



Introduction

San Diego has the location and the physical foundation in general for an important, perhaps a great, city. Its people are awake to its needs, and are resolved to meet them.

~ John Nolen, 1908

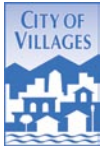
City Planner John Nolen wrote these words as a preface to San Diego's first grand vision statement of the 20th century. He looked at a young city with a population of less than 40,000 and imagined what it could become.

Against the backdrop of what Nolen considered San Diego's "permanent attractiveness beyond all other communities," he envisioned development of a civic center of downtown public buildings, more urban open space, parks and playgrounds, and a bayfront with promenades and public amenities. He urged San Diegans to build a city that capitalized on its many natural assets and enviable climate. Nolen's goals are still relevant today and they advised many of the planning decisions that shaped San Diego in the past century.

Since the Nolen Plan was commissioned, San Diego has grown from a small border town to a thriving metropolis of nearly 1.3 million people, complete with many distinct and diverse neighborhoods. The City's growth and evolution have served as a catalyst for the development of numerous planning visions and plan documents. Through the years, all of the plans have shared a somewhat common vision. They have sought preservation of unique neighborhoods, good jobs and housing for all San Diegans, protection and enhancement of the environment, development of a diverse economy, an efficient and useful public transit system, well-maintained public facilities and services, and careful management of the growth and development of the City.

San Diego's Planning History

During the 1960s, the City engaged in a comprehensive planning process to prepare the first Progress Guide and General Plan, and in 1967 the City Council adopted and the electorate ratified that document as the first General Plan for the City of San Diego. In 1974, planning consultants Kevin Lynch and Donald Appleyard, funded through a grant from the prominent San Diego Marston family, produced *Temporary Paradise?* This groundbreaking study focused upon the natural base of the City and region; it recommended that new growth complement the regional landscape to preserve its precious natural resources and San Diego's high quality of life. *Temporary Paradise?* served as a major influence on the subsequent comprehensive update of the Progress Guide and General Plan adopted in 1979.



The City experienced both significant growth and a serious recession over the two following decades. Residential development reached the City's jurisdictional boundaries which also expanded during this period. The City's economic base evolved from tourism and defense to include high technology research and manufacturing, and international trade. The citizens of San Diego reacted to the growth and change by participating in numerous visioning efforts. They produced several documents, ballot initiatives, and programs including: the Urban Form Action Plan, the Regional Growth Management Strategy, the Livable Neighborhoods Initiative, Towards Permanent Paradise, the Renaissance Commission Report, and many others.

Based upon the planning principles and shared common values in all of these documents, the City Council adopted the Strategic Framework Element in 2002 to guide the comprehensive update of the entire 1979 Progress Guide and General Plan.

A New General Plan

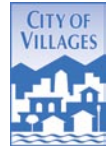
This General Plan provides policy guidance to balance the needs of a growing city while enhancing quality of life for current and future San Diegans. It provides a strategy, the City of Villages, for how the City can enhance its many communities and neighborhoods as growth occurs over time. It presents ten elements that overall provide a comprehensive "blueprint" for the City of San Diego's growth over the next twenty plus years.

While this General Plan builds upon many goals and strategies of the 1979 General Plan, the year 2008 finds the City of San Diego and its citizens facing new issues: a lack of vacant developable land for future growth, unmet public facilities standards, a changing economic base, and major environmental challenges.

A century after Nolen, San Diego is once again anticipating its future and defining new strategies for the way we will live on the land for the next 20-50 years. The challenges require new approaches, sound public policies, and innovative and achievable solutions – in sum, a new General Plan.

San Diego Profile

San Diego is the second largest city in California and eighth largest in the United States with a population of approximately 1.3 million in 2007. The City covers 342.5 square miles and stretches nearly 40 miles from north to south. There are 93 miles of shoreline including bays, lagoons and the Pacific Ocean. Elevations mostly range from sea level to 600 feet. High points include Mt. Soledad in La Jolla and Cowles Mountain in the eastern part of the City which is nearly 1,600 feet high.



San Diego has a unique and varied topography composed mostly of mesas intersected by canyons. Mission Valley is a prominent geographical feature near the center of the City. There are rather dramatic climate variations within the City. In the beach areas, summer high temperatures average in the low 70s while inland areas average in the mid to upper 80s. Rainfall averages only 10 inches per year.

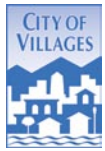
San Diego has a varied economy with both high and low wage industries prominent. The higher wage economic sectors include telecommunications, software, biotech and higher education. The tourism and visitor sectors of the economy provide many of the lower wage jobs. There are relatively few middle income jobs resulting increasingly in an hourglass economy. The military has long been a mainstay of the local economy offering middle income jobs although it is not as dominant as it once was. Defense industry jobs have declined in the past two decades.

San Diego is a major tourist and convention destination. The most visited sites are Balboa Park, the San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park, SeaWorld, Cabrillo National Monument, and Old Town State Historic Park. The village area of La Jolla and Gaslamp Quarter downtown are also popular destinations.

San Diego's population grew rapidly from 1940 to 1960 and again from 1970 to 1990. The population was approximately 200,000 in 1940, 700,000 in 1970 and over 1.22 million in 2000. During the last few years the rate of population growth in the City has slowed. Lack of vacant land and high housing costs relative to local incomes have deterred recent growth.

San Diego's population is diverse. Slightly less than half the population is composed of non-Hispanic whites. Hispanics make up 25-30 percent of the population. Approximately 15-20 percent of the population has Asian and Pacific Island origins and about 7 percent are black. The Hispanic and Asian populations are younger and are continuing to increase while the non-Hispanic white and black population has been stagnant or declining in recent years. The overall average age of 33.5 years has been increasing with the fastest growing segment being people over the age of 65. (See City of San Diego Fast Facts below, and Tables 8 and 9 in the Housing Element for more demographic information).





City of San Diego Fast Facts

Physical Characteristics:

Total area:	342.5 square miles
Latitude:	32.44 degrees north
Longitude:	117.10 degrees west
Coastline:	70 miles
Highest Point:	Cowles Mountain 1,586 feet
Lowest Point:	Sea Level
Average Altitude:	13 feet

Population Trends (1980 - 2007)

	1980	1990	2000	2007
Total Population	875,538	1,110,549	1,223,400	1,316,837
Growth from Prior Period		27%	10%	8%

Population Characteristics (2007 Estimates)

	Population	Percent of Total	Population < Age 18
Hispanic	360,021	27%	121,939
White	612,953	47%	28,609
Black	95,756	7%	26,188
American Indian	4,309	<1%	941
Asian	189,384	14%	40,383
Hawaiian & Pacific Islander	5,617	<1%	1,588
Other	3,562	<1%	1,312
Two or More Races	45,145	3%	17,816
All Ethnic Groups	1,316,837	100%	238,776

2030 Population, Housing and Employment Forecast

	2000	2010	2020	2030	% Change 2000-2030
Total Population	1,223,400	1,365,130	1,514,336	1,656,257	35%
Housing Units	469,689	518,063	574,254	610,049	30%
Civilian Employment	742,904	850,543	926,382	980,374	32%

Source: Demographic data provided by SANDAG, January 2008