- 1.1 Overview
- 1.2 Communities, Vision, and Purpose
- 1.3 Organization of the Area Plan
- 1.4 Relationship of the Area Plan to Other County and Regional Plans
- 1.5 Community Engagement
- 1.6 History
- 1.7 Methodology

Sections Included



CHAPTER 1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The East San Gabriel Valley Area Plan (ESGVAP) is a policy document intended to direct future development and land use decisions and achieve a shared vision for the potential growth and change of the built environment over the coming years and decades. The ESGVAP focuses on land use and policy issues specific to the unique characteristics and needs of the East San Gabriel Valley Planning Area (Planning Area) and its communities.

1.2 Communities, Vision, and Purpose

A. COMMUNITIES

The Planning Area includes the easternmost parts of Los Angeles County (County) and totals approximately 51.3 square miles. The Planning Area is located south of the Angeles National Forest, north of Orange County, and east of San Bernardino County, with the San Gabriel River and Interstate (I)-605 forming its western boundary.



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The Planning Area is comprised of the following 24 unincorporated islands and communities (see **Figure 1-1**, **ESGVAP Communities**):

- Avocado Heights
- Charter Oak
- Covina Islands
- East Azusa
- East Irwindale
- East San Dimas
- Glendora Islands
- Hacienda Heights
- North Claremont
- North Pomona
- Northeast La Verne
- Northeast San Dimas
- Rowland Heights
- South Diamond Bar
- South San Jose Hills
- South Walnut
- Valinda
- West Claremont
- West Puente Valley
- West San Dimas
- Pellissier Village
- Unincorporated South El Monte
- Unincorporated North Whittier

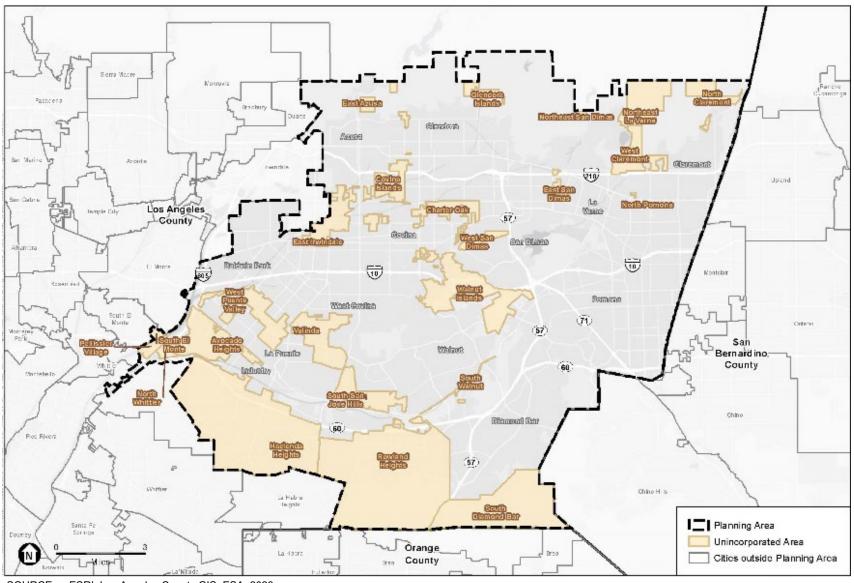
The Planning Area has a population of over 242,034 residents with a population density ranging from 18 to 14,100 persons per square mile, incorporating a considerable diversity of communities. Most of the communities are predominantly residential with some industrial and commercial areas. However, some of the communities are unpopulated or have very few residences and are primarily designated open space, water resource areas, or natural land without recent human development.











SOURCE: ESRI, Los Angeles County GIS, ESA, 2023

FIGURE 1-1 ESGVAP Communities



The Planning Area is well connected to the regional transportation system with extensive freeway access including I-605 along the western boundary, I-210 and I-10 in the north, SR-60 running through the central area, and SR-57 in the east connecting to Orange County. In addition, railroad lines for both commuter and goods movement run through the area, including the Alameda Corridor-East. However, the connectivity to freeways and goods movement corridors do have impacts on residential communities creating barriers to movement, air quality issues, and perpetuating reliance on automobiles.

One of the most valued assets voiced by community members is the wealth of natural features, including the San Gabriel Mountains and Puente Hills, which contribute to the distinctive ecological and scenic qualities of the region. The Planning Area contains many parks, open spaces, trails, and natural areas without development where native and rare animal and plant species can be found. Much of the hillside and habitat areas are designated Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs), which provides additional protections to minimize impacts of development to habitat areas and the increasingly rare plant and animal communities found there.

Planning efforts for the ESGVAP have sought to build upon community engagement and local assets, while addressing issues and concerns voiced by local organizations and community members. Some of the primary concerns the ESGVAP seeks to address include diversifying housing types, pedestrian connectivity, deteriorating commercial infrastructure, residential-industrial land use conflicts, and preservation of habitat areas.

B. VISION

The overarching vision of the ESGVAP is to conserve the character of the East San Gabriel Valley communities, while growing sustainably into a dynamic regional hub that provides diverse options for housing, shopping, entertainment, recreation, and services for its residents, workers, and visitors. While each of the 24 unincorporated communities in the ESGV Planning Area has its own unique set of characteristics and growth potential, the ESGVAP supports the community-wide desire to preserve the rural and equestrian character of the East San Gabriel Valley.

The connective thread that links the 24 communities together is captured in the following seven vision statements that together



represent the vision for the future. These vision statements provide the foundation for the development of growth and preservation strategies, as well as the goals, policies, and implementation programs for the ESGVAP.

Sustainable Growth Patterns

Growth in the ESGV Planning Area will be sustainably targeted, away from established residential neighborhoods, hazard areas and natural resources, and towards areas with existing and future transit opportunities. These targeted growth areas will be largely within a mile of major transit stops and within a half mile of high-quality transit corridors to capture the economic value induced by the presence of transit stations and corridors. Additionally, growth will be targeted within a quarter mile of commercial centers where new residents can easily access everyday goods and services. Growth will be coordinated with infrastructure and public facility investments to ensure sufficient capacity to sustain a high-quality level of service to meet the needs of existing and future development.

Diverse, Walkable Communities

While the developed communities contain primarily single-family residential uses, growth moving forward will strive to bring residents more diverse land use and housing choices and bring everyday services and amenities within walking distance. Aging commercial centers will be revitalized to become destination places for gathering, outdoor dining, and shopping for daily services. New commercial centers will be permitted at neighborhood gateways to bring everyday needs closer to homes. Single-family neighborhoods will be enabled to provide more affordable housing choices. Community facilities will be equitably distributed to support the mental, physical, emotional, and social needs of all who live within the Planning Area.

Connected and Active Communities

The Planning Area will consist of walkable neighborhoods and communities, with safe and convenient access to transit, jobs, shopping, entertainment, health, and recreational services to support active, healthy lifestyles, and a clean environment. The mobility network will provide safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Neighborhood greenways will connect communities, parks, waterways, and open spaces together across the Planning Area with distinct signage to mark routes to key destinations and provide a sense of community identity.



Thriving Economy and Workforce

The ESGV will be an economically thriving region, with a business-friendly environment that fosters innovation and the expansion of the Planning Area's strong industry niches. Employment opportunities will be expanded through economic development strategies that support the needs of existing businesses and attract quality jobs that match residents' skillsets. Residents will be able to live and work in their own communities. Priority will be given to strengthening the workforce, with improved access to education and economic resources, to reduce economic and financial stress and support the health and resilience of businesses and the workforce in the Planning Area.

Shared Community Identity and Character

The Planning Area will be tied together through a shared sense of pride and commitment to protecting and reinforcing the community characteristics that make it a special place to live, work, and play. Community identity will be reinforced through placemaking, compatible development, and design treatments. Community identity and character will be represented in public spaces and facilities, street beautification projects, community gateways, wayfinding signage, village centers, and other special places and destinations that are shared amenities for residents.

Sustainable Built and Natural Environment

The built environment across the Planning Area will reflect sustainability best practices, contributing to the goal of reducing greenhouse gas reductions and facilitating a cleaner environment. The ESGV's rich natural setting—made up of conservation areas, open spaces, undeveloped lands, and water resources—will be preserved, enhanced, and restored for the continued benefit, safety, and health of the current and future population, wildlife, and habitat areas.

Informed, Empowered, and Environmentally Just Community

The Planning Area residents will be informed, actively engaged, and empowered to participate as partners at all stages of the planning and decision-making process. Land use decisions are made through the lens of environmental justice, considering the varied needs of all residents, especially those who are most vulnerable. Disadvantaged



communities will be prioritized in the allocation of funding and capital investments, to ensure the equitable distribution of resources and amenities, and to address environmental injustices, correct social and economic inequities, and support the health, safety, and well-being of all residents.

C. PURPOSE

The purpose of the ESGVAP is to respond to local planning challenges, guide long-term development, enhance community spaces, promote a stable and pleasant environment, balance growth and preservation, and promote housing to enhance quality of life and support vibrant, thriving, safe, healthy communities in East San Gabriel Valley.

The primary objectives of the ESGVAP are to:

- Retain the residential character of the ESGV Planning Area in harmony with its surroundings;
- Promote economic development via an active regional hub near transportation centers with diverse options for housing, shopping, entertainment, recreation, and public services;
- Develop goals, policies, and implementation programs that support smart growth, sustainable development, and thoughtful enhancement of residential neighborhoods while preserving specific community's rural and equestrian character;
- Establish more public spaces and create walkable communities linked by paths and greenways; and
- Encourage a diversity of housing options and affordability.

The ESGVAP includes area-wide goals, policies, and implementation programs within six different elements. The ESGVAP also includes changes to land use designations to increase residential density and locate commercial and mixed uses in areas near transit. The ESGVAP provides a framework for the County, the development community, business owners, and residents to shape future growth in the Planning Area.



1.3 Organization of the Area Plan

The Area Plan is organized into the following nine chapters.

- Chapter 1, *Introduction*, provides the intent and purpose of the ESGVAP, along with the guiding vision statements and its relationship to other documents.
- Chapters 2 through 7 comprise the six ESGVAP area-wide elements, which describe the key challenges and opportunities under each topic area and provide goals and policies to achieve the vision of the Area Plan. The area-wide elements are applicable to all 24 unincorporated communities and include the following:
 - Chapter 2, Land Use Element, provides guidance on the regulation and distribution of land uses to promote sustainable growth patterns in support of the Area Plan's vision.
 - Chapter 3, Economic Development Element, provides a framework for an economically and fiscally equitable and sustainable ESGV.
 - Chapter 4, Community Character and Design Element, includes goals and policies in support of enhancing community identity, placemaking, and high-quality design.
 - Chapter 5, Natural Resources, Conservation, and Open Space Element, establishes goals and priorities to guide conservation of open space, biological, water, and scenic resources in the ESGV.
 - Chapter 6, Parks and Recreation Element, establishes goals, policies, and strategies to address the park and recreation needs of the ESGV.
 - Chapter 7, Mobility Element, provides goals and policies that support efficient and safe mobility across diverse modes, with an emphasis on facilitating active transportation and transit use.
- Chapter 8, East San Gabriel Valley Unincorporated
 Communities, highlights goals and policies unique to each
 individual community in the East San Gabriel Valley Area.
- Chapter 9, Implementation Programs and Actions, contains a
 list of actions and programs that will implement the goals and
 policies presented in Chapters 2 through 8. The chapter describes
 which County departments and agencies are responsible for
 implementation programs and sets a timeframe for completion of
 those programs.



A. HOW TO USE THE AREA PLAN

The ESGVAP outlines a vision, goals, policies, and programs that will shape the land, communities, neighborhoods, and places of the East San Gabriel Valley Area. The ESGVAP, used in conjunction with the LA County General Plan, will guide land use decision-making and serve several important roles: (1) Setting direction for County administration, County staff, and elected and appointed officials, including County planning commissioners, regarding the long-range land use needs of those who live, work and recreate in the East San Gabriel Valley Area communities; (2) Informing community-based organizations, business owners, developers, designers, and builders of the County's plans for the future and development priorities; and (3) Communicating the agreed upon future form of the East San Gabriel Valley Area communities to ensure accountability of decision makers in achieving the goals of this plan. Table 1-1, User Groups and Intended Use of the Area Plan, outlines how the plan may be referenced by three main user groups.

TABLE 1-1 User Groups and Intended Use of the Area Plan

Main User	Intended Use of the Area Plan
County Staff, Commissions, and Elected Officials	Provides direction regarding the long-range land use needs for those that live, work, and recreate in the East San Gabriel Valley Area communities.
	Communicates the agreed-upon future form of the East San Gabriel Valley Area communities to ensure accountability of decision makers in achieving the goals of this plan.
	Helps guide the County's capital improvements program, zoning ordinance, and zoning maps for future improvements and developments.
	Encourages alignment with other County planning documents including, but not limited to, the Bike Master Plan, the Vision Zero Plan, and the OurCounty Sustainability Plan.
	Consolidates regulations that exist across multiple plans to simplify and streamline land use and zoning regulations.
Developers/ Designers/Builders	Informs the County's future plans and development priorities.



TABLE 1-1 User Groups and Intended Use of the Area Plan

Main User	Intended Use of the Area Plan
Residents/Community Organizations/Busines s Owners	Holds the County administration accountable for implementing the identified goals and policies.
	Informs the County's future plans and development priorities.
	Identifies current trends and economic development opportunities.

1.4 Relationship of the Area Plan to Other County and Regional Plans

A. GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan is the foundational document for all communitybased plans that serve the unincorporated areas. To effectively plan and coordinate development in unincorporated areas across a large geographic range, the County adopted a "Planning Areas Framework" in 2015 as part of the General Plan. The purpose of the Planning Areas Framework is to provide a mechanism for local communities to work with the County to develop plans that respond to their unique and diverse character and circumstance. This framework identifies 11 Planning Areas, including the East San Gabriel Valley Area. The General Plan provides goals and policies to achieve countywide planning objectives for unincorporated areas. From here, the County can develop area plans that are tailored toward the unique geographic, demographic, economic, and social diversity of each Planning Area. All area plans are components of and must be consistent with the General Plan goals and policies; see Figure 1-2, Relationship of the General Plan to Community-Based Plans.



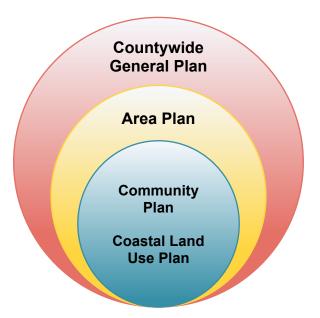


FIGURE 1-2 Relationship of the General Plan to Community-Based Plans

Countywide General Plan Guiding Principles

The General Plan provides the policy framework and establishes the long-range vision for how and where unincorporated areas will grow. It establishes goals, policies, and programs to foster healthy, livable, and sustainable communities. As a component of the General Plan, the ESGVAP is guided by the six General Plan Guiding Principles, which provide the foundation of the ESGVAP and inform its goals, policies, and implementation actions.

The General Plan's Guiding Principles include:

- Employ smart growth: Shape new communities to align housing with jobs and services; protect and conserve the County's natural and cultural resources, including the character of rural communities.
- Ensure community services and infrastructure is sufficient to accommodate growth: Coordinate an equitable sharing of public and private costs associated with providing appropriate community services and infrastructure to meet growth needs.
- 3. Provide the foundation for a strong and diverse economy:

 Protect areas that generate employment and promote programs that support a stable and well-educated workforce. This will provide a foundation for a jobs housing balance and a vital and competitive economy in the unincorporated areas.



- 4. Promote excellence in environmental resource management: Carefully manage the County's natural resources, such as air, water, wildlife habitats, mineral resources, agricultural land, forests, and open space, in an integrated way that is both feasible and sustainable.
- 5. Provide healthy, livable, and equitable communities: Design communities that incorporate their cultural and historic surroundings, are not overburdened by nuisance and negative environmental factors, and provide reasonable access to food systems. These factors have a measurable effect on public well-being.
- 6. **Promote strengths, community voice, and equity outcomes:**Seek out special places or traditions that are significant to the community and recommend ways to preserve and celebrate them.

Furthermore, the ESGVAP correlates with and implements the General Plan's Housing Element as it reinforces Housing Element policies and designates the proposed general distribution, location, and extent of land uses for housing at a range of densities to support housing for all income levels. Because the **Southern California Association of Government's (SCAG's)** 6th Regional Housing Needs Assessment allocation requires accommodating additional residential densities and additional housing affordability options in the ESGV, select land use goals, policies, and strategies in the ESGVAP address the accommodation of diverse housing types at various levels of affordability.

The ESGVAP is closely related to other County planning efforts including relevant transportation and sustainability plans. The goals, policies, and actions contained within these various plans helped to inform, support, align, and guide the goals, policies, and actions prepared for the ESGVAP, which also serve to further implement each plan.

Los Angeles County Community Climate Action Plan 2045

In 2015, the County adopted the 2020 Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP) as a component of the General Plan Air Quality Element and set a target to reduce emissions by 11% by 2020. The document is currently being updated as the 2045 Climate Action Plan (CAP). The 2045 CAP sets new targets and goals beyond 2020, ties together existing climate change initiatives, and provides a blueprint for deep carbon reductions. The 2045 CAP builds upon the existing and

The Southern California
Association of Governments is
an association of local
governments and agencies that
voluntarily convene as a group to
address regional issues.

SCAG is a Joint Powers
Authority under California state
law that was founded in 1965.
Under federal law, SCAG is
designated as a Metropolitan
Planning Organization and,
under state law, as a Regional
Transportation Planning Agency
and a Council of Governments.

SCAG 2021



ongoing efforts of the 2020 CCAP and focuses on actions to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with community activities in unincorporated areas of the county.

The CCAP aligns with General Plan goals, policies, and programs, as well as several other existing programs in the County. The 2045 CAP includes a GHG inventory, projections for future emissions, and a roadmap for addressing emissions from transportation, stationary energy (used by buildings and other facilities), waste, industrial, agricultural, and land use sectors. GHG emission reduction strategies, measures, and actions identified in the 2045 CAP will also yield community co-benefits, such as improvements in air quality, public health, mobility, and resilience. The 2045 CAP also outlines a process for implementation and monitoring that integrates with these ongoing sustainability efforts in the county.

The ESGVAP aligns with several policies and programs of the CCAP relating to the reduction of GHG emissions, the most significant being the targeting of growth near transit, active transportation, and commercial services, as well as expanding pedestrian infrastructure to facilitate walking, biking, and transit use in place of vehicular travel that can lead to increased GHG emissions.

Active Transportation Strategic Plan

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Active Transportation Strategic Plan (ATSP) was adopted in 2016. The ATSP explains how Metro plans to help cities encourage more walking and biking in the county. Metro's goal is to make it easier for people to walk and bike to transit stations and to help cities fund and build regional walk/bike paths that connect communities.

As part of the County's plan to make it easier to use **active transportation**, Metro is working to advance active transportation initiatives and provide more travel options throughout the county. Metro is currently updating the 2016 ATSP, which will further their mission of providing a world-class transportation system. The update will focus specifically on improving the regional active transportation network and first last mile connectivity to transit. Relevant, existing, and proposed initiatives from the ATSP have been incorporated into the ESGVAP to further implement the ATSP and meet the ESGVAP goals of enhancing walkability and integrating land use and mobility throughout its communities.

Active transportation refers to human-powered methods of travel, such as walking, bicycling, or rolling to get from one place to another.

Los Angeles ATSP 2016



Connect Socal

The SCAG 2020–2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (Connect SoCal) is a long-range plan that embodies a collective vision for the region's future and balances future mobility and housing needs with economic, environmental, and public health goals of the region. Connect SoCal was developed with input from local governments, county transportation commissions, tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and local stakeholders within the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura. Fundamental components of the Connect SoCal document contributed to the identification of the ESGV opportunity areas as informed by the SCAG-identified priority growth areas and high-quality transit areas. Additionally, Connect SoCal informed relevant goals, policies, and actions of the ESGVAP.

Step by Step Los Angeles County

Step by Step Los Angeles County – Pedestrian Plans for Unincorporated Communities (Step by Step Los Angeles County) was adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in 2019. The document provides a policy framework on how the County proposes to get more people walking, increase pedestrian safety, and support healthy and active lifestyles. It also includes community pedestrian plans for unincorporated communities in the county. The ESGVAP supports Step by Step Los Angeles County by providing goals and policies related to improving connectivity and pedestrian activity, and by locating new residential development in identified opportunity areas near existing commercial and active transportation corridors.

1.5 Community Engagement

Stakeholder and community engagement was an important foundational backbone to the preparation of the Area Plan. The Engagement Strategy for the Area Plan provides a multi-faceted approach to community outreach. At its core, the strategy is centered around the concept of "meeting people where they are." In addition to traditional methods of community meetings and stakeholder outreach, the Plan team needed to interact with and hear from groups typically not engaged with planning topics and challenges. Often these groups consist of marginalized populations and people who may have different experiences or needs of the built environment.









A variety of public engagement events were held throughout the planning process

For example, young residents are not commonly heard from during community outreach because planning meetings may be held at times when they cannot attend, or they may have difficulty accessing meeting spaces without reliable means of transportation. Spoken language can be another barrier to community outreach, and the planning team recognized the need for the translation of project documents and summaries into multiple languages.

From the concept of "meeting people where they are," the planning team developed an outreach strategy that fused traditional community outreach methods with supplemental methods intended to elevate the voices of marginalized groups. Major engagement events for the ESGVAP included a series of visioning workshops to gain insight into various community member's needs and desires for the neighborhoods.

In addition, other forms and strategies for engagement were used to broaden participation. To involve local students in the planning process, ESGVAP partnered with Y-Plan, a program in the Center for Cities and Schools at UC Berkeley. The partnership was sponsored by then LA County Fourth District Supervisor Janice Hahn's Office. Through this process, local students engaged with the planning process and become empowered to effect positive change within their communities.

The ESGVAP project website contains further information on the Y-Plan outreach effort and for further information about the project's outreach strategies and events, please access our website which contains a full listing of engagement events and activities, https://planning.lacounty.gov/long-range-planning/east-san-gabriel-valley-area-plan/.



An air photo of La Puente, West Covina looking northeast towards the San Gabriel Mountains Source: A Box of Pictures, flickr

1.6 History

The traditional stewards of what is now the United States, Indigenous Peoples have lived in the ESGV area for thousands of years. At the time of contact with the Spanish occupation, Indigenous Peoples living in Southern California lived in villages of 50 to 200 people in canyon areas and along waterways, including the San Gabriel River, other waterways, such as the San Jose and Puente Creeks, and near the drainage areas. Historically, marshland extended east from the San Gabriel River area along the north side of the Puente Hills.



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Indigenous Peoples relied upon this environment for their sustenance. A few examples of their resourcefulness include gathering acorns from oak woodlands for food; willows for thatched shelter; reeds for canoes; plants for basketry; and clay for pottery. Acorns, widely found in the canyons and foothills, were an important food source for Indigenous Americans. When the Spanish arrived in the 18th century, the Catholic Church established a Spanish mission at San Gabriel in 1771, along with a series of other missions across what is today Southern and Central California. The arrival of the Spanish and the mission system in this area devastated Indigenous American populations as they were displaced from their land, endured forced labor, forced conversion to Christianity, and died at alarming rates as a result of poor living conditions, abuse by the Spanish, disease, and other cruel practices that contributed to a long and sustained period of cultural genocide. Groups of Indigenous Peoples continue to reside in the ESGV area. however, having established active governance and cultural and economic opportunities for their respective communities.

The San Gabriel Mission established cattle ranching as its primary land use to trade tallow and hides with incoming ships, which persisted beyond Church ownership of the lands. After Mexico gained independence from Spain, by 1821, they encourage immigration to California by granting private land grant to citizens. In 1833, Mexico declared an end to the mission system and dissolved and secularized the missions, granting those lands to individuals as well, which resulted in the rancho system. Indigenous Americans were not granted lands by Mexico, but they did work on the ranchos.

The La Puente land grant, or Rancho La Puente, was granted by the Mexican governor of California to William Workman and John Rowland in 1845, totaling 48,790 acres from what is now Hacienda Heights north to Covina and from the San Gabriel River east to Walnut and Pomona. The historic Rancho La Puente makes up much of the ESGV Planning Area. Cattle, sheep, and horse ranches and other agricultural uses composed much of the activity. The early home and plantings constructed by the Workmans can still be seen at the Workman-Temple Homestead Museum in the City of Industry.

As the land grants were bought and sold over time, land was subdivided to form smaller family farms in the mid-1800s through early 1900s. These were likely inhabited by people coming over to California for the Gold Rush in the 1840s and later by many following railroad lines out west to resettle the area in the 1870s.



By the early 20th century, the rural area was known for its family farms and orchards of citrus, walnut, and avocado. An industrial presence was also developing with the discovery of oil in the Brea-Olinda fields and with the construction of packing plants for transporting agricultural goods by train. After World War II, suburban development edged out the agricultural economy. The expansion of freeway access and the population boom prompted the conversion of rural working land to residences, as work was increasingly consolidated into white-collar downtown offices. In the following decades, further expansion of freeways and roads led to an expansion of residential development further into natural areas and up into the hillsides.

1.7 Methodology

The ESGVAP was developed with the help of planners, stakeholders, and community members who offered their time to share their knowledge and expertise, review draft documents, and provide feedback. The ESGVAP drew insight from multiple sources, including a review of past planning studies, field surveys, interviews with planners, residents, business owners, industry professionals, and a robust community engagement effort summarized in Section 1.5, *Community Engagement*.

The ESGVAP was also drafted under the guidance and in consultation with other County and regional documents. It has been reviewed to be consistent with and further the goals and programs of each applicable County and regional document, see Section 1.4, *Relationship of the Area Plan to Other County and Regional Plans*, for descriptions of some of the referenced plans and documents that provided guidance throughout the development of this plan. A deeper dive into the strategies and research that helped frame the Area Plan, including the Community Engagement Strategy, and the other technical analyses prepared for the Area Plan, can be found in the appendices.



INTENTIONALLY BLANK

