

CHAPTER 2 PLANNING CONTEXT

The preparation of a comprehensive land use document draws upon numerous planning factors. The most significant factors examined at the early stages of the Specific Plan process included the following: the subregional context; planning background; land planning factors; and the City policies.

2.1 SUBREGIONAL CONTEXT

The planning area lies in a subregion of San Diego which is characterized by a variety of land uses, growth patterns and densities. With the exception of the San Dieguito River Valley, the surrounding area is in the process of urbanization. The aerial photograph on the following page, **Figure 2**, shows the urban character which surrounds the Specific Plan area. The communities of Del Mar and Solana Beach are intensively developed. The properties on the southeast, northeast and northwest side of the I-5/Via De La Valle interchange are also developed with low-density residential and commercial uses. In contrast, the development to the northeast and east of the planning area is characterized by very low-density residential lands uses.

2.2 OTHER PLANS IN PROGRESS

Several plans are presently in progress for the San Dieguito River Valley, which is now largely undeveloped. The Fairbanks Country Club project, located to the east of the planning area, was approved in 1982, and the unincorporated portion was annexed to the City in 1983. The 300± acres lying directly south of the planning area and the Del Mar 88 property west of I-5 are currently being studied for development.

The San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park Concept and the North City Future Urbanizing Framework Plan have been approved.

The purpose of the Concept Plan is to provide a planning framework for the Park that will enable the realization of the park vision and overall park objectives. The stated vision is to create an open space park within the San Dieguito River Valley that will protect its unique resources, while providing compatible recreational opportunities for the San Diego region. Primary park objectives include preservation of open space, conservation of sensitive resources, protection of water quality, preservation of the natural floodplain, retention of agricultural uses, and creation of recreational and educational opportunities.

Proposed developments which are known to be undergoing review are shown on **Figure 3** and include the proposed improvements to Via De La Valle, the San Dieguito Lagoon Enhancement and Restoration Project, the Stallions Crossing Residential Development and the Rancho Santa Fe Golf Range and Park. These are described below:



Aerial Photo of Surrounding Community Development

Via De La Valle Specific Plan

2

FIGURE

Via De La Valle Roadway

Via De La Valle is shown as a four-lane major street as a condition of development of the Specific Plan. The exact alignment and improvements have not yet been designed. Because the road crosses into the unincorporated area of the county, county review is also required to ensure that future City improvements match county plans for the roadway. The Coastal Commission would also have to approve the alignment and plans for widening of Via De La Valle.

San Dieguito Lagoon Enhancement and Restoration Project

The San Dieguito River Joint Powers Authority proposes to implement a lagoon enhancement and restoration program for the San Dieguito Lagoon both east and west of I-5. Planning for the enhancement program is already underway, covering an area of 420 acres from El Camino Real on the east to the ocean on the west, and including the lagoon and river floodway. Driven by the mitigation requirements of Southern California Edison (SCE) for impacts to coastal fisheries resulting from the operation of the nuclear generating station at San Onofre, concept planning and hydrological modeling are currently being completed, and environmental review is being conducted.

Stallions Crossing

This privately proposed residential project is currently being reviewed by the City. Located between I-5 and El Camino Real, 40 units of single-family, low-density residences and a private equestrian facility at the Ranch site are included. The project is undergoing environmental review; the Draft EIR is not yet available for public review.

Rancho Santa Fe Golf Range and Roller Hockey Rink

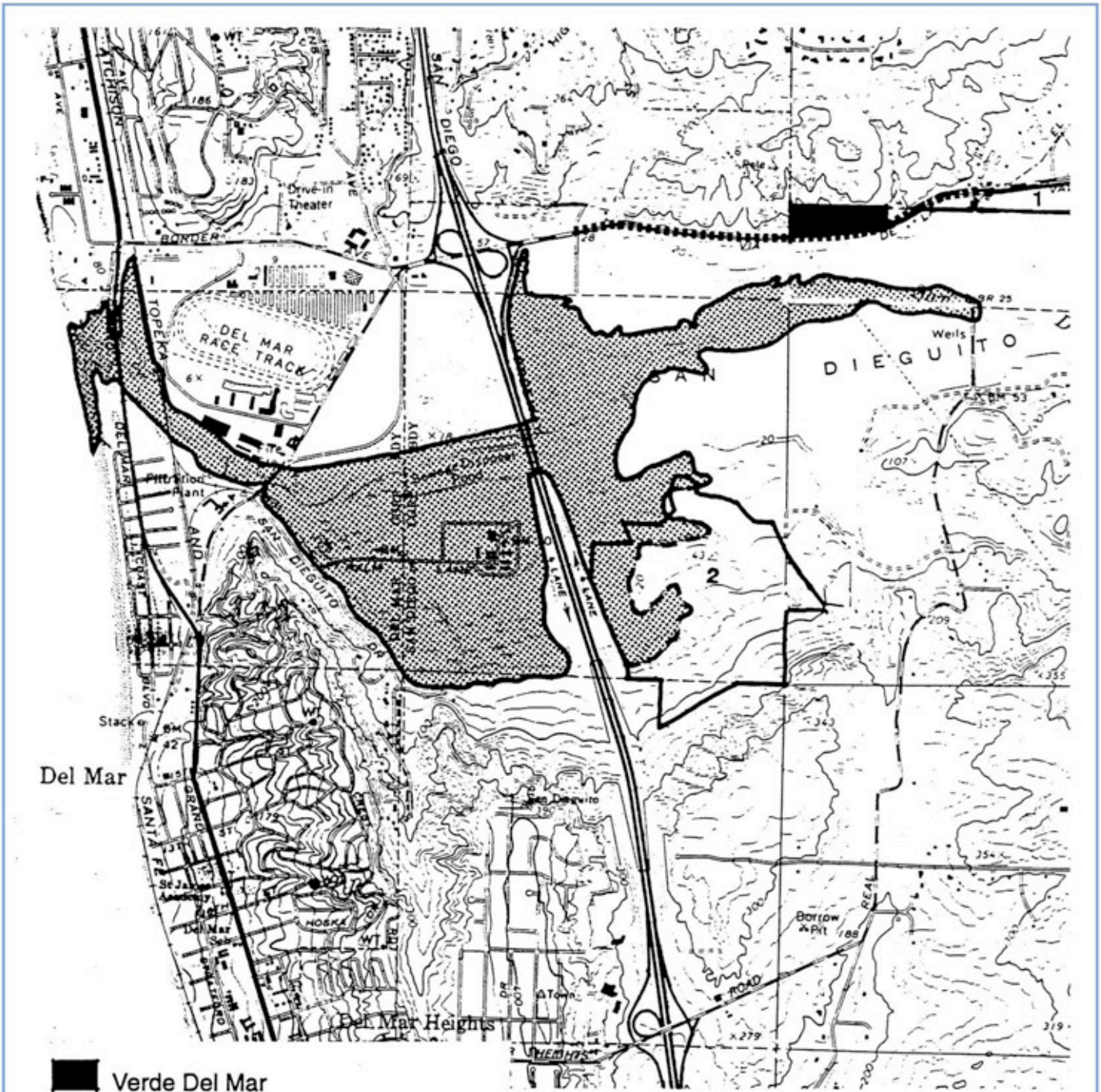
The 26-acre site, located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Via De La Valle and El Camino Real, is proposed for development with recreational facilities as an interim use. The project proposes a golf practice range, putting courses, roller hockey arenas, and related accessory structures, including 352 parking spaces.






2.3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

The General Plan sets forth the City's development goals and objectives through the year 1995. All land within the General Plan has been given either an urbanized, planned urbanizing, or future urbanizing land use designation, which is based primarily upon the levels of current development and the availability of public facilities.


Urbanized lands are characterized by extensive development and a completed infrastructure. Many of these areas have been built out or are experiencing a limited amount of infill development or redevelopment activities.

Planned urbanizing areas consist of the newly developing communities. These areas are open to development, subject to the orderly extension of public facilities. Examples of such communities are Rancho Bernardo, Carmel Valley, North University City and Miramar Ranch North.



-  Verde Del Mar
-  Rancho Santa Fe Golf Range and Roller Hockey Rink
-  The Ranch at Stallions Crossing
-  San Dieguito Lagoon Restoration
-  Via De La Valle Road Improvements

USGS Topo
Del Mar Quad

Other Plans in Progress **3**
Via De La Valle Specific Plan FIGURE



The future urbanizing areas are lands which are primarily vacant and, for the most part, zoned for agricultural use. This land is being held as an urban reserve and will be released for development as the planned urbanizing communities are built out and as public facilities are expanded.

The Via De La Valle Planning Area consists of a group of parcels totaling 124.7 gross acres. The properties are located at the City's northernmost boundary, which is designated planned urbanizing and shown for residential use by the General Plan. The properties are designated planned urbanizing due to their proximity to the existing developments in the City, the city of Solana Beach, county of San Diego, and the city of Del Mar. The Flower Hill and Albertsons Shopping Centers are immediately to the west and southwest of the planning area boundary. Estate and low-density residential developments exist throughout the county areas to the north and east.

2.4 PLANNING FACTORS

A number of factors were examined during the preparation of the Specific Plan. These are discussed below:

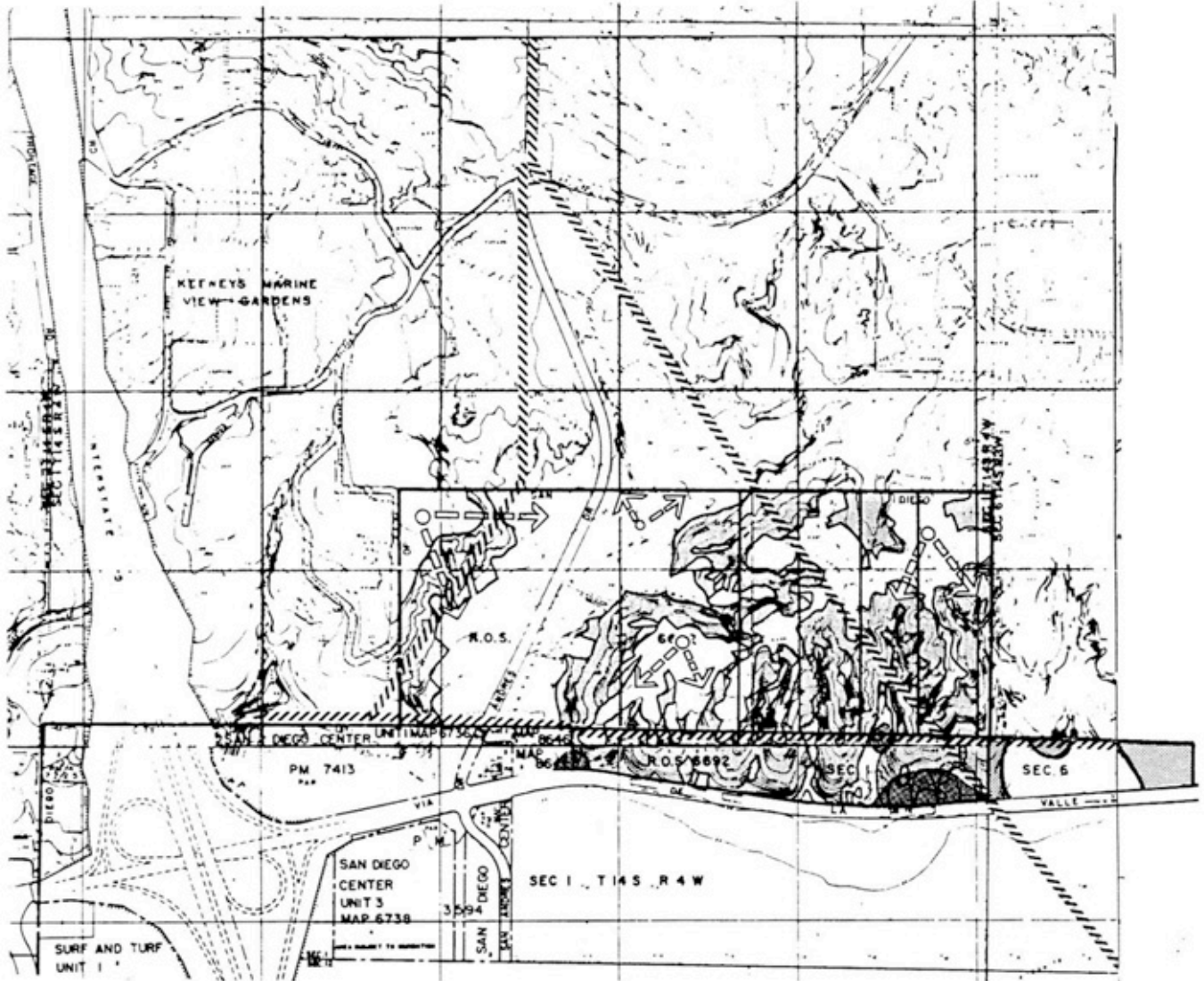
- Natural Features
- Historical Resources
- Man-made Features
- Surrounding Communities/Land Uses
- Circulation
- Existing Zoning

2.4a Natural Features

The most prominent natural feature of the Via De La Valle properties is the topography. The site is characterized by steep canyons running in a north-south direction separated by narrow ridges and bluffs. The steepest topography is concentrated at the most westerly, and the southeasterly portion of the site. Approximately 50 percent of the planning area consists of slopes exceeding 25 percent. The steep slopes and bluffs are an aesthetic asset to the planning area. The area is visible from I-5 and from the southern hilltops of the San Dieguito River Valley.

Development Area 6 is visible from points along the San Dieguito River, Via De La Valle and I-5. Development Area 6 can be seen from most of the area between I-5 and the intersection of Via De La Valle with El Camino Real. The clearest views of Development Area 6 are available from Via De La Valle, which serves as the site's southern boundary.

Figure 4 shows the controlling site features which have influenced the site design of the property. **Figure 5** photographically illustrates the topography and disturbed or impacted terrain of the planning area.



0 400 800 1200
Scale in Feet

LEGEND

- 25% Slopes
- Power Easement
- Ancient Landslides
- View Shed



Site Features
Via De La Valle Specific Plan

4
FIGURE

The geologic structure is generally supportive of development. The majority of the site proposed for development is characterized by stable soil formations. Geologic studies of the property have identified three small ancient landslides located along the Via De La Valle property boundary (see **Figure 4**). The landslides will remain undisturbed. The geologic studies conducted to date are a general soils reconnaissance of the site. A comprehensive study of the southeast corner will be conducted at the time specific development plans are proposed. A detailed soils report will determine the precise grading techniques needed to stabilize the soil. Grading techniques typically applied to landslide areas include remedial grading and sloping buttressing. Geologic resources on Development Area 6 include Delmar and Bay Point Formations, and fill, alluvium, colluvium and topsoil. No faults are known to exist on Development Area 6, and the risk of seismically induced liquefaction is negligible. Some of the soils are categorized as having severe erosion potential.

Approximately one-half of the Specific Plan area has been previously disturbed and does not support any significant biological resources. The remaining acreage is divided among several biological subregions, and includes approximately eight acres of chamise chaparral, 12 acres of mixed chaparral, 1.7 acres of maritime succulent scrub, and 58.5 acres of coastal sage scrub. These habitats support one (1) declining animal species and six (6) sensitive plant species, the presence of which will influence the ultimate site design.

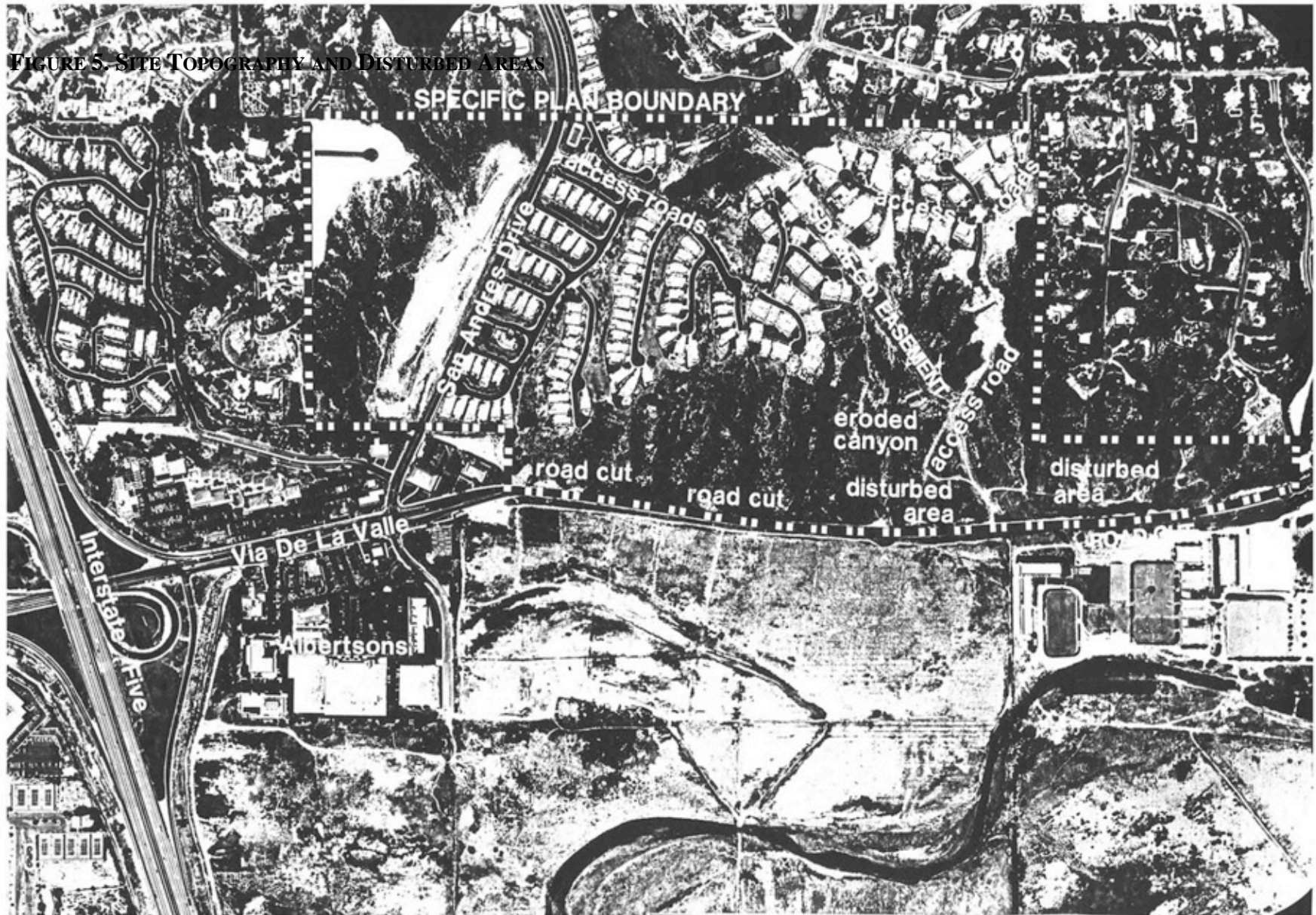
2.4b Historical Resources

Archaeological surveys of the Via De La Valle Properties have been conducted. The surveys have concluded that no significant archaeological resources are located on the site. Field surveys located four isolated finds of insignificant tool flakes and shell fragments. The finds were determined by the field archaeologist to be of limited value for archaeological research. The Specific Plan area is not considered to have been a prime location for aboriginal occupation because of the severe topography.

2.4c Man-Made Features

The most significant man-made feature on the site is the series of San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) 230-KV, 138-KV and two 69-KV overhead transmission lines and support towers (see **Figure 4**). The easement for the towers is 150 feet wide and is extensively graded and disturbed. The towers enter the property near the center of its northern boundary and exit at the southeast corner. The easement contains the electrical transmission lines and towers, and underground gas and oil lines. The facilities will remain intact and will not be relocated. Grading will be permitted within the easement so long as this activity does not interfere with the operation of the facilities. The presence of the easement places significant development limitations on the site which are reflected in the Specific Plan.

FIGURE 5. SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND DISTURBED AREAS



Site Topography and Disturbed Areas

Via De La Valle Specific Plan

5

FIGURE

2.4d Surrounding Communities/Land Uses

The most significant development factors influencing the Via De La Valle properties are the surrounding communities to the north, west, and east, as shown on **Figure 6**. Planning, site design and the ultimate engineering on the property must reflect the aesthetic and functional characteristics of these communities:

- San Dieguito and the city of Solana Beach: San Dieguito is an unincorporated community of the county of San Diego, located directly northeast of the Via De La Valle properties. The city of Solana Beach is located directly northwest of the Via De La Valle properties. These communities encompass approximately 98-square miles.

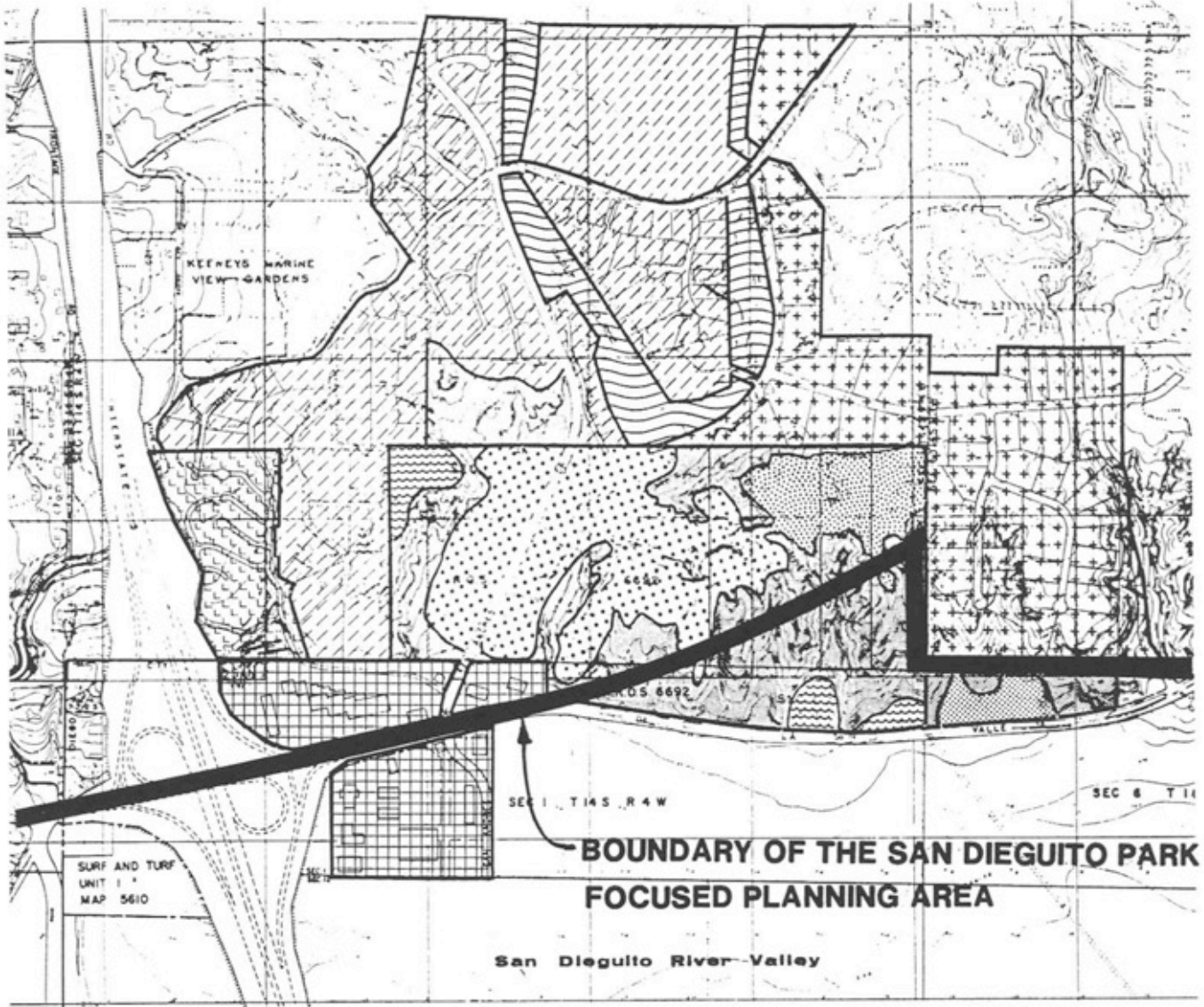
Historically, the areas have been characterized as semirural residential areas with large amounts of undeveloped land; however, San Dieguito and the city of Solana Beach have experienced a sizeable growth rate in the recent past. The present population is estimated to be 68,457 and is forecasted to increase to 81,474 by 1996. Approximately 75 percent of the future land use of community these communities will support various types of residential uses. The residential land uses to the north are very low-density and recreational golf course.

- San Diego: The City boundary extends just west of the I-5 interchange and roughly follows the northern edge alignment of the Specific Planning area. The development character of this section of the City has been heavily influenced by the Del Mar Race Track. The development along the Via De La Valle roadway in this area is primarily retail/commercial, and financial services as represented by the Flower Hill and Big Bear Albertsons Shopping Centers.

The Flower Hill and Albertsons commercial developments adjacent to the Specific Planning area are concentrated at the project's southwest boundary. The commercial establishments include the two large shopping centers, financial institutions and restaurants. The remaining land to the south and the southeast, within the San Dieguito River Valley, is open and sparsely populated.

In summary, the land uses which surround the Specific Planning areas are as follows:

North:	Residential	1.0 units per acre
		2.0 units per acre
	Recreation	Golf Course
West:	Residential	2.0 units per acre
		7.3 units per acre
East:	Residential	1.0 units per acre
South:	The Via De La Valle Roadway	
	Commercial	Shopping Center
	San Dieguito River Valley	



LEGEND

PROPOSED LAND USES

- Residential 0-2 du/ac
- Residential 0-3 du/ac
- Residential 3-6 du/ac
- Open Space

EXISTING LAND USES

- Residential 1 du/ac
- Residential 2 du/ac
- Residential 7.3 du/ac
- Commercial
- Golf Course

Proposed and Existing Land Uses

Via De La Valle Specific Plan

6
FIGURE



The Specific Planning area is surrounded on three sides by various intensities of existing residential, commercial and recreational developments. Specific Plan land use categories have been designed to be compatible with these existing land uses and to create density transitions between the higher and lower densities in the surrounding area.

2.4e Circulation

The primary regional access route available to the Via De La Valle properties is I-5, as shown on **Figure 7**. The Specific Plan area is located approximately 1,200 feet east of the I-5 interchange with Via De La Valle. Access to the freeway is very convenient.

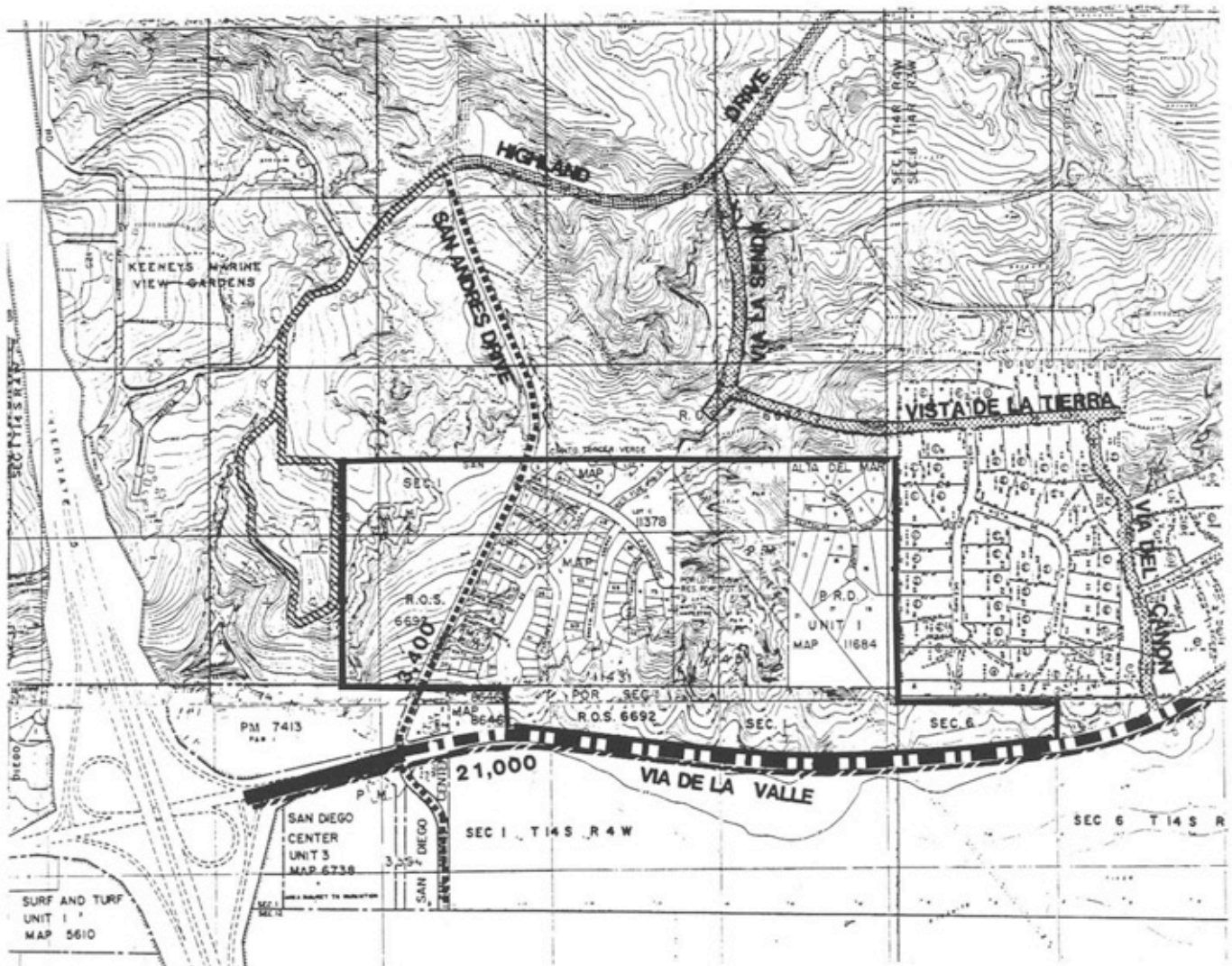
Via De La Valle, which fronts these properties, provides the major surface circulation route. This street is the connection to community shopping, entertainment and recreation facilities of Del Mar and Solana Beach to the west, Rancho Santa Fe to the east. Via De La Valle also connects to El Camino Real, which provides access to the south to San Dieguito Road and to Carmel Valley schools, shopping and entertainment.

Local circulation begins with San Andres Drive. This road runs north-south, providing the connection to Via De La Valle and the Solana Beach community to the north. The Specific Plan property west of San Andres Drive has public access from San Andres Drive and Avocado Place. A public street is proposed by the Specific Plan to provide access to centrally located parcels east of San Andres Drive. The northeasterly parcels of the Specific Plan will receive public access from Vista De La Tierra, located to the north of the planning area. Access to Area 6 is from Via de la Valle.

2.4f Existing Zoning

The existing zoning pattern for the Specific Planning area consists exclusively of single-family residential and agricultural zones and is illustrated by **Figure 8**.

Approximately 58 percent of the Specific Plan area is also covered by a Hillside Review (HR) overlay zone (**Figure 8**). This overlay zone is typically applied by the City to slopes exceeding 25 percent; however the overlay zone on the Specific Plan area also covers slopes which are less than 25 percent. Development of properties covered by the HR overlay zone requires approval of an HR permit or a Planned Residential Development (PRD) Permit. The Specific Plan proposes development areas which largely avoid the 25 percent slope areas. The Specific Plan also contains hillside grading and landscaping concepts designed to protect and enhance the steeper slopes in the planning area.



LEGEND

-  Major Street (6 Lane)
-  Major Street (4 Lane)
-  Collector
-  Residential Collector
-  Residential Street
-  N C T D Bus Route
-  3,400 Existing Average Daily Trips (ADT)



0 400 800 1200
Scale in Feet



Existing Transportation Facilities

Via De La Valle Specific Plan

7
FIGURE

2.5 THE SPECIFIC PLAN

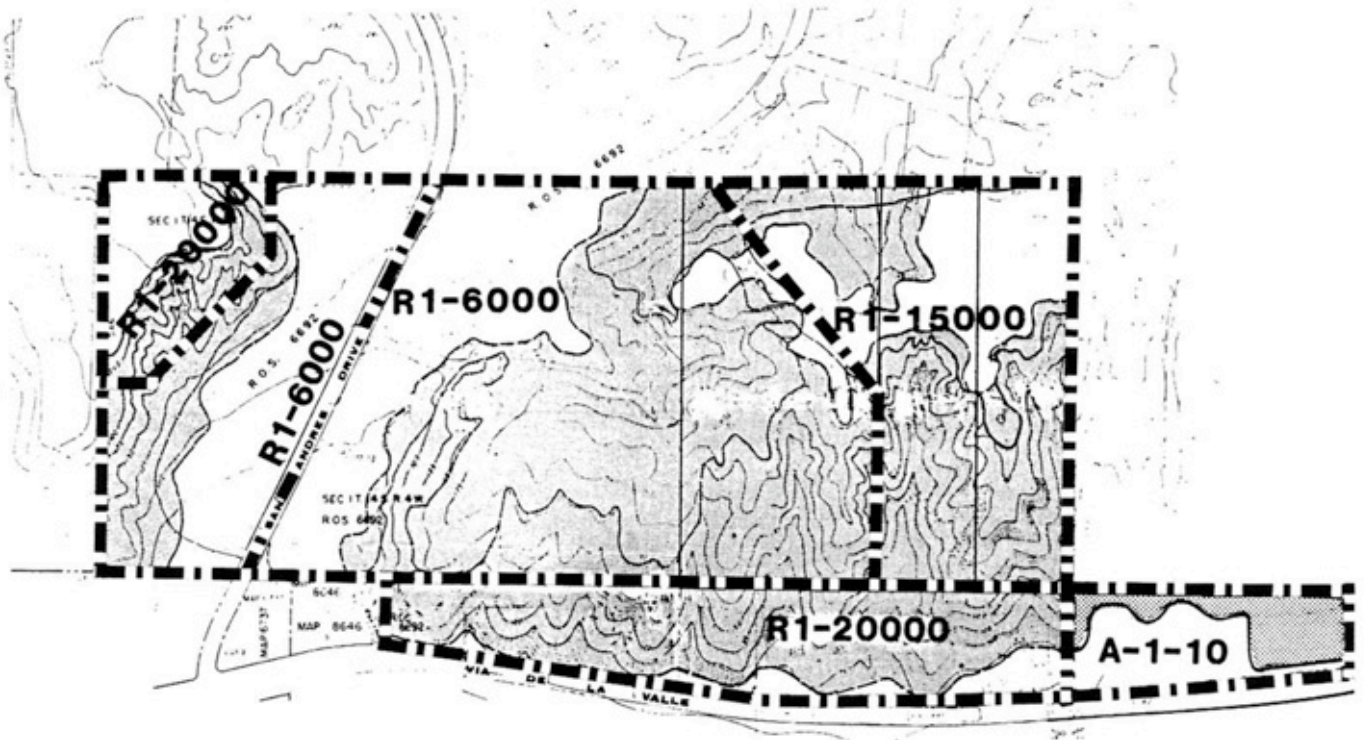
The Specific Plan is presented in the following chapters. **Figure 9** shows the land use designations for properties located in the Specific Plan area. **Figure 10** shows the proposed zoning for the Specific Plan properties.

The Specific Plan presents the plan elements which are relevant to the planning area, the site features, and the land uses proposed. These elements are:

Chapter 3	Residential Element
Chapter 4	Recreation and Open Space Element
Chapter 5	Public Services Element
Chapter 6	Transportation Element
Chapter 7	Resources Management Element
Chapter 8	Community Design Element
Chapter 9	Coastal Element
Chapter 10	Implementation Element

2.6 SUMMARY

Table 1 contains a summary of the Specific Plan land use categories listed by development areas. These areas are shown on **Figures 9** and **10**. The development theme is clustered single-family residential with attached units in the interior of the planning area and detached units at the perimeter. The attached single-family residential areas are designed to preserve the steeper slopes, minimize grading, and still achieve a suitable density in the area. The detached single-family lot areas are located along the perimeters of the planning area including all of Area 6 and to provide a buffer and transition between the higher-density attached units and the adjacent homes in the county.



 Indicates Hillside Review Overlay



0 200 400 600
Scale in Feet

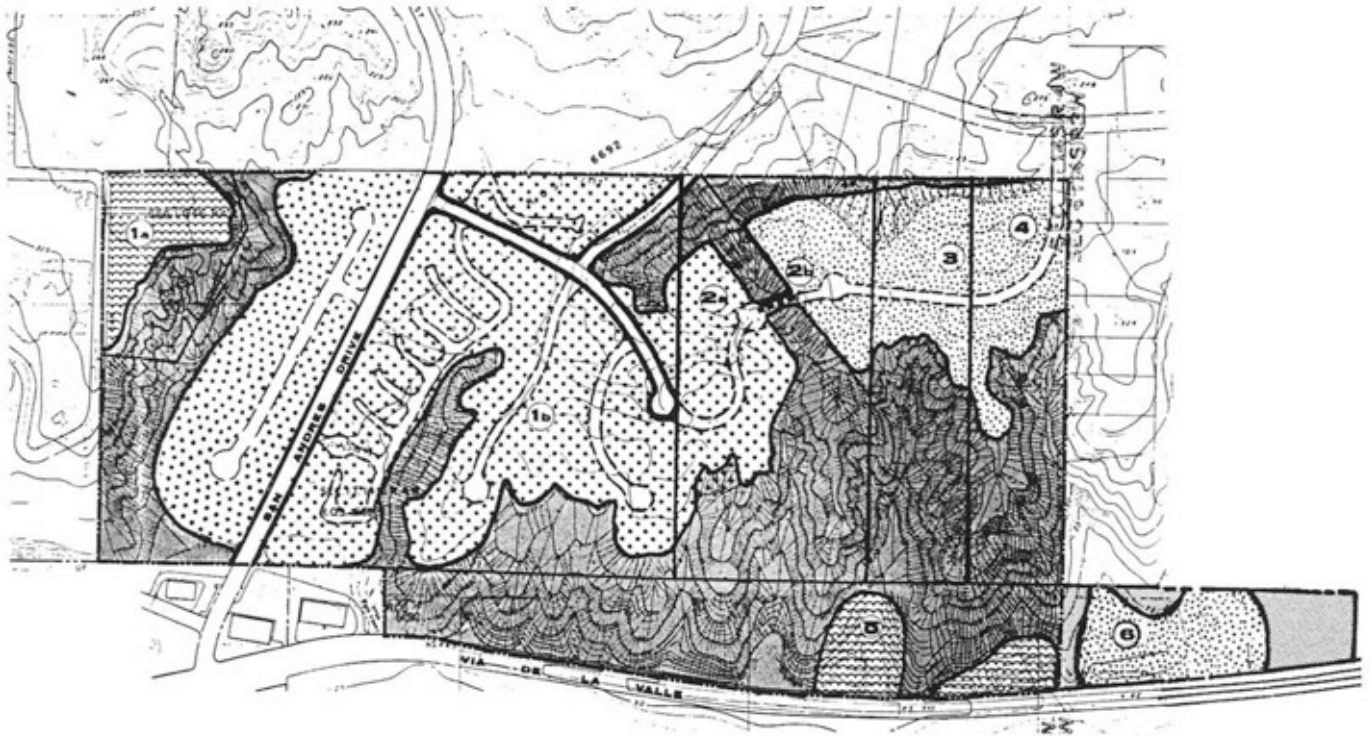


Existing Zoning **8**
Via De La Valle Specific Plan **FIGURE 8**

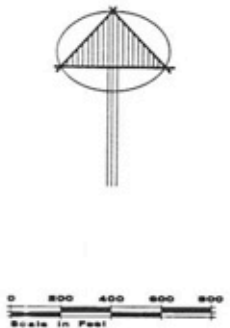
TABLE 1
STANDARDS FOR POPULATION-BASED PARKS


Development Area¹	Land Use	Total Acres²	Density Category	Natural Open Space³	Number of Units
1a	Residential	6.0±	Very Low (0-2 du/ac)	2.4 AC	9
1b	Residential	50.4±	Low/Med (2-6 du/ac)	23.2 AC	125
2a	Residential	12.4±	Low/Med (3-6 du/ac)	7.8 AC	42
2b	Residential	8.3±	Low (0-3 du/ac)	0.9 AC	9
3	Residential	10.3±	Low (0-3 du/ac)	7.0 AC	10
4	Residential	10.4±	Low (0-3 du/ac)	5.0 AC	10
5	Residential	18.8±	Very Low (0-2 du/ac)	12.0 AC	35
6	Residential	8.1±	Low (0-3 du/ac)	3.8 AC	19
Total		124.7 AC		62.1 AC	259

- Notes:**
1. See **Figure 9** for the location of the development areas.
 2. Net acres. Excludes public streets.
 3. "Natural Open Space" includes undisturbed land and vegetation where no grading will occur, as well as the existing SDG&E transmission line easement. Natural open space acres are included in "Total Acres."



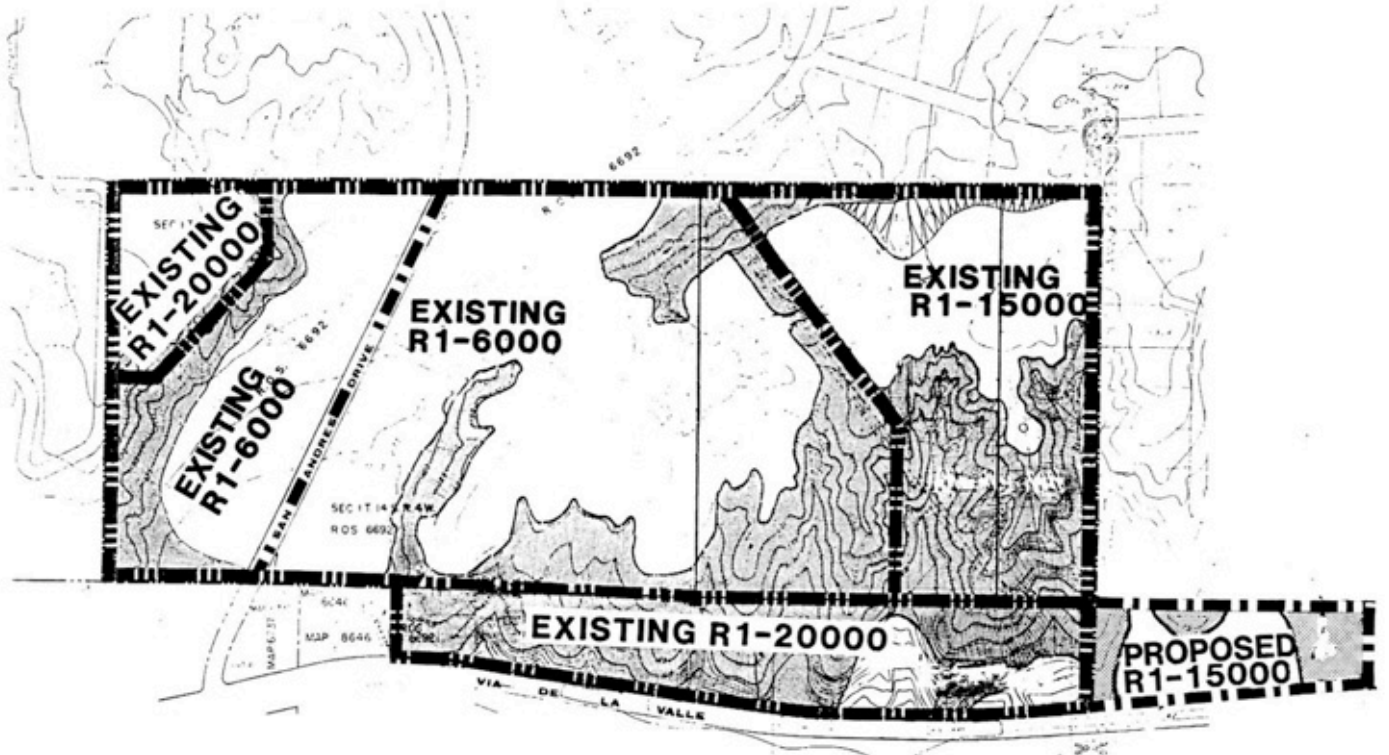
LEGEND



-  Very Low Residential 0-2 du/ac
-  Low Residential 0-3 du/ac
-  Low-Medium Residential 3-6 du/ac
-  Open Space
-  Public Streets
-  Private Streets
-  Development Area Number
-  Temporary Access Street



Specific Plan 9
Via De La Valle Specific Plan **FIGURE 9**



 Indicates Open Space Easement



Proposed Zoning **10**
Via De La Valle Specific Plan **FIGURE**