

SOUTHEASTERN SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY PLAN



Southeastern San Diego Community Plan

City of San Diego Planning Department
202 C Street, MS 4A
San Diego, CA 92101



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Editorial Note: Please note that bolded sentences in this document were reflected as underlined information in the original printed document. Please refer to the original printed document for clarification.

INTRODUCTION

Scope and Purpose

Plan Organization

Key Issues

Summary of Plan Objectives

Legislative Framework

Plan Alternatives

INTRODUCTION

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Southeastern San Diego is an urbanized community occupying approximately 7,200 acres in the central portion of the City of San Diego. As of 1986, the community contained approximately 79,258 people living in 25,477 dwelling units, accompanied by approximately 173 acres of industrial development, 179 acres of commercial development and approximately 900 acres of vacant land.

The community is centrally located near major employment centers in the South Bay, Centre City and northern San Diego. The community also has excellent regional access to the metropolitan area and major commercial areas of Centre City, Mission Valley and the South Bay by means of four freeway systems.

The land within Southeastern San Diego consists of a series of terraces which are cut by streams into four highland areas. These terraces currently provide view opportunities to the downtown, Mid-City and South Bay regions of the City.

The community's central location, excellent regional access and view opportunities are attributes which have not been fully utilized. Furthermore, the introduction of a light rail transit system through Southeastern San Diego and the recent redevelopment of the Centre City area has provided exciting incentives for redevelopment and new development in the community.

The purpose of this community plan is to guide the future development of the community and, by identifying key issues and goals, to assist the community in achieving its full potential as a place to live and work.

The Progress Guide and General Plan (General Plan) for the City of San Diego designates community planning areas in the City in which specific land use proposals are made in the form of community plans. Taken together, these plans form the land use element of the General Plan. This process allows the community plan to refine the policies of the City down to the community level, within the context of citywide goals and objectives. This plan addresses issues and goals which are unique to the community and will serve to implement the goals which have been formulated by the residents of the community.

PROJECT FIRST CLASS

In addition to the mandates of the Progress Guide and General Plan, a program to specifically assist this community in the process of growth and revitalization was initiated by the fourth district Council Office in 1984. Project First Class is a comprehensive program of community development which was approved by the City Council in May of 1984. This program was established to develop an urban design program, to form a concentrated code enforcement program and to facilitate other public and private improvements for Southeastern San Diego and the adjoining communities of Golden Hill and Skyline-Paradise Hills. The intent of this program is to work toward a better environment through economic

development, attention to urban design, eyesore eradication, street and alleyway improvements, building code enforcement, residential and commercial rehabilitation and the establishment of quality housing. This community plan can also be considered as a step toward implementing the intent of Project First Class.

The community plan does not rezone property, authorize the taking of private property or establish new development regulations or ordinances. The plan is intended to serve as the basis for simultaneous or future zoning actions, including the adoption of a planned district for portions of the community. Additionally, all rezoning or subdivision actions and other actions associated with public or private development or redevelopment will be judged based on the consistency of the proposed action with this community plan.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The community plan has been organized to first establish a general setting for the community in the Introduction and Background sections and then to address the existing conditions, objectives and recommendations for each of the following elements: Social-Economic, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Open Space and Recreation, Transportation, Public Facilities and Urban Design. A Neighborhood Element has also been prepared to more specifically discuss the following neighborhoods within the community: Sherman Heights, Grant Hill, Logan Heights, Stockton, Memorial, Mount Hope, Mountain View, Southcrest, Shelltown, Chollas View, Lincoln Park, Broadway Heights, Emerald Hills, Encanto, Valencia Park, South Encanto, and Alta Vista.

The final section outlines the specific actions recommended for implementation of the plan.

HOW THE PLAN WORKS

Existing

Conditions



Objectives



Recommendations



Implementation

What we see in
the community

What we want to
do

What we will do

How we will do it

KEY ISSUES

The City Council-designated community planning group for the Southeastern San Diego community is the Southeastern Development Committee. The Committee has raised the following issues as a part of the plan development process. It is these issues to which this plan is designed to respond:

- Employment Opportunities: Providing jobs is one of the key aims in improving the social and economic well-being of the community.
- Commercial Centers: The absence of commercial shopping locations in the community is seen as a major problem by community residents.
- Density and Design of New Development: Although Southeastern San Diego is a predominantly urbanized community, several developable vacant tracts are located in the eastern portion of the community. The density and design of these parcels has the potential to greatly affect the quality of the community.
- Access: Within several neighborhoods, access to services and freeways via the community's surface street system is difficult. The lack of through north-south streets in many parts of the community is an issue of particular concern.
- Community Design: Concern about the appearance of developed areas is a manifestation of the pride that residents have in their community. Methods of improving existing developed areas have been actively sought by residents. In addition, the maintenance and cleanliness of public facilities and streets can have a great influence on overall community design.
- Public Facilities: The provision and maintenance of public facilities, including parks, is repeatedly stressed by residents and policy makers alike. Funding public facilities through the Capital Improvement Program rather than relying on Community Development Block Grants is also a community desire.
- Assisted Housing Projects: The community group has expressed concerns with programs and projects that impact the community with a disproportionately large share of low and moderate-income units. At issue are assisted housing units, density bonus programs and senior citizen conditional use permit projects.
- Social Service Facilities: The community planning group is also concerned by the concentration of social service agencies in the community. Specifically, the group is concerned about the issuance of Conditional Use Permits for clinics, criminal rehabilitation, poverty assistance outreach centers and residential care facilities, which seem to be congregated in the community.
- Recreation and Education Facilities: As with most residential communities with a high percentage of school age children, the parents of Southeastern San Diego are vitally interested in the provision of the highest quality educational and recreational services and facilities for the community.

SUMMARY OF PLAN OBJECTIVES

Social and Economic Objectives

1. Achieve an economically and ethnically balanced community.
2. Provide housing for all family sizes, particularly larger families.
3. Increase job opportunities and resources within the community.
4. Provide adequate health care for all residents of the community, while reducing the impacts of social service facilities intended to serve the population at large.

Residential Objectives

1. Respect the housing character, scale, style and density of existing residential neighborhoods.
2. Preserve, restore and rehabilitate residences and/or neighborhoods with historical significance. (Information on historic structures and districts is detailed in the Neighborhood Element of the Plan.)
3. Encourage and accommodate orderly new development that is consistent with community goals and objectives.
4. Require high quality developments in accordance with the design guidelines established within the plan and as recommended by Project First Class.
5. Maintain or increase the level of owner occupancy in the community to increase maintenance of properties and to increase pride in individual neighborhoods.

Commercial Objectives

1. Provide attractive quality community and neighborhood commercial facilities that offer a variety of goods and services to meet community needs.
2. Rehabilitate existing commercial centers and improve both vehicular and pedestrian access to the site.
3. Encourage the preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of commercial buildings of historical significance or interest.
4. Decrease crime and increase the perception of safety through the use of crime-detering materials and design, including the thoughtful use of landscaping, screening materials, lighting and building siting and materials.

Industrial Objectives

1. Decrease land use conflicts between industrial and residential or commercial development.
2. Increase employment opportunities in the community.
3. Provide new, high quality office and industrial park development within the community.
4. Promote the redevelopment or rehabilitation of existing industrial facilities.
5. Decrease crime and crime-related aesthetic impacts (such as graffiti and barbed-wire fencing).

Open Space and Recreation Objectives

1. Maintain and improve existing parks by improvements to landscaping, lighting, signage, walkways and play facilities.
2. Increase the number of parks and the size of existing parks as financing and acquisition opportunities occur.
3. Require the provision of private recreation areas in new residential developments.
4. Maintain and enhance the community's cemeteries as unique landscaped open areas of visual significance to the community.
5. Preserve significant hillsides, canyons and drainage areas in their natural state
6. Increase the opportunities for the public enjoyment of open space areas, including limited access to Radio Canyon and Chollas Creek.
7. Achieve a more connected system of active and passive open space and recreation areas.

Transportation Objectives

Vehicular Transit

1. Minimize the effects of the existing freeways on adjacent development and oppose any addition of freeway construction as the community is well served by freeways.
2. Implement physical and operational improvements to the street system to meet the City's design standards and to reduce accidents.
3. Fully improve streets to reduce or remove "bottlenecks."
4. Improve north-south vehicular access in the community.

Public Transit

5. Maintain high public transit accessibility to downtown, as is currently promoted by the existing east-west bus route structure and the San Diego Trolley.
6. Improve the frequency and level of transit service, and the quality of transit facilities to meet the demands of the community.
7. Fully utilize the potential of the San Diego Trolley-East Line to revitalize and redevelop land adjacent to the trolley line and to maximize the use of public transportation.

Freight

8. Maintain freight transportation by rail to the extent feasible in the community.
9. Minimize impacts of freight transportation on vehicular circulation and nearby land use.

Pedestrian/Bicycle

10. Increase the aesthetic quality of street corridors to encourage pedestrian activity.
11. Maintain and improve pedestrian and bicycle access to public transportation.
12. Enhance bicycle circulation by improving designated routes to City standards and by attention to aesthetic quality and safety.

Public Facilities Objectives

Schools

1. Maintain an adequate level of capacity for all public schools and a high level of maintenance of all school facilities.
2. Improve present programs of racial desegregation in the schools.
3. Maintain and enhance the availability of community college and other higher education programs in the community.

Police/Fire

4. Maintain and improve response times and service levels to the community.
5. Reduce the present level of crime activity in the community.

Drainage/Flood Control

6. Protect property from flooding while retaining the natural appearance of drainage areas to the extent feasible.

Urban Design Objectives

1. Improve the visual and physical character of the community.
2. Ensure compatibility between new structures and existing neighborhoods.
3. Improve the quality of new multi-family residential development.
4. Enhance the community's visual image through streetscape improvements along major streets and within the neighborhoods.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Southeastern San Diego Community Plan was developed within the context of a legislative framework consisting of federal, state and local levels. Some of the more significant legislation is discussed below.

- Section 65450 of the Governmental Code of the state of California (state Planning and Zoning Act) gives authority for the preparation of community plans and specifies the elements which must appear in each plan. It also provides the means for adopting and administering these plans.
- State Government Code Chapter 4.3 requires that local governments and agencies provide incentives to developers to include affordable units in housing projects. The City has prepared an ordinance which would establish an Affordable Housing Density Bonus providing an increase in maximum permitted density in a given zone to be granted for projects in which at least a certain percentage of the total housing units are for low or moderate-income persons.
- The California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) requires that environmental reports be prepared for all community plans. Separate, detailed environmental reports may also be required for many projects which implement this plan.
- The Regional Air Quality Strategy (RAQS) was developed in 1977 to achieve a level of air quality in the San Diego Air Basin that would meet federal air quality standards set forth in the National Clean Air Act. A major recommendation pertinent to this planning effort is to include air quality considerations in all land use and transportation plans.
- The citywide Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances regulate the development of land and subdivision of land in preparation for development.
- In addition to legislation, the City Council has adopted a number of policies to serve as guidelines in the decision making process. Many of the policies relate directly to planning issues and should be used in implementing plan recommendations.
- The Progress Guide and General Plan serves as a basis for the development of the community plan. The General Plan sets forth goals, standards and criteria for the provision of facilities that are essential in the community and possess citywide importance.

PLAN ALTERNATIVES

The following alternative land use plans have been considered in preparing for the revision of the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan. The variations largely pertain to differences in population density. In each of the alternatives, non-residential land use would remain approximately the same.

Using the existing plan and/or the existing zoning would not have integrated the introduction of the trolley line with the land uses of the recommended Southeastern Plan nor would they have designated Sherman Heights as an historic district. Additionally, much of the single-family stability of the community would have been lost to redevelopment at higher densities. These alternative plans have not been adopted but the variations in land uses and their impact have been considered while developing this community plan revision.

RESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVES

Existing Plan Alternative

This alternative would continue the pattern of the existing 1969 Land Use Plan. The most widespread densities recommended in this plan were at the densities of 10-30 units per acre. Small pockets of 15-45 units per acre were scattered along the major corridors. The 1975 rezoning effort responding to the requirements of A. B. 1301 did not bring zoning into substantial conformance with this Land Use Plan. For that to have occurred, large areas would have had to be changed from 10-15 dwelling units per acre to five to ten dwelling units per acre, and in the eastern subarea from 5-10 dwelling units per acre to 0-5 dwelling units per acre.

Existing Zoning Alternative

Adjusting the Land Use Plan to conform to the existing zoning pattern yields the most intense development of all the alternatives. The preponderance of the multi-family segment of the western subarea is currently zoned R-1500 (15-30 du/ac).

Almost all multi-family development has occurred at a density of 30 units per acre, existing zoning does permit high density along major transportation routes, but it does not allow for transition zones between low and high densities. This could be accomplished through a series of up-zonings and down-zonings at transition points.

Transit Corridor Alternative

This alternative would identify the Trolley corridor, Market Street, Imperial Avenue, National and Logan Avenues, and Euclid Avenue as major thoroughfares and develop gradients in zoning density dependent on the distance to those streets and the trolley. The highest density would be concentrated in the blocks adjacent to those streets while density would decrease for the tiers of blocks as distance from the thoroughfares increases.

NON-RESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVES

OPEN SPACE

Existing Community Plan and Zoning

The previously adopted Southeastern San Diego Community Plan did not identify specific areas of significant natural topographical features to be designated as open space. The existing zoning provides only minimal potential for preserving open space.

General Plan Open Space Designation

The deficiencies in the previously adopted plan's designated open space are potentially remedied by the open space designations contained in the open space map included in the City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan Open Space Element. These designations include both tributaries of Las Chollas Creek and Radio Canyon.

Other Open Space Designation

This alternative would include all of the open space recommendations in the General Plan alternative above, with additional designations located in some of the remaining undeveloped canyons, as well as steep slopes throughout many neighborhoods in the community.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL USE

Existing Community Plan

The previously adopted Southeastern San Diego Community Plan recommends more limited commercial area than is now developed or zoned. The adopted plan also recommends limited areas for industrial use along Commercial Street, Imperial Avenue near Euclid, the northwest corner of I-15 at I-94, and smaller pockets off of Federal Boulevard, Market Street, and National Avenue.

Existing Zoning

The existing zoning ordinance does not adequately differentiate among the many kinds of commercial activity. Some of the commercially zoned land is not now and is not likely to be developed for commercial use. Such commercial areas should be designated for more appropriate land uses.

Intensified Economic Activity

This alternative would evaluate the potentials for heightened economic activity by recommending mixed commercial and multi-family uses, by expanding the depth of commercially zoned strips, by contracting the extent of commercially zoned strips, and redesigning certain unproductive areas from commercial activity to some other use. It would also recommend a differentiation for the various commercial activities and place special emphasis on office commercial use. It would also recommend expanded areas for industrial use.