

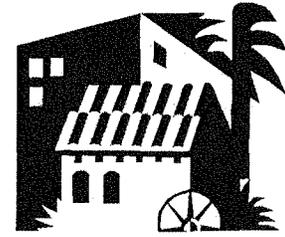
**City of Baldwin Park  
2020 General Plan**

**Economic Development  
Element**

**November, 2002**

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

### **Introduction**

#### **Purpose of the Element**

The Economic Development Element guides economic development planning and initiatives, consistent with other Elements of the General Plan. The formulation of the economic development plan was based upon an extensive analysis of historic development conditions, opportunities, and constraints in Baldwin Park. This Element identifies the economic factors affecting the City, presents the economic development goals and policies, and identifies how the Economic Development Plan will help the City achieve its goals.

#### **Element Scope and Content**

Through the General Plan update process, 15 focus areas throughout the City were identified as meriting special attention and revitalization efforts. For the purpose of this Element, primary attention regarding economic development is given to four broader areas: Northern Industrial Area, the Auction Village Area, Central Business District (CBD), and the I-10 Freeway Corridor.

Certain areas of the City have been identified as requiring special attention in order to help keep the City fiscally healthy. These areas have been affected by recurring economic recessions, leading to a general state of fiscal instability that the City continually works to overcome. The Economic Development Element addresses the policies and actions that should be implemented to capitalize on the City's economic opportunities. The Economic Development Element is comprised of three sections: 1) Introduction; 2) Issues, Goals and Policies; and 3) the Economic Development Plan.

The policies serve as a guide for planning economic development improvements that address preservation of major areas of the City, revitalization of selected areas, and guidance of new development within those underdeveloped portions of the City. The Element's goals and policies reflect Baldwin Park's response to current and future economic conditions and are intended to maintain and enhance the community's existing commercial, retail and industrial development; and to explore ways to foster new economic development.

### **Related Plans and Programs**

Several local plans directly impact economic development activities in Baldwin Park.

### **Redevelopment Areas**

Economic development requires substantial investment. Without adequate capital, financial incentives are difficult to structure and sites take much longer to clear and assemble. To raise investment capital, cities often form redevelopment project areas in zones that are experiencing difficult economic times. The authority granted by law to the redevelopment agencies is designed to encourage development and business growth and reverse declining conditions in project areas. Economic and redevelopment activities in redevelopment project areas are primarily funded with tax increment dollars.

The Baldwin Park Redevelopment Agency has established six Redevelopment Project Areas which include San Gabriel River, Central Business District, Sierra Vista, West Ramona Boulevard, Puente/Merced, and Delta. Existing redevelopment areas may be expanded or new areas may be established.

Redevelopment areas also have implications for residential revitalization. There is a strong connection between quality affordable housing and the creation of jobs. People prefer to live in or near the community in which they work and businesses prefer to locate in a community with a strong labor market. All redevelopment agencies are required under State law to direct 20 percent of their tax increment revenue generated from a project to affordable housing within the community.

### **Sierra Vista/Puente-Merced Freeway Corridor (I-10) Economic Development Strategy**

The Baldwin Park Redevelopment Agency prepared the Sierra Vista/Freeway Corridor Economic Development Strategy to focus its resources on projects of most benefit to the community. The report lays the foundation for economic growth by developing a strategy for identifying opportunities within the Sierra Vista and Puente-Merced Project Areas. This Economic Development Strategy carefully examines the economic development potential of the study area and provides information on the status of the demographic and physical characteristics in the area and its ability to support economic growth.

City of Baldwin Park  
Economic Development  
Strategic Implementation

This study prepared by Downtown/Main Street Visions (DMSV) analyzed existing conditions and other influential factors associated with the manner and methods by which the City pursues city-wide economic development. The report presents specific implementation strategies that will allow the City Council and staff to be more effective in achieving its desired economic goals and objectives. It also focuses on establishing economic development priorities and putting in place the resources and implementation tools to achieve measurable results.

## Issues, Goals and Policies

To fulfill the vision of Baldwin Park as defined through various avenues of community input, alternative land use strategies were defined for areas of the City where long-term change and improvement are desired. Alternative land use scenarios in each of these areas focused on optional physical land-use actions which can achieve a long-term vision for the area in the context of defined issues, constraints and opportunities.

The Baldwin Park 2020 Land Use Plan focuses growth in the commercial sector along the I-10 freeway corridor, in Downtown, and along key arterial roadways such as Arrow Highway and Ramona Boulevard. In addition, several neighborhood-serving commercial nodes are provided at key intersections in residential areas. A major goal of the Plan is to establish a viable pedestrian district in the central business district, consisting of both retail, office and higher density residential uses. Industrial uses continue to be focused in the northern portion of the City along Arrow Highway; in the Auction Village area; and along the I-10 corridor.

The following goals and policies focus on achieving and maintaining a fiscally sound economic base, increasing local job opportunities, and capitalizing on market opportunities with significant economic potential for the City.

### **Economic Factors Affecting the City**

The City's 1998 population (baseline) is estimated at 75,188. Baldwin Park's residents have a per capita income roughly half that of Los Angeles County. Estimates for 1997 list the County's per capita income at \$18,208 and Baldwin Park's at \$9,677.

The City grew considerably during the 1990s compared to other areas in terms of population growth, household growth, and average household size. From 1990 to 1997, Baldwin Park's population increased 6.8 percent while the County's grew only 3.4 percent. The number of Baldwin Park households increased 3.4 percent over the same 7-year period, compared to a 1.6 percent throughout the County. The average household size in the community has also grown at a faster rate than Los Angeles County as a whole.

Economic indicators show that Baldwin Park is steadily emerging from difficult economic times, with new developments that have helped increase general fund revenues and services to the residential population. The City's job base of about 18,200 employees is comprised mostly of service sector jobs, with 33 percent of the City's total. The manufacturing sector is the second largest job provider with 23 percent of total jobs. The City is largely developed, and efforts are focused on the redevelopment of land within its redevelopment project areas. The retail, industrial, and professional and medical office sectors enjoyed some growth since the end of the mid-1990s recession and are poised to continue their role as economic development catalysts in Baldwin Park.

**Summary of Issues**

The City is in a position to engage its residents and businesses in a collaborative effort to promote economic growth within the community. With careful planning and thoughtful review, the community will be able to achieve its economic development goals.

Economic development strategies formulated around the following five major goals will in large part determine the degree of success Baldwin Park will have in revitalizing its economy:

- Increase General Fund revenues
- Facilitate revitalization of targeted areas
- Diversify the city's job base
- Maintain economic competitiveness
- Improve public services and infrastructure

**Increase General Fund Revenues**

Baldwin Park has seen its General Fund revenues decline over the years. This revenue shortfall has led to decreased levels of public services and less availability of funds for infrastructure maintenance and improvement. The City should select among market supportable commercial and industrial uses that can help provide greater fiscal strength and stability. Retail stores may be promoted in certain areas to generate retail sales taxes. However, retail establishments must be balanced with office and industrial uses, thereby promoting a diversified economic base.

**Goal 1.0** Encourage and facilitate activities that expand the City's revenue base and increase taxable retail and non-retail sales.

**Policy 1.1** Secure the existing commercial tax base through the preservation of existing commercial centers and the enhancement of areas with further development potential.

**Policy 1.2** Track retail trends by focus area at least annually and tailor regulations accordingly in order to maximize revenue while maintaining appropriate business mix.

- Policy 1.3 Encourage development of high volume retail commercial centers, restaurants, and similar uses that would benefit from high visibility and good access from the I-10 corridor.
- Policy 1.4 Balance need to maximize revenues with targeted and appropriate land use designations for each region of the City.
- Policy 1.5 Monitor legislative changes that influence public revenue sources and their allocation.

**Facilitate Revitalization of Targeted Areas**

A total of 15 General Plan focus areas were delineated throughout the City where long-term change and improvement were desired. These are locations especially targeted for customized revitalization efforts based on each area's unique characteristics. Economic development policies have been defined for four of the Target Areas to supplement Land Use and Urban Design policies.

**Northern Industrial Area**

Baldwin Park's Northern Industrial Area supports industrial businesses, and Arrow Highway is a heavily traveled thoroughfare. Economic development should be stimulated in this area by encouraging commercial uses along the highway to better support industrial activity and serve travelers. Special attention should also be given to street and streetscape improvement programs.

**Goal 2.0 Promote development of Northern Industrial Area.**

- Policy 2.1 Consider expanding the San Gabriel River Redevelopment Project Area to increase funding for infrastructure improvements in the adjacent industrial areas.
- Policy 2.2 Work with the city of Irwindale to develop a jointly funded street and streetscape improvement program along Arrow Highway.
- Policy 2.3 Work with local landowners to rehabilitate or recycle older industrial buildings.
- Policy 2.4 Promote establishment of commercial sites along Arrow Highway that will serve the industrial activity, through travelers, and the local community.

**Auction Village Area**

The Auction Village Area lies partially within the Sierra Vista Redevelopment Area. It supports both older commercial and industrial uses. It also provides a long-term opportunity for diversifying the City's research and development and office environment. As an eastern "gateway" to the City, it should provide an inviting image to visitors.

**Goal 3.0** Encourage the development of commercial uses and small-scale industrial research and development activities to revitalize the area and expand the City's job base.

Policy 3.1 Allow a broader range of non-industrial uses, and utilize redevelopment authority to provide necessary infrastructure improvements to facilitate industrial transition to office park environment.

Policy 3.2 Promote development of a small-scale commercial retail zone that serves the business community and through travelers.

Central Business District Economic development efforts in Downtown should capitalize on the Central Business District's historic architecture and potential as a pedestrian-friendly commercial zone.

**Goal 4.0** Establish a pedestrian core for Downtown, with pedestrian linkages to adjacent activities.

Policy 4.1 Identify retail and entertainment niches that draw upon Baldwin Park's unique Downtown to create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Policy 4.2 Encourage collaborative efforts between landowners, business owners, and local governments.

Policy 4.3 Create stable mechanisms for funding and maintaining retail areas, e.g., assessment districts or business improvement districts, that can provide better street signage and lighting, street cleaning, garbage pickup, and heightened safety patrols.

Policy 4.4 Encourage the development of visitor-related retail and entertainment uses.

Interstate 10 Corridor Despite its superior location, Baldwin Park's I-10 corridor is challenged by inadequate street improvements, small lot sizes, inadequately configured parcels, a high percentage of non-conforming uses and buildings in need of repair. There is little vacant land currently available for new development, but several areas are appropriate for commercial, office or industrial uses.

**Goal 5.0** Promote economic development along the I-10 corridor through the establishment of businesses most likely to benefit from freeway frontage.

Policy 5.1 Encourage the development of high volume retail commercial centers, e.g. automobile dealers, building materials, restaurants and similar uses that would benefit from high visibility and good access from the freeway.

- Policy 5.2 Where possible, reconfigure difficult to access parcels to allow better traffic circulation for businesses along I-10 corridor.
- Policy 5.3 Encourage the redevelopment of existing industrial facilities to bring them up to more current industrial building standards.
- Policy 5.4 Coordinate economic development activities with I-10 expansion to maximize capture of retail purchasing power.

**Diversify Baldwin Park's  
Job Base and Balance  
Employment and Housing**

Baldwin Park's economy would benefit from increased diversification of its job base. A more varied job base would provide a range of skills and incomes and soften the blow of future economic downturns.

Balanced economic development requires that there are both new employment opportunities and a local labor force to fill the jobs. Imbalances between employment and housing can create excessive commuting patterns as workers from adjacent communities fill local jobs or local workers commute to jobs outside Baldwin Park. Lack of an adequate labor force can also discourage firms from moving into the area. Consequently, economic development of Baldwin Park needs to provide a balance between new jobs and suitable housing for a diversified local labor force.

**Goal 6.0 Stabilize and expand the City's diverse industrial base, including improvements to the older industrial area.**

- Policy 6.1 Create a specialized strategy to encourage businesses to remodel older industrial buildings to satisfy standards of today's businesses.
- Policy 6.2 Identify opportunities to assist under performing centers to restructure their tenant mix to remain competitive in today's changing marketplace.
- Policy 6.3 Encourage retention of businesses that are being recruited by other communities having problems staying in business or are thinking of expanding elsewhere. Coordinate these efforts with a community business retention task force.
- Policy 6.4 Target areas to expand local-serving office and professional service activities and expand job opportunities that generate a higher wage potential.
- Policy 6.5 Maintain an ongoing campaign with local businesses to hire local residents and support job training programs.

**Strive for and Maintain  
Economic  
Competitiveness**

To remain competitive in today's economy, local governments need to be as forward looking as possible, sensitive and responsive to changing economic times. Economic development is dependent upon the retention, attraction and expansion of business firms. Business growth in Baldwin Park can be stimulated and guided by creating more local opportunities for business development. Baldwin Park can participate in promoting local businesses by making available a comprehensive public/private approach to promote the kinds of businesses that are most beneficial to the community. Jointly promoting business development can bring greater public and private resources to bear and increase the opportunities to expand the economic base of the community.

**Goal 7.0** Engage in activities that promote Baldwin Park as a good place to work and/or run a business.

Policy 7.1 Quickly determine whether a business development proposal fits into the City's long-range planning efforts, and if so, quickly and efficiently formulate an implementation plan designed to carry out proposed development.

Policy 7.2 Work cooperatively with the Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations to develop and implement marketing programs that communicate economic development opportunities to existing and potential businesses.

Policy 7.3 Conduct annual business survey to determine needs of businesses and examine local government's responsiveness to them

Policy 7.4 Analyze effectiveness of the City of Baldwin Park Internet site. It should showcase services and assets that the City has to offer prospective businesses and residents.

Policy 7.5 Develop the physical design guidelines necessary to attract the desired types of business in specified locations.

**Improve Public Services  
and Infrastructure**

Levels of public service and infrastructure quality play a key role in a community's ability to remain economically healthy. Baldwin Park's difficult economic times have led to some declines in funding for public service programs and infrastructure improvements. Special efforts should be made to regain past levels of service and investment in these areas.

**Goal 8.0** Implement public service and infrastructure improvements to create an urban environment that is attractive to residents and businesses.

- Policy 8.1** Create stable mechanisms for funding and maintaining retail areas, e.g., assessment districts and business improvement districts through improvements, such as better street signage and lighting, street cleaning, garbage pickup and heightened safety patrols.
- Policy 8.2** Work with local neighborhoods to enhance the delivery of public services and programs.

# Economic Development Plan

This Economic Development Plan describes the approach to be used in implementing the goals and policies of the Economic Development Element. To fully realize these goals and policies, the City must undertake active steps by implementing initiatives designed to capitalize on opportunities as they develop.

Implementation is classified into short-term and long-term programs. Since much of the City is largely built out and depends on recycling of existing land uses, each of the future focus areas may require a different combination of approaches.

The Economic Development Plan presents a broad strategy to help relate and detail the many initiatives that can help the City achieve its economic development goals and objectives. These initiatives are undertaken separately or in concert to direct the City's economic development with available resources.

## Economic Development Strategy

The economic development strategy recognizes that specific future actions can best be carried out if some or all of the following conditions are realized:

- Identify a responsible group to oversee and direct economic development initiatives
- Maintain a current information base able to accurately characterize important economic conditions
- Relate economic development initiatives to other City activities including planning and redevelopment
- Maintain communications with property owners, businesses and governmental bodies to ensure cooperation and coordination
- Attempt to anticipate future needs and opportunities in order to act in a proactive rather than reactive manner

## Economic Development Initiatives

Economic development initiatives are designed to support the City's economic development strategy: take advantage of future opportunities and avoid future problems.

Coordination with Caltrans  
on I-10 Upgrading

Caltrans has planned for the eventual improvement and expansion of Interstate 10. The freeway expansion and related improvements to ramps and adjacent streets will impact many parcels along the freeway corridor. A preliminary plan submitted to the City shows that many of the parcels along the north and south side of the freeway will be impacted by the proposed improvements. The freeway expansion should be coordinated with the City's economic development strategies to capitalize on the considerable amount of freeway frontage it possesses.

Expand Baldwin Park  
Internet Site

Baldwin Park's Internet site is a potential marketing tool for prospective business owners looking to establish or relocate themselves. Cooperation between Baldwin Park's Chamber of Commerce and those responsible for the site's maintenance could lead to improved access to information and the formulation of a citywide inventory of available parcels.

Focus Planning Efforts in  
Targeted Areas

The City should allocate specific personnel resources to focus planning efforts in areas most in need of intensive economic development efforts. Successful economic development efforts in the focus areas requires the use of specialized, case-by-case initiatives that recognize each area's characteristics and addresses their individual needs.

Promote a Pedestrian-  
Friendly Central Business  
District

Pedestrian-friendly urban design can help promote economic development by providing a pleasant environment residents and visitors to shop and engage in entertainment activities. Baldwin Park's Central Business District has the potential to be an attractive and popular destination. The District's historic, cultural, and architectural heritage should be showcased and complemented by urban design modification and beautification that permit better circulation of foot and automobile traffic.

Expand or Establish New  
Redevelopment Areas as  
Appropriate

Redevelopment Project Areas have helped promote economic development in Baldwin Park. Reinvested property tax increments have helped revitalize the Project Areas. The City should examine which of the City's Project Areas could be expanded, or new project areas established, thereby giving adjacent parts of the City the opportunity to benefit from tax increment financing.

Monitor Sales Tax Trends  
by Focus Area

One of the most important sources of revenue available to any city is that provided by retail sales taxes. Sales tax revenues in Baldwin Park increased during the period following the mid-1990s recession but continue to fall below pre-recession levels. This continued shortfall has prevented the City from providing an optimal level of public services and infrastructure to its residents. To address this problem, the City should closely monitor sales tax trends by focus area. This would facilitate a customized approach to economic development, allowing administrators to critically evaluate current developments and quickly respond to business trends.

Retention and Attraction  
Programs

The City should develop an early warning program designed to identify and offer support to declining businesses or those likely to consider closing or relocating. City businesses are required to renew business licenses annually. This annual renewal process provides an opportunity to survey existing businesses to identify any unmet needs. Collecting basic information from local firms can be useful in business expansion and retention efforts. In addition to basic information, the City could include a series of brief questions, such as whether the firm anticipates a need to expand or move in the next year or beyond. These questions could be used to identify businesses which should be targeted for staff outreach and follow-up.

Establish Effective  
Communication with  
Business Community

The City must work cooperatively with the Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations to help promote economic development. Efforts should be focused on preventing local businesses from relocating and streamlining the permitting process for prospective businesses. To achieve these goals, the City will make efforts to be aware of the needs and concerns of its business community.

Formulate Additional Tools  
to Finance Business  
Development

The City should consider programs that promote the upkeep of its commercial districts, improving aesthetics and providing the public with a more pleasant environment. This would benefit the City by encouraging property owners to invest in upgrading their properties in a way that will help increase the number of visitors to the area.

These programs could range from small business loan programs, to assisting in the establishment of Business Improvement Districts, continued use of Community Development Block Grants and other financial assistance programs.