



# Executive Summary





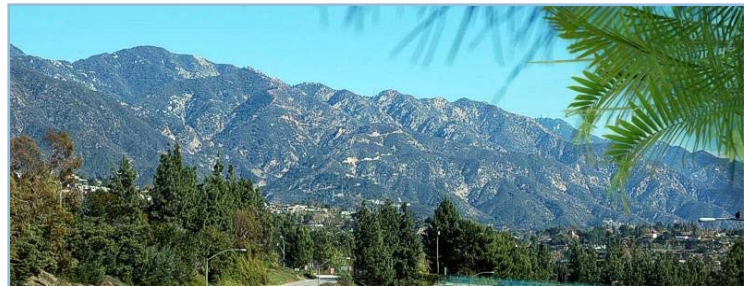


# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Overview

The La Cañada Flintridge City Council initiated a comprehensive update of the General Plan in 2006. A general plan, which is required by California State law, is the official guide for the physical development of the City and the foundation for local land use planning, including zoning, subdivisions, and public improvements. The California Supreme Court has called the general plan the "constitution for future development."

The components of a general plan are called elements. The City's General Plan is composed of the following elements:



1) Introduction, 2) Land Use Element, 3) Open Space and Recreation Element, 4) Conservation Element, 5) Safety Element, 6) Circulation Element, 7) Noise Element, 8) Air Quality Element, 9) Housing Element, and 10) References.

Prior to this comprehensive update, the City's General Plan included a Land Use Element (1995), Housing Element (1993), Circulation Element (1995), Environmental Resource Management Element (1980), Community Design Element (1980), Noise Element (1980), Safety Element (1980), and an Air Quality Element (1995). All topics that were addressed in the previous General Plan are still addressed in the updated Plan; however, the updated General Plan has been reorganized to follow a more conventional format. For example, topics in the Environmental Resources Management Element have been redistributed to various new elements, including Open Space and Recreation, Conservation, and

Safety; and issues addressed in the Community Design Element have been folded into the Land Use Element and new Conservation Element.

While there is no State requirement that a general plan be updated within a certain time frame (except for the Housing Element), a comprehensive update of the plan should be undertaken often enough to ensure that it accurately reflects and implements the City's vision; conforms to changes in law; reflects current court rulings; and provides an integrated and internally consistent set of goals, objectives, and policies designed to reflect the changing characteristics and growth of the community. Although various elements of the General Plan have been updated periodically, this is the first comprehensive update since the Plan was first adopted in 1980 following the City's incorporation.

The public played an essential role in the preparation of the General Plan. The City Council appointed a General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), a group of individuals representing the community, to oversee preparation of the Draft General Plan and update process. In addition, public workshops were held to solicit input from the community; one session was held with a La Cañada High School senior government class to gain the perspective of local youth; four City commissions reviewed the draft General Plan and provided comments and recommendations; and the City Council held multiple public hearings prior to adoption of the General Plan.



Based on input received at the various public meetings and 15 GPAC meetings, there was an overwhelming consensus to retain the existing character and quality of La Cañada Flintridge, as reflected in the 2030 vision statement (see Introduction). As the City is nearly built out, the majority of development that will occur within the City during the 2030 planning period is expected to take the form of redevelopment of existing properties and minor infill on currently vacant land. Therefore, the approach taken for this comprehensive update to the General Plan was to:

- review the existing goals, objectives, and policies and retain those that are still appropriate;
- enhance and/or add new ones to promote achievement of the 2030 Vision; and
- revise and/or add new ones to address changes in legislation and to reflect current data and trends as appropriate.

In addition to public involvement and input, a Background Report was prepared to assess existing conditions and provide technical information to guide the update process. Much of that information became the basis for the EIR and background summary information for the General Plan. It is on file with the Community Development Department and will remain a part of the complete public record.

## Key Issues and Changes

Following are highlights of the key issues and changes that are addressed and/or included in the General Plan:

1. Adds a new Mixed-Use land use designation and redesignates property from low density residential and commercial to high density residential to provide additional housing choices for seniors, those who prefer smaller units within walking distance of services and transit, and to provide opportunities for housing that is affordable and supports the goals of the Housing Element.
2. Redesignates all publically owned land from various residential land use designations to Open Space to preserve the remaining undeveloped hillsides to the extent possible.
3. Incorporates the Downtown Village Specific Plan (DVSP) by reference and integrates the policy direction in the Foothill Boulevard Master Plan into the Land Use Element.
4. Includes policies and development principles to support and enhance sustainable land use decision-making.
5. Strengthens and/or adds goals, policies, and objectives to preserve and protect La Cañada Flintridge's quality and character, including protecting existing neighborhoods from intrusion of noise, traffic, and other impacts, and preserving the City's semi-rural character and its animal-keeping tradition.
6. Incorporates the Trails Master Plan by reference and supports its implementation.



7. Promotes efficient and sustainable use of energy resources and addresses the City's responsibilities under AB 32 (regarding global climate change) and other energy and resource conservation-related legislation.
8. Updates the goals, objectives, and policies to reflect the City's responsibilities in enforcing State and federal safety-related mandates and regulations, such as the State Seismic Hazards Zonation Program, the National Incident Management System, and the State Standardized Emergency Management System.
9. Includes information, goals, objectives, and policies that acknowledge and address the impacts resulting from the 2009 Station Fire and the subsequent debris and mud flows that resulted from the winter storms of 2009-2010, which had devastating effects on homes and public and private property and caused disruption to the lives of many residents.
10. Updates objectives and policies to reflect the protection and mitigation measures in the City's existing Hillside Development Ordinance, which was adopted subsequent to approval of the 1980 Safety Element.
11. Recommends the adoption of a Level of Service (LOS) impact standard for the City's roadways and intersections to provide a method to evaluate projects based on their incremental impact on traffic operations.
12. Includes policies to reduce the number of vehicle trips on City streets by promoting the use of active transportation, such as walking, use of transit, and bicycling.
13. Updates the Noise Element to include information and recommendations from the Noise Barrier Scope Summary Report (NBSSR), which is a report prepared for Caltrans at the City's request to evaluate noise impacts of the I-210 Freeway on La Cañada Flintridge.
14. Recommends the development and implementation of a Noise Ordinance to be added to the City's municipal code.
15. Commits to preparing and implementing a Climate Action Plan for both community activities and municipal operations, and to updating the City's Greenhouse Gas Inventory as needed.
16. Provides residential development potential and goals, policies, and programs that meet the City's regional housing needs allocation (RHNA), resulting in a certified Housing Element for the current update cycle.



17. Reiterates the City's opposition to a potential option in the 2012 Regional Transportation Plan that entails a northward tunnel extension of the I-710 Freeway from its current terminus in Alhambra to intersect with the I-210 / SR-134 Freeways in Pasadena. The northward extension would be designated as the SR-710 Freeway. It is important that the City remain actively involved in implementation of the 2012 RTP to protect against potential adverse impacts to La Cañada Flintridge, including increased traffic, worsened air quality, and increased noise.

## Environmental Evaluation

An environmental impact report (EIR) was prepared for the General Plan update, which evaluates the environmental impacts that implementation of the changes identified in the General Plan may have on the City and identifies ways to reduce them via mitigation measures. Per the EIR, implementation of the General plan would result in significant and unavoidable impacts on the following issues: climate change; cultural resources; hazards and hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; noise; transportation, circulation, and parking; and utilities. For each significant impact identified, the City must:

- discuss whether measure avoids or substantially reduces significant environmental effect;
- identify responsibility for implementation;
- discuss the basis for selecting particular measure; and
- discuss significant side effects associated with implementation of each mitigation measure.

Mitigation of these impacts will be tracked through a mitigation monitoring and reporting program.

## Implementation

Implementation of the General Plan will require City elected officials, commission and committee members, staff, and the public to put into practice the adopted General Plan goals and policies. The City will prepare new and update or coordinate existing plans, permits, procedures, agreements, and ordinances to establish the regulatory basis needed to ensure that the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan will be realized.

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