

Mid-City Communities Plan Update

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Community Plan?

While the General Plan's Land Use Element provides broad land use policies that apply to the City as a whole, community plans provide more detailed guidance for how each of the City's 49 planning areas should grow over the next 30 years. Each document is a unique reflection of the issues and trends facing the community and corresponding strategies to implement community goals. Community plans include policies on land use, mobility, urban design, public facilities and services, natural resources, historic and cultural resources, and economic development. Community plan updates, in coordination with the General Plan and its Land Use Element, achieve both citywide and community-level goals.

What is a Draft Community Plan?

As part of the community plan update process, the City Planning Department prepares three drafts of a community plan: a first, second and final draft plan. As released, each draft provides an opportunity for community feedback that will be used to inform subsequent drafts. The following describes each draft that will be prepared as part of the Mid-City Communities Plan Update process and its purpose:

- **First Draft:** This is the first draft of the updated Mid-City Communities Plan. The City welcomes all feedback on this draft by September 30, 2026. Comments can be submitted using this [public comment form](#), sending us an [email](#), or [mailing](#) your comments. The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive draft for the community to review and provide comments on. No final recommendations or decisions are made at this stage, and feedback at this stage is valued and will inform the final draft.
- **Second Draft:** The second draft includes revisions based on community input received on the first draft. Although the second draft is more developed, no final decisions are made, and feedback continues to be welcomed and valued throughout the public hearing process. The second draft's potential

environmental impacts have also been analyzed in a supporting Environmental Document.

- **Public Hearings Draft:** After incorporating feedback received on the second draft plan, a final draft plan is prepared for review by City Council. For the final draft, opportunities for feedback will occur through comments provided through the public hearing process.

Why is the Mid-City Communities Plan being updated?

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.

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.

How is the Mid-City Communities Plan implemented?

The City cannot mandate development to occur, but through a community plan update, it can rezone areas and identify policies to encourage particular types of development in certain areas. Since it takes time for growth to occur, a community plan update provides a vision and guidance for how any potential development may occur for the next several decades. It is important to note that added home and job capacity in the community plan does not always equate to the number of new homes or jobs that will actually be constructed because it is up to individual landowners to

decide whether or not to develop their land. The plan sets the long-term framework for land use and policy decisions. Implementation depends on zoning changes, city investment in infrastructure, and private development to guide future growth and redevelopment.

The Community Plan is implemented through updated zoning, public infrastructure investments, and Development Impact Fees (DIF). As part of the community plan update, zoning is revised to implement the plan's land use designations and policies by establishing permitted uses and development standards. In key areas, the Community Enhancement Overlay Zone (CEOZ) supplements the underlying zoning by implementing the plan's urban design policies and requiring features such as on-site public spaces and streetscape improvements. New development also contributes Development Impact Fees, which help fund parks, mobility improvements, fire and library facilities, and other public infrastructure needed to serve growth. These funds, together with the City's Capital Improvements Program, are used to construct community-serving infrastructure such as streets, bikeways, storm drainage, parks, and other public facilities as development occurs.

[How does a Community Plan Update relate to the Climate Action Plan?](#)

The City's Climate Action Plan was adopted in 2015 and calls for a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2035. Community plan updates play a role in implementing Climate Action Plan strategies related to walking/rolling, bicycling and transit and land use. The Mid-City Communities Plan is consistent with the Climate Action Plan community plan-related actions by: planning for growth within Transit Priority Areas and Sustainable Development Areas; applying land use designations, residential densities, and implementing zoning to support transit-oriented development; providing policies and planned improvements to support transit operations and access; and designing a planned multimodal mobility network with robust pedestrian and bicycle facilities that connect people to transit. The Mid-City Communities Plan Update serves as one of the ways that the City is working to achieve citywide and community sustainability goals such as smart growth, mode shift, and transit-oriented development. All adopted community plans are consistent with the goals and policies in the Climate Action Plan.

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

The City Planning Department has released the first draft of the Mid-City Communities Plan for public review. The first draft provides a comprehensive document for the public to review and provide feedback. It is not final. Comments will be accepted on the first draft until midnight on Wednesday, September 30, 2026.

Input received will help inform the Second Draft Mid-City Communities Plan, which is anticipated for release in Winter 2026.

What are the guiding principles of the Mid-City Communities Plan Update?

A summary of the Mid-City Communities Plan Update Guiding Principles include:

- Clean, safe and thriving communities
- Safer, green streets for all
- Parks in every neighborhood
- Vibrant, walkable, mixed-use corridors and centers
- Celebrate and honor the diversity of cultures and places
- More affordable homes in every neighborhood
- Investment in community infrastructure
- Safe and enjoyable public places
- Creek restoration and canyon protection
- Innovative business districts support community life
- Beautiful, charming and welcoming neighborhoods
- Preserving historical neighborhoods

How does the Mid-City Communities Plan Update address opportunities for new homes?

The Mid-City Communities Plan Update provides additional capacity for approximately 30,000 new homes. While the plan would increase the area's capacity for up to 30,000 homes, that does not mean that there will be 30,000 new homes as the City cannot mandate development. The decision to develop a property ultimately rests with individual property owners. The City is undergoing an unprecedented housing crisis and needs to provide more capacity for new homes to meet population growth and provide for a range of housing options that meet the needs of our diverse population.

Creating capacity for homes is achieved through policies, rezoning, and other measures in the updated community plan. The Mid-City Communities Plan Update will help address the San Diego housing crisis in a way that will also meet Citywide goals in the General Plan and Climate Action Plan. The Mid-City Communities Plan Update allows us to comprehensively plan for appropriate housing and supportive infrastructure, jobs and services and avoid many of the negative consequences of unplanned growth. It also furthers the City's state-mandated commitment to affirmatively further fair housing.

The Mid-City Communities Plan timeframe extends up to 30 years or beyond. As such, the City updates and amends community plans to help address both our current and future housing goals.

[How will the opportunity for new homes affect the Mid-City communities?](#)

Although the City cannot mandate development, additional opportunities for new homes can promote development that supports new community investments, including new public spaces, new neighborhood commercial amenities, and enhanced places for people to enjoyably and safely walk, bike, and interact with their neighbors. Comprehensively updating the Mid-City Communities Plan and creating capacity for new homes close to transit allows for greater opportunities for new and improved community investment, and address citywide housing and Climate Action Plan goals.

[How will the Mid-City Communities Plan Update address affordable housing?](#)

One of the goals 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.

[Where will capacity be added for new homes and what types of homes will there be?](#)

The Community Plan Update envisions growth along urban and community villages, transit corridors, and neighborhood nodes, with new mixed-use development occurring on pedestrian-oriented streetscapes and connections to the neighborhoods; the maximum densities will range between 218 du/acre along urban

villages and transit corridors to 145 du/ac at community villages. The Mid-City Communities Plan Update also provides an opportunity to plan for many different types of housing adjacent to the corridors, allowing households with different incomes and life stages to live near jobs, services, and amenities; density located next to corridors will typically range from 55 du/acre to 109 du/acre. The overall intent is to provide opportunities for homes for people of all incomes, including families, that they will enjoy living in to ensure a thriving community.

What is dwelling unit per acre (du/acre)?

Dwellings units per acre (du/ac) is the relationship between the number of homes on a property and the area of the property. Dwellings units per acre is used to permit how many individual homes can be located on any one property. For example, a single-family home on a 1-acre property would have a density of 1 du/ac. A typically single-family lot is 5,000 square feet or 0.11 acres which has the density of 9 du/ac. The physical size of the property determines how many dwellings can fit on a site; a 0.25-acre lot with a density maximum of 20 du/acre would only be permitted for up to 5 homes. Whereas, as 0.11-acre property with a density maximum of 20 du/acre would only be permitted for up to 2 homes. Du/ac does not dictate unit size or unit type. Other bulk controls such as setbacks and height limits apply to the building form.

How will SB 79 be implemented in Mid-City?

SB 79 will be implemented in Mid-City and the rest of the city through the City's Transit Village Plan, which will update applicable community plans, and Land Development Code to meet state requirements while considering neighborhood context, infrastructure and environmental constraints. The draft Mid-City Communities Plan's proposed land use pattern already aligns with SB 79 by concentrating higher-density development near transit. As such, the proposed land use pattern within areas covered by the Transit Village Plan already meets SB 79's requirements and will be adopted as part of the Mid-City Communities Plan Update process.

How does the Mid-City Communities Plan Update address historic preservation?

To ensure that historic resources are recognized and incorporated into the Community Plan, the update includes a Historic Context Statement and a Focused Reconnaissance Survey. These documents help to guide land use decisions, historic preservation policies within the Community Plan, environmental analysis, and future historic preservation work within the community. The 2025 draft Focused Reconnaissance Survey identified four potential historic districts and identified a limited number of properties for future study. If a historic district is designated in the future, development is still allowed, including new homes, ADUs, and additions, provided projects are compatible with the district's historic character and applicable preservation standards.

How will the Community Plan address infrastructure and public facilities in the long-term?

As part of the community plan update process, public facilities, including fire stations, libraries, parks and mobility improvements needed to serve the community, are identified and included in the community plan. Projects identified within the Community Plan Update are further prioritized through Capital Improvement Program engagement in accordance with Council Policy 800-14. Specific infrastructure accommodations in the plan are addressed in the questions below. Ongoing community input is critical in identifying these needs.

How will the Mid-City Community Plan address fire safety?

The City of San Diego works with the Fire-Rescue Department during the Community Plan Update process to help plan for future fire-rescue service needs as the community grows. New development contributes Development Impact Fees that help fund new or expanded fire facilities and other public infrastructure needed to serve growth.

Most of Mid-City is located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, with wildfire risks concentrated in the community's canyons and hillsides. The Community Plan supports fire safety by promoting resilient development, maintaining emergency access, and coordinating with the Fire-Rescue Department, while implementation

occurs through the City's Fire Code, Building Code, brush management regulations, and ongoing emergency response planning.

How will the Mid-City Communities Plan address additional recreational and public space needs?

The first draft of the Mid-City Communities Plan identifies opportunities for new recreation public spaces to be built when new homes are developed throughout the life of the plan. This can be achieved through the provision of new parks, plazas, and public spaces as part of new developments, which are addressed in the first draft. In addition, more public space can be achieved through building setbacks, wider sidewalks, landscaping, street trees and other pedestrian amenities as individual development sites come forward in the future. The first draft includes strategies for developing mini-parks, pocket parks or plazas along villages and major corridors, identifies recreational spaces in small and no traditional areas and encourages continued joint-use agreements with schools to increase access to recreational spaces.

How will canyons and open spaces be protected?

The City has existing regulations that require new development to minimize encroaching on open space, steep slopes, and canyons. The Mid-City Communities Plan Update has also proposed conservation policies that would recommend new development maintain natural features and facilitate natural stormwater runoff.

How will the Community Plan Update address future public school needs?

The City coordinates with the San Diego Unified School District during the Community Plan Update process to help inform long-term planning for school facilities. Although the Community Plan accommodates future growth, district enrollment has generally declined since the early 2000s, leaving additional capacity at many existing schools. Decisions about new or expanded schools are made by the school district based on current and projected enrollment, and new development pays school impact fees to help fund eligible facilities.

How will the Community Plan address additional mobility needs?

The first draft of the Mid-City Communities Plan proposes a range of improvements to help residents move safely and easily throughout the community. These include pedestrian, bicycle, and transit enhancements designed to maximize future SANDAG transit investments, such as Next-Generation Bus Rapid Transit along several corridors, an expanded dedicated bus lane along El Cajon Boulevard and the Purple Line, a planned light rail connecting San Ysidro to Mission Valley, with two stations in Mid-City. These transit improvements will better connect the Mid-City Communities to Downtown, San Ysidro and other key destinations across the region.

By planning for new housing and amenities near these mobility and transit improvements, the plan supports the creation of a community where people can live closer to work, shopping, and other daily needs. This also supports the City's Climate Action Plan by reducing reliance on cars and lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

How will Mid-City become a more walkable community?

The Mid-City Communities Plan Update will accommodate new infill developments that include varied types and sizes of public gathering spaces (parks, playgrounds, plazas, etc.), streetscapes that give people a more comfortable environment to walk, bike, roll or take transit, as well as varied types of housing that meet a diverse range of people and needs. This mixed land use pattern ensures stores and necessities can be located near housing and allow for needs and services to be provided within walking distance.

What bicycle and pedestrian transportation improvements are proposed in the Mid-City Communities Plan Update?

The first draft Plan includes proposals for expanding bike lane, improving pedestrian pathways, and creating safer streets. It emphasizes the development of Complete Streets that prioritize the safety of all users while integrating pedestrian amenities such as green infrastructure (e.g. bioswales, landscaping and street trees), wider sidewalks, and space to gather. It aligns with the city's climate goals by encouraging alternatives to driving to important destinations within the community and strong active-mobility connections to daily amenities like retail, services and public spaces within and near to the Mid-City communities.

Several pedestrian infrastructure treatments such as curb extensions, wider sidewalks, more street trees and safer walking opportunities will improve the existing pedestrian network and encourage more trips to be made by foot. Pedestrian improvements will be primarily focused along the top ten priority corridors highlighted in the [corridor concept analysis](#).

Bicycle facility upgrades include, but are not limited to, the expansion of the existing bus-bike lane on El Cajon Boulevard throughout Mid-City, a multi-use path along Chollas Parkway, and cycle tracks along Fairmount Avenue, College Avenue, Federal Boulevard, and other corridors.

The first draft of the Mid-City Communities Plan describes the type of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that can be included, along with more information on specific areas for these facilities.

[How can I learn more about the Mid-City Communities Plan Update?](#)

Visit the Community Plan Update webpage at www.PlanMidCity.org where you can learn more about the plan update and sign up for email updates to stay informed.

[How can I make comments on the First Draft of the Mid-City Communities Plan Update?](#)

Comments will be accepted on the first draft of the Mid-City Communities Plan until midnight on Wednesday, September 30, 2026. You may submit comments on the First Draft of the Mid-City Communities Plan [here](#).