

In the past 18 months, the City of Long Beach has conducted approximately 40 community engagement events regarding the General Plan. The meetings and workshops continue to provide valuable information from residents and business owners. The City expects to make important changes to the Plan based on comments from the public. After changes have been made, the Plan will be reviewed by the Planning Commission and upon approval, it will be presented to City Council near the end of 2017.

1. *What is a General Plan?*

A General Plan is a broad, long-range policy document that guides future development, conservation, and is a comprehensive collection of goals and policies related to a multitude of aspects of community life. In California, cities and counties are required by State law to have a General Plan. It is the local government's long-term blueprint for future development. Pursuant to State law, the General Plan must accommodate the required amount of projected population growth the State of California estimates for each city.

2. *What is Zoning and how is it different from the General Plan?*

Zoning ordinances implement General Plan policies through detailed development regulations, such as specific types of uses and building requirements. Zoning implements the General Plan with greater specificity as to what can be built where, development standards, parking requirements, etc.

3. *What makes up a General Plan?*

California requires seven elements within the General Plan: Land Use, Circulation (Mobility), Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. The City of Long Beach has also adopted optional elements including Scenic Routes, Public Safety, and Historic Preservation. Consistency across all adopted elements is legally required.

4. *Why update the General Plan?*

State law requires it. Also, the City must be prepared to manage industry changes and population growth.

5. *Why is the City proposing more residential density?*

Pursuant to State law, the General Plan must accommodate the projected population growth the State of California estimates for each local jurisdiction or city. The City's obligations to create housing are detailed in the City's state-approved General Plan Housing Element. The Land Use Element is legally required to be consistent with the Housing Element.

6. *What is the Land Use Element?*

The Land Use Element describes objectives, policies, and programs for areas within a city's boundaries in both narrative and graphic terms and establishes development criteria and standards. This includes a map of allowable land uses, building types, and heights. Land use categories are used to depict the general distribution, location, and extent of public and private uses of land. It includes forecasts for jobs and population, and establishes policy to accommodate those projections. It includes implementation measures to guide future public and private investment and development.

7. What are PlaceTypes?

This Land Use Element takes land use planning to a new level by also incorporating physical features and characteristics that define these unique places: building massing and scale (the size and magnitude of a structure with relation to other buildings in the area), development patterns, accessibility, infrastructure, and streetscape design. PlaceTypes take into consideration how the development looks and how it relates to the streets, sidewalks and neighboring buildings. This is a deliberate step away from regulating buildings based solely on how tall they are or how many square feet they contain.

8. What is the Urban Design Element?

While the Land Use Element focuses on specific parcels, the Urban Design Element focuses on “the stuff in between,” such as building form, space between buildings, pedestrian space, public open space, connectivity and linkages, and a building’s relationships to the street. The Urban Design Element supports PlaceType development with an emphasis on development patterns, streetscapes, and urban form components; and how PlaceTypes relate internally and with adjacent PlaceTypes.

9. Who will use the General Plan?

The City Council and Planning Commission use the goals and policies of the General Plan as a basis upon which to make both long-term and short-term decisions, determine long-term objectives, generate and evaluate budgets, plan capital improvements, and prioritize tasks. City staff throughout all of its departments will also reference the General Plan when considering development applications, capital improvements, service programming, and departmental budgeting. Individual residents, existing and prospective business owners, and the development community can also seek guidance for preserving and enhancing the community through the General Plan. Finally, other local and regional agencies will refer to the General Plan when projecting future needs and services. The General Plan is truly the City’s collective guide to the future.

