

## E. COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES

While land use and lot sizes have a considerable impact on the rural characteristics of a community, the visual aspects of the community and the design details of the built form are also important components in preserving the rural atmosphere. In the development of the Plan, smaller lot sizes were permitted in order to preserve large tracts of contiguous open space. Although the lot sizes in the plan area are in some cases smaller than traditional estate lot sizes, the preservation of the rural character is still important and can be achieved through design standards. The development of mass produced tract homes would be inappropriate and contrary to the historical trend of development in the community and to the goal of maintaining and enhancing the rural character of the community. The following design guidelines are intended to preserve the rural character of Del Mar Mesa and encourage private developers to design projects that are compatible with the image and scale of a rural community.

**GOAL: DEVELOP THE COMMUNITY OF DEL MAR MESA AS A RURAL COMMUNITY THAT EMPHASIZES OPEN SPACES, DARK NIGHT SKIES, HIKING AND EQUESTRIAN TRAILS AND SENSITIVELY DESIGNED DEVELOPMENTS WHICH COMPLEMENT THE EXISTING TOPOGRAPHY**

The Framework Plan contains implementing principles for very low-density and Estate Residential neighborhoods. The following are several of the implementing principles that apply to Del Mar Mesa:

- Lot configuration and site design should emphasize canyons, hillsides and ridges as the visual focus points of neighborhoods. The layout of lots in these neighborhoods should adapt to existing topography and natural features, avoiding standard repetitive lot sizes and shapes.
- Develop clear pedestrian and open space linkages within and between neighborhoods.
- Streets, drives, parking and emergency vehicle access should be aligned to conform, as closely as possible, to existing grades and minimize the need for the grading of slopes. Streets and other built improvements should not greatly alter the physical and visual character of the hillside.

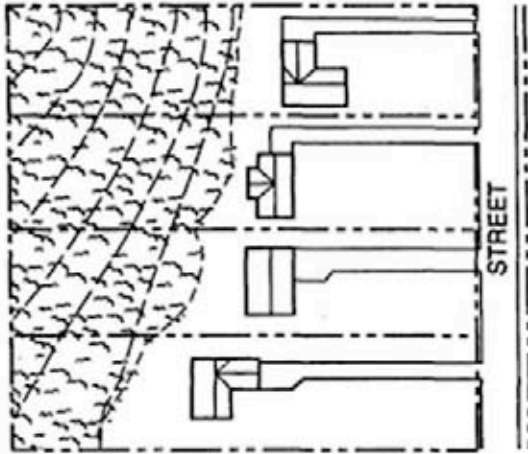
The following principles are those implementing principles which are specific to Del Mar Mesa and refine the Framework Plan principles listed above. These principles should be applied to all development projects in order to preserve the rural character of the community and develop a community consistent with this goal:

- Preserve the rural character of the community by reducing the bulk and scale of structures and integrating subdivisions into the existing topography and vegetation through the use of sensitive design and grading techniques.
- Complement the topography of Del Mar Mesa by designing structures which reflect and complement into the surrounding terrain.
- Utilize landscaping, fencing, street design and sensitive light treatments to preserve the qualities that contribute to the rural character of the community, such as the dark night skies and the open spaces.
- Preserve and enhance the recreational opportunities and promote non-motorized linkages within Del Mar Mesa and the surrounding communities by providing a system of hiking and equestrian trails in the community.

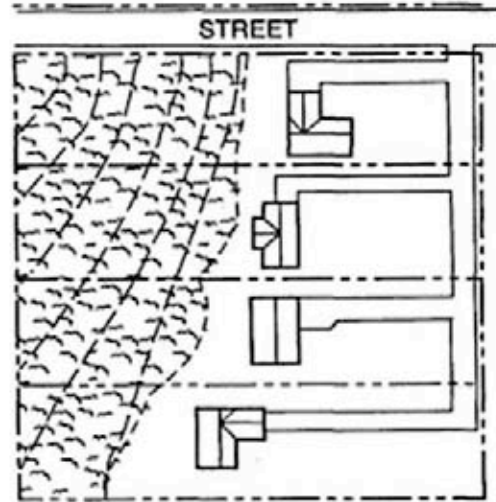
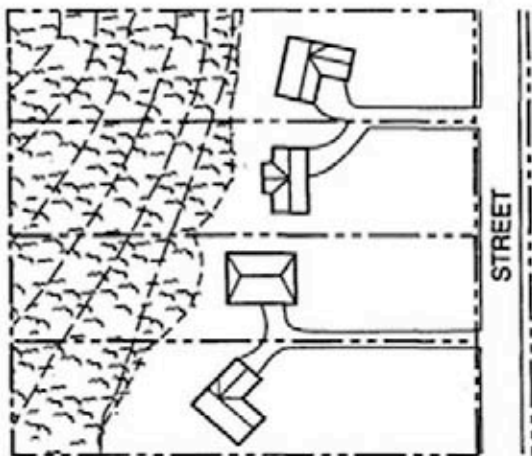
The following design guidelines and regulations which are included in this section are designed to implement these principles and to preserve the rural character of the community:

- Minimum Lot Size: 0.50 acres unless a specific lot size is specified in the Plan.
- Minimum Street Frontage: The requirement for minimum street frontage can be deviated from in order to preserve finger canyons and other topographic features.
- All residential structures shall be sited to take advantage of views and designed to blend in with the topography. The lot layout shall take advantage of the larger lots to provide a variety of orientations for the homes. The orientation of each lot shall be based upon view potential, topography, climate and exposure and relation to other homes and streets.
- Lot configuration and site design should emphasize canyons, hillsides and ridges as the visual focal points of the neighborhood. The layout of the lots and streets shall adapt to the existing topography and natural features, avoiding standard lot sizes and shapes and minimizing cut and fill.
- In order to reduce the bulk and scale of the homes, architecture should be designed to complement the surrounding vegetation and topography, taking cues from the natural features of the site rather than overwhelming and dominating these features. This may be achieved by dividing the building heights into one and two story components, varying the rooflines and wall planes, providing openings, projections, recesses and other building details. Additionally, entries, arcades, stairs, overhangs and unique, creative building shapes and angles can help to complement the surrounding vegetation and topography and create and define outdoor space. All accessory buildings and garages shall be integrated into the main home as subordinate elements which are designed with the same materials and of the same architectural style.

- The elements described above, such as varying wall planes, projections, recesses and building details, shall be provided on all elevations of each home.
- The location of the garage shall be subordinate to the main home. By reducing the visual impact of the garage, homes may be able to avoid the standard tract appearance and reduce the bulk and scale of the structures. The large lots provide the opportunity to place the garages to the rear of the homes, detached from the homes and oriented away from the street or designed to be side-loaded. Only 50 percent of the square footage for garages oriented away from and placed to the rear of the homes shall be counted towards the maximum lot coverages for each lot. All lots with over 0.50 acre of flat, graded pad area shall utilize alternative garage orientations.
- Driveways:
  - The number of driveways accessing public streets shall be kept to a minimum. However, U-shaped driveways could be accommodated that have two access points to the public street.
  - The appropriate use of shared driveways is encouraged. Where lots will access a public street, shared driveways shall be used where appropriate to minimize the number of access points to adjacent roadways (see **Figure 23**).
  - The maximum number of units served by a shared driveway shall be four.
  - Minimum shared driveway width: 16 feet with two-foot graded and stoned shoulders on both sides.
  - Paving shall be required in areas where driveway grade is in excess of six percent.
  - Maximum length of shared driveway: 1,000 feet.
  - All driveways in excess of 500 feet shall provide a turnout approved by the Fire Department.
  - Improvement of driveways with asphaltic concrete is not required. If the above improvement is not proposed, four inches of decomposed granite or suitable alternate material may be approved by the City Engineer in lieu of more durable paving on residential driveways. Shared driveways shall conform to all other driveway standards for a single driveway other than property line location.
  - PDPs that include shared driveways shall include a condition requiring a driveway maintenance agreement.



Conventional development of frontage lots with individual drives.



Use of common drives for frontage lots is encouraged.



- Landscaping:
  - Street trees should be clustered and set back various distances from the roadways, where possible, to avoid uniform design and permit a minimum six to eight foot root zone for optimal growth of large trees. The multiuse trail can meander through the public right-of-way and a six to ten foot landscape easement can be used to achieve this goal. Suggested street tree species include Pepper, Oak and Sycamore.
  - Where possible, native vegetation should be maintained. Landscape design should seek to incorporate the color palette of surrounding native vegetation. Manufactured slopes should be replanted with fire retardant native species, where possible, to control erosion.
- Fencing: The open spaces and spaciousness of the existing community contributes significantly to the rural character of Del Mar Mesa. In order to preserve this feeling of spaciousness and to protect views both to and from the open spaces that surround the development area, solid walls or fences shall not be permitted in front or street side yards except when these fences are necessary for safety reasons. Residential developments may, if fencing is necessary for safety and privacy, have open fencing in the front and street side yards of their lots. The recommended fencing design and material is four-foot post and rail. In addition to post and rail, the following is a list of other acceptable fence materials: native stone, masonry, detailed wrought iron, wood, brick. Fence heights shall not exceed four feet unless specified in the discretionary approval for the project. In the case of side yard fencing that is necessary to screen a backyard pool, a six-foot fence may be constructed of either solid, chain link or wrought iron material. All fences in the community, other than the four-foot high post and rail fence, shall be required to have landscaping that will soften and screen the full height of the fence, either in the form of non-invasive vines, trees or tall shrubs.
- Gated access: Gates shall not be permitted where their placement would preclude access to open space and trails. Gated projects shall be consistent with Council Policy 600-42, Council Policy on Gated Communities.
- Brush Management: Brush Management in Del Mar Mesa shall be consistent with citywide regulations, except in cases where more specific brush management measures are defined in the site specific development regulations located in this Plan.
- Signage: For residential developments, signage will be limited to access, litter control and educational purposes. A Comprehensive Sign Plan shall be prepared for all projects proposing signage in excess of access, traffic control, litter control and educational purposes.

- Grading Design Policies: The philosophy behind the Plan was to preserve the steep slopes and designate the flatter portions of the mesa for development. Although the areas designated for development are primarily flat, some canyons were included in the development area, particularly along the edges of the preserve area. Special care shall be taken to preserve these canyons.
- Where grading is necessary, daylight grading at the edges of the preserve is preferred. If grading is proposed adjacent to the preserve, all disturbance including cut and fill slopes, must occur wholly within the development area. Graded areas adjacent to the preserve shall be re-vegetated with native plant species.
- Grading in the community shall be minimized. Grading shall be permitted for only those areas necessary for the construction of streets and homes. Large quantities and areas of grading shall not be permitted as this type of grading is unnecessary for the development of single-family homes and is out of character in a rural community. Where grading is necessary for the placement of streets, homes and accessory uses, landform grading techniques shall be utilized in order to create only new slopes that topographically resemble the natural landforms of the surrounding area. The use of split pads is encouraged in order to accommodate accessory uses such as pools and tennis courts.
- In order to minimize the grading necessary for development, lot configuration and site design shall adapt to the existing topography and complement the natural features of the site. The created lots shall emphasize canyons, hillsides and ridges as visual focal points and avoid standard lot sizes and shapes. Existing topography and landforms, drainage courses, rock outcroppings, vegetation and views shall be incorporated into the design of lots to the maximum extent feasible.

The above grading policies shall apply to all projects proposed in Del Mar Mesa unless alternative grading policies have been established in the site-specific development regulations described in this Plan.

- Planned Development Permit

The San Diego Municipal Code allows deviations from the standard requirements with the use of a planned development permit. Although such deviations are permitted in the Del Mar Mesa community, certain deviations, such as maintaining the minimum lot size and setbacks, would negatively impact the rural character of the community.

- The minimum setbacks in the Del Mar Mesa community shall be:

Front:	25 feet
Side:	15 feet (or 30 feet between structures)
Rear:	25 feet

- The maximum lot coverage for a two-story home shall be 30 percent. The maximum lot coverage for a one-story home shall be 40 percent.
- The minimum lot size shall be 0.50 acre.

Deviations from these standards will not be permitted unless deemed appropriate for the rural character by the Planning and Development Services departments, or unless otherwise specified in the site-specific development regulations of this Plan. Consideration for deviations should be based on compatibility with surrounding topography and vegetation, surrounding lot sizes and configurations, the architecture proposed for the project and whether the requested deviation results in a project that is superior to a project that could be realized without the requested deviation.

## **F. COASTAL ELEMENT**

Portions of Del Mar Mesa are located within the Coastal Zone and are governed by the North City Local Coastal Program (LCP), adopted by the City Council and certified by the California Coastal Commission. These include areas designated Estate Residential and Resource Based Open Space in the northwest corner of the Del Mar Mesa and open space areas primarily in public ownership in the southern part of the subarea (see **Figure 5**).

The Plan, in addition to the NCFUA Framework Plan, constitutes the land use plan segment for Del Mar Mesa within the City's LCP. This Plan is intended to implement the Framework Plan and the North City LCP.

The Plan and Plan amendments and ordinances necessary to implement the Plan require certification by the California Coastal Commission in order to become effective in the Coastal Zone areas. The California Coastal Commission certified the Del Mar Mesa Specific Plan on August 13, 1997. Upon this certification, the City assumed coastal permit authority for all areas located in the Coastal Zone within the Del Mar Mesa community.