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Vision Statement Existing Conditions and Background Analysis

# City of Newport Beach General Plan Update

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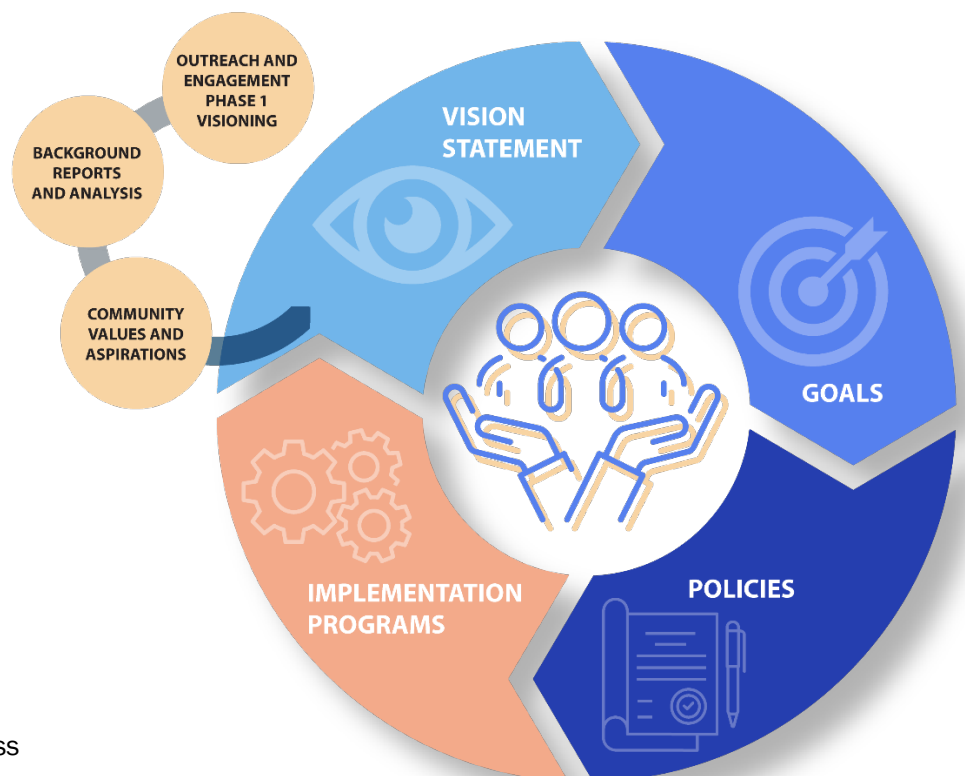
# 1 Introduction

The City of Newport Beach (City) General Plan Update will result in a plan that defines the vision for what the City will look like in 20 to 30 years and provide a roadmap to achieving this vision. This document provides an overview of a Vision Statement’s purpose and relevance, a review of the 2006 General Plan Vision Statement, and an overview of the process for developing a new Vision Statement as part of the General Plan Update.

## 1.1 Vision Statement Overview

The Vision Statement forms the foundation from which all decisions in the General Plan Update are made. It identifies priorities where resources should be focused in striving to achieve the Vision where the City continues to be a great place to live, work, visit, and play. It provides a process for developing a consensus around the desired future state of Newport Beach. While, the Vision Statement is written in the present tense, it is intended as the end state for how Newport Beach should look through future implementation of the General Plan.

The Vision Statement is developed early in the planning process and acts as a north star for guiding the development of goals, policies, and actions needed to achieve the vision. The process for creating a Vision Statement, otherwise known as the visioning process, is an important first step in revealing the values, needs, and aspirations of residents, businesses, and the larger community. While the Vision Statement is not a requirement of the General Plan, it is a foundational step in the planning process for developing an ideal future for Newport Beach. **Figure 1** illustrates the process for achieving the Vision Statement through implementation of the programs, policies, and goals.



**Figure 1.** Vision Statement Process

## 2 Existing Conditions

### 2.1 Newport Beach 2025

During the 2006 update to the City's General Plan, the Vision Statement was written as a retrospective view of the community by an observer from the year 2025. There are nine (9) topics covered in the Vision Statement chapter. The 2006 Vision Statement is attached to this report for reference. The topics are written as observations citing the City's achievements associated with the implementation of the 2006 General Plan. The cited topics include the following:

- **Community Character:** Newport Beach is a beautiful, unique residential community providing a successful balance of resources to meet the needs of residents, business, and visitors.
- **Growth Strategy, Land Use, and Development:** Newport Beach provides conservative growth that prioritizes development that emphasizes resident's quality of life and is beneficial to the community's character and economy. The variety of neighborhoods and villages offer live and work opportunities, protected viewsheds, and ample landscaping is preserved.
- **A Healthy Natural Environment:** Newport Beach protects the natural environment through flourishing natural ecosystems, preserved open space resources, and accessible beaches, parks, preserves, harbor, and estuaries.
- **Efficient and Safe Circulation:** Newport Beach provides a circulation system that is safe and convenient for all modes of transportation, emphasizing that traffic flows smoothly and ample public parking facilities for residents and visitors is planned.
- **Community Services:** Newport Beach's coordinated efforts with City Departments and other service providers work collectively to provide excellent public services, top-rated schools, access to health care and essential social services, and responsive high-quality public safety services.
- **Recreation Opportunities:** Newport Beach is a residential and recreational seaside community with attractive environmental assets and community facilities that serve residents and attract visitors.
- **Boating and Waterways:** Newport Beach is recognized as a premier recreational boating harbor that is well managed and maintained providing adequate access to the water. The shoreline and waterways in the upper bay are unencumbered and are free of sediment and debris.
- **Airport:** Newport Beach remains united in its efforts to control the noise, air, and traffic pollution impacts from the John Wayne Airport, preserving the community's unique character and land values.
- **Responsive Government:** Newport Beach's elected officials and City staff listen and respond to the interests of residents and the business community.

## 2.2 Role of the 2025 Vision

As noted in Section 1.1, Vision Statement Overview, the Vision Statement is the first step in the update to the General Plan. The 2006 Vision Statement for 2025 covers a limited range of community aspirations which are addressed throughout the various elements of the General Plan. For example, the **Growth Strategy, Land Use, and Development** statement describes the City as having a conservative growth strategy that emphasizes the quality of life of residents, values natural resources, and protects public views. Primarily this vision would be fostered through implementation of the Land Use Element; however, all Elements play a role in fostering a growth land use and development strategy. The 2006 Vision Statement was the cornerstone for the development of all goals of the 2006 General Plan, which subsequently guided the development of the policies and programs needed to achieve this vision.

# 3 Planning Trends and Emerging Issues

As part of the General Plan Update, a new Vision Statement will be developed to inform the General Plan Update process. The Vision Statement should be grounded in data and findings about existing conditions, as well as feedback received through a robust outreach and engagement program. Given the 20- to 30-year timeline of the General Plan, the Vision Statement should also be shaped by emerging social, environmental, and economic trends. The American Planning Association's 2023 Trend Report for Planners<sup>1</sup> (Trend Report) highlights trends that have the potential to affect cities in coming years and should therefore be considered in long-range planning efforts. The report prioritizes trends with both a high certainty of occurrence and a high potential to impact cities. The key trends discussed in the report are outlined below, but it is important to note that other known trends should be weighed, and the City should be adaptable and nimble where necessary to future trends.

## 3.1 Planning for Climate Change

According to the Trend Report, the effects of climate change – including, but not limited to, extreme weather, wildfires, drought, flooding, and sea level rise – are among the most certain and impactful trends for which cities should be planning. Cities are already feeling the effects of a changing climate, and existing infrastructure, transportation systems, emergency response systems, and development patterns are not always resilient to these effects. This poses a major threat to the natural and built environment, public safety, and local economies. For this reason, climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience have been at the forefront of planning in recent years and are critical to long-range planning efforts.

Moreover, many new funding opportunities have emerged to help local governments plan for climate change-related impacts. Most notably, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 included numerous loans and grant programs intended to help local jurisdictions transition to renewable energy and transportation, increase resilience to climate-related hazards, and restore natural systems that can help protect the built environment. These major investments in climate mitigation and resilience planning are indicative of the urgency and importance of responding to climate-related issues in long-range planning efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> American Planning Association. 2023. 2023 Trend Report for Planners. <https://www.planning.org/publications/document/9263250/>.

## 3.2 Integrating Technology into Planning

Another major trend identified in the Trend Report relates to emerging technologies and the ways in which they can affect cities – both intentionally and unintentionally – as well as the integration of technology into public spaces and municipal services. Cities are increasingly providing information and services online and in digital applications. Moreover, there are new ways to collect and store data that can be used to inform public decisions and investments. Additionally, the use of artificial intelligence, including autonomous vehicles and online bots, is projected to increase rapidly over the course of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This has the potential to affect local transportation systems and job markets in both positive and negative ways.

The Trend Report encourages the integration of technology into municipal services, transportation systems, and public spaces, but also cautions against technological dependency as some residents may not know how to use the technology, lack access to it, or do not feel comfortable using it. Studies have shown that a majority of Americans distrust private and public entities with their digital information and artificial intelligence has been known to reinforce social inequity. To combat this, municipalities will need to involve the public in decision making processes regarding technology and emphasize transparency.

## 3.3 Lingering Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

While public health measures and vaccines have enabled many aspects of society to return to “normal,” many of the societal shifts associated with the COVID-19 pandemic are expected to continue. For example, some people, particularly those who are immunocompromised or over 65 years old, remain wary of their safety in densely populated areas and spaces. This indicates a need for more precautions and considerations for public health when planning for dense development and public spaces. The pandemic has also caused long-term changes in the ways people work and shop. Many people will continue to work from home and rely on online shopping to meet many of their needs. These trends have led to some spaces becoming obsolete and a need to rethink certain land use policies. Higher than average vacancy rates for both retail and office space are projected to continue; however, the full effect is difficult to predict.

## 3.4 Inclusivity and Social Equity

Many cities are attempting to address the effects of a long history of inequitable urban planning. Social justice movements, including the Environmental Justice Movement, are calling on municipal governments to target investments and improvements for affordable housing, transportation, public infrastructure, schools, parks, and business districts in areas that have historically experienced disinvestment, been subject to de facto and de jure segregation, and been overburdened with pollution from incompatible land uses. These trends have led to many cities adopting new plans, policies, and programs focused on advancing social equity and creating new ways for the community to get involved in the decision-making process. The goal is to foster less racially and economically segregated cities creating more inclusive neighborhoods and public spaces. While the City of Newport Beach does not have traditional disadvantaged communities, it is important to plan future development including housing, public investment and facilities, and the provision of public services in ways to equally serve residents, business, and visitors.

## 4 Developing a Vision Statement

### 4.1 Next Steps

The Vision Statement for the General Plan Update will be developed through a process that is informed by data, focused on the future, and driven by the needs of the community. The implementation of a robust community outreach and engagement program will be instrumental in shaping a vision for Newport Beach. “The City of Newport Beach General Plan Update Community Outreach and Engagement Program” developed for the General Plan Update lays the foundation for community outreach. Stakeholders will be identified through the update process and outreach will provide meaningful input that will result in goal and policy development, so that community members can witness how their engagement shaped the process. Visioning through outreach and engagement will ensure a holistic vision for the future of Newport Beach is captured in the updated Vision Statement. Below is a summary list of critical path items for updating the Vision Statement:

- **Existing Conditions Analysis** – An analysis of relevant data will be conducted for all elements of the General Plan. This includes a study of existing regulations, on-the-ground data, and progress made on the 2006 General Plan.
- **Future Trends** – Understanding emerging trends, as discussed in Section 3, Planning Trends and Emerging Issues, is key to developing a vision that is future oriented.
- **Outreach and Engagement** – Implementation of the Community Outreach and Engagement Program is essential for identifying key stakeholders, raising awareness of the General Plan Update, and fostering discourse around a common future state for Newport Beach.

### 4.2 Progress Made To-Date

As part of the General Plan Update process, a General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) has been formed. The GPAC is made up of community volunteers that are enlisted to ensure there is sufficient input regarding the General Plan Update, to review and provide guidance to City staff and its consultants on changes to the General Plan goals and policies, and to make recommendations to the General Plan Update Steering Committee. The GPAC established subcommittees for the various topics of the General Plan Update, including the Vision Statement. The GPAC Vision Subcommittee has already begun to meet to discuss an updated Vision Statement for the General Plan Update. Topics discussed include the following:

- Community Services
- Airport
- Environmental Stewardship and Coastal Resilience
- Community Safety
- Partnerships
- Community Character
- Growth, Land Use, and Development
- Environmental Justice

The topics discussed by the GPAC Vision Subcommittee highlight key community values that can be used in the outreach and engagement process to foster discourse around community needs and the vision for the future of Newport Beach.

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