

# Executive Summary

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## INTRODUCTION

The General Plan Framework Element is a strategy for long-term growth which sets a citywide context to guide the update of the community plan and citywide elements. The Element responds to State and Federal mandates to plan for the future. In planning for the future, the City of Los Angeles is using population forecasts provided by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). The Framework Element does not mandate or encourage growth. Because population forecasts are estimates about the future and not an exact science, it is possible that population growth as estimated may not occur: it may be less or it may be more. The City could be at the beginning of a long decline in population or at the beginning of a sharp increase.

The Element is based on the population forecasts provided by SCAG. Should the City continue to grow, the Element provides a means for accommodating new population and employment in a manner which enhances rather than degrades the environment. The City does not have the option of stopping growth and sending it elsewhere. It must prepare for it, should growth occur. In preparing the General Plan Framework Element, the City has answered the question "What would the City do if it had to accommodate this many more people?" In answer to that question there are two possibilities: 1) prepare a Plan to accommodate density equally among all City neighborhoods, or 2) prepare a plan to preserve the single-family neighborhoods and focus density -- should it occur -- in limited areas linked to infrastructure.

A plan to spread growth among all neighborhoods negatively affects all single-family neighborhoods equally, and continues strip commercial development patterns without respect to available infrastructure and transportation facilities. A plan to focus growth preserves single-family and low density neighborhoods and affords a closer relationship with available infrastructure.

The Framework Element refines adopted City policy and is intended to update Concept Los Angeles. The central theme of Concept Los Angeles was to preserve single-family neighborhoods by focusing any growth away from them and into centers. While planning for the future is demanding and challenging for the City, it is clear that given the choices about how best to respond to the mandates to plan for growth, the Framework Element is clearly the better alternative.

## GENERAL PLAN FRAMEWORK ELEMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES GENERAL PLAN

The Framework Element supersedes Concept Los Angeles and the Plan citywide elements of the City of Los Angeles General Plan, and sets forth a citywide comprehensive long-range growth strategy. It defines citywide policies that will be implemented through subsequent amendments of the City's community plans, zoning ordinances, and other pertinent programs. In many respects, the Framework Element is an evolution of the Centers Concept, adopted in 1974, that provides fundamental guidance regarding the City's future. The City of Los Angeles is a city of cultural and natural diversity: its communities reflect a variety of people, while its environment reflects a variety of natural features ranging from mountains and hills to rivers, wetlands and coastal areas. This Element contains policies that are intended to maintain this diversity.

While the Framework Element incorporates a diagram that depicts the generalized distribution of centers, districts, and mixed-use boulevards throughout the City, it does not convey or affect entitlements for any property. Specific land use designations are determined by the community plans.

The Framework Element provides guidelines for future updates of the City's community plans. It does not supersede the more detailed community and specific plans.

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### **State Requirements**

California State law (Government Code Section 65300) requires that each city prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for its future development. This Element must contain seven elements, including land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise and safety. In addition to these, State law permits cities to include optional elements in their general plans, thereby providing local governments with the flexibility to address the specific needs and unique character of their jurisdictions.

In fulfillment of the State's requirements, the City's general plan contains citywide elements for all topics except Land Use for which community plans establish policy and standards for each of the 35 geographic areas. As optional elements, the City has adopted Air Quality and Service Systems Elements.

California State law requires that the day-to-day decisions of a city follow logically from and be consistent with the general plan. More specifically, Government Code Sections 65860, 66473.5 and 656474 require that zoning ordinances and subdivision and parcel map approvals be consistent with the general plan.

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### **Scope of the General Plan Framework Element**

The General Plan Framework Element defines citywide policies that influence most of the City's General Plan Elements. It includes policies for:

1. [Land Use](#)
2. [Housing](#)
3. [Urban Form and Neighborhood Design](#)
4. [Open Space and Conservation](#)
5. [Economic Development](#)
6. [Transportation](#)
7. [Infrastructure and Public Services](#)

### **PREPARATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN FRAMEWORK ELEMENT**

Over a period of several years, the Departments of City Planning and Transportation, in collaboration with a team of professional consultants, outside organizations, and residents from all parts of the City, developed the Proposed Framework Element. The primary means was approximately 60 community and neighborhood workshops, at which more than 3,000 residents and business persons participated.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN FRAMEWORK ELEMENT**

Implementation of the General Plan Framework Element will be achieved through plans, ordinances, standards and guidelines, studies, capital

improvements, economic development procedures, administrative procedures, and coordination with other governmental agencies, coordination and joint partnerships with private landowners and developers, and development review procedures. Many of the Element's policies will be implemented by the revision of the community plans and the Municipal Code, which is the basic mechanism through which the City regulates the use and development of land. The full-text Element specifies the implementation programs associated with each Framework Element policy.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE GENERAL PLAN FRAMEWORK ELEMENT**

The following sections present an overview of the principal Framework Element policies. Some policies have been paraphrased for the purposes of brevity. Refer to the full-text chapters for the complete text.

### **Basis for Planning: Growth and Capacity**

The General Plan Framework Element is based on a planning horizon for population and employment growth: that the City's population could increase by approximately 820,000 residents and employment by approximately 390,000 jobs. The City is not promoting this population growth. Rather, pursuant to conformity requirements, it has developed this Element to establish policies to best accommodate this growth when and if it should occur. The population estimate is the growth forecast for 2010 for the City of Los Angeles provided by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) (June, 1993). The employment increase goal doubles the SCAG 2010 forecast to maintain the City's 1990 jobs-housing ratio. While the SCAG employment forecast represents the prevailing trend in economic activity, the higher number is considered essential if the City is to have sufficient job opportunities for its residents and to maintain and improve the level of services for the City's future. Without changes in the current State taxation and revenue distribution laws, lesser employment growth would significantly and adversely impact the City's fiscal stability and the quality of City services.

The population and employment estimates represent a "step" in the City's future that can rationally be used for the planning and funding of supporting transportation, utility infrastructure, and services. Though the Framework Element's Land Use Diagram could accommodate higher levels of growth, these would not be achieved in the foreseeable future as determined by the Framework Element's economic analyses.

At the same time, the population and employment estimates do not represent maximum or minimum levels of growth to be permitted. A system for the annual monitoring of growth, infrastructure, and services, used as the basis to guide future capital investments and development decisions, will also be used as a mechanism to gauge the appropriateness of the estimates and provide for their modification over time.

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## **Principal Framework Element Policies**

### **[Land Use](#)**

The primary objectives of the policies in the Framework Element's Land Use chapter are to support the viability of the City's residential neighborhoods and commercial districts, and, when growth occurs, to encourage sustainable growth in a number of higher-intensity commercial and

mixed-use districts, centers and boulevards and industrial districts particularly in proximity to transportation corridors and transit stations.

The Framework Element establishes new land use categories whose specific locations are determined through the community plans. In general, these categories continue the residential and industrial designations that have been used in the past. New categories are recommended for selected areas of the City that, in general, have been previously designated for commercial uses. These include:

#### Neighborhood District

These are pedestrian-oriented retail focal points for surrounding residential neighborhoods (15,000 to 20,000 persons) containing a diversity of local-serving uses. Generally, these districts are at a floor area ratio of 1.5:1 or less and are characterized by buildings of one- and two-stories in height, both to be determined by the community plans.

#### Community Centers

Generally, these are the "downtowns" that serve Los Angeles' communities (25,000 to 100,000 persons). They contain a diversity of uses such as small retail and offices, entertainment, public facilities, and neighborhood oriented uses. In many areas, an emphasis is placed on the development of projects that integrate housing with the commercial uses. The Centers may contain one or more transportation hubs. Generally, Community Centers range from floor area ratios of 1.5:1 to 3.0:1. Heights are generally characterized by two- to six-story buildings, depending on the scale of the area. Floor area ratio and any specific height restrictions would be determined in the community plan.

#### Regional Centers

These serve as the focal points of regional commerce, identity, and activity for a population of 250,000 to 500,000 persons. Generally, they include corporate professional offices, concentrations of entertainment and cultural facilities, and mixed-use developments. Some contain region-serving retail facilities. Typically, Regional Centers are higher-density places whose physical form is substantially differentiated from the lower-density neighborhoods of the City. Regional Centers will fall within the range of floor area ratios from 1.5:1 to 6.0:1. This category is generally characterized by six- to twenty-story buildings or higher. Floor area ratios and any specific height restrictions would be determined by the community plan.

#### Downtown Center

Downtown Los Angeles is the principal government and business center of the region, with a worldwide market. It is the highest-density center of the City and hub of regional transportation.

#### Mixed-Use Boulevards

Boulevards connect the City's Neighborhood Districts, Community and Regional Centers, and Downtown. Mixed-use is encouraged along some of these boulevards, with the exact boundaries identified in the community plan. Generally, different types of Mixed-Use Boulevards will fall within a range of floor area ratios from 1.5:1 up to 4:1 and will be characterized by one- to two-story commercial structures up to three- to six-story mixed-use buildings between centers. Mixed-Use boulevards are served by a variety of transportation facilities.

Mixed-use can take three forms: housing above commercial, housing side-by-side with commercial, and/or alternating blocks of housing and commercial. Flexibility affords community choice in determining appropriate mixed-use to be identified in the community plan.

### Industrial Districts

Lands designated for industrial use by the community plans continue to be designated for these purposes to support economic development and jobs generation. Some limited flexibility is allowed to promote recycling when appropriate.

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### Housing

The Framework Element elaborates on the City's adopted Housing Element to ensure the provision of housing for the City's existing and future residents. Among the key policies are the following:

Provide sufficient lands for the development of an adequate supply of housing units. The Framework Element proposes the expansion of the City's capacity for housing units by the provision of bonus densities for the integration of housing with commercial uses in districts, centers, and boulevards.

Provide incentives for:

- The scattering of affordable units throughout the City.
- Development of family-size units in multi-family developments.
- Expedited permit processing for affordable units.

Establish development standards for new multi-family residential projects to provide for liveable communities.

Revise, as necessary, community plans to facilitate the conservation of the scale and character of existing stable residential neighborhoods.

Plan for appropriate increases in housing production in appropriate areas as determined through the community plans and implementing actions in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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### Urban Form and Neighborhood Design

The Urban Form and Neighborhood Design Chapter defines "urban form" as (a) the "general pattern of building height and development intensity" and (b) the "structural elements" that define the City physically, such as natural features, transportation corridors (including the planned fixed rail transit system), open space, public facilities, as well as activity centers and focal elements. The chapter describes options to improve community and

neighborhood liveability.

Establish local development standards through community plan amendments.

Visually differentiate the districts, centers, and boulevards that comprise Los Angeles.

- Neighborhood Districts: low-rise and pedestrian-oriented.
- Community Centers: mid-rise; largely pedestrian-oriented.
- Regional Centers: high-rise; some containing clusters of buildings on sidewalks and pedestrian areas and others with freestanding buildings.
- Mixed-Use Boulevards: comparable to the Neighborhood Districts and Community Centers.

Define streets according to their function and user character, including "pedestrian priority segments," "transit priority segments," and "vehicle priority segments."

Formulate development standards and guidelines that raise the quality of development citywide to enhance rather than adversely impact neighborhood character (e.g., multi-family residential).

Provide for elements that enhance neighborhood character, including the use of street trees and "slowing" of residential streets.

Establish standards to enhance pedestrian activity in areas to be designated by the community plans as pedestrian districts including the siting of buildings along sidewalks, design of the ground elevation of buildings to promote visual interest to the pedestrian, locating parking to the rear or other areas away from the primary pedestrian area, and inclusion of streetscape amenities.

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### [Open Space and Conservation](#)

The Framework Element's open space and conservation objectives are oriented around the conservation of significant resources, provision of outdoor recreational opportunities, minimization of public risks from environmental hazards, and use of open space to enhance community and neighborhood character. Key policies include the following:

Establish a linear open space and greenway system that connects the City's regional open spaces (mountains, coastline, and parks) and is linked to communities and neighborhoods. This may consist of improvements along the Los Angeles River, other drainages, transit corridors, and utility corridors, where appropriate. Bikeways, hiking trails, parks, and passive open space are among the improvements that may be considered.

Consider open space as an integral ingredient of neighborhood character.

Encourage sustainable urban forest management programs to conserve and manage open space and identify new opportunities for demand side management of the urban watershed.

Consider appropriate methods to protect significant remaining major open spaces, including hillsides and undeveloped areas.

Consider urban forms of open space, such as small parks, pedestrian districts, community plazas, and similar elements.

Promote the joint use of open space with public facilities (schools, transit, and other).

Open spaces that constitute a major risk to life and property should be preserved or regulated (e.g., steep terrain, landslide areas, and flood plains).

Develop a sustainable systems approach to public infrastructure planning, construction, and management that identifies opportunities to reduce long-term cost to taxpayers of such activity.

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### **Economic Development**

The Framework Element's economic development policies are designed to facilitate job growth by emphasizing that Los Angeles plays a proactive role in the retention and attraction of businesses in order to have a sufficient job base to maintain and enhance the quality of life. Key policies include the following:

Reorganize local government to coordinate economic development and business support services functions.

Establish a comprehensive program for business retention and attraction, including the marketing of the City to emerging industries.

Develop an infrastructure investment strategy to support population and employment growth areas.

Identify Federal and State mandates that may constrain business activity in Los Angeles, and address these through appropriate lobbying efforts.

Provide sufficient land to support economic development activities.

Concentrate commercial and office development in centers, corridors, and in proximity to transit stations.

Retain current industrial land use classifications to provide adequate quantities of land for emerging industrial sectors, except where such lands are unsuitable for such purposes.

Broaden the definition of industrial uses through the active investigation of their changing nature as effected by small company formation and the introduction of information age technology.

Establish incentives for industrial development in areas adjacent to the Port of Los Angeles, the rail corridor bisecting the San Fernando Valley, and the South Central/Southeast industrial area.

Facilitate the operations of the Port of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles International Airport as major drivers of the local and regional economy, supporting planned expansion and modernization.

Retain the City's existing employment base through an outreach program to existing businesses and an ongoing assessment of their specific land use requirements.

Improve the movement of goods and workers to industrial areas.

Develop and maintain streamlined approval processes and reduce uncertainty for the developers and the community.

Maintain development fee structures that do not unreasonably burden economic development activities.

Promote the re-use and recycling of deteriorated commercial and industrial districts.

Expand job training programs to adequately address the skill requirements of emerging industries.

Support efforts to provide all residents with reasonable access to transit infrastructure, employment, and job training opportunities.

Support efforts to develop industry and job markets in the area of resource conservation and demand side management.

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### *Transportation*

The primary goals of the Transportation Chapter are to provide adequate accessibility to commerce, to work opportunities, and to essential services, and to maintain acceptable levels of mobility of all those who live, work, travel, or move goods in Los Angeles. Attainment of this goal necessitates a comprehensive program of physical infrastructure improvements, traffic systems management techniques, and behavioral changes that reduce vehicle trips. These are linked to an integrated hierarchy of movement modes that encompasses the pedestrian, bicycle, automobile, local shuttle, bus, and rail transit. Key policies include the following:

#### *Neighborhood Transportation*

Expand neighborhood transportation services and programs to enhance neighborhood accessibility, including such systems as DASH, taxis, transit, paratransit, voucher programs, incentives for recreational trips, and "Smart Shuttles" and jitneys.

#### *Transportation Demand Management*

Participate in regionwide Transportation Demand Management programs and Transportation Control Measures to help achieve regional trip reduction and/or vehicle occupancy rate increases.

Promote the development of transportation facilities and services and educational programs that encourage transit ridership, increase vehicle occupancy, and pedestrian and bicycle access.

Provide park-and-ride shuttle services to and special events.

Encourage businesses to implement tele commuting programs, flexible work schedules, and teleconferencing programs.

Support completion of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority baseline rail transit system by 2010 and establish

priority corridors to continue transit development beyond 2010.

Increase bus service along high-demand routes and corridors.

Initiate shuttle bus programs to serve transit stations.

Continue transit restructuring studies to reduce the cost and enhance the effectiveness of transit service.

#### *Transportation Systems Management and Parking*

Establish priority corridors for Transportation System Management improvements, including Automated Traffic Surveillance and Control systems, Smart Corridors, and other strategies.

Establish a Plan for high-occupancy vehicles on City arterials.

Implement shared parking, peripheral parking, and parking-pricing strategies in high employment areas.

#### *Highway Infrastructure*

Establish priority corridors for highway capital improvements, with an emphasis on severely congested corridors.

Continue completion of the City's Highways and Freeways Plan.

#### *Centers, Districts, and Mixed-Use Boulevards*

Streamline traffic analysis and mitigation procedures and use flexible standards to facilitate development in the centers, mixed-use boulevards, and in proximity to transit stations.

Develop transit alignments and station locations that maximize transit service in centers and mixed-use boulevards.

Provide shuttles and other services that increase access to and within centers and mixed-use boulevards.

Develop new and/or redefined parking policy procedures in centers and mixed-use boulevards, including the provision of shared parking facilities.

Enhance pedestrian circulation and bicycle access to centers and mixed-use boulevards.

#### *Preservation of Neighborhoods*

Protect residential neighborhoods from the intrusion of additional traffic generated by new regional or local development.

#### *Movement of Goods and Services*

Support the development of the Alameda Corridor and other transportation projects that serve industrial and commercial uses.

Complete the LAX Master Plan and support the continued growth of the Port of Los Angeles.

Establish ground access plans that facilitate the future growth of Van Nuys Airport, Palmdale Regional Airport, and Ontario International Airport.

Continue to expand the role of Union Station as the major regional hub for Amtrak, Metrolink, Metrorail, and, in the future, high-speed rail service.

### *Financing of Transportation Programs*

Seek adequate funding for Transportation improvements and programs, including State and Federal and new sources (e.g., congestion pricing, user fees, assessment districts, private sector financing/ partnerships, bond measures, and other).

Encourage the participation of small business enterprises in implementing new transportation projects.

### *Street Maintenance*

Identify streets and sidewalks requiring remedial repair and implement improvements to prolong their useful life.

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### **Infrastructure and Public Services**

The goals, objectives, and policies found within this chapter address the following systems and services:

1. Wastewater
2. Stormwater
3. Water
4. Solid Waste
5. Police
6. Fire
7. Libraries
8. Parks
9. Power
10. Schools
11. Telecommunications
12. Street Lighting
13. Urban Forest

For each of the public services and infrastructure systems, four basic policies are defined by the Framework Element:

Monitor levels of demand and the abilities of the service/infrastructure system to support demands. Use these demands to forecast future needs and

improvements.

Maintain an adequate system/service to support the needs of population and employment. This encompasses the upgrade and replacement of existing facilities as they deteriorate as well as the expansion of facilities/services to accommodate growth.

Implement techniques that reduce demands on utility infrastructure or services, where appropriate. Generally, these encompass a variety of conservation programs (e.g., reduced liquid and solid wastes and energy use, increased site permeability, watershed management, telecommunications, and others).

Establish procedures for the maintenance or restoration of service after an emergency, including earthquakes.

Major changes have begun to occur in the field of information technology. While addressed in the Framework Element, it is important for the City to account for how these advances in communication technology will affect its planning efforts.

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### **Implementation Programs**

A diversity of programs are specified to implement the General Plan Framework Element's policies. Their timing is contingent on the availability of adequate funding. Key programs include the following:

Establish a program to monitor growth and public service and infrastructure demands and capacities.

Prepare and submit to the City Council an Annual Report on Growth and Infrastructure, based on information compiled by the monitoring program.

Amend the community plans and the zoning ordinance (Municipal Code), guided by the Framework Element's policies and standards.

Establish development standards to create a higher quality of development.

Formulate Transportation Improvement and Mitigation Plans for community plan areas and geographic groupings of districts centers and mixed-use boulevards.

Formulate master and financing plans for public services and infrastructure that are correlated with forecast population and employment growth.

Maintain and implement Capital Improvement Programs that consider, as a priority, the improvements as an incentive for development in industrial and targeted growth areas.

Establish and implement a comprehensive economic development strategy and a proactive business attraction and retention program.

Coordinate actions to mitigate regional transportation and air quality impacts with adjacent cities and regional agencies (SCAG, SCAQMD, and other).

Establish procedures for City agencies to coordinate the provision of services and infrastructure to support growth.

Establish master plans for infrastructure and public services to upgrade existing deficiencies and meet the needs of future growth.

Initiate procedures to streamline and provide certainty for the development review process, emphasizing the facilitation of projects that are consistent with the objectives and policies of the General Plan Framework Element, and the implementation of community plans and zoning regulations.

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