

**FINAL ADOPTED VERSION**

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**City of La Habra Heights  
General Plan**



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**2004**

# LA HABRA HEIGHTS GENERAL PLAN



## Celebrating 25 Years of Cityhood

### **City Council**

Mayor: Stan Carroll  
Mayor Pro Tem: Ed Borrowe  
Council Member: Bruce Douglas  
Council Member: Fred Klein  
Council Member: Tela Millsap

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Vice Chairman: Ginger Skinner  
Commissioner: Brian Bergman  
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Mike Cole  
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We would like to thank the La Habra Heights Historical Committee for their assistance and permitting us to use their historic photographs.

## **City of La Habra Heights General Plan Goals**

- Goal 1.** Protect, preserve, and enhance the residential rural character and individualistic lifestyle of La Habra Heights.
- Goal 2.** Minimize alteration of the natural terrain.
- Goal 3.** Preserve scenic views.
- Goal 4.** Preserve existing water courses, scenic beauty, mature trees, and vegetation.
- Goal 5.** Protect, preserve, and encourage open space within the City to ensure the maintenance of wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors, natural drainage courses, and passive recreational resources.
- Goal 6.** Encourage the expansion and use of the existing trail system for horseback riding, bicycling, and hiking.
- Goal 7.** Require that future residential development continues the present variety and diversity of structural design and appearance, maintains residents' privacy with large distances between houses, and is harmonious with natural settings.
- Goal 8.** Allow and encourage agricultural uses including, but not limited to, citrus and avocado groves and tree farms.
- Goal 9.** Allow and encourage animal husbandry, including keeping of horses, animals used for 4-H projects, and other livestock as allowed by local ordinance.
- Goal 10.** Assure that local and regional traffic demands are accommodated in a manner consistent with the unique rural environment of La Habra Heights.
- Goal 11.** Resist and discourage urban features such as curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street lights, and traffic signals.
- Goal 12.** Reduce potential fire hazards and recognize geological hazards.

## **Guiding Principle and the Definition of "Rural"**

This General Plan recognizes the historical precedent of our one acre (43,560 square feet) minimum lot size for residential use, as this precedent supports these General Plan goals.

Rural has been defined by the community as: variety of homes; natural terrain and dense vegetation; houses which blend in with the setting; privacy and large distances between homes; keeping of horses and farm animals; scenic views; no "city" improvements such as curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and streetlights.



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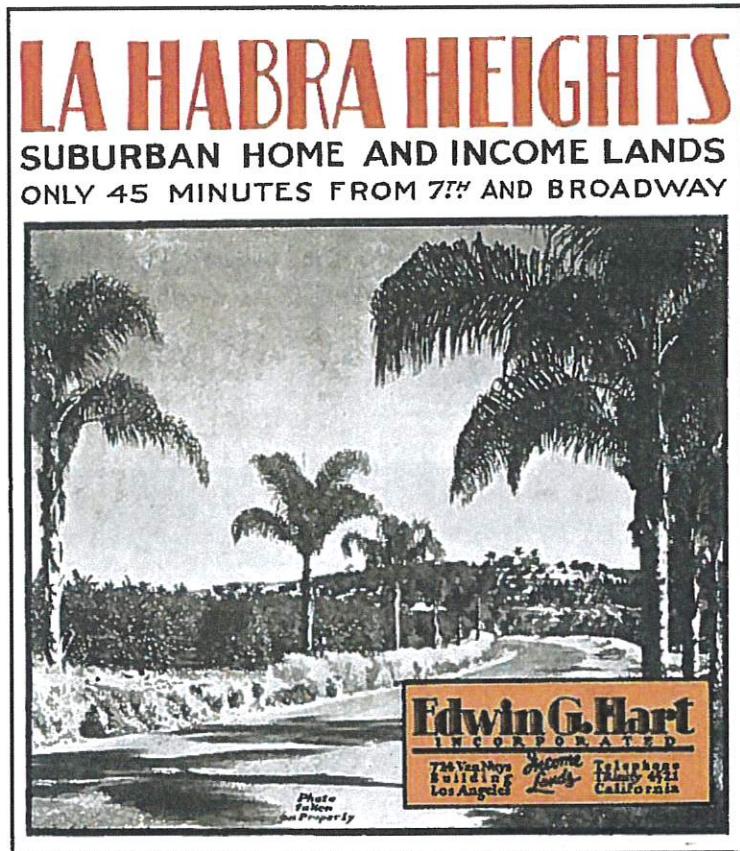
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Sales brochure from Edwin G. Hart, Inc. – 1930s

## Section 1 - Introduction

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### City of La Habra Heights General Plan





## Introduction

La Habra Heights is a unique community in the greater Southern California metropolitan area because of its rural community character. This community character is not an accident, but reflects the intentional efforts and commitment of residents over the past 75 years. On the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation of La Habra Heights, it is appropriate to acknowledge those efforts and the goals to which they have been directed.

La Habra Heights' character is most easily experienced by our senses, presenting distinct sights, sounds, and smells to residents and visitors alike. Our community's character is best described as that feeling of tranquility and connection to our roots one experiences when returning home. That feeling is engendered by the simultaneous perception of all of these distinct sensory inputs (sights, smells, and sounds) and the primary purpose of this General Plan is to preserve those amenities for future generations.

These sensory inputs begin with the larger scale views of rolling hills dominated by vegetation with homes only partially visible from any vista and the absence of any significant linear features. Homes built individually over the last 75 years on irregularly shaped and sized lots are accessed from terrain-conforming roads and so rarely display uniformity with neighboring homes in design, size, setback or landscape style. Natural drainage courses often serve as the storm drains of the City and steep and winding canyons persist and provide irregular breaks in the concentration of homes. The historical standard of one-acre minimum lot size, coupled with these large areas of natural terrain unsuitable for development, yields generous areas of natural open space interconnected by these existing drainage courses.

Over twenty percent of the City's land area is committed to permanent, public, natural open space. Another twenty percent of the City's land area is committed to recreational open space. These extensive open space areas give rise to dense vegetation and a natural look as

contrasted to the manicured landscapes typical of other communities. Wildlife finds its homes and paths through these spaces, adding the sounds of foraging, predator, and prey to the domesticated animal sounds and sights common to the La Habra Heights experience. These non-human sounds are experienced daily by residents because of the small traffic loads, the absence of commercial activity, and the preserved open spaces.

The local streets are lightly traveled roads that are narrow and conform themselves to the terrain rather than reflecting modern civil engineering standards of efficiency. Streetlights, curbs and gutters, and signage are minimal; roads are for the convenience of the residents first, with little attention given to requirements of commercial services and commuters. The absence of high density development, coupled with confusing roads, also discourage crime and gang activity so residences avoid the intense lighting typically required for security in most of Southern California. Stars, the moon, and the night sky stand in stark contrast to the surrounding bright regions, further discouraging outside traffic.

This General Plan provides Goals and Policies dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of these components of the La Habra Heights rural community character. All new development must not dominate nor interrupt the continuity of these characteristics, which is the primary goal of the La Habra Heights' planning and development practices.

## Overview of the City of La Habra Heights

The City of La Habra Heights is located within the eastern portion of Los Angeles County within the geographic center of the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area. Even though the community is located within the second largest urban population center in the United States, the topography and setting contributes to the City's rural character. Compared to other communities located in Southern California,



## Introduction

there are few areas located further from the regional freeway network.

The City, with just over 6 square miles in total land area, is a community of singular natural beauty. The views of the local hills and the abundant open space lands, with their trees, shrubs, grasslands and thriving wildlife, stand in sharp contrast to the dense suburban development found within the neighboring cities. Maintaining that contrast, and protecting the City's natural and rural environment, is a major focus of this General Plan.

In 2000, there were 1,951 housing units in La Habra Heights according to the U.S. Census. The La Habra Heights Housing Element estimates that a maximum of 386 additional housing units may be added to the City's housing stock based on buildable acreage available for development. An additional 200 units are more realistic given the significant development constraints found within these remaining parcels. Based on existing land use designations and development, the City is now over 90% developed. In response to this developmental maturity, this General Plan establishes guiding principles related to the maintenance, preservation, and improvement of the City as it now exists.

### La Habra Rancho - 1839

The first inhabitants of the area were the ancestors of the Gabrileno people that migrated into Southern California during the last ice age more than 10,000 years ago. The European presence in the area was marked with the establishment of the local missions in San Fernando, San Gabriel, and San Juan Capistrano. In fact, the first European owners of the land that now comprises La Habra Heights was the Mission San Gabriel.

Marino Roldan obtained a 6,698-acre land grant from the government of Mexico on October 22, 1839. This land grant, the *Rancho Canada de la Habra*, included all of La Habra Heights and most of what is now the City of La Habra. Roldan subsequently sold the rancho to Andres Pico, the brother of Pio Pico, the last Mexican governor of California.

La Habra Heights is bounded on the north by the unincorporated communities of Rowland Heights and Hacienda Heights, on the east by unincorporated Los Angeles County, on the south by the City of La Habra, and on the west by the City of Whittier.

La Habra Heights location in a regional context is illustrated in Exhibit 1-1. A detailed topographic map of the City is shown in Exhibit 1-2. Finally, an aerial view of the City is provided in Exhibit 1-3.

The area that was to become La Habra Heights, was first developed by Edwin Hart in the 1920's. Early efforts towards preventing increased density resulted in Los Angeles County establishing one-acre zoning for the area in 1949. Through the years, residents defeated subsequent efforts to increase development density. Busloads of residents repeatedly journeyed to the Los Angeles County Hall of Administration to let the County Supervisors know that the loss of the rural character of "The Heights" was unacceptable.

In 1970, the residents were once again galvanized in opposition to a proposed widening and realignment of Hacienda Road that would have resulted in significant impacts on the community. The residents were ultimately successful in defeating the proposed roadway project.

Both La Habra and Whittier undertook efforts to annex portions of the City and these efforts also failed due to vigorous community opposition. Local residents also filed a suit against Whittier to prevent condominiums from being constructed near the western border of La Habra Heights.

The City of La Habra Heights was incorporated in 1978 so that the residents could control their destiny and preserve the minimum one-acre zoning, the rural character, the volunteer Fire Department, and to obtain improved law enforcement services. Throughout this General Plan, tidbits of local history and other relevant information are provided for the reader's enjoyment. This information was taken from a number of sources that are identified in the



reference section of the Environmental Impact Report.

The City of La Habra Heights last updated its General Plan in 1980, two years after incorporation. The previous General Plan addressed issues and aspirations of a previous generation of residents and property owners in the City. Over the intervening years, many changes have been realized, both within the City and in the surrounding region. As part of the development of this General Plan, it was necessary to take an inventory of both the "unfinished business" of the original General Plan as well as the recognition of those challenges that face the community in this new century. Some of the issues and challenges the City will face in the coming years are shared with neighboring communities, while others are unique to La Habra Heights.

## **The City's Vision for the 21st Century**

The General Plan Advisory Committee developed a set of goals for the future of La Habra Heights. These goals will serve as the planning policy framework for the City of La Habra Heights well into the 21st Century. These goals focus on the maintenance and preservation of those amenities that are unique to La Habra Heights.

**Goal 1.** Protect, preserve, and enhance the residential rural character and individualistic lifestyle of La Habra Heights.

**Goal 2.** Minimize alteration of the natural terrain.

**Goal 3.** Preserve scenic views.

**Goal 4.** Preserve existing water courses, scenic beauty, mature trees, and vegetation.

**Goal 5.** Protect, preserve, and encourage open space within the City to ensure the maintenance of wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors, natural drainage courses, and passive recreational resources.

**Goal 6.** Encourage the expansion and use of the existing trail system for horseback riding, bicycling, and hiking.

**Goal 7.** Require that future residential development continues the present variety and diversity of structural design and appearance, maintains residents' privacy with large distances between houses, and is harmonious with natural settings.

**Goal 8.** Allow and encourage agricultural uses, including but not limited to, citrus and avocado groves and tree farms.

**Goal 9.** Allow and encourage animal husbandry, including keeping of horses, animals used for 4-H projects, and other livestock as allowed by local ordinance.

**Goal 10.** Assure that local and regional traffic demands are accommodated in a manner consistent with the unique rural environment of La Habra Heights.

**Goal 11.** Resist and discourage urban features such as curbs, gutters, sidewalks, streetlights, and traffic signals.

**Goal 12.** Reduce potential fire hazards and recognize geological hazards.

## **Authority of the General Plan**

The La Habra Heights General Plan will serve as the cornerstone for future planning and development in the City. This General Plan describes the City's vision for the future through the policies and plans contained herein that are designed to shape the physical development of the community. Public and private decision-makers will refer to this General Plan to identify the needs and desires of the community in decision-making related to land use and development. In essence, this General Plan will serve as the City's constitution.<sup>1</sup> This General Plan acknowledges the City's previous planning efforts, the established land use patterns in the community, and the adopted development

<sup>1</sup> State of California Government Code Section 65300



policies. However, this General Plan is also unique in a number of respects:

- This General Plan will guide the City's development as the 21st century progresses; a century that promises both new opportunities as well as unforeseen challenges.
- The City is located in the midst of a heavily urbanized area and continued growth in the neighboring communities will have an impact on La Habra Heights.
- The City's history and development patterns have been shaped, in large measure, by resident activism, the City's topography and location, and by the vigilance and efforts of the residents who were determined to preserve the City's rural character.
- This General Plan establishes patterns of land use and development that promote the maintenance of the City's rural character.
- This General Plan supports regional efforts towards the development of a conservation area within the Puente/Chino Hills.

California planning law requires every City and County to prepare and adopt a comprehensive General Plan to guide future development.<sup>2</sup> The citizens of the City of La Habra Heights have played an active and important role in the development and evolution of this General Plan. The City Council authorized the creation of a General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) to update the City's original General Plan prepared in the late 1970's and early 1980's following incorporation.

The GPAC was organized into a number of separate subcommittees that were responsible for the preparation of the individual Plan Elements. A total of 25 GPAC meetings were held, as well as a number of subcommittee workshops. Community workshops were also

held at key intervals of the work program to further expand the opportunity for public participation. In addition, a community survey was completed to identify the key issues. Subsequently, a total of 25 Planning Commission public hearings/study sessions were also held. Finally, numerous City Council hearings were conducted to further consider the General Plan. This General Plan is a direct outgrowth of this community-based planning effort.

### Organization of the General Plan

General Plans prepared by local governments contain a set of chapters, or Elements, that address a wide range of issues that are relevant to future land use planning and development. All General Plans must include a Land Use Element, Circulation Element, Housing Element, Noise Element, Safety Element, Conservation Element, and Open Space Element. These Elements may be reorganized or expanded, as long as the relevant issues are addressed.

## Scope & Content of the General Plan

The scope and content of a General Plan prepared by a local government, as well as the process that must be followed in its adoption and amendment, is governed by the State of California planning laws.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the courts have further refined the interpretation of the legislature's intent with respect to the scope and content of local General Plans over the past decades.

The General Plan represents the foundation in the long-range planning for land use and development. The importance of the General Plan is emphasized in the Government Code that states the General Plan "serves as the constitution of the local government for which it has been prepared." The foundation of the United States Constitution rests on the Bill of Rights and its Amendments. As with the United States Constitution, the foundation of the La Habra Heights General Plan rests on its goals

<sup>2</sup> The La Habra Heights General Plan has been prepared pursuant to Government Code Section 65300, et. seq., which requires the City to adopt a comprehensive, long-range General Plan to guide the physical development of the community.

<sup>3</sup> Government Code Section 65302



and policies. With respect to General Plan policies, the State of California General Plan Guidelines state the following:

*"The General Plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals. A development policy is a general plan statement that guides action. Development policies include goals, objectives, principles, plan proposals, and standards. Therefore, with regard to General Plans, "policy" has both a specific and general meaning."*

## Organization of the General Plan

The La Habra Heights General Plan consists of an integrated and internally consistent set of goals, policies, and programs that address the seven issue areas that the State requires local General Plans to consider: land use, circulation, housing, noise, safety, conservation, and open space.<sup>4</sup> The La Habra Heights General Plan consists of seven elements that comply with the requirements of California Government Code Section 65300, et. seq. The Elements that comprise this General Plan include the following:

- The **Land Use Element** indicates the general distribution and intensity of land use and development contemplated within the land area governed by the General Plan. This Element complies with the state requirements for a Land Use Element.
- The **Circulation Element** identifies the location and extent of roadways and other infrastructure in the City. This element complies with specific state requirements for a Circulation Element.
- The **Environmental Resource Management Element**, or ERME, indicates the City's policies with respect to the conservation and preservation of important natural and man-made resources. This Element complies with the state

requirements for both a Conservation Element and an Open Space Element.

- The **Safety Element** identifies the City's policies relative to the reduction and mitigation of natural and man-made hazards. This Element complies with the specific state requirements for a Safety Element.
- The **Noise Element** indicates the nature and extent of environmental noise and establishes City policy to control noise. This Element complies with the requirements for a Noise Element.
- The **Air Quality Element** establishes City policy with respect to air pollution and the improvement of air quality in the City and region. This Element is an optional element not specifically required under the State law.
- The **Housing Element** details plans and programs for the maintenance of existing neighborhoods and the development of new housing to accommodate future demand. The Housing Element was prepared and adopted prior to the other elements and complies with state requirements for a Housing Element.

In addition to the aforementioned elements, the Implementation Program identifies those programs that will be effective in ensuring that the policies and plans contained in the City of La Habra Heights General Plan, become a reality.

Table 1-1 indicates the relationship of those Elements that comprise the La Habra Heights General Plan with those required by the State of California.

<sup>4</sup> Government Code Section 65302



**Table 1-1**  
**The La Habra Heights General Plan Format**

La Habra Heights General Plan	State Required Elements						
	Land Use	Housing	Circulation	Open Space	Conservation	Safety	Noise
Land Use Element	•						
Circulation Element			•				
Environmental Resource Management Element				•	•		
Safety Element						•	
Noise Element							•
Air Quality Element							
Housing Element		•					
Implementation Program	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

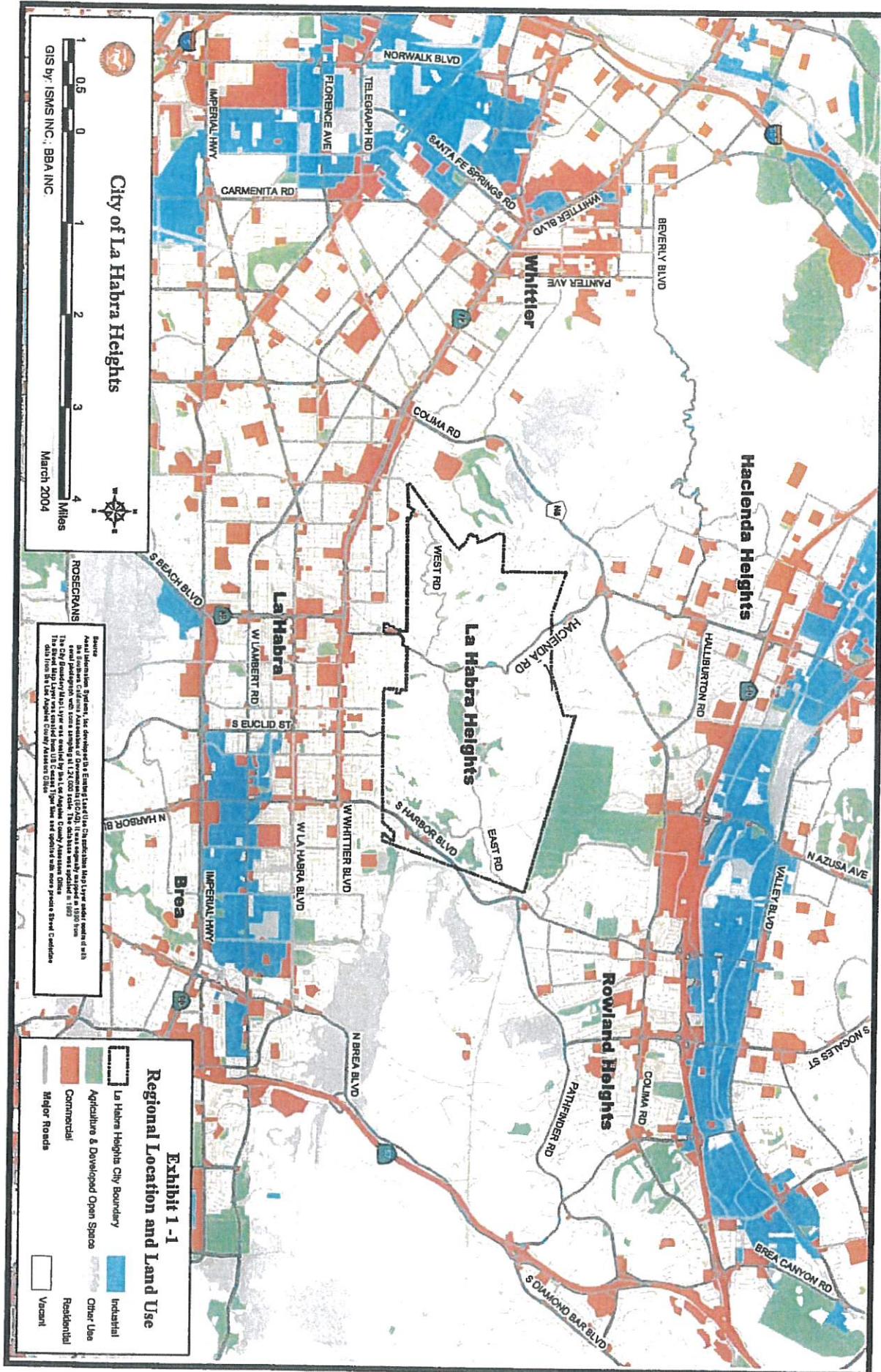
## Format of General Plan Elements

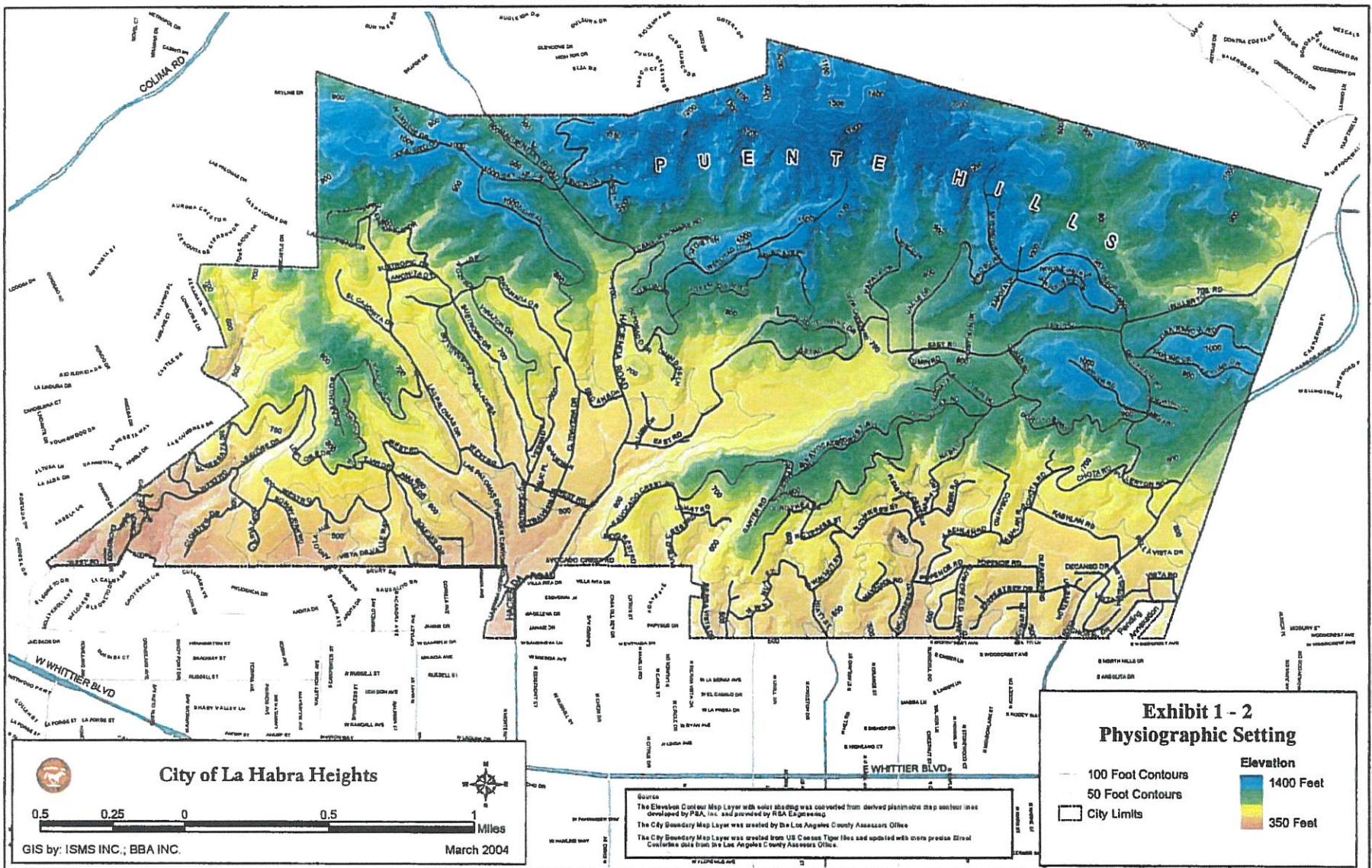
Each Element is both internally consistent and consistent with all of the other Elements so that the General Plan provides clear, consistent, and unified policy direction. Each of the Elements that comprise this General Plan are organized according to the following:

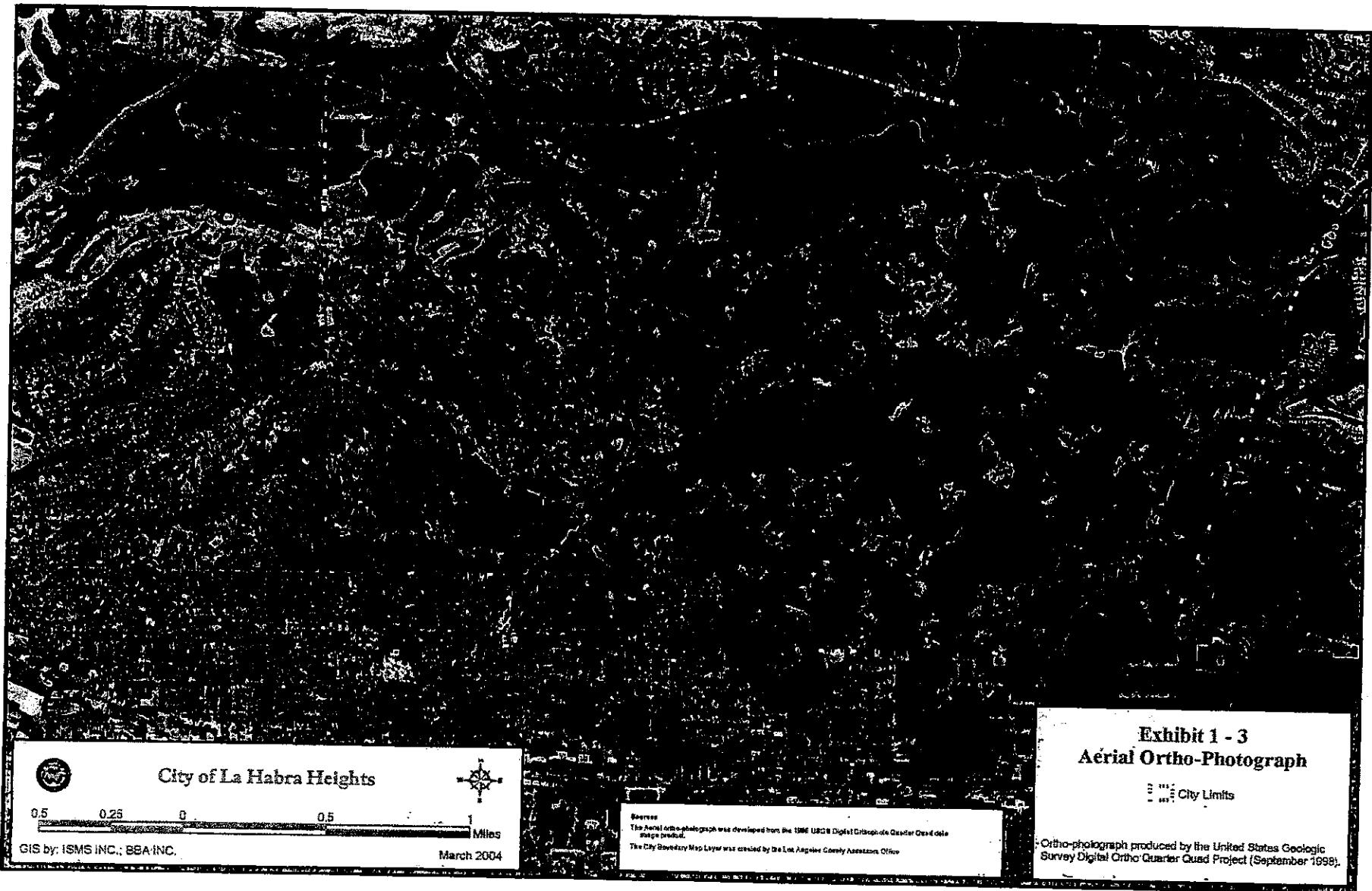
- The **Introduction** provides an overview of objectives and key issues germane to the Element and discusses its relationship to the other Elements that comprise the City of La Habra Heights General Plan.

- The **Issues and Policies** section provides a detailed identification of those issues facing the City and policies designed to address those issues.
- Each Element includes a **Plan** that indicates standards and programs that will be effective in the implementation of the Element's goals and policies. Each "plan" includes maps and diagrams to assist in the understanding of the policies' intent.









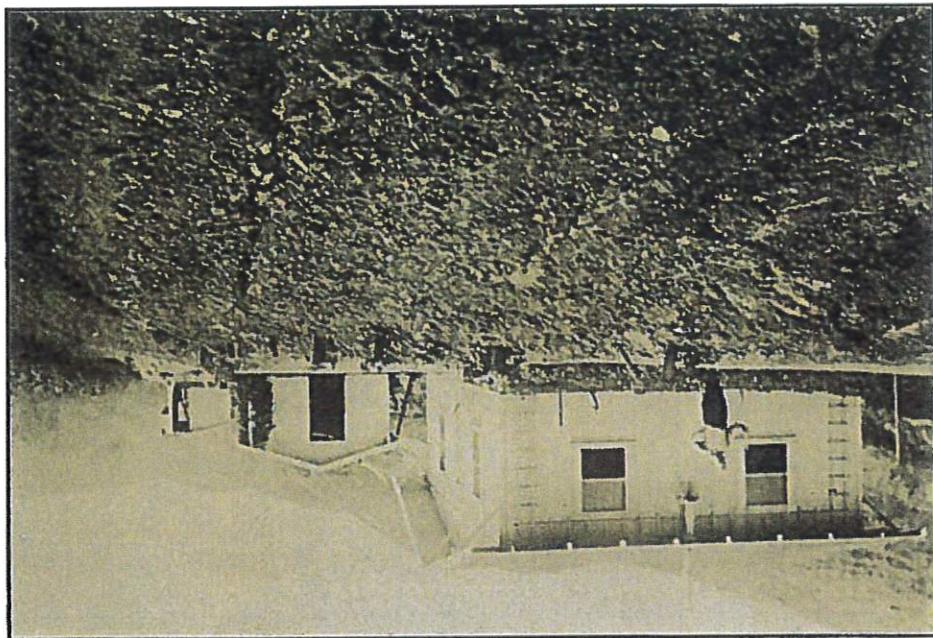


## City of La Habra Heights General Plan

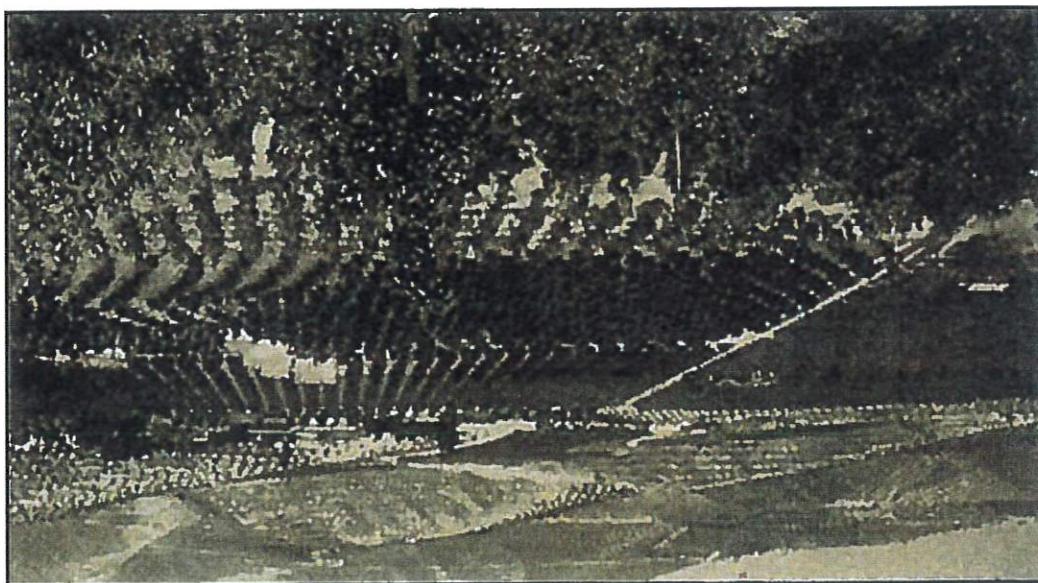
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## Section 2 – Land Use Element

Early Home in the Heights



Early Orchard in the Heights





## Introduction

The California Government Code Section 65302(a) mandates that local municipalities include within their General Plans a Land Use Element. The Government Code states the following:

*"The General Plan...[shall include a] Land Use Element which designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities and other categories of public and private uses of land. The Land Use Element shall include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan which are subject to flooding and shall be reviewed annually with respect to those areas..."*

This Land Use Element, together with the Land Use Map (Exhibit 2-1), has the broadest scope of any of the required components of the General Plan. The Element plays a central role in correlating land use issues into a set of coherent policies. In addition to the requirements listed in the Government Code, above, the courts have indicated that, while the location of a particular land use may be expressed in general terms, a property owner must be able to identify the General Plan designation for his or her parcel from the land use diagram or map contained in the Land Use Element.

This City of La Habra Heights Land Use Element serves as the framework for the goals and policies contained in the other Elements of this General Plan. The Government Code mandates that all Elements within a General Plan must be consistent with one another, and particularly notes in Section 65302(b) that all of the facilities treated in the Circulation Element must be "correlated with the Land Use Element of the

plan." The primary implementation mechanism for the Land Use Element is the Zoning Ordinance. For this reason, Government Code Section 65860 requires consistency between local zoning ordinances and the general plans they implement.

### The Purpose of this Element

According to the State's planning laws, the purpose of the Land Use Element is to designate "the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of uses of the land." The law goes on to state, "The obvious meaning of the term is that the General Plan should indicate the intended uses of the land rather than the actual use, which may or may not be, at odds with the adopted land use policies and goals."

## Issues & Policies

Through this Land Use Element the City seeks to maintain and preserve the rural character of the community. A primary focus of this Element is to preserve the existing amenities and character of the City while, at the same time, recognizing private property rights and the need to accommodate new residential development where such development is permitted.

### Issue - Residential Development

Residential land use is the predominant category of use within the City. Although La Habra Heights is a mature City, with most of the buildable lots already developed, there are still opportunities for new residential construction and the remodeling of the existing housing stock. Continuing growth in the region, often within higher-density subdivisions, has made the contrasting rural amenities of La Habra Heights particularly desirable, and buildable lots command high prices. Expensive building sites make very large, very expensive houses economically feasible. The issue of inappropriately scaled structures that dwarf their neighbors and obliterate the contours of the natural landscape (mansionization) must be addressed by the City.



## Land Use Element

**Goal 7.** Require that future residential development continues the present variety and diversity of structural design and appearance, maintains residents' privacy with large distances between houses, and is harmonious with natural settings.

**Land Use Element Policy 1.** New lots should only be considered if it can be shown that the development of each lot will be in conformance with City ordinances and the goals of the General Plan.

**Land Use Element Policy 2.** The City shall implement a staff level site plan review process of all proposed new structures that considers alternatives in the placement of structures and other development within the lot in order to meet the goals of this General Plan.

**Land Use Element Policy 3.** Encourage the architecture of structures to be consistent with the overall existing qualities of the site. The architecture should meld itself to the topography rather than dominate it.

**Land Use Element Policy 4.** Houses should blend into the existing setting and not draw attention to themselves.

**Land Use Element Policy 5.** No new structure shall exceed two above-grade stories in any single vertical plane.

**Land Use Element Policy 6.** Future development should have minimal adverse impacts on the environment and natural topography, and should not affect natural surroundings, including ridgelines, more than necessary to allow an economically viable use of privately held land.

**Land Use Element Policy 7.** Structures shall be appropriately scaled to the lot on which they are located by utilizing various proportional requirements such as setbacks, total average slopes, impervious coverage, and grading quantities. Structures shall not appear significantly larger or more massive

than neighboring houses and shall be scaled, massed, and screened to accomplish this goal.

**Land Use Element Policy 8.** Future residential development shall continue the present variety and diversity of structural design and appearance and City Standards shall allow a variety of architectural designs and forbid simultaneous development of more than one home by a single developer that employs substantially similar designs and sizes.

**Land Use Element Policy 9.** Landscaping plans for residential development shall be required to ensure that the visual impact of new structures is softened by providing screening, privacy for adjoining structures, and preservation of the rural appearance of the community. Approved landscape plans shall be monitored to ensure they are implemented.

**Land Use Element Policy 10.** The significant primary views of local hills, valleys, city lights, ocean, and mountains enjoyed by residents shall be protected from obstruction by any new development's structures or landscape elements, to the fullest extent consistent with the property rights of the owner of the site on which the new development is located.

**Land Use Element Policy 11.** All health and safety requirements noted in the Safety Element, the Noise Element, and the Circulation Element of this General Plan, and the ordinances that implement them, shall be observed and implemented in residential development.

**Land Use Element Policy 12** A landscaped buffer should be required for parking areas in new residential development.

### Zoning Tailored for "The Heights"

During the 1940's, several subdivisions were established with  $\frac{1}{4}$ -acre and  $\frac{1}{2}$ -acre lots, much smaller than the typical lots found in "The Heights." The Heights Association petitioned the Los Angeles County Planning Commission to revise the local zoning. The result of this effort is evident today with the RA-1 zoning that limits residential development to one-acre lots.

**Issue - Grading & Landform**

As buildable land becomes scarce within La Habra Heights, steep terrain on remaining lots creates a temptation to employ excessive grading techniques including large retaining walls, in order to provide pads for housing sites and accessory residential uses. The "mansionization" problem for new structures or remodels require larger pads, resulting in grading that is even more disruptive to natural landforms and their drainage.

**Goal 2.** Minimize alteration of the natural terrain.

**Land Use Element Policy 13.** Design all development to minimize impacts on the community character, the surrounding neighborhood, and natural features.

**Land Use Element Policy 14.** Preserve natural drainage courses in their existing state, where safe to do so.

**Land Use Element Policy 15.** Grading should be minimized and natural landforms shall be preserved to the extent reasonably feasible. The goal of grading should be to conform the structure to the site, rather than the reverse.

**Land Use Element Policy 16.** Grading in conforming with Goal 2 of this plan should feature gradual topographic transitions, utilizing contour grading and other means to mimic natural landforms. Grading should rely on split or stepped pads when appropriate; avoid visible, manufactured pads which extend substantially beyond the building footprint; and avoid adjacent manufactured pads that create large areas of visibly altered landforms.

**Land Use Element Policy 17.** Limit grading to that necessary for the house or other primary structure. Accessory structures shall be placed at varying distances and elevations from the primary structure to minimize the size of the graded pad supporting the primary structure and to eliminate the creation of unnatural linear features.

**Land Use Element Policy 18.** Prohibit hillside grading and development practices that damage the aesthetic character of hillside areas solely to provide off-site views.

**Land Use Element Policy 19.** Landscape all graded slopes as a means to control erosion and restore the look of the natural terrain.

**Land Use Element Policy 20.** The height, length, and extent of retaining walls shall be limited. The City will establish an ordinance requiring that retaining walls be screened using landscaping as necessary.

**Land Use Element Policy 21.** Limit impervious coverage to preserve the rural character of the community and to allow for the natural infiltration of water.

**Issue - Nonconforming Residential Use**

Many of the homes in La Habra Heights were constructed before the City was incorporated and were not subject to the development regulations adopted after incorporation. As a result, many older homes in the City are nonconforming to current standards that can limit remodeling or improvement options for effected homeowners.

**Goal 1.** Protect, preserve, and enhance the residential rural character and individualistic lifestyle of La Habra Heights.

**Land Use Element Policy 22.** Eliminate the termination dates for nonconforming residential properties so that nonconforming residential uses can continue in perpetuity.

**Land Use Element Policy 23.** Permit alterations of nonconforming residential structures so long as the nonconforming performance standard is not significantly exacerbated by the requested changes.



## Land Use Element

### Maintenance of the Rural Atmosphere through Specific Plans

In 1987 the La Habra Heights City Council amended the Zoning Section of the Municipal Code to require the preparation of a "Specific Plan" in order to allow for the careful planning of designated properties that exhibit environmentally sensitive features and resources or which are of a sufficiently large size so as to have a major impact on the community. Such properties include any parcel sufficiently large as to be divisible into ten or more lots.

### Issue – Significant Remodeling of Existing Structures

As property in La Habra Heights increases in value, remodels, tear-downs, and other means of increasing the value or utility of structures in accord with the increasing value of their sites become more frequent.

**Goal 1.** Protect, preserve, and enhance the residential rural character and individualistic lifestyle of La Habra Heights.

**Land Use Element Policy 24.** Require that permits for teardown/rebuilds or significant remodeling, projects for non-conforming residential properties be subject to the same requirements as other structural remodeling permits including adequate fire flow, cesspool or septic tank inspection, fire retarding sprinkler systems, etc.

**Land Use Element Policy 25.** When a development proposal fails to meet any performance standard, a standards modification or a variance shall be required so that adjoining property owners can work with the applicant, planning officials, and staff to ensure that the proposed structure is compatible with community character, privacy, view preservation and other amenities valued by residents.

**Land Use Element Policy 26.** Teardown/rebuild or significant remodeling projects shall when necessary, include landscaping designed to soften the visual impacts of the altered structures.

**Land Use Element Policy 27.** All health and safety requirements noted in the Safety Element, the Noise Element, and the Circulation Element of this General Plan, and the ordinances that implement them, shall be observed and implemented in the remodeling of existing residences.

### Issue - Open Space for Resource Production

A number of sites throughout the City are identified as open space devoted to resource production. These sites produce natural gas and oil and it is anticipated that these uses will remain for the next ten to fifteen years. At such time as the resource is depleted so that it is uneconomical to continue production, the property owners may request a change of land use designation and its implementing zoning. As it now exists, such land may not be suitable for residential uses and must be cleaned or "remediated" before it is safe for human habitation. State law mandates the necessary procedures to convert the natural gas and oil well sites to other uses.

One of the largest sites designated as Open Space-Resource includes a 99-acre parcel owned by Sempra Energy. This property is located in the western edge of the City. Currently, natural gas production or storage at this site is minimal, and other uses are being considered. A portion of the Sempra property is leased to the Highland Riders on a year-to-year basis for their use of the Las Palomas Riding Ring.

**Land Use Element Policy 28.** In light of the economic life remaining with respect to resource operations in La Habra Heights, the City should work with appropriate state agencies to require the operators to prepare for and to fulfill their obligations to remediate and abandon oil wells and other facilities as required by law.

**Land Use Element Policy 29.** At such time as the State of California or other appropriate authorities pronounce the land designated as "Open Space-Resource Production" as being remediated so that it is suitable for alternative uses, the City shall consider requests for a



General Plan Amendment and rezoning from the owners of such properties.

### Early Community Concerns with Oil Production

Prior to the 1940's, the local oil companies had limited success in finding oil in "the Heights." However, in 1948 Union Oil "struck oil" at the Sansinena #15 well. The oil companies quickly began to expand extraction efforts and the potential for unrestricted drilling threatened the quality of life in the area. In response to this potential threat, the Heights Association formed an "oil well drilling committee" that reviewed all zoning exceptions and helped to establish requirements governing the installation of new wells.

The efforts seemed to pay off as was pointed out in a 1957 Los Angeles Times article entitled, "This is an Oil Field?" The follow-up article answered the question by stating, "Yes, one of the major producing fields in California, producing nearly 11,000 barrels a day from 150 wells, and there isn't a well in sight."

### Issue - Open Space for Recreation

Open Space for Recreation is made up of the Hacienda Golf Club and the Las Palomas Riding Ring, which are member-supported recreational facilities, Powder Canyon, and the City Park.

**Goal 1.** Protect, preserve, and enhance the residential rural character and individualistic lifestyle of La Habra Heights.

**Land Use Element Policy 30.** Protect and preserve the four existing recreational resources within the City: the Hacienda Golf Club, the Las Palomas Riding Ring, the City Park, and Powder Canyon.

**Land Use Element Policy 31.** New recreational facilities on undeveloped open space land shall be limited to passive recreation.

**Land Use Element Policy 32.** All health and safety requirements noted in the Safety Element, the Noise Element, and the Circulation Element of this General Plan, and the ordinances that implement them, shall be observed and implemented in recreational facilities development.

### Issue – Open Space for Conservation

Approximately 20% of the City's land area is land owned by the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority. The Authority is funded by a portion of the tipping fees collected at the Puente Hills Landfill. The Authority's property in La Habra Heights is part of a wildlife corridor that extends from the San Gabriel River to the Cleveland National Forest. This corridor will persist if dedicated links of regional open space can continue to be acquired for natural conservation purposes.

These properties are valued by residents as beautiful sites for walking, bicycle riding or horseback riding. However, the first priority in its management must be natural conservation considerations. Recreational uses may not be permitted when conditions warrant closing the area to the public.

**Goal 5.** Protect, preserve, and encourage open space within the City to ensure the maintenance of wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors, natural drainage courses, and passive recreational resources.

**Land Use Element Policy 33.** Preservation of the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority's conservation area, and its plant and animal communities in their natural state, shall continue to be an important City objective.

**Land Use Element Policy 34.** Encourage the preservation of privately owned recreational open space.

**Land Use Element Policy 35.** The City shall support the designation of lands as Open Space-Conservation on publicly owned lands at such time as additional areas are acquired and dedicated to that purpose.



## Land Use Element

### Preservation of the Puente Hills

The Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority is a joint powers agency that was founded in 1994. The Habitat Authority's purpose is to acquire, restore, and maintain open space in the Puente Hills to permanently protect natural habitat. The acquisition of these open space lands are financed from a mitigation fund generated by "tipping" fees collected at the Puente Hills Landfill. As of February 2002, more than 2,800 acres of open space had been acquired and preserved for the enjoyment of future generations. Those areas of La Habra Heights included within this larger preservation area are noted in Exhibit 2-1. This area is part of a larger preservation area that includes a 31-mile long corridor that is one of the most biologically diverse

compatible with the neighborhood, undergo site plan review, and must meet all applicable performance standards in relation to floor area ratio, proportional permeable land surfaces, screening, view preservation, on-site parking, landscaping, cubic volume, and all other requirements applicable to the institutional use.

**Land Use Element Policy 40.** Only on-site signs identifying institutional uses are permitted; such signs shall be in accordance with the City's sign ordinance.

**Land Use Element Policy 41.** All health and safety requirements noted in the Safety Element, the Noise Element, and the Circulation Element of this General Plan, and the ordinances that implement them, shall be observed and implemented in the construction of new, or in the remodeling of, institutional structures.

### Birth of a Vision

In 1919, much of the land in what is now La Habra Heights, was acquired by Edwin G. Hart. Mr. Hart's vision for his 3,000-acre land-holding was to subdivide the area into large, five-acre lots that would contain abundant avocado groves. Mr. Hart believed that, over time, the area's amenities would attract prominent families into the area who would ultimately convert the avocado groves into well-manicured estates.

### Issue – Institutional Land Uses

Institutional land uses include those uses that are neither residential nor public facilities. They are private or quasi-public facilities. These uses provide services to individuals that can include educational, religious, cultural, recreational, and licensed residential care facilities for seniors or children. In many cases, more than one of these services are offered at the same location. Institutional uses do not include commercial or industrial activities, which are not permitted in La Habra Heights.

**Land Use Element Policy 36.** The minimum lot size for an institutional use is five acres.

**Land Use Element Policy 37.** For the safety of residents, institutional staff, and clients, all institutional uses must be located in an overlay zone which is located beside parts of Harbor Boulevard (refer to Exhibit 2-1).

**Land Use Element Policy 38.** Because of infrastructure constraints, institutional uses in the City must be limited in size and scope to the level supportable by the site, the roadways that serve it, and by other available infrastructure. A Conditional Use Permit or other discretionary approval shall be required.

**Land Use Element Policy 39.** All institutional development must be visually

### Issue – Public Facilities

There are two categories of public facilities in La Habra Heights. One category includes facilities that are directly under the control of the people of the City: the City Hall, the Community Center, and the Fire Department. The other category is composed of public facilities answerable to non-local mandates; these include the Water District facilities, portions of the "antenna farm," and the power transmission sites throughout the City.

Locally controlled properties, the first category, are managed directly by the City and because they are public property, no ordinances are



needed to direct their use to public purpose in order to serve the public interest. In the second category, State and Federal authority has limited local control. Some communication devices are unsightly when they appear as paddles suspended from roadside telephone poles, towers inappropriately looming over residential areas, or cabinets situated on the ground near utility poles without the benefit of screening or landscaping. Although federal law has limited local control of such facilities, many companies and agencies responsible for these structures, are amenable to working with local governments to address local concerns for aesthetics and other considerations.

**Land Use Element Policy 42.** The City of La Habra Heights shall work with property owners and operators of public facilities in the design, landscaping, and locating of facilities. The City shall regulate these facilities to the extent provided by law.

### Issue – Citywide Issues

This section of the Land Use Element contains policies that address a number of diverse Citywide issues that include specific plans, the preservation of dark skies and views, annexation, and surface drainage.

Specific plans were originated by the State of California as one means of implementing General Plans and, as noted in Section 65454 of The Planning and Zoning Law of California, "No specific plan may be adopted or amended unless the proposed plan or amendment is consistent with the general plan." The La Habra Heights City Council amended the Zoning Section of the Municipal Code to require the preparation of a "Specific Plan" in order to allow for the careful planning of designated properties that exhibit environmentally sensitive features and resources, or are of a sufficiently large size so as to have a major impact on the community. Such properties include any parcel sufficiently large as to be divisible into ten or more lots. Parcels in excess of ten acres in area are mandated for specific plan review and these parcels are identified in Exhibit 2-1.

**Land Use Element Policy 43.** Specific plans shall adhere to, or exceed, the performance standards, view preservation, and other development requirements set forth in this General Plan and the ordinances that implement it.

**Land Use Element Policy 44.** Any specific plan under consideration by the City shall be prepared, adopted, and amended in the same manner as the General Plan, with the requisite public notices, hearings, and procedures that are required for the adoption of the General Plan.

**Land Use Element Policy 45.** Current City requirements for the specific plan designation on large areas of undeveloped land shall continue to be enforced. For this purpose, a Specific Plan overlay zone shall be established which shall include, but not be limited to, parcels now known to require Specific Plans as shown on Exhibit 2-1.

The following policies will ensure that the City's rural character is preserved, while at the same time, ensure that properties are well maintained.

**Land Use Element Policy 46.** All non-residential development and structures must be visually compatible with the community and must comply with all the performance standards defined by ordinance.

**Land Use Element Policy 47.** The City shall establish a sign ordinance.

**Land Use Element Policy 48.** The remodeling and rebuilding of existing older homes is encouraged. The review of site-imposed constraints to the remodeling or rebuilding of existing homes should be conducted during the Site Plan Review process. The outcome of such review is optimum performance-based conformance to the Goals of the General Plan and our rural community character while recognizing that complete adherence to the language of existing development standards may not be possible where such constraints exist.



## Land Use Element

The residents of La Habra Heights have declared themselves to be opposed to street lights and other artificially illuminated intrusions on the majesty of moon, stars, and the clouds of infinity above us in the night skies.

**Land Use Element Policy 49.** The City will develop and implement a "dark sky" ordinance to control the glare and light trespass from outdoor lighting.

**Land Use Element Policy 50.** The City will promote the use of lighting techniques that will conserve energy and reduce potential glare.

### Preserving the Night-Sky

The night skies of the Southern California region are among the most "light-polluted" skies in the world. The International Dark Skies Association, an organization initially founded by amateur astronomers, has outlined simple ways a homeowner can reduce light pollution. While the local night skies may not be suitable for "deep sky" astronomy, they are certainly unique in terms of the lack of glare and spill-over lighting found in the adjacent communities.

Many homes in La Habra Heights have magnificent views of the San Gabriel Valley and mountains to the north, or the coastal plain and the Pacific Ocean to the south and west. Others have more moderately expansive views of local valleys, ridges, and hillsides. In every case, these views are cherished. Views not only add to the value of the homeowner's pleasure in his/her residence, but also add to the monetary value of the property. Landscaping can screen obtrusive structures, provide privacy, and soften the impact of new development but, as it develops and grows, planting can also obscure the views that were once enjoyed by owners of existing residences.

**Land Use Element Policy 51.** Significant primary views enjoyed by residents shall be protected from obstruction by any new development's structures or landscape elements, to the fullest extent consistent with the property rights of the owner of the site on which the new development is to be located.

**Land Use Element Policy 52.** Landscape plans submitted as required in other provisions of the Element, shall be reviewed to prevent significant primary view obstruction to neighbors.

**Land Use Element Policy 53.** The City shall establish a procedure to help resolve disputes between property owners of landscaping and those who claim a loss of views due to the growth of landscaping materials.

**Land Use Element Policy 54.** To the extent possible to protect public safety, minimize road signage, road striping, and road markings.

At the time of incorporation of the City of La Habra Heights, one small segment of the southeast portion of the City was excluded from the boundaries of the City. Subsequent to incorporation, this segment of excluded residences has enjoyed fire and law enforcement services of the City through mutual aid agreements, although it is not now a part of the incorporated area. In order to create a more logical boundary for the City of La Habra Heights, it is recommended the City consider that the excluded area be annexed to the City of La Habra Heights.

**Land Use Element Policy 55.** The City of La Habra Heights should consider petitioning the Local Area Formation Commission to approve the annexation of the excluded street, Pine Edge Drive, and the properties abutting it and properties to the east as shown in Exhibit 2-1, to the City of La Habra Heights.

**Land Use Element Policy 56.** Pre-existing parcels of less than one (1) acre in size, created as water tank sites or for other non-residential purposes, may be developed for residential use only if it is possible to do so in a manner that is consistent with setback and other development standards of this plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

**Land Use Element Policy 57.** Development in areas of local flooding must show adequacy



of liquid waste disposal systems in times of high water table.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maintains an inventory of all areas in the nation that are subject to flooding. La Habra Heights is not listed in FEMA data, indicating that flooding has not been a serious problem in the City. There are areas in the City, however, subject to ponding during and after severe rain storms; these areas are, and will continue to be, subject to measures to improve drainage. For further detail, please refer to the Safety Element and the Safety Plan (Exhibit 5-1) included in the Element.

### Issue – The Region

La Habra Heights is fortunate to be adjacent to areas of open space on its north, east, and west boundaries. Although the City has never formally sought to establish spheres of influence outside its borders, it is vitally concerned with the preservation of those areas. In addition, the mitigation of the impact of future regional development on the natural environment, the ecology of the region and the lifestyles, and values of the residents of La Habra Heights is a concern.

**Land Use Element Policy 57.** Support the protection of the ecology of wildlife habitat and natural conservation areas within open space areas adjacent to La Habra Heights.

**Land Use Element Policy 58.** When large tracts are to be developed adjacent to La Habra Heights, the City should seek the least intensive, lowest density development to occur in those areas adjacent to, and visible from, La Habra Heights so that the City's community and neighborhood character is preserved.

### Land Use Plan

La Habra Heights is a small, 6.39 square-mile community of singular natural beauty. The views of green hills and generous open spaces filled with trees, shrubs, grasslands, and thriving wildlife stand in sharp contrast to the dense suburban development within the neighboring

cities. Maintaining that contrast and protecting the natural environment with which the City has been endowed is a major concern of this Land Use Element.

In 2000, there were 1,951 housing units in La Habra Heights, according to the U.S. Census. The General Plan Housing Element of 2002 estimates that a maximum of 386 additional housing units may be added to the City's housing stock, based on buildable acreage available for development. More probably, due to topographical constraints, only an additional 200 units can be added to the City's housing stock. Based on existing land use designations and development, the City is now over 90% developed. In response to this developmental maturity, the Land Use Element establishes guiding policies for the maintenance, preservation, and improvement of the City as it now exists, with equal or greater emphasis than is given to policies designed to affect future development.

Land uses in La Habra Heights are quite simple compared to other municipalities which contain an array of residential, commercial, and industrial areas, with permutations of densities, building intensities, and permitted and prohibited uses within each area, and with buffers and screening between the land uses.

In La Habra Heights, there are basically only four categories of land uses: residential, open space, public facilities, and institutional. This lack of land use complexity allows an in depth concentration on issues of concern to City residents. Wildlife welfare or maintaining dark skies at night are issues which might be considered too detailed for other cities' General Plans, but they are appropriate for La Habra Height's General Plan because they are issues of significance to local residents.

There are a number of constraints to future development in La Habra Heights. In addition to the high proportion of developed lots and large areas of dedicated open space, earthquake fault lines and very steep slopes in many areas of the City preclude new construction. Infrastructure capacity is also a significant and economically



## Land Use Element

non-remediable constraint. Further, wildfire vulnerability and expansive soils affect building materials and methods that can be approved for use in the City. In this regard, the Safety Element of this General Plan must be closely related to this Land Use Element.

### Land Use Designations

The Land Use Plan Designations shown in Exhibit 2-1 display the land use designations allowed in this General Plan. The City's Zoning Ordinance will be in accordance with these designations. The land use designations

indicate the nature, density, and intensity of development permitted for each land use category. Table 2-1 below summarizes the various land use designations and indicates the applicable standards. As is evident from examination of both the table below and the Land Use Map (Exhibit 2-1), the great majority of the City is reserved for lower density residential development for the reasons cited previously. Accessory uses include not only the usual gazebos, garages, and gardening sheds, but barns, stables, and other structures accessory to agricultural activities.

**Table 2-1  
Land Use Designations and Standards (Base Land Use Designations)**

General Plan	Zoning Designation	Development Intensity Standard	Population Density Standard	Land Area
Residential Agricultural	RA Residential Agricultural	1 or fewer units/gross acre	3 persons/acre	2,7504s
I - Institutional	I Institutional	1 or fewer units/5 gross acres	NA	21 acres
PF - Public Facilities	PF Public Facilities	1 or fewer units/gross acre	NA	15 acres
O-1 Resource Production	O-1 Resource	0	NA	208 acres
O-2 Recreation	O-2 Recreation	0	NA	166 acres
O-3 Conservation	O-3 Conservation	0	NA	720 acres
Roads/Easements	NA	NA	NA	210 acres
Total				4,090 acres
Source: City of La Habra Heights. 2003				

No commercial or industrial uses are allowed in the City. Home occupations for business are permitted when it is determined that the occupation will not increase traffic or noise in the neighborhood, consistent with licensing or other ordinances adopted by the City. Issues concerning the development of nonconforming lots less than one acre were discussed previously under the Issues and Policies section. The rationale for the lower densities (minimum of one acre per lot) is based on sound planning practice and health and safety concerns. The

Housing Element emphasizes the constraints to higher density residential development that are present in the community. These constraints include a number of health and safety-related factors including topography, seismic hazards, and the potential for wildfire. A designated Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone crosses the center of the City in a west to east orientation. This zone corresponds to the fault trace of the Whittier Fault, a fault that is considered active. Under the zone requirements, special consideration must be taken when building any habitable structures along the fault trace.



### Residential-Agricultural Land Use Designation

All new residential lots are required to be one to five acres in size; larger lots are required for building sites in areas of steeper terrain. Most dwelling units within the City are single-family detached units.

Prior to 1949, second units were not prohibited and some indeterminate number of second units were located in the City. The 1949 zoning established by Los Angeles County prohibited any further construction of second units. While some clandestine second units have been constructed since that time, new second units should continue to be prohibited because of physical constraints of septic capacity, roadway capacity, domestic and fire flow water capacity, and other environmental and infrastructure constraints to development.

### Institutional Land Use Designation

Institutional uses may include educational, health, religious, and cultural activities. Recreational activities are generally compatible with institutional uses and are often part of such uses. These private and quasi-public institutions are permitted only in areas served by the single arterial highway within the City. This restriction will ensure the safety and convenience of the employees, clients or members of these institutions, and residents who live on narrow country roads and lanes which cannot handle institutional traffic. Residential use is permitted within institutional overlay areas.

### Public Facilities

The Public Facilities land use designation provides for a variety of local public facilities that serve the community. These facilities include, among others, the Community Center, the City Hall, the Fire Department buildings, the Water District offices, and other Water District properties. Present and planned public facilities included in this designation are those municipal facilities in service to the residents of La Habra

Heights. Public Facilities locations are shown on the Land Use Map.

### Open Space

There are three categories of Open Space in La Habra Heights: Open Space-Resource Production (O-1), Open Space-Recreation (O-2), and Open Space-Conservation (O-3). Each of the open space designations are discussed in this section.

Open Space-Resource Production (O-1) includes sites located throughout the City that contain producing natural gas and oil wells and their support facilities. At such time as the resources are depleted and after an area has been remediated to restore its suitability for a different use, it is expected that a request for a change in the General Plan land use designation will be entertained by the City.

The Open Space-Recreation (O-2) category includes the golf course at the Hacienda Golf Club, the City Park, and the Las Palomas Riding Ring.

Open Space-Conservation (O-3) is mainly dedicated to the protection of the 700+ acres owned by the Puente Hills Native Habitat Preservation Authority, a wildlife corridor, and natural conservation area. At such time as other conservation areas are established or expanded in the City, it is expected that this land use designation will be applied to those areas as well. The Open Space-Conservation land use designation is designed to conserve the natural vegetation and wild life associated with the natural environments of the Puente Hills region of Southern California. Within the lands designated as Open Space-Conservation, the beneficial preservation and maintenance of all components of the natural environment shall be mandated as the first priority to be considered in any issues involving these areas.

### General Plan Land Use Map

The location and distribution of the various land use categories permitted in this Land Use



## Land Use Element

Element are depicted in Exhibit 2-1. There is considerable debate regarding the level of detail required for a land use map. A 1984 Attorney General's opinion stated that "the California Government Code does not require a land use element diagram to be a parcel-specific map." The Attorney General went on to state,

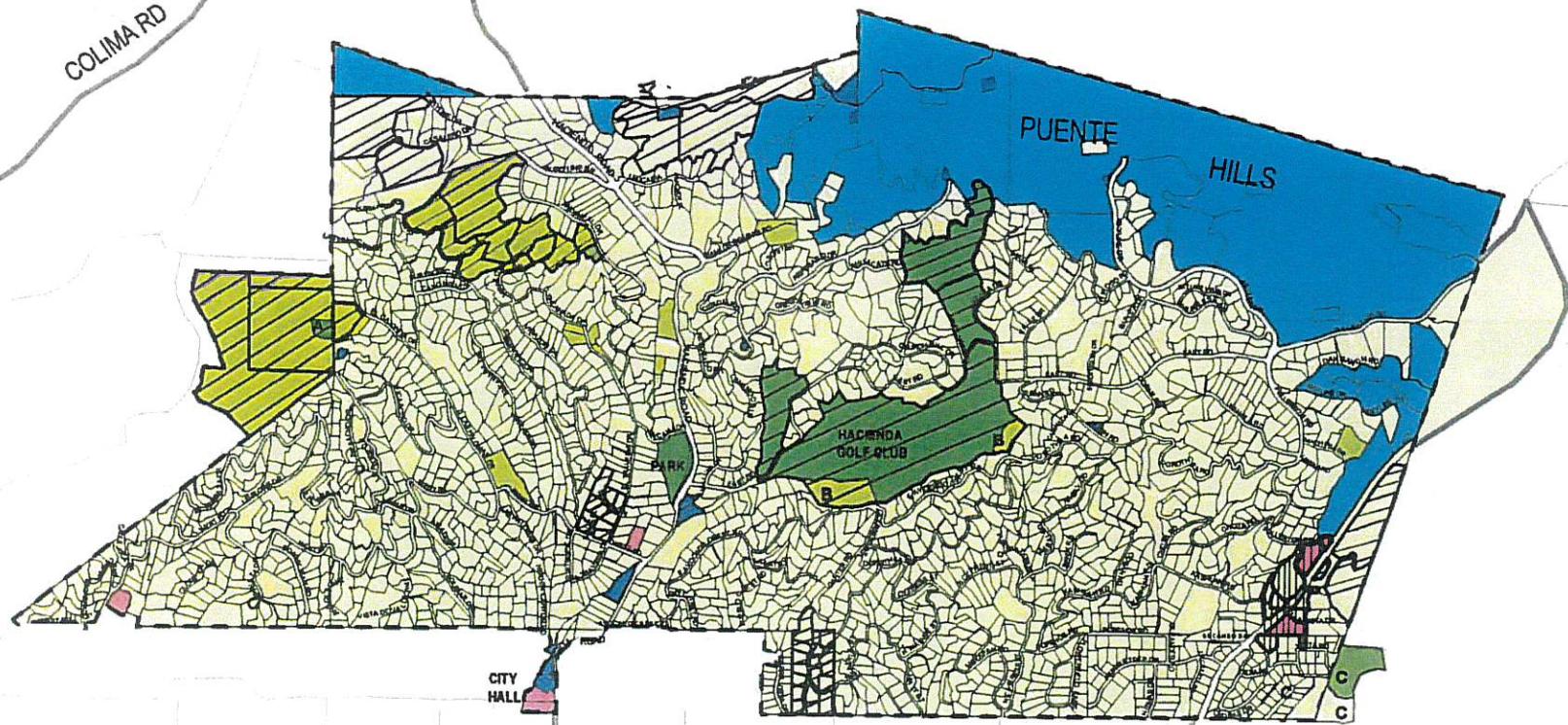
*"...rather, a diagram indicating the general locations illustrating the policies of the General Plan is sufficient. Regardless of the level of detail, the courts have indicated that the map or diagram should be of sufficient detail to permit those individuals using the map to be able to reach a consensus regarding the land use designation for a given parcel or property."*

State planning law requires that land uses identified on a land use map or diagram indicate standards for development intensity and population density. The purpose of the requirement is to aid in the understanding of the type and extent of development contemplated for each land use designation depicted on the land use map.

Development intensity may be described in different ways. In the La Habra Heights General Plan, the residential development intensities are defined as the number of units per acre. Population density is typically applied to residential land use designations to enable decision-makers to understand the potential population associated with the land use plans implementation. Population density is derived by multiplying the number of housing units permitted under a particular land use designation by the average household size of the community. The development intensity standards applicable to each land use designation are indicated in Table 2-1.

The Land Use Plan shown in Exhibit 2-1 depicts the categories of land use (land use designations). The land uses designations depicted in Exhibit 2-1 have been drawn to correspond with the City's zoning map.





**City of La Habra Heights**

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Miles

GIS by: ISMS INC.; BBA INC.

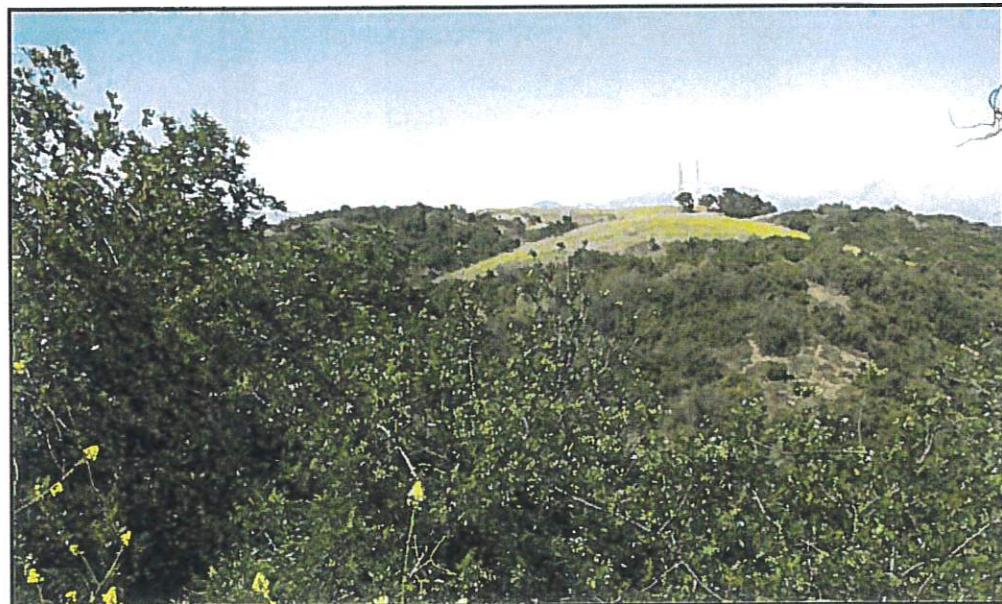
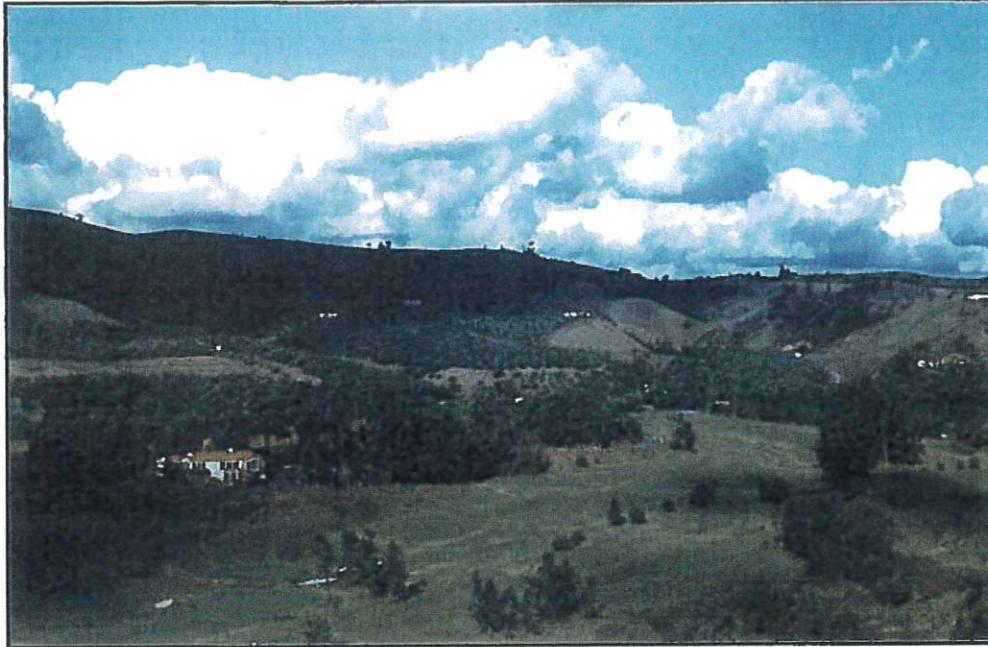
March 2004

**Source:**  
The Land Use Designation Map Layer was created from land assessment parcels developed by the Los Angeles County Assessors Office and coded by ISMS, Inc. with the proper land use and overlay designations determined by City Staff.  
The City Boundary Map Layer was created by the Los Angeles County Assessors Office.  
The City Boundary Map Layer was created from US Census Tiger Ideas and updated with more precise Street Centerline data from the Los Angeles County Assessors Office.

**Exhibit 2 -1**  
**Land Use Plan Designations**

- City Limits
- Specific Plan Overlay \*
- Institutions Overlay
- Open Space - Conservation (03)
- Open Space - Recreation (02)
- Open Space - Resource Production (01)
- Institutions
- Public Facilities
- Residential Agricultural

- A - Approximate Location of Recreation Use
- B - Approximate Location of Resource Production
- C - Approximate Location of Annexation TBC
- \* - Includes, but not limited to



## **Section 3 – Environmental Resource Management Element**

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**City of La Habra Heights General Plan**





### Introduction

The Environmental Resource Management Element (ERME) identifies environmental resources within the City and establishes a plan for their conservation, management, and preservation. The ERME promotes the management of natural resources to prevent their disturbance, neglect, or destruction. The Element also establishes a long-range plan for the preservation of open space areas in the City and for the provision of recreation areas and facilities to serve the needs of residents. Finally, the Element includes an inventory of both public and private open space and a plan for continued protection of these areas.

This ERME combines the State mandated Conservation and Open Space Elements. No gravel or aggregate resources exist within the City so the compliance with Sections 65302 (d) and (e) of the California Government Code and the State Mining Reclamation Act is not applicable to the City of La Habra Heights General Plan.

This Element addresses conservation issues as a means to increase awareness of the presence and condition of resources and to promote the advantages of conservation and management through its goals and policies. Conservation strategies also include the managed use of resources. This Element consists of independent policies for the managed use of oil resources, water conservation and the protection of groundwater, the preservation of hillsides, the protection of scenic corridors, and the protection of native plant and animal life.

This Element will help maintain ecological balance and improve the quality of life in La Habra Heights. Further, this Element calls for protection of those resources somewhat unique to La Habra Heights: the dark skies, the relatively quiet environment, the scenic views, and the abundant wildlife habitat.

### The Early Inhabitants

Prior to the European contact, the local Gabrielino Indians lived in more than 50 villages located throughout the Los Angeles Basin. Three early villages were located in the vicinity of La Habra Heights. They were Apachianga, Isantcangna, and Tsungna. Indian gathering activities were most likely concentrated along the Los Angeles and Rio Hondo River channels. Other post-contact Indian village sites are known to have existed in the vicinity of Tonner Canyon.

As indicated previously, this ERME also fulfills the requirements of Section 65560 to 65570 of the California Government Code regarding the preparation of an open space element for the City. Open space refers to unimproved land or water devoted to the preservation of natural resources for outdoor recreation or for public health and safety concerns. This includes wildlife habitats, rivers, groundwater recharge areas, and areas with mineral deposits. Trails, parks, outdoor recreation areas, private open space, commercial open space, utility easements, scenic roadways, and areas requiring the regulation of hazardous conditions such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soils, flood plains, and watersheds are also considered open space. Open space and recreation are considered together because of the interdependence of the two. Areas preserved as open space may also serve as a valuable resource for outdoor recreation.

Major conservation and open space issues affecting the City of La Habra Heights that are considered in this Element are summarized below.

- The City of La Habra Heights contains natural terrain and drainage courses, dense vegetation, large open space areas, wildlife habitat, extensive areas available for groundwater replenishment, country roads, dark skies, and low noise levels, resulting in an entire community that represents a



## Environmental Resource Management Plan

unique environmental resource. The effort to retain the natural conditions in La Habra Heights has been ongoing over more than the last 50 years and remains a cornerstone of the goals of this General Plan and the ERME.

- Native vegetation has been mixed with non-native species in all areas of the City. Native plant and animal species are found throughout the Puente Hills Wildlife Corridor as well as other canyon areas in the City, and include grassland, inland coastal sage scrub, mixed chaparral, and riparian woodland. These plant communities serve as habitats for amphibians, reptiles, birds, rodents and mammals. Sensitive habitats are found throughout the City.
- The groundwater resources of the City are part of a complex system of aquifers and soil formations in the Los Angeles Basin. A number of groundwater basins in the region have experienced contamination in recent years from human endeavors such as the contamination of the main San Gabriel aquifer by aviation and other industrial activities.
- Oil resources continue to be tapped in La Habra Heights, as they are throughout the Puente Hills and surrounding area.
- Open space in the City includes the Puente Hills, the City Park, the Hacienda golf course, the oil and gas production sites and steep hillsides and canyons. The City provides a variety of opportunities for the conservation of open space and natural resources. This General Plan continues to support the planning and preservation of the hillside areas and open space.
- There are a number of equestrian, hiking and biking trails in the area, including the Skyline Trail along the Puente Hills on the north as well as the trail system in Powder

Canyon. The expansion of the existing system of equestrian and bicycle trails will allow greater use of these facilities.

- The Puente Hills and the roadway corridors such as Hacienda Road, East Road, West Road, and Harbor Boulevard provide scenic resources in La Habra Heights.
- Other important environmental resource issues include recycling, energy conservation, landscaped areas, and recreation programs.

## Issues & Policies

The goals and policies in this section of the ERME address the different conservation and open space issues in La Habra Heights. These issues include resource conservation, energy conservation, open space, and its acquisition, recreation, scenic amenities and corridors, hillside areas, and recycling. The ERME goals and policies addressing these issues will provide a firm direction for the preservation, use, protection, management, and improvement of existing resources in the City.

### Issue – Resource Conservation

The City's natural environment contains many amenities that require protection for future generations. Resource conservation will protect and preserve existing resources in the City for future availability and use. The policies included in this section reflect La Habra Heights' concern for the preservation and conservation of natural resources that have scientific, educational, economic, aesthetic, social, agricultural, and cultural value.

**Goal 1.** Protect, preserve, and enhance the unique residential rural character and lifestyle of La Habra Heights.

# Environmental Resource Management Plan



## Oil Resources in the City

The Puente Hills oil field continues to be dotted with wells, both active and abandoned. Major landowners in the area continue to be oil companies that initiated extraction activities in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. These land holdings, largely depleted of oil, are being eyed for their potential development value.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 1.** Cooperate with state, federal, and regional agencies to monitor water quality and protect it from contamination. Encourage the La Habra Heights County Water District to provide an adequate supply of high quality water for local and regional needs and encourage water conservation.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 2.** Preserve and protect blue line streams from pollution, including contamination from liquid and solid waste disposal, and from streambed alterations such as change in course.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 3.** Encourage practices that stress soil conservation as a means to retain native vegetation, maximize water infiltration, provide slope stabilization, allow scenic enjoyment, and reduce flood hazards.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 4.** Preserve adequate open space areas for major habitat types so as to maintain ecosystems in a natural balance for recreation, scientific, conservation, economic, educational, agricultural, and scenic purposes.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 5.** Work with appropriate landowners and government agencies to rehabilitate abandoned resource fields.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 6.** Encourage property

owners to preserve and enhance areas with native vegetation and visual beauty.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 7.** The City will strive to preserve mature trees and establish requirements for their replacement.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 8.** The City will strive to ensure that protected animal species and sensitive native plant communities are not illegally destroyed as a consequence of any new development or urban activity.

## Issue – Energy Conservation

All development creates a demand for energy in the construction, maintenance, and operation of various structures and equipment. Energy is also consumed by human activities and vehicle use. Dwindling regional resources and increased demand have led to cost increases and the threat of resource depletion. Energy conservation will help reduce costs and assure resource availability in the future. The City of La Habra Heights recognizes that current sources of energy are limited and should not be wasted. Whenever possible, especially in new development, special energy conservation measures should be included in the design.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 9.** Encourage energy conservation measures in the design and construction of both existing and new development, whether public or private, within the City.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 10.** Encourage residents and new development to participate in energy conservation programs.



## Environmental Resource Management Plan

### Issue - Open Space and Landforms

The policies included under this issue area of the ERME promote the maintenance of the open space and other amenities that contribute to the City's rural character. These open space areas may also facilitate the preservation of land for habitat, resource production, recreation, or for safety purposes. The City will preserve the nature and characteristics of the local environment through careful planning and the preservation of the open space resources.

**Goal 2.** Minimize alteration of the natural terrain.

**Goal 5.** Protect, preserve, and encourage open space within the City to ensure the maintenance of wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors, natural drainage courses, and passive recreational resources.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 11.** Protect existing wildlife habitats through the preservation of open space.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 12.** Future development should have minimal adverse impacts on the environment and natural topography, and should not affect natural surroundings, including ridgelines, more than necessary to allow an economically viable use of privately held land.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 13.** Participate with the County of Los Angeles, the Southern California Association of Governments, and other responsible agencies on all open space planning matters to the extent necessary to implement the City's General Plan policies regarding open space, development, and wildlife preservation within its planning area.

### Environmental Resource Management

**Element Policy 14.** Establish and enforce mitigation measures for projects that have the potential for significant or irreversible adverse environmental effects.

### Issue - Acquisition of Open Space

Open space areas in private ownership cannot be restricted to solely open space use in a General Plan. Population pressures will likely lead to development on vacant lands in the City and these areas are not expected to revert to open space. The following goals and policies focus on the protection of existing open space and the potential for expanding open space resources in the City.

**Goal 1.** Protect, preserve and enhance the residential rural character and individualistic lifestyle of La Habra Heights.

**Goal 3.** Preserve scenic views.

**Goal 4.** Preserve existing water courses, scenic beauty, mature trees, and vegetation.

**Goal 5.** Protect, preserve, and encourage open space within the City to ensure the maintenance of wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors, natural drainage courses, and passive recreational resources.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 15.** The City shall encourage the dedication of open space land for public use and/or conservation purposes whenever possible.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 16.** Retain existing open space in public ownership, wherever possible, including surplus land within the City limits offered for sale or transfer by other public agencies, including easements and rights-of-way.

# Environmental Resource Management Plan



## Environmental Resource Management

**Element Policy 17.** Encourage the retention of privately owned outdoor recreation uses and consider the public acquisition of such land when the open space uses located thereon may be discontinued by the owners.

## Environmental Resource Management

**Element Policy 18.** Actively pursue the acquisition of open space areas, not only to provide areas for recreation activities, but also to preserve environmental features that are valuable for their scientific, educational, conservation, scenic, agricultural, and cultural values.

## Environmental Resource Management

**Element Policy 19.** Pursue the use of open space land used for public and semipublic rights-of-way for possible multiple use that would complement the continuity of other designated open space areas, with the consent of the owners and other appropriate agencies.

## Environmental Resource Management

**Element Policy 20.** Make every effort to locate grants for the acquisition of open space, including, but not limited to, Federal, State, County, and private sources.

## Environmental Resource Management

**Element Policy 21.** Upon the subdivision of large undeveloped parcels in the City or upon the approval of non-residential uses, the City may require the development of equestrian and pedestrian routes to provide access to the Skyline Trail and the Wildlife Corridor Trails where appropriate nexus can be shown between this mitigation and the impacts of the proposed development.

## Issue- Recreation

Recreation improves individual well-being and is a source of enjoyment, diversion, health, and

entertainment. Recreation opportunities in the City are provided by a public park, private recreational facilities, open space areas, and bicycle, hiking and equestrian trails. These facilities make the City a more attractive residential location and support the recreational interests of residents. The City will continue to provide passive recreational resources consistent with the rural character of the community.

### The City's Wildlife

The wildlife found in the City is diverse and, over time, has become adapted to the human presence. Mammals commonly seen in the area include the California ground squirrel, woodrat, gray fox, coyote, and mule deer. The mule deer is the largest herbivore found within the Puente Hills and may be seen along trails and watering spots near dusk. The Puente Hills are part of a unique ecosystem that extends 31 miles from the Whittier Narrows to the Cleveland National Forest.

**Goal 5.** Protect, preserve, and encourage open space within the City to ensure the maintenance of wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors, natural drainage courses, and passive recreational resources.

## Environmental Resource Management

**Element Policy 22.** Identify the needs and possible locations for walking, bicycle, and equestrian trails in the City.

## Environmental Resource Management

**Element Policy 23.** Encourage cooperation between all user groups and agencies involved with parks and recreation services and facilities.

## Environmental Resource Management

**Element Policy 24.** Integrate recreation planning efforts to consider conservation, open space, and scenic roadway areas and programs designed to conserve these resources.

## Environmental Resource Management

**Element Policy 25.** Support a system of



## Environmental Resource Management Plan

continuous cross-town bicycle, equestrian, and hiking trails that will encourage the use and enjoyment of public open space in the City and the surrounding area.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 26.** Cooperate with the County of Los Angeles and other entities in the establishment and acquisition of open space and passive parkland, including but not limited to, greenbelts, trails, and wilderness preserves.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 27.** Promote access within the existing parks for the physically challenged.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 28.** Coordinate the use of parkland with other community concerns, such as air quality, traffic circulation, and safety.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 29.** Encourage the use of parks by promoting a wide range of uses and activities for equestrians, hikers, children, joggers, bicyclists, etc.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 30.** The development of recreational uses in the City has the potential to be incompatible with existing residential and other uses of land within the City and to cause adverse environmental impacts including noise, light, glare, and traffic. Accordingly, the City prefers recreational uses such as those now present in the City including trails, equestrian facilities, open spaces and the like. The City disfavors recreational uses that require substantial alterations of the land or substantial construction such as sports fields and courts, large parking lots, stadium seating, and the like.

### Issue - Scenic Amenities & Corridors

La Habra Heights has many scenic amenities that include the Puente Hills, narrow winding country roads, and attractive rural neighborhoods. These amenities enhance the environment and create a sense of identity for the City. By recognizing the factors that contribute to the area's aesthetic qualities, the City can better preserve and enhance the beauty of its physical environment and maintain scenic amenities in their rural form so as to provide beauty, identity, and form of the community.

**Goal 1.** Protect, preserve, and enhance the residential rural character and individualistic lifestyle of La Habra Heights.

**Goal 3.** Preserve scenic views.

**Goal 11.** Resist and discourage urban features such as curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and streetlights.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 31.** Protect scenic corridors to maintain their aesthetic, recreational, cultural, or historic values.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 32.** Identify the portions of the street system that, together with the adjacent scenic corridors, require special scenic treatments.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 33.** Regulate bright outside lighting and, to the extent consistent with the necessities of public safety, prohibit streetlights to preserve dark skies at night.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 34.** Take reasonable measures to preserve scenic views.



## Issue - Wildlife Corridor

A portion of the City of La Habra Heights is part of the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor (PCHWC). The corridor is an important ecological and scenic resource for the City. The area has even been identified as having worldwide importance because of its biodiversity. Without adequate controls and proper planning, the PCHWC and its resources could be lost or destroyed forever.

**Goal 5.** Protect, preserve, and encourage open space within the City to ensure the maintenance of wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors, natural drainage courses, and passive recreational resources.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 35.** Work with corridor landowners and government agencies in promoting land use plans within the corridor that are sensitive to the environment and give maximum consideration to the preservation of natural habitats.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 36.** Work with corridor landowners and government agencies in identifying areas within the PCHWC that should be preserved as open space for passive recreation, resource management, or public safety.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 37.** Continue to work with Los Angeles and Orange Counties and other agencies in the preparation and review of development plans for land adjacent to the PCHWC to ensure the preservation and protection of the environment.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 38.** Encourage the protection of existing wildlife in the PCHWC.

## Issue - Source Reduction and Recycling

The lack of available land for landfills in the region and the environmental consequences of past waste disposal activities have led to the increasing need for recycling and reuse of materials, products, and solid waste. Reductions in the amount of solid waste will lead to the preservation of land for urban or open space use and the protection of soil, groundwater, and air resources. The City will promote recycling, source reduction, and waste management practices to reduce the volume of solid waste.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 39.** Support and complement recycling programs by public and private agencies.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 40.** Continue to implement the Source Reduction and Recycling Element pursuant to AB 939.

**Environmental Resource Management Element Policy 41.** Encourage the reduction of green waste through composting, chipping, mulching, etc.

## A Threatened Plant Community

Coastal Sage Scrub is a very threatened plant community found within the Southern California landscape. Once common in the region, Coastal Sage Scrub is protected by both state and federal regulations. Local examples of this community may be seen in Hellman Park, Sycamore Canyon, the Arroyo San Miguel, and Powder Canyon.



## Environmental Resource Management Plan

### Resource Management Plan

The ERME is directly related to the Land Use Element in that both establish land use policy that will be effective in natural resource preservation and conservation. The Environmental Resource Management Plan is depicted graphically in Exhibit 3-1. The Environmental Resource Management Plan indicates those areas of the City that are included within one of the City's three Open Space land use designations. The Land Use Plan (Exhibit 2-1 included in the Land Use Element) identified the following three "open space" land use categories that are also depicted in the Resource Management Plan (Exhibit 3-1):

**Open Space-Resources Production (O-1).** This open space land use designation applies to that land used for resource production. This designation applies to those sites located throughout the City that contain producing natural gas and oil wells and their support facilities. At such time as the resources are depleted, and after an area has been remediated to restore its suitability for a different use, it is expected that a request for a change in the General Plan land use designation will be entertained by the City.

**Open Space-Recreation (O-2).** This open space land use designation includes the golf course at Hacienda Golf Club, the Las Palomas Riding Ring, the City Park, and other open space areas used for recreational purposes.

**Open Space-Conservation. (O-3).** This land use designation is mainly dedicated to the protection of the 720 acres owned by the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority, a wildlife corridor and natural conservation area. At such time as other conservation areas are established or expanded in the City, it is expected that this land use designation will be accorded to those

areas as well. This land use designation is devoted to conservation of natural vegetation and wildlife associated with the natural environments of the Puente Hills region of Southern California.

The Resource Management Plan also indicates some areas where significant protected plant communities are known or suspected to be present. These major habitat areas include coastal sage habitat, oak woodlands, walnut woodlands, oak and walnut woodlands, and riparian habitats.

The City affirms the property rights of the individual property owners in the use of their land. The purpose of the identification of these habitats in Exhibit 3-1 is to indicate those areas where appropriate regulations should be adhered to in the development of vacant properties within these areas. As a result, property owners developing near sensitive habitats or a designated blue line stream may be required to obtain the requisite review from the trustee agencies.

Given the unique rural character of the City of La Habra Heights, there is a need to define how the City's recreational facilities and open space resources are to be used. Active recreational facilities refer to those areas, such as the City Park, where more intensive community activities are permitted. These may include the various civic events and more typical recreational activities. Passive recreation refers to those activities of a less intensive nature such as equestrian activities, picnic areas, hiking, biking, and resource conservation.

Table 3-1 summarizes the various designations that are applicable to the Resource Management Plan.

## Environmental Resource Management Plan



**Table 3-1**  
**Land Use Designations and Standards**

General Plan	Zoning Designation	Description	Land Area
O-1 Resource Production	O-1 Resource Production	This designation applies to areas used for resource (oil and natural gas) production. At such time as the resource production ceases, a General Plan Amendment will be required in the event the property owner seeks to convert the land to another use.	208 acres
O-2 Recreation	O-2 Recreation	These areas are used for recreation (both passive and active). The General Plan requires that any new public open space land be limited to a passive use.	166 acres
O-3 Conservation	O-3 Conservation	This designation applies to those areas reserved for resource and habitat protection.	720 acres

Source: City of La Habra Heights. 2003





## Environmental Resource Management Plan

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## **Environmental Resources Map**

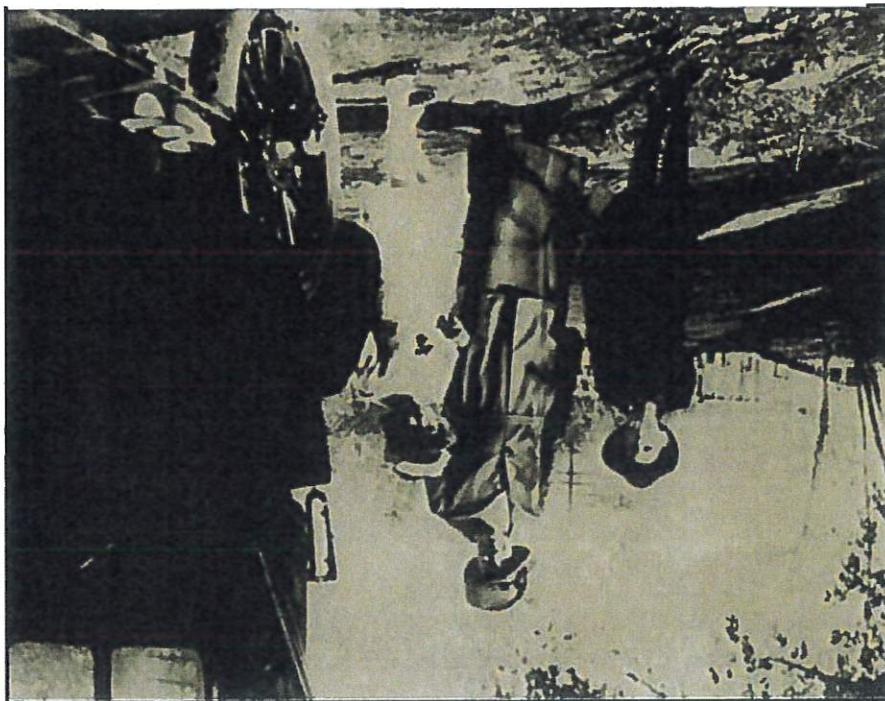


City of La Habra Heights General Plan  
**Section 4 – Circulation Element**

Aerial of "The Park" and Hacienda Road



Clyde Willcox Family on a Sunday outing





### Introduction

California Government Code Section 65302(b) mandates local municipalities to include within their General Plans a Circulation Element as follows:

*"A circulation element consisting of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the plan."*

The Circulation Element of a General Plan is often called "the infrastructure element" because it treats not only the movement of vehicles, but of pedestrians, of the several forms of energy, of water, including waste water and storm water, and of communications media. The State requirement to correlate these facilities with the Land Use Element is a precaution to ensure that planned development and growth within a city does not overwhelm the infrastructure necessary to serve a planned increase in population.

As has been noted in the Land Use Element, La Habra Heights is a mature City, already approaching complete build-out. Increasing the capacities of the City's existing infrastructure is not, therefore, a major concern. Instead, preserving, maintaining, and improving what is already in place is the focus of this Circulation Element.

#### Early Roads in the City

At the turn of the last century, roads in the area were nothing more than rutted and bumpy dirt wagon roads. What was later to become Hacienda Road was unimproved and extended only to individual ranches in the Heights. Other dirt wagon tracks followed what were later to become East Road, West Road, and Fullerton Road.

### Issues & Policies

The policies included in this section underscore the limitations and constraints associated with the maintenance of roadways and other infrastructure in the City. In addition, the policies address emergency services, transit, trails, and infrastructure.

#### Issue – Vehicular Traffic on Local Streets

The City's narrow, winding roads, without conventional curbs, gutters or sidewalks, are a point of pride to La Habra Heights' residents. They reaffirm the City's commitment to rural, country living. They provide arresting views of the rolling terrain of the City and they are a signature differentiation to the development in surrounding suburbs. The City's roads are neither efficient nor time-saving; nonetheless, Dial-a-Ride, airport shuttle services, garbage trucks, and school buses operate effectively in the City. Deliveries from the Federal Express, United Parcel Service, and the United States Post Office are provided without difficulty to La Habra Heights residents. As residents' vehicles slowly travel towards their destinations, the serenity and natural beauty is sufficient to justify the time lost, while many count it as value gained.

**Goal 11.** Resist and discourage urban features such as curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and street lights.

**Circulation Element Policy 1.** Maintain street widths and rights-of-way consistent with our rural environment. Existing streets serve as the standard for any new or extended local streets.

**Circulation Element Policy 2.** Many local streets provide views of the surrounding locale and of the distant terrain. Significant views enjoyed from public roadways shall be protected from obstruction by any new development's structures or landscape elements to the fullest extent possible consistent with the property rights of the



## Circulation Element

owner of the site on which the new development is to be located.

**Circulation Element Policy 3.** Maintain schedules of street maintenance as necessary to keep roads in good repair.

**Circulation Element Policy 4.** Maintain clear road sides for safe vehicular, emergency vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian travel. Property owners shall be required to clear from their properties, debris, litter, brush, weeds, and low overhanging branches that intrude onto the adjacent roadways.

**Circulation Element Policy 5.** Limit the use of local streets by trucks above specified weights and size, and require operators of heavy trucks shown to have damaged local streets to restore those streets to their previous condition.

**Circulation Element Policy 6.** East Road, West Road, and Avocado Crest are among a number of local streets carrying a major share of cross-Heights traffic. Periodic patrols or other appropriate measures should be taken to enforce safe speeds on these streets.

**Circulation Element Policy 7.** It should be a goal of the City to monitor California Highway Patrol advisories on hazardous materials transport within the City and act to protect residents.

**Circulation Element Policy 8.** Any new streets, and future extensions of existing streets, shall not disturb existing wildlife and sensitive habitats unless no feasible alternative is available and denial of the sought improvement would constitute a taking of property.

### Old Hacienda Road

What is now Hacienda Road was once a steep and narrow, one-way horse trail. The roadway was ultimately graded in the early 1900's with equipment borrowed from La Habra on Sundays when the equipment was not in use. The Union Oil Company and the Fullerton Oil Company donated oil for the roadway's coat.

### Issue – North/South Corridors

For historical reasons, sufficient north-south arterials within the region have not been developed. Heavy traffic, moving at unsafe speeds, tax the capacities of both Harbor Boulevard and Hacienda Road. Air quality within the City is threatened, and noise levels are increasing. In order to facilitate safe local access from and to east-west local streets, it has been necessary to install three traffic lights on Hacienda Road, increasing both noise and air pollution at these locations. Hacienda Road is locally financed and maintained. Harbor Boulevard is County financed and maintained.

**Goal 10.** Assure that local and regional traffic demands are accommodated in a manner consistent with the unique rural environment of La Habra Heights.

**Circulation Element Policy 9.** Designate Harbor Boulevard as having scenic significance.

**Circulation Element Policy 10.** Designate Hacienda Road as having scenic significance.

**Circulation Element Policy 11.** Prohibit any change in the width of the roadbed, any change in the alignment, and any increase in the number of lanes on Hacienda Road, as such changes would be inconsistent with the unique rural environment of La Habra Heights and would be detrimental to the City by increasing traffic on Hacienda Road and other City streets, and increasing pollution and noise throughout the City. Further, the present width and alignment of Hacienda Road is highly constrained by the presence of a deep canyon that overlies a trace of the Whittier Fault. Meaningful change to that width and alignment would require major earthwork, and would affect La Mirada Creek, a blue line stream. The road also crosses the wildlife corridor and changes in that area would be disruptive to a biological resource of State-wide significance.

**Circulation Element Policy 12.** Prohibit any change in the width of the roadbed, any

## Circulation Element



change in the alignment, and any increase in the number of lanes on Harbor Boulevard, as such changes would negatively impact the rural environment of La Habra Heights and would be detrimental to the City by increasing noise and pollution throughout the City. Further, the location of Harbor Boulevard is constrained by steep slopes on either side and by a major crossing of the wildlife corridor. Accordingly, alteration to this road would have environmental consequences similar to those noted above with respect to Hacienda Road.

**Circulation Element Policy 13.** Seek to provide clear rights-of-way for safe passage of pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrians using Harbor Boulevard and Hacienda Road.

**Circulation Element Policy 14.** Enforce weight and axle restrictions for trucks using City streets, with special emphasis accorded to Hacienda Road given its unsuitability for heavy truck traffic.

**Circulation Element Policy 15.** Any designation of roads within Powder Canyon is obsolete due to the acquisition of that land for permanent habitat preservation, and such designations are hereby eliminated from the Circulation Map of this General Plan and the City should encourage Los Angeles County to eliminate them from its Master Plan of Highways as well.

**Circulation Element Policy 16.** The City should consider clearing a trail and erecting a protective rustic fence on one side of Hacienda Road for the use of pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians. Other appropriate measures to ensure safe access that is consistent with the aesthetic and environmental values expressed in this Element should be employed by the City.

**Circulation Element Policy 17.** Continue to study and implement traffic calming on Hacienda Road and Harbor Boulevard and other roadways deemed by the City Council to carry substantial, high speed traffic.

### Regional Transportation Planning

The development of a regional transportation plan for Southern California is mandated by Section 65809 of the Government Code, which requires that regions address traffic congestion issues in conjunction with the consideration of transportation facilities, land use, and air quality. The first Congestion Management Plan (CMP) for Los Angeles County was adopted in 1993. The CMP is updated every five years.

### Issue – Emergency Services

Emergency service vehicles, including fire engines, paramedic units, ambulances, and law enforcement personnel may be constrained in the swift delivery of their services by the character of local streets. Although the City operates a 24-hour manned fire station, it is not ideally located in the City at present, so that responding fire engines and Emergency Medical Technicians may have a long and difficult run to the site of an emergency. Paramedic and ambulance services, under contract from outside agencies, may be unfamiliar with the eccentricities of private, unnamed roads, and erratic street numbering. Similarly, road signage and address numbering is a significant problem in La Habra Heights. Mitigation of these problems is addressed in the following policies.

**Circulation Element Policy 18.** The City of La Habra Heights emergency vehicles should have short wheel-base and high ground clearance in order to operate safely and expeditiously.

**Circulation Element Policy 19.** The City should review street naming systems to eliminate confusing duplications of street names on discontinuous streets.

**Circulation Element Policy 20.** The City should review house-numbering systems to assure a logical progression of numbers along every street.



## Circulation Element

**Circulation Element Policy 21.** The City should require new and existing private roads be named, with the name posted at the entrance to the road.

**Circulation Element Policy 22.** The City should consider relocating the Fire Station to a more suitable location, or otherwise consider locating fire stations closer to the properties to be served.

### Issue – Parking

Although narrow, winding local streets are not intrinsically unsafe, because they demand slow speeds and cautious maneuvering around curves, coming upon a car parked at roadside beyond a curve can be a serious hazard particularly when there is an opposing approaching vehicle. For this reason, ample on-site parking spaces are required on residential and non-residential lots for the use of the occupants and their visitors. There are, and will continue to be, events when a large number of people invited to a location will overwhelm the on-site parking spaces and must park along the road. Parking for such events will continue to be permitted as long as the parked cars do not present a danger or serve as an unexpected obstacle on the road.

On Hacienda Road traffic moves at far higher speeds than on local streets and on Harbor Boulevard it moves even faster. Occasionally, bicyclists or pedestrians can be seen on the rights-of-way of both Harbor Boulevard and Hacienda Road. For their safety, and the safety of passing vehicles, parking must be restricted in the rights-of-way of these streets.

**Circulation Element Policy 23.** The City will develop an ordinance to define, prohibit, and penalize nuisances created by illegal street and/or roadside parking or, if found appropriate, to ban such parking entirely in all or part of the City.

**Circulation Element Policy 24.** Prohibit all parking on Hacienda Road and Harbor Boulevard that presents a community risk or intrudes upon the roadway surface.

**Circulation Element Policy 25.** Continue to require new residential development to provide on-site visitor parking sufficient to serve each approved lot.

**Circulation Element Policy 26.** Prohibit frequent parking or storage of commercial vehicles, except agricultural equipment, anywhere in areas designated as Residential-Agricultural.

**Circulation Element Policy 27.** Require institutional uses within the City to provide on-site parking sufficient to serve all employees and patrons pursuant to the Institute of Transportation Engineers standards, or more restrictive standards.

**Circulation Element Policy 28.** Require non-residential uses to provide landscaping, irrigation, and screening in required parking areas.

### Issue – Alternative Transportation

The only scheduled mass transit services within the City are the school buses that serve the children of La Habra Heights. According to a survey conducted by the General Plan Advisory Committee, the overwhelming majority of parents with children using the school buses are well satisfied with the service.

Dial-A-Ride, available only to the aged and disabled, and taxicabs offer some mobility. However, an aging population may require additional transportation services so that they are not isolated from shopping, medical services, and social events.

**Circulation Element Policy 29.** Encourage carpools as an alternative to the single-occupant-vehicle in order to better manage regional demands on La Habra Heights circulation infrastructure.

**Circulation Element Policy 30.** Continue to provide Dial-A-Ride services arranged with an appropriate agency.



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**Circulation Element Policy 31.** Publicize City transportation programs such as the present availability of airport shuttle vouchers and their rates.

**Circulation Element Policy 32.** Consider establishing a volunteer chauffeur network for driving elderly and disabled residents to vital services, community events, and shopping.

### Equestrian Character of the Area

From the earliest days, horses and horsemanship were an important facet of rural life in "The Heights." By the late 1960's, the horse population in La Habra Heights had reached a total of 600. At that time, there were many miles of trails that traversed the local hills and valleys.

### Issue - Trails

Opportunities for horseback riding, hiking, and bicycling are among the expected benefits of living in a rural community. Within the City, some trails have been established and there is interest in extending and linking these trails within wider areas of open space and wildlife preserves.

**Goal 6.** Encourage the expansion and use of the existing trail system for horseback riding, bicycling, and hiking.

**Circulation Element Policy 33.** Encourage the linkage of existing local trails to regional trail networks wherever possible.

**Circulation Element Policy 34.** To the extent possible, extend existing local trails through newly acquired open space and wildlife preserves, consistent with the requirements of wildlife habitat.

**Circulation Element Policy 35.** The existing wildlife corridors will be considered to be of equal importance to those facilities that accommodate vehicular, equestrian, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation.

**Circulation Element Policy 36.** Encourage the City to identify and retain easements and

rights-of-way to allow their incorporation into trail networks.

### Issue - Electrical Utilities

The provision of electrical energy for City residents is of utmost importance to the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens. On frequent occasions, high winds, fires, rain storms, traffic mishaps, and other conditions disrupt the flow of electrical energy to City residents.

**Circulation Element Policy 37.** Continue to require that all new residential development underground all utility lines.

**Circulation Element Policy 38.** Utility trunk lines within the City will be undergrounded as utility funds are available for this purpose. The City will work with utility providers to arrange for the under-grounding of connections to existing residential structures for those homeowners who request it.

**Circulation Element Policy 39.** Require that all significant remodeling improvement projects or significant additions to existing structures incorporate on-site undergrounded utility lines.

**Circulation Element Policy 40.** To the extent the City has the power to do so, establish requirements for the location, appearance and need for high voltage utility lines within the City.

### Issue - Telephone Service

Telephone lines within the City are vulnerable to wind, rain, traffic accidents, fire, and even squirrels that may eat the insulation. In order to improve telephone service and Internet capabilities and maintain this vital link to emergency services in times of crisis, the following policies are necessary.

**Circulation Element Policy 41.** Require that all telephone lines serving future residences be undergrounded.



## Circulation Element

### **Circulation Element Policy 42.**

Underground telephone lines within the City to the extent funds are available for this purpose.

**Circulation Element Policy 43.** Any new antennas necessary for telephone service should be placed in the existing antenna farm, established by Consent Agreement in 1985 or pursuant to a conditional use permit or other regulatory device that will ensure that such antennas are located and designed so as to minimize their impact on community aesthetics and views, and to limit their intrusion into high fire-hazard areas.

**Circulation Element Policy 44.** Require that all significant remodeling improvement projects, or significant additions to existing structures, incorporate undergrounded telephone lines.

### **Issue – Wireless Communication Facilities**

Mobile telephones are a growing segment of the communications industry. Communication towers, necessary for mobile phone communications and other data transmission, have been largely exempted from local control by federal and state statute. Nonetheless, opportunities exist for local agencies to work with mobile telephone companies on the location and appearance of these facilities and other cellular equipment.

**Circulation Element Policy 45.** Establish a chain of command so that City officials and staff are apprised of all requests by cellular phone companies for the location of communication towers and monopolies.

**Circulation Element Policy 46.** Establish ground rules for the appearance and landscaping of transmission towers and other wireless equipment wherever they are located within the City, or pursuant to a conditional use permit or other regulatory device that will ensure that such towers, antenna, and support equipment are located and designed so as to minimize their impact on community aesthetics and views, and to limit intrusions into high-fire-hazard areas.

**Circulation Element Policy 47.** Require the joint use of communication towers to the maximum extent feasible to prevent their proliferation within the City.

### **Issue – Cable Television and Broadband Internet Communications**

The City is located in a hilly area that inhibits good television reception so that cable or other technologies are a necessity for many City households. Because of its relatively low density of users, and the difficulty of installing fiber optic cable systems in the area, the City is not an ideal location for cable services wishing to maximize their profits. Currently, the telephone companies and the cable networks are in competition for the provision of residential Internet services and other data services. Balancing these conditions against one another, the City may be able to procure a more economical, state-of-the-art service for its residents.

**Circulation Element Policy 48.** Ensure that the provision for undergrounding telephone lines also applies to, and is coordinated with, cable services.

**Circulation Element Policy 49.** Review cable contracts and competitive bidding periodically to ensure that the most economical and efficient services are provided to City residents.

**Circulation Element Policy 50.** The City shall require that providers of cable television, broadband Internet, and other communication services consult with the City and with affected property owners before placing physical equipment, except cables, on telephone company infrastructure within the City.

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### Water Reaches the Heights

The early development resulted in an increasing need to obtain water for the Heights. Water rights were finally purchased along the San Gabriel River in 1921 after protracted negotiations and legal battles. Four water companies were ultimately formed, including the La Mirada Mutual, the La Habra Highland Mutual, the La Habra Heights Mutual, and the Hillside Distribution Company.

### Issue – Domestic Water Supplies and Fireflow

The La Habra Heights County Water District provides potable water to City residents. The cost of water provision is operated on a two tier system, with those residences at lower elevations paying a lower rate for water than those at higher elevations. During drought conditions, the District monitors water use and encourages, and may mandate, water conservation. It is also essential in a City where wild land fires occasionally threaten residences, that sufficient water volume from fire hydrants be provided to protect the homes in La Habra Heights.

Water quality is reported periodically to users, and is generally conceded to have improved in recent years. The Water District is a special district, separate from the City and subject to its own and State and County regulations and requirements. The District is governed by a Board of five members elected by residents located within the service area.

**Circulation Element Policy 51.** Work with the La Habra Heights County Water District to ensure that City policies and Water District policies are mutually compatible.

**Circulation Element Policy 52.** The City, together with the La Habra Heights County Water District, shall work to ensure that adequate supplies of water are available to meet existing and projected demand.

**Circulation Element Policy 53.** Ensure that La Habra Heights County Water District activities affecting road surfaces are repaired by the District to City Engineer standards.

**Circulation Element Policy 54.** Work with the La Habra Heights County Water District and Fire Department to identify and plan corrections to areas of inadequate domestic flow capacity in order to ensure that internal fire sprinkler systems work properly.

**Circulation Element Policy 55.** Consider ways to coordinate the operations of the City and the Water District to reduce the total cost of government to the community by joint staff, joint purchases or other means.

**Circulation Element Policy 56.** The City will continue to require that proposals for new residential units have adequate fire flow prior to approval.

**Circulation Element Policy 57.** Continue to meet Fire Department requirements for the location of fire hydrants and fire flow capacities serving all new development.

**Circulation Element Policy 58.** Request annual reports from the La Habra Heights County Water District attesting to hydrant and reservoir capacities.

**Circulation Element Policy 59.** Work with the La Habra Heights County Water District and Fire Department to identify and plan corrections for zones of inadequate fire flow capacity.

### Issue – Solid Waste Management

The City of La Habra Heights does not provide trash removal services to its residents. Rather, residents contract individually with trash removal companies for this service. The City has adopted multiple franchising, allowing competition between waste removal services. Currently, residents are served by two waste removal companies. Both are subject to State law relevant to recycling and trash removal. Most City households are now separating their



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trash to meet State requirements. The volume of green waste, a major component of local wastes, is much reduced by residents who practice composting and mulching, according to a survey of La Habra Heights residents performed in 2000.

**Circulation Element Policy 60.** Continue to weigh alternative policies to support optimal provision of trash removal services to residents.

**Circulation Element Policy 61.** Adopt reasonable regulations to prohibit the storage of unscreened dumpsters from being placed at road sides that are visible from the roads and the surrounding neighbors.

**Circulation Element Policy 62.** Encourage residents to continue their practice of composting and mulching their green waste or the disposal of this waste in a designated "green waste" container for pick-up and removal.

**Circulation Element Policy 63.** Encourage residents to utilize available recycling programs.

### Issue – Sanitary Sewer Systems

Most residences within the City are served by septic tanks. There are now some instances in the City in which these systems are failing. The costs of urban sanitary sewer systems are very high and beyond the ability of the City to meet. Health issues make this a problem that the City must confront. It is, therefore, essential that the receptivity of soils for the leaching of liquid wastes, the proper functioning of cesspool and septic systems, and the safe distancing from neighboring liquid waste systems all be determined to be satisfactory before the development of new residences, any significant expansion or remodeling, or the sales of existing residences.

**Circulation Element Policy 64.** Require the inspection of existing liquid waste disposal systems to determine their condition at the time of sale.

**Circulation Element Policy 65.** New residential development shall not be approved until soil and drainage conditions have been analyzed to assure that liquid waste disposal systems can function adequately unless the development is connected to a sewer system.

**Circulation Element Policy 66.** If there are areas of the City in which organic waste disposal systems are failing, special assessment districts shall be formed to finance small area sewage treatment facilities or connections to regional sewer systems.

**Circulation Element Policy 67.** The City shall provide information concerning the proper maintenance of cesspool and septic tank systems to all households.

### Issue - Storm Water Drainage

The City now has ordinances to minimize hard surface areas and maximize surface penetration of rain water into the water table. These ordinances, along with policies which seek to preserve natural terrain, existing water courses, open spaces, and mature trees and vegetation, all work to preserve natural resources for the penetration and storage of rain water, and the minimization of run-off from impermeable surfaces.

**Goal 5.** Protect, preserve, and encourage open space within the City to ensure the maintenance of wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors, natural drainage courses, and passive recreational resources.

**Circulation Element Policy 68.** Implement policies for the preservation of natural conditions leading to retention of storm water where it occurs.

**Circulation Element Policy 69.** Review hard surface limitations on all development to ensure compliance with the government's storm water retention policies.

**Circulation Element Policy 70.** Review all building permits related to new construction

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and significant remodels to ensure storm water retention requirements are adhered to.

**Circulation Element Policy 71.** Require property owners to keep the courses of blue line streams running clear and unimpeded through their properties.

### Issue – Pipelines and Resource Production Facilities

The City contains producing natural gas and oil fields served by pipelines for the transport of their products. Recent disruption of one of those pipelines necessitated trucking for the transport of oil, causing disturbance, road damage, and air and noise pollution in the adjacent residential areas.

Natural gas is produced at several sites in the City. The largest property once devoted to natural gas production and storage, 99 acres owned by the Sempra Energy Company, is now used only for the limited production and storage of natural gas. Other uses for the property may soon be contemplated.

**Circulation Element Policy 72.** Work with the resource companies to create a contingency plan to be implemented at the time of any disruption to the functioning of their pipelines, tanks or other facilities.

**Circulation Element Policy 73.** Plan now for the time when resource production is abandoned and the site is converted to future uses in order to prevent a brownfields area within the City.

**Circulation Element Policy 74.** The City shall continue to work with appropriate State agencies, and with the property owner, to ensure the proper remediation of those areas within the property that have been polluted by resource extraction and distribution.

**Circulation Element Policy 75.** The City must be fully assured that remediation has been accomplished to the extent necessary for any proposed new use of the property before the redesignation of the land use is

considered. Any necessary remediation must occur prior to the consideration of any Zone Change or General Plan Amendment.

### Issue – Regional Planning

New development in incorporated and unincorporated areas adjoining La Habra Heights is occurring at a rapid pace. New high-density suburban housing tracts and large, multi-story commercial malls are generating growing volumes of traffic and more development is planned. Some of the increased volume of traffic will pass through our City. Higher traffic volumes create additional congestion on our roads, deteriorate air quality, and add markedly to ambient noise levels.

**Goal 10.** Assure that local and regional traffic demands are accommodated in a manner consistent with the unique rural environment of La Habra Heights.

**Circulation Element Policy 76.** Prohibit widening, straightening or leveling of local lanes and country roads. Their current configuration is the most effective deterrent against inappropriate short-cutting commuter traffic.

**Circulation Element Policy 77.** Prohibit any new access roads into the City and encourage alternative transit policies at the local and regional level to meet regional traffic needs without the environmental degradation that new roadways would entail in the fragile environment of La Habra Heights.

**Circulation Element Policy 78.** Consider additional traffic calming measures on the north-south traffic collectors.

**Circulation Element Policy 79.** Post and enforce appropriate speed limits on East Road and West Road. Encourage frequent traffic surveillance on all lanes, country roads and the north-south traffic collectors as a means to discourage speeding or other unsafe driving.



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### Circulation Plan

Much of the infrastructure that serves the people of La Habra Heights could appear to be an anomaly within the metropolitan area of Los Angeles. The pattern of local streets is unique due to the many narrow and winding roads that were constructed over the paths of previous farm lanes that followed the canyons and ridges of the Puente Hills.

The City enjoys a modern and efficient potable water distribution system, but most of its wastewater is processed through individual cesspool and septic tank systems. Storm water is not piped into sewer outfalls but filters into the water table through generous areas of undisturbed open space, permeable to receive and filter the rainfall into aquifers.

The correlation of these conditions with the Land Use Element is direct. Large lot residential land use is necessary because an adequate area is needed for the cesspool and septic tank leaching fields to operate without impinging on neighbors or on the water table. Large residential lots and natural conservation areas generally provide sufficient open land to handle storm water drainage and filtration. Resident population is limited by the City's area, its geological constraints of earthquake fault zones and landslide-prone areas, its dedicated open space, and its residential land use requirements so that the roadway system of former farm lanes, now paved, is adequate to serve its users. This environmental balance that operates within the City is a valuable and irreplaceable part of the quality of life in La Habra Heights.

Another instance of the unusual conditions in La Habra Heights is the concern for wildlife. While wildlife is not generally of importance within suburban developments, it is in La Habra Heights. The open space areas in the City facilitate wildlife movement within a corridor that extends from the Cleveland National Forest to the Whittier Narrows to the northwest. Accordingly, the movement of wildlife through the City is a part of this element.

#### Roadway Classifications

To aid in future transportation planning, roadways have been classified according to a definite hierarchy that indicates the optimal configuration of the street. This classification includes the roadway's actual width, the number of travel lanes, and its function.

#### Roadway Classifications

The roadway classification system described herein is used to identify the function of each roadway in the City. The classification system provides a logical framework for the design and operation of roadways serving La Habra Heights. The functional classification system permits residents, staff, and elected officials to identify the preferred characteristics of each street.

The roadway system in the City of La Habra Heights serves two distinct and equally important functions: 1) providing access to individual properties, and, 2) the transport of people and goods into and through the City. The design and operation of each roadway depends on the importance placed on each of these functions. For example, Harbor Boulevard is designed to carry larger traffic volumes and has more lanes, higher speed limits, and fewer curb-cuts or driveways. In contrast, the other streets in the City have fewer lanes, reduced speed limits, and more driveways as a means to provide access to individual properties.

The roadway system in the City has been defined using a classification system that describes a hierarchy of roadway types (refer to Table 4-1). The categories of roadways included in this classification system differentiate the size, function, and capacity of each type of roadway. The following roadway classifications apply to the City (shown in Exhibit 4-1) and are described below.

**Arterial Road.** This roadway classification applies only to Harbor Boulevard. Harbor Boulevard carries both local traffic and through traffic. This roadway classification consists of four travel lanes (two in each direction).

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**Collector.** This roadway designation applies only to Hacienda Road. This roadway classification consists of two travel lanes (one in each direction). Parking lanes are not provided on this roadway.

**Country Road.** This type of roadway typically provides access to individual residential properties while, at the same time, serving as a collector for smaller local streets. East Road and West Road are examples of this classification of roadway. These roadways consist of two travel lanes (one in each direction).

**Lanes.** This classification applies to those local streets that provide access to the individual residential properties. These roadways typically have a single lane.

**Private Roads.** These roads include those that are privately owned. Their function is similar to that described above for "Lanes."

**Trails.** This classification refers to those hiking, biking, and equestrian trails located within the City. The use of these trails by vehicles is restricted to fire control, law enforcement, and trail maintenance.

The location and extent of these roadways are depicted in Exhibit 4-1. Typical cross-section views of these roadways are also shown in Exhibit 4-1.

The functional designation of a roadway does not necessarily indicate the existing conditions (i.e., traffic volume, width, and available right-of-way). Instead, the classification indicates the intended use and ultimate design of the roadway to accommodate the anticipated travel demand. In addition, the typical cross-section of the roadway does not necessarily mean that the roadway should be redesigned or widened to meet its typical cross-section.

**Table 4-1**  
**Roadway Classification Standards**

	Arterial	Collector	Country Road	Lanes/Private Roads
Travel Lanes	4 lanes	2 lanes	2 lanes	1 lane
Parking Lanes	0 lanes	0 lanes	0 lanes	0 lanes
Volumes ADT	20,000- greater	Up to 10,000	2,000 or less	500 or less
ROW width	100 ft.	40-60 ft.	40 ft.	40 ft.
Pavement Width	84 ft.	22-36 ft.	20-35 ft.	12 ft. to 18 ft.

Note: ADT refers to average daily traffic volumes. ROW refers to right-of-way.

### Roadway Level of Service Standards

Evaluating the ability of the circulation system to serve existing and projected traffic demands requires the establishment of suitable "performance criteria." These performance criteria serve as a means by which traffic

volumes are compared to circulation infrastructure (roadway segments and intersections), and the adequacy of that infrastructure to accommodate existing or projected traffic volumes. Performance criteria have a policy component that establishes a desired "Level of Service" and a technical



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component that provides a more quantified measure. A qualitative measure, Level of Service, or LOS, is often used in describing the operating condition of a roadway segment or intersection. The LOS is a sliding scale (A through F), where LOS A represents optimal traffic conditions, while LOS F equates to significant congestion. A more quantitative measure used to define an intersection's level of service employs a ratio between an intersection's design capacity (as measured in traffic volumes) and the existing and/or projected traffic volumes. This method,

referred to as the Intersection Capacity Utilization, or ICU, is correlated to LOS definitions in Table 4-2.

The performance criteria used for evaluating volumes and capacities of the City street and highway system include both average daily traffic (ADT) volumes for individual roadway segments, and peak hour intersection volume criteria. ADT capacities represent the general level of daily traffic that each roadway type typically handles, and should be used only as a general design guideline. LOS standards for intersections are more precisely determined by examining peak hour intersection volumes.

**Table 4-2  
Level of Service Definitions**

LOS	V/C Ratio	Definition
A	0.00-0.60	Free flow traffic conditions
B	0.61-0.70	Stable flow, some restrictions
C	0.71-0.80	Satisfactory operating speeds
D	0.81-0.90	Unstable conditions beginning
E	0.91-1.00	Significant delays
F	1.01-	Severe congestion

### Scenic Corridors

A number of Circulation Element policies identified those roadways as warranting special consideration due to their significance as scenic corridors:

- Designate Harbor Boulevard as having scenic significance (Circulation Element Policy 9); and,

- Designate Hacienda Road as having scenic significance (Circulation Element Policy 10).

The roadways designated as Scenic Corridors are depicted in Exhibit 4-1.

### Infrastructure

Exhibit 4-2 indicates the location and extent of domestic water lines, major sewer lines, and major natural gas and oil pipelines in the City.

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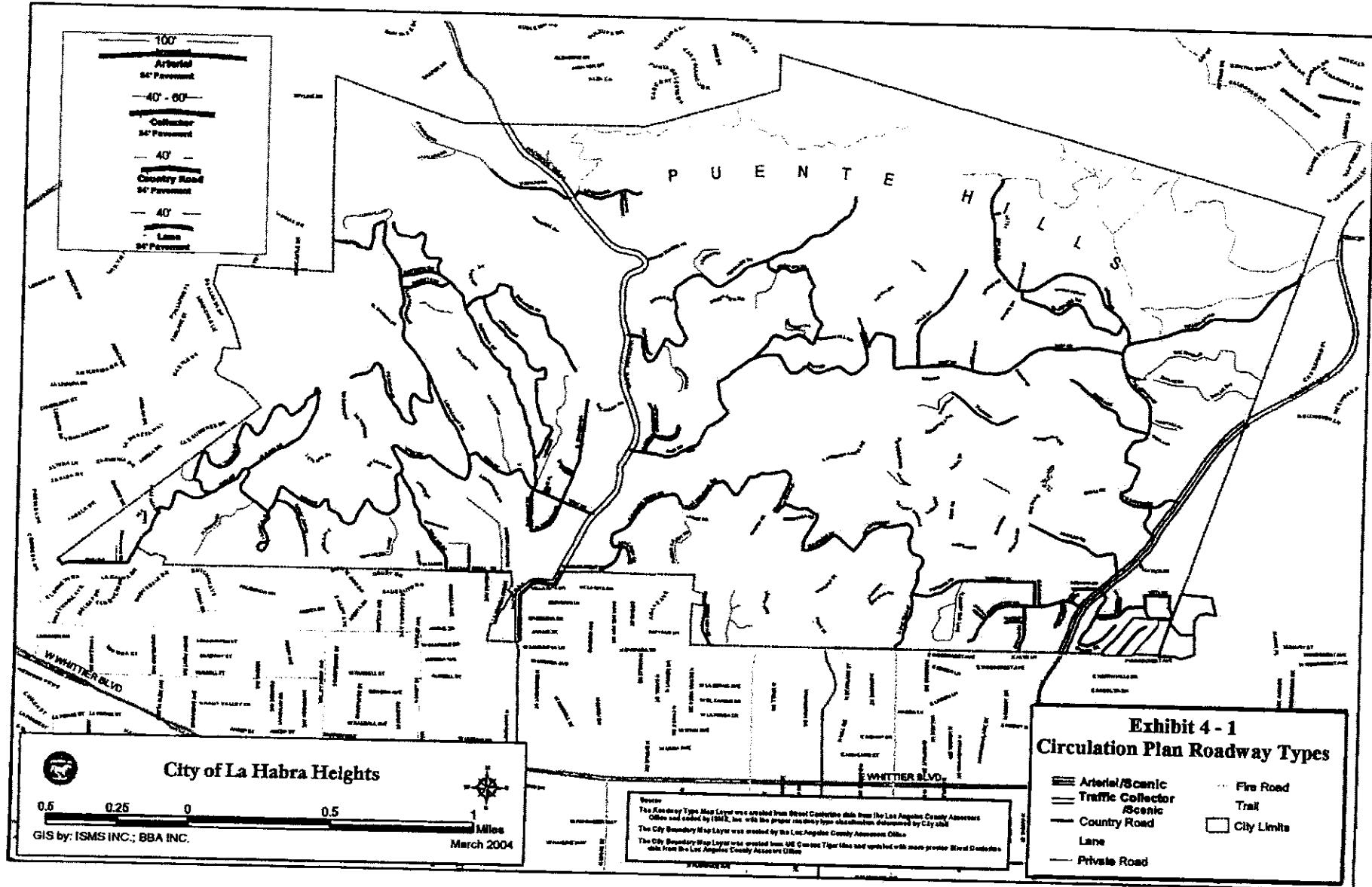


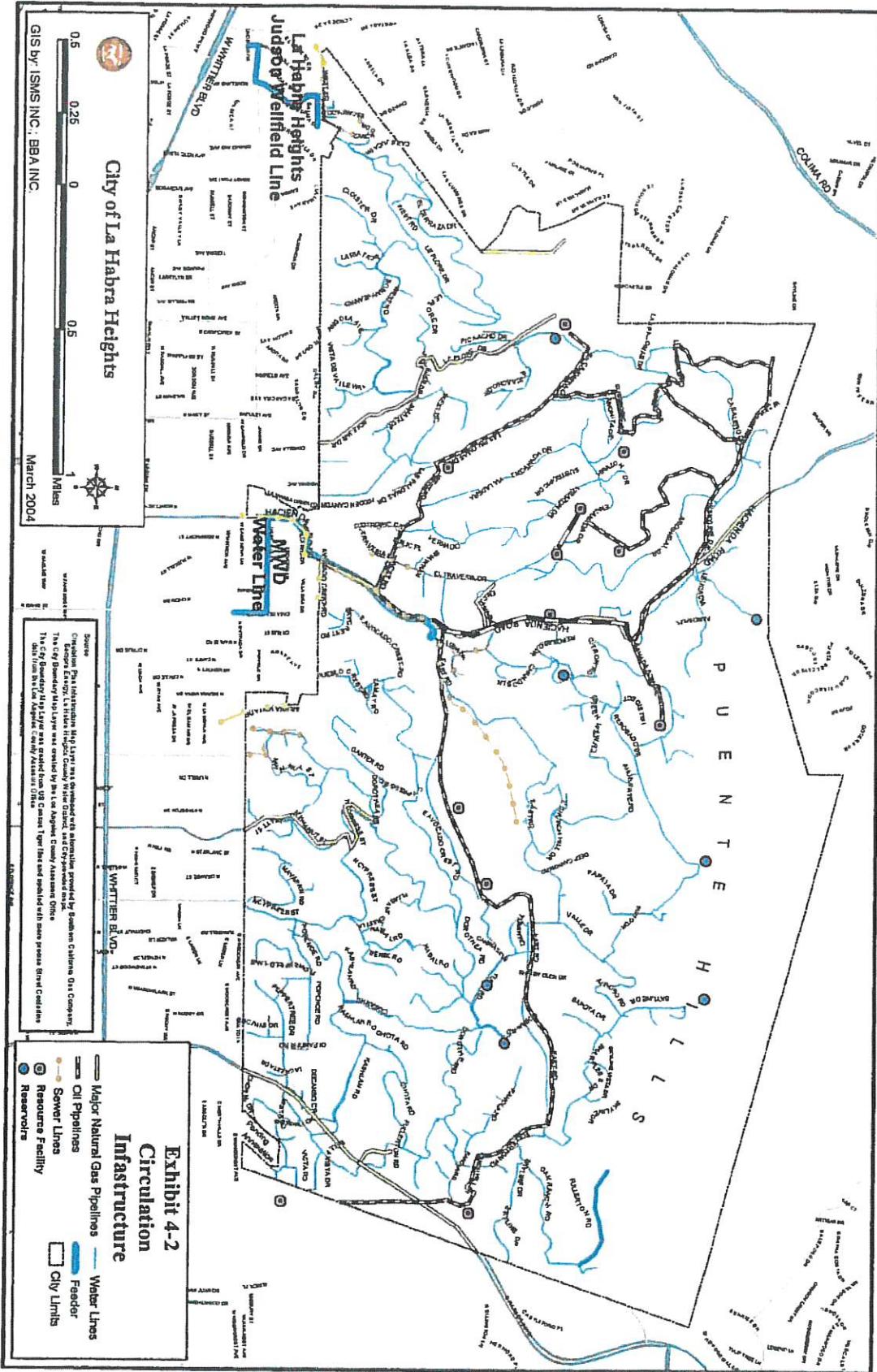


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## **Section 5 – Safety Element**

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### **City of La Habra Heights General Plan**





## Introduction

California Government Code Section 65302(b) mandates local municipalities to include within their General Plans a Safety Element. The Government Code states:

*"[A safety element is required] for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, tsunami, seiche, and dam failure; slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides; subsidence, liquefaction and other seismic hazards identified pursuant to Chapter 7.8 of the Public Resources Code, and other geologic hazards known to the legislative body; flooding; and wild land and urban fires. The safety element shall include mapping of known seismic and other known geologic hazards. It shall also address evacuation routes, peak load water supply requirements, and minimum road widths and brush clearances around structures, as those items related to identified fire and geologic hazards."*

This Safety Element addresses both natural and man-made hazards such as wildfire, earthquakes, landslides, crime, traffic, and hazardous materials/waste contamination. In dealing with these issues, it is prudent to consider prevention as the first step in hazard mitigation. Prevention may be accomplished by the elimination of the hazard, isolation/avoidance of the hazard, or through the regulation of land uses and structures in known hazard areas. The hazard must be planned for when prevention is not possible. Emergency planning includes the formulation of strategies to minimize human injury, property damage, and economic and social disruption.

This Safety Element addresses measures necessary to return the functions of the City to normal conditions soon after a disaster. This Safety Element also establishes policies that address public safety issues in the City. Finally,

the Element serves as a Safety Plan, identifying standards and policies to protect public safety and outlining facilities and services that will serve the emergency needs of the City. This Safety Element indicates the location of known hazard areas and available evacuation routes. It indicates peak water supply requirements, minimum road standards, brush clearance requirements, and other factors affecting safety procedures. Finally, the Element addresses other natural hazards and disasters that may occur in the City.

### Early Efforts to Annex La Habra Heights

La Habra's attempt to annex portions of the East Heights caused quite a stir among residents of the East Heights in the 1970's. The Mayor of La Habra contended that their fire and police departments frequently assisted La Habra Heights pending the arrival of Los Angeles County fire and police personnel. This was unfortunately true in some instances, since the nearest Los Angeles County Fire Station's response time was 15 minutes. The "East Heights" residents were concerned and a La Habra City Council meeting was packed, with standing room only. Both sides of the issue were discussed, sometimes emotionally. Despite that participation, the La Habra City Council authorized a request to the County to alter the border between the Counties so that annexation could take place. At the County Hearing on the matter, our Supervisor, Pete Schabarum, along with all the other Supervisors, denied the request to change the boundary line. Annexation to La Habra was now impossible.

## Issues and Policies

The major issues to be addressed in the Safety Element for La Habra Heights are summarized in this section.

- The hillside areas that comprise most of La Habra Heights pose wildfire, landslide, erosion, flood, and debris flow hazards. Programs that will be effective in reducing the level of risk, particularly from fire, must be regularly reviewed, continued, and strengthened.



## Safety Element

- The geology of the region largely determines the presence of natural hazards in La Habra Heights. Seismic hazards are created by the Whittier fault and the more than 95 potentially active faults in the Los Angeles region. Other earthquake faults besides the Whittier fault that could affect La Habra Heights include the Elsinore/Chino fault, the Elysian Park Fold and Thrust fault Belt, Newport-Inglewood, Sierra Madre, Palos Verdes, San Jacinto, San Andreas, and Norwalk faults. Hazards associated with earthquakes include surface rupture, ground failure, slope failure, liquefaction, ground motion, structural collapse, and infrastructure damage. The 1987 earthquake centered in the nearby Whittier Narrows area has given the City recent experience with an earthquake disaster.
- Fire, crime, vehicular accidents, and hazardous material accidents are man-made hazards in the area. Electrical systems, power lines, gas lines, oil lines, oil tanks, and other facilities have a potential for fire as well as contamination. Crime undermines the safety and security of the community. In La Habra Heights, the majority of crime consists of petty theft, residential burglary, auto theft, and vehicle burglary.
- The City's law enforcement agency, the City Fire Department, paramedic and ambulance service, and hospitals in neighboring communities provide emergency services for local residents. The City's Emergency Response Plan needs to be updated periodically. Public awareness programs can aid in reducing injury and property damage during disaster and emergencies by informing and educating citizens of potential hazards before they happen.

### Early Firefighting in "the Heights"

Prior to 1942, the nearest fire station to "the Heights" was located in San Dimas. During this period, the method of fighting fires involved the use of crews equipped with water buckets and wet sacks to beat back the fire until crews from the San Dimas station arrived.

The aforementioned issues provide the basis for the policies included in the Safety Element. The policies included in the Safety Element respond to the different safety concerns that are present in the City. The policies established by the City address protection from fire, automobile safety, crime hazards, the provision of adequate safety services, the protection from seismic and other natural hazards, and the regulation of hazardous materials use and disposal. These policies are intended to prevent hazardous conditions, to protect residents from harm, and to prepare the City in the event of unavoidable disasters.

The unique beauty and character of La Habra Heights result largely from its winding roads, natural landform, and densely vegetated hills and valleys. The hills and valleys, in turn, result from the underlying tectonic activity. Residential lots are large, with substantial portions left ungraded. Access to homes is often through a series of narrow, winding public and private roads and driveways, often poorly marked. The community is 90 percent built out, with the average home being over 40 years old. As a result, limited opportunity exists to redress some of these infrastructure hazards through controls on new development.

### Issue - Fire Hazards

The dense vegetation found throughout La Habra Heights, coupled with very steep slopes, results in increased threat of wildfire. The entire City of La Habra Heights is located within a Zone 4 Fire Hazard designation. The Zone 4 designation is applied by the Los Angeles County Fire Marshall in accordance with the California Fire Code, and denotes areas of Very High Fire Hazard Severity. This designation applies to areas containing steep slopes, high fuel loads, and fire conducive climate. Steep canyons are largely undeveloped and, as a consequence, are often densely packed with native and exotic plant species.

**Fire Department Before Incorporation**

The nearest County fire station experienced a 15 minute response time. Our volunteers usually had a fire under control before the County personnel arrived. Supervisor Kenneth Hahn attempted to force our community into the County Fire District and eliminate our volunteer effort. Our Supervisor, Pete Schabaram successfully resisted this attempt. However, the Board of Supervisors adopted the policy of including any parcel on which development of four or more houses into the Fire District. Patches of "Fire District" parcels began to proliferate but our volunteers continued to answer all calls and suppressed fire until the County Fire personnel arrived. Inevitably, some "turf" arguments did occur.

The local water distribution system generally meets all capacity and distribution requirements. However, total storage capacity is presently reported to be 30 percent less than the Metropolitan Water District recommendation. Further, the water system's peak delivery capability meets the City requirement of 750 gallons per minute (gpm) for two hours but does not meet County requirements of 1,500 gpm for two hours.

The age of the community has resulted in mature stands of essentially "wild" trees and shrubs. The fuel load in these areas can become extreme. Further, unmaintained brush along roadways presents a starting point for larger fires. Finally, narrow, steep, poorly identified and sharply curved roads and driveways are the norm, increasing the difficulty in responding to fires and initiating evacuation.

**Goal 12.** Reduce potential fire hazard and recognize geological hazards.

**Safety Element Policy 1.** The City, through its Fire and Public Works Departments, shall continuously and vigorously enforce a program of brush and grass clearance as required by law on all lands, public and private, developed and undeveloped, along roadways and around any structure to such distance as established by the City.

**Safety Element Policy 2.** Building design standards for both new and significant remodeling projects shall incorporate aggressive fire prevention and suppression designs in accordance with Fire Zone 4 standards.

**Safety Element Policy 3.** Fire Department equipment and personnel training should be specific to the narrow, steep, winding, dark, and poorly marked streets and driveways of La Habra Heights.

**Safety Element Policy 4.** The City will continue to ensure that the Fire Department has the resources adequate to comply with response times established by the City and the Fire Department.

**Safety Element Policy 5.** Street names and residential addresses shall be visible and unambiguous.

**Safety Element Policy 6.** The City shall work closely with the La Habra Heights County Water District to ensure adequate fire flow and reserve capacity for all areas of the City.

**Safety Element Policy 7.** The City shall monitor the diligence of Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority brush clearance and fire prevention activities on their properties, within and adjacent to the City.

**Safety Element Policy 8.** The Fire Department shall maintain an inventory of all swimming pools and other significant water sources within the City and attempt to obtain owner consent to utilize such sources in the event of emergency need. Further, the City shall encourage owners of such water sources to obtain pumps adequate to provide local fire protection in an emergency.

**Safety Element Policy 9.** The City should consider the adequacy and location of the Fire



## Safety Element

Department facilities in the City, in light of response times.

**Safety Element Policy 10.** The Fire Department shall review all development plans to ensure construction methods and activities are in accordance with standards and are not conducted in periods of high fire hazard.

### Beginning of the Volunteer Fire Department

In the spring of 1942, Clement E. Levins became the "father" of the fire department by suggesting to a number of friends that fire protection was the number one priority of "The Heights." The fire department was established on October 8, 1942. A fund raiser was held to purchase the department's first fire truck. This first truck (a Seagrave fire truck) was purchased in 1945. In 1946 an Army surplus fire truck was added to the inventory followed shortly by the acquisition of a 4-wheel drive jeep water carrier.

## Issue - Geologic Hazards

La Habra Heights is located in the western Puente Hills, which was formed of seabed deposits uplifted and faulted over at least the last several hundred thousand years. The Whittier Fault traverses the entire City from east to west. The consequence of the geologic history is seen in the steep and, in many cases, landslide-susceptible slopes. Further, the proximity of the Whittier Fault provides energy sufficient to liquefy susceptible low-lying soils, trigger landslides or significantly damage structures. The surface geology is complicated by its geologic history, and soils susceptible to shrink-swell behavior or erosional sensitivity are common. These geologic conditions present numerous constraints to development. Unreinforced concrete or masonry structures are particularly susceptible to failure during earthquakes. Fortunately, an inventory of non-residential structures in the City reveals there are no unreinforced masonry structures.

**Safety Element Policy 11.** Development that requires load-bearing foundations shall include site-specific analysis of underlying soil

conditions and the potential seismic effect on the structure.

**Safety Element Policy 12.** The City shall maintain a program to encourage all existing residences to have automatic seismic-safety shut off valves on the gas supply lines.

**Safety Element Policy 13.** Development shall be constrained in areas of historic landslides or in slope easement zones identified by the USGS, California Department of Conservation or by L.A. County (refer to Exhibit 5-1).

**Safety Element Policy 14.** The City shall maintain a map showing all constrained building zones including the Alquist Priolo Zone and other zones adjacent to fault traces discovered during construction of other projects.

**Safety Element Policy 15.** The City shall regularly inform the community of the proper strategy for seismic risk reduction to their residences.

**Safety Element Policy 16.** The City shall promote the study, adoption, and review of regulations designed to ensure appropriate and safe development in hazardous areas.

## Issue - Flood Hazards

The City of La Habra Heights has no known areas of severe flooding. Therefore, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides no mapped flood zones requiring discussion. However, the geologic history and terrain characteristics of La Habra Heights resulted in numerous valleys and other areas where channeled water may pose localized flood hazards. Further, the City has only limited infrastructure designed to efficiently contain floodwater. It is not economically feasible to develop such facilities in the already developed community. Areas in which localized flood hazard or ponding may result can be delineated



based upon topography and size of watershed, as shown in Exhibit 5-1.

**Safety Element Policy 17.** The City shall maintain a map showing flood constrained building zones. Development in such areas shall include appropriate hydrologic analysis and remediation measures.

**Safety Element Policy 18.** The City shall request that the La Habra Heights County Water District provide analysis of local flood (inundation) potential from each of its reservoir tanks.

**Safety Element Policy 19.** New impervious coverage shall drain into on-site impoundments that are adequate to contain all runoff as required by law.

### **Issue - Driving Hazards**

The agricultural history of La Habra Heights, coupled with the natural terrain and lower-density development has resulted in roadways that are narrow, winding, with limited sight distance and no shoulders. The roads are essentially "lanes" or "country roads" as contrasted to the typical Southern California residential streets.

Motorists may drive down the center of the many one-way lanes, abruptly encountering another vehicle around blind corners. Brush and debris can encroach onto the roadway, further limiting drivable width. Any pavement damage encourages drivers to move away from the damage and into the path of oncoming vehicles. Roadway shoulders may be on the edge of steep slopes and can be broken down by oversize or long wheelbase vehicles. In addition, the road edges serve as storm water channels and damage to these water guides will result in further damage to the integrity of both the pavements and to the structural capacity of the edge of the roadway as erosion occurs. Finally, the lack of shoulders requires that pedestrians, bike riders, and equestrians use the roadways as

paths. In most areas, there is not room for these users to get off of the lane in the face of oncoming traffic. Therefore, the roads do double duty as paths and must thus be classified as lanes or country roads with multi-user traffic and appropriate speed limits.

Regional growth must not be permitted to result in "cut-through" traffic onto La Habra Height's lanes and country roads. The routes without shoulders and limited sight distances are adequate only for residential traffic. The existing residential developments, coupled with the underlying geologic conditions, preclude any significant roadway widening or straightening to ameliorate these constraints.

**Goal 10.** Assure that local and regional traffic demands are accommodated in a manner consistent with the unique rural environment of La Habra Heights.

**Safety Element Policy 20.** The City shall continuously enforce a program of brush and debris clearance along the edges of all roadways, public and private.

**Safety Element Policy 21.** The City shall regularly inspect all roads and make provisions for the timely repair of damage to existing pavement that could result in the loss of driving surface.

**Safety Element Policy 22.** The City shall prohibit the use of roadways for the routine disposal of water such as that from swimming pools, filters, washing machines, irrigation systems, and other household devices.

**Safety Element Policy 23.** The City's policing agency shall enforce speed limits on all roads.

**Safety Element Policy 24.** The City shall continue to study and implement traffic calming on Hacienda Road and Harbor Boulevard and other roadways.



## Safety Element

**Safety Element Policy 25.** The City shall strongly resist any expansion of traffic loads and prohibit the expansion in the number of lanes and lane widths on both Hacienda Road and Harbor Boulevard. The through traffic that would result on the lanes and country roads of the City would cause significant ecological damage and increased traffic-related accidents and roadway deterioration, further increasing the risk of traffic accidents.

**Safety Element Policy 26.** The City, or designee, shall monitor any increase in the level of traffic on local lanes and roads resulting from spill-over congestion on Hacienda Road and Harbor Boulevard and develop preventative or remedial measures.

**Safety Element Policy 27.** The City will develop an ordinance to define, prohibit, and penalize nuisances created by illegal street and/or roadside parking or, if found appropriate, to ban such parking entirely in all or part of the City to the extent permitted by law.

**Safety Element Policy 28.** The City shall strongly discourage non-residential uses to limit the growth of traffic.

### Other Safety Objectives

La Habra Heights, like all cities, has objectives to maintain a safe environment for its residents. Issues include crime, natural disasters, hazardous waste pollution, and availability of emergency service.

### Issue - Crime and Police Services

La Habra Heights, being a small residential community, has a low crime rate. The City has effectively utilized contract law enforcement services since incorporation. As adjacent areas continue to increase in population, the probability of crime due to non-residents, also increases.

**Safety Element Policy 29.** The City shall review law enforcement services no less than annually, to determine the adequacy and quality of service and should consider a mechanism to encourage resident input to the City regarding their satisfaction with the services.

**Safety Element Policy 30.** The City shall continue to vigorously publicize and support neighborhood watch programs.

**Safety Element Policy 31.** The City shall continue to support active volunteer programs to assist law enforcement officials in crime prevention and law enforcement throughout the City, including in open space areas.

**Safety Element Policy 32.** The City shall continue its program of rapid removal of any graffiti to discourage crime and gang presence in the City.

**Safety Element Policy 33.** The City shall monitor the diligence of the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority, and other public agencies in policing their properties within and adjacent to the City.

**Safety Element Policy 34.** The City shall oppose regional land uses and facilities that may attract large numbers of people and develop ordinances to address their negative impacts (such as traffic, crime or fire hazards).

### Issue - Natural Disasters

Regional fire or seismic events can damage large areas of the City within a short time. Essential services such as water, fire protection, and even access to supplies could be significantly diminished for extended periods. Furthermore, emergency services may be overburdened or totally unavailable from outside sources.

**Safety Element Policy 35.** The City shall actively promote and support the continued



operation of the La Habra Heights Emergency Preparedness Committee.

**Safety Element Policy 36.** The City shall, on an annual basis, review its emergency medical and/or paramedic capabilities, including provision of increased emergency medical technicians (EMT) and paramedic capabilities within the Fire Department.

**Safety Element Policy 37.** Promote emergency preparedness through public education and awareness programs on safety, earthquake preparedness, crime prevention, and fire hazard prevention.

**Safety Element Policy 38.** The City should identify emergency resources including doctors and other medical personnel living within La Habra Heights who could be available in an emergency if the City is isolated from outside support.

**Safety Element Policy 39.** The City Fire Department and law enforcement agency shall, during emergencies, maintain the designated major thoroughfares as evacuation routes (refer to Exhibit 5-1).

**Safety Element Policy 40.** The City shall yearly mail, or otherwise make available to all residents, a summary of emergency preparedness plans and procedures.

### **Issue - Hazardous Wastes**

Hazardous materials present health risks due to contamination, prolonged exposure or potential explosion. While there are safety precautions for hazardous materials use and disposal, the mishandling or accidental release of these materials can compromise the health and safety of residents. The City is home to numerous oil production facilities as well as oil and gas lines (high and low pressure).

**Safety Element Policy 41.** Support the enforcement of state and federal

environmental pollution control laws. The City shall work with the Fire Department to require any hazardous materials users and generators to prepare procedures for responding to accidental spills and emergencies.

**Safety Element Policy 42.** Promote the proper disposal of hazardous materials. At the same time, publicize and support programs to allow residents to properly dispose of small quantities of household hazardous wastes.

**Safety Element Policy 43.** The City shall designate routes for trucks carrying hazardous materials and, to the extent permitted by law, prohibit those trucks from using City lanes, country roads, and Hacienda Road (refer to Exhibit 4-1).

**Safety Element Policy 44.** The City, through the La Habra Heights Fire Department, will work with the adjacent cities on emergency response plans for hazardous material accidents.

**Safety Element Policy 45.** The City Fire Department should perform twice-yearly inspections of resource facilities to minimize the chance of hazardous waste contamination or fire.

**Safety Element Policy 46.** The City shall require each oil and gas facility operator to provide long-term remediation plans and guarantees for their facilities and monitor each operator's compliance with applicable State regulations.

### **Issue - Emergency Services**

The primary sources of emergency services appropriate to La Habra Heights are the Fire Department Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) teams, outside ambulance and paramedic services, and the City's law enforcement agency. Medical emergencies are the most commonly needed emergency response.



**Safety Element Policy 47.** Continue to support the Fire Department efforts in the provision of emergency medical services. Consider the establishment of in-City ambulance and paramedic services.

**Safety Element Policy 48.** Continue to publicize the proper use of the 911 emergency dispatch service.

**Safety Element Policy 49.** The City shall publicize and support programs to provide clearly visible street and address identification for all structures.

**Safety Element Policy 50.** The City should consider changing its zip code to prevent confusion during emergencies or other disasters when outside emergency response services shall be required.

**Safety Element Policy 51.** La Habra Heights shall resist the expansion of regional traffic loads throughout the City because of the threat to public health and safety that would result from the increased response times for emergency vehicles.

### Issue - Government Mandates and Interference

The non-commercial nature of the City of La Habra Heights limits resources that are available to provide services critical to its residents. Government mandates imposed by state and national governments require expenditures by the City on programs not directly beneficial to residents. The result is that services that residents expect to be paid out of taxes, such as road maintenance and emergency services, must be paid by special assessments or other means.

**Safety Element Policy 52.** Strongly support efforts to minimize state and federal mandates that interfere with local service delivery and seek reimbursement for such mandates pursuant to state law.

### Why Become an Incorporated City?

One would think that after a massive effort involving more than 100 citizens crafting a Community General Plan, all would be peaceful and happy. However, several problems were not solved. First, our Volunteer Fire Department was weakened by the lack of new or near new fire fighting equipment, including reliable fire engines. Only about one-half of the citizens contributed annually and the Department had no ability to finance purchase of needed equipment. The Los Angeles County Fire Department was increasingly responsible for fire and medical aid as parcels of 4 or more units were created. It appeared that a successful attack on the volunteer effort could be soon made. Second, the home burglary rate skyrocketed due to (a) large distances between homes, (b) homes concealed from neighbors view by foliage, and (c) only 8 hours of Sheriff patrol time. The word was out that we were vulnerable to successful daytime burglary. Third, County Building and Safety (where building permits are issued) was moved from Whittier to downtown L.A. Some builders did not bother to make that trip, and building inspection personnel were distantly located. Two prior attempts to incorporate failed since voting rights were on the basis of property values. However, the statute concerning voting rights was changed to one vote per registered voter. Was this the time to act?

### Safety Plan

The graphic depiction of the City of La Habra Heights official policy relative to environmental hazards is presented on Exhibit 5-1, Safety Plan. The development policies and standards described earlier in the Safety Element provide the foundation for Exhibit 5-1.

This map illustrates those areas within the City that are impacted by natural and man-made hazards that should be considered in future land use planning. The information illustrated in the Safety Plan includes existing seismic hazards, soil hazards and flood hazards that impact the community. These hazards are identified to alert the public to the naturally-occurring hazards that are to be mitigated in order to reduce the risk to life and property in the City. The key components of the Safety Plan include the following:



## Element



**Seismic Risk Study Zones.** The Safety Plan indicates those areas that have been identified by the State of California Geological Survey as being located within areas that could be subject to liquefaction or landslides resulting from an earthquake. Future development within these areas must conform to the specific requirements outlined in the Government Code. The State also requires that Safety Elements prepared by local governments consider the information contained in the applicable seismic hazard map.

**Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zone.** Because the Whittier Fault is considered to be an active fault, land uses along the fault trace are subject to the requirements of the Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zone. If a property is undeveloped, a geotechnical study will be required as part of the development review process. If a property is already developed, the disclosure of the fault's location with respect to the property is required. For new development, any new building construction must be "set-back" a specified distance from the fault trace.

**Potential Local Flooding.** While the City is not included within any designated 100-year or 500-year flood zone, those areas that may be subject to localized flooding are shown in Exhibit 5-1.

**Evacuation Routes.** The four key roadways that would be used in the event of an order for emergency evacuation, are delineated in Exhibit 5-1. The designated emergency evacuation routes include Hacienda Road, Harbor Boulevard, East Road, and West Road.

**Emergency Shelters.** In the event of a major damaging earthquake or other emergency, there are a number of buildings that have been designated as emergency shelters. These include the City Hall, the Community Center, the City Park, the Hacienda Golf Club, and local churches.

**Hazardous Materials Transport Route.** The only roadway in the City where there is a potential for the transport of hazardous materials is Harbor Boulevard.

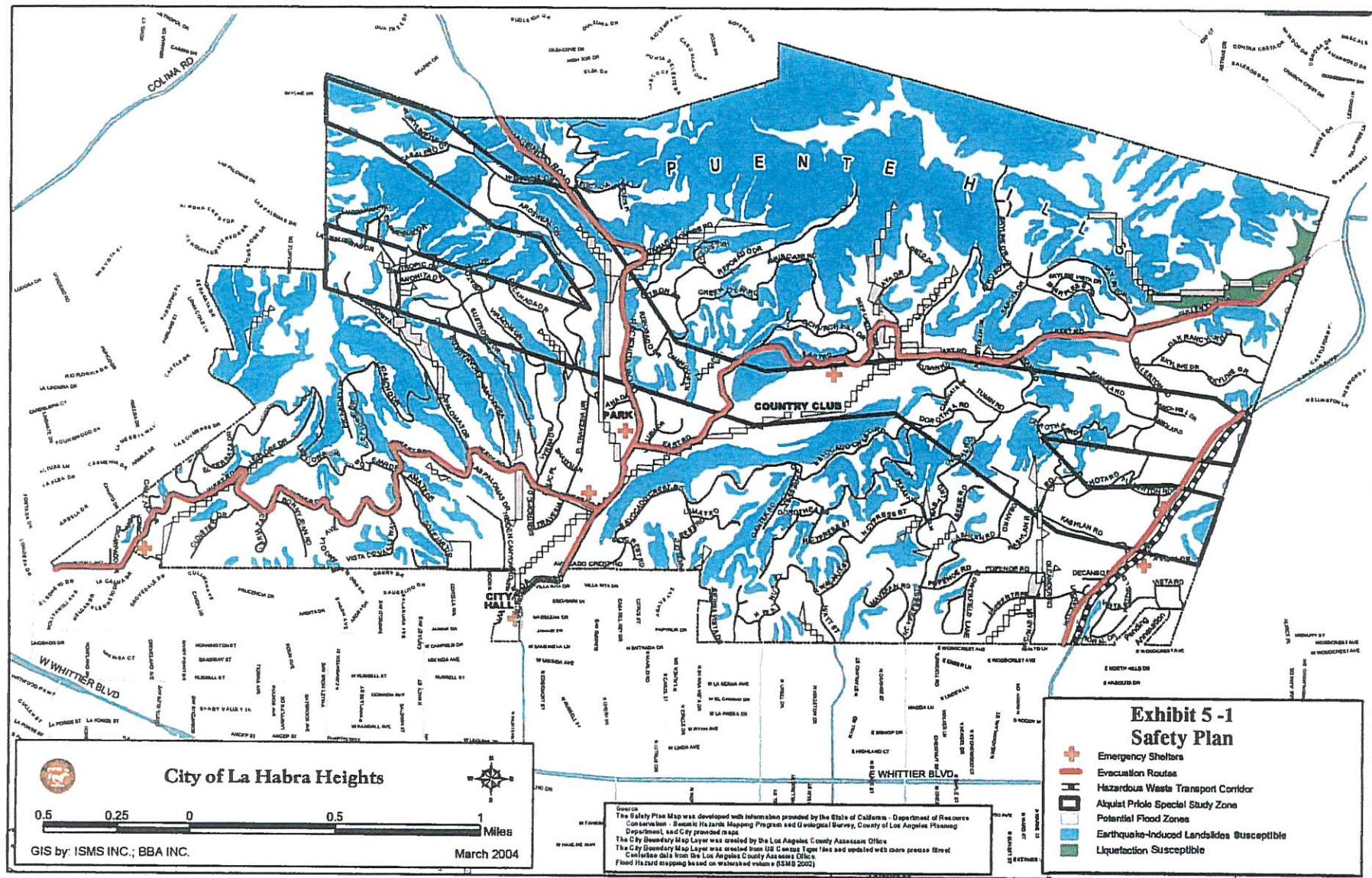


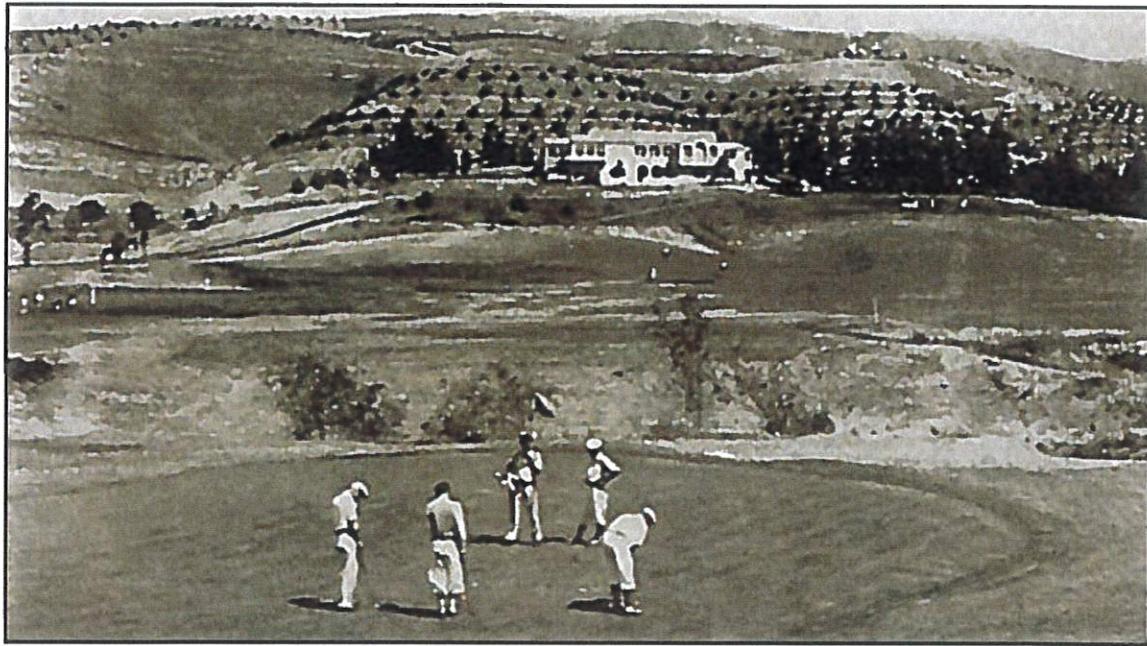


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**Safety Element**

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## **Section 6 – Noise Element**

### **City of La Habra Heights General Plan**





## Introduction

The Noise Element of the La Habra Heights General Plan establishes guidelines for controlling noise in the City. The Noise Element examines the characteristics and effects of noise, describes state and federal guidelines related to noise control, evaluates the existing noise environment, and discusses how the General Plan will impact the future predicted noise environment. The Noise Element also identifies sensitive land uses and noise sources so mitigation measures may be applied. Most residents view the relatively quiet and noise-free environment of the City as an important amenity that must be preserved. In response to this desire, the following guiding principle was considered in preparation of this Element:

*"The existing relatively quiet and minimal noise environment of our City will be preserved."*

As mandated by the California Government Code 65302(f), this Noise Element follows the guidelines established by the State Department of Health Services, Office of Noise Control. The Government Code requires that the Element analyze and project noise levels for:

- Highways and freeways;
- Primary arterials and major local streets;
- Passenger and freight main-line railroad operations and ground rapid transit systems;
- Commercial and general aviation, heliport, helistop, and military airport operations;
- Aircraft over-flights, jet engine test stands, and all other ground facilities and maintenance functions related to airport operations;
- Local industrial plants, including, but not limited to, railroad classification yards; and,

- Other ground stationary sources identified by local agencies as contributing to the community noise environment.

## Issues and Policies

From the aforementioned list of potential noise sources, the major source of noise in the City continues to be traffic noise along the two north-south through roads, Hacienda Road and Harbor Boulevard. The impact of these two roadways on our City's environment is evident from the noise survey included in this Element.

Noise contours were used to illustrate noise levels in areas adjacent to major roadways. The contour lines recorded in CNEL (Community Noise Equivalent Level as defined below) units indicate a specific noise level (55 CNEL, 60 CNEL, 65 CNEL, and 70 CNEL) along a roadway in the same way weather maps use lines (referred to as isolines) to indicate areas with a specific air temperature. The noise contour maps are used to identify existing traffic noise levels in the City along these roadways as well as future noise levels anticipated from projected traffic volumes.

### What is a CNEL and Leq?

The CNEL (Community Noise Equivalent Level) is based upon 24, one-hour noise measurements. The average noise levels for the late evening and early morning hours (the period between 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM) are weighted 10 decibels. This weighting penalty is to take into account an individual's increased sensitivity to noise during the early morning and late evening periods.

The Leq (Noise Level Equivalent or Equivalent Sound Level) is the average of the sound level energy for a one-hour period and employs an A-weighted decibel correction that corresponds to the optimal frequency response of the human ear. It is a method of quantifying noise levels and is used to determine the value of a steady-state sound, which has the same A-weighted sound energy as that contained in the time-varying sound. The Equivalent Sound Level is a single value of sound level for any desired duration, which includes all of the time-varying sound energy in the measurement period.



Our City's previous General Plan noted that Fullerton Road, a north-south through route across the City, was planned to be replaced by an extension of Harbor Boulevard. That activity has since been completed and now Harbor Boulevard is a four lane divided arterial roadway on our City's eastern border. Fullerton Road, once an arterial, is again a rural country road providing access primarily to the residents of La Habra Heights and those that traverse our streets going to the Hacienda Golf Club.

However, the extension of Harbor Boulevard has led to increased traffic volumes and vehicle speeds with a corresponding increase in noise levels. The traffic noise along this roadway represents the greatest source of noise affecting the community.

The California Government Code states, "...the General Plan and the parts and elements thereof shall comprise an integrated and internally consistent and compatible statement of policies." This Element contains policies and programs designed to alleviate noise in the City. This Element also indicates those areas of the City that may be exposed to high levels of noise. This Element provides the framework for those areas where planning and development must consider the ambient noise environment in the formulation of development plans.

The Noise Element is closely related to the Circulation, Land Use, Environmental Resource Management, and Housing Elements of the La Habra Heights General Plan, particularly in that development and traffic have a direct bearing on noise in the local environment.

### **Issue – Traffic Noise**

As indicated previously, the main source of noise in the City is traffic on roadways. Traffic noise affects noise-sensitive land uses located along and near these routes. Because of the primarily low-density residential nature of La Habra Heights and the rural nature of the local roads, future development in the City is not expected to result in major increases in traffic volumes and noise. However, increases in traffic

volumes on our two through north-south roadways are expected to come from growth outside the City, resulting in increased noise levels along these roadways. As a result, the following policies are recommended as a means to control noise in our community:

**Noise Element Policy 1.** When noise levels exceed acceptable community noise standards, mitigating actions should be implemented.

**Noise Element Policy 2.** Introduce traffic calming techniques that will reduce the average vehicle speed on our two north-south roadways, Hacienda Road and Harbor Boulevard, which will reduce the associated ambient noise from these sources. Discourage changes in the design and use of these roadways, and the system of roadways tributary to them, that would increase noise impacts. Finally, take appropriate measures to protect adjacent residential areas from the exacerbation of noise impacts associated with these roads.

**Noise Element Policy 3.** Enhance, as necessary, our building codes and appropriate building techniques for homes and other structures impacted by the noise levels along our two major north-south roadways, Hacienda Road and Harbor Boulevard.

**Noise Element Policy 4.** Continue to develop and enhance regulations to protect residents from objectionable noise emanating from private property sources.

**Noise Element Policy 5.** Oil field equipment must employ best available control technology (BACT) to reduce noise levels.

### **Legislated Policies**

A number of federal, state, and local agencies have adopted standards and recommended noise criteria to protect people in both the working and home environments. A summary of major existing noise regulations are provided on the following page:



**Federal Highway Works Administration.** The *Federal Highway Works Administration (FHWA)* has established noise exposure standards for different land uses. These standards apply to the planning and design of federally-funded highway projects, and are expressed in terms of both Equivalent Noise Level (Leq) and L<sub>10</sub>.

**Department of Housing and Urban Development.** The *Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)* has adopted environmental criteria and standards for determining project acceptability and necessary mitigation measures to ensure that projects assisted by HUD provide a suitable living environment. Standards include maximum levels of 65 dB for residential areas.

**Noise Control Act.** The *Noise Control Act of 1972* authorized the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to publish descriptive data on the effects of noise and establish levels of sound "requisite to protect the public welfare with an adequate margin of safety." These levels are separated into health (hearing loss levels), and welfare (annoyance levels), with an adequate margin of safety.

**California Vehicle Code.** The *California Vehicle Code* establishes noise standards for those areas not regulated by the federal government. State standards regulate the noise levels of motor vehicles and motorboats; establish noise impact boundaries around airports; regulate freeway noise affecting classrooms; and identifies noise insulation standards. The California Vehicle Code sets operational noise limits according to the type of vehicle and date of manufacture.

**California Administrative Code, Title 24.** Sound Transmission Control Standards contained in the *California Administrative Code, Title 24, Building Standards, Chapter 2.35*, outline noise insulation performance standards to protect persons within new hotels, motels, apartment houses, and dwellings other than detached single-family dwellings. These standards require an interior

noise level of 45 dB (CNEL) or less for residential projects. For residential buildings or structures within the 60 dB (CNEL) contour of an airport, vehicular, or industrial noise source, an acoustical analysis must be conducted to show compliance with the standards.

The following additional programs will either be continued or implemented as part of this General Plan.

**Building Code Review.** The City will periodically review, and if necessary, modify the Uniform Building Code (UBC) to reflect current technology and regulations. Review of policies and procedures will be undertaken by designated individuals to identify appropriate changes that should be considered. Following this review, amendments to the City's Building Code will be made as required.

**Code Compliance.** The Building Code contains regulations regarding construction techniques and materials that may be effective in eliminating or reducing noise levels. Code enforcement will also ensure that the City's noise control ordinance is adhered to. For this reason, ongoing code enforcement efforts are an important implementation program within the Noise Element.

**Environmental Review.** The City shall continue to evaluate the noise impacts of new development and provide mitigation measures prior to development approval, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Environmental review shall be provided for those projects that will have a potential to adversely impact the environment. In compliance with CEQA, the City shall also assign responsibilities for the verification of the implementation of mitigation measures.



## Noise Mitigation Plan

### Characteristics of Noise

Noise levels may be described using a number of methods designed to evaluate the "loudness" of a particular activity. The most commonly used units for measuring the level of sound include the decibel (dB, dBA), equivalent noise level (Leq), and the CNEL (Community Noise Equivalent Level). The predominant sound level criteria in use in California at the present time utilizes the Leq and the CNEL. Noise levels associated with typical activities are summarized in the box "What is a decibel?" below and are illustrated in Exhibit 6-1.

#### What is a decibel?

The decibel is a measurement of sound level pressure. The noise levels associated with various activities are provided below:

##### Noise Level Activity in Decibels

Very quiet night	10 dB
Library	35 dB
Refrigerator	45 dB
Light traffic	45 dB
Air conditioner	60 dB
Freeway traffic (50 ft.)	80 dB

The dB (decibel) is the basic unit used for measuring the intensity of sound. Zero on the decibel scale represents the lowest limit of sound that can be heard, while the eardrum may rupture at 140 dB.

The dBA (decibel-A-Weighted) is a unit of measurement of sound level corrected to the A-weighted scale, as defined in ANSI S1.4-1971 (R1976), using a reference level of 20 micropascals (0.00002 Newton per square meter). Another definition of dBA is a unit of measure for decibels. It is a logarithmic measurement; every 3 dB increase represents a doubling of the sound pressure. The "A" in dBA indicates that the measurement was taken with an A-weighted scale; sound pressure varies across the audible spectrum, and the A-

weighted scale approximates the human ear's sensitivity to various frequencies.

The Leq (Noise Level Equivalent or Equivalent Sound Level) is the average of the sound level energy for a one-hour period and also employs an A-weighted decibel correction that corresponds to the optimal frequency response of the human ear. It is a method of quantifying noise and is used to determine the value of a steady-state sound that has the same A-weighted sound energy as that contained in the time-varying sound.

The Equivalent Sound Level (Leq) is a single value of sound level for any desired duration, which includes all of the time-varying sound energy in the measurement period. The major virtue of the Leq is that it correlates reasonably well with the effects of noise on people, even for wide variations in environmental sound levels and time patterns. It is used only when the durations and levels of sound, and not their times of occurrence (day or night), are relevant. It is easily measurable by available equipment. It is also the measurement descriptor of the total outdoor noise environment, the Day-Night Sound Level (Ldn).

The Ldn is the A-weighted equivalent sound level for a 24-hour period with an additional 10 dB weighting imposed on the equivalent sound levels occurring during nighttime hours (10 pm to 7 am). Hence, an environment that has a measured daytime equivalent sound level of 60 dB and a measured nighttime equivalent sound level of 0 dB, can be said to have a weighted nighttime sound level of 60 dB (50 db [actual] + 10 dB [weighting]) and an Ldn of 60 dB.

The CNEL (Community Noise Level Equivalent) is based upon 24 one-hour Leq measurements. The average noise levels for the late evening and early morning hours (the period between 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM) are weighted 10 decibels. This weighting penalty is to take into account an individual's increased sensitivity to noise during the early morning and late evening periods.



Noise ordinances are typically specified in terms of the percent noise levels. Ordinances are designed to protect people from noise sources such as music, machinery and vehicular traffic. Noise ordinances do not apply to motor vehicle noise on public streets or other transportation related noise. The State or Federal government preempts regulations governing traffic-related noise regulations. Local governments are empowered to enforce these regulations.

### Noise and Land Use Compatibility Standards

The State Office of Noise Control has prepared *Guidelines for the Preparation and Content of Noise Elements of General Plans*. These guidelines (shown in Exhibit 6-2) provide standards related to the compatibility of noise-sensitive land uses in areas subject to noise levels of 55 to 80 dB CNEL or Ldn. Since the majority of the City is developed as single-family residential development, only those standards that apply to such uses are relevant in this Noise Element. Ambient noise levels in residential areas are normally considered unacceptable if they exceed 70 dB CNEL. Ambient noise levels for residential land uses between 60-70 dB CNEL are generally unacceptable. Conditionally acceptable noise levels are between 55-70 dB CNEL.

Other guidelines governing land use and noise compatibility have been prepared by a number of federal and state agencies including the Federal Highway Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the American National Standards Institute and the State of California. These guidelines, presented in the following paragraphs, are all based upon cumulative noise criteria such as Leq, Ldn or CNEL.

**Environmental Protection Agency.** In March 1974, the EPA published "Information on Levels of Environmental Noise Requisite to Protect Public Health and Welfare with an Adequate Margin of Safety" (EPA 550/9-74-004). This report indicates that 55 Ldn is the requisite level with an adequate margin of

safety for areas with outdoor uses, including residential and recreational areas. The EPA "levels document" does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation, but identifies safe levels of environmental noise exposure without consideration for economic cost for achieving these levels.

**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).** The FHWA has adopted and published noise abatement criteria for highway construction projects. The FHWA noise abatement criterion established an exterior noise goal for residential land uses of 67 Leq and an interior goal for residences of 52 Leq. The noise abatement criterion applies to private yard areas and assumes that typical wood frame homes with windows open provide a 10 dB noise reduction (outdoor to indoor) and 20 dB noise reduction with windows closed.

**State of California.** The State requires every city and county to adopt noise elements as part of their general plans. Such noise elements must contain a noise/land use compatibility matrix. A recommended (but not mandatory) matrix is presented in the "Guidelines for the Preparation and Content of Noise Elements of the General Plan," (Office of Noise Control, California Department of Health, February 1976). These guidelines are indicated in this Noise Element.

**City of La Habra Heights.** The City has ordinances that regulate potential construction noise sources (allowable day and hour of construction). These existing ordinances should be reviewed in light of this Noise Element.

### Sources of Noise Affecting the City of La Habra Heights

Noise may affect all types of land uses and activities although some are more sensitive to noise levels than others. Land uses identified as noise sensitive in La Habra Heights include the private elementary school, long-term care facilities, and those areas of the City that are



developed as residential. The sources of noise in La Habra Heights fall into the following basic categories: traffic noise from the distant freeways; aircraft over flights, traffic on local streets and the two north/south through roadways, and stationary sources. Each of these sources and their impacts on the noise environment of La Habra Heights are summarized in the following paragraphs.

**Freeways.** Portions of the City that may be affected by freeway noise include those areas with a direct line-of-sight of a freeway. Noise from the SR-57, SR-60, and SR-91 Freeways are heard in the City.

**Traffic Noise.** Traffic noise on surface streets is a significant source within the community, especially from traffic using Harbor Boulevard and Hacienda Road. The most important variables that may affect traffic noise are the average daily traffic (ADT), travel speeds, and the roadway gradient. Additional factors include the percentage of truck traffic, the time distribution of traffic, and the presence of buildings, landscaping, and topography that would attenuate the traffic noise in the same manner as a sound wall.

**Airports and Heliports.** There are no airports located in La Habra Heights. The nearest general aviation airport is located in Fullerton. During field surveys, aircraft did pass over the City on their landing approach pattern to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). There are no heliports located within the City.

**Railroads.** The City of La Habra Heights does not contain any railroads or spur lines. However, train noise from as far away as Fullerton is audible in the City.

**Stationary Sources.** The City of La Habra Heights is largely developed in residential

uses. As a result, the stationary noise sources are limited to those commonly found in a residential, neighborhood setting. Stationary noise sources include landscaping equipment and resource production equipment.

### Mobile (Traffic) Noise Sources

As indicated previously, the two through north/south roadways in the City serve as a connection for those urban areas located north and south of the Puente Hills. Because of the limited number of north/south connections, these roadways are presently carrying relatively high traffic volumes. For this reason, these two roadways were selected for analysis of existing and future traffic noise.

The existing traffic noise levels from major roadways in the City were computed using the Highway Noise Model published by the Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA Highway Traffic Noise Prediction Model," FHWA-RD-77-108, December 1978). The FHWA model uses traffic volumes, vehicle mix, vehicle speed, and roadway geometry to compute the noise level. The model has been fashioned so that it computes equivalent noise levels in CNEL units for each of the time periods used. Weighting these noise levels and summing them results in the CNEL for the traffic projections used. The traffic mixes and time distributions for the two routes were derived from actual traffic counts. The results of this analysis are shown in Noise Element Table 6-1 and are depicted in Exhibit 6-3.

Table 6-1 indicates the average distance of a noise contour from the roadway centerline. For example, the 55 CNEL noise contour along the southerly segment of Harbor Boulevard extends 2,157 feet on either side of the roadway's centerline, while the 70 CNEL contour extends just beyond the roadway's right-of-way (110 feet).