

4.11 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Population and housing characteristics of La Mesa are discussed in this section. Expected development capacity resulting from implementation of the 2012 General Plan and the identified potential environmental impacts are evaluated. There is a description of existing conditions, the potential environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the 2012 General Plan, and mitigation measures where appropriate. Information presented in this section draws from several sources: development capacity calculations based on the density limits contained in the land use designations contained in the General Plan Land Use and Urban Design Element and data from the U.S. Census, and population and housing forecast data from SANDAG.

4.11.1 Existing Environmental Setting

Population and Housing

In 1990, La Mesa's population was 52,931 and there were 24,154 housing units, as recorded by the 1990 U.S. Census. By 2012, La Mesa's population grew to 58,296 and 25,840 housing units. Projections by SANDAG for the year 2035 show a population of 68,682 with 28,985 housing units, an increase of 17.8 percent for population and 12.2 percent for housing. Table 4.11-1 shows the projected growth in population and housing based on the SANDAG 2050 Regional Growth Forecast (SANDAG 2011).

**Table 4.11-1
City of La Mesa Population and Housing Growth 2012 to 2035**

	2012	2012 General Plan Horizon Year 2035 Projections	Numerical Change 2012-2035	Percent change 2012-2035
Population	58,296	68,682	10,386	17.8%
Housing Units	25,840	28,985	3,145	12.2%
Persons per household	2.26	2.37	0.11	4.9%

Source: SANDAG 2011

The average household size is also expected to increase slightly over coming decades, which accounts for the smaller relative percent increase in housing units compared to population. In 2012 there were 2.26 persons per household. By 2035, the persons per household measure is projected to be 2.37.

In the coming decades, it is anticipated that the City will grow at a rate that is similar to what was experienced over the past decades. However, unlike the past when there was vacant land zoned for residential use available to develop, future growth will be accommodated through redevelopment of land previously developed with uses and structures that have become obsolete or are underperforming in the marketplace. These properties are already covered with buildings and parking lots. Transitioning to a more-densely developed mix of residential and/or commercial uses will increase the efficiency of land.

The Land Use and Urban Design Element and Housing Element of the 2012 General Plan both anticipate future development of housing along transit corridors and adjacent to trolley stations. The 2012 General Plan anticipates that existing single-family housing and neighborhoods would be preserved and future growth would be focused along streets that are transitioning from antiquated commercial strips to mixed-use neighborhoods.

Composition of the housing stock portfolio will shift over time as more multi-family buildings are constructed and the single-family housing stock remains approximately even. Table 4.11-2 shows the SANDAG Regional Growth Forecast broken down by housing unit type.

**Table 4.11-2
Change in Housing Stock Composition 2012 to 2035**

	2012	2012 General Plan Horizon Year 2035 Projections	Numerical Change 2012–2035	Percent change 2010–2035
Single-Family	13,786	14,055	269	27.1%
Multi-Family	11,722	14,621	2,899	24.7%
Mobile Homes	332	309	-23	-6.9%
Total Housing Units	25,840	28,985	3,145	12.2%

Source: SANDAG 2011

4.11.2 Regulatory Setting

The following section provides a general description of the applicable regulatory requirements for the City, including federal, state, regional, and local guidelines.

Federal

Federal Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970

The Federal Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (Uniform Act) passed by Congress in 1970 is a federal law that establishes minimum standards for federally funded programs and projects that require the acquisition of real property (real estate) or displaces persons from their homes, businesses, or farms. The Uniform Act's protection and assistance apply to the acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of real property for federal or federally funded projects.

State

California Government Code

Government Code Section 65008 prohibits, *inter alia*, discrimination of any group or individuals in the enjoyment of residence, land ownership, tenancy, or any other land use, and use of any resident development or emergency shelter.

Government Code Sections 65583 to 65590 address state requirements to plan for growth in a jurisdiction's housing stock to accommodate the projected population growth. This is accomplished through the regional housing needs allocation process. To accommodate the regional housing needs allocation numbers, the jurisdiction's Housing Element must demonstrate capacity equivalent to or exceeding the housing need to facilitate development of a variety of types of housing for all income groups.

Article 34

Article 34 of the California Constitution requires a majority vote of the electorate to approve the development, construction, or acquisition by a public body of any "low rent project" within that jurisdiction. For any project to be built and/or operated by a public agency, where at least 50 percent of the occupants are low income and rents are restricted to affordable levels, the jurisdiction must seek voter approval.

California Building Standards Code

CCR Title 24 includes the California Building Standards Code, which ensures that safe and decent housing is constructed in the state to promote public health and safety. The Building Standards Code serves to protect residents from hazards and risks, and is not considered to be an

undue constraint to housing production. The 2010 triennial edition of the Building Standards Code applies to all occupancies seeking a building permit from January 1, 2011, and remains in effect until superseded by the 2013 edition.

Local

2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

SANDAG, governing as the regional transportation planning agency, adopted the 2050 RTP/SCS as required by state law. The RTP/SCS ensures consistency between the implementation of local land use plans, the transportation infrastructure required for future mobility, and the need to reduce GHG emissions related to transportation sources. A key component of the RTP/SCS is the determination that adequate capacity to house the future population is available within the region's land use plans.

4.11.3 Thresholds for Determining Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a significant impact related to population and housing would occur if implementation of the 2012 General Plan would do any of the following:

- Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure).
- Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
- Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

4.11.4 Analysis of Environmental Impacts

Induce Substantial Population Growth

La Mesa's population is expected to grow approximately 18 percent over the next two decades. Increases in population, and the growth in housing stock and employment opportunities that support population growth, are generally considered to be social or economic effects, as opposed to effects on the physical environment, which are the focus of CEQA analysis.

There are circumstances where social and economic changes related to population growth could indirectly cause physical environmental impacts or result in changes to environmental resources, such as air quality, biological resources, or noise levels. Lead agencies may evaluate social or economic change related to a change in the physical environment to determine whether the physical change is significant pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15131.

Although the 2012 General Plan accommodates the projected growth in population, housing, and employment within La Mesa, this, in and of itself, is not an environmental impact. Specific physical impacts related to population, housing, and employment growth envisioned by the 2012 General Plan are addressed throughout the topic specific chapters of this EIR. The impact to inducing substantial population growth is **less than significant** and no mitigation is required.

Displace a Substantial Number of Existing Housing Units or People

The 2012 General Plan anticipates land use changes in accordance with the land-use designations and requirements of the City's development regulations. Future development is expected to occur along transit corridors and adjacent to the five trolley stations located in the City. A general intensification of uses will occur in these areas as properties are redeveloped in response to market forces.

A limited number of housing units are located within the areas designated for mixed-use development. Housing units could be displaced when new development occurs. However, permitted capacity of the mixed-use land-use designation (up to 40 dwelling units per acre) would allow for enough new residential development to replace any housing units lost.

Five privately owned trailer parks along El Cajon Boulevard will eventually be replaced, as they are becoming increasingly obsolete. A few hundred housing units are included in these trailer parks. State law contains special procedures governing the logistics of mobile home park closure, which the City would enforce at the time these trailer park(s) are closed.

As outlined above, the changes anticipated by the 2012 General Plan could impact existing residential development. These changes are expected to result in the maintenance of or an increase in the existing housing stock, with limited displacement or destruction of existing housing. Thus, implementation of the 2012 General Plan would not displace a substantial number of people or housing units, and would result in a **less-than-significant** impact. No mitigation is required.

4.11.5 Mitigation Measures

The 2012 General Plan would accommodate the projected growth in population, housing, and employment within La Mesa, and increase the overall number of residential units with limited residential and business displacement. Impacts to population and housing issues would be less than significant at this Program EIR-level of analysis. Impacts are less than significant and no mitigation is required.

4.11.6 Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of the 2012 General Plan would result in **less-than-significant** impacts to population and housing issues.