1. Introduction

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1.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE

San Ysidro’s location adjacent to Mexico provides abundant opportunities for cultural exchange and commerce serving both the tourist and the resident population. San Ysidro’s location, also presents the community with challenges related to border traffic congestion and associated vehicle emissions, and sub-standard socio-economic levels. While the architectural and cultural history remains evident, more than a century of settlement and development makes San Ysidro a dynamic community. The community today contains a breadth of building types and architectural styles from development waves occurring since the early part of the 20th century.

San Ysidro has an estimated population of 28,707 and encompasses approximately 1,863 acres within the City’s southern tip adjacent to Otay Mesa-Nestor, Otay Mesa, the Tijuana River Valley, and the international border with Mexico, refer to Figure I-1 San Ysidro Community Plan Area Map. Topographically, much of the San Ysidro planning area is moderately level; however, a sharp rise in topography occurs immediately east of I-5 in the area of the international border crossing and its border with Otay Mesa. The Tijuana River floodplain comprises most of the planning area south and west of I-5. Because of these topographical characteristics, spectacular views of the surrounding region can be found throughout the community.

The San Ysidro Port of Entry is the busiest in North America and is undergoing a huge expansion and reconfiguration in the early part of the 21st Century that will directly impact the community of San Ysidro. Although San Ysidro suffers from the constraints including aging infrastructure and overcoming barriers to connectivity, San Ysidro remains a strong, tightly knit community with an optimistic vision for its future. San Ysidro’s proximity to Mexico and its Hispanic heritage are among the community’s greatest resources. San Ysidro is both a bustling, vibrant community, as well as a gateway to San Diego and the United States.
San Ysidro Community Plan Update

Introduction

San Ysidro has a notably young population with over half the population under 25 and is characterized by a large Hispanic component with 90 percent of residents being Hispanic compared to 28 percent citywide. Along with a young and largely Hispanic population San Ysidro has a large household size. These demographic characteristics underscore the need to provide ample public facilities geared towards families with children, including parks, playgrounds, libraries, and recreational facilities. Even though San Ysidro has a high proportion of families, there is a relatively low rate of home ownership. Less than 40 percent of households are owners; compared to city and county ownership rates. Housing is in high demand in San Ysidro.

1.2 COMMUNITY VISION AND KEY OBJECTIVES

The plan update’s public outreach effort centered on individual community meetings that consisted of diverse representation from community planning group members, residents, property owners, various business interests, local community organizations and not-for-profit groups, and participating public agencies. There were workshops on key topics, a multi-day charrette and meetings of the San Ysidro Community Planning Group, the City’s recognized community planning group.

San Ysidro is situated adjacent to the international border and geographically separated from much of the rest of the City of San Diego. It is also topographically separated from Otay Mesa by canyons and the 905 creates a physical separation from Otay Mesa-Nestor. These characteristics provide a sense of seclusion from the rest of the City of San Diego.

As development occurred in San Ysidro following the short lived Little Landers Colony, commercial districts formed along San Ysidro Boulevard and Camino de la Plaza focusing primarily on border users. A legacy remains of traditional storefronts uniquely suited to small and sole-proprietor businesses, particularly along the community’s spine, San Ysidro Boulevard. Remnants of the original grid pattern of streets and alleys enhances connectivity and promotes walkability in the El Pueblito Viejo, the old town and community core, yet traffic

Community Vision Statement

San Ysidro is a long standing community of Mexican heritage, uniquely situated along the international border. The community strives for excellence in education, greater job opportunities, diversity in housing, access to health services, and takes pride in their neighborhood identity.
congestion and poor pedestrian connectivity occurs at many ‘pinch points’ where street widths narrow or access is ‘funneled’ due to the trisecting of the freeways and trolley tracks.

In 2010, the community engaged in intensive visioning workshops and identified a community vision and key objectives to focus on for the plan update. The Key Objectives include:

- Establish an attractive international border destination for residents, businesses and visitors
- Enhance and leverage bicultural and historic traditions and diversity
- Provide a plan with mix of land uses that serves residents, generates prosperity, and capitalizes on visitor traffic
- Increase mobility for pedestrians, cyclists, transit and automobiles through a border intermodal center, new linkages at key points, and a strong pedestrian focus
- Identify locations for urban parks, plazas, promenades and venues that support a variety of event and gatherings
- Expand park and recreation opportunities including trail options at Dairy Mart ponds and joint use opportunities; promote a healthy, active community
- Incorporate sustainability practices, policies and design features that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address environmental justice, and contribute to a strong economy
- Provide a lively, pedestrian-friendly, healthy environment where kids can walk safely to school
- Facilitate the development of the Mi Pueblo Village
- Craft a clear and practical implementation strategy

General Plan Guiding Principles

1. An open space network formed by parks, canyons, river valleys, habitats, beaches and ocean;
2. Diverse residential communities formed by the open space network;
3. Compact and walkable mixed-use villages of different scales within communities;
4. Employment centers for a strong economy;
5. An integrated regional transportation network of walkways, bikeways, transit, roadways, and freeways that efficiently link communities and villages to each other and to employment centers;
6. High quality, affordable, and well-maintained public facilities to serve the City’s population, workers, and visitors;
7. Historic districts and sites that respect our heritage;
8. Balanced communities that offer opportunities for all San Diegans and share citywide responsibilities;
9. A clean and sustainable environment; and
10. A high aesthetic standard.
1.3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

General Plan

The San Ysidro Community Plan is a component of the City of San Diego’s General Plan. It is intended to further express the General Plan policies in San Ysidro through the provision of more site-specific recommendations that implement goals and policies, guide zoning, and the Capital Improvement Plan. While the two documents are under separate cover, they work together to establish the framework for growth and development in San Ysidro. Some specific General Plan policies are referenced within the Community Plan to emphasize their significance in San Ysidro, but all applicable General Plan policies may be cited in conjunction with the San Ysidro plan, whether or not they are specifically referenced. Both the General Plan and the San Ysidro Community Plan should be consulted for land use planning matters in San Ysidro. While the community plan addresses specific community needs, its policies and recommendations remain in harmony with the General Plan, city-wide policies, and other community plans.

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 and contains a set of overall guiding principles (see inset). The recent update to the General Plan shifts focus from how to develop vacant land to how to design infill development and reinvest in existing communities. A key component guiding these efforts is the City of Villages Strategy, which proposes growth be directed into pedestrian-friendly mixed-use activity centers linked to an improved regional transit system.

Regional and local investments that promote transit and bicycle use support this strategy. By increasing transportation choices, a reduction in overall vehicle miles travelled can be achieved, which is a key contributor to broader sustainable development initiatives. Better mobility options are also needed for those who cannot drive, do not own a motor vehicle, or prefer to reduce their dependence on the automobile. Reduction in air pollutants as well as a shift to favor walking as a preferred mode benefits individuals as well as public health.
These villages or activity centers are to be formally identified through the community plan update process. The mixed-use commercial districts and higher density neighborhoods along transit lines are candidate village locations within each of the three communities. The policies of each plan can be used to focus needed investments in infrastructure, transit and other mobility improvements.

*Land Development Code*

The City of San Diego Land Development Code (LDC) is part of the municipal code and contains regulations and controls pertaining to land use, density and intensity, building massing, architectural design, landscaping, storm water management, street frontages, lighting, and other development characteristics. The LDC implements the policies and recommendations of the Community Plan and all development within in San Ysidro must comply with regulations set forth in the LDC.

*Local Coastal Program*

The California Coastal Act of 1976 requires all jurisdictions within the Coastal Zone to prepare a Local Coastal Program (LCP). The Local Coastal Program includes issue identification, a land use plan and implementation ordinances. In order to respond to individual community issues, the Local Coastal Program of the City of San Diego has been divided into 12 segments. The coastal zone portion of the San Ysidro community has been incorporated into the Tijuana River Valley Local Coastal Program segment. **Figure I-2 Coastal Zone Map** provides the boundary for coastal zone in San Ysidro. With the development of this Plan it was determined that it would be appropriate to have one document that would address the basic resource protection measures for the coastal zone and discuss the community’s relationship to the Tijuana River Valley resource area. The important coastal resources consisting of the Dairy Mart Ponds, Tijuana River Valley floodplain, and the Tijuana River estuary, is contained within the open space section of the **Conservation Element** of this Plan.
1.4 PLANNING PROCESS

The public outreach for the plan update was primarily conducted through the Community Plan Update Advisory Committee which were regularly held special meetings with the San Ysidro Community Planning Group and which included other stakeholder representatives. These meetings serve as the backbone for the community outreach effort. However, the outreach effort also included individual stakeholder meetings, a walk audit, booths at community festivals and school functions, community survey, outreach to students through the local schools and presentations to other organizations and agencies. The community outreach was a collaborative process between community members, stakeholders and the City and the participation strategy was designed to:

- Enhance community participation and input
- Integrate consensus building with planning process
- Strengthen Community Partnerships
- Provide learning opportunities to improve mobility, housing, recreation, access and quality of life issues for residents, businesses and visitors
- Gather and integrate community input and feedback

1.5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Golden Hill Community Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) provides a programmatic assessment of potential impacts occurring with the realization and implementation of Community Plan policies and recommendations. Potential impacts were anticipated during preparation of the Community Plan, and many of the policies were designed to reduce or avoid such impacts.

1.6 PLAN ORGANIZATION

The plan is organized similarly to the General Plan and includes nine Elements. Each element includes goals, discussion sections, policies and recommendations. A separate Implementation Chapter includes implementation measures. Policies often cross reference the General Plan and related subjects in corresponding Elements. This community plan is a companion document to the General Plan and the General Plan should be used in conjunction with this plan.