

IX. RELATIONSHIP TO RELEVANT PLANS

A. OBJECTIVES

The Atlas Specific Plan was prepared in accordance with governing City plans and state law pertaining to specific plans. This section discusses the relationship of the specific plan to the City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan, and to the Mission Valley Community Plan.

B. PROGRESS GUIDE AND GENERAL PLAN

The Progress Guide and General Plan of the City of San Diego is the City's comprehensive plan which is intended to serve as an overall guide to future development. The General Plan includes statements of overall goals and objectives, as well as guidelines and standards. In addition to the general plan, each of the subareas of the City has specific community plans which are intended to serve as official guidelines for specific development proposals within an individual community. The General Plan states that it is intended to:

indicate only those land uses of regional or City-wide significance and its locational designations should be regarded as advisory only. The fine detail so often seen on planning maps is included not on the General Plan, but on the many community plans which have been developed throughout the San Diego area. Reference must be made to these plans and the maps and descriptions contained within them in order to determine the land use designation of any particular property (p. 203).

This section of the specific plan describes the conformance of the plan with the various goals and objectives outlined in the Progress Guide and General Plan.

1. Transportation

In terms of the regional transportation systems, the General Plan seeks to:

Provide a network of transportation systems that are integrated, complementary and compatible with other city-wide and regional goals. A network that takes into account the physical, social and economic conditions of the environment, both present and future (p. 59).

The plan seeks to foster mobility and accessibility for all areas of the region minimizing the negative effects of congestion, noise and landscape alteration.

As discussed in the transportation element, the specific plan proposes a balanced transportation network accommodating automobile, mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian circulation systems. Circulation system improvements proposed by the Atlas Specific Plan are discussed in detail in the transportation and implementation elements of this specific plan and in the EIR which accompanies this document. The traffic study undertaken in conjunction with specific plan preparation assumed full build-out of the study area. Trips generated by the Atlas Specific Plan are approximately the same as trip allocations for the Atlas sites assumed in the Mission Valley Community Plan. According to the engineering and development department, the recommended set of major road improvements (Table 13) is

expected to mitigate the interim, as well as cumulative, traffic impacts associated with this project (memo from Allen Holden, Deputy Director, Transportation and Traffic Engineering Division, to Dave Potter, Deputy Director, Environmental Quality Division, July 22, 1987). Additional improvements beyond those required by the Mission Valley Community Plan have also been incorporated into the Atlas Specific Plan and are identified in the Transportation and Plan Implementation Elements of this Specific Plan. In conjunction with the cumulative development scenario analyzed in the traffic study for the Atlas Specific Plan, a transportation phasing plan has been developed for the Atlas Specific Plan and is presented in Table 12 of this specific plan. In addition, Atlas Hotels, Inc. will participate in the Mission Valley Interim Public Facilities Financing Plan prepared by the City of San Diego through the payment of Development Impact Fees.

2. Commercial

The primary objective of the General Plan for the commercial development of the City is to:

develop an integrated system of commercial facilities that effectively meets the needs of San Diego residents and visitors as well as assuring that each new development does not impede the economic vitality of other existing commercial areas (p. 72).

To implement this goal, the General Plan lists five general guidelines for evaluating new commercial use proposals:

- o Does the development fit into the environmental structure of the community.
- o Parking, where and how is it located.
- o The amount and quality of landscaping.
- o Do the facilities proposed really serve the community.
- o Does the development intrude upon the market area of other commercial activities.

The Atlas Specific Plan is designed to harmonize with the economic and land use climate existing in the project area. The Hotel Circle area is an established, successful hotel/convention center. San Diego's growing image as a resort center indicates that the city-wide demand for further tourist/convention oriented activities is increasing. The Hotel Circle area serves as a centrally-located hub for participation in the City's many attractions, including Mission Bay, Old Town and the Port. In addition to providing new hotel rooms, the specific plan will act as a catalyst for revitalizing the Hotel Circle area ensuring the long-term viability of existing businesses.

The specific plan also includes 216,658 total square feet of commercial office space. The incorporation of offices within the tourist/convention activities is designed to be mutually supportive. The availability of hotel/convention facilities within walking distance will be an attraction to corporate offices seeking relocation into modern facilities. The corporate activities will, in turn, create demand for convention services. Additionally, restaurants, theaters and shops as well as regional shopping centers located close by, will provide services for the future employees.

3. Public Facilities, Services and Safety

The primary goal of the Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element is to program public service allocation:

at a time and level to complement accompanying development . . . it is enormously important that the quality and quantity of the services and facilities provided be geared to the nature and intensity of the development that is prevailing and/or projected. But most important, that facilities and services be timely developed so as not to impact the capacity and ability of the City to provide the service (p. 81).

Adequate facilities and capacities for sewage collection and water distribution are available in the specific plan area, as discussed in the public facilities element.

In the provision of water, the plan's objective is to ensure that water will be available to all areas through a regional water management program. The individual development should support this goal through water conservation. Criteria regarding water conservation have been incorporated into the urban design element of this specific plan and Atlas Hotels, Inc. has indicated a willingness to utilize reclaimed water for irrigation if and when an appropriate water source becomes available.

In fire and police services, the General Plan strives to provide the highest service level possible through optimally located stations. Decentralization of police administration through the establishment of new sub-stations is planned to provide better service throughout the City for the next 30 years. The Linda Vista station is one of these new substations. Implementation of the specific plan may require additional personnel and equipment for this station; however, the excellent internal security program of Atlas Hotels, Inc. will be expanded for its developing sites, thereby reducing the load on public protection facilities. Additionally, Atlas Hotels, Inc. will participate in the provision of fire protection facilities through the payment of Development Impact Fees as required by the Interim Public Facilities Financing Plan for Mission Valley.

In the protection of public safety in drainage and flood control, the plan's main objective is:

to preserve as much as possible the natural attributes of both the floodplain and floodway without endangering loss of life and property (p. 92).

To implement this goal, the plan recommends specific measures for revegetation of disturbed habitats. Implementation of the proposed flood control improvements will also significantly improve flood protection between SR-163 and Fashion Valley Road.

4. Open Space and Recreation

The General Plan delineates a City-wide open space system based on the natural features of the San Diego coastal plain, emphasizing river valleys and adjoining

steep hillsides. The primary objective of the Open Space and Recreation Element is to:

Establish an open space system which provides for the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of resources, the provision of outdoor recreation, the protection of public health and safety, and the utilization of the varied terrain and natural drainage systems of the San Diego community to guide the form of urban development (p. 96).

The plan designated the San Diego River floodway on the north side of the specific plan area and the steep hillsides on the south side as open space. Plans for floodplain areas should emphasize preservation of natural resources and flood protection. Park and recreational uses should be developed wherever possible.

Hillside regulation is intended to provide for reasonable use of slopes greater than 25% gradient, as long as disturbance of natural terrain, soil erosion, siltation and flooding, slide damage and scarring is minimized, and environmental resources and views are protected. The retention of a "sense" of hillside topography is encouraged. Open space may be acquired through outright purchase, easement, dedication, and through provision of flood facilities.

The Atlas Specific Plan includes a comprehensive river improvement element which outlines plans for flood control improvements associated with implementation of the specific plan and revegetation of wetland habitats disturbed as a result of construction of the recommended flood control improvements. The proposed flood control improvements would significantly improve flood protection within Mission Valley between SR-163 and Fashion Valley Road. The plan includes recommendations for preserving and enhancing the existing floodway. The recreational potential of the floodway is maximized with the development of riverfront, bicycle and pedestrian paths. The Atlas Specific Plan also incorporates specific design criteria within the Urban Design Element for the Town and Country, Hanalei Hotel and Hanalei Tower sites, as well as the other Atlas Hotel sites within the Specific Plan area.

The hillside areas south of Hotel Circle South which visually identify the boundaries of the valley and form a green backdrop for the urban uses, will be preserved on the Kings Inn, Mission Grove Office Park, and Mission Valley Inn sites through careful structure siting. The Atlas Specific Plan incorporates specific design criteria within the Urban Design Element for these sites.

5. Redevelopment

For the most part, the Redevelopment Element of the General Plan addresses the older identifiably deteriorated areas of the city, with the objective of restoring these areas to social, economic and physical vitality. Secondly, the plan seeks to encourage the maintenance and conservation of sound existing development.

The specific plan will implement this goal through the modernization and redesign of existing developments, and through the addition of integrating landscape design. These efforts will ensure the long term integrity and overall appearance of the area.

6. Conservation

As discussed in the conservation element of this specific plan, measures have been incorporated into the specific plan to encourage energy conservation, replacement of wetland habitat, sensitivity to hillsides, and protection against geologic hazards.

7. Urban Design

The specific plan contains an extensive urban design element which presents detailed criteria with regard to streetscape plans, landform considerations, landscape considerations, architectural consideration, planting concepts, and site planning concepts. Specific design criteria are also provided for each of the sites within the specific plan area. Adherence to these criteria in conjunction with specific plan implementation will ensure fulfillment of the urban design goals set forth in the General Plan.

8. Growth Management

The Atlas Specific Plan will assist the City in the implementation of its adopted Growth Management policy, which is intended to encourage the intensification of development within the urbanized areas of the City. Mission Valley is centrally located in the City and will provide unique opportunities to foster the growth of a more compact city, and to help support the development and operation of additional mass transit facilities.

C. MISSION VALLEY COMMUNITY PLAN

The Mission Valley Community Plan was adopted by the San Diego City Council on June 25, 1985 and serves as a guide for future new development in the Mission Valley area. This area covers 1,982 acres and is bordered on the north by Friars Road, on the south by a 150-foot contour line to the south of I-8, on the east by the San Diego River east of I-15, and on the west by I-5. Development intensity guidelines and transportation systems development in the plan were based on land use assumptions provided by property owners. The main issues involved in development of the plan were form and intensity of development, flood protection and physical constraints, public facilities and services, and traffic circulation.

1. Land Use and Intensity

Land use proposals outlined in the Mission Valley Community Plan are based upon land use assumptions provided by property owners prior to conduct of the 1982 Mission Valley travel forecast. Intensity limits established by the Plan scenario are based upon the results of the Mission Valley travel forecast. The Community Plan establishes development intensity districts for various areas within the community plan area. The Plan also outlines several criteria for receiving a development intensity adjustment. These criteria are as follows:

- a) The portion of the Valley's vehicle circulation system affected by the proposed development is capable of accommodating all of the traffic which would be generated;

- b) The proposed land use will generate traffic at a lower rate than the land use originally assumed for the traffic forecast;
- c) An approved LRT or other regional public transit system station is located on the affected property or will otherwise serve the proposed development (as determined by adopted MTDB alignment studies);
- d) The unique nature of the proposed development justifies a lower traffic generation rate than that assigned by the original traffic forecast used as the basis for this Plan, as demonstrated by a professional transportation study, subject to the approval of the City Engineer;
- e) The direct and cumulative traffic impacts associated with the proposed development of the site can be mitigated;
- f) The financing and implementation of other transportation measures or systems, which can be shown to reduce traffic impacts on the street and freeway system, is not guaranteed by the applicant or property owner, either through provision of 100 percent of the costs involved or formulation of an assessment district.

The Community Plan states that any site or proposed development which meets one or more of these criteria may request higher intensity than called for in the plan.

The Atlas Specific Plan is consistent with the land use types established for the specific plan properties by the Mission Valley Community Plan. The intensity proposed by the specific plan is approximately the same as that anticipated for the specific plan area according to the Community Plan. Additionally, the specific plan meets several of the density adjustment criteria outlined in the Community Plan.

- o The traffic study conducted for the Atlas Specific Plan concludes that, with implementation of recommended improvements, the circulation system could accommodate anticipated traffic levels, as stated in the July 22, 1987 letter from the City of San Diego Transportation and Traffic Engineering Division.
- o Development within the specific plan will be located in proximity to two LRT stations and links to these stations have been incorporated into the specific plan design. Funding commitments for the LRT station and facility adjacent to the Town and Country site have also been incorporated into this specific plan.
- o The direct and cumulative impacts of the development can be mitigated to a level not exceeding impacts anticipated under the Community Plan.
- o The traffic study for the Atlas Specific Plan has been coordinated closely with other proposed developments in the area (including the Levi-Cushman and River Valley Plans) and a comprehensive transportation phasing plan has been prepared and committed to by Atlas Hotels Inc. which will ensure appropriate phased implementation of the recommended circulation improvements.

In these respects the Atlas Specific Plan is consistent with the land use and intensity guidelines outlined in the Mission Valley Community Plan.

2. Transportation

The Mission Valley Community Plan calls for development of a balanced circulation system in the community plan area including a well-developed road system, mass transit systems, and pedestrian and bicycle circulation systems. The community plan encourages the integration of alternative transportation modes into development designs.

The Atlas Specific Plan conforms with the guidelines included in the community plan transportation system in a variety of ways. A comprehensive transportation phasing plan has been prepared in conjunction with the Atlas, Levi-Cushman and FSDRIP Plans which will ensure coordinated implementation of a circulation network adequate to serve all of the proposed developments. Transportation improvement projects outlined in the Mission Valley Community Plan for the specific plan area will be constructed in conjunction with specific plan implementation. In addition, a number of alternative transportation system improvements have been incorporated into the specific plan design including links to the valley-wide LRT system, provision of an intra-valley shuttle for the Atlas properties, and numerous pedestrian and bicycle pathways. Funding commitments for these improvements are detailed in the Plan Implementation Element and elsewhere in this Specific Plan.

3. Flood Protection

The Mission Valley Community Plan describes the San Diego River as a "significant aesthetic and economic asset to the community (p. 112)." The river should serve as an attraction to visitor-oriented services through the orientation of land uses to the river and the protection and enhancement of the wetland habitat. At the same time, the adverse effects of periodic inundation of the floodplain should be reduced through application of appropriate hydraulic, environmental and design criteria. The San Diego River Wetlands Management Plan implements the goals of the draft community plan. The Wetlands Management Plan calls for a 10-year pilot channel and a flood facility to accommodate a 100-year storm.

The specific plan incorporates measures which would implement virtually all of the goals expressed above for the two sites adjacent to the San Diego River (Town and Country, and Hanalei Hotel). The river channel would be improved to the standards stated above, with the exception of providing 100-year storm protection along the northern side of the river channel at the Town and Country site. The revegetation plan incorporates habitat replacement and buffer areas to protect the wetlands. A pedestrian/bicycle promenade and buffer areas will also be located adjacent to the river corridor at both the Town and Country and Hanalei Hotel sites. Access to retail uses at the Town and Country site will be provided from the "River Court" and restaurant/lounge facilities located adjacent to the river corridor. A pedestrian/bicycle bridge across the river providing access to the Fashion Valley Shopping Center and LRT will also be provided at the Town and Country site. Structures on the two sites will be oriented to the river and passive recreational use encouraged through the development of pedestrian plazas, pedestrian/bicycle pathways, and pedestrian/bicycle bridge crossing. The river improvement and urban design elements of this specific plan describe these features in detail.

4. Hillsides

The Mission Valley Community Plan identifies the southern hillsides of Mission Valley as a distinctive and aesthetic feature of the valley's character. The plan's objective is to:

Preserve as open space those hillsides characterized by steep slopes or geological instability in order to control urban form, insure public safety, provide aesthetic enjoyment, and protect biological resources (p. 120).

Three of the sites within the specific plan area are located adjacent to the southern hillsides of Mission Valley. No encroachment into the hillsides will be associated with development on any of these sites. Design criteria have been incorporated into the Atlas Specific Plan to ensure sensitivity to the natural hillsides as discussed in the urban design element of this specific plan.

5. Urban Design

The main objective of the urban design element of the Mission Valley Community Plan is to encourage design which will enhance the form and function of the community and integrate the various components. Two functional categories are identified for special consideration: design protection areas and transportation corridors.

Design protection areas include the San Diego River and the valley walls. Design adjacent to the river should be sensitive to the natural habitat. Structures should be oriented towards the river, and designed at appropriate scale or "stepped-down" towards the river for a gradual visual transition. Visual and physical access should be ensured through protection of views and provision of pedestrian paths, observation areas and rest areas within buffer areas. On the southern hillsides, natural slopes should be utilized as a background and guide for urban form. Contouring, terracing and landscaping with natural vegetation should be utilized.

The Atlas Specific Plan area is somewhat unique from an urban design standpoint since several of the Atlas sites are already developed with existing uses which relate in a variety of ways to the urban design guidelines included in the Mission Valley Community Plan. In the case of the Town and Country and Hañalei Hotel sites, the Atlas Specific Plan seeks to redevelop existing developed sites in a manner more consistent with the urban design goals of the community plan. The urban design element of this specific plan presents criteria for both riverfront and hillside development and includes specific design criteria for each of the sites within the specific plan area.

The second area of concern in the Mission Valley Community Plan is in the transportation corridors. The plan recommends buffering of freeways from local frontage roads with landscaping. Development along major roads should observe setbacks and also be buffered by landscaping. Local streets should provide safe pedestrian access and visual interest as well as retail development.

LRT stations should be located and designed to emphasize pedestrian access; minimize conflict with vehicles; provide shelter, information and visual interest;

and harmonize with the river corridor criteria. Pedestrian paths and use areas should provide safe access to the major shopping centers; seating; landscaping; information, public art or vending activities; and observation areas for natural habitat.

The Atlas Specific Plan will achieve all of the transportation corridor objectives stated above. Specific designs are recommended which will provide pedestrian interest areas while meeting multiple objectives of river enhancement, flood protection, parking provision and visual quality. A conceptual streetscape plan for the Hotel Circle area has been incorporated into the specific plan which will provide visual integration of previously unrelated sites and improve the aesthetic environment of the freeway view corridor.