

Community Planning

The City's General Plan

On March 10, 2008 the San Diego City Council unanimously approved a comprehensive update to the City's General Plan. The plan sets out a long-range vision and policy framework for how the City should plan for projected growth and development, provide public services, and maintain the qualities that define San Diego over the next 20 to 30 years.

The updated General Plan provides guidance on how to design infill development and reinvest in existing communities to support long term growth, since less than four percent of the City's land remains vacant and available for new development. It has a strong sustainability focus through policies addressing transit/land use coordination; climate change; healthy, walkable communities; green buildings; clean technology industries; water and energy conservation and management; and urban forestry. In addition, the General Plan features protections for prime industrial lands; strategies for providing urban parks; "toolboxes" to implement mobility strategies; and policies designed to further the preservation of San Diego's historical and cultural resources. The plan was structured to work in concert with the City's community plans.

The General Plan update incorporates the City of Villages strategy to focus growth into mixed-use villages that are pedestrian-friendly districts, of different scales, linked to the transit system. Each village is envisioned as unique to the community in which it is located, yet all villages would be pedestrian-friendly, and characterized by inviting, accessible and attractive streets and public spaces. Individual villages are intended to offer a variety of housing types and affordability levels. The strategy draws upon the character and strengths of San Diego's natural environment, distinctive neighborhoods, and activity centers that together form the City as a whole.

The City developed the General Plan within the context of state requirements, regional plans and population forecasts, and the issues and needs unique to the City. The General Plan is comprised of an introductory Strategic Framework section and the following elements: Land Use and Community Planning; Mobility; Economic Prosperity; Public Facilities, Services and Safety; Urban Design; Recreation; Historic Preservation; Conservation; and Noise. The Housing Element update was adopted separately in 2006. The policies within each element of the General Plan were developed with ten guiding principles in mind. These principles are to achieve:

1. An open space network formed by parks, canyons, river valleys, habitats, beaches, and ocean;
2. Diverse residential communities formed by the open space network;
3. Compact and walkable mixed-use villages of different scales within communities;
4. Employment centers for a strong economy;
5. An integrated regional transportation network of walkways, bikeways, transit, roadways, and freeways that efficiently link communities and villages to each other and to employment centers;
6. High quality, affordable, and well-maintained public facilities to serve the City's population, workers, and visitors;
7. Historic districts and sites that respect our heritage;
8. Balanced communities that offer opportunities for all San Diegans and share citywide responsibilities;
9. A clean and sustainable environment; and,

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10. A high aesthetic standard.

The Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element of the General Plan includes policies on the prioritization and provision of public facilities and services, evaluation of new growth, guidelines for implementing a financing strategy, and guidelines for the provision of specific facilities. This element discusses City challenges, including a public facilities deficit, and calls for facilities deficiencies to be remedied through diverse funding resources.

Implementation of the General Plan is being accomplished through a broad range of legislative and regulatory actions that influence private and public development. The General Plan Action Plan identifies measures and timeframes for implementing General Plan policies. The Action Plan highlights eight key initiatives which are critical to General Plan implementation, as follows: Community Plan Updates, Climate Change Initiatives, Water Supply and Conservation Efforts, Land Development Code (LDC) Amendments, Public Facilities Finance Strategy, Economic Development Strategic Plan, Parks Master Plan, and Historic Preservation Incentives. In addition, the General Plan is consistent with the Regional Comprehensive Plan and will contribute to the San Diego Association of Governments' efforts to create a Sustainable Communities Strategy that meets anticipated Senate Bill 375 greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

Community Plans

The City's community plans contain additional detailed planning guidance, and are a part of the Land Use Element of the General Plan. Community plans establish specific recommendations and objectives in a given community for future land uses and public improvements. The community plan provides a long range physical development guideline for elected officials and citizens engaged in community development. Citizen involvement has been a long-standing concept in the City of San Diego. In the 1960s and 1970s, the City Council adopted policies that established and recognized community planning groups as formal mechanisms for community input in the decision-making processes. Community planning groups provide citizens with an opportunity for involvement in advising the City Council, the Planning Commission, and other decision makers on development projects, community plan amendments, rezoning projects, and public facilities. The recommendations of the planning groups are integral components of the planning process.

The general and community plans are policy documents, which require regulatory tools and programs to help implement their goals and standards. The implementation tools for planning documents include the Municipal Code, the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), zoning, Neighborhood Code Compliance, facilities financing plans, and redevelopment plans. These regulations and programs help guide land use, development, and design.

CIP Conformance to the City's General Plan and Community Plans

The capital improvement projects in the current budget were reviewed for conformance with the City's General Plan and Community Plans. The entire process is outlined in the Capital Improvement Program Conformance Report to the City's Planning Commission. The capital improvement projects were found to be consistent with the General Plan, relevant community plans, and facilities financing plans, with three projects in need of corrective measures, two of which are being addressed as part of community plan updates currently under way, and the third through a project scope revision allowing for consistency with the respective community plan requirements.

Capital Improvements Program Community Planning

Community Planning Areas



Capital Improvements Program Community Planning

Community Planning Areas by Council District

