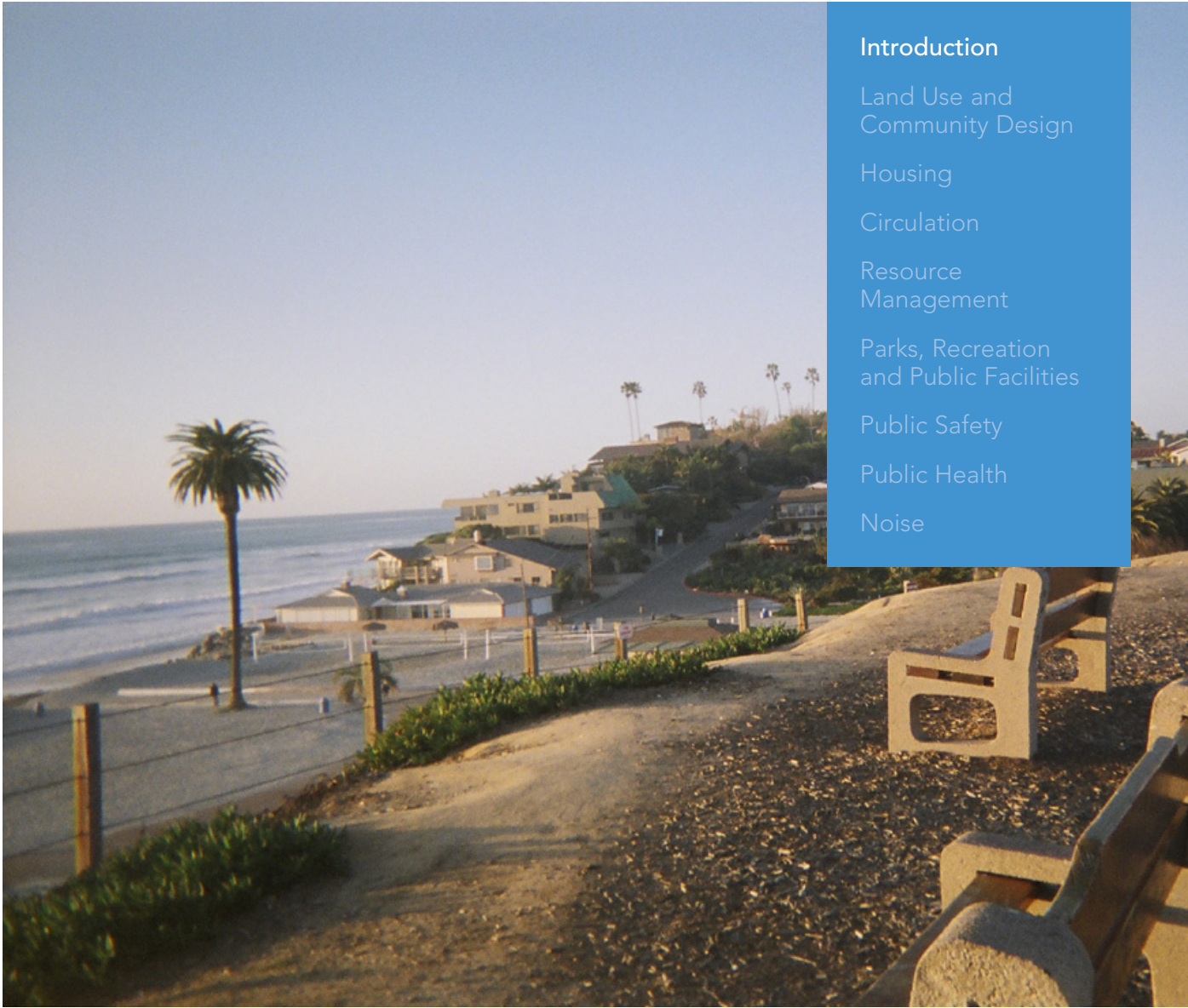




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The Encinitas General Plan, the city's primary policy document, sets forth policy direction to guide citywide decisions for the next 25 years. These long-term goals and related policies will drive local land use planning and decision related to the city's housing stock, transportation network, recreation facilities, natural resources, public safety services, public health and noise.



Introduction

Land Use and
Community Design

Housing

Circulation

Resource
Management

Parks, Recreation
and Public Facilities

Public Safety

Public Health

Noise

background and setting

The City of Encinitas has undergone significant changes since its incorporation as a city in 1986 and adoption of the original General Plan in March, 1989. In general, Southern California has continued to grow and evolve in national and international significance economically and culturally, with the San Diego region including Encinitas recognized as a premier coastal destination. This evolution has created many positive changes, as well as various social and environmental impacts. All the while, sustainability has emerged as a fundamental principle for all scales of planning and development in the city (as it relates to the region and California equally).

The Encinitas General Plan, the City's primary policy document, sets forth a systematic set of goals and policies to guide citywide decisions for the next 25 years. These long-term goals and policies will drive local land use planning and decisions related to the city housing stock, transportation network, recreation facilities, natural resource management, public safety services, public health and noise mitigation.

This Introduction provides an overview of the General Plan Update development process and also describes the regional context and conditions, and the historical evolution of Encinitas.

regional context

The City of Encinitas is located in the northern portion of San Diego County, approximately 25 miles north of the City of San Diego and 95 miles south of Los Angeles. The city is a coastal community with about six miles of coastline. Encinitas' immediate neighbors are the City of Carlsbad to the north, City of San Marcos to the northeast, City of Solana Beach to the south, and unincorporated portions of San Diego County directly east of the city. Encinitas is easily accessible from both northern and southern communities. The I-5 Freeway connects the city to all locations to the north and south. Coast Highway 101 and El Camino Real supplement some of the freeway's local circulation and provide north to south alternatives for regional and local trips. Coast Highway 101 is an older coastal route of scenic and historic interest. El Camino Real, a main thoroughfare, runs roughly parallel to I-5 and the ocean to the west, from the city's northern boundary at La Costa Avenue to the south to the Manchester/I-5 interchange. Figure I-1 provides a map depicting Encinitas' regional context.

The geologic diversity of Encinitas is strongly related to tectonic movement along the San Andreas fault zone and its broad zone of subsidiary faults that have shaped Southern California into a unique and diverse landscape. The San Diego area can be divided into four major physiographic provinces: the desert, the mountains, the foothills and the coastal plains. These provinces reflect differences in climate, soils and land use. The majority of the City of Encinitas is located in the coastal plains province, though the northeastern portion of the city is included in the foothills province. The topography of the city ranges from rolling hills to very steep, sloping terrain at elevations ranging from mean sea level to about 590 feet above sea level.

The diversity of the region's natural landscape has given rise to an equally diverse ecosystem. The city has a wealth of natural resources, and is bordered by six miles of coastline to the west, as well as the Batiquitos and San Elijo lagoons and their associated valleys to the north and south. Despite the fragmentation of natural habitats resulting from urban development, the coastal open space areas and wetland habitats within and adjacent to the city support a wide range of plant and animal species. These areas also are managed to encourage a variety of recreational activities.

Today, the City of Encinitas currently occupies a total area of approximately 19.57 square miles. The city's Planning Area (which includes the Sphere of Influence) includes all areas within the current city limits and approximately 1.2 square miles of unincorporated county area to the northeast of the city. Land outside of city limits but within the city Sphere of Influence is primarily undeveloped.

The Planning Area includes all areas within the city and adjacent to city limits where growth might occur and may influence or impact city services. Figure I-2 illustrates the extent of the city's Sphere of Influence, the Planning Area for the General Plan and Encinitas' five communities.

a brief history

For over 10,000 years, the Encinitas area was home to the San Dieguito, La Jolla and Leuseño Native American communities. It is estimated that approximately 80,000 Native Americans lived in San Diego County at the time Spanish missionaries arrived. In the 17th century San Diego County became the Spanish Alto California territory, with Spanish missions located along El Camino Real. Missionaries strived to actively convert Native Americans to Christianity and helped develop self-sustaining agricultural enterprises. The area became part of the United States following the Mexican American War in 1846.

In the 1880s, a railroad connection between Los Angeles and San Diego was established, facilitating the first permanent growth in the Encinitas area. Prior to this, coastal northern San Diego was sparsely populated, with a rugged, dry terrain that limited access and deterred settlement. Early settlers ranched, farmed and opened a hotel to meet the needs of railroad passengers. In 1882,

the first school was constructed to serve families within the area. However the area's limited supply of fresh water severely hampered early farming settlements and population growth. It was not until 1922, with the establishment of the San Dieguito Irrigation District and the construction of the Hodges Dam, that more rapid population growth could occur. These events dramatically changed the quality of life of area residents, facilitating new growth in established communities.

Agriculture, and specifically the growing of ornamental flowers, has been a significant factor in the history and local economy of Encinitas. The poinsettia has been particularly important to the city's legacy of local horticulture. Reliable irrigation spurred the development of avocado farming as a cash crop and the large-scale production of flower bulbs. After this time, Encinitas' local bulb culture and hybridization became well known internationally. With growing urbanization and the loss of a large portion of the poinsettia business, the future of agriculture in Encinitas is uncertain. However, Encinitas agricultural heritage will always remain an important part of the city's character and tradition.

encinitas' five communities

The City of Encinitas consists of five distinct communities:

- Cardiff-by-the-Sea
- Leucadia
- New Encinitas
- Old Encinitas
- Olivenhain

Cardiff-by-the-Sea, Old Encinitas and Leucadia represent older, established beach communities. Old Encinitas is home to Downtown Encinitas and the surrounding historic residential neighborhoods. New Encinitas is centrally located within the city and is considered a more contemporary planned community with a variety of private and public open space areas. To the east, Olivenhain provides an informal "rural" community setting, with large residential lots and a significant amount of undeveloped open space.

The city's four historic communities—Old Encinitas, Cardiff-by-the-Sea, Leucadia and Olivenhain—grew slowly between the 1880s and the 1920s, when limited water and infrastructure provided limited opportunities to increase housing and commercial development in the area. In the decades following World War II, the Encinitas communities grew significantly, with the area's mild weather, coastal character and comfortable lifestyle attracting residents from across California and the nation. Since then, population pressures have increased demand for housing and increased the need for new residential development.

Today, Encinitas' five communities are individually defined by their distinct topography, architecture and land use character, including landscape and streetscape design. The unique character of each community contributes to the overall character of the city and is an asset recognized and valued by Encinitas residents.



vision framework

In the spring of 2010, the City of Encinitas embarked on a city-wide outreach effort to engage the community in the City's General Plan update process. Many Encinitas residents contributed their ideas and opinions regarding the city's assets, challenges, core community values and opportunities for the future. The vision statements on the next page were developed through the outreach effort and were utilized to establish the framework for the General Plan Update process. The vision statements helped establish the goals and policies for this General Plan.

In 2035, Encinitas is...

A unique coastal community known for its beaches, surf culture, art, and easygoing and relaxed lifestyle.

A city that embraces the distinct identity and character of its five communities.

A sustainable community that embraces everyone's quality of life through environment, fiscal health, community health and equity.

A family oriented community that supports healthy and active lifestyles with strong connections to the natural environment and outdoor recreation.

Known to deliver high-quality parks and community facilities serving the needs of all residents.

A leader in green living and environmental stewardship and is known to conserve its natural habitat, protect its natural landforms and preserve its scenic resources.

Easy to walk, bike and get around in—to schools, shopping, parks, beaches and/or other destinations.

A complete community for working, shopping and living.

A place where one can live their entire life with housing for all ages, incomes and abilities.

Known for its distinct, locally owned and operated shops and businesses that support residents, visitors/tourists and employees.

A city that supports local businesses that serve Encinitas and those businesses that further the image of Encinitas, such as the agricultural and horticultural industries.

A city where innovative and creative developments respond to the needs of the community and where its architecture helps maintain community character.

Supportive of its local culture and promotes artistic creativity.

Known for hosting events that bring the community together, enhancing civic pride and sense of place.

A community where local history is remembered.





overview of the general plan

role of the plan

The Encinitas General Plan is the primary policy document for the City of Encinitas. It sets forth the City's goals and policies to guide future citywide decisions as it moves towards the year 2035. The purpose of the updated General Plan is to provide the needed policy framework to preserve the character and qualities that the community desires and to better prepare Encinitas for the future.

The State of California requires that every city and county adopt a general plan to guide decisions related to the conservation of natural resources, the physical form and character of future development, the city's housing stock, and public welfare and safety. Local ordinances and other programs and plans must be consistent with and implement general plan policies. While general plans typically address concerns relating primarily to the built environment, the City of Encinitas elevates the vitality of its citizens by addressing other topics such as arts, culture, public health, quality of life and well-being. The Encinitas General Plan establishes the basis for Encinitas' zoning ordinance, which serves as the formal regulatory code for land use and development within the City's jurisdiction. The policies set forth in the General Plan provide the foundation for the design and application of important policy tools, such as design guidelines and development regulations, and specific ordinances. The City has prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that outlines the impacts of General Plan direction related to land use, circulation and other changes. The EIR also identifies policies and activities intended to mitigate foreseeable plan impacts.

The coastal character of the city is one of the reasons people chose to live in and visit Encinitas. Approximately two-thirds of the city is located within the Coastal Zone and falls under California Coastal Commission (CCC) jurisdiction. In compliance with the Coastal Act, the City has adopted and implemented a Local Coastal Program (LCP). The policies of the LCP are included within the General Plan, as well as in the provisions of the City's municipal code and in City specific plans. The goals of the LCP are to protect, maintain and enhance the coastal zone environment; ensure balanced utilization and conservation; maximize public access to and along the coast; prioritize coastal-dependent and related development; and encourage coordinated State and local initiatives to implement beneficial programs and other educational uses. Figure I-3 illustrates the extent of the Coastal Zone boundary.

plan development process

In January 2010, the City of Encinitas embarked on a community based planning process to update the City's General Plan and to better prepare Encinitas for the future. The General Plan Update process included a series of events and activities designed to provide community members with multiple opportunities to learn about the General Plan Update, discuss personal and community issues, and ultimately identify a common vision for the city's future.

This citizen-driven, iterative process helped shape and influence the direction of General Plan policies. Community members provided input, feedback and direction via the following events and activities:

Picture Your Place (Winter 2009-2010). In order to engage different cross sections of the community and encourage participation from individuals early in the update process, City staff approached the City's Youth Commission, Family Enrichment Program, Senior Commission and the school districts to solicit their participation in a photo project. The photo study program was one strategy to get people involved and gave residents the opportunity to explore their outside world and take photos of important places and things. After the images were developed, each group hosted an event to assemble their group's picture boards. Collected images and picture boards were on display at City Hall in February, 2010 and at outreach events throughout the visioning process.

Outreach Toolkit (Spring 2010). Outreach toolkits provided the chance for targeted small groups to identify assets and opportunities. The City made the toolkits available on its General Plan Update website and trained community representatives and worked with local organizations to facilitate small, neighborhood based meetings. In addition to receiving initial feedback on key constraints and opportunities, this outreach was useful to inform neighborhoods and citizens of the project and promote future workshop participation. Comments received during these facilitated discussions were incorporated into the development of workshop and Plan materials.

Educational Lecture Series (Spring to Summer 2010). The City hosted an educational lecture series from March to August 2010 to discuss and help inform the community about issues and policies that were discussed during the visioning process and/or will be addressed throughout the overall update process. The informational presentations highlighted and covered topics such as healthy communities, transportation and the movement of people, smart growth, and sustainability. Guest speakers were utilized to present the subject matter.

Community-Specific Workshops and Citywide Vision Festival (Spring 2010). The visioning phase of the General Plan Update process began with a series of workshops held during spring 2010 in each of the city's five communities. Building on the input gathered during the community workshops, the

City hosted a citywide General Plan Vision Festival on May 1, 2010. Over 500 community members participated in the vision workshops. Participants shared ideas and opinions about important issues facing Encinitas, and identified core values and community characteristics intrinsic to the city's unique sense of place and high quality of life.

Land Use and Policy Development Workshops (November 2010 and March 2011). On November 16, 2010, Encinitas community members reviewed and responded to a series of potential physical improvements, land use options and character images for 12 geographic focus areas (where growth or change may occur). These 12 areas were identified by the community during the first phase of the process as areas for potential future change. On March 28, 2011, community members gathered again, this time responding to a number of preliminary policy directions for each General Plan element.

Public Health Element Workshops and Surveys (June and July 2011). Additional community outreach was conducted over the summer of 2011 to help define goals for healthy living in Encinitas and to discuss high-level issues related to the physical health and well-being of Encinitas residents. Two public workshops were conducted specific to the Public Health Element. The June 14, 2011 Public Health Element workshop featured small group discussions on various goals, issues and opportunities generally related to health disparities, environmental quality, access and the quality of the built environment. The July 18, 2011 Public Health Element workshop was designed to test the level of support for different policy approaches and get feedback on key issues. As part of the program, the City administered several different surveys in order to collect original background and Encinitas-specific data. Surveys administered through public schools were utilized to develop a Safe Routes to Schools Scorecard Program.

Wellness Advisory Committee (WAC). The Wellness Advisory Committee (WAC) was a stakeholder committee that assisted City staff and the consultant team with the preparation of the draft Public Health Element. The WAC was also utilized to help build community support for the updated plan that the community helps create. The WAC was used primarily as a sounding board, highlighting key findings and recommendations based on an existing conditions analysis, as well as addressing potential opportunities to foster health and wellness.

General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC). The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) is the community advisory committee convened to provide direction to City staff and the consultant team throughout the General Plan Update process. The Advisory Committee consisted of 23 members and accounts for a broad range of socioeconomic interests. Each stakeholder group appointed and/or selected their representative to be dedicated to the General Plan Update. Therefore, each member was directly responsible to inform their respective group to ensure consistent, regular communication between all interested parties. GPAC meetings were open to the public and provided additional opportunities for community input and participation. The GPAC reviewed community input and workshop results and provided direction to ensure that the plan update outreach process yielded valuable results and policy direction reflective of the values and desires of the broader community.

Other Outreach Events. The process of creating the 2035 General Plan included other outreach components, encouraging residents, business owners and community members to participate in the planning process and/or to solicit their input:

- Various stakeholder meetings;
- City Council Work Sessions to serve as a “check-in” and update on progress at key stages of the project;
- Planning Commission presentations and informational work sessions;
- City Commission/Committee debriefings and regular updates;
- City Council and Planning Commission announcement intermission slides;
- Key group outreach and neighborhood briefings held at various points throughout the process to provide information, discussion forums and presentations to community groups and organizations;
- Email notifications proposed at key points in the General Plan Update planning process for distribution to residents and businesses throughout the city;
- Street banner signs, newspaper display ads and postcards sent to every resident, property owner, box office holder and absentee owner in the city;

- Press and media releases were also prepared and distributed to local media at key benchmarks in the planning process;
- Social media (online comment forum) on the project website;
- Throughout the planning process, materials and information including project descriptions, meeting announcements and draft products were posted on the project's website; and
- Extended public review period on the draft Plan and draft Environmental Impact Report.

The results of the comprehensive General Plan Update outreach effort include:

- A vision statement that describes the ideal Encinitas in 2035 (see previous section);
- Community direction related to key policy areas including the city's network of streets and roads, parks and open space, and community health and safety;
- Confirmation of three General Plan focus areas for potential land use change and other areas for potential physical improvement; and
- Strong community support for the policy direction set forth in the updated Encinitas General Plan (adopted by City Council insert date).

the general plan elements

The Encinitas General Plan includes the following elements, each described briefly below:

- Land Use and Community Design
- Housing
- Circulation
- Resource Management
- Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities
- Public Safety
- Public Health
- Noise

Land Use and Community Design. The Land Use and Community Design Element is a significant element in shaping future development in the city. The Element presents land use direction that embraces the community's vision for the future, preserves and enhances unique communities and neighborhoods, and promotes sustainability and economic vitality. The Element is consistent with Section 65302(a) of the State of California Government Code.

Circulation. The Circulation Element establishes the plan for improving circulation and mobility in the city for all roadway users. The Circulation Element provides a planning and policy framework to identify, plan and design priority projects and secure the resources required to improve the city's system for all transportation modes and users. The Element meets State requirements concerning general plan circulation elements as defined in Sections 65302(b) of the Government Code.

Housing. The Housing Element is concerned with specifically identifying ways in which the housing needs of existing and future residents can be met. The purpose of the element is to ensure that the City of Encinitas embraces the distinct identity and character of its five communities and becomes a place where one can live their entire life, with housing for all ages, incomes and abilities.

The Element meets State requirements concerning general plan housing elements as defined in Sections 65302(c) of the Government Code. The Element also satisfies the legal requirement that the City include housing policy as part of the General Plan. This Encinitas Housing Element is prepared for the 2013-2020 update cycle for jurisdictions in the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) region.

Resource Management. The Resource Management Element identifies goals and policies that are designed to preserve significant natural and cultural resources in the Planning Area. In so doing, the City seeks to further the protection and maintenance of the state's natural resources and prevent their wasteful exploitation, degradation and destruction. The Element meets State requirements concerning the Conservation and Open Space Elements as defined in Sections 65302(d) and 65302(e) of the Government Code.

Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities. The Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities Element is the City's guiding document for parks, recreation and community facilities planning in the city, which are critical to maintaining and

enhancing Encinitas' quality of life. This Element is closely linked to the Encinitas Trail Master Plan, the City's guiding document for the maintenance and expansion of Encinitas' network of recreational trails. The Element is consistent with Section 65303 of the State of California Government Code, which allows local jurisdictions to adopt additional elements to those required by state law when they relate to the physical development of the jurisdiction.

Public Safety. The Public Safety Element is one of the most important components of the City's General Plan in that it is directly concerned with reducing the loss of life, injury and property damage that might result from a disaster or accident. This Element identifies goals and policies that will minimize the risks associated with natural and man made hazards, appropriate actions that are needed to respond to a crisis, and ways that hazards can be avoided through prudent planning. Section 65302(g) of the California Government Code requires that each city have a Public Safety Element as part of the general plan.

Public Health. The Public Health Element recognizes the value of upholding and improving community health for all ages, abilities and demographics. This Element provides a planning and policy framework that is directly concerned with promoting a healthier society and addressing challenges and opportunities to foster physical health and wellness. Although the Public Health Element is not a state-mandated element, its inclusion in the General Plan ensures that public health remains a priority. The Element is consistent with Section 65303 of the State of California Government Code, which allows local jurisdictions to adopt additional elements to those required by state law when they relate to the physical development of the jurisdiction.

Noise. The Noise Element is intended to serve as the City's primary policy document to protect residents from harmful and irritating transportation and non-transportation noise impacts, as well as to mitigate noise impacts, to the greatest extent possible. Section 65302(f) of the California Government Code requires that each city have a noise element as part of the general plan. This Noise Element follows the guidelines adopted by the Office of Noise Control, pursuant to Section 46050.1 of the Health and Safety Code, and guidelines published by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

policy imperatives and strategic directions

Looking towards the year 2035, the City of Encinitas and the Encinitas community anticipate a number of significant changes that will impact the local culture, economy and environment. Many of these changes will be direct in nature, while others will be indirect, resulting from national, state and regional changes and policy requirements. Given said changes and requirements, the Encinitas General Plan addresses basic community needs and responds to state and regional requirements related to the following policy criteria:

- Meeting **state housing requirements** and adequately accommodating regional and local housing needs, ranging from new single-family to multi-family homes;
- Reducing **greenhouse gas emissions** to 1990 levels by 2020, and further reductions by 2035, in part by facilitating the reduction of auto-dependency and vehicle miles travelled;
- Providing adequate **visitor-serving uses** (lodging) to address Local Coastal Program requirements, which require an increase in opportunities for these uses;
- Strengthening the City's **fiscal and economic health**, including strengthening the local economy and ensuring the efficient management of the City's financial resources; and
- Creating a more socially, environmentally and economically responsible and **sustainable community** overall.

With these policy drivers as a starting point, the Encinitas General Plan establishes the following strategic directions. Goals and policies of all General Plan elements, combined with other essential policy tools, create policy guidance to achieve these important objectives.

- Maintain the **unique character of the city's five communities** that reflect the values and cultures of the people that reside there and preserve those undeveloped portions of the city that are valued for their cultural, ecological and economic significance to residents and the greater community.
- Strengthen protection of Encinitas' finite natural resources and **view our natural resources as a key element of our needed infrastructure** and economic sustainability.

- Manage growth and target redevelopment based on the General Plan **vision and preferred design character for three land use focus areas:** El Camino Real Commercial Corridor; Encinitas Boulevard Corridor and Santa Fe Drive I-5 Interchange. Locate housing in smart locations (closer to transit and commercial service needs). Design future development so that it is high quality, context-sensitive and resource efficient.
- Create **a citywide network of place-based streets that is safe and comfortable for various modes of travel** and users of all abilities, and reflects surrounding land uses and desired community character and experiences. At a systems level, encourage walking, bicycling and transit use in order to increase community use of alternative modes of transportation. Move from an auto-focused community to a community giving equal preference (if not priority) to walking, bicycling and transit.
- Preserve existing affordable housing; promote the development of affordable housing and equal housing opportunities; and remove constraints to housing development in order to provide a sufficient number of **homes to meet regional needs, improve local resident quality of life and positively impact commute patterns.**
- Make **economic sustainability and fiscal health fundamental priorities.** Maintain a stable tax base, protect high property values, and promote business development and retention.

Although these principles may be presented separately, their strength lies in their synergy. Collectively these strategic directions help provide for orderly growth based on community values necessary to fulfill the vision for Encinitas in 2035. While each General Plan element serves a purpose in defining/shaping direction, all elements work together to support a coherent and cohesive plan for Encinitas.

figures



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