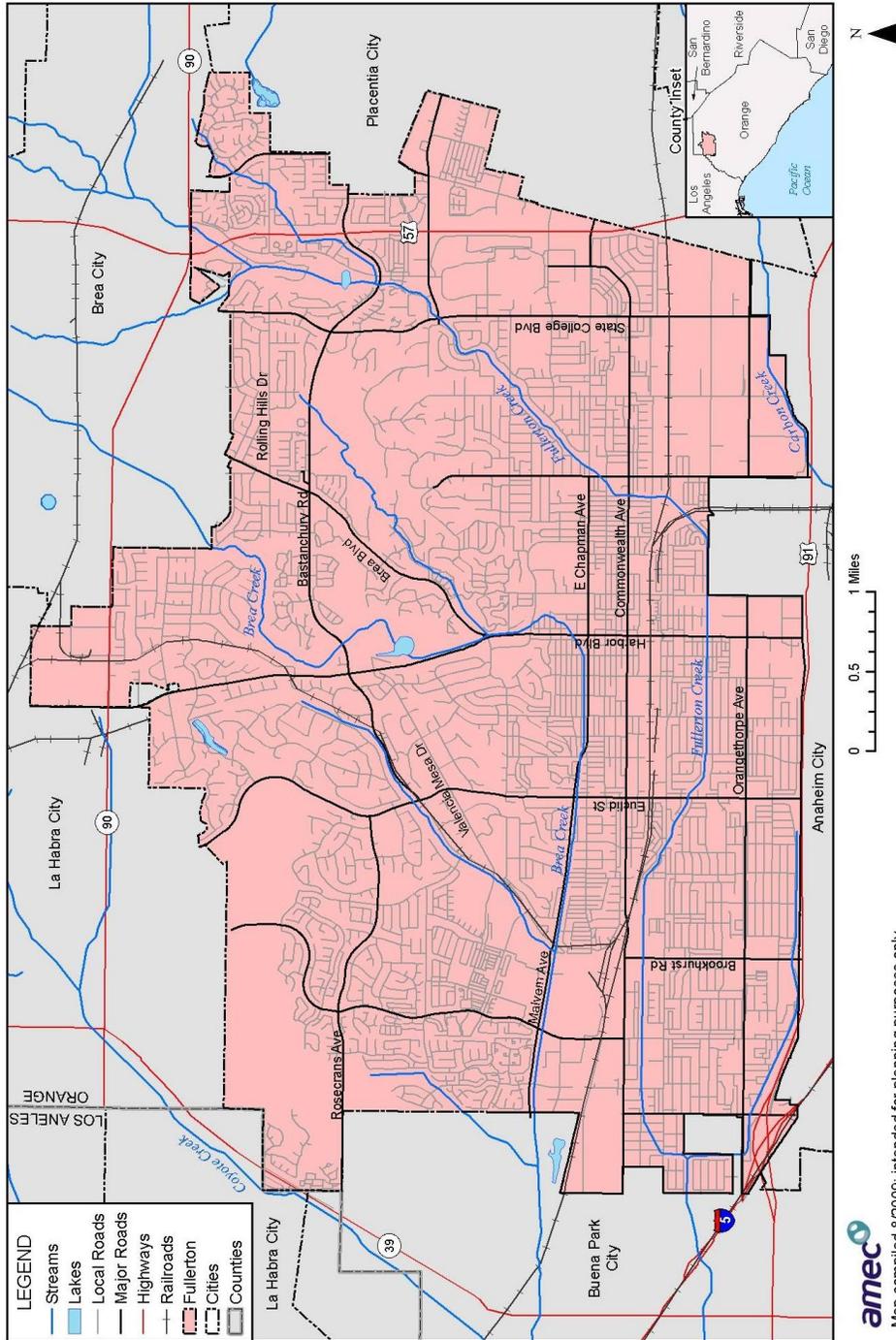




# 2 COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City of Fullerton is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1. City of Fullerton Base Map**



**amec**  
 Map compiled 8/2009; intended for planning purposes only.  
 Data Source: City of Fullerton, State of California, CAL OES

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## 2.1 History

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In 1887, George and Edward Amerige founded Fullerton. With the advent of the 1880s, Southern California was the scene of a “land boom” sparked by the area’s growing prosperity and the promotional campaigns of the railroads. It is at this point that George and Edward Amerige join the Fullerton story. The Ameriges were grain merchants in Malden, Massachusetts, when, in 1886, they sold their business and headed west to investigate the land boom for themselves. Arriving first in San Francisco, they worked their way south, purchasing a fruit ranch in Sierra Madre. On a duck hunting vacation to the Westminster marshes near Anaheim in early 1887, the Ameriges overheard the “locals” talking about the hot news of the day - that the California Central Railroad, a subsidiary of Santa Fe, was looking for land. George H. Fullerton, president of the Pacific Land and Improvement Co., also a Santa Fe subsidiary, had been sent west specifically to purchase land for railroad right-of-way. The Ameriges learned that a likely site for a town was located north of Anaheim. The brothers were so convinced of the potential of the area that they sold their Sierra Madre holdings and opened a real estate office in Anaheim. They then began negotiating for the land, arranging to buy 430 acres at a cost of approximately \$68,000.

Discussions next began with Pacific Land and Improvement, with the Ameriges offering free right-of-way and half interest in the land if the railroad survey were altered to include the proposed townsite. With George Fullerton’s assurance that the area would be included, the Ameriges purchased the 430 acres. On July 5, 1887, Edward Amerige drove a stake into a mustard field at what is now the corner of Harbor Boulevard and Commonwealth Avenue, and the townsite of Fullerton was born. The appreciative community voted to name the town in honor of its benefactor, George Fullerton.

Agriculture quickly became the new community’s leading industry, with Fullerton packing houses shipping as much as \$15 million in citrus crops in banner years. At one time, Fullerton boasted of having more orange groves than any other Orange County city. Today, however, it is estimated there are less than 50 acres of groves remaining in the City.

The first oil wells were struck in the late 1890s, and, by 1912, wells extended for 12 miles. The oil fields were located in the northern reaches of the town, much of which is now in Brea. The 1920s heralded an economic boom for the City, sparked in part by the oil being pumped in the hills to the north. Building permits soared to a record \$2 million, and the City launched an impressive (by 1920s standards) \$150,000 public works program to make street, water, and sewer system improvements.

Fullerton’s industrial destiny was secured in 1932 with the opening of Val Vita Food Products in the west end of town. Starting out as a small citrus juice plant, Val Vita, by 1941, had grown into the largest canning company in the nation. In 1943, it merged with another firm to become Hunt-Wesson Foods Co. With the establishment of the southeast industrial area as an “all manufacturing zone,” additional industries started to appear. Before the 1950s had concluded,

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the City had 142 industries producing a variety of goods, and employing 18,500 persons. Today, the City boasts more than 10,000 businesses and industries.

Fullerton's last big "boom" period began in the late 1940s as veterans returning from World War II began demanding homes for their families. In 1948, permit valuations reached \$2.5 million, and, in 1949, set a record \$3.2 million, which was more than doubled in 1950. In 1956, the building permit valuation skyrocketed to \$114 million. By the 1970s, the rapid pace of growth which characterized Fullerton in the post-war years had slowed considerably. The City was now able to concentrate on providing the amenities all those new families and businesses demanded. New libraries were built, a cultural center and a museum were opened, parks and community centers were developed, recreational trails were provided, human service programs were instituted, and general municipal services were expanded to meet the needs of businesses and residents alike. Work also began on revitalizing the older business areas of town.

The last two decades of the 20th century saw Fullerton's citizens and the City Council, joining forces in an effort to restore the traditional "heart" of the City – the downtown business district - which had begun to decline. This effort became known as "Fullerton 2000 and Beyond," and brought about a "renaissance" of the downtown, which included restoration of more than 70 historic buildings through a commercial building rehabilitation and seismic loan program funded by the Fullerton Redevelopment Agency, and the formulation and implementation of a master plan and vision statement for the downtown.

## **2.2 Geography and Climate**

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Orange County is a geographically diverse area of mountains, hills, flatlands, and shoreline. The City of Fullerton is located in the northwest portion of Orange County, northwest of the Santa Ana Mountains and southeast of the West Coyote Hills. The City of Fullerton is located along the fringe of the coastal plain of Los Angeles County and Orange County. Specifically, Fullerton is located within the central lowland coastal plain of Orange County, which stretches northeasterly from the vicinity of Irvine, past Santa Ana and Garden Grove, and into Los Angeles County.

According to the City of Fullerton 2006-2014 Housing Element the City of Fullerton covers an area of over 23 square miles within the northern portion of Orange County, California. It is bordered by the cities of Anaheim, Placentia, Brea, La Habra, La Mirada, and Buena Park.

Topographically the City is divided into two distinct geological areas. The southerly portion of the City is mostly flat, with a gradual downward slope to the south and west. The northerly part of the City consists of gently rising foothills, steep slopes, scenic drives and roadside vista points. The following descriptions of Fullerton's geological conditions are taken from the Existing Conditions Report, Fullerton General Plan Update:

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Fullerton is located within the central block of the Los Angeles basin. There are three natural geologic-geographic divisions of the basin represented in the City: the central plain, Coyote Hills, and a small area north of Coyote Hills. The central plain, which extends from the south City limits northerly to the south edge of Coyote Hills, makes up about one-half of the City. The Coyote Hills which cover the northern portion of Fullerton, also makes up about one-half of the City.

Most of the geologic structures in the City trend roughly east to west. The major groups of geologic strata in the Fullerton area consist of Basement Complex schist, which underlies the Puente Hills at depth; over this basement rock is the Puente Formation, which is a series of shales and sandstone of Miocene Age (approximately 15 million years old). South of the Whittier Fault, the Puente Formation is present at great depth, below the Fernando Formation. The Fernando Formation consists of beds of sandstone and silty sandstone of Pliocene-Age (age range of 3 to 12 million years old). Overlying the Fernando is the Quaternary group consisting of the San Pedro, Coyote Hills, and La Habra formations, with alluvium on top. The Quaternary group represents the last three million years on the geologic time scale. These formations consist of sandstone, siltstone, and conglomerate beds that are not strongly jointed together.

The City of Fullerton is underlain by three formations: surficial formations, terrace deposits, and alluvium. Alluvium underlays the southern portion of the City, those areas south of Chapman/Malvern Avenue. The terrace and surficial deposits are interspersed in the northern portion of the City.

The West Coyote Hills are located in the northeastern part of the Los Angeles basin and are part of a chain of low hills extending from Yorba Linda on the east to Santa Fe Springs on the west. These hills are geologically young features that are still in the process of forming under regional tectonic stresses.

The City of Fullerton climate is usually hot and dry in the summer and has mild winters. Data from the Western Regional Climate Center, from 1912 to 2007, shows the record maximum temperatures were a high of 114°F (in September of 1955) and a low of 20°F (on December 30, 1918). Average summer highs range from the lower to upper 80s. Average winter lows range from the lower to upper 40s. Fullerton averages 47 days each year with temperatures exceeding 90°F. Storms between November and April provide the majority of the annual precipitation. Of the total average yearly rainfall of 14.63 inches, 13.09 inches fall between November and April. There is little precipitation in the City during the summer months.

## 2.3 Economy

The most comprehensive economic data available for the City of Fullerton comes from the U.S. Census Bureau by way of the American Community Survey. Select estimates of economic characteristics for City of Fullerton are shown in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 The City of Fullerton’s Economic Characteristics, 2008**

Characteristic	City of Fullerton
Families below Poverty Level	6.4%
All People below Poverty Level	10.8%
Median Family Income	\$77,343
Median Household Income	\$66,010
Per Capita Income	\$23,370
Population in Labor Force	69,008
Population Employed*	3,654
Unemployment	5.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2008, [www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/)

\*Excludes armed forces

More recent data from the California Employment Development Department indicates that, in 2009, there were 72,500 people in the City of Fullerton labor force. Of these, 65,000 were employed; 7,500 were not. The unemployment rate was 10.4 percent. This is a large increase over the early 2000s, where unemployment ranged from 3.8 to 5.6%. This trend follows the recent trend for the State of California.

Table 2.2 illustrates the breakdown of employment by industry in City of Fullerton in 2008, and Table 2.3 lists the City’s major employers.

**Table 2.2 The City of Fullerton’s Employment by Industry, 2006-2008\***

Industry	# Employed	% Employed
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing , Mining	185	0.3
Construction	4,340	6.6
Manufacturing	9,158	14.0
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1,664	2.6
Information	1,336	2.0
Wholesale Trade	3,240	5.0
Retail Trade	7,823	12.0
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	5,367	8.2
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation, and food services	6,750	10.3
Educational and Health Services	12,220	18.7

Industry	# Employed	% Employed
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	7,988	12.2
Other Professional and Related Services	3,227	4.9
Public Administration	1,468	2.2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>65,265</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2006/2008, www.census.gov/  
 \*Civilian population 16 or older

**Table 2.3 The City of Fullerton's Major Employers**

Employer	Products and Services	# of Employees
California State University, Fullerton	Government	5,634
St. Jude Medical Center	HealthCare	2,750
Raytheon Systems Company	Defense	1,500
Fullerton School District	Education	1,452
Fullerton Joint Union High School District	Education	1,410
Beckman Coulter	Laboratory Supplies	1,300
Fullerton College	Education	1,123
Alcoa Fastening Systems	Commercial Fasteners	1,000
City of Fullerton	Government	964
Albertsons	Grocery	920
FoxConn	Technology	800
St. Jude Heritage Health	HealthCare	750
Target	Grocery and Textile	650
Kraft Foods	Food	475
Kimberly Clark	Textiles	450

Source: City of Fullerton Housing Element 2006-2014 (May 2008 Draft)

## 2.4 Population

The City of Fullerton has an estimated 130,963 residents (2006-2008), according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The City of Fullerton is urbanized and primarily built out. Table 2.4 breaks down Fullerton's demographics.

**Table 2.4 The City of Fullerton's Demographic and Social Characteristics, 2008**

Characteristic	City of Fullerton
<b>Gender/Age</b>	
Male	52.9%
Female	47.1%
Median Age	32.9
Under 5 Years	8.0%

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<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>City of Fullerton</b>
65 Years and Over	11.3%
<b>Race/Ethnicity**</b>	
White	51.1%
Some Other Race	21.7%
Asian	20.6%
Black or African American	2.9%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.5%
Hispanic or Latino (Any Race)	33.0%
<b>Education</b>	
High School Graduate or Higher	84.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2006, [www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/)

\*\*Of the 97.0 % reporting one race

More demographic information and information on growth can be found in Section 4.3.2 Growth and Development Trends.