

100

LA COUNTY
PLANNING
EST. 1923

1923-2023



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The County of Los Angeles recognizes that we occupy land originally and still inhabited and cared for by the Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Peoples. We honor and pay respect to their elders and descendants — past, present, and emerging — as they continue their stewardship of these lands and waters. We acknowledge that settler colonization resulted in land seizure, disease, subjugation, slavery, relocation, broken promises, genocide, and multigenerational trauma. This acknowledgment demonstrates our responsibility and commitment to truth, healing, and reconciliation and to elevating the stories, culture, and community of the original inhabitants of Los Angeles County. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on these ancestral lands. We are dedicated to growing and sustaining relationships with Native peoples and local tribal governments, including (in no particular order) the:

- Fernandño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council
- Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation
- San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
- San Fernando Band of Mission Indians

To learn more about the First Peoples of Los Angeles County, please visit the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission website at lanaic.lacounty.gov.



Introduction

The year 2023 represents a major milestone for the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission (RPC). The RPC has been in existence for 100 years, conducting public hearings on zoning matters and making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for the adoption of plans and ordinances. Planning staff have analyzed land use issues, processed subdivisions and zoning permits, developed plans and ordinances, and enforced zoning standards. Nearly 50 years after the creation of the RPC, the Board of Supervisors established the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) and placed planning operations and administration, budgeting, and staff hiring exclusively with its Director. The work of planning staff and the decisions made by the RPC have shaped Los Angeles County (County) and continue to guide the development of its unincorporated neighborhoods, communities, places, and regions.

Following the end of World War I, population growth and land development began to surge throughout the County within the 38 existing cities and in the vast expanses of unincorporated areas. The organization and use of land for residential, commercial, and industrial activities was becoming a paramount concern for neighborhoods, businesses, and government. Problems affecting the day-to-day activities of residential life, commerce, and mobility were being caused by the uncoordinated subdivision of land and dramatic rise in automobile ownership.

At the onset of the 1920s, the land use issues throughout the County were of such concern that several citizen-initiated planning conferences presided over by County Supervisor Reuben F. McClellan were held to consider ways to control and coordinate development. Supervisor McClellan advocated regional planning for the orderly development of the County. As a result of the planning conferences, the RPC was established by the Board of Supervisors with the adoption of Ordinances 805 and 806 on December 18, 1922. The RPC was the first county planning commission in the nation. In early 1923, the Board of Supervisors began appointing Commissioners, five in total, each one selected by a different Supervisor. The appointed Commissioners were noted as “public spirited community leaders.” The RPC held its first official meeting on March 2, 1923.

On September 9, 1927, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Los Angeles County Zoning Code. It was the first county zoning code in the nation. With a planning staff steeped in civil engineering, landscape architecture, land surveying, and graphic arts, the RPC focused on countywide master plans of land use, highways, shorelines, airports, parks, and heliports. The County Subdivision Ordinance was adopted in 1933 to guide developers and RPC staff in the preparation and review of subdivisions in the unincorporated areas. In addition, the RPC was assertively administering the Zoning Code with studies and precise zoning within the more than 3,500 square miles of County unincorporated area, an endeavor that was nearly complete by the late 1950s.

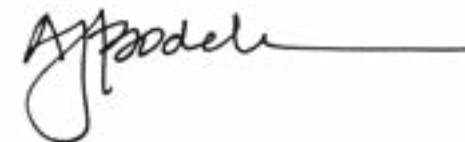
The 1950s and 1960s were a time of tremendous suburban growth. During these two decades, 32 cities incorporated, much of their zoning established by the RPC while they were unincorporated areas. The post World War II population growth and increasing complexity of industrial and commercial activities were affecting housing production, environmental quality, and community livability in unincorporated areas and cities alike. The RPC began an extensive effort among all unincorporated areas countywide to assess issues and establish frameworks for future development. This effort informed the initiation of a comprehensive general plan program adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1968.

By the 1970s, the social and political landscape of land use planning was far different than in the 1920s. Environmental, housing, and other planning policy concerns had emerged at the Federal and State level and filtered into the RPC scope of responsibilities. A comprehensive general plan was required by the State, and the County’s preliminary plan was adopted in 1970, titled the Environmental Development Guide (EDG). The EDG served as the initial foundation for how planning for the unincorporated areas would be conducted through the rest of the 20th century and into the 21st.

In 1974, the DRP was formally established, relieving the RPC from direct oversight and management of planning staff. In 1980, the Countywide General Plan was adopted, replacing the EDG. Addressing issues affecting unincorporated areas countywide, the Countywide General Plan was the guide for residential, commercial, and industrial development, and open space and natural resources protection. The General Plan remains the core development guide for unincorporated Los Angeles County and was comprehensively updated in 2015 with goals and policies addressing affordable housing, environmental racism, and climate change, among other pressing concerns. The General Plan is continually updated with amendments to elements such as Housing and Safety as well as component Area Plans.

These 100 years of County planning have seen the intent, vision, and values of planning evolve alongside the social, political, economic, and cultural changes occurring across the nation, California, and the County. The impacts of many past land use decisions, deliberate or unintended, have had negative consequences for some, particularly people of color and other marginalized groups. They have been affected by structural racism in land use, education, health policy, and environmental protections. These social issues must be addressed as the RPC and DRP look towards the future. The updated General Plan and housing and environmental justice ordinances adopted in the first two decades of the 21st century comprise an equity-focused strategy to address historical inequities. It is through equitable land use practices and rigorous, community-informed decision-making that negative outcomes of past planning efforts can and must be addressed. Future planning efforts of the RPC and DRP will continue to evolve as we strive to ensure fairness, equity, justice, and accountability in the development of unincorporated Los Angeles County over the next 100 years.

Join us as we acknowledge our past and embrace our future.



Amy J. Bodek, AICP
Director

1920s

Headquartered in the original Hall of Records built in 1911, the five-member RPC initially did not have staff. However, one of its members, Hugh L. Pomeroy, was given an additional duty less than six months after his appointment as Commissioner: being the RPC's first executive leader, with the title of Executive Secretary and the task of directing operations and technical work. Mr. Pomeroy made more than 200 public presentations to explain the purpose of the RPC. The first members of the RPC included an "engineer, agriculturist, civic leader, business operator, and public official." Some members of the RPC engaged in public outreach to showcase its work, notably at the Los Angeles County Fair in Pomona. Commissioner Joseph M. Paige, who was the Superintendent of the Agricultural Department of the Los Angeles County Fair, presented a large and elaborate RPC exhibit at the County Fair annually from 1923 to 1931.

Mr. Pomeroy resigned from his nearly five-year tenure with the RPC in September 1927 and was succeeded by Charles H. Diggs, formerly of Harland Bartholomew and Associates. Mr. Diggs had most recently been the consultant preparing the Glendale City Plan. Mr. Diggs was the RPC's first executive leader to be recognized as Director when the RPC changed the title of Executive Secretary to Director in August 1928. A landscape architect, Mr. Diggs built the planning staff, from a handful to nearly two dozen, to undertake extensive transportation studies supervised by the RPC Chief Engineer, William J. Fox, and to prepare precise zoning plans for many unincorporated communities, including West Hollywood and Altadena.

With so many thousands of acres of agricultural and undeveloped land in Los Angeles County being subdivided with little coordination among jurisdictions, the RPC was seeking harmonious order through master plans of highways, freeways, and airports, and as Mr. Diggs professed, "zoning by design." The master plans provided the transportation foundation upon which the residential, commercial, and industrial zones could be placed, and created a structure for good subdivision design. Mr. Diggs foresaw many design opportunities through the zoning and subdivision process, particularly with the vast amount of available undeveloped unincorporated land.

Executive Leadership

Hugh R. Pomeroy,
Executive Secretary 1923-1927

Charles H. Diggs,
Director 1927-1934

Commissioners

Robert M. Allan 1923-1925

George A. Damon 1923-1926

Mrs. Charles F. Gray 1923-1937

Bert R. Holloway 1923-1933

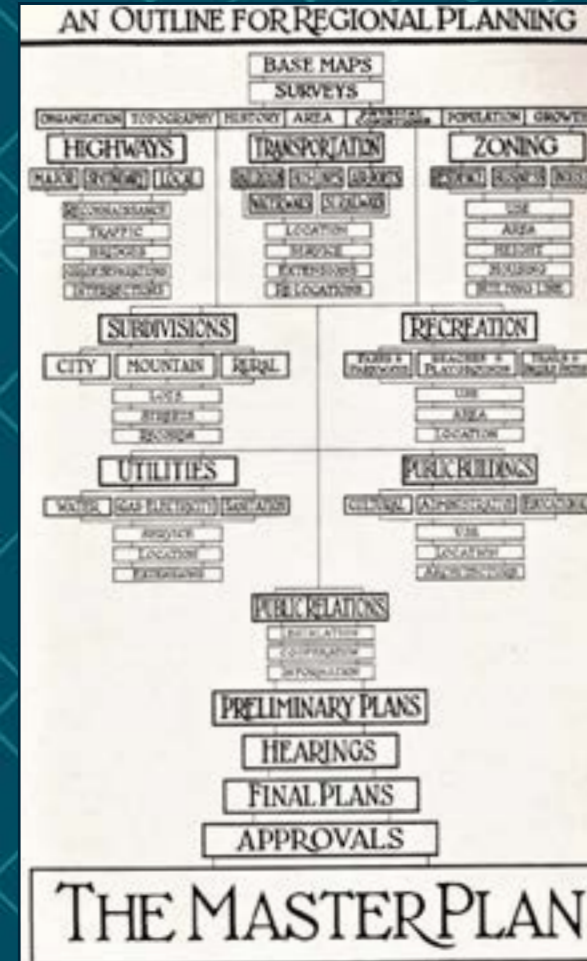
Hugh R. Pomeroy* 1923-1927

Carl Bush 1925-1931

Ray O. Baldwin 1925-1939

Joseph M. Paige 1926-1936

* Ex-officio 1925-1927



CREATE NEW BODY TO GOVERN CITY'S GROWTH
Problems of Metropolitan District to be Placed in Hands of County Planning Board

With the passage of an ordinance by the Board of Supervisors a regional planning commission, which will direct the growth and improvement of the entire metropolitan district of Los Angeles into logical channels, has been formed. The plan is the result of the series of regional conferences, inaugurated in 1921, for the purpose of promoting the uniform growth of the city and its environs along carefully considered and uniform plan, particularly in relation to streets and boulevards, subdivisions, zoning, and recreational centers, and to prevent the haphazard construction of streets and boulevards such as has characterized the growth of the city.



The material basis is for the purpose of answering by example certain questions pertaining to Regional Planning. The essentials are: An effective Commission, proper direction of the work, sound engineering principles, adequate research and statistics, a comprehensive highway plan, a wholesome regulation of land subdivisions, regulation of use of property based on comprehensive zoning, recognition of the problems of landscape design, informational material properly prepared - land, water, and with emphasis on visual presentation, above all, the mobilizing of public opinion for a comprehensive plan, well prepared and possible of accomplishment.

Charles H. Diggs



1930s

The land use policy and procedural direction of the RPC through its first decades of service was influenced by the early 20th century Progressive Era ideals of social activism, scientific methods, and professional expertise. These ideals nurtured planning as a comprehensive approach to be used by government for addressing pressing issues of urbanization, housing, and environmental exploitation. Leading into the 1930s, the RPC released an extensive compendium of illustrations and text explaining how the entire County could be well designed and pleasant to live in with a robust transportation network connecting spatially dispersed low-rise communities through the creative use of zoning and subdivision design.

Mr. Diggs resigned from his position as Director in November 1934 and was succeeded by the RPC Chief Engineer William J. Fox. Though the RPC executive leadership position of Executive Secretary had been changed to Director in August 1928, Mr. Fox chose to retain his title of RPC Chief Engineer, which he had held since being hired in October 1926. Mr. Fox viewed regional planning as “the scientific study of the problems of physical growth of separate communities which have common interests, the reduction of these to a coordinated, sound, economic plan, with methods of procedure for its execution.” He instilled an engineering philosophy within the RPC and revised the organizational chart to note that all key subordinate staff positions were identified as “Engineer.”

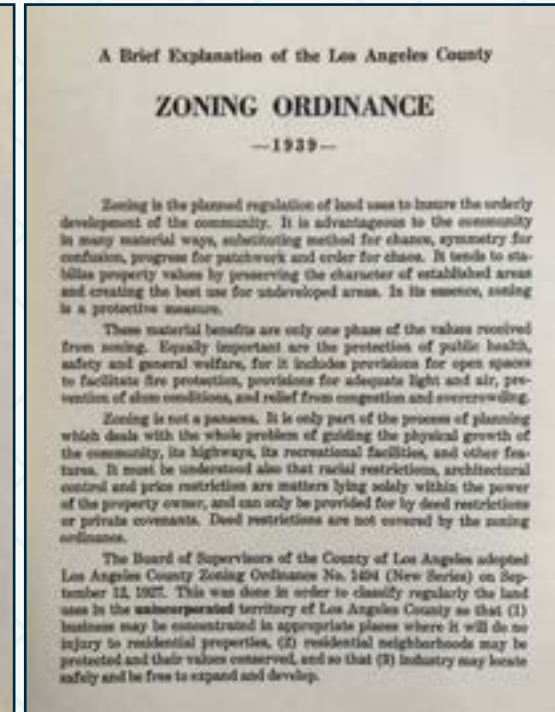
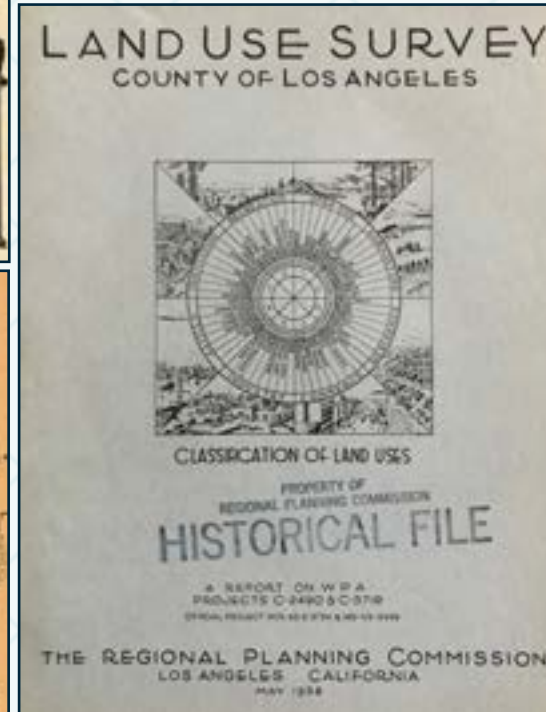
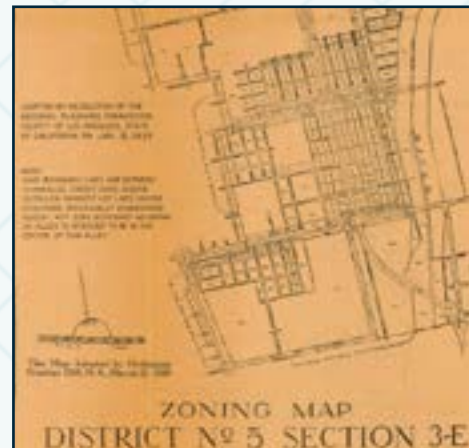
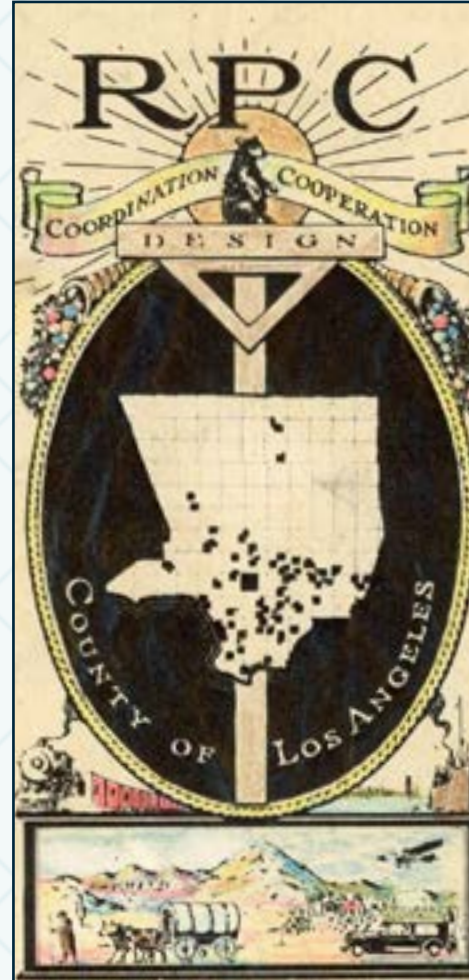
Mr. Fox took leadership of the RPC at a very difficult time in the nation’s history. In the deepest throes of the Great Depression, he had to reduce the staff to 20. Work on the Master Plans of Land Use, Highways, Shoreline Development, and Airports continued. During this time tremendous support was provided by 65 employees via the Federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the 1936-37 fiscal year. These WPA employees engaged in a comprehensive land use survey of the entire County, classifying and mapping all land uses. As World War II began to unfold in 1939, Mr. Fox entered military service within a year and was on leave from the RPC until December 1946.

Executive Leadership

William J. Fox *,
Chief Engineer 1934-1948
*Military Leave 1940-1946

Commissioners

B. F. Shrimpton 1931-1954
Mattison B. Jones 1933-1941
Roy Teeters 1936-1942
Mrs. Ella M. F. Atchley 1937-1945
Robert H. Kee 1937-1939
Mrs. L. S. Baca 1939-1950;
1953-1975
Stiles O. Clements 1939-1943



1940s

In 1937, the Board of Supervisors added a sixth member to the RPC. Known as a Commissioner at Large, this Commissioner had the same authority and duties as the existing five-member RPC. This addition broadened the RPC's capacity to review increased subdivision activity, requests for detailed zoning, and other planning activities as the effects of the Great Depression waned. The six-member RPC saw the completion and adoption by the Board of Supervisors of the Master Plans of Airports, Land Use, Highways, and Shoreline Development in 1940 and 1941. On the cusp of World War II, the RPC executive leadership was assumed by Acting Chief Engineer Arthur H. Adams, who ensured that comprehensive planning stayed the course, though staffing and funds were diverted to support the war effort. Anticipating growth following the end of the war, the RPC focused on preparing a report on business districts (1944), creating an illustrated Zoning Code pamphlet, and developing the Master Plan of Freeways (adopted 1947).

By the close of World War II, 19 Commissioners had served on the RPC since its first meeting in 1923. By the RPC's 25th anniversary in 1948, two more had started service. The Commissioners' profession and backgrounds ranged from PTA president, insurance, banking, and law, to ranching, manufacturing, architecture, and engineering. The longest tenured Commissioner over the 100 years of the RPC's existence, Mrs. L. (Lucy) S. Baca, started her service in late 1939 and concluded it after nearly 34 years. Famed and prolific Art Deco, Streamline Moderne, and Revivalism architect Stiles O. Clements served on the RPC from late 1939 until early 1943.

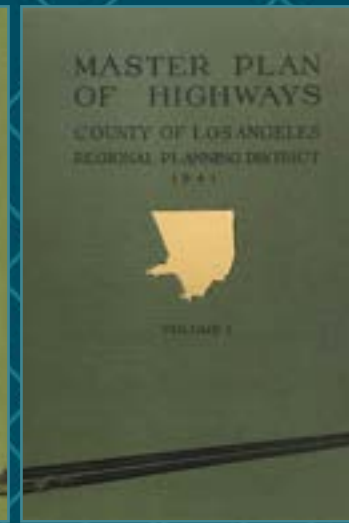
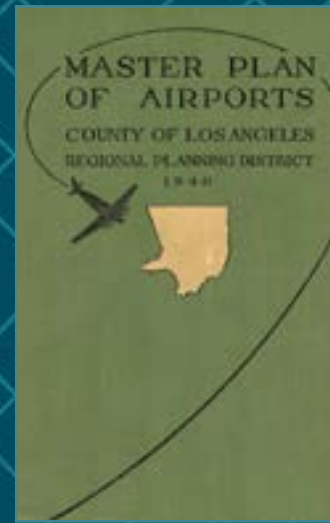
The post-war economic boom fueled rapid land development, and the RPC staff grew to 84 by the close of the decade, poised to manage the pending suburban explosion of the 1950s. Chief Engineer William J. Fox resigned from the RPC on July 1, 1948; and on September 14, 1948, the Board of Supervisors changed the position title of RPC Chief Engineer to Director of Planning. Arthur H. Adams was appointed to the position of Director on July 29, 1949.

Executive Leadership

Author H. Adams, Acting Chief Engineer	1940-1946
Temporary Chief Engineer	1948-1949
Director	1949-1952

Commissioners

Roy N. Clayton	1941-1957
Bert T. Harvey	1942-1953
Richard R. Loynes	1943-1948
Earl C. Planett	1945-1950
J. Hugh Davies	1948
Francis J. Heusel	1948-1951



1950s

The workload of the RPC ballooned from 1950 to 1953 with 2,176 new tract maps accounting for more than 79,000 acres and 268,536 lots. In 1952, the Board of Supervisors added another Commissioner at Large, creating a seven-member RPC that later switched back to its original five members in 1957. When the RPC celebrated its 35th anniversary in 1958, the number of staff had grown to 121. Throughout the decade, 10 new Commissioners were appointed. Some of these Commissioners served on the RPC through the 1960s and into the late 1970s.

The RPC continued its program of countywide zoning studies and precise zoning with substantial work taking place in the rapidly developing North County. The booming suburban development in the unincorporated areas, notably in the southeast area of the County, emboldened communities to secure local control through incorporation. Led by Lakewood, which established a novel relationship with the County to contract for municipal services, 26 cities incorporated from 1954 to 1960. RPC planning services were contracted to nearly a dozen of these cities.

Director Arthur H. Adams retired on June 1, 1952, and temporary executive leadership passed to RPC Chief Deputy Director Earl J. Esse. During the mid-1950s, the RPC, with the support of Mr. Esse, produced a film titled "Guiding Growth" to educate the public on the subdivision process. The film explains that subdivisions are developed to ensure good quality of life with thoughtful design that keeps highway traffic away from residences and ensures local traffic flows smoothly within and between neighborhoods.

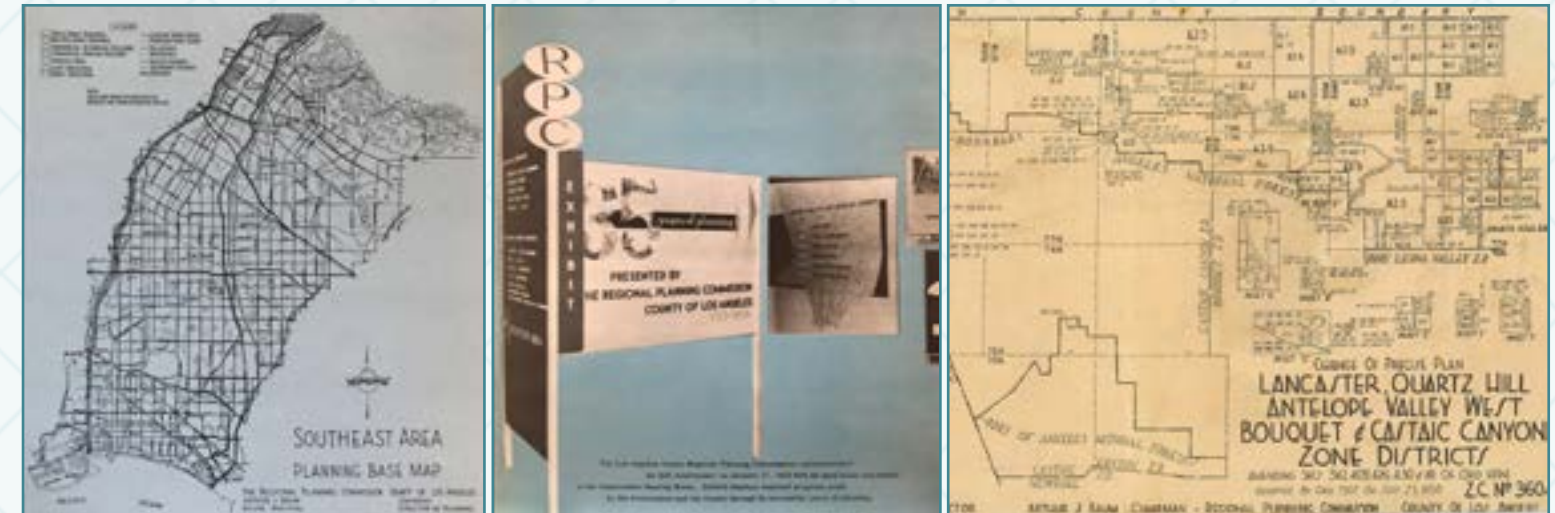
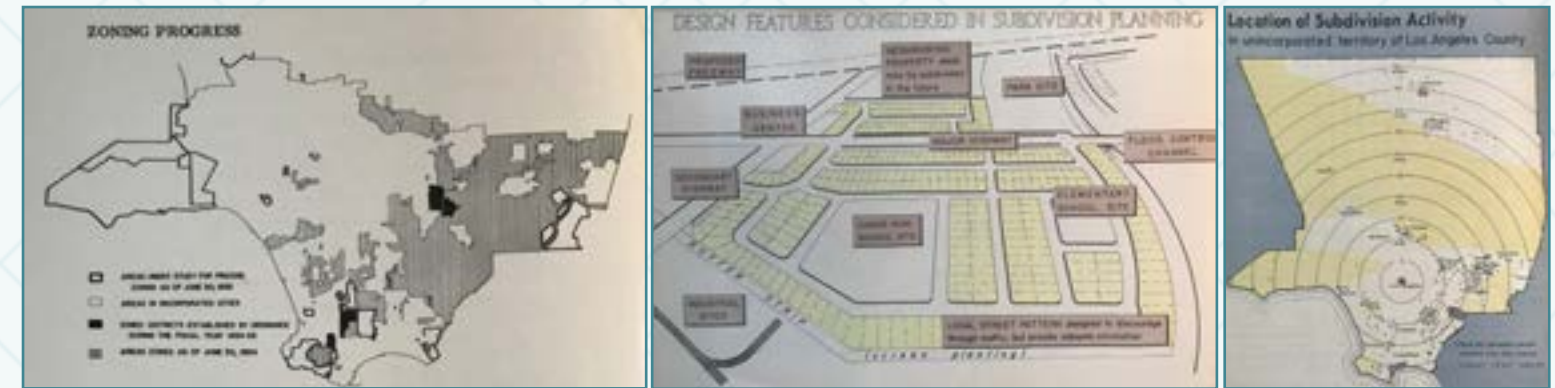
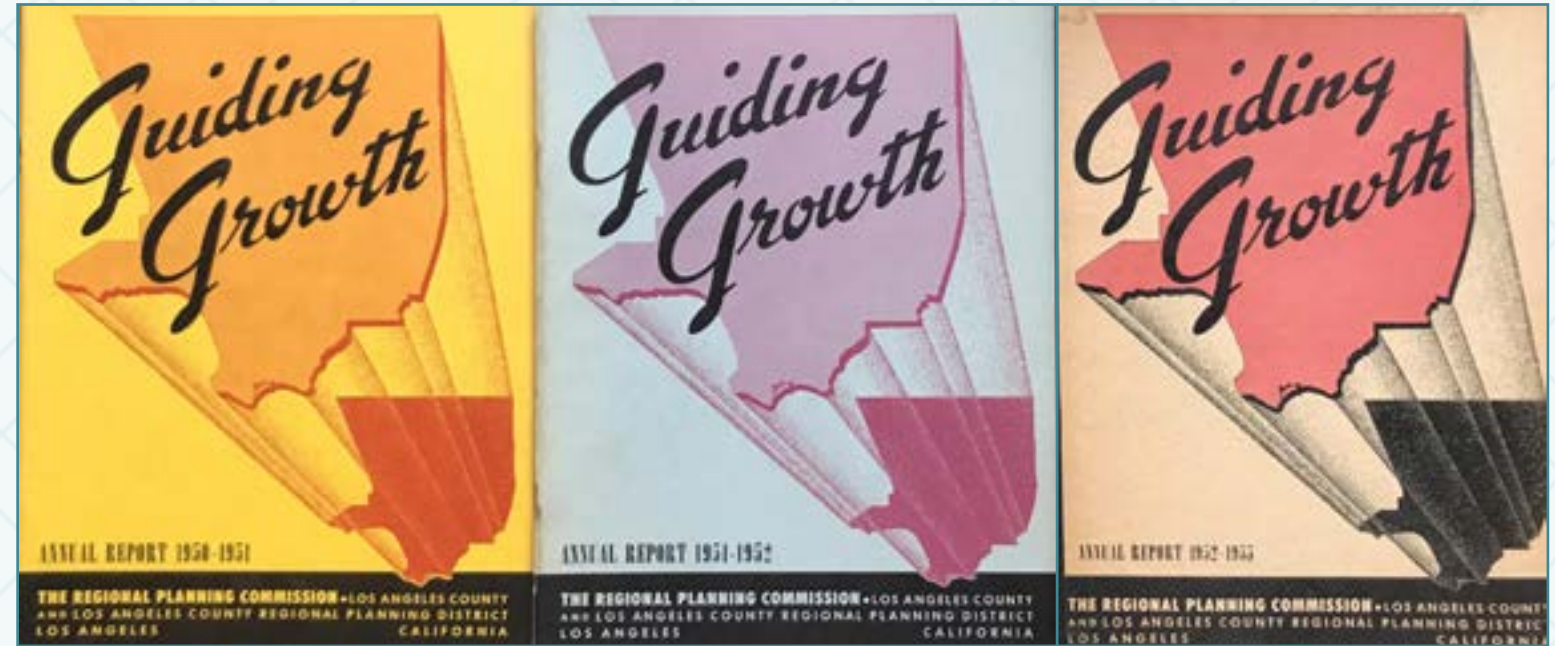
On September 1, 1953, Milton Breivogel, previously Principal City Planner with the City of Los Angeles, was appointed as Director. Mr. Breivogel initiated the Area and Community Studies Program to examine geographic regions of the County and set the foundation to transition from the Master Plan approach to a comprehensive General Plan approach for guiding development. Central to the General Plan approach was simultaneous coordination of land use, transportation, housing, and open space. The first area study completed was for the East San Gabriel Valley in 1956.

Executive Leadership

Earl J. Esse, Temporary Director	1952-1953
Milton Breivogel, Director	1953-1967

Commissioners

Robert M. Philleo	1950-1954
Robert L. Chambers	1951-1952
Victor H. York	1951-1955
Robert S. Groman	1952-1957
James M. Stafford	1953-1957
Authur J. Baum	1954-1977
Hugo M. Burgwald	1954-1957
Zell F. Harshon	1955-1962
Louis Kanaster	1957-1971
Alson E. Abernethy	1957-1967



1960s

The Area and Community Studies Program completed more than a dozen area and community studies between 1961 and 1968, including those for the Malibu, North County, San Fernando Valley, and West San Gabriel Valley areas. Community studies included Hacienda Heights, East Los Angeles, Altadena, Avocado Heights, and Rowland Heights. By the early 1960s, the suburban boom had waned, and city incorporations tapered to just six. However, demand for contract planning services accelerated with at least 17 cities benefiting from RPC staff expertise during the decade. Only two new Commissioners were appointed to the RPC in the 1960s, one being former Superior Court judge Alfred E. Paonessa. Director Breivogel retired in fall 1967 and was shortly thereafter succeeded by Orville K. Christenson, previously the RPC Chief Deputy Director.

The 1933 Long Beach earthquake affected many County buildings; the Hall of Records survived, but the RPC moved from its headquarters to make space for the displaced courts. The RPC subsequently met and operated at various Los Angeles Civic Center locations and in 1947, was headquartered in the Higgins Building at 108 West Second Street. The same year, the Civic Center Master Plan was prepared, which envisioned an orderly, aesthetically modern assemblage of governmental buildings. Richard Neutra and colleagues designed the new Hall of Records, at 320 West Temple Street, to meet the intent of the plan. In 1962, it was opened for County departments and became the headquarters and hearing location for the RPC, which continues to this day.

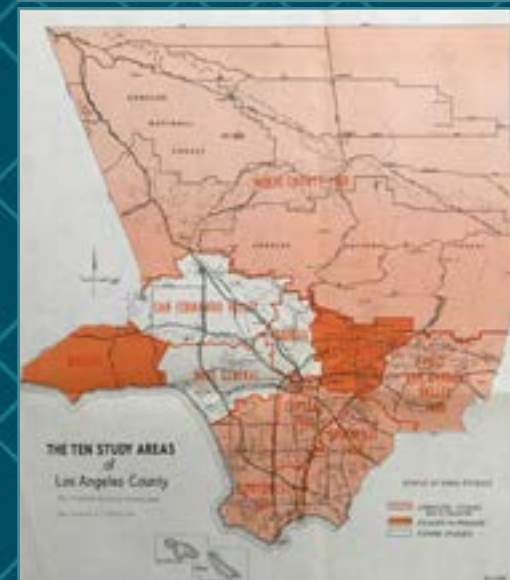
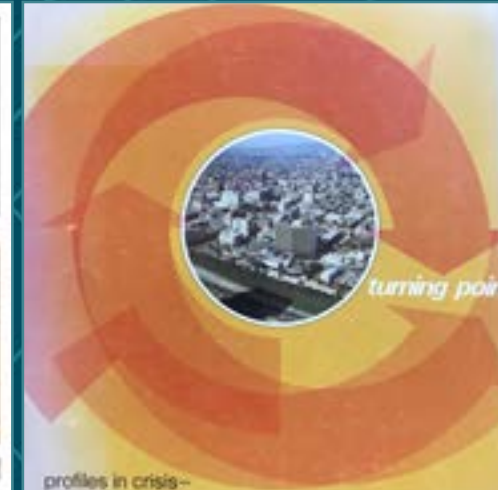
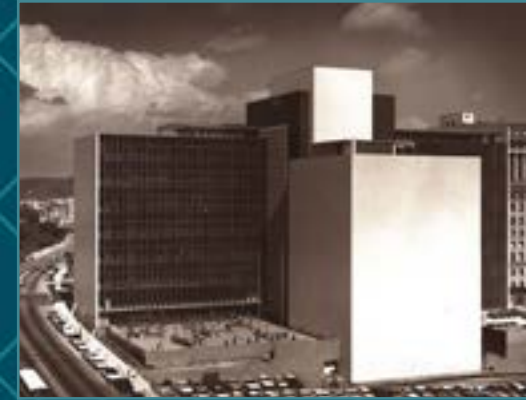
The social and political climate during the 1960s was one of acute awareness of social problems of racism, housing shortages, and environmental degradation, attributed to structural inequality and urbanization. The State and County affirmatively responded to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 1968 Fair Housing Act, and 1969 National Environmental Policy Act mandates; the RPC recognized the need to address pressing social problems that were at a level of crisis. Guided by State planning law that mandated a comprehensive general plan with a mandatory housing element, the Board of Supervisors initiated the County General Plan Program in August 1968, a turning point that heightened the RPC's attention on housing and social justice.

Executive Leadership

Orville K. Christenson,
Director 1967-1974

Commissioners

Owen H. Lewis 1962-1980
Alfred E. Paonessa 1967-1972



ABOUT THE BUILDING

The Hall of Records is one of the most modernly designed government offices in the West, and is the home of five county agencies: the County Recorder; Probation Department; Regional Planning Commission; County Library and Public Welfare Commission. Also occupying space in the graceful, new building are units of the Merchant's Department (Building Security Guards, Building Services Department and Communications Department).

County officials leading these tenant departments are County Recorder Ray E. Lee; Probation Officer Karl Holton; Arthur J. Ream, Chairman of the Regional Planning Commission; and Director Milton Breivogel; County Librarian John D. Henderson; and Mrs. Sybil Brand, President of Public Welfare Commission.

The general construction contract was awarded to the Travis-Wittenberg Company and American-Krubben Company. Up to 200 workers were engaged at one time in construction of the building in September, 1960. Construction contract cost was approximately \$11,700,000. The project was financed by funds of the Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association and will be used by the County under a lease arrangement.

Design and construction supervision was performed by a group of associated architects. They were Robert E. Alexander, James E. Fland (now deceased), Douglas Honnold, Herman Charles Light, Richard J. Neutra and John Rex.

The Hall of Records contains approximately 420,000 square feet of floor space. It is 325 feet long, up to 216 feet wide and 120 feet maximum height.

The building is 16 levels high when the partially below-ground Broadway Street floor is counted. Outriggerly ascending an eight-story building, it contains 12 full stories enclosed in windowless walls in the "stack-area."

Next to the main entrance on Temple Street is a large mosaic map, heavily influenced by the Byzantine mosaics of Italy, with outlines showing the county's main water courses. Water flows through tunnels in the mosaic, being recirculated into a reflecting pool nearby. This colorful design was created by Joseph Young of Los Angeles.

The south side of the building is shaded by giant solar-actuated louvers, 125 feet tall—the world's largest. They will shield the window walls as the earth rotates on its axis each day and along its seasonal orbit, reducing air-conditioning requirements and eliminating the need for interior shades. Architects have estimated that the savings on reduced air-conditioning loads will pay for the cost of the louvers in five years.

The Turning Point

There is no doubt that Los Angeles County has a lot going for it... a Mediterranean climate that is hard to match... an informal mode of living, mountain resorts, beaches, maintenance of all kinds, good schools in most areas, a wide variety of jobs and business opportunities... in short, the feel of a community that has great vitality and is going places.

But this vitality can be self-destructive. It drive that is so productive can leave a litter of problems that may in the end overwhelm the very community it has created. One of the tools available to you and your county government to guard against this possibility is comprehensive planning.

Our job of the Regional Planning Commission is to furnish information and ideas that will stimulate concerted action to create better living opportunities and an improved environment for you and all other citizens of Los Angeles County. This means uncovering information and ideas from many sources, putting them together so they can be easily used, and getting them out as quickly as possible so they are available when needed.

This year, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has committed the initial funds to start a three-year study of our community's needs and goals, and has authorized the Regional Planning Commission to carry out this study known as the County General Plan Program. It has been set up in three phases, each with its own special objectives.



1970s

As the RPC's approach to countywide planning transitioned in the mid-1960s from single function master plans to a comprehensive general plan of integrated elements, the Board adopted the EDG on October 1, 1970. The EDG was further developed and adopted on June 28, 1973, as the General Plan of Los Angeles County. The Conservation Element introduced the concept of the Significant Ecological Area (SEA) to "Designate important biotic communities and wildlife habitat areas for consideration in preparing environmental impact reports."

With the General Plan, the Board of Supervisors and RPC were seeking "an effective problem-solving" policy document to address "a long-standing accumulation of mistakes in environmental planning and development [that] has led to serious negative consequences—blight, congestion, pollution, economic decline and explosive social unrest." The Housing Element background report "Shelter" noted that housing was interconnected with environmental quality, jobs, transportation, and unequal opportunities for racial and ethnic minorities.

The RPC celebrated its 50th anniversary with an open house in the Hall of Records on February 20, 1973. Commissioners Owen H. Lewis, Mrs. L. S. Baca, and Mrs. Carolyn Llewellyn attended and discussed the evolution of the RPC's work over the years and the preparation of the comprehensive General Plan. Mr. Christenson retired from his position as Director on March 31, 1974. On September 13, 1974, Ordinance 10968 established the DRP.

On October 21, 1974, Norman Murdoch, previously Saint Louis, Missouri Director of Planning, was appointed as the Director of the DRP and led the revision of the General Plan culminating in the adoption of the expansive and detailed 10-element County of Los Angeles General Plan on November 25, 1980. The DRP also focused significant planning resources on the rapidly developing Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys, with area plans adopted for each in 1977.

Five new Commissioners were appointed to the RPC in the 1970s including Mrs. Sadie B. Clark, the longest serving commissioner since the establishment of the DRP; and George Lefcoe, USC Professor of Law. Mrs. Clark was a long-established real estate broker. Professor Lefcoe served for eight years; bringing academic expertise in real estate finance, development, and land use.

Executive Leadership

Edgar T. Irvine,
Acting Director 1974

Norman Murdoch,
Director 1974-1988

Commissioners

Howard Martin 1971-1976
Mrs. Carolyn Llewellyn 1972-1981
Mrs. Sadie B. Clark 1975-1997
Dr. Robert J. Meeker 1976-1980
George Lefcoe 1977-1986



INADEQUATE SUPPLY
There simply are not enough adequate homes or apartments to satisfy a growing population. Demand is exceeding supply. From a peak of over 100,000 units in 1963, the county's annual housing production dipped to only 21,000 units in 1966. By 1970, it had climbed back to 40,000 units—but this is only two-thirds of the 60,000 houses needed each year for newly formed families or as normal replacements for old, decrepit stock.

Although surveys of county citizens indicate their preference for single-family residences, more and more of them are forced to put their preference aside and take anything they can get. Not surprisingly then, apartments have increased greatly. And until recently, vacancy rates have been lower than in decades.

By 1990, there may be an even tighter housing squeeze. The expected 963,000 new homes and apartments constructed in the next 20 years will fall more than 300,000 units short of the projected minimum need. The deficiency will affect those in the market for apartments as well as for single-family lodging.

Open House Held on 50th Anniversary of LA County Regional Planning Commission
Los Angeles—Fiftieth anniversary of the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission was celebrated at an informal open house, Tuesday, Feb. 20, 1973, here in the Hall of Records.

Commissioner Chairman Owen H. Lewis said that since commission founder, Mrs. L. S. Baca set the golden anniversary table for this significant anniversary 50 years of service by the commission. Mrs. Baca has served for 21 years as a member of the commission.

As the first county regional planning commission in the nation, the commission began its operation on Jan. 18, 1923 with a directive of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to provide planning services to the unincorporated areas of the county and to coordinate plans among the county's then 12 cities and 157,800 residents.

Today the commission's plans encompass a county with 17 cities.

During the first four decades of its existence, over single function master plans were prepared by the commission staff for the metropolitan area which included land use, highways, shoreline development, airports, freeways, parks, ballparks, riding and hiking trails, and regional recreation areas.

Work was started in 1958 on a comprehensive countywide general plan and a preliminary plan of



Sadie B. Clark



1980s

Nine new Commissioners were appointed during the decade from the fields of architecture, development, community advocacy, public service, and the courts. Mrs. Delta L. Murphy was former Mayor of Whittier and Chair of the USC Wrigley Marine Science Institute. Earl Johnson Jr. was a USC Professor of Law during his brief term as a Commissioner, which concluded when he was appointed by Governor Edmund G. Brown as Associate Justice of the California Court of Appeal in 1982.

In 1982, implementation of the General Plan included the SEA and Oak Tree Permit (OTP) Ordinances. These Ordinances established standards for reviewing development impacts on environmental resources and issuing permits for development that would be most effective in minimizing impact on natural habitat communities and oak trees. Development pressures in the hillsides of remaining undeveloped land had long been a concern of the RPC, and the adopted SEA Ordinance had standards for hillside management. Illustrated hillside design guidelines demonstrated the cluster approach to the subdivision of land to preserve hillsides and open space.

Extensive work was undertaken in the coastal areas to prepare Local Coastal Plans that were certified by the California Coastal Commission for Santa Catalina Island in 1983, Marina del Rey in 1984, and Malibu in 1986. The tremendous growth of development in the Antelope Valley continued in the 1980s, and the Antelope Valley Areawide General Plan update was adopted in 1986. The Altadena Community Plan was adopted in 1986. In 1983, the Board adopted Ordinance 83-0065, which created the Community Standards District (CSD), a supplemental district with special development standards to address problems unique to certain geographic areas. The first adopted CSD was for West Hollywood in 1983 to regulate building height, lot coverage, and floor area ratio. West Hollywood subsequently incorporated in 1984.

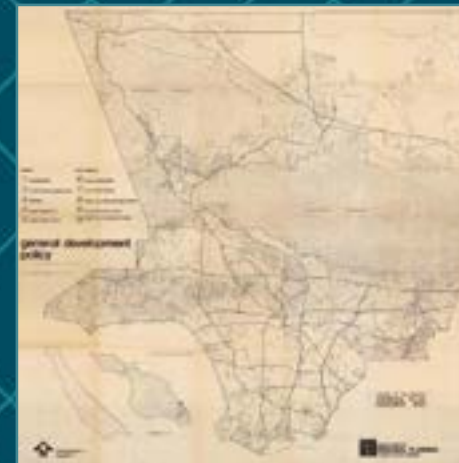
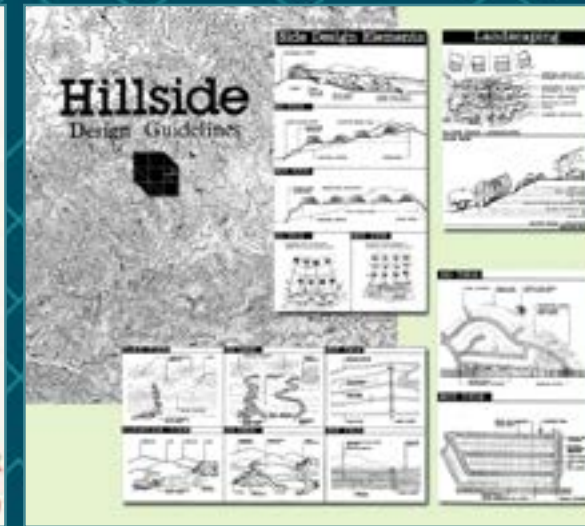
Mr. Murdoch transferred to another County position on July 1, 1988. James E. Hartl, AICP, immediately assumed the position of Acting Director and on May 31, 1989, was appointed as Director. Mr. Hartl had been employed with the County since 1969 when he joined the RPC as an assistant planner.

Executive Leadership

James E. Hartl, AICP, Acting Director	1988-1989
Director	1989-2006

Commissioners

Earl Johnson, Jr.	1980-1981
Mrs. Delta L. Murphy	1980-1986
Mrs. Norma Bard	1981-1987
Roy W. Donley	1981-1983
Stanley Gould	1983-1987
Lee Strong	1986-1991
Betty Fisher	1986-1990
Clinton Ternstrom	1987-1991
Paul Robinson	1987-1993



1990s

In 1990, the Local Implementation Programs for Santa Catalina Island and Marina del Rey were certified by the California Coastal Commission, giving the RPC full authority to issue coastal development permits in these areas. As the early 1990s proceeded, the County experienced a budget shortfall that impacted hiring and operations. Some employees transferred to other departments, others found employment as planners with local cities, and new hiring was curtailed. Current Planning staff continued to process development projects and necessary supplements to the Zoning Code. However, by the latter part of the decade, the County budget picture brightened; some new planners were hired, and the Board of Supervisors approved funding for the comprehensive update of the General Plan.

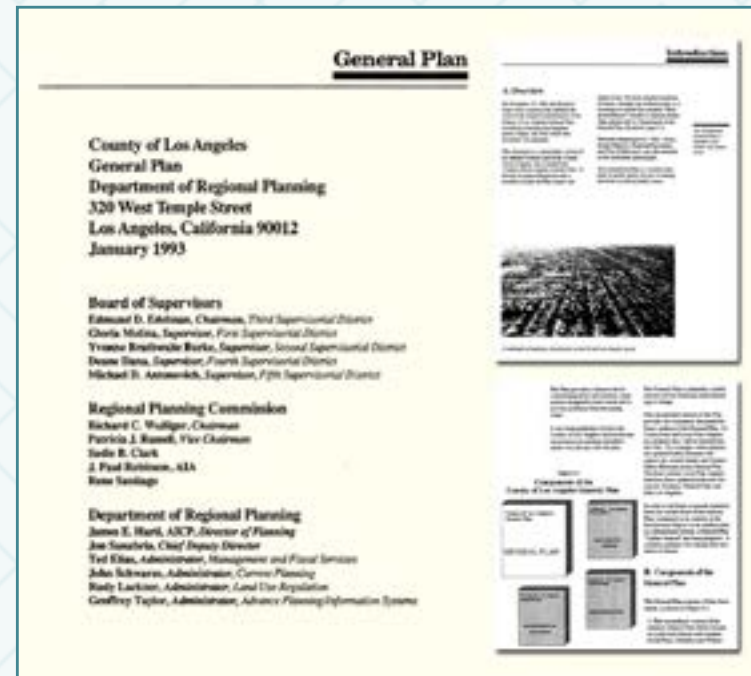
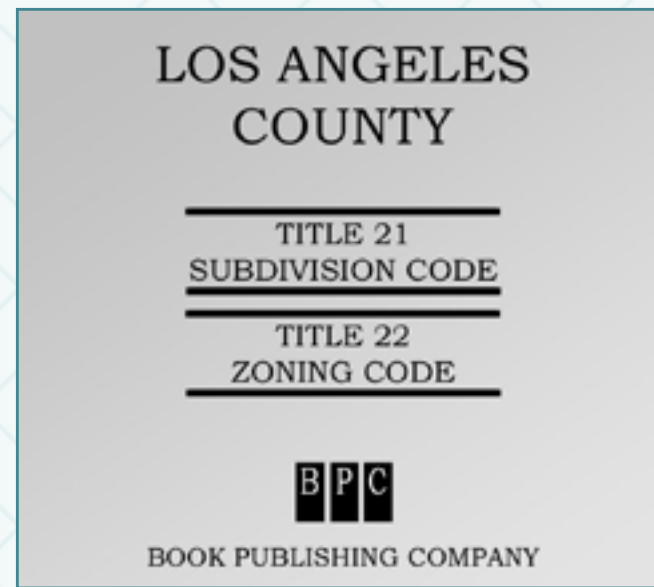
The number of incorporated cities in the County rose to 88 with Malibu and Calabasas achieving cityhood in 1991. No other cities have incorporated since. With subsequent city annexations of unincorporated areas, the RPC is now responsible for the land use regulation of 2,613 square miles (1,083 square miles within the Angeles and Los Padres National Forests). That is 916 square miles less than when the RPC began operations in 1923. The RPC celebrated its 70th anniversary with the 21st century fast approaching and its challenges of housing shortages, homelessness, threatened open space, environmental justice, and unmistakable climate change.

The General Plan content was streamlined with a companion document in 1993 to enhance users' access to goals, policies, and maps. Other efficiency measures DRP undertook included integrating and elevating geographic information systems (GIS) into the analytic and mapping needs of the Advance and Current Planning and Land Use Regulation Divisions. These included creation of a computerized database to track planning projects, Zoning Enforcement staff using laptops in the field, closed circuit television for remote testimony at public hearings, One-Stop case processing involving all relevant permitting agencies to advise on a development proposal at one time, and transition of staff to the use of computers and relevant software for all work duties.

Ten new Commissioners were appointed during the decade with backgrounds including aerospace engineering, environmental nonprofit administration, and public service.

Commissioners

Richard Wulliger	1990-1997
Patricia Russell	1991-1999
Rene Santiago	1991-1994
Robert Ryan	1993-1995
Donald Toy	1994-2000
Fred Guido	1995-1996
Cheryl Vargo	1997-2001
Esther Feldman	1997-2000
Renee Campbell	1998-2001
George Pederson	1999-2002



2000s

Four new Commissioners were appointed to the RPC in the first decade of the 21st century, with backgrounds ranging from law and politics to education and community service. Among them, Harold V. Helsley was a rural preservationist with a 40-year teaching career. Esther L. Valadez, an affordable housing developer, served more than 15 years on the RPC.

Collaborative planning work between DRP and the City of Santa Clarita, known as One Valley, One Vision, was initiated in 2001 to develop a comprehensive vision of development for the unincorporated County and City of Santa Clarita with separate yet complementary plans for the County and the City. West of the City of Santa Clarita, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan on May 27, 2003, for the development of a new community of more than 20,000 dwelling units. A feature of the Specific Plan is the set-aside of more than 5,000 acres of permanent open area.

Extensive outreach throughout the County was underway for the update of the General Plan. A component of the update was a thorough examination of the biotic resources comprising the SEAs and expansion of their boundaries. During the decade, the GIS Section completed full digital mapping of all unincorporated County land at the parcel level. This effort set the foundation for ensuring all policy maps were accurate at the parcel level during the comprehensive update of the General Plan.

The introduction of the CSD supplemental district in the early 1980s provided an opportunity for local unincorporated communities to advocate for and seek local development standards. This feature of the Zoning Code was frequently used; and from 1990 through 2009, 22 CSDs were adopted in communities ranging from the Santa Monica Mountains and Antelope Valley to the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains and urbanized unincorporated areas of the Los Angeles basin.

Mr. Hartl retired as the longest serving Director on March 6, 2006, after nearly 17 years in the position. Bruce McClendon, FAICP, previously Director of Planning and Growth Management for Hillsborough County, Florida, was appointed as Director by the Board of Supervisors in fall 2006.

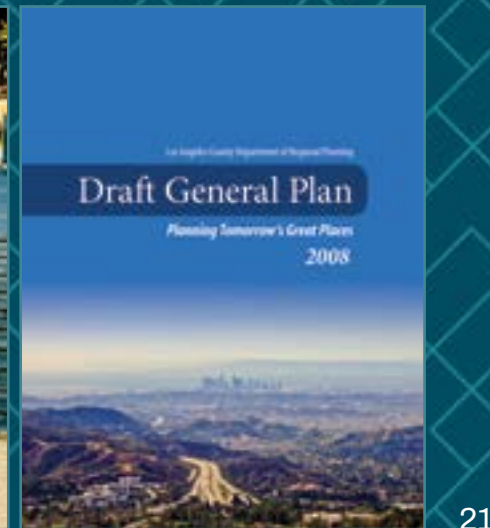
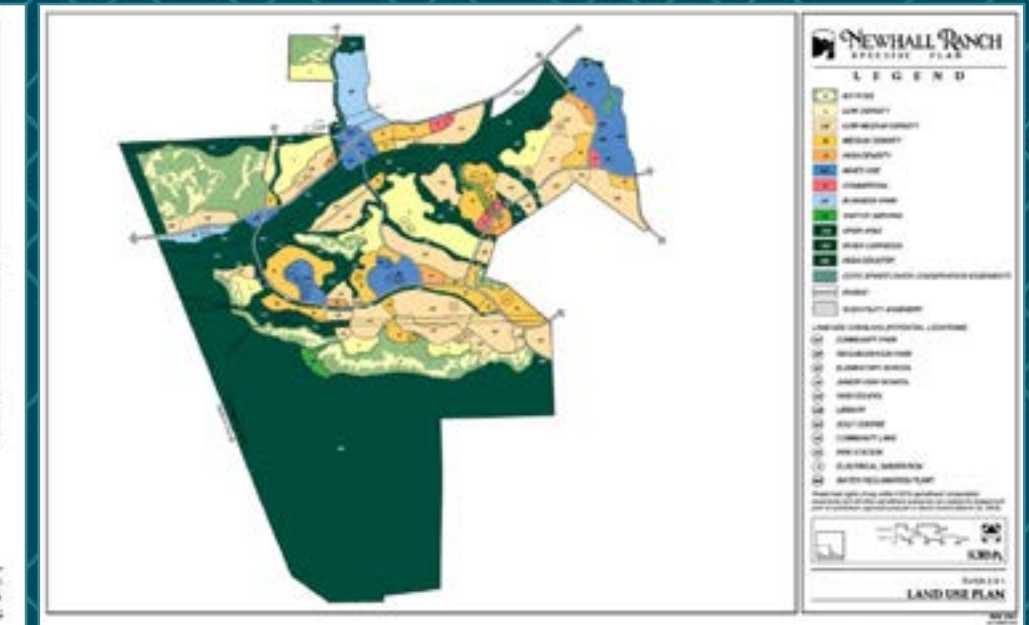
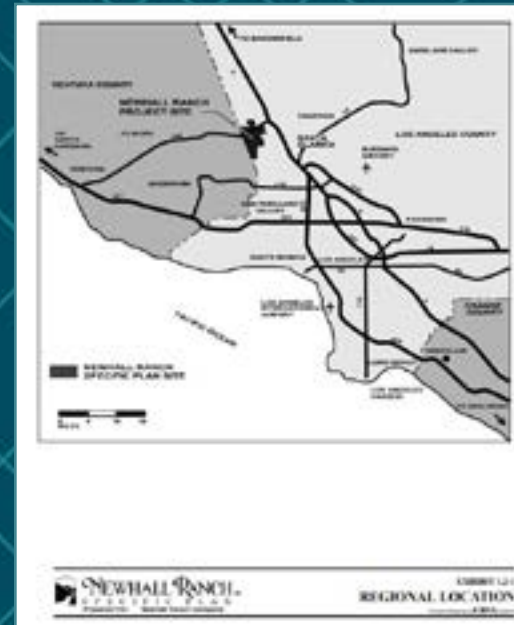
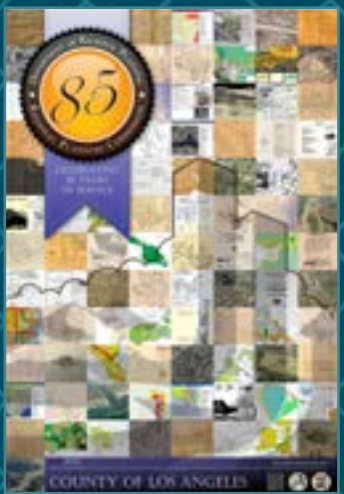
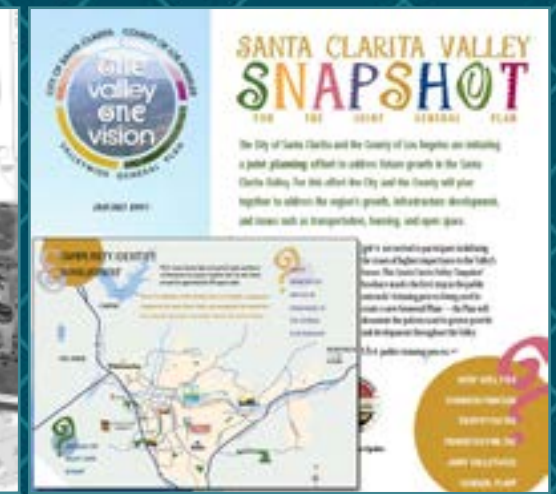
Executive Leadership

Bruce W. McClendon,
FAICP,
Director 2006-2009

Jon Sanabria,
Acting Director 2009-2010

Commissioners

Esther L. Valadez 2000-2015
Harold V. Helsley 2000-2014
Leslie G. Bellamy 2001-2011
Wayne Rew 2001-2010



2010s

On October 28, 2008, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Baldwin Hills CSD with regulations for oil and gas production activities in the unincorporated portion of the Inglewood Oil Field located in the Baldwin Hills. Mr. McClendon left County service in January 2009. Richard J. Bruckner, previously Director of Planning and Development for Pasadena, was appointed as Director and began service on February 1, 2010.

Seven new Commissioners were appointed to the RPC during this decade with backgrounds ranging from environmental science and public service to housing, community advocacy, finance, and business entrepreneurship.

In October 2014, the Land Use Plan and Local Implementation Program of the Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program were certified by the California Coastal Commission. The first County Historic Landmark, the Doumakes House in View Park, was established by Board resolution on May 16, 2016, following the Board of Supervisors adoption of the Historic Preservation Ordinance in late 2015.

Major work programs to update plans were completed, setting the goals and policies for development well into the 2030s. Adopted by the Board of Supervisors were the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan in 2012, the Antelope Valley Area Plan in June 2015, and on October 6, 2015, the General Plan. In 2019, the SEA Ordinance was updated to ensure continued achievement of the General Plan's goals of conservation, preservation of habitat connectivity and biotic resources, and sustainability.

DRP's embrace of digital technology for efficiency and customer service continued with the November 2015 introduction of the Electronic Permitting & Inspections system known as EPIC-LA. Integrated with allied County agencies, EPIC-LA is a comprehensive digital platform for the submission, review, distribution, and tracking of all DRP cases. The Zoning Code Technical Update project to reorganize the structure and improve the usability of the Zoning Code was completed in February 2019.

Mr. Bruckner retired from DRP in August 2017. Amy J. Bodek, AICP, previously Director of Development Services for Long Beach, was appointed by the Board of Supervisors and began her service on February 1, 2018, as the 11th Director of Planning and first female executive leader of the planning agency since its initiation of operations in 1923.

Executive Leadership

Richard J. Bruckner,
Director 2010-2017

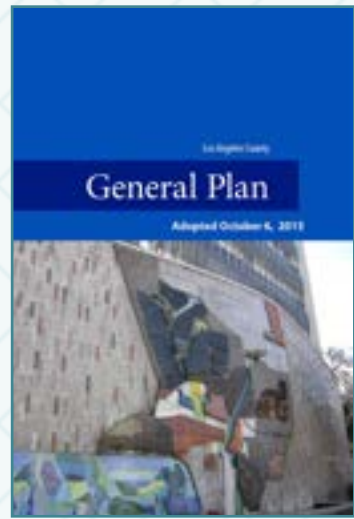
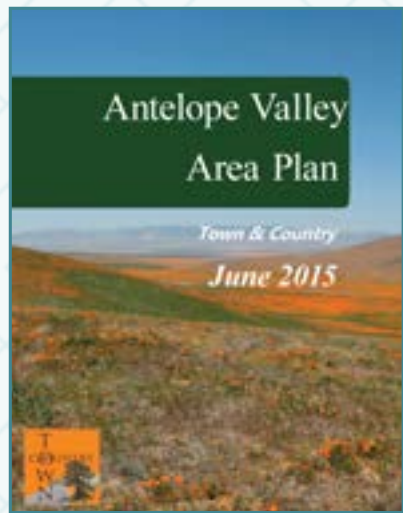
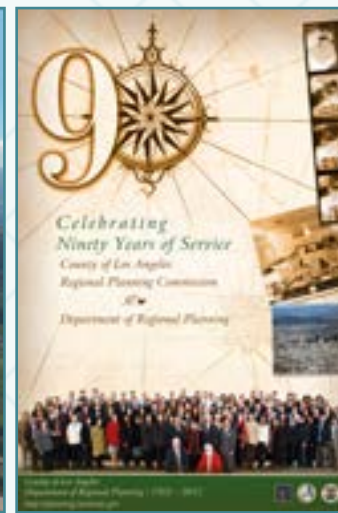
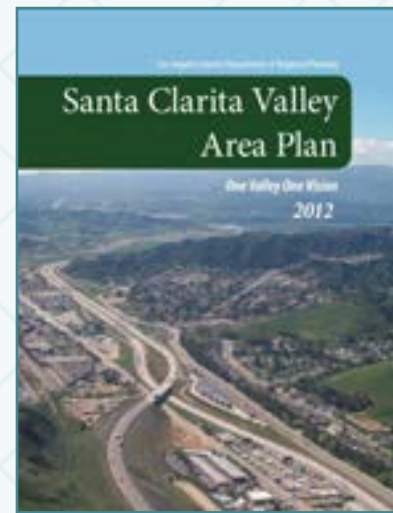
Dennis Slavin,
Acting Director 2017-2018

Amy J. Bodek, AICP,
Director 2018-present

Commissioners

Pat Modugno 2010-2021
Curt Pedersen 2011-2017
David W. Louie 2011-present
Laura Shell 2014-2015;
2016-2021

Stephanie S. Pincetl 2015-2016
Douglas Smith 2015-2020
Elvin W. Moon 2017-present



2020s

The Covid-19 pandemic had a dramatic effect on the nation and the world just as the decade began. The RPC and DRP responded safely and effectively by continuing planning work through teleworking and online hearings. Planners worked on ordinances to ensure more opportunities for affordable housing. Between 2020 and 2021, six housing ordinances were adopted. The Green Zones Ordinance was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on June 14, 2022, to promote environmental justice in communities that are disproportionately affected by toxic pollutants and contaminants generated from various land uses over time.

During the pandemic, EPIC-LA was essential to the effective functioning of the DRP. All plans, documents, and payments had to be processed through EPIC-LA because in-person transactions were not allowed. Though not contemplated when EPIC-LA was introduced, the dramatic societal changes wrought by the pandemic provided the opportunity for the digital platform to demonstrate its full potential for customer service, efficiency, and project management. The use of EPIC-LA follows a long tradition in the RPC and DRP of innovative thinking and application of technology for planning. Most recently, the DRP has been using drones to examine project sites in ways that were not possible in years past.

The RPC's return to in-person hearings coincided with its 100th anniversary celebration on March 1, 2023. As the RPC did on its 50th anniversary, an open house was held in the Hall of Records to commemorate its anniversary. The open house was preceded with a scroll presentation to the RPC membership by Supervisor Kathryn Barger at the February 28, 2023, meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

The present RPC membership is diverse and brings experience from many fields such as engineering, public service, business, and law enforcement. The longest serving is David W. Louie, who was appointed to the RPC in May 2011. Elvin W. Moon was appointed in April 2017. Commissioners Yolanda Duarte-White, Michael R. Hastings, and Pam O'Connor complete the five-member RPC, which complements the 2023 DRP Strategic Plan for Equity mission of "equitable planning, development, and engagement for all unincorporated LA County residents and businesses to help create vibrant, sustainable, and resilient communities."

Commissioners

Yolanda Duarte-White	2020-present
Michael R. Hastings	2021-present
Pam O'Connor	2022-present



Commissioners' Service and Meeting Future Challenges

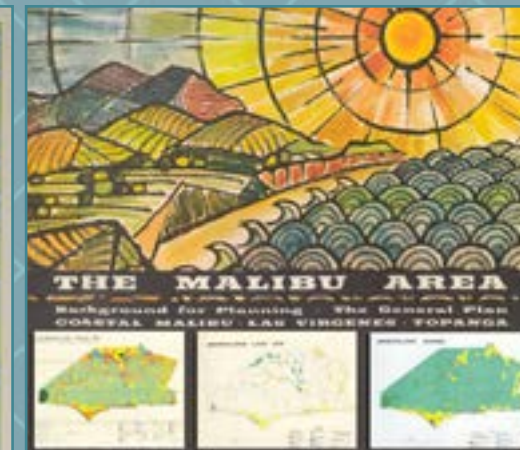
The DRP now has nearly 210 budgeted positions; about 75 percent of the positions are filled with land use planners by training and professional experience. This is quite different from the decades leading up to the RPC's 50th anniversary when most of the planning work was done by engineers.

Including the five current Commissioners, a total of 71 Commissioners have served on the RPC. Thirty-six Commissioners have served since the establishment of the DRP in 1974. The first Commissioner appointed following the establishment of the DRP was Mrs. Sadie B. Clark, who served more than 22 years until 1997.

Three other Commissioners served longer than Mrs. Clark. Serving more than 23 years was B. F. Shrimpton, who, during his tenure, was President of the California County Planning Commissioners' Association (CCPCA) in 1940. Mrs. L. S. Baca and Arthur J. Baum served before and after the establishment of the DRP. Mr. Baum served for 23 years, and Mrs. L. S. Baca served from 1939 until 1975 with a two-year break in service. The nearly 34-year tenure of Mrs. L. S. Baca is the longest to date of any Commissioner. Mrs. Baca was also President of the CCPCA in 1964.

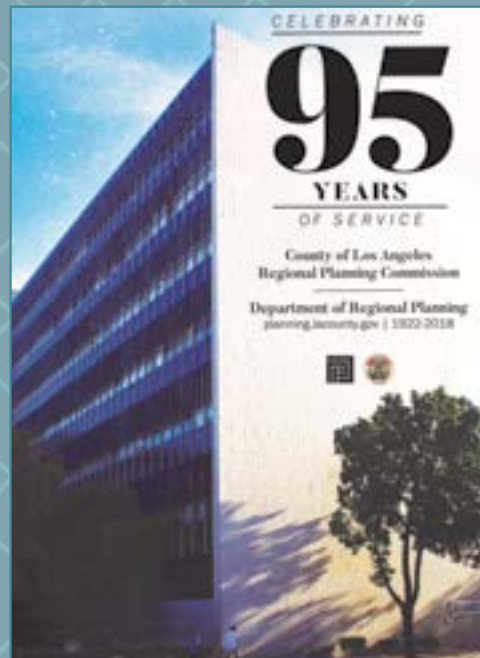
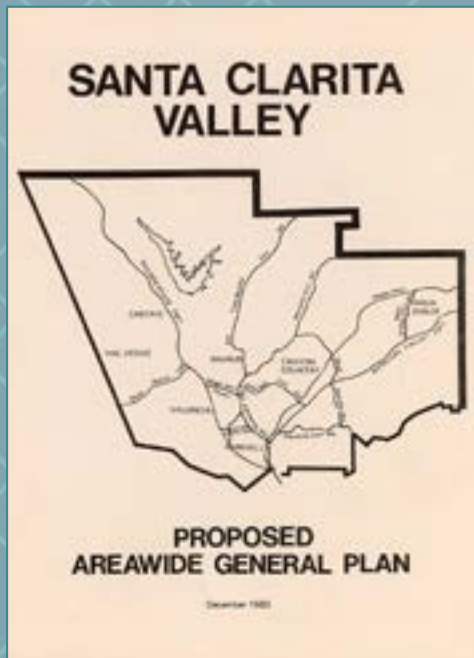
Thirteen other Commissioners have served 10 years or more. Five of those Commissioners have served or are now serving since 2000. David W. Louie is now serving his 12th year. Other long-tenured Commissioners that Mr. Louie has served with include Esther L. Valadez, who served more than 15 years; Harold V. Helsley, who served more than 13 years; and Pat Modugno, who served nearly 12 years.

Challenges abound regarding housing, safe places and neighborhoods, mobility, economic development, open space and natural resources, sustainability, and climate change. Many of these challenges were just as salient 100 years ago as they are now. Yet, the field of planning has evolved with an equity focus to assess them and, in partnership with communities, to develop solutions that address the harms of past actions and ensure that future development is fair and just. In this context, the RPC and DRP will proactively engage in equitable land use planning and zoning for years to come.





Acknowledgments and Credits



Board of Supervisors

Hilda L. Solis, First District
 Holly J. Mitchell, Second District
 Lindsey P. Horvath, Third District
 Janice Hahn, Fourth District
 Kathryn Barger, Fifth District

Regional Planning Commission

Yolanda Duarte-White, First District
 David W. Louie, Second District
 Pam O'Connor, Third District
 Elvin W. Moon, Fourth District
 Michael R. Hastings, Fifth District

Department of Regional Planning

Amy J. Bodek, AICP, Director of Planning
 Dennis Slavin, Chief Deputy Director of Planning

Contributors

Amy J. Bodek, AICP, Director of Planning
 John Sanabria, Deputy Director (Retired)
 Nick Franchino, AICP, GISP, GIS Manager
 Julie Moore, AICP, Supervising Planner
 Dan Hoffman, Principal GIS Analyst
 Kristina Kulczycki, Principal Planner

Production

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