Community Profile

The City of Alhambra

General Plan Update

Rincon Consultants, Inc.
November 2015
City of Alhambra
General Plan Update

Community Profile

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INTRODUCTION

Alhambra General Plan Update 2035

A General Plan serves as a long-term policy guide for the physical, economic, and environmental growth of a city. It provides the blueprint for how a community will grow and it addresses important land use issues such as the sufficiency of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation; the safety of the community; housing opportunities; the availability of recreational amenities such as parks and trails; the conservation of natural resources; and the impacts that land uses have on noise and air quality.

The City’s General Plan serves to ensure that the qualities that make Alhambra unique are preserved and enhanced. The City’s current General Plan was adopted nearly 30 years ago, in 1987, and the time has come for the Alhambra to reexamine its future and chart a course for the next twenty years. Toward this end, the General Plan Update provides a blueprint or constitution for the future of Alhambra.

The General Plan Update revolves around the idea of Vision 2035 – A Community Mosaic. The community’s input on various elements that make up the General Plan is vital to the success of the process. As part of the General Plan Update process, Alhambra held a community meeting and conducted a survey during the summer of 2015 covering various topics relating to the City and its future. The City made this Alhambra General Plan Survey available on the City’s website, with the option to take the survey on-line or print a hard copy and mail it to or drop it off at City Hall. More information on these surveys is included in the Community Survey section of this report.

Envision Alhambra 2035

Information in this Community Profile report, unless otherwise noted, is largely based on the 2012 Community Profile report, which was undertaken as part of the Envision Alhambra 2035 planning effort, a multi-agency and multi-departmental land use and transportation planning effort overseen by the city of Alhambra and funded by a Compass Blueprint Demonstration grant from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). SCAG is one of California’s 18 metropolitan planning organizations (MPO). It represents six counties, 189 cities, and more than
19 million residents. SCAG undertakes a variety of regional planning and policy initiatives to encourage a more sustainable environment. SCAG established the Compass Blueprint program to address the land use and transportation challenges facing Southern California now and in the coming years at a local level, including traffic congestion, air pollution, and lack of affordable housing.

The Compass Blueprint program was created with the notion that, collectively, member cities can contribute to a plan that, with only modest changes to development patterns or transportation alternatives, can point the region toward maintained and improved quality of life.

The SCAG Compass Blueprint Growth Vision encourages innovative land use and transportation planning guided by four principles: mobility, livability, prosperity, and sustainability.

- Mobility - Getting where we want to go
- Livability - Creating positive communities
- Prosperity - Long-term health for the region
- Sustainability - Promoting efficient use of natural resources

To realize these principles on the ground, the Growth Vision encourages:

- Focusing growth in existing and emerging centers and along major transportation corridors
- Creating significant areas of mixed-use development and walkable communities
- Targeting growth around existing and planned transit stations
- Preserving existing open space and stable residential areas

**The Region**

This Community Profile will briefly describe relevant topics, compare Alhambra to other similarly sized communities, and identify issues the City may face in the future. Throughout the Community Profile, the “region” is defined as the cities of South Pasadena, Monterey Park, Temple City, San Gabriel and Rosemead. These cities were selected for comparison with Alhambra because they are similar in size and will face many of the same land use, circulation, and economic issues that Alhambra is expected to experience. The City of San Marino, which is located just to the north of Alhambra, was not included since it is primarily a residential community with a very limited number of commercial areas. Throughout the profile, where appropriate, Alhambra is compared with the region, county, and/or state. Viewing Alhambra’s profile in this context will help identify which issues are unique to Alhambra and which are part of a widespread trend.
### Table 1. Regional Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>% Regional Population</th>
<th>Households</th>
<th>% Regional Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monterey Park</td>
<td>62,063</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>20,178</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemead</td>
<td>55,017</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>14,312</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Gabriel</td>
<td>40,517</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>12,561</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Pasadena</td>
<td>26,174</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>10,498</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple City</td>
<td>36,275</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>11,623</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (without Alhambra)</td>
<td>220,046</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td>69,172</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alhambra</td>
<td>85,545</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>29,530</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (with Alhambra)</td>
<td>305,591</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>98,702</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: California Department of Finance, May 2015
Figure 1. The Region

Source: The Planning Center DC&E
Purpose of this Report

The Community Profile provides a basic framework for identifying and understanding the broad range of issues the city of Alhambra is facing as an agency, especially in light of new governmental mandates, as well as the issues facing the community at large. It likens the City with the local region to compare and contrast Alhambra’s opportunities, advantages and challenges with those of its neighbors. The Community Profile provides a snapshot of the community as it is now and assesses where the City may stand from a market and economic perspective if current trends continue, so that the City may anticipate and actively plan for the direction Alhambra is heading in the next twenty years.

The Community Profile assimilates all of the feedback gathered from the public outreach process conducted as part of the City’s General Plan Update, including inputs received at a community meeting held on May 20, 2015 and a community survey conducted during the summer of 2015 (described in the community survey section of this report).

The Community Profile examines the city from a physical, social, environmental and economic perspective. It explores issues confronting Alhambra as it defines its long-term vision. In particular, the Community Profile focuses on changes in economic, fiscal and demographic trends that have occurred since the City last updated its General Plan approximately 30 years ago.

By taking a moment to assess where Alhambra stands and where it is heading, this Community Profile and the General Plan are valuable tools to provide linkages to other City initiatives and documents and to evaluate the relevance of the City’s current implementation tools. Tools can include, but are not limited to, the City’s Strategic Plan, Capital Improvements Programs and Budget. Some of these documents were developed over twenty years ago and may warrant a fresh look.

Our hope is that the information provided in this document will serve as a common knowledge base and lead to understanding of local issues. In this way the Community Profile can encourage residents, businesses, and property owners to engage in an informed dialogue about the City’s future.
Document Organization

This Community Profile contains four distinct parts:

**INTRODUCTION**

*Where we have been.* This section provides a snapshot of the history of the community and general discussion about its location in the region.

**COMMUNITY**

*Where we are now.* This section describes how Alhambra became the community it is today, the structure of the local governance, regional demographics and the facets that comprise the City’s human and social capital.

**ENVIRONMENT**

*How our surroundings affect where we live.* This section provides an overview of the City’s built and natural environment, including land use, transportation and natural resources.

**LOCAL ECONOMY**

*Where we are headed and what other issues affect our direction.* This section provides projections for key community indicators including demographics.

**COMMUNITY**

**Connecting with the Community**

An essential component of the General Plan Update work program is the ability for City staff and consultants to engage in a dialogue about the issues that are of the highest priority to the community so that the focus of the City’s strategies and next steps can be on the things that the community values most. The most compelling ideas will generally garner the most interest.

**Validating the Vision**

The city of Alhambra has a formal vision statement that describes what the City and residents aspire for Alhambra to look like in the future, providing specification of the community’s desired end state.

**Alhambra Vision Statement**

*The City of Alhambra shall be the premier family-oriented and economically prosperous community in the San Gabriel Valley.*

The Vision Statement typically serves as the starting point for a multidisciplinary effort such as the General Plan Update. The General Plan Update will benefit from the surveys the City has conducted periodically throughout the years to assess the community’s impressions of the City’s ability to achieve the community vision, as well as surveys the City conducted as part of this General Plan Update.

The City measures its progress in meeting its vision and goals through its City Resident Satisfaction Survey given periodically to measure community satisfaction and gather input. Of the 4,000 residents that responded to the last survey in 2007, 83 percent of survey respondents
stated that they agreed with the City’s vision statement, an increase in 14 percentage points since the previous community survey in 2002. This significant increase in support for the City’s vision statement may be attributed to the many recent City accomplishments. The City has successfully developed its economy, an achievement which has been recognized by the L.A. County Economic Development Corporation and also by the San Gabriel Valley’s Economic Partnership. It may also be attributed to the City’s diverse array of programs and services which received a 90 percent in resident satisfaction. Overall, the survey revealed that the City has achieved success in defining a vision with which a growing number of residents can identify.

The survey also identified key issues and offered recommendations. Traffic and parking were two of the most important issues. Increasing green space in the City and promoting smart development were also important. Since 2007, the City has succeeded in executing some of these recommendations. For example, the City has increased education for residents on water and conservation by establishing an annual Eco Fair.

These issues are of particular interest to General Plan Update discussions since most of the issues raised in the 2007 survey were reiterated in the Community Open House event held in October, 2011 in Almansor Park during the Envision Alhambra 2035 process. This information helps to guide the dialogue regarding future steps the City can take to achieve the community’s aspirations.

Community Meetings

On May 5, 2015, the City held a joint Boards and Commissions Study Session at the Granada Park Gym to discuss the General Plan Update. At this meeting, City Staff and the General Plan team explained the General Plan Update process to the Boards and Commissions members and the public in attendance. Topics included General Plan objectives, legal requirements, schedule, and organization. On May 20, 2015, the City hosted a Community Meeting at the Civic Center Library to discuss the General Plan Update. The General Plan team introduced the project and identified issues in an effort to gain input from the community including their likes, dislikes, desires, and general sentiment for the City. Participants rotated between work stations covering various topics involved in the General Plan Update (such as mobility, urban design, and conservation), where they could learn more about that topic and provide their input to a facilitator from the General Plan team. The community meeting served as a primary opportunity for the City to speak with residents about issues and considerations that should be taken into account in land use, mobility, quality of life, infrastructure, public safety, and economic development efforts in the future.

The community’s feedback from both these meetings provided the City with an opportunity to assess the comments that were received and to engage in a dialogue with City Boards and Commissions, the City Council, and the community about which issues are of the highest priority to Alhambra. Furthermore, many community priorities echoed the four Compass Blueprint Principles—mobility, livability, prosperity, and sustainability—suggesting that there is a common link between what residents value and SCAG’s regional approach to address future growth.

Overall, residents expressed their satisfaction living in Alhambra. The City is clean, peaceful, diverse, friendly, and safe. Many people feel a strong sense of community with good neighbors, receptive law enforcement authorities, fast emergency response personnel, and great schools. Many residents also articulated about ongoing issues that the City was already aware of,
and at many levels, was already addressing in some manner. Common themes included more transparency in government, historic preservation, reduce congestion, less high density housing, and more retail and entertainment. Many of the comments centered on requests for the City to provide additional public spaces or to improve economic development that would give the City governance the opportunity to explore all the ways in which it can enhance and create a healthy, sustainable community. The ongoing conflict between pedestrians, bikes and vehicles sharing the City’s roadway networks was of significant interest to attendees. Residents encouraged the City to look for ways to create more bicycle and pedestrian circulation and safety.

Residents appreciated the diversity of uses in the community, but also provided insights as to additional businesses that they would like to see the City bring into the community such as TJ Maxx or Trader Joes.

These issues have been determined to be of the highest importance to the community and will be the focus of further recommendations for strategies or actions that can be considered in future planning efforts.

Community Survey

As part of the General Plan Update, two community surveys (a phone survey and an online and written survey) were conducted during the summer of 2015 in the City of Alhambra. The methodology and results of these surveys are described below.

Phone Survey

True North Research, a full-service survey research firm, completed a General Plan Opinion Survey with 400 randomly selected adult residents of Alhambra between June 25 and July 9, 2015, to obtain a statistically valid, representative sample of Alhambra residents. Individuals were selected for the survey sample through a random selection of land lines and mobile phone numbers that service Alhambra households and asking screening questions to ensure eligibility. Interviews, which averaged 18 minutes in length, were conducted in English, Spanish, or Mandarin/Cantonese according to a respondent’s preference. Fifty-six percent of respondents reported living in Alhambra for over 15 years, while only 2 percent reported living in Alhambra for less than one year.

A clear theme of the phone survey results is that residents are focused on enhancing existing City services, protecting the City’s character/quality of life, and ensuring the health of the City’s economy and job market. As shown in Figure 2, nearly every resident surveyed held a positive opinion regarding the quality of life in the City, with 80 percent rating it as excellent or good, 17 percent stating it is fair, and just 3 percent using poor or very poor to describe the quality of life in Alhambra. The parks and recreational opportunities in Alhambra, the small town feel/sense of community involvement, the safety/low crime rate, and the well-kept appearance of the City were just some of the key things that residents feel make Alhambra a special place to live.

The changes residents seek are efforts to preserve or enhance existing qualities of the City. Among specific changes that were desired, the most common were managing growth and development (10 percent), improving public safety (8 percent), reducing traffic congestion (8 percent), providing affordable housing (7 percent), improving local shopping/dining opportunities (5 percent), and improving streets and roads (5 percent). Although the related themes of preserving the City’s character and managing growth and development were prominent in the survey, Alhambra residents are generally quite forward thinking and recognize that some types of change would be good for the City, particularly economic development. Many
residents would like to have gourmet/organic grocery stores such as Trader Joe’s or Whole Foods, family restaurant chains (Red Lobster, Sizzler, etc.), or traditional grocery stores such as Ralphs, and large discount stores like Wal-Mart.

Among a series of projects, programs, and policies that the City is considering for the future, residents assigned the highest priority to improving the flow of traffic in Alhambra (91 percent citing it as at least a medium priority). Most residents had positive perceptions of traffic circulation in residential areas of Alhambra, with 19 percent describing it as excellent, 49 percent good, 25 percent fair, 6 percent poor, and 2 percent very poor. Perceptions of overall traffic circulation in the City were less favorable, with 5 percent describing it as excellent, 30 percent good, 38 percent fair, 17 percent poor, and 9 percent very poor. Traffic congestion on major streets in Alhambra, meanwhile, received the least favorable ratings, with 4 percent describing it as excellent, 25 percent good, 38 percent fair, 23 percent poor, and 11 percent very poor. More than two-thirds of Alhambra residents stated they were either very (22 percent) or somewhat (48 percent) satisfied with the City’s efforts to improve traffic circulation by improving roads and intersections, timing traffic signals, and other measures, approximately one-quarter were very (8 percent) or somewhat (19 percent) dissatisfied with the City’s efforts to improve traffic circulation, and 4 percent were unsure or unwilling to share their opinion on this topic.

Figure 2. Quality of Life

ONLINE AND WRITTEN SURVEY

Veronica Tam & Associates also conducted an Alhambra General Plan Survey during the summer of 2015, which is identified in this Community Profile as the online and written survey because it was available online and in hard-copy format. The online and written survey was conducted in a fashion that allowed for self-selection of participants, and therefore did not allow for a statistically valid sample. This report includes a brief summary of the informal survey results. A more detailed report is bound under separate cover.

A total of 360 residents of the City of Alhambra participated. Nearly 61 percent of survey respondents have lived in Alhambra for over 15 years, while only 3 percent reported having recently moved to the area within the last year. Over 54 percent of survey responses indicated an overall good quality of life in the city of Alhambra. When asked to set priorities for the things that the City should attempt to accomplish over the next 10 years, the three most frequently selected “high priorities” by residents were to improve traffic flow in the City (58 percent), followed by preserving historic areas and buildings in the City (52 percent) and improving the maintenance of City streets (50 percent). These three priorities were identified by at least half of the survey respondents as “high priorities.” The remaining priorities received mixed responses, with typically no more than one-third of the respondents identifying them as “high priorities.”

When asked to rate overall traffic circulation within the City, the top responses were “fair” (33 percent) or “poor” (28 percent). The most frequently selected “low priorities” included creating new neighborhood parks (28 percent), the improvement of sidewalks (24 percent), and the improvement of bike lanes and bike paths (24 percent). Many residents were also concerned about “too much” development of condominiums (66 percent), apartments (60 percent), and mixed-use housing (58 percent). Overall, residents feel safe walking alone during the day in commercial and retail areas (45 percent) and when driving on City streets during their daily commute (32 percent). Residents reported feeling the most unsafe (“very unsafe”) when riding a bike on city streets (35 percent) or when walking across major streets during the morning or afternoon (20 percent).

OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE

When asked to rate the overall quality of life in the City, the top responses were “good” (55 percent) and “fair” (28 percent) (Figure 3). A very small number of residents who participated believed the quality of life to be less than “poor” (five percent) or “very poor” (two percent). The number of participants who believed the quality of life is “excellent” is also small (nine percent).
In general, the respondents to the online and written survey were less satisfied with the overall quality of life in the City, and expressed a higher level of concern with issues related to growth, such as traffic congestion and historic preservation, than respondents to the phone survey.
City History

Establishing Roots

The City of Alhambra is in the western San Gabriel Valley of Los Angeles County. It is bordered by the Cities of South Pasadena and San Marino to the north, San Gabriel to the east, Monterey Park to the south and Los Angeles to the west. It lies eight miles from downtown Los Angeles. The City encompasses seven and a half square miles with a population of approximately 85,545 residents.

Alhambra has a long history with roots preceding the birth of the United States. Many of Alhambra’s earliest settlers shaped the land in ways that still influence the city over a century later. For thousands of years, the Tongva Native Americans lived in villages throughout the San Gabriel Valley until the Spanish took over in the 1700s. In the 1840s, Benjamin Davis Wilson, the “founding father” of Alhambra, acquired much of the land of the San Gabriel Valley and property throughout Southern California.

Wilson and his son-in-law, James deBarth Shorb, an innovative engineer, subdivided a portion of Wilson’s land, and in 1875 they developed the first tract home properties with water piped in through iron pipes in California. Wilson and Shorb noted that the descriptions from Washington Irving’s Tales from the Alhambra were similar to the mountain vistas visible from the tract of land, thus inspiring the name, “The Alhambra Tract.” Due to the water pipeline, the tract sold out quickly, and Wilson and Shorb developed and sold additional land tracts. Single family residential subdivisions became a key feature of Alhambra that has continued to define the city even today. These earliest neighborhood land tracts were typically acquired by educated Americans permanently relocating from east of the Mississippi. They built unique homes to settle in for the rest of their lives. To meet the needs of the growing population, Hiram Willard Stanton, Alhambra’s first schoolteacher, storekeeper, postmaster, telephone agent, and promoter, established Alhambra’s first business center around a common corridor, Main Street, in 1885. Main Street quickly transformed into a commercial and social hub for the entire San Gabriel Valley, a distinction that has been revitalized in recent years.
The Twentieth Century: Alhambra as a Gateway

In 1901, more than 500 community residents formed the Alhambra Improvement Association and advocated for incorporation, which occurred on July 11, 1903. A Moorish-style arch was adopted as a symbol for Alhambra as a nod to its Spanish namesake, as well as a symbol of the city’s role as the gateway to the San Gabriel Valley from Los Angeles. It is currently part of the City’s logo and incorporated into public art throughout Alhambra.

Alhambra’s local businesses and manufacturing sectors created a prosperous local economy that attracted people from all over the world.

Alhambra underwent tremendous population growth and economic expansion throughout the twentieth century. A mere decade after incorporation, Alhambra’s population grew from 500 to 5,000. By 1930, the population rose to 30,000 and by 1950, over 50,000 people called Alhambra home. While the City’s growth benefitted from its close proximity to Los Angeles, Alhambra succeeded in developing its own economy by successfully attracting dozens of manufacturing plants and businesses.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, Alhambra’s population growth was fueled by immigration. Alhambra embraced a wave of Italian immigrants in the 1950s, Mexican immigrants in the 1960s, and Chinese immigrants in the 1980s. Today, over one-half of the
Community Profile

City’s population is foreign born—making Alhambra not only the Gateway to the San Gabriel Valley, but a gateway into an American life. These first generation immigrants help inject new life and business into the city and bring firm ties to a global economy.

This substantial, diversified growth poses a challenge to Alhambra’s leadership. Alhambra must actively plan to achieve a balance between preserving Alhambra’s historic small-town feel while exploring areas for new development to accommodate a growing population and an expanding economy.

Local Governance

Residents and business owners in Alhambra expect quality leadership and decision-making from their City government. As a municipal organization, the city of Alhambra conducts the public’s business on behalf of the present and future people of Alhambra. The City, through its programs, services, leadership and decision-making, helps develop human capital and strengthen the social network of the community.

Information in this section, unless otherwise noted, is based on communications with the city of Alhambra during June of 2015.

City Council

The City Council sets policy through the approval of actions and resolutions, and adoption of municipal ordinances. The Council is also charged with the allocation of City resources through the adoption of the annual City Budget. The City Council appoints the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Commission Members. The Council provides direction to the City Manager and staff in duly noticed public meetings.

In addition to completing day-to-day activities in Alhambra, the City Council represents the City to County and regional governmental agencies and carries out a great variety of other municipal responsibilities.
Five City Council members are elected at large by the voters as Alhambra’s representatives for four-year terms of office from five geographic districts. Under a rotational system adopted in 1984, each of the Council Members will serve as mayor for a nine-month period. The Mayor holds no additional voting powers but is responsible for conducting the City Council meetings.

**Staff Resources**

The City Manager supervises and directs the administration of the various City departments; presents recommendations and information to enable the City Council to make decisions on matters of policy; coordinates the City’s working relationship with external agencies and organizations; oversees the planning and funding of major city projects; serves as a liaison to improve communications between the City Administration, community organizations and citizens; and works to maximize efficiency and customer satisfaction with City services.

In addition to the City Manager’s office, the City comprises 11 departments, most of which house multiple divisions. These departments are as follows:

**CITY MANAGER/MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

The City Manager directs and oversees the day-to-day operations of all eleven City departments and serves as City Council’s chief advisor. The Management Services Department administers the City Waste and Recycling program and the administration of the City’s HUD funds.

**ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

Coordinates and prepares City Council meeting agendas and records official proceedings, ensures integrity of City’s public records, maintains vital statistics of the city, oversees elections, coordinates official City ceremonies, investigates violations of the municipal code, serves as the unbiased liaison between the community and the City, keeps constituents informed about news and events through the *Around Alhambra* and other local media, City website and cable TV Channel 3, and maintains City facilities.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Administers all emergency response services, protects lives and property from fire and other disasters, provides effective emergency medical services, coordinates community safety awareness and fire prevention programs, conducts plan checks and fire inspections, issues public safety permits, safeguards the public from the dangers of hazardous waste.

**PUBLIC WORKS**

Develops, builds and maintains the City’s physical infrastructure including maintenance of city landscaping, streets and sidewalks, street lighting and signals, traffic signs; maintains the city’s fleet and equipment; develops plans for future transportation needs of the City.

**FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

Controls financial operations of the City: accounting, banking, billing and collections, develops an annual budget (approved by the City Council); prepares State Controllers Report and Comprehensive Annual Financial Report; and oversees investment portfolios of the City.
Utilities Division

Provides the community with a dependable source of clean water and efficient disposal of sewage and storm water by means of a well-maintained infrastructure, highly-trained and professional personnel, and state-of-the-art equipment; educates the public about water conservation, water awareness and regulatory mandates.

Development Services

Administers planning, zoning, building, housing and economic development/redevelopment services; assists business owners and developers through the review and approval process; develops a comprehensive, long-term plan for development and improved land use; eliminates areas of urban blight and underlying causes; promotes quality development and rehabilitates existing structures, encourages business growth and development that creates local employment opportunities and increases the City’s tax base to support and enhance municipal services.

Personnel Department

Administers human resources; attracts and retains highly competent and qualified employees; maintains the City’s classification and compensation plan; ensures equal employment opportunities and compliance with various state and federal mandates; assists departments in resolving human resource issues.

Community Services

Administers, manages and implements programs to maintain and beautify parklands and recreational facilities and leisure service programs; coordinates community special events, civic and cultural programs, comprehensive senior programs, weekly farmer’s market, community garden, senior transportation services, and volunteer services.

Library Services

Administers library resources including acquiring, circulating, maintaining and securing library materials for the citizens of Alhambra.

Police Department

Administers public safety and has implemented several special programs to control criminal activity in Alhambra including the juvenile crime reduction plan, traffic safety checkpoints, and parole compliance sweeps. These efforts have contributed to an overall downward trend in crime rates for Alhambra from 2000 to 2015. Overall, Alhambra has a relatively low crime rate when compared with the County as a whole.
Figure 4. City Organizational Chart

City Council

City Manager

- Management Services
- Development Services
- Fire
- Community Services
- Police
- Utilities

- Administrative Services
- Finance
- Library
- Personnel
- Public Works

City Attorney (Contract)
Commissions and Committees

Various City commissions and committees assist the Council on matters within their area of responsibility and interest, as prescribed by the City Council and the Municipal Code. They help focus attention on specific issues and problems and recommend actions and alternatives for Council consideration. They also provide channels of communication and information among City government, the general public, and community groups.

Appointment of members of these Citizen Boards and Commissions is one of the important responsibilities of City Council. Tenure of service is limited to one (1) year with the provision that an individual may be reappointed annually up to a maximum of eight (8) years of consecutive service excepting Youth Commission service, which is limited to a maximum of four (4) consecutive years. Alhambra’s commissions and committees include the following:

Arts and Cultural Events Committee (5 members)
Prepares an annual plan for the "Art in Public Places" program; recommends to the City Council the purchase of art work to be displayed on public property, support for the performing arts, and the purchase and improvement of real property to be used for the display of art work.

Civil Service Commission and Board of Appeals (5 members)
Conducts hearings and renders decisions on all quasi-judicial and other general matters assigned to it; functions as the City’s Civil Service Commission.

Design Review Board (5 members)
Has design control over all commercial, industrial and residential planned development permits reviewed by the Planning Commission; reviews uniform sign plans for all multi-tenant buildings; and acts as a consulting board to the City Council with respect to design control and signage matters.

Environmental Committee (5 members)
Participates in an advisory role to develop City initiatives related to energy and resources conservation, protecting the environment and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and saving energy-related costs to the City.

HCDA Citizen Advisory Committee (HCDA) (10 members)
Participates in an advisory role in planning, implementing and assessing the City’s community development program.

Board of Library Trustees: (5 members)
Manages the City's public library system pursuant to the provisions of general law and the Alhambra City Charter.

Parks and Recreation Commission (10 members)
Acts as a consulting and advisory board to the City Council and makes recommendations in an advisory capacity on matters pertaining to recreation, and such subjects having to do with the orderly and consistent development of parks and recreation.
Planning Commission (10 members)
Acts as a consulting and advisory board to the City Council with respect to zoning and planning matters.

Successor Agency Oversight Board to the Alhambra Redevelopment Agency (7 members)
Has authority to pay enforceable obligations as approved by the State Department of Finance and administer the dissolution and wind-down of the former Redevelopment Agency.

Transportation Commission (10 members)
Acts as a consulting and advisory board to the City Council with respect to traffic and transportation matters.

Youth Commission (10 members)
Acts as an advisory board to the City Council with respect to matters pertaining to the activities or needs of the youth in the City.

Community Achievements

The City of Alhambra has received numerous awards and recognition for outstanding achievement in a variety of areas including redevelopment, economic development, education, and recreation. In 2010, the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) awarded Alhambra with an Eddy Award for “Most Business-Friendly City in Los Angeles County” with a population over 60,000. The LAEDC noted that:

Alhambra offers a favorable combination of housing, business, employment and recreational opportunities. Alhambra’s Economic Development Element in its General Plan provides a blueprint to sustain and grow commerce and businesses including industrial and central business district project areas, financial assistance in redevelopment areas, land acquisition, negotiated sales, lease agreements with an option to purchase, rent subsidy, and rebates. Alhambra was also named a finalist in 2009.

On December 29, 2011, the State Supreme Court upheld the State-mandated dissolution of Redevelopment Agencies under Assembly Bill 1X 26 and invalidated AB1X 27, which would have allowed cities to make “voluntary” payments to retain redevelopment authority. Before the dissolution of Redevelopment Agencies, the City received the prestigious California Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Award of Excellence three times. The award, given in nine categories, recognized the best projects and programs of California’s 340 redevelopment agencies that resulted in building better communities. Alhambra received the 2005 CRA Award of Excellence for Community Revitalization for creating a more livable, walkable downtown, the 2004 CRA Award of Excellence for Public Spaces & Linkages for Alhambra Renaissance Plaza, and the 2000 CRA Award of Excellence for Mixed Use Development for Plaza on Main, which revitalized downtown retail and created low-income senior housing. In 2007, Alhambra received the CRA Showcase Project Recognition in Public Spaces & Linkages for the Alhambra Summer Jubilee, which served as an outstanding example for building better communities. Without the
use of its Redevelopment Agency as a tool for economic revitalization and development, the City faces the challenge of developing alternative methods to achieve the same ends.

Awards

California Redevelopment Association

2007 “Showcase Project” Recognition: Public Spaces & Linkages, Alhambra Summer Jubilee
2005 Award of Excellence for Community Revitalization, Mosaic on Main Street Downtown Alhambra
2004 Award of Excellence for Public Spaces, Alhambra Renaissance Plaza
2000 Award of Excellence for Mixed Use Development, Plaza on Main

Economic Development

2010 L.A. County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) Eddy Award Winner for the Most Business-Friendly City in Los Angeles County
2009 L.A. County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) Eddy Award Finalist for the Most Business-Friendly City in Los Angeles County
2005 San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership Community of the Quarter

Community Development

2014 Livability.com Award Winner for the Top 100 Best Places to Live in the country
2000 J. Gunther Blue Ribbon Award for Practices in Community Development presented by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the redevelopment of Fremont Plaza.
Western City Magazine (article) “Show Me the Money: The Economic Impact of Redevelopment” (with recognition of Main Street)
California Redevelopment Association “Redevelopment: Building Better Communities: A Primer for Citizens and Public Officials” (for Main Street)

Schools

2013-14 Distinguished School Award – AUSD Monterey Highlands and Garfield Schools
2012-13 Distinguished School Award – AUSD Park Elementary
2011-12 Distinguished School Award – AUSD Brightwood Elementary
2010-11 Title I Academic Achievement Award - AUSD: Repetto Elementary and William Northrup Elementary
2009-10 Title I Academic Achievement Award - AUSD: Martha Baldwin Elementary and Repetto Elementary
2008-09 Title I Academic Achievement Award - AUSD: Garfield Elementary
2007-08 Title I Academic Achievement Award - AUSD: Garfield Elementary
2006-07 Title I Academic Achievement Award - AUSD: Emery Park, Fremont Elementary, Garfield Elementary School, Martha Baldwin, Monterey Highlands School, Park Elementary, Ramona Elementary, Ynez School
2004-05 Title I Academic Achievement Award - AUSD: Marguerita Elementary, Martha Baldwin Elementary, Monterey Highlands Elementary, Ramona Elementary, William Northrup Elementary, Ynez Elementary, Alhambra High School, Mark Keppel High School

2008 Distinguished School Award presented by the California Department of Education- Park Elementary School

2006 Distinguished School Award presented by the California Department of Education- Martha Baldwin Elementary, William Northrup Elementary, Ynez Elementary School

2005 Distinguished School Award presented by the California Department of Education- Mark Keppel High School

2004 Distinguished School Award presented by the California Department of Education- Ramona Elementary, Park Elementary, Marguerita Elementary

2002 Distinguished School Award presented by the California Department of Education- Fremont Elementary

Parks

2006 California Parks & Recreation Society “Recreation & Community Service” Award for the City’s Summer Jubilee event.

1994 California Parks & Recreation Society “Recreation Programming” Award for Service Programs

Demographics

Demographic factors, including the relationships between income, household composition, age, race and ethnicity, and birth rates establish existing — and affect future — housing needs, educational and recreational facility demands, and community program needs.

Population

The City of Alhambra is one of 88 cities in Los Angeles County. In 2015, it had 85,545 residents, making it the 22nd most populous city in the county. As shown in Table 2, From 2010 to 2015, Alhambra’s population increased by about three percent from 83,089 to 85,545, putting the current population just under year 2000 records. All five cities in the region experienced similar increases in their population. The region’s stable population is in part a reflection of decreasing birth rates in the past decade. While Alhambra’s population has changed only slightly in the past 20 years, fundamental changes have occurred in other key demographics.
Table 2. Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alhambra</td>
<td>82,106</td>
<td>85,804</td>
<td>83,089</td>
<td>85,545</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>-3.2%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monterey Park</td>
<td>60,738</td>
<td>60,051</td>
<td>60,269</td>
<td>62,063</td>
<td>-1.1%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemead</td>
<td>51,638</td>
<td>53,505</td>
<td>53,764</td>
<td>55,017</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Gabriel</td>
<td>37,120</td>
<td>39,804</td>
<td>39,718</td>
<td>40,517</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>-0.2%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Pasadena</td>
<td>23,936</td>
<td>24,292</td>
<td>25,619</td>
<td>26,174</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple City</td>
<td>31,100</td>
<td>33,377</td>
<td>35,558</td>
<td>36,275</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles County</td>
<td>8,863,128</td>
<td>9,519,338</td>
<td>9,818,605</td>
<td>10,136,559</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Birth Rates**

Statewide, birth rates have steadily decreased since 1990 for nearly all age groups (see Figure 5). The most significant decrease has been for teenage mothers and mothers between the ages of 20-29. A 2011 state-level look at fertility indicates a strong correlation between lower birth rates and economic distress. Because Alhambra, like the rest of California, was impacted by the recession, this may explain the decrease in birth rates. Research suggests that fertility decline during an economic downturn is largely a postponement of childbearing, not a decision to have fewer children or no children at all. It suggests that as the United States’ economic recovery progresses, birth rates will tick back up to pre-recession levels in Alhambra and throughout the nation. Historical and projected birth rate data from the California Department of Finance is shown in Figure 5.
## Figure 5. Historical and Projected Births

### CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED BIRTHS
**BY AGE GROUP OF MOTHER, 1990-2023**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age 15-19</th>
<th>Age 20-24</th>
<th>Age 25-29</th>
<th>Age 30-34</th>
<th>Age 35-39</th>
<th>Age 40-44</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>680,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>640,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>620,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>590,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>570,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>550,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>530,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>510,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>490,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>470,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
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<td>50,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>410,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>390,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>290,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>190,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>90,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Age composition is an important factor in determining demand for health care, community facilities and the types of housing that should be provided within a community. Alhambra’s population is aging. The median age in Alhambra in 2000 was 35, by 2013 it was estimated at 39.8. From 2000-2013, the percentage of the population over age 45 steadily increased, while the percentage of those under age 45 decreased. Specifically, the child-bearing age group (25-44 years) decreased most significantly from 34 percent of the population in 2000 to 30 percent in 2013. This decrease was accompanied by a decrease in school-age children (5-19 years). As reflected in enrollment data collected for the Alhambra Unified School District (see Figure 7), enrollment among elementary and high school students has steadily declined.

**Figure 6. Age Distribution 2000-2013, Alhambra**

Although Alhambra’s population is aging, its age distribution is similar to the surrounding region (see Figure 8). For both Alhambra and the surrounding region, senior adults comprise at least 15 percent of the population and the median age is approximately 40 years. The median age in Alhambra and the local region is noticeably older than Los Angeles County (whose median age is 35.1 years) and California (whose median age is 35.4 years).

Adult and elderly residents have different demands for community facilities than younger residents, such as for lifelong learning opportunities and access to health care. Alhambra already offers a diverse range of senior-oriented programming, and is in an ongoing process of developing senior housing and care facilities.
Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Alhambra’s population is approximately 11 percent white, 52 percent Asian, 35 percent Latino, 1 percent black, and two percent other, making Alhambra a “majority-minority” City (see Figure 9). The term majority-minority refers to jurisdictions where non-Hispanic whites comprise less than 50 percent of the population. Los Angeles County is a majority-minority jurisdiction, and California is one of four majority-minority states in the country. One important distinction is that in Alhambra and the surrounding region, the Asian population constitutes the largest racial group (52 percent and 58 percent, respectively). In Los Angeles County, Latinos make up the largest racial group (48 percent). Understanding the City’s diversity is significant for many reasons. Language translation may be important for service provision and various cultural holidays may be celebrated by residents. One notable benefit is that diverse communities can also have substantial connections to the global economy which can lead to higher socioeconomic levels for its residents.

Ethnic grocery stores and restaurants provide a variety of foods and specialty items to Alhambra’s diverse population.
Figure 9. Racial and Ethnic Diversity
When compared with the surrounding region, Alhambra has a lower proportion of married couples (47 percent versus 54 percent) and a higher percentage of non-family households (30 percent versus 23 percent). This may be due in part to a decreasing population in the 25-44 years age group, and in part to a higher percentage of lower income people in Alhambra than in the surrounding region. Generally, lower income levels correspond with postponing or abstaining from marriage. This trend may have become more pronounced during the economic recession due to people choosing to postpone marriage and/or childbirth for economic reasons. An improving economy may dampen or reverse this trend. According to a recently-released study by the National Center for Health Statistics, the birth rate among women ages 15 to 44 increased by 1 percent from 2013 to 2014, the first increase since 2007, at the beginning of the recession (USA Today 2015). This increase in childbirth, however, may or may not correspond to an increase in marriage.

**Figure 10. Household Composition**

![Diagram showing household composition for California, LA County, Region not including Alhambra, and Alhambra](image-url)
**Household Size**

In 2013, the average household size for Alhambra was 2.83 persons, a slight decrease from the 2000 average of 2.88 persons. Alhambra’s average household size is slightly smaller than that of County (3.01) and the State (2.94). It is also significantly smaller than the average household size for most of the surrounding region (3.11 persons or higher), with the exception of South Pasadena, whose average household size was 2.5 persons. The main differences between Alhambra and the region are the number of single person households and large households (five or more persons). In Alhambra, 25 percent of households contain only one person. In comparison, about 19 percent of households in the surrounding region are single person households. In addition, approximately 11 percent of Alhambra’s households were considered large, while 16 percent of the region’s households were considered large. This household composition typically reflects an aging population.

![Figure 11. Household Size](image)

Changes in household composition and size together significantly affect the demand for a diversity of housing types. Alhambra is continually looking for ways to meet the housing needs of its residents, including preserving single family neighborhoods and identifying appropriate locations for multifamily housing such as in its downtown. Due to the built-out nature of the City, an ongoing challenge for Alhambra will be finding ways to meet new demands for new housing types while preserving the community’s valued single family homes.
In 2013, the median income for Alhambra households was $54,148, three percent lower than the County average of $55,909. Compared to the region, Alhambra has slightly more people living on less than $25,000 year (23 percent versus 21 percent). One explanation for this difference may be that Alhambra’s unemployment rate (eight percent) is higher than most other cities in the region—with the exception of Rosemead (which also has an unemployment rate of eight percent). While Alhambra’s unemployment rate is high, it is lower than the County’s (11 percent). Economic recovery is anticipated to further increase employment and incomes for Alhambra residents.

Lower income households typically face challenges related to housing and other expenditures because a greater percentage of their income must be allocated to meeting housing costs and other basic needs. The City and local civil society organizations offer a variety of assistance and resources to help those in need during challenging economic periods.

Figure 12. Household Income Distribution


Generally, the data in this section shows that Alhambra is undergoing significant demographic change, with a population that is older and has a different ethnic profile than in the past. These factors, along with declining birth rates and household sizes, could have significant implications for the wants and needs of the community, including housing type preference, educational needs, healthcare needs, and shopping preferences. Housing, education, and employment, and economics are all discussed in subsequent sections of this report.
Developing Human Capital

Human capital refers to the broad range of skills, knowledge, and ability possessed by each community member. Communities can invest in human capital by offering resources that people can use to develop existing skills or acquire new ones. Schooling, higher education opportunities, health care, general social services, and age and need-specific programs are examples of how Alhambra cultivates human capital.

Measuring School District Performance

School performance is an indicator of Alhambra’s ability to provide its youth with a foundation for independence, higher education, and career development. Alhambra is located in the Alhambra Unified School District (AUSD), which has a total of 13 schools grades K-8, three traditional high schools (grades 9-12), and two nontraditional high schools (grades 9-12). Of the District’s 13 elementary schools, nine are primarily dedicated to serving the Alhambra community and four are dedicated to serving the adjacent community of Monterey Park. Ramona Elementary School recently converted from public to private. Two of the District’s high schools are located in Alhambra and serve the majority of the Alhambra community (Alhambra High and Mark Keppel High). San Gabriel High School primarily serves residents of San Gabriel. Century High School, a continuation school, and Independence High School, an alternative education program, are two nontraditional high schools that serve the entire district.

Since the 2004-2005 academic school year, the District has seen a steady decline in public school enrollment (California Department of Education 2015), as shown previously in Figure 7. As a result, AUSD has reduced the total number of classrooms while maintaining the same class sizes (full classes, but not utilizing every available classroom in every school). For the past five years, Alhambra High School in particular has experienced a significant decline in student enrollment, with approximately 700 students less than previous years. For this analysis, only the performance indicators for traditional schools that mainly serve Alhambra residents (Alhambra and Mark Keppel high schools) have been evaluated.

For the 2013-2014 school year, Alhambra’s nine elementary schools educated 6,322 students and employed 255 teachers, with an average ratio of 23 students per teacher (SARC 2015). Taken together, Alhambra and Mark Keppel high schools, whose boundary areas also include portions of Rosemead and South San Gabriel, educated 5,032 students and employed 192 teachers, with an average ratio of 26 students per teacher (SARC 2015). The District measures several types of student development at different levels and participates in state and federal student performance evaluation programs.

The Academic Performance Index is a state assessment of educational growth in California public schools. API scores range from 200 to 1,000, with a statewide target of 800. In 2013, all nine Alhambra elementary schools exceeded the statewide target. Another way to understand a school’s API score is to evaluate it against other schools in the state and rank the school from 1 to 10; a statewide rank of 1 means that the school has an API score in the lowest ten percent of all schools in the state, while a statewide rank of 10 means that the school has an API score in the highest ten percent of all schools in the state. In Alhambra, two of the nine elementary schools received a statewide rank of 6, three schools received a 7, three schools received an 8, and one school – Martha Baldwin Elementary – received a 9. The City’s two traditional high schools,
Alhambra and Mark Keppel high schools, also exceeded the statewide target in 2013 with a statewide rank of seven and nine, respectively (California School Ratings 2015).

The No Child Left Behind Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a federal measure of annual scholastic improvement, is a way to evaluate a school’s performance over time. AYP is evaluated on a “yes or no” basis (yes, the school achieved AYP, or no, it did not) in terms of its overall performance, in English/language arts (ELA) performance, math performance, and API score. None of Alhambra’s nine elementary schools achieved AYP on all four of these major evaluation categories (California Department of Education, 2013) for the 2013 school year. Additionally, both Alhambra and Mark Keppel high schools did not achieve AYP in their API score (California Department of Education 2013). In the 2009-2010 school year, seven of the nine elementary schools and both high schools achieved AYP. Standardized testing is still an important way for schools to measure student achievement. The most common standardized performance measure in California schools is the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program which identifies the percentage of a school’s students that are at the Proficient or Advanced level (meeting or exceeding state standards) in ELA, math, science, and history-social science. AUSD consistently exceeds statewide proficiency averages in all four categories. For the 2012-2013 school year, all nine Alhambra elementary schools achieved proficiency scores in ELA and math above state average, eight out of nine performed above the state average in science, and five out of nine performed above the state average in history-social science. While the proficiency scores for both Alhambra and Mark Keppel high schools were in line with state averages, there is room for improvement in math and science (SARC, 2015).

Youth Programming

The City of Alhambra offers a variety of programs to entertain, educate, and enrich the lives of Alhambra’s youth. Many of these programs are offered through the Community Services Department or in conjunction with local organizations. Youth Programs and Services organizes several sports leagues including baseball, flag football, volleyball, tennis, and a cheerleading program. It also organizes recreational sports and activities including badminton, basketball, bowling, cheerleading, dance, drill team, physical fitness, golf, gymnastics, individual sports, tennis and table tennis, volleyball, and martial arts. During the school year, the Community Services Department manages afterschool youth recreation programs at nine Alhambra school sites and include activities such as team and individual sports, arts and crafts, table game tournaments, four square, and kickball. The American Youth Soccer Organization Region 60 includes players from Alhambra and
Monterey Park ages 4 through 18. The popular soccer league holds games in Almansor Park. In 2011, the Alhambra City Council recognized four Region 60 teams for their on-field achievements including the Under 12 Girls’ Team which won the 2011 State Championship.

Besides organized recreation, the City provides additional educational opportunities for Alhambra’s youth. The Alhambra Civic Center Library offers many activities each month to coincide with holidays and general learning such as the homework help program. The Alhambra Police Department offers comprehensive child safety curriculums including Drug Abuse Resistance Education, traffic safety, conflict resolution and more. The Police Explorers Program provides a means for youth, between the ages of 14 and 20, to determine through actual experience and training if they would like to pursue a career in law enforcement. Teens learn through lecture and practical experience about the day-to-day operations of the Alhambra Police Department, as well as the skills and education necessary to be a law enforcement officer. The Police Explorers Program, associated with the Alhambra Fire Department and Boy Scouts of America, provides opportunities for Alhambra youth to develop leadership skills and work alongside career firefighters, paramedics, and fire prevention officers, assisting them with public education activities. The Alhambra Youth Commission is a ten-member advisory board that provides the opportunity for civic-minded teenagers age 14-20 to conduct investigations in matters pertaining to the activities or needs of Alhambra youth.

**Senior Programming**

Approximately 20 percent of Alhambra’s residents are age 60 and older. Senior programs that improve the health and quality of life for Alhambra’s seniors are an important service. Many senior activities are offered through the Community Services Department, Senior Division at the Joslyn Adult Recreation Center. In 2011, the Center underwent an extensive $900,000 renovation which included the addition of energy-saving features, new air conditioning, and ADA compliant features.

Senior programming in Alhambra includes an array of recreational activities, social services, trips, nutrition classes, transportation, and health and wellness programs. Nutritious senior lunches are provided at the Center Monday-Friday at 11 a.m. Health and wellness programs include medical screenings, informational session on disease prevention and management, home safety and nutrition. Holiday events and day trips around Southern California are scheduled throughout the year. Senior Services prints and distributes a newsletter, “Senior Scene,” which highlights programs, services, and activities offered by the City. A senior activities calendar is also posted on the City’s website.
Community Profile

For seniors with transportation needs, the Group Grocery Run service enables seniors to travel to grocery stores. Senior Ride drivers assist seniors on and off the vehicle with their bags. The City also sponsors a free hot meals program, a home-delivered meal program which delivers hot meals at no additional cost to homebound seniors age 60 and over. Senior Ride Service provides free curb-to-curb service for Alhambra residents, ages 60 and up or disabled persons of any age. Participants are transported throughout Alhambra for any purpose and up to two miles outside city limits for medical appointments.

Social Services

Some of the area’s best healthcare options are located in and around Alhambra. The City of Alhambra Senior Services offers case management to senior adults age 60 and older and to functionally impaired adults age 18 and older. Case management can provide assistance with Medicare and Medi-Cal, referrals for counseling, nutrition, transportation, and more in English, Spanish, Cantonese, and Mandarin. These services allow Alhambra seniors to remain living independently in their homes as they age. Several nonprofit cultural health organizations in Alhambra such as the Buddhist Tzu Chi clinic and Chinatown Service Center provide free and low cost health care services to those in need. These services, along with the multilingual services provided by the City, are especially important in a linguistically and culturally diverse City like Alhambra.

Alhambra Hospital Medical Center (AHMC) is an award-winning general acute care hospital located on South Raymond Avenue in Alhambra. The six-story facility is located on 5.5 acres with room for expansion. The hospital was owned by the City of Alhambra and operated as a nonprofit organization from 1924 until it was sold in 1991. It is currently owned by AHMC and run as a privately-held for-profit institution. AHMC currently maintains 144 beds and over 300 medical doctors from 32 different specialties.

Additional medical service facilities are located in the surrounding communities. The Garfield Medical Center, San Gabriel Valley Medical Center, Huntington Memorial Hospital, Los Angeles County-USC Health Network, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, City of Hope National Medical Center, and UCLA Medical Center are all within a 30 minute drive from Alhambra.

Child Care and Elder Care

The Community Service Department offers a summer lunch program for kids under the age of 18. Parents of children under the age of 5 may need to use day-time child care services while parents are at work. In 2013, approximately 4,377 children under the age of 5 and another 3,914 children ages 5 to 9 lived in Alhambra — the ages for which child care services are considered most essential (US Census Bureau, 2015). The City of Alhambra has over 45 licensed child care
facilities including state-run, nonprofit, and privately owned preschools and day care centers.

Elderly adults are another group that may need outside assistance or care. Local facilities that provide care for the elderly allow residents to remain in their community as they age. There are several senior housing and adult care facilities in Alhambra. Five public (four rental and one owner-occupied) facilities provide affordable independent living and assisted living units for Alhambra seniors. Alhambra also has eight privately owned senior living and adult day care centers.

**Civil Society Organizations**

Civil society refers to the sphere of voluntary associations and informal networks of a community in which individuals and groups participate. Faith-based and neighborhood organizations, cooperatives, charities, unions, clubs, foundations, and social movements are all components of a strong civil society.

Based on information collected by GuideStar, a database of nonprofit organizations, there are approximately 300 registered nonprofits operating in Alhambra including the City’s Chamber of Commerce and YMCA (GuideStar 2015). Based on 2015 data, that figure averages to 3.5 nonprofits per 1,000 residents of the City — lower than the San Gabriel Valley average of 4.93 nonprofits per 1,000 residents, and the national average of 5.62 nonprofits per 1,000 residents (Guidestar 2015).

The Chamber of Commerce is one of Alhambra’s most prominent civil society organizations. It has over 400 members and meets the third Thursday of the month for a Chamber Lunch and Learn Program and the fourth Wednesday of the month for a Business after Hours Mixer. It supports and promotes local businesses through numerous community events such as the Lunar New Year Festival and the Alhambra Business Expo, and in the past, has supported the Alhambra Summer Jubilee. It also sponsors an annual golf tournament to raise money for its scholarship program. In September of each year, the Chamber awards the annual Alhambra Beautiful Award recognizing the City’s best residential, commercial, and industrial properties. The Chamber of Commerce has also organized the City’s float entry for the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade. The Chamber publishes a monthly community newspaper, *Around Alhambra*, online and in paper format.
The YMCA of West San Gabriel Valley was opened in 1912 by State Senator N.W. Thompson, Spencer W. Hudson, and Judge W.H. Northrup. Through a partnership with the City of Alhambra, the current site at East Corto Street opened in 1993 to serve the City of Alhambra, Monterey Park, Rosemead, and San Gabriel. The YMCA has held steadfast to a commitment of programs that build healthy kids, healthy families, and healthy communities (YMCA 2015). The YMCA of West San Gabriel Valley aims to bring a sense of belonging to the community by promoting strong basic values and feelings of high self-worth that are critical for everyone. The mission and purpose of the YMCA of San Gabriel is continually demonstrated in programs such as after-school enrichment, youth leadership and development, youth and adult fitness, camping, and family support activities.

Several national clubs are represented in Alhambra. The Alhambra Lions Club, the Alhambra Masonic Lodge No. 322, Kiwanis Club of Alhambra, Knights of Columbus No. 2341, and the Rotary Club of Alhambra are active in the community.

**COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Alhambra hosts several community events throughout the year for residents to gather and celebrate the City’s history and diversity. The annual Taste of Alhambra attracts over a thousand foodies who come together to enjoy food and wine from local restaurants, wineries, and beverage trucks. On an ongoing basis, local foodies can shop for over 600 varieties of fresh fruits,
vegetables, flower, and plants at Alhambra’s Certified Farmer’s Market held every Sunday on South Second Street between Main and Commonwealth.

Celebrating the holidays is also an important part of the City’s social events calendar. The Chamber of Commerce sponsors a Halloween Costume Contest & Trick-or-Treating in October and a Tree Lighting Ceremony in December. Both of these events provide activities and entertainment for residents of all ages. Each year, approximately 50,000 people attend the San Gabriel Valley Annual Lunar New Year Parade and Festival on Valley Boulevard to watch the parade, sample Chinese food, and check out over 250 booths and cultural exhibits.

In past years, the Alhambra Summer Jubilee occurred over six Saturday evenings throughout the summer on Second Street in Downtown Alhambra. It attracted over ten to fifteen thousand attendees to watch musical performance by local, national, and even international musicians. The Summer Jubilee also included a variety of family-oriented activities such as games, arts and crafts, and food vendors. The Summer Jubilee was successful in its goal of revitalizing the downtown business district by attracting new visitors to the diverse shops and restaurants. The 2006 Summer Jubilee was recognized as a “Showcase Project” by the California Redevelopment Association and received the “Best of the Best” Award for community entertainment by the California Parks & Recreation Association.

The Alhambra Downtown Business Association sponsors the Alhambra Hot Spot, a community event which brought music, dance, art, and fashion on Saturday evenings at the Plaza at the Alhambra Renaissance Entertainment Center.

Clockwise from above left: a social hot spot; Taste of Alhambra; Halloween Costume Contest; Alhambra’s float “On Track in 2010” at the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade.
FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Alhambra is home to over fifty churches and faith-based organizations of numerous denominations and languages. This variety reflects the community’s support and celebration of the religious and ethnic diversity of its residents. Many church congregations consist of members from dozens of countries and they hold multilingual services or use headsets to translate services to Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Burmese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Japanese and more.

Alhambra’s faith-based organizations play an active role in community life. Many sponsor activities that complement existing City services. For example, Granada Park United Methodist Church delivers prepared meals to the homes of seniors, Alhambra First Baptist Church hosts the City of Alhambra Health Fair to educate the community, and several groups organize food pantries for those in need. Also, many churches open their spaces for community use such as gyms and outdoor space for recreation, and rooms for community classes on SAT prep or English as a Second Language.

Due to the strong and widespread influence of Alhambra’s faith-based organizations, the City sometimes collaborates with key religious leaders for outreach. Notably, the City reached out to several local churches who called upon their members to participate in the 2010 Census to ensure that Alhambra’s diverse population was accurately reflected in the decennial Census. Also, Alhambra’s Police Officers Association and the Alhambra Fire Department work with churches to identify families in need for food and toy donations at Christmas. Several of Alhambra’s churches and faith-based organizations also collaborate to host an annual BBQ on the Sunday closest to 9/11 Patriot Day to thank Alhambra’s Police and Fire Department for their services.

VOTER REGISTRATION AND VOTING RATES

In 2015, Alhambra had 37,538 registered voters, approximately 55 percent of the total age-eligible population. This is lower than the proportions for Los Angeles County where approximately 66 percent of the age-eligible population is registered to vote. Approximately 47 percent of the registered voters in Alhambra identified as Democrat, 18 percent are registered Republican, and the majority of the remaining residents are registered with no party preference.
In November 2014, the Alhambra General Municipal Election had a voter turnout of 32.3 percent. For the November 2012 Presidential Election, Alhambra reported a turnout rate of 67.4 percent.

**Library and Holdings**

In 2008, Alhambra celebrated the opening of the Alhambra Civic Center Library, a new, state-of-the-art facility located in the heart of the City. The two-story, 45,000 square foot facility, which cost $30 million to complete, is the City’s only library facility and attracts 44,000 visitors each month. Roughly three-quarters of these visitors are Alhambra residents. It has over 156,000 items in its collection including books, magazines, newspapers, audiobooks and DVDs. With a circulation of 500 items per hour and about 550,000 items annually, it is one of the busiest libraries in California.

In addition to providing local residents access to tangible materials, the library was also developed to serve as an electronic access point. It has 1.53 public access computers per 1,000 city residents, above the state average of 1 computer per 1000 state residents. In 2013, there were 93,951 log-ons. In 2014, there were 91,666 log-ons, a decrease of 2.4 percent. The library’s Children’s Room has 20 multi-function computers for children that offer educational games and word-processing programs, in addition to restricted internet connectivity.

The Alhambra Civic Center Library Foundation raises money to support the enhancement of library facilities, services, and programs. It also established a permanent library endowment to benefit the citizens of the greater Alhambra area.
PUBLIC ART

Several works of public art celebrate Alhambra’s culture and history. One of the most prominent is the Alhambra Arch at the corner of Valley and Fremont. Constructed in 2010, the 26-foot tall, Moorish-style arch stands in Gateway Plaza Park; the arch and surrounding plaza were designed by the Glendale architecture firm, Lawrence Moss and Associates. The arch symbolizes Alhambra as the “Gateway to the San Gabriel Valley” and is featured on the City’s logo.

The concept of Alhambra as a gateway also inspired the painting of the Alhambra Archway Mural in 2011 by Southern California native artist, Art Mortimer, a pioneer of the Los Angeles murals movement. The mural depicts an idealized view of the San Gabriel Valley in the 20th century as seen through an archway. It is located on Mission Road near Chapel Avenue. A second Mortimer mural is located in Shorb Garden. It commemorates the life and history of famed Alhambran James deBarth Shorb, a nineteenth century land and water baron. Shorb Garden also has a life-sized bronze statue of Shorb sculpted by local artist, Victor Amaro.

Colorful mosaics can be viewed throughout the City. Alhambra Renaissance Plaza is an inviting public space in the City’s downtown that is filled with colorful mosaic artwork and wispy dancing fountains. The curvaceous seating elements complement the surrounding shopping and dining areas and create an inviting outdoor seating arrangement. Installed above the elliptical entrance to Wing Lung Bank on Valley Boulevard is a 35 by 130 foot glass tile mural, the largest of its kind in North America. The mural’s abstract, multi-colored interpretation of Chinese landscape prints and paintings creates a unique presence for the Hong Kong-based bank.
Alhambra Archway Mural and other public art
As evident throughout this section, a wealth of services and opportunities for social and civic engagement are available in Alhambra. The City should continue to provide, nurture, and encourage these opportunities in order to build its human and social capital, with a focus on assessing the changing needs and desires of the community as it evolves over time.

ENVIRONMENT

Built Environment

The built environment provides the physical setting for human activity—it makes up the places where residents live, work, play, and learn. It consists of buildings, roads, parks, and all other infrastructure, which together forms the physical character of a community. Residential and nonresidential development, transportation facilities, public facilities, and overall community design character all contribute to Alhambra’s unique built environment. Together, they create a place where people will want to spend their time for years to come. Information in this section, unless otherwise noted, is based on communications with the City of Alhambra during June of 2015.

Existing Land Use

Alhambra is a built-out community with a land area totaling 4,864 acres. At 7.6 square miles, it is the second largest city in the region, smaller than Monterey Park (7.73 square miles) and larger than Rosemead (5.2 square miles). As shown in Figures 13 and Figure 14, residential land uses currently make up more than half (53 percent) of the City’s current land area, including single family residential (35 percent) and multifamily (18 percent). Rights of way, including streets and alleyways, make up 25 percent of Alhambra, for a total 1,202 acres. Since roadways are the second largest land use in Alhambra, they will continue to play a significant role in the City’s efforts to create a livable and sustainable community.

The remaining land uses include education and public facilities (6 percent), commercial (6 percent), industrial uses (3 percent), utilities and transportation (2.5 percent) and open space (4 percent) including parks, a golf course, and street medians. A very small area (less than 1 percent) of the City is vacant. While vacant land in Alhambra is limited, there are properties in Alhambra that are underutilized and well positioned for potential infill development.
Specific Plans

A specific plan is a tool for the systemic implementation of a jurisdiction’s General Plan. It serves as a link between implementing general plan policies and the proposed development in a specific area. A specific plan is a good tool for creating a “sense of place” in a community. Specific plans address the location and intensity of land uses, public streets, water and sewer improvements, development standards, and implementation.

Alhambra has ten specific plans. Many of the Plans, including but not limited to, Casita de Zen, 100 Bay State Street (Alhambra Walk), Alhambra Fifth and Main (Main Street Collection), and Alhambra Place, are located along the Main Street corridor or in the vicinity.

Valley Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan was adopted in 1990. Valley Boulevard Corridor encompasses 130 acres along 3.1 miles of Valley Boulevard. The Plan was designed to guide re-use and new development along the corridor. The Plan provides guidelines to ease traffic congestion, enhance the corridor’s physical appearance, and ensure that new development is sensitive to adjacent land use.

Alhambra Walk was approved in 2004. It transformed 2.69 acres of blighted and vacant land into a planned residential community with 129 dwelling units consisting of high-end single family attached units including two-level townhomes, one- and two-level lofts, and one-level flats.

Figure 13. Distribution of Existing Land Uses

Source: SCAG, 2006 and L.A. County Assessor, 2011
Alhambra Place was originally approved in 2006. It covers the 11-acre block located at the juncture of Garfield Avenue and Main Street. The Plan consists of a planned mixed-use development consisting of 260 luxury apartments and 140,000 square feet of commercial, restaurant, and retail space. In addition, there is a parking structure with subterranean and ground level parking for visitors while the upper levels are secured parking for the residents.

Alhambra 5th and Main Specific Plan, (Main Street Collection), was adopted in 2006. It is a project that transformed the site from an institutional use (the previous site of the Alhambra Public Library) into a planned mixed-use development consisting of 144 for-sale condominium units, 9,100 square feet of leasable, commercial/office space, and a subterranean parking garage.

Casita de Zen was approved in 2010. It transformed the site into a planned mixed-use development consisting of up to 94 for-sale multi-family residential units and up to 5,000 square feet of leasable commercial space. In addition, the complex contains at grade and subterranean parking spaces.

2300 Poplar Specific Plan was approved in 2011. The Plan transformed the 0.66-acre vacant site into a mixed-use development consisting of up to 104,000 square feet of self-storage and up to 4,300 square feet of leasable commercial space. The self-storage component consists of interior-accessible climate-controlled self-storage units. In addition the complex will contain open and covered parking spaces on the ground floor of the building.

Alhambra Pacific Plaza was approved in 2011. The project replaces an existing low-density full-service grocery located at 300 West Main Street, between 3rd and 4th Street. It is intended to revitalize the property, with a higher density and aesthetically-pleasing development, comprised of multiple uses that incorporate public and private open spaces, and provides additional parking for the district. This development will have a significant impact on the area, providing the above-mentioned amenities, as well as 118 new residential dwelling units. The residential use component will complement new ground floor retail/grocery and restaurant uses.

2500 West Hellman Avenue was approved in 2012. The plan covers approximately 1.25 acres of land. It transformed three older functionally obsolete retail/commercial structures and a former gasoline service station site into a self-storage development consisting of approximately 135,000 square feet of self-storage with a customer leasing-office and option to provide an on-site residence for the management.

Acacia and Marengo was approved in 2012. It transformed an underutilized development site into a planned residential community with 18 attached three-story townhome dwelling units.

2400 Fremont (Midwick Collection) was approved in 2015. The plan allows up to a 70-unit project, including 28 townhomes, 37 new single-family homes and retains 5 existing homes, which will be updated.
Figure 14. Map of Existing Land Uses

Source: SCAG 2008 and Los Angeles County Assessor, 2011
Figure 15. Specific Plan Map

- SP-1: Valley Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan
- SP-2: Alhambra Walk
- SP-3: Alhambra Place
- SP-4: Alhambra 5th and Main Specific Plan
- SP-5: Castilla de Zan
- SP-6: 2300 Pape Specific Plan
- SP-7: Alhambra Pacific Plaza
- SP-8: 2500 Ward Hallman Avenue
- SP-9: Acacia and Manero
- SP-10: 2400 Freemont

Downtown Specific Overlay
REDEVELOPMENT

In 2011, the State adopted Bill 1X 26, which dissolved redevelopment agencies. Before its dissolution, the Alhambra Redevelopment Agency (RDA) was part of the City’s Department of Development Services. There were three redevelopment project areas in Alhambra; the Industrial Area, the Industrial Added Area “A”, and the Central Business District, which encompassed a combined total of 580 acres. Development in these areas was funded through from various financial sources including RDA funds, HUD, CDBG, and Section 108 assistance. Completed redevelopment projects include retail commercial, office, industrial, automotive sales, theaters, restaurants, mixed use, and low and moderate income housing. These projects have created an estimated 1,375 jobs in Alhambra.

In addition to promoting economic prosperity, Alhambra redevelopment projects have been recognized for their contribution to creating a more livable, sustainable community. The Alhambra Redevelopment Agency received the prestigious California Redevelopment award for three Main Street Corridor projects: the 2000 CRA Award for Mixed Use Development and Plaza on Main including affordable senior housing, the 2004 CRA award for Public Spaces & Linkages for Alhambra Renaissance Plaza (including a 14-screen Edwards multiplex and five restaurants), and the 2005 Community Revitalization Award for creating a more livable, pedestrian-oriented district at Mosaic on Main.

Without the use of its Redevelopment Agency as a tool for economic revitalization and development, the City faces the challenge of developing alternative methods to achieve the same ends.
Clockwise from above left: Select redevelopment projects 38 Degrees, Alhambra Regency Plaza, the Plaza at the Alhambra Renaissance, and the Alhambra Volkswagen dealership.
NEIGHBORHOODS OF ALHAMBRA

Nineteenth century pamphlets proclaimed Alhambra the “City of Homes” due to its neighborhoods of eclectic family homes. Arts and Crafts bungalows, Spanish Colonials, Tudor-style manors, Beaux-Arts buildings, Victorian houses, and Moorish-influenced architecture all contribute to a diverse array of historic residences. While new development has displaced some homes and buildings, many of these structures remain standing today.

In 1984-85, the City commissioned the Alhambra Historic and Cultural Resources Survey to catalogue the City’s neighborhoods. It surveyed residential neighborhoods (shown in Figure 16) and additional sites throughout the City. In the past, single family homes were built as part of a larger subdivision. These subdivisions were often designed in accordance with the architectural trends and styles current at the time. As a result, each of Alhambra’s neighborhoods reflect their own unique style.

In the early 1900s, Alhambra’s residential development was concentrated in the City’s first communities including Alhambra (northwest of Mission Road and Atlantic Boulevard); Ramona (bounded by Valley Boulevard, Atlantic Boulevard, Hellman Avenue, and Fremont Avenue); Shorb (corner of Mission Road and Fremont Avenue); and Dolgeville (north of Shorb). Craftsman, Foursquare, Mediterranean, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Victorian architectural styles were the predominant styles at this time.

In the 1920s and 1930s, additional residential development occurred throughout Alhambra. During this period, new homes filled in existing neighborhoods, and most homes were built by individuals or small contractors. Architectural styles included Craftsman, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival with intermittent Colonial Revival, Modern, Monterey, and Ranch houses.

In the 1940s, undeveloped land around Almansor Park, the former Midwick Country Club, and the former Alhambra Airport property were developed into single family residential neighborhoods. Ranch style homes with their flexible layout and low cost were especially popular during this time. Most of the homes in these neighborhoods are Ranch houses with Colonial Revival and Modern touches.
Source: City of Alhambra
Adopted in 2009, the City’s Single Family Residential Design Guidelines take into consideration the historical context of Alhambra’s neighborhoods by providing guidance for renovation and development appropriate for Alhambra’s eight predominant architectural styles. Furthermore, Alhambra’s zoning code serves to preserve the character and integrity of existing neighborhoods. The Planning Commission and City Council value Alhambra’s existing single family neighborhoods and analyzes the potential impact of development on the City’s neighborhoods.

Housing

HOUSING TYPE

Over the past 20+ years the number of housing units in Alhambra has increased by approximately 4 percent, growing by 1,119 units from 30,086 units in 2000 to 31,205 units in 2013. The composition of Alhambra’s housing stock has changed very little since 2000, with single family homes comprising the majority of the total housing units available in Alhambra. In 2013, 44 percent of Alhambra’s housing units were multi-family units, similar to Los Angeles County (42 percent), but significantly higher than California (31 percent). The State Department of Finance reported a current housing inventory of 31,245 units as of January 2015.

Figure 17. Housing Type 1990 and 2010


TENANCY

Tenancy refers to whether a household owns or rents its current home. Diversity in home ownership and rental opportunities allows people of all incomes, household sizes, and preferences to have choices related to types of housing in a range of locations. In 2013, owners accounted for 41 percent of Alhambra households and renters for 59 percent. In the region, 53 percent of units were owner occupied while renters constituted 47 percent of households.
RESIDENTIAL VACANCY RATES

The housing vacancy rate measures how the supply of available housing meets the demand for different types of housing. Housing policy analyses usually consider housing vacancy rates of 3 to 4 percent as reasonable. In 2013, Alhambra’s vacancy rate was 5.9 percent, slightly above this reasonable range. The region’s vacancy rate in 2013 was the same, while Los Angeles County’s was higher at 6.4 percent.

The City’s vacancy rate of 5.9 percent was a small increase from the 2010 vacancy rate of 5.7 percent.

HOUSING COSTS AND AFFORDABILITY

Median home sales prices for Alhambra rose from $412,000 in 2010 to $503,500 in 2015—a 22 percent increase. The median home sales price in the City is notably higher than the County’s ($484,500).

High home values can be a great boon for existing homeowners, but may pose a challenge for those seeking to purchase a house or rent a unit in Alhambra. An “affordable” housing payment is generally considered one that consumes no more than 30 to 35 percent of a household’s annual gross income. When households spend more than 30 to 35 percent of their income on housing, the percentage of the household budget allocated to other important items such as food, fuel, or education can be limited. To afford a median priced home in Alhambra in 2015, a household would require a yearly income of approximately $80,000—assuming a 20 percent down payment, 20 percent of monthly affordable cost for taxes and insurance, and utility costs. In 2013, about 50 percent of Alhambra households met this income threshold.

To offset the challenge of homeownership, Alhambra currently has a first time homebuyer program that can provide up to $75,000 for the purchase of a home. The program is available to homebuyers that meet HUD income limits.
Non-residential Development

Alhambra Business Districts

In 2010, Alhambra received an Eddy Award from the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation for “Most Business-Friendly City in Los Angeles County” with special recognition for the City’s plan “to sustain and grow commerce and businesses including industrial and central business district project areas.” Each of Alhambra’s five main business districts — Main Street, Garfield Corridor, Mission Palm, Fremont, and Valley Boulevard — fulfills various commercial, industrial, and business needs to support a prosperous community.

Main Street

Main Street has served as a social hub and center of commerce for the San Gabriel Valley since 1895. By 1950, Main Street’s upscale stores and restaurants made it one of the most popular gathering areas in the San Gabriel Valley. To ensure that this area continues to serve the community as Alhambra’s downtown, the City has facilitated numerous redevelopment projects along Main Street. In 2005, the City received the Award of Excellence from the California Redevelopment Association for its effort to transform Main Street into a walkable and livable downtown.

Alhambra Renaissance Plaza is the heart of Main Street. Shops and cafes surround a plaza with colorful mosaic tiles and whimsical fountains that creates an inviting place for people to relax and socialize. There is a variety of indoor shopping, dining, and entertainment venues. The Lizard Mosaic Theater, Edwards Renaissance movie theater, and nightclubs provide entertainment options. People can park their cars in any of the adjacent, free downtown parking structures and walk throughout the Main Street District. Currently, a handful of projects are intended to create additional opportunities and development along the Main Street corridor or in the vicinity, including but not limited to: Casita de Zen, a planned mixed-use development consisting of 92 for-sale multi-family residential units and up to 5,000 square feet of leasable commercial space; Alhambra 5th and Main, a mixed-use development consisting of 144 for-sale multi-family residential units and 9,100 square feet of leasable, commercial/office space; and Alhambra Place,
Community Profile

A planned mixed-use development consisting of 260 for rent residential apartments and 140,000 square feet of commercial, restaurant, and retail space.

Other Business Districts

The Garfield Corridor, located on Garfield Avenue between Main Street and the San Bernardino Freeway, is home to a growing number of medical and professional office facilities including the Pacific Orthopedic and Medical Center Pacific Ambulatory Surgical Center, UCLA Health Medical Office, Pacific Medical Imaging & Oncology Center, 1234 Ortho-K Vision Care, Advanced Diagnostics and Surgical Center, and the SoCal Plastic Surgery Center.

The Mission Palm Corridor is located in the western section of the City on Palm Avenue between Commonwealth Avenue and Mission Road. It is sometimes referred to as an “Industrial Corridor” for its many small- to medium-size companies that are involved in light manufacturing, distribution, or service sectors.

The Fremont Corridor runs along South Fremont Avenue between Mission Road and Commonwealth Road. It is home to Fremont Plaza, the Alhambra Office Campus, Shops at the Alhambra, and Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. It offers a variety of commercial and office space. The Alhambra Campus encompasses 45 acres and includes more than 20 office buildings, 6 higher learning institutions, a 50,000 square foot fitness center, and service businesses designed to meet the personal needs of the immediate business community. The Shops at the Alhambra is a 17,755 square foot retail center featuring a large open-air plaza.

The 3 mile long Valley Boulevard Corridor is a very successful, culturally diverse business district. Valley Boulevard is a vibrant district encompassing a diverse mix of international, national and local markets, restaurants, retail, banking and service-type businesses. Several major Asian bank headquarters are located on Valley Boulevard’s “Financial District”, as well as businesses that cater to the City’s large Asian population.

Mobility

The availability and affordability of transportation options shape not only the way people navigate the physical environment, but also the environment itself. Mobility involves multiple modes of transportation: walking, bicycling, public transit and driving. Offering multiple modes of transportation yields positive impacts to individual physical health, reduced environmental impacts, and increased social connectivity.
**PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CIRCULATION**

The Complete Streets Act (AB 1358) aims to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and to shift from short trips in the automobile to other modes of travel such as walking, biking and use of public transit. It requires that the legislative body of a city or county, upon any substantive revision of the circulation element of its general plan, modify the circulation element to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways, defined to include motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, seniors, movers of commercial goods, and users of public transportation, in a manner that is suitable to the rural, suburban, or urban context of the general plan (California Legislative Info 2015).

Alhambra has sidewalks, overpasses, and signalized crosswalks to accommodate pedestrians. The City is engaged in ongoing efforts to promote pedestrian safety. The Alhambra Police Department routinely mobilizes its officers in locations to deter speeding, and the City’s 18 school crossing guards help school age as well as senior adult pedestrians cross streets. In 2010, Alhambra completed the installation of illuminated crosswalks at Alhambra Road and Second Street, and Commonwealth Avenue and Curtis Avenue as part of the “Safe Routes to School” project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

In 2015, the City installed a pedestrian signal at 7th Street and Valley Boulevard. The City actively seeks to improve facilities for all modes of travel including pedestrians, transit riders and bicyclists by applying for additional sources of funding.

Narrow arterial highways, high traffic volumes and speed have posed a challenge for adding bicycle facilities in Alhambra. Currently, there are no bike lanes or bike routes within the City. There is an opportunity for the City to connect to existing routes outside the City at: Huntington Drive, Marengo Avenue and Alhambra Avenues, all of which terminate at the City boundary.
The City is currently working to determine possible improvements to the City’s bicycle infrastructure, and completing a Bicycle Master Plan.

**Commute Times and Patterns**

Travel time to work affects quality of life; long commutes detract from the time one can spend with family and friends and can be an unproductive time, especially for those commuting by single-occupancy vehicle.

As shown in Figure 18, in 2011, most Alhambra residents not working from home commuted between 15 and 29 minutes to work. Approximately one of every five employed Alhambra residents traveled less than 15 minutes to work and one out of 10 traveled more than 60 minutes to work.

The commute time for Alhambra residents is very similar to residents of the other cities in the comparison region (which, as shown in Table 1 of this Community Profile, is made up of Alhambra and the cities of Monterey Park, Rosemead, San Gabriel, South Pasadena, and Temple City). The overall average commute time of Alhambra residents (31.6 minutes) was similar to the average commute time for regional residents (31.2 minutes.) This similarity may be in part because these communities share common roads and public transit networks.

![Figure 18. Commute Times](image)

As discussed further in the “Economic Structure” section of this report, under the heading “Out-Commuting”, on average from 2007 through 2009, only about 10 percent of Alhambra residents worked in the City, and residents living outside of the City filled about 85 percent of the jobs in Alhambra, indicating that Alhambra can be characterized as a “commuter city.”
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK

In Alhambra, 88 percent of working residents travel between home and work by car, and 11 percent of car commuters travel in a carpool of two or more people. Walking, bicycling, public bus, train and other modes account for 9 percent of the total trips for working Alhambra residents. Working residents in the surrounding regions are similar to Alhambra residents in terms of means of transportation to work. When compared with Los Angeles County, working residents of Alhambra and the region are slightly more likely to drive to work alone than working residents in the county. In an effort to meet the standards set by Senate Bill 375, which requires cities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles, the City is examining opportunities to promote the use of other modes of travel, such as pedestrian and bicycle circulation and transit.

Figure 19. Means of Travel to Work
KOA Corporation, a planning and engineering firm, conducted a traffic analysis for the City of Alhambra as part of the General Plan Update, which is summarized in their July 2015 *Summary of Existing Conditions* report. KOA collected traffic counts from four sources:

- National Data & Surveying Services: new counts conducted on 5/21/2015 and 6/23/2015
- Counts Unlimited, Inc.: new counts conducted on 5/20/2015
- Transportation Technical Report, SR 710 North Study (November 2014): counts conducted during weekdays, from March to July 2013
- Counts from the City of Alhambra: counts conducted by TransTech in December 2014.

The study area for this traffic analysis is shown in Figure 20. The list below shows the streets carrying the highest volumes of traffic in Alhambra, with approximate average daily trip (ADT) trip levels available from the City’s Public Works Department:

**North-South Streets**
- Fremont Avenue (about 27,000-51,000 ADT north of the I-10, with the highest ADT levels near Mission Road and Valley Boulevard)
- Atlantic Boulevard (from about 20,000 ADT in the northern part of Alhambra to about 44,000 ADT near the I-10)
- Garfield Avenue (from about 16,000 ADT in the northern part of Alhambra to about 45,000 ADT near the I-10)
- New Avenue (from about 34,000 ADT near the I-10 to about 19,000 ADT near Valley Boulevard)

**East-West Streets**
- Valley Boulevard (from about 23,000 ADT to 43,000 ADT, with the highest levels directly west of Fremont Avenue, and the lowest levels directly east of Fremont Avenue, then increasing again towards the eastern boundary of the City)
- Mission Road (increasing from about 19,000 ADT at the western end of the City to about 28,000 ADT at the eastern end of the City)
- Main Street (increasing from about 17,000 ADT near the western end of the City to about 28,000 ADT near the eastern end of the City)

High traffic volumes on these streets can lead to traffic congestion, particularly at intersections. Congested intersections have an influence on commute times. The analysis of peak hour intersection Level of Service (LOS) is typically used as the primary indicator of intersection performance. LOS values range from LOS A to LOS F. LOS A indicates excellent operating conditions with little delay to motorists, whereas LOS F represents congested conditions with excessive vehicle delay. LOS E is typically defined as the operating “capacity” of a roadway. In the a.m. peak hour, three study intersections operate at LOS values E or worse under the existing conditions: Fremont Avenue & Alhambra Road (LOS F), Fremont Avenue & Mission Road (LOS E), and Atlantic Boulevard & Glendon Way (LOS F). During the p.m. peak hour, seven study intersections operate at LOS values E or worse: Atlantic Boulevard & Huntington Drive (LOS E), Fremont Avenue & Alhambra Road (LOS E), Almansor Street & Main Street (LOS E), Marengo Avenue & Mission Road (LOS E), Garfield Avenue & Mission Road (LOS E), Fremont Avenue & Valley Boulevard (LOS F), and Atlantic Boulevard & Valley Boulevard (LOS E).
Figure 20. KOA Traffic Study

Legend:
- General Plan Update
- Study Intersection
- Study Segment

KOA Corporation

Alhambra General Plan - Community Profile

Study Intersections and Roadway Segments
INTERSTATES AND HIGHWAYS

Interstate 10 (I-10) is an east-west regional freeway, providing access directly to roadways in Alhambra. Within the City, the freeway has four general purpose lanes in each direction and can be accessed via local interchanges at Fremont Avenue, Atlantic Boulevard, Garfield Avenue and New Avenue. The freeway also has two High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes for the Metro Express Lanes project. Fremont Avenue is the only entrance/exit to the HOT lanes within the city boundary. Interstate 710 (I-710) is generally located at the western edge of the City boundary. The I-10 and I-710 freeways intersect southwest of Alhambra. Known as the San Bernardino Freeway, I-10 connects Alhambra to SR-101 and Downtown Los Angeles. I-710, also known as the Long Beach Freeway, has its northern terminus in the southwest portion of Alhambra at West Valley Boulevard and its southern terminus in the City of Long Beach. While the I-710 north was originally planned to run north through Alhambra to Pasadena, opposition from communities north of Alhambra has delayed the extension. One of the effects of the I-710 extension not being constructed is that local streets such as Fremont Avenue are used as north-south routes for traffic that may have otherwise used the I-710 extension if it were available. Caltrans is studying the feasibility of several alternatives for the extension including the latest 4.5 mile long tunnel that would help preserve the residential neighborhoods located in the path of the future freeway connection. While no alternatives for the connection have been selected, the City continues to actively participate in discussions related to these alternatives, design and their potential alignment.

Input received from Alhambra residents at the Community Open House confirmed that the I-710 extension is an ongoing point of discussion.

STREETS

The City owns and maintains 24,000 streets totaling 150 miles with an additional 16 miles of alleyways, and 19 free public parking lots. Streets, alleyways, and other rights-of-way cover approximately 25 percent of the city’s land area. There are several major thoroughfares in Alhambra: Main Street, Valley Boulevard, and Mission Road run east and west through the city. Atlantic Boulevard, Fremont Avenue, and Garfield Avenue provide north and south connectivity.

Alhambra is currently exploring ways to increase joint use and multi-use streets.

Alhambra is exploring opportunities for joint use and multi-use streets (streets used for more than just moving automobiles) which poses a challenge because the City is built-out and cannot dedicate additional lanes. At the Community Workshop on May 20, 2015, the community expressed a desire for the City to prioritize addressing traffic congestion. Several newly built and soon to be completed mixed-use developments in Alhambra will help reduce traffic while
accommodating growth by placing neighborhood amenities within walking distance from where people live.

**TRANSIT**

Public transportation in Alhambra consists of fixed route bus service and dial-a-ride service. This latter type of service is an advance reservation, shared ride transportation service for senior or disabled residents of any age and their attendants. Existing local bus transit services that collectively provide viable alternatives to the use of the private automobile are discussed below. Alhambra is served by bus transit lines operated by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), City of Alhambra Community Transit (ACT), and City of Montebello. Existing transit lines and ridership are shown in Figures 21 and 22.

**METROLINK AND METRO BUS/RAIL SYSTEM**

The Cal State LA Metrolink Station for the San Bernardino Line is half a mile southeast of Alhambra. The San Bernardino Line runs from LA Union Station to the City of San Bernardino. The Mission Station on the Metro Gold Line is only two miles north of Alhambra and can be accessed from Alhambra via a short Metro bus ride. The Metro Gold Line is a light rail and subway line. It connects to Pasadena (with an extension to Azusa scheduled to begin service in the Spring of 2016), Chinatown, Little Tokyo, the Arts District, East Los Angeles, Union Station, and the Metro Red Line, which connects to Downtown LA and Hollywood.

The Metro Silver Line is a bus rapid transit line which passes through Alhambra on the I-10 High Occupancy Vehicle lanes and connects to Downtown Los Angeles. Alhambra residents can access this line via El Monte Station or Cal State LA Station. Both of these stations are accessible by Alhambra Community Transit Lines. In addition to the Silver line, several regular service Metro Bus Lines provide service to Alhambra. Eastbound/westbound bus lines 76, 176, and 376 connect to Los Angeles, Glassell Park, South Pasadena, San Gabriel, and El Monte. North and southbound Metro Bus Lines 256, 260 and 361 connect to Pasadena, Monterey Park, Compton, Maywood, Altadena and East Los Angeles.
Figure 21. Existing Metro and ACT Transit Lines
Figure 22. KOA Study of Existing Transit Lines and Ridership
Alhambra Community Transit operates two fixed route bus lines within Alhambra. Four buses run on each line at twenty minute intervals. Operating Monday through Friday, the Blue Line offers a split schedule from Chapel to Bay State to Commonwealth to Fremont to Hellman to Cal State and back. The Green Line travels clockwise and counter-clockwise along Main Street, (from Palm to Chapel) and along Valley Boulevard (from Fremont to Vega); north/south connections are made on both the east side and west side of town, operating every day except Sunday. All Green and Blue line trips are 25 cents.

The City of Montebello also runs a daily, fixed-route bus services. Montebello Bus Line 30 makes one stop in Alhambra at Garfield Avenue and connects to the Cities of San Marino, Commerce, Bell Gardens, and South Gate.

Senior Ride
The Alhambra Senior Ride Program is a free local transportation service for Alhambra residents 60 years or older or disabled residents of any age. It provides curb-to-curb service for medical appointments anywhere in Alhambra or within 2 miles of the City limits.

Airport Access
Alhambra lies in close proximity to three international airports. It is less than 30 miles from Los Angeles International Airport, California’s busiest airport, 35 miles to Ontario International Airport in San Bernardino County, and 40 miles from John Wayne International Airport in Orange County. Bob Hope Airport is 20 miles away in Burbank with domestic flights throughout the western United States and New York City.

Alhambra is located twenty-five miles north of Long Beach Airport, which is among the top five busiest general aviation airports in the world. The Long Beach Airport serves nearly three million commercial airline passengers annually and provides direct commercial flights to destinations throughout the United States.

Thirty miles northwest of Alhambra is Van Nuys Airport, a public airport used by private, chartered, and small commercial aircraft. It is one of the biggest general aviation (excludes military, cargo and regular commercial airlines) airports in the world.
Figure 23. Local Airports in Relation to the City of Alhambra
Community Facilities

Cultural Facilities

The Alhambra Historical Museum was founded by the Historical Society in 1987. The museum, located in Burke Heritage Park on West Alhambra Road, includes a fine collection of historical memorabilia, clothing, furnishing, and books donated by Alhambra residents, organizations, and friends. It aims to serve as an educational organization to collect, classify, publish and disseminate historical information. It is free and open to the public.

The Mosaic Lizard Theater serves as a cultural and artistic hub, not only for Main Street, but for the greater Los Angeles Area. In 2010, the former Alhambra Redevelopment Agency contributed funding to developing this state-of-the-art, 50-seat theater. Original and revival plays, student films, and improvisational performances are held regularly. Eighty percent of performance attendees are from outside of Alhambra, mostly from Los Angeles.

Alhambra is also home to several art galleries and artist studios including Alhambra City Hall Art Gallery and Nucleus Art Gallery. These galleries include rotating art exhibitions, events open to the public, and professional art instruction.
EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

The City of Alhambra is served by the Alhambra Unified School District. The District’s educational facilities in Alhambra include nine grade K-8 elementary schools (Martha Baldwin, Emery Park, Fremont, Garfield, Granada, Marguerita, Northrup, Park, Ramona), three traditional grade 9-12 high schools (Alhambra, San Gabriel, Mark Keppel), two nontraditional high schools (Independence and Century) and one adult school. There are an additional four elementary schools in the Alhambra Unified School District that are located in the City of Monterey Park. Total student enrollment in the District is more than 16,000 students.

In 2008, voters in the Alhambra Unified School District passed the $50 million Bond Measure MM. Measure MM bond money has gone towards renovating all elementary schools. Several elementary schools have gained brand new classroom buildings; all will have internet connectivity and a new playground. In 2011, Mark Keppel High School completed construction of new facilities including a new science building with lab space and a language/ music building with sound proof practice rooms. Also in 2011, Century High School completed a multimillion dollar construction project adding a two-story building that includes nine classrooms, outdoor teaching spaces, a new science lab, an expanded art room and campus wide wireless Internet.

Alhambra is also home to several private schools including five religious schools: Ramona Convent Secondary School, St. Therese School, St. Thomas Moore Elementary School, All Souls Parish School and Emmaus Lutheran School. It also includes three nondenominational private schools: Oneanta Montessori School, Sherman School, Leeway School, and Bell Tower School.

Two higher education campuses are located in Alhambra: The University of Southern California’s Health Sciences campus and the Los Angeles campus of Platt College.
Parks and Recreational Open Space

Of Alhambra’s 4,864 acres of land, approximately 442 acres, or nine percent of the City, is designated as open space. Open space in the City of Alhambra includes parks, trails, public school sites, landscaped street medians and a golf course. The city’s five parks and public golf course account for approximately 180 acres of total open space acreage or 41 percent of open space. These parks offer a variety of recreational opportunities including baseball fields, soccer fields, tennis courts, playground equipment, basketball courts, and running trails.

Alhambra and the Alhambra Unified School District maintain a reciprocal use agreement for recreational facilities. After school hours, residents can use recreational facilities on school sites, and children can participate in supervised activities. School sites, which include school buildings, total approximately 194 acres.

Alhambra has a total of 442 acres of open space, or 5.9 acres per 1,000 people. This ratio is below the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) recommendation of 10 acres of local parks per 1,000 persons. However, many Southern California cities including Los Angeles adhere to an earlier NRPA standard of 4 acres of local park space per 1,000 residents.

Angeles National Forest is less than 10 miles north of Alhambra. It offers a variety of regional recreational activities including hiking, camping, swimming, fishing, mountain biking, and horseback riding. It encompasses 650,000 acres including mountains, rivers, dense forests, and wilderness. On October 10, 2014, President Barack Obama designated 346,177 acres of existing federal lands as the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, the eighth national monument under Forest Service management. This recently designated national monument covers 342,177 acres of the Angeles National Forest and 4,002 acres of neighboring San Bernardino National Forest. The area is within 90 minutes of 15 million people in the Los Angeles Basin (U.S. Forest Service website, http://www.fs.fed.us/visit/san-gabriel-mountains-national-monument, June 2015).

Table 3. Open Space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Open Space Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Utility</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medians and Reserved Right-of-Way</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>442</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alhambra, like many communities in densely-populated Southern California, will continue to face challenges providing adequate parks and recreational open space to its citizens.
**ACTIVE RECREATION FACILITIES**

Alhambra offers a variety of active recreation facilities for residents and visitors. The City is home to six parks totaling more than 200 acres.

Facilities included in Alhambra parks are shown in Table 4. Alhambra Park, Almansor Park, Granada Park, and Story Park have sports fields for activities like baseball, basketball, soccer, or tennis utilized by youth teams and adult sports leagues throughout the year. These parks also include playground equipment, exercise course, activity room, gymnasium as well as badminton, table tennis, lawn bowling, and horseshoe pits. The City of Alhambra Community Services Department offers youth sports teams, adult basketball and volleyball leagues, and lessons in sports and dance classes also held at the parks’ facilities throughout the year.

Story Park is home to the Joslyn Adult Recreation Center. The center is considered one of the finest meeting centers for senior citizens in California. It offers a variety of exercise, diet and lifestyle classes for seniors. It also has outdoor tennis courts open to the public. Senior citizens and other community clubs and groups use the center weekly.

In addition to recreational activities at Alhambra’s municipal parks, the After School Playground Program allows students and community members to utilize nine school facilities in the school district for free. Drop-in activities include team & individual sports and alternative programs such as arts & crafts, table game tournaments, four square, and kickball during after school hours.

Alhambra Golf Course is a municipal golf facility with a regulation par 71 course open to the public. The green is irrigated with non-potable water, and the course’s environmentally-friendly design has earned it recognition from Audubon International. The facility also includes a night-lighted golf practice center with two chipping greens, a putting green, and the country’s first three-level practice range lit for night-time use.
### Table 4. Park Facilities in Alhambra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alhambra Park</th>
<th>Almansor Park</th>
<th>Granada Park</th>
<th>Story Park</th>
<th>Emery Park</th>
<th>Burke Heritage Park</th>
<th>Gateway Plaza Park</th>
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<td>Covered Picnic Shelters</td>
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<td>Basketball Courts</td>
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</table>

Source: City of Alhambra
PASSIVE RECREATION FACILITIES

Some of Alhambra’s parks and plazas are designed especially for passive recreation activities. Burke Heritage Park features a xeriscape garden, a garden that utilizes drought tolerant plants to eliminate the need for irrigation, and a Historical Museum. Gateway Plaza Park includes benches, a garden and is home to a 26 foot tall public art sculpture of an arch on display.

The 2-acre Winston Smoyer Memorial Community Garden on Mission Road has approximately one hundred 200-1,000 square foot plots rented by community members for a few dollars per month. The garden has received recognition as one of the Ten Best Community Gardens in L.A. County by Spot.us, a division of American Public Media, for its unique Asian and South American herbs and vegetables. Many of the City’s other parks include large open grass areas for relaxing and people watching.

NOTABLE STRUCTURES

In addition to the important homes and neighborhoods throughout the City, several unique structures mark more than three centuries of history in and around Alhambra. Notable examples include the Pyrenees Castle, perched on a hilltop overlooking southwestern Alhambra. French immigrant Sylvester Dupuy had the castle modeled after a chateau he admired growing up in the South of France. Completed in 1926, the castle was originally constructed with ten bedrooms, eight tiled bathrooms.
Community Profile

with Italian marbled floors, a game room, office, dens, service rooms and large wine cellar. In 1946, it was sold and temporarily converted into an eight-unit apartment building. Since then, the castle has been restored to a single family home.

Other local treasures include old school iconic eatiers such as The Hat and Towheys. The first “The Hat” restaurant, constructed in 1951, is located at the corner of Valley Boulevard and Garfield. It is known for its “world famous” pastrami sandwiches. The Hat has a loyal following of Alhambra residents and continues to attract visitors from throughout the region. It remains in its original location along with its iconic retro neon sign featuring a chef’s hat.

Twoheys originally opened in Pasadena in 1943, but moved a decade later to its present location at the intersection of Huntington Drive and Atlantic Boulevard in Alhambra. This American-style diner featured memorable drive-up carhop service from the 1950s to the mid 1970s. It is known for its Stinko Burger and hot fudge sundaes.

In conclusion, Alhambra is a built-out community in a highly-urbanized area, but it still retains the predominant single family residential character valued by many members of the community. It is also characterized by distinct, diverse commercial areas and a variety of active and passive recreational facilities. In the future, the City will need to balance aspects of the built environment valued by the community (such as single family neighborhoods, parks and open space) with economic development and the needs of a growing population.

Natural Environment

As cities throughout Southern California face the mounting demands of population and economic growth, the natural environment will continue to play a critical role in sustaining a desirable and livable community. Open space, groundwater, coastal resources and other systems serve as essential infrastructure. Increasing land development often compromises the quality of these natural systems, and stresses a city’s ability to provide basic services—clean air, available potable water, and on-demand electricity. Protecting and enhancing these resources provides additional stability for communities that may be at risk to environmental hazards.

Natural Resources

Natural resources are the naturally-occurring materials and components of the environment. Living organisms such as plants and animals as well as non-living material including land, air, and fresh water, are all examples of natural resources. Because many natural resources are necessary for human health and survival, understanding and preserving a community’s natural resources is imperative.

Migratory and local birds feed in Alhambra’s parks and green spaces.
**WILDLIFE HABITAT**

Wildlife, including threatened or endangered species, may make their homes in urbanized areas, agriculturally productive areas, and open space areas. While previous studies and Environmental Impact Reports conclude that no rare or endangered plant or animal species permanently reside in Alhambra, occasional rare migratory birds may stop in Alhambra’s parks and green spaces including the Alhambra Golf Course. The course is certified by Audubon International, a nonprofit environmental educational organization dedicated to sustainable development (Alhambra Golf Course, www.alhambragolf.com/index.html, June 2015). Over 2,100 golf courses in 24 countries have, like Alhambra Golf Course, worked with Audubon International to preserve and enhance the natural environment and wildlife habitat.

**WATER SUPPLY**

The City is a member agency of the San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District. The City acts as the local water purveyor; the Utilities Division of the Public Works Department (Water Section) maintains and operates ten active wells, five booster stations, and approximately 17,900 service connections to provide water to over 90,000 customers. The City has the legal right to pump groundwater from the Main San Gabriel Basin and the Raymond Basin. Currently, 80 percent of the City’s water comes from ten active wells which draw from the main San Gabriel Basin. Water is no longer pumped from the Raymond Basin well due to nitrate levels above state standards.

Alhambra is not a member agency of the Metropolitan Water District (MWD). However, through the Coordinated Water Exchange Agreement, the City can purchase imported water from the MWD. This agreement was reached so that the water pumped from the Main San Gabriel Water Basin is not overdrawn. Approximately 20 percent of the City’s water comes from a MWD service connection. Water provided through the MWD is a blend of surface water from the State Water Project (75 percent) and the Colorado River (25 percent). Water is blended from different sources to minimize levels of constituents. This water is treated at the Weymouth Plant in La Verne before it is transported to Alhambra. The City also maintains five reservoir locations. With proper management, the ten wells and imported water is deemed adequate for meeting Alhambra’s current and future needs.
WASTEWATER AND RECYCLED WATER

The Sewer and Storm Drain Section of the Utilities Division maintains and operates the sewer collection system including storm drains, catch basins and sewer lines. The City does not operate its own wastewater treatment plant. All wastewater is conveyed through the City sewer system to the Los Angeles County Sanitation District, where it is transferred to one of two reclamation plants.

The infrastructure necessary to utilize recycled water is currently unavailable in Alhambra, although there may be future opportunities to incorporate recycled water into landscape irrigation. As a member of the San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, the City is a participant in discussions regarding the possibility of utilizing recycled water for Basin recharge.

WATER QUALITY

A safe water supply is critical to public health and quality of life. The City of Alhambra’s Utilities Division conducts regular water quality testing. The City collects approximately 6,000 individual water samples for testing at independent laboratories and ensures that water quality standards are satisfactory.

In 2008, the City completed construction of a water treatment facility which treats water for nitrates and volatile organic compound removal. This facility allows the City to pump groundwater from two previously inactive wells.

WATER CONSERVATION

The Governor of California has issued an Executive Order on actions necessary to address California’s severe drought conditions. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is directed to implement mandatory water reductions in urban areas to reduce potable urban water usage by 25 percent statewide. On May 5, 2015, the SWRCB adopted an emergency conservation regulation in accordance with the Governor's directive. The provisions of the emergency regulation went into effect on May 18, 2015. The SWRCB issued reduction targets for communities across the State in April 2015. Its target for Alhambra is 24 percent (SWRCB, April 2015).

The City of Alhambra implements various water demand management measures to encourage water conservation. The City audits the accounts of commercial, industrial and institutional customers and sends notices when there is unusual water consumption and possible leaks. The City educates the public about water conservation, water awareness, and regulatory mandates through Water Awareness Month, an annual Eco-Fair, an advertising program, and student programs and contests. Alhambra also participates in the San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District’s H20wl water education and conservation program which includes the H20wl mascot which visits schools, parks, community and business event to increase awareness and participation in water conservation activities.

The Utilities Division staff oversees public education, policy development, research and training. In November 2009, the City adopted a Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance to reduce the amount of water used in landscaping. This ordinance brings the City into compliance with California Assembly Bill 1881, which requires all local agencies to develop water conservation policies by 2010 (California Department of Water Resources website, June 2015). This represents an important conservation opportunity for Alhambra given that approximately half of California’s urban water usage is for landscaping. In July 2015, the SWRCB issued a new Model Ordinance to address landscaping, which the City is in the process of implementing.
The City of Alhambra has encouraged residents and businesses to conserve water on a voluntarily basis. Public education by the City of Alhambra Utilities Division and by its partner, the San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, has promoted saving water through water saving tips and videos, water conservation pilot projects, bus shelter and newspaper ads, websites, community outreach and rebates on water-efficient equipment. Residents who notice situations where water is being wasted on private or City-owned property are urged to contact the Utilities Division.

Other actions the City has taken to help conserve water include planting drought-tolerant landscaping at Shorb Garden, Almansor Park, Gateway Plaza, at the golf course and Fire Station 71. Annually, the City has a program to give residential customers free ultra-low flow toilets that use 30 percent less water than conventional toilets. More than six thousand ultra-low flow toilets have been distributed to date.

Air Quality

Because Southern California had—and still has—one of the worst air quality problems in the nation, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) was created by the 1977 Lewis Air Quality Management Act. The AQMD is the agency principally responsible for comprehensive air pollution control in the South Coast basin. It has jurisdiction over an area of 10,743 square miles, the South Coast air district. This area includes all of Los Angeles County (including Alhambra) except for the Antelope Valley, all of Orange County, the non-desert portion of western San Bernardino County, and the western and Coachella Valley portions of Riverside County.

Specifically, the South Coast AQMD is responsible for monitoring air quality as well as planning, implementing, and enforcing programs designed to attain and maintain state and federal ambient air quality standards in the district. Programs developed include air quality rules and regulations that regulate stationary source emissions, including area and point sources, and certain mobile source emissions. The AQMD is also responsible for establishing permitting requirements and issuing permits for stationary sources and ensuring that new, modified, or relocated stationary sources do not create net emissions increases. The AQMD enforces air quality rules and regulations through a variety of means, including inspections, educational and training programs, and fines.

Both the district and the South Coast Basin are surrounded by mountains, which tend to restrict air flow and concentrate pollutants in the valleys or “basins” below. The South Coast Basin is almost entirely urban, and its pollution is typically related to dense population and associated area sources, heavy vehicular traffic, and industrial sources.

Air quality issues in the South Coast air district are addressed through the efforts of federal, state, regional, and local government agencies. Local governments work in concert with their Councils of Governments (COGs) and the AQMD to improve air quality through a variety of programs, including regulatory actions, policy making, and education programs. City policies, particularly in land use, transportation, and energy, are essential to achieve state and federal air pollution standards and reduce localized air pollution impacts. The City, in partnership with the San Gabriel Valley COG, has developed and adopted an Energy Efficiency and Climate Action Plan (EECAP). The EECAP identifies goals which would assist the City in reducing its energy consumption and greenhouse gas emission in order to meet the projected 2020 targets.
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Capital improvement programs can fund transportation infrastructure projects such as bus turnouts, energy-efficient street lights, and synchronized traffic signals that contribute to improved air quality.

Solid Waste

California law requires cities and counties to develop solid waste diversion and recycling programs to meet gradually increasing performance standards. With decreasing capacity in local landfills, cities recognize that recycling and reusing waste materials becomes more cost-effective than traditional disposal practices. Recycling of construction and demolition debris, curbside recycling, green waste collection, and other creative programs also translate into cost savings for manufacturers and consumers.

Allied Waste Services provides Alhambra residents and businesses with curbside collection for trash, green waste, and recycling of glass, plastic, metal, aluminum and clean paper. It also collects large items and electronic waste from residential homes. Like all municipalities, Alhambra must meet the solid waste diversion mandates established by the California Integrated Waste Management Board under State Assembly Bill 939 (AB 939) in 1989. AB 939 mandates that all cities reduce annual waste per capita by 50 percent, a goal which Alhambra has achieved on a consistent basis.

The potential environmental impacts of a growing local and regional population on natural resources such as wildlife habitat, water supply and quality, and air quality, will need to be carefully assessed and avoided, reduced, or mitigated in order to maintain a high quality living environment in the City of Alhambra.

Safety

The General Plan Update must address issues of safety, hazards, and emergency response in order to ensure that the City has planned for and taken all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of its citizens. The following sections discuss these issues.

Seismic Hazard

No active faults are known to cross Alhambra and the City is not part of the Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone. However, seismic activity from nearby faults has the potential to cause damage within the City including the Raymond Hill fault, the San Rafael fault, the Whittier fault zone, and the Sierra Madre fault zone.

The two most destructive results of seismic activity are liquefaction and structural damage. Liquefaction refers to the process by which saturated, unconsolidated sediments are transformed and function like liquids. While liquefaction is not considered to be a concern in Alhambra because the water table is deeper than 50 feet; the potential for structural damage from ground shaking exists. In 1987, ground shaking from the Whittier Narrows earthquake caused structural damage to over 250 residential and commercial structures and a total property loss of $20 million to private and public structures in Alhambra. Since then, California building codes have been updated and revised to incorporate structural design that can withstand more significant seismic activity. In 2006, the largest building in Alhambra, the 12-story Los Angeles County Department of Public Works headquarters, had its steel frames strengthened when the Northridge earthquake revealed that welded joints were inadequate.
FLOODING

Potential flooding could occur in Alhambra from intense localized rainstorms and spillover from nearby flood control channels. To protect the community, Los Angeles County maintains and continues to improve storm drainage and flood control facilities which reduce the threat of flooding in the event of a 100 year flood.

Dam failure from any local and regional dams would not create flooding in Alhambra. There are two dams north of the City and near the base of the San Gabriel Mountains: one at Devil’s Gate Reservoir on the Arroyo Seco six miles north of the City, and the other at Eaton Wash Reservoir on Eaton Wash 4.2 miles north of the City. The City is not in dam inundation areas for either dam.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the event of an emergency, communication and access to people, places and resources may be limited. Therefore, making emergency preparedness and contingency plans before a disaster occurs is critically important. In 1981, the City approved an Emergency Service and Civil Disaster Plan, consistent with local and state guidelines. The Plan establishes a basis for the coordination, management, and operation of critical resources and describes the civil government’s authority, responsibilities, and functions. During an emergency, the City will collaborate with local, State and Federal law enforcement agencies, emergency health providers, the Alhambra Unified School District, the American Red Cross, private industry, and the faith-based community. The Plan provides a basis for incorporating these various organizations into the City’s emergency response. The Plan also identifies contingency action, and periodically City staff engages in simulation training to ensure understanding of the Plan.

The City of Alhambra’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC), operating out of the Police Department, will be activated in an emergency. The EOC brings together resources and personnel to make decisions and coordinate the flow of information and strategies required to deal effectively with the crisis.

The Police and Fire Departments have also been active in the Federal Homeland Security Grant process. The Police Department has received grant funds to procure a new mobile Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Command Center for major disasters in Alhambra and the surrounding region. The Fire Department has recently procured a new, mobile, Homeland Security-financed Emergency Preparedness Engine.
Community Profile

Additionally, Alhambra has established a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). CERT is a group of citizens specially trained to provide immediate assistance in the event of an emergency until agencies are able to respond. The training program includes sessions on disaster preparedness, first aid, communications and good team work, fire safety, disaster medical operations, search and rescue, and more.

Global Climate Change

Global climate change, typically defined as an observed increase in the average temperature of the Earth’s atmosphere and oceans along with other substantial changes in climate (such as wind patterns, precipitation, and storms) in response to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), is one of the leading environmental issues of our time. California has emerged as a leader in the U.S. in both governmental and private sector responses to global climate change. In turn, many California cities are examining their internal operations and development processes and how they may affect climate change. This section lays out some of the state and local responses to climate change.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is responsible for the coordination and oversight of State and local air pollution control programs in California. California has numerous regulations aimed at reducing the state’s GHG emissions. Assembly Bill (AB) 1493 (2002), California’s Advanced Clean Cars program (referred to as “Pavley”), requires CARB to develop and adopt regulations to achieve “the maximum feasible and cost-effective reduction of GHG emissions from motor vehicles.” Executive Order (EO) S-3-05, established statewide GHG emissions reduction targets. EO S-3-05 provides that by 2010, emissions shall be reduced to 2000 levels; by 2020, emissions shall be reduced to 1990 levels; and by 2050, emissions shall be reduced to 80 percent below 1990 levels (CalEPA, 2006). California’s major initiative for reducing GHG emissions is outlined in Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the “California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006,” signed into law in 2006. AB 32 codifies the statewide goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and requires CARB to prepare a Scoping Plan that outlines the main State strategies for reducing GHGs to meet the 2020 deadline.

SB 375

One of the prominent regional issues facing communities in California is the implementation of California Senate Bill 375 (SB 375). SB 375 requires the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to set regional targets for 2020 and 2035 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles. If regions develop integrated land use, housing, and transportation plans that meet the SB 375 targets, new projects in these regions can be relieved of certain review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The targets apply to the regions in the state covered by the 18 metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) – the MPO that represents Alhambra is SCAG. The passage of SB 375 serves as a catalyst for the City to find ways to reduce regional vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gases generated from passenger vehicles. The input and strategies generated though this effort will be particularly valuable for developing climate change policies that are embraced by the community.

SB 743

Another important regulatory development that may affect the General Plan Update is California Senate Bill 743 (SB 743). In 2013, California Governor Jerry Brown signed SB 743 into law and started a process that could fundamentally change transportation impact analysis as part of CEQA compliance. SB 743 makes and proposes changes to the current practice of environmental impact analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in order to more
appropriately balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals related to infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as required under SB 375. These changes would include removal of auto delay, level of service (LOS), and other similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion as a basis for determining significant impacts under CEQA. Furthermore, aesthetic and parking impacts would not be considered significant impacts on the environment for select development projects within infill areas with nearby frequent transit service.

During the summer of 2015, the second set of guidelines may be released for public comment. Later in 2015, the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) would likely make one more set of revisions and submit the final Guidelines to the Natural Resources Agency. Subsequent “rulemaking” process takes about 6 months. Sometime in 2016, upon the completion of the “rulemaking” process, there is normally a 60-day administrative law review before the Guidelines officially become law. Lead agencies normally have 120 days to update their guidance to comply with the law. If OPR includes an implementation buffer, additional time may be available before full implementation is required (Fehr & Peers, August 2015).

Municipal governments are also joining efforts to combat global climate change, such as the US Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement and the Sierra Club’s Cool Cities program, to demonstrate their commitment to making changes at home. Some are looking to implement land use planning strategies to reduce and adapt to the impacts of global climate change by focusing on smart growth principles, adopting green building policies, and promoting public transit and alternative modes of transportation in order to reduce GHG emissions. Many cities also recognize the value of implementing climate change adaptation measures in acknowledgement of the fact that global climate change is already occurring and producing very real and increasing impacts.

MEASURES TO REDUCE GHG EMISSIONS

Examples of strategies that can be used to reduce GHG emissions and their contribution to global climate change include the following:

- Compact, multiuse development
- Alternative energy
- Energy conservation
- Urban forestry
- Waste reduction and recycling
- Water conservation
- Green building

COMPACT, MULTIUSE DEVELOPMENT

There are multiple mixed-use development projects in downtown Alhambra specifically designed to promote a pedestrian friendly downtown by providing residents...
with dining, shopping, entertainment, employment and other amenities within a short walking distance. These projects have compact designs with higher densities in order to sustain neighborhood uses. These projects are accessible via several different bus routes including various LA County Metro bus lines, Montebello Bus Line 30 and the Alhambra Community Transit (KOA, 2015). For more information on the public transit network in Alhambra, see the Transit section in the Mobility section of this Community Profile report.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

A by-product of producing energy from fossil fuels is greenhouse gases, which directly contribute to climate change. Actions to reduce energy consumption and promote cleaner or renewable energy sources help mitigate climate change. The City has implemented the Chevron Project in 2006, which improves the energy efficiency mechanical systems at City Hall and the Police Station. Energy efficient fluorescent lighting has been installed at fire stations, and traffic signals have been changed to low emitting diodes (LED bulbs). The City switched speed warning signs from electric to solar power. Energy efficient equipment has been installed at the Groundwater Treatment Plant and training center grounds. The City also holds an annual Eco-Fair in which the City distributes the latest green products and services for conserving both energy and water.

URBAN FORESTRY

The benefits of urban forest are twofold. Enhancing urban forests mitigates climate change because trees sequester carbon that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere. They also help combat the effects of climate change. Climate change significantly increases the temperatures in cities more than other areas because concrete and asphalt absorb more heat. This is known as the “heat island effect.” Urban tree canopy coverage reduces heat.

After the windstorm in 2011, the City of Alhambra planted a combined total of 50 new trees at Alhambra Park and Granada Park and an additional 150 new trees at the Alhambra Municipal Golf Course during the 2011-2012 fiscal year. All of the trees are drought tolerant species.

WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING

Waste management and recycling materials can reduce greenhouse gas emissions in several ways. First, waste reduction and recycling reduce energy consumption associated with producing and manufacturing new materials. Second, it reduces deforestation which preserves carbon-sequestering trees. Third, diverting waste from landfills reduces the amount of methane (a greenhouse gas) from being released into the atmosphere.

Alhambra contracts with Allied Waste Service to provide single and multifamily homes with curbside recycling for glass, plastic, metal, aluminum, yard waste and electronic waste.

The City uses rubberized asphalt and rubberized sidewalk material made from recycled tires to re-pave and install streets and sidewalks. Rubberized sidewalks are porous and allow water to percolate through which helps reduce run off. Rubberized streets last longer than streets made from conventional asphalt and provide a quieter ride.

WATER

Water conservation has important implications for climate change for two reasons. First, because delivering and treating water is energy intensive, water conservation reduces energy use. Water delivery in Southern California is particularly energy intensive due to the fact that approximately
50 percent of the water supply is delivered from the Colorado River. Second, because climate change impacts include droughts and floods, water availability will become less predictable.

These concerns are already coming to the forefront of environmental and policy concerns in California because of the State’s ongoing severe drought. The Governor of California has issued a series of Executive Orders on actions necessary to address California’s severe drought conditions. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is directed to implement mandatory water reductions in urban areas to reduce potable urban water usage by 25 percent statewide. On May 5, 2015, the SWRCB adopted an emergency conservation regulation in accordance with the Governor's directive. The provisions of the emergency regulation went into effect on May 18, 2015. The SWRCB issued reduction targets for communities across the State in April 2015. Its target for Alhambra is 24 percent (SWRCB, April 2015).

Water conservation helps cities adapt to the impacts of climate change. Alhambra has taken action to promote water conservation and efficiency in the city. The City developed a Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance that complies with state law. The City has planted drought-tolerant landscaping at Shorb Garden, Almansor Park, Gateway Plaza, at the golf course and Fire Station 74. The City has implemented an ongoing program to give residential customers free ultra-low flow toilets that use 30 percent less water than conventional toilets. More than six thousand ultra-low flow toilets have been distributed to date.

The City of Alhambra has encouraged residents and businesses to conserve water on a voluntarily basis. Public education by the City of Alhambra Utilities Division and by its partner, the San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, has promoted saving water through water saving tips and videos, water conservation pilot projects, bus shelter and newspaper ads, websites, community outreach and rebates on water-efficient equipment. Residents who notice situations where water is being wasted on private or City-owned property are urged to call the Utilities Division.
**GREEN BUILDINGS**

Green building, also known as green construction or sustainable building, involves creating structures and using processes that are environmentally responsible and resource-efficient throughout a building’s lifecycle: from siting to design, construction, operation, maintenance, renovation, and deconstruction. Green buildings are generally designed to reduce the overall impact of the built environment on the natural environment by efficiently using energy, water, and other resources; protecting occupant health and improving productivity; and reducing waste, pollution and environmental degradation.

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is a nonprofit trade organization that promotes sustainability in how buildings are designed, built and operated. The USGBC manages the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building certification system, the leading program for rating the design, construction and operation of green buildings.

Within Alhambra, new development projects incorporate green building standards. The City Ventures mixed-use project in downtown Alhambra features pioneering sustainable technologies and is the first LEED-certified residential project in Alhambra. The new headquarters for the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission also features green building standards and energy efficient protocols.

Several existing structures in Alhambra have been retrofitted with green building features. The Joslyn Community Center has been retrofitted with energy efficient doors, windows, light fixtures, HVAC system as well as a “cool roof” which helps regulate the building’s interior temperature. Granada Park Gymnasium was updated with energy efficient windows, doors, lighting, appliances and HVAC systems.

As discussed throughout this section, the City of Alhambra has taken many steps to reduce its GHG emissions, and will continue to explore opportunities to reduce its contribution to climate change through various measures including land use and transportation planning, regulatory measures within its power, such as adoption of its Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance, and public education.
LOCAL ECONOMY

Overview

No community stands still for very long. The preceding chapters have painted a picture of what Alhambra is today and how it got here. This chapter now moves the conversation to the future, describing the trends and trajectories carrying the City forward, both local trends and the larger regional and national forces influencing Alhambra. Some trends are positive, representing strengths and opportunities that the community can harness to realize its aspirations. Other trends, however, may be moving in less helpful directions. Over time, the community may want to address those challenges over which it has some influence. This chapter intends to support public discussion by describing these trends, positive and negative, and their implications.

Shifting Demographics: Baby Boom and After

No other trend is as well understood and as certain as the demographic trend of the aging and retirement of the baby boom generation. The impacts of the subsequent generations, however, are less certain even though one can clearly see change on the way.

What is the Baby Boom?

After World War II, the number of births in the US increased substantially above its long-term norm, peaked around 1957, and showed a sharp decline from 1964 to 1965. Starting in 1976, the number of births then began to climb once again as the baby boomers began starting families, although the actual fertility rate has, since 1973, remained at historical lows of under 70 live births per 1000 women age 15 to 44. Figure 24 shows the long-term fertility rate and number of births nationally.

Although many commentators and academics debate whether or not the baby boomers represent one or more social generations, the 20-year period did create a population bubble. The subsequent ten-year period, when the birth rate dipped below the long-term average (down to the depression-era rate), produced significantly fewer people. This period is often referred to as the baby bust, or, more commonly, as Generation X. Finally, the generation born from 1977 to 2000, with more total births than during the previous baby bust period, is often referred to as the echo boom, or Generation Y.

Although the basic fertility rate has not changed much since 1973, the increasing number of women in the child-bearing years has resulted in the increase in total number of births in the echo boom. The US currently produces slightly more babies than the replacement rate, thus the nation’s population continues to grow, and would so even without immigration.

This demographic pattern of baby boom, baby bust, and echo boom poses several challenges for the nation, state, and region, as well as Alhambra. Some of these important challenges are the aging of the baby boom generation, the coming labor shortage, and the challenge of employing echo boomers.
In 2011, the first baby boomers became age-eligible for retirement. Just as this demographic group has shaped every stage of life it has passed through, it will now put its own spin on retirement.

**Retirement**

Current surveys suggest that boomers, on average, intend to work about 3 years longer than previous generations. Will boomers work much longer? Will they get up and move when they retire as some in previous generations did? Will they retire, only to open their own businesses? Will they swell the ranks of civic volunteers? No one really knows the answers to these questions. Even where survey research has been conducted, it is, at best, only a reflection of what the survey respondents felt they would probably do. But when the time comes to retire, baby boomers may change their minds and fool all of the surveyors.

The drop in household wealth, from both the decline in stock values and housing values during the recession, may encourage many baby boomers to stay employed longer to rebuild that part of their retirement nest egg. It might also, however, induce more boomers than those in past retiring generations, to retire from their careers and start a new business. Whether these new businesses are independent retail stores or home-based consulting services, this potential could reshape both the built environment and the local economies in many communities across the country.
For baby boomers to cash in on the value in the housing they own, they will need buyers, members of the baby bust or the echo boom generation. There are substantially fewer people in the baby bust than in the baby boom generation. And, survey research suggests that fewer members of the echo boom are as interested in larger single-family detached houses on large suburban lots as were members of the baby boom. This suggests that there may not be enough buyers to purchase the houses of all the baby boomers who might desire to sell and downsize or relocate. This is perhaps the most interesting conundrum of changing demographics.

**Wealth Transfer**

One key difference in the retirement of the baby boom generation will be their wealth. Their real earnings are higher than that of previous generations’, even though savings rates are lower. More importantly, though, their parents’ generation was the first in the US to, en masse, become homeowners and create widespread family wealth. As this generation passes on, many are leaving this wealth to their children and grandchildren. The baby boomers are becoming the recipients of the largest inter-generational transfer of wealth in history. No one really knows how this wealth will affect baby boomers’ choices for and after retirement, but it does provide opportunities past generations did not have.

**Medical Care**

What is known is that this country is woefully unprepared to deal with the cost of medical care as baby boomers age. Although Social Security is often reported to be in jeopardy, it is much better funded than Medicare. More importantly, as this generation enters the ages that require the most medical care, the US will face an increasingly acute lack of skilled nurses, doctors, hospital beds, and most other things related to medical care industry. Regardless of how national medical care policy and funding eventually shape up, the aging of the baby boom generation assures rising demand for medical services.

**So, What Does This Mean for Alhambra?**

Figure 25 shows the age distribution in Alhambra in 2010 compared to that of Southern California and the United States. The data shows that while Alhambra has a slightly higher portion of its population in the baby boom generation than do Southern California and the nation, it has only a slight decline following the baby boom. Indeed, the data suggest that Alhambra is well positioned to age through the transition from baby boom, through baby bust, and into the echo boom generation.

The distribution of the population by age group also suggests that Alhambra has succeeded where most cities fail: it attracts and retains adult population in all age groups, from those moving into their first home, to those raising families, and extending to those in retirement. However, Alhambra has a lower portion of its population in the child and young adult age groups. The higher portion of non-family households, however, partly explains this.

The City’s demographics suggest that the community does not face the same degree of aging baby boom challenges that the nation faces. The data also suggest that the City is well positioned to compete economically as the retirement of the baby boom generation creates a structural labor shortage (as discussed in the following section).
The Coming Labor Shortage

Nationally in 2010, the 15-year segment of the population following the baby boom has 3.4 million fewer people (a 5.3 percent decrease) than the youngest 15-year segment of the baby boom generation. Narrowing that window to 10 year segments, the decline in population will be even larger, 8.3 percent. Figure 25 illustrates the drop in population for Alhambra, Southern California, and the nation. Alhambra has only a slight drop off from the baby boom to the baby bust generation, -2.3 percent for the 15-year segments, and it actually has a 1.5 percent increase in population comparing the 10-year segments. The Southern California region has 17 percent more people in the 20-year age group following the baby boom generation.

As boomers move into retirement, the US labor force does not have enough workers to fill their jobs. The US economy faces a monumental challenge over the next 20 years, a structural labor shortage. The US will either have to: bring in more skilled and educated immigrants, increase economic productivity by 5.1 percent (just to maintain the status quo), ship more US jobs overseas, and/or expand and improve the effectiveness of education and job training. The economy will feel the effects of this labor shortage most intensely in about 10 to 15 years as the largest single age group moves into retirement.

Talk of a looming labor shortage may seem counterintuitive during a period of sustained high unemployment, but over the long-term the decrease in the size of the labor force will have major consequences for the economy. For example, growth in the labor force accounted for about 60 percent of all economic growth since 1948. A shrinking labor force would limit, if not reverse, economic growth.
As boomer retirement progresses, one can expect American jobs to chase American workers. Those communities that have the quality of life to attract the highest educated and highest skilled workers will also attract the jobs that need those highly skilled and highly educated workers. As in the late 1990s, proximity to available labor will be the most important factor for business location decisions, surpassing land costs, perceived business climate, or where company executives reside.

**Employing the Echo Boomers**

Because Southern California has a higher percentage of its population in the age groups following the baby boom generation it is well positioned to capture new jobs that will be chasing available workers. Nevertheless, the region faces a challenge to assure the labor force has the skills and education needed to fill those jobs. Those jobs will be searching for workers with skills and education (most regions will have a ready supply of under-educated and low-skill workers, potentially a greater supply than demand). Yet, of Southern California’s residents age 25 to 44, 21.0 percent do not have a high school diploma, compared to 12.7 percent nationally. And even though California prides itself on its competitiveness in attracting and employing those with college degree, a somewhat smaller percentage of Southern California’s residents 25 to 44 have a college degree as compared to the nation as a whole (29 versus 31 percent). In addition, the baby bust and echo boom generations have not generally pursued science and engineering education to the degree the nationally economy will need. Workforce development is and will continue to be one of the primary challenges for the region to address in order to capitalize on the national labor shortage.
Employment and Economics

People most closely associate their community with the place in which they live, and to a somewhat lesser degree, the place where they do a lot of their shopping, entertainment, and recreation. But because the majority of employed people work in a different place than where they live, they often do not think of their community as a place to work and earn a living.
Nevertheless, economic activity is a key defining characteristic of communities and the quality of life they offer. Economic activity also provides more in municipal revenues than it costs in municipal services, thus generating resources to provide services and enhance quality of life. This section describes the local economy in Alhambra and projects how the economy might grow over the next 20 years.

**Economic Structure**

To describe the structure of a local economy, economists often compare and contrast employment across 20 sectors of the economy locally with each sector’s share of the regional economy. This analysis identifies the types of economic activity in which the local economy specializes and the types in which the local economy is underserved. Figure 26 shows the share of total employment by economic sector for Alhambra, the San Gabriel Valley, and California for 2007-2009.

Relative to the more complete economies of the San Gabriel Valley and California, four sectors employ substantially more workers: retail trade; health care and social assistance; accommodation and food services; and other services, excluding public administration. Together, these sectors account for 53 percent of local jobs but only 37 percent of jobs regionally and statewide.

At the same time, six sectors employ substantially fewer workers locally than what one would expect based on the regional and state economies. These sectors are: construction; manufacturing; transportation and warehousing; information; management of companies and enterprises; and administration and support, and waste management and remediation. The underrepresented sectors account for only 15.7 percent of the jobs in Alhambra but make up about 28 percent of the jobs in the region and statewide.

**LOCAL-SERVING SECTORS**

Local-serving sectors are the compliment to the base sectors. These businesses primarily serve local residents, recirculating existing dollars rather than bringing new dollars into the local economy. This group of sectors includes: retail trade; finance and insurance; real estate, rentals, and leasing; arts, entertainment, and recreation; accommodation food services; other services; and public administration. Local serving sectors account for 49.7 percent of jobs in Alhambra, yet these sectors only provide about 35.8 percent of the jobs in the region and the state.

The increased importance of the local-serving sectors, however, does not necessarily imply an excess concentration in these sectors. Rather, the discrepancy mostly reflects that the local economy provides less economic activity in the base sectors. Considering the number of jobs per resident can provide a better illustration of the degree to which the local-serving sectors provide an expected level of economic activity. Figure 27 shows the number of jobs per 1,000 residents in Alhambra, Los Angeles County (detailed population data for the San Gabriel Valley is not available), and California, for 2012. The data show that retail trade has a higher than expected level of employment. That even population-weighted employment is higher in this sector indicates that Alhambra serves as a retail destination. Accommodation and food services employ slightly more than the expected number of workers. The remaining local-serving sectors, however, employ substantially fewer people than expected to serve the number of residents in Alhambra.
GOODS-PRODUCING SECTORS

Economic development efforts typically focus on base sectors, which are the sectors that usually produce goods and services that are exported out of the region and thus bring new dollars into the local economy. One group of base industries are the goods-producing sectors: agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting; mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; construction; and manufacturing. The goods-producing sectors only account for 8.2 percent of jobs in Alhambra, while making up 14.6 percent of jobs in the San Gabriel Valley and California. Thus, the local economy lacks the depth of economic activity in goods-producing sectors that would be expected in a more complete economy.

BASE SERVICES SECTORS

The other set of sectors that typically bring new dollars into a region and a local economy are the base service sectors. This group includes: utilities; wholesale trade; transportation and warehousing; information; professional, scientific, and technical services; management of companies; and administration & support, waste management, and remediation. The base services sectors only account for 18.7 percent of jobs in Alhambra. In contrast, this group constitutes 31.3 percent of jobs in the San Gabriel Valley and 26.7 percent statewide. Thus, the local economy also does not have sufficient economic activity in the base services sectors.
Education and Health Care

The educational services and the health care and social assistance sectors are also local-serving sectors. Economic analyses, however, often consider these sectors separately because state and federal regulations and funding have a greater influence over the level of employment than do the market forces that drive the other local-serving sectors. As shown in Figure 27, educational services employs only about 75 percent what would be expected based solely on population. However, the smaller portion of the population in the school-attendance age group explains most of this difference. Health care and social assistance employs about five percent more than the expected level.

Out-Commuting

On average from 2007 through 2009, only about 10 percent of Alhambra residents worked in the City, and residents living outside of the City filled about 85 percent of the jobs in Alhambra. The data shows that more residents in the City are employed in each sector than there are local jobs in each sector, with the exception of the utilities and the retail trade sectors. Figure 28 shows the locations where those working in Alhambra live. Darker shading represents a higher concentration of workers living in Alhambra. This map reveals that the highest concentration of Alhambra workers also live in Alhambra. Figure 29 shows where Alhambra residents work. Darker shading represents higher job concentrations. This map indicates that high proportions of Alhambra resident work in downtown Alhambra, downtown Los Angeles, and Pasadena.

Employment Projection

If present trends continue and the local economy maintains its current share of regional jobs, Alhambra’s local economy has the potential to grow by about 0.4 percent per year. Figure 30 shows the projected job growth by economic sector from 2011 through 2035.

The majority of growth would occur in the local-serving sectors of the economy. These sectors could increase employment by about 1,870 jobs, growing at a rate of 0.6 percent per year. The base-goods sectors of the economy would decline by 710 jobs, but the base-service sectors could provide about 590 new jobs, with an annual growth rate of 0.5 percent. Finally, education and health would add 860 jobs, for a 0.6 percent per year growth rate.

If present trends continue, employment in sectors with above average wages would account for only 20 percent of the total job growth in Alhambra. One of the issues that the City should consider is whether or not the community wants to invest in attracting and retaining higher-wage jobs.
Figure 28. Where Alhambra Workers Live, 2009

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics,
Figure 29. Where Alhambra Residents Work, 2009

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 20
Alhambra’s Economic Future

Alhambra is, in some ways, a quintessential suburban community. The vast majority of working residents commute to jobs outside of the City, and the local economy predominantly provides services to residents inside the City and surrounding areas. If present trends continue, these characteristics would continue and strengthen: an even higher percentage of local jobs would be in the local-serving sectors of the economy, and even more employed residents would work outside of the Alhambra.

The General Plan Update will address whether Alhambra should continue along this path, or the degree to which the community desires to diversify the local economy and provide more jobs for residents. Diversifying the local economy could expand net municipal revenues. Providing more
jobs for residents could reduce out-commuting and ameliorate the social and environmental effects of commuting.

The Natelson Dale Group, Inc. (TNDG) completed a real estate market overview for the City of Alhambra in July 2015. TNDG’s projected demand for future development (through the year 2035) in the commercial sector is approximately 375,000 square feet of retail/restaurant space, 4.2 acres of automobile dealerships, 2 gasoline stations, up to 480,000 square feet of office space, up to 400,000 square feet of industrial business space, and up to 250 hotel rooms. TNDG’s projected demand for new development in Alhambra from 2015 to 2035 is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Projected Demand for New Development in the City of Alhambra, 2015-2035**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Demand for New Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-family residential</td>
<td>500 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family residential</td>
<td>3,000 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail/restaurant space</td>
<td>375,000 square feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automobile dealerships</td>
<td>4.2 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasoline stations</td>
<td>2 stations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Space</td>
<td>400,000 – 480,000 square feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial (business park) space</td>
<td>225,000 – 400,000 square feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>175 – 250 rooms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Natelson Dale Group (TNDG), July 2015

The market forecasts are based on customized versions of TNDG’s demand projection models, and also reflect potential market opportunities identified by various stakeholders interviewed as part of the General Plan research process (including several developers active in the City). The demand forecasts are intended to generally quantify the amounts of new development that may occur in the City over the next 20 years (through 2035), and have not been adjusted to reflect land capacity constraints.

The long-term (20-year) forecasts are not necessarily indicative of immediate development opportunities in the City. Current development projects in the City (mostly notably the 140,000 square foot Alhambra Place) will absorb much of the near-term demand for new retail space. A reoccurring theme in TNDG’s projections is “catch up” demand, which represents the amount of additional space that Alhambra could currently support.
Alhambra is currently “under-represented” in office and industrial employment (i.e., in industry sectors that tend to occupy office and industrial space). Compared to historic trends, TNDG’s projections represent a fairly aggressive vision of Alhambra’s potential for future office development. The projections reflect stakeholder observations about locational advantages that the City could potentially leverage to achieve better representation in the regional office market due to proximity to Downtown Los Angeles and Pasadena, Cal State Los Angeles, and Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center. Additionally, TNDG has evaluated a hotel market area corresponding to the portion of the Western San Gabriel Valley on the Interstate 10 corridor, which encompasses competitive hotel facilities in Alhambra, Monterey Park, Rosemead and San Gabriel. Available data indicate that Alhambra is significantly underrepresented in the West San Gabriel Valley hotel market. Whereas the City represents 35 percent of the population and 31 percent of the employment in the four-city market area, it currently accounts for only 8 percent of the hotel room inventory.

If the regional economy would continue to provide good jobs within an acceptable commuting distance (with “good jobs” and “acceptable commuting distance” defined on an individual basis) and if the current trends in municipal revenues and expenditures would be sufficient to maintain an acceptable quality of life in the City, then there would be less value in expanding and diversifying the local economy. When envisioning the next twenty five years, Alhambra should consider these tradeoffs and seek a balance that reflects the community’s values.

Demographics: Population and Household Projections

Previous sections of the Community Profile have described demographic characteristics of the people who live in Alhambra today. Going forward, though, it is growth in population and households that will drive the demand for municipal services, new development and redevelopment, and retail sales. This section projects the number of people and households that could call Alhambra home by 2035 if present trends continue.

Population Projection

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) estimates that Alhambra’s population will slowly but steadily increase into 2040. During the next 25 years, the City’s population is expected to increase by 3,258 people, for an average annual growth of about 0.25 percent. Figure 31 shows the actual and projected population of Alhambra from 1990 to 2040.

Household Growth Forecast

The household is the basic unit in economic analyses, especially regarding consumer spending, retail market demand, and residential development. The California Department of Finance has reported a slow but steady increase in the number of Alhambra households from 1990 to 2015. Overall, the City added 1,297 households in the last 25 years, at an average annual rate of about 0.18 percent. Based on current trends, SCAG estimates that Alhambra will add another 2,346 households by 2040 to reach a total of 31,876 households, or an average annual growth of 0.53 percent. With the number of households increasing at twice the rate of population, the City’s average household size is expected to decrease over time.
Figure 31. Estimated and Projected Population, Alhambra CA, 1990 to 2040


Figure 32. Estimated and Projected Number of Households, Alhambra CA, 1990 to 2040

Residential Development Projection

At the simplest level, the long-term demand for housing equates to the long-term forecast for growth in households. According to the projected demand for new housing shown in Table 5, Alhambra will need to accommodate the development of over 3,000 housing units from 2015 to 2035. The projected demand for residential units are based on growth forecasts from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). As a built-out City, Alhambra does not have the luxury of spreading new housing out across fields of undeveloped land. From 2000 to 2010, the City accommodated the addition of nearly 300 new households almost exclusively through the construction of multifamily townhouses, condos, and apartments with five or more units per building.

A key question for the City is what types, sizes, and densities of housing will be acceptable to the community, will answer the market demand for new housing, and will be financially feasible to develop on infill or redevelopment opportunity sites? If the past ten years are used as a guide, then at least 85 percent of future residential development in the City will be multi-family units and up to 15 percent will be single family units (TNDG, July 2015). However, the City has the responsibility to plan for the location and intensity of residential land uses in the City, and will need to take into account the diverse values and aspirations of the community throughout the General Plan Update process.
REFERENCES


City of Alhambra. City of Alhambra Community Profile. February 2012.


Community Profile


US Census website.  


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Veronica Tam & Associates (demographics and informal survey analysis)

The Natelson Dale Group (TNDG) (economics)

KOA Corporation (transportation)

True North Research (formal survey)