

## 8.15 Northwestern Communities

### A. INTRODUCTION

- Covina Islands
- East Irwindale

#### Northwestern Communities

Covina Islands and East Irwindale, referred to here as the Northwestern Communities, are approximately 1.3 square miles and 1.5 square miles in size, respectively, and located in the northwest portion of the Planning Area. The Northwestern Communities are mostly flat, with curvilinear street layouts that usually end in cul-de-sacs. Major streets are paralleled by frontage roads that serve local residents. East Irwindale is southwest of Covina Islands, and these communities share boundaries with the city of Covina to the east, the city of West Covina to the south, the cities of Irwindale and Baldwin Park to the west, and the cities of Azusa and Glendora to the north. The unincorporated community of Charter Oak is located to the east of Covina Islands.

### B. COMMUNITY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following presents a summary of community challenges and opportunities learned from community feedback and an analysis of existing conditions in the Northwestern Communities (see **Table NWC-1, *Northwestern Communities Challenges and Opportunities***). The list of challenges and opportunities serves to inform the preparation of community-specific land use, zoning, policies, and programs for the Northwestern Communities.

**TABLE NWC-1 Northwestern Communities Challenges and Opportunities**

#### 1. Residential

**Housing Types.** Most of the existing land uses in East Irwindale and Covina Islands are single-family homes, resulting in a lack of diverse housing types.

**Housing Age.** The existing housing stock in East Irwindale and Covina Islands was largely built at the same time and upgrades to the housing stock have been sporadic over several decades. There is an opportunity to invest in upgrades, including updated façade treatments.

**Public Services to Residents.** Covina Islands and East Irwindale largely consist of residential land uses surrounded by incorporated cities. There may be inefficiencies and inequities with the provision of public services for these unincorporated islands. One option to alleviate these inequities is to determine the feasibility of annexation of the islands into one of the neighboring jurisdictions.

**TABLE NWC-1 Northwestern Communities Challenges and Opportunities**

**VS 2, *Diverse, Walkable Communities*, addresses the above by upgrading existing housing stock, updating existing zoning, and increasing housing diversity.**

**2. Commercial**

**Revitalization.** A cluster of commercial parcels is located north of Arrow Highway at Clydebank Avenue in East Irwindale, and Cypress Street, west of Citrus Avenue in Covina Islands. Based on the central location and existing uses in these clusters, parcels along these major corridors could be revitalized with façade treatments and pedestrian infrastructure to serve as community plazas or centers.

**Community-Serving Uses.** There is an opportunity to revitalize existing uses that consist of underutilized deep lots, auto-related uses, a community market, and strip mall with community-serving uses.

**Commercial Nodes.** Opportunities should be explored in both communities to create commercial nodes at key intersections along active transportation routes and within the three major transit areas.

**VS 3, *Connected and Active Communities*, addresses the above by improving existing commercial nodes and enhancing underutilized sites in the Northwestern Communities to provide revitalized and thriving commercial uses to residents.**

**3. Industrial and Employment Uses**

**Employment.** An industrial employment center exists on Arrow Highway, east of Barranca Avenue, which presents potential opportunities to direct opportunities and revitalization.

**Commercial Opportunities.** Revitalize existing vacant sites within a half-mile radius of a major transit stop with commercial uses that increase employment opportunities.

**VS 4, *Thriving Economy and Workforce*, addresses the above by identifying goals for business attraction, retention, and growth in the Northwestern Communities.**

**4. Access and Connectivity**

**Community Identity.** Covina Islands consists of five different unincorporated islands interspersed throughout existing incorporated city boundaries, creating difficulty in determining community boundaries, which can limit community identity and make navigation confusing.

**Pedestrian Infrastructure.** Some residential streets in East Irwindale and Covina Islands lack sidewalks, which can make it difficult to walk around the neighborhood, and access community amenities on foot. There is an opportunity to enhance access by improving pedestrian infrastructure, if feasible.



### TABLE NWC-1 **Northwestern Communities Challenges and Opportunities**

**Connectivity.** The current street network in the Northwestern Communities consists of neighborhood blocks terminating in cul-de-sacs, with a lack of sidewalks and homogenous land use types. These conditions increase automobile reliance, exacerbating air quality, pollution, and noise. There is an opportunity to increase connectivity by improving the active transportation infrastructure.

**Enhancement of Frontage Roads.** Frontage roads in East Irwindale and Covina Islands—including Cypress Street and Gladstone Street, respectively—work to shield faster-moving traffic from residential streets. There are opportunities to further enhanced them to include transit amenities like bus shelters, and mobility amenities like wider sidewalks, bike paths, street trees, and parklets to improve walkability and provide additional open spaces areas.

**Waterways.** San Dimas Wash and Big Dalton Wash connect to the San Gabriel River. Where feasible, routes parallel to the channel should be accessible to residents to access the San Gabriel River Trail and create urban pathways with greenery.

**VS 2, Diverse, Walkable Communities, and VS 3, Connected and Active Communities, address the above by enhancing existing infrastructure such as roads and sidewalks to increase pedestrian access and create community identity.**

#### 5. Traffic and Transportation

**Active Transportation.** Covina Islands is surrounded by major transit stops that are not particularly walkable from the community but are accessible by biking. This presents an opportunity to increase transit use through improved active transportation infrastructure for people on bicycles. There is an opportunity for new development in growth areas to connect to County-proposed bike paths along active transportation routes.

**VS 1, Sustainable Growth Patterns, VS 2, Diverse, Walkable Communities, and VS 3, Connected and Active Communities, address the above by increasing transit access and development of bike lanes along active transportation routes.**

#### 6. Public Realm

**Tree Canopy.** The existing tree canopy in East Irwindale and Covina Islands is sporadic and in some areas is nonexistent. There are opportunities in these areas to improve the tree canopy, which can provide shelter and shade for pedestrians, help lower ambient temperatures, reduce heat island effects, and make walking in the public realm a more pleasurable experience.

**Greenways.** There is an opportunity in the community of East Irwindale to create greenways with pedestrian improvements, such as trees and other greenery, on the frontage streets located at the intersection of Cypress Street and Lark Ellen Avenue. In addition, where feasible, vacant and underutilized areas along frontage roads can be revitalized with public realm improvements like bioswales, greenways, and pocket parks.

**TABLE NWC-1 Northwestern Communities Challenges and Opportunities**

**VS 5, *Shared Community Identity and Character*, addresses the above by focusing on street beautification in the Northwestern Communities, including improvements like tree canopy, bioswales, and greenways.**

**7. Preservation**

**Areas in Industry and Highways.** Development should be discouraged in areas in proximity to I-210, near industrial uses within the cities of Baldwin Park and Azusa.

**Mining Areas.** Development should be discouraged in areas near active mining, such as residential uses to the east of Vincent Avenue. Areas with active mining should be buffered to avoid erosion, poor air quality, and contamination of soil and ground and surface water.

**Freight Lines.** Development should be discouraged near active rail located in both communities. Active freight creates issues related to traffic, noise, and light that are not conducive to daily living and makes it difficult to create walkable, connected neighborhoods.

**8. Open Space**

**Parks Needs.** Based on the 2016 Park Needs Assessment, this area has high and moderate park needs, with approximately 50% of residents, concentrated in the southern and eastern neighborhoods, in high need of park space.

**VS 6, *Sustainable Built and Natural Environment*, addresses the above by identifying the areas in each community where growth would be avoided and where existing natural resources would be preserved.**

**Land Use**

The **Covina Islands** and **East Irwindale Land Use Maps**, found in Appendix E, *Land Use Maps*, present land use designations and establish the general location and diversity of each land use in the Northwestern Communities.

**C. COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC POLICIES**

The following provides the policies for the Northwestern Communities, which include Covina Islands and East Irwindale, organized to implement each of the six elements of the Area Plan and address the community-specific issues and opportunities presented above. Each policy is linked to a relevant vision statement (referenced as “VS”), as presented in Chapter 1, *Introduction*, of this Area Plan.



## VS 1 – Sustainable Growth Patterns

See Land Use Policy LU-1.2.

### Policy NWC-1



**Policy NWC-1: Complete Communities.** Enhance community access, connectivity, services, and amenities within walking distance of residential neighborhoods. Focus amenities and services along primary roads connecting residential neighborhoods to commercial centers and major transit in the northwest of East Irwindale along Arrow Highway and Azusa Avenue, as well as in key commercial nodes near major transit at Azusa Avenue and Gladstone Street, along Barranca Avenue, and at Barranca Avenue and Arrow Highway in Covina Islands.

**Policy NWC-2: Sensitive Uses.** Discourage sensitive uses in Covina Islands that are within 500 feet of I-210 to the north along Baseline Road, and near industrial uses to the southeast on Arrow Highway, where they would be exposed to increased levels of air pollution.

## VS 2 – Diverse, Walkable Communities

### RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING DIVERSITY

**Policy NWC-3: Affordable Housing.** Support opportunities to provide low-income and affordable housing options in the Northwestern Communities. Consider vacant lots in the northern portion of the community between Gladstone Street and Vincent Avenue in East Irwindale.



**Policy NWC-4: Annexation.** Discourage annexations of the Northwestern Communities that would involve smaller islands that may cause an inefficient configuration for fair distribution of community services. Where feasible, further investigation may be needed to determine the long-term viability of smaller, unincorporated islands, like Covina Islands and East Irwindale, remaining independent of their city neighbors.

**Policy NWC-5: Central Walkable Districts.** Support creation of redeveloped mixed-use commercial nodes and walkable districts at large, underutilized public/semi-public parcels, such as the Tri-Community Griswold Adult Education Center in East Irwindale and the Edison easement in Covina Islands, both of which can be enhanced as a central open space corridor.

**Policy NWC-6: Pedestrian Improvements.** Support improving pedestrian infrastructure along major intersections. Consider intersections at Cypress Street and Lark Ellen Avenue in East Irwindale—which would support youth at the school on the southwest corner and a daycare southeast of the intersection—and the frontage roads east, south, and west of the Covina Boulevard and Hollenbeck Avenue intersection in Covina Islands.

## COMMERCIAL CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

**Policy NWC-7: Downtown Corridor.** Enhance Arrow Highway in the northern portion of East Irwindale as a pedestrian-oriented downtown and commercial corridor.

**Policy NWC-8: Existing Commercial Centers.** Strengthen and enhance existing commercial centers on Irwindale Avenue, Vincent Avenue, Lark Ellen Avenue, and Azusa Avenue in East Irwindale, and on Barranca Avenue and Arrow Highway to provide retail needs for residents of Covina Islands.

Additional revitalization and adaptive reuse opportunities exist at the following commercial nodes in East Irwindale:

- Southwest corner of Gladstone Street and Azusa Avenue, within the major transit area and at the northeast entrance to the community;
- Arrow Highway, west of Lark Ellen Avenue and east of Clydebank where it backs onto the water channel. This area is also close to the active transportation route and proposed bike paths;
- South side of Renwick Road, east of Clydebank Avenue; this area contains deep lots, backs onto the public easement area, and is located near the Valleydale Park;
- Southwest corner of Edna Place and North Vincent Avenue;
- San Bernardino Road and N. Irwindale, where a commercial center is located.

**Policy NWC-9: Healthy Food.** Explore opportunities for smaller grocery stores within commercial centers in both communities to increase access to healthy food options. In East Irwindale, focus grocery stores along Arrow Highway and Vincent Avenue.

## MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AND VILLAGE CENTERS

**Policy NWC-10: Village Centers.** Support development of a village center in the northern portion of the East Irwindale at Arrow Highway and Clydebank Avenue, within one mile of major transit (Arrow Highway and Azusa Avenue) and in Covina Islands along Barranca Avenue, south of I-210, and near Gladstone Street and Hollenbeck Avenue where access to amenities, services, and connections through greenways is high.

**Policy NWC-11: Social Gathering Area.** Support additional social gathering areas near existing schools through enhanced public park and open space amenities in the Northwestern Communities. Prioritize locations in the northern portion of East Irwindale within one mile of major transit at Arrow Highway and Lark Ellen Avenue, near Ellington Elementary School, Valleydale Elementary School, and Gladstone High School; and in the southern portion of East Irwindale at Irwindale Avenue and San Bernardino Road, near Manzanita Elementary School.

## PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC FACILITIES

See Land Use Policy LU-3.18.

### Policy NWC-12

**Policy NWC-12: Joint-Use Facilities in East Irwindale.** Support partnerships with schools in the community—Ellington Elementary School to the north and Manzanita Elementary School to the south—to jointly use their facilities and resources, including parks, playgrounds, libraries, community centers, daycare facilities, and other resources, to increase access to recreational and other amenities for nearby residents.

## PARKS, OPEN SPACES, AND TRAILS

**Policy NWC-13: Park Needs.** Support creation of new parks and open space in the southern portion of the Northwestern Communities, near San Bernardino Road between Irwindale Avenue and Vincent Avenue in East Irwindale, and along Rockvale Avenue at Orkey Street, toward the western portion of Covina Islands. Explore opportunities to provide additional parks and open space amenities in the Northwestern Communities to fill the need for parks that are accessible from residential neighborhoods on foot.



## VS 3 – Connected and Active Communities

**Policy NWC-14: Complete Streets.** Support complete streets development from neighborhoods leading to commercial centers on Arrow Highway, Cypress Street, Vincent Avenue, and Irwindale Avenue in East Irwindale, and major transit and commercial centers at the following nodes in Covina Islands: Arrow Highway and Azusa Avenue, Barranca Avenue and Azusa Avenue, Gladstone Street and Hollenbeck Avenue, and Gladstone and Barranca Avenue.

**Policy NWC-15: Waterways and Trails.** Support development of urban trails and greenways along Big Dalton and San Dimas Washes to enhance community connectivity and connect residential neighborhoods to the village center on Arrow Highway in East Irwindale and in the northern and southern portions of Covina Islands, as well as connecting to active transportation infrastructure and transit stops. Consider repurposing vacant land adjacent to the waterways for the development of pathways and greenways.

**Policy NWC-16: Coordinate with Adjacent Cities.** Work with the City of Azusa to create urban pathways connecting residential neighborhoods in Covina Islands to Gladstone Park to the west on Pasadena Avenue, to provide greater access to parks and open space for residents.

See Chapter 7, *Mobility Element*, for related policies.

### Policy NWC-14

## VS 4 – Shared Community Identity and Character

**Policy NWC-17: Street Beautification.** Beautify and reinforce East Irwindale's and Covina Islands' identity and character through added street trees, lighting, community signage, bike lanes, public art, bioswales, greenways, and pocket parks. Prioritize beautification of major corridors that lead to commercial centers, major transit, and provide entrance to East Irwindale, including Arrow Highway, Cypress Street, Lark Ellen Avenue, San Bernardino Road, Irwindale Avenue, and Vincent Road; and major corridors that traverse and provide entrance to Covina Islands, including Arrow Highway, Gladstone Street, Barranca Avenue, and Citrus Avenue.



**Policy NWC-18: Frontage Roads to Greenways.** Support readapting select existing frontage roads in Covina Islands as urban greenways to provide attractive buffers between major streets and residential neighborhoods.

See Community Character and Design Policy CC-1.8.

**Policy NWC-19**

**Policy NWC-19: Community Gateways.** Mark prominent community entrance points with special design and architectural enhancements. Prioritize the entrances on major corridors near major transit, including Arrow Highway, Citrus Avenue, Lark Ellen Avenue, San Bernardino Road, and Cypress Street in East Irwindale; and at Gladstone Avenue, Citrus Avenue, Barranca Avenue, Arrow Highway, and Cypress Street in Covina Islands

## VS 5 – Thriving Economy and Workforce

**Policy NWC-20: Retail Industry.** Promote new retail businesses within commercial centers, and vacant and underutilized sites to add to the community’s retail diversity and bring more shops to East Irwindale and proposed commercial centers in Covina Islands.

**Policy NWC-21: Employment Center.** Provide resources for the community by creating employment centers around top industries and business uses, such as an industrial employment center on Arrow Highway, east of Barranca Avenue.

**Policy NWC-22: Business Retention and Growth.** Support the retention and growth of local retail shops, market, and small businesses through economic development strategies that enable businesses to easily and efficiently navigate the permitting process, gain access to resources, and adapt to fluctuating markets.

## VS 6 – Sustainable Built and Natural Environment

**Policy NWC-23: Waterways.** Maintain, protect, restore, and enhance the existing waterways—Big Dalton Wash, Little Dalton Wash, and San Dimas Wash— where feasible, as natural resources and assets that contribute to the community identity, beautification, and culture.