

# THE SPECIFIC PLAN

Source:



The Specific Plan is one of many policy or regulatory tools used by local governments to guide development (see diagram below). The overall guidance for physical development is provided by the **General Plan**. It sets forth goals, objectives, policies and programs for the City in its entirety in a variety of subject areas specified by State law. The same subject areas are included in **Specific Plans** to the extent they apply, but for a localized area and in greater detail. If a specific plan only provides more detailed policy guidance, it is a “**policy**” level plan. If it actually establishes development regulations, it is a “**regulatory**” specific plan and becomes customized zoning for the affected property.

The Specific Plan provides a bridge between the **General Plan** and individual projects submittals (Project Level), in a more area-specific manner than is possible with community-wide zoning ordinances.

While a combination of other tools (i.e. zoning and subdivision applications conditional use permits, variances, etc.), may, in concert, do what the specific plan accomplishes, the process may become cumbersome and disjointed. The specific plan can amend zoning ordinances to create more appropriate use or density designations; address specific area concerns, such as hillside development; and can serve excellent basis for a development agreement. All of these procedures can be processed in single “package,” essentially creating an area plan, zoning ordinance, circulation plan and park and recreation

