
Kearny Mesa

COMMUNITY PLAN

City of San Diego Planning Department
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KEARNY MESA COMMUNITY PLAN

The following information has been incorporated into this April 2011 posting of this Plan:

Amendment	Date Approved by Planning Commission	Resolution Number	Date Adopted by City Council	Resolution Number
Kearny Mesa Community Plan Adopted.			October 6, 1992	R-280821
Redesignate the land use at 5150 Murphy Canyon Road from Industrial and Business Park to General Commercial			February 9, 1994	R-283392
Amend the Stonecrest Specific Plan to redesignate areas from Office to Residential			January 30, 1996	R-286859
Montgomery Field (Reduce the length of the Flight Activity Zone)	November 16, 1995		August 6, 1996	R-287765
New Century Center (Master PID/PCD for former General Dynamics site)			November 18, 1997	R-289450
Stonecrest Office Uses (Allow office use where currently prohibited)	May 11, 2000	P-00-089	July 18, 2000	R-293496
San Diego Spectrum Apartments (Redesignates from Commercial and Industrial to Residential and Mixed Use)	August 17, 2000	P-00-118	October 3, 2000	R-293930
Extended Stay America (To allow a business hotel in an industrial area)	February 8, 2001	P-01-011	February 27, 2001	R-294596
Sunroad (Redesignates Commercial and Industrial to Mixed Use for 570 additional dwellings)	June 13, 2002	P-02-073	November 12, 2002	R-297295
Land use designation change from Industrial to Mixed Use for a six-acre parcel at the south end of Aero Court	September 15, 2005	3843-PC	October 25, 2005	R-300978

Amendment	Date Approved by Planning Commission	Resolution Number	Date Adopted by City Council	Resolution Number
Added Montgomery Field and MCAS Miramar ALUCP policy language and deleted references and maps to the NAS Miramar and Montgomery Field CLUPs.	February 17, 2011		April 26, 2011	R-306737
<u>Added current vernal pool mapping and reference to the Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan (VPHCP)</u>	<u>XXXX</u>		<u>XXXX</u>	<u>R-XXXX</u>

In response to existing conditions, community plan issues and input from the community and City of San Diego staff, the following overall objectives have been established for the project:

- Develop a project that will create a substantial number of jobs and growth opportunities, including industrial and manufacturing jobs, while generating both significant revenues and a positive net fiscal impact for the City of San Diego.
- Take advantage of project's strategic location central to the City of San Diego and near the confluence of four major freeways, by promoting a marketable commercial, office, residential and retail focus on the freeway-visible western portion of the site and multi-use office/industrial uses on the eastern portion of the site.
- Facilitate a flexible multi-use framework which is adaptable to emerging market opportunities and fosters compatible commercial, residential and employment opportunities.
- Establish site planning standards and architectural design guidelines that will attract development and further a sense of community identity by creating a comfortable environment.
- Create a featured location, such as "Spectrum Commons," within a landscaped setting within the commercial area that will establish an important central focus for the overall site and, in particular, the surrounding development parcels. This featured location would be open to the public and organized with a mixture of revenue-generating venues to create an economical, self-sustaining activity for the Kearny Mesa community providing pedestrian non-vehicular linkages within the project.
- Create an economically viable and market responsive re-use plan that provides the opportunity to successfully support the costs associated with infrastructure improvements necessary to implement the Plan.
- Promote, through a variety of land uses, a diversified economic base that can help expand employment opportunities and promote revitalization of the Kearny Mesa community.
- Provide a flexible internal circulation plan capable of withstanding the benefits of future progress in the anticipated development of a regional bus transit station on the project site.
- Provide a circulation system that reduces dependence on the automobile. The project will be pedestrian-oriented, including both a bicycle and pedestrian network and transit center.
- Incorporate into the project sufficient business acreage to provide business uses to help preserve and create high-paying industrial and manufacturing employment opportunities.
- Create a vernal pool conservation ~~bank~~ preserve.
- If more than 998 dwelling units are built on the General Dynamics site, park facilities should be provided in accordance with General Plan standards.

CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

PRIMARY GOAL

Preserve open and environmentally sensitive areas for the aesthetic, psychological, and recreational benefits they provide to the community.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Although Kearny Mesa is largely urbanized, portions of the community are constrained by environmental conditions that require special management. These environmental constraints include canyon and hillside systems, geologic hazards, noise and safety impacts from aviation uses, unique biotic communities, and sand and gravel resources.

Kearny Mesa is incised by two major canyon systems (see **Figure 19**). The most prominent canyon, Murphy Canyon, parallels I-15 along the entire eastern boundary of the Plan area. The second canyon is a tributary of the San Clemente Canyon. It protrudes into the northwest corner of the Plan area between I-805 and SR-52. Both systems are major scenic features in the community with high freeway visibility. The San Clemente Canyon tributary is the sole, undisturbed major canyon in Kearny Mesa. Murphy Canyon is largely developed, however, its steep hillsides remain in a natural state. A minor canyon of six acres is located south of Aero Drive, west of North Light Avenue.

Development of the majority of the mesa has limited once widespread vernal pool habitat to properties located to the south of SR-52 and ~~west of SR-163, and to~~ on or near Montgomery Field Airport (See Figure 21).

Faults and Geologic Hazard

The majority of the community is located on mesa topography and contains limited geologic hazards. Areas of potential hazard have been noted within the Plan boundaries especially in areas of poor slope stability. Slope stability is affected directly by the physical nature of the layered rocks and natural and man-made erosion. Areas of particular concern are along Murphy Canyon where the Friars Formation is exposed. This formation is susceptible to landslide, especially where the rock structure includes weak claystone beds or seams. The low-lying areas along Murphy Canyon are designated as low to moderate risk because of liquefaction resulting from high ground water levels.

A fault trace has also been mapped in Murphy Canyon (**Figure 20**). While it is not known whether the fault would affect the community, the Plan area is within the influence zones of the active Rose Canyon and La Nacion fault system.

Hydrology

Kearny Mesa is largely located within the 400-square-mile San Diego River Hydrologic Unit. There are no major water bodies within the Plan area. Drainage flows southward into the San Diego River system in Mission Valley, except in the extreme northwest portion of the Plan area where flow is into the San Clemente Canyon system.

Natural Resource Extraction

The StoneCrest Specific Plan details the reuse and reclamation of the sand and gravel quarry in Murphy Canyon. The quarry was operated continuously on this site for over 60 years. The use of the former quarry site will be as a mixed residential, commercial-industrial development.

Biological Resources

Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are depressions in the soil that fill with water during the winter rainy season. These vernal pools create a unique habitat that contains several rare and endangered plant species including the following species which occur in Kearny Mesa: San Diego mesa mint (*Pogogyne abramsii*), Spreading navarretia (*Navarretia fossalis*), San Diego button celery (*Eryngium aristulatum* var. *parishii*), California Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californiaca*), Riverside fairy shrimp (*Streptocephalus woottonii*), and San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegonensis*).

Vernal pools are highly specialized habitats that support biologically sensitive species (Figure 15). They are important environmental resources that occur on mesas located in Kearney Mesa. Management of these resources is governed by City, State and Federal policies and regulations. The Kearny Mesa Community Plan is consistent with these policies, guidelines, and regulations.

The City of San Diego has prepared a Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan (VPHCP). The purpose of the VPHCP is to provide an effective framework to protect, enhance, and restore vernal pool resources within the City's jurisdiction, while improving and streamlining the environmental and permitting process for impacts to threatened and endangered species associated with vernal pools. VPHCP is a comprehensive planning approach to preserve vernal pool species and their habitat within Kearny Mesa and the City as a whole. Areas for vernal pool conservation in Kearny Mesa have been identified on Figure 21.

~~Vernal pools within Kearny Mesa are confined to Montgomery Field, a City-owned property and federal government lands located on the north of Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, westerly of SR-163 and south of SR-52 (Figure 21) and an approximate four-acre area located on the southeastern corner of the General Dynamics property near Ruffin Road. The City-owned~~

~~property and federal government lands are part of a larger open space system to the north of SR 52, but have been isolated from it with the construction of the freeway.~~

~~Vernal pools on Montgomery Field are protected through agreements reached with the federal government in the City's Vernal Pool Protection Program and the Montgomery Field Airport Master Plan.~~

~~The City owned parcel is former federal government property that was obtained as part of the proposed SANDER "trash to energy" project. The City has purchased this off-site vernal pool habitat to mitigate future development impacts on the site. Any proposed development will require environmental review and a Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to address vernal pool impacts.~~

~~The federal government lands, located to the east of the City-owned parcel, will require federal environmental review in addition to federal permits prior to development.~~

~~The General Dynamics vernal pools are included within a City approved conservation bank.~~

POLICIES

- In order to conserve natural resources, prevent incompatible uses from locating ~~a~~ on constrained land.
- Sites designated as open space in this Plan shall be preserved with ~~non-building or negative open space easements determined on a case-by-case evaluation.~~ a Covenant of Easements (COE) consistent with the City's Land Development Code.
- Developments should comply with the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans for Montgomery Field and MCAS Miramar.
- Vernal pool habitat on Montgomery Field shall be preserved in accordance with the VPHCP and preservation policies described in the adopted Montgomery Field Master Plan. ~~Vernal pool habitat on federal government lands located south of SR-52 will require federal environmental review and/or Army Corps of Engineers 404 permits prior to development.~~
- Vernal pool habitat on the General Dynamics property shall be preserved ~~as a vernal pool conservation bank~~ in accordance with the preservation policies prescribed in the New Century Center Master Plan and final Environmental Impact Report (LDR No. 96-0165).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide open areas within developments that provide visual relief and temporary respite from the work place.
- Require a geologic reconnaissance study prior to project approval to identify development constraints when geologic hazards are known or suspected. This requirement would supplement the need for a full geotechnical report, which may be required at a later time in the permit process.
- Maintain the natural drainage system and minimize the use of impervious surfaces. Concentrations of runoff should be adequately controlled to prevent an increase in downstream erosion. Irrigation systems should be properly designed to avoid overwatering.
- Retain native vegetation where possible. Graded slopes that are adjacent to natural hillsides and canyons should be revegetated with native or drought-tolerant species to restore pre-development drainage conditions.
- Developments within the MCAS Miramar "airport influence area" should be reviewed for consistency with the MCAS Miramar Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan Refer to **Airport Element-Montgomery Field** of this Plan.
- Preserve and maintain vernal pools on Montgomery Field in accordance with the City's ~~Vernal Pool Preservation Program~~ VPHCP and the Montgomery Field Master Plan.
- Design projects adjacent to vernal pool habitat to ~~prevent runoff during the dry season, the invasion of exotic plants, and leaf litter from impacting vernal pool habitat.~~ be consistent with VPHCP and MSCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines.

ISSUES

Environmental Factors

The environmental factors that influence the development of Montgomery Field are the existence of biological resources, including numerous vernal pools on the property and noise and safety considerations from the aircraft operations.

Vernal Pools

The airport is located on a mesa top and encompasses 333 vernal pools including the City's most significant population of San Diego mesa mint (*Pogogyne abramsii*) which is listed on both state and federal endangered species lists. Other on-site environmentally sensitive habitats include disturbed coastal sage scrub, chamise chaparral, native grasslands, and non-native grasslands. The City's Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) covers 182 acres on-site and provides for a comprehensive preserve area that conserves the highest quality and biologically connected vernal pool and upland habitat. The conserved vernal pools would be managed and monitored consistent with the VPHCP and Vernal Pool Management and Monitoring Plan (VPMMP). Impacts to lower quality, isolated vernal pools and/or road pools with San Diego fairy shrimp outside of the MHPA would be allowed with mitigation, including vernal pool restoration and enhancement, provided inside the MHPA consistent with the VPHCP, City's Biology Guidelines, and Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) Regulations

~~Three separate areas of the airport, collectively encompassing approximately 86 acres, have been designated as environmentally sensitive (see **Figure 22**). These areas contain isolated vernal pools and seasonal wetlands of rare and endangered plant species. The San Diego Mesa Mint (*Pogogyne abramsii*) is listed on both state and federal endangered species lists and is found in moderate frequencies in Montgomery Field vernal pools. The airport Master Plan and the City's Vernal Pool Preservation Program commits the City to preserve and protect a minimum of 95 percent of these vernal pools.~~

Airport Influence Areas

The Airport Influence Area for Montgomery Field and Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar affects the Kearny Mesa Community Plan. The Airport Influence Area serves as the planning boundaries for the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans for MCAS Miramar and Montgomery Field and is divided into two review areas. Review Area 1 is comprised of the noise contours, safety zones, airspace protection surfaces, and overflight areas. Review Area 2 is comprised of the airspace protection surfaces and overflight areas. The Airport Land Use Commission for San Diego County adopted the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans for MCAS Miramar and Montgomery Field to establish land use compatibility policies and development criteria for new development within the Airport Influence Area to protect the airports from incompatible land uses and provide the City with development criteria that will allow for the orderly growth of the area surrounding the airports. The policies and criteria contained in the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans are addressed in the General Plan

Additional safety factors related to airport operations are regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). These safety factors are to protect the approach, departure and circling airspace in the vicinity of airports. The technical description of the safety factors is detailed in Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 77, the ALUCPs, and in the Montgomery Field Master Plan.

Urban Design

Montgomery Field is a dominant landmark in Kearny Mesa. No other single use has the potential to influence the character of the community as much as Montgomery Field. In addition to the environmental issues just discussed, the physical development of the airport also has community-wide and regional significance.

Montgomery Field is located between Aero Drive and Balboa Avenue, just east of SR-163 and Kearny Villa Road. The urban design elements proposed for Montgomery Field are intended to exploit the prominent location of the airport.

POLICIES

- Uses inconsistent with the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for Montgomery Field shall not be permitted.
- Development on Montgomery Field shall be designed to relate to nearby industrial uses and be both a community and regional asset.
- Vernal pools on Montgomery Field shall be preserved in accordance with the VPHCP and the Montgomery Field Master Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Montgomery Field Master Plan recommends a balanced general aviation facility in which the size of the operations is balanced with the capacity of the runway system to accommodate aircraft activity. Similarly, Montgomery Field operations should be balanced with the existing and future development of Kearny Mesa. Having a dominant land use at an important entry into the community affords an opportunity to create a strong community statement. Montgomery Field should define the southern edge of Kearny Mesa with architecturally integrated buildings, extensive perimeter landscaping and streetscape amenities.

URBAN DESIGN

The General Plan's goal to emphasize community activity and focal points through building design and location is achievable with the implementation of the specific recommendations contained in the **Urban Design Element**. Included in the element are guidelines for building location, size and design, and special opportunities, including the preservation of view corridors and open space areas. These guidelines will help implement the goals of the General Plan when used in the review of discretionary actions.

HOUSING

The residential development in Kearny Mesa comprises a very small portion of the land area in the community. A 143-unit single-family residential area and a 300-unit mobile home park are the only housing stock provided in Kearny Mesa. In addition, the StoneCrest Specific Plan will allow the development of an additional 1,235 dwelling units. The **Housing Element** of this Plan discourages any residential development that might negatively impact upon the character of Kearny Mesa as a regional employment center. The Plan encourages the retention of the existing single-family residential area. In addition, it allows for the development of new residential community, such as the StoneCrest Specific Plan, when it can be demonstrated that the proposed new development will not impact upon or disrupt the primary commercial/industrial “fabric” and function of Kearny Mesa and, in fact, enhances the primary uses of the community. This is consistent with the General Plan goal of retaining existing well-maintained residential communities and promoting quality urban infill development.

CONSERVATION

This Plan recommends that sites designated as open space be preserved. Future developments should be required to preserve open space through the use of ~~non-building or negative open space easements~~ COEs for environmentally sensitive lands. This will help implement the General Plan goal to preserve the City's unique landforms.

MONTGOMERY FIELD

Development of Montgomery Field is to be reviewed for consistency with the Montgomery Field Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP).

CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE

- Sites designated as open space are to be preserved with ~~non-building or negative open space easements~~ COEs for environmentally sensitive lands to be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Noise impacts are to be minimized through conformance to the Noise Compatibility and Land Use Matrix.
- Vernal pools on Montgomery Field are to be preserved in accordance with the adopted VPHCP and Montgomery Field Airport Master Plan.

FINANCING

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is the standard method of financing public improvements. The CIP is a six-year program that correlates identified public improvements to funding sources. Capital improvements scheduled in the first year of the CIP receive funds appropriated by the City Council in that fiscal year's budget. The improvements scheduled for the next five years are to be funded from anticipated revenues in subsequent years.

A Kearny Mesa Public Facilities Financing Plan describes the needed capital improvements to complete development of the community in accordance with this Plan. Various mechanisms are available to finance public facilities including the following:

- **Issuance of Special Bonds** - Local governments have traditionally issued bonds to raise the capital needed to construct major public improvements -- sewer plants, water systems and public buildings.

Revenue bonds are backed by a reliable flow of future revenues from the facility or enterprise they fund, such as the construction of parking facilities and other such public facilities. Because revenue bonds are secured by the proceeds from the enterprise they fund, they carry higher interest rates than general obligation bonds.

Lease revenue bonds are issued by a nonprofit corporation or special authority that constructs a facility and leases it to the City. Lease payments provide the revenue to payoff the bond and, when the bond is retired, the facility is turned over to the City. Some local agencies have used this method for financing administrative centers and schools.

Special assessment bonds are a traditional tool for financing sewer, water, street, sidewalk, street lighting, open space acquisition, and similar projects that benefit property owners within a given area. Assessment bonds issued under the Improvement Act of 1911 are





Urban Design Recommendations

Kearny Mesa Community Plan

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FIGURE



Legend

-  MHPA
-  OPEN SPACE

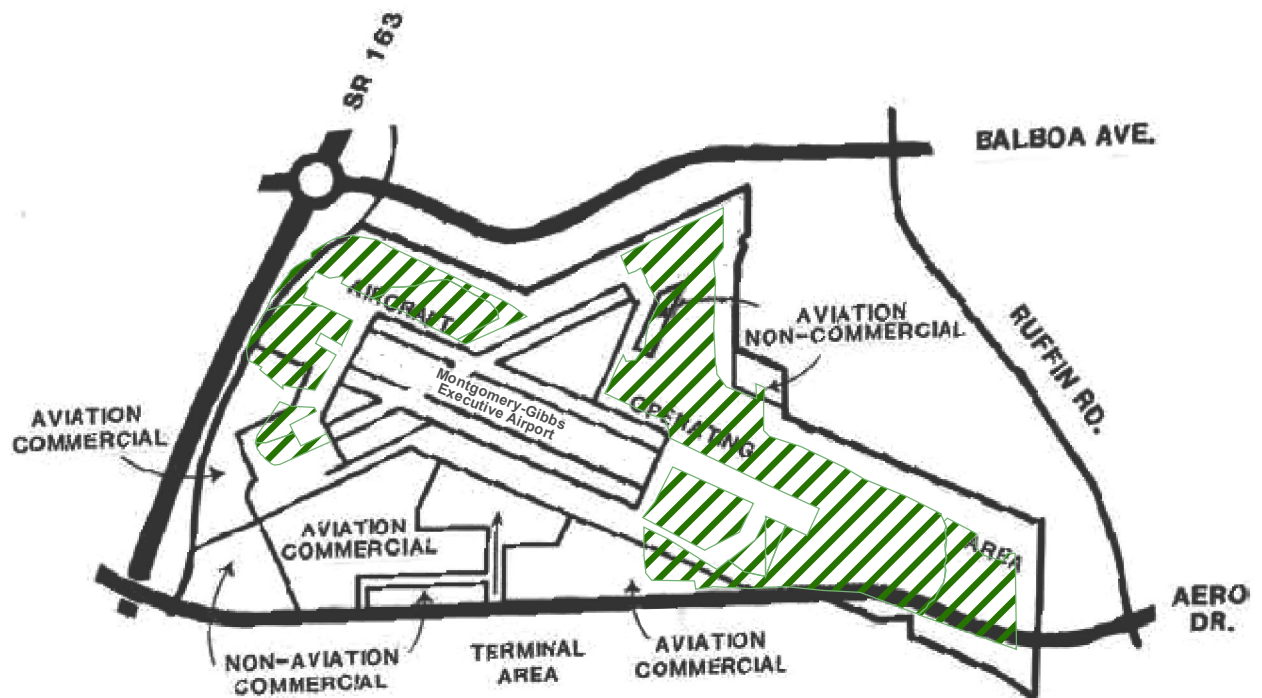



Conservation and Open Space Issues

Kearny Mesa Community Plan

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FIGURE



 ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREA

