
APPENDIX B

BUILDOUT MEMORANDUM



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City of San Bernardino Proposed General Plan: Methodology for 2025 – 2050 Population, Housing, and Employment Projections

PURPOSE, DESIGN, AND LIMITATIONS

The following summarizes the methodology and factors used to calculate existing and projected conditions at the 2050 planning horizon for the proposed General Plan and its analysis through an environmental impact report (EIR). All figures are estimates generated using the best available data for analysis for the entire planning area, which is comprised of the incorporated city and the City of San Bernardino's unincorporated sphere of influence (SOI).

Whenever possible, reliable/authoritative data sources were used directly or cited as references. These sources have their own error rates and may cover data at different geographic levels or in different categories. When more precise data was not available, existing and projected data were compared to aggregated or citywide totals from authoritative sources, understanding that such comparisons are primarily for the purpose of determining general accuracy.

It is important to understand that the proposed General Plan's 25-year planning horizon of 2050 represents an informed but estimated projection of a future condition. The actual construction of development will likely vary by timing, location, and mix of uses. The analysis of the proposed General Plan in the EIR provides a programmatic assessment of potential impacts, enabling tiering for future projects that are consistent with the General Plan and the assumptions analyzed in the EIR, as permitted under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Tiering is a process of streamlining environmental review of future projects by avoiding repeating an analysis of issues already addressed by a broader EIR. Future projects that are consistent may still need to evaluate project-level impacts for environmental clearance as required by CEQA.

The amount of potential development permitted by a general plan is determined primarily by the land use plan and density/intensity standards (dwelling units per acre or floor area ratio) for each land use category (e.g., Suburban Residential or Neighborhood Commercial). However, density and intensity standards convey an overall range indicating the minimum and maximum scale and intensity of potential development. The City of San Bernardino is a predominantly suburban community with an urban core, lower density outlying areas, and a modest supply of vacant land. Citywide, the majority of land with existing development is unlikely to intensify. New development is anticipated to occur primarily on vacant parcels and in select activity centers.

Accordingly, the following projections were developed based on assumptions of what is reasonably likely to occur by 2050 (the planning horizon for the San Bernardino General Plan). Overestimating horizon-year conditions (i.e., "worst-case scenario" or "maximum buildout") can lead to unnecessary and misleading concerns, mitigation measures, and planning efforts, as well as a misallocation of current and future public funds. This approach and the methodology described herein is supported by the California Court of Appeal's decision in the case of *Sierra Club v. County of Tehama* (2012).

The traffic analysis of existing conditions and the proposed plan used the latest version of the San Bernardino Transportation Analysis Model (SBTAM) available at the time the traffic modeling was conducted (June & July 2025). This version of the model is referred to as SBTAM+. The model uses math and computer simulations to represent and predict how vehicular traffic will move in the real world. The household and employment figures documented in this section represent the inputs used by SBTAM+.

PART 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Households

Existing conditions figures reflect the built environment as of 2025, based on the latest available data for the incorporated city from the California Department of Finance (DOF), and the unincorporated SOI based on data from SBTAM+. While the SBTAM+ dataset uses 2019 as a baseline year and reports 65,300 households for the incorporated city, this dataset was updated to reflect 2025 conditions and generally aligns with DOF's 2025 estimates of 64,767 households for the incorporated city. There were approximately 8,669 households in the unincorporated SOI in 2025. Technical analyses of the proposed General Plan consider occupied housing units (households) to be more relevant than the number of housing units as a projection statistic because nearly all activities and service needs are generated by the people living in housing units rather than the housing structures themselves.

Housing Units

The number of housing units within the incorporated city (occupied and vacant) for existing 2025 conditions is provided by DOF, which reported 67,420 units within the incorporated city. The number of housing units in the unincorporated SOI is not reported independently by DOF or the Census and was estimated (9,030) by applying the vacancy rate reported by DOF for the City of San Bernardino to the household figure. The total number of housing units for the entire planning area was estimated to be 73,797 for 2025.

Population

SBTAM+ does not analyze population data as a functional value. Therefore, parcel-specific population estimates were not calculated. Instead, to determine population data, SBTAM's persons per household assumption for the base year (2019) for each TAZ was multiplied by the number of existing households in the corresponding TAZ, as estimated by PlaceWorks. This resulted in the total population being 267,267.

To determine SBTAM's implicit persons per household factor, the total existing residential population within each TAZ was divided by the corresponding total number of existing households to generate a TAZ-specific persons per household factor.

Employment

Total employment was determined by reconciling job counts contained within parcel data, SBTAM+ data, and 2022 U.S. Census Bureau (best available data as of June 2025) employment estimates reported citywide and by industry sector (with rough equivalents identified for each SBTAM+ land use category). An industry sector, as reported by NAICS (North American Industry Classification System), is a broad category that groups together businesses based on similar types of economic activities or production processes. NAICS divides the entire economy into 20 primary sectors, such as manufacturing, professional services, or retail trade. An evaluation by the City of San Bernardino on changes in employment from 2022 through 2024 indicated that the 2022 employment estimates remain appropriate to represent 2025 conditions.

Existing employment was organized according to the traffic model variables, which broadly correspond with the NAICS sectors. First, non-residential building square footage on each parcel was divided by an Employment Growth Factor (EGF), corresponding with the existing use, to approximate the number of jobs occurring on the parcel. Next, the calculated jobs were disaggregated across traffic model employment categories, according to the existing proportion of jobs by industry sector, as reported by the US Census.

Table 1 summarizes the buildout assumptions for each existing land use category.

Table 1. Existing Buildout Assumptions

Existing Land Uses	Occupancy Rate	Percent Single Family	Percent Multifamily	Employment Generation Factor (EGF)	Percent Agriculture & Mining	Percent Construction	Percent Manufacturing	Percent Wholesale	Percent Retail	Percent Transportation	Percent Information	Percent Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	Percent Professional Service	Percent Education and Healthcare	Percent Arts and Entertainment	Percent Other	Percent Public Administration
Single Family Attached	0.96		100%	500	100%												
Single Family Detached	0.96	100%															
Multi-Family Low	0.96		100%														
Multi-Family High	0.96		100%														
RV-Mobile Home	0.96		100%														
Agriculture				500	100%												
Airport				80						100%							
Commercial				800					53%						36%	11%	
Commercial Recreation				2,000											100%		
Education				1,200										100%			
Industrial-Heavy				1,750		11%	12%	12%		65%							
Industrial-Light				1,750		11%	12%	12%		65%							
Institutional				400										100%			
Office				500							5%	15%	80%				
Public Facility				1,000													100%

PART 2: PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

For the future “buildout” scenario PlaceWorks evaluated change on a combination of vacant sites, sites with existing development that are likely to be redeveloped due to their proximity to transportation corridors, specific plan area with remaining development capacity, and projects in the development pipeline. Through discussions with City staff, it was determined that the buildout calculations should forecast a level of growth that is generally consistent with regional growth forecasts and current market demand. Areas outside those described above were assumed to remain constant through the planning horizon, so corresponding existing conditions figures were carried forward through to the future year dataset.

The buildout employed multiple methods to estimate population and employment depending on the following scenarios/conditions:

- Housing sites identified in the 6th Cycle Housing Element inventory were evaluated using the assumptions contained with the Element.
- The Downtown Specific Plan, Waterman + Baseline Specific Plan, Calmat Cajon Specific Plan, and Alliance California Specific Plan were evaluated using the corresponding assumptions from the applicable Specific Plan document and/or EIR. Growth in these areas was then reduced by a factor of 15 percent for residential uses and a factor of 30 percent for nonresidential uses, to account for the scale of development likely to occur by 2050.
- Areas along major vehicular thoroughfares and high-volume intersections, both vacant and currently occupied, were anticipated to develop sooner than parcels in less active areas of the City. Table 2 summarizes the growth modifications for 10 sub-areas where growth is more likely to occur. Where the “Modification” column refers to applying permitted densities and FARs, the evaluation followed a process similar to what was used for vacant parcels, described below.
- For vacant parcels not included in the aforementioned areas:
 - a. The total number of households was estimated by multiplying each residential parcel’s acreage by the density that corresponds with the applicable land use designation. Growth on these parcels was then reduced by a factor of 15 percent to account for the scale of development likely to occur by 2050.
 - b. Total population was estimated by multiplying the total number of households calculated for each TAZ by SCAG’s implicit persons per household figure for 2050.
 - c. The total number of jobs was estimated by first multiplying the acreage of each non-residential parcel’s acreage by the intensity (FAR) that corresponds with the applicable land use designation. The resulting building square footage was then divided by an EGF to estimate the number of jobs supported by the building space. Jobs were then distributed to align with the 13 traffic model employment categories. Growth on these parcels was then reduced by a factor of 20 to 70 percent to account for the scale of development likely to occur by 2050.
 - d. Table 3 summarizes the buildout assumptions for residential, non-residential, and mixed-use designations.
- Areas not described above are not expected to redevelop or change substantially during the planning period. Therefore, the SBTAM+ data for residential and non-residential buildout was carried through for the remainder of the City.

Table 2. Proposed Corridor / Intersection Sub-area Modifications

Sub-Area	Applicability	Modification
Areas Delineated on Draft Land Use Diagram		
NC	All parcels	No increase above existing square footage and/or housing units.
D	All parcels	10% increase above existing square footage and/or housing units.
A	All parcels	15% increase above existing square footage and/or housing units.
C	All parcels	25% increase above existing square footage and/or housing units.
B	All vacant parcels	100% FAR permitted by land use category), and
	Developed parcels	No increase above existing square footage and/or housing units.
E	All parcels	15% increase above existing square footage, and
	25% of all parcels	Residential at 50 du/ac.
F	All vacant parcels	100% permitted FAR (commercial and housing), and
	15% developed parcels	100% permitted FAR (commercial and housing).
G	15% of all parcels	100% permitted FAR (commercial and housing).
H	All parcels	FAR permitted by land use category (commercial and/or mixed use).
H1	25% of all parcels	FAR permitted by land use category (commercial and/or mixed use).
I	All parcels	100% permitted commercial development.
Areas Not Delineated as Change Areas		
Industrial Flex (I1)	15% of all parcels	100% permitted FAR (commercial and housing).
Industrial (I)	Vacant parcels	100% FAR permitted by land use category
	Developed parcels	No change.
All Residential Zones	Vacant parcels	100% permitted residential density for each category.
	Developed parcels	No change.

Table 3. Proposed Buildout Assumptions

Land Use Designation	Growth Factor	Density (units per acre)	Occupancy Rate	Percent Single Family	Percent Multifamily	Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	Employment Generation Factor	Percent Agriculture & Mining	Percent Construction	Percent Manufacturing	Percent Wholesale	Percent Retail	Percent Transportation	Percent Information	Percent Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	Percent Professional Service	Percent Education and Healthcare	Percent Arts and Entertainment	Percent Other	Percent Public Administration
Residential Estate	85%	1	0.96	100%																
Residential Low	85%	4	0.96	100%																
Residential Suburban	85%	6	0.96	100%																
Residential Medium	85%	16	0.96	50%	50%															
Residential High	85%	32	0.96	100%																
Mixed Use Neighborhood	85% / 30%	32	0.96		100%	1.0	700					45%		5%	5%	10%	10%	10%	15%	
Mixed Use Corridor	85% / 30%	40	0.96		100%	1.5	700					45%		5%	5%	10%	10%	10%	15%	
Mixed Use Center	85% / 30%	60	0.96		100%	2.0	700					45%		5%	5%	10%	10%	10%	15%	
Corridor Commercial	65%				100%	1.0	700					50%			10%	5%	10%	10%	15%	
Neighborhood Commercial	65%				100%	1.0	700					50%			10%	5%	10%	10%	15%	
Office Commercial	65%				100%	1.0	500							15%	25%	25%	20%	5%	10%	
Regional Commercial	65%				100%	2.0	700					50%			10%	5%	10%	10%	15%	
Industrial Extractive	50%					0.1	2,000	100%												
Industrial	80%					1.0	2,000		10%	5%	5%		80%							
Industrial Flex	80%					1.0	1,750		10%	5%	5%		80%							
Public/Commercial Recreation	N/A					0	2,000											100%		
Public Facilities	N/A																			100%
Airport	N/A												100%							
Open Space	N/A																			
Rail	N/A												100%							100%
Flood Control	N/A																			

Realistic vs. Maximum Theoretical Buildout

Density and intensity standards are provided in a general plan to convey the maximum scale and intensity for broad land use categories. Zoning standards are then applied at a parcel level to guide and control density and intensity at a development project level. When calculating buildout, a jurisdiction is permitted to assume that every single parcel will develop at the maximum permitted density/intensity. However, this assumption of absolute buildout runs the risk of overestimating the amount of building space and residential units within the identified planning horizon (in this case the year 2050). Overestimating buildout can lead to unnecessary and misleading concerns, mitigation measures, and planning efforts, as well as a misallocation of current and future public funds. Accordingly, the City of San Bernardino General Plan calculated a realistic or more likely buildout scenario for projecting growth between 2025 and 2050.