

INTRODUCTION

Table of Contents

Vision.....	I-1
Background.....	I-1
Citizen Participation	I-3
General Plan Update Survey Responses.....	I-4
New Initiatives.....	I-6
Planning in La Mesa.....	I-6
General Format and Content	I-10
Summary of the General Plan Elements	I-11
Land Use and Urban Design Element	I-11
Circulation Element	I-11
Conservation & Sustainability Element.....	I-12
Recreation & Open Space Element.....	I-13
Historic Preservation Element.....	I-14
Noise Element	I-14
Safety Element.....	I-15
Public Services and Facilities Element.....	I-16
Health and Wellness Element.....	I-17
Housing Element.....	I-17



Introduction

Vision

The City of La Mesa is a community working together toward a common goal which includes a safe and healthy environment, state-of-the-art resources and technology, unsurpassed quality of life and an efficient and effectively run government organization!

Background

Each city and county in California is required to prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-range general plan as outlined in the California Government Code (Govt. Code Sections 65300-65362). The general plan is required to have seven elements: land use, circulation, open space, noise, conservation, public safety, and housing.

California Law allows a city to include in its plan other elements which are deemed locally important; such as historic preservation and urban design. The updated 2012 La Mesa General Plan includes the seven required Elements plus three additional Elements: 1.) Historic Preservation, 2.) Public Services & Facilities, and 3.) Health & Wellness. Urban Design is added to, and part of, the Land Use Element; Sustainability is added to, and part of, the Conservation Element; and Recreation is added to, and part of, the Open Space Element.

Motto:

"Finest small town in San Diego County."

City Goals:

- Safe community.
- Maintain a financially sound and affordable city government.
- Continue to improve high quality municipal services.
- Revitalize neighborhoods and corridors.
- Enhanced recreation and quality of life opportunities.
- Effective and efficient traffic circulation and transportation.

The updated General Plan contains ten (10) Elements:

- Land Use * and Urban Design
- Circulation *
- Conservation * and Sustainability
- Recreation & Open Space *
- Historic Preservation
- Noise *
- Safety *
- Public Services and Facilities
- Health and Wellness
- Housing *

(*7 Elements required by State law)

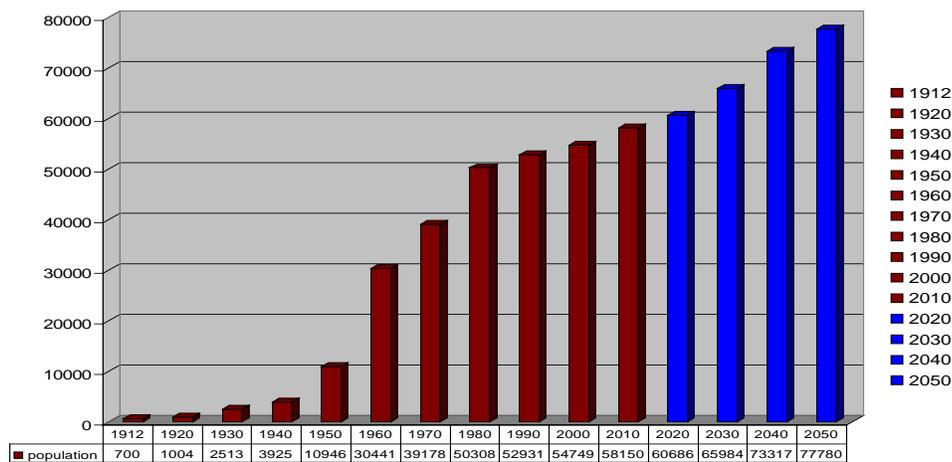


Sharp Grossmont Hospital Campus

With a 20-year planning horizon, the General Plan accommodates approximately 7,800 new people, 1,800 new housing units, and 1,200 new jobs based on SANDAG’s Regional growth forecast for La Mesa.

- 2010 La Mesa pop. 58,150
- 2030 La Mesa pop. 65,984 (13% increase)
- 2050 La Mesa pop. 77,780 (33% increase)

The 2012 “Centennial” General Plan of the City of La Mesa gives the community an opportunity to look back 100 years when the City was incorporated on Feb. 16, 1912, and forward to the next century. At the time of incorporation, the population of La Mesa was only 700 people. The chart below shows the population growth in La Mesa since incorporation in 1912 and in each Census decade until 2010. It also projects the population growth to the year 2050 based on the SANDAG Regional growth forecast.



Population growth in La Mesa, actual and projected

The 2012 La Mesa General Plan incorporates issues of sustainability, climate change, complete streets, water conservation, and wellness. The General Plan strengthens policies that preserve neighborhoods while promoting in-fill development opportunities in the City's commercial areas and along transit corridors in La Mesa. The Project will align the City's General Plan with Regional goals and State legislation that have been adopted since 1996.

Once adopted, the City Council and Planning Commission are required to ensure that development, both private and public, are consistent with the Goals and Policies of the Plan in the future. In this respect, the General Plan serves as a road map for the community, guiding many current activities and decisions, but also providing long-term direction for the City in the form of Goals and Policies.

The City of La Mesa adopted its first General Plan in 1965. It has been amended and added to periodically as State law has changed and as local needs have changed. A comprehensive update of the General Plan was last adopted by the City Council on March 12, 1996 and the Housing Element was previously updated in 2005.

A General Plan is intended to provide comprehensive, long-term direction by establishing locally important goals and policies. From time to time the Plan may be amended to reflect changing local policies and Regional objectives as may apply to La Mesa and State Legislature.

Citizen Participation

To be useful, as well as legally adequate, a general plan should reflect the current views and values of the citizenry. As a comprehensive set of goals and policies about the City today and in helping the community move into the next century, this is one of the most important functions of the General Plan. To this end, all of the City's advisory Boards and Commissions provided meaningful input into the General Plan update process to assist the Planning Department in the preparation of this Plan. Presentations were given to all 13 boards and commissions in 2011. The presentations included:

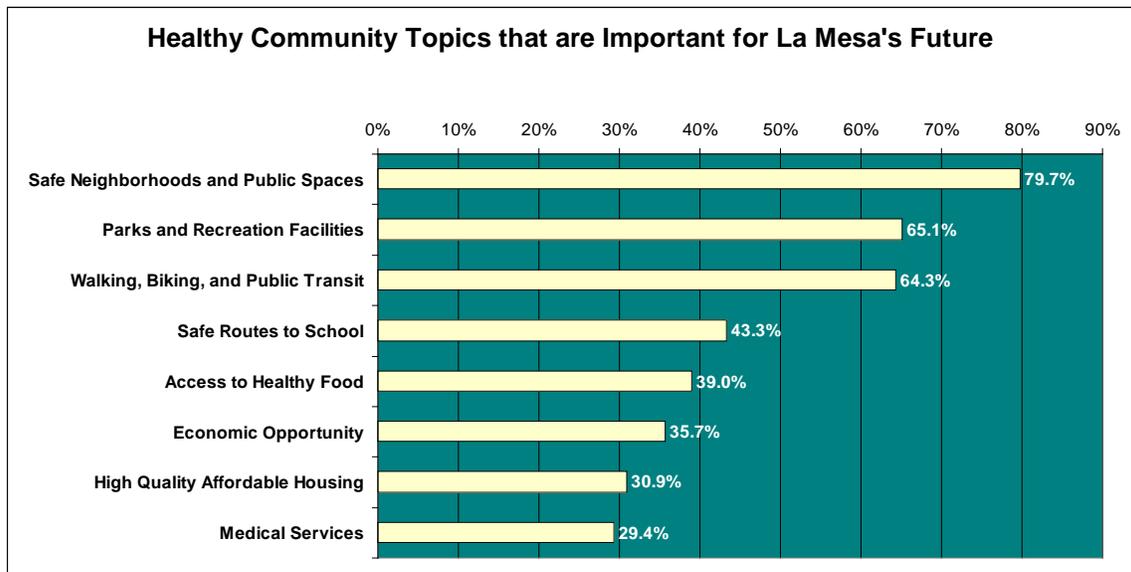
- Population & Regional Growth
- Local and Regional Transportation
- Land Use, Historic Preservation, and Redevelopment
- Housing and Urban Design
- Public Services and Facilities
- Conservation of Natural Resources
- Noise and Public Safety
- Historic Preservation
- Sustainability
- Parks & Recreation

The public review and approval process used in the adoption of the 2012 General Plan included an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and public hearings held before the Planning Commission and City Council.

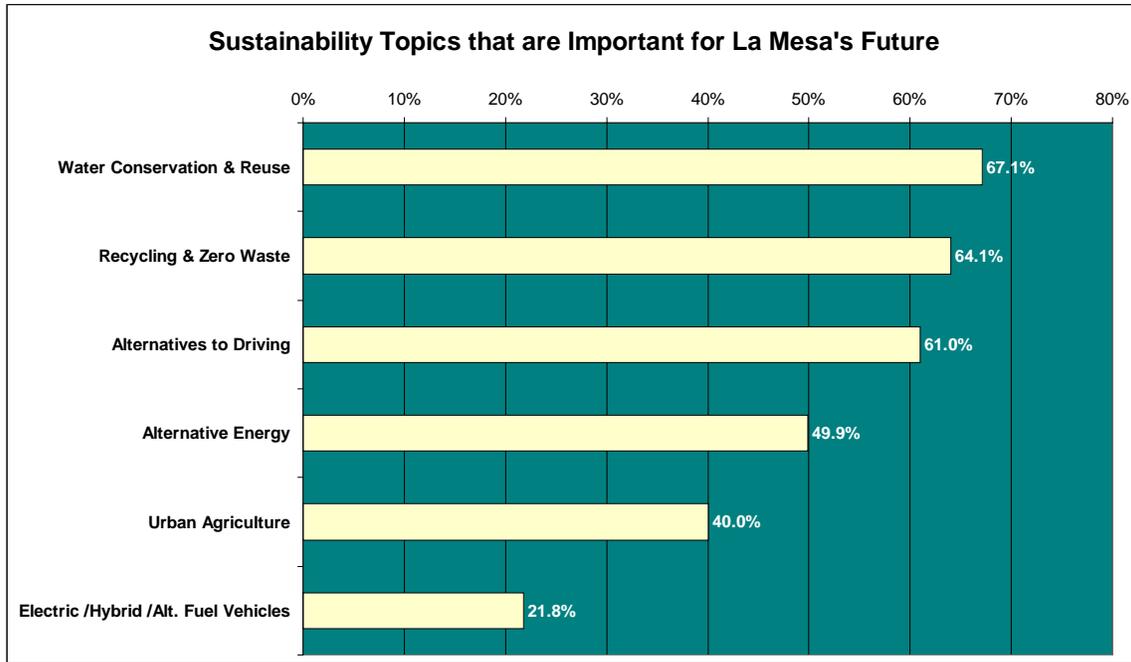
In March 2010 a webpage dedicated to the General Plan update went live on the City’s website. It contained useful information related to the comprehensive 2012 General Plan update and described how citizens could get involved in the process. A survey was posted on the webpage and the same survey questions were asked at five workshops held in 2010 and 2011. The five General Plan public workshops were held on April 15, 2010, September 23, 2010, April 7, 2011, July 30, 2011, and August 25, 2011. Public comments were collected in both written and electronic formats. The survey results from March 2010 to January 2012 are shown below. A total of 395 responses were received during that time.

General Plan Update Survey Responses

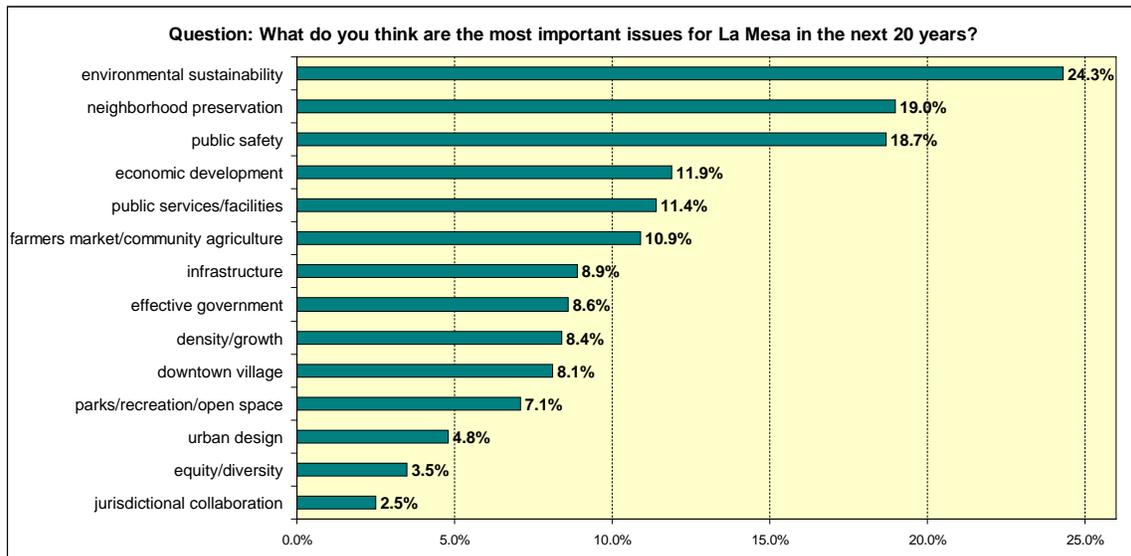
To the question “What healthy community topic(s) do you think are most important for La Mesa’s future?” the responses are shown below.



To the question “What sustainability topic(s) do you think are most important for La Mesa’s future?” the responses are shown below.



Individual responses to the third open-ended question are categorized into the topic areas shown below.



These three survey questions and the 395 responses to them are not scientifically valid because the number of responses was too low. However, this information shows general areas of interest for the future of La Mesa from the people that responded to the survey questions.

New Initiatives

The planning process for the 2012 General Plan update includes the development of goals, objectives and policies that address new initiatives adopted by the State Legislature as well as the Regional planning efforts of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) including:

- The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32)
- The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act (SB 375)
- California Complete Streets legislation (AB 1358)
- Consistency with the SANDAG Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) adopted by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)

Planning in La Mesa

Since becoming a City in 1912, planning in La Mesa has been an ongoing and evolving process. This section briefly outlines the major planning efforts that have helped to shape the City by addressing changes faced during the growth and maturity of the town. Many of the goals for the community have remained very consistent through the years, such as preserving the quality of life in the various residential neighborhoods and keeping the Downtown area a viable Commercial District. This historical review is also helpful in demonstrating that the General Plan should be viewed as a living document that represents a continuous process, rather than just a fixed snapshot of one point in time or a description of a specific end state.



Solar panels provide shade and renewable energy.

The citizens of the community of La Mesa Springs voted to incorporate as the City of La Mesa in 1912. By 1928 the first Planning Commission was established. In 1934 the first comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, Ordinance Number 178, was adopted, which, according to the Planning Commission's resolution, showed "comprehensively the

proposed districts in which the use, height and bulk of buildings were to be regulated, restricted and limited.”

Ordinance 178 was amended several times over the next 10 years before a new ordinance, Number 265, was adopted on July 25, 1945. According to minutes of the Planning Commission, the purpose of the new ordinance was to:

- Provide for a relocation of the Industrial Zone and the plans for landscaping and beautifying the entrance to the City along U.S. Highway 80;
- Realign the boundaries of the Commercial Zone in keeping with new development;
- Relocate boundaries of all residential zones according to modern trends of expansion and development of the City; and
- Amend and clarify sections of the Ordinance that operation under the Ordinance has shown to be uncertain and indefinite.

Two years later the City's first subdivision ordinance was adopted providing regulations for the subdivision of land, dedications of streets and approval of maps thereof.



Historic Train and Depot

In 1954, several planning activities were underway in the City of La Mesa. The City contracted with Gordon Whitnall and Associates of Los Angeles to prepare a Master Plan, subdivision ordinance and zoning ordinance to address the issues of the new growth. The Master Plan contained recommendations concerning circulation, parking, parks and recreation, and public buildings.

Although the Master Plan was not adopted in its entirety, a number of proposals contained therein were adopted. The proposed Subdivision Ordinance was enacted in 1954 and the proposed Zoning Ordinance, Ordinance Number 618, was adopted in 1958.

In 1959 a study entitled “La Mesa: A Study of the Future” was prepared by the Public Affairs Research Institute of San Diego State University. The purpose of the report was to assess the future fiscal condition of the City. Its basic assumption was that the citizens of La Mesa would desire to continue to live in a primarily residential community of single-family homes; a theme which predominates throughout the City's planning activities. The general conclusion drawn from the study was that the City had great potential as a commercial and professional center for much of the eastern metropolitan area, and that pursuance of this goal would be compatible with the existing residential community.

In the early 1960's the City found itself facing a number of planning issues generated by the rapid population growth of the previous two decades. Between 1940 and 1960 the

population grew from 3,925 to 30,441. Major issues included the construction of Interstate 8, which left the City divided in half without an adequate cross-town internal circulation system; an overabundance of commercial floor space resulting in vacant properties and a declining central business district; and the construction of housing resulting in a rapid loss of open space.

In order to confront these problems and resolve them, the City Council decided to prepare a General Plan. In 1962, the Planning Department, in association with the consulting firm of Eisner-Stewart and Associates, began developing the Plan. As the first step, the Staff completed a Land Use Survey, which was published as the first in a series of five reports. The second study undertaken in the development of the General Plan was an Economic Analysis by Real Estate Research Corporation. This study provided additional background information used in determining the amount of land to be designated for a particular use.

In January 1965, the City Council adopted the third series report, The General Plan. The primary purpose of the Plan was to guide the City's future growth and to encourage high quality development by establishing desired goals and objectives. The adopted General Plan contained Land use, Circulation and Public Facilities Elements. The community goals addressed in these Elements are summarized below:

- La Mesa is an optimum location for residential development and every effort should be made to retain its suburban quality and identity as a city of fine homes.
- There should be a balance between residential development and related public services by providing for schools, parks and other public service facilities adequate and convenient to serve the needs of all the people in all parts of the City.
- The Elements of the circulation system should be coordinated within the City and between the City and other adjacent municipalities so as to promote the safe movement of people and goods within and between the neighborhood, the community and the Region.
- The City, together with private enterprise, should devote concerted energies to the revitalization of the Central Business District as suggested in the Development Plan for the area.

In addition to the aforementioned General Plan Series Reports, two others were prepared. The General Plan Series Report 4, Proposed Precise Plan for the Central Business District and Town Center Plan, proposed solutions to the problem of that area's declining economic situation. The fifth and final report of the series concerned Capital Improvement Programming. It proposed a means of implementing the Public Facilities Element of the General Plan by classifying the numerous projects recommended for community improvement and rehabilitation in order of their importance and the City's ability to pay for them.



Construction of New Bank Building

In 1967, a Housing Element was added to the General Plan in response to new State requirements. In 1970, Conservation and Open Space Elements were added; and in 1971, State Law specified the need for each city to include seismic safety, noise, scenic highway and safety elements.

State Legislation in 1971 also required that zoning and subdivision approvals be consistent with the adopted General Plan. This legislation prompted La Mesa to update the Land Use Element and Zoning Ordinance 618. In response to the changes to the Land Use Plans, many areas of the City were rezoned to make the local zoning designation consistent with the General Plan's Land Use Element. This reflects the primary growth phase of the City where urban uses expanded to the City limits and merged with existing development. During this period, the City also adjusted to its southwest boundaries in response to the incorporation of Lemon Grove in 1977.



Grossmont Center

Since 1980, there have been some important amendments to the General Plan. The most significant amendment to the Land Use Element included several changes made in 1982 to reflect the changes recommended by the West-Central Specific Plan. This amendment investigated a number of problems in the area such as circulation and the pattern and design of existing land uses.

New land use designations were developed to promote the realization of objectives for the area. Other additions to the General Plan included a Bicycle Plan as part of the Circulation Element in 1981. This Plan assessed the needs of bicyclists traveling on City roadways and proposed a new bicycle network and procedures for its implementation. In 1984 a Historic Preservation Element was adopted that set policies for the preservation of architecturally and historically significant buildings and sites.

Since 1980, the General Plan has been amended and added to periodically as State Law has changed and as local needs have changed. A comprehensive update of the General Plan was last adopted by the City Council on March 12, 1996 and the Housing Element was last updated in 2005.

General Format and Content

The General Plan includes ten Elements that are divided as chapters within the document. Although each Element contains a separate subject area and a set of policies and programs, the Elements should be viewed collectively as the General Plan with policies that are inter-related and internally consistent. For example, in determining the City’s Goals and Policies regarding residential neighborhoods, one should consider the Policies within several Elements, such as Land Use and Urban Design, Circulation and Historic Preservation. Each Element has a particular focus, but is supported by the other parts of the “comprehensive” General Plan.

To make the General Plan a useful tool in the daily decision-making processes of the City, each Element uses a similar format and presentation. Each subject area is presented as an Element or Chapter of the General Plan but contains a table describing its relationship to other General Plan Elements. The Element is started with a Vision Statement, which gives the most general and long-range description of what the City should be striving to achieve. Subsections break the broad subject areas into specific topics, which contain Goals, Objectives and Policies.

Many existing goals, objectives and policies were edited to be consistent with the overall formatting of the draft General Plan document while maintaining the original intent and concept.

Following a discussion of each topic or issue are numbered “Objectives and Policies”. The Objectives and Policies are more specific statements that describe the City’s Policies needed to achieve the Vision and Goal statements. Finally, each Element includes a list of Implementation Programs that outline current or planned activities the City will undertake to implement the General Plan.

The General Plan presents a range of information and statements to describe the City and define where we are today and where we would like to go in our future. This hierarchy is listed below:

- Vision Statement
- Goals
- Objectives
- Policies
- Implementation Programs

Summary of the General Plan Elements

The following sections provide a brief summary of each of the Elements in the General Plan. This includes a discussion of the major issues within the Element and a description of the purpose for this portion of the General Plan.

Land Use and Urban Design Element

The Land Use and Urban Design Element of the General Plan focuses on the physical form and development of the community. This Element also identifies the Goals and Policies of the City related to La Mesa's role in a Regional planning context. The Regional issues are discussed within the section describing the Planning Area and the Regional Growth Management Strategy. The Element combines two major sections of the General Plan, Land use and Urban Design. Within each of these sections is a summary of the issues, which leads to the City's Goals, Policies and Objectives related to these topics. At the end of the Element there is a section, which outlines a range of existing and proposed programs intended to implement the Goals, Policies and Objectives established in this portion of the General Plan.

The policies of the Land Use and Urban Design Element place heavy emphasis on two concepts:

- The preservation and enhancement of residential neighborhoods and open spaces.
- Ensuring that new development and redevelopment along the City's major commercial and transportation corridors are of high quality and fit well into the fabric of the community.

In satisfying these two concerns, it will be the task of City leaders to preserve the past while allowing a level of growth necessary to sustain a viable community. The City cannot remain stagnant, without some new development, and continue to provide the level of service that will retain the quality of life citizens of La Mesa have come to expect. Both public and private property will experience wear and tear over time. Without reinvestment in maintenance and improvements, cities, like other facilities and systems, will deteriorate over time. As the cost of providing services in the community gradually rises, and the need to repair aging infrastructure increases, the lack of financial resources will make it more challenging for the City to provide a quality urban environment.

Circulation Element

The Circulation Element outlines a comprehensive approach for establishing Goals and Policies for a complete transportation system. It includes the concepts and recommendations from the Walkability Plan/Sidewalk Master Plan and the Bicycle Facilities and Alternative Transportation Plan to address the new requirements of AB 1358 California Complete Streets legislation. This system is made up of various networks

representing the different modes of travel, cars, buses, walking and cycling. The Circulation Element outlines the short- and long-range issues related to the particular components of the circulation network. It also defines the issues related to linking the various networks into a cohesive and effective overall transportation network. This concept of linking networks involves coordinating networks which are of concern primarily to La Mesa, as well as ensuring these local systems are linked efficiently with neighboring cities and with Regional transportation systems, such as transit routes, freeways and arterial streets.

In expanding the scope of the Circulation Element beyond just an outline of the street classifications, there are some key concepts appearing throughout the Element that tie the various components of the Element together. These concepts include:

- The Circulation Plan requires a balance between mobility and access.
- The needs for each of the various modes of transportation must be evenly balanced and effectively linked together into a cohesive system.
- The basic street system in La Mesa is well established and strongly defined by existing development patterns and terrain. This basic street pattern is not planned to significantly change during the planning period, therefore most circulation solutions will need to work within the given circulation infrastructure.



Grossmont Trolley Station Elevator and Bridge

- The Circulation system should be thought of as a series of paths that not only move people effectively through the City and the Region, but also physically define the character and quality of life in the community

A safe and efficient Circulation system is essential to the health and welfare of the residents of La Mesa, as well as being essential for the economic viability of the businesses, industries and services, which are a part of the community.

Conservation & Sustainability Element

The City of La Mesa has experienced a substantial transformation over the past 100 years as it has grown along with the surrounding Region. The community has evolved from being primarily a semi-rural bedroom community to its current status as an east county

urban sub-center. Approximately 98% of the City’s land area has been developed with residential and commercial land uses. La Mesa does not have many of the resources typically discussed in a Conservation Element, such as significant natural habitat areas, bodies of water, coastal zones, agriculture or mineral resources. These issues are important to the community in a Regional context, and the Goals and Policies in this Element reflect this interest in supporting Regional resource conservation efforts. Resource conservation issues, which are of Regional interest, also apply directly to local implementation including air quality, water supply, solid waste management, sewage treatment, and storm water pollution management. These topics, as they relate to conditions in the City of La Mesa, are addressed in this Element as well.



Colorful Walk in La Mesa

The topic of “Sustainability” has been added to the Conservation Element to address initiatives such as the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) and the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act (SB 375). The La Mesa Environmental Sustainability Commission provided significant input into the development of the Vision, Goals, Objectives and Policies of this Element.

The purpose of this Element is to accommodate population growth and future development in the most environmentally sustainable and non-polluting ways possible.

Recreation & Open Space Element

The purpose of the Recreation & Open Space Element is to establish the Goals, Objectives and Policies needed by the City to meet the community’s current and future open space and recreational needs. A decline in the number of acres of undeveloped land has accompanied the urbanization of La Mesa over the past century. This decline in the amount of undeveloped areas for open space purposes has increased the importance and demand on the City’s urban open space resources. The backbone of the City’s Open Space Plan is the City’s 14 parks and the open space resources provided by the schools within the City. In addition, private open space within residential developments, and even commercial recreational opportunities, will continue to be important components of the open space network needed to maintain a high quality of life in the City. Within the parks, there are conflicting demands on the open space for recreation purposes, for preservation of natural areas and for public health and safety. The Open Space section of the Conservation and Open Space Element establishes guidelines for balancing the demands placed on the City’s parks and open space areas. There is a close relationship between

measures needed to conserve natural resources and those needed to provide open space to sustain the quality of life for La Mesa’s citizens.

This Element includes highlights and recommendations from the City-wide Parks Master Plan to incorporate the recommendations and policies relative to parks and recreation within the City.

Historic Preservation Element

No city can hope to understand its present or to forecast its future if it fails to recognize its past. By tracing the past, a city can gain a clear sense of the process by which it achieved its present form and substance. Even more importantly, a city can use this information to determine how it is likely to continue to evolve. For these reasons, efforts directed at identifying and preserving La Mesa’s historic architectural and cultural resources, with their inherent ability to evoke the past, should be pursued.



Historic Porter Hall

Historic and cultural resources are physical features, both natural and man-made, associated with human activity. These may include such physical objects and features as archaeological sites and artifacts, structures, groups of buildings, street furniture, signs, and planted materials. In short, almost anything that connotes human historic (and prehistoric) presences. They may also include sites of fossil deposits or natural features which predate human arrival in the Region.

La Mesa first adopted a Historic Preservation Element in 1984. By 1985, the City had adopted an Implementation Ordinance, which created the Historic Preservation Commission, outlined the Commission’s responsibilities, and prescribed a process for designating Historic Landmarks and Historic Districts in La Mesa.

Noise Element

The purpose of the Noise Element is to identify and appraise existing noise problems in the community and to provide guidance to the City to avoid noise problems in the future. Accomplishing this goal requires an evaluation of existing and projected noise sources in the community. The Noise Element, as well as other General Plan Policies and implementing Ordinances, such as zoning codes and noise ordinances, are effective tools in noise reduction and mitigation, which will improve the overall quality of life for the citizens of La Mesa.

A consulting firm was retained by the City to assist in the preparation of background information necessary for the formulation of goals and policies for the Noise Element. The primary finding about La Mesa’s noise environment is that street and highway traffic is, and will continue to be, the major sources of intrusive noise in the City. Residential neighborhoods throughout the City are impacted by traffic noise.

This Element quantifies the community noise environment of the City of La Mesa in terms of noise exposure contours. These contours are the basis for the development of land use compatibility guidelines. The noise contours of major noise sources have also been prepared to assist in setting policies for the proper distribution of land uses and establishment of development standards. Since the last comprehensive update to the General Plan in 1996, the extension of SR-125 and the East (Green) Trolley Line has been completed. This update includes SR-125 in the Noise Element.

The Noise Contour Map assists in decision making regarding the placement of noise sensitive land uses such as residential, schools, hospitals and libraries. Where noise sensitive uses are proposed in areas exposed to high noise levels, the Noise Element outlines policies and noise attenuating measures, including building placement, type of construction and materials selections.

Safety Element

The Safety Element identifies hazards within the community and contains policies designed to mitigate the risk to the public. Areas of concern include hazards associated with seismic activities, flooding, fire, unstable soils and other natural or manmade hazard. The updated Element includes the City’s “Hazard Mitigation Plan”. Existing conditions are described along with the Goals and Policies established by the City to minimize the risks associated with these conditions.

Ensuring the health and safety of La Mesa’s citizens and maintaining the quality of life in the community have been long standing goals for the City. Many of the policies and programs addressed in this Element reflect this long-standing commitment. In addition, the Safety Element recognizes that we are living in an ever-changing environment where the best policy is being prepared and maintaining the ability to respond effectively to the unknown.



Gathering at Fire Station No. 11

The purpose of the Safety Element is to incorporate safety considerations into the planning process in order to minimize the impact of hazardous conditions or emergency situations on the community. The following are the identified areas of concern addressed in this

Element: Flood Hazard, Geologic Hazard, Seismic Safety, Fire Safety, Hazardous Materials Exposure, Disaster Preparedness and Citizen Safety. Some related policies and programs are also found in the Public Services and Facilities Element.

Public Services and Facilities Element

State Law does not require a general plan to include a Public Services and Facilities Element. The City has chosen to include a Public Services and Facilities Element because these topics are important to the City’s quality of life. Public services and facilities are also linked to the General Plan through the Capital Improvement Program. Every two years, the Planning Commission reviews the proposed Capital Improvement Program. The Capital Improvement Plan must be found consistent with, and serve to further, the Goals and Policies of the General Plan.

Planning for future services and facilities is among the most important roles of local government. The General Plan can help estimate the potential for growth in the residential and commercial sector. Growth in these areas impacts the demand for services and facilities. Anticipation of, and response to, increased services and facility demands can achieve the goals of this Plan and provide the orderly growth within the community that is needed to sustain La Mesa’s quality of life expectations.



Capital Improvement Projects enhance La Mesa’s streets.

Most of the growth on undeveloped land has already occurred. The years ahead are going to need to address the redevelopment of older commercial areas and the allowance for appropriate forms of infill development. Analysis of services and infrastructure needs is important to ensure that future development does not overtax both physical systems and is financially feasible. Planning for and replacing aging infrastructure will be important for existing citizens and property owners as well as those wishing to invest in La Mesa’s future.

The City of La Mesa provides vital services to the citizens of La Mesa through the following departments: Police, Fire, Public Works, Administrative Services/Finance, Community Development, and Community Services. To provide these services, the City maintains police and fire stations, parks, recreation centers, a maintenance yard, a City administration center, various community facilities, and many networks of public infrastructure needed to keep the City running. The provision of services and maintenance of facilities is supported by various revenue sources outlined in the Element. How the revenues are allocated through the budget process is also described in the section on expenditures by program area.

Health and Wellness Element

State Law does not require that a general plan include a Health and Wellness Element, but the inclusion of such an Element reflects Goals and Policies that the City has embraced in recent years. The Health and Wellness Element describes the measures La Mesa will take to make the health of the community a priority and achieve its vision of being the healthiest and most livable city in the San Diego Region. It offers policy guidance that will enable La Mesa’s residents to achieve an active lifestyle, have access to healthy food choices, enjoy a safe, livable community, and raise healthy, active children. This Element was made possible by a grant from the Kaiser Foundation. Thus, the health care community has a vested interest in improving and maintaining the healthy lifestyles of La Mesa citizens.

Housing Element

With a population estimate approaching 60,000, La Mesa has evolved into a mature suburban community. With remaining vacant land in La Mesa virtually non-existent, future residential development will occur primarily through infill on underutilized properties.

The Housing Element is intended to guide residential development and preservation in a way that coincides with the overall economic and social values of the community consistent with the Regional housing needs assessment determined by SANDAG and the California Department of Housing and Community Development. The residential character of a city is largely dependent on the type and quality of its dwelling units, their location and such factors as maintenance and neighborhood amenities.



La Mesa’s neighborhoods include a diversity of housing types.

The Housing Element is an official municipal response to a growing awareness of the need to provide housing for all economic segments of the community, as well as legal requirements that housing policy is made part of the planning process. As such, the Element establishes policies that will guide City officials in daily decision-making and sets forth an action program designed to enable the City to realize its housing goals.

A successful strategy for improving housing conditions must be preceded by an assessment of the housing needs of the community and Region. The Housing Element discusses the major components of housing need, including trends in La Mesa’s population, households, employment base, and the type of housing available. Housing needs in a Regional context is also presented. The Housing Element analysis is broken down into four major

subsections. Population Characteristics, analyzes the City of La Mesa in terms of individual persons and attempts to identify any population trends that may affect future housing needs. Household Characteristics analyzes La Mesa in terms of households or living groups to see how past and expected household changes will affect housing needs. Employment analyzes La Mesa residents in terms of occupation and employment sources, as this directly affects the need for, and location of, housing. Housing Stock analyzes the housing units in La Mesa in terms of availability, affordability and condition. This assessment of La Mesa’s housing needs serves as the basis for identifying appropriate policies and programs to address these needs to include in the Housing Element.