

CHAPTER 1 – PURPOSE & INTENT



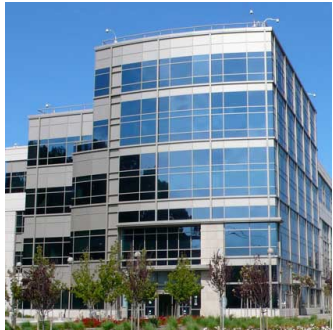
1.0 PURPOSE & INTENT

This Plan has been prepared to guide future land use and shape development within the Health District Plan Area. The Plan and its regulations, standards and guidelines have been prepared to implement a community-based vision of the future of this underdeveloped area that is at a major crossroad at the center of Lancaster, surrounding the Antelope Valley Hospital.

The impetus for the Plan, its top-level goals and strategies, and an overview of the plan preparation process are provided in Chapter 1. Background information and analysis that have informed the Plan are summarized in Chapter 2. The vision for the future of the Health District is summarized in Chapter 3 and the Chapter 4 provides broad-level vision-based development standards and guidelines. Implementation procedures are outlined in Chapter 5.

1.1 The Vision – An Oasis of Health & Wellness

This plan provides a vision and implementation guide for developing the Lancaster Health District into a nationally acclaimed and regionally significant center of health, wellness and innovation. Anchored by a state-of-the-art hospital and surrounded and supported by medical offices, clinics, labs and other support facilities, health-supportive businesses, and urban neighborhoods, the District will be a model for health urban living and a catalyst for new investment and economic development. Located at the geographic center of Lancaster near Downtown, adjacent to State Route (SR) 14, and organized around a district framework of multi-modal streets and human-scale open spaces, the District is a compelling destination and accessible by all travel modes, both locally and regionally.



Building on a core campus of existing medical service providers including Antelope Valley Hospital, Kaiser Permanente, City of Hope, High Desert Medical Group, and many other medical offices, drug stores and supporting businesses along Avenue J, the Health District will attract, organize, and support a broad range of health and wellness businesses, continuum of care providers, workforce and senior housing, long- and short-term lodging facilities, and high quality health restaurants and health- and wellness-oriented retail, and many other future uses and activities, to make the District a compelling designation to live, work, play, learn and invest.

1.2 The Opportunity

The convergence of a number of factors and developments have aligned to make the preparation of a plan for the Lancaster Health District extremely timely. With the development of the new Antelope Valley Hospital Facility comes the opportunity to re-establish the Lancaster Health District as the hub of health and wellness in the Antelope Valley Region, and beyond.

1. Stimulate New Investment

The Antelope Valley Hospital was constructed in the 1950s on the western edge of what now is the City of Lancaster. The City has since expanded to the point where the Antelope Valley Hospital finds itself in the center of a large city, surrounded by the highest concentration of medical offices and support facilities in the Antelope Valley. With a clear plan for growth, this area is strategically located to attract new public and private investment in medical infrastructure, support commercial uses, and housing.

Approximately 552,000 square feet of existing medical offices and clinic facilities are located within the Plan Area bounded by Avenue J, Avenue J-8, 20th Street West, and 15th Street West. These existing medical uses include City of Hope, Kaiser Health System, a medical imaging center and offices of physicians in private practice. The High Desert Medical Group is located in a former retail building south of Avenue J-8, and numerous medical and dental offices and clinics are located along Avenue J to the north and east of the Plan Area. Collectively these facilities represent over 552,000 square feet of the 1.1 million square feet of medical offices in Lancaster and 1.7 million square feet in the Antelope Valley.¹

2. Improve Poor Health Outcomes

The Health District presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve public health in the Antelope Valley region, which leads Los Angeles County in obesity, emphysema, hypertension, low birth weights, childhood asthma, and coronary heart disease.² The high demand for services outpaces the availability of affordable, accessible healthcare services.

Compounding these challenges is a large local population of indigent and homeless individuals, who, due to lack of services to meet their needs, become “by-default” patients of Antelope Valley Hospital, overburdening the emergency-services department. This has resulted in below-average satisfaction rates with available services, and a trend whereby patients who can afford to do so travel elsewhere for better, faster medical treatment in a more pleasant environment. This Plan aims to reverse this trend to redirect significant additional revenue to the Health District.

¹ CoStar, 2016. Health & Wellness District Real Estate Opportunities, City of Lancaster, HR&A Advisors, February 10, 2017.

² Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. Key Indicators of Health by Service Planning Area, January 2017.

3. Support Hospital District in Transition

The Antelope Valley Hospital District (AVHD), a public hospital district formed under California law, has undergone a number of leadership changes in recent years, and in 2017 was reorganized as a community hospital by ballot measure. It is now the governing body primarily responsible for public hospital operations and healthcare delivery in the Antelope Valley. This new structure and new leadership offers the prospect of creative approaches to financing new facilities and building new strategic partnerships.



Antelope Valley Hospital

The AVHD faces a deadline of 2028 to upgrade its physical facilities to meet the earthquake-resistant standards of Senate Bill (SB) 1953. This will require an investment on the order of half a billion dollars to upgrade its existing building complex at the corner of Avenue J and 15th Street West, or somewhat more to construct a new critical half facility elsewhere within the AVHD's sizable land holdings to the west, south, and east of the existing hospital.



Potential for mixed-use.

4. Reposition Under-Developed Land

The Health District is located in the geographic center of the City, immediately adjacent to the Antelope Valley Freeway and several major arterial streets and freeway interchanges with impending upgrades.

Of the 272.4 acres within the Plan Area, over 110 are vacant or undeveloped. While the lack of infrastructure in the area presents a distinct challenge for development of a pedestrian-oriented and transit-ready mixed-use health and wellness district, the abundance of open land in the center of a large city, adjacent to so many existing health-related facilities is a remarkable and unique opportunity.

As presented in more detail in Chapter 2, much of the land near the hospital is owned by AVHD. Large parcels of vacant land both north and south of Avenue J-8 are owned by private parties who share the vision for the Health District and look forward to developing their land with housing, medical offices, hotels and other uses that will support the viability and growth of the District.



Vacant land on-site



Typical undeveloped lots

5. Build on Place-Making Experience

The potential for transforming underdeveloped land into a vital, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use district and neighborhoods, known in planning circles as “placemaking”, is a topic familiar to the City of Lancaster. In 2009, the City completely transformed its downtown by rebuilding Lancaster Boulevard from a high-speed 4-lane arterial street to a low-speed, shaded town center avenue with frequent visitors and retail activity.



Lancaster Boulevard

The result was immediate and striking, drawing over \$100 million in private investment within the next 3 years, dozens of new businesses, hundreds of new residents, and many thousands of new customers. For the Health District, the City intends a result comparable to that of the BLVD District, making it a compelling address for health-related businesses and institutions, and the premier Antelope Valley destination for healthcare and wellness goods and services.



Lancaster Boulevard

6. Establish Strategic Partnerships

Recognizing this remarkable opportunity, City leadership has underwritten the preparation of this Plan, establishing partnerships with AVHD, other nearby healthcare providers, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Kaiser Permanente, Plan Area property owners, and many other interested community members.



Kaiser Permanente

Through the planning process, developers and investors with experience in health-related district and facilities development and financing have expressed interest in playing a role in implementing the Plan. The Los Angeles County Transportation Authority (Metro) has provided the City with a multi-million dollar grant for the construction of initial street network improvements for the District, in addition to a previous much larger grant for the improvement of Lancaster’s State Route 14 freeway interchanges.



County of Los Angeles

1.3 Health District Goals & Key Results

The following Planning Goals and Strategies, developed through interactive and collaborative work with the Antelope Valley Hospital District, property owners, and City staff, commissions, and Council, define in broad strokes, the community's vision and hopes for the Lancaster Health District.

-  1. Improve Health Outcomes
-  2. Create Medical District Core
-  3. Leverage Land & Location
-  4. Promote Active Mixed-Use Development
-  5. Create Quality Public Realm
-  6. Design for Local Climate
-  7. Provide Clear Standards & Guidelines

Based on these goals and strategies, the Health District Plan team prepared a series of conceptual development studies to explore site organization, development intensity, and use mix alternatives that aim to meet the Goals and implement the Strategies.

Those studies in turn informed Chapter 3, The Health District Plan, organizing, shaping, scaling and connecting future private and public improvements to meet the community's collective vision.

Chapter 4, Design Standards and Guidelines, reverse engineers the vision plan into an instruction set that can deliver the long-term vision for the Health District, one project at a time. The Regulating Plan (Figure 4.1) and zones defines the physical armature and organization for the land use regulations, multi-modal mobility network and standards, and urban and architectural design guidelines for all development within the Plan Area.

Chapter 5 covers the implementation to make certain that the built results match the vision of the plan.



Goal #1 - Improve Health Outcomes

Capitalizing on the existing Antelope Valley Hospital, historic concentration of medical uses, and prime location in the center of Lancaster, develop a regionally significant center of health and wellness to transform health outcomes in the Antelope Valley to become consistently positive.

Strategies

- A. Building on recent successes in reorganizing the Antelope Valley Hospital District and its leadership, and on the existing AVHD land holdings in this strategic location, assemble a collection of healthcare and wellness facilities and providers that meet the needs of all segments of the Antelope Valley's population.
- B. Beyond traditional medical and healthcare services, focus on public education and outreach to promote wellness and active healthy lifestyles.
- C. Make the Health District a regional and national model for healthy living.
- D. Through partnerships with government agencies, local businesses, educational institutions and non-profits, build and sustain a network of health and wellness services and education extending throughout the Antelope Valley and centered in the District "Hub of Health."



Expanded Medical Facilities



Nearby Farmers market

- E. Partner with Los Angeles County and other social service providers to untangle the current overburdening of medical service providers who are attempting to address unmet social service need.
- F. Through physical planning and design, as well as through structures that define programming, future-proof the District by building in flexibility to capitalize on emerging technologies and shifting service-delivery models.
- G. Partner with transit providers and new transportation technology companies to address the lack of physical access to health and wellness services.

Table 1.1 – Goal #1 Key Results

Key Results	Measures	Timing
1. The Antelope Valley sub-region public health statistics improve significantly over a mid- to long-term duration.	Public health ranking rises out of the bottom quartile of public health rankings in Los Angeles County within 10 years, and into the top two quartiles within 15 years.	10-15 years
2. The District becomes a regional hub for the delivery of healthcare, wellness, education, and social services.	Strategic partnerships and coordinated funding sources.	Year 1 and on-going
3. District governance and management structures and processes monitor shifts in funding, financing, technology and management to constantly improve service delivery and adopt to a changing health and wellness environment.	A working relationship is maintained between AVHD, property owners, City staff, commissions and Council to ensure communication needs between all parties.	Year 1 and on-going.
4. Partnerships with local primary, secondary and post-secondary schools and regional medical schools drives a highly educated workforce and well-informed community.	Systematically develop academic partnerships at all levels	On-going



Goal #2 – Create Medical District Core

Surround Antelope Valley Hospital with a significant collection of medical offices, clinics, and support facilities within a compact, pedestrian-oriented District Core area.

Strategies

- A. Actively purpose and develop partnerships with other health-care providers, community non-profits, the County of Los Angeles and others to build a first-rate collection of healthcare and wellness facilities.
- B. To help attract and retain patients, customers, healthcare professionals, and residents, ensure that the streets and other open spaces surrounding the hospital provide an attractive, safe, comfortable pedestrian environment that encourages movement among health and wellness facilities on foot.
- C. Provide a “park-once” system that enables visitors, employees, and residents to park their cars and access the District’s Medical Core on foot, encouraging health physical activity and reducing traffic congestion and parking demand.
- D. Provide a mix of small and medium sized outdoor gathering spaces, including and in addition to streets, to provide the District with destinations that help to organize activities attract people and encourage them to linger.
- E. Furnish streets and open spaces with beautiful landscaping defined by large canopy trees.
- F. Line and define streets and other public spaces with attractive, human-scaled buildings and frontages that provide visual interest, shade and activity to make these spaces inviting to and comfortable for pedestrians.
- G. Ensure that new buildings reflect high-quality, varied architecture and include high-quality, durable materials that age gracefully.

Table 1.2 – Goal #2 Key Results

Key Results	Measures	Timing
1. Medical offices, clinics, and supporting services surround the new Antelope Valley Hospital, connected by a pedestrian-oriented public space network.	Antelope Valley Health District and City collaborate in recruiting users.	2-5 years/ on-going
2. Medical staff and patients walk and bike through the Health District and patronize new businesses as part of their daily life.	High quality pedestrian and bike routes connect to neighborhoods, transit and parking	On-going
3. High-quality and durable architecture makes the District Core an iconic and recognizable location that lasts for generations.	High-quality building and public space design	Required at time of new development

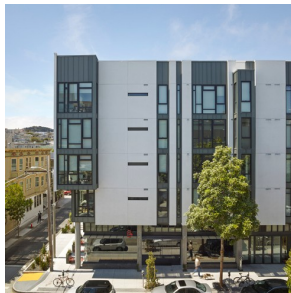


Goal #3 – Leverage Land & Location

Make productive of the vacant land adjacent to a major hospital in the center of a large city with significant portions owned by AVHD and by private and non-profit entities who share the vision for the Health District.

Strategies

- A. Efficiently utilize the vacant land within the District as a precious and scarce resource. If initial phases of new development are high in quality, the value of each adjoining parcel for subsequent phases of development will rise and economic pressure for further infill development will increase. If initial phases of new development sprawl out and use up available land with low-intensity suburban development, this great opportunity will be lost.
- D. Partner with private parties and non-profit partnerships that own a large percentage of the remaining land with the District and embrace a common vision for the Health District. Establish a land use and circulation framework and a phasing and financing strategy to deliver a health district of regional significance.
- E. Thoughtfully plan future District infill and expansion, within a framework that can flex to meet unforeseen needs.



Mid/High-Intensity zoning



Concentration of Health

- B. Set the framework for organizing the currently vacant land into a compact, efficient, mixed-use, urban district with connected neighborhoods. Infill development consistent with the Plan will recognize the value-creation potential of this strategy.
- C. Organize future building development around the new Antelope Valley Hospital. The Antelope Valley Hospital District owns a great deal of the vacant land within the District and the location of the new hospital facility in this area has the potential to generate significant new value in surrounding vacant land.
- F. Phase parking facility strategies so that early phases of new health and wellness facility development may utilize relatively low cost surface parking lots, which can later be redeveloped with medical, commercial or residential development when land values and development economics can support the cost of structured parking facilities. By this strategy, the value of facilities will increase over time, leveraging past investment and encouraging further investment in new facilities that efficiently utilize resources.

Table 1.3 – Goal #3 Key Results

Key Results	Measures	Timing
1. Developers and investors with experience in high quality urban infill development find the Health District to be an attractive investment.	Owners/purchasers of parcels submit applications for high quality infill development.	On-going
2. Residents of Lancaster needing medical services find the Health District to be a compelling option.	The medical services are frequented by nearby residents and visitors.	On-going
3. Commercial and residential spaces are successful.	Commercial/residential spaces are pre-leased and maintain high occupancy rates.	2-5 years/ on-going



Goal #4 – Promote Active Mixed-Use Development

Implement a mix of land uses and development intensities within the Lancaster Health District in a pedestrian- and transit-oriented urban environment, providing strong property values for current owners, support for feasible market-based development and reinvestment, and making the District a prominent designation for health services, goods and life-styles.

Strategies

- A. Allow and require a variety of uses including medical, office, retail, restaurant, housing, and other compatible uses, that both support and derive value from investments in regional medical facilities, transportation and transit.
- B. Provide for vertical mixed use with commercial uses on the first floor (retail and quasi-retail office uses such as personal service uses) and office or residential uses on upper floors.
- C. Encourage a balance mix of residential and non-residential uses that support AVHD's core medical mission and AVHD's and the City's continuing fiscal health.
- D. Encourage a 7-day per week, 18-hour per day environment similar to that found in Downtown Lancaster.
- E. Generate value from the Plan Area's adjacency to SR-14, proximity to Downtown and Metrolink, and other planned Valley-wide transit connections to offer employers and residents many convenient transit options to and from the Health District.
- F. Ensure that the public realm and circulation network within and around the Health District prioritizes active transportation modes to provide strong support for District uses and public transit and offer residents, workers, and visitors the option of an active pedestrian- and transit-oriented lifestyle.
- G. Provide a variety of new housing options within walking distance of the District Core and transit connections, including apartments and condominiums, targeted to healthcare professionals who would appreciate a convenient, healthy, active lifestyle with the option to walk or bike to work.
- H. Provide housing targeted to older residents who would value proximity to health and wellness facilities, including flat-style apartments and condominiums in elevator-served buildings as well as assisted living and continuum of care facilities.
- I. Encourage housing types that emphasize quality over quantity, including smaller floor plans in amenity-rich buildings.
- J. Take advantage of the concept that housing in an amenity-rich, transit-rich environment can generally be parked at ratios lower than typical requirements, enabling a higher concentration of residents and commercial activity within this area than would otherwise be feasible.



Mixed-Use Apartment

Table 1.4 – Goal #4 Key Results

Key Results	Measures	Timing
1. Commercial amenities provide convenient goods and services within a comfortable walk for employees of the Hospital and medical buildings and residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.	Retail and restaurant uses comprise a significant portion of ground floor spaces in key centers.	Required at time of new development
2. New medical and commercial uses provide jobs for local and regional residents, with a strong share commuting by alternative modes of transportation.	District becomes a more significant employer in Lancaster.	2-5 years/ on-going
3. Employees working in the District Core, whether at the new Antelope Valley Hospital or surrounding health and wellness businesses have access to a range of housing opportunities in the Health District area.	Over 20% of District employees live in the Health District.	2-5 years/ on-going
4. The public realm of the Health District is active at all hours of the day and into the evening.	Sidewalk activity for 18 continuous hours of the day.	2-5 years/ on-going
5. Housing serves a wide range of residents, from medical district employees to older populations.	Residents range in household size, age, and income.	Ongoing.
6. Transit ridership increases and parking demand per household, student and job decreases.	Adequate parking at a low ratio.	2-5 years.



Goal #5 – Create Quality Public Realm

Provide a very high quality, comfortable, and safe pedestrian and bicycling environment throughout the Plan Area, including existing and new streets, new paseos, plazas and courts, connecting the new Antelope Valley Hospital to other medical uses, mixed-use buildings and neighborhoods in the area.

Strategies

- A. Ensure that the public realm and circulation network within and around the Health District prioritizes active transportation modes to provide strong support for transit and a health active lifestyle for residents, employees, and visitors.
- B. Create a high-quality, safe, comfortable, and urban pedestrian environment on all streets, including canopy street trees, bulbed-out intersection planters, landscaping in the planters, sidewalks, benches and bus shelters, on-street parking and other design enhancements.



Creative street furniture

- C. Transform 15th Street West into a very comfortable walking and biking route and attractive gateway to the District and Central Lancaster for all travel modes.
- D. Make Avenues J and J-8 very safe and comfortable walking and biking routes to and through the Health District.

- E. Provide comfortable and convenient walking routes throughout the Health District.



Crossable streets

- F. Minimize the appearance/dominance of the automobile by utilizing parking structures and rear parking lined with active uses rather than surface parking lots located in front of buildings. Curbside street parking will also provide very convenient short-term visitor parking, and will encourage pedestrian activity along building frontages.
- G. Establish a “park-once” environment, in which parking is available in strategic locations, and it is easier and preferable for users and visitors of the Health District to park in one location and walk to their destinations and around the Health District area.



Bike-safe streets

Table 1.5 – Goal #5 Key Results

Key Results	Measures	Timing
1. Avenue J between State Route 14 and Kingtree Avenue is transformed into an attractive east-west spine, with avenues entering the Health District clearly branching from this arterial.	Arterial retrofits on Avenue J are realized	Required at the time of new development
2. Businesses within the Health District are successful due to a high-quality public realm that makes them easily accessible to residents and employees of the Health District	Model streetscape and public frontage designs meet Plan requirements	2-5 years
3. New area streets increase connectivity through the Plan Area.	The proposed Circulation Plan is realized.	2-5 years
4. The Health District becomes a pedestrian designation for residents living in Lancaster.	Daily errands are completed on foot and by bicycle.	2-5 years.



Goal #6 – Design for Local Climate

Provide development standards and design guidelines for landscaping reflective of the natural environment of the Antelope Valley, with particular attention to creating hospitable public space by providing shelter from direct sunlight, as well as utilizing native foliage and encouraging high-quality, sustainability-focused, and actively- and passively-cooled architecture.

Strategies

- A. Plan the network of streets and streetscape design with a focus on relatively short walking distances between rests and refuges, with relatively short block lengths, frequent paseos and other pedestrian short-cuts, adequate protection from the sun, and frequent rest stops provided by shaded open spaces and street furniture.
- C. Provide shading elements, such as trees, trellises, canopies, umbrellas, etc., in all parts of the public realm, including sidewalks and public open spaces.



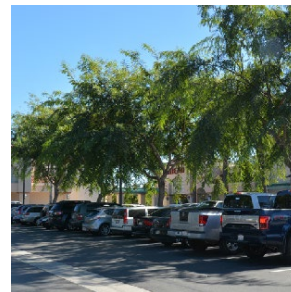
Multiple shade elements

- D. Encourage architecture that utilizes sustainable practices including durable, long-lasting structural design and material selection, passive solar design achieved by optimal building orientation, shade structures, operable windows, site-specific stormwater runoff management, and drought-tolerant landscaping.
- E. Where possible, integrate solar collectors with shading strategies for buildings, parking structures and surface parking lots.

- B. Require dry-climate native and adaptive plants and trees that will thrive in the Antelope Valley environment with minimal irrigation and maintenance.



Desert materials and foliage



Shaded parking lots

Table 1.6 – Goal #6 Key Results

Key Results	Measures	Timing
1. The pedestrian environment is hospitable and comfortable, with human-scale streetscape and open space elements focused on promoting comfort in the outdoor environment, with an emphasis on shade.	Each element of streetscape design prioritizes pedestrian comfort.	2-5 years
2. The Health District projects the image of a desert-climate area, and employs strategies that are typically used to improve desert environments.	Landscape materials are native or adaptive to the high desert climate.	Required at time of new development
3. Architecture is sustainable and uses durable, sustainable materials and sustainable technology for building maintenance.	Design documents of proposed buildings comply.	Required at time of new development



Goal #7 – Provide Clear Standards & Guidelines

Provide high-quality, clear standards and guidelines for the realization of the goals addressed that encourage best practices in planning and design of individual parts toward the creation of a holistic, pedestrian-friendly, amenity-rich, regionally significant Health District.

Strategies

- A. Implement complete, diverse, sustainable, economically potent mixed-use urban environments through the systematic application of customized development standards and design guidelines informed by the community vision for the Health District.
- B. Ensure that the standards and guidelines address development patterns, urban character, use and function at each scale, from the district to the neighborhood, from the block to the street, from the frontage to building architecture, and a mix of uses that can flex and evolve over time.
- C. Ensure that standards and guidelines for the public realm are calibrated to a human scale and coordinated with standards and guidelines for human-scale development types and architecture. Such a focus on the human is at the heart of a place that supports and fosters health.
- D. Standards focus on topics in which clarity and certainty are needed to achieve the Health District vision, such as size for blocks, length for walking distance, width for vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle accommodation within streets, and size, scale and configuration standards for buildings.
- E. Guidelines are focused on topics which are difficult to address through numerical standards, such as building scale, façade proportions, architectural style and landscape composition. Such topics require both a clear vision for a cohesive whole, and flexibility as to the means by which that vision is realized by many actors over time.



Network of public spaces



Active frontages

Table 1.7 – Goal #7 Key Results

Key Results	Measures	Timing
1. The Health District develops according to an organized plan, in which streets, blocks, building uses, and public spaces are coordinated and support each other element coherently.	The provided Large Site Subdivision Standards are followed	2-5 years
2. Standards and guidelines produce the intended results, the aforementioned goals.	Regulatory Standards and Design Guidelines provided in the code are realized.	On-going
3. The Lancaster Health District Master Plan is recognized as an example of excellence for an urban medical district.	Recognized with awards.	2-5 years
4. Partnerships with local primary, secondary and post-secondary schools and regional medical schools drives a highly educated workforce and well-informed community.	Systematically develop academic partnerships at all levels	On-going

1.4 Planning & Urban Design Principles

Guiding Principles

Related to and deriving from the foregoing goals are the Principles for Implementation presented in the following pages. The reader will also note that underlying each of these principles is Lancaster’s vision of a regionally significant medical district in which medical staff, medical students, residents, and visitors can interact within the context of a wellness-focused urban district, with abundant services, medical clinics, hospital-supporting uses as well as restaurants and retail all contained within an easy walking distance. Workers, residents, and visitors can visit clinics, conduct daily errands, meet friends and neighbors, and pursue a healthy, outdoor, transit-oriented lifestyle with a vibrant public realm.



Conceptual rendering of the new Antelope Valley Hospital and central square establishing a prominent entrance in to the Health District.

The following pages contain a matrix of the ten guiding principles, with symbols that indicate which sections of the Plan contribute significantly to implementing the given principle. The enforceable standards and guidelines that are relevant to each principle are contained within the matrix. Additionally, a detailed description of each principle is provided.

Table 1.8 – Guiding Principles for the Implementation of the Lancaster Health District

	Regulating Plan (See Section 4.2)	Block Standards (See Section 4.3)	Frontage Standards (See Section 4.7)	Street Standards (Section 4.10)	Open Space Standards (See Section 4.11)	Development Standards (See Section 4.4)	Mobility & Infrastructure (See Chapter 5)	Landscape Guidelines (See Appendix A)
1. Community Health & Wellness	○		○	○	○	○		○
2. Active Mix of Uses	△		○	○		△		
3. Human-Scale Public Realm	○	○	△	○	○	○	○	○
4. Complete Streets Network	○		○	△		○	○	
5. Walkable Block Structure	○	△	○	○		○		
6. High Quality Architecture			△			△		○
7. Pedestrian Oriented Frontages			△	○				
8. Strong Local Landscape					△	○		△
9. Sustainable Design				○	○	○	△	△
10. Shared Parking		○		○	○	△		

○ Indicates Plan sections that contribute to implementing the 10 Principles for Implementation as developed and endorsed by the City Council and Commissions.
 △ Indicates the sections that primarily and directly relate to each principle.

1. Community Health and Wellness

Community health and wellness is a prized value for the new Health District. This will be physically and systematically evident in the clustering of the hospital, medical, and supporting uses in an accessible, beautiful core in the Lancaster Health District. In addition to the new Antelope Valley Hospital and medical offices, commercial spaces that contribute to wellness practices and a healthy lifestyle, such as wellness research and development labs, pharmacies, alternative medicine clinics and markets, gyms, yoga studios, grocery stores, and healthy restaurants and cafes may find a home in the Health District.

The advantages of a health district should not stop at related uses, but should also extend to the structure of the neighborhood and how it is being used. A network of public spaces, connected by walking and biking paths, protected by shade, and enlivened by landscape and active ground-floor uses, should encourage users and visitors to spend time outdoors in the District.



Farmers market programming encourages healthy food choices.

2. Active Mix of Uses



Streets integrate all user types and modes of transit safely and comfortably.

An urban pattern that flexibly accommodates a dynamic and shifting mix of uses as the local economy evolves over time will be key to the long-term success and sustainability of the Health District. Such a mixture of uses reduces the demand for automobile travel by meeting many daily needs within walking-distance in the district, thus improving air quality and lessening noise created by vehicular traffic, while promoting active, healthy lifestyles. This plan provides flexibility of use to meet the market, both during the initial development process and also over coming decades to ensure sustained economic vitality and environmental responsibility.

3. Human-Scale Public Realm

The foundation of healthy, sustainable places is a network of public spaces that invite walking, biking and human activity. Ensuring that all public spaces are safe, attractive, and interesting places to walk and spend time is the key to this new development deriving strong value from its proximity to Metrolink, State Route 14, Lancaster, Boulevard, and surrounding neighborhoods. This will also allow new development to help facilitate increased transit ridership.



Open spaces provide opportunities for programming and spontaneous activity, both of which may be health- and wellness-oriented.

Places that combine an active mix of uses and a human scale public realm have been proven throughout the 20th century to also have enduring and steadily rising property values.

4. Complete Streets Network

A complete and interconnective network of complete streets, each balancing accommodation for pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles, and transit, is necessary to enable and encourage access to and through the Health District and avoid unreasonable congestion at any single point.

As the use of the land within the Plan Area is intensified, it is critically important that new routes for all modes of transportation are provided, connecting to such a network throughout the greater Lancaster area to enable user choice of route and mode based on the nature of the trip and user preferences.

Such infrastructure also encourages and supports small-scale local business enterprises that tend to reinvest profits and support non-profit organizations locally. The public frontages of complete streets provide pedestrians with comfortable, convenient and useful routes that encourage them to patronize local businesses in the normal course of their daily lives.



Streets integrate all modes of transit safely and comfortably.

5. Walkable Block Structure



Larger buildings fit the character of an urban downtown, given that they also maintain a human-scaled base.

It is critically important, both in providing a complete street network that prioritizes active transportation modes and in providing the structural framework for a mixed-use urban district, that the current area west of 15th Street West be divided into smaller blocks that encourage walking as an attractive alternative to driving.

Such blocks should generally have perimeters between 1,200 and 2,000 feet in length, but need not be bounded in every case on all sides by traditional public streets. These blocks can also be defined variously by private streets, shared streets, and public and semi-public greens, squares, paseos and courts, provided that the spaces and routes are available for public access and use.

To support healthcare institutions and wellness programming, this network, particularly in the Medical Core, may include campus blocks within which selected links and spaces are pedestrian-only to provide very high quality, active open spaces for daily outdoor activities and special events.

6. Complete Streets Network

The size and configuration of new buildings within the Health District will be determined to a significant extent by the programmatic requirements of healthcare providers, types of commercial businesses, types of residences, and economies of construction dictated by the market.

However, to achieve harmonious, cohesive, and human-scale urban places it is critically important that the massing and architecture that clothe those buildings with are designed as human-scale, urban compositions.

This will require significant skill in design and design review, as hospitals and other large healthcare facilities, and the architects and engineers who typically design them, are very much focused on internal functional arrangements, which often yields buildings that turn “backs” rather than “fronts” to the surround streetscapes and public spaces.

It is critically important that all Health District buildings fact the public realm with attractive, simple, well-fenestrated facades and active ground floor frontages that define and enliven the public realm and provide pedestrians and building occupants with valuable shade from the often-harsh desert climate.



Ground floors designed with shopfronts to welcome people and encourage them to linger.

7. Pedestrian-Oriented Frontages

Perhaps the single most critical element in place-making for high quality employment districts and neighborhood environments is the design of the public and private frontages – the ground floor of buildings as perceived by a passing pedestrian and the public space(s) onto which they front and shape.

The frontages of the Health District will welcome patients, employees, customers, and residents alike with nicely shaded, transparent ground floor shopfronts and lobbies that welcome them to medical buildings, draw them into commercial establishments, and welcome visitors to ground floor residences while providing sufficient privacy from passersby.

Medical office buildings and clinics will present active attractive entries and windows overlooking the streets that project the life inside the building while providing a comfortable interior working environment and appropriate privacy for patients. The careful and successful design of these frontages will shape and accommodate the active, safe, 18-hour live/work/shop/play environment envisioned for the Health District.



Shopfront fully opens to the public realm, with extensions such as outdoor dining and sidewalk signs.

8. Strong Local Landscape



Desert foliage can be varied, beautiful and shade giving.

The area around Lancaster is a high desert climate, and this desert landscape and natural, drought tolerant foliage make Lancaster a unique part of Southern California. The streets and public gathering places in the Lancaster Health District have the potential to be rich with shading tree canopies and visually interesting vertical and color accent trees, native and adaptive Western plants, and natural materials.

The Plan Area is currently quite lacking in landscaping. Its streetscapes, paseos, plazas, courts and other public and semi-public open spaces must surpass the standard of character and quality set by the surrounding blocks in Lancaster including the addition of a wide variety of small/medium canopy trees and vertical and color accent trees along streets and within public spaces. Large canopy trees should be limited to areas without concrete and asphalt and should be placed far enough away as to prevent damage to the built environment.

9. Sustainable Design



Sustainable design in the form of solar and shade structures protecting a surface parking lot.

Environmental sustainability is a critically important element for the Lancaster area, and a key goal for the development of the Health District. This will be measured in responsible, creative storm water management, solar shading, and passive heating for buildings, green building materials and techniques, sustainable landscaping, a strong emphasis on active transportation and transit, support for facilities for electric vehicles and emerging transportation technologies, net-zero and Community Choice Aggregation, and other area in which Lancaster is a regional leader in renewable energy and thrifty utilization of non-renewable resources.

10. Shared Parking

The development patterns of the Health District will be enabled in large measure by shared parking arrangements that allow a combination of on-site (including on-street and off-street parking) and off-site parking nearby in shared lots and structures.

Suburban parking standards that require dedicated parking for each building/use be located on-site have led to commercial areas that are dominated by surface parking to the detriment of human habitability.

A shared system that allows parking to be concentrated into efficient, shared lots and structures shielded from public view, and shared among uses whose maximum parking demands occur at different times of the day and week, will provide better utilization of land, accommodate more lively and productive uses in a limited area, and allow buildings and the public realm to be shaped for human use and not just for cars.



Small public green surrounded by businesses and overlooked by housing.



Conceptual rendering of environmental within the new Health District Core.



Conceptual rendering of the new central plaza within the Health District Core.