

Section I: Purpose and Process

"If you don't know where you are going, you can wind up someplace else."

- Yogi Berra

Introduction to the Plan

The Hacienda Heights Community Plan (the Plan) is visionary, progressive, and far-reaching. The result of an extensive and award-winning collaboration between citizens and planners, the Plan articulates the community's shared vision of the future and identifies specific, action-oriented goals and policies to achieve that vision. The process to develop the Plan was driven by the energy, enthusiasm, and dedication of the people who live, learn, work, and play in Hacienda Heights. Their insights and observations helped to identify crucial issues and assets in the community. Their foresight and values came together to create a clear vision of Hacienda Heights in 2015. Their creativity and suggestions formed the basis of the Plan's goals and policies. Finally, their commitment to making change happen drove the action plans. With continued community oversight and the commitment of service providers and elected leaders, the Plan will guide development in Hacienda Heights to meet residents' needs today and to achieve their vision of the future tomorrow.

Purpose

The purpose of the Community Plan is to guide development in Hacienda Heights to achieve the community's shared vision of the future. Through the community planning process, residents of Hacienda Heights identified where they want their community to be in 2015. Through the Plan's goals and policies they laid out a clear path to get there.

The Community Plan is a powerful statement of the community's priorities and desires. It informs decision-making at all levels to focus individual activities on achieving a shared vision of the future. It is a tool for citizens, developers, service providers, and elected officials. Each group will use the Plan in different ways, but each will be guided by the Plan's clear vision, goals, and policies. Citizens use the Plan to make decisions about their own homes and businesses. It is also a tool to voice their priorities and hold service providers and elected officials accountable. Developers look to the Plan's goals and policies when deciding what to build, how new developments should look, and where they should be located. Service providers use the Plan as a guide for deciding which infrastructure and improvement projects should be undertaken and which programs should be established or improved. Finally, elected officials use the Plan to allocate resources to address residents' most important issues and priorities.

Relationship to General Plan

A component of the Los Angeles County General Plan, the Hacienda Heights Community Plan complements the countywide goals and policies in the General Plan by addressing specific issues relevant to Hacienda Heights. The General Plan provides the land use "vision" for the County. The Community Plan allows for more detailed and issue-specific planning that builds upon the General Plan and allows communities to refine policy at a local level. While consistent with the elements found in the General Plan, such as housing, open space, and circulation, the Community Plan also deals with neighborhood-level issues such as community services and

youth planning. The General Plan provides policy guidance on all issues not dealt with in the Community Plan. The Goal Index, found in the Section 3, bridges the action-oriented goals of the Community Plan with the issue-oriented goals in the General Plan by organizing Community Plan goals according to the familiar elements found in the General Plan.

The Community Plan development process was consistent with all the components outlined in the General Plan: community participation, county participation, inter-departmental participation, and plan formulation. Consistency with the General Plan is also achieved through goals and policies that compliment and support the goals and policies found in the general Plan. For example, consistency with the General Plan’s Housing Element is achieved through policies that support housing to meet the needs of a socio-economically diverse population. Finally, the Community Plan reinforces the General Plan’s guiding principles by being dynamic, flexible, accountable, inspirational, informative, and progressive.

Process

The Plan was developed in four phases, which are summarized in the following table:

Table 1: Plan Development Phases

Phase	Steps	Timing
I: Research and Development	Preliminary Research, Community Input, Content Development	Feb 2007 – Jul 2008
II: Review and Revise	Review, Analysis, Consultation, Revisions	Jul 2008 – Dec 2008
III: Hearings and Adoption	Public Hearings, Plan Adoption	Early-2009
IV: Rollout	Dissemination, Implementation	Mid-2009

The most distinguishing feature of the Plan is that it was developed through an award-winning, community-driven process. From June 2007 to February 2008, planners worked with dedicated Hacienda Heights residents to create the basis of a Plan that truly reflects residents’ needs and priorities. The process included four main components: community meetings, activities, youth engagement, and community knowledge building.

Community Meetings

Over one hundred Hacienda Heights residents attended the first community meeting in June 2007 and received an orientation to the Community Plan Update process with an emphasis on opportunities for continued involvement. At this meeting, planners introduced the idea of a community plan and explained how it could be a powerful tool to shape the future of a community. Residents were invited to participate in a series of future meetings and activities to develop a plan specific to the needs and issues in Hacienda Heights. Planners extended themselves as “technical experts” who would help by facilitating the process. Residents were asked to serve as “community experts” to share their experiences, knowledge, and aspirations. This partnership provided a framework for collaboration that was continued throughout the process and strengthened with each subsequent meeting.

In July 2007, a community visioning meeting was held. This meeting employed an interactive exercise that challenged participants to identify their likes and dislikes in the community today and to envision their ideal future for Hacienda Heights in 2015. Participants worked individually and in small groups facilitated by planners to develop their vision statements. They reported the results of their activity to each other at the end of the meeting. Participants also completed a survey of their thoughts on the meeting format, content, and efficacy. The meeting results were then synthesized by planners and posted on the project website to document and share what was achieved. This format became the hallmark of the community planning process. It ensured a high level of engagement and interaction at meetings and a completely transparent and well-documented process throughout. The surveys provided a built-in feedback loop and helped the planners to continuously improve the process.

Based on areas of interest identified via a survey administered at the first community meeting, residents began to identify major community issues drawn from their observations at the Issues and Observations Meeting in September 2007. Residents self-selected priority topics on which to focus then formed topic-specific committees to identify and map the issues that were most important to them. The outputs of this meeting were Issue Statements that synthesized each committee’s key findings and concerns related to their topic.

Issues were turned into opportunities at the next community meeting in October 2007. Building on the Community Vision and committee Issue Statements, participants started developing their draft goals and policies. After the meeting, participants continued to work with their committees to develop their preliminary recommendations. These recommendations were revised and prioritized in November 2007 at the Plans and Proposals meeting. At this meeting, participants also identified what groups and resources would need to be mobilized to implement their recommendations.

Table 2: Community Issues

Community Issue Statements (September 19, 2007)	
Community Services	<p>We need to address the following for community services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ lack of meeting space, educational and fitness programs for residents of all ages ▪ lack of opportunity due to lack of personal funds ▪ lack of knowledge of cultural differences
Health & Safety	<p>[The main health and safety issues are:]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emergency preparedness ▪ Medical clinic in the community ▪ Neighborhood watch ▪ Hazardous materials protection ▪ More opportunities for physical activity ▪ Trash cans in front yards

Housing	The critical issues in Hacienda Heights are the need for a diversity of housing types, lack of public information and lack of maintenance and property upkeep, which affects neighborhood quality and housing affordability.
Land Use & Development	Protect, preserve, and enhance community character by preserving and increasing open space, managing density, and redeveloping commercial areas to create a pleasant gathering place for residents.
Maintenance & Appearance	The main maintenance and appearance issues in Hacienda Heights are improving the appearance, cleanliness, uniformity, and landscaping of walls and public areas by raising standards and enforcing existing laws and regulations.
Open Space & Recreation	The main open space and recreation issues are matching open space with appropriate uses for all ages; maintenance/preservation; access; fire protection; and communication with the community.
Transportation	The main transportation issue in Hacienda Heights is the need for expediting the flow of traffic by enforcement of improved traffic regulations and increase in other modes of transportation.
Youth Planning	The main issues affecting youth are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ lack of a central gathering place, ▪ graffiti and vandalism, ▪ lack of landscaping, beautification, lighting, and paving along roads and streets, and ▪ lack of choices for restaurants.

Next, participants turned their issues into opportunities by formulating specific goals and policies to address the identified issues. Their priority recommendations are listed below.

Table 3: Community Goals

Priority Community Goals (February 27, 2008)	
Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a community center for inter-cultural events ▪ Subsidize fine arts and skills enrichment ▪ Wi-Fi services for Hacienda Heights ▪ Create intercultural community-wide activities ▪ Expand library services and resident fitness programs

<p>Health & Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare for emergencies ▪ Establish a medical clinic/urgent care center ▪ Provide hazardous materials protection ▪ Improve physical activity ▪ Improve trash collection and sanitation
<p>Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess housing need ▪ Identify various types of housing ▪ Support code enforcement ▪ Ensure affordability for varying levels of income and needs ▪ Raise awareness through public education ▪ Build affordable housing by using grants
<p>Land Use & Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect existing open space from impacts of new development ▪ Encourage dedication of some open space to a land preservation agency ▪ Require mandatory setbacks for buildings ▪ Allow mixed-use where appropriate ▪ Require berms and trees in commercial areas
<p>Maintenance & Appearance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uniform walls along major streets ▪ Clean and well-maintained commercial areas ▪ Conforming signage ▪ Fully maintained and landscaped public right of ways
<p>Open Space & Recreation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and expand open space ▪ Create a local communication center ▪ Protect and preserve views ▪ Ensure appropriate use and access of space and facilities ▪ Create a safe and well-maintained environment ▪ Mandate a regular goal review and public reporting of results
<p>Transportation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a passenger train station, park and ride, and community transit system ▪ Promote education and enforcement of traffic laws ▪ Improve traffic flow in commercial zones ▪ Improve directional signage ▪ Maintain proper traffic signal synchronization

Youth Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a gathering place for young people with entertainment, restaurants, and places to hang out ▪ Increase street lighting for pedestrian and driver safety ▪ Increase landscaping along roads, streets, and islands ▪ Improve maintenance and appearance of school facilities ▪ Improve appearance of walls along major roads ▪ Update activities at community centers and parks ▪ Enforce laws against tagging
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After taking part in a workshop and rehearsal, committee chairs presented their committees' recommendations in February 2008. Over 200 people who live, work, learn, and play in Hacienda Heights attended the Community Presentation, including Supervisor Don Knabe, along with his Planning and Field Deputies; the Director of Regional Planning, along with several members of his senior staff and multiple planners; leaders from other county agencies; local community and school leaders; and, residents from all corners of the community. The committee chairs presented their recommendations on how to address key issues in the Plan. After the presentation, attendees participated in an interactive Open House, which provided an opportunity for attendees to provide feedback, ask questions, and view committee posters depicting key recommendations.

The Community Presentation in February 2008 culminated the formal community participation phase. During this phase, community members successfully and purposefully articulated a clear vision of the future, identified their most important issues, developed draft goals and policies, prioritized their recommendations, and shared their recommendations with their friends, neighbors, elected leaders, and service providers. Through their hard work and dedication, the residents of Hacienda Heights developed the foundation of the Hacienda Heights Community Plan. Participants exceeded expectations at every step in the process and truly proved themselves to be experts on their community.

Community Activities

In addition to community meetings, two outdoor activities were held to engage community members and evaluate community issues in new and exciting ways. In August 2007, Planning in the Park was held at Los Robles Park. The purpose of this event was to allow residents who were unable to attend regularly scheduled community meetings to learn about the Community Plan Update effort, to review work that had been produced, and to make suggestions for areas of focus. This event provided residents and planners an opportunity to discuss issues on a one-on-one basis. New participants were brought into the process and planners learned about people's personal concerns and desires for the community. In October 2007, a community Walk-About was held. Participants formed two groups and took to the streets to get an "eyes-on" perspective of specific community issues through a guided walk through commercial areas, residential neighborhoods, and along major thoroughfares. Participants' observations were collected with cameras, by facilitators who took notes, and via a survey administered at the end of the walk.

These two activities took participants and planners out of the traditional community meeting setting to explore Hacienda Heights in interactive and dynamic ways. Participants' observations and activity outcomes supplemented the work conducted during the community meetings.

Youth Engagement

The Hacienda Heights Community Plan Update process sought to engage and include all residents of Hacienda Heights. As the future residents, employees, employers, and leaders of Hacienda Heights, the youth of the community played a key role in developing the Plan. Starting in November 2008, a dedicated group of high school students from Hacienda Heights began to attend community meetings and formed a Youth Planning Committee. This committee co-presented with planners on the Community Plan Update to their classmates at school and administered a survey to their fellow students to gather information on youth's issues and priorities in the community. Representatives from the Youth Planning Committee presented their results at the February 2008 Community Presentation.

The committee members' enthusiasm and creativity led them to continue to explore youth-related issues beyond the presentation. In two subsequent workshops, the committee members brainstormed possible activities to explore their issues and designed a specific, original initiative related to the issues they care about most: access to healthy foods; safe, family-friendly places to gather; and environmental stewardship. Implemented in July 2008, the Hacienda Heights Restaurant Evaluation Demonstration Project sought to explore the current restaurant situation in Hacienda Heights as it relates to food options, recycling, and ambiance. Using a survey, rating tool, maps, and cameras, Youth Planning Committee members worked with planners and a public health official to survey restaurants in the community's main commercial corridor. Participants discovered more healthy food options than they had anticipated and also identified areas that could be improved, such as recycling and reusable container use. These results were somewhat unexpected and point to a promising area for future study and exploration.

The work done with the Youth Planning Committee was ground-breaking and original. For the first time in Regional Planning history, planners partnered with students as part of a Community Plan Update for an unincorporated area. Participants gathered observations and data that were used to create useful tools to support community health now. The results of the students' work also helped develop policies that will encourage healthy, environmentally-friendly practices for the future, and ensure that Hacienda Heights continues to meet the evolving needs of its young people.

Community Knowledge Building

In addition to the meetings and activities in which Hacienda Heights residents directly participated to shape the future of their community, specific products and tools were created throughout the Community Plan Update process to provide information to people outside of meeting times.

You Spoke, We Listened was released after each community meeting in order to provide prompt and thorough answers to questions raised during the meetings. Published in five installments, the documents provided information on activities and resources throughout the community and county. Issues included wireless internet networks, incorporation, graffiti, home loans, water maintenance, and trash collection. The last installment provided information on community plan implementation, funding, and next steps, which was specifically requested at the Community Presentation. *You Spoke, We Listened* became a valuable means through which to answer questions and provide information on community issues.

The Community Plan Update Poster provided a “snapshot” of the entire community participation phase of the Community Plan Update. The purpose of the poster plan was to synthesize the work completed during the community participation phase, generate enthusiasm for the Plan Update, and provide information on important next steps. The poster included a timeline of the award-winning community participation phase, key committee recommendations, and the action plan that serves as the organizational framework for the Plan. The poster was distributed throughout the community in both a small and large-format to increase awareness about opportunities for involvement and to provide information on the planning process.

Expectations, Assumptions and Constraints

The Hacienda Heights Community Plan articulates a clear vision of the future and lays out a path to get there. While visionary and progressive, the Plan takes into consideration certain expectations, assumptions, and constraints. The Community Plan will be implemented in the context of the political, economic, and social realities of Los Angeles County. Recognizing this will help to ensure that the Plan is a real, workable, and actionable tool for change, grounded in the realities of the environment in which it will be implemented.

The Plan is expected to be used as a blueprint for future growth and development in the community. It is expected that:

- Community members will use the Plan to gauge the success of growth and development in their community and to hold service providers and elected leaders accountable to their commitments over time;
- Private individuals will use the Plan when making decisions about what to build and provide to ensure a high quality of life;
- Planners will use the Plan to determine whether new proposed projects are in line with the community’s priorities and values;
- Service providers will look to the Plan to decide which projects are priorities for the community; and,
- Elected leaders will use the Plan to guide their decisions about where, how, and when to allocate resources.

Most importantly, it is expected that community members and other stakeholders will continue to play an active role in shaping their future by working with service providers to evaluate and monitor the Plan’s success on an ongoing basis. This strong partnership will continue to serve the community during Plan implementation and evaluation over time.

In addition to these expectations, the Plan assumes continued availability of County resources and support. While additional funding sources are identified within the Plan for specific programs and projects, political and financial support, plus strong leadership on the part of the County, will all be required to harness existing resources and acquire additional ones to implement the Plan. The Plan also assumes the consistent and continuous interest of community members. Residents, business owners, and community leaders in Hacienda Heights will need to serve as stewards to help guide and monitor the Plan’s implementation, and to communicate with elected officials and service providers about their wishes and concerns.

Finally, the Plan recognizes several constraints that could affect implementation, including fluctuations in available funding and staff resources from the County. Recognizing these

constraints, the Plan identifies potential sources for supplemental funding and partners for each action area. The Plan also creates a program to institutionalize collaborative monitoring, evaluation, and stewardship. With these mechanisms in place, the Plan has the best possible chance of guiding growth and development to meet the community's needs today and realize its vision in the future.

Planning Values

All aspects of the Community Plan are informed by a set of core values that ground and guide the Plan. The core values of the Hacienda Heights Community Plan are:

Collaboration

The issues and actions identified in the Community Plan are multi-dimensional and complex. As such, it takes a collaborative effort to accomplish the Plan's goals. Working in partnership with like-minded individuals from public agencies, private organizations, and throughout the community, participants in planning and implementation of the Plan can come together to achieve the community's vision.

Participation

The dedicated commitment and ongoing participation of community members, service providers and elected officials will ensure that the Plan's implementation over time remains in line with what they envision. Community participation also demonstrates to elected leaders and service providers that constituents support the implementation of the Plan and expect results.

Accountability

By adopting this Plan, elected leaders have expressed their commitment to achieving the community's vision by adhering to the Plan's goals and policies and by implementing the action plan. Accountability among individuals and organizations means that everyone is aware of and takes responsibility for what they have committed to in this Plan.

Community Oversight

This Plan was guided by and created for community members. Their oversight is critical to ensuring that the Plan remains true to their collective vision. Community oversight is built into the Plan to achieve this through continued partnerships and open communication between citizens and service providers.

Stewardship

In order for the Community Plan to be effective in achieving the community's goals, people who live, learn, work, and play in Hacienda Heights will have to take an active role in ensuring the Plan's timely and thorough implementation. The Community Stewards Program formally establishes a role for community volunteers to serve as liaisons between the community and the service providers and to provide insights into the community's perspective of the Plan's effectiveness.