



CHAPTER 1 Introduction

INTRODUCTION

This General Plan is the first comprehensive revision of the City’s General Plan in more than thirty years and is the result of more than four years of work by thirty-eight residents representing all segments of this community. These residents—members of the General Plan Advisory Committee, or GPAC—developed this plan after thorough study of input from thousands of their neighbors that was received during the most extensive public outreach in the City’s history.

After receiving community input, GPAC developed a “Vision Statement”—a description of the City that residents want Newport Beach to be now and in 2025—to serve as a blueprint for this General Plan Update. GPAC, with the assistance of planning professionals and using the Vision Statement as a guide, then developed this General Plan to ensure that the City achieves the vision by, among many other things, doing the following:

- Reducing traffic citywide by 28,920 trips each day over the life of the plan
- Reducing potential new commercial, office, and industrial space by 1.45 million square feet
- Supporting efforts to acquire Banning Ranch for permanent open space
- Creating and implementing a long term strategy to control John Wayne Airport impacts
- Taking strong action to prevent or reduce water pollution in the bay and ocean
- Enhancing natural resources such as Upper Newport Bay
- Improving circulation by synchronizing traffic lights and making road improvements that respect our community character



- Creating guidelines that preserve the charm and beauty of our residential neighborhoods
- Preserving public views of the ocean, harbor and bay
- Continuing to provide first-class service to seniors
- Continuing to offer education and recreation programs such as Junior Lifeguards
- Maintaining a world-class public library system with branches convenient to residents
- Promoting revitalization of older commercial areas like West Newport and Balboa Village
- Fostering artistic and cultural activities and venues in the community

The General Plan for the City of Newport Beach presents a vision for the City's future and a strategy to make that vision a reality. The Plan is the result of thousands of hours of research and technical studies, the collective efforts of the diversity of elected decision-makers, individuals, and agencies who cumulatively guide and shape land use development and natural resource conservation, and the engagement of numerous individuals throughout the community who have articulated their hopes and expectations for the City's future.



Newport Beach has progressed from a small tourist-oriented beach community to a highly desirable residential community of approximately 83,000 residents. One of Southern California's most appealing coastal communities, Newport Beach is renowned for its beautiful coastal lands and harbor; excellent fishing, surfing, and boating opportunities; large ecological preserves; retail centers, festivals and events, and quality residential neighborhoods (Figure I1).

The General Plan recognizes that Newport Beach is primarily a residential community, with diverse coastal and upland neighborhoods. As Newport Beach is almost fully developed, the Plan focuses on conserving the existing pattern of land uses and establishes policies for their protection and long term maintenance. However, there are a number of areas of the City that are not achieving their full potential and the Plan establishes strategies for their enhancement and revitalization. The General Plan identifies creative strategies for the re-use of land to provide opportunities for new housing and commercial uses that will complement and enhance Newport Beach's character and livability. The General Plan also provides guidance to preserve the qualities that define the natural and built environment. Specific goals and policies address the enhancement of open space, marine and harbor uses, historic and cultural resources, and recreational facilities. Other portions of the General Plan provide strategies to protect residents and businesses from adverse impacts such as noise and safety hazards.

This framework for the General Plan carefully considered in context of community objectives for the provision of an efficient transportation system that minimizes congestion for residents, employees, and visitors. At the same time, it recognizes the need to balance mobility objectives with priorities of Newport Beach's residents for the character of its neighborhoods and commercial districts and corridors.

Finally, the Government Code states that that the general plan must cover the entire area within the city limits and any land outside its boundaries that “bears relation to its planning.” This provides cities with an opportunity to indicate their concerns for nearby unincorporated areas, particularly in areas that may someday be annexed. In Newport Beach, the General Plan covers areas within the city limits and also provides guidance to the City’s “Sphere of Influence” (SOI) area, known as Banning Ranch. The Banning Ranch area is located in the western-most portion of the community and encompasses approximately 518 acres, of which 465 acres are under the jurisdiction of Orange County, and 53 acres are within the City of Newport Beach city boundaries (Figure I2).

Between November 2001 and January 2003, the City facilitated a Community Visioning process to elicit the values, aspirations, and ideas of the Newport Beach community. *Community Directions for the Future: A Summary of the General Plan Update Visioning Process* was produced by the City and presents the findings from the process. The findings from this process were used as a framework for the General Plan Update and to guide future planning efforts.

The Newport Beach General Plan is a document adopted by the City Council that serves several purposes:

- Provides a vision and framework for Newport Beach’s long-range physical and economic development and resource conservation that reflects the aspirations of the community
- Provides strategies and specific implementing actions that will allow this vision to be accomplished
- Establishes a basis for judging whether specific development proposals and public projects are in harmony with Plan policies and standards
- Allows City departments, other public agencies, and private developers to design projects that will enhance the character of the community, preserve and enhance critical environmental and historical resources, and minimize hazards
- Provide the basis for establishing and setting priorities for detailed plans and implementing programs, such as the Zoning Code, Capital Improvement Plans, facilities plans, and specific plans



How to Use the General Plan

The City of Newport Beach General Plan is intended to provide protection and preservation for existing neighborhoods. The General Plan is intended for use by all members of the community. If you are a resident, the Plan indicates the general types of uses that are permitted around your home, the long-range plans and changes that may affect your neighborhood, and the policies the City will use to evaluate development applications that might affect you and your neighbors.

The Plan also informs you regarding how it plans to improve transportation infrastructure, continue to provide adequate parks, schools, police, fire, and other

Figure I1 Southern California Regional Map

Pg 1—8.5x11 color

Figure I2 Sphere of Influence (SOI)

Pg 1—8.5x11 color

Pg 2—8.5x11 color

public services, protect valued open spaces, water resources, and environmental resources, and protect residents from the risks of earthquakes, fires, and other natural hazards.

The General Plan is also a tool to help City staff, City Commissions, and the City Council make land use and public investment decisions. It provides the framework for the City's Zoning Ordinance. It identifies the economic development, transportation improvements, community service and facility improvements, and environmental programs needed to sustain and improve the quality of life in the City. Future development decisions must be consistent with the Plan. Finally, the Plan is intended to help other public agencies, from Caltrans to our local school districts, as they contemplate future actions in Newport Beach.

While the Plan's narrative text and maps frame the key proposals, the essence of the Plan lies in its goals, policies, and implementation actions. These are declarative statements that set forth the City's approach to various issues. Goals, policies, and implementation actions are described as follows:

- Goals describe ideal future conditions for a particular topic, such as for Banning Ranch, the Harbor and Bay, traffic congestion, or affordable housing. Goals tend to be very general and broad.
- Policies provide guidance to assist the City as it makes decisions relating to each goal. Some policies include guidelines or standards against which decisions can be evaluated.
- Implementation Actions identify the specific steps to be taken by the City to implement the policies. They may include revisions of current codes and ordinances, plans and capital improvements, programs, financing, and other measures that should be assigned to different City departments.
- The Plan is a legal document and much of its content is dictated by statutory requirements relating to background data, analysis, maps, and exhibits.

How Newport Beach Residents Were Involved

A large part of the preparation of a General Plan is a technical process involving professional planners and staff from all City department that have a role in its implementation. However, a plan's success is dependent upon its ownership by a community's residents, businesspersons, and property owners.



Newport Beach Visioning Festival

They must concur with the issues, visions, and policies and actions that are defined to address these.

To this end, the City undertook a substantial public outreach program to understand community values and to establish a new General Plan policy foundation based on those values. The program began with a comprehensive public Visioning Process which involved numerous workshops, meetings, surveys, newsletters, and website information and outreach. During the preparation of the General Plan land use alternatives and element policies, the public had the opportunity to participate at many steps at General Plan Advisory Committee

(GPAC, Planning Commission, and City Council meetings, as well as at citywide public workshops. Newsletters distributed to residents and posted on the City's General Plan website were ongoing sources of information for the public. Detailed components of the outreach process are described below.

GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) consisted of 38 community members who were selected to represent a broad range of interests. GPAC members represented a cross-section of the Newport Beach community and were involved at all steps of the General Plan Update process. Members participated in over 50 meetings during the Plan's preparation. The GPAC developed the City's vision statement that is the framework for the direction, goals, and objectives for the General Plan Update, and reviewed and provided input on the land use alternatives, preferred plan, and the policies contained in the elements of the updated General Plan. Their recommendations were based on broad community input provided throughout the Visioning Process.

VISIONING PROCESS

At the start of the of the General Plan update, a comprehensive public process that involved several components was undertaken. Between November 2001 and January 2003, the City facilitated a community Visioning Process to elicit the values, aspirations, and ideas of the Newport Beach community. Throughout the process, residents, property owners, and business owners in voiced their opinions to City leaders. Participation in the Visioning Process resulted in an expression of the community's concerns, goals and values. This process consisted of a Visioning Festival, nine neighborhood workshops held over successive weeks in March and April, 2002, a newsletter mail-back questionnaire, website questions and a statistically valid community survey of both residents and business owners. Throughout this process, the GPAC met to deliberate on key questions facing the City, public input, and the statement of a new vision to chart a course into the future.

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE POLICY PREPARATION PROCESS

There were several opportunities for public input and feedback throughout the process by which General Plan policies were formulated. These included initial GPAC review, at City Council and Planning Commission meetings at a public workshop. Policy preparation of the General Plan update began with confirmation of the key planning issues, which considered input gathered during the visioning process and the conclusions of technical studies at several GPAC meetings. There were also opportunities at every GPAC meeting for general public input.

In the next step of the process, guiding principles were developed. These principles were used to guide the General Plan alternatives and policies, and cover the following topics: Circulation, Economic Development, Community Character, Affordable Housing, Environmental Conservation, and Environmental Hazards. They were developed with input from the Visioning Process, GPAC, as well as public comments heard at the GPAC meetings.

Next, the City prepared goals and policies for each General Plan element for GPAC review and comment. With feedback from the public during GPAC meetings, recommendations on the goals and policies were made and brought forward to the Planning Commission and City Council. The

Commission and Council identified any modifications to be incorporated into the Draft General Plan based on GPAC recommendations and public comments. The Planning Commission and City Council meetings were noticed public meetings, where the public had the opportunity to provide input.

LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

Several land use alternatives were developed by GPAC, and updated as feedback was received from the public, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. A citywide public workshop was held on June 25, 2005 for the public to review and comment on the land use alternatives and analysis of their impacts. The GPAC reviewed the alternatives and public comments from the workshop, and recommended a preferred land use alternative. The preferred land use alternative was presented at both Planning Commission and City Council public meetings. During these meetings, the public comments heard by the Planning Commission and City Council provided a framework for their recommendations for the alternatives to be analyzed in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Organization of the General Plan by Element

Under California law, every city and county must adopt a comprehensive long-term General Plan to provide guidance to decision makers regarding the conservation of resources and the future physical form and character of development for the city.

To ensure that jurisdictions prepare General Plans that are comprehensive and long-term in perspective, state statutes establish requirements for the minimum contents of a General Plan, (Government Code Section 65300). By law, a General Plan must contain the following seven elements and must be internally consistent element to element:

- Land Use
- Housing
- Circulation
- Open Space
- Noise
- Safety
- Conservation

The Newport Beach General Plan is organized into ten elements. Elements of the General Plan have been re-organized by thematic topic for clarity and to avoid redundancy, as encouraged by the state's General Plan Guidelines. To avoid duplication, the subjects of the Conservation and Open Space Element have been merged into the Natural Resources Element. As the state permits a general plan to incorporate other elements that pertain to a municipality's unique characteristics or visions, the Newport Beach General Plan also includes Parks and Recreation, Historical Resources, Arts and Cultural and Harbor and Bay Elements. Though optional by statute, once adopted they hold equal weight under the law as the mandated elements.

Although not a state-mandated element, Orange County's Measure M requirements mandate that all jurisdictions in the County must adopt a Growth Management Element describing how transportation infrastructure will be provided to residents and businesses within each community. Growth Management policies have been incorporated into the Circulation Element to meet Measure M requirements. In addition, the Implementation portion of the General Plan describes the specific actions that will implement the Plan's goals and policies. The Implementation Plan is intended to be reviewed and updated regularly to allow decision-makers to adjust to current community priorities and funding resources.

Each element of the General Plan presents an overview of its scope, summary of conditions and planning issues, goals, and policies. Goals and policies of the General Plan are applicable to all lands within the jurisdiction of the City of Newport Beach. Consistent with state statutes, it also specifies policies for the adopted Sphere of Influence (SOI), encompassing Banning Ranch, which represent the City's long-term intentions for conservation and development of the property should it be annexed to Newport Beach. Until that time, uses and improvements of the property are subject to the County of Orange General Plan.

An overview of the Plan's chapters is provided below:

1. **Introduction** describes the General Plan process and introduces the reader to the document.
2. **Vision** presents the statement of the desired character of Newport Beach by the end of the 20-year horizon of the General Plan.
3. The **Land Use Element** presents goals and policies pertaining to how existing development is going to be maintained and enhanced and new development occur. As Newport Beach is almost fully developed, the land use element focuses on how population and employment growth can be strategically inserted to preserve its distinguishing and valued qualities. However, there are limited areas of the City that are not achieving their full potential, and the element establishes strategies for their enhancement and revitalization. Land Use Element goals and policies directly affect the establishment and maintenance of the neighborhoods, districts, corridors, and open spaces that distinguish and contribute to Newport Beach's livability, vitality, and image.
4. The **Circulation Element** addresses the movement of people and goods, via automobiles, transit, bicycles, and other modes. It addresses key issues such as trip reduction, parking, bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian access, traffic flow, transportation improvements and funding, traffic safety, and enhancement of public water transportation services. The element is also consistent with the Transportation Demand Management Ordinance and Measure M requirements.
5. The **Historical Resources Element** addresses the protection and sustainability of Newport Beach's historic and paleontological resources. Goals and policies presented within this element are intended to recognize, maintain, and protect the community's unique historical, cultural and archeological sites and structures.
6. The **Recreation Element** addresses the provision of parklands and recreation programs for the City's residents. Specific recreational issues and policies contained in the Recreation Element include: parks and recreation facilities, recreation programs, shared facilities, coastal recreation and support facilities, marine recreation, and public access.
7. The goals and policies of the **Arts and Culture Element** are intended to be a guide for meeting the future cultural needs of the community. This element is intended to serve as a

mechanism for integrating these resources in order to provide improved and expanded arts and cultural facilities and programs to the community.

8. The **Safety Element** provides goals and policies to reduce the potential risk of death, injuries, property damage, and economic and social dislocation resulting from natural and human-induced hazards. This element specifically addresses coastal hazards, geologic hazards, seismic hazards, flood hazards, wildland and urban fire hazards, hazardous materials, aviation hazards, and disaster planning.
9. The **Noise Element** identifies noise sensitive land uses and noise sources, and defines areas of noise impact. Goals and policies within this element provide a framework to ensure that Newport Beach residents will be protected from excessive noise intrusion.
10. The goals and policies of the **Harbor and Bay Element** are intended to guide the content of regulations related to development of, and the activities conducted on, the water as well as land use decisions related to waterfront property around Newport Harbor. Goals and policies within the Harbor and Bay Element have been organized to address both water and land related issues, provision of public access, water quality and environmental issues, visual characteristics, and the administration of the Harbor and Bay.
11. The **Housing Element** addresses issues, goals, and policies related to ensuring an adequate supply of housing opportunities for all residents. Unlike the other elements, state law sets forth very specific regulations regarding the content and breadth of the Housing Element. Typically Housing Elements must be updated every 5 years in response to Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) cycles established by the State Department of Housing and Community Development.
12. The primary objective of the **Natural Resources Element** is to provide direction regarding the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources. It identifies Newport Beach's natural resources and provides goals and policies for their preservation, development, and wise use. This element addresses water supply (as a resource) and water quality (includes bay and ocean quality, and potable drinking water), air quality, terrestrial and marine biological resources, open space, mineral resources, visual resources, and energy.
13. **Implementation Programs** describe the actions to be taken by the City to carry out the goals and policies defined by the General Plan. These encompass:
 - ▶ **Development Management System**—Defines the codes, regulations, and processes for land development
 - ▶ **Governance**—Addresses the City's administrative procedures pertaining to land use regulation, coordination with other local, regional, state, and federal agencies, and annexation of new lands to the City
 - ▶ **Public Improvement Plans**—Defines strategies for the implementation of improvements to assure the timely provision of infrastructure and public services to support development
 - ▶ **Public Service Programs**—Addresses community services provided to meet resident and business needs
 - ▶ **Financing**—Identifies funding sources for capital improvements and community services

Related Documents

The Plan also includes separately bound technical appendices (The Technical Background Report) containing background data and analyses pertaining to all Plan topics. The TBR is not formally adopted by the City and may be expanded or modified without a formal General Plan amendment.

Finally, as required by the *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA), an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared for the General Plan. The EIR is a separate document that describes environmental conditions in the City and SOI (as presented in the TBR), assesses the possible effects that future development pursuant to the General Plan will have on these, identifies actions that will be undertaken to reduce these impacts, and evaluates the comparative impacts of alternatives to the General Plan. Many of the policies in the General Plan serve as mitigation for potential impacts and, consequently, the Plan is generally considered to be “self-mitigating.”

The document is considered a “program level” EIR, meaning that it examines the general nature of impacts at a citywide and SOI wide scale. The findings of the EIR help determine the appropriate level of environmental review that should be performed when subsequent projects consistent with the Plan are proposed. Although the EIR will be certified by the City Council, it is not adopted as a policy document

Implementing and Amending the Plan

The General Plan was adopted on July 25, 2006. It will be implemented through a variety of ordinances, programs, and activities. These specific actions are described in Chapter 7 and referenced by applicable policies for each element. Local land use regulations and procedures will be reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with the General Plan. The zoning map shall be consistent with the General Plan Land Use Plan, and the Zoning Code shall be consistent with the land use classification system and density/intensity and design and development policies stipulated by General Plan policy.

The General Plan is intended to be a dynamic document and must be periodically updated to respond to changing community needs. An annual review of the Plan is required to ensure that it remains relevant. Requests for amendments may be submitted by individuals or initiated by the City itself. Most amendments propose a change in the land use designation for a particular property. Policy and text amendments also may occur. Any proposed amendment will be reviewed to ensure consistency with other elements of the General Plan and the General Plan EIR.