



John Bernardino City Hall

1. Introduction

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Introduction

Welcome to the City of San Bernardino's General Plan 2050. The General Plan 2050 update represents a truly significant milestone and celebration for the entire community—residents, businesses, stakeholders, and others who call San Bernardino home. This General Plan outlines a shared vision for the future of San Bernardino and provides a roadmap for how the City will achieve that vision over the next twenty-five years through 2050.

The General Plan 2050 reflects the investment of imagination, dedication, and thoughtfulness by many members of the community. Numerous venues were held to seek public input throughout the update process. The policies articulated in this Plan are intended to speak to current and future leaders of San Bernardino about the unique challenges, aspirations, and opportunities of this time while establishing a vision that will endure for many decades.

San Bernardino's General Plan 2050 tagline, **The Future Is Ours**, was deliberately chosen for the update and not merely by chance. Rather, the tagline recognizes that our community has the power, responsibility, and freedom to shape its destiny. By working together, we can create new possibilities, overcome challenges, and build a desired future by making conscious intentional decisions now.



San Bernardino from State Route 18. Kspencerfan at English Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 4.0
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Community Setting

San Bernardino's history is deeply rooted in its Indigenous past, primarily the Serrano people (Yuhaaviatam), who lived in the valley for centuries. Spanish missionaries arrived in 1810, naming the area after Saint Bernardino and establishing an outpost, leading to cultural shifts, land use changes, and the eventual settlement by non-Indigenous groups. The only local Native American group in residence today is the Yuhaaviatam of the San Manuel Nation.

In the early 1800s, Spaniards entered the Valley and set up missions and rancherias to colonize the area and convert local tribes. Mormon settlers from Utah later arrived in 1851, charged with establishing a colony on the 35,000-acre Rancho San Bernardino. Their efforts culminated in the first one-mile square plat in downtown, which is the heart of the City today. The City of San Bernardino was officially founded in 1852, two years after California achieved statehood.

While the City was historically a major trade center for agriculture, it was transformed by the broader forces that changed the region and state of California. The Great Depression, World Wars, post-war boom, infrastructure, and major industries all transformed the City. The City's population has also changed, influenced by those who have migrated from across the nation and now call San Bernardino home. San Bernardino has also seen its rise to regional prominence, followed by urban decline, and now rebirth and revitalization.

In recent decades, the City has grown rapidly as its boundaries have expanded in all directions, bounded by Rialto, Colton, Loma Linda, Redlands, Highland, and the San Bernardino National Forest (see **Figure I-1**). As of 2025, the City of San Bernardino extends 70 square miles and boasts a population of 225,000, making it the 18th largest city in California. The City's sphere of influence (SOI) is 10 square miles and includes Arrowhead Farms, Muscoy, Del Rosa, and other areas.

San Bernardino's central location in the valley has and continues to position the City as the inland gateway to the rest of the nation. This General Plan 2050 plans for the City of San Bernardino to have a population totaling 330,000 residents by 2050, which will continue to denote it as the most populated city in San Bernardino County.

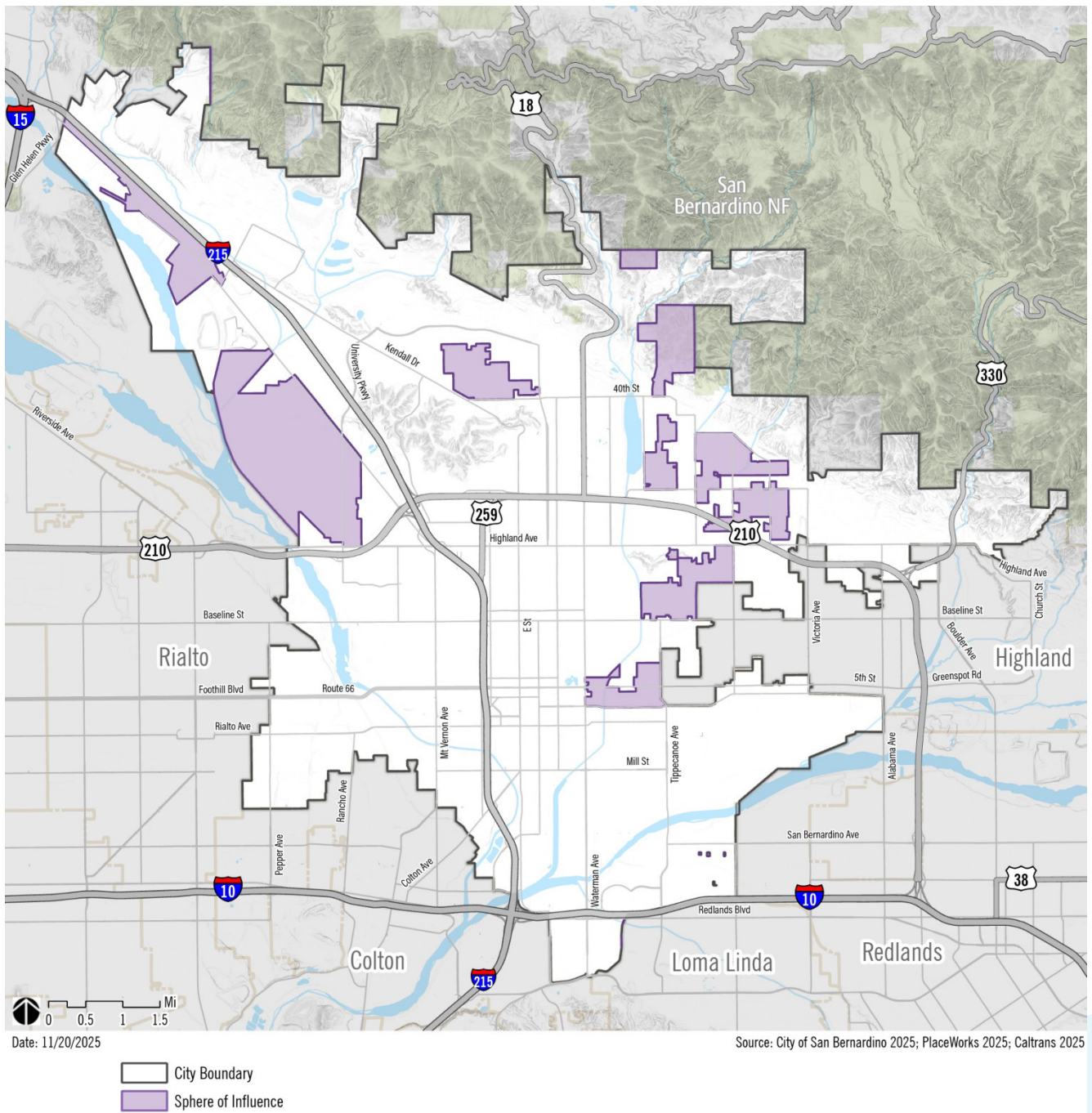


Figure I-1 City of San Bernardino, Regional Map



San Bernardino Vision

The City of San Bernardino's General Plan 2050 is anchored by a Vision Statement, displayed below, that was developed through an extensive visioning process with the community.

City of San Bernardino General Plan 2050 Vision

San Bernardino is the community of choice recognized as an excellent City in which to live, work, and play, distinguished by:

- *Our rich heritage as the gateway and the hub of commerce, entertainment, governance, culture, education, recreation, and transportation in the Inland Empire.*
- *Our residents, businesses, community groups, elected officials, and City staff work together toward a prosperous and innovative City for all future generations.*
- *The unparalleled natural and scenic beauty of our City, exemplified by its mountains, valleys, and rivers.*
- *Our equitable treatment of all residents, businesses, and community groups while ensuring broad community participation and ownership of the public process.*
- *Our residents' access to diverse employment opportunities, quality education, safe neighborhoods, reliable public services and infrastructure systems, and a healthy physical environment.*
- *Neighborhoods where we know one another and offer housing for everyone with quality parks, schools, and robust services.*
- *Our commitment to evolving innovation and advancing the education and skills of all residents, making them the most competitive in the region.*
- *A robust and resilient economy that nurtures the growth of local businesses, a thriving downtown, and emergent and innovative industries and that ensures household prosperity.*
- *Access to dependable, accessible, affordable, and environmentally responsible transportation options.*
- *Valuing and celebrating the cultural and creative expression of our residents.*

Purpose and Scope

California Government Code Section 65300 requires each city to adopt a General Plan “for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which...bears relation to its planning.” The San Bernardino 2050 General Plan can be considered the City’s development constitution, containing both a statement of the City’s vision of its long-term development as well as the policies to support that vision by guiding the physical growth of the City.

While State law specifically mentions the General Plan in terms of “physical development,” the 2050 General Plan serves a greater purpose beyond the collection of buildings, roads, and infrastructure. The 2050 General Plan also serves to provide a framework for creating and sustaining opportunities for all community members to achieve and sustain a high quality of life.

The San Bernardino General Plan 2050 serves to further a variety of objectives, including to:

- Establish a long-range vision for San Bernardino that reflects the aspirations of the community and that outlines practical steps to achieve this vision.
- Guide decision-making related to housing, transportation, environmental quality, public services, parks and open space, resource conservation, and hazards avoidance and resiliency.
- Help San Bernardino achieve compliance with applicable State and regional policies, including around housing production, transportation, and environmental regulations.
- Allow City departments, other public agencies, and private developers to design projects that enhance the character of the city, preserve environmental resources, and minimize hazards.
- Create opportunities for residents and business to attain and sustain a higher quality of life for themselves and their family through the resources provided in the City.
- Provide the basis for establishing and setting priorities for detailed plans and implementation actions that should be programmed in the budget and capital improvement plan.



Community Engagement Efforts

San Bernardino General Plan 2050 is the outcome of a collaborative process that included the community, City staff, and stakeholders, with support from the consultant team. Community input formed the foundation of the Plan, with the community members participating in various stages and products throughout the planning process. More than 100 events were held—stakeholder meetings, workshops, pop-up events, web-page surveys, and interviews.

General Plan Advisory Committee

The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) was an ad hoc committee established to serve as a key channel for engagement. The GPAC provided input and recommendations to City staff and the consultant team in preparing the draft General Plan. Committee members were appointed by the Mayor and City Council to reflect the diversity of interests and perspectives of the community. The GPAC held 15 meetings and provided input that shaped the Vision; Land Use Plan; and element goals, policies, and implementation measures.

Community Workshops

Two rounds of public workshops were conducted in each of the seven city council wards to ensure comments were received from all areas of the community. These workshops provided opportunities for the community to discuss their perceptions of citywide and local planning issues, needs, and opportunities and to provide input for developing a vision for the future. These workshops engaged participants in an interactive exercise to identify locations where new housing, commercial, parks, and other features should be included.

Downtown Specific Plan Outreach

A Downtown Advisory Committee (DTAC) was established by the Mayor and City Council to provide input to and promote participation in the preparation of the Downtown Specific Plan. Eight meetings were conducted with the DTAC on a variety of topics that informed the development of the Specific Plan. Three workshops were also conducted to develop a vision and land use plans for mobility, infrastructure, and public realm/open space, development standards, design guidelines, and associated programs. The Specific Plan reflects the sentiments heard from developers, businesses, residents, stakeholders, and the broader community.



Community Workshops



Downtown Charette

Community-Based Organizations

Meetings were conducted with community-based organizations to elicit their support in announcing and attracting participation in the public workshops and, in two cases, serve as facilitators of meetings for which the planning team provided talking points and interactive exercises. The planning team collaborated with faculty of two schools in designing and conducting interactive exercises for the students to create their plans for how lands should be developed in the future. In addition, numerous stakeholder meetings were held with individuals and advocates for housing and environmental justice.

Project Website

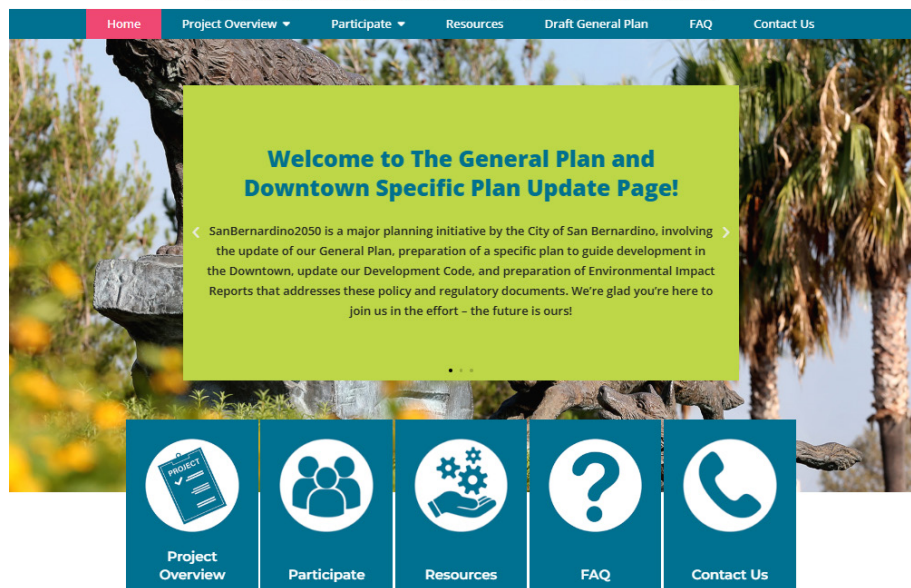
A project website was developed to provide information about the General Plan update. The General Plan website described how the public, businesses, and stakeholders could be informed and involved; announced dates and locations for various workshops; posted documents developed during the planning process; incorporated surveys for public comment; provided a library of resources, including legislative requirements, guidelines, and relevant planning documents; and finally, included information on how to contact City staff for those seeking additional information.



Community Events



Para ver esta página en español, seleccione "Español" en el cuadro desplegable que se encuentra en la esquina inferior derecha.





General Plan Organization

The General Plan 2050 that follows includes 12 elements or chapters, each structured in a manner that describes current issues in San Bernardino followed by the goals and policies to address them.

Element Coverage

The General Plan 2050 covers all the elements required by State law—land use, circulation, conservation, open space, safety, noise, housing, and environmental justice. In addition, the General Plan includes five topics of local importance to the community—parks/recreation/trails, public facilities and services, economic development, cultural resources, and utilities infrastructure.

One particular exception is the City’s 2021-2029 Housing Element. State law requires that the Housing Element be updated more frequently (typically every eight years) than the General Plan. As a result, San Bernardino’s Housing Element is published under a separate cover. The City of San Bernardino Housing Element was last completed in 2024 and will next be updated in 2029, consistent with the cycle mandated by the State of California.

State law requires consistency within the general plan update and among its elements. All general plan elements must be internally consistent and not conflict with one another. Each element, regardless of statute or topic, has the same legal standing. **Table I-1, General Plan Organization**, shows the State-mandated elements and optional elements in San Bernardino’s General Plan 2050.

Table I-1 San Bernardino General Plan 2050 Elements

State-Mandated Elements	Optional Elements
• Land Use and Urban Form	• Parks, Recreation and Trails
• Circulation and Mobility	• Public Facilities and Services
• Housing (separate volume)	• Economic Development
• Open Space & Conservation	• Cultural Resources
• Public Safety	• Utilities and Infrastructure
• Noise	• Health and Environmental Justice

Organization of Elements/Chapters

Each element of the San Bernadino General Plan 2050 has a similar organization—an introduction, planning context, series of responsive goals and policies, and implementation programs. All address issues and opportunities identified during the planning process and are intended to achieve the City's vision.

- **Introduction.** The introduction largely sets the context for the element. It addresses the regulations and authorization for its inclusion in the General Plan 2050, the purpose of the element, and organization of the element. It also includes how the element is consistent with and supports the General Plan 2050 vision.
- **Planning context.** Identifies and describes information on the historic and planning issues and constraints within the City. It also provides the setting upon which responsive goals and policies are drafted to address the array of issues.
- **Goal.** A statement that describes a desired future condition, or “end” state. Goals are intended to be change- and outcome-oriented, achievable over time, and not driven by existing funding. Each goal begins with an abbreviated chapter title followed by the number of the goal (e.g., LU Goal 1).
- **Policy.** A specific statement that decision-makers can take to achieve a desired goal. Some policies include guidelines or standards by which decisions are evaluated and commit the City to a course of action. Each policy is labeled with the abbreviated chapter title and a unique number.
- **Implementation program.** An implementation program is an action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out goals and policies. Implementation measures are intended to be modified over time. Completion of a program can depend on many factors, such as priorities, finances, and staff availability.

Taken together, each element is organized so that the public and decisionmakers can understand the planning issues in the City and use the goals and policies as a roadmap for making the vision in the General Plan a reality by 2050.



General Plan Implementation

The San Bernadino General Plan 2050 has a variety of uses and, like any plan, must be correctly implemented to achieve its intent. The following briefly describes how to use the plan, the implementation programs, and the amendment process.

How to Use the Plan

The San Bernadino General Plan 2050 is used as a point of reference for a variety of interested parties and for different purposes. For instance, City officials and staff may use the General Plan to evaluate a proposed specific plan, development project, or capital improvement for consistency with goals and policies. In other cases, residents and business owners proposing new developments may use the general plan to determine how their land can be used.

The following graphic provides a guide for the reader to understand the organization of the goals and policies section of each element.



Implementation

A general plan that sits on the shelf will not solve the pressing urban challenges facing a community. The success of any General Plan depends on the consistent implementation of programs. A program may entail large-scale changes, such as signature developments, a revitalized downtown, or new infrastructure. However, equally important are the seemingly smaller steps that, over time, collectively advance the General Plan 2050 vision. Dedication to completing large and small programs is important.

After the General Plan 2050 is adopted, it will be implemented through a variety of ordinances, programs, and activities. These specific implementation actions are described in the implementation plan that accompanies the General Plan 2050. The implementation plan is organized by each of the elements of the General Plan 2050 and includes actions, responsible parties, and time frames. Not all actions can be initiated simultaneously, but it is anticipated that implementation of actions will be phased over time.

Amendment

Though the General Plan 2050 sets the fundamental long-range vision for the community, it is still intended to be a dynamic document. The General Plan 2050 should be periodically updated to respond to changing needs. For instance, changing needs may arise from periodic swings in the economy, the development of new housing products, the fiscal position of the City, or state legislation that requires changes in local priorities. The General Plan Annual Report, which must be submitted to the State of California each year, is the appropriate tool for responding to these changes.

If amendments to the General Plan 2050 are needed at any point, State law allows it to be amended up to four times annually. Most amendments involve a change in land use designation, though policy and text amendments may be needed. Any proposed amendment will be reviewed to ensure that it furthers the public interest and would not be detrimental to public health, safety, and welfare. Environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act and tribal consultations pursuant to state law, are also required for all general plan amendments.



Relationship with Other Documents

The General Plan 2050 is the official long-range plan of the City and is implemented and codified into the municipal code through the development code, which contains specific standards that regulate land use and how and where they can be developed. Both documents must be consistent. Therefore, when the General Plan is amended, the development code must be updated to retain consistency.

Many existing planning and policy documents govern and guide growth and development in San Bernardino. Some of the documents are prepared by the City, and others are prepared by regional government agencies.

- **Specific Plans** contain distinct visions and directions for the development and use of land within a specific area.
- **Master Plans** address water, sewer, drainage, broadband, pavement, parks, streetlights, and other topics.
- **Transportation Plans** include short- and long-range transportation plans, active transportation plan, and others.
- **Design Guidelines** are the various design guidelines and standards in development codes, specific plans, etc.
- **Development Code** defines land use districts, permitted land uses, development standards, and regulations.

Specific plans, master plans, public works projects, and development decisions must be consistent with the General Plan. Great care has been taken to ensure that the General Plan 2050 is consistent with other local, regional, and state planning documents. This consistency is reflected in the goals, policies, and programs of the General Plan.