



Location Map

FIGURE 1

Rancho Bernardo Community Plan

INTRODUCTION

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The Rancho Bernardo Community Plan (Plan) has been prepared to serve as a guide for future public and private development within the area through 1995, or until it is fully developed. Once this Plan is adopted by the City Council, any amendments, additions or deletions, will require that the Planning Commission and City Council follow the same public hearing procedure as was required in the initial adoption of the Plan. While this Plan sets forth many proposals for implementation, it does not establish new regulations or legislation, nor does it rezone property. However, it must be clearly pointed out that adoption of this Plan may require subsequent public hearings be held to determine whether or not to rezone property so that it is consistent with Plan proposals. This requirement for consistency between zoning regulations and adopted plans is set forth within Section 65860 of the California Governmental Code. The amendment of other development controls must also be enacted separately through the regular legislative process. It should also be understood that this Plan is not precise in every minute detail and reasonable interpretation of this Plan, which may cause minor adjustments, is expected.

Proposals within this Plan have been coordinated with the City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan (General Plan). There is conformity between the goals and policies of this Plan and those of the City and region. Should differences occur between this Plan and the General Plan, they may be resolved during the course of related public hearings. This procedure conforms to the intent of City Council Policy 600-7.

In addition, periodic comprehensive reviews of the General Plan may produce recommendations for changes in this Plan. Again, the normal procedure for legislative action, including public hearings, must be followed before changes to either of these documents can be accomplished. Future development based on this Plan shall be undertaken in compliance with all existing City policies and all applicable City ordinances with respect to providing necessary public facilities.

During Plan preparation, the relationship with planning programs and development patterns in surrounding areas was considered. This analysis included coordination with the adopted San Pasqual and Rancho Peñasquitos Community Plans, and surrounding land uses. Proposals of the San Diego Association of Government's Regional Comprehensive Plan and the adopted San Diego County General Plan have also been considered. The Plan is not an end in itself, nor is it a static document. Two additional steps will follow Plan adoption: implementation and review. Implementation means putting the Plan policies and recommendations into effect. The Plan provides guidelines for implementation, but the actual work must be based on a cooperative effort of private citizens, developers, City officials and other agencies. This Plan is intended to be a development guide for the future. Community conditions and the legislative framework must be continually monitored to ensure that the Plan remains timely. If major Plan amendments are necessary, they would follow the same legislative process required for adoption.

THE PLANNING AREA

Rancho Bernardo is the northernmost residential community within the City of San Diego. It is centered on Interstate 15 (I-15) just south of Lake Hodges and the San Pasqual Valley. The community planning area encompasses about 6,511 gross acres consisting of:

1) approximately 6,107 gross acres containing the developed Rancho Bernardo community and other adjacent land proposed for development originally under the ownership of Avco Community Developers Inc., and 2) 404 gross acres of adjacent City-owned lands lying in the northwest quadrant of the plan area, west of I-15. The existing Rancho Bernardo community and properties can be developed independently of the other areas; however, their close physical relationship dictates an integrated planning approach. For lands lying outside the planning area it was assumed that:

1. The San Pasqual Valley will be maintained as a permanent open space area characterized by agricultural and recreational uses developed in accordance with the adopted San Pasqual Valley Area Plan.
2. The rugged hills and topographic breaks along the westerly and southwesterly boundaries of the Plan area will act to provide open space separations between Rancho Bernardo and adjacent lands thus giving definition to the community.
3. The Poway General Plan will provide for low-density residential, rural-residential, and commercial office uses within areas lying adjacent to the easterly boundary of Rancho Bernardo.
4. The Carmel Mountain Ranch Community Plan designates the area south of Rancho Bernardo and east of I-15 for industrial, commercial and residential land uses.
5. On the west side of I-15 and south of the Rancho Bernardo boundary, the Plan provides for primarily low-density residential land use.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The planning process must respond to a number of laws enacted at federal, state and local levels. Some of the more significant legislation is discussed as follows:

- Section 65450 of the Government Code of the State of California, and Section 41(c) of the Charter of the City of San Diego give authority for the preparation of community plans. More specifically, Section 65450 states, “After the legislative body has adopted a general plan, the planning agency may, or if so directed by the legislative body shall, prepare specific plans for the systematic implementation of the general plan for all or part of the area covered by the general plan.” Sections 65451 through 65454 of this law define the Scope, Implementation and Administration of Specific Plans and Regulations.
- The California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) was enacted in response to increasing public concern over the environment. In a 1972 landmark case, *Friends of Mammoth et al. vs. Board of Supervisors of Mono County et al.*, the California Supreme Court ruled that Environmental Impact Reports, (EIRs) must be prepared for both public and private projects having a significant effect on the environment. Environmental Impact Reports must be prepared for all community plans. Separate, detailed EIRs are also required for all significant projects, including those implementing this Plan.
- The citywide Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances serve to regulate the use of land. These are amended from time to time to resolve problems as they are identified, enhance the environment and encourage imaginative approaches to development design.
- In addition to legislation, the City Council utilizes a set of officially designated and numbered policies as a guideline in the decision-making process. Many of the policies relate directly to planning issues and should be used in implementing Plan recommendations. These are discussed within the **Implementation Element** of this Plan.

PLANNING BACKGROUND

In 1962, the San Diego City Council adopted the original Plan for Rancho Bernardo. Since then, the Plan has undergone revisions in 1966, 1971 and 1978. The two early revisions were made based upon findings of coordinated public agency and community developer planning studies. Shifts in land use involved agreements between developers and the City. In 1978, the format of the Plan was changed to that of a community plan rather than a development plan. The revisions recognized the changing character and growth in the community as reflected in the quickening tempo of development and increased diversity in land use, population and lifestyles.

The revisions included in this document represent the fourth update of the Plan and are considered essential if the Plan is to continue to serve as an effective guide to public and private development decisions. The Plan that follows respects existing patterns of development while incorporating the five amendments to the Plan since the 1978 revision, as well as new data from recent studies of environmental, economic, land use and transportation factors.

The following is a synopsis of the amendments to the Plan since its adoption in 1978.

The San Diego City Council adopted the Plan on March 28, 1978, by City Council Resolution No. 220568.

On March 16, 1981, by Resolution No. 253790-1, the City Council unanimously approved an amendment in the southern portion of the Plan to redesignate 30 acres of residentially-designated land to industrial use.

The City Council, on June 16, 1981, adopted an amendment by Resolution No. 254458 that:

- 1) redesignated an elementary school site east of I-15 and north of Bernardo Center Drive to low-medium density residential use (nine to 14 dwelling units per net acre),
- 2) redesignated an elementary school site in the southeast quadrant of the planning area to low-density residential use (one to nine dwelling units per net acre), and
- 3) revised the proposed residential and open space land uses in the Westwood area without an increase in residential density.

On March 9, 1982, by Resolution No. 255968, the City Council approved an amendment to the **Circulation Element** to the Plan. This amendment included the following revisions:

- 1) the deletion of Escala Drive extension under I-15 to West Bernardo Drive,
- 2) the extension of West Bernardo Drive to Pomerado Road as a four-lane major street, and
- 3) the extension of Bernardo Center Drive as a six-lane major street and Rancho Bernardo Road as a four-lane major street to the western boundary of the Plan area.

The City Council, on April 1, 1986, adopted by Resolution No. 265356, an amendment to the Plan to redesignate the elementary school site at the southeast corner of the intersection of Pomerado Road and Escala Road to low-density residential use (one to nine dwelling units per net acre).

On March 3, 1987, the City Council approved by Resolution No. 267821, an amendment to the Plan to redesignate the proposed intermediate school site and one elementary school site in the Westwood Valley area to low-density residential use (one to nine dwelling units per net acre). All amendments are on file in the office of the City Planning Department.

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT - 1988

Rancho Bernardo is characterized by rolling hills, ridges and knolls rising from valley and canyon floors. While some areas to the south drain into La Jolla Canyon, most lands are tributary to the San Pasqual Valley. Vegetation outside of developed areas is largely confined to range grasses which historically supported cattle grazing within the Rancho. Geologically, there are five distinct formations lying below the soil mantle. They vary from friable clay layers and conglomerates to hard, dense igneous and metamorphic rocks.

Approximately 4,560 net acres, or 70 percent of the Plan area, have been developed with a mix of recreational, residential, commercial and industrial uses.

Residential uses currently occupy about 2,437 net acres and consist of about 13,854 dwellings. Approximately 7,975 of these dwellings are single-family homes with the remainder in multifamily residential developments. The average residential density developed within the community is 5.7 dwelling units per net acre excluding streets and open space.

Commercial activity is concentrated around the town center located in the vicinity of Rancho Bernardo Road and Bernardo Center Drive. Approximately 44 acres of the 53-acre town center have been developed with a variety of uses including a major food market, drug store, numerous retail commercial businesses, service and financial institutions and a retirement facility. Approximately 55 acres of the area west of Bernardo Center Drive are developed with a diversity of uses such as a post office, library, fire station, theatre, financial institutions, auto service centers, restaurants and a hotel. An additional seven acres of financial institutions and restaurants are located to the south on Bernardo Center Drive east of the I-15 off-ramp.

Five neighborhood commercial centers have also been developed in the community. One is located at Rancho Bernardo and Pomerado Roads and consists of six acres. It is the site of a major food store, a hardware store and other various service establishments. Four other neighborhood commercial centers provide convenience goods and services to the community. They include a one-acre center on Oaks North Drive just east of Pomerado Road, a six-acre center at Duenda Road and West Bernardo Drive, a six-acre center at Pomerado Road and Bernardo Heights Parkway and a two-acre site in the High Country West area near the intersection of Maturin Drive and Bernardo Center Drive.

Specialized commercial areas include visitor-oriented and special community-serving commercial activities. In Rancho Bernardo, these uses are located in the vicinity of the I-15/Rancho Bernardo Road interchange and include such uses as motels, restaurants, service stations and retail shops. There are significant lodging, convention, restaurant, entertainment and recreation facilities in the Compri Hotel and the Rancho Bernardo Inn.

Industrial activity in Rancho Bernardo occupies 618 acres located in two industrial parks. Bernardo Industrial Park, located on the west side of I-15 between Rancho Bernardo Road, Bernardo Center Drive and Camino del Norte, contains approximately 588 acres. Major users such as UNISYS (Burroughs Corporation), National Cash Register, Hewlett Packard and Sony Tomura Electric, along with numerous industrial support activities, occupy about 370 acres.

The other industrial park, Bernardo Heights Corporate Park, occupies approximately 30 acres and is located southeast of the intersection of I-15 and Camino del Norte. Currently, the major user at this location is Gould Electronics, which occupies approximately 5.4 acres.