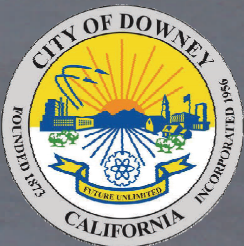




**City of Downey**

# **2015 General Plan Annual Report Community Development Department**



**11111 Brookshire Avenue, Downey, CA**

# City of Downey

11111 Brookshire Avenue  
Downey, CA 90241

## City Council

(at the time of adoption)

**Alex Saab, Mayor**

District 5

**Fernando Vasquez, Mayor Pro-Tem**

District 4

**Luis H. Marquez**

District 1

**Sean Ashton**

District 2

**Roger C. Brossmer**

District 3

## Planning Commission

(at the time of adoption)

**Matias Flores, Chairperson**

District 4

**Jim Rodriguez Vice-Chairperson**

District 5

**Hector Lujan**

District 1

**Patrick Owens**

District 2

**Louis Morales**

District 3



**City of Downey**

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Supervisor

Kevin Nguyen  
Assistant Planner



**City of Downey**

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# Introduction

## **Executive Summary**

The General Plan Annual Progress Report summarizes the City of Downey's progress towards implementing the goals, policies and programs of vision 2025, the City's General Plan. It covers the period from January 1, 2015, through December 31, 2015. The report also reviews the activities of the Community Development Department including the Planning, Building and Safety, Economic Development, and Housing divisions.

This report is prepared in compliance with California Government Code Section 65400(b) which mandates that all cities and counties submit to the State Office of Planning and Research an Annual Report on the status and implementation of the General Plan.

## **Background Information**

Downey is 12.8 square miles in area. Its topography is relatively level. The City is located in the southeastern part of Los Angeles County, about 12 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles. It is bounded by: the Rio Hondo River channel to the west; Telegraph Road to the north; the San Gabriel River channel to the east; and Gardendale Street and Foster Road to the south. Cities bordering Downey include Pico Rivers, Santa Fe Springs, Norwalk, Bellflower, Paramount, South Gate, and Commerce. The City of Downey is provided regional access by four interstate highways: the I-605 Freeway, the I-5 Freeway, the I-105 Freeway, and the I-710 Freeway. These freeways provide access to major employment centers including downtown Los Angeles and employment centers in Orange County

The City of Downey has matured from its farming roots from its founding in 1873 to become the premier city in the southeast area of Los Angeles County. Downey is one of the larger suburban cities in the region with a population of over 113,082 residents (Source: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates 2010-2014).

The issues addressed by General Plan Vision 2025 will work towards achieving this vision by adhering to the values providing excellent housing, education, employment, and recreation opportunities plus the mission of providing a safe, convenient, and attractive community for those that live, work, or visit Downey.

## **Acceptance Date**

The 2015 General Plan Annual Progress Report was reviewed by the Planning Commission on September 7, 2016, and accepted by the City Council on September 13, 2016.

# Community Development

Department Updates



# Planning Division

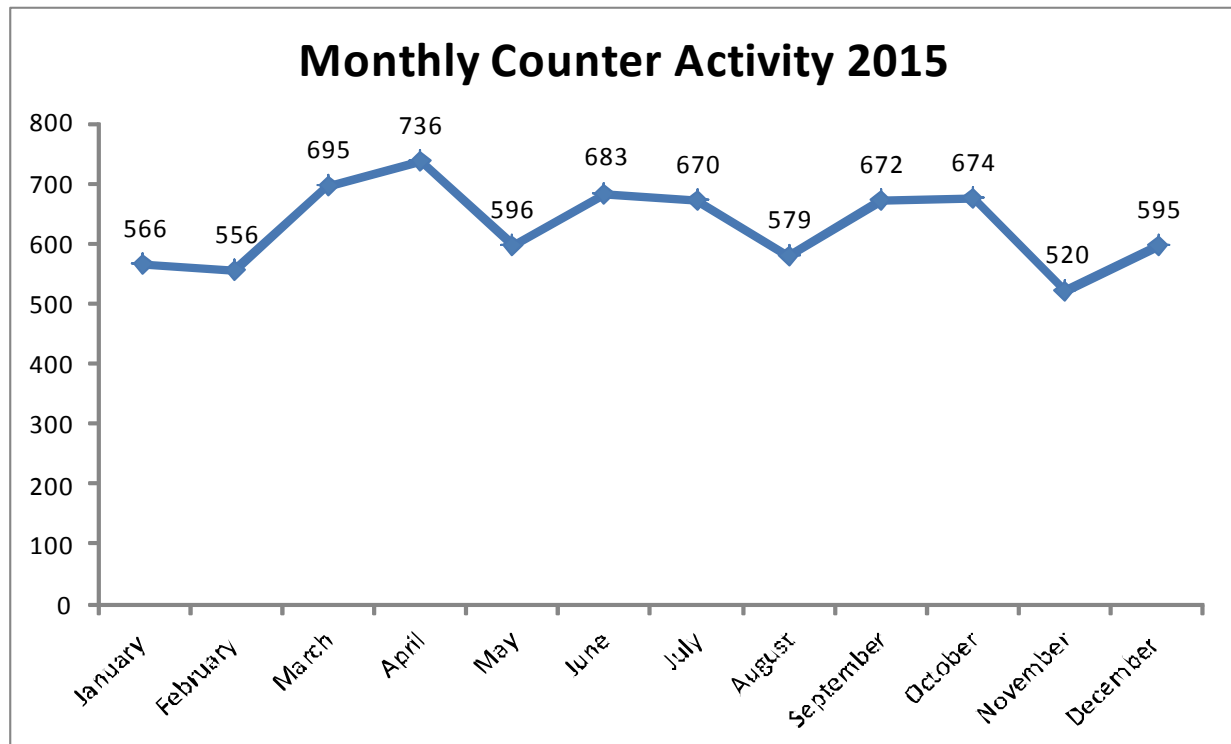
This section outlines the activities of the Planning Division from January 2015 through December 2015. The day-to-day planning activities include:

- Administrating the City’s Zoning Ordinance (Development Code)
- Answering public inquiries on the telephone and over the public counter
- Processing planning applications for the Planning Commission
- Reviewing and approving business license applications for zoning compliance
- Preparing reports for the City Council
- Reviewing development plans for compliance with City standards (Plan Checks).

## Counter Activity

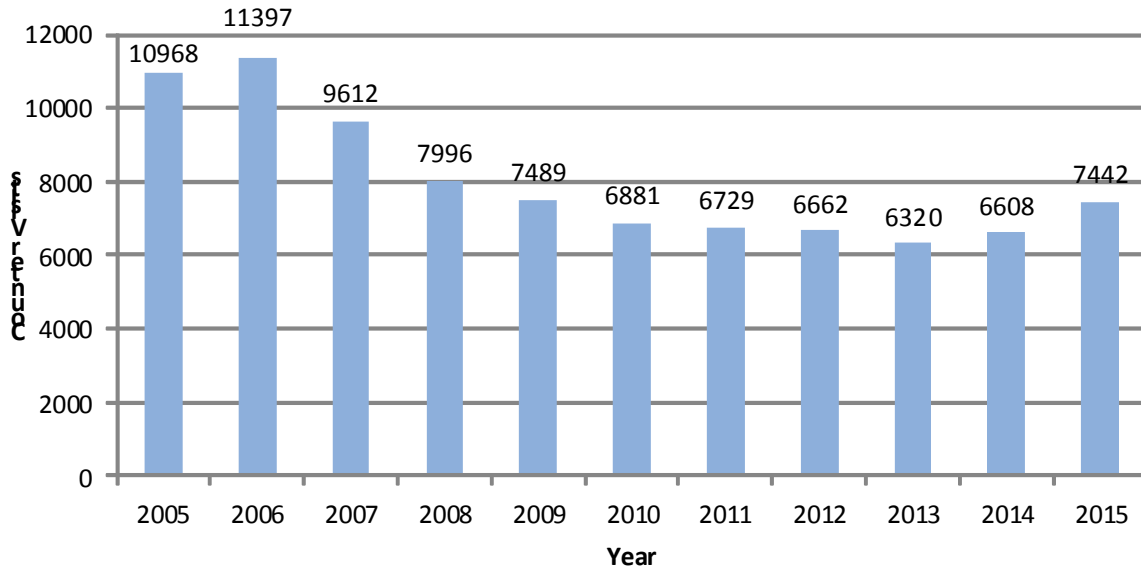
Counter activity represents the number of counter visits recorded in the Planning Division. Records of counter visits are kept and tracked on a monthly basis. In 2015, the total counter visits were 7,442.

Historically, counter activity has been greater during summer, while lower in the winter. However, in 2015, April was the busiest month of counter activity with 736 visits.





## Yearly Counter Activity (2005-2015)



### Planning Applications

Planning applications in 2015, including Administrative, Planning Commission, and legislative items to the City Council, totaled 261.

In addition to the above applications, Planning staff reviewed business licenses and conducted plan check review to ensure the proposed business, improvement and new construction are in compliance to zoning code.

### Street Faire

Community Development staff participated in the annual Street Faire on May 2, 2015. Planning, Building and Safety, Housing, Code Enforcement, and Economic Development staff members were on hand to provide information on City programs, policies and answer general questions in regards to development in the City.

Planning Applications	
Temporary Signs	52
Sign Permits	49
Conditional Use Permits	27
Sidewalk Sales	38
Fireworks Stands	18
Christmas tree Lots / Pumpkin Patches	5
Special Events	15
Minor Modifications	5
Tentative Tract Maps	5
Tentative Parcel Maps	2
Second Unit Developments	1
Negative Declarations	1
Planned Sign Programs	3
Zone Changes	3
General Plan Amendments	2
Code Amendments	2
Lot line Adjustments	2
Miscellaneous Actions	9
Minor Site Plans	1
Variances	5
Site Plan Review	10
Lot Mergers	2
Specific Plan Amendment	2
Final Tract Map	2

## Planning Commission

The Planning Commission conducts public hearings on most entitlements, including new buildings, conditionally permitted uses, variances, etc. On legislative items such as General Plan Amendments (GPA), Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, and Zoning Changes, the Planning Commission acts as an advisory body to the city council. In 2015, the Planning Commission conducted 21 meetings during which they considered 54 items.

Below is a list of some of the major projects that were approved by the City:

- The Commons (former Downey Ford Automobile Dealership)
- Downey Crossroads (former Downey Lincoln Mercury)
- Centerpointe—KB Home Project (former Gallatin Medical Center)
- Starbucks (southeast corner of Bellflower Blvd and Imperial Hwy)
- Vallarta Market & Starbucks (former Beach's Market)
- Imperial Townhomes (8545-8603 Imperial Hwy)
- Cielo Restaurant & Lounge (northeast corner of Second St and Downey Ave)

# Economic Development Division

The Economic Development Division oversees and is responsible for facilitating the growth of the local economy in Downey. More importantly, the Division works with City staff, local business entrepreneurs, developers, contractors, and the Downey Chamber of Commerce, to attract and retain quality development projects in Downey. In 2015, the Economic Development Division staff facilitated several key projects in Downey.

## **Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with Downey Art Vibe**

To maintain the momentum of the branding roll-out from the previous year, the City continued to use Downey Art Vibe's branding and marketing services for Phase II of the branding initiative. The proposed scope of work and deliverables associated with Phase II of this initiative included: creation of a Discover Downey Video highlighting the main retail, commercial and city attractions; and various "On-Call" services such as: strategic marketing for Discover Downey Events; Downtown Downey Branding; assistance with the design of the City's website template to match new brand; and Discover Downey Social Media.

## **Small Business Forgivable Loan Program**

In an effort to stimulate economic growth and create jobs within the City's Downtown Downey Specific Plan (DDSP) area, a small business forgivable loan program was created in early 2015. The Program provides affordable, non-conventional financing to eligible businesses and development projects. The Program has a maximum loan amount of \$25,000 with a fixed interest rate of 3.5%. By providing a fixed interest rate, the City can best provide loans under the program to suit the needs of different businesses in the DDSP area.

## **Amendment to the Downtown Downey Specific Plan Allowing Off-Site Parking**

Due to the unique nature of development standards within the downtown, implementation of the DDSP relies on the use of public parking to accommodate the needs of businesses. The primary scope of this amendment was to allow off-site parking agreements to be utilized to meet a business' parking requirement. As approved, off-site parking can now be located within ¼ mile (1,320 feet) of the business utilizing it. The amendment allowed the City to relax parking standards to encourage new development.

## **Purchase and Sale Agreement with the Olson Company**

Staff successfully negotiated a Purchase and Sale Agreement with the Olson Company for the purchase of City-owned land, for the development of a 28-unit condominium complex on the southwest corner of Third St. and La Reina Ave. The agreement allowed the Olsen Company to purchase the parcel and combine it with an adjacent privately-owned land, totaling approximately an acre.

**Professional Services Agreement with New City America**

New City America and City staff worked with the Downtown Property owners to determine the feasibility of forming a property assessment district in 2014, but required an extension on the existing professional services agreement to complete: further outreach, Community Benefit District (CBD) Steering Committee work, develop a supportable management district work plan for the Downtown Downey CBD, determine the CBD Board/Governance model/structure, and conduct a campaign to achieve the minimum 30 percent weighted petition support in order to move forward with adoption under the CBD ordinance.

**Operating Covenant Agreement for Downey Nissan**

In order to remain competitive and promote economic expansion, Downey Nissan and the City entered into Operating Covenant Agreement (OCA) allowing Nissan to construct a new dealership and service facility on an under-utilized property. The agreement provides for a sales tax sharing structure, with an estimated \$9 million dollar gain to the General Fund for the 12-year duration of the agreement.

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# Housing Division

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) provides the City of Downey (“City”) with its annual entitlement of Community Development Block Grant (“CDBG”) and Home Investment Partnership (“HOME”) grants. These two federal grants are available to the City for a variety of community development activities including affordable housing activities, neighborhood improvement programs, economic development strategies, improvement of public facilities, and support for needed public services. The CDBG and HOME grants can be used for a wide range of eligible activities, which primarily benefit low- and moderate-income households.

The Housing Division has completed updating its Consolidated Plan (“ConPlan”) and prepared an Annual Action Plan (Action Plan). Additionally, per HUD requirement every three years, the Housing Staff conducted and prepared a new Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (“A.I.”) Report to evaluate access to equal housing opportunities.

During fiscal year 2015-16, the Housing Division offered a Home Improvement Rebate and Grant incentive which encouraged a higher leveraging of public funds with private investment. The Rebate Program was offered to households who fell within the 80 percent of the Annual Median Income (“AMI”) as defined by HUD. The Grant Program was offered to households who fell within the 50 percent AMI as defined by HUD. Both incentive programs were available to owner-occupied single family residential properties with the goal of processing between 20 and 30 projects during the fiscal year. In 2015, The Housing Division completed 18 home improvement projects.

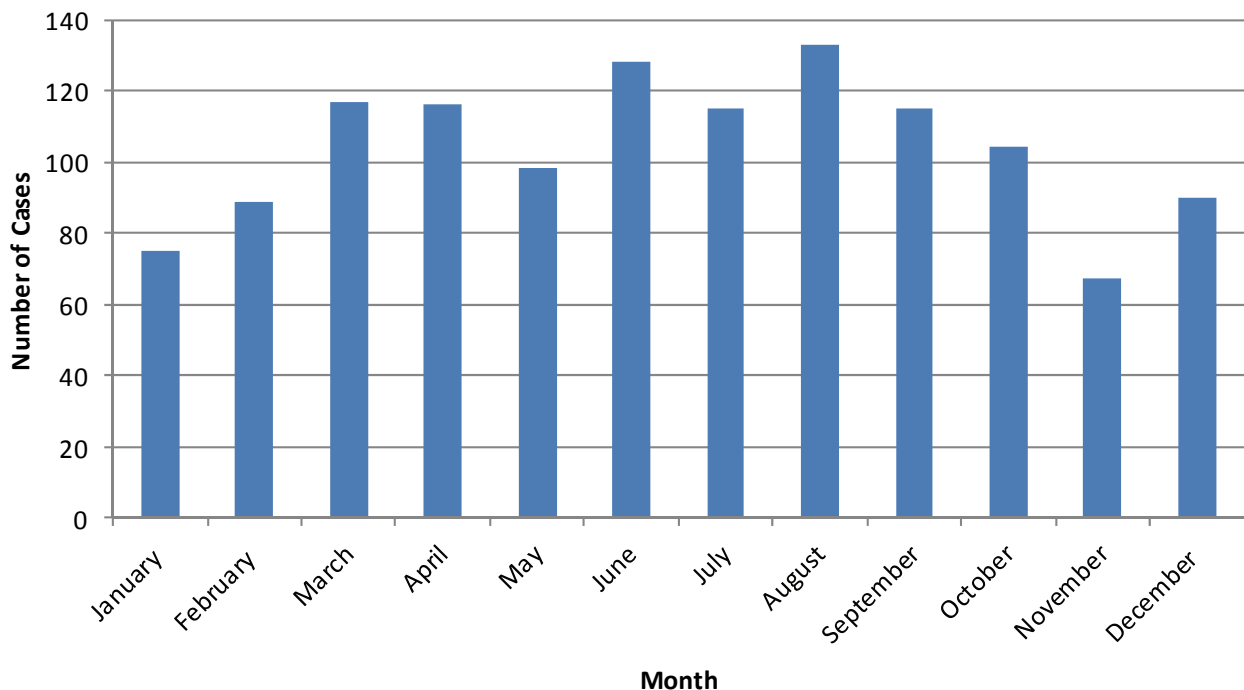
During the reporting period, the Housing Division co-hosted two (2) Certificate Management Training workshops with the Fair Housing Foundation. The training was available to landlords, managers, property owners, attorneys, realtors, and management companies at Downey’s City Library in the Cormack room. The training was a certificate program that covered general guidelines, lead disclosure, rental process guidelines, people with disabilities, modifications and accommodations, rules for tenants with minor children, occupancy standards, advertising guidelines, prohibited practices, and sexual harassment and hate crimes. In addition, the Housing Division co-hosted a Tenant Rights Workshop with the Fair Housing Foundation to anyone interested in learning basic fair housing rights and responsibilities, specific concerns, and obligations and guidelines.

# Code Enforcement Unit

The Code Enforcement Division is responsible for enforcing the Downey Municipal codes that relate to residential and business property maintenance standards, including business licensing. Code Enforcement also enforces building, health and safety standards related to environmental protection and neighborhood preservation. The Division works in close cooperation with all City departments and the City Prosecutor to educate the public and gain the willing compliance of violators.

Code Enforcement activity for the year of 2015 involved approximately 1,247 cases for various property violations (i.e. commercial, residential, public street, park and recreational). August had the highest number of code violation activities with 133 cases. In addition to conduct property violation inspections, Code Enforcement Officers conducted inspections on yard sale permits and were proactive in issuing administrative and parking citations.

## Code Cases by month for 2015

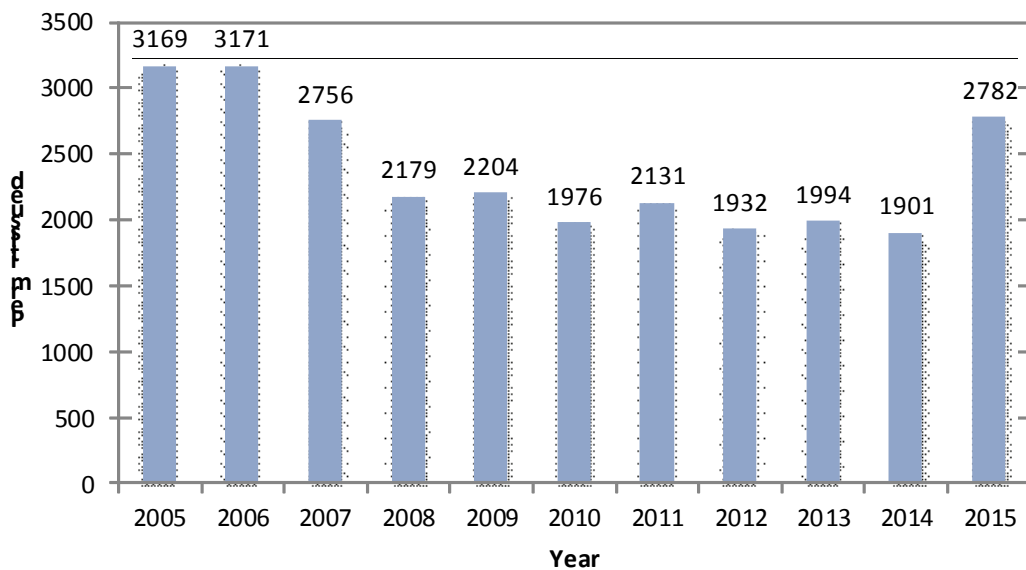


# Building and Safety Division

The Building and Safety Division is responsible for a variety of tasks that include issuing permits, processing plan check submittals, and inspections. The Building and Safety Division reviews all plans and permits for compliance with the 2013 California Building Code. New building construction and a majority of tenant improvements require plan check review for Zoning and Building Code compliance.

The total number of building applications accepted and permits issued by the Building and Safety Division in 2015 was 2,782. These applications include all construction related projects and installation of mechanical and utility equipment. There were a total of seven new single-family dwellings constructed in 2015. In addition, the Building & Safety Inspectors have conducted 11,281 inspections.

### Building Permits Issued (2005-2015)



In addition, the Building and Safety Inspectors conducted 395 business license inspections for commercial and industrial businesses. Below is a list of some of the major projects that were inspected in 2015:

- The Promenade at Downey
- McDonald's Restaurant at 9250 Lakewood Blvd
- In & Out Restaurant parking lot expansion at 8767 Firestone Blvd
- Nine Townhomes at 7634 Stewart & Gray Road

# General Plan

## Implementation Status

This section outlines the progress the City has made from January 2015, through December 2015, to implement the goals and policies of the General Plan.





## Chapter 1 Land Use Element

The Land Use chapter establishes the policies for determining where certain land uses, such as residential, commercial, industrial, are most desirable. The Land Use chapter defines the physical areas in the City serving the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

### Updates:

- ◆ **Continue the revitalization of commercial and industrial corridors (Program 9.1.1.5.).** With the addition of the Commons and Crossroads projects (under construction), the southwest and southeast corners of Lakewood Boulevard and Gallatin Road signify new retail activity in this commercial corridor. In addition, the Promenade at Downey commercial project will be a major addition that revitalizes the area north of Steve Horn Way, between Lakewood Boulevard and Bellflower Boulevard.
- ◆ **Promote Downtown Downey as a destination draw for entertainment and dining uses (Program 1.1.5.2.).** Construction of the View Housing project and the recently completed Joseph's Bar & Grill project will promote Downtown Downey as a destination. Additionally, the recently approved Cielo Restaurant & Lounge at the northeast corner of Second St and Downey Ave has paved the way for another upscale restaurant & lounge along Downey Ave.
- ◆ **Convert paper-based information to digital-based formats to facilitate integration into interdepartmental information networks (Program 9.4.2.4.)** Staff continues to scan all permits and approved entitlements into Laserfiche digital system formats. The technology allows various City Departments (City Clerk, Finance, Engineering, Fire and Community Development) easy access to archived City documents.
- ◆ **Expand the use of the City Website for public information (Program 9.4.2.5.)** Staff continues to monitor and update the Community Development Department's webpage to provide new and important documents to the public. In addition, staff provides PDF versions of Planning Commission minutes, agendas, and staff reports on the City webpage ([www.downeyca.org](http://www.downeyca.org)). This allows public access to information on various projects in the City. A link to the Department's documents can be found on the Community Department's webpage.



## **Chapter 2 Circulation Element**

The safe and efficient movement of people and goods through cities is provided by a circulation system ranging from sidewalks to roadways. As population and economic growth continue, cities have the challenge of improving the circulation system to deal with increased demands. Population and economic growth also impact the infrastructure needed to provide utilities and other services for those who live, work, and visit Downey.

### **Updates:**

#### **Traffic Congestion**

- ◆ **Maintain intersections and street segments at acceptable service levels and not worsen those intersections and street segments currently operating at unacceptable levels (Program 2.1.1.1.).** The Bellflower Boulevard at Imperial Highway Intersection improvement Project is still under construction. The project involves widening each of the four approaches of the intersection to construct additional left-turn lanes in the southbound and northbound directions and exclusive right-turn lanes in the eastbound, southbound and northbound directions to maintain an acceptable level-of-service at this intersection during peak hours into the future.

The Paramount Boulevard at Firestone Boulevard Intersection Improvement Project was completed in May 2015. It involved widening each of the four approaches of the intersection to facilitate construction of additional left-turn lanes in each of the four directions and an exclusive right-turn lane and additional through lane in the eastbound direction to maintain an acceptable level-of-service at this intersection into the future.

- ◆ **Develop a signal system master plan to promote state-of-the-art intelligent transportation system (ITS) improvements to better service on-going traffic conditions. (Program 2.1.1.3.).** The City continued to expand the traffic signal control system. The Traffic Management Center (TMC) was implemented at City Hall and the first fiber-optic traffic signal communications systems were installed along the Lakewood Boulevard and Firestone Boulevard corridors. Additional systems have since been implemented along Florence Avenue, Paramount Boulevard, Bellflower Boulevard and Telegraph Road and the City is currently in the process of upgrading the system software and other elements of the TMC to maintain pace with technology and replace obsolete hardware and software.

The Paramount Blvd. Traffic Signal Communication System Project-Phase 2 involved the expansion of the City's traffic signal communication system on Paramount Blvd. between Lubec St. and Gardendale St. This project was completed in June 2015.

- ◆ **Encourage appropriate turn lanes and other operational improvements at major arterial intersections identified as congested (Program 2.1.1.6.).** Major capacity improvements were added to the following intersections:

The Paramount Blvd. and Firestone Blvd. Intersection Improvement Project added additional left-turn lanes on each of the four approaches at the intersection as well as an additional through lane and an exclusive right-turn lane in the eastbound direction.

The City has implemented operational improvements at several intersections involving traffic signal upgrades, including upgrades at two intersections and upgrades to the detection systems at six additional intersections through the installation of video detection cameras, along Paramount Blvd. between Lubec St. and Gardendale St. The City also received funding through the Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) (Cycle 5) to upgrade and implement operational improvements to the existing traffic signals at six (6) additional intersections. The City also received HSIP funding (Cycle 6) to upgrade and implement operational improvements to the existing traffic signals at three (3) additional intersections. The traffic signal upgrades at these intersections were completed in November 2015.

- ◆ **Ensure the mitigation of off-site traffic impacts by development projects to the maximum extent feasible, including the installation or upgrade of traffic signals at intersections and/or contribution of its fair-share towards mitigating impacts (Program 2.1.2.2.).** Land development projects were reviewed on a case-by-case basis for potential traffic generation. Traffic studies were completed for proposed retail developments at the northeast corners of Firestone Boulevard at Pangborn Avenue and the southwest corner of Firestone Boulevard and Lakewood Boulevard. It was determined that trip generation thresholds in accordance with the LA County Congestion Management Program of 50 vehicle trips during either AM or PM peak hour were exceeded, a traffic impact analysis study was conducted to determine mitigation measures necessary to offset the impacts created by the development on a designated CMP facilities or the amount of development fee to be collected.
- ◆ **Promote site designs, street patterns, and street signalization that discourage the use of local streets as through routes (Program 2.1.2.4.).** The added traffic signal communication system projects mentioned in Program 2.1.1.3 will improve mobility along the Paramount Blvd and Imperial Hwy corridors which minimize intrusion through residential neighborhoods. The City's traffic Calming Program provides a framework for discouraging through traffic on local streets through a series of traffic calming measures which are applied to local residential streets as appropriate in response to requests submitted by residents.



## Truck Traffic

- ◆ **Co-ordinate with local, regional, and state agencies involved in mitigating truck traffic impacts in the region (Program 2.3.1.2).** The Public Works Department continued to issue overload permits to ensure that the correct haul routes are utilized through the City and that proper arrangements have been made in advance. In addition, the City is partnering with the City of Pico Rivera for the implementation of truck circulation improvements at the Lakewood Boulevard/Rosemead Boulevard at Telegraph Road intersection (Lakewood Boulevard Improvement Project Phase 3D), currently under construction.
- ◆ **Widen street right-of-way to accommodate truck turning movements (Program 2.3.1.3).** The intersection improvement projects referenced in Programs 2.1.1.1 and 2.1.1.6 allowed the reconstruction of the curb returns at each of the four corners of the two intersections to provide larger turn radii (between 40'-50') in order to accommodate truck turning movements at the Paramount Boulevard at Firestone Boulevard, Bellflower Boulevard at Imperial Highway and Lakewood Boulevard/Rosemead Boulevard at Telegraph Road intersections.
- ◆ **Discourage truck parking on public streets (Program 2.3.2.1).** The Public Works Traffic Division has implemented parking prohibitions of large commercial vehicles on public streets where transient parking of these vehicles has been observed. Downey Municipal Code Section 3185 (b) prohibits the parking of commercial vehicles exceeding 6,000 lbs. manufacturer's unladen weight or 84 inches in height or width on all public streets with the exception of those streets located within areas zoned industrial, the vehicle is involved with the servicing of the adjacent property or for a period not to exceed eight hours if the vehicle has been involved in an accident or is disabled.
- ◆ **Maintain landscape islands on and/or adjacent to truck routes with mature specimen fully grown landscape screens to minimize noise, dust, and visual impacts (Program 2.3.2.2).** The Firestone Blvd. (East) Improvement Project included the replacement of the existing landscaping material and irrigation within the existing median islands between Brookshire Avenue and Paramount Boulevard. Also, new median islands were installed between on Lakewood Boulevard between Florence Avenue and Gallatin Road.

## Regional Traffic

- ◆ **Coordinate with CalTrans, MTA, SCAG, Gateway Cities COG and other agencies to promote multi-modal improvement strategies to improve the regional transportation network (Program 2.4.1.1).**

In 2015, the Public Works Department continued to coordinate with Caltrans, Metro, SCAG and the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (COG) through discretionary funding processes and programs, the Congestion Management Program, Highway Performance Monitoring Survey (HPMS), etc. on an on-going basis to promote multi-modal improvement strategies to improve the regional transportation network.

In addition, staff coordinates with the I-5 Joint Powers Authority (JPA) on the I-5 Widening Project and with the Gateway Cities COG on the I-710 Freeway, I-605/I-405/SR91 Corridors and the I-605 Freeway Congestion Hot Spots Studies. In addition, the Gateway Cities COG recently adopted the Strategic Transportation Plan, a comprehensive multi-modal transportation plan which evaluated and will facilitate the planning of and funding for the improvement of existing and construction of new transportation infrastructure involving all modes of transportation, including transit systems and non-motorized transportation, within the Gateway Cities sub-region. Besides the New York City metropolitan area, this was the only comprehensive study of its kind ever conducted within the country.

- ◆ **Comply with provisions of the Congestion Management Plan, adopted by Los Angeles County (Program 2.4.1.4).** The City complies with the L.A. County Congestion Management Plan (CMP) annually through the preparation of the Local Implementation Report (Community Development Dept.) and Biennial Highway Monitoring (Public Works Dept.), as required by statute. In addition, the City holds land developers accountable for their traffic impacts by requiring traffic impact analyses (TIA) to be completed in accordance with L.A. County CMP TIA guidelines. Furthermore, as mentioned under Program 2.1.2.1, the City participated previously in a pilot study for a countywide developer fee program proposed by Metro.

## Infrastructure and Maintenance

- ◆ **Promote the expansion of communication networks to meet the needs of city residents, businesses, and other land uses (Program 2.7.1.2.)** The Public Works Department continues to maintain and update the City's traffic signal communication system on all major and primary arterials (i.e., Lakewood Blvd., Firestone Blvd., Paramount Blvd., Bellflower Blvd., Imperial Hwy. and Florence Ave.). The projects will integrate with water well sites, as they recently have with the Public Works Maintenance and Utilities Yards as well as other remote City facilities, to enhance communications between City Hall and said facilities in terms of speed, capacity and reliability.



- ◆ **Develop master plans to identify needs, priorities, and cost for infrastructure maintenance and upgrades (Program 2.7.2.2).** The Public Works Department recently updated its Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) in Fall 2015 to reflect current pavement conditions on the City’s arterial, collector and local streets to comply with funding requirements and to provide the latest information in terms of pavement maintenance and rehabilitation priorities.

The City also received a grant through Caltrans to fund the development of a Bicycle Master Plan (BMP). The BMP will serve as a blueprint for the planning and implementation of the City’s bicycle transportation system and will enable the City to receive funding for bicycle projects. The BMP was adopted by the Downey City Council in July 2015. The City is also currently preparing a park master plan to assess the needs of improving the City’s parks to current standards. The Park Master Plan draft document is complete and is currently in the environmental assessment phase.

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## **Chapter 3 Housing Element**

The California State Legislature has identified the “Attainment of a decent home and suitable living environment for every citizen”, as the State’s major housing goal. Accordingly, the State of California mandates that each county and city maintain a Housing Element in their General Plan. Section 65583 of the Government Code sets forth the specific components to be contained in a community’s housing element, including the City’s share of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA).

In addition to providing assistance and guidance for the City’s Housing Element, the Housing Division administers a variety of community development activities including affordable housing activities, neighborhood improvement programs, economic development strategies, improvement of public facilities, and support for needed public services. The following is in regards to Chapter 2 (Housing Plan) of the 2014-2021 Housing Element goals administered by the Housing Division:

### **Program 2 – The Housing Rebate and Grant Program**

- Objective:** Address property, structural, and energy/water conservation improvements for low-income homeowners in the City. The City anticipates that 20 projects will be assisted annually based on funding availability.
- Time Frame:** Housing Element 2014-2021.
- Status:** 18 projects were funded in during fiscal year 2015-16, with a total of \$322,697.91 in improvements to residential properties occupied by low - or moderate-income households.

### **Program 3 – Monitor and Preserve Affordable Housing**

- Objective:** City staff will maintain a list of affordable housing units throughout the City including affordability information to ensure landlords are compliant with deed restrictions and to preserve affordable units. The Housing Division will continue to pursue partnership opportunities with nonprofits to preserve and expand affordable housing in the City.
- Time Frame:** Housing Element 2014-2021.
- Status:** In a partnership with Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit agency, the development of six (6) affordable homebuyer units is under construction in order to expand affordable housing to low- income homebuyers.



### **Program 8 – Mortgage Credit Certificate**

- Objective: Continue Participation and distribute fliers and advertise program availability.
- Time Frame: Housing Element 2014-2021.
- Status: During fiscal year 2015-16, the City of Downey participated in the Community Development Commission of the Los Angeles County's Mortgage Credit Certificate ("MCC") Program. The Housing Division advertised the MCC Program by distributing fliers and publishing it on the City's website.

### **Program 9 – Section 8 Rental Assistance**

- Objective: Continue to provide assistance to households through continued participation in the Los Angeles County Section 8 program and encourage rental property owners to register their units with the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles ("HACOLA"). The Housing Division will continue to monitor the number of residents accessing the program and units available for rent.
- Time Frame: Housing Element 2014-2021.
- Status: During fiscal year 2015-16, the City of Downey participated in the Section 8 program offered by HACOLA to provide rental assistance to low-income households; just over 630 Section 8 vouchers were issued to Downey residents.

### **Program 10 – Los Angeles County Partnership**

- Objective: Increase resident awareness about housing programs offered by the County by advertising them on the City's website and by offering staff assistance at City Hall.
- Time Frame: Housing Element 2014-2021.
- Status: During fiscal year 2015-16, the City of Downey increased resident awareness about housing programs offered by the County by advertising various programs on the City's website.

### **Program 15 – Prioritize Housing Program Activities**

- Objective: Identify housing needs and prioritize housing program activities to meet those needs through five (5) year updates to the City's Consolidated Plan.
- Time Frame: Housing Element 2014-2021.
- Status: On May 26, 2015, the City Council approved the new 5-Year Consolidated Plan which covers the time period between 2015 through 2020.



**Program 21 – Fair Housing**

Objective: Continue to assist households through the Fair Housing Foundation (“FHF”) and continue to refer fair housing complaints to the FHF.

Time Frame: Housing Element 2014-2021.

Status: During fiscal year 2015-16, no less than 250 Downey residents were assisted by the FHF.

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## **Chapter 4 Conservation Element**

The City of Downey and the rest of southern California enjoy a temperate climate, access to both beaches and mountains and many other amenities not found in many other parts of the world. The quality of life that the region offers its residents is one of the main reasons the region continues to attract visitors and newcomers. However, southern California is a semi-arid desert environment with limited natural resources. These limited resources, need to be preserved for continued use by existing residents and by future generations.

### **Water Supply**

- ◆ **Continue providing information to the public promoting the benefits of water conservation (Program 4.1.1.1).** The Public Works Department continues to provide public education on water use habits and drought tolerant landscaping via the Environmental Fair, Street Fair, and landscaping workshops; the LivingWise school and household conservation education and coordination with CBWMD for the distribution of rebate incentives and plumbing retrofit hardware to the City's water customers. The City has also developed a handout of key water conservation tips along with a more exhaustive list of conservation ideas which included on the City's website along with rebate opportunities.
- ◆ **Develop, through the municipal water company financial incentives for water users, to conserve water, including individual meters and a tiered billing structure that charges excessive water use at a higher rate (Program 4.1.1.2).** The Public Works Department continues to require developers of multiple unit residential and business complexes to install separate meters for each unit thereby making the tenant of each unit responsible for their own water use. This method makes each tenant/owner responsible for their own water use and has been proven to promote water conservation.
- ◆ **Promote the continued use of water conservation methods at city-owned facilities, such as parks and golf courses (Program 4.1.1.3).** The City currently maintains 28 recycled water services/meters for use at City Park and golf course ponds, and for irrigation of landscaping at parks, golf course, and medians/parkways. The City continues to look for additional opportunities to expand its use of recycled water at City-owned and other sites as recycled water becomes available. Some of the larger City locations where recycled water is currently used include: Downey Cemetery, Independence Park, Rio San Gabriel Park, Wilderness Park, Rio Hondo Golf Course, Crawford Park, and Temple Park, as well as the new Columbia Memorial Space Center and Sports Park.

- ◆ **Encourage the use of reclaimed water, or re-use of water on-site, for new and redevelopment projects (Program 4.1.1.4).** Throughout the development review process, the Public Works Department continues to require contractors and developers to install recycled water services/piping and meters where recycled water is located in proximity to the development projects. Additionally, to help promote the use of recycled water, the City sells recycled water to its customers at 85 percent of the potable water rate.
- ◆ **Expand the availability of reclaimed water by extending the dual-pipe water system (Program 4.1.1.5).** The City has completed construction of several recycled water facilities through the capital improvement projects including Lakewood Boulevard, Firestone Boulevard as well as at the Downey Promenade. The project allows for use of recycled water for landscape irrigation at City medians/parkways and future developments along this corridor.

### Stormwater Quality

- ◆ **Provide treatment of runoff generated by properties on-site before release into the storm drain system (Program 4.3.1.1).** In 2015, 22 development and redevelopment projects were approved for construction with infiltration systems to capture and store runoff to reduce pollutant transport and augment local water levels beneath the ground. As public, commercial and residential projects are redeveloped, runoff control measures are implemented in the form of infiltration resulting in a steady improvement in water quality and local water levels.
- ◆ **Promote effective street cleaning (Program 4.3.1.3).** Public streets in the City continue to be vacuum-swept at least weekly by Nationwide Environmental Services. These streets are posted with “No Parking” signs during the appointed period and Parking Enforcement Officers accompany the sweeper vehicle. Residents utilizing a Street Sweeping Parking Permit are responsible for maintaining the street area that their vehicle prevents from being cleaned.
- ◆ **Encourage proper storage and handling of construction materials to avoid the contact of pollutants with storm water runoff during construction (Program 4.3.1.4).** Public Works, Code Enforcement, and Building and Safety staff continue to share responsibility for implementing Program 4.3.1.4 of the 2025 General Plan. Public Works focuses on construction projects in the public right of way, preparation and review of erosion control plans by developers, compliance by large state permitted construction sites and responding to complaints of materials in the municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4), which includes streets, alleys and drains. Building and Safety is primarily responsible for on-site or private property conditions, while Code Enforcement responds to resident complaints and provides more aggressive enforcement capabilities to supplement other staff efforts.



## Tree Preservation

- ◆ **Discourage the removal of trees on private and public property (Program 4.4.1.1).** The Community Development Department continues to encourage the preservation of mature landscaping when a site is redeveloped through an entitlement review process. The Public Works Department continues to discourage the removal of trees from public property in general and requires permits to be pulled when a tree is considered for removal, particularly mature trees.
- ◆ **Promote the installation of new trees when damaged or dying trees are removed (Program 4.4.1.3).** The Public Works Department continues to encourage planting increased tree canopy to offset the loss of significant trees on private property and to reap the maximum benefits that trees provide. Section 7605 of the Downey Municipal Code specifies that... “Any public street tree removed shall be replaced if a replacement is deemed appropriate and if it is mutually agreed to by both the City and the property owner.”

## Air Quality

- ◆ **Encourage alternative modes of travel, such as walking and cycling, to vehicle use and alternative modes of employment, such as telecommuting and home-based businesses, to reduce emissions associated with vehicle use (Program 4.5.1.4).** As previously mentioned in Program 2.7.2.2, the City received a grant through Caltrans to fund the development of a Bicycle Master Plan. The City also recently received grant funding through the Active Transportation Funding Program, Cycle 2 for the implementation of a Bike Sharing Program, Citywide Pedestrian Circulation Study and the South Downey Safe Routes to School Project.
- ◆ **Promote the use of alternative fuel vehicles, including clean diesel, compressed natural gas, hydrogen, that result in reduced emissions, including in instances involving City operations (Program 4.5.1.5).** With the growing number of electric and hybrid vehicles, there have been several charging stations installed in public and private facilities (the Civic Center, Stonewood Shopping Mall, Nissan and Champion FIAT Automobile Dealerships) to promote the use of natural gas hybrid and pure electric vehicles.

## Energy Resources

- ◆ **Provide incentives for people to use renewal energy sources such as solar energy (Program 4.6.1.1).** With the availability of State and Federal rebates and incentives programs, the City continues to encourage the use of solar panels on residential, commercial, industrial and public facilities.

## **Chapter 5 Safety Element**

Natural and non-natural hazards present a variety of risks 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.

### **Disaster Response**

- ◆ **Monitor the location, type of facility, and amount of hazardous materials kept at properties (Program 5.2.1.2).** The Fire Department continues to monitor and inspect all facilities that handle hazardous materials at or above the reportable quantities as set forth in the California Health & Safety Code (§25503.5). Inspections are conducted every other year to ensure compliance with both the Fire and Health & Safety Codes. These inspections frequency exceed the State's requirement for hazardous materials inspection to occur once every three years.
- ◆ **Promote public information regarding the types of hazardous materials, which may include common household items, and the proper method of disposal (Program 5.2.1.3).** The Downey Fire Department continues to update its website to provide the up-to-date information on the safe handling and disposal of hazardous materials. The website's Emergency Preparedness section contains information on hazardous material awareness and safety, in addition to educational information on fire safety.

### **Hazardous Materials**

- ◆ **Ensure proper disclosure of amounts of hazardous materials by existing uses and proposed uses, during the business review process (Program 5.2.1.4).** The Downey Fire Prevention Bureau continues to conduct inspections during the business license application process. Once identified as a handler of hazardous materials, these businesses receive an inspection from Downey Fire Department's Hazardous Material Section to ensure accurate disclosure of the hazardous substances, and the safe handling and storage of the materials. The facilities are then entered into the Fire Department's database, issued an operational permit, and placed on a routine inspection frequency.
- ◆ **Ensure that properties involving hazardous materials dispose of waste properly (Program 5.2.2.1).** The Public Works Integrated Waste Coordinator continues to monitor and manage hazardous waste disposal from residential properties. Businesses handling hazardous waste are permitted and inspected by the County of Los Angeles Fire Department Health-Hazardous Materials Division.



## Hazardous Materials

- ◆ **Promote the convenient “drop-off” collection for the disposal of hazardous waste generated by residential households and other land uses (Program 5.2.2.2).** The City continues to offer programs that encourages residents to dispose hazardous waste materials to either the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program or the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Safe Drug Drop-off Program, which accepts expired prescription medications and sharps (i.e., needles).
- ◆ **Adapt a code amendment to require a conditional use permit for existing and proposed facilities with hazardous materials (Program 5.2.2.3).** The Downey Municipal Code requires approval of a conditional use permit from the Planning Commission for all proposed facilities handling hazardous materials (i.e. service stations, automobile washing facilities, ambulance storage & repair facilities).

## Fire Protection

- ◆ **Promote adequate widths on travel lanes along street and alleys to accommodate emergency vehicles (Program 5.3.1.2).** The Fire Prevention Bureau personnel, under the direction of the Fire Department Chief, continues to review plans diligently to ensure emergency vehicle access through streets and alleys will be accommodated.
- ◆ **Ensure that development projects install fire hydrants, water mains, or otherwise contribute its fair share towards mitigating impacts on the fire flow system (Program 5.3.2.3).** The Fire and Public Works Departments continue to enforce the requirements for additional fire hydrants for development projects through the plan check process.
- ◆ **Promote the use of fire sprinklers for new, expanded, and remodeled developments (Program 5.3.2.4).** The Downey Fire Prevention Bureau continues to require sprinkler systems for new commercial development over 3,600 sq. ft. and tenant improvements of commercial properties, whose permit valuations exceed 50 percent of the value of the building.
- ◆ **Ensure access for emergency vehicles through security pedestrian and vehicular gates (Program 5.3.2.6).** The Planning Division continues to require that all new multi-residential developments shall provide vehicle access through security gates at not less than 20 feet in width and 40 feet in depth (measures from the street property line).

## Police Protection

- ◆ **Maintain an acceptable response time for police emergency service calls (Program 5.4.1.2.).** The Police Department continues to maintain a swift response time to high priority emergency calls that require immediate assistance to ensure the public's safety.
- ◆ **Coordinate with Federal, State, and County agencies to address illegal activities (Program 5.4.1.7.).** The Police Department's Special Enforcement Team (SET) continues to work in conjunction with the State's Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) to monitor and enforce applicable liquor laws at alcohol establishments throughout the City. The IMPACT (Informed Merchants Preventing Alcohol-Related Crime Tendencies) and Decoy Operations, under the supervision of SET are designed to test the compliance of establishments that have been granted liquor licenses by Alcoholic Beverage Control.

In 2015, the Downey Police Department conducted over 40 IMPACT Inspections at liquor stores, bars and restaurants throughout the city. Licensees were provided with literature from Alcoholic Beverage Control to further their knowledge about alcohol-related laws and regulations. Minor violations were documented at several locations. In addition to the IMPACT Inspections, Downey Officer's conducted Minor Decoy and Shoulder Tap operations at over 30 locations, targeting businesses and patrons that furnish alcohol to minors. Downey Officer's issued eight citations to retail store clerks and patrons of ABC licensed businesses for furnishing alcohol to minors.

- ◆ **Promote the increased visibility of police in neighborhoods (Program 5.4.2.1.).** The Neighborhood Preservation Unit continues to proactively patrol areas in need of upkeep and maintenance. The unit consists of officers and a Sergeant assigned to specific target areas of the City. The goal of the program is to assist the community with quality of life issues such as trash, graffiti, and abandoned vehicles.
- ◆ **Support community organizations and neighborhood awareness programs that promote crime prevention, including preventing gang activity (Program 5.4.2.2.).** The Police Department continues to participate in awareness programs, such as Gangs Out of Downey, and promotes crime prevention through its participation in Neighborhood Watch. In addition, the Police Department is involved in other programs such as School Resource Officers and Robbery & Burglary Suppression. These programs allow officers to work closely with school administrators dealing with various issues on campuses and provide extra support for patrol personnel.



## Earthquake Safety

- ◆ **Monitor groundwater table levels as they relate to liquefaction hazards (Program 5.5.1.3.).** Public Works regularly monitors ground water levels at well sites around the City of Downey. The ground water table is typically about 50' below the soil surface, which limits the risk of liquefaction to residential and typical commercial structures. Larger structures and those with significant subterranean components may be requested to provide additional seismic evaluations during the development process or as a condition of Site Plan Review (SPR) approval.
- ◆ **Ensure the placement of utility lines underground (Program 5.5.1.6.).** Public Works continues to implement Underground Utility Districts. Southern California Edison Company requires the use of vaults and transformers installed above ground to protect to project the equipment and electrical lines from the intrusion of moisture.

## Floods

- ◆ **Educate the public that the City is located in an “X” flood zone where flood insurance is no longer mandatory (Program 5.6.1.2.).** During the report period, the Public Works Department provided handouts at the public counter regarding the current FIRM (Flood Insurance Rate Map) and flood zoning . FIRM information can be found at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) website.
- ◆ **Mitigate hazards from possible dam or levee failure, including the raising of bridges and levees along rivers, including in areas outside the City (Program 5.6.1.3.).** City of Downey continues to support efforts by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), FEMA, Caltrans and the County of Los Angeles, in reducing the flood risk from dam or levee failure; however, maintenance and replacement of bridges, levees, and dams is primarily under the control and undertaken with funds provided by these agencies.

In December 2015, the City of Norwalk and the City of Downey celebrated the completion of the Firestone Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project. The new bridge at the San Gabriel River consists of wider sidewalks, center median, and six travel lanes in each direction.

- ◆ **Minimize increases in the amount of stormwater generated by existing and proposed land uses (Program 5.6.2.1.).** The Downey Public Works Department continues to enforce National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements, during plan checks for new and redevelopment projects with 5,000 square feet or more of new or replacement impervious surfaces, which are generally required to provide infiltration volume commensurate with an



instantaneous 0.75” storm falling on the new or replacement impervious surface. Larger developments are required to prepare a Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan and demonstrate that no increase in peak runoff rate will be observed as a result of the development and that at least the instantaneous first 0.75 inch of projected runoff can be infiltrated.

## **Vehicular Traffic**

- ◆ **Require street lights for new developments (Program 5.7.1.2.).** The City continues to require developers to install new street lights adjacent to the development within the public-right-of-way as a condition of approval where streetlights currently do not exist. In addition, as a condition of approval through the development plan review process, applicants are required to give their consent to the annexation of their property into the City of Downey Lighting Maintenance District in accordance with Division 15 of the Streets and Highways Code.
- ◆ **Adopt a Master Plan for installation of sidewalks for major arterials, secondary arterials, collector streets and school routes (Program 5.7.2.1.).** Sidewalks have been constructed and/or reconstructed along major arterials, secondary arterials, collector streets and school routes on a prioritized, as-needed basis as funding will allow. Priority is given to school routes.
- ◆ **Encourage the installation of sidewalks in new developments and major remodeling consistent with the sidewalk Master Plan (Program 5.7.2.2.).** The City continues to require the construction of new sidewalks and the repair of existing sidewalks and disabled ramps for new developments (i.e., The Promenade at Downey, The Commons, Downey Crossroads, and Centerpointe) as a condition of approval through the development plan review process.
- ◆ **Promote street intersection design and signalization that are safe and convenient to pedestrians and bicyclists (Program 5.7.2.3.).** Signalized and un-signalized intersections are designed to function in a safe and convenient manner for pedestrians and bicyclists to the extent possible through the implementation of Capital Improvement Projects and through the Development Review Committee and plan checking process when such improvements are constructed by private development.



## **Chapter 6 Noise Element**

Noise can be defined as unwanted sound and is known to have several adverse effects on people. The most critical impact of noise exposure is hearing loss. Other effects are speech interference, sleep interference and annoyance.

- ◆ The City continues to enforce its noise ordinance (Section 4600 of the Downey Municipal Code). This involves the permitted hours for construction.
  
- ◆ In addition, the City continues to require projects that involve live entertainment activities and projects that have the potential to generate noise from machinery equipment or amplified music to comply with City's noise ordinance. This can be regulated by imposing conditions of approval through a conditional use permit process.

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## **Chapter 7 Open Space Element**

Typical of most communities located within mature urbanized settings, Downey has a limited amount of open space areas. Open space areas are important not only to provide recreational activities for residents but also as a visual break from the built environment.

### **Updates:**

- ◆ **Maintain an adequate level of recreational staffing at park facilities (Program 7.2.2.1.).** The Parks & Recreation Department continues to monitor recreation staffing to ensure adequate levels of recreation staffing at park facilities. Part-time staff were hired as needed to fill vacancies throughout the year.
- ◆ **Develop a Park Maintenance Master Plan to identify needed upgrades to existing park facilities (Program 7.2.2.2.).** During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the outreach and development for the Parks & Recreation Master Plan occurred. It is expected to be complete by Winter 2016.
- ◆ **Provide funding for park improvements in the upgrades to existing park facilities in the Capital Improvement Program (Program 7.2.2.3.).** The City provided \$100,000 in General Funds for the purchase and installation of new playgrounds at Rio San Gabriel Park and Temple Park, which were completed in 2015. The City allocated \$50,000 for the purchase and installation of new standardized trash cans at Dennis the Menace, Independence, Treasure Island and Wilderness parks in 2015.
- ◆ **Secure alternative means of funding, such as grants, donations, user fees and public/private partnerships, for park upgrades (Program 7.2.2.5.).** The City was awarded \$217,950 non-competitive funding from the Housing Related Park Grant to fund a portion of this Civic Center Park, a passive area adjacent to the Library will begin in 2016.



## Chapter 8 Design Element

Most residents, visitors, and businesses in Downey recognize the City as the premiere city in the southeast area of Los Angeles County. However, others less familiar with the City's history may not share this perception and judge Downey solely on the physical appearance of the area. For this reason, it is important that the visual appearance of the community portray a positive image and that the community image display the distinct and numerous resources it has to offer.

- ◆ **Promote quality design for new, expanded, and remodeled construction (Goal 8.1).** The City continues to implement the Site Plan Review process that requires Planning Commission review and approval of the exterior design, materials and colors for new construction and/or additions to commercial buildings in the City.
- ◆ **Lack of property maintenance may exhibit a negative image of the City (Issue 8.2).** The Code Enforcement Division continues monitoring and working with a significant number of property owners, including residential properties, commercial and industrial businesses, in an effort to keep these properties maintained.
- ◆ **Promote compliance with code regulations (Policy 8.2.1.).** The Code Enforcement Division continues to enforce Citywide temporary sign enforcement program and continues issuing notices of violations. In 2015, Code Enforcement Officers issued 124 notices of violation to businesses and residences regarding illegal and unpermitted signs.

## **Chapter 9 Economic Development Element**

A strong community owes much to the spirit and involvement of its residents. However, community pride and civic-mindedness are not enough for a city to provide all necessary and desired services to maintain the local quality of life. A city needs a variety of employment and shopping opportunities to create balance, make it a desirable place to live, and enhance its image.

- ◆ **Develop economic strategies for business attraction and retention (Program 9.1.1.1).** In an effort to stimulate economic growth and create jobs within the City's Downtown Downey Specific Plan (DDSP) area, a small business forgivable loan program was created in early 2015. The Program provides affordable, non-conventional financing to eligible businesses and development projects. Also, staff successfully negotiated a Purchase and Sale Agreement with the Olson Company for the purchase of City-owned land, for the development of a 28-unit condominium complex on the southwest corner of Third St. and La Reina Ave.
- ◆ **Continue the revitalization of commercial and industrial corridors (Program 9.1.1.5).** With the addition of the Commons and Crossroads Projects (under construction), the southwest and southeast corners of Lakewood Boulevard and Gallatin Road will signify new retail activity in this commercial corridor. In addition, the Promenade at Downey commercial project is a major addition that revitalizes the area north of Steve Horn Way, between Lakewood Boulevard and Bellflower Boulevard.
- ◆ **Promote through public information the benefits of businesses locating in Downey (Program 9.1.1.7).** Economic Development staff continues to update the "Opportunity Sites" and "Redevelopment Areas" web pages to help attract and retain quality businesses in Downey. The pages contain information materials for businesses coming to the City and includes a guide to start up a business and links to view maps of different redevelopment project areas.
- ◆ **Expand the use of the city Internet web site for public information (Program 9.4.2.5).** City Departments continue to work toward improved customer service by maintaining the on-line business license application process, which enables customers to submit business license renewals or applications for a new license and to allow Downey residents to pay their water bills on-line. In addition, the City continues to update it's website periodically and provide more information to the public via the Internet.