

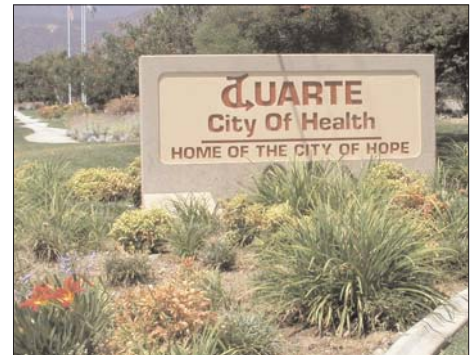
# Chapter I

## Introduction

Duarte is blessed with a beautiful setting and an array of assets and amenities. From its tree-lined streets and world-class hospitals to its rich historic past, Duarte is a unique community that evokes a sense of pride in its residents.

However, Duarte lacks a "sense of place." It has no historic town center or central gathering spot. It lacks a place where pedestrians can comfortably shop or stroll along storefronts, relax with friends in a plaza, or come together for community events.

The Duarte Town Center Concept Plan represents a key step in addressing this situation. The elements of this plan – and the process that created them – set the stage for creating a place that will become a true "center" for the community.



Well-maintained landscaping and signs reflect Duarte's sense of civic pride.

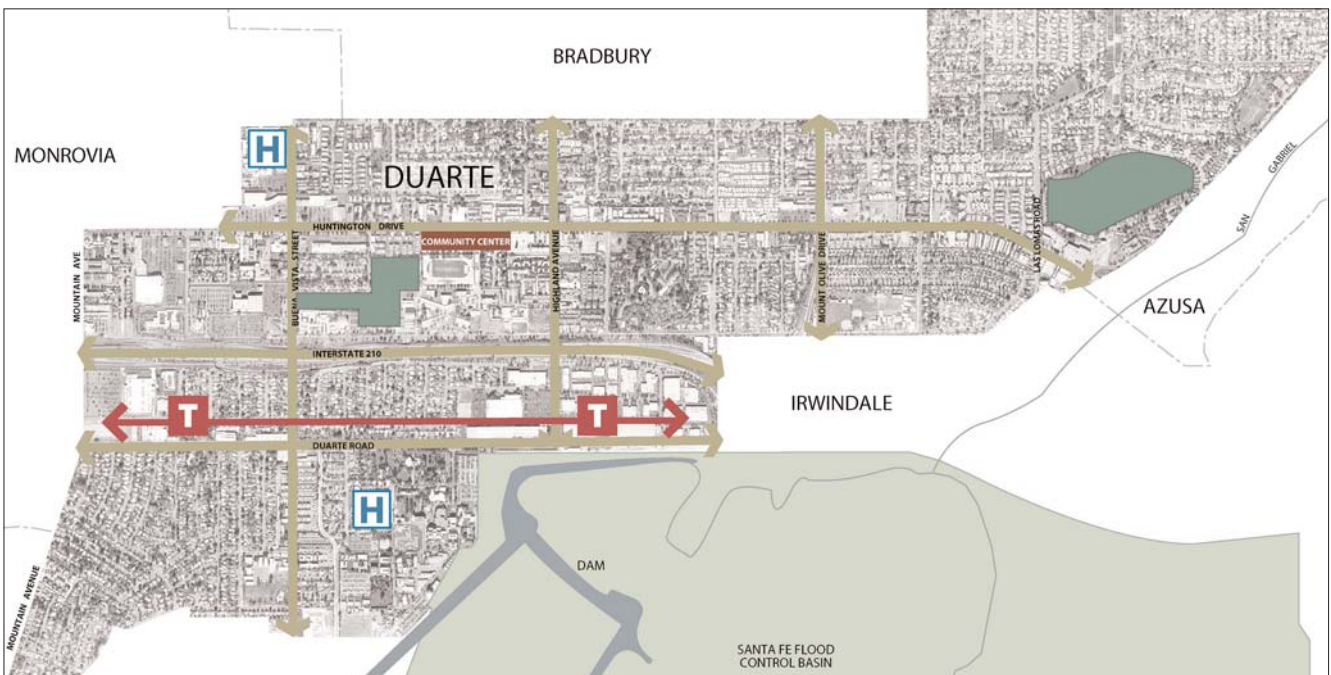
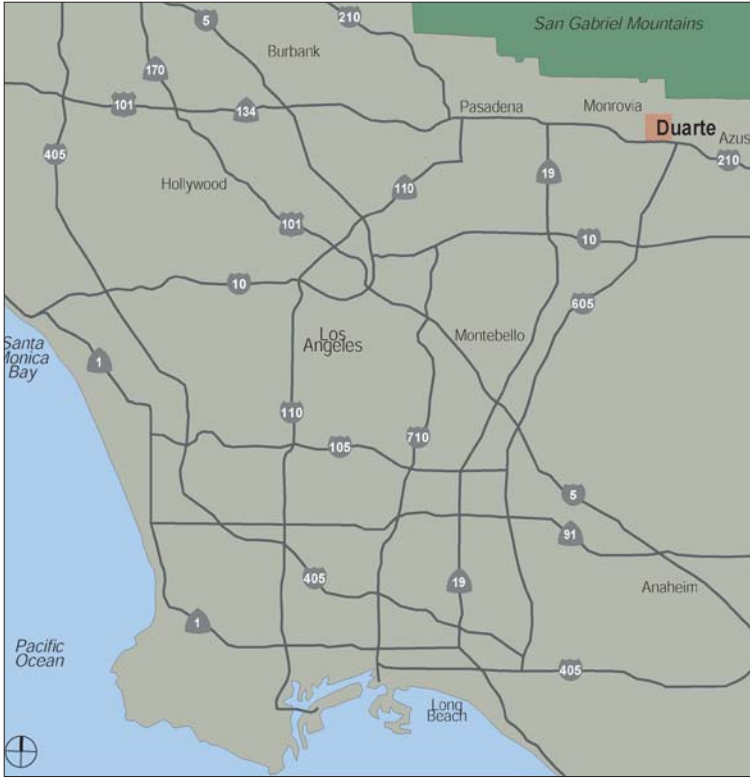
## Setting

Duarte is situated at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains, about 20 miles northeast of Los Angeles. It borders Monrovia to the west, Bradbury to the north, Azusa to the east, and Irwindale to the south. Additionally, the San Gabriel River and Santa Fe Flood Control Basin abut Duarte to the east and south.

Major transportation corridors, including Interstate 210, Interstate 605 and Huntington Drive (Route 66), connect Duarte to these towns and the region beyond. Huntington Drive also links commercial and civic uses within town, while key north-south corridors such as Buena Vista Street and Highland Avenue connect retail services, medical-related uses, and business park areas to the city's residential neighborhoods.

## Regional and Local Context

The map on the upper-left portion of the page shows Duarte in relation to the greater Los Angeles area. The aerial photograph along the bottom of the page highlights major roads through Duarte, a proposed mass-transit connection, City of Hope and Santa Teresita Medical Centers and adjacent cities.



## Demographics

Duarte is small and ethnically diverse with a population of approximately 21,000 residents. The City's population has remained virtually unchanged in the last 10 years, showing a slight (six percent) increase. The community has many families, which translates to a relatively young population base, as 30 percent of residents are under the age of 18. Sixty percent of citizens are between 18 and 64 and 10 percent are 65 or older.



Duarte's Teen Center and athletic fields meet the needs of its youth population.

## Economics and Land Use

Despite its relatively small size in the region, Duarte enjoys a comparatively strong economic and housing market. The median annual household income was \$45,092 in 2000, surpassing the income in neighboring Azusa and Monrovia. Duarte's workforce has an unemployment rate of five percent, compared with a six percent national average in 2002. Although the economic climate is favorable, Duarte averages \$410,000,000 in taxable retail sales per year, which may indicate that the market is not fully utilized.

Much of Duarte is comprised of residential housing, including single-family dwellings throughout the city and some apartment buildings and townhouses along major streets. Property value in Duarte is lower than in surrounding cities - the median home value in Duarte was \$175,500 in 2000 and was \$229,600 in Monrovia - which may make land acquisition for new development more likely.

Duarte also features a successful local-serving commercial base, including such uses as restaurants, dry cleaners, video stores, clothing shops, and professional services (such as dentist and doctors' offices). Large anchors include Big Lots, Wal-Mart and Ralph's grocery store, as well as regionally oriented automobile dealerships. The city also has several motels, particularly along the Huntington Drive corridor.



Detached single-family houses such as this are common throughout Duarte.



The Community Center is a valuable and attractive civic resource, but it is currently disconnected from other amenities in Duarte.

Civic-oriented uses include a Community Center, performing arts center, senior center, library, fitness center and public pool. In addition, Santa Teresita Hospital and the City of Hope are world-class medical facilities that have spurred nearby development of biomedical firms and other research oriented companies.

Furthermore, Duarte enjoys ample park and recreation space throughout the city and spectacular views of the mountains to the north. The nearby San Gabriel River also provides natural open space and recreation opportunities.

Despite these attributes, many amenities are disjointedly dispersed across the city, leaving Duarte without any central gathering place and creating a cityscape that is unfriendly to pedestrians.

## Planning Process

In fall 2002 the City of Duarte embarked on a planning process to address these issues. The City Council charged a newly formed Duarte Downtown Task Force with three principal tasks:

- Evaluate issues and opportunities for creating a downtown;
- Identify and evaluate potential sites; and
- Make recommendations to City Council in early 2003.

The Task Force, in conjunction with urban planning consultants Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG), Inc., transportation consultants Wilbur Smith Associates, and economics consultants Keyser Marston Associates, conducted a six-month planning process to accomplish these tasks and develop recommendations for creating a Duarte Town Center Concept Plan.

The planning process included five Task Force meetings, two Community workshops and two walking tours (one in Duarte and one to the downtowns of Fullerton and Brea). Throughout the process, Task Force members, community participants and planning consultants worked together to develop (1) a shared vision for future development in Duarte, (2) an informed set of recommendations for program and design, and (3) action-oriented strategies to implement the plan.

These interactive sessions included exploration and analysis of land use issues and opportunities, economic costs and feasibility, roadway capacities, design considerations, and potential social impacts. The workshops provided an environment for open dialogue and debate while building consensus toward a Town Center plan.



The planning process involved a series of Task Force meetings, Community Workshops, and walking tours, resulting in the strategies and actions outlined in the Town Center Concept Plan.



The Task Force toured existing downtowns in the region to identify development patterns and land uses that could be successfully applied to Duarte.



## Report Organization

The remainder of the Duarte Town Center Concept Plan is organized into the following sections:

### Chapter II: Vision

The Vision describes common goals that the community has for future development in the area. This broad vision provides the foundation for the Town Center Concept Plan.

### Chapter III: Analysis of Area Options

During the planning process, the Task Force developed and analyzed five alternative Town Center area options. The area options incorporated the tenets of the Vision while exploring alternative locations for a Town Center, examining different ways to organize uses within it, and analyzing land use mixes to ensure that it is economically feasible.

### Chapter IV: Town Center Concept Plan

A single, refined Town Center Concept Plan emerged from the preliminary area options. The Town Center Concept Plan features a development approach that identifies key opportunity sites, outlines potential uses, incorporates future amenities, and creates pedestrian connections throughout the area. The Concept Plan also provides an overview of phasing strategies to construct the development over time and outlines the costs associated with creating a Town Center.

### Chapter V: Implementation Action Plan

The final section of this document is an Implementation Action Plan that includes strategies that community organizations, business groups and the City can collaborate on to attract the recommended development in Duarte. Through public investment, citizen involvement, research, marketing and other development efforts, the ideas in the Concept Plan can be achieved and a Duarte Town Center can become a reality.