



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 19, 2007

FACT SHEET

**MAYOR SANDERS ANNOUNCES DRAFT GENERAL PLAN
READY FOR PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW**

***WHEN ADOPTED, CITY'S 'BLUEPRINT FOR FUTURE GROWTH' WILL BE MOST
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE SINCE 1979***

Mayor Jerry Sanders announced today that the City's Draft General Plan, its constitution for development, has completed a formal public input phase that began October 25, 2006, and will be heading to the Planning Commission for review on November 1. Public comment on the Draft General Plan will still be accepted as the plan continues to move forward for review by the Planning Commission, the Council's Land Use and Housing Committee, and the full City Council.

WHAT IS THE GENERAL PLAN?

The General Plan is the foundation upon which all land use decisions in the City are based. It expresses a citywide vision and provides a comprehensive policy framework for how the City should grow and develop, provide public services, and maintain the qualities that define the City of San Diego over the next 20 to 30 years. The Draft General Plan does not change land use designations or zoning on individual properties, but rather provides policy direction for future community plan updates, discretionary project review, and implementation programs.

San Diego's General Plan was last updated comprehensively in 1979—a time when the City had thousands of acres of undeveloped land. Because less than 4 percent of the City's land now remains vacant and available for new development, the plan's policies represent a shift in focus from how to develop vacant land to how to design infill development and reinvest in existing communities.

A NEW GENERAL PLAN FOR SAN DIEGO'S FUTURE GROWTH

- The General Plan provides policy guidance to balance the needs of a growing city while enhancing quality of life for current and future San Diegans.
- It is comprised of an introductory Strategic Framework Chapter, which includes the plan's Guiding Principles, followed by 10 elements that taken together provide a comprehensive "blueprint" for the City of San Diego's growth over the next 20 plus years. The Housing Element, one of the 10 elements, was adopted under separate cover in December 2006.
- It provides a primary strategy, the City of Villages, for how the City can enhance its many communities and neighborhoods as growth occurs over time.

WHAT IS THE CITY OF VILLAGES STRATEGY?

The City of Villages strategy focuses growth into mixed-use villages that are pedestrian-friendly districts, of different scales, linked to an improved regional transit system. The strategy was first adopted as a part of the Strategic Framework Element of the General Plan in 2002.

The strategy draws upon the character and strengths of San Diego's:

- natural environment
- neighborhoods
- commercial centers
- institutions
- employment centers

The strategy is designed to sustain the long-term economic, environmental, and social health of the City and its many communities. It recognizes the value of San Diego's distinctive neighborhoods and open spaces that together form the City as a whole.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A "VILLAGE"?

- A "village" is a place where a mix of residential, commercial, employment, and civic uses are present and integrated.
- Each village will be unique to the community in which it is located, yet all villages will be pedestrian-friendly, and characterized by inviting, accessible and attractive streets and public spaces.
- Individual villages will offer a variety of housing types affordable for people with different incomes and needs.
- By directing growth primarily toward village centers, the strategy works to preserve established residential neighborhoods, to efficiently provide public facilities, and manage the City's growth over the long term.

WHAT ARE THE DRAFT GENERAL PLAN'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES?

- An open space network formed by parks, canyons, river valleys, habitats, beaches, and oceans
- Diverse residential communities formed by the open space network
- Compact and walkable mixed-use villages of different scales within communities
- Employment centers for a strong economy
- An integrated regional transportation network of transit, roadways, and freeways that efficiently link communities and villages to each other and to employment centers
- High quality, affordable, and well-maintained public facilities to serve the City's population, workers, and visitors
- Historic districts and sites that respect our heritage
- Balanced communities that offer opportunities for all San Diegans and share citywide responsibilities
- A clean and sustainable environment
- A high aesthetic standard

THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The General Plan includes the Strategic Framework, an introductory section of the General Plan that describes the role and purpose of the General Plan, outlines the City of Villages strategy, presents 10 Guiding Principles that helped to shape the General Plan, and summarizes the plan's 10 elements.

THE 10 ELEMENTS OF THE GENERAL PLAN

- Land Use and Community Planning Element
- Mobility Element
- Urban Design Element
- Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element
- Recreation Element
- Economic Prosperity Element
- Conservation Element
- Historic Preservation Element
- Noise Element
- Housing Element

LAND USE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING ELEMENT

The Land Use and Community Planning Element of the General Plan contains policy direction for implementing the City of Villages strategy, provides citywide land use policies, and establishes community plans as integral components of the General Plan. It includes a General Plan Land Use and Streets Map, which is a compilation of adopted community plan land use and circulation system maps.

What's New?

- The 1979 General Plan did not include a citywide land use element, relying instead on community plans
- Policies support changes in development patterns to combine multiple uses in village centers
- Sets the stage for more focused community plans that will work in concert with the General Plan
- Categorizes 160 community plan designations currently in use into 26 recommended community plan designations for application in future plan updates
- Relies upon community plan updates/amendments to designate village sites
- No land use designation or zoning changes will occur concurrently with the update

What's Controversial?

- Overall, some planning groups and citizen activists are opposed to the City of Villages strategy as it plans for future growth to occur in the City, and they would prefer to minimize new growth.
- Some planning groups would prefer the existing community planning program where, in practice, the General Plan is rarely used and each community plan functions as a complete general/community plan for their geographic area.

MOBILITY ELEMENT

The Mobility Element advances a strategy for congestion relief and increased transportation choices in a manner that strengthens the City of Villages land use vision. Policies call for working proactively with regional agencies to plan and fund transportation projects/services that the City needs. The “Transit/Land Use Connections Map” shows the relationship between existing and planned transit services and the City’s planned land uses.

What's New?

- “Toolboxes” (illustrated tables) are proposed that provide citywide direction while recognizing the need for site-specific solutions to community parking and traffic issues
- The 2007 General Plan will have a greater emphasis on considering all forms of transportation—pedestrian, bicycling, mass transit, city streets, freeways, etc.—than in the past.
- Edits to the October 2006 Draft include the addition of discussion and policies related to maintenance.

What's Controversial?

- City of Villages strategy relies on an improved transit system, but regional funding is not adequate to dramatically improve transit services at this time.

URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

The General Plan's Urban Design Element establishes a set of design principles from which future physical design decisions can be based. Policies call for respecting San Diego's natural topography and distinctive neighborhoods, providing public art, and encouraging the development of walkable, transit-oriented communities.

PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES AND SAFETY ELEMENT

The General Plan's Facilities, Services and Safety Element includes policies on the prioritization and provision of public facilities and services, evaluation of new growth, guidelines for implementing a financing strategy, and guidelines for the provision of specific facilities.

What's New?

- Recognizes that there is a public facilities deficit
- Calls for facilities deficiencies to be remedied through diverse funding resources
- Calls for broader areas of benefit when establishing assessment districts
- Updates facilities guidelines to take into account infill development needs
- Edits were made to the October 2006 Draft to clarify and refine financing and prioritization policies
- Additional policies were added to address climate change impacts and disaster preparedness

What's Controversial?

- Some people would prefer to stop development from occurring until public facilities deficiencies are remedied. The plan policies instead support continued growth, as long as development pays its fair share and does not make matters worse.

RECREATION ELEMENT

The Recreation Element seeks to acquire, develop, operate/maintain, increase and enhance public recreation opportunities and facilities throughout the City. The element contains guidelines for park and recreation facilities and presents alternative strategies to meet those guidelines.

What's New?

- Calls for the creation of a comprehensive, citywide Parks Master Plan to guide park and open space acquisition, design and development, recreational programming and needed maintenance over the next 20-30 years.

- Maintains existing guidelines for a minimum of 2.8 useable acres of population-based park land to be provided per for every 1,000 residents, and provides policy direction for the future Parks Master Plan to explore “equivalencies” as an opportunity to meet a portion of population-based park needs. Equivalencies policies originally included in the October 2006 Draft General Plan were edited in response to public comments.
- Provides a Park Guidelines table and Facilities Guidelines table which outline minimum standards and strategies for development of population-based park and recreation facilities. Expands the types of parks that can count toward fulfilling population-based park guidelines.

What’s Controversial?

- Allowing the use of equivalencies which: 1) may result in additional recreational facilities, but not necessarily additional park land, and 2) allows portions of resource-based parks (e.g., Balboa Park and Mission Bay Park) to satisfy population-based park needs. The redrafted language responds to previous public input.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY ELEMENT

The Economic Prosperity Element of the General Plan includes policies aimed at supporting an innovative and sustainable local economy, and achieving a rising standard of living for San Diego’s workforce.

This element includes policies to protect remaining industrial lands.

What’s New and Controversial?

- Inclusion of a Prime Industrial Land map that identifies lands that should be preserved for industrial use. The map does not redesignate property; it is to be used in plan updates, amendments, and discretionary project review.
- An industrial lands conversion/collocation policy that sets forth criteria for where residential uses are appropriately mixed with employment uses.
- Edits were made to refine the approach to industrial lands protections and employment/wages issues.

CONSERVATION ELEMENT

The Conservation Element of the General Plan calls for the City to be a model for sustainable development, to address climate change impacts, and to preserve quality of life in San Diego.

Policies under this element are designed to:

- conserve natural resources
- protect unique landforms
- preserve and manage our open space and canyon systems, beaches and watercourses
- prevent and reduce pollution
- reduce the City’s carbon footprint
- promote clean technology industries

What's New?

- A focus on climate change including an expanded discussion and a new table that identifies climate change issues and provided references to where related policies can be found throughout the General Plan.
- Policies that address sustainable building and practices that reduce global climate change.
- Policies that address reducing emissions which contribute to global climate change.
- Policies to encourage clean tech industries to benefit San Diego's environment and economy.
- Incorporation of policies (here and in other elements, such as the Recreation Element) to support aspects of the *Canyonlands* initiative.

What's Controversial?

- The City's revised policies addressing climate change will be highly scrutinized.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT

The Historic Preservation Element of the General Plan strives to guide the preservation, protection, restoration and rehabilitation of historical and cultural resources so that a clear sense of how the City gained its present form and substance can be maintained.

NOISE ELEMENT

The Noise Element of the General Plan contains policies addressing compatible land uses and the incorporation of noise abatement measures for new uses to protect people from living and working in an excessive noise environment. It includes a matrix that identifies compatible, conditionally compatible, and incompatible land uses by noise decibel level.

What's New?

- Various edits were made to Table NE-3 – Land Use –Noise Compatibility Guidelines

HOUSING ELEMENT

The Housing Element of the General Plan serves as a comprehensive plan with specific measurable goals, policies, and programs to address the City's critical housing needs. The Housing Element update was adopted by the City Council under separate cover on December 5, 2006.

OPPORTUNITY FOR FINAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The Draft General Plan is available on the City of San Diego's Web site at www.sandiego.gov.

Printed copies will be available by early October for review at all City libraries and community service centers, and at the City Planning Division's office, City Administration Building, 202 C, 4th Floor, Street in Downtown San Diego.

The draft will also be made available on compact disc and as a complete printed document, for a discounted cost of reproduction. For more information, contact (619) 235-5200.

Comments on the draft General Plan, or requests for presentations, should be directed to: Nancy Bragado, General Plan Program Manager, City of San Diego, City Planning & Community Investment Department, 202 C Street, MS 5A, San Diego, CA 92101, or nsbragado@sandiego.gov.

In addition, the City of San Diego Land Development Review division distributed a draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Draft General Plan (Project No. 104495, SCH No. 2006091032) on April 26, 2007. The public comment period for the Draft PEIR closed on June 25, 2007.

The Final Program Environmental Impact Report will be available along with the General Plan at the locations listed above, and will be posted on City of San Diego at <http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/genplan/index.shtml>

DRAFT GENERAL PLAN TIMELINE

- **January 2003** - General Plan update process begins; public outreach efforts begin
- **October 25, 2006** - (delete - Final public review process begins) add: Draft General Plan released for public review
- **December 5, 2006** - Housing Element adopted by City Council
- **April 26, 2007** - Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Plan distributed to public
- **September 19, 2007** - Revised Draft General Plan released to the public for review
- **November 1, 2007** - Draft General Plan goes before Planning Commission
- **December 5, 2007** - Draft General Plan goes before Land Use and Housing Committee
- **Early 2008** - Draft General Plan goes before the City Council for approval

The public is encouraged to review the Final Draft General Plan and testify at the hearings.
Changes may be made to the Draft General Plan until the Council adopts it.

THE GENERAL PLAN ONLINE

The Draft General Plan is available online at the General Plan home page:
<http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/genplan/index.shtml>