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## COMMUNITY AMENITIES ELEMENT

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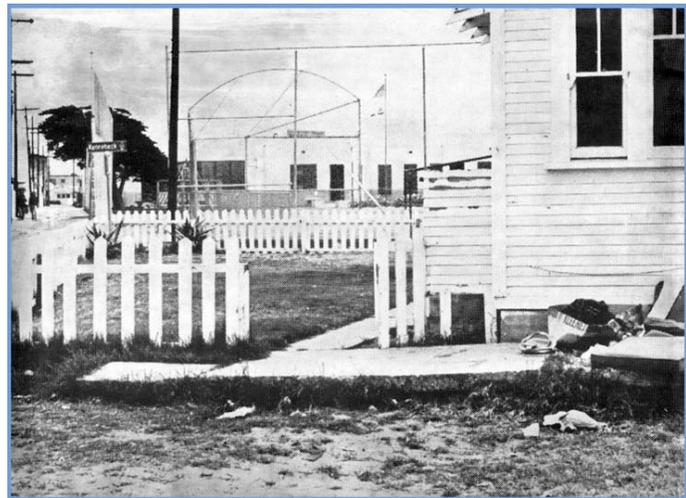
Amenities, in a community, are those features, mainly physical, that are conducive to the quality and attractiveness of an area's environment. These generally relate to visual perception although there is some relationship to other senses. There are four basic components of the Mission Beach environment that must meet certain criteria if the community is to be visually appealing. These are its structures, the street furniture filling these spaces, and the landscaping accenting the other three components.

### GOALS

- To identify and preserve those features that are conducive to the attractiveness of Mission Beach.
- To eliminate both visual and non-visual nuisances in Mission Beach.
- To enhance the quality of the physical environment of Mission Beach by upgrading the existing community and encouraging attractive development in the future.

### IDENTIFYING A DESIRABLE ENVIRONMENT

In terms of structures, the architectural design is of primary importance. Materials, colors, and textures, if appropriately used, can enhance the appearance of both the structure and its surroundings. In terms of spaces, the relationship of a structure to both its site and surrounding structures can result in either wasted space on private lots or the creation of usable open space for residents. The concept of public open space refers mainly to public paths, both pedestrian and vehicular. These spaces should be well designed, and relate to an overall system. Design



**An example of what a desirable environment is not.**

relates to their size, shape, use, and composition, while the interrelationship is in the context of the views and vistas that they define, as well as the means by which one space is connected to another. In terms of street furniture, the myriad of objects that fill spaces such as lighting, benches, kiosks, mailboxes, trash receptacles and fire hydrants should be well designed and well placed. Fountains and sculpture are an example of a more ornamental type of furniture that can be used. Probably the most noticeable of street furnishings are signs, both public and private. Signs should be modest and attractive. Their use should be limited to identification. Finally, landscaping is an important part of the overall appearance of the community. The amount, location, type (whether trees, shrubs, flowers) and kind (species) should be carefully arranged to complement the inanimate components of the community.

## PRESENT ABUSE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The most serious environment abuse in Mission Beach is of a visual nature. Many residential structures suffer from the lack of proper maintenance. Many others, mostly newer, are reasonably well maintained but are unappealing in terms of design. Plain stucco walls are accompanied by a repetition of flat roofs. Many commercial buildings suffer from a general lack of maintenance. Because of the small lot sizes, and the desire to maximize development on them, many structures have a very poor relationship to each other. Walls block light and air as well as views. Unusable spaces between structures result in an inefficient use of valuable land. Few structures are actually situated on their site in order to complement and enhance surrounding development.



A little imagination goes a long way.

eyesore. Litter is predominant along heavily used pedestrian routes, on the beaches and in yards adjacent to these areas. Along with these conditions, landscaping is sparse throughout the community. The lack of mature trees and vegetation makes the other violations even more noticeable.

In addition to the problem of visual pollution, Mission Beach has a problem related to excessive noise levels. Because of the close proximity of streets to residences, vehicular noise is unusually disturbing to people inside their homes. This is particularly true of noise generated by vehicles on Mission Boulevard. The close proximity causes similar problems generated by gatherings of people on streets and walks adjacent to residences. Large parties are often the source of complaints to police, especially parties with live music. Some of the noise generated by the various activities at Belmont Park are disturbing to people in residences in the vicinity of the amusement park. While these noises are not necessarily any higher than similar noises generated throughout the rest of the City they are more bothersome in Mission Beach because of the close proximity of all uses and activities to each other. Airplanes ascending over Mission Beach are particularly annoying because of their relatively low altitude.

Mission Beach also suffers from a lack of visually attractive street furnishings. Instead, it is permeated with an inordinate amount of clutter situated in, and visible from, its public spaces. Telephone and electric wires and poles blanket the community. Television antennas clutter the skyline. Excessive signs, including billboards, compete with each other for attention. Many signs are unattractive. Both businesses and residences, in many cases, are guilty of the unsightly storage of materials in locations visible from public streets and walkways. Trash and garbage accumulates in highly visible areas. This latter practice can cause a health problem in addition to being an

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS**

Consideration should be given to the development of architectural and site design criteria for use by both new and existing development in Mission Beach. Such criteria should be available for use by anyone desiring to improve property. These guidelines should suggest techniques that maximize the visual appeal of a piece of property without necessarily involving substantial increases in cost. The criteria should include discussions of materials, colors, textures, building shape, roof shape, ornamental treatment, placement of a structure on a lot, fencing type, screening, landscaping and relationship to adjacent structures. Lighting, both functional and ornamental, should be discussed in terms of enhancing structures, as well as public and private spaces.

Design criteria are warranted in order to upgrade the quality and appearance of the components of the community, not to force certain architectural styles. This is the primary reason that such criteria should be voluntary. In some cases, development at a reasonable cost may have a higher priority than the use of expensive architectural techniques. Voluntary compliance allows the maximum freedom of choice.

The system of pedestrian and vehicular spaces already provides a complete network throughout Mission Beach. Further consideration should be given to identifying nodes of pedestrian activity throughout the community and paths connecting them, through the development of a design plan for the spaces. This might include special consideration of the Places as pedestrian walks, for example. The appearance of some areas and the views from most, can be improved through a program of upgrading. A total utility undergrounding program should be undertaken in order to eliminate wires and poles. It will be the responsibility of the residents to pay the cost of such a project through an assessment district procedure. The advent of cable television provides an alternative to outdoor antennas. Deteriorating walks and streets in some locations should be improved.

Billboards and excessive signs in Mission Beach will be eliminated by January of 1976 in order to comply with the requirements of the C-S zone, adopted in 1973. The development of additional sign criteria is necessary in order to improve the appearance of those signs that are necessary for identification purposes, both public and private. Such criteria should detail the shape of signs, materials, textures, lettering styles, and layout of the copy.

The appearance, quantity and placement of public street furnishings such as benches, mailboxes, fire hydrants, trash receptacles and kiosks should be both functional and attractive. Kiosks, benches and, perhaps, fountains could define nodes of public activity. Consideration should be given to the color, composition, and texture of materials used for walls and paving of these nodes, as well as the paths linking them. Improved maintenance of public and private spaces should be undertaken, especially regarding trash and litter. More receptacles should be provided and regular pick up schedules by the City should be increased. Citizen effort should also be increased, both individual and organized.

Specific criteria should be developed regarding landscaping programs. Because of the climate in Mission Beach, only selective trees, shrubs and plants will grow. Those species

that grow should be catalogued and made available. Criteria should indicate how planting can be most effectively used for buffering, screening, shading and highlighting structures and spaces. Landscaping should be used selectively in order to enhance public spaces. Planter boxes should be considered in certain locations. A community-wide planting and landscaping plan should be prepared for all public spaces within Mission Beach.

Special attention should be paid to the need for mitigating the effects of the non-visual pollution of excessive noise. Planting can serve as a noise buffer in some cases. Sound proofing of structures is especially important in an area like Mission Beach. Regulation of hours of certain activities such as live bands and some attractions in Belmont Park can ease the impact of excessive noise levels.

Mission Beach is blessed with the visual assets of the ocean on one side and the bay on the other. Existing visual confusion provides a strong contrast to these natural amenities. The future should include coordinated efforts to upgrade the physical environment so that it complements the surrounding natural environment.

## **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- That design guidelines including discussions of materials, colors, textures, building shape, roof shape, ornamental treatment, site placement, fencing, screening, landscaping, building relationships and lighting be developed for use by persons seeking to improve property in Mission Beach.
- That a design plan for public spaces be developed, indicating the size, shape and location of activity areas, and the nature of materials used in finishing such spaces.
- That sign criteria be developed detailing the shape, texture, material, lettering style and layout of signs necessary for the purpose of adequately identifying uses in Mission Beach.
- That criteria for functional and attractive street furniture be developed for Mission Beach, and that such furniture be used to define and enhance public spaces in the community.
- That specific landscaping criteria be developed including a listing of various types of vegetation best suited to Mission Beach and the most effective way that it can be used.
- That a total utility undergrounding program be undertaken by residents and property owners.
- That television antennas be systematically removed throughout Mission Beach.
- That improved maintenance programs be undertaken including increased collection of trash and litter, and the provision of additional receptacles.
- That efforts such as soundproofing and buffering be undertaken in order to reduce the impact of excessive noise levels on residents.