

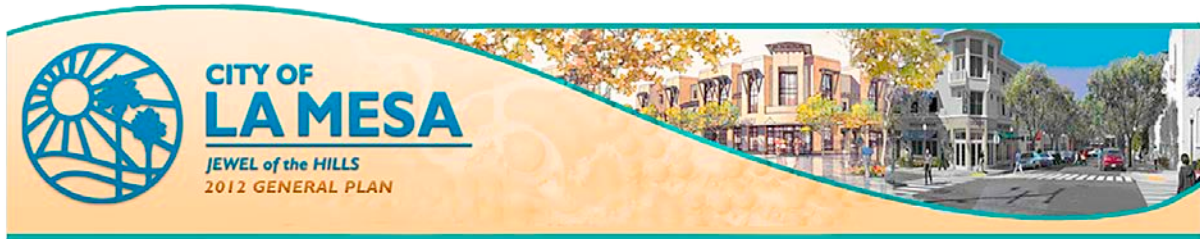
CONSERVATION & SUSTAINABILITY ELEMENT

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Conservation & Sustainability Element

Vision

A City where a natural landscape of rolling hills and canyons has provided a beautiful setting for its many well maintained, residential neighborhoods, parks and open spaces.

A City which has taken steps to conserve and enhance its local resources, safeguard human health and the environment, maintain a healthy and diverse economy, and improve the livability for all community members.

A City that is an environmental leader in the Region through implementation of sustainable principles that maintain and enhance quality of life in the City.

Conservation and Sustainability Goals:

Goal 1: The sustainable use of natural resources and land.

Goal 2: The improvement of environmental and public health in the City.

Goal 3: The use of sustainable modes of transportation situated close to homes, services, and employment centers.

Introduction

The City of La Mesa has experienced a substantial transformation as it has grown along with the surrounding Region. The community has evolved from being primarily a semi-rural suburban 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 resources are important to the community in a Regional context though, and the goals and policies in this Element reflect this interest in supporting both local and Regional resource conservation efforts.

Sustainability is the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations. Sustainable community planning helps to control cost of living

and to reduce future expense. A sustainable community is one which has the following in place:

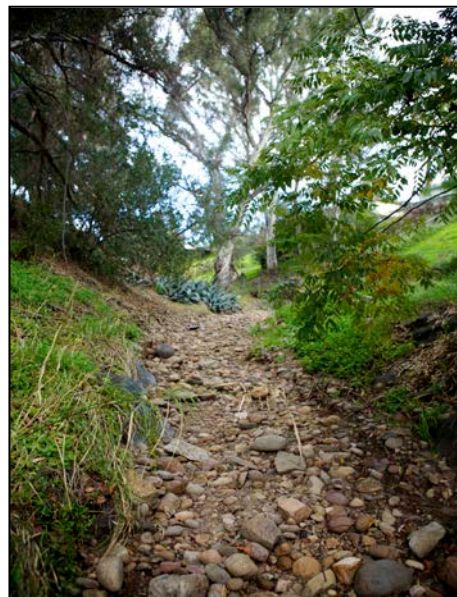
- Local and Regional development patterns that expand housing choice and employment opportunity for all persons.
- A healthy environment and social climate that function in harmony with natural ecosystems and allow people to lead healthy, productive, and enjoyable lives.
- Resilient, diverse, and self-sufficient local economies that meet the needs of residents and build on the unique characteristics of the community.
- A transportation network that provides residents with connectivity and commuting options.



La Mesa Vistas

Purpose

The City's population is forecasted to increase from 58,000 (2010) to approximately 66,000 (2030) during the next 20 years. This will place new demands on renewable and non-renewable resources. If current trends continue in San Diego County, by 2050 average annual temperatures will rise between 1.5-4.5°; the County will require 37% more water than it currently uses; occasionally poor air quality will increase respiratory and cardiac health problems; and peak electric demand will grow by over 70%, according to a climate change impact assessment commissioned by the San Diego Foundation, "San Diego's Changing Climate: A Regional Wake-Up Call." The Conservation & Sustainability Element establishes goals, objectives, and policies which address the conservation and enhancement of our local resources, safeguard human health and the environment, maintain a healthy and diverse economy, and improve the livability and quality of life for all the La Mesa citizenry.



La Mesa's Natural Canyons

Organization & Content

There is a close relationship between measures needed to conserve natural resources and those needed to sustain the quality of life for La Mesa's citizens. This Element examines the City's conservation and sustainability efforts and then provides policy direction for enhancing these efforts. Major topics include: Resource Conservation, Environmental and Public Health, Economic Development, Transportation and Waste Management.

Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

The Conservation and Sustainability Element focuses on La Mesa's natural setting and quality of life. Due to the broad and interdisciplinary nature of sustainability issues, common concepts can be found throughout the General Plan. Shared topic areas are summarized in **Table CS-1**.

Table CS-1. Relationship with other General Plan Elements

Conservation & Sustainability Topic Areas	Elements								
	Noise	Land Use & Urban Design	Health and Wellness	Housing	Circulation	Open Space/ Recreation	Historic Preservation	Public Services and Facilities	Safety
Resource Conservation		x		x	x	x	x	x	
Environmental and Public Health	x	x	x		x	x		x	x
Economic Development		x			x				x
Transportation	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Waste Management			x					x	

Resource Conservation

Natural resources and energy conservation is achieved by managing materials more efficiently. This Element recognizes that while growth will occur, the use of land, water, and energy can be more sustainable.

Open Space and Land Use Planning

While La Mesa is highly urbanized, the remaining open space in the City is important because it provides visual relief and respite from the noise and congestion of urban living. Within the City of La Mesa, natural landforms create a dramatic and varied terrain. Hillsides, canyons and gently sloping mesas provide many opportunities to enjoy La Mesa's natural setting. This varied landform defines the character of La Mesa. Vistas and views serve a significant role in identifying districts and neighborhoods, adding value to the community. These features are important in evaluating land use opportunities and constraints.

Land use patterns influence energy use and greenhouse gas production, primarily because of the strong relationship between where we live and work and our mode of transportation. Significant efforts in land use planning are necessary to reduce vehicle miles traveled to meet the State's emission reduction goals. Land use planning that promotes infill development, creates strong neighborhoods with a range of housing, commercial, and transportation options, and makes it possible for communities to grow in ways that support economic development. Existing and planned infill development of residential and commercial uses within La Mesa will support sustainable transportation options such as walking, biking, and transit. As the City continues to grow and evolve, preservation, reuse and retrofit of developed land and existing structures is an important component of sustainability.



Urban Forestry along Fletcher Parkway

Urban Forestry

Since 1980 the City of La Mesa has been recognized by the non-profit Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City USA community for its commitment to urban forestry. As of 2012, La Mesa had earned this national designation for 32 consecutive years. The City's emphasis on urban forestry improves air quality, as well as environmental and human health. Through shade, trees cool the community and reduce energy use and costs. Trees also absorb water, thereby reducing storm water runoff and promoting absorption into the ground. When tree cover is diminished, more costly storm water infrastructure is required to drain water from paved or impervious surfaces and buildings. Drought tolerant, native

plant material and ornamental landscaping with water efficient irrigation systems add to quality of life in the City by providing small habitats for species and visual relief for people.

Water Resources

La Mesa is part of a naturally water poor region. An average of 80% of the water supply in San Diego County is imported from Northern California and the Colorado River. Imported water is delivered through a complex system of pipelines, pump stations, and reservoirs. Large energy demand required to move water from outside the Region generates greenhouse gas emissions. Adding to the complexity are fluctuating political and legal arrangements.

The Helix Water District supplies water within the City of La Mesa. The District’s Urban Water Management Plan shows the ability to serve the water needs of La Mesa through 2030. Although La Mesa is not a water-providing agency, the City is committed to the efficient use of water resources.



Water Conserving Landscape & Bio-swale on Allison Avenue

In San Diego County, residents have faced mandatory water use restrictions and water rate increases. Increasing water rates heightens public awareness of San Diego County’s water supply. At the same time, rising water rates increase the cost-competitiveness of water reuse and other alternative water sources.

Water conservation is one way of addressing the increased demand for potable water resulting from population growth. Reducing potable water demand through conservation helps improve water quality, protect water resources, and maintain aquatic ecosystems. The efficient use of potable water can also prevent pollution by reducing wastewater flows and reducing energy demand.

Various household routines require high water usage such as washing clothes or flushing a toilet. The use of water conserving fixtures is now mandated by the State building code. Examples include faucet aerators and low flow toilets and shower heads. Both indoor appliances and outdoor irrigation systems have become more efficient as technology improves.

Wastewater Treatment

La Mesa does not have a wastewater treatment plant, but directs its wastewater to a plant in the City of San Diego. The City completed a Wastewater Master Plan in 2008 and

determined that La Mesa is expected to have sufficient capacity to accommodate anticipated development through 2030.

Storm water that does not soak into the ground becomes surface runoff, which either flows directly into surface waterways or is channeled into storm sewers, which eventually discharges to surface waters. Storm water is of concern for two reasons: one related to the volume of runoff water and potential for flooding and erosion. The other is related to potential contaminants that the water is carrying.

Residential areas are a common source of runoff water in the San Diego Region. Landscape chemicals, home remodeling projects, and improper waste disposal are some activities that pollute our waterways. Streets and parking lots pollute our storm water due to fuel residue, trash, and other debris. Everything that goes down a storm drain flows directly to the nearest creek or to the ocean without being treated. As part of the City's storm water pollution prevention efforts, four informational kiosks have been installed in City parks and information is available on the City's website. Continued code enforcement and participation in local cleanup efforts contribute to storm water quality.

Energy Conservation

Energy conservation and the use of renewable energy play an important role in preserving natural resources. Solar and wind power systems have long term benefits by reducing reliance upon fossil fuels.



Solar panels line the roof of the parking garage at the Kaiser Permanente Campus.

The City of La Mesa has taken steps towards improved energy efficiency. In 2011, the City began working with SANDAG and SDG&E on an energy audit of public facilities to identify areas which need improvement. All new City buildings meet California energy standards and existing buildings will be upgraded with high performance windows, HVAC systems, and cool roofs as opportunities arise.

Improvements include cleaner, more efficient backup generators at the police and fire facilities; the retrofitting of traffic signals and street lights for energy savings, and the purchase of energy-efficient vehicles.

In April 2011, Governor Jerry Brown signed into law Senate Bill 2X. This law requires utilities to obtain one third of their electricity from renewable energy sources by 2020. Meeting this goal requires cooperation from multiple sectors of the California economy, including the electricity, natural gas and transportation sectors. Businesses and homes can be made more energy-efficient by:

- Implementing energy efficiency building standards;

- Developing ways to streamline energy use in manufacturing, water systems, and processing systems;
- Educating citizens that wise energy use is a good investment in the economy and the environment.

Retrofitting Existing Buildings

In terms of community sustainability, utilization of existing buildings is more resource efficient than constructing new buildings. Retrofitting existing buildings can be a low risk investment with long term savings for property owners. Other benefits include improving the environment, increased health and productivity, and higher property values.

State and Regional efforts are underway to develop new building energy assessment tools and protocols to rate the energy performance of existing structures. For example, Assembly Bill AB758 requires the California Energy Commission to develop a comprehensive energy efficiency program for existing residential and nonresidential buildings. With green workforce training, energy assessments, and building alterations including replacement of appliances and equipment, the goal is to deliver substantial energy savings and greenhouse gas emission reductions.



Restaurants replaced a former movie theater on Fletcher Parkway.

Many historic and older buildings are energy-efficient because of the quality of construction, and use of passive heating and cooling, while other buildings require improvements to reduce their environmental footprint. Historic buildings can include “green” technology or be re-purposed for new uses without compromising their historic character. Older and historic communities also tend to be centrally located, highly developed, walkable, and are often mass-transit accessible. These qualities are promoted by Smart Growth principles as defined in the Land Use and Urban Design Element and are exhibited in the City’s Date Avenue Historic District.

Environmental and Public Health

There are both natural and man-made environmental factors which cause adverse impacts to human health and well-being. The City’s conservation efforts focus on waste management, supporting locally grown and organic foods, reducing air pollution, and improving air quality.

Solid Waste Management

San Diego County produces approximately 1.8 million tons of trash each year. Each person in the County produces approximately 7.5 pounds of trash each day. From a

planning perspective, the key issue is the lack of future landfill space to handle these projected volumes of trash. State law requires cities and counties to divert at least fifty percent of their trash away from landfills, whether through waste reduction, reuse or recycling programs. This includes the familiar forms of recyclable materials such as glass, paper, aluminum, plastic, and yard cuttings. The City has met its State obligation to divert fifty percent of the waste stream and continues to explore new opportunities to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Locally, EDCO Disposal Corporation is contracted for the collection of solid waste and recyclable materials. Everyone in La Mesa has access to the program and the City's recycling ordinance requires all properties and businesses to recycle. A grant-funded program to improve recycling opportunities for apartment and condominium complexes began in 2010. Eligible properties can receive recycling materials for use in individual units as well as shared common areas. Curbside and commercial collection is provided through the week. This service includes recyclables such as paper, cardboard, cans, bottles, all rigid plastics, and green waste. EDCO station, a public disposal site located within the City's industrial district, accepts electronics, batteries and medical sharps from residents, Styrofoam, and cooking fats, oils and grease (FOG) for drop-off, in addition to the recyclables included in the curbside program. Green waste is also accepted. EDCO periodically revises their collection programs and hosts special events to accept waste based upon changing consumer needs.

Urban Agriculture

Farmers' markets feature produce that is grown locally and organically, providing opportunities for residents of urban areas to access fresh produce. Farmers are able to pick produce at the peak of flavor and food retains more nutritional value. Community gardens and other community-based agriculture help to reduce mass-produced food packaging and the use of industry pesticides. Since locally grown produce does not require long-haul truck transport, fuel savings benefit both the food supplier and the environment.



La Mesa's Weekly Farmer's Market

In San Diego County there were 29 community gardens for public use as of 2010. The majority of gardens are run by a volunteer board of directors and managed by a volunteer manager. Currently there is no organization in San Diego that exclusively manages gardens, but there is a San Diego Community Garden Network. Cities that have community gardens provide minor staff oversight by City parks maintenance or neighborhood services staff. Most gardens have non-profit volunteers who provide day-to-

day oversight. Funding provided by cities varies from no financial support to the provision of water at no charge.

In 2010, the City began searching for an appropriate community garden demonstration site. Various public and private properties were considered in proximity to multi-family and single-family housing. Factors such as property size, access to water, and the potential to displace other land uses were considered. The City will continue to evaluate potential locations for a community garden demonstration site.

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases

Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere are called greenhouse gases. Some greenhouse gases occur naturally and are emitted to the atmosphere through natural processes while others are created and emitted solely through human activities such as driving cars. Carbon dioxide, methane and nitrogen oxide are examples of greenhouse gases resulting from human activities. Hazardous air pollutants can cause serious health effects such as asthma. Many policies and programs are directed toward reducing the impact of emissions on air quality by reducing air pollution in the Region.

In 2006, the State Legislature took a proactive stance against the challenges of climate change with the adoption of the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32). The California Air Resource Board (CARB) was charged with developing regulations and market mechanisms that would reduce the State's greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. This represents a 25 percent reduction statewide, with mandatory caps for significant emission sources beginning in 2012.

The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act (SB 375) was enacted in 2009. This legislation addresses the need to integrate land use and transportation planning to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicle trips. The California Air Resources Board set reduction targets for all regions of the state. For the the San Diego Region, the target is a reduction in emissions of seven percent by 2020 and thirteen percent by 2035.

SANDAG's 2050 Regional Transportation Plan contains a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), a plan to reach the greenhouse gas reduction targets established for the San Diego Region. The strategy proposes to utilize anticipated funding resources to achieve transportation and housing goals that reduce green house gas emissions, while protecting natural resources and open space. Future housing and job growth within the Region are focused in areas served by existing and planned transportation infrastructure providing workers and residents with travel options.

La Mesa's central location, mix of housing stock and employment opportunities align with the goals of the Sustainable Communities Strategy. An organizing principle of the La Mesa General Plan is strengthening this alignment by concentrating future mixed-use development around transit infrastructure and improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities within transit-rich neighborhoods.

Economic Development

Maintaining a strong economy whose vitality can be relied on well into the future is key to sustainability. A healthy economy delivers diverse employment opportunities to its residents, while addressing the environmental and societal impacts of business and consumer actions. A well-trained workforce, access to an appropriate range and supply of local jobs and services, and energy-efficient business operations are integral to sustainable economic development. The Land Use and Urban Design Element includes sustainable economic development policies.

Transportation

A safe and efficient transportation system supports the health and welfare of both residents and visitors and is essential to the economic vitality of the business community. Most people are reliant on private, single-occupant vehicles, which cause pollution and the release of greenhouse gases into the air. There are more sustainable methods of transportation that have less of an impact on the environment such as transit, carpooling, biking, and walking.

Sustainable Transportation

In 2011, SANDAG adopted the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) which outlines a plan for investing an estimated \$214 billion in local, State and Federal transportation funds expected to come into the Region over the next 40 years. The largest proportion of these funds will go towards transit in an effort to add sustainable transportation options to the San Diego Region. Furthermore, SANDAG was the first agency in California to adopt a Regional Transportation Plan which included a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) required by Senate Bill 375. The SCS details how the Region will reduce greenhouse gas emissions to State-mandated levels over time. The strategy focuses on increasing the use of sustainable modes of transportation such as biking, walking, and transit.



Sustainable transportation includes non-motorized travel options such as biking.

The 2050 RTP carefully balances the mandate to improve the environment with the needs of the economy and the desire to construct a multimodal transportation system that works for everyone. The Plan includes 156 new miles of trolley service, doubled transit service miles, and increased frequency in key corridors. Furthermore, the Plan dedicates \$3.8 billion for Regional and local bicycle and pedestrian projects, and creates new carpool and tele-work incentive programs to reduce single-occupancy vehicle travel.

Transportation also includes the design of streets for health, safety, livability, sustainability, and more. Sustainable communities include complete streets which are safe to cross or walk along, places to meet people, a link to healthy neighborhoods, and a vibrant mix of retail. Not only does this initiative enhance the safety and security of streets, it reduces the total amount of paved area, reduces street water runoff into watersheds, maximizes infiltration and reuse of storm water, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, promotes the economic well-being of businesses and residents, and reduces energy consumption.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

While significant improvements to Regional transportation infrastructure may take many years, managing the demand on our existing roadways is a cost-effective method for improving the daily commute while also improving the quality of life within La Mesa. Typical transportation demand management programs include ridesharing initiatives such as carpooling, vanpooling, and buspooling; promoting alternative work schedules and telecommuting; and promoting bicycling, walking, and the use of public transit.



Goals, Objectives, and Policies

This section summarizes the City's Goals and Policies on Conservation and Sustainability issues from both local and Regional perspectives. The issues are divided into subsections by subject area, including: Resource Conservation, Environmental and Public Health, Economic Development, and Transportation.

Goal CS-1: The sustainable use of natural resources and land.

Objective CS-1.1: Create compact, mixed-use projects with amenities to enhance the City's natural setting.

Policy CS-1.1.2: Promote the Mixed-Use Overlay Zone and related Design Guidelines to encourage infill along the City's transit corridors.

Policy CS-1.1.3: Preserve existing trees where appropriate and require planting of new trees in conjunction with public and private developments.

Objective CS-1.2: Encourage the use of local, non-polluting, renewable, and recycled resources.

Objective CS-1.3: Achieve sustainable levels of water supply and quality in support of local and Regional needs.

Policy CS-1.3.1: Support Regional water conservation efforts, water reclamation, and prevention of water quality degradation.

Policy CS-1.3.2: Encourage development that incorporates water recycling subject to review and approval of the local water purveyor (Helix Water District).

Policy CS-1.3.3: Encourage the use of mulch and compost in lieu of chemical fertilizers to improve water quality.

Objective CS-1.4: Collaborate with partner agencies, utilities, and businesses to support a range of energy efficiency and conservation measures.

Policy CS-1.4.1: Facilitate savings-by-design and address energy-efficient building and site design in the retrofit or renovation of new, and existing, developments.

Policy CS-1.4.2: Encourage the use of local, non-polluting, renewable, and recycled resources.

Goal CS-2: Improve environmental and public health in the City.

Objective CS-2.1: Facilitate solid waste reduction measures.

Policy CS-2.1.1: Encourage composting, recycling, and other appropriate techniques to reduce waste by the City and its residents.

Policy CS-2.1.2: Establish management policies and programs which will encourage recycling by the City, residences and businesses.

Objective CS-2.2: Reduce the level of pollutants entering the air.

Policy CS-2.2.1: Establish local best management practices that improve air quality as mitigation measures in the environmental review of future development.

Policy CS-2.2.2: Encourage infrastructure, such as fueling stations, for alternative fuel vehicles.

Policy CS-2.2.3: Collaborate with public, private, and Regional entities to develop and implement “clean energy fueled” fleet, bus, and train vehicles.

Goal CS-3: Safe mobility and access for all without compromising our ability to protect public health and safety.

Objective CS-3.1: Facilitate a reduction of automobile dependency in favor of affordable alternative, sustainable modes of travel.

Policy CS-3.1.1: Encourage businesses, organizations, and residents to participate in the implementation of Regional transportation demand management, including carpooling programs.

Implementation

U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement

The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. The primary roles of the USCM are to promote the development of effective national urban and suburban policy, to strengthen Federal-City relationships, and to provide mayors with leadership and management tools.

The U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement was passed in June 2005 recognizing global warming and urges both the Federal and State governments to enact policies and programs toward the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The agreement includes 12 target areas for reducing greenhouse gas emissions including emissions monitoring, land use policies, non-automobile transportation, energy efficiency, building design, waste treatment and recycling, and outreach. On April 10, 2007 the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2007-039 endorsing the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. As such, the City is committed to:

- Urging State governments and the Federal government to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the greenhouse gas emission reduction target suggested for the United States in the Kyoto Protocol.
- Meeting or exceeding Kyoto Protocol targets for reducing global warming pollution by taking actions in its own operations and community such as:
 1. Creating an inventory of global warming emissions in City operations and in the community, setting reduction targets, and creating an action plan;
 2. Adopting and enforcing land use policies that reduce sprawl, preserve open space, and create compact, walkable urban communities;
 3. Promoting transportation options such as bicycle trails, commute trip reduction programs, incentives for carpooling, and public transit;
 4. Increasing the use of clean, alternative energy by investing in “green tags,” advocating for the development of renewable energy resources, and recovering landfill methane for energy production;
 5. Making energy efficiency a priority through building code improvements, retrofitting City facilities with energy-efficient lighting, and urging employees to conserve energy and save money;
 6. Purchasing only Energy Star equipment and appliances for City use;

7. Practicing and promoting sustainable building practices using the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program or a similar system;
8. Increasing the average fuel efficiency of municipal fleet vehicles, reducing the number of vehicles, launching an employee education program including anti-idling messages, and converting diesel vehicles to bio-diesel;
9. Evaluating opportunities to increase pump efficiency in water and wastewater systems and recovering wastewater treatment methane for energy production;
10. Increasing recycling rates in City operations and in the community;
11. Maintaining healthy urban forests, promoting tree planting to increase shaded areas, and to absorb CO₂; and
12. Helping to educate the public, schools, other jurisdictions, professional associations, and businesses about reducing global warming pollution.

Opportunities for Sustainability

The City will continue to implement sustainability within the community in various ways. Amenities such as urban walking trails, the safe routes to school program, a City fleet of hybrid vehicles, the Farmers' Market, and the rehabilitation of existing buildings all improve the quality of life for City residents. Additionally, City departments will assist private property owners through the development review process for those interested in retrofitting their homes and businesses, or developing new energy-efficient projects. La Mesa's Boards and Commissions, including the Environmental Sustainability Commission, advise City officials and the public on environmental policies, programs, and projects while promoting public education and fostering community engagement. Suggestions for a sustainable lifestyle include:

- Condense auto trips and replacing trips with biking, walking, or public transit.
- Use natural lighting in buildings, such as skylights and replacing old appliances and fixtures with high performance ones.
- Start a vegetable or herb garden and composting food waste and yard trimmings.
- Use drought tolerant landscapes and watering yards in the cool of the evening.
- Combine shopping trips and reuse shopping bags.
- Recycle packaging and other items for landfill diversion.
- Support historic preservation efforts that conserve existing built resources.

Resource Conservation

Land Use and Design Review

Regionally, the San Diego Association of Governments is working to identify smart growth development opportunities where compact, walkable, and bicycle-friendly urban centers are sited near transit and bus corridors. The City's General Plan Land Use Map also establishes land use opportunities on properties throughout the City to promote this type of development. The City's Design Review Program is used as part of the review of projects including sites that are considered to be environmentally sensitive.

Grading Ordinance

Grading construction means excavating or depositing soil materials, either through a cut or a fill process. It is usually done to reorient the land for development. The Grading Ordinance was adopted to address potential impacts associated with earth movement and grading construction; to safeguard the health, safety, and public welfare, and to minimize erosion and protect fish, wildlife, and the natural environment. A grading permit is required for all but a limited scope of earth-moving operations so that these problems can be prevented.

Habitat Conservation Plan

In 1999 the City of La Mesa executed an implementing agreement to establish the La Mesa Sub-area Plan for Habitat Conservation with the United States Fish and Game Service and the California Department of Fish and Game. The La Mesa Sub-area Plan lists threatened and endangered species which are subject to conservation within the Regional Multiple Species Conservation Plan area (MSCP). The MSCP is intended to provide for the protection and conservation of the Region's heritage while continuing to allow appropriate levels of development and growth. As a planning tool, these plans protect the Region's bio-diversity while reducing conflicts between development interests and natural resources.

Water Quality

The City of La Mesa participates in San Diego County's METRO wastewater system, treating an average of 180 million gallons of wastewater per day. The METRO Wastewater Joint Powers Authority, comprised of 15 participating agencies, addresses wastewater issues that ensure fair rates, concern for the environment, and collaboration among all stakeholders.

Storm Water Management

The City of La Mesa’s Storm Water Management Ordinance is intended to protect water quality by setting best management practices for new development and enforcing the San Diego Regional Water Control Board water quality objectives and implementation plans. Implementation of Regional and local storm water quality objectives protects the City’s watersheds by prohibiting non-storm water discharges to the storm water conveyance system.

Water Supply

The Community Development Department refers development plans to Helix Water District for review and comment to ensure that water service is available to serve proposed projects. Helix Water District has completed a report on future water supply. Adopted in 2011, the Urban Water Management Plan is a forecast of future water demand within the district’s service area.

Water Efficient Landscaping

To address outdoor water efficiencies the City of La Mesa adopted a water efficient landscape ordinance in 2010 as required by the State of California Water Conservation in Landscaping Act. The City’s Ordinance recognizes that, while landscaping is essential to the quality of life, landscape design and installation must be water efficient. This Ordinance establishes a water budget to encourage water use efficiencies.

Energy Conservation

The California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) was implemented in early 2011, applies to all new residential and non-residential buildings, and is the first State-wide mandatory Green Building Code in the Nation. CALGreen establishes regulations that will achieve major reductions in Greenhouse Gas Emissions, energy consumption, and water use. It is intended to improve the public



Newly constructed buildings must adhere to the California Green Building Standards Code for New Construction.

health, safety, and general welfare through design and building construction techniques which reduce environmental impacts and encourage sustainable practices. Mandatory provisions of the code include:

- Preferred parking areas for clean-air vehicles on new development sites;
- Twenty percent (20%) reduction of potable water use within new buildings;

- Fifty percent (50%) of construction waste diverted from landfills;
- Use of building finishes that emit low levels of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's); and
- Modification of a building's subsystems for optimum efficiency.

Local jurisdictions, including the City of La Mesa, have adopted these building codes to implement State goals.

Environmental and Public Health

Air Quality

San Diego Regional Air Pollution Control District

The San Diego Regional Air Pollution Control District (APCD) regulates air quality within the County and has programs and regulations to control the release of toxic substances into the air and to minimize dust and particulates released during construction and demolition activities. The Community Development Department will implement State air quality standards as part of the development review process for new projects. Enforcement of air quality regulations during the construction phase and as part of on-going operations is necessary to protect the public health.

Solid Waste Management

City Staff select environmentally friendly options for products and services for use by all departments. The City's mandatory Recycling Ordinance is enforced and has a City-wide compliance rate among commercial businesses and multi-family properties of 95%. Using a grant from the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), the City distributes hundreds of recycling cans for common areas in multi-family properties in La Mesa along with thousands of recycling bags and can crushers for individual units.



EDCO provides curbside collection services through the week.

The Public Works Department will continue to implement the City's Source Reduction & Recycling Plan and promote the curbside recycling program conducted by EDCO Disposal.

National Prescription Drug Take-Back Program

The La Mesa Police Department, working in conjunction with Drug Enforcement Administration, participates in the National Prescription Drug Take-Back Program,

which encourages citizens to properly dispose of their unused and outdated medications. The “no-questions” drop-off program is preferred to throwing away or flushing unneeded prescriptions down the toilet, both of which can be hazardous.

Fats, Oils, and Grease Control Program

The Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) Control Program was implemented to help reduce blockages within the wastewater system which can lead to sanitary sewer overflows that degrade surface water quality and pose a hazard to health and safety. Food service establishments are required to participate in the program. EDCO Station in La Mesa is providing a FOG recycling program to all San Diegan residents and businesses. The EDCO’s FOG recycling program removes oil commodities from landfills while a private company refines those substances into biodiesel that can be sold to commercial customers to run greener diesel fleets.

Economic Development

The City will work with private developers and businesses to assist and direct them to Regional resources and programs which encourage sustainable business practices. One such Regional resource is the non-profit Center for Sustainable Energy, which offers specific workforce training programs and grants for retro-fitting buildings for energy efficiency. Opportunities for grants and collaborative programs may vary year to year, but can be used to minimize local costs of “going green”. The City of La Mesa also works in collaboration with utility providers, such as SDG&E and Helix Water District, on implementing sustainability practices for specific development projects.

Transportation

The Circulation Element sets specific policies for action, including implementation of the Bicycle Facilities and Alternative Transportation Plan. Additionally, the Health and Wellness Element addresses walkability and Safe Routes to School programs as transportation alternatives. Governments, special districts, and private businesses should consider incentives for employee carpooling, use of compressed work week schedules, telecommuting, and education initiatives as options in support of a more sustainable future.

Through the Sustainable Communities Strategy, SANDAG offers various incentive programs to encourage people to change their daily commute to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and improve air quality. Employers play a significant role in transportation demand management by offering comprehensive commuter programs for their employees. To encourage reduced automotive use and air pollution, agencies in the County have promoted programs to recognize those companies or organizations that have taken steps to improve air quality through innovative projects and programs.

Glossary

Air Basin: A land area with similar meteorological and geographic conditions throughout. To the extent possible, air basin boundaries are defined along political boundary lines. California is currently divided into 15 air basins.

Air Pollution Control District (APCD): A county agency with authority to regulate stationary, indirect and area sources of air pollution within a given county and governed by a District Air Pollution Control Board composed of the elected county supervisors.

California Air Resources Board (ARB or CARB): The State's lead air quality agency is responsible for attainment and maintenance of the State and Federal air quality standards, California climate change programs, and motor vehicle pollution control. It oversees County and Regional air pollution management programs.

Cap-and-Trade: Cap-and-Trade is a regulatory approach used to control pollution by setting a firm cap on allowed emissions while employing market mechanisms to achieve emissions reductions while driving costs down. In a cap-and-trade program, a limit, or cap is put on the amount of Greenhouse Gases that can be emitted.

Economic Diversity: The mix of industries and businesses in an economy that offer opportunities for people of differing skill and educational levels to obtain employment.

Emissions: Released or discharged air contaminants in the ambient air from any source.

Greenhouse Gases (GHG): Atmospheric gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, chlorofluorocarbons, nitrous oxide, ozone and water vapor that slow the passage of re-radiated heat through the Earth's atmosphere.

Retrofit of buildings: The improvement of a building's infrastructure to increase its energy efficiency, comfort, safety, health and durability. This could include improving building components, building operating systems and equipment, and installing energy-efficient appliances.

Sensitive Lands: Land or natural areas on which development may harm ecological diversity; areas of special significance for animal, bird or plant life; areas important for erosion control and water quality; land of aesthetic, cultural or historical significance.

Smart Growth: The concentration of growth in compact, walkable, urban centers.

Sustainability: To meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (WCED 1987). A sustainable community fosters the three E's; environment, economy, and social equity by not letting the interest of one be considered above the others.

Urban Sprawl: Urban sprawl is the uncontrolled expansion of cities and their suburbs to outlying rural and remote areas.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT): The miles traveled by motor vehicles over a specified length of time.