San Diego County General Plan

A Plan for Growth, Conservation, and Sustainability

August 2011

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION

I hereby certify that this is the text and exhibits of the San Diego County General Plan, and that it was considered by the San Diego County Planning Commission during nine hearings from November 6, 2009 through the 20th day of August 2010, and adopted by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on the 3rd day of August 2011.

Attest: MARK WARDLAW, Director
Planning & Development Services

Amendments

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CHAPTER 1 Introduction

Overview of the General Plan

This document is the first comprehensive update of the San Diego County General Plan since 1978 and is the result of the collective efforts of elected and appointed officials, community groups, individuals, and agencies who spent countless hours developing a framework for the future growth and development of the unincorporated areas of the County. This document replaces the previous General Plan and is based on a set of guiding principles designed to protect the County's unique and diverse natural resources and maintain the character of its rural and semi-rural communities. It reflects an environmentally sustainable approach to planning that balances the need for adequate infrastructure, housing, and economic vitality, while maintaining and preserving each unique community within the County, agricultural areas, and extensive open space.

Rural landscape

Public meeting

Lakeside community

The General Plan directs future growth in the unincorporated areas of the County with a projected capacity that will accommodate more than 232,300 existing and future homes. This growth is targeted to occur primarily in the western portions of the unincorporated County where there is the opportunity for additional development. Compared to the previous General Plan, this update reduces housing capacity by 15 percent and shifts 20 percent of future growth from eastern backcountry areas to western communities. This change reflects the County's commitment to a sustainable growth model that facilitates efficient development near infrastructure and services, while respecting sensitive natural resources and protection of existing community character in its extensive rural and semi-rural communities. The General Plan provides a renewed basis for the County's diverse communities to develop Community Plans that are specific to and reflective of their unique character and environment consistent with the County's vision for its future.

What Is a General Plan?

State law requires each city and county to prepare and adopt a comprehensive and long-range general plan for its physical development. The General Plan provides a consistent framework for land use and development decisions consistent with an established community vision. As the equivalent of a local "constitution" for land use and development, the General Plan's diagrams, goals, and policies form the basis for the County's zoning, subdivision, and infrastructure decisions. A number of important themes that are integral components of the County's vision for its future are woven throughout the General Plan rather than structured as separate elements such as community character, environmental sustainability, and global warming. As required by State law, the seven required elements of the General Plan are highly correlated and are presented in six chapters of the San Diego County General Plan as shown in the following matrix.

San Diego County General Plan Elements	Legally Required General Plan Topics						
	Lands Use	Circulation	Housing	Conservation	Open Space	Noise	Safety
Land Use	●						
Housing			●				
Circulation (Mobility)		●					
Conservation & Open Space				●	●		
Safety							●
Noise						●	
Implementation Plan	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

The General Plan serves as the "constitution" for decision-making regarding the County's physical development

How Is It Organized?

Following the Introduction and Vision, Chapters 3 through 8 comprise the "elements" of the General Plan required by State law. Each element includes a purpose and scope, the context of the planning issues, and the goals and policies for the various element topics. Chapter 9 describes the broad actions that implement the Plan's policies and the final chapter presents the acronyms and a glossary of terms. Map figures depicted in the General Plan are also available online or hard copies are available for purchase at the County DPLU. The General Plan also includes appendices and other documents such as community plans that are separately bound. An overview of the Plan's chapters follows:

1. **Introduction** presents information about the Plan's purpose and organization, describes the General Plan process, and provides a profile of San Diego County.
2. **Vision Statement and Guiding Principles** presents the vision and overarching themes that guided development of the goals, policies, and implementation programs.
3. **Land Use Element** presents a policy framework for shaping the type and location of new development and strategies to maintain and enhance existing development and community character.
4. **Circulation (Mobility) Element** provides a framework for providing a balanced, multi-modal transportation system for the movement of people and goods within the County.
5. **Conservation and Open Space Element** provides policies relating to the conservation, protection, and management of natural resources and the preservation of open space, along with provision of park and recreation resources.
6. **Housing Element** presents goals, policies, and programs designed to assist the development of housing for the County's current and future residents at all income levels.
7. **Safety Element** establishes policies that minimize the risk of personal injury, loss of life, and property and environmental damage associated with natural and man-made hazards.
8. **Noise Element** provides a process to control and abate environmental noise and to protect citizens from excessive exposure.
9. **Implementation of the General Plan** summarizes the general categories of the actions to be taken to carry out the vision of the General Plan as specified in the goals and policies. The Implementation Plan, a separate document from the General Plan, is envisioned to be a fluid document that will be used for developing annual work programs and establishing funding needs and priorities for County departments, as appropriate.
10. **Acronyms and Glossary** provides a listing and full description of acronyms used in the General Plan and a glossary that defines terminology used in the General Plan.

Appendices that provide technical information and maps in support of the elements:

- Land Use Maps are community-level maps that depict designations as color or graphic patterns that indicate allowable uses and permitted development densities or intensities.
- Mobility Element Roadway Network is depicted on community-level maps that show the road classification series and the general route of each road.
- Forest Conservation Initiative language enacted in 1993.

Separately Bound Documents

- Community Plans, adopted as an integral parts of the County of San Diego's General Plan, are policy plans specifically created to address the issues, characteristics, and visions of communities within the unincorporated County.
- Housing Element Background Report

How to Use the General Plan

The General Plan is intended for use by all members of the community as described below. The General Plan must be referred to in its entirety, including separately bound portions (such as community plans). While the General Plan is internally consistent, some issues are addressed through multiple policies and some receive refined and more detailed direction in community plans.

The policies contained within this General Plan were written to be a clear statement of policy but also to allow flexibility when it comes to implementation. Policies cannot be applied independently; rather, implementation of the policies must be balanced with one another and will address details such as how and when the policy is applied and any relevant exceptions. For example, a policy to conserve open space is not a mandate for preservation of 100 percent of the existing undeveloped land in the County. It must be balanced with other policies that allow development and other uses of the land. In this case, implementation of the policy in new developments will be achieved through regulations such as the Resource Protection Ordinance, Biological Mitigation Ordinance, and California Environmental Quality Act, which will guide to what degree open space must be conserved.

If you are a San Diego County resident or property owner, the General Plan indicates the general types of uses that are permitted around your home and changes that may affect your neighborhood, and the policies the County will use to evaluate development applications that might affect you and your neighbors. The Plan also informs you regarding how the County plans to improve mobility infrastructure, continue to provide adequate parks, schools, police, fire, and other public services, protect valued open spaces and environmental resources, and protect you from the risks of earthquakes, fires, and other natural hazards.

If you are interested in developing land within the County or moving your household or business to the County, the Plan will introduce you to the community and provides an overview of the County's overall approach to land development within its jurisdiction. However, it is also important to review other County planning documents and regulations to get a complete perspective on how and where development may take place. A complete listing of relevant documents and regulations is available on the Department of Planning and Land Use website (http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/).

County Administration Center

The General Plan is also a tool to assist County supervisors and planning commissioners as well as County staff in making land use and public infrastructure decisions. It provides the framework for the County's Zoning Ordinance. It identifies mobility and infrastructure improvements, community services, and environmental sustainability initiatives to sustain the County's quality of life. Future development decisions must be consistent with the Plan. Finally, the Plan is intended to help other public agencies, from Caltrans to local school districts, as they contemplate future actions in the County.

While the General Plan's narrative text and maps frame the key proposals, the essence of the Plan lies in its goals, policies, and implementation programs. These are declarative statements that set forth the County's approach to various issues. Goals, policies, and implementation measures are described as follows:

- *Goals* describe ideal future conditions for a particular topic, such as town centers, rural character, protection of environmental resources, traffic congestion, or sustainability. Goals tend to be very general and broad.
- *Policies* provide guidance to assist the County as it makes decisions relating to each goal and indicates a commitment by the County to a particular course of action. The policy is carried out by implementation measures. While every effort has been made to provide clear and unambiguous policies, the need for interpretation will inevitably arise. The authority of interpretation lies with the

County and will be enacted through its implementation measures and decisions. Therefore, the Implementation Plan should be reviewed for a complete understanding of each policy.

- *Implementation Measures*, adopted by the County in a separate Implementation Plan, identify all the specific steps to be taken by the County to implement the policies. They may include revisions of current codes and ordinances, adoption of plans and capital improvement programs, financing actions, and other measures that will be assigned to different County departments after the General Plan is adopted.

The following diagram is intended to serve as a "reader's guide" to the goals and policies of the General Plan.

Process for Preparing the General Plan

Steps in the Planning Process

The process of preparing the General Plan included the following key steps:

- Prepare background reports and technical studies
- Develop alternative growth plans and select a preferred plan through a public outreach process
- Prepare draft goals and policies
- Prepare the Draft General Plan
- Prepare the Implementation Plan
- Prepare the Draft Environmental Impact Report
- Conduct public hearings to adopt the General Plan and certify the EIR
- Publish the final General Plan and EIR

TECHNICAL STUDIES AND BACKGROUND REPORTS

As required by State law, a General Plan must be based upon existing conditions and trends in a community and be responsive to the needs and issues identified in an analysis of existing conditions. Background Reports were prepared for each of the seven State-mandated topical areas to be covered in the General Plan including Land Use, Mobility, Housing, Safety, Conservation, Open Space, and Noise. In addition, technical studies such as traffic impacts, noise, and commercial and industrial lands needs analyses were conducted as a basis to develop a Land Use Plan responsive to community needs and issues.

How to Use the General Plan

SECTION HEADER
Identifies the section (if on an even-numbered page) or element (if on an odd-numbered page).

GOAL NUMBERING
Each goal number starts with the element acronym and is followed by the number of the goal (e.g., S-14 = Safety Element, fourteenth goal).

GOAL TITLE
Each goal contains a leading title in bold for a quick reference to the goal.

GOALS
A goal is a general direction-setter. Each goal has one or more policies associated with the goal.

POLICIES
A policy is a specific statement that guides decision-making. It indicates a commitment to a particular course of action carried out by implementation measures. Each policy is associated with a specific goal.

POLICY NUMBERING
Continuing from the goal numbering, the policy number is shown as the last number, supporting the goal it follows (e.g., Policy S-14.3 = Safety Element, fourteenth goal, third policy).

POLICY TITLE
Each policy contains a leading title in bold for a quick reference to the policy.

SAFETY ELEMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL S-5

Regional Fire Protection. Regional coordination among fire protection agencies.

Policies

S-5.1 **Regional Coordination Support.** Advocate and support regional coordination among fire protection and emergency service providers.

S-5.2 **Fire Service Provider Agreements.** Encourage agreements between fire service providers to improve fire protection and to maximize service levels in a fair, efficient, and cost effective manner.

GOAL S-6

Adequate Fire and Medical Services. Adequate levels of fire and emergency medical services (EMS) in the unincorporated County.

Fire station in Pine Valley

Policies

S-6.1 **Water Supply.** Ensure that water supply systems for development are adequate to combat structural and wildland fires.

S-6.2 **Fire Protection for Multi-Story Development.** Coordinate with fire services providers to improve fire protection services for multi-story construction.

Multi-story structures are associated with densities of 15 to 30 dwelling units per acre–particularly in areas within the County Water Authority (CWA) Boundary. Design features may include safe zones and increased building design features.

S-6.3 **Funding Fire Protection Services.** Require development to contribute its fair share towards funding the provision of appropriate fire and emergency medical services as determined necessary to adequately serve the project.

S-6.4 **Fire Protection Services for Development.** Require that development demonstrate that fire services can be provided that meet the minimum travel times identified in Table S-1 (Travel Time Standards).

Travel times are to be calculated using accepted methodology based on the travel distance from the fire station to the furthest dwelling unit of the development. Fire stations must be staffed year-round, publicly supported, and committed to providing service. These do not include volunteer stations, seasonal fire stations, and stations that are not obligated by law or agreement to automatically respond to an incident. Table S-1 establishes a service level standard for fire and first responder emergency medical services that is appropriate to the area that a development is located. Standards are intended to (1) help ensure development occurs in areas with adequate fire protection and/or (2) help improve fire service in areas with inadequate coverage by requiring services level improvements prior to project approval.

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO 7-9 GENERAL PLAN

PAGE NUMBER
Shows the chapter and page number (e.g., 7-28 = Chapter 7, page 28).

POLICY BACKGROUND AND SIDEBARS
Provides further clarification and reasoning for the policy.

ALTERNATIVE LAND USE/GROWTH PLANS

Prior to adoption of the Land Use Map, four alternative maps were considered. These alternatives included (1) a Referral Map that the Board of Supervisors created during the land use mapping phase of the project to incorporate a number of property-specific requests not included in the Draft Land Use Map, (2) a Draft Land Use Map that was created out of a stakeholder-driven process and includes land uses to meet the County's Housing Element allocation and achieve a balanced road network, (3) a Hybrid Map that strikes a balance between the Referral Map and the Draft Land Use Map in meeting the County's targeted growth consistent with its guiding principles, and (4) an Environmentally Superior Map that reflects more stringent **and** aggressive application of the principles to restrict growth in portions of the Semi-Rural and Rural Lands Regional Categories.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Goals, policies, and an Implementation Plan were prepared based on the land use maps, current issues, and community needs, understandability, effectiveness in previous applications, practicality, and feasibility, embodiment of state-of-the-art planning practices, consistency with current legislation and court decisions, community values, and past Board of Supervisors policy decisions. General guiding principles, goals, and policies developed by the advisory committees served as the foundation for this undertaking. Specific goals, policies, and implementation measures were then prepared by working with internal and external technical review committees for inclusion in the Draft General Plan.

DRAFT GENERAL PLAN

The Draft General Plan was first circulated for public review in November 2008, incorporating an overview of background data, goals, and policies. As part of this review, the Draft General Plan was reviewed by the advisory committees, stakeholders, and relevant public agencies. Comments were incorporated and the revised Draft General Plan was circulated for public review in July 2009, along with the Draft Environmental Impact Report, Implementation Plan, and revisions to the Community Plans.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

A Draft EIR was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA). In July 2008, the Draft EIR was circulated for a 60-day public review and comment period. Responses to all comments were prepared and incorporated into the Final EIR, which was reviewed and certified by the Board of Supervisors.

ADOPTION AND CERTIFICATION

The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors conducted public hearings on the Draft General Plan and EIR. In consideration of the public input, the Commission made a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding the General Plan and certification of the Final EIR. The Board of Supervisors considered the Commission's

Meeting of the County Board of Supervisors

input and based on its findings, the Board of Supervisor adopted the General Plan with changes and certified the Final EIR.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Once adopted, implementation of the County of San Diego General Plan will begin in accordance with the Implementation Plan. Associated changes to zoning, other regulations, policies, and procedures will be made. Implementation of the General Plan will be monitored and reported on an annual basis.

Planning Commission meeting

Public Outreach and Involvement in the Planning Process

The General Plan planning process involved a broad spectrum of the community through an extensive public outreach program that included hundreds of meetings, mailings, and e-mail updates, a hotline, and a website. The outcome of the effort led to the development of land use maps and a road network, the development of goals and policies, and the preparation of the General Plan based upon input from the numerous workshops, open houses, and community meetings.

Interest Group meeting

Steering Committee meeting

Community meeting

The entire process was guided by two regional advisory committees:

- *Steering Committee*—Chairpersons or designated representatives from 26 Community Planning and Sponsor Groups
- *Interest Group*—Designated representatives from environmental groups, professional organizations, building industry representatives, and the Farm Bureau

These groups made policy recommendations to staff, the Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors. All meetings were advertised, open to the public, and held in accordance with the Brown Act.

Through frequent work sessions, the public and stakeholders were provided the opportunity for involvement throughout the entire planning process from the initial establishment of population growth targets, to development of a land use framework, identification and refinement of desired goals and policies, and review of land use map and road network alternatives. In addition to the advisory groups, the community

planning and sponsor groups served as the primary conduit for public outreach throughout the planning process. Community planning groups worked closely with staff throughout the development of the land use map, along with town center and road network planning efforts. Since 2000, staff participated in over 212 meetings with the full Planning and Sponsor groups, 109 workshops, and 216 subcommittee meetings. All meetings were advertised to the general public through standard planning and sponsor group agendas or through the General Plan Update mailing lists described below. Most meetings were advertised in multiple ways.

Public workshop

Other groups involved in the planning process included:

- *Native American Tribal Nations*—A tribal outreach strategy that invited the 18 tribes in the County to participate in the process coordinated through the Native American Heritage Commission.
- *City Planning Directors*—Staff coordinated with the Planning Directors from incorporated cities within the County to provide status reports on the progress of the General Plan Update and solicit their feedback.

In an effort to continually involve interested parties in the planning process to obtain valuable feedback, other methods of public outreach over the course of the project included a General Plan Update Hotline number, informational flyers, and a General Plan website where members of the public could find out up-to-date information about the project.

- *Hotline*—An unmanned telephone hotline was established that allowed the public direct access to the San Diego County Department of Planning and Land Use with an ability to leave a message (i.e., be placed on mailing lists), or could get general questions answered.
- *Project Initiation Postcard*—All property owners in the unincorporated County in January 2001 were mailed a postcard introducing the General Plan Update to inform the public about the update and encourage their involvement.
- *Flyer*—In 2002, an informational flyer was developed to inform the public about the proposed changes to land use density and announce a Land Use Map. This flyer was mailed to every property owner in the unincorporated County.
- *Monthly Newsletter*—A monthly e-mail newsletter was used to inform interested parties of project progress, major milestones, website updates, documents available for review, and upcoming meetings or events.
- *Mailing Lists*—Mailing lists were accumulated over the project duration of individuals and organizations interested in receiving the newsletter, notices of specific meetings, hearings, and documents available for review. Parties were notified through their requested method, mail or e-mail, when appropriate.
- *Website*—A website was developed and maintained by County Staff to inform the public about the General Plan Update, including its progress and any upcoming public meetings. The site also provided the population forecast projections, land use and circulation frameworks, and land use distribution and road network maps for each community for quick access to information as they evolved

throughout the planning process. In addition, complete reports to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors were posted prior to each public hearing to inform the public of the issues and other information that were planned to be addressed during the hearing. http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/index.html

- *Local Newspapers*—Several regional and local newspapers published notices, stories, and editorials related to the General Plan Update.

Community Plans

Community plans are policy plans specifically created to address the issues, characteristics, and visions of communities within the County. These diverse communities each have a distinct physical setting with a unique history, culture, character, life style, and identity. Community and subregional plans, thus provide a framework for addressing the critical issues and concerns that are unique to a community and are not reflected in the broader policies of the Land Use Element of the General Plan. These goals and policies are designed to provide more precise guidance regarding the character, land uses, and densities within each community planning area. Generally, these goals and policies are more limiting and restrictive than the countywide goals and policies, consistent with State legislation for internal consistency. The Community Plans are adopted as integral parts of this General Plan but bound separately, and must be referenced in determining the types and density of land use that may be considered for any property within the community planning area.

When updating Community Plans, communities are encouraged to delineate areas within their plans that will assist with the future planning of developments, infrastructure, facilities, and regulations. An Urban Limit Line and/or Village Boundary may be defined in the Community Plan as a community-specific growth boundary that identifies an area to which development should be directed. These boundaries may also serve as the basis for community specific goals and policies.

Another convention that is encouraged for use in Community Plans is the designation of Special Study Areas. Special Study Areas define areas for further planning and implementation and should be further defined in more detail in the Community Plan for each area that is identified. The designation a Special Study Area does not presume that modifications to the General Plan are necessary nor does it bestow any additional entitlement upon the property. The property retains the land use designations shown in the General Plan. Any changes to the General Plan resulting from this additional study must occur through a General Plan Amendment (GPA), be evaluated independently, and must be consistent with all other components of the General Plan. The designation of a Special Study Area is intended to give a clear commitment to the community and property owners that if further changes to the General Plan are processed in the future, those changes will address the areas identified as areas needing further information and evaluation. The Special Study Area designation provides assurances that the areas of concern will be addressed as staff and stakeholders change over time. Outlining the objectives of the study area helps ensure that all interested parties continue to have the same understanding of the intent of efforts for that area.

The scope of the additional planning will vary widely between areas and communities but some possibilities include (but are not limited to): Specific Plans; master development plans; design guidelines; circulation networks including local public roads, bicycle and pedestrian facilities; and plans for civic, park and

recreational facilities. Special Study Areas are particularly useful for town centers, village cores where revitalization is desired, areas designated for mixed use, transit nodes, and areas that are generally undeveloped or developed at low intensities but are planned as future growth areas. Where appropriate, the Community Plan may restrict development within the Special Study Area until more detailed plans are prepared and approved, so that interim development does not preclude the preparation and implementation of the study.

As integral components of the County of San Diego General Plan, Community Plans have the same weight of law and authority in guiding their physical development. The Community Plans are introduced by a vision statement defining intentions regarding the role, character, and values of each community. This is followed by a description of the community and goals and policies corresponding to each of the countywide elements. In some cases, there may be no unique local policies applicable to a countywide element topic.

The Community Plans are prepared for the following communities and subregional planning areas:

- Alpine
- Bonsall
- Central Mountain
  - Cuyamaca
  - Descanso
  - Pine Valley
- Crest/Dehesa/Harbison Canyon/Granite Hills
- Desert
  - Borrego Springs
- Fallbrook
- Jamul/Dulzura
- Julian
- Lakeside
- Mountain Empire
  - Boulevard
  - Jacumba
  - Campo/Lake Morena
  - Potrero
  - Tecate
- North County Metro
  - Twin Oaks Valley
  - Hidden Meadows
- North Mountain
- Otay
- Pala-Pauma Valley
- Pendleton/ De Luz
- Rainbow
- Ramona
- San Dieguito
- Spring Valley
- Sweetwater
- Valle de Oro
- Valley Center

Related Documents

Background Reports and GIS

The General Plan is based upon a series of Background Reports containing relevant topical data and analyses as well as identification of relevant issues and trends to be considered in preparation of the General Plan. These reports and technical studies serve as the existing conditions or existing setting for the General Plan elements and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). These background reports are not adopted by the County and may be expanded or modified without an amendment to the General Plan. Also, separate from the General Plan but utilized as background data for analysis is the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) database. Data related to land use, physical constraints, and resources, included in various figures in the General Plan are available from the San Diego Geographic Information Source (SanGIS) at www.sangis.org.

Environmental Impact Report

A program EIR was prepared for the General Plan in accordance with the substantive and procedural requirements of the *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA). The EIR describes environmental conditions

in the County, assesses the possible adverse environmental impacts that the General Plan adoption will have on these conditions, identifies actions that will be undertaken to reduce these impacts, and evaluates the comparative impacts of alternatives to adoption of the General Plan. Mitigation measures in the EIR are incorporated both as policies in the General Plan and as implementation measures in the Implementation Plan and, consequently, the General Plan is generally considered to be "self-mitigating."

The document is considered a "program level" EIR, meaning that it examines the general nature of impacts at a Countywide scale. The findings of the EIR help determine the appropriate level of environmental review that should be performed when subsequent projects consistent with the Plan are proposed.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan is a set of the principal actions and procedures necessary to achieve the goals and policies set forth in the General Plan. It is a separate document that is directly correlated and cross referenced to the policies in the General Plan, but it may be modified and updated as necessary without the necessity of a General Plan amendment. An overview of the Implementation Plan is provided in Chapter 9.

Regional and Multi-Jurisdictional Plans

There are 19 jurisdictions in San Diego County, including the unincorporated County, with local land use authority along with the responsibility for preparing their own general plans. Regional coordination is necessary to guide overall development and ensure an efficient allocation of infrastructure funding. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) serves as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for area-wide coordination and as the technical and informational resource for the region's local jurisdictions. SANDAG prepares regional land use and transportation plans, which provide a basis for allocating federal and state funds used for specific items such as land use incentives and transportation improvements.

The Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) identifies existing and planned Smart Growth Opportunity Areas (SGOAs)—compact, mixed use, pedestrian-oriented development patterns where a higher priority is placed on providing transportation facility improvements. A specific SGOA category was developed to accommodate the unique community character and development patterns found in village centers for some unincorporated communities. Therefore, the SGOA is closely related to the community development model, which is one of the fundamental components of this General Plan Update. The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) seeks to improve transportation connections to SGOAs. Road network planning for the County General Plan Update considered the RTP when identifying the necessary improvements to the County's Mobility Element road network.

The Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) is a County conservation planning program designed to establish connected preserve systems that ensures the long-term survival of sensitive plant and animal species and protects the native vegetation found throughout the unincorporated County. Plans created under this program are both a federal Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and a State Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) program plan. The MSCP addresses the potential impacts of urban growth, natural habitat loss, and species endangerment and creates plans to mitigate for the potential loss of

sensitive species and their habitats. The MSCP Plan covers 582,243 acres over twelve jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction has its own Subarea Plan; however, there are only minor differences in how each is implemented. The MSCP is also an important program that significantly contributes to the County's ability to realize its watershed protection and climate change goals.

The County also works with the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority (SDCRAA) on a regular basis to ensure land use compatibility around each of the eight County-owned airports. The SDCRAA serves as San Diego County's Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC), responsible for protecting public health and safety surrounding airports. The ALUC is responsible for adopting Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCPs) for all public-use and military airports in San Diego County. ALUCPs provide guidance on appropriate land uses surrounding airports to protect the health and safety of people and property within the vicinity of an airport, as well as the public in general.

The San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is a regulatory agency responsible for annexation and detachment of territory, incorporation of cities, and the formation of special districts. LAFCO also develops and adopts spheres of influence for each city and special district within the unincorporated county. A sphere of influence is defined as a "plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local government agency. In addition to LAFCO, the County of San Diego also coordinates planning efforts with tribal governments and special district agencies, such as fire, water, school, and sanitation districts.

Other County Policies and Ordinances

A number of local plans and ordinances are impacted by the County's General Plan:

- **Zoning Ordinance**—The County administers its General Plan primarily through its Zoning Ordinance. While the General Plan identifies general land use designations, zoning identifies specific uses and development standards. As mandated by the State, the General Plan must be consistent with the County Zoning Ordinance. Changes in this General Plan Update require an update to the County Zoning Ordinance.
- **Subdivision Ordinance**—State law, through the *Subdivision Map Act*, governs local approval of land subdivision, which is further directed in the County Subdivision Ordinance. Review of proposed subdivisions and parcel maps includes a determination of consistency with General Plan goals and policies.
- **Specific Plans**—Specific plans provide an alternative to the Zoning Ordinance in that they are customized plans that delineate land uses, infrastructure, development standards and criteria, and implementation measures. Specific plans must be consistent with the General Plan, and can be used to implement the General Plan within a limited area.
- **The Forest Conservation Initiative** (FCI)—Enacted in 1993 with the goal of preserving the area's unique resources and the rural environment and open space, the FCI affects nearly 91,000 acres of privately owned land in the unincorporated County within the Cleveland National Forest by establishing a 40-acre minimum parcel size with a restriction of one dwelling unit per parcel. This initiative only remains in effect until December 31, 2010, and is included as an appendix to this General Plan. Upon expiration, a General Plan amendment will be required to redesignate the FCI lands to be consistent with the General Plan Update.

Implementing and Amending the Plan

This comprehensive update to the General Plan will be implemented through a variety of ordinances, programs, and activities. These specific actions are described in the Implementation Plan, which is a separate document to the General Plan.

The General Plan is intended to be a dynamic document and must be periodically updated to respond to changing community needs. An annual review of the Plan is required to ensure that it remains relevant. Moreover, any of the Plan's mandatory elements may be amended up to four times a year. Any proposed amendment will be reviewed to ensure that the change is in the public interest and would not be detrimental to public health, safety, and welfare. Environmental review is required for substantive General Plan amendments. A comprehensive update to the General Plan requires an assessment of all seven mandated regional elements, including the Land Use and Mobility Element network maps. This General Plan includes policies that require a comprehensive General Plan update to accommodate significant land use changes.

Global Climate Change: AB 32 Compliance

The issue of global climate change has received greater attention from governments around the world in recent years. Global climate change refers to the transformation in the average weather of the earth as observed in wind patterns, storms, precipitation, and temperature.

Human activities associated primarily with the use of carbon-based fossil fuels have led to changes in the composition of the atmosphere. The combustion of carbon-based fossil fuels creates greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions such as carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), and nitrous oxide (N_2O), which has caused the earth's atmosphere to absorb more heat from the sun. The concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has significantly increased as a result of combustion of fossil fuels primarily associated with automobile use and energy production. Scientists have already observed some of the negative effects of climate change, and expect more changes in the future. Governments, organizations, and private citizens all over the world are looking for ways to reduce GHG emissions to create a better future, while preparing to adapt as necessary to the inevitable repercussions of this situation.

In 2006, the California State Legislature took a proactive role in addressing the challenges of climate change with the adoption of the California *Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006*, Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32). AB 32 focuses on reducing GHG emissions in California. By 2020, AB 32 requires the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the state agency charged with regulating statewide air quality, to adopt rules and regulations that would achieve GHG emissions equivalent to statewide levels in 1990. Since 2006, the State Legislature has adopted several other pieces of legislation to further efforts in addressing climate change. Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), adopted in 2008, is one of those bills and is significant because it connects land use planning with AB 32. SB 375 will result in development of regional greenhouse gas emission reduction targets by the State

that will then be implemented by regional transportation planning agencies. In San Diego, this responsibility falls to the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).

In California, carbon dioxide accounts for approximately 84 percent of all greenhouse gases, while methane makes up approximately eight percent and nitrous oxide and hydrocarbons contributing an additional six and two percent, respectively. Fossil fuel combustion is the principal source, an estimated 98 percent, of carbon dioxide emissions. Of this, transportation and development are the primary sources of fossil fuel combustion. In California, more than half of fossil fuel emissions of carbon dioxide are related in some way to transportation. Worldwide, buildings contribute 40 percent of greenhouse gases, though this is comparatively less in the County due to the rural character of many areas. Clearly, dispersed development patterns that necessitate extensive vehicle trips and gasoline consumption and the predominance of buildings that use extensive climate control systems play a significant role in affecting greenhouse gases.

An underlying premise of the San Diego County General Plan is to conserve natural resources and develop lands and infrastructure more sustainably in the future. Planning and developing a truly sustainable future depends on a healthy environment, strong economy, and the social well-being of the County's residents. Throughout the General Plan are goals and policies that contribute to achieving this goal, including the following:

- Environment: conserving air, water, land, soils, minerals, natural habitat, energy, and aesthetic resources; while protecting life and property from the risks of wildfires, flooding, and other hazards.
- Economy: creating good jobs, income, and financial resources.
- Equity and Social Well-Being: providing library, park and recreations facilities, along with programs that contribute to improvements in education, income, health, safety, arts, and cultural attainment for all.

AB 32's mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions represents a key element in meeting sustainability objectives. The General Plan takes steps to address the challenging issue of climate change by reducing GHG emissions, retaining and enhancing natural areas, improving energy efficiency, reducing waste, recycling, and managing water use. The General Plan will reduce GHG emissions primarily through minimizing vehicle trips and approving land use patterns that support increased density in areas where there is infrastructure to support it, increased opportunities for transit, pedestrians, and bicycles, and through green building and land development conservation initiatives. Policies also address adaptation to climate change, such as continued wildfire management and protection, monitoring flood hazards, and regional collaboration on biological preservation, water use and supply, and other areas of concern.

The sources, impacts, and solutions to climate changes are complex. Climate change and GHG emissions reduction are addressed in policies and programs from multiple elements of this General Plan rather than in a single section. Table I-1 (General Plan Policies Addressing Climate Change) identifies the policies in the San Diego County General Plan that carry out the primary objectives of AB 32: mitigation (reduce greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (changing current strategies to adapt to climate change). Table I-1 further categorizes the General Plan policies according to the strategies identified to accomplish the two primary objectives. The primary objectives of AB 32 are identified below.

- **Mitigation (Objective A)**—Responses producing a strategy that seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Adaptation (Objective B)**—Responses adapting current strategies so that Climate Change is integral to planning activities and decisions.

Table I-1 General Plan Policies Addressing Climate Change

Element	Policies	
OBJECTIVE A: MITIGATION—REDUCTION IN GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS		
Strategy A-1: Reduce vehicle trips generated, gasoline/energy consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions		
Land Use	LU-1.2	Leapfrog Development
	LU-1.3	Development Patterns
	LU-1.4	Village Expansion
	LU-3.3	Complete Neighborhoods
	LU-5.1	Reduction of Vehicle Trips within Communities
	LU-5.2	Sustainable Planning and Design
	LU-5.4	Planning Support
	LU-5.5	Projects that Impede Non-Motorized Travel
	LU-6.3	Conservation-Oriented Project Design
	LU-6.4	Sustainable Subdivision Design
	LU-9.5	Village Uses
	LU-9.7	Town Center Planning and Design
	LU-9.8	Village Connectivity and Compatibility with Adjoining Areas
	LU-9.10	Internal Village Connectivity
	LU-9.12	Achieving Planned Densities in Villages
	LU-10.1	Residential Connectivity
	LU-10.4	Commercial and Industrial Development
	LU-11.1	Location and Connectivity
	LU-11.3	Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial Centers
	LU-11.6	Office Development
	LU-11.8	Permitted Secondary Uses
Mobility	M 1.2	Interconnected Road Network
	M-3.1	Public Road Rights-of-Way
	M-3.2	Traffic Impact Mitigation
	M-4.1	Walkable Village Roads
	M-4.2	Interconnected Local Roads
	M-4.3	Rural Roads Compatible with Rural Character
	M-5.1	Regional Coordination
	M-6.5	Adaptive Reuse of Abandoned Rail Lines
	M-8.1	Maximize Transit Service Opportunities
	M-8.2	Transit Service to Key Community Facilities and Services
	M-8.3	Transit Stops That Facilitate Ridership
	M-8.4	Transit Amenities
	M-8.5	Improved Transit Facilities
	M-8.6	Park and Ride Facilities
	M-8.7	Inter-Regional Travel Modes

Table I-1 General Plan Policies Addressing Climate Change

Element	Policies	
	M-8.8	Shuttles
	M-9.1	Transportation Systems Management
	M-9.2	Transportation Demand Management
	M-9.3	Preferred Parking
	M-9.4	Park-and-Ride Facilities
	M-10.1	Parking Capacity
	M-10.2	Parking for Pedestrian Activity
	M-10.3	Maximize On-Street Parking
	M-10.5	Reduced Parking
	M-10.6	On-Street Parking
	M-11.1	Bicycle Facility Design
	M-11.2	Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities in Development
	M-11.3	Bicycle Facilities on Roads Designated in the Mobility Element
	M-11.4	Pedestrian and Bicycle Network Connectivity
	M-11.5	Funding for Bicycle Network Improvements
	M-11.6	Coordination for Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Connectivity
	M-11.7	Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Design
	M-11.8	Coordination with the County Trails Program
	M-12.1	County Trails System
	M-12.2	Trail Variety
	M-12.3	Trail Planning
	M-12.4	Land Dedication for Trails
	M-12.5	Future Trails
	M-12.6	Trail Easements, Dedications, and Joint-Use Agreements
	M-12.7	Funding for Trails
	M-12.8	Trails on Private Lands
Conservation and Open Space	COS-14.1	Land Use Development Form
	COS-14.2	Villages and Rural Villages
	COS-14.3	Sustainable Development
	COS-14.4	Sustainable Technology and Projects
	COS-14.9	Significant Producers of Air Pollutants
	COS-14.10	Low-Emission Construction Vehicles and Equipment
	COS-14.13	Incentives for Sustainable and Low GHG Development
	COS-15.1	Design and Construction of New Buildings
	COS-15.2	Upgrade of Existing Buildings
	COS-16.1	Alternative Transportation Modes
	COS-16.2	Single-Occupancy Vehicles
	COS-16.3	Low Emission Vehicles
	COS-16.5	Transit-Center Development
	COS-21.5	Connections to Trails and Networks
	COS-23.2	Regional Coordination

Table I-1 General Plan Policies Addressing Climate Change

Element	Policies	
Housing	H-1.2	Development Intensity Relative to Permitted Density
	H-1.3	Housing near Public Services
	H-1.4	Special Needs Housing near Complementary Uses
	H-1.5	Senior and Affordable Housing near Shopping and Services
	H-1.6	Land for All Housing Types Provided in Villages
	H-1.7	Mix of Residential Development Types in Villages
Strategy A-2: Reduce non-renewable electrical and natural gas energy consumption and generation (energy efficiency)		
Land Use	LU-5.2	Sustainable Planning and Design
Conservation and Open Space	COS-6.5	Best Management Practices
	COS-14.4	Sustainable Technology and Projects
	COS-14.5	Building Siting and Orientation in Subdivisions
	COS-14.6	Solar Access for Infill Development
	COS-14.7	Alternative Energy Sources for Development Projects
	COS-14.12	Heat Island Effect
	COS-15.1	Design and Construction of New Buildings
	COS-15.2	Upgrade of Existing Buildings
	COS-15.3	Green Building Programs
	COS-15.4	Title 24 Energy Standards
	COS-15.5	Energy Efficiency Audits
Strategy A-3: Increase generation and use of renewable energy sources		
Land Use	LU-4.6	Planning for Adequate Energy Facilities
	LU-5.2	Sustainable Planning and Design
Conservation and Open Space	COS-6.5	Best Management Practices
	COS-14.4	Sustainable Technology and Projects
	COS-14.5	Building Siting and Orientation in Subdivisions
	COS-14.6	Solar Access for Infill Development
	COS-14.7	Alternative Energy Sources for Development Projects
	COS-15.2	Upgrade of Existing Buildings
	COS-15.3	Green Building Programs
	COS-16.4	Alternative Fuel Sources
	COS-17.5	Methane Recapture
	COS-18.1	Alternate Energy Systems
	COS-18.2	Energy Generation from Waste
Strategy A-4: Reduce water consumption		
Land Use	LU-5.2	Sustainable Planning and Design
	LU-6.4	Sustainable Subdivision Design
	LU-6.9	Development Conformance with Topography
Conservation and Open Space	COS-4.1	Water Conservation
	COS-4.2	Drought-Efficient Landscaping

Table I-1 General Plan Policies Addressing Climate Change

Element	Policies	
	COS-4.5	Recycled Water
	COS-14.4	Sustainable Technology and Projects
	COS-14.11	Native Vegetation
	COS-15.1	Design and Construction of New Buildings
	COS-15.2	Upgrade of Existing Buildings
	COS-15.3	Green Building Programs
Strategy A-5: Reduce and maximize reuse of solid wastes		
Land Use	LU-5.2	Sustainable Planning and Design
	LU-6.1	Environmental Sustainability
	LU-6.4	Sustainable Subdivision Design
	LU-16.3	New Waste Management Facilities
Conservation and Open Space	COS-10.7	Recycling of Debris
	COS-14.4	Sustainable Technology and Projects
	COS-15.1	Design and Construction of New Buildings
	COS-15.2	Upgrade of Existing Buildings
	COS-15.3	Green Building Programs
	COS-17.1	Reduction of Solid Waste Materials
	COS-17.2	Construction and Demolition Waste
	COS-17.4	Composting
	COS-17.6	Recycling Containers
	COS-17.7	Material Recovery Program
	COS-18.2	Energy Generation from Waste
Strategy A-6: Promote carbon dioxide consuming landscapes		
Land Use	LU-1.3	Development Patterns
	LU-2.5	Greenbelts to Define Communities
	LU-5.2	Sustainable Planning and Design
	LU-5.3	Rural Land Preservation
	LU-6.1	Environmental Sustainability
	LU-6.2	Reducing Development Pressures
	LU-6.3	Conservation-Oriented Project Design
	LU-6.6	Integration of Natural Features into Project Design
	LU-6.9	Development Conformance with Topography
	LU-7.1	Agricultural Land Development
	LU-7.2	Parcel Size Reduction as Incentive for Agriculture
	LU-9.10	Internal Village Connectivity
Conservation and Open Space	COS-14.4	Sustainable Technology and Projects
	COS-14.11	Native Vegetation

Table I-1 General Plan Policies Addressing Climate Change

Element	Policies	
Strategy A-7: Maximize preservation of open spaces, natural areas, and agricultural lands		
Land Use	LU-1.3	Development Patterns
	LU-1.4	Village Expansion
	LU-1.6	Conversion of Public Lands to Private Ownership
	LU-3.3	Complete Neighborhoods
	LU-5.2	Sustainable Planning and Design
	LU-5.3	Rural Land Preservation
	LU-6.1	Environmental Sustainability
	LU-6.2	Reducing Development Pressures
	LU-6.3	Conservation-Oriented Project Design
	LU-6.4	Sustainable Subdivision Design
	LU-6.6	Integration of Natural Features into Project Design
	LU-6.7	Open Space Network
	LU-6.9	Development Conformance with Topography
	LU-7.1	Agricultural Land Development
	LU-7.2	Parcel Size Reduction as Incentive for Agriculture
	LU-9.11	Integration of Natural Features in Villages
	LU-10.2	Development—Environmental Resource Relationship
Mobility	M-2.3	Environmentally Sensitive Road Design
Conservation and Open Space	COS-1.1	Coordinated Preserve System
	COS-1.2	Minimize Impacts
	COS-1.3	Management
	COS-1.4	Collaboration with other Jurisdictions
	COS-1.5	Regional Collaboration
	COS-2.1	Protection, Restoration and Enhancement
	COS-2.2	Habitat Protection Through Site Design
	COS-3.1	Wetland Protection
	COS-3.2	Minimize Impacts of Development
	COS-7.2	Open Space Easements
	COS-14.11	Native Vegetation
	COS-23.2	Regional Coordination
	COS-24.1	Park and Recreation Contributions
	COS-24.2	Funding Opportunities
Housing	H-2.2	Projects with Open Space Amenities in Villages
OBJECTIVE B: ADAPTATION—ADAPTING CURRENT STRATEGIES SO THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS INTEGRAL TO PLANNING ACTIVITIES AND DECISIONS		
Strategy B-1: Reduce risk from wildfire, flooding, and other hazards resulting from climate change		
Land Use	LU-1.2	Leapfrog Development
	LU-1.4	Village Expansion
	LU-5.2	Sustainable Planning and Design

Table I-1 General Plan Policies Addressing Climate Change

Element	Policies	
	LU-5.3	Rural Land Preservation
	LU-6.3	Conservation-Oriented Project Design
	LU-6.4	Sustainable Subdivision Design
	LU-6.7	Open Space Network
	LU-6.9	Development Conformance with Topography
	LU-6.10	Protection from Hazards
	LU-6.11	Protection from Wildfires and Unmitigable Hazards
	LU-6.12	Flooding
Mobility	M-2.3	Environmentally Sensitive Road Design
Conservation and Open Space	COS-5.1	Impact to Floodways and Floodplains
	COS-5.3	Downslope Protection
	COS-5.4	Invasive Species
	COS-14.4	Sustainable Technology and Projects
Safety	S-1.3	Risk Reduction Programs
	S-2.2	Participation in Mutual Aid Systems
	S-2.3	Familiarity with National and State Response Plans
	S-2.5	Existing Development within 100-year Flood Zones
	S-2.6	Effective Emergency Evacuation Programs
	S-3.1	Defensible Development
	S-3.2	Development in Hillsides and Canyons
	S-3.3	Minimize Flammable Vegetation
	S-3.4	Service Availability
	S-3.5	Access Roads
	S-3.6	Fire Protection Measures
	S-4.1	Fuel Management Programs
	S-5.1	Regional Coordination Support
	S-5.2	Fire Service Provider Agreements
	S-6.1	Water Supply
	S-6.4	Fire Protection Services for Development
	S-9.1	Floodplain Maps
	S-9.2	Development in Floodplains
	S-9.3	Development in Flood Hazard Areas
	S-9.4	Development in Villages
	S-9.5	Development in the Floodplain Fringe
	S-9.6	Development in Dam Inundation Areas
	S-10.1	Land Uses within Floodways
	S-10.2	Use of Natural Channels
	S-10.3	Flood Control Facilities
	S-10.4	Stormwater Management
	S-10.5	Development Site Improvements
	S-10.6	Stormwater Hydrology

Table I-1 General Plan Policies Addressing Climate Change

Element	Policies	
Strategy B-2: Conserve & improve water supply due to shortages from climate change		
Land Use	LU-5.2	Sustainable Planning and Design
	LU-6.2	Reducing Development Pressures
	LU-6.4	Sustainable Subdivision Design
	LU-6.5	Sustainable Stormwater Management
	LU-698	Development Conformance with Topography
	LU-8.1	Density Relationship to Groundwater Sustainability
	LU-8.2	Groundwater Resources
	LU-8.3	Groundwater-Dependent Habitat
	LU-8.4	Program for Borrego Valley Aquifer
	LU-13.1	Adequacy of Water Supply
	LU-13.2	Commitment of Water Supply
	LU-16.1	Location of Waste Management Facilities
Mobility	M-2.5	Minimize Excess Water Runoff
	M-10.7	Parking Area Design for Stormwater Runoff
Conservation and Open Space	COS-4.1	Water Conservation
	COS-4.2	Drought-Efficient Landscaping
	COS-4.3	Stormwater Filtration
	COS-4.4	Groundwater Contamination
	COS-4.5	Recycled Water
	COS-5.2	Impervious Surfaces
	COS-5.5	Impacts of Development to Water Quality
	COS-14.4	Sustainable Technology and Projects
	COS-19.1	Sustainable Development Practices
	COS-19.2	Recycled Water in New Development
Strategy B-3: Promote agricultural lands for local food production		
Land Use	LU-1.3	Development Patterns
	LU-5.2	Sustainable Planning and Design
	LU-5.3	Rural Land Preservation
	LU-6.1	Environmental Sustainability
	LU-6.2	Reducing Development Pressures
	LU-6.3	Compatibility with Recreational Open Space
	LU-6.4	Sustainable Subdivision Design
	LU-7.1	Agricultural Land Development
	LU-7.2	Parcel Size Reduction as Incentive for Agriculture
	LU-12.9	Environmental and Agricultural Resources
Conservation and Open Space	COS-6.1	Economic Diversity
	COS-6.2	Protection of Agricultural Operations
	COS-6.4	Conservation Easements

Table I-1 General Plan Policies Addressing Climate Change		
Element	**Policies**	
Housing	H-3.6	Housing for Special Need Populations
	H-3.7	Alternative Affordable Housing Options
Strategy B-4: Provide education & leadership		
Conservation and Open Space	COS-17.8	Education
	COS-20.1	Climate Change Action Plan
	COS-20.2	GHG Monitoring and Implementation
	COS-20.4	Public Education
Safety	S-2.4	Emergency and Disaster Education Programs

San Diego County History and Community Profile

The San Diego County Profile is described below in terms of its history, physical setting, economy, population and growth patterns, and the unique communities in the unincorporated County.

History

The County of San Diego was established on February 18, 1850, as one of the original 27 counties of California. The newly created County covered nearly 40,000 square miles including the present counties of San Diego, Imperial, Riverside, and San Bernardino, along with the eastern portion of Inyo County.

The territory comprising San Diego County was under Mexican rule from 1821 until 1846 during which time private land grants covering 948 square miles were bestowed throughout the County. The grants resulted in the formation of private ranchos, some of which are recognizable areas today, such as Rancho Santa Fe (Rancho San Dieguito), Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton (Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores), Rancho Santa Maria (Ramona), and Rancho El Cajon (El Cajon, Lakeside, Santee, and Bostonia). Many ranchos were transformed into incorporated cities; for example, National City and Chula Vista were formed from Rancho de la Nación. Today, the County includes 18 incorporated cities, but retains a large unincorporated area which is the subject of this General Plan.

Physical Setting and Community Planning Areas

Valley landscape

Borrego desert

Fallbrook community

San Diego County, including incorporated cities, contains approximately 4,261 square miles that cover 65 miles north to south and 86 miles east to west. The County is bordered by Riverside County and Orange

County to the north; Imperial County to the east; the nation of Mexico to the south; and the Pacific Ocean to the west as shown in Figure I-1 (Regional Context). The County's western portion includes 18 cities, while in the unincorporated area specifically designated subregions and community planning areas encompass the remainder of the County. These community and subregional planning areas are shown in Figure I-2 (Unincorporated County Communities). A majority of the land in the unincorporated area is open space or undeveloped and includes large tracts of federal, state, or regional parklands, and agricultural production areas. Residential land uses account for the majority of the developed land in the unincorporated County.

Relative to the incorporated areas located near the coast, development opportunities in the unincorporated areas of the County are generally more highly constrained due to more rugged terrain, more occurrences of sensitive species and habitat; and less opportunity for the provision of infrastructure and essential services. These physical, environmental, and infrastructure considerations, particularly the limited availability of water service from the County Water Authority (CWA), and the limited availability of other urban services such as sewer, fire, and emergency services, are major factors that shape the County's future growth and development potential.

The most developed communities in the unincorporated County are located at its westernmost boundaries within the CWA boundary; they have access to public services and infrastructure and have sustained growth at a more rapid rate than in other parts of the County. The communities closest to the core metropolitan area of the region have limited potential for future growth because much of their land is already developed. These communities—Valle de Oro, Spring Valley, Sweetwater, the western portions of Lakeside—contain substantial existing populations. These communities desire to retain the existing community character and remaining open space. These more densely populated communities are also concerned about limiting negative impacts caused by road construction and certain developments in incorporated jurisdictions.

Other communities that are more distant from the San Diego metropolitan center but within the CWA—Alpine, Ramona, Valley Center, North County Metro, Bonsall, Fallbrook, and Otay Mesa—have a greater capacity to grow when compared to other communities. However, in all of these communities, any future growth must be carefully balanced with other factors to preserve their identity and unique resources. Although within the CWA, growth potential is more limited in Rainbow, Twin Oaks, and Hidden Meadows (part of North County Metro), Jamul, and Crest/Dehesa/Harbison Canyon/Granite Hills due to the absence of infrastructure, the rugged terrain, and sensitive habitats.

San Diego's remaining major rural communities include Dulzura, Julian, Pala-Pauma, Palomar, Borrego Springs, Cuyamaca, Descanso, Pine Valley, Jacumba, Boulevard, Lake Morena, Campo, Potrero, and Tecate. Rugged terrain, agriculture, and sensitive environmental habitats, as well as limited road networks and public services, limit growth in these areas. With few exceptions, these communities are sparsely populated and lack the infrastructure and employment opportunities to support anything more than limited population growth. With the exception of some limited areas of sewer service, these communities rely largely upon septic systems. Without imported water, groundwater is also a limiting factor to growth. Further, this area of the County contains a substantial amount of public lands, tribal land, and land affected by the Forest Conservation Initiative (FCI). Residents in these communities desire to preserve the existing rural setting and character.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

San Diego County General Plan

Figure I-1

UNINCORPORATED COUNTY COMMUNITIES

San Diego County General Plan

Figure I-2

Demographic Patterns

The unincorporated County encompasses 3,570 squares miles that represent 84 percent of the total land area of San Diego County, yet its 2008 population of 491,764 persons represented only 15.6 percent of the total County population. During the period from 1980 to 2008, the average annual population rate increase for the unincorporated area was approximately 1.1 percent, whereas the average annual rate of increase for the entire County was 3.4 percent between 1980 and 1990 and 1.3 between 1990 and 2008. Population forecasts for 2030 indicate that the population of the entire County will grow by 42 percent.

Once dependent on the military and defense-related industries, San Diego County now has a diverse economy that includes manufacturing, telecommunications, tourism, trade, biosciences, software, multimedia, and digital technology. These industries are largely located in the 18 cities, with the exception of agricultural production, which is primarily located in the unincorporated County and which is a significant component of its economy.

Valley Center

Fallbrook Village

Twin Oaks agriculture

CHAPTER 2 Vision and Guiding Principles

Introduction

The County of San Diego's General Plan sets a direction for the future of the unincorporated area of San Diego County by providing clear, unified framework for community development and conservation. The development of this General Plan began in 1998 and included extensive community involvement, the results of which informed the creation of the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles. The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles in turn establish the foundation upon which the General Plan elements and its components are consistent, related, and measured. The Vision represents the basis by which all updated plan goals, policies, and implementation programs are measured and constitute the Plan's legislative intent as approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Vision

The Vision is derived from the strategic initiatives of the County's General Management System (GMS), which include:

- Kids—Improve opportunities for children
- The Environment—Manage resources to ensure environmental preservation, quality of life, and economic development
- Safe and Livable Communities—Promote safe and livable communities

The General Plan provides a key vehicle for the County to implement these strategic initiatives by identifying innovative growth solutions that address a full spectrum of issues, including housing, transportation, community infrastructure, and environmental impact. The County of San Diego is committed to improving opportunities and outcomes for children by providing a healthy and safe physical environment, while supporting recreational opportunities and land use patterns that encourage a healthy lifestyle. This General Plan guides the County's management of its environmental resources through policies to sustain and enhance the land, water, air, and biodiversity upon which all life depends, while recognizing that our growing population must also be accommodated. While the General Plan's goals and policies address San Diego County's natural hazards and human activities that pose a threat to public safety, promoting livable communities requires much more than just safety. Essential components of livable communities include: a sense of place with attractive and convenient service and support facilities, a safe and efficient

transportation network, public and personal safety, and sustainable development. The following represents the vision for what San Diego County is intended to become with build-out of this General Plan.

What We Plan to Be

San Diego County is comprised of diverse communities offering residents with places to live, work, shop, be educated, and recreate in settings dominated by the natural environment and open spaces. It is generally a low-density alternative to the urbanized San Diego coastline and inland areas. Many communities consist of small scale villages or residences on large lots with agriculture and open space. Our villages are intended to grow in compact land development patterns to minimize intrusion into agricultural lands and open spaces; the distance that we travel to our local services and businesses; and the need for extensive infrastructure and services; while also inducing community association, activity, and walking. The County's ambience will remain quiet and peaceful, with nighttime skies illuminated by the stars. Our infrastructure and services will retain the characteristics of rural places with natural water courses, septic systems, low-level street lighting, and limited sidewalks. Buildings and architecture will continue to be subsumed within and complement our physical setting of valleys, hillsides, and deserts.

Our Physical Setting

We recognize the importance of the San Diego region's natural environment and are committed to sustaining its diversity, health, and integrity as a distinguishing asset for residents and visitors. New development shall respect and maintain the physical and visual integrity of the hillsides, valleys, and deserts that shape and provide identity for our community. We will continue to avoid or minimize developing in areas susceptible to geologic, wildfire, and flooding risks and we will continue to retain and protect the viability of our woodlands, riparian corridors, and important plant and animal habitats, maintaining the health and viability of declining species. The County's lakes and streams will be free of toxins and harmful pollutants, sustaining fish populations and a healthy water supply, while offering abundant recreation opportunities for residents and

visitors. We will continue to recognize and maintain strong partnerships with state and federal agencies in protecting and preserving our natural environment.

Protecting Our Agriculture

We will continue to value our agricultural lands and recognize the importance of preserving opportunities for the production of healthy food and ornamental crops for our population and others. We will emphasize the distribution of our agricultural products locally and within the region. Our future development patterns and parcel sizes will avoid incentivizing the conversion of agriculture for urban uses.

Our Communities

The County of San Diego will continue to provide a diversity of choices for the type and character of community in which we live. These choices will include villages that contain a mix of housing types that are located near retail businesses, employment, schools, parklands, churches, and public institutions. These villages will vary in density and character that will provide affordable housing choices, some will be located near and transitioning with coastal suburban communities, while others will reflect the unique character of their mountain, valley, and desert setting. An alternative choice will be to continue to live on large parcels, separated from our neighbors by agriculture and open spaces with few or no urban services.

How We Get Around

San Diego County infrastructure will be planned to offer easy and convenient access within and between our communities and to the greater region. The County's streets and highways will be planned to provide a comprehensive, well-connected network maintained to support use by all our road users — cars, trucks, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Our road network will also be planned to channel traffic to avoid conflicts with our residential neighborhoods. Our traffic signalization and traffic control mechanisms will be planned to facilitate traffic flow and avoid congestion. As an alternative to the automobile, bicycle paths and

pedestrian-ways will be planned to be strategically located within and around village areas and designed to provide a pleasant experience for users. We will continue to explore opportunities to expand transit services commensurate with needs and density. Our village cores will be planned to shared parking facilities that enable residents and visitors to park once, walk along lively streets, and patronize multiple business establishments and community services.

How We Sustain Our Community

The County of San Diego recognizes its long-term obligations to future residents by simultaneously promoting ecological health, economic vitality, and social well-being. In our villages, the Land Use Map provides a mix and density of land uses that will minimize automobile trips and their length, invigorate the economic health of our businesses, and promote association with our neighbors. These, coupled with increased access to transit, will reduce our air emissions, greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption, noise, and time spent away from our families. We will walk more in our village cores and participate in recreational activities, improving the health of our families and children. We will develop our properties and design our buildings to reduce energy consumption, use low-impact alternative energy sources, capture stormwater and recycle wastewater, use recycled construction materials, reuse our solid wastes, and use non-toxic paints and materials. Our sustainable practices will contribute to a healthy environment, enhancing the livability of San Diego County.

Our Sustainable and Vital Economy

We will continue to strive to maintain a healthy and vital economy, providing a variety of jobs for our residents and a climate in which our businesses can prosper. Our businesses are diverse, building on the resources uniquely available in the County, including its agriculture and natural setting that offers opportunities for tourism and, at the same time, providing goods and services to our residents. By providing our residents with housing in compact villages, we will provide a strong customer base to maintain the viability of our businesses.

Our Safe Community

We value the safety of our community. Our neighborhoods continue to be safe places to live and we continue to be comfortable in our business districts, parks, and open spaces with almost non-existent crime.

While we value and enjoy the beauty of our outdoors and environment, we continue to recognize the inherent risks of wildfires, flooding, earthquakes, and other natural hazards and take measures to locate and design our development to avoid these risks and provide excellent and responsive police and fire services to protect our well-being.

Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles constitute a set of rules by which updated General Plan policies were developed. They guide the formulation of growth and development plans, environmental conservation, provision of infrastructure and services, and protection from environmental and man-induced hazards. The General Plan maps, goals and policies, and implementation programs are based on a set of ten interrelated principles that provide guidance for accommodating future growth while retaining or enhancing the County's rural character, its economy, its environmental resources, and its unique communities. The ten Guiding Principles are:

1. Support a reasonable share of projected regional population growth.
2. Promote health and sustainability by locating new growth near existing and planned infrastructure, services, and jobs in a compact pattern of development.
3. Reinforce the vitality, local economy, and individual character of existing communities when planning new housing, employment, and recreational opportunities.
4. Promote environmental stewardship that protects the range of natural resources and habitats that uniquely define the County's character and ecological importance.
5. Ensure that development accounts for physical constraints and the natural hazards of the land.
6. Provide and support a multi-modal transportation network that enhances connectivity and supports community development patterns and, when appropriate, plan for development which supports public transportation.
7. Maintain environmentally sustainable communities and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.
8. Preserve agriculture as an integral component of the region's economy, character, and open space network.
9. Minimize public costs of infrastructure and services and correlate their timing with new development.
10. Recognize community and stakeholder interests while striving for consensus.

In summary, the Guiding Principles provide for the development of land uses, investment in infrastructure and public services, and conservation of natural resources that enable the County's residents and businesses to enjoy a more sustainable environment, economy, and well-being and health. Each of the guiding principles is outlined in more detail below.

Guiding Principle 1

Support a reasonable share of projected regional population growth.

California and the San Diego region have been among the fastest growing areas in the nation and projections indicate that this will continue during the upcoming decades, regardless of variations associated with

economic cycles. Data indicate that much of the growth has been and will continue to be attributable to birth rates of existing residents coupled with the longer lifespan of the population and, secondarily, due to immigration. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) projects that the entire County's population will increase by 40 percent between 2000 and 2030, or approximately 1,140,000 persons. Though considerable growth in the region is likely to gravitate toward existing urbanized areas to facilitate access to jobs and services and reduce vehicle commutes and gasoline consumption, demand for development in unincorporated County areas is anticipated to continue as available lands within urbanized areas diminish and residents choose to live in a rural environment.

As growth continues in the region, the County will accommodate a reasonable share in the unincorporated County in a manner that sustains the natural setting, characteristics, and qualities that distinguish the County, its communities, and rural places as special places to live. The County will implement this guiding principle by planning and facilitating housing in and adjacent to existing and planned villages.

Guiding Principle 2

Promote health and sustainability by locating new growth near existing and planned infrastructure, services, and jobs in a compact pattern of development.

Julian's compact development patterns with a small central core surrounded by semi-rural and rural development

Low-density, large-parcel development patterns in the County afford residents the opportunity to enjoy open spaces, natural areas, and a rural lifestyle. However, such fragmentation and dispersal of development can result in corresponding increases in impacts on environmental resources and the costs of community infrastructure and services. The complexity and cost of the network of highways, water pipes, electrical energy, and other utility infrastructure needed to serve development is a function of the distance from supply source to the user. The greater the dispersal of development, the greater the improvements and associated costs required for the user and community. Similarly, community services such as police and fire are provided from central locations and require travel times to access users. Those travel times increase with decreasing densities. Low-density and fragmented development patterns also increase travel distances and times from homes to jobs, shopping, and services. These, in turn, increase gasoline consumption, air pollution, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and time away from home and the family.

Large-parcel development also contributes to the loss of agriculture and natural habitats. Research for the Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP) indicates that there has been a considerable loss of habitat in San Diego region over the past several decades, with some habitats occupying less than 10 percent of their historic range.

As population growth continues in the San Diego County, more compact development should occur within existing and planned communities to reduce these impacts. Locating housing closer to retail, services, schools, and jobs and on smaller lots within communities can reduce the size of required infrastructure

improvements and number and length of automobile trips, while increase the efficiency of delivering police, fire, and other public services and enhancing community livability. A more compact form of development in the County would reduce the amount of developed land, or its "footprint," increasing the amount of open space, natural habitat, and agriculture that can be preserved, as well as reducing pressure on groundwater resources. It also would contribute to the retention of the rural setting and lifestyle of backcountry communities.

A model of compact development begins with a central core, referred to as a "Village" or, in very rural communities, a "Rural Village" in which the highest intensities of development are located. Under ideal conditions for achieving sustainability, the central core would be surrounded by areas of very low density. In unincorporated San Diego County, the ideal model has been modified with semi-rural areas surrounding the central core to reflect the existing pattern of development for most of the unincorporated County, along with a realization that the ideal Community Development Model is only achievable with a wide ranging and extensive transit network. Therefore, in the County's Community Development Model, the central core is surrounded by areas of lesser intensity including "Semi-Rural" and "Rural Lands." The edge of a "Village" or "Rural Village" can be defined by a boundary that can be used to differentiate permitted development densities and design standards. The "Village" would contain the densest neighborhoods and a broad range of commercial and civic uses that are supported by a dense network of local roads containing bicycle lanes and walkways linking the neighborhoods with parks, schools, and public areas. Outside of the "Village," "Semi-Rural" areas would contain low-density residential neighborhoods, small-scale agricultural operations, and rural commercial businesses. In turn, these would be surrounded by "Rural Lands" characterized by very low-density residential areas that contain open space, habitat, recreation, agriculture, and other uses associated with rural areas. The diagrams below illustrate these relationships:

Community Development Model

Developing the County's communities more compactly meets critical objectives for compliance with the mandates of AB 32, the *California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006*. The bill requires the reduction of GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, about a 25 percent reduction from current levels. Governor Schwarzenegger's Executive Order S-E-05 requires further reductions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. As automobile use and energy consumption are principal contributors to GHG emissions, compact land use patterns and development practices that reduce trip generation and distances will be essential.

Guiding Principle 3

Reinforce the vitality, local economy, and individual character of existing communities when planning new housing, employment, and recreational opportunities.

Main Street in Fallbrook

Critically important in defining the San Diego region is the diversity and character of its distinct communities. Some are located at the edges and serve as transitions from coastal and inland urbanized cities to agriculture and open spaces. These communities are often integrated into the more urban fabric of the region and will serve an important role in meeting the region's housing and employment needs. Others are remotely located in agricultural, pine-covered mountain, valley, and desert locations. Each has emerged in a distinct physical setting with a unique history, culture, character, life style, and identity that has attracted residents and, in some cases, tourists.

As the County continues to grow, it is critical that development be located, scaled, and designed to retain and enhance the qualities that distinguish its communities. Development planning must consider uses; parcel sizes; building form, scale, massing, and architecture; landscapes; and site development practices that are comparable to, or transition with, existing development to ensure that new development "fits" with the community. Smaller parcel sizes in community cores, for example, can be developed to replicate the character and scale of existing development. An economically viable community must also provide housing for all income levels. Close coordination with communities will be essential in understanding those attributes that distinguish them. Clear and effectively crafted community plans have an important role in communicating these principles.

With new development, it is also crucial to accommodate, and provide incentives for, important missing uses that residents and other stakeholders indicate are needed to "complete" the community. These may include locally-needed retail and services and/or amenities, such as parks, sidewalks that are pedestrian-friendly, trails and pathways, and parking facilities.

Guiding Principle 4

Promote environmental stewardship that protects the range of natural resources and habitats that uniquely define the County's character and ecological importance.

The San Diego region is considered to be one of the most biologically diverse areas in the United States[1] and it is home to more rare and endangered species than any other region in the continental United States. Large lot development practices during recent decades have resulted in a loss of habitat resources, with some habitat types occupying less than five to ten percent of their historic ranges. The continued existence of over 400 sensitive plant and animal species depends on the assurance that sufficient amounts of native habitat, wildlife corridors, and habitat linkages are preserved and managed in a viable manner. The County, in cooperation with the City of San Diego, local, state, and federal agencies, has been aggressive in documenting and developing policies for the protection of sensitive species and habitats. The Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) provides the foundation for these efforts through conservation of land and adaptive management and monitoring activities.

As growth and new development occur in the County, critical lands and habitat should be set aside and protected from development. On other lands, buildings, infrastructure, and other improvements should be located and designed to prevent degradation and adverse impacts on adjoining resources. Maintenance of viable and healthy habitats and biological resources not only sustains sensitive plant and animal species, but also contributes to the economic value, character, and identity of the County.

As practiced, the strict correlation of parcel size with density has been contrary to these objectives. Smaller lot sizes are an essential tool when planning for new development to preserve sensitive resources. Another important consideration is the configuration of the lots, which should be arranged to connect open spaces and create a linked network throughout the region.

[1] Dobson, A.P., J.P. Rodriguez, W.M. Roberts, and D.S. Wilcove. 1997 Geographic Distribution of Endangered Species in the United States. Science 275(5299): 550-553

Guiding Principle 5

Ensure that development accounts for physical constraints and the natural hazards of the land.

Residents, businesses, and visitors to the San Diego region are exposed to a diversity of natural and human-induced hazards that could affect life and property. Rupture of the Elsinore, Earthquake Valley, and San Jacinto Faults, and other ancillary faults, may incur property and personal damage due to ground shaking, landslides, liquefaction, and tsunamis. Landslides and rockfalls occur throughout the County's mountainous terrain. Hillside canyons, valleys, the desert floor, and flatlands may be impacted by heavy storm runoff and flooding. Wildland fires often occur in grasslands, chaparral, and forests, while threatening structures in urbanized areas. Some industrial and commercial businesses involve the use of toxic chemicals and hazardous materials that pose a risk to human health.

New development should be located and designed to protect life and property from these and similar hazards. In high risk areas, development should be prohibited or restricted in type and/or density. In other areas, structures, properties, infrastructure, and other improvements should be designed to mitigate potential risks from these hazards. Development that cannot avoid high risk areas should be carefully reviewed for consistency with County building codes and development regulations to eliminate or minimize potential risks.

Guiding Principle 6

Provide and support a multi-modal transportation network that enhances connectivity and supports community development patterns and, when appropriate, plan for development which supports public transportation.

The transportation system within the unincorporated County will rely primarily on a public road network that contains transportation routes for vehicular and non-vehicular travel such as pedestrians and bicycles. Future development will be more compact, which will reduce travel distances and the geographic extent of the transportation network, as discussed in Guiding Principle 2. These compact development patterns will support the development of a public transportation system. However, the mix and densities of land uses in the rural setting will be insufficient to support the development of a more comprehensive public transportation system accessible to a significant number of residents and the automobile will remain the primary mode of transportation in these areas. Nevertheless, public transit will be supported and enhanced where appropriate. Additionally, bike routes, pathways, and trails will be integrated with the road network providing options for travel and recreation.

An effective transportation system should provide convenient access to employment, education, public service, commercial, and recreational centers. It should provide connectivity within each community and within the region. The capacity of the transportation network should be adequate to support the development capacity of the land use plan for housing, retail, industrial, recreational, and other uses. Routes should be designed and developed that are sensitive to their context and minimize construction and environmental costs.

The transportation network should be built to support and correlate with community development patterns. Where more compact forms of development occur, a transportation network should provide a unified and connected system of public roads that accommodate private vehicles, bus or transit stops, pedestrian routes, and bicycles. In low-intensity rural areas, transportation routes should provide safe connections within the community, as well as connections to the regional transportation network.

Guiding Principle 7

Maintain environmentally sustainable communities and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

Example of native landscaping

There is a growing body of evidence that our built communities and typical lifestyles are resulting in over-consumption and degradation of natural resources and that a major shift in human behavior and development practices is necessary to overcome these. Increasingly, communities are seeking more sustainable approaches to development and conservation where persons and societies can live within the means of what the Earth can provide over the long term. A generally accepted definition states "sustainability meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."[2] The emission of GHGs is one critical issue among many that cumulatively contribute to a community's and a region's sustainability.

Sustainability principles also recognize the need to balance the environment with economic and social equity needs. A sustainable economy is one in which good jobs are available for residents and businesses thrive, providing capital to support human needs and protect the environment. A sustainable society is one in which residents are well-educated, have access to cultural activities, are physically active and healthy, and

[2] United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development

participate with their neighbors in community activity. Together, these are referred to as the "triple bottom line" of sustainability and all are considered of equal importance.

The County of San Diego can move towards sustainability and a reduction of GHG emissions by managing land development and building construction, conserving habitats and natural resources, providing efficient transportation and mobility systems, and developing its infrastructure and public services. As described for Guiding Principle 2, land should be developed more compactly, resulting in reduced automobile use and increased use of public transit, walking, and bicycling. This will result in less consumption of gasoline, generation of less air pollution and GHG emissions, the preservation of greater amounts of habitat and agricultural lands, and the improvement of the lifestyles and health of community residents. Locating residences closer to retail stores and jobs also increases the economic viability of those commercial entities. Providing new recreational facilities and access to the County's abundant open spaces can improve public health. Similarly, choices for alternative transportation modes including bus and transit systems, pedestrian routes, and bicycle paths should be expanded, as described in Guiding Principle 6. This will result in similar benefits to public health by increasing outdoor activities.

Reduced consumption of energy, water, and raw materials, generation of waste, and use of toxic and hazardous substances should be considered in all aspects of development. Buildings should be oriented on properties to maximize opportunities for solar access and photovoltaic energy systems. Rainfall should be captured on site, lessening runoff into storm drainage facilities and pollution of creeks and streams, and used for irrigation and to replenish the groundwater supply. Buildings should be designed to reduce energy consumption by incorporating natural ventilation, insulation, sunshades, use of energy-efficient equipment, and similar techniques. Wastewater should be re-used for irrigation, toilets, and other suitable purposes. Sites should be landscaped with plant materials that are drought-tolerant and require little water and fertilizer. These represent some of the diverse techniques that should be considered as growth occurs in the County.

Guiding Principle 8

Preserve agriculture as an integral component of the region's economy, character, and open space network.

Agriculture contributes to the County's rural character and is an important contributor to the regional economy. Unlike many agricultural areas that depend primarily on soil quality, agriculture in San Diego County relies primarily on the region's mild climate and its long growing seasons. These factors allow the County to facilitate small farms and crop diversification through support of the Farm and Home Advisor.

Growth and development in the County should be directed to areas so as to protect opportunities for continued agricultural production. Development of compact communities, as defined by Guiding Principle 2, will contribute to this objective. Permitted densities in prime agricultural areas should be reduced to sustain sufficient parcel size

for viable agricultural activities. Incentives should be provided to enable farmers to create small lot subdivisions while retaining the bulk of their land for agricultural operation. Land uses that are incompatible with agricultural uses should be prohibited from major agricultural areas. Finally, a program for the purchase of development rights for agricultural lands should be implemented.

Guiding Principle 9

Minimize public costs of infrastructure and services and correlate their timing with new development.

Population growth impacts the cost to build and operate essential public services. The development of housing, retail stores, and industrial jobs and services requires new roads, schools, parks, law enforcement, fire protection, and other public services. National studies indicate that a residential development does not pay for itself, requiring an estimated $1.42 in public expenditures for every dollar it generates in tax revenues. In California, this deficit is even greater due to the limitations of Proposition 13. In addition, dispersed development patterns, common in unincorporated areas, are costly to serve because they require a more extensive road network for transportation and fire protection, law enforcement, and emergency services. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, for example, found that the capital costs for public infrastructure are typically 74 percent greater for low-density, semi-rural development than for high-density development.[3] Although entitlement fees cover some of the initial public costs for capital improvements, they do not pay for operational or maintenance costs and property taxes do not generate sufficient revenue to fund operational costs.

To reduce the costs of construction and maintenance, development in the County should be designed to be more compact and located in proximity to existing and planned infrastructure and services. New development located near existing and planned infrastructure and services would be served in a more efficient manner and would require less extensive roads and infrastructure, as defined by Guiding Principle 2. This could reduce the need to build and operate new road networks, emergency and law enforcement facilities, libraries, schools, parks, and other public services needed to support residential development in remote areas. Additionally, new technologies and planning approaches that improve cost effectiveness of services and infrastructure should be continually sought out and applied when appropriate.

Guiding Principle 10

Recognize community and stakeholder interests while striving for consensus.

The residents of San Diego County's unincorporated communities and rural areas have chosen to live here largely due to its environmental setting of hillsides, valleys, deserts, and agriculture; low-density rural character; absence of congestion and pollution; friendliness of neighbors; and pace of life that contribute to a high quality of life distinct from the urbanized environment of coastal San Diego and adjoining inland areas. As growth continues, development must be managed to protect these assets.

[3] "Development of the Urban Fringe and Beyond," Economic Research Service, USDA, June 2001. The report defines "low density" as less than 2 dwelling units per acre.

A community meeting held during the General Plan Update planning process

In addition to individual property owners, stakeholders of this Plan primarily include community groups, the building industry, environmental organizations, agricultural interests, and planning and design professionals. These groups represent a myriad of competing interests as do the goals and policies in this Plan that address those interests. While there is often an apparent disconnect between the goals and policies, the Plan's implementation must strike a balance between these individual interests.

To this end, opportunities must continue to be provided to engage the County's residents, business persons, and stakeholder interests in planning and development decisions that affect the character and quality of the communities and rural areas. Forums for citizens to voice their opinions and provide input regarding proposed land uses to be accommodated; their density, design and development character; compatibility and "fit" with existing uses; obligations to support public infrastructure and services; and impact mitigation must be continued. Where significant debates occur, processes should be established to enable each viewpoint to be heard and for compromise positions to be reached. Community groups such as the community planning and sponsor groups should continue to have an active role in these processes.