The City of La Mesa is located in eastern San Diego County and is bordered by the City of San Diego to the north and west; the City of El Cajon to the northeast; the unincorporated communities of Valle de Oro and Spring Valley to the east; and the City of Lemon Grove to the south.

As of 2014, the City of La Mesa has an estimated population of 58,769, which is projected to increase to 78,780 by 2050 (SANDAG Regional Growth Forecast, 2010).

The City of La Mesa is governed by a five-member City Council consisting of a directly-elected Mayor and four Council members elected at-large.

The adopted Sphere of Influence of the City of La Mesa is coterminous with the City's incorporated boundary.

The City of La Mesa provides fire protection, police, and wastewater services city-wide.

Water service is provided by the Helix Water District. Trash hauling and disposal services are provided by contract with EDCO Disposal.

Note that on January 1, 2010, the Cities of La Mesa, El Cajon, and Lemon Grove entered into a joint exercise of powers agreement for management and delivery of fire protection and emergency medical services. This management team is known as Heartland Fire & Rescue.