City of San Diego General Plan

CITY OF VILLAGES

Adopted by the:
Council of the City of San Diego
March 10, 2008

Resolution Number: R-303473

Acknowledgements

City Planning & Community Investment (CPCI)
Betsy McCullough, AICP, Assistant to the Director
Mary Wright, AICP, Deputy Director

General Plan Staff
Nancy Bragado, General Plan Program Manager
Marco Camacho, Facilities Financing
Jean Cameron, Economic Development
Melissa Devine, Community Planning
Cecilia Gallardo, AICP, Community Planning
Tait Galloway, Transportation Planning
Maureen Gardiner, P.E., Transportation Planning
Howard Greenstein, RLA, Park Planning
Sara Lyons, Community Planning
Marlon Pangilinan, Community Planning
Deborah Sharpe, RLA, Park Planning
Cathy Winterrowd, Historic Preservation

Graphic Design And Maps
Jan Atha, Mapping
Rick Brown, Graphic Design
Mike Klein, Mapping

Support Staff
Shirley Atencio, Administrative/Support
Jacqueline Dominguez, Administrative Services
Anne Havin, Administrative Services
Brian McGarrigle, Administrative Services

Contributing Staff

CPCI
Raynard Abalos, Community Planning
Patsy Chow,* Community Planning
Coleen Clementson,* Planning
Jennifer Duval,* Planning
Kristen Forburger, Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP)
Charlene Gabriel, Facilities Financing
Russell Gibbon, Economic Development
S. Gail Goldberg,* Planning
Keith Greer,* Planning
Samir Hajjiri, P.E., Transportation Planning
Gary Halbert,* Planning
Jeff Harkness, RLA, Park Planning
Melanie Johnson,* MSCP
Diane Kane,* Historic Preservation
Jeanne Krosch, MSCP
Bill Levin,* Planning
Linda Marabian, P.E., Transportation Planning
Betsy Miller, MSCP
Monica Munoz, Communications
Michael Prinz, Planning
Randy Rodriguez,* Planning
Kelley Saunders, Historic Preservation
Nancee Thomas, Proofreader
John Wilhoit,* Community Planning

Development Services
Kelly Broughton
Dan Joyce
Werner Landry
Amanda Lee
Robert Manis*
Anna McPherson

Commission For Arts And Culture
Victoria L. Hamilton
Dana Springs

Engineering And Capital Projects
Richard Leja*

Environmental Services
Tom Blair
Linda Pratt
Lisa Wood

Fire-rescue
Tracy Jarman
Javier Mainar
Sam Oates*
Monica Orton

Homeland Security
Donna Faller

Library Department
Meryl Balko
Mary Ann Tilotta

Metropolitan Wastewater
Joe Harris
Andrew Kleis
Chris Zirkle

Park And Recreation
Stacey LoMedico
April Penera*

San Diego Police Department
Marta Williams

Water Department
George Adrian
Jeffery Pasek
Leonard Wilson

Former Planning Commissioners
William Anderson
Bruce Brown
Carolyn Chase
Anthony J. Lettieri
Mark Steele

Other Contributors
Anthony J. Lettieri, FAICP
Dennis Ryan, Formatting Editor
Andy Spurlock, President Spurlock Poirier Landscape Architects
Students from the NewSchool of Architecture and Design

Participating Boards And Commissions
Commission for Arts and Culture
Community Forest Advisory Board
Historical Resources Board

** Former City staff*

Housing Commission
Park and Recreation Board
Redevelopment Project Area Committee Chairs
San Diego Housing Commission
Science and Technology Commission
Senior Affairs Advisory Board
Small Business Advisory Board
Wetlands Advisory Board

Community Planners Committee (CPC)

CPC General Plan Subcommittee

Leo Wilson, CPC and Subcommittee Chair
Steve Laub, Former CPC Chair
Lee Campbell
Cynthia Conger
Eric Germain
Buzz Gibbs
Kathy Mateer
Lee Rittiner
Patricia Shields
Jim Varnadore

Community Planning Groups

Carmel Mountain Ranch Community Council
Carmel Valley Community Planning Board
Centre City Advisory Committee
City Heights Area Planning Committee
Clairemont Mesa Planning Committee
College Area Community Council
Del Mar Mesa Community Planning Board
Eastern Area Planning Committee
Encanto Neighborhoods Community Planning Group
Greater Golden Hill Planning Committee
Greater North Park Planning Committee
Kearny Mesa Community Planning Group
Kensington-Talmadge Planning Committee
La Jolla Community Planning Association
Linda Vista Community Planning Committee
Midway Community Planning Advisory Committee
Mira Mesa Community Planning Group
Miramar Ranch North Planning Committee
Mission Beach Precise Planning Board
Mission Valley Unified Planning Organization
Navajo Community Planners Inc.
Normal Heights Community Planning Committee
Ocean Beach Planning Board
Old Town Community Planning Committee
Otay Mesa – Nestor Planning Committee
Otay Mesa Planning Committee
Pacific Beach Community Planning Committee
Peninsula Community Planning Board
Rancho Bernardo Community Planning Board
Rancho Penasquitos Planning Board
Sabre Springs Planning Group
San Pasqual – Lake Hodges Planning Group
San Ysidro Planning and Development Group
Scripps Ranch Community Planning Group
Serra Mesa Planning Group
Skyline – Paradise Hills Planning Committee
Southeastern San Diego Planning Committee
Tierrasanta Community Council
Torrey Hills Community Planning Board
Torrey Pines Community Planning Group
University Community Planning Group
Uptown Planners

Stakeholders

Air Pollution Control District
Association of Environmental Professionals
Bicycle Coalition
Building Industry Association
Burnham Real Estate
BID Council
BioCom
California Air Resources Board
California Department of Transportation
Center on Policy Initiatives
Citizens Coordinate for Century 3
Community Parking Districts
Community Planners Advisory Committee on Transportation
Council of Design Professionals
Dow Chemical Company
Economic Research Associates
Endangered Habitats League
Environmental Health Coalition Gen-Probe
Industrial Environmental Association
Kiwanis Club of Old San Diego
Kyocera
Land Use and Housing Committee's Technical Advisory Committee
Ligand Pharmaceuticals
Manager's Parking Task Force
Metropolitan Transit System
National Association of Industrial and Office Properties
New School of Architecture & Design
Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce
Otay Mesa Community Planning Coalition
Park and Recreation Board
Pedestrian Master Plan Working Group
Qualcomm
Redevelopment Project Area Committee Chairs
San Diego Association of Governments
San Diego Association of Realtors
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce
San Diego Community College District
San Diego County Air Pollution Control District
San Diego County Department of Environmental Health
San Diego Highway Development Association
San Diego Housing Federation
San Diego Labor Council
San Diego Organizing Project
San Diego Port Tenants Association
San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation
San Diego Unified Port District
San Diego Unified School District
San Diego Workforce Partnership
San Diego Working Waterfront
Save Our Heritage Organisation
Sierra Club
Small Business Advisory Board
Society of American Military Engineers
Society of Architecture and Engineering
Solar Turbines
Uptown Partnership
United States Green Building Council
United States Marine Corps
United States Navy
Walk San Diego

Introduction

San Diego has the location and the physical foundation in general for an important, perhaps a great, city. Its people are awake to its needs, and are resolved to meet them.

~ John Nolen, 1908

City Planner John Nolen wrote these words as a preface to San Diego's first grand vision statement of the 20th century. He looked at a young city with a population of less than 40,000 and imagined what it could become.

Against the backdrop of what Nolen considered San Diego's "permanent attractiveness beyond all other communities," he envisioned development of a civic center of downtown public buildings, more urban open space, parks and playgrounds, and a bayfront with promenades and public amenities. He urged San Diegans to build a city that capitalized on its many natural assets and enviable climate. Nolen's goals are still relevant today and they advised many of the planning decisions that shaped San Diego in the past century.

Since the Nolen Plan was commissioned, San Diego has grown from a small border town to a thriving metropolis of nearly 1.3 million people, complete with many distinct and diverse neighborhoods. The City's growth and evolution have served as a catalyst for the development of numerous planning visions and plan documents. Through the years, all of the plans have shared a somewhat common vision. They have sought preservation of unique neighborhoods, good jobs and housing for all San Diegans, protection and enhancement of the environment, development of a diverse economy, an efficient and useful public transit system, well-maintained public facilities and services, and careful management of the growth and development of the City.

San Diego's Planning History

During the 1960s, the City engaged in a comprehensive planning process to prepare the first Progress Guide and General Plan, and in 1967 the City Council adopted and the electorate ratified that document as the first General Plan for the City of San Diego. In 1974, planning consultants Kevin Lynch and Donald Appleyard, funded through a grant from the prominent San Diego Marston family, produced *Temporary Paradise?* This groundbreaking study focused upon the natural base of the City and region; it recommended that new growth complement the regional landscape to preserve its precious natural resources and San Diego's high quality of life. *Temporary Paradise?* served as a major influence on the subsequent comprehensive update of the Progress Guide and General Plan adopted in 1979.

The City experienced both significant growth and a serious recession over the two following decades. Residential development reached the City's jurisdictional boundaries which also expanded during this period. The City's economic base evolved from tourism and defense to include high technology research and manufacturing, and international trade. The citizens of San Diego reacted to the growth and change by participating in numerous visioning efforts. They produced several documents, ballot initiatives, and programs including: the Urban Form Action Plan, the Regional Growth Management Strategy, the Livable Neighborhoods Initiative, Towards Permanent Paradise, the Renaissance Commission Report, and many others.

Based upon the planning principles and shared common values in all of these documents, the City Council adopted the Strategic Framework Element in 2002 to guide the comprehensive update of the entire 1979 Progress Guide and General Plan.

A New General Plan

This General Plan provides policy guidance to balance the needs of a growing city while enhancing quality of life for current and future San Diegans. It provides a strategy, the City of Villages, for how the City can enhance its many communities and neighborhoods as growth occurs over time. It presents ten elements that overall provide a comprehensive "blueprint" for the City of San Diego's growth over the next twenty plus years.

While this General Plan builds upon many goals and strategies of the 1979 General Plan, the year 2008 finds the City of San Diego and its citizens facing new issues: a lack of vacant developable land for future growth, unmet public facilities standards, a changing economic base, and major environmental challenges.

A century after Nolen, San Diego is once again anticipating its future and defining new strategies for the way we will live on the land for the next 20-50 years. The challenges require new approaches, sound public policies, and innovative and achievable solutions – in sum, a new General Plan.

San Diego Profile

San Diego is the second largest city in California and eighth largest in the United States with a population of approximately 1.3 million in 2007. The City covers 342.5 square miles and stretches nearly 40 miles from north to south. There are 93 miles of shoreline including bays, lagoons and the Pacific Ocean. Elevations mostly range from sea level to 600 feet. High points include Mt. Soledad in La Jolla and Cowles Mountain in the eastern part of the City which is nearly 1,600 feet high.

San Diego has a unique and varied topography composed mostly of mesas intersected by canyons. Mission Valley is a prominent geographical feature near the center of the City. There are rather dramatic climate variations within the City. In the beach areas, summer high temperatures average in the low 70s while inland areas average in the mid to upper 80s. Rainfall averages only 10 inches per year.

San Diego has a varied economy with both high and low wage industries prominent. The higher wage economic sectors include telecommunications, software, biotech and higher education. The tourism and visitor sectors of the economy provide many of the lower wage jobs. There are relatively few middle income jobs resulting increasingly in an hourglass economy. The military has long been a mainstay of the local economy offering middle income jobs although it is not as dominant as it once was. Defense industry jobs have declined in the past two decades.

San Diego is a major tourist and convention destination. The most visited sites are Balboa Park, the San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park, SeaWorld, Cabrillo National Monument, and Old Town State Historic Park. The village area of La Jolla and Gaslamp Quarter downtown are also popular destinations.

San Diego's population grew rapidly from 1940 to 1960 and again from 1970 to 1990. The population was approximately 200,000 in 1940, 700,000 in 1970 and over 1.22 million in 2000. During the last few years the rate of population growth in the City has slowed. Lack of vacant land and high housing costs relative to local incomes have deterred recent growth.

San Diego's population is diverse. Slightly less than half the population is composed of non-Hispanic whites. Hispanics make up 25-30 percent of the population. Approximately 15-20 percent of the population has Asian and Pacific Island origins and about 7 percent are black. The Hispanic and Asian populations are younger and are continuing to increase while the non-Hispanic white and black population has been stagnant or declining in recent years. The overall average age of 33.5 years has been increasing with the fastest growing segment being people over the age of 65. (See City of San Diego Fast Facts below, and Tables 8 and 9 in the Housing Element for more demographic information).

City of San Diego Fast Facts

Physical Characteristics:

Total area:	342.5 square miles
Latitude:	32.44 degrees north
Longitude:	117.10 degrees west
Coastline:	70 miles
Highest Point:	Cowles Mountain 1,586 feet
Lowest Point:	Sea Level
Average Altitude:	13 feet

Population Trends (1980 - 2007)

	1980	1990	2000	2007
Total Population	875,538	1,110,549	1,223,400	1,316,837
Growth from Prior Period		27%	10%	8%

Population Characteristics (2007 Estimates)

	Population	Percent of Total	Population < Age 18
Hispanic	360,021	27%	121,939
White	612,953	47%	28,609
Black	95,756	7%	26,188
American Indian	4,309	<1%	941
Asian	189,384	14%	40,383
Hawaiian & Pacific Islander	5,617	<1%	1,588
Other	3,562	<1%	1,312
Two or More Races	45,145	3%	17,816
All Ethnic Groups	1,316,837	100%	238,776

2030 Population, Housing and Employment Forecast

	2000	2010	2020	2030	% Change 2000-2030
Total Population	1,223,400	1,365,130	1,514,336	1,656,257	35%
Housing Units	469,689	518,063	574,254	610,049	30%
Civilian Employment	742,904	850,543	926,382	980,374	32%

Source: Demographic data provided by SANDAG, January 2008

Strategic Framework

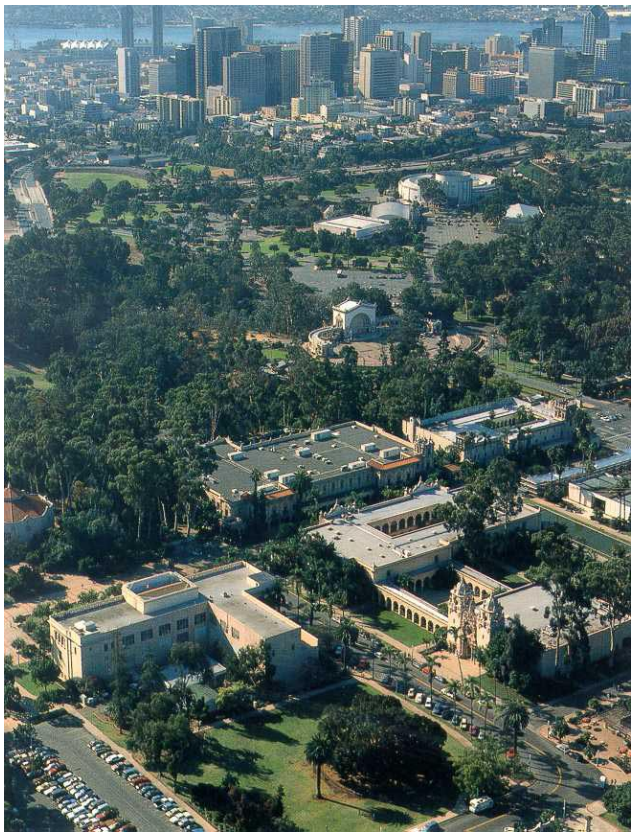
We are stewards of a remarkable resource, a City on the Pacific of great cultural and physical diversity. In the 21st century, San Diego must continue to evolve in harmony with its exceptional natural environment, always treasuring the unique character of its neighborhoods, striving for equity, and celebrating the rich mosaic that is San Diego.

~ Strategic Framework Element Vision Statement, 2002

San Diego is a city in a region with unique and varied landscapes – ocean and beaches, estuaries and river valleys, canyons and mesas, hills and mountains, and desert. These landscapes and the City's transportation networks define San Diego's communities, each with their own character, history, and scale. These communities, and the landscapes and transportation networks that frame and link them, are the City's basic building blocks.

San Diego is a prominent California city, adjacent to Mexico, on the Pacific Rim. It is an international city, economically and culturally. It is a creative city with exceptional strength in science, commerce, education, and art. It is an important city in the nation's defense.

Building such a city across this special landscape has always been and will continue to be San Diegans' urban planning challenge. This General Plan sets out the City's policies for wise land use and the provision of services to maintain, and where necessary improve, San Diego's natural and built environments, and its residents' quality-of-life.



Over the last two centuries, San Diego has grown by expanding outward onto land still in its natural state. This is the first General Plan in the City's continuing history that must address most future growth without expansion onto its open lands. It establishes the strategic framework for how the City grows while maintaining the qualities that best define San Diego.

Role and Purpose of the General Plan

The City's General Plan is its constitution for development. It is the foundation upon which all land use decisions in the City are based. It expresses community vision and values, and it embodies public policy for the distribution of future land use, both public and private.

State law requires each city to adopt a general plan to guide its future development and mandates that the plan be periodically updated to assure its continuing relevance and value. It also requires the inclusion of seven mandatory elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Noise, Open Space, and Safety. However, state law permits flexibility in the presentation of elements and the inclusion of optional elements to best meet the needs of a particular city. The City of San Diego's General Plan addresses state requirements through the following ten elements: Land Use and Community Planning; Mobility; Economic Prosperity; Public Facilities, Services and Safety; Urban Design; Recreation; Historic Preservation; Conservation; Noise; and Housing. More information on mandatory and optional elements is found in Appendix A, SF-1. State law requires internal consistency, meaning that policies within the components of the General Plan cannot conflict with one another, and that no one element may take precedence over another.

City of Villages Strategy

The City of Villages strategy focuses growth into mixed-use activity centers that are pedestrian-friendly districts linked to an improved regional transit system. It was first adopted as a part of the Strategic Framework Element of the General Plan in 2002. It was developed through an intensive process of public collaboration over a three-year period. The strategy draws upon the character and strengths of San Diego's natural environment, neighborhoods, commercial centers, institutions, and employment centers. The strategy is designed to sustain the long-term economic, environmental, and social health of the City and its many communities. It recognizes the value of San Diego's distinctive neighborhoods and open spaces that together form the City as a whole.

A "village" is defined as the mixed-use heart of a community where residential, commercial, employment, and civic uses are all present and integrated. Each village will be unique to the community in which it is located. All villages will be pedestrian-friendly and characterized by inviting, accessible and attractive streets and public spaces. Public spaces will vary from village to village, consisting of well-designed public parks or plazas that bring people together. Individual villages will offer a variety of housing types affordable for people with different incomes and needs. Over time, villages will connect to each other via an expanded regional transit system.

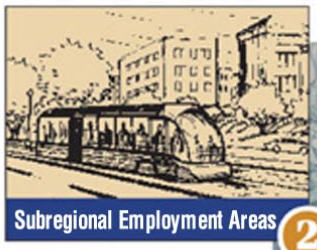
Implementation of the City of Villages strategy relies upon the designation and development of village sites. There are many factors to consider when designating village sites including the capacity for growth, existing and future public facilities, transportation options, community character, and environmental constraints. Precise village boundaries, the specific mix of uses, architectural form, needed public facilities, and the type of public space within proposed village areas will be determined through community plan updates or amendments. The hierarchy of village types and development areas is described on the following page.

Transportation and Land Use Planning

Implementation of the City of Villages growth strategy is dependent upon close coordination of land use and transportation planning. The strategy calls for redevelopment, infill, and new growth to be targeted into compact, mixed-use, and walkable villages that are connected to a regional transit system. Villages should increase personal transportation choices and minimize transportation impacts through design that pays attention to the needs of people traveling by foot, bicycle, and transit, as well as the automobile. Focused development and density adjacent to transit stops that link where people live to where people work, shop, and recreate, helps make transit convenient for more people. It allows for a more cost-effective expansion of transit services.

Subregional Employment Areas are major employment and/or commercial areas within the region containing corporate or multiple-use office, industrial, and retail uses with some adjacent multifamily residential uses. Existing Subregional Employment Areas include the Mission Valley/ Morena/Grantville and University/ Sorrento Mesa areas.

Urban Village Centers are higher-density nodes within subregional employment areas. They cluster more intensive employment, residential, commercial, and civic uses, integrated with public spaces, to encourage walking and to support transit.



Community and Neighborhood Village Centers are locally-oriented mixed-use commercial and residential districts where residents and visitors come together. They are staging areas for transit. Community and Neighborhood Village Centers can range in size from just a few to more than 100 acres. Community Village Centers serve a larger area than Neighborhood Village Centers and may have a more significant employment component than a neighborhood village.

Downtown San Diego a has a unique role to play in the 21st century development of the San Diego region. In addition to being the administrative, legal, cultural and entertainment center in the region, downtown also offers the most convenient and extensive transit connections and has emerged as an exciting pedestrian environment.

The City contains commercial corridors that are lively and vital; pedestrian-friendly; home to a rich variety of small businesses, restaurants, and homes; and served by higher frequency transit service. Transit corridors provide valuable new housing opportunities with fewer impacts to the regional freeway system because of their available transit service. Some corridors would benefit from revitalization.

Housing in mixed-use commercial areas provides opportunities for people to live near their place of work, and helps support the use of neighborhood shops and services. As such, the City of Villages land use pattern is both a transportation and land use strategy. The integration of transit and land use planning is illustrated by the Transit/Land Use Connections Map (see Mobility Element, Figure ME-1). This map identifies existing and community plan designated activity centers, commercial centers and corridors, and multifamily residential areas that are along the region's higher frequency existing and planned transit services.

Regional Planning/Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination

Regional coordination is needed to effectively guide land use and transportation planning, investment in regional-serving facilities, and preservation of open spaces that span multiple jurisdictions. The City of San Diego works closely with the County of San Diego, the San Diego Unified Port District, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, Tribal Governments, and other local governments and agencies throughout the region to further common goals. The City also works with state and federal representatives on legislative, regulatory, and budgetary matters that impact the City of San Diego; and with its counterparts in Mexico on border/binational issues.

SANDAG plays a key role in regional coordination efforts. SANDAG is the region's transportation and planning agency (see also the Mobility Element discussion) comprised of member agencies from the region's 19 local governments. City of San Diego interests are represented at SANDAG through the votes of the City's elected officials serving on the SANDAG Board of Directors, staff participation on SANDAG advisory committees, and direct public participation in the process. Working with SANDAG and as an independent jurisdiction, the City of San Diego must plan for, and implement transportation projects which are essential to the growth and evolution of a major urban center, and are critical to progressive land use planning decisions.

The SANDAG Board of Directors adopted a Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) in 2004 that provides a strategic planning framework for the San Diego region. The RCP encourages cities and the county to increase residential and employment concentrations in areas with the best existing and future transit connections, and to preserve important open spaces. The RCP includes an Integrated Regional Infrastructure Strategy and serves as a unifying document for a number of other regional initiatives covering topics such as housing, economic prosperity, habitat preservation, and environmental resource protection. The RCP addresses San Diego's relationships with neighboring counties, Tribal Governments, and northern Baja California. The City of San Diego General Plan is designed to complement and support the RCP.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The City of San Diego General Plan integrates the following basic principles which describe the essential structure of San Diego's plan and reflect the core values that guide its development:

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**
10. **A high aesthetic standard.**

The updated General Plan translated these organizing principles into new policy direction in the ten elements of the General Plan. Because less than four percent of the City's land remains vacant and available for new development, the plan's policies represent a shift in focus from how to develop vacant land to how to reinvest in existing communities. Therefore, new policies have been created to support changes in development patterns to emphasize combining housing, shopping, employment uses, schools, and civic uses, at different scales, in village centers. By directing growth primarily toward village centers, the strategy works to preserve established residential neighborhoods and open space, and to manage the City's continued growth over the long term.

The guiding principles of the General Plan are based on the Strategic Framework Element vision statement and "Core Values" that address San Diego's physical environment, economy, and culture and society. These values were developed by the Strategic Framework Citizens' Committee which included more than 40 individuals of diverse and accomplished backgrounds. In addition, thousands of others provided valuable input to the Strategic Framework Element in public hearings, public workshops, community planning group meetings, public forums, and email communications. Community planning groups provided input through their own meetings and as members of the Community Planners Committee. The complete Core Values can be found in the General Plan Appendix A, SF-2. In addition, those that contributed to the development of the SFE are acknowledged in Appendix A, SF-3.

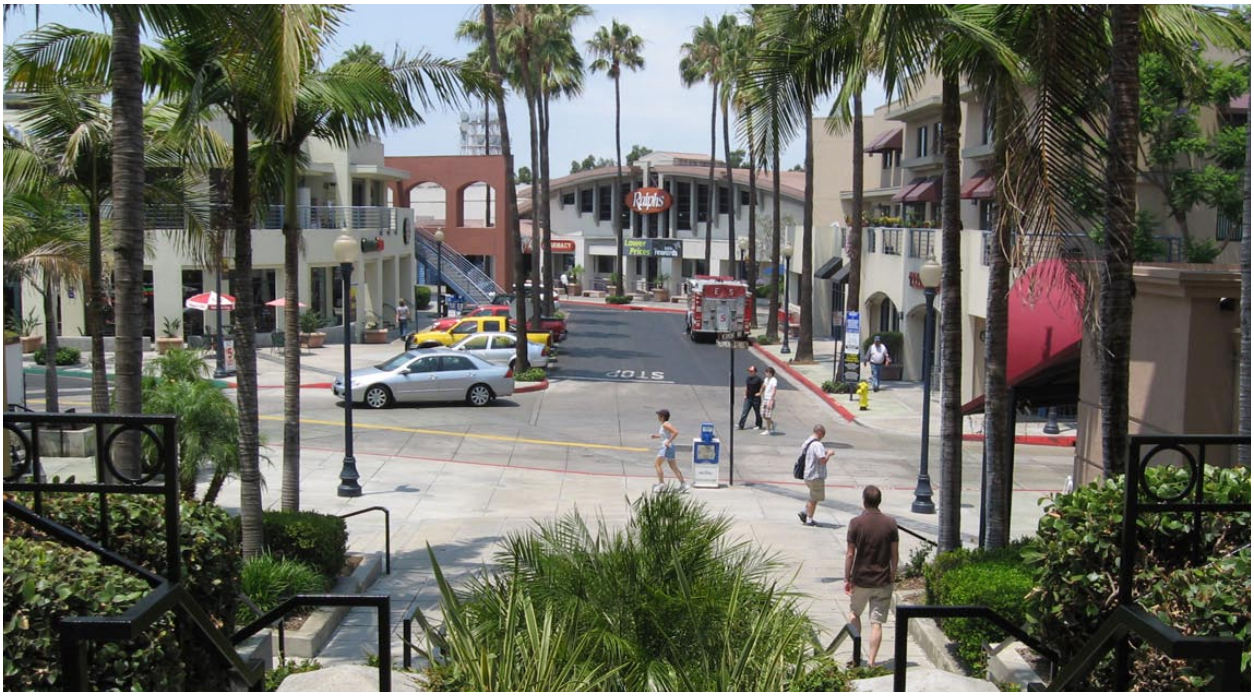
Element Summaries

Land Use and Community Planning Element

Purpose

To guide future growth and development into a sustainable citywide development pattern, while maintaining or enhancing quality of life in our communities.

The Land Use and Community Planning Element (Land Use Element) provides policies to implement the City of Villages strategy within the context of San Diego's community planning program. The element addresses land use issues that apply to the City as a whole and identifies the community planning program as the mechanism to designate land uses, identify site-specific recommendations, and refine citywide policies as needed. The Land Use Element establishes a structure that respects the diversity of each community and includes policy direction to govern the preparation of community plans. The element addresses zoning and policy consistency, the plan amendment process, annexation policies, airport-land use planning, balanced communities, equitable development, and environmental justice. The Land Use Element also has sections covering the California Coastal Act and its implementation in San Diego, and the history and implementation of Proposition A – the Managed Growth Initiative of 1985.



Land Use and Street System

The Land Use Element identifies seven General Plan land use categories: Parks, Open Space and Recreation; Agriculture; Residential; Commercial Employment, Retail, and Services; Industrial Employment; Institutional, Public, and Semi-Public Facilities; and Multiple Use. These land uses are displayed on the General Plan Land Use and Street System Map (see fold-out map, Land Use Element, Figure LU-2, General Plan Land Use and Street System Map). This map also identifies the planned street system, freeways, expressways, arterials, and collector streets needed to serve vehicular transportation demand resulting from the development of the City in accordance with this General Plan. The map is based upon a composite of the more detailed land use and circulation system maps adopted for each community.

The seven land use categories permit an overall, citywide view of land use distribution. For greater specificity, the General Plan identifies 26 "Recommended Community Plan Designations" that are to be applied during community plan updates and amendments. These 26 designations were derived from analyzing some 160 community plan designations that share similar definitions (see Appendix B, LU-2). Standardized designations were developed so that over time, community plans will share a common terminology, enabling better citywide land use analysis and measurement against regional programs.

Community Planning

The City of San Diego has more than fifty planning areas (see Land Use Element, Figure LU-3, Planning Areas). The community planning program has a long and diverse history with the earliest community plans being adopted in the 1960s. Each document is a unique reflection of the issues and trends facing the community and includes corresponding strategies to implement community goals.

Community plans represent a vital component of the City's Land Use Element because they contain more detailed land use designations and describe the distribution of land uses better than is possible at the citywide document level. San Diego is one of the few jurisdictions in the state that has the size, diversity, and land use patterns that necessitate community-based land use plans. The community-specific detail found in community plans is also used in the review process for both public and private development projects. While the community plan addresses specific community needs, its policies and recommendations must remain in harmony with other community plans, the overall General Plan, and citywide policies. Overall, the General Plan and community plans are intended to be used as a means to maintain or improve quality of life, and to respect the essential character of San Diego's communities.

Community plans are also the vehicle for implementing state laws pertaining to provision of housing opportunities, and meeting the City's share of regional housing needs. As community plans designate land uses and assign densities, they must preserve or increase planned capacity of residential land uses to ensure that the City is able to meet its share of the region's housing needs. Implementation of community-based goals may cause a shift in densities within or between community planning areas but together they must maintain or increase overall housing capacity. Community plans and other adopted land use plans are implemented through application of a broad range of zones, regulations and programs.

Balanced Communities and Equitable Development

"Balanced communities" have a diverse mix of housing types that are suitable for households of various income levels. Balanced communities can contribute toward achievement of a fair and equitable society, and have the additional advantage of providing more people with the opportunity to live near their work. City initiatives that work toward more balanced communities and to increase the supply and distribution of affordable housing include the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (2003) and the City of Villages strategy (2002). The City of Villages strategy strives to increase housing supply and diversity through the development of compact, mixed-use villages in specified areas. This strategy also helps to achieve some of the jobs/housing benefits of balanced communities at a broader scale by encouraging better links from homes to jobs and services throughout the region.

Mural by Eddie L. Edwards, Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Center

The City of Villages strategy also includes a commitment to equitable development and environmental justice. Equitable development is concerned with the creation and maintenance of economically and socially diverse communities, and environmental justice strives for fair treatment of all people with respect to development and implementation of environmental laws, policies, regulations, and practices.

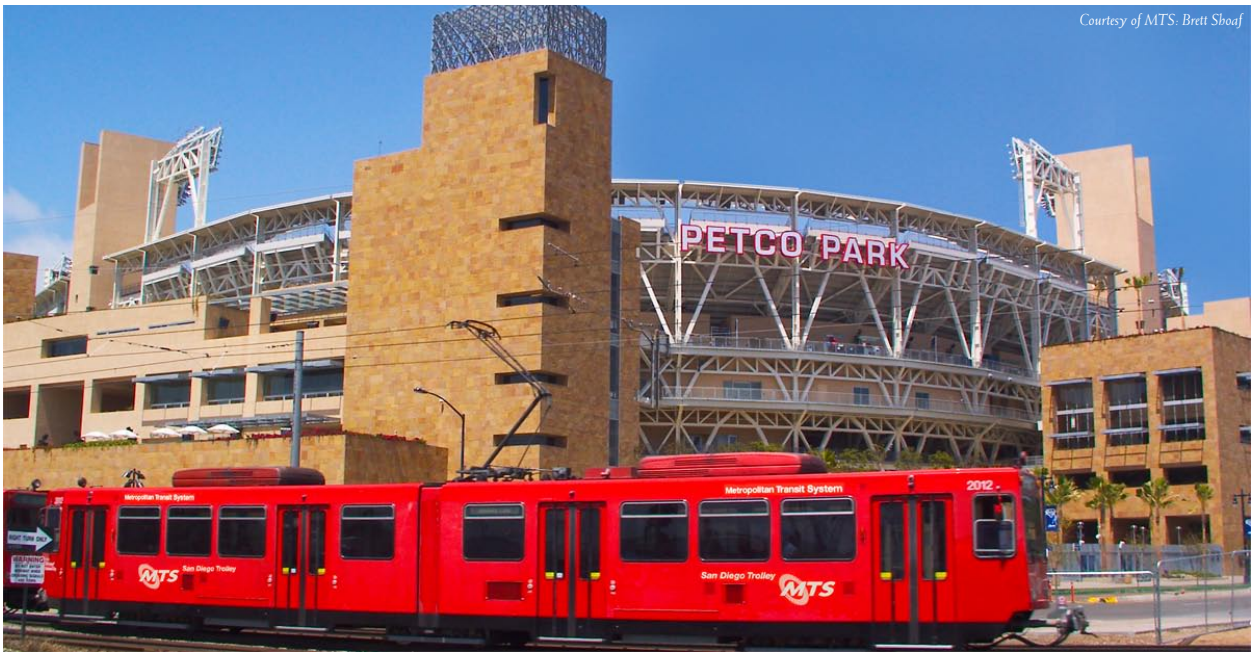
Measures to support attainment of equitable development will occur as a part of village master plans or other long-range plans as appropriate. General Plan policies call for working toward environmental justice through broadening public input, prioritizing and allocating citywide resources to benefit communities in need, and striving for equity in environmental protection and in the location of undesirable land uses, among other initiatives.

Mobility Element

Purpose

To improve mobility through development of a balanced, multi-modal transportation network.

The Mobility Element contains policies that promote a balanced, multi-modal transportation network that gets us where we want to go and minimizes environmental and neighborhood impacts. A balanced network is one in which each mode, or type of transportation, is able to contribute to an efficient network of services meeting varied user needs. For example, the element contains policies that will help walking become more attractive for short trips, and for transit to more effectively link often visited destinations, while still preserving auto-mobility. In addition to addressing walking, bicycling, transit, and streets, the element also includes policies related to regional collaboration, parking, the movement of goods, and other components of our transportation system. Taken together, these policies advance a strategy for relieving congestion and increasing transportation choices in a manner that strengthens the City of Villages land use vision.



Courtesy of MTS: Brett Shoaf

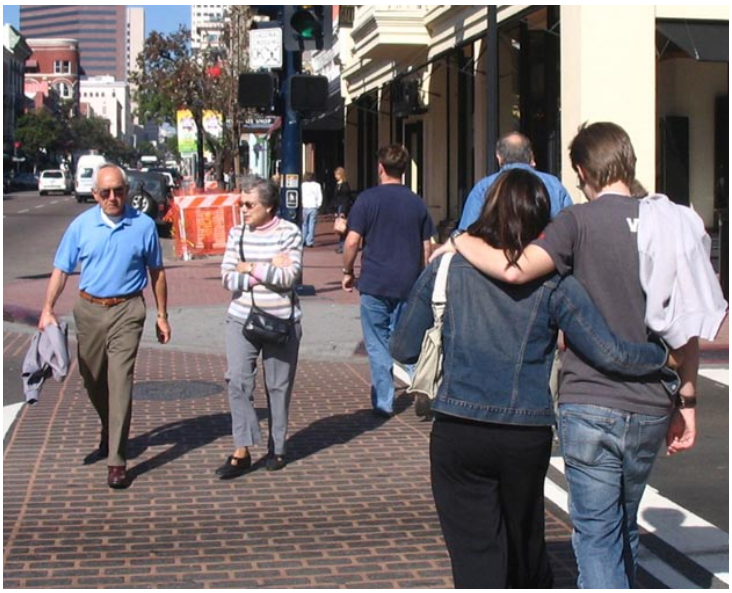
The Land Use and Community Planning Element and Mobility Element of the General Plan are closely linked. The Land Use and Community Planning Element identifies existing and planned land uses. The Mobility Element identifies the proposed transportation network and strategies which have been designed to meet the future transportation needs generated by these land uses. Mobility Element policies related to project design and multi-modal facilities will be implemented through public and private development and capital improvement projects.

The City's transportation strategies and policies cannot be discussed in isolation. The General Plan is a part of a larger body of plans and programs that guide the development and management of the transportation system.

- The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), prepared and adopted by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), is the region's long-range mobility plan. The RTP plans for and identifies projects for multiple modes of transportation in order to achieve a balanced regional system. It establishes the basis for state funding of local and regional transportation projects, and its adoption is a prerequisite for federal funding. SANDAG prioritizes and allocates the expenditure of regional, state and federal transportation funds to implement RTP projects.

- The region's Congestion Management Program (CMP), also prepared by SANDAG, serves as a short-term element of the RTP. It focuses on actions that can be implemented in advance of the longer-range transportation solutions contained within the RTP. The CMP establishes programs for mitigating the traffic impacts of new development and monitoring the performance of system roads relative to Level of Service (LOS) standards. It links land use, transportation, and air quality concerns.

The Mobility Element, the RTP, and the CMP all highlight the importance of integrating transportation and land use planning decisions, and using multi-modal strategies to reduce congestion and increase travel choices. The Mobility Element Section K, and Public Facilities, Financing and Safety Element Section B, contain policies on how to work effectively with SANDAG to help ensure that City of San Diego transportation priorities are implemented.



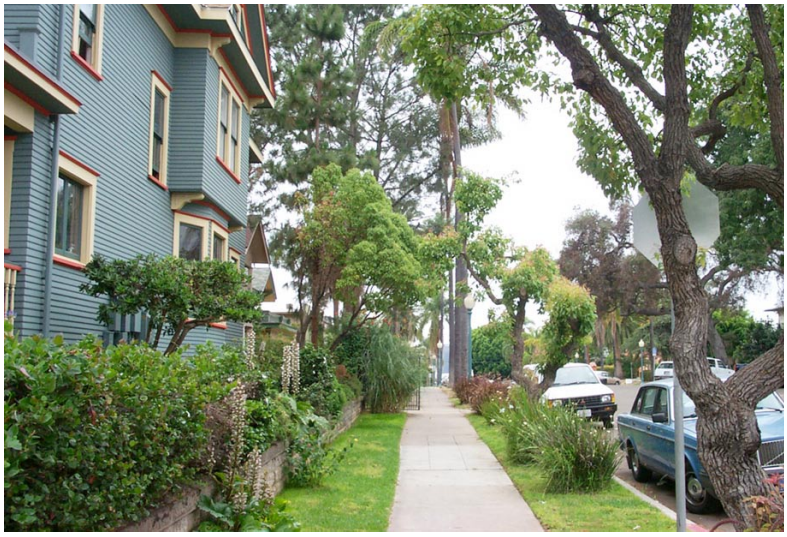
Urban Design Element

Purpose

To guide physical development toward a desired image that is consistent with the social, economic and aesthetic values of the City.

Urban Design Element policies capitalize on San Diego's natural beauty and unique neighborhoods by calling for development that respects the natural setting, enhances the distinctiveness of our neighborhoods, strengthens the natural and built linkages, and creates mixed-use, walkable villages throughout the City.

Urban design describes the physical features that define the character or image of a street, neighborhood, community, or the City as a whole. Urban design is the visual and sensory relationship between people and the natural and built environment. The built environment includes buildings, walkways and streets, and the natural environment includes features such as shorelines, canyons, mesas, and parks as they shape and are incorporated into the urban framework.



Each resident and visitor may perceive San Diego's aesthetic character differently, although there are several basic design elements that are commonly recognized by all. San Diego's distinctive character results from its natural setting, including beaches, bays, hills, canyons and mesas that allow the evolution of geographically distinct neighborhoods. The network of small human-scaled canyons creates a natural open space system that extends through many parts of the City. The topography and San Diego's year-round climate are ideal for outdoor pedestrian activity of all kinds.

There are several urban design principles relating to the existing City form and a compact and environmentally sensitive pattern of development envisioned in the City of Villages strategy. These principles are identified below to provide a framework for the goals of the Urban Design Element:

- Contribute to the qualities that distinguish San Diego as a unique living environment;
- Build upon our existing communities;
- Direct growth into commercial areas where a high level of activity already exists; and
- Preserve stable residential neighborhoods.

The Urban Design Element addresses urban form and design through policies that respect San Diego's natural environment, work to preserve open space systems, and target new growth into compact villages. Urban form and how it functions becomes increasingly important as increases in density and intensity occur over time. The urban design principles established in this element are intended to help achieve an identity for the City as a whole while encompassing its physical, social and cultural diversity. A higher overall quality of urban design is another fundamental goal. Urban design applies at multiple levels from citywide to community to neighborhood and ultimately to individual projects. Urban design is a process to foster quality in the built and natural environment as the City of San Diego changes.

Urban Design Element policies help support and implement land use and transportation decisions, encourage economic revitalization, and improve the quality of life in San Diego. Ultimately, the General Plan's Urban Design Element influences the implementation of all elements of the General Plan and community plans as it establishes goals and policies for the pattern and scale of development and the character of the built environment. The urban design policies will be further supplemented with site-specific community plan recommendations.

Economic Prosperity Element

Purpose

To increase wealth and the standard of living of all San Diegans with policies that support a diverse, innovative, competitive, entrepreneurial, and sustainable local economy.

The structure of San Diego's economy influences the City's physical development and capacity to fund essential services. A strong economy creates wealth that makes continued investment in, and maintenance of, San Diego's infrastructure possible. Over the past several decades the structure of the City's economy has shifted from a production-based economy to one that is increasingly based on creativity and innovation. The Economic Prosperity Element seeks to help create an environment that fosters this creativity and allows San Diego to better compete in the regional, national, and global economic setting. The element links economic prosperity goals with land use

distribution and employment land use policies. The element also expands the traditional focus of a general plan to include economic development policies that have a less direct effect on land use. These include policies aimed at supporting existing and new businesses that reflect the changing nature of industry, creating the types of jobs most beneficial to the local economy, and preparing our workforce to compete for these jobs in the global marketplace. The element also describes how the formation of redevelopment project areas can be used to help implement community goals.

Employment Lands

San Diego's economic base is primarily composed of industries in the technological and professional services, manufacturing, visitor industries, national security, and international trade sectors. These "base sector" industries bring new wealth into San Diego by exporting goods, services, and intellectual property. Base sector industrial uses such as manufacturing, research and development, and support uses are especially desirable as they provide middle-income employment opportunities and good wages. Non-base sector uses include public sector uses, commercial services, and retail trade to residents. These uses provide essential services and jobs for residents and are encouraged to locate in village and subregional employment areas. Non-base sector uses are directly proportionate to the size of the population and strength of the economic base; they cannot expand beyond the capacity of the economic base on which they are dependent.

The General Plan includes the following approaches to encouraging base sector industrial uses to remain, locate, and expand in San Diego:

- **Community Plan Land Use Designations.** A range of community plan industrial land use designations are provided to protect industrial lands through varying degrees of limitations on non-industrial uses.

- **Prime Industrial Lands.** Prime industrial lands are employment areas that support base sector industries. The Industrial and Prime Industrial Land Identification Map (see Economic Prosperity Element, Figure EP-1) identifies the City's existing industrially-designated land and the subset of these lands that are identified as Prime Industrial Lands. Residential and most non-industrial uses are not permitted within "prime" areas in order to protect base sector uses from potential land use conflicts and to maintain capacity for base sector industry growth.

- **Business Incentives.** City incentives programs are to be monitored and updated so that they offer increased benefits to projects and industries that have a demonstrated potential of providing middle-income jobs, and contributing to community revitalization.

Having an adequate supply of workforce housing is also an important factor in meeting the needs of businesses in San Diego. The City of Villages strategy encourages higher-density housing to be located in or near certain employment areas and village centers to better link jobs, housing and transportation. This integration of uses is encouraged in areas outside of the Prime Industrial Lands (based on an analysis of area characteristics) to help meet the City's workforce housing needs. The Housing Element contains more detailed goals and strategies to increase the supply and affordability of housing in San Diego.

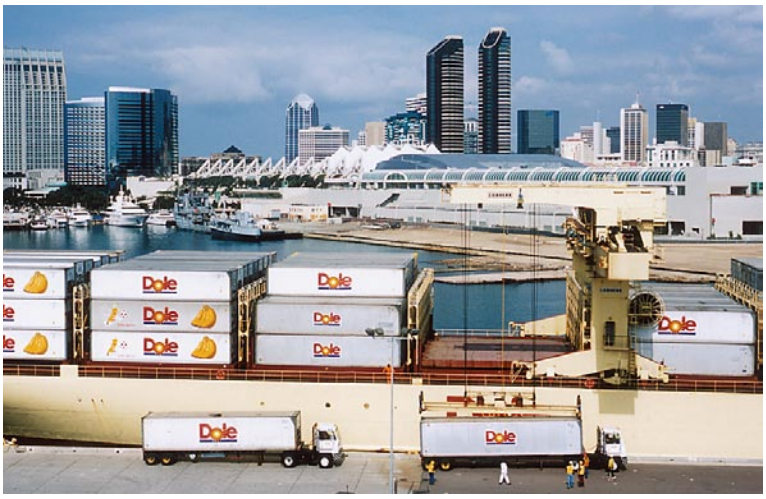
Economic Opportunities and Investments

The Economic Prosperity Element promotes economic opportunity for all segments of the population and development of workforce skills consistent with an evolving local economy. This element of the General Plan includes policies to help the private sector create jobs for local residents, encourage career ladders and benefits for service sector employment, and to help increase access to education and training to meet today's business needs.

Additional policies are designed to encourage community revitalization through improving access to regional and national sources of public and private investment, to target infrastructure development to support economic prosperity, and to leverage the redevelopment process in certain communities.

While this element establishes economic prosperity goals and policies, it also calls for the periodic preparation and more frequent updates of the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan. The strategy will identify and monitor those San Diego industries that are growing and are globally competitive. It will also translate policies into more specific programs and near- to mid-term actions, in response to changes in the global economy.

The achievement of economic prosperity goals also relies on policies in the Land Use and Community Planning Element to appropriately designate land for economic development, the Mobility Element to provide a link between housing and jobs, and the Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element to address the development of regional facilities needed to reinforce the viability of our industrial areas.



Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element

Purpose

To provide the public facilities and services needed to serve the existing population and new growth.

Providing adequate public facilities to serve the City's current and future population continues to be a great challenge. The Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element (Public Facilities Element) responds to this challenge through policies that address public financing strategies, public and developer financing responsibilities, prioritization, and the provision of specific facilities and services that must accompany growth. The policies within the Public Facilities Element also apply to transportation, and park and recreation facilities and services.

The 1979 Progress Guide and General Plan (1979 General Plan) established a growth management program to address the rapid growth on the periphery of the City, and the declining growth trend in the central areas of the City. The plan sought to revitalize the central business district, and phase growth and development in outlying areas in accordance with the availability of public facilities and services.

In 1979, the City was divided into three "tiers:" "Urbanized," "Planned Urbanizing," and "Future Urbanizing." The Planned Urbanizing areas consisted of newly developing communities where development was required to "pay its own way" through the use of Facilities Benefit Assessments (FBAs), or other financing mechanisms. Growth was encouraged in urbanized communities, with the assumption that General Fund (public) capital improvement expenditures would be provided in those areas. Over time, the FBAs were largely successful in providing facilities in the then-developing communities, but the General Fund fell short in meeting the public facilities needs of urbanized communities. In addition, the City's Development Impact Fee (DIF) program for the funding of public facilities in urbanized communities was not adopted until 1987.

The 2002 Strategic Framework Element identified the facilities deficit in urbanized communities, and reaffirmed the need to address existing and future public facility and service needs in those areas and throughout the City. The Strategic Framework Element was also the catalyst for an effort to identify and map certain existing facilities in each of the City's community planning areas.

Facilities Financing

Financing Strategy. As the majority of San Diego's communities are now primarily urbanized, the General Plan provides a multi-faceted facilities financing strategy framework to address existing needs, provide adequate facilities to support infill development, and plan for the ongoing need to fund operations and maintenance throughout the City.

Key points of the General Plan financing strategy are that:

- The City and current population base are responsible for funding existing facilities deficiencies;
- Funding for existing public facilities deficiencies will come through diverse funding resources; and
- New development will pay its proportional fair-share of public facilities costs.

The element identifies a menu of financing options that could be implemented in order for the City to meet its responsibility to correct existing public facilities deficiencies. To supplement the General Plan, a more detailed strategy to identify specific mechanisms for financing various facility types in targeted geographic areas will be prepared and updated more frequently as needs are reassessed and new mechanisms are developed.

Other implementation actions include anticipated amendments to the City's DIF methodology and public facilities financing plans. Under impact fee methodologies in place as of 2006, fees collected did not keep pace with escalating facility needs and costs, and were intended to only fund a proportional share of new facilities. It is expected that DIFs will need to be applied in more communities in the future as areas developed as planned urbanizing communities in the past experience infill development that was not anticipated in their FBAs.

Prioritization. The General Plan establishes the framework for an objective and systematic approach to prioritizing the financing of public facilities. The aim is to strengthen the relationship between the City's General Plan and annual Capital Improvements Program (CIP), to maximize efficiencies in the annual allocation of capital resources, and to implement the City of Villages strategy. Policies call for the City to use a standardized approach to facility prioritization that includes: identifying relevant criteria, evaluating projects based on that criteria, and producing a prioritized list of projects by facility type. Community plan conformance and preferences are to be a part of the prioritization process.

Evaluation of Growth, Facilities, and Services. In evaluating new growth, the General Plan requires new development to mitigate its impacts and avoid making facility deficits worse. Key policies require development proposals to fully address impacts to public facilities and services, and require projects that necessitate a community plan amendment due to increased densities to provide or help fund physical improvements that benefit the affected community planning area. In addition, General Plan policies call for the establishment of a centralized development monitoring system and for the maintenance of up-to-date public facilities financing plans to guide the provision of public facilities.

Facilities Guidelines

The General Plan provides policies to guide the provision of a wide range of public facilities and services, as summarized on Table SF-1, Public Facilities and Services Topics.

Table SF-1
Public Facilities and Services Topics

Facility Type	Topics Addressed in Policies
Fire-Rescue	• Response time objectives for fire and emergency medical services • Annual emergency incident volume to evaluate impacts on services
Police	• Average response time goals for various priority calls • Guidelines for evaluating when additional resources are needed to maintain service levels
Wastewater	Wastewater treatment and disposal services, and infrastructure planning
Storm Water Infrastructure	• Storm water conveyance system • Storm water facility and service demands
Water Infrastructure	Water supply and infrastructure (see Conservation Element regarding water conservation)
Waste Management (including recycling)	Waste collection, reduction, recycling, and disposal
Libraries	Library planning and design guidelines
Schools	Coordination with districts on school design, location, and joint-use
Information Infrastructure	Integrated information infrastructure system
Public Utilities	• Collaboration with regional public utility providers in the planning and provision of their services and facilities • Consideration of utility investments in potential village areas
Regional Facilities	Planning and implementation of regional facilities and infrastructure investments
Healthcare Services and Facilities	• Participation with healthcare providers in facilities siting decisions • Integration with the City's growth strategy
Disaster Preparedness	• Preparation for man-made and natural disasters • Plans for restoration of municipal services
Seismic Safety	Seismic, geologic, and structural considerations in the built environment to protect health and safety

Recreation Element

Purpose

To preserve, protect, acquire, develop, operate, maintain, and enhance public recreation opportunities and facilities throughout the City for all users.

The City of San Diego has over 38,930 acres of park and open space lands that offer a diverse range of recreational opportunities. The City's parks, open space, trails, and recreation facilities annually serve millions of residents and visitors and play an important role in the physical, mental, social, and environmental health of the City and its residents. Parks can improve the quality of life by strengthening the body and assisting in maintaining physical well-being. Mental and social benefits include providing visual relief from urban development, passive recreational opportunities that refresh the mind and provide opportunities for social interaction, and healthy activities for youth. Park and open space lands benefit the environment by providing habitat for plants and animals, and space for urban runoff to percolate into the soil, while also serving to decrease the effects of urban heat islands. In addition, the City park system supports San Diego's tourism industry, and enhances the City's ability to attract and retain businesses.

San Diego's environment, its coastal location, temperate climate, and diverse topography, contribute to creating the City's first-class recreation and open space system for San Diego's residents and visitors. The goals and policies of the Recreation Element have been developed to take advantage of the City's natural environment and resources, to build upon existing recreation facilities and services, to help achieve an equitable balance of recreational resources, and to adapt to future recreation needs.

It has become an increasing challenge to meet the public's park and recreational needs as resident and visitor populations grow and the availability of vacant land decreases. The City faces increased demand on existing park lands and an inequitable distribution of parks citywide. The problems are especially acute in the older, urbanized communities. The Recreation Element contains policies to address these challenges and to work toward achieving a sustainable, accessible, and diverse park and recreation system.

The City's Parks and Open Space System

The City of San Diego provides three categories of parks and recreation for residents and visitors: population-based, resource-based, and open space. These three categories of recreation, including land, facilities and programming, constitute the City of San Diego's municipal park and recreation system.

- Population-based parks (commonly known as Neighborhood and Community parks), facilities and services are located in close proximity to residential development and are intended to serve the daily needs of neighborhoods and communities. When possible, they adjoin schools in order to share facilities, and ideally are within walking distance of many residences within their service area.

- Resource-based parks are located at, or centered on, notable natural or man-made features (beaches, canyons, habitat systems, lakes, historic sites, and cultural facilities) and are intended to serve the citywide population, as well as visitors.

- Open space lands are City-owned land located throughout the City consisting of canyons, mesas, and other natural landforms. This open space is intended to preserve and protect native plants and animals, while providing public access and enjoyment through use of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails.

Park and Recreation Guidelines

The Recreation Element provides policies to guide the City's vision and goals for park and recreation facilities citywide and within individual communities. It provides guidelines for the provision of population-based, resource-based, and open space parks and calls for the preparation of a comprehensive Parks Master Plan. Recreation Element policies also: support joint use and cooperative agreements, and protection and enjoyment of the City's canyonlands; introduce the concept of providing "equivalent" recreation facilities and infrastructure in constrained areas; and call for implementation of a financing strategy to better fund park facility development and maintenance.

Population-based parks are to be provided at a minimum ratio of 2.8 usable acres per 1,000 residents. Some of San Diego's newer communities come close to meeting this standard, but communities that were developed prior to the introduction of this ratio in the 1979 General Plan fall well short of this goal. It is difficult to acquire parklands in already-developed communities due to the cost of land and the desire to avoid displacement of existing land uses. In recognition of the City's land constraints, it is proposed that some of the 2.8 acres could be satisfied through the provision of equivalent recreation facilities. The proposed Parks Master Plan will develop and define criteria on how equivalent standards would be measured and applied.

Parks Master Plan

The Recreation Element calls for the preparation of a citywide Parks Master Plan that will establish a citywide parks network; inventory and evaluate all City park lands, recreational uses, facilities, and services; set priorities for protection and enhancement of existing park and recreation assets; develop implementation strategies to meet community needs; address inequitable access to recreational resources; and establish the basis for a sound financing mechanism to develop, enhance and maintain the City's park network and recreational resources.

Park Financing

In addition to facing land constraints, the City has been continually challenged with financial constraints regarding park development, maintenance and operations. Therefore, it is essential that new parks and recreation facilities, and improvements to existing parks and facilities, be designed and constructed to ensure their intended use with minimal funding for maintenance or upgrades during the expected useful life of the facility. Sustainable development features include the application of water and energy conservation measures, "green" building technology, low-maintenance plantings, and design that is sensitive to local environmental conditions and can help reduce long-term costs (see also the Conservation Element, Section A).

The key to providing increased recreation opportunities on a long-term basis is to identify and ensure adequate financing for park development, maintenance and staffing. The Recreation Element calls for the City to collect land and/or appropriate park fees for population-based park and recreation facilities to serve future residents.

The Recreation Element is interconnected to other elements of the General Plan. In particular, the Conservation Element provides additional policies for protecting and preserving our recreational natural resources, canyons, and open spaces, and the Public Facilities Element provides policies on public facilities financing, prioritizing, and development impact fees. Overall, the City of Villages strategy reinforces the importance of recreation as an essential quality-of-life factor that needs to be integrated into every community.

Conservation Element

Purpose

To become an international model of sustainable development and conservation. To provide for the long-term conservation and sustainable management of the rich natural resources that help define the City's identity, contribute to its economy, and improve its quality of life.

Conservation is the planned management, preservation, and wise utilization of natural resources and landscapes. The Conservation Element contains policies to guide the conservation of resources that are fundamental components of San Diego's environment, that help define the City's identity, and that are relied upon for continued economic prosperity. San Diego's resources include, but are not limited to: water, land, air, biodiversity, minerals, natural materials, recyclables, topography, views, and energy. Over the long term, conservation is the most cost-effective strategy to ensure that there will be a reliable supply of the resources that are needed now and in the future.

The City of Villages strategy to direct compact growth in limited areas that are served by transit is, in itself, a conservation strategy. Compact, transit-served growth is an efficient use of urban land that reduces the need to develop outlying areas and creates an urban form where walking, bicycling, and transit are more attractive alternatives to automobile travel. Reducing dependence on automobiles reduces vehicle miles traveled which, in turn, lowers greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, it improves water quality by decreasing automobile-related oil and gas leaks that pollute water bodies throughout the City.

Climate change is a growing concern for cities around the world. The burning of fossil fuels, such as coal and gasoline, as well as deforestation and other human activities are changing the composition of the atmosphere, causing concentrations of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, and methane to increase significantly. The City of San Diego has taken steps to address climate change impacts at a local level. The City organization has continued to reduce its share of greenhouse gas emissions through fuel efficiency, energy conservation and the use of renewable energy, and the use of methane gas (biogas) to generate electricity, and continues to investigate additional steps that can be taken to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, identify adaptation goals, and curb the impact of climate change at a local level. Refer to the Conservation Element, Table CE-1, Issues Related to Climate Change Addressed in the General Plan, for a comprehensive list of policies related to climate change issues.

Sustainable development is development which respects the balance and relationship between economy, ecology, and equity. The City is implementing sustainable development policies that will reduce its environmental footprint, including: conserving resources, following sustainable building practices, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and encouraging clean technologies. In sustainable development practices, economic growth is closely tied with environmental, "clean," or "green" technologies and industries. San Diego is well positioned to become a leader in clean technology industries due to its highly qualified workforce, world-class universities and research institutions, and established high technology industries. Clean technology industries demonstrate that environmental protection and economic competitiveness goals are aligned and mutually beneficial.

The Conservation Element reflects key goals contained in many other City and regional plans and programs and will help guide their future updates. The Conservation Element sets forth a citywide vision that ties these various natural resource-based plans and programs together using a village strategy of growth and development. It contains policies for sustainable development, preservation of open space and wildlife, management of resources, and other initiatives to protect the public health, safety and welfare.

Historic Preservation Element

Purpose

To guide the preservation, protection, restoration and rehabilitation of historical and cultural resources and maintain a sense of the City. To improve the quality of the built environment, encourage appreciation for the City's history and culture, maintain the character and identity of communities, and contribute to the City's economic vitality through historic preservation.

No city can hope to understand its present or to forecast its future if it fails to recognize its past. By tracing and preserving its past, a city can gain a clear sense of the process by which it achieved its present form and substance. San Diego's rich and varied historical and cultural resources include buildings, structures, objects, landscapes, districts, archaeological sites, and traditional cultural properties that possess historical, scientific, architectural, aesthetic, cultural, or ethnic significance. Although not always easily distinguishable, these resources, with their inherent ability to evoke the past, represent important aspects of the history of San Diego and the region, from the time before and during European contact with Native Americans to the recent past. The identification, evaluation, registration, and protection of these resources, and thereby the preservation of San Diego's past for its current and future residents, are the essential components of San Diego's historic preservation program.

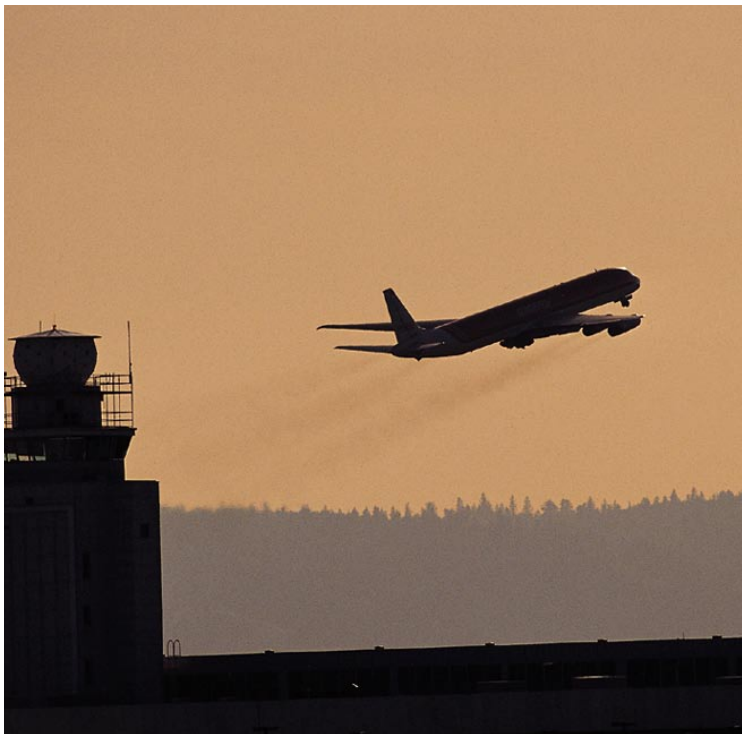
The continuing challenge is to integrate effective historic preservation into the larger planning process. As future growth in San Diego shifts attention from building on open land to a focus on reinvestment in existing communities, there will need to be a continued effort to protect historical and cultural resources.

The City's commitment to historic preservation results in multiple economic benefits. It is widely recognized that where preservation is supported by local government policies and incentives, designation can increase property values and pride of place. Revitalization of historic downtowns and adaptive reuse of historic districts and buildings conserves resources, uses existing infrastructure, generates local jobs and purchasing, supports small business development and heritage tourism, and enhances quality of life and community character.

Noise Element

Purpose

To protect people living and working in the City of San Diego from excessive noise.



Noise at excessive levels can affect our environment and our quality of life. Noise is subjective since it is dependent on the listener's reaction, the time of day, distance between source and receptor, and its tonal characteristics. At excessive levels, people typically perceive noise as being intrusive, annoying, and undesirable.

The most prevalent noise sources in San Diego are from motor vehicle traffic on interstate freeways, state highways, and local major roads generally due to higher traffic volumes and speeds. Aircraft noise is also present in many areas of the City. Rail traffic and industrial and commercial activities contribute to the noise environment.

The City is primarily a developed and urbanized city, and an elevated ambient noise level is a normal part of the urban environment. However, controlling noise at its source to acceptable levels can make a substantial improvement in the quality of life for people living and working in the City. When this is not feasible, the City applies additional measures to limit the affect of noise on future land uses, which include spatial separation, site planning, and building design techniques that address noise exposure and the insulation of buildings to reduce interior noise levels.

The Noise Element provides goals and policies to guide compatible land uses and the incorporation of noise attenuation measures for new uses to protect people living and working in the City from an excessive noise environment. This purpose becomes more relevant as the City continues to grow with infill and mixed-use development consistent with the Land Use and Community Planning Element.

Housing Element

Purpose

To create a comprehensive plan with specific measurable goals, policies and programs to address the City's critical housing needs.

San Diego faces a severe housing affordability crisis. Not only are low-income people and special needs populations having difficulty finding adequate affordable housing, but now many middle-income people are finding it difficult to remain in San Diego due to the high cost of housing. The Housing Element identifies and analyzes the City's housing needs, establishes reasonable goals, objectives and policies based on those needs, and sets forth a comprehensive five-year program of actions to achieve, as fully as possible, the identified goals and objectives. The Housing Element includes objectives, policies and programs for the following five major goals:

- Provision of an adequate site inventory and new construction capacity;
- Maintenance and conservation (including preservation of existing low-income housing and rehabilitation of existing housing stock);
- Reduction of governmental constraints that are no longer necessary;
- Provision of affordable housing opportunities; and
- Implementation of administrative goals (including fair share and community balance, use of redevelopment set-aside funds, reduction of housing discrimination, and energy conservation).

The Housing Element is intended to assist with the provision of adequate housing to serve San Diegans of every economic level and demographic group.

State law directs that a Housing Element shall be updated at five-year intervals, "consist of standards and plans for the improvement of housing and for the provision of adequate sites for housing," and "make adequate provision for the housing needs of all segments of the community." The Housing Element is provided under separate cover from the rest of the General Plan due to the need for frequent Housing Element updates, and to facilitate compliance with the state reporting requirements. It must remain consistent with the other elements of the General Plan and incorporate the City of Villages strategy as one of the key components of the City's housing strategy.

Implementation

Action Plan

The General Plan provides a broad range of citywide policies that affect land development and overall quality of life. General plan policies are statements that guide decision making and are adopted by City Council resolution. Policies differ from Land Development Code regulations which contain specific, enforceable standards and are adopted by ordinance. The policies within the City of San Diego's General Plan provide a framework to guide the physical development of the City and will be used to: guide community plan updates; review discretionary permits; and provide direction for public projects, master and redevelopment plans, and other implementation programs. As projects and future implementation actions are reviewed, individual actions are to be deemed consistent with the General Plan if, considering all its aspects, it will further the goals and policies of the plan and not obstruct their attainment.

The State of California General Plan Guidelines (2003) indicate that a general plan is typically implemented through zoning, subdivisions, and capital improvements. In the City of San Diego, General Plan policies are also implemented through community plan recommendations and actions. In addition, there are many specific actions or programs that the City initiates or completes consistent with General Plan direction. In order to identify and monitor a wide variety of actions found within the General Plan, community plans, and beyond, the City has created the General Plan Action Plan (Action Plan). The Action Plan is a companion item to the General Plan which identifies action items intended to implement General Plan policies. The Action Plan will be updated, as needed, to indicate implementation progress, identify new initiatives designed to implement General Plan policies, or reflect shifting priorities over time. Upon City Council approval of a General Plan Action Plan, the Action Plan will be deemed incorporated into the General Plan by reference. However, because an implementation measure, by its nature, must be consistent with what it is implementing,

Action Plan items that are updated or changed and remain consistent with the General Plan are not amendments to the General Plan. Changes to implementing actions will be 'tracked' to assure a clear record is maintained. In addition, a Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program (MMRP) has been prepared and is incorporated by reference in the General Plan.

Because San Diego is a large and diverse city, the General Plan relies upon the community plans (legally recognized as a part of the Land Use and Community Planning Element) to provide community-specific policies and recommendations. While community plans are in the process of being updated, there may be instances where the policies of the community plan and General Plan are not fully aligned. However, there are no land use or zoning inconsistencies between the General Plan and any given community plan because the General Plan does not change community plan land use designations. The community plans are the final arbiter on issues of land use, density, and intensity. The General Plan and community plans are to play complementary roles to ensure that quality of life is maintained, essential community character is respected, and that public facilities are provided.

The City's adopted land use plans set the framework for the implementing regulations found in the Land Development Code. Despite that state law exempts charter cities from the zoning consistency requirement, it is the City of San Diego's practice to apply zoning that is consistent with community plan land use designations to ensure their implementation. Zoning is one of the primary plan implementation measures. As the California General Plan Guidelines state, "the success of a general plan, and in particular the land use element, rests in part upon the effectiveness of a consistent zoning ordinance in translating the long-term objectives and policies contained in the plan into everyday decisions." Zoning will be reviewed and changed as appropriate, especially at the time of a community plan update or amendment, to assure that revised land use designations or newly-applicable policies and recommendations can be implemented. New zoning options may be developed to better implement plan recommendations. Plan recommendations may also be implemented through subdivisions, in accordance with the Subdivision Map Act.

Additional implementation programs are referenced in more detail in the elements of the General Plan and Action Plan. Major implementation initiatives include the Public Facilities Financing Strategy, Economic Development Strategic Plan, Parks Master Plan, and other master plans and strategies. Master plans and strategies offer more in-depth analysis and implementation actions associated with their topic areas than is desirable in the General Plan. However, the formation or amendment of such plans will be evaluated against the policies of the General Plan. There are also specific legislative, regulatory, administrative, and collaborative implementation actions that will be needed. The General Plan and the associated Action Plan will be monitored to measure its effectiveness in achieving goals. The General Plan Monitoring Report, initially prepared in 2004, measures progress through: 1) Action Plan item implementation tracking, 2) San Diego Sustainable Community Program Indicators, and 3) community economic indicators.

City Budget Process

Implementation of the General Plan is accomplished through a broad range of legislative and regulatory actions that are outlined in the Action Plan. Each policy in the General Plan corresponds with an Action Plan item which identifies the implementation tool, such as a community plan update, master plan, or modification to regulations and ordinances, to help implement the policy. Although the Action Plan provides anticipated timeframes for implementing plan policies, many of the work program items are dependent on budget decisions. A Five Year Financial Outlook (Outlook) was developed in 2007 and updated in 2008 to examine the City's long range fiscal condition and establish funding priorities over the next five years. In addition, the Outlook established the framework for the development of the City's Annual Budgets. Eight significant initiatives were identified that require immediate City attention and resources and these initiatives as well as core city services are reflected in the Annual Budgets. It is during the budget process that new programs or additional funding for existing programs is allocated for the upcoming year. The General Plan Action Plan will be monitored to track the progress of General Plan implementation measures and help inform the budget process.

City of Villages Strategy

The City of Villages strategy will continue to help meet the long-term needs of the City through the incremental redevelopment of aging buildings and sites. Some of the activity centers or districts that have village characteristics are currently experiencing demand for intensified use and have infrastructure or financing for infrastructure available. These areas could develop in accordance with the City of Villages strategy in the next few years through comprehensive development plans. Sites that are currently developed with other uses may be the villages of the future. Many of San Diego's communities already have districts of different scales with village-like neighborhoods that will continue to evolve. A common feature of all the villages will be the addition of vibrant public places and the increased ease of walking between residences, transit stops, public facilities, and basic commercial uses. An emphasis within villages will be on improving the overall walkability between local destinations through the provision of safe and convenient pedestrian connections, traffic calming measures, landscape, pedestrian-scale lighting, public plazas, wayfinding programs, and other measures. As the villages become more fully developed, their individual personalities will become more defined and their development patterns will become more varied and distinctive. Some of the villages may take on specialized functions that cannot be predicted at the present time.

The rate at which the City of Villages concept can be applied throughout the City will be determined largely by market demand, public support, and 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.

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 diversified pattern built with transit- and pedestrian-orientation will take many 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.

Another 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 strategy will not be affected by the rate of growth, but the number of villages, and the demand for development within individual villages, will be influenced in part by population growth pressures. A demographic trend that could influence implementation of the City of Villages strategy is the steadily increasing proportion of elderly among the City's population as the Baby Boom generation ages. Many elderly people are unable to, or choose not to drive as frequently. The creation of a more pedestrian- and transit-oriented urban pattern around village centers will provide more options to the elderly than the auto-oriented pattern of development that has prevailed in the past. Under the City of Villages strategy, many elderly may choose mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods that are accessible by transit or walking to a full-range of services and facilities.

It should also be noted that future environmental, political, and economic conditions, and other factors that cannot be predicted at the present time could affect the rate and scale of San Diego's growth and development

Conclusion

The General Plan is intended to provide an enlightened strategy for the future development of the City – a strategy that values the distinctiveness of our communities while recognizing that San Diego is a major metropolis. The plan builds upon what is good in San Diego's communities, protects the City's canyons and open spaces, strives for a sustainable use of resources, and seeks to preserve a high quality-of-life for future generations. The General Plan relies upon the community plans to provide the site-specific guidance that will lead to implementation of many of the General Plan policies, and the continued involvement of an engaged citizenry to monitor its implementation.

The complete City of San Diego General Plan is available in printed form, on compact disc (CD) and on the City's website at www.sandiego.gov/planning/genplan.