

City of Huntington Beach

2000 MAIN STREET

CALIFORNIA 92648

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

www.huntingtonbeachca.gov

Planning Division

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Building Division

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October 8, 2015

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Huntington Beach General Plan Update

Lead Agency:

Agency Name: City of Huntington Beach
Street Address: 2000 Main Street

City/State/Zip: Huntington Beach, CA
92648

Contact: Jennifer Villasenor
Planning Manager

Consulting Firm:

Firm Name: Atkins
Street Address: 3570 Carmel Mountain
Road, Suite 300

City/State/Zip: San Diego, CA 92130

Contact: Diane Sandman
Program Manager

The City of Huntington Beach publicly announces the preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the following project, as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and set forth in Public Resources Code Section 21065. A description of the project, as well as an explanation of potential environmental effects, is provided in this Notice of Preparation (NOP). We need to know your views as to the scope and content of the environmental information included in the EIR to address the project's potential environmental effects.

SCOPING MEETING: Pursuant to Section 21083.9 of the Public Resources Code, a scoping meeting will be held for the general public and responsible and trustee public agencies. The purpose of the scoping meeting is to learn about the proposed project, review the anticipated scope of the EIR, and assist the City in identifying the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and potentially significant effects to be analyzed in depth in the EIR. Below, the date, time, and location of the scoping meeting are provided.

Scoping Meeting Date
Wednesday, October 21,
2015

Scoping Meeting Time
Agencies: 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Public: 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Scoping Meeting Location
Room B-7, City Hall –
Lower Level, 2000 Main
Street, Huntington Beach,
CA 92648

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD: A 30-day public review period for submitting comments on the scope of the EIR is:

Starting Date: Thursday, October 8, 2015

Ending Date: Friday, November 6, 2015 at 5 p.m.

All comments need to be mailed or submitted no later than 5 p.m. on November 6, 2015. Please send your response, including your name, address, and concerns, to:

Jennifer Villasenor, Planning Manager
City of Huntington Beach
2000 Main Street, Huntington Beach, CA 92648 or via e-mail to:
jvillasenor@surfcity-hb.org.

A copy of the NOP describing the project location and potential environmental effects is available at the following locations:

- City of Huntington Beach Planning and Building Department, 2000 Main Street, Huntington Beach, California, 92648;
- City of Huntington Beach Clerk's Office, City Hall – 2nd floor, 2000 Main Street, Huntington Beach, CA 92648;
- Central Library, 7111 Talbert Avenue, Huntington Beach, CA 92647;
- The project website: <http://www.hbthenextwave.org>
- The City's website:
<http://www.huntingtonbeachca.gov/government/departments/planning/major/>

PROJECT TITLE: City of Huntington Beach General Plan Update

PROJECT APPLICANT: City of Huntington Beach

PROJECT LOCATION: City of Huntington Beach and surrounding unincorporated areas, Orange County, California

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The City of Huntington Beach has initiated a comprehensive program to update its General Plan. State law (Government Code Section 65300) requires each city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for its physical development. The proposed project consists of the adoption and implementation of a Draft General Plan, which establishes an overall development capacity for the city and serves as a policy guide for determining the appropriate physical development and character of Huntington Beach over an approximate 25-year planning horizon (to 2040). The draft General Plan must comply with State law (Government Code Section 65300), which requires each city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for its physical development. The draft General Plan Update project also includes a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Program and a Coastal Resiliency Program (CRP). A GHG Reduction Program provides near-term specific and measurable actions, programs, and projects to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals as required by State legislation, and provides performance indicators and a monitoring tool. A CRP provides guiding engineering, ecological, and community resilience principles to address potential sea level rise in accordance with the adopted guidelines of the California Coastal Commission. It also identifies preparedness goals, actions, and an implementation strategy.

General Plan update documents and presentations developed to date are available at the following website: <http://www.hbthenextwave.org/>.

The City's current General Plan was last comprehensively updated in 1996. The Coastal Element was last updated in 2001, the Growth Management Element was last updated in 2002, and the Housing and Circulation Elements were last updated in 2013. The Housing Element is currently being updated again to comply with State requirements.

PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING: The City of Huntington Beach is located in the northwestern portion of Orange County along the Pacific Ocean. The city is bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the southwest, the City of Seal Beach to the northwest, the City of Westminster to the north, the City of Fountain Valley to the northeast, and the Cities of Newport Beach and Costa Mesa to the east (see **Figure 1**).

The planning area, shown on **Figure 2**, includes the entire corporate limits of the City of Huntington Beach, as well as unincorporated areas surrounded by the city, including the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. The General Plan applies to all properties within the planning area.



LEGEND

□ Planning Area

N
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MILES



Basemap Source: City of Huntington Beach (2014).



Figure 1 – Regional Vicinity

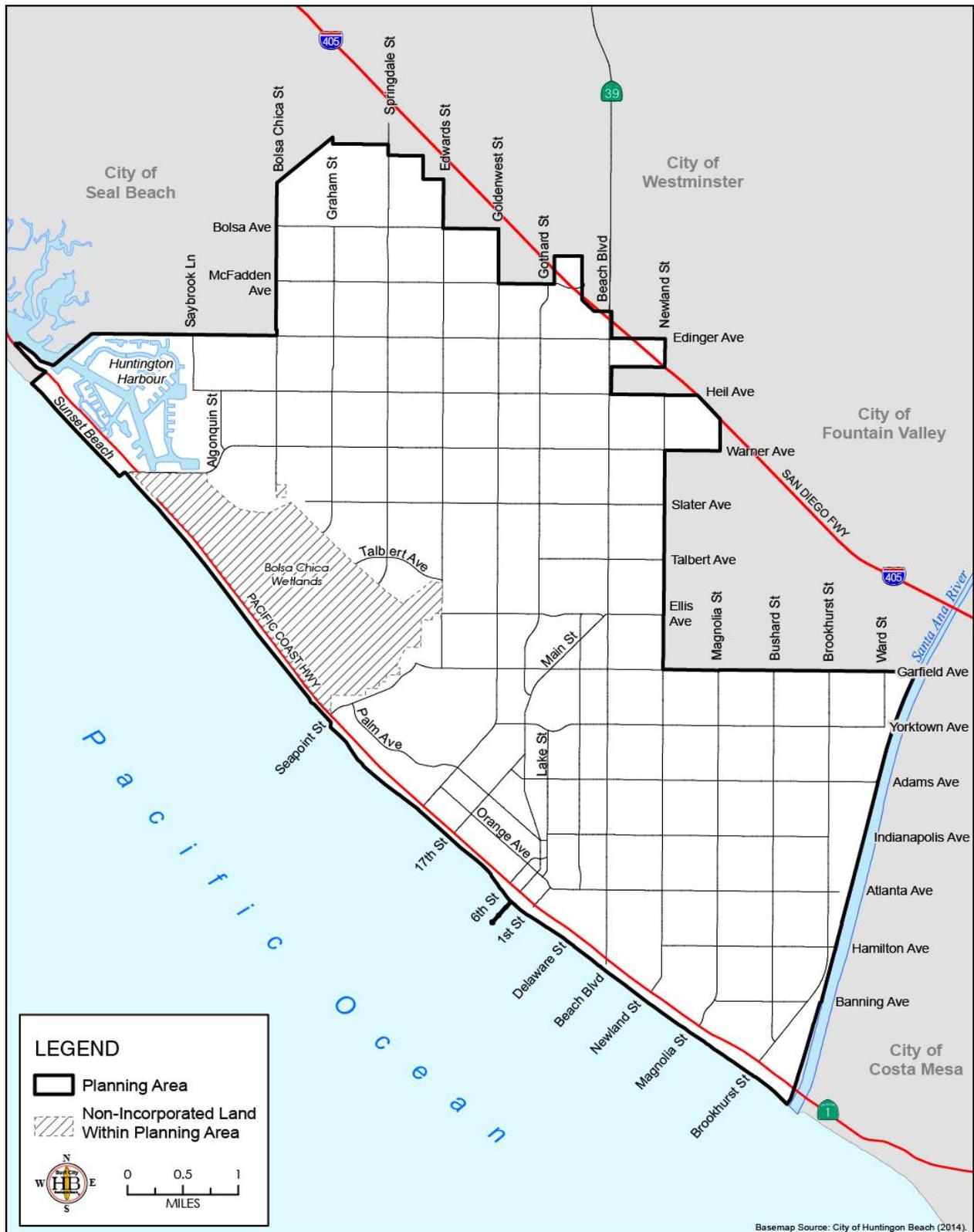


Figure 2 - Planning Area

City of Huntington Beach General Plan

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: The General Plan and implementing programs serve as the blueprint for future growth and development. As a blueprint for the future, these documents must contain policies and programs designed to provide decision-makers with a solid basis for decisions related to land use and development.

Vision Statement: The following community vision supports the draft General Plan Update project:

In 2040, the City of Huntington Beach is...

A **desirable destination for all people to live, work, play, and visit.** Huntington Beach is a **healthy and safe, family-oriented community** with flourishing schools and accessible community services for all ages. Natural resources are protected, while parks, open spaces, and the beach provide a variety of recreation opportunities. Community members travel easily by automobile, by bicycle, on foot, and using transit.

Well-maintained, high-quality infrastructure and cutting-edge technology help **all businesses throughout the city prosper in a culture of innovation**, offering a variety of job opportunities for residents and the region. **Development is guided to ensure responsible growth** while preserving and enhancing our community character, the beach, Surf City culture, and the environment.

The community and its priorities are resilient, withstanding the challenges posed by a changing coastline and economic base, and shifting demographics. The City, in partnership with the community, is sustainable – **considering the needs of future generations while protecting what is valued today.**

Huntington Beach’s vision is supported by ten overarching guiding principles that set the tone and direction of how the city will change over the next 25 years. These guiding principles are a benchmark to ensure that the City’s goals, policies, and actions align with the community’s vision for the future. They describe the future conditions in Huntington Beach in 2040, based on successful implementation of the proposed plan and programs.

The guiding principles for the General Plan update have been modified as follows to serve as project objectives for the EIR:

Objective 1 – Economic Vitality: Maintain an innovation-friendly environment where local businesses thrive and become a top choice for highly qualified job seekers.

Objective 2 – Infrastructure: Update water, sewer, street, and other infrastructure facilities through a comprehensive systems approach to adequately serve future growth while supporting the existing community.

Objective 3 – Open Space and Recreation: Maintain a balance of open space and recreational activities throughout the community.

Objective 4 – Surf City Community Image: Promote Huntington Beach’s unique Surf City image, identity, and culture as a beach community.

Objective 5 – Public Safety: Create a safe and secure community by preparing for natural hazards and improving street lighting and design to enhance safety in public areas, parks, and streets.

Objective 6 – Redevelopment and Revitalization: Revitalize commercial corridors and older industrial areas to support economic development. Enhance the community through successful infill development and a diverse array of housing types.

Objective 7 – Mobility and Access: Retrofit high-traffic corridors to better connect cyclists, pedestrians, and transit users, support use of alternative fuel vehicles, and reduce traffic congestion.

Objective 8 – Resource Conservation: Protect natural resources within the community and become a regional leader in sustainability. Shift toward renewable energy resources and conservation practices to achieve the city’s self-sufficiency goals.

Objective 9 – Resident Services: Update and expand community and social services to meet the needs of all community members, including youth and seniors.

Objective 10 – Culture and Arts: Support programs, activities, and facilities that celebrate the city’s historical and cultural heritage.

GENERAL PLAN COMPONENTS: The General Plan must include the subject matter required for the following state-required elements: Land Use; Circulation; Housing; Conservation; Open Space; Noise; and Safety. In addition, Measure M, approved by Orange County voters in 1990 and renewed in 2006 as Measure M2, requires all jurisdictions within the County to maintain a Growth Management Plan and a seven-year Capital Improvement Program. Measure M2 raises the County’s sales tax, for a 22 year period, to pay for specific voter-approved transportation projects. Local jurisdictions may receive tax monies for approved local projects if their Growth Management Plan and Capital Improvement Program conform to measure requirements. The City’s Growth Management Plan is addressed in the Land Use and Infrastructure and Public Services Elements of the General Plan. Because a portion of the City is located in the Coastal Zone, the General Plan also includes a Coastal Element.

The Draft General Plan will be divided into nine elements, which together address the mandated topics as well as additional topics of interest to the City. Each of these elements is briefly described below.

The **Land Use Element** guides future development in Huntington Beach and designates appropriate locations for different land uses including open spaces, parks, residences, commercial uses, industry, schools, and other public uses. The Land Use Element establishes standards for residential density and non-residential building intensity for land located throughout the city. This element also presents long-term urban design and economic development goals and policies.

The Land Use Diagram (**Figure 3**) establishes the general pattern of uses in the planning area and identifies maximum permitted land use densities and intensities. These parameters can be used to identify the anticipated level of development in the planning area between 2015 and 2040. Future uses within Specific Plan areas will continue to be regulated primarily by the development standards established by each Specific Plan. As the density and intensity standards for each land use designation are applied to future development projects and land use decisions, properties will gradually transition from one use to another, and land uses and intensities will gradually shift to align with the intent of the plan.

Table 1 identifies anticipated land use changes that would occur between 2014 and 2040 with implementation of the General Plan.

Table 1 – Anticipated Land Use Changes between 2014 and 2040

	Land Use	
	Residential Uses (Dwelling Units)	Non-Residential Uses (Square Feet)
Existing (2014)	78,175	45,052,000
Proposed (2040) ¹	85,403	50,437,000
Net Difference	7,228	5,385,000
Source: City of Huntington Beach		
Note:		
1. Some land uses identified as proposed at the time the land use inventory was completed in 2014 have recently been occupied or are currently under construction.		

The **Circulation Element** defines the transportation network and describes how people move throughout the city, including the streets, railways, transit routes, bicycle paths, and sidewalks. The transportation network is a major determinant of urban form and land use. Factors such as, but not limited to, traffic patterns and congestion, access to transit, and ease and safety of walking and biking may determine where people choose to live, work, and visit. **Figure 4** illustrates the adopted Arterial Plan. No change to the Arterial Plan has been made relative to the plan adopted as part of the 2013 Circulation Element update.

The **Environmental Resources and Conservation Element** describes the conservation, development, and use of natural resources and addresses Huntington Beach’s parks and recreation opportunities. This element also addresses key issues related to environmental resources and conservation areas, including biological resource areas, energy and water conservation, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and coastal resources.

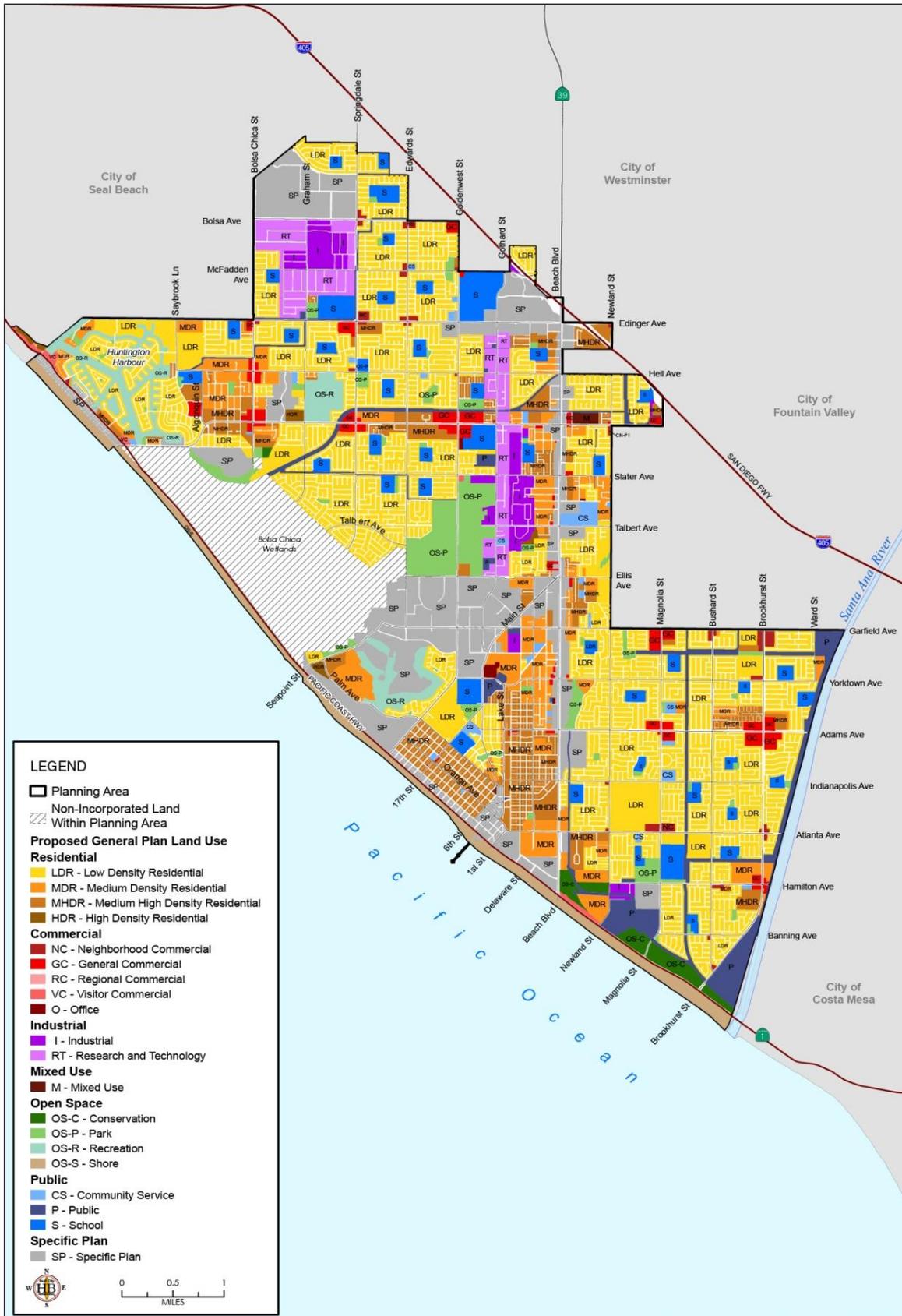


Figure 3 – Land Use Diagram

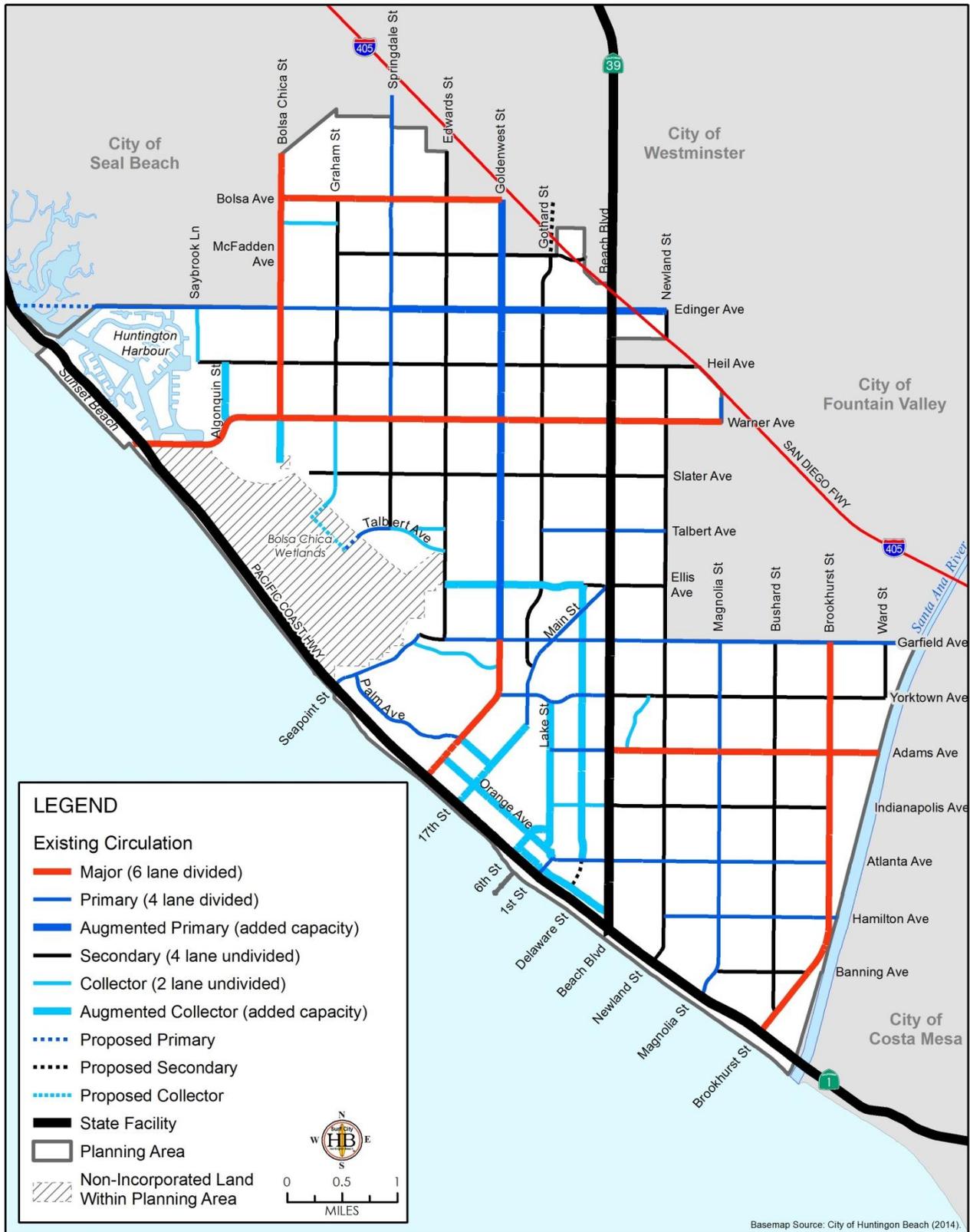


Figure 4 – Arterial Plan

The **Natural and Environmental Hazards Element** identifies areas prone to natural hazards and potentially hazardous conditions including ground shaking, surface rupture from earthquakes, ground failure, tsunami, seiche, and dam failure; slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides; subsidence, liquefaction, and other geologic hazards; flooding and sea level rise; urban fires; hazardous materials; and evacuation routes.

The **Noise Element** describes the existing noise environment in Huntington Beach, identifies noise sources and problems affecting community safety and comfort, and establishes policies and programs that limit community exposure to excessive noise levels. The Noise Element sets standards for acceptable noise levels by various land uses and provides guidance to balance the noise created by an economically healthy community with the public's desire for peace and quiet.

The **Infrastructure and Public Services Element** describes the water delivery system, wastewater collection and treatment system, stormwater and urban runoff, solid waste disposal, power, communications, and infrastructure finance. The element also identifies Huntington Beach's plans for preparing for health and safety hazards, including police protection, fire protection, emergency response and preparedness, and airport safety.

The **Historic and Cultural Resources Element** identifies important local cultural, archaeological, and historic resources and establishes goals, policies, and actions for the protection and preservation of those resources. This element is currently being updated separately and not considered a part of the proposed project that will be analyzed in this EIR.

The **Housing Element** serves as a policy guide to address the housing needs of the City of Huntington Beach. The element outlines housing needs, barriers or constraints to providing housing, and actions proposed to address these concerns over an eight-year period. The Housing Element is currently being updated under a separate process from the comprehensive update to the General Plan and is anticipated to be complete by early 2016. This element is not considered a part of the proposed project that will be analyzed in this EIR.

The **Coastal Element** addresses the requirements of the California Coastal Act within the portions of Huntington Beach located within the Coastal Zone. Goals and policies in this element guide civic decisions regarding growth, development, enhancement, and preservation of coastal resources. This element is not being updated at this time, and is not considered a part of the proposed project that will be analyzed in this EIR.

Additional Components of the General Plan Update project

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program

The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program will provide a baseline for emissions in Huntington Beach that coincides with State emissions reduction targets, as well as a GHG inventory for a current year to more accurately assess progress toward the GHG reduction goal set by Assembly

Bill (AB) 32. Using the inventories prepared, a forecast of GHG emissions will be included for both 2020 and 2050 to ensure compliance with the AB 32 reduction target and the General Plan. This information will be used to develop an implementation program that identifies time frames, responsible parties, indicators, potential costs and benefits, funding sources, and monitoring mechanisms.

Coastal Resiliency Program

The Coastal Resiliency Program evaluates the resiliency and adaptation strategies and policies to address potential sea level rise effects along the coastline of Huntington Beach. This program will include an analysis of past trends and calculations of the future effects of sea level rise. It will identify the exposure to sea level rise effects in Huntington Beach; how specific functions, structures, and populations will be affected; and the ability of those affected to adapt to the changing conditions. It will then assess their vulnerability and identify adaptation strategies to increase the resiliency of the vulnerable functions, structures, and populations.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT: The City of Huntington Beach is the lead agency for the preparation of this EIR. The City will prepare a comprehensive Program EIR addressing all topics required by CEQA. Thus, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a), no Initial Study has been prepared. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, a Program EIR may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans or other criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program, such as the General Plan and associated implementation programs. The EIR will evaluate the proposed project's potential direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts on the following issues:

Visual and Aesthetic Resources: The EIR will examine the potential impacts of the proposed project on the visual character and quality of the planning area related to urban form, building design, aboveground utilities, commercial signage, and other factors as well as potential impacts to visual resources such as views of the Pacific Ocean, Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, and the Huntington Beach Municipal Pier.

Agricultural Resources: The EIR will describe existing agricultural resources located in the planning area and analyze potential impacts from land use changes on the agricultural resources, if any.

Air Quality: The EIR will describe the regional air quality conditions in the South Coast Air Basin and will address air quality impacts expected to result from the proposed project in conformance with criteria identified by the South Coast Air Quality Management District. The EIR will address potential impacts from construction-related activities, as well as operational air quality impacts, toxic air contaminant exposure, and consistency with air quality improvement plans.

Biological Resources: The EIR will evaluate biological resources conditions in the planning area and potential impacts of the proposed project to any biological or marine resources. The EIR will address the presence/absence of special-status plant and animal species and sensitive habitats in Huntington Beach, with particular focus on the ocean,

beach, parks, and open spaces.

Cultural Resources: The EIR will describe archeological, tribal, and historic resources (including any offshore resources) and the potential for the proposed project to affect the integrity of those resources.

Energy: The EIR will evaluate the proposed project's energy consumption during construction, operation, and maintenance. The EIR will also address peak energy demand, alternative renewable fuels, and recycling of non-renewable resources.

Geology and Soils: The EIR will describe the geologic, seismic, and paleontological setting of the planning area, and will address potential impacts associated with the proposed project.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions: The EIR will analyze the potential for the proposed project to generate cumulatively considerable greenhouse gas emissions and will describe whether the proposed project is consistent with applicable plans or policies designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: The EIR will describe existing conditions in the planning area, including the potential for soil and groundwater contamination to affect future uses. Existing or potential hazards or hazardous waste generators in the planning area will be identified, along with federal, state, and local legislation concerning hazards and hazardous material use, handling, or transport.

Hydrology and Water Quality: The EIR will analyze issues concerning hydrology and water quality, including the existing stormwater conveyance system, flood hazards, and groundwater quality. The EIR will also address potential water quality impacts and conformance with Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements.

Land Use and Planning: The EIR will address the issue of consistency and compatibility of proposed land use and transportation changes and policies resulting from the proposed project in relation to physical effects on the environment and evaluate all policies that might result in physical changes for land use compatibility or conflicts.

Noise and Vibration: The EIR will discuss the existing noise setting and will evaluate potential stationary and traffic-related noise impacts associated with the proposed project and future development patterns. The EIR will also evaluate exposure of excessive groundborne vibration. A noise and vibration analysis will be conducted, and its results will be analyzed in the EIR. The analysis will evaluate existing ambient noise exposure and noise and vibration levels during construction and operation of the proposed project.

Population and Housing: The EIR will analyze the potential changes in population, housing, and employment resulting from the proposed project, and determine whether those changes would result in substantial adverse physical effects on the environment.

Public Services: The EIR will compare existing demand for police, fire, schools, parks, and other public facilities to proposed demand in 2040 with implementation of

the proposed project, and determine whether changed demand would create the need for provision of new or physically altered facilities to maintain acceptable service ratios, the construction of which could result in substantial adverse physical impacts on the environment.

Recreation: The EIR will assess the number of facilities within existing parks and compare this to established local, state, and national standards, and consider the potential for future development resulting from implementation of the proposed project to increase the use of existing parks such that substantial physical deterioration of existing park facilities would occur.

Transportation: Continued growth, both in Huntington Beach and in surrounding communities, could increase vehicle miles traveled and the amount of traffic congestion experienced in the planning area. A traffic analysis will be conducted, and its results will be analyzed in the EIR. The traffic analysis will evaluate existing and long-term impacts of the proposed project on roadway systems and alternative and active transportation facilities in the planning area and in adjacent jurisdictions.

Utilities and Service Systems: The EIR will analyze whether the proposed project will require or result in the construction of new or expanded water or wastewater treatment facilities, storm water drainage facilities, and landfills. The EIR will also analyze if the proposed project would have sufficient water supplies and comply with regulations related to solid waste.

Cumulative Impacts: The EIR will address the potentially significant cumulative impacts of the proposed project related to the Southern California Association of Governments' population and jobs forecasts and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the region.

Growth-Inducing Impacts: The EIR will discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster growth in the surrounding environment and the types of growth that could result.

Alternatives: The EIR will describe and analyze multiple alternatives to the proposed project which are capable of meeting the project objectives, but also designed to avoid or minimize significant impacts that would otherwise occur under the proposed project. CEQA requires an EIR to provide adequate information for decision makers to make a reasonable choice between alternatives based on the environmental aspects of the proposed project and alternatives. The impacts of the alternatives will be compared to those of the proposed project. As a result of this analysis, the EIR will identify an environmentally superior alternative.

EIR AND GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS: The Draft EIR will be based on the input received at the scoping meeting and comments submitted on the NOP. The purpose of the Draft EIR is to fully examine and disclose the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and identify mitigation measures and alternatives that would reduce and/or avoid significant impacts.

The Draft EIR will have a 45-day public review period in which public agencies and members of

the public will review and comment on the Draft EIR. Comments received on the Draft EIR will be reviewed and addressed in the Final EIR. The Final EIR will be a document consisting of the Draft EIR, errata or changes to the Draft EIR, "Responses to Comments," as well as additional technical reports or follow-up documentation that may be necessary. The Huntington Beach Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the Final EIR and make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the Final EIR prior to action on the General Plan Update. The City Council will hold its own public hearing on the Final EIR and make its own determination on certification of the Final EIR prior to action on the General plan Update.