



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

DATE ISSUED: February 27, 2008 REPORT NO. 08-019

ATTENTION: Council President and City Council  
Agenda of March 10, 2008

SUBJECT: General Plan Update

REFERENCE: Council Report Nos. 06-025, 06-056, 06-095, 07-194, 07-206  
Manager's Report Nos. 03-019, 03-115, 03-204, 03-205, 03-206, 04-149,  
05-038, 05-161  
Planning Commission Report Nos. P-03-183, P-03-227, P-03-333,  
PC-04-220, PC-05-070, PC-05-183, PC-05-26, PC-05-304, PC-06-092,  
PC-06-149, PC-06-215, PC-06-216, PC-07-099, PC 07-158

REQUESTED ACTION:

Approval of the General Plan Update and associated actions.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. Certify the Draft General Plan Final Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) with edits documented in **Attachments 3 and 8** (Project No. 104495, SCH No. 2006091032) and adopt the Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations, and edited Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
2. Approve the Public Hearing Draft General Plan, September 2007 (**Attachment 1**), with edits documented in **Attachment 3**, to replace the Strategic Framework; Transportation; Commercial; Industrial; Public Facilities, Services, and Safety; Open Space; Recreation; Redevelopment; Conservation; Energy Conservation; Cultural Resources Management; Seismic Safety; and Urban Design Elements of the *Progress Guide and General Plan*.
3. Request that staff prepare a final General Plan Action Plan for City Council consideration.
4. Adopt amendments to the Land Development Code (LDC) and the City of San Diego's (City) Local Coastal Program implementing ordinances, Chapter 12, Articles 2, 3, 5 and 6; Chapter 13, Article 1; and Chapter 14, Articles 1 – 4, to implement the comprehensive update of the General Plan.

## SUMMARY:

In 1999, the City started the planning process for the Strategic Framework Element (SFE) of the General Plan. The goal of the SFE process was to establish a working vision and a set of core values for the City that would guide future planning and development review efforts, and be the foundation for the comprehensive update to the *Progress Guide and General Plan*. The SFE planning process integrated the work contained in planning documents generated by citizen committees, workshops, and City Council actions from previous years. It included five phases of public outreach as follows:

- Growth projections forums;
- Growth issues forums and Citizen Committee formed to guide development of the element;
- Alternative strategies and preferred strategy selection workshops and meetings;
- Citywide community planning group workshops; and,
- Public workshops and hearings.

In October of 2002, the San Diego City Council adopted the SFE and certified the Final Environmental Impact Report (LDR No. 40-1027; SCH No. 2001061069, dated August 27, 2002). The SFE set forth the City of Villages strategy and a comprehensive slate of citywide policies as the City's plan for growth and development. In January of 2003, following the SFE adoption, the City began the comprehensive update to the *Progress Guide and General Plan* (1979 General Plan) using the SFE as a guide. Since then, there have been numerous public meetings as described in the "Community Participation" section of this report.

Milestones in the General Plan Update process include:

- January 2003 – Following the SFE adoption, the City began the comprehensive General Plan Update. The Housing Element update was underway under separate cover and timeline to facilitate compliance with state requirements. Over a two-year period a series of panel discussions/public forums and stakeholder meetings were held, and preliminary drafts of elements, or sections of elements, were distributed to interested parties.
- July 2004 – The General Plan Monitoring Report was prepared to fulfill an Action Plan requirement that staff monitor progress in implementing the SFE.
- April 2005 – The Discussion Draft General Plan was released for public review.
- May-June 2005 – The Discussion Draft General Plan was presented to nearly all of the community planning groups and numerous interest groups and stakeholders. Edits were made to the Discussion Draft General Plan based on written comments and comments provided at public meetings.
- July 2005 – The July 2005 Draft General Plan was released for public review. Planning Commission, Land Use and Housing (LU&H) Committee, community planning groups, and the public expressed concerns with this draft.
- August 2005-July 2006 – The Draft General Plan was edited based on input from the public, elected officials, and Planning Commissioners.
- May-June 2006 – Revised working drafts of the General Plan elements were posted to the City's website.
- October 2006 – The October 2006 Draft General Plan was released for public review and work began on a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the General Plan Update.

- December 5, 2006 – The Housing Element update was adopted on a separate schedule, per state law.
- April 25, 2007 – The Draft PEIR was released for public review.
- June 25, 2007 – The PEIR public comment period ended.
- September 19, 2007 – The Public Hearing Draft was released.
- September 28, 2007 – The PEIR was finalized. (Website posting occurred on Oct. 2, 2007.)
- November 7, 2007 – The Community Planners Committee (CPC) voted to support the General Plan, subject to recommended edits.
- November 8, 2007 – The Planning Commission recommended City Council adoption of the General Plan, with edits.
- December 5, 2007 – The LU&H Committee made motions to approve the Draft General Plan and forward it to the full City Council with recommended edits.
- January 30, 2008 – The Natural Resources and Culture (NR&C) Committee made motions to approve the Draft General Plan Conservation and Recreation Elements, and forward it to the full City Council with recommended edits. The NR&C Committee also forwarded the Historic Preservation Element to the full Council.

The General Plan covers a wide range of topics and issues. Given the extensive public meetings, workshops and hearings that have taken place prior to the City Council hearing, this report focuses on remaining issues and areas of concern that have garnered significant public attention throughout the process.

## Overview

The Public Hearing Draft General Plan (Draft General Plan) sets out a long-range vision and comprehensive policy framework for how the City should plan for projected growth and development, provide public services, and maintain the qualities that define San Diego over the next 20 to 30 years (see **Attachment 1**). The Draft General Plan does not change land use designations or zoning on individual properties, but rather provides the framework and policy direction for future community plan updates, discretionary project review, and implementation programs.

The Draft General Plan’s guiding principles are to achieve:

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.

Since less than four percent of the City's land remains vacant and available for new development, the Draft General Plan policies focus on the reinvestment in existing communities needed to support long term growth. The Draft General Plan continues to implement the adopted City of Villages strategy to focus on future housing, retail, employment uses, educational, and civic uses in mixed-use village centers of different scales. By directing growth primarily toward village centers, the Draft General Plan supports the preservation of established residential neighborhoods and the management of growth over the long term. The pattern of development envisioned in the City of Villages strategy will not be affected by the rate of growth, but the number of villages, and the demand for development within individual villages, will be influenced by population growth pressures, public support, the rate at which infrastructure deficiencies can be remedied, and real estate market conditions. The Village Propensity Map (Land Use and Community Planning Element, Figure LU-1, also included as report **Attachment 4**) illustrates existing areas that already exhibit village characteristics, and areas that may have a propensity to develop as village areas. This map does not change land use designations or zoning, nor does it require that village development occur in high propensity areas.

The City has developed the plan within the context of state requirements, regional plans and population forecasts, and the issues and needs unique to the City. California mandates that all local jurisdictions prepare a general plan that establishes policies and standards for future development, housing affordability, and resource protection. With the exception of the Housing Element, the state does not mandate when a general plan should be updated, but it does encourage jurisdictions to keep general plans current through regular updates. In addition, the State General Plan Guidelines (2003) identify 15 to 20 years as a typical time horizon for a general plan, and further state that a general plan "based upon outdated information and projections is not a sound basis for day-to-day decision-making and may be legally inadequate." A general plan must include the following mandatory elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Noise, Open Space, and Safety. However, the state provides flexibility in the presentation of elements and the inclusion of optional elements that best meet the needs of a jurisdiction.

The City's Draft General Plan is comprised of an introductory Strategic Framework section<sup>1</sup> and nine elements: Land Use and Community Planning; Mobility; Economic Prosperity; Public Facilities, Services and Safety; Urban Design; Recreation; Historic Preservation; Conservation; and Noise. The update to the Housing Element was adopted by the City Council on December 5, 2006. A summary of each element, along with major issues, is provided on a Fact Sheet included as **Attachment 2** of this report.

### **General Plan Issues and Edits**

The Public Hearing Draft, dated September 2007, reflects edits made to the previously distributed October 2006 Draft General Plan. Changes to the General Plan are shown in strike-out/underline formatting to recognize stakeholders' and the public's time investment in reviewing and commenting on the October 2006 draft, and to facilitate public review. More recent staff-recommended edits to the Public Hearing Draft are shown in **Attachment 3**. Issues

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<sup>1</sup> After General Plan adoption, the Strategic Framework section will be printed separately, and offered along with a compact disc of the entire General Plan, to provide the public with an accessible and economical version of the Plan.

and edits that have garnered the most public interest are discussed below.

#### Land Use Element – General Plan, Community Plan, and Zoning Consistency

The General Plan Update has raised questions on the roles of the General Plan and community plans; internal consistency among the General Plan and community plans; what zoning tools will be needed to implement land use plans; and what will occur during the time period when the updated General Plan is in effect, while many community plans are in need of updates. Regarding land use consistency, it is important to note that the General Plan does not change the land use designation or zoning of specific properties, and that the General Plan land use map is a compilation of the adopted community plan land use maps. If a project is consistent with the community plan land use designation, then it is consistent with the General Plan land use designation. To clarify this point:

- Policy LU-C.1.a has been edited, since the LU&H hearing, to further specify that community plan policies “may be more detailed or restrictive than the general plan as needed” to implement citywide goals and address community-specific issues;
- Policy LU-C.1.b states “Rely on community plans for site-specific land use and density/intensity designations and recommendations;” and,
- Policy LU-C.1.c addresses potential policy inconsistencies between a community plan (or a proposed amendment to a community plan) and the General Plan, as follows: “Maintain consistency between community plans and the General Plan, as together they represent the City’s comprehensive plan. In the event of an inconsistency between the General Plan and a community plan, action must be taken to either: (1) amend the community plan, or (2) amend the General Plan in a manner that is consistent with the General Plan’s Guiding Principles.”

The adopted LDC contains a variety of zones and development regulations. The General Plan Action Plan, however, will contain implementation actions that require LDC amendments (see also discussion below under General Plan Implementation). The desire to create or amend regulations in the LDC to better implement the updated General Plan does not indicate that inconsistencies are being created by the new General Plan. When the LDC was adopted, it was anticipated that community plan updates, or the General Plan Update, could contain policies or recommendations that would best be implemented through new zoning packages or regulations. Policy LU-F.1 calls for the City to “apply existing or new LDC zone packages or other regulations as needed to better implement the policy recommendations” of the City’s land use plans. The majority of LDC amendments to implement new land use designations and new land use policy direction will occur as part of the first cluster of community plan updates, beginning in Spring 2008 and continuing through FY 2009.

#### Economic Prosperity Element

The Draft Economic Prosperity Element (EPE) proposes a balanced approach to economic prosperity through both economic diversity and protection of industries which contribute the most to the region’s economy. Base sector industries bring new wealth to the region by exporting goods, services, and intellectual property. In San Diego, the economic base is primarily composed of industries in the manufacturing, visitor industries, technological industries, and national security and international relations sectors. The amount of non-base sector uses such as public sector uses, commercial services, and retail is directly proportionate to the size of the population and strength of the economic base. While non-base sector uses provide

essential services and jobs for residents, they cannot expand beyond the capacity of the economic base on which they are dependent. The EPE seeks to retain approximately half of the City's industrial land (this percentage will increase after the Otay Mesa community plan update) for base sector uses primarily through identification and protection of industrial lands, heightened analysis for proposals that would convert or collocate with industrial lands, and a menu of community plan land use designations (found in the Land Use and Community Planning Element, Table LU-4).

Prime Industrial Lands (PIL) have been mapped to comprehensively identify industrial areas that are critical to sustaining the City's economic base, as shown in **Attachment 5.a**. The boundaries in each community are depicted in more detail in **Attachment 5.b**. These lands were mapped to ensure that a high level of scrutiny is applied when evaluating future discretionary projects; however, the PIL map does not redesignate or rezone property, nor does it influence the processing of ministerial permits. While some base sector uses can occur in office settings, and office uses are permitted in varying degrees in the industrial land use designations, the industrial land protections are specifically designed to help ensure that land remains available for the types of industrial uses that rely on chemicals, trucks, or other potentially hazardous substances, and/or need operating flexibility that may not be compatible with other land uses. To protect the industries that use these lands, as well as the health and safety of the neighbors of industrial lands, staff proposes to prohibit the mixing of industrial uses in these areas with potentially sensitive uses.

The PIL Matrix (see **Attachment 5.c**) describes how such lands were identified in each community. The list of communities with PIL (see **Attachment 5.d**) and community recommended maps (see **Attachment 5.e**) specify which community planning groups recommended boundaries that differ from staff's analysis (Navajo, Scripps Ranch, and Kearny Mesa).

New language presented in the Public Hearing Draft General Plan (Policy EP-A.12) allows for future amendments to the PIL map boundaries to occur, if warranted, based on analysis that would occur through the community planning process. Please note that some copies of the Draft General Plan were printed with an error: Policy EP-A.12.a should conclude with the word identification, rather than designation. This revised language, and additional corrections to the EPE, is provided in Attachment 3.

In recognition of the need for additional workforce housing closer to jobs, the EPE specifies that non prime-industrial lands may convert to residential uses, if justified, based on an analysis of suitability factors and the contribution of the area in question to the local economy, and subject to certain requirements such as a distance separation between industrial and residential uses. Collocation (the integration of residential and industrial uses on the same premises) is encouraged in industrial areas where non-industrial uses, such as commercial retail and office uses, predominate.

The Draft General Plan provides a menu of seven "Community Plan Designations" that fall under the General Plan "Industrial/Employment" land use category. These designations are to be applied through the community plan update/amendment process. The designations offer a hierarchy of industrial land use choices, including: "Scientific Research," which focuses on scientific research and product development; "Business Park-Residential," which allows a wide range of employment and residential uses; "International Business & Trade," which combines the uses permitted in the Business Park and Light Industrial designations allowing for office, research and development, light manufacturing and other uses; and "Heavy Industrial," which provides for industrial uses with

nuisance or hazardous characteristics, than exists in current community plans. The International Business & Trade designation was added to the September 2007 Draft in response to public comment, and has been further edited as shown in **Attachment 3** to broaden its potential applicability beyond the border area. The Public Hearing Draft and **Attachment 3** reflect additional edits that were made as a result of public input and an effort to clarify certain policies, including:

- Recognition that future amendments to the PIL map may occur (EP-A.12)(see **Attachment 3**);
- Greater flexibility in the range of uses to be considered within PIL areas (EP-A.14 and A.15) (see Public Hearing Draft and **Attachment 3**);
- A new land use designation, International Business & Trade, was added to Table LU-4 (see **Attachment 3**, as discussed above);
- Explicit language that any of the Industrial/Employment land use designations may be applied in PIL areas, (EP-A.15) (see **Attachment 3**); and,
- Greater emphasis on providing workforce housing within or near employment areas (EP-A.6 and EP-A.11) (see Public Hearing Draft).

Several property owner representatives requested at both the Planning Commission and LU&H Committee meetings that their property be removed from the map depicting PIL. Although no properties were removed subsequent to meeting with these representatives, staff is prepared to discuss each of the properties individually if requested by the City Council at the hearing. **Attachment 5.f** provides answers to frequently asked questions regarding the PIL protections.

#### Economic Prosperity Element – Employment Development Policies

The EPE expands the traditional focus of a general plan to include a variety of economic development policies that have a less direct effect on land use, but are designed to achieve a rising standard of living. In particular, EPE Section E “Employment Development,” contains goals and policies related to the creation of high quality jobs. In the Public Hearing Draft, September 2007, staff removed all policy references to “living wages” that had been present in the October 2006 Draft General Plan. The phrase has been replaced with language that still addresses the policy goals related to achieving a rising standard of living, but with a focus on employment development rather than a determination of what constitutes an acceptable wage.

The LU&H Committee, at their hearing on December 5, 2007, recommended that the living wage language from the October 2006 Draft be reinstated in the Public Hearing Draft. Committee members cited the linkage between the creation of low-income jobs and land use decisions, the importance of wages to improving overall prosperity, and the commitment to address economic quality of life in the General Plan that began with the SFE process, as reasons for this recommendation. These recommendations are documented in **Attachment 6** of this report.

#### Recreation Element – Population-Based Parks and Equivalencies

The Draft Recreation Element acknowledges that variations exist among communities with respect to the total park and recreation facilities, and population-based park acreage. As the City evolves into a fully urbanized environment and land costs rise, the need for creative solutions to meet park and recreation needs has become increasingly important. Of primary concern is how to provide park and recreation facilities in older neighborhoods that developed prior to current park standards where there is: limited undeveloped land readily available, a lack of funding resources to enable opportunistic acquisitions, high land costs, and dual objectives for providing affordable housing and park land. The needs of urbanized neighborhoods and the potential use

of equivalencies were discussed at a joint workshop of the Planning Commission, and Park and Recreation Board on July 19, 2007. As a result of the workshop, and additional consultation with stakeholders, staff drafted edits to the Recreation Element policies that are now reflected in the Public Hearing Draft General Plan.

The Draft General Plan maintains the existing General Plan population-based park acreage, which is generally accepted to be 2.8 acres per 1,000 population, although the existing 1979 General Plan acknowledges that there is “considerable variation among the various communities (p. 312),” and calls for population-based facilities to “ideally constitute between 1.0 – 3.9 acres/1,000 population . . . (p. 316).” In previous drafts of the Recreation Element, staff had proposed a 2.4 acre per 1,000 guideline (July 2005) and introduced the concept of park “equivalencies” (October 2006). Equivalencies are alternative methods of providing recreation facilities.

Key edits to the October 2006 Draft include:

Recreation Element Tables RE-3, RE-4 and RE-5 are new and replace the previous Tables RE-3 and RE-4 from the October 2006 Draft. These new tables address park guidelines, recreational facilities, and equivalencies. More specifically:

- Table RE-3 maintains the 2.8 acres per 1,000 residents guideline, but expands the types of parks that can qualify to meet this standard and the anticipated service areas for various parks (see also Policy RE-F.8);
- Table RE-4 includes revisions to the Recreational Facilities Guidelines;
- Table RE-5 identifies guidelines for possible equivalencies; and,
- Policy RE-F.9 has been revised to delete the “enhancements” concept, to delete the direction to prepare a new Council Policy as an interim implementation tool, and to specify that any future use of equivalencies will be location-specific to be further vetted through the Parks Master Plan or community planning efforts.

A more recent edit that took place since the Planning Commission hearing, shown in **Attachment 3**, is to add language and policies to recognize that greater flexibility in the use of equivalencies will be needed in Downtown San Diego due to the limited amount of land available, and the high cost of urban land.

#### Conservation Element – Climate Change

In response to public comments and Assembly Bill 32 (the Global Warming Solutions Control Act), the Draft General Plan and the PEIR were revised to more comprehensively address global climate change. In summary, staff (1) modified the policy language of the October 2006 Draft General Plan to expand and strengthen climate change policies; (2) incorporated the related policies into the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), to ensure that policies to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions are imposed on future development and City operations; (3) prepared a Draft General Plan Action Plan to identify measures such as new or amended regulations, programs and incentives to implement the GHG reduction policies; and (4) made additional edits to the Public Hearing Draft as shown in **Attachment 3**. In previous drafts, climate change had been addressed more generally as a part of sustainability and air quality policies.



A key Conservation Element policy (CE-A.2) is to “reduce the City’s carbon footprint,” and to “develop and adopt new or amended regulations, programs and incentives as appropriate to implement the goals and policies set forth” related to climate change. Additional policies are to “collaborate with climate science experts” (CE-A.3) and to “regularly monitor and update the City’s Climate Protection Action Plan (CE-A.13).” The NR&C Committee recommended further Conservation Element edits to strengthen Policies CE-A.13, CE-I.2, and CE-A.5. These recommendations are shown on **Attachment 6** along with staff responses. The NR&C edits were largely, but not completely, incorporated into the staff recommendation.

In addition, the Draft General Plan Land Use and Community Planning; Mobility; Urban Design; and, Public Facilities, Services and Safety Elements were edited to better support GHG reduction and climate change adaptation goals. These elements contain policy language related to sustainable land use patterns, alternative modes of transportation, energy efficiency, water supply, and GHG emissions associated with landfills. Overall, the plan addresses climate change through the City of Villages strategy and a wide range of resource conservation and management policies that promote sustainable development and reduce GHG emissions.

Staff received two letters of comment related to climate change from the state Attorney General’s office, and has had a constructive dialogue with Deputy Attorney General Sandra Goldberg to ensure that the General Plan is in compliance with Assembly Bill 32. The letters from the state Attorney General’s office, along with staff’s responses, are provided in **Attachment 7**.

Climate change may affect San Diego’s long term water supply. The Draft General Plan addresses Water Infrastructure in the Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element in Section H, and Water Resources Management in the Conservation Element in Section D. The Office of the Independent Budget Analyst (IBA) issued a report on the Draft General Plan (No. 07-115) calling for Public Facilities Element Policy PF-H.1(e) to be modified to allow the City flexibility in the type of recycled water programs it pursues, including, but not limited to, potable water uses. The LU&H Committee endorsed the IBA recommendation. Staff believes that the policies, as drafted in the Public Hearing Draft, are broad enough to not preclude future water supply options.

#### Multi-Element Wild Fire-Related Edits

At the Planning Commission hearing of November 1, 2007, Planning Commissioners asked staff to better address issues related to wild fires. New language was drafted, and additional refinements were made as a result of public testimony at the January 9, 2008 NR&C meeting. The edits, shown in **Attachment 3** are summarized as follows:

- New discussion text added to Section D of the Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element to address San Diego’s fire propensity and to emphasize the importance of providing defensible space between open space and urban areas;
- Policy UD-A.3.p calls for structures to be designed to be ignition- and fire-resistant; and,
- Policy CE-B.6 calls for defensible space between open space and urban areas through the management of brush, the use of transitional landscaping, and the design of structures.

#### Historic Preservation Element

The purpose and intent of the Historic Preservation Element is to guide the preservation, protection and restoration of historical and cultural resources so that a clear sense of how the City gained its

present form and substance can be maintained. Several plan issues are addressed in the element including balancing the principles of historic preservation with the need to provide adequate housing, social institutions, and economic development for the benefit of all San Diegans; inclusion of meaningful consultation with community and preservation groups, property owners, and cultural, ethnic and racial groups that are represented in the City's historical record of development; and, the enjoyment of the benefits of historic preservation through an increased historic tourism economy and reinvestment of individual property tax savings into historical properties. The Historic Preservation Element provides policies to strengthen planning through integration of historic preservation in the larger planning process; identification, documentation, evaluation, designation, and preservation of historical resources; promoting financial and development incentives for historic property owners; development of a historic preservation sponsorship program; fostering greater public participation and education in historic preservation; and, increasing opportunities for cultural heritage tourism.

Several edits have been made to the element as part of the public participation process that strengthen preservation policies and emphasize early consideration of historical resources in the development review process, and resolution of conflicts between the preservation of historical resources and alternative land uses. An expanded discussion of establishing historic districts, where concentrations of buildings, structures, sites, landscapes, and objects, are identified has also been added. Many of the historic preservation policies will be implemented through mechanisms identified in the General Plan Action Plan. Specific historic preservation concepts and identification of historical resources will be addressed in community plan updates. Amendments to the LDC are required to implement remedies and penalties to address unlawful demolition or destruction of historical resources. Changes to the number of votes needed to designate a historical resource and the timeframe for determining the need for a site specific survey as part of the development review process would also require code amendments. New historic preservation incentives need to be developed as well as a comprehensive Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program related to historical resources, a historic preservation sponsorship program, a historic preservation mitigation fund, and a cultural heritage tourism program.

#### Other Issues/Recent Edits

Additional edits that have taken place since the public hearings started (documented in **Attachment 3**), include:

- Strategic Framework Section: Implementation:
  - At the advice of the City Attorney, the EIR Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program and the Action Plan will be incorporated by reference in the General Plan.
  - Per the recommendation of the IBA, a new paragraph has been added to describe how General Plan implementation is linked to the budget process.
- Mobility Element :
  - Edits to the Mobility Element Section A were made to explicitly describe the public health benefits of walkable communities.
  - Clarifying edits were made regarding the use of Traffic Impact Study Guidelines
- Land Use and Conservation Elements:
  - Edits were made to clarify that open space has many values and purposes.
- Economic Prosperity Element:
  - Per the recommendation of LU&H, Policy EP-L.3 has been deleted.

- Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element:
  - Per the recommendation of the IBA, a new paragraph has been added to describe how funding for operations and maintenance differs from funding for capital improvements.

### **Final Program Environmental Impact Report**

The Development Services Department has prepared a Final PEIR for the Draft General Plan. A PEIR, as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) 15168(a), is:

“An EIR which may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either geographically, as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions, in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program, or as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.”

The Final PEIR describes the environmental setting for the Draft General Plan and identifies potential environmental impacts, the significance of the potential impacts, and mitigation framework to avoid or reduce potentially significant adverse environmental impacts. It also addresses cumulative impacts, growth-inducing impacts, effects found not to be significant, irreversible environmental effects, and alternatives. The environmental setting section contains a description of the status of public facilities within the City, including detailed tables identifying park acreage by community, and extensive mapping of public facilities and/or service areas related to libraries, police facilities, fire and lifeguard facilities, and schools.

The Draft General Plan policies are designed to promote smart growth, sustainability, and environmentally responsible development. The environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the Draft General Plan were found to be significant and unavoidable in all issue areas. This determination was made not because the policies themselves are considered harmful to the environment, but because there are impacts related to population growth and uncertainty related to future implementation through community plan land use designations, applied zoning, and proposed development. As such, even the PEIR No Project alternative could result in similar or worse impacts as the Draft General Plan. Since the degree of impact and applicability, feasibility, and success of mitigation framework measures cannot be adequately known for each future specific development project at the program level of analysis, program level impacts were called out as significant and unavoidable. The PEIR concludes that the full impacts of any future specific development project under the Draft General Plan can only be determined at the project level of analysis.

The Enhanced Sustainability alternative was found to meet all of the project objectives and was identified as the environmentally superior alternative. Through the climate change edits described above, the City has incorporated the principal objectives of this alternative into the Draft General Plan, so that the Draft General Plan now approaches the level of impacts estimated to occur under the Enhanced Sustainability alternative. In addition, the City has incorporated the principal environmental objective of the Increased Parking Management alternative into the Draft General Plan to further reduce environmental effects related to air quality and traffic.

Copies of the 38 letters of comments received on the Draft PEIR, along with staff responses, are included in the Final PEIR. Staff responses to public comments are also reflected in edits made to various sections of the Final PEIR, as well as the Draft General Plan. Since the PEIR was finalized, additional General Plan policy edits and corrections have been proposed that, if approved by Council, must also be incorporated into the Final PEIR. The General Plan edits are shown in **Attachment 3**. An explanation of how these policy edits will be incorporated into the environmental document, as well as additional edits to the Final PEIR, are included in **Attachment 8**. Once the document and accompanying edits have been certified by the City Council, all of the edits will be consolidated into the document. The revisions to the PEIR and Draft General Plan serve to clarify and amplify information and mitigation in response to public comments, but do not result in the identification of new or increased environmental impacts requiring the recirculation of the PEIR. The revisions to the draft PEIR, with the exception of a new Section 9 - Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program, are shown in strikeout/underline format. The City is the lead agency for preparation and adoption of the Draft General Plan PEIR. This PEIR is intended for use by City decision-makers, other responsible or interested agencies and the general public in evaluating the potential environmental impacts that may result from the implementation of the Draft General Plan. The PEIR is provided as **Attachment 8**, under separate cover.

## **Draft General Plan Implementation**

### Long Term Implementation

Implementation of the Draft General Plan will be accomplished through a broad range of legislative and regulatory actions that will ultimately influence private and public development. Key implementation tools include: community plan and facilities financing plan updates, zoning, LDC amendments, redevelopment plans, Capital Improvement Program projects, development permits, and, resource conservation and management plans. As discussed in the PEIR, all future implementation actions would be subject to separate environmental analysis, pursuant to CEQA, to identify any potentially significant direct, indirect and/or cumulative impacts. Additional implementation actions that will follow Draft General Plan adoption include a comprehensive Infrastructure Finance Strategy; a Quimby Act/Park Fee Ordinance; additional LDC amendments and other actions. The rate at which certain types of implementation will occur is dependent on the City budget process. Through the budget process, decisions will be made to prioritize staffing and funding levels for projects and programs citywide.

When the SFE was adopted in 2002, a Five-Year Action Plan was brought forward as a companion item to identify specific measures needed to implement the element. Many of the identified action items were related to completing the comprehensive General Plan Update. To close out this Five-Year Action Plan, staff is in the process of preparing an updated General Plan Monitoring Report that will identify which actions have been completed, are underway, or not completed. A new General Plan Action Plan has been partially drafted and is attached to this report as an information item (see **Attachment 9**). Within 60 days subsequent to the City Council's adoption of the Draft General Plan, this new Action Plan, along with the updated General Plan Monitoring Report, will be brought forward in final form, beginning with the Planning Commission.

### Companion Item Code Amendments

Two code changes, the expiration of the Tier system and the relocation of the plan amendment initiation process from Chapter 12 in the LDC to the Land Use and Community Planning Element, require immediate attention. These policy changes affect multiple sections of the code,

albeit in a fairly minor way. Most of the code revisions involve changes in terminology to maintain consistent wording between the LDC and the General Plan.

*Tier System Code Changes.* The General Plan, in recognition of the developed condition of the City's land supply, no longer includes the tier (Phased Development Areas) system of "Urbanized," "Planned Urbanizing," and "Future Urbanizing." As explained in the Draft General Plan, and as analyzed in the PEIR, the phased development areas system has become an outdated system to address future growth and development. In 2008, the City is more accurately described as a jurisdiction with primarily two tiers:

- Proposition A Lands – lands subject to the 1985 Managed Growth Initiative characterized by very low-density, residential, open space, natural resource-based park, and agricultural uses; and,
- Urbanized Lands – characterized by older, recently developed, and developing communities at urban and suburban levels of density and intensity.

Although no longer useful as a tool to address future growth and development, the tier system has also served, in the LDC, as a vehicle to apply different sets of development regulations to different geographic areas of the City. The LDC has included multiple sets of regulations in recognition of the different development patterns and character present in neighborhoods throughout the City depending upon age and location. It is necessary, therefore, to amend the code to provide another system to maintain the application of the regulations to the same communities. The proposed amendments include a new section of the code, Section 131.0105 Development Character Areas, which follows the former tier system terminology and boundaries, it divides the City into three "character areas:" Proposition A Lands, Planned Urbanized, and Urbanized. Additionally, many of the amendments simply address the terminology change from Future Urbanizing to Proposition A Lands throughout the code.

Two sections: § 123.0104, Applications for Zoning or Rezoning in the Planned Urbanizing Area, and §125.0442, Exception Findings for Tentative Maps in the Planned Urbanizing Area are also proposed for deletion. These code sections were first adopted in the early 1980s to address rezonings and tentative maps prior to the preparation of community plans. All of the City's land area is now covered by land use plans (such as a community, subarea, specific or framework plan). As a result, these code sections are obsolete.

*Deletion of § 122.0103 – § 122.0104.* With the adoption of the General Plan Update, and as described and analyzed in the PEIR, the plan amendment initiation process will be returned to a policy setting, the Land Use and Community Plan Element. The plan amendment initiation process is unique to the City. The process was first housed in a Council Policy, adopted in 1986, to address an ever growing number of proposed amendments to the City's Progress Guide and General Plan and community plans. The City Council was concerned about multiple amendments changing or thwarting the achievement of the vision and goals contained in the City's land use documents, especially the community plans. The Council Policy provisions were slightly revised and moved to the LDC as part of the Zoning Code Update.

The initiation process has never been an easy fit as a regulation within the LDC. It is a non-noticed public hearing, and although Planning Commission is the decision-maker it is not considered a Process 4 (or any Process). If denied, the applicant may request that the City Council

consider the item, but this is not technically an appeal because the decision is based upon compliance with criteria. No findings are made. The Planning Commission's approval of a plan amendment initiation allows staff to accept the application and proceed with processing the plan amendment. It is not a decision on the actual project.

With the establishment of the Land Use and Community Planning Element, staff decided that the relocation of the plan amendment initiation process to the General Plan, where community plan development policies are housed, made sense. The new section in the Draft General Plan includes the same basic initiation process but the two sets of criteria have been revised and combined into a single set. The proposed LDC amendment to address this specific change deletes the sections specific to the initiation process; the sections governing the plan amendment hearing process remain.

### **Alternatives**

The LU&H Committee recommended edits to the EPE living wage language and recycled water were not incorporated into the staff recommendation. The NR&C Committee recommended edits to Policies CE-A.5 and CE-I.2 that were largely, but not completely, incorporated into the staff recommendation. These edits (shown in **Attachment 6**), or other combinations of edits suggested by various stakeholders, could be approved by the City Council as an alternative to the staff recommended Draft General Plan.

### FISCAL CONSIDERATION:

The update to the General Plan, with its emphasis on directing new growth to areas served by transit, will better position the City to compete for TransNet Smart Growth Incentive Funding, state bond measure Proposition 1C funds, and other smart growth funding sources. Action items identified in the General Plan Action Plan, which will be brought forward at a later date, will have fiscal impacts due to staffing and budgetary needs for the implementation of the updated General Plan.

### PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTION:

On January 9, and 30, 2008, the Natural Resources and Culture Committee (NR&C) reviewed the Draft General Plan Conservation, Recreation, and Historic Preservation Elements. The NR&C recommended three edits to the Conservation Element, and no changes to the Recreation Element. For the Historic Preservation Element, NR&C requested that staff provide an additional analysis of public comments in advance of the full City Council hearing. The NR&C recommendations and staff responses are included in **Attachment 6**.

The LU&H Committee has played a significant role in the General Plan Update process through workshops that have occurred over a five-year period. On December 5, 2007, LU&H held an all-day meeting to discuss the Draft General Plan. The LU&H recommended City Council approval of the Draft General Plan, with recommended edits and identification of issues that would require additional discussion at the full City Council. The LU&H recommendations, and staff responses, are included in **Attachment 6**.

## AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION ACTION:

On December 10, 2007, the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, acting in its capacity as the state designated San Diego County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC), determined that the Draft General Plan is conditionally consistent with the adopted Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCPs) for the San Diego International Airport, Montgomery Field, Brown Field, and the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. The conditions included that the City submit development projects within the areas governed by the ALUCPs to the ALUC until the City submits its development regulations used for implementing the ALUCPs and the ALUC subsequently determines that they are consistent with the ALUCPs.

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION and PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS:

Public outreach has taken place throughout the General Plan Update process. Since January 2003, over 250 workshops, forums, presentations, and working meetings have been held with community planning groups, the Community Planners Committee (CPC), the general public, and stakeholder and interest groups. Workshops and presentations have been given to the full San Diego City Council, the LU&H Committee of the City Council, and the Planning Commission (see **Attachment 10.a**). The public and stakeholders have had opportunities to both receive information and provide input on the Draft General Plan at each of these public meetings. In addition, staff has received many letters of comment, prior to the beginning of public hearings, which are listed in **Attachment 10.b**. Copies of letters received as a part of the hearing process are included in the hearing back-up materials.

- Community Planning Group Recommendation – On November 7, 2007, the CPC voted 13-3-3 to support the Draft General Plan as amended by various motions, which are documented in **Attachment 11** along with staff responses. Through Council Policy 600-9, the CPC is the recognized advisory body for preparation, adoption and amendment of the Draft General Plan. The CPC has devoted a substantial amount of time to the Draft General Plan effort and has closely followed its progress. The CPC's element-by-element motions on previous drafts are also recorded in **Attachment 11** of this report.

At their January 2008 meeting, the CPC voted to evaluate whether or not to revise their recommendation from the current format (which is to recommend approval with various conditions), to instead recommend denial unless edited in accordance with CPC's motions. This will be discussed at the CPC meeting scheduled for February 26, 2008. The results of this meeting will be verbally reported to the City Council.

- Planning Commission Recommendation – On November 8, 2007, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend City Council approval of the General Plan Update and certification of the PEIR. The Planning Commission made separate motions on each element, with recommended edits for staff and City Council consideration, as documented in **Attachment 12**.
- On January 10, 2008, the Planning Commission held a hearing to consider the first set of LDC amendments to implement the Draft General Plan, and voted unanimously to recommend City Council adoption concurrent with the Draft General Plan.

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS and PROJECTED IMPACTS:

- Overall Impact – The General Plan Update is a program of citywide significance that has drawn a great deal of public comment. The Draft General Plan is a long-range policy document that does not result in direct impacts to specific properties or individuals, as there are no changes to the application of land use designations or zoning with the General Plan Update. However, some property owners are concerned that the identification of their properties on the proposed PIL map will have an impact on their property rights.
- Environmental Impact – The City, as lead agency, has prepared a Final PEIR No. 104495 (SCH No. 2006091032) for the proposed Draft General Plan in accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines. A Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program consisting of a Mitigation Framework will be implemented. However, since the degree of impact and applicability, feasibility, and success of mitigation framework measures cannot be adequately known for each future specific development project at the program level of analysis, program level impacts were called out as significant and unavoidable. The PEIR concludes that the full impacts of any future specific development project under the Draft General Plan can only be determined at the project level of analysis.
- Housing Affordability Impact – The Draft General Plan is consistent with the adopted FY 2005-2010 Housing Element. The Housing Element identified the ongoing General Plan Update as a further step in implementing the City of Villages concept and various Housing Element action items. The Draft General Plan does not directly impact housing affordability as it does not include amendments to land uses or change planned housing capacity in the City. However, the strategy to direct housing into areas supported by public facilities and transit would provide opportunities for the development of housing at densities considered affordable.

## CONCLUSION:

The General Plan is intended to provide a strategy for the future development that values the distinctiveness of San Diego's communities while recognizing that San Diego is a major metropolis. The plan targets growth into distinctive village centers, protects the City's canyons and open spaces, strives for a sustainable use of resources, and seeks to preserve a high quality of life for future generations. The General Plan relies upon the community plans to provide the site-specific guidance that will lead to implementation of many of the General Plan policies, and the continued involvement of an engaged citizenry to monitor its implementation.

Respectfully submitted,

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Executive Director of City Planning and Development

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Nancy S. Bragado  
General Plan Program Manager  
City Planning & Community Investment

ANDERSON/BRAGADO/ah



- Attachments:
1. Public Hearing Draft General Plan (distributed under separate cover and available at: <http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/genplan/index.shtml>)
  2. General Plan Fact Sheet
  3. Staff Recommended Corrections/Edits to the Public Hearing Draft
  4. Village Propensity Map
  5. Economic Prosperity Element materials:
    - a. Citywide Prime Industrial Land Maps
    - b. Community Prime Industrial Lands Maps
    - c. Prime Industrial Lands Matrix
    - d. Communities With Prime Industrial Land
    - e. Community Group Recommended Prime Industrial Lands Map
    - f. EPE Question and Answer Sheet
  6. Council Committee Recommendations and Responses
  7. Attorney General Correspondence
  8. Final PEIR (distributed under separate cover and available at <http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/genplan/peir.shtml>) and Recommended Revisions and, Candidate Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations
  9. Working Draft Action Plan
  10. Public Contact Records:
    - a) Public Meeting Log
    - b) Public Correspondence Log
  11. CPC Motions Handout and Recommendations Matrix
  12. Planning Commission Motions and Recommendations

Note: Due to the size of the attachments, its distribution will be limited to the Council binders and the City website (<http://www.sandiego.gov/city-clerk/officialdocs/legisdocs/index.shtml>). A copy is also available for review in the Planning Division, located in the City Administration Building, 202 C Street, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, and in the Office of the City Clerk.