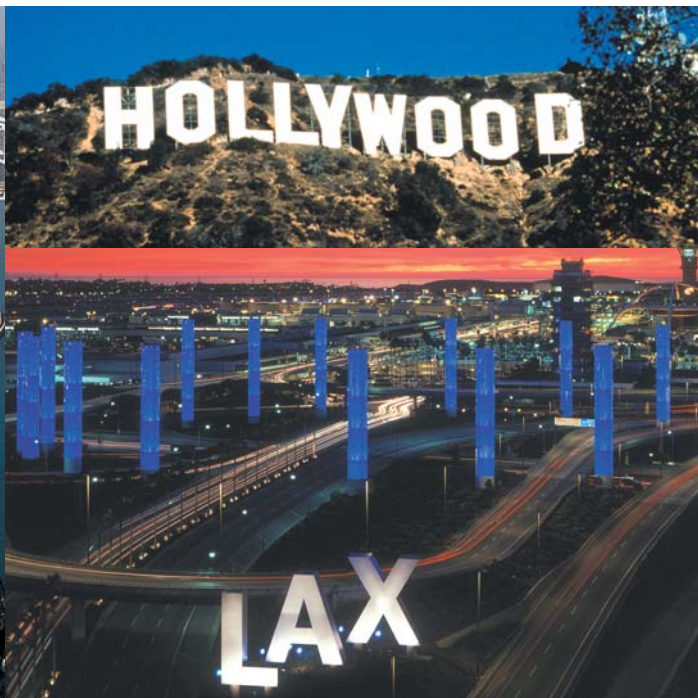


# LOS ANGELES COUNTY

## Strategic Plan for Economic Development



ENSURING A STRONG, AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY  
FOR L.A. COUNTY'S RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES.

2010-2014



# MAKING LOS ANGELES MORE COMPETITIVE

Los Angeles County and its 88 cities have underperformed in job creation in recent decades, due in part to the lack of a strategic plan for economic development to guide decision making. There are many risks associated with not having a proactive strategic plan for future economic development, including reduced quality of life, social inequity, disinvestment and a corroding economic environment that undermines job growth, impairs business attraction and retention, and depresses overall economic well-being and wealth creation. In the age of globalization, a strategic plan is an essential guide to long-term regional prosperity. A better connected world will bring greater demands for resources and products and increase location options for companies seeking a competitive advantage. Rapid development will unleash a flood of qualified and educated workers, increasing the need for local workers to attain higher skill levels and improve productivity in order to maintain and improve current living standards. Our response to these competitive pressures must be shaped by a clear, comprehensive, collaborative strategy that guides job and business retention, expansion and attraction. Having good quality, stable jobs is the only path to a stronger, more sustainable economy and a better quality of life for our current and future residents.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE L.A. COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

*Los Angeles County covers over 4,000 square miles and is the nation's most diverse and populous county with more than 10.4 million residents representing more than 220 languages and cultures from around the world. Home to some of the world's leading consumer markets, the largest labor force of any county in the United States, three world-class research universities and 112 other college and university campuses, the two largest seaports in America, and one of the busiest origin and destination airports anywhere, Los Angeles County has one of the world's largest and most dynamic economies with annual economic activity in excess of \$490 billion in 2008.*

*To guide job and business retention, expansion and attraction in this nation-sized economy, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors wholeheartedly endorses this first-ever, ground-up, consensus strategic plan for economic development in Los Angeles County.*

*The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation facilitated the creation of the plan through a series of public meetings with a diverse array of participants from education, labor, business, government and the environmental and environmental justice communities. This distinctive group of leaders from regions throughout the County was united in their commitment to a brighter economy, a cleaner environment, and a more broadly shared prosperity.*

*Now it's time for all of us to come together, carry out and realize what's contained in the "four corners" of this plan. To do so, we need champions to help implement the plan and there are roles for everyone in the public, private and non-profit sectors to play. We invite local residents and the best and brightest leaders from the most creative firms from around the world to participate and help us reach our goals.*



Gloria Molina  
1st District



Mark Ridley-Thomas  
2nd District



Zev Yaroslavsky  
3rd District



Don Knabe  
4th District



Michael D. Antonovich  
5th District







## INTRODUCTION

The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), a private, non-profit public benefit organization with more than 200 members representing leading private sector employers in the County, two dozen academic institutions, more than 20 cities from across L.A. County, six regional economic development corporations, the County CEO and appointed representatives of all five County Supervisors, identified, assembled and mobilized a diverse group of public, private, business, education, labor, environmental and other community-based participants to shape, build support around and help implement the first-ever comprehensive, consensus strategic plan for economic development in L.A. County.

## CONSENSUS STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic planning process was conceived to design and build consensus around the need to implement a comprehensive, collaborative plan for economic development to strengthen the economy, improve the environment and invigorate communities. With generous support from the Morgan Family Foundation, this strategic planning effort differs markedly from other outwardly similar plans in the high level of stakeholder involvement a teach step of the process. The animating idea has been to develop consensus around a common vision that serves the community's long-term interests and encourages broad community participation, engagement and ownership to help guarantee the plan's success.

**Research** began with a survey of more than 5,000 businesses operating in Los Angeles County to determine the health and concerns of industry. Next, we conducted an in-depth study of major industry clusters driving the Los Angeles County economy. This was followed by a series of focus groups

with industry leaders to confirm the needs, opportunities and growth potential in key sectors. Then, we surveyed and cataloged best economic development planning practices and strategies among selected U.S. cities and counties, as well as major international cities. From these different research inputs, we identified **five key components** central to economic development success: **Educated Workforce, Business-Friendly Environment, Attractive Quality of Life, Smart Land Use** and **21st Century Infrastructure**. We prepared a "straw-man" document complete with a key aspirational goal for each component, and a series of sample objectives and strategies for meeting each goal.

**Public input** was a central element of the plan's development. While the "straw-man" document served as a critical starting point, it was during 26 public workshops held across L.A. County that the plan was molded and its consensus vision was developed. We solicited input from 1,070 individual stakeholders (see back cover)

representing government, education, business, environment, non-profits, community and labor organizations. Their feedback was used to shape, refine and continuously advance the general plan from an outline to a consensus-driven blueprint for economic development.

**Implementation** and delivery on the strategies is ultimately what will make this plan dynamic, purposeful and relevant versus one that merely "sits on the shelf." During this phase we will identify champions to guide implementation of the plan. In particular, the champions will develop an action list of specific implementation tasks, decide on appropriate measurements of success and delineate performance-based timelines. Many of the stakeholders will be drawn from among the participants at the 26 public forums. We also invite the broader public and other key civic stakeholders to join us in committing to implement these strategies in the years ahead to sustain and expand our region's economic prosperity.



# LOS ANGELES COUNTY – BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS

Los Angeles County is made up of 88 vibrant and diverse cities whose population of over 10.4 million would make it the 8th largest state in the United States. As the **entertainment, manufacturing** and **international trade** capital of America, and with over \$490 billion in annual economic activity spread across a number of other key areas of expertise, L.A. County's gross domestic product is larger than Taiwan or Hong Kong.



L.A. County is most famously known for its entertainment industry. Billions of people around the world enjoy the films, television shows, music and new media created here. Entertainment, in turn, is a major draw for one of the area's primary imports—tourists. Each year, millions of people flock to the County to visit famed studios, enjoy the attractions, relax on one of the region's popular warm water beaches and browse the chic shops along Rodeo Drive and other famous streets in the region.

But there is more to the County than its sunny skies and movies stars. Los Angeles County is also the creative capital of the world and home to 15 of the world's leading export-oriented industry clusters, ranging from fashion and automotive design to materials and machinery to technology, health services and biomedical. With over 200 institutions of higher learning and an abundance of well-educated workers, it should come as no surprise

that technology-based businesses are big here, as are engineering, financial, and professional services. The County's major research universities (Caltech, UCLA and USC) have also spawned great growth in the life sciences, engineering and digital technology.

Home to the nation's largest port complex, municipally-owned power utility, and many leading export-oriented industries transitioning to environmental sustainability, L.A. County has also been a leader in advancing environmental innovation, in applying new clean technologies and products to "green" its more established industries such as manufacturing and international trade, and in the creation of green jobs, especially in the areas of renewable energy generation, energy efficiency and green transportation.

As the nation's #1 gateway to the global economy, via the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and Los Angeles







International Airport (LAX), one of the world's busiest origin and destination airports, international trade is the force behind much of the region's vitality. The continuous stream of goods flowing in and out of the region's ports sustains other key segments including warehousing and logistics, materials and machinery, and business and financial services.

L.A. County has also been a leader in advancing environmental innovation. As the foremost market for alternative fuel vehicles, energy efficiency and clean air initiatives, L.A. County offers abundant opportunities for "green" growth. In fact, California invested over \$3.3 billion in clean technologies in 2008 and ranks first in the nation in new energy patents.

With a larger consular corp than any American city outside Washington, D.C. and more than 220 languages and cultures represented across the County, Los Angeles is increasingly being

recognized as the Capital of the Pacific Rim. The County's cultural and economic diversity, educational opportunities, extensive infrastructure and thriving industry clusters have created unparalleled opportunities for all its residents and helped to establish L.A. County's growth and economic success.

Building on our strengths to ensure our region's continued economic health, we believe that it is critical that we implement this consensus strategic plan for economic development. On the following pages, we have identified the aspirational goals and 12 objectives have been developed to ensure our region's continued success.



# I. PREPARE AN EDUCATED WORKFORCE

Los Angeles County is home to numerous highly educated workers, and businesses in the area benefit from an industrious, talented and diverse workforce. To stay competitive in the global economy, Los Angeles County will need to maintain and expand its educated workforce and entrepreneurial class. Higher education provided by Caltech, UCLA and USC, numerous California State University campuses, private universities and colleges, and community colleges is superb, but there is still substantial room for improvement in K-12 education where student performance and dropout rates are both major areas of concern. The Educated Workforce component aims to improve educational outcomes, align education and training programs with business needs, and ensure that all potential workers are prepared to participate in the dynamic L.A. County economy.



## OBJECTIVE ONE:

**Ensure successful education outcomes at every level, i.e., all students should, at a minimum, achieve grade-level proficiency and graduate.**

**Make schools better** by tracking, assessing and reporting student performance outcomes; increasing the number of charter schools and small schools/learning communities in schools; increasing the use of technology at all levels; increasing arts, language, STEM education and preparation for employment opportunities in key industries; improving teacher quality and accountability through enhanced training, recruitment and incentives; implementing multiple pathway approaches which prepare students from diverse backgrounds for college, careers and entrepreneurship; and creating and strengthening linkages among K-12 schools, community colleges and universities.

**Connect schools and communities** by linking local community organizations, non-profits, businesses and corporate leaders with schools through formal partnerships and implementing family education programs and after-school programs.

**Increase student access and engagement** by teaching and motivating parents to be meaningfully engaged in their children's educational success; educating parents and students on career opportunities and readiness requirements; and increasing access to scholarships, loans and grants for education.





## OBJECTIVE TWO:

**Ensure that businesses have enough workers with the right skill sets to meet their needs.**

**Conduct and publish research** on workforce shortages, skill gaps and required proficiencies; and evaluate existing education, training and placement programs for continuous improvement.

**Fund workforce intermediaries** to bring together stakeholders in targeted industry sectors to address existing and projected future workforce gaps by facilitating more opportunities for public-private collaboration between individual businesses, community colleges and universities, and promoting industry-driven curricula and technical education based on employer-recognized certification.

**Integrate workforce training activities** and higher education (from entry to college/university-based to enhanced professional education) to create seamless career pathways leading to high-value jobs in target industries (e.g., aerospace engineers).

**Expand customized, sector-based programs** to train larger numbers of people and market them better to job seekers.

**Retain and attract highly skilled workers** and develop the next generation of managerial talent.

**Co-locate public services** such as WorkSource/OneSource centers on college campuses.

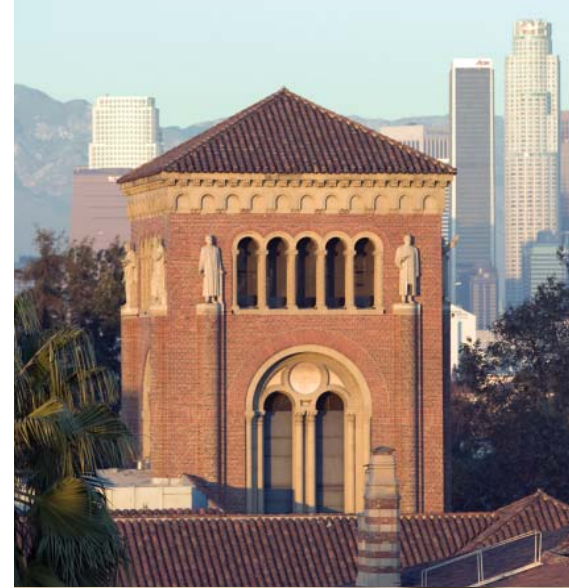
## OBJECTIVE THREE:

**Prepare job seekers and incumbent workers to enter sectors with high-value jobs - as measured by wages, benefits and additional income attracted into the County - and built-in career ladders.**

**Create programs that expand the workforce** by reconnecting high school dropouts to educational and training opportunities.

**Develop, expand and upgrade the skills** of the existing workforce.

**Begin career awareness programs** in middle school. Offer student internships, job shadowing, apprenticeships, concurrent enrollment programs, soft skills training, improved career counseling, youth employment and more parent education on careers to provide students with career awareness and work experience.



## II. CREATE A BUSINESS-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

Los Angeles County is a great place to do business, but so are many other locations. In today's globally competitive economy where businesses have flexibility in their location decisions, Los Angeles must be as welcoming as possible to businesses of all sizes. All firms, and particularly smaller ones with fewer resources, need to be able to focus their energies on serving their customers rather than interacting with government. Being business friendly means: state, county and city governments are customer-driven in their interactions with businesses; government processes are rational, predictable, understandable and timely; and public and private economic development agencies help businesses thrive and create good quality jobs.



### OBJECTIVE ONE:

**Establish and promote a business-friendly environment to create and retain good quality jobs.**

**Educate local and statewide stakeholders** on the value of private sector businesses as generators of jobs, tax revenue and regional prosperity, and encourage government officials to evaluate the economic impact of regulations and policies that affect overall competitiveness and to play a more active role in courting private sector employers.

**Create a sample template** and encourage cities to include an economic development element in their general plans; then, encourage L.A. County and our 88 cities to update their economic development elements regularly.

**Facilitate private sector job creation** by helping the state of California, L.A. County, and our 88 cities develop for their business-facing activities more efficient processes, more affordable pricing and a stronger customer service ethic.

**Adopt clear, reasonable and predictable processes** for the development of land to facilitate job creation and implement policies, plans and procedures to streamline review and approval processes.



© Ken Pagliaro



## OBJECTIVE TWO:

**Retain and expand the existing job base while pro-actively attracting new businesses, industries, jobs and investment.**

Develop and promote a compelling, consistent value proposition and brand for L.A. County, incorporating existing and aspirational strengths (e.g., size, diversity, creativity, climate, culture and commitment to green).

Increase proactive outreach to help retain and expand businesses of all sizes, with emphasis on those that are at risk of closing, leaving or being wooed away.

Align local and statewide tax incentive policies with local and regional economic development priorities.

Develop sector-specific value propositions and strategies to attract firms including incentives for businesses seeking to capitalize on opportunities

created by the greening of the local, state and world economies.

Create employment and business opportunities for local firms by supporting the development of international trade, tourism and by promoting Los Angeles County as a destination for foreign direct investment.

Ensure access to capital by expanding outreach and marketing efforts to capital sources and attracting capital investors and lenders for all stages of development; exploring creative new sources of capital such as the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program; and creating and augmenting channels/networks to connect capital to entrepreneurs, with emphasis on small, minority or women-owned businesses.

## OBJECTIVE THREE:

**Leverage the County's research and development facilities for the commercialization of research, technology and similar opportunities.**

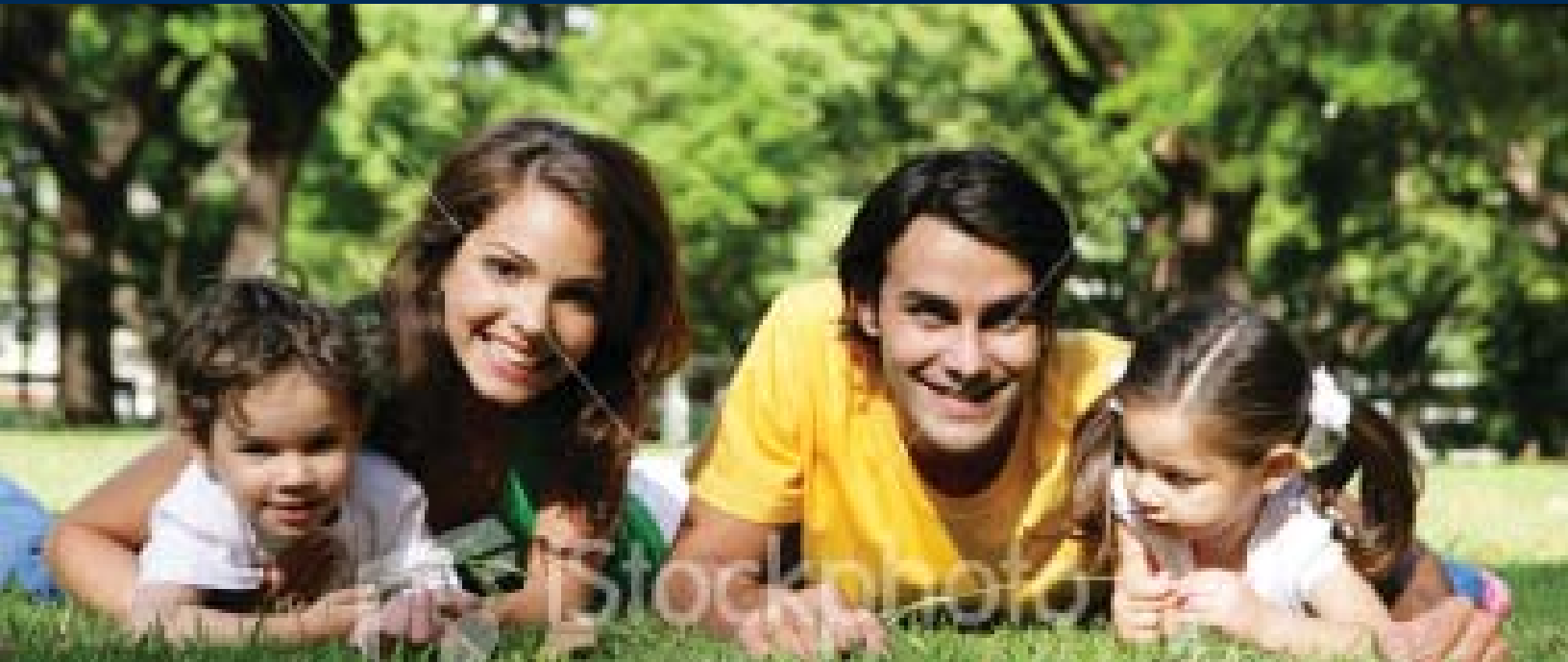
Aggressively seek more research funding and activity for L.A. County-based institutions.

Create a more supportive infrastructure and stronger networks to facilitate the commercialization of local research and provide needed services to

entrepreneurs (venture capital, research parks, entrepreneurial management teams and mentors, etc.), focusing in particular on industries where L.A. County holds a competitive advantage (port tech, digital media, entertainment technology, etc.).



# III. ENHANCE OUR QUALITY OF LIFE



Quality of life is important to everyone. We all want safe neighborhoods, improved mobility, plentiful and affordable housing, clean air and water, and healthy, vibrant communities. A high quality of life also includes promoting social equity to ensure all residents in Los Angeles County have an opportunity to live a healthy life as full participants in the larger community. From an economic development standpoint, quality of life is critical to a healthy and productive workforce. Moreover, many businesses and workers have options about where to locate, and a healthy environment and high quality of life can help attract and retain them.

## OBJECTIVE ONE:

### Make our communities more desirable places to live.

**Ensure public safety** by supporting programs that reduce crime (such as Business Watch, Neighborhood Watch, volunteer patrols, anti-gang programs and rapid response to “broken window” problems).

**Improve mobility and reduce traffic congestion** and its environmental impacts by employing technology and traffic management strategies to reduce demand and optimize system efficiency; making transit easier and more desirable to use; improving walkability and bicycling; encouraging transit-oriented development and densification where appropriate; offering incentives for carpooling and transit; and improving the jobs/housing balance.

**Remove obstacles and create incentives** to encourage the construction of a large quantity and wide range of housing

of all types (i.e., condos, apartments, townhouses, single-family homes, etc.), with a particular emphasis on adding affordable and workforce housing units.

**Promote healthy living** by building more parks and expanding recreational activities, and encouraging healthy living through active lifestyles, wellness programs and locally-sourced nutritious food supplies (e.g., community gardens and farmers markets).

**Encourage and expand cultural and artistic amenities** that celebrate our diversity and attract local and global patrons.

**Create healthy, vibrant and strong communities** by balancing land use, transportation, economic development, housing and environmental improvement objectives.





## OBJECTIVE TWO:

Use all available resources (i.e., Hope VI funding, etc.) and adopt new approaches to the revitalization of low-income communities.

Increase community participation in the planning and jobs creation process.

maximize the creation of new affordable and workforce housing units, and create more open space for residents.

Use smart growth principles to economically integrate communities,



*“In today’s global economy, the places that attract and retain talent will win, and those who don’t will lose.”*

–Richard Florida, Author of *The Flight of the Creative Class*.





## IV. IMPLEMENT SMART LAND USE



Los Angeles County must preserve an adequate supply of jobs-producing land so that current residents and their children will have a place to work and earn a decent living. The population density in the County is among the highest in the nation, placing a premium on the efficient use of the limited supply of land, particularly in urban areas. Smart land use provides adequate space for both employment uses and housing through strategies such as by-right development, infill development, redevelopment, and reuse of obsolete industrial land.

### OBJECTIVE ONE:

#### **Maintain an adequate supply of jobs-creating land.**

**Create and maintain a database** of County-wide, jobs-creating land to facilitate the retention and expansion of local companies as well as the attraction of new companies to the County.

**Implement an employment land preservation policy** that restricts rezoning of industrially-zoned land to other uses without formal consideration and recognition of: the need for adequate buffering between industrial land and incompatible uses; how and where that industrial land will be replaced elsewhere in the County; whether the proposed change-of-use development will increase land values of surrounding industrial land and/or encroach on near

by viable industries; and whether will the new use will produce more higher value jobs than alternative industrial uses.

**Make better use of the public sector's real estate portfolio** to facilitate jobs-producing projects.

**Reserve employment land** (existing and vacant) for research and development uses, especially land proximately located near research institutions and universities, using strategies such as creating community land trusts, land banking, and/or through the creation of business, industrial, manufacturing or research and development zones.





## OBJECTIVE TWO:

**Develop and rehabilitate land to meet strategic economic development objectives.**

**Update general, community and specific plans** to enable by-right development and rectify weaknesses in the existing zoning classifications and remedy the reactive, case-by-case, spot zoning approach focused on individual parcels.

**Develop, adopt, and implement an incentive program** to retain commercial and industrial activities and revitalize obsolete industrial land.

**Create and promote public/private collaboration programs** to facilitate infill development and redevelopment of brownfield sites, underutilized industrial and commercial properties and functionally obsolete buildings.

**Collaborate on securing state and federal grants**, other public financing vehicles, and tax incentive programs such as the establishment, renewal, implementation, management and/or expansion of Enterprise Zones, Recycling Market Development Zones, Business Improvement Zones, Redevelopment Agencies, as well as other innovative programs that facilitate community development and rehabilitation.

**Reform the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)** to eliminate abusive uses of the statute for non-environmental purposes, such as an existing business seeking to block competitors.



## V. BUILD 21ST CENTURY INFRASTRUCTURE



World-class infrastructure, notably the freeways, ports, airport and water system, underpinned the rise of the Los Angeles County economy to the 19th largest in the world, ranking it ahead of Taiwan. The key infrastructure investments were made a generation or more ago and have served the County well. To maintain its competitive edge in today's global economy, the region must fix the infrastructure development process and invest in upgrading its critical infrastructure.



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### OBJECTIVE ONE:

#### Fix the broken infrastructure development process.

Restore the balance between local and regional interests in considering approval of infrastructure projects.

Promote enabling legislation allowing for best practices (e.g., design/build, public-private partnerships, and performance

contracting) to expedite infrastructure development.

Advocate for our fair share of public infrastructure dollars and support programs that create opportunities for local contractors from under-served communities.

### OBJECTIVE TWO:

#### Build and maintain critical infrastructure for L.A. County.

Expedite green growth at the Ports of L.A. and Long Beach by speeding implementation of the Clean Air Action Plan, developing and deploying locally-sourced and driven green technology solutions, and adding infrastructure to shift container traffic from road to rail or other cleaner modes.

Modernize Los Angeles International Airport by improving domestic and international terminals, airfield safety and efficiency, passenger experience and accessibility in and out of LAX while also encouraging the further development and improvement of other airports throughout Southern California.





Ensure a reliable supply of clean and affordable energy by encouraging green energy production from public and private sources, building necessary transmission lines to access clean energy, improving network efficiency and reducing demand (e.g., through energy efficiency programs).

Ensure a reliable supply of clean and affordable water by implementing strategies such as urban water conservation, local stormwater capture, water recycling, and groundwater storage while also pursuing an environmentally sound solution for the Sacramento Delta that protects Southern California water supplies.

Create a world-class ground transportation network by expanding and improving the quality and user appeal of mass transit and alternative modes (such as bike paths/lanes and

community/Google buses), improving highway and road capacity, and investing in goods movement infrastructure (such as truck lanes near-dock intermodal rail yards, and grade-separated rail corridors).

Improve waste-handling capabilities by expanding recycling efforts, finding environmentally-friendly means of disposal for non-recyclables, and upgrading the region's sewage treatment system, while reducing the waste stream to landfills by encouraging the use of locally-manufactured products that are recyclable, have long life cycles and use less packaging.

Support public and private efforts to continuously improve wired and wireless communications networks in the County to match or exceed the highest global standards for speed and reliability.



# PARTICIPANTS IN PUBLIC WORKSHOP PROCESS

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\*Participants of the focus group meetings for the strategic planning process.



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