
SECTION III: LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

The Land Use Element's goals and policies direct future growth in La Cañada Flintridge, while minimizing existing and potential land use conflicts. The goals and policies are designed to encourage:

- Balanced Development
- Compatible and Complementary Development
- Environmentally Sensitive and Safe Development

These goals and policies are designed to address issues affecting the entire City of La Cañada Flintridge. Specific goals and policies have also been developed to provide policy direction for the land use study areas evaluated in this 1993 Update of the Land Use Element.

BALANCED DEVELOPMENT

A well-balanced community provides housing, education, recreation and employment opportunities for its residents. By encouraging a mix of land uses, the City can address the housing needs of existing and future residents, can assist the school districts in assessing the long term adequacy of school facilities with respect to land use, can enjoy a stable employment and tax base, and can provide residents with suitable recreational opportunities.

GOAL 1A: Maintain and enhance the City's character as a low density, wooded, predominantly single-family residential and hillside community.

GOAL 1B: Encourage the development of an attractive and balanced commercial base for the community, recognizing the constraints of the existing circulation network, the interrelationship between commercial uses, and the residential character of the City.

Policy 1.1: Preserve existing low density, single-family neighborhoods in La Cañada Flintridge.

Policy 1.2: Continue to allow Accessory Living Quarters (second units) where such units are deemed consistent with neighborhood character, both as accessory uses to residential uses and as a response to regional housing needs.

Policy 1.3: Allow for multi-family infill in designated areas to satisfy regional housing needs.

Policy 1.4: Encourage mixed use development on Foothill Boulevard by providing density incentives.

Policy 1.5: Create employment opportunities for City residents that are compatible with the community's character.

Policy 1.6: Recognize the diversity of public/semi-public facilities in the City. (Refer to Goal 9).

Policy 1.7: Provide opportunities for high quality educational facilities in the community.

Policy 1.8: Undertake a comprehensive study of the long term service needs for the aging population within the City as they relate to land uses and balanced development. This study should be completed by the end of FY 94-95 (Refer to Goal 10).

COMPATIBLE AND COMPLEMENTARY DEVELOPMENT

A variety of land uses enable a community to provide housing, education, employment and recreation opportunities to City residents. However some land uses may present compatibility problems, such as residential and heavy commercial development, due to the differences in traffic and noise levels, physical scale, and hours of operation. The following goal and policies establish standards for the relationship of land uses to ensure their compatibility.

GOAL 2: Ensure that new development is compatible with the residential character of the City, the project's surrounding land uses, the circulation network, availability of public facilities, and existing development constraints.

Policy 2.1: Design all new commercial and public and semi-public development to minimize impacts on adjoining residential neighborhoods.

Policy 2.2: Ensure the character of existing neighborhoods is not detrimentally altered as a result of land divisions and/or new development.

Policy 2.3: Ensure the character of existing residential neighborhoods is not detrimentally altered as a result of home occupations, keeping of horses or other domestic/farm animals, or by other related non-residential uses.

Policy 2.4: Encourage non-conforming uses and buildings to be brought into compliance with City codes.

Policy 2.5: Consider amending existing zoning regulations to utilize Conditional Use Permits and Planned Development Permits for commercial development where the use, location or adjacent uses indicate the appropriateness thereof.

Policy 2.6: Review land use studies and decisions proposed to be made in adjoining jurisdictions which may affect the City of La Cañada Flintridge.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AND SAFE DEVELOPMENT

The backdrop of the Angeles National Forest, significant hillside topography, and large expanses of open space lands all contribute to the semi-rural character of the City. These natural areas are valuable resources because of their natural beauty as well as the many plants and animals that live within these areas. Despite these positive attributes, these resources can create a number of hazards within the City.

Flooding, geologic hazards, and wildland and urban fires have the potential to seriously affect the life and property of La Cañada Flintridge residents. Many of these issues are addressed through public services and facilities which offer fire protection, flood and drainage control, etc. The following goals and policies strive to ensure that environmentally sensitive and safe development continues to occur in the City.

GOAL 3A: Preserve and enhance, to the maximum extent possible, the natural and manmade scenic beauty of the community.

GOAL 3B: Continue to protect the public's safety by evaluating land and environmental constraints prior to development.

GOAL 3C: Coordinate public utilities and services with new development.

Policy 3.1: Ensure that future hillside development does not detrimentally impact environmental and recreational resources, is coordinated with available and potential circulation capacities, and is planned, designed and implemented with regard for natural environmental hazards and constraints.

Policy 3.2: Conduct appropriate environmental reviews for all projects affecting land use.

Policy 3.3: Encourage within economic capabilities a wide range of accessible public facilities and community services, including fire and police protection, flood control and drainage, educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities and other governmental and municipal services.

Policy 3.4: Continue to make incremental improvements to the flood control and drainage system.

Policy 3.5: Define needs and deficiencies that are within the City and introduce priority projects into the City's budgetary process.

Policy 3.6: Develop plans for and begin construction of public residential sewers for all residential areas in order to enhance the quality of life in the City.

Policy 3.7: Construct a sewer line along Foothill Boulevard with the capacity to serve commercial properties as well as future residential sewer lines.

HILLSIDE AREAS

La Cañada Flintridge is characterized by acres of unspoiled hillside land, a unique attribute among Los Angeles County jurisdictions. As the City approaches build-out, population increases and the desirability of hillside homes continue to pressure the development of additional dwelling units in the hillside areas. The City has instituted a number of regulations, including the A/B Line and Hillside Development Ordinance, to preserve the existing urban edge and protect the community's hillsides.

GOAL 4: Maintain hillside areas for the purpose of preserving the visual quality of the City, protecting the public from safety hazards, and conserving natural resources.

Policy 4.1: Map the A/B Line on the parcel-specific Land Use Policy Map to clearly define density standards.

Policy 4.2: Modify permitted residential densities on the "B" side of the development line to allow 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres.

Policy 4.3: Identify key transition areas between existing development and larger undeveloped hillside areas. Densities permitted in these transition areas shall be strictly adjusted according to the slope of the property to enhance the compatibility of any future development with the City's adopted policies for hillside development.

Policy 4.4: Ensure long term preservation of deed-restricted private open space areas.

Policy 4.5: Ensure that land divisions or new development in hillside areas do not alter the character of existing neighborhoods.

Policy 4.6: Encourage development to integrate La Cañada Flintridge's natural environmental setting and viewsheds, with building height and siting regulated to avoid obtrusive breaks in the natural skyline.

Policy 4.7: In areas of hillside development, preserve ridgelines, natural slopes, and bluffs as open space, minimize erosion, and complement natural landforms through sensitive grading techniques.

Policy 4.8: Continue to implement the City's Hillside Development Ordinance which establishes standards to minimize land form alteration, preserves significant environmental features, and controls development densities.

Policy 4.9: Adopt specific building code regulations for high fire areas so as to minimize fire hazards.

Policy 4.10: Review policies for approval of private septic systems in hillside areas prior to the availability of public sewers to assure the continued safe and healthful management of wastewater as steeper properties are developed.

FOOTHILL BOULEVARD

The Master Plan establishes the following "vision" for Foothill Boulevard:

"Foothill Boulevard will be an inviting place for people to shop, stroll, live, play, work and move within the City. It will present a setting for uses, buildings, open spaces, and roadways which respect people as pedestrians rather than passengers. The setting will have a village character, including small districts of distinct identity, buildings scaled to fit the district, a community/civic center, a variety of architectural forms and convenient parking on the street and within each site. Landscaping will bring a more comfortable look to

the street, softening the hard edges of pavement and providing a cooler, greener place for people to mingle and shop. The focus of commercial and civic activities will be local in nature, with some regionally oriented activities in support of the community's needs. A park-like environment will characterize residential development. The look of Foothill Boulevard will be enhanced by placing utilities underground, and the installation of sewers will improve and revitalize properties fronting the Boulevard."

GOAL 5: Enhance the visual image and economic vitality of Foothill Boulevard through implementation of the 1991 Foothill Boulevard Master Plan.

Policy 5.1: Enhance the appearance and use of Foothill Boulevard through a series of distinctive districts which offer a variety of interesting places and are linked by a village character emphasizing pedestrian use and human scale.

Policy 5.1-1: Support retail commercial activities in the *West Gateway District*. Encourage future development to consolidate lots, locate buildings closer to the street, soften and reduce Boulevard views, and introduce a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Policy 5.1-2: Maintain single-family residential uses in *The Link District*. Coordinate public/semi public uses and professional offices with these residential uses, and reinforce the District's residential identity through improvements to the public right-of-way.

Policy 5.1-3: Preserve the *Old Town District's* historic character and identity as a local serving commercial area of smaller shops and offices. Provide for increased parking facilities and encourage pedestrian oriented design.

Policy 5.1-4: Support the mixed use "village" character of the *Downtown District*. Promote the development of street front retail buildings, attractive architecture and signage, and additional outdoor amenities. To support the development of the downtown character, a northern road is recommended, as described in the Master Plan.

Policy 5.1-5: Preserve the low density single-family character of the *Michigan Hill District* and ensure that all public/semi-public uses and public improvements retain the area's semi-rural character.

Policy 5.2: Design buildings and signs to complement the identity of the districts and employ the elements of a village setting. Create spaces using furnishings, plantings, and public improvements, which define and enhance the districts.

Policy 5.3: Encourage private efforts to consolidate smaller properties into larger sites, where recommended in the Master Plan, through density and other zoning incentives, economic development strategies, mediation and improvement bonding.

Policy 5.4: Designate "Development Opportunity Overlay" areas on the Land Use Policy Map in those areas where the Master Plan calls for lot consolidation, mixed use, and/or multi-family development.

Policy 5.5: Encourage the integration of mixed use retail/office and multi-family residential/retail projects in locations identified in the Master Plan.

Policy 5.6: Encourage high quality multi-family residential development on Foothill Boulevard, where recommended in the Master Plan, as a means of promoting pedestrian activity and improving the physical appearance of the Boulevard.

Policy 5.7: Establish a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) standard of 0.5:1 for areas designated Commercial/Office and Foothill Community District.

Policy 5.8: Provide for up to a 35% increase in FAR for Development Opportunity Overlay Areas in exchange for implementation of the land use policies established in the Master Plan.

Policy 5.9: Make parking reductions available for projects within a Development Opportunity Overlay Area when the proposed project contributes to improvements which include common public parking, as identified in the Foothill Boulevard Master Plan.

Policy 5.10: Establish a program to review the impacts of combined FAR Bonus and Parking Reductions as they relate to the objectives of each Development Opportunity Overlay Area. Such program shall be completed prior to implementation of any zoning standards which would permit the combined use of these incentives for a project.

Policy 5.11: Allow for density increases in areas outside the Development Opportunity Overlay in exchange for the provision of public improvements called for in the Master Plan.

Policy 5.12: Create an environment which supports local serving retail and service enterprises which provide adequate parking, and a dynamic residential environment for families and senior citizens.

Policy 5.13: Support the installation of sewer lines to serve Foothill Boulevard and replace on-site septic systems.

RESIDENTIAL MANSIONIZATION

The introduction of new or remodeling of existing houses to a scale that is much larger or out of scale with its site or neighborhood has been referred to as "mansionization". Neighborhoods in the City of La Cañada Flintridge are beginning to recycle into larger residential units, partially due to the scarcity of vacant land. The following goal and policies will address the issue of mansionization in La Cañada Flintridge.

GOAL 6: Protect the City's character as a low density, predominantly single-family residential and hillside community.

Policy 6.1: Amend the development standards of the R-1 Zone in order to better relate development to the size and shape of a lot and the scale of the surrounding neighborhood.

Policy 6.2: Establish criteria for neighborhood compatibility review of single-family development.

Policy 6.3: Ensure that the size and design of new development is compatible with existing residential uses.

Policy 6.4: Encourage new developments to utilize architectural features that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Policy 6.5: Establish design standards to discourage a "mansionized" look.

RESIDENTIAL LOT SPLITS

The lot split process divides land into smaller parcels for future development. La Cañada Flintridge has experienced many problems with the design and density of lot splits conducted prior to the City's incorporation. The following goal and policies will address past and future lot splits.

GOAL 7: Establish land division practices that preserve the City's predominantly single-family residential character.

Policy 7.1: Encourage the merger of substandard sized parcels to maintain current development patterns.

Policy 7.2: Adopt a program to identify and merge lots which are undersized, but held in common ownership. Target lot consolidation efforts towards the western portion of the Rancho Subdivision.

Policy 7.3: Prohibit flag lots on parcel maps and non-hillside tract maps to preserve the quality and character of existing residential neighborhoods and to ensure adequate emergency vehicle access.

Policy 7.4: Permit flag lots within hillside tract maps (subject to Planning Commission approval) as a means of minimizing hillside grading and preserving existing hillside viewsheds.

VERDUGO BOULEVARD - DESCANSO GATEWAY DISTRICT

The Verdugo Boulevard Corridor serves as an important entry to the City and access to Descanso Gardens. The Descanso Gateway District's land use goals and policies can be further supported by circulation and community design considerations to enhance the gateway impression of this area. Single family residences and adjacent commercial and institutional uses can be blended with ongoing public and private improvements to frame this area and underscore its gateway characteristics.

Goal 8: Establish Verdugo Boulevard as a visually pleasing residential corridor which serves as the Descanso Gateway District.

Policy 8.1: Preserve the existing single family neighborhood.

Policy 8.2: Recognize Verdugo Boulevard as a significant entry point into the City by establishing it as the Descanso Gateway District.

Policy 8.3: Encourage extensive landscaping and high quality architecture along Verdugo Boulevard.

Policy 8.4: Address circulation, street and public improvements in the Circulation Element which can enhance both the gateway and single family character of this corridor.

Policy 8.5: Develop a design program for the district which supports the unique land use, circulation and gateway characteristics of this corridor. This design program should include identity signage and public improvements, such as street furniture, sidewalks and bikeways.

Policy 8.6: Using the 1991 Foothill Boulevard Advisory Committee citizen participation format as a model, involve the community in FY 94-95 in formulating a District plan which incorporates all of the above policies into recommendations for a comprehensive long term implementation program for the City.

PUBLIC/ SEMI-PUBLIC

Public/semi-public lands refer to a variety of land uses, including parks, educational facilities, public buildings, and community facilities.

GOAL 9: Provide clarification in the General Plan as to which properties are considered public/semi-public.

Policy 9.1: Create the following land use designations for public/semi-public lands:

- o Open Space, Public
- o Open Space, Private
- o Public Facilities
- o Public Schools
- o Institutional
- o Recreational

Policy 9.2: Provide information to local school districts when considering any land use policy decisions which could effect local school populations, thereby allowing those school districts to prepare and provide an assessment of whether adequate school facilities exist in order to facilitate the City's making of decisions.

Policy 9.3: Establish a requirement for a Conditional Use Permit for any new public/semi-public use in any zone.

Policy 9.4: Adopt zoning categories and development standards for public and semi-public uses which recognize the diversity of these facilities within the City, and which require a Conditional Use Permit for any change or intensification of use of these facilities, except public school uses on sites designated in "Public Schools" in the General Plan.

Policy 9.5: Ensure development standards for public, public school and semi-public uses and identify appropriate buffers and protections for adjacent single-family residential neighborhoods to assure compliance with the City's goal and policies for compatible and complementary development (Refer to Goal 2).

Policy 9.6: Implement a program to identify properties which may be suitable for use as public recreational fields. Contact property owners to request a first right of refusal on the identified properties. Establish evaluation procedures in advance which consider the suitability of the site and the ability to effectively limit the potential impacts of such a use on surrounding development.

LONG-TERM NEEDS OF SENIORS

The aging of the La Cañada Flintridge population has the potential to substantially impact the long term policies of the community. The increasing proportion of older residents warrants additional study to outline future land use policies related to the needs of seniors.

GOAL 10: Study the long term needs of seniors within the City as they relate to land use policies and the stated goals for balanced and compatible development within this low density, predominantly single family community.

Policy 10.1: Examine the needs of seniors for specialized services and accommodations to determine which needs may impact the City's future land use policy.

Policy 10.2: Determine the types of land uses which could appropriately serve the needs of the community's senior population, and the extent to which such facilities can or should serve other segments of the population.

Policy 10.3: To the greatest extent possible, identify the extent to which the long term needs of seniors are not adequately met by existing and proposed services and facilities in surrounding communities.

Policy 10.4: Identify design characteristics for senior-serving facilities which ensure their compatibility with surrounding development and with the overall low density character of the community.

Policy 10.5: Outline the land use characteristics of appropriate long term locations for senior-serving facilities. Indicate policies or incentives which can be used to encourage their development of appropriate facilities where suitable to the community.