



CHAPTER 1

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Re-Imagine
Santa Fe Springs

2040 GENERAL PLAN



WELCOME TO
SANTA FE SPRINGS



THE VISION FOR SANTA FE SPRINGS 2040

We are a strong, diverse, and balanced community where industrial businesses thrive, neighborhoods offer many housing choices, and residents enjoy ready access to parks, transit, local-serving shops, restaurants, and entertainment destinations.

Our well-maintained neighborhoods, distinguished schools, commitment to public safety, and outstanding community services create an exceptional quality of life.

Our families live in Santa Fe Springs for many generations, choosing to raise children in a community that respects and responds to cultural values.

With a strong industrial sector as an economic foundation, we remain committed to providing a welcoming environment for businesses that contribute to the local tax base, offer well-paying jobs for skilled labor, and responsibly manage their environmental impacts locally and regionally.

As an active, participatory community, we engage in local government, participate in community events, and celebrate family-oriented activities and social gatherings within vibrant public spaces. Our community is respectful and inclusive. Our governance values are accountability and transparency, and our leaders make decisions on behalf of the community with integrity, impartiality, and honesty.

Santa Fe Springs: An unparalleled place to enjoy life and to prosper.



Introduction

In 2020, the City of Santa Fe Springs initiated a program to comprehensively update its General Plan. This vision statement reflects the City's plan to continue to evolve into a balanced community, one where the long-established industrial business base is complemented by new homes and neighborhoods that grow the local work force, a new downtown that provides community gathering places, transit-oriented districts around Metro's L Line and Metrolink stations, and civic improvements that serve both residents and the business community.

This General Plan 2040 establishes the policies and actions that will guide decisions toward achieving this vision. The plan addresses all considerations for creating a balanced, healthy community:

- The interrelationships of all land uses
- How goods and people move in, around, and through the City
- Homes for people of all income levels and in all life stages
- Well-designed and well-maintained infrastructure systems
- Environmental quality, including noise, air quality conditions, and water resources
- Parks and other places for people to recreate and enjoy community life
- Maintaining a safe living environment
- The equal ability of all residents to live in a safe and healthy environment



Recreation programs and events at park facilities allow residents to recreate and enjoy community life



Guiding Principles

Decision-making in Santa Fe Springs—by City leaders and City staff—is guided by these planning principles:



Healthy and Safe Neighborhoods

Promote healthy and safe neighborhoods with comprehensive approaches that consider best practices around land use, mobility, housing, environmental justice, community services, and design.



Economic Strength and Local Businesses

Strengthen the City's industrial and office sectors while increasing and diversifying commercial businesses.



Diversified Economy

Support a diversified economy with a balance of small and large businesses across a broad range of industries that provide employment, commercial, and experiential opportunities.



Downtown

Support a downtown that showcases our rich history, celebrates local entrepreneurship, features our civic institutions, and encourages downtown living within a vibrant gathering place for the community.





Active and Diverse Transportation

Create an interconnected and active transportation system that recognizes and responds to the critical needs of businesses to move commerce while accommodating the equally important necessity for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and motorists to move around the City with convenience and ease.



Environmental Justice and Community Safety

Improve environmental conditions, noise conditions, and air and water quality for all residents and people working in the City by minimizing the impacts of industrial businesses, truck and commuter traffic, and contaminated lands.



Clean and Sustainable Environment

Insist upon remediation of contaminated land and take steps to prevent pollution from the different processes involved in industrial business operations. Improve local air quality and make rational use of natural resources to support environmental responsibility and the collective health of residents, employees, and visitors.



Equitable and Inclusionary

Engage residents and stakeholders in ensuring equitable and inclusive processes, policies, investments, and service systems. Our residents in disadvantaged communities have access to healthy foods, parks, mobility options activity, public programs, and safe homes.





Adaptive and Resilient Community

Protect people, infrastructure, and community assets from evolving climate threats and vulnerabilities, and from natural and human-caused hazards.



Technology

Embrace technology and innovative practices where digital technology and intelligent design can be harnessed to create smart, sustainable cities and adaptable infrastructure systems.





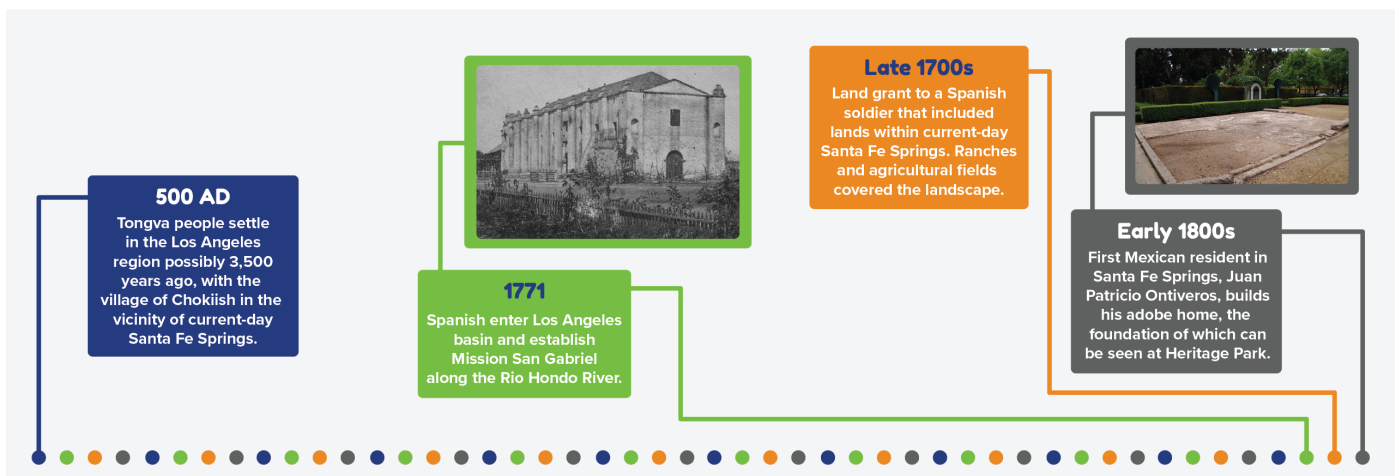
The Big Ideas

Re-Imagine Santa Fe Springs 2040 General Plan presents the following big ideas.

- **Integrating Transit-Oriented Communities and Mixed Uses.** The Land Use Element provides for transit-oriented communities around the Metro Norwalk Santa Fe Springs Metrolink Station and Metro's planned L Line station on Washington Boulevard. These mixed-use communities integrate experiential retail, commercial services, restaurants, offices, and residential uses within a pedestrian-friendly environment that encourages transit use. Additionally, first- and last-mile strategies will make it easier to walk or bike to the transit stations.
- **Economic Development.** Santa Fe Springs benefits from a strong economic base of many forms of industrial businesses. The weekday population swells to over 55,000 people, demonstrating the strong employment foundation. The Economic Development Element identifies strategies to retain this base, court new businesses that benefit local residents in terms of well-paying jobs, attract businesses that provide sales tax revenues for the City, have limited environmental and public health impacts, and create a diversity of commercial enterprises to serve the residents and day-time workers.
- **Protecting Residential Neighborhoods from Pollution Burdens.** The Safety Element and Environmental Justice Element identify methods to address pollution burdens that can adversely affect residents: hazardous emissions, contaminated soils and water, and the release of diesel exhaust and particulate matter from truck tailpipes. Planned strategies include developing green buffer zones of trees and landscaping, substituting light industrial uses for manufacturing industries adjacent to and near neighborhoods, encouraging cleaner industrial activities and businesses, reducing truck idling, increasing enforcement, monitoring air quality, establishing clean-up priorities for long-contaminated properties, and expanding community education.
- **Active Transportation.** The Circulation Element builds upon the City's efforts to encourage more walking and biking in the community by creating safer environments. Recommended pedestrian improvements include enhanced crosswalks, curb treatments, new signals and crossing beacons, reducing cut-through traffic, and new transit stop amenities. Planned improvements for cyclists include a new shared use path along Orr and

Historical Context: Santa Fe Springs Timeline

500 AD to 1800s



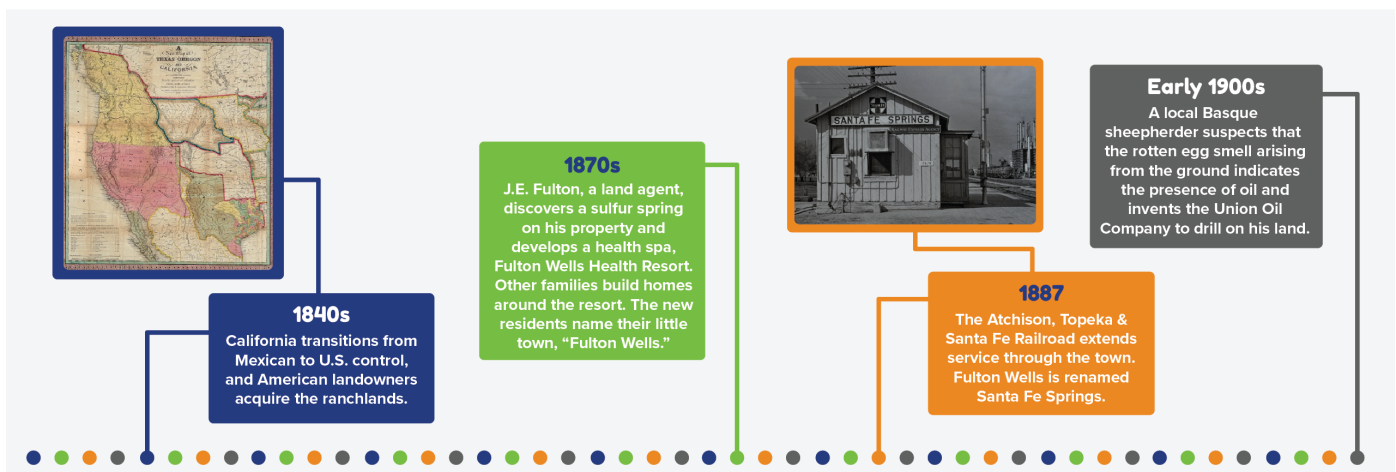


Day Road and buffered bike lanes and bicycle boulevards along certain streets to better link neighborhoods and schools.

- Digital City and Technology.** Throughout all elements of the General Plan and within all facets of government operations, new policies will incorporate smart city strategies to improve day-to-day operations, create efficiencies and cost savings, improve sustainability, and ensure the community and businesses stay connected. New technologies can be implemented to manage traffic and parking, make public wi-fi available at community gathering spaces, and have people use apps and smart phones to learn of City events and activities.
- Community Needs.** Through the Environmental Justice Element, this General Plan recognizes and prioritizes community health and employment needs, especially for neighborhoods identified as disadvantaged communities. These needs include increased access to parks and open space within certain neighborhoods, improved access to healthy foods, and expanded community engagement.
- Downtown.** Santa Fe Springs envisions a new downtown at the center of the City that will create community gathering spaces, restaurants and entertainment venues, and hospitality uses all within a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly environment. Commercial and office uses will be integrated with new homes and will connect with a current popular community spot: Heritage Park.
- I-5 Freeway Corridor.** A vision has been established for properties and businesses along the I-5 Freeway Corridor that emphasizes regional-oriented commercial and hospitality uses will benefit from freeway visibility. Design and signage themes will create aesthetics and City recognition along this heavily traveled corridor.
- Trucking Impacts.** New policies and land use changes are aimed to reduce the impacts of trucking uses, including limiting truck idling, types of trucking businesses near residential neighborhoods, and requiring truck businesses to pay their fair share of roadway damage. The goal is to improve air quality, reduce pollution burdens, and improve the paving of local streets.

Historical Context: Santa Fe Springs Timeline

1840s to 1900s





Planning Context

Examining the conditions and environment in place at the time this planning program began allows for a thorough understanding of the intent behind the General Plan goals and policies.

Demand for Industrial Land

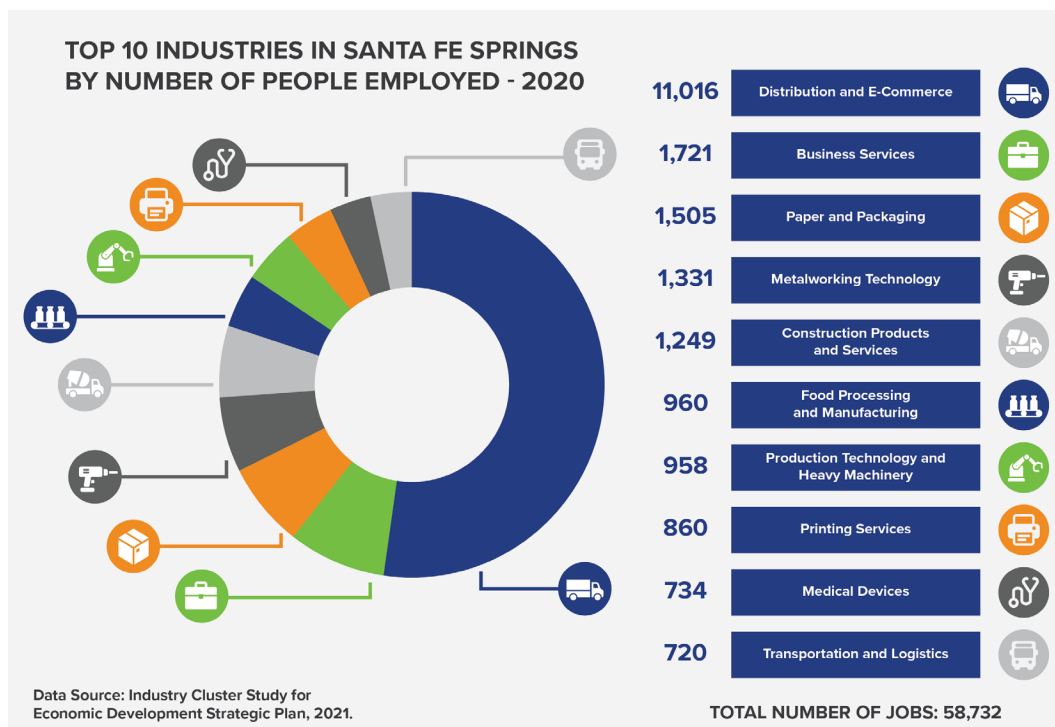
The Santa Fe Springs of 2020, when the General Plan process commenced, was a built-out city, with virtually no vacant properties remaining. The boom period of the 1980s and 1990s—when the City actively led redevelopment of former oil field sites and aging industrial properties—vanished almost entirely with the dissolution of the City’s redevelopment agency in 2012 by Governor Jerry Brown. In the post-redevelopment era, private redevelopment activity was driven largely by well-funded logistics industries looking to meet increasing consumer demands related to online shopping and rapid goods delivery. Interest by other industry clusters remained more moderate but steady, reflecting the City’s business-friendly environment and strategic location along Interstates 5 and 605. With the loss of redevelopment dollars, however, City leaders wished

to focus economic development efforts on industries and businesses that offer skilled labor jobs and sales revenues, with a diversity of industry types that guard against adversity as markets change.

Demand for Housing

The City’s population increased very modestly during the first two decades of the 2000s—from 16,413 in 2000 to 18,295 in 2020, with the increase primarily associated with development of the Villages at Heritage Springs neighborhood on a former oil field. However, the pent-up demand for housing throughout California resulted in the State legislature enacting several laws to encourage housing production and in the State Department of Housing and Community Development allocating significantly higher Regional Housing Need Assessment allocations to all cities and counties. For the housing planning period extending from 2021-2029, Santa Fe Springs was assigned a housing production goal of 952 units. This challenge required the City to examine the best places to create new housing opportunities without resulting in undesirable residential/industrial interfaces.

Figure I-1: Santa Fe Springs Top Employers





Residents' Desires for Local Shops and Gathering Places

Santa Fe Springs has never had a real downtown. The Civic Center complex serves as a de facto center for community events, but residents have long expressed a desire for a vibrant downtown where they can shop, dine, and gather with friends. A downtown could also be a place with housing, hospitality, and offices.

The Civic Center's library, aquatics center, Clarke Estate, and community garden can be complemented with urban-scale development, gradually replacing industrial and business park uses with three- to five-story mixed-use buildings and public plazas designed for pedestrian activity and creating a connection between the civic complex and Heritage Park. This is a bold vision but one which will transform the City center.



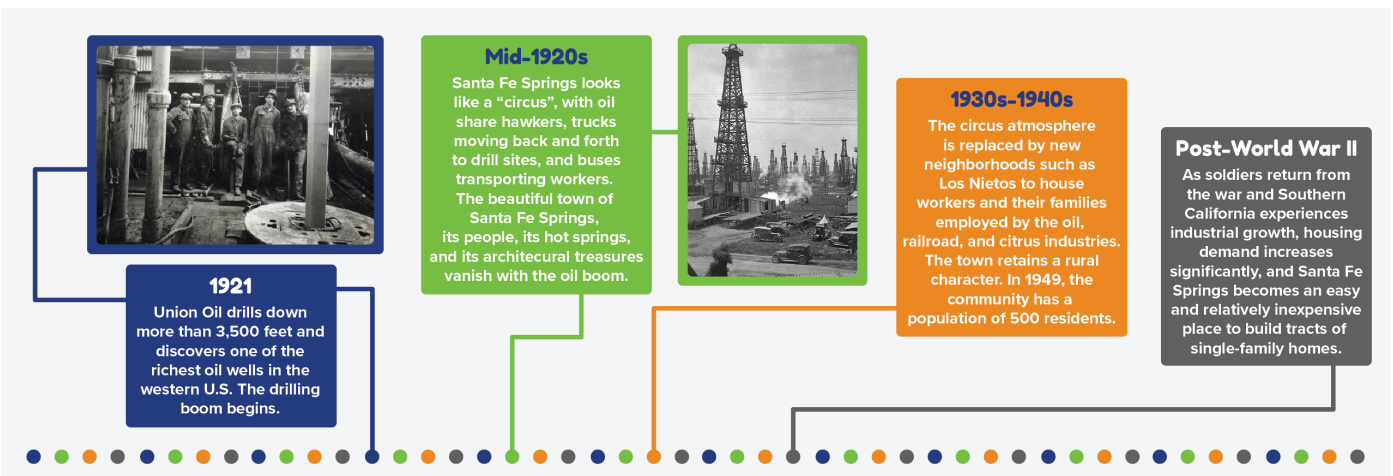
Gathering spaces



A vibrant downtown

Historical Context: Santa Fe Springs Timeline

1921 to Post-World War II





Evolving Mobility Modes and Infrastructure Needs

As a predominantly industrial city, Santa Fe Springs experiences substantial truck traffic. Also, with a daytime population of over 58,000 people working at industrial and other businesses, this means a lot of commute trips in and out of the City. The continuing rise of delivery services also adds to the vehicle load on local streets and competition for curb space—and anticipated competition for air space for delivery by drone.

Regional and statewide efforts to reduce traffic volumes and the associated pollutant emissions have driven several advancements in how Southern Californians commute and the types of vehicles we drive. Electric cars are no longer a curiosity, and electric trucks will join the fleet. The Los Angeles region has become a place where trains are a reliable commute mode and on-demand public bus transit encourages bus ridership. Extension of light rail service to a station in Santa Fe Springs will increase transit use. And residents' calls for improved walking and biking conditions means improvements to the local roadway system are needed to respond to multi-modal and interconnected mobility modes.



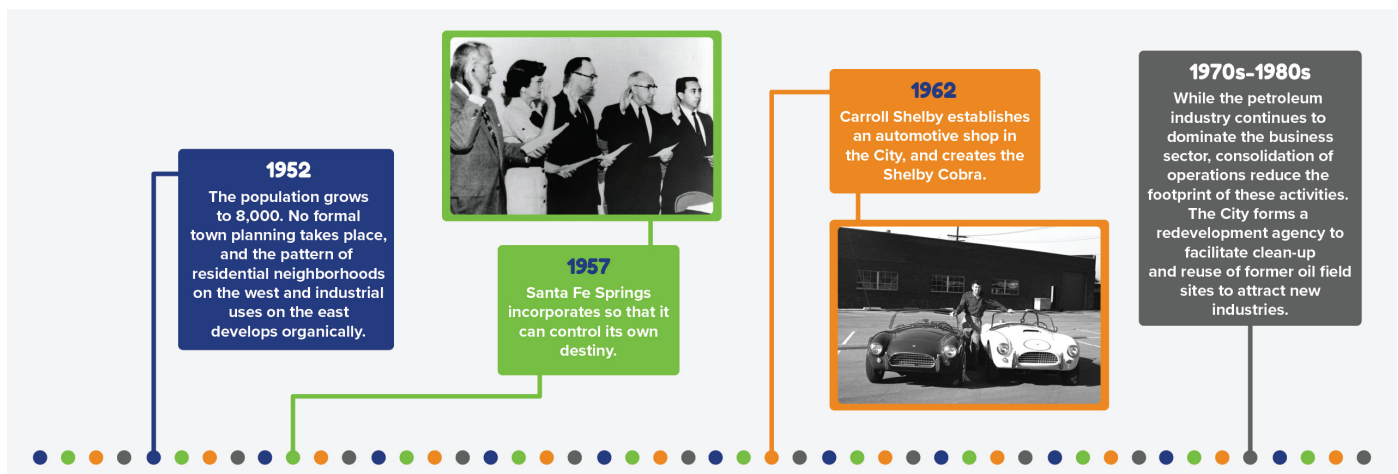
Vehicles commuting along Telegraph Road



Metro light rail trains parked at a station

Historical Context: Santa Fe Springs Timeline

1952s to 1980s





Environmental Justice Considerations

In 2016, the State legislature adopted Senate Bill 1000 to require that all general plans incorporate environmental justice considerations, either as a stand-alone element or integral to all elements. The legislative intent was to ensure planning policies correct the inequities historically experienced by low-income communities and communities of color: disproportionate pollution burdens, the associated health risks, and difficulties finding safe and suitable housing of their choice.

In the early days of Santa Fe Springs, residential neighborhoods developed relatively close to the oil fields operations and associated industries since many workers had limited ability to commute. When Interstate 605 was extended through the City, it was built immediately adjacent to the neighborhoods along the City's western edge. Santa Fe Springs residents have long endured with health burdens created by these environments. Data from the 2020 California Communities Environmental Health Screening tool called CalEnviroScreen 3.0 indicate that virtually all neighborhoods in the City can be identified as "Disadvantaged Communities," meaning that the adverse pollution and low socioeconomic attainment conditions in these areas are among the top 25 percent in the State.

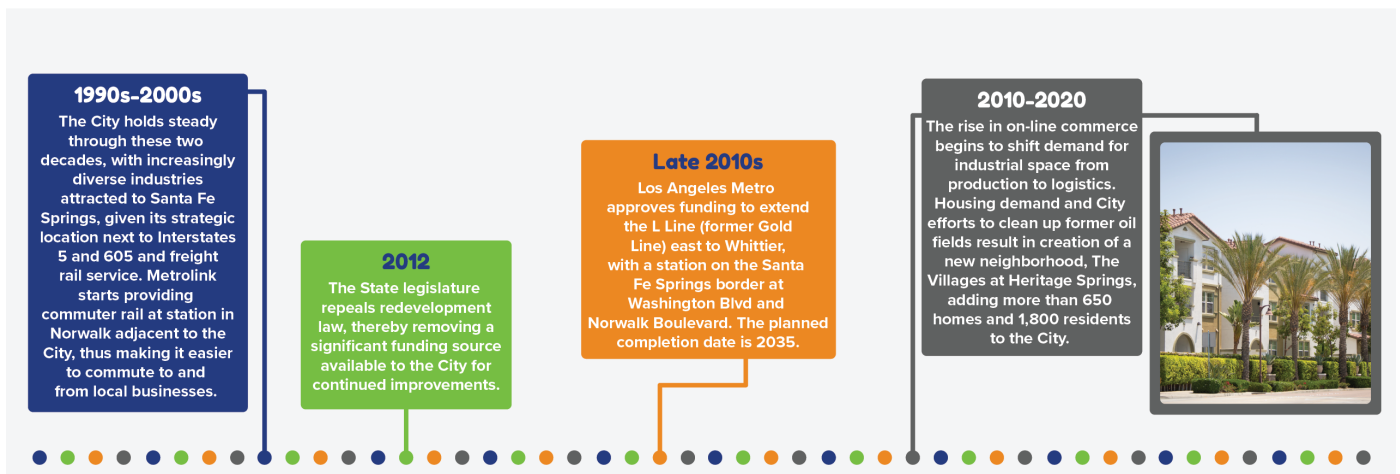
General Plan policies look to gradually ameliorate these conditions by reducing pollution exposure, improving local air quality conditions, providing ways for residents to improve their physical health, and encouraging creation of local well-paying jobs.



Light industrial uses

Historical Context: Santa Fe Springs Timeline

1990s to 2020





Using the General Plan

Every general plan in California is required to address the following topics as stand-alone chapters, called elements:

- **Land Use** to designate the type, intensity, and general distribution of all uses of land
- **Circulation** to correlate with the land use element and identify the location and extent of existing and planned roadways, rail routes, and other public infrastructure and facilities
- **Housing** to assess current and project housing needs for all economic segments of the community and to provide programs and policies to accommodate those needs
- **Conservation** to plan for the managed conservation and use of natural resources—water, forests, soils, rivers, and mineral deposits
- **Open Space** to detail measures for the preservation of all kinds of open space lands for resource protection, agriculture, outdoor recreation, and public health and safety
- **Noise** to identify community noise sources and to shape land use planning based on that knowledge

- **Safety** to protect the community from risks associated with fire, seismic and geologic hazards, flooding, and climate change impacts
- **Environmental Justice** to identify means to reduce pollution exposure, improve air quality, promote public facilities access, improve food access, address housing issues, and improve residents' health in identified disadvantaged communities

General plan law allows a jurisdiction to include any other element that may uniquely address a community's vision. These optional elements carry the same weight as a required element and must be consulted in the review of development applications and public investments.

The Santa Fe Springs General Plan consists of the following elements:

- Land Use
- Housing
- Circulation
- Open Space and Conservation
- Safety
- Environmental Justice

Figure E-2: General Plan Elements





- Noise
- Economic Development

The Economic Development Element is an optional element to the General Plan. With a large portion of the City devoted to industrial and commercial uses, the Economic Development Element focuses on identifying the pursuing businesses that are beneficial to the City, including increasing high-paying jobs, expanding local businesses, and ensuring sufficient resources to invest in public facilities and services.

Each element sets forth goals and policy direction used to guide decisions by the City Council, City commissions, and City staff. Critically, the annual budgeting process is guided by the General Plan, as are longer-range funding documents such as the City's Capital Improvement Plan, which identifies planned improvements to roadways, parks, and other local facilities. Property owners use the plan to understand how they can use and develop their lands, and City planners use the plan to review those applications submitted for development. All new development and uses of properties must be consistent with the goals and policies in the General Plan.

With the exception of the Housing Element, which has very specific content requirements in State law, all elements have been structured similarly to allow for easy use and to identify the foundational reasons and

Goals, Policies, and Implementation Measures

Goal: A general direction-setter that describes the ideal future end related to the topic at hand. Usually not quantifiable or assigned a specific time for accomplishment.

Policy: A specific statement to guide decision-making and identifying a commitment to a particular course of action. To be most effective, a policy should be clear and unambiguous.

Implementation Measure: An action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out one or more policies. Can include a metric and should indicate a timeframe for accomplishment.

Source: State of California General Plan Guidelines, 2017.

principles underlying goals and policy direction at a much finer-grained level than described above.

In each General Plan element, the following icons indicate how a particular goal or policy implement the overarching objectives related to:

- HS** Healthy and Safe Neighborhoods
- ES** Economic Strength and Local Businesses
- D** Downtown
- DE** Diversified Economy
- EJ** Environmental Justice

- CSE** Clean and Sustainable Environment
- ARC** Adaptive and Resilient Community
- EI** Equitable and Inclusionary
- ADT** Active and Diverse Transportation
- T** Technology



Public Engagement

Santa Fe Springs residents, business owners, and property owners all contributed to the vision and ideas expressed in this General Plan. Beginning in April of 2020, City staff undertook a series of engagement activities to promote and inform the General Plan update process. A key priority was to make participation easy, accessible, and bilingual. Communications materials and the social media campaign were conducted in English and Spanish.

The program leveraged a variety of outreach and engagement strategies, tools, and methods to encourage participation from a broad cross-section of the Santa Fe Springs community that represent the City's diverse cultural groups, income levels, ages, interests, and needs. In particular, the program sought out and considered the viewpoints of Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) and groups that planning programs historically have not adequately engaged, such as communities of color, low- and moderate-income residents, seniors, youth, limited-English proficient individuals, people with disabilities, and individuals and groups often marginalized in civic engagement.

A dedicated **General Plan website** kept the public informed and invited comments at various program stages. Early in the program a series of stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions began to frame issues of concern and surface ideas and solutions to address those concerns. To reach an audience beyond these smaller groups, the City **published a survey**—both online and in paper form—to understand community priorities.

A **General Plan Advisory Group (GPAG)**, with membership including residents, business owners, school district representatives, youth, and the Chamber of Commerce, met five times to help craft the Vision and Guiding Principles, produce the preferred land use plan, identify desired circulation improvements, and shape goals and policies. The Planning Commission and City Council conducted joint study sessions to consider the GPAG's recommendations. And while the public was invited to attend both the GPAG meetings and joint study sessions, they had more informal opportunities to contribute at four community workshops.

Prior to formal public hearings, City staff provided an overview of the entire General Plan to the Planning Commission and City Council, as well as the Circulation Element to the Traffic Commission, to allow for in-depth discussions. Public hearings proceeded quickly and smoothly, as the public was instrumental in shaping the plan during the 18-month update process and City decision-makers were kept informed at each step along the way.

Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Group Meetings



Online and Paper Survey



Project Website and Social Media



Community Workshops



General Plan Advisory Group (GPAG)



Joint Study Sessions with Commissions and Planning Commission and City Council Public Hearings



Community Conversations

The following are a sampling of some of the community comments received during the public engagement process. A full summary of public engagement activities and findings can be found in Appendix B (Santa Fe Springs General Plan Engagement Summary).

Allow seniors to access a grocery store by tram or public transportation

Continue with the many community events and maintain small community feeling

A desire for a safe and thriving community

Safety for bicyclists and pedestrians

Energy and water self-sufficiency and electric charging stations and solar

More shade trees along streets and attract greener businesses

Importance of incorporating City history in new development

There is a need to maintain the City and keep its beauty

Citywide internet: smart city

Need for more restaurants and something to do on the weekends; add outdoor plazas and dining spaces



Key Terms

Key terms used in this General Plan are defined here.

- **CALGreen** refers to the California Green Building Standards Code included in the California Code of Regulations (Title 24, Part 11), originally adopted in 2007 to establish building standards that move the State toward achieving greenhouse gas reduction targets. The code is periodically updated to reflect emerging technologies and revised reduction targets.
- **Climate Change** means a change in global or regional climate patterns.
- **Complete Streets.** A comprehensive approach to the practice and related policies of mobility planning. The complete street concept recognizes that transportation corridors have multiple users with different abilities and mode preferences (e.g., pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers) that need to be accounted for.
- **Conservation** refers to the management and sustainable use of natural resources to minimize waste, destruction, or degradation.
- **Decibel.** A degree of loudness, or a unit used to measure how powerful or loud a sound or signal is using a logarithmic formula.
- **Density and Intensity** are quantitative measures used to describe the degree to which land can be used and developed.
- **Disadvantaged Communities.** Areas and people throughout California suffering most from a combination of economic, health, and environmental burdens. These burdens include poverty, high unemployment, air and water pollution, presence of hazardous wastes, and high incidence of asthma and heart disease.
- **Dwelling Units per Acre (du/ac)** refers to the maximum number of residences, or dwelling units, allowed per acre of developable land. Density is measured in du/ac and only applies to residential uses.
- **Environmental Justice.** Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental regulations and policies implemented by local agencies.
- **Floor Area Ratio (FAR)** is a ratio of the gross floor area permitted on a site divided by the total net area of the site (exclusive of streets, alleys, and easements). Intensity is measured in FAR and typically describes nonresidential uses.
- **A Goal** expresses general direction or vision. It is an ideal future end related to the public health, safety, and general welfare of people living in, working in, and visiting Santa Fe Springs. A goal is a general expression of community values and may, therefore, be abstract in nature. Thus, a goal is generally not quantifiable or time dependent.
- **Global Warming** refers to the condition whereby carbon dioxide and other air pollutants and greenhouse gases collect in the atmosphere and absorb sunlight and solar radiation that have bounced off the Earth's surface. Normally, this radiation would escape into space, but these pollutants, which can last for years to centuries in the atmosphere, trap the heat and cause the planet to get hotter.
- **Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions.** Greenhouse gases, or GHGs, are compound gases that trap heat or longwave radiation in the atmosphere. Greenhouse gases produced by human activities include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. Their presence in the atmosphere makes the Earth's surface warmer. Sunlight or shortwave radiation easily passes through these gases and the atmosphere and is trapped below, creating a phenomenon known as the greenhouse effect. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the largest source of GHGs in



the U.S. is the burning of fossil fuels for electricity, heat, and transportation.

- **Green Infrastructure** means a network of parks, street trees, landscaped areas, open spaces, drainageways, floodplains, and human-made facilities that help manage stormwater and provide vital environmental, economic, and social benefits, such as improved air and water quality, reduced flooding risk, urban heat mitigation, and climate resiliency.
- **Land Use Category** means a designation applied to properties in Santa Fe Springs identifying the types of land uses permitted.
- **Liquefaction** means a condition resulting from earthquake-induced ground shaking of wet granular soils, whereby the soils change from a solid state to a liquid state, destabilizing the soil's ability to support structures.
- **Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.** A local hazard mitigation plan (LHMP) identifies hazards, vulnerabilities, and risks affecting a local, state, or tribal government, and prioritizes actions to reduce the risks. Such plans are required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a jurisdiction to receive certain federal assistance in response to a disaster. The document is referred to interchangeably as a Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (NHMP).
- **Open Space** refers to land that is not developed for residential, commercial, or industrial use and that is set aside for natural resource preservation/conservation, outdoor recreation, and flood control purposes. Open space lands can encompass wildlife habitat, rivers, groundwater recharge areas, and areas containing mineral deposits. Trails, parks, outdoor recreation areas, utility easements, and areas with limitations on usage to mitigate hazardous conditions (such as unstable soils, floodplains, and watersheds) are also often considered open space.
- **Parks** refers to lands developed for the purpose of enjoying outdoor spaces for active and passive recreation.
- **Particulate Matter** refers to tiny particles made of any material suspended in the air, except pure water that exists in the solid or liquid state. The notation PM10 is used to describe particles 10 micrometers or less in diameter, and PM2.5 represents particles less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter. Smaller PM particles cause lung irritation, and exposure can trigger asthma attacks.
- **Planning Area** refers to all properties within the City of Santa Fe Springs corporate limits and within the City's designated sphere of influence.
- **A Policy** is a specific statement that guides decision-making and is carried out by implementation measures. A policy indicates the City's commitment to a course of action. A policy is based on and helps implement the goals and the larger vision.
- **A Program** is the actionable item intended to achieve stated policies and goals.
- **Public/Quasi-Public** are land uses operated and maintained for public administration and welfare. May include government, civic, cultural, schools, libraries, post offices, public utilities, public parking, religious institutions, and infrastructure.
- **Right-of-Way.** Any place which is dedicated to use by the public for pedestrian and vehicular travel. A right-of-way may include, but is not limited to, a street, sidewalk, curb, and gutter. A right-of-way may be a crossing, intersection, parkway, median, highway, alley, lane, mall, court, way, avenue, boulevard, road, roadway, railway, viaduct, subway, tunnel, bridge, thoroughfare, park square, or other similar public way.
- **Sensitive Receptors** are land uses such as residences, residential care facilities, schools, day-care centers, playgrounds, and medical facilities, all of which have occupants—particularly children and older adults—who are sensitive to harmful effects from air pollution.



- **Superfund Site.** A contaminated site created by the legal or illegal deposit of hazardous materials/waste, either above ground or buried, or otherwise improperly managed. These sites include manufacturing facilities, processing plants, and landfills.
- **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).** Moderate- to higher-density development, located within an easy walk of a major transit stop (Metrolink and L Line stations, shuttle, or bus stops), generally with a mix of residential, employment, and shopping opportunities designed for pedestrians without excluding the auto. TOD can be new construction or redevelopment of one or more buildings whose design and orientation facilitate transit use.
- **Urban Design** focuses on spatial relationships within the public realm and how the built environment affects social interaction and human behavior.
- **Urban Heat Island.** Heat islands are urbanized areas that experience higher temperatures than outlying open space or natural rural areas. Buildings, roads, and other infrastructure absorb and re-emit the sun's heat more than natural landscapes such as forests and water bodies, causing urban areas to be warmer.
- **Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).** The total distance traveled in miles by all motor vehicles of a specific group within a given area at a given time.
- **Vulnerability Assessment.** A vulnerability assessment is the process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing (or ranking) the vulnerabilities related to natural or human-caused disasters that could affect a community.
- **Watershed** refers to an area of land that drains collected rainfall via streams to a common collection point, such as a groundwater recharge basin or flood control infrastructure.
- **Wayfinding.** All the ways in which people orient themselves in physical space and navigate from place to place, including signage and other graphic communication.