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# CHAPTER 5 SAFETY

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## VISION 2025 GENERAL PLAN DOWNEY, CALIFORNIA

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ADOPTED 1-25-2005

# **Downey Vision 2025**

## **Chapter 5. Safety Chapter**

**ADOPTED 1-25-2005**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Natural and non-natural hazards present a variety of risk to persons who live, work, and visit the city. The aim of the city is to reduce the potential risk of death, injuries, property damage, and the economic and social dislocation resulting from hazards.

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# DISASTER RESPONSE

Issue 5.1. Disasters and emergencies have the potential of harming life and property.

The City of Downey is exposed to disasters and emergencies. The two major objectives addressing disasters are minimizing the community's exposure to disasters and emergencies and providing resources to respond in the event of a disaster or emergency.

Disasters and emergencies may include:

- major earthquakes,
- hazardous materials incidents,
- eminent or actual flooding,
- eminent or actual dam failure,
- mass casualty incidents,
- chemical explosion,
- leak of dangerous fuel,
- aircraft accident,
- acts of terrorism,
- civil unrest,
- war.



There are various plans at the federal, state, and local level dealing with responses to disasters and emergencies. Local emergency plans are considered extensions of the California Emergency Plan, published by the State Office of Emergency Services (OES), which provides for authorities and responsibilities in the event of formal proclamation of emergencies. The Los Angeles

County Office of Disaster Preparedness is responsible for coordinating the various federal, state, local, quasi-public, and private agencies involved in disaster and emergency response.

Local agencies, such as Downey, are responsible for responding to disasters and emergencies within their borders. The City of Downey has an emergency operation plan, consistent with the Standards Emergency Management System – Emergency Operations Plan (SEMS-EOP).

The objectives of the plan are:

1. Save lives and protect property;

2. Repair and restore essential systems and services;
3. Provide a basis for direction and control of emergency operations;
4. Provide for the protection, use and distribution of remaining resources;
5. Provide for the continuity of government;
6. Coordinate operations with the emergency service organizations of other jurisdictions

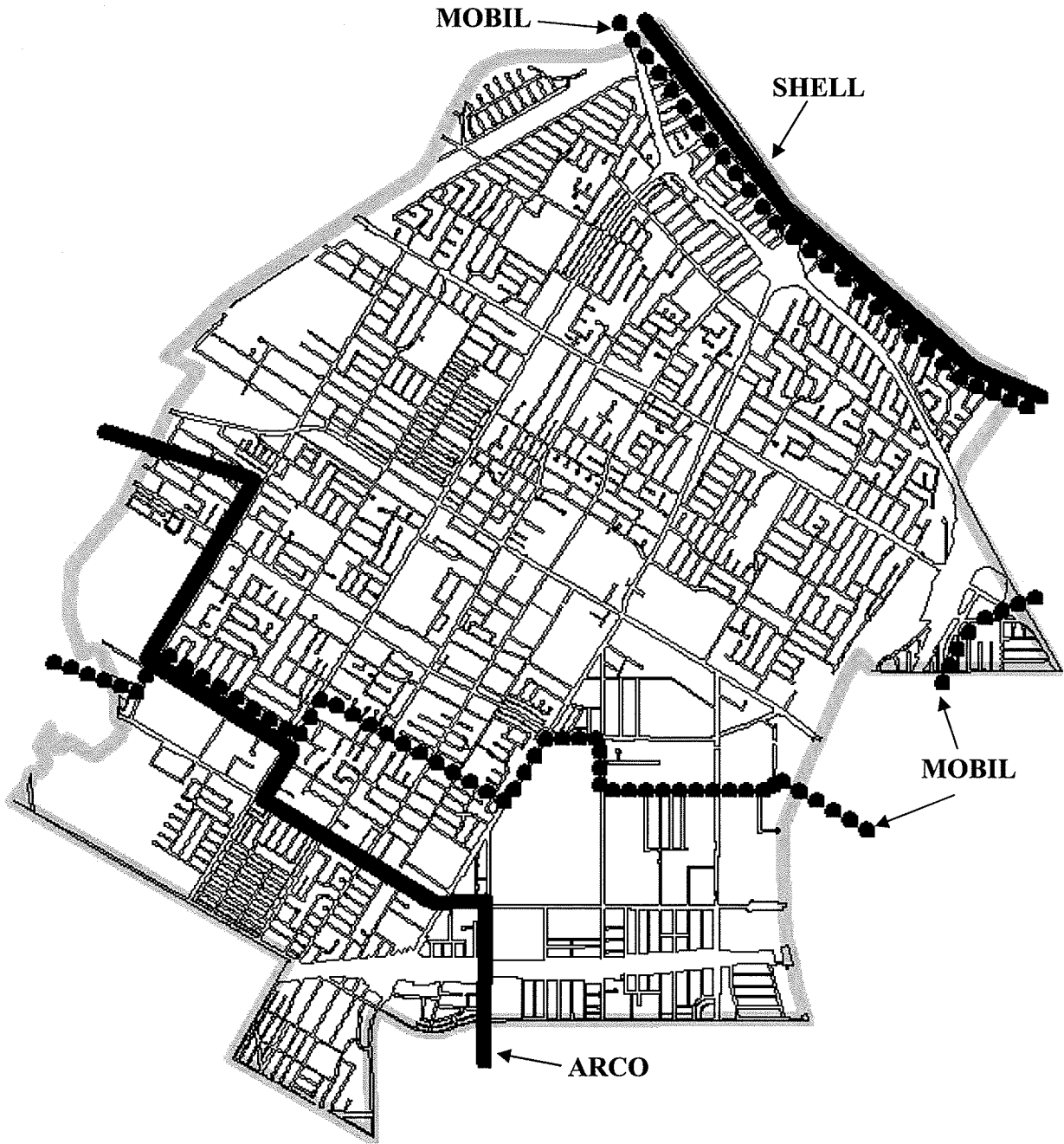
The plans provides for the following:

1. Defines roles and responsibilities of city employees;
2. Provides for the allocation of critical resources;
3. Established a basis for mutual aid between and among public agencies at such times.
4. Methods of organization and detailed task assignments
5. Plans to deal with lines of succession, temporary seat of government, preservation of records, assignment of city staff as registered disaster service workers, and similar concerns
6. Provide for continued communications, housing and shelter

During an emergency, the City will implement the Emergency Operation Plan, which includes setting up the Emergency Operation Center (EOC). In a disaster, the EOC would become the command post for coordinating manpower, equipment, resources and facilities. Using the communications network, the disaster coordinator will be able to assemble information in the field , assess the situation throughout the city, keep the general public informed at all times and determine the proper channels to successfully allocate available resources and disaster services. To maintain open communication lines between emergency facilities within the city and with facilities outside the city are essential, the EOC has access to a variety of radios, telephone and telecommunication resources.

Downey has a special issue regarding emergencies due to its location surrounded generally by bridges for rivers and freeways. The partial or entire collapse of bridges could make roads which cross above or below rivers and freeways impassible after a major event. This raises the issue that the core of the city may be isolated from the rest of the region while portions of the city on the other side of the collapsed bridges may become isolated from the EOC and the rest of the city. Until collapsed bridges are repaired, food, medical

FIGURE 5.1-1  
MAP OF LIQUID FUEL LINES



SCALE  
1 INCH = 0.78 MILE

North

supplies, and other essentials may need to be transported by air or some other means to isolated areas.

For this reason, it is important that the city maintain mutual aid agreements with surrounding cities to augment emergency response. The city may call upon the County, State of California or the Federal Government to obtain assistance in handling any disaster. Los Angeles County is subdivided into seven civil defense areas, with Downey located in Area E. Civil defense operations from other jurisdictions will provide recovery aid should to be warned under the State Mutual Aid Pact. Both the state and federal governments have established programs allowing local communities to apply for financial and other types of assistance.

During emergencies, Rio Hondo Golf Course and Apollo Park are designated casualty collection points. When activated, these locations will be utilized by the county to air-evacuate the injured together medical facilities. Although there are no licensed fallout shelters in the City, Downey has many resources that may provide shelter, medical treatment, or other necessary services. Hospital facilities may be provided by Downey Regional Medical Center and Rancho Los Amigos Medical Center. First aid centers can be provided through the conversion of public schools and other public facilities. In addition, auxiliary and convalescent hospitals are also available for the treatment and care of disaster victims. Should evacuation of parts of the city be found to be necessary, The Police Department would coordinate evacuation procedures based on possible evacuation routes.

### **Goals, Policies, and Programs**

#### **Goal 5.1. Protect life and property from disasters and emergencies.**

Policy 5.1.1. Minimize the level of risk and exposure to disasters

- Program 5.1.1.1. Maintain a hazard mitigation plan with a focus on lowering the community's risk and exposure to disasters.

- Program 5.1.1.2. Promote public education explaining the benefits of disasters preparedness.

Policy 5.1.2. Provide resources to respond to disasters.

- Program 5.1.2.1. Maintain an emergency operation plan to provide response to a variety of potential hazards
- Program 5.1.2.2. Continually review the readiness of the Emergency Operating Center.
- Program 5.1.2.2. Maintain the CERT, Civilian Emergency Response Team, as a civilian group to supplement staff during emergencies.
- Program 5.1.2.3. Coordinate emergency preparedness with the federal, state, school districts and other local agencies.

# HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Issue 5.2. Residential, commercial, and industrial uses generate waste that is considered hazardous materials.

Hazardous materials generally refers to waste materials that are toxic, explosive, or radioactive. More specific definition of “hazardous materials” and “hazardous waste” have evolved over the years causing some confusion as different governmental agencies and regulations addressed the issue.

Commercial and industrial operations are most commonly associated with hazardous materials. Presently, operators are required to report to the Fire Department the amounts of certain hazardous materials used for processing. If these

amounts exceed a certain quantity or threshold, the property is considered a hazardous materials site and is monitored through annual inspections by the Fire Department. Proposed hazardous material sites are identified through questionnaires part of the business review process. However, the business review process does not provide for notification to the public. A conditional use permit process or similar procedure may allow for notification of the public of hearings that allow public discussion of a proposed use before it is allowed to operate.



The following are the types of commercial and industrials that typically have hazardous materials in quantities to trigger monitoring, and would require a conditional use permit if one was required:

- Dry Cleaners
- Blueprinting services
- Medical and dental offices
- Medical and dental laboratories
- Film Laboratories and photo engraving
- Research (experimental) and testing laboratories
- Hospitals
- Assembly plants and machine shops
- Automobile and truck repair and maintenance garages
- Manufacturing, including furniture, battery, engine, tools
- Food processing
- Machinery repairs



- Metal fabrication
- Paint spray booths
- Public utility services yards

The proper disposal of hazardous materials generated by residential uses poses challenges since most residents may be unaware that certain common household items are hazardous materials that should not be disposed of with the general wastestream. To address this issue, public information explaining which household items are hazardous materials are provided and the disposal of such item is made convenient for residents by providing “drop-off” collections. The following common household items are typically considered hazardous materials:

- cleansers
- garden pesticides,
- batteries,
- fingernail polish removers
- paints and varnishes

Uses no longer in operation may still be considered contaminated sites long after closure and still need to be monitored. Sources include pesticide use on past agricultural uses in parts of property now developed, soil contamination from heavy industrial sites and underground gas tank leaks at former gas-service station sites. Also, the closed landfill at Rio San Gabriel Park must be continually monitored.

The Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Team is prepared to respond to uncontrolled releases of hazardous materials, including those associated with un-permitted activities such as illegal dumping and illegal drug laboratories. To assist adequate response, information on sites should be kept up to date, including that relative to underground natural gas pipelines.

There is also a significant potential for the release of hazardous materials from accidents either from vehicles or rail since both are used to transport hazardous materials. The City may better prepare for the transportation of hazardous materials through the City if the following is provided:

- Ensure that existing businesses that transport hazardous waste develop routing plans to be reviewed and approved by the City.

- Restrict hazardous material transportation on city streets to major streets.
- Restrict hazardous material transportation during non-peak hours.
- Support the efforts of the California Public Utilities Commission to subject rail transportation to a duty to report hazardous material shipments and releases to local emergency response agencies.

### **Goals, Policies, and Programs**

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#### **Goal 5.2. Protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents, workers, and visitors from the improper use, storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous materials.**

Policy 5.2.1. Monitor the generation, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials.

- Program 5.2.1.1. Monitor inactive, active, or potential hazardous material contaminated properties, including the closed landfill at Rio San Gabriel Park for odor and toxic gases.
- Program 5.2.1.2. Monitor the location, type of facility, and amount of hazardous materials kept at properties.
- Program 5.2.1.3. Promote public information regarding the types of hazardous materials, which may include common household items, and the proper method of disposal.
- Program 5.2.1.4. Ensure proper disclosure of amounts of hazardous materials by existing uses and proposed uses, during the business review process.

Policy 5.2.2. Prevent contamination from hazardous materials.

- Program 5.2.2.1. Ensure that properties involving hazardous materials dispose of waste properly.
- Program 5.2.2.2. Promote the convenient “drop-off” collection for the disposal of hazardous waste generated by residential households and other land uses.

- Program 5.2.2.3. Adopt a code amendment to require a conditional use permit for existing and proposed facilities with hazardous materials.
- Program 5.2.2.4. Monitor continually the natural gas pipelines for leaks.
- Program 5.2.2.5. Ensure the safe transport of hazardous materials through City review of routing plans.
- Program 5.2.2.6. Review continually that Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan has adequate resources.

## FIRE PROTECTION

Issue 5.3. Fire protection services need to be maintained and improved.

Building and other structure fires pose the primary fire hazard in Downey. Brush fires in Downey are a rare occurrence due to the lack of vacant undeveloped areas overgrown with shrubbery but these do occur along the flood control channels and adjacent properties. The two keys to deal with fire are to provide adequate resources to respond to calls and to adopt measures to prevent fires from occurring.



Fire services in Downey are provided by the City Fire Department, except for properties owned by the County of Los Angeles in the southwest part of the city, which are patrolled by the County Fire Department, based in Lynwood. The Downey Fire Department has four fire stations, in

four corresponding fire districts. The first-alarm response to structure fires in Downey consists of three engine companies, one ladder truck, a paramedic squad and a Battalion Chief (totaling 16 personnel). The estimated response times to service calls for the City Fire Department is 3 to 4 minutes. Based on this preparedness for response to calls, Downey has received high ratings from the Insurance Services Organization (ISO). Currently, Downey has an ISO rating of 2 (on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the highest rating).

In addition, the Downey Fire Department also has automatic aid agreements with the cities of Santa Fe Springs, Montebello and the County of Los Angeles. The agreement provides for coverage at fires by the nearest unit regardless of the jurisdictional boundary. Additional resources will respond as requested during major fires classified as disasters based on the "Area E" Mutual Aid Plan and State Master Mutual Aid Plan.

A major factor for fighting fires is early detection of fires through the installation of fire alarms and smoke detectors. A major factor affecting response time is the ability of emergency vehicles to travel through city streets to reach properties. Due to the large size of fire-related emergency vehicles, roads need to provide travel lanes and turning radius with sufficient widths to accommodate vehicle movement.

The fire hydrant system is critical for fighting fires. The desired interval for fire hydrants is 300 feet with sufficient water pressure and capacity to be effective. Certain areas in Downey have fire hydrants spaced too far apart or insufficient water main diameter to provide adequate water pressure. A master plan will identify and prioritize upgrades to the fire flow system.

The most cost-effective way to address a fire problem is to implement fire prevention measures to either prevent a fire before it starts or to limit the spread and intensity of fires once started. This issue is especially a concern in Downey since many older residential areas with ranch style homes featuring untreated wood shingle and shake roofs that are particularly susceptible to spreading fires. The use of concrete, tile and ferrous and copper sheet metal (considered Class A roof materials) or composition, hot mop and rock roofs (Class B roof materials) would lessen this fire hazard.

The ideal method of fire prevention is to provide fire sprinkler systems for all buildings in the City. The adopted codes require that commercial buildings over 3,600 square feet, residential buildings over 5,000 square feet, and assembly-related uses (such as theatres, churches, health clubs) be protected by fire sprinklers.

### **Goals, Policies, and Programs**

#### **Goal 5.3. Maintain and improve fire protection services.**

Policy 5.3.1. Provide adequate response to fire emergencies.

- Program 5.3.1.1. Identify and maintain an acceptable response time for fire emergency service calls.

- Program 5.3.1.2. Promote adequate widths on travel lanes along street and alleys to accommodate emergency vehicles.
- Program 5.3.1.3. Promote the design of private properties with fire lane width and turnaround capability appropriate for emergency vehicle access.
- Program 5.3.1.4. Consider emergency response as a factor during the design or redesign of roadway medians and islands, including traffic calming designs.
- Program 5.3.1.5. Promote the design or redesign of roadway terminals (cul-de-sac) and elbows to accommodate emergency vehicle turn movements.
- Program 5.3.1.6. Control traffic lights by a city-approved emergency traffic preemption system.

Policy 5.3.2. Promote fires prevention programs.

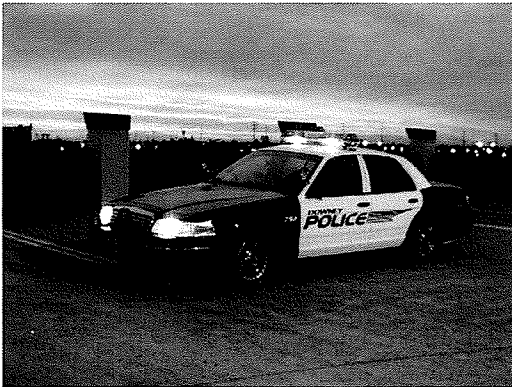
- Program 5.3.2.1. Identify fire flow capacity in various parts of the city.
- Program 5.3.2.2. Adopt a master plan to prioritize and implement the upgrade of the fire flow system.
- Program 5.3.2.3. Ensure that development projects install fire hydrants, water mains, or otherwise contribute its fair share towards mitigating impacts on the fire flow system.
- Program 5.3.2.4. Promote the use of fire sprinklers for new, expanded, and remodeled developments.
- Program 5.3.2.5. Promote the use of fire-retardant materials for roofs.
- Program 5.3.2.6. Ensure access for emergency vehicles through security pedestrian and vehicular gates.

# POLICE PROTECTION

Issue 5.4. Crime is a concern to residents and visitors of the City.

Crime in Downey, as well as nationwide, has decreased from levels measured a decade ago. However, recently crime level has started to increase, emphasizing that the city must continue to provide resources to deal with crime. The two keys to deal with crime are to provide adequate resources to respond to calls and to adopt measures to prevent crimes from occurring.

Police services in Downey are provided by the City Police Department, except for properties owned by the County of Los Angeles in the southwest part of the city, which are patrolled by the County Sheriff's Department, based in Lynwood.



The estimated response times to service calls for the City Police Department are 1 to 2 minutes for emergency calls and 5 to 8 minutes for non-emergency calls. Downey's Police Department has 138 sworn officers and responds to an average of 1,000 service calls per month. The department maximizes the use of its sworn personnel uses by using advanced technology to increase productivity and utilizing non-sworn personnel for certain tasks.

The Police Department has mutual aid agreements with virtually all other cities in Los Angeles County except the City of Los Angeles. This agreement establishes a reciprocal law enforcement status between other cities and the City of Downey. Downey also participates in a statewide mutual aid program.

Preventing crime before it occurs benefits the city in terms of the saving of direct cost of proving police and court services as well as the improved lives of individuals, quality of life to the community, and image of the city as a safe place. The city may take an active role in crime prevention by promoting recreational and counseling programs. The City Community Services Department and local school districts provide after-school programs and other recreational programs that provide youth with productive activities. This also may

include the support of school-based disciplinary systems, including review of school attendance to prevent truancy.

A police presence in the community typically serves as a deterrent to criminal activity. Increasing the visibility of police, through police substations, increased patrols, or community involvement, conveys the message that crime is closely monitored. Maintaining effective communication between the Police Department and the community, including by addressing the need for bilingual staff, is necessary for the community and the city to work towards long-term problem solving.

The development review process may also work towards crime prevention by designing buildings and projects to reduce the opportunities to create nuisances, criminal activity. This may include providing walkways and entrances visible from the public street, discouraging areas obscured from view by walls or tall hedges that may serve as hiding spaces, and providing parking lots with adequate lighting.

### **Goals, Policies, and Programs**

#### **Goal 5.4. Promote the protection of life and property from criminal activities.**

Policy 5.4.1. Prepare for adequate response to crime.

- Program 5.4.1.1. Keep crime rates and property loss rates at the lowest levels feasible.
- Program 5.4.1.2. Maintain an acceptable response time for police emergency service calls.
- Program 5.4.1.3. Provide the highest level of police service with the resources available.
- Program 5.4.1.4. Promote the use of non-sworn personnel for police service tasks wherever possible to maximize the efficiency of sworn personnel.
- Program 5.4.1.5. Promote the use technology as tools to improve staff productivity.



- Program 5.4.1.6. Promote the design or redesign of roadway medians and islands that do not impede emergency vehicles access.
- Program 5.4.1.7. Coordinate with Federal, State, and County agencies to address illegal activities.

Policy 5.4.2. Promote crime prevention programs.

- Program 5.4.2.1. Promote the increased visibility of police in neighborhoods.
- Program 5.4.2.2. Support community organizations and neighborhood awareness programs that promote crime prevention, including preventing gang activity.
- Program 5.4.2.3. Maintain effective communication, including by addressing the need for bilingual staff, between the community and the City towards achieving long-term problem solving.
- Program 5.4.2.4. Promote recreational and counseling activities to provide alternatives to criminal behavior and activity.
- Program 5.4.2.5. Promote coordination between schools and the City to address juvenile crime in a proactive and preventive manner
- Program 5.4.2.6. Promote building and site design during the development review process that does not create nuisance and crime attraction.

# EARTHQUAKE SAFETY

Issue 5.5. Downey is located in a seismically-active region.

A major earthquake is expected to impact Southern California within the next 20 to 30 years. The most commonly known earthquake fault in the country, San Andreas Fault, is located 40 miles northeast of Downey. Other lesser known but seismically active faults are located closer to Downey, but no active faults have been identified at the ground surface within Downey.

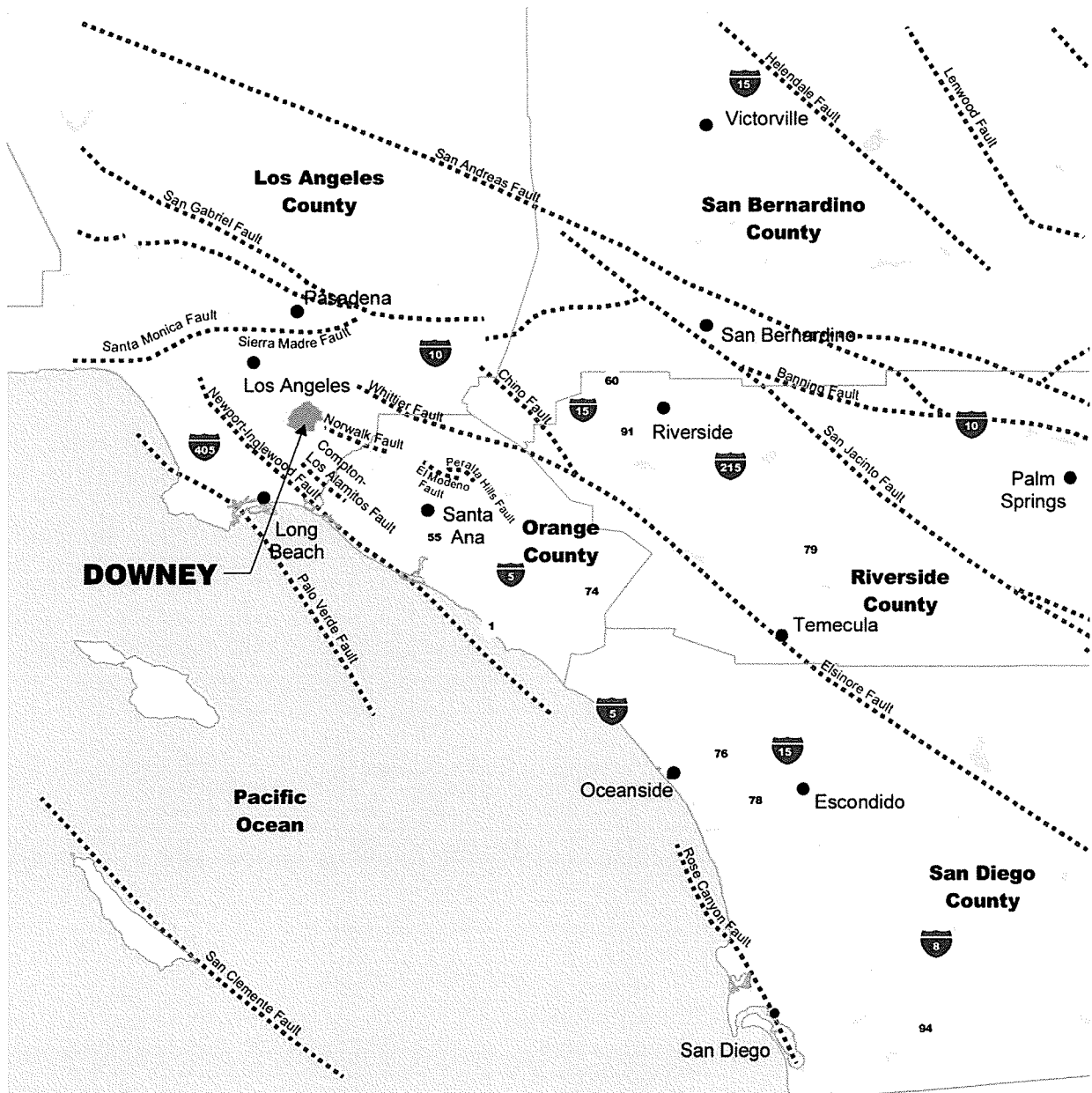
The greatest damage from earthquakes results from groundshaking. Although groundshaking is generally most severe near quake epicenters and generally become weaker further out from the epicenter, property not immediately adjacent to the epicenter may be subject to extreme damage due to liquefaction. Liquefaction occurs when the type of soil and high groundwater table levels combined with intense ground shaking make soil react in a manner similar to the properties most commonly associated with liquids. Although such effects would be temporary during a quake, the potential for damage to structures, roads, and other infrastructure are extreme.

Downey has the combination of silts and sands soil types and relatively high water table that are conducive for liquefaction to occur during intense groundshaking. The State Division of Mines and Geology has designated all areas within the city within a liquefaction hazard zone, which requires geotechnical reports for construction projects to mitigate the potential undermining of structural integrity during earthquakes.

Other possible types of hazards include the following:

- Rupture of underground natural gas pipelines causing fires and release of gas.
- Collapse of road bridges over rivers.
- Collapse of road overpasses and underpasses at freeway crossings.

FIGURE 5.5-1  
REGIONAL EARTHQUAKE FAULT LINES



**FIGURE 5.5-2  
LIQUEFACTION HAZARD ZONE MAP**



 Liquefaction Zone

- Fallen overhead utility lines blocking road access and damaging structures.

The Emergency Operations Plan provides for response to any of the hazards associated with earthquake events.

### **Goals, Policies, and Programs**

#### **Goal 5.5. Address the potential hazards associated with seismic activity.**

Policy 5.5.1. Minimize damage in the event of a major earthquake.

- Program 5.5.1.1. Promote public information about earthquake safety.
- Program 5.5.1.2. Monitor seismic activity to identify new potential for fault rupture, liquefaction, and other seismic-related hazards.
- Program 5.5.1.3. Monitor groundwater table levels as they relate to liquefaction hazards.
- Program 5.5.1.4. Ensure the preparation of geotechnical reports for developments to address soil liquefaction hazards.
- Program 5.5.1.6. Ensure the placement of utility lines underground

# FLOODS

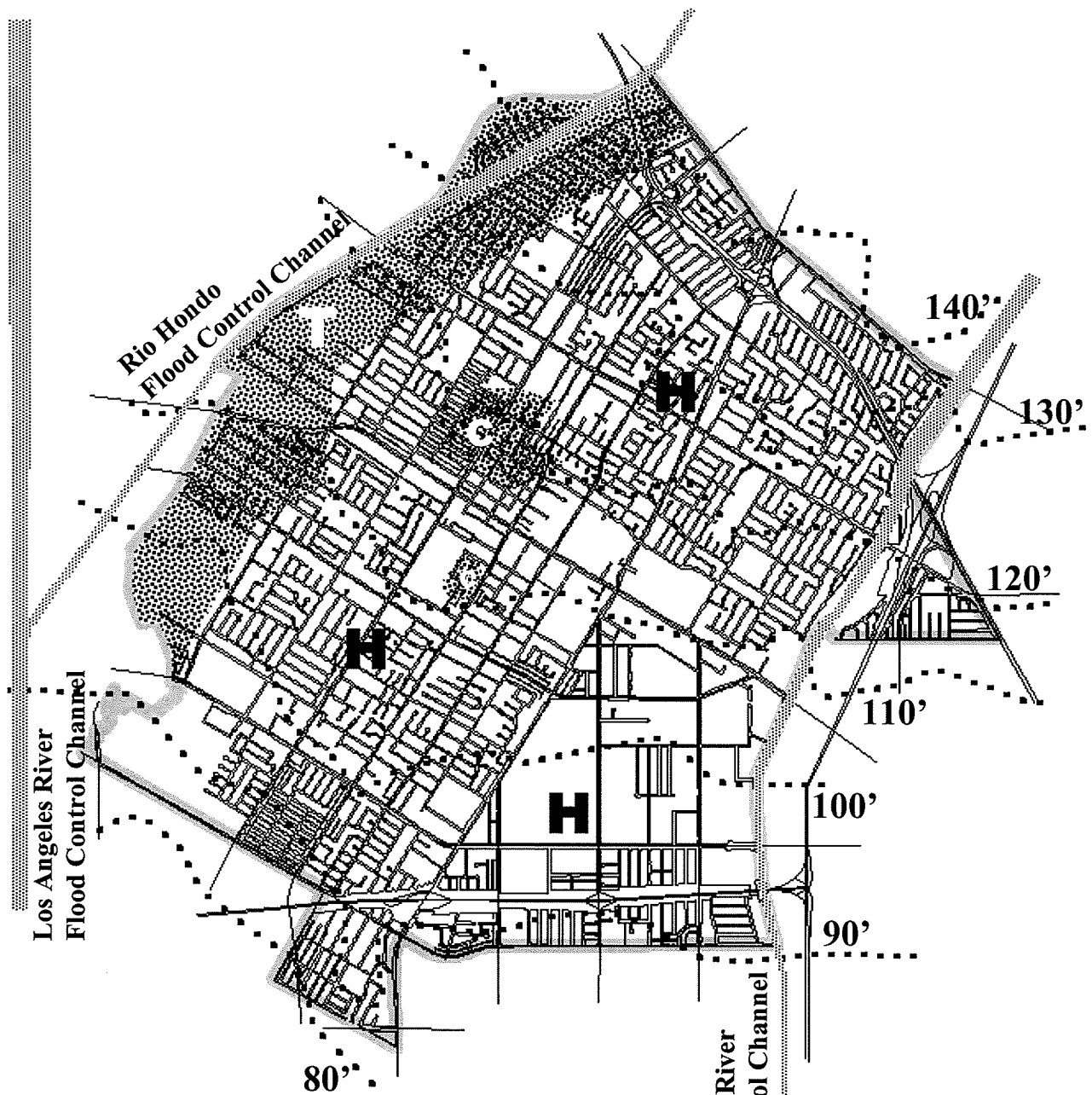
Issue 5.6. Downey is susceptible to flooding.

Downey is sometimes referred to an “island” because it is generally bound by two rivers, the Rio Hondo on the west end of the City and the San Gabriel River at the east end of the City. The City had been subject to periodic flooding and flood insurance requirement imposed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) until recent improvements were constructed by the Army Corp of Engineers. These improvements included installing dams upstream (including the Whittier Narrows dam approximately 6 miles to the north), providing concrete bottoms for riverbeds, and constructing levees and flood walls on the sides of the concrete channels. The channels are currently maintained by Los Angeles County Flood Control District.

Since the Army Corp of Engineers completed raising the channel levees in 2000, no properties within Downey are considered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to be within a 100-year flood zone (a 100 year flood is one of such intensity that it has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year). Instead, the City is located within a 500-year flood zone, as designated by FEMA (a 500 year flood is one of such intensity that it has a 0.2% chance of occurring in any given year). Although FEMA regulations do not require flood insurance for properties in the 500-year flood zones, the risk of flooding from unusual amounts of rainfall is still present. Another risk is posed by levee failures along either the Rio Hondo or San Gabriel River Flood Control Channel. Another area of concern regarding levee failure is the location downstream just south of the Downey city limits where the Rio Hondo Flood Control Channel is joined by the Los Angeles River where the channel is not entrenched below grade and the channel is contained only by levees.

Localized flooding may result from deficiencies in the existing storm drain system, which is operated and maintained by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. Intensified development of properties over time has increased the amount of impermeable paved surfaces

FIGURE 5.6-1  
MAP OF RIVERS AND TOPOGRAPHY



**LEGEND**

**Soil Types**

- H** Hanford Sands
- T** Tujunga Sands
- C** Chino Silt Loam

..... Elevation Contours

SCALE  
1 INCH = 0.78 MILE



thereby reducing the watershed's ability to infiltrate stormwater. This increase in impermeable surfaces has increased the quantity of water runoff, which is the amount of water directed towards street drains from properties. The storm drain system consists of a network of reinforced concrete boxes (RCB) along city streets that direct stormwater towards flood control channels via reinforced concrete pipes (RCP). The system is typically designed to handle 10-year floods. However, there are parts of Downey where the amount of surface runoff now exceeds the design of the system and periodic flooding may occur. These areas include arterial streets which may produce traffic delays and possible service interruptions during rainfall events.

The deficiencies in the storm drain system may be addressed by increasing the capacity of the storm drain system. However, upgrading the storm drain system involves capital outlays and coordination among government agencies. Measures that reduce the volume of stormwater are the best method to reduce any further strain on the storm drain system. These measures may include the following:

- Require hydrology studies that address the impact by developments on downstream stormwater capacity.
- Require building expansions and new developments to generate less stormwater runoff after development.
- Maximize the amount of landscaped planting areas and other pervious surfaces on properties to decrease runoff volumes.
- Encourage the use of pervious materials that allow for stormwater infiltration and retention in areas used as driveways, walkways, courtyards, plazas, and other areas that are typically paved with impervious surfaces.
- Minimize the surface areas of rooftops, parking lots, driveways, walkways, and other impervious surfaces.
- Encourage building roof designs which direct rooftop runoff to pervious surfaces for stormwater infiltration and retention.
- Preserve existing naturally vegetated areas and encourage re-vegetation and soil restoration where feasible.
- Incorporate stormwater runoff systems into site design to provide areas for infiltration and retention of stormwater runoff on site.
- Establish mechanisms (e.g. covenants and agreements) that guarantee long term management and maintenance



of drainage structures, pervious and impervious surfaces

- Utilize street tree wells, landscaped parkways, medians, islands, and other elements of the streetscape to minimize, capture, and reuse storm water runoff.

### **Goals, Policies, and Programs**

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#### **Goal 5.6. Minimize potential adverse impacts from flooding.**

Policy 5.6.1. Protect life and property from flooding hazards.

- Program 5.6.1.1. Continue to participate in the Federal Emergency Management Agency flood program.
- Program 5.6.1.2. Educate the public that the City is located in an "X" flood zone where flood insurance is no longer mandatory.
- Program 5.6.1.3. Mitigate hazards from possible dam or levee failure, including the raising of bridges and levees along rivers, including in areas outside the City.

Policy 5.6.2 Minimize the potential for flooding due to stormwater generation.

- Program 5.6.2.1. Minimize increases in the amount of stormwater generated by existing and proposed land uses.
- Program 5.6.2.2. Maximize the amount of pervious surfaces on properties to absorb stormwater and decrease runoff volumes.
- Program 5.6.2.3. Preserve existing naturally vegetated areas and encourage re-vegetation and soil restoration where feasible.

# VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

Issue 5.7. Traffic accidents are a major safety concern to residents and visitors of the city.

Traffic accidents are mainly caused due to the lack of obeying traffic laws, especially in regards to speeds. Other than increased enforcement however, the city may also advance the following to improve traffic safety:

- Increase the visibility by motorists by installing street lighting, especially along residential streets that do not have lighting presently. Traffic accidents may be prevented by increasing the visibility of motorists.
- Reducing the number of points for cross traffic (both vehicular and pedestrian).
- Provide sidewalks to separate pedestrians from oncoming vehicular traffic. Due to constraints, priority should be granted to areas that have no sidewalks along major and secondary arterials, collector road, and school routes.
- Discourage planting, walls, buildings and other objects that block visibility by the drivers of vehicles entering onto streets from other streets (intersections), alleys, or driveways.
- Design parking lots and driveways to allow vehicles to enter streets in a forward manner.

## **Goals, Policies, and Programs**

### **Goal 5.7. Reduce the likelihood of traffic accidents.**

Policy 5.7.1. Promote traffic safety along streets.

- Program 5.7.1.1. Enforce speed limits throughout the city, but especially on streets in residential areas
- Program 5.7.1.2. Discourage objects that block visibility by drivers of vehicles entering onto streets.

- Program 5.7.1.3. Promote street design that impedes the use of local residential streets as bypass and through routes.
- Program 5.7.1.4. Promote programs that encourage driver courtesy.
- Program 5.7.1.5. Promote effective signage visible to motorists.
- Program 5.7.1.6. Promote the parking and access agreements and parking consolidation to reduce the number of driveway access points on streets.
- Program 5.7.1.7. Provide for vehicles to enter onto streets in a perpendicular manner.
- Program 5.7.1.8. Promote designs to provide for vehicles to enter onto streets in a forward manner.

Policy 5.7.1. Increase the visibility of pedestrians and vehicles by promoting the installation of lighting.

- Program 5.7.1.1. Adopt a Master Plan for installation of streetlights.
- Program 5.7.1.2. Require street lights for new developments.
- Program 5.7.1.3. Establish a development recovery fee program to require new developments and expansions of existing developments to fund the cost of streetlights.
- Program 5.7.1.4. Promote adequate lighting on site designs through the development review process in parking lots and walkways.

Policy 5.7.2. Promote the installation of sidewalks and walkways to improve traffic safety.

- Program 5.7.2.1. Adopt a Master Plan for installation of sidewalks for major arterials, secondary arterials, collector streets and school routes.

- Program 5.7.2.2. Encourage the installation of sidewalks in new developments and major remodeling consistent with the sidewalk Master Plan.
- Program 5.7.2.3. Promote street intersection design and signalization that are safe and convenient to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Program 5.7.2.4. Promote internal walkways and bikeways on private property that are safe and convenient to bicyclists.

# AIRBORNE TRAFFIC

Issue 5.8. With the high volume of air flights over the city, there is a potential for airborne accidents impacting Downey.

The amount of aircraft traffic over Downey is significant and, should an airborne accident occur, lives could be in danger. Downey lies under the flight path to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). In a normal day, more than 75 flights an hour go over Downey en route to LAX. The number of flights over Downey is regulated by the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration). The FAA is a higher governmental entity than the city, thus it pre-empts the City's authority. The City can, however, make the FAA aware of its concern for the safety of Downey.

A helicopter pad is located at Downey Community Hospital. Lifelight provides emergency air service to this helipad and there are, on the average, approximately 6 flights per month. There is a third helipad at Rancho Los Amigos Hospital; however, it is currently inactive.

In the event of an air disaster, the emergency preparedness plan prepared by the City will go into effect in response.

## **Goals, Policies, and Programs**

**Goal 5.8. Reduce the possibility of airborne accidents.**

Policy 5.8.1 The City shall work with other agencies to alter the flight path to LAX.

- Program 5.8.1.1. Contact the FAA requesting that the FAA consider altering the flight path to LAX.

# PERSONAL HEALTH

Issue 5.9. In an urbanized and congestion setting, residents are susceptible to personal health issues.

The general well-being and health of persons who live and work in Downey is important to allow persons to live full and productive lives. To maintain the health of residents, it is important that the city provide sufficient land for hospital and health care services. This is especially important due to the relatively high percentage of elderly and young children, which are groups with special medical needs.

The County Health Department is the primary authority addressing health issues such as inspections for restaurants and other uses involving the handling of food. The County Health Department also addresses the overcrowding of housing units based on the number of persons per household.

The city may also promote preventive measures that enhance health such as the following:

- Discourage glare from street lighting and private property lighting.
- Discourage the placement of trash enclosure and other trash collection next to adjacent properties.
- Discourage site designs that do not provide individual private enclosed yards for each housing unit or otherwise provide inadequately sized yards for exercise and plays by children and residents.
- Encourage the placement of common open areas for multiple-family residential development in central location to facilitate access to all units.

## **Goals, Policies, and Programs**

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**Goal 5.9. Promote the well-being and general health of those that live and work in Downey.**

Policy 5.9.1. Support the provision of health care services.

- Program 5.9.1.1. Encourage the establishment and expansion of uses providing health care services and areas designated for health care services.
- Program 5.9.1.2. Support the maintenance of regional trauma centers.

Policy 5.9.2. Promote healthy building design and use as a means to prevent future medical problems.

- Program 5.9.2.1. Discourage the placement of trash collection areas in the vicinity of adjoining housing units or properties.
- Program 5.9.2.2. Encourage that each housing unit is provided with a adequate sized private enclosed yard for the exercise and play needs of residents.
- Program 5.9.2.3. Encourage that common open spaces in multiple-family developments that are easily accessible to all residents.
- Program 5.9.2.4. Discourage public street lighting and private lighting that create glare onto adjacent properties, street traffic, and the sky above.
- Program 5.9.2.5. Support the County Health Department relating to restaurant inspections and other objectives.
- Program 5.9.2.6. Discourage the overcrowding of dwellings.

# HOSPITAL ACCESS

Issue 5.10. The Union Pacific Railroad Line, parallel to Firestone Boulevard, may impede access from the northern part of the city to hospitals during emergencies.

For the Union Pacific Railroad line parallel to Firestone Boulevard, there are 10 crossings at public streets within Downey. These crossings are at grade which means that traffic is stopped during the passage of trains. Each day, approximately 5 to 10 trains pass through Downey. During these crossings, there may be delays between 5 and 10 minutes along north-south routes in the City. Providing grade separation at crossings would eliminate these delays. The grade separation may take several forms, such as placing the railroad beneath ground level so that the road is on a bridge, keeping the railroad at grade and place the road on overpass bridges, or keeping the railroad at grade and providing underpass tunnels for the road.

A greater concern than the impact on traffic congestion is the impact on public safety due to temporary restrictions on access to hospital. The Downey Regional Medical Center (located at 11500 Brookshire Avenue), about 700 feet south of an at-grade railroad crossing at Brookshire Avenue. During the passing of trains, access to the hospital from properties north of the railroad and access by emergency vehicles from the hospital to properties north of the railroad is delayed. During emergencies, this delay may be critical to life and safety.

Therefore, although the city would ultimately desire a grade separation at all 10 crossing across the city, there is a priority that a grade separation (most preferably, Brookshire Avenue) is provided to eliminate delays in access to the hospital. Public Utilities Commission, a state agency, regulates railroads. The City should work with the Public Utilities Commission and the railroad companies to advance the grade separation as important to improve public safety for residents.



**Goals, Policies, and Programs**

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**Goal 5.10. Provide access to hospitals from the northern part of the City during emergencies.**

Policy 5.10.1. Adopt a plan for a grade separation of the Union Pacific Railroad Line, parallel to Firestone Boulevard, at Brookshire Avenue to allow emergency vehicle access to hospitals from the north.

- Program 5.10.1.1. Identify as a priority a railroad grade separation at Brookshire Avenue, either as part of or not a part of a larger grade separation project.