

**ITEM NO. 23***STAFF REPORT**CITY OF OCEANSIDE*

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DATE: October 6, 2021

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

FROM: Development Services Department

SUBJECT: **DRAFT COMMUNITY VISION IN SUPPORT OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE CITY'S GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

**SYNOPSIS**

Staff seeks City Council input on the Draft Community Vision (Vision), which outlines organizing themes and guiding principles that provide a framework for the preparation of an updated General Plan and associated long-range planning documents, including the South Morro Hills Community Plan and the Smart and Sustainable Corridors Specific Plan.

**BACKGROUND**

In May 2019, the City Council adopted the first phase of a comprehensive General Plan Update (GPU), which introduced an Economic Development Element (EDE), Energy and Climate Action Element (ECAE), and Climate Action Plan (CAP). Together, the EDE, ECAE, and CAP promulgate goals, policies, and actions that promote both economic and environmental sustainability.

In February 2020, the City initiated the second and culminating phase of the GPU. This phase involves the updating of all existing General Plan elements – many of which have not been updated for over 30 years – along with the preparation of focused long-range planning documents for the South Morro Hills Neighborhood Planning Area and the City's major east-west commercial corridors (Mission Avenue, Oceanside Boulevard, and Vista Way/Highway 78), an Active Transportation Plan (ATP), and a Trails Master Plan (TMP). The ATP will consolidate the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans into a single document and identify projects that will expand and improve the connectivity of the City's active transportation network. The TMP will contribute to the implementation of the recently-adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which calls for improved connectivity between recreational facilities and adjoining neighborhoods.

The second phase of the GPU has achieved several project milestones, including: an initial round of community engagement featuring over 50 stakeholder meetings, online surveys, and other outreach activities involving over 1,000 community members; completion of various technical studies addressing the local economy, land use patterns, mobility options, community assets, and environmental resources; a Draft Policy Framework for the South Morro Hills Agricultural District; and a locally-adopted Housing Element.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Vision begins with an overview of the kind of community Oceanside aspires to be in the years ahead, emphasizing that the City can leverage its many assets to promote quality of life, economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social equity. The Vision then introduces organizing themes that will serve as the titles of the updated General Plan elements. These themes convey community aspirations related to safety, land use, mobility, resource conservation, visual quality, social interaction, and other locally-relevant and state-prescribed topics. A series of guiding principles are located under each organizing theme. The guiding principles provide further insight on the purpose and intent of each organizing theme.

The Vision includes a discussion of the project team's efforts to gather information and perspective through community engagement, research, fieldwork, and collaboration across City disciplines. This discussion notes policy direction provided by the EDE, ECAE, and CAP, key issues raised by community members, state and regional policy guidance, assets and opportunities the City can build upon, and challenges the City can work to overcome.

## **ANALYSIS**

Summarizing key community values, concerns, and priorities, the findings of technical studies, and relevant state and regional policies, the Vision is meant to highlight important policy considerations, provide an orderly structure for the updating of the General Plan, and foster additional public input on the course the City will chart over the next several decades.

The Vision is neither a policy nor regulatory document in and of itself, but rather a means of validating the general direction of the GPU prior to the development of project alternatives and other key project deliverables.

The City Council can help to refine the Vision by identifying values or priorities that have not been recognized in the document, suggesting ways to make the document more responsive to the City's uniqueness, and noting any content that could be expressed with more clarity.

For further analysis of the purpose and intent of the Vision, see the September 13<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission staff report, appended as Attachment 3.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

Does not apply.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

The Vision is a component of the second phase of the City's comprehensive General Plan Update. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Environmental Impact Report will be prepared once a preferred plan has been selected.

## **COMMISSION OR COMMITTEE REVIEW**

The Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the Vision on September 13, 2021. The staff report from this meeting is included as Attachment 3. The Commission expressed overall support for the Vision, while encouraging staff to integrate additional language highlighting the importance of addressing climate change, homelessness, coastal erosion, traffic congestion, and the changing market for commercial land. The Commission also noted the challenge of implementing ambitious plans and advised staff to set appropriate expectations with the community through feasible goals and policies. With regard to the range of possible project alternatives, as outlined in the Planning Commission staff report, the Commission offered no specific concerns or recommendations.

Several community members provided written comments on the Vision in advance of the Planning Commission. These comments are summarized below.

- New housing should be accommodated through infill and redevelopment within the City's already urbanized areas, including the planning area of the Smart and Sustainable Corridors Specific Plan.
- Preserve farmland in South Morro Hills. Do not allow for additional housing beyond the current allowance of one dwelling unit per 2.5 acres. Do not provide for clustered housing development.
- New housing in South Morro Hills will be vulnerable to wildfire.
- Allowing additional housing development in South Morro Hills is contrary to the City's climate mitigation goals.
- Promote agritourism as a means of enhancing the long-term viability of farming in South Morro Hills.
- Expanding infrastructure in South Morro Hills would increase costs to the City and local taxpayers.
- Pursuit of tax revenue should not be privileged over quality of life concerns.
- Partner with local school districts to promote better educational outcomes, including strong curriculum linkages between high school, community college, and other institutions of higher learning.
- The Smart and Sustainable Corridors Specific Plan will help to revitalize the City's commercial corridors, calm traffic, and preserve existing single-family neighborhoods.
- The City should encourage expansion of the urban forest.

Ten community members provided verbal testimony at the meeting. Public testimony included the following:

- The Vision is generally going in the right direction.
- The project EIR should explore alternatives that minimize environmental impacts.
- The City should adopt the Draft Subarea Habitat Conservation Plan.
- The City needs to preserve local food sources.
- The South Morro Hills Community Plan should focus on agritourism and not housing development.
- Current standards for the South Morro Hills area are outdated.

- The City should dedicate resources to improving safety and security in Crown Heights, Eastside Capistrano, and the “back gate” area.
- The City needs more affordable housing, particularly for lower-income households.
- Traffic analysis should evaluate traffic impacts on neighborhood streets (and not just major roadways).

**CITY ATTORNEY’S ANALYSIS**

Does not apply.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff seeks City Council input on the Draft Community Vision, which outlines organizing themes and guiding principles that provide a framework for the preparation of an updated General Plan and associated long-range planning documents, including the South Morro Hills Community Plan and the Smart and Sustainable Corridors Specific Plan.

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Attachments:

1. Draft Community Vision
2. Draft Vision Statement
3. Planning Commission Staff Report (September 13, 2021)

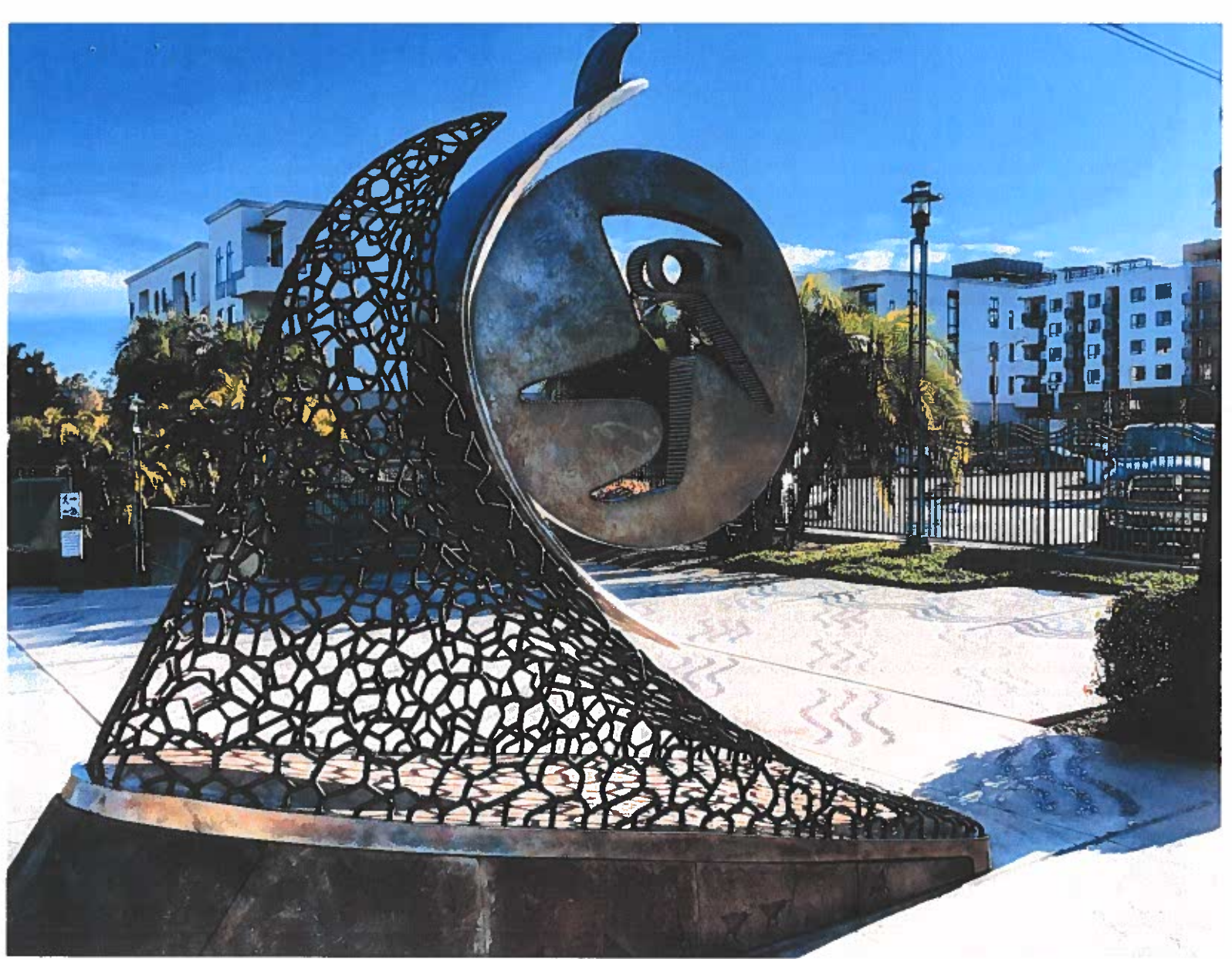


CITY OF OCEANSIDE

AUGUST 2021

**DRAFT COMMUNITY VISION,  
ORGANIZING THEMES, AND  
GUIDING PRINCIPLES**





## **DRAFT COMMUNITY VISION, ORGANIZING THEMES, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

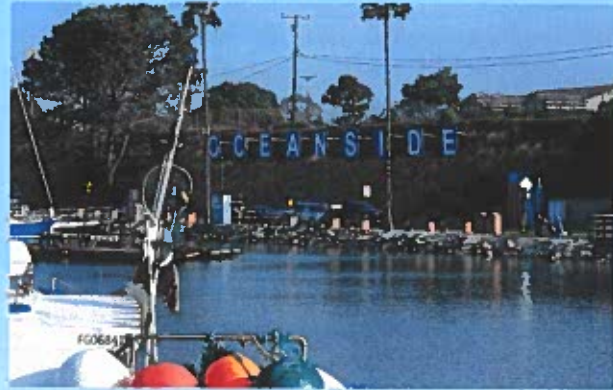
The Vision reflects the community's aspirations for Oceanside's future. The Vision summarizes the broad goals to be achieved through the updated General Plan and companion planning documents, including the Smart and Sustainable Corridors Specific Plan (SSCSP), the South Morro Hills Community Plan, the Active Transportation Plan, and the Trails Master Plan. The Guiding Principles elaborate upon the Vision and provide guidance for detailed policy development. The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles reflect extensive input from the community, gained through Citywide workshops, neighborhood meetings, forums, community surveys, and stakeholder interviews, as well as ad hoc meetings, email correspondence, and City Council and Planning Commission workshops. For more information on how the Draft Community Vision, Organizing Themes, and Guiding Principles were developed, please see the "How We Got Here" section at the end of this document.

## Vision

Oceanside will leverage its many assets to promote community quality of life, economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social equity. The City will grow and diversify the local economy, foster lively and safe public spaces, protect the natural environment, and provide high-quality community facilities and services, while promoting long-term environmental sustainability and community resiliency.

Housing and employment growth will be concentrated within already urbanized areas, with a particular focus on creating vibrant, walkable, visually attractive and engaging mixed-use communities centered along Coast Highway and the major east-west commercial corridors, around Sprinter stations, and in the Downtown District. This focus on infill and redevelopment will allow for the preservation and enhancement of recreational open space, sensitive habitat, and existing single-family neighborhoods. Concurrently, strategic planning emphasizing agritourism, clustered housing, rural design standards, view preservation, and limited infrastructure improvements will help preserve the agricultural heritage and character of South Morro Hills, one of San Diego County's last remaining active agricultural areas west of Interstate 15.

An inviting and well-maintained public realm will enhance Oceanside's sense of place and provide safe and comfortable spaces for residents to shop, gather, enjoy the outdoors, and build community. Neighborhoods will transition seamlessly from low-density residential areas to higher-intensity mixed-use corridors, improving multimodal connectivity while preserving each neighborhood's unique character and significant historical and cultural resources. An enhanced network of bike and pedestrian trails, centered along the coastline, the San Luis River, and other waterways, will connect destinations, provide recreational opportunities, and improve traffic safety throughout the City. This "smart growth" approach will promote walkability, transit use, neighborhood access to everyday services and amenities, and urban design elements that promote a sense of place, social interaction, and natural surveillance of the public realm.



Oceanside will preserve and enhance the ecological, scenic, and recreational values of its coastline, riparian areas, hillsides, and open spaces, ensuring that these are available to Oceansiders of all ages and abilities for generations to come. Consistent with the City's adopted Energy and Climate Action Element and Climate Action Plan, the City will work diligently to reduce its carbon footprint, while building community resiliency to climate change. Climate mitigation and adaptation strategies include renewable energy procurement, reduced vehicles miles traveled (VMT), expanded tree canopy, "green infrastructure," and community preparedness and responsiveness to threats and hazards such as wildfires, flooding, and earthquakes.

The Oceanside community will foster social and economic diversity and provide access to City resources to all residents. New and rehabilitated housing developments will serve all income levels, including low and very low-income households, ensuring that

all Oceansiders have a safe and affordable place to call home. Oceanside will continue to embrace and celebrate its diversity through programs and community events, support of educational and cultural institutions, inclusive community outreach, and a commitment to environmental justice and social equity. This includes efforts to ensure that historically disadvantaged communities are not disproportionately impacted by pollution, noise, traffic, or other threats to public health, economic opportunity, and quality of life.

In partnership with local groups and institutions, the City will assert its important role in charting the future of the San Diego region, working closely with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared concerns and seek mutual benefits, participating actively in regional planning efforts, and implementing complementary State priorities and regional policies at the local level.





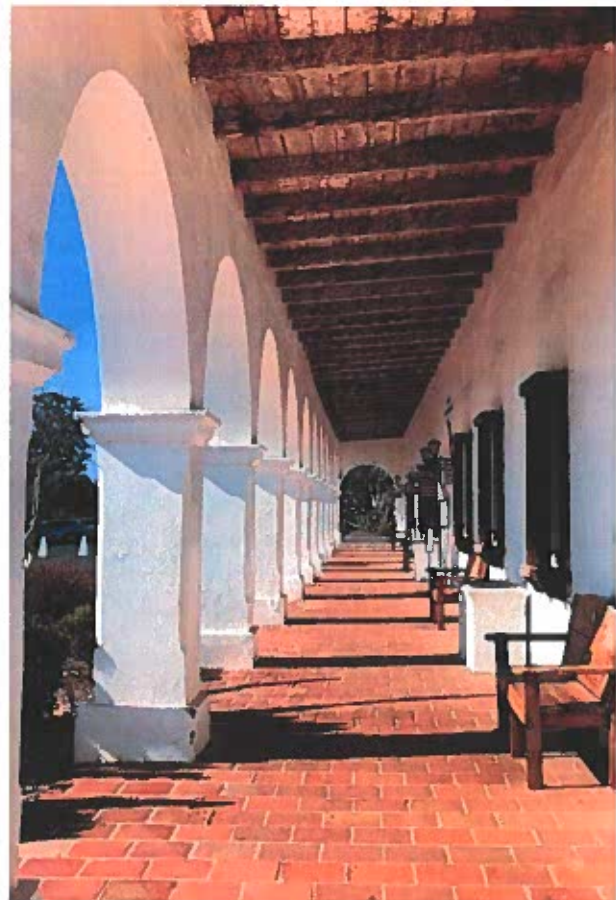


## ORGANIZING THEMES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The General Plan will be comprised of six thematic elements (plus the Housing Element) that represent the community's vision for its future. These six thematic elements, or chapters, will establish the General Plan's organizational structure.

The thematic elements, each of which puts the City's vision for the future at the forefront, will address all of the state-required General Plan topics, in addition to other topics that reflect regional and community priorities.

Each element, as outlined in the following pages, is informed and supported by several Guiding Principles. These Guiding Principles build upon the Vision and will further guide the goals and policies that will be included in the themes/elements and will shape development of Oceanside into a safe, healthy, thriving, attractive, inspiring, resilient, and welcoming community. These thematic elements and the Guiding Principles that inform them, as well as the three already adopted General Plan Elements, are shown in Table 1.



**TABLE 1: Organization of General Plan Elements**

<i>Organizing Theme</i>	<i>Guiding Principles</i>	<i>Key Topics/Issues</i>
<b>Remarkable Community</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen Oceanside's Sense of Place</li> <li>2. Preserve and Enhance Neighborhood Character</li> <li>3. Promote Pedestrian and Bicycle-Friendly Development</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual Quality</li> <li>• Neighborhood Character</li> <li>• Public Spaces</li> <li>• Scenic Views</li> <li>• Historic Resources</li> <li>• Branding/Wayfinding</li> </ul>
<b>Efficient and Compatible Land Use</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Promote Efficient Use of Limited Land Resources</li> <li>5. Facilitate a Range of Housing Opportunities</li> <li>6. Ensure Adequate Land Resources for Employment-Oriented Uses</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Use Designations</li> <li>• Building Scale and Form</li> <li>• Mixed-Use Design</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Edge Conditions/Buffers</li> <li>• Home Occupations</li> </ul>
<b>Physical, Social and Digital Connections</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Expand Mobility Options</li> <li>8. Create Spaces, Resources, and Activities that Support Community-Building</li> <li>9. Bridge the Digital Divide</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Streets</li> <li>• Transit Access</li> <li>• Ped and Bike Facilities</li> <li>• Evacuation Routes</li> <li>• Public Events</li> <li>• Smart Cities Technologies</li> </ul>
<b>Vital and Sustainable Resources</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Preserve Natural Resources</li> <li>11. Protect Air/Water Quality</li> <li>12. Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitive Habitat</li> <li>• Farmland</li> <li>• Water Resources</li> <li>• Climate Action</li> <li>• Beach Preservation</li> </ul>
<b>Safe and Resilient Environment</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Minimize Risks Associated with Natural and Human-Induced Hazards</li> <li>14. Create Safe and Secure Public Spaces</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Hazards</li> <li>• Human Induced Hazards</li> <li>• Climate Adaptation</li> <li>• Terrorism and Cyber-Threats</li> <li>• Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)</li> </ul>
<b>Healthy, Livable and Equitable Community</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Create a Physical Environment Conducive to Healthy Living</li> <li>16. Minimize Noise Impacts</li> <li>17. Protect and Build Upon the City's Investments in Community Facilities and Services</li> <li>18. Promote Personal Growth, Social Interaction, and Inclusiveness</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational Opportunities</li> <li>• Access to Goods and Services</li> <li>• Public Services</li> <li>• Environmental Justice</li> <li>• Social Equity</li> <li>• Noise</li> </ul>
<b>Housing (Adopted June 2021)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Fair Share</li> <li>• Equal Opportunity</li> <li>• Sustainable Land Use Patterns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Sites</li> <li>• Regulatory Constraints</li> <li>• Special Needs Housing</li> <li>• Housing Programs</li> </ul>
<b>Economic Development (Adopted April 2019)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse Local Economy</li> <li>• Workforce Readiness</li> <li>• Sub-Regional Coordination</li> <li>• Employment Growth/High-Wage Jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrial Land Inventory</li> <li>• Flexible Zoning Standards</li> <li>• Access to Employment Areas</li> <li>• Housing</li> </ul>
<b>Energy and Climate Action (Adopted May 2019)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart Growth</li> <li>• Renewable Energy</li> <li>• Zero Waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VMT Reduction</li> <li>• Green Building</li> <li>• Urban Forestry</li> <li>• Sustainable Consumption</li> </ul>



## REMARKABLE COMMUNITY

Oceanside will be known as a place renowned for its quality of life and cultural, historical, and recreational riches, with charming neighborhoods, and attractive destinations. As new development is directed primarily to commercial districts, the functional and visual integrity of established neighborhoods will be protected and enhanced. The City's built and natural environments will be maintained to ensure ecological balance, economic vitality, visual quality, a strong sense of place, and connections to the City's history.

The Remarkable Community theme will incorporate urban design, urban forestry, scenic public view preservation, activation of public spaces, neighborhood design standards, and maintenance of historic resources. The following Guiding Principles provide further insight on this theme's purpose and intent.

### ***1. Strengthen Oceanside's Sense of Place***

Oceanside is a distinctive coastal community with a variety of neighborhoods and landscapes ranging from the scenic beachfront Downtown to the agricultural resources of South Morro Hills. While the City's oldest neighborhoods and the Downtown District are next to the ocean, Oceanside today encompasses a diverse array of employment areas, commercial centers, and neighborhoods reflecting various eras of the City's development, and extending nearly 10 miles inland. The City's topography is also diverse, with relatively flat areas west of I-5 giving way to rolling hills toward the east, that delineate three watersheds, each forming a visual unit with its own setting and ecology. The City also has distinctive historical resources, such as the Mission San Luis Rey, around which development is guided by specific design standards and architectural guidelines. Reinforcing the positive aspects of Oceanside's diverse settings and districts will strengthen the community's visual character, and promote a more cohesive, unified identity.

### ***2. Preserve and Enhance Neighborhood Character***

Oceanside is comprised of several unique neighborhoods, each with its own community strengths and priorities. The majority of Oceanside's future growth will be concentrated in commercial corridors, allowing for the preservation of the City's existing single-family neighborhoods. The City will seek to maintain the scale and character of existing single-family neighborhoods and ensure that new developments contribute to safe, engaging, and pleasant environments for future and current Oceanside residents. As part of this effort, the updated General Plan will include brief policy frameworks for each of the City's 17 neighborhood planning areas (NPAs). The policy frameworks will reflect community input received at NPA-focused meetings.

### 3. Promote Pedestrian and Bicycle-Friendly Development

Oceanside's older areas, such as the Downtown District and adjacent neighborhoods west of I-5, are designed to be walking-friendly, with a connected street-grid network, short blocks, and mix of uses in close proximities, enabling a resident to, for example, easily walk to a store or a café. In recent decades, as the City has grown outward toward the east, development patterns have become increasingly auto-centric, with increasing separation between uses, discontinuous street patterns, and lack of pedestrian and bicycle amenities in many neighborhoods.

As infill and redevelopment occurs and commercial corridors transform into mixed-use environments, the General Plan and the SSCSP will seek to promote more connections within and between developments and adjacent neighborhoods, greater pedestrian and bicycle orientation, and more attention to architecture and urban design to foster context-sensitive development.





## EFFICIENT AND COMPATIBLE LAND USE

The City's limited land resources will be organized and regulated to ensure compatibility between different land uses, accommodate demand for both housing and non-residential uses, foster complete neighborhoods, and encourage efficient land use that creates synergies between different uses, enhances walkability and transit access, and reduces development pressure on outlying areas.

This theme will leverage land use patterns and classifications, density and intensity standards, and policies on edge conditions (i.e., where different environments converge) and land use transitions to foster orderly, vibrant, and pleasant surroundings for all Oceansiders. The following Guiding Principles provide more insight on how the Efficient and Compatible Land Use Element will be structured.

### **4. Promote Efficient Use of Limited Land Resources**

Much of Oceanside is built out, with limited supplies of vacant developable land and little opportunity for expansion of the City's physical boundaries. Looking ahead, the City will need to carefully prioritize and balance land uses to meet multiple needs, including a variety of housing options, economic diversity and vitality, ample and appropriately programmed open space, a viable agricultural sector, and other considerations. Organized and harmonious land use patterns across the City can also improve access to commercial goods and services, schools, recreational facilities, cultural venues, and other amenities that meet people's needs. Moreover, efficient use of City-owned property (e.g., City Operations Center, El Corazon Park) can allow for additional City services and facilities while reducing the need for additional land acquisition.

### **5. Facilitate a Range of Housing Opportunities**

With California and the San Diego region in the midst of a profound housing crisis, it's incumbent upon local jurisdictions to facilitate additional housing across the income spectrum, with an emphasis on senior, supportive, and affordable housing. Through strategic land use changes and a variety of other strategies, the City will boost availability of housing sites in diverse settings: e.g., mixed-use environments along major commercial corridors (particularly well-suited to seniors and others looking for more walkable environments adjacent to services); accessory dwelling units (ADUs), sited and designed to be compatible with surrounding single-family neighborhoods; and redevelopment of high-density residential properties, and context-sensitive housing in targeted areas (e.g., South Morro Hills).

The City does not intend to pursue increased density allowances in existing residential neighborhoods. Should future State legislation require the City to allow attached housing in single-family zoning districts, the City will explore updated development standards and design guidelines that help to minimize the functional and visual impacts of additional housing density in these areas.

## 6. Ensure Adequate Land Resources for Employment-Oriented Uses

Once reliant on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Oceanside's economy has become increasingly diversified, attracting major technology and bio-technology firms, hospitality and other visitor-serving uses, healthcare, sports and active lifestyle manufacturing, and other key industry sectors. Oceanside offers the business community a relatively low cost of entry; opportunities for collaboration in the agriculture, tourism, healthcare, and biotechnology sectors; comparatively lower housing costs; transit connections; and an exceptional environment that supports a high quality of life. However, lack of readily available land for large-scale businesses is a significant constraint, as are the City's peripheral location within the San Diego region and limited market area for regional-serving commercial uses. The City can do more to leverage its underutilized property, coastal resources, highway access, transit facilities, and farmland to attract employers and spur business activity.

Building upon goals and policies identified in the 2019 Economic Development Element, Oceanside will support further employment growth in the community to ensure a better balance between jobs and housing, create more local job opportunities for Oceanside residents, and support additional pathways to workforce development, business incubation, entrepreneurship, and small business retention.





## PHYSICAL, SOCIAL, AND DIGITAL CONNECTIONS

Oceanside will become an increasingly connected community, with convenient access to safe, efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly modes of transportation as well as 21st century technologies that support economic activity, social interaction, and self-actualization. New technology and data applications will improve public safety, mobility, and access to City services. Improved digital access will provide community members with essential public information, educational resources, and opportunities for civic engagement. Public realm improvements and programming will create spaces for commerce, social gathering, and community-building.

This element will focus on improvements to the City's physical infrastructure, including roadways, emergency evacuation routes, transit systems, and pedestrian and bike facilities, as well as improvements to digital networks and physical spaces that serve residents, workers, and visitors. Such improvements include community broadband connections and smart City technologies. The following Guiding Principles further define the focus of this element.

### 7. Expand Mobility Options

Several transit services connect Oceanside to the San Diego region and the rest of southern California. NCTD's Coaster links the City to other North County Coastal cities and employment hubs in Sorrento Valley, University Town Center, and Downtown San Diego. NCTD's Sprinter connects Oceanside with the other cities in the Highway 78 corridor. Metrolink and Amtrak link the City to Orange County, the greater Los Angeles area, and the Inland Empire. Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner intercity rail line provide service as far north as San Luis Obispo. Coupled with NCTD's Breeze bus service, these four rail services make Oceanside one of the most important transit hubs in California. However, much of Oceanside's existing intracity mobility infrastructure is auto-oriented, requiring residents, workers, and visitors to rely on their cars for most trips.

Oceanside will focus future mobility improvements on expanding and improving existing transit connections, creating last-mile connections, improving station access, developing a safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian network, and supporting ridesharing and new transportation technologies. As residents, workers, and visitors gain increasingly convenient access to safe, efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly modes of transportation, single-occupancy trips in combustion engine vehicles will be reduced, alleviating stress on the City's roadway network, curbing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and improving air quality.

## 8. Create Spaces, Resources, and Activities that Support Community-Building

Community-building occurs when residents have opportunities to gather in comfortable spaces to engage in fun and enriching activities. Such activities can be regular occurrences (e.g., Farmers Market, Sunset Market) or casual ad hoc events (e.g., neighbors gathering in a local park). The City can support such activities by providing spaces for gathering and sponsoring programs and events that bring residents together. Library Services, Parks and Recreation, Neighborhood Services, and other City operations offer a wide range of programs and events that contribute to community-building. Additionally, City partnerships with local non-profit organizations (e.g., museums, public health services, cultural groups) provide exposure and resources for activities that strengthen civil society and social cohesion. The City will explore additional ways to promote community-building efforts, with a focus on leveraging existing City facilities and the public realm to accommodate more engaging, wholesome, and inclusive activities.



## 9. Bridge the Digital Divide

As a connected City of the future, Oceanside will leverage technology and data purposefully to make more informed decisions and deliver better services. Digital applications will help to address quality of life issues such as safety, convenience, health, environmental quality, social connectedness and civic participation, jobs, and the cost of living. Access to broadband internet has become a basic need, linking people to vital resources, such as jobs, education, healthcare, sustenance, and information. The City will work to incorporate new “smart City” technologies—such as real time data and analysis for roadway management and emergency response—to improve operations, services, infrastructure, and other components of daily life. Improving access to high-quality internet, particularly in underserved areas, will help to ensure equal access to information and opportunity.







## VITAL AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

Environmental and community resources will be protected, enhanced, and managed to serve the present and future needs of residents, workers, and visitors. The City will balance and sustain the ecological, aesthetic, and recreational value of open space, while incorporating natural elements into the urban fabric.

This element will address habitat and wildlife conservation, agricultural preservation and viability, air quality, water quality and conservation, solid waste and recycling, and other topics addressed in the Energy and Climate Action Element and Climate Action Plan.

### **10. Preserve Natural Resources**

Oceanside's natural resources include beaches and estuaries, riparian corridors such as the San Luis River, and undeveloped hillsides and ridgelines. Open space areas provide wildlife habitat and opportunities for passive recreation, while serving to conserve the City's picturesque setting and sense of spaciousness. The City will minimize impacts to wildlife and habitat through integrated land use and conservation planning, thereby maintaining the health of the area's diverse ecosystems. In addition to clean air, water, and soil, the City will invest in clean energy and mobility solutions as well as water independence to ensure a healthy and lasting environment for generations to come. Moreover, the City will support regional and sub-regional habitat conservation efforts that contribute to an integrated system of wildlife corridors and landscape-scale habitat preserves.

### **11. Protect Air and Water Quality**

The City's coastal location, adjacency to open space, and limited amount of heavy industrial activity contribute to relatively good air quality. Additionally, federal and state mobile source emissions standards help to significantly reduce concentrations of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, and particulate matter. However, heavily-traveled roadways, landfills, industrial operations, gas stations, and other pollutant sources can create "hot spots" where concentrations of listed pollutants can exceed air quality standards. Policies that promote adequate separation from pollutant sources, walkable environments, alternative transportation facilities, electric vehicles, and urban forestry can contribute to improve air quality.

Water quality is a concern in all of the City's major waterways (San Luis Rey River, Loma Alta Creek, Buena Vista Lagoon). These waterways are listed as impaired under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act for heightened bacterial levels and excessive concentrations of nutrients, sediments, and/or silt. These conditions not only affect plant and animal life within these waterways but also compromise water quality in the ocean, into which all three of these waterways drain. While Oceanside typically enjoys some of the best ocean water quality in the San Diego region, improving the health of the City's waterways can help to ensure that residents and visitors can safely enjoy the City's beaches and other coastal resources.

## 12. Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As greenhouse gas emissions increase globally, temperatures are expected to continue rising, placing further stress on human health, water resources, energy systems, farmland, and other assets. Oceanside's coastal and riparian resources are highly vulnerable to sea level rise, while the City's northern and eastern areas face increasing extreme heat events and wildfire threats. In doing its part to contain GHG emissions, the City can expand the local green economy, promote cost-savings for residents and the business community, achieve greater energy independence, and enhance environmental quality. Building on the City's 2019 Climate Action Plan, Energy and Climate Action Element, and Local Coastal Program Update, the City will continue to pursue sustainable strategies that proactively and aggressively address the causes and effects of climate change.





## SAFE AND RESILIENT ENVIRONMENT

Oceanside will be proactive and vigilant in mitigating risks associated with natural hazards, traffic, industrial operations, noise and nuisance conditions, hazardous materials, and social instability.

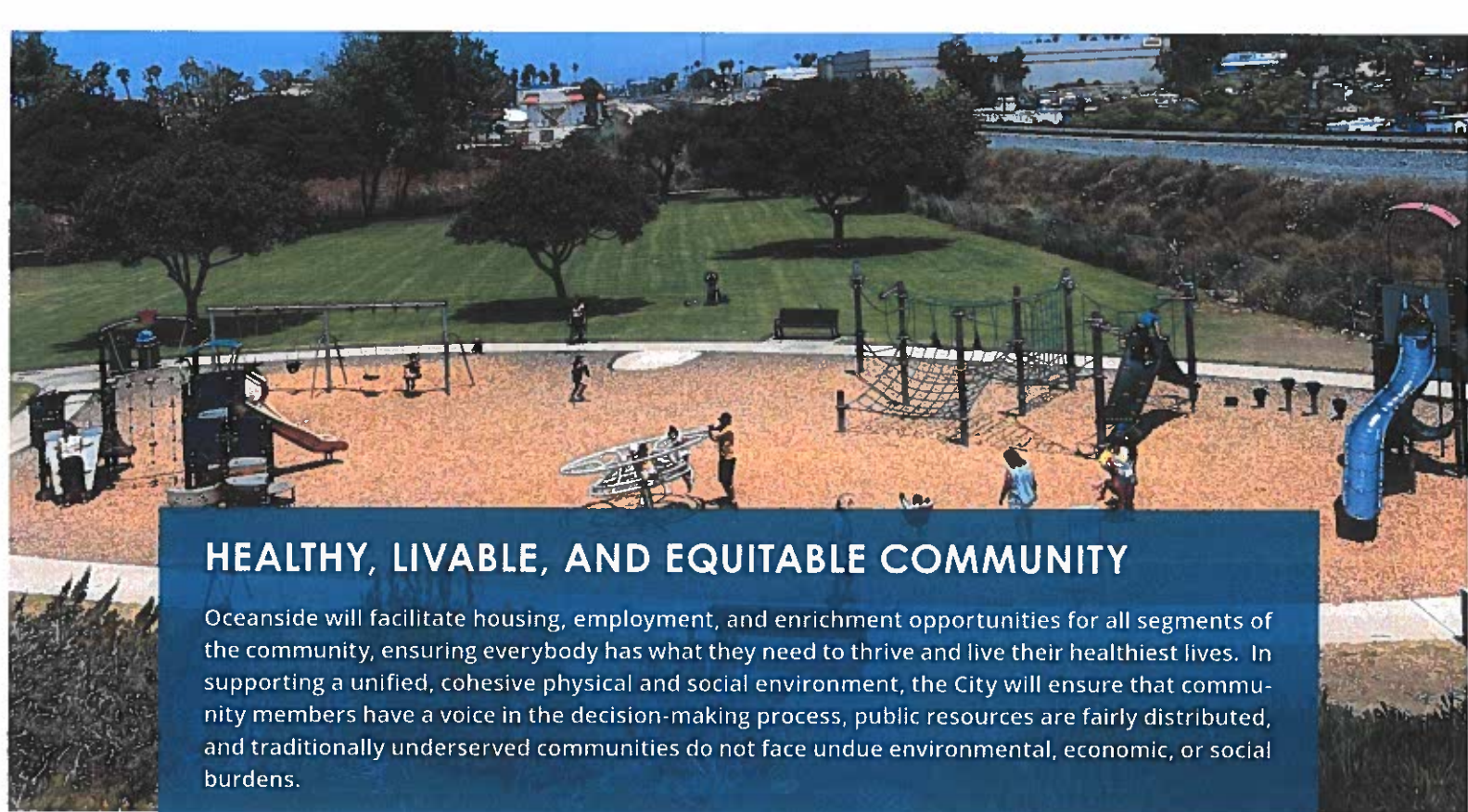
This element will prepare the City to face a range of hazards including fire, geologic and seismic hazards, coastal and inland flooding, extreme heat events, airport hazards, and community safety. While the Vital and Sustainable Resources Element will primarily focus on climate mitigation efforts, the Safe and Resilient Environment Element will largely consider how to effectively adapt to climate change. The following Guiding Principles outline this element's structure and focus.

### ***13. Minimize Risks Associated with Natural and Human-Induced Hazards***

While Oceanside does not have any active earthquake faults, the City faces threats from other natural disasters and extreme weather, including landslides, coastal and inland flooding, drought, and wildfire. In the built environment, Oceanside faces human-induced threats to health and safety, such as exposure to hazardous materials. Both natural and human-induced threats have the potential to affect the health and well-being of residents and visitors. Oceanside will identify, plan for, and mitigate risks associated with these hazards through land use and development standards, monitoring programs, public safety.

### ***14. Create Safe and Secure Public Spaces***

Many community members have expressed concern about the safety and security of public spaces, particularly in the more urbanized areas of the City. While perceptions of the relative safety and security of an area may not always be consistent with the actual level of risk, community members should feel comfortable in public spaces; if they do not, these spaces will not be activated and utilized to their full potential. Consequently, beyond addressing large-scale threats, creating comfortable and security throughout the City will also be a high priority. Improvements to the public realm, design techniques that promote natural community surveillance, coordination with public safety in the development review process, and community investments in safety and security will foster more comfortable environments for all Oceansiders.



## HEALTHY, LIVABLE, AND EQUITABLE COMMUNITY

Oceanside will facilitate housing, employment, and enrichment opportunities for all segments of the community, ensuring everybody has what they need to thrive and live their healthiest lives. In supporting a unified, cohesive physical and social environment, the City will ensure that community members have a voice in the decision-making process, public resources are fairly distributed, and traditionally underserved communities do not face undue environmental, economic, or social burdens.

The Healthy, Livable, and Equitable Community Element will focus on improvements to the City's public facilities including parks and recreation facilities, educational and community facilities and cultural venues, as well as the public services (e.g., public safety and emergency services, public works operations). This element will also cover food systems, public health, and community-building programs and events. The following Guiding Principles elaborate on the structure and contents of this element.

### 15. Create a Physical Environment Conducive to Healthy Living

While genetics, healthcare, and lifestyle choices affect health, so can land use patterns, transportation infrastructure, access to open space, socioeconomic status, and a variety of other social and environmental factors. Oceanside will promote the health and wellness of its residents and recognize the value of a preventative approach to health by addressing both the social and physical determinants of health and safety. In addition to access to quality housing, education, services, and jobs, Oceanside will support development patterns that promote active living – connected paths and open space networks, and walking access to amenities and services. Incorporation of green space in public and private development will support mental health and well-being, and improved access to fresh, local healthy food, healthcare services, recreational amenities and other resources will give people what they need to thrive.

### 16. Minimize Noise Impacts

In an urban environment, noise from everyday human activity is expected, but excessive noise can detract from quality of life and even have harmful effects on health. The City will seek to reduce impacts from increased transportation noise, pursue noise attenuation in sensitive areas (such as residential areas, daycare, hospitals, churches, and other establishments), establish feasible noise limits for mixed-use areas, and incorporate other noise-reducing techniques to ensure Oceanside can accommodate more growth and activity while maintaining a pleasant environment.

### **17. Protect and Build Upon the City's Investments in Community Resources and Services**

In 1990, the City demonstrated its commitment to high quality community services and facilities by adopting an optional Community Facilities Element. This component of the General Plan encourages good stewardship of municipal assets, including public safety facilities, water utilities, transportation infrastructure, drainage systems, coastal amenities, and other essential community resources. To maintain and enhance these resources, the City must be diligent in identifying community priorities, securing and allocating adequate funding, retrofitting and repurposing existing facilities as circumstances warrant, designing new facilities that can be adapted to accommodate future needs and preferences, and pursuing energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation in municipal operations. The City must also coordinate with other public agencies and non-governmental organizations to pursue projects and programs that achieve shared goals. Through effective asset management, Oceanside can continue to provide safe, convenient, and high-quality services and facilities for all segments of the community.

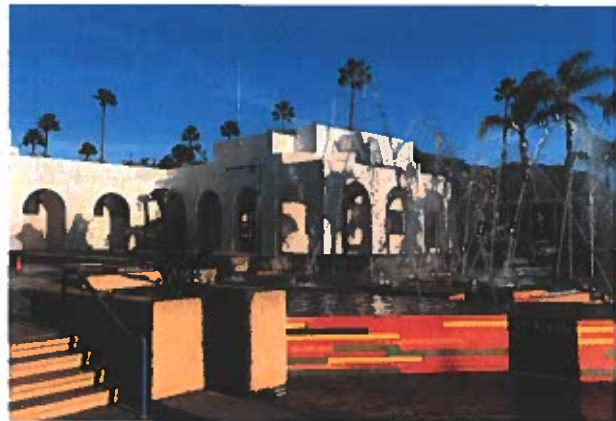
Oceanside offers a wealth of recreational opportunities, with more than 30 neighborhood and community parks that together comprise more than 640 acres of existing parkland. Some of these facilities (e.g., El Corazon Park, Guajome Regional Park) attract visitors from throughout the region, while others mostly serve the local community. All of these facilities provide unique settings and experiences. Providing sufficient recreational and open spaces for residents is an important aspect of creating a healthy community and fostering an appreciation of the natural world. Guided by the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Master Plan for the Arts, Oceanside will maintain its existing recreational resources, expand the existing trail network, and enhance access through improved connections to recreational amenities, upgraded facilities, and expanded arts and cultural programming.

Other important City resources include coastal amenities (e.g., Small Craft Harbor, Municipal Pier, Bandshell/Amphitheater), civic and educational resources (e.g., City Hall, library system, community

resource centers), public safety services, and public infrastructure (roads, water utilities). Maintenance of high-quality public services and infrastructure not only enhances the livability of Oceanside but also contributes to the City's appeal to prospective employers, investors, and visitors. The City will strategically invest in public services to ensure that all Oceansiders have equal access to community resources including educational facilities, parks, bicycle and pedestrian trails, police and fire services, and well-functioning infrastructure.

### **18. Promote Personal Growth, Social Interaction, and Inclusiveness**

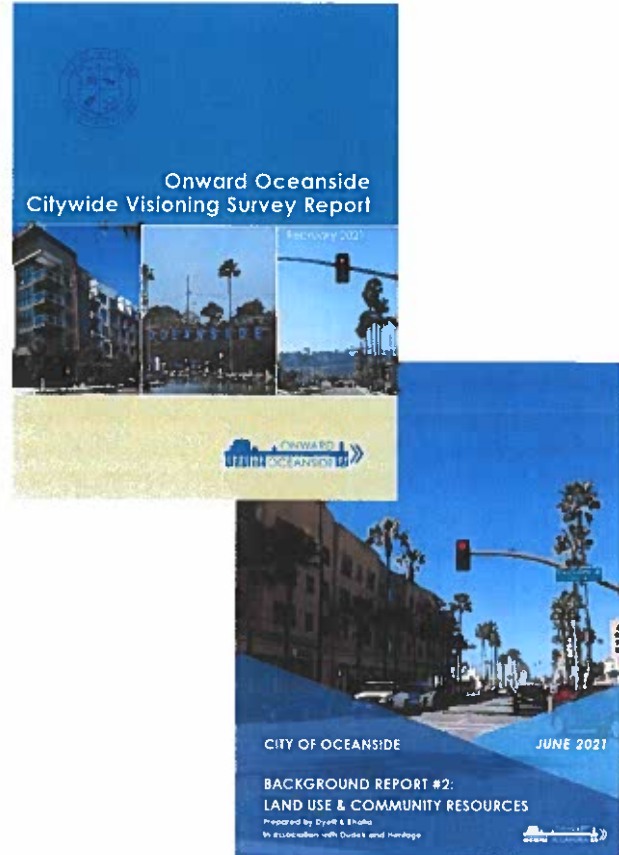
Oceanside residents represent a broad range of racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds. To afford all City residents with the chance to live long, healthy, and opportunity-filled lives, Oceanside must strive to ensure equal access to community amenities, economic opportunity, and enriching experiences. The City will therefore work to enhance access to educational facilities, recreational facilities, active transportation infrastructure, emergency services, cultural venues, and gathering spaces. Programs, resources, and outreach activities will be designed to engage and bring together all members of the Oceanside community. Public spaces, digital resources, and human capital will be leveraged to support activities that inspire lifelong learning, creativity, enterprise, and civic engagement. Historically disadvantaged communities will be actively invited to participate in these activities. The City will conduct decision-making in a transparent and inclusive manner, ensuring that everyone has a voice in the City's future and can benefit equitably from its growth.



## HOW WE GOT HERE

Oceanside’s Vision Statement, along with the Themes and Guiding Principles that it informs, present a culmination of extensive efforts to gather knowledge and insight on Oceanside’s future through community engagement, fieldwork, technical study, and collaboration across City disciplines. These efforts have revealed key community assets, opportunities for positive change, challenges that must be overcome, and a wide range of community values, priorities, and concerns.

Community input was gathered through a variety of methods to achieve a broad understanding of the community’s vision for the future of Oceanside. Summaries of community input are posted on the project webpage. In addition to community engagement, in-depth background reports and technical analyses have provided a foundation for understanding both the challenges and opportunities that Oceanside faces. These reports are also posted to the project webpage. Additionally, the first phase of the City’s General Plan Update (EDE, ECAE, and CAP) provides important direction for this second phase, including policies that call for economic diversity, sub-regional collaboration, smart growth, sustainable building design, and renewable energy procurement.



State legislation and guidelines on housing, farmland preservation, GHG reduction, climate adaptation, and environmental justice must be factored into the updated General Plan and companion planning documents. The recipient of three state grants in support of the General Plan Update, the City is expected to further the state’s efforts to promote sustainable development, expand housing opportunities, protect natural resources, and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Additional information on state priorities can be found on the webpages for the California Office of Planning and Research and the California Department of Housing and Community Development.

Regional planning priorities such as smart growth, expanded mobility options, shoreline management, military base access, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure also provide valuable direction to the local planning process. The City has an important role in implementing these regional priorities.

The following pages elaborate on the outreach, research, and relevant planning efforts that have contributed to the development of Oceanside’s Vision Statement.

## COMMUNITY INPUT

The process of drafting a new General Plan enables the community to assess opportunities and challenges, establish a vision for the City's future, and outline a systematic process to achieve the vision. Preparation of the General Plan is far more than a legal formality – it is an opportunity for community members to define Oceanside's future, and to ensure a high quality of life for themselves and for subsequent generations. While the planning process will take direction from many sources, the most important voice in this process is that of the community. The valuable input of community members is essential to the creation of a new General Plan that accurately reflects the common goals, needs, visions, and desires of the community. The project team conducted extensive community outreach leading up to the development of the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, ranging from a Citywide survey with over 650 responses, to community workshops attended by several hundred community members, and small discussion groups. Key findings from these outreach efforts are presented below, and detailed reports can be found on the project website, [www.onwardoceanside.com](http://www.onwardoceanside.com). Some of the most frequently identified community priorities included:

- The safety and security of public spaces;
- The preservation and restoration of natural habitat;
- The continued viability of agriculture;
- The visual quality of both the built and the natural environments;
- The integrity of existing residential neighborhoods;
- Mitigating risk of natural hazards;
- A diversity of housing opportunities;
- Supportive environments for people to age in place;
- Traffic safety, particularly in residential areas;
- Expanded and enhanced active transportation facilities; and
- Enhanced recreational facilities, and improved access thereto.

## BACKGROUND RESEARCH

As part of the Onward Oceanside process, the planning team researched and prepared a series of background reports that outline both existing conditions in the City, and challenges and opportunities that the City faces. Findings from those reports are presented below, and the full reports can be found on the project website.

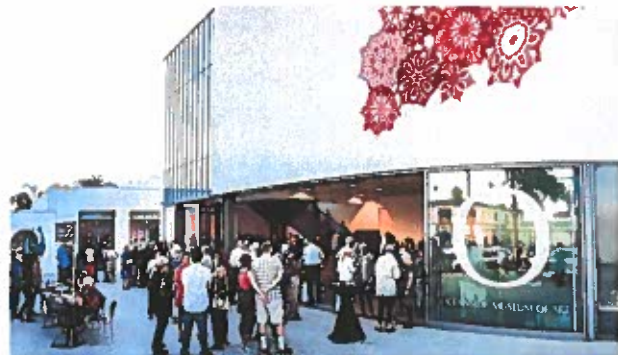
## ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

One of the oldest municipalities in San Diego County, Oceanside has been home to Native Americans, missionaries, homesteaders, farmers, military personnel, entrepreneurs, and households that span the income spectrum. Today, the City reflects the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of the San Diego region. Situated in the northwest corner of San Diego County, where it is bounded by the Pacific Ocean, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, the cities of Carlsbad and Vista, and the unincorporated rural communities of Fallbrook and Bonsall, Oceanside is a distinctive community defined by its coastal location, unique landforms, diverse population, community events, and rich history. The City lies along a major transportation corridor between San Diego and Los Angeles and is served by two state highways that connect the City to inland areas. The City is also served by regional rail service and local bus networks that provide transit connections both within the City and to neighboring jurisdictions as far as San Luis Obispo. For more information on the City's transportation system, please see Background Report #3: Mobility.

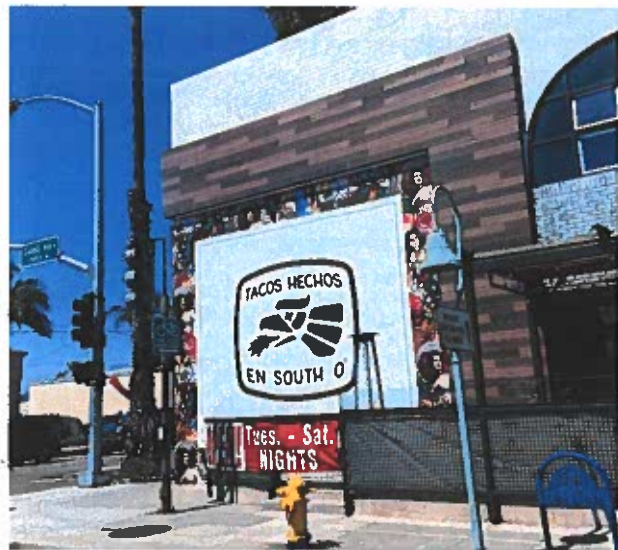




Featuring exceptional year-round weather, over three miles of coastline, attractions such as Mission San Luis Rey, the Small Craft Harbor, Oceanside Pier, Bob Maxwell Memorial Airfield, the Oceanside Museum of Art, and the California Surf Museum, and what many locals consider a relaxed and welcoming ambiance, the City has become a popular visitor destination and an increasingly attractive place to live and work. For more insight on the City’s existing land use and community character, please see Background Report #2: Land Use & Community Resources on the project website.



Once dominated by businesses serving the military population, Oceanside’s economy has become increasingly diverse, with growth in the hospitality, healthcare, education, active lifestyle, and technology sectors. Downtown has become a vibrant locale, with new resort and residential developments creating a more urbane ambiance and a more active public realm. Industrial parks developed over the past 25 years (e.g., Ocean Ranch, RDO Business and Technology Park) have brought new jobs to Oceanside, as have community and regional-serving retail centers (e.g., Quarry Creek Plaza). For more information on the economic and employment trends of the City, please reference Background Report #1: Market Analysis and the Economic Development Element, adopted in 2019.







While the City's name and brand reflect its adjacency to the Pacific Ocean, Oceanside is much more than just a beach town, with the vast majority of the City's 177,000 residents, major employers, parks and recreation facilities, and other key community assets being located east of I-5. Inland areas of the City are characterized by neighborhoods set amongst rolling hills, industrial uses clustered along portions of Mission Avenue and Oceanside Boulevard, and community and regional shopping centers and office space dotting the major commercial corridors. Open spaces and natural habitat are concentrated within the City's waterways, the SDG&E power transmission corridor, and the City's boundary with Camp Pendleton. Bounded by hillsides, mesas, and waterways, the City's major corridors (i.e., Coast Highway, Mission Avenue, Oceanside Boulevard, College Boulevard, and Vista Way) accommodate a variety of non-residential uses and effectively knit the City together, providing access to employment centers, residential areas, community facilities, and transit. Characterized by relatively low-intensity development, these corridors have the potential to support most of the City's future growth. For more information on Oceanside's major corridors, please reference the Smart and Sustainable Corridors Specific Plan Background Report.

The South Morro Hills Neighborhood Planning Area lies within the City's northeast corner and contains some of the last remaining contiguous agricultural land in the coastal San Diego region. To learn more about the South Morro Hills area, see the South Morro Hills Community Plan Map Atlas.

## CHALLENGES

Oceanside is not without its challenges. Despite being one of the most affordable housing markets along California's coast, the City faces rising housing prices as well as traffic congestion, a relatively limited employment base, vulnerability to natural hazards (exacerbated by climate change), visual blight along aging corridors and lingering concerns about the safety and security of public spaces. While the vast open spaces along the City's northern edges provide a scenic asset to the community, they also combine with the City's peripheral location within the San Diego Metropolitan Area, and the adjacency to the Pacific Ocean to limit the geographic growth and accessibility of Oceanside. The geography of inland Oceanside, which includes steep slopes and three east-west trending waterways, creates barriers to active transportation and transit use. These barriers are compounded by scattered land use patterns. Moreover, the City has limited vacant land designated for new development, with land for industrial uses in particularly short supply. The viability of agriculture faces threats from rising labor costs, increasingly scarce water, and competition from international produce. This area faces significant development pressure, as demonstrated by small-scale residential subdivisions, land values that reflect allowances for residential use, and the pending North River Farms project. While South Morro Hills continues to support both commercial and avocational farming, members of the farming community have indicated that the long-term viability of agriculture depends on new sources of income.

Portions of Oceanside are subject to flooding, particularly along the Mission Avenue and Oceanside Boulevard corridors. The City's coastal areas face the likelihood of rising sea levels due to increasing ocean temperatures and the displacement of glaciers and ice shelves. More information on the City's response to sea level rise and coastal concerns can be found in the City's Local Coastal Program Update. Wildfire threatens eastern and northern parts of the community, and over 2,000 acres near the City's western border with Camp Pendleton are classified as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone by CalFire. More information on the environmental conditions of the City can be found in Background Report #4: Environmental Resources. The City's 2019 Climate Action Plan and Energy and Climate Action Element also provide more background information on effects of climate change, as well as goals, policies, and strategies to address climate change and sustainability.

## REGIONAL PLANNING PRIORITIES

While much of the General Planning process is dependent on local conditions and community priorities, Oceanside is also part of the San Diego metropolitan region, and the plan must also reflect the existing regional planning priorities. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) serves as the forum for regional decision-making for the San Diego region, providing guidance on key regional planning priorities and allocating to local governments the housing units included in the State's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). SANDAG's regional plan for the San Diego area includes an emphasis on innovative transportation solutions. Detailed information on SANDAG's Regional Plan is provided in the draft update of San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan.



*Prepared for*



*By*

**DYETT & BHATIA**  
Urban and Regional Planners

# DRAFT COMMUNITY VISION

## The City of Oceanside will be ...

### A REMARKABLE COMMUNITY –

- Renowned for its coastal setting, riparian areas, farmland, unique terrain, scenic views, cultural venues, historic resources, charming neighborhoods, and attractive destinations.
- With a cohesive and unified built environment and a healthy and ecologically-rich natural environment; and
- Where neighborhoods are connected to a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly mobility network, mixed-use corridors with cohesive architecture and street design, and a variety of commercial and recreational uses in close proximity.

### COMPRISED OF EFFICIENT AND COMPATIBLE LAND USES –

- Characterized by a harmonious and synergetic mix of housing, businesses, public facilities, and cultural venues; and
- Featuring context-sensitive design; ample and contiguous open space; a thriving agricultural sector; a diverse economy; and housing options that meet needs and preferences across the spectrum of income, age, and lifestyle.

### PHYSICALLY, SOCIALLY, AND DIGITALLY CONNECTED –

- Linked to safe, efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally-friendly modes of transportation and pedestrian and bicycle facilities;
- Where residents have ample, vibrant, and welcoming spaces to gather, spend time together, and engage in fun and enriching activities; and
- With smart technology and digital infrastructure that help the City provide better, more efficient services and residents and businesses connect to the rest of the world.

### ENRICHED WITH VITAL AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES –

- Where nature is preserved as open space and incorporated into the urban fabric;
- With clean air, land, and water and picturesque, unspoiled, and ecologically vibrant beaches, estuaries, riparian corridors, hillsides, and ridgelines of immeasurable economic, aesthetic, recreational, and ecological value; and
- Serving as a model of environmental stewardship and boasting a green economy, energy independence, recycling programs, and high-quality environmental resources.

### A SAFE AND RESILIENT ENVIRONMENT –

- Proactive and vigilant in preparing for and responding to a range of natural and manmade hazards, including those driven by climate change; and
- Where community members feel safe and secure public spaces.

### A HEALTHY, LIVABLE, AND EQUITABLE COMMUNITY –

- Where all residents enjoy access to opportunity, resources, and public services, and no community faces undue environmental, economic, or social burdens;
- With an abundance of community resources, infrastructure, and services that promote health and well-being, as well as equitable access to quality housing, education, services, and jobs; and
- With engaging and enriching public amenities and programming, responsive public services; and a diverse, socially-connected, and civically-engaged population.

# AGENDA NO. 5

Attachment 3

*PLANNING COMMISSION*



*STAFF REPORT*

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DATE: September 13, 2021

TO: Chairperson and Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Development Services Department/Planning Division

SUBJECT: **DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT COMMUNITY VISION, ORGANIZING THEMES, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE SECOND PHASE OF THE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE – GENERAL PLAN UPDATE, PHASE 2 – APPLICANT: CITY OF OCEANSIDE**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission:

- 1) Hear public testimony and provide input on the Draft Community Vision, Organizing Themes, and Guiding Principles for the second phase of the City's General Plan Update; and
- 2) Provide input on potential project alternatives that can be analyzed in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project.

## **BACKGROUND**

On May 8, 2019, the City Council adopted the first phase of a comprehensive General Plan Update that introduced an Economic Development Element (EDE), Energy and Climate Action Element (ECAE), and Climate Action Plan (CAP). Together, the EDE, ECAE, and CAP encourage a sustainable approach to accommodating future growth, with a focus on infill and redevelopment, expanded mobility options, open space and farmland preservation, and renewable energy sourcing. Organized around the themes of quality of life, prosperity, resilience, and collaboration, the EDE outlines policies that support diversifying the local economy, increasing land resources for industrial use, leveraging local assets to promote Oceanside as a visitor destination, investing in workforce readiness, reducing retail leakage, improving access to employment areas, and incentivizing green business practices. Focused on reducing the City's reliance on fossil fuels, the ECAE promotes clean power, smart growth, solid waste diversion, water conservation, urban forestry, local agriculture, and sustainable consumer choices. The CAP outlines specific measures for reducing the City's carbon footprint.

On February 24, 2020, the City initiated the second phase of the General Plan Update with kick-off events involving staff from all City departments. The project team conveyed its intention to create a General Plan that guides decision-making in all realms of local government, including public safety, development review, capital improvements programming, operations and maintenance, property management, economic development, educational and recreational programs, and community engagement.

In response to restrictions on public gatherings occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, the project team devised a multifaceted community engagement process that has involved a project webpage, email blasts, remote community meetings, online surveys, social media posts, direct outreach to community groups, and email and telephone correspondence with community members, subject matter experts, and representatives of other public agencies.

## **PROJECTION DESCRIPTION**

The Community Vision, Organizing Themes, and Guiding Principles identify key issues and priorities that have emerged through community engagement, technical assessment, interdisciplinary staff dialogue, and analysis of relevant state and regional priorities.

The Community Vision describes in broad terms how the City will continue to evolve over the next several decades to realize its potential as a prosperous, vibrant, sustainable, and welcoming community that plays an important role in shaping the future of the San Diego region. The Vision is not a regulatory document, but will inform the drafting of the General Plan Update documents.

The Organizing Themes provide a framework for the Community Vision, highlighting key community values and priorities as well as state-prescribed General Plan topic areas. These themes establish the structure of the General Plan, link the updated General Plan elements to related long-range planning documents, and provide a vocabulary for ongoing dialogue on the City's future.

The Guiding Principles speak to how the City will realize the Community Vision, identifying high-level objectives and providing context that relates the Organizing Themes to the City's history, existing conditions, and current issues.

The Community Vision, Organizing Themes, and Guiding Principles are supported by background information that emphasizes the City's uniqueness, identifies key community assets and challenges, and provides an empirical basis for updated goals, policies, and actions.

The Community Vision, Organizing Themes, and Guiding Principles do not constitute a final product but rather an interim step toward achieving community consensus on the course the City should chart in the years ahead.

The matrix below illustrates how the Guiding Principles nest under the Organizing Themes and where key topics/issues will be addressed. To demonstrate how all components of the General Plan come together to form a cohesive whole, the matrix includes the already-adopted Housing Element, EDE, and ECAE.

**TABLE 1: Organization of General Plan Elements**

<b>Organizing Theme</b>	<b>Guiding Principles</b>	<b>Key Topics/Issues</b>
Remarkable Community	Sense of Place Neighborhood Character Active Transportation	Neighborhood Character Public Spaces Scenic Views Historic Resources
Efficient and Compatible Land Use	Land Use Efficiency Housing Opportunities Employment-Oriented Uses	Land Use Designations Building Scale and Form Mixed-Use Design Parking Edge Conditions/Buffers Home Occupations
Physical, Social, and Digital Connections	Mobility Options Community-Building Activities Digital Access	Complete Streets Transit Access Ped and Bike Facilities Evacuation Routes Public Events Smart City Technologies
Vital and Sustainable Resources	Natural Resource Preservation Community Resource Stewardship GHG Emissions Reduction	Sensitive Habitat Farmland Water Resources Community Facilities Climate Action
Safe and Resilient Environment	Hazard Risk Mitigation Safe and Secure Public Spaces	Natural Hazards Human-Induced Hazards Climate Adaptation Terrorism and Cyber Threats CPTED
Healthy, Livable, and Equitable Community	Healthy Environment Noise Mitigation Community Facilities/Services Equal Access	Air Quality Recreational Opportunities Access to Goods and Services Public Services Environmental Justice Social Equity
Housing*	Regional Fair Share Equal Opportunity Sustainable Land Use Patterns	Housing Sites Regulatory Constraints Special Needs Housing Housing Programs
Economic Development	Diverse Local Economy Workforce Readiness Sub-Regional Coordination	Industrial Land Inventory Access to Employment Areas Housing
Energy and Climate Action	Smart Growth Renewable Energy Zero Waste	VMT Reduction Green Building Urban Forestry Sustainable Consumption

\*The Housing Element is a unique component of the General Plan, in that it is subject to more prescriptive state requirements, including a specific deadline for local adoption. The City recently adopted an updated Housing Element for the Sixth Housing Element Cycle.

## **ANALYSIS**

The second phase of the City's General Plan Update is a multifaceted long-range planning effort that includes updates to the City's existing General Plan elements as well as the preparation of several focused planning documents – the South Morro Hills Community Plan, the Smart and Sustainable Corridors Plan, the Active Transportation Plan, and the Trails Master Plan. Together, these documents will depict how the City will accommodate growth and change in a manner consistent with community values.

Intended to further inclusive dialogue on the kind of community Oceanside aspires to become over the next several decades, the Community Vision, Organizing Themes, and Guiding Principles signal the general direction the project team is heading with the General Plan Update. Public workshops with the Planning Commission and City Council provide an opportunity for community members and decision-makers to offer course corrections, raise additional issues that they believe merit consideration, and suggest specific goals, policies, and actions that can be incorporated into the updated General Plan and companion planning documents.

### ***Community Input***

As noted above, the project team has conducted extensive public outreach. Written summaries and recordings of public input received at a wide range of community forums are posted on the project webpage, [onwardoceanside.com](http://onwardoceanside.com). The most prevalent concerns and aspirations shared by community members are listed below.

1. The safety and security of public spaces should be improved.
2. Growth should be focused in our commercial corridors, with the integrity of existing single-family neighborhoods protected.
3. Remaining open space and natural habitat should be protected, and the ecological, recreational, and aesthetic value of the City's east-west waterways should be enhanced.
4. Farmland should be preserved, and methods for sustaining the economic viability of farming should be explored.
5. New housing should provide for all households across the income spectrum.
6. Traffic safety in residential areas should be assured.
7. Active transportation facilities should be expanded.
8. Parks and recreational facilities should be upgraded, and access to these resources should be improved.
9. The visual quality of public spaces should be enhanced.
10. The City should do its part to mitigate climate change, while adapting to its effects.
11. More resources should be devoted to addressing homelessness and its impacts on the community.



## **Technical Studies**

The project team prepared a series of technical studies on the local economy, land use and community resources, mobility, environmental resources, and those areas that will be governed by the Smart and Sustainable Corridors Specific Plan (i.e., segments of Mission Avenue, Oceanside Boulevard, and Vista Way outside of the Downtown District and Coast Highway Incentive District). These technical studies highlight existing conditions and trends that warrant updated goals, policies, and actions. Some of the key findings of these studies are listed below.

1. Demand for housing across the income spectrum will remain strong.
2. While demand for office and retail space is expected to remain relatively weak, demand for industrial and “flex” space will continue to be strong. These projections indicate that the City has a surplus of commercial zoning and a deficit of industrial zoning.
3. Non-residential buildings in Oceanside have an average floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.26, with 93 percent of the existing sites accommodating an FAR below 0.50.
4. Healthcare, retail, hospitality, and educational services together constitute more than 50 percent of the City’s employment base.
5. Approximately 2,200 licensed home-based businesses are currently operating in Oceanside.
6. Forty-four percent of the City’s total land area is occupied by residential uses, with single-family housing comprising 64 percent of the City’s total housing stock.
7. The average existing residential density in Oceanside is approximately 8.7 units per acre.
8. Housing costs for nearly 60 percent of renting households exceed 30 percent of gross household income.
9. Current residential market values and market rents do not support the development costs associated with higher-density construction and structured parking, in addition to the acquisition costs associated with existing improved properties.
10. Nearly 80 percent of Oceanside commuters drive to work alone. Only three percent of the City’s workforce regularly commute via public transit.
11. The City’s pedestrian network scores relatively low on the Pedestrian Environment Quality Evaluation (PEQE), which evaluates pedestrian conditions along roadway segments and at crossing locations.
12. “Bikeshed” areas around several Sprinter stations score low on assessments that measure connectivity, bicycle facility quality, and cyclists’ stress levels.
13. Oceanside has higher rates of diabetes, obesity, food insecurity and other health risk factors than the regional average.
14. Since 2005, water usage in Oceanside has been declining on a per capita basis.
15. The California Natural Diversity Database shows 26 special status plant species and 32 special status wildlife species occurring in Oceanside.
16. At present, library facilities do not meet square footage and staffing levels established in the Community Facilities Element (1990).
17. It has become increasingly difficult for public safety services to meet the City’s response time standard within certain areas of the City.
18. In some neighborhoods, household internet access is well below the regional average.

These technical studies are posted to the project webpage.

### ***Organizing Themes and Guiding Principles***

The project team has identified six organizing themes, each of which serves as the title of a separate General Plan element. These themes encompass state-mandated General Plan topics (e.g., environmental justice, land use, circulation, conservation, open space, safety, noise) as well as the key priorities expressed by community members. Organizing the General Plan around these themes responds more directly to the unique needs of the Oceanside community, identifies issues in more intuitive terms, reduces redundancy, and provides a common vocabulary for public discourse and decision-making.

- **“Remarkable Community”** evokes Oceanside’s unique, character-defining features that attract residents, employers, and visitors to the City, enhance the City’s brand, and instill civic pride. Highlighting key assets, enhancing visual quality, creating a strong sense of place, and preserving neighborhood character will help to render Oceanside an even more remarkable community.
- **“Efficient and Compatible Land Use”** speaks to how land use is organized throughout Oceanside and how, going forward, the City can promote higher and better use of its increasingly limited land resources, minimize incompatibilities, and foster synergies between different land uses. Facilitating mixed-use in our corridors and high-employment industrial activity will be key to achieving greater land use efficiency.
- **“Physical, Social, and Digital Connections”** acknowledges the many ways in which Oceansiders are linked to one another and, in turn, how the Oceanside community is connected to the San Diego region and rest of the world. This theme focuses on mobility options, community-building resources, and digital access.
- **“Vital and Sustainable Resources”** emphasizes responsible stewardship of the City’s open space and natural habitat, farmland, water resources, community facilities, historic resources, and other key assets. The fundamental goal promulgated under this theme is the preservation of environmental and community resources for future generations of Oceansiders.
- **“Safe and Resilient Environment”** brings attention to both natural and human-induced hazards and how risks associated with these hazards can be mitigated. The community has expressed particular concern about the increasing threat of wildfire, sea level rise, and riverine flooding. State laws calls upon local jurisdictions to consider and address how such threats are exacerbated by climate change.
- **“Healthy, Livable, and Equitable Community”** highlights the connections between conditions in the built environment and public health outcomes, with emphasis on the concepts of environmental justice and social equity. This theme focuses on how the City can assist all residents in living active, healthy, and fulfilling lives.

### ***Project Alternatives***

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that Environmental Impact Reports consider alternatives that achieve the fundamental objectives of projects. The Community Vision, Organizing Themes, and Guiding Principles provide a basis for exploring project alternatives and their respective environmental impacts. Consideration of project alternatives will provide additional opportunities for public input. For discussion purposes, the project team offers the following initial ideas for project alternatives:

1. Accommodating growth primarily through infill and redevelopment in the City's major commercial corridors, in keeping with the Smart and Sustainable Corridors Specific Plan; preserving farmland through supplemental income and clustered housing and transfer of development rights, as outlined in the South Morro Hills Community Plan
2. Accommodating growth primarily through infill and redevelopment in the City's major commercial corridors, in keeping with the Smart and Sustainable Corridors Specific Plan; maintaining the status quo in South Morro Hills
3. Accommodating growth primarily through densification of existing residential areas (considered primarily in light of proposed state legislation that would require local jurisdictions to allow higher-density development in single-family zoning districts)
4. No project, as required under CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(1)

The project team welcomes input from the Planning Commission and community members on these and other potential project alternatives.

### **NEXT STEPS AND SCHEDULE**

Informed by Planning Commission, City Council, and community input, the project team will begin to formalize project alternatives that will be made available for public review and comment in the fall of this year. From these alternatives, a preferred plan will be selected through public meetings with the Planning Commission and the City Council. The preferred plan will be developed into a high-level Draft Land Use and Mobility Plan, which will be brought forward for a Planning Commission recommendation and formal action by the City Council. The project team anticipates bringing the Draft Land Use and Mobility Plan forward in the spring of 2022.

Due to a number of factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the amount of staff time and effort thus far devoted to the South Morro Hills Community Plan and the Housing Element Update, changes in project scope, and delays in the preparation of an updated regional traffic model, the second phase of the General Plan Update will likely not come forward for final adoption until the spring of 2023.

### **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

Legal notice of this public hearing was published in the North County Times. Email notice was sent to the project interested parties list. A press release was distributed to media outlets. Announcements were posted to the City's webpage and social media accounts.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff seeks Planning Commission input on the Draft Community Vision, Organizing Themes, and Guiding Principles, as well as potential project alternatives for the second phase of the City's General Plan Update.

PREPARED BY:



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SUBMITTED BY:



Jeff Hunt  
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ML/RC/fil

Attachments:

1. Draft Community Vision, Organizing Themes, and Guiding Principles (Online)
2. Community Vision Flyer (Online)