

Chapter 2

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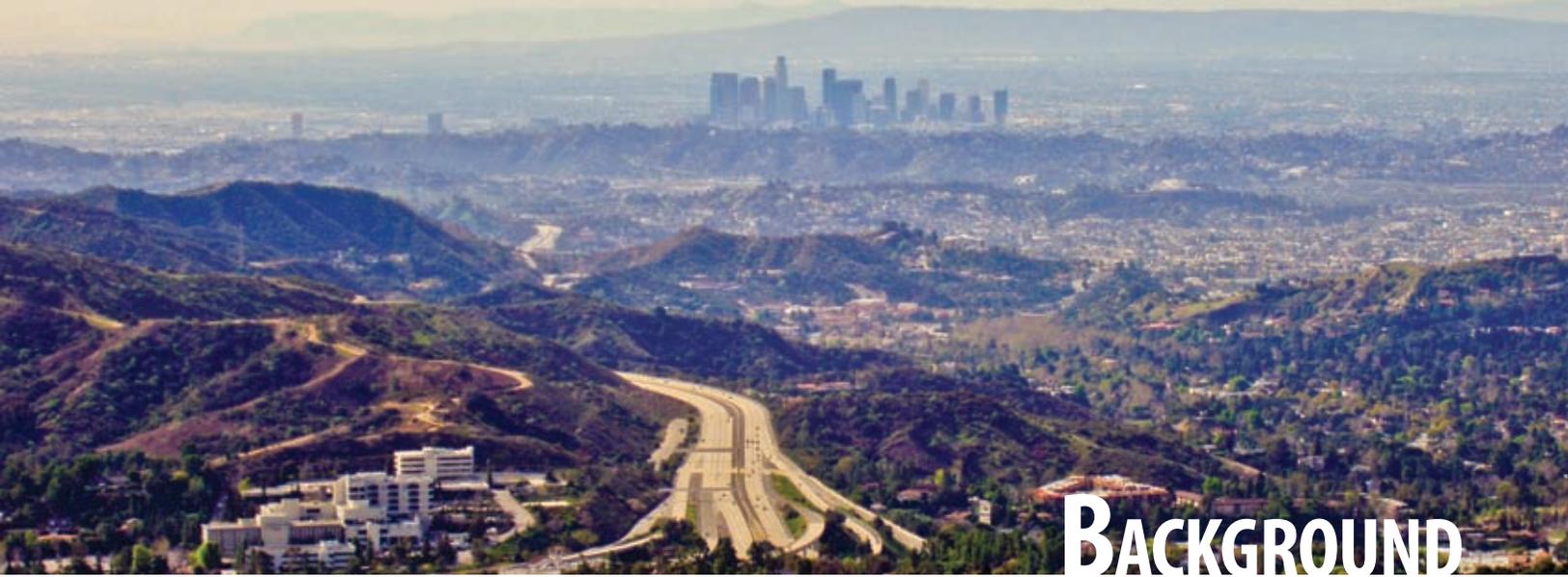
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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Background Chapter is to describe the natural, rural, and urban characteristics of unincorporated Los Angeles County. Following this description is a summary of the County’s current demographic data, which looks at statistics and projections related to population, housing, and employment. From this data, the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) formulated a broad list of planning assumptions that were used to shape the goals, policies, and implementation programs for the General Plan.

The unincorporated areas of the County cover a large geographic area and are ecologically and climatically diverse. A truly unique aspect of planning in the County is the non-contiguous nature of the County’s jurisdiction. The unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County consist of 124 separate, non-contiguous land areas. The unincorporated areas in the northern part of the County are covered by large amounts of sparsely populated land and include the Angeles National Forest, a portion of the Los Padres National Forest, and the Mojave Desert. The unincorporated areas in the southern part of the County consist of 58 pockets of unconnected communities, often referred to as the County’s unincorporated “urban islands”.

II. LOCATION AND COUNTY DESCRIPTION

Los Angeles County is geographically one of the largest counties in the nation with approximately 4,083 square miles. The County stretches along 75 miles of the Pacific Coast of Southern California, and is bordered to the east by Orange and San Bernardino Counties, to the north by Kern County, and to the west by Ventura County. Los Angeles County also includes the offshore islands of Santa Catalina and San Clemente. **Figure 2.1** shows the regional location of Los Angeles County.

The County Setting

The unincorporated areas account for approximately 65% of the total Los Angeles County land area, as seen in **Table 2.1**.

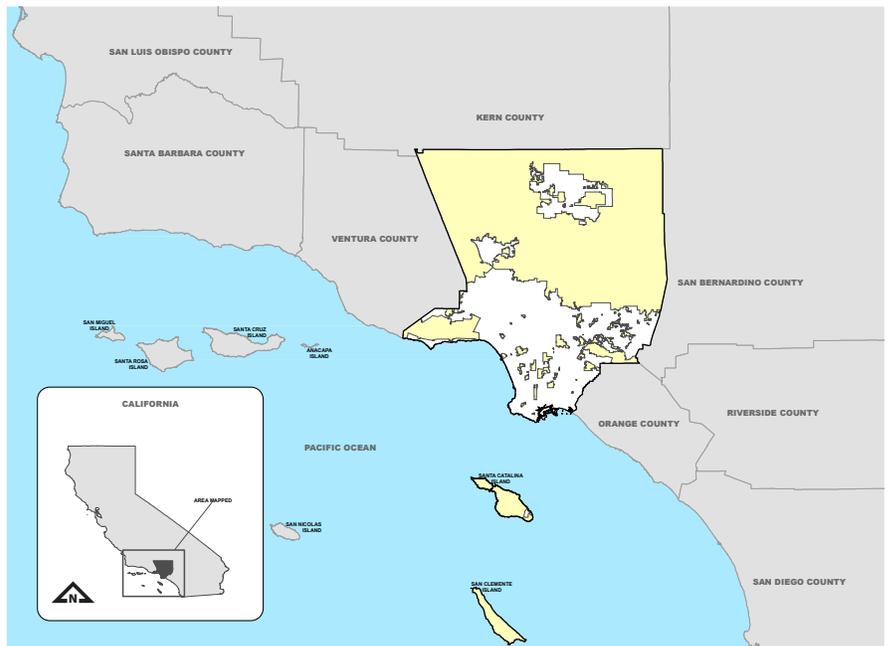


Figure 2.1: Regional Location of L.A. County

Table 2.1: L.A. County Distribution of Land Area

County Land Components	Cities (sq. miles)	Unincorporated (sq. miles)	Total (sq. miles)
Mainland	1,423.7	2,528.3	3,952.0
San Clemente Island	0.0	56.4	56.4
Santa Catalina Island	2.9	71.9	74.8
Total	1,426.6	2,656.6	4,083.2

Source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Works

Los Angeles County is divided into five (5) supervisorial districts. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, created by the state Legislature in 1852, is the governing body for the County. Five supervisors are elected to four-year terms by voters within their respective districts. The Board has executive, legislative, and quasi-judicial roles. It appoints all department heads other than the assessor, district attorney, and sheriff, which are also elected positions.

Figure 2.2 displays the unincorporated areas of the County, and Figure 2.3 depicts the County’s five (5) Supervisorial Districts.

Defining Characteristics

The following discussion categorizes the unincorporated areas of the County by defining characteristics and/or natural elements. There is a high level of diversity among the communities and their natural features within each geographic area of the County. The purpose of these descriptions is to familiarize readers with the diversity of the various communities under the County’s jurisdiction.

Northern Los Angeles County

The northern part of the County contains the largest amount of unincorporated County land, and is generally defined as the land between the Ventura and San Bernardino County lines, and from the Kern County line in the north stretching southward to the San Gabriel Mountains. This area includes large sections of the Mojave Desert, the Angeles and Los Padres National Forests, and contains most of the remaining agricultural land in Los Angeles County. Additionally, Edwards Air Force Base, which straddles the Los Angeles County and Kern County border, consists of 79,000 acres of land along the north County border.

This area has seen the most growth and annexation over the last 20 years, such as the incorporation of the City of Santa Clarita and the expansion of the cities of Palmdale and Lancaster. Despite the rural nature of the area, significant urbanization can be seen in the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys. There are four (4) major new planned communities under development in this area: Northlake, Fair Oaks Ranch, Newhall Ranch, and Centennial. The key planning issues in these areas include the loss of open space to development, strains on over-extended public services, and the environmental impacts related to long commuting patterns to and from the Los Angeles basin.

Western Los Angeles County

The western and coastal parts of unincorporated Los Angeles County include the Santa Monica Mountains Region and the offshore coastal zones that stretch along the Pacific Ocean. This area contains some of the most scenic parts of the County, including the Santa Monica Mountain National

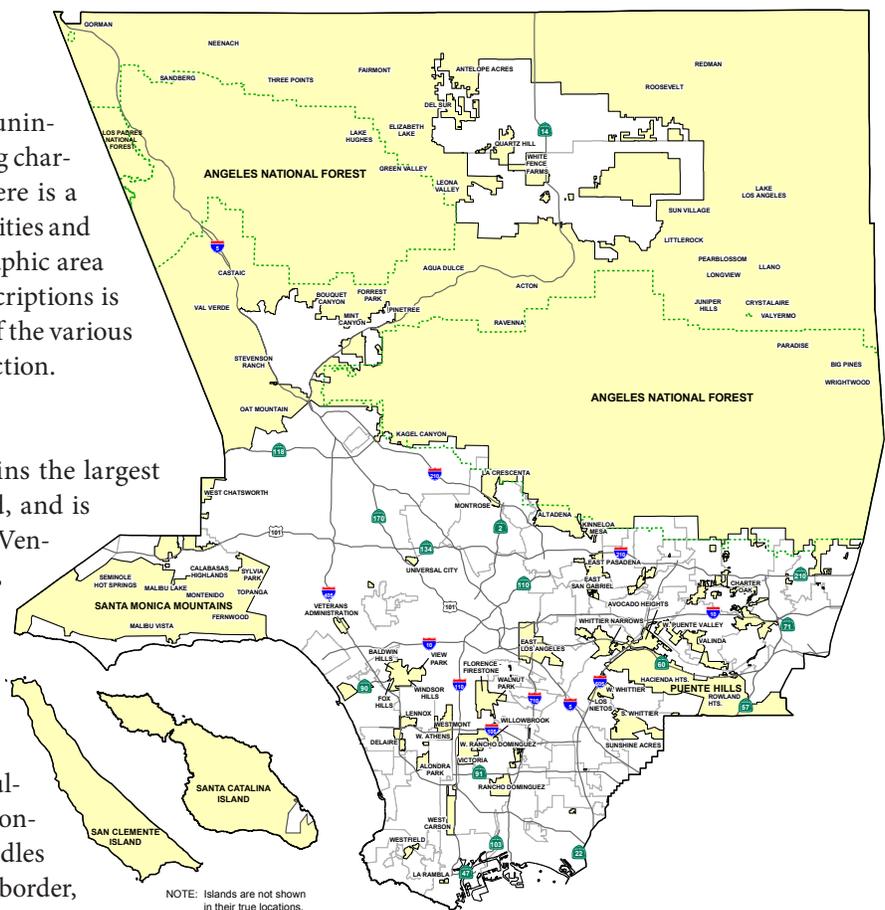


Figure 2.2: Unincorporated Areas of L.A. County

Recreation Area. Because of its natural amenities and proximity to urban areas, development in this area is often seen as controversial. The unincorporated areas include land that is preserved for open space and regional parks, small rural communities, and growing communities such as Las Virgenes. Santa Catalina Island, which is outside of the City of Avalon is managed almost entirely by the Catalina Island Conservancy, and San Clemente Island, which is wholly owned and operated by the U.S. Navy, are located in the County's two offshore coastal zones.

There are also a handful of diverse unincorporated pockets located south of the Santa Monica Mountains that are very distinct from other County areas. These pockets include Marina del Rey, a highly developed coastal community south of the City of Santa Monica, the Ladera Heights/Baldwin Hills, Lennox, Del Aire and Alondra Park neighborhoods, and the large Veterans Administration complex that straddles I-405 near Westwood. The Baldwin Hills, with the Kenneth B. Hahn State Park, and the marina facilities at Marina del Rey provide many recreational opportunities for area residents.

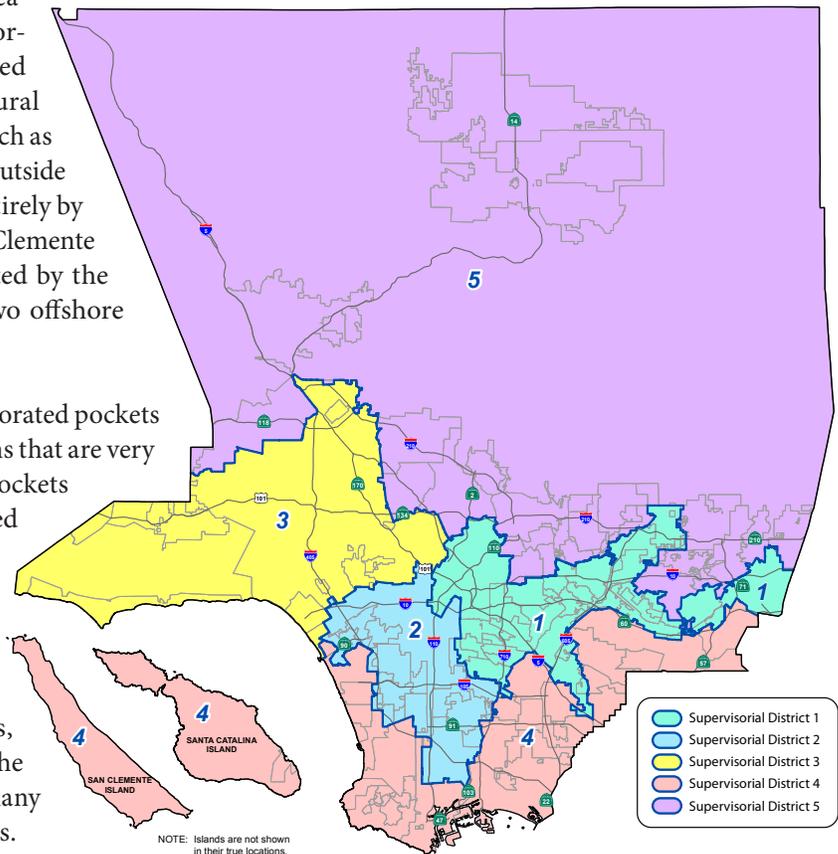


Figure 2.3: L.A. County Supervisorial Districts

Southern Los Angeles County

The southern part of the County includes Los Angeles basin communities that are highly urbanized, very dense, and are generally characterized by challenging physical and economic conditions. These urban pockets include the communities of Florence-Firestone, Willowbrook, West Rancho Dominguez, Westmont, West Athens, East Compton and West Carson. There are very few natural areas and open spaces in the southern basin, and these communities have disproportionate amounts of industrial land uses. The principal planning concerns in this area are the incompatibility of industrial and residential land uses, the need to attract new investment, businesses and jobs, and basic services and infrastructure, such as grocery stores.

East Los Angeles County

There are a few urban pockets adjacent to the Gateway Cities that line the eastern border of the City of Los Angeles. This area, which includes the West Whittier community, is urban and largely residential. The critical challenges facing these communities are their aging housing stock and lack of economic investment.

The eastern parts of the County are comprised of East Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley communities. East Los Angeles is located just east of downtown Los Angeles. It is home to a diverse mix of residential and commercial uses and is an older, denser, and more established community compared with other unincorporated areas. This area is heavily influenced by the majority Hispanic community, and its connections to the economy of the City of Los Angeles. The expansion of the Metro Gold Line into East Los Angeles presents the community with many development and planning opportunities, such as transit-oriented development.



All General Plan Figures Can Be Found on the
DRP Website at planning.lacounty.gov/maps

Table 2.2: L.A. County Population Estimates, 2000-2006.

County	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Unincorporated	986,050	1,004,301	1,026,047	1,045,549	1,063,148	1,079,245	1,092,908
Incorporated	8,533,280	8,658,942	8,803,068	8,933,923	9,025,786	9,087,172	9,152,664
Total	9,519,330	9,663,243	9,829,115	9,979,472	10,088,934	10,166,417	10,245,572

Source: State of California, Department of Finance, E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State, 2001-2006, with 2000 Benchmark. Sacramento, California, May 2006.

San Gabriel Valley

There are several pockets of unincorporated communities that line the San Gabriel Valley, south of the San Gabriel Mountains and north of the Puente Hills. Like East Los Angeles, many of the communities in this area are older, denser and more established than their northern counterparts and they are culturally influenced by their large Hispanic and Asian populations. The San Gabriel Valley communities are widely diverse in terms of housing stock, development patterns, and the amount of industry in each community. Some areas in the eastern part of the County, like Hacienda Heights and Rowland Heights, are newer bedroom communities that line the scenic Puente Hills, while other areas are characterized by a much older housing stock or are primarily industrial. Following the North County, the San Gabriel Valley is experiencing the most rapid growth in the County.



Cultural Diversity Mural

Table 2.3: Percent Change in Population for L.A. County, 2000-2006.

Year	Unincorporated Population	Percent Change	Total County Population	Percent Change
2000	986,050	-	9,519,330	-
2001	1,004,301	1.85	9,663,243	1.51
2002	1,026,047	2.17	9,829,115	1.72
2003	1,045,549	1.90	9,979,472	1.53
2004	1,063,148	1.68	10,088,934	1.10
2005	1,079,245	1.51	10,166,417	0.77
2006	1,092,908	1.27	10,245,572	0.78

Source: State of California, Department of Finance, E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State, 2001-2006, with 2000 Benchmark. Sacramento, California, May 2006.

III. DEMOGRAPHICS

This section of the General Plan documents the current demographic and economic conditions in unincorporated Los Angeles County. This data was used to identify important demographic and social trends that helped shape the goals and policies of the General Plan. The demographics section utilizes statistics from the Demographic Research Unit of the California Department of Finance, which is designated as the single official source of demographic data for state planning and budgeting. Additional data are provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Current Population Estimates

Tables 2.2 and 2.3 show the population estimates for Los Angeles County, and the percent change in population for the years 2000-2006. Both the unincorporated areas and the County as a whole have experienced steady population growth. However, as seen in Table 2.3, the percentage of change in population over the last six years has been higher in the unincorporated areas when compared to the County at large.

Table 2.4: Population by County for SCAG Region, 1990-2000.

County	1990 Population	2000 Population	Percent Increase
Los Angeles	8,863,164	9,519,338	+ 07.4%
Orange	2,410,556	2,846,289	+ 18.1%
San Bernardino	1,418,380	1,709,434	+ 20.5%
Riverside	1,170,413	1,545,387	+ 32.0%
Ventura	669,016	753,197	+ 12.6%
Imperial	109,303	142,361	+ 30.2%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Table 2.5: Racial/Ethnic Composition of Unincorporated L.A. County, 2000.

Race / Ethnicity	Population	Percent
Hispanic	525,903	53.3%
White	239,580	24.3%
African American	103,504	10.5%
Asian	95,814	9.7%
Native American	2,714	0.3%
Native Hawaiian	1,802	0.2%
Other	1,617	0.2%
Two or More Races	16,603	1.7%
Total	987,537	100%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Regional Context

For a broader perspective, a review of regional population data is informative. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is a regional planning agency for the six-county Southern California area, which includes Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Imperial, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties. **Table 2.4** shows population growth in all of the SCAG counties between 1990 and 2000. Although Los Angeles County had the slowest rate of growth of all of the SCAG counties during that period, it remains by far the most populous.

Racial and Ethnic Composition

In addition to being the most populous county in the SCAG region, Los Angeles County is also the most diverse. The cultural variety of residents in Los Angeles County plays a significant role in defining the character of the unincorporated communities. Influenced by migratory patterns, the roughly ten million residents of the County comprise one of the most diverse regions in the United States.

The Demographic Research Unit of the California Department of Finance estimates that by the year 2050, the Hispanic and Asian populations will account for more than 80% of the residents in the County. Any effort to guide future planning endeavors must recognize and respect the diversity and social values that accompany these demographic shifts. **Table 2.5** shows the racial and ethnic make-up of the unincorporated County population.

IV. PROJECTIONS

This section of the General Plan provides projections that estimate future demographic and economic conditions based upon a variety of informed assumptions and scenarios. Projections play a critical role in the planning process and are tools that can help guide future development patterns in the County. The growth projections contained in this Chapter are based on the best information the County is able to obtain, provides a picture of probable occurrences rather than assured outcomes, and whose accuracy is independent of unforeseen future events.

This section focuses on population, housing, and employment projections that are based on the SCAG 2008 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). As the designated Southern California Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO),



LA County's Next Generation

Table 2.6: Unincorporated L.A. County Population Projections

Subregion	2005	2030	Number Change	Percent Change
Arroyo Verdugo	20,395	23,443	3,048	15.0%
City of Los Angeles	57,235	64,837	7,602	13.3%
Gateway Cities	342,956	382,816	39,860	11.6%
Las Virgenes	21,341	30,529	9,188	43.1%
North L.A. County	132,797	389,595	256,798	193.4%
San Gabriel Valley	364,836	500,358	135,522	37.1%
South Bay Cities	117,449	131,191	13,742	12.4%
Westside Cities	29,068	39,214	10,146	34.9%
Totals	1,086,077	1,561,983	475,906	44.0%

Source: 2008 SCAG RTP Projections.

Population Projections

Table 2.6 shows the unincorporated County’s population projections based on SCAG’s forecasts for 2030.

SCAG projects that unincorporated Los Angeles County’s population will continue to grow, resulting in a 44% increase in population by the year 2030. The rate of population growth will vary greatly among each subregion. For example, the North Los Angeles County subregion, which includes both the Santa Clarita Valley and Antelope Valley unincorporated areas, is expected to grow by approximately 250,000 people (193.4%) by the year 2030. In contrast, the urban South Bay Cities subregion is projected to have a relatively lower population change of 12.4% over

SCAG is mandated by the federal government to research and draw up plans for transportation, growth management, hazardous waste management, and air quality issues.

As part of the methodology for the 2008 RTP projections, SCAG requested local jurisdictions to provide feedback on their community statistics in order to improve the accuracy of SCAG’s projections. The Department of Regional Planning conducted a systematic review of unincorporated areas to account for unique land use characteristics, including availability of vacant and underutilized land, land suitability, transportation networks, and redevelopment potential.

SCAG Subregions

In this section, projections are organized according to SCAG’s eight subregions, which collectively encompass all of the County’s unincorporated areas. The subregions, shown in Figure 2.4, include:

- Arroyo Verdugo;
- City of Los Angeles;
- Gateway Cities;
- Las Virgenes;
- North Los Angeles County;
- San Gabriel Valley;
- South Bay Cities; and,
- Westside Cities.

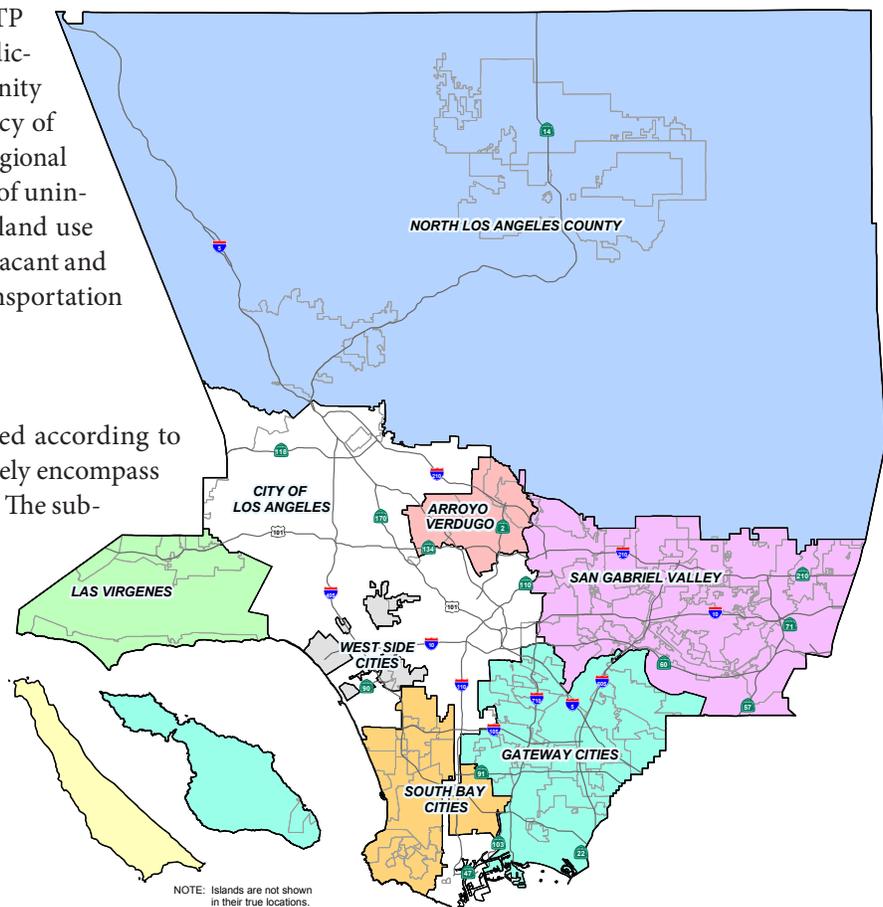


Figure 2.4: L.A. County Subregions as Designated by SCAG

Table 2.7: Unincorporated L.A. County Household Projections

Subregion	2000	2030	Number Change	Percent Change
Arroyo Verdugo	7,304	8,343	1,039	14.2%
City of Los Angeles	13,685	15,445	1,760	12.9%
Gateway Cities	82,041	99,353	17,312	21.1%
Las Virgenes	7,105	9,872	2,767	38.9%
North L.A. County	39,331	119,114	79,783	202.9%
San Gabriel Valley	99,301	138,128	38,827	39.1%
South Bay Cities	32,775	36,802	4,027	12.3%
Westside Cities	13,246	16,357	3,111	23.5%
Totals	294,788	443,414	148,626	50.4%

Source: 2008 SCAG RTP Projections.

the same period. These trends are important to identify so that County agencies can better prepare for future development, guide development toward more suitable areas, focus services where most needed, and address issues related to overcrowding, housing shortages, and recreational needs.

Household Projections

Household estimates are an important indicator of the growing demand for all types of housing in the County. **Table 2.7** displays the projected number of households for the unincorporated County subregions based on SCAG's projections for 2030.

SCAG's household projections indicate a net increase of 148,626 households by the year 2030. The General Plan promotes accommodating these additional households through increasing density in appropriate areas to compensate for the County's dwindling supply of developable land, and to protect its remaining farmland, natural resources, and open spaces. The justification for several policies in the General Plan, such as supporting transit-oriented development and providing density bonuses for affordable housing development, are based on these projected increases in the number of new households. The Housing Element provides a comprehensive analysis of the unincorporated County's housing needs and future plans for housing-

related planning activities. The 2008 Housing Element can be found at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/housing>

Employment Projections

Los Angeles County is situated at the center of a highly developed and diversified industrial-based economy. Major features of the economy include: one of the world's largest concentrations of high technology industry supported by many advanced research and educational institutions; a high proportion of employment concentrated in services, trades and professions; and the world's fifth busiest seaport (the

combination of the adjacent Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach). Historically, the County's economic base has adapted to rapid innovation and change, and has placed an emphasis on education and research as economic activities.

The economy and regional job market of Los Angeles County is large and increasingly diversified. The economic base of the Southern California region consists of professional services, diversified manufacturing activities, transportation and wholesale trade, tourism and entertainment, and defense-related and resource-based industries. In addition to strong manufacturing, services and trade sectors, the County has developed into a center of international business and finance. The Economic Development Element of the General Plan provides a detailed discussion of the County's economy and the land use issues related

“Fast-forward to 2030. Imagine a Los Angeles County with almost three million residents over age 60, up from 1.4 million today. One in every four neighbors will be older. What will be their quality of life? What services must we as a society provide now to assist and support them? As Los Angeles County's population ages, pressure builds to assure the right local services exist to preserve older residents' healthy independence and to mitigate potential problems as they age.

*-L.A. County Seniors Count!
County of Los Angeles, Community and Senior Services*

to economic development. **Table 2.8** shows employment projections for unincorporated Los Angeles County based on SCAG forecasts.

The largest growth in jobs is expected to be in the North L.A. County sub-region (125.0%), the same area that is expected to see the most population growth and housing construction. The General Plan considers these trends important, and the data shapes County goals and policies that promote healthy and sustainable communities that provide a high quality of life for County residents and businesses.

V. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

Using the data compiled from the demographic analysis of the unincorporated County areas, several planning assumptions were formulated to aid the development of the goals, policies, and implementation programs contained in the General Plan Elements. The following planning assumptions have been organized by the three areas of demographic analysis (population, housing, and employment), and one section for the environment.

Population

- There will be continued population growth county-wide with a disproportionate amount of growth being concentrated in the North County.
- The County will continue to see a complex pattern of migration and immigration that will present cultural and age-specific planning opportunities and constraints.
- The Hispanic composition of the population will continue to increase.
- Development to accommodate population growth will continue to mount pressures to convert open space areas into non-open space uses.
- The need to balance population growth with environmental concerns will be increasingly important in planning actions.

Table 2.8: Unincorporated L.A. County Employment Projections

Subregion	2000	2030	Number Change	Percent Change
Arroyo Verdugo	3,844	4,082	238	6.2%
City of Los Angeles	24,820	26,785	1,965	7.9%
Gateway Cities	83,435	93,006	9,571	11.5%
Las Virgenes	16,277	17,854	1,577	9.7%
North L.A. County	34,592	77,831	43,239	125.0%
San Gabriel Valley	98,834	112,084	13,250	13.4%
South Bay Cities	20,346	21,767	1,421	7.0%
Westside Cities	17,637	18,459	822	4.7%
Totals	299,785	371,868	72,083	24.0%

Source: 2008 SCAG RTP Projections

- Specific incentives and land use strategies must guide development toward infill areas, existing urban infrastructure, and along public transit corridors in accordance with SCAG’s Compass Blueprint 2% Strategy.

Housing

- Housing demand, especially for affordable housing, will remain high.
- Affordable housing in the County will include low income housing, low-median income housing, and workforce housing.
- Consistent housing construction will be needed to keep pace with the County’s expected rate of population growth.
- Development activities will be most aggressive in the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley areas.
- There will be a continued decrease in land available for new housing throughout the County coupled with a continued increase in pressure to preserve open space and agricultural land.
- Higher density housing is needed to balance shortages of land for development and the increasing needs for housing and commerce.

Employment

- Los Angeles County will continue to be a major regional economic center.
- Existing employment trends are likely to continue.
- The region will continue to lose manufacturing jobs while seeing an increase in jobs related to professional and business services and trade.

- The County will need to promote and maintain a diversified economy in order ensure a healthy and sustainable economic future.
- The County will need to better train its workforce in order to be prepared for future job growth and changes in the economy.
- Commercial and industrial activities will continually need to be refined, improved, and balanced with residential sectors.
- Infrastructure and commerce needs will continue to be important to the County and will require the attention of various County agencies and officials.
- Communities throughout unincorporated Los Angeles County face unique and diverse economic conditions and challenges.
- Development pressure to convert industrial lands to other uses will continue.
- The amount of trading and cargo activity at the Ports will continue to grow, causing increased impacts on the regions environment and transportation system.
- The challenge as to how to balance growth and the environment will be increasingly important in planning decisions.
- Existing parks will be burdened by a lack of neighborhood parks and open space to serve a growing population.
- Environmental conditions and environmental regulations will continue the pressure to introduce and utilize new technologies and green techniques, such as green-building, low impact development and alternative energy sources.
- Attention to water supply, water quality regulations and climate conditions will be critical planning issues related to global warming.
- Global warming, air quality concerns, and federal and state legislation will affect land use and transportation policies in the County.

Environment

- The County will continue to see environmental issues arising from growth, transportation, and economic activities.
- Development will continue to mount pressures to convert open space areas into non-open space uses.



Development at the Urban Fringe

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