

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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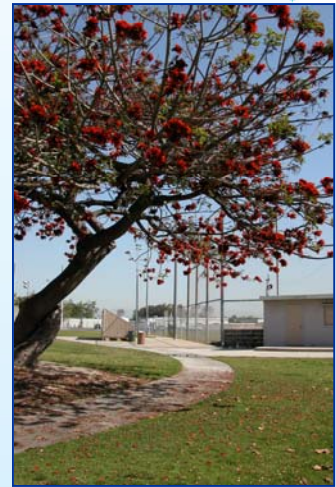
1.1 INTRODUCTION

The General Plan is a policy document designed to guide the future of the City of Garden Grove. The General Plan describes Garden Grove's goals and policies regarding land use, community design, economic development, transportation, housing, parks, recreation and open space, conservation, safety, air quality, noise, infrastructure, and housing. Along with these goals and policies is an implementation program geared toward carrying out these goals and policies.

1.2 GENERAL PLAN PROCESS

The General Plan update process involved four phases, as described below.

- **Phase 1: Existing Conditions.** This phase of the process is about understanding the existing conditions within Garden Grove. It included data reconnaissance and review of existing conditions, trends, and future projections. The research collected in this phase of the process helped frame the existing issues and opportunities for the future.
- **Phase 2: Developing and Selecting a Land Use Alternative.** Following the existing conditions analysis, a number of land use alternatives were developed for key focus areas within the City. Each alternative was evaluated for impacts on the community and a preferred land use alternative was selected.
- **Phase 3: Developing the Draft General Plan and Program EIR.** During the third phase in the General Plan process, goals and policies were developed to reflect the vision of the community and set new policy direction for the future. Following the development of the goals and policies, an environmental review was conducted to evaluate the impacts of the policy program and the preferred land use alternative. A Draft General Plan and Draft Program EIR were developed for public review.
- **Phase 4: Adopting the General Plan and EIR.** The last step in the General Plan process is the General Plan adoption. The Planning Commission and City Council will conduct public hearing on the Draft General Plan and Draft Program EIR. In consideration of public input, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the



City Council. The City Council will consider the Planning Commission's recommendation and conduct an additional public hearing. The City Council will make its final decision to adopt the General Plan and EIR. The adopted Garden Grove General Plan is then published and implemented.

1.3 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The Community Participation Program for the Garden Grove General Plan was organized into three workshops, conducted at key milestones within the planning process. Citywide mailings invited all residents to participate in the General Plan Update program. These workshops, like the community vision campaign, were a sincere effort to gather ideas from those who know the City best. Each workshop is described below.



- **Workshop 1:** The first General Plan update workshop was held on May 16, 2006. Over eighty-five people attended this informal open house to learn more about the General Plan, process, and provide their input on the elements.
- **Workshop 2:** Workshop 2, held on November 1, 2006, focused on confirming the input heard during the first workshop, as well as obtaining additional comments on the community design element and the land use alternatives.
- **Workshop 3:** The final General Plan update workshop was held on May 29, 2008. This workshop included a presentation and discussion on the Draft General Plan goals and policies. This workshop provided the community with one last opportunity for input before the Draft General Plan is presented to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Input received at all of the community workshops was incorporated into the General Plan update. Specifically, input about the community's Treasures, Challenges, and Visions served as the basis to determine the Key Themes and Vision for the General Plan. A summary of the community's input is provided below.

TREASURES

- History
- Proximity to Freeways
- Big Yards
- Main Street
- Preserving Residential Areas
- Village Green (Clock Tower)
- Its People
- Strawberry Festival
- Teens and Community Programs
- Parks
- Community Events
- Schools
- Korean Business District
- Vietnamese Business District



- Well-maintained Trees and Medians
- Older Homes and Neighborhoods
- Trees and Green Space

CHALLENGES

- Preserving Small Business
- City Budget and Revenue
- Noise Pollution
- Design Standards
- Beautify Lots and Sidewalks
- Lack of Community Involvement
- More Jobs
- Growth without Losing Character
- Blighted Shopping Centers
- Aging Infrastructure
- Casino versus No Casino
- Big Box Retailers versus no Big Box Retailers
- Crime
- Litter
- Staying Small
- Traffic and Parking
- Overdevelopment of Commercial Areas
- Communication
- Keeping the City Green
- Decaying Homes



VISIONS

- Transit-Oriented Development
- Community Events on Main Street
- Mixed Use
- Art Park in OCTA Right-of-Way
- Development at Brookhurst Street/Brookhurst Triangle Area
- Main Street and Downtown City Buildings as Live-Work and Entertainment District
- Continue Improving Major Arterials
- Culture and Arts
- Community Involvement
- Develop Vacant Land
- Better Park Facilities
- Build Low-Density Housing Units
- Revitalization and Preservation
- Rails to Trails Bike Path
- Affordable Housing
- Support for Small Business
- Underground Utility Wires
- Technology
- Quality of Life
- Environmentally Conscious City
- Keeping the City Green



1.4 GARDEN GROVE COMMUNITY VISION

The General Plan update process also relied on a community visioning effort that was undertaken by the City Council. The aim of this campaign was to determine how residents felt about where the community has been and where it should be going. The effort gathered information from the citizens of Garden Grove over an 18-month period of time by using a variety of methods including focus groups, surveys, an open house, and a Community Forum.

The results of the surveys and Community Forum were synthesized by City staff into a Community Vision Statement.

The City's Strategic Plan 2005-2010 established the following vision statement, guiding principles, and intentions for the City. The vision and seven City objectives were also important in determining the Key Themes and Vision for the General Plan.

COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Garden Grove is to be a safe, attractive, and economically vibrant city with an informed and involved public. We are a diverse community that promotes our unique attributes and preserves our residential character.

The City Council adopted the Community Vision Statement and Strategic Plan goals (the City's Strategic Plan 2005-2010). All City Council memorandums are required to include a "Community Vision Implementation" section.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We commit ourselves to the betterment of the individual, the organization, and the community, fostering a spirit of trust, creativity, cooperation, integrity, empathy, respect, and quality service to all.

CITY'S SEVEN OBJECTIVES

Garden Grove will be:

- A Safe Community
- An Economically Sound Community
- A Family-Oriented Community
- A Diverse Community
- A Well Maintained Community
- An Informed Community and A Well Administered Community
- A High-Quality-of-Life Community

A description of the seven areas from the Strategic Plan 2005-2010 are provided below.

A Safe Community – Adequately funded, staffed, and equipped police and fire services that provide a timely, effective response to both minor and major public safety concerns. Also, the public safety providers will engage and educate all segments of the community.

An Economically Sound Community – Meet budget challenges by capitalizing on our unique development opportunities and providing enhanced shopping, dining, and entertainment options while improving the aesthetics of the community.



A Family-Oriented Community – Safe, well-kept neighborhoods where all segments of the community feel secure and comfortable, and where residents can feel unburdened from the stresses of the world outside of the neighborhood.

A Diverse Community – All segments of the community have a sense of belonging, regardless of race, ethnicity, or age. Also, a community where all feel safe in expressing their uniqueness, while joining and celebrating in their commonality as Americans, Californians, and Garden Grove residents.

A Well Maintained Community – Public infrastructure (i.e., streets, water and sewer systems, storm drains) that is kept in good working order, but results in few inconveniences and disruptions to users during maintenance. Also, future plans that ensure the continued adequacy and availability of these services as the community changes.

An Informed Community and Well Administered Community – Good channels of communication shall exist between the general public, community organizations, service providers and the city government. This provides residents and other interested persons both information and opportunities to provide input on proposals being brought before the City's Boards, Commissions, and Council. In addition, the city government shall be adequately staffed and compensated to meet the service needs and goals of the community. City staff shall be encouraged to learn about and apply the most efficient and effective methods for providing public services to the community.

A High-Quality-of-Life Community – Public facilities and open spaces that are well maintained and adequate for size and nature of the community, as well as provide recreational opportunities for all segments of the community.

1.5 REQUIREMENTS OF THE GENERAL PLAN

California law requires each city and county to have an adopted General Plan. State law specifies that each jurisdiction's General Plan address seven elements or topics including: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. Jurisdictions are also allowed to add additional elements based on values within that specific city or county. The Garden Grove General Plan includes the following elements:

- **Land Use Element:** This element describes the desired land use types and development intensity and density throughout the City.
- **Community Design Element:** This element describes the existing character and identity of the community, as well as describes visions for future development and redevelopment within the City.
- **Economic Development Element:** This element identifies strength, opportunities, and issues of the local economy.
- **Circulation Element:** This element determines the general location and extent of existing and proposed major roadways, bike facilities, as well as mass transit.
- **Infrastructure Element:** This element provides an overview of the City's existing infrastructure including water, wastewater, and storm drain, as well as identifies how the City will meet future needs.



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- **Noise Element:** This element identifies and analyzes noise problems within the community and forms the basis for land use distribution.
 - **Air Quality Element:** This element discusses the quality of air in the region as well as develops goals and policies for improving air quality.
 - **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element:** This element includes a discussion of open space areas, as well as parks and recreational facilities.
 - **Conservation Element:** The Conservation Element addresses national and man-made resources in the City, including water resources, energy, solid waste, biological resources, green building, and cultural/historical resources.
 - **Safety Element:** This element addresses conditions in the City that impact the safety of those who live and work there, such as police, fire, earthquakes, and hazardous materials.
 - **Housing Element:** This element looks at current and future need for housing units (based on numbers prescribed by the State of California), the capacity in the City for additional units, types of households that will need some form of assistance for housing, and ways to conserve existing housing.

Each element of the General Plan includes goals, policies, and an implementation program to provide a safe and pleasant environment within the City of Garden Grove in the future.

1.6 USE AND PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The role of each community's general plan is to act as a constitution for development and the foundation upon which all land use decisions are to be based. Land use decisions encompass not only zoning, but circulation, design, open space, and other factors. The Plan is a policy document to assist and guide local decision makers. The Plan also identifies land uses and their distribution throughout the City. To be considered consistent with the General Plan, a project must not only be consistent with the Land Use Plan, but it must also further the goals of all elements of the General Plan and meet the intent of its goals and policies.

The General Plan is to be used by the City Council and Planning Commission to evaluate land use changes, make funding and budget recommendations and decisions, and to evaluate specific development proposals. City Staff will use the Plan to regulate building and development and to make recommendations on projects to the Planning Commission and City Council. The Plan will also be used by residents, neighborhood groups, City Commissions and Councils, and developers to understand the City's long-range plans and to evaluate specific development proposals.

A General Plan is a legal document that must meet specific State requirements for content. The Garden Grove General Plan meets or exceeds the requirements set forth in the California Government Code (Sections 65300 et seq.). The Plan is an integrated, internally consistent statement of the official land use policy for the City of Garden Grove. The Plan addresses each issue prescribed by State law as it applies to Garden Grove. The Plan contains land use and circulation maps. It also contains text that identifies goals, sets forth policies and identifies implementation strategies.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires all local and State governmental agencies to consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have a



discretionary authority. The State CEQA Statutes, Section 21065, define a project as “an activity which may cause either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.” Therefore, the City of Garden Grove, as the lead agency, was required to prepare and certify an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the General Plan Update.

The General Plan Update EIR is a public document that assesses the overall environmental effects of the Plan update at a program level of detail and indicates ways to reduce or avoid possible environmental damage. The Program EIR generally analyzes the broad environmental effects of the General Plan Update, and provides a baseline, or “first tier,” against which future projects implemented under the General Plan Update 2030 horizon are evaluated. Where subsequent CEQA documentation is required for a future project, the City must implement the applicable mitigation measures developed in the Program EIR, and focus its analysis on site-specific issues that cannot otherwise be addressed at a program or policy level of analysis.

The Program EIR is to be used as a companion document with the General Plan Update.

KEY TERMS USED

The most important part of a General Plan is its goals and policies, which will help direct decision making and the execution of implementation programs through the year 2030. As a result, this General Plan is organized into goals, policies, and implementation programs in each Element. A description of the intent of a goal, policy, and implementation program is provided below.

Goal: Is an overall statement of community aim and consists of a broad statement of purpose or direction. For each goal in this General Plan, associated and more definitive policy statements follow.

Policy: Provides guidance to the City Council, Planning Commission, other City commissions and boards and City staff to follow, regarding the goal and in their review of development proposals and other actions taken.

Implementation Programs: Specific actions, procedures, programs, or techniques to achieve the goals and policies.

The Garden Grove General Plan 2030 is purposely brief and is meant to be an everyday guide. Explanatory text and diagrams are provided where needed. 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. However, General Plan users should realize that the policies and diagrams in the various elements are interrelated and should be examined comprehensively. Policies are presented as written statements, tables, diagrams, and exhibits. All of these policy components must be considered together when making planning decisions.

[Exhibit INTR-1, City Boundary Map](#), outlines the Planning Area addressed in this General Plan, which includes the City’s corporate limits. The map also identifies the City’s relationship to neighboring cities.

1.7 ADMINISTERING THE GENERAL PLAN

It is the intent of the City Council to implement this General Plan by establishing annual planning goals based on the Plan, developing ordinances and regulations to implement the Plan, and providing the requisite staff resources. The City Council is also mindful that its intention to



implement this General Plan is based on the availability of funding and that some goals, policies, and programs might not be achieved if funds are unavailable.

Once adopted, the General Plan does not remain static. As time goes on, the City may determine that it is necessary to revise portions of the text or add policies or programs to reflect changing circumstances or philosophy.

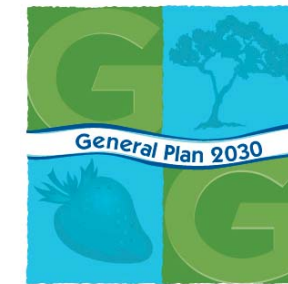
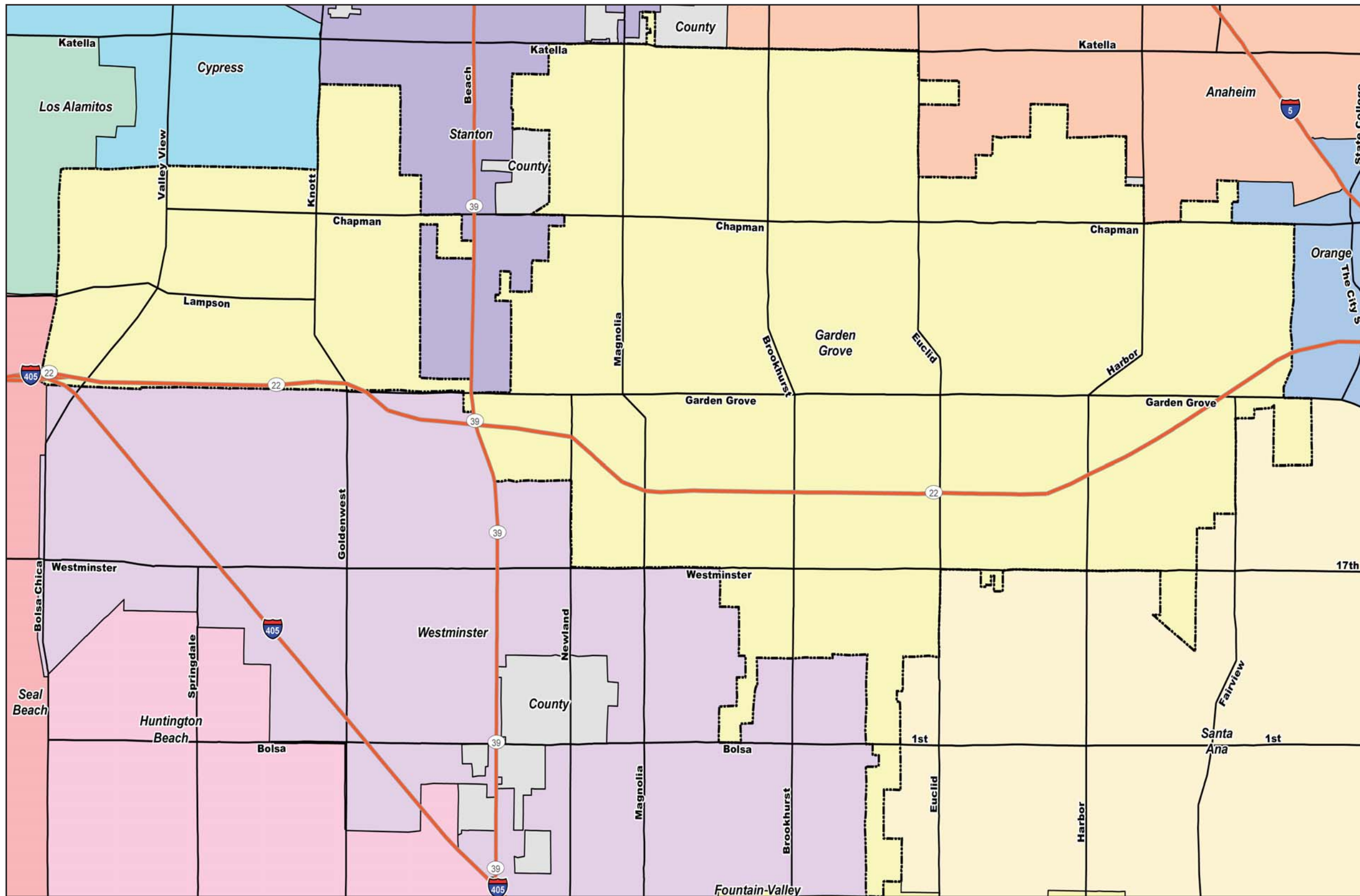
State law provides direction on how cities can maintain the General Plan as a contemporary policy guide: it requires each planning department to report annually to the City Council on “the status of the plan and progress in its implementation” (Government Code Section 65400[b]). The City Council may respond to the planning department review by setting goals for the coming year.

1.8 AMENDING THE GENERAL PLAN

It is necessary to periodically review, update and revise the General Plan as the City and its resources are developed. State law permits General Plan amendments up to four times per year for each mandatory element (Government Code Section 65358[b]). Optional elements are permitted by State law (Government Code Section 65303), and once adopted, the optional elements carry the same legal weight as the seven mandated elements. However, State law does not specify any limitations regarding the number of times an optional element can be amended per year.

In addition, the State recommends short-term portions, such as the implementation program, of the General Plan be reviewed on an annual basis (Government Code Section 65400[b]) and that the entire document be thoroughly reviewed every five years, and revised as necessary.





LEGEND



SOURCE: RBF Consulting, GIS Department, 2008.