

The Circulate “Plan” Mobility Certification

Application and Instructions



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](#).

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: **SDSU Mission Valley Campus; San Diego State University**

Plan Location: **Mission Valley, San Diego, California**

Applicant's Contact Name:

Applicant's Contact Email

Applicant's Contact Phone:

Plan Size – Permissible Number of Residential Units: **4,600**

Plan Size – Permissible Square Feet of Non-Residential Space: **2,749,000 GSF**

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?

- a) 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.

Yes, the entire site is within one-half mile of three stops on the MTS green line: Fenton Parkway, Mission San Diego and the Stadium Stations (Figure 4). The green line is a trolley that runs every 15 minutes during peak periods (Figures 5a and 5b). The site design also enables two potential alignments of the proposed MTS Purple line (Figure 4). All major streets in the project (including those leading to and from the Stadium Station) will have bike and pedestrian facilities, and four miles of hike and bike trails will connect the existing and planned river trail to the developed area of the site, loop around the

edge of the developed area, and connect to the street network. New and improved street connections to Fenton Parkway and Rancho Mission Road from the site will improve access to the Fenton Parkway and Mission San Diego stations. (See figure 9a).

The site is served by two bus routes with stops within ½ mile of the future campus. Route 14 stops at two locations: Rancho Mission Road & Ward Road (approximately 1,300 feet from the project site boundary) and at Rancho Mission Road & San Diego Mission Road (approximately 1,650 feet from the project site boundary). Route 18 stops at one location: Camino del Rio N & Ward Road in the westbound direction (approximately 1,900 feet from the project site boundary). Three additional routes, Route 11, Route 60 and Route 235 travel near the campus edges, including along Interstate 15, but do not currently have stops within ½ mile. Bus route maps and timetables can be found in Figures 5b through 5g.

The plan includes a multimodal transit plaza between the stadium trolley station and the end of Street D that provides staging space for two busses and adequate turn around space to allow bus routes to come into and layover on the campus. SDSU will continue to work with MTS and SANDAG to discuss future bus routes, alignments and connections as the campus is built out and occupied.

2) VMT – AB 743 Thresholds:

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

- a) 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
- b) Equal or lower than the established VMT CEQA threshold in the plan’s relevant jurisdiction.

Yes, the project will result in a VMT reduction of 25.7%. The level impact threshold for projects like the SDSU Mission Valley Campus Master Plan (campus mixed-use) is a project-generated VMT per service population that is 15% below the existing regional, sub-regional or Citywide VMT per service population. The 2012 baseline for this project is 34.34 VMT per service population. At full build out, this project will result in A VMT of 25.52 VMT per service population, a reduction of 25.7% which exceeds the threshold of 15%. The reduction in VMT results from project design features and a robust TDM program.

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.
 - a) Satisfying any Sub-Criteria of a Qualitative Question is worth one point.
 - b) 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?

1.1 Yes. The plan provides a total of 12.7 linear miles of pedestrian, bicycle or shared pedestrian/bike trail, paths, sidewalks and on-street facilities. As a comparison, the plan provides just under 4 linear miles of streets. Nearly all of these roadways will include a sidewalk or path on both sides of the street. For the few segments with a walking facility on only one side, appropriate street crossings treatments will be provided within a reasonable walking distance. The segments without walks on both sides include portions of Street A where steep grade on the west side prevents a sidewalk on the west side, Street 3 West; which is actually at the lower parking level below the concourse of the stadium and "ground level" of the campus; and the north side of Street 6 at the northeast corner which does not have any development on the north side. Pedestrian crossing treatments include traffic signals, raised crosswalks, or stop signs to delineate right of way. See figures 9a through 9d for location of bike and pedestrian facilities and street sections illustrating these facilities. Specific information regarding bicycle and pedestrian facilities is outlined below:

- *Just under two miles of separated community hike and bike loop that circumnavigates the perimeter of the campus. Where this trail uses abuts streets, extra wide sidewalks (17 to 18 feet clear) are provided with lanes indicated for bikes and pedestrians. See figure 9c for street sections illustrating the trail abutting a street.*
- *Just under one mile of San Diego River Trail – a multi-use trail that connects to existing and future sections of the trail envisioned in the San Diego River Park Master Plan.*

- *Just under one mile of other multi-use trails connecting park areas to the campus and connecting the river trail to the existing multi-use trail along Murphy Canyon Creek north of the site.*
- *Almost three miles of pedestrian paths and trails in the park and open space areas. These will be a mix of hard surface and decomposed granite.*
- *One and a half miles of dedicated on-street bike lanes (See figures 9b. and 9d. for Street Sections showing proposed bike lane configurations)*
- *Five miles of sidewalk along campus streets, separated by rows of trees. See figures 9b, 9c and 9d for examples of sidewalks.*

1.2 The plan does include traffic mitigations which widen adjacent roads. Existing bike facilities and sidewalks will be maintained or improved as part of these improvements. For Example, the existing protected bike lanes on the Mission Village Drive overpass over Friars Road would be maintained with the proposed widening of the overpass, and they would connect to bike lanes on Street D through the center of the site. The existing bike lanes on Friars Road would also be maintained

1.3 Yes. The plan includes over 4 miles of separated, dedicated multi-use hike and bike trails which connect to existing and planned river trails and the existing trail along Murphy Canyon Creek to the north of the site.

1.4 Yes. The plan provides a variety of connections to existing or planned, future bike and pedestrian facilities and destination. The network of streets and paths on site will provide a number of alternative, lower-traffic east west and north south bike and pedestrian connections.

Specific examples of improved connections to bicycle facilities outside the plan area are listed below:

- *Bike Lanes on Street D through the center of the site will connect to existing protected bike lanes on the Mission Village Drive overpass over Friars Road.*
- *A new connection to existing bike lanes on Friars Road will be provided by the signalized intersection at Street A.*
- *A new on-site multi-use trail along the northern and eastern edges of the site (connecting to San Diego and Rancho Mission Roads) will provide a safer and lower stress option for cyclists traveling from west of Street A to east of I-15.*
- *Another on-site multi-use trail along the southern edge of the site will provide a critical missing link between the San Diego River Trail and the path parallel to I-15/Murphy Canyon Creek.*

- *The new on-site multi-use path parallel to I-15/Murphy Canyon Creek will connect to an existing north/south trail that currently ends north of the site.*
- *The proposed site connection to Fenton Parkway provides a convenient bikeable connection to the shops and restaurants at Fenton Marketplace, improving the link between the Rio San Diego neighborhood and the Rancho Mission Road neighborhood east of I-15.*
- *The site connection to Rancho Mission Road will provide a bikeable route to the bus stops along Rancho Mission Road and Camino del Rio North.*

Specific examples of improved pedestrian connections to destinations outside the plan area are listed below:

- *The dense and extensive network of on-site pedestrian facilities will provide new pedestrian connections parallel to the Friars Road environment, enhancing pedestrian connectivity to adjacent sites and neighborhoods.*
- *The proposed site connection to Fenton Parkway will provide an additional walkable connection to the shops and restaurants at Fenton Marketplace, as well as the low-volume east-west connection provided by Rio San Diego Drive. This will improve the pedestrian link between the existing neighborhoods along Rancho Mission Road and Fenton Marketplace area. This new connection will be a substantial improvement over the current walking path through the Friars Road/I-15 interchange.*
- *The site connection to Rancho Mission Road will provide a walkable route to the bus stops along Rancho Mission Road.*

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?

2.1 Yes. The campus plan includes a mix of residential (4,600 units); community serving retail (95,000 GSF) and research/innovation space (1.6 M GSF) within a half mile radius of

each other and of a green line trolley stop. The retail use will include a 12,000 SF space suitable for a grocery store.

2.2 Yes. The campus plan includes 1.6 M GSF of research and innovation space that will include office and research space with increasing university presence over time within ½ mile of 4,600 units of housing. The 95,000 GSF of retail space, 400 hotel rooms and associated conference/meeting space will provide additional employment opportunities also within ½ mile of the housing. 10% of the housing will be affordable built on site.

2.3 Yes. The plan provides over 80 acres of parks, open space, plazas, and playgrounds on site within ½ mile of the other uses. This open space includes playgrounds, tot lots, playing fields, hard surface recreation (basketball courts, etc.) natural areas with native plants that provide habitat, trails, malls, and plazas for community events such as fairs and farmer's markets.

2.4 Yes. The plan provides 4,600 units of housing including 10% affordable units on site. We anticipate that this will be a mix of housing oriented toward students, faculty/staff, and the larger community.

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?

3.1 Yes. The campus plan significantly increases density on the site and includes a mix of residential, retail, hotel, research and innovation, entertainment (the stadium) and recreational uses within a half mile radius of each other and the three green line trolley stations.

3.2 Yes. The plan significantly increases density over the previous Mission Valley Community plan from 1984 that was in place at the beginning of the planning process, but the density is in line with the very recently approved Mission Valley Community Plan Update, which was adopted in September 2019.

3.3 Yes. The plan reduces the parking spaces on the site from the existing 18,870 spaces to 13,192 with far more density. The plan assumes a ratio of 1.23 spaces per unit for the housing (which is 17% lower than the average number of spaces in existing Mission Valley

housing). However, this is a maximum and the university will support developers who wish to use the new city legislation to provide fewer parking spaces. 5,065 spaces are provided for 1.6 M GSF of office/research/innovation/academic space which equates to 3.2 spaces per 1,000 SF. These 5,065 spaces will be shared with the stadium for events, with an additional 1,140 spaces provided for capacity events on recreation fields to the west of the stadium. This equates to 1 space per 5.6 seats which compares to 1 per 4 seats provided for the existing stadium. 485 spaces are shared for 400 beds of hotel and 40,000 SF of conference use. 840 on street parking spaces are also planned which would be metered on a similar schedule to other city metered parking to encourage quick turnover.

3.4 As mentioned above, the campus plan provides a **mix of land uses** including housing, retail, employment, education and entertainment within a ½ mile walking radius. The buildings are **designed to be compact** on their sites – most will be 3 to 6 stories – a height which maintains a human scale but makes efficient use of the land. The plan provides a **range of housing opportunities and choices**, including 10% affordable units on site. The plan creates a **walkable**, urban neighborhood where residents can learn, work, live and play within a compact area, connected by sidewalks, paths and paseos. The plan was designed to create a **distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place**. All streets have views to the river, river park and the surrounding hills to connect the community to its environment. The connected courtyards in the campus area will provide a distinctively collegiate feel, and the river park will be a unique community asset which belongs to all. The plan **preserves the existing open space corridors and critical environmental areas** along the San Diego River and Murphy Canyon creek and creates over 80 acres of new open space on a site that is currently an asphalt parking lot. The plan **strengthens the existing Mission Valley communities** by adding parkland, providing additional housing, employment and neighborhood commercial opportunities. The parkland provided more than makes up for existing deficits in Mission Valley and Grantville, in addition to providing parks for the housing on site. The need for convenience retail, particularly a grocery store in this part of Mission Valley was noted in the recent community plan updated. The plan provides a **variety of transportation choices** through improved pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular connections to the site and by improving connections to the existing trolley station. In addition, the plan enables and supports ride share, motorized personal mobility devices and potential future bus and trolley routes. SDSU has **encouraged community and stakeholder input** throughout the process. The plan has been shared with over 100 community and campus organizations. River Park and Community Advisory Groups have been formed and are actively influencing design improvements to the plan.

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?

4.1 Yes. The campus plan proposes that the research/innovation buildings will be 3 to 6 stories in height, and the plan achieves 4,600 units of housing with only 3 to 6 story buildings, but provides an option for three to five high rise sites (18 to 20 stories) should these prove economically viable and affordable. The hotel will also be a high rise, which may be up to 24 stories. This is consistent with the existing context of Mission Valley, which is mid-rise residential punctuated by individual high rises, and is similar to the scale and density envisioned in the Mission Valley Community Plan Update.

4.2 Yes. The plan provides over 80 acres of open space with a variety of characteristics – active, passive, natural, hard surface, which will be suitable for gatherings and events large and small as well as individual contemplation or small group interaction. The stadium will provide a venue for sports, concerts and other community events. The research and innovation district will provide opportunities for showcasing research projects, student work and other scholarly activities as well as community outreach on academic topics. The conference space in the hotel will provide a venue for indoor community events. The arts will be represented through SDSU's Arts Alive program which features public art and performances.

4.3 Yes. The retail spaces will be generally small in scale which will support local food service and convenience retail businesses. A number of outdoor spaces with a more urban character will support farmer's markets, fairs, food trucks, and festivals.

4.4 Mission Valley does not really have a consistent architectural context but the design guidelines for the project emphasize a campus feel with connected quadrangles and courtyards.

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.

The plan provides a range of housing options including 10% affordable housing to be built on site.

By developing a plan that achieves the 4,600 units without requiring high rise construction the plan provides flexibility to build mid-rise residential buildings, if high rises prove more costly and less affordable, allowing the housing units will serve a wider array of income levels. SDSU's intent is to develop a project that provides attainably priced housing for upper-division students, faculty, staff and others who would like to live within a diverse university village-like neighborhood.

The plan reduces parking through a number of strategies. Parking ratios are maximums and are significantly lower than standard for these types of land uses – see 3.3 above. We will support housing developers who wish to use the new city parking regulations that allow reduced or no parking in transit priority areas. The upper level of the parking

deck below the campus buildings has been designed with a flat floor and taller height to support future conversion to lab space.

Robust TDM strategies that will reduce VMT by 14.5% include the following:

Ride-sharing and Transit

- *Car Share service accommodations*
- *Ridesharing support*
- *Hotel shuttle service*
- *Transit Pass programs*

Parking Infrastructure

- *Unbundled residential parking*
- *Metered on-street parking*
- *Reduced parking supply*

Bicycle Infrastructure

- *New bicycle facilities*
- *Showers and lockers in employment areas*
- *Dedicated land for bicycle/multi-use trails*
- *Bicycle parking*
- *Electric Bike-Share accommodations*

See TDM Plan attachment for more detail.

The plan provides for active transportation with a combined 12.7 linear miles of pedestrian, bicycle or shared pedestrian and bike facilities.

The plan includes 95,000 SF of neighborhood serving commercial retail, including a space for a grocery store. A site has also been set aside for a City constructed recreation center. Within walking distance of transit.

The river park will provide a variety of active and passive recreation areas and gathering spaces including nature trails, overlooks, recreation fields, picnic areas, and an amphitheater. Beyond the park, the plan provides a variety of pedestrian friendly gathering spaces including a plaza at the trolley station to activate this area (particularly important in the first few years before a critical mass of residents occupies the site), malls and quadrangles in the research/innovation district and a stadium concourse which will be open to the public when not in use for events.

The plan accommodates two possible alignments for the planned trolley purple line – one at the east edge of the campus and one down the main street of the campus. SDSU will be a partner with the City of San Diego SANDAG and MTS in planning for future transit opportunities at the site. The plan also accommodates a multimodal transit plaza

between the trolley station and the end of Street D that provides a staging space for two busses and adequate turn around space. This will allow future bus routes to come into the site and turn around or layover. SDSU will continue to work with MTS and SANDAG to discuss future bus routes, alignments and connections as the campus is built out and occupied.

Example Application