*San Diego’s Certification Program for Sustainable, Transit-Oriented Communities*

**About the Circulate Mobility Certification**

The Circulate Mobility Certification provides a review process for neighborhood level land use plans that demonstrate a commitment to creating, preserving and enhancing sustainable communities that provide mobility choices in the San Diego region.

Neighborhood-level residential, commercial, or mixed-use plans (“Plans”) proposed by either the public or private sector are eligible for consideration. These can be small community plans, specific plans, transit area plans, etc., that contemplate more than one building or project.

The Circulate Mobility Certification panel, a coalition of members with expertise in the areas of sustainable transit-oriented development, will independently evaluate each proposed Plan for certification. This holistic approach will provide a Plan with recognition from the Circulate Mobility Certification, which will certify that the Plan is an exemplary model of sustainable, transit-oriented communities.

A Circulate Mobility Certification acknowledges a Plan which demonstrates a measureable commitment to maximizing the transportation and land use connection. A Plan will demonstrate a focus on increasing mobility choices, reducing single occupancy vehicular trips, and enhancing overall connectivity in the community.

**Benefits of the Circulate Mobility Certification**

The goal of Circulate San Diego’s certification program is to inform regulators, public officials, citizen groups, and other agencies of the advantages sustainable transit-oriented communities and smart growth projects bring to the region. A Circulate Mobility Certification will include:

* A formal certification letter from Circulate San Diego that an applicant can provide to local authorities, community groups and elected officials demonstrating independent recognition of the sustainable transit-oriented characteristics and smart growth qualities of the proposed Plan.
* Permission to use the Circulate Mobility Certification “seal” on websites or any other communications signifying certification.
* Publicity and marketing through press releases, web site summaries, social media and recognition at Circulate San Diego events.
* Up to 15 hours of Circulate San Diego staff time to provide testimony at noticed public meetings or hearings, i.e. City Council, Planning Commission, or Community Planning Groups, explaining the certification program and why the proposed plan qualified. Direct communications with decision-makers to support certified projects by Circulate San Diego staff will only occur during noticed public meetings.
	+ Testimony will depend on staff availability.
	+ Additional support from Circulate San Diego staff can be provided to promote a plan that receives the Circulate Mobility Certification, on an hourly basis through a consulting agreement. Such support is only available to Plans after they have received endorsement by the Circulate Mobility Certification independent review panel.

**No Risk Application**

Applicants whose Plans are not certified will be notified of this decision in the strictest confidence. This is a no-risk process for the applicant regardless of the panel’s decision.

**Application Process**

Plans are eligible for consideration if they are, or shortly will be, under review for land-use approval. Plans that have already been approved are also eligible to apply.

All potential applicants should contact Circulate San Diego Policy Director Maya Rosas via email at mrosas@circulatesd.org or by telephone at 619.544.9255 ext 301, prior to submitting an application. An application fee of $7,500 will be assessed for each Plan application. Application fees are non-refundable.

Plan materials such as visuals, drawings, plans, specifications, digital graphics and other items will be required, and the applicant will have an opportunity to present the Plan to the Circulate Mobility Certification panel. Plans will then be evaluated by the panel, consisting of professionals with expertise in smart growth planning and sustainable transit-oriented development disciplines.

Note that the payment of an application fee for the Mobility Certification for a plan located in the City of San Diego may require the applicant to file as an “Expenditure Lobbyist.” Details on those disclosure requirements are available on the [City of San Diego’s Ethics Commission website](https://www.sandiego.gov/ethics/documents/lobbyists).

**Material Submission**

In order for the Circulate Mobility Certification panel to efficiently and fairly review a Plan, the following material should be submitted with the application:

1. **Cover letter** (optional) explaining how the Plan meets the goals of the certification program and enhances the community, including reference to any potential bonus criteria.
2. **Plan data sheet** with site location map, size of site, total units, units per acre or FAR, land use designation, zoning for site, density limit for site, plan description (specifications on residential sq. ft., commercial sq. ft., etc.)
3. **Plan site plan and elevation map** showing building locations, parking, walkways, landscaping, and open space amenities
4. **Vicinity map** showing proximity to transit options, access routes to transit stops, location of nearest employment center(s), proximity to shopping and services to meet daily needs, proximity to open space and/or recreational space
5. **Transportation schedule** of accessible transit options
6. **Transportation Demand Management (TDM)** plan or strategies (shared parking, carpool and/or vanpool program, etc.)
7. **Parking Study** or at a minimum the parking requirement for the area and planned parking space additions
8. **Visual simulations,** conceptual drawings, or renderings showing structures, facilities, walkways, bicycle paths, site lighting, landscaping, etc., including exterior elevations from the street
9. **Completed Circulate Mobility Certification application**

**Application Instructions**

To earn the Circulate Mobility Certification, a Plan must meet all of the below criteria:

* Be scored by the panel as meeting the stated intent of all three of the “Prerequisite Questions.”
* Meet the stated intent of all four “Qualitative Questions.”
* Receive at least 9 points, based on the “Sub-Criteria” and the receipt of “Bonus Points.”

**Application Form**

*Instructions: Please complete this form in its entirety and e-mail this document along with the additional requested materials to* *mrosas@circulatesd.org**.*

Plan Name and developer: **Click here to enter text.**

Plan Location: **Click here to enter text.**

Applicant’s Contact Name: **Click here to enter text.**

Applicant’s Contact Email: **Click here to enter text.**

Applicant’s Contact Phone: **Click here to enter text.**

Plan Size – Permissible Number of Residential Units: **Click here to enter text.**

Plan Size – Permissible Square Feet of Non-Residential Space: **Click here to enter text.**

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the certification of development plans. Please attach documentation and explain in the provided text boxes below how the plan meets the intent of the criteria, specifically addressing the corresponding sub-questions:

**Prerequisite Questions:**

These Prerequisite Questions must be answered in the affirmative. If the plan does not meet the intent of these questions, then they cannot be certified.

1. ***Access to Transit:***

Is at least 75 percent of the plan area within one-half mile and safely accessible by both bicyclists and pedestrians to a high performing transit stop?

1. A high performing transit stop means either a rail stop, or an intersection of at least two bus lines with at least 15 minute headways during peak periods.

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1. ***VMT – AB 743 Thresholds:***

Will the plan result in VMT that is the lesser of either:

1. Equal to or lower than the VMT threshold recommended by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research in the current version of the SB 743 implementation guidelines, or
2. Equal or lower than the established VMT CEQA threshold in the plan’s relevant jurisdiction.

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**Qualitative Questions:**

The Qualitative Questions will be reviewed according to the below rules:

* 1. A plan must meet the stated intent of all four Qualitative Questions. To meet the stated intent of a Qualitative Question, a plan must achieve at least half of the Sub-Criteria associated with that question.
	2. A plan must receive at least 9 points, based on the Sub-Criteria, and the receipt of Bonus Points.
1. Satisfying any Sub-Criteria of a Qualitative Question is worth one point.
2. Up to four Bonus Points may be awarded by the review committee for exemplary plans with characteristics not otherwise considered by the Sub-Criteria.

***Qualitative Question 1 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Network:*** *(Satisfying the Sub-Criteria for this question is worth one point each.)*

1.1) Does the plan provide for sufficient bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

1.2) Does the plan contemplate no road widening, or other infrastructure changes that are dangerous for bicyclists and pedestrians?

1.3) Does the plan contemplate bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure separated from vehicular traffic within the plan area and connecting to the outside community?

1.4) Does the plan accommodate bicycle and pedestrian connections and safety outside of the plan area?

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***Qualitative Question 2 - Mixed Use Opportunities:*** *(Satisfying the Sub-Criteria for this question is worth one point each.)*

2.1) Does the plan allow for the adequate and appropriate incorporation of housing, retail, commercial, or community services within the plan area or within walking or bicycling distance?

2.2) Does the plan provide live-work opportunities either in the plan area or within walking or bicycling distance?

2.3) Does the plan adequately incorporate open spaces, plaza, parks, or playgrounds either within the plan area, or within walking or bicycling distance?

2.4) Does the plan provide a mix of housing options either within the plan area or within walking or bicycling distance?

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***Qualitative Question 3 - Density and Smart Growth Techniques:*** *(Satisfying the Sub-Criteria for this question is worth one point each.)*

3.1) Does the plan implement density and smart growth techniques that can support a mix of uses in the neighborhood?

3.2) Does the plan increase development capacity beyond currently adopted plans?

3.3) Does the plan require the absolute minimum additional parking spaces?

3.4) Does the plan utilize other smart growth techniques?

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***Qualitative Question 4 - Community Character:*** *(Satisfying the Sub-Criteria for this question is worth one point each.)*

4.1) Does the plan require building(s) pattern, scale, and massing appropriate to its surrounding community patterns, either currently or in consideration of projected growth?

4.2) Does the plan provide convenient access to arts, culture, recreation, parks, green space, and/or civic engagement opportunities as well as authentic experiences that are long-term and sustainable?

4.3) Does the plan have potential to support local, small businesses within or near the planned area?

4.4) Do the plan’s design standards fit into the neighborhood context?

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***Qualitative Question - Bonus Points:***

5.1) There are a wide variety of concepts and programs that support sustainable plans and encourage the use of transit and non-car modes. The Circulate Mobility Certification panel is aware that the topics listed above do not cover them all. The Bonus Points section provides an opportunity to receive recognition for other elements that have been incorporated into the plans to create sustainable communities, support transit, and reduce VMT.

5.2) Up to four Bonus Points can be awarded, to meet the 13 minimum points in the application. Bonus Points can be awarded at the discretion of the review committee for features including but not limited to:

* Providing affordable housing or a range of housing options,
* Mechanism to encourage the construction of subsidized or middle income affordable homes,
* Reducing parking requirements, or incentivizing the construction of fewer parking spaces,
* Implementing traffic reduction strategies or alternative methods for reducing VMT,
* Incorporating opportunities for active transportation,
* Incorporating convenient neighborhood and community services,
* Creating pedestrian-friendly gathering spaces or other types of placemaking,
* Plans for accommodating future transit service, or
* Design documents that demonstrate specific accommodations such as dedicated bus lanes for future transit routes.

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