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A guide to planning in the City of San Diego

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Introduction

This handbook is intended to give a basic land use planning overview. It contains descriptions of many of the land use planning activities performed in the City of San Diego. The document also contains references to other planning agencies or resource documents. The bolded phrases found in this section are described in more detail throughout the handbook.

Overview

Most individuals become involved with land use planning when their attention is drawn by one particular issue. The issue may be cars parked in a front yard next door, it may be protection of an area with hillsides and vegetation, it may be traffic congestion, or it may be because a vacant site in the community is being developed. However, these issues may be broader and can involve other cities in the region. As an example, a major issue facing the entire region includes creating and implementing a strategy to provide additional housing opportunities for future residents. This whole range of issues, from the “big picture” to the detailed issue, is **land use planning**.

While a few federal laws govern the City’s land use policies and regulations, the largest outside influence comes from the State Planning and Zoning Law. The California Government Code gives local governments the authority to create land use policies within their jurisdictional boundaries and the ability to create a citywide land use and policy document called the **General Plan**. Many cities in California are small enough that their General Plans are single volumes. Larger cities often have several **community plans**, i.e. “mini” land use and policy plans for more specific geographic areas. In the City of San Diego, due to our sheer size and the diversity of our communities, there are more than 40 **community plans**. The community plans combined together constitutes the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The community plans must work as part of the General Plan and must not contain policies or recommendations that are contradictory to other parts of the General Plan or to other community plans.

While land use plans are the most common type of plan, some issues affect more than one city, and the planning approach is multi-jurisdictional. This leads to broader policy-based plans such as the **Multiple Species Conservation Program** and the **Regional Comprehensive Plan** created by the **San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)**.

Plans are policy documents that are adopted by the City Council as statements of intent regarding a variety of long range policy issues. In order for policies to be used, there must be “implementing actions.” Commonly used implementation tools include: **zoning, historical preservation, and financing plans**.

Some development on private property happens only after approvals by decision makers such as the **Hearing Officer, Planning Commission** or **City Council**, and after public review. This process is called **Discretionary Review** because the decision maker has discretion over whether to approve, deny or modify the project. Proposed projects are submitted to the City and reviewed by City staff, by recognized **community planning groups** and by members of the public. Prior to making a decision on any project, a review is conducted in accordance



with the **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**. The **CEQA** review discloses whether there will be any potentially significant environmental impacts by the proposed project. A decision about the proposed project can only be made after the decision maker finds that the **CEQA** review has been adequately completed.

Projects that comply with Municipal Code regulations are reviewed by City staff under the **Ministerial Review** process. A project of this type, in accordance with the existing regulations found in the **Land Development Code** and Building Code, does not need to have the approval of a decision-making body.

With all projects, whether approved through the ministerial process or through the discretionary process, it may be discovered that once built, the property is not being operated or maintained the way it was permitted. The use may have changed or the structure may have been modified without the benefit of a permit; or the landscaping may have died and not been replaced. The effort to assure that these uses return to what was originally permitted or that a discretionary action is taken to reflect the current use and that a property is maintained in accordance with City regulations is called **code enforcement** and is administered by the **Neighborhood Code Compliance Department (NCCD)**.



What Are Some of the Development Patterns in San Diego?

San Diego, the oldest town in California, was incorporated as a City on March 27, 1850. With its steady growth patterns over the years, San Diego has experienced a rather long planning history. On November 25, 1890, an ordinance was passed that regulated new construction and alterations to existing structures. In 1908, city planning consultant John Nolen recognized that, if residents acted in time, San Diego would have the potential of becoming a great city. The official Zoning Ordinance was adopted in January 1923 and contained five zones. In 1926, Nolen laid out a comprehensive plan that became a foundation of urban design and signaled the emergence of the city's official planning process. A municipal planning department was formed, and Kenneth Gardner, a Nolen employee, was named its first planning director.

San Diego's original growth debate happened as early as 1917 during the Mayoral race. The slogan "Smokestacks versus Geraniums" portrayed both sides of the issues that existed when the population was just around 35,000 residents.

During the Depression years, tough economic times did not diminish San Diego's civic pride. City leaders staged the California Pacific Exposition of 1935-36. It was a follow-up to the successful Panama-California Exposition of 1915-16, which gave Balboa Park its historic Spanish-Moroccan style architecture. A new civic center, a Works Project Administration project that remains a handsome jewel on San Diego Bay, was built along the downtown waterfront. In 1931, voters approved a new council/manager form of government that allowed the Planning Department to function separately from the City Manager. The Works Progress Administration funded a textbook on city planning for schools.

It fell to the next generation to draw in the details of the plans that sought to reconcile the desire to protect San Diego's environment and quality of life with the gritty realities of economic forces and rapid development. World War II and its aftermath spurred San Diego's growth. As a result, San Diego

became a busy center for military bases and defense work. With the influx of military personnel and their families, suburban neighborhoods of single family homes were developed, the City's older urbanized areas on the mesa tops, such as the first sub-division which was in Kensington. Starting in the 1950's, the "great, broad, quiet mesas" admired by John Nolen began to fill with factories, homes and highways, and "lovely Mission Valley" became what some called a second downtown. As a result of these actions, the State mandated that the City of San Diego develop a General Plan and Progress



Guide in 1965. Voters rejected the 1965 citywide General Plan that would have provided development guidelines forcing the city to come up with a new plan.

By 1967, the City had approved a Progress Guide and General Plan that included some of the fundamentals of the future

growth management plan, varying from compact development to preserving open space. The City was not only looking to modernize its policies, it sought to democratize the planning process by officially recognizing community planning groups. More than 40 of these groups currently exist.

Rapid growth in the 1950's and 1960's brought many civic amenities and landmarks to San Diego, among them the creation of Mission Bay Park, Sea World, a stadium, a sports arena and a new City Hall and Civic Theatre on a downtown community concourse. Such projects were applauded. The real growth debate moved to the suburbs, where thousands of tract homes, serviced by strip malls, were being constructed. As growth accelerated, environmentalists argued for greater protection of resources from the coastline to the inland canyons and mesas. At the state and local level, voters showed their desire to protect their natural assets by adopting a bond measure that would raise money for the acquisition of open space.

San Diego's most rapid geographic expansion occurred during the late 1960's. Using sewer access as an enticement to annexation, raw land adjacent to the City was rapidly annexed and developed. Centering on the need for more public schools, public outcry and controversy arose over the lack of public facilities.

The California Coastal Commission was created during the 1970's to protect the coastline and encourage the preparation of local coastal preservation programs. San Diegans passed a bond measure to raise money to acquire open space in 1978. Pete Wilson, who was elected San Diego's mayor in 1971, was confronted almost immediately by the buyers of Mira Mesa tract homes picketing City Hall. Their recently developed subdivisions lacked schools and other public services. Wilson put the City's planning issues at the top of his political agenda.



The program for guiding City growth, beginning with the 1979 General Plan, recommended the division of the City into planning areas or "tiers", designated Urbanized, Planned Urbanizing and Future Urbanizing.

The Urbanized area is the central portion of San Diego as well as the remaining older sections of the City. This area includes most of the land south of Miramar Naval Air Station with the exception of Tierrasanta, East Elliott, and Otay Mesa. These three communities fall within the Planned Urbanizing designation.

The Planned Urbanizing area consists of the newly developing communities. The objectives for these areas include supporting additional public investment necessary to complete development and allow the growth of communities already served by capital facilities.

The Future Urbanizing Area (FUA) initially included those lands within the City that were vacant, agriculturally zoned, lacking public facilities, and removed from existing development. Designated lands could be released for development at urbanized densities as the Urbanized and Planned Urbanizing areas approached build-out. In 1993, the North City Future Urbanizing Framework Plan, a blue print for development of the largest portion of the City's FUA, was approved. Since then, several areas have received approval to shift to the Planned Urbanizing designation and several sub-area plans have been adopted. The remaining Future Urbanizing Areas in the City are typically lands that will retain agricultural zoning and develop at very low residential densities.

In summary, with the postwar population boom of the 1950's, and equally rapid growth in the 1960's, the City developed a series of growth management fundamentals which it included in its 1967 Progress Guide and General Plan. In the 1970's, growth became more rampant, causing voters to express their desires for the protection of natural resources, including a bond measure to raise money for the acquisition of open space. The City responded to rapid growth by adopting a growth management plan structured around the timing and location of development. Since 2000, the City has been dealing with such issues as housing and infill development.

At this time, a number of elements in the Progress Guide and General Plan are in the process of being updated and are scheduled to be presented to the City Council in early 2006. The Strategic Framework Element, which is the City's guide for growth and development, was adopted by the City Council in 2002.

For further information relating to the Progress Guide and General Plan update, please visit: <http://www.sandiego.gov/cityofvillages/>.

Citizen and Community Involvement

Citizen involvement has been a long-standing practice in the City of San Diego. The City Council adopted policies in the 1960's and 1970's that established and recognized community planning groups as formal mechanisms for community input in the decision-making processes. Community planning groups provide citizens with an opportunity for involvement in advising the City Council, the Planning Commission, and other decision makers on development projects, community plan amendments, rezonings, and public facilities. The recommendations of the planning groups are integral components of the planning process, and are highly regarded by the City Council and by staff.



In 1966, the San Diego City Council formalized this government-citizen relationship with the adoption of Council Policy 600-5. Under this policy, citizens who wish to participate in the planning

process are able to form “officially recognized” planning groups. The City Council recognizes one official planning group in each community. The groups work with City staff to formulate and implement the General Plan, community plans, and to advise the Planning Commission and the City Council on project review, as well as planning and code enforcement issues.

How Can I Get Involved in My Community?

There are many different ways to get involved in issues, projects and programs that impact the quality of life in your community and the City overall. For example, the Friends of the Library groups provide opportunities to support your local library and promote literacy. Park and recreation councils provide opportunities to influence the provision of park space and recreational programming within a community. Many other boards and groups focus on specific areas of interest. Community planning groups focus on establishing a long-term vision for development of the community and reviewing development proposals for consistency with that vision. Planning group sub-committees can also be formed to work with the Neighborhood Code Compliance Department on code enforcement issues as well.



Which Staff in the City Are Involved in Planning Processes?

Staff from a number of departments are involved in the City's planning process. Planning Department staff is responsible for the creation of the overall framework that guides growth and development. Other City departments, such as

the Development Services Department, follow this policy framework by implementing regulations set forth in the Land Development Code/Building Code as well as other Council Policies and Ordinances.

Community Planning Groups

What Are Community Planning Groups?

Community planning groups are community organizations that advise the City on community goals and development proposals. Community planning groups are established in conformance with City policies and are ‘recognized’ to provide official recommendations to the City.

What Areas of the City Do Community Planning Groups Represent?



The City of San Diego currently includes fifty-seven planning areas. Forty-two of these community planning areas have recognized planning groups with one group per planning area. Exceptions to this include the Mid-City communities and the Southeastern

communities. Planning groups generally focus on issues and projects within the boundaries of the community. However, each group sends a representative to sit on the Community Planners Committee to address issues of city-wide concern.

How Do Community Planning Groups Get Formed?

Community planning groups already exist for most communities within the City of San Diego. The Planning Department works with community members interested in forming a community planning group where none currently exists. Together, staff and community members prepare an initial group roster as well as group bylaws in conformance with City policies. A hearing before the City Council or Council Committee is then scheduled to formally approve and ‘recognize’ the new group.

What Are the Operating Responsibilities of Community Planning Groups?

Planning groups are required to adopt operating procedures and responsibilities, otherwise known as bylaws, which must be consistent with the requirements of Council Policy 600-24. The bylaws ensure that the group will represent the community at large, will solicit input from the community, and will operate in a fair manner. Operating responsibilities for community planning groups are outlined in Council Policy 600-24 which can be found at <http://clerkdoc.sanet.gov/Website/council-policy>.

Community planning groups have between 12 and 20 voting members from throughout the community. Planning group officers are elected to chair the meetings and perform all duties necessary to carry out the purpose of the group. Members attend regular group meetings to review community goals and development proposals. Issues and projects are discussed and then a recommendation is passed by the majority of voting members. Planning group recommendations are submitted to the City for consideration during the approval process.



Planning groups are responsible for reviewing development proposals in their communities and making a recommendation to the decision maker, which may be a hearing officer, the Planning Commission, and/or the City Council. The recommendations of the group are based upon policies established in the applicable community plan. Planning groups also work with City staff contributing to periodic updates of their community plan.

Planning groups and individuals representing themselves as planning group members are not permitted to endorse a political candidate. A planning group may allow a candidate to speak at their meeting only if all candidates for the office are allowed a chance to speak although avoiding political activity and involvement is the best approach to retain community planning group impartiality. Planning groups may endorse a political proposition only if it relates to the group's activities.



Who Can Be on a Community Planning Group?

Community planning group members are elected by and from eligible members of the community. Some bylaws refer to an executive board, with all general members belonging to the group. Group members must be at least eighteen (18) years of age and be affiliated with the community as a property owner, resident or local business person. Eligibility may be further defined by group bylaws.

Where Do Community Planning Groups Have a Voice?

Community planning groups advise the City on the adoption, implementation or amendment of their community plan - the long-term planning 'blueprint' for development of the community. Community planning groups also review the more complex development proposals which include those requiring 'discretionary' City approval for conformance with community plan goals and policies.

What is Planning in San Diego Today?

What Is The City's Progress Guide And General Plan?

The General Plan is the master document for planning the growth in a city or region. The City Council adopts the General Plan as a "blueprint for the evolution of the City over a long term planning horizon, usually twenty years. The General Plan provides a long term vision of how it intends the City to change or be preserved in the next 20 years. State law requires all cities and counties to have general plans. It is a strategy to respond to public concerns over growth, housing density and development patterns, and environmental protection. Changes to the 1979 General Plan and Progress Guide, include a new key element entitled the Strategic Framework Element which can be accessed at <http://www.sandiego.gov/cityofvillages/index.shtml>.

Keep in mind that the recommendations and guidelines of the General Plan and community plans are policy statements and cannot be implemented by the adoption of the plan alone. A series of implementation programs, including zoning and development regulations, must be undertaken concurrent with, or subsequent to, adoption of the General Plan and community plans if the recommendations of the plans are to become reality. The Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), zoning, Neighborhood Code Compliance, public facilities financing plans, and redevelopment plans are examples of the regulations and programs that help guide and implement land use, development, and design.

What Is the Strategic Framework Element?

The Strategic Framework Element, adopted by the City Council in October 2002, is a new chapter of the City's Progress Guide and General Plan, replacing the Guidelines for Future Development that were adopted as part of the General Plan in 1990. The City of Villages is the strategy drafted as part of the Strategic Framework Element. It provides a long-term plan for accommodating the City's forecasted population growth and development, while maintaining and enhancing quality of life, and it provides an overall structure to guide the General Plan update, which is tentatively scheduled to be adopted by the City Council in early 2006.



The City of Villages strategy is based on a vision and core values for San Diego which reflect past and recent planning efforts and trends, as well as public outreach. The element addresses recent trends and challenges, describes the growth strategy and recommends policies to implement the strategy. In addition, there is a description of an implementation program which includes a five-year action plan and recommendations for growth and development after 2020. The new Strategic Framework Element embraces San Diego's past planning efforts as it charts a course for the future.

What Is a Community Plan?

A community plan is a public document which contains specific proposals for future land uses and public improvements in a given community. It provides tailored policies that more specifically implement Progress Guide and General Plan policies and purpose, and are enabled by a legislative framework at state and local levels. The community plan provides a long-range physical development guide for elected officials and citizens engaged in community development. Typical elements found in a community plan include: Land Use; Transportation; Urban Design; Public Facilities and Services; Natural and Cultural Resources; and, Economic Development.

How Is a Community Plan Developed?

The Progress Guide and General Plan designates community planning areas in the City in which specific land use proposals are made in the form of community plans. This process allows the community plan to refine the policies of the City down to the community level, within the context of city-wide goals and objectives. A community plan is developed when City staff and the community, usually coordinated through community planning group forums, work together to identify changes in land use or revisions to policies in order to make them consistent with the General Plan.

What Are the Characteristics of a Community Plan?

A community plan must be all of the following:

COMPREHENSIVE: The plan should address all aspects of community development including: housing; transportation; commercial and industrial development; public facilities, such as schools, parks and libraries; urban design or the physical or constructed image of the community; and environmental issues, such as noise, and hillside preservation.

LONG-RANGE: The plan should make the recommendations which guide development over a long period of time. Development of a community is a process which takes many years and is an ongoing process. The plan must be based on not only what the community is today, but what development factors will be likely to occur in the future.

RELATED TO THE ENTIRE CITY: Any community is only one segment of the City as a whole. The community plan must address not only issues within the community, but also citywide issues as they relate to the community. No community exists separately from neighboring communities or is isolated from the rest of the City. The Progress Guide and General Plan provides the outline for development of the City as a whole, and each community plan must work within this outline to guide development in the individual communities.

A VISION OF THE FUTURE: As San Diego grows, so does each of its component communities and the plan serves as a guide for anticipated growth. While the plan is based on existing conditions in that community, it must do more than simply reflect the status quo. The planning process is based on the assumption that growth will occur and the plan must be a document that envisions what those changes will be. The plan is a document which guides the community toward the future.

IMPLEMENTATION: As stated earlier, the plan itself does not control development in the community. The recommendations of the plan must be implemented through zoning regulations in the Land Development Code, the Capital Improvements Program, a Public Facilities Financing Plan, monitoring of projects, etc. The plan must identify what implementation methods are needed and also include recommendations for any new legislation which might be necessary to implement the plan. In the coastal zone, the policies in the City's community plans must be certified by the California Coastal Commission as being appropriate to implement the Coastal Act.



Typical General and Community Plan Elements

Although state law establishes a set of basic issues for consideration in local general plans, and mandates the inclusion of seven mandatory elements, each city and county determines the relative importance of each issue to local planning and decides how they are to be addressed in the General Plan. As a result, no two cities or counties have plans which are exactly alike in form or content. The following is a brief outline of the basic issues that are addressed cumulatively between the community plans and General Plan:

The **Land Use Element** designates the general location and intensity of housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings and grounds, waste disposal facilities and other land uses.



The **Housing Element** is a comprehensive assessment of current and projected housing needs for all economic segments of the community and region. It sets forth local housing policies and programs to implement those policies. This is the single element of the General Plan that the State requires to be updated every five years.

The **Circulation Element** identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major roads, transportation routes, terminals, and public utilities and facilities. It must be correlated with the land use element.

The **Conservation Element** addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources, including water, forests, soils, rivers and mineral deposits.

The **Open Space Element** details plans and measures for preserving open space for natural resources, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety, and the identification of agricultural land.

The **Noise Element** identifies and appraises noise problems and sounds within and affecting the community, and forms the basis for distributing new noise-sensitive land uses.

The **Safety Element** establishes policies and programs to protect the community from risks associated with seismic, geologic, flood and wildfire hazards.

Other issues that are either contained within the community plans or General Plan, or accompany planning actions are:

A **Historical** review of a site, building, structure, district, or mark of historical significance due to its association with such things as noted past events, historical persons or distinguishing architectural characteristics or a significant representation of an era in the development of a city.

A community's **Financing Plan** is a City Council approved document that identifies public facilities which serve the community and which are required in order to comply with General Plan standards and the area community plan.

Zoning is a legislative means of ensuring that land uses of a community are properly situated in relation to one another in accordance with adopted plans. Zoning regulates the use of all land and provides regulations for building sizes, heights, adequate parking, among other items. It outlines the kind of activity (uses) that can be established (permitted) in each zone. Most of the City's 319.5 square miles have designated zones, excluding some parklands and Port District lands. Certain areas in the City have Planned Districts which have specific development regulations in such detail as is necessary to permit the evaluation of proposed development controls for the district. The City's zoning regulations are found in the City's Municipal Code, starting in Chapter 11, and are known as the "Land Development Code". The following is the link to the Municipal Code: <http://clerkdoc.sannet.gov/Website/mc/mc.html>.

Historical Property Designation

What Constitutes an Historical Site?

An historical site is any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon), building, structure, district, or object of historical significance due to its association with such things as noted past events or trends, historical persons or distinguished architectural characteristics, or a significant representation of an era in the development of a city.



What Are the Criteria for Historical Designation?

Properties are designated by the Historical Resources Board based on the Board's review of a historical study that documents the property's significance. The significance of a structure can be predicated on its association with persons, events, trends, notable architecture, work of a master builder, exemplifying special characteristics of a community, or is a national or state historical landmark.

What Is a Historic District?

A historic district is a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of sites, buildings, structures or objects that are united historically, geographically, or aesthetically by plan or physical development and that have a special character, historical interest, cultural or aesthetic value, or that represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the city.



What Kinds of Historic Districts are Recognized by the City of San Diego?

The City of San Diego recognizes five types of Historic District 1) Geographic/Traditional; 2) Thematic; 3) Voluntary Traditional; 4) Emerging; and 5) Archaeological.

What Criteria does a Historic District Need to Meet in Order to Become Designated?

A proposed historic district must meet one or more of the eleven criteria described in HRB Policy 4.1 that determine district significance.

What Incentives Are There for Historical Designation?

Historic designation has many positive benefits including the Mills Act which may result in a reduction in property taxes for a residential property. Historical designation also allows the use of the State Historic Building Code

that provides for greater leniency in the rehabilitation of historically-designated buildings. Property owners also have access to a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) that may allow a use not normally permitted in that zone, as well as other regulatory flexibility for all historically-designated properties, contributing to retention of historic fabric and neighborhood ambience.



Who Makes a Decision That a Property or Building Should Be Designated Historical?

A property owner or interested person may present a property to City staff assigned to the Historical Resources Board for review as a potential historical resource. After City staff reviews historical site documentation, staff will make a recommendation based on Historical Resources Board

adopted criteria as to whether the site is potentially historic. Staff will present the findings to the Historical Resources Board which makes a decision based on the presented documentation. This action is appealable to the City Council.

Who Should I Contact Regarding Historical Designation?

To have a property considered for historical designation, one should contact the City historic preservation staff at 619-235-5224 or email inquiries to HistoricalResources@sandiego.gov to request a designation packet. This packet contains detailed information regarding the process for designation including a sample submittal; a list of consultants; a copy of the historical ordinance; the U.S. Secretary of the Interior Standards; information on the Mills Act tax reduction for historic property owners; and, other economic incentives.

Facilities Financing

What Is a Financing Plan?

In each community there are identified public facilities which serve the community and which are required in order to comply with General Plan guidelines and the community plan. The facilities are identified in a plan with priorities and potential funding sources. A community's financing plan is a City Council approved document. For those communities which are assessed Facilities Benefit Assessments (see response to "What is an FBA?"), the Public Facilities Financing Plan (PFFP) includes the following: the community's boundary within which, and an area of benefit for which, development fees are collected; an estimate of the community's development schedule; projected community build-out; a description of community facilities with funding sources; and the assessment on residential, commercial or industrial development. For those communities which are assessed Development Impact Fees (see response to "What is a DIF?"), the Financing Plan includes the following: the community's boundary within which, and an area of benefit for which, development fees are collected; projected community build-out; and a description of community facilities. The DIF does not include liens on property.



Does New Development Always Cause New Facilities?

The need for public facilities is related to a community's growth. Transportation improvements, park and recreation improvements, police, fire, library and other facilities (water, sewer, drainage, etc.) are required, or need to be expanded, as a community reaches identified thresholds for each type of facility and to maintain existing levels of service. As an example, a project would not cause the need for new facilities if a project proposes to replace two existing residential units with two new residential units. However, if a project proposes to construct five residential units where two already exist, the assessment would only take into account the three additional units.



How Does the City Collect and Process the Fees Paid by the Developer?

At the time of building permit issuance, the property being developed is assessed an amount determined by the type and size of the development for the permit being issued. Monies collected are placed in a City revenue account, used solely for those major public facilities shown in the financing plan for the area of benefit. The same timing for collection of fees applies to both methods of facilities fee collection: Facilities Benefit Assessments and Development Impact Fees.

What Is a Facilities Benefit Assessment (FBA)?

A Facilities Benefit Assessment (FBA) provides 100 percent of funds for public facilities projects which service a designated area of benefit and are identified in the PFFP. The dollar amount of the assessment is based upon the cost of each public facility equitably distributed over a designated area of benefit in the community planning area. Liens are recorded with the County Assessor's Office.

What Is a Development Impact Fee (DIF)?

Within urbanized communities which are near build-out, Development Impact Fees (DIF) are collected to mitigate the impact of new development through provision of a portion of the financing needed for identified public

facilities and to maintain existing levels of service for that community. Upon determination of the area of benefit and community build-out population, the estimated cost to construct the facilities is divided among residential and nonresidential development. The cost for each development is dependent on the type and size of that development. New development can only be charged a fee in proportion to the impact it causes. For example, if two dwelling units are demolished and two new dwelling units are proposed for the site, then there would be no development impact fee associated with the project. However, if two dwelling units are demolished and four new dwelling units are proposed, then the developer would be required to pay DIF for the two additional units.

What Is the Capital Improvements Program (CIP)?

In some communities, public facilities may be needed because of existing development. Or, the City may be collecting fees from all residents and businesses to upgrade public facilities. These projects are listed in the City's Capital Improvements Program and include a variety of funding sources.



The San Diego City Council has directed the City Manager to annually develop an eleven-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP). The CIP is developed by individual departments and is reviewed by the Planning Commission prior to City Council review and adoption. The CIP document lists each capital improvement by project name, community location, revenue sources, financing schedule, project history, project phases, grants and reimbursements.

What Is the Capital Improvements Program Budget?

The CIP budget is a listing of necessary capital projects, together with funding estimates and a schedule for their phased completion and includes multiyear scheduling of improvements to public facilities and services. The budget indicates what improvements will be provided; how much, where, and when construction begins and ends; and at what costs, to whom, and how public facilities, such as public buildings, streets, expressways, water and sewer lines, and park and recreation facilities will be funded.

Multiple Species Conservation Program

What Is the Multiple Species Conservation Program?

The Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) is a comprehensive habitat conservation planning program for southwestern San Diego County. The MSCP will preserve a network of habitat and open space, protecting biodiversity and enhancing the region's quality of life. The MSCP will also provide an economic benefit by reducing constraints on future development and decreasing the costs of compliance with federal and state laws protecting biological resources. To find out more detailed information, please visit the MSCP website at: <http://www.sandiego.gov/mscp/index.shtml>.

How Was the Program Developed?

The MSCP has been developed cooperatively by participating jurisdictions and special districts in partnership with the wildlife agencies, property owners and representatives of the development industry and environmental groups. The program is designed to preserve native vegetation and meet the habitat needs of multiple species, rather than focusing preservation efforts on one species at a time. By identifying priority areas for conservation and other areas for future development, the MSCP will streamline existing permit procedures for development projects which impact habitat.



What Will the MSCP Do?

Many native vegetation communities in the region are considered sensitive because they have been greatly reduced in distribution by development. San Diego county contains over 200 plant and animal species that are federally and/or state listed as endangered, threatened, or rare; proposed or candidates for listing; or otherwise considered sensitive. Over half of these species occur in the MSCP study area. The MSCP will protect habitat for over 1000 native and non-native plant species and more than 380 species of fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

What Policies Is the MSCP Based On?

The assembly of the MSCP preserve, known as the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA), is based on the policies that public lands be incorporated to the greatest extent possible and that private property rights be fully respected and upheld. Private lands acquired with public funds for the preserve will only be acquired from willing sellers. The MSCP is also based on the equitable distribution of costs.



Where Is the MSCP Found?

The City of San Diego is one of 11 jurisdictions within the MSCP study area. The City has adopted a subarea plan and implementing agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game. The City's subarea plan serves as: 1) a multiple species habitat conservation plan pursuant to Section 10(a) of the Federal Endangered Species Act; and, 2) a Natural Community Conservation Program (NCCP) plan pursuant to the California NCCP Act of 1991 and the Federal Endangered Species Act.

Private Development & Environmental Review

In addition to land use policy development, a primary responsibility of both the Planning and the Development Services Departments is the review of proposed development projects in San Diego for conformance with local and state development policies and regulations. This often involves project review by multiple City staff, other government agencies, and community representatives. The project customer pays for the costs of this review process through the payment of permit and inspection fees.

What is the Land Development Code?

Chapters 11-14 of the Municipal Code are referred to as the Land Development Code. These chapters contain the City’s planning, zoning, subdivision, and building regulations, with the exception of the planned district ordinance regulations which are contained in Chapters 10 and 15. The Land Development Code is one of the tools used to implement the Progress Guide and General Plan and the community plans, which establish the pattern and intensity of land use through the City.

How are Planned District Ordinances Affected by the Land Development Code?

Planned district ordinances (PDO) are special zoning regulations that have been adopted by the City Council for certain geographic areas of the city. The planned districts have not been incorporated into the Land Development Code and remain in Chapters 10 and 15 of the Municipal Code. Although the planned districts remain in effect, where they rely on city-wide zoning, subdivision, or building regulations, the Chapter 11-14 regulations will apply.

What Is a “Development Review Process”?

All projects that are required by law to obtain a permit or other approval from the City of San Diego must be reviewed by City staff before construction can proceed. The City has established five basic review processes to ensure consistency and certainty in the development review process.

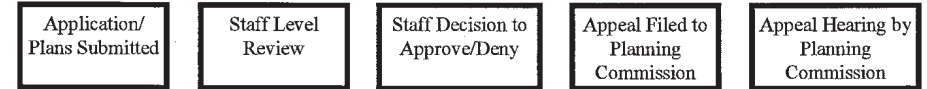
What Are the Steps in the Development Review

Decision Processes and Notices

PROCESS ONE



PROCESS TWO



PROCESS THREE



PROCESS FOUR



PROCESS FIVE



Approval Process?

The legal process steps that any development project must go through are established in the San Diego Municipal Code § 112.0501 entitled Overview of Decision Process. The subject matter of the development application determines the process that shall be followed for each application. The five decision processes that are illustrated fall into two primary categories, ministerial decisions or discretionary decisions. Projects reviewed and decided by Process 1 are ministerial decisions. These decisions are based solely on whether a project complies with regulations of the Municipal Code and, where applicable, any prior approved discretionary decision. If a project complies, the City must, by law, issue a permit. Some types of projects can be appealed though. Process 2-5 decisions are discretionary decisions. While these projects are also subject to regulations, there is some level of discretion given to the assigned decision-maker to approve or deny these projects.



Community planning groups review and provide project approval or denial advisory recommendations for those projects subject to discretionary decisions. Planning groups receive copies of all plans provided by project customers at the same time as City staff, once the project plans and documents have been deemed complete by the City. Planning groups receive training about how to review these projects in relationship to their community plan and City regulations. Projects that are subject to ministerial decisions are reviewed by City staff only and are not distributed to planning groups. In general, the more complex the issue, or more discretion that is involved in a decision, the “higher” the process.

Do All Projects Undergo the Same Process?

The Decision Process diagram illustrates the typical permit/approval types identified in the Municipal Code and the decision process required for each type. The specific decision process for any given project is established in Chapter 12 of the Land Development Code (Municipal Code Chapters 11-14).

PERMIT APPROVAL TYPES	DECISION PROCESS				
	Ministerial Decisions Process 1	Discretionary Decisions			
		Process 2	Process 3	Process 4	Process 5
Legislative Actions (Land Use Plan Amendments, Rezones, Etc.)					■
Subdivision Maps			■	■	■
Planned Development Permits				■	■
Site Development Permits			■	■	■
Conditional Use Permits			■	■	■
Coastal Development Permits		■	■		
Neighborhood Development Permits		■			
Neighborhood Use Permits		■			
Construction Permits (Building Permits, Right-of-Way Permits, Etc.)	■				

What Is the Environmental Review Process?

Environmental review is a key part of the review process for projects requiring discretionary decisions. All discretionary decisions are subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This process begins when a complete application for a permit



or other approval is received by City staff. The environmental review process occurs at the same time and in parallel with all other project review. Projects cannot be scheduled for a decision or public hearing until either

the project is determined to be exempt from CEQA or the appropriate environmental document has been distributed for public review and then finalized. City staff review of the project for conformance with development regulations and policies can often be finished prior to the completion of the environmental document. Public hearings to make decisions on projects cannot be held until at least two to three weeks after the environmental document has been finalized.

What Is the Basic Purpose of CEQA?

The basic purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) are to:

- Inform governmental decision-makers and the public about the potential, significant environmental effect of proposed activities
- Identify the ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced.
- Prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when the governmental agency finds the changes to be feasible.
- Disclose to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved a project in the manner the agency chose if significant environmental effects are involved.

CEQA establishes a duty for public agencies to avoid or minimize significant environmental impacts where feasible. A public agency should not approve a project as proposed if there are feasible alternatives or mitigation measures available that would substantially lessen any significant effects that the project would have on the environment unless specific findings can be made to support the project.

What Is the City's Responsibility in the Environmental Review Process?

The City's Land Development Code specifically assigns the responsibility for implementation of CEQA to the Development Services Department (DSD). The Development Services Department is charged with maintaining independence and objectivity in its review and analysis of the environmental consequences of projects under its purview. The Director of DSD must work with both public and private project applicants to ensure that all feasible environmental mitigation measures or project alternatives are incorporated to minimize or preclude significant adverse impacts to the environment resulting from the project. Any decision-maker in the City on a project subject to processes 2-5 or on a land use plan or other new regulations, must consider the results of the CEQA document when making a decision.



What is the CEQA appeal process?

In January, 2003, CEQA was amended to require state and local agencies to facilitate appeals of environmental determinations made pursuant to CEQA. In that the state law specifically lists the type of CEQA documents which must be made appealable, the City's ordinance does not facilitate appeals of other types of actions under CEQA (e.g., re-use of a previously certified environmental document, addenda, etc.). The City's ordinance also does not facilitate appeals of statutory exemptions. Unlike categorical exemptions, which require staff to make a determination of whether the project has a significant effect on the environment, the State Legislature has decided that statutory exemptions should be applied regardless of the impacts of the project.

The City's ordinance creates a "Notice of Right to Appeal" and mandates its filing for all exemptions (except statutory exemptions) associated with projects not subject to approval by or appeal to the City Council. Anyone can file an appeal of an exemption, a negative declaration or Environmental Impact Report if project approval does not occur at a public hearing.

For projects where the appeal of the environmental determination is denied, the decision of the lower decision making body is upheld and becomes effective immediately. For projects where the appeal of the determination is upheld, the Council will vacate the project approval and remand the environmental determination back to the lower decision making body for reconsideration based on the issues determined by the City Council.

What Parties Are Involved in the Development Review Process?



Project Customer

The project customer is required by the Land Development Code to make application for a permit or other approval because of the type of project proposed, where it is located and the regulations applicable. They have a responsibility to submit

a complete project application per the City's submittal requirements and to diligently process their project through the review and construction process.

Project customers are not legally required to attend or make presentations to community planning groups for projects that require discretionary decisions. The customer is only required to provide an extra copy of the materials being reviewed by City staff. This copy is forwarded to the planning group for their review and recommendation. City staff, however, encourage project customers to contact the appropriate planning group early in the process and to work cooperatively with them throughout the project review.

Community Planning Group

The responsibility of the community planning group is established by Council Policy 600-24. Review and recommendations on how well a proposed development project complies with the adopted community plan for an area is a primary responsibility of the planning group. Group recommendations are forwarded to staff and the decision-maker. All recommendations provided by the group should cover whether a proposed project implements the goals and objectives of the adopted plan. If the group feels there are conflicts, they should clearly indicate the specific provisions of their plan with which the project or aspects of the project design conflict.

Providing a timely recommendation to the City is also an important responsibility of the planning group. Projects often go through months of review, involving a number of City staff review cycles. Providing an early recommendation makes the group's issues known during the time when most project changes are occurring. It also avoids placing the group in a position of requesting a delay in a project's schedule. Groups should make the best and timeliest recommendation they can with the project application materials that they have available to them.

City Staff

There are two general groups of staff involved in project review -- the project multi-disciplinary team reviewers (MDT) and the development project managers (DPM).

The MDT members are the staff responsible for determining if a proposed project complies with state and local land development policies and regulations. They represent expertise in the building and site engineering, planning, landscape architecture, and architecture disciplines. Each time a project is submitted for review, the appropriate project review team from this group of disciplines is formed. These staff members then make recommendations on the proposed project's compliance with applicable development standards and requirements during each review.

The DPMs are responsible for process-related matters on development projects. They have responsibility for all formal project communication between the customer and staff and with the community. Development projects are facilitated through the project review process by the DPM. When design conflicts arise on a project between staff recommendations and a customer's proposal, the DPM has the responsibility to make sure the conflict is resolved in a timely manner.

The overall role of City staff is to ultimately provide a recommendation to the decision-maker on whether a project should be approved or denied and to provide alternatives for their consideration.

Decision-Maker

The decision-maker varies on development projects based on several factors. These include the "type of project" proposed and the permit required (rezoning, conditional use permit, building permit, etc.); the location of the project (Coastal Zone, Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone, Beach Impact Area, etc.); and what is on the property (wetlands, historic structures, steep slopes, etc.). Projects that comply with the detailed regulations are typically decided by staff. Projects that do not meet all of the development regulations as provided in the Municipal Code are decided at a public hearing by a Hearing Officer, the Planning Commission, or City Council.

The role of the decision-maker is to review the evidence provided by the customer, planning group and staff, and then make a finding on the building permit. The Land Development Code identifies the basis to be used by each decision-maker in making a finding on a project. They must provide the basis or evidence for their finding as part of the project's public record.

Neighborhood Code Compliance

The Neighborhood Code Compliance Department is responsible for enforcing numerous regulations found in the City's Municipal Code. Regulations that are enforced include building code, California State housing law, encroachments into the public right-of-way, grading, graffiti, noise, Title 24 disabled access and zoning. The Neighborhood Code Compliance Department works in partnership with citizens to promote and maintain a safe and desirable living and working environment.

Are All San Diego Municipal Codes Enforced?

There are numerous codes on the books. It is necessary for the City and the communities to prioritize needs and focus on the most important issues. Issues involving health and safety are the highest priority along with those issues that could impact the neighborhood. Examples include illegal units, non-permitted businesses, substandard housing, blight and grading of environmentally sensitive lands.

What Happens If a Project Doesn't Get Built in Accordance with the Plans That Have Been Approved?



City staff closely review plans submitted by applicants prior to the issuance of a building or grading permit, to ensure that they comply with all requirements of the Municipal Code. If these projects are not consistent with their plans, the Development Services Department is the lead agency to ensure that the projects are brought back into compliance. Once the permit has been issued, the City expects that the improvements shown on the plans will be constructed as shown. Serious consequences can occur to the owner/ developer if the project is not built according to plans. These consequences include issuance of "Stop Work" orders, modifications to completed improvements or structures and potential revocations of permit approvals. Phases of construction are monitored through progress inspections.

These inspections allow the City to observe the construction during various phases of completion. In order for a project to be completed, these progress inspections must be passed. In special circumstances, field inspectors may allow minor deviations to the approved construction plans (example: relocation of an interior wall). For other changes, the owner/ developer is directed to revise the plans and have them undergo another plan check review.

After a Project Is Built or Is Operating and There Are Problems; ie., Noise, Lack of Landscaping or Non-maintenance, Change in the Use, Is There Citizen's Recourse?

The Neighborhood Code Compliance Department can be requested to investigate the premises. The Neighborhood Code Compliance Department requires compliance with the approved permit or requires the individual involved seek an amendment to the permit.



What Kind of Fines Are Imposed If Someone Has Constructed Without Permits and Conducting Business Without Approval?

The minimum penalty for work without permits is that the City doubles the required permit fee. Fines for minor violations can be \$100, \$250, and \$500. Major violations can be \$2,500 per day up to a maximum amount of \$250,000. Violations of the Municipal Code constitute a misdemeanor which is punishable by a fine of \$1,000 per day, and/or six months in jail.

Two examples of successful code compliance court cases include: A landlord was ordered to serve 360 days in jail for maintaining rental properties in a deplorable condition. An owner was forced by the court to make necessary improvements and restricted from investing in residential rental property without leave of the court.

Key City of San Diego Decision Forums

The City of San Diego has numerous key decision forums that develop, implement and administer regulations found in the Municipal Code. The following provides a description of each decision forum and describes their duties and responsibilities.

What Is the City Council?

The City Council is San Diego's governing legislative body and is responsible for the City's laws, policies and programs. As representatives of the citizens, members of the Council have certain authority delegated to them by the City Charter. The Council has the authority to appoint the City Manager, approve all ordinances, resolutions and contracts, adopt the annual budget and provide for revenues and make or confirm appointments to various City Boards and Commissions.



In addition to the Mayor, who is elected by all City voters, the City Council is made up of eight nonpartisan Council members who are nominated and elected by district. Members serve overlapping four year terms, with Council elections occurring either in even or odd-numbered years (Districts 1, 3, 5 and 7 elected in 2001, 2005, etc., Districts 2, 4, 6 and 8 elected in 2000, 2004, etc.).

The Council utilizes five standing Sub-committees to facilitate the legislative process: Rules, Finance and Intergovernmental Relations; Natural Resources and Culture; Land Use and Housing; Government Efficiency and Openness; and Public Safety and Neighborhood Services. Each of the five Committees meets once or twice a month to hold public discussions and review legislation and departmental actions prior to such matters are considered by the full Council.

In addition to regular weekly City Council and Committee meetings, the Council also convenes as the San Diego Housing Authority and the San Diego Redevelopment Agency. The City Council meets weekly in the Council Chambers on the 12th floor of the City Administration Building. The full City Council meetings are held weekly on Monday afternoon and all day Tuesday, except for holidays or special adjournments. Planning matters are most often heard on Tuesday.

All Council meetings, except for “closed sessions” when the Council discusses personnel or judicial matters, are open to the public and are held on the 12th floor of the City Administration Building. The meetings are broadcast on cable television. Taking part in the Council meetings are the Mayor, eight Council members, the City Attorney, the City Manager, the City Clerk and interested citizens.



What Is the Planning Commission?

The Planning Commission is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The Commission conducts hearings on special use permits, all rezonings, all community plans, and the General Plan as well as considers land use ordinances and other improvements as Council may, or by ordinance, determine.

The Planning Commission meets every Thursday at 9:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers on the 12th floor of the City Administration Building, located at 202 C Street. The meetings are broadcast on cable television. In order to find out more information including Commission agendas, minutes and staff reports, please visit the Planning Commission website at: <http://www.sandiego.gov/planning-commission/>.

What is the Board of Appeals & Advisors?

The Board of Appeals and Advisors (BAA) is comprised of technical professionals who assist the City’s Chief Building Official in applying and interpreting building regulations and legislative matters. The BAA is legally empowered by Section §111.0207 of the Municipal Code to investigate and advise on the suitability of alternate materials and methods of construction, provide reasonable interpretations of the building regulations where the meaning may be obscure, and recommend new legislation to the City Council. The Board may recommend approval of minor deviations of the building regulations in certain cases. Hearings are held on the first Thursday of every month and are open to the public.

Who Is Seated on the Historical Resources Board?

The City’s Historical Resources Board is a City advisory board made up of 15 members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The Board is authorized by law to officially designate historical properties and to make recommendations on projects proposed for historically-designated resources.

The Historical Resources Board meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 1:00 p.m. in the Committee Room on the 12th floor of the City Administration Building.

For information pertaining to the HRB agendas and minutes, please visit the HRB website at <http://www.sandiego.gov/historical/agenda.shtml>.

What Is the San Diego Housing Commission?

The members of the San Diego Housing Commission are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The Commission investigates and improves dwelling conditions in the City of San Diego by reviewing and recommending revisions and actions, including recommendations on all

matters before the Housing Authority. They also approve plans, specifications, agreements, expenditures and such other matters as the Housing Authority may from time to time delegate by resolution to the Commission.

The San Diego Housing Commission meets the second and fourth Friday of each month at 9:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers on the 12th floor of the City Administration Building, located at 202 C Street.

What Is the Park and Recreation Board?

The members of the Park and Recreation Board are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The Board advises the Council through the City Manager on public policy matters relating to the acquisition, development, maintenance and operation of parks, beaches, playgrounds, and recreational activities. The Board also reviews recreational programs for the City's Park



and Recreation facilities.

The Park and Recreation Board meets on the third Thursday of each month, at 2:00 p.m. in the City Administration Building, 12th Floor, Council Committee Room.

What Are the Duties of the Hearing Officer?

The Hearing Officer is appointed by the City Manager and acts as the decision maker for permits, maps, and other matters in accordance with the decision-making procedures of the Land Development Code. The Hearing Officer presides at a public hearing and makes an impartial decision on a permit, map, or other matter based on the application, written reports prepared prior to the hearing, and information received at the hearing.

The Hearing Officer meetings occur every Wednesday at 8:30 a.m. in the Council Chambers of the City Administration Building, 12th Floor.

Other Governmental Agencies Involved in the Land Use Process

San Diego has a multi-jurisdictional planning approach because some planning and land use issues affect more than one city. Agencies involved in the City's development of short- and long-range planning goals include the City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency, the San Diego Association of Governments, the Port of San Diego, the Local Agency Formation Commission, the California Coastal Commission and the Airport Land Use Commission. The following provides a description of each governmental agency and provides a description of their duties and responsibilities.

The Redevelopment Agency of The City of San Diego

What Is the Redevelopment Agency?

The Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Diego was created by the City Council in 1958 to alleviate conditions of blight in older urban areas. The Redevelopment Agency is able to use special legal and financial mechanisms to eliminate blight and improve economic and physical conditions in designated areas of the City. This authority is conferred on the Agency through the state of California's Health and Safety Code (Section 33000-et.seq.), also known as the California Community Redevelopment Law.

Who Governs the Redevelopment Agency?

Although the Redevelopment Agency is a separate, legal entity, the City Council serves as its legislative body. The Mayor chairs the Agency, the City Manager is the executive director, the City Attorney serves as general counsel, and the City's Redevelopment Division serves as staff to the Agency.

How Many Project Areas Does the Redevelopment Agency Have Jurisdiction Over?

The City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency's 16 redevelopment project areas encompass more than 8,000 acres. In addition to the City's Redevelopment Agency, the Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) along with the Southeastern Development Corporation (SEDC) are two redevelopment agencies that operate within the City of San Diego.

What are the Responsibilities of CCDC?

CCDC is the public, non-profit corporation created by the City of San Diego to staff and implement Downtown redevelopment projects and programs. Formed in 1975, the corporation serves on behalf of the San Diego Redevelopment Agency as the catalyst for public-private partnerships to facilitate redevelopment projects adopted pursuant to redevelopment law. Through an operating agreement, CCDC is the Agency's representative in the development of retail, residential, office, hotel, cultural and educational projects and public improvement projects. For further information, CCDC's website is at www.ccdc.com

What are the Responsibilities of SEDC?

The Southeastern Economic Development Corporation focuses on 7.2 square miles of real estate that falls within Southeastern San Diego. SEDC offers a wide array of professional services in the areas of land use, affordable housing, commercial development and redevelopment financing, and have put that expertise to work for a diverse client list that includes multi-national corporations, food retailers, franchise operations, small businesses and local entrepreneurs. For further information, SEDC's website is www.sedcinc.com.

San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)

What Is SANDAG?

SANDAG is comprised of 18 cities and the county government, and serves as a forum to make regional and transit planning decisions. The Association builds consensus, makes strategic plans, obtains and allocates resources, and provides information on a broad range of topics pertinent to the region's quality of life.

Who Governs SANDAG?

SANDAG is governed by a Board of Directors composed of mayors, council members, and a county supervisor from each of the region's 19 local governments. Supplementing these voting members are advisory representatives from the U.S. Department of Defense, Caltrans, San Diego Unified Port District, North San Diego County Transit Development Board, San Diego County Water Authority, and Tijuana/Baja California/Mexico.



What Does SANDAG Do?

SANDAG's monthly board meetings provide the public forum and decision point for significant regional issues such as growth, transportation, environmental management, housing, open space, air quality, energy, fiscal management, economic development, and criminal justice. Association Directors establish policies, adopt plans, allocate transportation funds, and develop programs for regional issues which are used by local governments as well as other public and private organizations. Citizens, special interest groups, and other agencies are involved in the planning and approval process by participating in SANDAG's committee's as well as attending workshops and public hearings.

During the past year, SANDAG made new strides in the areas of growth management, transportation, habitat conservation planning, and criminal justice research, while continuing to provide regional planning leadership in the areas of housing, open space, recycling, hazardous waste management, and land use authority near airports. These interrelated charges allow a more streamlined, comprehensive, and coordinated approach to planning for the region's future without the need to create costly new government.

On January 1, 2003, a new state law (SB 1703) consolidated the roles and responsibilities of SANDAG with many of the transit functions of the Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) and the North San Diego County Transit Development Board. The consolidation provided for SANDAG to assume transit planning, funding allocation, project development, and construction in the San Diego region, in addition to its on going transportation and land use responsibilities. SANDAG's transit functions include most of those formerly performed by MTDB, including designation of routes, fares, frequency of service, and hours of operation. The responsibilities of the now-smaller MTDB include the day-to-day planning and management of the system, as well as management of the public and private agencies that run the busses and trolleys.

The Port of San Diego



What Is the Port of San Diego?

The Port of San Diego is a special government entity, created in 1962 by an act of the California legislature in order to manage San Diego Harbor and administer the public lands along San Diego Bay.

Who Governs the Port?

The Port is governed by a seven member Board of Port Commissioners; one commissioner each is appointed by the city councils of Chula Vista, Coronado, Imperial Beach and National City, and three commissioners are appointed by the San Diego City Council. The Board establishes policies under which the Port's staff, supervised by the Executive Director, conducts its daily operation.

Local Agency Formation Commission

What Is the Local Agency Formation Commission?

LAFCO is an acronym for Local Agency Formation Commission. It is a regulatory agency with countywide jurisdiction, established by state law (Cortese-Knox Act) to discourage urban sprawl and to encourage orderly and efficient provision of services, such as water, sewer, fire protection, etc. San Diego LAFCO is a state-mandated agency and is not a county department.

What Is LAFCO Responsible For?

LAFCO is responsible for reviewing and approving proposed jurisdictional boundary changes, including annexations and detachments of territory to and/or from cities and special districts, incorporations of new cities, formations of new special districts, and consolidations, mergers, and dissolutions of existing districts. In addition, LAFCO must review and approve contractual service agreements, determine spheres of influence for each city and district, and may initiate proposals involving district consolidation, dissolution, establishment of subsidiary districts, mergers, and reorganizations (combinations of these jurisdictional changes).

California Coastal Commission



What Is the California Coastal Commission?

The California Coastal Commission was established by voter initiative in 1972 (Proposition 20) and made permanent by the Legislature in 1976 (the

Coastal Act). The primary mission of the Commission, as the lead agency responsible for carrying out California's federally-approved coastal management program, is to plan for and regulate land and water uses in the coastal zone consistent with the policies of the Coastal Act.

What Is the Jurisdiction of the Coastal Commission?

Commission jurisdiction in the specifically mapped coastal zone is broad and applies to all private and public entities and covers virtually all manner of development activities, including any division of land, a change in the intensity of use of state waters and of public access to them. The Coastal



Act includes specific policies relating to public access and recreation, lower cost visitor accommodations, terrestrial and marine habitat protection, visual resources, land-form alteration, agricultural lands, commercial

fisheries, industrial uses, water quality, offshore oil and gas development, transportation, development design, power plants, ports, universities and public works. These policies constitute the statutory standards applied to planning and regulatory decisions pursuant to the Coastal Act.

Who Can Be on the Coastal Commission?

The Commission is an independent, quasi-judicial state agency organizationally in the California State Resources Agency. Its membership is composed of twelve voting members, appointed equally (four each) by the Governor, the Senate Rules Group, and the Speaker of the Assembly. Half (six) of the voting commissioners are locally elected officials and half are representatives of the public at large. It also has four ex officio (non-voting) members representing the Resources Agency, the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, the Trade and Commerce Agency and the State Lands Commission.

What is the Airport Land Use Commission?

The Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) is an agency that is required by state law to exist in counties in which there is a commercial and/or a general aviation airport. The purpose of the ALUC is to protect public health, safety and welfare by ensuring the orderly development of airports and the adoption of land use measures that minimize the public's exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards within areas around public airports, to the extent that these areas are not already devoted to incompatible uses. The ALUC has two specific duties: (1) preparation and adoption of airport land use compatibility plans; and (2) review of certain local agency land use actions and airport plans for consistency with the compatibility plans. The San Diego County Regional Airport Authority is the ALUC for all the airports in San Diego County. The Airport Authority is governed by a nine-member board, which meets monthly to conduct the Authority's business.



Web Site Resource Page

What is the City of San Diego Web site?
<http://www.sandiego.gov/>

Where can I find the Historical Resources Board's Monthly Agendas?
<http://www.sandiego.gov/historical/agenda.shtml>

What is the San Diego Planning Commission Web site?
<http://www.sandiego.gov/planning-commission/>

Where Can I Find More Information on the Progress Guide and General Plan ?
<http://www.sandiego.gov/cityofvillages/documents/index.shtml#gp>

Where Can I Find More Information on the Multiple Species Conservation Program?
<http://www.sandiego.gov/mscp/>

Where Can I Find More Information on the History of San Diego?
<http://www.sandiego.gov/cityofvillages/overview/future.shtml>

What Is the Redevelopment Agency's Web site?
<http://www.sandiego.gov/redevelopment-agency/index.shtml>

Where can I find the City of San Diego Community Contact List?
<http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/pdf/cpg/contactlist.pdf>

What Is the Coastal Commission Web site?
<http://www.coastal.ca.gov/>

What Is SANDAG's Web site?
www.sandag.org

What Is the Port District Web site?
<http://www.portofsandiego.org/>

What is the Development Services Department Web site?
<http://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/>

What is the Neighborhood Code Compliance Department Web site?
<http://www.sandiego.gov/nccd/>

What is the Land Development Code Web site?
<http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/cpplanddevcode.shtml>

What is the Airport Land Use Commission Web site?
<http://www.san.org/authority/planning/aluc.asp>

