

# *Plan Elements*

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- *Housing*
- *San Diego State University*
- *Transportation*
- *Commercial*
- *Open Space*
- *Parks and Recreation*
- *Public Facilities*
- *Urban Design*

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## HOUSING

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### EXISTING CONDITIONS

The primary residential goal of this plan is the preservation of single-family neighborhoods. The City's Growth Management Program is based on preservation of established single-family neighborhoods, especially within the urbanized portion of the City where pressure to develop multifamily housing is strong. The recommendations of the community plan focus on the protection of this community's single-family neighborhoods and include rezonings and retention of existing single-family zoning in order to ensure that the community remains predominantly single-family in the future.

The last decade has witnessed growth of the university, but relatively little growth of the multifamily housing stock in the community. The university estimates that approximately 16 percent of the student body living off-campus resides within the State University (within one mile of campus). This is due, in part, to the lack of multifamily housing in the area and, in part, to individual preference about where to live. In both cases, the result is that most students drive from other communities into the area each day, causing traffic congestion and parking problems in a significant portion of the community.

Students have found that they can rent single-family houses and live close to the university and avoid the traffic congestion that plagues so many students. These single-family houses become, in effect, a form of higher density housing which substitutes for the more traditional forms of multifamily housing in the community. Because more people live in these houses than the structures were designed to house, the impact on surrounding single-family neighborhoods is often negative. These houses generate more traffic than single-family houses, are provided with insufficient off-street parking, are sometimes poorly maintained by the tenants and house people whose life style may sometimes conflict with the life styles of family-oriented property owners. Many single-family property owners, therefore, perceive this situation to be an erosion of the established single-family neighborhoods of the community.

In order to help alleviate this problem, the City Council, in May of 1987, adopted the Single-Family Rental Overlay Zone Ordinance (0-16868) and in July of 1987 applied this ordinance to the State University Area. The ordinance protects single-family neighborhoods by regulating how single-family houses may be rented in those areas where the overlay zone is applied. The ordinance requires sufficient off-street parking for the number of people renting a house, requires rooms to be a certain size, requires enough bathrooms for the number of residents, limits curb cuts and requires landscaping which must be maintained. The regulations of the ordinance are enforced on a complaint basis by the Planning Department.

An additional solution to this problem is more multifamily housing close to the university. However, that housing must be located and designed so that it does not intrude upon established single-family neighborhoods. The location of new multifamily housing near the university or along the El Cajon Boulevard corridor, and the permitted densities of that housing are the key factors in minimizing conflicts between the two housing types in the community.

High activity areas, such as transportation corridors and areas adjacent to high activity areas, are preferred locations for multifamily housing because of the multiplicity of urban services available in such areas. If an area exhibits a mixture of housing densities, or a mixture of residential and more intense land uses, or if it exhibits deterioration of structures, the area may be suitable for reinvestment with new multifamily housing. In keeping with these principles, this Plan makes recommendations for new multifamily housing in those areas of the community where such conditions as mentioned above exist. New multifamily housing constructed in these areas must minimize impacts on existing adjacent single-family neighborhoods. Specifically, these are adjacent to the university and to the El Cajon Boulevard corridor.

## **POPULATION AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS**

1. While the population of the community experienced substantial increase in the 1960s, the population has remained stable since the early 1970s.
2. The household size has decreased since 1980.
3. Approximately 56 percent of the land area is developed with single-family housing.
4. Approximately ten percent of the land area is developed with multifamily housing.
5. Most of the housing units are in sound condition.

In order to understand the housing needs of the community, a brief description of the population and existing housing is helpful. The following paragraphs are a composite of information from the 1980 census and the yearly update estimates of census data compiled by the City of San Diego Planning Department.

The population of the area in 1988 numbered approximately 19,000 people, which represented 1.9 percent of the total City population. According to the 1980 census, 91 percent of the population was white, with the remaining nine percent evenly divided among blacks, Asians and other racial groups identified by the census. The population was generally older than that of the City as a whole, with 15 percent at an age of 65 years and older, as compared to a citywide average of 10 percent in the same age group. The average family size in 1987 was 2.16 persons, compared to 2.74 in 1980.

The median family income in the area, according to the 1980 census, was approximately \$22,000 as compared to a citywide figure of \$20,000. The poverty threshold for a family of four was \$7,412. Approximately 17 percent of the population of the area fell into this category. Most of the people in this category were elderly people over 65 and families with a female as head of household with no husband present.

Of the approximately 7,500 housing units in the area in 1988, approximately 52 percent were single-family structures and 48 percent are multifamily units. Approximately 56 percent of the total units in the area were owner-occupied, with 44 percent renter-occupied. On January

1, 1987, the vacancy factor for the 92115 zip code area, which includes the College Area community, was 3.5 percent. Most of the housing units were in sound condition. The rental vacancy rate in 1987 was 7.7 percent. The median value of housing according to the 1980 census was \$92,700 compared to a citywide value of \$90,700, and median rent was \$288 per month compared to a citywide figure of \$249.

**TABLE 2**  
**Population and Housing Characteristics -1988**

Total Population	19,000
Total Housing Units	7,500
Single-Family Units	3,900
Multifamily Units	3,600
Average Family Size	2.15
Overall Community Density	9 people/acre
Average Family Income	\$22,000
Median Housing Value	\$92,700

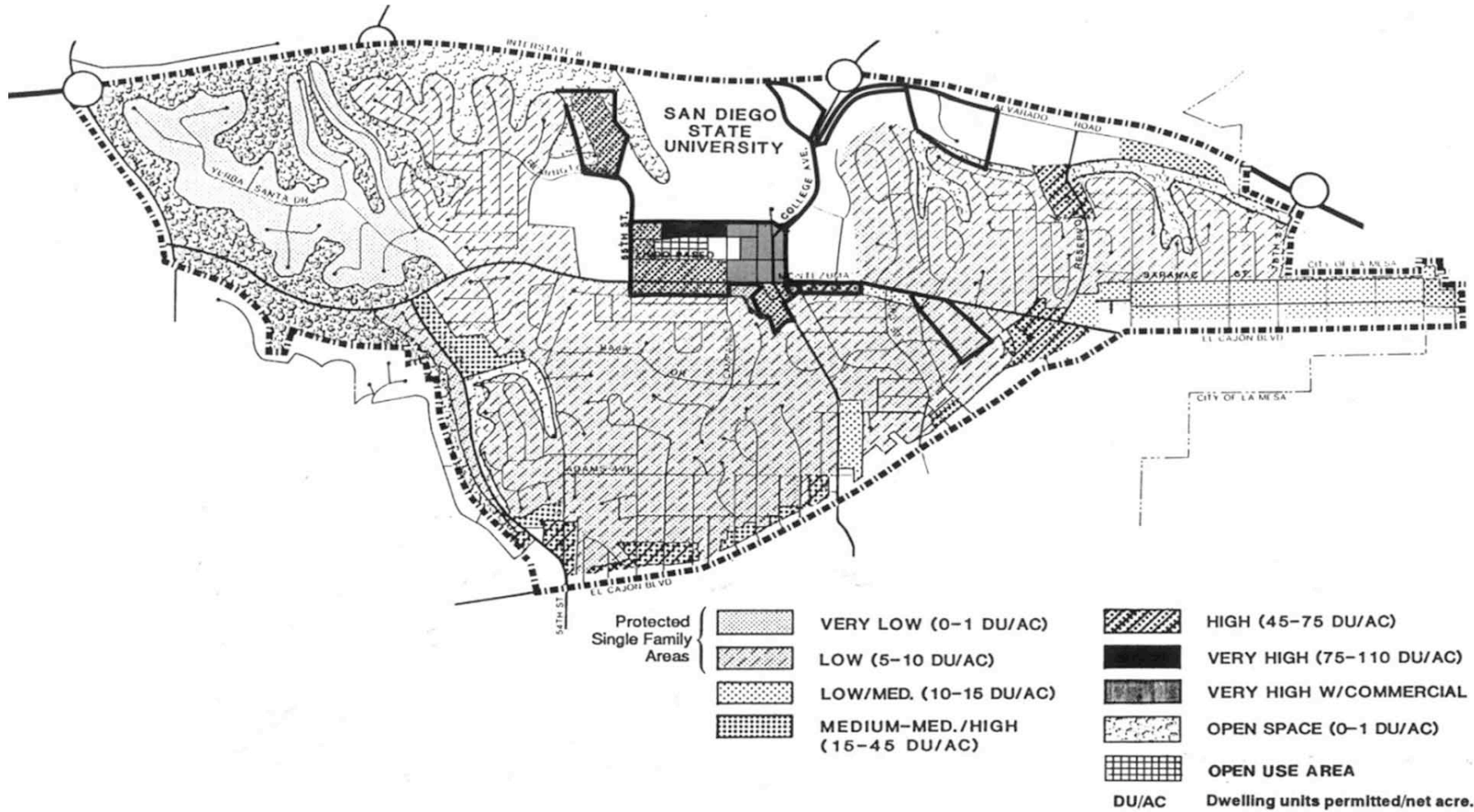
Sources: U.S. Census, 1980; Population, Housing Inventory Data, January 1, 1988, City of San Diego

The overall profile of the community is that of a middle class community beginning to age but still somewhat family oriented. The overall density of the community is low (nine people/acre), while the relative wealth (income, housing value, rent) is higher than average. Even though there is a significant nonresident population, the community is still a stable, established area.

**Table 3**, below, represents projected growth in the College Area community based on the recommendations of this Plan. All new housing units are projected to be multifamily units with the number of single-family units remaining the same as in 1988. These projected numbers may not be used as absolute quantities representing future growth. These numbers are included for planning purposes only and represent gross estimates that do not reflect changing economics or social factors in the City or the region. They are included here only as possible future quantities (based on recommended land uses and densities) to be compared with existing numbers.

**TABLE 3**  
**Projected Population and Housing Units**

Total Population	22,000
Total Housing Units	8,750
Total Increase of Units	1,250
Percent Increase	14%



## Recommended Residential Densities

College Area Community Plan

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FIGURE

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Protect stable single-family neighborhoods by maintaining them at very low and low densities.
  - a. Require single-family property owners to conform to the regulations of the Single-Family Rental Overlay Zone.
  - b. Do not permit fraternities or sororities to locate in areas other than those designated on **Figure 7**.
2. Development occurring in steep slopes areas of the community should be sensitive to existing topography and vegetation on the site as outlined in the Steep Hillside guidelines and the urban design guidelines of this Plan. Development which is inappropriate for hillside sites, for instance, tennis courts or parking areas, should be avoided. Development should be clustered on flatter portions of a site and located close to access streets in order to minimize grading for roadways and driveways.
3. Development along the northeast side of Fairmount Avenue and Montezuma Road should not take access from either Fairmount Avenue or Montezuma Road. Any new development should adhere to the Steep Hillside guidelines, with development clustered at the top of the slopes, close to Palo Verde Terrace or Yerba Santa Drive.
4. Rezone the property on the east side of 54<sup>th</sup> Street, north of El Cajon Boulevard from R-600 to R1-5000 (**Figure 23B**).

This rezoning will result in both the eastern and western portion of a single vacant parcel being zoned the same (R1-5000). The R1-5000 zoning will ensure that the density of any development on the parcel will be compatible with existing surrounding single-family neighborhoods. This rezoning will not affect the already approved Planned Residential Development permit on this site, but will affect any future development if the approved development proposal is not built.

5. Property located north of El Cajon Boulevard, which is zoned for multifamily development but is developed with single-family housing and is an integral part of existing single-family neighborhoods, should be rezoned to the R1-5000 Zone.

Affected property is located on the east side of Betting Street, both sides of 58<sup>th</sup> Street, along Soria Street, on the north side of Arosa Street west of College Avenue, and on the east side of Art Street (**Figures 23A** and **23B**). These rezonings will help to protect existing single-family neighborhoods.

6. Single-family lots should not be subdivided unless the new lots meet all requirements of the underlying single-family zone. No panhandle lots should be created, nor should any other variances relating to lot size or configuration be granted.

7. Building permits for conversion of garages on single-family property to storage or living spaces should not be approved, unless required off-street parking can be maintained on the site.
8. Rezone five lots on the east side of 60<sup>th</sup> Street, north of El Cajon Boulevard, from R-3000 to R1-5000 (**Figure 23B**). Four of these lots are developed with single-family houses, while the fifth has two units in one structure with the appearance of a single-family house. Predominant zoning and development on 60<sup>th</sup> Street is single-family and the rezoning of the five lots will make the zoning on those lots compatible with zoning on the rest of 60<sup>th</sup> Street.
9. All existing multifamily-zoned areas located north of El Cajon Boulevard which are already developed with multifamily housing or are developed with single-family housing which is not an integral part of existing single-family neighborhoods, should be zoned to provide for buffering between uses such as commercial and residential uses or between residential uses of different intensities.
10. All new multifamily housing adjacent to the El Cajon Boulevard corridor should be designed for compatibility in bulk and scale with surrounding lower density, single-family development as outlined by the urban design guidelines of this plan.
11. All new multifamily housing which is developed as part of multiple use projects in the commercial zones along the north side of El Cajon Boulevard should be designed to emphasize architectural and circulation relationships between on-site multifamily housing, on-site commercial development and adjacent residential development. The College Area Community Council shall review all discretionary permits applied for along the north side of El Cajon Boulevard within the College Area Community Plan.
12. New multifamily housing, including dormitories, fraternities and sororities should be developed adjacent to the university, within a mixed-use area as discussed in the San Diego State University Element and the College Community Redevelopment Plan (see **Figure 7B**). This new housing should be compatible with the bulk, scale, and character to adjacent development. Structures up to 12 stories tall should be considered with enclosed or underground parking. Strong pedestrian links to the university, nearby commercial facilities and public transit facilities should be provided. Multiple or mixed-use development consisting of housing, retail and university-oriented office facilities should be provided (see **San Diego State University Element**).
13. Fraternities and sororities should not be permitted to develop outside the area shown on **Figure 7B**.
14. Senior citizen housing projects should be located near commercial facilities, health care facilities, and public transportation. The north side of El Cajon Boulevard, is an ideal location for senior housing due to the availability of market commercial facilities and mass transit. Recreational areas (see Recommendation 14, below) should be provided. Security of residents should be assured by fencing, enclosed parking, lighting of common

areas and controlled pedestrian entry areas. Landscaping should be used to enclose, screen and visually enhance outdoor recreation areas.

15. All new multifamily development projects, including student housing, should provide a variety of on-site recreational facilities which may include, but not be limited to: swimming pool, spa, gym, tennis courts, picnic areas, barbecues and lounge areas. Because of lack of public park and recreational facilities in this community, on-site recreational facilities will help meet the recreational needs of residents.
16. Conditional Use Permits for nonresidential uses (e.g., churches, schools, residential care facilities) in residential areas, or for higher intensity residential uses (e.g., companion units, guest quarters) in lower density residential areas should include elements to ensure that the development permitted is compatible with surrounding development. The **Implementation Element** of this Plan contains guidelines for such Conditional Use Permits.
  - a. Screening or buffering with fences, walls, landscaping, or increased setbacks, or any combination of these four methods should be used to minimize the impact of the project on the surrounding neighborhood.
  - b. Parking areas should be located to the rear of the project or within a structure. If surface parking must be located near a perimeter of the property, landscaping should be used to screen parking from adjacent property and from the public right-of-way.
  - c. Structures should be compatible with the bulk and scale of surrounding neighborhoods, particularly if those neighborhoods consist of single-family development. Facades should be articulated, rooflines varied and upper stories set back from the story below.
  - d. Access to and from the project should be designed to minimize on-street congestion. In the cases of churches and schools, pickup/drop-off areas and bus loading/unloading areas should be provided on-site.