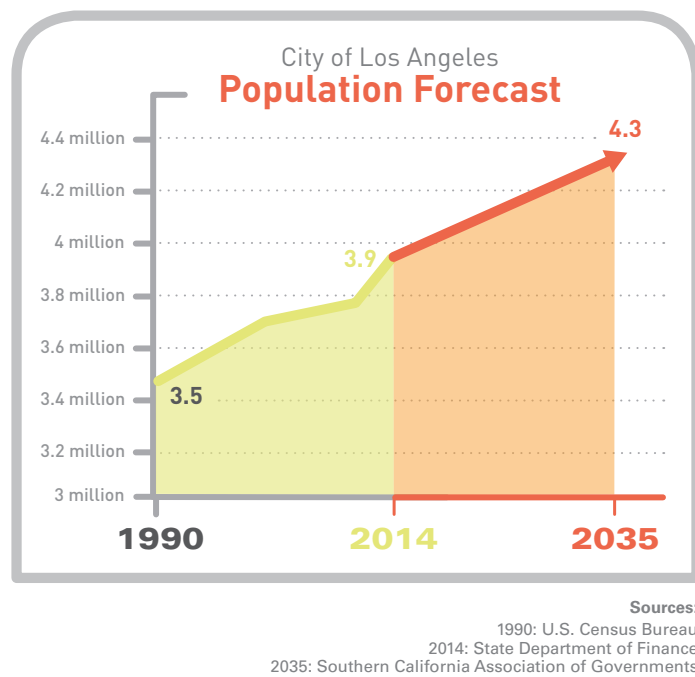


The Long View PLANNING FOR 2035

A Strategic Plan for
Long Range Planning
in Los Angeles
November 2014



With nearly four million people and 469 square miles, Los Angeles is a region unto itself. Due to its sheer size and diversity, the city has developed a unique approach to long range planning that involves a citywide general plan and a community plan for 35 separate areas. The city's planning system also includes smaller, geographically specific plans as well as overlays for unique districts and corridors, all implemented by a cumbersome zoning code last comprehensively updated in 1946.



Over the past few years the Planning Department has successfully completed a number of long range planning efforts. These include the Jordan Downs Transit Village, Cornfield Arroyo-Seco, Bunker Hill, and Warner Center 2035 specific plans, and master plans for the airport and USC. A citywide bicycle plan, an overlay zone to implement the Los Angeles River Master Plan, comprehensive citywide design guidelines, and a certified Housing Element all demonstrate the Department's ability to successfully advance forward-thinking plans and regulations. Furthermore, the Department is rapidly moving two ambitious proposed citywide plans, Mobility Plan 2035 and the Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, through the adoption process.

Community plans are the best way to translate citywide goals into reality and ensure that the aims and aspirations of our neighborhoods are achieved.

Given their importance, the Department launched a program in 2006 to create more robust community plans that would combine policies with zone changes and implementation programs. A total of 13 plan areas were included in this initial launch of what was called the New Community Plan (NCP) program - a work effort of unprecedented scale. Four years later, due to resource and staffing limitations caused by the Great Recession, the NCP program was dialed back and in 2010 six plans were placed on hold.

Under this more modest program the Department achieved City Planning Commission approval last year of four plans and made significant progress on three others - a major accomplishment. Then, in early 2014, a trial court invalidated the Hollywood Community Plan Update, citing inadequacies in its Environmental Impact Report (EIR), a decision with far-reaching implications that has delayed the entire NCP program. Shortly thereafter, the

Department conducted a top-to-bottom program assessment and arrived at four conclusions:

One, there has been a striking mismatch between the scale of the NCP program and the resources devoted to it. Simply put, the program has been underfunded and understaffed.

Second, the toolkit to complete and implement the NCP program has been inadequate. The Department has been saddled with an outdated zoning code not up to the challenge of planning for a 21st century metropolis.

Third, the citywide general plan is outdated, with many elements over 20 years old. As a result, the NCP program has been expected to resolve many issues more appropriately addressed at the citywide level.

Fourth, the NCP program's California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance strategy is overbroad. The current approach could lead to the preparation of 35 stand-alone EIRs, one for each of the city's 35 plan areas - an expensive and litigious path.

Based on this assessment the Department prepared and now submits for the Mayor's consideration a strategic plan for long-range planning in Los Angeles, "The Long View: Planning for 2035." The plan includes nine strategic objectives all aimed toward one overarching goal: accelerating the NCP program, so that all 35 plans can be more quickly updated and all of Los Angeles rezoned.

The linchpin of this strategy is CEQA compliance, and so the Department has drafted a strategy that will dramatically reduce the potential number of separate EIRs that must be prepared and thus the City's exposure to costly litigation.

Four of these nine objectives require added resources and position authorities next fiscal year, an up-front investment that will pay dividends down the line. Accordingly, we have included a few strategic new requests in our budget submittal for FY 2015-16.

From Broadsides to New Community Plans

Community planning has been a way of life in Los Angeles for the past half-century. In the 1970's, the city developed a series of brief community plans called "broadsides." Each broadside was essentially a community vision and regulatory land use map, all compiled into a two-sided, foldable poster. The next effort to update community plans occurred in the 1990's and resulted in longer, 30 to 50 page documents.

Both sets of plans were criticized for not responding to long-standing community concerns and for lacking meaningful implementation. In response, the Department launched the ambitious NCP program, with community plans envisioned to cover not just land use but also circulation, noise, open space, conservation, and safety, plus other topics relevant to the community, including urban design. Additionally, an innovative new implementation tool was devised, the Community Plan Implementation Overlay, to provide more customized zoning and development standards.

Certainly the logic behind this approach was sound. Each community plan area is the size of a small- or medium-sized city, with a population between 50,000 and 250,000. But the complexity of this approach, combined with limited staff resources and insufficient funding in the General Fund, virtually guarantees that such detailed plans cannot be completed on a regular and predictable schedule. The result is that our communities may not have in place the guidance, protections and incentives needed to respond to the sweeping changes that will occur between now and 2035, or for the city to capitalize on the historic build-out of the regional transit system made possible by Measure R.

To date the NCP program has yielded City Planning Commission approval of four updates: Granada Hills-Knollwood; San Pedro; Sylmar; and West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert. In addition, the Department has completed and released for public review draft plans and regulations for South and Southeast Los Angeles and restarted work on the Central City and Central City North updates. (These two downtown plans were put on hold when the NCP program was scaled back in 2010.) Significant technical analysis and outreach has also been completed on the Boyle Heights update; we



Community members learn about the proposed West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert Community Plan at an Open House in January 2013.

expect to roll out a draft plan and regulations for public review in 2015. With the Hollywood Community Plan back on the Department's work program we are currently juggling a total of ten community plan updates.

The importance of this work effort cannot be overstated. The proposed plans have garnered widespread community support and offer innovative planning solutions, including transit-oriented development incentives and key neighborhood protections. Added together these plans cover 27 percent of the city's total land area and with 1.3 million residents they account for 34 percent of its total population. Given the significant investment of time and resources by both the public and city government in creating these plans the Department is committed to moving them across the finish line. As job number one, that means continuing to work with the City Attorney to shore up our environmental analysis so that Council can vote with confidence to approve all ten plan updates in the near future.

MANAGING GROWTH AND CHANGE

Planning in Los Angeles is at a crossroads. Over the last year as the economy has rebounded project filings have increased 26 percent. Over the next 20 years Los Angeles is forecast to grow by **over 400,000 new residents**, from 3.9 million today to **4.3 million by 2035**, an increase of 11 percent. That's a significant increase, the equivalent of **adding a city almost the size of Long Beach.**

During this same time horizon the six-county region (Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside & Imperial Counties) will grow at an even faster rate, adding 3.6 million new residents, from 18.5 million today to 22.1 million by 2035, an increase of 19 percent.

All of this growth, both within the city and regionally, spells change. If properly managed, this growth can help steer Los Angeles toward a more sustainable and economically prosperous future, with more affordable housing, complete streets, and a more equitable distribution of resources. But growth without the guidance provided by thoughtful planning can have unintended consequences. As a largely built-out city, Los Angeles in particular faces the challenge of accommodating future growth through infill development, an often contentious process where vacant or underdeveloped parcels are recycled for new uses, typically at higher densities.



Located on the former CBS Studios site, the Columbia Square Project in Hollywood is an example of mixed use urban infill.

