

# COVINA

# GENERAL PLAN



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PLANNING DIVISION STAFF

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## **COVINA GENERAL PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **BRIEF DISCUSSION ON COVINA**

The City of Covina is a mature, suburban community located in the eastern portion of the San Gabriel Valley, approximately twenty-three miles east of downtown Los Angeles and just north of the San Bernardino Freeway (Interstate 10). Covina was originally settled in the late 1800s for agricultural purposes and soon thereafter became a major citrus producing area. After World War II, growth pressures sweeping the region resulted in tremendous population and acreage increases that transformed Covina into a prosperous, highly-regarded, and well-balanced suburban community.

Covina today (1997) has a resident population of approximately 46,500 and is seven square-miles in area with a three square-mile Sphere of Influence, which is unincorporated territory designated for eventual Covina annexation. Thus, the Covina General Plan covers a ten square-mile Planning Area. Covina is predominantly built-out, though future growth and redevelopment is anticipated on remaining vacant and on underutilized properties. The City's development and land use pattern are fairly well-established, there being predominantly single-family houses, lower density apartment and condominium complexes, and low rise commercial and industrial uses dispersed throughout the community. For a suburban city, Covina possesses a relatively high percentage of commercial and industrial activities, which translates to a strong, diversified economic base. Retail, service, manufacturing, and wholesale businesses constitute the major employers. Despite significant overall changes to the community that have occurred over the years, Covina has retained its pleasant small-town flavor and has preserved and improved its vibrant, quaint downtown, centered around Citrus Avenue and Badillo Street, as the focus of the community. The nearby San Bernardino, Foothill, and Orange Freeways and the Metrolink Commuter Rail Line link the City to other areas of metropolitan Los Angeles.

### **WHAT IS THE COVINA GENERAL PLAN?**

Under State law (California Government Code Section 65300 et seq.), every city and county must prepare, adopt, and implement a general plan to guide and shape its long-term growth. "Long-term" typically refers to twenty years in the future. The role of each local government's general plan is to act as a constitution for both public and private development, the foundation upon which all growth- and land use-related decisions and actions are to be based. The general plan expresses community development goals with respect to both the man-made and natural environments and sets forth the policies and implementation measures to achieve them for the welfare of those who live, work, and do business in a community. Because Covina is basically well-established and built-out, the Covina General Plan thus focuses on guiding future redevelopment activities, limited new construction, and expected additions and/or modifications to existing public and private facilities.

California planning law also establishes the requirements pertaining to the content, analysis of data and information, and preparation/amendment of general plans, all of which the City has met. State law further places the plan atop the hierarchy of all other local long-term and more day-to-day oriented documents that regulate or address land use, such as the Zoning Ordinance, Design Guidelines, Subdivision Ordinance, Capital Improvement Program, and Redevelopment Implementation Plan. By law, these and other tools must conform to the Covina General Plan.

### **WHAT DOES THE COVINA GENERAL PLAN CONTAIN?**

The Covina General Plan document is divided into six chapters or Elements that address particular issue areas, including land use, circulation, housing, natural resources and open space, safety, and noise. Land use is the central and most frequently referenced chapter, though, under law, all Elements have equal legal status, must be internally consistent, and must complement one another. In addition, the Elements have separate Technical Appendices that provide detailed background information that was used to formulate the policies. The General Plan also includes an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which documents how the Plan would affect the environment and which has been prepared consistent with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.).

Each of the six Elements of the Covina General Plan, most importantly, identifies and analyzes various planning matters or issues warranting attention and contains long-term goals and objectives, day-to-day decision-making policies, plans and maps, and/or programs/implementation measures. The goals and subsequent items constitute key components because they serve as the chief tools with respect to evaluating, approving/denying, and carrying out public and private developments and proposals. It is noted that this General Plan and the Elements thereof, as permitted under State law, have been organized and prepared in a manner that the City believes is most logical and best suited for carrying out planning activities.

In preparing the Covina General Plan, the City provided many opportunities for public participation to ensure that the document reflects community views and sentiments. Specifically, City staff distributed surveys and questionnaires, conducted public forums, prepared television commercials, distributed flyers at City Hall and around the community, prepared press releases and articles in various newspapers and City publications, and formed an advisory body called the General Plan Update Committee. The public comments ascertained from these and other measures were carefully studied by the City and used to identify issues and develop goals, objectives, policies, and programs/implementation measures. Copies of the Draft General Plan and accompanying Environmental Impact Report were distributed to a variety of individuals and public groups and made available for public review at the Covina Public Library and at Covina City Hall (Planning Division Counter).

The remainder of this section summarizes each General Plan Element.

#### **Land Use Element**

##### **Goal:**

A physical environment that provides for the housing, employment, business, service, recreational, social, educational, cultural, and entertainment needs of and maintains and enhances a high quality of life for its residents.

##### **Summary of Key Policies:**

1. Accommodate moderate overall residential growth, including single-family detached houses and apartment and condominium/townhome complexes, though limit the rate of higher density apartment and condominium/townhome construction;
2. Preserve existing commercial and industrial areas, maintain and facilitate the expansion and/or revitalization of the City's various operating businesses, if appropriate, and encourage the capturing of new commercial and industrial activities to sustain and enhance Covina's economic base and image;
3. Focus on the downtown as the economic and social center of Covina and, accordingly, continue with ongoing physical and economic revitalization activities, better link the district to the Metrolink Commuter Train Station, and explore permitting mixed uses and new vibrant enterprises;
4. Generally maintain the current land use pattern and preserve the predominantly low-rise, low- to medium-intensity character of Covina's residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial districts, though allow slightly higher intensities in the downtown and along various portions of major streets;
5. Protect existing parklands and open space resources from conversion to other uses;
6. Preserve the very low density character, sensitive environmental resources, and natural appearance of Covina Hills by minimizing future grading and development;



7. Attempt to preserve structures, resources, and/or areas that are of local historic and/or architectural significance;
8. Maintain appropriate development standards, design provisions, construction practices, and inspections to ensure the safety, viability, functionality, and attractiveness of development, to ensure adequate separation between incompatible land uses, to enable development of affordable housing, and to sustain community appearance, image, character, and quality of life;
9. Ensure that all properties and uses are physically, aesthetically, and functionally maintained to retain community appearance, image, and stability; and
10. Accommodate future growth, redevelopment, and revitalization with functionally adequate and well-maintained public facilities, including, but not limited to, roads, street trees and landscaped medians, water mains, sewers, storm drains, and, to the greatest extent possible, schools and utilities, with sufficient community services, and that respect physical and environmental resources and constraints.

#### Land Use Plan:

The Land Use Plan, which is the backbone of the Land Use Element and the entire Covina General Plan process, establishes land use districts that identify permitted uses of land, building character, and extent of development for the entire Covina Planning Area (City limits and unincorporated territory designated for eventual Covina annexation). In relation to the current General Plan, this Plan retains the existing, well-established land use pattern by maintaining single-family detached housing throughout the community as the predominant use category, by focusing multiple-family dwelling units (or, apartments, condominiums/townhomes, and mobile home parks) in and around the downtown and in particular neighborhoods, where they are already common, and by preserving the areas for commercial and industrial activities that are typically along various major streets and intersections. A key distinction of the new Land Use proposal is that it reduces the amount of medium and high density (i.e., apartment and condominium/townhome) development to best reflect current community sentiments on this issue, while still complying with Covina regional housing obligations. The three tables below compare and contrast acreage allotment of the various land use districts and theoretical dwelling unit and population build-out figures for the existing and proposed General Plans by City and Planning Area limits. Subsequent notes list typical permitted use types and development intensities and provide the major caveats about the information. The new Land Use Plan is illustrated at the end of this Executive Summary.

TABLE 1. ACREAGE ALLOTMENT FOR EXISTING AND PROPOSED COVINA LAND USE PLANS BY CITY LIMITS AND PLANNING AREA \*

\*As clarified under the notes below, the Residential-Medium and -High categories of the Proposed Plan represent lower density ranges than those of the Existing Plan. The upper limits of the Medium and High categories of the Proposed Plan are, respectively, 14 and 22 dwelling units for every acre of land; the upper limits of the Medium and High classifications of the Existing Plan are, respectively, 20 and 40 dwelling units for each acre of property. This means, for example, that on any lot designated under both plans as High, fewer multiple-family dwelling units could be constructed upon adoption of the Proposed scenario.

	Acres – City			Acres – Planning Area		
	Existing Plan	Proposed Plan	Percent Change	Existing Plan	Proposed Plan	Percent Change
A. Residential (Total)	2,230	2,240	-	3,650	3,650	-
1. Low	1,800	1,800	-	3,120	3,090	-1%
2. Medium	400	200	-50%*	500	270	-46%*
3. High	30	240	+700%*	30	290	+867%*
B. Commercial (Total)	550	550	-	580	580	-
1. General	N/A	460	N/A	N/A	490	N/A
2. Town Center	N/A	90	N/A	N/A	90	N/A
C. Industrial	220	210	-4%	220	220	-
D. School	360	360	-	390	390	-
E. Park	60	60	-	90	90	-
F. Open Space	40	40	-	40	40	-
G. Public Streets	1,020	1,020	-	1,490	1,490	-
Acreage Grand Total	4,480	4,480		6,460	6,460	

Notes:

1. For Residential uses: Low refers generally to single-family detached houses; building density is up to 6.4 dwelling units per net acre of land for Existing Plan and up to 6.0 for Proposed Plan. Medium means basically apartments, condominiums/townhomes, and mobile homes; building density is 6.5 to 20.4 dwelling units per net acre of land for Existing Plan and 6.1 to 14.0 for Proposed Plan. High also refers generally to apartments, condominiums/townhomes, and mobile homes; building density here is 20.5 to 40.4 dwelling units per net acre of land for Existing Plan and 14.1 to 22.0 for Proposed Plan.
2. For Commercial uses (Proposed Plan only—Existing Plan does not reflect illustrated categories and does not contain intensity standards): General refers basically to various types of retail, service, and office activities; building intensity is up to 1.5 floor area ratio (FAR, the maximum ratio of total building square footage to net acreage of site). Town Center generally means specified retail, service, and office activities that compliment the unique character of and serve downtown Covina; building intensity here is up to 2.5 floor area ratio (FAR, the maximum ratio of total building square footage to net acreage of site).

3. For Industrial uses: Industrial generally (for Proposed Plan) refers to manufacturing, processing, assembly, and warehousing operations; building intensity is up to 2.0 floor area ratio (FAR, the maximum ratio of total building square footage to net acreage of site.) Existing Plan does not contain intensity standards.
4. All numbers are rounded to nearest 10.

New Land Use Plan is illustrated at end of Executive Summary.

TABLE 2. DWELLING UNIT BUILD-OUT FIGURES FOR EXISTING AND PROPOSED COVINA LAND USE PLANS – CITY LIMITS AND PLANNING AREA

	<u>Dwelling Units – City</u>			<u>Dwelling Units – Planning Area</u>		
	Existing Plan	Proposed Plan	Percent Change	Existing Plan	Proposed Plan	Percent Change
A. Residential - Total (Relation to current figure - N3)	20,060 (+22%)	17,910 (+9%)	-11%	28,460 (+25%)	25,960 (+14%)	-9%
B. Residential – Low Density (Relation to current figure - N4)	10,490 (+14%)	9,890 (+7%)	-6%	16,900 (+20%)	15,790 (+12%)	-7%
C. Residential – Medium & High Density (Relation to current figure - N5)	9,580 (+33%)	8,020 (+11%)	-16%	11,570 (+33%)	10,170 (+17%)	-12%

Notes:

1. Low refers generally to single-family detached houses; building density is up to 6.0 dwelling units per net acre of land. Medium means basically apartments, condominiums/townhomes, and mobile homes; building density is 6.1 to 14.0 dwelling units per net acre of land. High also refers generally to apartments, condominiums/townhomes, and mobile homes; building density here is 14.1 to 22.0 dwelling units per net acre of land.
2. The dwelling unit figures are theoretical capacities, created primarily for discussion purposes. Actual build-out numbers, which are based on various unforeseen factors and trends, cannot be predicted but typically are around 80% of capacity.
3. Current Total Dwelling Unit figures: City, 16,400; Planning Area, 22,800.
4. Current Low Density Dwelling Unit figures: City, 9,200; Planning Area, 14,100.
5. Current Medium and High Density Dwelling Unit figures: City, 7,200; Planning Area, 8,700.
6. All numbers are rounded to nearest 10.

**TABLE 3. POPULATION BUILD-OUT FIGURES FOR EXISTING AND PROPOSED COVINA LAND USE PLANS – CITY LIMITS AND PLANNING AREA**

	<u>Population – City</u>			<u>Population – Planning Area</u>		
	Existing Plan	Proposed Plan	Percent Change	Existing Plan	Proposed Plan	Percent Change
A. Residential - Total (Relation to current figure - N4)	55,070 (+18%)	49,150 (+6%)	-11%	78,130 (+21%)	71,250 (+10%)	-9%
B. Residential – Low Density	28,780	27,150	-6%	46,390	43,340	-7%
C. Residential – Medium & High Density	26,290	22,000	-16%	31,750	27,920	-12%

**Notes:**

1. Low refers generally to single-family detached houses; building density is up to 6.0 dwelling units per net acre of land. Medium means basically apartments, condominiums/townhomes, and mobile homes; building density is 6.1 to 14.0 dwelling units per net acre of land. High also refers generally to apartments, condominiums/townhomes, and mobile homes; building density here is 14.1 to 22.0 dwelling units per net acre of land.
2. Population estimates are based on a State Finance Department figure of 2.745 persons per household. Also, the population figures are household counts only (referring to persons living in regular dwelling units), they not being inclusive of individuals residing in group quarters facilities.
3. The population figures are theoretical capacities, created primarily for discussion purposes. Actual build-out numbers, which are based on various unforeseen factors and trends, cannot be predicted but typically are around 80% of capacity.
4. Current Total Population figures: City, 46,500; Planning Area, 64,500.
5. All numbers are rounded to nearest 10.

**Circulation Element**

**Goal:**

A well-balanced infrastructure system and related circulation network that provide functional, viable, safe, efficient, economical, and attractive transportation, movement, and transmission and applicable services for current and future Covina residents, employers, workers, business patrons and service recipients, visitors, and passers-by.

### Summary of Key Policies:

1. Sustain a network of public streets, under an appropriate classification system, that enable the City to accommodate existing and future traffic conditions, volumes, and patterns arising from projected moderate growth and revitalization and that will preserve the community's low-rise, low- to medium-intensity character and protect residential neighborhoods from potential adverse traffic and related encroachments;
2. Place a high priority on attempting to maintain public streets and, where necessary and feasible, improve roads that are deficient in width, design, construction, improvement, or traffic signals through the most appropriate strategies and/or funding sources;
3. Perform focused traffic and circulation studies and analyses for particular congested streets and intersections as a means of clarifying operations and best identifying acceptable or sufficient relief;
4. Where necessary and feasible, consider enhancements to downtown traffic, circulation, and parking that respect and further the unique character of the district and consider "urban village" or mixed use concepts that reduce vehicular trips (see also Housing Element Policy 3 below);
5. Ensure that local transportation programs and regional-oriented transit lines best serve Covina, with minimal adverse impacts on Covina properties and activities, and best link the Metrolink Commuter Train Station to other local-serving transportation networks as well as to ongoing downtown Covina revitalization, beautification, and economic development activities;
6. Ensure that adequate access, circulation, maneuverability, and parking standards are utilized to facilitate safety and functionality with respect to both public and private developments and areas; and
7. Ensure the continued maintenance and adequacy of and, where necessary, improvements to Covina's storm drainage, water supply, and sewage disposal systems to accommodate future growth and redevelopment.

### Circulation/Infrastructure Plan:

The Circulation/Infrastructure Plan is a chief component of the Circulation Element. This Plan focuses on the location and functional classification and accompanying standards of the various roadways that transport primarily cars, buses, and trucks through and within Covina. The Metrolink Commuter Railroad Line and the few flood control channels that traverse the community are also included in the Circulation hierarchy. Generally, the Circulation/Infrastructure Plan, which is superimposed on the Land Use Plan/Map, retains and appropriately categorizes existing circulation facilities located around the community to better serve Covina and to complement the Land Use Element in accommodating future growth and changes. The Circulation/Infrastructure Plan itself, as summarized below, is comprised of five public roadway categories and two designations relating to the Commuter Railroad Line and the flood control channels.

1. Freeway – This refers to the San Bernardino Freeway, which passes through the southeastern portion of Covina and expedites movement between relatively distant areas in the region.
2. Primary Arterial Street – Primary Arterial Streets refer to the community's principal four- or six-lane roads that link principal elements within the City to each other and to adjacent areas.
3. Secondary Arterial Street – These four-lane routes serve primarily locally-destined traffic, tying together the different areas of the City and connecting them to the Primary Arterials and to nearby communities.

4. **Collector Street** – The Collector Streets are two or four lanes in size and also accommodate traffic of a primarily local orientation and collect and carry traffic to the Primary and Secondary Arterials. (Citrus Avenue in the downtown falls under this category, though see note below.)
5. **Local Street** – These are designed to provide access to abutting, generally residential properties and to link these properties to the Arterial and Collector street network.
6. **Railroad Line** – The Railroad Line designates part of the regional-oriented Metrolink Commuter Rail Line, which serves generally a commuter function.
7. **Flood Control Channel** – These facilities, of which the Circulation/Infrastructure Plan must also include, serve local and regional stormwater runoff management purposes.

**Note:** The Plan calls for further analysis of the unique characteristics of Citrus Avenue in the downtown area, particularly with respect to balancing traffic/circulation and business/economic development needs.

### **Housing Element**

#### **Goal:**

A Housing Element that accurately reflects Covina's early 1990s housing-related situation, resources, and needs and establishes a clear, unambiguous, and locally acceptable policy orientation and program framework so that community decisions and actions will affectively, viably, and efficiently address Covina housing issues, needs, and problems.

#### **Summary of Key Policies:**

1. **Maintain and/or accommodate development of a variety of housing types, including single-family detached houses, condominiums/townhomes, apartments, mobile homes, second units, and mixed uses, to suit all economic segments as a means of addressing the City's regional housing obligations to the greatest extent possible and as a vehicle for sustaining community stability and for continuing with ongoing moderate growth, redevelopment, and revitalization activities;**
2. **Deal with and abate serious private property structural and/or maintenance problems, particularly deteriorating and dilapidated, aging houses and apartments, through applicable City ordinances and Code Enforcement activities;**
3. **Develop a downtown area "urban village" concept, which would be based on mixed uses in an attractive, spirited, and functional arrangement, to best complement existing revitalization activities in the district, to capture positive spillover Metrolink Commuter Train Station benefits, to provide some upper density, alternative housing opportunities, and to reduce vehicular trips;**
4. **Meet its State-mandated regional housing targets, which, most importantly, call for the City to plan for, through site identification, or to attempt to develop (through private or public action) 341 lower income dwelling units over the current Housing Element timeframe;**
5. **Continue with and, where possible, expand existing housing programs, such as rent subsidy, property rehabilitation, and developer assistance measures, to address lower income housing needs and to conserve the affordable housing stock to the greatest extent possible; and**
6. **Consider new housing programs of all levels of government to address lower income renter and owner housing overpayment, rehabilitation funding deficiencies of single-family owner-occupants, deteriorating**

or dilapidated apartments, and other key needs and consider new procedures and development standards to facilitate the construction of affordable housing.

### **Natural Resources and Open Space Element**

#### **Goal, Natural Resources:**

A setting in which a high environmental quality is achieved through the bona fide conservation and protection of existing natural resources.

#### **Goal, Open Space Lands:**

A complete, well-balanced, and functional system of parks, open space facilities, and trails and appurtenant thorough, viable programs and services that meet the diverse active and passive recreational needs of current and future Covina residents.

#### **Summary of Key Policies, Natural Resources:**

1. Support the efforts at all levels of government to monitor and regulate water quality and conditions, guaranteeing that all applicable standards are met, ensure sufficient water supplies and service for Covina residents and businesses as well as follow appropriate water conservation measures to best serve the community, and call for continuing the efforts of all levels of government to remedy or handle groundwater contamination problems;
2. Preserve and protect in their natural conditions, through appropriate land use controls, development standards, and other reasonable measures, the unimproved segments of two flood control channels running through Covina (Charter Oak Wash in Wingate Park and Walnut Creek in the Covina Hills/southeastern area) and concomitant riparian woodland communities as important functional, ecological, biological, aesthetic, and passive open space resources;
3. Continue to enforce the Covina Oak Tree Ordinance as a means of protecting oak tree resources and to attempt to preserve mature trees of all types in conjunction with new private and quasi-public construction or redevelopment proposals as well as public works projects for aesthetic and ecological purposes; and
4. Meeting all applicable City standards, provide for needed landscape improvements of the City's parks and recreational facilities and continue to require and/or call for the maintenance of landscaping in conjunction with private, quasi-public, and public developments or lands for aesthetic and ecological reasons.

#### **Summary of Key Policies, Open Space Lands:**

1. Preserve, protect, and maintain all existing local parks, ball fields, trail facilities, and bicycle ways through appropriate measures, procedures, and funding sources to best sustain recreational opportunities as well as community appearance and image and keep joint-use agreements with public schools to provide Covina residents with open space lands that supplement the City's park system;
2. Whenever possible and feasible, enhance existing parks and attempt to acquire and improve additional recreational facilities, considering creative, practical approaches, such as developing mini-parks or converting vacated institutional properties, to address current deficiencies;
3. In augmenting existing or developing new parks and recreational facilities, ensure that all appropriate site design, accessibility, landscaping, equipment safety, and security requirements and standards are met and

that viable, cost-effective funding sources and mechanisms for construction and maintenance are attained; and

4. Continue to offer quality and diverse park/recreational programs, activities, and services to address local needs, particularly those of the generally less mobile segments of the City's population, to best maintain community image and vitality.

### Safety Element

#### Goal:

A community in which the loss of lives, serious injuries, major damages to public and private structures/properties, the loss of natural resources, economic and social dislocation, and the disruption of vital services associated with a potential natural or man-made disaster are prevented.

#### Summary of Key Policies:

1. Monitor the dormant/potentially active Indian Hill and Walnut Creek Fault systems in Covina for any movement and take appropriate actions if activity is detected as well as continue with ongoing seismic retrofitting of older, unreinforced masonry buildings for the effective abatement of potentially hazardous structures;
2. Study and monitor the long-term or cumulative effects and implications of property damage, human danger, and soil erosion and concomitant threats to wildlife in and adjacent to the unimproved section of Walnut Creek (in Covina Hills) relating to existing, seasonal flooding conditions (emanating from the upstream Puddingstone Dam and Reservoir complex in Bonelli Regional Park);
3. Support the efforts of and/or work with other levels of government to maintain and, where necessary, enhance the local storm drainage system to accommodate future moderate growth, to attain a permanent solution to Walnut Creek flooding and erosion problems, to continue to identify, address, and resolve underground contamination, to implement a stormwater/urban runoff management program, and to regulate the use, storage, disposal, and transport of hazardous materials associated with businesses;
4. Maintain, enforce, and periodically review all codes, standards, guidelines, plan and environmental impact review procedures, building permit issuance activities, and inspection and monitoring tasks that are directly or indirectly associated with safety matters and issues to further community health, safety, welfare, land use compatibility, and/or environmental quality. These matters/issues include structural integrity, seismic stability, grading, development near the flood-prone unimproved portion of Walnut Creek, fire detection and suppression and fire-resistant materials (for both the flatland and fire-susceptible Covina Hills areas), the use, storage, disposal, and transport of hazardous materials, architectural design, site planning, building setback, landscape design, public roads and private driveways, property usage and maintenance, the potential siting of a hazardous waste management facility in Covina, City evacuation routes, weed abatement and brush clearance programs (particularly relating to Covina Hills), and water pressures and flow capacities;
5. Maintain and periodically update the Covina Emergency (preparedness) Plan with respect to emergency procedures to be followed in an earthquake, landslide, major flood, extreme fire, or hazardous materials accident to enable the City government, local residents, and businesses to respond and function in an efficient, hierarchical/organized, expedient, and safe manner and to restore normal conditions as quickly as possible plus to serve as a foundation for community programs on general disaster preparedness, earthquake preparedness, fire prevention, and other topics; and



6. Maintain sufficient personnel, equipment, and resources in the Covina Fire and Police Departments and in the City Building and Safety and Planning Divisions to perform their many, varied safety-related duties, such as responding to disasters and everyday emergencies, administering and enforcing particular codes and standards, performing inspections, and conducting emergency preparedness planning, maintain appropriate mutual aid agreements with surrounding jurisdictions to enable supplemental assistance, when needed, continue to contract with neighboring communities to provide day-to-day emergency service support in various areas, including the provision of large-scale fire vehicles and responding to hazardous materials accidents, and ensure that the quality and scope of these City services keep pace with projected moderate growth and redevelopment activities.

### Noise Element

#### Goal:

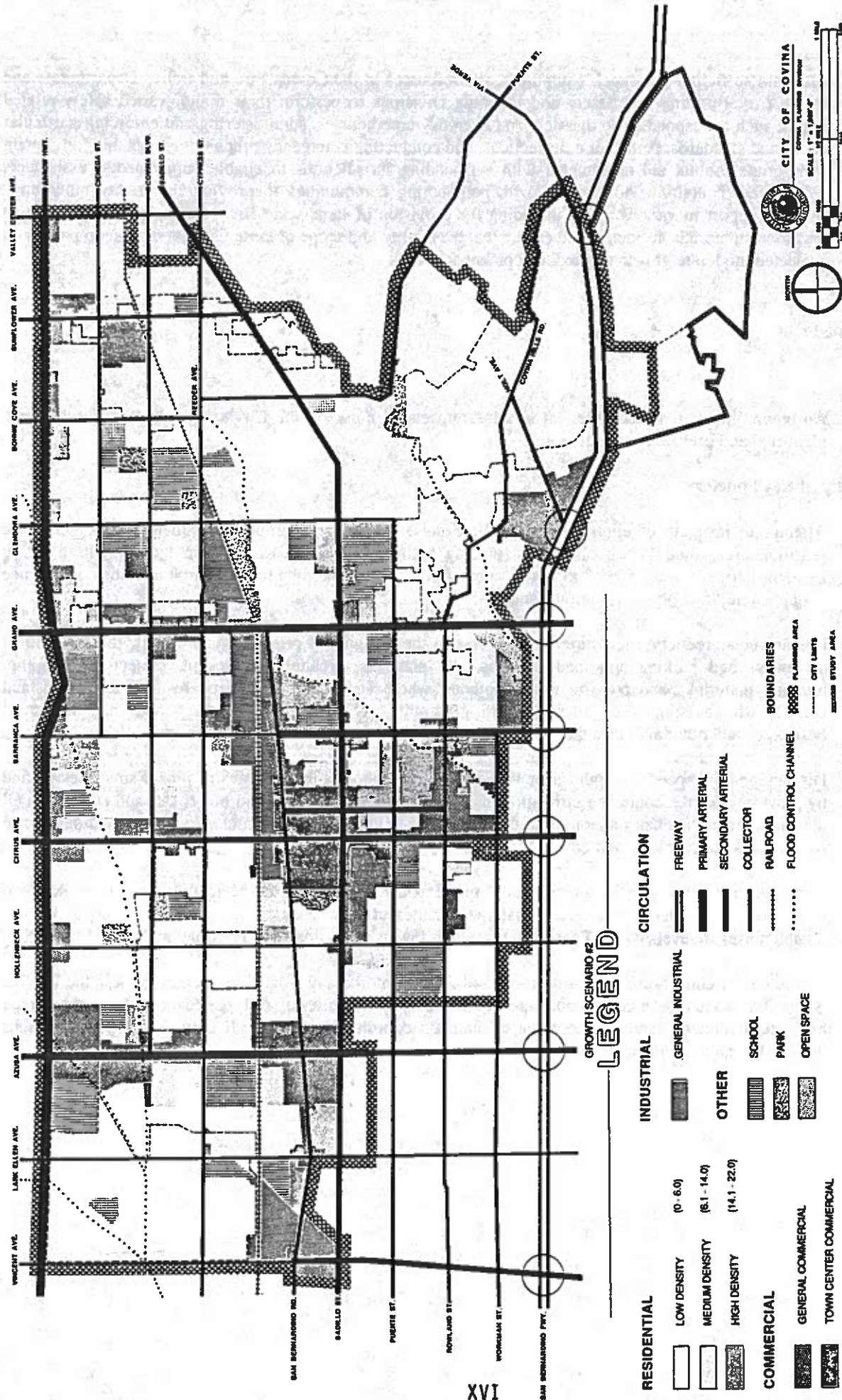
An environment in which potential adverse impacts of noise on the City's residents and workers are identified and prevented and mitigated.

#### Summary of Key Policies:

1. Attempt to mitigate or eliminate the possible noise problems of proposed residential or other noise sensitive uses, such as schools, parks, nursing homes, and churches, that are located within Noise Element-defined "noisy zones" to ensure compatibility and, pertaining to residential activities, adherence to applicable State noise insulation standards;
2. Require noise-reduction measures and features in the design and orientation of streets, the location of driveways and parking and loading areas, site planning, architectural design, project landscaping, building materials, and construction techniques, where necessary or required by law, and study and consider the existing and potential noise-generating characteristics of commercial and industrial businesses and other activities that wish to expand or modify their scope of operation;
3. Discourage high speed, through traffic in residential neighborhoods by means of proper street design and by providing for the continued utilization of officially-designated truck and bus routes and encourage all law enforcement agencies operating in the City limits to enforce State Vehicle Code and additional noise standards for cars, trucks, and other vehicles;
4. Continue to monitor existing operations of and expansion plans for the Metrolink Commuter Railroad Line and Covina Station and ensure that specific measures are adopted that reduce rail car- and horn-related noises to levels within Federal limits and as low as technologically possible; and
5. As the City's chief noise-regulating tool, continue to enforce and from time to time review the Covina Noise Ordinance to best control noise-generating uses and activities of all types (except where preempted by State or Federal law) and continue to maintain coordination among all City departments/divisions involved in noise abatement.

# COVINA GENERAL PLAN

## MODERATE GROWTH SCENARIO



### GROWTH SCENARIO #2 LEGEND

- |                             |                       |            |                        |                       |           |                   |               |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>RESIDENTIAL</b>          | LOW DENSITY (0 - 6.0) | INDUSTRIAL | GENERAL INDUSTRIAL     | <b>CIRCULATION</b>    | FREEWAY   | <b>BOUNDARIES</b> | PLANNING AREA |
| MEDIUM DENSITY (6.1 - 14.0) | OTHER                 | SCHOOL     | PARK                   | PRIMARY ARTERIAL      | COLLECTOR | CITY LIMITS       | STUDY AREA    |
| HIGH DENSITY (14.1 - 22.0)  | GENERAL COMMERCIAL    | OPEN SPACE | TOWN CENTER COMMERCIAL | SECONDARY ARTERIAL    | RAILROAD  |                   |               |
|                             |                       |            |                        | FLOOD CONTROL CHANNEL |           |                   |               |



## COVINA GENERAL PLAN INTRODUCTION

### I. Background on the City of Covina

The City of Covina is a special community. Located approximately 23 miles east of downtown Los Angeles and just north of the San Bernardino Freeway (Interstate 10), Covina lies in the heart of the mature, suburban, and prosperous east San Gabriel Valley (depicted in Map 1 at end). From its founding more than one-hundred years ago to the present, Covina has maintained a steady pulse of prosperity, vitality, and opportunity. The City, incorporated in 1901, like many communities in the region, was originally settled in the late 1800s for agricultural purposes. By the turn of the Century, because of favorable climatic and soil conditions and the construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad and the regional-oriented Pacific Electric streetcar network, both of which traversed the City, citrus became the predominant crop. In fact, Covina was the largest shipper of oranges in Los Angeles County and boasted of being the third largest in the world. Both railroad systems further brought more people to the area and gave Covina name recognition. The citrus industry remained the mainstay of the local economy through World War II, after which the citrus groves gave way to the post-War building boom that swept southern California. Between 1950 and 1960, the pressure for suburban living resulted in a City population increase of over 400% and a major expansion to the community's original one square-mile area. Much of this growth was also spawned by the opening of the San Bernardino Freeway in 1954. Covina's positive image, reputation, and public and private amenities were the catalysts for continued though slower growth in subsequent decades, which included more and more commercial and industrial developments. Despite these changes that forever transformed the composition and fabric of the community, Covina retained its pleasant, small-town flavor.

Today (1997), the City of Covina has a resident population of approximately 46,500 and is seven square miles in area with a three square-mile Sphere of Influence (unincorporated territory designated for eventual Covina annexation. Thus, the Covina General Plan covers a ten square-mile Planning Area. These boundaries are depicted in Map 2 at end.) The City is generally flat and organized upon a typical network of suburban roads. The nearby San Bernardino, Foothill, and Orange Freeways and the Metrolink Commuter Rail Line (formerly Southern Pacific Railroad) link the City to other areas of metropolitan Los Angeles. Regarding Metrolink, Covina is fortunate to have one of the Line's stations.

Covina is predominantly built-out, though future growth and redevelopment is anticipated on remaining vacant and on underutilized properties located in various neighborhoods. The City's development and land use pattern are fairly well-established, there being predominantly single-family houses, lower density apartment and condominium complexes, and low rise commercial and industrial uses dispersed throughout the community. For a suburban town, Covina possesses a relatively high percentage of commercial and industrial activities. This feature is best signified by the facts that the City has about the same daytime and nighttime adult populations, collects the highest amount of sales tax per capita of any comparable San Gabriel Valley municipality, and has a relatively high percentage of its residents that also work in the community. Covina's strong, diversified economic base reflects longstanding City government and Redevelopment Agency policies of allocating sufficient land for commercial and industrial uses and, correspondingly, of encouraging the retention and attraction of many, varied retail stores and service, manufacturing, and wholesale businesses. When considered in relation to the City's adequate, stable resident population, this solid economic foundation further renders Covina a balanced community.

Covina has retained and improved its vibrant, quaint downtown, the most famous street of which is Citrus Avenue generally between Badillo Street and just north of San Bernardino Road, as the social, economic, and geographic focus of the community. The downtown area, centered around Citrus Avenue and Badillo Street, constitutes the original settlement of the City, and, over the years, growth generally spread outward from this district in all directions. Although Covina overall has changed quite a bit over the Twentieth Century, the community remains a popular, well-regarded place in which to live, work, conduct business, shop, and seek leisure activities. Regarding the latter point, Covina has many fine City

parks, a community playhouse in the downtown, a bowling alley, varied restaurants, and a state-of-the-art 30-screen movie theatre. As the community slogan states: Covina is a city full of old-town traditions and new-town opportunities.

## **II. Definition and Purpose of the Covina General Plan**

The Covina General Plan is the City's blueprint for long-range growth and development and redevelopment. Under State law (California Government Code Section 65300 et seq.), every city and county must prepare, adopt, and implement a general plan to guide and shape its physical as well as social and economic development and environmental resources and to address various growth-related statutes of the State over a long-term (typically twenty-year) timeframe. The role of each local government's general plan is to act as a constitution for development, the foundation upon which all land use and affiliated decisions and actions are to be based. The general plan, which must also address certain regional issues, such as air quality, housing, and transit, expresses community development goals with respect to both the man-made and natural environments and sets forth the policies and implementation measures or programs to achieve them for the welfare of those who live, work, and do business in the community. Therefore, the plan is of importance to decision-makers as well as to residents, property owners, employers, businesses, and community groups. State law further specifies the below-discussed substantive and procedural requirements of general plans. Because Covina is, as stated in the previous section, basically, a well-established and built-out community, general plan implementation or planning in the City relates to guiding future changes in land uses that occur as a result of anticipated recycling and redevelopment activities, limited new construction, and additions and/or modifications to existing public and private facilities.

Furthermore, State planning law places the general plan atop the hierarchy of the tools of local government that regulate land use. The Covina General Plan therefore also serves as a basis for the preparation and administration of various documents concerning the City's community development, such as the Zoning Ordinance, Design Guidelines, Subdivision Ordinance, Capital Improvement Program, and Redevelopment Implementation Plan, which have a more short-term or day-to-day orientation. The above and similar items, other development-related master plans, like the Covina Park System Master Plan, and all site- or area-specific private proposals, such as shopping center additions, or public projects, like widening a particular street, must conform to the General Plan.

The forces that affect the course of community development are constantly changing. These influences include, but are not limited to, the state of the local economy, land values and other market factors, a shifting demographic structure, and evolving community values and desires. Therefore, the general plan must also change in order to reflect current community needs, changing circumstances, and/or new information. State law provides for these occurrences by allowing amendments to be made to a general plan. The document must be as dynamic and meaningful as the community it represents. Additional situations under which revision to the general plan is warranted pertain to changes in State statutes and requests by property owners, businesses, residents, or others that further the public interest. (However, the plan may not be changed more than four times in any calendar year.) This Covina General Plan thus constitutes a complete update over a previous Plan so that the City may better guide and shape future growth, development, and revitalization and will address recent changes in State planning law.

## **III. Content and Organization of the Covina General Plan**

The Covina General Plan consists of text and maps. The text is divided into six chapters or Elements that address particular issue areas. These Elements, which meet the requirements of State law, are as follows:

- 1. Land Use Element – Land Use is the central General Plan Element, the one that correlates land use and related issues among all Elements and is the most frequently referenced chapter. The Element designates the proposed general distribution/location and extent of the uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, education, and public buildings and grounds.**

**2. Circulation Element** – The Circulation Element focuses on the movement of people and goods. Specifically, the Element identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed highways, major roads, railroad and transit routes, trails, and terminals, all closely correlated with the Land Use Element. In addition, the chapter addresses the general location and extent of local public utilities and facilities.

**3. Housing Element** – This Element establishes a framework for addressing and meeting local housing needs, particularly those of lower income persons, for identifying and resolving local housing problems, and for recognizing and implementing State, regional, and local goals concerning the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. Under law, this Element must be revised every 5 years and consider various specific State and regional housing-related statutes and/or guidelines.

**4. Natural Resources and Open Space Element** – Natural Resources and Open Space is the Element of the General Plan that serves to identify, protect, and conserve local natural resources and to establish a framework for preserving, managing, and enhancing the community's open space areas. Natural resources include water, soils, water bodies, vegetation, wildlife, and air; open space lands pertain to parks and related recreational facilities and trails.

**5. Safety Element** – The Safety Element functions to protect the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of various potential natural and man-made disasters, including earthquakes, floods, fires, hazardous materials accidents, and landslides. Possible hazards are identified and appraised to best reduce death, injuries, property damage, and economic and social dislocation resulting from such incidents. The Element also provides for emergency preparedness.

**6. Noise Element** – The Noise chapter of the General Plan identifies and assesses major noise problems in the community for the purposes of developing and maintaining compatible land use patterns and an appropriate, day-to-day administered Noise Ordinance to protect local residents and others from excessive sound exposure. In Covina, the primary noise generators affecting the local environment are the San Bernardino Freeway, the major streets, and the Metrolink Commuter Rail Line.

Although Land Use is the central and most frequently referenced chapter, under law, all Elements have equal legal status, must be internally consistent, and must complement one another. Without meeting these requirements, the General Plan cannot effectively serve as a clear guide for future development and redevelopment. Moreover, State law calls for the General Plan or Elements thereof to meet or consider various statutes pertaining to content, analysis, and policy formulation, though grants to local governments flexibility in document organization and preparation to best suit local circumstances and conditions. Furthermore, as indicated earlier, the timeframe of General Plan implementation is long-term because the Plan affects the welfare of both current and future generations. The State strongly encourages local governments to thoroughly review their general plans at least once every five years and revise the document as necessary. Lastly, the General Plan must be written so as to serve as a clear and useful guide to decision-makers, citizens, and others, an obligation that Covina has herewith met, as well as be available to all those concerned with the community's long-term growth and changes. Regarding the latter point, this document is available for review at the Covina Public Library and is readily accessible for study, comment, and/or purchase in the Community Development Department, Planning Division at Covina City Hall.

In addition to the six-chapter or –Element General Plan document, which, again, provides direction for the City's growth, development, and redevelopment, the General Plan as a whole also consists of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The EIR documents how the Plan would affect the environment over long-term implementation. Covina's General Plan EIR, which is also available for public review at the Covina Library and at the Planning counter at Covina City Hall, has been prepared consistent with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.).

Each of the six Elements of the Covina General Plan described above is divided into eight to thirteen sections. The reason for this variation is that some of the Elements have additional information required by State law for that particular issue area. Generally, the sections of all Elements consist of and are arranged according to the following content headings:

1. **Introduction/Background** – This first section describes the purpose and focus of the Element, key applicable State requirements, the organization of the Element, and general features about Covina, particularly in relation to the specific topical area.
2. **Issues Identification** – This area, which covers one or more sections in the Elements and varies in arrangement and heading, identifies, discusses, and analyzes or appraises various planning matters warranting attention in the particular General Plan chapter and forms the basis for subsequent and below-discussed goals, objectives, policies, plans, and/or programs/implementation measures. These matters consist of issues State planning law requires to be addressed as well as all locally relevant physical, social, and economic planning concerns. In addition, the Elements have separate Technical Appendices that provide further background information describing generally base conditions in the community. The Technical Appendices are legally part of the General Plan. This section also introduces other plans and programs outside of the General Plan that must be followed to meet particular legal requirements and achieve General Plan goals and objectives.
3. **Goals, Objectives, and Policies** – Goals, objectives, and policies are the chief tools with respect to evaluating and making decisions on matters, issues, and public and private proposals and developments for the subject area of each Element. These components, which are based on the previously-noted issues section(s) and technically function closely with programs/implementation measures (discussed below), bridge the gap between where the community is and what type of city it wishes to become.

A goal is defined as a general expression of an ideal future condition or state toward which the community wishes to advance. An objective, on the other hand, is similar to a goal but more specific in focus. Several objectives generally “branch off” or clarify the state or direction of which the goal leads. Lastly, a policy is a statement that most directly guides decision-making and actions. In order for policies to be meaningful and useful, they must be clear and unambiguous, a guideline that this Element has followed. Policies must indicate local government commitment.

It is noted that objectives are utilized in the Land Use and Housing Elements only, as those chapters are of a type and intricacy that warrant inclusion of this particular item. The City believes that all other Elements can be most efficiently carried out through a more straightforward goal-policy framework. Furthermore, the Housing Element contains a unique section entitled “quantified objectives” that refers to specific legal targets for dwelling unit construction, rehabilitation, and conservation, which differ from general future ends or conditions.

The goals, objectives, and policies for each chapter of the General Plan are arranged in hierarchy from the most general to the most specific. Thus, each Element begins with one or two goals. Policies are subsequently listed under either the objectives (for the Land Use and Housing Elements) or topical areas relating to the particular General Plan chapter. The City maintains some generality and flexibility in carrying out the General Plan’s goals, objectives, and policies to most effectively and appropriately respond to changing and unforeseen physical, environmental, social, and economic conditions.

4. **Plan Presentations** – This next section of the General Plan actually pertains to the Land Use and Circulation Elements only. Under law, these chapters are required to have maps to illustrate how the General Plan goals and (relating to Land Use) objectives and the policies will be carried out. For example, the Land Use Element must contain a Land Use Plan, which establishes land use districts that identify the permitted type of uses, building character, and extent of new and modified development and

redevelopment throughout the community. This Land Use Plan is in fact the backbone of the Element and therefore of the entire Covina General Plan process. The Circulation/Infrastructure Plan of the Circulation Element indicates the location and functional classification and accompanying standards of the major roadways that transport cars, buses, and trucks through and within Covina. Because of the inextricable relationship between circulation and land use, Covina's Circulation/Infrastructure Plan is illustrated on the Land Use Map. Furthermore, the Land Use Element consists of an additional Future Public and Quasi-Public Facilities Map, showing the location of public facilities, such as City Hall, the Covina Public Library, and City Fire Stations. The City believes that separating public facilities from the primary Land Use Map clarifies the overall land use strategy and related policies and is appropriate because such facilities compose a very small percentage of the land uses. Therefore, including the public facilities on the Land Use Map would obscure land use distributions. The above Plans thus serve a similar planning function to programs/implementation measures, which most General Plan Elements are required to contain and that are discussed below.

**5. Programs/Implementation Measures** – State law requires certain General Plan Elements to contain programs/implementation measures, which are a coordinated set of specific actions that facilitate achieving the goals and objectives and carrying out the policies. And in the central Land Use Element, the programs or measures further supplement the previously-noted Land Use Plan/Map in Element implementation. Like the organization of policies in most General Plan chapters, the programs/implementation measures are listed under particular topical areas. Furthermore, as is the case with all goals, objectives, and policies, the City maintains a degree of generality and flexibility in fulfilling the programs/measures to most effectively and appropriately respond to changing and unforeseen physical, environmental, social, and economic conditions.

**6. Relation To and Consistency With Other General Plan Elements** – Every Element of the General Plan describes how the Element relates to and is consistent with all other chapters of the document. Each Element must be consistent with all other chapters in terms of everything from supporting data and information to policy orientation to implementation. The State requires inter-Element consistency as an essential ingredient for General Plan adequacy. Each such section of the Elements of the Covina General Plan mentions that the City has met this consistency requirement by updating all Elements simultaneously, with one common data and information base and with the same community input, thus ensuring that goals, objectives, policies, plans, and programs/implementation measures have been prepared based on the same foundation and according to identical or similar methodology.

**7. Citizen Participation in Element Formation** – In updating a general plan, State law requires the local government to provide ample opportunities for public participation to best ensure that the document reflects community goals and sentiments. As described in this other latter section of each Covina General Plan Element, the City of Covina has recognized the importance of community input in revising the General Plan document through achieving interaction among City staff, the Planning Commission, the City Council, and Covina residents, property owners, business persons, and local groups. Specifically, the views and desires of the community were ascertained by City staff by distributing questionnaires, conducting public forums, preparing television commercials, distributing flyers at City Hall and around the community, and preparing press releases and articles in various newspapers and City publications. In addition, City personnel received numerous comments from the public at City Hall in the course of site-specific project reviews, met with what was called the General Plan Update Committee, which was comprised of City Council and Planning Commission members, and came together with various City advisory bodies. The public comments ascertained from these and other measures were carefully studied by City staff and incorporated into the body of data and information that was used in identifying certain issues and in subsequently developing goals, objectives, policies, plans, and programs/implementation measures. Copies of the Draft Covina General Plan as well as the accompanying Environmental Impact Report (EIR) had been distributed to interested individuals and organizations and to required agencies. Moreover, as previously stated, copies were made available for public review at the Covina Public Library and at the Community Development Department, Planning

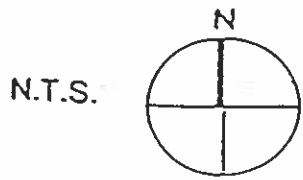
Division at Covina City Hall. And additional public involvement has been encouraged through the Planning Commission and City Council public hearing processes.

**8. Monitoring Element Implementation** – Once the General Plan is adopted, the City must implement and monitor its application over time. The last section of each Element of the Covina General Plan discusses this process as required by State law and is important to ensure that the Element is implemented as proposed or that any identified problems with respect to policies, programs/implementation measures, or other matters are adequately handled. Here, the City states its intention to fulfill the monitoring obligation by following the General Plan in making decisions and preparing a mandatory annual report for the Planning Commission and the City Council on the status of the General Plan.



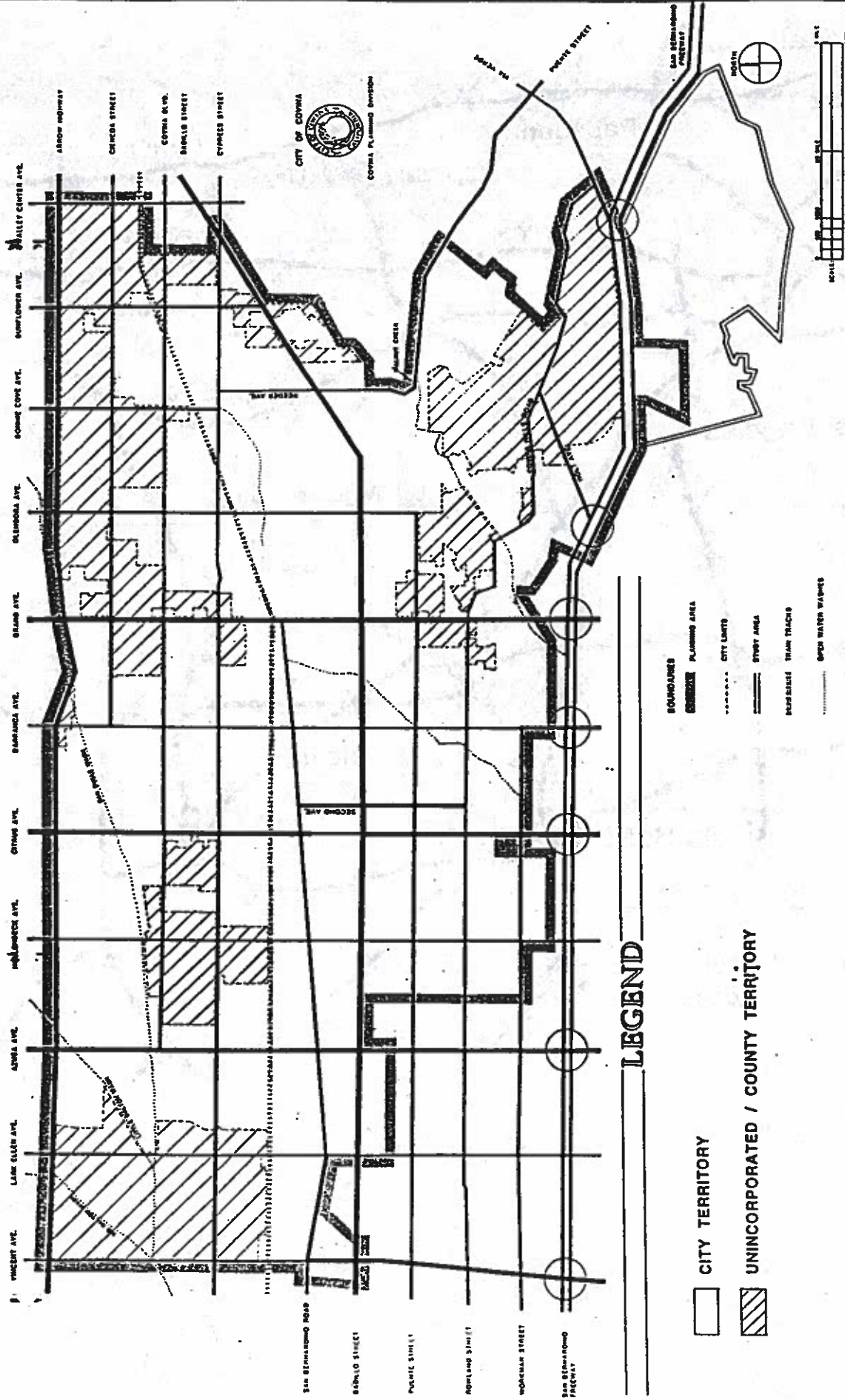


COVINA REGIONAL LOCATION



# COVINA GENERAL PLAN

# DEMARICATION OF CITY AND UNINCORPORATED TERRITORIES



- LEGEND**
- CITY TERRITORY
  - ▨ UNINCORPORATED / COUNTY TERRITORY
  - BOUNDARIES
  - ▨ PLANNING AREA
  - ..... CITY LIMITS
  - STREY AREA
  - SUBURBAN TRAM TRACKS
  - ..... OPEN WATER WARDENS