

Strategic Framework

Purpose and Intent

To shape growth in the City by capitalizing on the unique and treasured assets of our communities, while preserving their character and the City's natural resources.

To guide updates and ongoing implementation of the General Plan and community plans.

Plan Issues

- Population forecasts indicate that the City's population will continue to increase over the next 30 years
- Less than 10 percent of the City's land is vacant and available for new development, meaning the City must shift from developing vacant land to reinvesting in existing communities
- The City faces a significant shortfall in public facilities and services
- There is a need to address traffic congestion and other quality of life concerns
- Housing has been increasingly unaffordable and unavailable throughout the city

Introduction

The Strategic Framework Element of the General Plan was adopted in October of 2002. This purpose of this element was to establish the vision and guiding policies upon which a comprehensive General Plan update would be based. The Strategic Framework Element set forth the City of Villages strategy for growth and development, along with a slate of citywide policies intended to address a broad range of issues facing the City. The City of Villages strategy represents a comprehensive approach to guiding future development. The strategy recognizes that while the City is a thriving metropolis, it remains a City of Villages with distinctive neighborhoods and communities.

Because topic-specific policies have been relocated to other elements, the Strategic Framework Element now plays the role of showing how the City of Villages strategy fits into the other elements. Descriptions of Strategic Framework Element topic areas are included below, with summaries of key policies and references to where additional policy development has occurred within the ten General Plan elements.

Framework Policies

Urban Form

San Diego is one of a few major metropolitan areas built upon and around a canyon system. The City's urban form is loosely based upon a naturally connected system of open space, characterized by valleys, canyons and mesas. These natural features also define the boundaries and gateways into the City's distinct neighborhoods. As San Diego grows, its urban form must increasingly respect the existing natural template, provide stronger linkages between communities, and create diverse village centers.

<i>Strategic Framework Element Policy Summary</i>	<i>Corresponding General Plan Element</i>
Allow the natural environment to define and shape the City's form.	Conservation Element - Open Space and Landform Preservation section
Protect urban canyons, significant hillsides and ridgelines, and community open spaces.	Conservation Element - Open Space and Landform Preservation section
Focus more intense commercial and residential development in pedestrian-oriented village centers.	Land Use and Community Planning Element - Village Categories section

Neighborhood Quality

As San Diegans, we value the distinctive character, safety and security, diversity, and sense of community in the City's many neighborhoods. Many of our older communities are loved for their architectural style, mix of uses, tree-lined streets and distinctive shopping districts. Others are drawn to newer suburban locations due to their excellent schools and public facilities, and new home choices. The City's strategy must preserve the best qualities of our neighborhoods, improve elements that do not function well, and provide for the needs of future generations. Neighborhood and urban centers will contain various mixes of commercial, employment, and housing uses. Centers will also include public gathering spaces, civic or educational uses, walkable, tree-lined streets, and opportunities for arts and culture. Historic resources will be addressed in a comprehensive manner and, where present, will be incorporated into many of the village centers.

<i>Strategic Framework Element Policy Summary</i>	<i>Corresponding General Plan Element</i>
Develop alternative methods of providing parks and recreational areas to meet the needs of urban and built-out communities.	Recreation Element - Joint Use and Cooperative Partnerships section
Include significant public spaces in village centers.	Urban Design Element - Public Spaces and Civic Architecture section

Promote safety and security.	Urban Design Element - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) section
Increase walkability in City neighborhoods, and improve opportunities for bicycle and transit use.	Mobility Element - Walkable Communities, Transit First, and Bicycling sections
Promote arts, culture, and history.	Urban Design Element - Public Art & Cultural Amenities section

Public Facilities and Services

The provision of adequate infrastructure and public facilities is the key component for the entire strategy. Public facilities like schools, parks, and police services must keep pace with population growth and development. In order to achieve progress in remedying existing public facilities shortfalls and to provide high quality public facilities and services in the future, new growth must have a more compact urban form, greater joint use efficiencies must be achieved, new sources of revenues must be secured, and facilities and services must be better tailored to meet the needs of diverse communities.

Financing strategies and options that address existing and future public facilities needs are included under the Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element of the General Plan. The Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element also sets forth a strategy for prioritizing public facilities needs on a citywide basis while Community Facilities Elements will establish overall policy direction on the character, prioritization, and mix of needed facilities for each community. Community Facilities Elements will provide policy guidance for the development of Public Facilities Financing plans. The financing plans will identify existing and future facilities needs in each community, and available funding sources that could be used to meet those needs. A wide range of community input will be required to determine which types of facilities best suit the needs of each community, taking into account unique neighborhood character and urban form.

<i>Strategic Framework Element Policy Summary</i>	<i>Corresponding General Plan Element</i>
Facilitate development patterns that can be served by adequate infrastructure.	Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element - Evaluation of Growth, Facilities, and Services section <i>***This is proposed section title for next draft. July draft title: Public Facility and Service Provision Strategy***</i>
Focus infrastructure investments in communities that have a demonstrated need for such resources.	Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element - Public Facilities and Services Prioritization section

Use citywide resources to ensure that community facilities, open space, and infrastructure improvements are provided (to address existing deficiencies).	Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element - Public Facilities Financing section
Require new development to contribute to public facilities commensurate with the level of impact.	Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element - Evaluation of Growth, Facilities, and Services section <i>***This is proposed section title for next draft. July draft title: Public Facility and Service Provision Strategy***</i>

Conservation and the Environment

San Diego's beauty and character is in large part due to its unmatched natural resources. San Diego's mountains, beaches, bays, canyons, and other natural landforms define the City. Some of the most unique, and unfortunately threatened and endangered plants and animals in the nation are concentrated in this region. Our future quality of life hinges on the protection of these natural resources to safeguard San Diego's beauty and biodiversity, and to ensure an adequate supply of resources such as energy and water for the future.

The City of San Diego is committed to protecting and restoring natural resources, preventing harm to the environment and human health, and promoting a sustainable future that meets short-term objectives without compromising San Diego's long-term needs. Environmental quality is a key to the City's quality of life and long-term economic prosperity. The City of San Diego's commitment to conservation and the environment will help guide future decision-making, policies, and programs.

<i>Strategic Framework Element Policy Summary</i>	<i>Corresponding General Plan Element</i>
Conserve, protect and restore natural resources.	Conservation Element - Open Space and Landform Preservation section Recreation Element - Preservation section and Open Space Lands and Resource-Based Parks section
Work toward citywide development of sustainable buildings.	Conservation Element - Sustainable Development and Urban Forestry section
Prevent pollution and reduce urban runoff.	Conservation Element - Urban Runoff Management section
Ensure that environmental impacts and costs of protecting the environment do not unfairly burden or omit any one geographic or socio-economic sector of the City.	Land Use and Community Planning Element - Environmental Justice section Conservation Element - Border/International Conservation section

Promote environmental education.	Conservation Element - Environmental Education section Recreation Element - Preservation section
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Mobility

The City of Villages strategy calls for a convenient, efficient, and attractive multi-modal transportation system that encourages trips to be made by pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. This system should improve mobility for San Diegans by providing faster, competitive, even preferred, alternatives to the automobile for many trips in the region.

To realize this vision, transportation and land use planning must be closely linked. This includes retrofitting and redeveloping portions of existing neighborhoods and roadways and designing new streets and centers to fully integrate land use, circulation, and urban design. The goal is to maximize the ability of people to move about comfortably and efficiently by foot, bicycle and transit, and to reduce automobile dependence.

Thoughtful land use planning may also reduce the need for vehicular travel, because goods and services would be conveniently located near homes and jobs. For San Diegans to enjoy freedom of mobility in the future, dramatic improvements to our transit system and focused improvements to streets and highways need to be made. Future road improvements to enhance the connectivity of the transportation network will need to be balanced with goals of protecting neighborhood character and environmental resources.

While villages are intended to have a variety of uses and services that meet many of the daily needs of the people living and working within them, villages are not expected to be self-sufficient enclaves. San Diego's most dense neighborhoods, urban centers, and corridors will be linked to each other and to the region through high quality, rapid transit services. In order to make transit the first choice for many of the region's trips, the San Diego region must strive for: a rich network of high-speed routes, ten-minute service frequencies, extensive use of transit priority measures, walkable community designs, stations integrated into neighborhoods, and customer focus in services and facilities. The goal is to create a world-class transit system that is competitive with the automobile.

<i>Strategic Framework Element Policy Summary</i>	<i>Corresponding General Plan Element</i>
Integrate land use and transportation planning to improve mobility.	Land Use and Community Planning Element - Village Location Criteria Mobility Element - Introduction
Increase capacity and operational improvements to streets and highways.	Mobility Element - Streets and Freeways section
Manage parking.	Mobility Element - Parking Management section

Support implementation of transit improvements that will help make transit the first choice for many types of trips in the region	Mobility Element - Transit First section
Promote walkable, tree-lined streets.	Mobility Element - Walkable Communities section

Housing Supply and Affordability

A consistently increasing housing supply is needed to accommodate future population growth. In addition, new forms of housing and housing at higher densities is needed due to anticipated demographic shifts, a shortage of land available for traditional single-family housing, the high cost of land, and to enable the workforce to live in locations that are near or accessible to employment centers. The provision of affordable housing also assists the City of San Diego in meeting social equity and economic prosperity goals. Key policy measures to ensure a variety of housing types and range of affordability options include:

<i>Strategic Framework Element Policy Summary</i>	<i>Corresponding General Plan Element</i>
Ensure that the housing supply accommodates future population growth.	Housing Element - Goal 1 (discussion of overall housing supply)
Balance the distribution of affordable housing among communities.	Housing Element - Goal 1 (discussion of Inclusionary Housing policy)
Concentrate future residential density increases in the Regional Center area, Subregional Districts, and Urban and Neighborhoods Village Centers.	Land Use and Community Planning Element - City of Villages Strategy section
Establish policies to allow areas within the Subregional Districts to collocate employment and higher density residential uses and to adopt design standards to mitigate land use conflicts.	Economic Prosperity Element - Regional and Subregional Employment Districts section

Economic Prosperity and Regionalism

To address the shortage of available land used for employment, the land appropriate for future employment uses should be designated in key areas throughout the city, including recognizing underutilized land that could be redeveloped for employment uses. Subregional Districts and Urban Village Centers (further defined under the Land Use and Community Planning Element) will play an important role in the City's economic prosperity strategies by providing the appropriately designated land and infrastructure needed to support business development and a variety of employment and housing opportunities. Key strategies to increase economic prosperity include:

<i>Strategic Framework Element Policy Summary</i>	<i>Corresponding General Plan Element</i>
Use employment lands efficiently.	Economic Prosperity Element - Industrial and Commercial Land Use sections, and Regional and Subregional Employment Districts section
Increase middle-income employment opportunities.	Economic Prosperity Element - Employment Development section
Retain and expand businesses that diversify the economic base and offer high-quality employment opportunities.	Economic Prosperity Element - Business Development section and Employment Development section
Promote education and job training.	Economic Prosperity Element - Education and Workforce Development section
Lead regional collaboration and strengthen border relations.	Economic Prosperity Element - International Trade and Border Relations section Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element - Public Facilities and Services Prioritization section

Equitable Development Policy Recommendations

Equitable development is defined as “the creation and maintenance of economically and socially diverse communities that are stable over the long term, through means that generate a minimum of transition costs that fall unfairly on lower income residents.”¹ If carefully framed, gentrification can help meet the goal of equitable development by creating a greater income mix in a neighborhood and providing new economic opportunities.

<i>Strategic Framework Element Policy Summary</i>	<i>Corresponding General Plan Element</i>
Create and maintain stable, economically and socially diverse communities through means that distribute equitably the costs and benefits of development.	Land Use and Community Planning Element - Balanced Communities section Equitable Development section
Ensure that residents can afford to remain in their community when it is improved.	Land Use and Community Planning Element - Equitable Development section

Behind the City of Villages Strategy

¹ Maureen Kennedy and Paul Leonard, *Dealing With Neighborhood Change: A Primer on Gentrification and Policy Changes*. (The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, April 2001), p.4.

The analysis in this section was used in the development of the Strategic Framework Element policies. While the City of Villages strategy represents the City's new approach for shaping how the City will grow, it builds upon a strong legacy of growth management and environmental protection measures.

The essence of the Strategic Framework Element is the City of Villages strategy, a wide-ranging approach to improving the quality of life for all San Diegans. The strategy addresses the urban development trends of the past and the challenges of the near future, while outlining implementation strategies for the continued growth of the City beyond the year 2020. The focus of the strategy is determining where and how new growth and redevelopment occur to ensure the long-term environmental, social, and economic health of the City and its many communities. The strategy seeks to target growth in village areas and it must strengthen neighborhoods, not diminish them. Conceptually, the City of Villages reinforces and enhances the existing patterns of development found in the City's communities. It draws upon the strengths of San Diego's natural environment, neighborhoods, commercial hubs and employment centers. San Diego needs a well defined strategy for investing finite City resources for the greatest public benefit. The City of Villages strategy will help to accomplish this objective and ensure the future prosperity of the City and its residents.

The City of Villages strategy was developed after a thorough analysis of the experiences of the past, existing opportunities and constraints, and trends for the future. City staff worked in conjunction with the Strategic Framework Citizen Committee to analyze the impacts of population trends, development patterns and legislative policy decisions of the past and future. The most recent data on population trends and cultural diversity are discussed in the Land Use and Community Planning Element.

Urban Form Development Patterns

Phased Development Areas and Proposition 'A'

In 1979, the Progress Guide and General Plan established a growth management program entitled, Guidelines for Future Development. The guidelines were designed to require a phasing of growth and development in the outlying areas of the city, in accordance with the availability of public facilities and services, and to redirect growth into the central business district and established neighborhoods. This growth management program established the three tiers of growth: Urbanized, Planned Urbanizing, and Future Urbanizing areas. The General Plan encouraged intensive and varied development in the Urbanized area, a portion of the city consisting of established, built-out neighborhoods and the downtown core. Development in the Planned Urbanizing area's newly developing communities primarily along the I-5 and I-15 corridors could occur, but Council Policies were established which required developers to pay for the construction of all necessary public facilities through either a Facilities Benefit Assessment (FBA) or other financing mechanisms.

In 1979, the Future Urbanizing Area (FUA) located at or adjacent to the city boundaries was largely vacant and zoned for agricultural use. The General Plan discouraged urban and suburban levels of development in the FUA, unless and until the Urbanized and Planned Urbanizing areas were sufficiently built. The intent was to discourage leapfrog development and inefficient use of

the City's facilities and services. As a result, there was a significant increase in the amount of growth in the Urbanized area. Whereas only ten percent of all new residential growth in 1979 occurred in the urbanized area, by 1983, that number had increased to sixty percent. During the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the momentum shifted again to the Planned Urbanizing area, but a substantial amount of residential development continued to occur each year in the Urbanized area up through the time of the recession in the early 1990s.

In the mid-1980s, developers began to pursue projects within the northern portion of the city in the North City Future Urbanizing Area (NCFUA). In 1984, the City Council approved a development in the La Jolla Valley at the extreme northern edge of the city. San Diego residents grew concerned that the City would approve such an intense development in apparent conflict with adopted growth management policies, and without the benefit of comprehensive planning. The City Council's action prompted a voter-initiated ballot measure, Proposition 'A' – the Managed Growth Initiative. This initiative required approval of a majority vote of the people for phase shifts from Future Urbanizing to Planned Urbanizing area, retroactive to the date prior to approval of the La Jolla Valley development. The ballot measure provided that the “provisions restricting development in the Future Urbanizing Area shall not be amended except by majority vote of the people” except for “amendments which are neutral or make the designation more restrictive in terms of permitting development.” Consequently, after the passage of Proposition 'A,' in the absence of voter approval, development in the FUA continued to be limited to extremely low-density, estate residential projects, a few low intensity recreational uses, and agriculture.

Planning and Phase Shifts for Proposition 'A' Lands

Concern over losing so much of the urban reserve to unplanned, low density development resulted in City Council adoption of a moratorium on NCFUA development, while the City prepared and adopted a comprehensive amendment to the Progress Guide and General Plan. This amendment, the NCFUA Framework Plan, was adopted in 1992. The plan established an interconnected open space system and divided the NCFUA into five subareas. The plan called for moderate density residential projects in mixed-use centers surrounded by lower density development, the integration of pedestrian-oriented design, and the use of landform grading techniques. By 1998, the voters had approved phase shifts for three major subareas.

The City has also undertaken other planning efforts to address land use in the remainder of the Future Urbanizing area subject to its jurisdiction. In 1995, the City Council adopted a comprehensive update to the San Pasqual Valley Plan that recommended the preservation of San Pasqual Valley for agricultural use and open space. Additionally, in 1996, the City adopted a specific plan for the Del Mar Mesa that limits residential development and sets aside over half of the plan for the purposes of habitat preservation. Furthermore, federal, state, county, and other jurisdictions have participated with the City in planning for open space and habitat preservation in the San Dieguito and Tijuana River valleys, also part of the Future Urbanizing area. As a result of these planning efforts, the City, with voter concurrence, has effectively determined for the most part where future development should and should not occur for the foreseeable future.

One of the primary purposes behind the adoption of the Phased Development areas system was

to ensure the timely provision of public facilities as growth occurred. The City developed the Facilities Benefit Assessment (FBA) and other financing programs to assist with the accomplishment of this requirement. Funds collected through these particular mechanisms, however, can only be used for capital expenditures. Once a public facility is constructed, the City must turn to other funding sources for operation and maintenance, primarily the general fund. The public facility phasing and sequencing components of the tier system therefore will no longer be relevant when the City reaches build-out according to community plans.

Infill Development

The City of San Diego's 1979 Progress Guide and General Plan was successful in reversing two related trends: rapid growth on the northern periphery of the city, and slowed growth in the central, older core. The growth management strategy, however, had unintended consequences as intensive redevelopment of the older core neighborhoods occurred without sufficient public facilities. Poor architectural design and site planning characterized many of the new projects, since many new apartment buildings were out of scale with the prevailing architectural character of the older neighborhoods. Ultimately, public opposition to infill development resulted in a reluctance to accept additional growth and prompted new multiple-family development regulations to address design issues.

Auto-Oriented Development

Single-family construction of larger homes continued to dominate the market as the century came to a close. This resulted in rapid consumption of land around the periphery of the city, especially to the north. Throughout the 1990s, developers continued to build larger single-family subdivisions, characterized by a hierarchical street layout with cul-de-sacs feeding onto collector and arterial roads, and segregated land uses. Such a development pattern makes an effective transit program difficult to implement, resulting in much of the northern city becoming highly auto-dependent.

Open Space

The City and region have made significant strides with respect to open space preservation. As the 1990s began, San Diegans continued to express concerns regarding the lack of comprehensive open space planning and preservation within the city and throughout the region, and the failure of existing regulations to protect sensitive habitat and land form. Interconnected habitat preservation areas had not been clearly identified, and serious deficiencies in open space management and acquisition funding existed. Habitat preservation occurred on an ad hoc, project-by-project basis, and was scattered around the city. During the second half of the decade, the City engaged in a comprehensive habitat planning program, the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), to establish an interconnected open space preserve throughout the region. The MSCP established a preserve area, the Multiple Habitat Planning Area (MHPA), and a specific set of regulations for development adjacent to (and to a limited extent within) the preserve, and developed a funding strategy to acquire key parcels of land.

Despite the tremendous advance in habitat planning and preservation that the MSCP represents,

challenges remain. Specifically, some community planning advocates are concerned that the MSCP may have preempted efforts to preserve other open spaces, such as urban canyons and significant landforms, located outside of the MSCP preserve. Additionally, development of sensitive lands, where it is permitted, continues to be marred by poor design and insensitive grading techniques that have resulted in the destruction of ridgelines and other environmental impacts. Finally, open space linkages between communities and the integration of open space, scenic resources, and active recreation into neighborhoods rarely occur.

San Diego has almost reached its current plan build-out, with the exception of Otay Mesa in the southern portion of the city. Here the City wrestles with the conflict between open space acquisition of developable land and the resultant loss of potential urban uses. The outstanding urban form challenge is to accommodate and redirect growth so that it preserves the existing, desirable, characteristics of established neighborhoods and builds character into new neighborhoods. Furthermore, a successful growth strategy must address how to provide the open space and transportation linkages to create a unified structure for the City as a whole, while maintaining and enhancing the diverse character of its individual neighborhoods, and distinctive natural landform.

Public Facilities and Financing

Provision and maintenance of the City's infrastructure and public facilities have been severely strained in the last two decades. Public facilities discussion and policies, as well as a proposed financing strategy, have been moved from the Strategic Framework Element to the Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element.

Conservation and the Environment

San Diego Conservation History and Challenges

Although the environmental movement is recognized more as a recent phenomenon, San Diego has a long history of planning for open space protection. Beginning in 1868, the City of San Diego Board of Trustees set land aside for a city park, later named Balboa Park. John Nolen's 1908 comprehensive plan for San Diego called for development to conform to and respect the natural environment.

San Diego has had many successful open space planning and preservation efforts. An amendment to the City Charter in 1972 established the Environmental Growth Fund, two-thirds of which could be used as debt service for bond issuance to acquire, improve, and maintain open space for park or recreational purposes. By 1984, these monies had funded the purchase of 10,800 acres of open space. Additionally, San Diego voters approved Proposition C in 1978, which authorized the sale of bonds to purchase open space.

In 1979, with the adoption of the Progress Guide and General Plan, an Open Space Element was included that established the goals of providing an open space system for natural resource protection, recreation, public health and safety, urban form guidance, and scenic and visual enjoyment.

In 1987, the City's Residential Growth Management Program included a policy recommendation to allow topography and environmentally sensitive lands to define the City's urban form. In response, the City Council adopted the Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO) in 1989. In 1997, the Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) regulations were created to simplify implementation of both RPO and the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP).

Although the ESL regulations have been instrumental in the City's progress towards its conservation and open space goals, the negative impacts to citywide housing goals and facility financing plans have not been fully analyzed or mitigated. In addition, the development allowed through RPO permits has often not been visually compatible with the adjacent environmentally sensitive lands, especially in terms of grading and building design.

State and Federal Resource Protection

Over the last thirty years, conservation issues have become increasingly more important to the general public. The environmental movement, and in particular, federal and state laws enacted in the late 1960s and 1970s have shaped the planning process to focus on environmental protection. Most state and federal laws currently address specific natural resources. In particular, the Endangered Species Acts (State and Federal), the Clean Air Acts (State and Federal), the Clean Water Act (Federal), the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) have affected local efforts towards natural resource protection.

The State Legislature enacted the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in 1970. CEQA requires jurisdictions to inform decision makers and the public about a project's environmental effects, identify ways to avoid environmental damage, prevent avoidable environmental damage, and disclose why a project is approved. CEQA has provided the land use planning link to resource protection.

Despite increased incorporation of resource protection into the planning process, seamless coordination between local, state and federal agencies has often been difficult to achieve. Locally, however, the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) is a successful example of coordination between participating jurisdictions, wildlife agencies, property owners, and representatives of the development industry and environmental groups. The plan is designed to meet the habitat needs of multiple species, rather than focusing preservation efforts on one species at a time. Although this is a huge step toward implementing the Endangered Species Act in San Diego, a funding gap for land acquisition, the implementation goal of the MSCP, still exists.

Other challenges remain to achieve the goals of State and Federal legislation. Environmental protection legislation, including the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, has traditionally focused on emission standards, best available practices, and targeted point-source dischargers, such as heavy industry. However, the emphasis is now shifting to reducing the impact of non-point dischargers, which includes households. The region must find meaningful ways to reduce air, water, and land pollution through broad-based solutions such as reducing automobile

dependency, safely disposing of household hazardous materials, and reducing pollutants entering the storm drains.

The provision of water and water quality has emerged as a major conservation issue in the San Diego region over the past decade. Scientific and public concern over the dramatic loss of wetlands has led to the passage of legislation aimed at preserving and restoring the remaining wetlands, and preventing urban storm water runoff and non-point source pollution. Watershed planning, the provision of increased urban vegetation, and reducing impervious surfaces (i.e. roads and parking lots) pose potential challenges and solutions for addressing these issues.

Mobility

San Diegans value mobility and consider it an important aspect of their quality of life. Most rely on the automobile as their primary means of transportation. Other transportation options have become less viable due to post World War II development patterns and infrastructure decisions that have favored an auto-based transportation network. The transportation system has been developed in accordance with federal and state programs, as well as local programs such as the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the City's Progress Guide and General Plan, community plans, various council policies, and the City's Street Design Manual. The goal of transportation planning has been to anticipate and accommodate future travel demand based on existing needs and future forecasts. Design standards are in place to ensure safe and functional facilities. The emphasis in this region has traditionally been on providing optimal automobile traffic flow.

The effectiveness, cost, and long-term sustainability of our auto-focused system are now being reexamined. For example, freeway widening has been shown to provide only temporary congestion relief as extra lanes draw new vehicle trips to the system that would not have otherwise occurred. In addition, there is a growing recognition that improving automobile circulation must be balanced with other community values, such as preserving neighborhood character and sensitive environmental resources.

During the 1990s, efforts to solve congestion problems with multiple approaches have resulted in greater regional interest in transit and bicycle facilities, and in the development and implementation of programs in the areas of transportation demand management, transportation systems management, and intelligent transportation systems. Better coordination of transit and land use planning, including promotion of more walkable, mixed-use communities as described in the City's Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Design Guidelines, is also acknowledged as part of the solution. The shift toward seeking multi-modal solutions also occurred at the federal level with passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act in 1991.

It is clear that a transportation planning strategy based on providing capacity improvements on freeways and roadways cannot solely meet the increasing travel demand of the region. Not only will congestion increase, but there is also a growing concern that there will be insufficient parking as well as roadway space. By one estimate, if current trends continue, the one million new residents forecasted for the region by the year 2030 will be driving 685,000 cars. These cars will require approximately 3.5 million new parking spaces or the equivalent of 37 square miles of parking lots. The central challenge for the future is to enhance mobility by creating walkable, mixed-use communities that are linked by superior bicycle and transit systems.

Housing Supply and Affordability

Demand for housing options is increasing as the City's developable land is vanishing. San Diego lacks a variety of housing types that are affordable to different income levels. The trend of not developing at the maximum density allowed, or rezoning to lower densities to allow more single-family homes, has reduced the potential housing stock in San Diego. Current residential development is mostly geared toward upper-end single-family and multifamily units. San Diego's demographics suggest a need for attached rental housing with units of more than two bedrooms and entry level, for-sale, multifamily and single-family homes. Accessible housing options for persons with disabilities must also be considered.

A number of issues impact San Diego's housing affordability, including the national and local economy, in addition to local supply and demand. High economic growth tends to negatively impact most people's ability to purchase or rent housing because of market demand and limited supply. Affordable housing is generally unavailable for lower income households. This is exacerbated during times of increased economic growth. The dominance of single-family and lower-density multifamily units in San Diego County has resulted in an insufficient supply of housing units.

During the late 1990s, a period of rapid economic growth, housing became less affordable for San Diegans. In 1998, the National Association of Homebuilders ranked San Diego as the fifteenth least affordable homeowner market in the country. In 2000, San Diego was ranked the ninth least affordable. From 1996 to 2000, rents increased in San Diego 36 percent, with a vacancy rate in 2000 of approximately one to three percent.

These trends are not unique to San Diego. The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development reports that nationwide the number of homes and apartments affordable to families with low-wage incomes is decreasing. Affordable housing opportunities are shrinking with rents rising at twice the rate of general inflation (1999), and the number of people with low-income jobs is increasing. The decline in federal and local assistance for rent and income restricted housing units has also resulted in fewer units affordable to low income households.

Challenges to creating new housing units in San Diego include land availability, financing, traffic constraints, and environmental impacts. San Diego's developable land continues to decrease, meaning that new housing units will have to occur through infill or redevelopment. Infill and redevelopment create a different challenge in increasing the housing stock because both development costs and neighborhood opposition tend to be higher in existing communities.

Economic Growth

For most of the 20th century, San Diego's economy has been closely tied to federal defense expenditures. It began with the Navy bases during World War I, followed by the Marines and shipbuilding. Aerospace manufacturing growth followed World War II. In the last quarter of the 20th century, San Diego became a vacation destination due to its climate and natural beauty. During much of the 1980s, the growth of uniformed services, military contracts, and the visitor industry together made San Diego the fastest growing major city in the United States. This

growth fueled a volatile real estate market that drove up housing prices and created speculative development, stimulating both residential and commercial sprawl.

When the Cold War ended, San Diego lost nearly 50,000 high technology defense jobs over a period of four years, partially contributing to a downward spiral for the economy. San Diego's economic condition was exacerbated by a worldwide recession resulting from corporate restructuring, and the collapse of the savings and loan industry. Housing construction all but ceased and entire shopping centers failed. School districts and local governments dramatically pared back services as tax revenues diminished, and the State retained a larger share of tax dollars to balance its declining budget. Only the tourism sector of San Diego's economy, with its comparatively low paying jobs, continued to grow in the early 1990s.

San Diego reinvented its economy during the 1990s. While some defense contractors vanished, others found commercial niches for their knowledge-based technologies. Electronics manufacturing growth in Tijuana's maquiladoras stimulated research and development, pilot manufacturing, and office functions in San Diego. The global surge in internet and wireless technologies in the late 1990s made San Diego's combination of high tech development, manufacturing capabilities and high quality of life one of the world's most desirable high technology business locations. By 1998, the loss of defense contracting jobs had been more than replaced with the "new economy" jobs.

The "new economy" comes with an awareness that the City of San Diego is part of a larger economic region, that quality of life and natural resources are economic assets, that there is a need for connected vital centers with more living and working choices, and that the City must be able to adapt quickly to change. The supply of vacant developable employment land has decreased to a critical point in the city, especially in locations preferred by "new economy" industries. Dwindling employment lands must be used more efficiently to sustain job growth, and there will be an increasing demand for reuse-infill development in older areas. San Diego faces other challenges in promoting long-term economic prosperity. San Diego has been experiencing declining middle-income job opportunities and a concentration of lower income populations. San Diego continues to create more jobs, with knowledge-based jobs fueling the high end of the economic spectrum. However, manufacturing, which has provided the most solid middle class job opportunities, continues to decline as a percentage of employment. The growing visitor industry and retail and business service occupations do not typically offer middle-income jobs with medical benefits. The region's remaining middle class occupations tend to be in government and private business ownership.

Low-income families accounted for 13 percent of the region's population in 1999. Declining middle-income job opportunities and increasing housing costs add to the problems of concentrated poverty and poor school performance. The social and physical costs of concentrated poverty greatly exceed the limited resources of social programs and redevelopment efforts.

Once the top performing education state, California now ranks near the bottom. The lack of resources for local schools has inhibited their ability to provide a skilled labor force, forcing employers to look outside the region to find quality employees.

The rapid increase in housing prices will steadily increase pressure on salaries. This could cause the regional economy to succumb to inflation, making San Diego less cost competitive as a place to do business. The capacity of regional infrastructure has been declining. Border infrastructure lags behind the increase in border trade. Despite growth in tourism and international trade, San Diego's airport is less than a third the size of the next smallest airport among major U.S. cities. Both water and power supplies are under pressure to meet the region's growing need.

In summary, an Economic Prosperity strategy for San Diego must encourage a rising standard of living that is equal to or above the national trend as measured by real per capita income.

Beyond 2020

The City of Villages concept and accompanying growth strategies embodied in the Land Use and Community Planning Element are intended to guide future development in San Diego well beyond the year 2020. This is a long-range proposal that will not be fully implemented in many parts of the city until after 2020. Some of the urban nodes contemplated as future villages are currently experiencing demand for intensified use and have infrastructure in place. These nodes could develop in accordance with the City of Villages strategy in the next few years while other areas will not achieve urban village characteristics until much later.

Village Evolution

Over the next few years, the greatest share of redevelopment and village development will initially occur in the older developed central communities. However, it is anticipated that there will be a gradual shift to newer suburban areas as communities developed after World War II begin to age and experience redevelopment pressure. After 2020, it is anticipated that a significant share of redevelopment and village development will occur in the northern portion of the city, particularly in those areas that experienced initial development after 1970.

Some of the most significant potential urban village locations that may become available in the long term are on sites that are now used for military and airport uses and are not currently planned for urban development. These sites could include San Diego International Airport, Brown Field, Montgomery Field, the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, and portions of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. Lindbergh Field, for example, has been suggested as a site that could, if the airport is relocated, support a variety of uses that could take full advantage of bay views and proximity to downtown. Redevelopment of these airport and military sites is currently uncertain and would likely occur after 2020.

An even more important trend anticipated after 2020 than the establishment of new urban villages will be the continued evolution of existing villages. In the dynamic process of urban development, some villages, including the pilot projects, will begin to form during the next decade, combining residential and retail uses. Within several years, these villages may add local office uses such as doctors and dentists offices. Still later they may include larger scale employment components. A common feature of all the villages will be ease of walking between residential units, transit stops, public facilities, and basic commercial uses. However, as the villages become more fully developed, their individual personalities will become more defined

and their development patterns will become more varied and distinctive.

It is anticipated that the functions of most individual villages will develop in a gradual, organic manner rather than be quickly established through the construction of a few large projects. After 2020, some of the villages may take on specialized functions that cannot be predicted at the present time. For example, some villages could eventually contain regional entertainment centers while other villages gain renown as specialized shopping districts. Still other areas will have a wide mix of uses with no particular emphasis.

The Rate of Village Development

Infrastructure that is currently lacking must be in place before potential villages can begin to accept higher density residential development and/or additional commercial uses. Transit is currently inadequate in many of the areas that could be considered as potential village locations. While some of the older communities in the city are already ripe for redevelopment, and intensification could enhance their existing village characteristics within ten to fifteen years, other potential urban village locations are characterized by relatively new shopping centers and housing that will not be ready for redevelopment for fifteen to twenty years or more.

The rate at which the City of Villages concept can be applied throughout the city will be determined largely by the rate at which infrastructure deficiencies can be remedied. Transit will be particularly crucial. As urban area transit service is improved, many potential village locations could begin to develop in accordance with the City of Villages concept. The rate of implementation is dependent upon available funding, public support, and political will. However, even if transit deficiencies and other infrastructure needs are fully addressed in the next two decades, it is likely that the transition from the current auto-oriented pattern of development to a more transit and pedestrian-oriented development pattern will take up to forty years to be fully achieved. The current automobile-dominated urban development pattern in San Diego has occurred over several decades and the incremental land use and transportation changes sought will likely take almost as long to realize.

Finally, a significant factor that will influence the pace at which the City of Villages strategy will be implemented is the rate of future population growth in the San Diego region. The pattern of development envisioned in the City of Villages concept will not be impacted by the rate of growth, but the rate of development of individual villages will be dependent in part on the region's population growth rate.

Lifestyle Trends

Certain demographic trends that are already evident in San Diego will be more fully developed by the year 2020 and thereafter. These trends include a steadily increasing elderly proportion of the population and fewer people living in detached single-family units. Many elderly people are unable or choose not to drive. The creation of a more pedestrian and transit-oriented urban pattern around village nodes will provide more options to this population group than the auto-oriented pattern of development that has been prevalent in the recent past. Under the City of Villages strategy, more seniors may not need housing developed that specifically serves senior

citizens, instead they may choose mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods that are accessible by transit or walking to a full-range of services and facilities.

Another trend that is currently in a beginning stage in San Diego, but that will be far more evident in the future, is the desire by an increasing segment of the population to live in an urban, rather than a suburban, setting. By 2030, San Diego will offer a broader choice of residential lifestyles resembling more mature cities such as Chicago and San Francisco. This will be the case in part because the chief advantage of suburbia in the postwar era – a home surrounded by a large yard – has already become unattainable for most San Diego residents because of the high cost and scarcity of land.

Many of the trends that will impact development and planning in the years after 2020 cannot be accurately predicted at the present time. The degree to which shortages of water and energy may impact future growth patterns is unknown. Federal funding levels for regional public facilities cannot be projected. It is already apparent that a shortage of buildable land combined with continued desirability of living in San Diego will result in a continued lack of affordable housing and high rents for office and retail space. The traditional low density pattern of development characterized by single-family subdivisions, auto-oriented retail centers and campus-type business parks will not meet the needs of this city and region in the years after 2020.

Both the Strategic Framework and Land Use and Community Planning Elements are intended to provide a positive response to growth and development trends by providing an enlightened strategy for the future development of the City – a strategy that builds upon what is good in our communities and ensures high quality conditions of life for future generations.