TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

A majority of the most significant traffic issues identified by the community were related to safety. Del Mar Heights Road, because of its width, traffic volumes and speed, is perceived by many residents as a major barrier dividing the community in two. Many children are bused only a few blocks to school to avoid having to cross Del Mar Heights Road on foot. Residents have identified a variety of additional traffic concerns including the lack of efficient pedestrian circulation, illegal excessive speeds on Del Mar Heights Road and Carmel Valley Road, increasing traffic volumes and congestion overall, overflow beach parking during summer weekends, the substandard street conditions in the Del Mar Terrace neighborhood and traffic impacts from regional growth including the construction of State Route 56 (SR-56).

The Torrey Pines community faces the challenge of planning and developing a transportation system that accommodates future traffic volumes, emphasizing mass transit, without disrupting the community's unique environment and the lifestyle of its residents.

The traditional services provided by a community's traffic circulation system are internal circulation from one part of the community to another and a means of connecting the entire community to other communities. Because of its location at the northern extent of the City of San Diego and its long, thin shape, the Torrey Pines circulation system must also carry through traffic (i.e., traffic without an origin or destination within the community). The Torrey Pines community forms a long, narrow area along I-5 and I-805 through which all east-west traffic must pass. Among the areas to be served are the city of Del Mar, the beaches, the fairgrounds-race track area and other residential areas. The uses of some of these facilities (beaches and race track) vary considerably from winter to summer and thus cause a seasonal variation in traffic between these time periods.

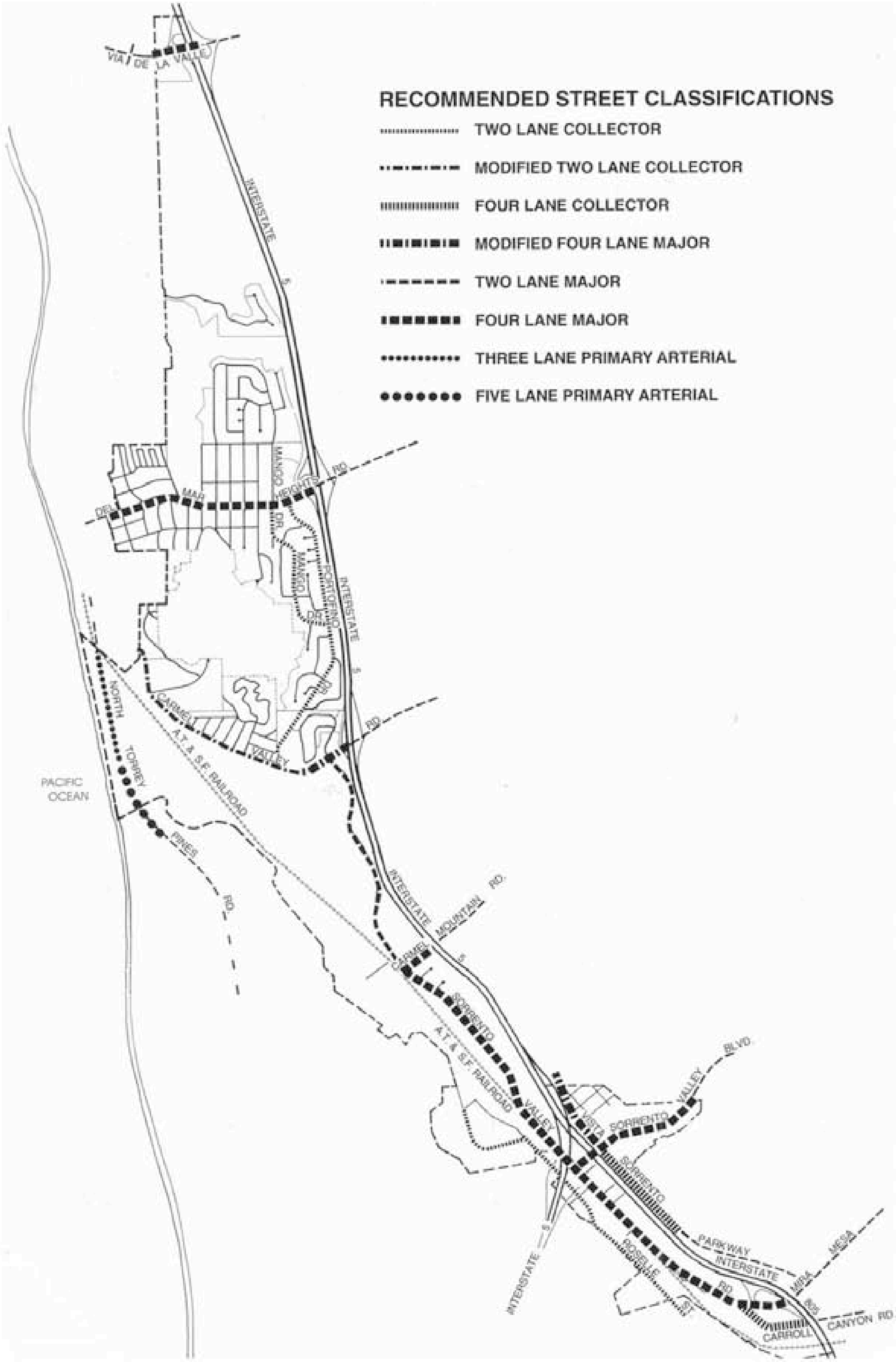
In February 1992, a Transportation Study was completed in association with the Torrey Pines Community Plan Update. This study contained an analysis of existing transportation conditions, as well as documentation of the travel forecast used in the analysis of future transportation conditions. The Transportation Study indicated that existing daily traffic volumes on North Torrey Pines Road, Sorrento Valley Road, Via De La Valle and Carmel Valley Road exceeded their approximate maximum desirable average daily traffic. The study also found that three intersections operated with a level of service (LOS) below C including:

Carmel Valley Road/Sorrento Valley Road (LOS D)

Carmel Valley Road/North Torrey Pines Road (LOS F)

Sorrento Valley Road/Sorrento Valley Boulevard (LOS D)

Some of the potential problems associated with levels of service D or greater include congestion, delay and air quality impacts. Intersection Level of Service analyses were then performed using projected traffic at buildout of the Plan and surrounding communities and jurisdictions. Analyses assumed existing road geometrics. Six intersections had LOS greater than C:



Street Classifications

Torrey Pines Community Plan

7
FIGURE

Carmel Valley Road/Sorrento Valley Road (LOS D/E)

Del Mar Heights Road/Mango Drive (LOS D)

Sorrento Valley Road/Sorrento Valley Boulevard (LOS D)

Sorrento Valley Boulevard/Vista Sorrento Parkway (LOS E)

Carmel Valley Road/North Torrey Pines Road (LOS F)

Del Mar Heights Road/Camino Del Mar (LOS D)

Because of the potential impacts associated with locations where LOS is greater than D, the intersection of Carmel Valley Road/North Torrey Pines Road, Carmel Valley Road/Sorrento Valley Road, and Sorrento Valley Road/Vista Sorrento Parkway were reanalyzed with transportation improvements. These recommended transportation improvements caused the Carmel Valley Road/North Torrey Pines Road intersection (located in the City of Del Mar) to improve from F to D/E, and the Carmel Valley Road/Sorrento Valley Road intersection to improve from D/E to C and the Sorrento Valley Road/Vista Sorrento Parkway intersection to improve from E to C.

These road improvements, as well as all other recommended improvements to the community's transportation system, can be found in the Specific Proposals section of this element.

GOALS

1. Provide an efficient, safe and environmentally sensitive transportation system.

2. Ensure that transportation improvements do not negatively impact the numerous open space systems located throughout the Torrey Pines community.

3. Provide a transportation system that maximizes the opportunities for public transit use, especially in Sorrento Valley.

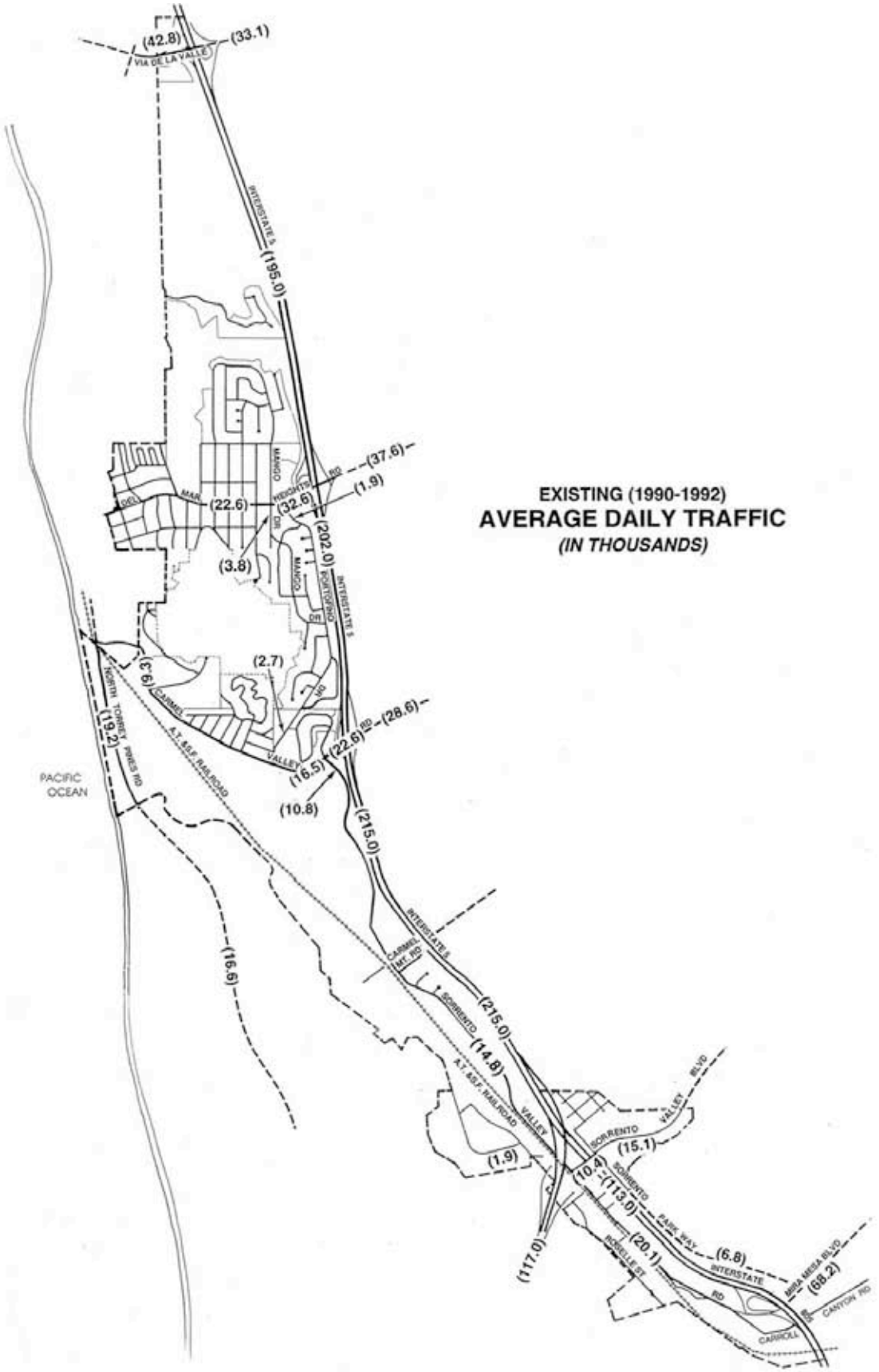
4. Provide a system of bikeways and pedestrian facilities that will encourage bicycling and walking as means of transportation.

5. Provide a transportation system that provides convenient linkages to the community's activity centers and to the rest of the metropolitan region.

6. Provide a safe and environmentally sensitive improvement of the Del Mar Terrace neighborhood streets.

7. Provide a transportation system that encourages the use of mass transit, rather than building and/or widening roads and freeway.

8. Investigate the feasibility of providing seasonal shuttle service.



Existing (1990-1992) Average Daily Traffic

Torrey Pines Community Plan

8 FIGURE

POLICIES

1. The construction of new roads or improvements to existing roads adjacent to open space areas shall mitigate impacts through the restoration and enhancement of that open space system to the maximum extent feasible.

2. When road improvements are proposed, those portions that traverse sensitive areas (water courses, wildlife corridors, sensitive biological areas, etc.) shall be designed to reduce or eliminate impacts to those areas.

3. Improved public transit service should be provided to the Torrey Pines community, especially to the employment area of Sorrento Valley and the North Torrey Pines mesa area. Regular bus service, light rail transit and commuter rail should link the Torrey Pines community with the regional transportation network.

4. Provide bikeway and pedestrian paths that link all areas within the community, as well as linking Torrey Pines with surrounding communities and jurisdictions.

5. Provide improvements to the road network that will facilitate traffic circulation without negatively impacting adjacent open space areas and residential neighborhoods.

6. Require that Transportation Demand Management strategies are implemented within the Sorrento Valley industrial area. Provide bicycle racks/lockers, showers, and locker room facilities for employees who bike or walk to work.

7. All available traffic measures that improve pedestrian safety on Del Mar Heights Road should be investigated, and where feasible, implemented.

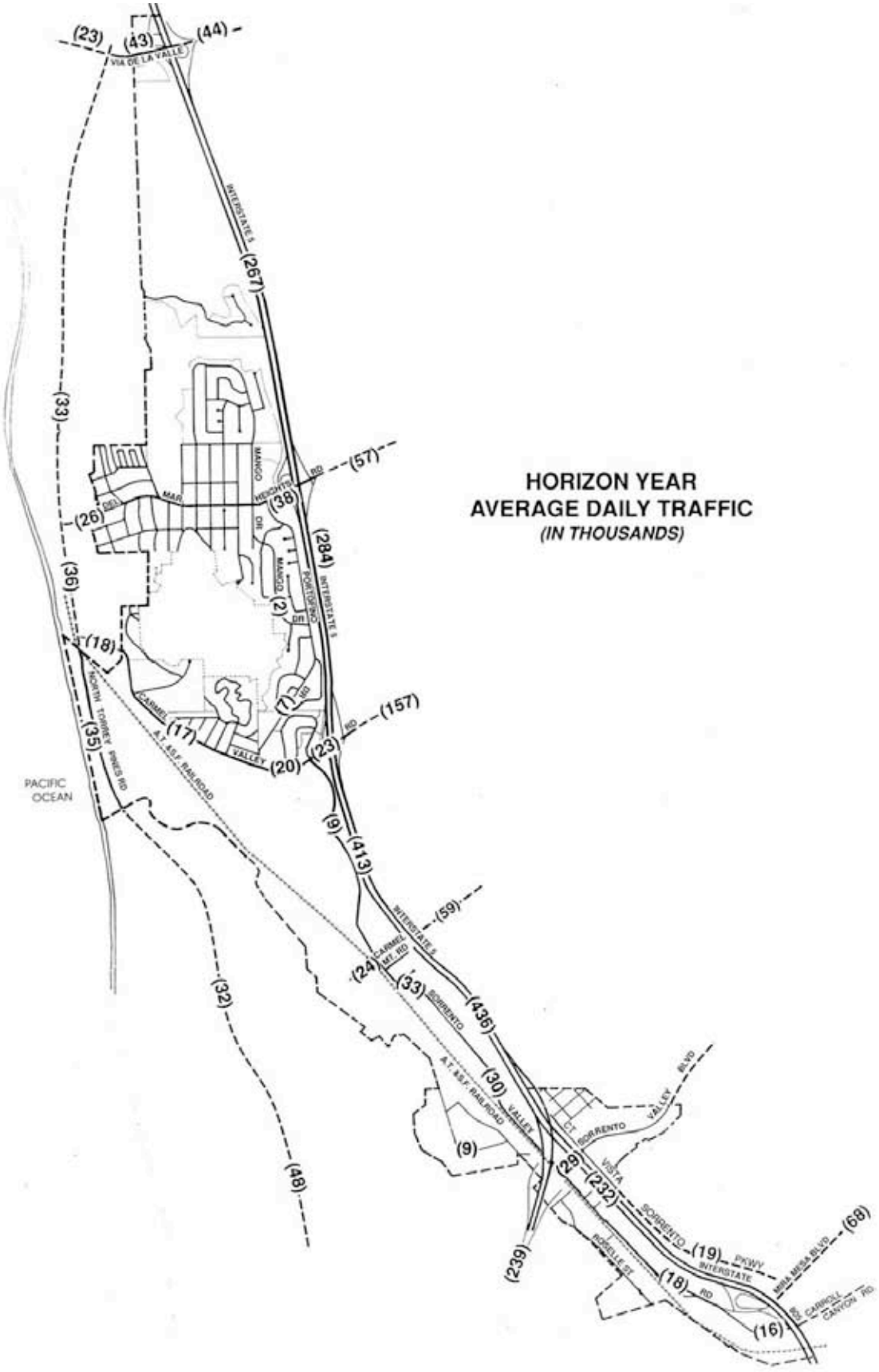
SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

Traffic Volume Trends

Torrey Pines existing traffic counts for 1990 are shown in **Figure 8**, and projected (Horizon Year) traffic volumes are shown in **Figure 9**. It should be noted that the projected traffic volumes were generated using an adjusted version of SANDAG's calibrated mid county model which assumed buildout of the Torrey Pines Community Plan, buildout of surrounding communities and jurisdictions, buildout of all surrounding planned circulation improvements, and a 40 percent drive alone rate (a regional goal).

Bikeways

The City of San Diego has actively pursued the establishment of a commuter-oriented bikeway system in the City. The purpose of the bikeway system is to encourage the use of bicycles as a transportation mode especially in place of single occupant motor vehicles. It is expected that the increased use of bicycles as a transportation mode will help reduce air pollution and traffic congestion. There are three classifications of bikeway facilities. Class I (bike paths), Class II (bike lanes) and Class III (bike routes). See **Figures 10** and **12** for details.



Horizon Year Average Daily Traffic

Torrey Pines Community Plan

9 FIGURE

The majority of the existing bikeways in the Torrey Pines community are Class II bike lanes. Bicyclists are allowed to use I-5 shoulders between the Genesee Avenue and the Sorrento Valley Road interchanges.

The following Class I bicycle path projects have been proposed within the Torrey Pines community. The Carmel Valley Road bicycle path is proposed to be constructed along the south side of Carmel Valley Road between McGonigle Road and Sorrento Valley Road. The San Dieguito River Valley bicycle path, a planned 55-mile regional bicycle path, will parallel the San Dieguito River. The Coastal bicycle path is proposed to be built within the A.T.&S.F. Railroad right-of-way between downtown San Diego and Oceanside.

Class II bicycle lanes are planned along the northern portion of Sorrento Valley Road between Carmel Valley Road and the Sorrento Valley Industrial Park.

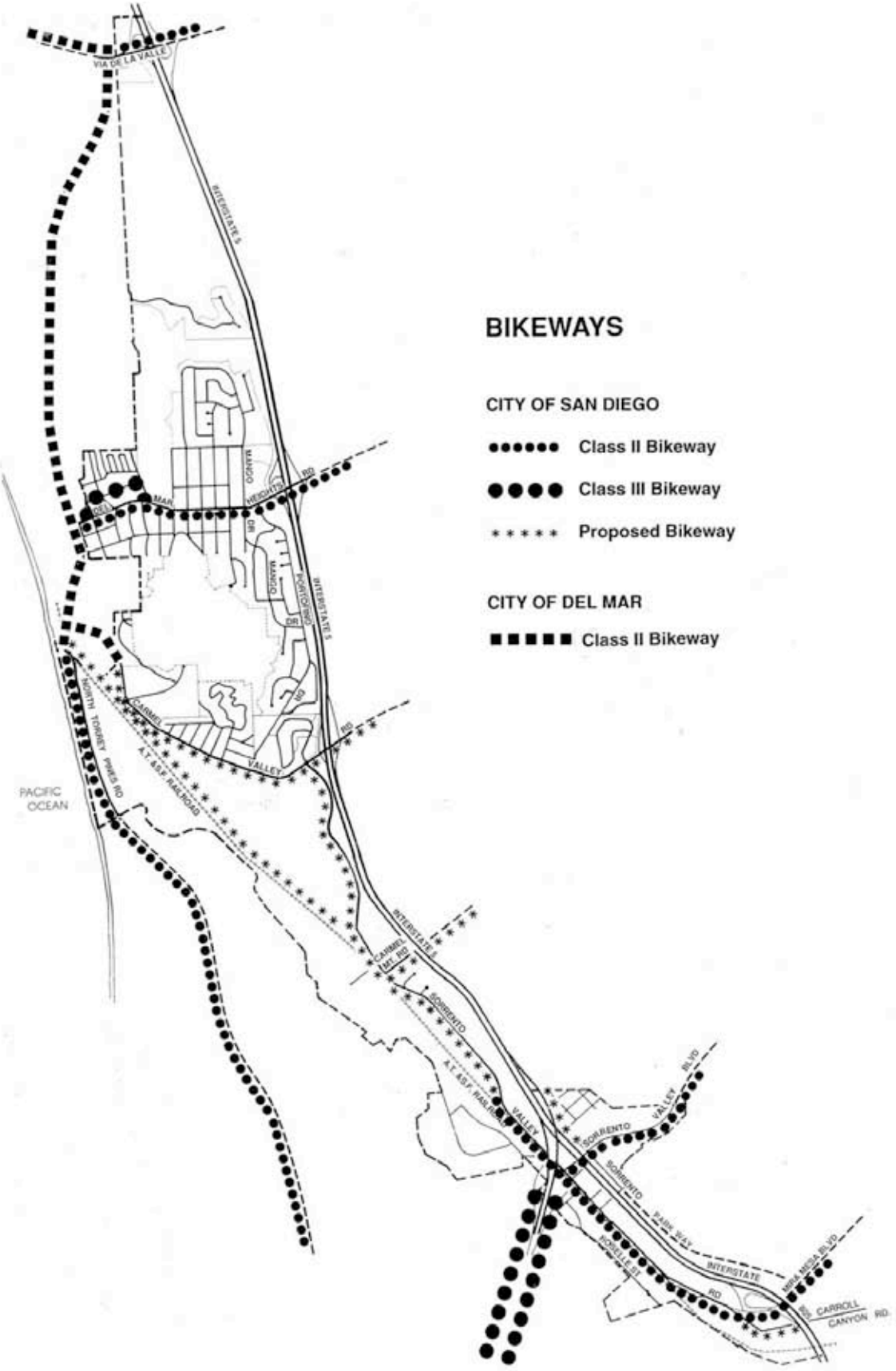
Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Concept Sketch

Pedestrian Paths

Primary pedestrian routes should be well lit and located along or visible from the street. Wherever possible, trees planted in parkways or tree wells should line the street to create shade and a buffer between pedestrians and the street.

Mass Transit

Currently, only one bus line provides service between downtown and the Torrey Pines community planning area. The San Diego County Transit System provides express service (Route 800) between Oceanside and downtown with one stop at the park-and-ride facility located on the southwest corner of I-5 and Carmel Valley Road. The North County Transit District, Route 301, operates along North Torrey Pines Road and provides shuttle service to the annual Fair and thoroughbred racing during the summer months. In addition, future mass transit plans by the Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) include a variety of mass transit service improvements.



Bikeways

Torrey Pines Community Plan

10 FIGURE

Light Rail Transit (LRT)

MTDB's long-range plans include extending the LRT line north along I-5 to Oceanside. The LRT alignment would extend north along the I-5 corridor with future potential LRT stations within Sorrento Valley near the I-5/I-805 intersection, and on the east side of I-5 both at Carmel Mountain Road and Carmel Valley Road (see **Figure 11**).

Commuter Rail

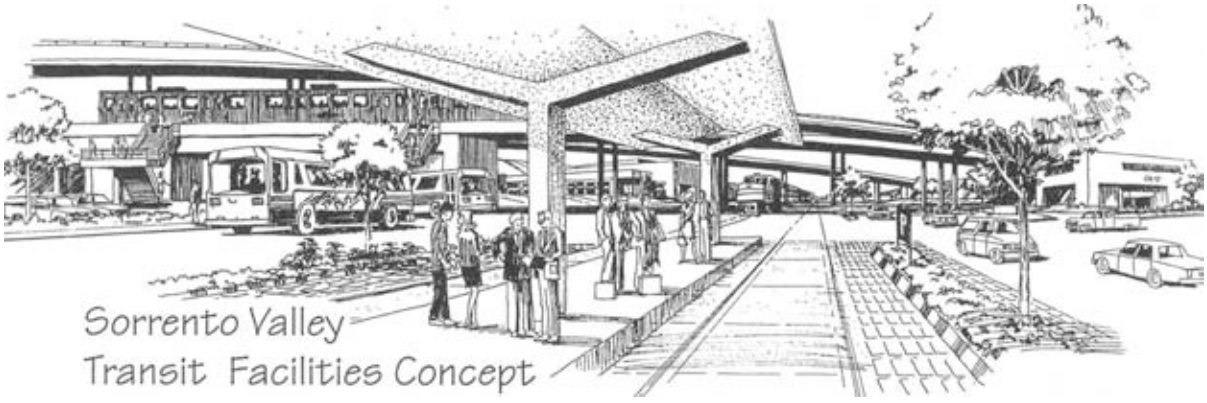
The North County transit district is in the process of implementing a plan for a commuter rail line that would provide mass transit service to those communities along I-5 between Oceanside and San Diego. The commuter rail line would use the existing Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way through Sorrento Valley (see **Figure 11**) with a station within Sorrento Valley near the I-5/I-805 interchange.

Bus Service

MTDB's short-range transit plan identifies a need for one new bus service line to serve the Torrey Pines area. Route 961, while currently unfunded, would operate from Carmel Valley to University Towne Centre, with service to Sorrento Valley and Sorrento Mesa (**Figure 11**).

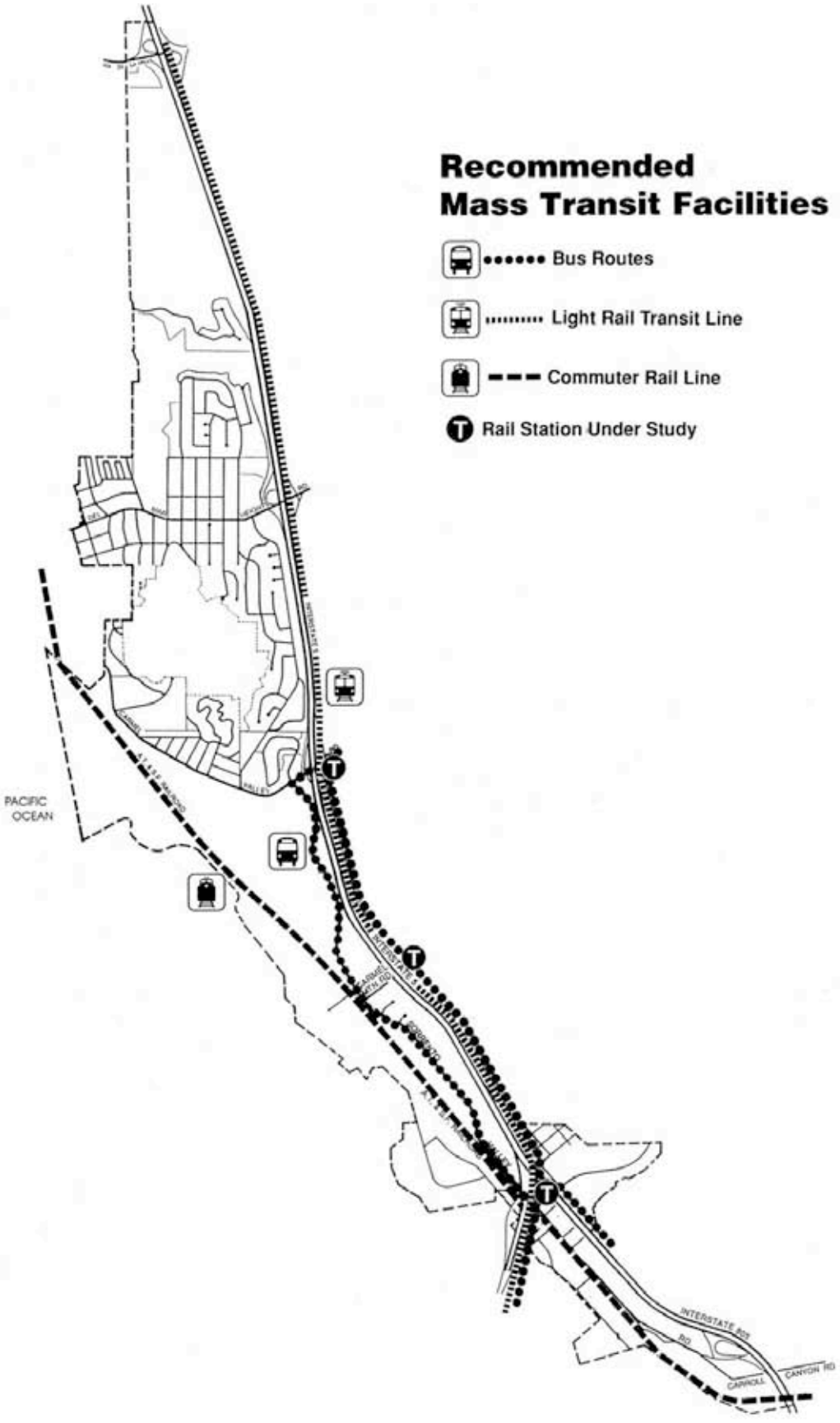
Transit Stations

Transit stations should provide shelter for pedestrians, convenient passenger loading zones, telephones, adequate lighting and secure bike storage. Retail shops and services should also be integrated with transit stations. Pedestrians and feeder/shuttle bus users should not have to walk across parking lots in order to board the rail lines. The intent is to provide comfortable, safe, convenient stations. The commercial uses can help alleviate the need for before or after work auto trips to do errands.



Scenic Routes

Since 1964, the City has maintained a 52-mile scenic route extending from Mount Soledad on the north to Cabrillo National Monument on the south and traversing such in-between areas of attraction as Balboa Park and Mission Bay Park. This route was designed to provide scenic views of the San Diego community as well as to link points of visitor interest.



Recommended Mass Transit Facilities

Torrey Pines Community Plan

11
FIGURE

In addition to the 52-mile scenic route, the Torrey Pines community has a number of road segments that have scenic qualities worthy of formal recognition and protection. Three road segments within the community are currently recommended for a scenic route designation including North Torrey Pines Road, Carmel Valley Road and Sorrento Valley Road.

Specific Road Improvements

The following specific road improvements are recommended primarily to: 1) protect the health and safety of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists; 2) accommodate existing and future traffic with minimum disruption to residents and businesses; and 3) protect the sensitive environmental resources contained within the community planning area.

North Torrey Pines Road

North Torrey Pines Road is a five-lane primary arterial which narrows to two lanes as it passes about half-way through the Torrey Pines community planning area. In order to improve the level of service at the intersection of North Torrey Pines Road and Carmel Valley Road, an additional northbound lane will be provided from Torrey Pines Park Road to the boundary of the City's jurisdiction. Improvements north of the City of San Diego's boundary can only occur subsequent to approval by the city of Del Mar.

In addition, the bridge over the railroad tracks just south of this intersection should be improved to allow a second northbound lane as well as bike lanes and a sidewalk on the west side to the City's jurisdiction. Bridge improvements north of the City's boundary can only occur subsequent to approval by the city of Del Mar.

An alternative to extending the additional lane through the intersection includes extending the lane as a right turn only lane onto Carmel Valley Road.

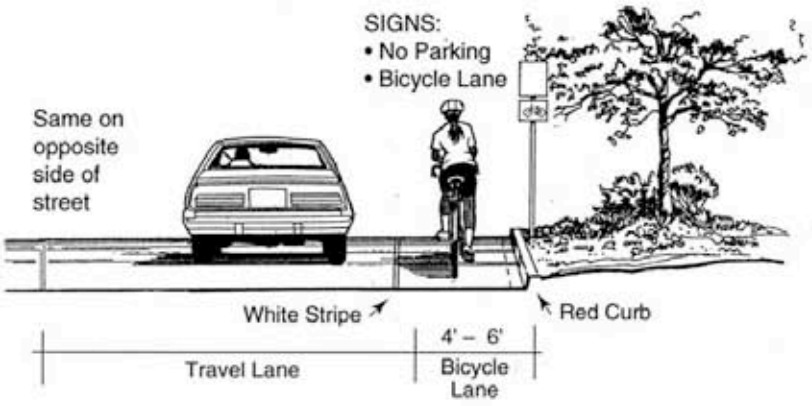
North Torrey Pines Road Bridge over Peñasquitos Creek

The North Torrey Pines Road Bridge over Peñasquitos Creek will need to be reconstructed due to seismic and structural deficiencies. The reconstruction of this bridge includes the addition of a northbound lane, bike lanes on both sides, a sidewalk on the west side, and transition widening on both road approaches. Although the bridge should be widened in order to provide ultimately for three lanes, it should be striped for two lanes until the recommended northern road improvements are constructed.

This project includes a special bridge design that will contribute to the restoration and enhancement of Los Peñasquitos Lagoon. The ultimate design of this bridge creates a wider lagoon mouth by approximately 40 feet, in order to increase the tidal prism, restore tidal action and improve circulation of lagoon waters. Design consideration should include completely spanning the lagoon mouth by cutting back the road embankment and lengthening the bridge span, etc. The design of this bridge shall include input from a qualified biologist or other lagoon expert familiar with the complex ecosystem found within Los Peñasquitos Lagoon. No impacts to salt marsh habitat shall occur.

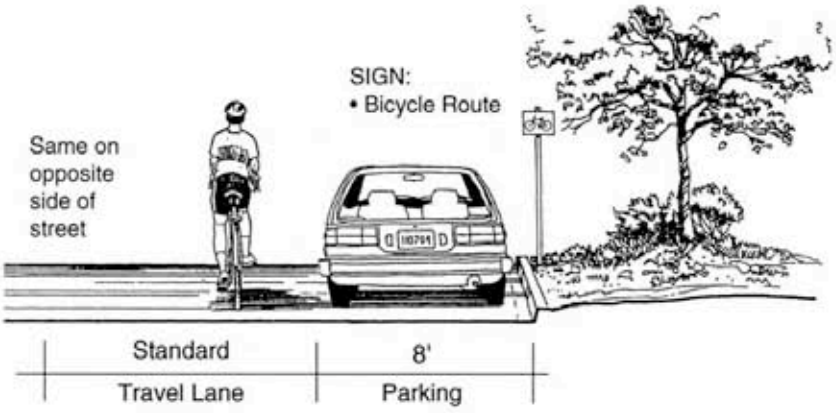
CLASS I
(Typical location - open space)

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 markings.



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.

NOTE: The dimensions illustrated on this page are subject to change.

Bicycle Facilities Classifications
Torrey Pines Community Plan
12 FIGURE

One of the most scenic visual resources of the community includes those views of North Torrey Pines Road as it passes between the Pacific Ocean and Los Peñasquitos Lagoon. In order to protect the scenic and visual qualities of this coastal area, the reconstruction and/or replacement of the North Torrey Pines Road bridges should include a design that is visually and aesthetically compatible with the character of the area. The design of both bridges should restore and enhance the visual quality and public views of this area. It is suggested that a variety of aesthetic designs and architectural alternatives be explored. The Torrey Pines Community Planning Group and the community shall review and provide input during the design of the bridges.

Carmel Valley Road

A variety of improvements to Carmel Valley Road are anticipated in the future, and may include widening, intersection improvements, a parking lane, and a bicycle/pedestrian pathway. At the time specific design proposals are determined and environmental impacts assessed, coastal development permits will be required to implement the project. A preliminary plan for the improvements is described below; however, in no case shall any improvement result in wetland fill.

Improvements to Carmel Valley Road include retaining this road as a modified two-lane collector street with a center turn lane. Carmel Valley Road should remain a modified four-lane major between I-5 and just west of Sorrento Valley Road. A traffic signal will be provided at Portofino Drive and Carmel Valley Road, with intersection improvements as needed there and at Sorrento Valley Road.

Bicycle and pedestrian circulation should be provided along the south side of Carmel Valley Road within the Bicycle/Pedestrian Pathway (see **Bicycle/Pedestrian Pathway** discussion below). Parking for residents and businesses should be provided along the north side of Carmel Valley Road, and a sidewalk should also be provided along the north side with appropriate street lighting. The ultimate design of Carmel Valley Road should also include the following improvements provided that adequate right-of-way exists:

1. A parking lane should be provided along the south side of Carmel Valley Road between Via Donada and Via Aprilia.

2. The existing curb line, sidewalk, landscaping and patios along the north side of Carmel Valley Road between Via Donada and Del Mar Scenic Parkway should be preserved.

Future improvements to Carmel Valley Road should include all measures necessary to eliminate silt and/or pollutants from entering/draining into Los Peñasquitos Lagoon. The speed limit on Carmel Valley Road should be aggressively enforced.

Various types and levels of traffic control methods and devices (i.e., traffic signals, stop signs, etc.) shall be utilized in order to provide the greatest degree of safety and efficiency for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists on Carmel Valley Road.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Pathway

A bicycle/pedestrian pathway should be provided in the existing disturbed, upland area along the south side of Carmel Valley Road. A variety of design options should be considered, however, in no case shall the bicycle/pedestrian pathway involve wetland fill. An appropriate buffer between the bicycle/pedestrian pathway and the lagoon shall be established after full consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the State Department of Fish and Game and the State Department of Parks and Recreation. The pathway should be wide enough to be shared by bicyclists and pedestrians, and should be physically separated from Carmel Valley Road (see Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Concept Sketch). The pathway should be constructed with a combination of concrete and wood. The concrete portion would be used for those previously disturbed areas where the path is located immediately adjacent to the road; the wooden or boardwalk portions would be constructed where the path meandered closer to sensitive resource areas.

The path should meander along the lagoon, and in several places provide sitting areas and viewpoints into the lagoon. Interpretive displays describing the marsh and lagoon ecosystem should be included at these viewpoint areas. Safe access to the pathway from the north should be provided at regular intervals.

Del Mar Heights Road

Del Mar Heights Road shall remain a four-lane major street but shall include improvements to facilitate pedestrian safety and traffic flow. Improvements should include a raised center median, a traffic signal with pedestrian crossing indications at Crest Way, a protected left turn signal for north-southbound traffic on Mango, adequate storage for left turns at Mango Drive and sidewalks along the entire length of Del Mar Heights Road. The raised center median should be landscaped when funding becomes available. Funding sources include, but are not limited to, a landscape maintenance district.

Sorrento Valley Road

Sorrento Valley Road, from Industrial Court to Carmel Valley Road, is a two-lane major road that is scheduled for realignment improvements.

The existing road lies immediately adjacent to wetlands and other sensitive habitat areas at several points. Any improvements to Sorrento Valley Road shall require the issuance of coastal development permits, and shall be permitted only if consistent with the specific development standards in the Wetlands/Environmentally Sensitive Resources policies contained in **Appendix E**. Riparian impacts shall be mitigated at a ratio of 3:1 and salt marsh impacts shall be mitigated at a ratio of 4:1.

Mitigation for impacts to the lagoon must include restoration and enhancement of all areas previously disturbed by activities associated with the construction and operation of Sorrento Valley Road. The Torrey Pines Community Planning Group shall be provided the opportunity to review and provide input regarding the mitigation, restoration and enhancement efforts associated with this road improvement.

Carmel Mountain Road/I-5 Interchange

This project will construct a diamond interchange at I-5 and Carmel Mountain Road. Design and construction is to be completed by Caltrans. Although the cost of this improvement is being paid by the Carmel Valley Facilities Benefit Assessment District and Sorrento Hills Development Agreement, it is immediately adjacent to the Torrey Pines Community. A strong benefit of this improvement is the reduction of traffic using Sorrento Valley Road between Carmel Mountain and Carmel Valley Roads.

Vista Sorrento Parkway

The restriping of the northbound lanes of Vista Sorrento Parkway at Sorrento Valley Road is proposed to improve the poor Level of Service (LOS) projected at buildout. The restriping of the three northbound lanes from the existing left, through and right to two lefts and a through/right will improve the projected LOS from E to C. This minor modification should only be implemented when actual future traffic volumes warrant it. In conjunction with buildout of the Sorrento Hills community planning area, Vista Sorrento Parkway shall be extended from its existing terminus (Sorrento Valley Court) northerly through Sorrento Hills until it intersects with Carmel Mountain Road.

Construction of this extension, known as Street "A", will require some fill in existing wetlands at the western end of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Various project alternatives have been examined to determine that the proposed project is the least environmentally damaging one. There are currently two options that may be implemented to mitigate the environmental impact of the proposed project.

OPTION A

Any unavoidable permanent wetland fill associated with Street "A" shall be mitigated at a ratio of 4:1 for alkali marsh/meadow impacts and 1:1 for freshwater marsh (i.e., cattails) impacts. Shading impacts to cattails shall be mitigated at a ratio of 1:1. Mitigation for freshwater marsh impacts shall be in kind and shall occur within the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon watershed. Mitigation for alkali marsh/meadow impacts shall be in kind and in the immediate area of the alkali marsh/meadow or, if no appropriate site can be found for creation of alkali marsh/meadow, mitigation shall consist of newly created willow scrub habitat within the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon watershed.

or OPTION B

Any unavoidable permanent wetland fill associated with Street "A" shall be mitigated at a ratio of 1:1. Mitigation for direct and shading impacts to freshwater marsh (i.e., cattails) shall be in kind and shall occur within the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon watershed. Mitigation for alkali marsh/meadow impacts shall be in kind and in the immediate area of the alkali marsh/meadow or, if no appropriate site can be found, mitigation shall consist of newly created willow scrub habitat within the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon watershed.

and

The balance of the alkali marsh/meadow shall be designated open space and permanently protected from development through dedication of an open space easement, recordation of a deed restriction, or some other appropriate mechanism.

Carroll Canyon Road

This project, financed through the Mira Mesa Public Facilities Financing Plan, will construct Carroll Canyon Road as a four-lane collector street from its westerly terminus at Scranton Road, beneath I-805, to Sorrento Valley Road. Design of this roadway extension should minimize impacts to the adjacent Carroll Canyon Creek Corridor. Mitigation for construction of this roadway should include implementation of the Guidelines for the preservation and enhancement of the Carroll Canyon Creek Corridor, which are located in the **Industrial Element** of this Plan.

Mitigation for impacts to the wetland area must include restoration and enhancement of all areas previously disturbed by activities associated with the construction and operation of Carroll Canyon Road. The Torrey Pines Community Planning Group shall be provided the opportunity to review and provide input regarding the mitigation, restoration and enhancement efforts associated with this road improvement.

Del Mar Terrace Neighborhood Streets

The streets of the Del Mar Terrace neighborhood, located immediately north of Carmel Valley Road, have never been improved and accepted for maintenance by the City of San Diego. As a consequence these streets are in a state of disrepair. Property owners in the Del Mar Terrace neighborhood have petitioned the City Council to form an assessment district to improve the streets. The City Council directed City staff to take the necessary steps to form a maintenance district and directed that the street design maintain the rural nature of the area.

State Route 56/I-5/I-805 Widening Projects

These CALTRANS projects are located immediately east of the Torrey Pines planning area, and will be constructed in order to alleviate the extremely congested regional traffic conditions projected to occur on I-5, I-805 and I-15.

Environmental reports have been completed for each of these projects. Potential exists for significant environmental impacts to the Torrey Pines area, including, but not limited to, air quality impacts, visual impacts, impacts to wetlands, noise impacts and erosion impacts.

Visual impacts include permanent landform change as a result of new cut slopes, fill slopes, bridge structures, traffic movement and retaining walls. Visual grading impacts will be reduced to levels below significance by erosion control measures including immediate plant cover on cut/fill slopes. Newly planted slopes will be compatible with surrounding landforms. Interchanges will be given a full planting scheme with Torrey Pines. The visual impact from retaining walls will be mitigated by incorporating crib walls where feasible, special wall treatment utilizing texture, color and design elements, and, new bridges with slender, aesthetically pleasing design.

Impacts to wetlands are attributable to bridge piers, temporary work areas and shading from bridge structures. It is considered biologically important to treat the creeks and lagoon as an ecosystem therefore, mitigation for impacts to wetlands are included in the Carmel Valley Restoration and Enhancement Project (CVREP).

Existing noise levels at some points within the Torrey Pines area along I-5 exceed federal guidelines. The proposed projects will increase noise from one to four additional decibels over today's level. It should be noted that a three-decibel change is hardly discernible to the human ear. Sound walls at several locations are proposed as mitigation measures.

There will be increased erosion caused by grading. A detailed erosion control plan has been prepared. This plan includes immediately seeding new slopes and other abatement measures. Due to the sensitivity of Los Peñasquitos Lagoon, every reasonable precaution will be taken to protect watershed flow into the lagoon to avoid or minimize muddying and silting, before, during, and after construction.

ACTION PLAN

Implementation Measures	Timing	Responsibility for Implementation	Source of Funding
Restore and enhance those biologically sensitive areas impacted by circulation improvements.	Add as condition at time of project approval. Include in preliminary design.	Planning Department, Engineering & Development Department	City of San Diego,
Provide mass transit service, especially in the Sorrento Valley area.	Immediately	MTDB	MTDB through various funding sources including private sector
Provide bikeways and pedestrian paths that link all areas within the community.	Include in design of private development and transportation projects.	Planning Department, Engineering & Development Department	City of San Diego and Private
Adopt the Facilities Financing Plan to identify costs and potential funding sources.	Adopt with this Community Plan.	City Council, Planning Department	City of San Diego
Require projects to design for transit, bicycle and pedestrian use (i.e., submit TDM Programs, provide bike lockers, showers, etc.)	Add as condition at time of project approval.	Planning Department	Private
Reconstruction of North Torrey Pines Road bridge shall contribute to restoration and enhancement of Los Peñasquitos Lagoon.	At preliminary design stage	Engineering & Development Department	City of San Diego, and state bridge grant
Provide street improvements for the Del Mar Terrace neighborhood.	Immediately	Engineering & Development Department	Assessment District