



## THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

### Planning Department General Plan Work Program Status Report March 2004

On October 22, 2002, the City Council adopted the Strategic Framework Element City of Villages Strategy and Action Plan. The General Plan work program, approved on February 12, 2003, by the City Council Land Use and Housing Committee (LU&H), is based upon priority actions identified in the City Council-Adopted Strategic Framework Action Plan to be accomplished by 2008. The General Plan Work Program Quarterly Status Report (Status Report) provides an overview of priority actions and the status of each.

We are pleased to announce with this Status Report:

- The City of San Diego received the State of California American Planning Association's prestigious 2003 Award for planning excellence for the Strategic Framework Element Action Plan. The award was presented to the Mayor and City Council in November 2003.
- Additionally, in February 2004, the City Council selected five proposals a Pilot Villages to demonstrate the City of Villages Strategy. (See Page 3 for details.)

The following is a review of the five priority work program elements.

#### 1. Public Involvement and Communications

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Since the September 2003 Status Report, the Planning Department has continued to leverage its limited resources, while maintaining an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders on issues that are key to implementing the City of Villages strategy and Action Plan. Using the department's consolidated email-based database, approximately 8,900 mailings were sent to General Plan stakeholders with more than 65 percent of those sent by email. In addition, on key mailings,

email blasts were sent to over 180 community leaders and organizations to pass on to their constituents. These steps have drastically reduced the cost of postal mailings and provided more timely information to the public about events and other topics of interest.

To engage as many stakeholders in the planning process as possible, face-to-face contact and opportunities for direct dialogue remain at the heart of the Planning Department's communication strategy. Since the last Status Report, Planners met with almost 600 stakeholders on a variety of General Plan related topics. In December 2003 the fourth public forum in the "From Controversy to Solution Series" was held exploring Conservation Element issues. Other innovative strategies to involve the public are being incorporated into the planning process and are referenced in more detail throughout this Status Report. They include:

- **Interest Group Meetings**- Open exchanges between the planners and stakeholders on issues and policies related to the specific elements.
- An Integrated Approach to Collaboration with Community Planning Groups, Interdisciplinary Teams, Periodic E-mailings, Periodic General Plan Updates, and Creation of a CPG Resources Section on the Planning Department Website.

Other ongoing involvement and communication tools utilized since September 2003 include:

- Repeated **TV 24 Broadcasts** of the *From Controversy to Solution* Public Forums,
- **News Releases, Media Alerts** and a **Mayor's Press Conference** including the announcement made by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Atkins concerning the City Manager's recommendations on Pilot Villages,
- A **KPBS Interview** on the program, "These Days" concerning the Pilot Village program,
- **Lobby Display** of the Pilot Village proposals,
- **Collaboration Between Departments** to leverage public education and involvement that already exists in each department such as working with the Environmental Services department on a public survey on quality of life issues and sustainability,
- **Website** posting of documents, press releases, schedule of meetings, and other General Plan related information, and
- A **Hotline** to receive ongoing input related to the General Plan.

For a complete overview of the public involvement and communication strategy or to find out how you can get involved in the planning process, please visit our website at [www.sandiego.gov/cityofvillages](http://www.sandiego.gov/cityofvillages).

## 2. Existing Conditions Data Collection

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The Planning Department is collecting citywide existing conditions data in GIS (Geographic Information System) format that can be used for future analysis on various actions including:

- Updating the General Plan

- Amending or updating community plans
- Conducting environmental analysis
- Preparing a financing strategy for public facilities and infrastructure

The goal is to expand the existing database used by the City of San Diego (SanGIS) in order to centralize pertinent information and data critical to effective and comprehensive planning efforts. The Planning Department is collecting data from other City departments, reviewing community specific data with the appropriate community planning groups, and working with community groups to validate the accuracy of the data.

Uptown served as the test case for existing conditions data collection and final maps for that community were posted to the Planning Department website in July 2003. Since then, data collection has been completed, or is currently underway, in an additional 16 community planning areas. Staff anticipates completing the Existing Conditions Data Collection effort in July 2004 in accordance with LU&H direction. A community by community schedule is available on the City's website: <http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/existing.shtml>

### **3. Pilot Village Program Implementation**

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The Pilot Village Program provides an opportunity to demonstrate how the village concept can be realized through the selection and construction of three or four Pilot Villages. It is a goal that this process will serve as a catalyst toward implementation of the City of Villages strategy around the City, and act as a model of possibility for every community in San Diego. Successful village development will be challenging and will require the City to partner with communities, developers, and other agencies. The City Council established the program along with Strategic Framework Element adoption on October 22, 2002.

In November 2003, the City Council adopted a package of incentives to support the Pilot Village Program which include such incentives as expedited permit processing, priority for undergrounding public utilities, and priority for water and sewer line upgrades, among others. After an extensive process, the City Council selected the following as the first Pilot Villages for the City of San Diego:

- The Boulevard Marketplace-MCTIP (Mid-City – Normal Heights)
- Mi Pueblo (San Ysidro)
- The Paseo (College Area)
- Village Center at Euclid and Market (Southeastern San Diego)

- North Park Pilot Village (subject to density and affordable housing requirements)

Please visit our website to review the finalist proposals.

#### **4. General Plan Update**

The Strategic Framework Element is a new chapter of the General Plan. In order to implement this new element all of the remaining General Plan elements must be updated, and new Economic Prosperity and Land Use elements prepared to achieve internal consistency within the General Plan and to implement the City of Villages strategy. This will involve consolidating fourteen elements into eight. The update process will include coordination with various community and interest groups as well as other agencies and City departments. Due to limited staffing, work on the elements will be staggered. However, the goal is to bring forward all the elements for City Council consideration in November 2005, with one environmental document that would look at the elements comprehensively. Outlines for each element have been prepared and are available on the website.

The following status reports briefly summarize the issues being addressed and specific efforts on the eight elements being updated.

#### **4.1 Conservation Element Status Report**

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##### **Background**

The original 1979 Conservation Element provided a framework for the planned management, preservation and use of natural resources, including land (landforms, beaches, shoreline, erosion, soil, and agricultural land), water (rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, oceans, bays, lagoons, fisheries, pollution), minerals (sand, gravel, salt), ecology (vegetation, wildlife, major habitats, endangered species, human threats), and air. In 1997, the City Council amended the Conservation Element and the Open Space Element to reflect the goals of the Multiple Species Conservation Program.

The new Conservation Element will further integrate resource protection, pollution prevention, efficient and sustainable land development, social equity, and environmental education.

##### **Key Issues**

- Resource Conservation and Efficiency
- Landform Preservation and Urban Form
- Mineral Production
- Energy Independence
- Water Resource Management
- Water Quality
- Biological Diversity
- Wetlands

- Pollution Prevention
- Waste Management
- Sustainable Land Use Patterns
- Efficient Building and Site Design
- Environmental Justice
- Border/International Conservation
- Environmental Education

### **Status**

- A draft document has been prepared that includes discussion and policies for each of the key issue areas identified above.
- A broad contact list of interested individuals and organizations continues to be developed as a resource for providing input on the General Plan Conservation elements. Staff has sent five element e-mails on nine of the thirteen key issue areas that comprise the Conservation Element. Staff has received limited, but specific, input on the draft policies through this process. The remaining issue areas will be e-mailed by the end of March.
- The Planning Department held a public forum entitled “What on Earth Are We Doing? How Today’s Decisions on Land Use, Water, and Energy Affect Our Future” in December 2003 that focused on resource supplies and land use.
- Staff provided a presentation on the Conservation Element to the City’s Wetlands Advisory Board in late November, and to the Building Industry Association, the Sierra Club, the San Diego Audubon Society, and the Community Planners Committee in February 2004 for additional input.

## **4.2 Economic Prosperity Element Status Report**

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### **Background**

The City’s existing Industrial, Commercial and Redevelopment Elements from the 1979 General Plan will be updated and incorporated into the new Economic Prosperity Element which will contain coordinated and comprehensive economic prosperity goals, objectives and implementation measures. Since much of the City of San Diego has been developed, the new element will focus on the efficient utilization of existing employment areas and providing direction that new infill employment and retail commercial growth be located in the easily accessible Villages, Subregional Districts and Centre City.

Economic trends will be updated based on current data. The importance of small business development and manufacturing will be discussed in terms of preserving and creating middle-income employment opportunities. A more direct link between education and the work force will be established with key policies and actions regarding workforce training, including the issue of digital inclusion.

### **Key Issues**

- Employment land use and availability
- Expansion and diversification of the employment base
- Regional infrastructure
- Equitable development
- Education and workforce development
- United States - Mexico Border

### **Status**

- Community Outreach – Visits to community planning groups. A public forum on the Economic Prosperity Element was held in June taped and aired on TV 24. Staff is collaborating with a variety of agencies and interest groups on individual issues. In collaboration with Environmental Services department, a quality of life survey has been established on the City's web site to assist in development of the Sustainable Community Program Indicators called for in the Action Plan.
- Indicators - The Strategic Framework Element and Action Plan calls for economic indicators to be developed for San Diego's communities. A draft index of economic indicators was presented at a June forum and has since been revised and refined.
- Employment Lands - Preliminary scoping of existing development and development trends is underway to provide a framework for employment lands policy.
- Redevelopment – Planning staff is working with the Community and Economic Development department to create draft redevelopment policies for public review.

### **Implementation Efforts**

- Collocation and Conversion - Policies on industrial-residential collocation are being considered that will eventually be incorporated into the economic prosperity element when it is adopted in 2005. Land Use and Housing Committee, Planning Commission and CPC workshops and hearings have been held to discuss the draft policy.
- Community Impact Reports – As the Action Plan directs, staff is working with other City departments to determine how economic and fiscal impacts of major development projects should be considered in the decision-making process.
- Large Retail Establishment Regulations - A draft ordinance will be presented to Planning Commission in March 2004 and Land Use and Housing Committee will hear the regulation options later in the spring.

## **4.3 Housing Element and Housing Programs Status Report**

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## **Background**

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 to achieve the goals and objectives.

## **Key Issues**

- Housing production
- Regulations and incentives
- Financing and revenues
- Infrastructure
- Housing demand vs. supply
- Accessibility

## **Status**

Planning Department staff has begun the next update of the Housing Element with the objective of providing an adequate supply of housing to serve San Diegans of every economic level and demographic group. The Housing Element update was to begin in early 2003 with completion by spring 2004. However, in 2003, the State Department of Housing and Community Development granted a SANDAG request for a one year delay in the Housing Element update schedule for all jurisdictions in this region to allow the process of determining housing needs to proceed concurrently with SANDAG's Regional Comprehensive Planning process. This has delayed work on the update until 2004 and completion is now anticipated in late spring 2005.

## **Implementation Efforts**

**Companion Unit Ordinance:** The City Council adopted a revised companion unit ordinance on July 14, 2003 to conform with a new state law requiring that all cities in California allow ministerial review of companion unit development applications beginning on July 1, 2003.

**Inclusionary Housing Ordinance:** The City Council adopted an inclusionary housing ordinance on May 20, 2003. This citywide ordinance requires that new housing developments of two or more units either build ten percent of their units at specified affordability levels or pay an in lieu fee.

**Density Bonus Ordinance:** State law pertaining to density bonus was recently modified to add a category for moderate income condominiums and to require cities to offer second incentives requested by applicants. The Planning Department and City Attorney, with assistance from the Housing Commission, have prepared a draft ordinance to bring the City's regulations into conformance with the new state law. The revised regulations were considered by the LU&H on December 3, 2003 (see Manager's Report No. 03-237). Additional meetings and hearings on this matter will be held at the Community Planners Committee, Planning Commission, Housing Commission and City Council between February and April 2004.

**Single Room Occupancy Ordinance (SRO):** Housing Commission staff, with assistance from the Planning and Development Services departments and CCDC, is preparing revisions to the SRO ordinance to respond to recent changes in state law and case law. The revised ordinance will clarify which properties are SROs and modify conversion and relocation

regulations. The goal is to mitigate the impact of loss of SROs and to promote the construction of new SROs and other small affordable units. A discussion of this issue was held on September 17, 2003 at the LU&H Committee (see Manager's Report No. 03-187). A draft ordinance incorporating the direction received on September 17th has been prepared. A hearing to discuss this draft ordinance is anticipated in spring 2004 at the LU&H committee. Subsequent meetings and hearings will be held at the Community Planners Committee, Housing Commission, Planning Commission and City Council in February-May, 2004.

Condominium Conversion Ordinance: The City Council voted to: 1) approve a requirement that when the rental vacancy rate is below seven percent, property owners who seek approval to convert rental housing units to for-sale condominium units be required to provide relocation/down payment assistance equal to three months current rent to existing residents who earn less than the Area Median Income (AMI), and 2) approve an amendment to the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance to apply the inclusionary requirement to condominium conversions that will sell at a price affordable to families earning 150 percent or more of AMI.

Analysis of Public Land suitability for housing: In September 2003, the LU&H Committee directed staff to analyze publicly-owned properties in the City to determine what potential these sites may have to accommodate housing to help meet the City's housing shortage. The Planning Department is leading this effort with input from the Housing Commission and the Real Estate Assets department. A report on this issue to the LU&H Committee is anticipated in the Spring of 2004.

Affordable Housing Task Force (AHTF): This task force, which was formed at the request of City Council, made recommendations in June 2003 on a wide range of issues ranging from options for financing affordable housing to improving the regulatory process to addressing tenant landlord issues. The Community Planners Committee, Housing Commission, and Planning Commission provided input on the AHTF recommendations. In late 2003, the LU&H and Rules committees addressed and took action on nearly all of the AHTF recommendations, although many of the AHTF recommendations were not adopted. A "Housing Day" is anticipated in spring 2004 to summarize and provide a current status report on housing initiatives. Additionally, it is anticipated that the City Council will act on each of the proposals made by the AHTF.

#### **4.4 Land Use Element Status Report**

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**Background**

State law identifies Land Use as a mandatory element in the General Plan. The current General Plan relies upon the forty plus community, subarea, specific, and precise plans to serve as the Land Use Element. The proposed land use element will more fully establish and define the relationship between the General Plan and those community plans through a standardized format. It will provide policy guidance on how to write community plans to supplement citywide policies more appropriately located at the general plan level with



community and neighborhood specific policy direction and implementation measures. The updated land use element will also establish citywide land use recommendations to implement the City of Villages strategy, identify land uses of citywide significance, and depict the citywide relationship between land use and all transportation systems. The updated element will also revise and incorporate all policies related to community plan amendments to address prioritization, and include criteria for those amendments that increase or add residential density. These new policies will assist the City in preserving the integrity of the General Plan and all community plans.

### **Key Issues**

- Equitable development and environmental justice
- Regional policy for land use distribution, protection of unique resources and rural areas
- Policies and procedures to govern plan amendments
- Noise policies
- Incorporation of an updated development phasing proposal based upon the Phased Development Areas System and consistent with the City of Villages strategy and Proposition A (the 1985 Managed Growth Initiative).
- Update the existing *Progress Guide and General Plan Land Use Map*.

### **Status**

- On October 22, 2003, Land Use & Housing committee of the City Council and the Planning Commission, after reviewing several options, directed staff to retain and strengthen the community plan amendment initiation process.
- Land Use and Housing and the Planning Commission also accepted the Planning Department's recommendation that staff establish and work with a committee, composed of planning professionals and planning group members, to prepare either a Council Policy (to be incorporated into the Land Use Element) or Land Development Code amendments to accomplish the task described above.
- Research is underway to refine the City of Villages Opportunity Areas Map for incorporation into the Land Use Element. A new working draft will be produced for Community Planners Committee review. Follow up discussions will be scheduled with each of the community planning groups for their review and input.

## **4.5 Mobility Element Status Report**

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### **Background**

The proposed Mobility Element will replace the Transportation Element which was last updated in 1985. Comprehensive amendments to the element are needed to implement Strategic Framework Element core values for “walkable communities with tree-lined streets” and “a convenient, efficient, aesthetically pleasing, and multi-modal transportation system.” In addition, the new element will contain policy recommendations on how to implement the

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) in the City of San Diego. The RTP (also known as Mobility 2030), adopted by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), is the San Diego region's long-range plan for transportation. The RTP identifies projects and funding sources for implementation.

### **Key Issues**

- Land Use and Transportation - Better integrate land use and transportation by focusing much of the City's new growth within walking distance of transit services. Link the planned transportation network to the new Land Use Element (which will include the City of Villages Map). Support transit-oriented development and design.
- Walkable Communities - Design and retrofit our City so that walking is a safe, comfortable, and frequently-used form of transportation.
- Transit First - Support implementation of a transit system that is so attractive and convenient that transit will become the first choice of travel for many trips. Support expansion of service to areas on the City of Villages Map.
- Streets and Freeways - Improve driving conditions and balance the needs of multiple users of the public right-of-way.
- Transportation Demand Management - Reduce peak period traffic congestion by promoting alternatives to driving alone. Optimize the performance of the street and freeway system without adding expensive new infrastructure.
- Intelligent Transportation Systems - Improve the efficiency and safety of the transportation system through traffic control, information dissemination, freeway lane management, emergency management systems, crash prevention and safety, and other intelligent transportation systems.
- Bicycling - Develop a safe and effective bikeway network that serves commuter and recreational riders and encourages more people to bicycle.
- Parking management - Address parking supply and demand to meet the needs of multiple users, while reducing the amount of land devoted to the automobile. Develop innovative regulations and parking management programs. Consider parking facilities as part of the community infrastructure and develop community-specific solutions to parking problems.
- Environmental Quality - Recognize the broad environmental impacts from motor vehicle operations and infrastructure and seek to minimize those impacts.
- Environmental justice - Develop transportation policies and programs that result in the fair treatment of all people.
- Financing - Influence and prioritize the collection and use of transportation revenues.
- Airports, goods movement, intercity rail, and noise - Sections to be updated.

### **Status**

- Four e-mails have been sent out to the Mobility Element Interest List soliciting comment on draft sections of the element.
- An open public meeting to discuss mobility issues was held on Sept. 15, 2003; a second meeting was scheduled for February 5, 2004.
- A community forum on mobility was held on September 25, 2003.
- A joint workshop of the LU&H and the Planning Commission was held on October 22, 2003.
- Presentations have been made to various interest groups, including the Community Planners Committee, on January 27, 2004.

- Collaboration with SANDAG on the Regional Transportation Plan, Congestion Management Program, the Regional Comprehensive Plan and other mobility issues has occurred.

#### **4.6 Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element Status Report**

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##### **Background**

The Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element addresses those facilities and services that are publicly managed and which have a direct influence on the location of land uses. These include schools, libraries, police, fire, water, sanitation, and flood control. The revised element will focus on the establishment of citywide priorities in providing facilities.

The existing element, adopted in 1979, emphasized the importance of timely development of facilities and services so as not to impact the capacity and ability of the City to provide the service. Findings in the 1979 element did not, however, anticipate the severe infrastructure financing constraints that have developed over the last two decades, beginning with voter-adopted property tax restrictions.

These fiscal constraints have impacted all California cities, yet San Diego utilizes fewer general revenue sources than most other medium and large cities in the State. Therefore, in addition to the goal of state-local fiscal reform that could benefit the City, alternative methods of financing public facilities will be addressed as identified by the Strategic Framework Element and through the plan update process.

##### **Key Issues**

- Address the phasing of new development and the preparation of public facilities plans.
- Prioritization of citywide and community facility needs.
- Incorporate public amenities into village projects.
- Encourage the use of shared resources.
- Identify user fee and taxation measures similar to those used by peer cities within the state to provide needed facilities such as parks, libraries, fire stations, and local street/pedestrian improvements and amenities including those that facilitate transit use.

##### **Status**

- Work on the Public Facilities and Safety Element has not begun in an official capacity at this time due to the need to complete the existing Conditions data collection effort and staffing resources.
- An outline of topic areas has also been prepared regarding the organization of an updated public facilities element.

## 4.7 Recreation Element Status Report

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### **Background**

The existing Recreation Element provides a framework for a comprehensive public recreation system. It contains recommendations for: population-based centers, resource-based parks, other recreational accommodations, and class/programs/activities. The existing element emphasizes the combination of land, facilities, and staff services as vital elements for a constructive and enjoyable use of leisure time. It recognizes that recreation land may be difficult to acquire in the already developed parts of the City and states that “an idea balance of recreational opportunities cannot be achieved through just citywide application of numerical standards for physical facilities. These standards are important, however, they should be used with discretion rather than mechanically.” Most of the recommendations in the existing Recreation Element are still valid; others require editing and/or updating.

Many of the policies will be taken directly from the Strategic Framework Element and Action Plan, or from the existing Recreation Element. A comprehensive update of the element will include the drafting of new policies and strategies to address the acquisition, design and development of new parks and recreational resources. Planning and Park and Recreation staff will work with a consultant to develop a Park and Recreation Master Plan to supplement and implement Recreation Element policies with detailed information about park and recreation inventories, conditions, and linkages, and acquisition and development strategies.

### **Key Issues**

- Recreation opportunities and access
- Community diversity
- Joint use
- Open space recreation
- Park guidelines
- Park and Recreation Master Plan - Supplemental document to the Recreation Element policies containing detailed information about our park and recreation inventories, conditions, and linkages.

### **Status**

- Work on the Recreation Element has not begun in an official capacity at this time due to staffing resources. An outline of topic and policy areas, however, is available for review and comment.
- The ongoing Existing Conditions Data Collection (ECDC) effort is inventorying the existing park, open space, and recreation centers in the City.

- On June 4, 2003, LU&H voted to support the preparation of a Park and Recreation Master Plan. The ECDC will serve as a background study for the master plan. The Park and Recreation department is in the process of seeking funds for a Park Master Plan.

#### **4.8 Urban Design Element Status Report**

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##### **Background**

The existing Urban Design Element provides direction citywide for design of public and private development, circulation, infrastructure, and natural and open spaces. It contains many of the policies addressed in the Strategic Framework Element such as recognizing the significance of the natural topography, directing density to compact, urban areas, promoting mixed-use and “green” construction, integrating new development into the existing neighborhood character and encouraging multimodal transportation with pedestrian, bike and transit facilities. Many of these recommendations are still valid, however the language will need to be updated to reflect the current status of the City as one which has nearly completed build-out and where new development will be focused in mixed-use villages functioning as community centers. Transit-oriented design, planning for pedestrians, and mixed-use development will need significantly more detail to respond to the high significance that Strategic Framework core values place on these issues.

##### **Key Issues**

- Urban form and the natural environment
- Urban infill development that
- Street design
- Arts and culture
- Historic resources

##### **Status**

- Work on the Urban Design Element has not begun in an official capacity at this time due to staffing resources.
- An outline of topic and policy areas, however, is available for review and comment.
- Stakeholder groups and potential ad hoc committee participants for the various issue areas are being identified for public input purposes.

#### **5. Financing Strategy**

A financing strategy for public facilities must be developed to continue progress toward ultimately securing additional funding to remedy existing facilities shortfalls. As part of the Public Facilities Element, the Planning Department will work with the City Manager to identify a broad range of citywide needs (including public facilities and infrastructure, maintenance, and open space acquisition) then link these needs to existing and new potential

funding sources. This includes strengthening the linkage between community financing and phasing plans and the City's Capital Improvement Program. Ultimately, the City Council could potentially make decisions on funding sources and place financing measures on the ballot for a public vote. A discussion of infrastructure financing related to recommendations from the AHTF has been forwarded from LU&H to the Rules Committee. Rules has directed staff to return in June 2004 with a comprehensive analysis of revenue needs and sources, including referral to the City Manager for a fiscal analysis and the City Attorney for a legal opinion.

Other ongoing components of the financing strategy include proactive legislative work and strengthened inter-agency coordination.

For additional information please contact Coleen Clementson, General Plan Program Manager at (619) 235-5216 or e-mail [cclementson@sandiego.gov](mailto:cclementson@sandiego.gov), visit our website at [www.sandiego.gov/cityofvillages](http://www.sandiego.gov/cityofvillages) or call our hotline at 619-235-5226. You can also email comments to [planning@sandiego.gov](mailto:planning@sandiego.gov).