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A. Vision: A National City



Global Climate Change – Refers to the change in the average weather of the earth. Human activities associated with the combustion of carbon-based fossil fuels are widely believed to be one of the main causes of global climate change.

National City seeks to become a nationally recognized model that shows how small jurisdictions inside of large metropolitan areas can implement innovative solutions to pressing issues such as global climate change, population growth, regional coordination, social equity and well being, resource conservation, public health, education, and economic vitality. National City strives to approach these issues by becoming a sustainable community that reduces its impact on the environment, maintains economic health, and promotes a high quality of life for all.

Under this General Plan, National City will become a sustainable community that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. National City will provide decent, affordable homes; offer a wide range of employment opportunities; accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile movement; facilitate access to and use of transit and alternative transportation modes; celebrate a diverse and inclusive community; offer opportunities for community members to become engaged and make a difference; use natural resources effectively and efficiently; provide access to goods and services; promote safety in public places; provide high quality education; cultivate the arts; preserve and celebrate cultural and historic resources; provide access to open space and recreational opportunities; improve and protect the quality of air, water, and food; promote healthy living; and cater to the needs of the young, individuals, families, the elderly, and the disabled. National City will be a place where people want to live, work, and play.

B. Guiding Principles

In 2007, National City adopted a Five Year Strategic Plan to address community and economic development. That plan

was updated in March of 2009. As part of the process, a series of public workshops was held to identify significant goals and objectives. Five interlocking guiding principles were formed to promote collaboration, improve public communication, and align city departments. These guiding principles were expanded upon during the General Plan Update process to become the basis for the goals, policies, and implementation programs in this General Plan.



DEVELOPMENT: Recognize the importance of linking land use and transportation planning. According to the San Diego County Association of Government's (SANDAG) 2030 Regional Growth Forecast, San Diego County's population is expected to increase faster than housing supply. This trend leads to higher housing costs, forcing many residents to move to neighboring areas with less expensive housing. These people become long distance commuters, and with few transit options, San Diego County's freeways become more congested. The result is an ongoing housing crisis and worsening traffic and air quality.



Smart Growth Opportunity Areas

- Areas where compact, mixed use, pedestrian-oriented development exists now, is currently planned, or has the potential for future incorporation into local land use plans.

To help combat this problem, SANDAG adopted a Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) in 2004. The RCP balances regional population, housing, and employment growth with habitat preservation, agriculture, open space, and infrastructure needs. It directs SANDAG to use regional transportation funding as an incentive for local agencies and service providers to make land use decisions and infrastructure investments that support smart growth. One of the main aspects of the RCP is the identification of Smart Growth Opportunity Areas, which are areas where SANDAG places a higher priority on directing transportation facility improvements and other infrastructure resources.

National City's General Plan is designed to complement and support the RCP by basing its land use pattern on the smart growth principles outlined in the RCP. Under this General Plan, redevelopment, infill, and new growth will be targeted into compact, mixed-use, and walkable areas that are connected to the regional transportation system. Higher density and intensity development will be focused around transit stops and major corridors that link residences to employment, shopping, health care, educational facilities, and recreational areas. This General Plan will result in increased personal transportation options with priority given to the needs and safety of people traveling by foot, bicycle,



Greenhouse Gases
 – Gases in the atmosphere such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide that reduce the loss of heat into space and therefore contribute to rising global temperatures.



and transit. Regional coordination will be a key to effectively guiding land use and transportation planning and investment.

This smart growth land use pattern will also help the City to address global climate change issues. It is widely accepted that the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has increased significantly as a result of the combustion of fossil fuels, primarily associated with automobile use and energy production. In 2006, the California State Legislature adopted Assembly Bill 32, which focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in California. It requires the California Air Resources Board to adopt rules and regulations to achieve greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 1990 statewide levels by 2020. Senate Bill 375, which was signed into law in 2008, provides incentives for integrated regional land use planning and local development while reducing greenhouse gas emissions consistent with AB32. It requires each metropolitan region to adopt a Sustainable Communities Strategy to encourage mixed-use development and alternative modes of transportation to reduce passenger vehicle use. As of the writing of this General Plan, SANDAG was working on its first Sustainable Communities Strategy. National City will continue to coordinate with SANDAG and align its local plans with regional transportation and land use goals and policies.



QUALITY OF LIFE: Improve the quality of life for everyone within National City. National City is one of the lowest income communities within San Diego County. According to SANDAG 2009 estimates, the median household income in National City is \$46,731, whereas the median household income for the region is \$72,963. National City also has a large “minority” population where the majority of residents are Hispanic or Latino. The low socio-economic status of National City residents has led to overcrowded households, overpayment for housing, a disproportionate share of undesirable land uses, crime, poor education, and a lack of shopping opportunities. .

National City has a series of auto services, light manufacturing, and warehouse uses that are interspersed throughout residential neighborhoods. This mixture of land uses has resulted in community concerns related to traffic, parking, noise, air quality, and hazardous materials exposure.

These same neighborhoods often lack public facilities and services that enhance quality of life such as community centers, parks, and open space.

National City is devoted to improving the quality of life for all of its residents by recognizing these inequities and balancing new development and redevelopment with important community amenities accessible to all segments of the population. National City also seeks to improve quality of life for its residents by providing a mixture of housing opportunities, offering better access to transportation choices, enhancing community character and cultural arts, addressing noise, nuisance, health, and maintenance issues, amortizing incompatible land uses over time, and ensuring that future generations can meet their environmental resource needs.



HEALTH AND SAFETY: Seek opportunities to improve public health and safety performance. According to San Diego County health statistics, National City suffers disproportionately from health issues than the rest of the region¹. For example, in 2004, National City had the highest rate of deaths from diabetes in the County (41 deaths per 100,000 population compared to 18 deaths per 100,000 population countywide). In 2004, National City also experienced a high rate of deaths from coronary heart disease (191 deaths per 100,000 population compared to 133 deaths per 100,000 population countywide). In addition, in 2005, childhood asthma hospitalization rates in National City were higher than the County average (247 per 100,000 children compared to 140 per 100,000 children county wide).

National City recognizes that there is a direct connection between how the city is physically structured and its residents' health. The built environment influences how much people walk, drive, or ride a bike, their level of stress, what type of food they eat, and the quality of their water and air. To encourage healthier living, this General Plan seeks to increase urban agriculture, make the city more walkable and bikeable, increase recreational opportunities, and improve air and water quality through sustainable development.

¹ County of San Diego Community Health Statistics Unit, 2009.



Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) – A multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through the physical design of the built environment. CPTED strategies rely on the ability to influence offender decisions that precede criminal acts.



Another factor that influences public health and safety is crime. In 2008, National City had one of the highest crime rates in the County². This General Plan focuses on crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) techniques to deter criminal activities. Compact, mixed-use development helps to reduce crime by increasing human activity on the street. Criminals are less likely to commit offenses when there is a risk of being seen or caught. Neighborhood farms and gardens will also help get people out of their homes and into common areas. The City will also work to increase lighting and surveillance features and will focus on maintaining and improving police and fire facilities and services.



EDUCATION: Emphasize the importance of schools by making them focal points within every neighborhood. This General Plan is built upon the “Neighborhood Unit Concept”, in which all residential portions of the City are to become identifiable neighborhoods focused on their local elementary schools. The General Plan identifies nine neighborhoods based on elementary school attendance boundaries. The local elementary school is intended to become a community gathering place within its neighborhood.

The City is also devoted to strengthening partnerships with the school districts and finding opportunities to share facilities. For example, neighborhoods that may be lacking park and recreational facilities may have the ability to utilize or expand a school’s play area.

Educating the community and promoting citizen participation in local issues is a critical component of this General Plan. National City strives to improve the academic performance of schools, offer lifelong learning opportunities, and maintain open and honest channels of communication with its citizens.



BUSINESS: Provide a framework for sound economic development strategies. In addition to the nine

² County Sheriff’s Department 2008 crime statistics.

neighborhoods, this General Plan identifies four business districts: Downtown, the Mile of Cars, Plaza Bonita, and the Harbor. Action plans for these districts focus on maintaining and enhancing economic development opportunities as well as retaining and attracting businesses.

In addition, each element of the General Plan addresses economic health and viability within its goals and policies. Increasing revenue and providing living wage employment opportunities are essential components of a sustainable community and are a major focus of this General Plan. Limited funding for implementation programs is a major obstacle when it comes to carrying out goals and policies. Therefore, this General Plan also identifies viable funding sources to support its programs.

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