



# Frequently Asked Questions

## OPR Fire Hazard Planning Technical Advisory

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## General Plan Guidelines and Technical Advisories

### What is a general plan?

California state law requires each jurisdiction to adopt a general plan “for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning” (Gov. Code § 65300). The general plan outlines a vision for how a community will grow, reflecting community priorities and values in its goals, objectives, and implementation measures. Currently, there are eight required topics, or “elements”, that must be addressed in general plans.

- Land Use
  - Circulation
  - Housing
  - Conservation
  - Open Space
  - Noise
  - Safety
  - Environmental Justice\*
  - Air Quality \*
- \*Only required for a subset of jurisdictions

For more information please refer to [General Plan Guidelines Chapter 2: A Vision for Planning](#).

### What are the general plan guidelines?

The Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) periodically revises its general plan guidelines to assist local governments with preparing and developing general plans. Within the general plan guidelines (GPG), OPR provides process recommendations and well as sample data and policy language for jurisdictions to consider as part of their plan update. Given the diversity of cities and counties across California, the contents within the GPG are meant to represent a toolbox of options in which jurisdictions many choose to adopt or modify OPR’s recommendations as appropriate within the local and statutory context. Please note that OPR has no regulatory authority over the development of general plans.

### What is a general plan technical advisory?

OPR issues technical guidance on topics that broadly affect land use planning, including the preparation of general plans and the application of CEQA. Technical advisories may be developed in response to new/changing legislation or to provide supplemental information on topics that are of high interest to planners across California. General plan technical advisories are meant to be extensions of the GPG, focusing on specific subtopics related to the general plan required elements. To view all current technical advisories please visit [OPR’s General Plan Guidelines and Technical Advisories page](#).

## Fire Hazard Planning Update

### **Why is OPR updating the existing Fire Hazard Planning Technical Advisory?**

OPR's Fire Hazard Planning Technical Advisory (TA) was first published in 2015. Pursuant to the requirements of SB 901 and AB 2911, as codified in Gov. Code § 65040.21, OPR is now updating the document to include "specific land use strategies to reduce fire risk to buildings, infrastructure, and communities" and prepared this draft update "in consultation with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (State Board), and other fire and safety experts." Per Gov. Code § 65040.21, OPR must update the guidance document "not less than once every eight years."

### **What does the Technical Advisory address?**

The draft technical advisory is meant to assist cities and counties as they revise their general plans to better address fire hazards and reduce the associated risks. The update provides guidance on outreach and engagement, conducting comprehensive wildfire hazard and risk assessments, aligning and integrating these assessments across a variety of plans, and developing general plan policies and programs that reduce risk for existing and future communities. Moreover, the TA includes sample policies and programs, case studies, potential funding sources, and numerous other resources and tools to support local level planning.

The Technical Advisory is not intended to be exhaustive guide to all aspects of fire hazard response or mitigation that may be undertaken by various levels of government, non-governmental organizations, or private interests in the state. Numerous laws, regulations, policies, plans, and programs exist across both the public and private sector that may play important roles in mitigating fire hazards and reducing risk. The Technical Advisory recognizes interrelationships with these other efforts to some extent, but primarily focuses on those that are applicable to local general plans and their implementation.

### **Do local governments have to follow this Technical Advisory?**

The guidance in this Technical Advisory is designed for a wide spectrum of uses and applications in local planning and is intended to be a resource for the public and local agencies to use at their discretion; however, it does not alter or direct public agency discretion or decision-making in preparing planning documents.

The Technical Advisory should not be construed as legal advice. OPR does not have the authority to enforce or attempt to enforce any part of the guidance or recommendations in the TA document. While the Technical Advisory is a guidance document that is advisory in nature, courts periodically refer to OPR's guidance to interpret planning law. For this reason, the Technical Advisory closely adheres to statute and current case law. It also relies upon commonly accepted principles of contemporary planning practice.

## Public Review and Comment Process

### **What is the timeline for public comment? How do I submit a public comment?**

OPR will be accepting written public comments on the draft through **December 18, 2020**. To submit a public comment please use [OPR's Public Comment Submission Form](#). This form will ask for your name, whether you are submitting comments on behalf of yourself or an agency/organization, and which part of the TA you would like to comment on. You will have the option to submit your comments by uploading a letter, or through the form directly (preferred).

### **How will my public comment inform the TA update?**

OPR values public engagement and views the public review and comment process as an opportunity to develop more thoughtful and useful guidance. OPR staff are committed to reviewing and reflecting on all comments received and will work to the best of their ability to integrate public input into the final document. Unfortunately, due to limited capacity, OPR staff will not prepare formal responses to submitted comments.

### **Will OPR hold public meetings to present on and discuss the Draft TA Update?**

OPR will host a webinar on November 18, 2020 to present the draft Fire Hazard Planning TA update and answer questions. Interested individuals may [register directly for the webinar](#) or view the event on [OPR's YouTube channel](#), where the webinar will be livestreamed and archived. Staff may host additional webinars during and after the public review process. To receive future webinar announcements, sign up for the [OPR Announcements E-List](#).

### **Who do I contact should I have additional questions?**

If you have additional questions, please send an email to OPR staff at [WildfireTA@opr.ca.gov](mailto:WildfireTA@opr.ca.gov).