FOCUSED GENERAL PLAN UPDATE
CITY OF REDONDO BEACH

Introduction to General Plans

WHAT IS A GENERAL PLAN?
A general plan is the principal long-range policy and planning document guiding the physical development, conservation, and enhancement of California cities and counties. State law requires every city and county to adopt a general plan to layout the jurisdiction’s blueprint for its future. Specifically, it establishes goals and policy direction to ensure that the vision for Redondo Beach community life is preserved and enhanced for the City’s residents, businesses, and visitors.

What goes into the General Plan?
The General Plan is both geographically and topically comprehensive. It covers topics related to community growth and development. The General Plan addresses a wide variety of issues that characterize the City. State law requires all general plans to include the seven elements—usually included as topical chapters of the plan—described on the back of this page. At the direction of City Council, the City is updating two of its elements: Land Use and Conservation, Recreation, Parks and Open Space. The City is also concurrently updating its Housing Element in a separate process.

The General Plan outlines desired future conditions, values and characteristics to be achieved or reinforced by the plan, and lays the foundation for the implementation programs developed for each of the General Plan elements. During the General Plan process the public is invited to provide input to decision makers regarding the content that is included in the general plan. The General Plan can memorialize the community values and planning principles that are important to its residents and are used to shape the goals, policies objectives and implementation programs of the General Plan elements.

WHY UPDATE THE GENERAL PLAN?
As a matter of practice and pursuant to the State’s General Plan laws, the City of Redondo Beach has routinely and regularly updated various elements of its General Plan since Redondo Beach’s last major comprehensive General Plan adoption in 1992. Most recently a comprehensive update of the City’s Circulation and Housing Elements were completed in 2009. The Housing Element was again updated in 2014 and is concurrent with this effort, being updated again this year. The Conservation, Recreation and Parks, and Open Space Element was also updated in 2004. Even with the numerous changes the General Plan has undergone since 1992 it is time to take a comprehensive look at these two (2) elements, Land Use and Conservation, Recreation and Parks, and Open Space, in order to effectively address growth and change, respond to new laws, reflect the goals and values of the community and remain a relevant “living” policy document.

WHO WILL USE THE GENERAL PLAN?
The Redondo Beach General Plan is a document that is used by residents, businesses, City officials, community organizations, and others interested in the City’s future. Here are a few ways the Plan is used by different groups:

- City Council and Planning Commission regularly use the goals and policies of the general plan as a basis upon which to make both long-term and short-term decisions, determine long-term objectives, generate and evaluate budgets, plan capital improvements, and prioritize tasks.
- City staff and all departments will also reference the general plan when considering development applications, capital improvements, service programming, and departmental budgeting.
- Individual residents, existing and prospective business owners, and the development community can also seek guidance for how and where to develop projects and include amenities to serve the community.
- Other local and regional agencies (e.g., schools, utilities, community-based organizations) will refer to the general plan when projecting future needs and services. The general plan is truly the City’s collective guide to the future.

HOW WILL THE GENERAL PLAN BE IMPLEMENTED?
General plan implementation consists of shorter-term actions and programs to carry out longer-term general plan goals and policies. This includes one-time initiatives by the City (e.g., zoning code update to reflect changes in a new general plan), decisions on public and private development projects, municipal operational programs, capital improvements and partnerships with other jurisdictions or agencies. Implementation actions in the General Plan can also be tied to the City’s annual Strategic Plan priorities.

ELEMENTS OF A GENERAL PLAN
All elements, or chapters of the plan, have equal legal status so no element has legal supremacy over another. State law requires the elements of a general plan to be internally consistent, meaning
the goals, policies, and implementation measures cannot conflict with one another, and they must be consistent. For example, if the Land Use Element identifies an increase in development potential, then the Circulation Element (roadway capacity) must also address this anticipated change. Optional elements may also be added to address specific needs of a city. An optional element, once adopted, also has equal legal status with the required elements.

It is important to note that state law provides local jurisdictions the flexibility to determine the structure of their General Plans. For instance, a city may combine one or more elements or structure the General Plan by issue. What is important is that the General Plan and its elements satisfy the minimum requirements as to content, format, and procedure.

- **Land Use**: The land use element establishes goals, objectives, policies, and programs for areas within a jurisdiction’s boundaries. It also describes policy direction and criteria for development, including building intensity and population density. Land use categories are used to depict the general distribution, location, and extent of public and private uses of land.

- **Open Space**: Intends to provide a plan for the long-term preservation of active and passive open space. It must specify plans and measures for preserving open space for natural resources, for managing the production of resources, for outdoor recreation, and for public health and safety.

- **Conservation**: The primary focus of the conservation element is preservation of natural resources. The element addresses the identification, conservation, development, and use of resources including energy and natural gas, water and natural landforms.

- **Housing**: Analyzes housing needs for all income groups and demonstrates how to meet those needs. State law requires that this element be revised, every five to eight years.

- **Circulation**: Includes the identification, location, and design of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, pedestrian connections, bicycle facilities, public transit options, trails, and local public utilities and facilities. It serves as an infrastructure plan and must be correlated with the land use element.

- **Noise**: Identifies and analyzes projected noise conditions in the community and must include measures to abate or mitigate potential noise levels.

- **Safety**: Identifies seismic, geologic, flood, and wildfire hazards, evacuation routes, and establishes policies to protect the community from them.

This General Plan update will serve to update two elements of the City’s current General Plan—one of which combines two of the required elements—Land Use and Open Space, Recreation, & Conservation. Under a separate but related effort the City is also updating the Housing Element consistent with state law schedule.

### CONSISTENCY

One of the key legal requirements concerning General Plans deals with consistency. “Consistency” is one of the factors used in determining the legal adequacy of a General Plan. As stated in the General Plan Guidelines prepared by the California Office of Planning and Research:

“In general terms, an action, program or project is consistent with the General Plan if, considering all its aspects, it will further the objectives and policies of the General Plan and not obstruct their attainment.”

### Internal Consistency

State law requires that no textual or diagrammatic policies conflict between the components of a General Plan. That is, a General Plan must be internally consistent. Internal consistency has five dimensions:

- All elements of the General Plan, including adopted optional elements, have equal legal status. No element legally takes priority over another.

- All elements must be consistent with one another. For instance, if land use element policies are likely to result in an increase in population and traffic, the circulation element must provide feasible mitigation to address those impacts.

- Each element’s data, goals, objectives, policies, and implementation programs must be consistent with one another. For instance, if one section of the housing element indicates that current housing supplies will meet future demand and another section describes a shortage of affordable housing, the element is not internally consistent.

- All goals, objectives, policies, and implementation programs identified in a special policy area must be consistent with the overall General Plan.

- The text and diagrams within the General Plan must be consistent. In other words, the diagrams or maps of land use distributions, circulation systems, open space and natural resource areas must reflect the written policies and programs of the General Plan elements.

### Consistency with Other City Documents and Projects

The City utilizes several other planning tools such as a zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, and specific plans, which must be consistent with the provisions of the General Plan. If any documents or projects are determined to be inconsistent with the General Plan, they cannot be approved. The General Plan should also be reviewed by other departments to determine whether or not efforts such as public works projects or public land acquisition or sale are consistent with the goals and policies identified in the General Plan.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the project website at:  
[www.redondo.org/PLANredondo](http://www.redondo.org/PLANredondo)

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