

## Appendix A

### California Planning Practice for Historic, Agricultural, and Constrained Sites

#### Overview

Under California planning law, General Plans establish broad land use policy, while implementation tools—such as zoning, Specific Plans, and overlay districts—are used to tailor land use intensity and form to site-specific conditions. For properties that are historically significant, environmentally constrained, partially operational, or large relative to surrounding neighborhoods, California cities commonly employ **site-specific planning frameworks** rather than broad mixed-use designations with wide residential density ranges.

#### General Plan Framework

The land use element of a General Plan is intended to designate the *type, intensity, and distribution* of land uses in a manner consistent with community goals, infrastructure capacity, environmental conditions, and public safety. California planning guidance emphasizes internal consistency and context-sensitive land use designations, particularly where safety, conservation, or historic preservation considerations are present.

#### Specific Plans and Overlay Districts

A Specific Plan is a recognized implementation tool under California law that establishes detailed land use regulations, development standards, infrastructure requirements, and implementation measures for a defined geographic area. Overlay districts and special planning areas similarly provide additional regulatory controls layered over base zoning. These tools are routinely used for sites that:

- Contain historic or cultural resources
- Support ongoing agricultural or institutional uses
- Are located within environmental or fire hazard zones
- Require phased or carefully managed redevelopment
- Adjoin established residential neighborhoods

Such frameworks allow jurisdictions to divide properties into sub-areas, limit residential density where appropriate, preserve existing assets, and ensure that new development aligns with safety and evacuation realities.

#### Historic and Agricultural Properties

Historic wineries and agricultural campuses in California are rarely planned as vacant redevelopment parcels. Planning frameworks for such sites typically emphasize adaptive reuse,

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continuity of use, preservation of character-defining features, and constrained residential development. These objectives are difficult to achieve through a single mixed-use designation applied uniformly across an entire site.

**Fire Hazard and Public Safety Considerations**

State fire and planning guidance recognizes that land use decisions directly affect wildfire exposure, evacuation feasibility, and emergency response capacity. In Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, jurisdictions commonly rely on site-specific planning tools to manage residential intensity, circulation design, access, and evacuation constraints, rather than relying on broad land use categories with wide density allowances.

**Conclusion**

In California planning practice, the application of a single mixed-use land use designation with a wide residential density range to a historically significant, agriculturally active, fire-constrained site is atypical. Jurisdictions facing similar conditions more commonly employ site-specific planning tools—such as Specific Plans, overlay districts, or special planning areas—to ensure that development outcomes are calibrated to site conditions, preservation objectives, and public safety requirements.