



City of Downey

2017 General Plan Annual Report Community Development Department



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City of Downey

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Downey, CA 90241

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(at the time of adoption)

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Blanca Pacheco
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(at the time of adoption)

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City of Downey

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City of Downey

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Introduction



Executive Summary

The City of Downey's 2017 General Plan Annual Progress Report is prepared by the Community Development Department with input from various City Departments including Public Works, Fire, Police, Parks and Recreation. The report is intended to provide information on the measurable outcomes and actions associated with the implementation of all of the General Plan elements. It also reviews the activities of the Community Development Department including the Planning, Building and Safety, Economic Development & Housing, and Code Enforcement.

This City of Downey General Plan is a long range comprehensive plan that will control and regulate land uses and development in the City. The individual Elements (land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, safety, design, and economic development) of this General Plan contain policies and programs that will guide future development in the City.

California Government Code Section 65400 et seq. requires the City to annually review the General Plan. An annual report should be prepared for review and approval by the Planning Commission/City Council and forwarded to the State Office of Planning and Research and the State Housing and Community Development office.

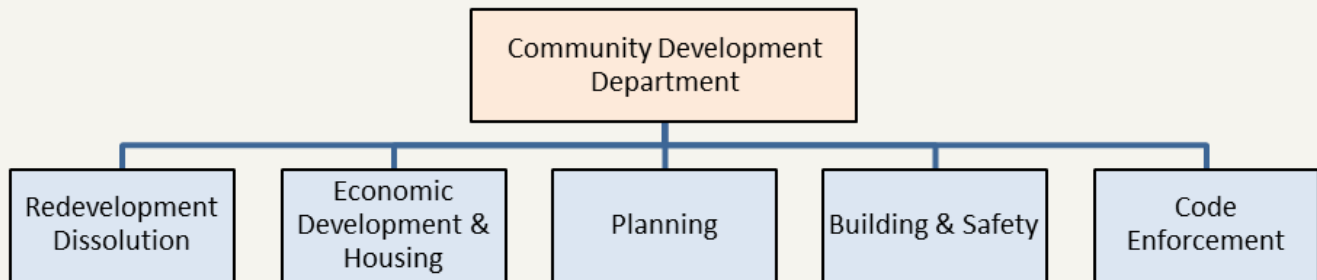
Background Information

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 Rivera, 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 114,146 residents (Source: State of California, Department of Finance, *E-1 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State with Annual Percent Change — January 1, 2017 and 2018*. Sacramento, California, May 2018).

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.

Department Organizational Chart



Acceptance Date

The 2017 General Plan Annual Progress Report was reviewed by the Planning Commission on August 1, 2018, and accepted by the City Council on _____, 2018.

Community Development

Department Accomplishments



Planning Division

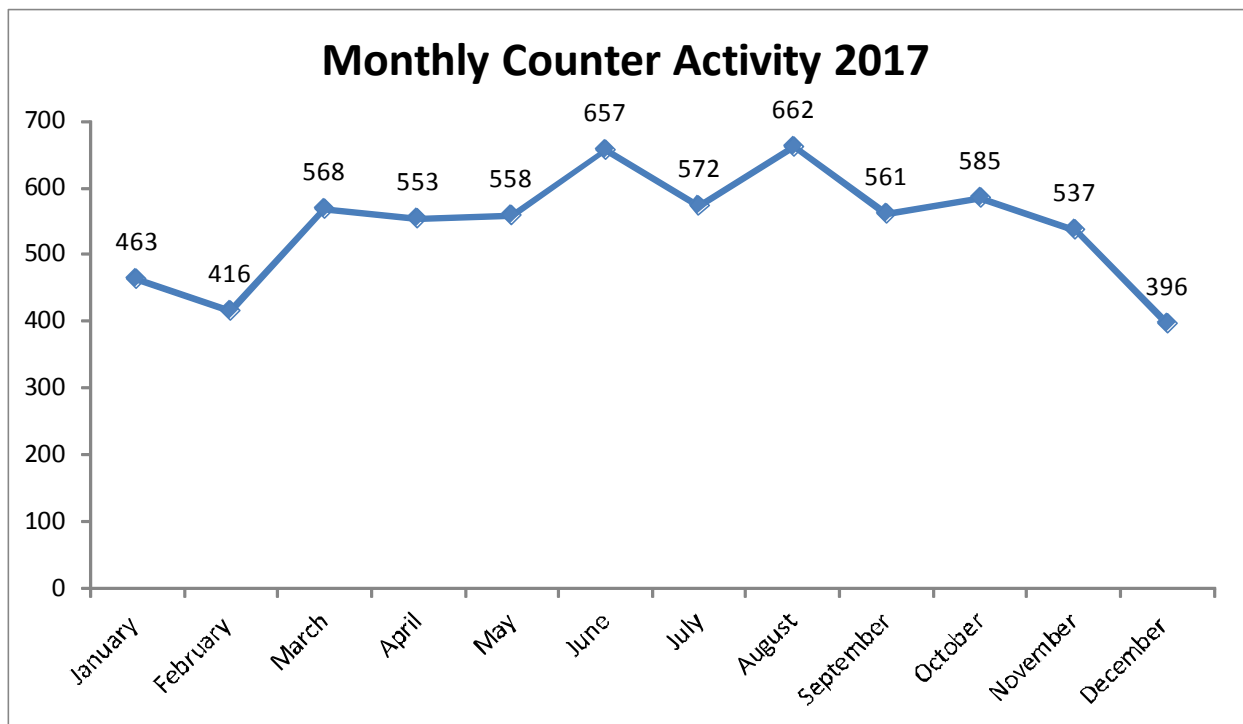
The Planning Division maintains and implements the Downey Municipal Code, Zoning Ordinance, General Plan, and prepares other specialized planning documents. The division reviews development requests for conformance with the City's planning policies and standards, and conducts environmental review under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The list below outlines the activities of the Planning Division from January 2017 through December 2017. 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 entitlement applications for the Planning Commission and City Council
- Reviewing and approving business license applications for zoning compliance
- 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. Historically, counter activity has been greater during summer, while lower in the winter. In 2017, the total counter visits were 6,528. August was the busiest month of counter activity with 662 visits.



Planning Applications

Planning applications in 2017, including Administrative, Planning Commission, and legislative items to the City Council, totaled 202. Also, 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.

Cost of Services (Fee) Study

In 2017, The City hired Matrix Consulting Group to analyze the “Cost of Services (Fee) Study” for service activities related to Planning, Building & Safety, Public Works Engineering, Fire, Police, Park & Recreation, Library, Columbia Memorial Space Center, and the Theatre. The study was to provide a tool for understanding current service levels, the cost and demand for those services and what fees for service should be charged.

Imperial Highway Plan

Staff worked with consultants to develop a strategic plan that contains economic development goals and strategies, as well as implementation plan outlining the timing, anticipated cost and potential funding sources.

Street Faire

Community Development staff participated in the annual Street Faire on May 7, 2017, which occurred on Downey Avenue between Stewart & Gray Road and Phlox Street. Staff members were presented throughout the day to provide information on City programs, policies and answer general questions in regards to development in the City.

Planning Applications	
Temporary Signs	39
Sign Permits	45
Conditional Use Permits	14
Sidewalk/ Parking Sales	23
Fireworks Stands	17
Christmas tree Lots / Pumpkin Patches	4
Special Events	18
Minor Modifications	4
Zone Changes	2
Tentative Parcel/ Tract Maps	4
General Plan Consistency	1
Promenade Develmt. Agreement	1
Planned Sign Programs	1
Downtown Outdoor Dining	1
Downtown Parking Credit	1
Code Amendments	5
Lot line Adjustments	4
Miscellaneous Actions	1
Minor Conditional Use Permit	2
Variances	1
Site Plan Review	9
Temporary Use of Land Permit	1
Specific Plan Amendment	2
Final Tract/ Parcel Map	2

Rancho South Campus

The City of Downey applied for a grant to create a specific plan for the area and plan a station for the future Eco-Rapid line. METRO has awarded the City a \$425,000 grant. On June 13, 2017, the City Council approved an agreement with Kimley-Horn to begin preparing the specific plan. The City has kicked off the specific plan project. Los Angeles County has begun the environmental scoping process. Metro has also begun their environmental review. A community meeting took place on Thursday, November 16, 2017 at the Barbara J. Riley Center to receive community input regarding the proposed specific plan. Approximately 100 members from the community attended the meeting.

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 2017, the Planning Commission conducted 20 meetings during which they considered 34 items.

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

- Rock & Brews (467 Stonewood St)— The new 7,440 square foot restaurant with a 960 square foot outdoor dining area was to replace the formerly Garden Buffet Restaurant at this location. The new restaurant is now open.
- New Industrial Building (12120 Woodruff Blvd) - The new 17,656 square foot one-story industrial building along with 91 parking spaces. The project's plans are currently under review for building permits.
- Starbucks (7966 Florence Ave) - The new 1,785 square foot drive-thru Starbucks to be located at the previous Walgreens on the southwest corner of Paramount Blvd and Florence Ave. Project plans have been approved and are pending building permit issuance.

Economic Development & Housing

The Economic Development and Housing 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 2017, the Economic Development Division staff facilitated several key projects in Downey.

Counter Activity

In 2017, the total counter visits for Economic Development and Housing Divisions were 448. June was the busiest month of counter activity with 111 visits.

Professional Services Agreement with New City America

New City America and City staff continued to work with the downtown property owners to determine the feasibility of forming a property assessment district and are now ready to initiate the final phase of this effort. The Community Benefit District's ("CBD") purpose was to increase commerce, increase property values, attract new businesses and development, and manage all aspects of Downtown Downey. The CBD provided the downtown property owners with independent, property owner-controlled finances to better control and fund special events, marketing, promotional activities, public space development, security, maintenance and beautification, property enhancements, and the creation of a new property owner-controlled non-profit corporation to spend and manage these funds. The CBD was forecasted to raise at least \$253,589 annually.

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Economic Development & Housing

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.

In 2017, 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 approximately 20 projects during the fiscal year. In 2017, The Housing Division completed 12 home improvement projects. Also, through the down payment assistance the city’s First-Time Homebuyer Program provided, two families in were able to purchase and move into their own home.

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.

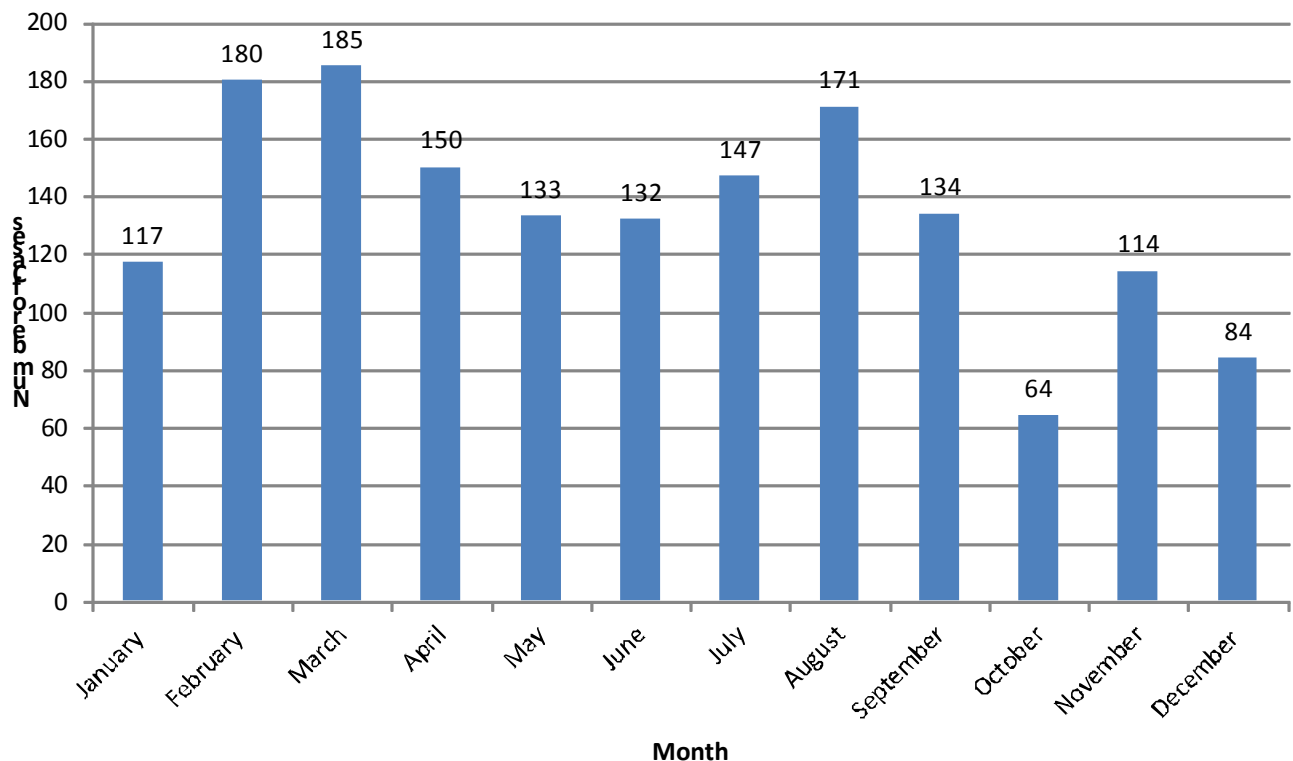
Code Enforcement Unit

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.

In 2017, the total counter visits for Code Enforcement Unit were 849. August was the busiest month of counter activity with 140 visits.

Code Enforcement activity for the year of 2017 involved 5,805 new and existing cases for various property violations (i.e. commercial, residential, public street, park and recreational). March had the highest number of new cases generated with 185 cases. In addition to conduct property violation inspections, Code Enforcement Officers conducted inspections on yard sale permits and were proactive in issuing administrative citations.

Code Cases by month for 2017

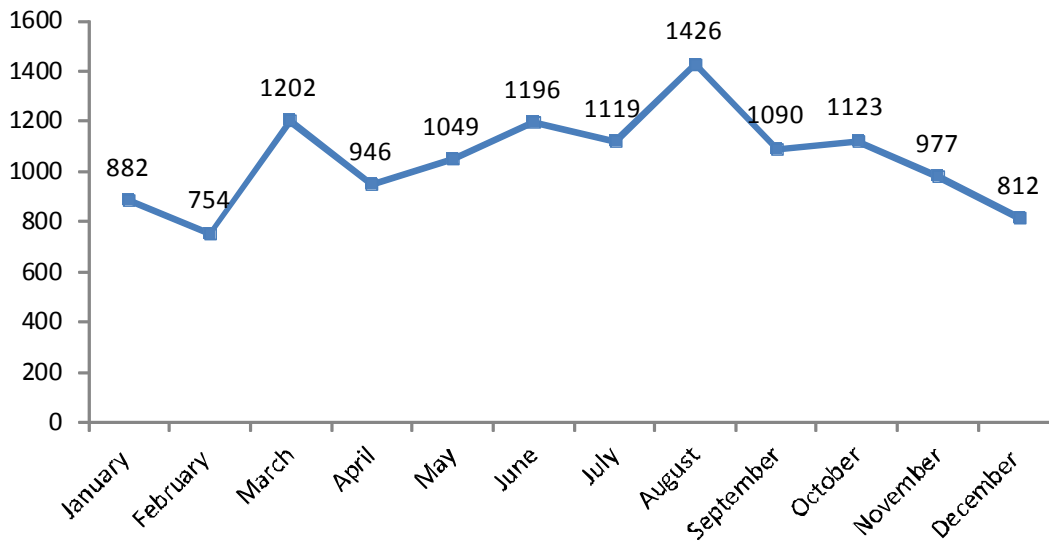


Building and Safety Division

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 Zoning and Building regulations. The 2016 California Building Standards Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24) was adopted and went into effect on January 1, 2017.

In 2017, the Building and Safety Division accepted 2,415 permit applications and issued 2,393 building permits. The total valuation for all permits issued was \$145,865,635. These applications include all construction related projects and installation of mechanical and utility equipment. Also, there were a total of 135 new residential dwellings constructed in 2017. In addition, the Building & Safety Inspectors have conducted 12,552 inspections.

Monthly Counter Activity 2017



Building & Safety's counter activity has always been busy during summer. In 2017, the total counter visits were 12,576. August was the busiest month of counter activity with 1,426 visits.

General Plan

Implementation Status





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.

- ◆ **Promote housing projects and mixed use projects that include housing within areas designated for the downtown area, transit-oriented developments, and areas in the vicinity of the Downey Landing project (Program 1.1.2.3.).** Paramount Boulevard Professional District and Downtown Residential District continued to grow with the addition of KB Home (117 townhomes) residential project, a 28-unit condominium project at the southwest corner of Third St and La Reina Ave, and a 6-unit apartment complex on Second Street. The addition of these housing units expected to increase nighttime activities and pedestrian traffic in the Downtown.
- ◆ **Promote the Downtown area as a destination point for entertainment, dining, civic, and other activities (Program 1.2.2.1.).** Downtown Downey continued to support and encourage community events including outdoor events for businesses. The annual Downey Street Faire, St. George Greek Festival, rooftop events at Mi Cielo Restaurant, Veteran and Memorial Day Events at Bastards Canteen restaurant. These type of events have drawn large crowd to the downtown area and created a lively environment for the community.
- ◆ **Adjust the codes, policies, and regulations in response to changes in land use trends (Program 1.3.2.2.)** As requested by multiple schools, staff requested the City Officials to initiate a Zone Text Amendment to consider updating the Municipal Code to allow monument signs for public and private schools in Downey.

Also, with the fast growing jobs in the bio-medical industry, the City Council approved a professional service agreement with Civic Solutions to study and prepare the necessary code amendments to achieve the City's goal. The bio-medical industry not only includes medical offices and care facilities, but also includes all support services such as manufacturing, research, development, education, and pharmaceutical.

- ◆ **Discourage residential construction not in harmony with the surrounding neighborhood (Program 1.4.2.1.)** Staff continued to monitor and promote residential construction projects to ensure the architecture and general appearance of the building shall be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.

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.

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 involved widening three of the four approaches of the intersection to construct additional left-turn lanes in the eastbound and northbound directions, in order to maintain an acceptable level-of-service at this intersection during peak hours into the future. This project also included truck circulation enhancements.

The Lakewood Boulevard Improvements Project (Phase 3C) involved the continuation of the previously-completed phases of the Lakewood Boulevard Improvements Project from Gallatin Road northerly to Telegraph Road. This project involved the widening of Lakewood Boulevard in order to provide three lanes in each direction.

- ◆ **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 Traffic Management Center 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 been implemented along Florence Avenue, Paramount Boulevard, Bellflower Boulevard, Imperial Highway and Telegraph Road. The City is currently in the process of upgrading the system software and other elements of the TMC to maintain pace with current technology and replace obsolete hardware and software.

In addition, the Imperial Highway Traffic Signal Communication System was installed to allow the expansion of the city's traffic signal communication system along Imperial Highway between Woodruff Avenue and Old River School Road.



- ◆ **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 Bellflower Boulevard at Imperial Highway Intersection Improvement Project added additional left-turn lanes in the northbound and southbound directions as well as exclusive right-turn lanes in the eastbound, southbound and northbound directions to accommodate projected future traffic volume growth as well as more efficient truck circulation at the intersection.

In addition, the City completed a series of operational improvements at several intersections involving traffic signal upgrades, including upgrades at nine intersections at various street locations throughout the city and upgrades to the detection systems at nine additional intersections through the installation of video detection cameras along Imperial Highway and Lakewood Boulevard. The city also received funding through the Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) (Cycle 7) to upgrade and implement operational improvements to the existing traffic signals at six additional intersections along Paramount Boulevard as well as five additional intersections along Stewart & Gray Road. Also, the city received HSIP funding (Cycle 8) to upgrade and implement operational improvements to the existing traffic signals at three additional intersections along Imperial Highway.

- ◆ **Establish a development recovery fee program to require new developments and expansions of existing developments to pay the cost of circulation improvements (Program 2.1.2.1.).** The Public Works Department has collected developer fees on a case-by-case basis through the development plan review/entitlement process. Over the last eight years, a total of approximately \$1.1 million has been collected.
- ◆ **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 impact. It was determined that if trip generation thresholds in accordance with the LA County Congestion Management Program of 50 vehicle trips during either AM or PM peak hour are exceeded, a traffic impact analysis study is required which will determine mitigation measures necessary to offset the impacts created by the development on any 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 intersection improvement projects included under Programs 2.1.1.1 and 2.1.1.6 are intended to increase capacity at these intersections in order to encourage through traffic on arterial streets and minimize intrusion through residential neighborhoods .

In addition, the Lakewood Boulevard Improvement Project Phase 3C involved the widening of the facility to provide three through lanes in each direction between Gallatin Road and Telegraph Road in order to increase the capacity and mobility along Lakewood Boulevard to minimize intrusion through residential neighborhoods. Furthermore, the traffic signal communication system projects mentioned in Program 2.1.1.3 have improved mobility along the Woodruff Avenue, Stewart & Gray Road and Old River School Road corridors which also minimized intrusion through residential neighborhoods. Also, 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 complaints submitted by residents.

Travel Alternatives

- ◆ **Encourage the use of bicycling as a form of transportation for employment commuting and business purposes, in addition to recreational purposes (Program 2.2.2.1).** Bike lanes have been installed throughout various major streets in Downey. These bike lanes provided a healthy option to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Each bike on the road means one less car. Also, bike lanes have a "traffic calming "effect, meaning roads that appear narrow result in slower vehicular speeds improving safety and increasing driver's reaction times.
- ◆ **Promote home-based businesses (Program 2.2.3.4).** In 2017, the city issued 95 business licenses for home-based business. This allows people who live in residential zoned properties an opportunity to work from home. The majority of the licenses are on-line sale and real estate businesses.

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 issuing 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, truck circulation improvements were recently completed at the Bellflower Boulevard at Imperial Highway intersection as referenced in Program 2.1.1.1 and 2.1.1.6.



- ◆ **Widen street right-of-way to accommodate truck turning movements (Program 2.3.1.3).** The intersection improvement projects located along Bellflower Boulevard at Imperial Highway included geometric enhancements to facilitate more efficient truck circulation in addition to capacity enhancements.
- ◆ **Discourage truck parking on public streets (Program 2.3.2.1).** The Public Works Traffic Division continued to implement parking prohibitions of large commercial vehicles on public streets. DMC 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. The Downey Police Department's Traffic Unit continued to monitor and issue citations for those in violation.
- ◆ **Ensure that land uses generating high amounts of truck traffic provide compensation to the city for projected pavement wear of public streets (Program 2.3.2.4).** In 2017, approximately \$5 million was dedicated in the city's Capital Improvement Program for the rehabilitation and/or reconstruction of the city's arterial, collector and local streets. In addition, developers are assessed fees on a case-by-case, pro-rata share basis towards pavement rehabilitation of arterial streets designated as truck routes.

Regional Traffic

- ◆ **Coordinate with CalTrans, METRO, SCAG, Gateway Cities COG and other agencies to promote multi-modal improvement strategies to improve the regional transportation network (Program 2.4.1.1).** City staff continued to participate in the development of the West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB) Transit Corridor Project. It is a new 20-mile light rail transit line that would connect downtown Los Angeles to southeast LA County, serving the cities and communities including Downey. Metro has formally initiated the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) phase. In response to comments received during the scoping period and ongoing technical analysis, Metro has been studying new potential alignments in addition to the original four Northern Alignment Options (alignment between downtown Los Angeles and City of Huntington Park).

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 City designed and implemented the customer service check-in kiosk system to better expedite service at the public counters. This new system allows staffs to provide an effective and efficient service to our customers and to enhance communications between various City Departments in terms of speed, capacity and reliability.
- ◆ **Promote alternative funding sources for infrastructure maintenance and upgrades (Program 2.7.2.1.).** In an effort to continue to advance the unique programming at the Space Center and without taking up the City's general fund, the Columbia Memorial Space Center Foundation significantly increased its development activity. The Foundation secured \$77,000 in grant funding from various resources, as well as \$23,000 donated in services and materials.

Measure S went into effect in April 2017 and expected to generate approximately \$9 million per year to protect and enhance the quality of services to the community.



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.

Status: 12 projects were funded in during 2017 calendar year, with a total of \$204,466 in improvements to residential properties occupied by low- or moderate-income households.

Program 3 – Monitor and Preserve Affordable Housing

Objective: City staff continued to 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.

Status: In a partnership with Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit agency, the development of six (6) affordable homebuyer units was completed in September 2017 and the units were sold to low- income homebuyers.

Program 8 – Mortgage Credit Certificate

Objective: Continued participation and distribute fliers and advertise program availability.

Status: During 2017 calendar year, 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: Continued 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.

Status: In 2017, the City of Downey participated in the Section 8 program offered by HACOLA to provide rental assistance to low-income households.

Program 10 – Los Angeles County Partnership

Objective: Increased resident awareness about housing programs offered by the County by advertising them on the City’s website, social media, and by offering staff assistance at City Hall.

Status: During 2017 calendar year, the City continued to offer 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.

Status: The recently approved 5-Year Consolidated Plan which covers the time period between 2015 through 2020.



Program 21 – Fair Housing

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

Status: In 2017, at least 250 Downey residents were assisted by the FHF.

Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA)

Each local government in California is required to adopt a Housing Element as part of its General Plan that shows how the community plans to meet the existing and projected housing needs of people at all income levels. The Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) is the state-mandated process to identify the total number of housing units (by affordability level) that each jurisdiction must accommodate in its Housing Element. In 2017, City of Downey have constructed 135 new homes. This includes all low income levels, moderate and above moderate.

Enter Calendar Year starting with the first year of the RHNA allocation period.			2014	2015	2016	2017	Total Units to Date (all years)	Total Remaining RHNA by Income Level
Income Level		RHNA Allocation by Income Level	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4		
Very Low	Deed restricted	478	15	0	0	0	15	463
Low	Deed restricted	242	35	0	6	0	41	201
Moderate	Deed restricted	135	0	0	0	0	0	135
Above Moderate		346	0	0	50	135	185	161
Total RHNA by COG Enter allocation number:		1201	50	0	56	135	241	960
Total Units ▶ ▶ ▶								
Remaining Need for RHNA Period ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶								

Chapter 4 Conservation Element

The City of Downey, like 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. Extreme drought conditions continued through much of 2016, making conservation critical.

Water Supply

- ◆ **Continue providing information to the public promoting the benefits of water conservation (Program 4.1.1.1).** The Public Works Department continued to provide public education on water use habits and drought tolerant landscaping via the Street Fair, National Night Out, Ride & Stride event, and landscaping workshops. In addition, staff continued to provide samples of synthetic turf at the Community Development Department Planning counter. Residents were encouraged to work with Planning staff for additional information and recommendation regarding installation and materials.
- ◆ **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 continued 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, Columbia Memorial Space Center, and Sports Park. The City currently maintains 35 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.
- ◆ **Encourage the use of reclaimed water, or re-use of water on-site, for new and redevelopment projects (Program 4.1.1.4).** The Public Works Department continued to require contractors and developers to install recycled water services/piping and meters where recycled water is located in proximity to the development projects.
- ◆ **Expand the availability of reclaimed water by extending the dual-pipe water system (Program 4.1.1.5).** The recently constructed recycled water facility at the Downey Promenade Shopping Center allows the use of recycled water for landscape irrigation at medians/parkways along Lakewood Boulevard, Bellflower Boulevard and future construction projects along these corridor.



Stormwater Quality

- ◆ **Provide treatment of runoff generated by properties on-site before release into the storm drain system (Program 4.3.1.1.).** Over 50 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.).** The Nationwide Environmental Services continued to vacuum-swept the city streets weekly. These streets are posted with “No Parking” signs during the appointed period and Parking Enforcement Officers accompany the sweeper vehicles. Residents utilizing a Street Sweeping Parking Permit are responsible for maintaining the street area adjacent to their properties as a condition of being exempted from the posted parking restrictions.
- ◆ **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 continued to share responsibility for implementing Program 4.3.1.4 of the City Vision 2025 General Plan. Public Works focused 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

- ◆ **Promote the installation of new trees when damaged or dying trees are removed (Program 4.4.1.3.).** The Public Works Department continued to work with property owners to ensure that the removal of damaged trees and the placement of new trees comply with City’s Tree Ordinance. Public Works Department is responsible to review and approve all proposed landscaping plans within the public right-of-ways and street medians. 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 2.2.2.1., the City had been implementing the recently adopted Bicycle Master Plan (BMP). This including the addition of bike lanes on various primary and secondary arterials. These bike lanes provided a healthy option to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Each bike on the road means one less car.
- ◆ **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, additional charging stations have been installed in public and private facilities (City Library, Promenade at Downey, and The Commons Commercial Center) to promote the use of natural gas and pure electric vehicles.

Energy Resources

- ◆ **Ensure the installation of energy efficient street lights and traffic signals (Program 4.6.2.1.).** The City installed new LED light fixtures in the Civic Center, which provided a 40 percent energy savings and reduce maintenance costs, with an added financial incentive from Southern California Edison (SCE).



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

- ◆ **Coordinate emergency preparedness with the federal, state, school district and other local agencies (Program 5.1.2.3).** The Office of Emergency Management throughout the year have coordinated with the federal, state, and neighboring local agency in preparing for response and recovery efforts in an event of disasters. This was done through planning, training and exercising and the goal is to minimize the loss of lives and property.
- ◆ **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 continued 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 continued 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.

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 continued to offer programs that encourages residents to dispose hazardous waste materials (i.e. electronic devices) to both the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program and the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Safe Drug Drop-off Program, which accepts expired prescription medications and sharps (i.e., needles).

The Downey Police Department and Downey C.E.R.T members participated in the annual National Prescription Drug-Take Back Initiative. Downey residents had an opportunity to drop off expired, unused and unwanted prescription drugs. All of the collected items were turned over to the D.E.A for disposal.

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 Chief, continued to review plans diligently to ensure emergency vehicle access through private driveways, public streets and alleys will be accommodated. This review is completed early in the Planning application process to ensure proper site layout is achieved.
- ◆ **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 continued to enforce the requirements for additional fire hydrants for development projects through the plan check process. The Community Development Department continued to conduct Development Review Committee (DRC) to allow various City Departments to offer comments and conditions for a proposed project.
- ◆ **Promote the use of fire sprinklers for new, expanded, and remodeled developments (Program 5.3.2.4).** The Fire Prevention Bureau continued 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 Fire Prevention Bureau continued to require emergency lighting, exit signs, Knox box, and 2A-10BC fire extinguishers for all commercial and industrial projects.



Police Protection

- ◆ **Keep crime rates and property loss rates at the lowest levels feasible (Program 5.4.1.1.).** In an effort to keep crime and property loss rates low, the Police Department increased staffing by hiring 15 Police Officers. In addition, the Department added 1 Records Supervisor, 1 Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, 1 Network Engineer, 1 Parking Enforcement Officer, 1 Forensics Specialist, a 1 Police Aide.
- ◆ **Maintain an acceptable response time for police emergency service calls (Program 5.4.1.2.).** The Police Department continued to maintain a swift response time to high priority emergency calls that require immediate assistance to ensure the public's safety.
- ◆ **Promote the use of technology as tools to improve staff productivity (Program 5.4.1.5.).** The Department completed the installation of 25 "Automated License Plate Readers" at 10 locations throughout the city. This use of technology allows the Department to not only recover stolen cars, but assist investigators with other types of criminal investigations.
- ◆ **Coordinate with Federal, State, and County agencies to address illegal activities (Program 5.4.1.7.).** The Police Department's Special Enforcement Team (SET) continued to work in conjunction with the State's Alcoholic 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 2017, the Downey Police Department conducted over 11 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. Also, Downey Officer's conducted Minor Decoy and Shoulder Tap operations at over 19 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.

- ◆ **Support community organizations and neighborhood awareness programs that promote crime prevention, including preventing gang activity (Program 5.4.2.2).** The Police Department continued to participate in awareness programs, such as Gangs Out of Downey, and promotes crime prevention through its participation in Neighborhood Watch, which expanded from 196 groups to 214. In addition, the Police Department’s “Homeless Outreach Team” and various outreach organizations conducted several operations throughout the year in an effort to provide resources and alternatives to living on the streets for the city’s homeless population.
- ◆ **Promote coordination between schools and the City to address juvenile crime in a proactive and preventive manner (Program 5.4.2.5).** The Police Department Expanded the Department’s internet presence with the creation of a “Social Media Team”, responsible for interacting with the public via social media, while also producing public advisory videos. The department also hosted monthly Safe Schools meetings with DUSD administrators and participated in the School Resource Officer Program and Gangs Out of Downey (G.O.O.D.) meetings in collaboration to provide a safer environment for the city’s students and educators.

Earthquake Safety

- ◆ **Monitor groundwater table levels as they relate to liquefaction hazards (Program 5.5.1.3).** Public Works continued to regularly observed ground water levels at well sites around the City. The ground water table is typically greater than 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 approval.
- ◆ **Ensure the placement of utility lines underground (Program 5.5.1.6).** Public Works Department continued to implement Underground Utility Districts for all development projects. In addition, Southern California Edison Company continued to prohibit the use of vaults installed above ground to protect 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.).** The Public Works Department continued to provide 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 website.
- ◆ **Minimize increases in the amount of stormwater generated by existing and proposed land uses (Program 5.6.2.1.).** The Public Works Department continued to enforce National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements, during plan check review 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 85th percentile within 24-hour runoff event (whichever is greater) 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 85th percentile or 0.75 inch in a 24-hour event (whichever is greater) of projected runoff can be infiltrated.

Vehicular Traffic

- ◆ **Require street lights for new developments (Program 5.7.1.2.).** The City continued to require developers to install new street lights adjacent to the new developments 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, properties are annexed into the City of Downey Lighting Maintenance District in accordance with Division 15 of the Streets and Highways Code.
- ◆ **Encourage the installation of sidewalks in new developments and major remodeling consistent with the sidewalk Master Plan (Program 5.7.2.2.).** The City continued to require the construction of new sidewalks and the repair of existing sidewalks and disabled ramps for new developments (i.e., KB Home, The Promenade at Downey, and Village Walk Townhomes) 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.).** In an effort to make street intersections more pedestrian-friendly, pedestrian countdown indications were installed to provide more precise information to pedestrians about the time remaining to safely cross the streets. The indicators were installed at most of the major street intersections (i.e. Lakewood Blvd, Florence Ave, Old River School Rd, Imperial Hwy, Downey Ave, Paramount Blvd, Woodruff Ave, Bellflower Blvd).

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.

- ◆ **Ensure that existing land uses that are generating noise beyond the acceptable levels reduce noise levels to acceptable levels (Program 6.3.1.2).** The City continued to enforce its noise ordinance (Section 4600 of the Downey Municipal Code). This involves the permitted hours for construction. For projects that involved amplified music, the City continued to strictly enforcing businesses to mitigate noise impacts by imposing conditions of approval through a conditional use permit application process. Also, the Downey Police Department Special Enforcement Team conducted IMPACT inspections to ensure businesses are operating at an acceptable noise level.

In addition, the City continued 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 the entitlement process.

- ◆ **Discourage the placement of air conditioning equipment, electric generators, or other noise-generating equipment in close proximity to adjacent properties (Program 6.3.1.6).** The City continued to impose conditions of approval for outdoor events and carnivals that involved with the use of temporary electric generators to mitigate potential impacts to the public. This includes limiting the number of generator, requiring minimum separation from generator to buildings and property lines, requiring the use of generators that generating minimal noise.



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 continued to monitor recreation staffing to ensure adequate levels of recreation staffing at park facilities. Full-time and part-time staffs were hired as needed to fill vacancies throughout the year.
- ◆ **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 contracted with Playpower LT Farmington for the installation of new playground equipment for Independence Park and Apollo Park. The new playgrounds were funded from the Los Angeles County Regional Parks and Open Spaces Grant. As mentioned under Program 2.7.2.1., Measure S was expected to generate approximately \$9 million per year to protect and enhance the quality of services to the community, including enhancing police services, ensuring adequate funding for public parks, and improving public streets.
- ◆ **Promote the creation of new parks, especially in areas of the city in the greatest need of additional parks (Program 7.3.1.1.).** City staff continues to work with the County of Los Angeles on a sports complex project (soccer fields) on the south side of the Rancho Los Amigos campus, which includes five acres that the county approved for recreational use.
- ◆ **Actively work with private, non-profit and public community services organizations to provide educational and community services including child care, English translation, after school programs and recreational activities (Program 7.4.1.5.)** Parks and Recreation staff and the Downey Unified School District (DUSD) continued to administer a State grant to provide the “After School Program Information Recreation Education” (ASPIRE) at Alameda, Carpenter, Gauldin, Griffiths, Lewis, Old River, Stauffer, Sussman, Price, Unsworth, Ward and Williams Schools. The goal of the program is to provide a fun, positive, and safe learning environment. The program operates on school days from school dismissal until 6:00 p.m. Also, the Department continued to use contracted instructors to bring recreational classes and programs to the community. Lastly, Parks and Recreation staff continued to support TLC (True Lasting Connections) organization, a branch of DUSD that supports children and their families including access to child care, English translation, programs, and other necessities. With the ongoing support from local donors (i.e. First Baptist Church, Kaiser Permanente of Downey, Foundation for Life, The Downey Promenade, and Planet Fitness), TLC were able to continue to help families in need.

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 continued to contract with the Architectural Peer Review Services to provide technical review and a comprehensive range of integrated design services for a variety of buildings. In addition, the City continued to implement the Site Plan Review process that requires Planning Commission review and approval of site plans, landscaping, lighting (except single family homes and apartments) for new constructions and additions to townhome, commercial and industrial projects in the City.
- ◆ **Lack of property maintenance may exhibit a negative image of the City (Issue 8.2).** The Code Enforcement Division continued 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.
- ◆ **Support the Keep Downey Beautiful programs (Program 8.2.2.3).** City staffs, business owners, and volunteers participated in the monthly event "Keep Downey Beautiful" that help improving the community environments. The program not only keep Downey beautiful but have a safe and clean environment.



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).** Biomedical Overlay Zone—With the fast growing jobs in the bio-medical industry, Staff worked with consultants to evaluate and develop a biomedical overlay zone that enhance the existing Zoning Code and provide a catalyst to increasing biomedical businesses in Downey. The project is ongoing, with the City Council’s direction to staff to develop future zoning amendments to further attract the biomedical industry.
- ◆ **Continue the revitalization of commercial and industrial corridors (Program 9.1.1.5).** The City continued to work on the Imperial Highway Strategic Plan, a corridor assessment that includes five (5) components: A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, an implementation plan, performance metrics, development opportunity sites analyses, and a summary of research findings. The analysis assisted in identifying six major goals to revitalize the Imperial Highway corridor, which are supported by strategies, action steps, and performance metrics within the plan, providing a roadmap for enhancing economic development and the growth of the corridor.
- ◆ **Promote through public information the benefits of businesses locating in Downey (Program 9.1.1.7).** Staff has revamped the Economic Development web pages to assist in the attraction and retention of quality businesses. The pages contain information and materials for businesses coming to the City and include information on the various business start-up steps and even links to a site locator and opportunity sites. Additionally, the city has included a business tool-kit, to further help businesses locate regional, state and federal resources.
- ◆ **Maintain the high level of standards for quality of staff and work produced (Program 9.4.1.3).** City designed and implemented the customer service check-in kiosk system to better expedite service at the public counters. This new system allows staffs to provide an effective and efficient service to our customers. In 2017, the city has been named “Most Business Friendly City” by the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC).
- ◆ **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 its website periodically and provide more information to the public via the Internet.