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

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Rancho Bernardo community identifies strongly with its natural and topographic environment. It is adjacent to the San Pasqual Valley and Lake Hodges on the north and is surrounded on the east, south and west by hills, ridges and canyons which successfully buffer the community from neighboring urban developments. The community has thus far successfully taken advantage of the area's many assets through imaginative development concepts. Ridges, slopes and canyon lands provide many opportunities to relate development to the environment and to develop natural and manicured open space systems that link activity centers and create an atmosphere of serenity and quality to the community.

### **OPEN SPACE, PARK AND RECREATION OBJECTIVES**

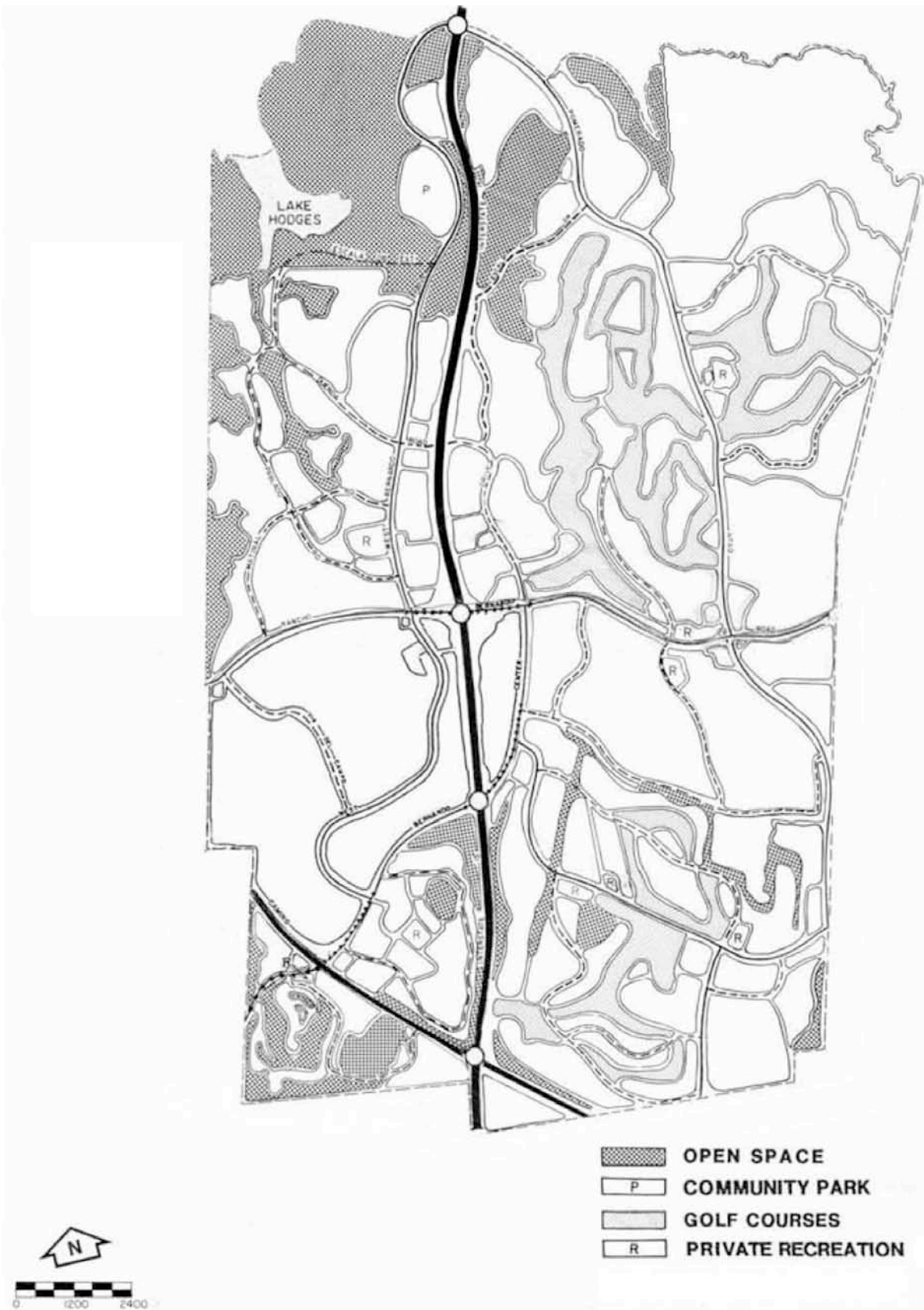
The Plan proposes that about 1,543 acres be reserved for open space, park and recreational uses. The objectives of this Plan are:

- To provide for the preservation of natural open space areas throughout the community.
- To provide park and recreation facilities that meet the needs of all age groups and interests in the Rancho Bernardo community and meet or exceed citywide standards.
- To promote the use of school recreation facilities for public use when they are not being used for school purposes.
- To establish an open space system that provides linkage between various elements of the community. Such linkages should facilitate pedestrian, bicycle and golf cart movement between recreational facilities, commercial centers, neighborhoods, schools and parks.
- To support the creation of a regional park in the Lake Hodges area.

### **OPEN SPACE, PARK AND RECREATIONAL PROPOSALS**

- **Open Space System**

Approximately 508 acres are designated for open space. This open space system includes the undeveloped slopes, canyon bottoms and natural drainage areas within the community. Prominent examples are the slopes of Battle Mountain and the Montelena area in the northeastern portion of the community, the hills and canyons of the Westwood Valley area to the northwest and the hills, slopes and riparian areas in the Camino Bernardo portion to the southwest. In addition, large open space areas in the Bernardo Heights and High Country West areas in the southern portion of the community have been established through open space easements and are owned and maintained by private homeowner associations. All such natural and landscaped areas in the Rancho Bernardo community should remain as open space.



## Open Space, Park and Recreation Proposals

Rancho Bernardo Community Plan

FIGURE

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An additional 369 acres of open space, excluding the 35-acre community park, are located south of Lake Hodges in the northwest corner of the community and consist of City-owned lands. These lands are temporarily designated for open space. The City should retain ownership of this area until its relationship to San Pasqual Valley, the proposed San Dieguito Regional Park and the future use of Lake Hodges is determined. Appropriate zoning, dedication to the City, open space easements and assessment districts should be investigated for their use in assuring open space within the Rancho Bernardo community.

Segments of the open space system should be developed with pedestrian and bicycle paths and riding trails to provide links between neighborhoods and community facilities. Open space areas, parks and recreational facilities should interrelate and supplement one another. There are many opportunities available for selective development of passive recreational uses such as benches and picnic facilities in these areas.

Precise delineation of the open space areas (both natural and developed) should be defined in the design stages of preliminary development plans. The future preservation of such spaces can be ensured by the establishment of open space easements with the underlying ownership being held in common by adjoining property owners or given to the City. Maintenance and enhancement of these areas could be accomplished through resident associations or park districts. In any case, an ongoing maintenance program should be established for all open space areas with responsibilities clearly defined and agreed to.

The City owns over 400 acres of land in the area bordered by Lake Hodges on the north and I-15 on the east. Most of this area is expected to remain in its natural state. A Plan for Equestrian Trails and Facilities (1975), developed by the City of San Diego, identifies a number of recreational uses in this area. They include an equestrian center, campgrounds and hiking trails. The development of activity areas shall preserve, to the extent possible, the area's natural state and should also be consistent with a comprehensive plan for Lake Hodges as part of the San Dieguito Regional Park planning effort.

Development of these facilities should occur in such a manner as to protect the natural and topographic character, environmental resources and aesthetic qualities of the area. Development should conform with the intent of the Hillside Review (HR) and Resource Protection Overlay Zones (RPOZ) to encourage sensitive forms of development which complement the natural and visual character of the area.

The San Dieguito River Regional Plan was adopted by the San Diego City Council in 1984. The San Dieguito River Regional Plan encompasses the 40-mile river basin that extends from the Sutherland Reservoir northeast of Ramona to the beach at the City of Del Mar. The general aim of the plan is to preserve the San Dieguito River Basin's recreation and open space potential. The plan recommends coordination of goals and policies of all jurisdictions that have an interest in the future of the San Dieguito River Basin.

The 404 acres of City-owned land south of Lake Hodges in the Rancho Bernardo community is included in Subarea III of the San Dieguito River Regional Plan.

Recommendations of the San Dieguito River Regional Plan for City-owned property include the following:

- Provide pedestrian access from adjacent residential areas to the recreational areas.
- Prepare a study of the potential for establishing an archaeological interpretive site near Rancho Bernardo Park.
- Preserve oak and riparian woodlands to the maximum extent feasible.

The Plan also supports the City's A Plan for Equestrian Trails and Facilities and further recommends the interconnection of pedestrian and equestrian trails with adjacent communities.

All proposed developments under the San Dieguito River Regional Plan for the Lake Hodges area in the Rancho Bernardo community should be considered in terms of planning maximum recreational and cultural facilities, preservation of open space and compatibility with the Rancho Bernardo Community Plan.

If hiking, bicycle and equestrian trails are to be developed in the open space areas, they should be carefully designed to act as linkages between the various community activity centers, and, where possible, should connect with public parks in adjoining communities. Where appropriate, trailheads should be improved with a shaded rest area including benches and picnic tables. A map and directions regarding the trail system should be displayed at these trail heads.

- **Park and Recreational Facilities**

Rancho Bernardo is unique in that the primary developer (AVCO), in accordance with City Council Policy regarding parks within this community, accepted full responsibility for the provision of community recreational facilities (Neighborhood Parks) in accordance with the standards of the General Plan. To date, these facilities include an extensive inventory which exceeds what is normally provided in standard neighborhood parks. According to existing City Council Policy, the developer has not been required to provide standard Neighborhood Parks so long as all the facilities required are provided in some of the private recreational areas. This policy has permitted flexible development of facilities and activity centers in keeping with the needs and interests of various groups in different geographic areas of Rancho Bernardo. This concept should apply to all developers within the Rancho Bernardo community and should assure that each resident of Rancho Bernardo has adequate privately provided park and recreation facilities.

#### Private Recreation Facilities

Privately developed recreation centers have been established on approximately 54 acres throughout the community and are owned and maintained by the homeowners associations. The major community centers include the Westwood Club (12.8 acres), Seven Oaks (4.7 acres), Oaks North (6.5 acres), Rancho Bernardo Swim and Tennis (10.3 acres), High Country West (6.3 acres), Bernardo Heights Recreation Center (7.2 acres) and Camino Bernardo Recreation Center (1.5 acres).

The Eastview Club (2.7 acres) and the Las Brisas Bernardo Club (1.7 acres) provide special recreation centers restricted to local residents.

Although not shown on the Parks and Recreation map, other private recreational facilities including swimming pools, tennis courts and play areas, have been planned or developed in multifamily residential projects throughout the community.

Privately developed recreational facilities include Lucido Park, a 4.8-acre semi-developed park and a 5.7-acre recreational site in Bernardo Heights.

Four golf courses containing about 523 acres have been developed within the community. Two 18-hole courses are privately owned and maintained for the exclusive use of members. In addition, an 18-hole golf course and a 27-hole executive golf course have been developed and are open for public use. Commercial recreational uses and meeting areas are encouraged to locate in private facilities such as the Rancho Bernardo Inn.

#### Public Community Park

In the northwest quadrant of Rancho Bernardo, the City of San Diego has developed a 35-acre community park utilizing park fees from the entire community. This park is partially developed with eight ball fields, parking facilities, restrooms and landscaping. Additional site development, including tennis courts, lawn bowling greens, lighting and other park amenities, is scheduled for construction in 1988. Construction of a community building and swimming pool are scheduled in the six-year Capital Improvements Program. Provision should be allowed for expansion of the Rancho Bernardo Community Park, regardless of what other uses are made of the Lake Hodges area, to handle increased parking and other public recreational uses.

All developed private recreation centers and facilities, golf courses and equestrian recreation areas, as well as partially developed private and public parks, should be retained. Furthermore, the proposed private recreational facilities in the developed and undeveloped residential areas should be developed to ensure that all residents have privately-provided park and recreational facilities. As membership in private clubs reaches capacity, developers of new areas of residential development should be required to provide on-site recreational facilities.