



## Overview

In early 2018, the City of Lake Forest embarked on an effort to update its General Plan, a long-term policy document which identifies the community's vision for the future and provides a framework to guide decisions on growth, development, and conservation of open space and resources in a manner consistent with the quality of life desired by residents and businesses. The updated General Plan was adopted in June 2020.

Over time, the city's population and the physical environment in which its residents live and work changes. In order for the General Plan to be a useful document, it must be monitored and periodically revised to respond to and reflect changing conditions and needs. As such, a general plan should be comprehensively updated periodically to reflect current conditions and emerging trends in order to respond to changes as they occur. This effort is the first comprehensive update to the City's General Plan since 1994, when the City's first General Plan was adopted following the City's incorporation. This General Plan provides the framework for long-term decision making in Lake Forest for the next 20 years. We appreciate the community's participation in this project and look forward to a bright future for our City.

The City of Lake Forest's Updated General Plan (General Plan) identifies the community's vision for the future and provides a framework that will guide decisions on growth, development, and conservation of open space and resources in a manner that is consistent with the quality of life desired by the city's residents and businesses. The General Plan supersedes and replaces the City's 1994 General Plan. While the General Plan carries forward some of the major goal and policy framework of the 1994 General Plan, it has been substantially updated to address current local conditions, community priorities, and goals, and has been reorganized to make the document more user-friendly and straightforward.

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## Scope and Content of the General Plan

State law requires the City to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of its planning area. The general plan must include land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety elements, as specified in Government Code Section 65302, to the extent that the issues identified by State law exist in the City’s planning area. Additional elements that relate to the physical development of the city may also be addressed in the general plan. The degree of specificity and level of detail of the discussion of each general plan element need only reflect local conditions and circumstances. The General Plan has been prepared consistent with the requirements of State law and addresses the relevant items addressed in Government Code Section 65300 et seq.

A general plan is a “constitution” or “blueprint” for the future physical and economic development of a county or city. All future planning decisions and project approvals must be consistent with the general plan, including, but not limited to: Area Plans, Master Plans, subdivisions, public works projects, public services, and zoning decisions. A general plan has four defining features, as described below.

### *General*

As the name implies, a general plan provides general guidance for future land use, transportation, infrastructure, environmental, and resource decisions.

### *Comprehensive*

A general plan covers a wide range of social, economic, infrastructure, and natural resource issues. There are seven State mandated topics that general plans must cover including: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, safety, and noise. Cities can also address topics of local significance in their General Plans, including economic development, community design, and health and wellness.

### *Long-Range*

A general plan provides guidance on achieving a long-range vision of the future for a city or county. To reach this envisioned future, the general plan includes goals, policies, and implementation programs that address both near-term and long-term needs. The City of Lake Forest’s General Plan looks ahead approximately 20 years—to the year of 2040. At the same time, the General Plan will provide policy direction that allows for flexibility to respond to changes in the marketplace and in technology, positioning the City for long-term success.

### *Integrated and Coherent*

The goals, policies, and implementation programs in a general plan must present a comprehensive, unified program for development and resource conservation. A general plan uses a consistent set of assumptions and projections to assess future demands for housing, employment, public services, and infrastructure. It has a coherent set of policies and implementation programs that enables residents, landowners, businesses, and industry to be more certain about how future planning decisions will be made and implemented.

### Organization of the General Plan Elements

Each element (i.e., chapter) of the General Plan is organized into a set of goals, policies, and implementation actions. Each goal is supported by a particular set of policies and actions to implement and achieve that goal. The final chapter of the General Plan (Implementation) includes a complete summary of each action that is identified in the various elements, accompanied by the City department responsible for implementing the action and the timing of implementation.

### General Plan Policy Document

This General Plan policy document is the heart of the General Plan. It contains the goals, policies, and actions that will guide future decisions within the city and identifies implementation measures to ensure the vision and goals of the General Plan are carried out. Two important documents support the General Plan. The Existing Conditions Report and the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) are both intended to be used in conjunction with this General Plan and to serve as companions to this policy document.

The General Plan also contains a land use diagram, which serves as a general guide to the distribution of land uses throughout the city. The General Plan addresses all of the elements required by State law. The table below identified the elements included in the General Plan and the corresponding requirement in State law.

**Table IN-1 Relationship Between General Plan Elements and State Requirements**

Lake Forest General Plan Elements	Land Use	Circulation	Conservation	Open Space	Noise	Safety	Environmental Justice	Climate Planning	Housing	Optional Topics
Land Use and Design	▲						▲			
Mobility		▲								
Economic Development										▲
Recreation and Resources			▲	▲				▲		
Public Safety					▲	▲		▲		
Public Facilities			▲							▲
Health and Wellness							▲	▲		▲
Housing (Separate Cover)									▲	
Implementation	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲

## Public Participation

The Lake Forest General Plan was developed with extensive community input and reflects the community's vision for Lake Forest. A summary of the community outreach and public participation process is provided below.

### ***Outreach Objectives***

Objectives established for the comprehensive outreach program were to:

- Educate the public on the City's history, existing conditions, socioeconomic trends, and fiscal health
- Develop a long-term vision for Lake Forest
- Build capacity for future public outreach efforts
- Engage key stakeholders to perpetuate long-term involvement
- Engage a broad spectrum of the City's community members
- Raise the profile of the General Plan and establish a greater connection to current planning issues

### ***Visioning Workshops***

The City hosted General Plan Update Visioning Workshops in May, June, and July 2018, addressing a different topic each month. Each Workshop included a brief overview of the General Plan, including why it's important and why the City is updating its Plan, some background information on the evening's topic, and a series of facilitated activities to solicit input on key topics or ideas.



The first General Plan Visioning Workshop was held on Wednesday May 16, 2018 at the Lake Forest City Hall from 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM. Approximately 15 individuals attended this Workshop. The intent of the first Workshop was to begin a dialogue with the community regarding its priorities for the next 20 years. Following a brief presentation on the General Plan Update, the consultant team facilitated two activities to help conduct this conversation. The first activity was to identify assets, vision ideals, and challenges facing Lake Forest, and the second activity was to identify opportunity areas that warranted additional land use and/or policy direction.

The second Visioning Workshop was held on Wednesday June 13, 2018 at City Hall from 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM. Approximately 25 people attended this event. The focus of the second Workshop was on transportation and mobility in Lake Forest, including how people get around (cars, walking, biking, transit) and regional transit connections. The presentation included background on existing conditions, such as existing traffic volumes, transit routes, and accident information. The group also reviewed existing commute patterns (where do people who live in Lake Forest go for work, and where do people who work in Lake Forest commute from).

The third and final Visioning Workshop was held on Wednesday July 11, 2018 at City Hall from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM. Approximately 40 people attended this event. The focus of the last Workshop was on land use and community design. The discussion focused on better understanding the community's vision for the following five focus areas: Foothill Ranch Towne Centre, El Toro Rd/I-5 Corridor, Lake Forest Dr/Muirlands Rd, Civic Center area, and the Rail Corridor/El Toro Road. As part of the overview presentation, the group considered how local and regional socioeconomic trends shape land use planning in Lake Forest. Representatives from the City's Homeowners Associations were personally invited to participate in this workshop.

The topics explored in each Workshop along with summaries of the input provided by the community are provided in the Vision and Values Outreach Summary Report, which is available for review online at: [www.lakeforest.generalplan.org](http://www.lakeforest.generalplan.org).



## Pop-up Events

To connect with a broad audience throughout Lake Forest, the City hosted two Pop-up Events where the project team was able to educate the community on the General Plan and better understand what residents love most about living in the City.

### Bunny Blast

On Saturday March 24, 2018, the City of Lake Forest hosted its annual Bunny Blast, a fun-filled event for the entire family. The day included a range of activities including game booths, rides, and music. The General Plan Update hosted a booth inviting attendees to share what they “love about Lake Forest” and spin the prize wheel. Project factsheets were also available along with small business cards highlighting the project website and contact information. Throughout the day, the project team spoke with over 200 community members to let them know about the General Plan Update project, including what topics the General Plan will address and why the City is updating its Plan, and to hear what each person loved most about their community.

The top responses received included “Parks”, “Community”, “Nature” and “Events”. All of these special qualities were identified more than a dozen times. Other key topics and issues identified by the community included: “Mobility”, “Retail/Shops”, “Schools”, “Safety”, “Location”, and “Recreation”.



## **National Night Out**

On Tuesday August 7, 2018, the City of Lake Forest hosted National Night Out, an annual community-building event that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie. The General Plan Update team hosted a booth inviting attendees to share what they “love about Lake Forest”. Project factsheets and website small business cards were provided, along with copies of the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) Statement of Interest form. Throughout the evening, the project team spoke with over 100 community members of all ages regarding their favorite things about Lake Forest.

The top three responses were the same as those received at Bunny Blast: “Parks”, “Community” and “Nature”. These three responses were all each identified at least 10 times.

## **Online Surveys and Polls**

The City of Lake Forest hosted a Vision and Values Survey which was facilitated online. The survey was open from May 15 through July 13, 2018 and was administered online via the SurveyMonkey web platform. During the approximately two-month time period that the survey was active, there were 824 responses to the eighteen primary questions related to the General Plan update. The questions involved a wide range of response formats that are synthesized in the Visioning and Values Report. The survey responses provide insight into the demographics and opinions of Lake Forest community members concerning goals and topics related to the update of the City’s General Plan.

Based on the demographic questions within the survey, the online survey attracted those Lake Forest residents with families and children. Respondents to the survey tended to be in their family-forming years, or later, and have more than one child. The survey had less representation from single-person households, renters, and younger residents than the typical resident demographics for the City of Lake Forest. Of the participating community members, survey respondents prioritized the following themes:

- community safety
- improved entertainment options
- open spaces
- housing affordability
- traffic calming.

Detailed survey results and responses are contained in Appendix B of the Vision and Values Summary Report, which is available for review online at: [www.lakeforest.generalplan.org](http://www.lakeforest.generalplan.org).

## **General Plan Advisory Committee**

The 18-member General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), which consisted of residents, homeowners association representatives, business leaders, and representatives from the school district, Community Services Commission, Traffic and Parking Commission, and Planning Commission, among others, collaborated with City staff and the General Plan Update consultant team throughout the development of the General Plan. The Advisory Committee met 11 times between September 2018 and September 2019 to identify key issues and challenges that Lake Forest faces over the next 20 years, prepare a Community Vision Statement, and to develop the comprehensive set of goals and policies contained in the General Plan. Each General Plan Advisory Group meeting was open to the public. All meeting materials are available on the project website at [www.lakeforest.generalplan.org](http://www.lakeforest.generalplan.org).

## **City Council Briefings**

The City Council received quarterly briefings from City Staff and the Consultant team (for a total of 6 briefings) to review input from the Visioning Workshops, receive information relevant to the specific topics addressed at the General Plan Advisory Group meetings, and provide specific direction and guidance to staff and the consultant team regarding the Community Vision Statement and the Land Use Themes Report/development of the Benchmark Plan which is analyzed in this Environmental Impact Report.

## Community Open Houses on Draft General Plan

The community was invited to two open houses on the General Plan, which were held on November 12, 2019 at the El Toro Library and on November 13, 2019 at City Hall. At both open houses, the City hosted tables focusing on key topics/components of the General Plan (such as land use, community design, transportation, and public facilities) and shared key goals, policies, and actions included in the General Plan to address these topics. Community members were able to ask questions of City Staff and the Consultant team and learn more about the future of Lake Forest.

## Public Outreach

For all public workshops and meetings, the City of Lake Forest conducted extensive outreach, using a wide variety of methods and tools, to inform and encourage the community to participate in the General Plan Update process. The following is a list of methods and tools used to inform the public of meetings, workshops, and the status of the General Plan Update work efforts.

- **General Plan Website:** The City maintains a website ([www.lakeforest.generalplan.org](http://www.lakeforest.generalplan.org)) devoted to informing the public about, and encouraging participation in, the General Plan Update process. The website includes all public notices, all workshop materials, presentations given to the GPAC and City Council, background materials, draft policy documents, and draft versions of the General Plan Land Use Map.
- **Focus Group Briefings:** The City held General Plan Update briefings with interested focus groups including the Executive Committee Roundtable, the Hospitality Roundtable, and the Homeowners Association Roundtable.
- **E-mail distribution list:** This list was developed and maintained over time, and included approximately 345 agencies, organizations, stakeholders, and individuals.
- **Social Media:** The City regularly posted meeting notices and project updates to its social media platforms, including NextDoor, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The project was also provided in a “Mayor’s Minute” video which was posted to Facebook and YouTube. All three Visioning Workshops were also broadcast via Facebook Live on the City of Lake Forest’s Facebook page.
- **Flyers:** Flyers were posted at City Hall and at key locations throughout the community advertising the Visioning Workshops and online survey.

## Development of a Community Vision Statement

Based on the extensive public input received, a Community Vision Statement was prepared to serve as the foundation for the General Plan. The Vision Statement and eight associated Guiding Principles—presented in full on the following pages—was reviewed by the General Plan Advisory Committee and approved by the Lake Forest City Council in early 2019.



## Community Vision

***The Lake Forest Community Vision is a statement which describes the City in 2040.***

Lake Forest is an exceptional city where people of all ages can live, work, and enjoy their lives. The City provides the necessary high-quality infrastructure, facilities, and services that our residents expect while consistently looking towards the future to carefully plan for the needs of new residents, growing business industries, and emerging technologies.

Our distinct sense of place is rooted in our parks, natural open spaces, lakes, creeks, urban forest, landscaped parkways, and established residential communities. We have well-located and maintained local and regional parks, trails, and recreation programs providing a diverse range of active and passive recreational opportunities for our residents to enjoy. Residents of our attractive, safe, and quiet neighborhoods support Lake Forest's vibrant commercial centers which feature desirable shopping and dining options and engaging public spaces. The City provides safe and efficient ways to get around the community in a vehicle, walking, biking, and alternative other transportation modes. Lake Forest's enviable regional location and transportation connections allow our residents to easily access many of southern California's most beautiful natural resources and destinations.

We also recognize that meaningful partnerships with local and regional stakeholders—including homeowner associations, businesses, the Saddleback Valley Unified School District, utility providers, neighboring jurisdictions, and public and nonprofit agencies—can help us achieve our vision. We are committed to fostering a positive atmosphere of civic collaboration so that Lake Forest remains a desirable and safe community.

## Guiding Principles

- ▶ ***Sense of Community***
- ▶ ***Quality of Life***
- ▶ ***Parks, Recreation, and Natural Open Space***
- ▶ ***Vibrant Commercial Centers***
- ▶ ***Business Opportunities***
- ▶ ***Mobility in the City and Region***
- ▶ ***Local and Regional Partnerships***
- ▶ ***Focus on the Future***



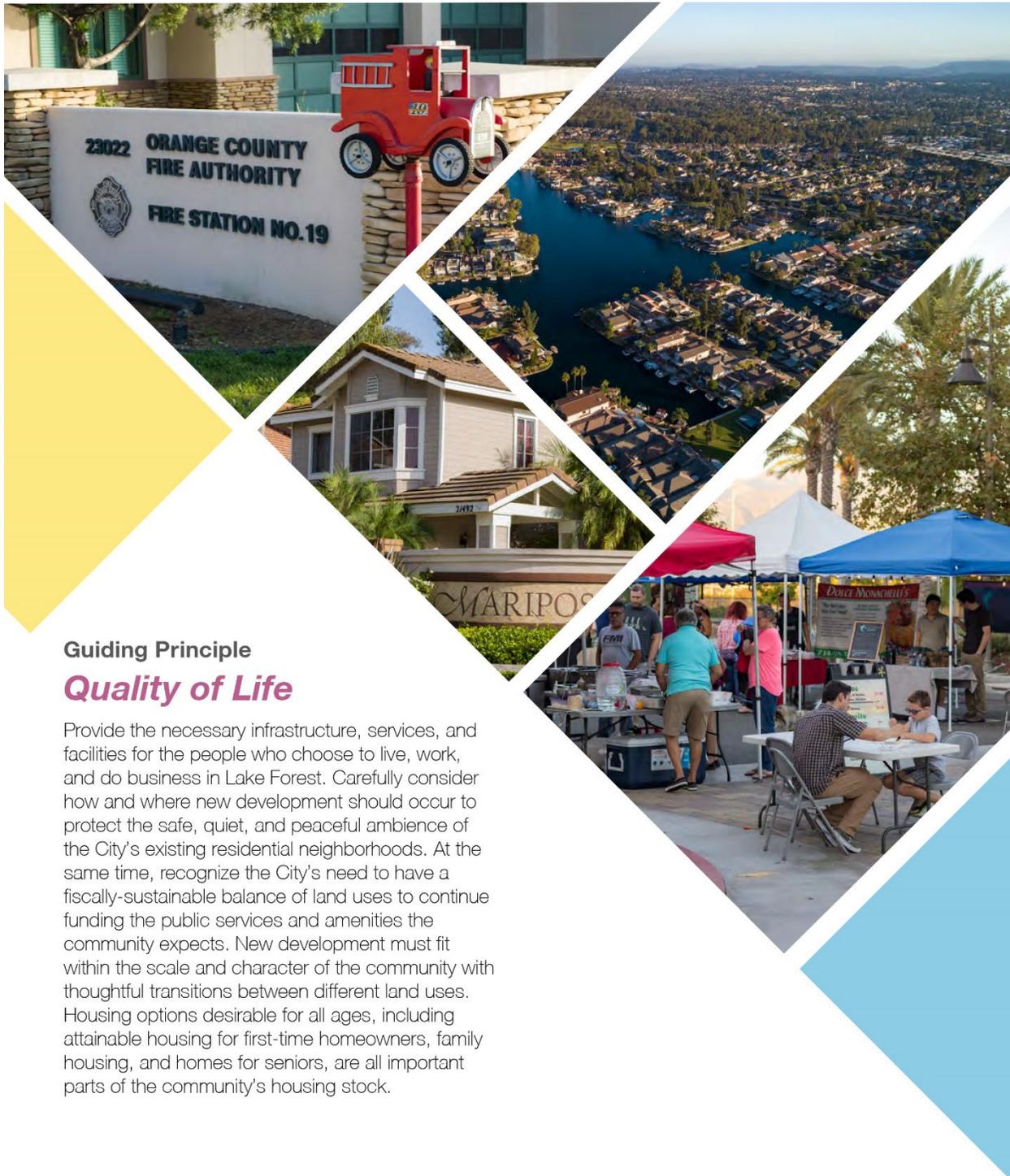


## Guiding Principle

### *Sense of Community*

Foster a sense of community unique to Lake Forest that celebrates the City's history, image, services, and amenities. Even as the City changes, the community will retain its charming character. The Civic Center will serve as the cornerstone of civic life and community events and programs held throughout Lake Forest will continue to create inviting opportunities for people to come together. The community's distinguishing physical characteristics, including its parks, lakes, creeks, urban forest, and natural open spaces, are highly valued as an important part of the community's sense of place and character. Residents are proud to call Lake Forest home and businesses want to locate to Lake Forest because of its sense of community.





**Guiding Principle**  
***Quality of Life***

Provide the necessary infrastructure, services, and facilities for the people who choose to live, work, and do business in Lake Forest. Carefully consider how and where new development should occur to protect the safe, quiet, and peaceful ambience of the City's existing residential neighborhoods. At the same time, recognize the City's need to have a fiscally-sustainable balance of land uses to continue funding the public services and amenities the community expects. New development must fit within the scale and character of the community with thoughtful transitions between different land uses. Housing options desirable for all ages, including attainable housing for first-time homeowners, family housing, and homes for seniors, are all important parts of the community's housing stock.

## Guiding Principle

### *Parks, Recreation, and Natural Open Space*

Maintain the City's diverse array of parks, recreation facilities, natural open space areas, and equestrian, biking, and hiking trails so that users of all ages and abilities have access to a range of active and passive amenities. The City also supports local and regional efforts to improve air quality and expand multimodal transportation options which can help create a healthier environment for Lake Forest residents. Educational material and programs promote the City's parks, recreation, and natural open space areas and encourage residents to enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle.





### Guiding Principle

## ***Vibrant Commercial Centers***

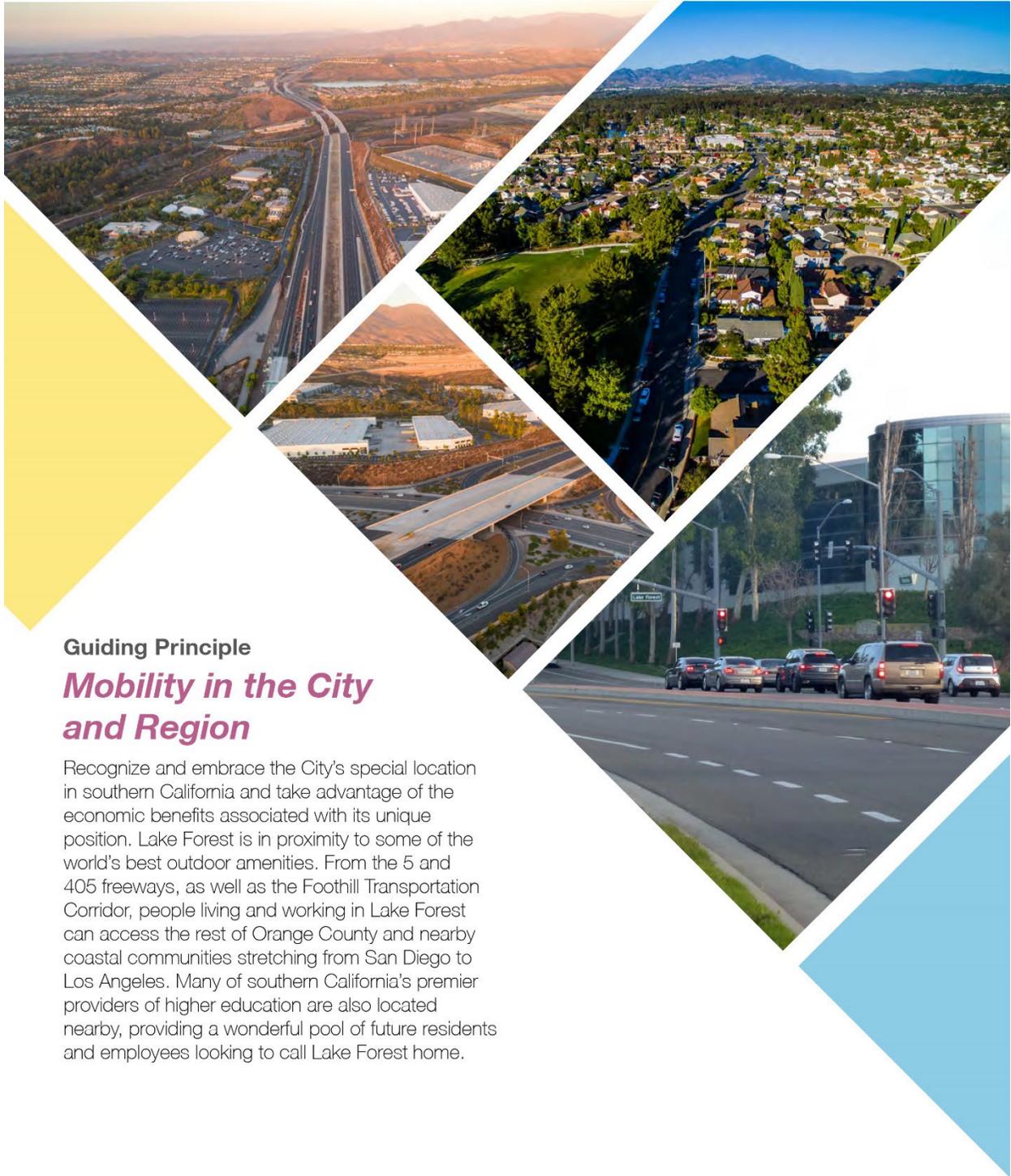
Improve our ability to be fiscally sustainable through the expansion of commercial activities, retention of existing successful commercial businesses, and redevelopment of existing commercial centers. Embrace the challenges of the new retail economy by supporting development or redevelopment of commercial centers that focus on providing unique experiences that cannot be replicated through online shopping. This includes providing a range of dining, shopping, and entertainment options for all generations so that people living and working in Lake Forest want to spend time at the community's commercial centers. The inclusion of visible gathering spaces like public plazas and outdoor dining patios will help to create a more enjoyable commercial environment. Bringing commercial, residential, and civic uses closer together in mixed-use environments can also support the success of Lake Forest's commercial development.

## Guiding Principle

### *Business Opportunities*

Enhance the City's reputation as a leading location for high-quality jobs and encourage the expansion of business clusters that provide employment opportunities and add to the City's revenues. Lake Forest has everything a business needs to thrive and grow. Its location provides businesses with access to strategic markets and a multimodal transportation system, including freeways, airports, and seaports. The community includes a diverse, highly-educated, and creative labor pool as well. Work collaboratively with businesses to promote and streamline regulations to facilitate economic activity. Continue to invest in economic development programs that promote Lake Forest as the natural choice to successfully grow a business and encourage innovation.





### Guiding Principle

## *Mobility in the City and Region*

Recognize and embrace the City's special location in southern California and take advantage of the economic benefits associated with its unique position. Lake Forest is in proximity to some of the world's best outdoor amenities. From the 5 and 405 freeways, as well as the Foothill Transportation Corridor, people living and working in Lake Forest can access the rest of Orange County and nearby coastal communities stretching from San Diego to Los Angeles. Many of southern California's premier providers of higher education are also located nearby, providing a wonderful pool of future residents and employees looking to call Lake Forest home.

## Guiding Principle

### *Local and Regional Partnerships*

Encourage effective partnerships with local and regional stakeholders to help achieve the City's vision. Working together with key partners including homeowner associations, businesses, providers of lifelong learning opportunities, utilities, neighboring jurisdictions, and public and nonprofit agencies, creates a shared vision and mutual commitment among parties. Public/private partnerships are also a key to the City's successful development of some of the community's most special places, including the Etnies Skatepark, the Sports Park, and The Arbor shopping district. The City will continue to work cooperatively and creatively with local and regional partners to further the City's objectives.





### Guiding Principle

## *Focus on the Future*

Inspire a community culture that is forward-thinking and innovative. Change is happening all around us —in the way we connect with each other, where we live, how we get around, the jobs we have, how we purchase goods and services, and the way we receive and share information. Lake Forest believes we must use data and information to understand where we've been to determine where we'd like to go, and that we must chart a path that provides clear direction while also allowing us the flexibility to quickly adapt to change. With thoughtful leadership Lake Forest will be able to respond to dynamic conditions while maintaining its commitment to its residents and businesses.

## Applying the General Plan

The General Plan is intended for use by a broad range of persons, including City decision-makers, City staff, developers, and community members, to serve the following purposes:

- To identify Lake Forest’s land use, growth, transportation, environmental, economic, and social goals and policies as they relate to land use, conservation, development, and provision of community services and facilities.
- To enable the City Council and the Planning Commission to establish long-range conservation and growth goals and policies.
- To provide a basis for judging whether specific private development proposals and public projects are in harmony with these goals and policies.
- To inform citizens, developers, decision makers, and other jurisdictions of the policies that will guide development and conservation within the Lake Forest.

The General Plan applies to lands in the incorporated area of the City, to the extent allowed by Federal and State law. Under State law, many actions, such as development projects, specific plans, master plans, community plans, zoning, subdivisions, public agency projects, and other decisions must be consistent with the General Plan. State law requires that the City's ordinances regulating land use be consistent with the General Plan. The Zoning Ordinance, individual project proposals, and other related plans and ordinances must be consistent with the goals and policies in the General Plan.

### *Interpreting the General Plan*

In reading the General Plan, one should infer that the goals, policies, and implementation measures are limited to the extent that it is financially feasible and appropriate for the City to carry them out and to the extent legally permitted by Federal and State law. For example, policies and measures which indicate that the City will “provide,” “support,” “ensure,” or otherwise require or carry them out do not indicate an irreversible commitment of City funds or staff resources to those activities, but rather, that the City will support them when the City deems that it is financially feasible and appropriate to do so. In some cases, the City will carry out various policies and measures by requiring development, infrastructure, and other projects to be consistent with the policies and actions of the General Plan. In other cases, the City may include General Plan items in the Capital Improvement Program, annual budget, or other implementation mechanisms, as the City deems appropriate.

## **How to Read Lake Forest's General Plan**

As the guide for future development and desired conditions, residents, property owners, and business owners should also familiarize themselves with how to read this document. Each element contains a brief introduction, several goals and related policies, and a description of related actions to help implement the City's vision.

### **Goals**

A goal in the General Plan is the broadest statement of community values. It is a generalized ideal which provides a sense of direction for action. They are overall statements of desired future conditions.

### **Policies and Implementation**

The essence of the General Plan is contained within its policies. Policies are statements which further refine the goals, and guide the course of action the City must take to achieve the goals in the plan. It is important to note that policies are guides for decision makers, not decisions themselves. Policies and implementation measures must be clear to be useful. However, they may range in terms of commitment of resources, importance, and expected results. Therefore, it is important for readers to understand the distinctions between various levels of policy and implementation action. The following is a list of common terms used in policies and implementation measures, and how to interpret their usage in the General Plan. In cases where other terms are used (and not defined below), an equivalent to the closest applicable term can be used.

**Shall:** Absolute commitment to the policy or action, and indicate that the policy must be adhered to in all cases.

**Should:** Policy will be followed in most cases, but exceptions are acceptable for good reasons.

**Ensure:** Policy indicates that the City plays a role in making sure something happens, often times in partnership with other agencies or as part of other City programs and processes.

**Encourage:** Policy is highly recommended and/or desired, and should be pursued when feasible.

**Allow:** Policy will be supported within certain parameters and certain guidelines.

**Coordinate:** Policy will occur in conjunction with another entity, and the City will carry its share of the responsibility.

**Explore:** Effort will be taken to investigate the subject at hand, to discover whether or not further commitment is relevant.

**Consider:** Policy may or may not be followed, depending upon the results of analysis that will be completed.

**Limit:** Effort will be taken to keep the subject within certain limits, or will at least make undesired change more difficult.

**Restrict:** Effort will be taken to keep the undesired action to a minimum.

### ***Amending the General Plan***

The General Plan is not static, but rather is a dynamic and multi-faceted document that defines and addresses the changing needs of the City. It is based on an on-going assessment and understanding of existing and projected community needs. The City's decision-makers have broad discretion in interpreting the General Plan and its purposes, and are allowed to weigh and balance the various goals and policies when applying them. Recognizing the need for the General Plan to remain current and reflective of local issues and policies, State law allows the City to periodically amend the General Plan to ensure that it is consistent with the conditions, values, expectations, and needs of its residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. The General Plan may be amended in accordance with State law. While specific findings may be applied on a project-by-project basis, at a minimum the following standard findings shall be made for each proposed General Plan amendment:

1. The amendment is deemed to be in the public interest;
2. The amendment is consistent and/or compatible with the rest of the General Plan;
3. The potential impacts of the amendment have been assessed and have been determined not to be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare; and
4. The amendment has been processed in accordance with the applicable provisions of the California Government Code, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the City's Municipal Code.

City-initiated amendments, as well as amendments requested by other public agencies, are subject to the same basic process described above to ensure consistency and compatibility with the General Plan. This includes appropriate environmental review, public notice, and public hearings, leading to an official action by the City Council.

## Timing

Mandatory elements of the General Plan may be amended up to four times in each calendar year. The City Council or any citizen may initiate consideration of a General Plan Amendment. It is left to the discretion of the local jurisdiction to establish an amendment schedule to be published one year in advance. State law further requires that the Housing Element be reviewed and updated at least once every eight years.

## Exemptions

The State Legislature has recognized that occasions arise which require the local jurisdiction to have some flexibility in amending the General Plan. As set forth in the California Government Code, the following are exempt from the General Plan amendment schedule:

- Amendments to optional elements.
- Amendments requested and necessary for affordable housing (Section 65358(c)).
- Any amendment necessary to comply with a court decision in a case involving the legal adequacy of the general plan (Section 65358(d)(1)).
- Amendments to bring a general plan into compliance with an airport land use plan (Section 65302.3).

## Annual Reporting

Given the long-term nature of the General Plan, it is critical to periodically evaluate its effectiveness and to document the implementation status of the various policies and actions that it contains. State law provides direction on how cities and counties can maintain the General Plan as a useful policy guide. State law also requires the City to annually report "the status of the plan and progress in its implementation" (California Government Code Section 65400(b)) to the City Council.

The Implementation Element identifies each measure to be carried out by the General Plan, the timing of the measure, and the responsible City department for addressing implementation.