



2023 General Plan Annual Progress Report



Land Use Services Department
Planning Division

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Introduction

San Bernardino County is over 20,000 square miles with 24 incorporated cities and over 80 unincorporated communities. The unincorporated population is over 311,000 divided between the Valley, Mountain, North Desert and East Desert regions.

The Land Use Services Department is comprised of Planning, Building and Safety, Land Development, Code Enforcement and Administration divisions. The Planning Division is responsible for updates and implementation of the General Plan in coordination with other Departments and Agencies.

This report reviews the implementation activities of the Countywide Plan, Policy Plan (General Plan update). This report fulfills a state requirement to measure progress in implementing the General Plan.

In 2014, the County began a seven year process to enhance and expand the General Plan into a comprehensive, online Countywide Plan (CWP) which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on October 27, 2020. In addition, the 14 existing Community Plans were reimagined with the assistance of the unincorporated communities into 35 Community Action Guides. The 2007 General Plan's one-map system of a Land Use/Zoning map was moved to a two-map system of separate Land Use Map and Zoning Map. In order to make comprehensive changes to planning documents, the Development Code is also being updated to be consistent with the recently adopted CWP and new two-map system. The final CWP package includes an Implementation Plan, which serves to support the Annual Reports.

With the aforementioned changes, including the implementation of the Countywide Plan and associated documents, the County is utilizing this annual report to assess the progress of the CWP which was adopted in October of 2020.

Purpose of the Annual Progress Report

The California Supreme Court has called the general plan “the constitution for future development.” The general plan expresses the community’s development goals and embodies public policy relative to the distribution of future land uses — both public and private. California law [Government Code Section 65400(b)(1)] requires all jurisdictions to submit to their legislative bodies an annual report on the status of the general plan and progress achieved toward its implementation. The Planning Agency who is responsible for investigating and recommending reasonable and practical means for implementing the general plan, must submit the annual report to the governor’s Office of Planning Research (OPR) and the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) each year. The County’s General Plan Annual Report explains how the adopted goals, policies, and programs in the General Plan are implemented in all land use decisions. It also identifies necessary “course adjustments” or modifications to the General Plan as a means to improve the County’s implementation.

Countywide Plan

Structure of the General Plan

Every city and county in California is required by law to have a general plan for its future development. A general plan is a blueprint that guides the “physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning” (California Government Code §65300).

General Plan Elements

As required by state law, a general plan must include seven elements – Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise and Safety. In addition, San Bernardino County has chosen to include

Economic Development and Renewable Energy and Conservation as additional elements. Both topics are included as optional elements.

The eleven elements of the San Bernardino County General Plan are as follows:

1. Land Use Element (LU)

- Designates the distribution, location, intensity, and balance of land uses for the unincorporated areas of the County.
- Establishes goals for where, when, and how the county grows, which is also guided by policies in other elements.
- Provides direction for new development on community design, land use compatibility, and interagency coordination.
- Provides guidance for orderly expansion of incorporated areas.

2. Housing Element (H)

- Identifies adequate sites to facilitate and encourage housing for households of all economic levels, including persons with disabilities.
- Removes governmental constraints to housing production, maintenance, and improvement as legally feasible and appropriate.
- Assists the development of adequate housing for low- and moderate-income households.
- Preserves publicly assisted multiple-family housing developments in each community.
- Conserves and improving conditions in existing housing and neighborhoods, including affordable housing.
- Promotes a range of housing opportunities for all individual and households consistent with fair and equal housing opportunity.

3. Infrastructure and Utilities (IU)

- Provides guidance on where, when, and how infrastructure and utilities are improved and expanded.
- Establishes goals and policies to maintain an adequate supply of potable water and the safe disposal, treatment, and recycling of wastewater, and the recycling and safe disposal of solid waste.
- Provides direction on system integration, resource conservation, and the protection of the natural environment.

4. Transportation and Mobility (TM)

- Establishes the location and operational conditions of the roadway network.
- Coordinates the transportation and mobility system with future land use patterns and projected growth.
- Provides guidance for the County’s responsibility to satisfy the local and subregional mobility needs of residents, visitors and businesses in unincorporated areas.
- Addresses access and connectivity among the various communities, cities, towns, and regions, as well as the range and suitability of mobility options: vehicular, trucking, freight and passenger rail, air, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit.

5. Hazards Element (HZ)

- Identifies potential natural and human-generated hazards, including increased risk due to climate change.
- Provides direction to address risks to residents, businesses, workers, and visitors.
- Prioritizes resources and reduce pollution exposure in unincorporated disadvantaged communities.

6. Personal Property and Protection (PP)

- Promotes continuous improvement in the provision of public safety and administration of justice.
- Supports coordinated and effective inter-agency response to emergencies and natural disasters.
- Provides policy direction to engage communities and respond to identified needs.
- Fosters collaboration among the Board of Supervisors-directed agencies and departments and the elected Sheriff and District Attorney.
- Augments, rather than replaces, state- and federally-mandated goals and objectives

7. Natural Resources (NR)

- Establishes policies that preserve and enhance the beauty and resiliency of our natural resources.
- Provides guidance on coordinating with others to manage, conserve, and protect natural resources such as watersheds, wildlife habitat areas and corridors, and other natural and open space areas.
- Promotes clean air and a supply of water for human consumption and the natural environment.
- Supports the maintenance and enhancement of a countywide system of open space, parks, and recreation assets.
- Provides guidance and support for mining operations and the preservation of agricultural lands.
- Provides guidance on the location and distribution of new development to protect natural resources.

8. Renewable Energy and Conservation (RE)

- Clarify the County's collective community, environmental, and economic values for RE development and conservation.
- Articulate what the County will strive to achieve and avoid through energy conservation, energy efficiency, and RE development.
- Establish goals and policies to manage RE development and conservation of the natural environment.
- Set a framework for Development Code standards for RE development.

9. Cultural Resources (CR)

- Establishes direction on notification, coordination, and partnerships to preserve and conserve cultural resources.
- Provides guidance on how new development can avoid or minimize impacts on cultural resources.
- Provides direction on increasing public awareness and education efforts about cultural resources.

10. Economic Development (ED)

- Provides direction for County efforts to attract private investment in nonresidential development in unincorporated areas of the county.
- Focuses countywide investments in workforce development on growing occupations and industries.
- Establishes the County's intent to invest in economic development in order to improve the countywide jobs-housing ratio.
- Identifies the means through which the County promotes countywide economic development.

11. Health and Wellness (HW)

- Provides guidance on addressing issues that by their nature require extensive coordination and collaboration within the County and with outside agencies and organizations.
- Establishes a holistic approach to the continuum of care.
- Identifies the County's policy focus regarding its use of state and federal funds to improve the physical and behavioral health of residents.
- Describes the County's priorities and roles in serving the health and social needs of vulnerable populations.

The Countywide Plan (General Plan) consists of the Policy Plan text, Business Plan (governance element, tracking and feedback, and implementation plan), 35 Community Action Guides, the separately bound Housing Element and Renewable Energy and Conservation Element. The General Plan is accompanied by a series of PDF and Web maps. These documents are listed and briefly described as follows:

Policy Plan Text

The County Policy Plan contains the long-term goals and policies that will guide County decisions, investments, and improvements toward achieving the Countywide Vision. The Policy Plan represents a unique approach to county planning. It serves as the County's General Plan for the unincorporated areas, which is mandated by state law, but it also includes policy direction for adult and child supportive services, healthcare, public safety, and other regional services the County administers in both incorporated and unincorporated areas.

Business Plan

The Business Plan provides overarching and ongoing guidance for existing County processes (i.e., budget, goals and objectives, performance measures, etc.). The Business Plan consists of a policy-based governance element and an action-oriented implementation plan and two new implementation tools: a tracking and feedback system and a fiscal analysis model. Combined, these sections and tools provide clarity and transparency to the public regarding County governance while ensuring the Countywide Plan remains meaningful and current.

Community Action Guides

The Community Action Guides were created by the community members who attended workshops, provided comments online or sent in written comments. The Action Guides are written in the words of those participating in the public engagement process. Therefore, the Community Action Guides retain the voice and future image of the community presented by the community members participating in the public engagement process. However, the implementation of each Action Statement is an opportunity for additional discussion by community members and modification of the statement and action steps may be made by the community and Action Teams.

Overall, the Community Action Guides are a framework for communities to create the future character and independent identity, as identified in the workshops as community values and aspirations, through completion of community actions. As stated in the community workshops, the Community Action Guides replace any 2007/2014 Community Plans, with a greater focus on community self-reliance, grass-roots action, and implementation. Goals, policies, land use, and infrastructure information presented in 2007 Community Plans have been incorporated within the Policy Plan of the Countywide Plan. The County Development Code will continue to regulate zoning and land use development.

The Community Action Guides are strategic in nature which provide clear Focus Statements and Action Statements identified by the community that led to the creation of an Action Plan that can be implemented

at the grass-roots level within each community. Some actions may require assistance by a County department, however the community will take the lead in moving the action forward, identifying funding or scheduling meetings or requesting information from specific County departments.

A detailed implementation plan and training module will be set up by the County to guide communities in identifying Champions, setting up Action Teams, contacting County departments and answering questions. In addition, the County’s role will be clarified. This information will be included on the website for easy reference by communities.

Valley	Mountain	East Desert	North Desert
Bloomington	Angelus Oaks	East Desert Communities	Baker
Devore	Bear Valley Communities	Homestead Valley Communities	Daggett
Mentone	Crest Forest Communities	Joshua Tree	El Mirage
Muscoy	Hilltop Communities	Morongo Valley	Helendale
San Antonio Heights	Lake Arrowhead Communities	Pioneertown Communities	High Desert Communities
	Lytle Creek	Route 66 Communities	Lucerne Valley
	Mountain Communities	Wonder Valley	Newberry Springs
	Mt. Baldy		North Desert Communities
	Oak Glen		Oak Hills
	Wrightwood		Oro Grande
			Phelan/ Pinon Hills
			Trona
			Yermo

Specific and Area Plans

The purposes of Specific Plan Land Use Zoning Districts are to designate an area that encompasses the boundaries of an adopted Specific Plan. They are also intended to allow joint planning efforts among adjacent land owners and jurisdictions. Specific Plans usually provide sites for a combination of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, open space, recreational and similar and compatible uses as determined by the Specific Plan. The East Valley Area Plan contains detailed land use regulations to guide growth and development within the boundaries of the plan for the East Valley. The Plan contains maps which delineate land use designations and the circulation network within the area, along with establishing a Land Use Zoning District designation for each parcel, establishing the circulation design guidelines and the site design standards and guidelines.

The Specific and Area Plan are also a part of the overall General Plan. They are as follows:

- Aqua Mansa Specific Plan (AMSP)
- East Valley Area Plan (EVAP)
- Glen Helen Specific Plan (GHSP)
- Kaiser Specific Plan (KSP)
- Hacienda Fairview Valley Specific Plan (HFVSP)
- Valley Corridor Specific Plan (VCSP)
- Speedway Commerce Center II Specific Plan (SCCSP)
- Bloomington Business Park Specific Plan (BBPSP)

General Plan Mapping Series

Land Use Zoning District Maps

The County has elected to change from a “one-map” system to a two-map system. Previously, there was one map to show the General Plan and Zone designation. Now, there is a map showing Land Use Designations, or land use categories, and another map showing the zoning designation. The Land Use Designation Map is published as a PDF and is also available as an interactive webmap. The maps are parcel-specific in that they show the designated land use zoning district for each parcel. Three overlays – Additional Agriculture, Agricultural Preserve, and the Sign Control are shown on these zone map as a suffix to the land use zoning district.

Infrastructure and Utilities

A series of 7 maps, that are published online and are also available as a PDF. They are parcel specific and cover a range of infrastructure and utility topics like regional wastewater and waste disposal facilities and utility service providers.

Transportation and Mobility

A series of six maps show the road designations for all roads with the following classifications throughout the County: Freeway, Major Arterial Highway, Major Divided Highway, Major Highway, Secondary Highway, Controlled/Limited Access Collector, Mountain Major Highway and Mountain Secondary Highway. This series also includes mobility focus areas, airports, and adopted transportation plans.

Natural Resources

A series of 5 maps that show air districts and basins, parks and open space resources, scenic routes and highways, mineral resources zones, and agricultural resources. Some of these maps are not parcel specific because the delineations of the various resources are not intended to be parcel-specific.

Hazards

A series of 11 maps, these maps are published online and available as a PDF. Unlike the Land Use Zoning District Maps, some of the Hazard Overlay Maps are scale dependent, and do not show parcel specific information because the delineations of the various hazards are not intended to be parcel-specific. The hazards on these maps include airport safety, dam inundation, fire, flood, and noise, earthquake, liquefaction and landslides, Environmental Justice Focus Areas, and wind hazards.

Personal Property

A series of three maps that are available online as webmaps and hardcopy as PDF. These maps depict critical facilities, evacuation routes, and sheriff operations.

Economic Development

This webmap and PDF shows commercial, employment, and industrial redevelopment focus area.

Health and Wellness

A series of 2 web and PDF maps, that depict educational and public facilities located within the unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County.

Major Completed Activities

General Plan Amendments

Almond Avenue Warehouse Project/ 2nd District

The amendment changes the land use category designation on approximately 0.33 acres from Medium Density Residential (MDR) to Limited Industrial (LI), A Zoning Amendment from Multiple Residential (RM) to Community Industrial (IC). The Land Use Map Amendment was found to be consistent with the General Plan Goals and Policies, it was adopted July 25, 2023. This will comprise the First Cycle General Plan Land Use Element Amendment of 2023.

Development Code Amendments

Environmental Justice Focus Area

The San Bernardino County Development Code was not amended in 2023 however, staff started work on an amendment to the Development Code to reflect the policies from the General Plan that relate to Environmental Justice Focus Areas. The proposed amendment will increase notification requirements for certain types of projects that are located near or within an Environmental Justice Focus Area. The amendment also expands on Policy HZ 3.18 which requires certain types of applications to include documentation of how the project will address the environmental justice concerns potentially created as a result of the project, and an outreach plan for nearby residents and business owners to share public input on the project. The ordinance was reviewed by the Planning Commissioners on 5-19-2023 and will be heard by the Board of Supervisors in 2024.

Other Activities

Housing Element

The County has adopted the 6th Cycle Housing Element in September 2022. The Element was certified in November 2022. This General Plan Element is one of nine state-mandated elements. The Housing Element identifies the County's housing conditions and needs, establishes the goals, objectives and policies that are the foundation of the County's housing strategy as well as programs and actions to implement the Element by accommodating growth, producing an opportunity for the development of new housing units and preserving existing housing stock. It is accompanied by 27 programs.

In 2023 the County focused on Program 4- Short term rentals from the Housing Element. In early 2023 the County started working with Granicus to develop a short term rental study to analyze the impacts of short term rentals on the long term housing stock. This already complex issue has been made even more complex due to the influence of the Pandemic and the resulting surge of people seeking to move permanently from the coastal communities to the more rural and idyllic unincorporated communities in San Bernardino County, where they can now enjoy the beauty of the natural environment while working remotely elsewhere in the county and beyond. We are looking to bring our findings, informed by the latest data we have internally and from the Census, to the public and our Board of Supervisors in 2024.

Ongoing Implementation

2023 Development Code Update Program

Status

Upon completion and adoption of the Countywide Plan (CWP) in October of 2020, the County began an update of their Development Code (Code). The update became necessary with the adoption of new policies that are implemented through the Development Code. To ensure consistency with the new Policy Plan and Business Plan, a program to review, update, and create new standards and processes for the Development Code was undertaken. A major part of this program was the creation of a two map system instead of the single map system employed by the County since 2007. As part of the CWP the Board adopted a new Land Use Designation map (LU-1) which required the creation of a new Zoning Map.

The major tasks for the Development Code Update program were:

- Update existing zone descriptions and add new zones pursuant to the CWP, Policy Plan's land use designations.
- Create a new web based Zone Map.
- Reorganize and update the uses section of the Code to comply with the policies relative to land use compatibility.
- Review Code overlays for consistency and linkage to policy maps contained in the Policy Plan
- Add necessary procedures to comply with new state laws affecting the adoption of new general plans (i.e.: Environmental Justice, Sustainable Communities Strategy, Climate Adaptation and Resiliency, Wild Fire Assessment, etc.).
- Add new development standards for all new zones created as part of this program, review development standards of existing land use categories (zones) to make consistent with Policy Plan provisions.

The County also articulated the following goals for the Development Code Update, apart from the Policy Plan implementation items mentioned above:

- Update the definitions chapter
- Review and, where necessary, make improvements to the development process and related applications to ensure they are clear, concise, and easy to understand and implement.
- Strengthen visual aids for better understanding of development standards and procedures.

In 2023 the County achieved the following milestones in the development of the new Code:

- Draft Environmental Justice Focus Area Standards and Processing Requirements
- Draft SB-9 Ordinance

Next Steps / Schedule

The County plans on updating their ADU and Housing sections of the Development Code to be consistent with the Housing Element and State Laws. The comprehensive Development Code will continue to move forward slowly to allow public input in the process.

Housing Element Annual Progress Report

Government code section 65400 requires that each city and county in California prepare an annual progress report (APR) on the status of the Housing Element of its general plan and progress in its implementation,

using forms and definitions adopted by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Once complete, the Housing Element APR must be submitted to the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) on or before April 1st of each year. The full report submitted in 2024, reporting on the 2023 calendar year, has been submitted separately. Below is a summary of the number or units built which have received final occupancy in the reporting year. It should be noted that the housing production targets identified in the 6th Cycle Housing Element have been met.

Figure 1. 2023 Building Permits Issued by Affordability

Income Level	Reporting Year 2023
Very Low	0
Low	8
Moderate	278
Above Moderate	778
Total Units	1064

SB 2 Grant

The County has been notified of the approval to receive \$625,000 under the Senate Bill (SB) 2 Planning Grants. The purpose of the grant program is to help local agencies prepare, adopt, and implement plans and process improvements that streamline housing approvals and accelerate housing production.

Chapter 354, Statutes of 2017 (SB 2, Atkins) was part of a 15 bill housing package signed by Governor Brown that was aimed at addressing the state’s housing shortage and high housing costs. Specifically, it establishes a permanent source of funding intended to increase the affordable housing stock in California. The legislation directs HCD to establish a program that provides financial and technical assistance to local governments to update planning documents and zoning ordinances in order to streamline housing production, including, but not limited to, general plans; community plans; specific plans; implementation of sustainable communities strategies; and local coastal programs.

Project Description: Eligible activities under the Program include, but are not limited to, environmental analyses that eliminate the need for project-specific review. To support housing development and redevelopment, the Department proposes to utilize Program funding to streamline environmental review and limit, to the extent feasible, the requirements for intensive, technical studies required for future development. The proposed approach will provide developers with more certainty regarding environmental review, and will reduce both County and applicant time and cost for future housing approvals.

The Department’s proposed use of the funds is to build off of the extensive policies, mitigation and information being compiled in the Countywide Plan (CWP) and CWP Environmental Impact Report (EIR), as well as the Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS). The approach includes:

- Conducting upfront environmental technical studies;
- Pre-screening areas with limited environmental constraints;
- Providing screening tools for streamlining the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process for projects; and
- Optimizing CWP EIR documents to support CEQA compliance for projects.

Status Update:

Task A- Environmental Technical Studies-

The technical reports for pre-screening areas have been completed and provided to County Staff.

Task B- California Environmental Quality Act Streamlining

This task is currently in progress. The technical studies are being reviewed by the County and review of GIS features to build analysis tool in process.

LEAP Grant

On June 11, the County applied to the State for a \$750,000 Local Early Action Area Planning Grant (LEAP). The purpose of the grant program is to help local agencies prepare, adopt, and implement plans and process improvements that accelerate housing production and facilitate implementation of the sixth cycle Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA).

On January 27, 2020, HCD released a Notice of Funding Availability for approximately \$119 million as part of the Local Early Action Planning Grants Program (LEAP or Program). LEAP is made available pursuant to Chapter 3.1 of Health and Safety Code (sections 50515 to 50515.05). LEAP provides funding to local agencies for the preparation of planning documents, process improvements that accelerate housing production, consistent with the RHNA.

Program Funding Proposal: Eligible activities under the Program must support housing-related planning activities that facilitate accelerated housing production. The Department proposes to utilize Program funding to prepare and implement the 6th Cycle Housing Element, with additional land use and infrastructure planning to expand housing development opportunities in Bloomington.

County Use of Grant Funds: The Department's proposed use of the funds would build on the extensive policies and land use planning in the Countywide Plan (CWP) and the Valley Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan. The funding proposal includes the preparation of the 6th Cycle Housing Element, analysis of development potential, including supporting infrastructure to expand housing development opportunities in Bloomington and other communities identified as growth focus areas in the CWP, and the related environmental compliance documents.

Status update:

Task 1- 6th Cycle Housing Element

The 6th cycle Housing element is adopted and certified. The adopted element and land inventory are available online. Implementation of the 27 housing element programs has begun. The Bloomington Infrastructure study is drawing to a conclusion pending the review of the City of Rialto's infrastructure plan. Final documentation expected in Spring of 2024.

Future Annual Reports

The development of a fully web-based, comprehensive Countywide Plan (CWP) was planned to address some of these issues by being inclusive of every County Department and Agency participating and ensuring all polices were at the higher level with action items in the Implementation Plan or in the Community Action Guides. The CWP has about 350 policies, which are prioritized in the Implementation Plan. The County is working on the immediate actions listed in the Implementation plan which includes updating the Development Code to be consistent with the Policy plan.