

Riches Galore, and a Future to Secure Them

God, gold, and glory: this oft-repeated refrain is often cited as the mantra that drove Spanish *conquistadores* across the barren deserts north of Baja California to explore California's coast. Many expeditions never found their share of those precious commodities, but had it not been for them, the community of San Gabriel would not be here to supply its own riches to the region.

San Gabriel – birthplace of the Los Angeles region – is distinctive in ways that most suburban communities, scoured of all beauty or culture, wish they could be. In only four square miles – and with a population of only 41,000 – San Gabriel retains much of the history and cultural flavor that makes it a historic destination, even as its own population changes and matures.

The list of assets that San Gabriel can claim is remarkable. You can start with its location, its climate, and its proximity to Downtown Los Angeles, and those are the sorts of assets that any city would cherish. But step back and take a look at an imaginary ledger of assets, and you will begin to see San Gabriel in a different light, the light in which many of its residents see San Gabriel:

- The San Gabriel Mission, often called the Queen of the Missions because of its vast ranchlands and agricultural prominence, is one of the outstanding historical and tourism venues in California, visited by more than 256,000 people a year. And yet, it also continues to serve its people as a parish church.
- Church of Our Saviour, the first Protestant church in the San Gabriel Valley, retains a campus of charm and elegance that sets its north San Gabriel neighborhood apart.
- The San Gabriel Civic Auditorium, built in 1923 as the Mission Playhouse and since 1946 the Civic Auditorium of the city, is rich with architecture, interior design, and exhibits
- The Mission District, anchored by four small but vital museums, provides cultural resources in close proximity to residents.
- Valley Boulevard, the engine driving an emerging Asian/Pacific Island culture in the San Gabriel Valley, is the source of tremendous capital, and if properly managed

can create a more livable city than has existed up to now.

- A significant Tongva population of Native Americans remains.

These are some of the riches that derive from San Gabriel's past. But its future is another question, one tied to land use and demographics, economics and design. But most importantly, its future – and the general plan that we hope will define it -- begins with the people of San Gabriel.

What You Told Us

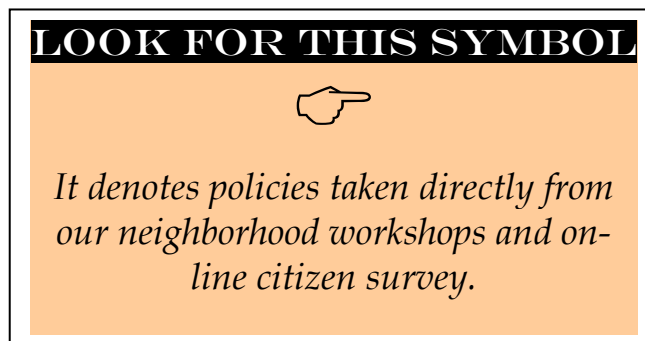
There are many issues to solve – traffic congestion, public safety, infrastructure, and economic development to be sure. But

what do the people of San Gabriel want? Our staff members hit the streets in a series of six neighborhood workshops called Tell-a-Vision Nights. "Turn off your TV," read the colorful banners strung across Las Tunas Drive, "and tell us

your vision for San Gabriel."

Each of the six sessions had a focus topic around which discussion was built, but every resident was encouraged to talk about each and every issue of interest. It is from this foundation that our general plan process begins, for each of the chapters that follow are based in part on a commitment to see residents' viewpoints reflected in the general plan document.

Residents moved quickly to identify their top priorities. These are combined from the comments received over each of the six meetings, but you will find many more issues and concerns in this chapter. See page P-8.



About This General Plan

California law (*Government Code Sec. 65300 et seq.*) requires every California city to develop its own vision statement for the future, a plan that helps its residents document how they want to grow, develop and prosper.

At a minimum, every general plan must address seven basic topics (often called “elements”):

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

We have organized them a little differently, and added some new concepts that were not part of the 1989 plan. The new chapters are identified in boldface type:

- Land Use
- Mobility (includes Circulation)
- Demographics and Housing
- **Economic Development**
- Public Safety
- Open Space
- Environmental Resources
- **Community Facilities**
- **Cultural Resources**
- **Community Design**
- Noise

We should note that the Housing Chapter of the plan is actually a summary taken from a more detailed Housing Element approved by the State last year. The narrative in this plan mirrors the larger plan, and refers the reader back to the parent document.

San Gabriel has had general plans before, the most recent in 1989. But never before has the plan focused on the array of quality of life issues that are found in this update of the 1989 plan.

Each of the issue areas found in the 1989 plan is found here, and there have been no changes to the basic growth limitations set by that plan. But this plan imposes new design principles, planting and community greening strategies, traffic management proposals, and a host of other strategies designed to make San Gabriel a more robust, livable and beautiful community.

How Did We Gather Citizen Input?

We believe in listening to what our citizens said, and we gave them lots of opportunities. The outreach strategy includes:

- Six “**Tell-a-Vision Nights**” at locations around San Gabriel
- Nine Planning Commission community **study sessions**
- More than a dozen **street fairs and community events**



Staff members facilitated the six “Tell-a-Vision nights,” hosting more than 400 San Gabriel residents in the process.

- **Presentations** before many community organizations, including open forums.
- An **on-line survey** at the City's website
- **Cable television announcements** and banners publicizing general plan events
- Articles in the **Grapevine** and the City's **recreation guide**.

In addition to all these, the normal public hearing process – including many meetings before the Planning Commission, Design Review Commission, and City Council – have brought this plan to reality.

What You Told Us ... and Where to Find It

Here's what you told us ...

Look here in the General Plan to find your interest.

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| ▪ San Gabriel should preserve its historic neighborhoods | ▪ See the Cultural Resources chapter for a discussion of historic preservation and cultural resources. Look at the chapter called Community Design to see how the general plan can improve the quality of design. |
| ▪ We need more parking in the Mission District | ▪ Check out the discussion of parking in the Community Facilities and Economic Development chapters. |
| ▪ Get more parking and better circulation near the post office | ▪ See the chapter called Mobility for a discussion of circulation issues. |
| ▪ Dress up Las Tunas Drive; add a median | ▪ See discussions in the Mobility and Community Design chapters, including the opportunities to implement a Livable Communities plan on Las Tunas Drive. |
| ▪ Improve the public library | ▪ See the discussion of the public library in the Community Facilities chapter. |
| ▪ Promote the civic auditorium | ▪ See the discussions in the Economic Development and Cultural Resource chapters. |
| ▪ Have better street maintenance in general | ▪ Learn about the Millennium Miles program in the Community Facilities and Mobility chapters. |
| ▪ Improve on the lack of open space | ▪ See the proposals in the Open Space chapter |
| ▪ Improve conditions at Mission Road and San Gabriel Boulevard | ▪ See the Mobility chapter. |

Components of the General Plan

The Background Report

The first round of citizen outreach and research resulted in the publication, *Ingredients for Success*. That document was then refined through the addition of further research by various City departments, and the final general plan represents yet another layer of citizen participation in the form of formal public hearings before the Planning Commission and Council.

The Policy Report

This is the part of the plan that most people will use, a text and maps that propose the future character of San Gabriel through an array of goals, targets, actions and implementation strategies.

- **Goals** are the broad overarching statements concerning what we as residents of San Gabriel want to accomplish.
- **Targets** are refined statements that help us get to the goals we have set.
- **Actions** are specific actions that we will take to meet the targets.
- **Implementation strategies** appear in most, but not all, chapters.

The General Plan Map

A full size general plan map contains a summary of the plan's key provisions.

Ultimately, that plan will be incorporated into a plan summary document available to those members of the public who don't need to buy the entire plan.

Environmental Determination

A separate component of the plan is the project environmental assessment, which includes both an initial study of environmental impacts and a negative declaration finding that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the environment if the plan is implemented as provided.

Reference Binder

The reference binder contains the preliminary studies that were prepared to supply data for the general plan process. These include studies in the areas of circulation, noise, sewers, and other issues that required a higher level of analysis than was available from the City's existing staff and resources. This binder is kept on file at the Community Development Department. It's not an encyclopedic collection, but it contains many of the products upon which staff developed their analyses.



Audience and Planning Commission members listen intently at a Washington School "Tell-a-Vision" night.