

INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The *City of Whittier General Plan* is a comprehensive plan designed to direct growth and maintain the quality of the environment in the City. This Plan contains goals, policies, and standards to guide future development and change. The General Plan provides planning direction for City operations and programs and serves as a guide for public and private decision-making through goals and policies that embody the intent of all City actions. The goals and policies of the General Plan serve as the constitutional framework for the City.

Section 65302 et seq. of the California Government Code requires that a general plan contain seven elements: 1) Land Use, 2) Circulation, 3) Housing, 4) Conservation, 5) Open Space, 6) Noise, and 7) Safety. The requirements for the open space and conservation elements have been combined into the Environmental Resource Management Element in this General Plan. Aside from these elements, a Historic Resources Element and an Air Quality Element has been adopted as part of the General Plan. The following elements will comprise the Whittier General Plan in accordance with the State General Plan Guidelines:

- **Land Use Element** - The Land Use Element designates the general location, distribution, and extent of existing and proposed land uses for the City and indicates standards for population density and development intensity.
- **Housing Element** - The Housing Element evaluates the existing and projected housing needs of the City and establishes goals, policies, objectives, and programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing to meet local and regional housing needs.
- **Transportation Element** - The Transportation Element identifies the general location and the extent of existing and proposed roadways, highways, railroads and transit routes, terminals, and public utilities and facilities. This Element has been expanded in scope to also consider alternative means of transportation.
- **Environmental Resource Management Element** - The Environmental Resource Management Element (ERME) meets the State mandated requirements for the conservation and open space elements. The Element provides for the conservation, development, and use of natural resources including water, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources. In addition, the element details plans and measures for the preservation of open space designed to promote the management of natural resources, outdoor recreation, and public health and safety.
- **Public Safety Element** - The Public Safety Element establishes standards and plans for the protection of the community from a variety of hazards including earthquake, flood, fire, and geologic hazards.
- **Noise Element** - The Noise Element examines the existing and future noise environment and major noise sources in the City. The Element contains an analysis

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of noise problems and corresponding standards to encourage noise-compatible land uses.

- **Air Quality Element** - The Air Quality Element is not a State mandated element. Adoption of the Air Quality Management Plan for the South Coast Air Basin required cities within the basin to develop Air Quality Elements as a measure to abate air pollution. The Air Quality Element contains a discussion of local and regional air quality, stationary and mobile emission sources, and programs to reduce pollutant emissions generated within the City.
- **Historic Resources Element** - The Historic Resources Element is not a mandatory element, although its inclusion in the General Plan gives it the same force of law as the mandatory elements. This element establishes goals and programs related to cultural resources, archaeological resources, paleontological resources, and historical resources.

Together, the eight elements provide an integrated and internally consistent set of goals, policies, and implementation measures that focus on issues that are of the greatest concern to the community.

Format of General Plan

To facilitate use of the General Plan and future updates, the individual elements have a consistent format. A brief introduction to each element is provided, along with a summary of major issues and opportunities in the City. This is followed by goals and policies which embody the City's response to those issues and opportunities. The implementation matrix contains the standards, guiding principles, and implementation measures to achieve the goals and policies in the previous section. A detailed description of the implementation programs are included in the final chapter of each element. Finally, Background Reports for the Whittier General Plan are included as an appendix to the General Plan. The Background Reports contain a discussion of existing conditions in the City, as they relate to individual elements.

The General Plan has been an important component in local planning for many years, though the specific requirements have changed over time. Many of these changes involve detailed definitions or interpretations of the General Plan process. Based on the interpretations of the courts, the General Plan must conform to the following requirements:

- Each part of the General Plan must be internally consistent;
- The Zoning Map, revision to the Map, subdivision approvals, and the Zoning Ordinance must be consistent with the General Plan for all general law cities;

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- All capital improvements and public works projects must be consistent with the General Plan;
- The adoption of ordinances and plans which address the individual mandatory items required in the elements is not the same as adopting an element; and
- Moratoriums may be declared on those development approvals which require findings of consistency with the General Plan.

Planning Process

The Whittier General Plan reflects the needs and objectives of residents and businesses in the City. To encourage public input for a representative plan, the City Council elected to establish a General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) to aid in the development of the General Plan Update. The ten members of the GPAC came from different sectors of the community and represented a wide range of issues and concerns in Whittier. They identified issues and opportunities in the City, drafted goals and policies for each General Plan Element, and refined the land use plan to respond to the goals and policies.

The Planning Commission and the City Council held joint study sessions, and community workshops were subsequently held during the formal public review period. This led to additional public participation and involvement in the development of the General Plan. A pre-public hearing community workshop also resulted in early public input which guided the development of goals and policies, and brought out issues not previously considered. Public hearings held prior to adoption of the General Plan also reflected the direction and future environment that the City wants to achieve by the year 2010. Subsequent revisions and amendments to the Whittier General Plan shall follow the procedures outlined in Government Code Section 65350 et. seq.

Issues and Opportunities

Major issues and opportunities that face the City which were considered in this General Plan update are discussed briefly below.

- Development and building activity in the City, limited by existing development, is largely dependent on land recycling and infill developments. The policy direction of the City is presently for quality and responsible growth. Future development pressures are focused on the unincorporated portions of the Puente Hills.
- There is an increasing elderly population made up of residents who have been in the City for more than ten years. At the same time, young families with children are moving into the area. This diverse population continues to challenge the City in meeting their needs and providing for their interests over the life of the plan.

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- The City is primarily developed with a variety of housing types and styles and this trend is continued under the General Plan. The City is a well-balanced community in terms of supporting retail, office, and industrial development. The length of Whittier Boulevard is developed with a variety of commercial uses. Uptown Whittier is a commercial district that was once the central business district and is experiencing a rebirth following the 1987 earthquake. The Uptown shopping district presents an old village atmosphere that attracts shoppers and visitors from neighboring communities. The City hopes to preserve, maintain, and enhance its residential neighborhoods and to provide the commercial and industrial uses needed to support its neighborhoods.
- The City's long history has left many important cultural and historical structures in the area. Residents have recognized this resource and have established programs for historical preservation. Whittier also offers a variety of parks and recreational facilities. The retention and maintenance of these facilities will provide residents with continued opportunities for leisure and recreation.
- Open space and natural resources in the planning area are concentrated in the hillsides. Although only a small portion of the Puente Hills is within the City's boundaries, a major portion lies within the City's sphere of influence. The General Plan recognizes the value of the hills and encourages the City to actively participate in planning for the future of the Hills. The Environmental Resource Management Element calls for the preservation of open space and natural resources in the planning area.
- The Land Use Plan addresses the balance of residential and non-residential land uses and the prevention of land use conflicts. As a predominantly residential community, Whittier seeks to preserve the integrity of its neighborhoods while providing the necessary commercial, industrial and institutional uses to serve its residents.
- The provision of affordable housing is a local and regional concern. The City of Whittier is continuously looking for ways to promote residential development which will provide housing for low and moderate income households. Housing for special needs households is also a challenge that the City is constantly trying to meet. The Housing Plan, included in the Housing Element, outlines strategies that will be effective in meeting the housing needs of area residents.
- With growth and development, traffic becomes an increasing concern. Through traffic from neighboring communities has added to congestion along City streets. Residential streets have been experiencing more traffic as drivers look for short cuts and less crowded roadways. As new development occurs, the adequacy of existing roadways and increased traffic will continue to be a concern.

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- A major factor related to public safety in the City is the Whittier fault, which runs along the northeastern section of the City, and other nearby faults. The earthquake on the Elysian Park fault in 1987 also underscored the City's vulnerability in the face of a natural disaster. As a result of this earthquake, the City is a leader in terms of readiness for future emergencies. Programs for greater public safety are being developed to address earthquake hazards, landslides, liquefaction, wildfire and urban fire, crime, and hazardous material accidents. The City also faces increased criminal and gang activity. Special programs have been developed to address and target these issues.

- Noise problems in the City range from constant roadway traffic noise to occasional loud activities and infrequent rail activity. Without specific standards and noise control measures, noise reduction is confined to individual responses to resident complaints. The Noise Element responds to existing problems through developing appropriate policies and programs to mitigate noise.

- Regional air quality continues to exceed state and federal standards and the South Coast Air Quality Management District has required cities to be more involved in air pollution control. The City of Whittier is finding ways to help improve regional and local air quality through City programs and regulations.

The following matrix (Table 1-1) lists the major issues and goals and the corresponding policies under each element. The eight General Plan elements are noted in the table heading while policies that respond to the issue/goal are noted by the policy numbers. As the matrix indicates, some policies address issues contained in several of the elements of the General Plan. The matrix helps identify interrelationships between the elements' goals, policies, and programs.

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**TABLE 1-1
 POLICIES MATRIX**

Land Use Policy #	Housing Policy #	Transportation Policy #	ERME Policy #	Air Quality Policy #	Noise Policy #	Public Safety Policy #	Historic Resource Policy #
LAND USE ELEMENT							
Land Use Compatibility: Establish an orderly, functional, and compatible pattern of land uses to guide the future growth and development of Whittier and its sphere of influence, in order to provide a high quality of life for the people.							
1.1	2.8			5.1	1.1		2.3
1.2				5.2	2.1		
1.3				5.3	2.5		
1.4				5.4			
1.5				8.3			
1.6							
2.1							
3.7							
7.2							
Residential Neighborhoods: Encourage the maintenance and development of cohesive, clean, safe, and stable residential neighborhoods in Whittier.							
1.1	1.1			5.3	2.3		2.1
1.2	1.2			5.4			2.2
2.1	1.3						2.3
2.2							
2.3							
2.4							
2.5							
2.6							
2.7							
2.8							
7.1							

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**TABLE 1-1
 POLICIES MATRIX (continued)**

Land Use Policy #	Housing Policy #	Transportation Policy #	ERME Policy #	Air Quality Policy #	Noise Policy #	Public Safety Policy #	Historic Resource Policy #
Commercial Development: Promote the maintenance and development of commercial and retail facilities which are convenient to residents of Whittier, provide the widest possible selection of goods and services, and supplement the City's tax base.							
1.2				5.3			
3.1				5.4			
3.2				9.2			
3.3							
3.4							
3.5							
3.6							
3.7							
3.8							
3.9							
7.2							
Industrial Land Uses: Encourage the maintenance and continued improvement of industrial areas which support and enhance the physical and economic well-being of Whittier.							
1.2				9.2			
4.1							
4.2							
4.3							
4.4							
4.5							
4.6							
Parks and Recreation: Provide a wide range of safe, attractive, and accessible recreational opportunities to meet the needs of individuals of all ages, families, community groups, and the physically challenged who live in the City.							
5.1			5.1				
5.2			5.2				
5.3			5.3				
5.4			5.7				
5.5			5.9				
			5.11				
			5.16				

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**TABLE 1-1
 POLICIES MATRIX (continued)**

Land Use Policy #	Housing Policy #	Transportation Policy #	ERME Policy #	Air Quality Policy #	Noise Policy #	Public Safety Policy #	Historic Resource Policy #
Scenic Areas and Open Space: Encourage the retention and development of parkways, median strips, green belts, bike trails, and other open landscape areas, which provide scenic variety and aesthetic improvement.							
6.1			5.16				
6.2			6.1				
6.3			6.2				
6.4			6.3				
6.5			6.4				
8.1							
8.2							
Mixed-Use Development: Promote mixed-use development in those areas of the City, so designated, to provide additional housing and to assist in the revitalization of commercial districts.							
7.1			5.3				
7.2			5.4				
Institutional Land Uses: Preserve existing institutional land uses in the City.							
1.1							
1.2							
1.5							
1.6							
8.1							
8.2							
HOUSING ELEMENT							
Maintenance of Existing Housing Stock: Maintain a supply of housing within the City of Whittier which is free from the adverse problems of structural neglect and deterioration and promote neighborhood environments which provide an excellent quality of life for all residents.							
2.2	1.1						
	1.2						
	1.3						
	1.4						
	1.5						
	1.6						
	1.7						
	1.8						
	1.9						
	1.10						
	1.11						

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TABLE 1-1 POLICIES MATRIX (continued)							
Land Use Policy #	Housing Policy #	Transportation Policy #	ERME Policy #	Air Quality Policy #	Noise Policy #	Public Safety Policy #	Historic Resource Policy #
Housing Production: The City will work to provide opportunities to build new housing units to meet the housing needs of all economic segments of the City of Whittier.							
2.5	2.1						
2.6	2.2						
7.1	2.3						
	2.4						
Housing Assistance: Work to maintain a balanced housing stock with a range of housing available to all economic segments of Whittier and make an effort to meet the housing assistance needs of Whittier residents to the maximum extent possible.							
	3.1						
	3.2						
Special Needs Housing: Promote housing opportunities for all persons regardless of race, religion, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, color, or handicap.							
	4.1						
	4.2						
	4.3						
TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT							
Transportation System: Provide a comprehensive transportation system for the movement of persons and goods with maximum efficiency and convenience and with a minimum of danger, delay, and cost.							
3.1		1.1		2.1			
		1.2		2.2			
				2.3			
Internal Circulation: Provide a public road system which will move private automobiles within the City safely, efficiently and with minimum impact on residential neighborhoods.							
	1.10	2.1		2.1		4.3	
		2.2		2.2			
		2.3		2.3			
		2.4		3.1			
		2.5		4.1			
		2.6					
		2.7					
		2.8					

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TABLE 1-1 POLICIES MATRIX (continued)							
Land Use Policy #	Housing Policy #	Transportation Policy #	ERME Policy #	Air Quality Policy #	Noise Policy #	Public Safety Policy #	Historic Resource Policy #
Alternative Modes of Transit: Encourage the development of a comprehensive public transportation system and alternative modes of transit.							
		3.1		1.1	2.1		
		3.2		1.2	2.2		
		3.3		1.3	2.3		
		3.4		4.2	2.4		
		3.5		8.5	2.5		
		3.6		9.4	10.3		
		3.7			11.1		
		3.8			11.3		
Multi-use Paths: Encourage the creation of a multi-use trails network in the City.							
		4.1	5.1	1.6			
		4.2	5.5	1.7			
		4.3	5.13				
		4.4					
		4.5					
		4.6					
		4.7					
		4.8					
Pedestrian Safety: Establish a comprehensive system of sidewalks and pedestrian walkways.							
		5.1					
		5.2					
		5.3					
		5.4					
Street Extensions: Consider environmental and socio-economic impacts along with the benefits of street extension and widening projects.							
		2.6					
		6.1					
		6.2					
		6.3					

Section 1: Introduction (continued)

TABLE 1-1 POLICIES MATRIX (continued)							
Land Use Policy #	Housing Policy #	Transportation Policy #	ERME Policy #	Air Quality Policy #	Noise Policy #	Public Safety Policy #	Historic Resource Policy #
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ELEMENT							
Resource Conservation: Preserve or conserve natural and cultural resources that have scientific, educational, economic, aesthetic, social, and cultural value.							
1.3			1.1	6.5			2.1
4.4			1.2				2.2
6.4			1.3				2.3
			1.4				2.4
			1.5				
			3.1				
			3.3				
			4.4				
Energy Conservation: The City of Whittier 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 of the project.							
1.3			2.1	6.1			
3.8			2.2	6.2			
				6.3			
Open Space: Secure a safe, healthful, and wholesome environment through careful planning and preservation of open space resources.							
6.3	2.7		1.3				
6.4			1.5				
			3.1				
			3.2				
			3.3				
			3.4				
			3.5				
			5.3				
			5.5				
			5.6				
			7.4				

Section 1: Introduction (continued)

**TABLE 1-1
 POLICIES MATRIX (continued)**

Land Use Policy #	Housing Policy #	Transportation Policy #	ERME Policy #	Air Quality Policy #	Noise Policy #	Public Safety Policy #	Historic Resource Policy #
Acquisition of Open Space: Preservation of open space land will be a priority in future planning.							
5.2 6.5			3.5 4.1 4.2 4.3 5.15 7.4				
Recreation: Provide a sufficient range of recreation opportunities to meet the needs of residents of all ages and interests in the community.							
5.1 5.3 5.4 5.5	1.8		5.1 5.2 5.3 5.4 5.5 5.6 5.7 5.8 5.9 5.10 5.11 5.12 5.13 5.14 5.15 5.16				
Scenic Roadways and Corridors: Maintain amenities along major roadways which provide beauty, identity, and form to the community and to neighborhoods within the community.							
			6.1 6.2 6.3 6.4 7.3				

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TABLE 1-1 POLICIES MATRIX (continued)							
Land Use Policy #	Housing Policy #	Transportation Policy #	ERME Policy #	Air Quality Policy #	Noise Policy #	Public Safety Policy #	Historic Resource Policy #
Hillside Areas: Protect and preserve the hillside areas. Continue to work with property owners and governmental agencies in the preparation of land use and development plans for the Puente Hills.							
1.3	2.5		3.2 5.16 7.1 7.2 7.3 7.4	7.3			
Recycling: Promote source reduction, recycling, and waste management.							
			8.1 8.2	6.4			
AIR QUALITY ELEMENT							
Automobile Travel: Reduce emissions associated with single-occupancy automobile use.							
		3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5 3.7 4.2 4.3 4.4 4.5 4.6 4.7 5.3 5.4		1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4 1.5 1.6 1.7 5.5			
Truck Traffic: Reduce truck emissions, as much as possible.							
		2.2		2.1 2.2 2.3			
Vehicle Emissions: Reduce directly emitted vehicle emissions.							
1.3		3.8		3.1 3.2			

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TABLE 1-1 POLICIES MATRIX (continued)							
Land Use Policy #	Housing Policy #	Transportation Policy #	ERME Policy #	Air Quality Policy #	Noise Policy #	Public Safety Policy #	Historic Resource Policy #
Parking Management: Reduce vehicle emissions through improved parking design and management.							
		2.3 2.4		4.1 4.2 4.3 4.4 4.5			
Growth Management: Reduce emissions associated with vehicle miles traveled by providing a balance of jobs and housing.							
				5.1 5.2 5.3 5.4			
Energy Consumption: Reduce emissions associated with energy consumption.							
			2.1 2.2	6.1 6.2 6.3 6.4 6.5			
Particulate Emissions: Reduce fugitive dust emissions.							
				4.5 7.1 7.2 7.3			
Building and Operational Emissions: Reduce air pollution emissions and impacts through siting and building design.							
				8.1 8.2 8.3 8.4 8.5			

Section 1: Introduction (continued)

TABLE 1-1 POLICIES MATRIX (continued)							
Land Use Policy #	Housing Policy #	Transportation Policy #	ERME Policy #	Air Quality Policy #	Noise Policy #	Public Safety Policy #	Historic Resource Policy #
Intergovernmental Cooperation: Maximize the effectiveness of air quality control programs through coordination with other governmental units.							
				9.1			
				9.2			
				9.3			
				9.4			
SAFETY ELEMENT							
Protection from Hazards: Promote an environment that is reasonably safe from hazards so that Whittier residents may conduct their daily lives free from fear and apprehension.							
1.3						1.1	
2.3						1.2	
4.5						1.3	
						1.4	
						1.5	
						2.1	
						2.2	
Seismic Hazards: Minimize loss of life, injuries, damage to property, and social and economic dislocation resulting from future regional or local seismic activity.							
						1.4	
						2.1	
						2.2	
						2.3	
						3.2	

Section 1: Introduction (continued)

TABLE 1-1 POLICIES MATRIX (continued)							
Land Use Policy #	Housing Policy #	Transportation Policy #	ERME Policy #	Air Quality Policy #	Noise Policy #	Public Safety Policy #	Historic Resource Policy #
Safety Services: Maintain and enhance safety and emergency services in the City.							
						1.1 3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5 3.6 5.1 5.2 5.3 5.4 5.5	
Hazardous Materials: Develop programs to protect residents and businesses from hazardous materials contamination.							
						4.1 4.2 4.3	
Crime and Violence: Reduce crime and violence in the City.							
						3.3 3.5 5.1 5.2 5.3 5.4 5.5	
NOISE ELEMENT							
Noise Sensitive Uses: Minimize noise levels throughout the community.							
1.4	1.9 1.10					1.1 1.2	
Noise Sources: Discourage noises which are detrimental to the public health and welfare and contrary to the public interest.							
1.4						2.1 2.2 2.3	

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TABLE 1-1 POLICIES MATRIX (continued)							
Land Use Policy #	Housing Policy #	Transportation Policy #	ERME Policy #	Air Quality Policy #	Noise Policy #	Public Safety Policy #	Historic Resource Policy #
HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT							
Historic Resource Identification: Determine the nature and extent of Whittier's physical and cultural heritage.							
							1.1 1.2
Historic Preservation: Develop an historic resources preservation program, recognizing that effective utilization of the City's historic resources supports community identity and appeal, social and economic vitality, and neighborhood stability.							
1.6 2.2			6.2				2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4
Public Awareness: Promote public awareness of Whittier's history and heritage.							
							3.1 3.2

