



West San Gabriel Valley Area Plan

Historic Context Statement: Outreach #2

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This presentation covers the work that LA County Planning’s consultants at ESA completed for the West San Gabriel Valley Area Plan’s Historic Context Statement. This presentation accompanies the draft document that we have released for public review on our website.

Agenda

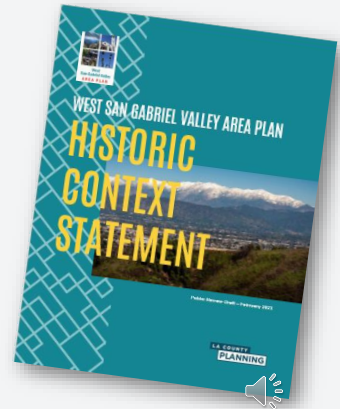
- Historic Context Statement (HCS) Definition
- HCS Purpose
- HCS Timeline and Process
- HCS Communities
- Components of an HCS
- Historical Events and Impacts
- Significant Themes and Architectural Styles
- HCS Recommendations
- Review the HCS and How to Provide Feedback



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What is a Historic Context Statement (HCS)?

- Is a document that identifies the important themes relevant to the history and development of the built environment of a geographic area
- Establishes periods of significance for these themes and their associated property types
- Is *not* a definitive or comprehensive community history, but rather an analytical framework
- Provides the background information for future historic resources surveys, which take a closer look to identify properties eligible for historic designation



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An HCS is a document that identifies the important themes relevant to the history and development of the built environment of a geographic area. The HCS establishes periods of significance for each of these themes and identifies property types that best tell the story of those themes. A HCS is not a definitive or a comprehensive history. Rather, it highlights the patterns of development, history, and culture that shaped the built environment over time. It also provides background information for future historic resources surveys. And *surveys* identify properties that are eligible for historic designation – so, the properties that could be County Landmarks one day.

HCS Purpose

- Provides an analytical framework for identifying and evaluating resources in subsequent historic resources surveys
- Provides the foundation for future research
- Informs the West San Gabriel Valley Area Plan by:
 - Revealing the land development history of the planning area
 - Providing recommended goals, policies and implementation programs that support preservation of historic resources while accommodating necessary growth and development
 - Informing the Cultural Resources section of the WSGVAP's EIR



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As I mentioned, the HCS will provide the foundation for subsequent historic resource surveys by identifying the characteristics that historic resources should reflect in order to be considered an important representation of that resource type (registration threshold / designation criteria).

And it also provides a foundation for future research.

This project is a subproject of the WSGVAP project. And it will *inform* the plan by:

- Revealing the land development history of the planning area. Specifically, an HCS identifies the aspects of geography, history, and culture that significantly shaped the physical development of the planning area.
- Additionally, the HCS findings will roll over into the goals, policies, and implementation programs. These will support the preservation of historic resources while accommodating necessary growth and development.
- Lastly, the HCS will inform the Cultural Resources section of the plan's EIR.

Timeline and Process

1. Hold a public meeting to introduce project to the public and request community input: *October 2023*
2. Consultant (ESA) completes windshield surveys and conducts research and interviews
3. Draft HCS
4. Present draft HCS to LA County Planning for feedback: *November 2023*
5. Present draft HCS to the public for feedback: *January 2024*
6. Present draft HCS to the Historical Landmarks and Records Commission (HLRC) for feedback: *March 8, 2024*
7. Finalize HCS: *Spring 2024*

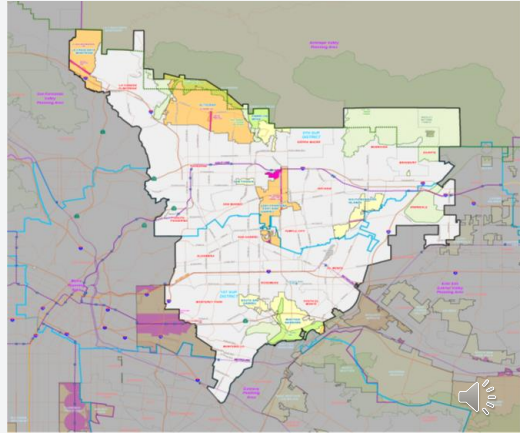


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This slide outlines the schedule and process for the WSGVAP HCS. We held a virtual public meeting in October. Our consultants conducted research and windshield surveys and have drafted a HCS which the County has reviewed. We are now sharing the draft HCS with the public before we bring it to the Landmarks Commission.

Which communities were studied for this project?

- La Crescenta – Montrose
- Altadena
- Kinneloa Mesa
- San Pasqual
- East Pasadena – East San Gabriel
- South El Monte Island
- South Monrovia Islands
- South San Gabriel
- Whittier Narrows




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The HCS studied the communities of La Crescenta-Montrose, Altadena, Kinneloa Mesa, San Pasqual, East Pasadena-East San Gabriel, South El Monte Island, South Monrovia Islands, South San Gabriel, and Whittier Narrows.

How to Read an HCS

- Events and Long-Term Impacts
- General History of the San Gabriel Valley
- Community-Specific Historical Backgrounds
- Significant Themes
 - Capture major patterns and trends in development history
 - Includes residential architectural styles under “Residential Development” theme
 - Eligibility standards
 - Examples of eligible resources
 - Character-defining features
- Recommendations
 - Further studies
 - Will be integrated into the HP Element and Land Use Element



Contents

HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT	
Executive Summary	1
What is a Historic Context Statement?	1
Organization and Themes	2
Methodology and Background	4
Community Input	4
SCC/DIGERD	4
Background Research	4
Survey	4
Regulatory Setting	5
Federal Eligibility Criteria and Integrity Aspects	5
State Register and Eligibility Criteria	8
Local Preservation Ordinances	10
Timeline of Study Area	13
Events and Long-Term Impacts of Study Area	14
General History of the San Gabriel Valley	16
The Pre-Contact Period (A.D. 1542)	17
The Spanish Period (A.D. 1542-1821)	19
The Mexican Period (A.D. 1821-1848)	21
American Period (1848-Present)	22

WEST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY AREA PLAN | HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT | HISTORIC ELEMENT



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You will find the following in the HCS:

Executive Summary, Methodology and Background, Regulatory Setting – sets up the document; describes the study area and research methodology

Timeline of Study Area, Events and Long-Term Impacts of Study Area – presents a timeline of important events and the lasting impacts they had on the built environment.

General History – provides an overview of major periods in the area’s history, starting with the pre-contact period of Native American life (pre-European contact) prior to 1542, the Spanish and Mexican Periods, and the American Period through today.

Community Specific Development Histories – provides more focused history of each community mentioned in the previous slide.

Significant Themes – the meat of the report. This chapter breaks down the historically significant themes of the planning area, such as Public and Private Health and Medicine and Commercial Development. For these themes (and sub-themes) it provides eligibility standards—these are standards that help determine which buildings, structures, or objects, or groupings of buildings, are eligible for historic designation. This is based on a few things: if the resource was built within the period of significance, if it’s one of the associated property types, if it retains the important character-defining features and aspects of historic integrity, and other considerations.

Shelved within the Residential Development theme is a section on **Architectural Styles** – focuses on styles present in the Planning Area. For each, the HCS provides photos of extant examples and lists character-defining features (usually physical features of a resource that convey its significance).

Recommendations – based on what the survey team found in the field and through the HCS research, make recommendations for future research and designations. The forthcoming HP Element and possibly the Land use Element will integrate incentives and policy recommendations related to historic preservation.

Appendix A – identifies topic areas for further study; lists events and individuals of potential historical significance

Historical Events and Impacts

- 1761: Portola Expedition
- 1771: Mission San Gabriel founded
- 1834: Rancho era
- 1850: California statehood
- 1861: Flooding
- 1883: Transcontinental railroad and Los Angeles land boom
- 1886-1920: Incorporation and Annexation
- 1930-1950s: Continued Flooding and Channelization
- 1933: HOLC/Redlining
- 1941-1945: World War II
- 1942: Japanese Internment
- 1947: Master Plan of Metropolitan Los Angeles Freeways
- 1950s: Widespread Suburbanization
- 1954: Brown v. Board of Education
- 1965: Immigration and Nationality Act



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The HCS provides a general history of the West San Gabriel Valley, focused history of each community, and a timeline of important events and the lasting social and physical impacts they had on the area.

We will present three events and their impacts. The others can be found in the HCS.

In the West San Gabriel Valley, you had the *Mission Vieja* (Old Mission) – the original location of Mission San Gabriel – in Whittier Narrows at the San Gabriel River narrows in this planning area. For years and years, this site was home to the Indigenous village of Shevaanga, where because of the confluence of the San Gabriel River and the Rio Hondo, blue elderberry, various sages, chaparral prickly pear, coastal live oak, and California black walnut trees flourished. [You can read more about the Tongva and the Kizh people in the HCS.]

Historical Events and Impacts

1930-1950s: Continued Flooding and Channelization

Event: The combination of a large forest fire in November 1933 followed by intensive rainstorms in December of the same year resulted in over 600,000 cubic yards of water and silt that rushed through the Crescenta Valley, killing over 60 people and destroying homes throughout La Crescenta and Montrose, with debris reaching all the way to Long Beach. The County flood control was further supported by the passage of the Flood Control Act at the federal level in 1936. Further flooding in 1938 encouraged local civic leaders and politicians to embrace flood control in the San Gabriel Valley. Over 80 people died in the San Gabriel Valley alone, and the flooding in the mountains above Altadena and La Crescenta caused irreparable damage to many of the mountain resorts and early housing developments.

Impact: Large scale flooding combined with state and federal funds allowed many flood channels and dams to be built by the Army Corps of Engineers throughout the WSGV. Flood channels and other infrastructure to control water throughout the County.



Homes damaged by flood in La Crescenta, 1934. California Historical Society, University of Southern California Libraries.



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Due to the planning area's unique geography and development on the alluvial plain, it has been repeatedly flooded - often taking livestock, crops, buildings and structures, and people. A series of fires and rainstorms in the 1930s led to major infrastructure projects at the Army Corps of Engineers designed to control water in large-scale floods. Today, these concrete dams and channels are a feature found all over the San Gabriel Valley.

Historical Events and Impacts

1947: Master Plan of Metropolitan Los Angeles Freeways & 1950s: Widespread Suburbanization

Event: The resulting network of freeways not only separated neighborhoods, but also facilitated the residential growth of the Planning Area. Housing developments and apartment buildings were designed around the need for each family to have a car, and access to public transportation became less of a priority for urban planners.

Impact: New housing developments throughout the WSGV took advantage of the manufacturing capabilities that had been refined throughout WWII and the passage of the GI Bill allowed for families of veterans to purchase homes at an unprecedented rate. These developments were comprised of single-family homes on cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets, which remain the dominant form of improvements in the WSGV Planning Area. The further expansion of freeways and suburban development caused the destruction of work camps-turned-barrios, including Hicks' Camp.



Hicks' Camp, 1940s. KCET.



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Around the same time, long-standing ethnic populations such as Japanese- and Mexican-Americans saw new struggles from 1942 through the 1960s. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese residents were forcibly moved to internment camps in Arcadia and Pomona and eventually relocation camps in Wyoming. The major expansion of the freeway system and rapid plotting of tract homes post-WWII and led to the cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets dominant in the planning area- but first to the destruction of lively barrios/Mexican neighborhoods such as Hicks' Camp in El Monte.

The widespread constructions of suburban housing tracts represented tens of thousands of homes; however, large portions of the SGV continued to be closed off to non-White groups (the exception to this was Altadena, which was notably not red-lined). The FHA and the VA's racial funding practices as well as local "home improvement" organizations worked to keep entire neighborhoods Whites-only. Racial discrimination in FHA and VA loans would only become federally prohibited in 1962.

Historical Events and Impacts

1965: Immigration and Nationality Act

Event: Signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, this act abolished immigration quotas and restrictions from the 1920s.

Impact: In the WSGV Planning Area, immigration from Asian countries, especially China, increased and changed the demographics of the WSGV Valley to one of the first majority-Asian areas in the United States. Further international events, such as tensions in Hong Kong and the aftereffects of the Vietnam War, brought more Asian residents to the WSGV.



Intersection of Altantic and Valley Boulevards, Alhambra, CA. 2013. Wendy Cheng.



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We turn to 1965, then, which saw the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act. This was during a time when political strife erupted in Taiwan and Hong Kong, leading to a wave of immigrants coming to the US for educational and economic opportunity. Fred Hsieh, an engineer with the City of LA, obtained his real estate license and is credited with marketing homes in Monterey Park to Taiwanese individuals, likening its lush hills to those in Taipei. With White flight and a trend toward multi-generational homeownership among Mexican- and Asian-American families in the WSGV, the planning area became home to the diverse experiences described in Wendy Cheng's book *The Changs Next Door to the Diazes*.

Significant Themes

- Parks and Recreation
- Education
- Public and Private Health and Medicine
- Commercial Development
- Residential Development
- Religion and Spirituality



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The HCS provides a historical narrative of the West San Gabriel Valley and each of its unincorporated communities. It also covers 12 historical themes such as Agricultural and Industrial Development. For the significant themes and subthemes with extant resources (Parks and Recreation, Education, Public and Private Health and Medicine, Commercial Development, Residential Development, and Religion and Spirituality), the HCS provides eligibility standards.

Architectural Styles



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The HCS covers the wide range of architecture found in the WSGV Planning Area. Two examples here:

- An Asian-influenced Ranch House in South San Gabriel. Constructed in 1964, within the period of significance (1940-1975)

- A MCM house in Kinneloa Mesa. Constructed in 1961, within the period of significance for Modernism (1930-1975)

The HCS identifies 19 architectural styles found in the planning area and for each, provides a discussion of the style's origins, photos of extant examples, and character-defining features. These are:

- Queen Anne
- Italianate
- Colonial Revival
- Spanish Colonial Revival
- Pueblo Revival
- Mediterranean Revival
- French Revival
- Tudor Revival
- Monterey Style
- Craftsman
- Prairie
- FHA Home/Minimal Traditional/American Small House
- Postwar Minimal
- Modernism
- Ranch
 - Asian-Influenced
 - Contemporary
 - Rustic Ranch
 - Storybook

HCS Recommendations

- Designate County-level resources
- Pursue an Ethnic and Cultural thematic study for an Asian American Historic Context Statement in the WSGV
- Increase community knowledge of local history to inspire the preservation of the built environment
- Preserve known historic resources

The Recommendations chapter provides a list of potential historic districts and thematic multiple property listings. Appendix A provides a list of key events and historically significant individuals for each community.



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Finally, the HCS makes recommendations for future study. These include focused areas of study, including

- Designate County-level resources
- Pursue an Ethnic and Cultural thematic study for an Asian American Historic Context Statement in the WSGV
- Increase community knowledge of local history to inspire the preservation of the built environment – tapping into the knowledge of Asian immigrants, local Tongva and Kizh peoples, and other interested groups such as schools, libraries, and local historical societies.
- Preserve known historic resources

The Recommendations chapter provides a list of potential historic districts and thematic multiple property listings. Appendix A provides a list of key events and historically significant individuals for each community.

Again, the forthcoming HP Element and possibly the Land use Element will integrate these recommendations along with preservation-related incentives and policy

recommendations.

Review the Draft HCS + Provide Feedback

- Find the Draft HCS here:
planning.lacounty.gov/wsgvap → **Historic Resources**
- Feedback due **Monday, February 15, 2024**
- Email Shannon Papin at SPapin@esassoc.com, Bruce Durbin at BDurbin@planning.lacounty.gov, and Katrina Castaneda at KCastaneda@planning.lacounty.gov for questions, comments, and feedback.



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You can find the draft report on our website by clicking on the Historic Resources tab.

We're asking that you provide any feedback to us by email by February 15.



Thank you!

Review HCS on our Project Website (WSGVAP Historic Resources page):
<https://planning.lacounty.gov/long-range-planning/wsgvap/historic-resources>

Feedback Submittal: spapin@esassoc.com, bdurbin@planning.lacounty.gov and
kcastaneda@planning.lacounty.gov **DUE** February 15

Area Plan Questions: wsgvap@planning.lacounty.gov



Thank you for listening, and thank you in advance for reviewing the HCS. We look forward to hearing from you!