

Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

THE CITY OF
BRE A
GENERAL PLAN



Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION



Imagine Brea. Imagine Brea as a town where people live, work, shop, and play within one community. Where people find homes to match diverse lifestyles, access needs, and income levels. Where businesses provide jobs for local residents and create a strong economic foundation for the community. Where parks and recreational facilities offer opportunities for a diverse population to exercise and interact. Where schools and teachers educate the youth and inspire the mind. Where the natural environment is protected for its inherent visual and wildlife resource values. This is how the community imagines the Brea of the future, and this General Plan will take Brea there.

WHAT IS THE GENERAL PLAN?

The Brea General Plan identifies the community's vision for its collective future and establishes the fundamental framework to guide future decision-making about development, resource management, public safety, public services, and general community well-being. During creation of the General Plan, the community worked together to craft this vision and define it through text and illustrations. This General Plan reflects the planning desires and values of Brea residents, the business community, community educators, and elected and appointed officials.

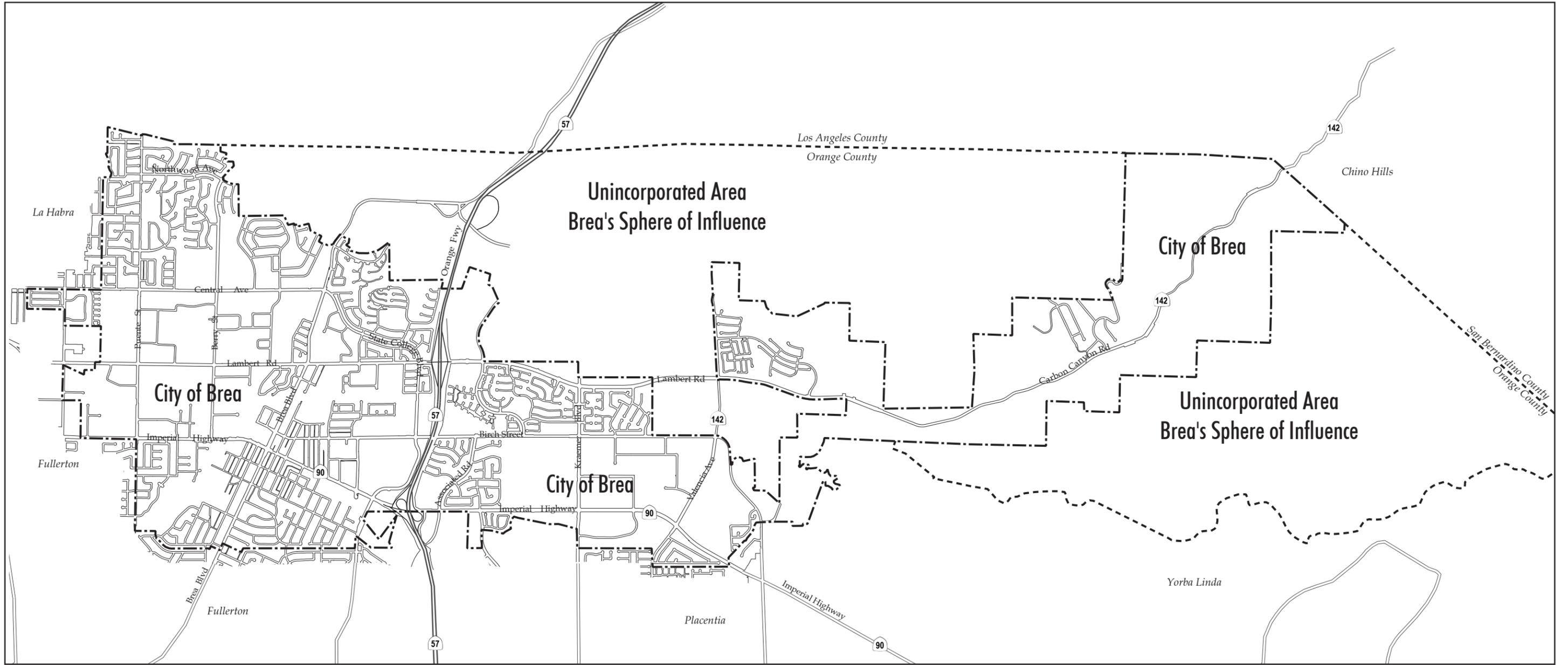
The Brea General Plan describes how Breans will work to retain the natural and aesthetic qualities that make their City unique, but at the same time, respond to the dynamics of regional growth and meeting changing community needs. The General Plan serves as a policy guide, balancing these interrelated factors to Brea's community vision.

Imagine Brea

Importantly, this General Plan addresses not just lands within the City's corporate limits, but also unincorporated Orange County properties surrounding Brea, within its so-called sphere of influence. In this General Plan, the combined City area and sphere of influence are termed the "planning area," illustrated in Figure I-1. While properties within the sphere of influence are under the jurisdiction of Orange County agencies, these properties bear a critical relationship to Brea's planning activities and, from a visual standpoint, form a significant backdrop to the community. One day, these properties may become part of the City proper, and planning for service extensions, integrated infrastructure, and high design quality is timely and prudent.



In the foreground is Carbon Canyon Regional Park, partially located within the corporate limits of Brea. In the background are the Chino Hills in unincorporated Orange County; both lie within Brea's planning area.



Brea's Planning Area

- City Boundary
- - - Sphere of Influence

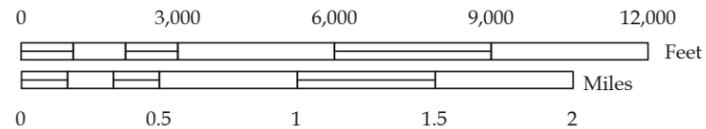
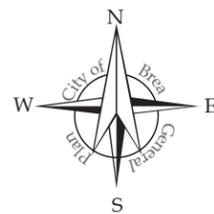


Figure I-1
Planning Area

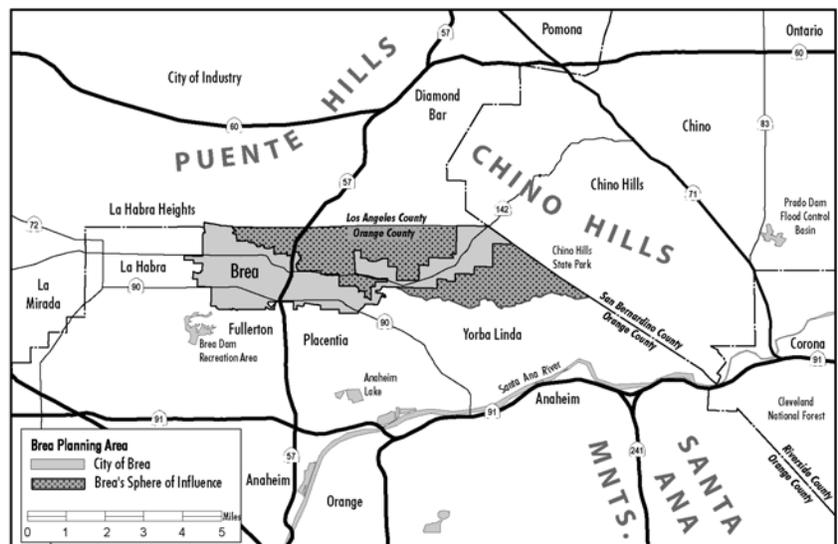
HOW WE IMAGINE BREA

The Brea of the future builds upon the Brea of the past. Throughout its history, the City has embraced changes that have expanded economic development opportunities, created new housing, improved the services and facilities available to residents, and preserved resources integral to the health of the community. As Brea moves through the first two decades of the twenty-first century, the community will continue to experience change, guided by the goals and policies contained in this General Plan.

Brea’s Beginnings – A Planning Context

The Brea of today lies at the base of the Puente and Chino Hills, geographic features that provide Breans with scenic views of natural beauty. The hills contrast with and complement the urban forms of the City. Whereas the SR-57 freeway and arterial roadways link Brea to adjacent communities in Orange, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties, the hills tie Brea to its past. Brea occupies a unique geographic location that offers residents and businesses easy access to both the benefits of urban living and the quiet solitude of open spaces (Figure I-2).

Figure I-2. Brea’s Planning Area and Regional Location



Imagine Brea

The properties comprising current day Brea were once part of the large land holdings of the San Gabriel Mission established in 1771 by the Franciscan Padres. Vast herds of Mexican cattle pastured on all the land in and surrounding Brea during the Mission period and the subsequent Rancho era. In 1863, thousands of acres of Rancho lands, including Brea, were acquired by Abel Stearns, a Los Angeles businessman who later leased much of his land to sheep ranchers.

Sheep ranching and oil production represented the two predominant business activities during the latter half of the 1800s. Beneath the hills in Brea lie what was once one of the world's richest deposits of oil. The Puente Hills and Brea Canyon supported substantial petroleum production. By 1895, the Puente Hills Oil Company had approximately 30 oil wells in the Puente Hills producing 700 barrels of oil a day. Union Oil Company was also lured by the riches of Brea and began purchasing land in Brea for oil production and leasing it out to other oil companies. Wooden oil derricks and oil production machinery covered the hills and canyons. Evidence of oil production and remaining steel derricks can be seen today in the canyons. In Spanish, *brea* means tar. Thus, the City's name reflects its history as an oil community.



Oil derricks can still be seen along the hillsides in Brea Canyon.

The first real village in Brea was called Olinda and was originally sited where Carbon Canyon Regional Park lies today. Olinda, literally surrounded by hundreds of oil wells, was the workplace for many of the oil field workers. The village contained a church, barbershop, livery stable, boarding house, dance hall, pump house, Santa Fe Freight Depot, a school, and an oil storage tank.

The official founding date for the town of Brea is January 19, 1911. The City incorporated in 1917 with a population of 732. Many of the buildings of the original town were situated along Pomona Avenue (current day Brea Boulevard). As a booming oil town, the City's population began to grow rapidly. Development of new housing, businesses, and civic buildings began to shape the Brea of today. In 1918, the Pacific Electric Railway connected Brea to La Habra, Whittier, and other Los Angeles communities.

With the oil boom, land in and around the City began converting from sheep ranches to orange groves. The Bastanchury Ranch Company in La Habra, Fullerton, and Brea was said to have the largest citrus groves in the world, which included over 5,350 acres of orange groves during the 1920s. Union Oil Company also realized the potential of turning over underutilized properties to citrus production.

In Brea and throughout Southern California, the post-World War II years were a period of substantial growth. Citrus groves were plowed under and the land subdivided for greater profits. Brea also experienced an influx of manufacturing and industrial businesses. In 1972, completion of the 57 Freeway made agricultural lands and oil lands surrounding Brea even more accessible. Five years later, the Brea Mall opened, providing economic growth for the City while supplying retail opportunities for Breans and the region.

During the latter decades of the twentieth century, as the flatter lands below the base of the hills built out, development started to occur along the lower hillslopes. Also, properties once in active oil production transitioned to urban development as the economics of the energy industry changed. The Olinda Ranch development at Lambert Road and Valencia Avenue transformed 277 acres of oil fields into a residential community with substantial open space features.

As the community moves through the first twenty years of the twenty-first century, continuing regional growth pressures will again transform Brea. The question this General Plan answers is, How do we imagine Brea in 2020?

Imagining Brea - Year 2020

How do we imagine the Brea of tomorrow? As part of the General Plan program, the City undertook a substantial public outreach program to understand current community values and

to establish a new General Plan policy foundation based on those values. The outreach effort arose from Brea’s long-standing practice of involving its citizenry in important policy discussion, as well as in reaction to public discussion in 2000 regarding the future of Brea’s hillsides, a discussion that culminated in a much-debated ballot measure. The outreach program was multi-faceted and included the components described below.

- As part of the General Plan update program, a **General Plan Advisory Committee** (GPAC) was formed to serve as an advisory committee to the City Council and Planning Commission. The GPAC members represented various City commissions and committees, the school board, community groups, and community at large. The GPAC conducted eight meetings over a one-year period, during which time the group formulated a long-range vision for Brea and assisted in translating this vision into General Plan goals and policies, as well as suggestions for land use and development capacity within the hillsides and unincorporated areas. The public was invited to share their comment and concerns with the members of the GPAC during these meetings. Two special meetings were conducted to which owners of large vacant hillside properties were specifically invited to engage in dialogue about hillside development policy.



At the Imagine Brea workshop, residents learned about different urban design and architectural concepts that may be used in Brea.

- Full-scale public participation began at the **Imagine Brea Workshop** involving the GPAC, City staff, City policy makers, consultants, and the public. This interactive workshop – which was presented in the format of “virtual Brea”, with the meeting room laid out as a map of the City – allowed the public ask to questions about the General

Plan program, collectively create a vision, and discuss the level of detail and framework of the General Plan. Major planning issues were identified and discussed.

- The second **Community Workshop** was a mobile workshop, whereby participants, maps in hand, drove to key sites in the City, reviewed land use options, and indicated a preference among the options presented. The information from this workshop helped the GPAC craft a preferred land use policy map.
- At the City's annual **Wellness Festival**, attendees were invited to visit the General Plan booth and identify preferences for various types of development: suburban versus urban, clustered versus the more traditional lotting patterns in Brea. This mini-workshop helped refine different land use alternatives for consideration by the GPAC.
- Once foundation goals and policies had been drafted, the public participated in a third **Community Workshop** designed to gain affirmation of policy direction. The two key questions City staff asked the public to answer were, "Did we get it right?" and "What did we miss?"
- The City utilized its **website** to provide current information on the General Plan update program. Summaries of the public meetings and information on program progress were posted for review. The public was allowed to comment on various aspects of the program during its formation.
- A special General Plan **newsletter** summarizing the General Plan Chapters was prepared and distributed to residents, with a brief description of the proposed General Plan and its contents.
- **Brea Line**, the City's community newsletter, was used to keep the public continually informed about the General Plan program. One issue focused on the General Plan.
- An internal City staff advisory committee, the **General Plan Action Team**, met at key points in the work program to review issues, goals and policies, and land use/circulation alternatives.

- Prior to adoption of the General Plan, the Draft General Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report were circulated for public review and comment, and a final community workshop was held before **General Plan Public Hearings** were conducted before the Planning Commission and City Council.

Through this extensive outreach process, the City learned how residents and the business community imagine Brea.

Imagine Brea

Brea will be a community that provides great places to live, work, learn, and play, places that respect the community's natural and cultural resources, provide open space and public spaces that appeal to all Brea residents, encourage economic vitality, and enhance the overall quality of life for all residents.

In support of this vision statement, the community defined four overarching goals that embody the community's values and will guide all decisions made pursuant to this General Plan.

Overarching General Plan Goals

Goal 1

Create an inclusive community that strives to meet the needs of residents of all ages, income levels, occupations, family types, and lifestyles.

Goal 2

Plan for the sustainable stewardship of natural resources.

Goal 3

Provide a range of mobility options that reduce dependence on the automobile.

Goal 4

Maintain a sustainable economic base to provide a solid fiscal foundation and diverse employment opportunities, and to ensure the provision of quality community facilities and services.

ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN

Under California law, every city must adopt a comprehensive, long-term General Plan to guide the physical development of the city's incorporated area, plus to plan for land outside of the municipal boundaries that bear a relationship to a city's planning activities. As described above, such planning is not just a State mandate; it simply makes good sense. State law further indicates that the General Plan is the primary document a jurisdiction must utilize to regulate land use. Consequently, the zoning ordinance, specific plans, and individual public and private development proposals must be consistent with General Plan goals, policies, and standards.

To ensure that every city and county prepares General Plans that are comprehensive and long-term in perspective, State statutes establish requirements for the minimum contents of a General Plan. (Interested readers are referred to Sections 65350 through 65590 of the Government Code.) By law, a General Plan must contain the following seven "elements" and must be internally consistent element to element:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Housing
- Conservation
- Open Space
- Noise
- Safety

Jurisdictions may prepare and adopt any other General Plan element or address any other subject of particular relevance or interest to that community, with the understanding that these optional elements must be implemented with the same vigor – and are subject to the same legal scrutiny – as the mandatory elements.

The Brea General Plan has been constructed to reflect the issues and policies and issues unique to this City. Rather than "elements", the Plan is organized by themed chapters, each of which examines and addresses several interrelated issues. Separate sections within the chapters treat a specific issue. For example, the Community Development Chapter contains sections related to development: land use, circulation, economic

development, urban design, and infrastructure. Figure I-3 illustrates this organization.

Figure I-3. Organization of the General Plan

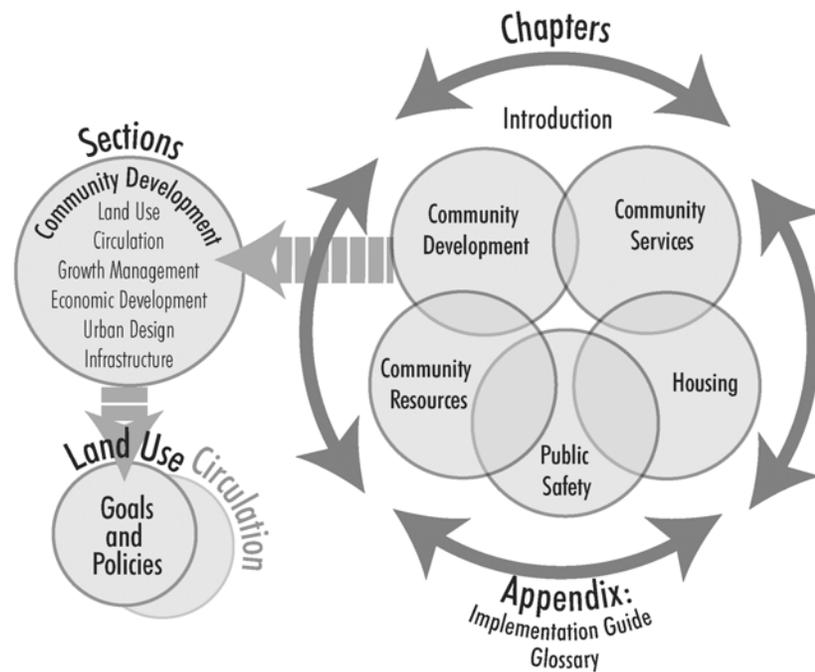


Table I-1 indicates how each of these chapters corresponds to the seven State-mandated elements.

The **Community Development** Chapter contains the following sections: Land Use, Circulation, Infrastructure, Urban Design, Economic Development, and Growth Management. This chapter focuses on the built environment aspect of Brea and pulls together issues and goals from the other chapters and lays out the framework for balancing development with broader community aims.

The **Housing** Chapter addresses issues, goals, and policies related to ensuring an adequate supply of housing opportunities for persons of all needs and income levels. Unlike the other elements, State law sets forth very specific regulations regarding the content and breadth of the Housing Element. Housing elements must be updated every five years.

The **Community Resources** Chapter examines both the natural and human-made environments, and establishes policies to protect those resources that distinguish and define Brea. Issues addressed are Parks and Open Space, Wildlife Habitat, Trails, Scenic

**Table I-1
General Plan Chapters and State-Mandated Elements**

Brea General Plan Chapters/Sections	State Mandated Elements							Optional
	Land Use	Circulation	Housing	Open Space	Conservation	Safety	Noise	
Chapter 2: Community Development								
Land Use	•							
Circulation		•						
Infrastructure		•						
Urban Design								•
Economic Development								•
Growth Management ^(a)								•
Chapter 3: Housing								
Housing			•					
Chapter 4: Community Resources								
Parks and Open Space				•				
Wildlife Habitat					•			
Trails		•						
Scenic Resources					•			
Air Quality								•
Water Conservation and Quality					•			
Historic Resources								•
Chapter 5: Community Services								
Recreation Programs								•
Human Services								•
Cultural Arts								•
Education								•
Libraries								•
Chapter 6: Public Safety								
Emergency Services						•		
Hazards Management						•		
Wildland Fires						•		
Flood Concerns						•		
Geologic and Seismic Considerations						•		
Noise							•	

(a) While Growth Management is not a State-mandated element, it is mandated by Measure M for all jurisdictions in Orange County.

Resources, Air Quality, Water Conservation and Quality, and Historic Resources.

The **Community Services** Chapter emphasizes the human elements of the City: Recreation Programs, Human Services, Cultural Arts, Education, and Libraries.

The **Public Safety** Chapter is concerned with identifying hazards present in the community and ensuring that proper planning and emergency response services can mitigate the hazards. Sections in the chapter include: Emergency Services, Hazards Management, Wildland Fires, Flood Concerns, Geologic and Seismic Considerations, and Noise.

USING THE GENERAL PLAN

Because the General Plan is a community document intended for use by all Breans, not just City staff and decision-makers, the Plan has been written and organized for ease of use. Tables, diagrams, and maps help readers understand planning concepts, and sidebar notes define terms and direct users to chapters addressing related topics or policies. At the end of each goals and policies section, readers can follow links to the Implementation Guide contained in Appendix A of the General Plan.

Key Terms Used

As stated above, goals and policies represent the Plan's foundation. A **goal** is an overall statement of community desires and consists of a broad statement of purpose or direction. For each goal in this General Plan, associated and more definitive policy statements follow. A **policy** provides guidance to the City Council, Planning Commission, other City commissions and boards, and City staff in their review of development proposals and the actions taken.

The organization of the General Plan allows users to turn to the section that interests them and quickly obtain a perspective of City policies on the subject. However, General Plan users should realize that the policies throughout all chapters are interrelated and should be examined comprehensively. All of these policy components must be considered together when making planning decisions.

Some readers may find that the goals and policies do not fully articulate how the City will achieve its aims. Further articulation can be found in the **Implementation Guide** (Appendix A). The Implementation Guide identifies specific actions the City will undertake toward putting each goal and policy into action. Adopted separately from the General Plan, the Implementation Guide is intended to be reviewed and updated annually to allow decision-makers to adjust to current community priorities and funding resources.

Related Plans and Programs

As referenced above, State law places the General Plan atop the hierarchy of land use planning regulations. Several local ordinances and other City plans must conform with General Plan policy direction and work to implement the Plan. Also, regional governmental agencies, such as the Southern California Association of Governments and the South Coast Air Quality Management District, have been established in recognition of the fact that planning issues extend beyond the boundaries of individual cities. Efforts to address regional planning issues such as air quality, transportation, affordable housing, and habitat conservation have resulted in the adoption of regional plans. The policies Brea adopts are affected by these plans. The paragraphs below describe ordinances, plans, and programs important to be consulted in association with the General Plan in development and planning decisions.

Brea Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance, the primary tool used to implement the General Plan, regulates development type and intensity citywide. Development regulations imposed include those setting limits on building height, requiring setbacks, and specifying the percentage of a site which must be landscaped. The Zoning Ordinance also outlines standards for residential planned unit development, affordable housing, adult entertainment businesses, hillside management, historic preservation, and off-site hazardous waste facilities, among many other land use issues.

Brea Redevelopment Plans

Under California Law, cities can form redevelopment agencies and adopt redevelopment plans as mechanisms for facilitating community renewal. Since establishment of redevelopment authority in 1972, the Brea Economic Development Department has been instrumental in restoring a vibrant downtown commercial district, providing numerous affordable housing opportunities, and achieving economic development successes. Brea's City Council acts as the Redevelopment Agency.

Specific Plans in Brea

A Specific Plan is a detailed plan for the development of a particular area. Falling under the broader umbrella of the General Plan, Specific Plans are intended to provide more finite specification of the types of uses to be permitted, development standards (setbacks, heights, landscape, architecture, etc), and circulation and infrastructure improvements. Specific Plans are often used to ensure that multiple property owners and developers adhere to a single common development plan, as well as to provide flexibility in development standards beyond those contained in the Zoning Ordinance. Brea has utilized Specific Plans as a tool to achieve the coordinated development of individual parcels within a broader context. Active Specific Plans include:

- Birch Hills
- Brea Industrial
- Brea Towne Plaza
- Carbon Canyon
- Olinda Heights (Ranch)
- Tomlinson Park

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was adopted by the State legislature in response to a public mandate for thorough environmental analysis of projects impacting the environment. The provisions of the law and environmental review procedure are described in the CEQA Law and Guidelines. CEQA is the instrument for ensuring that environmental impacts of local development projects are appropriately assessed and mitigated.

SCAG Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) undertakes regional planning for the six-county SCAG region of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Imperial and Ventura counties. SCAG's efforts focus on developing regional strategies to minimize traffic congestion, protect environmental quality, and provide adequate housing. The *Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide* sets forth broad goals intended to be implemented by participating local and regional jurisdictions and the South Coast Air Quality Management District. SCAG has adopted companion documents to the *Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide*, most notably the *Regional Transportation Plan*.

Air Quality Management Plan

The federal Clean Air Act requires preparation of plans to improve air quality in any region designated as a nonattainment area.¹ The *Air Quality Management Plan*, or AQMP, prepared by the South

¹ A nonattainment area is a geographic region identified by the Environmental Protection Agency and/or California Air Resources Board as not meeting State or federal standards for a given pollutant.

Coast Air Quality Management District, first adopted in 1994 and updated on a three-year cycle, contains policies and measures designed to achieve federal and State air quality standards within the South Coast Air Basin. The assumptions and programs in the AQMP draw directly from regional goals, objectives and assumptions in SCAG’s *Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide*.

**Orange County
General Plan**

The Orange County General Plan guides land use decision-making in unincorporated sections of the County. Brea’s sphere of influence is so governed. The County and incorporated communities within the County have agreed through a formal Memorandum of Understanding to consult with each other whenever development actions are proposed within a city’s Sphere of Influence.

**Orange County
Growth
Management Plan**

The Orange County Growth Management Plan, adopted by Orange County voters in 1990 via Measure M, works to ensure that Countywide transportation systems and public facilities are adequate to meet the current and projected needs of County residents and businesses. To receive associated Measure M benefits, cities are required to include a Growth Management Element in their General Plans.

**County of Orange
Master Plan of
Arterial Highways**

The County of Orange Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) forms part of the Orange County General Plan and designates the arterial system in the circulation element of the General Plan. Defined according to specific arterial functional classifications, the MPAH serves to define the intended future roadway system for the County. Cities within the County are expected to achieve consistency with the MPAH in individual General Plan circulation elements. To implement changes to the MPAH, approval from the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is required.²

**Local Agency
Formation
Commission
Guidelines**

The provisions of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 set forth procedures for Local Agency Formation Commissions, or LAFCOs, throughout the State to review annexation applications. The Act was adopted to:

- Encourage orderly development
- Ensure that populations receive efficient and quality governmental services
- Guide development away from open space and prime agricultural lands, unless such action promotes planned, orderly, and efficient development

² A city’s Sphere of Influence (SOI) is established by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). It is anticipated that as properties in the SOI develop they would be annexed to and served by the adjacent city.

Imagine Brea

The Orange County LAFCO must adhere to adopted guidelines pursuant to the Act in its review of future City annexations within the Brea sphere of influence.