



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

DATE ISSUED: **July 1, 2009**

REPORT NO. **09-096**

ATTENTION: Council President and City Council  
**Agenda of July 7, 2009**

SUBJECT: **GENERAL PLAN ACTION PLAN**

REFERENCE: City Council Report Nos. 09-021, 08-091, 08-019  
Planning Commission Report Nos. 08-153, 07-158

REQUESTED ACTION:

Approval of the General Plan Action Plan

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the General Plan Action Plan (Attachment 1).

SUMMARY:

**General Plan Update**

On March 10, 2008, the City Council adopted an update to the General Plan, which 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. The policies within the General Plan provide guidance for the physical development of the City and are used to: guide community plan updates; review discretionary permits and provide direction for public projects, master plans, and other implementation programs. The next step to achieve implementation of the goals and policies in the adopted General Plan will be through the adoption of a General Plan Action Plan, which will provide a comprehensive implementation program for the General Plan and outline the strategies and tools needed to bring together policy and action. After City Council approval, the General Plan Action Plan (Action Plan) will be deemed incorporated into the General Plan by reference. The implementation measures identified in the Action Plan must be consistent with the policies in the General Plan.

### **General Plan Implementation**

After the adoption of a General Plan, the planning agency is required per California State Law to identify and make recommendations to the local legislative body on reasonable and practical implementation measures. The State of California General Plan Guidelines (2003) identify that a general plan is typically implemented through zoning, subdivisions, and capital improvement programs. The Action Plan has been prepared to provide a broad range of actions to implement each of the adopted General Plan policies.

The Action Plan has been developed collaboratively with the assistance of many City Departments. Those with key roles in implementation have been actively involved in reviewing drafts of the Action Plan and crafting implementation measures for policies related to their department functions and work programs.

### **Overview**

The Action Plan is structured consistent with the General Plan and organized into nine tables that correspond with the adopted General Plan elements: Land Use & Community Planning; Mobility; Urban Design; Economic Prosperity; Public Facilities, Services and Safety; Recreation; Conservation; Noise; and Historic Preservation. The implementation program for the Housing Element is included within that element under separate cover due to mandatory compliance requirements. Each General Plan policy is identified by number and associated with an implementation action(s).

Each of the nine tables contains ongoing, short-, mid-, and long-term actions associated with the implementation of General Plan policies. Ongoing actions are defined as those with no definite completion date and which are part of the ongoing City work program or standard City practices. Short-term actions are those anticipated to be completed within 0-3 years, mid-term actions within 3-5 years, and long-term actions within 5-10 years. Some General Plan policies will be implemented through City processes currently in place such as the development review process. However, other policies will need to be implemented through specific actions such as amendments to the Land Development Code. The Action Plan also identifies which departments are responsible for carrying out each action. Often, multiple departments may share implementation responsibility.

The Action Plan will need to be periodically updated to reflect progress on implementation or to reflect shifting budget priorities. Changes to the Action Plan that further the goals and policies of the General Plan and do not obstruct their attainment will be considered consistent with the General Plan and will not require an amendment to the General Plan. Any changes to specific actions will be recorded to ensure that a clear record is maintained.

### **Issues and Edits**

During the public input process, comments were received from the City Council Committees, the Planning Commission, the Community Planners Committee and other interested parties which have resulted in edits to the Action Plan. Substantive changes to the draft that have occurred after the Planning Commission and Committee meetings are shown in strikeout/underline text. Edits shown in strikeout/ underline were made to Historic Preservation Actions 5, 14, and 18 and Conservation Actions 4 and 16 to include additional detail from the General Plan and clarify the actions. Prior to final printing, staff will correct any formatting, grammatical or terminology errors as needed that do not affect content.

Comments received from the public and interested stakeholders have primarily addressed four issue areas, as discussed below:

1. Reduced staffing and resources due to budget impacts may affect the scope and rate of implementation of action items. Most actions are identified within reasonable timeframes for completion considering existing work programs. However, some actions, such as the Land Development Code amendments, have been identified as short-term actions because of their immediate importance in implementing the General Plan vision, but will need additional resources and/or staffing to complete within the timeframes specified.
2. The Action Plan was developed at a general level to provide a citywide overview of implementation; more specific details are found in the various responsible departments' work programs. The current format and structure of the Action Plan facilitates the monitoring of General Plan implementation that will take place on an annual basis. In response to public comments, edits were made to clarify the purpose and scope of the Action Plan, and to its relationship to the General Plan and community plans.
3. Climate Change Initiatives are identified as one of the eight priority actions. Encompassed within this are actions addressing sustainable buildings, including an update to Council Policy 900-14 – Sustainable Building Policy, which is currently underway. In response to public interest in climate change and specifically sustainable building, Action Plan edits were made to expand the climate change discussion and refine some of the actions, and additional detail will be provided through an upcoming update to the City's Climate Protection Action Plan.
4. Ten community plans are in the update or major amendment process, or have funding identified and are scheduled to begin the update process in the near future. This represents an aggressive community plan update program. Increased funding and staffing would need to be identified to begin additional community plan updates. Edits were made to clarify the Action Plan's relationship to the General Plan and community plans.

### **Implementation Priorities**

The Action Plan highlights eight key actions which are critical to General Plan implementation. Additional details on funding and timeframes and a description of the eight key actions are provided due to their importance in implementing the General Plan. The actions are complementary and together form the core of the implementation program.

- Community Plan Updates

The implementation and refinement of citywide goals and policies as applied to individual communities will be accomplished primarily through the update of the City's community plans. A table provided on page AP-6 of Action Plan identifies community plans that are in the update process or scheduled to begin in the near future. Additional community plans are also in need of update. As staffing and funding becomes available to begin additional updates or as plan updates identified below are completed, updates of the remaining community plans will commence.

- Climate Change Initiatives

The City of San Diego General Plan incorporates policies which address local Greenhouse Gas Emission (GHG) mitigation strategies. The Action Plan identifies some of the steps that the City can take to help meet state and local targets. However, more detailed implementation will need to be developed through the update of the City's Climate Protection Action Plan.

- Water Supply & Conservation Efforts

An adequate and reliable water supply is vital for the future of San Diego. This action will cover the multiple efforts by the City to address the water shortage for current and future residents through increasing water supply and promoting conservation. The Water Department is actively pursuing ways to increase our water supplies and our options. This includes maximizing all local alternatives and reaching out to regional partners. The City is committed to leading by example and to conserving water use within every department. A key part of the City's strategy is to promote conservation through education and incentive programs in partnership with the San Diego County Water Authority.

- Land Development Code (LDC) Amendments

LDC amendments will take place to provide zoning packages to implement land use designations or site-specific recommendations, as part of the regular Land Development Code update process, or as stand-alone amendments needed to implement specific policies in the General Plan related to the Conservation, Mobility, and Urban Design elements. The amendments identified throughout the Action Plan have been assigned a timeframe according to priority. Additional funding will need to be identified to provide for staffing or consultant services to accomplish the amendments in the timeframes specified.

- Public Facilities Finance Strategy

The Public Facilities Financing Strategy will be a companion document to the General Plan and will establish a plan of action to address the provision of public facilities within the City. The purpose of the strategy is to identify practical financing mechanisms and reasonable methods for providing currently needed and future public facilities. Facilities Financing staff has begun initial work on developing the strategy.

- Economic Development Strategic Plan

The Economic Development Strategic Plan will further refine the goals and policies of the Economic Prosperity Element, report on economic trends, describe targeted industry clusters, inform infrastructure and land use priorities, develop strategies for addressing near- to mid-term economic issues, and identify new initiatives for public and private partnership. The Plan is currently being updated and will be completed with existing staffing.

- Parks Master Plan

The Parks Master Plan will be a comprehensive, citywide plan to guide park and open space acquisition, design and development, recreational programming and needed maintenance over the next 20-30 years. The preparation of a Parks Master Plan will require consultant services and funding will need to be allocated to complete this work within the timeframe identified.

- Historic Preservation Incentives

The Historical Resources Board has established an Incentives Subcommittee to research and evaluate specific incentives, including proposals for a Transfer of Development

Rights program. The Incentives Subcommittee is meeting monthly and will refer specific proposals to the full Board and onto the City Council for implementation. Existing Historical Resources staff is working with the subcommittee to develop the program.

### **General Plan Monitoring**

In compliance with state law, an annual progress report on general plan implementation and progress on meeting housing element goals must be prepared and submitted to the state Office of Planning & Research and the Department of Housing & Community Development. After the adoption of the Action Plan, annual monitoring will take place to evaluate progress on General Plan implementation. Monitoring of specific actions will focus on those actions identified as short-, mid-, or long-term. Ongoing actions are included to provide a comprehensive plan for implementation but because they are part of current city practices or programs, there will not be detailed annual monitoring on those actions.

### **Strategic Framework Action Plan**

When the Strategic Framework Element 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 has prepared a final report to identify which actions have been completed, are underway, or were not completed (Attachment 2). The new Action Plan is more comprehensive than the Strategic Framework Action Plan and will replace it for purposes of monitoring. The Strategic Framework Action Plan and the subsequent 2004 Monitoring Report included economic and sustainable community indicators. Both sets of indicators are in the process of being reviewed to determine the usefulness of the indicators and how monitoring might be accomplished on a regular basis.

### **Environmental Analysis**

The preparation of the Action Plan was anticipated at the time of the General Plan Update and was analyzed in the Program Environmental Impact Report No. 104495 prepared for the General Plan and certified on March 10, 2008. The Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) included within the Final Environmental Impact Report for the General Plan provides a Mitigation Framework to address potential impacts that could result from implementation of the General Plan. The General Plan Action Plan will provide a bridge between the Mitigation Framework in the MMRP and more specific, refined mitigation measures. Actions identified in the Action Plan will be subject to separate environmental analysis, pursuant to CEQA, to identify any potentially significant direct, indirect and/or cumulative impacts.

### **Alternatives**

The Action Plan is based on General Plan adopted on March 10, 2008 by the City Council and provides implementation measures for the adopted policies. The City Council could adopt the Action Plan, adopt the Action Plan with recommended edits or return the Action Plan to staff for further refinements.

### **FISCAL CONSIDERATION:**

The preparation of the General Plan Action Plan was completed with existing staff funded through the General Fund.

The rate at which implementation will occur is dependent upon the City budget process. Specific actions may have fiscal impacts due to staffing and budgetary needs. Through the budget process, decisions will be made to prioritize staffing and funding levels for projects and programs citywide. As such, it may not be possible to complete each of the actions within the timeframe specified. The General Plan monitoring report will be used to track implementation progress and adjust implementation timeframes or priorities as needed.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTION:

A Land Use & Housing Committee Workshop was held on June 18, 2008. The committee did not take action but did provide general comments on the Action Plan. On March 11, 2009, the LU&H Committee reviewed the Action Plan and recommended approval of the Action Plan to City Council. Councilmember Lightener requested that appendix A of the Action Plan be expanded to include the type of environmental document prepared for the last update of each community plan. Appendix A has been updated to include environmental documents. An informational update was provided to the Natural Resources and Culture Committee on January 28, 2009. On April 22, 2009, the NR&C committee reviewed implementation actions for the Recreation and Conservation elements and also actions related to water, wastewater, and storm water. NR&C emphasized the importance of continuing the work on the update to the Climate Protection Action Plan. The committee unanimously recommended forwarding the Action Plan to City Council for adoption.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION and PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS:

The Action Plan has been distributed for public review through the General Plan e-mail interest list, presented to citywide committees and other interested parties, and posted to the City's website since the fall of 2007. Additionally, the Action Plan was presented or discussed at the following meetings: Community Planners' Committee on May 27, 2008, November 25, 2008, and January 27, 2009; Technical Advisory Committee on May 14, 2008, November 12, 2008, and February 11, 2009; Community Forest Advisory Board on June 11, 2008 and October 15, 2008; AIA COTE Subcommittee on July 11, 2008; Sustainable Energy Advisory Board Subcommittee on August 2, 2008; Council of Design Professionals on August 12, 2008; and the Historic Preservation Incentives Subcommittee on August 11, 2008.

**Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission hearing on the General Plan Action Plan began on December 4, 2008 and concluded on February 19, 2009. At the December 4<sup>th</sup> hearing Planning Commissioners heard the staff report and public comment, offered initial comments on the Draft Action Plan, and made requests for additional information. Planning Commissioners generally agreed that the items identified as the key implementation actions in the Draft Action Plan were the highest priority action items, and specifically sought CPC's review of these items. The hearing was continued until February 19, 2009. Staff returned to the February 19 hearing with additional information as requested and some edits based on the comments received at the prior hearing and from the Community Planners Committee. The Planning Commission recommended that the City Council approve the General Plan Action Plan with a unanimous vote. Some commissioners emphasized the need for a comprehensive green building program and that implementation priorities may need to shift over time.

### **Community Planners Committee**

On January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the CPC recommended a prioritized ranking of the key General Plan implementation actions by a vote of 23-1-1 (Attachment 6). Each CPC member cast a vote for their top three implementation actions. The results were tallied and the actions ranked in order of voting totals. Community Plan Update, Climate Change Initiatives; and the Parks Master Plan were ranked as the top three priorities. CPC also recommended that an eighth key implementation action on water conservation be added to the list. Staff has included an eighth key implementation action on water supply and conservation efforts.

### **Technical Advisory Committee**

The Action Plan has been presented and discussed three times at the Technical Advisory Committee. The committee did not make a formal recommendation but has indicated a general agreement with the direction of the Action Plan.

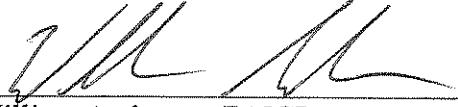
### **KEY STAKEHOLDERS and PROJECTED IMPACTS (if applicable):**

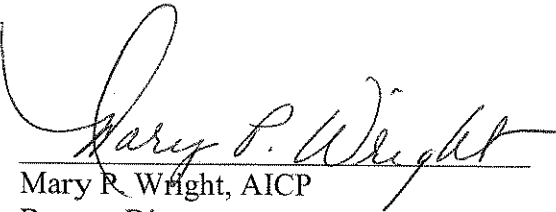
The Action Plan will identify actions that may have citywide or specific impacts dependent upon the specific action.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Action Plan has been developed as the connective link between the policy vision expressed in the General Plan and implementation. The adoption of the Action Plan will result in an instrument for the continued monitoring of General Plan implementation to ensure that the vision of the General Plan is implemented through the City's actions.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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ANDERSON/WRIGHT/BRAGADO/MCD

- Attachments:
1. General Plan Action Plan
  2. Strategic Framework Action Plan 2008 Monitoring Report
  3. City Council Committee Actions
  4. Planning Commission Resolution
  5. Planning Commission Minutes
  6. CPC Minutes
  7. Correspondence