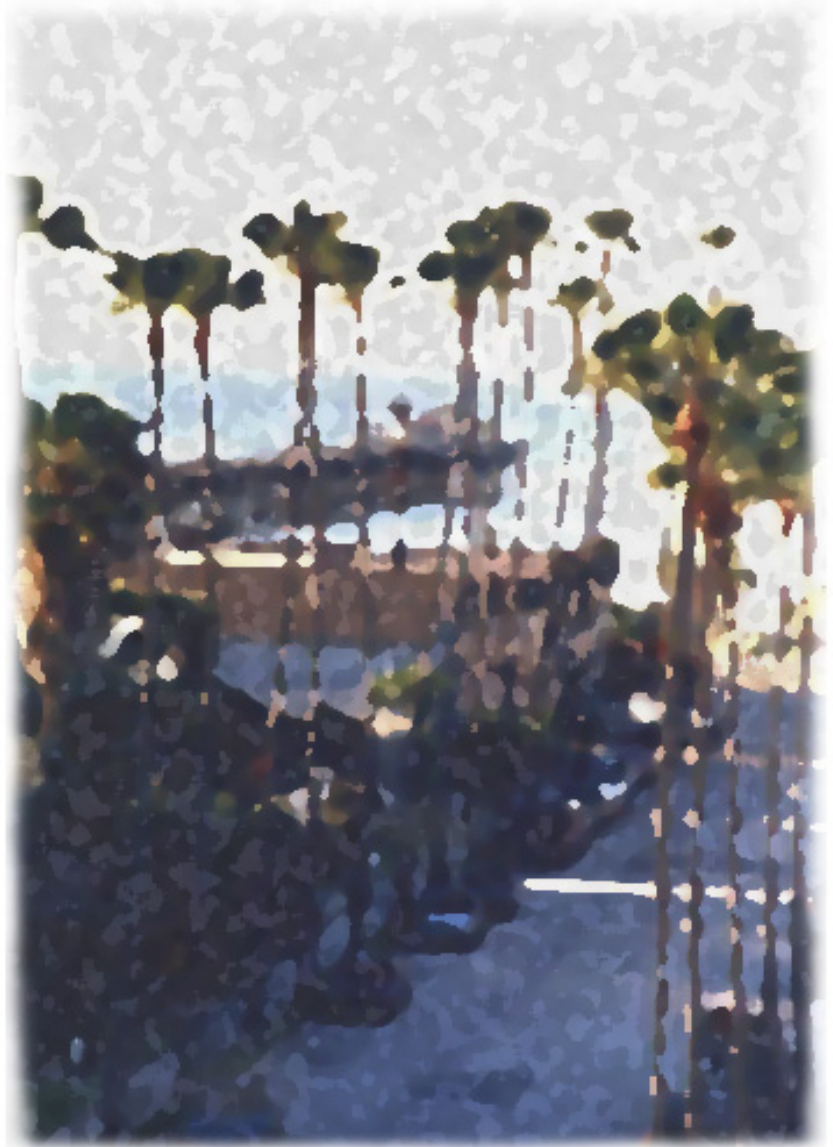




City of Seal Beach General Plan

December 2003

City of Seal Beach

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Open Space/Recreation/Conservation Element
Safety Element
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Introduction

Need for General Plan

Incorporated in 1915 primarily as a farming community, the City of Seal Beach has grown into a small city within an urbanized region. Despite regional pressures, Seal Beach has successfully maintained its small-town atmosphere and community values.

The General Plan's first elements were adopted in 1973. Since that time individual elements and portions of elements have been revised and updated as needed. However, this document represents the first comprehensive revision to the General Plan and organizes and incorporates all previous elements and revisions. Intentionally, no changes in established land use designations or core policies were made as part of this effort.

Seal Beach has grown from a small community of approximately 1,000 persons in 1944 to a developed city of over 24,000 in 2002, with a variety of land uses providing housing, recreation, jobs, shopping, services, and open space. As development occurred, overall patterns of land use within the community were established, and a very limited amount of land suitable for development remains vacant.

The City of Seal Beach is now at a transition. Unlike past years, when planning for the future may have focused on the expansion, much of Seal Beach is now developed and the focus of planning for the future has evolved toward managing and enhancing development. Planning will now focus on retaining small-town character, stimulating new economic growth, revitalizing older areas, assuring public safety, finding new uses for underutilized land, and enhancing the amenities and environmental resources that define Seal Beach.

To address change, the General Plan serves as a policy guide for determining the appropriate physical development and character of Seal Beach. The Plan is founded upon the community's vision for Seal Beach and expresses the community's long-term goals. Seal Beach is a community that appreciates its small-town character and realizes the value of providing a balance of land use that will provide for a self-reliant community. Implementation of the Seal Beach General Plan will ensure that future development projects are consistent with the community's goals and that adequate

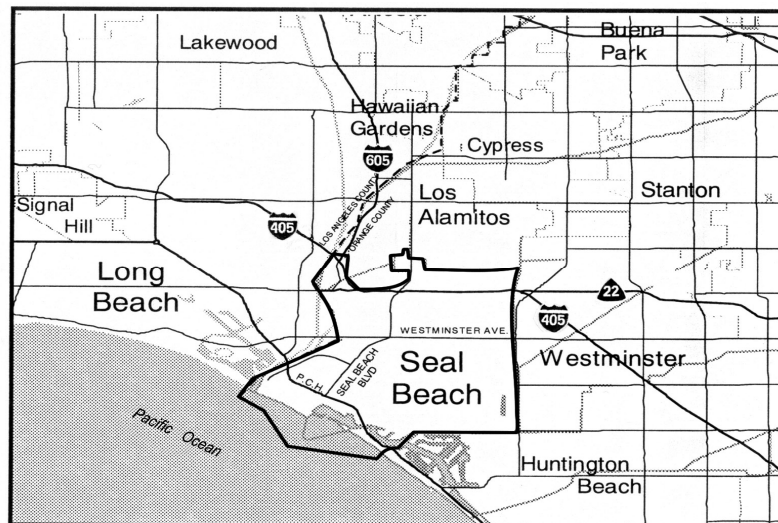


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urban services are available to meet the needs of new and existing development.

Seal Beach Planning Area

Seal Beach is a beach community encompassing 11.5 square miles (or 7,296 acres) along the Pacific Ocean coast between the Cities of Huntington Beach and Long Beach. Other communities neighboring Seal Beach include Westminster, Garden Grove, Los Alamitos, and the unincorporated community of Rossmoor. The City lies within the northwest portion of Orange County and is part of the larger Southern California region, an area in which the population and economy have grown substantially over the past 40 years.



Introduction - Figure 1 - Regional Location

Although not large in size, Seal Beach encompasses a variety of neighborhoods and land uses. The City boundaries extend from the coastline to approximately 5 miles inland. The Coastal Zone extends approximately two miles inland. Major state and federal highways cross through the community and include the San Diego Freeway (I-405), I-605 Freeway, Garden Grove Freeway (SR 22), and Pacific Coast Highway (SR1). The City's westerly boundary largely follows the San Gabriel River.

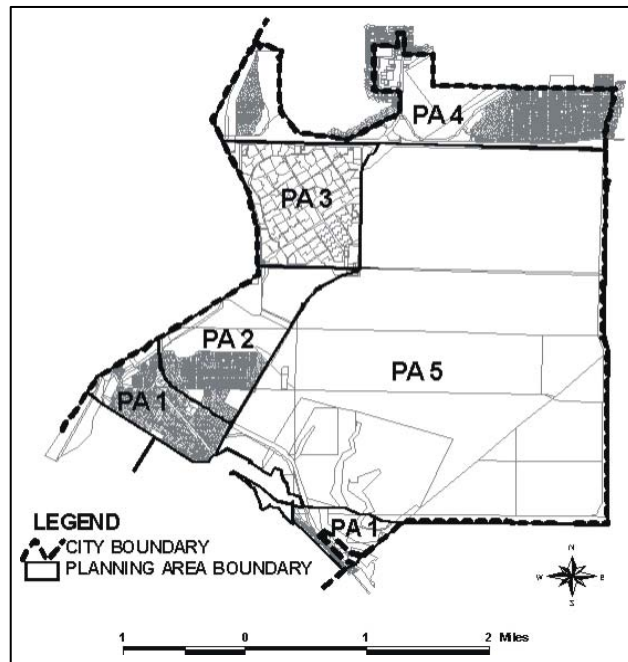
Due to varied and unique characteristics of neighborhoods within the community, five Planning Areas have been established as summarized below. Detailed descriptions of the land uses and characteristics of each Planning Area are provided in the Land Use



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Element. The City's five Planning Areas are illustrated in Figure 2 – Planning Areas.

- Planning Area 1 – Old Town/Surfside
- Planning Area 2 – Hellman Ranch/Marina Hill/Boeing
- Planning Area 3 – Leisure World
- Planning Area 4 – College Park/Bixby/Rossmoor
- Planning Area 5 – Naval Weapons Station



Introduction - Figure 2 - Planning Areas

Community Goals

The City Council has established 4 goals and 21 objectives that will provide staff, boards, and commissions with a blueprint to guide the City over the next several years. The four primary goals are:

- Deliver responsive, user-friendly customer service.
- Improve the quality of life for all residents.
- Create sustainable revenues for essential City services.
- Adopt a proactive, constructive approach to land uses.

Purpose of the General Plan

California state law requires each city and county to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for its own physical development (§65300 of the California *Government Code*). In essence, a city's



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general plan serves as the blueprint for the future. The plan must contain policies and programs designed to provide decision makers with a solid base for land use related decisions. The general plan must be comprehensive, internally consistent, and long-term.

The general plan must address many issues that are directly related to and influence land use decisions. In addition to land use, state law requires that the plan address circulation, housing, the conservation of natural resources, the preservation of open space, the noise environment and the protection of public safety (§65302 of the California *Government Code*). These issues are to be discussed to the extent that each applies to the particular jurisdiction. Although required to address the issues specified in state law, the general plan may be organized in a way that best suits the city or county. The general plan may also cover topics of special or unique interest to a city or county, such as cultural or coastal resources.

Organization of the General Plan

The City of Seal Beach General Plan contains goals, policies, and programs that are intended to guide land use and development decisions for the coming years. The General Plan consists of the Land Use Map and the following eight elements, which together fulfill the state requirements for a general plan. The eight elements are: Land Use, Circulation, Conservation & Open Space, Safety, Housing, Noise, Cultural Resources, and Growth Management. Introduction - Table 1 - Relationship of Seal Beach General Plan Elements to State-Mandated Elements illustrates the relationship between the General Plan's eight elements and the seven state-mandated elements.



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Introduction - Table 1 - Relationship of Seal Beach General Plan Elements to State-Mandated Elements

Seal Beach General Plan Elements	State-Mandated General Plan Elements							Optional
	Land Use	Circulation	Conservation*	Open Space*	Safety	Housing	Noise	
Land Use	✓							
Circulation		✓						
Conservation and Open Space			✓	✓				
Safety					✓			
Housing					✓	✓		
Noise							✓	
Cultural Resources			✓					✓
Growth Management**								✓

*These elements may be combined.

**While Growth Management is not a state-mandated element, it is mandated by Measure M for all jurisdictions in Orange County.

The Seal Beach General Plan consists of text and maps. The Plan provides direction for the City's growth and development.

Each of the General Plan elements is comprised of several sections:

- Purpose/Background
- Statutory Requirements
- Related Plans & Programs
- Issues, Goals, Objectives and Policies
- Maps

In addition, where appropriate within each element, policies and discussion are organized by Planning Area.

Updating and Periodic Review

The General Plan will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains current. If unanticipated conditions warrant, the General Plan will be amended, following technical study and public hearings by the Planning Commission and the City Council.



Citizen Participation

A citizens' committee has been encouraged and established to review the General Plan documents at times of amendment and all development programs can be based on maximum involvement and true reflections of the aspirations of the citizens.

