## <COVER PAGE>

<Text box in upper left corner>

**Phase 2 Draft: Released May 1, 2025**

**Industry comment period ends: May 30, 2025**

**Submit comments to** [**regionalplans@visitcalifornia.com**](mailto:regionalplans@visitcalifornia.com)

<IMAGE> <https://assets.visitcalifornia.com/media/?mediaId=E35717D0-ADAA-4E28-B9A9388EC158A101>



## Resilience and sustainability scorecard

# **Los Angeles County**

May 2025

## <INSIDE COVER>

<Text box on left side of page>

The development of these regional scorecards was funded by a State Tourism Grant awarded to Visit California as part of the U.S. Economic Development Administration’s Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation program. The program invested federal funds appropriated by the American Rescue Plan Act to support states and communities whose tourism economy was damaged by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The majority of the grant funds were used to directly support tourism recovery through marketing initiatives. With the EDA’s oversight, a portion of the grant was directed to the development of these scorecards, which are designed to build a more resilient travel and tourism sector in California.

Visit California extends its gratitude to the diverse project teams, strategic partners and industry experts whose contributions were instrumental throughout the two-year process.

<Project partner logos>

<PAGE IMAGE> <https://assets.visitcalifornia.com/media/?mediaId=EBF4ED23-1C19-4A72-A66C4B4882250563>



<Image text box in lower left corner> Rodeo Drive

## Executive summary

Los Angeles County is one of the most iconic and dynamic tourism destinations in the world, offering coastal escapes, mountain adventures, world-renowned entertainment and countless cultural experiences. Yet this vibrancy is increasingly under pressure, as climate change, natural disasters and infrastructure challenges threaten the resilience of the region’s tourism sector.

The region faces three major concerns that could undermine the long-term sustainability of tourism in Los Angeles County.

Top Risks

1. Limited Disaster Response Infrastructure

The county lacks sufficient emergency shelters and preparedness systems, leaving both residents and visitors highly vulnerable during disasters, particularly earthquakes.

1. Escalating Climate and Hazard Risks

Earthquakes, drought and extreme heat — especially in inland and high-density tourism zones — pose growing threats to tourism assets and visitor safety.

1. Water Scarcity and Visitor Experience

Persistent drought and low water availability scores signal serious challenges for maintaining the quality and appeal of outdoor attractions and amenities.

The most critical issue is the county’s lack of essential infrastructure for disaster preparedness and response. Earthquakes remain the single greatest financial threat to tourism infrastructure, with high Average Annual Losses (AAL) projected in key tourism corridors — including downtown Los Angeles, Santa Monica and surrounding coastal areas. Many major tourism assets are located near active fault lines, compounding the severity of this risk.

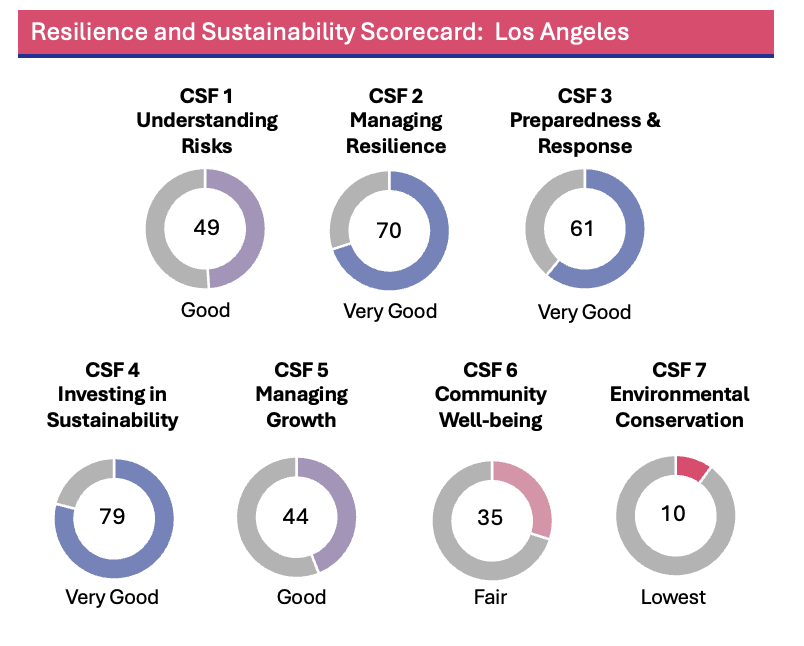
The second major concern is drought. With water availability scoring among the lowest across environmental indicators, ongoing drought conditions threaten the viability of parks, gardens, golf courses and other outdoor amenities that rely heavily on irrigation. These shortages not only affect the landscape but also degrade the quality of visitor experiences.

Finally, extreme heat is a rising threat, particularly for inland areas such as the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys. Projections show sharp increases in maximum temperatures and longer durations of heatwaves, presenting health and safety risks for visitors — especially vulnerable populations such as seniors and young children — and challenging the region’s outdoor-focused tourism economy.

To help tourism stakeholders prepare for, respond to and recover from a changing climate and other risks, the resilience and sustainability scorecard explores metrics across seven critical success factors (CSFs) to identify and define the challenges facing the region. The scorecard blends spatial data layers and quantitative analysis with qualitative input from regional experts in a panel format. Panelists were selected to reflect diverse perspectives across tourism, land and water management, environmental sustainability, government, Indigenous leadership, infrastructure and regional planning.

The resulting quantitative and qualitative ratings provide a baseline risk assessment from which strategies are offered to improve the region’s resiliency to identified risks. For more background on the methodology, see Scorecard Overview.

The Los Angeles Resilience and Sustainability Scorecard is a summary of results of this extensive process, with each dial chart representing the overall quantitative rating for each CSF. 40 different indicators in total were selected across the seven CSFs. The various units of measurement for the CSF indicators were normalized to a ratings scale of 0 to 100 to simplify comparisons and develop composite scores by CSF. The scores were then divided into five equal tiers — low, fair, good, very good and exceptional — where the higher the score, the better the CSF overall performance.



## Interpreting the scorecard

### CSF 1 Understanding risks — Good

The Los Angeles County region is most exposed to earthquakes and climate-driven threats like drought and heatwavesEarthquakes present the highest Average Annual Loss (AAL) across the entire area, reflecting high financial exposure, particularly in dense tourism corridors. Some destinations within the region have taken initial steps to plan for the risks the region faces and include some consideration of impacts to tourism in their plans.

### CSF 2 Managing Resilience — Very Good

While several cities and counties in the region have established strong resilience plans, opportunities for improvement remain. Some destinations have begun to address tourism-related risks in their planning efforts.

### CSF 3 Preparedness and Response — Very Good

The region demonstrates a strong level of preparedness and recovery capacity with regards to emergency healthcare access and infrastructure density, while lacking other critical infrastructure, such as emergency shelters and road accessibility.

### CSF 4 Investing in Sustainability — Very Good

Los Angeles County demonstrates a broad and active approach to sustainable development, particularly in how it leverages public funding and prioritizes equity in project distribution. The region, by a very wide margin, is the largest recipient of funding from the California Climate Investment umbrella of programs. However, it has received the funding because the region remains home to the nation’s worst in air quality in terms of ozone and smog (see CSF 7), as well as high greenhouse gas emissions.

### CSF 5 Managing Growth — Good

The region performs well in hospitality employment and in its share of highly-rated attractions. The region has also achieved robust diversity in tourism offerings and moderate success in year-round demand. However, there is significant room for improvement in traffic congestion, highlighting a critical area that affects both visitor experience and local resident quality of life.

### CSF 6 Community Well-Being — Fair

Institutions like the Hollywood Bowl and Getty Center offer strong examples of community integration, but a regionwide approach to community well-being and preparedness education is lacking. More consistent outreach and benefit-sharing across neighborhoods — particularly those impacted by tourism activity — could help improve this score​.

### CSF 7 Environmental Conservation — Lowest

Los Angeles County faces the most serious environmental challenges of all the regions. The Los Angeles-Long Beach metro area has the dubious distinction of 25 years as the smoggiest in the nation, according to the American Lung Association. The region also has the least biodiversity, poor stream conditions, minimal conserved areas and troubling water scarcity, none of which is all that surprising considering the region is home to the second largest metropolitan area behind only New York. The region is an economic and tourism powerhouse, but also struggles with myriad environmental concerns.

The following sections dive into the findings of Los Angeles County’s regional scorecard and identify opportunities for incremental improvement across the seven critical success factors. While the assessment was carried out at the regional level, the opportunities can be pursued at the local level by tourism businesses and destination management organizations (DMOs) to better understand, prepare for, respond to and recover from the various threats facing the region.

**California Tourism Resilience and Sustainability Dashboard**

All the risk indices and data layers used to develop these indicators are accessible through an interactive dashboard created specifically for California and each of the 12 tourism regions.

**Explore the Los Angeles County data here:** [**Los Angeles County Dashboard**](https://www.risklayer-explorer.com/region/title=California/detail/California%20Los%20Angeles%20County)

# CSF 1 — Understanding Risks

This CSF focuses on identifying, assessing and communicating the risks that impact the tourism sector.

### CSF 1 key findings

Los Angeles County’s top three risks to tourism infrastructure — earthquakes, heatwaves and drought — are clearly identified through the Tourism Risk Index, Average Annual Loss (AAL) calculations and climate change projections included in this report.

Earthquakes pose the greatest financial threat to the tourism sector. Geological hazards, especially earthquakes, generate the highest AAL values for the county due to the presence of extensive tourism-related infrastructure (e.g., hotels, cultural venues and recreational attractions) located near fault lines. These events are rare but catastrophic, which significantly increases the county’s expected average annual losses.

Heatwaves represent an escalating climate-related risk. Projected increases in the heatwave index under an intermediate emissions scenario (SSP370) shows that by 2050 and 2070, many inland areas (such as the San Fernando Valley) shift into the highest tiers of climate risk for extreme heat. These prolonged heat events affect not only visitor comfort but also safety, especially for at-risk populations like seniors and children. The tourism risk model incorporates maximum temperatures and frequency of heat extremes to quantify rising exposure​.

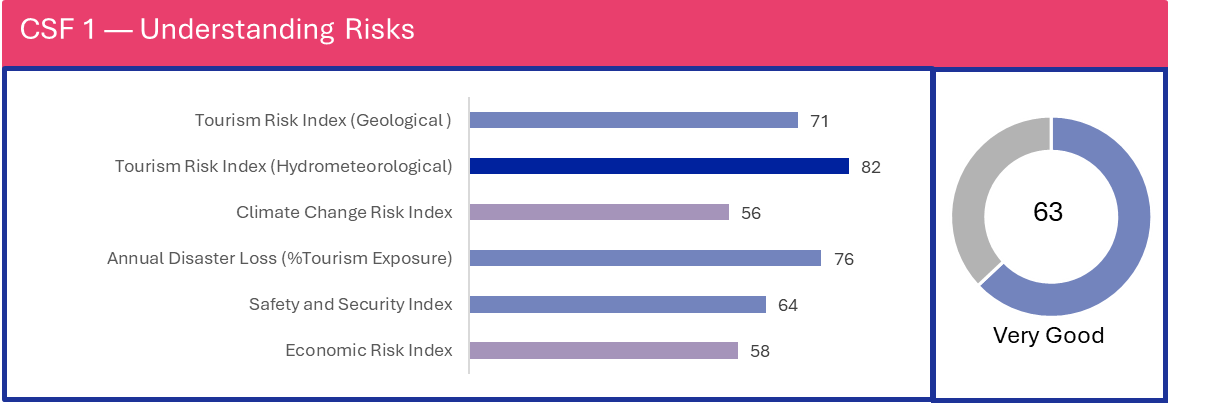
Drought is the third key risk and is evaluated through a climate change risk index based on variables such as precipitation, temperature and moisture availability. Los Angeles County ranks high on drought severity, with ongoing stress on parks, urban forests and landscaped tourism environments. The scorecard notes that water availability is among the lowest environmental indicators in the region, suggesting potential service disruptions or aesthetic degradation in tourism-facing assets​.

The gap between these quantified risks and stakeholder perception remains wide. Tourism decision-makers tend to focus more on short-term economic and health concerns, underestimating the operational and reputational risks posed by environmental hazards. Panelists rated the region’s performance low on criteria like risk perception, data sharing and understanding of tourism impacts, signaling that the sector lacks both the information access and analytical tools to act on the data already available​.

Data accessibility and shared resources have emerged as significant challenges in Los Angeles County's tourism industry. The lack of a centralized information repository hampers effective risk management and the implementation of sustainable practices. Despite these challenges, there is a clear willingness among stakeholders to improve their approach to risk management and sustainability. Many express a need for guidance and practical tools to help them navigate these complex issues, indicating a positive attitude towards enhancing their risk management capabilities.

Collaboration and policy consistency in risk management present additional hurdles for Los Angeles County. While some entities demonstrate effective coordination with various agencies on incident and emergency response, ensuring consistent policies and procedures across different organizations remains challenging. Leadership changes in various organizations can impact the implementation and continuity of risk management policies, highlighting the need for more robust, institutionalized practices.

The scorecard’s climate and hazard indexes — especially AAL — provide a starting point for the tourism industry to align its preparedness and sustainability strategies with the actual risks facing its assets and audiences. To address these issues, Los Angeles County should focus on developing strategies that enhance risk awareness across all potential hazards, improve data sharing mechanisms and foster better communication between tourism stakeholders and emergency planning entities. Creating centralized resources and guidance for tourism stakeholders could significantly improve risk management practices and sustainability efforts across the county.



### CSF 1 quantitative ratings and findings

CSF 1 assesses various geological risks including earthquakes, landslides and tsunamis, as well as hydrometeorological and other hazards such as floods, windstorms, heatwaves, hail and wildfires, evaluating their impact on the region's tourism exposure data.

To assess tourism exposure for loss calculations (AAL - Average Annual Loss), the RES4, COM8 and COM9 occupancy classes from [FEMA’s Hazus National Building Inventory](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_hazus-inventory-national-database-dictionary.pdf)1 were chosen; AAL represents the estimated financial loss a location can expect to incur each year from disasters, averaged over time based on hazard frequency and severity.

These FEMA classes collectively represent the accommodations, entertainment and cultural attractions that define tourism infrastructure:

* RES4 (temporary lodging) includes hotels, motels and resorts where tourists stay.
* COM8 (entertainment & recreation) encompasses amusement parks, casinos, stadiums, golf courses and other leisure venues.
* COM9 (theaters & cultural facilities) covers museums, performing arts centers and historic attractions.

CSF 1 assesses the understanding of risks to tourism using the following quantitative metrics:

#### Tourism risk index (geological and hydrometeorological)

Incorporates Risklayer modeling of average annual losses (AAL) from exposed accommodations and tourism attractions. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [National Risk Index](https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/), which compiles data from various sources, provides the hazard models.

The geological index evaluates risks from earthquakes, landslides, volcanoes and tsunamis, all linked to geological processes. The hydrometeorological tourism risk index assesses natural hazards associated with atmospheric processes, including floods, hurricanes and wildfires. All hazards were analyzed and integrated into the index score, allowing identification and highlighting of the highest risks in the findings.

#### Climate change risk index

Assesses the severity of climate-related events, such as heatwaves, droughts, snowfall and increased precipitation, on tourism assets and local communities. Each climate indicator is calculated using different metrics, like mean annual precipitation, extreme maximum temperature and precipitation as snow, for different CMIP6 climate scenarios (ssp245, ssp370, ssp585) and projected years (2030, 2050, 2070, 2090) provided from [AdaptWest](https://adaptwest.databasin.org/pages/adaptwest-climatena/). The climate change risk index uses a scale from 0 (low risk) to 100 (high risk) to indicate the intensity of these events, highlighting the areas that are most affected by climate variability.

#### Annual disaster loss (% tourism exposure)

Represents the proportion of tourism-related infrastructure exposed to natural disasters and climate impacts, calculated as a percentage of average annual losses. This index helps quantify the economic vulnerability of the tourism sector to recurring disasters. The data originates from FEMA’s [National Risk Index](https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/), a dataset that assesses the relative risk of 18 natural hazards across the United States, combining hazard risk, exposure and social vulnerability data to produce a comprehensive risk score.

#### Safety and security index

Evaluates public safety and security conditions for tourists, considering factors like crime rates, healthcare access and family-friendliness to provide a holistic view of personal security and the overall quality of safety in the region. Additionally, this index incorporates indicators such as COVID-19 vaccination data (specifically the percentage of population with 1+ dose) from [CovidActNow](https://covidactnow.org/?s=50083753) and homelessness data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ([HUD](https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/gis-tools/)).

#### Economic risk index

Measures economic stability and risks in areas with significant tourism activity, highlighting economic pressures that could impact the sustainability of the tourism industry. It considers factors like workforce availability (unemployment rate), housing affordability and economic stability. Housing affordability assesses the financial ability of a typical household to purchase an existing home in an area. Economic stability describes the relationship between non-workers and the employed population.

Los Angeles County experiences a Mediterranean climate, characterized by warm, dry summers and mild winters. Its year-round pleasant weather has long been a major draw for tourists. However, climate change is projected to increase the frequency and intensity of heatwaves and droughts, posing significant challenges to the area's tourism and urban environment. During summer months, extreme heat could deter visitors due to uncomfortable conditions, particularly in inland areas like the San Fernando Valley. Coastal regions such as Santa Monica may see increased tourism as people seek relief from the heat. The county's diverse microclimates, from beaches to mountains, will experience varying impacts. These conditions threaten outdoor attractions, events and green spaces, potentially affecting the region's appeal to tourists. The urban heat island effect may intensify in densely populated areas, while prolonged droughts could stress the county's parks and urban forests, crucial for maintaining the area's aesthetic and environmental quality.

***Figure 1a. Earthquake risk***

A map of the california earthquake

AI-generated content may be incorrect.Figure 1a shows effects (AAL) from earthquakes for tourism assets in Los Angeles. As can be seen in the CSF1 Scorecard, geological risks have the highest rating for the Los Angeles region compared to all other risks.

The Average Annual Loss (AAL) for Los Angeles is high due to the inclusion of potential damages from low-frequency but high-impact earthquakes, which significantly raise the annual loss calculations.

The map shows both relative distribution in terms of percent of the total AAL coming from tourism assets, as well as the absolute loss values for the different Census Tracts of Los Angeles. In this case the total asset value of tourism assets is estimated by looking at the capital stock value of hotels, restaurants and tourism-related businesses.

*Source: Risklayer GmbH*

***Figure 1b. Heatwave climate change risk index for 2030, 2050 and 2070 for ssp370 emissions scenario***

A map of different colors of the same state

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

*Source: Risklayer GmbH*

Climate change impacts were also investigated in terms of increased precipitation, drought and heatwave. Figure 1b depicts Heatwave as a climate change risk for Los Angeles. The furthest left image represents the 30-year average historic baseline for heatwaves, while the images to the right show increases in the heatwave index value for the years 2030, 2050 and 2070 based on an intermediate emissions scenario (SSP370: "A Rocky Road"). The areas in dark red indicate a relative increase in the heatwave index.

Other risks included in the analysis are safety and security factors such as COVID-19 vaccination rates, overall safety, personal security index, average annual healthcare spending, family friendliness, women's well-being and homelessness. Economic risks were also assessed, including economic stability, workforce availability (unemployment rate), housing affordability and housing displacement risk.

All of these risks will be visualized on the web-based [California Tourism Resilience & Sustainability Dashboard](https://www.risklayer-explorer.com/region/title=California/overview), providing a comprehensive view of the vulnerabilities and strengths of the Los Angeles Region.

### CSF 1 qualitative ratings and findings

Qualitatively, the panelists were asked to assess the region’s performance across the following CSF 1 performance criteria:

#### Risk perception

Gauges the panelists’ awareness of 11 types of risks affecting tourism, including natural disasters, climate change, water scarcity, air quality, economic factors, public health concerns and technological disruptions.

#### Understanding tourism impacts

Considers the extent to which tourism stakeholders understand the impacts of natural disasters, climate change, environmental and ecological issues, public health crises, social, technological, political issues and economic uncertainty.

#### Risk information sharing

Analyzes the degree to which risk-related information (e.g., data, maps, studies) on tourism assets and destinations is communicated effectively to tourism stakeholders and policymakers to support informed decision-making.

#### Data sharing effectiveness

Examines the effectiveness of existing mechanisms for sharing risk data with tourism stakeholders and policymakers to inform them about key risks and prevention strategies.

Panelists rated the individual performance criteria for CSF 1 at a relatively consistent level of 1.5 to 3 of 5, pointing out that the tourism stakeholders and industry within the region have a basic awareness of the importance of proactive mitigation of risks and that the data sharing practice between tourism and emergency planning entities is sporadic and at the very early stages. The four individual performance criteria and the subsequent findings are shown in Table 1 below:

***Table 1. CSF 1 qualitative performance criteria ratings***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance criteria** | **Rating** | **Findings** |
| **Risk perception** | 1.9 | Panelists’ perception of risk in the region is highest for natural disasters. Safety and public health concerns follow closely as the next highest perceived threats. Geopolitical and security issues are perceived as the lowest risks. |
| **Understanding tourism impacts** | 1.5 | According to the panelists, tourism stakeholders have the highest understanding of economic uncertainty; their comprehension of natural disasters is also high. However, climate change and environmental impacts are only moderately understood, according to the panelists. |
| **Risk information sharing** | 3 | Most panelists note that ongoing data sharing and some collaboration exist, but there is significant room for improvement in providing access to risk information for tourism stakeholders. |
| **Data sharing effectiveness** | 3 | Panelists mostly rate the current mechanisms for sharing risk data with tourism stakeholders as moderately effective. |

“Tourism stakeholders are more aware of economic and public health risks (especially after the COVID-19) while other environmental/sustainability risks are still being analyzed."

"No in-house place to find data. Everyone is on their own as to how they implement sustainability."

# CSF 2 — Managing Resilience

This CSF reviews existing local plans and strategies that have been adopted to mitigate adverse impacts from and adapt to climate change-related disasters, as well as manage risk from other natural disasters

### CSF 2 key findings

With a composite score of 70 out of 100, CSF 2 outcomes on managing destination resilience reveal that some cities and counties in the region have adopted disaster risk and climate plans but there remains significant room for improvement. These results are based on quantitative analysis of city and county-level planning data, which reflect public sector efforts to address climate-related hazards. The highest score is for disaster risk management plans (84 out of 100), indicating that many jurisdictions have taken steps to prepare for potential disasters. Climate adaption plans scored slightly lower (74 out of 100), suggesting progress in preparing comprehensive strategies to adjust to long-term climate impacts. The lowest score (54 out of 100) is for climate mitigation, is still above average but highlights potential room for improvement in efforts to reduce greenhouse emissions. These scores reflect actions and commitments made by city and county governments to address climate risks, reduce emissions and build community resilience.

The lowest qualitative ratings from panelists are for budget allocations and regulations and for cooperation and coordination — highlighting stakeholder concerns about fragmented implementation and insufficient resources. This is reflected in panelist comments such as: *"There doesn't seem to be a coordinated effort to fix the issue due to multiple concerns about budget, land rights of property owners along the rail corridor, etc."*

The City of Santa Monica's [*Climate Action and Adaptation Plan*](https://www.smgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/OSE/Climate/CAAP_SantaMonica.PDF) is an example of a best-in-class municipal initiative, setting ambitious targets to reduce carbon emissions, increase resilience and promote sustainability through goals like converting 50% of trips to walking/biking and 50% of vehicles to electric by 2030. The plan also integrates climate impacts into planning processes and emphasizes water self-sufficiency, coastal flooding preparedness and low-carbon food systems — many of which have clear relevance to the visitor experience.

At the county level, the [*Los Angeles County 2045 Climate Action Plan* (2045 CAP](https://planning.lacounty.gov/long-range-planning/climate-action-plan/)) provides a framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in unincorporated areas by 83% below 2015 levels by 2045. While not focused specifically on tourism, its strategies, such as transitioning to renewable energy and enhancing urban greening, carry significant implications for tourism infrastructure, quality of place and visitor experiences.

These findings underscore the importance of improving communication and alignment between those implementing resilience and climate strategies and the broader tourism industry. While strong planning frameworks exist, their visibility, accessibility and relevance to tourism stakeholders remain limited.

Destination managers have a unique opportunity to bridge this gap by integrating resilience priorities into tourism-specific plans and advocating for greater coordination across sectors. Enhancing awareness of existing initiatives, clarifying how tourism fits into regional strategies and addressing resource allocation and implementation consistency across jurisdictions will be key to strengthening Los Angeles County’s tourism resilience and sustainability in the years ahead.

A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

### CSF 2 quantitative rating descriptions

An inventory of local destinations was compiled and a desk top review was completed to evaluate each plan along three criteria:

#### Disaster risk management planning

#### Indicates whether a destination has identified and mapped specific hazards, conducted detailed risk assessments, analyzed vulnerabilities and developed robust disaster management plans and hazard mitigation strategies. The presence and comprehensiveness of these plans and strategies indirectly reflect the destination's capability to safeguard visitors, local communities and tourism infrastructure from potential impacts of natural or man-made disasters.

#### Climate adaption planning

Indicates whether a destination has developed a plan that discusses improving resilience of infrastructure to climate-change related disasters, consideration of water resource management, mitigation measures for floods and sea-level rise and public policies to integrate climate change considerations into broader planning framework. These plans typically include measures to reduce vulnerability to climate-related risks and capitalize on potential opportunities arising from changing climate conditions.

#### Climate mitigation planning

Refers to the existence of a plan focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from local economic activity the community’s contribution to climate change. Such plans usually include strategies to decrease greenhouse gas emissions from the built environment, promote sustainable practices and support the transition to low-carbon business operations, including in the tourism sector.

*CSF 2 qualitative ratings and findings*

Qualitatively, the panelists assessed the region on CSF 2 across the following performance criteria:

#### Budget allocation and regulation

Indicates panelists’ perceptions of whether policies and regulations are in place to mandate or support tourism stakeholders in advancing resilience investments through planning and compliance mechanisms, along with appropriate government budget allocations to fund these requirements.

#### Risk-based tourism planning

Indicates the extent to which panelists feel disaster- and climate-related risks are incorporated into tourism-related economic development plans and local zoning regulations to minimize vulnerabilities and support safe, sustainable tourism practices.

#### Collaboration and coordination

Assesses panelists’ perceptions of the extent to which the tourism sector actively collaborates with public authorities responsible for disaster risk management and climate change adaptation in the region.

#### Effectiveness of resilience measures

Evaluates panelists’ perceptions of the effectiveness of implemented measures, such as infrastructure design, disaster risk financing and coordination agreements, in reducing the impacts of natural disasters.

#### Climate action

Measures panelists’ perceptions of the integration of climate change adaptation into tourism planning and evaluates the industry's active adoption of measures addressing ongoing climate impacts on the tourism sector.

The five individual performance criteria and the subsequent findings are shown in Table 2 below:

***Table 2. CSF 2 qualitative performance criteria ratings***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance criteria** | **Rating** | **Findings** |
| **Budget allocation and regulation** | 1.5 | Panelists report a significant lack of support for tourism resilience in the region. Regarding budget allocations, most panelists indicate either a complete absence or very limited budgets, insufficient for effective resilience initiatives. |
| **Risk-based tourism planning** | 3 | Most panelists report minimal or partial risk incorporation in development plans and zoning regulations for tourism. However, panelists observe that in the metro regions, risk mitigation has taken place but not specific to the tourism sector. |
| **Cooperation and coordination** | 2 | Most panelists report basic coordination between the tourism sector and authorities on resilience planning and advocacy. |
| **Effectiveness of resilience measures** | 2 | Most panelists report that some disaster and climate resilience measures are in place, but their effectiveness is limited. Some panelists note more positive effects and effectiveness. |
| **Climate action** | 3 | Most panelists rate the region's efforts to address the long-term impact of climate change on its tourism sector as showing progress. |

“Municipalities are undergoing climate resiliency planning now .I think this is average across the regions."

"I know that Metro has plans and policies but have limited awareness of overall management of resilience in tourism destinations."

"Initial measures and efforts though well intended may have a short-term negative impact on tourism."

## CSF 3 — Preparedness and Response

This CSF focuses on the region’s ability to anticipate, respond to and recover from crises or disasters while maintaining competitiveness.

### CSF 3 key findings

Los Angeles County overall rating of 61 out of 100 in crisis response capacity indicates great work already happening with areas for improvement. The county demonstrates strong overall capacity for emergency response, reflected in high quantitative scores for infrastructure density (88 out of 100) and emergency healthcare access (95 out of 100).

However, the scorecard also points to gaps in equitable access and implementation, particularly when it comes to specific tourism destinations and infrastructure types. Catalina Island, for instance, was cited by panelists as an area with limited access to funding and preparedness tools, despite being a popular tourist destination. One of the most notable operational shortfalls is in emergency shelter capacity, which scored just 23 out of 100. This low score highlights a lack of designated public shelter space relative to the region’s population — and this gap becomes even more critical when considering the influx of non-resident visitors during peak tourism seasons.

Tourism infrastructure — especially hotels and short-term rentals — may be relied upon during disasters when public shelters are overwhelmed or inaccessible. Yet, there are no protocols defining tourism’s role in emergency sheltering. Without formal planning or coordination, the burden of supporting displaced tourists may fall unevenly across lodging providers and local governments. Exacerbating this, the county faces challenges in road accessibility (50 out of 100) that could affect evacuation and emergency response efforts.

Panelists note that few tourism businesses are currently prepared to serve as emergency shelters and most lack access to regional emergency response plans. This reveals an opportunity for the tourism sector to take proactive steps in disaster preparedness to ensure continuity of service as well as visitor safety and to support local emergency management efforts during high-impact events.

Moving forward, Los Angeles County needs to focus on bridging the gap between its strong infrastructure indicators and the on-the-ground implementation of preparedness and recovery measures. Improving coordination between public and private entities, ensuring equitable access to resources across all regions and building trust within diverse communities are crucial steps.

A screenshot of a computer screen

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

### CSF 3 quantitative rating descriptions

CSF 3 considers key regional infrastructure essential to responding to an emergency or natural disaster, as well as the region’s preparedness to respond to and recover from the priority risks facing the region — heatwaves, drought and earthquakes:

#### Road accessibility

Utilizes Risklayer analysis to assess road accessibility in terms of proximity to airports, road condition and connectivity.

#### Emergency shelter availability

Calculates the number of emergency shelters per 10,000 residents; provides a quantitative measure of shelter accessibility in case of emergencies.

#### Emergency healthcare availability

Measures the number of hospitals per 10,000 residents; indicates the level of emergency medical care accessibility in the region.

#### Infrastructure density index

Evaluates infrastructure density based on the length of electric transmission lines per region, serving as a proxy for urbanization and overall infrastructure development.

#### Emergency preparedness and response planning

Employs a desktop review of emergency preparedness plans such as Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) of counties or local government and evaluates quality and detail of key components such as clearly defined roles and responsibilities, coordination mechanisms, communication protocols including public warning systems, evacuation and sheltering strategies, resource allocation processes and established cooperation agreements. Risklayer analysis of emergency preparedness based on accessibility, proximity to emergency facilities and transportation network conditions to provide a comprehensive view of readiness for potential crises.

### CSF 3 qualitative ratings and findings

Qualitatively, the panelists assessed the region’s performance on CSF 3 across the following performance criteria:

#### Disaster preparedness and response

Assesses panelists’ perceptions of the involvement of tourism stakeholders in decision-making during and after disasters to minimize disruptions and losses and, as a result, maintain competitiveness of the tourism destination.

#### Public-private partnerships

Examines panelists’ awareness of agreements and policies that mobilize public and private resources to enhance preparedness of the tourism sector, such as disaster communication, emergency services and shelter management.

#### Preparedness and mitigation

Reviews panelists’ perceptions of the availability of early warning systems, post-disaster shelter plans, contingency plans of key service providers and strategies to mitigate reputational risks through marketing and communication.

#### Response and recovery measures

Evaluates panelists’ perceptions of the effectiveness of recovery tools, such as government stimulus packages, targeted support for vulnerable groups and the advocacy skills of tourism leaders in the region to secure government resources.

The four individual performance criteria and the subsequent findings are shown in Table 3 below:

***Table 3. CSF 3 qualitative performance criteria ratings***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance criteria** | **Rating** | **Findings** |
| **Disaster preparedness and response** | 4 | Most panelists indicate tourism stakeholders are involved in collaborative decision-making, working closely with authorities to share expertise and contribute to disaster response strategies. |
| **Public-private partnerships** | 3 | Most panelists note awareness of agreements, policies, or procedures available to enhance the tourism sector's preparedness for various risks, although with potential gaps in coverage. |
| **Preparedness and mitigation** | 3.3 | The overall preparedness and mitigation measures are moderately implemented, according to panelists. Early warning systems are partially visible to visitors, while contingency plans for post-disaster shelters show effective coordination with the accommodation sector. Critical infrastructure contingency plans display partial integration with tourism needs. |
| **Response and recovery measures** | 3.3 | Panelists report that stimulus packages for tourism recovery range from having limited to notable effect. Targeted support programs for vulnerable groups in the tourism industry show partial to high effectiveness. Tourism leaders' knowledge and advocacy for emergency preparedness resources, policies and programs span from moderate to expert proficiency. |

"Very difficult to find implementation on a county-wide level. Easier to find for cities.”

"These partnerships, preparedness and mitigation measures may exist in cities but not county-wide."

## CSF 4 — Investing in Sustainability

This CSF involves integrating resilience and sustainability into tourism planning and operations through investment, risk management, diversification and resource allocation.

### CSF 4 key findings

With a composite score of 79 out of 100, Los Angeles County demonstrates a broad and active approach to sustainable development, particularly in how it leverages public funding and prioritizes equity in project distribution. The region, by a very wide margin, is the largest recipient of funding from the California Climate Investment umbrella of programs. However, it has received the funding because the region remains home to the nation’s worst in air quality in terms of ozone and smog (see CSF 7), as well as high greenhouse gas emissions.

The region demonstrates a strong commitment to diversifying its tourism products and experiences, particularly in preparation for upcoming mega-events like the 2026 World Cup and the 2028 Olympics. This focus is driving significant assessments and planned investments (e.g., [LA 2028 Olympic Legacy Street Improvements Plan](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/48ded9841f1c413994a79d31f6fae62e)), including the expansion of multi-modal transportation options in key visitor areas.

Risk assessment and management in Los Angeles County show varied progress across different areas. Major infrastructure projects typically incorporate risk analysis, though climate stresses are not always comprehensively included. The region has developed robust approaches to earthquake risks, which could serve as a model for addressing other hazard types more systematically.

The role of government involvement is emphasized, particularly in developing risk transfer strategies and supporting broader resilience efforts. Multiple jurisdictions are implementing green initiatives, especially in transportation, indicating a growing awareness of sustainability needs across the region.

Los Angeles County shows a strong foundation in tourism product diversity and a commitment to sustainable development, particularly driven by upcoming major events. Continued attention to risk integration, increased investment in tourism-related sustainability and carefully tailored approaches to infrastructure will be essential to maintain the county’s leadership in sustainable economic growth.

A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

### CSF 4 quantitative rating descriptions

CSF 4 evaluates the region across a myriad of criteria, characterizing investment in and funding for sustainability, as well as the region’s overall economic health:

#### Number of sustainable hotels

Reviews a comprehensive list of sustainable hotels based on [Tripadvisor’s criteria on eco-friendly practices](https://www.tripadvisor.com/GreenLeaders), from linen and towel re-use, recycling and composting to solar panels, electric car charging stations and green roofing. This is the total number of sustainable hotels in the region, not the percentage of all sustainable hotels in the region.

#### GHG emissions per capita

Analyzes GHG emission estimates based on state, regional or federal data sources and aggregated facility-specific emission reports from CARB's [Mandatory GHG Reporting Program](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/mandatory-greenhouse-gas-emissions-reporting).

#### GDP per capita

Calculates the region's economic output per person by dividing total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by total population, serving as an indicator of the area's standard of living and the economic well-being of the local population.

#### Annual job growth (2018-2022)

Measures the year-over-year increase in the number of employed individuals within the region and expresses this growth as a percentage, indicating the rate of job creation in the economy over a 12-month period. The metric incorporates the percent change in total employees between 2018 and 2022 for the scorecard and interprets positive percentages as an increase in employees and negative percentages as a decrease.

#### Total sustainability funds (CCI)

Reviews funding from the [California Climate Initiative (CCI)](https://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/), derived from the state's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions cap-and-trade auction proceeds, aiming to reduce GHG emissions, strengthen the economy and improve public health and the environment; provides data at the county level.

#### Priority population funding

Reviews funding from the [California Climate Initiative (CCI)](https://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/) for projects benefiting “[priority population](https://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/priority-populations)” households as defined in state statute as disadvantaged communities, low-income communities and low-income households. This metric examines how these projects provide meaningful benefits to these specific groups.

#### Sustainability funding (per Capita)

Reviews funding from the [California Climate Initiative (CCI)](https://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/) per resident in each county.

#### Sustainability project count score

Examines the number of [California Climate Initiative (CCI)](https://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/) projects per county and indicates the level of effort invested in climate initiatives within each county and reflects the diversity of project types implemented across different counties.

### CSF 4 qualitative ratings and findings

Qualitatively, the panelists assessed the region’s performance on CSF 4 across the following criteria:

#### Risk-Informed public investments

Reviews the extent to which panelists feel public sector infrastructure projects consider multi-hazard vulnerability/risk studies to tourism.

#### Resilience initiatives and tourism assets

Assesses panelists' perceptions regarding public investment in programs that protect tourism assets, natural attractions and infrastructure and evaluates whether panelists believe such investments are being made and to what extent.

#### Prioritization of tourism product diversification

Evaluates panelists’ perceptions of destination investment aimed at broadening the variety of tourism offerings and assesses efforts to diversify tourism products and experiences.

#### Risk transfer strategies

Measures panelists’ perceptions of the level of risk transfer strategies implemented to safeguard tourism assets against unforeseen risks and includes strategies such as insurance, reserves and climate bonds.

#### Transportation infrastructure

Analyzes panelists’ perceptions of visitor reliance on personal vehicles versus public transportation and assesses the extent to which visitors use green transportation options.

#### Sustainability standards

Examines panelists’ perceptions of the level of support provided to local tourism-related businesses for meeting sustainability requirements.

#### Sustainability funding

Investigates panelists’ perceptions of the availability of funding for resilience and sustainability initiatives in tourism, considering both non-tourism funds and tourism-generated revenue (e.g., taxes and surcharges) to assess support for initiatives such as protecting attractions, promoting eco-friendly practices and enhancing crisis response procedures.

The individual performance criteria and the subsequent findings are shown in Table 4 below:

***Table 4. CSF 4 Qualitative performance criteria ratings***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance criteria** | **Rating** | **Findings** |
| **Risk-Informed public investments** | 4 | Panelists said most public-sector investments in infrastructure and tourism projects are contingent upon the projects being risk-informed, with relevant projects incorporating multi-hazard vulnerability/risk studies. |
| **Resilience initiatives and tourism assets** | 3 | Panelists report there is some level of investment (i.e., programs and resources) in resilience initiatives to protect tourism assets, businesses and infrastructure. |
| **Prioritization of tourism product diversification** | 3 | Panelists said there is partial prioritization, i.e., some efforts are made to diversify tourism products, experiences and interpretation. |
| **Risk transfer strategies** | 3 | The region has applied some risk transfer measures (e.g., insurance, reserves, climate bonds) to specific tourism assets in panelists’ opinions. |
| **Transportation infrastructure** | 2.5 | Panelists report that the region-wide visitor journey is significantly dependent on personal vehicular travel versus public transportation. Although clean mobility options, such as bike sharing and lanes, multi-use paths, electric buses and trains, are available in many locations, they are minimally utilized by visitors. |
| **Sustainability standards** | 2 | Panelists’ perception is that local tourism-related businesses receive limited support with minimal resources tied to meeting sustainability standards. |
| **Sustainability funding** | 2.5 | Panelists report that a moderate amount of funds are allocated to support resilience and sustainability initiatives specifically related to tourism. Limited revenue from tourism, such as TOT, surcharges from admissions to attractions and/or events, ride-share companies and taxis, is utilized to support resilience and sustainability initiatives specifically related to tourism. |

"Initiatives seem to be legislated at a state or local level, but the requisite funding opportunities are limited, insufficient or stakeholders are unaware of them.”

# CSF 5 — Managing Growth

This CSF evaluates how tourism strategies address seasonality, visitor distribution, responsible travel, visitor flow monitoring and marketing practices.

### CSF 5 key findings

Los Angeles County’s approach to managing sustainable tourism growth reveals a mixed picture of moderate performance and clear opportunities for improvement. The composite rating is 44 out of 100, reflecting a region with strong foundational assets but uneven implementation of strategies that promote long-term tourism sustainability.

The region performs well in managing tourism pressure (79 out of 100), indicating effective oversight of tourism’s impact on infrastructure and local populations. Moderate scores are seen in hospitality employment (57 out of 100), attraction quality (57 out of 100), variety of attractions per overnight visitor (56 out of 100) and seasonality (55 out of 100). These metrics suggest a healthy tourism workforce and well-regarded visitor experiences, along with reasonable diversity in tourism offerings and modest success in supporting year-round tourism demand.

The region’s greatest challenge lies in traffic congestion (5 out of 100), highlighting a major issue that affects both visitors and residents. Tourism infrastructure utilization (52 out of 100) indicates that existing assets may not be used to their full potential.

There are also social dynamics at play. Panelists note a strained relationship between residents and tourism, particularly in areas where community members do not directly benefit from tourism-related businesses. In these locations, some residents express a preference for fewer visitors, highlighting the need for a balanced approach that maximizes the cultural and economic value of tourism while addressing impacts on community life.

Los Angeles County demonstrates potential to be a leader in sustainable tourism. Strengthening regional coordination, investing in infrastructure that eases congestion and supporting off-peak and place-based tourism strategies could help address the current challenges. By building on its existing strengths and aligning tourism management practices across jurisdictions, the county can more effectively balance visitor demand with community well-being and environmental sustainability.

A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

### CSF 5 quantitative rating description

CSF 5 explores the region’s tourism economy and potential for sustainable growth in the industry:

#### Hospitality employment

Measures the total number of people employed in jobs related to accommodations, food service and other visitor-serving industries in the region.

#### 3-star or higher attractions

Calculates the percentage of visitor attractions that have received three stars or higher reviews on [TripAdvisor](https://www.tripadvisor.com/) out of the total attractions in the region.

#### Attractions to overnight visitor ratio

Computes the ratio of total tourist attractions to the number of overnight visitors, indicating the variety of experiences available per visitor.

#### Seasonality

Analyzes the occupancy rate of hotels during the least busy month within a given year, reflecting the destination's seasonality and ability to attract visitors year-round.

#### Traffic congestion (inverse)

Estimates 'peak hour' traffic at all points on the state highway system in the region, showing how near to capacity the highway is operating. Peak hour values represent the total traffic volume in both directions during the busiest typical hour. While a small number of hours each year may have higher traffic volumes, the peak hour represents a more consistent high-traffic period. In urban and suburban areas, this peak hour typically occurs daily on weekdays, with approximately 200 hours per year showing similar traffic levels.

For roads with significant seasonal traffic variations, the peak hour is determined differently. It is identified as one of the four busiest hours of the year but excludes the 30 to 50 hours with the most extreme traffic levels. This approach ensures that the peak hour reflects a traffic volume that occurs frequently during the busy season, rather than including atypical spikes that do not represent regular conditions.

#### Tourism pressure index (inverse)

Measures the ratio of overnight hotel stays to the local population and the density of overnight stays per square kilometer. Each factor is normalized by dividing by its maximum observed value, typically found in highly urbanized areas. The population share component reflects the impact of tourism on the local community, while the stays per square kilometer component indicates tourism intensity and infrastructure density.

By averaging these two normalized ratios, the tourism pressure index provides a balanced measure of tourism's impact on both the local population and the physical environment. This approach allows for comparison across different regions, accounting for variations in population density and urbanization levels. Higher index values indicate greater tourism pressure on the destination.

#### Tourism infrastructure utilization index (TIUI)

Combines multiple indicators related to supply and demand of accommodations (e.g. home rental listings as percentage of hotel rooms, home rental occupancy and others), providing a holistic view of how well tourism infrastructure is being considered to evaluate the utilization of tourism-related accommodation infrastructure across the region.

### CSF 5 qualitative ratings and findings

Qualitatively, the panelists assessed the region on CSF 5 across the following performance criteria:

#### Managing seasonality

Assesses a region's success in increasing off-peak tourism and managing peak visitor flow and measures the region's focus on and results in balancing visitor volume throughout the year.

#### Managing visitor distribution

Evaluates the focus on increasing visitation to less-frequented areas and the success of such efforts.

#### Managing responsible travel

Rates the presence and effectiveness of clear suggestions to encourage sustainable visitor behavior.

#### Monitoring visitor variations

Examines the extent and impact of monitoring visitor trends (e.g., daily, seasonal) to inform tourism management.

#### Responsible marketing

Considers how marketing strategies account for capacity, seasonality, environmental impact and residents’ well-being.

The individual performance criteria and the subsequent findings are shown in Table 5 below:

***Table 5. CSF 5 qualitative performance criteria ratings***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance criteria** | **Rating** | **Findings** |
| **Managing seasonality** | 2.3 | According to panelists, the region is moderately focused on mitigating seasonality with limited success. Although there are destinations within the region that experience near-capacity peak-season visitation, the region overall is not characterized by severe seasonal swings. |
| **Managing visitor distribution** | 2 | Panelists believe that there has been limited focus on and success in increasing visitor volume to less-visited areas in the region. |
| **Managing responsible travel** | 2 | Suggestions for visitors to travel responsibly and support sustainability are provided but their effectiveness is not clear, according to the panelists. |
| **Monitoring visitor variations** | 2 | Monthly and daily variations in visitation are monitored throughout the year but have limited impact on tourism management, according to the panelists. |
| **Responsible marketing** | 2.3 | Panelists believe that marketing strategies across the region typically have a slight focus on capacity, impact on the natural environment and residents' well- being and a moderate focus on seasonality, with the larger destinations incorporating these elements more consistently. |

“Major progress can still be realized in mass transportation options, managing peak volume and impact to residents.”

“What would be helpful is if the larger visitation areas could guide visitors to smaller towns for tourism. Tourism stakeholders are too localized right now.”

“Tourism is managed consistently regionally when scaled for tourist popularity, with the exception of some weather-dependent locations that are notably unprepared for significant volume (ex: mountain towns, some beach cities).”

## CSF 6 — Community Well-being

This CSF evaluates how well tourism supports community needs and promotes sustainable, inclusive development. It emphasizes community feedback, resident access, equity and responsible tourism development.

### CSF 6 key findings

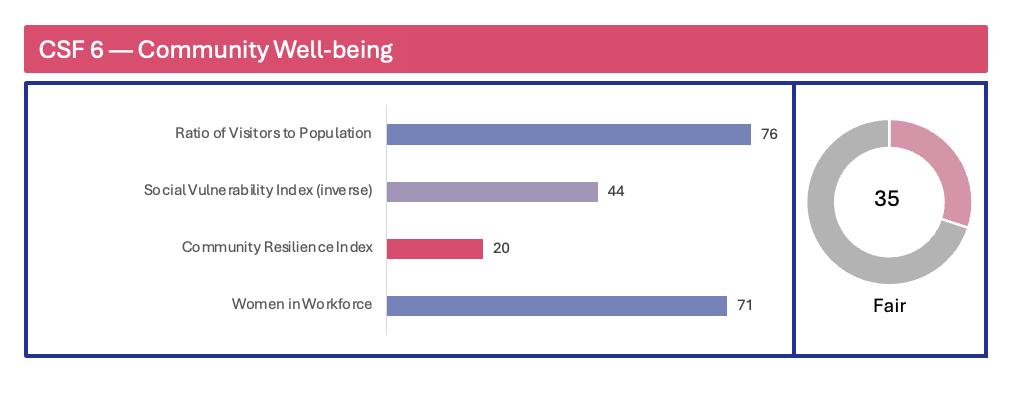
The assessment of community engagement and well-being in Los Angeles County reveals a complex and often challenging relationship between tourism development and community needs. The region receives a low composite rating of 35 out of 100, indicating significant room for improvement in aligning tourism with broader community resilience and equity goals. The county’s strongest performance is seen in women’s workforce participation (71 out of 100), pointing to potential progress in economic opportunity and work-life balance.

Other critical indicators present clear weaknesses. The visitors-to-population ratio (76 out of 100) highlights strain on transportation infrastructure, services and resources, particularly in high-traffic areas like beach communities. The community resilience index (20 out of 100) reflects limited preparedness to respond to disasters across social, economic, institutional and infrastructural domains. Meanwhile, the social vulnerability index (44 out of 100) points to persistent disparities in how different populations experience and recover from disruptions.

Despite these efforts, community engagement remains uneven and fragmented. While individual destinations solicit resident input, there is no regional framework guiding how tourism impacts are assessed or managed. Stakeholders describe a lack of coordinated engagement, with the effectiveness of efforts varying widely by organization and location. This contributes to mixed perceptions of “overtourism”: while not a widespread countywide issue, localized impacts in high-demand areas are seen as significant by some stakeholders.

Residents face pressures stemming from high living costs, a shortage of affordable housing and low wages. The lax enforcement of short-term rental regulations further undermines housing stability, weakening the effectiveness of policies aimed at protecting long-term residents. These structural issues heighten social vulnerability.

Overall, Los Angeles County’s community engagement efforts in tourism show signs of progress but remain constrained by fragmentation, inequities and inconsistent follow-through. A more coordinated and inclusive county-wide strategy — focused on equitable distribution of tourism benefits, mitigation of community-level impacts and deeper integration of resident voices in tourism planning — would help build a more resilient, supportive relationship between the tourism sector and local communities.



### CSF 6 quantitative rating descriptions

CSF 6 switches the focus to the perspective of the local community and assesses the region through the lens of resident well-being and engagement with the tourism industry. Of the four quantitative metrics, two are derived from the [National Risk Index](https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/) dataset designed and built by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The National Risk Index helps illustrate the U.S. communities most at risk for 18 natural hazards and is measured at the county and census tract levels.

#### Visitor-to-resident ratio

Compares the number of visitors a destination receives to its permanent resident population, indicating the tourism intensity of an area and potential impact of tourism on local infrastructure, services and community.

#### [Social vulnerability index](https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/social-vulnerability) (inverse)

Utilizes 16 socioeconomic variables from the [FEMA National Risk Index](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_national-risk-index_technical-documentation.pdf) to measure a community's reduced ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from hazards and natural disasters.

#### [Community resilience index](https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/community-resilience)

Assesses a community's ability to prepare, plan for, absorb, recover from and adapt to natural hazard impacts using 49 indicators across six resilience types (social, economic, community capital, institutional, infrastructural and environmental) at the county level, as included in the [FEMA National Risk Index](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_national-risk-index_technical-documentation.pdf).

#### Women in workforce

Calculates the proportion of women participating in paid employment compared to the total workforce, serving as an indicator of gender equality in the labor market and reflecting societal norms, economic opportunities and work-life balance policies in a given area.

### CSF 6 qualitative ratings and findings

Qualitatively, the panelists assessed the region’s performance on CSF 6 across the following criteria:

#### Community feedback

Evaluates panelists' perceptions regarding the solicitation of resident feedback about the tourism industry and the frequency with which this feedback influences policies and actions.

#### Community access to sites

Assesses panelists' perceptions of resident access to popular natural and cultural sites, distinguishing local needs from those of tourists.

#### Economic, social and environmental well-being

Analyzes the regional tourism industry's focus on diversity, equity and inclusion in hiring practices, as well as its contributions to cultural heritage preservation, cross-cultural exchange and environmental sustainability.

#### “Overtourism”

Investigates the presence, perception and mitigation of 'overtourism,' including strategies to address future risks associated with excessive visitor numbers.

#### Tourism development

Evaluates the effectiveness of planning guidelines and policies for sustainable tourism development, including the incorporation of resident feedback, management of short-term rentals and preservation of cultural heritage, as perceived by panelists.

The five individual performance criteria and the related findings are shown in Table 6 below:

***Table 6. CSF 6 qualitative performance criteria ratings***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance criteria** | **Rating** | **Findings** |
| **Community feedback** | 3 | Panelists believe resident feedback is solicited related to the tourism industry (surveys, town halls, focus groups) throughout the region and there is sometimes action taken in response. |
| **Community access to sites** | 1 | Distinctions between residents and tourists are not typical across the region, according to panelists, with respect to access to highly visited natural and cultural attractions and sites; however, some popular sites in larger municipalities have created ways to differentiate residents. |
| **Economic, social and environmental well-being** | 3.4 | Panelists report that the region's workforce is very reflective of the residential population. The tourism industry is moderately focused on ensuring diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging is a priority in its hiring practices. Tourism contributes to the preservation of local cultural heritage and traditions. |
| **“Overtourism”** | 3.3 | Generally, panelists indicate “overtourism” is only present in certain locations (e.g., beaches, mountain areas) during peak periods of demand. Panelists also note the limited risk of future issues related to overtourism. |
| **Tourism development** | 3.3 | Planning guidelines, regulations and/or policies for the location and nature of tourism development exist but are minimally effective, with resident feedback sometimes solicited, according to panelists. Measures exist to manage short-term rental inventory but are minimally effective. Measures exist to protect and preserve cultural heritage sites and traditions and are moderately effective. |

““Enforcement of short-term rental laws is lax, making those measures minimally effective.”

“Overtourism is significant in certain areas, which has a tendency to drive tourists elsewhere in the short term.”

## CSF 7 — Environmental Conservation

This CSF focuses on promoting sustainable tourism by preserving natural assets, ensuring responsible visitor behavior and addressing environmental impacts.

### CSF 7 key findings

Los Angeles County faces the most serious environmental challenges of all the regions. The overall composite rating of 10 out of 100 is the lowest, by far, of any region in the state, with the only relative strength being the management of cultural resources (43 out of 100). In contrast, air quality (19 out of 100), biodiversity (19 out of 100), conserved areas (19 out of 100) and stream condition (1 out of 100) all receive low scores.

Put differently, the Los Angeles-Long Beach metro area has the dubious distinction of 25 years as the smoggiest in the nation, according to the American Lung Association. The region also has the least biodiversity, poor stream conditions, minimal conserved areas and troubling water scarcity, none of which is all that surprising considering the region is home to the second largest metropolitan area behind only New York. The region is an economic and tourism powerhouse but also struggles with myriad environmental health concerns.

Water scarcity is a key area of concern. The water availability rating (35 out of 100) highlights an ongoing vulnerability in the face of California’s frequent droughts. Panelists report water usage guidelines exist across the region. However, panelists also note that data on tourism-sector water use is lacking or inaccessible, limiting the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of guidelines and complicating the development of responsive policy.

Panelists suggest that the widespread perception of Los Angeles County as a dense urban area may lead some visitors to underestimate the importance of protecting natural resources and respecting wildlife. These insights reflect a clear need for a region-wide code of conduct, increased signage and more consistent messaging on responsible visitor behavior. Panelists also emphasize that some jurisdictions have stronger leadership in environmental messaging, but there remains difficulty in securing consistent visitor buy-in and behavior change.

Los Angeles County would benefit from a more holistic and coordinated strategy that improves visitor behavior management, expands land and water conservation efforts, promotes green transportation and increases data collection and transparency, particularly in areas such as water usage within the tourism sector. A stronger regional framework will be critical for aligning tourism with the county’s broader environmental goals and ensuring long-term sustainability in the face of urban pressures and climate-related risks.

A screenshot of a graph

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

### CSF 7 quantitative rating descriptions

CSF 7 inventories the region’s position with regards to various environmental metrics:

#### Conserved areas

Calculates the percentage of conserved areas within each region using the [California Protected Areas Database](https://calands.org/) (CPAD), which identifies lands owned and protected for open space, including all parks from National Forests to neighborhood pocket parks.

#### Terrestrial and aquatic species biodiversity

Examines native species richness, rare species richness and irreplaceability using the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's [Areas of Conservation Emphasis](https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/Analysis/ACE) (ACE) dataset. The species biodiversity metric examines three related measures: native species richness, rare species richness and irreplaceability (i.e., areas of high endemism that support a unique species with a limited range). ACE ranks areas from 1 (low species diversity) to 5 (high species diversity). The average species biodiversity metric within the region was calculated to determine relative ratings and rankings.

#### Air Quality Index (AQI) (inverse)

This composite index measures overall air pollution exposure in a given area. It is based on two components: the annual mean concentration of PM2.5 over a three-year period (2015–2017), using data from [CalEnvironScreen](https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40) 4.0 and the [California Air Resources Board](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/) (CARB); and the 8-hour ozone concentration (in ppm) averaged over three years (2017–2019), also from CalEnvironScreen. Higher index values indicate better air quality. The AQI reflects long-term exposure risks to respiratory and cardiovascular health from both fine particulate matter and ground-level ozone.

#### Cultural resources

Quantifies the number of historic places within the region listed in the [National Register of Historic Places](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm), as defined by the National Park Service as worthy of preservation.

#### Stream conditions

Evaluates the percentage of streams meeting designated biological uses within the region using the [California Stream Condition Index](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/swamp/bioassessment/docs/csci_factsheet.pdf) (CSCI), a biological rating tool assessing freshwater stream health. This tool is based on an assessment of a wide array of environmental data associated with each stream and sets forth benchmarks for sites based on the local environmental setting. CSCI ratings provide a threshold above which a stream segment is determined to meet designated biological uses. The percentage of those streams that “meet designated biological uses” within the region was calculated to determine relative ratings and rankings.

#### Renewables

Calculates the total percentage of energy generated by renewable resources within the region using utility-scale (>1 MW) power plant generation data from the [California Energy Commission](https://www.energy.ca.gov/data-reports/energy-almanac/california-electricity-data/electric-generation-capacity-and-energy). Large hydroelectric plants (>30 MW) are considered non-renewable. The total percentage of energy generated by renewable resources within the region is calculated to determine relative ratings and rankings.

#### Water availability

Combines precipitation, drought and current/future water stress variables to create a comprehensive measure of water scarcity in the region.

##### Drought

Analyzes five years (2019-2023) of weekly [U.S. Drought Monitor](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?CA) (USDM) data for California monitoring sites, classifying drought conditions from normal to exceptional. The [U.S. Drought Monitor](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?CA) (USDM) is a weekly assessment of drought conditions by multiple federal agencies based on a variety of water-related variables including precipitation, streamflow, reservoir levels, temperature, evaporation potential, vegetation health and more. USDM combines data into six classifications to identify drought conditions from normal (or wet) to exceptional drought.

##### Precipitation

Computes the average 30-year normal precipitation value (1991-2020) within the region using data from the [PRISM Climate Group](https://www.prism.oregonstate.edu/).

##### Current water stress

Identifies and evaluates current global water risks using the [World Resources Institute's (WRI) Aqueduct tools](https://www.wri.org/aqueduct). This metric quantifies current water supply (upstream consumptive water users and large dams on downstream water availability) and demand (domestic, industrial, irrigation and livestock uses) factors through Aqueduct's current water stress data. It places areas into water stress categories ranging from low to extremely high and analyzes current water stress values in each study area to determine relative ratings and rankings.

##### Future water stress

Identifies and evaluates future global water risks using the [World Resources Institute's (WRI) Aqueduct tools](https://www.wri.org/aqueduct) to predict future water supply (upstream consumptive water users and large dams on downstream water availability) and demand (domestic, industrial, irrigation and livestock uses) factors through Aqueduct's future water stress data for 2030. It places areas into water stress categories ranging from low to extremely high and analyzes future water stress predictions for 2030 in each study area to determine relative ratings and rankings.

### CSF 7 qualitative ratings and findings

Qualitatively, the panelists assessed the region’s performance on CSF 7 across the following criteria:

#### Managing protected sites

Evaluates the accessibility, usefulness and effectiveness of maintaining and using a list of natural heritage sites and protected areas, including ongoing conservation processes.

#### Guidelines for behavior at natural sites

Assesses the presence and effectiveness of regionwide guidelines for visitor behavior and tour operators to ensure responsible management of natural sites.

#### Ethical animal tourism

Focuses on guidelines for ethical animal interactions in tourism, ensuring alignment with global standards like the [Global Welfare Guidance for Animals and Tourism](https://www.abta.com/sites/default/files/media/document/uploads/Global%20Welfare%20Guidance%20for%20Animals%20in%20Tourism%202019%20version.pdf).

#### Reusable products

Measures the prioritization of reusable products over single-use items in tourism businesses and attractions.

#### Water usage

Examines the implementation and effectiveness of regionwide water conservation guidelines for tourism-related activities.

#### Emissions information on tourism

Considers how tourism's impact on emissions is measured and integrated into broader environmental goals and policies.

The six individual performance criteria and the subsequent findings are shown in Table 7 below:

***Table 7. CSF 7 qualitative performance criteria ratings***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance criteria** | **Rating** | **Findings** |
| **Managing protected sites** | 3.3 | Panelist report that lists of natural heritage sites and other protected areas exist and are moderately accessible to tourism stakeholders. These lists are considered by panelists to be moderately useful to tourism stakeholders and provide current and actionable information. Panelists also note there is an ongoing process to measure performance and implement steps to protect natural assets in the region, but it is minimally effective. |
| **Guidelines for behavior at natural sites** | 2 | Panelists agree that there are not consistent regionwide guidelines in place for appropriate visitor behavior at natural sites. While regionwide guidelines are in place for tour operators and tour guides on visitor management at natural sites, they are viewed as minimally effective, according to the panelists. |
| **Ethical animal tourism** | 3 | Panelists indicate that there are regionwide guidelines for ethical animal tourism, including interaction with wildlife and domesticated animals, but they are minimally effective. |
| **Reusable products** | 3 | Panelists report that tourism businesses and attractions are focused on using reusable products, but they sometimes still use single-use products. |
| **Water usage** | 4 | There are effective regionwide guidelines in place related to water conservation by tourism businesses and attractions, according to panelists. |
| **Emissions information on tourism** | 3 | The region is at an initial stage of monitoring tourism's impact on the region's overall GHG emissions goal, according to panelists. |

“While residential data demonstrates that policies for water are effective, we do not know if water usage in the tourism sector has decreased. That type of data either doesn't exist or is very hard to find.”

“Visitors often think of Los Angeles County as a very urbanized area with no natural sites. When they do see wildlife, they are not respectful. A code of conduct is needed.”

“Some regionwide guidelines are in place for nature parks but aren’t for things like recreational fishing.”

## Opportunities for incremental improvement

The Los Angeles County Scorecard serves as a baseline tool to raise awareness of the region’s current sustainability efforts and key risks to its tourism sector. The most critical issue identified is the region’s limited preparedness and response capacity, particularly the low number of available emergency shelters — a major concern given that earthquakes remain the highest threat, with significant risk to tourism infrastructure. Drought and extreme heat also pose major challenges. With water availability scoring among the lowest across environmental indicators, ongoing shortages threaten to diminish the overall quality of the visitor experience throughout the region.

Addressing infrastructure issues primarily resides with local, state and federal governments. However, there are still several opportunities for travel and tourism entities in the Los Angeles County to pursue to improve the overall sustainability and resilience of the industry to climate-related and other natural disasters:

### Be prepared.

* Use the [California Tourism Resilience & Sustainability Dashboard](https://www.risklayer-explorer.com/region/title=California/overview) to identify potential impacts to tourism from various hazards and disaster events.
  + Organize webinar training sessions to familiarize tourism stakeholders, local officials and the broader public with the dashboard and how to interpret the data.
  + Determine which communities are most vulnerable to and face the greatest risks from tourism losses from natural disaster and other events.
* Develop scenario-based exercises focusing on the region’s high-priority risks — drought, heatwaves and earthquakes — tailored for small and medium tourism businesses and DMOs, with an emphasis on supporting the most vulnerable communities.
  + Adopt emergency response strategies to prepare for higher risk crisis situations.
  + Provide guidance on effective post-crisis recovery strategies.
* Prepare a regional risk-based action plan focused on protecting tourism assets, including tourism products prioritized for development in the Los Angeles Regional Strategic Tourism Plan, from the top risks identified under CSF 1:
  + Provide a detailed risk profile of key tourism assets.
  + Identify steps for mitigating impacts identified in the risk profile.
  + Incorporate mitigation/resilience improvements into operation budgets.
* Establish communication channels between tourism stakeholders, emergency services, regional news media and visitors to support timely and accurate information dissemination during crises:
  + Prepare a list of mobile apps, websites and local radio stations providing real-time updates on weather conditions and disaster alerts.
  + Develop tools, such as regular email updates, a dedicated hotline or social media updates for instant alerts, to communicate risk information to tourism businesses.
  + Pursue partnerships with local government to establish temporary agreements for converting facilities into emergency shelters during crises.

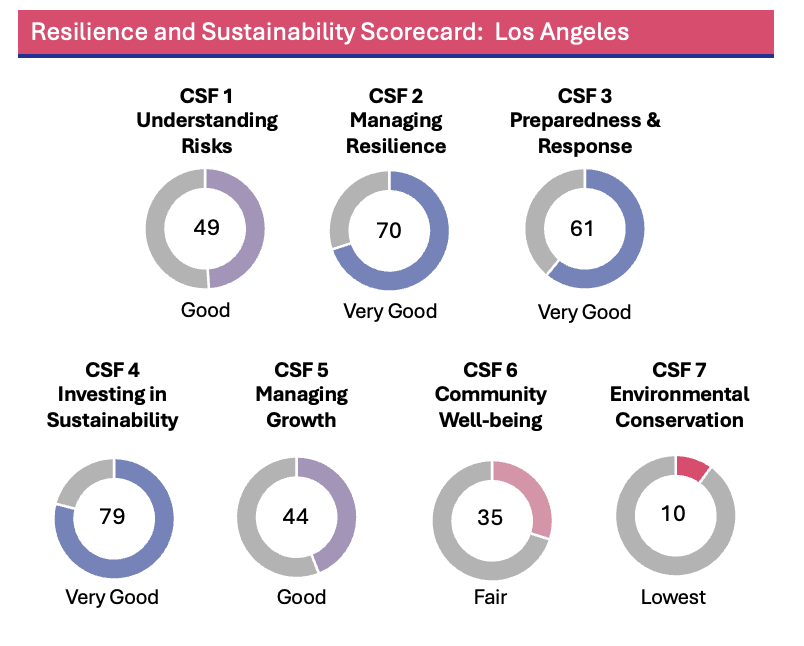
### Act sustainably.

* Pursue sustainability certification through recognized frameworks, such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Council Criteria for hotel and tour operators, destinations, venues, event organizers, events & exhibitions and attractions.
* Incorporate sustainability initiatives into regular operations.
  + Install water-conserving and/or energy-efficient measures that exceed building code requirements when replacing existing building components.
  + Pursue electric utility and local, state and federal government incentives for clean energy improvements and electric vehicle charging infrastructure (see Statewide Opportunities for more information).
  + Partner with local businesses to create a closed-loop system for resources, such as turning food waste into compost for local farms that supply restaurants.
  + Collect relevant data, including guest satisfaction ratings, initial investment costs, ongoing maintenance expense, energy and water savings and waste reduction to determine the long-term financial benefits of sustainable practices.

### Manage responsible visitation.

* Develop a strategy to manage visitation in popular areas to avoid exceeding capacity during peak periods:
  + Gather seasonal visitation data and monitor fluctuations to identify and address shifting demand patterns (monthly and daily) in a timely manner.
  + Partner with public agency stakeholders to collect visitor data at high-trafficked public sites to inform visitor management strategies.
  + Identify sites experiencing environmental degradation from visitation exceeding capacity, assign a level of urgency and develop a strategy for mitigation that includes resources and monitoring performance against KPIs.
* Create guidelines for visitor behavior at natural sites, communicate guidelines at all stages in the visitor journey and create a system to monitor the impact of visitor impact on natural sites.
* Implement campaigns on a regionwide basis, like Leave No Trace and Cleaner California Coast, to educate visitors on the importance of sustainability and how their choices can make a difference.
  + Leverage Visit California’s Responsible Travel Code resources to encourage positive visitor behavior.
  + Emphasize pre-trip engagement, such as the USFS’s [Know Before You Go](https://www.fs.usda.gov/visit/know-you-go), to encourage visitors to plan effectively prior to arrival at a destination.

## Conclusion



This scorecard highlights unique challenges facing the Los Angeles County regarding climate change and disaster preparedness. These pressures underscore the urgency of advancing robust sustainability approaches. Without sufficient progress, the region faces distinct challenges that could impact its tourism industry and overall resilience.

There is energy, enthusiasm and commitment from regional stakeholders to address resilience and sustainability issues, which are important not only for the region but for the entire state of California. The strong local support and recognition of sustainability's importance provide a foundation for addressing these issues. Significant work lies ahead to improve the region's performance and prepare for future environmental challenges, particularly in managing drought conditions and adapting to climate change impacts.

# Appendix

## Appendix 1- Reviewed destination plans

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Destination** | **Plan name** |
| Alhambra | Alambra General Plan Vision 2040 |
| Arcadia | Arcadia General Plan |
| Artesia | Artesia General Plan 2030 |
| Avalon | Avalon 2030 General Plan / Local Coastal Plan |
| Azusa | Azusa General Plan |
| Baldwin Park | Baldwin Park 2020 General Plan |
| Bell Gardens | Bell Gardens 2030 Comprehensive General Plan |
| Bellflower | Bellflower General Plan |
| Beverly Hills | Beverly Hills General Plan |
| Bradbury | General Plan 2012-2030 Update |
| Burbank | Burbank 2035 General Plan |
| Calabasas | Carson General Plan |
| Carson | Carson General Plan |
| Cerritos | Cerritos Final General Plan |
| Claremont | Claremont General Plan |
| Commerce | Commerce 2020 General Plan |
| Compton | Compton 2030 Comprehensive General Plan Update |
| Covina | Covina General Plan |
| Cudahy | Cudahy General Plan Annual Progress Report |
| Culver City | Culver City General Plan 2045 |
| Diamond Bar | Bar Diamond Bar General Plan 2040 |
| Downey | Downey Vision 2025 General Plan |
| Duarte | Duarte Comprehensive General Plan 2005 |
| El Monte | El Monte Community Development General Plan |
| El Segundo | The El Segundo General Plan |
| Gardena | Gardena General Plan |
| Glendale | County Government Envision Glendale 2040 General Plan |
| Glendora | Glendora Community Plan 2025 |
| Hawaiian Gardens | Hawaiian Gardens General Plan |
| Hawthorne | Hawthorne General Plan |
| Hidden Hills | Hidden Hills General Plan |
| Huntington Park | Huntington Park General Plan |
| Industry | Industry 2014 General Plan |
| Inglewood | County Government Inglewood General Plan Proposal |
| Irwindale | Irwindale 2020 General Plan |
| La Canada Flintridge | La Cañada Flintridge General Plan 2030 |
| La Habra Heights | La Habra Heights General Plan |
| La Mirada | La Mirada General Plan |
| Los Puente | La Puente General Plan |
| La Verne | La Verne General Plan |
| Lakewood | The Lakewood 2022 General Plan |
| Lancaster | Lancaster General Plan |
| Lawndale | General Plan 2045 Lawndale |
| Lomita | Lomita General Plan |
| Long Beach | Long Beach General Plan |
| Los Angeles | [Los Angeles City G**eneral**](https://planning.lacounty.gov/long-range-planning/general-plan/) Plan 2025 |
| Lynwood | Lynwood General Plan |
| Malibu | Malibu General Plan |
| Maywood | Maywood General Plan |
| Monrovia | Monrovia General Plan |
| Montebello | Montebello General Plan |
| Monterey Park | Monterey Park General Plan |
| Norwalk | Norwalk Citywide Plan: 2019-2029 |
| Palmdale | Palmdale 2045 General Plan Update |
| Paramount | Paramount General Plan |
| Pasadena | Pasadena General Plan |
| Pico Rivera | General Plan |
| Rancho Palos Verdes | Rancho Palos Verdes General Plan |
| Redondo Beach | Redondo Beach General Plan |
| Rolling Hills | Rolling Hills Estates General Plan 2040 |
| Rolling Hills | Rolling Hills General Plan |
| Rosemead | Rosemead General Plan Update |
| San Dimas | San Dimas General Plan |
| San Fernando | Sab Fernando Revised General Plan |
| San Gabriel | General Plan of San Gabriel |
| Santa Clarita | Santa Clarita General Plan |
| Santa Fe Springs | Santa Fe Springs 2040 General Plan |
| Santa Monica | Santa Monica Sustainable City Plan |
| Sierra Madre | General Plan Sierra Madre |
| South El Monte | South El Monte General Plan |
| South Gate | South Gate General Plan 2035 |
| Temple City | Temple City General Plan |
| Torrance | Torrance General Plan |
| Vernon | Vernon General Plan |
| Walnut | Walnut General Plan |
| West Hollywood | The West Hollywood General Plan 2035 |
| Westlake Village | Westlake Village General Plan |
| Whittier | Whittier Envision Whittier General Plan |