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PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES & SAFETY

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7. Public Facilities, Services & Safety

GOALS

- Provision of public facilities to serve the existing and future residents and employees living and working in Old Town San Diego.
- Provision of maintenance, landscaping, and lighting to serve the existing and future residents and employees living and working in Old Town San Diego.
- A safe and livable environment by ensuring development reduces and avoids risks posed by geologic, seismic, and hazardous materials conditions as part of the planning, design, and construction process.



Installation and maintenance of landscaping serves to enhance the public realm of Old Town San Diego.

INTRODUCTION

The Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element addresses public facilities and services for Old Town San Diego and health and safety issues affecting the community. The Community Plan discussion and policies supplement the city-wide public facilities, services, and safety goals and policies in the General Plan. Public facilities and services related discussions and policies are also interspersed within other Community Plan elements. The Recreation Element addresses parks and recreation facilities.



Infrastructure repair and improvements in the community should incorporate Sombrero Buff concrete sidewalks that complement Old Town's pre-1872 character.

7.1 Police, Fire and Rescue

Police, fire, and rescue services contribute to livability and safety. Fire Station No. 8, within the Uptown community, Fire Station No. 20, within the Midway – Pacific Highway community, and Fire Station 15, within the Ocean Beach Community, serve the Old Town San Diego community. The Police Department's Western Division Station, which serves Old Town, is located within the Linda Vista community.

POLICIES

- PF-1.1** Maintain Old Town's existing level of police and fire/rescue service.
- PF-1.2** Maintain a community relations program between police, residents and property owners.

7.2 Education and Library

San Diego Unified School District provides public education services to Old Town San Diego. Students from Old Town San Diego have the option to attend San Diego Unified School District Kindergarten to 12th grade schools in Midway – Pacific Highway, Peninsula, Uptown and Downtown, as shown in Box 7-1. The Ballard Parent Center is a Parent Education facility located at the former Fremont Elementary School site.

The Point Loma/Hervey Library in the Peninsula community and the Mission Hills Library in the Uptown community provide libraries services to the Old Town San Diego community. Additionally, the Central Library in Downtown is accessible from Old Town via the trolley.

POLICIES

- PF-2.1 Support a process to allow the public to have the opportunity to guide long-term uses of publicly owned community-serving facilities.
- PF-2.2 Support the funding and creation of a new Mission Hills library to build the library standard and extend existing resources.
- PF-2.3 Support the extension of library hours, expansion of book and periodical collections, and hiring of additional staff as necessary to provide adequate access to a full range of materials.



Undergrounding utility lines along the community's major street corridors reduces the visual impact of these facilities and enhances the community's historical character.



The location of utility boxes on private property provides a clear pedestrian path of travel and allows for screening these boxes with landscaping.

7.3 Utilities

San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) provides gas and electricity utility services. Overhead wires detract from the historical aesthetic character of Old Town. However, undergrounding utility lines can result in the installation of ground-mounted transformers on sidewalks, which can impede pedestrian mobility.

POLICIES

- PF-3.1 Encourage agreements between property owners and utilities to locate transformers and other utility boxes on private property whenever feasible to minimize obstacles to pedestrian activity and visual impacts.
- PF-3.2 Encourage SDG&E to locate or relocate pad-mounted transformers and other utility boxes outside of the public right-of-way through the execution of utility easements.

7.4 Maintenance, Landscaping and Lighting

The Urban Design and the Mobility Elements contain policies to enhance the pedestrian environment and the public realm with pedestrian-oriented lighting and street landscaping. Pedestrian-oriented lighting gives people greater visibility and safety and supports activity in the Core. The City provides standard street/pedestrian lighting at intersections, trash removal, street sweeping, street tree trimming, and maintenance efforts within the public right-of-way. Additional installation and maintenance of pedestrian lighting and landscaping require funding and coordination beyond the City's standard level of service.

The Old Town San Diego Chamber of Commerce administers the Old Town San Diego Business Improvement District (BID) which provides funding for additional street cleaning, street-tree planting and trash removal in support of the business community. Property and Business Improvement Districts or Maintenance Assessment Districts, such as the Old Town BID, can provide property owners as well as business owners with the opportunity use assessments to pay for improvements, maintenance, services and activities beyond City standard services in a specific areas or the entire community.

POLICIES

- PF-4.1** Support installation of pedestrian lighting to ensure that the Core and corridor and connector sidewalks have an increased level of street lighting that is consistent with Old Town's historical character.
- PF-4.2** Support the establishment of a Property and Business Improvement District or a Maintenance Assessment District to install and maintain landscaping and pedestrian lighting and provide maintenance services beyond City standard services.

7.5 Water and Sewer Infrastructure

The City plans, monitors and maintains the water and sewer system on an ongoing basis to ensure adequate service, and infrastructure replacement projects can take years to plan and bring to construction. Early and regular community coordination is an important component of careful planning and execution of infrastructure projects that can ensure that potential effects on historical resources, community character, and events in Old Town are addressed.

POLICIES

- PF-5.1** Collaborate and coordinate with the Old Town community and other stakeholder entities when planning and executing infrastructure improvements to preserve historical and archaeological resources and community character and prevent impacts to community events.



Pedestrian-oriented street lighting that is appropriate with Old Town's pre-1872 historical styles helps provide an enhanced sense of place.

7.6 Health and Safety

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Gasoline, oil and auto repair facilities were formerly located along major roadways in Old Town, including San Diego Avenue, Congress Street, Taylor Street and Pacific Highway. Site remediation related to past heavy commercial or industrial, when required as part of the project approval based on the proposed use and the property existing conditions, will reduce issues associated with potential ground contamination for new residential uses and other uses considered sensitive receptors.

GEOLOGIC AND SEISMIC HAZARDS

Artificial fill placed decades ago with minimal to no engineering controls underlies approximately 40 percent of the community's western portion. The potential for liquefaction is considered high in artificial fill areas. Liquefaction occurs when soil loses strength and stiffness in response to applied stress. The active/potentially active Rose Canyon fault zone underlies Old Town San Diego trending north-south and northwest-southeast as shown on Figure 7-1. The City requires development projects provide geologic investigations within high liquefaction hazard zones and appropriate mitigation measures.

POLICIES

- PF-6.1 Seek State and Federal funding, incentives, and other assistance for hazardous materials site remediation as needed.
- PF-6.2 Protect public health and safety through the application of effective seismic, geologic, and structural considerations.
- PF-6.3 Require the submission of geologic and seismic reports, as well as soils engineering reports, in relation to applications for land development permits whenever seismic or geologic problems are suspected.

- PF-6.4 Abate structures that present seismic or structural hazards with consideration of the desirability of preserving historical and unique structures and their architectural appendages, special geologic and soils hazards, and the socio-economic consequences of the attendant relocation and housing programs.
- PF-6.5 Provide passive public space and landscaped areas as part of development projects where active faults preclude the construction of new buildings.

FIGURE 7-1: GEOLOGIC AND SEISMIC HAZARDS

