

Mid-City Communities Plan Update

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the General Plan?

The [General Plan](#) sets out a long-range vision and policy framework to guide future development, provide public services and maintain the qualities that define San Diego over the next 20 years and beyond. The General Plan also has a focus on how to design infill development and reinvest in existing communities. The City of Villages is the General Plan's strategy for development of the City as a whole. The General Plan includes citywide policies on land use, mobility, urban design, public facilities and services, natural resources, historic and cultural resources and economic development.

City of Villages Strategy?

The General Plan's City of Villages strategy focuses jobs and housing near existing and planned transit to further the City's climate goals and making it easier for people to reach their daily destination easily and conveniently.

What is the Climate Action Plan?

[Climate Action Plan](#) contains a set of strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make the city more sustainable. The Climate Action Plan aims to achieve net zero emissions by 2035.

What is a Community Plan?

The General Plan's Land Use Element defines a range of allowable land uses for any parcel of land. Due to the sheer size of San Diego, the Land Use Element is broken up into 49 Community Plans. While the Land Use Element provides broad land use policies that apply to the City as a whole, community plans provide more detailed guidance for how the individual community will be planned over the next 20-plus years. A community plan serves several purposes. It establishes a vision with policies to guide the future growth and development within each community planning area consistent with the General Plan. The community plan is the basis for implementation tools including zoning and development regulations. Community plan updates, in coordination with the General Plan and its Land Use Element, achieve both citywide and community-level goals.

What is the Mid-City Communities Plan Update?

The City is updating the Mid-City Communities Plan for the first time in 25 years to identify opportunities for new homes, businesses and infrastructure that benefit everyone in Mid-

City. The Mid-City Communities Plan is being updated as part of a Citywide program to update community plans in locations served by high-frequency public transit consistent with the City of Villages strategy in the General Plan.

Since the adoption of the General Plan in 2008, the City has updated 15 and amended four community plans to address climate change and a housing shortage by allowing for additional homes to be built near high-frequency public bus stops and trolley stations. The Community Plan update aligns to the Climate Action Plan and General Plan to identify future opportunities for homes in areas near existing and planned high-frequency transit. Community plan updates help to increase the opportunities for homes to help address the need for housing within the City and region and provide for a range of housing options that meet the needs of all San Diegans.

The Mid-City Communities Plan update provides an opportunity to plan for additional homes, businesses and public spaces along existing and planned bus rapid transit corridors such as El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue. Providing more homes, jobs and amenities near high-frequency transit is a key strategy to furthering the City's climate goals, while also improving the quality of people's lives by increasing easy and convenient access to daily needs, such as parks, schools and shopping.

[What are the key planning priorities being considered as part of the Mid-City Communities Plan Update?](#)

This initiative focuses on the following topics:

- Focuses opportunities for homes within mixed-use, commercial and residential areas.
- Identifies opportunities for public spaces and pocket parks, trails and joint-use facilities/parks.
- Provides guidance for the future identification and preservation of historical resources and districts that embody architectural and cultural history.
- Identifies opportunities for mobility infrastructure that improves walking/rolling, biking and transit connections.
- Promotes opportunities for urban greening and street trees to address stormwater runoff and climate change.
- Protects canyons, open spaces and sensitive habitats.
- Promotes employment uses as economic drivers connected to regional transit.

[What communities are included in the Mid-City Communities Plan?](#)

The Mid-City Communities Plan covers 8,052 acres and includes four communities: City Heights, Eastern Area, Kensington-Talmage and Normal Heights. The northern area of Mid-City is next to Interstate 8 and the College Area community; while the west adjoins Interstate

805, State Route 15, and the North Park and Golden Hill communities. On the east side is the City of La Mesa; and the southern portion is bounded by State Route 94 and communities of Southeastern and Encanto Neighborhoods.

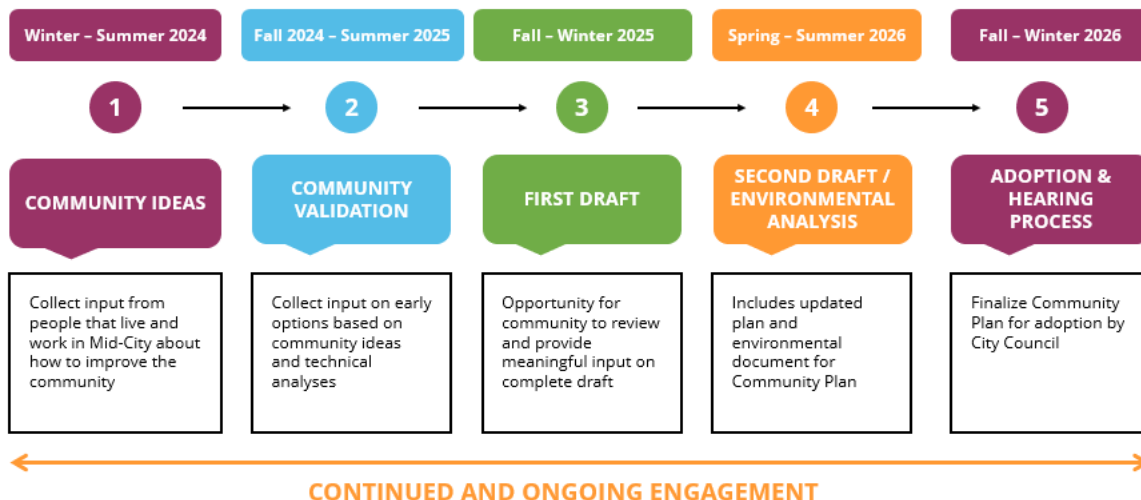
How does the Community Plan Update align with the City of Villages Land Use Strategy and the Climate Action Plan?

The General Plan's [Village Climate Goal Propensity Map](#) identifies where additional homes and jobs could have the best opportunities to increase the number of trips taken by transit, bicycling or walking. It shows that the Mid-City Communities contains some of the highest propensities in the City for residential and commercial mixed-uses that would achieve the goal of reducing the need to travel by personal car. This is due to existing and planned transit facilities for the Mid-City Communities, which can best be utilized by increased development, resulting in overall less travel by personal car, which helps meet Climate Action Plan goals. The Community Plan Update has the potential to increase residential densities along existing and planned bus rapid transit corridors. Providing more homes, jobs and services near high-frequency transit and bike routes is a key strategy to furthering the City's climate goals. It also allows the City to invest in transportation infrastructure that will serve the greatest number of people, allowing for efficient delivery of City infrastructure and municipal services.

What are the steps for completing the Mid-City Communities Plan Update?

The Community Plan update process will unfold in five phases:

- Phase 1 - Community Ideas (Winter to Summer 2024)
- Phase 2 - Community Validation (Fall 2024 to Summer 2025)
- Phase 3 - First Draft (Fall to Winter 2025)
- Phase 4 - Second Draft and Environmental Analysis (Spring to Summer 2026)
- Phase 5 - Adoption and Hearing Process (Fall to Winter 2026)



Why plan for more homes in the Mid-City Communities?

The City is undergoing a record housing crisis and needs to provide more opportunities for new homes to meet current and future needs of our diverse population by providing for a range of housing options. The updated community plan will help to create the opportunity for more homes through its policies and zoning. The updated Mid-City Communities Plan will help address the San Diego housing crisis in a way that will also meet Citywide climate goals in the General Plan and Climate Action Plan. The Mid-City Communities Plan Update allows the City to comprehensively plan for future homes and supportive infrastructure, jobs and services and avoid many of the negative costs of unplanned growth.

How will the Mid-City Communities Plan Update address affordable housing?

A goal for the Mid-City Communities Plan Update is to increase opportunities for homes for people of all incomes. Citywide regulations require developments to provide a portion of the new homes to be rented or sold at affordable levels or pay a fee to support the construction of future affordable homes.

How does the Mid-City Communities Plan Update become reality?

The City cannot require people to develop their properties, but the Mid-City Communities Plan Update can use policies in the community plan that encourage and guides new development. Since it takes time for new homes to occur, the Mid-City Communities Plan Update provides a vision and helps to guide future development that may occur for the next 20 to 30 years. It is important to note that added home capacity in the community plan does not always equal the number of new homes that could be constructed because it is up to the individual property owner if they wish to develop their property or not. The Community Plan sets the long-term framework and vision for new homes, jobs, public spaces and infrastructure. Implementation depends on zoning changes, city investment in infrastructure and private development to guide future growth and redevelopment.

How will the Mid-City Communities Plan Update address infrastructure and public facilities in the long term?

Since 1998, Mid-City has changed significantly. As part of the plan update process, the City will work with the public to identify community priorities and future infrastructure and facility improvements through the combination of inclusive public engagement processes and studies, such as public facilities, fire stations, libraries, parks and mobility improvements. Projects identified within the Community Plan Update are further prioritized through Capital Improvement Program engagement in accordance with [Council Policy 800-14](#). The Community Plan Update also helps to create a framework for ongoing community input in identifying these needs.

The City of San Diego has also recently released the [Infrastructure Priorities Summary Report](#) (2024) which offers a comprehensive review of community feedback on infrastructure priorities, incorporating input from Asset Managing Departments and highlighting how community input influenced the formulation of the Five-Year Capital Infrastructure Planning Outlook.

[Will the Community Plan Area Boundary be adjusted as part of the Mid-City Communities Plan Update?](#)

A request was made by the Kensington-Talmadge Community Planning Group and College Area Community Planning Board to amend the boundary to include the area west of Collwood Boulevard as part of the Kensington-Talmadge Community Plan Area. The City Planning Department recommends retaining the residential areas within the College Area Community Planning Area due a stronger connection and access to the College Area. The City Planning Department supports moving the designated open space parcel adjacent to Montezuma Road to the Kensington-Talmadge Community Plan Area.

[How does the Community Plan Update consider the need for parks, and what is the process for identifying new parks?](#)

The Community Plan Update process incorporates the policies and criteria from the General Plan Recreation Element and the Parks Master Plan, which establishes a standard based on recreational value . This approach considers factors such as recreation opportunities, accessibility, and activations to ensure parks serve community needs effectively.

As part of the Community Plan Update, the City explores opportunities for new parks and public spaces, such as plazas and paseos, through private development requirements. In addition to identifying locations for new parks and improving existing ones, the process also examines joint use of facilities and incentives for future residential developments to integrate on-site recreational spaces. This strategy helps expand recreational opportunities and accelerate the creation of accessible public spaces beyond traditional park development timelines, including policies for the opportunistic acquisition of land that serves the community.

The Mid-City planning area has seen several park developments over the past two decades, including Charles Lewis III Memorial Park (2016) and Wightman Street Neighborhood Park (2017). In 2022, a General Development Plan for Chollas Triangle Park was approved, outlining a vision for the park's layout, amenities, and activities.

Will recreational value points be evaluated separately for each Community Planning Area?

The Mid-City Atlas: Existing Conditions Report shows the summary of park scores for the Mid-City planning area. At the same time, Appendix B of the Existing Conditions report also provides the individual park scores of all four community planning areas and a list of scoring calculations for individual parks. As part of the Parks Master Plan, park amenities are assigned recreational value points, and each amenity could have a maximum score (e.g., a splash pad has a set maximum value). However, there is no overall limit on the total recreational value points a community can accumulate. The Community Plan Update process will determine future recreational value points needs for each community, helping guide park planning and development.

What are joint-use parks, and how could they be addressed in the Community Plan Update?

Joint-use parks are recreational spaces shared between other organizations such as schools, and the community, providing public access to school facilities outside of school hours. The City regularly meets with the San Diego Unified School District and will continue to work with schools and other potential organizations to consider future recreational opportunities within the Mid-City Communities.

How will the Community Plan address climate change and resilience?

The Mid-City Atlas: Existing Conditions report shows that the Mid-City planning area face exposure to floods (100-year and 500-year floodplain) and wildfires and are at high risk to extreme heat events. The plan will address these climate change-driven risks and enhance community resilience through various strategies consistent with [Climate Resilient SD](#). One of the primary approaches that addresses both flood and heat risk, is through the greening of Mid-City, which includes expanding the tree canopy, bioswales, and adding more parks and open spaces. The plan update will explore future growth along major corridors and near transit that are typically outside of very high fire severity zones.

The plan will also support community resilience through policies that support resilience hub locations and/or the identification of where additional cooling centers would be beneficial to the community. As the plan seeks to support a more multimodal transportation network, consideration of climate change impacts on both the network and the user will be incorporated. This could include planning for shading at public transit stops or prioritizing cool pavement materials.

What is the City's approach to using data analysis in the planning for future land uses?

The City's approach to planning for future land use analysis involves using a combination of data sources to ensure accuracy and reliability. Differences can arise between SANDAG's housing and population data and the U.S. Census housing and population data due to how

the data is collected, especially at a smaller geographic scale. The City also uses parcel data from the San Diego County Assessor as part of the parcel-level analysis when considering future land uses. This detailed and current information allows the City to conduct more accurate land use analysis, providing a clearer understanding of how land and housing trends are changing and helping to inform future planning decisions.

How can I learn more about the Mid-City Communities Plan Update?

Visit PlanMidCity.org for updates and to sign-up for email announcements.

Questions? Email Planmidcity@sandiego.gov

How can I request translation of this FAQ?

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