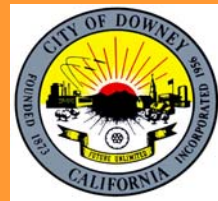


# City of Downey



## General Plan Annual Progress Report 2008



11111 Brookshire Avenue, Downey CA 90241



## **CITY OF DOWNEY**

11111 Brookshire Avenue  
Downey CA 90241

### **CITY COUNCIL**

(at the time of adoption)

Dn. Mario A. Guerra, Mayor  
District 2

Anne Marie Bayer, Mayor Pro-Tem  
District 4

David R. Gafin  
District 1

Roger C. Brossmer  
District 3

Luis H. Marquez  
District 5

### **PLANNING COMMISSION**

(at the time of adoption)

Terry Lambros, Chairman  
District 4

Louis Morales, Vice-Chairman  
District 3

Michael Murray  
District 1

Fernando Vasquez  
District 5

Robert Kiefer  
District 2

# **CITY STAFF**

## **CITY ADMINISTRATION**

Gerald M. Caton  
City Manager

Gilbert A. Livas  
Deputy City Manager/Community Development

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

William A. Davis  
City Planner

John E. Perfitt  
Economic Development Director

Mark Selheim, AICP  
Principal Planner

Steven C. Yee  
Economic Development Manager

David Blumenthal  
Senior Planner

Ed Velasco  
Housing Director

Jessica Flores  
Assistant Planner II

Linda S. Haines  
Director of Building and Safety

Kevin Nguyen  
Assistant Planner

Luz E. Reyes (former)  
Economic Development Intern

Shion Hori  
Assistant Planner

Rebecca Guerrero  
Executive Secretary

Ricardo Rodriguez (former)  
Planning Intern

Katie Crockett  
Planning Intern

Theresa Still  
Secretary

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
Downey Background	
Report Acceptance Date	
Community Development Department Activities.....	7
Planning Division	
Building and Safety	
Housing	
Economic Development	
General Plan Implementation Status.....	14
Chapter 1: Land Use	
Chapter 2: Circulation	
Chapter 3: Housing	
Chapter 4: Conservation	
Chapter 5: Safety	
Chapter 6: Noise	
Chapter 7: Open Space	
Chapter 8: Design	
Chapter 9: Economic Development	

## **Introduction**

The General Plan Annual Progress Report summarizes the City of Downey's progress with implementing the goals, policies and programs of Vision 2025, the City's General Plan, from January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008. The report also summarizes the activities of the Planning Commission and Planning Division during this same time.

In order to provide a comprehensive progress report, input has been given from each department. They have all contributed by providing information on how their department is working towards achieving the goals of the General Plan. This Progress Report also reviews the activities of the Community Development Department including Planning cases, plan checks, daily planning activities, housing developments, and Economic Development projects.

This report is in compliance with California Government Code Section 65400(b) which mandates that all cities and counties submit to the State Office of Planning and Research an Annual Report on the status and implementation of the general plan.

## **Downey Background**

Downey is 12.8 square miles in area and its topography is relatively level. The City is located in the southeastern part of Los Angeles County, about 12 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles. It is bounded by: the Rio Hondo River channel to the west; Telegraph Road to the north; the San Gabriel River channel to the east; and Gardendale Street and Foster Road to the south. Cities bordering Downey include: Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, Norwalk, Bellflower, Paramount, South Gate, and Commerce. The City of Downey is provided regional access by four interstate highways: the I-605 Freeway, the I-5 Freeway, the I-105 Freeway, and the I-710 Freeway. These freeways provide access to major employment centers including Downtown Los Angeles and employment centers in Orange County.

The City of Downey has matured from its farming roots and its founding in 1873 to become the premiere city in the southeast area of Los Angeles County. Downey is one of the larger suburban cities in the region with a population over 113,000 residents and an employment base of over 55,000 jobs. In spite of these larger numbers, the City has retained its small town character.

The overriding vision of the city, as expressed in the General Plan, is to maintain and enhance its role as the premiere quality of the City. The issues addressed by Downey Vision 2025 will work towards achieving this vision by adhering to the value of providing excellent housing, education, employment, and recreation opportunities plus the mission of providing a safe, convenient, and attractive community to those that live, work, or visit Downey.

## **Acceptance Date**

The 2008 General Plan Annual Progress Report was reviewed by the Planning Commission on October 21, 2009 and accepted by the City Council on November 10, 2009

**Community Development**  
*Department Updates*

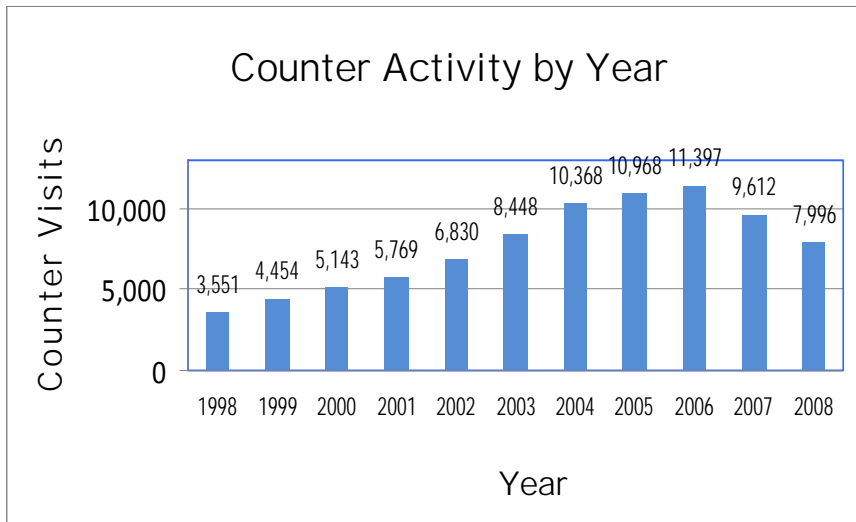
**2008**

## Community Development Department

### Planning Division

This section outlines the activities of the division from January 2008 through December 2008. The day-to-day planning activities include:

- ◆ Administrating the City's Zoning Ordinance (Development Code)
- ◆ Processing planning applications for the Planning Commission and/or Design Review Board
- ◆ Preparing reports for the City Council
- ◆ Reviewing development plans for compliance with City standards (Plan Checks)
- ◆ Signing individual developments for final occupancy (Field Inspections)
- ◆ Reviewing business registration investigation reports for new businesses

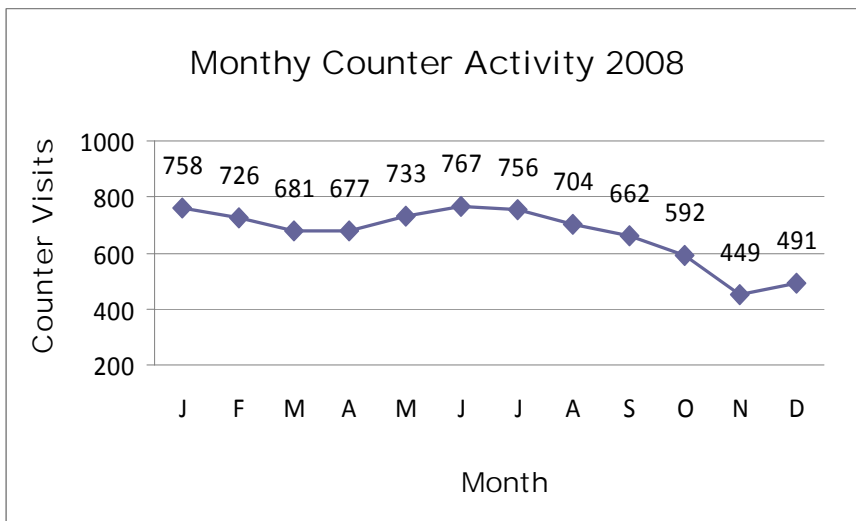


### Counter Activity

Counter activity represents the number of counter visits recorded in the Planning Division. Records of Counter visits are kept and tracked on a monthly basis.

Some of the highlights related to Counter Visits in 2008 were:

- ◆ Total counter visits in 2008 were 7,996
- ◆ Counter visits in 2008 were down 16.8% from 2007
- ◆ Counter visits have decreased by 29.8% since 2006.
- ◆ Monthly counter activity in 2008 demonstrated a gradual decrease in the later months of the year, with the busiest month of the year being July.



Planning Cases

Planning cases in 2008 totaled 141, which was a 16.5% increase above 2007. The sharpest increase from 2007 being Conditional Use Permit (CUP) Applications.

- ◆ CUP: 13 in 2007 vs. 32 in 2008

The “Other” category includes Temporary Use Permits, Outdoor Activities, Certificates of Compliance, Special Event Permits, and Miscellaneous Planning Commission items. On legislative items such a General Plan Amendments (GPA), the Planning Commission acts as an advisory body to the City Council.

<b>Cases by Type (2008)</b>	
Design Review Board (DRB)	65
Zone Variances (ZV/MZV)	6
Conditional Use Permit (CUP/MCUP)	32
Tentative Parcel Map (TPM)	2
Site Plan Review (SPR)	2
Planned Sign Program	2
Lot Merger (LM)	6
General Plan Amendment (GPA)	1
Second Unit Development (SUD)	3
Other	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>141</b>

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission conducts public hearings on most entitlements, including new buildings, conditionally permitted uses, variances, etc. Additionally, the Planning Commission is responsible to make recommendations to the City Council on amendments to the zoning ordinance, zone changes, and amendments to the City’s General Plan.

In 2008, the Planning Commission conducted 20 meetings, during which the considered 78 items. Additionally, the conducted three joint workshops with the City Council.

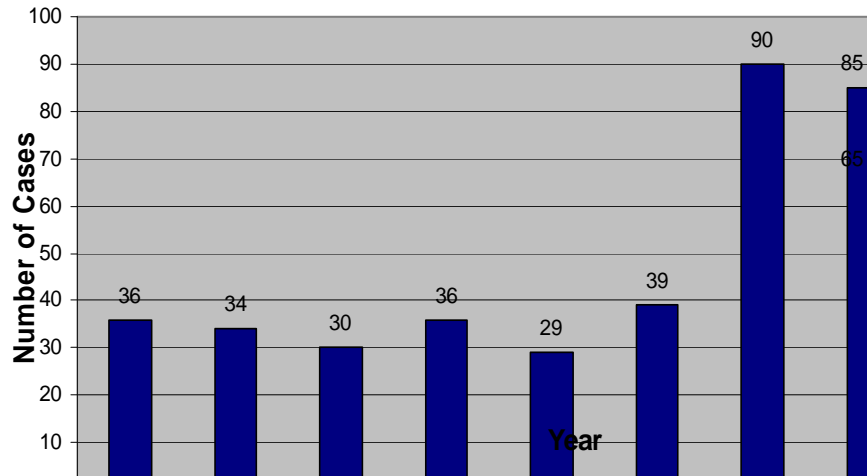
Design Review Board

The Design Review Board (DRB) reviewed the architecture, building materials, colors, signing, landscaping and irrigation for all new building construction and most exterior remodels in the Commercial, Industrial and Multi-Family Residential zones. In addition, an ordinance addressing bulk and mass in Single-Family Residential zones require the Design Review Board review all second story additions and single story additions with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) exceeding 0.55.

Design Review Board Cases have steadily decreased beginning in 2006, with only 65 cases in 2008. This decrease represents a 23.5% decrease in DRB cases from 2007. With the adoption of the new Zoning Code in 2008, the Design Review Board was disbanded and all architectural review will be done either administratively within the Planning Division (for R-1 and R-2 zoned properties) or by the Planning Commission.



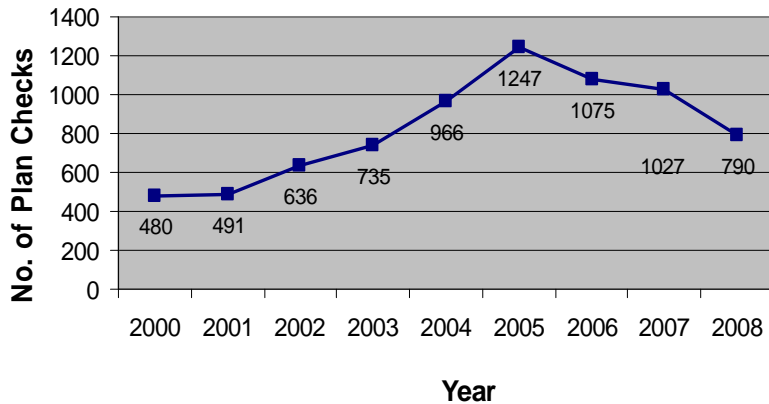
Design Review Board Cases (2000-2008)



Building and Safety Division

The Building and Safety Division is responsible for a variety of tasks including issuing permits, processing Plan Check submittals, and Inspections. The division reviews all plans and permits to be in compliance with the 2007 California Building Code.

Plan Checks Submitted (2001-2008)



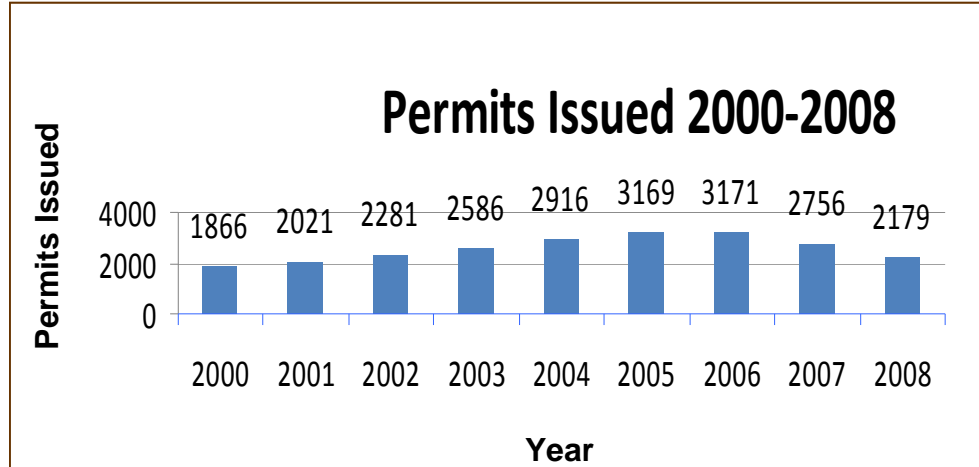
*Most new building construction and/or tenant improvements require plan check review for Zoning and Building Code compliance. These Plan Checks are reviewed by the Building and Safety Division, Planning Division, Fire Department, and Engineering Division of the Public Works Department.*

The submittal of plan checks has steadily decreased since 2006, with only 790 in 2008. This decrease represents a 23% decrease in Plan Checks submitted from 2007. Furthermore, since 2005 there has been a 36.6% decrease in Plan Checks submitted to the Building and Safety Division. The decrease in Plan Checks and Permits Issued can mostly be attributed to the recent downturn in the national economic and slump in the housing market.

In addition to reviewing plan checks, the Building and Safety Division also issues permits. These types of permits include all construction related projects, patio additions, roofing, installation of condenser units, construction of walls and fences, and repaving of driveways.

The number of permits issued in 2008 was 2,179. This is a 20.9% decrease in permits issued from 2007.

Since 2005, there has been a 31.2% decrease in permits issued.



Housing Division

In addition to providing assistance and guidance for the City’s Housing Element, the Housing Division administers a variety of programs. The following is in regards to Section (e) of The Housing Element programs administered under the Housing Division:

**2. HOUSING REHABILITATION**

Objective: Fund 20 rehabilitation projects per year  
 Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
 Status: 33 rehabilitation projects were funded in 2008; another 23 housing units received modifications which made these units accessible to disabled persons.

**3. MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING REHABILITATION**

Objective: Financing for rehabilitation of 6 housing units  
 Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
 Status: One housing unit was undergoing rehabilitation improvement in 2008.

**4. SENIOR PAINT/FIX-UP PROGRAM**

Objective: Assist 30 projects in 2006  
 Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
 Status: 28 housing units were improved under this program in 2008.

**9. SENIOR HOUSING PROGRAM**

Objective: Provide unit density and other incentives for senior housing projects  
 Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
 Status: No new projects were submitted or in process in 2008

**10. TRANSITIONAL AND EMERGENCY SHELTERS**

Objective: Revise zoning Code to permit land use  
Time Frame: By December 2002  
Status: There were no new requested for homeless transitional housing permits in 2008; The City continued its policy of providing funding for an existing transitional facility in 2008, which resulted in transitional housing for 10 persons.

**11. AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM**

Objective: Reserve Local funds for affordable housing units  
Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Status: In 2008 the City allocated over \$900,000 for new affordable housing developments; 2 new projects were in the predevelopment phase with 74 units under consideration in 2008.

**12. NONPROFIT ASSISTANCE**

Objective: Facilitate 10 new housing units for very low income households.  
Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Status: See program # 11

**13. FIRST TIME HOMEBUYER**

Objective: Assist 12 low income homebuyers per year  
Time Frame: 2000 - 2005  
Status: No new loans were financed in 2008.

**14. MORTGAGE CREDIT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM**

Objective: Provide ongoing promotional and marketing support of the County's Program  
Time Frame: 2000-2005  
Status: There were no real estate transactions in Downey which utilizes this Program in 2008.

**15. SECTION 8 RENTAL ASSISTANCE**

Objective: Continue support of the County's Program  
Time Frame: 2000-2005  
Status: Each year over 450 renters receive rent subsidies from the County, enabling them to preserve affordable housing.

*(This space left intentionally blank.)*

## **Economic Development**

2008 marked the beginning and continuation of major Economic Development projects.

### **Tierra Luna**

The Tierra Luna Project is a proposed reuse of the existing Downey Studios that will include mixed-use development. Economic Development staff spent much of 2008 working on a new Specific Plan for the area as well as an Environmental Impact Report.

Economic Development staff continues to work with the Consultants to finalize the Tierra Luna Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report.

### **Avenue Theater and Verizon Building Redevelopment**

The City of Downey continues to move forward with a strategy to redevelop the Downtown area of Downey. The City seeks to implement several catalytic projects in the Downtown that can help reshape it and set the tone for similar and new redevelopment. Downey staff members identified the Verizon Building and Avenue Theater in Downtown Downey as properties to target for potential acquisition using redevelopment housing set-aside funds.

The Verizon Building and the Avenue Theater were acquired in 2008 with the intent to redevelop both properties with residential units. Both properties are located close to each other and both are in the central area of Downtown. Economic Development staff issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to seek an experienced developer to redevelop both properties. The guidelines given to prospective developers for this RFP included adaptive reuse, new residential units, restaurant space, and community space.

The Economic Development division plans to move forward with a selected developer on this project in 2009.

### **Johnie's Broiler**

In 2007, a significant portion of Johnie's Broiler Restaurant was illegally demolished. Since then, the City has worked to save the remaining historical elements by placing a moratorium on the development of the site. During this time, City staff has worked to find an economically viable reuse of the property. With assistance from the Planning Division, Economic Development was able to secure a development agreement with Bob's Big Boy to locate a restaurant at the former Johnie's Broiler site. Many of the architectural features of the original restaurant will be preserved and/or incorporated into the new design.

**Porto's Bakery**

Community Development staff has worked with Raul Porto, of Porto's Bakery, to locate a facility in Downtown Downey to further revitalize the area. Porto's Bakery is a highly successful family owned bakery/restaurant that has operated in the region for over 35 years and currently has two locations, one in Glendale and the other in Burbank. This addition to the Downtown will further attract residents and enhance the area.

**CitiBank Building**

Citigroup Realty Services continued working with Planning and Economic Development staff for a new bank building at 8764 Firestone Blvd. The building (Citibank) contains 6,038 square feet of floor area. The subject property covers 30,465 square feet of land. It is located on the southwest corner of the Lakewood Boulevard/ Firestone Boulevard intersection.

The new CitiBank building opened in early 2009.

**BJ's Restaurant**

In 2008, BJ's restaurant approached City staff with a request to locate a new restaurant at the existing Stonewood Mall Shopping Center. The subject site is located on the southwest corner of the mall and encompasses two contiguous tenant spaces, formerly occupied by Citibank and a vacant space.

The applicant performed tenant improvements to allow for the change in use from retail and office to restaurant, as well as a façade change for said tenant space. The restaurant contains about 9,168 square feet of floor area; of which 5,596 square feet is indoor dining area, 876 square feet is outdoor seating/patio area, and the remaining 2,696 square feet encompasses restrooms, cooler, take-out and a service area.

The Conditional Use Permit for the BJ's Restaurant was approved by the Planning Commission in December of 2008 and BJ's opened for business in July 2009.

*(This space left intentionally blank.)*

**General Plan**  
*Implementation Status*

**2008**

## Chapter 1: Land Use Element

The land use chapter establishes the policies for determining where certain land uses, such as residential, commercial, industrial, are most desirable. The land use chapter defines the physical areas in the city serving the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

### Updates:

- ◆ **Adopt a comprehensive update of the zoning chapter of the municipal code (Program 1.3.2.1).** The Planning Department underwent a comprehensive update to the Zoning Code that became effective in November of 2008.
- ◆ The new Zoning Code is consistent with and/or implements the following General Plan Programs:
  - ◇ **Adopt floor-area ratios (FAR) or comparable method to address building intensity for each zoning classification (Program 1.1.1.3).** Floor Area Ratios have been incorporated into each zoning district's development standards. In every case, the proposed F.A.R. has been set at or below the maximum allowable F.A.R. authorized by the General Plan.
  - ◇ **Designate parts of the City as second unit development areas to absorb the need for additional housing (Program 1.1.2.2).** The existing second unit areas were maintained, but the second unit ordinance has been revised to encourage the development of second units. Furthermore, the minimum lot size required to construct a second unit was reduced from 10,000 square feet to 7,500 square feet.
  - ◇ **Promote project designs that reduce dependency on vehicles and promote pedestrian, transit, and alternate modes of travel (Program 1.2.1.1).** The new Mixed Use zone is intended to encourage physical design characteristics that are pedestrian-oriented and storefront-style streets that create a more active and vibrant street life.
  - ◇ **Promote mixed-use development with housing on the same site or in proximity to commercial services to reduce the need for trips by vehicles (Program 1.2.1.2).** A Mixed Use zone has been included in the new Zoning Code. In addition, the new redevelopment of the Tierra Luna site and the Avenue Theater/Verizon Building site will include Mixed-Use elements.
  - ◇ **Promote public participation in the planning process (Program 1.4.1.4).** The new Site Plan Review process has been included to promote neighborhood identity and public participation in the planning process. Site Plan Review will require new developments to be reviewed by the Planning Commission during a public hearing, which in turn requires notice be sent to all property owners within 500' of the project site.

- ◇ **Discourage residential construction not in harmony with the surrounding neighborhood (Program 1.4.2.1).** New residential development standards have been implemented to encourage design that fits in with the surrounding neighborhood.
- ◇ **Adopt standards to address the appropriate relationship between building size and lot size, such as maximum floor area ratio (Program 1.4.2.2).** The floor area ratio requirements have been re-written to limit the size of the home and establish a maximum floor area ratio throughout the City.
- ◇ **Encourage developments to consider impacts to privacy, views, and sunlight on adjacent properties (Program 1.4.2.4).** The new residential development standards include design requirements that protect the privacy of neighboring properties.
- ◇ **Promote building designs with second story additions to address scale, bulk and massing (Program 1.4.2.3).** The development standards for the residential zones have been updated to increase the side yard setbacks and reduce the second floor footprint of single-family residences. These standards will serve to reduce the bulk and mass of new residential structures.
- ◆ **Promote livable communities concepts that allow added flexibility in addressing land use needs (Policy 1.2.1).** The Tierra Luna Specific Plan and development will promote livable community concepts.
- ◆ **Adopt a specific plan for the areas surrounding the Downey Landing site with uses complimentary to the primary uses on the Downey Landing site (Program 1.2.2.5.)** A specific plan and EIR process for the Tierra Luna development has begun that will include uses that are complimentary to the primary uses on the Downey Landing site.
- ◆ **Promote Downtown Downey as a destination draw for entertainment and dining uses (Program 1.1.5.2).** The Request for Proposals issued for the Avenue Theater/ Verizon Building redevelopment project hopes to promote Downtown Downey as a destination draw.



## Chapter 2: Circulation Element

The safe and efficient movement of people and goods through cities is provided by a circulation system ranging from sidewalks to roadways. As population and economic growth continues, cities have the challenge of improving the circulation system to deal with increased demands. The growth also impacts the infrastructure needed to provide utilities and other services needed for those who live, work, and visit the City.

### Updates:

#### Traffic Congestion

- ◆ **Maintain intersections and street segments at acceptable service levels and not worsen those intersections and street segments currently operating at unacceptable levels. (Program 2.1.1.1.).** Capacity improvements were completed at the intersections of Lakewood Blvd. at Firestone Blvd., Imperial Hwy., and on Lakewood Blvd. between Imperial Hwy. and the I-105 Freeway in order to provide acceptable levels of service at these intersections and arterial segment.
- ◆ **Develop a signal system master plan to promote state-of-the-art intelligent transportation system (ITS) improvements to better service on-going traffic conditions. (Program 2.1.1.3.).** The City of Downey has developed a Traffic Signal System Master Plan. The City of Downey has previously installed and is operating fiber optic communication systems along Firestone Blvd. and Lakewood Blvd. and has completed a design of the Paramount Blvd. Fiber Optic (FO) Traffic Signal System. The City of Downey is also underway with the design for the Florence Ave. FO System.
- ◆ **Prohibit on-street parking on major, primary, and secondary streets to increase roadway capacity and improve safety. (Program 2.1.1.4.).** On-street parking was removed on Old River School Rd. in the vicinity of Muller St. to accommodate left-turn pockets at the new signalized intersection.
- ◆ **Establish a development recovery fee program to require new developments and expansions of existing developments to pay the cost of circulation improvements. (Program 2.1.2.1.).** Developer fees are collected on a case-by-case basis by the Public Works Department through the development plan review process. Over the last five years a total of approximately \$242,540 has been collected.

## Truck Traffic

- ◆ **Co-ordinate with local, regional, and state agencies involved in mitigating truck traffic impacts in the region. (Program 2.3.1.2.).** Coordination is maintained with Los Angeles County on a regular basis regarding the issuance of overload permits to ensure that the correct haul routes through the City of Downey are utilized and that proper arrangements have been made in advance. In addition, the City of Downey has partnered with the Gateway Cities Council of Governments and Los Angeles County for the construction of truck circulation improvements at the Paramount Blvd. at Florence Ave. intersection.
- ◆ **Widen street right-of-way to accommodate truck turning movements. (Program 2.3.1.3.).** The Public Works Department has already modified several intersections throughout the City by reconstructing the curb returns with larger radii (50') to accommodate truck turns. Several intersections (Firestone Blvd., Stewart & Gray Rd. and Imperial Hwy.) along Lakewood Blvd. have already been modified at major intersections and two additional intersections (Paramount Blvd. at Firestone Blvd. and Bellflower Blvd. at Imperial Hwy.) are currently under design. Similar truck circulation improvements were also completed in 2008 at the Paramount Blvd. at Florence Ave. intersection by the Los Angeles County Dept. of Public Works through the Gateway Cities Truck Impacted Intersection Project, including the reconstruction of the curb returns at each corner with 50' radii and the construction of right-turn pockets in the northbound and southbound directions.
- ◆ **Discourage truck parking on public streets. (Program 2.3.2.1.).** DMC section 3185 (b) prohibits parking of commercial vehicles exceeding 6,000 lbs. manufacturer's unladen weight or 84 inches in height or width on all public streets with the exception of those streets located within areas zoned industrial, the vehicle is involved with the servicing of the adjacent property or for a period not to exceed eight hours if the vehicle has been involved in an accident or is disabled. The Public Works Dept. has also implemented parking prohibitions of large commercial vehicles on public streets where transient parking of these vehicles has been observed. For instance, a parking prohibition of commercial vehicles exceeding seven feet in height was established on Everest St. between Woodruff Ave. and Benedict Ave. in 2008 to discourage overnight parking of transient commercial vehicles.
- ◆ **Promote property development designs along truck routes that minimize noise, dust, and visual impacts through the use of berms, landscape screening, walls, and other design features. (Program 2.3.2.3.).** Physical barriers separating truck routes from adjacent uses are constructed as necessary in conjunction with capital improvement projects. For instance, masonry block walls were constructed along Lakewood Blvd. adjacent to residential neighborhoods and along the frontage of a mobile home park located on the northeast corner of Lakewood Blvd. at Imperial Hwy. in conjunction with the Lakewood Blvd. Improvements Project.

## Infrastructure and Maintenance

- ◆ **Promote the expansion of communication networks to meet the needs of city residents, businesses, and other land uses. (Program 2.7.1.2.).** During 2008, three new cell antenna sites and vaults were constructed in the public right of way.
- ◆ **Develop master plans to identify needs, priorities, and cost for infrastructure maintenance and upgrades. (Program 2.7.2.2.).** Public Works is developing a sewer master plan for sewer infrastructure identifying capacity and structural integrity needs, as well as costs for maintenance and upgrades. Public Works is developing a water master plan for sewer infrastructure identifying capacity and structural integrity needs, as well as costs for maintenance and upgrades.

In 2008/09, the Public Works Dept. updated its Pavement Management Information System to reflect current pavement conditions on the City's arterial and collector streets to comply with funding requirements and provide the latest information in terms of pavement maintenance and rehabilitation priorities on these facilities.

## Water Supply

- ◆ **Continue providing information to the public promoting the benefits of water conservation. (Program 4.1.1.1.).** Public Works continues participation in LivingWise Educational Conservation Program which reaches out to school age children (and their families) through the Downey Unified School District.
- ◆ **Develop, through the municipal water company financial incentives for water users to conserve water, including individual meters and a tiered billing structure that charges excessive water use at a higher rate. (Program 4.1.1.2.).** Public Works required developers of multiple unit condominiums (residential/business) to install individual meters for each unit thereby promoting water conservation.
- ◆ **Promote the continued use of water conservation methods at city-owned facilities, such as parks and golf courses. (Program 4.1.1.3.).** Public Works applied for a Metropolitan Water District grant to install water conservation fixtures at City owned facilities.
- ◆ **Encourage the use of reclaimed water, or re-use of water on-site, for new and re-development projects. (Program 4.1.1.4.).** Public Works continues to require developers to install reclaimed water piping and meters where reclaimed water is available.

## Air Quality

- ◆ **Reduce air particulate and other pollutants created by, but not limited to the operation of diesel engine and increased truck traffic from marine and port operations in the Long Beach and Los Angeles ports and City operations, especially along the I-710 freeway corridor. (Program 4.5.1.3.).** In late 2008, the City of Downey

donated \$4,200 to Sustainable Conservation (Brake Pad Partnership) to support legislation to reduce the content of copper in automobile brake pads, which were and become particulate pollutants of water and air.

### Solid Waste Disposal

- ◆ **Encourage recycling and source reduction to divert recyclable and reusable materials from the solid waste sent to landfills. (Program 4.7.1.2.).** City's new Construction and Demolition Program, which requires all construction projects exceeding set dollar values or square footages to recycle materials, became effective in 2008.

### Vehicular Traffic

- ◆ **Promote programs that encourage driver courtesy. (Program 5.7.1.4.).** The Public Works Dept. provides educational brochures at the front counter on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of City Hall on various driver safety topics. In addition, brochures on driver courtesy have been requested from the Automobile Club of Southern California (AAA) for display at the front counter.

## Chapter 3: Housing Element

The California State Legislature has identified the attainment of a decent home and suitable living environment for every citizen as the State's major housing goal. Accordingly, the State of California mandates that each county and city maintain a Housing Element in their General Plan. Section 65583 of the Government Code sets forth the specific components to be contained in a community's housing element, including the City's share of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA).

- ◆ **Housing Element Update.** A draft new Housing Element was submitted to the State of California on June 30, 2008. Staff is currently working on the final draft.
- ◆ **Regional Housing Needs Assessment.** Like with the rest of the SCAG region, the City of Downey is within the RHNA planning period for 2006-2014. For this planning period, the City of Downey was assigned 1,108 units for its share of the regional housing needs. A summary of the City's accomplishment to meet this requirement is noted in the following table:

Housing Production	2006-2014 Requirement	Constructed 2006-2007	Constructed 2008	Total Constructed
Extremely Low Income	138	0	0	0
Very Low Income	139	0	0	0
Low Income	174	0	0	0
Moderate Income	187	0	0	0
Above Moderate Income	470	51	2	53
Total Units	1,108	51	2	53

## Chapter 4: Conservation Element

Residents of Downey and the rest of Southern California enjoy a temperate climate, access to both beaches and mountains and many other amenities not found in many other parts of the world. The quality of life that the region offers its residents is one of the main reasons the region continues to attract visitors and newcomers. However, Southern California is a semi-arid desert environment with limited natural resources. These natural resources, as well as other limited resources, need to be preserved for continued use by existing residents and by future generations.

- ◆ **Promote drought-tolerant plants, rain sensors, moisture sensors and other water conservation methods for plant landscaping projects (Program 4.1.1.6.).** The revised landscape standards in the new Zoning Code require a minimum of 75% of non-turf material in the non-residential zones to be drought tolerant.
- ◆ **Discourage the removal of trees on private and public property (Program 4.4.1.1.).** The revised landscape standards in the new Zoning Code encourage the preservation of mature landscaping when a site is redeveloped.
- ◆ **Provide incentives for people to use renewable energy sources such as solar energy (Program 4.6.1.1.).** In the R-1 zones, a 0.05 bonus is provided for the Floor Area Ratio when the residence utilizes solar or wind energy and solar or tankless water heating. This was included in the new Zoning Code.
- ◆ **Reuse existing historic architectural elements in new construction when preservation of historic resources is not feasible (Program 8.4.2.5.).** The Economic Development Department negotiated the purchase of the Downey Avenue Theater and plans to preserve some of the architectural features that make the Theater a Downey cultural resource.
- ◆ **Encourage adaptive reuse of older structures (Program 8.4.2.4.).** As part of the re-development of the Downey Avenue Theater and Verizon Building, the Economic Development Department encouraged adaptive reuse as an option for prospective developers.

## Chapter 5: Safety Element

Natural and non-natural hazards present a variety of risk to persons who live, work, and visit the city. The aim of the city is to reduce the potential risk of death, injuries, property damage, and the economic and social dislocation resulting from hazards.

### Updates:

- ◆ The Fire Department adopted a new fire code in 2008 to comply with current fire regulations that are applied to all development applications that require their approval.
- ◆ **Identify and maintain an acceptable response time for fire emergency service calls (Program 5.3.1.1).** The Fire Department has maintained a speedy response time for fire emergency calls over the last three years.

Year	2006	2007	2008
<b>Average Response Time</b>	4:50 minutes	4:45 minutes	4:46 minutes

- ◆ **Consider emergency response as a factor during the design or redesign of roadway medians and islands, including traffic calming designs (Program 5.3.1.4).** The Fire Department worked with the Engineering Department to maintain openings on a new median along Imperial Hwy in several locations to ensure adequate emergency response.

## Chapter 6: Noise

Noise can be defined as unwanted sound and is known to have several adverse effects on people. The most critical impact of noise exposure is hearing loss. Other effects are speech interference, sleep interference and annoyance.

- ◆ The City continues to enforce noise ordinances.

## Chapter 7: Open Space Element

Typical of most communities located within mature urbanized settings, Downey has a limited amount of open space areas. Open space areas are important not only to provide recreational activities for residents but also as a visual break from the built environment.

### Updates:

- ◆ **Develop a Park Maintenance Master Plan to identify needed upgrades to existing park facilities (Program 7.2.2.2.).** The Community Services department produces a Needs Assessment which identifies needed upgrades to existing park facilities and other facilities operated by the Department.
- ◆ **Provide funding for park improvements in the upgrades to existing park facilities in the Capital Improvement Program (Program 7.2.2.3.).** The Community Services Department takes an inventory of existing playground equipment in order to address future needs for upgrades.
- ◆ **Secure alternative means of funding, such as grants, donations, user fees and public/private partnerships, for park upgrades (Program 7.2.2.5.).** The department has also been successful in obtaining funding from the Los Angeles Regional Parks and Open Space District for the Discovery Sports Complex. The Department was awarded \$100,000 in January of 2008.
- ◆ **Promote the expansion of the existing park system (Policy 7.3.1.).** The Community Services Department has continued work on the Discovery Sports Complex, which is a new 11-acre sports complex. The sports complex will include baseball/softball fields, soccer fields, and a concession stand. The park is expected to open in Summer of 2009.
- ◆ **Promote the development of pocket parks (Program 7.3.1.5.).** Rose Park, a 2-acre pocket park, was developed on the corner of Lakewood and Rose in conjunction with street improvements on Lakewood Boulevard.

## Chapter 8: Design Element

Most residents, visitors, and businesses in Downey recognize the city as the premiere quality city in the southeast area of Los Angeles County. However, others less familiar with the city's history may not share this perception and judge the city solely on the physical appearance of the area. For this reason, it is important that the visual appearance of the community portray a positive image and that the community image display the distinct and numerous resources it has to offer.

- ◆ **Lack of property maintenance may exhibit a negative image of the City (Issue 8.2).** A chapter to the Municipal Code titled "Vacant Property Registration Ordinance" was worked on in response to concerns regarding vacant, abandoned, and foreclosed properties in the City. The ordinance will seek to establish an abandoned and/or vacant property registration program as a mechanism to protect residential neighborhoods and commercial areas from becoming blighted through the lack of adequate maintenance and/or security of abandoned and vacant properties.

## Chapter 9: Economic Development

A strong community owes much to the spirit and involvement of its residents. Community pride and civic-mindedness, however, are not enough for a city to provide all necessary and desired services to maintain the local quality of life. A city needs a variety of employment and shopping opportunities to create balance, make it a desirable place to live, and enhance its image.

- ◆ **Provide quality customer service (Goal 9.4).** Various City Departments have worked towards improved customer service by developing handouts for the public that include information about City Services, the permitting process, business licensing, and Planning Development Standards.
- ◆ **Convert paper-based information to digital-based formats to facilitate integration into interdepartmental information networks (Program 9.4.2.4).** The Building and Safety department was successful in transferring all building permit records to a digital database on Laserfiche. This digital database is also accessible by other departments.
- ◆ **Expand the use of the city Internet web site for public information (Program 9.4.2.5).** Efforts were begun to expand and upgrade the use of the City website.