



WHITTIER
1955

introduction

in this section

context

community effort

vision

guiding principles

user's guide

administering the plan

- envision whittier v. state mandated elements

- statutory requirements

- key focus symbols

- key terminology

- general plan reference documents



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context

Whittier encompasses 14.6 square miles in southeastern Los Angeles County, bounded by the unincorporated community of Hacienda Heights and the cities of La Habra Heights and Industry to the north/northeast. The city of Pico Rivera lies to the west, city of La Habra to the southeast, and the city of Santa Fe Springs and Orange County to the south (Figure I-1). Several freeways and highways offer regional access to Whittier. Interstate 605 (I-605) runs along the western boundary. State Route 60 (SR-60), five miles north, offers access via Workman Mill Road and Colima Road. Access from Interstate 5 (I-5) is six miles south. Whittier Boulevard (State Route 72) bisects Whittier from the northwest to the southeast and provides a freeway alternative into downtown Los Angeles to the west and the city of La Habra on the east. Colima Road (County Route N8) runs north-south across the eastern portion of Whittier, providing access to the San Gabriel Valley communities to the north.

This General Plan addresses all lands within the City's corporate limits, as well as some unincorporated Los Angeles County neighborhoods near Whittier, within the City's Sphere of Influence. In this General Plan, the combined City area and Sphere of Influence are termed the "planning area," as illustrated (in red) in Figure I-2. While properties within the Sphere of Influence are under the jurisdiction of Los Angeles County agencies, these properties bear a critical relationship to Whittier's planning activities. Many of these areas already receive some services from Whittier and could be annexed into the city in the future. Planning for service extensions, integrated infrastructure, and high design quality is timely and prudent.

Whittier's General Plan, also known as "Envision Whittier", reflects the community's shared values of what Whittier is today and plans to be in future years. Often referred to as the community's "blueprint", a general plan establishes the basis for zoning regulations and provides guidance in the evaluation of development proposals. Additionally, it creates the framework for economic development, mobility improvements, and balancing the community's desires regarding sustainability, City services, and parks. The Envision Whittier General Plan will lead the community toward a more healthy and sustainable future.

community effort

In Whittier, we understand that community building and public participation are the cornerstones of a thriving city. The public participation effort arose from Whittier's fundamental belief that an active resident population must be integrally involved in important policy discussions. Envision Whittier's public participation program was multi-faceted and included the components described below.

INTRODUCTION

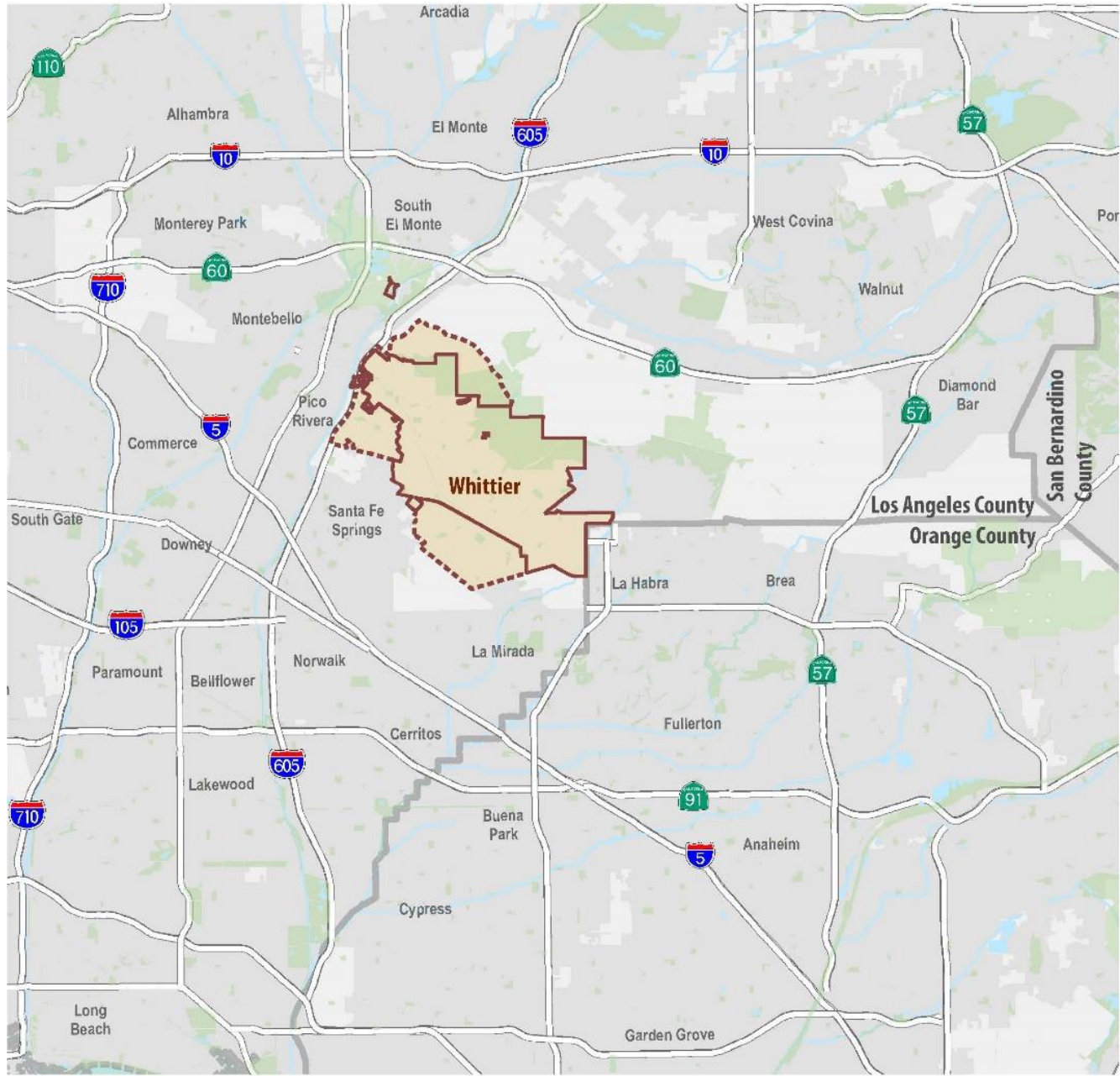


Figure I-1: Regional Location

ENVISION WHITTIER

Boundaries
—— Whittier City Boundary
- - - - Whittier Sphere of Influence

Source: City of Whittier and American Community Survey, 2015.
Prepared by MIG, 2022.



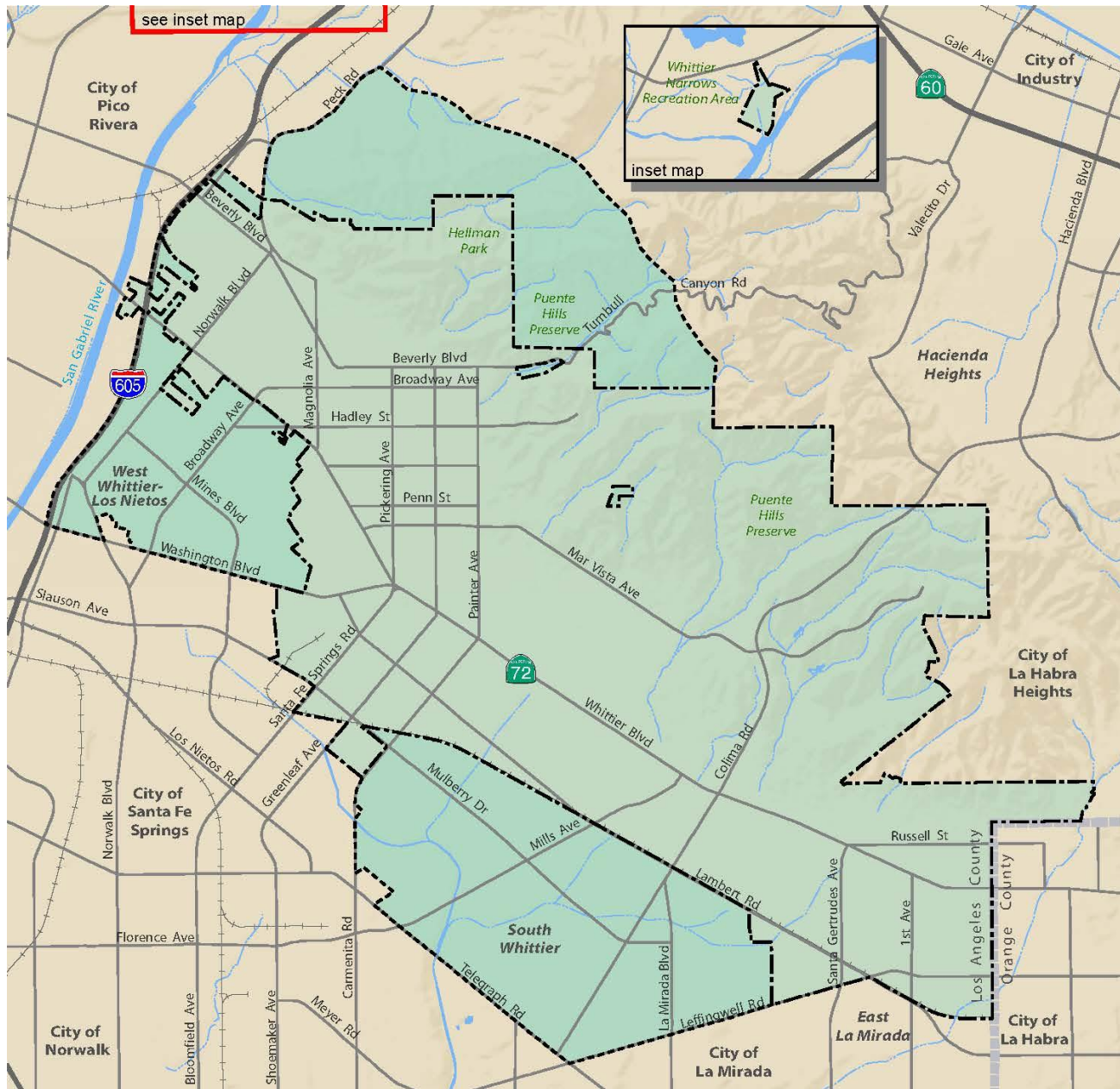


Figure I-2: Planning Area

ENVISION WHITTIER

Planning Area

- Whittier City Boundary
- Whittier Sphere of Influence

Base Map Features

- County Boundary
- Major Streets
- Freeways
- Railroads
- River and Creeks
- Waterbodies

Source: City of Whittier and American Community Survey, 2015.

Prepared by MIG, 2022.



INTRODUCTION

stakeholder interviews

Two stakeholder interview sessions with a total of 24 participants representing 19 organizations were convened at the start of the General Plan update, in July and August 2017. The stakeholders were a diverse group of community representatives, including residents, developers, business owners, law enforcement, school administrators, and various Whittier-based organizations. The interactive sessions encouraged participants to share a wide range of perspectives and opinions regarding Whittier’s assets, concerns, and opportunities.

launch workshops

Four Envision Whittier launch workshops were conducted to assess the community’s view regarding what is valued most about Whittier. The four workshops took place during September 2017. Community members were given passbooks and encouraged to visit the workshops’ five stations: “Where do you live?”, “What do you value most?”, “How do you get around?”, “How do we stay healthy?”, and “What are Whittier’s community assets and future opportunities?”. These workshops were designed to educate community members about the General Plan, inform the public about the update process, and gather feedback from a wide cross-section of Whittier constituents. In total, more than 75 people provided input at the four workshops. Workshops were advertised using City social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), email blasts, and the Envision Whittier website.

questionnaires

Soon after the project’s launch, in November 2017, a total of 491 Whittier residents, property owners, students, and workers responded to a questionnaire for Envision Whittier. The questionnaire’s objectives were to understand the community’s opinions on issues and opportunities in Whittier and solicit input on what community members value, building on perspectives collected during the launch workshops.



Questionnaire outreach during Whittier Earth Day Event 2018

A total of 403 community members participated in a second Envision Whittier questionnaire built from public input provided at previous outreach events and the first questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire was to shape the General Plan’s vision and guiding principles. The City

distributed and collected the 2nd round of questionnaires during the months of April and May 2018.

commission/committee workshop

A workshop for Whittier Commissions/Committees, convened in December 2017, gathered members' desired outcomes for the Envision Whittier process. Commissioners and committee members had the opportunity to direct the planning program and provide comment on the General Plan and input on key themes that would create the Plan's guiding principles. The following Commissions/Committees participated, represented by 25 members: Planning Commission; Historic Resources Commission; Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission; Design Review Board; and the Parking & Transportation Commission. The workshop was open to the public; twelve community members participated.

guiding principles public workshop

In June 2018, approximately 40 community members attended a public workshop held to draft Envision Whittier's guiding principles and opportunities. The workshop consisted of three parts—an open house, presentation, and breakout group activities—and solicited public input on the Plan's land use, transportation, and other planning issues. Workshops were advertised using City social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), email blasts, and the Envision Whittier website.



Public Workshop at Parnell Park Community Center. June 20, 2018.

commissioners/public workshop

In September 2018, a joint Commissioners/Public workshop was held with 63 participants—43 community members and 20 commissioners/board members. The Commissions and Boards represented included the Planning Commission; Historic Resources Commission; Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission; Parking & Transportation Commission; and the Design Review Board. The purpose of the workshop was to recommend General Plan policy ideas, framework ideas, and issues.



Commissioners/Public Workshop at Whittier Community Center. September 2018.

INTRODUCTION

council study session

In March 2019, during the continued engagement process to identify community priorities, a City Council Study Session was held with City staff and included discussions about the following topics:

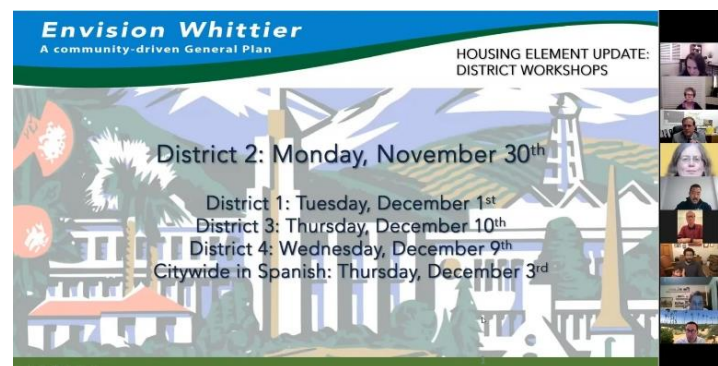
- PIH/ L-Line Station (formerly called the Gold Line) (Expanding Transit Oriented Corridors and Development)
- Whittier Boulevard (Specific Plan- Development priorities)
- Lambert Road (Mixed Use Development)
- Uptown (Specific Plan)
- Mobility (Vehicular, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Circulation)
- Health and Wellness (Park Improvements, Urban Greening, Recreational Activities, Food Options)
- Historic Resources (Preservation)

These topics and themes have informed the draft General Plan goals and policies, the land use policy map, and buildout estimate. Based on the Study Session discussion, the City initiated an extensive land use analysis, which resulted in a variety of programs and policies that aim to strategically create and develop programs enhancing Whittier’s unique character and quality of life.

A second City Council Study Session was held on October 13, 2020, to review community outreach progress and to discuss next steps. This meeting addressed key themes identified throughout all community meetings to date. This particular meeting also began discussion of community needs as repercussions of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

housing element update

As required for every California jurisdiction, the City of Whittier updates its General Plan Housing Element on an eight-year cycle. In November and December 2020, the City hosted five community workshops to collect input on housing challenges, needs, and strategies from a broad cross-section of residents and stakeholders. Due to the



District Housing Element Workshop Series, 2020.

constraints on public gathering imposed by the Center for Disease Control as a result of the novel COVID-19 virus pandemic, an online workshop was held for each of the four Council Districts. The Housing Element presentations focused on the housing laws' legislative intent, population and housing characteristics in Whittier, how affordable housing is defined, and how the City can accommodate its Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) of 3,439 units. In addition, a fifth workshop was conducted completely in Spanish. The Spanish language workshop's content was the same as the Council Districts workshop. Workshops were advertised using City social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), email blasts, and the Envision Whittier website.

social media and website

Online community engagement was being conducted throughout the Envision Whittier process. The multimedia campaign used the following social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

In addition, the City used the Envision Whittier website to provide current and ongoing information on the General Plan update. Public meetings summaries, questionnaires, technical documents, Envision Whittier documents, and information on the program's progress were posted for review. The public was asked to comment on various aspects of the Envision Whittier documents during their formation.



City of Whittier

vision

Based on the community input, the Envision Whittier’s vision and guiding principles were developed. The Envision Whittier General Plan seeks to redefine what the City of Whittier will look like, and how the city is experienced in the generations to come. The General Plan Update defines and reflects the community values and aspirations of today. Through an intensive, inclusive, and creative community engagement process the City was able to identify key needs and identify areas of improvement throughout the many districts and neighborhoods of Whittier.

Topics identified for improvement included housing, parks and physical activity, transportation, safety, a clean environment, and sustainability.

guiding principles

The Guiding Principles direct the development of Envision Whittier’s goals and policies. They reflect the vision for Whittier, rather than describe Whittier as it exists today. The Guiding Principles were developed with community and staff input and were vetted by the community and City Council.

- Whittier has a small town feel with a strong sense of community where gathering spaces, engaging events, and attractive streetscapes and greenways connect the community physically and socially. Our vibrant Uptown, diverse commercial corridors, stable residential neighborhoods, and natural open spaces provide places where all community members feel at home.
- Whittier strives to preserve its historic landmarks and districts, protect its hillsides, grow local businesses, and promote quality neighborhood character while encouraging complementary, managed, and sustainable growth.
- Whittier embraces Uptown as its urban retail core with local businesses, events, civic institutions, and a safer environment. Whittier promotes a unified Whittier Boulevard as a corridor that efficiently connects our neighborhoods to adjacent communities and provides a diversity of commercial businesses and institutions for locals and visitors. The Boulevard also benefits from the presence of higher-density housing that offers homes to people of all income levels and lifestyles.
- Whittier strengthens its economic prosperity by leveraging local assets and establishing community partners to grow quality jobs, enhance services, and maintain stable revenues.

- Whittier offers attractive, convenient transportation options and provides walkable, cyclable, safer, and livable streets while continuing to strengthen access to the greater region. Community amenities are accessible by all residents.
- Whittier values and is committed to enhancing the Puente Hills Preserve, a safer and scenic trail system, and diverse recreational facilities where the community can experience nature and engage in healthy activities.
- Whittier wisely manages its open space, water, energy, and air resources for sustainable use.
- Whittier residents, business interests, and local decision makers come together and celebrate Whittier's shared community values while working toward Whittier's best community interests.

user's guide

The General Plan is a community document intended for use by all residents, business owners and employees, and decision-makers in Whittier. As such, Envision Whittier is written and organized for ease of use. Tables, diagrams, and maps help readers understand planning concepts. A glossary provides further guidance and support to encourage a deeper understanding of all topic areas.

The organization of the General Plan allows users to turn to the element that interests them and quickly obtain a perspective of City policies on the subject. However, General Plan users should realize that the goals, policies, and programs throughout all elements are interrelated and should be examined comprehensively. These policy components must be considered together when making decisions.

The General Plan is intended to be both a long-term and a dynamic document and must be periodically updated to respond to changing community needs. Requests for amendments may be submitted by individuals or initiated by the City itself. Amendments may involve a land use designation change for a particular property, or policy/text changes applicable to larger areas or the entire city. Proposed amendments will be publicly reviewed to ensure consistency with all General Plan Elements and the General Plan EIR. Per State law, General Plans may be amended up to four times per year. A city is under no obligation to process General Plan amendments, as it constitutes a legislative act. To facilitate a larger number of amendment requests, a jurisdiction may group together several amendment requests to process together as one General Plan amendment.

administering the plan

The Whittier City Council will implement this General Plan by establishing annual planning and budgeting goals based on the Plan, and by adopting implementing ordinances, regulations, and programs. City departments will use General Plan policies to guide their programming and planning and, importantly, to review development applications for consistency with the community’s vision.

State law provides direction on how cities can maintain the general plan as a contemporary policy guide. California requires each planning department to report annually to its city council on “the status of the plan and progress in its implementation”. Moreover, it is the Whittier City Council’s policy to review the General Plan periodically to maintain the currency of its goals and policies, as well as its background and technical information. Envision Whittier has been adopted pursuant to this policy.

The City of Whittier regulates the use of property within its jurisdiction through the General Plan in conjunction with the zoning and specific plans, subdivision, building codes, and other municipal code sections. Following the General Plan’s adoption, any regulations in zoning, subdivision, building, and other ordinances that are not consistent with the General Plan will be amended to ensure consistency.

envision whittier general plan v. state mandated elements

Table I-1: Envision Whittier Plan v. State-Mandated Elements

| Elements of the Envision Whittier General Plan Update | State-Mandated General Plan Elements |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Land Use and Community Character (Land Use, Urban Design, and Economic Development) | Land Use |
| Mobility and Infrastructure (Transportation, Sustainable Communities/Climate Protection, Supportive Infrastructure) | Circulation |
| Resources Management (Parks and Recreation, Natural Resources, Environmental Sustainability, Oil and Gas Resources) | Conservation Open Space |
| Historic Resources | Historic Resources |

Table I-1: Envision Whittier Plan v. State-Mandated Elements

| Elements of the Envision Whittier General Plan Update | State-Mandated Elements | General Plan |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Public Safety, Noise, and Health | Noise Safety Air Quality | |
| Implementation Plan | -- | |
| Housing Element (Housing Element is under a separate cover) | Housing | |

NOTE: Environmental Justice policies are woven throughout the Envision Whittier General Plan.

statutory requirements

Every California jurisdiction is required to adopt a general plan and update it at regular intervals. The purpose of the general plan is to anticipate and plan for “the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning” (California Government Code §65300). A general plan must address many issues that are related to and influence land use decisions. Specifically, California law requires the general plan to address land use, circulation, housing, conservation of natural resources, preservation of open space, noise environment, public safety, and environmental justice (Government Code §65302). Jurisdictions may prepare and adopt other general plan elements or address any other topics of relevance or interest to that community, with the understanding that these optional elements must be implemented with the same vigor – and are subject to the same legal scrutiny – as the mandatory elements or topics.

key focus symbols

Throughout the Envision Whittier General Plan, symbols are used to identify key focus policies and programs. The health and sustainability focus will be identified by a green leaf symbol. The Environmental Justice symbol will be identified using a green globe.

health and sustainability focus

Envision Whittier takes a holistic approach to community health, weaving principles of sustainability into every element. Sustainability is achieved through careful planning to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability issues are addressed throughout Envision Whittier. The General Plan’s sustainability symbol, a green leaf, indicates the goals, policies, and/or programs that include specific attention



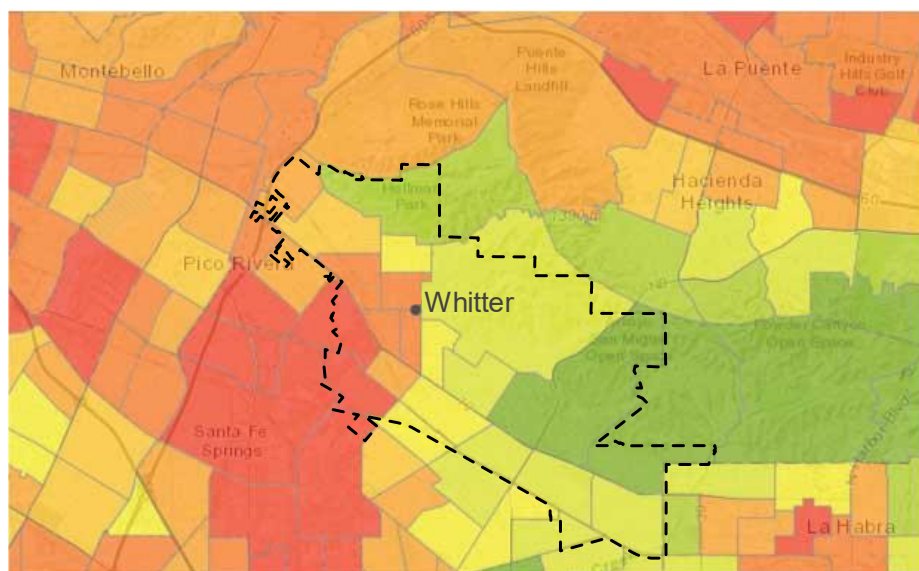
Whittier Greenway Trail

to best practices from the perspective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving natural resources, or promoting a healthier lifestyle. Sustainability is a cornerstone of the General Plan.

environmental justice focus

Envision Whittier, also, takes a holistic approach to environmental justice issues. Environmental justice issues are defined as those that promote community engagement in the public

decision-making process, reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities, and prioritize improvements and programs to address the needs of disadvantaged



CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Analysis of Whittier

communities. Disadvantaged communities as defined by the State of California are communities (area, neighborhoods, or parts of neighborhoods) that are disproportionately burdened by

multiple sources of pollution and with population characteristics that make them more sensitive to pollution.¹

Some of Whittier’s western neighborhoods (including some SOI neighborhoods) are considered by the State to be disadvantaged communities in CalEnviroScreen 3.0². For all of Whittier, especially those western neighborhoods, it is critical that environmental justice be considered at every level of Envision Whittier’s implementation. Like sustainability, environmental justice is also integrated into every Element. Envision Whittier policies and programs support the environmental justice goal by reducing pollution exposure; promoting public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, physical activity, and adaptation to climate change; and by supporting civil engagement. These are all marked with a green globe symbol.

key terminology

goal

A goal is an ideal future end; it is a direction-setter. As such, a goal may be abstract in nature, and, generally, not quantifiable or time dependent.

policy

A policy is a specific statement that guides decision-making. It indicates a commitment of the City of Whittier City Council to a course of action. A policy implements a general plan’s goal.

program

A program is a coordinated set of specific measures and actions (e.g., zoning, subdivision procedures, and capital expenditures) that local government intends to use in carrying out the policies of the General Plan.

general plan reference documents

The General 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

¹ “Disadvantaged communities” are defined as areas identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency as those in the top 25 percent of highest scoring census tracts in CalEnviroScreen. CalEnviroScreen calculates a score for each census tract in California based on both pollution levels and socioeconomic factors. For this document, we will be identifying the Disadvantaged communities as Environmental Justice communities.

² Several blocks located west of Painter Avenue and south of Whittier Boulevard are in the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 91-100 percentile range, while blocks north of Whittier Boulevard and between Broadway Avenue and Painter Avenue are in the 76 – 90 percentile range.

INTRODUCTION

engagement of numerous individuals throughout the community who have articulated their hopes and expectations for the City's future.

Through the process, several related documents have been produced, that will provide resource material for years to come. These include:

- Envision Whittier Existing Conditions Atlas
- Envision Whittier Guiding Principles
- Public Engagement Summaries
 - Stakeholder Interviews Summary (2017)
 - General Plan Update Launch Workshop Summary (2017)
 - Envision Whittier Questionnaire #1 Summary (2017)
 - Commission/Committee Workshop Summary (2017)
 - Envision Whittier Questionnaire #2 Summary (2018)
 - Guiding Principles and Opportunities for the Future Public Workshop Summary (2018)
 - Options for Our Future Commissioners/Public Workshop Summary (2018)
- General Plan Environmental Impact Report
- ADK&A Market Analysis
- KMA Market Analysis