

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.

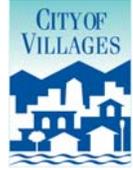
Based upon the planning principles and shared common values in all of these documents, the City Council adopted the Strategic Framework Element in 2002 to guide the comprehensive update of the entire 1979 *Progress Guide and General Plan*.

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 2007 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 seventh 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 1600 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 ten 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.

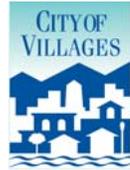
San Diego is a major tourist and convention destination and in recent years had had very high hotel occupancy levels. The most visited sites are Balboa Park, the San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park, Seaworld, Cabrillo National Monument, and Old Town State Historic Park. The village area of La Jolla and Gaslamp District downtown are also popular with visitors.

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 seven 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 Fast Fact Summary from SANDAG below and Tables 8 and 9 in the Housing Element for more demographic information).



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Official City Seal

SAN DIEGO FAST FACTS



Official City Flag

Jurisdiction Facts

Acres 219,185	Square miles: Total land area: 331.7	Including bodies of water: 342.6	Incorporated 1850
Latitude 32.44 degrees north	Coastline 70 miles	Elevation Highest Point: Lowest Point: Average Altitude:	Cowles Mountain 1,586 feet Sea Level 13 feet
Longitude 117.10 degrees west			

Population Trends (1980 - 2006)

	1980	1990	2000	2006
Total Population	875,538	1,110,549	1,223,400	1,311,162
Growth from Prior Period		27%	10%	7%

Population Characteristics (2006 Estimates)

	Population	Percent of Total	Population < Age 18
Hispanic	354,136	27%	118,599
White	608,873	46%	103,199
Black	94,535	7%	26,278
American Indian	4,476	< 1%	979
Asian	193,734	15%	41,658
Hawaiian & Pacific Islander	5,649	< 1%	1,597
Other	4,042	< 1%	1,333
Two or More Races	45,717	3%	18,588
All Ethnic Groups	1,311,162	100%	312,231

2030 Regional Growth Forecast Update

	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, 2007