
III. INTRODUCTION

Mid-City is a land area located in the heart of the City of San Diego and with a population in excess of 130,000 people it is as large as a moderate size city. Its numerous neighborhoods—as diverse as all of the San Diego Region—have been categorized into four communities: Normal Heights, Kensington-Talmadge, City Heights, and Eastern Area.

The westernmost communities began their development in the early part of the twentieth century. They feature a "grid" street pattern and strip commercial development typical of the era. The easternmost area developed after the Second World War with a curvilinear street system, and with commercial development clustered into shopping centers.

From north to south, the community reveals a social gradient: Kensington and Talmadge have a history connected with early California movie making, while other communities such as City Heights were working class communities. More recently, immigrants from around the world have found Mid-City neighborhoods to be their first home in the United States, creating a very special international flavor in the central portion of Mid-City.

The Community

Scope and Purpose

Legislative Framework

Ancillary Documents

THE COMMUNITY

The Mid-City communities are centrally located in the San Diego metropolitan area, northeast of Centre City, south of Mission Valley, and west of the City of La Mesa. It is a gently rolling mesa divided by canyons on both the north and south edges of the community. Hills and canyons in the eastern portion of the community feed into the Chollas Valley system, which bisects the area from northeast to southwest.

Mid-City includes some of the older communities in the City of San Diego, with an estimated 52,510 dwelling units and 132,466 residents in 1997. Much of the westerly portion of the community was originally developed in the 1910-1930 era, before the Second World War, while development east of 54th Street generally occurred in the post World War II period. Overall, residential development is predominantly of single-family homes, with pockets of varying multifamily densities ranging from duplex development, to early century apartment courts, garden apartments and high-density three-story plus apartment development.

Commercial and other business development has been concentrated along the major traffic arterials. El Cajon Boulevard was once the main east-west highway for the region (Highway 80) until Interstate 8 (I-8) was built in the late 1950s. The Boulevard still serves as Mid-City's main thoroughfare. Other major streets that provide business services in Mid-City are: University Avenue, another east-west thoroughfare parallel to the Boulevard; and, Adams Avenue, the site of early neighborhood commercial activity. Land uses along these transportation corridors are characterized by strip commercial development servicing a variety of residential neighborhoods, ranging from high-density apartments near the corridors, to single-family dwellings to the north and south along canyons.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This Mid-City Communities Plan is designed to supplement the City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan (General Plan) policies. It accomplishes this by identifying specific community issues and specific policies that build on those already embodied in the General Plan. This Mid-City Communities Plan once approved will become a part of the City's General Plan document.

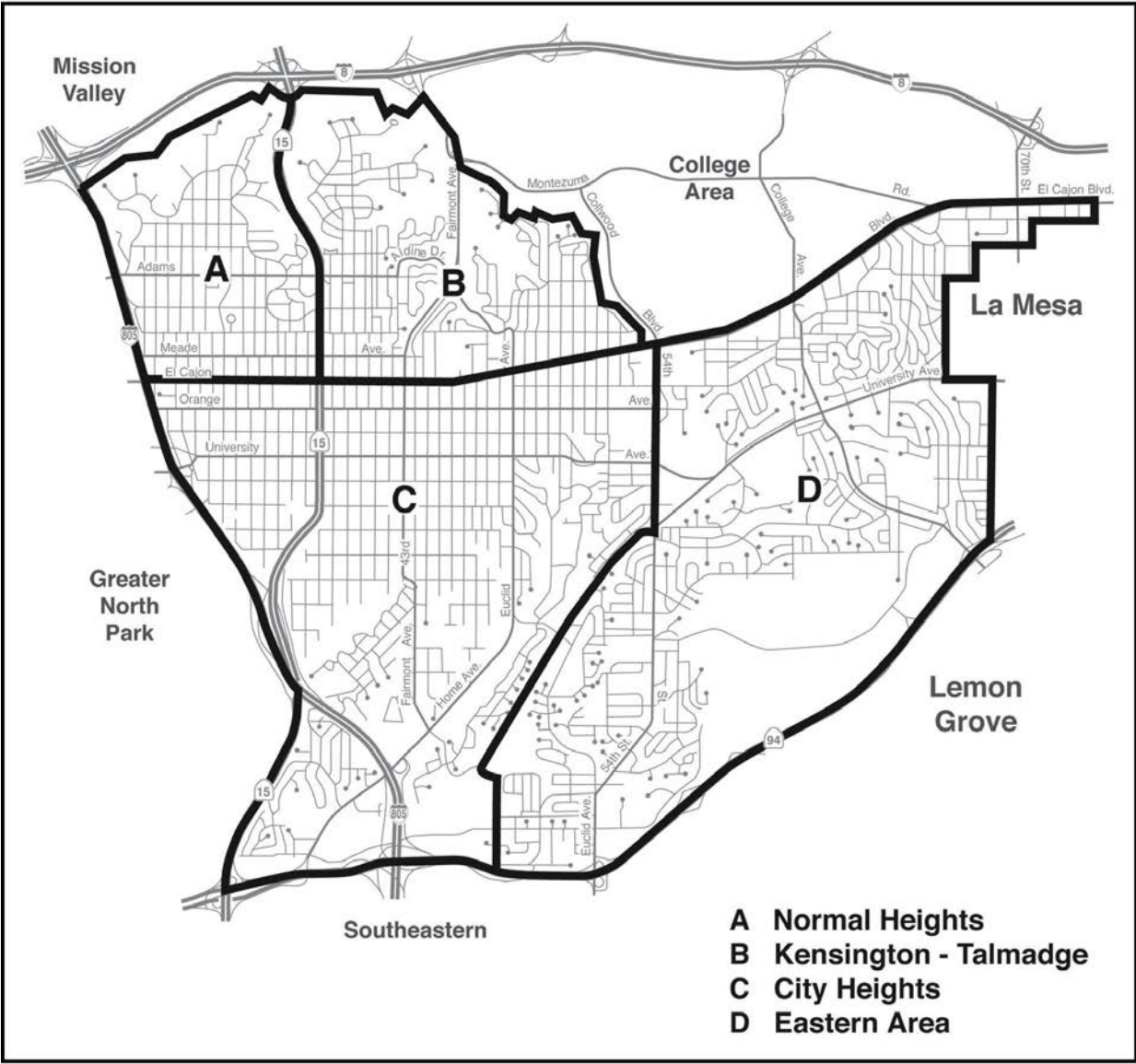
It is the intent of this communities plan to identify a “vision” for the future development of the four Mid-City communities of Normal Heights, Kensington-Talmadge, City Heights, and Eastern. The Plan contains policies that implement that vision, and an implementation strategy that establishes the timing and financing required to implement the policies and vision.

While this Plan sets forth many proposals for implementation, it does not establish new regulations nor does it rezone property. It does however put the policies in motion that will be followed by public hearings to rezone property in accordance with the Plan's recommendations. This Plan also incorporates a financing program that will be subject to subsequent City Council actions, incorporating the recommendations into the City's Capital Improvements Program.

This Mid-City Communities Plan replaces the previous community plan originally adopted on December 4, 1984 by resolutions Number R-262091. This 1984 community plan in turn replaced the original Mid-City Development plan adopted on August 5, 1965.

Adoption of this Plan requires an amendment to the General Plan for the City of San Diego, consistent with Council Policy 600-7.

Figure 4
Mid-City Communities



LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

As stated earlier, the Mid-City Communities Plan is an element of the City's General Plan, providing tailored policies that more clearly implement General Plan Policies and purpose. As such, this Plan is enabled by legislative framework on federal, state and local levels. Some of the more significant legislation applicable to this Plan is described below:

- California Government Code Section 65800 (State Planning and Zoning Law) gives Local Government the right to regulate land use within its jurisdictional boundaries. Such regulation in turn requires that a citywide land use plan be established.
- California Government Code Section 65350 (State Planning and Zoning Law) gives authority to local government for the preparation of general plans. The Code further specifies required and optional elements that must appear in every plan. The legislation also provides means for adopting and administering these plans. This Mid-City Community Plan meets the state requirements.
- Federal legislation and California Government Code Chapter 4.3 require that local government agencies provide affordable housing and ready access to it through housing programs and development incentives. This Plan identifies such programs and incentives consistent with the General Plan's Housing Element.
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that all government actions be subject to environmental review. The environmental review process identifies areas where environmental quality is affected, and requires that appropriate environmental mitigation be identified. This Plan is subject to such environmental review.
- Federal and state regulations such as the U.S. Clean Air Act and the California Regional Air Quality Strategy recommend that air quality issues be considered in all land use and transportation plans. The environmental review to this Plan addresses these impacts.
- Federal and State Water Quality legislation require that impacts on water quality, both surface and subsurface be addressed. The environmental review to this Plan addresses these impacts.
- The City's Municipal Code regulates the development of land and other policies contained in this Plan. The Plan's implementation will require that rezonings be undertaken to better match land use policy recommendations to regulatory controls.
- In addition to legislation, the City Council has adopted a number of policies that are used as guidelines for implementation of numerous community plan recommendations.

ANCILLARY DOCUMENTS

A number of background documents prepared over the years were used as reference in the preparation of this Plan. In a few cases, comprehensive studies were made as part of this planning program, which, for the sake of brevity, are also referenced. While these documents are not adopted as part of this Plan, they provide essential information that was used in the development of its policies.

Documents include economic development studies, business enhancement studies, residential improvement studies, traffic studies, transit studies, open space and park studies, environmental, redevelopment and financial studies. An annotated bibliography of these documents is provided in **Appendix A**.