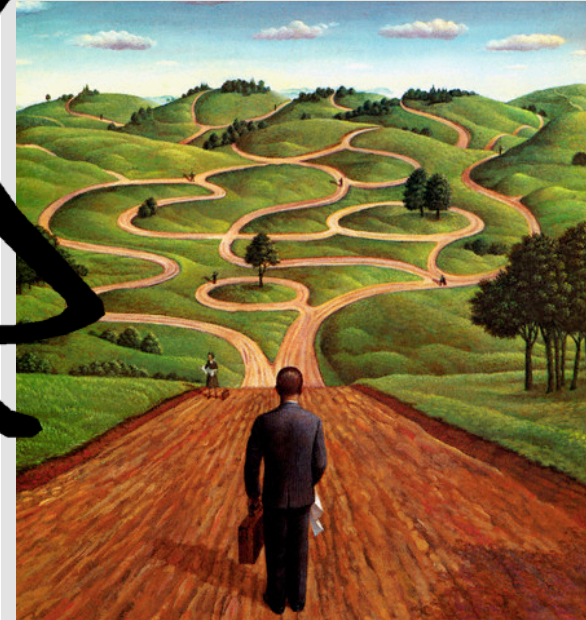


Updating the General Plan is an Arduous Journey— Is It Worth the Trip?

Sonoma State University
33rd Annual Planning Commissioners Conference
Woodie Tescher, PlaceWorks

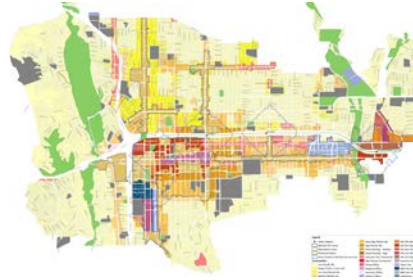


California Government Code, Section 65300 et seq

“Every planning agency shall prepare and the legislative body of each county and city shall adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the **physical development** of the county or city, and of any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning”

General Plan Requirements

LAND USE



HOUSING



CIRCULATION



CONSERVATION



OPEN SPACE



NOISE



SAFETY



Some Critical Issues

- Updates recommended to keep GP current
- OPR notifies the community in 8 years that the plan may be out of date
- Attorney General notifies the community in 10 years of the risks of not updating the GP—compliance of CEQA documents, state and federal funding, and other
- On average, updates occur on a 10-12 year cycle
- Many plans much older—City of LA Community Plans over 20 years old (Subject to development moratorium initiative as a result)

Some Critical Issues

Risks for Failure to Update Your Plan

- CEQA compliance for development entitlements and approvals
- Eligibility for funding—state and regional agencies (e.g., MPOs, transportation agencies, Strategic Growth Council, others)
- Compliance with State Law (e.g., Housing, Climate Change, others)

Some Critical Issues

Standards for Adequacy

- Is it current?
- Is it relevant to your community's issues and values?
- Is it comprehensive?
- Does it address all relevant legislation?
- Is it internally consistent?
- Is it horizontally consistent?
- Is it feasible?

Some Critical Issues

Why we don't like General Plan updates!

- The list of requirements keeps changing
- It takes time away from doing what we are suppose to be doing
- Much of the work is technical, requiring input from professional consultants...
- ...yet, policy often informed by subjective public input
- It takes time: Often multi-year time frame for preparation
- It is expensive!



Some Critical Issues



But on the
other hand...

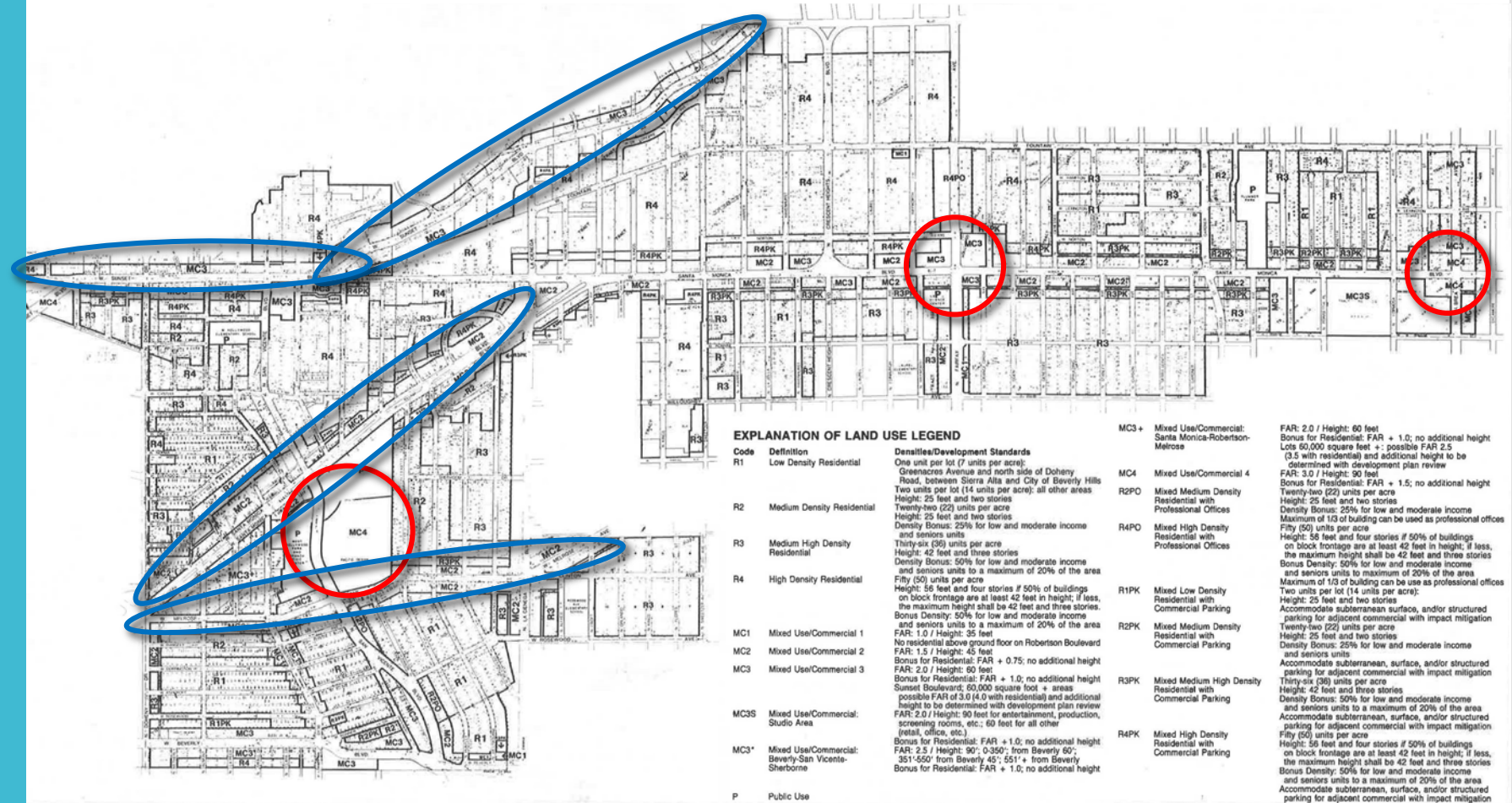
...some GPs have been transformative



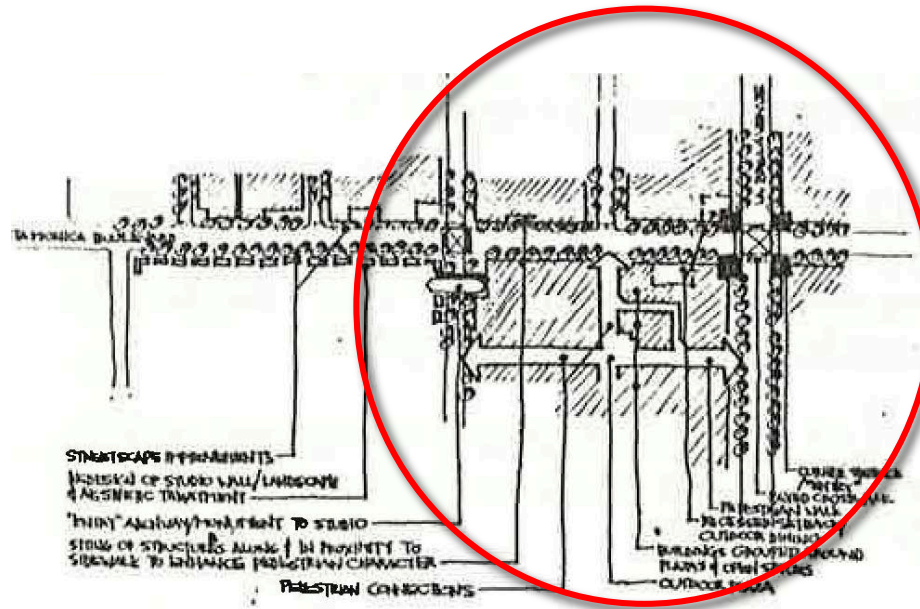
THE CITY OF
West Hollywood
GENERAL PLAN

- **First General Plan for Newly Incorporated City**
- **25 Years+ Implementation**
- **Incorporates all Mandated Elements and**
 - **Public Open Space/Urban Design**
 - **Economic Development**
 - **Education and Cultural**
 - **Parks and Recreation**
 - **Human Services**
 - **Energy and Water Conservation**

Placemaking



Placemaking



1.11.30 - Require that development projects fronting onto the intersection of Santa Monica Boulevard and La Brea Avenue locate their structures and incorporate architectural elements and forms, landscaped open spaces, public art, and/or the appropriate design techniques which uniquely identify this intersection as a primary entry to the City (I1.1, I1.3, I1.7 and I1.10).

1.11.31 - Require that all uses and buildings enhance pedestrian activity along Santa Monica Boulevard and La Brea Avenue in accordance with the land use and urban design policies and standards specified for Issue Six (Policies 1.37.1-1.37.8) (I1.1, I1.7 and I1.10).

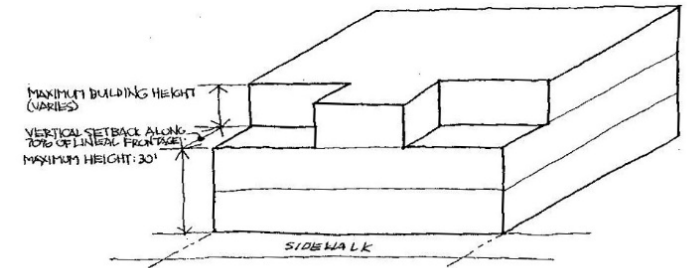


Land Use & Urban Form: Street Orientation & Modulation of Building Mass



1.37.7 - Require that height and bulk impacts of buildings be minimized on pedestrian areas by setting back the upper levels according to the following standards for the first 20 feet of parcel depth:

- a. 0-30' height: none required
- b. 31'-45' height: 8" for each additional 12" of height for 70 percent of the elevation (the balance requires no setback)
- c. 46'-60' height: 8" for each additional 12" of height for 100 percent of the elevation (11.1).



1.37.8 - Allow the construction of towers and other architectural projections to a maximum height of 25 feet above the height permitted by the underlying land use classification where these contribute to and are integral with an extremely high level of architectural design performance, under the following conditions:

- a. the portion of structure exceeding the height limit shall be non-occupiable;
- b. extensions will be limited to 10-15 percent of the total roof area; and
- c. extensions shall not result in adverse shadows on adjacent properties (11.1 and 11.7).

Streetscape Improvements

F. ISSUE SIX: SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD MEDIAN

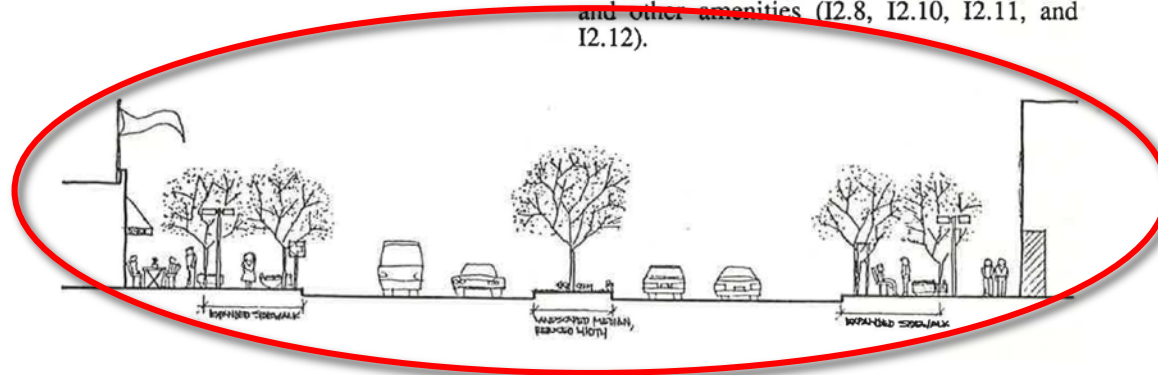
Objective

2.6 - Enhance pedestrian activity and visual quality of Santa Monica Boulevard between Doheny and Croft Avenue-Olive Drive by improvements to the median and adjacent sidewalks.

Policies

2.6.1 - Acquire the Santa Monica Boulevard median and improve it as a visual amenity of the city (I2.8, I2.10, and I2.11).

2.6.2 - Consider the appropriateness and feasibility of reducing the width of the median, using it as landscaped open space, and expanding the width of the adjacent sidewalks by the corresponding amount of space with minimal reductions to accommodate required circulation improvements, and incorporating new streetscape improvements, including street trees, landscape planters, paving treatment, street furniture, pedestrian-oriented lighting, information kiosks, well-designed signage, and other amenities (I2.8, I2.10, I2.11, and I2.12).



2.6.3 - Allow for and encourage the use of expanded sidewalk areas for pedestrian oriented uses, such as outdoor cafes, flower stalls, and public performance spaces, provided that pedestrian flow and safety is maintained (I2.8, I2.10, I2.11, and I2.12).

Streetscape Improvements



Housing

Goal

3A - Encourage the provision of adequate housing in the city with special emphasis on maintaining residential neighborhood stability and supply a housing mix for all residents with due consideration for individuals and households with special needs.

Objective

3.1 - Facilitate the production of 900 new housing units by the year 1992.



Policies

3.1.1 - Promote the production of new housing units on all remaining vacant parcels designated for residential purposes (I3.9, I3.10, I3.11, I3.12, and I3.18).

3.1.2 - Encourage the private sector to develop housing in the City of West Hollywood (I3.9, I3.10, I3.11, I3.12, and I3.18).

3.1.3 - Develop a density bonus program which can serve as an incentive to the production of housing on under-utilized land, and land designated for commercial purposes (I3.4, I3.10, I3.11, I3.12, and I3.18).

3.1.4 - Promote mixed-use projects which include housing as a means of increasing the City's housing stock (I3.9, I3.10, I3.11, I3.12, and I3.18).

3.1.5 - Engage in the direct production of housing (I3.9, I3.10, I3.11, I3.12, and I3.18).

ISSUE THREE: AVAILABILITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Goal

3C - Provide the opportunity for affordable housing units to be available throughout the City.

Objective

3.3 - Facilitate the development of housing for low- and moderate-income households and senior citizens which is compatible with and complements adjacent uses and located in close proximity to public and commercial services.

Policies

3.3.1 - Permit a bonus residential density, in accordance with California State law, of 25 percent in areas of the City designated for multi-family residential densities or other incentives of equivalent financial value, provided that:

- a. At least 25 percent of the total units in the project excluding the bonus density are restricted to the rental or purchase by persons and families of low- or moderate-income; or
- b. At least 10 percent of the total units in the project excluding the bonus density are restricted to rental or purchase by low income households; or

Housing

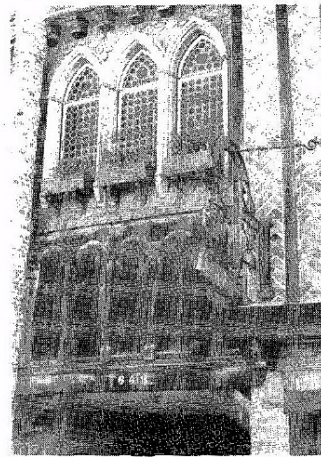


Historic Preservation

I. ISSUE NINE: HISTORICALLY AND ARCHITECTURALLY SIGNIFICANT STRUCTURES

Objective

1.42 - Identify and encourage the preservation of significant architectural, historical, and cultural resources.



Policies

1.42.1 - Compile and maintain a current inventory of architectural, cultural, and historic resources within the city (II.14).

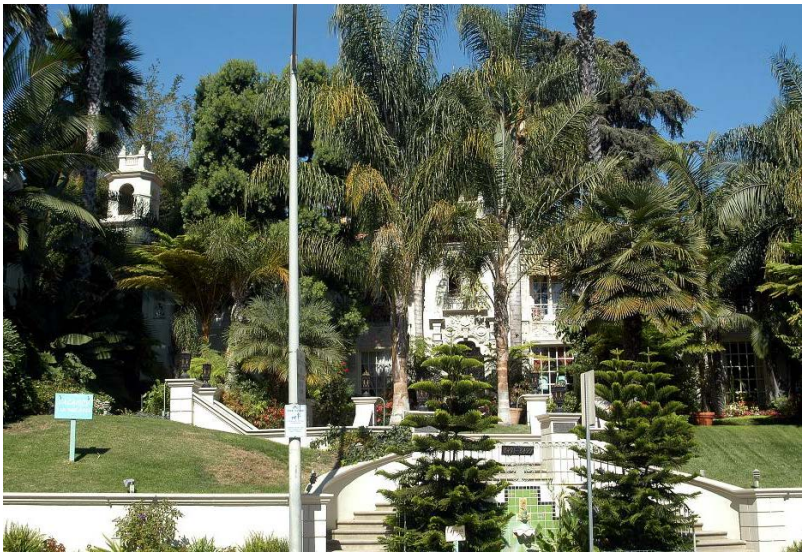
1.42.2 - Consider the potential establishment of special zones characterized by the presence of significant architectural, historical, and cultural residential resources which would provide (a) guidelines for rehabilitation and new construction, (b) demolition control, and (c) use regulation (II.1, II.10 and II.14).

1.42.3 - Require that significant architectural, historic, and cultural buildings be renovated according to the following guidelines:

- a. A compatible use be located in the structure which requires the minimum alteration to the historical character of the structure and its environment;
- b. Rehabilitation should not destroy the distinguishing feature or character of the property and its environment and removal or alteration of historical architectural features should be minimized;
- c. Renovations should recognize buildings as products of their own time, discouraging alterations to create an appearance inconsistent with the actual character of the buildings;
- d. The existing character of building/house spaces and setbacks should be maintained; and
- e. The existing height, bulk and massing which serves as an important characteristic of the resource should be retained (II.1, II.7, II.10 and II.14).

1.42.4 - Require that new construction in any designated architectural/historical/cultural district complement the existing structures and open space characteristics (II.1, II.7, II.10 and II.14).

Historic Preservation

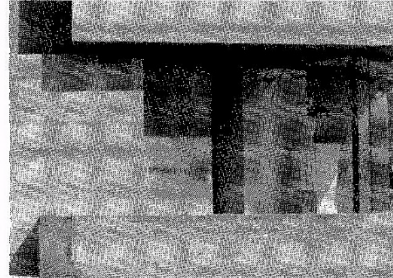


Economic Development

4.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Objective

4.3 - Maintain the linkage/recognition connection between themes like “creativity,” “California look,” “The New Southern California,” etc., and identification with West Hollywood.



Objective

4.4 - Establish a City reputation as a contemporary cultural center, presenting the performing and representational arts as a program specialty of the community.

Goal

4D - Strengthen the attractiveness and economic viability of the several distinctive business districts and corridors which make up the community, thereby improving the entire city.

Objective

4.5 - Create a special sense of place and recognition of a district as being within West Hollywood (Sunset Strip, the Pacific Design Center and environs, Warner Hollywood Studios, and the Santa Monica Boulevard corridor, for example); build on the strengths already in place and ensure the contemporary and future economic health of a district and its businesses; and involve the owners and businesses in partnerships to carry out economic revitalization as appropriate and timely to each district.

Policies

4.3.1 - Encourage deliberate regional and national exposure of the developing trends--“dateline West Hollywood” (I4.20 and I4.22).

4.3.2 - Define the “Look of the City” in terms which are complementary to, and provide for the flexible evolution of, the “California Look/Life Style” theme of the city’s special business groups. This changing, evolutionary “look” may be displayed in public places (I4.20 and I4.22).

4.3.3 - The Marketing Corporation should have an annual business development strategy, in tune with the new and oncoming themes, that includes a comprehensive tracking system that measures increases in the city’s sales tax base and hotel occupancies and measures commercial investment patterns in the city through leasing information, building permit activity and interviews with banking institutions (I4.29 and I4.32).

Policies

4.4.4 - Create a West Hollywood Arts Trust as a public-private partnership to develop the array of cultural activities which will arouse the regional publics (I4.23).

Policies

4.5.1 - Establish a deliberate economic development strategy for each viable district which would include the participation of major district anchors in any district development activity (I4.24, I4.25, I4.26, I4.28 and I4.33).

4.5.2 - Provide infrastructure/public improvements (including parking management and development) in each viable district (I4.27 and I4.28).

Economic Development

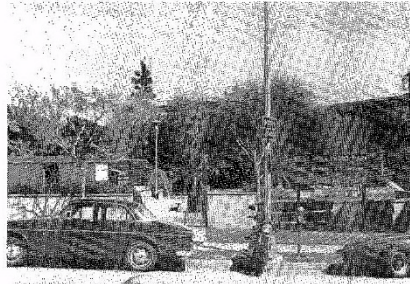


Transportation



Human Services

10.0 HUMAN SERVICES



INTRODUCTION

The Human Services Element addresses a number of policy issues which are not required to be included in the General Plan, but which are important for cities and counties to address in their general plans.

For the past two decades, Federal and State government have dominated the funding of and policy for local social services. In recent years, however, cities and counties have begun to assert a strong role in planning for the delivery of social services. Under the leadership of the League of California Cities and the County Supervisors Association of California, local governments have defined new rules in planning for the delivery of social services. The Human Services Element of a General Plan has emerged as an important tool for defining the local role and for coordinating planning for social services with physical and environmental planning.

In recognition of its importance and the needs of its residents, one of West Hollywood's first priorities as a new city was on the funding and provision of human services. In September 1985, the Department of Human Services was formed and charged with the responsibility of increasing existing service levels and creating a social services system for the city.

This element defines the spectrum of human service needs facing the City of West Hollywood and establishes the framework of policy by which services will be provided to meet these needs.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS OF SERVICE PROVISION

The City of West Hollywood has taken an innovative humanistic approach to human services issues. The City Council has committed to meeting the service needs and enhancing the quality of life for its community members. The level of social services funding, the inclusion of this Human Services Element in the General Plan, and the commitment to community access to and participation in decision-making all demonstrate this commitment.

A basic philosophy of service provision has evolved, necessitating the creation of non-traditional City policies and procedures for implementation. The City has taken the lead in identifying community needs and responding with service provision. The staff are experienced in a variety of program and direct-service designs. The City has chosen an innovative mix of in-house and contracted services.

- Social services delivery system
- Social policy to meet community needs
- Partnerships with service providers
- Maximum community participation in determining service levels
- Communication system with community
- Fiscal accountability

Truckee General Plan

- General Plan as a tool box to achieve community visions
- Provided basic guidance for investment of millions in streetscape improvements, bike lanes, and multi-use trails—based on vision to morph from an auto-only community to a more walkable and bikeable community
- Improvements contributed to strengthening of visitor economy (also a GP goal)

Downtown



Legacy Trail



Donner Lake
Bike Lane



Architecture & Affordable Housing

GP policies led to relatively distinct and high quality design/architecture in new projects, permanent preservation of open space, and aggressive work on building affordable/workforce housing (more than the region)



Davis General Plan

Davis GP (1980s) required developers to dedicate to the city 10% of the land area of their subdivision for “greenbelts” with bike and pedestrian paths.

Resulting in one of the best greenbelt/bike systems in the county, with no public dollars.



Davis General Plan

GP started the inclusionary housing program—25% set aside for medium, low, and very low income housing.

By early 2000s, almost 24% of the housing built was affordable.



Some lessons in developing a transformative GP...

- Write policies that address specific community needs, objectives, and visions
- Correlate policies with specific implementation actions (what?, who?, and how?)
- Avoid the generic solutions (except where necessary to satisfy legal requirements)
- Keep it up to date

- Design and format the GP to promote community interest and excitement—Interactive on-line plans, Story Mapping

Some lessons
in developing a
transformative
GP...



- Design and format the GP to promote community interest and excitement—Interactive on-line plans, Story Mapping

Some lessons
in developing a
transformative
GP...

The screenshot displays the Temple City General Plan web application. The browser address bar shows the URL: <https://tpc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=2c80418>. The page title is "Temple City General Plan". A navigation menu at the top includes tabs for: 1 - Introduction, 2 - Land Use (selected), 3 - Mobility, 4 - Economic Development, 5 - Community Services, 6 - Natural Resources, and 7 - Hazards.

The "Land Use" section is active, showing three designations:

- Low-Density Residential (RL)**
0-6 dwelling units per acre / 3.1 people per unit
The *Low-Density Residential* designation is characterized by single family dwelling units in conventional suburban-style development pattern, with lots ranging from 5,000 to 7,200 square feet or larger. While there is a mix of housing forms and styles, these areas retain the basic character of single-family neighborhoods, such as front and rear yards, driveways, and garages. Other compatible uses, such as schools, child care centers, parks, and religious facilities, may also locate in areas with this designation.
- Medium-Density Residential (RM)**
7-12 dwelling units per acre / 3.1 people per unit
The *Medium Density Residential* designation is intended for mix of single-family homes, patio home (zero lot line), and small multi-unit buildings. These areas are multi-family in character, but retain some of the characteristics of suburban neighborhoods such as landscaped yards, off-street parking, common open space, and low building heights. Structures in these areas are generally less than three stories tall and have surface parking. For properties located within this designation that qualify as "tiered" or "flag" lots or located on cut-de-sacs, development shall be limited to single family-detached units. Other compatible uses, such as schools, child care centers, parks, and religious facilities, may also locate in areas with this designation.
- High-Density Residential (RH)**
13-36 dwelling units per acre / 3.1 people per unit
The *High Density Residential* designation applies to apartment and condominium/townhouse residential structures that house multiple dwelling units and may consist of two to three-story buildings. A portion of these units may be priced for low and moderate income households. On larger parcels with this designation, common open space and other shared amenities are typically provided. Structured parking may also be included. Other compatible uses, such as schools, child care centers, parks, and religious facilities, may also locate in areas with this designation. For properties located within this designation that qualify as "tiered" or "flag" lots or located on cut-de-sacs development shall be limited to single family-detached units.

The map on the right shows the Temple City area with various land use designations highlighted in yellow and orange. Surrounding areas like West Arcadia, East Arcadia, North El Monte, El Monte Airport, Rosemead, and East San Gabriel are also visible. The Esri logo and "POWERED BY" text are at the bottom right of the map. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the time as 12:01 PM on 11/22/2016.

- Design and format the GP to promote community interest and excitement—Interactive on-line plans, Story Mapping

Some lessons
in developing a
transformative
GP...

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the Temple City General Plan. The page title is "Temple City General Plan" and the current section is "2 - Land Use". The "Commercial Districts" section is highlighted in the table of contents. The main content area features a heading "Commercial Districts" followed by a paragraph: "The following goal and policies provide for the maintenance and enhancement of diverse, economically vibrant, and well-designed commercial districts and corridors that provide a diversity of goods, services, and entertainment and contribute to a positive experience for community residents and visitors." Below this is "Goal LU 13: Diverse and Vibrant Commercial Corridors and Districts." which states: "Flourishing and dynamic commercial corridors and districts that provide an assortment of retail goods and services and entertainment uses for residents and guests." The section includes several sub-goals: "LU 13.1 Vibrant Economy", "LU 13.2 Local Businesses", "LU 13.3 Economic Vitality", "LU 13.4 Differentiation of Commercial Districts and Corridors", "LU 13.5 Retail Streetscapes", "LU 13.6 Retail Parking", and "LU 13.7 Cohesive Development". To the right of the text are four images: a street scene with outdoor seating, a modern building with a glass facade, a street view with a traffic light, and a Whole Foods store.

Updating the General Plan is an Arduous Journey— Is It Worth the Trip?

The answer can be a resounding yes!

