

Chapter Three:

# Vision

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the community vision, public involvement process, and Specific Plan policies as they relate to the City’s General Plan and the Foothill Boulevard Master Plan. This chapter is organized as follows:

- 3.1 The Vision for the Downtown Village Specific Plan
- 3.2 Community Participation
- 3.3 Relationship to the General Plan
- 3.4 Relationship to the Foothill Boulevard Master Plan
- 5.5 Specific Plan Policies
- 3.6 Vision for a Village Center

### 3.1 The Vision for the Downtown Village Specific Plan

The vision for La Cañada Flintridge’s Downtown is characterized by traditional, small town, “main street” development, rather than typical suburban development. Streets will be tree-lined, pedestrian friendly, and connect through to community assets such as parks and civic uses. The retail environment will not just be another group of stores behind large parking lots, but rather a main street that provides pedestrian comfort and accessibility between land uses. Parks and open spaces will be integrated into the project, providing places for people to meet and relax in the downtown environment.

The community defined a vision for the Downtown Village Specific Plan through a series of public workshops held during the planning process. Following are the key visions defined by the community:

#### **Vision 1: A Village Atmosphere**

“A small town, village atmosphere with low traffic and a low density residential core.”

#### **Vision 2: A Pedestrian-Friendly Area**

“A place where people can park their cars and walk from cluster to cluster.”

#### **Vision 3: The “Heart of the Community”**

“The area acts as a town center for residents and has a civic center.”

#### **Vision 4: A Sense of Arrival into the City**

“There is an area that creates a sense of entry into the City and reinforces identity.”

#### **Vision 5: Housing Options for the Future**

“Elegant townhomes for seniors and all ages so they are able to live near retail, enhancing the pedestrian character of the area.”

#### **Vision 6: Citizen Ownership**

“People feel a sense of stewardship for the unique community that is La Cañada Flintridge.”

Implementation of the Downtown Village Specific Plan will achieve the vision for the downtown area. It is for this vision that the recommended Specific Plan was developed.



*A Steering Committee made input to the plan at each workshop.*



### 3.2 Community Participation

There have been several forms of community participation in the Downtown Village Specific Plan project:

#### 3.2.1 Community Workshops

The Downtown Village Specific Plan was prepared with input obtained through a series of five community workshops. Citizens provided input to the project team through group discussion, comment forms and feedback exercises related to the direction of the Specific Plan. Participation at the workshops ranged from approximately 40 to 120 people.

The community workshops were held over a nine-month period as follows:

Community Workshop 1:  
“Visions, Goals and Issues”  
November 20, 1999

Community Workshop 2:  
“Vision Refinement”  
January 22, 2000

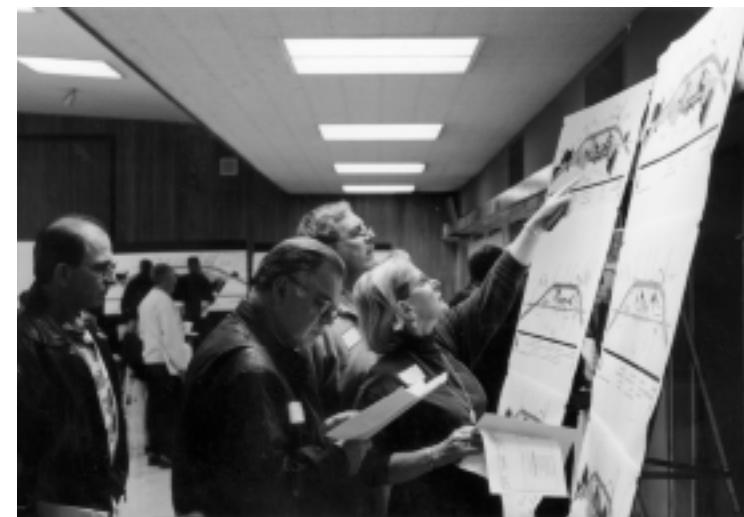
Community Workshop 3:  
“Alternative Concepts to Achieve the Vision”  
February 26, 2000

Community Workshop 4:  
“Preliminary Recommendations”  
April 27, 2000

Community Workshop 5:  
“Final Recommendations”  
July 13, 2000

Concurrent to the community workshops, five public meetings were held with the Specific Plan Steering Committee, a 21-member committee appointed by the City Council at the onset of the project. Representation on the Steering Committee included representatives from the City’s Commissions, Friends of 91011 organization, La Cañada Properties, Inc. (owner of Sport Chalet site), La Cañada Youth Sports Coalition, La Cañada Unified School District and City residents.

Also concurrent to the community workshops and Steering Committee meetings, five public meetings were held with property owners in the Specific Plan area, as well as the Planning Commission and City Council. The Plan will also be reviewed by the Design Commission, Planning Commission and City Council in the context of public hearings scheduled for Fall 2000.



*Residents review the alternative concepts at Workshop 3.*



*Citizens participated in a series of workshops.*



*The City's Shuttle buses transported Workshop participants at Workshop 1.*

## 3.2.2 Public Outreach Materials

Five newsletters were prepared and mailed to every household in the City of La Cañada Flintridge. The newsletters presented educational information about the Specific Plan, invited residents to upcoming workshops, and reported the results of previous workshops.

The project team also developed a web site for the Downtown Village Specific Plan that was linked to the City’s web site and was available throughout the duration of the project. The web site informed residents of the opportunities for participation at the workshops, educated residents about the recommendations of the plan as the project evolved, and updated them on the results of previous workshops.

Additionally, students in La Cañada Flintridge were involved in the planning process through educational handout materials, survey forms and a PowerPoint presentation about the Specific Plan. Members of the City Council presented this information to students at La Cañada Flintridge High School and other schools in the City.

## 3.2.3 Community Surveys

Additional community input was obtained through community surveys throughout the process. Survey sources included: a tear-off mail-in comment form attached to the third newsletter, the interactive web site, and questions related to the Specific Plan in the City’s Community Survey. Throughout the duration of the process, the project team also received many comments and ideas for the Plan in writing via letters from the community. These comments and ideas, along with survey responses, were considered and incorporated into the Plan where applicable.

## 3.3 Relationship to the General Plan

The City’s General Plan sets forth the policy direction for each district along Foothill Boulevard. The project study area is called the “Downtown District” in the General Plan. The role of the Downtown District, as defined by the Land Use Element of the General Plan (adopted in 1993), is a mixed use area that serves local and regional commercial needs, as well as office, educational, residential and public/semi-public uses. The policy direction to guide the implementation of this vision is highlighted below:

- Consolidate individual commercial buildings at the northeast corner of Angeles Crest and Foothill Boulevard into a unified retail center.
- Introduce mixed and multi-family uses into the single-family neighborhood north of the Boulevard.
- Consider development of a northern road to support the development of the downtown character.
- Establish the downtown “village” character through minimum one-acre redevelopment projects from Commonwealth to Oakwood on the north side.
- Consolidate and redevelop individual lots along the south side of the Boulevard to introduce commercial/mixed use projects and provide more attractive street-front buildings.
- Consolidate smaller parcels on the north side of the Boulevard between Oakwood and Gould to create new parking facilities behind existing and future stores and to provide development activity to support a new North Road.

The Specific Plan is consistent with the policy directives of the General Plan.

## 3.4 Relationship to the Foothill Boulevard Master Plan

The Foothill Boulevard Master Plan, accepted by the City Council in 1991, describes a vision for Foothill Boulevard that is rooted in preserving and enhancing a small-scale pedestrian-oriented atmosphere with a village character. The objectives and recommendations of the Master Plan have been integrated into the General Plan Land Use Element, and are therefore adequately represented in the above policies. There are additional ideas presented in the Master Plan, however, that relate to the issues of the Specific Plan study area:

- The Master Plan articulates design principles and guidelines to achieve village character.
- The Master Plan recognizes La Cañada Properties/Sport Chalet site as a unique opportunity to help initiate the creation of a downtown village.
- The Master Plan notes the opportunities available to the City and private property owners to develop additional parking and improved vehicle circulation through mutual access easements, shared parking agreements and public parking facilities in the Downtown District. These concepts are important to support existing and future street-front retail buildings in the Downtown District, and to contribute to pedestrian-oriented feel of the Boulevard.
- The Master Plan distinguishes the Downtown area from other districts along Foothill Boulevard with regard to its existing public improvements and appropriate design strategies. The area contains landscaped medians, narrower right-of-way (90 feet), underground utility lines, and closely spaced intersections.
- Another important concept in the Master Plan is the realignment of the offset intersection at Foothill Boulevard and Angeles Crest/Chevy Chase. This intersection is a significant gateway to the Downtown Village Specific Plan area and offers views of the mountains. The Master Plan

recommends realignment options that involve major landscaped areas, enhanced views, and slowing of vehicle speeds without restricting traffic flow.

- Finally, the Master Plan acknowledges the linear nature of Foothill Boulevard. A true village setting contains more interwoven streets in a grid or network pattern, where development faces the right-of-way of each street. Therefore, the Plan recommends the consideration of a new “North Road,” adjacent to the south side of the 210 Freeway, with connections back to Foothill Boulevard to realize a central village setting.

The Specific Plan is consistent with the policy directives of the Foothill Boulevard Master Plan.

### 3.5 Specific Plan Policies

In summary, the policy direction of the General Plan and Foothill Boulevard Master Plan is consistent with the vision for the area as defined by the community. Therefore, the Specific Plan establishes the following general policies:

- Implement the Foothill Boulevard Master Plan’s clear objective to enhance the pedestrian environment of the Boulevard.
- Create a true village character with a distinct identity.
- Support mixed-use character by promoting development of street-front retail buildings, attractive architectural design, low-scale signage, landscape design, open spaces and parks, outdoor plazas and other pedestrian amenities.
- Preserve and enhance existing terrain, vegetation and mountain views.
- Balance development to also include high quality multi-family residential housing and/or facilities for aging citizens.

- Incorporate a Community/Civic Center into the plan.
- Encourage mutual access easements, shared parking and public parking lots or subterranean parking to improve parking and circulation along the Boulevard.
- Encourage local-serving commercial uses and low density development consistent with the small town character of the community.

### 3.6 Vision for a Village Center

The Vision for a Village Center within the overall Downtown Village Specific Plan was the outgrowth of a number of factors.

First, the Community expressed their opinion that Foothill Boulevard was too long to become a pedestrian corridor along its entire length within the Specific Plan Area.

Second, major property owners – La Canada Properties and Vons (Safeway) – indicated that they were intending to develop their properties, located between Angeles Crest Highway and Rinetti Lane, in the relatively near term.

Third, the area between Angeles Crest Highway and Rinetti Lane was observed to be the geographic center of the Downtown Village Specific Plan area and also contains a concentration of existing, viable small-scale retail users.

Fourth, the area east of Rinetti Lane has either been recently revitalized, including the Ralph’s and Trader Joe’s projects, or is comprised of public uses and churches that are unlikely to change in the near future.

Fifth, the area west of Angeles Crest Highway consists of the Foothill Intermediate School site and smaller parcels which are

relatively unlikely to experience significant change in the near future.

Therefore, it was the combination of these factors that lead to the creation of the Village Center as a focus within the overall Downtown Village Specific Plan area.

