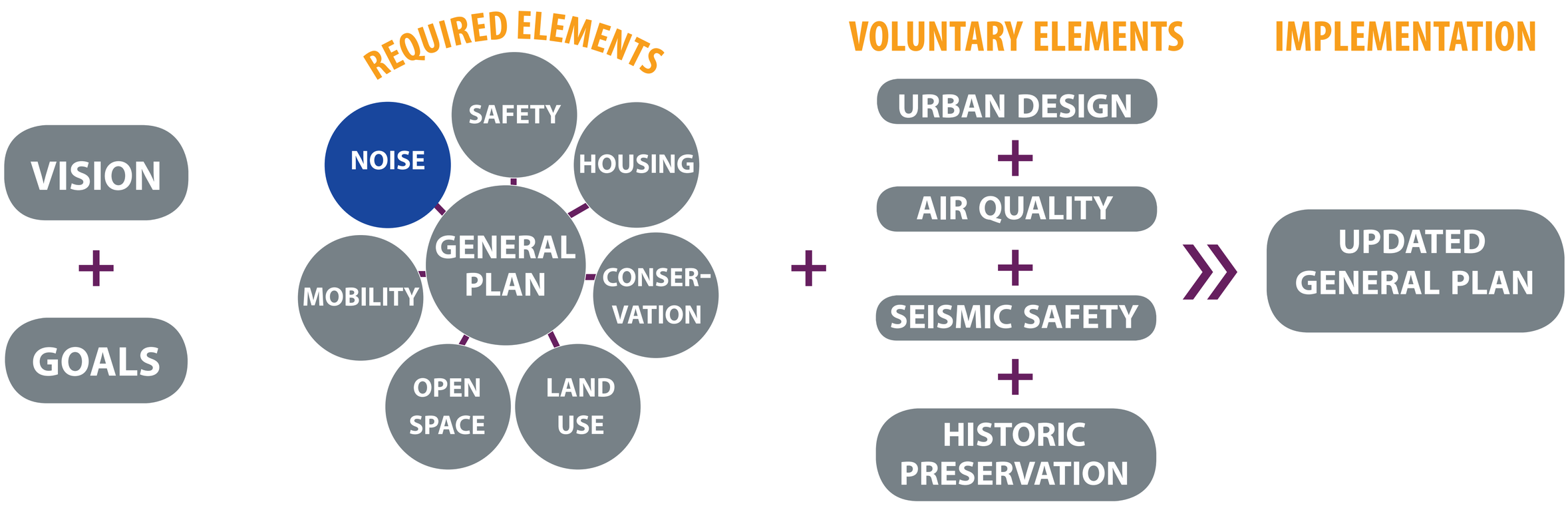
NOISE ELEMENT BASICS

GENERAL PLAN PROCESS AND CONTENTS



HOW THE CITY REGULATES NOISE

THE GENERAL PLAN is a broad, long-range policy document that guides future development.

THE NOISE ELEMENT is a required element of the General Plan

- Discusses noise characteristics and documents existing and future noise environment.
- Establishes uniformity of policy and direction within the City concerning actions to minimize or eliminate noise pollution.
- Serves as an official guide to City decision-makers and departments, indvidual citizens, businesses, and private organizations on how to manage and regulate noise.
- Provides policies and goals the decision makers can implement in order to maintain a desirable environment as it relates to noise and vibration.

THE NOISE ORDINANCE implements the Noise Element with specific regulations.

- Codified in the Long Beach Municipal Code (LBMC).
- Intended to protect people from non-transportation noise sources.
- Requires new development to show compliance with the ordinance including operating in accordance with noise levels recommended in the Noise Element.
- Provides general standards for prohibited noises.
- Establishes maximum interior and exterior sound levels and regulates additional considerations such as construction hours and noise.

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WHY DOES THE NOISE ELEMENT NEED UPDATING?

The Noise Element was adopted in 1975 and the way we live and work has changed since then.

Long Beach has grown into a vibrant urban community, home to residents and enterprise alike.

Long Beach has established itself as a metropolitan city —a home to a thriving port, international airport, and transit lines.

Long Beach is now a young, spirited stand-alone city, no longer a Los Angeles suburb.

The city is now a destination for nightlife, festivals, and concerts.

Long Beach is now the 46TH largest city in the country—similar in size to Miami and Atlanta.

The population has grown by over 100,000 residents since the 1980 census— an increase of over 20%.

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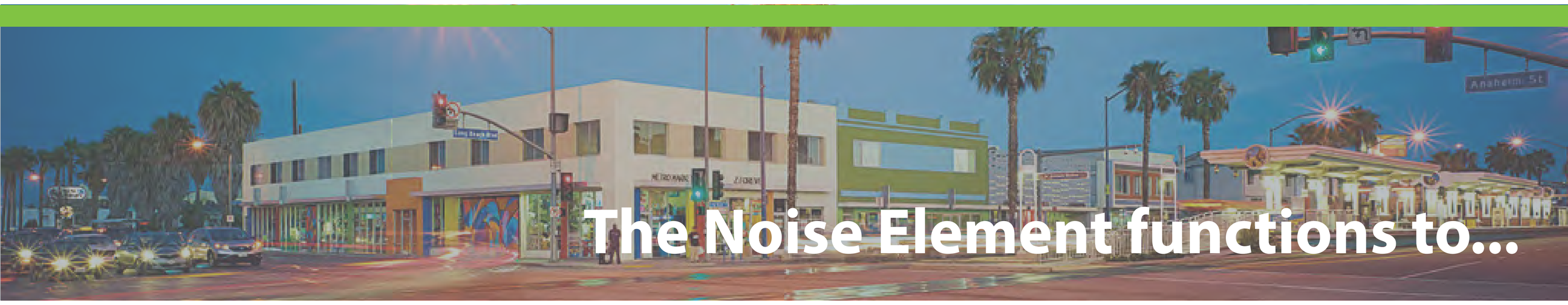
GOALS AND FUNCTION OF THE NOISE ELEMENT

Goals of the Noise Element include...

- improving the quality of life of all Long Beach residents.
- tailoring the approach to noise to the unique neighborhoods across the City.
- utilizing community engagement to inform the current issues and desired outcomes.
- maintaining consistent policies with other General Plan elements.



The Noise Element functions to...

- balance the needs of mobility, industry, entertainment, and business with the wellbeing of residents.
- create and maintain a healthy noise environment in Long Beach.
- foster a more equitable distribution of noise.
- limit exposure of the community to excessive noise levels in noise-sensitive areas and at noise sensitive times of day.
- allow elements necessary for a dynamic, growing city.

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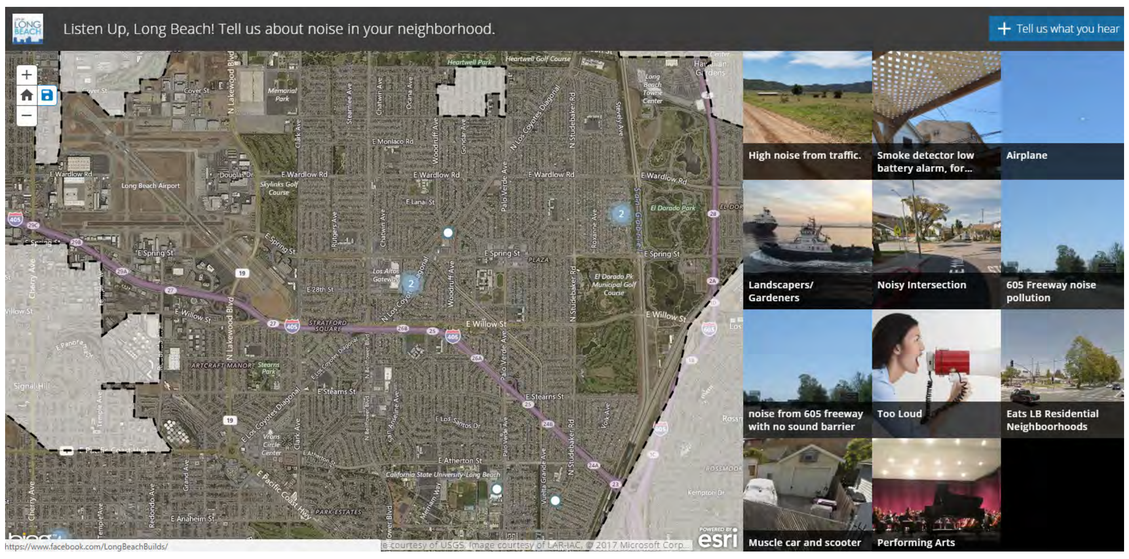
2017 PUBLIC PROCESS TO INFORM THE EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

Community engagement strategies included...

- Project website: www.lbds.info/noise_element_update
- Social media outreach with the hashtag #ListenUpLB
- Online engagement mapping tool "Listen Up Long Beach"
- City-hosted webpage, emails, facebook, and twitter
- Comment cards available at City Hall and other locations
- Materials provided in both English and Spanish

Social media outreach



Online mapping tool

Stakeholder Meetings

- Internal and external stakeholders
- City department and local agencies including Police Department, Special Events and Filming, Noise Control Office, Animal Care Services, Public Works, Port, Airport, and Long Beach Unified School District

Facebook ad

Focus Groups

- Public health professionals and academics
- Environmental justice advocates
- Bar and restaurant operators
- Construction industry representatives
- Environmental health working group
- Local school students

Facebook ad

Planning Commission Study Session (April 2017)

- Introduced the project
- Discussed background, overview and goals

Existing Conditions Report

- Discusses fundamentals of noise, existing regulatory setting
- Offers an analysis of existing noise conditions

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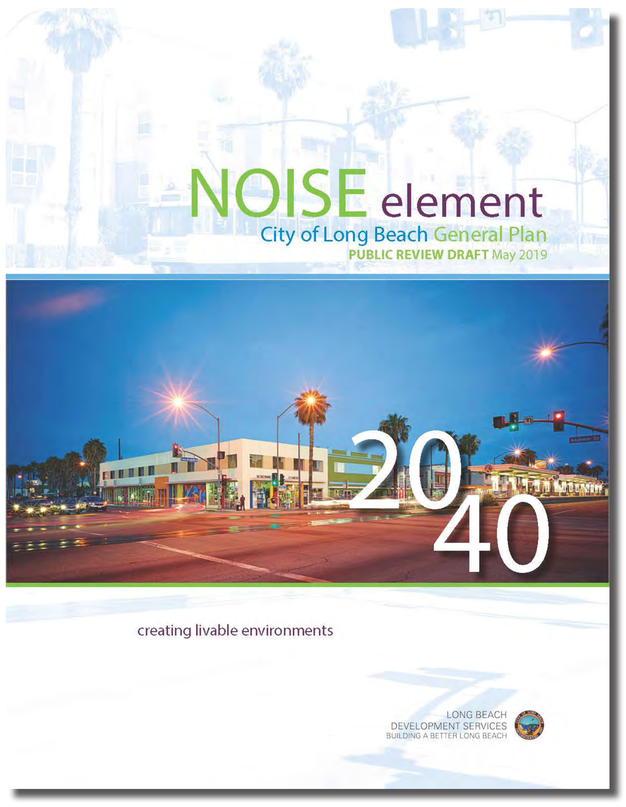
NAVIGATING THE 2040 NOISE ELEMENT:

THE FRAMEWORK AND ORGANIZATION OF THE DOCUMENT

Contents of the Noise Element

- Vision
- What is a Noise Element
- Context: Understanding of a Noise Element
- Noise Fundamentals
- Noise Plan (Strategies and Policies)
- Administration and Implementation



Building Blocks of the Noise Element	What it is	Definition	Example
•Vision •Strategies •Policies •Implementation	**Vision**	• A healthy, livable community • Equitable distribution of noise • Minimizing exposures to excessive noise • Allowances for elements as necessary for a dynamic, growing city	
	Strategies	Broad statements of desired future conditions	**Strategy 7:** Promote alternative forms of mobility to reduce noise generated from vehicular traffic.
	Policies	Specific statements that guide decision making	**Policy 7-3:** Evaluate private development proposals to ensure provisions for alternative modes of mobility, where feasible.
	Implementation	Identifies responsible City departments and supporting departments, as well as implemention timeframes - short, medium, long-term, and on-going.	**Method**: Development review process **Responsible department:** Development Services **Timeline:** Ongoing

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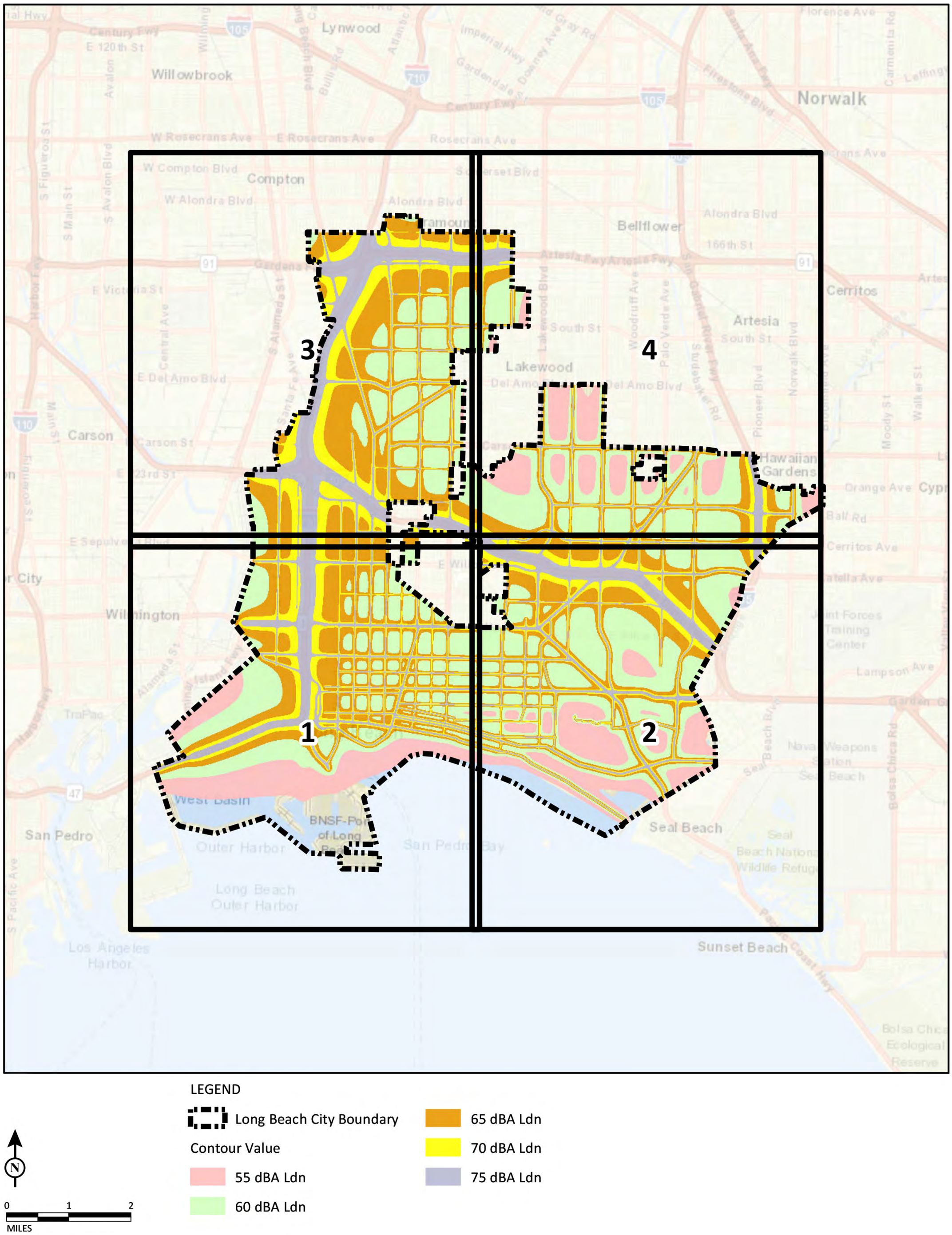
EXISTING TRAFFIC NOISE CONTOURS AREA OVERVIEW



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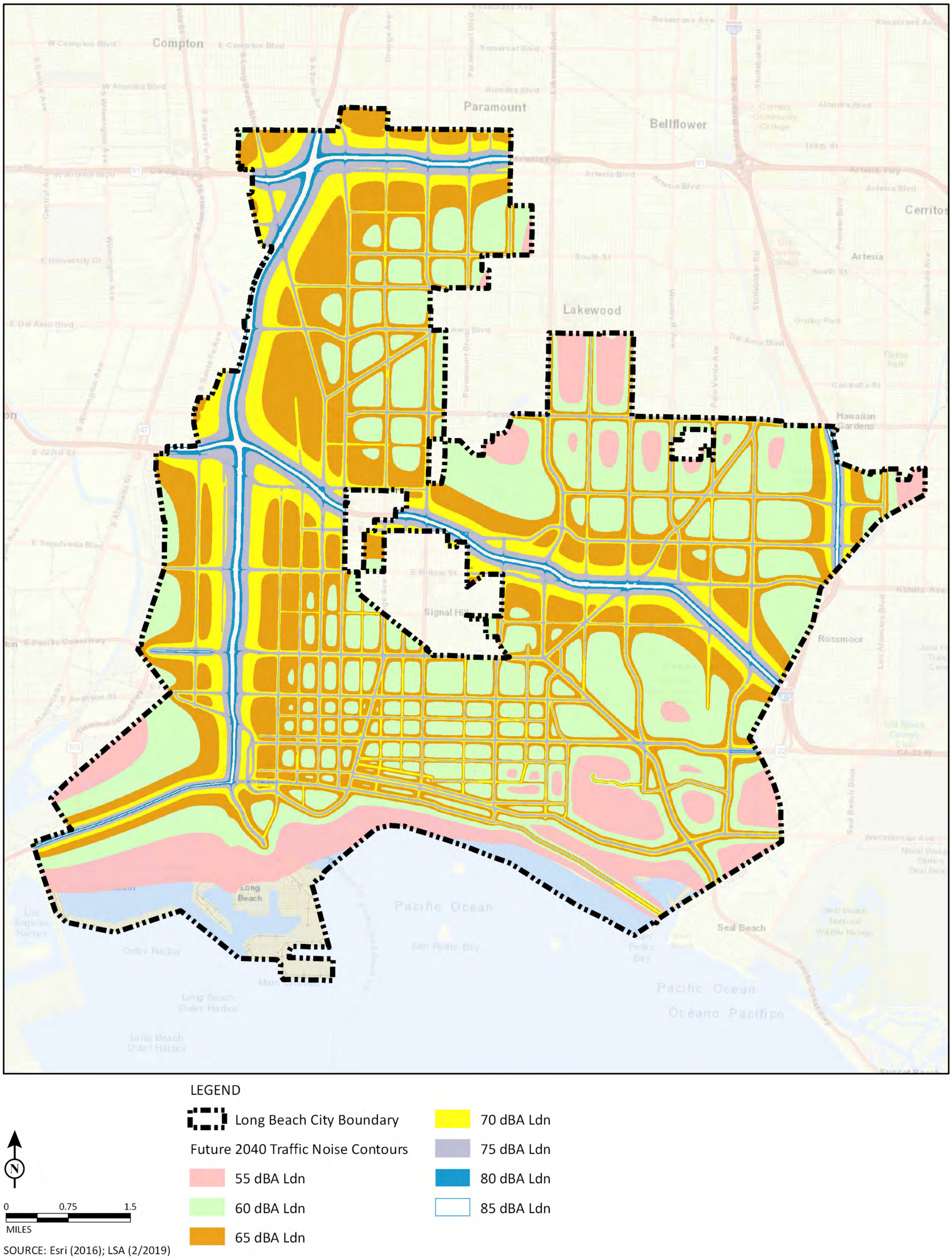
FUTURE TRAFFIC NOISE CONTOURS 2040 OVERVIEW



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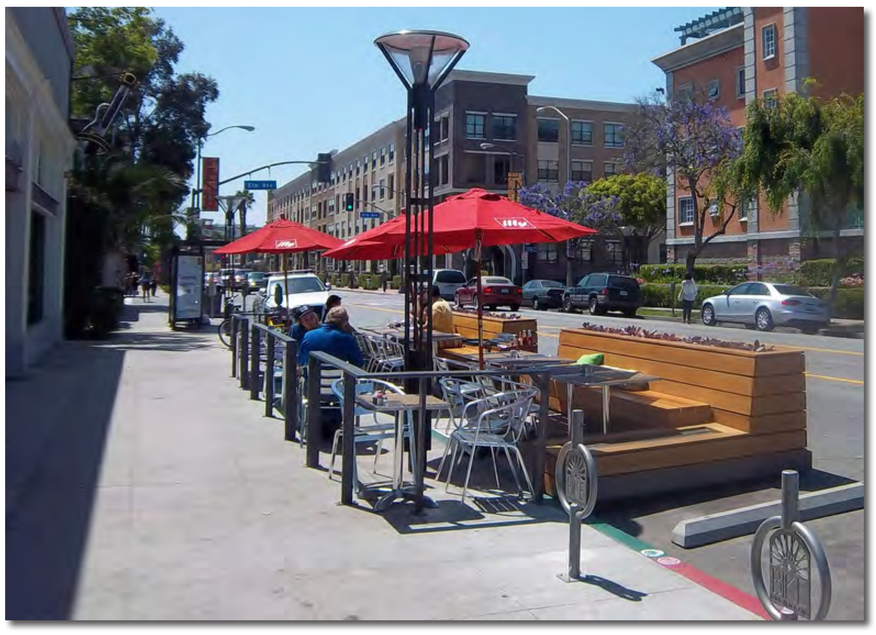
HOW HAVE KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES BEEN ADDRESSED IN THE NOISE ELEMENT?

Public Comment

Provide structure to business operation.

Strategy No. 2 Create a balance of business practices within dynamic, active, and engaging areas such as the Transit-Oriented Development – Low and Moderate, Downtown, and Waterfront PlaceType areas to promote activity while respecting adjacent sensitive uses.



Parklet located in an active and engaging business area

Public Comment

Guidelines for future development to promote best business practices.

Strategy No. 1 Apply site planning and other design strategies to reduce noise impacts, especially within the Founding and Contemporary Neighborhoods, Multifamily Residential—Low and Moderate, and Neighborhood-Serving Centers and Corridors – Low and Moderate PlaceTypes.

Strategy No. 4 Protect and buffer noise sensitive areas and uses through effective building design and material selection.

Landscape buffer to adjacent residential buildings

Public Comment

Serve noise-impacted communities in West Long Beach.

Strategy No. 14 Ensure meaningful participation in the public process by all members of the community, especially historically excluded or marginalized groups.

Strategy No. 15 Reduce the disproportionate environmental noise burdens affecting low-income and minority populations.

Ensuring that all members of the community have the opportunity to give feedback is a critical component of social equity for the Noise Element.

HOW HAVE KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES BEEN ADDRESSED IN THE NOISE ELEMENT?

Public Comment

Address common annoyances such as traffic, leaf blowers, dogs barking, and loud music.

Strategy No. 7
Promote alternative forms of mobility to reduce noise generated from vehicular traffic.

Public transit and biking are viable alternatives to vehicular transportation

Public Comment

Coordinate with regulatory agencies that govern rail and air transit.

Strategy No. 9 Minimize train noise in residential areas and near noise sensitive land uses.

Strategy No. 10 While the operations of airports and airport related uses are noisy by nature, the adverse effects of aircraft-related noise should be minimized.

Railroad quiet zone sign (photo: Metrolink)

Long Beach Airport (LGB)

Public Comment

Minimize noise generated by construction.

Strategy No. 12 Minimize construction noise and vibration levels in residential areas and in other locations near noise sensitive uses, where possible.

Construction practices to minimize noise

Public Comment

Develop better procedures and administration to minimize noise issues and promote technology trending toward quieter equipment.

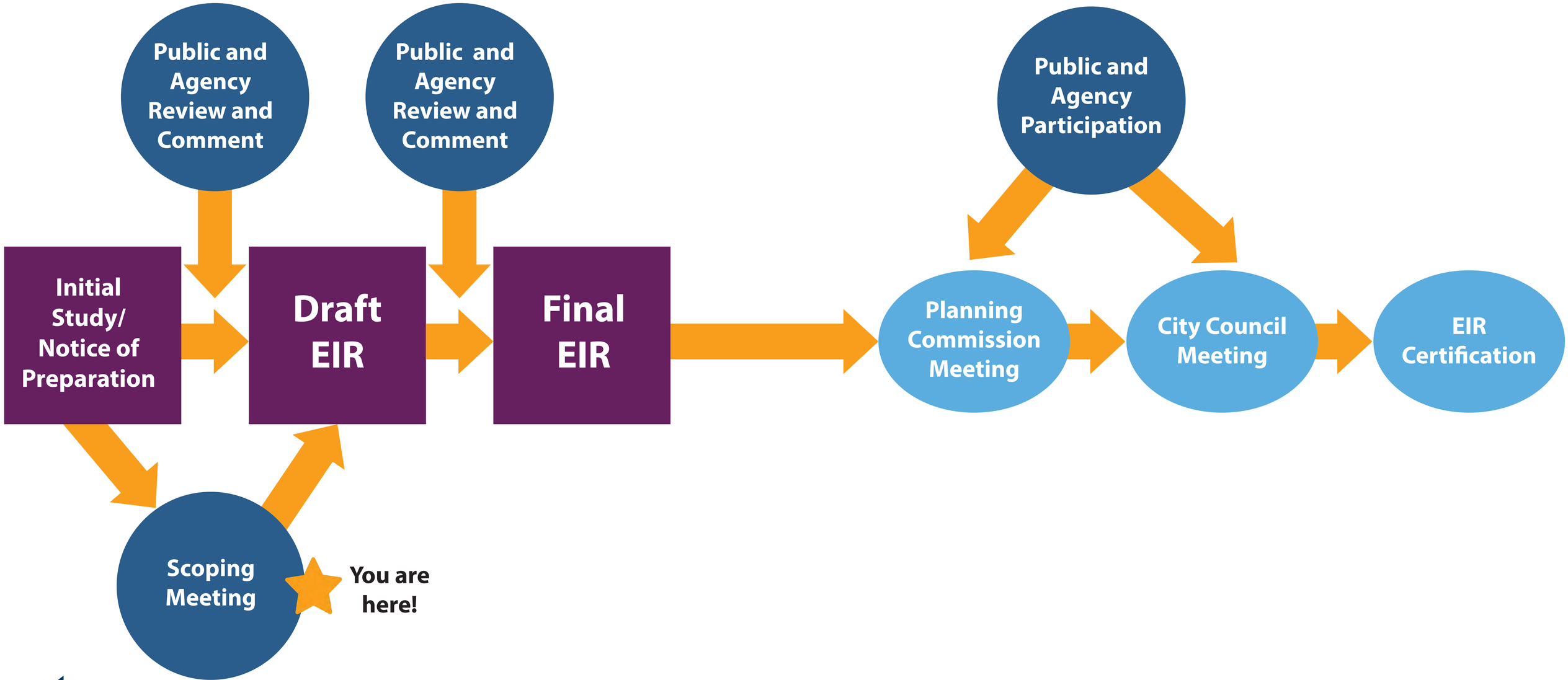
Strategy No. 16 Continue to actively enhance the regulation and management of noise to improve procedures and minimize noise impacts.

Continual maintenance and updates are an important strategy for addressing noise issues

California Environmental Quality Act

The **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)** of 1970 is the State's landmark environmental law. It requires the agency responsible for approving a project (the Lead Agency) to conduct an environmental review of the project. **CEQA** analyzes environmental impacts of proposed projects on the natural and built environments and develops measures to reduce these impacts. It fosters transparency and public participation, allowing public review and participation at several points throughout the process (i.e., scoping process, document public review periods, and public hearings). The Long Beach General Plan Noise Element is considered a project under CEQA.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) PROCESS



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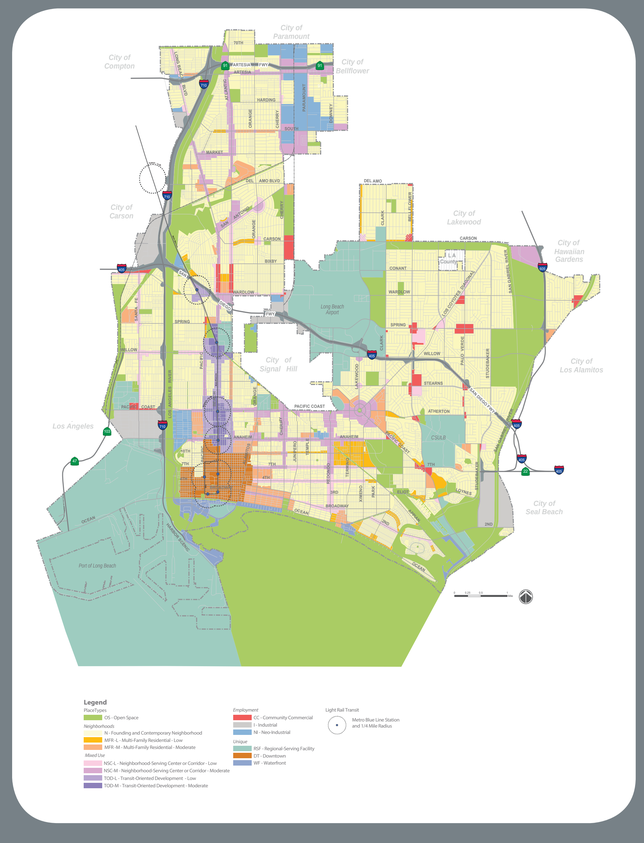
NOISE MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

(AFTER THE NOISE ELEMENT IS ADOPTED)

Policy and Zoning

- Zoning: strategic location of land uses
- Noise Ordinance
- Building and housing codes



Development Review

- Development review (project design)
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)/ National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)
- Consistency in implementation (General Plan findings for zoning, subdivisions, specific plans, capital improvement projects)

Ongoing Management

- City noise procedures/ management
- Interagency coordination
- Enforcement remedies
- Periodic progress reports

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CEQA SCOPING MEETING

OBJECTIVES

- Provide the first oppportunity for public participation in the overall CEQA process
- Allow the public to provide input on environmental issues to be analyzed in the EIR
- Advise the community about future opportunities for input

ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS TO BE ADDRESSED IN EIR

- Land use and planning
- Noise
- Transportation and traffic

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SPECIAL EVENTS NOISE

Independent study—currently underway

BACKGROUND/PURPOSE

To address community concern, Long Beach City Council gave direction to evaluate Long Beach's existing policies and processes surrounding noise from Special Events and to evaluate those of relevant cities.The purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding of the current regulations in Long Beach, and to understand best practices surrounding Special Event noise in other vibrant communities.

ANALYSIS

The study began with a deep dive into Long Beach's current processes and regulations, State codes, and the regulations in place in the cities of:

- Austin, Texas
- Seattle, Washington
- Nashville, Tenessee
- Pasadena, California

OUTREACH

A focus groups was conducted with affected residents on October 17, 2018 to gain feedback on preliminary findings.

STUDY

A study of current City processes and regulations related to noise from special events is currently underway as a separate effort from the Noise Element. In addition to examining processes and regulations currently in place in Long Beach, the study will also include case studies of special event noise processes and regulations in other cities, and will present key findings.

NEXT STEPS

City Council Status Update Summer 2019