

# Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element







# Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element

## Purpose

**To provide the public facilities and services needed to serve the people that live in and visit San Diego.**

## Introduction and Background

The City of San Diego has a comprehensive network of public spaces and facilities that provide important services to the City. Expanding public spaces and facilities to meet the growing needs of the City is critical to providing a high quality of life. These facilities include those owned and managed by the City, such as police and fire facilities, parks and recreational spaces, libraries, stormwater and wastewater infrastructure, information infrastructure, disaster preparedness and infrastructure related to seismic safety. Other facilities are ones that the City funds or supports, such as schools and healthcare facilities. The policies within the Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element (Public Facilities Element) also apply to transportation improvements and park and recreation facilities and services with additional guidance from the Mobility Element and the Recreation Element. The Conservation Element addresses the management, preservation, and utilization of natural resources. The Public Facilities and Conservation Element together provide policy on both facility infrastructure and management of vital resources such as water and energy.



*City Heights/Weingart Branch Library and Performance Annex*



## Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element

Although managed by organizations other than the City of San Diego (City), regulated Public Utilities, Regional Facilities, and Healthcare Facilities are also included, as they too affect land uses and public health and safety. The Public Facilities Element also provides policies for public facilities financing, prioritization, developer, and City funding responsibilities.

The 1979 Progress Guide and General Plan (1979 General Plan) established a growth management program to address the rapid growth on the periphery of the City, and the declining growth in the central areas of the City. The plan sought to redirect growth into the central business district and established neighborhoods and phase growth and development in outlying areas in accordance with the availability of public facilities and services.

Under the 1979 General Plan, the City was divided into three “tiers” of growth: “urbanized,” “planned urbanizing,” and “future urbanizing.” The “future urbanizing” areas were largely vacant and ultimately required voter approval to shift to “planned urbanizing” in order to develop. The “planned urbanizing” areas consisted of newly planned and developing communities. The “urbanized” areas were the established and developed neighborhoods and the Downtown core.

The planned urbanizing areas required development to “pay its own way,” in terms of public facilities and services, through the use of Facilities Benefit Assessments (FBA), or other financing mechanisms such as Mello-Roos Districts. At the time, the pattern of growth was focused in undeveloped “greenfield” areas and FBAs were used to assure adequate and timely development of public facilities, such as police, fire, parks, recreation, library, and transportation for this type of development. While FBAs were largely understood to allow for full cost recovery from developers for new infrastructure in these communities, recognizing that FBAs were subject to the same legal requirements applicable to all other development impact fees (DIF), the separate procedures related to FBA were repealed from the San Diego Municipal Code in 2016 and since that time all FBAs have been subject to the requirements set forth in the Municipal Code related to DIF.

In the urbanized areas, General Fund revenue was generally presumed to be available to fund needed capital investments, and it was not until 1987 that the City Council adopted a Development Impact Fee (DIF) resolution in 1987. The fee resolution allowed for the establishment of DIFs in urbanized communities to collect what was - at the time - considered to be a proportional fair-share of capital improvements needed to offset the impact of the any new development. Because these communities were largely considered to be built-out at the time, the methodology used to establish the DIF amounts often did not keep pace with the full cost needed to provide adequate public facilities for any new development that occurred within the urbanized areas. Additionally, DIF could not - and cannot - be used to fund existing deficiencies in infrastructure attributable to new development.



As discussed in the Land Use Element, Section J, as of 2006, the communities formerly known as planned urbanizing were largely completed according to the adopted community plans. With the adoption of the City's Climate Action Plan in 2015, most new development is anticipated to occur within the urbanized areas as urban infill, representing a significant shift away from a more suburban model of development. Our City has also grown to be more connected – people that live in one community spend significant amounts of time in other communities across the City, whether it be for work or play. And the facilities that are needed to serve new development are not limited to those in their immediate community boundary. The facilities needed to serve new development are needed across the City, and should be prioritized where they will be used by the most people and where the needs are the greatest. A move to a Citywide approach to infrastructure is what is needed to recognize and plan for the development – and the City – of today.

The previous lack of funding tools focused on urbanized communities has resulted in significant disparities across the City in funding for parks, libraries, public streets, and other public spaces. This has often resulted in relatively newer communities benefitting from greater infrastructure investments funded from developer fees, while urbanized communities – once considered to be built-out, but now experiencing more infill development, and often occurring in traditionally underserved communities have received significantly less investments from developer fees. Addressing inequitable investments of the past, by prioritizing investments where they are the most needed, is critical to a thriving City with infrastructure that not only supports new development, but improves the lives of all of the people that live in and visit San Diego. This model is also critical to the City's success in achieving its climate goals in the Climate Action Plan which identifies the need to focus development in areas located closest to transit. These investments must also be relevant, useful, and usable to meet the people's needs. The City aims to ensure that the City's infrastructure and public spaces

- are equitably distributed across the City and prioritized where they will serve the most people
- provide services that are relevant to communities throughout the City
- provide space for the City's growing population to gather, connect and play
- respond to the needs of shifting demographics and changing technology
- are resilient to the effects of natural and man-made disasters and climate change

## A. Infrastructure and Public Spaces

### Goal

Develop and manage existing and future infrastructure and public spaces to provide long-term environmental, economic, social and health benefits for all residents and communities across the City.



### Discussion

Infrastructure and public spaces play a critical role in ensuring that the needs of a city's changing demographics are met and in facilitating inclusiveness of people of all income levels, abilities, races, genders, and cultures. Infrastructure and public spaces can provide pathways for public transport and street lighting; centers for cultural exchange and recreation and social interaction. People in traditionally underserved communities largely depend on access to public spaces for day-to-day activities as well as sociocultural and political events and job creation. Good quality infrastructure and public spaces, therefore, is a critical part of empowering traditionally underserved communities and inclusive green growth strategies. Infrastructure and public spaces are also potential testing grounds for innovative solutions. Infrastructure and public spaces can also adopt technology to integrate with green building design and green infrastructure which not only results in operational cost savings in the long-term but also increases urban resiliency and reduces overall carbon footprints.

### Policies

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|----------|--|
| PF- A.1  | Plan for infrastructure and public spaces that are models of environmental, economic, and social stewardship and that serve as examples for private development.   |
| PF-A.2   | Plan for public spaces such as libraries, public markets and parks that will be attractive to families with children.  |
| PF-A.3   | Consider the potential impacts of changing demographics, conditions and other events – such as climate change, technological changes, and natural and man-made disasters – to ensure resilient infrastructure and public spaces. |
| PF-A.4   | Encourage the protection, enhancement, and adaptive reuse of City-owned historic facilities.   |
| PF-A.5   | Identify a variety of facilities required to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of diverse communities.  |
| PF – A.6 | Plan for safe and enjoyable opportunities for walking/rolling and biking for people of all age groups and abilities.   |

## B. Public Facilities Financing and Evaluation of Growth,



## Facilities and Services

### Goal

Develop and maintain financially sustainable, quality infrastructure and public spaces for all San Diegans across the City.

### Discussion

Providing high-quality public spaces that prioritize people across the City requires dedicated funding to address the costs associated with developing and managing public spaces. Regulatory frameworks that facilitate joint undertaking between the City and private sector or between the City and community based organizations while ensuring public benefit at all times are vital to develop and maintain successful public spaces. In accordance with the City's Climate Action Plan, the majority of the City's new growth will consist of infill development and increase joint use efficiencies to achieve progress in remedying existing public facilities shortfalls and to provide high quality public facilities and services in the future. In 2021, the City estimated a \$3.02 billion shortfall in funding for the provision of all identified capital improvements necessary to serve existing and future development anticipated in the FY 2022-2026 Five Year Capital Improvement Infrastructure Planning Outlook. Adequate resources for capital and operational needs need to be secured, operational efficiencies need to be maximized, and facilities and service should be better tailored to meet the needs of diverse communities. To meet current and future facilities needs, development patterns that can be served efficiently are also critical. Limited, and often restricted existing funds must be targeted to support desired growth patterns (see also Land Use Element, Section A) and new or expanded funding sources must be considered alongside enhanced efficiencies and effective management of resources. Additionally, attention should be directed to the maintenance and operational requirements of all public facilities.

The comprehensive evaluation of development proposals will be critical to ensure any impacts to public facilities and services are identified and addressed. While development impact fees (DIF) and other capital funding sources are critical to funding infrastructure needed to serve new development throughout the City, private development should ensure that existing needs are not compounded by new development. Future development should not only ensure that the infrastructure to meet its needs is provided, but that these investments contribute positively to the community. DIFs are a core source of funds to ensure that new development contributes its fair share toward needed infrastructure and public spaces. In lieu of the payment of DIFs, new development is also encouraged to provide needed infrastructure investments, where feasible.





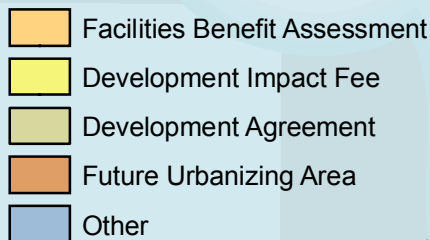
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*Mission Valley Branch Library*



Pacific Ocean



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Other public facilities financing strategies independent of impact fees are available to bring infrastructure up to the City's current standards. These alternatives can include general taxes, special taxes, special assessments, fees and exactions, leasing, and other methods, as follows:

- General taxes refer to any tax imposed for general government purposes.
- Special taxes consist of any tax imposed for specific purposes, including a tax imposed for special purposes, which is placed into a General Fund. Special taxes include community facilities districts (CFD/Mello-Roos).
- Special assessments fund a specific benefit that exceeds what is typically provided. An example of a special assessment in San Diego is a Maintenance Assessment District (MAD).
- Tax increment financing through the creation of Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts (EIFDs) to fund economic development projects within a geographic boundary.
- Fees and exactions are one-time charges or dedications collected by local government as a condition of a map approval or building permit. The purpose of the fee or exaction must relate to the development being charged. Fees can be categorized into four major classes: (1) development impact fees, which are levied on new development to cover the cost of infrastructure or facilities needed by that development; (2) permit and application fees which cover the cost of processing permits and development plans; (3) regulatory fees; and (4) "property related fees and charges," as defined by Proposition 218.
- Leasing is a financing alternative to outright purchasing property. Common lease financing arrangements include lease-purchase agreements, sale-leaseback agreements, certificates of participation, and lease revenue bonds.
- Other methods can include general obligation bonds, which are still a common financing mechanism, but they are difficult to issue because of the two-thirds voter approval requirement. Nevertheless, these bonds are used to acquire and construct public capital facilities and real property. A jurisdiction can levy an ad valorem property tax at the rate necessary to repay the principal and interest of the bonds. Other alternatives are public enterprise revenue bonds issued to finance facilities for revenue-producing public enterprises, such as sewer systems that can pay for themselves through service charges. The use of tax increment financing by redevelopment agencies is another method regularly used by jurisdictions to issue tax allocation bonds for major improvements in project areas.



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### Policies

PF- B.1. Develop a centralized citywide monitoring system, accessible to the public, to document and report on the following:

- New Development - development proposals, fiscal impacts, operations and maintenance requirements, required plan amendments, exactions, service level and capacity impacts;
- Capital Improvements Program (CIP) - funding sources, project and funding schedules, project amendments, project costs, project locations, project status; and
- Existing Conditions - facility inventory, service and capacity levels, repair and replacement schedules, facility records (size, age, location, useful life, value, etc.).

PF B.2 Invest in citywide public facilities that meet the current and future needs of the growing population.

- a. Prioritize investments in projects that improve connectivity between communities and enable safe access to citywide infrastructure.
- b. Prioritize investments in projects that connect communities and positively influence the life of all San Diegans.
- c. Prioritize investments in projects that serve the greatest number of people and where the needs are the greatest.

PF-B3. Address current and future public facility needs by pursuing, adopting, implementing, and maintaining a diverse funding and management strategy.

- a. Ensure effective management and optimal allocation of all financial resources for both capital and operational needs.
- b. Maximize operational and capital efficiencies.
- c. Continue to develop, evaluate, and apply innovative public infrastructure and facility financing mechanisms and strategies. Employ a public infrastructure financing strategy that includes a variety of financing mechanisms such as:
  - Supporting state and local government fiscal reform efforts which provide an equitable redistribution of property tax proceeds or other revenues to the City from the state;
  - Assuming an active leadership role in planning and implementing infrastructure investments on a collaborative regional basis and apportion, as applicable and appropriate, eligible infrastructure expenses to support regionally beneficial capital improvements projects;



- Coordinating with all appropriate authorities and agencies for a more efficient use of shared resources, and increased joint use of facilities and services;
- Adopting new, or increase existing, CIP funding sources for needed public facilities and infrastructure;
- Working in partnership with stakeholders to design a bond measure to address the City's unfunded needs for capital improvements projects to support development;
- Adopting facilities, infrastructure, improvements and/or maintenance districts, and other special assessments for locally prioritized facilities and/or services;
- Pursuing Regional Comprehensive Plan and Smart Growth Incentive Program funding for transportation projects that have been prioritized consistent with Section B, Public Facilities and Services Prioritization, of this element;
- Continuing to use and seek a broad range of funding sources to finance public facilities and infrastructure;
- Evaluating City real estate assets for opportunities to address public facility needs;
- Partnering with other agencies and organizations to leverage public financing and resources with private funds and assets;
- Utilize development, reimbursement and other agreements to ensure public spaces are delivered in a timely manner.
- Incentivize onsite improvements and private delivery of public infrastructure to ensure infrastructure and public spaces are delivered in a timely manner.
- Maximizing the extraordinary and other benefits of development-related agreements to address needs in areas of benefit;
- Coordinating with redevelopment agencies to effectively utilize tax increment and other agency financing to leverage additional funds, initiate public and private investment, and address needs; and
- Maximizing the procurement of grants, endowments, and private donations for public facility and services need

PF- B.4 Recommend development proposals to fully address impacts to public facilities and services.



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- a. Identify the demand for public facilities and services resulting from new development.
- b. Identify specific improvements and financing which would be provided by the project, including but not limited to sewer, water, storm drain, solid waste, fire, police, libraries, parks, open space, and transportation projects.
- c. Subject projects to exactions that are reasonably related and in rough proportionality to the impacts resulting from the proposed development.
- d. Provide public facilities and services to assure that current levels of service are maintained or improved by new development within a reasonable time period.

PF-B.5 Require a fiscal impact analysis to identify operations and maintenance costs with a community plan amendment proposal of potential fiscal significance.

PF-B.6. Incentivize physical improvements that fully address impacts to public facilities and services, when a nexus exists, that will benefit the affected community planning area.

PF- B.7. Integrate all planning and development policies and strategies into the annual development of the CIP to ensure projects are programmed in a cost-efficient manner.

- a. Review all capital projects for consistency with adopted planning documents, including the General Plan, Climate Action Plan, and community plans.
- b. Evaluate the fiscal impact and timing of needed capital improvements to minimize the burden on operations and maintenance budgets.

PF- B.8. Conduct periodic review of the fiscal impacts of private development throughout the City to assist in land use and capital planning decisions by providing data regarding the amount, intensity, location, and timing of new development.

PF-B.9. Maintain an infrastructure and public spaces program to ensure that public infrastructure and spaces needed to serve new development is provided.

- a. Ensure new development pays its proportional fair-share of public facilities costs through applicable DIFs pursuant to the California Government Code.
- b. Ensure DIFs are updated frequently and evaluated periodically to ensure the fees are sufficient to provide the infrastructure needed to serve new development.



- c. Identify priorities for needed infrastructure in consultation with interested stakeholders, including community planning groups.
  1. Incorporate community specific criteria in community plans to define and describe the desired character and location of needed facilities.
  2. Apply public facility and service guidelines which consider varied constraints and needs, while providing an equivalent level of service and maintaining consistency with sustainable development policies (see also Conservation Element, Section A).
- d. Encourage community participation in the identification of infrastructure needs throughout the City to ensure the delivery of infrastructure that will be most useful and enjoyable to the City's residents.

## C. Public Facilities and Services Prioritization

### Goals

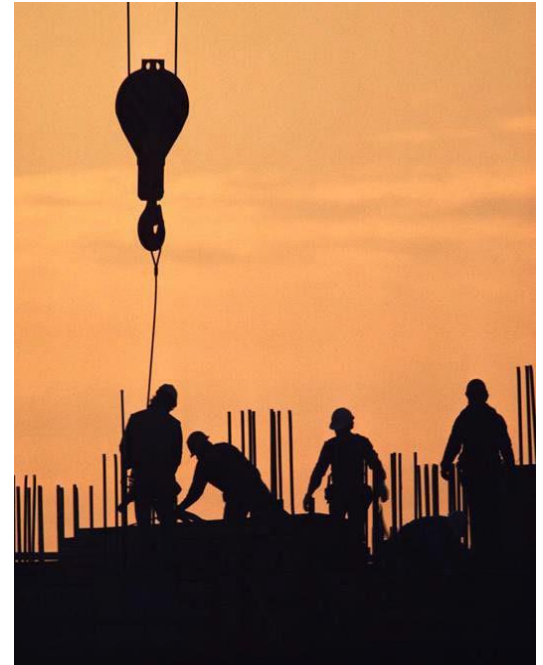
- ◆ Public facilities and services that are equitably and effectively provided through application of prioritization guidelines.
- ◆ Maximum efficiency in the annual allocation of capital resources for the Capital Improvements Program (CIP).
- ◆ Public facilities expenditures that are linked to implementation of the General Plan.
- ◆ Public investments that prioritize public facilities in areas that serve the most people and that have the greatest need.



## Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element

### Discussion

Prioritization guidelines for public facilities and services are needed to efficiently and effectively allocate available resources. Policies within this section call for a formally structured approach to evaluate potential capital improvements projects by identifying appropriate criteria for each facility type. The system will be designed to weigh a project's contribution to the protection of health and safety. Consideration will also be given to areas with existing or planned village characteristics and existing facilities deficits. Funds should also be targeted to foster village attributes citywide, through implementation of projects that support greater transit use, walkability, housing opportunities and inviting public spaces. Attention to community-level priorities will also be given during this process.



*Capital improvements under construction*

Upon complete assessment of criteria and ranking, projects will then be proposed for inclusion in the annual CIP which is ultimately adopted by the City Council as a part of the budget process. To maximize the optimal allocation of resources and implementation of the General Plan, citywide coordination and evaluation of proposed projects and available funding will be a critical step in finalizing the annual CIP. The City's annual budget documents contain additional information about the annual capital budget and CIP. The following policies apply to all public facilities and services discussed in the General Plan.

### Policies

#### *Capital Programming and Financing*

PF-C.1. Guide the annual programming of capital projects to optimize the appropriation of resources and to implement the General Plan.

- a. Ensure the annual CIP is coordinated and developed in a timely manner to allow for required consistency and prioritization reviews.

PF-C.2. Coordinate the allocation of public resources for priorities across the City organization, to maximize operational and capital investment efficiencies.





### *Facility Type Prioritization*

PF- C.3 Create an organization-wide method for identifying and ranking capital improvement projects for proposed inclusion in the annual CIP and to guide the City's applications for regional, state, federal, or other funds.

- a. Establish an objective rating system which includes criteria that are appropriate for each facility type (bridges, roadways, traffic signals, pedestrian, drainage, water, sewer, parks, libraries, fire, police, etc.). Examples of potential criteria include, as applicable, but not limited to: funding, percent of project complete, health and safety, capacity and level of service, planning consistency, legal mandates, and cost-benefit relationship. Establish an objective rating system which includes criteria that addresses equity, efficiency, and conformance with land use plans. Evaluate and assign values to projects based on the following:

- Conformance with community plans. Additionally consider community priorities, when preferences are expressed in the community plan, or by recommendation of interested stakeholders, including community planning groups.
- Projects that further the achievement of General Plan or other Council-adopted standards for public facilities, such as the Parks Master Plan, Library Master Plan, and Mobility Master Plan.
- Projects that will serve the greatest numbers of people, and that will be delivered in areas with the greatest needs.
- Project can immediately connect communities.
- Project is located within a community where there are opportunities to leverage other resources and partnerships with other public, private, and not-for-profit entities.
- Project creates sustainable and high-quality public facilities.
- Project delivers facilities that are models of environmental stewardship, are energy and stormwater efficient, align with City's Climate Action Plan and Climate Resilient SD goals, and prioritize local and environmentally preferable products and limit waste.
- Project prioritizes and designs complete streets for safe mobility and non-motorized transportation.
- Project prioritizes and reclaims streets for pedestrians and creatively repurposes existing, old or vacant public infrastructure.