
VII. MANDATORY DISCUSSION AREAS

A. Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes which would be Involved in the Proposed Project Should it be Implemented

If adopted, the proposed City of Villages strategy, the Strategic Framework Element of the City's *Progress Guide and General Plan*, would trigger the start of an effort to implement this conceptual vision for the future development within the City. Once implemented, this strategy would result in a more compact urban core with mixed-use centers connected by an extensive, world-class transit network. Around each village center, attractive urban design features will invite community interaction in the provided public meeting areas and encourage more walking and bicycling due to the proximity of attached homes to the amenities and shops in the villages and the improved, convenient transit links to jobs, entertainment, and major attractions in Downtown or the proposed subregional centers.

The proposed project would result in infill and redevelopment of areas with existing commercial-employment uses or multifamily homes; the proposal would intensify these existing uses and add auxiliary, moderate to high density, attached homes to the commercial-employment uses. The proposal would perpetuate the existing urban uses while avoiding or, at a minimum, lessening development pressures on dwindling vacant and/or sensitive areas. In addition, the proposed City of Villages is designed such that it would not result in the intensification or densification of existing designated and zoned detached, single-family neighborhoods.

The proposed project is planned to meet additional housing needs, therefore, even if the proposal proves to be highly successful, these additional homes would be expected to result in more auto trips adding to roadway congestion and potentially could contribute more pollutants and decrease regional air quality.

B. Effects Not Found to be Significant

The following issues have been determined to not be significant. It should be noted that subsequent CEQA review for phased implementation of this proposed strategy would reconsider these issues to determine if any potential significant effect might occur when more specific projects are proposed.

Biological Resources

The proposed City of Villages would result in infill and redevelopment of areas with existing development; the proposal would intensify these existing uses. The proposed resultant intensification within the urbanized core may lessen development pressures on dwindling vacant and/or sensitive areas. The proposal generally affects the City's long-established, urbanized areas and would not result in significant adverse effects on sensitive resource areas. In addition, the proposal was designed to avoid adjacency concerns with the City's planned habitat preserve, the MHPA.

However, this is not to imply that future environmental analysis associated with discretionary actions needed to implement the City of Villages strategy (such as community plan updates or

amendments or individual project development proposals) would not find significant impacts to biological resources and, as such, require mitigation measures.

Neighborhood Character and Aesthetics

The proposed City of Villages protects existing single-family neighborhoods; the proposal would not result in the intensification or densification within these established neighborhoods of detached homes. The identified areas of potential villages and corridors may result in three story structures but some may reach five stories in height on selected sites. Design of any subsequent, multi-story development would be analyzed to consider its bulk and scale with respect to adjacent neighborhoods. The expected urban design features that promote walkability, such as tree-shaded sidewalks and traffic calming street design should also result in subsequent village development which would not pose conflicts with adjacent neighborhoods, and some resulting development may also complement the surrounding, existing development.

However, this is not to imply that future environmental analysis associated with discretionary actions needed to implement the City of Villages strategy (such as community plan updates or amendments or individual project development proposals) would not find significant impacts to neighborhood character and aesthetics and, as such, require mitigation measures.

School Facilities

The proposed City of Villages strategy, the Strategic Framework Element, could potentially result in an additional 17,000 to 37,000 attached homes above the City's existing plans for the year 2020 and beyond. The majority of this increase would occur in the area served by the San Diego Unified School District. Potential sites for intensification have also been identified in the area served by the San Ysidro School District. The proposed growth strategy would provide a long-term framework towards the planning of facilities and infrastructure needed to support the residents of these potential housing units. With the addition of these potential housing units there would be a need to plan and provide for expanded and additional school related facilities. Due to the long-term nature of this potential growth, the City and the school districts will have sufficient time to plan for additional school related facilities. Typically, inadequate and over burdened facilities are a result of jurisdictions that do not utilize long-terms plans and as a result react to the current needs rather than future needs. By utilizing a long-term planning strategy, the City would be able to jointly coordinate and plan with the potentially affected school districts, so that school districts would plan and provide school related facilities to meet the future education needs of the City's respective constituents.

However, this is not to imply that future environmental analysis associated with discretionary actions needed to implement the City of Villages strategy (such as community plan updates or amendments or individual project development proposals) would not find significant impacts to school facilities and, as such, require mitigation measures.

Fire and Police Protection

The proposed strategy for growth and development will guide the planning and management of operations for the City of San Diego. Fire, Police, Planning, and Development Services are all within the control of one entity, the City. The proposed growth strategy would provide a long-term framework towards the planning of facilities and infrastructure as well as essential police

and fire services needed to support the residents of these potential, additional attached housing units which may result with implementation of the proposed strategy. Facilities and services for the protection of the City's residents will be provided as the need arises.

However, this is not to imply that future environmental analysis associated with discretionary actions needed to implement the City of Villages strategy (such as community plan updates or amendments or individual project development proposals) would not find significant impacts to fire and police protection and, as such, require mitigation measures.

VIII. ALTERNATIVES

Alternative Considered but Rejected

A. City of Villages B Higher Intensity Scenarios

The previous SANDAG 2020 population forecast indicated a need for 50,000 homes in the City of San Diego in addition to those already anticipated in existing community plans. In attempting to accommodate this predicted shortfall, the initial proposed City of Villages strategy identified potential areas (villages/corridors) for possible intensification. This would have resulted in an estimated 45,000 to 70,000 attached homes. The revised preliminary forecast for the year 2030 showed that the shortfall for the year 2020 has been reduced to 17,000 homes. The number and/or intensity of potential village sites has been reduced and proposed project yield has been revised to 17,000 to 37,000 detached units.

An alternative to the previous higher yield proposal considered potential development occurring at the highest end of the range on every possible village site and corridor throughout the City. This high-intensity scenario would result in the addition of between 70,000 to 105,000 dwelling units beyond those already anticipated in existing community plans. If divided evenly over the next 18 years (to reach 2020), annual production would result in between 9,000 and 12,000 units.

Development at such intensity would significantly exceed the City's forecasted population growth and development needs through 2020. If designed and built according to the provisions of the proposed strategy, the higher intensity projects may have provided an even greater level of support for a world-class transit system than would the proposed strategy. Higher density development could result in an even greater population base within village locations available to support a more diverse array of retail uses.

Increasing the City's overall housing supply to such a level may ultimately result in a decrease in housing prices. Focusing even more of the City's growth into villages may have reduced possible encroachment into the County's back country. Provision of a greater supply of housing would also reduce the need for those employed within the City limits to meet their housing needs outside of the region. This could result in less traffic congestion along Interstates 5 and 15. However, traffic on local roads feeding onto the freeways in the vicinity of the villages would most likely been significantly increased in this alternative compared to the proposed strategy.

Historically, over the last 30-40 years, approximately 8,000 housing units have been constructed per year in the City. During the late 1980's, a period of accelerated economic growth due to the growth of the uniformed services, military contracts and aerospace manufacturing, and the visitor industry, development substantially exceeded this average. Additionally, builders constructed most of these new units in the planned urbanizing area on easier to develop, vacant, unsubdivided land.

Although past development patterns and historical trends do not necessarily predict the future, it is reasonable to conclude that such a vigorous rate of development would result in many of the same negative impacts seen in the 1980's. In light of the revised, reduced population forecast,

this rate of development appears unwarranted. Therefore, this higher intensity alternative was rejected.

It is also reasonable to conclude that projects at the highest end of the density range are likely to be built in communities such as Centre City and Mission Valley, and that depending upon the economy and demand for housing, higher densities could be realized on village sites around the City. This scenario, while unlikely and unnecessary during the immediate twenty-year planning horizon, may occur over a much longer period of time, perhaps in the next 50 years. Continued growth, geographic expansion, and increase in function and complexity of existing villages may result in additional intensification in the long term.

More importantly, whereas the City of Villages strategy envisions that the greatest share of redevelopment and of village development will occur as redevelopment or infill in older communities, it is anticipated that there will be a gradual shift northward as the newer communities along Interstates 5 and 15 begin to age and experience redevelopment pressure. During the period after 2020, it is anticipated that a significant share of redevelopment and of village development will occur in the northern portion of the City in addition to some further intensification of the villages built before 2020.

A. General Intensification Alternative

This alternative would, like the proposed City of Villages project, add approximately 17,000 to 37,000 homes above the number of units currently accommodated by existing community plans. However, instead of being located in villages and meeting specific criteria, the additional units would be distributed equally throughout every community in the City. The number of units to be added in each community would be allocated by acreage. Units could be added to the individual communities in various ways including adding companion units, subdividing parcels, redevelopment of underutilized parcels, adding residential units in commercial areas and increasing zoning and/or amending community plans.

The major advantage of this alternative is that there would be significant flexibility and neighborhood/community input regarding how to accommodate additional housing and employment within communities. This alternative would be more market-driven than the proposed project.

This alternative has several disadvantages. The lack of clear policy on where additional units should be accommodated throughout the City would most likely mean that the additional development would tend to be more scattered and less focused on transit and pedestrian oriented locations than would be the case with the proposed City of Villages alternatives. In addition, there would likely be more encroachment into remaining undeveloped open space areas. Difficult to develop environmentally sensitive parcels would come under increased development pressure. In the long run, a less efficient overall land use pattern would likely result from this alternative. The additional residents would most likely continue to use automobiles for most trips with only a small portion walking, bicycling or using transit. This alternative would, therefore, not be compatible with MTDB's Transit First planning philosophy. If transit improvements could not be adequately supported or used, traffic congestion would be more severe with this alternative than with others. This alternative would also result in serious continuing impacts on

air and water pollution and possibly on sensitive biological resources. It would likely be more costly to provide infrastructure and public services to the relatively inefficient growth anticipated in this alternative.

The lack of a clear policy on where and how growth would result in this alternative being particularly susceptible to local opposition aimed at density increases. It would most likely be very difficult to meet the density targets in certain communities, particularly in communities dominated by detached, residential development.

B. Slowed Growth/Reduced Alternative

This alternative can be achieved in two ways: the number and intensity of potential villages and corridors identified by the proposed City of Villages could be reduced to provide fewer additional homes than are anticipated to be needed or the City could actively attempt to influence its growth rate. For environmental purposes, the analysis will focus on reducing the housing capacity.

The reduced yield scenario focuses on the most likely areas to intensify with high density mixed-use and increased employment opportunities. This reduced yield could be achieved by intensifying only a few areas including Centre City (Downtown) and one or more selected subregional districts. The selected subregional district must be well-located to enable use of the anticipated improved transit linkages with Downtown and other major activity centers Mission Valley, for example, is already connected to Downtown by the trolley and soon will be connected to San Diego State and eventually to La Mesa. La Mesa is also already connected to Downtown via a separate trolley line. This will create a transit loop around the south-central portion of the City's urban core as well as the adjoining cities of Lemon Grove and La Mesa.

The slowed growth scenario does not accept the results of a recent SANDAG draft *Evaluation of Growth Slowing Policies for the San Diego Region* (April, 2001) report which concludes that local government can not significantly impact the rate of population growth. Instead this alternative assumes that certain policies can influence the population growth rate with a goal of attaining a growth rate in conformance with San Diego's natural carrying capacity. Subsidies to growth inducing industries and businesses would be eliminated. The slow growth alternative assumes that various tools could be used to impact the growth rate and could be targeted in particular to restrict growth of low paying jobs such as those in the tourism and hospitality sector because the high housing costs in San Diego make it very difficult to provide affordable housing to workers in low paying sectors of the economy. Some of the tools that would be used to restrict growth and improve the quality of life in this alternative are higher business and hotel room taxes, business license caps and elimination of subsidies and incentives to expand growth inducing services and amenities such as the airport, convention center and commercial visitor attractions on leased City lands.

The pattern of future growth anticipated in this alternative would be the same as that projected in the proposed City of Villages strategy. While the rate of growth of villages would be slower, the pattern would be the same with new development concentrated in villages or nodes served by transit and oriented toward pedestrian and transit access.

Major advantages of this alternative are that slower population growth would allow more time for any existing utilities and facilities deficiencies to be resolved and for housing construction to catch up to demand. In addition there may, over the long term, be a better match between jobs and housing supply. Pressure to develop remaining open space areas and to impact natural resources would be reduced.

This alternative would potentially have many impacts as well. Attempts to slow or reduce growth usually result in disproportionate impacts on lower income individuals and households and could have particularly negative impacts on elderly people and members of minority groups. Job growth would be inhibited in certain industries resulting in more unemployment and forcing some people to leave the City. Any attempts to limit housing production to reduce growth would have severe negative consequences in this City which already has an acute housing shortage. While a slower rate of growth could reduce the pace at which natural resources are lost or impacted, such impacts may merely be delayed rather than eliminated unless the region's population stabilizes and the employment becomes far less growth-dependant.

If growth is slowed within the City without similar regional growth slowing efforts, environmental impacts outside the City will be exacerbated. Much of the housing and employment expected to locate within the City may instead locate in undeveloped sections of San Diego County and adjacent Riverside County. The negative environmental impacts associated with this development would likely be even greater than would have been the case had this growth occurred within the City. In particular, regional freeway traffic congestion associated with growth continuing to sprawl out into undeveloped areas may be exacerbated by a slow growth policy in the City of San Diego.

C. No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, the City of Villages Strategy would not be implemented and housing needs would be addressed by planned housing levels contained in the approved community plans throughout the City. Although it is anticipated that some infrastructure and transit improvements would be constructed to accommodate planned development, for purposes of this alternative it is assumed that the proposed regional transit vision without the City's City of Villages could not be optimized.

Effects of No Project Alternative on Housing Supply and Pricing

Under the No Project alternative the anticipated housing shortage within the City would not be adequately addressed. Current population forecasts anticipate a need for a minimum of 17,000 homes beyond those currently planned in adopted community plans.

The continuation of a serious housing shortage would make it difficult to provide housing affordable to lower and middle-income sectors of the population. The No Project alternative does not make provisions for additional multiple-family housing beyond that currently permitted by individual community plans. Additional multiple-family housing is necessary to address the anticipated housing shortage. Due to high land costs in San Diego multi-family housing is generally more affordable than single-family housing.

Lack of provision of an adequate supply of housing will also be likely to increase the number of families forced to share homes. The City's population would still increase, as would impacts to public facilities. Overall, the quality of life in many of the City's neighborhoods and for many of the City's residents may decrease due to the continuing housing shortage.

Transit, Traffic Congestion, and Air Quality

The inability of the City to address anticipated housing shortages would result in additional indirect impacts. Higher intensity projects are necessary to support improvements to the transit system. Improvements to the transit system including new trolley and bus routes beyond the minimum necessary to address existing needs would be less viable in the no project alternative than in the proposed City of Villages strategy. The lack of targeted locations for more intense development in the no project alternative would likely result in scattered development throughout the developing communities that is conducive to increased transit use and service.

Additional traffic congestion is also likely with the No Project Alternative because a lower proportion of trips would be by transit than in the City of Villages strategy. The No Project Alternative would also increase air quality impacts beyond those associated with the proposed project. However, this alternative's impact on air quality due to less transit improvements is unknown.

The City of Villages strategy proposes increased development in older communities with a gradual shift over time to newer communities along Interstate 5 and 15. It is anticipated that focusing growth and housing demand in urbanized areas will reduce the pressure to extend development further into the unincorporated "back country" areas. This reduction in the rate of sprawl would not occur under the No Project Alternative because under this alternative, new housing development would not be focused on infill and redevelopment areas.

Targeting increased housing development to urbanized areas associated with the proposed project would also reduce pressure to develop environmentally sensitive vacant parcels throughout the County including those that may contain sensitive biological resources. Implementation of the No Project alternative would not have a corresponding benefit in decreasing adverse effects to biological resources.

Development pressure on vacant lands associated with implementation of the No Project alternative may also result in adverse impacts to water quality and hydrology not anticipated with the proposed project. The City of Villages concept anticipates that future developments in infill and urbanized areas would incorporate the latest Best Management Practices into site designs to ensure that storm water runoff from village areas does not adversely impact ambient water quality pollution levels. Without the proposed effort to target development to infill areas, the resulting pressure to impact vacant lands will require alteration of natural hydrologic patterns by altering landforms and eliminating natural vegetation. Increasing the extent of impervious surfaces will result in adverse impacts to natural hydrology and water quality not anticipated with the proposed project. In addition, the City of Villages proposal's focus on redevelopment or infill projects on targeted large surface parking lots could provide benefits to water quality. Redevelopment of these lots would eliminate a large non-point source of urban runoff and replace it with structured or underground parking. This would allow capturing runoff for treatment.

IX. REFERENCES

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Golden Hill (1988)	Peninsula (1987)
La Jolla (1976)	Rancho Bernardo (1989)
Linda Vista (1983) *	Sabre Springs (1987)
Mid-City (1998) *	Scripps-Miramar Ranch (1988)
Midway (1970)	North Park (1986) Serra Mesa (1977)
Mira Mesa (1988) *	Skyline-Paradise Hills (1987)
Miramar Ranch North (1987)	Southeast San Diego (1987)
Mission Beach (1974)	State University (1989)
Mission Valley (1985)	Tierrasanta (1982)
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X. EIR PREPARERS AND CONTACTS

EIR Preparers

John Kovac, Senior Planner, Planning Department

Anne Lowry, Senior Planner, Development Services Department

Larry Monserrate, Assistant Deputy Director, Development Services

Jim Harry, Associate Planner, Planning Department/MSCP

Michael Klein, Information Systems Analyst, Planning Department/GIS

Emory McCaffery, Graduate Student Intern, Planning Department

Paul Montgomery, Student Intern, Planning Department

Planning Department - General Plan - Strategic Framework

Coleen Clementson, Program Manager

Jean Cameron, Senior Planner, Element

Nancy Bragado, Senior Planner, Action Plan

Anna McPherson, Senior Planner, Pilot Villages

Paul Fiske, Senior Planner, Financing Strategy

Bill Levin, Senior Planner, Housing

Tait Galloway, Associate Planner, GIS mapping

Anna Shepherd, Associate Planner, Element

Jennifer Flynn, Associate Planner, Pilot Villages

Catherine Cleary, Program Manager

Lawrence McGuire, Public Outreach

Metropolitan Waste Water Department

Chris Zirkle, Senior Planner

Attachments

1. Notice of Preparation and Responses
2. Community Plans—Environmental Goals and Policies
3. Traffic Model Run Results
4. Air Quality Modeling Results and Monitoring Data
5. County Water Authority Draft Report on Regional Water Supply
6. Lists of City Mitigated Negative Declarations, Addendums to MND's and EIR's 1991-2001