



## College Area Community Plan Update

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Q - Why plan for more housing in the College Area?

**A -** Home construction has not kept pace with the demand for housing within the City and the region, which has resulted in extremely high costs for housing. The City has run out of vacant developable land for new housing. Without planning for additional housing as part of all of the City's community plan updates, new home construction will continue to fall behind the demand for new housing. This will result in the housing market becoming further constrained and exacerbate housing unaffordability in the future.

SANDAG is planning '5-Big Moves', which includes a [high-speed commuter rail station at SDSU and Next-Generation Bus Rapid Transit along El Cajon Boulevard, College Avenue and Montezuma Road](#). These transit investments will further connect College Area to Downtown and other activity and job centers throughout the region. Planning for housing within the College Area leverages existing and future public investments in transit and adds more amenities closer to where people live. This also allows people to drive less and reduce greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the City's Climate Action Plan.

#### Q – How can planning for more housing in traditionally single-family areas enhance the College Area community?

**A -** The community has single-family areas that have transitioned to high-occupancy single family housing designed for students due to the demand for housing exceeding available housing. Many homes surrounding San Diego State University [have five or more bedrooms](#). Many of the homes with five or more

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bedrooms [pay rental unit business taxes](#), indicating that they are already providing a form of multi-family style homes. The [market analysis](#) conducted for the College Area Community Plan Update shows there is demand for more homes for families, seniors, and students. Planning proactively for today's need for homes in this larger context provides the community new opportunities to shape how this looks, such as the surrounding streetscape, landscaping, and new thriving public spaces to be enjoyed by everyone.

#### Q - How will new homes in my neighborhood affect my property?

A – New homes in any neighborhood bring opportunities to welcome new neighbors into a community. Beyond that, new development brings along with it new community investments, which can include new public spaces and enhanced places for people to enjoyably and safely walk, bike, and interact with their neighbors.

#### Q - How will the Community Plan address additional infrastructure and mobility needs?

A – Part of the benefit of updating the community plan is that it provides the opportunity to think holistically about how and why people move around in the community, both in terms of the way land is used to influence how people get around and how infrastructure is built to influence these traveling choices. The Community Plan Update will allow more flexible uses of land that allow goods, services, and neighborhood amenities to be located closer to where people live,

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work, and can access transit. The Community Plan Update will also include plans to allow for safe and enjoyable spaces to bike, take transit, walk and roll.

The Community Plan Update process will also identify opportunities to ensure the development of new public spaces along with development along the corridors. This will be achieved through building setbacks, wider sidewalks, landscaping, street trees, and other pedestrian amenities.

Traffic modeling will be conducted after a preferred land use scenario is selected. The College Area Community Plan Update includes recommendations for multi-functional corridors that accommodate cars, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians. For additional information, please also refer to the December 1, 2021 [‘Mobility Concepts’ presentation](#) to the College Area Community Planning Group and the May 26, 2021 [‘Streetscape Concepts’ presentation](#) to the College Area Community Planning Group.

### Q - What is being planned for parks and public spaces?

**A** – New development provides opportunities for new public spaces and parks. In general, taller buildings allow for increased opportunities on the ground for more public spaces.

The Community Plan Update is proposing two different land use approaches. In the ‘Grand Boulevards’ land use approach, most of the new public spaces would occur as a ‘string-of-pearls’ with new development along the corridors. In the ‘15-minute Neighborhoods’ approach, the string of pearls along the corridors would still exist, with additional opportunities for small parks and play spaces along smaller neighborhood streets within the heart of the community.

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#### Q - What is a '15-Minute Neighborhood?'

A - A 15-minute neighborhood is generally defined as a place where you should be able to travel to transit, schools, parks, stores, and services within a 15-minute walk from your home. The College Area Community 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.

#### Q - How will canyons and open spaces be protected?

A – The City has existing regulations that require new development to minimize encroaching on open space, steep slopes, and canyons. The College Area Community Plan Update has also [proposed conservation policies](#) that would direct new development to maintain natural features and facilitate natural stormwater runoff.

#### Q - How will the College Area become an attractive place for people of all stages of life to live and visit?

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**A** - The [market analysis](#) completed as part of Community Plan Update shows that there is demand for family-oriented housing in the College Area. The College Area Community Plan Update will include land use options that allow new housing types for new families, seniors, and students, as well as new public amenities like pocket parks, playgrounds, and retail spaces to serve them.

### Q - Will 'eminent domain' be a part of this Community Plan Update?

**A** – The Community Plan Update does not include properties for eminent domain, nor can the City force a property owner to redevelop their property. The community plan provides a long-range land use vision and policies for new development. It does not require existing land use to change.

### Q - What are the next steps for the College Area Community Plan Update?

**A** - The next step for the Community Plan Update is to release a community-wide online survey from March 27 until May 1 to gather community input on the land use approaches. This survey allows respondents to choose different approaches for different areas of the community. The Planning Department will then present the online engagement results to the College Area Community Plan Update Committee on Wednesday, May 25 and to Planning Commission in June. Late this summer, the Planning Department will aim to release a first draft of the updated College Area

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Community Plan. The Community Plan Update is expected to go before City Council for approval in summer/fall of 2023.

#### Q - How can I learn more about the College Area Community Plan Update?

A - Visit the Community Plan Update webpage at [www.PlanCollegeArea.org](http://www.PlanCollegeArea.org) where you can learn more about the plan update and sign up for email updates to stay informed.

#### Q – What is the purpose of the survey for the College Area Community Plan Update?

A – The Planning Department is updating community plans throughout the City of San Diego to plan for more homes, focusing primarily on areas located near high-quality transit. This survey for the College Area Community Plan Update is an opportunity for people to give feedback about the location and scale of new housing in the College Area. The survey is one of many ways for the community to provide feedback, and additional public input will continue to be welcome and appreciated throughout the process.

#### Q – How will the College Area Community Plan Update address affordable housing?

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**A** – One of the goals for the College Area Community Plan Update is to increase opportunities for homes for people of all incomes. As part of new development, inclusionary housing regulations, which generally require a portion of the new homes to be rented or sold at affordable levels are implemented. The community's feedback on how to continue to increase opportunities for additional affordable homes is valued.

**Q** - How many additional homes will the updated College Area Community Plan allow in the community?

**A** – The Planning Department is still exploring the final build-out figures, but capacity for an additional 10,000 – 20,000 homes is anticipated. It is important to note that while the plan would include increased capacity for up to 20,000 homes, that does not mean that there will be 20,000 new homes, since not all property owners will choose to develop their properties to the allowed capacities.

**Q** - Should the College Area Community Plan Update only focus on adding capacity for new homes only along the major corridors?

**A** – The Community Plan Update envisions new growth on the corridors, with new mixed-use development occurring on pedestrian-oriented streetscapes and connections to the neighborhoods. The College Area Community Plan Update also provides an opportunity to plan for many different types of housing adjacent to the

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corridors to allow seniors to downsize and new homes for families. 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.

#### Q: What is dwelling unit per acre (du/acre)?

A - 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.

#### Why is the SANDAG Series 13 Forecast used rather than the SANDAG Series 14 Forecast?

A - The SANDAG Series 13 Forecast for housing and population was the most current available forecast data when the City started the College Area Community Plan Update. The Series 13 Forecast provides data at the community plan area for the College Area. The SANDAG Series 14 Forecast was approved by the SANDAG

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Board in December 2021 at the jurisdictional level. SANDAG has not yet release the Series 14 Forecast by community plan area for the City of San Diego. When SANDAG releases the Series 14 Forecast at the community plan level for the College Area, City staff will reference the data from it as part of the community plan update.

### What elements of the College Area Community Council “Vision Plan” were incorporated into the scenarios?

**A** - Prior to plan-update kick-off, the College Area Community Council presented the Planning Department with a ‘7-Visions’ report that highlighted some of the community priorities for the new plan, including the desire for a stronger sense of community identity, new public gathering spaces, a linear park on Montezuma Road, improved local mobility and connections to SDSU, a ‘campus-town’ near SDSU, and a preference for new infill development along major streets and at hubs of activity such as SDSU, neighborhood schools and parks, and Alvarado Hospital. The draft concepts have incorporated the ability for new development along the El Cajon Blvd, Montezuma Road, and College Avenue corridors and nodes, campus town near SDSU, and the Montezuma linear park. These community visions will be further incorporated into the College Area Community Plan Update as part of the draft community plan.

### Why are the scenarios proposing townhome zoning within single-family areas?

**A** - Single-family areas have changed across the state due to a recent state law that requires cities to allow lots to be split into two and up to two homes per lot. These For more FAQ and to learn more about the College Area Community Plan Update, visit the project website at [www.PlanCollegeArea.org](http://www.PlanCollegeArea.org) – Contact Nathen Causman (Project Manager) by email: [NCausman@SanDiego.gov](mailto:NCausman@SanDiego.gov) or by phone: (619) 236-7225



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changes could result in new 'backyard-infill' development around existing homes. This proposal offers an opportunity to engage the community for how new housing can address important site properties and neighborhood amenities like how parking is accommodated, the makeup of the streetscape and the experience of pedestrians. Potential design requirements could be implemented with a new zone or overlay zone. Townhomes would also allow a new housing type that could support homeownership for new families and for seniors that want to downsize and live in the community. As part of the community plan update process, City staff will continue to receive feedback and work with the community to refine the scenarios.

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