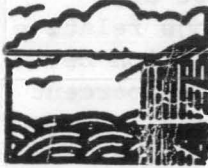


City of San Diego  
Development  
Services  
Department



Land Development  
Review Division  
(619) 236-6460

# Environmental Impact Report

DEP No. 94-0576  
SCH No. 96-121073

**SUBJECT:** Del Mar Highlands Estates: PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, RESOURCE PROTECTION ORDINANCE PERMIT, VESTING TENTATIVE MAP, and, AMENDMENT TO THE NORTH CITY FUTURE URBANIZING AREA FRAMEWORK PLAN (DEP NO. 94-0576) for the construction of 148 single family dwelling units and 24 affordable housing units on 398 acre parcel in Subarea III of the North City Future Urbanizing Area (NCFUA). The affordable housing will be located on a 5.35 acre parcel with access from Old El Camino Real. The proposed 148 single family market rate lots would be irregularly shaped and would vary in size from approximately 13,000 square feet to 100,800 square feet. Access to the development would be from San Dieguito Road along the northern site boundary. A security gate is proposed to be installed at the main entrance into the project. The total 172 units includes a proposed 21 unit density transfer from the Shell parcel (in Subarea III), and a 0.46% density bonus for the construction of the affordable units. The project is located south of San Dieguito Road, west of the Senterra residential development and the remaining undeveloped portion of Subarea III of the North City FUA, north of the Carmel Valley Community Planning area, and east of Old El Camino Real. Applicant: Pardee Construction Company.

**CONCLUSIONS:**

The proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates (DMHE) project consists of 389 vacant acres located in the North City Future Urbanizing Area (NCFUA). The project proposes a 148 single family lot subdivision and 24 affordable housing units. To achieve this density 21 dwelling units are being transferred from the Shell Parcel located in the southern area of Subarea III. A density bonus of 46% for the construction of the affordable housing units also applies. The project will dedicate a total of 222 acres (57% of the total DMHE site) and the entire 84 acre Shell parcel as Open Space to the City of San Diego.

Natural Communities Conservation Program (NCCP)

On March 25, 1993, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the California gnatcatcher as a threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). On December 10, 1993, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 4(d) rule became effective, affecting projects in all stages of the development process. The City is enrolled as a participating agency in the State's NCCP, which requires tracking of impacts to coastal sage scrub habitat. The City's

Multiple Species Conservation Program has been approved by the State as an equivalent to the NCCP. The NCCP allows the City to approve the loss of up to five percent of existing Coastal sage scrub habitat. Approvals must also comply with the State NCCP Process Guidelines, which require findings relative to the affect on regional preserve planning, and require that mitigation be adopted. The NCCP Conservation Guidelines have indicated that a five percent loss of Coastal sage scrub habitat is acceptable within any individual subregion during the preparation of a subregional NCCP or it's equivalent (i.e. MSCP Subarea Plan). Within the City of San Diego the five percent cumulative loss allowed is 1,186 acres of coastal sage scrub.

Total allowed loss:	1,186.00 acres
Cumulative actual loss to date:	493.35 acres
Loss due to this project:	33.88 acres
Total cumulative loss:	527.23 acres
Remaining loss allowed:	658.77 acres

This project will mitigate all impacts to Coastal sage scrub through on-site preservation, and on-site revegetation of Coastal sage scrub habitat. An Interim Habitat Loss Permit under Section 4(d) of the ESA through the City is currently being pursued through a separate application. It is anticipated that implementation of the project will not have an adverse affect on MSCP preserve planning and that the appropriate Findings could be made.

#### Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP)

The proposed project has been redesigned in concert with the draft MSCP and would therefore implement the strategies outlined in the draft MSCP document. The entire 84 acre Shell parcel is located within the MSCP Preserve Area. The dedication of this property to the City of San Diego as Open Space is consistent with MSCP recommendations.

The draft Biological Standards and Guidelines for Multiple Species Preserve Design have indicated the need to preserve Coastal sage scrub based on the species dependent upon it, and to preserve the long-term viability of the breeding population of the California gnatcatcher by maintaining core populations of gnatcatcher constituting viable metapopulations. The subject property contains nine pairs of gnatcatchers of which three pairs would be impacted by this project. This impact will be mitigated by revegetating existing agricultural land located on site within the MSCP Preserve in Gonzales Canyon.

**The project would result in the following significant, unmitigated impacts:**

Landform Alteration (direct): Impacts from the DMHE project would result in significant unmitigated impacts as a result of the grading proposed on the site, (9,620 cubic yards per graded acre) the height and length of manufactured slopes on-site, and excess RPO steep slope encroachment criteria.

Visual Quality (cumulative): This project, along with other projects proposed in the area, would have a cumulative impact on landforms and visual quality in the region because of the widespread changes from undeveloped open space to urban and suburban environments which would occur if all proposed projects in the area were built out.

Biological Resources (cumulative): Although the DMHE project will (1); mitigate the impacts to Coastal sage scrub and southern maritime chaparral by implementation of an on-site revegetation program and (2); the project has been designed to be consistent with the draft MSCP regarding biological core areas and wildlife corridors, the potential for significant cumulative biological impacts has not been eliminated. DMHE, along with other projects in the NCFUA area, would contribute to a significant cumulative loss of biological resources.

Traffic Circulation (cumulative): Although the proposed project is consistent with adopted traffic master plans and phasing plans applicable to the subregion, the potential cumulative traffic impacts to area roadways are considered regionally significant and unmitigable.

Air Quality (cumulative): Along with other projects in the vicinity, the project would contribute to the non-attainment of clean air standards in the region.

Natural Resources/Agricultural (cumulative): Considered with other developments in the area, the loss of 200 acres of agricultural land in the DMHE project, is cumulatively significant.

RECOMMENDED MITIGATION OR ALTERNATIVES FOR SIGNIFICANT UNMITIGATED IMPACTS:

The alternative section of the EIR analyzes two alternative development scenarios and the No Project Alternative for the DMHE project. The two alternatives to the proposed project analyzed would not eliminate all identified environmental impacts. The A-1-10 Rural Cluster Alternative would cluster 37 units in the eastern portion of the site. This alternative would have similar impacts to the proposed impact, although to a lesser degree, however, impacts would not be below a level of significance. For example, the project would have significant impacts if mitigation is not incorporated into the project, to the NCFUA Framework Plan regarding the Environmental Tier; loss of Diegan coastal sage scrub; landform alterations; and impacts to local schools and parks. Agricultural uses could continue on-site and the undeveloped portions of the site could be developed in the future if a phase shift from Future Urbanizing to Planned Urbanizing is approved by the electorate. Because of the future development potential on the site, additional significant unmitigated impacts over those identified with the project could result.

A second alternative that was reviewed, but rejected, analyzed the benefits of removing the southern most tier of lots adjacent to Gonzales Canyon to reduce visual impacts. This would affect approximately 24 lots located on the rim of Gonzales Canyon. This alternative was rejected after analyzing the proposed project's Design Guidelines in relationship to proposed setbacks, height restriction and landscaping/fencing requirements. The proposed project has mitigated visual impacts from open space areas to a below a level of significance. Due to the gradual slope up from the bottom of the canyon to the ridge near the northern property line, the removal of the 24 lots adjacent to Gonzales Canyon would not substantially reduce the visual impact.

Unless mitigation measures or project alternatives are adopted, project approval will require the decision-maker to make Findings, substantiated in the record, which state that: a) individual mitigation measures or project alternatives are infeasible, and b) the overall project is acceptable despite significant impacts because of specific overriding considerations.

MITIGATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM INCORPORATED INTO THE PROJECT:  
(See attached EIR for more detailed information on mitigation)

Hydrology/Water Quality: The project would mitigate its incremental contribution of Water Quality impacts through the implementation of erosion control measures as required by the City's Grading Ordinance and would re-landscape disturbed areas after the completion of grading. Conditions have been included that would minimize sediment transport, especially during the rainy season. To minimize potential effects of urban runoff, the project would comply with the Best Management Practices Program for Storm Water Pollution Control created by the City.

Landform Alteration/Visual Quality: The project has incorporated several design features into the plan that will mitigate the visual quality resulting from the grading activity. 57% of the site (222 acres) will be left in open space. The developable portion of the site has been clustered into the less constrained areas of the property resulting in wide open space corridors. The Design Guidelines have established development regulations that will soften the aesthetic appearance of manufactured slopes and structures that would be visible from public areas. In particular, those lots located upon the rim of Gonzales Canyon have expanded setback and height/bulk requirements. No two-story elements will be permitted within the rear 50 feet of those lots in order to encourage a variety of building facades that would be visible from Gonzales Canyon.

Geology and Soils: The proposed grading concept plan and the DMHE Guidelines provide a number of specific standards related to erosion control including general landscaping and specific planting criteria for disturbed or manufactured slopes. These include the use of deep-rooted vegetation, use of native drought-tolerant vegetation, use of erosion-controlling measures such as mulch or jute netting. A project specific soils and geological investigation will be prepared and approved by the City prior to the issuance of the grading permit. The implementation of the recommendations shall be

required to the satisfaction of the City Engineer to mitigate the potential for significant geologic hazards.

Biology: The proposed project includes preservation of on-site biological open space consisting of 91.5 acres of gnatcatcher-occupied Coastal sage scrub and, 35.7 acres of southern maritime chaparral. The project will impact 33.88 acres of Coastal sage scrub and 6.65 acres of southern maritime chaparral. Mitigation for habitat impacts includes revegetation of 36.7 acres of coastal sage scrub. A revegetation plan has been developed which includes success criteria, a monitoring program, and a surety bond to ensure the creation of Coastal sage scrub. Lighting adjacent to native areas shall be directed away from the habitat and appropriately shielded.

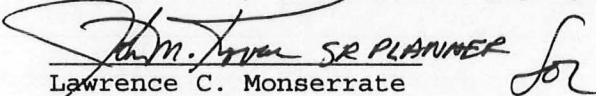
Cultural Resources: The applicant has agreed to implement a testing program for sites which have not been tested to date. A data recovery program for sites which are determined to be significant shall be incorporated into the project and would be required prior to the issuance of a grading permit. The testing shall be accomplished to the satisfaction of the Director of Development Services.

Paleontological Resources: Implementation of a paleontological monitoring and salvaging program would mitigate potential impacts to paleontological resources to below a level of significance. Prior to the issuance of grading permits, grading plans shall be reviewed by the Environmental Analysis Section to ensure that notes which require monitoring are on the plans.

Traffic Circulation: The intersection of San Dieguito Road and the primary access road shall be modified to provide both westbound to southbound left turn and eastbound to southbound right turn lanes. Fair share contributions shall be made for a signal at El Camino Real and Derby Farms Road intersection as well as contributions for widening El Camino Real and Via de la Valle.

Public Services: Participation in the Mello-Roos and Community Facilities District #1 and the implementation of a School Impact Agreement would mitigate to below a level of insignificance the project's contribution to cumulative impacts on school facilities. Response times for law enforcement and fire protection services would be mitigated to below a level of significance by providing a 24-hour guard at the proposed gate or by providing the fire and police departments with a security code for immediate access to the development.

The above Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program will require additional fees and/or deposits to be collected prior to the issuance of building permits, certificates of occupancy and/or final maps to ensure the successful completion of the monitoring program.

  
Lawrence C. Monserrate  
Development Services Department

Analyst: Gentles

January 31, 1997  
Date of Draft Report

March 26, 1997  
Date of Final Report

Distribution

PUBLIC REVIEW

The following individuals, organizations, and agencies received a copy or notice of the draft EIR and were invited to comment on its accuracy and sufficiency:

**Federal Government**

Naval Air Station at Miramar  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Federal Highway Administration  
USDA Soils Conservation Service  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**State of California**

CALTRANS, District 11  
Department of Fish and Game  
Intergrated Waste Management Board  
Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 9  
Department of Water Resources  
Food and Agricultural Department  
California Coastal Commission  
Air Resources Board  
Division of Mines & Geology  
State Clearinghouse

**County of San Diego**

Air Pollution Control Board  
Department of Planning & Land Use

**City of Del Mar**

City Attorney  
Planning Department

**City of San Diego**

Councilmember Mathis  
Park and Recreation Department  
Fire Marshall  
Engineering Department (Bob Cain)  
San Diego Housing Commission

**Other interested groups, agencies and individuals**

Carmel Valley Community Board  
City of Solana Beach  
Del Mar Union School District  
Solana Beach School District  
San Diego City Schools  
San Dieguito Union High School District  
SANDAG  
San Diego Gas & Electric  
Metropolitan Transit Development Board  
Sierra Club  
San Dieguito River Park JPA  
San Diego Natural History Museum  
San Diego Audubon Society  
California Native Plant Society

Wetland Advisory Board  
San Diego Regulatory Alert  
Southwest Center for Biological Diversity  
Citizens Coordinate for Century III  
South Coastal Information Center, SDSU  
San Diego Museum of Man  
Kumeyaay Cultural History Committee  
San Diego County Archaeological Society  
San Dieguito Lagoon Committee  
Rancho Santa Fe Association  
Arroyo Sorrento Homeowners Association  
Arroyo Sorrento Property Owners  
Senterra Homeowners Association  
Del Mar Heights & Portofino Homeowners Association  
Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve  
Mike Wells, State Parks  
Rancho Penasquitos Planning Board  
San Dieguito River Park CAC  
Rancho Santa Fe Association  
Torrey Pines Community Planning Group  
University of California, San Diego  
22nd District Agricultural Association  
Sun Valley Association  
Rancho Del Mar Homeowners Association  
Friends of San Dieguito River Valley  
San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy  
Fairbanks Ranch Association  
Fairbanks-Stratford Home Owners Association  
John Northrup  
Craig Sherman/Allison Rolfe  
Jay Shrake  
Endangered Habitats League  
Statford Homeowners Association  
Pardee Construction Company  
Project Design Consultants  
Tom Steinke

## DEL MAR HIGHLANDS ESTATES EIR LETTERS OF COMMENT AND RESPONSES

Letters of comment to the draft EIR were received from the following agencies, groups, and individuals. The letters of comment and responses follow.

<u>Letter from:</u>	<u>Page</u>
United States Marine Corps	PR-1
Carmel Valley Community Planning Board	PR-2
Fairbanks Ranch Association	PR-9
San Diego County Archaeological Society	PR-12
SDG&E	PR-14
City of San Diego Water Utilities Section	PR-15
T&B Planning Consultants	PR-17
Solana Beach Elementary School District	PR-20



## ERRATA

Several comment letters received during the EIR public review period contained accepted revisions which resulted in changes to the Final EIR text. These changes include minor editorial changes to the text which are indicated by strike-out (deleted) and underline (inserted) markings. The more substantive changes are also noted here for the reader's information and convenience in the following Errata to the Final EIR.

### **Minor Modifications to the PRD Site Plan and VTM**

Subsequent to the release of the DEIR for public review, minor modifications to the project design were made by the project applicant and a revised PRD site plan and VTM were submitted. These changes were made to accommodate internal design changes to the project (e.g., reconfiguration streets and lot layouts), and modifications to the Design Guidelines. The revised PRD site plan and VTM have been included in the Project Description of the Final EIR.

### **Schools**

The Final EIR has been revised to indicate that the participation in a Mello-Roos Community Facilities District would only apply for grades 7-12 in the San Dieguito Union School High School District, and that a Schools Agreement between the applicant and Solana Beach Elementary School District would be required for grades K-6.

### **Interim Habitat Loss (4d) Permit Findings**

The Draft EIR for Del Mar Highlands Estates indicated that a multiple project Interim Habitat Loss (4d) Permit may be processed by the project applicant with additional related projects. During the public review period for the Draft EIR, the City of San Diego issued a multiple project Interim Habitat Loss (4d) Permit Findings which included the Del Mar Highlands Estates project and three other related projects. These projects include the Neighborhood 10 Precise Plan Amendment, the Neighborhood 10 School Site/Sewer Line, and the Neighborhood 8C Precise Plan. The findings were distributed to the public and wildlife agencies on February 28, 1997 for a 45-day review period ending on April 14, 1997.

### **Cultural Resources**

Site CA-SDI-5371 has been determined to be outside the boundaries of the proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates Vesting Tentative Map (VTM), and therefore, would not require testing for the project as described in the DEIR. Documentation from previous technical reports, which clearly describe the site's location relative to the project boundary, indicate the site CA-SDI-5371 is mapped on the terminus of a ridge that is clearly outside the project boundary. There are no indications from completed field studies that the site

boundary was changed or that the site was incorrectly mapped. Therefore, there is no basis for completing sampling at this location as described in the DEIR.

A second site, CA-SDI-5372H, is located within the VTM in an area that will be deeded to the City of San Diego as part of a natural open space corridor related to the Draft MSCP. There are no direct impacts identified within or adjacent to the recorded limits of this site. This resource area is identified as a light scatter of flaked lithic debris and the remnants of an historic-era cobble foundation. This site was not tested during previously completed work; however, survey level observations of the site indicate limited resource potential. The revised recommendation for this site is the completion of a sampling/indexing program which would provide sufficient information to place the historic and prehistoric portions of this site in context with the region prior to preservation in the open space area. The recommended sampling/indexing program is included in the text of the Final EIR on pages 150-151.



**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**  
MARINE CORPS AIR BASES WESTERN AREA EL TORO  
PO BOX 96001  
SANTA ANA CA 92706-5001

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
11103.79  
AQ/DMESTAT  
7 Mar 1997

CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
ATTN MR LARRY MONSERRATE  
202 C STREET MS 4A  
SAN DIEGO CA 92101

CARMEL VALLEY; DEL MAR HIGHLAND ESTATES DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT REPORT

Dear Mr. Monserrate:

This is in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Del Mar Highlands Estates DEP No. 94-0576 for the construction of residential housing within the North City Future Urbanizing Area. Pursuant to the Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1993 Marine Corps Air Stations El Toro and Tustin will close by 1999 and aviation units will transition to Miramar.

- 1 The proposed project will be affected by operations of military aircraft transiting to and from Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar. Occupants will both see and hear military aircraft and will experience varying degrees of noise and vibration. It is important to realize that while this project is a compatible land use, residents may experience concern over single event noise. Information can be obtained within the Final Environmental Impact Statement for MCAS Miramar. A copy of this document can be acquired by contacting Ms. Timarie Seneca at (619) 532-3780.

If I may be of any further assistance, please contact me at (714) 726-3702.

Sincerely,

D. P. PENDER  
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps  
Community Plans and Liaison Officer  
By direction of the Commander

Encl:

(1) COMCABWEST ltr 11103.72 AQ/NCFUA of 7 Jan 1997

**RESPONSES**

- 1 Review of the Final EIS for the aircraft operations at the Marine Corps Air Station (pages 4.11-12 to 4.11-41) indicates that the Del Mar Highlands Estates Project residential development would be outside the 65 CNEL contour from aircraft operations and significant noise impacts would not occur.

**CARMEL VALLEY COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARD**  
**12760 High Bluff Drive, Suite 160**  
**San Diego, CA 92130**  
**PH: (619) 794-2500/FAX: 259-6173**

March 11, 1997

Lawrence C. Monserrate, Principal Planner  
City of San Diego  
Land Development Review Division  
Development Services Department  
1222 First Ave., M.S. 501  
San Diego, CA 92101

**SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON DRAFT EIR DEP NO. 94-0576:**

**"DEL MAR HIGHLANDS ESTATES (NCFUA SUBAREA III)**

Dear Mr. Monserrate:

The proposed planned residential development (PRD) lies directly north of Carmel Valley and would impact our community facilities and services. In addition, it amends the Framework Plan for the North City Future Urbanizing Area (NCFUA), which surrounds our community and whose future land uses concern us regarding sensitive development of existing open spaces, adequate roadways for increased development, and the overall impacts of urbanizing in the City's last remaining natural areas.

We request the following questions and issues be addressed in the final EIR. Our major points address

**I Preservation of Gonzales Canyon**

**Project Alternatives:** Concerns about omitting an environmentally preferable alternative proposed in 1995 as part of the N 8A/DMHE final EIR (DEP Nos. 87-0211,91-0899, 94-0576)

**Biology/Land Use/Landform Alteration:** Concerns about the adequacy of the 1,000-ft. of Gonzales Canyon to be "preserved"

**II Land Use:** Concerns about the inconsistency with NCFUA Framework Plan-recommended number of dwelling units and the methods of transferring units from the "Shell Parcel."

## PRESERVATION OF GONZALES CANYON WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

### Biology, land use and landform alteration— impacts on Gonzales Canyon wildlife corridor and consideration of a reduced development alternative

Direct significant and unmitigated impacts to landform would result from manufacturing twenty-two slopes an average of forty feet high. This exceeds the resource protection ordinance encroachment allowance and would disturb slopes along the Gonzales Canyon wildlife corridor. [4]

- 2 The DEIR substantiates this conclusion; however, then it determines that impacts to biological resources are fully mitigated because the project (1) will mitigate the impacts to coastal sage scrub and southern maritime chaparral by revegetating 70 acres on site and (2) will preserve a 1,000-ft corridor in Gonzales Canyon.

Gonzales Canyon is a primary MSCP/NCFUA environmental tier concern because it is the only remaining viable corridor to the San Dieguito River Valley whose preservation is a goal of every City land use document and policy. As the DEIR states [133], "It ultimately connects with McGonigle and Deer Canyons and Del Mar Mesa to the south...."—the heart of City MSCP efforts is the western San Dieguito River Valley connecting to the Del Mar Mesa. Is the DEIR saying that the project would result in significant, unmitigated impacts to landform alteration but that this would have no effect on biology?

- 3 In the previous final EIR for N 8A/Del Mar Highlands Estates (DMHE), the proposal (then 148 du) "would not implement the recommendations for development adjacent to the natural areas which includes Gonzales Canyon and the San Dieguito River Valley." [S-17] This finding was due to two impacts: (1) "the extent of earthwork, the anticipated level of disturbance to 25 percent or greater slopes, and the construction and length of 15 manufactured slopes up to 100 feet in height." [S-16] and (2) "noticeable changes" in visual quality of the site. The landform alteration impacts were deemed significant and unmitigated. The visual quality impacts would be mitigated by adoption of the "environmentally preferred alternative" which "would move or eliminate lots which are visible from the river park." [S-19]

The board's response to that issue was:

"(4) 'The 'Reduced Project Alternative'...removes 21 development pads from the map area overlooking the riparian area of Gonzales Canyon. The DEIR finds net significant impacts to landform alteration and visual quality. We believe this alternative also reduces impacts on biological resources because the Gonzales wildlife corridor would be protected from edge effects, through this alternative's single-loaded streets and widening of the corridor."

- 5 We believe this view is equally valid with the resubmitted project. Because of development approved east of and adjacent to Gonzales Canyon, wildlife depend solely on the remaining corridor through the DMHE parcel. No viable habitat or linkage remains as Gonzales Canyon to the east is cut off by grading and existing development, in Subarea III and the remainder of the NCFUA, as well as "Rancho

## RESPONSES

- 2 These comments concur with the Conclusions in the DEIR. However, only 36.7 acres of the 77 acres of revegetation are being credited to the Del Mar Highlands Estates Project for mitigation.

- 3 The landform alteration impacts are considered significant and unmitigated because the grading quantities exceed the City of San Diego significance thresholds in terms of cubic yards of grading per graded acre and the height of the manufactured slopes to develop the site. The DEIR acknowledges that this proposed grading will impact biological resources, but the impacted acreage consists primarily of non-native vegetation communities (approximately 138 acres). The impacts to sensitive vegetation types including coastal sage scrub (33.88 acres) and southern maritime chaparral (6.64) would be fully mitigated by the on-site preservation of habitat.

- 4 The Carmel Valley Community Planning Board's comment on the 1995 EIR addressing Del Mar Highlands Estates is acknowledged. However, the Design Guidelines submitted with the current project include additional setbacks, perimeter fencing, and building height restrictions which were not part of the original project. These additional measures have reduced the visual quality impacts to below a level of significance.

- 5-6 The Reduced Project alternative was included in the 1995 EIR (City of San Diego 1995: 502-504) for the purposes of reducing the visual quality impacts. Although it is recognized that the impacts to biological resources would be incrementally lessened under such an alternative, the 1995 EIR did not conclude that the impacts to biological resources and the Gonzales Canyon wildlife corridor would be substantially lessened under this alternative. The currently proposed wildlife corridors are consistent with the Draft MSCP recommendations for wildlife corridor widths and the proposed project was designed with the need to accommodate wildlife movement from east to west and northerly to the San Dieguito River Valley. These on-site corridors were specifically designed to reflect the Draft MSCP corridor width recommendations.

Lakes" and other county of San Diego development. The necessity of grading, for example, an 800-ft. long section into an 85-ft. high slope to get buildable pads does impact the biology of the project area. It reduces the essential wildlife corridor to the western San Dieguito River Valley to the minimum standard for corridor design recommended by Ogden (1992) for the City's natural areas (environmental tier and MSCP.)

Assuming our belief that landform impacts also reduce the corridor width and bring development too far down into Gonzales Canyon, the 1995 final EIR alluded to the preference of the reduced development area alternative for biological (corridor) reasons. Although biological impacts are considered fully mitigated by the preservation of the off-site "Shell Parcel" this alternative "would reduce the amount of fill proposed for pad development..." [503] and "It is accurate...that impacts to biological resources would be further reduced by this alternative." [Response 4]

The "Reduced Project Alternative" removing the southernmost tier of lots is rejected in the current DEIR "after analyzing the proposed project's Design Guidelines in relationship to proposed setbacks, height restriction and landscaping/fencing requirements." Home setbacks from Gonzales Canyon slopes are considered to be sufficient.

This rationale completely ignores the potential edge effects and minimal size of the wildlife corridor. Why doesn't the DEIR at least consider an alternative which would reduce landform and biological impacts and which would offer more than the minimal corridor design? The success in preserving a major environmental tier/MSCP corridor to the region's last struggling river valleys depends on prudence, not roof pitches or fencing design.

We strongly urge reconsideration of an alternative which removes development on lots 47-53, 68-76, and 109-111 to reduce landform alteration impacts and preserve the viability of the Gonzales Canyon wildlife corridor. If the proposed design is driven by City guidelines, these should be fully explained as to why the southern perimeter lots were allowed and a vastly disturbed area was proposed for wildlife crossing onto San Dieguito Road.

**Overall Wildlife Corridor Design:** The DEIR appears to justify the corridor design as follows:

"The project, as proposed, would conform to the Framework Plan and MSCP preserve design indicating conservation of Gonzales Canyon in open space....Wildlife access through the site east-west would be maintained and access to the north (San Dieguito Valley) would be retained through the provision of four large breaks between lots (ranging from approximately 200 feet to approximately 600 feet) between the clustered housing and the six more isolated lots in the western portion of the project area." [133]

There are two flaws in this argument: (1) existing wildlife movement is east-west and back, from the canyons in the Del Mar Mesa area to the water and food supply in the western San Dieguito River Valley. The "four large breaks" between lots not only are in

## RESPONSES

7 See response 5-6 above.

8 The draft EIR includes a project alternative, the A-1-10 Rural Cluster alternative, which substantially lessens the impact to biological resources and landform alteration. This alternative also provides wildlife corridors well in excess of the MSCP recommended standards. The A-1-10 Rural Cluster Alternative limits development to the northern eastern portion of the site, and development of the remainder of the site could not occur unless a phase shift vote was approved.

9 Comment noted. However, the proposed design of the project with respect to the wildlife corridor configuration is consistent with adopted city plans and policies which include the Draft MSCP and NCFUA Framework Environmental Tier. As described on pages 132-134 in the DEIR, the lots along the southern perimeter of the development area and the use of disturbed lands (on- and off-site) to accommodate wildlife movement are not considered a significant impediment to the functionality of these wildlife corridors.

10 disturbed agricultural land—they would be in the middle of development. How can the DEIR consider "large breaks (200-600') between lots" a wildlife corridor? (2) Wildlife is supposed to then travel north across these breaks between homes and cross San Dieguito Road, currently bringing half of the traffic from east and north of Carmel Valley to El Camino Real and I-5. The DEIR concludes "Although they would have to cross a paved road, this is not considered a significant barrier." [133]

11 We strongly disagree with this corridor design. The final EIR should establish scientifically how wildlife in the City's key MSCP preserve area will function if it (1) is channeled into the minimum 1,000-ft. wide corridor because that is the only outlet; (2) then forage, migrate, or establish nests in "four large breaks" from development only 200-600-ft. wide and surrounded by roads and development; and (3) then survive crossing San Dieguito Road, after which they will then have to cross El Camino Real to access the wetlands and habitat of the western San Dieguito River Valley.

12 **Wildlife Undercrossing:** The project proposes a \$50,000 contribution toward construction of a wildlife underpass beneath a future, widened El Camino Real. We believe that this underpass is essential to the viability of the environmental tier and that it should occur at the western end of the plan area, the most direct route along the existing riparian corridor emptying out at the floodplain and future restored lagoon. (Southern California Edison mitigation project) The DEIR acknowledges that without this projected wildlife undercrossing, the Gonzales Canyon corridor does not work. This project would introduce development onto lands which currently work as both wildlife habitat and corridor, increasing and making even more critical the need for a viable corridor.

The sum of \$50,000, apparently, is the applicant's offer. We understand, based on discussions of the failed "Stallion's Crossing" projects, that a wildlife crossing bridge will cost at least \$2 million. That applicant was asked to pay \$1 million. What is the actual projected cost of this bridge? Would \$50,000 actually be the applicant's fair share cost? How is this determined? If this project's unit count is in excess of that anticipated by the Framework Plan, has the applicant's fair share been adjusted to reflect that increase? If \$50,000 is not the applicant's fair share, will other area property owners or public funds—such as MSCP funds—be required to make up the difference?

Given lack of voter approval of development proposals in Subareas II and III, and general property owner dissatisfaction with Framework Plan requirements, it appears it will years before El Camino Real is actually widened or before development has generated enough funds for wildlife bridge undercrossing. Since this project is creating a critical need for this undercrossing, it makes sense that this applicant should front the funding for or construct the undercrossing, with other property owners reimbursing the applicant for their fair share costs as their projects come on line. It should be noted that this applicant is the majority property owner in Subarea III, whose agricultural replacement of habitat and development proposals are creating the need for a viable corridor and wildlife undercrossing.

**Impacts to Biological Resources and Mitigation Requirements:**

13 (1) These impacts and mitigation measures are discussed and identified, but no explanation is given on the relationship between the two. What impact/mitigation ratio

## RESPONSES

10 See responses 5-9 above. In addition, the on-site north/south wildlife corridor leading from Gonzales Canyon to the San Dieguito River Valley is in the western portion of the site. This corridor is west of the main area of development in the central portion of the property and traverses the very low density estate residential area of the project which contains six lots (Lots 143-148) on approximately 65 acres.

11 See responses 5-10 above.

12 The \$50,000 contribution to the City of San Diego by Pardee Construction Company is earmarked for the construction of a wildlife corridor across San Dieguito Road or for any other purpose deemed necessary by the City. Although the money could be utilized for construction of a wildlife underpass at El Camino Real, such an undercrossing has not been discussed in the context of this project. The \$50,000 has not been identified as satisfying public facility financing obligations attributable to the development of this project. In addition, this project does not create the need for an undercrossing. If a need for an undercrossing exists, it would exist whether this project were approved or did not proceed.

13 The biology section in the Final EIR has been revised to clarify that the on-site preservation of coastal sage scrub and southern maritime chaparral would represent mitigation for the impacts associated with the proposed project. This on-site preservation is consistent with the mitigation described in the 1995 EIR for the original project. The on-site preservation and revegetation would represent mitigation for the impacts to sensitive habitats (coastal sage scrub and southern maritime chaparral) at a ratio of approximately 3:1.

was used? The DEIR determines that 36.7 acres out of 77 would need to be revegetated to mitigate this project, and that the remainder could be used as mitigation credit toward some future project. This indicates a careful calculation was used. Please provide an account of that calculation.

14 (2) Under the discussion of "Geology and Soils", the DEIR states:

"A number of potentially significant on-site geologic conditions exist...these include seismically induced ground shaking and landsliding, unstable manufactured slopes, and unsuitable surficial deposits (e.g., expansive or unconsolidated soils). Mitigation of potential landslides could result in temporary removal of vegetation and grading/recompaction of soils beyond the proposed limits of disturbance under RPO." [107] (emphasis added)

If grading of soils beyond RPO limits needs to occur, resulting in encroachment of natural vegetation, then mitigation for this encroachment also needs to occur. It is possible that the need for such grading may be identified only after grading actually begins, after this project, complete with its mitigation requirements, already has been approved. How would such an eventuality be handled? Which City department will be responsible for keeping track of this project even after grading begins, in order to ensure that the need for additional mitigation will be noticed and implemented?

15 (3) The draft precise plan for the 1995 submittal stated that "substantial conformance" would include up to a 10 percent increase in the development footprint. We believe that the DEIR should state that a 10 percent increase would not be in "substantial conformance" but, rather, would constitute an entirely different project. Any increase in the footprint, particularly any increase which encroached into natural vegetation or into the wildlife corridor should trigger environmental re-evaluation, resulting in possible increased mitigation. Alternatively, of course, the applicant and the EIR could agree that if this project required an increase in the approved RPO development footprint in order to mitigate against seismic catastrophe, the project would need to be redesigned to stay within its original approved footprint.

16 Given the potential need for seismic mitigation on this property, we question the wisdom of designing a project so squeezed into its site that the DEIR has to caution that the RPO development footprint may need to be exceeded. In order to fit all applicant's desired units on the site, this project requires extraordinary cuts and fills and manufactured slopes—e.g., a cut slope 800-ft. long and 85-ft. high, and a manufactured slope 110-ft. high. This results in unmitigated impacts to landform alteration.

Surely it makes more sense to "relax" project intensity, to reduce its landform impacts, to reduce edge effects on Gonzales Canyon, and to avoid the need to expand the development footprint to avert landslides.

## RESPONSES

14 Based on the updated geotechnical investigation prepared for the project (GEOCON 1997), grading is not anticipated to encroach into the four mapped landslide areas within the Baypoint Formation north of Gonzales Canyon. The geotechnical investigation recommends that the grading operations be observed by a qualified geologist. In addition, revegetation of any temporary grading impacts associated with any remediation of landslide deposits in the open space areas would be a noted requirement on the final grading plans for the project. The Final EIR and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program have been revised to ensure that field monitoring by a qualified geologist and additional revegetation would be implemented, if necessary. Should additional resource impacts be identified during plan check or field monitoring, additional environmental review will be required to determine whether or not additional mitigation and revegetation is necessary.

15 Comment noted. However, processing of a "precise plan" is not required for the Del Mar Highlands Estates project as it is located in the NCFUA. Any substantial conformance determination required as part of the final mapping process would be made by the City of San Diego. See also response 14 above.

16 Comment noted. This comment concurs with the assessment of impacts in the DEIR regarding landform alteration.



## LAND USE

### Concerns About Inconsistency With Framework Plan Recommendations for the Number of Dwelling Units; Method of Transferring Units From the Shell Parcel

- 17 **Shell Parcel:** In order to fully inform decision makers as to the appropriateness of the transfer of 21 units from the Shell Parcel, at a rate of 1:4 acres, the EIR should assess the development potential of that parcel, especially with regard to sensitive biological and topographical resources on site and alluvial soils.

There are constraints on development of the Shell Parcel. Factors potentially making inappropriate 1:4 development include: (1) alluvial soils, which would require extensive removal and recompaction, possibly requiring grading extending well beyond any footprint grading for the units. This would require additional mitigation; (2) the Central Alignment of SR 56, particularly given alluvial soils which might require extensive grading beyond the footprint grading for the six-lane freeway; (3) access to the site, which is isolated from the planned circulation system; (4) development of the Shell Parcel would have required changes or upgrades to the infrastructure proposed for Subarea V and the Bougainvillea project, including utilities infrastructure and Shaw Ridge Road.

If development of the Shell Parcel at 1:4 would have required mitigation, either on- or off-site—as seems likely—how is this mitigation reflected in the current proposal? Pardee is, in effect, asking for the benefits of a discretionary PRD approval, the increased number of housing units, without providing for the mitigation which would likely have been required to offset those units' impacts to the environment. If the answer to this question is that Pardee is dedicating the entire parcel to the City, and has thereby mitigated for the hypothetical 1:4 development, then some portion of the Shell Parcel must be acknowledged and identified in the EIR mitigation for the project. In order to assert that some portion is adequate mitigation for a 1:4 PRD, the City needs to assure that that portion of the Shell Parcel will not adversely be affected the Central Alignment of SR 56.

The DEIR highlights this issue by saying "Potential future development associated with this parcel would be restricted to possible rights-of-way and construction associated with future Camino Santa Fe and State Route 56, respectively." [S-3]

Despite these constraints, the Shell Parcel's 21 dwelling units "which could be developed per the underlying zone would be transferred to the Del Mar Highlands Estates project..." A lot of value is being given for this transfer. Would there have been mitigation required for 1:4 on the Shell Parcel? If so, and if the mitigation would have been on-site, how does this square with the possible use of the Shell Parcel for the Central Alignment for SR 56? Would it have been possible to develop the parcel at 1:4 and mitigate development impacts on site and leave room for SR 56 also?

## RESPONSES

- 17 The discussion relating to development constraints on the Shell parcel are speculative because no testing of the site has occurred and no proposal currently exists to proceed with development of the Shell parcel. The 21 single-family dwelling units which could be developed on the site at 1 du/4 acres would likely be clustered on the more developable portions of the Shell parcel should such a development proposal be submitted to the City by the applicant. The City was desirous of maintaining the undeveloped status of the 84-acre Shell parcel and that has been accomplished by incorporating the 21 single-family dwelling units for the parcel into the project. Additionally, by locating the 21 units within the development footprint of the Del Mar Highlands Estates project site, disturbance of lands within the Shell parcel or other areas within the project has been minimized.

When development rights are transferred, no development impacts occur on the property the density is transferred from; therefore, no mitigation is required. The impacts of the development of these 21 units on the Del Mar Highlands Estates property are being mitigated on the project site. No mitigation credit to the project is being provided by virtue of the open space dedication of the Shell parcel. Many lands designated as open space in the City contain reservations, easements, or right-of-way for future road development. Should that road development be proposed, and impacts analyzed, appropriate mitigation measures would be required in the environmental analysis for that road project.

### Framework Plan Inconsistency

- 18 This project conflicts with the Framework Plan, yet the DEIR has limited its discussion of compatibility with existing and future land use plans to issues of development footprint and the MSCP/environmental tier. In order to be adequate and complete, the EIR should discuss the extent and possible consequences of this conflict under Land Use. Given their displeasure with the Framework Plan, will other property owners demand similar upgrades in unit count? If similar upgrades are granted, what will this do to public facilities planning throughout the NCFUA?

The Framework Plan for Subarea III "envisions estate residential development for the Del Mar Highlands Estates project site at 0.2 dwelling unit per gross acre. This density would allow the development of 77 units on the 389-acre project site." [32] This proposal increases the density to .45 du/gross acre, for 172 units overall, more than double. In absence of a phase shift vote to planned urbanizing, the base zone is A-1-10, or up to 1 du per 4 acres with a discretionary approval of clustering.

- 19 Another determinant of development is the allowable encroachment of the RPO. The DEIR states that approximately 180 acres are defined by RPO as either steep slopes or biologically sensitive land [27]. Also, the property is in the floodway or floodplain fringe zones. According to RPO, 180 acres could be developed. The EIR should explain why the RPO encroachment allowance is exceeded and alternative compliance would be approved. Which rule for allowing alternative compliance would be invoked? Strict application to RPO "would result in unnecessary hardship to the applicant? Or strict compliance would preclude provisions of extraordinary benefit to the general public?

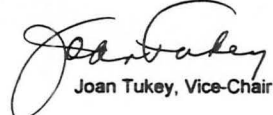
- 20 This discussion should reflect the City's 1995 rejection of "Findings" for the project. This rejection stated "specifically, four alternatives that are presented in the alternatives section...have not, in staff's opinion, been adequately determined to be infeasible by the applicant." [City of San Diego Memorandum, September 27, 1995, to Planning Commission from Ann B. Hix, Principal Planner, Development Services Department.]

The "finding" by applicant for why the "Reduced Project Alternative" was infeasible was:

"This alternative, by eliminating 21 units or shrinking the development area, would not be consistent with the draft MSCP preserve design. The elimination of the 21-unit transfer from the Shell Parcel would remove the Shell Parcel as a project component, allowing the potential for development of the site pursuant to the existing zoning. Development of the Shell Parcel would not be consistent with the regional conservation planning efforts of the MSCP...."

The proposed project has been determined to be consistent with the housing goals and objectives of the General Plan/Framework Plan. Thus, the reduction in units under this alternative would not fully implement the General Plan goals in terms of the provision of housing per the Framework Plan." [52]

  
Jan Fuchs, Chair

  
Joan Tukey, Vice-Chair

### **RESPONSES**

- 18 The Land Use section of the DEIR concludes that the proposed project is consistent with the NCFUA Framework Plan and Environmental Tier (see pages 46-48) and no mitigation measures are required. See also response 17 above.

- 19 As described on pages 52-53 of the DEIR, the project would exceed the overall allowable encroachment into RPO-sensitive resources. However, the measures incorporated into the project design (i.e., proposed on-site preservation of open space/regional wildlife corridors and revegetation of disturbed agricultural land) would allow for RPO alternative compliance findings to be made by the decisionmaker.

- 20 The 1995 "Findings" discussed in this comment refer to the EIR Findings required pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) which were prepared in conjunction with the previous EIR for Del Mar Highlands Estates. The CEQA EIR Findings are not directly related to the RPO alternative compliance findings discussed above. In addition, subsequent to the September 27, 1995 letter to the Planning Commission from Ann B. Hix, Principal Planner, Development Services Department, City staff prepared revised Draft CEQA Findings regarding the project alternatives. The revised Findings recommended to the decisionmaker that the draft Findings were adequate and that the project alternatives could be found to be infeasible by the decisionmaker.



March 13, 1997

Mr. Bob Gentles, Associate Planner  
City of San Diego  
Development Services Department  
Development and Environmental Planning Division  
1222 First Avenue, Mail Station 501  
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: **DEP No. 94-0576 - Del Mar Highlands Estates**  
**Draft Environmental Impact Report**

Dear Mr. Gentles:

On behalf of the Fairbanks Ranch Association, thank you for sending us a copy of the Draft EIR on the proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates Tentative Map and Planned Residential Development project. Since the subject property is in the vicinity of Fairbanks ranch and will utilize our main access corridor, we have definite concern about this project and its potential impacts.

We are particularly interested in the analysis in the Draft EIR pertaining to Traffic Circulation. We note that the Draft EIR identifies potentially significant impacts to traffic movement at or near the intersection of San Dieguito Road and the project main access. The Draft EIR also anticipates that at project buildout the Level of Service (LOS) for San Dieguito Road from El Camino Real to points east of Derby Farms Road will be LOS D. The only mitigation measure proposed as a response to the stated potentially significant traffic impacts to San Dieguito Road, is a proposed condition for the tentative map requiring that improvements for turn lanes be provided on San Dieguito Road at the main entrance.

- 21 The Draft EIR lists in Table 4H-3, the Peak Hour Intersection Analysis, that the AM and PM levels of service for the El Camino Real @ San Dieguito Road will be LOS B

## RESPONSES

- 21 The DEIR and the accompanying traffic analysis (Appendix G, page 10) describes the existing level of service for the segment of El Camino Real between Via de la Valle and Half Mile Drive. Although not required as part of the traffic analysis for the project, the 1996 level of service for the intersection of El Camino Real and San Dieguito Road was LOS B in the AM peak hour and LOS C in the PM peak hour (Kimley-Horn 1996). In addition, the project is required to make fair share contributions to the widening of El Camino Real between Half Mile Drive and Via de la Valle. The widening project includes improvements to the intersection of El Camino Real and San Dieguito Road. The City of San Diego has an approved CIP project to improve this intersection and design studies are currently being initiated.

Mr. Bob Gentles  
City of San Diego  
March 13, 1997  
Page Two

## RESPONSES

at buildout conditions. The present levels of service at this intersection are not stated in the document, nor is the timing or financing program established for the necessary improvement of that intersection described. The Final EIR should include the missing information and justify why this project is not being required to contribute to the El Camino Real/San Dieguito Road intersection improvements, as appropriate mitigation.

22 Similarly, while the report acknowledges that the Del Mar Highlands Estates project will add a substantial number of vehicle trips to San Dieguito Road, the Draft EIR does not analyze the traffic impact to the nearest easterly intersection of Derby Farms Road. The San Dieguito Road/Derby Farms Road intersection is currently a severe traffic hazard, particularly to east bound traffic. Construction of a right turn lane is an identified capital improvement project on the City's list, but is unfunded. The Final EIR should analyze the San Dieguito @ Derby Farms Road intersection under existing condition and at project buildout, and include a mitigation requirement to either construct or at least contribute to an east bound right turn lane.

23 Finally, pertaining to traffic circulation, we have noted that the Vesting Tentative Map for the project (Figure 3-1) indicates an internal street that extends to the southern portion of the eastern boundary of the project, and appears to extend into the adjacent property. We have been told by City staff that this road may ultimately provide vehicular access to this other property, and could therefore funnel this additional traffic to the main northern access to Del Mar Highlands Estates at San Dieguito Road.

The Draft EIR Traffic Circulation section makes no mention of this road connection and its potential for additional traffic impacts, nor does any of the traffic analysis or projections reflect this potential. The Final EIR should discuss this traffic circulation linkage to the adjacent parcel, and analyze the possibilities for further traffic impacts to San Dieguito Road and other area streets such as Derby Farms Road.

24 In regard to the Draft EIR's analysis of Land Use impacts, more information is necessary to explain how property within the North City Future Urbanizing Area with base zoning that allows for a maximum of 38 dwelling units, can accommodate a project proposing a total of 172 units, without a "phase shift" vote of the citizens. The Draft EIR notes that the unit count is partially achieved by applying a "46 percent density bonus" for affordable housing. The Final EIR should state by what specific authority

22 The DEIR (see Figure 4H-3) and traffic analysis (Appendix G, Figure 6) shows the distribution of the project-generated traffic. As these figures indicate, Derby Farms Road would be used for emergency access only, and 404 daily trips and 40 peak hour trips are projected to use San Dieguito Road easterly of the project's northern access point. Therefore, a separate right-turn lane is not needed for project traffic at the intersection of Derby Farms Road and San Dieguito Road.

23 The project does not propose any development on the adjacent parcel. If development is proposed on an adjacent property, a separate traffic report would be required based on City of San Diego requirements to determine potential traffic circulation impacts.

24 As described on pages 11, 30-36, and 47 of the DEIR, development in the NCFUA can proceed pursuant to Council Policy 600-29 and the PRD Ordinance without approval of a phase shift by the citizens. The 46-percent density bonus for the creation of affordable housing (24 units) on the project site is based on the City Municipal Code Section 101.0307.6(B)(2) as noted on page 11 of the DEIR. Application of this code section allows for a density bonus if 10 percent of the units are for affordable housing. There is no requirement that all the bonus units be affordable units.

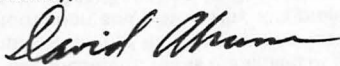
Mr. Bob Gentles  
City of San Diego  
March 13, 1997  
Page Three

this bonus is being granted. It should also indicate how it was determined that only 24 of the total 54 bonus dwelling units were to be in the affordable range while 30 units could be market rate.

- 25 We think it should also be noted that the concept of transferring off-site development density as proposed for Del Mar Highlands Estates, was rejected by the City Council in the recent case of the Stallions Crossing - Ranch project. The Land Use section of the Draft EIR does not provide full explanation as how the policies for the Future Urbanizing Area intended to preserve rural character prior to a phase-shift vote, may be overridden in the manner proposed by this project.

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to the Draft EIR for the Del Mar Highlands Estates project. Please include the Fairbanks Ranch Association on subsequent mailings, distributions and notifications regarding any aspect of this project.

Sincerely,



David J. Abrams, AICP  
General Manager  
FAIRBANKS RANCH ASSOCIATION

cc: Councilman Harry Mathis

## RESPONSES

- 25 Comment noted. However, the application of the PRD Ordinance to the project site and incorporation of the Shell parcel as part of the total PRD acreage is consistent with adopted NCFUA Framework Plan provisions and adopted City ordinances and Council policy.



San Diego County Archaeological Society  
Environmental Review Committee

February 17, 1997

To: Mr. Bob Gentles  
Land Development Review Division  
Development Services Department  
City of San Diego  
1222 First Avenue, Mail Station 501  
San Diego, California 92101

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Report  
Del Mar Highlands Estates  
DEP No. 94-0576

Dear Mr. Gentles:

I have reviewed the cultural resources aspects of the subject DEIR on behalf of this committee of the San Diego County Archaeological Society.

Based on the information contained in the DEIR and its Appendix F, we have the following comments:

- 26 (1) Archaeological sites SDI-5371 and SDI-5372/H are required to be tested as part of the mitigation program. We believe this is improper and a violation of CEQA. Testing, even though these sites are within portions of the parcel presently identified as open space, is necessary to provide the City and the public an adequate definition of the resources. Without it, there can be no full disclosure of the project's impacts prior to approval of the project, and therefore no assurance that the impacts will be properly mitigated. What if it proves necessary to take some positive action, such as capping, to adequately mitigate indirect impacts? Or if some aspect of the project as it is actually implemented turns out to directly impact one or both of the sites? The decision on mitigation will have been made "behind closed doors", between the City and the applicant and out of public view, exactly the situation CEQA is intended to avoid. Furthermore, the City's bargaining power to require adequate mitigation may also have been impaired by the prior approval of the project.
- 27 (2) Page 4-5 of Appendix F notes that curation of the archaeological collections from the project "is the responsibility of the developer." This notation does not appear in the DEIR. Please confirm that the developer is, in fact, to be responsible for the ultimate curation costs for the collections from this project.

RESPONSES

- 26 The history of CA-SDI-5371 provides substantial verification that this cultural resource site is not on the subject property and is not part of this EIR. The relationship of this cultural resource site to the project is as a resource area within a mile radius of the property. This site is located adjacent to a portion of the project that has been slated for open space which should provide protection from potential impacts. This site was not tested because it is on property that does not belong to the project applicant. The Final EIR has been revised to reflect this fact.

CA-SDI-5372/H is located within the project area and is situated within an area identified as an open space corridor (a portion of the Draft MSCP preserve). This site was initially identified in 1978 and referred to as not significant. Subsequent visits to this site in recent years have not produced surface indications that this site is substantively different than the 1978 findings. The recommendations for this site are the completion of a sampling/indexing program to collect archival information concerning the foundation/historic elements and to recover surface artifacts and complete no more than 10 shovel test pits and 3 one-meter sample units. Sampling will be focused on determining the extent, content, variability, and nature of the prehistoric-era materials at this site prior to preservation of the area as part of the habitat conservation area that will be deeded to the City of San Diego. One radio-carbon sample will be submitted for analysis if appropriate materials are recovered and a report which includes appropriate mitigation measures will be completed providing the results and interpretations of the field and archival efforts.

The applicant has agreed to implement mitigation measures recommended by the sampling/indexing report as reviewed and approved by the Manager of Development Services prior to the issuance of the final map.


- 27 The artifacts from this project are in the possession of Gallegos and Associates.

- 28 (3) Also on the subject of curation, we believe that, since the mitigation work performed in 1980 is being accepted as satisfying the mitigation requirements of the present project, that curation of those collections is also part of that mitigation. Please confirm the present location (presumably RECON) of the 1980 collections, and their condition. As part of the current project, did the project archaeologists inspect the 1980 collections? We believe that, as part of the mitigation for this project, they should be examined and, as necessary, rehabilitated to condition adequate for delivery to an archaeological repository. It seems unlikely that, after 16 or 17 years, that the collections are up to contemporary standards.

Other than the above issues, we concur with the impact analysis and mitigation recommendations proposed.

Thank you for affording us this opportunity to participate in this project's environmental review process.

Sincerely,

  
James W. Royle, Jr., Chairperson  
Environmental Review Committee

cc: Gallegos & Associates  
SDCAS President  
file

## RESPONSES

- 28 The collections made for this project in 1978 are presently located at the South Coastal Information Center at San Diego State University and have been since circa 1985. The condition of these collections is unknown; however, it is likely that they have been revitalized as part of an ongoing effort to elevate collections to curation standards of today.



San Diego Gas & Electric  
An Enova Company

P.O. BOX 1831 • SAN DIEGO, CA 92112-4150 • 619 / 696-2000

March 17, 1997

FILE NO.

Lawrence C. Monserrate, Principal Planner  
City of San Diego  
Development Services Department  
1222 First Avenue, MS 501  
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: DEL MAR HIGHLANDS ESTATES DRAFT EIR (DEP No. 94-0576)

Dear Mr. Monserrate:

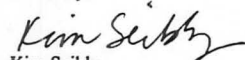
San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) appreciates the opportunity to review the above referenced Draft EIR. As stated in the Draft EIR, SDG&E has several facilities within the proposed project area. The subject of this response letter is Section 4.K, Public Facilities and Services.

29 The Significance of Impacts of Land Use in the Environmental Analysis section, page 49, refers to encroachments into SDG&E's easement being addressed in Section 4.K, Public Facilities and Services. However, there is no discussion of encroachments in Section 4.K. Since there is a mention of fencing being located within SDG&E's easement, it is important that this is addressed. Please address encroachments in SDG&E's easement in the Final EIR.

30 SDG&E's Property Management section is coordinating with the developer of the subject proposed project. Due to the number of overhead and underground SDG&E facilities within this area, SDG&E would like future homeowners to be aware of these facilities. In particular, the underground high pressure gas and fuel lines, since these are not visible. SDG&E would appreciate the City of San Diego's support of the developer coordinating with SDG&E to develop the appropriate disclosure language to inform future homebuyers of these facilities.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the subject Draft EIR. If you have any questions, please contact me at (619) 696-2415.

Sincerely,

  
Kim Seibly  
Associate Land Planner

## RESPONSES

29 Comment noted. The Final EIR has been revised to correct this reference to Section 4.L. where the discussion of encroachments into the SDG&E easement is discussed.

30 Comment noted.



CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**MEMORANDUM**

**RESPONSES**

DATE: March 18, 1997  
TO: Robert Gentles, Associate Planner, Environmental Analysis Section  
FROM: Shahin Moshref, Associate Engineer-Civil via Leonard Wilson, Senior Civil Engineer, Water Utilities Section  
SUBJECT: **Draft Environmental Impact Report - Del Mar Highlands Estates, DEP No. 94-0576**

We have completed our review of the subject Draft Environmental Impact Report dated February 3, 1997. The project is located south of San Dieguito Road, west of Subarea III of the North City Future Urbanizing Area, north of the Carmel Valley Community Planning area and east of Old El Camino Real. We have the following comments:

- 31 • Any construction of water and sewer facilities not addressed in this Environmental Impact Report will require additional environmental review.
- 32 • The locations and alignments of required water and sewer facilities cannot be ascertained until completion and acceptance of the water and sewer studies.
- 33 • The proposed Environmental Impact Report must address the construction of the proposed water and sewer facilities to be located within easements and open space.
- 34 • On page 191 in the "Water" section, delete the paragraph beginning "A Water Master Plan for the City..."
- 35 • In the fourth paragraph on page 192, delete the second sentence which begins "The City, through the Greater San Diego Clean Water Program,..."
- 36 • On page 192 delete the last paragraph on the page beginning "Existing water consumption due to..."

- 31 Comment noted.
- 32 Comment noted. However, the proposed Vesting Tentative Map includes alignments based on water and sewer studies conducted to date. Should the location of these alignments change, then additional environmental review would be required.
- 33 The impact analyses provided in the DEIR have addressed the water and sewer easements shown on the VTM (see Figure 3-1).
- 34-36 The Final EIR has been revised to reflect these comments.

Robert Gentles  
Page 2  
March 18, 1997

Thank you for the opportunity to review this draft environmental impact report. We look forward to reviewing the subsequent draft environmental impact report. If you have any questions or require additional information, please call me at 533-5150.

*Alicia Vaughan*  
for  
SHAHIN MOSHREF, P.E.

AV

cc: Afshin Oskoui, Deputy Director, Water and Wastewater Facilities Division  
Deborah Johnson, Development Project Manager, Process 2000



T & B Planning Consultants  
San Diego • Santa Ana

1600 COLUMBIA DRIVE, SUITE 200 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92108 TEL: 619-594-8600 FAX: 619-594-8603

JN 161-008

March 18, 1997

Mr. Lawrence C. Monserrate  
Principal Planner  
City of San Diego Development Services Department  
Land Development Review Division  
1222 First Avenue, MS 501  
San Diego, CA 92101

**RE: DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR DEL MAR HIGHLANDS ESTATES (DEP No. 94-0576)**

Dear Mr. Monserrate:

As part of public review required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), T&B Planning Consultants, Inc. (T&B) has reviewed the Draft EIR for the proposed project. T&B prepared the Del Mar Highlands Estates Design Guidelines and Development Standards for the proposed Planned Residential Development Permit (PRD) that is evaluated as part of the Draft EIR. Based on our knowledge of the proposed project, the following comments are provided for inclusion in the Final EIR:

- 37 1. Cover page: The first sentence states that the total project area is 398 acres. The total project area is actually 389 acres. The incorrect total acreage also appears on page 1.
- 38 2. Cover page: The third sentence states that the single-family market rate lots would range in size from approximately 9,000 square feet to approximately 63,000 square feet. Based on the PRD site plan, these lots will vary from approximately 13,000 square feet to approximately 100,800 square feet.
- 39 3. Page 4: To clarify the last sentence on page four under the heading "Landform Alteration/Visual Quality," no two-story elements will be permitted in the 50-foot setback area only for those lots that directly abut Gonzales Canyon. These lots include lot numbers 55-60, 68, 69, 80-83, 129, 130, and 137-142.
- 40 4. Page 5: The Del Mar Highlands Estates Design Guidelines and Development Standards call for low levels of lighting in keeping with the rural character of the community. The last sentence under the heading "Biology" states that "lighting adjacent to native areas shall be directed away from the habitat and appropriately shielded." This statement is true for the project's signage and entry illumination and lighting bollards that may be located on private driveways to ensure pedestrian safety. The Design Guidelines do not dictate, however, what type of lighting can be installed by private homeowners in their backyards, which in some instances, occur adjacent to native areas.
- 41 5. Page S-2: The size of the affordable housing lot referenced in the first sentence of the second paragraph should be changed from 5.25 acres to 5.35 acres.
- 42 6. Page S-11: Refer to comment no. 5 above regarding lighting at perimeter lots.

**RESPONSES**

37-39 The Final EIR has been revised to reflect these comments.

40 Comment noted. However, these lighting requirements have been included in the Draft EIR in order to minimize indirect impacts on adjacent habitat from lighting, and would be a condition of the PRD approval.

41 The Final EIR has been revised to reflect these comments.

42 See response 40 above.

**RESPONSES**

- 43 7. Page S-19: Item 5c on this page indicates that results of coordination with the Fire Department "shall be included within the Del Mar Highlands Estates Design Guidelines." For clarification, it should be noted that as a part of standard project review by the City of San Diego, each relevant City Department, including the Fire Department, has an opportunity to review project design and provide comments. Comments received from City Departments on the Del Mar Highlands Estates Design Guidelines were incorporated into the project design, as appropriate. Outside of the standard City review process, separate coordination with the Fire Department was not required nor requested of the applicant during preparation of the project's Design Guidelines.
- 44 8. Page S-21: The Del Mar Highlands Estates Design Guidelines are intended to address the architectural, landscape architectural and site development requirements of the project. It is therefore not appropriate to include items f and g listed on page S-21 of the Draft EIR in the Design Guidelines document. These two items would be more appropriately placed in the project's conditions of approval, if deemed necessary by the City.
- 45 9. Page 11: The range of residential lot sizes is approximately 13,000 square feet to 100,800 square feet. The text indicates an incorrect range of approximately 9,000 to 63,500 square feet. Also, the size of the affordable housing lot should be changed from 5.25 acres to 5.35 acres.
- 46 10. Page 20: All brush management would not be accommodated within zone 1 as implied in the Draft EIR. The intent of the project's brush management plan is to accommodate the majority of brush management in zone 1. All brush management would be accommodated in within zone 1 for those lots adjacent to Gonzolas Canyon. In other areas, small amounts of zones 2 and 3 would be cleared on graded manufactured slopes as shown on the brush management plan in the Del Mar Highlands Estates Design Guidelines and Development Standards. These slopes are proposed to be planted with native vegetation to simulate the adjacent native vegetation and would be planted to achieve the selective thinning requirement of zones 2 and 3.
- 47 11. Page 89: The following provides clarification regarding the proposed lot areas and floor areas for Del Mar Highlands Estates:

Lot Type/Numbers	Average Lot Size	Minimum Floor Area
Estate/143-148	1.55 acres	4,000 square feet
Small/96-142	17,800 square feet	3,000 square feet
Medium/42-95	29,000 square feet	3,000 square feet
Large/1-41	48,600 square feet	3,500 square feet

Regarding building heights, the standard is 30 feet on lots with rear yard setbacks of less than 50 feet, with the ability to vary the height to up to 35 feet for architectural features such as chimneys, entry features, etc. Building heights up to 35 feet are permitted on all dwelling units that have a rear yard setback of 50 feet or greater. For the estate lots (nos. 143-148), building heights are permitted up to 35 feet, regardless of the rear yard setback. For those lots that directly abut Gonzolas Canyon (including lot numbers 55-60, 68, 69, 80-83, 129, 130, and 137-142), no two-story elements are permitted in the 50-foot building setback area.

- 48 12. Page 95: See comment no. 10 above regarding brush management.

- 43 Comment noted.
- 44 Comment noted. These water conservation measures will be included in the vesting tentative map conditions of approval.
- 45 The Final EIR has been revised to reflect these comments.
- 46 This comment is generally consistent with the discussion of brush management provided on page 20 of the DEIR.
- 47 These comments are noted, and the EIR has been revised to be consistent with the cited table.
- 48 See response 46 above.

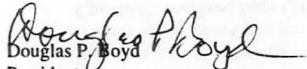


- 49 13. Page 131: See comment no. 10 above regarding brush management.
- 50 14. Page 223: First bullet - add "continuous" to the first sentence so that it reads ". . . without continuous supplemental water. . . ." With the addition of this word, the first bullet will be a direct quote from the Del Mar Highlands Estates Design Guidelines and Development Standards.
- 51 15. Page 223: Third bullet - replace the third bullet with the following, which is excerpted from the Del Mar Highlands Estates Design Guidelines and Development Standards: "Turf shall be accepted as ground cover within parkways only in areas where it relates to turf plantings in the front yard areas of individual residences, at project entries, and at the enhanced circulation nodes."
- 52 16. Page 223: Fourth bullet - replace the first sentence with the following, which is excerpted from the Del Mar Highlands Estates Design Guidelines and Development Standards: "Trees, shrubs, ground covers, and lawn areas at project entries and enhanced circulation nodes, along streetscapes, on private residential lots, and on interior landscaped slopes shall be permanently irrigated."
- 53 17. Page 225: See comment no. 8 above regarding items 6 and 7 listed on page 225 of the Draft EIR.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the City's environmental review process and for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

T&B PLANNING CONSULTANTS, INC.

  
Douglas P. Boyd  
President

DPB/tz:001

## RESPONSES

- 49 See response 46 above.
- 50-52 The Final EIR has been revised to reflect this comment.
- 53 See response 44 above.



March 19, 1997

# solana beach school district

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
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## RESPONSES

Mr. Bob Gentles  
Land Development Review  
City of San Diego  
1222 First Avenue, Mail Station 501  
San Diego, California 92101

Re: Del Mar Highlands Estates Draft Environmental Impact Report

Dear Mr. Gentles:

The Solana Beach School District (District) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above referenced Draft EIR. Representatives of the District and Pardee Development Company have met numerous times over the last year and a half attempting to develop a Mitigation Agreement for this project. The parties are close to finalizing this agreement which, if approved, will provide the necessary mitigation. It is anticipated that the final document will be executed prior to April 15, 1997, when the project is scheduled for review. However, the District continues to maintain its position that the City Council should not approve the project absent a fully-executed Mitigation Agreement.

For your information, the District expects the 172 units in the Del Mar Highlands Estates Project to generate 75 K-6 students. Using the costs of Carmel Creek Elementary School, which excludes class size reduction, the District will need approximately \$1,380,000 to house these students. This impact does not include portable classroom facility costs or central administrative facility costs.

54 The District also wishes to correct inaccuracies within the Draft EIR. The discussion of the project's impacts upon schools (commencing on page 199) states at page 205 that the project is - -

within the Mello-Roos and Community Facilities District No. 1 and, therefore, would pay an appropriate share of school fees. Participation in the Mello-Roos and Community Facilities District No. 1 would mitigate cumulative impacts as adequate facilities are constructed. Direct impacts would also be mitigated with contribution of Mello-Roos fees and when adequate facilities are constructed.

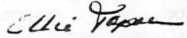
54 Comment noted and the Final EIR has been revised to reflect this comment.

While this is true that the project is within Community Facilities District ("CFD") No. 1, that CFD provides funding only for grades 7 through 12, and funding for elementary school facilities is not included; therefore, a mitigation agreement is imperative.

- 55 The final EIR should note that the project's impact upon the District is not mitigated, and that the project proponent is required to enter into an agreement with the District to provide the necessary funding for new school facilities.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need further information.

Sincerely,



Ms. Ellie Topolovac  
Superintendent

ET/lb

## RESPONSES

- 55 Comment noted. The Final EIR has been revised to indicate the mitigation of school impacts would be assured through an agreement between the project applicant and the District.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT  
FOR THE  
DEL MAR HIGHLANDS ESTATES  
PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT  
DEP No. 940576  
SCH No. 96-121073**

MARCH 27, 1997



# Executive Summary

## Del Mar Highlands Estates Project Background

The Del Mar Highlands Estates project site, containing 389 acres, is located in the western portion of the 12,000-acre North City Future Urbanizing Area (FUA). A single project applicant owns the site. In the late 1970s the applicant received approval from the City of San Diego for the Derby Farms project, including certification of a final environmental impact report (EIR). This was a 39-unit tentative tract map to develop the Del Mar Highlands Estates project site, but the project was not implemented. In 1994, a vesting tentative map (VTM) was filed with the City which would have allowed development of 38 estate residential lots on minimum 10-acre parcels. In 1995 a planned residential development (PRD) for Del Mar Highlands Estates was one of several components of the City Manager's Neighborhood 8A Compromise Plan (DEP No. 87-0211, 91-0899, and 94-0576). A final EIR was prepared for the Neighborhood 8A Compromise Plan that included Del Mar Highlands Estates, and a noticed public hearing was held on the project on October 31, 1995. No action was taken on any of the Compromise Plan project components. The current proposal is a 172-unit clustered PRD. The Shell property (described below) would continue to be a component of the PRD and would be preserved as open space.

In 1989, the City granted an agricultural permit to a lessee of the project site and adjoining parcels to the east. The City used a Mitigated Negative Declaration (EQD No. 86-0618) in conjunction with this permit. The project site has been in agricultural use since 1989.

## Project Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of Del Mar Highlands Estates are as follows: (1) to establish an estate residential community in a rural setting with 148 residential view lots for custom home development, with accompanying uses as permitted by the A-1-10 zone and the design guidelines for the proposed project, and to place a wildlife corridor (Gonzales Canyon) into permanent open space; (2) to provide 24 affordable housing units pursuant to City requirements; and (3) to create a development which conforms to City plans regarding Environmental Tier and open space goals in compliance with Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) efforts.

## Project Characteristics

The proposed project would involve the creation of 172 residential units (124 at 1 dwelling unit per 4 acres including 21 units transferred from the Shell parcel using a 0.46 density bonus for 24 constructed affordable housing units) and the extension of roadways and utilities into the project site to serve the new lots. This proposed density is based on the allowable PRD development for the project site (97 units) and 21 units transferred from the 84-acre Shell parcel, plus a 46 percent density bonus for constructing 24 affordable housing units. The 46 percent density bonus for affordable housing includes a 25 percent density bonus (30 units) and an additional 21 percent density bonus (24 units) per the City Municipal Code Section 101.0307.6(B)(2). The proposed lots would be irregularly shaped and would vary in size from approximately 0.25 acre to 2.62 acres.

An area of ~~5.355-25~~ acres at the western project boundary would be provided to accommodate the affordable housing units. This acreage meets the required criteria of the Housing Commission. The affordable units would be constructed by the project applicant. The San Diego Housing Commission, at a public hearing held on March 25, 1996, approved the 172-unit program for Del Mar Highlands Estates that includes 24 two-bedroom affordable housing units in three 8-plex buildings with parking.

The primary entrance road to the development (Private Driveway A) would be from San Dieguito Road along the northern site boundary. This would connect with a roadway (Private Driveway B) stretching across the site from west to east, terminating in a cul-de-sac in the southeast corner of the site. The sewer line and water line easements would be approximately 20 feet in width. The VTM also shows one detention/desiltation basin located on the north side of Gonzales Canyon in the central portion of the project site.

Approximately 223 acres of the 389-acre project site would remain as natural open space on the slopes above Gonzales Canyon. The project applicant is proposing to revegetate 36.7 acres of the approximately 77 acres of available disturbed agricultural land within this open space area with native coastal sage scrub vegetation. This revegetation will contribute to the value of Gonzales Canyon as a wildlife corridor as part of the MSCP. The remaining 40.3 acres of revegetation would be available to the applicant as mitigation for future development. Manufactured slopes, which vary in height, are shown on the site plan which are adjacent to the preserved open space. These slopes will be planted with native plant materials which are noninvasive.

Design guidelines have been proposed for Del Mar Highlands Estates in accordance with PRD regulations. The design guidelines include landscaping concepts, signage, lighting, architectural guidelines, development standards for the market and affordable housing, allowable uses, and a brush management plan. The project design guidelines and development standards vary to some extent between the 6 estate lots, 142 residential pads

in the central portion of the site, and 24 affordable housing units on a 5.8-acre lot at the western boundary. The Del Mar Highlands Estates Design Guidelines are included as Appendix B of this EIR.

The discretionary approvals necessary for the project include the proposed PRD permit, Framework Plan Amendment, VTM, and Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO) permit also must be approved by the City Council. The applicant would obtain a grading permit including an interim 4(d) habitat loss permit to grade the project pads, construct the proposed private roadways, and extend utilities into the project site. The coastal California gnatcatcher is on the federal list of threatened species. The successful continuance of this species is directly tied to continuation of its habitat (Diegan coastal sage scrub).

Approximately 33.88 acres of occupied habitat would be impacted by the proposed Del Mar Highlands project. This will require the issuance of a permit for the incidental taking of a federally listed threatened species prior to site grading. Thus, either approval of a project-level habitat conservation plan through Section 10(a) of the federal Endangered Species Act, approval of an interim take permit in accordance with the adopted 4(d) rule, or participation in the City's MSCP would be required to gain federal approval. It is the applicant's intent to process a multiple-projects 4(d) permit which includes Del Mar Highlands Estates and other related projects. During the public review period for the Draft EIR, the City of San Diego issued a multiple project Interim Habitat Loss (4d) Permit Findings which included the Del Mar Highlands Estates project and three other related projects. These projects include the Neighborhood 10 Precise Plan Amendment, the Neighborhood 10 School Site/Sewer Line, and the Neighborhood 8C Precise Plan. The findings were distributed to the public and wildlife agencies on February 28, 1997 for a 45-day review period ending on April 14, 1997. It is possible that Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act may also be used as a permitting option if it can be shown that a nexus exists between any federal action (in this case, the issuance of a 404 permit) and the taking of the gnatcatcher.

## Shell Parcel

The Shell parcel is located in the southern portion of Subarea III, on the south edge of Carmel Valley. The Framework Plan identifies approximately five acres as peripheral residential, which allows 7 dwelling units per gross acre, or a total of 35 units. The remainder of the 84-acre parcel is shown as Environmental Tier.

The primary project goal for the Shell parcel is to remove development rights from the parcel and preserve the parcel as part of the MSCP preserve system in perpetuity. Potential future development associated with this parcel would be restricted to possible

rights-of-way and construction associated with future Camino Santa Fe and State Route 56, respectively.

The 21 dwelling units which could be developed on the Shell parcel per the underlying zoning would be transferred to the Del Mar Highlands Estates project as part of the PRD approval and final map recordation process. The Shell parcel would be preserved as open space consistent with the City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program. The intent would be for the City to hold the Shell parcel in open space with the possible exception of rights-of-way required by the City for future potential development of the Camino Santa Fe or State Route 56 roadways and associated construction.

## **Significant Impacts and Proposed Mitigation Measures**

### **A. Land Use**

#### **Significant Impacts**

##### **1. Consistency with Existing Plans and Policies**

The proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates project would be consistent with PRD regulations and would generally comply with the City's land use goals, objectives, and recommendations. Furthermore, the proposed project would cluster development and dedicate open space land consistent with the Framework Plan Environmental Tier. No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

##### **2. Consistency with the Local Coastal Program**

Neither project site is within the Coastal Zone and neither would affect the North City Local Coastal Plan.

##### **3. Open Space**

The Del Mar Highlands Estates project is compatible with the City's equestrian plan. The project's design guidelines would implement the principles for development adjacent to significant natural areas as described in the Framework Plan and San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan. No significant impacts are anticipated.

##### **4. Resource Protection Ordinance and Council Policy 600-40**

The proposed project would exceed the encroachment allowance for RPO but would provide adequate on-site mitigation to reduce impacts to a level below significance.

## **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

### **1. Consistency with Existing Plans and Policies**

No mitigation is required for the Del Mar Highlands Estates PRD.

### **2. Consistency with the Local Coastal Program**

Mitigation measures are not necessary.

### **3. RPO and 600-40**

Mitigation measures are not necessary.

## **B. Hydrology/Water Quality**

### **Significant Impacts**

#### **1. Natural Drainage Modification**

The alteration of existing drainage patterns associated with proposed roadway and lot development could result in significant local change to the direction and velocity of on-site flows. Specifically, locally altered drainage patterns could result in erosion and/or undermining of stream channels and banks, potentially threatening adjacent vegetation. Such effects would only be expected on the higher reaches of the drainages, however. By the time flows reach Gonzales Canyon, they would be within established floodways. This would be aided by the presence of a detention basin located in the central portion of the site on the north side of Gonzales Canyon downslope from the proposed development.

Any increase in on-site runoff volumes associated with the proposed project is not considered significant on a direct, indirect, or cumulative basis due to its incremental nature. This conclusion is based on a detailed hydrologic analysis of the proposed project. Implementation of the detention basin will avoid or reduce all impacts related to drainage alteration below a level of significance.

Short-term construction impacts resulting in local erosion and sedimentation associated with on-site runoff are considered potentially significant, due to the amount of cut and fill associated with the proposed roadway and the potential for disturbance of up to approximately 166 acres, which represents the developable area of the site (lots plus roadways and internal slopes). Manufactured slopes and development would occur within and adjacent to on-site local drainages. These temporary impacts would be mitigated to below a level of significance by the following construction-related mitigation. Over the long term, however, downstream effects of the project are expected

to be an improvement over current conditions as routine and repeated grading associated with agriculture will cease.

## **2. Downstream Water Quality**

The proposed development of the project site has the potential to significantly impact water quality (both directly and cumulatively) in Gonzales Canyon and the San Dieguito River and Lagoon. The runoff of urban-generated pollutants is not considered significant (on a direct basis) due to the presence of existing regulatory controls and the anticipated incremental nature and extent of such pollutants.

## **3. Alteration to Floodwaters**

Potential direct and indirect project-related impacts from the alteration of floodwater directions, velocities, or volume would be reduced below a level of significance through the implementation of proposed design measures (i.e., detention basin).

## **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

### **1. Natural Drainage Modification**

Several short-term construction practices and project design components are required to mitigate the potentially significant hydrologic impacts associated with the project. These measures are described in detail in the EIR. Examples include requiring grading and other surface-disturbing activities planned to avoid the rainy season (i.e., November through March), use of erosion control measures (e.g., sandbags, matting, mulch, berms, hay bales, or similar devices) along all graded areas to minimize sediment transport, use of temporary desilting basins at all discharge points, hydroseeding and landscaping of graded and common areas with appropriate ground cover vegetation, postconstruction erosion control measures, use of applicable best management practices contained in the City and State *Best Management Practices to be Considered in the Development of Urban Stormwater Management Plan*, and long term maintenance of the detention basin.

### **2. Downstream Water Quality**

Potential water quality impacts related to erosion and siltation and discharge of construction-related contaminants would be mitigated below a level of significance by incorporating the anticipated design measures to be identified as part of the ongoing project hydrologic study (see Issue 1 above).

### **3. Alteration to Floodwaters**

The mitigation measures identified above for Issue 1 would reduce identified adverse (but not significant) impacts related to floodwaters.

## **C. Landform Alteration/Visual Quality**

### **Significant Impacts**

#### **1. Topographic Change**

Project-related landform alteration impacts for Del Mar Highlands Estates would be significant due to the extent of earthwork, the anticipated level of disturbance to 25 percent or greater slopes, and the maximum height and length of the manufactured slopes.

#### **2. Visual Quality**

The Del Mar Highlands Estates project would result in noticeable changes in views from many public vantage points and would represent a continuation of the suburban development in the vicinity of the San Dieguito River valley. The proposed development would change the rural character of the site to a suburban atmosphere similar to that of the existing development to the north and east. However, the project's design guidelines would implement the principles for development adjacent to significant natural areas which include Gonzales Canyon and the San Dieguito River valley. The impact to visual quality would therefore not be significant.

The loss of mature eucalyptus trees would be considered a significant but temporary visual impact, due to the large size and high local visibility of these trees. These potential impacts would be reduced below a level of significance through the measure identified below.

#### **3. Brush Management**

The selective thinning of native vegetation caused by implementation of a brush management program would alter the appearance of natural slopes adjacent to development, and the direct and cumulative effect of brush management would represent a potentially significant visual impact.

### **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

#### **1. Topographic Change**

Mitigation of significant landform impacts would require the modification of the proposed project design to (1) reduce grading requirements to 2,000 cubic yards or less per acre; (2) conform with RPO steep slope encroachment criteria; and (3) eliminate the major manufactured slopes. Incorporation of these measures into the project design would require substantial revision to the proposed project. These adverse effects comprise significant and unmitigable impacts of the Del Mar Highlands Estates project.

## **2. Visual Quality**

No mitigation measures are required for changes in views to roadways, Torrey Highlands Park, or the San Dieguito River Park.

Mature eucalyptus removed as a result of proposed project development shall be replaced with saplings at an approximate ratio of 1:1. Replacement trees may consist of any ornamental or native tree species approved by the City of San Diego, Development Services Department Director, which will grow to match the height and breadth of lost trees. The designated project mitigation monitor shall verify that the above-described replacement trees are included in the project landscaping plan and shall verify and document the planting of these trees to the Development Services Department Director as part of the site development.

## **3. Brush Management**

Hand thinning brush in zones 2 and 3, which has already been incorporated into the project, would mitigate visual impacts to below a level of significance.

# **D. Geology and Soils**

## **Significant Impacts**

### **1. Development Constraints**

There are no soil or geologic conditions observed or known to exist on the project site which would preclude development of the property. A number of potentially significant on-site geologic conditions exist, however, which will require mitigation. Specifically, these include seismically induced ground shaking and landsliding, unstable manufactured slopes, and unsuitable surficial deposits (e.g., expansive or unconsolidated soils). Mitigation of potential landslides could result in temporary removal of vegetation and grading/recompaction of soils beyond the proposed limits of disturbance under RPO.

### **2. Erosion Potential**

Future grading activities for Del Mar Highlands Estates for roadways and development pad "terraces" could result in potentially significant soil erosion and transport.

## **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

### **1. Development Constraints**

The following mitigation measures would be required for Del Mar Highlands Estates. These measures would reduce geology impacts associated with unstable geologic formations, soils, and geologic hazards to below a level of significance:



- a. Prior to grading permit issuance for any development on the project site (including proposed roadways), a project-specific soils and geological investigation shall be submitted to and approved by the City Engineering Department. The evaluation shall include, but not be limited to, an analysis of the following conditions in areas to be graded and developed: seismic loading, gross and surficial slope stability, landslide and mudflow potential, hydrostatic pressure potential, foundation suitability of soils, and soil expansion. The evaluation shall provide remedial grading and foundation design measures to mitigate any significant impact associated with the foregoing conditions including unstable soil, bedrock, groundwater, or seismic conditions.
- b. Grading and development plans shall be reviewed and approved by the Environmental Analysis Section (EAS) and the City Engineering Department to determine compliance with the remedial grading measures identified in the development-specific geotechnical reports. Geotechnical specifications shall be identified as mitigation measures on grading plans. Field monitoring by a qualified geologist would be required. Should additional resource impacts be identified during plan check or field monitoring, additional environmental review will be required to determine whether or not additional mitigation or revegetation is necessary.

## 2. Erosion Potential

The proposed project design guidelines described above, as well as mitigation measures identified in Section 4.B, Hydrology/Water Quality, and below, would reduce impacts associated with on-site erosion potential to below a level of significance for Del Mar Highlands Estates.

Prior to grading permit issuance for proposed on-site roadways and lot development, a site-specific erosion control and landscaping plan shall be submitted to and approved by the City Development Services Department, Development and Environmental Planning Division. This plan will include measures to mitigate erosion and transport both during and immediately after construction (e.g., sediment traps or detention facilities), as well as the provision of landscaping to provide short- and long-term erosion control. Specifically, the landscaping plan shall include long-term landscaping to control erosion from manufactured slopes, and a phased plan of erosion-resistant ground cover planting shall be prepared for graded areas which require installation within 30 days of completion of grading.

## **E. Biology**

### **Significant Impacts**

#### **1. Sensitive Species and Associated Habitats**

##### *Sensitive Habitats*

The direct impacts to 33.88 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub habitat would be considered significant. Project impacts to this coastal sage scrub (which supports approximately three pairs of coastal California gnatcatchers) would therefore be considered significant on both the local and regional level. Impacts to coastal sage scrub that is not currently occupied by the gnatcatcher are also considered significant.

Approximately 18 percent (6.656.5 acres) of the southern maritime chaparral on-site would be impacted, which is considered a significant impact.

Similarly, impacts to mule fat scrub (0.17 acre) would be considered significant based on the wildlife value.

##### *Sensitive Species*

Two out of the eight (25 percent) populations of Palmer's grappling hook would be either partially or totally impacted by the proposed project. Approximately 126 individuals out of the estimated 173 on-site (73 percent) would be directly impacted. The large amount of impact would be a significant cumulative impact.

Impacts to 33.88 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub that is considered occupied by the coastal California gnatcatcher is considered significant.

#### **2. Brush Management**

The project's impacts to biological resources (approximately 0.3 acre of coastal sage scrub) as a result of brush management for zone 3 would be considered significant.

#### **3. Long-term Conservation**

Development of the proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates project would not result in significant impacts to the MSCP covered plant species. Impacts to the California gnatcatcher and its associated Diegan coastal sage scrub habitat would be significant under federal criteria, as described above. No other MSCP covered species would be significantly impacted.

The proposed project (and draft MSCP) has set aside Gonzales Canyon as permanent open space and a linkage area or corridor for wildlife. It is the most logical connection

alternative between habitat to the south and east (McGonigle and Deer Canyons and Del Mar Mesa) with the San Dieguito Valley and Lagoon to the north and west.

Regarding the project as a whole, adverse impacts to wildlife movement and implementation of the draft MSCP preserve design would not be considered significant. The project as proposed sets aside a wildlife corridor and complies with the draft MSCP. It will provide approximately 220 acres overall toward preserve assembly and save representative examples of 20 MSCP covered species.

#### **4. Migratory Wildlife Species**

No significant adverse effects would result from project implementation.

### **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

#### **1. Sensitive Species and Associated Habitats**

The proposed site design for Del Mar Highlands Estates includes on-site open space consisting of 81.19 acres of gnatcatcher-occupied coastal sage scrub (nearly a 3:1 ratio of area preserved to area impacted). Additionally, 35.7 acres of southern maritime chaparral would be preserved on-site. Mitigation for the habitat impacts includes revegetation of 36.7 acres of the 77 acres of disturbed agricultural land with coastal sage scrub on the Del Mar Highlands Estates property. Areas previously used for agriculture on the western slopes of the property and in the bottom of Gonzales Canyon will be revegetated and preserved in open space. The remaining 40.3 acres would be available as mitigation for future projects. A revegetation plan has been developed which includes success criteria, a monitoring program, and a surety bond to ensure the creation of coastal sage scrub. Impacts to biological resources are considered to be mitigated below a level of significance.

The project design guidelines also include development standards for open space which include the following:

- Trails, although not included in the current project design, can be accommodated in the future in the open space area. Any trail located in the open space area shall not in the future be located to adversely affect areas supporting sensitive biological resources.
- The Design Guidelines shall reflect that the development of the individual lots abutting conserved habitat shall not permit large spotlight-type lighting directed into the conserved habitat. This shall not prohibit appropriate lighting for tennis courts, swimming pools, etc. so long as the lighting is directed toward the tennis court, swimming pool, etc. In addition, lighting from homes abutting conserved habitat shall be screened with vegetation to the extent appropriate that does not significantly

~~reduce the purpose of the lighting. Lighting at perimeter lots adjacent to the open space shall be selectively placed, shielded, and directed away from that habitat.~~

- Rear-yard fencing guidelines and wall standards for perimeter lots have been ~~shall be~~ developed and are included in the Design Guidelines.

## 2. Brush Management

The significant effects of brush management have been reduced by the proposed coastal sage scrub revegetation plan.

## 3. Long-term Conservation

As no significant adverse impacts are identified, no mitigation measures are required.

## 4. Migratory Wildlife Species

No mitigation measures are required.

# F. Cultural Resources

## Significant Impacts

### 1. Archaeological or Historical Impacts

#### *Significance Testing*

Eight cultural resource sites (CA-SDI-194, CA-SDI-293, CA-SDI-322, CA-SDI-685, CA-SDI-5369, CA-SDI-5370, CA-SDI-5373, and CA-SDI-5612) were previously tested for significance. Site CA-SDI-5370 was tested by Peter and Whitney-Desautels (1986) and determined to be not significant. The remaining seven sites (CA-SDI-194, CA-SDI-293, CA-SDI-322, CA-SDI-685, CA-SDI-5369, CA-SDI-5373, and CA-SDI-5612) also had data recovery programs completed to mitigate potential impacts of development. For sites mitigated of impacts through previous data recovery, no additional work is recommended. One newly recorded site, CA-SDI-13,094/H, was also tested and one locus (Locus B) was found to be significant.

Site CA-SDI-5371 has been determined to be outside the boundaries of the proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates VTM and, therefore, would not require testing for the project.

One ~~Two~~ previously-recorded sites (CA-SDI-5371 and -5372/H) has ~~have~~ not been tested for significance. ~~Sites not previously tested/excavated to determine significance under City of San Diego CEQA and RPO guidelines will need to be tested.~~

## Conclusion

Potentially significant impacts are ~~currently being assessed to two~~three sites (CA-SDI-5371, -5372H, and -13,094/H Locus B) within the Del Mar Highlands Estates project component. However, Site CA-SDI-5372 is within a designated open space area. Sites CA-SDI-5371 and CA-SDI-5372H will be tested and evaluated for significance prior to the issuance of a grading permit. BothAll three sites are considered potentially significant and unmitigated at this time. The implementation of the proposed mitigation will achieve a lowering of impact to below a level of significance.

## Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

### 1. Archaeological or Historical Impacts

Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the following mitigation monitoring and reporting procedures shall be completed. For site CA-SDI-13,094/H, only the habitation area (420 m<sup>2</sup> of Locus B) is identified as important under CEQA. Impacts to this localized habitation area can be mitigated to below a level of significance through (1) avoidance, capping, and placement of the 420 m<sup>2</sup> portion of CA-SDI-13,094/H Locus B within permanent open space deeded to the City; (2) completion of a data recovery program prior to construction grading; or (3) in concurrence with the City, a combination of capping, indexing the site through a sample excavation, and placement of deed restrictions to avoid direct or indirect impacts. Mitigation measure 3 assumes that the site will not be built on, that capping will not exceed a depth of six feet, and that utility lines or deep-rooted plants will not be placed within the primary site area. The exact location of this deposit needs to be professionally mapped prior to completion of mitigation measures. Mitigation of impacts through data recovery will follow the City of San Diego's 15 percent sample excavation requirement and will be conducted in approximately five percent phases. The excavation program will be structured to provide information to address the research questions of chronology, subsistence, trade and travel, environmental setting, and lithic reduction strategy. Additional specifics on the research questions are provided in Appendix F of the EIR.

CA-SDI-5372H is located within the Tentative Map area in an area that will be deeded to the City of San Diego as part of a natural open space corridor related to the Draft MSCP. There are no direct impacts identified within or adjacent to the recorded limits of this site. This resource area is identified as a light scatter of flaked lithic debris and the remnants of an historic-era cobble foundation. This site was not tested during previously completed work; however, survey level observations of the site indicate limited resource potential. The recommendation for this site is the completion of a sampling/indexing program which would provide sufficient information to place the historic and prehistoric portions of this site in context with the region prior to preservation in the open space area.

## G. Paleontology

### Significant Impacts

#### 1. Loss of Paleontological Resources

Grading for roadway construction and future development on the project site would have the potential for significant impacts to paleontological resources. These impacts could be mitigated below a level of significance as described below.

### Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

#### 1. Loss of Paleontological Resources

The following mitigation measures shall be a condition of approval of grading permits within the Del Mar Highlands Estates area and shall mitigate impacts to below a level of significance.

A program for the recovery of paleontological resources during grading and earthwork shall be implemented. This program will include the following steps:

- a. A qualified paleontologist and/or paleontological monitor shall be retained to implement the monitoring program. A qualified paleontologist is defined as an individual with a Ph.D. or master's degree in paleontology or geology who is a recognized expert in the application of paleontological procedures and techniques such as screen washing of materials and identification of fossil deposits. A paleontological monitor is defined as an individual who has experience in the collection and salvage of fossil materials and who is working under the direction of a qualified paleontologist.
- b. The qualified paleontologist shall attend any preconstruction meetings to consult with the excavation contractor. The requirement for paleontological monitoring shall be noted on the construction plans. The paleontologist's duties shall include monitoring, salvaging, preparing materials for deposit at a scientific institution that houses paleontological collections, and preparing a results report. These duties are defined as follows:
  - 1) Monitoring. The paleontologist or paleontological monitor shall be on-site during the original cutting of previously undisturbed areas of the sensitive formation to inspect for well-preserved fossils. The paleontologist shall work with the contractor to determine the monitoring locations and the amount of time necessary to ensure adequate monitoring of the project.

- 2) Salvaging. In the event that well-preserved fossils are found, the paleontologist shall have the authority to divert, direct, or temporarily halt construction activities in the area of discovery to allow recovery of fossil remains in a timely manner. Recovery is anticipated to take from one hour to a maximum of two days. At the time of discovery, the paleontologist shall contact the Environmental Analysis Section of the City of San Diego Development Services Department. EAS must concur with the salvaging methods before construction is allowed to resume.
  - 3) Preparation. Fossil remains shall be cleaned, sorted, cataloged, and then deposited in a scientific institution that houses paleontological collections (such as the San Diego Natural History Museum).
  - 4) Monitoring Results Report. A monitoring results report, with appropriate graphics, summarizing the results (even if negative), analysis, and conclusions of the above program shall be prepared and submitted to EAS within three months following the termination of the paleontological monitoring program.
- c. The project manager shall notify EAS staff of any preconstruction meeting dates and of the start and end of construction.
  - d. A report of findings, even if negative, shall be filed with EAS and the San Diego Natural History Museum prior to issuance of building permits.

It shall be a requirement of the project that the above mitigation measures be conditions the Del Mar Estate Highlands project. EAS shall verify this is a condition of the precise plan approval.

## **H. Traffic Circulation**

### **Significant Impacts**

#### **1. Regional Traffic Patterns**

Buildout of the proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates would result in potentially significant impacts to traffic movements at or near the intersection of San Dieguito Road and the project main access. In addition, Del Mar Highlands Estates may contribute to a cumulatively significant regional traffic impact at the El Camino Real/Derby Downs Road intersection. Finally, Del Mar Highlands Estates traffic would contribute to existing significant impacts to traffic flow on El Camino Real between Half Mile Drive and Via de la Valle and on Via de la Valle between El Camino Real (north of Via de la Valle) and San Andres Drive. Both project-specific direct and cumulative impacts would be reduced below a level of significance through the mitigation measures identified below.

## **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

### **1. Regional Traffic Patterns**

The following mitigation measures shall be included as a condition of the tentative map and in the final project design specifications submitted to the City of San Diego Engineering Department. The project Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program shall require verification and documentation that these measures have been incorporated into the final design prior to approval of the proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates tentative map.

- a. At the intersection of San Dieguito Road and the northern main access point, San Dieguito Road shall be modified to provide both westbound-to-southbound left-turn and eastbound-to-southbound right-turn lanes.
- b. The project applicant shall provide fair share contributions for a signal to mitigate traffic impacts at the El Camino Real/Derby Downs Road intersection.
- c. The project applicant shall provide fair share contributions to widen El Camino Real to four lanes between Half Mile Drive and Via de la Valle.
- d. The project applicant shall provide fair share contributions to widen Via de la Valle to four lanes between San Andres Drive and El Camino Real (north of Via de la Valle).

Implementation of the mitigation measures indicated above will reduce potential traffic impacts associated with buildout of the proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates project to below a level of significance.

## **I. Air Quality**

### **Significant Impacts**

#### **1. Conformance with Regional Air Quality Strategies**

Because dust control during grading operations would be regulated in accordance with the rules of the San Diego Air Pollution Control District and the regulations of the City of San Diego Land Development Ordinance, and since construction would be a one-time, short-term activity, air quality impacts due to construction of the proposed project would not be significant.

In accordance with the City's significance thresholds described previously, there would be no significant air quality impacts since the proposed project would not create level of service E or F conditions at intersections.



The proposed project would be consistent with the Regional Air Quality Strategies and would not create direct traffic impacts to the surrounding street system provided that the recommended road improvements are constructed. Therefore, direct air quality impacts would not occur if the proposed project were implemented.

## **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

### **1. Conformance with Regional Air Quality Strategies**

No mitigation is required.

## **J. Noise**

### **Significant Impacts**

#### **1. Incompatible Noise Levels**

The proposed project would not result in significant long-term noise impacts on the project site or adjacent development.

## **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

### **1. Incompatible Noise Levels**

No mitigation measures are necessary.

## **K. Public Facilities and Services**

### **Significant Impacts**

#### **1. Schools**

The proposed project will add an estimated 74 students to the elementary school serving the project site. Given the crowded nature of the schools expected within the project development time frame, significant adverse impacts are anticipated until a new elementary school is constructed. The additional 63 students anticipated to join the junior and senior high school system as a result of the project also comprise a significant impact to an already overburdened district. Mitigation for these significant impacts is identified below.

#### **2. Water**

The proposed project would decrease on-site water consumption by replacing the current agricultural operations with residential development. This is not an adverse impact.

### **3. Sewer**

The City currently has no plans to construct new water facilities or modify existing facilities in the area. The applicant would be responsible for extending utility lines, the financial burden of which would therefore not fall on the City. Additional sewage flow generated by the small number of units would be incremental and is expected to be a less than significant burden to the system on a project-specific level.

### **4. Parks and Recreation**

Project residents would be between 0.5 and 6 miles from neighborhood and community parks. Available (e.g., Torrey Pines and Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve) and planned (i.e., San Dieguito River Park) resource-based parks are considered sufficient to meet or exceed the needs of proposed project residents. Existing neighborhood and community parks in the area are not adequate to serve new development. This is a potentially significant impact.

### **5. Law Enforcement**

Development of the proposed project would not significantly impact the ability of the San Diego Police Department to provide adequate law enforcement services (with response times of seven to eight minutes). However, there is a potential for significant adverse impacts on emergency access due to the controlled (gated) entrances/exits. As indicated previously, the north access gate is proposed to be staffed 24 hours a day while the east access is proposed to be operated by emergency personnel using a master code, key, or card system.

### **6. Fire Protection**

Fire Department response time to the project would be acceptable for the majority of the project site (under six minutes), except for the westernmost lots (Lots 143 to 148) where response time is projected to be approximately 6.8 minutes. Additionally, access to Lots 143 to 148 is via a dead-end roadway which exceeds 750 feet. These are potentially significant impacts.

It is currently unknown whether adequate water supplies would be available to fire fighters. Again, this issue relates particularly to the isolated lots (143 through 148), as there is a greater potential for distance from hydrant hookups along the street.

Although response time to the project is generally projected to be within acceptable limits, there is a potential for significant adverse impacts on emergency access due to the controlled (gated) entrances/exits. As indicated previously, the north access gate is proposed to be staffed 24 hours a day while the east access is proposed to be operated by emergency personnel using a master code, key, or card system.

## 7. Solid Waste

Although project construction would result in the generation of recyclable construction wastes, this waste generation would be in regionally less than significant quantities. Over the long term, the project would have ongoing significant direct and cumulative impacts on solid waste disposal due to the limited landfill capacity in the region.

## Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

### 1. Schools

Prior to the issuance of any building permit for any residential dwelling unit, the applicant shall participate in mitigation through implementation of School Agreement (grades K-6) and the participation in a Mello-Roos Community Facilities District (Mello-Roos) (grades 7-12). Prior to the issuance of any building permit for any residential unit, these fees shall be established through a School Agreement with the Solana Beach Elementary School District and the participation in a Mello-Roos with the San Dieguito Union High School District. ~~The Del Mar Highlands Estates project is within Mello-Roos and Community Facilities District #1 and, therefore, would pay an appropriate share of school fees. Participation in Mello-Roos and Community Facilities District #1 would mitigate cumulative impacts as adequate facilities are constructed. Direct impacts would also be mitigated with contribution of Mello-Roos fees and when adequate facilities are constructed.~~

### 2. Water

Mitigation measures beyond the required development and phasing of water facilities would not be required.

### 3. Sewer

Mitigation measures beyond the required development and phasing of sewer facilities would not be required.

### 4. Parks and Recreation

The developer shall pay to the City the development's fair share costs in providing population-based parks to serve future residents (i.e., park fees).

### 5. Law Enforcement and Fire Protection

In order to mitigate potentially significant impacts to public services (police/fire) and minimize emergency response times to future on-site residences, the following requirements will be incorporated into the design guidelines for Del Mar Highlands Estates:

- a. Large, clearly legible address numbers will be provided at the street.
- b. Security entrances will either be staffed 24 hours a day or a security gate code, key, or card will be provided to the Police and Fire Departments. Emergency access shall be reviewed and approved by the Fire Department prior to project approval.
- c. The developer shall coordinate with the Fire Department to ensure that road widths and turning radii are adequate for all roads and that project fire hydrants are optimally located and meet all City and Fire Department standards. The results of this coordination shall be included within the Del Mar Highlands Estates Design Guidelines and tentative map.
- d. Residential fire sprinklers will be required for any structure built on Lots 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, and 148.

## **6. Solid Waste**

No mitigation is required for the proposed project; however, it should be noted that all City projects must comply with the City's recycling program.

# **L. Public Safety**

## **Significant Impacts**

### **1. Electromagnetic Health Hazards**

Any project-related activities conducted within the described on-site SDG&E easement could potentially result in safety impacts related to the noted pipelines. However, SDG&E has strict encroachment requirements for SDG&E easements. Therefore, no impacts to gas or fuel pipelines are anticipated from implementation of the proposed project.

### **2. Hazardous Materials**

No significant impacts are anticipated.

### **3. Emergency Vehicle Access**

The potential slowing of access for emergency vehicles entering from Derby Farms Road would be a significant but mitigable impact of constructing a gated community.

## Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

### 1. Electromagnetic Health Hazards

No mitigation is required provided that all project-related activities comply with existing SDG&E standards regarding easement encroachment.

### 2. Hazardous Materials

No mitigation is required.

### 3. Emergency Vehicle Access

It shall be a condition of the PRD that Police and Fire Department personnel shall be given the means to access the community rapidly (key, code, card) so that no significant delay is incurred should they require entry through the Derby Farms gate.

## M. Water Conservation

### Significant Impacts

#### 1. Water Use

Because water usage would be decreased by up to an anticipated 74 percent (to 77,700 gallons per day), implementation of the proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates project would not have a significant adverse impact on city water supplies.

## Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

### 1. Water Use

Although significant project-level effects were not assessed based on anticipated water use rates for Del Mar Highlands Estates development, the following mitigation measures shall be incorporated ~~as noted below into project design guidelines to address cumulative water usage concerns.~~

- a. Limit grading in areas where no construction is proposed; thereby reducing the need for planting and irrigation of graded areas. (landscaping plans)
- b. Provide integrated soil amendments in lifts of low clay content soil in landscaped areas to improve infiltration. (landscaping plans)
- c. Reduce runoff potential from landscaped areas by utilizing berming, raised planters, and drip irrigation systems. (landscaping plans)

- d. Install soil moisture override systems in all common irrigation areas to avoid sprinkling when the ground is already saturated. (landscaping plans)
- e. Identify in the plant materials list in the project design guidelines whether or not plants are native or naturalize easily and incorporate a list of local California sources for native plants. (landscaping plans)
- f. Incorporate low-flush toilets, low-flow faucets, and timers on sprinklers (including nighttime watering) into project design. (building permits)
- g. Provide information regarding water conservation measures to new residents at the time of lot purchase. (certificate of occupancy)

## **N. Natural Resources/Agriculture**

### **Significant Impacts**

#### **1. Conversion of Agricultural Land**

No significant direct impacts to agricultural use or potential are anticipated as a result of proposed project implementation. This conclusion is based on a number of factors, including the lack of prime farmland on Del Mar Highlands Estates, very limited areas of prime farmlands on the Shell parcel, lack of agricultural preserves, the fact that local agriculture is not regionally significant, and the presence of numerous limiting factors for agricultural production (e.g., topography and sensitive habitats).

#### **2. Mineral Resources**

The project site has unknown potential for aggregate mineral deposits. The most likely location for occurrence of such deposits is the alluvium in Gonzales Canyon. Any potential value associated with on-site mineral resources would be lost due to the proposed project, which places these areas into open space in perpetuity. This is not considered significant, however, due to the generally low potential assigned to on-site aggregate mineral development. This conclusion is based on the relatively small extent of on-site alluvial materials, the low unit value of aggregate minerals, and the presence of sensitive habitats (as described above).

### **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

#### **1. Conversion of Agricultural Land**

No mitigation is required for direct impacts to agricultural use or potential from the Del Mar Highlands Estates project.

## **2. Mineral Resources**

Because no significant impacts to mineral resources were identified, no mitigation is required for Del Mar Highlands Estates.

# **Project Alternatives**

## **A. No Project Alternative**

The project site would remain essentially in its existing condition, utilized primarily for agricultural production. The significant impacts associated with project implementation and the potentially significant cumulative impacts of proposed and approved developments in the area would not occur under this scenario. These impacts include potential direct and indirect impacts to sensitive biological habitat, landform alteration, loss of mature trees, paleontological resources, cultural resources, runoff and erosion patterns, traffic circulation, public facilities and services (schools, parks, fire, and police services), cumulative water supply (conservation), and public safety.

On the other hand, this scenario would result in the continued agricultural use of over half of the project site, including portions of Gonzales Canyon. This existing land use is dusty and noisy, consumes large amounts of water, and prevents the reestablishment of wildlife habitat and wildlife movement. It results in erosion, sedimentation, use of pesticides and herbicides, and related water quality impacts. This scenario would not facilitate the establishment and enhancement of the Environmental Tier and the MSCP wildlife habitat and corridor in Gonzales Canyon and the connection of Gonzales Canyon to San Dieguito River valley, which would occur with the proposed project. The affordable housing units provided by the proposed project would also not be available to the market.

## **B. A-1-10 Rural Cluster Alternative**

One of the development alternatives allowed on the project site under the adopted Framework Plan, its current Future Urbanizing Area land use designation, and existing A-1-10 zoning is to develop the property under the City's Rural Cluster Development guidelines. This would allow development of the site according to the density of the applicable zone, but clustered to promote more efficient land utilization. This alternative would develop 37 lots clustered in the northeastern corner of the property, with the remainder of the project (Lot 38) undevelopable unless a phase shift occurs, changing its land use status from a future urbanizing area to a planned urbanizing area. Agricultural use would most likely continue in the agricultural permit areas within Lot 38. Access to the site would be provided from the east via Derby Farms Road.

Significant landform alteration would be substantially reduced with the implementation of this alternative. Development would be primarily located on the previously farmed mesa tops which would avoid nearly all of the impacts to biological resources. Although impacts to landform alteration/grading and biological resources would be reduced, the impacts would remain significant. Other mitigated impacts of the proposed project would be further reduced by implementation of this alternative. Cumulative impacts related to the addition of project traffic to existing queues occurring at the intersections of El Camino Real/San Dieguito Road and San Dieguito Road/Derby Farms Road, increased traffic through the intersection of El Camino Real/Derby Downs Road, solid waste disposal, and water conservation could also occur.

## **Cumulative Impacts**

### **A. Significant Impacts**

Although the proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates project is consistent with the adopted traffic master plans and phasing plans applicable to the subregion, the cumulative traffic impacts to Interstate 5 are considered regionally significant and unmitigable. Cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts are not significant because all of the project components would be required to comply with all National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System requirements. Cumulative impacts concerning air quality, landform alteration, biology, and natural resources/agriculture are considered significant and unmitigated.

### **B. Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

No other mitigation is possible within the currently proposed project design. However, alternatives to the proposed project that would reduce the project's contribution to these cumulative impacts are discussed in Chapter 7 of the EIR.



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A:	Notices of Preparation, Responses, and Scoping
B:	Del Mar Highlands Estates Design Guidelines
C:	Storm Drain Report for Del Mar Highlands Estates (Project Design Consultants)
D1:	Pacific Soils geotechnical report
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E1:	Biological Resources Technical Report for Del Mar Highlands Estates (Sweetwater Environmental Biologists, Inc.)
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E3:	Del Mar Highlands Estates Revegetation Plan (RECON)
F:	Archaeological Survey Report for Del Mar Highlands Estates (Gallegos and Associates)
G:	Traffic Report for Del Mar Highlands Estates (Urban Systems Associates)
H:	Technical Acoustical Study for Del Mar Highlands Estates (Giroux & Associates)

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### A. Project Components

This draft environmental impact report (EIR) has been prepared according to the requirements of the City of San Diego and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended. It is an informational document intended for both the decision maker and the public and, as such, represents relevant information concerning the Del Mar Highlands Estates project. This EIR will address the Del Mar Highlands Estates Planned Residential Development (PRD) and Vesting Tentative Map (VTM) in Subarea III of the North City Future Urbanizing Area (FUA). The PRD also includes the open space preservation and transfer of development rights from the 84-acre Shell parcel, which is zoned A-1-10 and also located within Subarea III. Development of the Del Mar Highlands Estates property with clustering per Council Policy 600-29 (with a Planned Residential Development), could accommodate development based on one dwelling unit per four acres. The project addressed in this EIR would transfer all future development rights from the Shell parcel to Del Mar Highlands Estates. Twenty-one (21) dwelling units from the Shell parcel would be transferred to Del Mar Highlands Estates with the parcel being preserved as open space. This open space area could be utilized by Caltrans for State Route 56 should the alignment occur within the Shell parcel.

This EIR has been prepared to analyze the specific environmental issues related to the proposed project components that were identified by the Environmental Analysis Section (EAS) of the City of San Diego.

### B. User Guide to the EIR

The following potentially significant issues should be addressed in the EIR: land use, hydrology/water quality, landform alteration/visual quality, geology and soils, biology, cultural resources, paleontology, traffic circulation, air quality, noise, public facilities and services, public safety, natural resources/agriculture, water conservation, and cumulative effects. The Notice of Preparation, including associated responses, is included in

Appendix A of this document. For the reasons described in Section 5.C, not all of these issues will be discussed at the same level of detail.

The requirements described in the State CEQA Guidelines, Title 14, Article 9, of the California Administrative Code, were followed in the preparation of this EIR. A summary of the proposed action is provided in the Project Description section. In accordance with Section 15125, general descriptions of the existing environmental setting for the project site locales are provided in Chapter 2 of this EIR. Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the proposed project. Each of the project's potentially significant environmental impacts are presented in Chapter 4. For each major topic under analysis, a discussion is presented of the existing physical and regulatory conditions; followed by issue identification, potential impacts, identification of the significance of the impacts, and mitigation measures when necessary. Significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the project is implemented are identified in Chapter 5, as are growth-inducing effects and effects found not to be significant. Cumulative impacts are analyzed in Chapter 6. A description of project alternatives is presented in Chapter 7. The EIR preparation staff, contacts made during the EIR preparation process, and references cited are listed in Chapters 8, 9, and 10, respectively. Technical and supporting materials are included as appendixes, as outlined in the Table of Contents.

Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code requires a public agency to "adopt a reporting and monitoring program for the changes to the project which it has adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment." The purpose of this program is to ensure compliance during project implementation. Mitigation monitoring programs should, at minimum, identify the following: the entity responsible for monitoring the program, what exactly is being monitored and how, what schedule is required to provide adequate monitoring, and what identifies the monitoring as complete.

Mitigation measures recommended in this EIR have been prepared to ensure ease of monitoring as well as feasibility of monitoring. The mitigation monitoring program is detailed in each issue section.

# Chapter Two

## Environmental Setting

### A. Del Mar Highlands Estates

The Del Mar Highlands Estates project site is located on 389 acres in the city of San Diego (Figures 2-1 and 2-2). It is south of the San Dieguito River valley, west of the Senterra residential development and the remaining undeveloped portion of Subarea III of the North City FUA, north of the Carmel Valley community planning area, and east of El Camino Real (Figure 2-3).

Regional access to the site is provided by Interstate 5 (I-5), approximately 0.75 mile to the west. Access to the site from I-5 is obtained by following Via de la Valle east to Old El Camino Real south. In addition to this approach, the site may be accessed via San Dieguito Road to Derby Farms Road.

The topography of the project site ranges from approximately 40 feet above mean sea level (MSL) at the northwestern corner to approximately 322 feet above MSL in the northeastern corner of the site (Photograph 2-1). A mesa traverses the northern portion of the site and Gonzales Canyon traverses the southern portion of the project site in an east-west direction. Approximately 4.0 miles northeast of the project site, Black Mountain reaches an approximate elevation of 1,550 feet above MSL and can be seen for miles in all directions. The Pacific Ocean is located 2.3 miles to the west and can also be seen from the project site. The project site is located within the San Dieguito hydrographic unit. Runoff from the northern edges of the project site drains directly into the San Dieguito River. The remaining majority of the project site drains through Gonzales Canyon to the San Dieguito River.

The majority of the project site (approximately 195 acres) is highly disturbed and in agricultural use (truck crops). The remaining acreage includes disturbed and undisturbed native habitat (see Photograph 2-1). Several dirt roads traverse the site. San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) has a 150-foot-wide easement and two 12-kilovolt rights-of-way which cross the western portion of the site. The 150-foot easement contains high-power overhead transmission lines, a high-pressure gas line, and buried fuel pipelines. A trunk

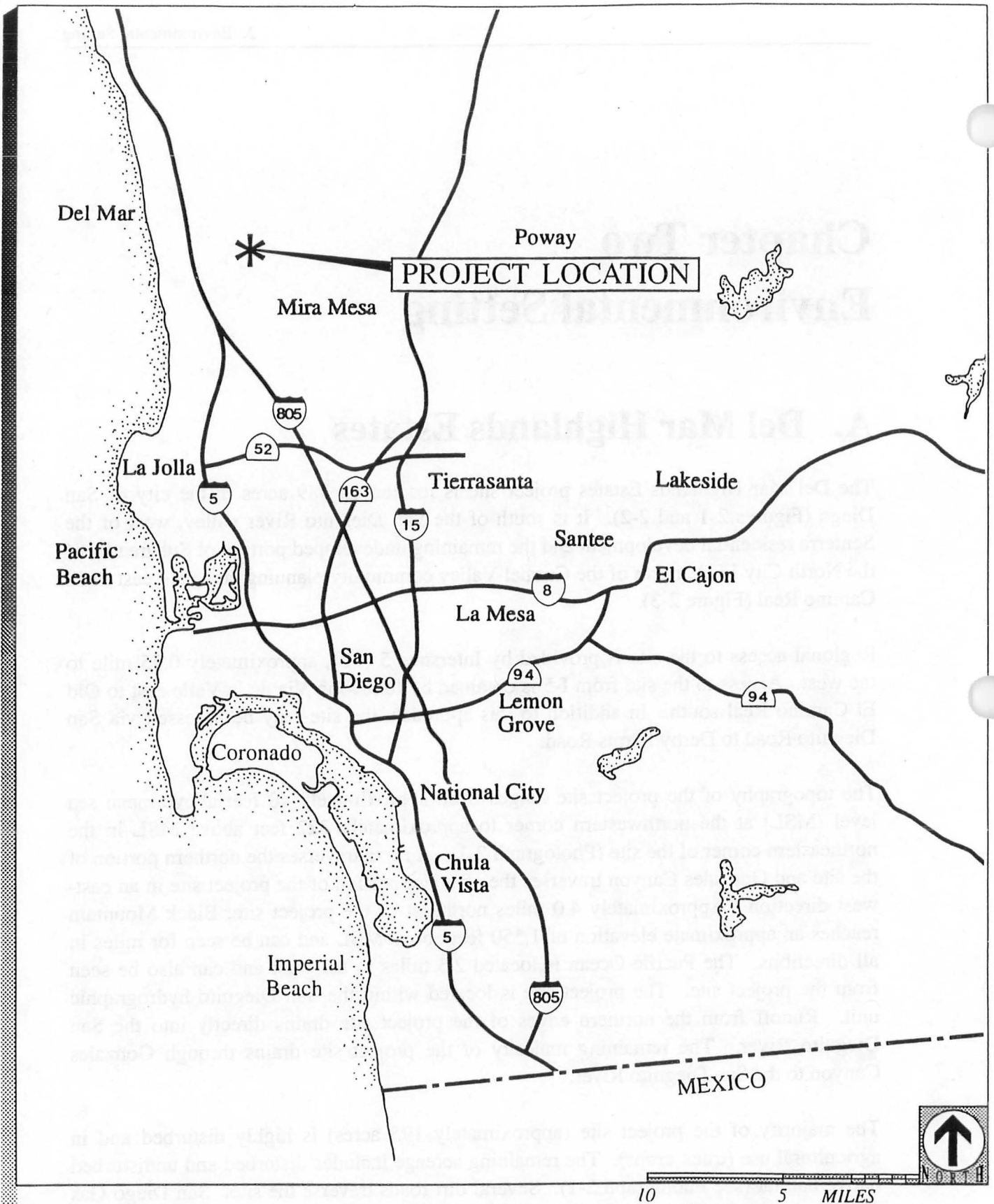


FIGURE 2-1

Regional Location of the Project



sewer line easement also traverses the site within Gonzales Canyon. Water lines have been extended on-site to serve the existing agricultural use of the property.

Approximately 195.9 acres of the site have been disturbed by agriculture, primarily tomato cropping, and another 12.8 acres support ruderal vegetation. Other non-native plant associations include eucalyptus woodland (4.1 acres) and non-native grassland (1.0 acre). On steep slopes and drainages, native vegetation persists, although disturbed by dirt roads in some areas. Diegan coastal sage scrub covers about 119.9 acres, with southern cactus scrub (3.6 acres), southern maritime chaparral (38.9 acres), scrub oak chaparral (2.0 acres), southern sycamore riparian woodland (6.6 acres), and mule fat scrub (4.2 acres) also present.

Surrounding land uses include undeveloped land, agriculture, large-lot single-family residences, and equestrian activities. Additional tomato farming is conducted on the uplands north of Gonzales Canyon and east of the project site. Horse ranches are located in Gonzales Canyon east and west of El Camino Real, north of the site, and southeast of the site. Some single-family residences and mobile homes are located south of the project site and just east of Old El Camino Real. Single-family residential developments in the Carmel Valley community planning area (Neighborhoods 7 and 4A) are located on the southern slopes of Gonzales Canyon south of the project site. Two country clubs are to the north of the site. The Senterra residential development is adjacent to the site on the east, extending northeast. A church, Torrey Highlands park, and Torrey Pines High School are to the south.

## **B. Shell Parcel**

The Shell parcel includes approximately 84 acres located in the south-central portion of Subarea III of the North City FUA. The northern edge of the site abuts the area where Carmel Valley divides into McGonigle Canyon and Deer Canyon. The western two-thirds of the site is south of Carmel Valley, while the remaining one-third is south of Deer Canyon. The southern boundary of the site is located approximately one-half mile north of Shaw Valley, and Del Mar Mesa is located approximately one-third mile to the east of the site.

I-5, approximately 2.5 miles to the west, provides regional access to the site. Access to the parcel site from I-5 is obtained by following State Route 56 (SR-56) to Carmel Valley Road east.

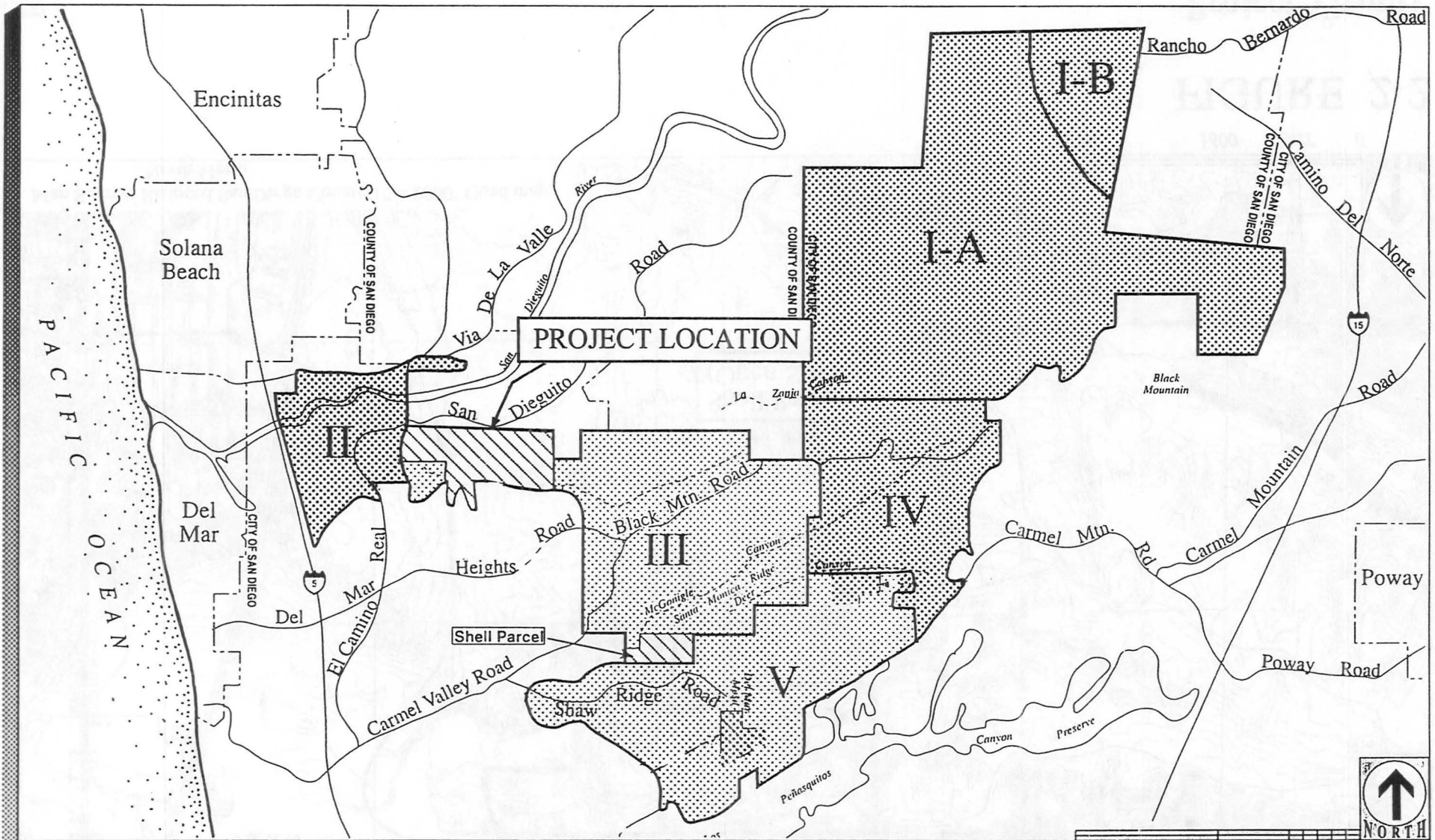
On-site elevations for the Shell parcel vary between 140 feet above MSL in the north-central portion of the parcel to 320 feet above MSL in the southern sector of the parcel. This open space parcel abuts agricultural fields within Carmel Valley and contains southeasterly trending finger canyons which contain agriculture along the drainage floor.

The primarily natural southerly slopes show trails and dirt roads to some extent. The remaining western section of the parcel site lies within undisturbed open space area. The site drains into Carmel Valley and from there into Los Peñasquitos Lagoon.


Twelve vegetation types occur on-site; 10 of these are native and 2 are non-native habitats. Primary habitats located within the parcel consist of southern mixed chaparral, chamise chaparral, Diegan coastal sage scrub, and agriculture. Four of the habitats are considered sensitive by responsible state and federal agencies; including mule fat scrub and three varieties of Diegan coastal sage scrub.

The Shell parcel has a small amount of agriculture intruding from the north associated with fields within the alluvial floodplain of Carmel Creek. A farmhouse and ancillary farm structures and amenities (e.g., a well, a pond) are located immediately north and northeast of the site. Just northwest of the site is the 427-unit single-family residential development of Vintage at Palacio del Mar. These detached homes stretch along the southern bank of Carmel Valley.



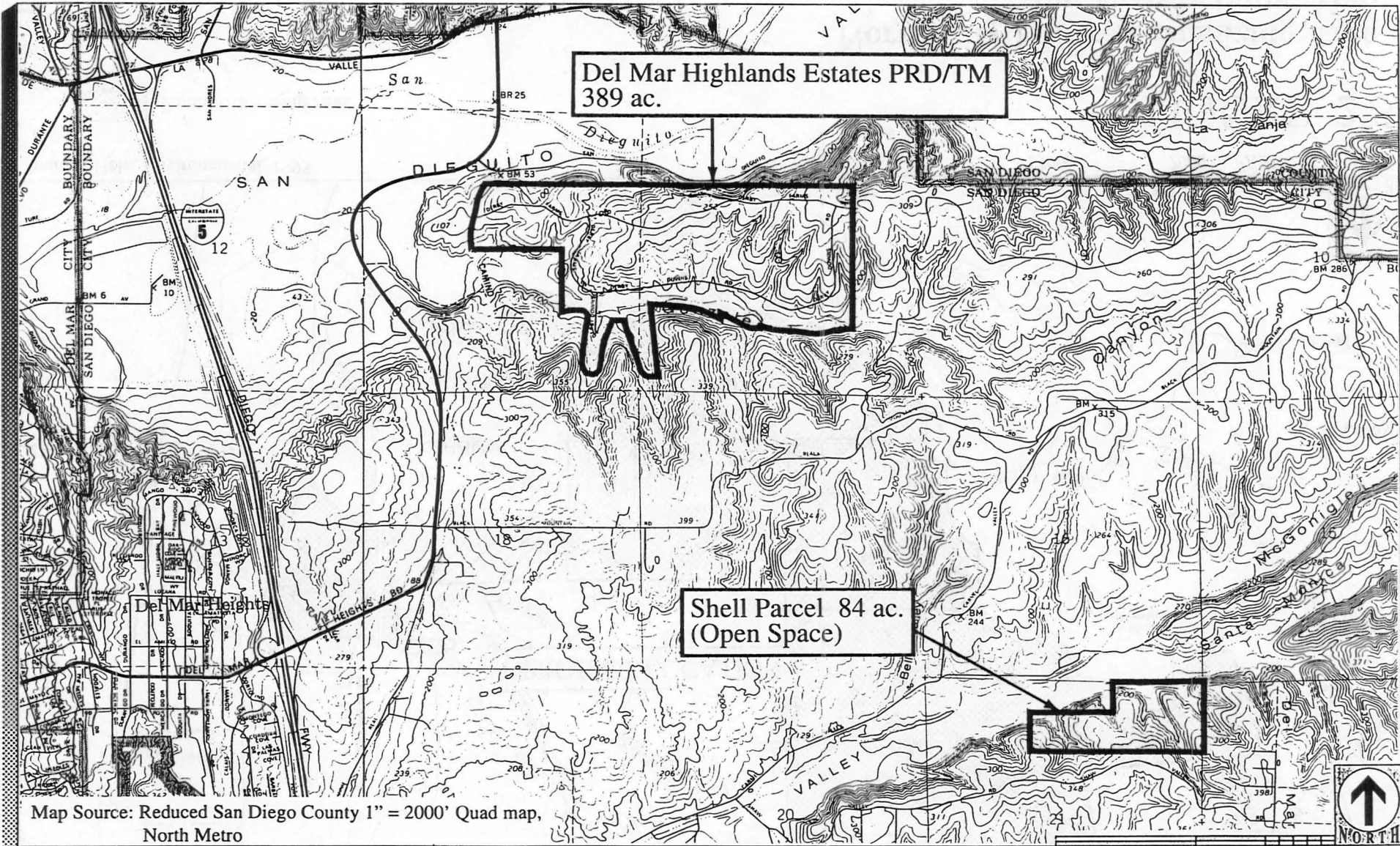


Source: Helix Environmental 1995

 Future Urbanizing Area

**FIGURE 2-3**

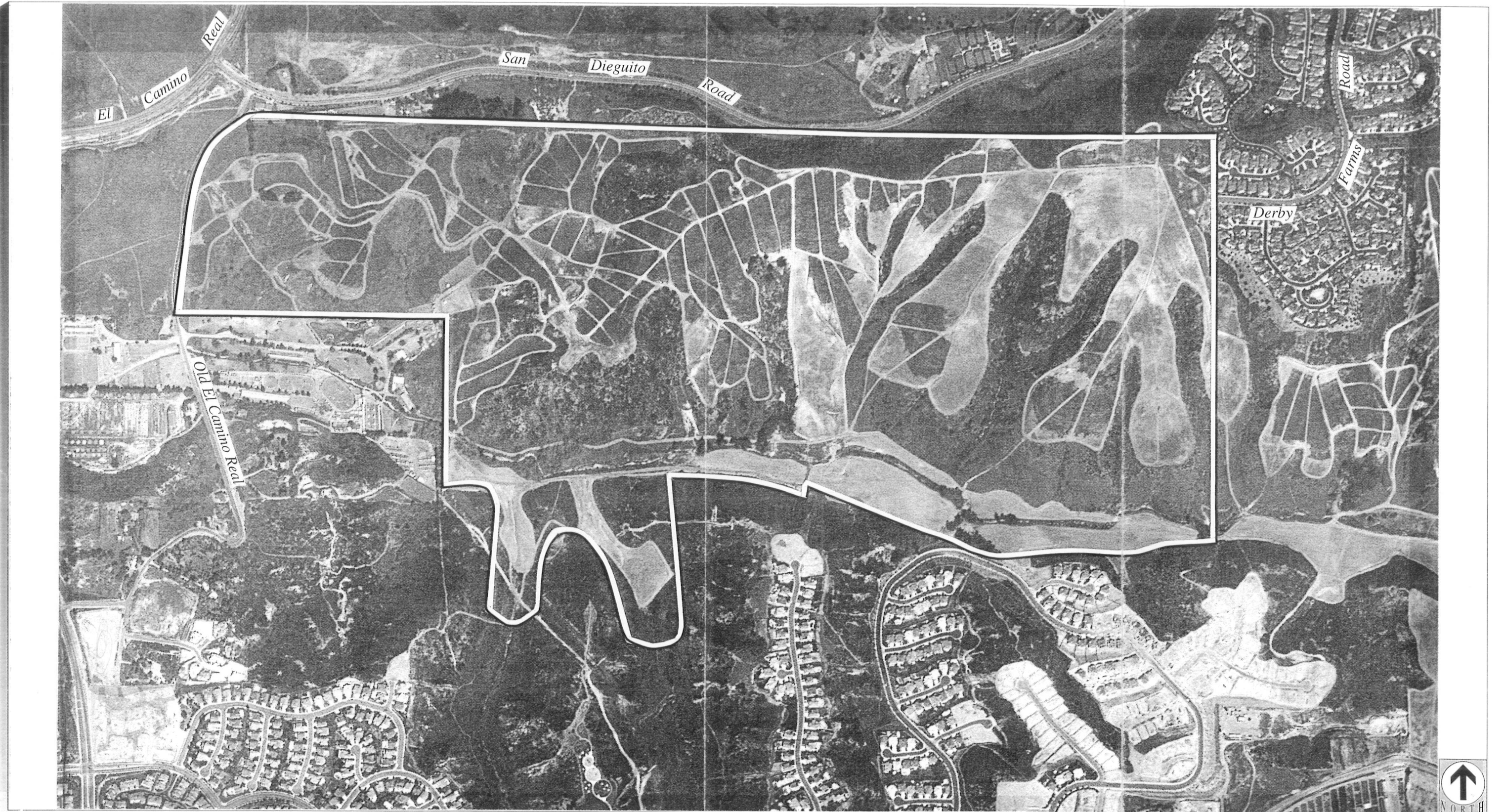
**North City Future Urbanizing Area and Jurisdictional Map**



Map Source: Reduced San Diego County 1" = 2000' Quad map, North Metro

FIGURE 2-2

Project Vicinity



Source: Helix Environmental 1995

## PHOTOGRAPH 2-1

Del Mar Highlands Estates  
Aerial Photograph

# Chapter Three

## Project Description

### 1) Del Mar Highlands Estates Vesting Tentative Map

#### a) Background

The Del Mar Highlands Estates project site, containing 389 acres, is located in the western portion of the 12,000-acre North City FUA. A single project applicant owns the site. In the late 1970s the applicant received approval from the City of San Diego for the Derby Farms project, including certification of a final EIR. This was a 39-unit tentative tract map to develop the Del Mar Highlands Estates project site, but the project was not implemented. In 1994, a vesting tentative map was filed with the City which would have allowed development of 38 estate residential lots on minimum 10-acre parcels (see discussion of the A-1-10 alternative PRD development in Chapter 7, Project Alternatives). In 1995 a PRD for Del Mar Highlands Estates was one of several components of the City Manager's Neighborhood 8A Compromise Plan (DEP No. 87-0211, 91-0899, and 94-0576). A final EIR was prepared for the Neighborhood 8A Compromise Plan that included Del Mar Highlands Estates, and a noticed public hearing was held on the project on October 31, 1995. No action was taken on any of the Compromise Plan project components. The current proposal is a 172-unit clustered PRD. The Shell property (described below) would continue to be a component of the PRD and would be preserved as open space.

In 1989, the City granted an agricultural permit to a lessee of the project site and adjoining parcels to the east. The City used a Mitigated Negative Declaration (EQD No. 86-0618) in conjunction with this permit. The project site has been in agricultural use since 1989.

The City adopted the Framework Plan for the North City FUA and certified the accompanying final EIR in October 1992. The Framework Plan sets forth some general plans and guidelines for the development of the FUA. The Framework Plan identifies two land uses for the 389-acre Del Mar Highlands Estates project site: Environmental Tier and estate residential (0.2 du per gross acre). Development of the project site is

permitted at 1 unit per 10 acres (38 total units) under the existing A-1-10 zoning or 1 unit per 4 acres (97 total units, clustered) with a PRD permit.

### **b) Goals and Objectives**

The goals and objectives of Del Mar Highlands Estates are as follows: (1) to establish an estate residential community in a rural setting with 148 residential view lots for custom home development, with accompanying uses as permitted by the A-1-10 zone and the design guidelines for the proposed project, and to place a wildlife corridor (Gonzales Canyon) into permanent open space; (2) to provide 24 affordable housing units pursuant to City requirements; and (3) to create a development which conforms to City plans regarding Environmental Tier and open space goals in compliance with Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) efforts.

### **c) Proposed Residential and Open Space Features**

The proposed project would involve the creation of 172 residential units (124 at 1 du per 4 acres including 21 units transferred from the Shell parcel using a 0.46 density bonus for 24 constructed affordable housing units) and the extension of roadways and utilities into the project site to serve the new lots. This proposed density is based on the allowable PRD development for the project site (97 units) and 21 units transferred from the 84-acre Shell parcel, plus a 46 percent density bonus for constructing 24 affordable housing units. The 46 percent density bonus for affordable housing includes a 25 percent density bonus (30 units) and an additional 21 percent density bonus (24 units) per the City Municipal Code Section 101.0307.6(B)(2). The proposed lots would be irregularly shaped and would vary in size from approximately ~~13,000~~9,000 to ~~100,800~~63,500 square feet. The proposed VTM is shown in Figure 3-1 and the PRD site plan is included as Figure 3-2.

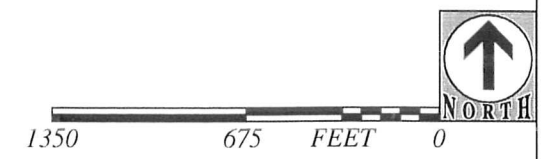
An area of ~~5.355~~2.25 acres at the western project boundary (see Figure 3-1) would be provided to accommodate the affordable housing units. This acreage meets the required criteria of the Housing Commission. The affordable units would be constructed by the project applicant. The San Diego Housing Commission, at a public hearing held on March 25, 1996, approved the 172-unit program for Del Mar Highlands Estates that includes 24 two-bedroom affordable housing units in three 8-plex buildings with parking. The proposed PRD site plan is provided in Figure 3-2. The site plan for the affordable housing units is included as Figure 3-3, with the architectural elevations and landscaping plan shown in Figures 3-4 and 3-5, respectively. No development is currently proposed in the eastern portion of the affordable housing site. Any development of this area would require an amendment to the PRD permit.

All lots would be graded and private streets and utilities would be extended to each site, including water, sewer, electrical, telephone, cable television, and natural gas. Street construction is expected to impact 14.71 acres due to required grading of roadbeds and



FIGURE 3-1  
 Del Mar  
 Highlands Estates  
 Vesting Tentative Map

Source: Project Design Consultants 1997



necessary slopes. Total cut is expected to be approximately 1.61 million cubic yards and total fill would be 1.61 million cubic yards over 166 acres, with the soil being balanced on-site. This total includes small areas of off-site grading along the eastern boundary and would result in approximately 9,620 cubic yards of grading per graded acre.

The primary entrance road to the development (Private Driveway A) would be from San Dieguito Road along the northern site boundary. This would connect with a roadway (Private Driveway B) stretching across the site from west to east, terminating in a cul-de-sac in the southeast corner of the site. This road narrows and becomes Private Roadway M, where it extends westerly from Lots 30 and 31 to its terminus near Lot 151 in the western portion of the site at another cul-de-sac. The secondary emergency-only access to the site (Private Driveway D) would be provided as an extension of Derby Farms Road from its present terminus in the existing Senterra residential development east of the site westerly to meet the above-described street (B). Multiple additional cul-de-sac roadways would extend north and south of the main east-west street to ensure access to all lots (Private Driveways C and E through L). Security gates are proposed at both the primary and emergency secondary access points to the project site and would have security personnel or be electronically operated, respectively. All on-site roadways would be privately maintained. Street lighting would be used for signage illumination, driver and pedestrian safety, and aesthetics (e.g., at project entries).

Water service would be provided in all project roadways and are proposed to connect to the city water supply system along Old El Camino Real and to existing lines in Sword Way. Sewer lines would connect to the existing trunk sewer in Gonzales Canyon via two routes (see Figure 3-1). The sewer line and water line easements would be approximately 20 feet in width. The VTM also shows one detention/desiltation basin located on the north side of Gonzales Canyon in the central portion of the project site. This basin has been designed to accommodate storm flows from the developed site.

Approximately 223 acres of the 389-acre project site would remain as natural open space on the slopes above Gonzales Canyon and slopes above San Dieguito Road. The project applicant is proposing to revegetate approximately 77 acres of the disturbed agricultural land within this open space area with native coastal sage scrub vegetation. Approximately 36.1 acres of the revegetation will be used as biology mitigation for the Del Mar Highlands Estates project. The remaining 40.9 acres can be used by the applicant as mitigation for future development. This revegetation will contribute to the value of Gonzales Canyon as a wildlife corridor as part of the MSCP. Manufactured slopes, which vary in height, are shown on the site plan which are adjacent to the preserved open space. These slopes will be planted with native plant materials which are noninvasive.

**d) Proposed Design Guidelines**

Design guidelines have been proposed for Del Mar Highlands Estates in accordance with PRD regulations. The design guidelines include landscaping concepts, signage, lighting, architectural guidelines, development standards for the market and affordable housing, allowable uses, and a brush management plan. The project design guidelines and development standards vary to some extent between the 6 estate lots, 142 residential pads in the central portion of the site, and 24 affordable housing units on a 5.8-acre lot at the western boundary. The design guidelines describe specific development standards for the five residential products and densities. These include large lots (Lots 1-41), medium lots (Lots 42-95), small lots (Lots 96-142), estate lots (Lots 143-148), and the affordable housing lot (Lot 149). The Del Mar Highlands Estates Design Guidelines are included as Appendix B of this EIR.

**e) Proposed Landscaping**

The proposed landscape concept plan is presented graphically in Figure 3-6 and is described in the design guidelines for the proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates project. The plan addresses landscaping for the gated community entries, community streetscapes, natural vegetation areas, and enhanced circulation nodes.

Parkways along the main circulation routes and adjacent to the community entry streets would incorporate a single row of trees with multiple drought-tolerant, low-maintenance ground covers beneath the trees. A 24-foot-wide private drive (Private Drive M) is planned to extend from the western terminus of Street B to Lots 143-148. This private drive will extend for a distance of approximately one-half mile and will not contain any ornamental landscaping.

Slopes steeper than 6:1 with more than 5 feet in vertical height would be planted with herbaceous or prostrate shrubby ground covers. Slopes greater than 15 feet in vertical height would include planting of an average of one tree, shrub, and ground cover per 100 square feet of slope area. At least 50 percent of the shrubs and ground cover would be a deep-root variety. Recommended plant species are listed in the design guidelines.

All shrubs, ground cover, manufactured and disturbed slope plantings, and lawn areas would be permanently irrigated with fully automatic, water-conserving systems. Irrigation system designs would conform with the requirements set forth in the City's Landscape Technical Manual and would be installed in accordance with San Diego Area Regional Standard Drawings. Landscaping along streets and at project entries would be maintained by a master homeowners association or a landscape maintenance district. Slopes and private yard landscape maintenance would be the responsibility of the future lot owners.



**f) Proposed Brush Management**

As required by the City of San Diego, a brush management plan has been incorporated into the design guidelines for the proposed project in order to reduce the availability of flammable materials adjacent to future on-site structures.

The vast majority of brush management proposed for Del Mar Highlands Estates would take place within the 166 acres total already proposed for grading to create the lots as indicated on the brush management plan in Figure 3-7. The areas of disturbance for brush management are minor in extent as they are small in area and consist only of zone 3 management efforts—selective pruning and thinning of native vegetation while preserving natural appearance. The intent of the design guidelines is to accommodate all brush management within zone 1 and limit the need for selective thinning of native habitat beyond the development pads.

The design guidelines for the proposed project provide a list of recommended plant materials for brush management and identify those plant materials that are fire retardant. Notes on the map address future building materials, prohibited plants, and the requirement that maintenance of brush management areas be carried out in accordance with specifications in the City of San Diego Landscape Technical Manual (1989a).

**g) Discretionary Actions and Permits Required**

This EIR must be certified in final form by the San Diego City Council. Subsequently, the proposed PRD permit, Framework Plan Amendment, VTM, and Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO) permit also must be approved by the City Council. The applicant would obtain a grading permit including an interim 4(d) habitat loss permit to grade the project pads, construct the proposed private roadways, and extend utilities into the project site.

**California Department of Fish and Game**

A 1603 Streambed Alteration Agreement would have to be issued by the California Department of Fish and Game prior to commencement of any work which would alter a streambed, including grading of the proposed sewer and water lines through Gonzales Canyon.

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

Construction of the utilities rights-of-way might require the placement of fill within delineated wetland areas if wetland determinations (to be completed in the year preceding construction) are positive. In that case, a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would be required, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The coastal California gnatcatcher is on the federal list of threatened species. The successful continuance of this species is directly tied to continuation of its habitat (Diegan coastal sage scrub). Therefore, authorization by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required prior to any "take" of coastal sage scrub habitat occupied by the California gnatcatcher.

Approximately 33.8 acres of occupied habitat would be impacted by the proposed Del Mar Highlands project. This will require the issuance of a permit for the incidental taking of a federally listed threatened species prior to site grading. Thus, either approval of a project-level habitat conservation plan through Section 10(a) of the federal Endangered Species Act, approval of an interim take permit in accordance with the adopted 4(d) rule, or participation in the City's MSCP would be required to gain federal approval. ~~It is possible that Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act may also be used as a permitting option if it can be shown that a nexus exists between any federal action (in this case, the issuance of a 404 permit) and the taking of the gnatcatcher.~~ It is the applicant's intent to process a multiple-projects interim habitat loss 4(d) permit that will include Del Mar Highlands Estates with additional related projects. During the public review period for the Draft EIR, the City of San Diego issued a multiple project Interim Habitat Loss (4d) Permit Findings which included the Del Mar Highlands Estates project and three other related projects. These projects include the Neighborhood 10 Precise Plan Amendment, the Neighborhood 10 School Site/Sewer Line, and the Neighborhood 8C Precise Plan. The findings were distributed to the public and wildlife agencies on February 28, 1997 for a 45-day review period ending on April 14, 1997.

## 2) Shell Parcel

### a) Background

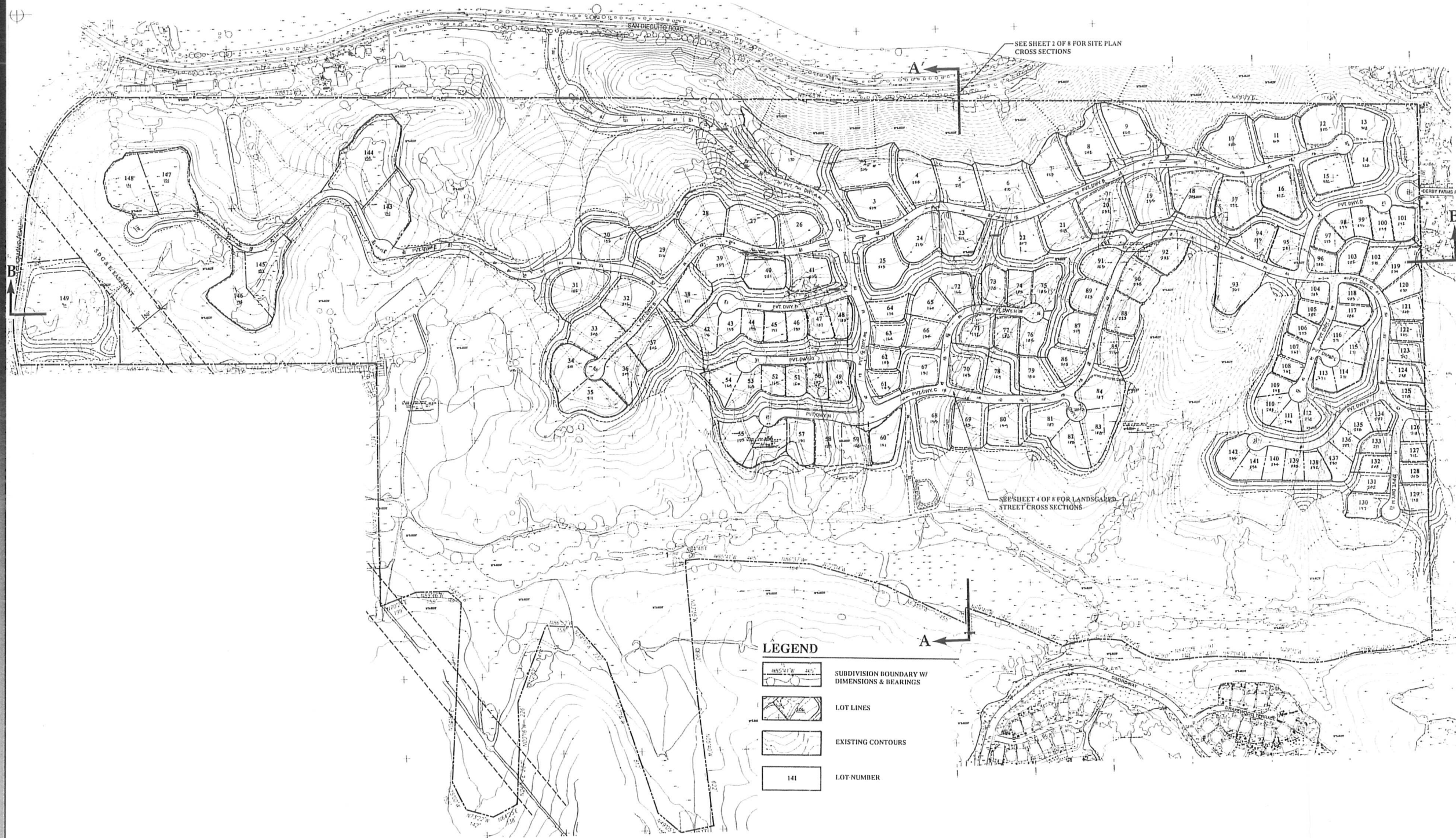
The Shell parcel is located in the southern portion of Subarea III, on the south edge of Carmel Valley (see Figure 2-2). The Framework Plan identifies approximately five (5) acres as peripheral residential, which allows 7 dwelling units per gross acre, or a total of 35 units. The remainder of the 84-acre parcel is shown as Environmental Tier.

### b) Goals and Objectives

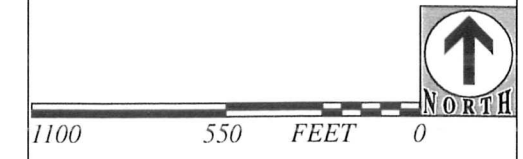
The primary project goal for the Shell parcel is to remove development rights from the parcel and preserve the parcel as part of the MSCP preserve system in perpetuity. Potential future development associated with this parcel would be restricted to possible rights-of-way and construction associated with future Camino Santa Fe and SR-56, respectively.

**c) Project Characteristics**

The 21 dwelling units which could be developed on the Shell parcel per the underlying zoning would be transferred to Del Mar Highlands Estates project as part of the PRD approval and final map recordation process. The Shell parcel (see Figure 2-2) would be preserved as open space consistent with the City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program. The intent would be for the City to hold the Shell parcel in open space with the possible exception of rights-of-way required by the City for future potential development of the Camino Santa Fe or SR-56 roadways and associated construction.



**FIGURE 3-2**  
**Proposed**  
**P.R.D. Site Plan**

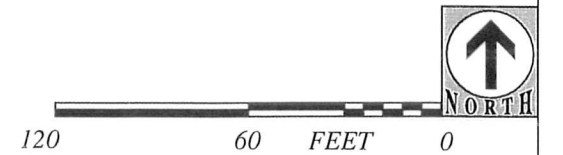


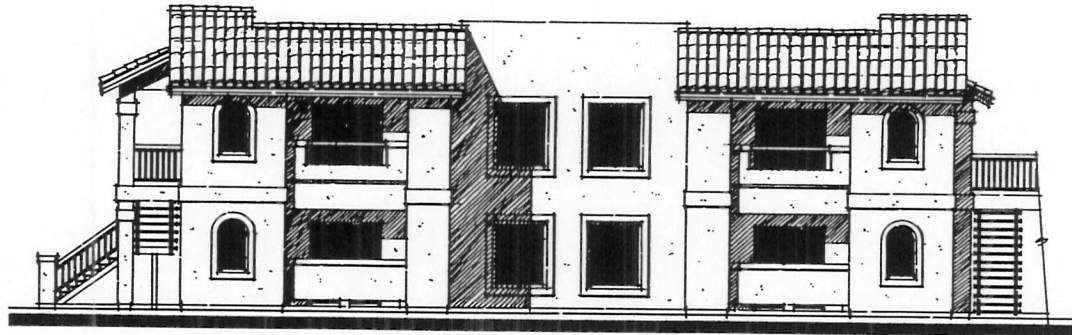
Source: T & B Planning Consultants 1997



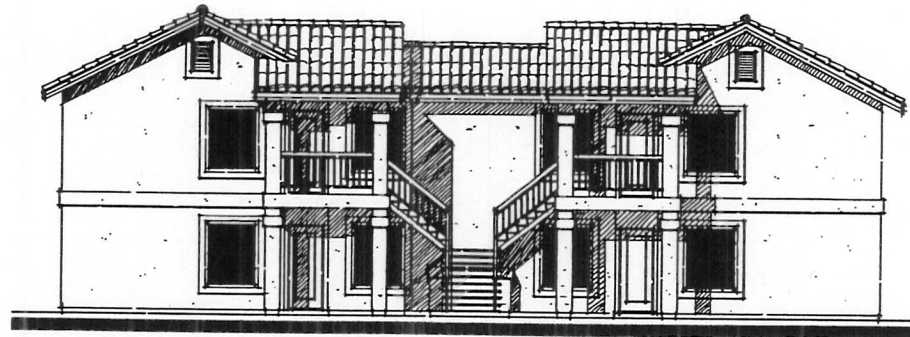
FIGURE 3-3

Affordable Housing  
Site Plan





FRONT / REAR ELEVATION



LEFT / RIGHT ELEVATION

Source: Bassenian Lagoni 1997

FIGURE 3-4

Affordable Housing Site  
Architectural Elevations

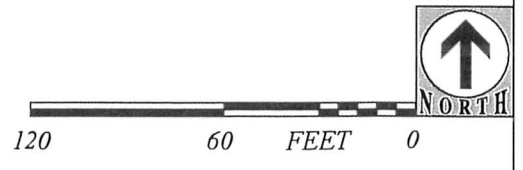
Source: Alhambra Group Landscape Architecture 1997

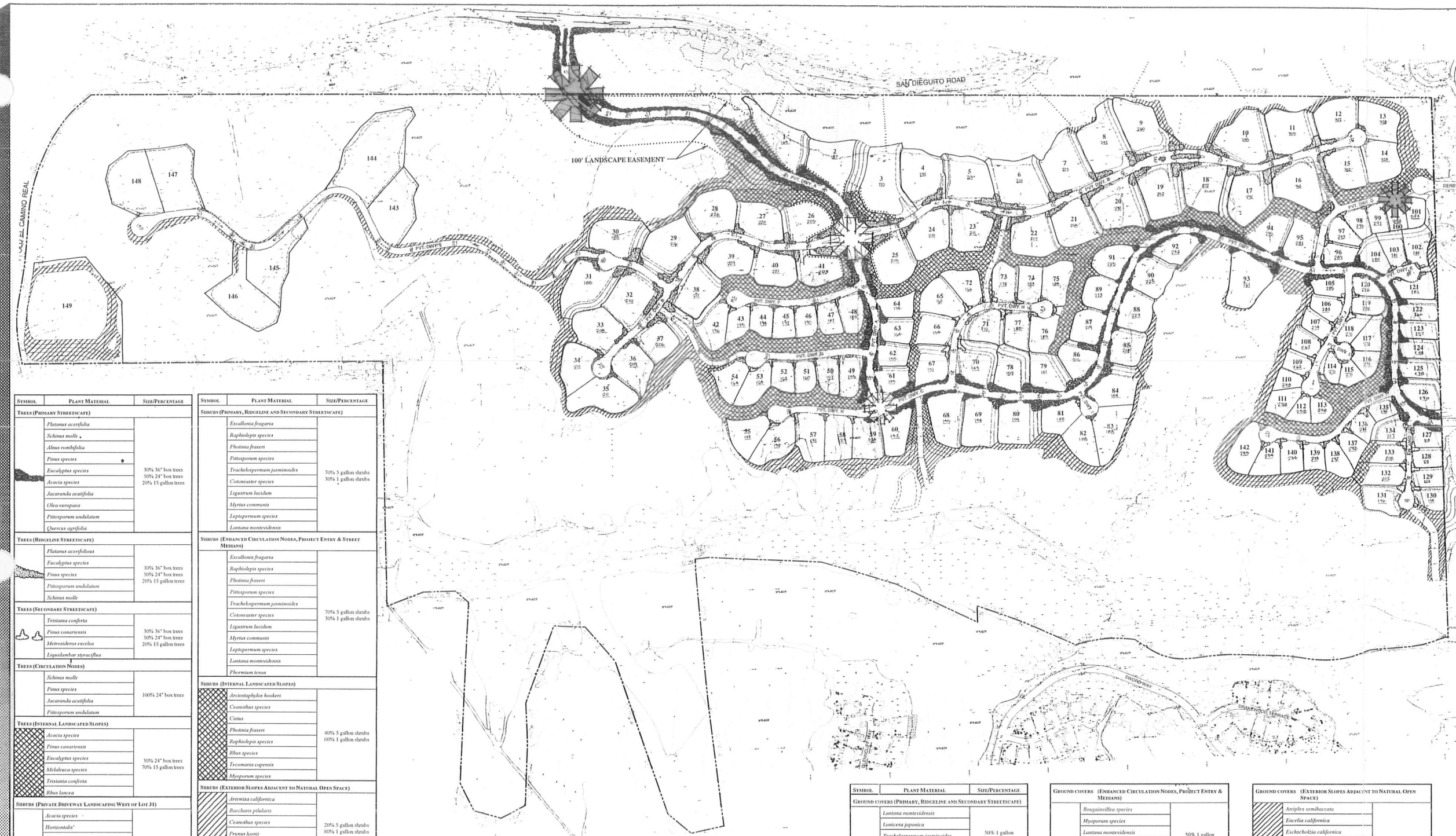


**PLANTING LEGEND**

- STREET TREES**  
24" POT MINIMUM SIZE FOR STREET TREES LOCATED IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY (R.O.W. SECTION 10/10/10) IS GALLON OUTSIDE OF RIGHT-OF-WAY.  
BRACHYCHITON POUQUENUN - BOTTLE TREE  
CUPANOPSIS ANACARDIODES - CARROT WOOD  
MAGNOLIA GRANDIFLORA - MAJESTIC BEAUTY - MAGNOLIA  
MELALEUCA QUINQUEMNERVIA - CAJUPUT TREE  
PLATANUS ACERIFOLIA - LONDON PLANE TREE  
PODOCARPUS CRUCIOLUS - TEAK PINE  
QUERCUS ILEX - HOLLY OAK  
RIVUS LANCEA - AFRICAN SUMAC  
ULMUS PARVIFOLIA - DRAKE - BREA ELM
- ACCENT STREET TREES**  
10 GALLON - ALONG PRIVATE PROJECT STREETS AND OPEN SPACE  
24" POT AT PLANTING, MINIMUM IN PARKING LOT.  
BETULA ALBA - WHITE BIRCH  
CUPANOPSIS ANACARDIODES - CARROT WOOD  
LIQUIDAMBAR STRACIFLUA - PALO ALTO - SWEET GUM  
MELALEUCA QUINQUEMNERVIA - CAJUPUT TREE  
PRUNUS CERASIFERA - KRAUTER VESUVIUS - PURPLE LEAF PLUM
- MIXED OPEN SPACE TREES**  
40S 10 GALLON & 40S 5 GALLON AT APPROXIMATELY ONE PER 600 S.F.  
AGONIS FLEXUOSA - WILLOW MYRTLE  
LAGESTROEMIA INDICA - CREPE MYRTLE  
LIQUIDAMBAR STRACIFLUA - PALO ALTO - SWEET GUM  
MELALEUCA QUINQUEMNERVIA - CAJUPUT TREE  
PRUNUS HALLETII - ALPELO PINE  
PLATANUS ACERIFOLIA - LONDON PLANE TREE
- INTERIOR SLOPE TREES**  
40S 10 GALLON & 40S 5 GALLON AT APPROXIMATELY ONE PER 600 S.F.  
ALNUS RHOMBIFOLIA - WHITE ALDER  
EUCALYPTUS CITRIGODDIA - LEMON SCENTED GUM  
EUCALYPTUS RUDES - DESERT GUM  
LIQUIDAMBAR STRACIFLUA - SWEET GUM  
PRUNUS HALLETII - ALPELO PINE  
RIVUS LANCEA - AFRICAN SUMAC  
ROBINIA IDAHOENSIS - PINK FLOWERING LOCUST
- FOUNDATION AND BACKGROUND SHRUBS**  
40S 5 GALLON & 40S 10GALLON  
ADAPANTHUS AFRICANUS - LILY OF THE NILE  
DIDONIA VISCOSA - HOBBLED BUSH  
EUDORPUS SPECIES - EUDORPUS  
HEMEROCALLIS ALBANTICA - DAYLILY  
ILEX CORNUTA - DAZLER - DAZLER HOLLY  
ESCALONIA FRANCESI - ESCALONIA  
JUNIPERUS SPECIES - JUNIPER  
LEISTERIA JAPONICA - TEXANUM - TEXAS FENNET  
MELALEUCA NEOFILIA - PINK MELALEUCA  
PHOTINIA FRASERI - FRASER'S PHOTINIA  
PITTOSPORUM TORIBA - VAREGATA - VAREGATED WOCK ORANGE  
PITTOSPORUM TORIBA - WHEELER'S DWARF - DWARF WOCK ORANGE  
PODOPHYLLUM SPECIES - INDIAN RANUNCULUS  
TRACHELOSPERMUM JASMINOIDES - STAR JASMINE  
VIBURNUM SPECIES - VIBURNUM  
XYLOSMA CONGESTUM - XYLOSMA
- SLOPE SHRUBS AND GROUND COVER**  
20S 5 GALLON & 40S 10GALLON AT APPROXIMATELY ONE PER 100 S.F.  
**SHRUBS**  
ACACIA REDOLENS - PROSTRATE ACACIA  
ARBUS ULMOID - STRAWBERRY TREE  
CALLISTEMMA INAEQUILATERA - PINK POWDER PUFF  
CELANOTHUS SPECIES - CEANOTHUS  
ESCALONIA FRANCESI - PINK ESCALONIA  
MELALEUCA NEOFILIA - PINK MELALEUCA  
PHOTINIA FRASERI - FRASER'S PHOTINIA  
FLUMBAGO CAPENSIS - CAPE FLUMBAGO  
RIVUS INTEGRIFOLIA - LEMONADE BERRY  
TEUCOARIA CAPENSIS - CAPE HONTSUCKLE  
**GROUND COVER**  
APTEKIA CORDIFOLIA - RED APPLE  
ARCTOSTAPHYLOS - MANZANITA  
BACCHARIS PILULARIS - COYOTE BUSH  
DELOSPERMA ALBA - WHITE TRAILING ICE PLANT  
FRAGARIA CHLIDENSIS - WILD STRAWBERRY  
GAZANIA 'HISUN' - YELLOW TRAILING GAZANIA  
LONICEA JAPONICA - JAPANESE HONTSUCKLE  
VINCA MAJOR - PERIWINKLE  
OVERSEED WITH ALLISON - 'CAPLET OF SNOW' AND HASTURIUM OR SUITABLE HYDRANGEA MIX TO BE BASED UPON FINAL SOILS ANALYSIS AND CONFORM TO THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO STANDARDS
- LAWN AREAS**  
LAWN AREAS SHALL BE HYDROSEEDED (LAW) TYPE TALL FESCUE
- IRRIGATION AND MAINTENANCE**  
ALL COMMON AREA LANDSCAPING TO BE IRRIGATED WITH A FULLY AUTOMATIC IRRIGATION SYSTEM AND BE MAINTAINED BY THE OWNER.
- CITY OF SAN DIEGO 'LANDSCAPE TECHNICAL MANUAL'**  
ALL COMMON AREA LANDSCAPING AND IRRIGATION TO CONFORM TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO PLANNING DEPARTMENT 'LANDSCAPE TECHNICAL MANUAL' (DOCUMENT NO. 88-274 008).

**FIGURE 3-5**  
**Affordable Housing Site**  
**Landscape Plan**





**LEGEND**

- PRIMARY STREETSCAPE (INFORMAL)
- RIDGE LINE STREETSCAPE (INFORMAL)
- SECONDARY STREETSCAPE (INFORMAL)
- CONTROLLED ACCESS COMMUNITY ENTRY
- EMERGENCY CONTROLLED ACCESS LOCATION
- ENHANCED CIRCULATION NODE (LARGER=PRIMARY, SMALLER=SECONDARY)
- NATURALIZED MANUFACTURED SLOPES
- INTERNAL LANDSCAPED SLOPES (NOT PART OF INDIVIDUAL LOTS)

SYMBOL	PLANT MATERIAL	SIZE/PERCENTAGE
<b>TREES (PRIMARY STREETSCAPE)</b>		
	<i>Platanus acerifolia</i>	
	<i>Schinus molle</i>	
	<i>Alnus rhombifolia</i>	
	<i>Pinus species</i>	
	<i>Eucalyptus species</i>	30% 36" box trees
	<i>Acacia species</i>	50% 24" box trees
	<i>Acacia species</i>	20% 15' palm trees
	<i>Jacaranda acutifolia</i>	
	<i>Olea europaea</i>	
	<i>Pittosporum undulatum</i>	
	<i>Cherries agrifolia</i>	
<b>TREES (RIDGE LINE STREETSCAPE)</b>		
	<i>Platanus acerifolia</i>	
	<i>Eucalyptus species</i>	30% 36" box trees
	<i>Pinus species</i>	50% 24" box trees
	<i>Pittosporum undulatum</i>	20% 15' palm trees
	<i>Schinus molle</i>	
<b>TREES (SECONDARY STREETSCAPE)</b>		
	<i>Tritanica conferta</i>	
	<i>Pinus canariensis</i>	30% 36" box trees
	<i>Albizia julibrissin</i>	50% 24" box trees
	<i>Albizia julibrissin</i>	20% 15' palm trees
	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	
<b>TREES (CIRCULATION NODES)</b>		
	<i>Schinus molle</i>	
	<i>Pinus species</i>	100% 24" box trees
	<i>Jacaranda acutifolia</i>	
	<i>Pittosporum undulatum</i>	
<b>TREES (INTERNAL LANDSCAPED SLOPES)</b>		
	<i>Acacia species</i>	
	<i>Pinus canariensis</i>	
	<i>Eucalyptus species</i>	30% 24" box trees
	<i>Albizia julibrissin</i>	70% 15' palm trees
	<i>Tritanica conferta</i>	
	<i>Rhus lancea</i>	
<b>SHRUBS (PRIVATE DRIVEWAY LANDSCAPING WEST OF LOT 31)</b>		
	<i>Acacia species</i>	
	<i>Horizonalibis</i>	
	<i>Cotoneaster species</i>	70% 5' palm shrubs
	<i>Heteromeles obtusifolia</i>	30% 1' palm shrubs
	<i>Rhus species</i>	
	<i>Verbesina species</i>	

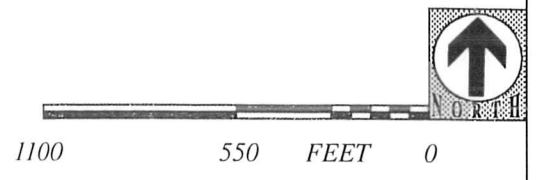
SYMBOL	PLANT MATERIAL	SIZE/PERCENTAGE
<b>SHRUBS (PRIMARY, RIDGE LINE AND SECONDARY STREETSCAPE)</b>		
	<i>Escallonia fragaria</i>	
	<i>Raphirolepis species</i>	
	<i>Photinia fraseri</i>	
	<i>Pittosporum species</i>	
	<i>Trachelosperman jasminoides</i>	70% 5' palm shrubs
	<i>Cotoneaster species</i>	30% 1' palm shrubs
	<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	
	<i>Myrica communis</i>	
	<i>Lepidogermis species</i>	
	<i>Lantana montevidensis</i>	
<b>SHRUBS (ENHANCED CIRCULATION NODES, PROJECT ENTRY &amp; STREET MEDIANS)</b>		
	<i>Escallonia fragaria</i>	
	<i>Raphirolepis species</i>	
	<i>Photinia fraseri</i>	
	<i>Pittosporum species</i>	
	<i>Trachelosperman jasminoides</i>	70% 5' palm shrubs
	<i>Cotoneaster species</i>	30% 1' palm shrubs
	<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	
	<i>Myrica communis</i>	
	<i>Lepidogermis species</i>	
	<i>Lantana montevidensis</i>	
	<i>Phormium tenax</i>	
<b>SHRUBS (INTERNAL LANDSCAPED SLOPES)</b>		
	<i>Arctostaphylos hookeri</i>	
	<i>Ceanothus species</i>	
	<i>Citrus</i>	
	<i>Photinia fraseri</i>	40% 5' palm shrubs
	<i>Raphirolepis species</i>	60% 1' palm shrubs
	<i>Rhus species</i>	
	<i>Trochostema cuspidata</i>	
	<i>Myoporum species</i>	
<b>SHRUBS (EXTERIOR SLOPES ADJACENT TO NATURAL OPEN SPACE)</b>		
	<i>Artemisia californica</i>	
	<i>Baccharis pilularis</i>	
	<i>Ceanothus species</i>	
	<i>Prunus lyonii</i>	20% 5' palm shrubs
	<i>Rhus species</i>	30% 1' palm shrubs
	<i>Heteromeles urbanifolia</i>	

SYMBOL	PLANT MATERIAL	SIZE/PERCENTAGE
<b>GROUND COVERS (PRIMARY, RIDGE LINE AND SECONDARY STREETSCAPE)</b>		
	<i>Lantana montevidensis</i>	
	<i>Lonicera japonica</i>	
	<i>Trachelosperman jasminoides</i>	50% 1 gallon
	<i>Myoporum species</i>	50% from flats
	<i>Verbesina peruviana</i>	
<b>GROUND COVERS (PRIVATE DRIVEWAY LANDSCAPING - WEST OF LOT 31)</b>		
	<i>Citrus species</i>	
	<i>Lantana montevidensis</i>	50% 1 gallon
	<i>Atriplex species</i>	50% from flats
	<i>Verbesina peruviana</i>	

SYMBOL	PLANT MATERIAL	SIZE/PERCENTAGE
<b>GROUND COVERS (ENHANCED CIRCULATION NODES, PROJECT ENTRY &amp; MEDIANS)</b>		
	<i>Bougainvillea species</i>	
	<i>Myoporum species</i>	
	<i>Lantana montevidensis</i>	50% 1 gallon
	<i>Romarinus species</i>	50% from flats
	<i>Pyracantha species</i>	
	Turf	
<b>GROUND COVERS (INTERNAL LANDSCAPED SLOPES)</b>		
	<i>Baccharis pilularis</i>	
	<i>Diurisatherum floribundum</i>	
	<i>Lantana species</i>	30% 1 gallon
	<i>Myoporum species</i>	70% from flats
	Turf	

SYMBOL	PLANT MATERIAL	SIZE/PERCENTAGE
<b>GROUND COVERS (EXTERIOR SLOPES ADJACENT TO NATURAL OPEN SPACE)</b>		
	<i>Atriplex semibaccata</i>	
	<i>Encelia californica</i>	
	<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>	
	<i>Lupinus species</i>	100% hydroseed
	<i>Himelias pumilus</i>	
	<i>Salvia species</i>	
	<i>Trichostema lanatum</i>	





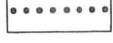
**FIGURE 3-6**  
**Landscape Concept Plan**



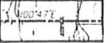


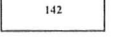




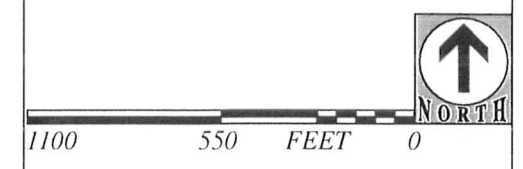
**BRUSH MANAGEMENT LEGEND**

-  ZONE ONE (DISTANCE MAY VARY)
-  ZONE TWO (DISTANCE MAY VARY)
-  ZONE THREE (DISTANCE MAY VARY)
-  NO BRUSH MANAGEMENT REQUIRED
-  6' BRUSH MANAGEMENT WALL

**LEGEND**

-  SUBDIVISION BOUNDARY W/ DIMENSIONS & BEARINGS
-  LOT LINES
-  EXISTING CONTOURS
-  LOT NUMBER

**FIGURE 3-7**  
**Brush Management Plan**



# Chapter Four

## Environmental Analysis

The following environmental analysis addresses existing conditions, potential impacts resulting from project implementation, and suggested mitigation measures. The existing conditions discussions address the two project areas (Del Mar Highlands Estates and Shell parcel). The impact discussions only addresses Del Mar Highlands Estates. Any potential effects resulting from maintaining the Shell parcel in permanent open space are expected to be beneficial and are not addressed in this section.

### A. Land Use

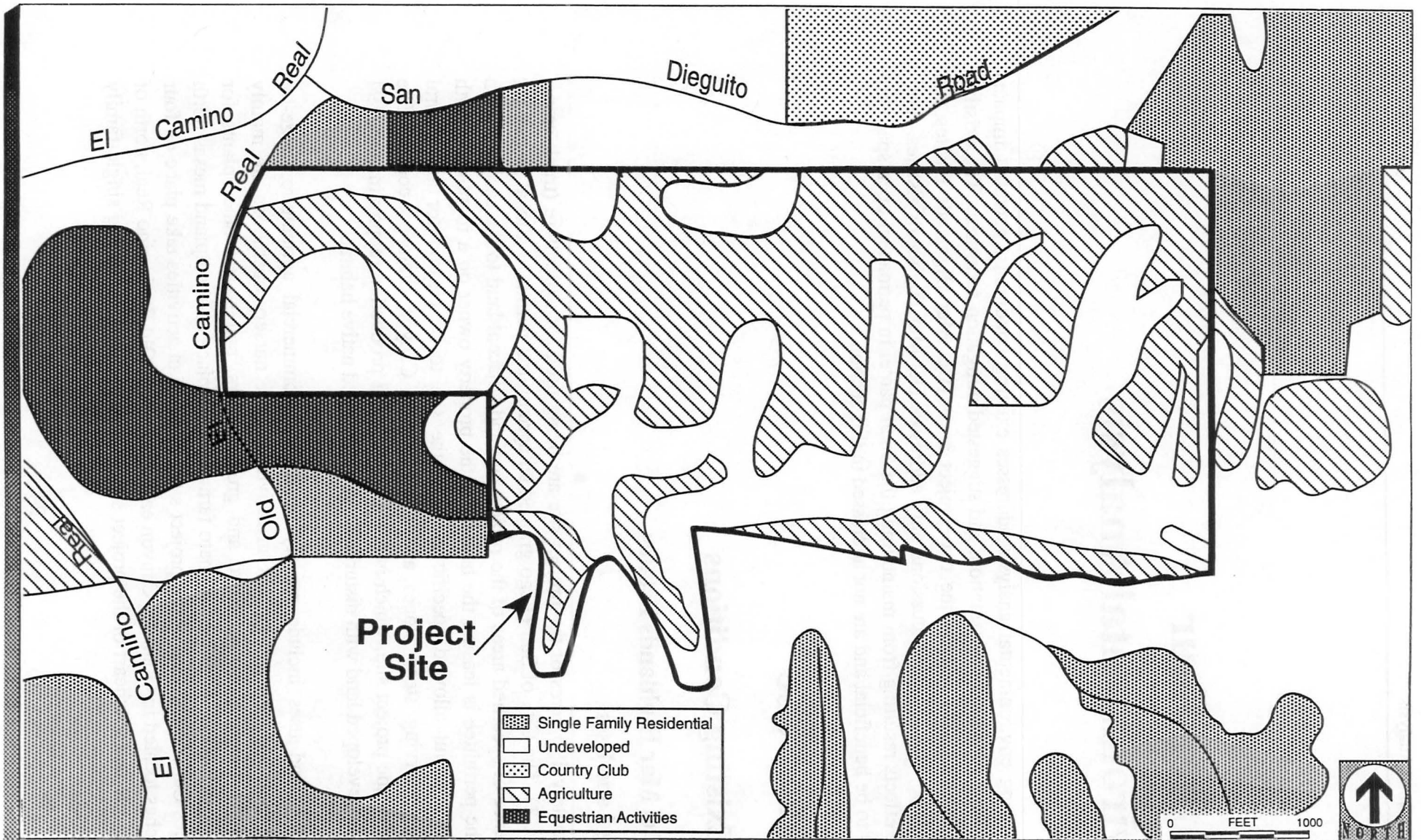
#### Existing Conditions

##### a) Del Mar Highlands Estates

##### Existing Land Uses

Approximately 195 acres of the project site are being used for agriculture (truck crops; Figure 4A-1). The City of San Diego granted an agricultural permit to a local farmer for the clearance of specified areas of the project site and adjacent land to the east in March 1989. The permittee is leasing the land from the property owner on a month-to-month basis. The permit allowed specific areas of the site to be cleared for agricultural activities, preserving steep slopes and the Gonzales Canyon drainage course. The remainder of the project site, which is not in agricultural production (approximately 194 acres), is undeveloped land with disturbed and undisturbed native habitat.

Surrounding land uses include nursery operations, commercial agriculture, large-lot single-family residences, and equestrian activities. The nursery operations are mainly located along Black Mountain Road and grow flowers, palms, and other plants for landscaping purposes. Additional tomato farming takes place on the upland mesas north of Gonzales Canyon and east of the project site. Equestrian activities take place on four horse ranches located in Gonzales Canyon east and west of Old El Camino Real, north of the project site and southeast of the project site. There are several existing single-family



Source: Helix Environmental 1995

FIGURE 4A-1

Del Mar Highlands Estates  
Existing Land Use Map

residences and trailers for worker housing, located south of the project site and east of Old El Camino Real. Two country clubs are located north and northeast of the site. The Senterra residential development is adjacent to the site on the east and extends northeast of the site. A residential development, a church, Torrey Highlands park, and Torrey Pines High School are located south of the project site. As shown in Figure 4A-1, a substantial amount of undeveloped land also surrounds the site.

### **Zoning Designations**

The project site, like the rest of the North City FUA, is zoned A-1-10. According to the Municipal Code, the purpose of the A-1 (Agricultural) zones is to provide “appropriate zoning for areas that are presently in agricultural or open space use or which are undeveloped and either are awaiting development or are premature for development at urban intensities.”

Permitted uses include single-family dwellings (one residential unit per 10 acres), churches, stables, all agricultural uses (with the exception of pig farming), stands for the sale of crops produced on the premises, living quarters for up to five farm employees, public utility substations, and some signs.

Floodway (FW) and Floodplain Fringe (FPF) Overlay Zones are located within Gonzales Canyon on-site. Development of permanent structures in the FW Overlay Zone is generally restricted. Within the FPF Overlay Zone, development is generally permitted in accordance with the underlying zoning, provided that the design of such development mitigates potential flood hazards.

In addition, the Hillside Review Overlay Zone applies to all areas of the site having slopes with a natural gradient in excess of 25 percent and a minimum elevation differential of 50 feet. The purpose of this zone is to ensure that development occurs in a manner that protects the natural and topographic character and identity, environmental resources, and aesthetic qualities of hillside areas. The requirements of the Hillside Review (HR) Overlay Zone have also been incorporated into the City’s Resource Protection Ordinance, which is discussed below. All grading, construction, and demolition activities within the HR zone require an HR permit or a RPO permit from the City.

This site is subject to the regulations of the City of San Diego’s Resource Protection Ordinance. The purpose and intent of this ordinance is “to protect, preserve, and, where damaged, to restore the environmentally sensitive lands of San Diego, which includes wetlands, wetland buffers, floodplains, hillsides, biologically sensitive lands, and significant prehistoric and historic resources.” The provisions of the ordinance are applicable to floodways and 100-year floodplain fringe areas, all wetland and wetland buffer areas, all hillside areas of 25 percent or greater slope in excess of 50 feet in height,

all biologically sensitive lands, and all significant prehistoric and historic sites and resources. RPO requirements for the applicable resources on the project site are as follows.

Hillsides encompassing slopes of 25 percent gradient or more and with an elevation differential of 50 feet or more are considered sensitive under the ordinance. Native biological communities or any vegetative community supporting state or federally listed or candidate species are considered sensitive, along with designated plant or wildlife species. On Del Mar Highlands Estates, there are approximately 180.1 acres of RPO-defined steep slopes and biologically sensitive lands (coastal sage scrub, southern maritime chaparral, mule fat scrub, and southern mixed chaparral) on the property. There are no mapped wetlands or wetland buffers for the project site, but a portion of the project site is located in a floodway or floodplain fringe. Significant prehistoric resources do occur on the property.

A minimal encroachment is allowed into hillsides and biologically sensitive lands, per formulas provided in the ordinance. The encroachment allowance is not applicable to sensitive biological lands with state or federally listed rare, threatened, or endangered species or wetlands. RPO combines the allowed encroachment for hillsides and biological resources, based on the proportion of each resource, to set the encroachment allowance. A separate HR permit is not required; however, the project must conform to the hillside development guidelines of the Hillside Review Overlay Zone. The development guidelines for hillside review are discussed in Section 4.C, Landform Alteration. Development beyond the encroachment allowance for biologically sensitive lands shall not be permitted unless all feasible mitigation to protect and preserve these lands is required as a condition of approval.

RPO allows for plan approval through alternative compliance where a development plan does not conform with the ordinance, but only when the project complies with the ordinance to the maximum extent feasible. This applies to cases where strict application would result in unnecessary hardship to the applicant; create results in conflict with City Council policy, the Progress Guide and General Plan, or any adopted community plan; or preclude provisions of extraordinary benefit to the general public. Findings must be made for the situation which applies to the proposed project.

### ***City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan***

***Land Use Designations.*** The City's 1989 *Progress Guide and General Plan* designates most of the Del Mar Highlands Estates project site as "Area for Future Growth," except for Gonzales Canyon, which was designated as "Open Space." These designations have been superseded by the FUA Framework Plan.

**Land Use Goals and Objectives.** In June 1989, the City published an updated and reprinted version of the Progress Guide and General Plan. On October 1, 1990, the City adopted a revised version of the "Guidelines for Future Development" section of the Progress Guide and General Plan, which describes the City's objectives in the Future Urbanizing Area as follows:

To avoid premature urbanization, to conserve open space and natural environmental features, and to protect the fiscal resources of the City by precluding costly sprawl and/or leapfrog urban development.

In addition, the Guidelines for Future Development section states that the delineation of the Future Urbanizing Area is not intended to be permanent; rather, it is an interim designation designed, as part of the overall growth management program, to prevent premature urban development and, therefore, to guide urbanization into more appropriate areas in accordance with a balanced and efficient growth pattern.

Additional applicable development policies from the Guidelines for Future Development section are as follows:

- The existing non-urban land use pattern and character of the area should be retained until such time as the City Council and the electorate approve a phase shift reclassifying the land to the Planned Urbanizing designation and a land use plan for the area is adopted.
- Rural, resource-based, and open space uses should be retained on a permanent basis, where appropriate and feasible.
- Development should be permitted consistent with the A-1 (Agricultural) zone applied, and conditional uses should be allowed provided they are natural resources-dependent, non-urban in character and scale, or of an interim nature which would not result in an irrevocable commitment of the land precluding future uses.
- Public facility improvements should be permitted only to meet regional needs or to serve primarily the Urbanized and Planned Urbanizing communities, provided the impacts of those facilities upon identified resources can be avoided or fully mitigated.
- Lands that should be categorized as environmentally sensitive or which are appropriate for permanent retention as rural, resource-based, or open space uses should be identified and mapped.
- Following the identification and mapping of these resources, transportation corridors and other needed public facility improvements should be identified and mapped, provided such facilities avoid or fully mitigate impacts to the area's resources.

***Environmental Goals and Objectives.*** The following relevant general environmental quality goals are stated in the revised Guidelines for Future Development section of the Progress Guide and General Plan, adopted on October 1, 1990:

- Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive lands which include but are not limited to shorelines, floodplains, hillsides, canyons, wetlands, riparian habitat, endangered species and habitats, and prehistoric and historic sites.
- Obtain, preserve, and maintain interconnected and functional open space systems to meet the current city needs and the needs of future growth as outlined in the Open Space Element of the Progress Guide and General Plan.

The Guidelines for Future Development section goes on to state the following guidelines and standards for implementation of the preceding environmental quality goals:

- The current three-tier program shall be amended by creation of a fourth geographic area within the city: the Environmental Tier.
- All areas within the city which are currently and formerly designated as Open Space, those areas defined as environmentally sensitive lands, and those areas defined as open space in the Open Space Element of the Progress Guide and General Plan shall be mapped. This mapped area will be analyzed for inclusion in the Environmental Tier, and based upon such mapping, the City shall adopt the Environmental Tier.
- Before development can proceed on any site within the Environmental Tier, the City Council shall be required to find that all possible methods of preservation to eliminate development of land within this tier, and/or to minimize development and the impacts of development to land within this tier through the use of mitigation measures, have been exhausted.
- On lands within portions of the Environmental Tier which are already developed or that have development imminent, all feasible measures shall be taken to protect and preserve environmentally sensitive lands and to provide interconnected and functional open space systems.
- Continued maintenance of sensitive lands and interconnected open space systems preserved within the Environmental Tier shall be provided.

### **City of San Diego Council Policies**

City Council Policies 600-29 and 600-30, which were amended by the City Council on October 1, 1992, are applicable to development within the Future Urbanizing Area, in which the project site is located. These policies are summarized below.

*City Council Policy 600-29, "Maintenance of Future Urbanizing Area as an Urban Reserve."* This council policy states that the City's objectives in land use decision making in the Future Urbanizing Area are "to avoid premature urbanization, to conserve open space and natural environmental features, and to protect the fiscal resources of the City by precluding costly sprawl and/or leapfrog development."

Policy 600-29 presents four options for limited development in the Future Urbanizing Area, without distinguishing any of them as preferable to the others. They are:

- Development pursuant to the A-1 zoning regulations, at the density and minimum lot size permitted in the applicable zone.
- Development pursuant to the Rural Cluster Development regulations, at the density permitted in the applicable zone, but clustered in order to promote more efficient land utilization and land conservation; to allow development in patterns more consistent with that occurring in adjacent areas; to avoid fragmentation of land ownership patterns which would mitigate against future development opportunities; to allow for reasonable development opportunities during the planning period without foreclosing future development choices; and to make annexation of unincorporated land more attractive where such lands will be brought into the Future Urbanizing Area. Clustering will allow the owner a reasonable present development opportunity, while retaining the undeveloped portions of the property for future development at higher densities, if appropriate, when the property is shifted from the Future Urbanizing Area to the Planned Urbanizing Area in accordance with Council Policy No. 600-30, "General Plan Amendments to Shift Land From Future Urbanizing to Planned Urbanizing Area."
- Development pursuant to the Planned Residential Development regulations, at a density not to exceed one dwelling unit per four acres, in order to promote the permanent preservation of lands designated in the General Plan as part of the Environmental Tier through the provision of public and private open space easements and/or dedications; provided, however, that in return for the density increase granted by the City Council, no future development rights shall remain on the property. As a condition for obtaining the increased density, the property owner shall also be required to locate public facilities in the vicinity and roads necessary to access them and to provide a financing mechanism for these facilities pursuant to the Progress Guide and General Plan. This development option may not be appropriate in areas where the lot pattern precludes clustering of development outside of the Environmental Tier.
- Development pursuant to the Conditional Use Permit regulations, provided that the conditional uses are natural resource-dependent, non-urban in character and scale, or



of an interim nature which would not result in an irrevocable commitment of the land precluding future uses.

***City Council Policy 600-30, "General Plan Amendments to Shift Land from Future Urbanizing to Planned Urbanizing Area."*** This council policy was amended following the passage of Proposition A by voters in 1985. Proposition A requires that projects located in the Future Urbanizing Area which propose a shift to the Planned Urbanizing Area attain a majority approval vote of the people at a city-wide election. The council policy applies to all shifts of land from Future Urbanizing to Planned Urbanizing prior to a General Plan Amendment. The policy now states that no land shall be shifted from Future Urbanizing to Planned Urbanizing except by a General Plan Amendment approved by the City Council and a majority approval vote at a city-wide election. Once land is shifted, a rezone or subsequent development approval shall be in accordance with applicable requirements. Finally, a General Plan Amendment to shift land may be initiated by the City on its own motion or by a property owner.

Pursuant to this council policy, a phase shift vote was entered on the ballot in June 1994 to shift the North City FUA from a Future Urbanizing Area to a Planned Urbanizing Area. The measure did not pass.

***City Council Policy 600-10, "Adequacy of Public Facilities in Connection with Development Proposals."*** This policy addresses the timing of public services for new developments to ensure availability commensurate with need. It requires that:

- New development be consistent with a master development plan for the general area which has been reviewed by the Planning Commission and adopted by the council;
- The development include an implementation section which sets forth in detail measures to be taken to ensure that needed public services are provided concurrent with need in the development; and
- The proponent present evidence satisfactory to the appropriate body or agency that the required public services will in fact be provided concurrent with need.

### **North City Future Urbanizing Area Framework Plan**

***General Background.*** The Framework Plan for the North City FUA was adopted in October 1992 as the culmination of a two-year-long planning effort by the City of San Diego and the Citizens Advisory Committee for the FUA. The Framework Plan is intended to serve as a guide for development of the FUA. It identifies land uses and tentative development intensities at a General Plan level of detail. The Framework Plan amended the City's Progress Guide and General Plan. Where Framework Plan policies

are more detailed than policies in the Progress Guide and General Plan, the Framework Plan policies govern.

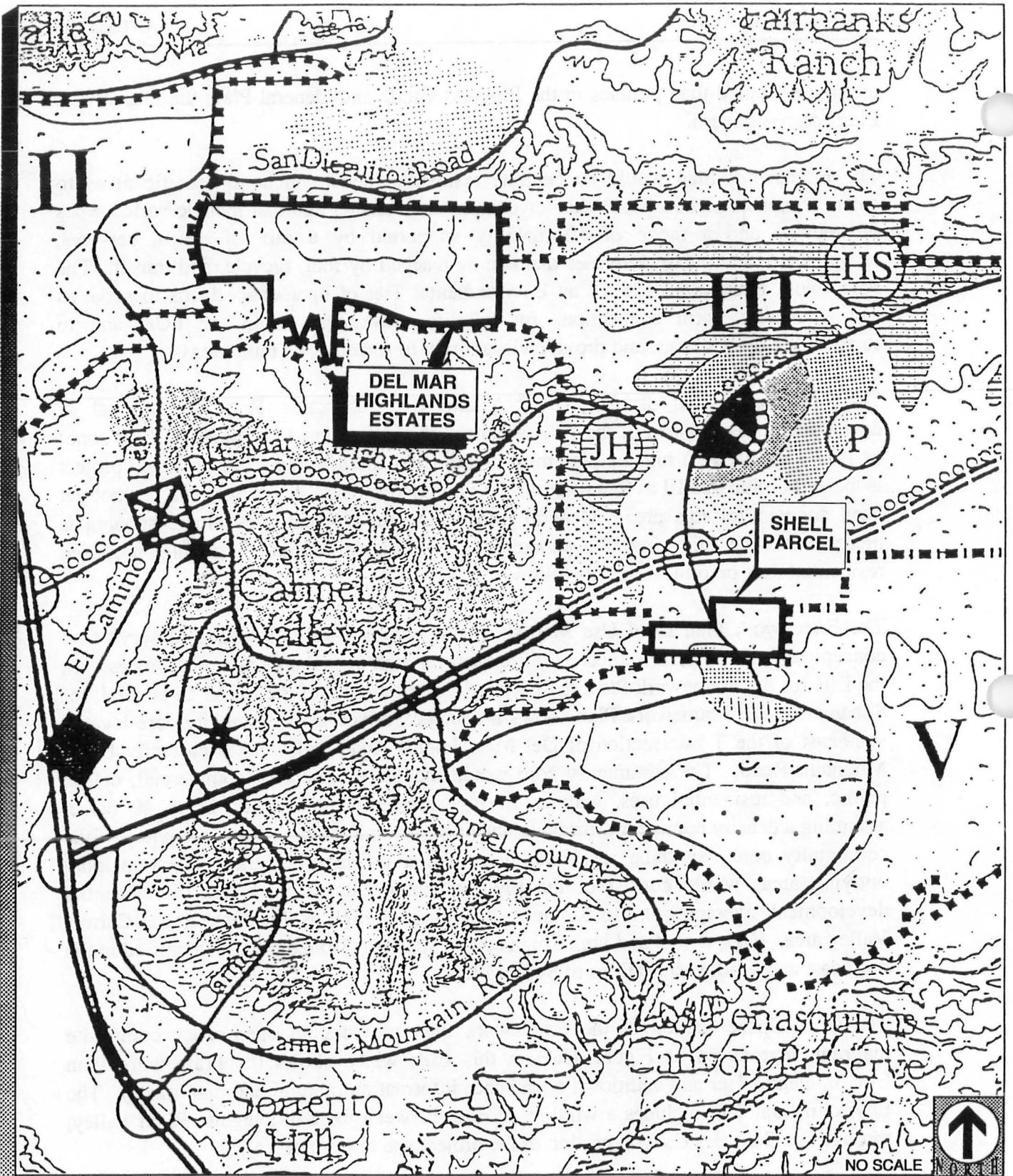
The Framework Plan would concentrate residential development in specific areas to create compact neighborhoods that have an urban character and that include varied types of housing and a range of affordability supported by a mix of shops, services, employment, and public activities that can be reached by foot, bicycle, and transit. The Framework Plan also identifies an Environmental Tier of open space lands to serve as natural habitat, form connections for wildlife movement within the FUA and to surrounding open spaces, and provide visual relief to surrounding built areas.

The Framework Plan divides the FUA into five subareas. Prior to approval of development in a subarea of the FUA at a density greater than 1 du/10 ac (A-1-10 zone) or 1 du/4 ac (PRD), a subarea plan must be prepared and adopted. The proposed project is located in Subarea III as identified in the Framework Plan. A subarea plan has not yet been adopted for this area. General information on planned uses in the subarea is presented in the following two paragraphs. Specific information regarding proposed residential uses on project parcels follow.

The Framework Plan Land Use Map shown in Figure 4A-2 is intended to serve as a conceptual land use plan, subject to refinement through the subarea planning process. In the EIR for the Framework Plan, the City estimated buildout of the FUA. In general, for Subarea III, the Framework Plan shows a compact, mixed-use community core located southeast of the T intersection of Del Mar Heights Road and what is currently Black Mountain Road. The community core would include a variety of commercial, office, public, and residential uses, with an average residential density of 11 to 40 du/ac, assuming a density bonus for affordable housing. Around the immediate periphery of the community core would be residential uses and a community park. The remaining outlying areas would consist of the Environmental Tier with pockets of residential development, averaging 0.2 to 5.2 du/ac but going as high as 7.0 du/ac in the Carmel Valley area. High school and junior high school sites are also tentatively identified in the northeast and southwest portions of Subarea III.

The Open Space section of the Framework Plan provides an open space composite diagram, reproduced as Figure 4A-3 in this EIR, which shows the Framework Plan Environmental Tier and additional open space information (natural and man-made). The Environmental Tier includes a wildlife corridor between the San Dieguito River valley, through the Gonzales Canyon portion of the project site to Carmel Valley.

***Del Mar Highlands Estates.*** As shown in Figure 4A-2, the Framework Plan envisions estate residential development for the Del Mar Highlands Estates project site at 0.2 dwelling unit per gross acre. This density would allow the development of 77 units on the 389-acre project site. As mentioned previously, however, in the absence of a phase




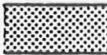
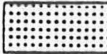
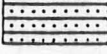

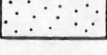
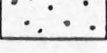
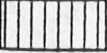


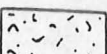
Source: Helix Environmental 1995

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






FIGURE 4A-2

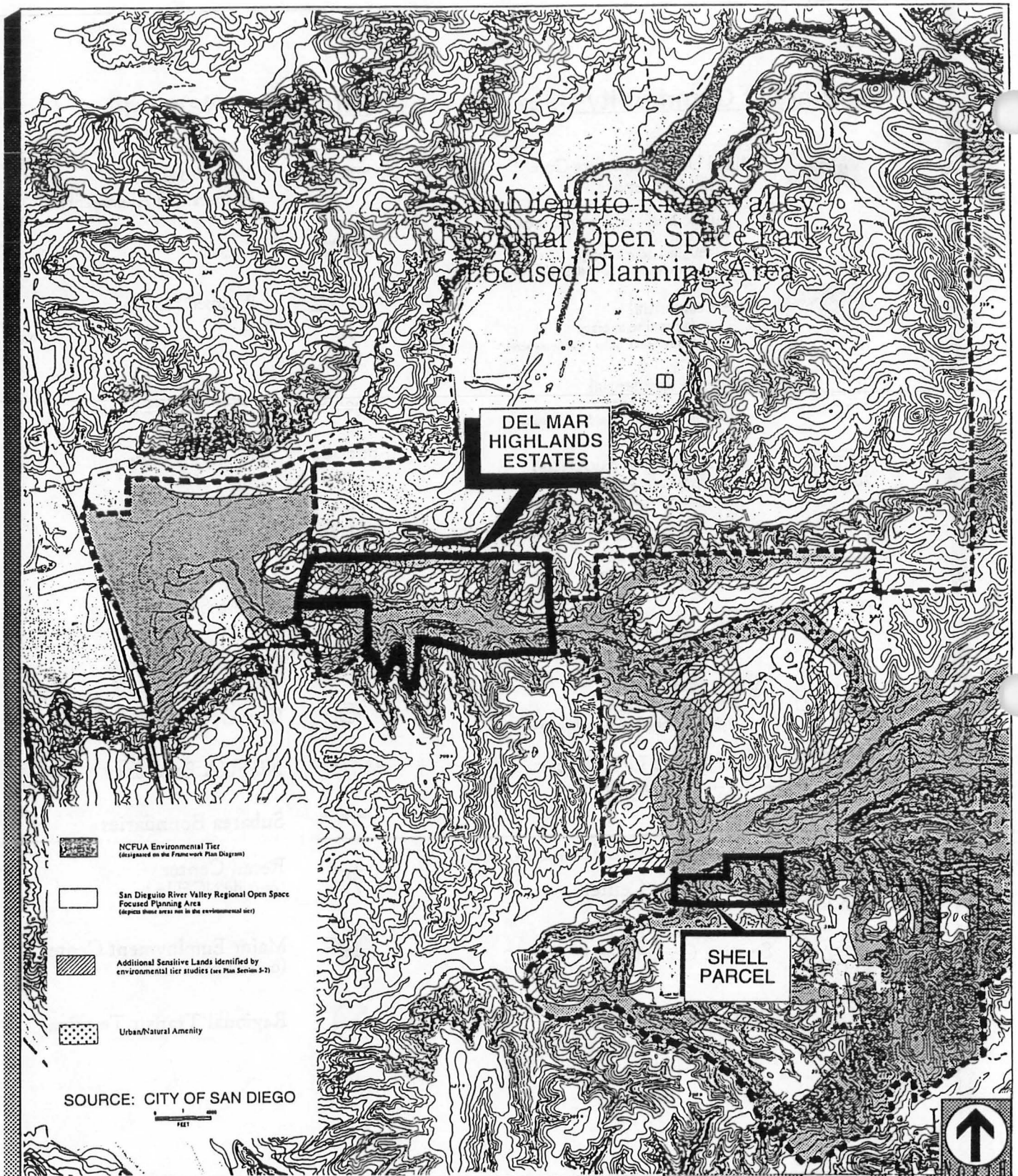
Framework Plan Land Use Map

## Compact Community Uses

	<b>Mixed Use Community Core</b> retail and service office public and semi-public uses residential 32 du/gross acre average (with density bonus, up to 40 du/gross acre)
	<b>Core Residential</b> 11 du/gross acre average (with density bonus, up to 14 du/gross acre)
	<b>Peripheral Residential</b> 7 du/gross acre average (with density bonus, up to 8.7 du/gross acre)
	<b>Low Density Residential</b> 4 du/gross acre average (with density bonus, up to 5.2 du/gross acre)
	<b>Moderately Low Density Residential</b> 1.6 du/gross acre average (with density bonus, up to 2 du/gross acre)
	<b>Very Low Density Residential</b> .8 du/gross acre average (with density bonus, up to 1 du/gross acre)
	<b>Estate Residential</b> .2 du/gross acre average (with density bonus, up to .25 du/gross acre)
	<b>Local Mixed Use Center</b> local-serving retail public and semi-public uses residential 14 du/gross acre average (with density bonus, up to 17.2 du/gross acre)
	<b>Employment Center</b>
	<b>Service Commercial</b>
	<b>Environmental Tier</b>

## Circulation Network

	<b>Major Roadway</b> (Generalized Alignment)
	<b>Freeway</b>
	<b>Proposed Freeway</b>
	<b>Interchange</b>
	<b>Transit Emphasis</b>
	<b>Transit Exclusive Right-of-Way</b>
	<b>High School</b>
	<b>Junior High/ Middle School</b>
	<b>Community Park</b>
	<b>City Operations Station</b>
	<b>NCFUA Boundary</b>
	<b>Subarea Boundaries</b>
	<b>Retail Center</b> (outside NCFUA)
	<b>Major Employment Center</b> (outside NCFUA)
	<b>Regional Transit Terminal</b>



Source: Helix Environmental 1995

**FIGURE 4A-3**  
**Framework Plan Open Space**  
**Composite Plan**

shift and an adopted subarea plan, development of the project site is only permitted at up to one unit per ten acres (A-1-10 zoning) or up to one unit per four acres (PRD) with clustering. These density limits would allow a maximum of 38 units or 97 units, respectively. Development at greater than 1 unit per 10 acres is subject to additional restrictions under the Framework Plan, as described previously for Council Policy 600-29. This PRD application includes both the Shell parcel and the Del Mar Highlands Estates parcel. Density would be calculated over both parcels.

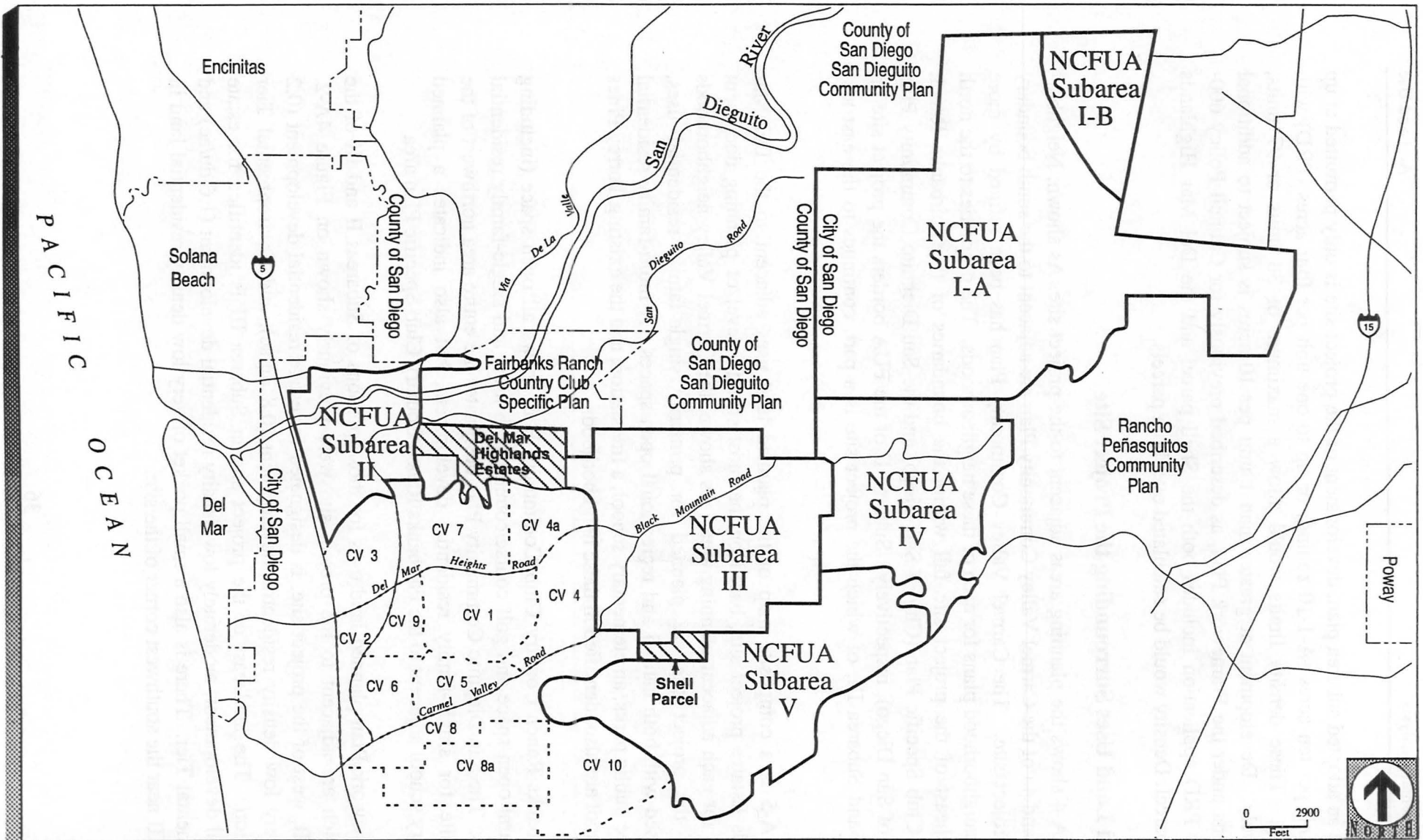
### **Planned Land Uses Surrounding the Project Site**

Figure 4A-4 shows the planning areas adjacent to the project site. As shown, Neighborhoods 7 and 4a of the Carmel Valley Community Plan are adjacent to the south boundary of the project site. The Carmel Valley Community Plan has been refined by more specific neighborhood plans for each of these neighborhoods. The properties to the north and northeast of the project site fall within the boundaries of the Fairbanks Ranch Country Club Specific Plan (City of San Diego) and the San Dieguito Community Plan (County of San Diego), respectively. Subarea II of the FUA borders the project site on the west and Subarea III, of which the project site is a part, continues to the east and south.

Figure 4A-5 is a composite map of the planned land uses adjacent to the Del Mar Highlands Estates project site, based on the most specific level of planning document available for each adjacent planning area. As shown, the Carmel Valley neighborhoods south of the project site are planned for primarily single-family residential uses, interspersed with both natural and recreational open spaces. A multi-family residential area, three public parks, an elementary school, a fire station, and the existing Torrey Pines High School are also identified in these neighborhoods.

The Fairbanks Ranch Country Club Community Plan shows all open space (including both natural open space and golf course/country club uses) and single-family residential land uses. The San Dieguito Community Plan designates the entire area northwest of the project site for single-family residential development, but also indicates a planned elementary school adjacent to the Fairbanks Ranch Country Club Specific Plan area.

The Framework Plan planned land uses for those portions of Subareas II and III of the FUA which are adjacent to the project site were previously shown on Figure 4A-2. Subarea II, west of the project site, is designated for estate residential development (0.2 du/ac), very low density residential development (0.8 du/ac), and Environmental Tier preservation. The land east of the project site in Subarea III is identified for estate residential development, moderately low density residential development (1.6 du/ac) and Environmental Tier. There is also a small pocket of very low density residential land in Subarea III near the southwest corner of the site.



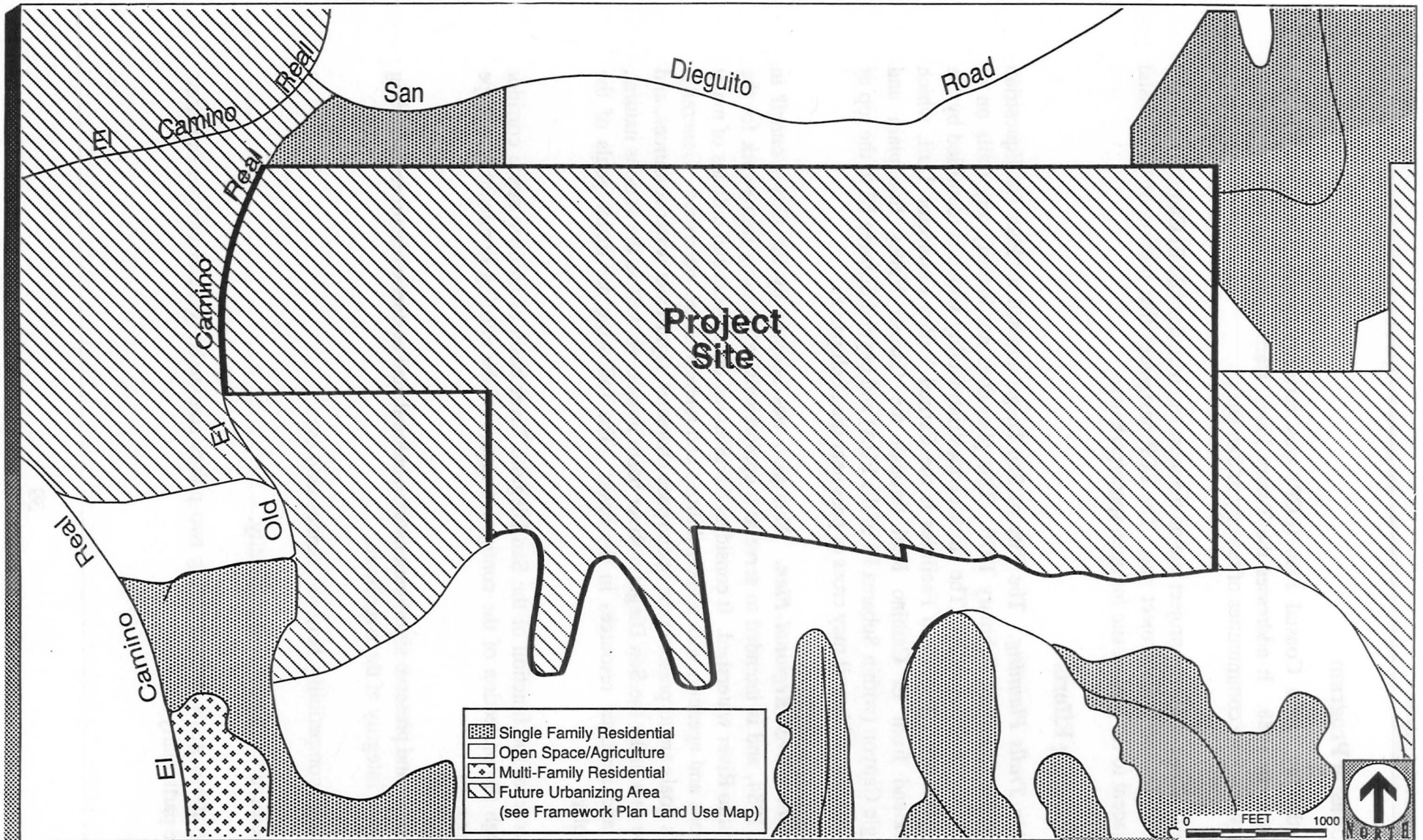
Source: Helix Environmental 1995

CV = Carmel Valley Community Neighborhood

NCFUA = North City Future Urbanizing Area

**FIGURE 4A-4**

**Community and Specific Planning Areas in the NCFUA Vicinity**



Source: Helix Environmental 1995

FIGURE 4A-5

**Del Mar Highlands Estates  
Planned Land Use Map**



### Local Coastal Program

The North City Local Coastal Plan (LCP) was certified by the California Coastal Commission in 1988. It addresses the Torrey Pines, Carmel Valley, Mira Mesa, and University–La Jolla communities of the city of San Diego.

The Coastal Zone abuts the project site on the west and includes Old El Camino Real, but does not extend onto the project site. The LCP designates that portion of the Coastal Zone adjacent to the project site for open space/park uses.

### Other Planning Efforts

***Equestrian Trails Planning.*** The City of San Diego adopted a “Plan for Equestrian Trails and Facilities” in February 1976. This plan does not identify any trails on or adjacent to the project parcels. The closest equestrian facility which is identified by the Plan for Equestrian Trails and Facilities is the Carmel Valley Connector Trail, which would extend from El Camino Real through the Carmel Valley floodplain and McGonigle Canyon (within Subarea III of the FUA) and beyond Subarea III to the top of Black Mountain. This trail may cross or pass near the Shell parcel.

***San Dieguito River Regional Plan.*** This plan was adopted by the City Council in October, 1984, and is intended to serve as a comprehensive planning framework for the San Dieguito River watershed. It considers the planning documents and policies of many jurisdictions and agencies with responsibilities and interest in the watershed. Generally, the plan’s goals are to preserve the open space character, significant water resources, and landscape that make the San Dieguito River basin unique, as well as the various natural, cultural, and aesthetic resources in the basin. The following are major goals of the regional plan:

- To preserve the function of the San Dieguito River basin as an open space corridor through the protection of the contiguous nature of the existing dominant landscape features.
- To protect and preserve significant natural, cultural, and aesthetic resources, including the visual integrity of the river basin.
- To ensure compatibility between various land uses.
- To preserve water quality and quantity.

From the above goals, the following two points summarize general recommendations which are particularly relevant:

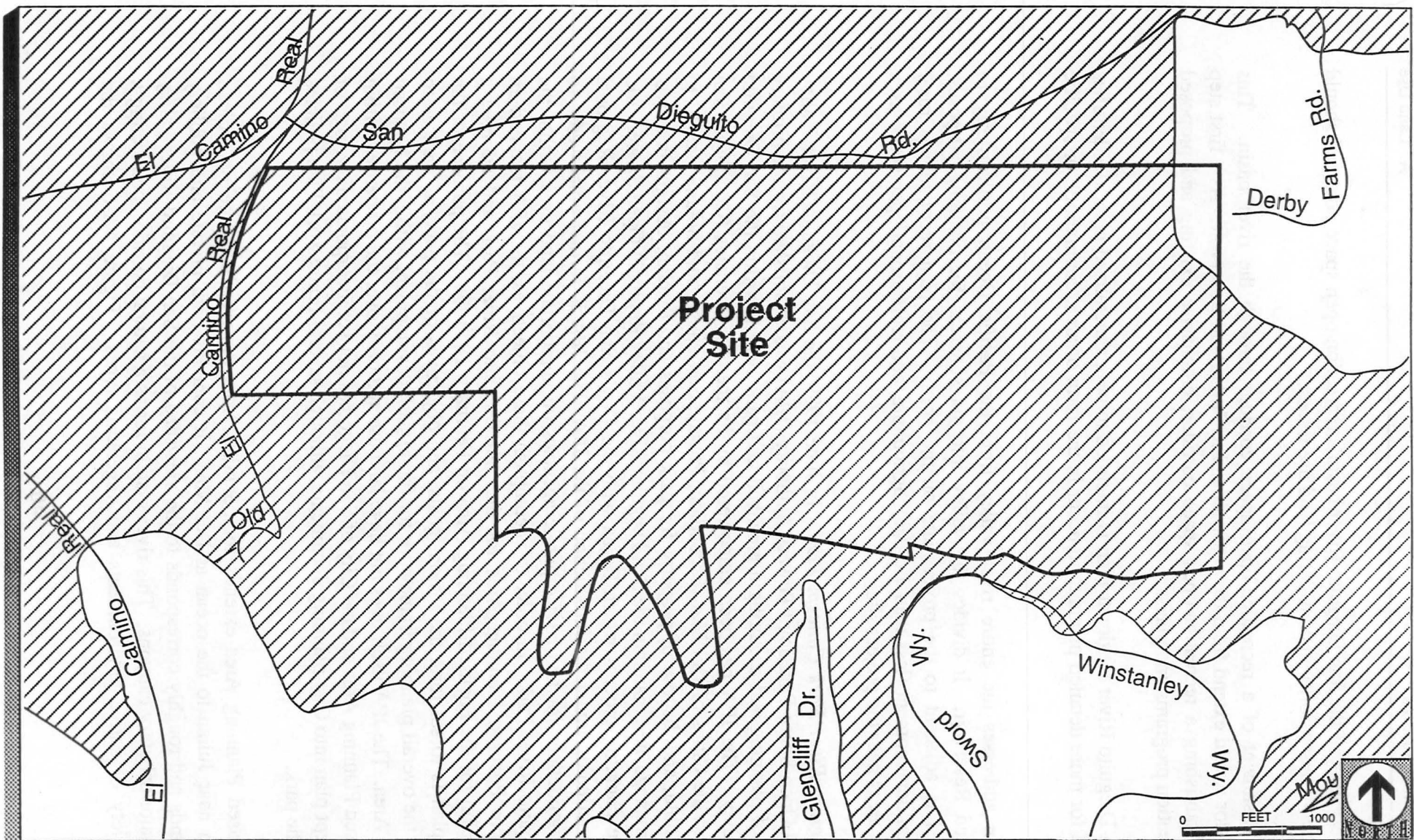
- Preservation of the San Dieguito River basin's recreation/open space potential should be the highest priority in considering land use issues.
- Establishment of a recreation/open space corridor through the river basin. This corridor would extend from the coast, inland to Sutherland Reservoir. As a first step in establishing a recreation/open space corridor, emphasize existing and proposed recreation programs and plans.

The San Dieguito River Regional Plan is intended to be a generalized plan. It identifies the need for more detailed planning to occur in the form of area, community, or specific plans.


The plan addresses the entire river valley from the Pacific Ocean northeasterly to Sutherland Reservoir. It divides the valley into six subareas for planning purposes. Subarea I is adjacent to the project site on the north. The plan recommends rural residential development (less than 1 du/ac), agriculture, and recreational/open space uses for those areas near the project site.

***San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan.*** In June 1989, the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park Joint Powers Authority (JPA) was established for the primary purpose of planning and acquiring a greenbelt and park system within the San Dieguito River valley. The JPA has been empowered by its member agencies (County of San Diego and the Cities of Del Mar, Escondido, Poway, San Diego, and Solana Beach) to acquire, hold, and dispose of property for park purposes and to plan, design, improve, operate, manage, and maintain the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park. Thus, the planning process which began with the City's San Dieguito River Regional Plan is continuing under the jurisdiction of the JPA. The JPA is further empowered to establish guidelines for and advise public agencies on appropriate land uses within the San Dieguito River Park. In order to accomplish these objectives, the JPA mapped an 80,000-acre Focused Planning Area for the San Dieguito River Park and adopted a concept plan for the Focused Planning Area on February 18, 1994. The purpose of the concept plan is to set forth the vision, goals, and objectives of the park, as well as to establish the overall planning framework for future park development within the Focused Planning Area. The JPA itself does not have land use authority over the properties within the Focused Planning Area and the City of San Diego has not yet incorporated any part of the concept plan into City planning documents, although several Framework Plan policies address the park.

The Focused Planning Area extends for 55 miles from the river's source on Volcan Mountain near Julian to the ocean at Del Mar. It contains both private and publicly owned lands and roughly corresponds to the viewshed of the San Dieguito River valley and its major tributary canyons. This river system forms a natural corridor, connecting a wide variety of native environments and vegetation types. Figure 4A-6 shows the



Source: Helix Environmental 1995

 Focused planning area

**FIGURE 4A- 6**

**San Diegouito River Valley  
Regional Park Focused Planning Area**

boundaries of the Focused Planning Area within the project area. As shown, it includes all of the project site, with the exception of the northeast corner, and continues along Gonzales Canyon, the San Dieguito River valley, and La Zanja Canyon east and west of the site. Gonzales and La Zanja Canyons are identified by the concept plan as important wildlife habitat links and open space trail connections to Carmel Valley. The plan states that special attention should be given to viewsheds of specific activity areas, although buffering of development with trees would be appropriate where compatible with wildlife habitat.

The vision of the concept plan is “to create an open space park within the 55-mile-long San Dieguito River valley that will protect the valley’s unique resources, while providing compatible recreational opportunities for the San Diego region.” The stated overall goal of the concept plan is to “preserve land within the Focused Planning Area of the San Dieguito River Park as a regional open space greenway and park system that protects the natural waterways and the natural and cultural resources; provides compatible recreational opportunities that do not damage sensitive lands; and provides a continuous and coordinated system of preserved lands with a connecting corridor of walking, equestrian, and bicycle trails encompassing the San Dieguito River valley from the ocean to the river’s source and beyond.” The general objectives for the park, as stated in the concept plan, are as follows:

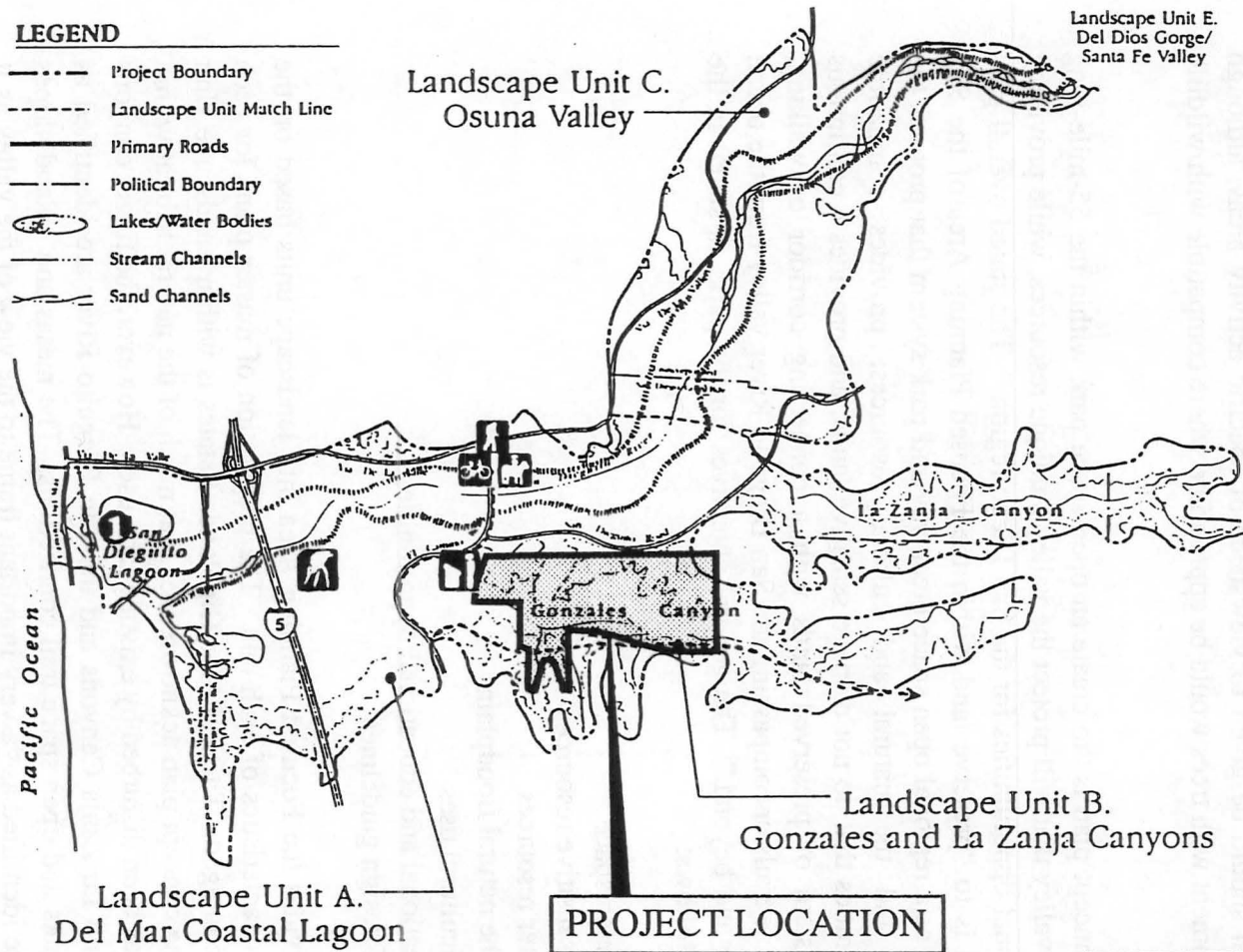
- Preservation of open space
- Conservation of sensitive resources
- Protection of water resources
- Preservation of the natural floodplain
- Retention of agricultural uses
- Creation of recreational and educational opportunities
- Establishment of design guidelines

The concept plan divides the Focused Planning Area into landscape units based on the differing physical characteristics of each unit. The preparation of master plans for each landscape unit is encouraged. The Del Mar Highlands Estates is within Landscape Unit B (Figure 4A-7). The concept plan acknowledges that much of the natural habitat within this landscape unit has been disturbed by existing land uses. However, the finger canyons between Gonzales and La Zanja Canyons and the San Dieguito River are identified as important wildlife links and open space trail connections. The mesas and upland slopes of these drainages are identified as “a very important frame to the view of the valley as it narrows.” Within Landscape Unit B, the concept plan calls for:

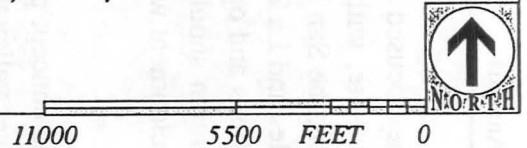
- Dedication of open space corridors within Gonzales and La Zanja Canyons in conjunction with development. These corridors should be of adequate size to accommodate both wildlife and human movement. Existing sensitive habitat in these

**LEGEND**

- Project Boundary
- Landscape Unit Match Line
- Primary Roads
- Political Boundary
- Lakes/Water Bodies
- Stream Channels
- Sand Channels



**PROJECT LOCATION**



- San Dieguito Lagoon Enhancement Area
- Interpretive Center
- Sikes Adobe Restoration
- Campground
- Coast to Crest Trail Corridor  
Hiking, Bicycling & Equestrian
- Secondary Trails
- Vista Point

**1** San Diego County Fair Grounds

**FIGURE 4A-7**

**San Dieguito River Park  
Concept Plan (1994)**

Source: San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority 1994

corridors should be preserved and, where necessary, native habitats should be restored.

- Setback of development on the adjacent ridges from the top of slope in order to reduce its visibility from the river valley and canyons, as well as to provide for an upland transition area that will serve to buffer the development from the adjoining natural habitat. Architectural treatment should be sensitive to the views from the park, and appropriate landscaping should be provided within a transition buffer area to help screen the development.
- Construction of canyon overlooks or viewpoints within future development proposals that will provide visual access to interested park visitors.
- Maintenance and improvement of the equestrian facilities within this landscape unit.
- Sensitive siting of trails intended for hiking and equestrian use that connect to the regional trail systems in Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Black Mountain Park, and Carmel Valley. Existing trails and dirt roads should be utilized wherever feasible.
- Provision of a small trail staging area within this landscape unit for parking and access to the proposed trail system.
- Development of a park headquarters in Landscape Unit A or B that, in addition to administration, could serve as a park information and visitor's center, provide ranger housing and a central location for docent and volunteer programs, and provide a base for scientific research and educational programs on coastal wetlands.

The concept plan also lists implementing principles for development adjacent to the San Dieguito River Park Focused Planning Area. These principles call for minimizing alteration of drainageways and landforms, conforming development in hillside areas to the natural setting, preserving significant native vegetation, and clustering units where appropriate to minimize intrusion into sensitive habitat areas. Additional principles encourage blending of development with the hillside background and topography, preservation of public views, restoration of disturbed open space areas, minimal grading, setbacks from ridges and bluffs, use of landscaping as screening, use of shielded low-sodium exterior lighting, and variation of rooflines. On May 19, 1995, the JPA adopted a Private Property Rights Protection Policy which reiterates that the JPA does not have land use authority and states that the JPA respects private property rights and will not recommend or participate in hostile condemnation of private property for park purposes. It further states that the right to review and comment on private development proposals is in an advisory capacity only.

## **b) Shell Parcel**

### **Existing Land Uses**

This parcel is currently in open space. The Shell parcel abuts agricultural fields within Carmel Valley and includes southeasterly trending finger canyons (which contain agriculture along the canyon floors) extending into the mesa. Several trails or dirt roads are present through the south central section of the parcel. Sensitive wildlife habitat, including mule fat scrub and three varieties of Diegan coastal sage scrub, occur on-site. Along the northwestern boundary, the parcel is abutted by a residential property associated with the agricultural activity. The "Vintage at Palacio del Mar" development is located just west of a farm property in Carmel Valley.

### **Zoning Designations**

This parcel also shares the A-1-10 zoning designation and is partially within the HR Overlay Zone, as described above. Portions of the Shell parcel are within the FW and FPF zones associated with Deer Canyon.

### **City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan**

**Land Use Designations.** The Shell parcel contains "open space" designations in the major drainage areas (Deer Canyon itself and Carmel Valley) and is designated "Area for Future Growth" on the mesas in the City's 1989 Progress Guide and General Plan. These designations have been superseded by the FUA Framework Plan, as described above in Section 4.A.a.

**Land Use and Environmental Goals and Objectives.** The land use and environmental goals and objectives applicable to this project area are described in detail above in Section 4.A.a.

### **City of San Diego Council Policies**

City of San Diego council policies which are applicable to development within the Future Urbanizing Area, in which this project area is located, are described in detail above in Section 4.A.a.

### **North City Future Urbanizing Area Framework Plan**

Background information regarding the North City Future Urbanizing Area Framework Plan is provided above in Section 4.A.a. Based on Figure 3-2 in the Framework Plan, development for the Shell parcel anticipated approximately 5.0 acres of peripheral residential, or a maximum of approximately 35 dwelling units at 7 dwelling units per gross acre.

### **Planned Land Uses Surrounding the Project Site**

A currently developing use just west of the Shell parcel is the 478-unit “Vintage at Palacio del Mar” residential development located along the south bank of Carmel Valley and extending westerly to Carmel Country Road. Other planned uses include Environmental Tier which abuts the Shell parcel intermittently.

### **Local Coastal Program**

Over two-thirds of the Shell parcel is within the Deer Canyon portion of the Coastal Zone, as mapped by the California Coastal Commission. These areas are identified for public and semi-public open space and other open space systems in the LCP (City of San Diego 1981:105).

### **Resource Protection Ordinance**

RPO would apply to any development on the Shell parcel. RPO requirements which are potentially relevant to the parcel were discussed in detail above for Del Mar Highlands Estates. The Shell parcel contains approximately 69.5 acres of biologically sensitive lands and slopes in excess of 25 percent.

#### **Land Use Issues**

1. Would the proposed project implement existing plans and policies of the City and would the project be compatible with existing and future land uses?
2. Would the proposed project be consistent with the goals and objectives of the North City Local Coastal Program and coastal ordinances?
3. Would the proposed land uses and open space be compatible with adjacent existing or planned uses and environmental plans?
4. Would the project result in a conflict with the purpose and intent of Council Policy 600-40 and the Resource Protection Ordinance or the Resource Protection Overlay Zone?

### **1) Issue**

Would the proposed project implement existing plans and policies of the City and would the project be compatible with existing and future land uses?



## Impacts

The proposed project would create 148 clustered residential lots and 1 affordable housing lot (for the construction of 24 affordable housing units) on the project site. This proposed density is based on the allowable PRD development for the project site (97 units) and 21 units transferred from the 84-acre Shell parcel, plus a 46 percent density bonus for affordable housing. Such development is permitted by the Framework Plan and Council Policy 600-29 prior to the availability of an approved subarea plan and phase shift to Planned Urbanizing Area. The clustering of the proposed development, provision of affordable housing, and preservation of Gonzales Canyon would be consistent with the land use policies of the General Plan and the Framework Plan, which encourage clustering to reduce impacts on sensitive resources.

The proposed project identifies 166.32 acres of the site as development area, leaving 222.68 acres (57 percent of the site) to be dedicated to the City as open space within the Framework Plan Environmental Tier. These nondevelopable areas would primarily consist of existing sensitive resource areas, as well as Gonzales Canyon, which is predominantly in agricultural use.

The Shell parcel where the 21 units would be transferred to Del Mar Highlands Estates, consisting of 84.42 acres, would retain no development rights. Approximately 83 percent of the parcel contains sensitive resources, but 100 percent of it would be deeded to the City. For the purposes of the Del Mar Highlands Estates PRD, therefore, parcels covered in the PRD total 473.42 acres, of which only 166.32 acres is proposed as developable (i.e., 35 percent). Approximately 307 acres, or 65 percent of the combined parcels, would be maintained in open space.

The percentage of Environmental Tier acreage on the proposed PRD site plan exceeds the percentage of Environmental Tier acreage identified in the Framework Plan for Subarea III (i.e., 65 percent versus 47 percent), and the configuration of the open space areas is generally comparable with the preliminary Environmental Tier boundaries in the Framework Plan. Although precise development boundaries do not match those identified in the Framework Plan (both north/south connections between Gonzales Canyon and San Dieguito are on the western side of the property rather than one to the east and one to the west as shown in the Framework Plan), the general boundaries of potential residential versus Environmental Tier match. Thus, the proposed project would meet the goals and objectives of the Framework Plan and the General Plan with respect to the Environmental Tier in the FUA. The Environmental Tier areas identified on the PRD site plan are contiguous and contribute toward the future connectivity with the San Dieguito River valley to the north and west and southerly through Carmel Valley toward the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. The proposed PRD site plan shows Environmental Tier through Gonzales Canyon on the project site, consistent with the Framework Plan.

The Del Mar Highlands Estates project would construct 24 units of affordable housing, preserve significant native vegetation, and propose clustering of units, as encouraged by the Framework Plan.

The proposed project is consistent with the Framework Plan and Council Policy 600-10 goals and policies regarding the provision of needed public facilities at the time of need and avoiding leapfrog development. The project site is surrounded by development, with public utilities connections to serve the project available in nearby roadways and Gonzales Canyon.

The proposed project would be consistent with the PRD regulations, which allow development of one unit per four acres, with clustering of units. In addition to the 97 units which would normally be permitted for the 389-acre project site, the development rights for 21 units are proposed to be transferred to the Del Mar Highlands Estates site from the Shell parcel, which totals 84 acres. Conformance with the Hillside Review Overlay Zone (through the Resource Protection Ordinance) is addressed under Issue 3 below and in Section 4.C, Landform Alteration/Visual Quality.

## **Significance of Impacts**

The proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates project would be consistent with PRD regulations and would generally comply with the land use goals, objectives, and recommendations of the Progress Guide and General Plan, the Framework Plan, and City Council Policies 600-29 and 600-30. Furthermore, the proposed projects would cluster development and dedicate open space land consistent with the Framework Plan Environmental Tier. No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

## **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

No mitigation is required.

### **2) Issue**

Would the proposed project be consistent with the goals and objectives of the North City Local Coastal Program and coastal ordinances?

## **Impacts**

The project site is not within the Coastal Zone. Therefore, the project site is not subject to the requirements of the Coastal Zone and no amendments to the LCP will be required in conjunction with approval of the proposed project. Minor utility extensions or

upgrades may occur within Old El Camino Real, however, which lies within the Coastal Zone.

The North City LCP designates land west of Old El Camino Real, across from the project site, for open space and park uses. The proposed project would establish Environmental Tier, affordable housing, and one residential lot adjacent to Old El Camino Real. These uses would be compatible with this adjacent land use designation.

## **Significance of Impacts**

The project site is not within the Coastal Zone and would not affect the North City LCP.

## **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

Mitigation measures are not necessary.

### **3) Issue**

Would the proposed land uses and open space be compatible with adjacent existing or planned uses and environmental plans?

## **Impacts**

### **a) Adjacent Existing or Planned Uses**

The proposed project would extend water utilities across the existing SDG&E easement containing aboveground high-power lines and buried fuel and natural gas lines. No other development would occur within this easement. The design guidelines for the proposed project do not allow any structures other than fencing to be located within SDG&E's easement. The issue of encroachment into the SDG&E easement is addressed further in Section 4.LK, Public Facilities and Services. The potential for adverse health impacts due to development near high-power transmission lines is addressed in Section 4.L, Public Safety.

The proposed residential use and open space areas are considered to be compatible with the adjacent existing single-family residential open space, equestrian, agricultural, and country club uses. The proposed access off San Dieguito Road and Old El Camino Real to serve the proposed project would add an estimated 1,776 and 240 traffic trips to those roadways, respectively (see Section 4.H). Emergency access only is proposed at the eastern boundary (Derby Farms Road) adjacent to the Senterra single-family residential

development. This would result in less than significant traffic, noise, and visual impacts on the single-family homes along these roads.

There is the potential for land use conflicts between future on-site residents and the commercial agricultural operation which is likely to continue just off-site to the east. Minor noise and dust impacts may be associated with this remaining agricultural/residential interface.

The planned land uses in the adjacent Carmel Valley, Fairbanks Ranch Country Club, and FUA planning areas, which are immediately adjacent to the project site, are all single-family residential and open space uses. These uses are compatible with the single-family residential and open space uses proposed on-site.

Grading and construction of the Del Mar Highlands Estates project are expected to take approximately three years. Site grading and construction of the proposed roadways and utilities would occur first, followed by construction of the homes. Residents of existing homes surrounding the site and those homes which would be constructed earlier in the project buildout process are likely to experience short-term nuisance impacts due to ongoing construction activities. These impacts would include unsightly views of bare dirt areas and construction trailers and equipment, as well as noise and dust from construction activities. Many of these impacts are already being experienced by residents immediately south and east of the Del Mar Highlands Estates site, due to the existing agricultural activities on the site. Visual and noise impacts, which contribute to short-term nuisance impacts, are addressed further in Sections 4.C and 4.J of this EIR.

## **b) Environmental Plans**

### **San Dieguito River Regional Plan**

The planning area for this park plan is adjacent to the project site on the north. The recommended residential, agricultural, and open space/recreational land uses and equestrian/hiking amenities in the regional plan are consistent with the designated residential land use and open space areas which the project proposes along the northern boundary of the site.

### **San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan**

The San Dieguito River Park Focused Planning Area includes all but the northeast corner of the project site. Most of the project site is within the viewshed of either the San Dieguito River Valley or Gonzales Canyon. However, due to the low number of potentially visible residences on-site (fewer than approximately 30) and the clustering of development primarily in previously disturbed agricultural areas in the eastern and central parts of the site, the character of the project site (as seen from the Focused Planning Area) will be consistent with the existing surrounding developments which are visible from the

Focused Planning Area, including single-family residential subdivisions, a polo field, and rural residential and equestrian uses. The project would continue the suburbanization of the viewshed in the San Dieguito River valley.

The proposed design guidelines include measures that implement the principles for development adjacent to significant natural areas. These include building setbacks from the edge of the development pads above Gonzales Canyon and the San Dieguito River valley, building height limits, perimeter lot wall and fencing requirements to screen development, allowances for sensitive siting of pedestrian trails, and dedication of open space corridors in Gonzales Canyon.

The project plans show Environmental Tier lands along much of the northern site boundary, adjacent to the San Dieguito River valley. The development areas for Lots 8-9 and 12-13 touch the northern site boundary. The developable areas for the remaining lots above the San Dieguito River valley are set back approximately 100 to 500 feet from the northern site boundary. The concept plan encourages the dedication of Gonzales Canyon as an open space corridor for both wildlife movement and human use and the provision of a recreational trail in Gonzales Canyon (see Figure 4A-7). The proposed project would be consistent with the designation of Gonzales Canyon as Environmental Tier and begin the vegetation restoration process in the canyon. Under the Framework Plan, recreational trails are permitted in the transitional zone of the Environmental Tier. Thus, the proposed project is generally considered to be compatible with the concept plan (see Section 4.C, Landform Alteration/Visual Quality, for additional discussion). However, the proposed project would not provide for a trail staging area or canyon overlooks or view points, which the concept plan calls for somewhere in Landscape Unit B. However, these facilities could be sited elsewhere in Landscape Unit B of the Focused Planning Area.

### **Plan for Equestrian Trails and Facilities**

The 1976 City plan does not identify any equestrian trails or facilities on or adjacent to the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not adversely impact any planned equestrian trails or facilities.

## **Significance of Impacts**

Short-term, construction-related nuisance impacts to residential uses within and adjacent to the site during roadway and home construction would be less than significant, due to the distance and topographic variation between the proposed building pads and off-site existing residents, as well as the short duration of project construction.

The Del Mar Highlands Estates project is compatible with the City's equestrian plan. The project's design guidelines and development standards would implement the principles

for development adjacent to significant natural areas, as described in the Visual Quality section (4.C). No significant impacts are anticipated.

## Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

No mitigation is required.

### 4) Issue

Would the project result in a conflict with the purpose and intent of the Resource Protection Ordinance?

### Impacts

Approximately 248.4 acres of the Del Mar Highlands Estates and Shell parcels (53 percent of the sites) have sensitive biological resources, as defined by RPO, and/or slopes in excess of 25 percent with a gradient differential of 50 feet or more, which are subject to the City's Hillside Review Ordinance. Approximately 180.1 acres of the 389-acre Del Mar Highlands Estates property contains sensitive resources and 69.50 acres of the 84-acre Shell parcel contains sensitive resources. The RPO calculations (Table 4A-1) include both parcels because transfer of dwelling units from the Shell parcel to Del Mar Highlands Estates must be included in a single PRD application. Under RPO, the developable areas of the proposed project are permitted to encroach into the RPO-sensitive areas by up to 14.97 acres. Exempt areas (e.g., public roadways and utilities) are permitted to encroach by up to 12.48 acres. The developable areas of the proposed project would encroach into 31.45 acres of sensitive land, which exceeds the allowable encroachment by 16.48 acres. On-site roadways proposed as part of this project, which would contain public utilities and would qualify as exempt facilities, would have a total encroachment of 7.04 acres. This is less than the combined encroachment allowance for these facilities of 12.48 acres. The proposed project would exceed the allowable encroachment under RPO.

Although the proposed project would exceed the encroachment allowance for developable area of the project site, it would provide mitigation at a minimum 2:1 ratio on-site, which would mitigate impacts to biological resources and land use. The proposed project would cluster units in the center of the site and dedicate a combined total of approximately 307 acres of the Del Mar Highlands Estates and Shell parcels as open space within the City's Environmental Tier. The proposed 166-acre development area (including roadways) is less than the total developable acreage allowed under RPO (i.e., 228.7 acres), but a large part of the RPO developable area is within the areas planned for Environmental Tier under the Framework Plan. The proposed project would impact

**TABLE 4A-1  
RPO ANALYSIS SUMMARY**

Category	Acres
PRD gross site area*	473.0
Area with no sensitive resources*	223.4
Area with sensitive biology and/or 25% slope*	249.6
Percent of site with sensitive resources*	52%
<b>RPO Maximum encroachments</b>	
Developable area	14.97 (6%)
Exempt area	12.48 (5%)
<b>PRD encroachments</b>	
Developable area	31.45
Exempt area	7.04
Maximum developable area per RPO	228.7
Proposed developable area per PRD	166.32

\*Includes Del Mar Highlands Estates and Shell parcel.

sensitive resources in the central portion of the Del Mar Highlands Estates site in excess of the encroachment allowance, but it would dedicate undisturbed sensitive biological habitat and cease current agricultural activities within Gonzales Canyon. The project would provide a 1,000-foot-wide wildlife corridor within Gonzales Canyon and a 700-foot-wide corridor between Gonzales Canyon and the San Dieguito River valley.

In addition to the dedication of Environmental Tier lands, the proposed project would construct 24 units of affordable housing.

## Significance of Impacts

Based on the preceding analysis, the proposed project would exceed the encroachment allowance for RPO but would provide adequate on-site mitigation to reduce impacts to a level below significance.

## Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

No mitigation is required.



## **B. Hydrology/Water Quality**

### **Existing Conditions**

#### **a) Del Mar Highlands Estates**

##### **Surface Water**

The project site is located within the San Dieguito hydrologic unit (HU), one of 11 statewide drainage designations. The San Dieguito HU includes an area of approximately 350 square miles and extends from the coast to just east of Santa Ysabel. Drainage is provided by three major creeks and associated tributaries, including the San Dieguito River, Santa Ysabel Creek, and Santa Maria Creek. Average annual precipitation in the San Dieguito HU ranges from approximately 11 inches along the coast to 30 inches near Santa Ysabel (Regional Water Quality Control Board [RWQCB] 1994).

Runoff within the project site flows primarily into Gonzales Canyon and drains west into the San Dieguito River, which eventually flows west to the San Dieguito Lagoon and the Pacific Ocean. Gonzales Canyon exhibits largely ephemeral runoff associated with storm events, although additional flow is associated with local irrigation runoff. On-site drainage facilities are limited to minor crossing structures (i.e., culverts) and impoundments (as described below under "Flooding Hazards"). Downstream drainage facilities include numerous crossing structures (bridges and culverts) in portions of Gonzales Canyon and the San Dieguito River. The design specifications for these downstream facilities are unknown, although it is likely that at least some of the older structures are not designed to accommodate current 100-year storm flows.

##### **Flooding Hazards**

City Council Policy 600-14 establishes provisions for development within areas of special flood hazard. This policy prohibits development within areas of special flood hazard prior to completion of flood control works (detention basins) with a capacity to contain the 100-year peak flow, the application of appropriate floodplain regulatory zoning, or demonstration that a proposed development or structure complies with the policy's provisions for flood hazard reduction. The policy establishes requirements for development approvals in floodplains, special standards of construction, and standards for utilities and subdivisions.

The City requires that all new construction or substantial improvements within the floodplain fringe zone (which lies between the floodway, or stream channel, and the outer limit of the 100-year floodplain) shall be elevated one foot above the 100-year flood elevation, or otherwise protected (pursuant to City guidelines).

The City's *Progress Guide and General Plan* (1989) recommends placing an emphasis on the multipurpose use of floodplains. The City has adopted the "California Storm Water Best Management Practices Handbook" (State of California 1993a), which is used during development of urban stormwater management plans. These BMPs describe several methods of reducing adverse effects caused by urban stormwater runoff. Several of the BMPs identified by the City and the State are included in this document as mitigation measures for potential hydrology/water quality impacts.

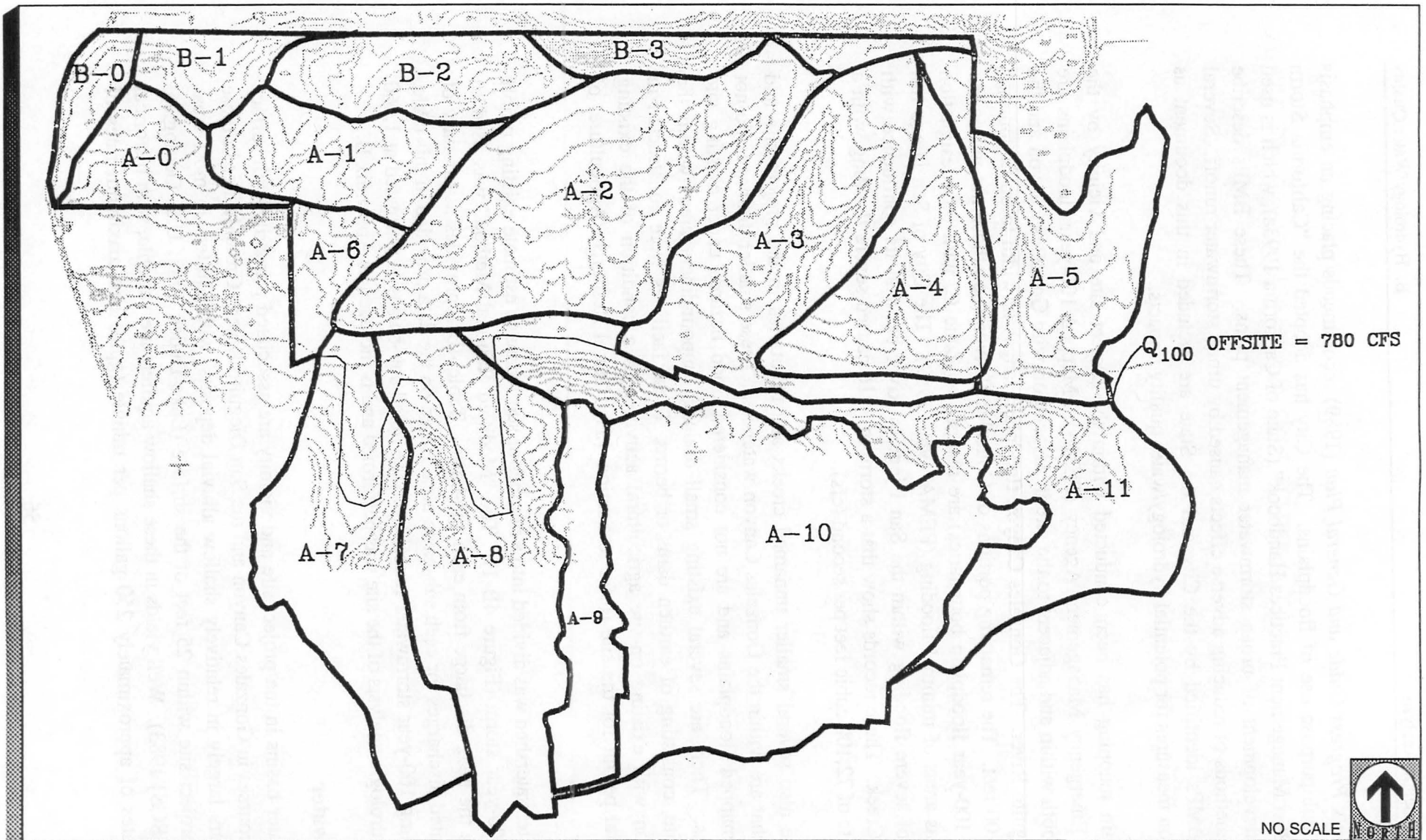
Floodplain mapping has been conducted within the project site and vicinity by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Mapped 100-year floodplains are present both within and adjacent to the site in association with Gonzales Canyon and the San Dieguito River. The Gonzales Canyon floodplain ranges in width to up to approximately 200 feet. The remaining portions of Gonzales Canyon (i.e., those not within the mapped 100-year floodplain boundaries) are mapped as Zone C, with this designation defined as areas of minimal flooding (FEMA 1983, 1989). The City of San Diego has records of severe flooding within the San Dieguito River basin at its confluence with Lusardi Creek. These records show that a storm in 1916 caused severe flooding, with a runoff rate of 72,100 cubic feet per second (cfs).

There are also several smaller unnamed creeks and tributaries in the project site and vicinity that are within the Gonzales Canyon watershed. These smaller drainages do not include mapped floodplains and are not considered flood hazards under existing site conditions. There are several existing small drainage impoundment areas within the project site, consisting of earthen dams or berms. These facilities were constructed in association with existing on-site agricultural activities as a condition of the existing agricultural permit for the site (refer to Section 4.N, Natural Resources/Agriculture, of this EIR).

The on-site watershed was divided into a number of sub-basins to estimate existing runoff from a 100-year storm (Figure 4B-1). The "Modified Rational Method" was used to determine the peak discharge from each sub-basin. Table 4B-1 provides a summary of the estimated discharges for each sub-basin area. Based on the data provided in this table, total existing 100-year stormwater runoff from the noted sub-basins is estimated at 1,060 cfs. A hydrologic analysis of the site was performed and is included as Appendix B.

### **Groundwater**

Groundwater basins in the project site and vicinity are associated primarily with surface drainage courses in Gonzales Canyon and the San Dieguito River. Groundwater in these areas occurs largely in relatively shallow alluvial deposits, with aquifers in most areas near the project site within 25 feet of the surface (Luke-Dudek 1988; U.S. Geological Survey [USGS] 1983). Well yields in these shallow aquifers are variable, with historical average rates of approximately 250 gallons per minute (gpm) and maximum rates of



Source: Helix Environmental 1995

**FIGURE 4B-1**  
**Del Mar Highlands Estates**  
**Surface Hydrology Map**

**TABLE 4B-1  
EXISTING STORMWATER RUNOFF ESTIMATES**

Subbasin Number	Area (acres)	Existing Q <sub>100</sub> (cfs)
A0	23.3 (N)	35
A1	33.3 (N)	45
A2	102.5 (N)	92
A3	54.4 (N)	70
A4	47.0 (N)	51
A5	45.0 (N)	48
A6	13.2 (N)	22
A7	67.0 (OS)	79
A8	87.4 (OS)	103
A9	27.2 (D)	38
A10	150.0 (D)	196
A11	<u>118.2 (N)</u>	<u>124</u>
<b>Total Basin A</b>	<b>768.5</b>	<b>903</b>
B0	9.7 (N)	18
B1	18.3 (N)	30
B2	54.7 (N)	76
B3	<u>17.1 (N)</u>	<u>33</u>
<b>Total Basin B</b>	<b>99.8</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>Total Basins A and B</b>	<b>868.3</b>	<b>1,060</b>

N = natural or agriculture

OS = open space

D = developed

Q<sub>100</sub> = flow associated with a storm with the probability of occurring once every 100 years

1,800 gpm (USGS 1983; California Department of Water Resources [DWR] 1975). A number of deeper groundwater basins are also present in the project site vicinity, in association with geologic strata including Tertiary sediments and Jurassic/Cretaceous metavolcanics. Groundwater associated with these deposits may occur at depths of approximately 300 to over 1,000 feet below the surface. While local production data are not known to be available for these deeper aquifers, well yields are estimated to range between approximately 2 and 125 gpm (USGS 1983). Perched groundwater may also occur seasonally in the project site and vicinity, in association with impermeable strata and high precipitation rates. Such aquifers are generally not laterally or vertically extensive and typically are not utilized as a water source.

### **Surface Water Quality**

Surface water in the project site and vicinity consists largely of intermittent storm runoff and irrigation drainage. These types of flow are subject to wide variations in water quality with factors such as runoff volume, velocities, and adjacent land use. Runoff within the project vicinity is derived from a number of agricultural, urban, and open space land uses. These types of areas can differ markedly in runoff quality, with undeveloped areas typically contributing lower quantities of contaminants such as bacteria, pesticides, nutrients, solids, and metals than urban or agricultural zones (Wigington, Randall, and Grizzard 1983). Existing and potential beneficial uses identified for surface waters in the project site and vicinity include agricultural, industrial, recreational, water reclamation, and wildlife habitat applications (RWQCB 1994).

Existing on-site agricultural operations (approximately 200 acres) are contributing to soil erosion and sedimentation of natural drainages within and adjacent to the site. In addition, these operations utilize fertilizers and pesticides which are carried by stormwater and irrigation runoff into on-site drainages and off-site into the San Dieguito River and Lagoon. No reclaimed water is currently being used on-site. Although the current water quality impacts of on-site agriculture may be incremental and less than significant for the project site alone, cumulative urban and agricultural runoff may be significant.

Over the past 10-15 years, development in the Carmel Valley community and other surrounding areas has resulted in sedimentation, urban runoff, and the associated water quality degradation within the San Dieguito River and Lagoon, Los Peñasquitos Lagoon, and Carmel Valley (Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Foundation 1985; City of San Diego 1992).

### **Groundwater Quality**

Overall groundwater quality in the project site region is considered poor, primarily due to past and current agricultural uses and/or saltwater intrusion. Groundwater that occurs in the coastal portion of the San Dieguito HU is generally sodium chloride in character, with total dissolved solids (TDS) levels typically varying from approximately 1,000 to 5,000

milligrams per liter (mg/l). Groundwater ratings for domestic use in this section of the San Dieguito HU are largely inferior, due to high TDS and sulfate content. Ratings for irrigation use in this unit are also generally inferior due to high electrical conductivity and a high chloride content (RWQCB 1994). Groundwater quality may vary locally, however, with conditions such as site-specific geology and land use. Two existing wells located in Gonzales Canyon just south of the project site, for example, yielded TDS concentrations of 947 and 1,250 mg/l during a 1981-82 study (USGS 1983). Existing and potential beneficial uses identified for groundwater in the project site vicinity include municipal, agricultural, and industrial applications (RWQCB 1994). Local groundwater is currently being used for irrigation in association with on-site agricultural activities (refer to the Natural Resources/Agriculture section (4.N) of this EIR).

## **b) Shell Parcel**

### **Surface Water**

The Shell parcel is located within the Miramar Reservoir Hydrologic Area, which is part of the Peñasquitos HU. It is also known as the Soledad basin. The Pacific Ocean forms the western border of the basin, which extends approximately 12 miles inland and covers approximately 55 square miles. Carmel Valley Creek, Los Peñasquitos Creek, and Los Peñasquitos Lagoon comprise some of the main hydrologic features of this HU. Average annual precipitation for this HU is 8 inches along the coast and 18 inches inland (RWQCB 1994).

Main hydrologic features include the westerly draining Shaw Valley Creek—a tributary of Carmel Valley Creek, and Deer Canyon Creek—which joins with McGonigle Canyon Creek to form Carmel Valley Creek. A few unnamed tributaries of Los Peñasquitos Creek flow southerly to meet Los Peñasquitos before turning westerly to drain into the ocean. The Shell parcel drains directly into Carmel Creek or its tributaries.

### **Flooding Hazards**

Deer Canyon, Shaw Valley, Carmel Valley, and Los Peñasquitos Canyon all contain creeks with 100-year floodplains identified by FEMA. Although certain floodplains enter the Shell parcel boundaries, the parcel would be maintained in permanent open space under this proposal. There are other smaller unnamed tributaries and creeks in the area, although these are all mapped as Zone C (FEMA 1983, 1989) and are not considered flood hazards at this time.

### **Groundwater**

As with Del Mar Highlands Estates, historical movement of groundwater has been toward the west, discharging to the Pacific Ocean. Groundwater may exist in the alluvial

aquifers around Shaw Valley Creek, Deer Canyon Creek, and near Los Peñasquitos Creek.

### Surface Water Quality

Deer Canyon and Shaw Valley Creeks, which receive runoff from largely undeveloped areas, are expected to carry water of fairly good quality. This is because Deer Canyon drains an undeveloped, open space area. Shaw Valley receives runoff from Del Mar Mesa, which consists largely of open space but also contains residences and equestrian facilities.

As noted above, development throughout the area is contributing to off-site problems in downstream lagoons. Analysis of sediment cores in Los Peñasquitos Lagoon indicates that pre-European contact sediment rates of 4 inches per annum had increased five times (to 20 inches per year) by 1980. Sedimentation has a strong influence on keeping the mouth of the lagoon closed, restricting tidal flushing that would benefit wildlife habitat (Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Foundation and State Coastal Conservancy 1989).

Due in part to problems associated with sedimentation caused by development, the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Foundation was formed and the *Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Management and Enhancement Plan and Program* (1985) completed. The plan established a fee program for development projects within the lagoon watershed and listed recommendations for methods to reduce sediment loading. The project parcel is within the area covered by the fee program. Suggested measures in the plan to control erosion include:

- Localized detention basins to capture runoff, reduce flow velocity, and provide settling.
- Maintenance by periodic cleaning to remove accumulated sediment and keep the basin capacity at an operational level.
- Prohibition of grading from November through March to avoid the rainy season and potential for large-scale erosion.

### Groundwater Quality

Little is known about the groundwater within the Shell parcel. Overall, however, groundwater quality in the Miramar Reservoir HU has steadily deteriorated due to increased TDS concentration and is considered to be "poor quality" by the City's Water Utilities Department. In Carmel Valley during 1954-1963, the TDS level ranged from 510 mg/l to 6100 mg/l and averaged 2000 mg/l. Wells in 1984-1985 had levels ranging from 1000 mg/l to 2000 mg/l. This decrease in average TDS concentrations was

attributed to abandonment of the well with very high levels of TDS, thereby lowering the range and mean (Evenson 1989).

### Hydrology/Water Quality Issues

1. What modifications to the natural drainage system would be required for implementation of the project? Would the project result in changes in the rate and amount of runoff?
2. What effect would implementation of the project have on downstream water quality?
3. Would the project result in alteration to the course or flow of floodwaters?

## 1) Issue

What modifications to the natural drainage system would be required for implementation of the project? Would the project result in changes in the rate and amount of runoff?

## Impacts

Project implementation would result in reclamation of Gonzales Canyon from agricultural use and placement of this major drainage into naturally vegetated open space. Portions of associated tributary drainages would remain undeveloped, while other portions higher on the mesa have been identified as "developable areas." The FEMA-mapped 100-year floodplain within Gonzales Canyon would not include any graded areas of lots associated with Del Mar Highlands development (FEMA 1983, 1989). Some grading would be necessary in this floodplain to provide project water line and sewer hookups with pipelines located in Sword Way (south of project boundaries) and Gonzales Canyon, respectively.

Proposed and future project-related activities in the remaining developable areas would include grading, landscaping, and the construction of roads, buildings, and/or manufactured slopes. Such activities would change the physical nature of drainage patterns by increasing (or decreasing) grades in the upper reaches of some of the tributary canyons on the north side of Gonzales. Potential impacts to existing drainage patterns from these actions include altering the direction and/or velocity of runoff, as well as associated erosion/sedimentation from redirected or higher velocity flows. These impacts would be associated with the great majority of lots located within existing drainage channels in the eastern two-thirds of the development, where the lots are tightly clustered. Within the lots slated for development in the western portion of the development, these



effects are expected to be less; especially for Lots 143-148. These effects would be local in nature, with overland runoff eventually entering Gonzales Canyon and/or the San Dieguito River (either directly or through tributaries).

Proposed roadway development and future home lot development may increase runoff discharge volumes and velocities within and off the site, due to an increase in impervious surfaces such as buildings, roads, and other paved areas. Replacement of commercial agricultural endeavors on top of the mesa with vegetated lots, however, may actually decrease runoff. Any increase in on-site runoff volumes and velocities associated with proposed roadway construction would be minimal, due to the small area involved (i.e., approximately 14.7 acres spread throughout the project site and 0.5 acre northerly to connect with San Dieguito Road) and the nature of proposed roadway design. Specifically, roadways would include rolled concrete curbs with a number of drainage design features to accommodate projected runoff and protect roadway structures, drainage courses, and associated downstream facilities from drainage alteration impacts. Runoff would be collected at appropriately placed inlets in the streets and conveyed via underground pipes/conveyance systems to (as appropriate) detention basins. From there, waters would be dispersed to existing drainage courses on-site. Grading profiles to direct runoff away from structures and unstable areas (e.g., graded slopes) would be used. Intake inlets on the roads would accommodate projected 100-year storm flows, pursuant to direction by the City of San Diego Engineering Department, and detention basins would accommodate 10-year storm events (Campbell, pers. comm. 1995).

Drainage alterations associated with future lot development would vary with site-specific lot design. Based on the location and extent of developable areas, however, it is anticipated that such development could affect existing drainage patterns, runoff volumes, and flow velocities on a local level. This would be mitigated by the incorporation of a detention basin into project design. A basin is currently proposed by the applicant between Lots 60 and 68 in the more central portion (see Figure 3-1). This basin is downstream from the bulk of the development and is situated in steeper drainage areas. This basin would mitigate the potential significant adverse effect downstream from the proposed development.

## **Significance of Impacts**

The alteration of existing drainage patterns associated with proposed roadway and lot development could result in significant local change to the direction and velocity of on-site flows. Specifically, locally altered drainage patterns could result in erosion and/or undermining of stream channels and banks, potentially threatening adjacent vegetation. Such effects would only be expected on the higher reaches of the drainages, however. By the time flows reach Gonzales Canyon, they would be within established floodways. This would be aided by the presence of a detention basin located in the central portion of

the site on the north side of Gonzales Canyon downslope from the proposed development.

Any increase in on-site runoff volumes associated with the proposed project is not considered significant on a direct, indirect, or cumulative basis due to its incremental nature. This conclusion is based on a detailed hydrologic analysis of the proposed project. Implementation of the detention basin will avoid or reduce all impacts related to drainage alteration below a level of significance.

Short-term construction impacts resulting in local erosion and sedimentation associated with on-site runoff are considered potentially significant, due to the amount of cut and fill associated with the proposed roadway and the potential for disturbance of up to approximately 166 acres, which represents the developable area of the site (lots plus roadways and internal slopes). Manufactured slopes and development would occur within and adjacent to on-site local drainages. These temporary impacts would be mitigated to below a level of significance by the following construction-related mitigation. Over the long term, however, downstream effects of the project are expected to be an improvement over current conditions as routine and repeated grading associated with agriculture will cease.

## **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

Based on the project hydrologic study, the following types of analyses and requirements are expected.

### **Short-term Construction Practices**

As a condition of the VTM, the following mitigation measures will be specified on the grading plan:

1. As a condition of the VTM and to be shown as a note on the grading permit, grading and other surface-disturbing activities either shall be planned to avoid the rainy season (i.e., November through March) to reduce potential erosion impacts or shall employ construction phase erosion control measures, including the short-term use of sandbags, matting, mulch, berms, hay bales, or similar devices along all graded areas to minimize sediment transport. The exact design, location, and schedule of use for such devices shall be conducted pursuant to direction and approval by the City Engineering Department.
2. Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the grading plan shall locate temporary desilting basins at all discharge points adjacent to drainage courses or where substantial drainage alteration is proposed. The exact design and location of such

facilities shall be conducted pursuant to direction by the City Engineering Department.

3. As condition of the VTM, the subdivider shall within 90 days of completion of grading activities hydroseed and landscape graded and common areas with appropriate ground cover vegetation consistent with the biology section mitigation requirements (e.g., use of native or noninvasive plants). These revegetated areas shall be inspected monthly by a qualified biologist until vegetation has been firmly established as determined by the City's grading inspector.
4. Compacted areas shall be scarified, where appropriate, to induce surface water infiltration and revegetation as directed by the project geologist, engineer, and/or biologist.
5. General Construction Activity Storm Water Permits (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System [NPDES] No. CAS000002) shall be obtained from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) prior to project implementation. Such permits are required for specific (or a series of related) construction activities which exceed five acres in size and include provisions to eliminate or reduce off-site discharges through implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Specific SWPPP provisions include requirements for erosion and sediment control, as well as monitoring requirements both during and after construction. Pollution control measures also require the use of best available technology, best conventional pollutant control technology, and/or best management practices to prevent or reduce pollutant discharge (pursuant to SWRCB definitions and direction).
6. A Dewatering Waste Discharge Permit (NPDES No. CA0108804) shall be obtained for the removal and disposal of groundwater (if necessary) encountered during construction. Such permits are intended to ensure compliance with applicable water quality, and beneficial use objectives, and typically entail the use of BMPs to meet these requirements. Discharge under this permit will require compliance with a number of physical, chemical, and thermal parameters (as applicable), along with pertinent site-specific conditions (pursuant to RWQCB direction).
7. Specified vehicle fueling and maintenance procedures and hazardous materials storage areas shall be designated to preclude the discharge of hazardous materials used during construction (e.g., fuels, lubricants and solvents). Such designations shall include specific measures to preclude spills or contain hazardous materials, including proper handling and disposal techniques and use of temporary impervious liners to prevent soil and water contamination.

## Project Design

As conditions of the vesting tentative map and to be included as notes and exhibits on the grading plan, the following mitigation measures will be required:

8. Postconstruction erosion control measures shall be implemented where proposed disturbance is adjacent to or encroaches within existing drainage courses and projected runoff velocities exceed 5 cfs.
9. Final project design shall incorporate all applicable BMPs contained in the City and State *Best Management Practices to be Considered in the Development of Urban Stormwater Management Plan*. Specifically, these may include measures such as the use of detention basins, retention structures, infiltration facilities, permeable pavements, vegetation controls, discharge controls, maintenance (e.g., street sweeping), and erosion controls.
10. Surface drainage shall be designed to collect and discharge runoff into natural stream channels or drainage structures. All project-related drainage structures shall be adequately sized to accommodate 10-year flood events (or other storm events pursuant to direction from the City).
11. Project operation and maintenance practices shall include a schedule for regular maintenance of all private drainage facilities within common development areas to ensure proper working condition. Public facilities shall be maintained by the City.
12. Surface and subsurface drainage shall be designed to preclude ponding outside of designated areas, as well as flow down slopes or over disturbed areas.
13. Runoff diversion facilities (e.g., inlet pipes and brow ditches) shall be used where appropriate to preclude runoff flow down graded slopes.
14. Energy-dissipating structures (e.g., detention ponds, riprap, or drop structures) shall be used at storm drain outlets, drainage crossings, and/or downstream of all culverts, pipe outlets, and brow ditches to reduce velocity and prevent erosion.
15. Long-term maintenance of the detention basin shall be the responsibility of the City of San Diego.

## 2) Issue

What effect would implementation of the project have on downstream water quality?

## Impacts

Potential impacts to water quality from the proposed development include erosion of exposed soils and associated sedimentation of natural drainages, construction-related contaminant discharge, and runoff of urban and horticultural pollutants into the natural drainage system.

Grading and construction activities could conceivably increase the potential for erosion and transport of material both within and downstream of the project site. Specifically, the removal of stabilizing vegetation cover in *currently naturally* vegetated steep drainages, creation of artificial slopes, and use of granular cohesionless fill all have the potential to generate erosion effects. Developed areas would be especially susceptible to erosion between the end of construction and the establishment of permanent landscaping. The movement of sedimentary materials into on-site drainages and off-site into the San Dieguito River and Lagoon could produce significant impacts to surface water quality. The influx of such materials could temporarily increase the quantity of total solids and several individual organic and inorganic constituents.

Accidental spills or leaks of certain construction materials (e.g., vehicle fuels) could adversely impact local surface water quality. In addition, disposal of groundwater extracted during dewatering of construction areas (if necessary) could impact local surface water quality through the presence of contaminants (e.g., suspended sediment added during excavation or pumping) and/or erosion in water discharge areas.

Over the long-term, however, it is anticipated that implementation of the project would decrease the volume (and in some cases the rate) of on-site surface water runoff as discd acreage becomes vegetated. In addition, current on-site runoff is expected to be contaminated with pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, or other "urban" pollutants, such as heavy metals, grease, and oil from the ongoing agricultural activities. Although project development could actually improve downstream water quality through diminution of sedimentation and pollutant runoff in the long term, project effects would remain.

Water running off rooftops picks up chemicals from construction materials, while water flowing across streets and driveways picks up hydrocarbons and heavy metals associated with roadways and automobiles. Runoff from domestic gardens and landscaped areas incrementally contributes fertilizers, herbicides, and/or pesticides to local drainages. These pollutants could adversely affect the quality of downslope or downstream surface water and groundwater. The quality of most surface runoff and groundwater in urban areas is generally below drinking water standards and is not usable for human domestic water purposes. Wildlife does use this resource, however, with the increased presence of urban pollutants also potentially resulting in adverse impacts to wildlife and riparian or wetland habitats. A number of existing federal, state, and local statutes regulate the discharge of hazardous and toxic substances. As a result, the potential discharge of such

materials in association with the proposed project would be controlled by these statutes and potential impacts are considered incremental.

### **Significance of Impacts**

The proposed development of the project site has the potential to significantly impact water quality (both directly and cumulatively) in Gonzales Canyon and the San Dieguito River and Lagoon. Specifically, such impacts may be associated with short- and long-term erosion and sedimentation and construction-related contaminant discharge. Although the impacts would continue to remain significant, it is expected that the project effects would be less adverse overall than those currently resulting from commercial agricultural activities on-site. The runoff of urban-generated pollutants is not considered significant (on a direct basis) due to the presence of existing regulatory controls and the anticipated incremental nature and extent of such pollutants, though the incremental contribution of urban pollutants would be cumulatively significant.

### **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

Potential water quality impacts related to erosion and siltation and discharge of construction-related contaminants would be mitigated below a level of significance by incorporating the anticipated design measures to be identified as part of the ongoing project hydrologic study (see Issue 1 above).

### **3) Issue**

Would the project result in alteration to the course or flow of floodwaters?

### **Impacts**

The proposed project does not include grading and construction activities extending into mapped 100-year floodplains and would therefore not affect the course of floodwaters. The development of impervious surfaces on-site would increase the total amount of runoff generated within the site. A comparison of current and project runoff from the portions of the Del Mar Highlands Estates site proposed for development (i.e., basin numbers A2-A4, B1, and B2) is shown on Table 4B-2. As seen from this information, 100-year storm runoff within developed basins C and D would increase by 113 cfs, with 79 cfs of this total (representing 10-year storm flows) to be detained in an on-site basin. The net increase in off-site 100-year storm flows (i.e., 34 cfs) would be disseminated into Gonzales Canyon and (ultimately) the San Dieguito River and would not result in significant direct or indirect impacts related to downstream flooding hazards.

This increase in off-site storm flows could contribute to potentially significant cumulative impacts, however, in association with additional approved or planned development in the

**TABLE 4B-2  
EXISTING AND DEVELOPED DISCHARGES AND  
COASTAL ZONE DETENTION REQUIREMENTS  
FOR PROJECT SUB-BASINS**

Measurement	Natural Subbasin Number			
	A0	A2-A4	B1	B2
Existing area	23.3 acres	203.9 acres	18.3 acres	54.7 acres
Q <sub>100</sub> existing basin peak discharge	35 cfs	158 cfs	30 cfs	76 cfs
Developed basin	F	C and D	A	B
Q <sub>100</sub> developed basin peak discharge	31	271 cfs	22 cfs	78 cfs
Q <sub>100</sub> net increase/decrease	5 cfs	113 cfs	-8 cfs	2 cfs
Potential Coastal Zone detention requirement change in Q <sub>10</sub>	*	79 cfs	*	*

\*Initial examination indicates the difference between the developed and natural flow (Q<sub>10</sub>) is negligible (10 cfs or less), and detention of flow by way of detention basins will most likely not be required.

San Dieguito River watershed. Mitigation of such potential impacts would require a regional effort to reduce or control runoff (e.g., detention) and is beyond the scope of this analysis.

## Significance of Impacts

Potential direct and indirect project-related impacts from the alteration of floodwater directions, velocities, or volume would be reduced below a level of significance through the implementation of proposed design measures (i.e., detention basin). The project could contribute to potentially significant cumulative flooding impacts, with mitigation for such effects requiring a regional effort to reduce or control runoff.

## Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

Mitigation is not required.



## C. Landform Alteration/Visual Quality

### Existing Conditions

#### a) Existing Landform

The northern portion of the project site is an east/west-trending ridge, the north side of which slopes steeply downward toward the San Dieguito River valley. The top of the ridge is relatively level and affords views in all directions, including views of the ocean to the west. The south side of the ridge drops into Gonzales Canyon, which runs east-west along the southern boundary of the project site.

The elevations of the project site vary from 40 feet above MSL in the northwest corner to 322 feet above MSL in the northeast corner. The top of the ridge in the northern portion of the site generally appears as a relatively level mesa, especially from a distance (e.g., from Via de la Valle). However, from close-up (e.g., from the San Dieguito River), variations in topography can be discerned due to the presence of shallow drainages along the mesa top. From Old El Camino Real on the west to the eastern site boundary, the ridgeline generally rises from 75 feet above MSL to 165 feet above MSL, then drops gradually to approximately 100 feet above MSL to the east. The remaining two-thirds of the on-site ridgetop climbs gradually to the east from 100 feet above MSL to 322 feet above MSL. Elevations within Gonzales Canyon decline gradually from approximately 120 feet above MSL near the eastern site boundary to approximately 75 feet above MSL at the western site boundary. The southern boundary of the site generally follows the southern edge of the canyon floor, except that in the southwest corner of the site, two fingers of land extend to the south, taking in two minor tributary canyons along the southern side of Gonzales Canyon.

Figure 4C-1 is a slope analysis map for the project site. Approximately 82 acres, or 21 percent, of the site consist of slopes of over 25 percent gradient. These slopes occur primarily along the northern and southern sides of the ridge in the northern portion of the project site. Adjacent to these areas are slopes with a 15-25 percent gradient, covering approximately 117 acres (30 percent) of the site. Slopes of 0-15 percent are within the remaining 190 acres (49 percent) of the site and are primarily located in the bottom of Gonzales Canyon in the southern portion of the site and along the ridge in the northern portion of the site.

#### b) Existing Visual Character

The existing character of the site is rural. Surrounding properties are mixed in character, with single-family residential subdivisions to the east and south of the project site and undeveloped land and residential development to the north. A photograph orientation

SLOPE

SLOPE  
CATEGORY

0% TO 15%



AREA (AC.)

190

15% TO 25%

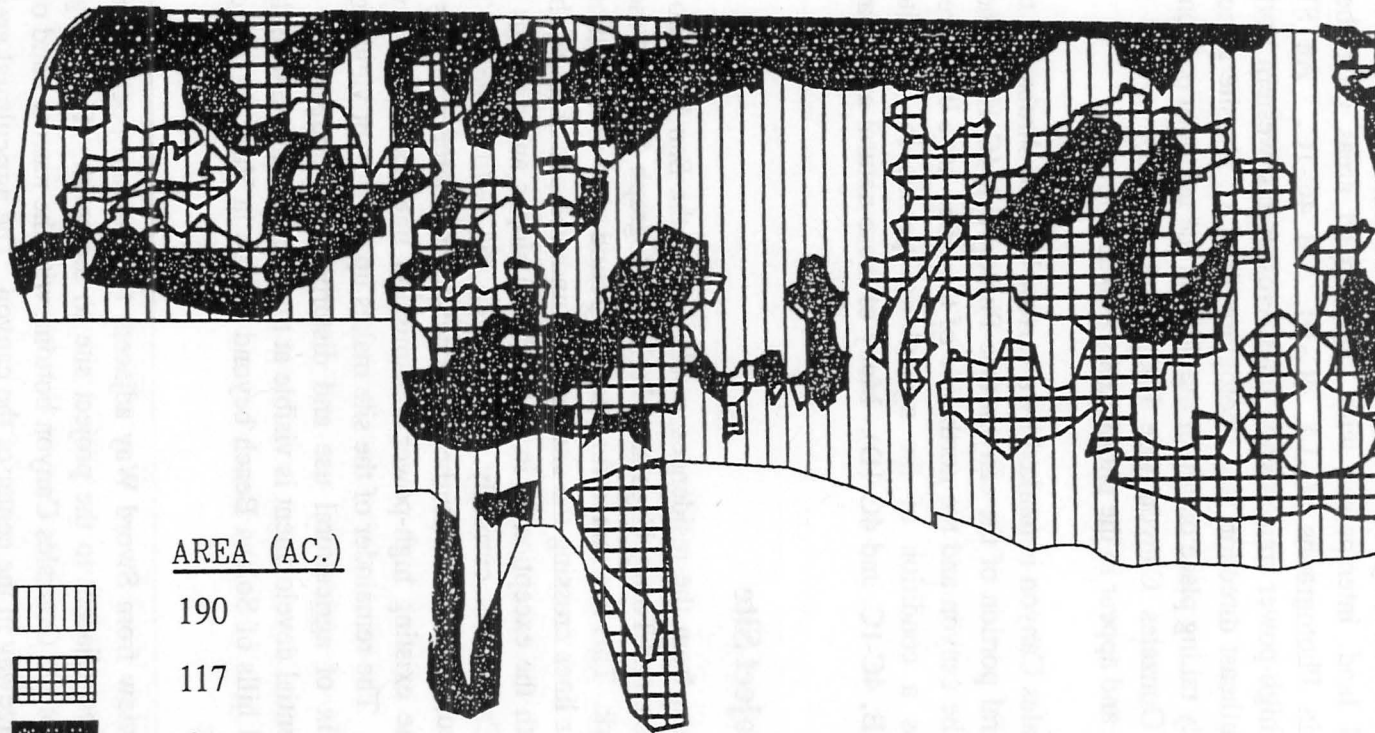


117

>25%



82



SOURCE: PROJECT DESIGN CONSULTANTS

FIGURE 4C-1

Del Mar Highlands Estates  
Slope Analysis Map

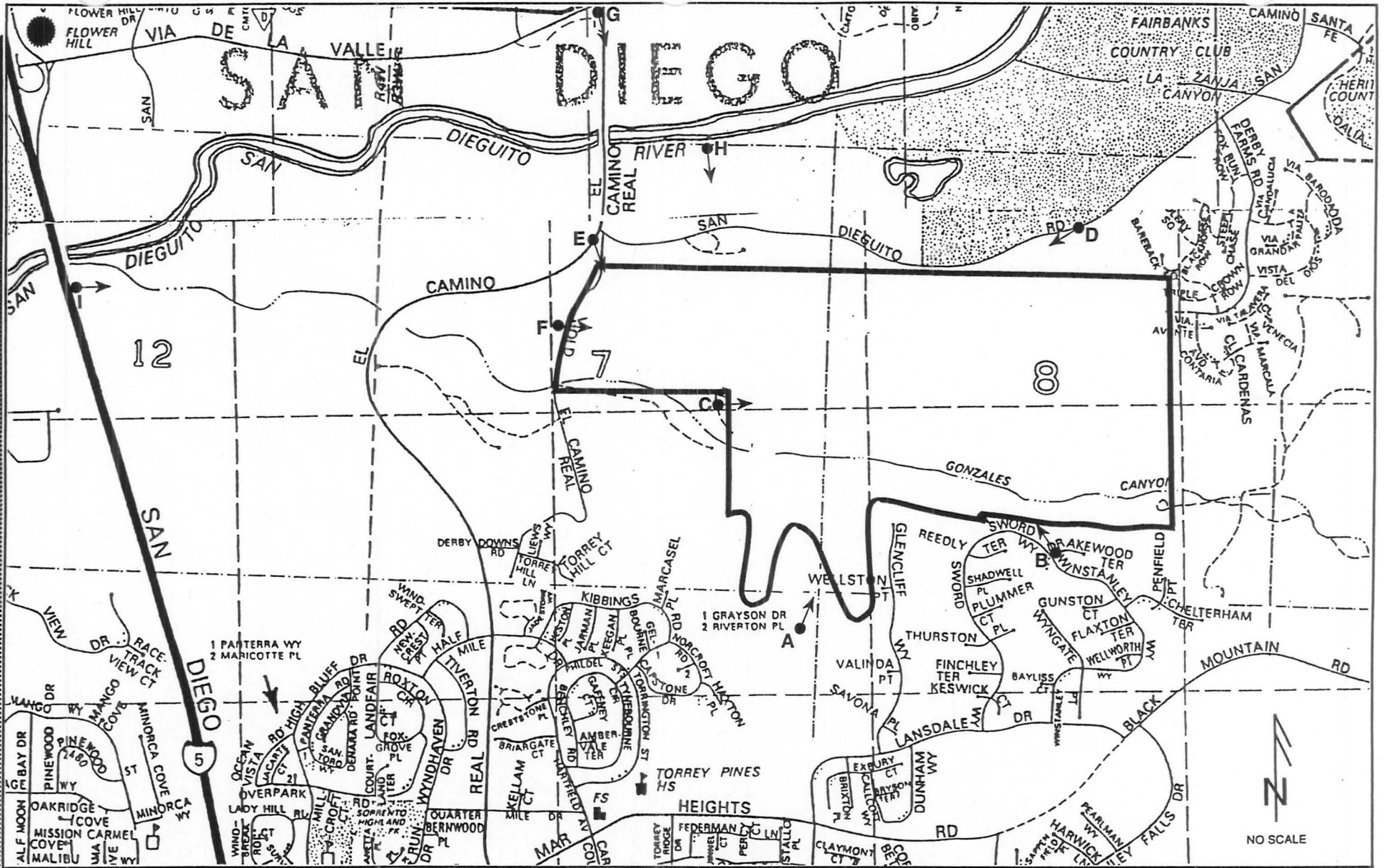
map is provided in Figure 4C-2. Photographs of the project site and surrounding areas are provided in Photographs 4C-1A through 4C-1I. The project site consists of approximately 200 acres of agricultural land, interspersed with undeveloped areas (disturbed and undisturbed), as shown in Photographs 4C-1A, 4C-1B, and 4C-1C. An SDG&E easement, with overhead high-power transmission lines, crosses the western portion of the site in a northwest-southeast direction (see Photograph 4C-1A). On-site agricultural crop production is primarily taking place on top of the ridge in the northern portion of the site and in portions of Gonzales Canyon (see Photograph 4C-1B). Areas not in production are kept disced and appear in the photographs as bare dirt areas.

The drainageway in Gonzales Canyon is marked by a narrow band of shrubs and trees in the center of the agricultural portion of the canyon (see Photograph 4C-1B). The steep slopes along the sides of the canyon and the north side of the ridge have been preserved in a natural condition as a condition of the agricultural permit for the site (see Photographs 4C-1A, 4C-1B, 4C-1C, and 4C-1D). Many of these natural areas have dirt trails across them.

### **c) Views of the Project Site**

The project site can be seen from the residences, public roads, the San Dieguito River Park Focused Planning Area, and Torrey Highlands Park. Photograph 4C-1A is the view from Torrey Highlands Park. This is a mixed fore- to midground view of the agricultural areas of the site, the power lines crossing the site, and the undeveloped areas of the site. The entire project site, with the exception of its north-facing slopes and portions of the south side of Gonzales Canyon, is currently visible from the north edge of Torrey Highlands Park. The agricultural and undisturbed areas within the southern fingers of the project site, along with the existing high-power transmission line corridor, are visible from the park at midrange. The remainder of the site makes up the distant view from the park and appears as a mix of agricultural use and disturbed and undisturbed native vegetation. Existing residential development is visible at the edge of this view to the east and south. The developed hills of Solana Beach beyond Via de la Valle form a distant backdrop to this view.

Photograph 4C-1B is the view from Sword Way adjacent to a private pocket park and existing single-family homes adjacent to the project site to the south. The foreground view is of the disced areas of the Gonzales Canyon bottom, with the narrow band of trees and shrubs along the drainageway in the center of the canyon. The agricultural areas and natural, undeveloped areas in the northern portion of the project site form the background of this view. Although Photograph 4C-1B represents the closest view of the site from the residential neighborhoods south of the site, the project site is also visible from several other residential streets in this area, including Marcasel Place, Winstanley Way, and Drakewood Terrace.

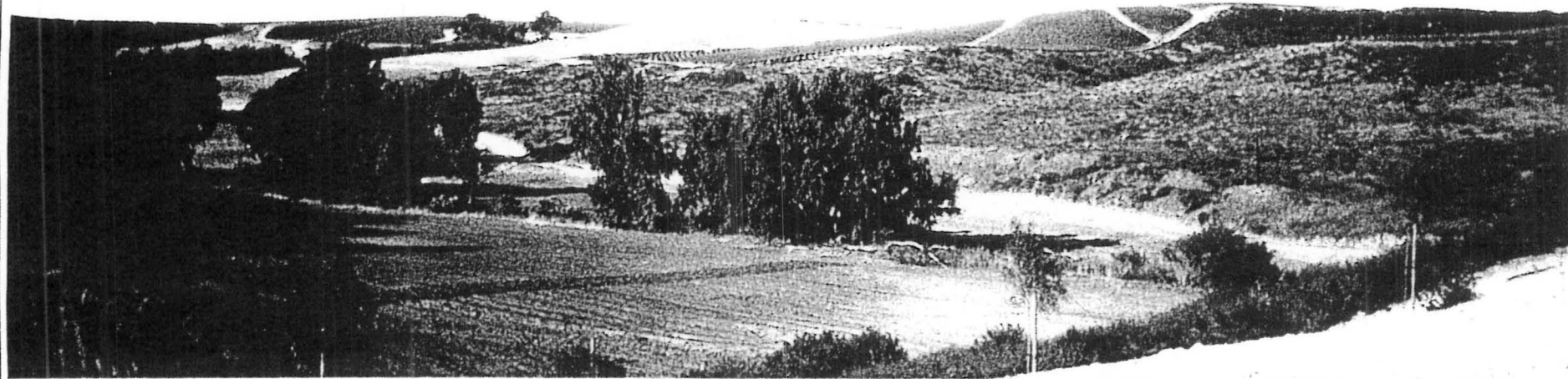


Source: Helix Environmental 1995

**FIGURE 4C-2**  
**Del Mar Highlands Estates**  
**Photograph Orientation Map**



A. View of project site from Torrey Highlands Park.

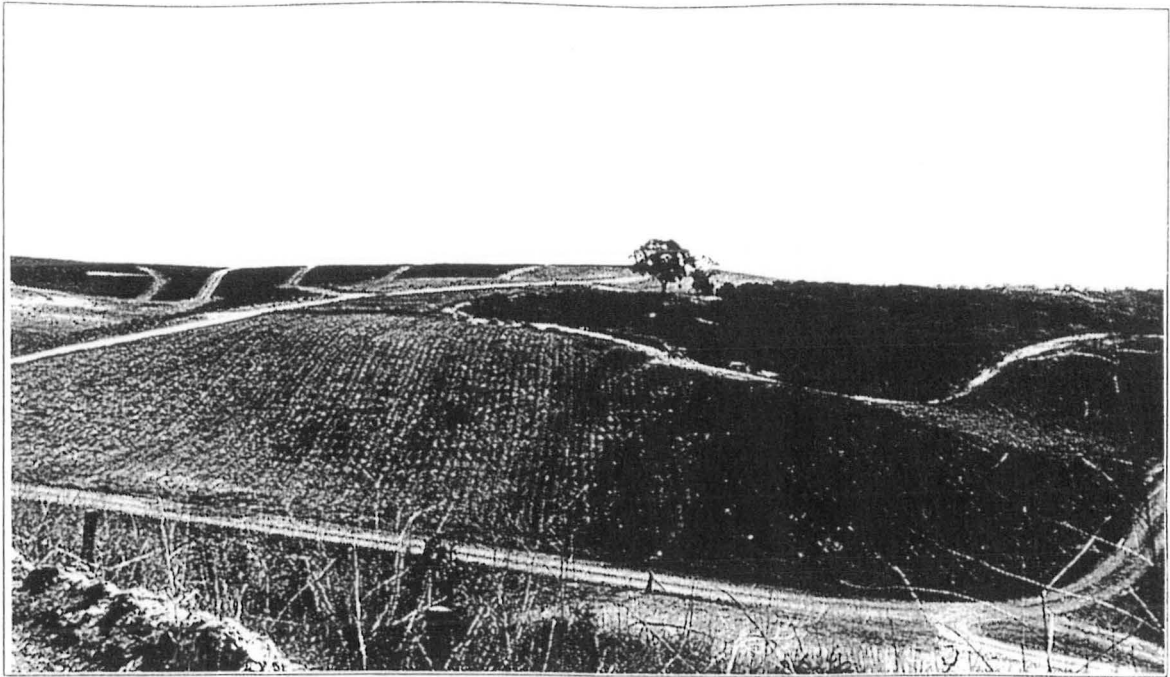


B. View of project site from residential collector street (Winstanley Way) and adjacent pocket park.

## PHOTOGRAPH 4C-1

### Photographs of Del Mar Highlands Estates and Surrounding Areas

Source: Helix Environmental 1995



C. View of existing agriculture and native habitat on the project site.



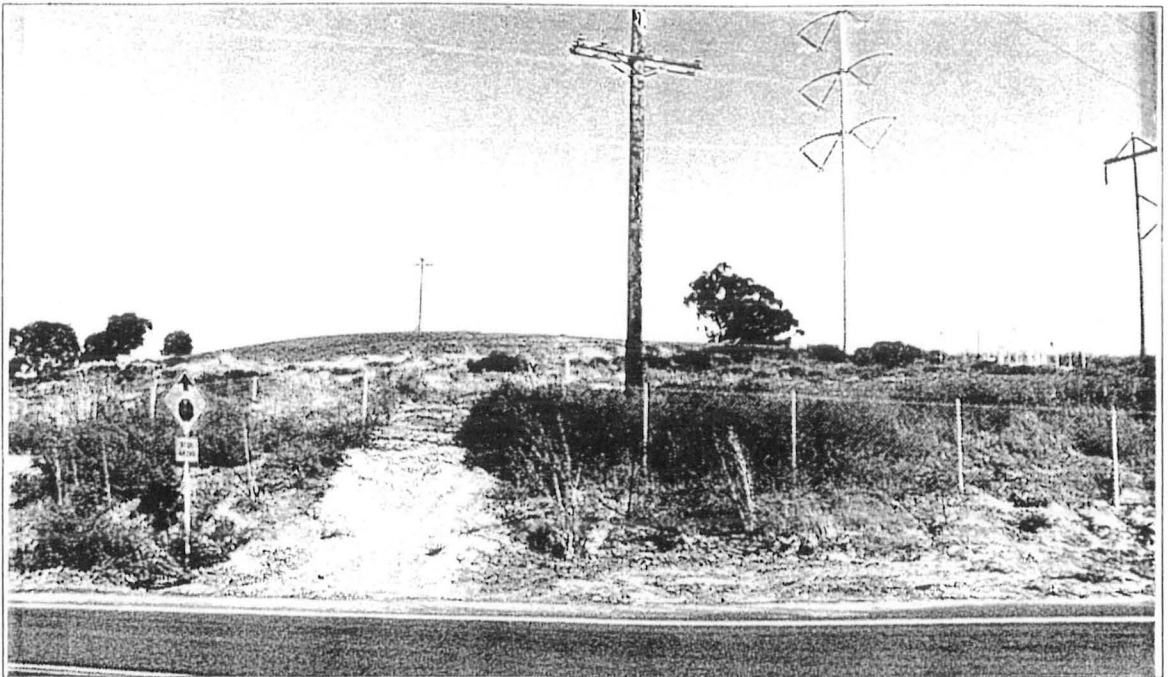
D. Steep slopes along the northern project boundary, as viewed from San Dieguito Road.

## PHOTOGRAPH 4C-1

### Photographs of Del Mar Highlands Estates and Surrounding Areas



E. Hillside in western portion of project site, as viewed from El Camino Real.

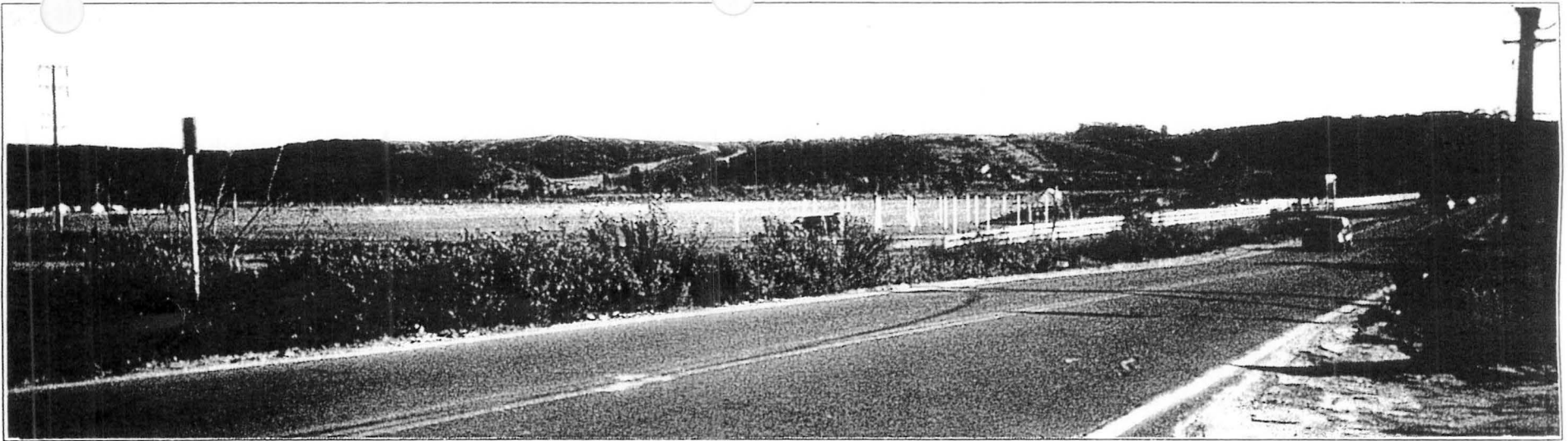


F. View of project site and SDG&E easement from Old El Camino Real.

## PHOTOGRAPH 4C- 1

### Photographs of Del Mar Highlands Estates and Surrounding Areas

Source: Helix Environmental 1995



G. View of project site from intersection of Via De La Valle and El Camino Real.



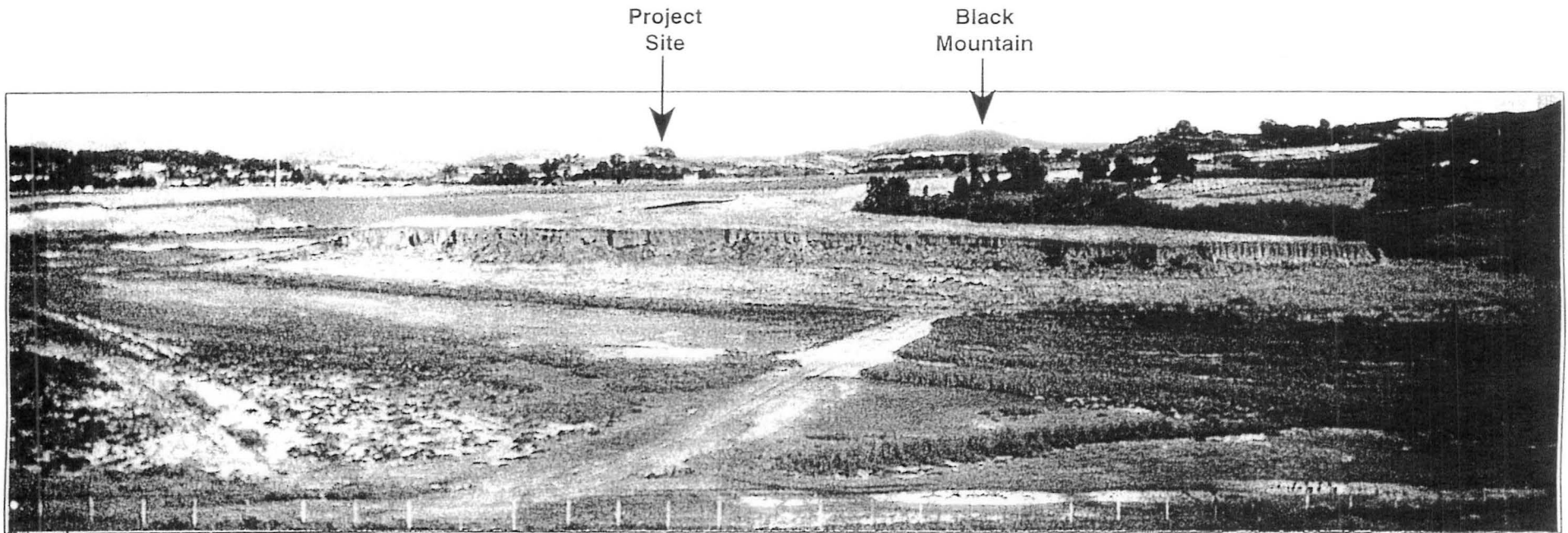
H. View of project site from the San Dieguito River Valley.

## PHOTOGRAPH 4C-1

### Photographs of Del Mar Highlands Estates and Surrounding Areas

Source: Helix Environmental 1995





1. Distant view of project site from Interstate 5, with the San Dieguito River Valley in the foreground and Black Mountain in the distance.

## PHOTOGRAPH 4C-1

### Photographs of Del Mar Highlands Estates and Surrounding Areas

Photograph 4C-1D is the view from San Dieguito Road of the steep natural slopes along the northern boundary of the project site. As shown, very limited views of the site are available from San Dieguito Road. Photographs 4C-1E and 4C-1F are representative views of the site from Old El Camino Real. As shown, these areas of the site have been heavily disturbed by agriculture and activities associated with the SDG&E easement. Chain link fencing is present along much of this site boundary, and in many locations the overhead transmission lines dominate the view. There are several stands of mature trees.

Photograph 4C-1G shows the view from the intersection of Old El Camino Real and El Camino Real, which is abutted by commercial uses. In this view, the polo field is in the foreground, with the northern slopes of the project site and adjacent parcels to the east as a backdrop. The slopes are primarily a mixture of disturbed and undisturbed native habitat, with the agricultural areas barely visible along the top of the ridge. There is also agricultural cropland along the gentler slopes to the right in the photograph (in the western portion of the project site).

Photograph 4C-1H is the view of the project site from the San Dieguito River valley. As shown, the project site is the backdrop for the views of the valley floor. There are a few existing homes along the bottom of the hill adjacent to San Dieguito Road. The western portion of the project site appears as agricultural land and undeveloped land. The eastern portion of the site appears as undeveloped land along the slopes, with agriculture barely visible on top of the ridge. Interstate 5 and commercial buildings are also visible in the distance to the west.

In addition to the project site, the viewshed from the adjacent portion of the San Dieguito River valley takes in off-site disturbed and undisturbed open space areas along the river. Agriculture and residential subdivisions can be seen to the east. San Dieguito Road and the adjacent rural residences can be seen to the south, adjacent to the project site. North of the San Dieguito River, the polo fields and Via de la Valle can be seen along the northern edge of the valley. Commercial buildings are located at the intersection of Via de la Valle and El Camino Real. The hillsides beyond Via de la Valle to the north are developed with single-family homes, which are partially screened by mature landscaping.

The view from Interstate 5 east towards the project site is shown in Photograph 4C-1I. As shown, the project site is barely visible in the distance, beyond the San Dieguito River valley. From this vantage point, the project takes up a narrow portion of the view. Black Mountain is prominent in the distance beyond the project site to the east.

#### **d) Existing Landmark and Mature Trees**

Existing landmark or mature trees within the project site include eucalyptus and sycamores, as well as several individual scrub oaks, pecans, and arroyo willows. Eucalyptus trees occur in 14 distinct areas in the northwest, central, and southern portions

of the site (see Photograph 4C-1B). These woodland areas vary in size from 40 to over 160 trees, include individuals ranging in height from approximately 6 to 80 feet, and are primarily adjacent to agricultural sites where they stand out in distinct relief. Approximately 15 mature eucalyptus trees are also located along the portion of Gonzales Canyon encompassing sycamore woodland habitat.

Approximately 160 sycamore trees are located within a riparian woodland area of Gonzales Canyon in the southwest corner of the site. The majority of these trees are mature, with heights ranging between approximately 60 and 80 feet. The sycamore woodland forms a dense canopy over the associated portion of Gonzales Canyon Creek and stands out in distinct relief compared to adjacent areas encompassing agricultural uses and/or brushy vegetation.

Two mature pecan trees are located near to the eastern tip of the above-described sycamore woodland area and are ostensibly associated with previous agricultural activity. These trees extend to a maximum height of approximately 40 feet and stand out in distinct relief compared to surrounding ruderal (primarily non-native grassland) vegetation.

#### **e) Applicable Regulations**

##### ***City of San Diego***

The City's Progress Guide and General Plan does not identify any existing scenic highways or routes in the project area. However, the General Plan identifies Interstate 5 west of the project site as eligible for designation as a state scenic highway and recommends that the City apply for this designation. The view of the project site from Interstate 5 was provided in the preceding subsection as Photograph 4C-1I. The project site represents a small portion of the distant view from Interstate 5. Carmel Valley Road, south of the project site, is recommended for designation as a City scenic route. The project site is not visible from Carmel Valley Road. The Carmel Valley Community Plan does not address scenic resources or roadways in the community planning area for the proposed project.

The City's Resource Protection Ordinance includes (among other criteria) restrictions on disturbance or encroachment within areas of 25 percent or greater slope. Specifically, these restrictions involve conformance with RPO encroachment ratios (i.e., the percentage of total steep slopes on-site authorized for disturbance), zoning classifications, and HR Overlay Zone requirements. Zoning criteria generally regulate the type and size of allowable facilities within a given classification, while HR regulations involve discretionary approval of development activities such as grading, erosion control, landslide hazards, building scale and design, site clustering, and landscaping. When a particular development is subject to provisions of both RPO and HR, the City typically

conducts the evaluation as a single permit action. Additional discussion of RPO requirements related to the proposed project (including issues other than steep slopes) is provided in the Section 4.A discussion in this EIR.

The North City Future Urbanizing Area Framework Plan outlines implementing principles for development adjacent to significant natural areas. Gonzales Canyon and the San Dieguito River valley are considered significant natural features in the framework plan. The regulations are meant to ensure sensitive development adjacent to natural areas until such time that the City Council establishes criteria for development in the San Dieguito River Park Master Plan area.

- Development in hillside areas should conform to the unique natural setting of each area and site, retaining the character of existing landforms and preserving significant native vegetation.
- Cluster units where appropriate to minimize grading, roadway, and driveway intrusion into sensitive habitat areas. Neighborhoods abutting the areas of the Environmental Tier such as Gonzales Canyon are areas where clustering of dwellings is encouraged.
- The development pattern in hillside areas should be designed so that structures do not stand out prominently when seen from a distance.
- Development should not obstruct public views.
- In conjunction with project proposals, disturbed areas on a site which are to be retained as open space shall be contoured to blend in with natural slopes and shall be revegetated with native plants.
- Mass grading shall be avoided. Grading will be limited to the building footprint, accessory uses, and access corridors essential to the development of the site.
- Development adjacent to ridges and bluffs shall minimize visual impacts to these topographic features through setbacks and landscaping, especially near major canyons or valleys.
- New development shall be required to minimize erosion.
- Structures located within the view of the park, if within 200 feet vertically and 50 feet horizontally of a ridgeline, shall be setback and be low in profile so as not to be visually prominent from the future park.

- The facades of structures shall be angled at varying degrees to follow the natural topography of the site.
- All exterior lighting shall be a low-sodium type with horizontal cut-off and shall be shielded downward such that the light would not be visible to the adjacent properties and the proposed park.
- Rooflines shall vary in angle and height to provide a changing profile.

#### ***San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan and San Dieguito River Regional Plan***

As noted in the Land Use discussion of this report, the JPA of the San Dieguito River Park has adopted a concept plan, which addresses future development activities within the viewshed of the San Dieguito River and its major tributary drainages. This viewshed area is called the Focused Planning Area. The goals of the San Dieguito River Regional Plan and San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan are discussed in the Land Use section of this EIR. Many of these goals relate specifically to natural areas (Gonzales Canyon and San Dieguito River valley) and the visual interface with new development.

The concept plan proposes to develop a "Coast to Crest Trail" as a bicycle, hiking, and equestrian trail system stretching the entire length of the park from the Pacific Ocean to Volcan Mountain near Julian. This trail system would run along both sides of the San Dieguito River. A secondary trail is proposed through Gonzales Canyon to connect with trails to the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. The northern slopes of the project site would be visible from the Coast to Crest Trail (see Photograph 4C-1H). The Gonzales Canyon Trail would cross the southern portion of the project site from west to east. The concept plan also generally identifies a scenic lookout in the vicinity of the western boundary of the project site.

The concept plan states that special attention should be given to viewsheds of specific activity areas, although buffering of development with trees would be appropriate where compatible with wildlife habitat. The plan acknowledges that much of the natural habitat within the project area has been disturbed by existing land uses. However, the mesas and upland slopes of Gonzales and La Zanja Canyons and the San Dieguito River are identified as "a very important frame to the view of the valley as it narrows." The concept plan calls for setback of development on the adjacent ridges from the top of slopes to reduce its visibility from the river valley and canyons, as well as to provide for an upland transition area that will serve to buffer the development from the adjoining natural habitat. Architectural treatment should be sensitive to the views from the park, and appropriate landscaping should be provided within a transition buffer area to help screen the development.

As discussed in the Land Use section of this report, the concept plan lists implementing principles for development within the San Dieguito River Park Focused Planning Area. Many of these principles address potential visual impacts of development on the existing visual character of the area and on views from the park. Such principles include clustering of residential units, minimizing of alteration of drainageways and landforms, conformance of development in hillside areas with the natural setting, preservation of significant native vegetation, blending of development with the hillside background and topography (including angling of facades to blend with existing topography), preservation of public views, restoration of disturbed open space areas, minimal grading, setbacks from ridges and bluffs, use of landscaping as screening, use of shielded low-sodium exterior lighting, and variation of rooflines.

### **Landform Alteration/Visual Quality Issues**

1. Would implementation of the project result in a substantial change in topography or ground surface relief features, or the loss, covering, or modification of any unique geologic or physical features, including canyons, bluffs, or hillsides with a slope gradient in excess of 25 percent?
2. How would implementation of the project affect the visual quality of the area, especially with regard to views from public roadways and recreational areas?
3. Would compliance with the City's fuel management program result in visual impacts?

## **1) Issue**

Would implementation of the project result in a substantial change in topography or ground surface relief features, or the loss, covering, or modification of any unique geologic or physical features, including canyons, bluffs, or hillsides with a slope gradient in excess of 25 percent?

## **Impacts**

Project grading would occur primarily on the mesa top in areas already graded for agricultural efforts. Future grading would not occur in Gonzales Canyon (currently in agriculture), which would be largely revegetated with coastal sage scrub during project efforts, or in the area proposed for an open space north-south corridor extending from the San Dieguito River valley to Gonzales Canyon.

Project area roadways would extend primarily along the east/west-trending ridgeline in the northern portion of the site (Streets A, B, and I; each 40 feet wide), with the remaining driveways and cul-de-sacs being 36 feet in width. A 24-foot-wide private drive extends west from Lot 118 towards Old El Camino Real. The primary access to the site from San Dieguito Road will be a public street with a 74-foot-wide public right-of-way. Off-site grading is required to extend the project access road approximately 350 feet to San Dieguito Road.

Proposed roadways would disturb 15 acres (3.9 percent) of the project site and are designed to conform with existing site topography to the maximum extent feasible. Construction of the proposed project would involve approximately 1.6 million cubic yards of cut and 1.6 million cubic yards of fill over 166.32 acres, or 9,620 cubic yards per graded acre. The relatively high grading quantities per acre are a result of efforts to minimize the area of disturbance as much as possible. Project grading would create an estimated 22 cut or fill slopes in excess of 20 feet in height. As shown on Figure 4C-3, these manufactured slopes are located throughout the project site to create building pads and project roadways. Table 4C-1 lists the approximate maximum heights and lengths of the major manufactured slopes. Figure 4C-4 depicts cross sections that illustrate the proposed grading.

Based on the RPO analysis for the Del Mar Highlands Estates project site, the proposed project would encroach into approximately 31.45 acres of sensitive biology areas and slopes in excess of 25 percent gradient with an elevation differential of 50 feet or more. This exceeds the allowable encroachment under RPO by approximately 16.48 acres (see Section 4.A, Land Use, for more discussion of RPO compliance). Based on underlying topography and lot layout as shown on the PRD map, it is likely that project grading could involve changes in elevation of greater than five feet on each of the project lots.

## **Significance of Impacts**

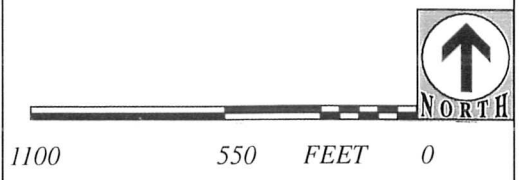
Project-related landform alteration impacts for Del Mar Highlands Estates would be significant due to the extent of earthwork, the anticipated level of disturbance to 25 percent or greater slopes, and the maximum height and length of the manufactured slopes.

## **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

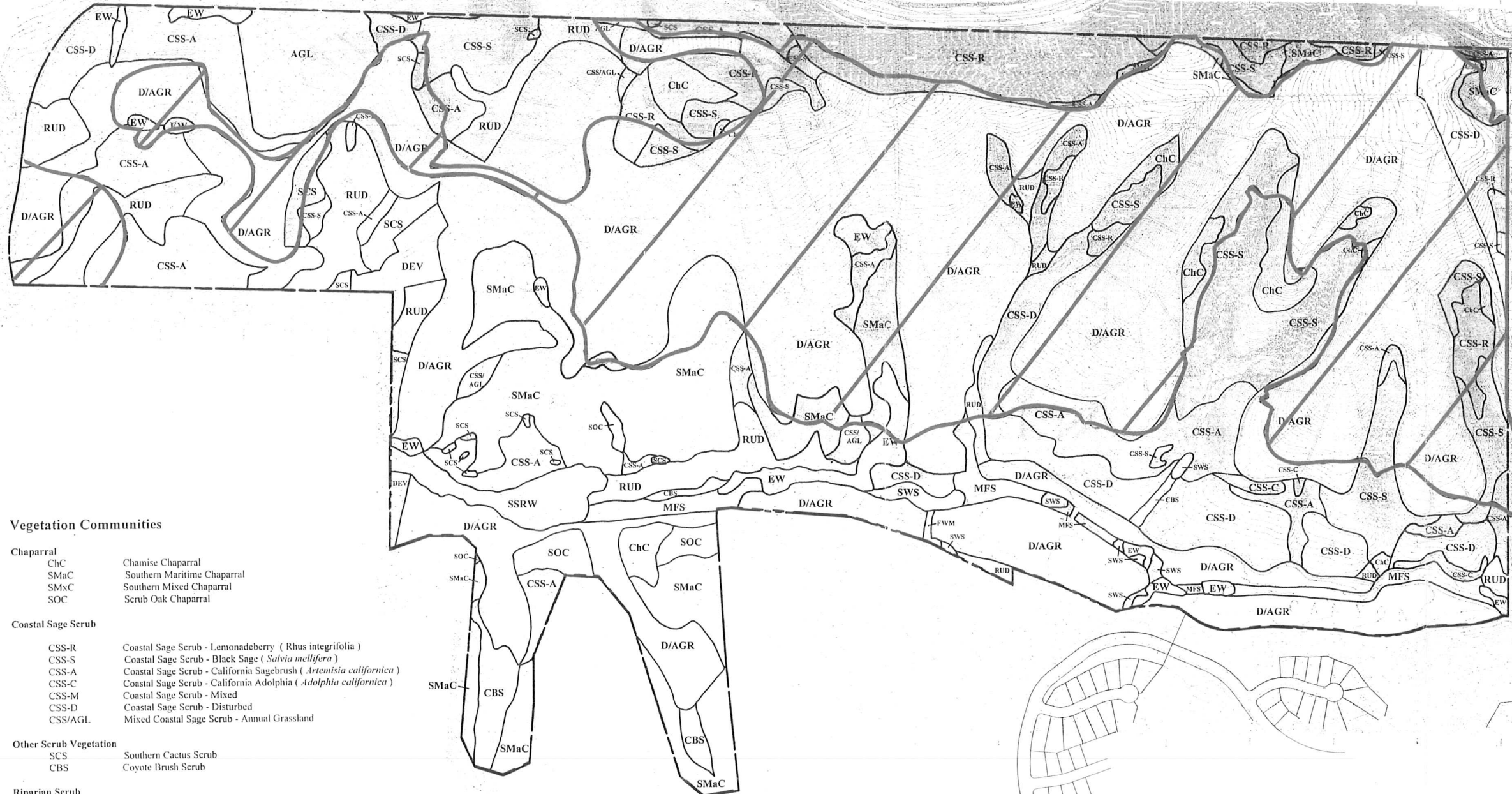
Mitigation of significant landform impacts would require the modification of the proposed project design to (1) reduce grading requirements to 2,000 cubic yards or less per acre; (2) conform with RPO steep slope encroachment criteria; and (3) eliminate the major manufactured slopes. Incorporation of these measures into project design would require substantial revision to the proposed project. These adverse effects comprise significant and unmitigable impacts of the Del Mar Highlands Estates project.




**FIGURE 4C-3**  
**Major**  
**Manufactured**  
**Slopes**







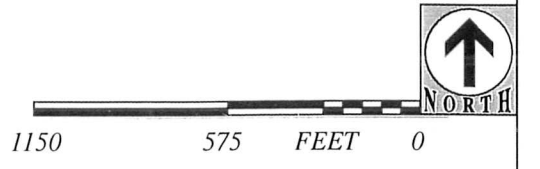
 Proposed extent of grading

**Vegetation Communities**

<b>Chaparral</b>	
ChC	Chamise Chaparral
SMaC	Southern Maritime Chaparral
SMxC	Southern Mixed Chaparral
SOC	Scrub Oak Chaparral
<b>Coastal Sage Scrub</b>	
CSS-R	Coastal Sage Scrub - Lemonadeberry ( <i>Rhus integrifolia</i> )
CSS-S	Coastal Sage Scrub - Black Sage ( <i>Salvia mellifera</i> )
CSS-A	Coastal Sage Scrub - California Sagebrush ( <i>Artemisia californica</i> )
CSS-C	Coastal Sage Scrub - California Adolphia ( <i>Adolphia californica</i> )
CSS-M	Coastal Sage Scrub - Mixed
CSS-D	Coastal Sage Scrub - Disturbed
CSS/AGL	Mixed Coastal Sage Scrub - Annual Grassland
<b>Other Scrub Vegetation</b>	
SCS	Southern Cactus Scrub
CBS	Coyote Brush Scrub
<b>Riparian Scrub</b>	
SWS	Southern Willow Scrub
MFS	Mulefat
FWM	Coastal and Valley Freshwater Marsh
<b>Woodland</b>	
SSRW	Southern Sycamore Riparian Woodland
EW	Eucalyptus Woodland
<b>Grasslands</b>	
AGL	Annual Grassland
NGL	Native Grassland
RUD	Ruderal
D/AGR	Disked/Agricultural GR
<b>Other Vegetation</b>	
RUD	Ruderal
D/AGR	Disked/Agricultural
GR	Graded
DEV	Developed

**FIGURE 4E-1**

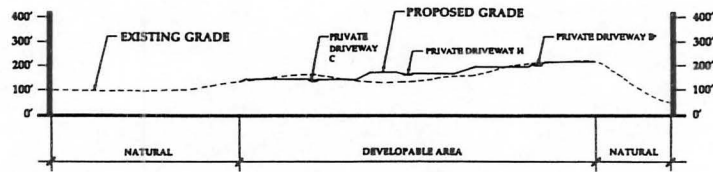
**Existing  
Vegetation Map**



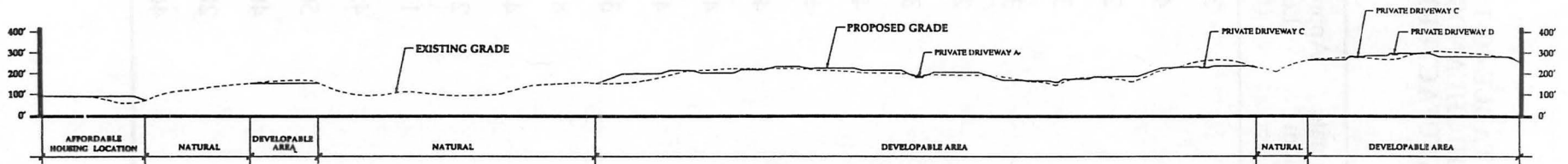
Source: Natural Resource Consultants 1997

**TABLE 4C-1  
DEL MAR HIGHLANDS ESTATES  
MAJOR MANUFACTURED SLOPES**

Slope Number	Approximate Maximum Height (feet)	Approximate Length (feet)	Cut/Fill
1	50	350	Fill
2	45	400	Cut
3	20	250	Fill
4	35	300	Fill
5	35	320	Fill
6	25	200	Fill
7	60	375	Fill
8	20	400	Fill
9	65	400	Fill
10	40	400	Fill
11	40	450	Fill
12	20	400	Cut
13	45	300	Fill
14	85	800	Cut
15	50	400	Fill
16	30	275	Fill
17	50	175	Fill
18	30	450	Fill
19	30	500	Fill
20	30	400	Fill
21	40	200	Fill
22	35	400	Fill



CROSS SECTION A - A'



CROSS SECTION B - B'

Source: T & B Planning Consultants 1997

FIGURE 4C-4

Cross Sections

## 2) Issue

How would implementation of the project affect the visual quality of the area, especially with regard to views from public roadways and recreational areas?

### Impacts

The proposed project would ultimately add single-family homes and affordable housing to the project site. Agricultural uses on the mesa top would be developed with residential uses and agricultural uses in Gonzales Canyon would be replaced with native vegetation. The character of the site would shift from agricultural and open space to residential and natural open space. The proposed developable areas of the site correspond fairly closely with the existing agricultural disturbance on the mesa top, but would also soften some of the existing sharp-edged gullies. Approximately 36 acres of sensitive habitat would be removed as part of the proposed development. In general, those areas of the site on the mesa which are currently in agricultural use would be developed with dwellings as viewed from off-site. Likewise, the existing undisturbed areas of the site on the lower hillsides would continue to appear much the same way they do now, with native vegetation and dirt trails the predominant visual elements. Views into Gonzales Canyon would change from cultivated land to wildlife habitat.

In general, development would occur on the project upland areas, including estate development on each of three local (small) ridgeline/knoll features located in the western portion of the property (Estate Lots 143-148). The average lot area on the estate residential area would be ~~1.55~~1.4 acres with a minimum floor area for the homes of 4,000 square feet. In the eastern portion of the site, Lots 96-142 (Small Lots) would be an average of ~~17,800~~9,500 square feet each. The homes on these lots would be a minimum of ~~3,000~~2,000 square feet and have a maximum height of 30 feet from finished grade. In the south-central portion of the site, Lots 42-95 (Medium Lots) would be an average of ~~29,000~~23,000 square feet with homes a minimum of 3,000 square feet that have a maximum height of 30 feet. In the central and northern portion of the property (Large Lots 1-41), the average lot size would be ~~48,600~~38,000 square feet and the homes would be a minimum of 3,500 square feet and have a maximum building height of 30 feet. The site plan (see Figure 3-3) and building design standards for the affordable housing site (Lot 149) would be predominantly earth-tone and soft pastel colors, with darker colors permitted as accents.

The proposed project would be visible from multiple public roadways and two public parks. These include Old El Camino Real, El Camino Real, San Dieguito Road, Via de la Valle, Sword Way, Interstate 5, Derby Farms Road, Torrey Highlands Park, and San Dieguito River Park. Impacts upon views from each of these key locations are addressed in the paragraphs which follow.

**a) Old El Camino Real**

The proposed project would provide an entrance into the southwestern corner of the project site from Old El Camino Real and would grade a 2.9-acre pad within the viewshed of Old El Camino Real. The pad (Lot 149), which would accommodate 24 affordable housing units (see Figures 3-3 and 3-4), would be located on the gentle slope which faces this roadway and is currently in agricultural use. The three 8-plex buildings would be located on top of the ridge above Old El Camino Real. Views of these units would be interrupted by the existing high-power transmission lines. Naturalized manufactured slopes are associated with the south and north slopes of the lot. Access to Old El Camino Real would be at grade, but the entrance would be screened with landscaping and fencing treatments along Old El Camino Real. These views of the proposed project would not be in character with the existing views along this roadway to the south of the project site where there are existing single-family homes and commercial stables.

**b) El Camino Real**

The views of the project site from El Camino Real are primarily experienced by southbound travelers between Via de la Valle and San Dieguito Road. From this roadway segment, the north-facing slopes and ridge in the northern half of the project site appear as a backdrop to the relatively level polo field and natural areas of the San Dieguito River valley. The site becomes clearer and takes up a greater portion of the view as the southbound traveler approaches the site. The ridge on the site appears as a relatively level mesa, which continues beyond the project site to the east. Existing residential development adjacent to the project site cannot be easily discerned from this roadway, with the exception that the existing Senterra residential subdivision immediately east of the project can be seen from the northern portion of this roadway segment. The larger areas of agricultural use on the site can be discerned along the tops of the ridges and along the slopes at the west end of the site.

Approximately 17 homes would be visible along the northern site boundary (including four of the six estate lots in the western portion of the property). Overall, the existing natural slopes along the northern site boundary would not be greatly altered by the proposed project because these slopes north of Lots 1-9 would be preserved as natural open space. Minor grading of natural areas along the upper reaches of these northerly, steep slopes would occur on or adjacent to Lots 10-13. The homes that would be visible from El Camino Real are all along the northern ridgeline. Although the design guidelines (see Appendix B) contain landscaping, setbacks, and architectural standards for these lots, the proposed project would noticeably change the skyline as viewed from El Camino Real by interrupting it with the rooflines of these homes and associated structures.

**c) Via de la Valle**

Views from Via de la Valle are primarily experienced by travelers in both directions from the vicinity of San Andres Drive to a point approximately 1,200 feet east of the intersection of Via de la Valle and El Camino Real. The views from this roadway are distant and several existing commercial and agricultural uses along the south side of Via de la Valle interrupt and detract from the views of the site. In addition, multiple residential subdivisions are visible beyond the project site and to the north of Via de la Valle in Solana Beach.

**d) San Dieguito Road**

The project site is visible from San Dieguito Road between approximately Derby Farms Road and El Camino Real. This roadway provides relatively close-up views of the northern slopes of the project site. The northern site boundary, which is visible from San Dieguito Road, is approximately 6,750 feet long. The proposed grading areas generally closely correspond with existing agricultural fields, which are visible from San Dieguito Road. The homes have lot lines which correspond closely to the previously cultivated property. The current views of agricultural activities and bare, fallow areas, then, would be replaced by views of homes and/or associated landscaping. The remaining slope areas would remain undisturbed, with native vegetation, in accordance with the City's RPO. Future homes along the northern edge of the ridgetop would be most visible from those portions of San Dieguito Road which are farthest from the site (e.g., just west of Derby Farms Road) and would be least visible from those portions of San Dieguito Road which are closest to the project site, where the hillside edging the road provides screening.

An additional effect of the project is related to construction of the major project access point. This entrance extends south, up the slope and into the project, from San Dieguito Road (see Figure 3-2). Currently consisting of disturbed grassland, the main entrance will have a gate, security personnel, and a gatehouse. The gatehouse would be constructed in an early California motif. Typical elements of this style of architecture include white stucco walls and clay or terra cotta tile roofs. Concrete tiles that have the appearance of terra cotta may also be used. Vehicular access gates should be constructed either of tubular steel or rough-hewn wood. The wood may be left natural, painted white, or stained in brown or other earth-tone colors. Associated vegetation will include trees and shrubs (see Figure 3-3). Planting along the access road would also be apparent to travelers along San Dieguito Road, whereas current views are to natural and disturbed vegetated slopes. It is expected that the proposed structure and vegetation, although certainly "developed" in nature when compared with the existing setting, would blend well with specimen planting along portions of San Dieguito Road and similar structural planting associated with the golf club/country club entrance just to the east.

### e) Interstate 5

As discussed previously, Interstate 5 has been recommended by the City for designation as a state scenic highway. The views of the project site from I-5 are distant, with the project taking up a very narrow portion of the view. This view is dominated by the San Dieguito River valley in the foreground and Black Mountain in the background and includes several existing rural residential developments. While it is likely that many of the future homes in the western and southern portions of the project site would be visible from I-5, the rooflines of these homes are not expected to alter the current skyline.

### f) Sword Way

Residents and travelers along Sword Way currently have views of Gonzales Canyon and the gentle slopes beyond the canyon. These views take in a mix of active and fallow farmland, with a narrow band of riparian vegetation within the drainageway of Gonzales Canyon and native coastal sage scrub along the south-facing, gently sloping wall of Gonzales Canyon. Sword Way is generally a minimum of 80 to 90 feet higher in elevation than adjacent portions of Gonzales Canyon.

With implementation of the proposed project, the entire area which is currently in agricultural use on the tops of the mesa beyond the canyon would be developed with homes while the bare dirt bottom of Gonzales Canyon would be revegetated to blend with the existing riparian corridor. The proposed developable areas in the eastern two-thirds of the project site are visible from Sword Way. The proposed project would step up the lot pads to generally match natural terrain slopes on the southern, and more gently sloping, portion of the mesa. At buildout of the project site, virtually all the homes in the eastern cluster area may ultimately be visible on-site from one vantage point or another along Sword Way. Thus, the view in Photograph 4C-1B would be replaced with a mix of single-family homes and associated landscaping in the mid-distance (to skyline) with segments of coastal sage scrub and riparian vegetation visible between the structures and the viewer. The agricultural operations, which are currently visible in the canyon, would cease and the native habitat of the canyon would be restored through replanting or natural regeneration.

### g) Torrey Highlands Park

With project implementation, the existing commercial agriculture on the mesa top and portions of the south-facing slopes of Gonzales Canyon would be replaced by homes (with associated driveways and landscaping). The remainder of Gonzales Canyon and the southern fingers of the project site would be revegetated or allowed to naturally regenerate native vegetation. Due to the visibility of existing single-family residential developments around the periphery of the project site, the distant view of the proposed residential uses would be consistent with the character of the surrounding area.

## h) San Dieguito River Park

The view from the planned Coast to Crest Trail alignment in the San Dieguito River Park is similar to the views described above for El Camino Real, except that it is consistently a midrange view. As such, the view of the project site and existing rural residential development along San Dieguito Road is much clearer and the east-west ridgeline within the site appears more variable. Existing residential subdivisions in Carmel Valley beyond the project site to the south cannot be seen. Views to the north are of residential development. The views of the project site currently take in agriculture, high-power transmission lines, trees, and native vegetation areas. The proposed residential development would occur primarily in the existing agricultural areas which are visible from the park (see Photograph 4C-1H). As was described for the views from El Camino Real, depending on the precise building pad location and specific home designs, several homes (each up to a maximum height of 30 feet) could be visible from the park along the ridge or on the north-facing slopes in the western portion of the site. These homes will appear to be an extension of the Senterra development to the east and would be in character with views to the north but would nonetheless replace the last section of rural view within the immediate area.

The San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan has design guidelines for the preservation or enhancement of views from the park, including clustering of units, setbacks from the top of the slope, use of landscaping to screen development as viewed from the park, and blending of rooflines and building facades with the existing topography. The project would cluster residential units, and the design guidelines for the proposed project would require a minimum 20-foot rear-yard setback for the units along the southern perimeter of the project site above Gonzales Canyon and a minimum 30-foot rear-yard setback for Lots 1-41 on the northern ridgeline from the rear-yard property lines. However, as shown on the brush management plan (see Figure 3-7), the building setbacks along the southern perimeter lots are predominantly 35 feet and generally 70 feet on the northern perimeter. In addition, the design guidelines also limit buildings to a single story within 50 feet of the rear-yard property line for these perimeter lots. The maximum building height for all of the single-family units is 30 feet.

The project's design guidelines (Appendix B) also include architectural requirements regarding building color (e.g., use of earth-tone and soft pastel colors), exterior lighting, signage, building materials, and roof design/overhang requirements. Landscaping treatments are also provided (see Figure 3-6) for perimeter slopes which will soften the visual impact of the development from off-site areas such as the San Dieguito River Park, and trees will be used along the ridgeline streetscape (Street M). In addition, the design guidelines includes rear-yard fencing guidelines and wall standards for perimeter lots in order to minimize the visual impacts from off-site areas.



### **i) Landmark and Mature Trees**

The proposed development area within the project site includes portions of five of the noted eucalyptus woodland areas (specifically, within portions of Lots 41 and 147-148). The number of mature trees lost from development in these areas may vary substantially, however, with the final design and layout of the homes and ancillary facilities. It is estimated that a worst-case scenario for on-site lot development would involve the loss of up to approximately 100 mature eucalyptus trees. Specifically, this total assumes that virtually all mature trees within the identified development areas would be lost.

The on-site sycamore woodland would be preserved in the proposed Environmental Tier in Gonzales Canyon and would, therefore, be unaffected by the proposed project.

## **Significance of Impacts**

The Del Mar Highlands Estates project would result in noticeable changes in views from many public vantage points, and would represent a continuation of the suburban development in the vicinity of the San Dieguito River valley. The proposed development would change the rural character of the site to a suburban atmosphere similar to that of the existing development to the north and east. However, the proposed design guidelines for the project would implement the recommendations in the San Dieguito River Valley Concept Plan for development adjacent to the natural areas which includes Gonzales Canyon and the San Dieguito River valley. The impact to visual quality would therefore not be significant.

The loss of mature eucalyptus trees would be considered a significant but temporary visual impact, due to the large size and high local visibility of these trees. These potential impacts would be reduced below a level of significance through the measure identified below.

## **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

No mitigation measures are required for changes in views to roadways Torrey Highlands Park or the San Dieguito River Park.

Mature eucalyptus removed as a result of proposed project development shall be replaced with saplings at an approximate ratio of 1:1. Replacement trees may consist of any ornamental or native tree species approved by the City of San Diego, Development Services Department Director, which will grow to match the height and breadth of lost trees. The designated project mitigation monitor shall verify that the above-described replacement trees are included in the project landscaping plan and shall verify and

document the planting of these trees to the Development Services Department Director as part of the site development.

### **3) Issue**

Would compliance with the City's fuel management program result in visual impacts?

## **Impacts**

As required by the City of San Diego, a brush management plan has been incorporated into the design guidelines for the proposed project in order to reduce the availability of flammable materials adjacent to future on-site structures. Brush management is typically accomplished by pruning and thinning of native plants, revegetation with non-native plants, or a combination of the two. In no case should hillsides be left devoid of vegetation, because this would lead to soil erosion.

Typically, fuel management involves the identification of three zones. These zones are shown on Figure 3-7. The vast majority of brush management proposed for Del Mar Highlands Estates would take place within the areas proposed to be graded for the project as shown in Figure 3-2, the PRD site plan. The grading boundaries are exceeded for brush management purposes for only a few lots because of the minimum setback requirements in the design guidelines. These worst-case excesses are minor in extent as they are small in area and consist only of zone 3 management efforts—selective pruning and thinning of native vegetation while preserving natural appearance. The actual extent of the brush management zones would be determined on a lot-by-lot basis. No off-site brush management impacts are proposed.

The design guidelines for the proposed project provide a list of recommended plant materials for brush management and identify those plant materials which are fire retardant. Notes on the map address future building materials, prohibited plants, and the requirement that maintenance of brush management areas be carried out in accordance with specifications in the City of San Diego Landscape Technical Manual.

## **Significance of Impacts**

The selective thinning of native vegetation caused by implementation of a brush management program would alter the appearance of natural slopes adjacent to development, and the direct and cumulative effect of brush management would represent a potentially significant visual impact.

## Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

As a condition of the PRD, hand thinning brush in zones 2 and 3 would mitigate visual impacts from brush management activities to below a level of significance. Maintenance of zones 2 and 3 would be the responsibility of a homeowners association.

## D. Geology and Soils

A geologic reconnaissance report (Pacific Soils 1989) was prepared for the proposed project site and other properties in Subarea III of the FUA. More recently, a preliminary geologic and geotechnical report (Converse Consultants West 1993) was prepared for the entire Subarea III.

### Existing Conditions

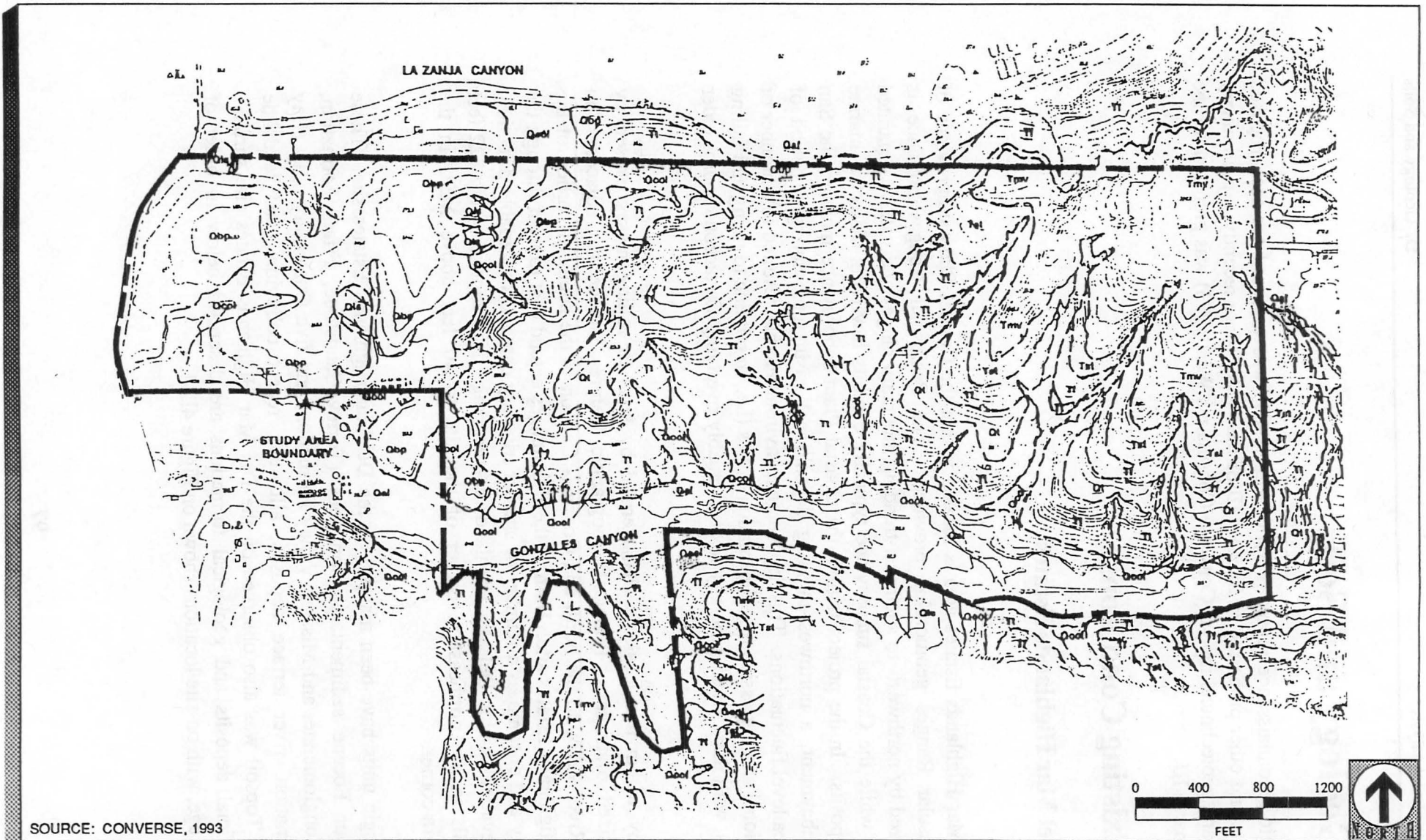
#### a) Del Mar Highlands Estates

##### Geology

The Del Mar Highlands Estates area is located within the Coastal Plain subprovince of the Peninsular Ranges geomorphic province. The Peninsular Ranges province is characterized by northwest- to southeast-trending mountain ranges and valleys separated by faults, while the Coastal subprovince typically exhibits low-lying dissected marine terrace deposits. In the project region, the Coastal Plain subprovince includes the San Diego Embayment, a northwest-trending depositional basin representing a period of Tertiary sea level fluctuations. This depositional environment has resulted in a number of transgressional and regressional sedimentation cycles (i.e., in relation to rising and falling sea levels), with these strata generally unconformably overlying Cretaceous and/or older rocks.

Topography within this locale is characterized by level to rolling mesas incised by variably sized drainages. Principal topographic features include the adjacent San Dieguito River valley to the north and Gonzales Canyon in the southern portion of the Del Mar Highlands Estates site. Both of these drainages extend east to west through the site vicinity and encompass a number of smaller tributary canyons of variable direction. On-site elevations within Del Mar Highlands Estates range from approximately 322 feet above MSL in the northeastern corner of the site to 40 feet above MSL in the northwestern corner.

Nine geologic units have been mapped on the Del Mar Highlands Estates site. These include four Eocene sedimentary formations (Torrey Sandstone, Friars Formation, Stadium Conglomerate, and Mission Valley Formation) and five Quaternary units (Bay Point Formation, river terrace deposits, alluvium, recent colluvium, and landslide deposits). Topsoil was also observed on the Del Mar Highlands Estates site surface. These surficial deposits and geological formations are described below in order of decreasing age, with on-site locations shown on Figure 4D-1.



SOURCE: CONVERSE, 1993

**LEGEND**

Qaf	Artificial Fill	Tmv	Mission Valley Formation
Qal	Alluvium	Tst	Stadium Conglomerate
Qcol	Colluvium	Tf	Friars Formation
Qls	Landslide Deposit	Tsc	Scripps Formation
Qt	Terrace Deposit	Tt	Torrey Sandstone
Qbp	Bay Point Formation	—	Geologic Contact
Qln	Lindavista Formation	• • •	Buried Geologic Contact

**FIGURE 4D-1**

**Del Mar Highlands Estates  
Geologic Map**

The Torrey Sandstone (Tt) consists of dense, light-colored, medium- to coarse-grained sandstone. This unit is exposed primarily along a number of slopes adjacent to Gonzales Canyon (and smaller associated drainages) in the southern and central portions of the site. The Torrey Sandstone in the project vicinity has been observed to be stable when exposed in cut slopes. The sandstone possesses relatively high shear strength, a low expansive potential, and low compressibility characteristics in both an undisturbed or properly compacted condition. It is therefore generally suitable for foundation support.

The Friars Formation (Tf) consists of relatively dense, clayey sandstone and sandy claystone, with on-site exposures located predominantly in the south-central area. The sandstone and claystone units of this formation are relatively unstable (compared to other formations) when exposed in cut slopes. In addition to possessing relatively low shear strength, the more clayey portions of this formation are highly expansive. The Friars Formation is identified as slide-prone in the City of San Diego Seismic Safety Study (1983).

The Stadium Conglomerate (Tst) consists of very dense, clayey sand, gravel, and cobbles and overlies the Friars Formation and Torrey Sandstone in the western portion of the Del Mar Highlands Estates site. The Stadium Conglomerate typically exhibits favorable geotechnical engineering properties for development.

The Mission Valley Formation (Tmv) outcrops primarily in the northwest corner of the Del Mar Highlands Estates area, overlying the Stadium Conglomerate. This geologic unit is generally comprised of relatively dense sandstone interbedded with siltstone and claystone. It is anticipated that significant quantities of low-expansive sand occur within this unit.

The Bay Point Formation (Qbp) is extensively exposed in the northeastern portion of the Del Mar Highlands Estates site. This unit consists mostly of marine and nonmarine, poorly consolidated, fine- and medium-grained, pale brown, fossiliferous sandstone. The marine part of the formation interfingers with unfossiliferous sandstone that lies generally more than 100 but less than 200 feet above MSL (City of San Diego 1992). Typically, the Bay Point Formation exhibits a low to moderate expansion potential and generally good geotechnical characteristics. Slope instability in this formation has been observed locally on the Del Mar Highlands Estates site, with several mapped landslide deposits associated with the Bay Point Formation located in the northeastern corner of the site (as described below).

Thin stream terrace deposits (Qt) form low benches north of Gonzales Canyon in the central portion of Del Mar Highlands Estates. These deposits typically consist of dense, weakly cemented cobble conglomerates and sandstones, generally possessing excellent bearing characteristics in both a natural and properly compacted condition.

Alluvial deposits (Qal) of 5 to over 25 feet deep are found predominantly in the bottom of Gonzales Canyon on the Del Mar Highlands Estates site. The alluvium consists of silty sands to silts and may contain a large amount of cobbles and some boulders within the main streambeds. In general, observed alluvial deposits are soft and porous and considered unsuitable for supporting engineered fills and/or structures (Appendix D1).

Colluvial materials (Qcol) consist of loose, unconsolidated materials deposited along the bases of slopes, chiefly through the action of gravity. On-site colluvial deposits consist of silty sands to sandy clays with cobble-sized rock fragments and have an estimated maximum thickness of 10 to 15 feet. Deposits of colluvial materials are found within many of the secondary drainages on the Del Mar Highlands Estates site.

Possible landslide deposits (Qls) occur in two different categories as defined by the City of San Diego Seismic Safety Study (1983). The first category includes known or highly suspected landslides. The second category includes landslides which are considered to be possible or conjectured. Four known (first category) landslide deposits occur in the northwestern portion of the Del Mar Highlands Estates site in association with the Bay Point Formation. No possible or conjectured landslides have been identified for the Del Mar Highlands Estates area, although both the Friars and Bay Point Formations may exhibit local slope instability.

Topsoils (unmapped) within the Del Mar Highlands Estates site consist predominantly of well-drained clay, clay loam, loamy sand, and loam, all of which include clayey subsoils. In general, topsoils overlying the Stadium Conglomerate, Torrey Sandstone, Bay Point Formation, and terrace deposits are more loamy in nature and are likely to exhibit low expansion (or shrink-swell) potentials. The thickness of these soils on-site is estimated to be on the order of two feet. Topsoils overlying the Mission Valley and Friars Formations exhibit higher clay contents and typically possess higher expansive potentials. The thickness of these soils on-site may vary from approximately two to five feet.

## **Groundwater**

The Del Mar Highlands Estates site is located within the San Dieguito Hydrographic Unit. It is likely that a permanent shallow groundwater table exists within Gonzales Canyon. It is also likely that during the rainy season, shallow perched groundwater conditions could develop within on-site alluvial and colluvial deposits.

## **Geologic Hazards**

### ***Faulting and Seismicity***

Previous seismic evaluations prepared for the project files (Converse Consultants West 1993; City of San Diego 1983) do not identify any known active or potentially active faults on the Del Mar Highlands Estates site. Active faults are defined as those which

exhibit Holocene displacement (i.e., within approximately the last 11,000 years) or historic seismicity, while potentially active faults displace Pleistocene (two million years or less in age) but not Holocene strata (California Division of Mines and Geology 1992). The Del Mar Highlands Estates site is not within a currently designated Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone. These zones are designated by the California Division of Mines and Geology and are intended to identify active faults and associated setback requirements for habitable structures.

Regional topographic and seismic characteristics in the project vicinity are influenced by a series of northwest-trending faults associated with the San Andreas fault system. As part of the project seismic evaluation, an analysis was performed to estimate the magnitude and on-site peak horizontal ground accelerations for the maximum credible earthquake and maximum probable earthquake along major regional and local faults. A total of 12 major active or potentially active faults were identified within an approximate 62-mile (100 km) radius of the Del Mar Highlands Estates site, with the results of this analysis summarized in Table 4D-1.

As shown in Table 4D-1, the nearest major active faults to the Del Mar Highlands Estates site are the Rose Canyon fault, located approximately 5 to 8 miles (9 to 13 km) to the west, and the Coronado Bank fault, an offshore zone of deformation located approximately 17 to 19 miles (27 to 31 km) to the west. The peak horizontal ground acceleration range for maximum credible earthquake and maximum probable earthquake events along the Rose Canyon fault are 0.44 g to 0.39 g and 0.31 g to 0.24 g, respectively. These represent the maximum peak horizontal ground acceleration values expected on-site in association with major regional seismic activity.

In addition to the faults noted in Table 4D-1, the State Route 56 West, Carmel Valley Restoration and Enhancement Project Plan Amendments FEIR identifies a potentially active fault in Carmel Valley approximately 2,000 feet east of the I-5/Carmel Valley Road intersection (i.e., in the immediate vicinity of the Shell parcel). This potentially active fault, however, is not considered capable of generating a large-magnitude seismic event due to its relatively short length (2.5 miles) (Appendix D2).

### ***Liquefaction***

Liquefaction is the phenomenon whereby soils lose shear strength and exhibit fluidlike flow characteristics. Liquefaction is generally associated with seismic ground shaking and occurs predominantly in loose, unconsolidated, and saturated granular deposits. In the event of a strong earthquake, on-site liquefaction is most likely to take place in areas exhibiting shallow groundwater depths and loose, unconsolidated alluvial deposits. In the Del Mar Highlands Estates vicinity, these conditions occur on the project site in Gonzales Canyon and, to a lesser extent, in a number of smaller secondary drainages.



**TABLE 4D-1**  
**SUMMARY OF SEISMIC SOURCES AND PARAMETERS**

Abbreviated Fault Name	Approximate Distance and Direction from Site mi (km)	Maximum Credible Magnitude (Richter Scale)	Peak Site Acceleration (g)	Site Intensity (Mercalli Scale)	Maximum Probable Magnitude	Peak Site Acceleration (g)	Site Intensity (Mercalli Scale)
Rose Canyon	5 (9) - 8 (13) - W	7.50	0.44 - 0.36	X - IX	6.25	0.31 - 0.24	IX
Coronado Bank/ Offshore Zone of Deformation	17 (27) - 19 (31) - W	7.50	0.22 - 0.20	VIII	6.00	0.09 - 0.08	VII
Elsinore	30 (48) - NE	7.50	0.14	VIII	6.75	0.09	VII
San Clemente	50 (81) - SW	7.50	0.08	VII	6.25	0.03	V
Palos Verdes Hills	51 (82) - NW	7.50	0.05	VI	5.50	0.01	III
Coyote Creek (San Jacinto)	60 (97) - NE	7.50	0.07	VI	6.00	0.02	IV
Casa Loma-Clark (San Jacinto)	58 (93) - NE	7.50	0.07	VI	7.00	0.05	VI
Newport-Inglewood	60 (97) -NW	7.50	0.07	VI	6.50	0.03	V
Hot S-Buck Ridge (San Jacinto)	60 (97) - NE	7.50	0.07	VI	6.25	0.02	IV
Whittier-North Elsinore	60 (97) - NNW	7.50	0.06	VI	6.25	0.02	IV
Gln. Helen-Lytle Claremont	61 (98) - N	7.50	0.06	VI	7.00	0.04	V
Borrego Mountain (San Jacinto)	62 (100) - ENE	6.50	0.02	IV	6.25	0.02	IV

SOURCE: Converse Consultants West (1993).

- NOTES: 1. Attenuation relation: Idriss (1987 - mean).  
2. Soil condition: rock/stiff soil.

### ***Expansion***

A number of soils within the project site contain clayey horizons or substrata which may exhibit expansive behavior. Soil expansion is related to the water holding capacity of clay minerals and can adversely affect the integrity of structures such as foundations, footings, and retaining walls.

#### **b) Shell Parcel**

The northern portion of the Shell parcel abuts the floor of Carmel Valley and the (relatively open) mouth of Deer Canyon south of Santa Monica Ridge. From this northern boundary, the parcel extends south, incorporating the bisected slopes of the sloping mesa top above. Elevations range from a low of approximately 140 feet above MSL in the northwestern portion of the parcel in Carmel Valley to a high of approximately 320 feet above MSL along the mid-eastern boundary.

The Shell parcel contains two geologic units: Friars Formation and alluvium and slope wash (undifferentiated). Descriptions of geologic units not described for the Del Mar Highlands portion of the study area are summarized below.

Alluvium consists primarily of poorly consolidated stream deposits of silt, sand, and cobble-sized particles derived from bedrock sources that lie within or near the area. These deposits intertongue with Holocene slope wash that commonly mantles the lower valley slopes throughout coastal San Diego County. Alluvium and slope wash are mostly undifferentiated on the geologic maps.

Slope wash deposits are poorly consolidated surficial materials derived chiefly from nearby soil and decomposed bedrock sources. The slope wash is deposited along the flanks of the lower valley slopes by the actions of gravity and surface water. Thick deposits of slope wash are especially common on Friars Formation where deep soil horizons have developed. Expansive clay materials deposited as slope wash yield the hummocky topography developed on rocks of lagoonal and nonmarine origin.

Topsoils on the parcel contain clayey elements.

### **Groundwater**

The project parcel is located within the Miramar Reservoir Hydrologic Area of the Peñasquitos Hydrologic Unit. Groundwater may exist in the alluvial aquifers around Shaw Valley Creek, Deer Canyon Creek, and near Los Peñasquitos Creek. Shallow groundwater conditions are indicated by standing water in Carmel Valley. It is likely that permanent shallow groundwater exists within Deer Canyon.

## Geologic Hazards

Geologic hazards associated with the Shell parcel are discussed under the geologic hazards discussion for the Del Mar Highlands Estates section above.

### Geology/Soils Issues

1. Are there unstable geologic conditions which would represent a constraint to development of the site and pose future hazards on the sites?
2. Would development of the site increase the potential for erosion?

## 1) Issue

Are there unstable geologic conditions which would represent a constraint to development of the site and pose future hazards on the sites?

## Impacts

### a) Geologic Formations and Surficial Deposits

Since the Torrey Sandstone formation is relatively unstable when exposed in cut slopes, slope stabilization may be required. This sandstone should be suitable for capping building areas which might otherwise contain expansive soils at grade. Excavations within this formation should be readily accomplished with moderate ripping by conventional earth-moving equipment. The occurrence of localized cemented stones or concretions may be expected; however, the need for blasting is unlikely.

The commonly occurring claystone beds within the Friars Formation generally require slope stabilization measures if exposed in cut slopes or if they lie at shallow depth beneath fill slopes. The clays of the Friars Formation are moderately to highly expansive and would require either selective grading or specially designed foundations. This formation should be rippable with conventional grading equipment.

Moderately heavy to heavy ripping should be anticipated during grading within the Stadium Conglomerate unit. Because of the high cobble content, this formation is generally considered less desirable than sandstones of the Mission Valley Formation or Torrey Sandstone for capping building pads. Cut or fill slopes should possess adequate stability if graded at inclinations of 2 horizontal to 1 vertical. The soil matrix of the conglomerate is generally of low expansive potential and should provide adequate bearing capacity for the support of conventional spread footings.

Within the Mission Valley Formation, cut and fill slopes with inclinations of 2:1 can be expected to possess adequate overall stability. Excavation should be readily accomplished with moderate ripping and conventional heavy-duty grading equipment. The occurrence of localized cemented zones or concretions is likely, but the need for blasting is considered extremely remote.

The Bay Point Formation may require slope stabilization measures where it is exposed in cut slopes or if it exists at shallow depths beneath fill slopes. The Bay Point Formation should be ripplable with conventional grading equipment.

Terrace deposits generally provide favorable geotechnical conditions relative to proposed development. Because only limited areas of the project site encompass these materials, however, they are not a major consideration for site development.

Alluvial and colluvial materials are generally loose and granular in nature and may be subject to seismically induced liquefaction during local or regional earthquake events. Where structural improvements are proposed in areas of alluvial or colluvial deposits, remedial grading in the form of removal and recompaction would likely be required, pursuant to direction by a qualified geologist.

The proposed project plans show developable areas for estate residences over or adjacent to known landslide deposits. It may therefore be necessary for lot owners to either avoid these landslide-prone areas or mitigate potential landsliding effects through measures such as removal and recompaction or buttressing. Such stabilizing efforts could potentially extend beyond the designated on-site limits of disturbance under RPO.

The unconsolidated consistency and expansive potential of unmapped on-site topsoils may require remedial grading, such as removal and recompaction or replacement with approved fill.

## **b) Groundwater**

Where project-related development for Del Mar Highlands Estates extends into canyons or ravines, subdrains would be required to relieve the potential buildup of hydrostatic pressure. Due to the anticipated installation of a municipal water system, the proposed development would eliminate the current use of groundwater on-site for farming, thereby reducing impacts to local groundwater supplies. Use of groundwater for agricultural and domestic purposes is anticipated to cease upon the installation of a municipal water supply system, and existing groundwater quality problems in the area would therefore not impact the proposed project.

## **c) Geologic Hazards**

### **Faulting and Seismicity**

The seismic hazard considered most likely to impact the site is ground shaking associated with an earthquake along a major regional active fault. Specifically (pursuant to Table 4D-1), the Rose Canyon fault may be capable of producing a maximum probable earthquake of 6.25, the Elsinore fault is believed to have a repeat activity interval of approximately 60 years for magnitude 7.3 event, and the San Jacinto fault could produce a maximum probable earthquake of up to 7.0. Due to their distance from the project site, design engineering of on-site structures and features can provide an adequate margin of safety for seismic events along the noted faults. Potential on-site geologic hazards associated with seismic activity include landsliding and liquefaction, as outlined below.

### **Landslides**

The Del Mar Highlands Estates site encompasses a number of known landslide deposits and areas of the Friars and Bay Point Formations which exhibit landsliding potential. These deposits may be subject to slope movements or failures from seismic ground shaking, as well as nonseismic factors such as gravity, vegetation removal, and irrigation. This is particularly applicable to manufactured slopes associated with building and road construction in areas exposing or underlain by the Friars and Bay Point Formations. Specifically, this includes portions of streets in the northwestern and north-central portions of the Del Mar Highlands Estates site, as well as developable portions of numerous residential lots. In order to accurately determine the size and subsurface geometry of known and potential landsliding hazards; however, site-specific exploratory drilling and/or trenching would be required. Where landslides are present in areas to be developed, earth buttresses or other remedial measures can be provided during site development to properly stabilize landslide deposits. Similarly, remedial grading may be required where slides are not present but where weak claystone beds (or other unstable strata) are encountered. Slide debris often possesses zones of compressible material and some recompaction of these soils may be necessary.

### **Liquefaction**

No development is proposed for the alluvial (liquefiable) areas.

### **Expansion**

Much of the developable portions of the Del Mar Highlands Estates site are overlain with topsoils exhibiting variable levels of expansion potential. These materials could significantly affect most proposed roadway and residential structures through displacement of and damage to foundations and surface structures. These potential impacts can be reduced below a level of significance through measures such as removal and replacement of expansive soils with approved fill.

## Significance of Impacts

There are no soil or geologic conditions observed or known to exist on the project site which would preclude development of the property (Converse Consultants West 1993). A number of potentially significant on-site geologic conditions exist, however, which will require mitigation. Specifically, these include seismically induced ground shaking and landsliding, unstable manufactured slopes, and unsuitable surficial deposits (e.g., expansive or unconsolidated soils). Mitigation of potential landslides could result in temporary removal of vegetation and grading/recompaction of soils beyond the proposed limits of disturbance under RPO.

## Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

The following mitigation measures would be required for Del Mar Highlands Estates. These measures would reduce geology impacts associated with unstable geologic formations, soils, and geologic hazards to below a level of significance:

1. Prior to grading permit issuance for any development on the project site (including proposed roadways), a project-specific soils and geological investigation shall be submitted to and approved by the City Engineering Department. The evaluation shall include, but not be limited to, an analysis of the following conditions in areas to be graded and developed: seismic loading, gross and surficial slope stability, landslide and mudflow potential, hydrostatic pressure potential, foundation suitability of soils, and soil expansion. The evaluation shall provide remedial grading and foundation design measures to mitigate any significant impact associated with the foregoing conditions including unstable soil, bedrock, groundwater, or seismic conditions.
2. Grading and development plans shall be reviewed and approved by EAS and the City Engineering Department to determine compliance with the remedial grading measures identified in the development-specific geotechnical reports. Geotechnical specifications shall be identified as mitigation measures on grading plans. Field monitoring by a qualified geologist would be required. Should additional resource impacts be identified during plan check or field monitoring, additional environmental review will be required to determine whether or not additional mitigation or revegetation is necessary.

## 2) Issue

Would development of the site increase the potential for erosion?

## Impacts

Many of the areas proposed for development are currently in agricultural production. These areas have been cleared of most stabilizing vegetation and are generally plowed or disced year-round. Therefore, although several on-site surficial deposits may be subject to erosion hazards due to project removal of stabilizing vegetation and the construction of manufactured slopes, development of the proposed project may actually reduce on-site erosion through implementation of project landscaping. Finally, erosion effects currently associated with keeping Gonzales Canyon (the area floodway) in a disced field crop or fallow state would cease. The natural and planned revegetation which would occur here would diminish present adverse effects on downstream sedimentation.

Where construction conditions could potentially accelerate erosion rates in currently undeveloped areas (due to the generally loose and unconsolidated nature of graded areas and fill materials), erosion potential would be highest in drainages or manufactured slopes. The latter condition would occur primarily along interior slopes between development levels. Existing topography in those areas would require recontouring of existing variable slopes. Based on the PRD site plan, modified slopes on-site would range up to 110 feet in height.

Most eroded materials within the Del Mar Highlands Estates site would enter the San Dieguito River, either directly or through tributary drainages (including Gonzales Canyon). Such erosion, if unchecked, could result in significant effects to proposed facilities through undermining of supporting fill or soil deposits. In addition, the transport of eroded sediment into local drainages could significantly impact local water quality through effects such as sedimentation and turbidity (refer to Hydrology/Water Quality). Potential on-site erosion impacts would be greatest during storm events, although local irrigation could also generate significant sediment transport. Effects associated with storm events would be largely alleviated by detention basins proposed as part of project design. Although remaining effects may be significant, they are still expected to be less than those currently associated with agricultural activities on over 50 percent of the Del Mar Highlands Estates site.

The proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates Design Guidelines provide a number of specific standards related to erosion control, including general landscaping and specific planting criteria for disturbed or manufactured slopes. Specifically, these latter criteria involve the following types of measures:

- Use of native drought-tolerant vegetation to reduce irrigation requirements.
- Provision of both deep-rooted and ground cover vegetation on all disturbed slopes.

- Use of erosion-controlling measures such as mulch or jute netting prior to establishment of vegetation.

## Significance of Impacts

Future grading activities for Del Mar Highlands Estates, for roadways and development pad "terraces," could result in potentially significant soil erosion and transport.

## Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

The proposed project design guidelines described above, as well as mitigation measures identified in Section 4.B, Hydrology/Water Quality, and below, would reduce impacts associated with on-site erosion potential to below a level of significance for Del Mar Highlands Estates.

Prior to grading permit issuance for proposed on-site roadways and lot development, a site-specific erosion control and landscaping plan shall be submitted to and approved by the City Development Services Department, Development and Environmental Planning Division. This plan will include measures to mitigate erosion and transport both during and immediately after construction (e.g., sediment traps or detention facilities), as well as the provision of landscaping to provide short- and long-term erosion control. Specifically, the landscaping plan shall include long-term landscaping to control erosion from manufactured slopes, and a phased plan of erosion-resistant ground cover planting shall be prepared for graded areas which require installation within 30 days of completion of grading.



## E. Biology

The following discussion is based on the biology technical report prepared by Sweetwater Environmental Biologists in 1995. Vegetation community data was updated in 1997 by Natural Resource Consultants. These reports are included as Appendix E of the EIR.

### Existing Conditions

#### a) Del Mar Highlands Estates

##### Vegetation

Vegetation types and subassociations for Del Mar Highlands Estates are shown on Figure 4E-1 and listed on Table 4E-1 along with their associated acreage. The text which follows describes the vegetation types in detail.

##### SCRUB COMMUNITIES

**Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub.** Diegan coastal sage scrub may be dominated by a variety of species, depending upon soil type, slope, and aspect and is classified into several subassociations based on the dominant species. There are three Diegan coastal sage scrub subassociations on the Del Mar Highlands Estates site: coastal sagebrush dominated, black sage dominated, and lemonadeberry dominated.

Most of the sage scrub at Del Mar Highlands Estates exhibits high structural and compositional quality and occurs along the south-facing slopes and tributary canyons of western Gonzales Canyon. There are areas of sage scrub that are recovering from fire and also some patches of disturbed sage scrub that have a high component of non-native, annual ruderal species such as mustard (*Brassica* sp.). Approximately 115 acres are dominated by Diegan coastal sage scrub. Of this total, approximately 33 acres are coastal sagebrush dominated, 30 acres are black sage dominated, and 18.6 acres are lemonadeberry dominated.

**Southern Cactus Scrub.** Southern cactus scrub is a new vegetation type that has been proposed (Magney 1992) to be included in the California Department of Fish and Game's (CDFG's) "Terrestrial Natural Communities of California" (Holland 1986). This vegetation type is a low, dense (50-85 percent cover) scrub dominated by succulent shrubs consisting primarily of prickly pear (*Opuntia littoralis*) and coastal cholla (*O. prolifer*). This vegetation type occurs on sandy soils and rocky areas, primarily on south-facing slopes. There are two small patches (totaling approximately 3.88 acres) of southern cactus scrub on the project site, just north of Gonzales Canyon. Because of the open canopy of this community, there is a large component of non-native, annual ruderal species involved.

**TABLE 4E-1  
VEGETATION TYPES AND ACREAGE  
OF DEL MAR HIGHLANDS ESTATES**

Vegetation Type	Acreage
<b><u>Scrub Communities</u></b>	
Diegan coastal sage scrub	88.27
Disturbed Diegan coastal sage scrub	22.92
Southern cactus scrub	<u>3.88</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>115.07</b>
<b><u>Chaparral Communities</u></b>	
Southern maritime chaparral	35.03
Chamise chaparral	6.75
Scrub oak chaparral	<u>2.64</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>44.42</b>
<b><u>Riparian Communities</u></b>	
Southern sycamore riparian woodland	3.66
Southern willow scrub	1.46
Mule fat scrub	4.98
Freshwater marsh	<u>0.15</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>10.25</b>
<b><u>Grasslands</u></b>	
Non-native grassland	7.39
<b><u>Non-native Communities</u></b>	
Ruderal	19.04
Eucalyptus woodland	6.25
Disturbed/agriculture	183.74
Developed	<u>2.84</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>211.87</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>389.00</b>

## CHAPARRAL COMMUNITIES

**Southern Maritime Chaparral.** The southern maritime chaparral on-site in Del Mar Highlands Estates is best developed on the north- and south-facing slopes within Gonzales Canyon. The majority of this habitat type on-site is isolated from other native habitat by agricultural activities. This is especially true of the large patch in the center of the project site. There are approximately 35.03 acres of southern maritime chaparral within the site's boundaries.

**Scrub Oak Chaparral.** Scrub oak chaparral is a dense, evergreen chaparral that reaches a canopy height of up to 20 feet. This is dominated almost exclusively by Nuttall's scrub oak, with San Diego mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus minutiflorus*), toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), and lemonadeberry as minor constituents. Within the project site this vegetation type seems to be restricted to north-facing slopes along the western portion of Gonzales Canyon. The scrub oak chaparral is contiguous with the southern maritime chaparral in that area of the Del Mar Highlands Estates site. Approximately 2.64 acres of scrub oak chaparral occur within the site.

## RIPARIAN COMMUNITIES

**Southern Sycamore Riparian Woodland.** Southern sycamore riparian woodlands are composed of winter-deciduous trees that require water near the soil surface. Western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) is the dominant species in this vegetation type, forming an open to dense, medium-height woodland in the moist canyons and drainage bottoms. Associated understory species include mule fat, Mexican elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), and poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversiloba*). A remnant stand of southern sycamore riparian woodland occurs along the western portion of Gonzales Canyon near the western boundary of the site. Approximately 3.66 acres of southern sycamore riparian woodland occur on the Del Mar Highlands Estates site.

**Mule Fat Scrub.** Mule fat scrub is a riparian scrub community dominated by mule fat and interspersed with shrubby willows. This habitat occurs along intermittent stream channels with a fairly coarse substrate and moderate depth to the water table. It also occurs in areas where there is not enough water to support riparian tree species. The drainage that flows through Gonzales Canyon is dominated by mule fat scrub, with the exception of the above-noted riparian woodland portion of the canyon. Approximately 4.98 acres of mule fat scrub occurs within the project site.

## GRASSLAND COMMUNITIES

**Non-native Grassland.** Non-native grassland is restricted to a few slopes that are infrequently disced. Since most of the nonagricultural, disturbed areas have been disced on an annual basis, it is difficult to assess whether these areas were grasslands or

dominated by ruderal species. As such, the non-native grassland may be more extensive than is mapped. Approximately 7.39 acre of non-native grassland occurs on the site.

#### NON-NATIVE COMMUNITIES

**Ruderal Vegetation.** Areas classified as ruderal are highly disturbed and dominated by non-native, broad-leaved forbs that are adapted to a regime of frequent disturbance. Many of the characteristic species of ruderal habitat are also indicator species of annual grasslands, but ruderal areas tend to be more dominated by forbs than by grasses. Characteristic species include red brome, mustard, tocolote (*Centaurea melitensis*), and Russian thistle (*Salsola* spp.). Approximately 19.04 acres of ruderal (including disced) vegetation occurs on the Del Mar Highlands Estates site.

**Eucalyptus Woodland.** Patches of eucalyptus woodland are present within Gonzales Canyon, with approximately 6.25 acres of eucalyptus woodland occurring within the Del Mar Highlands Estates project site.

#### Flora

A total of 194 plant species, 150 (77 percent) of which are natives, were observed during project field surveys. A complete inventory of plant species identified on the property is included in the biology technical report for Del Mar Highlands Estates (see Appendix E1). This high percentage of native species reflects the diversity and high quality of the habitats on the remaining undisturbed portions of the site. The plant surveys were thorough since they were conducted over a nearly complete growing season. The flowering periods of all sensitive plant species thought to have any potential for occurrence on-site were covered by this survey timing. In addition, the 1992-1993 winter rainfall was exceptional and provided suitable conditions to induce germination and growth of a high percentage of the on-site flora.

#### Wildlife

##### INVERTEBRATES

Invertebrate communities, for the most part, are linked to the plant life of a given area. Numerous invertebrate species undoubtedly inhabit the Del Mar Highlands Estates site, as predicted by the multiple habitats and floral diversity found there; most of these would belong to the phyla Mollusca and Arthropoda (including insects). The insect groups which should exhibit the greatest diversity on-site are the orders: Orthoptera (grasshoppers, crickets, katydids), Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies), Hemiptera (true bugs), Homoptera (cicadas and relatives), Coleoptera (beetles), Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths), Diptera (flies) and Hymenoptera (bees, wasps, and ants) (see Appendix E1). Most species would more likely be observed during the warmer months of late spring, summer, and early fall as these are the peak times of adult activity. Only the largest and

most noticeable species would be observed during a general survey, while many others would be found during a more focused invertebrate survey.

## VERTEBRATES

Approximately 70 vertebrate species were observed or detected during the surveys of the project site: 1 amphibian, 4 reptiles, 54 birds, and 10 mammals. A complete list of these animals is presented in the biology technical report (see Appendix E1).

**Amphibians.** One amphibian species was observed during the late summer and winter surveys of the project site: pacific chorus frog (*Pseudacris regilla*). Some additional species may occur because the site contains their preferred habitats and is within their known range. These other species are expected to occur mostly in and around the wetland areas but may also be found in shrublands. Some of the other probable amphibian inhabitants include but are not necessarily limited to the California toad (*Bufo boreas halophilus*) and garden slender salamander (*Batrachoseps major*).

**Reptiles.** Four reptile species were observed during the survey of project site: the western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*), Coronado island skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus interparietalis*), and orange-throated whiptail. Several other species are expected to occur on-site based on knowledge of specific habitat or food requirements and documented ranges. Some other reptile species that would be expected to occur on-site are the San Diego horned lizard, northern red diamond rattlesnake, southern alligator lizard (*Elgaria multicarinatus*), southern pacific rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis helleri*), and common kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getulus*). Reptile species are widespread in the project area, occurring in the shrublands and woodlands mostly, but also grasslands.

**Birds.** During the surveys, 54 species of birds were observed utilizing the site; a complete list is presented in the biology technical report (see Appendix E1). Surveys conducted during different times of the year will undoubtedly encounter additional species, particularly those which may use the site during migration or as breeding habitat. Some of the most common birds using the site include the California towhee (*Pipilo crissalis*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), and California quail (*Callipepla californica*). Bird species diversity is likely highest in the shrublands, but bird species are found in all habitat types found on-site.

**Mammals.** During the surveys of the site, 10 species of mammals were observed. The most common species observed include the California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*), Botta's pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*), and desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*). These three mammals were seen in the grasslands and shrublands of the site. The scat of gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) was noted, and this species is likely found throughout the site. Additional carnivores which may occur include the coyote

(*Canis latrans*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), and bobcat (*Lynx rufus*). Rodents which have the potential for occurring on the site include, but are not limited to, the San Diego pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus fallax fallax*) and pacific kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys agilis*). Most of these mammals would be found in shrublands, but some undoubtedly use the grasslands and woodlands.

## Sensitive Resources

### SENSITIVE HABITATS

Sensitive habitats are those which are rare within the region or support sensitive plants or animals, are considered sensitive per CDFG (Holland 1986), and are identified in the City's RPO.

The sensitive habitats within Del Mar Highlands Estates are Diegan coastal sage scrub, southern maritime chaparral, and riparian communities (southern sycamore riparian woodland and mule fat scrub).

**Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub.** The Diegan coastal sage scrub on the site is fragmented due to agricultural activities and is primarily restricted to the slopes adjacent to drainages. Most of these drainages are interconnected by similar habitat along connecting slopes, creating a contiguous area of habitat. Much of the remaining habitat is of good quality (floristically and structurally). The highest-quality sage scrub occurs along the lateral tributaries of Gonzales Canyon.

**Southern Maritime Chaparral.** Much of the southern maritime chaparral on-site is fragmented due to agricultural activities. Almost all of the southern maritime chaparral is still of high quality (floristically and structurally) and contiguous with similar habitat (which is also limited in size and surrounded by development) off-site.

**Riparian and Wetland Habitats.** The riparian habitat on-site within the Del Mar Highlands Estates is of low quality due to agricultural activities that have impacted these areas. Much of the southern sycamore riparian woodland and mule fat scrub have been impacted by erosion and siltation from adjacent agricultural fields which alter the streambed and prevent the establishment of any understory stratum.

**Scrub Oak Chaparral.** Scrub oak chaparral composed almost entirely of Nuttall's scrub oak is also considered sensitive, as the Nuttall's scrub oak is described as a species of concern by the federal government. Scrub oak chaparral is found at one location on Del Mar Highlands Estates, on the lower portions of a slope adjacent to southern sycamore riparian woodland in Gonzales Canyon.

### SENSITIVE FLORA

The following 10 sensitive plant species were detected within the project site during the field surveys. These sensitive species locations are shown on Figure 4E-2. A more detailed description of each of these species is also included in the biological technical report (see Appendix E1). In addition to the 10 sensitive plant species detected on the site, another 8 species could possibly occur. The 10 which occur on-site are listed below; the other species, their status, and the potential for their on-site occurrence are also described in Appendix E1.

No plant species listed by the state or federal government were identified on Del Mar Highlands Estates. Five plant species found on the property are considered species of concern by the California Department of Fish and Game:

- San Diego barrel cactus (*Ferocactus viridescens*)
- Nuttall's scrub oak (*Quercus dumosa*)
- Palmer's grappling hook (*Harpagonella palmeri* var. *palmeri*)
- summer holly (*Comarostaphylis diversifolia* ssp. *diversifolia*)
- wart-stemmed lilac (*Ceanothus verrucosus*)

Five additional sensitive plant species based on California Native Plant Society (CNPS) lists observed on the site are:

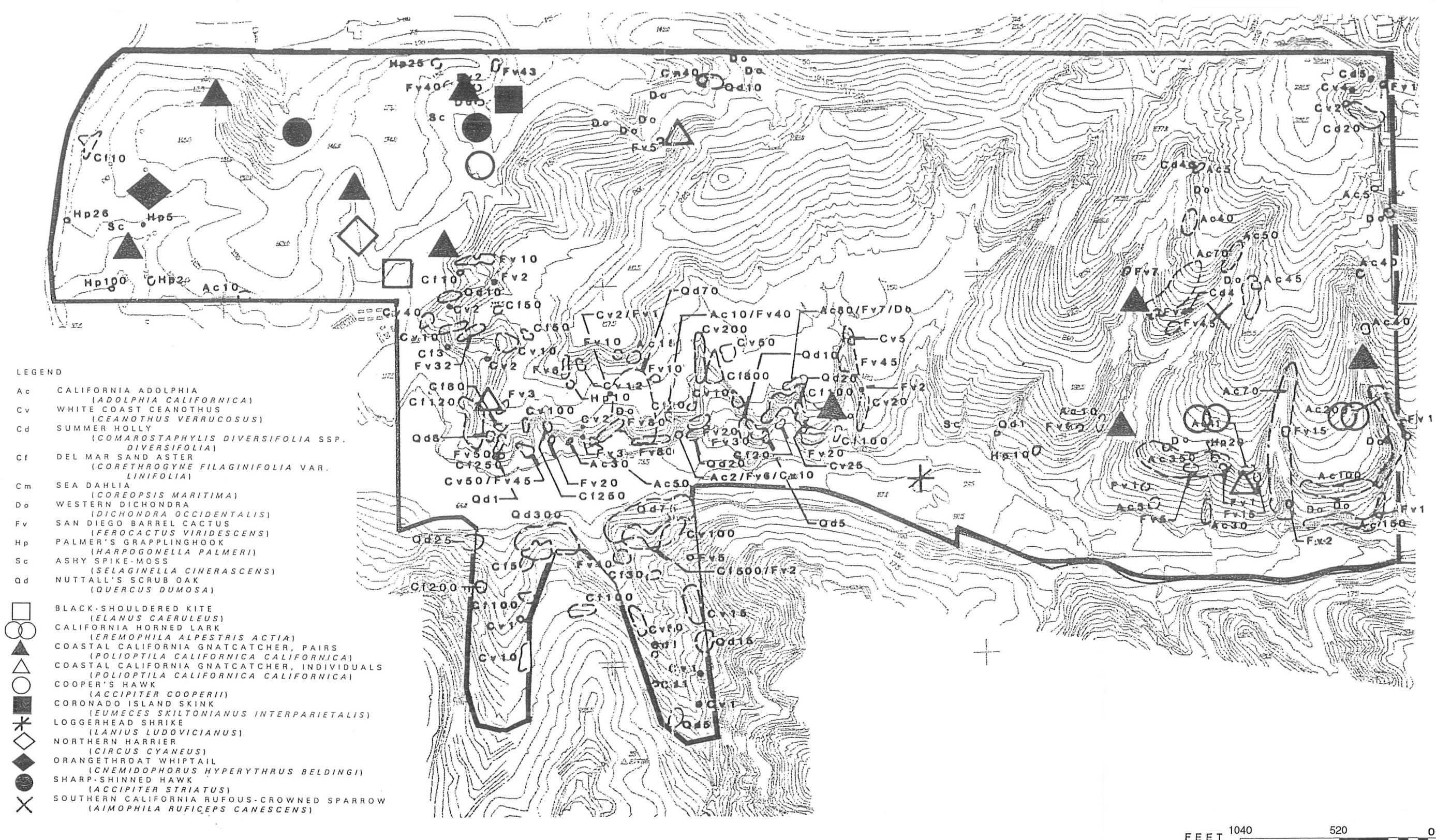
- ashy spike-moss (*Selaginella cinerascens*)
- California adolphia (*Adolphia californica*)
- Del Mar sand aster (*Lessingia [Corethrogyne] filaginifolia* var. *incana*)
- sea dahlia (*Coreopsis maritima*)
- western dichondra (*Dichondra occidentalis*)

### SENSITIVE FAUNA

Ten sensitive animal species were observed during the survey of the Del Mar Highlands Estates site: two reptiles and eight birds. Their locations as observed during the surveys are shown on Figure 4E-2.

One species observed on-site is listed by the federal government as threatened, the coastal California gnatcatcher. Four others are considered species of concern by the California Department of Fish and Game:

- California horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris actia*)
- Coronado island skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus interparietalis*)
- orange-throated whiptail (*Cnemidophorus hyperythrus beldingi*)
- southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens*)



LEGEND

- Ac CALIFORNIA ADOLPHIA  
(*ADOLPHIA CALIFORNICA*)
- Cv WHITE COAST CEANOTHUS  
(*CEANOTHUS VERRUCOSUS*)
- Cd SUMMER HOLLY  
(*COMAROSTAPHYLIS DIVERSIFOLIA* SPP.  
*DIVERSIFOLIA*)
- Cf DEL MAR SAND ASTER  
(*CORETHROGYNE FILAGINIFOLIA* VAR.  
*LINIFOLIA*)
- Cm SEA DAHLIA  
(*COREOPSIS MARITIMA*)
- Do WESTERN DICHONDRA  
(*DICHONDRA OCCIDENTALIS*)
- Fv SAN DIEGO BARREL CACTUS  
(*FEROCACTUS VIRIDESCENS*)
- Hp PALMER'S GRAPPLINGHOOK  
(*HARPOGONELLA PALMERI*)
- Sc ASHY SPIKE-MOSS  
(*SELAGINELLA CINERASCENS*)
- Qd NUTTALL'S SCRUB OAK  
(*QUERCUS DUMOSA*)
- BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE  
(*ELANUS CAERULEUS*)
- CALIFORNIA HORNED LARK  
(*EREMOPHILA ALPESTRIS ACTIA*)
- ▲ COASTAL CALIFORNIA GNATCATCHER, PAIRS  
(*POLIOPTILA CALIFORNICA CALIFORNICA*)
- △ COASTAL CALIFORNIA GNATCATCHER, INDIVIDUALS  
(*POLIOPTILA CALIFORNICA CALIFORNICA*)
- COOPER'S HAWK  
(*ACCIPITER COOPERII*)
- CORONADO ISLAND SKINK  
(*EUMECES SKILTONIANUS INTERPARIETALIS*)
- \* LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE  
(*LANIUS LUDOVICIANUS*)
- ◇ NORTHERN HARRIER  
(*CIRCUS CYANEUS*)
- ◆ ORANGETHROAT WHIPTAIL  
(*CNEMIDOPHORUS HYPERYTHRUS BELDINGI*)
- SHARP-SHINNED HAWK  
(*ACCIPITER STRIATUS*)
- × SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RUFOUS-CROWNED SPARROW  
(*AIMOPHILA RUFICEPS CANESCENS*)

SOURCE: SWEETWATER ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGISTS, INC. 1995

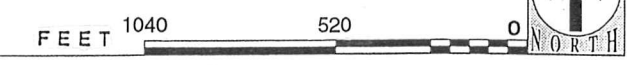


FIGURE 4E-2

Del Mar Highlands Estates  
Existing Sensitive Resources Map



Five other sensitive species were also observed:

white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*)  
Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)  
northern harrier (*Circus cyanus*)  
loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)  
sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*)

## b) Shell Parcel

### Vegetation

Many of the vegetation types located on the Del Mar Highlands site also occur on the Shell parcel located south of Carmel Valley; including the Diegan coastal sage scrub categories, scrub oak chaparral, mule fat scrub, eucalyptus woodland, and non-native grasslands and ruderal habitats. Other vegetation types are present as well (Table 4E-2).

The Shell parcel contains diverse habitats. Diegan coastal sage scrub habitats (including both lemonadeberry and sagebrush subassociations) are present. Chamise chaparral accounts for 4.3 acres, southern mixed chaparral for 50.7 acres; and scrub oak chaparral for 0.8 acre. Mule fat scrub, pond, and coast and valley freshwater marsh (each at 0.6 acre) and non-native grassland (2.9 acres) are also present.

### Flora

Focused surveys were not carried out for the Shell parcel. Historical data gathered for previous projects, however, have been reviewed. These include field efforts carried out for the FUA Subarea V plan (Dudek 1993) and the MSCP effort (Ogden 1993). Based on these data, the Shell parcel has been known to maintain over 1,083 individuals of California adolphia, 3 individuals of western dichondra, 703 individuals of summer holly, and 7 individuals of coast barrel cactus.

### Wildlife

As noted above, no detailed species surveys have been undertaken as part of the current project for the Shell parcel. Historic data are available, which were gathered as part of the FUA Subarea V and MSCP field check efforts (Dudek 1993; Ogden 1993). This information is summarized below.

No fauna were noted during previous surveys on the Shell parcel, but an individual northern harrier was noted immediately south of parcel boundaries and a pair of coastal California gnatcatchers were noted approximately 500 feet to the south.

**TABLE 4E-2  
VEGETATION TYPES AND ACREAGE  
OF SHELL PARCEL**

Vegetation Type	Acreage
<b><u>Scrub Communities</u></b>	
Diegan coastal sage scrub	7.4
Disturbed coastal sage scrub	<u>0.0</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>7.4</b>
<b><u>Chaparral Communities</u></b>	
Chamise chaparral	4.3
Southern mixed chaparral	48.4
Disturbed southern mixed chaparral	2.0
Scrub oak chaparral	<u>0.8</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>55.5</b>
<b><u>Riparian/Wetland Communities</u></b>	
Mule fat scrub	0.6
Pond	0.6
Coastal and valley freshwater marsh	<u>0.6</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1.8</b>
<b><u>Grasslands</u></b>	
Valley needlegrass grassland	0.0
Non-native grasslands	<u>2.9</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2.9</b>
<b><u>Non-native Communities</u></b>	
Disturbed habitat	0.0
Eucalyptus woodland	0.0
Ruderal	1.0
Agriculture	<u>15.4</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>16.4</b>
<b>TOTAL ACREAGE</b>	<b>84.0</b>

## Sensitive Resources

### SENSITIVE HABITATS

Sensitive habitats on the Shell parcel include Diegan coastal sage scrub, mule fat scrub, and coast and valley freshwater marsh, and valley needlegrass. Three of these communities, Diegan coastal sage scrub, scrub oak chaparral, and mule fat scrub, have been discussed above under the Del Mar Highlands Estates heading. Sensitivity descriptions for coast and valley freshwater marsh are provided below.

***Coast and Valley Freshwater Marsh.*** This wetland habitat is naturally limited, and remaining acreage provides important habitat for migrant birds as well as performing many other functions, such as floodwater conveyance and water quality control.

### SENSITIVE FLORA

As noted above, floristic data for the Shell parcel were taken from previous studies (Dudek 1993; Ogden 1993). The plants mapped by prior researchers which are considered sensitive include ashy spike-moss, California adolphia, coast barrel cactus, summer holly, and western dichondra.

### SENSITIVE FAUNA

Sensitive fauna noted during prior field efforts on or adjacent to the Shell parcel include Bell's sage sparrow, coastal California gnatcatcher, northern harrier, and southern California rufous-crowned sparrow.

### c) Draft Multiple Species Conservation Program

Following the listing of the coastal California gnatcatcher as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1993, the City of San Diego and other land use jurisdictions in southwestern San Diego County began development of the Multiple Species Conservation Program to meet the Metropolitan Wastewater Department's need to mitigate the direct biological impacts associated with mandated improvements to the region's sewage treatment facilities. The MSCP effort was also directed toward mitigating the secondary biological impacts associated with projected growth in the region.

The MSCP is designed to identify lands that would conserve habitat for federal and state endangered, threatened, or sensitive species, including the federally listed threatened California gnatcatcher. The MSCP is intended to be the equivalent of a Natural Community Conservation Plan for the area, consistent with the federal Endangered Species Act Section 4(d) rule for the coastal California gnatcatcher that would define conditions under which "take" of the species could occur without violation of the

Endangered Species Act. That is, the MSCP is a plan and process for the issuance of permits under the federal and state Endangered Species Acts and the state's Natural Community Conservation Planning Act of 1991.

In August 1996, the Draft MSCP Plan and related resource documents were released for public review. A final joint federal environmental impact statement and state EIR was released in January 1997 on the MSCP Plan. The MSCP includes the compilation of information related to vegetation, land use, and generalized land ownership mapping and the preparation of biological standards and guidelines, a habitat evaluation model, a population viability analysis for the coastal California gnatcatcher, and an analysis of the acreage necessary for a viable preserve system. The MSCP Plan also includes an implementation strategy, preserve design, and management guidelines. When adopted by local jurisdictions and approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and CDFG, a final MSCP plan and report will be prepared.

Using the MSCP Plan as a framework plan, subarea plans may be prepared by local general-purpose agencies. The City of San Diego has prepared a subarea preserve plan to guide implementation of the MSCP Plan within its corporate boundaries. The subarea plan is intended to guide land uses and preserve management but has not yet been adopted. The project site is within the northern subarea of the City's subarea plan as part of the Future Urbanizing Area preserve area. Within the northern subarea, the City proposes to "preserve two-thirds of the Los Penasquitos Lagoon/Canyon/Del Mar Mesa core area within its jurisdiction" (City of San Diego 1996). To do so, "[p]reserve areas would be acquired or a conservation easement applied, as necessary, to assure wildlife movement and habitat restoration/protection." The subarea plan contains a list of specific guidelines for the proposed North City FUA subarea; none of these directly apply to the proposed project area.

The MSCP Plan identifies lands for proposed open space and habitat preservation within a "Multi-Habitat Planning Area" (MHPA). The MHPA designates "Biological Core Areas," "Linkages," and potential preserve areas, with preserve areas also carrying a "Percent Preservation" designator that "applies only to habitat lands." In addition, the MHPA map states that the "MSCP Plan must be approved by Councils and Board of Supervisors for the cities and county before this information is used to regulate land use."

The MSCP defines core areas as those "supporting a high concentration of sensitive biological resources which, if lost or fragmented, could not be replaced or mitigated elsewhere" (City of San Diego 1996). Linkages are essential connections between Biological Core Areas for wildlife movement. MHPA-designated areas for the project site include an open space habitat linkage area in Gonzales Canyon.

### Biology Issues

1. What sensitive species and associated habitats would be affected by implementation of the proposed project components?
2. Would compliance with the City's brush management program result in the loss of sensitive plant species or wildlife habitat?
3. Would the project affect the long-term conservation of biological resources; in particular, the maintenance and/or enhancement of biological diversity in the region and the conservation of viable populations of endangered, appropriate threatened, and key sensitive species and their habitats, to prevent their local extirpation and/or ultimate extinction as described in the draft Multiple Species Conservation Program?
4. Would implementation of the project result in interference with the movement of any resident or migratory wildlife species?

## 1) Issue

What sensitive species and associated habitats would be affected by implementation of the proposed project components? How do any proposed natural open space areas relate to open areas of the sites?

## Impacts

An assumption of this impacts assessment is that all areas within the "limits of development" (as shown on the PRD site plan for Del Mar Highlands Estates) ultimately would be permanently and directly impacted. It is also assumed that all invasive fuel management (zone 1 activities; see Project Description) would occur within the direct impact area. Indirect impacts are impacts to the biological resources that result from adjacent direct permanent impacts. Though these sensitive biological resources may not initially be impacted by the adjacent impacts, over time they may be impacted due to their relative proximity to the proposed development. Examples of indirect impacts include habitat fragmentation, habitat insularization, edge effect, exotic species invasion, and increased human and domestic animal intrusion.

Affected sensitive habitats on Del Mar Highlands Estates total approximately 40.53 acres. On the project site, 33.88 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub would be impacted, as well as 6.65 acres of southern maritime chaparral.

Overall, roughly 74 percent of the native habitat on the site will remain undisturbed with project development. The project proposes the physical alteration of approximately 182 acres of the project site, most of which have been disturbed by agricultural practices. This number includes temporary impacts which would result from installation of 20-foot-wide utility rights-of-way into Gonzales Canyon and a 25-foot-wide utility right-of-way between Lot 149 and Old El Camino Real. This project also proposes approximately 220 acres of undeveloped land as open space within the site, approximately 140 acres of which support native vegetation. Table 4E-3 provides a summary of impacts to the various habitats found within the project site.

### **Habitats**

Approximately 33.88 acres (31 percent) of Diegan coastal sage scrub would be directly impacted by the project as it is currently designed. Most of the impacts to this habitat would be along the edges of the canyon slopes of the south-facing, tributary drainages of Gonzales Canyon.

Approximately 6.65 acres (18 percent) of southern maritime chaparral would be directly impacted by the project as it is currently designed. Approximately 3.27 acres (17 percent) of ruderal vegetation would be directly impacted by the project.

Mule fat scrub would be impacted by the utility crossings (0.17 acre). These impacts would require a 1603 Streambed Alteration Agreement with the CDFG and, if wetland delineations are positive, a 404 permit with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may be required prior to site grading.

### **Sensitive Species**

#### **PLANTS**

Only 8 of the approximately 23 populations (35 percent) of California adolphia observed on-site would be partially or totally impacted by the project as it is currently proposed. Approximately 50 individuals of the estimated total population of 1,263 (4 percent) would be directly impacted by the project.

Approximately 1 of the 15 populations (7 percent) of Del Mar sand aster would be partially or totally impacted by the project as it is currently proposed. Approximately 25 individuals of the estimated population of 2,698 (less than one percent) of Del Mar sand aster would be directly impacted by the project.

Five of the approximately 23 populations (22 percent) of wart-stemmed lilac observed on-site would be partially or totally impacted by the project as it is currently proposed. Forty-one individuals of the estimated total population of 725 (6 percent) would be

**TABLE 4E-3  
VEGETATION COMMUNITIES  
ON THE DEL MAR HIGHLANDS ESTATES SITE  
(acres)**

Vegetation Community	Total	Impacts	Retained
<u>Scrub Communities</u>			
Coastal sage scrub—black sage	29.50	11.04	18.46
Coastal sage scrub—California sagebrush	32.98	8.80	24.18
Coastal sage scrub—California adolphia	2.49	0	2.49
Coastal sage scrub—lemonadeberry	18.60	7.03	11.57
Coastal sage scrub—disturbed	22.92	6.53	16.39
Coastal sage scrub—annual grassland	1.27	0.03	1.24
Southern cactus scrub	3.88	0.45	3.43
Coyote bush scrub	3.43	0	3.43
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>115.07</b>	<b>33.88</b>	<b>81.19</b>
<u>Chaparral Communities</u>			
Chamise chaparral	6.75	2.26	4.49
Southern maritime chaparral	35.03	6.65	28.38
Scrub oak chaparral	2.64	0	2.64
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>44.42</b>	<b>8.91</b>	<b>35.51</b>
<u>Riparian Communities</u>			
Southern willow scrub	1.46	0	1.46
Mule fat scrub	4.98	0.17	4.81
Freshwater marsh	0.15	0	0.15
Southern riparian woodland	3.66	0	3.66
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>10.25</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>10.08</b>
<u>Other Communities</u>			
Eucalyptus woodlands	6.25	1.93	4.32
Annual grasslands	7.39	0.50	6.89
Ruderal	19.04	3.27	15.77
Disturbed/agriculture	183.74	131.99	51.75
Developed	2.84	0	2.84
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>219.26</b>	<b>137.69</b>	<b>81.57</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>389.00</b>	<b>180.65</b>	<b>208.35</b>

NOTE: As mapped by Natural Resource Consultants in January 1997.

directly impacted by the project. This species is still abundant in other parts of San Diego County.

Approximately two of the five stands of Nuttall's scrub oak (CNPS List 1B) would be partially or totally impacted by the project as it is currently proposed. Approximately 25 individuals (7 percent) of the estimated total population of 347 individuals of Nuttall's scrub oak would be directly impacted by the project.

Six of the approximately 15 stands (40 percent) of San Diego barrel cactus observed on-site would be partially or totally impacted by the project as it is currently proposed. Approximately 57 individuals of the estimated total population of 676 (8 percent) would be directly impacted by the project. This species is still abundant in other parts of San Diego County.

Out of the five populations of summer holly on-site, two (40 percent) would be either partially or totally impacted by the project. Approximately 22 individuals out of the estimated total of 34 (65 percent) would be directly impacted by the project.

Approximately one-half (50 percent) of the single population of sea dahlia on-site would be directly impacted by the proposed project.

Two out of the eight (25 percent) populations of Palmer's grappling hook would be either partially or totally impacted by the proposed project. Approximately 126 individuals out of the estimated 173 on-site (73 percent) would be directly impacted.

Small amounts of western dichondra (one location) and ashy spike-moss (six locations) will also be directly impacted by the proposed project. These impacts would not be considered significant because of the lower level of sensitivity of these plant species, the high amount of each species that is expected to be preserved by the project, and the abundance of these species elsewhere in San Diego County.

#### **INVERTEBRATES**

Because of the current and historical distribution of the quino checkerspot and Hermes copper butterflies, these species have a low potential to occur on-site and impacts are not expected.

#### **VERTEBRATES**

Reptiles, birds, and mammals would all be affected by development of Del Mar Highlands Estates.



**Reptiles.** The orange-throated whiptail and Coronado skink use much of the site, preferring the open sage scrub, chaparral, and grassland areas. Approximately 36 acres (23 percent) of the combined sage scrub and chaparral on the site would be directly impacted. The same amount and percentage of the preferred habitat of the San Diego horned lizard (open sage scrub and chaparral) would be directly impacted by the proposed project.

**Birds.** The project would impact 33.88 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub habitat that is considered occupied by the coastal California gnatcatcher. Figure 4E-2 indicates that approximately three pairs of the nine gnatcatcher pairs and three individual gnatcatchers observed during the surveys of the project site would be impacted.

Potential roadway and construction noise impacts to gnatcatchers were evaluated. Based on the locations of the proposed roadways and developable areas relative to occupied habitat, the anticipated low intensity of project construction, and the low traffic volumes anticipated on project roadways, no adverse noise impacts on California gnatcatchers are anticipated due to the proposed project.

Direct impacts to Cooper's hawk nesting habitat are not anticipated. Direct impacts to sharp-shinned hawk nesting habitat are not anticipated since this species is not known to nest in coastal San Diego County. Sharp-shinned hawks and Cooper's hawks forage over chaparral and sage scrub and within wooded and riparian areas. Impacts to 6.65 acres of southern maritime chaparral, 33.88 acres of sage scrub, 1.93 acres of eucalyptus woodland, and 0.15 acre of riparian areas would reduce foraging habitat on the site for a maximum of one pair of either species.

The northern harrier forages over open grassy areas including non-native grasslands and ruderal habitats. Breeding habitat is not located on-site and would not be directly impacted by the project. Impact to non-native grasslands and ruderal areas total 3.77 acres. This would result in the loss of a portion of the foraging habitat for this species. Foraging habitat for this raptor, as well as others, is expected to increase after development because the agricultural lands remaining would be allowed to revegetate.

The California horned lark was sited in two upland areas north of Gonzales Canyon. Both areas fall within the development plan and would be directly impacted. The single southern California rufous-crowned sparrow was seen in an area that would not be developed.

**Mammals.** Sensitive mammal species would be most directly affected by the fragmentation of their habitat on the project site. Additional focused surveys (i.e., small-mammal trapping) would be required to determine the status of other sensitive mammal species on-site. Given the low sensitivity of these species, however, no small-mammal trapping is recommended.

### Indirect Impacts

Remaining habitat would be impacted by the added pressures of humans and domestic animals, although in some areas these impacts may be reduced through fencing. With the proposed development, more people and their pets would have greater access to these areas than at any previous time. Intrusion into these areas may deleteriously affect the biological resources as domestic animals may prey upon the local fauna. The wildlife corridor through Gonzales Canyon and the proposed corridor to the north to the San Dieguito River valley are expected to function after project completion. Possible impacts would at least be partially offset by the maintenance of healthy predator populations, which are known to prey on domestic animals. The possible dumping of trash, lawn, and shrub clippings would not only directly damage the local biological resources but would also possibly provide a "staging area" for the successful invasion of non-native weedy species.

The replacement of vegetation with "impervious" structures such as buildings and roads will alter the hydrology of the area reducing soil water percolation and increasing runoff. There are many local examples of the formation of wetlands in drainages adjacent to developments as the result of urban runoff. An increased moisture regime in these typically xeric areas could result in the replacement of vegetation from a xeric to a more mesic one. The increased available water and associated sediment could provide the right environmental conditions for the successful invasion of non-native species that might not have been able to become established during the pre-development xeric conditions.

With increased urbanization also comes increased noise and artificial lighting. These two factors could have deleterious effects on the physiological and behavioral patterns of the local fauna. Increased noise could disrupt or interfere courtship behavior or interfere with an individual's ability to detect predators.

Zone 1 of the fuel management plan for the project falls within the limits of grading. These areas will be landscaped, but nevertheless they may provide an additional buffer between native habitat which is preserved in open space and the actual structures and associated lighting and noise of the development. Individual occupants of the residences will have the option of using native landscaping, and in these cases, the value of native habitat abutting the development may actually be enhanced.

A potential project benefit would be an improvement in water quality for on-site drainages by the elimination of agriculture and associated pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers. Certainly some of these effects would remain with project development, however, a reduction in these types of pollutants is assured.

Edge effects due to noise, lighting, exotic plant and animal invasions, and other disturbances have the potential to affect habitat which abuts the limits of development

within Del Mar Highlands Estates. The following sensitive habitats occur within this zone: Diegan coastal sage scrub, disturbed coastal sage scrub, southern cactus scrub, and southern maritime chaparral.

Many variables affect the edge of habitats, including extent and location of impact. A major variable would be whether the zone would start at the inner or outer edge of the fuel management zone. For instance, the source of lighting and structure-related effects would likely be the inner edge, where the structures would be located. A source of native plant invasion might be the outer edge of the fuel management zones.

For the purposes of this analysis, edge effects were considered to occur 150 feet from the edge of urban development, excluding single-loaded streets which are assured to significantly reduce edge effects.

## Significance of Impacts

### Sensitive Habitats

The direct impacts to 33.88 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub habitat would be considered significant. Project impacts to this coastal sage scrub (which supports approximately three pairs of coastal California gnatcatchers) would therefore be considered significant on both the local and regional level. Impacts to coastal sage scrub which is not currently occupied by the gnatcatcher are also considered significant.

Approximately eight percent (~~6.653-2~~ acres) of the southern maritime chaparral on-site would be impacted, which is considered a significant impact.

Similarly, impacts to mule fat scrub (0.05 acre) would be considered significant based on the wildlife value.

### Sensitive Species

Two out of the eight (25 percent) populations of Palmer's grappling hook would be either partially or totally impacted by the proposed project. Approximately 126 individuals out of the estimated 173 on-site (73 percent) would be directly impacted. The large amount of impact would be a significant cumulative impact.

Impacts to 33.88 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub that is considered occupied by the coastal California gnatcatcher is considered significant.

## Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

### Proposed Mitigation

The proposed site design for Del Mar Highlands Estates includes on-site preservation of open space consisting of 81.19 acres of gnatcatcher-occupied coastal sage scrub (nearly a 3:1 ratio of area preserved to area impacted), of which approximately 64.5 acres is considered not to be affected by edge conditions. Additionally, 28.38 acres of southern maritime chaparral would be preserved on-site. Mitigation for the habitat impacts includes revegetation of 36.7 acres of coastal sage scrub on the Del Mar Highlands Estates property. Within the project site, approximately 77 acres which were previously used for agriculture on the western slopes of the property and in the bottom of Gonzales Canyon will be revegetated and preserved in open space. A revegetation plan has been developed which includes success criteria, a monitoring program, and a surety bond to ensure the creation of coastal sage scrub. The remaining 40.9 acres of revegetation can be used by the applicant as mitigation for future development. The revegetation plan is included as Appendix E3 of this EIR. Impacts to biological resources are considered to be mitigated below a level of significance.

The project design guidelines also include development standards for open space which include the following:

- Trails, although not included in the current project design, can be accommodated in the future in the open space area. Any trail located in the open space area shall not in the future be located to adversely affect areas supporting sensitive biological resources.
- The Design Guidelines shall reflect that the development of the individual lots abutting conserved habitat shall not permit large spotlight-type lighting directed into the conserved habitat. This shall not prohibit appropriate lighting for tennis courts, swimming pools, etc. so long as the lighting is directed toward the tennis court, swimming pool, etc. In addition, lighting from homes abutting conserved habitat shall be screened with vegetation to the extent appropriate that does not significantly reduce the purpose of the lighting. Lighting at perimeter lots adjacent to the open space shall be selectively placed, shielded, and directed away from that habitat.
- Rear-yard fencing guidelines and wall standards for perimeter lots have been developed and are included in the Design Guidelines shall be developed.

## 2) Issue

Would compliance with the City's brush management program result in the loss of sensitive plant species or wildlife habitat?

## Impacts

Aggressive fuel management activities associated with zone 1 maintenance on the Del Mar Highlands Estates project site would not extend beyond the limits of disturbance line shown on the project's site plan. Therefore, the project's overall impacts to sensitive species and habitats, including the potential effects of fuel management, have been fully addressed above under Issue 1. No further analysis of this issue is provided in this EIR.

## Significance of Impacts

The project's impacts to biological resources (approximately 0.3 acre of coastal sage scrub) as a result of brush management for zone 3 would be considered significant.

## Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

The significant effects of brush management have been mitigated as a result of the revegetation plan.

### 3) Issue

Would the project affect the long-term conservation of biological resources; in particular, the maintenance and/or enhancement of biological diversity in the region and the conservation of viable populations of endangered, appropriate threatened, and key sensitive species and their habitats, to prevent their local extirpation and/or ultimate extinction as described in the draft Multiple Species Conservation Program?

## Impacts

The preceding sections of this draft EIR describe the project's impacts to vegetation communities, sensitive species (including MSCP covered species), core biological resource areas, and wildlife corridors and linkages. This analysis is based on the draft MSCP, including the City of San Diego subarea plan. In summary, impacts would potentially occur to the following MSCP covered species:

- Del Mar sand aster
- wart-stemmed lilac
- San Diego barrel cactus
- orange-throated whiptail
- coastal California gnatcatcher
- Cooper's hawk
- northern harrier
- California rufous-crowned sparrow

The project provides an interface between large areas of undeveloped lands to the east and west. Habitat evaluation maps prepared as part of the City of San Diego draft MSCP identify the site as moderate quality on the south-facing slopes of Gonzales Canyon and very high quality on the north-facing slopes of Gonzales Canyon which are on-site. The areas immediately off-site to the south and west are very high and moderate habitat quality. Areas immediately east are shown as agriculture and are not ranked.

## **Significance of Impacts**

Development of the proposed Del Mar Highlands Estates project would not result in significant impacts to the MSCP covered plant species, as described above in detail under the Issue 2 heading. Impacts to the California gnatcatcher and its associated Diegan coastal sage scrub habitat would be significant under federal criteria, as described above. No other MSCP covered species would be significantly impacted.

The proposed project (and draft MSCP) has set aside Gonzales Canyon as permanent open space and a linkage area or corridor for wildlife. It is the most logical connection alternative between habitat to the south and east (McGonigle and Deer Canyons and Del Mar Mesa) with the San Dieguito Valley and Lagoon to the north and west.

Currently, the bottom of Gonzales Canyon is mainly used as agricultural fields and the existing lack of native vegetation is the most significant barrier to wildlife movement. A southern sycamore riparian woodland at the west end of the project site provides a patch of native vegetation, but the area west of this woodland currently supports horse stables. In addition, El Camino Real poses a constraint to the west. These conditions likely reduce existing and planned wildlife use of the corridor somewhat. The human presence in the canyon at present is quite low, however. The proposed project would dedicate this corridor to permanent open space and enhance the native habitat within Gonzales Canyon. This should ultimately increase its effectiveness as a linkage area for wildlife, because there will be more cover along its length.

Regarding the project as a whole, adverse impacts to wildlife movement and implementation of the draft MSCP preserve design would not be considered significant. The project as proposed sets aside a wildlife corridor and complies with the draft MSCP. It will provide approximately 220 acres overall toward preserve assembly and save representative examples of 20 MSCP covered species.

## **Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

As no significant adverse impacts are identified, no mitigation measures are required.

#### 4) Issue

Would implementation of the project result in interference with the movement of any resident or migratory wildlife species?

#### Impacts

Gonzales Canyon, in its current condition, connects the agricultural and native vegetation east of the project with the San Dieguito Valley and Lagoon, functioning as a wildlife corridor. It ultimately connects with McGonigle and Deer Canyons and Del Mar Mesa to the south through existing agriculture lands, although there is no canyon or other topographic feature normally associated with wildlife corridors. Black Mountain Road currently traverses the area that would be used by animals passing from McGonigle Canyon to Gonzales Canyon. In its current undeveloped status, Gonzales Canyon's physical configuration significantly exceeds the guidelines of the literature regarding reserve and corridor dimensions (1,000 feet wide). This corridor is maximized by existing dedicated land along the southern slopes of Gonzales Canyon. Connectivity off-site between the western site boundary and the San Dieguito Lagoon is limited by the requirement of crossing El Camino Real. This crossing could take place at one of several at-grade crossings or underneath El Camino Real via the San Dieguito River to the north. The applicant has agreed to provide the City with \$50,000 which can be used towards the future construction of a wildlife crossing under San Dieguito Road which would maintain the long-term connection between Gonzales Canyon and the San Dieguito River valley or for other purposes as determined by the City.

The Framework Plan's Environmental Tier identifies Gonzales Canyon as the east-west corridor connecting the San Dieguito Lagoon with a north-south corridor that ultimately connects with McGonigle and Deer Canyons and Del Mar Mesa. The Environmental Tier assumes that the corridor area would also be taken out of agricultural use, with the potential for this land to be restored to native vegetation. The project, as proposed, would conform to the Framework Plan and MSCP preserve design indicating conservation of Gonzales Canyon in open space. Existing agricultural activities currently associated with Gonzales Canyon would cease and the value of the Gonzales Canyon corridor to wildlife would be enhanced. Wildlife access through the site east-west would be maintained and access to the north (San Dieguito Valley) would be retained through the provision of four large breaks between lots (ranging from approximately 200 feet to approximately 600 feet) between the clustered housing and the six more isolated lots in the western portion of the project area. Wildlife traveling north or south could choose from several drainages. Although they would have to cross a paved road, this is not considered a significant barrier.

## Significance of Impacts

No significant adverse effects would result from project implementation.

## Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

No mitigation measures are required.