City of Downey

October 5, 2015

California Department of Housing and Community Development
Division of Housing Policy Development
Cathy Creswell, Deputy Director
P.O. Box 952053
Sacramento, CA 94252-2053

**SUBJECT: 2014 GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

Dear Ms. Creswell:

Enclosed is a copy of the City of Downey's General Plan Annual Progress Report. The 2014 General Plan Annual Progress Report has been prepared in compliance with California Government Code Section 65400(a)(2), which mandates that the Planning Commission submit to the City Council, State Office of Planning and Research, and the Department of Housing and Community Development the status of the General Plan and the progress the City has made on implementing the goals and policies of the General Plan.

The report not only summarizes the City's progress with regards to implementation of the goals, policies and programs of Vision 2025, the City's General Plan; but also summarizes the activities of the Planning Commission and the Community Development Department from January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at the Planning Division (562) 904-7060 or via email at knguyen@downeyca.org.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Nguyen
Assistant Planner

*Attachment:* 2014 General Plan Annual Progress Report

# Community Development Department

# 2014 General Plan Annual Report

City of Downey

11111 Brookshire Avenue, Downey, CA

# City of Downey

11111 Brookshire Avenue

Downey, CA 90241

## City Council

(at the time of adoption)

**Luis H. Marquez, Mayor**
District 1

**Alex Saab, Mayor Pro-Tem**
District 5

**Sean Ashton**
District 2

**Roger C. Brossmer**
District 3

**Fernando Vasquez**
District 4

## Planning Commission

(at the time of adoption)

**Hector Lujan, Chairperson**
District 1

**Matias Flores, Vice-Chairperson**
District 4

**Patrick Owens**
District 2

**Louis Morales**
District 3

**Jim Rodriguez**
District 5

# City Staff

## City Administration

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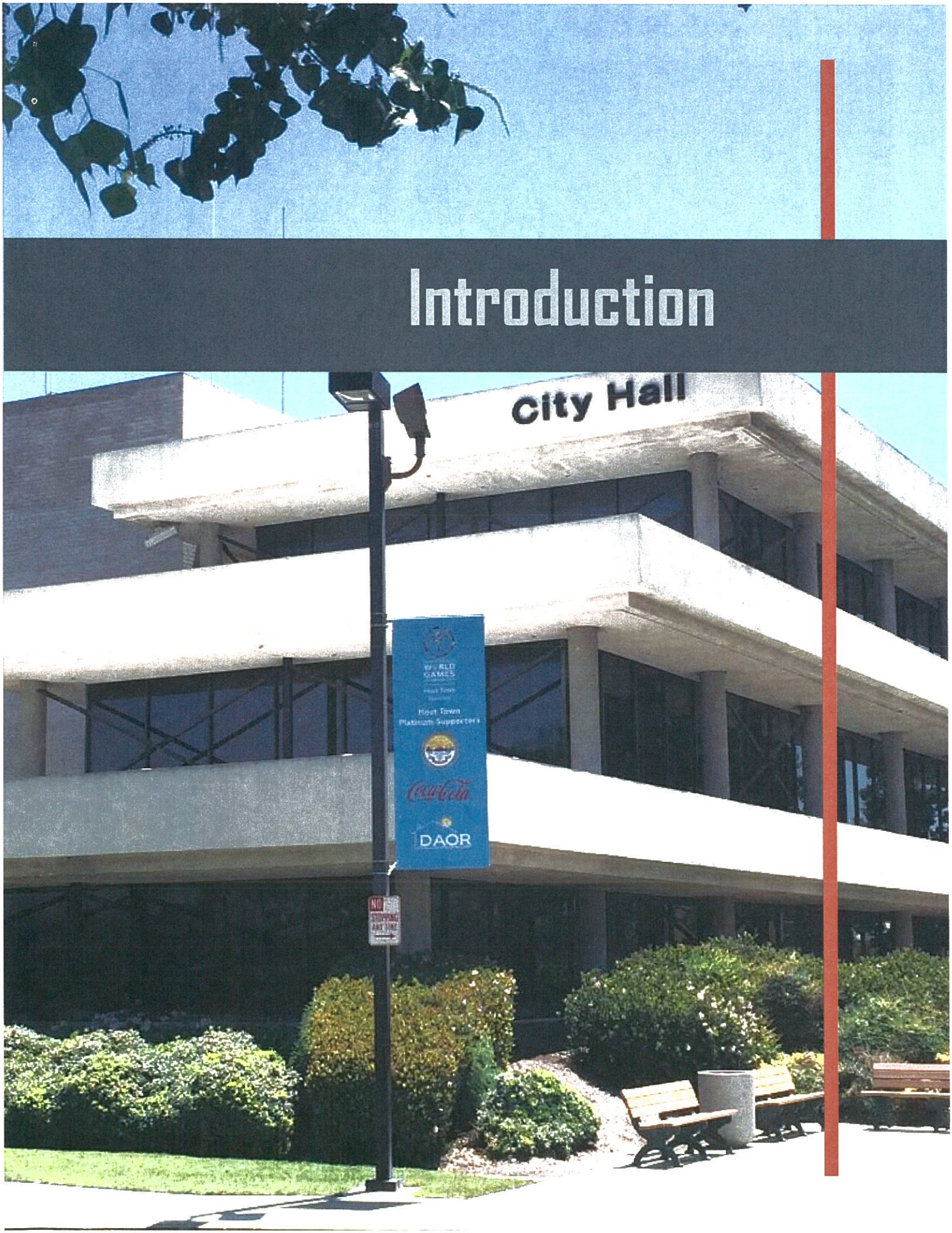
# Introduction



# Introduction

## Executive Summary

The General Plan Annual Progress Report summarizes the City of Downey's progress towards implementing the goals, policies and programs of Vision 2025, the City's General Plan. It covers the period from January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014. The report also reviews the activities of the Community Development Department including the Planning, Building and Safety, Economic Development, Code Enforcement, and Housing divisions.

This report is prepared 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.

# Background Information

Downey is 12.8 square miles in area. 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 premier city in the southeast area of Los Angeles County. Downey is one of the larger suburban cities in the region with a population of 113,242 residents (Source: quickfacts.census.gov).

The issues addressed by the General Plan Vision 2025 will work towards achieving this vision by adhering to the values providing excellent housing, education, employment, and recreation opportunities plus the mission of providing a safe, convenient, and attractive community for those that live, work, or visit Downey.

## Acceptance Date

The 2014 General Plan Annual Progress Report was reviewed by the Planning Commission on August 5, 2015, and accepted by the City Council on August 11, 2015.

# Community Development

## Department Updates

# Community Development

## Department Updates

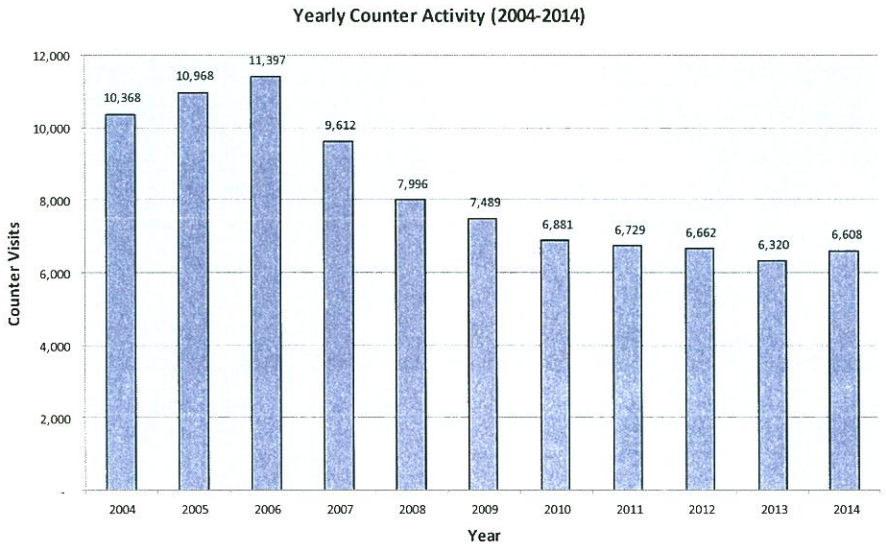
## Planning Division

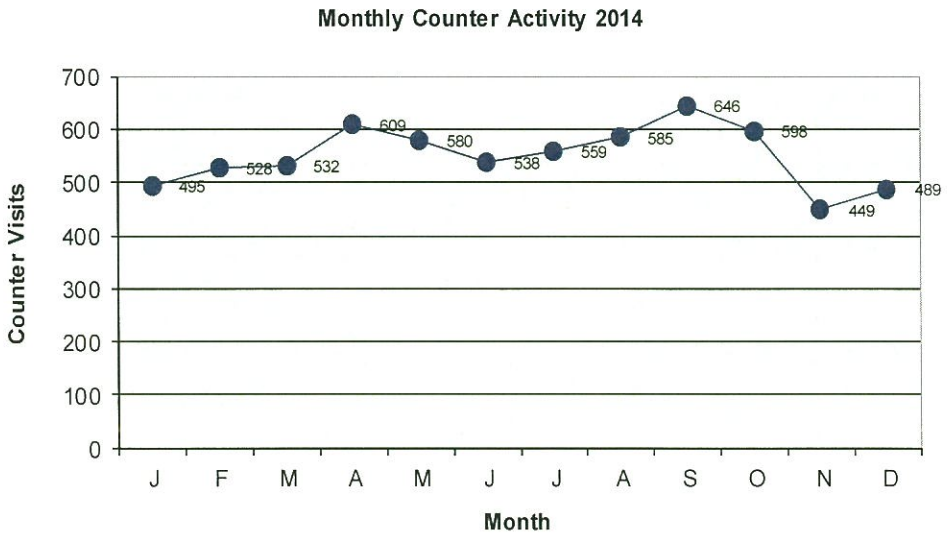
This section outlines the activities of the Planning Division from January 2014, through December 2014. The day-to-day planning activities include:

- Administrating the City's Zoning Ordinance (Development Code)
- Answering public inquiries on the telephone and over the public counter
- Processing planning entitlements for the Planning Commission
- Reviewing and approving business license applications for zoning compliance
- Preparing reports for the City Council
- Reviewing development plans for compliance with City standards (Plan Checks)

## 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. In 2014, the total counter visits were 6,608. Note that after a seven year trend of decline, we saw an increase of counter visits over last year.




Historically, counter activity has been greater during the spring and summer, while lower in the winter. However, in 2014, September was the busiest month in counter activity with 646 visits.

## Planning Applications

Planning applications in 2014, including Administrative, Planning Commission, and legislative items to the City Council, totaled 260. Records indicate that submittal of Planning applications decreased slightly in 2014 from the previous years with only 21 conditional use permits, 4 variances, and 58 parking lot sale and fireworks permits.

In addition to the above applications, Planning staff reviewed business licenses and conducted plan check review to ensure the proposed business, improvement and new construction are in compliance to Zoning Code.

| Cases by Type (2014) | |
|---|---|
| Conditional Use Permits (CUP) | 21 |
| Minor Conditional Use Permits | 1 |
| Special Events (SE) | 13 |
| Site Plan Reviews (SPR) | 7 |
| Zone Variances (VAR) | 4 |
| Lot Line Adjustments (LLA)/Lot Merger | 6 |
| Planned Sign Programs (SIGN) | 3 |
| Certificate of Compliance | 1 |
| Tentative/Final Maps | 7 |
| Code Amendments (CA) | 2 |
| Minor Site Plan Reviews | 3 |
| General Plan Amendments | 1 |
| Minor Modifications | 10 |
| Permanent Sign Permits | 39 |
| Temporary Signs/Banners | 62 |
| Pumpkin Patch & Christmas Tree Lots | 10 |
| Parking Lot/Sidewalk Sales & Fireworks | 58 |
| Second Unit Development (Residential) | 2 |
| Miscellaneous Action & RV Parking | 12 |
| **TOTAL** | **260** |

## Planning Commission

The planning commission conducts public hearings on most entitlements, including new buildings, conditionally permitted uses, variances, etc. On legislative items such as General Plan Amendments (GPA), Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, and Zoning Changes, the Planning Commission acts as an advisory body to the city council. In 2014, the Planning Commission conducted 17 meetings, during which they considered 41 items.

Below is a list of some of the major projects that were approved by the City:

- Champion Dodge Automobile Dealership
- Habit Burger Restaurant
- Penske Toyota Automobile Dealership
- Uptown Vogue Shoes Store
- Dunkin Donuts Restaurant

## Street Faire

Community Development staff participated in the annual Street Faire on Saturday, May 3, 2014. Planning, Building and Safety, Housing, Code Enforcement and Economic Development staff members were on hand to provide information on City programs, policies and answer general questions in regards to development in the City.

# Economic Development Division

The Economic Development Division oversees and responsible for the growing of local economy in Downey. More importantly, the Division works with City staff, business entrepreneurs, developers, contractors, and the Downey Chamber of Commerce, to attract and retain quality development projects in Downey. In 2014, the Economic Development Division staff facilitated several key projects in Downey:

## Tools for Business

A new on-line tools for business was created to assist local businesses and entrepreneurs. This new tool allows businesses to conveniently access local, state and federal resources, all under one location. Through this new site, businesses can also access information regarding hiring, training, sustainability, financing, security, and government regulation issues. The Tools for Business site can be accessed at http://downey.toolsforbusiness.info

## Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with Downey Art Vibe

Together with City Staff, Stay Gallery, which is operated by the Downey Art Vibe, has crafted a strategic marketing and creative public relations services for Downey. Under the direction of the City, the Downey Art Vibe implemented a plan that includes promoting, marketing and executing the City's marketing strategy while creating new public events that attract a diverse population and promote pedestrian activity within the Downtown Downey District.

## Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with New City America, Inc.

With the rapid growth of Downtown Downey, staff found an increase in the demand for certain services in the area, including street sweeping, steam cleaning, security, public art. It is important that alternative sources be studied to provide continued funding for special services the downtown requires to maintain its vitality.

## Operating Covenant Agreement for Benihana Restaurant

Staff has successfully negotiated with Benihana to locate its restaurant within the Promenade shopping center. The company was founded in 1964 in New York City, Benihana is a leading Asian-themed restaurant chain that started as a family business and pioneered the communal dining concept. Opening a Benihana restaurant in the Promenade at Downey not only provide jobs and stimulate economic growth, but also enhance the entire Promenade development.

# Housing Division

The Housing Division is responsible in providing programs and services designed to improve Downey neighborhoods and the community supply's of affordable housing for all residents. Using multiple funding sources, the division offers a variety of improvement programs that residents can use to improve their homes.

Some of the programs are included but not limited to grants and loans to single and multi-family residences for home improvements. In addition, the division works with the Los Angeles County Section 8 program to provide rental assistance to qualified households.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides the City of Downey (City) with its annual entitlement of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnership (HOME) grants. These two federal grants are available to the City for a variety of community development activities including affordable housing activities, neighborhood improvement programs, economic development strategies, improvement of public facilities, and support for needed public services. The CDBG and HOME grants can be used for a wide range of eligible activities, which primarily benefit low- and moderate-income households.

The Housing Division has completed updating its Consolidated Plan ("ConPlan") and prepared an Annual Action Plan (Action Plan). Additionally, per HUD requirement every three years, the Housing Staff conducted and prepared a new Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice ("A.I.") Report to evaluate access to equal housing opportunities.

The 5-Year Consolidated Plan as described above is a comprehensive report which serves as a planning guide for the expenditure of the federal grants over the next five -year period. The ConPlan consists of several HUD required sections, including an assessment of the City's needs for housing and supportive services for low- and moderate-income residents. The ConPlan includes a 5-year strategic plan with established goals and realistic objectives, and a one-year expenditure plan that outlines the specific projects and activities for the available resources.

During fiscal year 2014-15, the Housing Division offered a Home Improvement Rebate and Grant incentive which encouraged a higher leveraging of public funds with private investment. The Rebate Program was offered to households who fell within the 80 percent of the Annual Median Income ("AMI") as defined by HUD.
The Grant Program was offered to households who fell within the 50 percent AMI as defined by HUD. Both incentive programs were available to owner-occupied single family residential properties with the goal of processing between 20 and 30 projects during the fiscal year. In 2014, The Housing Division completed nineteen home improvement projects

During the reporting period, the Housing Division co-hosted two (2) Certificate Management Training workshops with the Fair Housing Foundation. The training was available to landlords, managers, property owners, attorneys, realtors, and management companies at Downey's City Library in the Cormack room. The training was a certificate program that covered general guidelines, lead disclosure, rental process guidelines, people with disabilities, modifications and accommodations, rules for tenants with minor children, occupancy standards, advertising guidelines, prohibited practices, and sexual harassment and hate crimes. The workshops were ended with a Fair Housing Training Exam.

## Code Enforcement Division

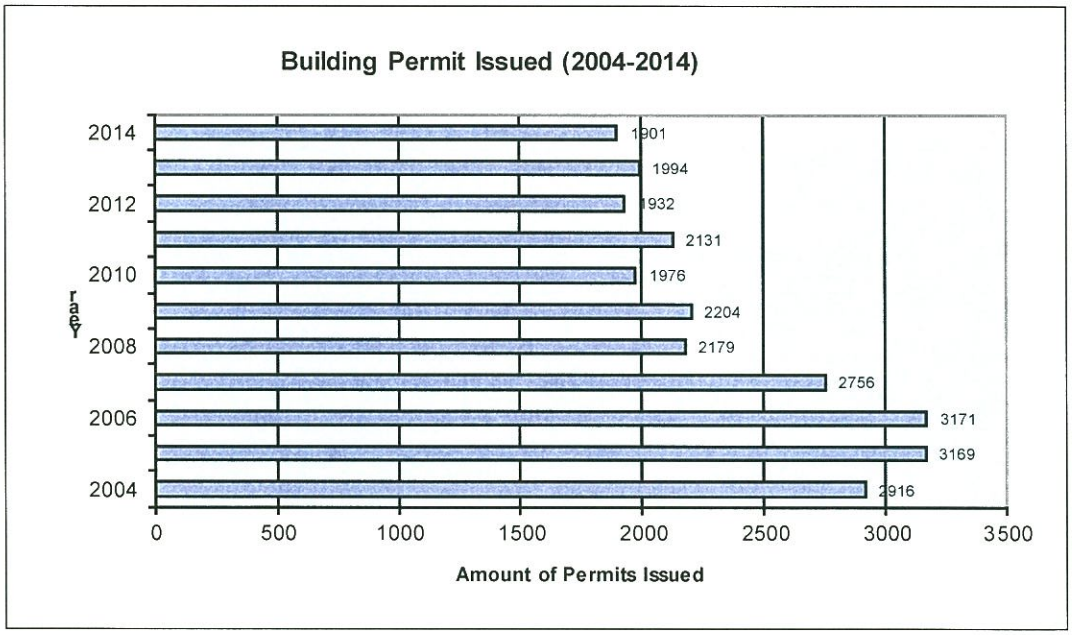
The Code Enforcement Division is responsible for enforcing the Downey Municipal codes that relate to residential and business property maintenance standards, including business licensing. Code Enforcement also enforces building, health and safety standards related to environmental protection and neighborhood preservation. The Division works in close cooperation with all City departments and the City Prosecutor to educate the public and gain the willing compliance of violators.

Code Enforcement activity for the year of 2014 involved approximately 1,331 cases for various property violations (i.e. commercial, residential, public street, park and recreational). Similar to 2013, July had the highest number of code violation activities with 161 cases. In addition to conduct property violation inspections, Code Enforcement Officers conducted inspections on yard sale permits and were proactive in issuing administrative and parking citations.

# Building and Safety Division

The Building and Safety Division is responsible for a variety of tasks that include issuing permits, processing plan check submittals, and inspections. The Building and Safety Division reviews all plans and permits for compliance with the 2013 California Building Code. New building construction and a majority of tenant improvements require plan check review for Zoning and Building Code compliance.

The total number of building applications accepted and permits issued by the Building and Safety Division in 2014 was 1,901. These applications include all construction related projects and installation of mechanical and utility equipment. There were a total of seven new single-family dwellings constructed in 2014. In addition, the Building & Safety Inspectors have conducted 9,894 inspections.



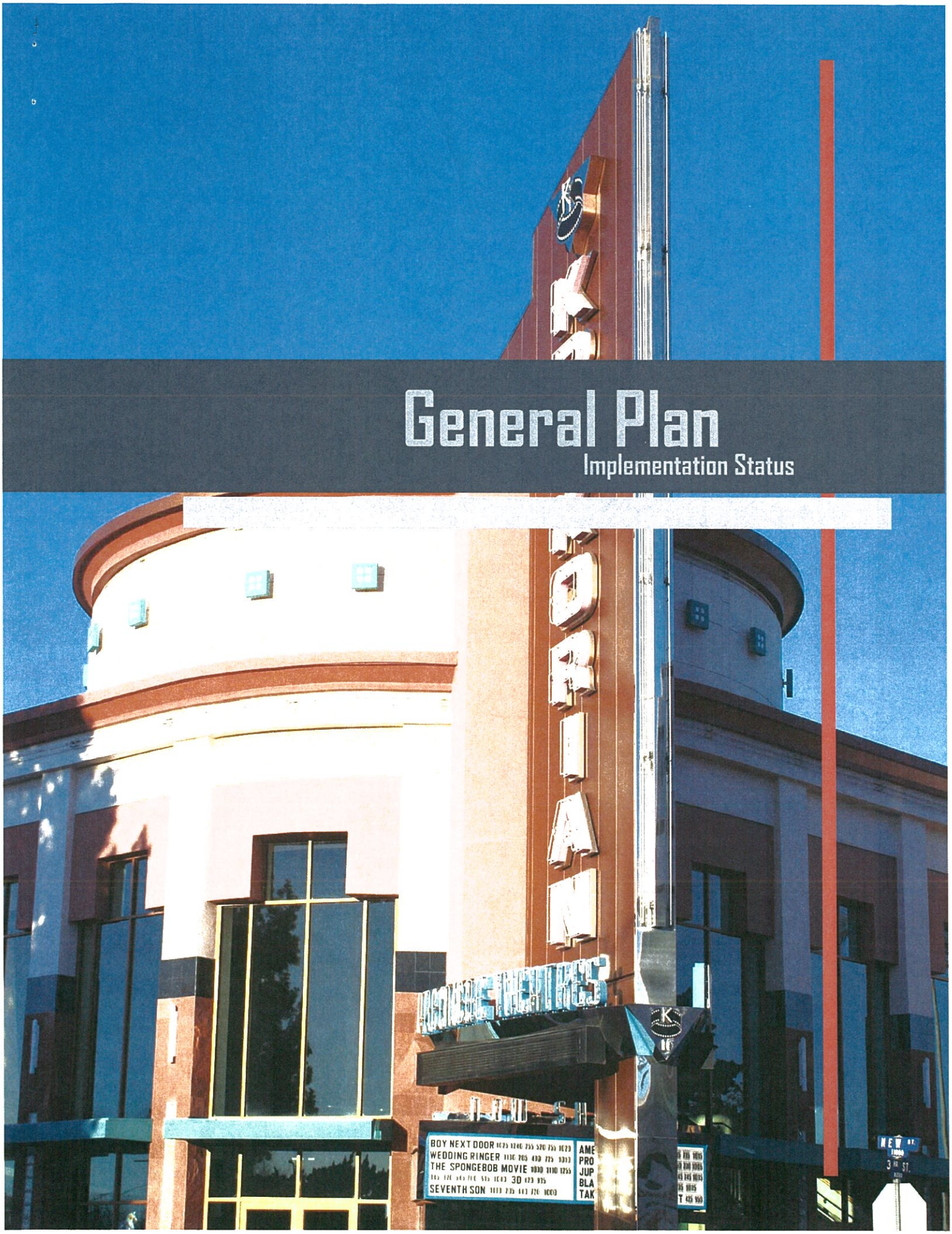

In addition, the Building and Safety Inspectors conducted 380 business license inspections for commercial and industrial businesses. Below is a list of some of the major projects that were inspected in 2014:

- The Promenade at Downey*
- 17-unit condominium project at 9100-9126 Florence Avenue
- 9-unit townhouse project at 7634 Stewart & Gray Road
- Habit Burger Grill Restaurant at 8619 Firestone Boulevard
- Penske Toyota façade renovation at 9136 Firestone Boulevard*
- Uptown Vogue façade renovation at 8315 Firestone Boulevard

* Projects still under construction

# General Plan

## Implementation Status



# General Plan

## Implementation Status

This section outlines the progress the City has made from January 2014, through December 2014, to implement the goals and policies of the General Plan.

- **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.).** Over the past several years, the City has continued to expand the traffic signal control system incrementally. Initially, the Traffic Management Center (TMC) was implemented at City Hall and the first fiber-optic traffic signal communications systems were installed along the Lakewood Boulevard and Firestone Boulevard corridors. Additional systems have since been implemented in the field and the City is currently in the process of upgrading the system software and other elements of the TMC to maintain pace with technologies and replace obsolete hardware and software.

- **Encourage appropriate turn lanes and other operational improvements at major arterial intersections identified as congested (Program 2.1.1.6.).** The City is in the process of implementing operational improvements at several intersections involving traffic signal upgrades, including proposed upgrades at eight (8) intersections along Paramount Boulevard between Lubec Street and Gardendale Street. The City also received funding through the Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) (Cycle 5) to upgrade and implement operational improvements to the existing traffic signals at six (6) additional intersections. In addition, the City received HSIP funding (Cycle 6) to upgrade and implement operational improvements to the existing traffic signals at three additional intersections. The proposed traffic signal upgrades at these nine (9) intersections are currently in the design phase.

- **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.).** The Public Works Department collects developer fees on a case-by-case basis by the Public Works Department through the development plan review process. Over the last eight (8) years, approximately $435,000 has been collected. In addition, the City participated in a pilot study sponsored by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) involving a proposed countywide developer fee which, if established, would provide the mechanism for collecting fees from developers in order to mitigate their traffic impacts on a countywide basis.

- **Ensure the mitigation of off-site traffic impacts by development projects to the maximum extent feasible, including the installation or upgrade of traffic signals at intersections and/or contribution of its fair-share towards mitigating impacts (Program 2.1.2.2.).** The Public Works Department continues to monitor land development projects on a case-by-case basis for the potential traffic generation. If trip generation thresholds in accordance with the LA County Congestion Management Program of 50 vehicle trips during either AM or PM peak hour are exceeded, a traffic impact analysis study is required which will determine mitigation measures necessary to offset the impacts created by the development or the amount of development fee to be collected. For example, traffic studies were recently completed for the proposed retail developments at the southeast and southwest corners of Lakewood Boulevard and Gallatin Road and a proposed residential development on the east side of Paramount Boulevard between Fifth Street and Seventh Street.

- **Promote site designs, street patterns, and street signalization that discourage the use of local streets as through routes (Program 2.1.2.4.).** The intersection improvement projects included under Programs 2.1.1.1 and 2.1.1.6 are intended to increase capacity at these intersections in order to encourage through traffic on arterial streets and minimize intrusion through residential neighborhoods. In addition, the Lakewood Boulevard Improvement Project Phase 3C will involve the widening of the facility to provide three (3) through lanes in each direction between Florence Avenue and Gallatin Road in order to increase the capacity and mobility along this roadway to minimize intrusion through residential neighborhoods.

**Truck Traffic**

- **Co-ordinate with local, regional, and state agencies involved in mitigating truck traffic impacts in the region (Program 2.3.1.2.).** In 2014, the Public Works Department issued 15 overload permits to ensure that the correct haul routes are utilized through the City and that proper arrangements have been made in advance. In addition, the City partnered with the City of Pico Rivera for the implementation of truck circulation improvements at the Lakewood Boulevard/ Rosemead Boulevard at Telegraph Road intersections. Truck circulation improvements have been made to major intersections, including the two intersections referenced in Programs 2.1.1.1 and 2.1.1.6.

- **Widen street right-of-way to accommodate truck turning movements (Program 2.3.1.3.).** The reconstruction of the curb returns at each of the four corners of the two intersections (referenced in Programs 2.1.1.1 and 2.1.1.6) was completed to provide larger turn radii (40'-50') in order to accommodate truck turning movements at the two intersections. In addition, the completion of the Lakewood Boulevard Improvement Project Phases 3B and 3D involved similar improvements at the Florence Avenue and Telegraph Road intersections along Lakewood Boulevard in order to facilitate truck turns at these intersections.

- **Discourage truck parking on public streets (Program 2.3.2.1.).** Municipal Code Section 3185(b) prohibits parking of commercial vehicles exceeding 6,000 lbs. manufacturer's unladed weight or 84 inches in height or width on all public streets with the exception of those streets located within areas zoned industrial, vehicles involved with the servicing of the adjacent property or for a period not to exceed eight (8) hours if the vehicle has been involved in an accident or is disabled. The Traffic Division and Code Enforcement Division continues to implement parking prohibitions of large commercial vehicles on public streets where transient parking of these vehicles has been observed.

- **Maintain landscape islands on and/or adjacent to truck routes with mature specimen fully grown landscape screens to minimize noise, dust, and visual impacts (Program 2.3.2.2.).** New landscaped median islands and irrigation have been constructed along Firestone Boulevard (West) between Old River School Road and Paramount Boulevard. Additional landscaped median islands were installed along Paramount Boulevard, between Florence Avenue and Telegraph Road. In addition, construction was completed for the installation of masonry walls along the median islands adjacent to the frontage roads along this portion of Lakewood Boulevard in order to replace the large shrubbery, which currently screens the adjacent residential neighborhood from noise, dust and visual impacts created by the busy Lakewood Boulevard corridor.

- **Ensure that land uses generating high amounts of truck traffic provide compensation to the City for projected pavement wear of public streets (Program 2.3.2.4.).** The City received up to $5 million annually from the Capital Improvement Program for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the City's arterial, collector, and local streets. In addition, developers are assessed fees on a case-by-case, pro rata share basis towards pavement rehabilitation of arterial streets designated as truck routes.

## Regional Traffic

- **Coordinate with CalTrans, MTA, SCAG, Gateway Cities COG and other agencies to promote multi-modal improvement strategies to improve the regional transportation network (Program 2.4.1.1).** The Public Works Department continues to work with Caltrans, Metro, SCAG and Gateway Cities COG through discretionary funding processes and other programs such as the Congestion Management Program, Highway Performance Monitoring Survey (HPMS) on an ongoing basis to promote multi-modal improvement strategies to improve the regional transportation network.

  In addition, staff continued to work with the I-5 Joint Powers Authority (JPA) on the I-5 Widening Project and with the Gateway Cities COG on the I-710 Freeway, I-605/I-405/SR91 Corridors and the I-605 Freeway Congestion Hot Spots Studies. The Gateway Cities COG has also initiated the preparation of a comprehensive transportation study of the Gateway Cities sub-region. This study will evaluate all modes of transportation throughout the sub-region, inclusive of transit and non-motorized transportation.

- **Comply with provisions of the Congestion Management Plan, adopted by Los Angeles County (Program 2.4.1.4).** The City complies with the L.A. County Congestion Management Plan (CMP) annually through the preparation of the Local Implementation Report (Community Development Department) and Biennial Highway Monitoring (Public Works Department), as required by statute. In addition, the City holds land developers accountable for their traffic impacts by requiring traffic impact analyses (TIA) to be completed in accordance with L.A. County CMP TIA guidelines. Furthermore, as mentioned under Program 2.1.2.1, the City participated previously in a pilot study for a countywide developer fee program proposed by Metro.

### 3. MORTGAGE CREDIT CERTIFICATE (PROGRAM 8)

Objective: Continue Participation and distribute fliers and advertise program availability.

Time Frame: Housing Element 2014-2021.

Status: During calendar year 2014-15, the City participated in the Community Development Commission of the Los Angeles County's Mortgage Credit Certificate ("MCC") Program. The Housing Division advertised the MCC Program by distributing fliers and publishing it on the City's website.

### 4. SECTION 8 RENTAL ASSISTANCE (PROGRAM 9)

Objective: Continue to provide assistance to households through continued participation in the Los Angeles County Section 8 program and encourage rental property owners to register their units with the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACOLA). The Housing Division will continue to monitor the number of residents accessing the program and units available for rent.

Time Frame: Housing Element 2014-2021.

Status: During calendar year 2014-15, the City participated in the Section 8 program offered by HACOLA to provide rental assistance to low-income households; just over 630 Section 8 vouchers were issued to Downey residents.

### 5. FAIR HOUSING (PROGRAM 21)

Objective: Continue to assist households through the Fair Housing Foundation ("FHF") and continue to refer fair housing complaints to the FHF.

Time Frame: Housing Element 2014-2021.

Status: During calendar year 2014-15, more than 250 Downey residents were assisted by the FHF.

## 6. PRIORITIZE HOUSING PROGRAM ACTIVITIES (PROGRAM 15)

Objective: Identify housing needs and prioritize housing program activities to meet those needs through five (5) year updates to the City's Consolidated Plan.

Time Frame: Housing Element 2014-2021.

Status: In 2014, the City Council approved the new 5-Year Consolidated Plan which covers the time period between 2015 through 2020.

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## Stormwater Quality

- **Provide treatment of runoff generated by properties on-site before release into the storm drain system (Program 4.3.1.1.).** During 2014, 24 development and redevelopment projects were approved for construction with infiltration systems to capture and store runoff to reduce pollutant transport and augment local water levels beneath the ground. As public, commercial and residential projects are redeveloped, runoff control measures are implemented in the form of infiltration resulting in a steady improvement in water quality and local water levels. In addition, all redevelopment projects in Downey must adhere to the "Low Impact Development" ordinance that was adopted by the City Council in April 2014, related storm water and urban runoff pollution and conveyance controls.

- **Promote effective street cleaning (Program 4.3.1.3.).** Publically owned streets in the City of Downey are continued to vacuum swept at least weekly by Nationwide Environmental Services. These streets are posted with "No Parking" signs during the appointed period and Parking Enforcement Officers accompany the sweeper vehicle. Residents utilizing a Street Sweeping Parking Permit are responsible for maintaining the street area that their vehicle prevents from being cleaned. The sweeper truck also cleans City parking lots weekly.

- **Encourage Proper storage and handling of construction materials to avoid the contact of pollutants with storm water runoff during construction (Program 4.3.1.4.).** Public Works, Code Enforcement, and Building and Safety staff shares responsibility for implementing this program. Public Works focuses on construction projects in the public right of way, preparation and review of erosion control plans by developers, compliance by large state permitted construction sites and responding to complaints of materials in the municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4), which includes streets, alleys and drains. Building and Safety is primarily responsible for on-site or private property conditions, while Code Enforcement responds to resident complaints and provides more aggressive enforcement capabilities to supplement other staff efforts.

## Air Quality

- **Support regional and sub-regional efforts in strategically managing goods movements in order to reduce emissions from truck traffic (Program 4.5.1.2.) and 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.).** The Public Works Department and City Manager's office continue to coordinate with various regional agencies (i.e., Caltrans, Gateway Cities COG, I-5 JPA, etc.) in the planning and implementation process for the widening of the I-710 and I-5 Freeways. Both projects have provided improved mobility for trucks and a reduction in truck-related emissions.

- **Encourage alternative modes of travel, such as walking and cycling, to vehicle use and alternative modes of employment, such as telecommuting and home-based businesses, to reduce emissions associated with vehicle use (Program 4.5.1.4.).** As mentioned during last year report, the City hopes to make Downey more bike friendly and to educate drivers and riders alike on the proper rules of the road. As part of the public outreach effort, in 2014, the City worked with the Fehr & Peers Team to assist with the preparation of the Bicycle Master Plan. The Study Team also held two special events and three community work shop throughout the City to ensure input was obtained from all sectors of the community. The public outreach effort kicked-off with a special event at the Tour de Downey on June 14th, and continued with three additional community workshops held to obtain feedback on the draft and final Bicycle Master Plan. Community input received at these events and workshops was used to prepare the Plan that will ultimately be considered by City Council.

  Also, the City continues to offer "Thumbs Up Commuting Program", which pro vides incentives for those who use alternate modes of travel to get to work.

- **Promote the use of alternative fuel vehicles, including clean diesel, compressed natural gas, hydrogen, that result in reduced emissions, including in instances involving City operations (Program 4.5.1.5.).** With the growing number of electric and hybrid vehicles, many automobile dealerships such as Champion Fiat and Nissan have been offering charging stations to its customers for free of charge. In 2014, the Building & Safety Division issued permits for the installation of a charging station located at the Stonewood Shopping Center.

## Chapter 1 - Land Use Element

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

**Updates:**

- **Continue the revitalization of commercial and industrial corridors (Program 9.1.1.5.).** The additions of the new restaurants and retail stores (Chick-fill-A, Habit Burger Grill, Dunkin' Donuts, Uptown Vogue) along Firestone Boulevard and Lakewood Boulevard at Gallatin Road revitalized commercial activities in the Firestone and Lakewood corridors. In addition, the Promenade at Downey commercial project will be a major addition that revitalizes the area north of Steve Horn Way, between Lakewood Boulevard and Bellflower Boulevard.

- **Promote Downtown Downey as a destination draw for entertainment and dining uses (Program 1.1.5.2.).** Attraction of new restaurants will promote Downtown Downey as a destination. Additionally, the Annual Food Festival on Downey Avenue adds a lively atmosphere to the Downtown area.

- **Convert paper-based information to digital-based formats to facilitate integration into interdepartmental information networks (Program 9.4.2.4.)** The Community Development Department continues to scan all permits and approved entitlements into Laserfiche digital system formats. The technology allows various City Departments (City Clerk, Finance, Public Works Engineering, Fire and Community Development) easy access to archived City documents.

- **Expand the use of the city internet web site for public information (Program 9.4.2.5.)** The Community Development Department continues to monitor and update the Department's webpage to provide new and important documents to the public. Also, the Department continues to provide digital of Planning Commission minutes, agendas, and staff reports on the City webpage (www.downeyca.org). This allows public access to information on various projects in the City. A link to the Department's documents can be found on the Community Department's webpage.

# 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 continue, cities have the challenge of improving the circulation system to deal with increased demands. Population and economic growth also impact the infrastructure needed to provide utilities and other services for those who live, work, and visit Downey.

**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.).**

  Constructed began on Bellflower Boulevard at Imperial Highway Intersection Improvement Project. The project involved widening each of the four approaches of the intersection; construct additional left-turn lanes in the southbound and northbound directions; and construct exclusive right-turn lanes in the eastbound, southbound and northbound directions. These improvements will maintain an acceptable level-of-service at this intersection during peak hours into the future.

  Construction continued on Paramount Boulevard at Firestone Boulevard Intersection Improvement Project. It involved the widening of the east and west approaches of the intersection to facilitate construction of additional left-turn lanes in each of the four directions and an exclusive right-turn lane and additional through lane in the eastbound direction in order to maintain an acceptable level-of-service at this intersection into the future.

  Phases 3B and 3C of the Lakewood Boulevard Improvements Project extended the previously-completed phases of the Lakewood Boulevard Improvements Project northerly from Florence Avenue to Gallatin Road (Phase 3B) and from Gallatin Road to Telegraph Road (Phase 3C). This project involves the widening of Lakewood Boulevard to provide three lanes in each direction.

  The Lakewood Boulevard/ Rosemead Boulevard at Telegraph Road Intersection Improvement Project was completed involving the widening of the east, west, and south approaches of the intersection, to conduct additional left-turn lanes in the eastbound, westbound, and northbound directions and an exclusive right-turn lane in the eastbound direction.

## 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.)** The Public Works Department continues to maintain and update the City's traffic signal communication system on all major and primary arterials (i.e., Lakewood Boulevard, Firestone Boulevard, Paramount Boulevard, and Florence Avenue). The projects will integrate with water well sites, as they recently have with the Public Works Maintenance and Utilities Yards, to enhance communications with City Hall in terms of speed, capacity, and reliability. In addition, the Community Development Department processed seven conditional use permit applications for the modification and installation of wireless facilities throughout the City. The projects have enhanced the communication systems and provided better services for people in the area.

- **Develop master plans to identify needs, priorities, and cost for infrastructure maintenance and upgrades (Program 2.7.2.2).** The Public Works Department continues to update its Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) in the fall 2015, to reflect current pavement conditions on the City's arterial, collector and local streets to comply with funding requirements and to provide the latest information in terms of pavement maintenance and rehabilitation priorities.

- **Establish an impact recovery fee program so that new developments and expansions of existing developments share the cost of providing infrastructure maintenance and upgrades necessary for the development (Program 2.7.2.6).** As mentioned under Program 2.1.2.1, the City recently participated in a pilot study for a countywide developer fee program proposed by Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro).

# Chapter 3 - Housing Element

The Housing Division administers a variety of community development activities including affordable housing activities, neighborhood improvement programs, economic development strategies, improvement of public facilities, and support for needed public services.

According to the 2014-2021 Housing Element, Assembly Bill 1233 requires City of Downey to identify available sites to accommodate Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) from the previous planning period (2008-2014) for a total of 1,201 housing units. This includes low income, low, moderate, and above moderate income. However, by the end of 2014, only 190 units were approved and/or developed.

The following pertains to Chapter 2 of the Housing Element goals administered by the Housing Division:

**1. HOUSING REBATE & GRANT PROGRAM (PROGRAM 2)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Objective: | Address property, structural, and energy/water conservation improvements for low-income homeowners in the City. The City anticipates that 10 projects will be assisted annually based on funding availability. |
| Time Frame: | Housing Element 2014-2021. |
| Status: | 19 rehabilitation projects were funded in during fiscal year 2014-15, with a total of approximately $180,000 in improvements allocated to residential properties occupied by low- or moderate-income households. |

**2. MONITOR & PRESERVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING (PROGRAM 3)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Objective: | City staff will maintain a list of affordable units throughout the City including affordability information to ensure landlords are compliant with deed restrictions and to preserve affordable units. The Housing Division will continue to pursue partnership opportunities with non-profits to preserve and expand affordable housing in the City. |
| Time Frame: | Housing Element 2014-2021. |
| Status: | In a partnership with National CORE, a non-profit agency, the development of a 50 unit affordable housing apartment complex was completed in the City's downtown district to expand affordable housing to low- income households during fiscal year 2014-15. |

# Chapter 4 - Conservation Element

The City 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 limited resources, need to be preserved for continued use by existing residents and by future generations.

**Water Supply**

- **Continue providing information to the public promoting the benefits of water conservation (Program 4.1.1.1.).** The Public Works Department continues to provide public education on water use habits and drought tolerant landscaping via the Kid's Day Environmental Fair, Street Fair, and smart gardening workshops; Conservation education and coordination with CBWMD for the dissemination of rebate incentive information to the City's water customers. The Public Works Department has also developed handouts of key water conservation tips and State-mandated restrictions along with a more exhaustive list of conservation ideas which it has included on the City's website along with rebate opportunities.

- **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.).** The City's water rate structure has both a fixed bi-monthly water meter charge based on the size of the meter and a variable bimonthly water usage component based on metered bi-monthly water use. The variable water usage charge makes up a greater portion of each customer's total bi-monthly bill. Therefore, reducing water usage can help conserve water while reducing the amount of money owed on a customer's bill. The Public Works Department also requires developers of multiple unit residential and business complexes to install separate meters for each unit thereby making the tenant of each unit responsible for their own water use. This method of making each tenant/ owner responsible for their own water use has been proven to promote 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.).** The City currently maintains 28 recycled water services/meters for use at City Park and golf course ponds, and for irrigation of landscaping at parks, golf course, and medians/ parkways. The City continues to look for additional opportunities to expand its use of recycled water at City-owned and other sites as recycled water becomes available. Some of the larger City locations where recycled water is currently used include: Downey Cemetery, Independence Park, Rio San Gabriel Park, Wilderness Park, Rio Hondo Golf Course, Crawford Park, and Temple Park, as well as the new Columbia Memorial Space Center and Sports Park.

- **Encourage the use of reclaimed water, or re-use of water on-site, for new and redevelopment projects (Program 4.1.1.4).** The Public Works Department continues to require developers to install recycled water services/piping and meters where recycled water is located in proximity to the development. Additionally, to help promote the use of recycled water, the City sells recycled water to its customers at 85 percent of the potable water rate.

- **Expand the availability of reclaimed water by extending the dual-pipe water system (Program 4.1.1.5.).** The City has taken the lead on the construction of recycled water facilities through several of its recent capital improvement projects and through development requirements allowing for extension of recycled water mains on several major streets over the past years including Lakewood Boulevard and Congressman Steve Horn Way. The most recent expansions were constructed in 2014, and included the extension of a 12-inch recycled water main on Lakewood Boulevard from Florence Avenue to north of Gallatin Road and an 8-inch recycled water main on Firestone Boulevard east of Lakewood Boulevard to allow for use of recycled water for landscape irrigation at City medians/parkways and future developments along this corridor. Additional expansions are currently planned in conjunction with future Lakewood Boulevard as well as at the Downey Promenade development.

**Energy Resources**

- **Provide incentives for people to use renewal energy sources such as solar energy (Program 4.6.1.1.).** With the availability of State and Federal rebates and incentives programs, the City continues to encourage the use of solar panels on residential, commercial, industrial and public facilities. However, the installation of the solar systems on top of residential, commercial and industrial buildings will require Building permits. This helps to ensure the electrical wiring system and their equipment will aesthetically screened from public view.

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# Chapter 5 - Safety Element

Natural and non-natural hazards present a variety of risks to persons who live, work, and visit the City. It's the City's goal to reduce the potential risk of death, injuries, property damage, and the economic and social dislocation resulting from hazards.

**Disaster Response**

- **Maintain an emergency operation plan to provide response to a variety of potential hazards (Program 5.1.2.1.).** In 2014, the Downey Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) and the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) distributed over 500 emergency storage water barrels to community members. The program is aimed at the biggest emergency preparedness problem for most communities, a lack of potable water immediately after an emergency.

  In December 2014, Andrew Stevens was hired as the City of Downey's Emergency Manager. The task of Emergency Manager is to ensure Downey is pre pared to respond to a wide variety of natural, man-made and technological disasters, and resilient enough to recover quickly.

- **Monitor the location, type of facility, and amount of hazardous materials kept at properties (Program 5.2.1.2.).** The Fire Department continues to monitor and inspect all facilities that handle hazardous materials at or above the reportable quantities as set forth in the California Health & Safety Code (§25503.5). Inspections are conducted every other year to ensure compliance with both the Fire and Health & Safety Codes. These inspections frequency exceed the State's requirement for hazardous materials inspection to occur once every three years.

- **Promote public information regarding the types of hazardous materials, which may include common household items, and the proper method of disposal (Program 5.2.1.3.).** Together with the Emergency Manager, the Hazardous Materials Section continues to update its website to provide the up-to-date information on the safe handling and disposal of hazardous materials. The website's Emergency Preparedness section contains information on hazardous material awareness and safety, in addition to educational information on fire safety.

## Hazardous Materials

- **Ensure proper disclosure of amounts of hazardous materials by existing uses and proposed uses, during the business review process (Program 5.2.1.4.).** The Downey Fire Prevention Division continues to conduct inspections during the business license application process. This will ensure all new businesses handling hazardous materials to provide accurate disclosure of the hazardous substances, and the safe handling and storage of the materials. The facilities are then entered into the Fire Department's database, issued an operational permit, and placed on a routine inspection frequency.

- **Ensure that properties involving hazardous materials dispose of waste properly (Program 5.2.2.1).** The Downey Public Works Integrated Waste Coordinator continues to monitor and manage hazardous waste disposal by residential properties. Businesses handling hazardous waste are permitted and inspected by the County of Los Angeles Fire Department Health-Hazardous Materials Division.

- **Promote the convenient "drop-off" collection for the disposal of hazardous waste generated by residential households and other land uses (Program 5.2.2.2).** In 2014, the City facilitated two programs that encourages residents to dispose hazardous waste materials to either the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program or the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Safe Drug Drop-off Program which accepts expired prescription medications and sharps (i.e., needles).

- **Adopt a code amendment to require a conditional use permit for existing and proposed facilities with hazardous materials (Program 5.2.2.3).** Downey Municipal Code continues to require an approval of a conditional use permit application from the Planning Commission for all proposed facilities handling hazardous materials (i.e. drive-in service stations, automobile washing facilities, ambulance storage and automobile/truck repair facilities). In 2014, the Planning Division accepted and possessed a CUP application for the expansion of an existing car wash facility.

## Fire Protection

- **Promote adequate widths on travel lanes along street and alleys to accommodate emergency vehicles (Program 5.3.1.2.).** The Fire Prevention Division personnel, under the direction of the Fire Department Chief, continues to diligently review plans to ensure emergency vehicle access through streets and alleys will be accommodated.

- **Ensure that development projects install fire hydrants, water mains, or otherwise contribute its fair share towards mitigating impacts on the fire flow system (Program 5.3.2.3.).** Requirements for additional fire hydrants are determined through the plan check process. In 2014, eight new fire hydrants were installed at various locations (private and public) throughout the City.

- **Promote the use of fire sprinklers for new, expanded, and remodeled developments (Program 5.3.2.4.).** The Downey Fire Prevention Division continues to require sprinkler systems for new commercial development over 3,600 sq. ft. and tenant improvements of commercial properties, whose permit valuations exceed 50 percent of the value of the building.

- **Ensure access for emergency vehicles through security pedestrian and vehicular gates (Program 5.3.2.6.).** Many apartment complexes and multi-residential projects built prior to the adoption of the Zoning Code in 2008 did not meet this requirement. However, today's Code Section 9710.04 requires that all new multi-residential developments shall provide vehicle access through security gates at not less than 20 feet in width for a two-way driveway and a 40 feet in depth for stacking of two vehicles (measures from the street property line).

## Police Protection

- **Maintain an acceptable response time for police emergency service calls (Program 5.4.1.2.).** The Police Department continues to maintain a swift response time to high priority emergency calls that require immediate assistance to ensure the public's safety.

- **Keep crime rates and property loss rates at the lowest levels feasible (Program 5.4.1.1.).** In an effort to keep crime and property loss rates low, the Police Department increased staffing by hiring three (3) Police Officers. In addition, the Department added one Dispatcher and one Records Specialist.

- **Coordinate with Federal, State, and County agencies to address illegal activities (Program 5.4.1.7.).** The Police Department's Special Enforcement Team (SET) continues to work in conjunction with the State's Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) to monitor and enforce applicable liquor laws at alcohol establishments throughout the City.

- **Promote the increased visibility of police in neighborhoods (Program 5.4.2.1.).** The Neighborhood Preservation Unit continues to proactively patrol areas in need of upkeep and maintenance. The unit consists of officers and a Sergeant assigned to specific target areas of the City. The goal of the program is to assist the community with quality of life issues such as trash, graffiti, and abandoned vehicles.

- **Support community organizations and neighborhood awareness programs that promote crime prevention, including preventing gang activity (Program 5.4.2.2.).** The Department continues to participate in awareness programs, such as Gangs Out of Downey, and promotes crime prevention through its participation in Neighborhood Watch. In addition, the Department is involved in other programs such as School Resource Officers and Robbery & Burglary Suppression. These programs allow officers to work closely with school administrators dealing with various issues on campuses and provide extra support for patrol personnel.

**Earthquake Safety**

- **Monitor groundwater table levels as they relate to liquefaction hazards (Program 5.5.1.3.).** Public Works regularly monitors ground water levels at well sites around the City of Downey. The ground water table is typically about 50' below the soil surface, which limits the risk of liquefaction to residential and typical commercial structures. Larger structures and those with significant subterranean components may be requested to provide additional seismic evaluations during the development process or as a condition of Site Plan Review (SPR) approval.

- **Ensure the placement of utility lines underground (Program 5.5.1.6.).** The Department of Public Works continues to implement Underground Utility Districts. Southern California Edison Company requires the use of vaults and transformers be installed above ground to protect the equipment from the intrusion of moisture. However, the City of Downey requires all electrical wiring be installed below grade.

## Floods

- **Mitigate hazards from possible dam or levee failure, including the raising of bridges and levees along rivers, including in areas outside the City (Program 5.6.1.3.).** City of Downey continues to support efforts by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), FEMA, Caltrans and the County of Los Angeles, in reducing the flood risk from dam or levee failure; however, maintenance and replacement of bridges, levees, and dams is primarily under the control and undertaken with funds provided by these agencies.

  In April 2014, The City of Downey participated in a joint Groundbreaking event with the City of Norwalk to kick-off the construction of the Firestone Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project. The project involves the replacement of the existing Firestone Boulevard Bridge at the San Gabriel River in its entirety with a new bridge to meet current standards with wider sidewalks, center median and shoulders. The same number of travel lanes (six) will be provided on the new bridge. The City of Norwalk is the lead agency on the project.

- **Minimize increases in the amount of stormwater generated by existing and proposed land uses (Program 5.6.2.1.).** Downey Public Works Department continues to enforce National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements, during plan checks for new and redevelopment projects with 5,000 square feet or more of new or replacement impervious surfaces, which are generally required to provide infiltration volume commensurate with an instantaneous 0.75" storm falling on the new or replacement impervious surface. Larger developments are required to prepare a Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan and demonstrate that no increase in peak runoff rate will be observed as a result of the development and that at least the instantaneous first 0.75 inch of projected runoff can be infiltrated.

  In April 2014, the City Council adopted an ordinance amending the applicability of the existing pollutant source reduction requirements; thus imposing runoff Low Impact Development (LID) strategies on projects that require building, grading, and construction permits. The ordinance stipulates that the project's owner and/or occupant must adhere to Best Management Practices (BMP) requirements in order to prevent or reduce the discharge of pollutants to achieve water quality standards.

## Vehicular Traffic

- **Require street lights for new developments (Program 5.7.1.2.).** For certain developments, the City continues to require developers to install new street lights adjacent to the development within the public-right-of-way as a condition of approval where streetlights currently do not exist. In addition, as a condition of approval through the development plan review process, applicants are required to give their consent to the annexation of their property into the City of Downey Lighting Maintenance District in accordance with Division 15 of the Streets and Highways Code.

- **Promote the parking and access agreements and parking consolidation to reduce the number of driveway access points on streets (Program 5.7.1.6.).** The City continues to encourage the consolidation of parking and imposes reciprocal access agreements upon adjacent developments through the plan review process, for the purpose of minimizing driveway curb cuts.

- **Adopt a Master Plan for installation of sidewalks for major arterials, secondary arterials, collector streets and school routes (Program 5.7.2.1.).** Sidewalks have been constructed and/or reconstructed along major arterials such as Firestone Boulevard between Myrtle Street and Dolan Avenue. Similar to previous years, priority is given to school routes.

- **Encourage the installation of sidewalks in new developments and major remodeling consistent with the sidewalk Master Plan (Program 5.7.2.2.).** The City continues to require the construction of new sidewalks and the repair of existing sidewalks and disabled ramps for new developments (i.e., The Promenade at Downey) as a condition of approval through the development plan review process. In addition, sidewalks have been constructed and/or reconstructed along major arterials such as Firestone Boulevard between Myrtle Street and Dolan Avenue.

- **Promote street intersection design and signalization that are safe and convenient to pedestrians and bicyclists (Program 5.7.2.3.).** Signalized and un-signalized intersections are designed to function in a safe and convenient manner for pedestrians and bicyclists to the extent possible through the implementation of Capital Improvement Projects and through the Development Review Committee and plan checking process when such improvements are constructed by private development.

# Chapter 6 - Noise Element

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 ordinance under Section 4600 of the Downey Municipal Code. This involves the permitted hours for constructions.

- In addition, the City continues to require projects that involve live entertainment activities and projects that have the potential to generate noise from machinery equipment or amplified music to comply with City's noise ordinance. This can be regulated by imposing conditions of approval through a conditional use permit process.

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# Chapter 7 - Open Space Element

Comparing to neighboring cities, 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:**

- **Maintain an adequate level of recreational staffing at park facilities (Program 7.2.2.1.).** In 2014, the Parks and Recreation Department added a new full-time staff member that serves as an ASPIRE Supervisor managing the after school program. In addition, several part-time positions were added to provide an adequate level of service to the Department.

- **Develop a Park Maintenance Master Plan to identify needed upgrades to existing park facilities (Program 7.2.2.2.).** During the 2014-2015 Fiscal Year, the City authorized funding towards the completion of a Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

- **Provide funding for park improvements in the upgrades to existing park facilities in the Capital Improvement Program (Program 7.2.2.3.).** The Parks & Recreation Department received $300,000 for an Apollo Park trail that was completed March 2015 and $300,000 for Furman Park trail that was completed in November 2014 . The Department completed a playground and trail project funded by a $135,000 grant from First 5 and LA Conservation Corp in July 2014. In addition, the Department received $200,000 for the completion of the Wilderness Park Pond Restoration project from the State of California through the competitive grant Habitant Conservation Fund, Wetlands Habitat category. The restoration project is expected to begin at the end of 2015.

- **Develop an open space area or plaza in the downtown area (Program 7.3.1.3.).** The City was awarded $217,950 non-competitive funding from the Housing Related Park Grant to fund a portion of this Civic Center Park, a passive area adjacent to the City Library. No date is scheduled for the implementation of this project.

# Chapter 8 - Design Element

Most residents, visitors, and businesses in Downey recognize the City as the premiere 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 Downey 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.

- **Promote quality design for new, expanded, and remodeled construction (Goal 8.1).** The City continues to implement the Site Plan Review process that requires Planning Commission review and approval of the architectural styles, exterior elements, materials and colors for new construction and/or additions to multi-residential, commercial, and industrial buildings in the City. The City continues to work with Studio One Eleven Company as a peer review committee to facilitated key projects such as the Downey Gateway.

- **Lack of property maintenance may exhibit a negative image of the City (Issue 8.2).** The Code Enforcement Division continues monitoring and working with a significant number of property owners, including residential properties, commercial and industrial businesses, in an effort to keep these properties maintained. In 2014, Code Enforcement Officers issued 916 citations that involved lack of property maintenance.

- **Promote compliance with code regulations (Policy 8.2.1.).** The Code Enforcement Division continues to enforce citywide temporary sign (i.e. banner, window sign, streamer, real estate sign) enforcement program and continues issuing notices of violations. In 2014, Code Enforcement Officers issued 187 notices of violation to businesses and residences regarding illegal and unpermitted signs.

# Chapter 9 - Economic Development Element

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.

- **Develop economic strategies for business attraction and retention (Program 9.1.1.1.).** City staff (Parks & Recreation Department) worked with many local restaurants in the community to bring forth the annual "International Food Festival" experience that was launched on September 20, 2014, on Third Street in Downtown, between Second Street and Third Street. In addition, a new on-line tools for business was created to assist local businesses and entrepreneurs. This new tool allows businesses to conveniently access local, state and federal resources, all under one location.

- **Continue the revitalization of commercial and industrial corridors (Program 9.1.1.5.).** The City continues to promote façade modifications of Club DB Lounge and the Uptown Vogue businesses. The new façades have encourage other property owners to invest in their properties. Also, with the addition of the Chick-fill-A, Habit Burger Grill, Dunkin' Donuts and La Barca restaurants, Firestone Boulevard will signify new retail activity in the Firestone commercial corridor.

- **Promote through public information the benefits of businesses locating in Downey (Program 9.1.1.7.).** Economic Development staff continues to update the "Opportunity Sites" and "Redevelopment Areas" web pages to facilitate development citywide at various locations. It's a great tool to help attract and retain quality businesses in Downey. The pages contain information materials for businesses coming to the City and includes a guide to start up a business and links to view maps of different redevelopment project areas.

- **Expand the use of the city Internet web site for public information (Program 9.4.2.5.).** City Departments continue to work toward improved customer service. The City established an on-line business license approval process in 2014 which enables customers to submit business license renewals or applications for a new license. Another new service allows Downey residents to pay their water bills on-line. In addition, the City continues to update it's website periodically and provide more information to the public via the Internet.