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## RESIDENTIAL

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### GOAL

Create a safe and healthy living environment and link residential development to the provision of adequate community facilities and services.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

#### Population Characteristics

- San Ysidro's population in January 1988, was 22,130 persons. Residents are predominantly Hispanic and have large families with many young children.
- The average household size is large, approximately 3.93 persons, compared with an average household size of approximately 2.73 persons in the City of San Diego (1985 San Diego County study).
- Approximately 84.1 percent of the community's population is of Hispanic origin, compared to approximately 14.9 percent in the City of San Diego.
- Roughly two out of five people in San Ysidro are under the age of 18, compared to approximately 1.5 out of five people in the City of San Diego.
- The income of most residents is low. (Low income is defined as being between 50 and 80 percent of the median income of all households.) Approximately 45.7 percent of San Ysidro households are in low-income categories, compared with only 29.1 percent of the households in the City of San Diego.
- Unemployment is high, approximately five to six percent higher than City and County averages.

#### Growth

San Ysidro has grown dramatically in recent years. The community has outpaced earlier population projections, growth rates and total number of housing units in comparison with other areas of the City and County of San Diego.

- **Population.** As of the 1980 census, the population of San Ysidro was 14,584 persons. As stated above, as of January 1, 1988, the population was 22,130 persons, already close to the 22,323 population projected for 1995 by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Series 7 Forecast.
- **Growth Rates.** The annual rate of growth in San Ysidro between 1970 and 1980 was 8.9 percent, while in the City and County of San Diego it was 2.5 percent and 3.4 percent, respectively. Although more current information is unavailable, it is probable that the present growth rate is higher than the rest of the City or County.

- **Housing Units.** From April 1980 to January 1988, the total number of housing units in San Ysidro increased from 3,618 to 5,817 units, an increase of approximately 60.7 percent (or an average annual increase of 7.6 percent). The increase in total number of housing units in the City of San Diego at this time was much lower, approximately 21.6 percent (or an average annual increase of 2.7 percent). Most of the new residential construction in San Ysidro has been multifamily development. Between 1980 and 1988, multifamily units increased by 128 percent. (See **Table 3.**)

### **Existing Land Use and Zoning**

As stated above, most of the housing units in San Ysidro are in multifamily developments. In January 1988, 60 percent of the total number of housing units in the San Ysidro community were multifamily. In comparison, 44 percent of the total number, citywide, were multifamily. (See **Table 4.**)

There are several reasons for this imbalance between the community and the City. In the last several years, plan amendments to the San Ysidro Community Plan (1974 edition) have increased the residential densities on properties totaling approximately 16 acres and have resulted in about 300 units over the original community plan forecast of roughly 4,000 total units. In addition, much of the development of multifamily housing has occurred in areas zoned and designated for commercial development. (In the City of San Diego, residential development is permitted, by right in commercially-zoned areas, at densities up to 29 units per acre.) Approximately 47 acres of commercial land has been developed with multifamily housing in this manner, resulting in an additional 1,400 housing units above the original community plan forecast. These two factors have contributed to a total of approximately 1,700 units above the original community plan forecast of about 4,000 units.

### **Existing Residential Land Use**

As of January 1989, 675.2 acres were zoned and designated for residential land use in San Ysidro. Approximately 345 acres were built out with single-family development and 261 acres with multifamily development. These acreages do not include the land east of I-805 and the railroad. Before the adoption of this Plan, this property was included in the Otay Mesa Community Plan. (See **Figure 3** for 1989, generalized existing land use and **Figure 4** for 1989, existing zoning.)

### **The Condition of the Housing Stock**

Most of the multifamily development has been low-income housing. San Ysidro has a disproportionate share: 34 percent, compared to six percent for San Diego as a whole. Low-income projects (projects targeting those people whose income is between 50 and 80 percent of the median income of all households) have tended to locate here because of:

- The low cost of land, compared with other areas of San Diego;
- The absence of community opposition at the time of construction; and
- The need for affordable housing within the community.

**TABLE 3  
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS  
San Ysidro and City of San Diego, 1970-1988**

	Number of Units			Average Annual Percentage Change		
	Apr 1970	Apr 1980	Jan 1988	1970-1980	1980-1988	1970-1988
<b>San Ysidro</b>						
Total Housing Units	1,599	3,618	5,817	12.6%	7.6%	14.7%
Single-family	1,377	2,033	2,152	4.8%	.7%	3.1%
Multifamily	222	1,585	3,665	6.1%	16.0%	86.2%
<b>City of San Diego</b>						
Total Housing Units	233,255	341,928	415,248	4.7%	2.7%	4.3%
Single-family	159,359	209,110	231,454	3.1%	1.3%	2.5%
Multifamily	73,796	132,818	183,794	8.0%	4.8%	8.3%

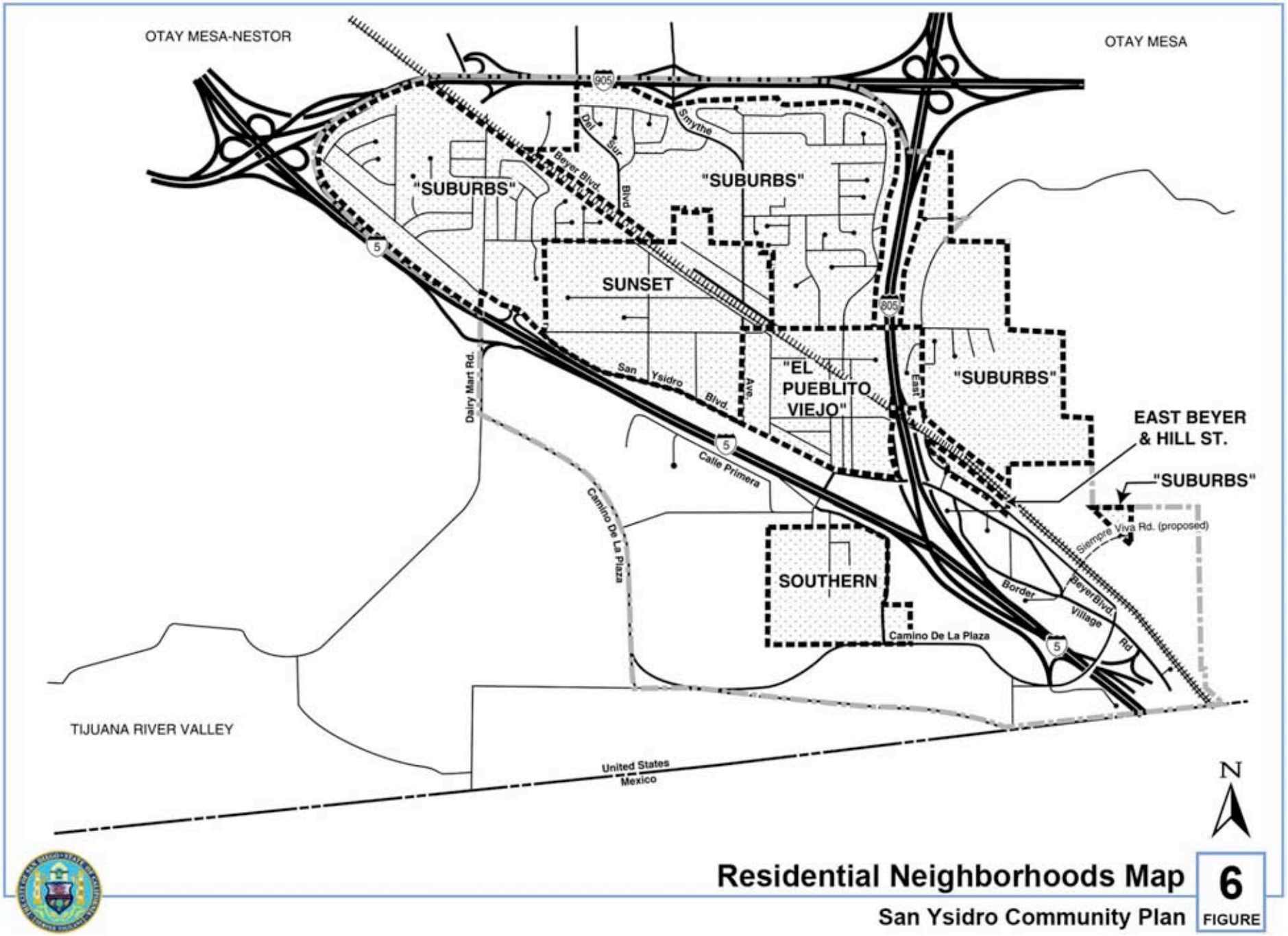
**TABLE 4  
POPULATION AND HOUSING UNITS - JANUARY 1988  
San Ysidro and City of San Diego, 1970-1988**

	Population	Single-Family	%	Multi-Family	%	Mobile Home	%	Total Housing	Household Size
<b>San Ysidro</b>	22,130	2,152	35%	3,665	60%	261	4%	6,078	3.83
<b>City of San Diego</b>	1,058,708	231,454	56%	183,794	44%	4,910	1%	415,248	2.53

Most residents believe that they have had more than their “fair share” of multifamily (usually low-income) housing and some have referred to recent development as “instant slums” because of their poor quality design and lack of amenities, especially recreation and landscaping. New residential construction does not reflect the scale and character of the old and established residential neighborhoods. Parking requirements for the new multifamily development do not address the needs of the larger San Ysidro families. In addition, space for car maintenance is often not provided. According to some community members, many San Ysidro families are their own mechanics.



Recently built Multifamily Residential



Most residents of these multifamily projects would prefer to own a single-family home. However, they have been forced out of the market by their low incomes and rising housing prices.

Many of the residences, particularly in the older sections of the community, are in need of maintenance and repair, and some lack basic services such as paved roads, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, sewer and gas. Many of the residences are older, historic homes and require special rehabilitation techniques. In addition, more than half of all residences (about 59 percent) are renter occupied. According to some community residents, renters do not want landlords to invest money in maintaining property because some landlords subsequently will raise rents. They also believe that rental property tends to have lower property values because renters or landlords are less likely to properly maintain the property.

### **The Neighborhoods**

San Ysidro residential land uses are located in five neighborhoods, as illustrated in **Figure 6**, and are as follows:



**“El Pueblito Viejo”**

**“El Pueblito Viejo.”** A small neighborhood of circa 1920 homes, and the remaining portion of the historic Little Landers Colony from the turn-of-the-century, is located in the geographic center of San Ysidro, and has provided the community’s small-scale, single-family, village character. (See **Urban Form and Cultural and Historic Resources Elements**.) This area consists primarily of single-family homes, several units on one lot, bungalow courts, and small-scale attached units. Several large-scale

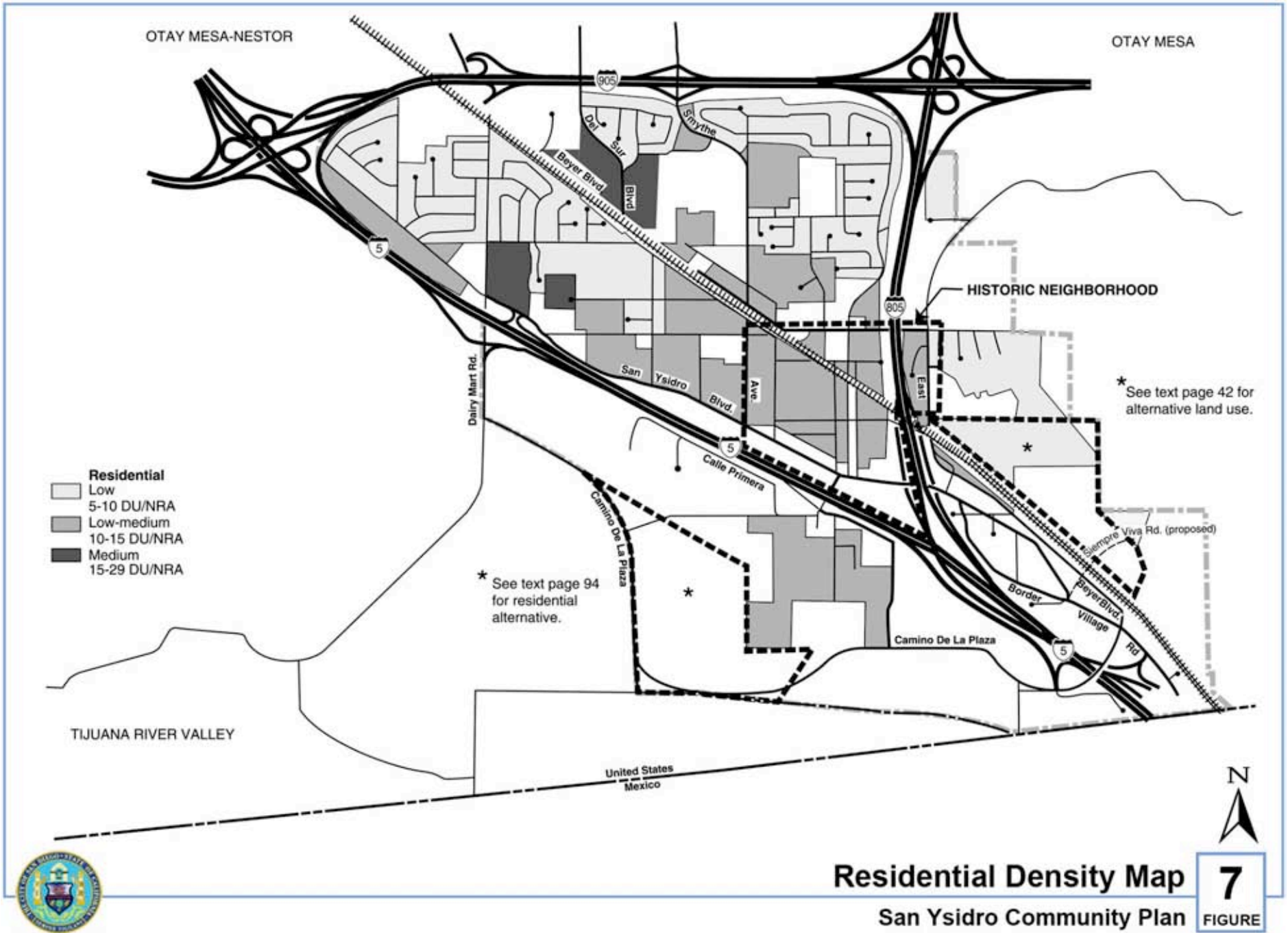
multifamily developments, on two or more consolidated lots, disrupt the character of this neighborhood.

**Sunset Neighborhood.** The area west of the historic neighborhood is also generally small in scale and single-family in character. A neighborhood in transition, it contains single-family homes on one-acre lots, a few with corrals and stables, and at the same time, medium- to large-scale multifamily developments.



**Sunset Neighborhood**







The East Beyer and Hill Street Neighborhood

**The East Beyer and Hill Street Neighborhood.** This neighborhood, located just east of I-805 and immediately south of the railroad and trolley corridor, consists of well-maintained single-family homes. A dilapidated multifamily development and several deteriorated duplexes are located at the extreme west of the neighborhood. The neighborhood is bounded on one side by the San Ysidro Boulevard tourist commercial area.



The Southern Neighborhood

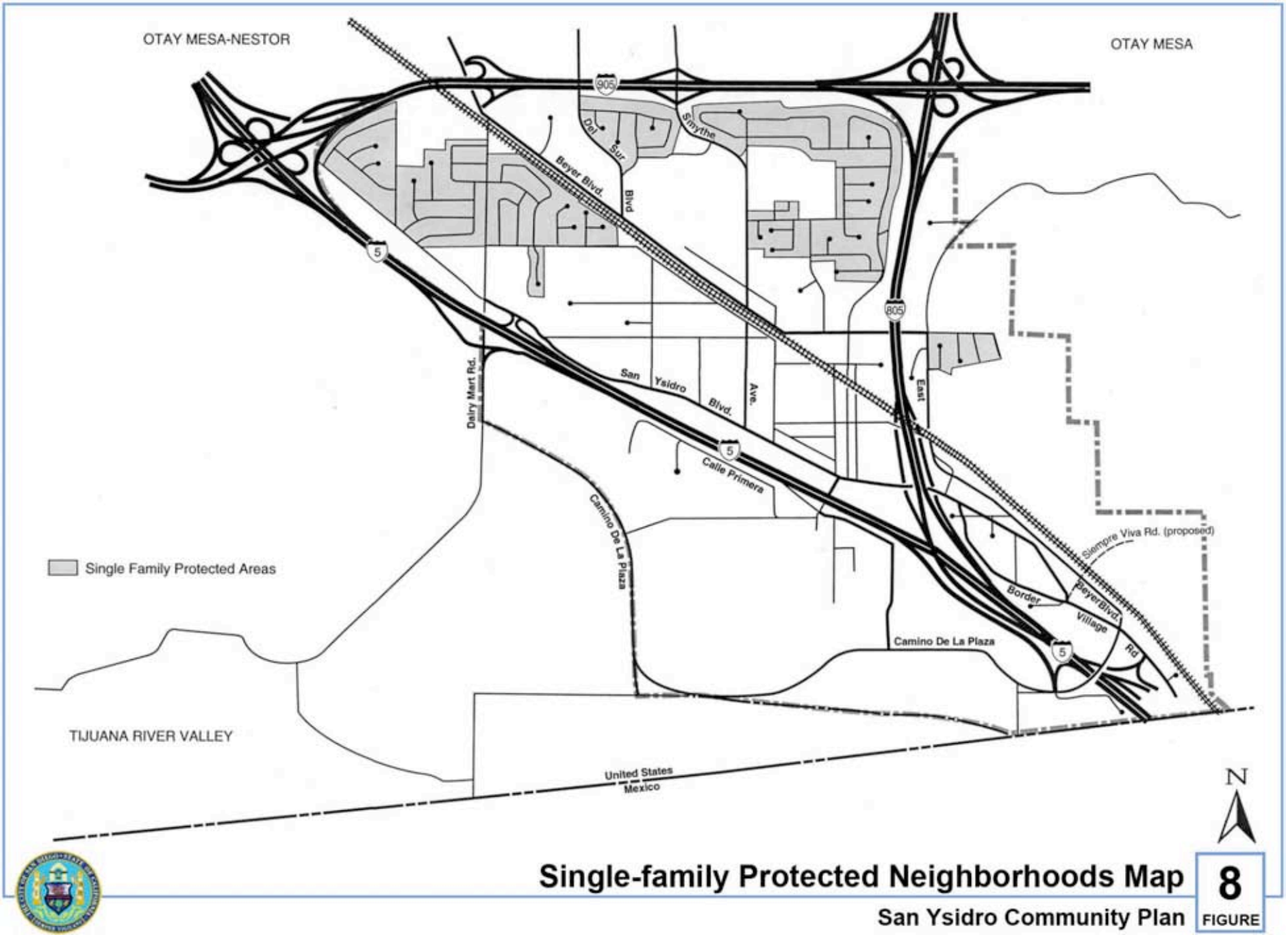
**The Southern Neighborhood.** This neighborhood is located south of I-5 and consists primarily of recently built multifamily developments, including several Housing Commission projects (both multifamily and a mobile home park). This dense development surrounds a pocket of older single-family homes.



The "Suburbs"

**The "Suburbs."** The northern, western and easternmost portions of the community primarily contain single-family tract homes built in the 1970s and early 1980s. These homes are generally well-maintained. In addition, the northern and western "suburbs" each contain several medium- to large-scale multifamily developments.

**Single-Family Protected Neighborhoods.** These neighborhoods are the existing low-density residential areas (shown on **Figure 8**) characterized by traditional single-family development and located in the "suburbs" neighborhoods.





## **The Demand on Public Facilities and Services**

The densities allowed by the zoning prior to this Plan adoption were too high and did not implement the 1974 Community Plan. Too many multifamily housing developments were built, with densities much higher than the adjacent single-family neighborhoods, and they lacked adequate facilities and services, such as schools and parks. (See **Community Facilities and Services Element**.)

## **Plan Buildout**

**Table 5** lists the number of dwelling units allowed by 1989 zoning compared with the number of dwelling units allowed by this Plan.

**TABLE 5  
PLAN BUILDOUT**

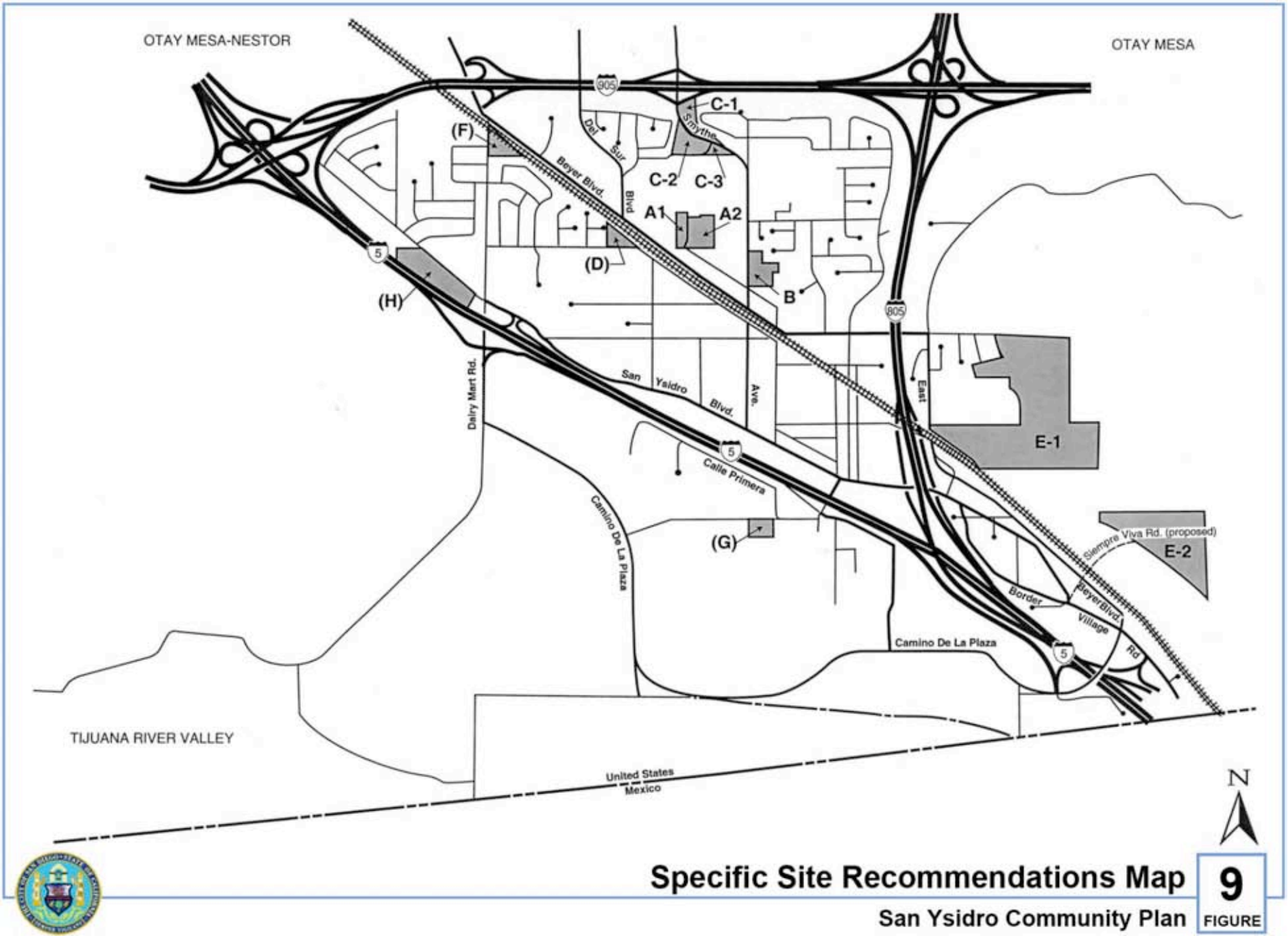
	<b>UNITS</b>
Existing Dwelling Units (January 1988)	6,467
Dwelling Units Allowed Under 1989 Zoning*	15,205
Dwelling Units Allowed Under This Plan**	8,261

\* This figure does not include the up to 29 units/acre allowed in commercial zones and does not include the area east of I-805 and the railroad tracks.

\*\* This figure assumes 1 unit per 5,000 square feet for Low-Density Residential, 1 unit per 3,000 square feet for Low-Medium Density Residential, and 1 unit per 1,500 square feet for Medium-Density Residential.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Ensure the provision of adequate public facilities and services, including schools, parks, roads, water, sewer and public safety, at standards equal to or exceeding the standards specified in the General Plan.
- Preserve and rehabilitate existing single-family homes and upgrade existing multifamily residential developments.
- Maintain a “village” atmosphere in the historic neighborhood.
- Redefine multifamily housing as it can provide affordable housing for a considerable segment of the community. Accompany reduced multifamily densities (for example, low-medium density at ten-15 units per acre in the place of medium density at 15-30 units per acre) with design standards that are sensitive to, and compatible with, the existing small-scale, single-family neighborhoods.
- Limit residential development in commercially-zoned areas. (See **Commercial Element**.)



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Community-wide

1. Residential development projects will be approved upon the provision of basic public facilities and services, including schools, parks, roads, water, sewer and public safety, at standards equal to those recommended by the General Plan.
2. Initiate rezonings to lower densities throughout the older residential sections of the community, particularly in the “Pueblito Viejo,” Sunset, East Beyer and Hill Street, and Southern neighborhoods, to ease the burden on strained and overcrowded public facilities and services and to maintain and enhance the existing small-scale, single-family character of these neighborhoods.
3. Require new construction to provide funds for community amenities such as roads, parks and recreational and school facilities.
4. Prohibit “spot” zoning, and restrict the use of variances.
5. Establish residential rehabilitation programs and provide incentives for neighborhood upgrading. Design these programs to enable existing residents to remain in the community after it is upgraded.
6. Utilize low-interest loan programs sponsored by the City of San Diego Housing Commission for both homeowners and renters. Publicize these programs so that information is easily accessible to the community. These programs include the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, which, through the Housing Commission, offers low-interest loans to homeowners and owners of rental property, the Cal-Vet Housing Rehabilitation Program which offers loans for rehabilitation and purchase of homes to qualified California veterans, and the Rental Rehabilitation Program which offers low-interest loans to both property owners and eligible tenants.
7. Lower the residential densities allowed in commercially zoned areas to R-3000, and limit the commercial areas where residential development is allowed to San Ysidro and Beyer Boulevards above the street level only. (See **Commercial** and **Urban Form Elements**.)
8. Include multifamily designated land use areas in a redevelopment project survey area.
9. A landscape maintenance plan should be established where landscaping, fencing, recreation and/or open areas are provided in the public right-of-way.

### “El Pueblito Viejo”

1. Establish a Historic District, or designate a special character design area in the historic neighborhood, “El Pueblito Viejo,” to protect the tangible remains of the Little Landers colony and to document the evolution of housing styles in San Ysidro. (See **Figure 7**.)

2. Utilize Historic District tax incentives and the City of San Diego Planning Department, Urban Conservation Division, which offers information and assistance regarding the State Historic Building Code (used in place of the Uniform Building Code), funding programs, design and assistance in locating contractors. Publicize this information so that it is easily accessible to the community and to potential investors.
3. Require discretionary review of development proposals to preserve and enhance this neighborhood's historic single-family, small-scale character, to provide for sensitive rehabilitation and redevelopment, and to ease the burden on strained and overcrowded public facilities and services. The design guidelines and recommendations listed in the **Urban Form Element** are to be used in the evaluation of proposed development.
4. Designate the neighborhood as Low-Medium Density Residential (ten-15 dwelling units per net acre), from Medium-Density Residential, and rezone from R-1500 to a zone similar to R-3000 to preserve the neighborhood's single-family character and maintain its existing predominantly low-medium density pattern. (See **Figure 7.**)

### **Sunset Neighborhood**

1. Require discretionary review of development proposals to preserve and enhance the neighborhood's small-scale, single-family character, to provide for sensitive transition between the remaining single-family homes on one acre lots and the existing medium to large scale multifamily developments, and to ease the burden on strained and overcrowded public facilities and services. The design guidelines and recommendations listed in the **Urban Form Element** are to be used in the evaluation of proposed development.
2. Designate the western and northernmost portions of the neighborhood as Low-Density Residential (five to ten dwelling units per net acre), from Low-Medium Density Residential, and apply a zone similar to R1-5000. Designate the remaining portion as Low-Medium (ten-15 dwelling units per net acre), from Medium-Density Residential, and rezone to a zone similar to R-3000. (See **Figure 7.**)

### **The East Beyer and Hill Street Neighborhood**

1. Require discretionary review of development proposals to minimize the potential impacts of the adjacent trolley corridor and the adjacent tourist commercial area on San Ysidro Boulevard, and to preserve and enhance the neighborhood's existing small-scale, single-family character. The design guidelines and recommendations listed in the **Urban Form Element** are to be used in the evaluation of proposed development.
2. Designate the neighborhood as Low-Medium Density Residential (ten-15 dwelling units per net acre), from Border Commercial, and apply a zone similar to the existing R-3000 zoning. This will preserve the character of the existing residential neighborhood while still allowing for some redevelopment. (See **Figure 7.**)



## **The Southern Neighborhood**

1. Require discretionary review of development proposals because of the proximity of this neighborhood to the border and the potential impacts of Border Patrol operations and illegal immigration, its proximity to the Dairy Mart Ponds natural habitat (see **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element**), and because of the strain that this neighborhood's existing dense development has placed on public facilities and services. The design guidelines and recommendations listed in the **Urban Form Element** are to be used in the evaluation of proposed development.
2. Designate the neighborhood as Low-Medium Density Residential (ten-15 dwelling units per net acre), from Medium-Density Residential, and apply a zone similar to R-3000 to ease the strain on public facilities and services. (See **Figure 7**.)
3. Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ). CPIOZ is proposed to be a supplemental implementation tool for the potential redevelopment of the 10.86-acre parcel at the southwest corner of I-5 and Willow Road, if the school is found to no longer be needed. The site is currently occupied by the Willow Elementary School and is zoned A-1-1/CO.

The CPIOZ Type “B” Permit should be utilized to assure that this highly visible site is developed in an attractive manner and appropriately buffered from the adjacent freeway on the north and east and from commercial development to the south when it redevelops residentially.

The specific issues to be addressed in an application for a Type “B” Permit are:

- A. Architectural design of buildings, structures and signs.
- B. Height and bulk of buildings and setback from the freeway.
- C. Screening of rooftop equipment.
- D. Noise attenuation.
- E. Landscape and fence screening.
- F. Compatibility with other uses in the area.
- G. Adequacy of public facilities.

Note: The San Ysidro Planning and Development Group recommends additional residential land use as an alternative for the southwestern portion of the community.

## **The “Suburbs”**

1. **Single-Family Protected Neighborhoods.** Designate these areas as Low-Density Residential (five to ten dwelling units per net acre) and zone for single-family development (similar to R1-5000) to protect them as single-family neighborhoods in the future. Deny requests for rezonings or other discretionary actions in these areas which could result in the construction of any type of residential structures other than the traditional single-family residential development pattern of one dwelling unit per lot. (See **Figure 8**.)

## SPECIFIC SITE RECOMMENDATIONS

Discretionary review of residential development proposals is recommended for the following sites, see **Figure 9**. These sites are included because they are the remaining undeveloped residential sites in the community, because of particular cultural, architectural, or potential historic significance, or because of location (for example, forming an “entrance” into the community). The design guidelines listed here are in addition to the guidelines contained in the **Urban Form Element**, and are to be considered in the evaluation of proposed development.

### Site A.1 and A.2

These sites are located in the Sunset neighborhood, on Foothill Road west of Smythe Avenue. Discretionary review of proposed development at these sites is necessary due to the single-family character of the adjacent neighborhood, the unimproved condition of the entire length of Foothill Road, and the strained and overcrowded public facilities and services.

#### **Proposed Land Use Designation:**

Low-Medium Density Residential

**Recommended Density:** Ten-15 dwelling units per net acre

**Recommended Zoning:** Similar to R-3000.



- **Building and Site Design.** Provide a small-scale, single-family character to the development to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. Massive, monolithic structures are unacceptable. Instead, articulate individual units so as to provide each unit with its own identity. Site structures so as not to obstruct scenic vistas and use pedestrian paths to link the development to the adjacent park and school.
- **Landscaping, Fencing and Open Areas.** Provide a well-landscaped buffer between the development and the adjacent Immigration Detention Center Facility, as long as that facility is located on that site, and include a solid wall to mitigate noise and visually separate the two disparate uses. Provide recreation and open areas within the development.
- **Parking.** Provide enough parking to accommodate large families having several cars. Provide well-landscaped parking areas and include some covered parking with storage for tools, equipment and bicycles.

## **Site B**

This site is located in the Sunset neighborhood, on the east side of Smythe Avenue north of Foothill Road. Several different conditions in this section of the planning area create the need for additional design review. Specifically, the hilly topography of the site, its views of Tijuana, the Tijuana River Valley and the Pacific Ocean, and the single-family character of the existing adjacent neighborhoods, require sensitive project planning and design to accommodate sufficient setbacks, landscaping and buffering.



### **Proposed Land Use Designation:**

Low-Medium Density Residential

**Recommended Density:** Ten-15 dwelling units per net acre

**Recommended Zoning:** Similar to R-3000

- **Building and Site Design.** Provide a small-scale, single-family character to the development to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. Massive, monolithic structures are unacceptable. Instead, articulate individual units so as to provide each unit with its own identity. Site structures so as not to obstruct scenic vistas.
- **Landscaping, Fencing and Open Areas.** Provide a well-landscaped buffer between the development and the existing adjacent single-family neighborhoods. Provide recreation and open areas within the development.
- **Parking.** Provide enough parking to accommodate large families having several cars. Provide well-landscaped parking areas and include some covered parking with storage for tools, equipment and bicycles.

## Site C

This site, located in the “Suburbs,” includes three parcels (C.1, C.2 and C.3) at Smythe Avenue and SR-905 and serves as an important entrance or “gateway” into the community. Discretionary permits are required for development proposals at this site for the following reasons:



1. The site serves as one of the community’s major entrances;
2. Access to the site is difficult due to a sharp curve and jersey barrier median on Smythe Avenue;
3. Public facilities and services, such as roads, schools, parks and public safety, are strained and overcrowded; and
4. The site is immediately adjacent to single-family neighborhoods and the freeway.

**Proposed Land Use Designation:** C.1 and C.2 Low-Medium Density Residential, C.3 Passive Park (see **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element**)

**Recommended Density:** Ten-15 dwelling units per net acre

**Recommended Zoning:** C.1 and C.2 Similar to R-3000 C.3 A-1-10

- **Building and Site Design.** Provide a small-scale, single-family character to the development to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. Massive, monolithic structures are unacceptable. Instead, articulate individual units so as to provide each unit with its own identity. Site the structures so as to minimize noise and visual impacts from the adjacent freeway and to reflect the lot configuration of the adjacent neighborhood.
- **Landscaping, Recreation and Open Space Areas.**
  - Link the three properties to the adjacent community park with appropriate landscaping and a pedestrian connection.
  - Address the “gateway into the community” theme, particularly at site C.3 which should serve as a landscaped entrance to the community.
  - Provide a protective buffer from the street, the freeway and the adjacent single-family residential areas.
  - Provide and delineate private, semi-private and public open areas.
  - Provide recreational facilities for residents such as playgrounds, barbecue areas with tables and benches and fountains.
- **Parking.** Provide enough parking to accommodate large families having several cars. Provide well-landscaped parking areas and include some covered parking with an enclosed storage area for tools, equipment and bicycles.



## **Site D**

This site is located in the Sunset neighborhood, at Vista and South Vista Lanes. Discretionary review of development proposals at this site is required due to the single-family nature of the adjacent neighborhoods, the site's proximity to the trolley corridor, and the strained and overcrowded conditions of the community's public facilities and services.



### **Proposed Land Use Designation:**

Low-Density Residential

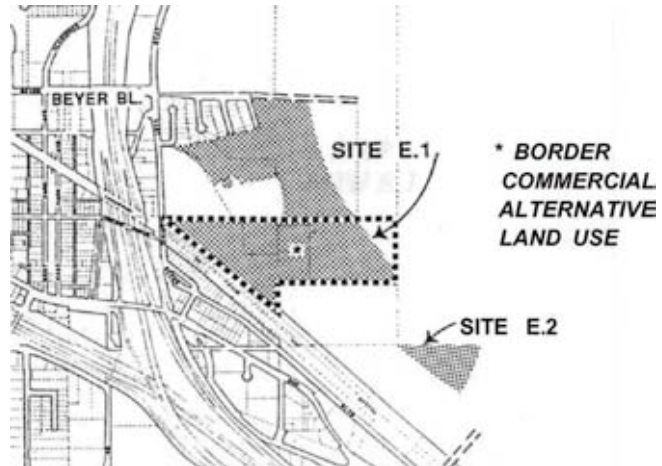
**Recommended Density:** Five to ten dwelling units per net acre

**Recommended Zoning:** Similar to R1-5000

- **Building and Site Design.** Provide a small-scale, single-family character to the development to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. Massive, monolithic structures are unacceptable. Instead, articulate individual units so as to provide each unit with its own identity. Site structures so as to minimize the visual and noise impacts of the adjacent trolley corridor.
- **Parking.** Provide enough parking to accommodate large families having several cars. Provide well-landscaped parking areas and include some covered parking with storage for tools, equipment and bicycles.

## Site E.1 and E.2

These sites are located in the “Suburbs,” south of Beyer Elementary School. Development of these sites will require discretionary review because they are located in an area characterized by geotechnical problems (unstable soils) and hilly, sensitive topography. A Resource Protection Ordinance permit would be required in areas containing resources regulated by the ordinance. This area is also located immediately above the railroad and trolley corridor.



**Proposed Land Use Designation.** Low-Density Residential. An alternative land use, Border Commercial is appropriate on a portion of this site (see diagram). If conditions pertaining to access, use restrictions, minimum project size, resource protection, site design and landscaping are met. These conditions are described on **page 92**.

**Recommended Density:** Five to ten dwelling units per net acre.

**Recommended Zoning:** Similar to R1-5000. A privately initiated rezoning, but not a community plan amendment, would be required to develop a Border Commercial project on the portion of the site shown in the diagram.

The overall density permitted on the site may be less than five to ten dwelling units per acre if Resource Protection Ordinance conformance requires that a portion of the sensitive land area be preserved.

- **Building and Site Design.** Site structures to reflect the slope of the existing, undeveloped hillsides and so as not to obstruct scenic vistas.
- **Landscaping and Open Areas.** Provide a well-landscaped buffer between the development and the adjacent railroad and trolley corridor.
- **Parking.** Provide enough parking to accommodate large families having several cars. Provide well-landscaped parking areas and include some covered parking with storage for tools, equipment and bicycles.

Note: The boundary of a commercial project would extend to the adjacent site to the south.  
See **page 88** of the **Industrial Element**.

## **Site F**

This site is located in the “Suburbs” at Plantel Way and Dairy Mart Road and serves as one of the major entrances into the community. Discretionary review of development proposals for this site is required because site design must address the wide variety of uses surrounding the parcel, including an elementary school, park, single-family neighborhood and the trolley corridor.

### **Proposed Land Use Designation:**

Low-Density Residential

**Recommended Density:** Five to ten dwelling units per net acre

**Recommended Zoning:** Similar to R1-5000



- **Building and Site Design.** Provide pedestrian access to Nicoloff School, and Howard Lane Park. Provide a small-scale, single-family character to the development to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. Massive, monolithic structures are unacceptable. Instead, articulate individual units so as to provide each unit with its own identity. Site structures so as to minimize the visual and noise impacts of the adjacent trolley corridor.
- **Landscaping and Open Areas.** Provide a well-landscaped buffer between the development and Dairy Mart Road and the trolley corridor. In addition, include a solid wall to mitigate noise and visually separate the road and trolley from the development. Treat the site as one of the entrances into the community by articulating it with attractive landscaping and special signage or other identifying markers.
- **Parking.** Provide enough parking to accommodate large families having several cars. Provide well-landscaped parking areas and include some covered parking with storage for tools, equipment and bicycles.

## Site G

This site is located in the Southern neighborhood at Calle Primera, adjacent to the Dairy Mart Ponds. Development of this site will require a discretionary permit because of the site's proximity to the Dairy Mart Ponds natural habitat, the strained and overcrowded conditions of the community's public facilities and services, and the need for an adequate circulation system to serve the area. Resource Protection Ordinance criteria will be used to evaluate any proposed project.

### **Proposed Land Use Designation:**

Low-Medium Density Residential

**Recommended Density:** Ten-15 dwelling units per net acre

**Recommended Zoning:** Similar to R-3000



The overall density permitted on the site may be less than ten-15 dwelling units per acre if Resource Protection Ordinance or coastal resource ordinance conformance requires that a portion of the sensitive land area be preserved and/or that a buffer between new development and the sensitive resource be provided.

- **Building and Site Design.** Provide a small-scale, single-family character to the development to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. Massive monolithic structures are unacceptable. Instead, articulate individual units so as to provide each unit with its own identity.
- **Landscaping and Open Areas.** Provide a well-landscaped buffer between the development and the Dairy Mart Ponds natural habitat. In addition, include a solid wall to mitigate noise and visually separate the development from the ponds.
- **Parking.** Provide enough parking to accommodate large families having several cars. Provide well-landscaped parking areas and include some covered parking with storage for tools, equipment and bicycles.



## **Site H**

This site is located in the “Suburbs” on San Ysidro Boulevard, northwest of Dairy Mart Road. The existing use on this site is a recreational vehicle park. Discretionary review of development proposals for this site is required because of the site’s proximity to single-family residential neighborhoods and to a major commercial district and the strained and overcrowded conditions of the community's public facilities and services.



### **Proposed Land Use Designation:**

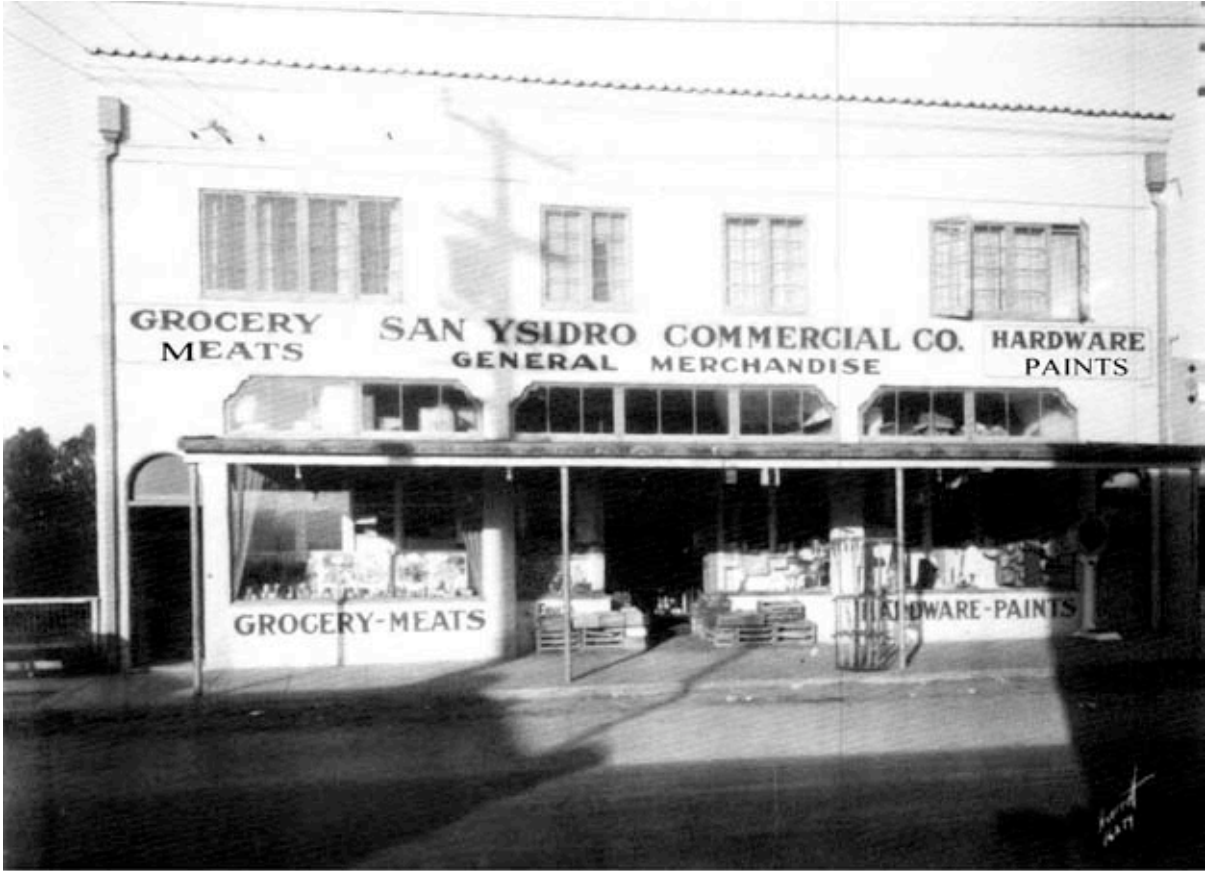
Low-Medium Density Residential

**Recommended Density:** Ten-15 dwelling units per net acre

**Recommended Zoning:** Similar to R-3000; however, allow a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to maintain the site's existing use. The existing, well-maintained recreational vehicle park is an appropriate use for this site. The park provides a well-landscaped buffer between the existing residential neighborhoods to the north and the existing commercial district to the east and south.

- **Building and Site Design.** Provide a small-scale, single-family character to the development to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. Massive, monolithic structures are unacceptable. Instead, articulate individual units so as to provide each unit with its own identity. Site structures to minimize the visual and noise impacts of the freeway and the adjacent commercial district.
- **Landscaping and Open Areas.** Provide a well-landscaped buffer between the development and the freeway and the adjacent commercial district. In addition, include a solid wall to mitigate noise and visually separate the development from the freeway.
- **Parking.** Provide enough parking to accommodate large families having several cars. Provide well-landscaped parking areas and include some covered parking with storage for tools, equipment and bicycles.

Note: See also **page 89** of the **Industrial Element** (Site T) for an alternative single-family residential use located adjacent to the Tijuana River levee.



San Ysidro Entrance Sign - Circa 1925

Photo from San Diego Historical Society Files

*Commercial*

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## COMMERCIAL

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### GOALS

- Preserve and enhance the community-oriented character in the historic commercial district; encourage the maintenance of existing uses and the development of new community-serving commercial uses which meet the needs of the residents.
- Facilitate the development of an International Gateway, a regional retail/visitor center.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### Existing Land Use and Zoning

Existing Commercial Land Use: 98.4 acres Land Zoned for Commercial Use: 212 acres

As of January 1989, approximately 212 acres of land were zoned for commercial land use in the San Ysidro community. Ninety-eight acres were built out with either community or tourist-serving commercial businesses. Forty-seven acres were developed as residential, as described in the Residential Element. The existing commercial centers are located in six districts and are as follows: (See **Figure 10**.)

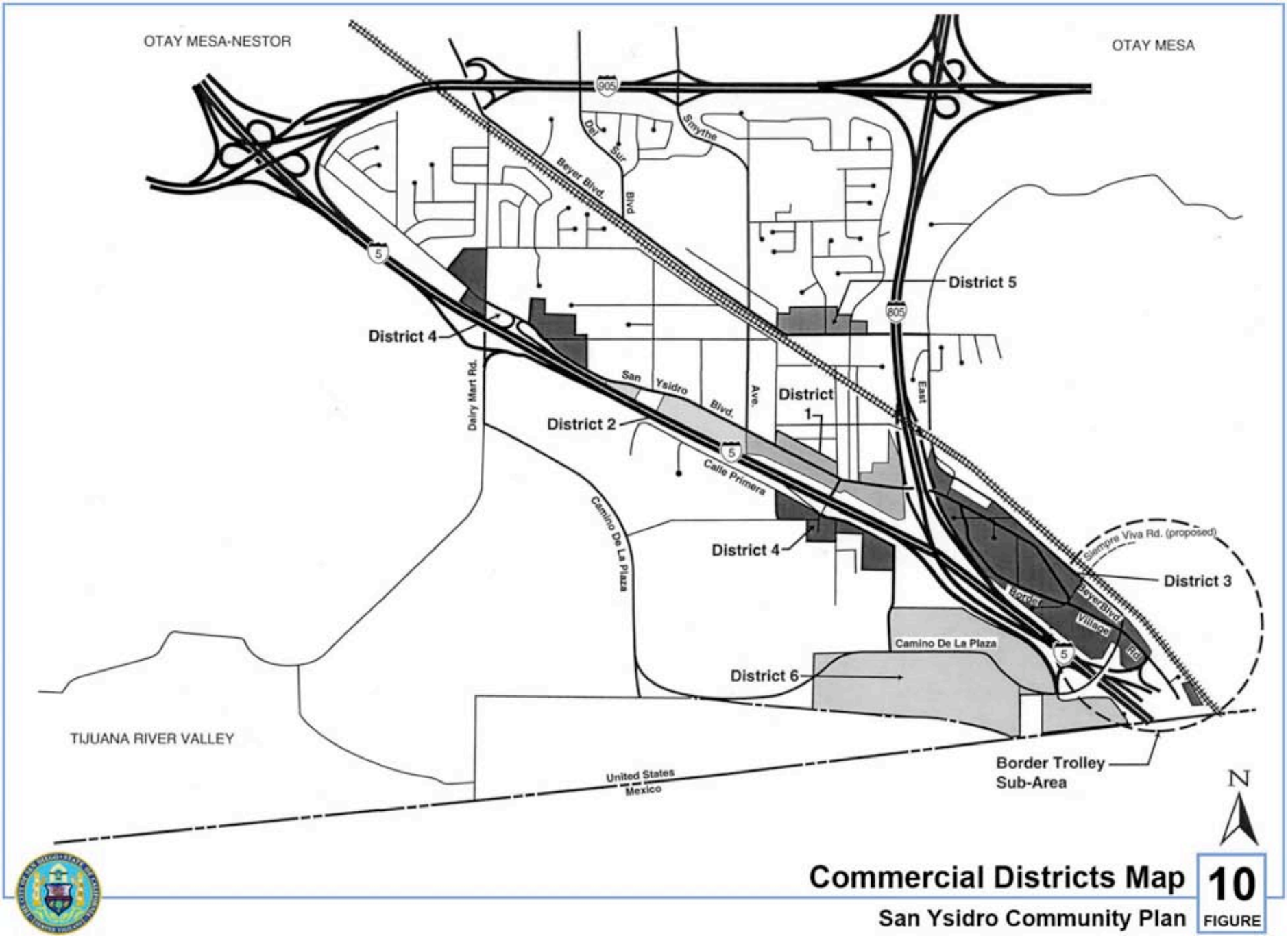
#### Historic - District 1

The commercial district along San Ysidro Boulevard between I-805 and Cottonwood Road is the historic and geographic center of the community. Businesses along the Boulevard were first established in the 1920s and 1930s to serve the growing rural community of San Ysidro. Over the past 20 years, this area has declined in importance and deteriorated due to the growth of the border commercial area and the construction of newer commercial centers in surrounding communities. Businesses such as clothing and hardware stores, used car lots, fabric outlets and a neighborhood pub are located here. The Hotel San Ysidro, a single-room occupancy hotel and one of the oldest structures in the community, is also located along this section of the Boulevard. Many of the buildings in this area have potential historic significance, but they are in need of rehabilitation. This district is characterized by small lots with minor or no front setbacks. Most of the structures are one- or two-story buildings, many with clapboard siding or stucco facades.

Despite the absence of sidewalks, curbs and gutters, this area is a major pedestrian thoroughfare. Although somewhat dilapidated, this section of the Boulevard is a landmark in the community, and it has the greatest potential for becoming a focused center, a downtown for San Ysidro.



Historic - District 1





## Community Commercial - District 2

The commercial district north of the historic commercial district, along San Ysidro Boulevard between Cottonwood Road and Averil Road, consists of community-serving strip commercial centers which contain uses such as the Big Bear grocery store, fast-food restaurants, a bank, the Southwestern College annex and the post office. Many of the businesses in this area are heavily patronized by Mexican consumers. The district continues southeast of the historic district on Olive Drive and contains a popular community-serving restaurant and supermarket. Both portions of the district are loosely connected and uninviting, lacking unifying signage, landscaping and building design. Pedestrian and vehicular access into the shopping centers is difficult due to the traffic congestion within center parking lots (for example, Big Bear regularly conducts outdoor sales in its front parking lot) and on San Ysidro Boulevard.



Community Commercial - District 2

## Casas de Cambio and Visitor Serving - District 3

The border commercial (visitor-serving commercial) district occupies San Ysidro Boulevard from I-805 to the border. It is the site of numerous “casas de cambio” (money exchange businesses), Mexican insurance establishments, curio shops, motels, fast-food franchises and discount clothing stores. Only a few sit-down restaurants exist in this area. It is also the primary location for offices that cater to persons seeking assistance with immigration matters. Setbacks and street widths vary and landscaping is minimal. The vast



Casa de Cambio and Visitor-Serving - District 3

array of signage and telephone poles contribute to the visual clutter along this portion of the boulevard. A recently built shopping center is situated on Border Village Road, a small street loop off San Ysidro Boulevard. The mall is well landscaped and maintained but, due to the lack of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, most of the stores are vacant. The majority of businesses in this area appeal to the Mexican consumer/tourist. (See **International Gateway Element** “International Commercial Support.”)

The border trolley sub-district encompasses the area immediately adjacent to the border crossing. This site includes the border trolley station, a grocery store, discount store, bus

station, several fast-food outlets, a bank and a tourist parking lot. The sub-district, with its dirty, littered streets has a history of being poorly maintained. The area is congested with both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Most of the buildings are of recent construction with the exception of a potentially historic site, the International Building, which is an example of the Art Deco style. This structure is a bus station located at the eastern terminus of San Ysidro Boulevard. A number of small, temporary stands stocked with curios, crafts and miscellaneous goods from Mexico are also located here.

In general, the sub-district lacks unifying design elements and is an uninviting entrance into the community and the country. It is beautifully sited, however, as it is framed by Mexico to the south and the slopes of Otay Mesa to the east. Tremendous potential exists for transforming this area into an aesthetically appealing International Gateway. It is also served by I-5 and I-805, a rail line, and the San Diego Trolley. (See **International Gateway Element** “Grand Central Station.”)

#### **Visitor Commercial - District 4**

The commercial uses at Dairy Mart Road and the west side of I-5 at Via de San Ysidro are comprised mostly of freeway/tourist businesses. Uses include motels, recreational vehicle parks, fast-food franchises and coffee shops. Some multifamily housing is also located in this area. A moderately sized mall occupies a 4.5-acre site on the northwest corner at the intersection of I-5 and Dairy Mart Road.



Visitor Commercial - District 4

Although easily accessible and well maintained, this shopping center has not benefited from either community or freeway customers.

#### **Neighborhood Service - District 5**

A small neighborhood-serving center is located along Beyer Boulevard between Cottonwood Road and Alaquinas Drive. It includes a convenience store, gas station, grocery store and the San Ysidro Health Center. These few facilities are the only commercial uses serving the northern portion of the planning area. The health center is the only medical facility within the community boundaries. This area is loosely connected and is actually a string of businesses rather than a center. It lacks landscaping, unifying design elements and is poorly maintained.



Neighborhood Serving - District 5

## **Visitor Commercial and Discount Center - District 6**

The sixth commercial district is located west of I-5 and consists of a factory outlet mall which opened in 1988, and several tourist-oriented businesses, including a motel, restaurants and Mexican insurance. The outlet center, formerly an unsuccessful traditional mall, is hoping to attract tourists (American and other nationalities) who are traveling south to visit Mexico. While this center is well designed and landscaped, the remainder of the commercial area is disjointed and lacks unifying design elements. Most of San Ysidro's vacant land is in this district (just south and west of the factory outlet) and is ideal for new development. Although surrounded by single- and multifamily development to the east, and despite the presence of a growing population in this sector of the community, there are few neighborhood-serving commercial businesses. (See **International Gateway Element** "Future Tourist Commercial.")



Visitor Commercial and Discount Center - District 6

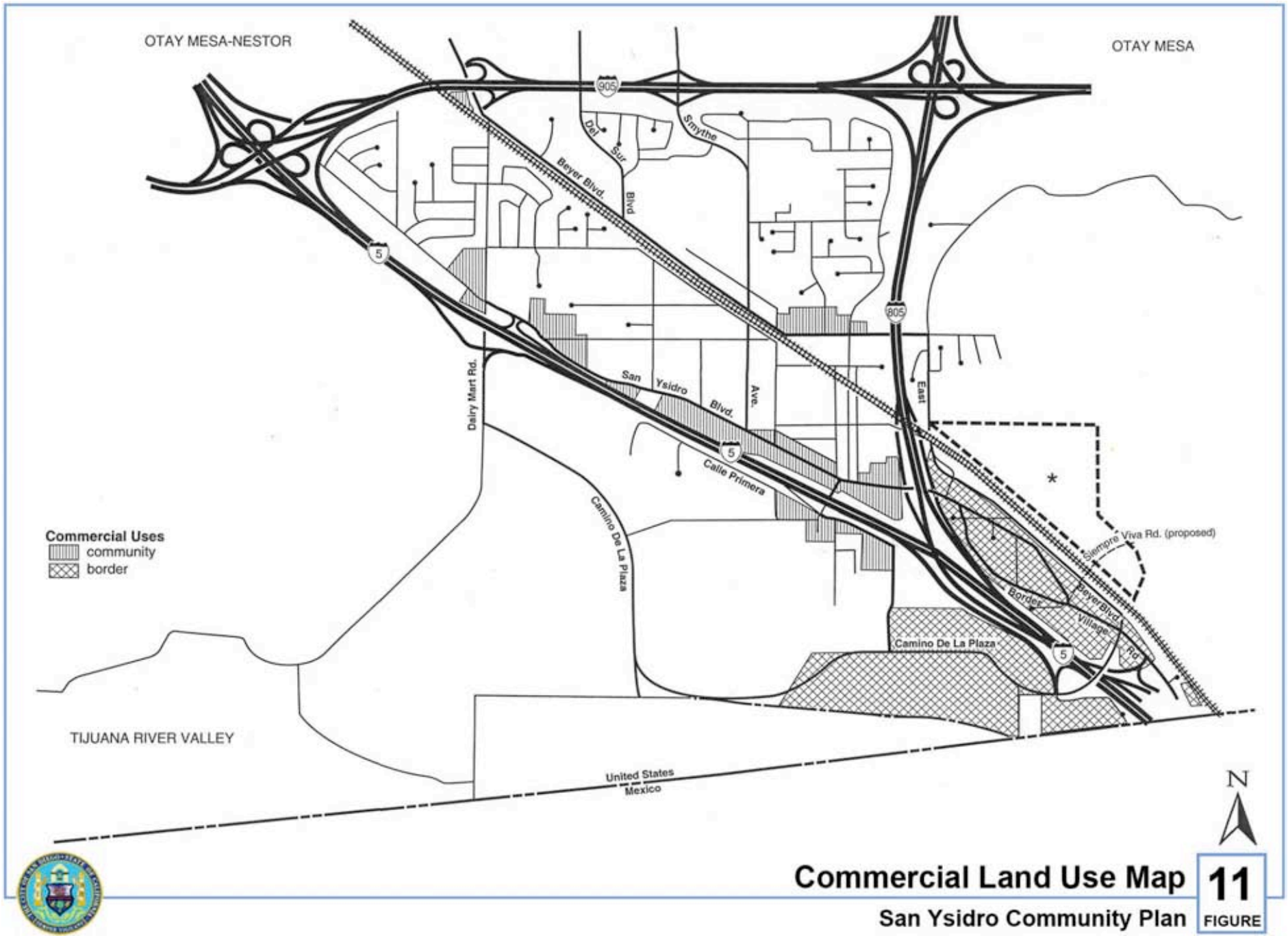
In recent years, approximately 47 acres of commercially-zoned land have been developed as multifamily housing. (As referred to in the **Residential Element**, residential development in the City of San Diego is permitted, by right in commercially-zoned areas, at densities up to 29 units per acre.) Residential development in commercial areas, combined with a rapidly growing population, has led many residents to believe that the existing commercial uses (and public facilities and services) are insufficient.

### **Existing Market Conditions**

San Ysidro's local economy is influenced by a number of forces, some of them border-related. As described above, the community's commercial establishments serve four major markets: Mexican consumers, local residents, American tourists and undocumented immigrants. Generally, the majority of the older businesses are in poor physical condition. Many buildings have low vacancy rates, but the turnover rate of commercial uses is high, which reflects the fact that some businesses are constantly closing and reopening. Additionally, San Ysidro businesses have few goods and services from which residents can choose to meet their everyday needs, so they elect to shop elsewhere. There are few leisure centers and gathering places, such as bowling alleys, cinemas, discotheques and public urban spaces. Such services are essential in communities like San Ysidro with young populations. Instead, young people go to Tijuana and other nearby communities for their entertainment. It should also be noted that, in general, San Ysidro residents have lower incomes than the City and countywide average.

Mexican consumers comprise the largest market in the community. Unfortunately, their buying power has been unreliable due to the instability of Mexico's economy in the 1980s and the recent devaluations of the peso. Each time the Mexican economy takes a downward turn, San Ysidro's economy is equally affected.





The following charts (see **Tables 6 and 7**) list the major shopping and hotel/motel developments in the community. As the charts illustrate, there is a high building occupancy rate for the major shopping centers. The hotel/motel occupancy rates are considered fair; the total number of hotel rooms in the community is 781. However, the community's strip commercial and the new commercial development at the border trolley station and south of I-5 has been much less successful as physical deterioration and empty tenant spaces indicate.

**Maintenance, Rehabilitation, or Redevelopment Needs**

Both the community and tourist-oriented segments of San Ysidro Boulevard (see **Figure 10**, Districts 1, 2 and 3) are in need of economic revitalization. Several major trends have contributed to the decline of San Ysidro's commercial core:

- New supermarkets and other stores seeking the business of the Mexican consumer have developed in recent years. Community residents have reported that they shop elsewhere because the new stores tend to charge higher prices, stock poor quality merchandise and tend to be gathering places for undocumented immigrants and immigrant smugglers.
- Through the 1980s, as the value of the peso dropped dramatically, numerous “casas de cambio” (money exchange houses) emerged and replaced the “mom and pop” stores that had existed on San Ysidro Boulevard for decades. There are few stores or restaurants left which attract residents. They shop outside of the community looking for a wider variety of shops than is available in San Ysidro, depriving the community of potential revenues.
- American tourists stop, if at all, only to exchange money and to purchase Mexican insurance. No other tourist destination, or even a public comfort and information center exists.

**TABLE 6**  
**INVENTORY OF MAJOR SHOPPING CENTERS IN SAN YSIDRO – JANUARY 1989**  
 Williams and Kubelbeck & Assoc., Inc. and City of San Diego Planning Department

<b>Name/Location</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Leasable Sq. Ft.</b>	<b>Year Opened</b>
<b>San Diego Factory Outlet</b> (formerly Plaza Mayor) Camino de la Plaza	6	210,000	1976
<b>Big Bear Center</b> (+new)* West San Ysidro Boulevard	2	80,000 (+new)*	1978 (+new)*
<b>Von's/Long's</b> San Ysidro Square East San Ysidro Boulevard	3	35,000	1968-69
<b>Border Village</b> Border Village Road	3	3,000	1982
<b>Plaza International</b> 360-390 East San Ysidro Boulevard	3	20,000	—
<b>Border/Trolley Park</b> East San Ysidro Boulevard	3	8,000	1983
<b>Dairy Mart Center</b> Dairy Mart Road	4	46,000	1988

\* An addition to the Big Bear Center, including a fast-food restaurant, laundromat and auto parts store, completed in Fall 1988.



**TABLE 7**  
**INVENTORY OF HOTELS/MOTELS – SPRING 1989**  
**Williams and Kubelbeck & Assoc., Inc. and City of San Diego Planning Department**

<b>Name/Location</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Rooms</b>	<b>Occupancy*</b>
Economy Inns of America	5	122	n/a
Motel 6	5	103	96%
International Motor Hotel	5	102	70%
Best Western – Valli-Hi	3	100	45%
Mexico Gateway Travelodge	2	34	50%
Flamingo Motel	2	25	55%
Frontier Motel	5	25	75%
Holiday lodge Motel	2	21	70%
San Ysidro Hotel	1	20	55%
La Nola Hotel	1	20	80%
El Toreador	2	42	95%
Rodeway Inn on the Border	3	167	70%
<b>781 total</b>			<b>68% average</b>
<b>number of rooms</b>			<b>occupancy</b>

\* Long-term residents (those occupying rooms for two weeks or longer) account for roughly 23% of total guests.  
n/a = not available

**OBJECTIVES**

- Attract community-oriented commercial redevelopment and infill projects in the historic town center.
- Provide adequate parking in the San Ysidro Boulevard/Border Village Road area to ensure that businesses will benefit from improved vehicular traffic.
- Improve the appearance of dilapidated commercial structures and upgrade the landscaping.
- Redevelop the International Gateway area with regional commercial development and infill projects to provide jobs for San Ysidro residents and to improve the physical appearance of the area.
- Provide commercial development near residential areas to serve neighborhoods and ensure that they are designed to complement those neighborhoods.
- Capitalize on the opportunities for commerce provided by Otay Mesa development.
- Provide adequate commercial facilities within areas designated for commercial use to meet the needs of both residents and visitors.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

(See **Figure 11** for recommended commercial land uses.)

### **Community-wide**

1. Utilize the wide-ranging services of the San Ysidro Revitalization Project, the local community development corporation (CDC), to the fullest extent. This non-profit development corporation can, for example, provide linkages to employment opportunities and occupational training, devise programs to offer low-interest loans for facade improvements, organize Business Improvement Districts (see Recommendation #3), and can act for the Redevelopment Agency by acquiring land for redevelopment in a designated Redevelopment Project Area.
2. Assist the San Ysidro Revitalization Project and other community groups in the search for funding by publicizing information related to grants, including but not limited to, the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG).
3. Establish a Business Improvement District (BID), a means by which businesses can agree to assess themselves and raise funds to promote the San Ysidro Boulevard community commercial core area. Assessment from a BID can only be used within the district boundaries for uses such as the construction and maintenance of parking facilities, promotion of public events, and the decoration of public spaces in the district. A BID will assist in stimulating an awareness of San Ysidro as a destination, an appealing place in which to live and work and an exciting place to visit. Construction, maintenance and improvement of sidewalks could be required by a Building Inspection Department Permit.
4. Utilize the vacant warehouses in the International Business Park and adjacent industrial areas at Calle Primera and Via Segundo, southwest of I-5, for new uses such as theaters, skating rinks and bowling alleys. Additional uses could include professional office and “heavy” commercial uses such as health clubs, trade schools, furniture stores and hardware stores. This can be accomplished by rezoning the properties from M-1A and M-IP to a multiple-use zone. This area has excellent freeway visibility and in 1989, new commercial uses, such as a swap meet and a retail outlet, were beginning to locate here. (See the **Industrial Element**.)
5. Enlist the support of the news media, elected officials, the County Health Department and other agencies, to ensure that local grocery stores are well maintained and will stock merchandise which is of similar quality to other stores elsewhere in the City at similar prices.
6. Establish a code enforcement task force to correct the numerous zoning, building and sign code violations in the commercial corridors. Additional enforcement is necessary due to the zoning violations which are border related, such as the proliferation of barbed wire fences to prevent the intrusion of undocumented immigrants and drug traffic.
7. Limit residential development in commercial areas on San Ysidro and Beyer Boulevards (above the street level only). (See **Residential** and **Urban Form Elements**.)

8. Establish a redevelopment survey area which could include all land designated for commercial, industrial, institutional and residential uses to determine a Redevelopment Project Area. A Redevelopment Project Area can help to eliminate physical, social and economic blight and assist with the revitalization of the community. Redevelopment projects are undertaken by redevelopment agencies which can assemble financing packages, acquire land, relocate site occupants, and rehabilitate and redevelop property. As the value of the property rises, the revenues from increased property taxes would be reinvested in the community. These revenues would be used for commercial revitalization, which would ultimately attract future development. A portion of the funds would be used for residential rehabilitation. (See also **International Gateway Element**, “International Gateway Districts” and **Residential Element**.)

### **Districts 1, 2 and 3**

1. Require discretionary review of development proposals in these districts to preserve the historic, small-scale character and to provide for sensitive rehabilitation and redevelopment.
2. Designate Districts 1 and 2 for community-serving commercial uses. Except for Site I in District 1, rezone the properties within these districts to permit only these uses.
3. Designate District 3 for tourist-serving commercial uses (Border Commercial). Rezone the properties within this district to permit these uses.
4. Establish a unifying architectural, signage and landscaping theme for the community commercial section of San Ysidro Boulevard consistent with the historic character of the area. (See also **Urban Form** and **Cultural and Historic Resources Elements**.)
5. Establish a financing program for facade and other improvements in the community commercial core and visitor-oriented commercial area along San Ysidro Boulevard. Participants would be subject to the design guidelines specified in the **Urban Form Element** of this Plan. (See **Figure 10**, Districts 1 and 2.)

6. Create a “Mercado” (market), similar to the Tianguis El Monte store located in the Los Angeles area. (Tianguis is a branch of Von’s Grocery Company which specializes in a variety of goods and prepared foods from Mexico.) The design theme should be festive to help the mercado attract residents and tourists, alike. One possible site in San Ysidro is the existing San Ysidro Square (Von’s/Long’s Center) at San Ysidro Boulevard and Louisiana

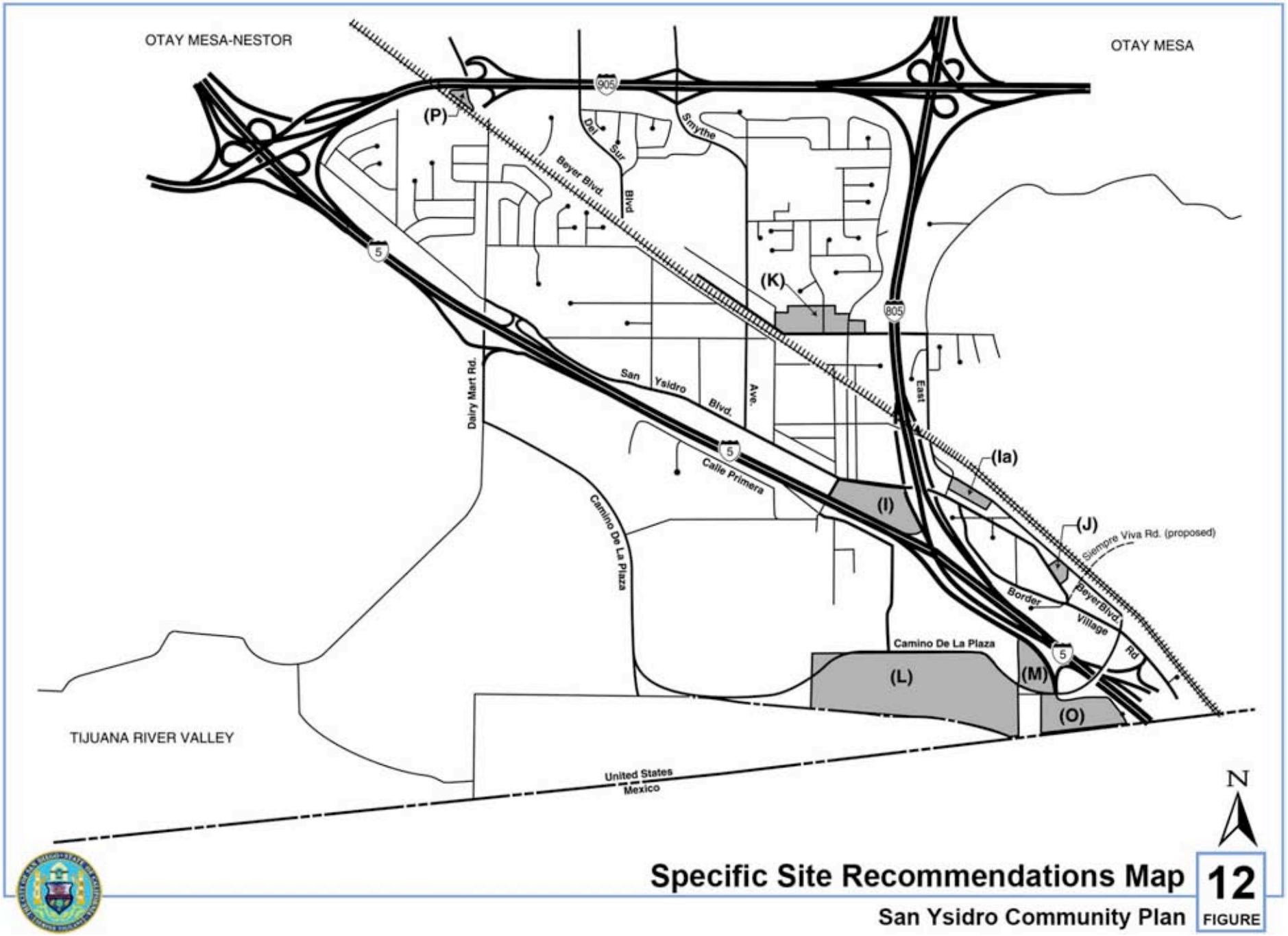


Avenue. This site contains 8.9 acres and ample parking. Uses could include vegetable and meat markets, booths filled with spices, herbs, fabrics, kitchen utensils and clothing—a Mexican mercado.

7. Preserve small-scale development and provide pedestrian amenities, such as benches and landscaping, in the community commercial core area of San Ysidro Boulevard as part of either a Business Improvement District or a San Ysidro Revitalization Project program or Redevelopment Project.
8. Require ground floor retail in all development along commercial streets, such as San Ysidro Boulevard and Border Village Road, to enhance the environment at the pedestrian level.
9. Construct a couplet at San Ysidro Boulevard and Border Village Road to improve traffic circulation and to connect the two commercial areas to form one district. (See also the **Transportation and Circulation** and **Urban Form Elements**.)
10. Develop a plaza-type commercial development (to include public urban outdoor space) at the San Ysidro Boulevard and Border Village Road couplet area with unique and unifying signage, landscaping and an architectural theme based upon San Ysidro's ethnic identity. This will provide both the resident and tourist with an attractive shopping area and will promote a positive San Ysidro image.
11. Develop a bilingual movie theater in District 1. The theater would be a community and regional attraction offering English-language and Spanish-language films with subtitles. (See also the **International Gateway Element**.)
12. Do not allow the expansion of commercial uses on Olive Drive.

#### **District 4**

1. Require discretionary review of development proposals in this district because it contains areas immediately adjacent to the freeway and residential neighborhoods and two of the community's major entrances.
2. The Planned Commercial Development Permit that covers the Dairy Mart Center should only allow an expansion of uses permitted by the existing underlying CN zone. Permit only neighborhood commercial retail uses on this site and the site on the southwestern corner of the intersection of Dairy Mart Road and I-5, due to the lack of such facilities in the western portion of the planning area.
3. Maintain the freeway and tourist-oriented uses to the immediate east of Dairy Mart Road but do not allow the expansion of these uses in this district.
4. Do not allow the expansion of tourist-oriented uses in the area west of I-5 at Via de San Ysidro. Rezone these properties to permit only community-serving commercial uses because of the lack of such facilities in the western portion of the planning area.





## **District 5**

1. Require discretionary review of development proposals in this district to provide for sensitive rehabilitation and redevelopment.
2. Upgrade the businesses along Beyer Boulevard, between North Lane and Alaquinas Drive, to form a more cohesive neighborhood-serving center.
3. Site and building design must ensure that new development and redevelopment is compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood and is “human-scaled” and oriented to the pedestrian. Site the structures to front the street with parking towards the rear of the site.
4. Require ground floor retail in all development in commercially designated areas along Beyer Boulevard to enhance the environment at the pedestrian level.
5. Rezone the properties within this district to permit only neighborhood-serving commercial uses.

## **District 6**

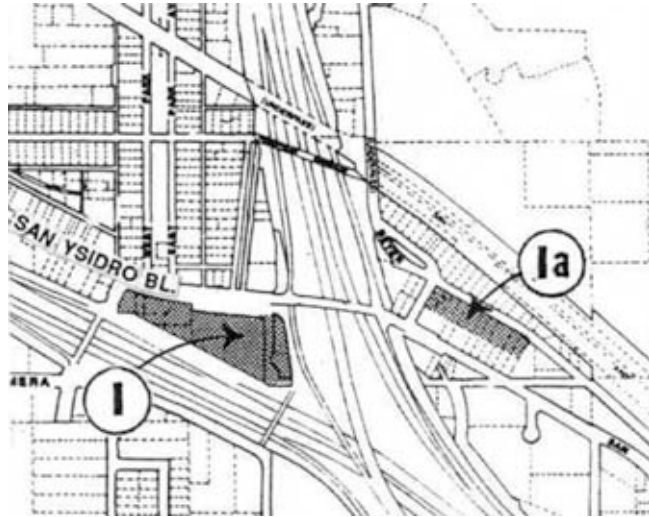
1. Require discretionary review of development proposals in this district because of its proximity to the border, the potential impacts due to Border Patrol operations and illegal immigration, and the potential for this area to form an International Gateway.
2. Designate the underdeveloped area west and south of I-5 and immediately north of the border for tourist-oriented retail, professional office, and heavy commercial uses such as furniture stores, hardware stores and trade schools, by utilizing a multiple-use zone. This will allow for a variety of commercial uses and provide a commercial and financial center for the Mexican and American consumer and the business community that conducts business transactions on both sides of the border.
3. Establish a regional shopping/visitor center at the border. It should include uses to attract both the American tourist (arts and crafts, restaurants) and the Mexican consumer (clothing, appliances, postal and banking services). (See also the **International Gateway Element**.)

## **SPECIFIC SITE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Discretionary review of development proposals is recommended for the following sites. (See **Figure 12**.) These sites are included because they form the remaining undeveloped (or underdeveloped) commercial areas within the community, because of particular cultural, architectural or potential historic significance, or because of location (for example, forming an entrance into the community). The design guidelines are in addition to the guidelines contained in the **Urban Form Element** and are to be considered in the evaluation of proposed development.

## Site I

This site is located in District 1 on the south side of San Ysidro Boulevard at Via de San Ysidro and is across the street from the public library. Discretionary review of development proposals for this site is recommended because it is a major entrance to the community and within the Historic Community Commercial District. In addition, the site could serve as a pedestrian link because of the pedestrian bridge that spans I-5 and the linear park across San Ysidro Boulevard.



### **Proposed Land Use Designation:**

Neighborhood Commercial

**Recommended Zoning:** A zone which permits only community-serving commercial uses and Mexican insurance sales and money exchanges.

- **Site and Building Design.** Provide a strong well-landscaped link to the library and the linear park to the north and to the pedestrian bridge at the southeastern edge of the property by utilizing pedestrian-oriented design elements such as plazas, fountains or sculptural elements, paths and landscaping. Community-serving retail uses, pedestrian in scale and oriented to the street, should further strengthen the link. Place buildings along San Ysidro Boulevard at the property line to maintain the uniform building setbacks of the historic commercial area.

## Site Ia

This site, located in District 3, consists of the properties on the south side of East Beyer Boulevard from Center Street to west of Bolton Hall Road. A San Ysidro Development Permit is required to ensure that commercial activity along San Ysidro Boulevard is not weakened and that residents on the north side of East Beyer Boulevard are not negatively impacted by commercial development.

**Proposed Land Use Designation:** Border Commercial

**Recommended Zoning:** CSR-3 (CPIOZ Type B).

- **Site and Building Design.** Encourage frontage on or access from San Ysidro Boulevard or from an alley off of the Boulevard and discourage access from East Beyer Boulevard. Locate, buffer, and attractively and completely screen with solid walls and landscaping all service and mechanical areas and parking lots to minimize impacts to residents on the north side of East Beyer Boulevard. Where possible, orient development to San Ysidro Boulevard and enhance its pedestrian character. Place buildings along San Ysidro Boulevard at the front property line to maintain the uniform building setbacks of this area.
- **Uses.** Provide visitor-oriented uses, including retail and entertainment.

## **Site J**

The El Toreador Hotel site, a community and potentially historic landmark, is located in District 3 on San Ysidro Boulevard, south of I-805. (See also **Cultural and Historic Resources Element**.) The site is a candidate for adaptive reuse as a restaurant/retail center. If designated as a historic site, the Urban Conservation Section and the Historic Site Board will review design and rehabilitation proposals.



### **Proposed Land Use Designation:**

Border Commercial

**Recommended Zoning:** A zone which permits tourist-serving commercial uses.

- **Site and Building Design.** Preserve and enhance the existing structures, the central main building and the surrounding bungalow court, the existing “El Toreador Motel” sign and the Virgin Mary grotto in the hillside to the rear of the site. Design new structures within the development and its immediate vicinity to reflect the Spanish Colonial Revival character of the existing structures. Enhance the pedestrian scale and orientation of the existing development by utilizing pedestrian-oriented design elements, such as plazas, fountains and landscaping.
- **Uses.** Provide visitor-oriented uses including retail, entertainment and a sit-down restaurant.

## **Site K**

See District 5 recommendations.

## **Sites L, M and O**

These sites are located in District 6 west of Interstate 5, immediately north of the International Border. Discretionary review of developments proposed at these sites is recommended because of the large expanse of vacant land, the proximity of these sites to the International Border, the need for an adequate circulation system to serve the area, and the need for a variety of commercial uses.

**Proposed Land Use Designation:** Border Commercial

**Recommended Zoning:** A Multiple-use zone

- **Uses.** Include tourist-oriented development such as retail and entertainment, a limited amount of professional office, and heavy commercial development such as furniture and

hardware stores. This would encourage the development and redevelopment of existing underdeveloped commercial and industrial parcels to an intensity and use compatible with a new image for San Ysidro as a major tourist/commercial/cultural center. Every development proposal should include an area dedicated to furthering this type of center. This could be accomplished by providing public plazas and gathering places, linkages to existing neighborhoods and transit centers, entertainment uses, and free/foreign trade zones designed to draw community and regional customers.



- **Site Design.** Develop a comprehensive landscape plan for the area to include a street tree planting theme.

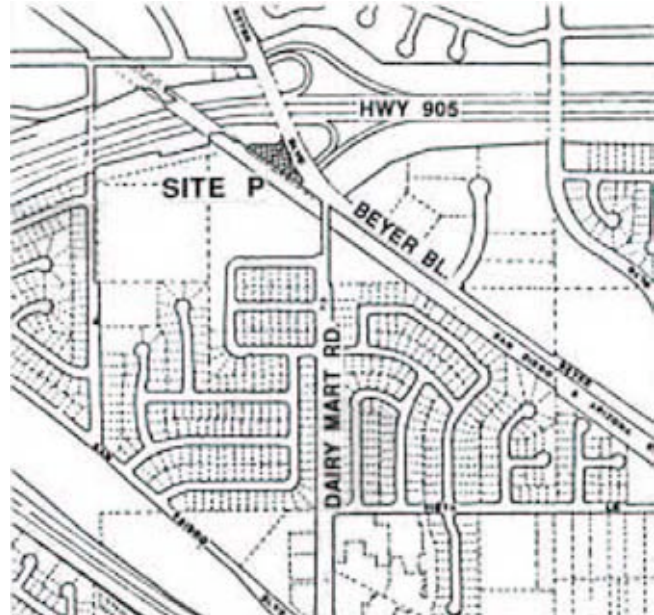
Larger, comprehensively planned development proposals are preferred over small disjointed projects. Every project should identify the vehicular and pedestrian circulation network within the project and as it connects to the community at large. Large expanses of parking areas that create monotonous streetscapes should not be permitted.

Transitions, such as landscaped areas and offices, should be provided between large scale heavy commercial uses and smaller more pedestrian-oriented retail outlets.

- **Design Theme.** The area should develop with common design elements to help distinguish it as a special place. This does not mean that all buildings should look alike, but rather that they contain common factors such as consistent street setbacks, cohesive pedestrian path and plaza systems and compatible landscape themes, building materials and roof elements. Individual site development proposals should be reviewed for accomplishment of design goals within the project itself and as they relate to other projects in this area. Design review should focus on the quality of the spaces that are created between buildings.

## **Site P**

This site is located at Beyer Boulevard and SR-905. It is too small to be considered a commercial center (it currently contains two businesses, a liquor store and a small furniture store) and is not included in one of the six commercial districts. Discretionary review of development proposals for this site is required because it is a major entrance into the community and is adjacent to the trolley corridor, a neighborhood park and an industrial park.



### **Proposed Land Use Designation:**

Community Commercial

**Recommended Zoning:** A zone which permits only community-serving commercial uses.

- **Site and Building Design.** Provide a pedestrian link from the development, across the trolley corridor to the park and nearby residential neighborhood. In addition, provide a link to the industrial park across the street. Site structures to front the street with parking towards the rear of the site.

Note: See also **page 40** of the **Residential Element** (Site E. 1) and **page 87** of the **Industrial Element** (Site S) for an alternative Border Commercial use east of the railroad tracks near the border.





The International Gateway - Circa 1925

Photo from San Diego Historical Society Files

## *The International Gateway*

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## THE INTERNATIONAL GATEWAY

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### GOALS

- Develop the border crossing as an International Gateway—a grand entrance into the United States, the City of San Diego, and the community of San Ysidro that serves as a center of cultural exchange and commerce serving both the tourist and the resident population.
- Recognize and capitalize on the opportunities provided by the world’s busiest border crossing. Tap this outstanding economic opportunity and invest it back into the community.
- Foster an active working relationship, a cultural exchange and an economic partnership with Mexico.
- Develop an International Gateway that is sensitive to the security and safety issues associated with undocumented immigration and crime.
- Reduce dependency on the Mexican consumer and provide incentives for tourists traveling to Tijuana to linger and purchase goods and services in San Ysidro.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### Tourism and the International Gateway

The location of the International Gateway is generally along San Ysidro Boulevard, north of the San Ysidro Port of Entry, and south of I-805 and along Camino de la Plaza west of I-5. It is a major entrance into San Ysidro, San Diego, the United States and Mexico; however, traffic congestion, litter, overburdened sewers and storm drains, and visual clutter all detract from its potential. Visitors enter the area, buy gas and auto insurance, exchange money, and cross into Tijuana. Community residents seldom enter except to cross into Mexico.



The San Ysidro Port of Entry, at the hub of the International Gateway area, is reported to be the world's busiest border crossing. According to United States Customs, it was crossed by approximately 53 million people in 1988—an average of 10 million northbound pedestrians and 12 million northbound vehicles. American tourists, going to Tijuana on a typical holiday weekend, number about seven times San Ysidro's population.

Despite the community's proximity to the border, San Ysidro businesses have not been able to benefit from this potential market (American tourists make up only 15 percent of the customer base) because there are few tourist facilities or amenities. Instead, the community's businesses have been dependent on the Mexican economy. As a result, as the Mexican economy has faltered throughout the 1980s, San Ysidro businesses have lost their economic vitality, particularly on San Ysidro Boulevard (as indicated by the physical deterioration of commercial structures, a lack of variety in commercial services available, and a large amount of vacant tenant space). (See also the **Commercial Element**.) Discussed below are several of the conditions which have contributed to the unrealized potential of the International Gateway:

- There is a lack of public cultural exchange and entertainment activities, for example festivals and parades, and no public urban space in which to promote them.
- There are few good restaurants and shops to attract residents and visitors to linger in the area.
- There are no public restroom facilities to serve visitors going to and coming from Mexico. (Many tourists utilize nearby restaurant facilities as a rest stop.)
- There is a shortage of secure parking.
- Providers of Mexican insurance and "casas de cambio" (money exchange houses) are scattered throughout the commercial areas of the community, causing traffic congestion and confusion among tourists as they search for these businesses.
- There is no signage to direct tourists to parking areas, insurance providers and money exchange houses, contributing further to the traffic congestion.
- The International Gateway at the Border Trolley Station is congested with many different types of vehicular traffic including the trolley, jitneys, buses, taxis, passenger cars and service vehicles. These vehicles conflict with one another and threaten the safety of the many pedestrians that use this area. In addition, the large volume of pedestrians crossing at the border gate makes it difficult to move across the border.
- The entrances into the community (especially at the border crossing) are ill-defined. The existing sign is unattractive, not highly visible, and poorly maintained. It is also located at an inappropriate location well within the community, near the San Ysidro Boulevard and Border Village Road intersection.
- The Virginia Avenue commercial crossing (a one-way crossing west of I-5 which permits southbound commercial traffic only) has an uncertain future. It could be closed within several years. (See also **Industrial Element**.)

- The International Gateway area, however, could be enhanced by quality building and urban design, the rehabilitation of existing structures, increased landscaping, and improved traffic circulation and by providing for important needs such as public restrooms, improved transit, and expanded customs facilities. San Ysidro has a close cultural and commercial trade relationship with Mexico which should be fostered, developed and allowed to grow.

### **The Underground Economy**

The underground economy in San Ysidro has been fueled in recent years by the Mexican peso devaluation and by illegal immigration. It has been said that illegal actions occur at money exchange houses. Also, large numbers of Mexican immigrants illegally cross into the United States, a number that grows as the Mexican economy weakens.



The money exchange houses or “casas de cambio” started to appear in 1981 when the Mexican government allowed for a floating peso which resulted in a wildly fluctuating exchange rate. Casas de cambio were quickly constructed, primarily along San Ysidro Boulevard. It is estimated that there are approximately 300 of these businesses. Most of them are owned, according to many community residents, by several major out-of-state companies.

Many of the casas de cambio:

- Violate sign and building codes.
- Have been reported as charging hidden fees and advertising falsely.
- Are scattered along the length of San Ysidro Boulevard.
- Are located on sites not zoned for financial institutions.

The casas de cambio have been difficult to regulate because most are very small structures (usually small wood-frame structures or trailers of less than 100 square feet) and therefore are not required to obtain building permits. However, in 1988, the Money Exchange Ordinance established casas de cambio as police-regulated businesses and they must obtain business licenses (similar to card rooms and dance halls). In addition to checking for legal business transactions, the police perform a secondary role by inspecting the establishment to ensure that it meets all zoning, health, fire, sign and building regulations as set forth in the Municipal Code. As the peso stabilizes, it is believed that the number of money exchange businesses will diminish significantly.

Mexico's unstable economy has had an additional effect. Each time the peso value fluctuates, "Mexican flight" capital is deposited into San Ysidro banks. (These are the funds that Mexicans place, in dollars, in American banks to avoid losses due to peso devaluations.) For a community of its size, San Ysidro has an unusually large number of banks (six). These banks, however, tend to serve as depositories only and according to local merchants, have not invested back into the community.



The most important effect of Mexico's unstable economy has been the illegal immigration of Mexicans crossing into the United States. The Border Patrol makes approximately 1,200 apprehensions a day in San Diego County, most of them in the San Ysidro area. They estimated that this is only 35 to 45 percent of the illegal crossings number, approximately one sixth of the

population of San Ysidro. The Border Patrol, in response to the almost constant flow of illegal immigration, covers the border day and night. Their late-night helicopter patrols disturb the community with noise and searchlights.

This situation has created a feeling of insecurity, oppression, tension and fear among San Ysidro residents. Residents fear the immigrants because they associate crime problems with them. (Although some crime is attributed to the undocumented immigrant, they are often the victims. According to the City of San Diego Southern Division police, there is a great deal of violent crime being committed by "alien robbers" or highwaymen against the vulnerable immigrant especially at night and in the area of the levee of the Tijuana River.) In addition, the Immigration Detention and Border Patrol Center, headquarters for one of the largest single concentrations of patrol agents in the United States, is inappropriately located in the center of this Hispanic community and is adjacent to schools and residential developments. When the facility was built, in the late 1950s, it was surrounded on three sides by vacant land and most of the residential population was concentrated to the south.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **Tourism and the International Gateway**

To realize the potential of the existing border crossing:

- Capitalize on the colorful excitement of the meeting of two cultures and on the hustle and bustle of millions of people crossing the border here.
- Develop the area immediately adjacent to the border as an International Gateway, a richer, symbolic image of entry into San Ysidro, San Diego and the United States.





- Create a sense of entry into the community through the special treatment of all major entry points.
- Increase commercial retail development at the border to capture tourist dollars.
- Attract tourists by developing projects which offer entertainment and cultural activities.
- Design tourist attractions to be visible and accessible from the freeway, yet compatible with existing development within the community.
- Develop distinctively and innovatively designed projects.
- Promote outdoor activity with sidewalk cafes, public outdoor spaces and open areas, and pedestrian-oriented shopping plazas.
- Improve the transportation system at the border to provide for the smooth flow of traffic and minimize conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians.
- Increase the availability of secure parking for visitors at the border.
- Direct tourist traffic to the tourist-serving commercial areas.

### **Underground Economy**

- Minimize disturbances due to border patrol operations and illegal immigration from Mexico.
- Improve the relationship between the community and the Border Patrol by opening lines of communications so that residents feel secure, but not intimidated by Border Patrol activity.
- Reduce dependency on the Mexican economy.
- Invite bank participation in San Ysidro business community organizations.
- Define a southern edge for the community at the border.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

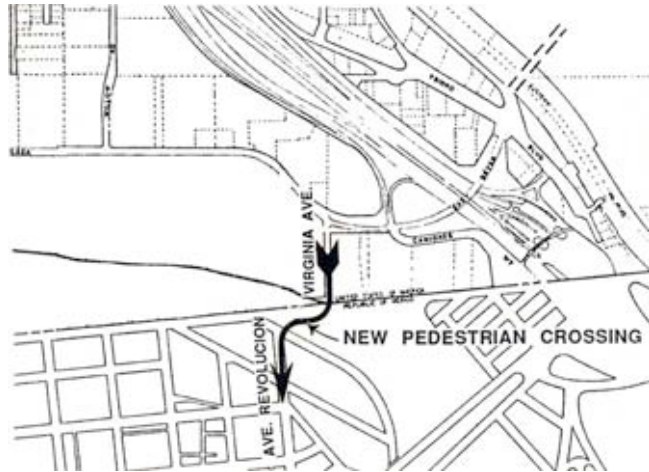
### **Tourism and the International Gateway**

(See also the **Urban Form Element**.)

### **Transportation and Circulation**

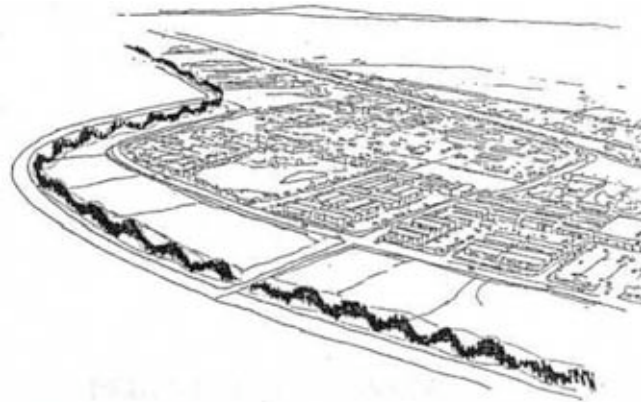
1. Request Caltrans to install effective directional signage on the freeway to direct tourists to use the Camino de la Plaza exit and include parking information. This exit accesses the tourist-serving commercial area and the border gate.
2. Install effective directional signage on the community's major thoroughfares, such as Via de San Ysidro, San Ysidro Boulevard, and Camino de la Plaza to direct tourist traffic to the border gate and the tourist-serving commercial areas south of I-805 and west of I-5. Include parking and visitor center location information.

3. Explore the feasibility of opening a new pedestrian and bicyclist border crossing at Virginia Avenue (site of the existing commercial gate) to facilitate tourist traffic flow between San Ysidro and Avenida Revolucion, the main shopping district in Tijuana, and to ease pedestrian loading and unloading facilities. (See **Transportation and Circulation Element.**)



4. Identify the major entrances to the community using landscaping and attractive signage, architectural forms, or other markers. Potential sites include the border crossing, San Ysidro and Dairy Mart Road, SR-905 and Smythe Avenue, SR-905 and Beyer Boulevard, and the Via de San Ysidro and San Ysidro Boulevard.
  - a. Redesign the existing entrance sign and relocate it to one of the major entrances into the community such as San Ysidro Boulevard at the Border Trolley Station.
5. Improve pedestrian accessibility to tourist-oriented portions of the community by enhancing the design of pedestrian bridges across I-5 and I-805. (See also the **Urban Form and Transportation and Circulation Elements.**)
  - a. These bridges could also serve as gateways to the community, just as the Cabrillo Bridge in Balboa Park serves as a gateway to downtown. Sponsor a design competition for an International Gateway similar to the competition held in 1988 for gateways into the City of San Diego.

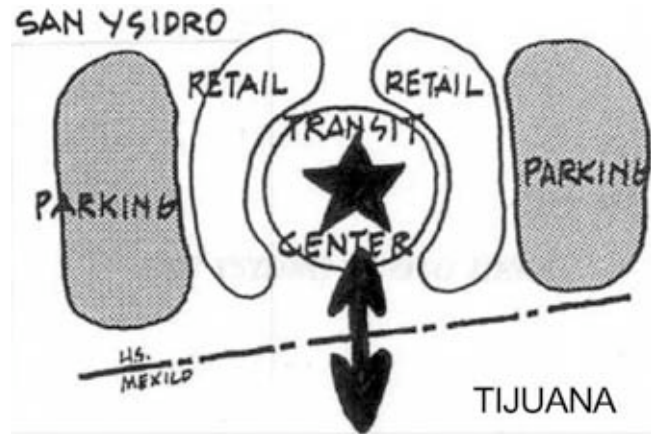
6. With the assistance of MTDB, develop a multi-modal transit terminal at the border gate to incorporate the existing trolley station, bus stations, taxi stands, jitney stops, bicycle racks and lockers, and passenger drop offs and to safely separate these vehicular uses from pedestrians. Include effective signage to direct traffic to and from the area.



SOUTHERN EDGE/ LIMITE DEL SUR

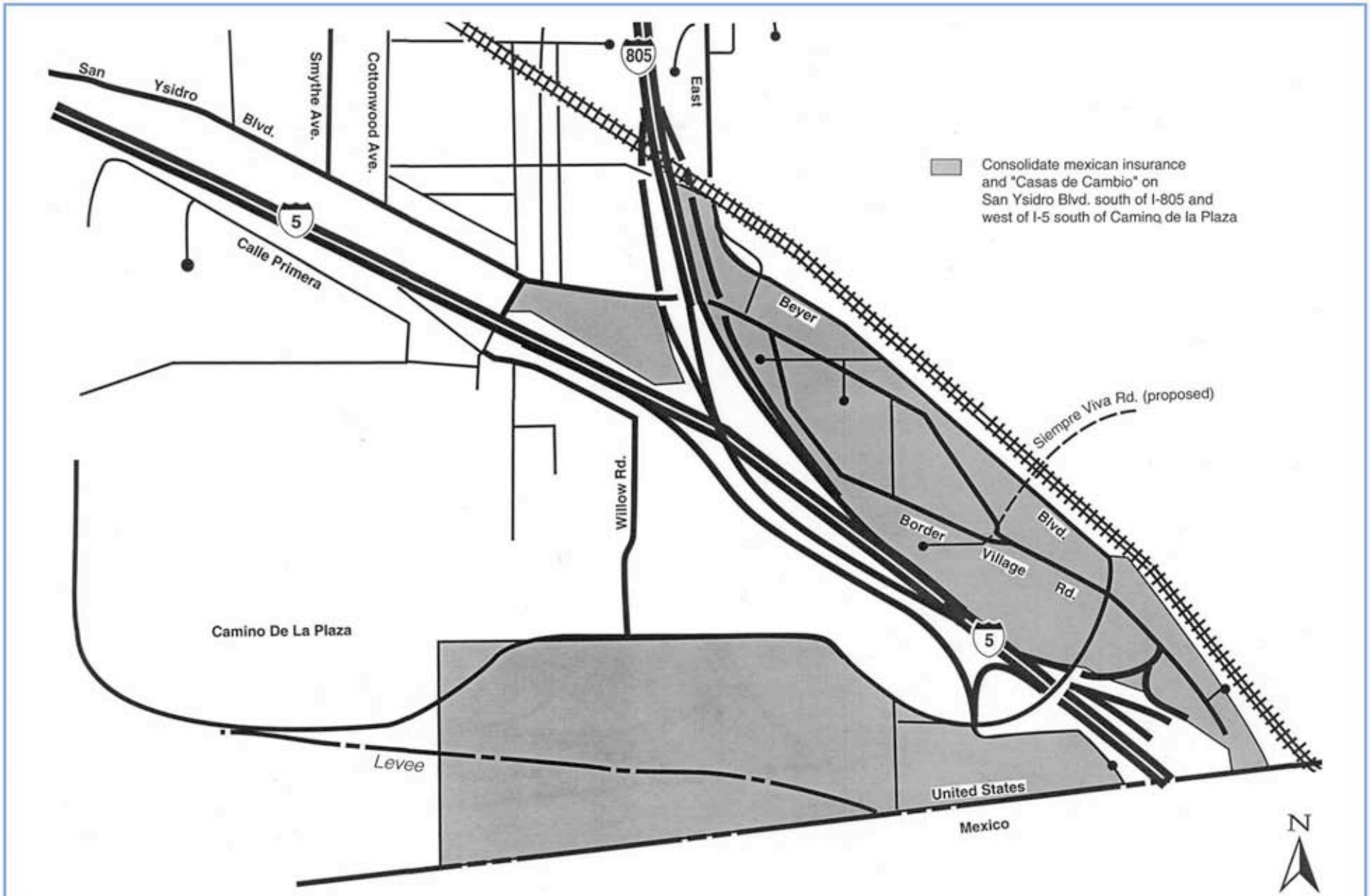
7. Establish a Special Parking District near the border crossing to provide adequate, easily accessible parking on the perimeter of a multi-modal transit center. This would help to eliminate vehicular and pedestrian conflict. (See **Transportation and Circulation Element.**)

8. Discourage through traffic on San Ysidro Boulevard at the Border Trolley Station. Use signage to direct tourists to parking areas, passenger drop off points and the freeway. These actions will ease traffic congestion at the Border Trolley Station and enhance its pedestrian environment. Use special paving and “knuckles” to further define the area’s sense of place. (See also **Transportation and Circulation Element, Figure 28.**)



### **Tourist Facilities and Attractions**

1. Increase the portion of the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), a tax on hotel/motel visitors, that is invested in the San Ysidro community.
2. Establish a Transient Maintenance Tax (similar to the citywide Transient Occupancy Tax) to be used as a source of funding for maintenance and provisions of facilities used by the visiting public. Services and items taxed would include visitor-oriented hotels, restaurants, casas de cambio and retail items.
3. In 1989, several groups and individuals involved in federal and state government-proposed legislation to exact tolls at the San Ysidro Port of Entry. These proposals should require that a specified portion of the revenues collected go to the community of San Ysidro to fund physical improvements to the border area.
4. Provide a visitor information center at the Border Trolley Station.
5. Provide a public restroom facility in the vicinity of the Border Trolley Station.
6. Develop a new hotel/resort complex immediately adjacent to the border gate, in the vicinity of the Border Trolley Station. (See also the following section, **International Gateway Districts**, “Grand Central Station.”)
7. Develop an attraction, such as a dinner theater, for tourists who are still “thinking Mexico” upon their return from Tijuana.
8. Develop good, sit-down restaurants to attract tourists and residents in the tourist-oriented districts, including San Ysidro Boulevard south of I-805, and at Camino de La Plaza west of I-5.
9. Develop tourist attractions such as shops selling “artesanias” (arts and crafts), fruits, vegetables, and Mexican herbs and spices, restaurants, and art exhibits. Tourism invests money into the community, although it provides primarily minimum-wage jobs.



**Consolidation of Mexican Insurance Establishments & "Casa de Cambio" Map**  
**San Ysidro Community Plan**

**13**  
 FIGURE

10. Create a unique tourist attraction that may not be available in Mexico, such as a center with shops and restaurants offering crafts, services and cuisines from all regions of Mexico.
11. Redevelop San Ysidro Square (the Vons/Longs site) as a “Farmers’ Market” similar to Tianguis El Monte facility in the Los Angeles area (a branch of Vons Grocery Company specializing in Mexican food). (See also the **Commercial Element**.)
12. Develop a financial and postal center near the border gate to serve the Mexican consumer.
13. Sponsor joint City of San Diego/Tijuana public events such as Binational Independence Day parades and festivals.
14. Locate cultural exchanges between San Diego and Mexico, such as the Ballet Folklorico, City Council Meetings, and art exhibits, at the International Gateway.
15. Develop a bilingual movie theater. The theater would be a regional and community attraction offering English language and Spanish language films with subtitles. (See **Commercial Element**.)
16. Construct a kiosk that marks the southern terminus of the Pacific Coast Bicentennial bike route, provides vicinity maps of San Ysidro and Tijuana and information of interest to bicycling tourists. This kiosk should be located at the cul-de-sac on Camiones Way.

### **Underground Economy**

#### **Casas de Cambio**

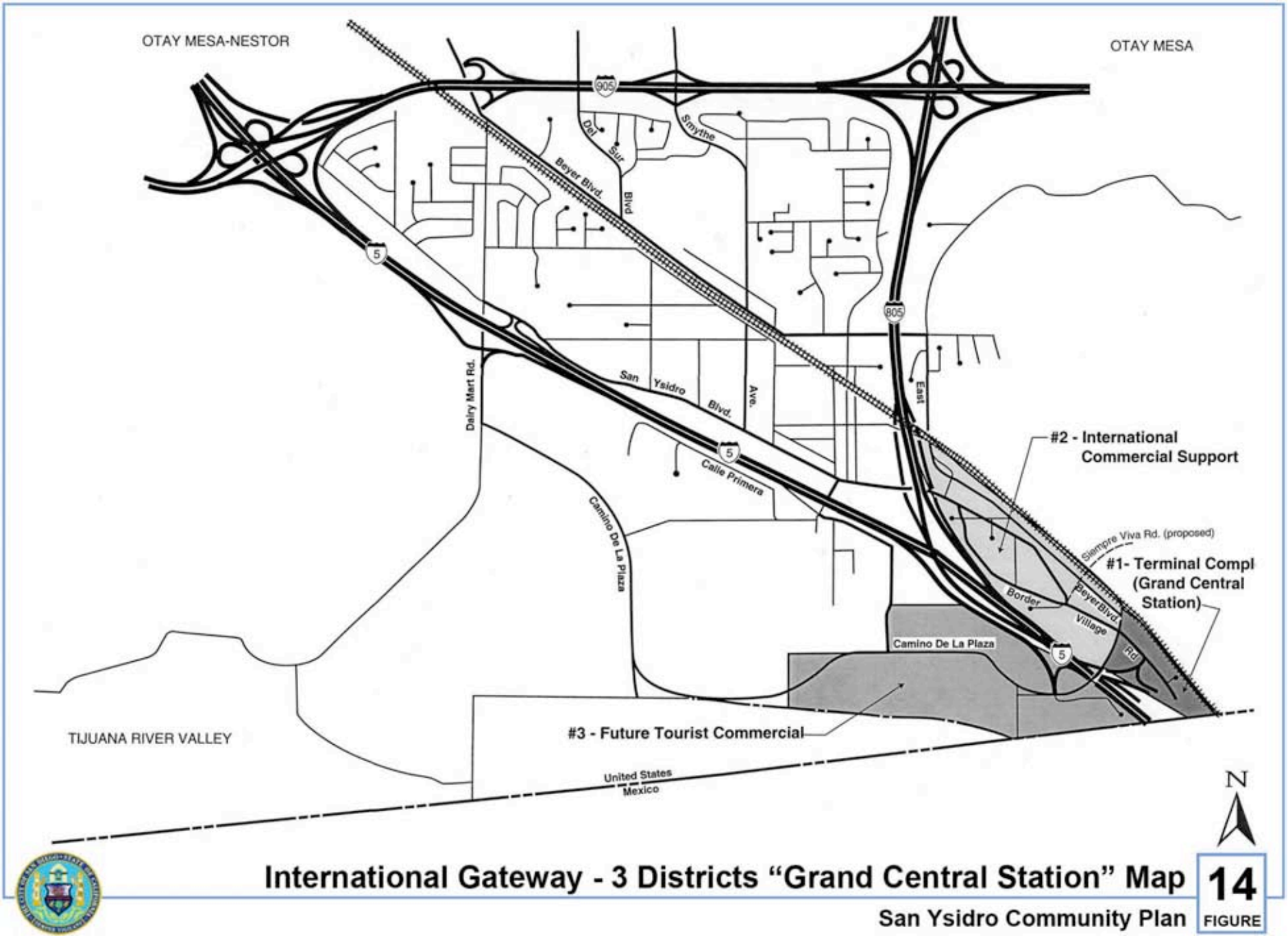
(See **Urban Form Element** for design guidelines.)

1. Regulate the casas de cambio as required by the Money Exchange Ordinance. According to that ordinance, each business is required to obtain a license from the Chief of Police, the applicant is required to submit to a background check, and the business will be inspected to ensure that it meets required codes.
2. Consolidate casas de cambio and Mexican insurance into one general location on San Ysidro Boulevard south of I-805, and west of I-5, south of Camino de la Plaza, to reduce traffic congestion and confusion as tourists search for these uses. (See **Figure 13**.)

### **Financial Institutions**

1. Increase investment by banks in the community (i.e., loans to local businesses and residents) through a public loan program.
2. Form a San Ysidro Credit Union to provide competitive rate loans to local businesses and residents. Several community members have suggested that San Ysidro School District employees could provide the initial customer base, which could later be expanded to serve the entire community.





**International Gateway - 3 Districts "Grand Central Station" Map**

San Ysidro Community Plan

**14**  
FIGURE



## Border Issues

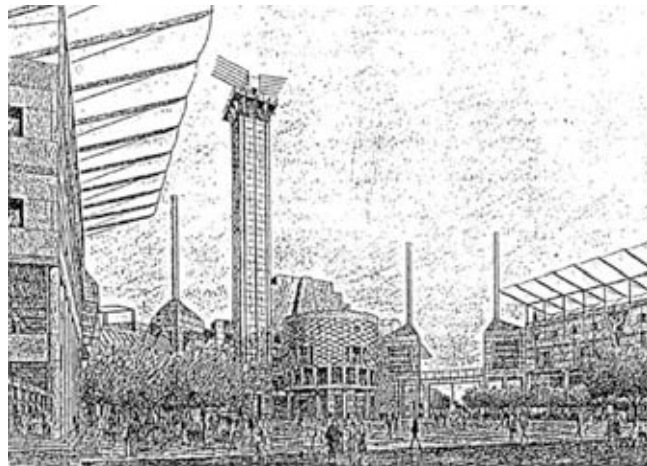
1. Work with the Police Department Crime Prevention Unit and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to provide for “defensible design” of development projects.
2. Relocate the INS Detention Center and Border Patrol Headquarters to Brown Field on the Otay Mesa or to an alternative site on the outskirts of the San Ysidro community.
3. Convert the existing INS Detention Center and Border Patrol Headquarters to a community park (see **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element**).



## International Gateway Districts

To form a framework for the above recommendations, three districts within the International Gateway area have been identified and conceptual plans proposed for each. (See **Figure 14**.) These are:

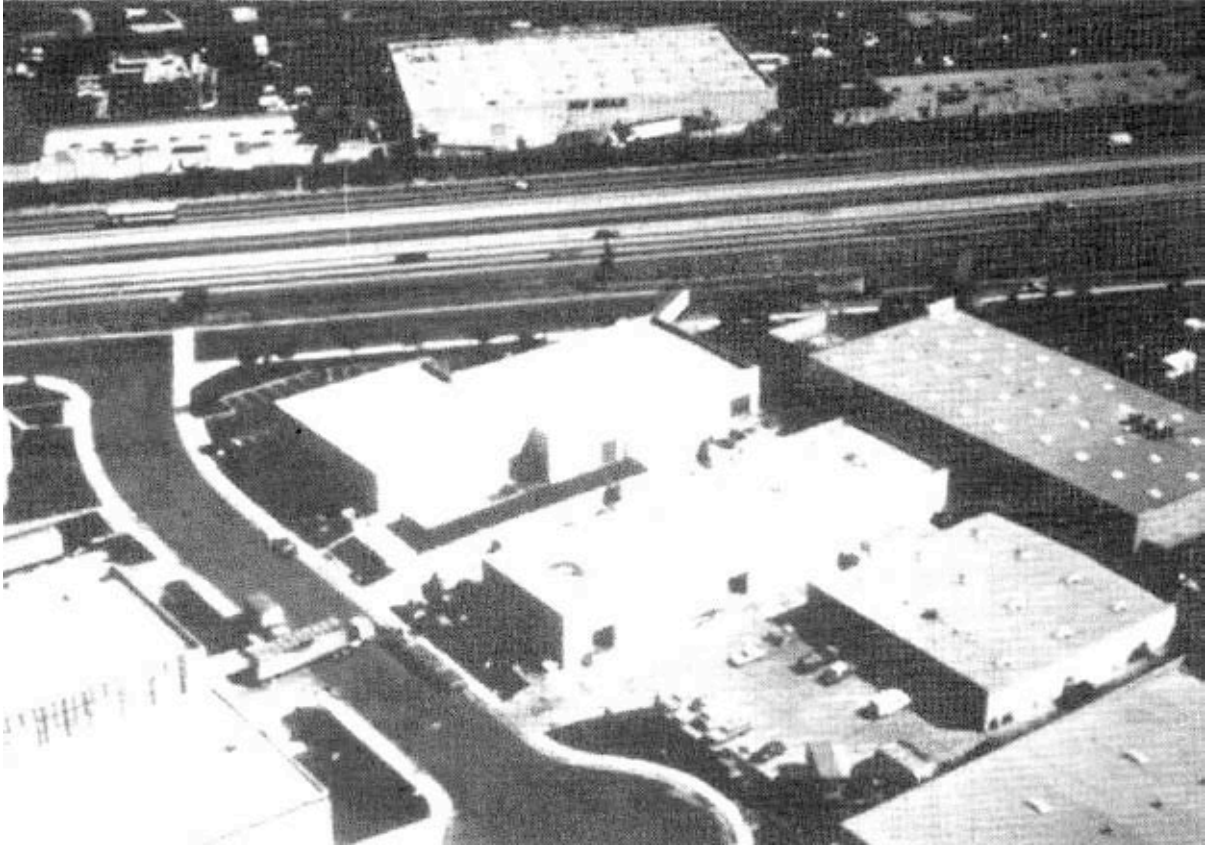
1. A “Grand Central Station” immediately adjacent to the border crossing. This station would be a bold and dramatic architectural statement that would include a terminal complex (a bus, jitney, trolley and taxi transit center), a hotel, shops, and an entertainment center. It would be designed to discourage automobile traffic. Vehicular traffic on San Ysidro Boulevard from the end of East Beyer Boulevard to the border would be limited to emergency and service vehicles and those entering the freeway south of Camino de la Plaza. (See **Transportation and Circulation Element, Figure 28**.) The concept would require “packaged” development to assemble and consolidate parcels.



“Grand Central Station”  
A Bold and Dramatic Architectural Statement

2. An area of “International Commercial Support” which would serve as a transition from the International Border to the neighborhood-serving commercial area north of the border crossing. This area would allow some auto-oriented commercial uses and include some tourist parking, yet also enhance the existing pedestrian use of this area.
3. An area of “Future Tourist Commercial” west of the border crossing which would develop as the need arose. In this area, a master planned development, to include professional office, tourist parking, tourist-oriented commercial, and heavy commercial development, is recommended. A landscaped buffer along the Tijuana River channel is also recommended to mitigate disturbances from Border Patrol operations. The Plan would capitalize on the millions of tourists that cross the border through San Ysidro every year and provide a buffer between the tourist-oriented uses of this district and the residential and community oriented commercial portions of the community. One possible development scenario is to use a tourist parking lot component of a commercial project (an immediate profit maker) as an attraction to the development and to partially subsidize the retail component of the project.

To implement these concepts, the creation of a Redevelopment Project Area is recommended. The San Ysidro Revitalization Project could act for the Redevelopment Agency. Redevelopment activities could include assembling parcels and developing projects or locating developers and “package” deals. (See the **Commercial Element**.) In addition, as a Redevelopment Project Area, revenue from increased property taxes due to increased property values and ownership turnover would go to the area. These revenues would be used for commercial revitalization which would ultimately attract future development.



*Industrial*

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## INDUSTRIAL

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### GOALS

Permit modest industrial growth within San Ysidro and ensure the development of roads and public transportation links to the industrial development in Otay Mesa to provide and increase employment opportunities for community residents.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### Existing Land Use

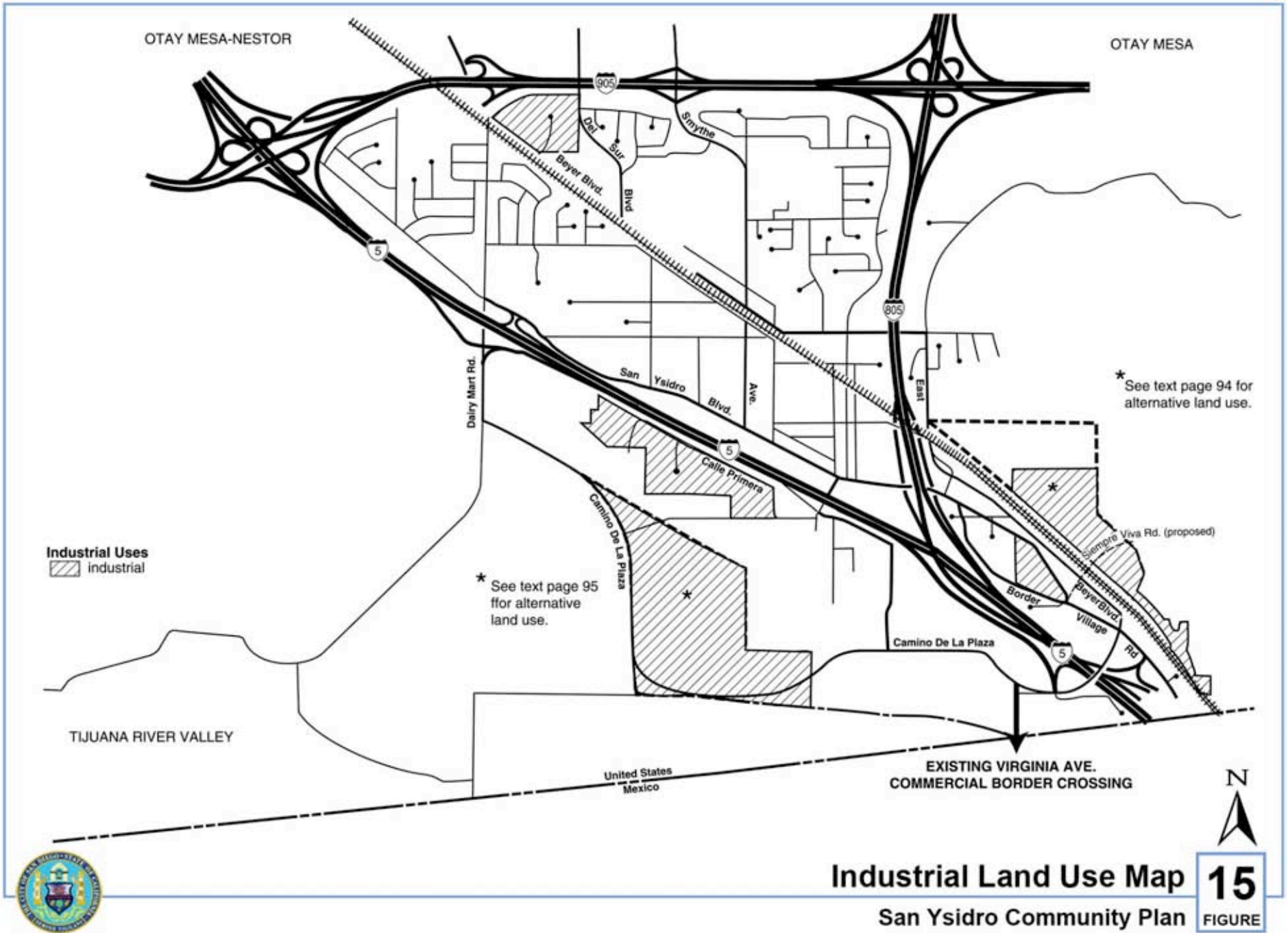
As of January 1989, 69 acres of land in San Ysidro were zoned for industrial use. Approximately 30 acres were developed for that use. **Table 8** lists the major industrial developments in the community. These developments are multi-tenant industrial parks containing mostly warehouse, light manufacturing and distributing uses. Occupancy levels are approximately 80 percent.

In addition to these industrial properties in the community, there are several significant industrial uses in the adjacent communities of the Tijuana River Valley and Otay Mesa. These include sand and gravel extraction operations directly to the west of San Ysidro, along the United States-Mexico border in the Tijuana River Valley, and new industrial developments east of the community in Otay Mesa, near Brown Field and the Otay Mesa border crossing. Many of these developments are “maquiladoras,” an in-bond cross-border factory system that has grown up between firms in the United States and Mexico. The in-bond plan system allows United States or foreign companies to process, assemble, or fabricate products or services in Mexico, using cheaper labor. The products are brought back to the United States and customs duty is paid on the value added only with no other import or export fee charged. The maquiladoras industries locate on the mesa to take advantage of the new commercial crossing, completed in 1985. The new crossing combined with the availability of land in Otay Mesa makes the possibility for future industrial development much greater than in San Ysidro, which has a small amount of vacant land available for industrial use.

Additionally, industrial development in San Ysidro is hampered by a number of obstacles. The Virginia Avenue commercial crossing (a one-way crossing permitting southbound commercial traffic only) has an uncertain future. (See also **International Gateway Element**.) The General Service Administration has discussed closing the crossing within the next few years (a measure which many in the community endorse). As a result, some of the distribution and warehouse uses have already relocated from San Ysidro to Otay Mesa. Also, other types of industry, such as research and development or scientific research, are reluctant to locate in San Ysidro because it is immediately adjacent to the border. Unlike the maquiladoras, these industries depend upon a skilled work force rather than the availability of low-cost Mexican labor, and they prefer to situate in the North City and County area.

There is potential for a limited amount of industrial development in San Ysidro because the community offers good railroad and highway access, as well as residential and commercial support to industrial development. Also, industrial land costs are low (compared with other areas of the City).





**TABLE 8**  
**INVENTORY OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN SAN YSIDRO – JUNE 1989**

Name/Location	Date Opened	Total Acres	Building Size
<b>Border International Industrial Park</b> Beyer Boulevard and SR-905	1977	18+	204,553 sq. ft.
<b>International Industrial Park</b> Via Segundo and Calle Primera	1985	9.4	276,000 sq. ft.

**Employment Opportunities**

Otay Mesa industrial development is expected to provide some employment opportunities for skilled San Ysidro residents. Since the maquiladora system creates only one job in the United States for every ten to 30 jobs in Mexico, and since these jobs can be scattered anywhere within a reasonable driving distance of the maquila plant, there have been few job creation opportunities in San Ysidro.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Provide for limited industrial development.
- Provide for the reuse of the areas most likely to be affected by the changing market conditions due to industrial growth in Otay Mesa and the impending closure of the Virginia Avenue commercial crossing.
- Attract and market new light industrial businesses to minimize environmental impacts.
- Facilitate the commute for San Ysidro residents traveling to jobs in Otay Mesa.

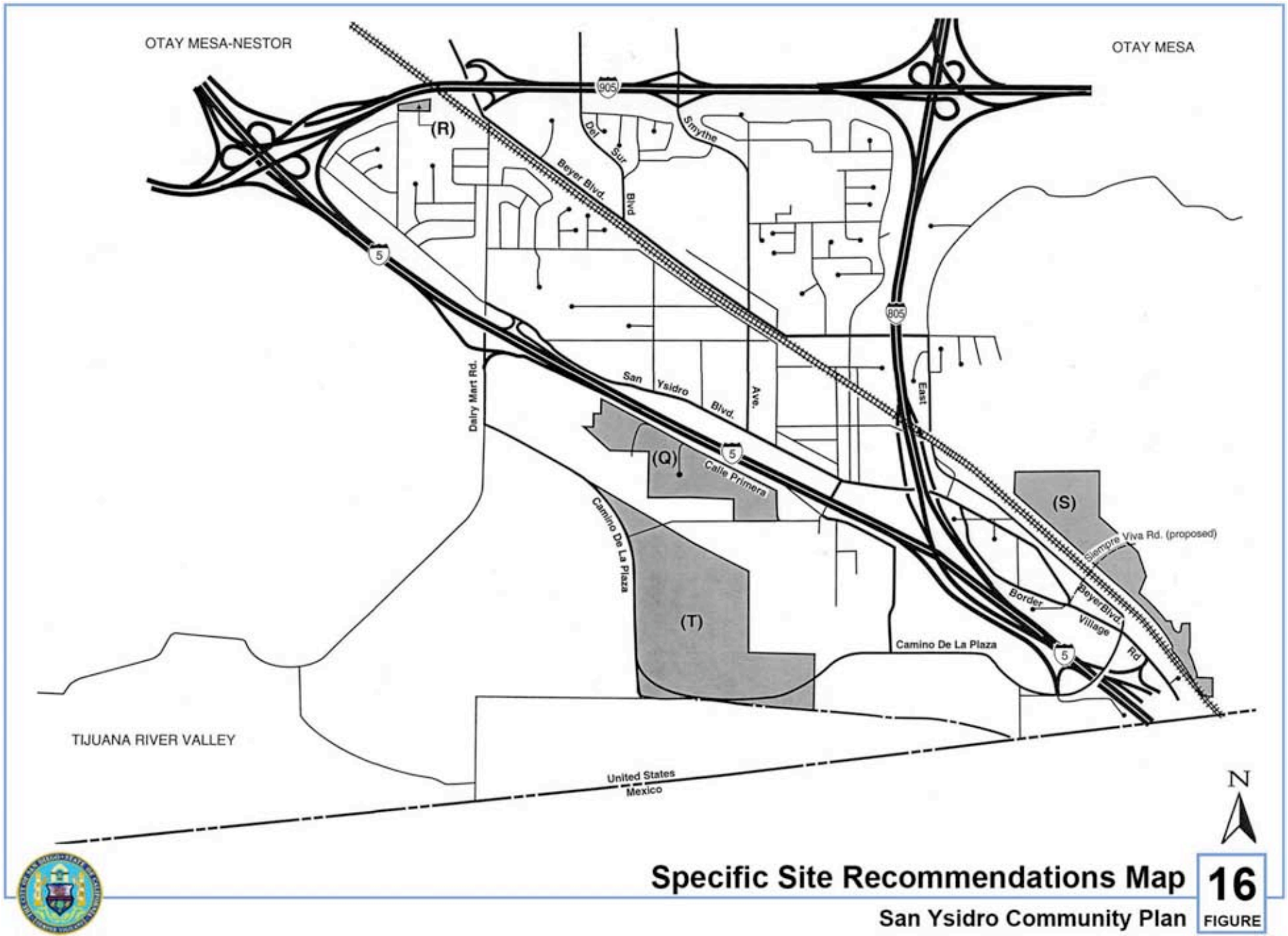
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

(See **Figure 15** for recommended industrial land uses.)

1. Maintain the Light Industrial land use designation in the area east of the railroad tracks because of the area’s accessibility to the freeway and railroad. Rezone this property to permit this use.
2. Maintain the light industrial use designation at the Border International Industrial Park located at the intersection of Beyer Boulevard and SR-905 because of its easy freeway access. In addition, allow an institutional use, using a Conditional Use Permit, to accommodate expanded adult education facilities. (See also the **Community Facilities and Services Element**.)



East of Railroad Tracks



3. Maintain and expand the light industrial land use designation in the western portion of the community, immediately east of the Tijuana River levee. Maintain the existing zoning (A-1-1 and A-1-10) to preserve future options.

4. Allow new commercial uses at the International Business Park and adjacent industrial areas on Calle Primera, southwest of I-5, if the Virginia Avenue commercial crossing is closed. Otay Mesa industrial development continues to occur at a fast pace, and the demand for this site as an industrial park declines. Appropriate commercial uses include theaters, bowling alleys, professional offices, and heavy commercial uses such as health clubs, trade schools, furniture stores and hardware stores. This flexibility in uses can be accomplished by rezoning the properties from M-1A and M-IP to a multiple-use zone. (See also the **Commercial Element**.)



Calle Primera Industrial Park

5. Design new projects to minimize conflicts with surrounding uses.
6. Ensure that new industrial projects are visually interesting with human scale architectural elements, such as entrance canopies and recessed walls, and include adequate landscaping and storage, loading and parking facilities. (See **Urban Form** for additional design guidelines regarding industrial development.)
7. Provide mass transit (bus and trolley service) between San Ysidro and Otay Mesa, extend Beyer Boulevard, and build Siempre Viva Road to ensure that San Ysidro residents can easily commute to jobs in Otay Mesa and so that future Otay Mesa residents and employees will be able to easily and conveniently patronize San Ysidro commercial areas. (See **Transportation and Circulation Element**.)

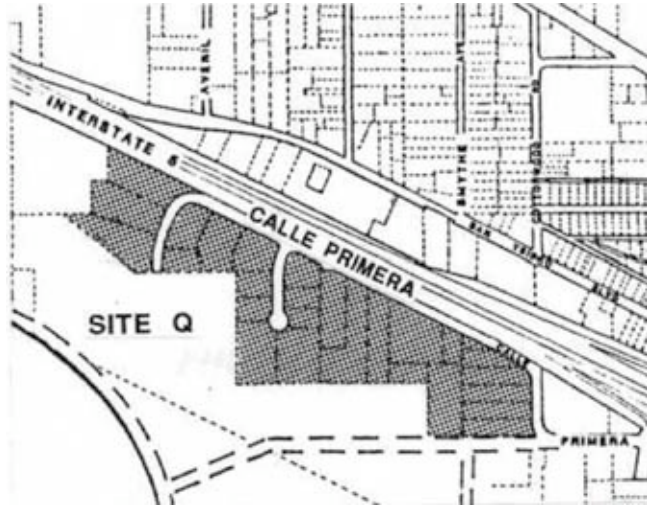


## SPECIFIC SITE RECOMMENDATIONS

Discretionary review of development proposals is recommended for the following sites. (See **Figure 16.**) These sites were included because they form the remaining undeveloped (or underdeveloped) industrial areas in the community.

### Site Q

This site, which includes the International Business Park and adjacent industrial areas, is located on Calle Primera, southwest of I-5. Existing land uses include storage facilities, warehouses, a retail outlet and a swap meet. Discretionary review of development proposals at this site is recommended because of the need for flexible uses, the area's high visibility from I-5, the need to provide adequate vehicular access to the area, and the site's proximity to the Dairy Mart Ponds—a sensitive natural habitat.



**Proposed Land Use Designation:** Industrial  
**Recommended Zoning:** A multiple-use zone

- **Uses.** Allow light industrial, entertainment and heavy commercial uses.
- **Building Design.** Avoid large expanses of blank walls. Instead, provide a visually interesting building design incorporating human scale architectural elements such as recessed walls, fenestration and entrance canopies. Avoid flat-topped roofs. Instead, vary roof heights and textures to enhance the view of the development from I-5.
- **Landscaping.** Provide a buffer landscaped with native vegetation to protect the Dairy Mart Ponds. In addition, provide a solid wall to mitigate noise and visually separate the development from the ponds.



## Site R

This site is located on the east side of Howard Avenue, immediately south of SR-905. The existing land use is a storage facility. Discretionary review of development proposals at this site is recommended because the area is highly visible from SR-905 and marks an entrance into San Ysidro. In addition, the site is immediately adjacent to an elementary school, single-family housing and a neighborhood park.



### **Proposed Land Use Designation:**

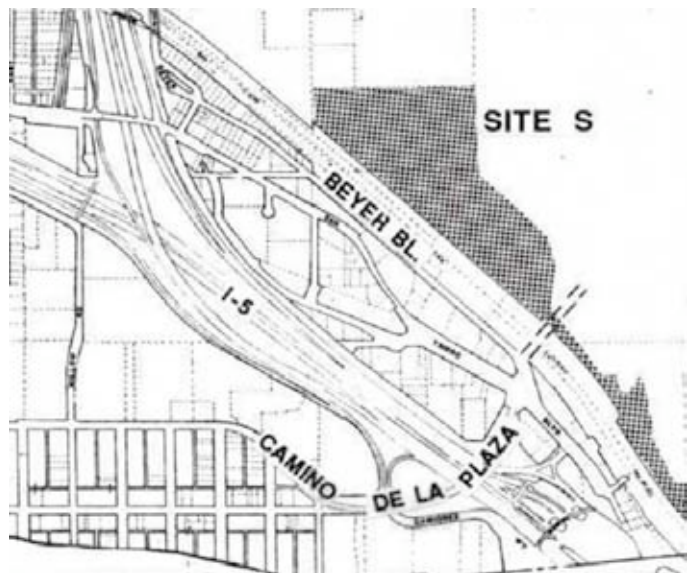
Light Industrial

**Recommended Zoning:** A light industrial zone which permits storage facility, office and light manufacturing uses that would not create adverse environmental effects on adjacent residential, school and park uses.

- **Uses.** Provide a mini-storage facility, office or light manufacturing use.
- **Building and Landscaping Design.** Provide interesting rooflines by varying roof heights and textures to enhance the view of the project from SR-905. Buffer the storage facility with walls and landscaping to screen views from the adjacent uses.

## Site S

This site is located east of the railroad tracks near the border and includes several parcels. Discretionary review of development proposals for this site is recommended because the area contains some unstable soils, the need for an adequate circulation system responsive to the adjacent freeway and railroad, and the potential impacts to the low-density housing planned for the area nearby.



### **Proposed Land Use Designation:**

Light Industrial or Border

Commercial if conditions pertaining to access, use restrictions, minimum project size, resource protection, site design and landscaping described in this section are met.

**Recommended Zoning:** A zone which permits only light industrial uses. A privately initiated rezoning, but not a community plan land use designation amendment, would be required to develop a Border Commercial project.

- **Site and Building Design.** Industrial or commercial projects should site structures to reflect the slope of the existing undeveloped hillsides and so as not to obstruct views. The architectural theme of the commercial project should reflect the style of Old Mexico and include elements such as tile roofs and public plazas.
- **Landscaping.** Provide a well-landscaped buffer to screen the development from nearby residential uses. Commercial projects should provide generous landscape and hardscape features.
- **Border Commercial Access.** Provide linkages to the older, existing commercial areas. Pedestrian access should be well defined.
- **Border Commercial Use Restrictions.** The project emphasis will be on tourist-serving/entertainment and hotel uses that will complement revitalization of the tourist-serving/retail uses planned for Commercial District 3. (See **Figure 10.**) The theme of the project will recreate a Mexican village. The project will provide for a cultural exchange and a variety of commercial activities serving tourists and residents. The exhibits and commercial activities should include but not be limited to: Mexican music and dancing; Mexican arts and crafts, exhibits and sales; restaurants and bars, including entertainment; Mexican rodeo and carnival; Mexican farmers' market; hotels/motels and theaters.
- **Border Commercial Minimum Project Size.** A comprehensive project of at least 15 acres should be constructed in one phase to ensure that isolated commercial development does not detract from existing commercial areas.

Note: The boundary of a commercial project would extend to the adjacent site to the north.  
(See **page 40** of the **Residential Element.**)

## Site T

This site is located at the extreme west edge of the community planning area and adjacent to the Tijuana River levee. Discretionary review of development proposals at this site is required because of the large size of the site (approximately 90 acres), its proximity to the border and the potential impacts due to border patrol operations, its proximity to the Tijuana River levee and the Tijuana River Valley, and the need for an adequate circulation system to serve the area.



### **Proposed Land Use Designation:**

Industrial or exclusively single-family residential if conditions pertaining to crime prevention, mosquito control, public facilities and community linkages described in this section are met.

- **Industrial Uses.** Allow light industrial uses, including a use such as a food distribution facility. In addition, allow institutional uses with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), such as the INS Detention Facility and Border Patrol Headquarters and a college or university.
- **Industrial Site and Landscaping Design.** Extend Camino de la Plaza with a landscaped median up to Dairy Mart Road to buffer the south and west sides of the site from the border. Cluster the buildings and include a substantial amount of landscaped open area within each cluster. The open areas could include such uses as employee recreation and extensively landscaped and screened parking.
- **Industrial Building Design.** Avoid large expanses of blank walls. Instead, provide a visually interesting building design incorporating human scale architectural details such as recessed walls, fenestration and entrance canopies. Avoid flat top roofs. Instead, vary roof heights and textures to enhance the view of the development from Camino de la Plaza.
- **Residential Site and Landscaping Design.** To protect future residents from any potential undesirable activities associated with the undocumented workers/migrants crossing from Mexico into the United States and to minimize conflicts between residents and INS officials, the following should become conditions of approval for a residential project:
  1. **A Wall and Buffer Area.** Should be constructed on the southern boundary. This wall shall be screened with landscaping that is aesthetically pleasing to residents but maintains open views. (See also **International Gateway Element**.)
  2. **The Defensible Space.** Guidelines outlined in the **Urban Form Element** of this Plan shall be adhered to.

3. **Linkages.** To integrate the new residences into the community, the placement of streets and sidewalks should create view and access corridors from the residences to nearby commercial uses, parks and open area.
4. **Public Facilities.** A ten-acre site shall be designated as an elementary school, to be located adjacent to a three- to five-acre park based upon the recommendations of the Park and Recreation Department.
5. **Mosquito Control.** Mosquitos would be controlled by participation in the County of San Diego Environmental Health Services Vector Surveillance and Control Program and the payment of fees required by the County pursuant to the Vector Surveillance and Control Program in existence at the time the Tentative Map is approved.



***Parks, Recreation and Open Space***



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## **PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE**

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### **GOALS**

Provide for a full and varied range of recreational opportunities accessible to all San Ysidro residents by improving existing resources, designating additional community and neighborhood parks, and preserving natural resources and open space areas.

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Due to a greater than anticipated increase in residential growth, San Ysidro is deficient in developed parkland by approximately 20 acres. The General Plan population-based park standards for neighborhood and community parks state that a neighborhood park should be located within an area serving 3,500-5,000 persons, and be a minimum of five acres when adjacent to an elementary school and ten acres when freestanding. According to the General Plan, community parks are recommended to serve a population of between 18,500 and 25,000 residents and to contain a minimum of 13 acres when adjacent to a junior high school and 20 acres when freestanding. Based on the projected population for the year 2010 of 29,292 people (forecasted by SANDAG, Series 7), San Ysidro should contain 1.2-1.5 community parks, and five neighborhood parks of five acres, using an average of 1.86 acres of park per 1,000 people. The community should have 54.5 total park acres. Currently, the community has one community park at 3.6 acres and five neighborhood parks for a total of 41.13 acres.

One neighborhood park site is currently undeveloped. The total existing developed population based park acreage is 34.35 acres.

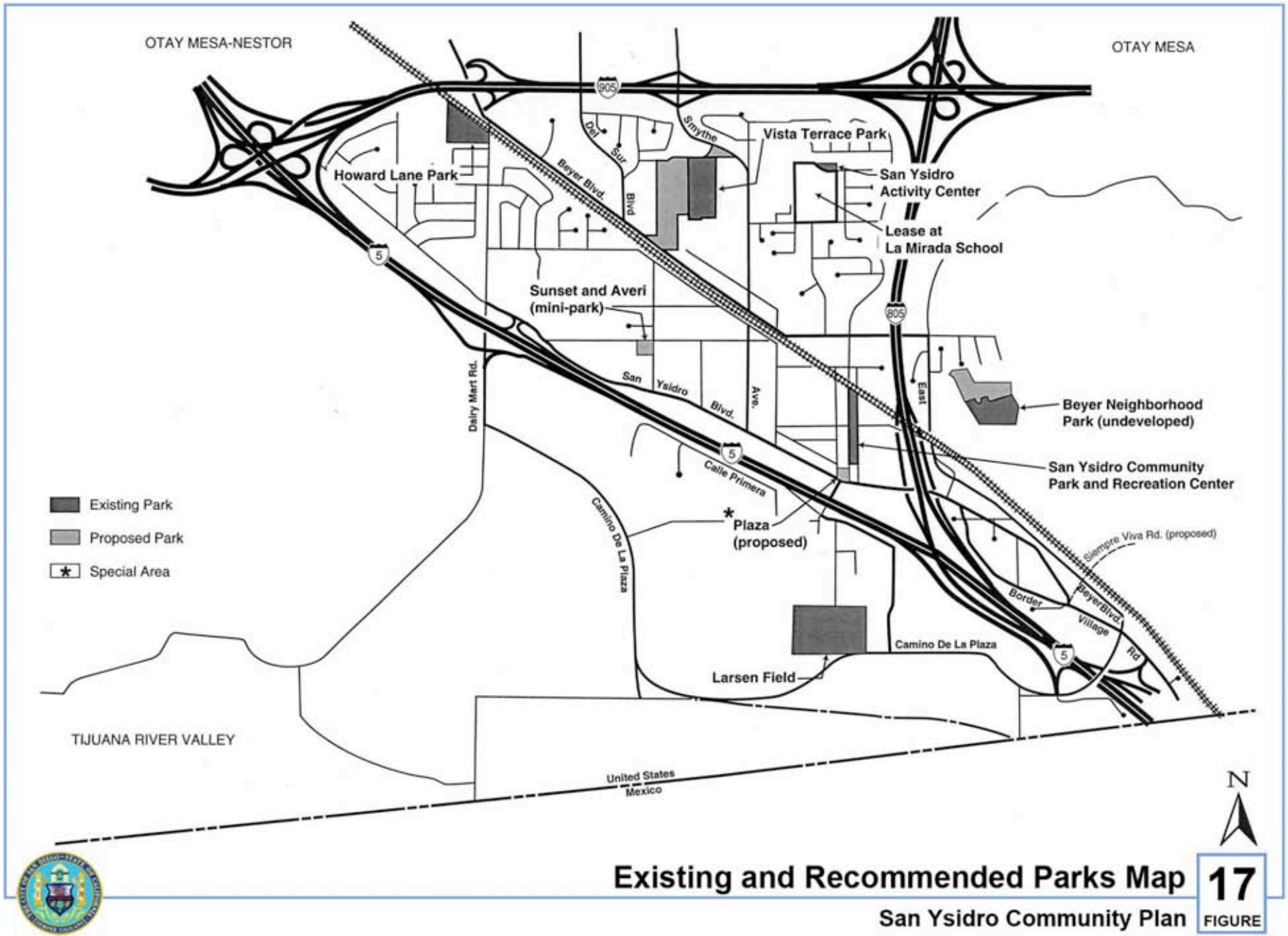
### **Community Park**

The San Ysidro Recreation Center is classified as a community park. This 3.6-acre linear park site is bounded by East and West Park Avenues, San Ysidro Boulevard and Seaward Avenue, and serves as the primary unifying element of the historic neighborhood “El Pueblito Viejo.” Improvements to this facility include tennis and basketball courts, parking facilities, a tot lot and a landscaped open area with picnic tables.

The park also contains several important public facilities: the San Ysidro Library, the Senior Center, the Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee Center (a social service agency), and a gymnasium. Access to these facilities is enhanced by the park’s central location in the community. (See **Figure 17** and **Table 9**.) Casa Familiar, a local social service agency, began operating the gymnasium in 1988.



**San Ysidro Recreation Center - The “Linear Park”**



# Existing and Recommended Parks Map

San Ysidro Community Plan

**17**  
FIGURE

## **Neighborhood Parks**

Vista Terrace Park, a neighborhood park, contains 6.7 acres and is located west of Smythe Avenue and south of Athey Avenue, adjacent to the United States Border Patrol Headquarters and Detention Facility and Smythe School. (See **Figure 17.**) This neighborhood park is the site of a municipal swimming pool with a dressing facility, a tot lot, parking and picnic areas and a soccer athletic field. This is a heavily visited facility due to the popularity of the swimming pool and fully improved athletic field, yet it has inadequate parking. The location of the Border Patrol facility currently prohibits a much needed expansion of the park. In 1988, the San Ysidro community began a drive to relocate the facility to Otay Mesa and expand the park.



Vista Terrace Park

Howard Lane Park is a 6.6-acre neighborhood park located immediately adjacent to Nicoloff Elementary School, west of Dairy Mart Road and south of SR-905. Improvements include a turfed playing area, a tot lot, picnic benches, basketball courts, paved walkways and landscaping.

The San Ysidro Community Activity Center, a 1.45-acre neighborhood park, is located at the western terminus of Diza Road, below La Mirada Elementary School. This recreation center sponsors a variety of recreational and educational activities for the San Ysidro community. The Center also sponsors a lunch program every weekday. This facility is landscaped but it is lacking a turfed outdoor playing area. A ramp links the Center to La Mirada Elementary School, where, in 1988, the City of San Diego proposed a joint use agreement with the San Ysidro School District to share 2.5 acres of an unturfed sports field.

The San Ysidro Athletic Center (Larsen Field), at the south end of Sycamore Road, is an approximately 16-acre neighborhood park consisting of playing fields and a comfort station. Currently, it does not meet the community's need for youth recreation because it lacks necessary improvements. In 1988, the Park and Recreation Department hired a consultant to design a 10,000-square-foot recreation building. Construction of this facility is due to begin in Fiscal Year 1989.

**TABLE 9  
EXISTING POPULATION-BASED PARKS**

<b>Parks</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Major Facilities</b>
San Ysidro Recreation Center	3.6	Community	Tennis and Basketball, Tot Lot, Picnic Area, Library, Senior Center, Gymnasium, Mexican American Activity Center
Vista Terrace Park	6.7	Neighborhood	Swimming Pool, Soccer
Howard Lane Park	6.6	Neighborhood	Playing Field, Basketball
San Ysidro Community Activity Center	1.45	Neighborhood	Gymnasium, Meeting Rooms
San Ysidro Athletic Center (Larsen Field)	16.0	Neighborhood	Playing Field, Comfort Station
Beyer Neighborhood Park	6.78 (undeveloped)	Neighborhood	Unimproved
<b>Total</b>	<b>41.13</b>		

The timely completion of this facility is critical, due to the general lack of public facilities south of I-5 and the influx of young families from other San Diego neighborhoods. When fully improved, Larsen Field will provide San Ysidro and neighboring communities with a sports center with lighted playing fields, a soccer field, a baseball diamond and a recreation building.

It should also be emphasized that San Ysidro lacks leisure centers and gathering places, such as bowling alleys, cinemas, discotheques and open areas. This precludes the provision of entertainment and cultural activities, such as concerts, dance programs and lectures. Such services are essential in communities like San Ysidro with young populations. Recommendations regarding the provision of these services are included in the **Commercial and International Gateway Elements**.

**Open Space**

San Ysidro is also deficient in open space acreage; there is none designated within the community's 1974 plan boundaries. Prior to this Plan's adoption, existing open areas, such as the Dairy Mart Ponds and the steep slopes on the community's eastern boundary, were not protected with the appropriate land use designation and zoning nor were they easily accessible to San Ysidro residents.



Dairy Mart Ponds

In addition, the potential visual, open space and pedestrian link between San Ysidro and these resources was not realized; this deterred public access and use.



The Dairy Mart Ponds, approximately 113 acres of wetland habitat, 88 of which are in the San Ysidro community planning area, are one of the community's major natural resources. They are located off Dairy Mart Road, southwest of I-5. 53 acres have been acquired by the State of California Wildlife conservation Board. (Twenty-five of those acres are in the Otay Mesa-Nestor community planning area.) The remaining portion of the ponds is under other ownership: approximately 20 acres under public ownership and 40 acres under private ownership.



Steep Slopes

The steep slopes on the community's eastern boundary are one of San Ysidro's major visual open area resources and dramatically frame the eastern portion of the community. They are immediately adjacent to the open space network in the adopted Otay Mesa Community Plan. This area has been identified as containing unstable soils.

The Tijuana River Valley, immediately to the west of San Ysidro, is also the site of undesignated open areas, including the floodplain, extending west of the Tijuana River Levee, Border Field State Park and the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve. Located between the Cities of Tijuana and San Diego, the river valley provides an open, natural area in an otherwise urban atmosphere. (See **Figure 18**.) Although not within the San Ysidro Community Plan boundaries, the river valley has a dramatic visual impact on that community and serves as its major natural resource.

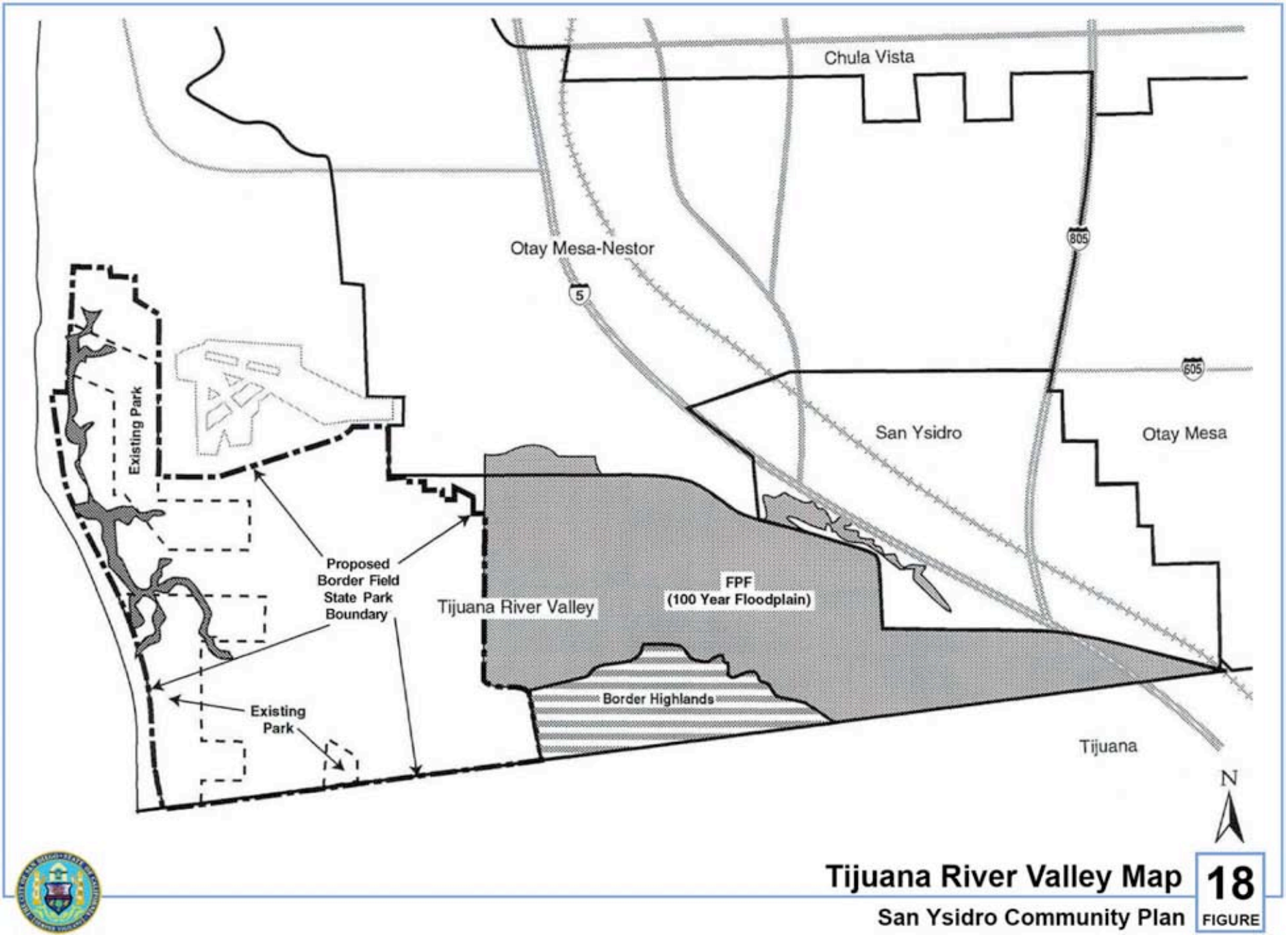


Tijuana River Valley

The potential visual, open space, vehicular and pedestrian link between San Ysidro and the river valley, however, has not been realized, limiting public access and use.

The existing Border Field State Park and Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve contains 680 acres and extends from the border north along the coast for approximately 2.5 miles. An International Border monument is located on a ten-acre plateau which overlooks the coast and floodplain. This passive recreation area consists of a park used for picnicking and sightseeing and a beach area used for swimming, surfing and fishing. Access to the ocean, however, is often closed due to sewage spills and flooding. The remainder of the area within the existing park consists mainly of wetland habitats—a saltwater marsh, mud flats and a maritime transition zone. It is a primary objective of the State Park and Recreation Commission to preserve the ecological system in as natural a condition as possible and to restrict active recreation to the sandy beach and upland area.





**Tijuana River Valley Map**  
 San Ysidro Community Plan

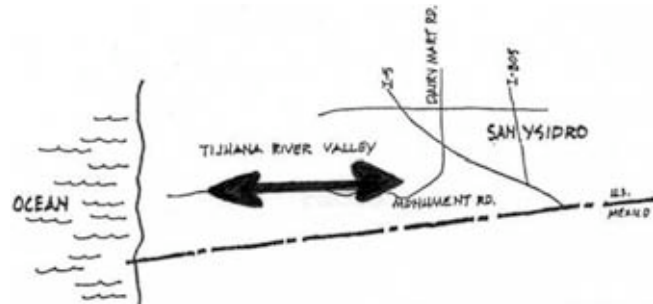
**18**  
 FIGURE



The Tijuana River Estuary is one of the San Diego region's major natural resources. The estuary provides a very valuable wildlife habitat, and is of great environmental, scientific, aesthetic, educational and recreational value. Hillsides surrounding the estuary, the Border Highlands, are also important resources since they form an integral and highly aesthetic open area that frames the southern edge of the estuary. Buffer zones between the estuary and any road or other development must be controlled so that the estuary resource is not damaged.

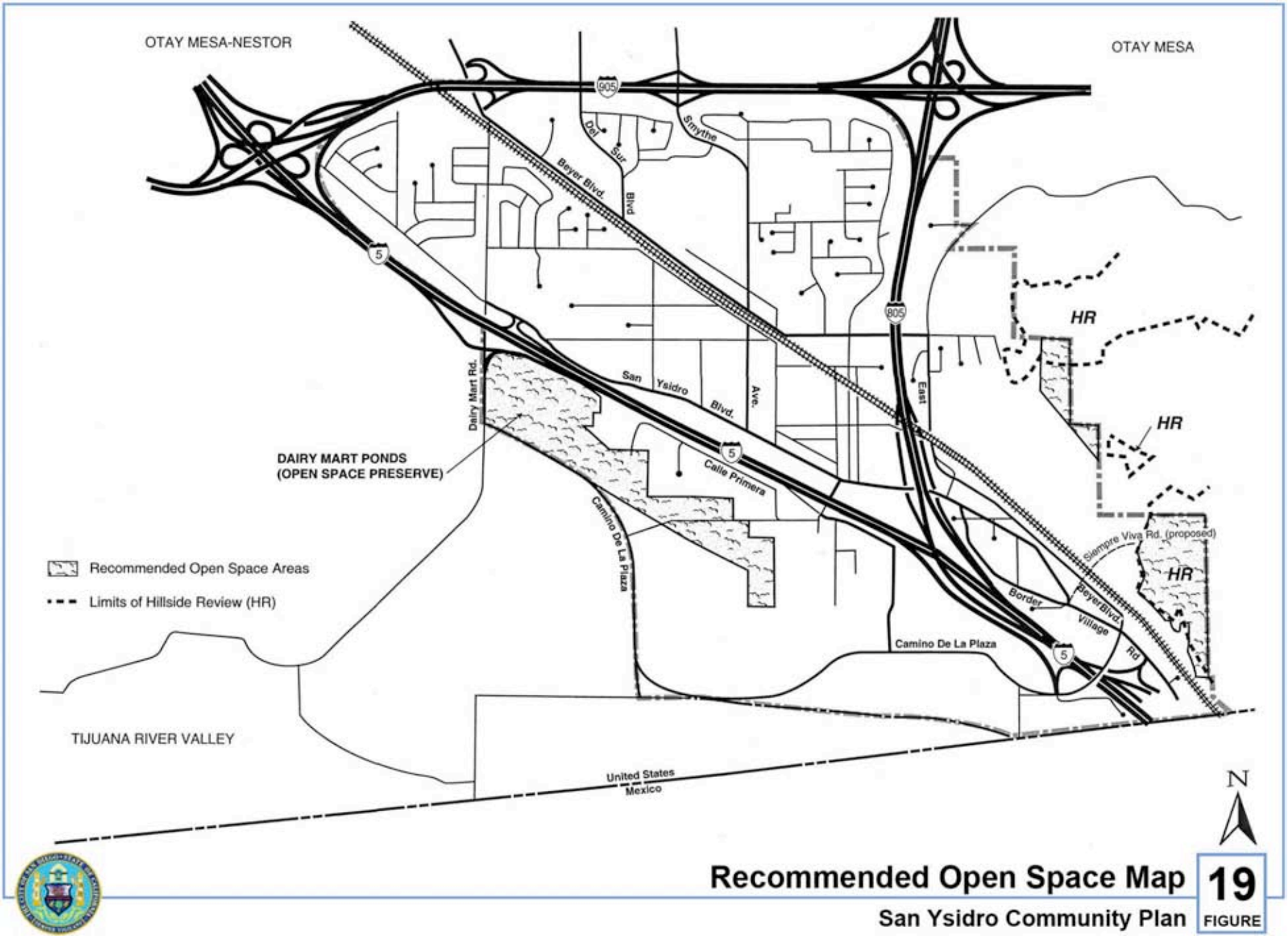
## OBJECTIVES

- Meet the population-based park standards of the General Plan.
- Expand existing parks and develop new parks.
- Provide recreational facilities within residential developments.
- Limit active recreation use of Border Field State Park to the sandy beach and park area.
- Ensure that the Tijuana River Valley is protected because of its natural, educational, recreational and aesthetic value.
- Create a link from San Ysidro to the Tijuana River Valley and to the ocean.
- Preserve and enhance the valued natural resources of the San Ysidro community.
- Link parks, recreation centers, open areas and schools.
- Ensure that development adjacent to wetlands and other sensitive habitats is designed to minimize adverse effects to the resource.
- Maintain sensitive areas in contiguous open space connections with other habitat areas in adjacent communities.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Pursue new sources of revenue, such as bond issues and Federal or State Grant Programs, for the acquisition and development of parks not financed by the City of San Diego General Fund.
2. Relocate the Immigration and Naturalization Service Detention Facility and acquire the 14.4-acre property to expand the existing 6.7-acre neighborhood facility, Vista Terrace Park. The expanded 21-acre park will then serve as an adequate Community Park and ensure that the General Plan's population-based park standards will be met. (See **Figure 17** and **Table 10**.)



**TABLE 10  
RECOMMENDED POPULATION-BASED PARKS**

<b>Parks</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Proposed Facilities</b>
Beyer Neighborhood Park (Addition)	(3.0)	Neighborhood	Expand Park Site
Sunset and Averil Park	1.16	Mini-park	
Athey and Smythe Avenues Passive Park	1.47	Passive Park	
Vista Terrace Park Expansion	14.43*	Community	
San Ysidro Activity Center/La Mirada Elementary	2.5**	Neighborhood	Turfed Playing Field
Town Center Plaza	0.25		
<b>Total</b>	<b>22.81</b>		

\* The total park acreage including the expansion would equal 21 acres.

\*\* The total park acreage would equal 3.95 acres and include the joint City of San Diego/La Mirada Elementary School playing field and the Activity Center.

3. Designate the 1.47-acre triangular parcel at Smythe and Athey Avenues as Neighborhood Park. (See **Figure 17.**) Develop the site as a passive park and open area and as an entryway to Vista Terrace Park.
4. Improve the 2.5-acre playing field at La Mirada Elementary School for joint use by the school and by the San Ysidro Activity Center.
5. Improve the San Ysidro Athletic Center (Larsen Field) to provide a much needed recreation building and lighted playing fields.
6. Provide sites for mini-parks and landscaped open areas in park deficient neighborhoods. Designate the 1.16-acre currently vacant parcel located at the southwest corner of Sunset and Averil as a mini-park. (See **Figure 17.**)
7. Purchase an additional three acres at Beyer Neighborhood Park.
8. Develop Beyer Neighborhood Park. The existing unimproved 6.78-acre site was designated as park in the 1974 adopted plan. It is owned by the City of San Diego and has been reserved for future park development. The additional three-acre purchase will create, approximately, a ten-acre site.
9. Designate a town center “plaza” site as park. (See also the **Urban Form Element.**) The 0.25-acre plaza would not be a typical park in that there would be no active recreation (playing fields, for example). However, the plaza would be an area for sitting, strolling, community festivals and parades. Maintenance could be provided by a Merchants’ Association or an Assessment District.
10. Use public school facilities (including recreational fields, auditoriums and meeting rooms) for community activities and park and recreation uses during non-school hours.

11. Designate approximately 88 acres of the Dairy Mart Ponds and surrounding land as open space. (See **Figure 19**.) New development adjacent to the wetlands will be subject to discretionary review to ensure protection of the resource. The criteria of the Resource Protection Ordinance, including a requirement to provide a buffer between wetlands and development projects, will be in effect. The buffer shall be a minimum of 50 feet in width and shall be maintained around all identified riparian areas, unless it can be demonstrated that a buffer of lesser width will protect the resources of the riparian habitat, based on site-specific information. Such information shall include, but is not limited to, the type and size of development and/or proposed mitigation (such as planting of vegetation or construction of fencing) which will also achieve the purposes of the buffer. The buffer shall be measured landward from the riparian habitat. The California Department of Fish and Game and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service shall be consulted in such buffer determinations.
12. Designate the floodplain area in the Tijuana River Valley for resource-based open space use. Although not in the San Ysidro planning area, this Plan strongly recommends the retention of this area as open space.
13. Publicize the facilities, and hours that they are available, at the Border Field State Park and the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve.
14. Designate the steep slopes on the eastern boundary of the planning area as open space and apply agricultural zoning and the Hillside Review Overlay zone to reserve this major visual open area resource and to extend the open space network in the adopted Otay Mesa Community Plan. (See **Figure 19**.)
15. Develop a pedestrian path network throughout the planning area to permit pedestrians to safely and easily walk to various community facilities, including schools, parks, and residential, commercial, industrial and institutional development. Maintenance responsibility should be assigned upon development of these paths. (See **Urban Form Element, Figure 20**.)
16. Review all development proposals involving sensitive resources with the goal of maintaining contiguous open space connections within and adjacent to the plan area.

### **Recommended Open Space**

The total amount of open space acreage identified is approximately 149 acres. This includes 88 acres of the Dairy Mart Ponds and about 61 acres of the steep hillsides on the eastern boundary of the planning area.





*Urban Form*

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## **URBAN FORM**

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### **GOALS**

This element includes a discussion of public urban spaces, the relationships between exterior spaces and the relationships between buildings in San Ysidro.

- Develop a more cohesive San Ysidro, a community connected socially, visually and physically.
- Create architecture that reflects the history and climate of the area, the needs of San Ysidro residents, business people and visitors, and that revitalizes and maintains existing buildings and public spaces, including sidewalks and streets.

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The San Ysidro community is challenged by several major social and economic conditions that affect its physical urban form. Many of these have been discussed in other elements of this plan and include:

- A close cultural and commercial trade relationship with Mexico and the millions of people, tourists, business people and workers, that cross the International Border with Mexico every year.
- The lack of economic vitality that exists in the community while large number of tourists pass through its boundaries every day.
- The need for sensitively designed, affordable housing for San Ysidro residents.

These conditions contribute to the shape that the urban environment takes and have resulted in a series of issues that have been identified through discussions with many San Ysidro residents, landowners, business people and design professionals. The issues have been grouped into two categories: The Divided Community and Architecture.

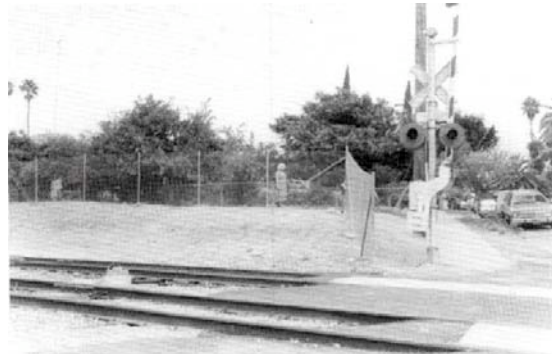
#### **The Divided Community**

The community of San Ysidro (and all of South San Diego) is isolated from the rest of the City of San Diego, separated by several municipalities and tenuously connected to it by two interstate highways (I-5 and I-805) and a strip of land under the bay.

Within the San Ysidro community, neighborhoods are isolated from each other. San Ysidro was originally laid out in a grid pattern with major avenues running north and south and organized around a central linear park. This historic pattern has been undermined in the last several decades by the construction of major freeways, the trolley (and railroad) line (the original rail line ran along San Ysidro Boulevard) and indiscriminate and often insensitive development. Discussed below are conditions which contribute to the sense of isolation and division within the community:

- **The community is bisected by the trolley line and railroad tracks, I-5 and I-805 and several major roads.** The southern and western neighborhoods are separated from the rest of the community by I-5 and are bounded by the Tijuana River Valley and the International Border. The eastern neighborhood is separated from the rest of the community by the railroad and trolley tracks and I-805. The northern and older central neighborhoods are separated by the railroad and trolley tracks and Beyer Boulevard.

The trolley line and railroad tracks, the interstate highways and major roads act as physical barriers, impeding not only vehicular circulation (access points such as cross streets and under and over passes are very limited in number) but pedestrian circulation as well. San Ysidro has a great deal of pedestrian activity, yet there are few pedestrian connections across these barriers and those that do exist, particularly the pedestrian bridges across I-5 and I-805, are uninviting, graffiti-covered concrete and chain link.



Pedestrians walk directly over the trolley tracks.

In the older central residential neighborhoods (including the historic neighborhood), there are few pedestrian connections linking areas north and south of the trolley/railroad corridor and no pedestrian connections linking the Beyer Trolley Station with the surrounding neighborhoods, linear park and nearby commercial districts. Pedestrians instead walk directly on the trolley tracks. In addition, the trolley/railroad corridor passes through these neighborhoods with no buffer between the corridor’s chain link edge and the quiet residences immediately adjacent. The frequent (every 15 minutes during the day) clanging of trolley horns and bells disturbs nearby residents.

- **There is no real “center of town.”** The historic center of the community, the linear park with the library serving as an anchor, dead ends at San Ysidro Boulevard near Via de San Ysidro. There is no link to the rest of the community. The strength of this potential central focus is limited by the traffic congestion on the Boulevard (this is the most congested intersection in the community), the lack of a link from this area to the rest of the community and the deterioration of the adjacent historic commercial core.



Pedestrians on San Ysidro Boulevard

- **San Ysidro Boulevard traffic creates a barrier to the pedestrian.** San Ysidro Boulevard, the community’s “main street,” is heavily traveled by pedestrians, particularly from the border to Dairy Mart Road. However, there are few places along the street where pedestrians can safely cross to the other side of the Boulevard and the neighborhoods beyond.

- **The southern portion of the community suffers not only from isolation from the rest of the community but from a poorly defined edge.** The southern portion of the community is bounded by the Tijuana River Valley to the west and the International Border with Mexico to the south. Development in this area of San Ysidro consists of several large multifamily and commercial projects, ending abruptly in a large open area used by undocumented immigrants and the Border Patrol.



Undefined southern edge

### **Architecture**

A small neighborhood of early 20<sup>th</sup> century (circa 1920) homes and shops and the remaining portion of the historic Little Landers Colony is located in the heart of San Ysidro and has set the tone for the community’s small-scale, single-family, village character. A linear park with a small, historic library is in the center of the area. Most of the older structures are one-story stucco or wood-sided homes and many are connected to the outdoors with porches, patios and courtyards. Existing gardens in this neighborhood tend to be lush, outdoor rooms filled with vibrant color, palm trees and native shrubs.



Neighborhood surrounding the Linear Park

Residential infill construction, the design of which is often unattractive and unsympathetic to the community’s historic past, climate and ethnic heritage, is undermining the character of these neighborhoods. These new structures do not take advantage of the area’s natural topography or views (many areas in San Ysidro are hilly and have spectacular views of the Tijuana River Valley and the City of Tijuana) and are often very massive and dense, overshadowing their small-scale neighbors.



New Residential Infill

Minimal landscaping and a lack of human-scale details, such as approaches, balconies and covered and protected entrances, provide a stark contrast to the existing urban fabric.



In addition, residents consider that they have received more than their fair share of low-income projects. Some community members have labeled these projects “instant slums” because of their monotonous, institutional or barracks-like appearance, large expanses of asphalt parking lots, chain link fencing and inadequate private and public outdoor space.

Many existing single-family and multifamily residences are in need of maintenance and repair, not only in the older neighborhoods where the age of the structures contributes to the deterioration, but in the newer subdivisions as well. As discussed in the **Residential Element**, the need for maintenance and repair is due, in part, to the renter-occupied status of many of the homes. About 59 percent are renter-occupied.



Historic Community Commercial Core

In addition, recent commercial, industrial and institutional development in the core of the community and at the International Border does not respond to the character of San Ysidro in terms of the area’s climate, history, ethnic heritage, or topography. In the community’s commercial core on San Ysidro Boulevard, historic commercial buildings have deteriorated and many are vacant. Despite this deterioration and years of neglect, this area has a friendly, village flavor with many references to San

Ysidro’s past (for example, the old Hotel San Ysidro dating back to the Little Landers Colony). The area is scaled to the pedestrian, with no building higher than two stories, most structures built to the property line, and most of the parking off-site. Recently built industrial and institutional developments often lack interesting architectural features and details and are insensitively designed. At the International Gateway, traffic congestion, litter and overburdened storm drains detract from the potential of this major entrance to San Ysidro, San Diego, and the United States and Mexico.

Other elements contribute to the sense of poor quality architecture, such as dirty, neglected streets and sidewalks visual clutter from a proliferation of signage that does not meet City regulations, unsightly utility poles, inadequate street lighting, and minimal or non-existent landscaping on the community’s major thoroughfares and at many of the residential, commercial and industrial developments. These conditions have a significant effect on the urban form as San Ysidro is a community with a great amount of pedestrian activity. They also detract from the beauty of the built environment, particularly at the pedestrian level.

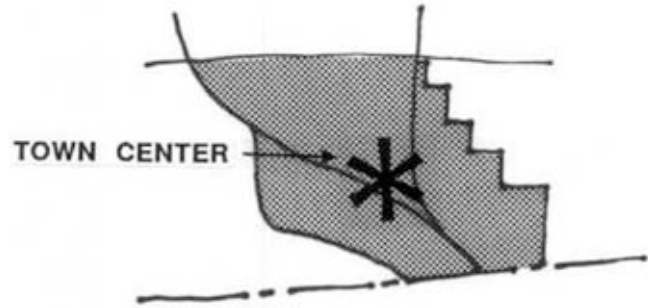


## OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

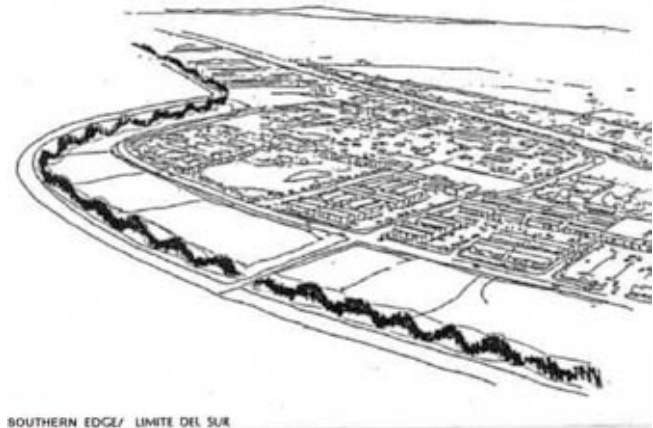
### Unified Community

To unify the community:

- Realize a town center or plaza, a “central focus” for the community;
- Reinforce the positive things about the community such as the linear park and the historic district;
- Increase pedestrian and automobile access across the trolley corridor, Dairy Mart Road, San Ysidro Boulevard, I-805 and I-5 and create a strong visual link across these physical barriers to nearby neighborhoods and commercial centers;
- Link schools and activity centers (parks and recreation centers); and
- Define the community’s southern edge.

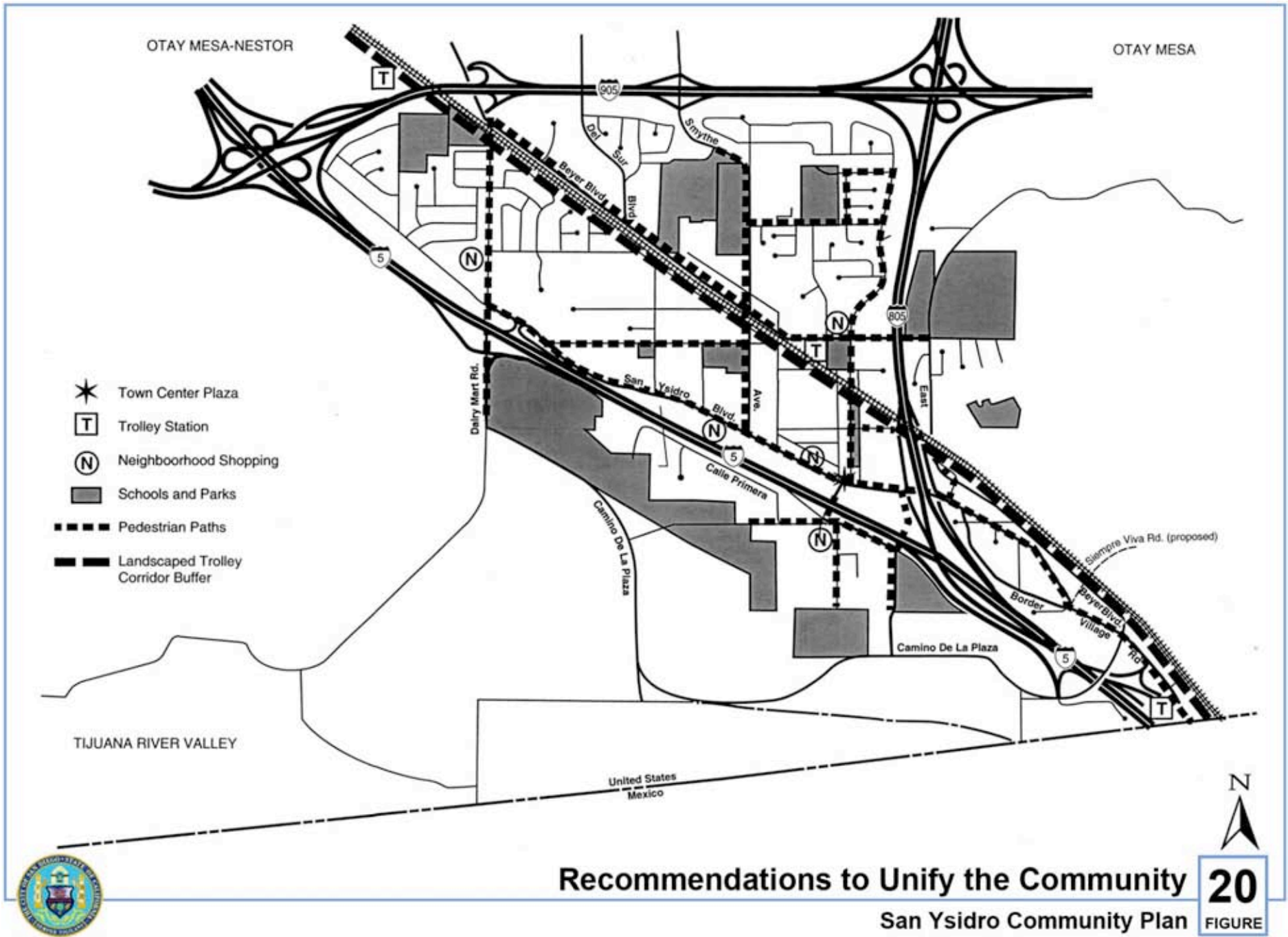


Recommendations to unify the community focus on San Ysidro Boulevard and other major traffic corridors. San Ysidro Boulevard is one of the major roads in the community, passing through the heart of old San Ysidro (a possible Historic District) between Dairy Mart Road and I-5 to the border. Although it is hampered by parking and circulation problems, it could serve as the community’s primary unifying element. The following actions, including those regarding San Ysidro Boulevard, are recommended:



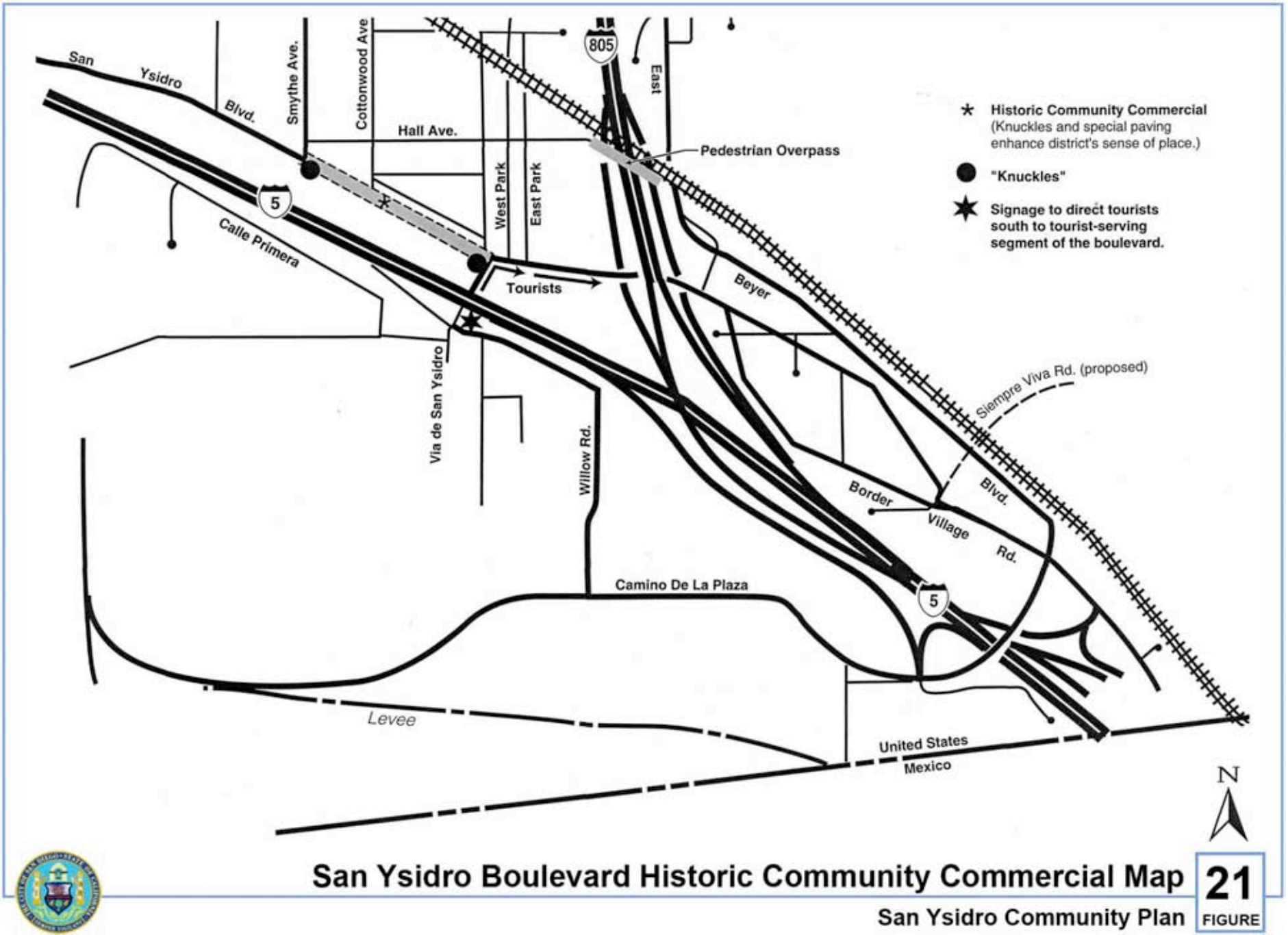
#### 1. Town Center and Plaza

Develop a plaza at the center of town. The existing businesses along San Ysidro Boulevard could serve as the foundation for a town center or “mercado/plaza.” Locate the plaza at San Ysidro Boulevard and Via de San Ysidro. This intersection serves as a gateway into the community and is also a freeway on- and off-ramp, and is at the center of the historic district. (See **Figure 20** and the **Parks and Recreation, and Open Space Element.**)

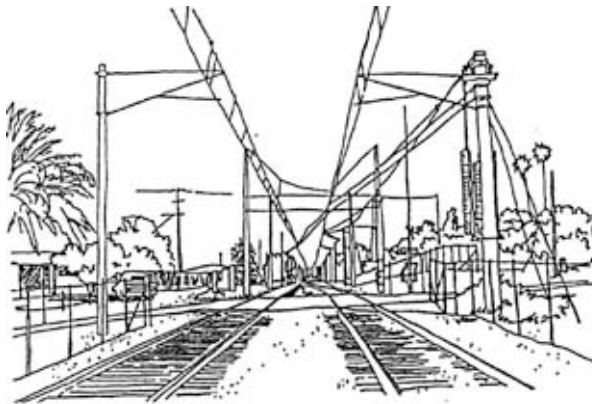


Recommendations to Unify the Community  
San Ysidro Community Plan

2. Street Improvements. (See **Transportation and Circulation Element**.)
  - a. Transportation Models. Re-evaluate standard planning and transportation models in which the fast, smooth flow of traffic is the only goal. The provision of transportation facilities should serve the community, not just the automobile.
  - b. San Ysidro Boulevard. Discourage through traffic along San Ysidro Boulevard in the historic commercial district northwest of Via de San Ysidro by placing appropriate signage at the intersection of Via de San Ysidro and San Ysidro Boulevard, and using other appropriate traffic engineering methods which may include special paving, additional signage, or “knuckles.” This will direct tourists south to the tourist-serving segments of the Boulevard south of I-805. The use of special paving, street furniture, identification signage and “knuckles” would also help to enhance the historic commercial district’s sense of place. (See **Figure 21**.) If the above described methods do not prove effective, restripe San Ysidro Boulevard to three lanes of traffic within the existing vehicular right-of-way area, prohibiting parking on one side of the street.
  - c. Camino de la Plaza Exit. Direct tourists out of the community-serving, historic-commercial segment of San Ysidro Boulevard by placing the appropriate directional signage on the freeway at the Camino de la Plaza exit. Locate tourist-serving uses south of the historic area, south of I-805, and in the vicinity of Camino de la Plaza. (See also **Commercial Element**.)
  - d. San Ysidro Boulevard and Border Village Road Couplet. Construct a couplet at San Ysidro Boulevard and Border Village Road to ease existing traffic congestion. (See **Figure 22**.)
  - e. North-south Access. Improve north-south access in the community where feasible. Possible options are to provide a new pedestrian crossing over the trolley tracks between Del Sur Boulevard and Averil Road, to improve the Smythe Avenue crossing and to extend Olive Drive.
  - f. Camino de la Plaza Extension. Extend Camino de la Plaza to Dairy Mart Road to form an edge to the community between the developed, urban areas and the natural riparian habitats of the Tijuana River Valley. (See **Figure 20**.)
3. Trolley Corridor Improvements. (See also **Transportation and Circulation Element**.)
  - a. Landscape the trolley corridor to soften the edge of this physical barrier.
  - b. Create pedestrian links from the Beyer Trolley Station to the linear park, town center and surrounding neighborhoods. (See **Figure 20**.)
  - c. Enhance the trolley bridge at East Beyer Boulevard with a mural to connect the neighborhoods east and west of I-805. This could be a youth-oriented project which could be used to unify rival San Ysidro gangs.







Existing Trolley Corridor - No Landscaping



Existing Trolley Corridor - With Recommended Landscaping

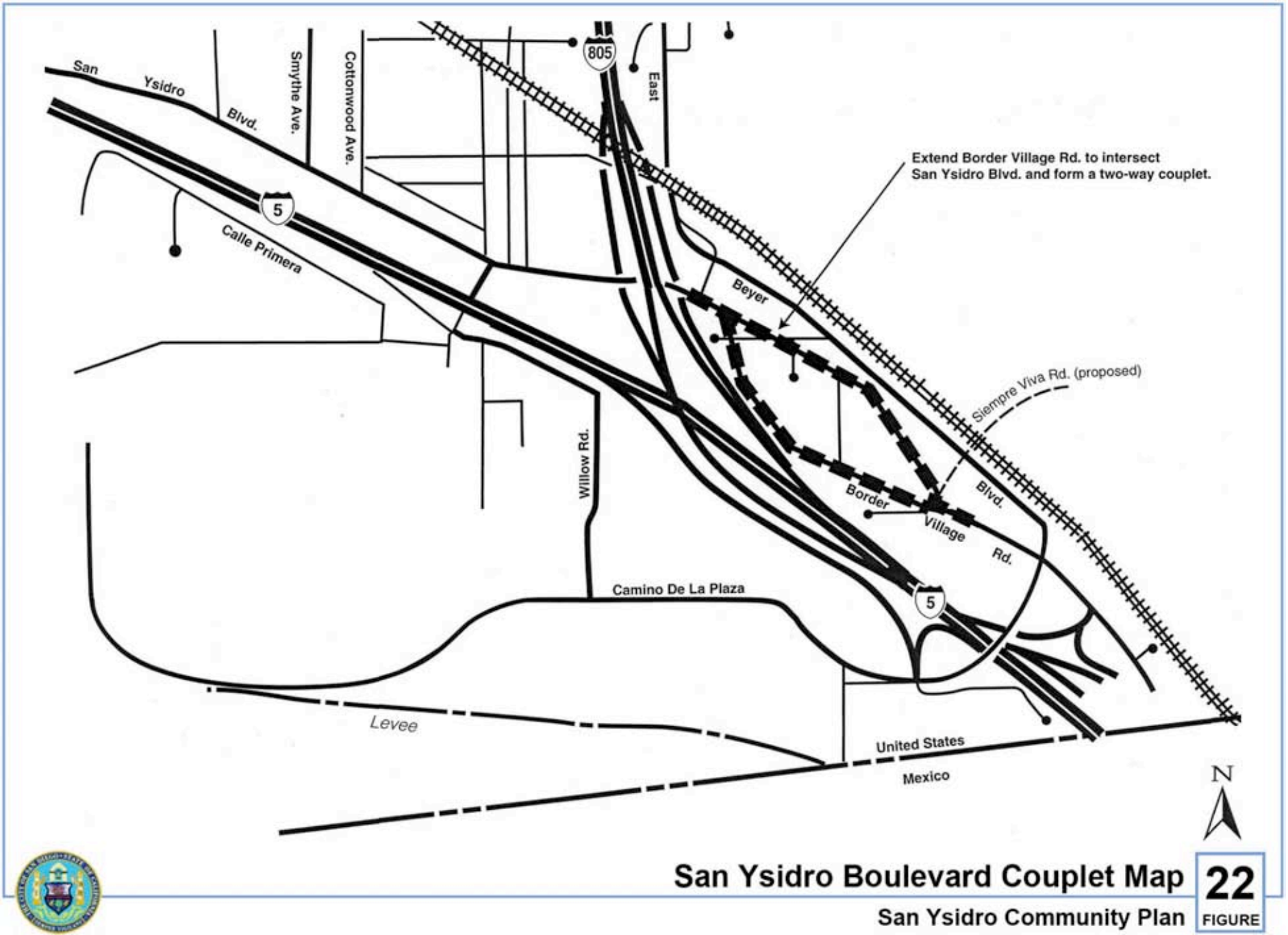
#### 4. Pedestrian Links

- a. Provide crosswalks and pedestrian bridges to create linkages across major traffic corridors. Enhance the existing bridges to improve the pedestrian environment, safety and accessibility using design elements such as lighting, signage, pedestrian furniture and landscaping.
- b. Link schools and activity centers (parks and recreation centers) with well-defined, well-lit, safe paths (See **Figure 20.**)

#### **Architecture**

1. Recognize, preserve and enhance historical and significant buildings, urban environments (including the linear park), and natural features such as the Dairy Mart Ponds and the Tijuana River Valley;
2. Maintain and complement the existing scale and character of the existing residential and historic commercial areas;
3. Upgrade the existing commercial and industrial areas;
4. Create maintenance programs for homeowners for their houses and yards and for store owners to improve storefronts;
5. Adhere to the design guidelines outlined in this Plan and enforce zoning and signage codes; and
6. Protect and maximize visual links to sensitive natural areas including canyons, hillsides, floodplains and wetlands.





San Ysidro Boulevard Couplet Map

San Ysidro Community Plan

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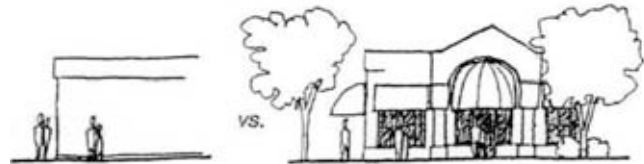
FIGURE

## General Design Guidelines

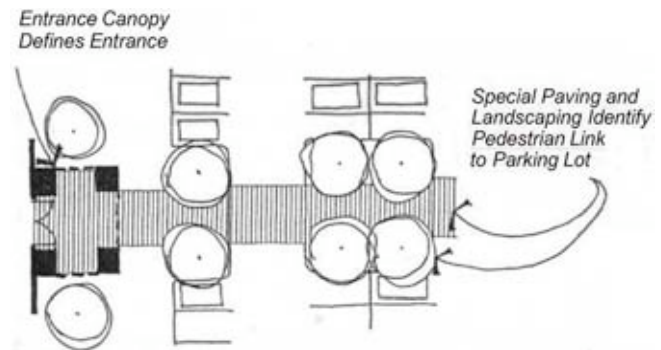
The following design guidelines have been developed for general application in any new development (including redevelopment) or in the rehabilitation of existing structures.

1. **Orient the development to the pedestrian.** In order to maintain and preserve the existing small and pedestrian-scale character of the San Ysidro community, orient development towards the pedestrian.

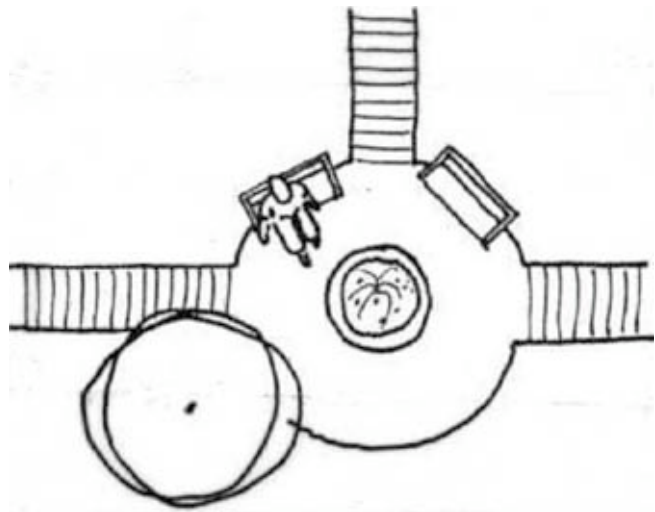
- a. Avoid blank walls at the pedestrian level. Articulate the facades of all buildings through the use of color, materials, architectural elements, recessed walls and landscaping.



- b. Link building entrances, parking lots and pedestrian paths visually and physically to provide safe and easy access to pedestrians. Use design elements such as decorative paving, additional landscaping and building entrance canopies and other architectural elements.



- c. Design landscaped retaining walls, steps and planters to serve an additional role as pedestrian sitting areas.
- d. Provide pedestrian paths and activity centers and reinforce these areas through the use of seating areas, tables, overhead sun trellises, fountains and decorative paving.
- e. Design and site structures so that views (especially of Tijuana and the Tijuana River Valley and the Pacific Ocean) are preserved.



2. **Transitioning between old and new development.** Scaling the development to the pedestrian also provides a harmonious transition between existing and new development as many older structures are small or human-scale. To achieve balance and ensure compatibility, design new development to reflect the scale, massing and texture of the existing development.

a. Articulate the facades of all structures. For example:

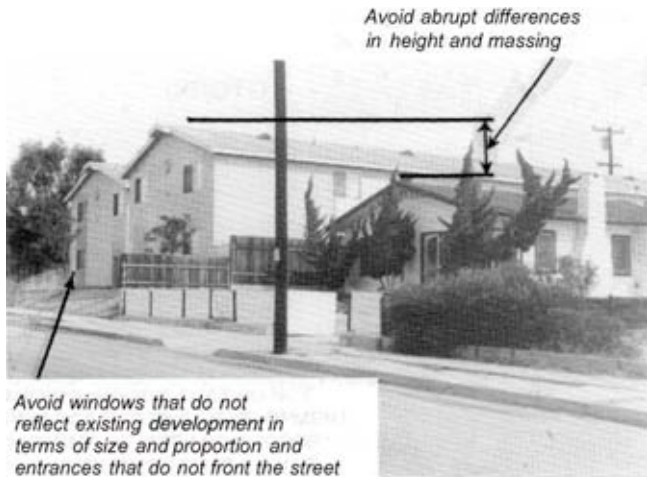
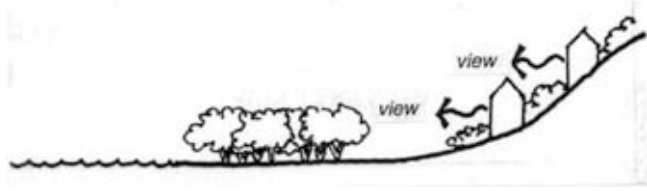
1) Use doors, windows, porches and entrance canopies to reflect an existing neighborhood scale.

2) Use similarly sized and shaped building volumes to reflect an existing neighborhood massing.

3) Use similar project densities or intensities of use and similar materials such as wood siding or stucco to reflect an existing neighborhood texture.

b. Avoid abrupt differences in building height. Maintain similar rooflines.

c. Consider adjacent development while evaluating new development proposals.



*Incorporate the use of Front Porches.*

3. **Signage.** Design signage as an integral element of the total design of the development. To prevent visual clutter, all signage should meet the requirements of the City Sign Ordinance with no additional signs or increases in surface area or height permitted. Do not permit rooftop, tall freestanding, or off-premise signs and billboards. To minimize clutter, use well-landscaped monument signs. Abate all existing signs that do not conform to City standards within a five-year period. Design decorative graphics to be compatible with the character of the street or neighborhood.

4. **Remove utility poles.** Place utility lines underground throughout the community within a reasonable period of time.

5. **Parking.** Screen parking areas by using landscaping or a combination of landscaping and walls or decorative fences. Where feasible, locate parking areas at the rear of the lot. This will limit views of parking areas from the public right-of-way and existing residential areas, and prevent headlights from disturbing nearby residences.

Landscape parking areas with long-lived round-headed trees that have a mature height and spread of at least 30 feet, screening hedges and shrubs, and mounding around the edges. The adopted citywide landscape regulations should be used as a minimum standard.

6. **Design** all trash enclosures, mechanical equipment (including rooftop appurtenances), and utility and storage areas as an integral part of the project's design.

Screen these areas attractively with a combination of decorative fencing and landscaping to limit views from the public right-of-way.

7. **Design and site** new development to reflect the existing topography of the site and to preserve natural features such as stream beds and rock outcroppings.
8. **Landscaping.** Landscape to maintain the colorful and lush quality of San Ysidro's gardens.
  - a. Use trees and plants as the dominant elements of major project entries.
  - b. Incorporate the use of native shrubs, palm and pepper trees, etc., into landscape plans.
  - c. Site new development to preserve existing trees where possible. If removal is unavoidable, provide replacement landscaping of a similar kind on the site.
  - d. Avoid large, unbroken expanses of concrete or paving. Break up monotonous spaces by using overhead sun trellises, pergolas or patterned paving. In areas of little or no activity, plant ground cover as an alternative to paving.
  - e. Visually soften solid walls and fences with recesses and landscaping. Locate fences and walls so that a landscaped area is provided between the fence or wall and the sidewalk. Avoid the use of chain link fencing.
  - f. Use dense and/or thorny plantings to provide "defensible space" and to minimize hiding places and graffiti.
  - g. Provide long-term maintenance for all vegetation in accordance with adopted citywide landscape standards.
9. **Hillside development.** The easternmost portion of the San Ysidro community is hilly with some slopes exceeding 25 percent. Ensure sensitive design in this area consistent with the Hillside Review (HR) Overlay Zone and the Resource Protection Ordinance so that views and topography are preserved and enhanced.

### **Residential Guidelines**

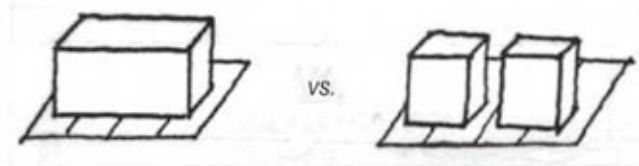
The following residential guidelines have been developed for application in any new residential development (including redevelopment) or in the rehabilitation of existing structures. These guidelines supplement the above General Design Guidelines, the requirements of the **Residential Element** and the Defensible Space Guidelines contained within this element.

The two major goals for housing in San Ysidro respond to the challenges caused by recent poor quality residential infill construction:

- Preserve the character of the existing neighborhoods; and
- Make housing as affordable as possible.

1. **Limit lot consolidation and unit type.** In order to achieve these goals, a limit on lot consolidation and a compromise on unit types for new housing development is recommended in the established neighborhoods of single-family character (particularly in the historic “El Pueblito Viejo” and Sunset neighborhoods). Single-family homes are not affordable to most San Ysidro residents. Therefore, duplexes and other apartments should be allowed as long as single-family architectural styles are maintained and lot consolidation is limited to two lots.

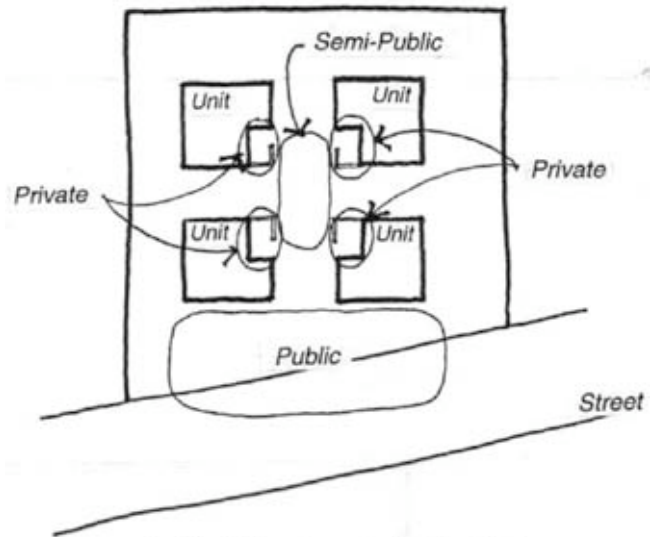
This will help prevent incompatible, large, monolithic and impersonal structures.



- Rezone the historic, single-family residential area from R-1500 to a zone similar to R-3000. Limit multifamily development to duplex or bungalow type development.

2. **Orient the development to the resident.**

- Provide public, semi-private and private outdoor space, and provide recreational facilities for project residents such as playgrounds, benches, barbecue areas, pools, passive recreation areas and recreation/meeting rooms. Require developers of all new residential projects to set aside at least 25 percent of their total project site for these uses.



Residential Development - Provide Public, Semi-Public, and Private Open Areas

- Promote feelings of residential and user territoriality.
  - Promote surveillance of common or shared areas.
  - Reinforce a sense of ownership through site and building design; articulate individual units so as to provide each unit with its own identity.
  - Provide safe and well-lit pedestrian paths and places.



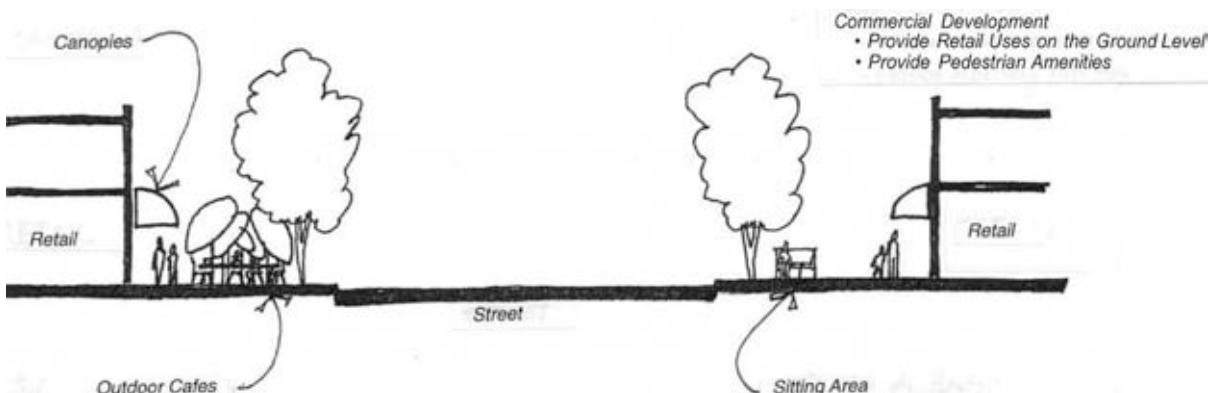
3. **Landscaping.** Consider landscaping as a major element of the character of a neighborhood. Incorporate a consistent landscaping theme throughout new developments. Provide space in infill development for allotment gardens.
4. **Parking.** Minimize curb cuts and front driveways. Provide enough parking to accommodate large families having several cars. Provide well-landscaped parking areas and include some covered parking with storage for tools, equipment and bicycles.

### **Commercial Guidelines**

The following commercial guidelines have been developed for application in any new commercial development (including redevelopment) or in the rehabilitation of existing structures. These guidelines supplement the General Design Guidelines and the requirements of the **Commercial Element**.

#### **1. Orient the development to the pedestrian.**

- a. Provide retail uses at the ground floor of developments located on major commercial streets such as San Ysidro Boulevard. (See **Street Guidelines**.)
- b. Provide pedestrian amenities such as window displays in shops on the ground level, fountains, canopies and arcades, outdoor cafes, sitting areas and plazas. These interesting places contribute to the pedestrian's positive and exciting experience of the community and, when a series of these amenities is within walking distance of each other, they encourage pedestrian movement.
- c. Locate buildings at the property lines, maintaining historic setbacks, along San Ysidro Boulevard from Cottonwood Road to the border crossing.
- d. Maintain a two-story height limit on Beyer Boulevard, on Border Village Road and on San Ysidro Boulevard from just west of Averil Road to Border Village Road. On San Ysidro Boulevard, allow a gradual increase in height from Border Village Road to the border. For example, allow three stories from Border Village Road to Camino de la Plaza and four stories from Camino de la Plaza to the border.
- e. Provide bicycle storage racks for public use at retail establishments and restaurants.



2. **Landscaping.** For developments on corner lots, extend street landscaping treatments onto the side street.
3. **Lighting and Signage.** Direct lighting away from adjacent residential areas. Locate signage for commercial projects so that it is not visible from adjacent residential areas.
4. **Casas de Cambio.** (See **International Gateway Element**.)
  - a. Architecture/façade. Address accessibility to trailer structures. Provide a protective awning or canopy structure above transaction windows and entrances.
  - b. Signage. Allow only one primary sign on each facade.

### **Industrial Guidelines**

The following industrial guidelines have been developed for application in any new industrial development (including redevelopment) or in the rehabilitation of existing structures. These guidelines supplement the General Design Guidelines and the requirements of the **Industrial Element**.

1. Provide an appropriately landscaped open area for employee recreation.
2. Require adequate off-street parking for both motorists and bicyclists and adequate storage and loading facilities to serve the needs of the development. Design these areas as an integral part of the total project design. Locate these uses so that the visual impacts of these areas on adjacent development and the public right-of-way are minimized and screen them attractively using a combination of fencing and landscaping.

### **Institutional Guidelines**

1. Incorporate pedestrian-oriented public urban spaces such as plazas, sitting areas, fountains and pedestrian paths into the design of institutional facilities. Institutional uses provide an opportunity to provide needed public urban space and other public improvements because of their often public-serving nature.
2. Incorporate design elements of adjacent development, such as scale, building materials, design elements and landscaping, into the design of the institutional development to reflect the context in which the institutional development is placed.

## **Street Guidelines**

(See **Transportation and Circulation Element.**)

### **General**

1. Enhance and visually unify streetscapes through the appropriate use of landscaping, building siting, pedestrian amenities such as benches, awnings, public spaces and sidewalk treatments.
2. Install and maintain benches and bus shelters at bus stops.
3. Develop a comprehensive tree-planting program for all major streets.
4. Discourage street widening in order to preserve the community's existing scale. Instead, use traffic engineering techniques to improve street capacity.
5. Increase safety and visibility for pedestrians.
  - a. Place street lamps beside sidewalks at appropriate intervals, not above the roadway. Council Policy 600-4 constitutes the minimum requirements for street lighting.
  - b. Place bollard-type lighting in pedestrian activity areas and paths.
  - c. Incorporate adequate lighting within the design of proposed projects.
  - d. Separate automobile traffic and pedestrian paths where possible.
6. Maintain streets and sidewalks, particularly on Beyer Boulevard along the trolley corridor and Dairy Mart Road between San Ysidro and Beyer Boulevards and improve trash removal service.
7. Where public projects include streetscape amenities such as benches and bus shelters, they should be of standard stock, where possible, to reduce maintenance and replacement costs.

### **Streets**

1. **San Ysidro Boulevard.** Locate retail uses on the ground level of all structures fronting San Ysidro Boulevard to encourage pedestrian activity. This will enhance the urban environment at the pedestrian level.
2. **Olive Drive.** Olive Drive was originally designed to include a landscaped median strip running the entire length of the street. Only a short median strip at the intersection of San Ysidro Boulevard has been constructed, resulting in an extra



**Olive Drive**

wide street. The street is lined with small bungalows, which, with the wide street, are out of scale with the street and distinctly separated from each other. Provide a landscaped median the length of the street to connect both sides of the street to each other and achieve a balance between the small-scale homes and the wide street.

3. **Border Village Road.** Locate retail uses on the ground level of all structures fronting Border Village Road to encourage pedestrian activity. This will enhance the urban environment at the pedestrian level.
4. **Camino de la Plaza.** As recommended in other elements of this Plan, extend Camino de la Plaza north to Dairy Mart Road to form a southern edge between the river valley and the urban area east of the levee. Develop an appropriately landscaped parkway to provide a visual transition between the river valley and the urban area.
5. **Dairy Mart Road.** Landscape and maintain the strip on either side of the street adjacent to the sidewalk from San Ysidro Boulevard to Beyer Boulevard. Maintain the slump stone noise walls.
6. **East Beyer Boulevard.** Landscape the parcel between East Beyer and Hill Street to serve as a median strip. (This parcel is currently developed with a deteriorated apartment building.)
7. **The alley system in the historic neighborhood.** The existing narrow alleys are quiet and intimate in scale and offer a pleasant contrast to the wider and busier streets nearby.
  - a. Discourage through automobile traffic in the alleys through the use of signage. Use appropriate traffic engineering methods to discourage through traffic, which may include special paving, signing and “knuckles” to deter traffic.
  - b. Use special paving, lighting and planting treatments to enhance the alleys as part of a pedestrian path system.



The Alleys

### **Defensible Space Guidelines**

Public and private improvements should use defensible space design concepts to increase casual surveillance and prevent crime. This can be accomplished without the building of fortresses. Where casual surveillance takes place, potential intruders will be deterred due to the possibility of being noticed by an alert neighborhood. The Neighborhood Watch program successfully uses this premise.

1. Buildings and grounds should be designed to be self-policing so that residents may participate in security.
2. For multifamily projects, smaller-scale courtyard or townhouse developments are encouraged, as they are easier to police than large complexes.
3. When cul-de-sacs are used in residential subdivisions, they should be designed to allow clear vistas from cross streets to the terminus of the cul-de-sac. A “U-shaped” street layout is preferable to cul-de-sacs.
4. Windows should be positioned to allow residents to easily watch public spaces, parking areas and entrances to dwellings.
5. Common spaces, courtyards and entryways should be visible from the street, allowing clear vision by neighbors and law enforcement officers.
6. For multifamily buildings fronting on a public street, two means of providing a street entrance are encouraged:
  - a. Through a street-facing courtyard, with dwelling units entered from the courtyard.
  - b. Through visible street entrances.

Both configurations have proven to be good means of providing security of sidewalks and building entrances through natural surveillance opportunities.

- Sidewalks or paths should be located between parking areas and residences, and between the street and residences to allow natural surveillance over the entire path.
- Night lighting along walkways, streets and at parking lots should be provided by using fixtures that will shape and deflect light into a layer close to the ground. This will place light where it is needed most and reduce interference with windows.
- When commercial parking areas are located to the rear of a building, alley access or drive-through capability should be provided, when possible, to allow for police surveillance. Security gates and lighting are other options that could be considered to deter crime.
- When parking is located in the front of a building, parking areas may be buffered from the street with planting, while still allowing for surveillance if trees with high canopies and low shrubs and groundcovers are used.
- Residences should be separated by physical barriers or distance from possible crime generators such as bars, adult entertainment establishments and other similar uses.
- If security fencing is used, attention should be given to its detailed design. Fencing should be an attractive architectural feature of a project, such as in the use of wrought iron fences integrated into the overall design of the project.



In addition to the physical design features described above, attention should also be given to the following programs:

- Neighborhood Watch or similar free programs should be promoted throughout the community. Developers of new residential subdivisions should assist in the formation of such a program for the new residents.
- Management plans for multifamily developments should be reviewed as a part of a discretionary permit.



San Ysidro Boulevard Aerial- Circa 1925

Photo from San Diego Historical Society Files

## *Transportation and Circulation*

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## TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

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### GOALS

- Develop a circulation system that provides for the smooth flow of vehicular traffic while allowing for a response to the social and economic needs of the community.
- Provide for smooth traffic flow and good accessibility to and from San Ysidro and outlying communities, including Mexico.
- Develop parking strategies that support planned land uses.
- Eliminate the barriers to pedestrian activity and enhance the pedestrian environment.
- Provide for an increased use of bicycles as a major means of transportation throughout the community.
- Improve the mass transportation system and increase its accessibility for San Ysidro residents, visitors and business people.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### Freeways

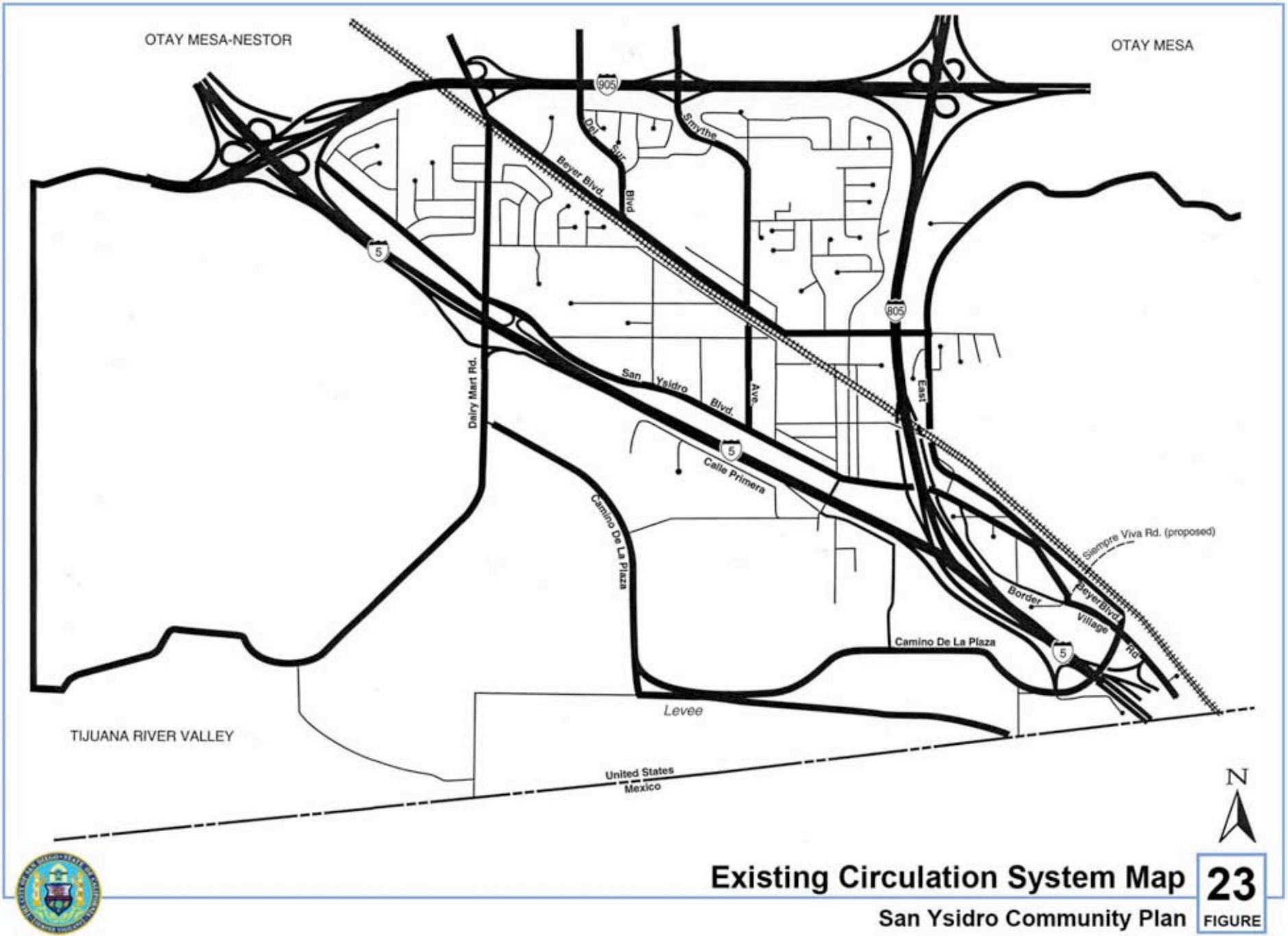
San Ysidro is a community bounded and divided by highways. The northern boundary is formed by SR-905 and is accessed at Smythe Avenue and Beyer Boulevard. Interstate 5 to the south and I-805 to the east present formidable visual barriers within the community. The pedestrian bridges across both of these facilities are unattractive, uninviting and unsuccessful in linking the various sections of the community. Access to I-5 is provided at Dairy Mart Road, Via de San Ysidro and Camino de la Plaza, and to I-805 at the cloverleaf interchange at SR-905 and a diamond intersection on San Ysidro Boulevard. (See **Figure 23**.)



Junction of Interstates 5 and 805

Inadequate and confusing signage on I-5 causes a significant amount of tourist traffic to exit at Via de San Ysidro and onto an already congested San Ysidro Boulevard.

Freeway noise is a nuisance for residents of nearby apartments and houses.



## Major Streets

The existing network of major and collector streets in San Ysidro is old and inadequate. Many of the primary thoroughfares, including a substantial section of San Ysidro Boulevard, are without sidewalks, curbs and gutters. Since the circulation system was developed in the early 1970s, some of the streets were not designed for existing or projected traffic volumes. Significant traffic increases have occurred on San Ysidro Boulevard and Via de San Ysidro due to border traffic and customers patronizing businesses along this major commercial corridor.



Portion of San Ysidro Boulevard widened in 1989

San Ysidro Boulevard is the primary thoroughfare within the community boundaries. Years ago, when most land along San Ysidro Boulevard was vacant and existing development was small-scale, the number of vehicles traveling on the street did not cause critical problems. Traffic flowed smoothly. The substantial increase in commercial and multifamily development along the roadway, however, has caused severe congestion. In addition, the convergence of two freeways, I-5 and I-805, has

imposed additional traffic impacts on San Ysidro Boulevard by eliminating the feasibility of alternate surface street routes for traffic to traverse the community. (See **Figure 23.**)

The Boulevard is also congested with pedestrian traffic because many residents of San Ysidro and Mexican visitors do not own automobiles. Although San Ysidro Boulevard is the community's major roadway, the absence of sidewalks, curbs and gutters sometimes creates a hazard to the pedestrian. In 1985, the City Council allocated Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the improvement of the Boulevard from Via de San Ysidro to I-805. The project entailed the widening of this section, placement of a landscaped median, landscaping on both sides of the street, patterned pavement and street furniture. The project also involved the undergrounding of utilities. The project was completed in the Spring of 1989.

Beyer Boulevard is a major street which parallels the railway and then turns north into the Otay Mesa-Nestor community. It is four lanes until it branches off into East Beyer Boulevard, a two-lane collector street. Beyer is an improved roadway with gutters, curbs and sidewalks, but has no landscaping. Its sidewalks are poorly maintained, overcome by tall weeds. It is an important pedestrian pathway because it provides pedestrian and vehicular access to the San Ysidro Adult School, the Beyer Trolley Station, the community's only medical facility, the San Ysidro Health Center and two of the community's largest multifamily housing projects. The Boulevard is also heavily used for on-street parking, particularly near the large multifamily housing projects, the Health Center and the Adult School. In this area, pedestrians and those parking on the street jaywalk, resulting in a significant traffic hazard. There are no crosswalks.



North of Beyer Boulevard, East Beyer becomes Otay Mesa Road. This roadway is classified as a two-lane collector. It winds north, parallel to I-805 and follows SR-905 for approximately five miles where it terminates. Once fully improved, this roadway will become an important connection to Otay Mesa.

Dairy Mart Road is the major north-south road in western San Ysidro. It is a fully improved, four-lane facility between San Ysidro and Beyer Boulevards, and an improved two-lane road with a soft shoulder, between I-5 and Monument Road. It is the only road from San Ysidro to provide access to the Tijuana River Valley. North of I-5 to Beyer Boulevard, the street's slump stone walls are covered with graffiti. The landscape strip along the sidewalk is poorly maintained and inadequately planted. South of I-5, the road accumulates litter and is often the site of illegal truck parking.



Dairy Mart Road

Camino de La Plaza is classified as a major road, but only a small portion, between I-5 and Camiones Way, is constructed to major street standards. It then decreases in size to two lanes with curbs, gutters and sidewalks on the north side of the street only. The paved portion of the road terminates at Larsen Field, east of Willow Road, with the exception of an unconnected section below the mobile home park.

The remaining graded, dirt road continues west and ultimately connects with Dairy Mart Road. Camino de la Plaza is unlandscaped and is the site of a substantial amount of litter and debris. Currently, it functions as an unattractive southern edge for the community and the City. The construction of this facility to major street standards is critical to the development of the southern portion of the planning area and the entire International Gateway.

### **Collector Streets**

Smythe Avenue is a fully improved four-lane road, north of Beyer Boulevard and the trolley corridor, with sidewalks, curbs and gutters. This roadway also extends northwesterly into the Otay-Mesa Nestor planning area, becoming Picador Boulevard at SR-905. On the south side of Beyer, Smythe is a two-lane road with on-street parking, curbs, sidewalks and gutters, although some portions remain unimproved. The two segments of the street do not connect across the trolley tracks. Smythe is interrupted at Beyer Boulevard and resumes south of the trolley corridor. A small road, approximately 75 feet northwest of the Smythe Avenue/Beyer Boulevard intersection, crosses the trolley tracks and intersects with Vista Lane, which runs into the southern segment of Smythe Avenue. (See **Figure 23.**)

East and West Park Avenues run parallel between San Ysidro Boulevard and Seaward Avenue, north and south respectively. These roads are classified as major thoroughfares but function like collector roadways due to awkward alignments. Running through the center of the historic neighborhood, they provide access to the library, Senior Center, the linear park and gymnasium. Both roads cross the trolley corridor and vehicles frequently must stop when the trolley passes. East Park Avenue ends at Seaward, and West Park continues, becoming two-way and providing access to Beyer Boulevard. Pedestrian traffic is heavy on and around these streets, due to the residential neighborhood and the community facilities in the area.

Willow Road is a two-lane collector which runs north-south between Camino de la Plaza and Calle Primera. This roadway provides access to Willow Elementary School. Portions of the street are unimproved. It is also heavily traveled by truck traffic due to the nearby commercial crossing at Virginia Avenue. Sycamore Road is also a two-lane collector and parallels Willow Road, but terminates at Larsen Field, the neighborhood park south of I-5. The northern segment of the road is fully improved but lacks landscaping. The southern segment lacks curbs, sidewalks and gutters.

## **Mass Transit**

### **Bus Service**

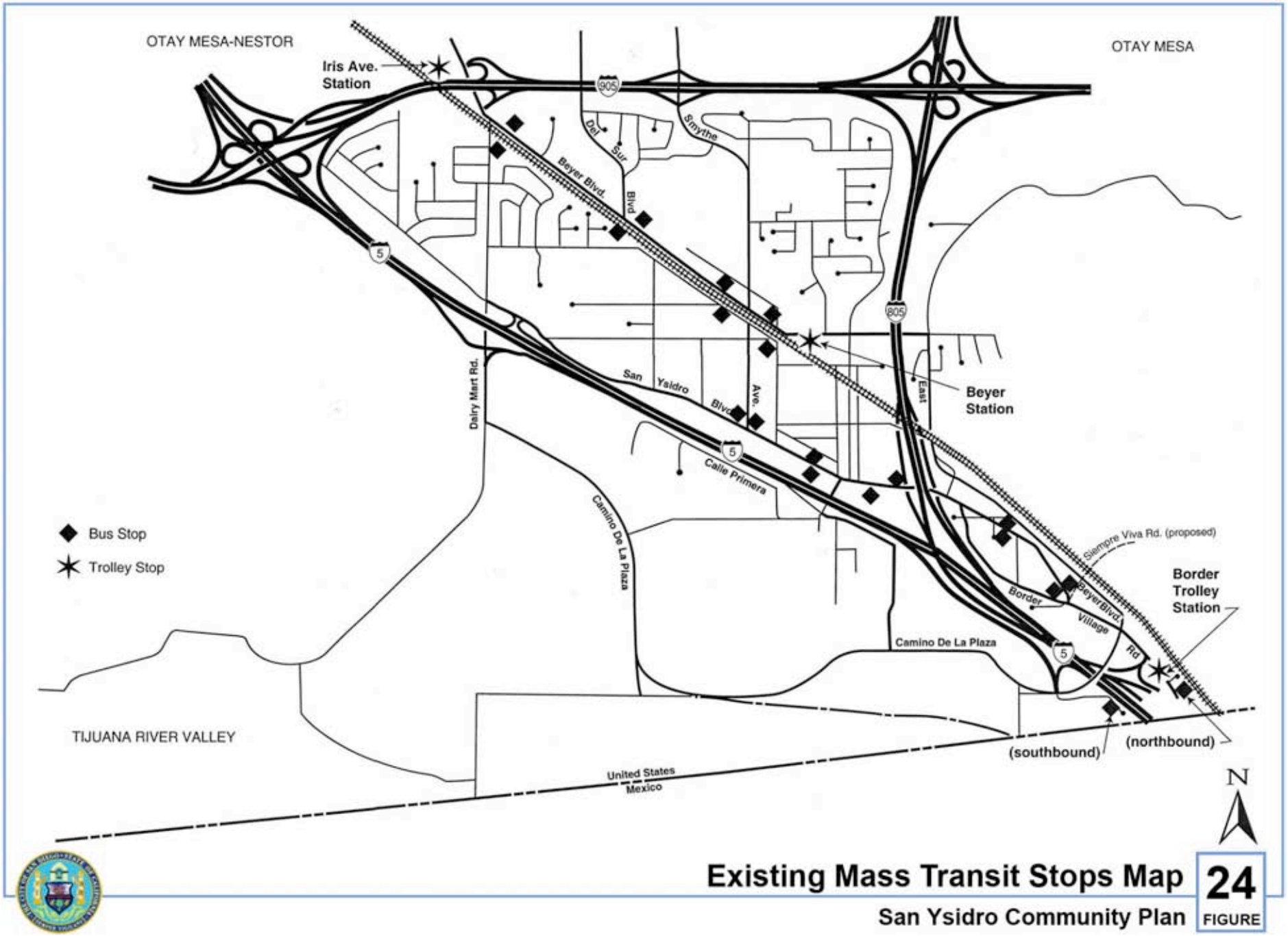
Fixed-route transit service to the San Ysidro community is provided by elements of the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), a group of transit operators under the overall jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB). Transit service consists of the Amarillo y Rosa Route 932 bus and the south line of the San Diego Trolley.

Route 932 provides line haul service between San Ysidro and Centre City via Palm City, the downtown areas of Chula Vista and National City, Barrio Logan and Centre City East. The Centre City terminus for the route is the Santa Fe Depot at Broadway and Kettner in downtown San Diego.

Within the San Ysidro community, Route 932 runs along Beyer Boulevard, Cottonwood Road and San Ysidro Boulevard. Southbound buses terminate at Camiones Way. (See **Figure 24**.) Northbound buses begin their route slightly to the east at the International Border Crossing Trolley Station. Route 932 provides direct access to several other trolley stations, including Beyer Station in San Ysidro. These stations also serve as transfer centers linking the Trolley and Route 932 with other MTS routes. Route 932 operates at 30-minute intervals commencing at 5:20 a.m., with the interval increasing to 60 minutes between 7:20 p.m. and 11:20 p.m.

### **Light Rail Transit**

San Ysidro is the southern terminus of the San Diego Trolley's South Line. The South Line, at present, links San Ysidro and the International Border with Centre City and includes a total of 18 stops. Park-and-ride lots are available at many of these stops, including the Beyer Station in San Ysidro. (See **Figure 24**.) Fifty-four parking spaces are available at this station.



The lot is approximately 20 percent full at any given time. Landscaping at the perimeter of the lot visually enhances the station and provides a buffer for the adjacent apartment buildings. Security problems exist at the Beyer Station. Many residents feel uncomfortable about leaving vehicles in the lot for any length of time due to car thefts.

Access to the Trolley's East Line is available via the transfer station at Imperial Avenue and 12<sup>th</sup> Street. This line currently terminates in downtown El Cajon. As the light rail system expands during the next decade, much more of the greater metropolitan area will be accessible via this mode of transit.

Weekday trolley service between the Border Trolley Station and Centre City currently operates from 5 a.m. to 1 a.m. Before 8 p.m., trains operate every 15 minutes. After 8 p.m., trains operate at 30-minute intervals. Trains consist of between one and four vehicles, with larger trains operating during peak demand periods.

The trolley provides an important service to the San Ysidro community. It carries an average of 20,000 weekday passengers to and from San Ysidro stations and provides a direct link to downtown San Diego and East County employment, cultural, shopping and recreation centers. The trolley is the preferred mode of transportation for many weekday commuters and, together with bus service, is the only available mode of transportation for many.

The trolley, however, also divides and disrupts the community. It is an impediment to pedestrian and vehicular circulation across the community. Access points such as cross streets and over passes are very limited in number and there are few pedestrian connections. In addition, the trolley horns and bells at crossings create noise in surrounding neighborhoods and the trolley corridor has been devoid of landscaping.

### **Bicycles**

Prior to the adoption of this Plan, there was no designated bikeway system. In 1982, the San Diego City Council adopted a Master Bikeway Plan which identified the following streets as proposed bikeways within the San Ysidro community:

- Dairy Mart Road from Beyer Boulevard to Monument Road.
- Smythe Avenue from SR-905 to Beyer Boulevard.
- Willow Street from San Ysidro Boulevard to Camino de la Plaza with a grade separated crossing of I-5.
- Beyer Boulevard between SR-905 and Siempre Viva Road.
- Otay Mesa Road between Beyer Boulevard and SR-905.
- Camino de la Plaza between Dairy Mart Road and San Ysidro Boulevard.

In 1989, these bikeway recommendations had not been implemented.

San Ysidro is the southern terminus of the Pacific Coast Bicentennial bike route. This 1,000-mile bikeway extending along the length of the California coast from Oregon to Mexico was established in 1975 by the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of California and Caltrans. Although its designation expired in 1983, this route remains in use by bicycling tourists and in 1989 a resolution was introduced into the state legislature to permanently establish it. Currently, there are no markers identifying this route in San Ysidro. (See **Figure 29.**)

## **Parking**

San Ysidro's location on the International Border with Mexico and the millions of vehicles that pass through the community every year create a high demand for parking facilities. Currently, there is a lack of convenient tourist-to-Tijuana parking. Many tourists park on local streets and in the parking lots of commercial businesses. In addition, bus parking, truck loading and unloading, and general traffic near the pedestrian border crossing create congestion, pollution and noise.



Tourist parking at the border



Truck parking at Virginia Avenue

The Virginia Avenue commercial border crossing creates a high demand for truck parking facilities. Mexico does not allow American commercial trucks to cross their border so American truckers park anywhere they are able while waiting to exchange cargo. Often, trucks are parked on local streets and left unattended. Existing commercial truck parking areas are unpaved, dusty, and lack landscaping.

San Ysidro's recent, rapid growth has created parking shortages in the commercial and residential areas. Parking for the commercial areas overflows onto residential streets and inhibits the flow of traffic. In addition, residents do not have off-street places to work on their cars, which contributes to parking and traffic problems.



Residents working on their cars in the street



## **Pedestrian**

San Ysidro has a great deal of pedestrian activity, especially on the major streets, at the border crossing and along the trolley corridor. Pedestrian movement is hampered, however, by the following conditions:

- Pedestrians and autos conflict on San Ysidro Boulevard and at the border crossing. A large pedestrian population is present at any given time in this area due to disembarking trolley passengers and visitors from the Mexican side of the border.
- San Ysidro Boulevard is a barrier to pedestrians due to fast moving vehicular traffic and the absence of crossings and traffic signals.
- There is no easy pedestrian access to the San Ysidro Health Center on Beyer Boulevard. The street is a busy four-lane major east/west roadway, and there is no pedestrian crossing between the Beyer Trolley Station and the Center.
- There are no pedestrian connections linking the Beyer Trolley Station with the linear park, town center, and the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Trolley users, instead, walk directly on the trolley tracks.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **Vehicular**

- Discourage through tourist traffic (those heading south across the border) from entering the community-oriented area west of Via de San Ysidro.
- Connect San Ysidro to the Tijuana River Valley and Otay Mesa.
- Reconnect the areas of San Ysidro bisected by the trolley corridor and the freeway system.
- Improve the street environment.

### **Parking**

- Provide an adequate, accessible and well-maintained supply of parking spaces for residents businesses and tourists.

### **Bicycles**

- Increase bicycle accessibility throughout the community.
- Minimize bicycle/auto conflict on major streets throughout the community.
- Increase the use of bicycles in San Ysidro to reduce dependence on the single occupant motor vehicle.



## **Pedestrian**

- Require new development to address pedestrian activity in site design proposals. (See also the **Urban Form Element**.)
- Minimize pedestrian/auto conflict on San Ysidro Boulevard, at the border crossing and on Beyer Boulevard.
- Improve pedestrian access across the trolley corridor.
- Develop pedestrian pathways throughout San Ysidro.

## **Mass Transit**

- Locate transit stops (bus and trolley) to maximize access and optimize transit service and pedestrian and bikeway connections.
- Reduce noise and soften the edge of the trolley corridor.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

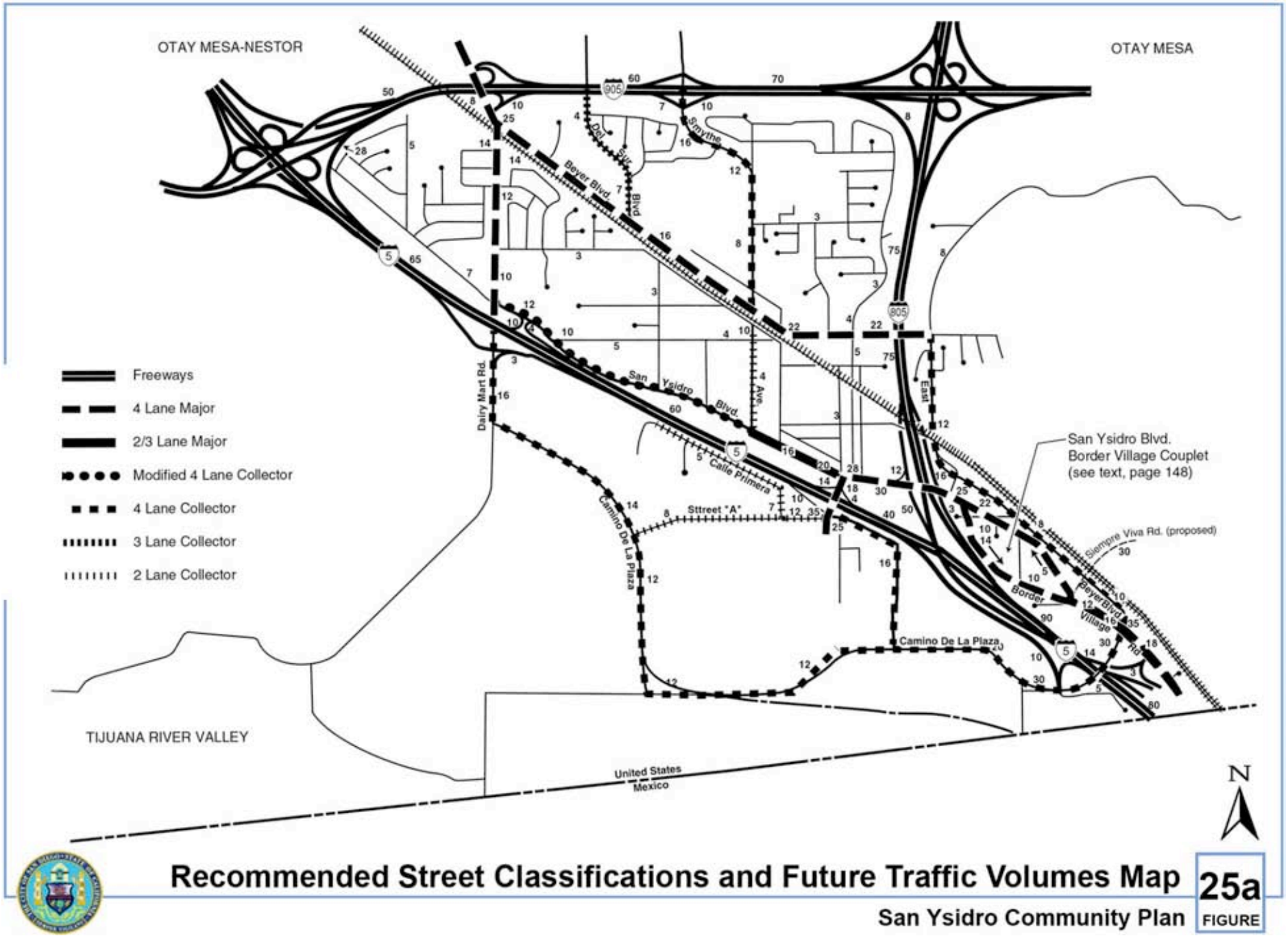
### **Vehicular**

**Figure 25** illustrates the recommended street classifications for the San Ysidro community. **Figure 25a** lists future traffic volumes based on the recommended future land uses contained in this plan. This information is from the San Ysidro travel forecast prepared by the Engineering and Development Department.

Implementation of the recommended street network will require new construction of some roadways and the widening or reconstruction of others. Future traffic volumes are shown on **Figure 25a**. **Figure 26** illustrates the location where the new construction of roadways is required. These streets include the extension of Camino de la Plaza and Street “A” to serve future development in the southern portion of San Ysidro, south of I-5. **Figure 27** shows existing streets which need to be either widened or reconstructed. These streets include East Beyer Boulevard, Calle Primera, Camino de la Plaza, Dairy Mart Road and Willow Street.

Additional vehicular recommendations include:

1. Maintain one-way streets where appropriate, for example at East and West Park Avenues.
2. Maintain the existing width of San Ysidro Boulevard in the historic community commercial core area between Via de San Ysidro and Cottonwood Road to preserve the pedestrian, small-scale character of the area. Use appropriate traffic engineering methods which may include additional signage, special paving, and “knuckles” to discourage through traffic and to enhance that area's sense of place. (See also the **Urban Form Element**.) If necessary, restripe for three lanes of traffic without widening the road.
3. Use directional signage, special paving and “knuckles” to discourage vehicular traffic at the trolley station and to enhance that area's pedestrian environment. (See **Figure 28** and the **International Gateway Element**.)



4. Construct a two-way couplet at Border Village Road and San Ysidro Boulevard to improve traffic flow and to allow the retention of on-street parking on San Ysidro Boulevard to accommodate existing and future businesses.

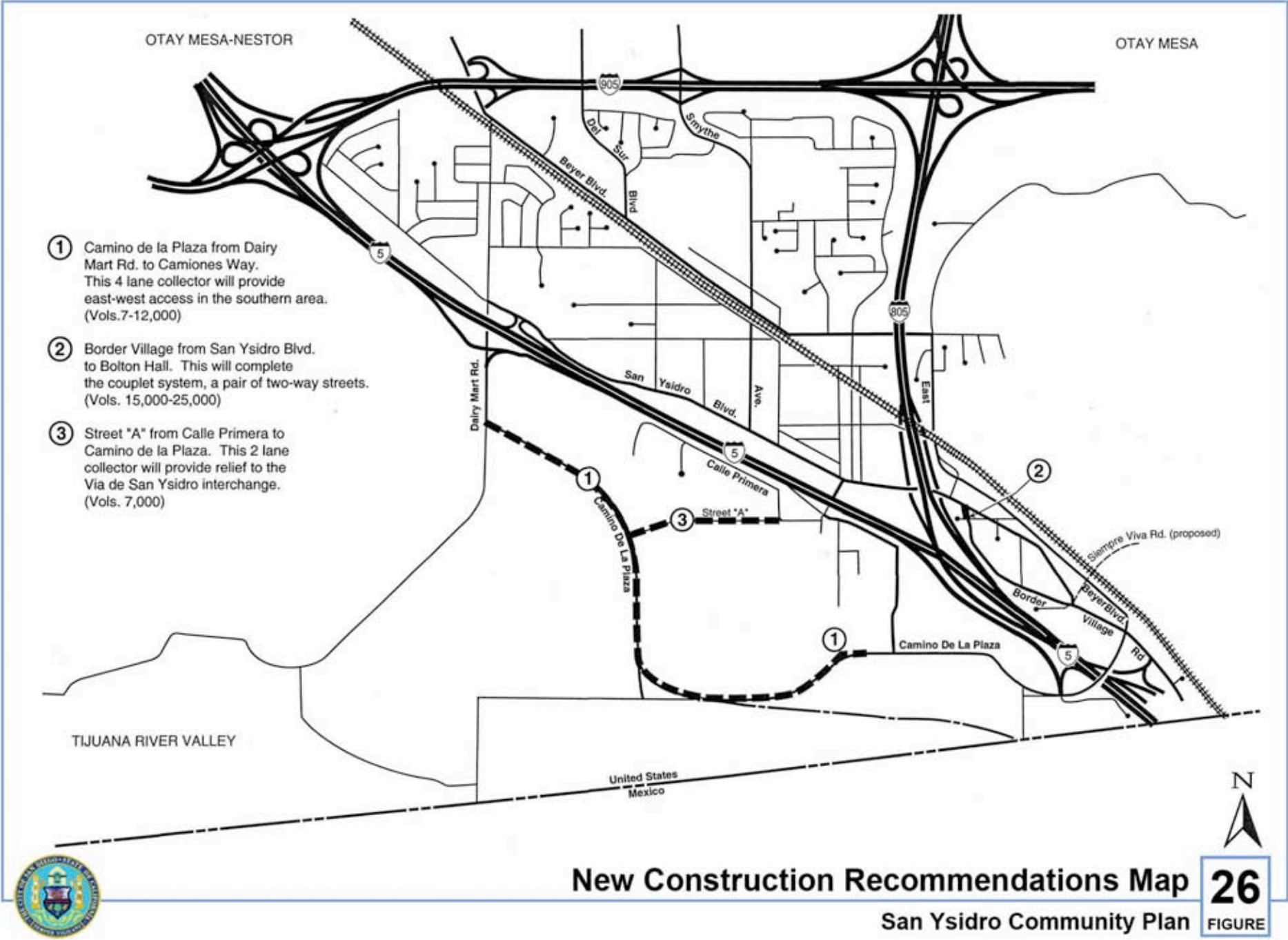
5. Designate Camino de la Plaza as a four-lane collector street to be connected with the Dairy Mart Road. This roadway shall be aligned so as to



provide a sufficient buffer between the roadway and the existing riparian corridor of the Dairy Mart Ponds. Mitigation for any riparian habitat disturbed or permanently displaced for the construction of the roadway shall be replaced at a ratio of 3:1. Recognizing present site constraints and high resource values, an “Enhanced Buffer” with a minimum width of 50 feet shall be created and maintained from Dairy Mart Road along the entire length of the riparian corridor to the vicinity of the Calle Primera cul-de-sac, unless physically impossible because there is no upland area between the existing habitat and the proposed alignment. In those instances, the maximum buffer than can be established will be required. The buffer shall be measured landward from the riparian habitat and shall include, but not be limited to, separation of the roadway from the sensitive habitat by a fence and/or wall; an enhancement plan to create a riparian woodland transition area; the removal of debris, as necessary, and replanting any fill slopes with riparian woodland species that have been found to be acceptable to the State Department of Fish and Game. Design and construct to accommodate future border traffic demand and include a landscaped median or parkway where Camino de la Plaza abuts the Tijuana River levee to define a southern edge for the community and the City. (See **Figure 25.**)

6. Improve vehicular access to the Tijuana River Valley by improving Dairy Mart Road.
7. Improve vehicular access to Otay Mesa by extending Beyer Boulevard east and constructing Siempre Viva Road.
8. Improve north-south access in the community where feasible. One option is to construct a new pedestrian crossing over the trolley tracks between Del Sur and Averil. In addition, the existing Smythe Avenue vehicular crossing should be improved to better serve vehicles and pedestrians.
9. Enhance the scenic and aesthetic qualities of the riparian habitat surrounding the portion of Dairy Mart Road that lies south of I-5, when improvements to that road are made. In addition, an “Enhanced Buffer” consistent with the provisions for Camino de la Plaza stated above, shall be created and maintained between the roadway and the riparian habitat on both sides of Dairy Mart Road. Said buffer shall include, but not be limited to, separation of the roadway from the habitat area by fencing and the planting of native vegetation.





- ① Camino de la Plaza from Dairy Mart Rd. to Camiones Way. This 4 lane collector will provide east-west access in the southern area. (Vols. 7-12,000)
- ② Border Village from San Ysidro Blvd. to Bolton Hall. This will complete the couplet system, a pair of two-way streets. (Vols. 15,000-25,000)
- ③ Street "A" from Calle Primera to Camino de la Plaza. This 2 lane collector will provide relief to the Via de San Ysidro interchange. (Vols. 7,000)

**New Construction Recommendations Map**

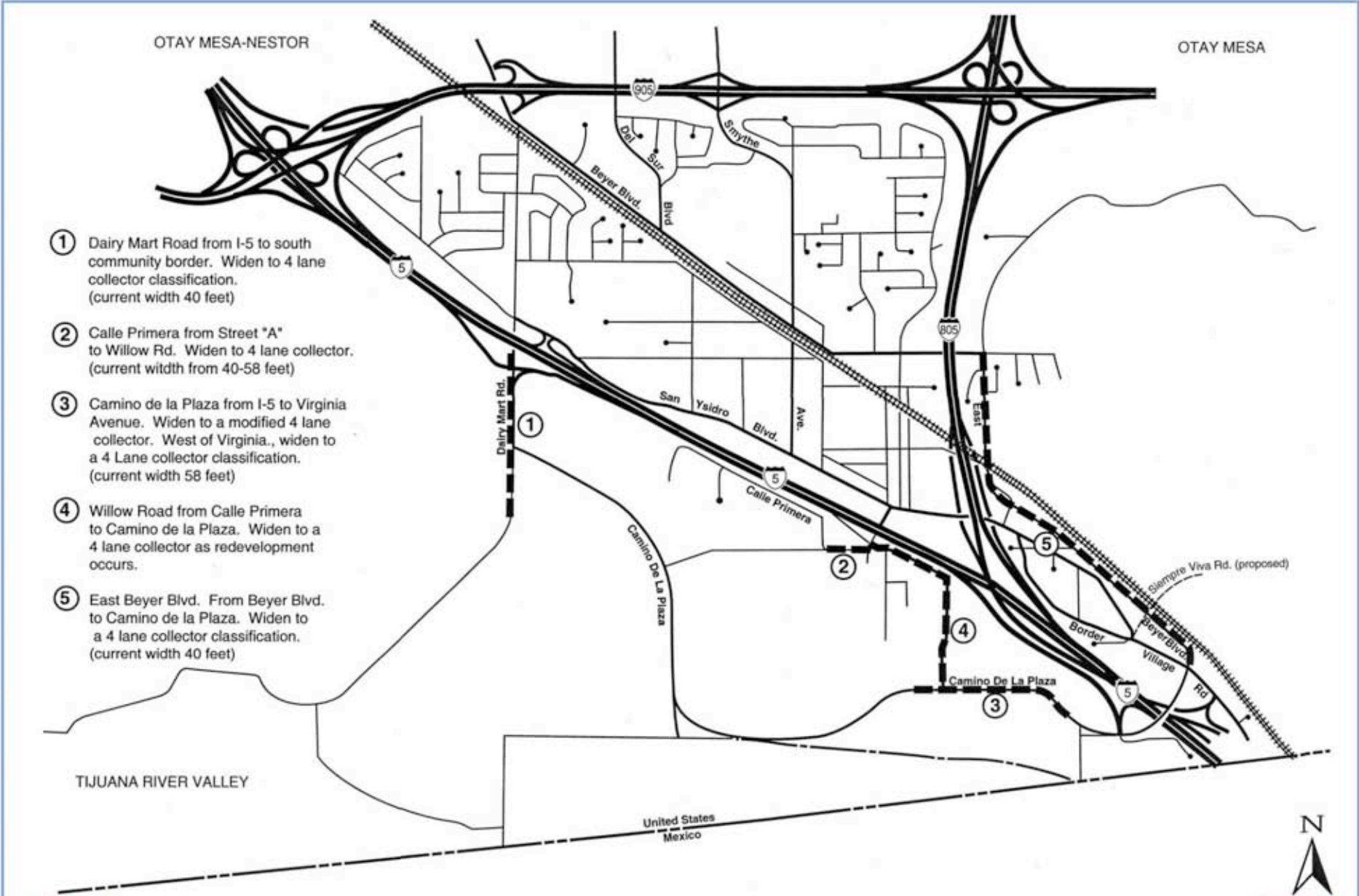
San Ysidro Community Plan

**26**  
FIGURE

10. Improve drainage on Calle Primera.
11. Provide a landscaped median the length of Olive Drive to connect both sides of the street to each other and achieve a balance between the small-scale homes and the wide street. (See **Urban Form Element**.)
12. Appropriately landscape and maintain the landscaping strip on either side of Dairy Mart Road, from San Ysidro Boulevard to Beyer Boulevard. Maintain the slump stone noise walls.
13. Acquire and landscape the parcel between East Beyer Boulevard and Hill Street to serve as a median strip. This parcel is currently developed with a deteriorated apartment building.
14. Discourage through automobile traffic in the alleys by using appropriate traffic engineering methods which may include the use of signage, special paving, or “knuckles.” (See **Urban Form Element**.)
15. Willow Road should be widened to a four-lane collector between Calle Primera and Camino de la Plaza as redevelopment occurs.
16. Street “A” shall be designated as a two-lane collector to be extended from Calle Primera to Camino de la Plaza. The roadway, where it is proposed to cross the Dairy Mart Ponds and their associated riparian corridor, shall be aligned to follow the existing disturbed dirt road course. The roadway shall be designed to minimize impacts to the riparian corridor to include a culvert of sufficient size to allow the migration of wildlife under the road, the maintenance of appropriate buffers and mitigation for any riparian habitat disturbed or permanently displaced for the construction of the roadway at a replacement ratio of 3:1.

### **Parking**

1. Establish a parking assessment district in the Border Village Road - San Ysidro Boulevard couplet area to provide adequate, landscaped and well-maintained parking facilities.
2. Provide safe, convenient and pleasant pedestrian passages within, to, and from parking areas.
3. Restrict parking to one side of heavily traveled streets (such as San Ysidro Boulevard, especially at the border gate) or very narrow streets (such as the local streets and alley system in the historic neighborhood).
4. Install meters on San Ysidro Boulevard south of I-805, and establish a meter enforcement program.
5. Establish a special parking district at the Border for buses and cars to prevent tourists from occupying parking spaces in community shopping centers and in residential areas.



- ① Dairy Mart Road from I-5 to south community border. Widen to 4 lane collector classification. (current width 40 feet)
- ② Calle Primera from Street "A" to Willow Rd. Widen to 4 lane collector. (current width from 40-58 feet)
- ③ Camino de la Plaza from I-5 to Virginia Avenue. Widen to a modified 4 lane collector. West of Virginia., widen to a 4 Lane collector classification. (current width 58 feet)
- ④ Willow Road from Calle Primera to Camino de la Plaza. Widen to a 4 lane collector as redevelopment occurs.
- ⑤ East Beyer Blvd. From Beyer Blvd. to Camino de la Plaza. Widen to a 4 lane collector classification. (current width 40 feet)



## Street Widening and Reconstruction Recommendations Map

San Ysidro Community Plan



**27**  
FIGURE

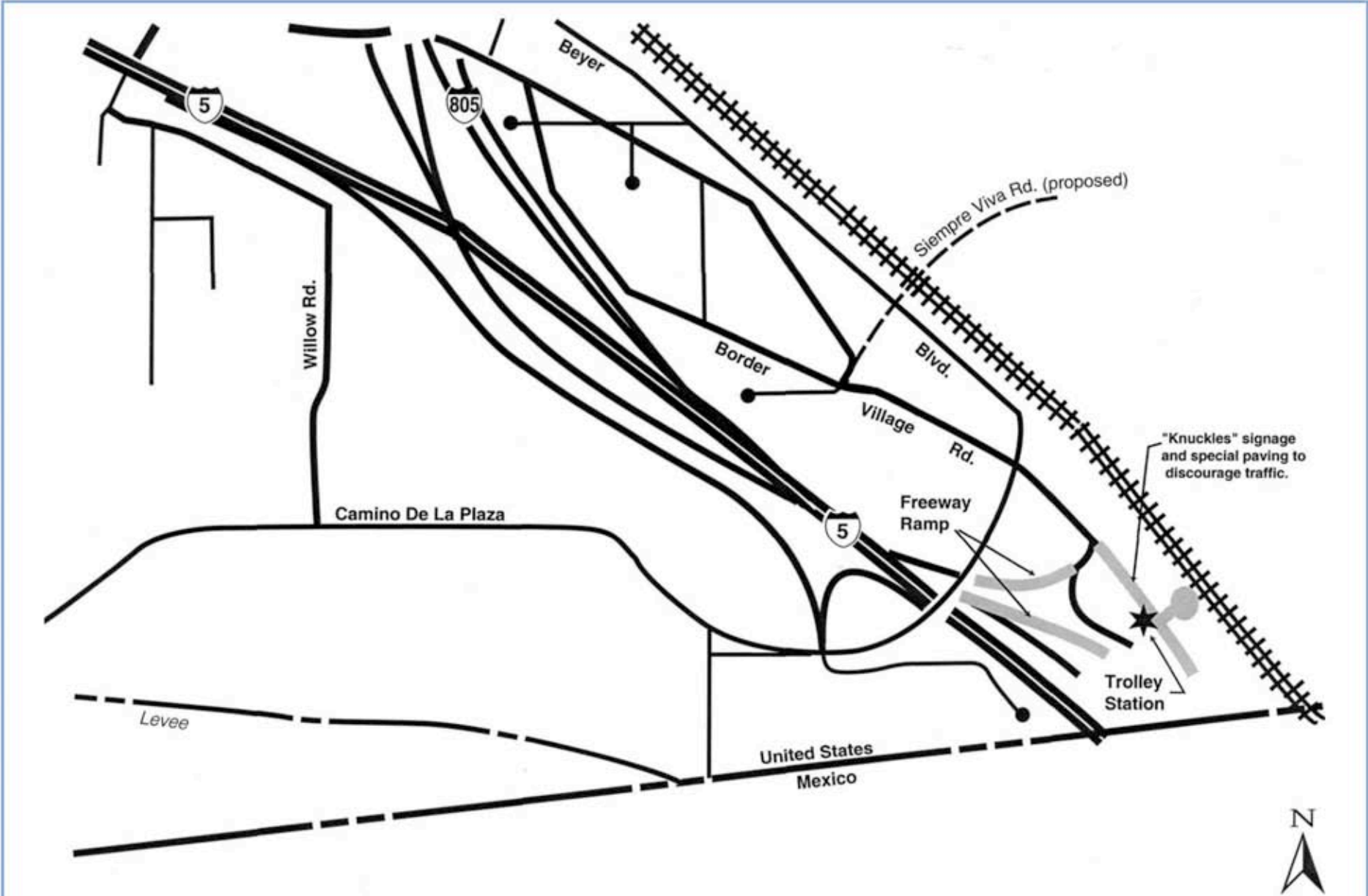
6. Ensure that new residential and commercial projects meet citywide parking requirements.
7. Enforce the removal of abandoned vehicles, including illegally parked commercial trucks.
8. Provide an auto shop for local residents to work on their cars, possibly in conjunction with a local high school or junior college auto shop.
9. Increase the use of the parking facility at the Beyer Trolley Station by entering into a joint-use agreement with the San Ysidro Health Center across the street to share the lot. The health center is a heavily used facility with over-burdened parking.

### **Bicycles**

1. Provide the bikeways proposed in the 1982 Master Bikeway Plan, including:
  - a. Dairy Mart Road from Beyer Boulevard to Monument Road.
  - b. Smythe Avenue from SR-905 to Beyer Boulevard.
  - c. Willow Road from San Ysidro Boulevard to Camino de la Plaza with a grade separated crossing of I-5.
  - d. Beyer Blvd. between SR-905 and Siempre Viva Road.
  - e. Otay Mesa Road between Beyer Boulevard and SR-905.
  - f. Camino de la Plaza between Dairy Mart Road and San Ysidro Boulevard.

In addition, provide bikeways on major streets, including:

- g. San Ysidro Boulevard from Dairy Mart Road to Camino de la Plaza.
- h. East Beyer Boulevard from Otay Mesa Road to San Ysidro Boulevard.
- i. Smythe Avenue from Beyer Boulevard to San Ysidro Boulevard.
- j. Border Village Road along the entire length of the proposed couplet.
- k. Camiones Way/I-5 (southbound only) from Camino de la Plaza to the International Border.
- l. Virginia Avenue, if the commercial border crossing is closed and reopened as a pedestrian crossing, from Camino de la Plaza to the International Border.



**San Ysidro Boulevard and Trolley Station at the Border Map**

San Ysidro Community Plan

**28**

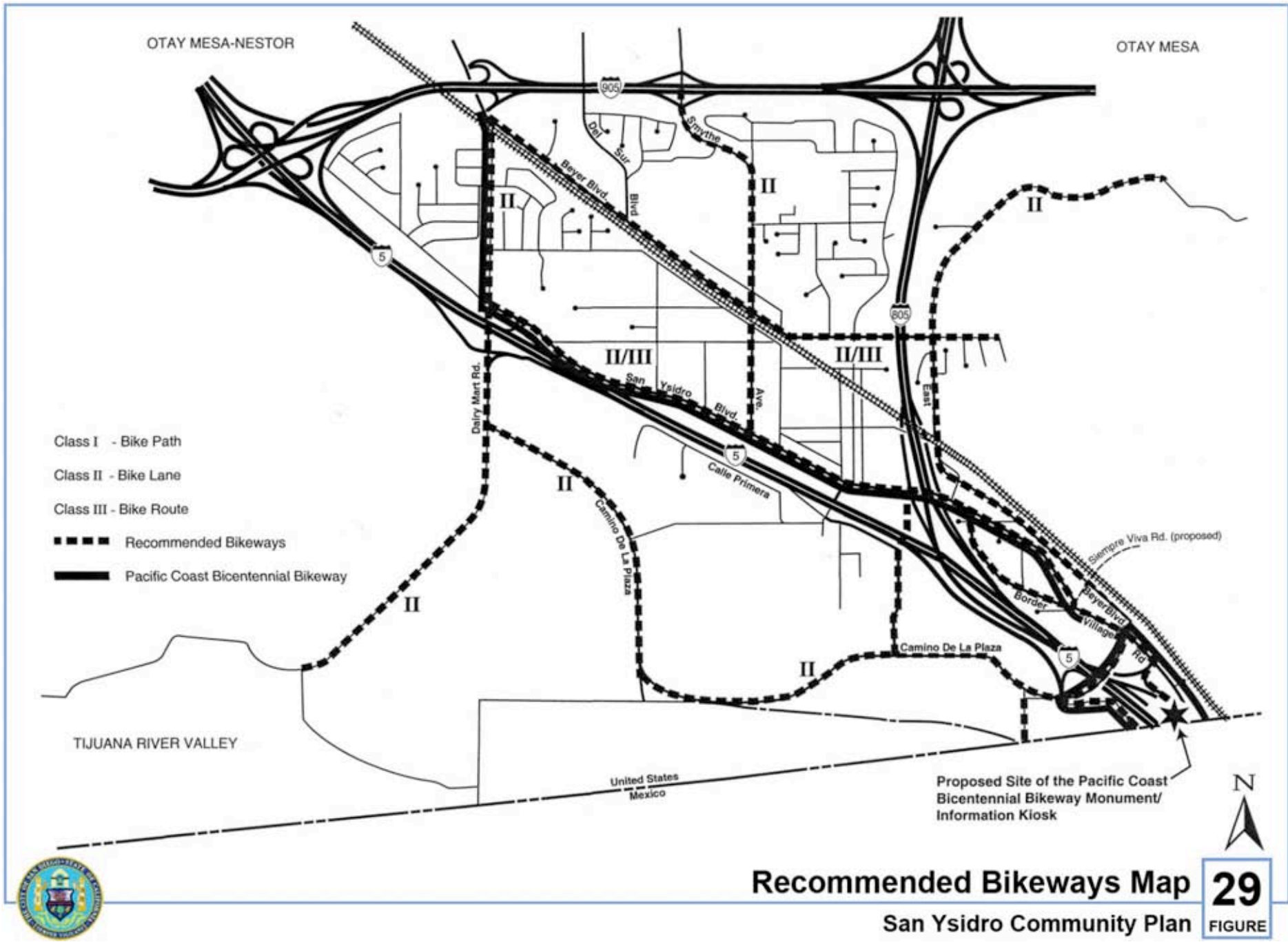
FIGURE



2. Provide bikeway signage and bicycle sensitive traffic detector loops on all bikeways.
  - a. Install special Pacific Coast Bicentennial bike route signs along this route alignment.
  - b. Construct a monument/information kiosk at the U.S. Customs Station to encourage bicycle commuting by San Diego-bound Mexican commuters. (See **Figure 29**.)
3. Integrate bicycle facilities such as bike lanes, bikeway guide signs, bicycle sensitive traffic detector loops and bicycle parking facilities at major activity centers.
4. Provide a special bicycle lane at the border crossing to reduce northbound traffic congestion and ease the strain on the community's nearby parking facilities. Include bicycle storage facilities on both sides of the border to accommodate bicycle/trolley trips.
5. Identify the San Ysidro segment of the Pacific Coast Bicentennial bike route with signs and on bikeway maps. Construct a display kiosk at the cul-de-sac of Camiones Way to officially mark the end of the bikeway. In addition to identifying the entire 1,000-mile route and providing bicycle related services information, the kiosk could also identify San Ysidro and Tijuana points of interest.

### **Pedestrian**

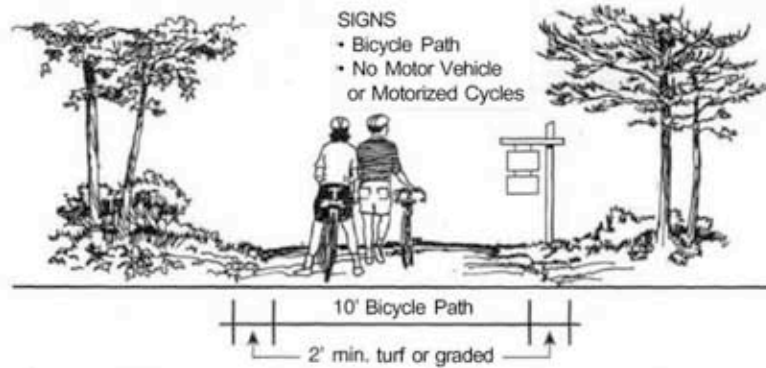
1. Require ground floor retail uses in all developments along commercial streets such as San Ysidro Boulevard and Border Village Road. (See also **Commercial** and **Urban Form Elements**.)
2. Provide adequate street lighting along the major streets.
3. Investigate the need for a stoplight at the busy intersection of Alverson Road and San Ysidro Boulevard to provide for easy pedestrian and vehicular access into the shopping center located at this site.
4. Improve the street environment with:
  - a. Improved street and sidewalk maintenance and trash removal
  - b. Landscaping
  - c. Lighting
  - d. Street furniture (See also **Urban Form Element**.)
5. Locate attractive, well-designed pedestrian linkages (crosswalks, paths and bridges) across the trolley corridor, especially at Smythe Avenue and San Ysidro and Beyer Boulevards and at the Beyer Trolley Station, to connect it with the surrounding neighborhoods, linear park and nearby commercial districts.



6. Explore the feasibility of opening a new pedestrian crossing at Virginia Avenue (site of the existing commercial gate) to facilitate tourist traffic flow between San Ysidro and Avenida Revolucion, the main shopping district in Tijuana, and to ease pedestrian congestion at the existing border crossing. Include auto and bus passenger loading and unloading facilities. (See **International Gateway Element.**)
7. Use special paving, lighting and planting treatments to enhance the alleys as part of a pedestrian path system. (See **Urban Form Element.**)
8. Improve pedestrian accessibility to tourist-oriented portions of the community by enhancing the design of the pedestrian bridges across I-5 and I-805. (See **Urban Form Element.**)

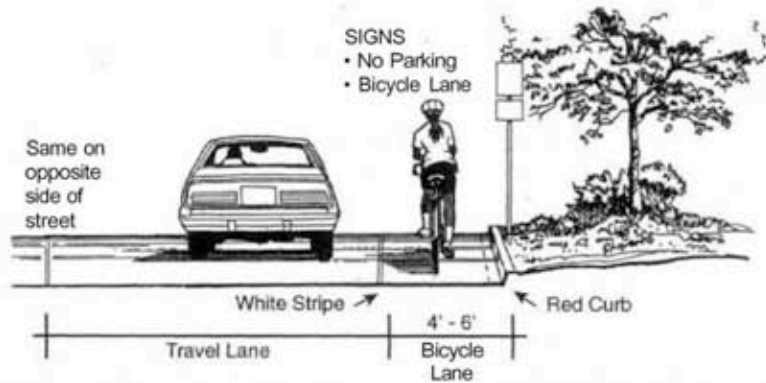
### **Mass Transit**

1. A comprehensive review of transit service needs in the San Ysidro area should be conducted by MTDB. The study should include assessing the feasibility of expanding or implementing the following:
  - a. Fixed-route service, including the feasibility of additional bus service west of I-5 to serve the densely-populated southern neighborhood and new bus and trolley service east to Otay Mesa to serve future employment centers.
  - b. DART (Direct Access to Regional Transit); and
  - c. Private transit service (for example, jitneys).
2. Include transit shelters, canopies, patterned sidewalks, information kiosks, benches and other pedestrian amenities in developments located along transit routes.
3. Design transit stops to be attractive, highly visible and provide shelter. Integrate their design into the design of the surrounding neighborhood. Consult MTDB about transit stop design and location.
4. Integrate the design of trolley stations into the design of the surrounding neighborhood. Develop pedestrian paths to link the station to the neighborhood. Provide bicycle storage facilities.
5. Landscape the trolley corridor to better integrate it into the community. (See **Urban Form Element.**)
6. Create pedestrian links from the Beyer Trolley Station to the surrounding neighborhoods, linear park and nearby commercial districts. (See **Urban Form Element, Figure 20.**)
7. Enhance the trolley bridge at East Beyer with a mural to connect the neighborhoods east and west of I-805. This could be a youth-oriented project which could be used to unify rival San Ysidro gangs. (See **Urban Form Element.**)



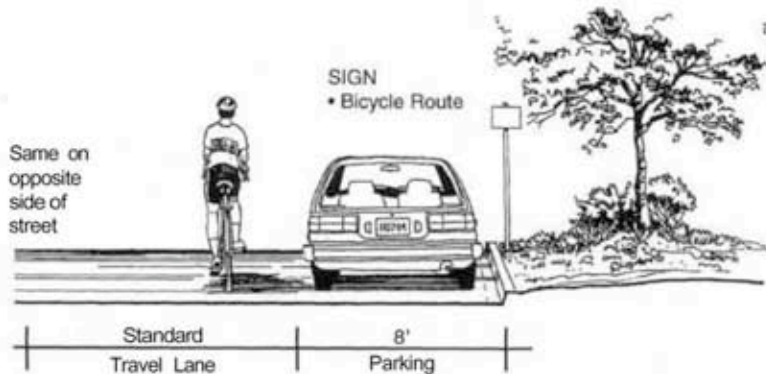
**CLASS I**  
(Typical location - open space)

**Bicycle Path**  
A completely separate right-of-way for the exclusive use of non-motorized vehicles.



**CLASS II**  
(Typical location - major street)

**Bicycle Lane**  
A restricted right-of-way located on the paved road surface alongside the traffic lane nearest the curb, and identified by special signs, land striping, and other pavement marking.



**CLASS III**  
(Typical location - neighborhood street)

**Bicycle Route**  
A shared right-of-way designated by signs only, with bicycle traffic sharing the roadway with motor vehicles.

*The dimensions illustrated on this page are subject to change.*



8. Enhance the bus stop on Beyer Boulevard at Del Sur Boulevard and facilitate connections to nearby trolley stations to more effectively serve the large residential population of the adjacent high-density multifamily developments.
  - a. Evaluate the need for more frequent bus service at the Beyer and Del Sur Boulevards Stop.
  - b. Provide an attractive, inviting bus shelter at this bus stop on both sides of Beyer Boulevard.
9. Increase the usage of the parking facility at the Beyer Trolley Station. Increase surveillance of the lot to provide additional security. Investigate the feasibility of shared use with the San Ysidro Health Center across the street.



# ***Community Facilities and Services***

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## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

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### GOALS

Provide a full and balanced range of employment opportunities, medical facilities, public utilities, and educational, social and recreational facilities and services.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### Schools

There are four school districts which serve the community: the San Ysidro School and South Bay Union School Districts which provide elementary school education through the eighth grade, the Sweetwater Union High School District which provides high school education and the Southwestern Community College District which offers a junior college curriculum. In the San Ysidro community, the Sweetwater Union High School District also operates an adult education center. The Southwestern Community College District operates the Southwestern Education Center, a satellite of Chula Vista-based Southwestern College. In addition to these four school districts, the community is served by a parochial school, Mt. Carmel, which provides elementary school education through the eighth grade. (See **Figure 30.**)

The school is a very important element in the life of most San Ysidro residents because:

- Most residents are very family-oriented with many young children and tend to identify and form their neighborhoods around their children's schools. For most San Ysidro residents, the best possible education for their children is a major goal.
- The school districts in San Ysidro are the community's largest employer; and
- The school district boards, particularly the San Ysidro School District, serve as a political forum for many community residents, even for those without school-age children. Many residents, especially Hispanic residents, consider the school district board to be their "City Council" because the board is located in their community and is very accessible.

Many of San Ysidro's schools are overcrowded. The population of the community has dramatically increased in recent years from 14,584 at the time of the 1980 census to 22,130 (from a City of San Diego Planning Department study of January 1988). This increase has been due, primarily, to the construction of low-income, multifamily apartments. This rapid development has not been tied to the development of new schools and other public facilities. Instead, the school districts have initiated multi-track school programs at several of the schools, increased class sizes and increased the use of temporary structures (portables).



Southwestern Adult Center



Overcrowded schools are further strained by the large numbers of Spanish-speaking children learning English as a second language and the large migratory problem (children moving into the district, attending school for several months, and then moving out of the district). These conditions tend to require smaller class sizes and more individualized instruction for each student. According to the San Ysidro School district, 50 to 60 percent of the classes in San Ysidro elementary schools are conducted in both English and Spanish. In addition, district officials estimate that as many as 54 percent of the children attending schools in their district in 1989 will move before the end of the school year.

**Tables 11, 12, 13 and 14** illustrate the enrollment capacity and the current enrollment for the public schools serving San Ysidro.

**TABLE 11  
SAN YSIDRO SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT AND CAPACITY**

<b>School</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>10/88 Actual Enrollment</b>	<b>10/89 Projected Enrollment</b>
Beyer (K-6)	631	665	705
La Mirada (K-6) Four-track	626	643	685
Smythe (K-6) Single-track	622	502	535
Sunset (K-6) Single-track	361	426	450
Willow (K-6) Four-track	537	692	735
Middle School (7-8)	1,182	744	790

**TABLE 12  
SOUTH BAY UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT AND CAPACITY**

<b>School</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>10/88 Actual Enrollment</b>	<b>10/89 Projected Enrollment</b>
Nicoloff (K-6)	610	1,107	1,162

**TABLE 13  
SWEETWATER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT AND CAPACITY**

<b>School</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>10/88 Actual Enrollment</b>	<b>10/89 Projected Enrollment</b>
Southwest High	1,214	1,814	2,237
Montgomery High	1,270	1,650	1,748
Adult Education Center	630*	n/a**	n/a

\* Number of students at the school at any one time

\*\* Actual enrollment figures are unavailable but are probably much higher than the school capacity because of the several sessions offered (for example, morning, afternoon, and evening) and the variety in the length of classes offered (for example, some classes might last for one week, others for one month).

**TABLE 14  
SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT  
ENROLLMENT AND CAPACITY**

School	Capacity	10/89 Actual Enrollment
Southwestern Adult Center	1,100*	1,162

\* Number of students at the school at any one time

**Libraries**

The San Ysidro Branch Library, a historical community landmark and community focal point, was donated to the community by Mr. Frank and Mrs. Evelyn Beyer in 1924.

The library is located on San Ysidro Boulevard at the southern end of the linear park and is adjacent to the senior citizens' center. Originally built at 1,264 square feet, the library was remodeled in 1984 and tripled in size to 4,089 square feet. The library contains 20,500 volumes, 6,000 of which are in Spanish. This is the largest Spanish language book collection in the City's library system and serves a community that is roughly 75 percent Spanish speaking. The library also serves as an archive of San Ysidro history with a small collection of turn-of-the-century San Ysidro photographs and documents.



The San Ysidro Library



Station No. 29

The San Ysidro library is adequate for the present needs of the community, according to General Plan standards, which state that a branch library serves a population of up to 30,000 people. Parking, shared with the senior citizens' center, is also adequate. The Library Department's future plans for expansion include a new 10,000-square-foot library facility in the San Ysidro community to meet anticipated future growth and a new 10,000-square-foot facility in Otay Mesa as that community develops.



## **Fire Protection**

The City of San Diego Fire Department facility that serves San Ysidro, Station No. 29, is located on San Ysidro Boulevard, east of Cottonwood Road. This station, originally built in 1963, consists of an engine company, a truck company, brush rig and utility rig. Twenty-four people are stationed here, eight people (or two crews) per 24-hour period. In 1989, the station met the response time of six minutes for residential areas and four minutes for commercial areas as required by Council Policy. This station is supported by two Otay Mesa-Nestor Fire Stations, Station No. 6 on Palm Avenue and Station No. 30 on Coronado Avenue.

Future plans for expansion include a new fire station at Brown Field in Otay Mesa as that community develops.

## **Police Protection**

The police station, the headquarters of the Southern Division of the San Diego Police Department, was built in 1960 and is located on San Ysidro Boulevard, two blocks from the international boundary. In 1989, the station was supported by a staff of 100 people, each assigned to one of six beats. The staff has outgrown its present building and the possibility of a new location, in Otay Mesa, is being studied.



Southern Division of the San Diego Police Department

The Southern Division police deal with several major crime problems primarily associated with the station's proximity to the border and the recent, rapid growth that has occurred in San Ysidro. The recent influx of minorities has created serious racial tension. One major site of racial tension has been Larsen Field which is adjacent to recently built, low-income multifamily housing. This new multifamily housing has contributed to a serious racial problem, according to some in the community, because recreational facilities in the area cannot adequately support this new population, leaving young people with nothing to do.

In addition, much of the crime that the police in San Ysidro confront is a result of the large number of people that cross the border every day—the undocumented immigrants. Although some crime is attributed to the undocumented immigrants, immigrants are often the victims. According to the Southern Division police, there is a great deal of violent crime being committed by “alien robbers” or highwaymen against the vulnerable immigrant, especially at night and in the area of the Tijuana River levee. The police also believe that many of these crimes in the levee area could be related to drug trafficking.

Commercial truck parking on local streets is also a tremendous problem for the police. It is against the law to leave a truck parked on a street unattended. Yet, because Mexico does not allow American commercial trucks to cross the border, American truckers park anywhere they are able while waiting to exchange cargo. (See also **Transportation and Circulation Element**.)

## **Medical Facilities**

The San Ysidro Health Center provides most of the public health care for the San Ysidro community. The center is located at 4004 Beyer Boulevard, across the street from the Beyer Trolley Station. The center opened in August of 1969 and was originally sponsored by the University of California at San Diego. In 1974, the sponsorship was ended and the center became a corporation. It is now funded by federal, state, and City/county governments.

The center offers a wide range of health services, including dental and mental. In 1989, the staff consisted of approximately 150 full-time and 50 part-time employees. The center covers approximately 40,000 square feet divided between three buildings. In 1987, the center served 14,955 patients and in 1988, the center projected 18,700 patients would be served. The on-site parking is currently over-burdened, requiring patients to park on the street.



The San Ysidro Health Center

There is no hospital in San Ysidro. Residents must travel to other communities in San Diego, Chula Vista and National City to receive hospital care. The hospitals used are Paradise Valley, University and Chula Vista Community hospitals. There are few private medical practices in the community.

## **Social and Government Services**

Many residents do not know what is available to them in terms of social and governmental services because of language and cultural barriers and physical isolation from the rest of the City of San Diego. For example, Municipal Code violations, including zoning, signage and litter, often go unreported as many residents, particularly older ones, are unaware of the Code's existence. In addition, these barriers create special needs for many residents, such as a local utilities office for seniors to pay their bills and a satellite Council office for government information. The major social and government services that currently exist in the community are described below.

### **Post Office**

The post office located at 440 W. San Ysidro Boulevard, has a unique function in this community: it serves a border community, including many Mexican nationals with San Ysidro post office boxes. According to many residents, this added patronage has significantly added to the traffic congestion problem on San Ysidro Boulevard and brings large amounts of traffic through the center of the community.

## Social Service Agencies

The demand for social services in San Ysidro is higher than the county average. San Ysidro residents, as stated in previous sections of the Plan, are predominantly low-income and Hispanic and have large, young families. Many residents face language and cultural barriers, obstacles for receiving an education and finding a job. These conditions increase the demand for social services.

There is a lack of employment opportunities available to San Ysidro residents. San Ysidro lacks a strong economic base and, because of its large, young population, will generate more job seekers than most other areas.

Unemployment due to lack of education and job skills is among the community's major social problems. Other urgent community needs, according to a 1984 San Diego County survey, include juvenile diversion and youth counseling.

Several social agencies serve San Ysidro. One of these is the MAAC (Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee) Center, a non-profit social service agency located in the linear park in the center of the community.



The MAAC Center

Another social service agency, "Casa Familiar," offers social services such as counseling and educational outreach. This agency has become increasingly involved in the development and planning of the community as well.

The existing social services, however, are insufficient to solve all of the youth problems such as drug abuse, the school dropout rate, teen pregnancy and racial tension. Recreation programs for the community's youth can also help to solve younger residents' social problems. Currently, though, there is a lack of youth-oriented recreation within the community. Existing parks, for example Larsen Field, do not meet the community's need for youth recreation. Many younger residents go instead to Tijuana where, some community parents say, "they get into trouble." (See **Commercial and Park, Recreation and Open Space Elements.**)

## Churches

There are seven churches located in the San Ysidro community. The churches play an active role in supporting the community's social needs and they provide a means of organizing the community, of distributing information to the community, and of giving child and senior citizen care.



## **Public Utilities**

### **Sewer and Water Service**

When San Ysidro was annexed into the City of San Diego in 1957, the community had poor water service and sewer lines and storm drains did not exist. At that time, the City made several improvements to the community's sewer and water service. San Ysidro is now served by the South San Diego Pipeline and the San Ysidro trunk sewer. Some residences in the older sections of the community, however, are still without sewer and gas service. Exactly how many residences lack these services and where they are located are unknown because much of the community is old, annexation to the City is relatively recent and public utilities records are incomplete. According to the city of San Diego Water Utilities Department, the extension of new sewer service would be dependent on new development or the assessment district process. New gas service, according to San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E), would be dependent on the property owner. (After being contacted by the property owner, SDG&E would investigate the site to determine gas line requirements. If the required gas line were above a certain size, all costs would be borne by the property owner.) There are several possible reasons why no action has been taken to obtain these services:

- The language barrier—Roughly 85 percent of the community is Spanish-speaking. Many people believe that they would be unable to communicate with City and utility company staff, unaware that there are bilingual staff in almost every department.
- The cultural barrier—Many residents and business owners in the community are unaware that local ordinances prohibit such conditions (non-existent services). Some Hispanic residents and business owners have experienced much worse conditions in Mexico and believe that conditions in San Ysidro are “better.” Their experiences in Mexico have demonstrated that complaints to the authorities would result in little action.
- Fear and threats of losing their homes—Some residents who lack basic services are also afraid that if they were to file complaints or requests for services, building codes would then be enforced and many of them would lose their homes. Also, renters face their landlord's threats of eviction or higher rents and are further discouraged from filing complaints.

### **Drainage**

Another major problem with public utilities in the community is street drainage, especially in the area of the Border Trolley Station on San Ysidro Boulevard. There, on San Ysidro Boulevard south of I-805, on Calle Primera between Via de San Ysidro and Willow Road, and on several local streets, the heavy rainfall submerges sidewalks and parking lots and impedes traffic flow. There are three major reasons for this:

1. San Ysidro is an old community and storm drains do not exist on many of its old streets. (Many of these older streets are also without curbs, gutters and sidewalks.)

2. San Ysidro is difficult to drain because it is flat, low and adjacent to the Tijuana River.
3. Otay Mesa runoff, containing large quantities of silt, drains into San Ysidro and obstructs storm drains. This is a major problem at San Ysidro Boulevard and Center Street and at San Ysidro Boulevard and the Border Trolley Station. In 1988, a contract was awarded by the City to improve the drainage at the trolley station.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Improve educational opportunities for residents.
- Attract additional medical facilities.
- Broaden residents' familiarity with the special services and facilities that are available to them in the community, City and region.
- Promote self-reliance and volunteerism among community residents to assist in providing education, public safety and social services.
- Provide sewer and water service to all residents of San Ysidro.
- Improve the community's drainage system.
- Ensure the maintenance and periodic upgrading of public utilities services.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **All Community Facilities and Services**

1. Development projects will be approved upon the provision of basic facilities and services, including schools, parks, roads, water, sewer and public safety, at standards equal to those recommended by the General Plan. A Public Facilities Financing Plan will be prepared concurrent with plan adoption to define possible funding sources if known, not limited to the General Fund and Development Impact Fees.
2. Eliminate additional City or Section Eight participation in subsidized multifamily apartments in San Ysidro. The community is already impacted with large numbers of subsidized units, contrary to the balanced communities policy adopted by the City Council.
3. Prepare and distribute a guidebook to San Ysidro and the San Diego region to publicize available public facilities and services.



## **Schools**

1. Provide additional educational programs, such as literacy and English training, to increase employment opportunities (for example, to provide an employee pool for Otay Mesa industry).
  - a. Publicize existing adult education programs.
  - b. Attract a college or university.
2. Complete a comprehensive master plan for all educational facilities in the South San Diego area with the assistance of the four school districts.
3. Collect development impact fees to provide necessary facilities, such as libraries and parks.
4. Allow Southwestern Junior College room for expansion in the future (their current site has no expansion capability) by utilizing vacant industrial warehouse space in the Border International Industrial Park. This can be accomplished with a Conditional Use Permit. (See also the **Industrial Element**.)
5. Apply the Institutional Overlay Zone to all public school sites.

## **Libraries**

1. Allow for future library expansion at or near the existing library site in the linear park to maintain this use in the “heart” of the community.

## **Police Protection**

1. Provide a police storefront office at or near the site of the existing Southern Division Headquarters. Members of the community have requested that police presence be maintained in the community when the Police move their headquarters to Otay Mesa.

## **Social and Government Facilities**

1. Establish a “mini-City Hall” to provide residents with improved access to local government. It could include services such as a satellite Council office, a satellite utilities office for close-to-home bill paying (especially for low-income seniors), and an employment opportunities center. This could be located in conjunction with a police storefront office at the existing police sub-station on San Ysidro Boulevard when the police relocate to Otay Mesa.
2. Locate post office boxes at or near the border gate. (The majority of those who use this service are Mexicans who, after crossing the border, now must traverse the entire community to reach the post office, contributing to the traffic congestion on San Ysidro Boulevard.)

3. Establish San Ysidro as a regional cultural/retail visitor center to provide jobs.
4. Create programs to link jobs in Otay Mesa with San Ysidro residents. Such programs could include: “First Source” hiring, a program that requires Otay Mesa and San Ysidro employers to target community residents as potential employees; centralized job banking; and a job training center in the community, targeting unemployed and underemployed San Ysidro residents.
5. Develop the San Ysidro Community Cultural Center at the San Ysidro Middle School site to provide meeting, classroom and social and cultural space for the community. This project was proposed as part of the 1989 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program but did not receive the required funding.

### **Public Utilities**

1. Determine the community's infrastructure needs and address funding sources.
2. Publicize the City's services and its bilingual staff. Provide information on how to make complaints to City Departments, including Building Inspection and Water Utilities, and what constitutes a legitimate complaint.
3. Enforce health and safety codes to help clean up deteriorated conditions in residential and business districts.
4. Establish a Code Enforcement Task Force (similar to Project First Class in Southeast San Diego).
5. Expand the City’s role in helping renters respond to intimidation and threats by landlords.



Hotel San Ysidro - Circa 1925

Photo from San Diego Historical Society Files

## *Cultural and Historic Resources*

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## CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

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### GOALS

Recognize, preserve and rehabilitate historical or significant buildings, districts, landscaping, archeological and paleontological sites and urban environments.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

San Ysidro's history involves a tale of two countries, the United States and Mexico, the founding and demise of an agrarian utopian settlement and the evolution of an exclusive farming village into the multi-cultural busiest border crossing in the world. The community's built environment reflects this rich and varied heritage, as styles which run the gamut from Craftsman to Art Deco are in evidence throughout the community.



El Toreador Motel

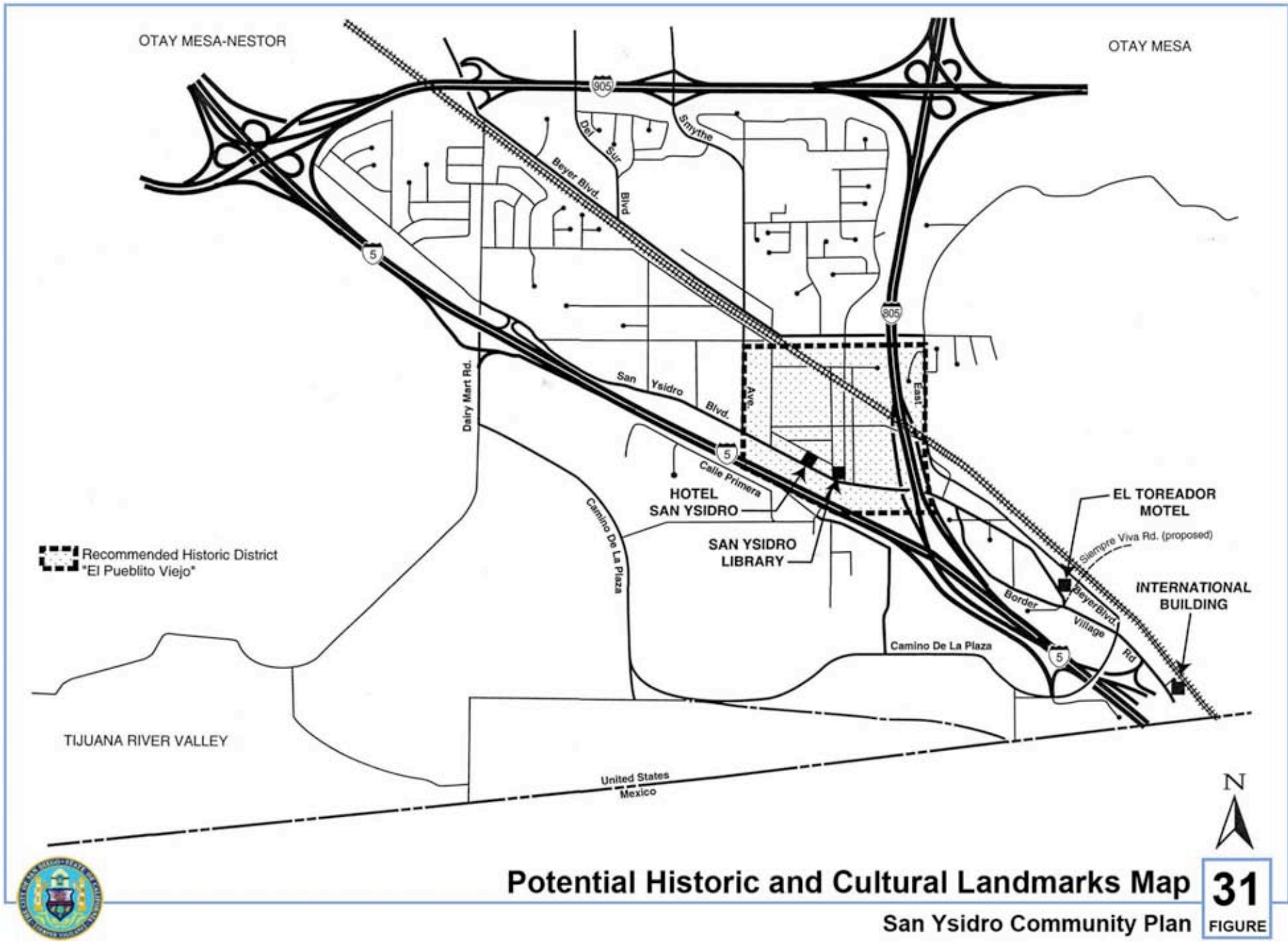
The planning area contains a few historic buildings which are culturally significant as individual structures. These are considered historic either because they exemplify the construction techniques and architectural elements of a particular period or architect or because of their relationship to historic personages and events. The El Toreador Motel and the International Building along San Ysidro Boulevard are both good examples.

There are, however, a number of structures which may not merit individual designation, but instead contribute to a grouping of buildings: a historic district. A district is composed of structures related in architectural style, age, method of construction or historical development. The residential area bounded by Beyer Boulevard to the north, both sides of San Ysidro Boulevard to the south, Smythe Avenue to the west and East Beyer Boulevard and I-805 to the east should be considered such a district. Informally named "El Pueblito Viejo," this neighborhood contains approximately 150 buildings of architectural and/or historical significance built between 1900 and 1930. The architectural styles that predominate in the district include Craftsman, Folk Victorian and Spanish Colonial Revival. Some of the buildings are remnants of "Little Landers" colony, an agrarian Utopian settlement founded in San Ysidro in 1909.



International Building

Through the years, the neighborhood has maintained its small, low-density character. Most of the houses are one-story, wood frame structures surrounded by vegetable and flower gardens.





The recommended district also encompasses the community commercial core along San Ysidro Boulevard which includes some of the oldest businesses in the community such as the San Ysidro Hardware Store and the Hotel San Ysidro. As mentioned in the **Commercial Element**, this area is the historic and geographic center of the community and has the greatest potential for becoming a focused center, a downtown for San Ysidro.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Promote the establishment of historic and cultural districts where appropriate.
- Develop and implement preservation incentives and strategies.
- Preserve historic structures on-site and in their historic context whenever possible.
- Preserve paleontological resources.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Establish a historic/cultural district in the “El Pueblito Viejo” neighborhood to preserve “El Pueblito Viejo” and to encourage the rehabilitation of existing structures.  
(See **Figure 31**.)
2. Limit the development potential of “El Pueblito Viejo” by rezoning the area from R-1500 to a zone similar to R-3000 because it is a predominantly single-family and duplex residential area.
3. Establish development guidelines for projects which would affect the significant historical sites and the historic district in San Ysidro. These guidelines will set design criteria, height and setback requirements, sign controls for new development and the rehabilitation of existing structures.
4. Evaluate projects located within or adjacent to a historic, archeological or paleontological site in terms of their impact upon and/or compatibility with the resource. Preserve such resources in a manner which would not degrade the resource or impair its educational value.
5. Provide a package of incentives for property owners to encourage the preservation of historical, archeological paleontological sites.
6. Allow adaptive reuse of historic structures as a means of preserving the built environment while stimulating economic revitalization.
7. Record those structures determined not to be worthy of preservation according to Historic American Building Survey (HABS) standards, prior to demolition.