

**SECTION 6**

**ADDITIONAL STATE & FEDERAL  
REQUIREMENTS**

**Section 6 - ADDITIONAL STATE & FEDERAL  
REQUIREMENTS**

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# CITY OF LOS ANGELES HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

## GOALS

The Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Task Force has specifically recognized the importance of incorporating environmental protection and historical preservation into the Plan. The approved Goals and Objectives include the following relevant objectives:

### **Goal 5 - Environmental & Historical Preservation**

- A)** Balance land use planning with natural and manmade hazard mitigation to protect life, property and the environment
- B)** Implement mitigation programs and projects that protect not only life and property, but the environment as well.
- C)** Preserve and protect historical landmarks and structures in the City while implementing hazard mitigation programs and projects.

These goals and objectives will be implemented in two ways. First, as detailed in Section 4, many existing and proposed Hazard Mitigation Projects are targeted at achieving one or more of the specific objectives listed above. Secondly, as programs and projects go through the planning and approval process they will be required to conform to City policies and regulations relating to environmental protection and historical preservation.

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

### Introduction

The City of Los Angeles is committed to ensuring that all hazard mitigation policies, programs and projects are implemented consistent with the City's environmental goals and policies. The following sections describe existing and ongoing environmental protection efforts conducted by the City, including applicable ordinances and regulations.

### Flood Control and Ecological Considerations

Environmental considerations are an important part of flood control systems. As the Los Angeles flood control system neared completion and public demand for water supplies, recreation and beautification increased, Congress provided for multiple use of facilities. By the 1960s watershed protection, electrical power, recreation, agriculture and water storage were integral secondary uses of flood control systems and considerations in flood control systems planning. Paving of the Los Angeles River bottom in the 1930's, and urban development in general, reduced ground water recharge. To compensate for the loss, water spreading grounds were established to replenish underground aquifers. Three sections of the Los Angeles River have unpaved bottoms partially due to the existence of natural springs. These sections and dam basins provide natural habitats for wild animals and birds. The dam basins also provide land for recreation and agricultural uses. Sand bars, trees and heavy marsh growth provide protected habitats for water birds. Fish live in the river channel. Until 1984, the Los Angeles River channel, except for the unpaved sections, virtually was dry except during the rainy season. Upon completion of the San Fernando Valley Donald C. Tillman Wastewater Reclamation Plant (1984) a continuous flow of reclaimed water was sent down the channel creating a year round stream which has regenerated plant and animal life along the entire channel. Some hiking, equine and bicycle trails exist and are planned for expansion along the edges of some flood control channels.

A concerted effort by the City, the State, local community groups and non-profit organizations to provide additional parkland along the Los Angeles River is resulting in the development of a series of parklands for both passive and active recreation adjacent to the River. Several "pocket" parks have been completed, portions of former rail yards are being converted to recreational use.

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## Water Quality

Water quality relative to drainage was an early consideration of the City. Public funds began to be expended in the late 1880s for construction of public works, including streets with gutters and associated drains.

The sewage and water drainage systems were separated so as to keep storm and drainage water from entering the sewage system and to enable large quantities of rain water to be carried rapidly to the ocean without necessity of treatment. In the 1920s sewer maintenance hole covers near gutters were sealed to keep out storm water and an inspection unit was established to identify and cite property owners for illegal connections from roofs, yards, wash racks and the like into the sewer system. In recent years pollution of drainage water has become an increasing concern.

Prior to 1958 the primary concern relative to water pollution related to pollution of ocean and beaches due to oil tanker spills. Such spills were regulated by federal agencies. Beginning with the Water Pollution Control Act of 1956, the federal government began to address the problem of pollution discharge into navigable waters, such as the Pacific Ocean. Initially, this resulted in regulations of discharge of waste water (sewage). More recently, federal regulations have focused on storm water, urban runoff and dumping of pollutants into storm drainage systems. Daily runoff in dry or wet periods washes residues from the land, including deposits from vehicles, pet waste, pesticides and street litter. Illegal dumping of waste into the storm drainage system adds to the run-off stream. The first rains of the season wash accumulated pollutants from streets, vegetation and roof tops into the drainage system.

Even natural seepage, such as from the La Brea tar pit area or other oil and gas deposits which underlay large sections of the City, or from microorganisms in the soil, contribute pollutants. Pollutants also are washed from the air onto the land and into the run-off stream. Storms result in inflow and infiltration into sewage systems and have caused release into the ocean of partially treated sewage. Sometimes discharge washed into the ocean during storms has resulted in temporary beach closure due to potential health hazards associated with harmful bacteria from human and animal waste and decomposed plant material which is washed from land surfaces into the ocean by storms or which results from leak incidents. There also is concern that storm related residues may contribute damage to the ecology of the local bays, estuaries and natural water supported habitats.

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Water quality issues are addressed in the General Plan, and enforced through the Subdivision Regulations (Article 7, Municipal Code).

## **Air Quality**

The City of Los Angeles falls completely within the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB). Despite a record of improving air quality over the past decade, the SCAB remains one of the most unhealthful air quality areas in the nation. The South Coast Air Quality Management District has jurisdiction for the promulgation and enforcement of air quality regulations. The City of Los Angeles has historically been actively involved in efforts by the SCAQMD to improve air quality in the region. The Air Quality Element of the General Plan details the City's air quality policies and programs.

## **Subdivision Regulations**

The Subdivision Map Act of the State of California grants authority to local agencies to regulate and control the design and improvement of subdivisions within its boundaries. Subdivision is both the process and the result of laying out a parcel of undivided land into lots, blocks, streets, tracts, parcels or sites for the purpose of sale, lease or finance and subject to applicable regulations. Subdivision included condominium projects.

The subdivision of one parcel of land into five or more new parcels or developing a condominium project with 5 or more units requires submission of an application for a Tentative Tract Map. Applications are filed with the City Planning Department simultaneously with an Environmental Assessment form. The City utilizes the subdivision application and environmental assessment process to ensure conformance with a wide range of environmental, health and safety requirements. Several of the specific application requirements relate to environmental protection, among them:

- Environmental Clearance
- Flood Plain Hazard Information
- Hillside Grading Computation (if located within a hillside area)
- Coastal Clearance (if located within a coastal zone)
- Landscape Plan

## **Tentative Tract Map**

The Tentative Tract Map for a proposed subdivision is made for the purpose of showing the design and improvements proposed. Requirements for tentative tract maps include

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information necessary to determine compliance with environmental and hazard requirements.

In addition to showing the locations of proposed buildings, structures, streets, and easements, tentative tract maps are required to include:

- Locations of potentially dangerous areas, including geologically hazardous areas subject to inundation or flood hazard.
- The proposed method of providing sewage disposal and drainage for the property.

### **Zoning, Building, Plumbing and Electrical Codes**

The City's Department of Building and Safety has responsibility for enforcement of Zoning, Building, Plumbing, and Mechanical Codes, as well as Engineering, Energy, and Disabled Access regulations, and local and State laws for construction and maintenance of commercial, industrial and residential buildings. Code administration and enforcement are

key elements in ensuring that both new construction and existing buildings in the City comply with safety and environmental requirements. The Department issues over 140,000 permits with an estimated valuation of over \$3 billion per year. Over 40,000 projects are reviewed annually, and more than 630,000 inspections are conducted annually.

The Department closes over 48,000 code enforcement cases every year.

Code administration and enforcement are key elements ensuring that hazard mitigation policies and programs are applied to both new and existing structures.

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## HISTORICAL PRESERVATION

### Introduction

The City of Los Angeles has taken an aggressive stance in regard to preservation of structures, sites, and other features of historical significance. As specific Hazard Mitigation projects are brought forward for implementation, they will be required to conform to Historical Preservation requirements as applicable.

### Cultural Heritage Commission

In 1962, the Cultural Heritage Commission was formed to help stop the demolition of the historic and cultural landmarks in the City of Los Angeles, and more than seven hundred have since been designated.

The “monument” designation includes a classic variety of public buildings, private residences, bridges and memorial markers, and is also peppered with non-traditional landmarks that help define the character of Los Angeles, past and present. Examples are the star-studded sidewalks of Hollywood, the Moreton Bay Fig Tree planted in West Los Angeles in 1875, the granite blocks on Bruno Street that were part of the City’s first paved streets, and the towers in Watts created by Simon Rodia.

The process of designating a monument begins when a location is nominated either by the property owner or another interested party. After the Commission reviews the nomination application and decides to consider the property for designation, the commissioners visit the site, accept public comment and then vote to either recommend designation or reject it. Once recommended, City Council makes the final designation.

### Historic Preservation Overlay Zones

The City Council has declared that “(A)s a matter of public policy that the recognition, preservation, enhancement, and use of buildings, structures, Landscaping, Natural Features, and areas within the City of Los Angeles having Historic, architectural, cultural or aesthetic significance are required in the interest of health, economic prosperity,

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cultural enrichment and general welfare of the people.” This policy is implemented through Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (Sec. 12.20.3, City of Los Angeles Zoning Ordinance).

This ordinance provides for the creation of special preservation zoning to protect historical structures and areas. Zones may contain buildings, structures, landscaping, natural features or lots having historic, architectural, cultural or aesthetic features.

Once a preservation overlay zone is created, a Historic Preservation Board is created for the purpose of evaluating and making recommendations concerning any proposed development in the zone.

Each individual preservation zone is required to have Preservation Plan which clarifies and elaborates on preservation requirements as they apply to that zone. With some specified exceptions, every proposed development in a Historic Preservation Overlay Zones must be certified prior to initiation of construction. It is noteworthy that government agencies are not exempt from the requirements.