

# 1 Introduction

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Since the original General Plan was adopted in 1973, much has changed in the world. We are more concerned with the environment, our health and wellness, homelessness, and the disparity between income levels. Cities cannot solve all the issues that arise, but they do affect change, help to create better places to live and set in place policies that can improve our imprint on the environment. Just as the world has changed, Placentia has changed as well. This General Plan update is the evidence of this positive change. We have reached many of the goals set out in 1973 and have now set our sights on new ones. This new General Plan will feature new and revised goals, all poised to protect what is cherished and special about Placentia, and to strive for even more improvements. Our community now reflects on what we have successfully accomplished, evaluates new challenges and begins to look forward to the future to ensure that we are providing the same quality of life that our residents and businesses enjoy today.

*Rich Heritage, Bright Future: The Placentia General Plan* is our guide to Placentia's future. It is a guide that takes our vision for Placentia and develops the framework of policies to make that vision come true.

## 1.1 PLACENTIA – A “PLEASANT” PLACE

Our community takes pride in our history, places and people. Reflecting on our history reminds us of this community pride. When we take a look back to see where we came from, we see a rich history of oil and agriculture. Incorporated in 1926, the history of the City of Placentia started much earlier than that with the Spanish explorers of the 1760s. The area was first populated by the Gabrielino Native American tribe, also known as the Tongva, referring to the Shoshonean or Tatic speaking Native Americans, who lived throughout the region. In 1837, the Mexican Governor granted the Rancho San Juan Cajon De Santa Ana to Juan Ontiveros. The land grant included the area, which today comprises Placentia, Anaheim, Fullerton, La Habra, and Yorba Linda (refer to Exhibit 1-1, *Regional Location Map*). Daniel Kraemer, credited with being the first non-Spanish settler, arrived in 1865, bought 3,900 acres of land in the area and moved his family out from Illinois. Kraemer, after which Placentia's Kraemer Boulevard and Kraemer Middle School and Kraemer Memorial Park are named, paved the way for the future City.

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### *The City's Overall Mission Statement:*

*The City Council is committed to keeping Placentia a pleasant place by providing a safe family atmosphere, superior public services and policies that promote the highest standards of community life.*

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In 1868, William McFadden and his wife, Sarah Jane, acquired 100 additional acres in this area. Many people were attracted to the area, as homes, businesses, schools and churches began to shape the City's future. In 1878, Sarah, a teacher in the City's first school, suggested "Placentia" as the name for the school district. The word "Placentia" is derived from a Latin word meaning "pleasant place to live". When the City incorporated, it took the name Placentia from the existing school district.



Following this Gold Rush period, Albert S. Bradford, seeking a new and prosperous life, boarded a train heading west, when he met Mr. Halladay, a local businessman who persuaded the young Bradford to help manage a ranch in the area. Bradford settled down, called for his wife and children from back east, and in the 1890s moved to the area that later became Placentia. He grew vegetables, then oranges, served on the Chamber of Commerce, and in 1910 he organized locals and persuaded the Santa Fe Railroad to run a line into Placentia, shortening the rail distance to Los Angeles. A station was built and packing houses were established for the town's growing citrus industry. Mr. Bradford was instrumental in bringing businesses, a post office and a newspaper to Placentia. He also laid out the town site; and, in his honor, Bradford Avenue retains his name today. His family home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



The lack of water in Placentia was one of the principal reasons for its slow development. Prior to the 1870s, Placentia was an arid area without natural water sources. There was no water to develop residential, agriculture or industrial uses. Water ditches for agriculture began to be dug in the 1870s. A primitive irrigation system for agriculture began around 1910, after the railroad was brought in.

But even as a water system was installed, and development was more feasible, the people of Placentia eschewed the big stores and shopping areas of their neighboring cities. Having started small and slowly, the community decided it liked it that way. Recognizing the need for sound planning, the City Council, in 1966, called upon Placentia's 18,000 residents to assist in defining community goals to be accomplished by the City's 50th birthday in December 1976. Utilizing a series of public forums and study sessions, the *Placentia Tomorrow* program explored several aspects of the community. Among the findings were strong indications that the residents desired to preserve a small-town atmosphere, were interested in having a variety of recreational and leisure time activities and wanted a well-rounded community. The city grew mostly as a "bedroom" community, with a very modest local economy until the 1970s.

Exhibit 1-1



## 1.2 PLACENTIA – OUR RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Reflecting on Placentia’s past can help us understand who we are as a community, why we’ve made certain choices and what our community holds as important. Today, even as its people remain cautious about over development and losing their small town feel, Placentia looks to future growth and economic vitality. There is a sense of pride in this small city and many people who grew up here stay here and raise their own families. Placentia is a small city that is manageable, where people know one another and one can feel the cohesiveness of the community.



Placentia is a place that, while stable, has been steadily growing and improving over the years. After a population growth spurt beginning in the 1960s, the population surged from 5,000 to its current 50,533 residents. The City Council is active and engaged, supported by its boards, commissions, and citizenry. In the last few years alone the City has made many improvements:

- Improved **fiscal responsibility and economic sustainability**; creating a Citizens Fiscal Sustainability Task Force.
- A new **revitalization plan for the Old Town District** - a much loved place, rich in history.
- A **Transit Oriented Development (TOD) District**, just south of Old Town, that will allow a new kind of mixed-use development in the City. It will bring new people and new businesses to this part of town.
- A **new Metrolink Station** is being constructed. It is the 13th and newest station on the 91 line, which will run from Los Angeles Union Station to downtown Riverside. The Placentia Metrolink station will be the closest

station in proximity to Cal State Fullerton and will provide passengers with an alternative to the Fullerton Metrolink station.

- The City is building a large **parking structure** to support the new station, also helping Old Town and the TOD district.
- **New policies on housing** – making sure a range of housing can be built to support people of all needs and income levels.
- The **Police Department has expanded and more services** will be digitized for efficiency. The Department rolled out the Nixle System, a mass communication system that all residents can use.
- The City has a **new Emergency Operations Center**, to be used as a command center in times of emergency.
- A **new website** was launched and has regular updates to respond to changing needs. The City also launched a new mobile application for the website, making it easier for all citizens to stay in touch with their government.
- Our **parks, facilities, and programs** are steadily improving by continuously working closely with community members and stakeholders to identify community needs and to seek appropriate grant funding. Program enhancements have been successful in the areas of senior services, health and wellness, and teen programs.
- Look for more and **more community events**: Community Walks; Walk with the Mayor; Bark Walk and Parade, Walk with a Doc, Seniors Walk, movie nights at the public pool, and more senior dances, health fairs and excursions.
- Placentia now has a **Police Department Citizen Academy** and already graduated two classes.
- The Police Department secured a **\$476,000 State grant** for Homeless Liaison Officers, Gang Unit Officers, and community based organizations.

### 1.3 PLACENTIA – OUR FUTURE, OUR VISION

As we reflect on our past and our recent accomplishments, we also look to the future. We understand that looking to our future requires us to reevaluate what we have accomplished and identify goals we still need to accomplish. We understand that our community is almost completely developed, requiring us to think about creative ways to provide for the changing economic and social needs of our community. We also recognize that changing conditions necessitate that we refine our vision to reflect the community's current and future goals. The General Plan helps us to clearly express our vision of Placentia's future and provides the pathway to achieve it.

This update was first started in 2014 and after an unforeseen need to place a hold on the project, was restarted in 2017. From 2014 to 2019, the City staff and community have eagerly been involved in this important, and long awaited, update to the General Plan: everyone anticipating the document that would represent their

current and future much-loved City of Placentia. With this enthusiastic input, and early on in the process, the City formed a General Plan Update Leadership Team (GPULT) with representatives from every City department, including the Police and the Fire Department Staff. The department heads and staff from all of the different City divisions and departments have been involved in the writing, reviewing and editing of the Plan from the start. Each department work directly with the authors to ensure that the text of the update was relevant to the particular needs and desires of the residents they serve. A General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), comprised of commission and committee representatives met to give direction in the process along the way. In addition, the City's Housing, Planning and Economic Development Ad Hoc Committee with two City Council members, has been monitoring the Plan's progress from the start of the project.

Virtually every City commission and committee reviewed and commented on the document. There were many comments and corrections made to the historical section, after a careful review by the Historic Commission. Other commissions commented on safety issues such as homelessness, more bicycle opportunities (dedicated bike lanes), health and wellness issues (especially healthy food options) in the disadvantaged parts of the community, improving access to parks, and improving the overall quality of life citywide. Below is a list of the City Commissions who were involved in the review and update of the General Plan:

- Veterans Advisory Committee
- Traffic Committee
- Historic Commission
- Recreations/Parks Commission
- Senior Advisory Committee
- Cultural Arts Commission
- Economic Development Committee

The community was quite involved as well. Because there are disadvantaged communities within the City, a dedicated community meeting was set up to hear from residents there. The community organization, Lot318, helped to organize and increase attendance at this very fruitful meeting. Staff from Development Services, Community Services and Public Safety joined in the conversation to listen to and gain input from this part of the community who is often not heard from. The Health, Wellness and Environmental Justice Chapter was informed greatly by this connection.

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Scoping meeting and two formal community meetings were conducted as well. Other community groups were equally involved, including the following community groups and organizations:

- Placita Santa Fe Merchants Association (representing the Old Town area)
- Placentia Rotary Club
- Placentia Chamber of Commerce

- Kiwanis Club
- Placentia Collaborative

Our vision for the Placentia General Plan provides us with the core principles by which the General Plan is guided. It is this core vision that provides us with a conceptual view of how we picture our future, articulating what we hope to become. The vision expresses the community's hopes and goals for the future:

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*“The citizens of Placentia aspire to maintain a beautiful, safe, and balanced community that provides a variety of community and cultural activities. Placentia will be a place where the local commercial centers, including the Old Town and Transit Oriented Development Districts, provides for the needs of the community and also attracts people from surrounding communities. People of all ages and with a variety of ethnic backgrounds will be proud to live and work in Placentia. As a balanced community, Placentia will provide for the diverse educational, housing, social, recreational, and safety needs of its residents, while optimizing the City’s resources. Through the establishment of quality services and responsive government that is grounded in shared, fair, and equitable community values, Placentia will remain a pleasant and safe place to live, play and work.”*

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## 1.4 OUR GENERAL PLAN AND HOW IT WORKS

California State law requires that we adopt a General Plan that provides a policy framework for the long-term physical development of the community. Our General Plan is a means to express the community's development goals and provide specific public policies related to the public and private uses of the community's land resources. Our General Plan allows us to express the relationship between community values and vision with how we utilize public land, private land and other community resources. It is a comprehensive and long-term document that provides the primary guidance for specific projects, policy actions and programs occurring in the future and is designed to fulfill the future vision expressed in this General Plan.

Our General Plan contains ten (10) Elements. State law requires us to include seven (7) mandatory Elements including; Land Use, Mobility, Housing, Conservation, Open-Space, Noise and Safety. State law also allows us to include optional Elements. We

have included two (2) optional Elements as an additional part of this General Plan, which include the Economic Development and Sustainability Elements. A third element was added, Health, Wellness and Environmental Justice, to help address the community's health with a specific focus on disadvantaged communities. The ten (10) Elements of this General Plan include:

## Chapter 2: Land Use Element

The Land Use Element can be considered the primary long-range planning guide for the physical development within the City. It indicates the location and extent of development to be allowed over the next twenty (20) years. Our Land Use Element also identifies the goals and policies that will guide future land use and development. The most visible portion of this Element is the General Plan Land Use Map, which illustrates the distribution, density and intensity of land uses throughout the City.

## Chapter 3: Mobility Element

The Mobility Element provides programs and policies to establish a circulation system that adequately accommodates future growth consistent with the Land Use Element. The Mobility Element seeks to provide for a safe, convenient and efficient transportation system allowing for the movement of people and goods throughout the City and the region. Additionally, the Mobility Element includes policies for non-motorized modes of transportation including bicycles, street improvement policies and other transportation-related issues.

## Chapter 4: Housing Element

The Housing Element provides programs and policies that assist our community, region and state in meeting the goal of providing affordable housing to all socioeconomic segments of the population. The Element addresses citywide housing and population demographics, regional fair-share housing allocations and implementation strategies to assist our City in providing a full range of housing opportunities.

## Chapter 5: Conservation Element

The Conservation Element provides an inventory of water resources, energy resources, solid waste generation and reduction, historic and cultural resources and air quality conditions in the City. This Element provides direction regarding the management, development and conservation of natural resources within our City and the policies and programs to achieve them.

## Chapter 6: Open Space and Recreation Element

The Open Space and Recreation Element outlines strategies and actions to preserve and enhance open space areas within Placentia to meet the open space and

recreational needs of our residents. Open space in the City of Placentia includes neighborhood, community and regional parks, as well as community centers, trail ways, golf courses and open space easements.

### Chapter 7: Safety Element

The Safety Element is intended to reduce the potential risk of death, injuries, property damage and the economic and social dislocation resulting from hazards such as fires, floods, earthquakes, landslides and others. The Safety Element serves as a guide for our City government and the general public for understanding the hazards facing the City of Placentia and how we can reduce and respond to the impacts of these hazards.

### Chapter 8: Noise Element

The Noise Element describes the existing noise environment within the City and its relationship with Federal, State and City noise regulations. This Element also provides a framework to limit the exposure to objectionable noise within the City, considering both the existing and future noise environments and compatibility of land uses.

### Chapter 9: Economic Development Element

The Economic Development Element is an optional General Plan Element and describes the existing economic and fiscal landscape of the City. It highlights the strengths as well as opportunity areas of the City where focus would render a brighter fiscal future for the citizens of Placentia.

### Chapter 10: Health, Wellness and Environmental Justice Element

The Health, Wellness and Environmental Justice Element is a new element that for the General Plan Element. One of the City government's primary roles is to create a safe, healthy and equitable community for Placentia's residents. The goals and policies in this element promote a healthy environment for all residents including those in disadvantaged communities by addressing public health issues which have major intersections with the Land Use Economic Development and Open Space and Recreation Elements. .

### Chapter 11: Sustainability Element

The Sustainability Element is an optional General Plan Element and explains the City's commitment to sustainability through goals, policies, and actions that support the General Plan's other nine (9) Elements. Sustainability means maintaining a culture of stewardship to enhance our natural environment, economic interests, and quality of life for present and future generations. Sustainability entails aligning the

built environment and socioeconomic activities with nature’s constraints and opportunities and intersects with all of the other Elements.

## 1.5 HOW DO WE IMPLEMENT THE GENERAL PLAN?

The General Plan is a policy document that clearly states our community’s development strategy. The City Council formally adopts our General Plan as the City’s primary development guidance tool. All future projects, development programs and activities occurring in the City are required to seek policy guidance from the General Plan. The General Plan, at the end of each element, sets out the goals and policies to help implement the vision of the Plan. *Goals* are general statements of aspiration or intent to achieve a desired condition that serves as an endpoint and may be attainable. *Policies* are specific statements that provide a directive or framework for City decision-making that directly contribute to the attainment of the goal.

To implement the policies contained in our General Plan, we adopt ordinances and regulations and secure the staffing and financial resources to execute programs that fulfill our goals.

We conduct periodic reviews of our policies and programs, making sure they are in line with the goals of the General Plan and its vision. California State law requires the City provide an annual report to our City Council about the General Plan and our progress in its implementation. We also utilize appointed boards and commissions, and consult with community groups, residents and business owners to ensure our community’s needs and concerns are adequately addressed.

