

---

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
Introduction.....	1
Purpose of the Land Use Element.....	1
Scope and Content of the Element.....	1
Related Plans and Programs.....	2
Relationship to Other General Plan Elements.....	4
Issues, Goals, and Policies.....	5
Balance of Land Uses.....	5
Image and Identity.....	5
Compatible and Complementary Development.....	6
Development of Planned Communities.....	6
Economic Diversity, Expansion and Business Retention.....	7
Revitalization of Older Areas.....	7
Related Goals and Policies.....	8
Land Use Plan.....	9
General Plan Amendment 2008-02.....	9
Balance of Land Uses.....	11
Image and Identity.....	22
Compatible and Complementary Development.....	24
Development of Planned Community.....	25
Economic Diversity, Expansion and Business Retention.....	25
Revitalization of Older Areas.....	26

---

---

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
LU-1 Land Use Related Goals and Policies by Element .....	8
LU-2 Land Use Classification System.....	14
LU-3 Land Use Plan Development Capacity Summary .....	23

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page</b>
LU-1 Land Use Policy Map.....	12
LU-2 Business Development Overlay .....	13
LU-3 Possible Building Configurations for a 0.50:1 Floor Area Ratio.....	17
LU-4 Planned Communities .....	27
LU-5 El Toro Special Study Area.....	28

---

---

## INTRODUCTION

The Land Use Element is a guide to land use planning in Lake Forest and provides a framework for the environmental and infrastructure issues examined in the other General Plan elements. The Land Use Element identifies how land will be used in the future—for housing, commercial, and business centers, public facilities, parks, open space, and transportation. The Plan for future land use reflects community goals to maintain a quality suburban environment for families, strengthen the community's distinctive image, diversify and expand the local economy, and preserve natural areas that make Lake Forest unique.

### **PURPOSE OF THE LAND USE ELEMENT**

The City of Lake Forest incorporated in 1991 to gain local political control and strengthen community identity and pride. One of the responsibilities of an incorporated city is controlling future growth and development. According to state law, cities must prepare and adopt a General Plan as a tool to manage growth and development. The Land Use Element is a mandatory element or chapter of the General Plan.

The purpose of the Land Use Element is to describe present and planned land use activity, and address the relationship between development and environmental quality, potential hazards, and social and economic objectives. As a guide for future growth and development, the element identifies the general distribution, location, mix and extent of desired land uses including residential, commercial, business and light industrial, public facilities and open space uses.

Through the use of text, maps, and diagrams, a clear and logical land use pattern is established including standards for future development. A

particularly important feature of the element is the Land Use Policy Map. This map shows the location, density, and intensity of development for future desired land uses in Lake Forest. Finally, the goals and policies in the element establish a constitutional framework for future land use planning and development decisions in Lake Forest.

The Land Use Element of the Lake Forest General Plan represents the City's desires for long-range changes and enhancements of land uses within the City. The Land Use Plan builds on the established land use pattern to provide integration between existing community qualities and the community's vision of the future. Achieving the vision will be accomplished through continued public involvement and diligence by City elected officials and staff.

### **SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE ELEMENT**

The Land Use Element is comprised of three sections: (1) Introduction; (2) Issues, Goals, and Policies; and (3) the Land Use Plan. In the Land Use Issues, Goals, and Policies section, major land use issues are identified and related goals and policies are established to address these issues. The goals, which are overall statements of the community's desires, are comprised of broad statements of purpose and direction. The policies serve as guides for reviewing development proposals, planning facilities to accommodate anticipated growth, and accomplishing community development strategies. To achieve the goals and policies, established in the Plan with standards for future community development. The Plan contains the Land Use Policy Map, which graphically identifies the planned land use designations within Lake Forest. The land use designations are described including the type

---

---

and density of allowed uses, and a statistical summary of the future land use composition is provided. Areas of special interest, which involve more focused planning efforts, are also identified. Specific implementation programs for the element are located in the General Plan Implementation Program.

## **RELATED PLANS AND PROGRAMS**

The scope and content of the Land Use Element are primarily governed by the *General Plan Law and Guidelines* and the *Planning Zoning and Development Laws* for the state (California Government Code Sections 65000–66025). A number of other plans and programs are additionally considered in the formulation, adoption and implementation of local land use policy.

Related plans and programs are both local and regional in nature. Regional planning agencies, such as the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), recognize that planning issues extend beyond the boundaries of individual cities. Efforts to address regional planning issues such as air quality, transportation, affordable housing, and habitat conservation have resulted in the adoption of regional plans. The form and distribution of development in Lake Forest are affected by regional plans. Relevant local and regional plans are discussed briefly and related to the Land Use Element in the following sections.

### **California Environmental Quality Act and Guidelines**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was adopted by the state legislature in response to a public mandate for thorough environmental analysis of projects impacting the environment. The provisions of the law and environmental review procedure are described in the CEQA Law and Guidelines as amended. CEQA is the instrument for ensuring that

environmental impacts of local development projects are appropriately assessed and mitigated.

### **County of Orange Zoning Ordinance and City of Lake Forest Zoning Ordinance**

Following incorporation, the City elected to use the County of Orange Zoning Ordinance as an interim means of regulating land use. The County Zoning Ordinance was supplemented directly by City-adopted ordinances, which tailored the County Zoning Ordinance to the City of Lake Forest. The Zoning Ordinance is the primary implementation tool for the Land Use Element. Together, the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map identify specific types of land use, intensity of use, and development and performance standards applicable to specific areas and parcels of land within the City.

### **Planned Communities**

Lake Forest has been primarily developed as a series of Planned Communities prior to incorporation. The Planned Communities comprising the incorporated City include Lake Forest, El Toro, Baker Ranch, Pacific Commercentre, Rancho de los Alisos, Rancho Serrano, Serrano Highlands, Foothill Ranch, and Portola Hills. Pre-incorporation development agreements apply to a number of the Planned Communities in Lake Forest and identify permitted levels of development based on the provision of public facilities and infrastructure. The land use designations identified in the Land Use Element are consistent with the development densities identified in the development agreements.

### **SCAG Growth Management Plan**

The SCAG Growth Management Plan recommends methods to redirect regional growth to minimize traffic congestion and

---

---

better protect environmental quality. The goals of the Growth Management Plan include balance between jobs and housing. While SCAG has no authority to mandate implementation of its Growth Management Plan, principal goals have implications for the land use composition of Lake Forest. The SCAG goals are reflected throughout all of the General Plan elements, including the Land Use Element.

### **South Coast Air Quality Management Plan**

The South Coast Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) mandates a variety of measures to improve air quality. To comply with the AQMP, the Land Use Element organizes land uses in relation to the circulation system, promotes commercial and industrial land uses with convenient access to transportation, and provides a balanced Land Use Plan that promotes a favorable relationship between jobs and housing in the region.

### **Orange County Growth Management Plan**

The purpose of the Orange County Growth Management Plan is to ensure that the transportation system and other public facilities are adequate to meet the current and projected needs of Orange County. The Plan establishes the following five major policies:

1. **Development Phasing.** Development will be phased according to Comprehensive Phasing Plans (CPPs) adopted by the County. Phasing is limited to roadway and public facility capacities.
2. **Balanced Community Development.** Development will be balanced to encourage employment of local residents, and both employment and employee housing in the County, as well as in

individual Growth Management areas (GMAs).

3. **Traffic Level of Service.** Future development creates the need for improvements to major intersections significantly impacted by growth, and a developer fee program is included to pay for improving affected intersections on a pro-rata basis.
4. **Traffic Improvement Programs.** The Plan requires that all new development provide necessary transportation facilities and intersection improvements as a condition of development approval.
5. **Public Facility Plans.** The Plan requires comprehensive public facility plans for fire, sheriff/police, and library services. New development participates on a pro-rata basis.

Implementation of the Orange County Growth Management Plan involves the establishment of (1) Growth Management Areas (GMAs) to implement Comprehensive Phasing Plans; (2) Facility Implementation Plans to address the financing of public facilities for each GMA; (3) County-wide implementation and evaluation of compliance with development phasing and improvements; and (4) traffic improvement/public facility development agreements. Lake Forest is located in the Foothill GMA (GMA 9).<sup>1</sup>

### **Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission**

The provisions of the Cortese-Knox Local Government Reorganization Act of 1985 will be applied by the Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) decisions regarding any reorganizations of service districts for Lake Forest.<sup>2</sup> Under this

---

<sup>1</sup> General Plan Amendment 00-01, dated May 2, 2000

<sup>2</sup> General Plan Amendment 01-01A, dated July 17, 2001

---

---

act, LAFCO is responsible for (a) encouraging orderly development; (b) ensuring that populations receive efficient and quality governmental services; and (c) guiding development away from open space and prime agricultural lands unless such action promotes planned, orderly, and efficient development.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS**

According to state planning law, the Land Use Element must be consistent with the other General Plan Elements. Each element is independent and all the elements together comprise the General Plan. All elements of the General Plan are interrelated to a degree, and certain goals and policies of each element may also address issues that are the primary subjects of other elements. The integration of overlapping issues throughout the General Plan elements provides a strong basis for implementation of plans and programs, and achievement of community goals.

The Land Use Element relates very closely to all of the General Plan elements. The Land Use Element establishes the planned land use pattern for Lake Forest based on the historic formation of the City and the community's vision of the future. Alternatively, the other General Plan elements ensure that infrastructure and public facilities are available to accommodate planned land uses, and that the unique environmental quality of Lake Forest is safeguarded and enhanced.

For example, the Housing Element of the General Plan provides the basis for establishing housing stock that meets the affordability requirements and other special needs of the community. Emphasis is given to the development of housing that is complementary to existing neighborhood character. The Circulation Element provides a Circulation Plan to accommodate traffic from

planned development. The use of alternative transportation modes and reduction of automobile trips are addressed in the Circulation Element to meet the transportation demands from new development, and to mitigate the impact of development on regional air quality and traffic conditions. The Land Use Element helps to improve the jobs-to-housing balance by encouraging additional residential development in jobs-rich south Orange County.

A number of areas are designated for parks and open space on the Land Use Policy Map for recreational and aesthetic purposes. The Recreation and Resources Element provides policy and plans to maintain and enhance existing parks and recreational facilities and to develop new facilities to meet new demand from population growth. Recreation and Resources Element policy is also designed to protect natural and cultural resources. The Safety and Noise Element ensures that the planned land uses identified in the Land Use Element are compatible and will not result in public safety hazards or excessive noise.

As development continues in Lake Forest, utilities and public services must be available for new businesses and residents. The Public Facilities/Growth Management Element addresses the availability of utilities and services for planned development including water, sewer, natural gas, electricity, communications, fire protection, law enforcement, flood control, libraries, schools, and transportation facilities. The Public Facilities/Growth Management Element ensures that adequate utilities and services are available for planned development. The growth management portion of the Public Facilities/Growth Management Element focuses on enhancing interjurisdictional cooperation, improving regional environmental conditions, and minimizing the environmental

---

---

effects of continued regional development,

including development in Lake Forest.

## ISSUES, GOALS, AND POLICIES

Six major issues are addressed by the goals, policies and implementing actions of the Land Use Element. These major issues include (1) balancing the mixture of land uses within the City to ensure that revenue generation matches service provision responsibilities; (2) creating a greater distinctive and individual identity for Lake Forest; (3) ensuring that new development is compatible with natural and physical characteristics of the community; (4) using the development plans prepared for the Planned Communities of Lake Forest as a basis for planning future development; (5) enhancing fiscal stability and local employment opportunities by retaining, expanding and diversifying economic activities; and (6) revitalizing older areas within the community to maintain the quality of life. Each issue and the related goals, policies and implementing actions are identified and discussed in the following section.

### BALANCE OF LAND USES

A variety of land uses are located in Lake Forest including residential, commercial, industrial, historical, and community uses. This variety of land uses offers an important balance between the generation of public revenues and the provision of public facilities and services, and also minimizes the distances people have to travel to work, shop, and recreate.

**GOAL 1.0:** A balanced land use pattern that meets existing and future needs for residential, commercial, industrial, and community uses.

**Policy 1.1:** Achieve a land use composition in Lake Forest that promotes a balance between

the generation of public revenues and the costs of providing public facilities and services.

**Policy 1.2:** Consider increases in development intensity up to the maximum identified in the Land Use Element where development projects provide exceptional design quality, important public amenities or public benefits, or other factors that promote important goals and policies of the General Plan.

**Policy 1.3:** As future conditions in surrounding areas change, the future use of land presently within the Business Development Overlay will be reviewed.<sup>3</sup>

### IMAGE AND IDENTITY

Lake Forest is establishing its image and identity as a distinctive, identifiable community among the communities comprising Orange County. The community possesses desirable physical qualities, including its lakes, urban forest, trees, major open space areas, accessible community facilities and well planned residential neighborhoods. A sense of arrival will be created by improving the appearance of major thoroughfares and entrances to the City.

Enhancing image and identity will create a greater sense of community and connection among the population of Lake Forest.

**GOAL 2.0:** A distinct image and identity for Lake Forest.

**Policy 2.1:** Enhance the physical attributes of Lake Forest to create an identifiable and distinct community within Orange County.

---

<sup>3</sup> General Plan Amendment 00-01, dated May 2, 2000

---

---

**Policy 2.2:** Promote high quality in the design of all public and private development projects.

**Policy 2.3:** Create greater City unity in the future by establishing a community center that draws the north and south portions of Lake Forest together.

## **COMPATIBLE AND COMPLEMENTARY DEVELOPMENT**

Incompatibility can occur where the characteristics of specific land uses do not blend with the physical characteristics of available land. Locating different land uses in close proximity to one another can also result in incompatibilities associated with differences in the physical scale of development, noise levels, traffic levels, hours of operation, and other factors. Maintaining compatibility is important and reducing or avoiding incompatibilities in development is essential in improving the community's overall quality of life.

### **GOAL 3.0: New development that is compatible with the community.**

**Policy 3.1:** Ensure that new development fits within the existing setting and is compatible with the physical characteristics of available land, surrounding land uses, and public infrastructure availability.

**Policy 3.2:** Preserve and enhance the quality of Lake Forest residential neighborhoods by avoiding or abating the intrusion of disruptive, non-conforming buildings and uses.

**Policy 3.3:** Ensure that the affected public agencies can provide necessary facilities and services to support the impact and intensity of development in Lake Forest and in areas adjacent to the City.

**Policy 3.4:** Blend residential and nonresidential development with landscaping

and architectural design techniques to achieve visual compatibility.

**Policy 3.5:** Encourage the establishment of churches, synagogues, temples, and similar religious institutions in the community in accessible areas where compatibility with surrounding land uses can be achieved.

**Policy 3.6:** Work with lead agencies and adjacent jurisdictions to insure that correctional facilities are not located or expanded in a way that conflicts with neighborhood land uses and the quality of life in the City; clearly, such facilities should not be located within close proximity to residences.<sup>4</sup>

## **DEVELOPMENT OF PLANNED COMMUNITIES**

Much of the future development in Lake Forest will be based on several pre-incorporation Planned Communities: Lake Forest, El Toro, Baker Ranch, Pacific Commercentre, Rancho de los Alisos, Rancho Serrano, Serrano Highlands, Foothill Ranch, and Portola Hills. A number of these Planned Communities are also the subject of existing pre-incorporation development agreements, which identify the levels of development allowed, based on the provision of important public facilities such as Foothill Circulation Phasing Plan, fire stations, sheriff stations, and libraries.

### **GOAL 4.0: New development conforming to the established planned community development plans and agreements.**

**Policy 4.1:** Ensure that all development proposals within the planned community areas conform to applicable development plans and agreements.

---

<sup>4</sup> General Plan Amendment 96-01, dated October 29, 1996

---

---

**Policy 4.2:** Ensure that all proposed amendments to approved planned community development plans and agreements will not create unacceptable impacts to surrounding existing and planned development, the natural characteristics of the sites, fiscal stability of the City, and the public facilities and services that support development.

### **ECONOMIC DIVERSITY, EXPANSION AND BUSINESS RETENTION**

Enhancement of City revenue is necessary to sustain the level of public services desired by the community. This can be accomplished through diversification of the community's economic base by retaining existing businesses, and by attracting additional retail and service commercial businesses, and employment generating businesses.

**GOAL 5.0: Diversification and expansion of economic activities, and retention of existing businesses and revenues in support of public services.**<sup>5</sup>

**Policy 5.1:** Improve the fiscal stability of Lake Forest through retention of existing businesses, by attracting business and industry that contributes to economic growth and employment opportunities.

**Policy 5.2:** Work closely with the business community in developing approaches to effective business retention, economic development, and expansion of economic activities.

**Policy 5.3:** Focus efforts at economic development and business retention on the commercial and industrial areas throughout the City, including the Foothill Transportation Corridor, the San Diego Freeway (I-5), and along major thoroughfares.

**Policy 5.4:** Pursue opportunities to promote economic development and business retention using various approaches available under state and federal law.

**Policy 5.5:** Streamline and refine development process procedures to insure responsiveness to the business community.

**Policy 5.6:** Review the zoning ordinance to insure that regulations are concise and appropriate.

**Policy 5.7:** Preserve the fiscal well-being of the community by ensuring that land use designation changes for land within the Business Development Overlay will not result in a loss of future net revenue for the City.<sup>6</sup>

### **REVITALIZATION OF OLDER AREAS**

The quality of life in the community can be substantially improved through ongoing revitalization and rehabilitation efforts aimed at improving older development in Lake Forest. These revitalization efforts will address the physical components of development including buildings, landscaping and public infrastructure.

**GOAL 6.0: Revitalization of older residential, commercial, and industrial development.**

**Policy 6.1:** Promote revitalization of identified residential neighborhoods in Lake Forest.

**Policy 6.2:** Promote rehabilitation of older commercial and industrial properties and buildings to enhance their quality and competitive advantage.

---

<sup>5</sup> General Plan Amendment 00-01, dated May 2, 2000

---

<sup>6</sup> General Plan Amendment 00-01, dated May 2, 2000

## RELATED GOALS AND POLICIES

The goals and policies described in the Land Use Element are related to and support subjects included within other General Plan elements. In turn, many goals and policies

from the other elements directly or indirectly support the goals and policies of the Land Use element. These supporting goals and policies are identified in Table LU-1<sup>7</sup>.

**Table LU-1 Land Use–Related Goals and Policies by Element**

<i>Land Use Issue Area</i>	<i>Related Goals and Policy by Element</i>					
	<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Housing*</i>	<i>Circulation</i>	<i>Recreation and Resources</i>	<i>Safety and Noise</i>	<i>Public Facilities/Growth Management</i>
Balance of Land Uses				1.1, 7.5		8.1
Image and Identity				2.4, 4.2		
Compatible and Complementary Development		1.3, 1.4, 1.6	1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 5.1	1.1, 7.4, 7.6	1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 7.1	1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, 9.1, 9.2
Development of Planned Communities			2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 5.1, 7.2	1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 7.1, 7.6	1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.4, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1,	1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 6.1
Economic Diversity, Expansion, and Business Retention				7.2, 7.5		8.1
Revitalization of Older Areas		2.1, 2.2				

\* 2002 – 2005 Adopted Housing Element

---

---

## LAND USE PLAN

Lake Forest is recognized as a place where natural amenities have been incorporated and integrated in land use planning decisions. The nature and character of existing development, the desire for greater economic development, planned infrastructure capacity, and concerns for environmental sensitivity all have an influence on the development of land use policy and planning for future land use.

The Land Use Plan describes the approach that will be used to build upon the community's history of sound planning through the use of planned communities. The Plan addresses the issues identified in the previous section of the Element. The goals and policies described in that section provide the basis for the Plan and are supported by approaches to maintain an advantageous balance among land uses, create a distinct community identity, maintain land use compatibility, complete approved plans, promote economic development, and revitalize older areas in the community.

### **GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT 2008-02**

The Opportunities Study was a three-phase study designed to look at the implications of re-designating vacant land within the City that was entitled for business park, commercial and industrial uses to allow for residential and mixed uses.

The Opportunities Study focused on approximately 950 acres of vacant land located in the City of Lake Forest, north and south of the Foothill Transportation Corridor and adjacent to the former Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) El Toro. The study area was formerly encumbered by the 65 Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) contours,

which imposed land use restrictions due to the aircraft noise generated by airplanes taking off from the now defunct Marine base.

At the beginning of the Opportunities Study in 2002, there were thirteen vacant properties within the study area ranging in size from four acres to 380 acres; eleven properties south of the Foothill Transportation Corridor and two north of the Corridor. The majority of the properties are not contiguous.

In August of 2002, the City Council approved a phased approach to the Opportunities Study, which allowed the City to proceed in an incremental and cost-effective manner only after assessing the information generated in each phase, and deciding if subsequent phases of work should be undertaken. The City Council also adopted a set of objectives at the outset of the Opportunities Study to be used as criterion to determine if the Study should proceed to the next phase. The objectives established a clear direction for the Study and identified to the landowners the issues that are sensitive to the community. These objectives included:

- Reducing traffic and other environmental impacts that would occur with development of the currently allowed land uses.
- Mitigating all schools impacts.
- Ensuring any land use change does not negatively impact the City's General Fund.
- Integrating the north and south portions of the community.
- Sharing the benefits of changed land uses among the entire community through the addition of public amenities such as a sports park and community/civic center.

- 
- 
- Providing open space and trail linkages between new and existing development.
  - Ensuring any land use changes are appropriately planned.

Phase 1 of the Opportunities Study provided a preliminary, macro-level analysis of the existing conditions and approved development, proposed land use re-designations, and potential impacts associated with industrial and commercial development versus the proposed residential and mixed-use land use changes. In addition, Phase 1 defined important communitywide issues and interests through meetings with affected landowners, various stakeholders, and Lake Forest residents and identified public benefits desired by the community. At the conclusion of Phase 1, a process was established for Phase 2 whereby property owners could submit conceptual plans to the City for analysis to determine the general benefits and impacts that would result if land use changes were to occur.

During Phase 2 of the Opportunities Study, the City received conceptual plans from six landowners in the Study Area. The remaining owners of vacant land chose not to participate in the Opportunities Study. The plans received from the six participating landowners included residential and mixed uses. The land use changes proposed were evaluated at a broad scale, citywide level from the following perspectives:

- **Master Planning:** staff and the City's consultant reviewed the proposed residential densities, product type (i.e. single family or multi-family), compatibility of proposed land uses with neighboring uses, mix of land uses and the provision of parkland and open space.
- **Fiscal:** the fiscal consultant analyzed the proposed land use changes and proposed State legislation to determine the potential impact on the City's General Fund.

- **Traffic:** the Phase 2 traffic analysis estimated trip generation and forecast traffic volumes using average daily traffic (ADT). The analysis was used to compare future traffic volumes in the City to identify potential capacity deficiencies.
- **Schools:** staff coordinated with the school district to develop potential alternatives for mitigating the students generated by the proposed land use changes.
- **Public Facilities:** staff and the consultant conducted a needs assessment for a sports park and community/civic center and analyzed four potential sites to host the facilities. Conceptual designs of the facilities were also generated.

The plans were also compared against the industrial and commercial land uses allowed under the City's original General Plan and the City Council approved Opportunities Study objectives.

Through analyses conducted during Phase 2, and input received from the City Council and public, staff and the City's consultants developed a plan that integrates the vacant properties with each other, links the northern and southern areas of the community together and satisfies the objectives of the Opportunities Study. This plan is the basis for General Plan Amendment 2008-02.

Phase 3 of the Opportunities Study was initiated in June 2004 and comprised four principal tasks listed below.

- Develop a citywide traffic model and traffic mitigation plan.
- Select a site for an active sports complex, community center and city hall.
- Prepare and consider a General Plan Amendment (GPA) and Zone Change to

---

---

re-designate land uses within the Study Area.

- Prepare a Program Level Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) to assess the impacts and identify mitigation measures associated with the GPA and Zone Change.
- Select a preferred land use alternative.

Completion of these tasks and achieving community consensus over the future of the vacant land in the Opportunities Study has provided the basis for the current General Plan.<sup>7</sup>

## BALANCE OF LAND USES

The variety of land uses within Lake Forest affects an important balance between the generation of public revenues and the provision of public facilities and services. Achieving and maintaining a balance of land uses can ensure fiscal stability and also create a desirable community in which people can work, shop, reside, and recreate. Substantial land in the central portion of the City was planned for nonresidential use by the County in response to the aircraft noise and accident potential that was created by the operation of the former Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) El Toro. Nonresidential uses are less sensitive to noise and safety factors and were planned for this central area assuming that the aircraft noise and safety conditions would remain. However, the MCAS El Toro was closed in July 1999, ending all military aircraft operations, so that the adjacent properties are no longer impacted by aircraft noise or safety considerations. While the land within the central portion of the City is no longer limited by these factors, this area was located within the Business Development Overlay, and any proposed change in land use designation from nonresidential to residential land use is subject to the requirements of the Business

---

<sup>7</sup> General Plan Amendment 2008-08, dated July 1, 2008

Development Overlay, as defined later in this Land Use Plan.<sup>8</sup>

The Opportunities Study, which began in 2002, sought to define a balanced plan for use of the vacant lands within the area formerly restricted by the aircraft operations at MCAS El Toro. The result of the Opportunities Study is an integrated community, with a balance of land uses, all tied together by public facilities such as parks, open space, and trails. As a result, a number of properties formerly designated for nonresidential use have been removed from the business development overlay and designated for residential and mixed uses. During the next 10 to 20 years, Lake Forest is expected to experience the buildout of the Opportunities Study area as well as intensification of some developed areas.<sup>9</sup>

## Land Use Classification System

The Land Use Policy Map (Figure LU-1) and Business Development Overlay (Figure LU-2) illustrate the various types and distribution of land uses and overlay districts planned for the community.<sup>10</sup> The land use classification system is presented in Table LU-2 and includes 14 land use designations. These land use designations identify the types and nature of development allowed in particular locations depicted on the Land Use Policy Map (Figure LU-1).

The residential category includes five designations that allow for a range of housing types and densities. The nonresidential grouping includes a variety of designations, such as commercial, professional office, mixed use, business park, and light industrial to promote a wide range of revenue and job generating businesses.

---

<sup>8</sup> General Plan Amendment 00-01, dated May 2, 2000

<sup>9</sup> General Plan Amendment 2008-02, dated July, 1 2008

<sup>10</sup> General Plan Amendment 2008-08, dated July 1, 2008

# City of Lake Forest General Plan

COUNTY OF ORANGE

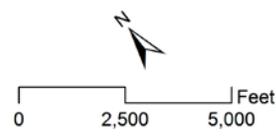
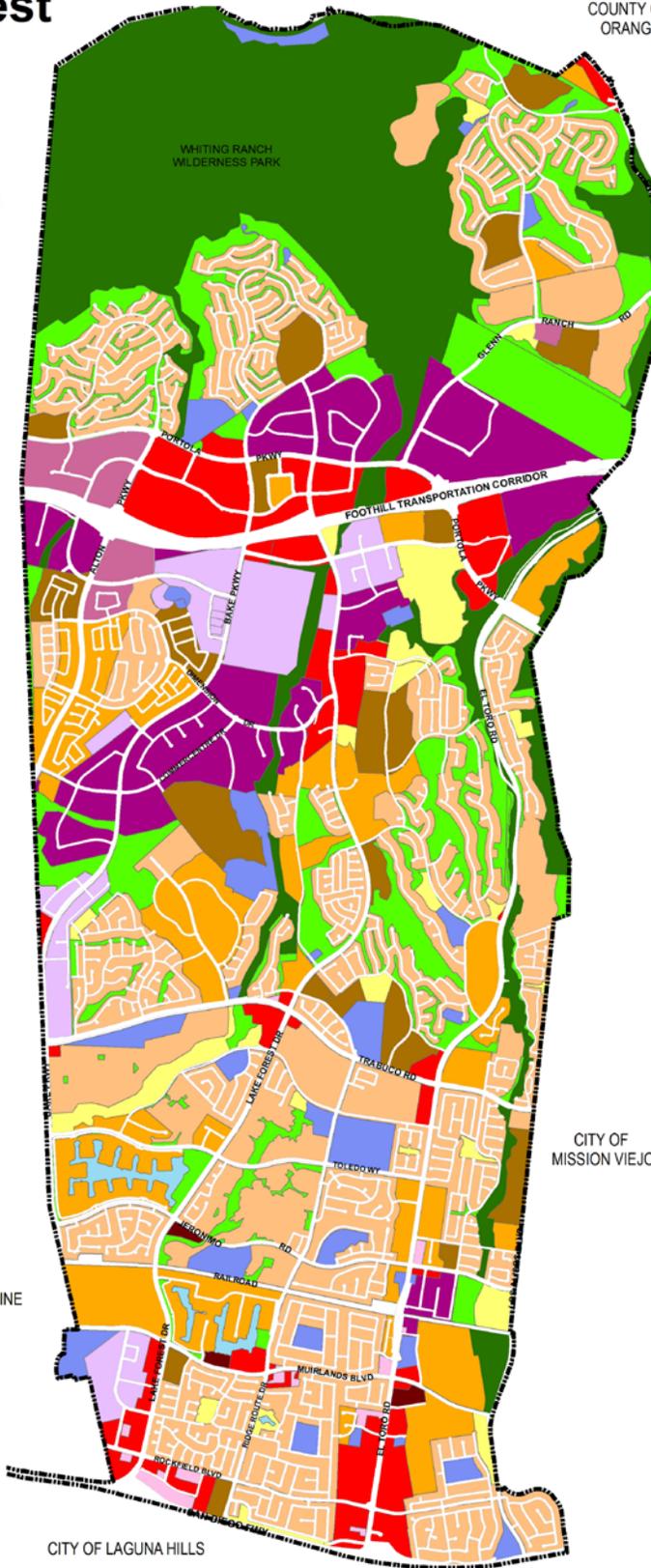
## Land Use Designations

### Residential Designations

- Very Low Density Residential (0 to 2 DUs/Net AC)
- Low Density Residential (2 to 7 DUs/Net AC)
- Low-Medium Density Residential (7 to 15 DUs/Net AC)
- Medium Density Residential (15 to 25 DUs/Net AC)
- High Density Residential (25 to 43 DUs/Net AC)

### Non-Residential Designations

- Commercial
- Professional Office
- Mixed-Use
- Business Park
- Light Industrial
- Public Facility
- Community Park/Open Space
- Regional Park/Open Space
- Open Space
- Lake
- Transportation Corridor
- City Boundary



CITY OF IRVINE

CITY OF MISSION VIEJO

CITY OF LAGUNA HILLS

Updated 7/26/16 JM

Figure LU-1  
Land Use Map

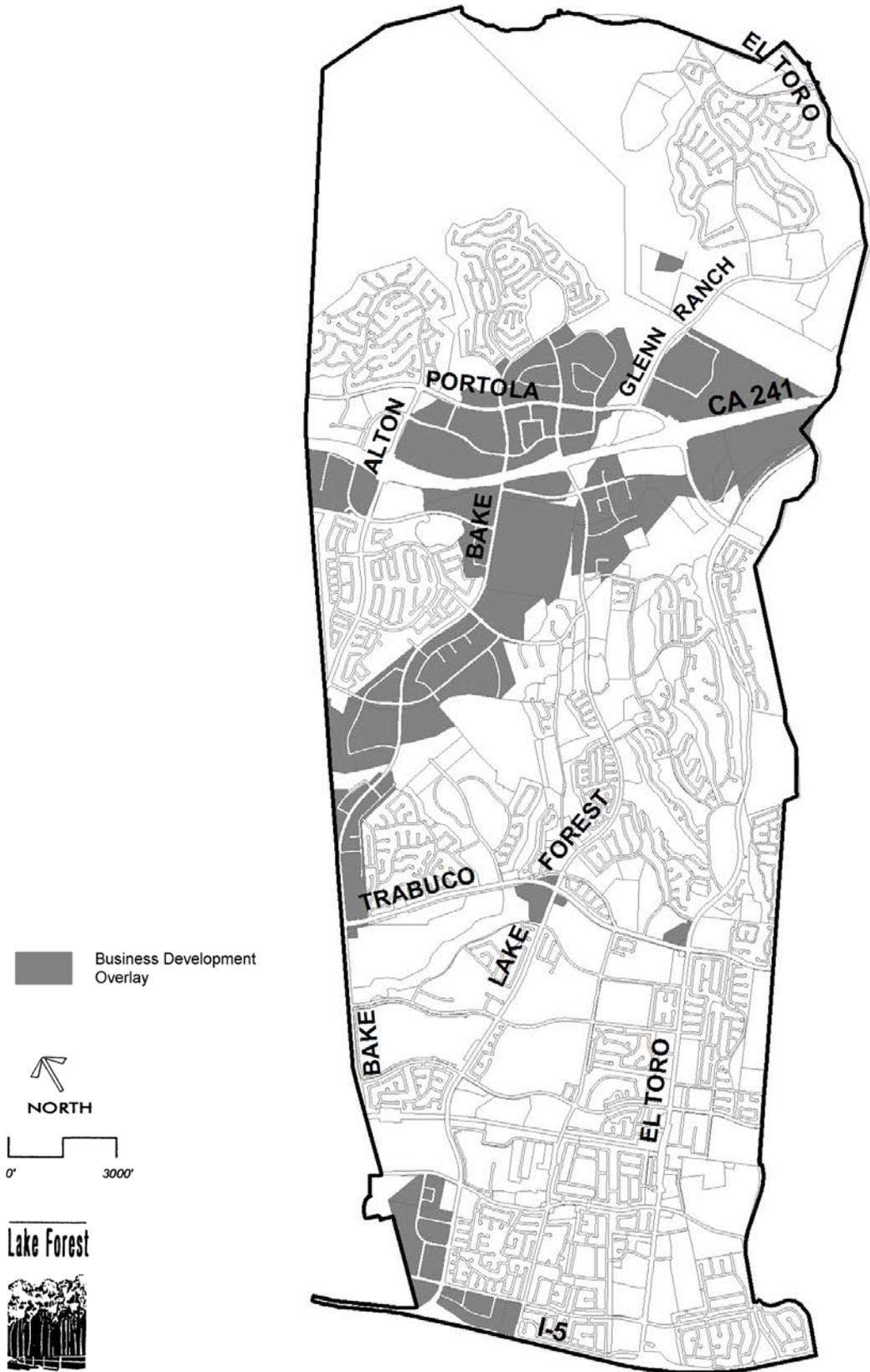


Figure LU-2  
Business Development Overlay

**Table LU-2 Land Use Classification System**

MAJOR LAND USE CATEGORIES	MAXIMUM DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE OR MAXIMUM FLOOR AREA RATIO (A)	EXPECTED DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE OR EFFECTIVE FLOOR AREA RATIO (B)	LAND USE DESIGNATION AND SUMMARY DESCRIPTION <i>(Summary Description Only—See Text on the Following Pages for Complete Description of Land Use Designations)</i>
RESIDENTIAL	0–2	1.0	VERY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL—Detached single-family dwelling units. Allows up to two dwelling units per net acre with an average of 3.2 persons per dwelling unit.
	2–7	6.8	LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL—Detached single-family dwelling units and mobile homes. Allows up to seven dwelling units per net acre with an average of 3.2 persons per dwelling unit.
	7–15	10.9	LOW-MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL—Detached and attached single-family dwelling units, mobile homes and multi-family dwelling units, including duplexes, townhomes, condominiums, apartments, and cooperatives. Allows up to 15 dwelling units per net acre with an average of 3.2 persons per dwelling unit.
	15–25	23.5	MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL—Single-family dwelling units and multi-family dwellings including duplexes, townhomes, condominiums, apartments, and cooperatives. Allows up to 25 dwelling units per net acre with an average of 2.0 persons per dwelling unit.
	25–43	42.6	HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL—Single-family dwelling units and multi-family dwellings, including duplexes, townhomes, condominiums, apartments, and cooperatives. Allows up to 43 dwelling units per net acre with an average of 2.0 persons per dwelling unit.
NONRESIDENTIAL	1.0:1	0.4:1	COMMERCIAL—Includes retail, professional office, and service-oriented business activities serving a community-wide area and population.
	1.2:1	0.5:1	PROFESSIONAL OFFICE—Includes single tenant or multi-tenant offices including legal, medical, general financial, administrative, corporate, and general business offices as well as supportive commercial uses.
	43 DU/AC and 1.2:1	35 DU/AC and 0.5:1	MIXED-USE—Includes a mixture of commercial, office, and residential use in the same building on the same parcel of land, or within the same area. Allowable uses are commercial retail and office; and low-medium, medium, and high density residential.
	1.0:1	0.35:1	BUSINESS PARK—Includes a mixture of all uses allowed under Commercial, Professional Office and Light Industrial land use designations.
	0.6:1	0.35:1	LIGHT INDUSTRIAL—Includes a mixture of light industrial uses, wholesale businesses, light manufacturing and processing, storage, distribution and sales, research and development, warehousing and storage, high technology production, retail sales and related uses.
	1.2:1	0.20:1	PUBLIC FACILITY—Includes public uses such as schools, government offices and facilities, public utilities, libraries, fire stations, sheriff substations and other public uses.
	0.4:1	0.1:1	COMMUNITY PARK/OPEN SPACE—Includes all public parkland, public open space, and associated public recreational activities for active and passive recreation.
	0.1:1	0.001:1	REGIONAL PARK/OPEN SPACE—Includes public recreational areas for active and passive recreation. Includes Limestone/Whiting Wilderness Park and other Orange County open space.
	0.4:1	0.05:1 <sup>3</sup>	OPEN SPACE—Includes private open space and facilities for active and passive recreational activities such as lakes, club houses and athletic/sports facilities.
	0.2:1	0.01:1	TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR—Includes major transportation roadway and railroad corridors.
	(c)	(c)	MINERAL RESOURCE OVERLAY—Includes important mineral resource areas.
(c)	(c)	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY—Includes land designated for Commercial, Professional Office, Business Park, and Light Industrial uses.	
(d) <sup>1</sup>	(d) <sup>1</sup>	PUBLIC FACILITIES OVERLAY – Includes land designated for Commercial, Business Park, and Residential uses.	

**Table LU-2 Land Use Classification System**

MAJOR LAND USE CATEGORIES	MAXIMUM DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE OR MAXIMUM FLOOR AREA RATIO (A)	EXPECTED DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE OR EFFECTIVE FLOOR AREA RATIO (B)	LAND USE DESIGNATION AND SUMMARY DESCRIPTION <i>(Summary Description Only—See Text on the Following Pages for Complete Description of Land Use Designations)</i>
---------------------------	---	--	---

- (a) Maximum allowable level of development standard for individual parcels of land.
- (b) Assumed overall expected level of development. The development that has occurred to date has not reached the maximum allowed level of density or intensity and future development is expected to be less than the maximum permitted. Therefore, an expected level of density is used when projecting total future dwelling units/population for residential development. Future square footage for nonresidential development uses floor area ratio as a measurement of development intensity.
- (c) Maximum and effective levels of development are based on underlying land use.
- (d) The Public Facilities Overlay is placed on properties with General Plan Land Use designations that would allow public facilities and parks. The intent of this overlay is to indicate potential sites for future public facilities, government buildings, and community parks.

1. General Plan Amendment 2008-02

Other designations in the nonresidential grouping include public facility, community park/open space, regional park/open space, and open space to provide for public uses and open space within the community. The nonresidential grouping also includes a transportation corridor designation to provide land area for circulation needs within the planning area.

***Land Use Density and Intensity***

This Element uses certain terminology to describe the 15 land use designations. The term “density” is used for residential uses and refers to the population and development capacity of residential land. Density is described in terms of dwelling units per net acre of land (du/net acre). For example, 50 dwelling units occupying 10 net acres of land is 5.0 du/net acre.

Development “intensity,” which applies to nonresidential uses, refers to the extent of development on a parcel of land or lot: the total building square footage, building height, the floor area ratio, and/or the percent of lot coverage. Intensity is often used to describe nonresidential development levels; but in a broader sense, intensity is used to express overall levels of both residential and nonresidential development types. In this Element, floor area ratio and building square footage are used as measures of nonresidential development intensity.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) represents the ratio between the total gross floor area of all buildings on a lot and the total area of that lot. FAR is determined by dividing the gross floor area of all buildings on a lot by the land area of that lot. For example, a 20,000 square foot building on a 40,000 square foot lot yields a FAR of 0.50:1, as illustrated in Figure LU-3. The FAR controls the intensity of use on a lot. A 0.50:1 FAR allows a single-story building that covers most of the lot, a two story building with reduced lot coverage, or a three or more story building with substantially reduced coverage of the lot.

State General Plan law requires that the Land Use Element indicate the maximum densities and intensities permitted within the Land Use Plan. The land use designations shown on the Land Use Policy Map are described in detail in this Element. Table LU-2 lists each of the land use designations shown on the Land Use Policy Map and provides a corresponding indication of maximum density or intensity of development. Maximum allowable development on individual parcels of land is governed by these measures of density or intensity. The table also includes the effective overall level of development within each land use designation within the City. These effective levels of development represent an anticipated overall density and intensity of development for Lake Forest and are, therefore, less than the absolute maximum allowed for an individual parcel of land. For

---

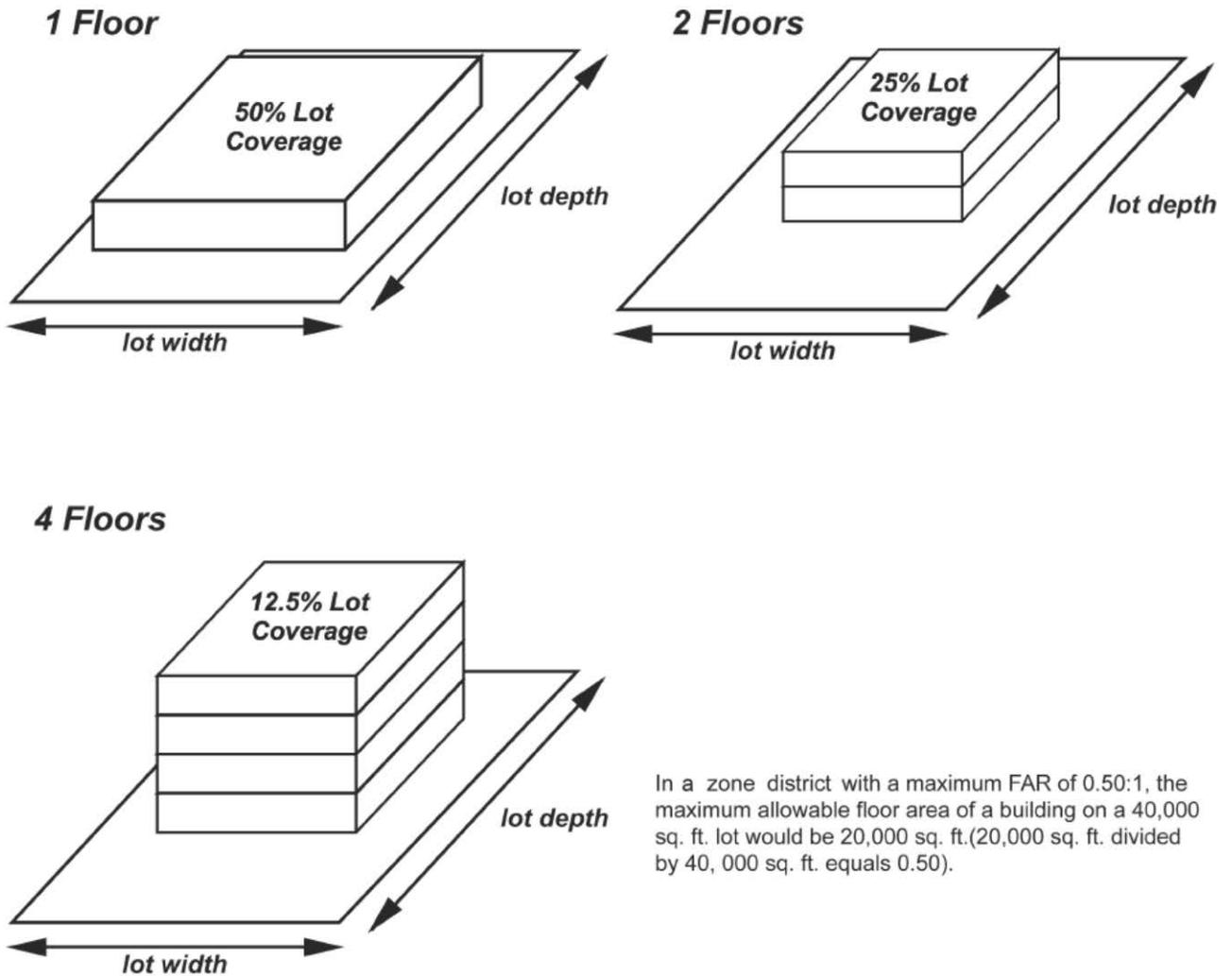
---

various reasons, many parcels in the community have not been developed to their maximum density or intensity and, in the future, maximum development as described in this Element can be expected to occur only on a limited number of parcels.<sup>11</sup>

The overall future development in Lake Forest is anticipated to occur at the expected level of density or intensity indicated in Table LU-2. Development at an intensity or density between the expected and maximum levels can occur only where projects offer exceptional design quality, important public amenities or benefits, or other factors that promote important goals and policies of the General Plan. For the residential land use designations, projects are expected to build to a density at least as high as the lowest density allowed by their respective designations.

---

<sup>11</sup> General Plan Amendment 00-01, dated May 2, 2000



In a zone district with a maximum FAR of 0.50:1, the maximum allowable floor area of a building on a 40,000 sq. ft. lot would be 20,000 sq. ft. (20,000 sq. ft. divided by 40,000 sq. ft. equals 0.50).

$$\text{Floor Area Ratio (FAR)} = \frac{\text{Gross Building Area (All Floors)}}{\text{Lot Area}}$$

**Note:**  
Variations may occur if upper floors are stepped back from ground level lot coverage

**Source:** City of Lake Forest

*Figure LU-3  
Possible Building Configurations  
for 0.50:1 Floor Area Ratio*

---

---

## Land Use Designations

All land in Lake Forest is assigned to one of the 15 land use designations described below:

### *Residential Designations*

***Very Low Density Residential.*** The Very Low Density Residential land use designation provides for the development of very low density single-family dwellings and accessory buildings. Uses such as second single-family structures, guest houses, churches, public or private schools, family day care homes, public facilities, private recreation facilities, and others that are determined to be compatible with and oriented toward serving the needs of very low density single-family neighborhoods may also be allowed.

The designation allows a maximum of two single-family dwelling units per net acre of land. Development under this land use designation should maintain a very low density character. The average population for this residential designation is approximately 2.91<sup>12</sup> persons per dwelling unit, which represents a population density range for this land use designation of 1 to 6 persons per acre. The maximum density of this land use category may be exceeded to complement General Plan Housing Element policy in accordance with the density bonus provisions of Section 65915 of the California Government Code, as amended in January 1, 2005 under SB 1818.

***Low Density Residential.*** The Low Density Residential land use designation provides for the development of low density single-family dwellings and accessory buildings. Uses such as second single-family structures, mobile homes, guest houses, churches, public or private schools, family day care homes, public facilities, private recreation facilities, and others that are determined to be compatible

with and oriented toward serving the needs of low density single-family neighborhoods may also be allowed.

The designation allows a maximum of seven single-family dwelling units per net acre of land. Development under this land use designation should maintain a low density character. The average population for this residential designation is approximately 2.91 persons per dwelling unit, which represents a population density range for this land use designation of 6 to 21 persons per acre. The maximum density of this land use category may be exceeded to complement General Plan Housing Element policy in accordance with the density bonus provisions of Section 65915 of the California Government Code, as amended in January 1, 2005 under SB 1818.

***Low Medium Density Residential.*** The Low Medium Density Residential land use designation provides for the development of a wide range of living accommodations, including single-family detached and attached dwelling units, mobile homes, duplexes, and multiple-family dwellings, such as townhomes, condominiums, apartments, and cooperatives. Uses such as churches, public or private schools, community care facilities, family day care homes, public facilities, private recreation facilities, and others that are determined to be compatible with and oriented toward serving the needs of low medium density neighborhoods may also be allowed.

The designation allows a maximum of 15 dwelling units per net acre of land. Development under this land use designation should maintain a low medium density character. The average population for this residential designation is approximately 2.91 persons per dwelling unit, which represents a population density range for this land use designation of 21 to 44 persons per acre. The maximum density of this land use category

---

<sup>12</sup> Based on 2000 Census

---

---

may be exceeded to complement General Plan Housing Element policy in accordance with the density bonus provisions of Section 65915 of the California Government Code, as amended in January 1, 2005 under SB 1818.

***Medium Density Residential.*** The Medium Density Residential land use designation provides for the development of a wide range of living accommodations, including single-family dwelling units, and multiple-family dwellings, such as townhomes, condominiums, apartments, and cooperatives. Uses such as churches, public or private schools, community care facilities, family day care homes, public facilities, private recreation facilities, and others that are determined to be compatible with and oriented toward serving the needs of medium density neighborhoods may also be allowed.

The designation allows a maximum of 25 dwelling units per net acre of land. Development under this land use designation should maintain a medium density character. The average population for this residential designation is approximately 2.91 persons per dwelling unit, which represents a population density range for this land use designation of 44 to 73 persons per acre. The maximum density of this land use category may be exceeded to complement General Plan Housing Element policy in accordance with the density bonus provisions of Section 65915 of the California Government Code, as amended in January 1, 2005 under SB 1818.

***High Density Residential.*** The High Density Residential land use designation provides for the development of a wide range of living accommodations, including single-family dwelling units and multiple-family dwellings, such as townhomes, condominiums, apartments, and cooperatives. Uses such as churches, public and private schools, community care facilities, family day care

homes, public facilities, private recreation facilities, and others that are determined to be compatible with and oriented toward serving the needs of high density neighborhoods may also be allowed.

The designation allows a maximum of 43 dwelling units per net acre of land. Development under this land use designation should maintain a medium density character. The average population for this residential designation is approximately 2.91 persons per dwelling unit, which represents a population density range for this land use designation of 73 to 125 persons per acre. The maximum density of this land use category may be exceeded to complement General Plan Housing Element policy in accordance with the density bonus provisions of Section 65915 of the California Government Code, as amended in January 1, 2005 under SB 1818.

#### ***Non-residential Designations***

***Commercial.*** The Commercial land use designation provides for a variety of retail, professional office, and service oriented business activities, many of which are roadway oriented and serve a community wide area and population.

Other uses that are determined to be compatible with the primary uses may also be allowed.<sup>13</sup> Commercial land uses serve local, as well as broader market areas and generally include professional and business offices, retail and commercial services, and community facilities. Site development standards for this land use designation encourage large projects and provide for adequate setbacks, parking, landscaping, buffering from residential land use areas, and other features, which create well designed, efficient, and attractive projects. The effective intensity of development is a floor

---

<sup>13</sup> General Plan Amendment 94-01, dated July 11, 1995

---

---

area ratio of 0.4:1 and the maximum intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 1.0:1.

**Professional Office.** The Professional Office designation provides for professional offices and other supporting uses. These uses include professional, legal, medical, general financial, administrative, corporate, and general business offices, as well as supportive commercial uses such as restaurants, medical services, community facilities, and similar uses, which together create concentrations of office employment or community activity. Also included are small convenience or service commercial activities intended to meet the needs of the on site employee population. Other uses that are determined to be compatible with the primary uses may also be allowed.<sup>14</sup> The effective intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.5:1 and the maximum intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 1.2:1.

**Mixed Use.** The Mixed Use designation provides opportunities for mixtures of commercial, office, and residential uses in the same building, on the same parcel of land, or within the same area. Allowable uses include those identified in the Commercial and Professional Office designations, and the Low Medium Density, Medium Density, and High Density Residential designations. When mixtures of uses occur in the same building, retail uses or offices are usually located on the ground floor with residential uses above. The mixed uses are generally located in areas where multiple activities and pedestrian orientation are considered to be desirable objectives. The expected intensity of nonresidential development is a floor area ratio of 0.5:1 and the maximum intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 1.2:1. The expected density of 35 dwelling units per net acre of land. A maximum density of 43

dwelling units per net acre of land is allowed for residential projects.

**Business Park.** The Business Park designation provides opportunities for a mixture of all those uses allowed under the Commercial, Professional Office, and Light Industrial land use designations. The effective intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.35:1 and the maximum intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 1.0:1.

**Light Industrial.** The Light Industrial designation provides for a variety of light industrial uses that are non polluting and which can co exist with surrounding land uses and which do not in their maintenance, assembly, manufacturing or operations create smoke, gas, dust, sound, vibration, soot or glare to any degree which might be obnoxious or offensive to persons residing or conducting business in the City. Allowable uses include wholesale businesses, light manufacturing and processing, research and development uses, warehousing and storage, distribution and sales, high technology production, retail sales and related uses. Other uses that are determined to be compatible with the primary uses may also be allowed.<sup>15</sup> The effective intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.35:1 and the maximum intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.6:1.

**Public Facility.** The Public Facility designation includes a wide range of public uses distributed throughout the community, such as schools, government offices and facilities, public utilities, libraries, fire stations, sheriff sub stations, cemeteries, hospitals, and other public uses. The effective intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.2:1 and the maximum intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 1.2:1.

---

<sup>14</sup> General Plan Amendment 94-01, dated July 11, 1995

---

<sup>15</sup> General Plan Amendment 94-01, dated July 11, 1995

---

---

**Community Park/Open Space.** The Community Park/Open Space designation provides for public recreational uses designed to meet the active and passive recreational needs of the community. This designation includes all public parkland, open space, and associated public recreational activities, such as indoor and outdoor sports/athletic facilities, museums, theaters, and similar uses. The effective intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.1:1 and the maximum intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.4:1.

**Regional Park/Open Space.** The Regional Park/Open Space designation provides for public recreational uses designed to meet the active and passive recreational needs of the community and other nearby areas in the region. This designation includes the Whiting Ranch Regional Wilderness Park and other County of Orange open space along portions of Serrano Creek and Aliso Creek. This designation applies to land that is generally maintained as natural open space with minimal improvements. The effective intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.001:1 and the maximum intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.1:1.

**Open Space.** The Open Space designation provides for private open space designed to meet the active and passive recreational needs of the community. This designation includes open space that is held under private ownership, and includes facilities for active and passive recreational activities. Open Space activities include indoor and outdoor sports/athletic facilities, lakes, club houses, meeting rooms, outdoor gathering areas, and similar uses, as well as ornamentally landscaped and natural landscaped open areas. The effective intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 1:0.5 and the maximum

intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.4:1.<sup>16</sup>

**Transportation Corridor.** The Transportation Corridor designation applies to the land within the corridors of the San Diego Freeway (Interstate 5), the Foothill Transportation Corridor, and the Southern California Regional Rail Authority, and other arterial highways. Lands within these corridors are reserved for transportation purposes as the primary use. Secondary uses, such as open space linkages and landscaped areas, public and private parking areas, and other transportation related activities and facilities are also allowed. The effective intensity of development is a floor area ratio of .01:1 and the maximum intensity of development is a floor area ratio of .2:1.

### **Land Use Overlay**

**Business Development Overlay (BDO).** The Business Development Overlay designation applies to areas designated for Commercial, Professional Office, Business Park, and Light Industrial land uses as shown in Figure LU-2. The overlay provides for a balance of land uses required for the continued fiscal well-being of the community. Private property owners of land subject to the Business Development Overlay must prove that proposed land use designation changes will not result in a loss of future net revenue for the City. The underlying land use designation represents the future planned use of the land, and there is no intensity of development of this overlay, other than the intensity of development for the underlying land use designation.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> General Plan Amendment 01-01A, dated July 17, 2001

<sup>17</sup> General Plan Amendment 00-01, dated May 2, 2000

---

---

## Development Capacity

The Land Use Plan for Lake Forest includes expected levels of residential and nonresidential development, where all land in the City is developed according to the Plan. The expected levels of development establish a capacity for the Land Use Plan that is expressed as estimates of total dwelling units, total population, and total square footage of nonresidential development in the future.

Table LU-3 summarizes the development capacity of the Land Use Plan. This table provides a breakdown of land uses within Lake Forest for purposes of identifying the estimated development capacity of the Land Use Plan.

The degree to which the estimated capacity exceeds projected population is referred to as “overage.” Some overage is desirable to make allowance for inevitable small pockets of undevelopable land, to allow for difficulty in recognizing development trends in completely vacant areas, to allow for unforeseen need for public utilities, and to recognize that some owners will maintain their land in an undeveloped state beyond the time span of the Plan. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has recommended that Plan capacity not exceed approximately 1.20 to 1.25 times the projected population. The measurement of capacity is accomplished by dividing the difference between maximum population capacity of the Plan by the projected population. For Lake Forest, the projected population per the Plan is approximately 97,261 and the projected population in 2020 per OCP 2006 is approximately 79,863 resulting in a capacity of 1.03.<sup>18</sup>

## IMAGE AND IDENTITY

Lake Forest has many desirable physical qualities, including its lakes, urban forest, trees, major open space areas, accessible community facilities and well planned residential neighborhoods. The image and identity of the community will continue to be enhanced in the future to create a greater sense of community and connection.

The image of Lake Forest has been further enhanced through landscaping improvement and strengthening, particularly along public areas adjacent to major thoroughfares and at points where those thoroughfares enter the community.

---

<sup>18</sup> General Plan Amendment 2008-02, dated June 2008

**Table LU-3 Land Use Plan Development Capacity Summary**

<i>Land Use Designations</i>	<i>Total Acres</i>	<i>Total Dwelling Units<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Total Square Footage<sup>a</sup> (000s)</i>	<i>Average Persons per DU<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>Total Population</i>
<b>Residential Designations</b>					
Very Low Density Residential (0–2 du/ac)	0.0	0		2.91	0
Low Density Residential (2–7 du/ac)	2,307	15,687		2.91	45,649
Low-Medium Density Residential (7–15 du/ac)	906	9,862		2.91	28,698
Medium Density Residential (15–25 du/ac)	429	10,082		2.91	29,337
High Density Residential (25–43 du/ac)	16	681		2.91	1,981
<i>Subtotal</i>	3,658	36,312 <sup>a</sup>			105,665 <sup>a</sup>
<i>Effective Development Based on OSA DAs</i>		32,333*			94,089*
<b>Nonresidential Designations</b>					
Commercial	634		11,046		
Professional Office	34		741		
Mixed-Use	139	1,090*	1,037	2.91	3,172*
Business Park	267		4,073		
Light Industrial	797		12,149		
<i>Subtotal</i>	1,871	1,090	29,046		3,172
Public Facility	335		2,922		
Community Park/Open Space	265		1,154		
Regional Park/Open Space	2,003		87		
Open Space (with Lake)	1,074		2,339		
Transportation Corridor	513				
Local Roadways	1,127 <sup>d</sup>				
Business Development Overlay	(c)		(c)		
<i>Subtotal</i>	5,317		6,502		
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,846</b>	<b>33,423*</b>	<b>35,548</b>		<b>97,261*</b>

Source: GPA 2008-02 and GPA 5-10-1233 – PEIR Alternative 7\*, GPA 2-11-1729, GPA 2-12-2395, GPA 1-12-2377, GPA 12-13-3705, GPA 9-14-4593, GPA 6-16-4932

a: Estimated number of dwelling units and square feet of development based on effective intensity of development for each land use type (see table LU-2)

b: Based on 2000 census estimates.

c: Approximately 1,650 acres of land are designated as Business Development Overlay (BDO) under this overlay. The underlying future planned land use is Commercial, Professional Office, Business Park, and Light Industrial and the acreage is reflected under these land use designations.

d: Acreage to increase by approximately 13 acres based on Alton Parkway construction. Acreage will be deducted from Low, Low-Medium, and Medium Density Residential acreages.

\* Actual development is capped by Development Agreements for: GPA 12-13-3705 (250 d.u.), GPA 1-12-2377 (72 d.u.), GPA 2-12-2395 (147 d.u.), GPA 2008-02 (1,691 d.u.), GPA 5-10-1233 (2,379 d.u.) and GPA 9-14-4593 (52 d.u.)

Last revised: September 6, 2016

Existing landscaping can be strengthened with additional planting to produce dramatic effects that create recognizable landmarks within the community. Other improvements to man-made structures, such as signs, benches, and street lighting can be made in concert with landscaping improvements to produce scenes along streets and other public areas within the community that are recognizable and create a “sense of place” for those who work or reside in Lake Forest.

The City includes a significant grove or forest of eucalyptus trees in the south central portion of the City that is one of its strongest natural features. In the early 1900’s, Dwight Whiting planted 400 acres of eucalyptus “forest” in an attempt to use the wood as a major source of lumber for various purposes. However, because eucalyptus wood cracks along its length, Whiting’s economic experiment failed. His loss has become an important gain for the community of Lake Forest by providing uncut forest contributing to the City name.

Many other parts of the community also include smaller, but important groupings of these trees that have been used for agricultural purposes. The eucalyptus forest and other mature trees can be preserved to maintain an important natural asset of the community. The image and identity of Lake Forest will also be further enhanced by the establishment of a major civic or community center that will be recognized as the focal point for public and community activities. This central facility may include governmental services, such as City administrative and other government offices, as well as recreational and cultural activities that act as a magnet for large gatherings of people and celebrations of important community events.

## **COMPATIBLE AND COMPLEMENTARY DEVELOPMENT**

Land use incompatibility can occur where differences exist among uses that are near one another. These incompatibilities may result from differences in the physical scale of development, noise levels, traffic levels, hours of operation and other factors. The overall quality of life in Lake Forest is dependant to a great extent upon the maintenance of compatibility among the different land uses comprising the community.

The City Zoning Ordinance is one of the primary regulatory documents that is used to ensure land use compatibility. The Ordinance contains standards for development, such as minimum lot sizes, building setback and maximum height limitations, parking and landscaping requirements, and others standards that are designed to promote compatibility. In addition to the Zoning Ordinance, the City Subdivision and Grading Ordinances are important regulatory tools to control the subdivision of land and alteration of land in preparation for development. These ordinances will be reviewed and updated periodically to maintain consistency with new state and local legislation, court decisions, and community values.

Land use compatibility is also addressed as part of the City site development permit and environmental review process. Proposed development projects are reviewed by the City to promote high quality in urban design and to minimize associated environmental impacts. Precise development project planning may also be reviewed by the City and other public agencies through a specific plan process allowed by state law to ensure compatibility and consistency with surrounding development in the community. Proposed development will

---

---

also be reviewed for consistency with the noise, safety, and building height criteria.<sup>19</sup>

Systematic enforcement of City ordinances and monitoring of development within and around the City will be used to maintain the quality of life in the community. Development monitoring by the City can be used to ensure that affected public agencies are capable of providing necessary facilities and services in support of proposed development.

Landscaping is an important factor in achieving land use compatibility where commercial and industrial development is adjacent to residential development. The standards for landscaping in these areas have been strengthened to achieve greater aesthetic and functional compatibility in these critical areas.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF PLANNED COMMUNITIES**

At incorporation, the planned development in Lake Forest was primarily based upon pre incorporation planning for nine large scale Planned Communities (Figure LU 4). These Planned Communities include Lake Forest, El Toro, Baker Ranch, Pacific Commercentre, Rancho de los Alisos, Rancho Serrano, Serrano Highlands, Foothill Ranch, and Portola Hills. Several of these Planned Communities are also the subject of development agreements that identify the levels of development allowed and important public facilities that will accompany such development. Development in these areas will follow the individual Planned Community development plans and development agreements.

Development proposals within these Planned Communities will be reviewed for consistency with approved development plans and

agreements or any amended development plans and agreements. Any proposed amendments to the approved Planned Communities, or new planned communities, will also be reviewed to ensure that any land use changes support the fiscal stability of the City, provide necessary public facilities and services, and minimize environmental impacts.

## **ECONOMIC DIVERSITY, EXPANSION AND BUSINESS RETENTION**

The level of public services desired by the community will be sustained over time through continued enhancement of City revenue. The City will improve its fiscal stability through a general diversification of its economic base. This will be accomplished by promoting the continued development of the portion of the City that is identified on the Land Use Policy Map for nonresidential development and through the implementation of the Business Development Overlay.<sup>20</sup> Diversification will be based on retaining existing businesses, as well as attracting new retail, service commercial, and employment generating businesses to the community. Attracting and retaining businesses that contribute to economic stability represents an important effort by the City.

Incentives to attract businesses to the community, such as City fee reductions or deferrals, permit assistance, fast track permit processing, formal recognition of businesses contributing to the community may be used to achieve a partnership between the business community and the City. City staff assigned to work with the business community can act as an important liaison between local government and business. City development and provision of data on retail, commercial, industrial and office space can provide an important connection between City and business interests

---

<sup>19</sup> General Plan Amendment 01-01A, dated July 17, 2001

---

<sup>20</sup> General Plan Amendment 00-01, dated May 2, 2000

---

---

that will be beneficial in achieving economic stability. The City newsletter can serve as a means to communicate market information to local businesses. Training the City Council, Planning Commission and City staff regarding current business and market trends can help economic activity. Programs available under state and federal law can also be utilized by the City in its efforts improve economic and fiscal stability.

## **REVITALIZATION OF OLDER AREAS**

Revitalization and rehabilitation of older development in the community can substantially improve the overall quality of life in Lake Forest. Buildings, landscaping, and public facilities can be improved physically through rehabilitation efforts designed to breathe new life into areas that may otherwise decline over time.

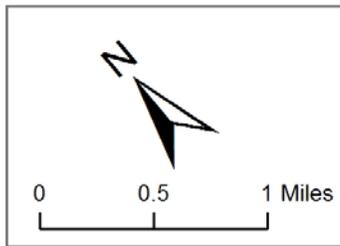
Enforcement of City ordinances regulating building, zoning, health and safety, as well as community programs aimed at removal and prevention of graffiti will have very positive effects. The use of Community Development Block Grant Funds for commercial and residential rehabilitation also provides a sound approach for revitalization.

For larger distinct areas that would benefit from revitalization and focused study of improvement needs, state law provides a planning approach known as the Specific Plan that can be used to promote positive changes over time. The Specific Plan can be prepared for such Special Study Areas as a cooperative effort by the City and interested property owners to plan for improvements and changes within an area to achieve both economic and other land use planning objectives. Such areas do not have to be comprehensively identified in the General Plan, but one such area that is appropriate for a Specific Plan is the El Toro

Planned Community area. In particular, the business area located on the southeast side of El Toro Road along both sides of the railroad tracks has developed over time with a variety of commercial and industrial uses that would benefit from more precise study and planning for the organization of uses and the infrastructure needed to serve those uses. Figure LU 5 depicts the El Toro Special Study Area.



General Plan



Source: County of Orange

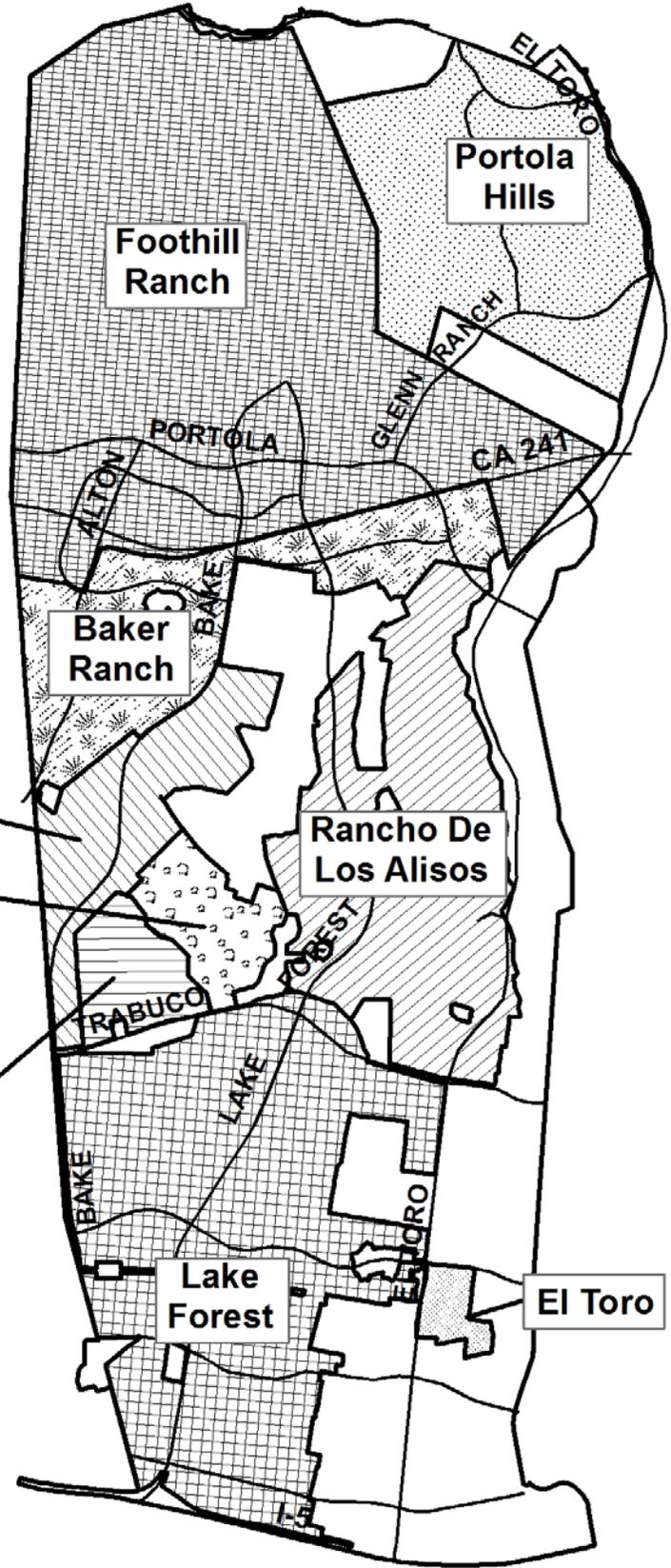


Figure LU-4  
Planned Communities



-  City Boundary
-  El Toro Special Study Area

Source: City of Lake Forest

Figure LU-5  
El Toro Special Study Area