



*San Gabriel River in its original state, c. 1900*

## Creating the Verdant Community

 *We will build a sustainable city with verdant trees, clean water, improved open space, and clean air.*

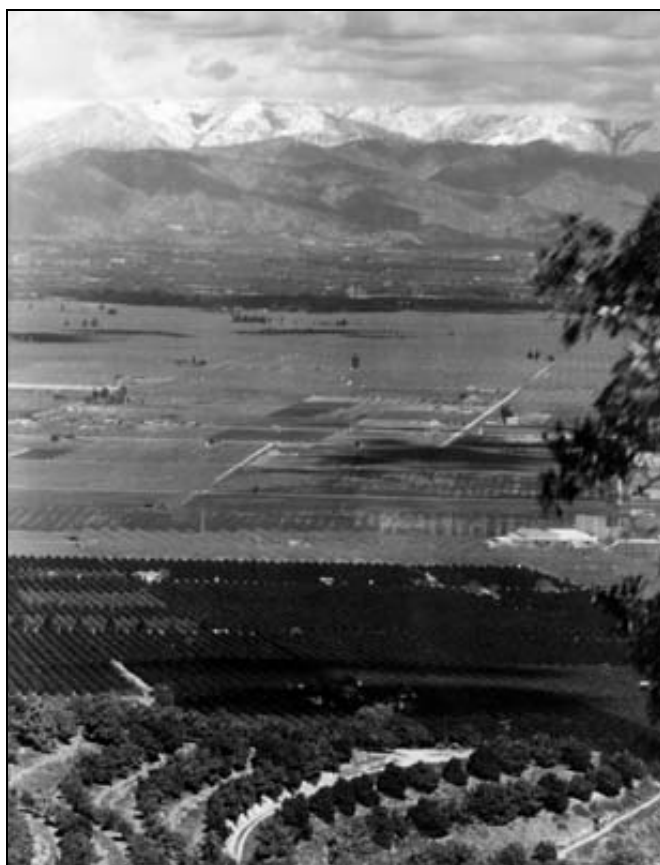
It's been a long time since San Gabriel was the pastoral paradise described in countless early accounts by settlers. And yet, the same things – climate, fertile soil, and a hospitable environment – that brought people to San Gabriel for the last 200 years will still be there to enjoy if we protect them.

The general plan background report found the following issues that need improvement:

- **Greening:** While some parts of the City have beautiful mature street trees, other portions of the City need more trees and attention to landscaping. The City will work to plant more trees, encourage the proper maintenance of landscaping, and protect significant trees and landscapes.
- **Water Quality and Conservation:** Storm drains collect water from properties in San Gabriel and deposit the polluted water downstream. The City has adopted policies to address water quality, but further action is needed.
- **Concrete canals:** The Los Angeles County Flood Control Channels are a huge potential asset for the City. While they keep the City safe from flooding, they do little else to help the City environmentally. The City will work to make use of these channels as recreational resources and/or landscape them in order to improve San Gabriel's appearance and environment.
- **San Gabriel River:** The San Gabriel River hardly looks or acts like the river it once was. But it was, and remains, the source of life, culture, and productivity in

this valley for more than 100 years. And while it is outside the City proper, it still has a role to play. The City will support proposals from the State and Federal Government to help make this river a center for recreation and a vital asset to the region's health.

- **Poor air quality:** While the air quality in San Gabriel has improved dramatically over the last 20 years there is still room for improvement. This City will work to design buildings that reduce our dependence on automobiles through mixed-use development or transit oriented design. The City will also work to encourage residents and employees to use alternative forms of transportation such as mass transit, carpooling, walking, telecommuting, and using vehicles that run on alternative fuels.



## How green was our valley?

*A view of the San Gabriel Valley with the San Gabriel Mountains in the background, as they appeared in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

*Los Angeles Public Library Collection*

## Our Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Using the ideas shared by residents, commissioners, elected officials, staff, and other general plans, a list of goals, targets, tools, and actions items has been developed to enhance and expand the City's environment. A map showing the City's environmental resources can be found in Figure 8-1.

### A Greener Community

**Goal 8.1**      **Goal Create a verdant City by maintaining significant trees, requiring developers to plant additional trees, and promoting the healthy maintenance of trees.**

- Target 8.1.1 The City shall work to plant additional trees throughout San Gabriel.
  - Action 8.1.1.1 Strive to plant 10,000 new trees by the year 2010. ↻
  - Action 8.1.1.2 Work with non-profit organizations to obtain grants that will assist in implementing a citywide tree-planting program.
  - Action 8.1.1.3 Work with non-profit organizations to help plant street trees.
  - Action 8.1.1.4 Celebrate Arbor Day by: allowing all City Employees to participate in a citywide tree planting exercise; working with local school and other non-profit organizations to plant street trees; offering classes to local residents on the proper manner in which to trim trees; and award local property owners and designers for superb landscape design.

**Goal 8.2**      **Develop a stronger tree trimming and removal policy.** ↻

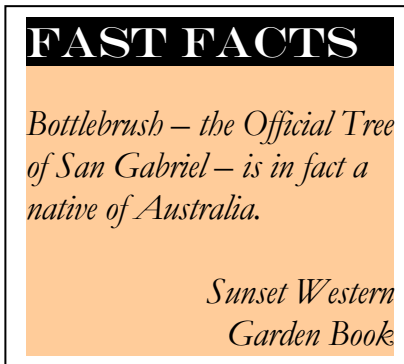
- Target 8.2.1 Work to enforce the City's tree trimming and removal policy on the weekends.



- Action 8.2.1.1 Educate and organize the public in order to improve the care and support of trees and landscapes.
- Action 8.2.1.2 Educate citizens and business owners on how to take better care of their landscaping. ↻
- Target 8.2.2 Assist in the development of a constituency of those interested in protecting and planting trees.
- Target 8.3.7 The City will improve its own landscaping in order to enhance the importance of significant trees or buildings, and in order to reflect San Gabriel's history and climate.
- Target 8.3.8 Improve the design and care of public facilities such as civic buildings, parking areas, park facilities, freeway onramps, medians, etc.

**Goal 8.3 Promote environmentally sustainable planting practices.**

- Target 8.3.1 Create a demonstration drought tolerant garden, in order to instruct property owners and landscapers in the possibilities of designing an aesthetically pleasing draught tolerant garden.
- Target 8.3.2 Encourage property owners to maintain existing vegetation on developed sites and replace unhealthy or dead landscaping.
- Target 8.3.3 Require that all new construction include a landscape component that will increase the number of trees onsite.
- Target 8.3.4 Implement policies to require developers to plant one tree for every one thousand square feet of net lot area on new commercial and residential projects. At least one tree shall be planted in the front yard of every new house or addition.
- Target 8.3.5 Require applicants submitting plans for all additions of more than 800 square feet and all new buildings to submit landscape plans.
- Target 8.3.6 Encourage developers to incorporate existing mature and specimen trees and other significant vegetation into the design of a development project for that site.



**Improved Water Quality**

**Goal 8.4 Encourage the conservation and protection of water quality within San Gabriel.**

- Target 8.4.1 Discourage the use of fertilizers, pesticides, and insecticides on private property.
- Target 8.4.2 Reduce or eliminate the use of fertilizers, pesticides, and insecticides by the City.
- Target 8.4.3 Reduce the amount of storm water runoff by updating the City's Best Management Practices.
- Target 8.4.4 Where feasible, direct runoff from rooftops and other areas to water tanks.
- Target 8.4.5 Encourage property owners to use paving surfaces that reduce the amount of urban storm water runoff.
- Target 8.4.6 Require new buildings and the construction of additions to include water conserving toilets and fixtures; expand existing provisions in the City's building and plumbing code.

## More Beneficial Watercourses and Flood Control

**Goal 8.5** Restore the lost environmental value of San Gabriel's waterways – the Los Angeles County Flood Control channels (Alhambra Wash, Rubio Wash) and the San Gabriel River.

- Target 8.5.1 Investigate the feasibility of using the flood control channels for functional and/or passive open space.
- Target 8.5.2 Protect the flood control channels from enclosure by developers.
- Target 8.5.3 Work with the San Gabriel Mountains and River Conservancy, and other interested agencies, to restore the San Gabriel River to a more environmentally healthy state.



*While most people think of "washes" as eyesores, these Flood Control Channels have a lot of potential. This is just a portion of the Alhambra Wash.  
Community Development Department photo*

- Target 8.5.4 Encourage public art focused on the flood control channels.

- Target 8.5.5 Use a portion of capital improvement money set aside for the improvement of bridges to include public art themed on the importance of water and the flood control channels.

## Enhanced Air Quality

**Goal 8.6** Improve air quality within the City of San Gabriel

- Target 8.6.1 Reduce the amount of emissions from vehicles in San Gabriel.
- Target 8.6.2 Encourage the use of mass transit, car pooling, bicycling, and other alternative transportation options.
- Target 8.6.3 Investigate the feasibility of installing a gas station with alternative fuels for use by City vehicles.
- Target 8.6.4 Enhance the functionality and expand the size of the City's network of Park and Ride Lots.
- Target 8.6.5 Encourage the planting of street trees and yard trees because of their air quality contribution.
- Target 8.6.6 Replace City-owned and encourage replacement of privately owned fire extinguishers with models that do not use ozone depleting compounds.
- Target 8.6.7 Investigate the feasibility of expanding a City operated bus service.
- Target 8.6.8 Work with the South Coast Air Quality Management District to reduce emissions from stationary sources in San Gabriel.
- Target 8.6.9 Permit major indirect sources of air pollution only if they provide transportation measures to reduce their impacts to an insignificant level.
- Target 8.6.10 Map sensitive land uses including hospitals, schools, and care facilities and periodically check air quality in these areas.
- Target 8.6.11 Update the City's Municipal Code to require architects to design buildings that promote pedestrian activity, transit use, and other forms of alternative transportation.

- Target 8.6.12 Require priority parking areas for carpoolers in projects with larger numbers of employees.
- Target 8.6.13 Require large developments to include improvements to bus shelters in front of the site.
- Target 8.6.14 Discourage the placement of parking lots along the street.
- Target 8.6.15 Provide City incentives for City employees that take an alternative form of transportation.
- Target 8.6.16 Require new construction in Transit Oriented Design areas to be design to incorporate the ideas of transit oriented design.
- Action 8.6.2.2 Require buildings in these areas to undergo an investigation that is more stringent, to reduce the potential for injury or loss of life.

### Implementation Measures

While the above goals, targets, and tools point to broadly defined objectives, the following implementation measures specify how we will get to the above goals. Community outreach measures should address members of the City who do not speak English.

#### A Greener Community:

- Work with the National Arbor Day Foundation to institute an annual City Arbor Day celebration that brings together City Staff, non-profit groups, schools, and other interested parties in order to plant trees throughout the City.
- ☞ Finish the Tree Master Plan and begin the implementation measures as outlined so that the City can plant 10,000 trees by the year 2010.
- Hire a part-time code enforcement officer for weekends in order to enforce the City's tree trimming and removal policy.

### Protection from Geological and Seismic Hazards

#### Goal 8.7 Minimize the harmful effects of seismic and geological hazards to people and property.

- Target 8.7.1 Reduce injuries and death due to earthquakes.
  - Action 8.6.1.1 Use Community Development Block Grant money to seismically retrofit unsafe buildings in San Gabriel.
  - Action 8.6.1.2 Use money from the City's Redevelopment Fund to seismically retrofit unsafe buildings within the Redevelopment Area.
- Target 8.7.2 Reduce the potential damage caused by liquefaction.
  - Action 8.6.2.1 Educate staff, local architects, builders, and property owners about how projects designed to be located in liquefaction areas should be built.

**FAST FACTS**

*On warm summer days, the air in urban areas can be 6-8°F hotter than its surrounding areas.*

*The Heat Island Group*

- Immediately prepare informational handouts and within two years create a residential demonstration garden to teach the Community how to care for existing plants and to plant additional plants.
- By 2005, begin offering adult education classes through the Parks and Recreation Department on gardening techniques and landscaping design.
- By 2005, work with the owner of a commercial building to create and maintain a demonstration garden for commercial sites. The site would be complete with information handouts or plaques showing drought resistant landscape design that is both beautiful and easy to maintain.

- Amend the Municipal Code in order to require all new buildings and additions over 800 square feet to (1) plant at least one tree for every 1,000 square feet of net lot area, (2) retain existing landscaping that is significant, and (3) undergo a review of landscape plans.

Improve Water Quality:

- Immediately prepare handouts that explain: the hazards caused by insecticides and chemical fertilizers and the issues involving urban storm water runoff. Adult education classes focused on gardening techniques can further underline the need to stop using hazardous chemicals
- Immediately begin talks with vendors and consultants to find alternatives to chemical insecticides and pesticides used by City forces.
- Amend the Municipal Code to allow for modifications – or minor variances – to lot coverage figures if a project incorporates alternative paving systems that reduce urban storm water runoff.

Improved Water Courses and Flood Control Channels:

- Initiate a meeting between employees responsible for the Los Angeles County Flood Control Channels and the City of San Gabriel in order to create a reasonable set of policies and programs to initiate the City's visions for creating active or passive open space around the channels.
- Discourage the covering of the Los Angeles County Flood Control Channels.
- By 2005, create an impact fee and begin requiring a ten-foot easement for properties adjacent to or within 300 feet within the Los Angeles County Flood Control Channels in order to provide for additional public open space.
- Create a policy requiring all commercial and residential development within 300 feet from the Los Angeles County Flood Control Channels to put aside 2% of construction costs for public art that underlies

the importance water and waterways – or an in lieu fee can be paid.

Clean the City's Air:

- Require new businesses to provide fire extinguishers that do not deplete the ozone.
- By 2005 amend the Municipal code to (1) prohibit parking lots along the street front, (2) require bicycle parking racks for commercial developments over 2,000 square feet and residential developments over four units, (3) require priority parking spaces for carpools in all office developments.
- Require large new construction to improve any bus shelters within 100 feet of the property line.
- Institute the implementation measure of the Las Tunas Corridor Strategy and work to institute policies that will highly encourage transportation oriented design in the areas shown in Figure 1-4.

**FAST FACTS**

*There has not been a stage one smog alert since 1999 in the Los Angeles area. In 1977 there were 121 stage one smog alerts.*

*South Coast Air Quality Management District*

Enhanced Seismic and Geological Safety:

- Provide additional points to Community Development Block Grant projects and Redevelopment projects that incorporate seismic retrofitting.
- Create a seminar for local architects, designers, and builders on the issues surrounding new construction in liquefaction areas.
- Create a standard condition on all new construction for projects within the liquefaction zone that requires the construction to conform to the recommendations found in a geological technical study.
- Avoid construction within any designated fault zone that exists within, or subsequently found to exist within, an Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone (lands specified by State law as being restricted because of recent seismological activity).

Intergovernmental and Agency Relationships:

- The City shall work with the County of Los Angeles, surrounding cities, local non-profit organizations, school districts, and other like agencies to help improve San Gabriel's environment.



*Don Merckt's Crossed Currents is a 28 foot water pitcher that leans over Ballona Creek in Culver City, a community of about the same size as San Gabriel. Communities throughout Southern California are discovering that those concrete water channels are more than simply a conveyance for water – they are open space resources.*