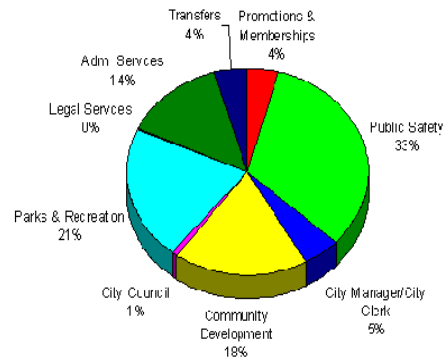


# City of Duarte Comprehensive General Plan 2005 - 2020



Prepared by  
Economic & Development Specialist  
Adopted August 14, 2007

# CITY OF DUARTE GENERAL PLAN



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# CITY OF DUARTE GENERAL PLAN

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# **CITY OF DUARTE GENERAL PLAN**

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# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION



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# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

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## WHAT IS A GENERAL PLAN?

A general plan has been described as the blueprint for future physical and economic development and preservation of community environmental and cultural resources. It has also been called the constitution for city decision makers. A general plan is a comprehensive, general, long-range, and internally consistent list of policies directing the city's future.

The Duarte 2020 General Plan is a comprehensive update of general plan adopted in 1989. This comprehensive general plan builds on the accomplishments of the past and visions of what the city can be by the year 2020.

- The Duarte 2020 general plan is comprehensive – it assesses and plans future uses for all property within the planning area (all land within the city boundaries).
- The 2020 plan is long range - in that it looks 15 years into the future.
- The plan is general - in that it consists of broad goals, policies and programs. The zoning code, zoning map, redevelopment plan, subdivision regulations, capital improvements program, specific plans, development agreements, building and housing code and city budget are much more specific and are implementation tools to the general plan and must be consistent with the general plan.
- The general plan must be internally consistent – each goal, policy, and implementation measure must be consistent with every other goal, policy and implementation measure within the nine elements of the plan.

Because of the extensive community outreach by the city, this plan establishes what the residents and businesses of Duarte want to preserve and achieve in coming years. As a result, the Duarte 2020 general plan reflects the values and visions of the community. Even though this plan is a fifteen year plan, California law provided that the plan can be amended if significant changes are desired or foreseen.

## DUARTE PLANNING AREA

State law requires that the general plan must cover a local jurisdiction's entire planning area and address the broad range of issues associated with the city's development. A city's planning area typically encompasses the city limits and potentially annexable land within the sphere of influence. A sphere of influence is the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission. Because Duarte has

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no sphere of influence, the planning area for the Duarte 2020 General Plan is the land area within the city limits including that portion of the city within the Angeles National Forest. While Duarte has no sphere of influence, the Duarte Unified School District includes land area within Bradbury and unincorporated county area. These areas impact the City of Duarte. Some of the unincorporated areas should be considered as a possible sphere of influence in any future general plan amendments. Diagram INTRO – 1 provides the boundaries of the Duarte 2020 general plan planning area.

## LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Section 65300 of the Government Code requires that each planning agency (Planning Commission) shall prepare and the legislative body (City Council) of each county and city shall adopt a comprehensive, long-term, plan for the physical development of the county or city... Section 65302 provides that *“the general plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals. The plan shall include the following elements:”*

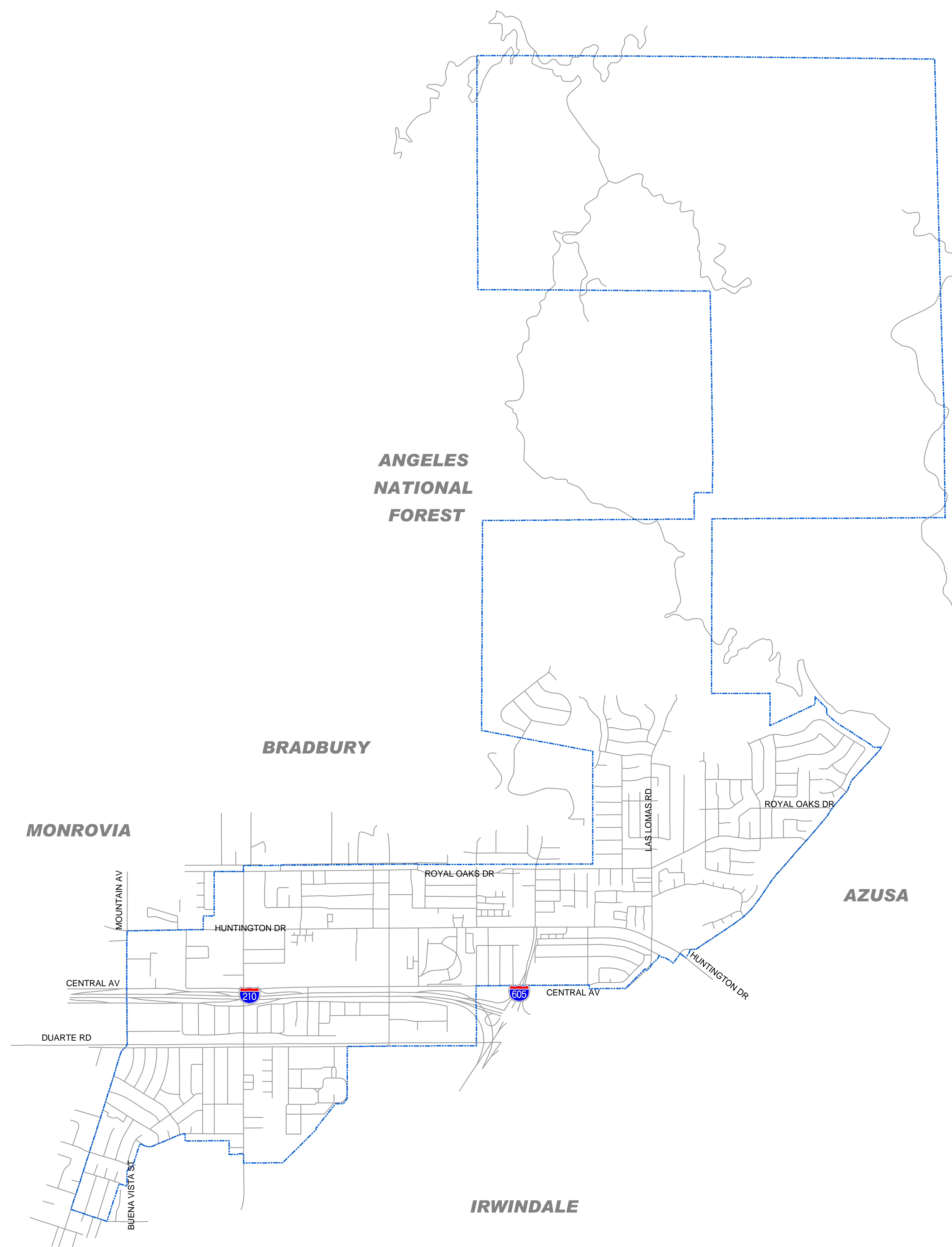
- Land Use Element
- Circulation Element
- Housing Element
- Conservation Element
- Open Space Element
- Noise Element
- Safety Element

The Duarte 2020 General Plan includes individual chapters devoted to each of these elements, except that Conservation and Open Space have been combined because they are so closely related. In addition, state law provides for each city or county to adopt non-mandatory elements to the general plan. Duarte has chosen to include the following non-mandatory elements:

- Economic Development Element
- Historic Preservation Element.

These non-mandatory elements also have chapters devoted to them and have the same legal status as the mandatory chapters.

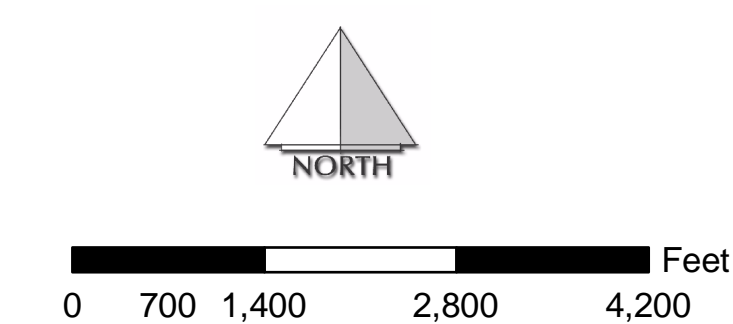
## Diagram Intro - 1



LEGEND

----- City Limits

Source: City of Duarte - June 2006



July 10, 2006



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## PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Adoption of a general plan is a significant undertaking requiring extensive environmental review. In order to minimize the need to reanalyze a series of projects related to the general plan, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the state CEQA Guidelines encourage using a general plan EIR to address subsequent discretionary projects, such as adopting zoning ordinances and approving specific capital improvement or development projects that are consistent with the general plan. This streamlined approach to environmental review is commonly called “tiering” (CEQA Guidelines §15152). By using a tiered approach, the environmental review for a subsequent project can be limited to those project-specific significant effects that either were not examined or not examined fully in the general plan EIR. Later environmental analysis for more specific actions can be tiered from the general plan EIR in several ways.

The Duarte 2020 General Plan utilizes a Program EIR to assess potential impacts of the plan. A program EIR prepared for a general plan examines broad policy alternatives, considers the cumulative effects and alternatives to later individual activities where known, and contains plan-level mitigation measures. Later activities that have been described adequately under the Program EIR will not require additional environmental documents. When necessary, new environmental documents, such as a subsequent or supplemental EIR or a negative declaration, will focus on the project-specific impacts of later activities, filling in the information and analysis missing from the Program EIR.

The “project” being examined in the Program EIR is the general plan. The CEQA Guidelines recommend that a program EIR deal with the potential effects of a general plan “as specifically and comprehensively as possible.” A good rule of thumb is that the Program EIR level of detail should be commensurate with the level of detail contained in the general plan element (*Rio Vista Farm Bureau Center v. County of Solano (1992) 5 Cal.App.4<sup>th</sup> 351*).

## DIAGRAMS AND MAPS

The general plan’s text and its accompanying diagrams are integral parts of the plan and must be in agreement. The plan’s text and diagrams must be reconciled, because “internal consistency requires that general plan diagrams of land use, circulation systems, open-space and natural resources areas reflect written policies and programs in the text for each element.” (*Curtin’s California Land-Use and Planning Law*, 1998 edition, p. 18).

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A diagram is a graphic expression of a general plan's development policies, particularly its plan proposals. Many types of development policies lend themselves well to graphic treatment, such as the distribution of land uses, urban design, infrastructure, and geologic and other natural hazards.

A diagram must be consistent with the general plan text (§65300.5) and should have the same long-term planning perspective as the rest of the general plan. For purposes of the Duarte 2020 General Plan the term “diagram” instead of “map” is used for identifying locations of various land uses because the term ‘map,’ implies preciseness, exact location, and detailed boundaries....” as in the case of the Zoning Map or Subdivision Map. No such precision is necessary of a general plan land use diagram.

## GENERAL PLAN PROCESS

The Duarte 2020 General Plan process began when the City Council adopted the Housing Element on August 24, 2004. See Chapter 6 Housing Element for more details on why this element was adopted before the other general plan elements. In April of 2005 Economic and Development Specialist, the prime general plan consultant, began gathering background data for the 2005 – 2020 update. The draft Existing Conditions/Background Report was released in June of 2005. This report was the basis of the data to be used in subsequent meetings and reports. Figure INTRO – 1 is an overview of the Duarte General Plan process not including the Housing Element process.

### Major Stakeholders Interviews

In August and September of 2005 twenty-one individuals representing a cross section of Duarte residents and businesses were interviewed one-on-one by general plan consultants. These individuals included all five City Council members, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, business owners, representatives of senior citizens groups, youth groups, neighborhood watch, homeowners associations, different ethnic groups, religious organizations and citizens at large.

The purpose of the interviews was to identify key issues and opportunities to be considered and/or addressed in the general plan update process, to identify all groups and individuals, representing a cross-section of Duarte that should be made aware of and/or get involved in the general plan process, and to provide an informal one-on-one opportunity for direct, candid dialogue about the general plan process, issues and opportunities to be addressed.



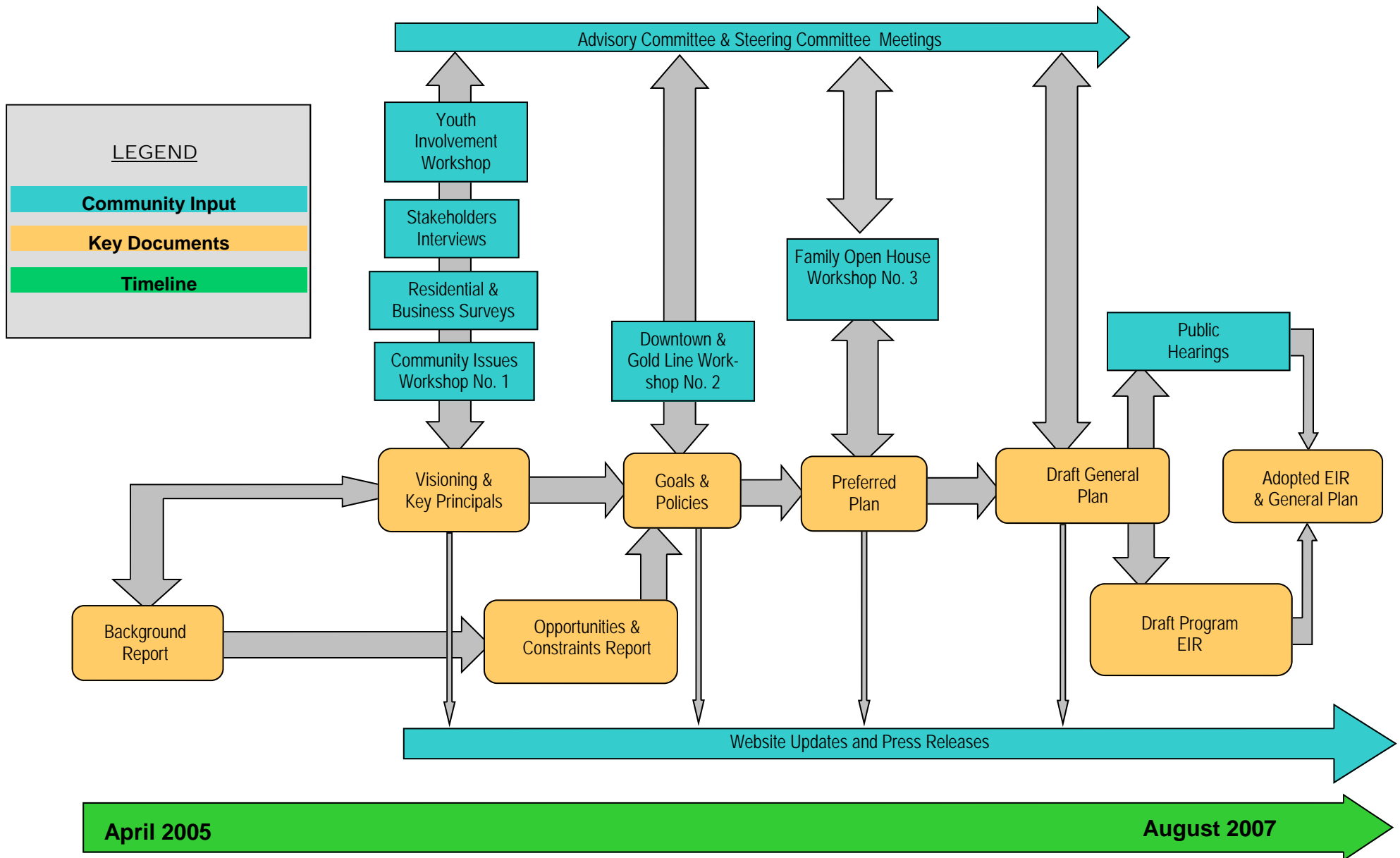
# General Plan

Building a new vision.

20/20

Figure INTRO - 1

## GENERAL PLAN PROCESS OVERVIEW



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Of the fourteen questions asked of each person interviewed, the following were included:

1. How would you describe Duarte to someone who has never been here before?
2. What are your four favorite things about Duarte?
3. What are four things that you think can be improved?

### **Community Surveys**

In September of 2005 surveys, in English and Spanish, were mailed to both residents and businesses of Duarte. These surveys were also posted on the city's web site and could be completed on-line. Of the 8,946 mailed residential surveys 21% were completed and returned. Of the 591 surveys mailed to Duarte businesses 13% were completed and returned. In October of 2005 114 Duarte High School students were surveyed.

Following is a summary of the conclusions drawn from the residential, business and youth surveys:

- Close to three-quarters of all survey respondents felt quality of life in Duarte is excellent or good.
- There was consensus among respondents that access and quiet neighborhoods make Duarte appealing while their concerns centered around increased traffic, crime and population growth, the youth also cited cost of housing as a problem.
- The issue of housing is clearly a concern among the youth and business community.
- However, the question of whether to allow higher density housing and/or mixed use around the Gold Line station or City Center areas was very mixed and undecided.
- Most respondents felt that a downtown or City Center is a good idea. Furthermore, one of the reasons Monrovia was selected as a city for Duarte to model itself after was because of its old downtown. The other cities commonly cited were Pasadena and Arcadia for their pedestrian friendly atmosphere together with their shopping and entertainment.
- In the written comments many respondents wanted to see a cleaner city
- Illustrating their different perspectives, resident and business respondents disagreed on the importance of the traffic issue where residents ranked that the #1 concern and businesses #8.

### **Steering Committee and Advisory Committee**

A general plan should reflect the community's values and dreams for the future. As a result, citizens committees are usually an important part of the public input

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process. Initially a Steering Committee was established. The Steering Committee was comprised of representatives of each of the five City commissions, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, Duarte Unified School District, Downtown Task Force, Friends of the Library, Duarte Coordinating Council, youth, City of Hope (City of Hope is the city's largest employer), and two citizens at large. The role of the Steering Committee was to:

- Identify Long-Range Policy Issues Affecting Duarte
- Assist in the Development of goals and policies for eight general plan elements to be Updated
- Review and Comment on land use and circulation alternatives

In an effort to gain more participation, the City Council directed staff to create an ad hoc Advisory Committee. This committee was open to anyone who may have an interest in one or more elements of the general plan or who may just want to get involved. Twenty-one individuals came forward to participate as Advisory Committee members. The role of the Advisory committee was as follows:

- Advisory Committee = Focus Groups who may want to get involved in individual general plan elements and review them in detail
- Review Background/Existing Conditions Report and provide update information through the general plan process
- Review draft elements before they are forwarded to the Steering Committee & City Commissions

### **Community Values/Guiding Principles**

At their first meeting on October 26, 2005 the Steering and Advisory Committees thought Duarte had a good quality of life, good educational system, good parks and recreational system and services, wide range of churches, and liked having the mountains as a backdrop. The group as a whole was concerned about traffic and noise, emergency preparedness, lack of shopping opportunities, employment opportunities, housing variety and affordability, and was concerned about the future expansions of quarry operations in neighboring communities.

### **Community Workshops**

Three community workshops were conducted with the expressed purpose to provide even more community outreach and education of the general plan so that everyone could be part of the general plan process. The first community workshop held November 17, 2005 was widely publicized and resulted in 42 citizens and 7 staff and consultants present. Items on the agenda included a presentation regarding the purpose of the general plan, the process, timing and

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need for public participation, and progress to date. In addition, attendees were asked to participate in round table discussions (7 tables each representing an element of the General Plan) to learn about and provide opinions regarding the individual elements of the general plan. Attendees were given an opportunity to rotate tables if desired.

The final activity of the evening was a visioning exercise in which each table was given a base street map of the city and asked to perform a “Visioning Exercise”. A slide was shown defining Visioning as “The act of imagining what may be possible in the long term future - 15 years from now”. Participants worked as groups to express what they envisioned Duarte to be in the future expressing opportunities and concerns.

After reviewing data from the major stakeholders interviews, community attitude surveys, outcome of “Identification of Community Values/Guiding Principles” exercise, and outcome of the first community workshop, Steering and Advisory committee members were asked what they wanted the desired outcome of the general plan to be. The consensus was to keep or improve the quality of life in Duarte, create a downtown/city center for Duarte, build transit development around the Gold Line station, and seek to mitigate traffic issues.



The second community workshop was held February 15, 2006 and dealt exclusively with the creation of a downtown/city center and the potential for development around the Gold Line Station. After a presentation by the general plan consultants regarding important elements needed for the creation and sustainability of a city center, and opportunities for transit oriented development near the proposed Gold Line Station, participants were given an opportunity to express their views.

The third community workshop held on October 11, 2006 was the presentation of the draft general plan to the community at large.

### **Other Community Outreach**

In September, October and November of 2005 flyers were distributed at various Duarte functions and events urging residents and businesses to get involved in the general plan process. Over the entire course of the general plan process, the city’s website was frequently updated providing agendas, summaries of

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meetings, upcoming meeting dates, pertinent reports and documents. Frequent articles appeared in Duarte View and Pasadena Star. Appearances on DCTV, Duarte cable network covering the general plan also provided information for the benefit of the community. Banners advertising the three community workshops and neighborhood meeting were provided at various locations throughout Duarte.

In June 2006 a neighborhood workshop was held at Beardslee Elementary School in South Duarte. This workshop was provided to continue to reach out to the community for input.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Duarte 2020 General Plan consists of eight (8) chapters, an introduction, and appendices. A table of contents is provided for each chapter for ease of finding information relative to that chapter. Each element is a distinct, but integral part of the general plan. The general plan is accompanied by a general plan Glossary (Appendix INTRO-1). Each of the elements, with the exception of the Housing Element is organized according to the following format: (1) Introduction; (2) Goals, Objectives and Policies; (4) Related Agencies, Laws and Plans; (4) Overview of Issues and Opportunities and (5) Implementation Measures. The Housing Element was adopted by the Duarte City Council in August 2004 and the Element was certified by the California Office of Housing and Community Development (HCD) in November of 2004. As a result, this Element maintains most of its original format in order to assure compliance with strict HCD requirements.

The most important part of a general plan is its policies which will help direct decision making and adoption of implementation measures through the year 2020. As a result, this plan is organized with goals, objectives, policies early in each chapter. Suggested ways to implement the policies are at the end of each chapter. It is critical to remember that a general plan is long range, comprehensive, general in nature and must be internally consistent. To help provide a focus to this the following terms are provided.

**Goal:** A general, overall, and ultimate, aim or end toward which the city will direct effort.

**Objective:** A specific statement of desired future condition toward which the city will expend effort in the context of striving to achieve a broader goal.

**Policy:** A specific statement of principle or of guiding actions that imply clear commitment but is not mandatory.

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**Program:** An action, activity or strategy carried out in response to adopted policy to achieve a specific goal or objective.

**Implementation:**

Actions, procedures, programs, or techniques that carry out policies.

The goals, objectives, policies and implementation measures are based on input received from community surveys and interviews; community workshops; members of the General Plan Steering Committee, members of the General Plan Advisory Committee; carry-overs from the 1989 General Plan, City staff; and eventually members of the Planning Commission, City Council and public hearings.

The Duarte 2020 General Plan is purposely brief and is meant to be an everyday guide. Explanatory text and diagrams are provided where needed. The organization of the general plan allows users to easily locate issues of interest and quickly obtain a perspective on the City's policies on the subject. However, general plan users should realize that the policies and diagrams in the various elements are interrelated and should be examined comprehensively. Policies are presented as written statements, tables, figures, and diagrams. All of these policy components must be considered together when making planning decisions.