

# SERRA MESA

## COMMUNITY PLAN



**SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**



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## COMMUNITY PLAN

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Prepared by  
The Serra Mesa Community Planning Group

and

City of San Diego Planning Department  
202 C Street, MS 4A  
San Diego, CA 92101



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## SERRA MESA COMMUNITY PLAN

The following information has been incorporated into this ~~May 2006~~ **2011** posting of this Plan:

Amendment	Date Approved by Planning Commission	Resolution Number	Date Adopted by City Council	Resolution Number
Adoption of the Serra Mesa Community Plan	March 3, 1977	840	July 27, 1977	R-218949
Southern boundaries of Serra Mesa incorporated into the Mission Valley Community Plan	September 8, 1994 January 24, 1985	2123-PC	June 25, 1985	R-263537
Adoption of Stonecrest Specific Plan	November 19, 1987		February 9, 1988	R-270335
Redesignate 2.5 acres in Murphy Canyon Gateway from light industrial to visitor-serving commercial	April 24, 1986		June 10, 1986	R-265932
Adopt the alignment for State Route 52	June 5, 1986	6340-PC	June 17, 1986	R-266024
Graves Tract, Lot 2, redesignated	February 12, 1987		March 31, 1987	R-268002
Adoption of Highlands Corporate Center	August 17, 1989		November 21, 1989	R-274777
Kearny Mesa Community Plan adopted separating the commercial and industrial areas from the SMCP			October 6, 1992	R-280821
Update existing conditions information, update Housing & Environmental Management Elements in conjunction w/ rezonings for Open Space Element	October 28, 1999	2869-PC	May 16, 2000	R-293135

[Added Montgomery Field ALUCP policy language and deleted references to the Montgomery Field CLUP.](#)



### ***Members involved with the 1977 Plan***

Ted Gavett, President	Mary Johnson
Tom Barbour	Anne Marie Kaukonen
Dale Bramble	Phil Laviolette
Russ Breese	Bill Levin
John Brewer	Deane Martinez
Maxine Brubaker	James McCarthy
Claude Burnett	Louis Messier
Charles Carr	Victor Miranda
Thelma Collins	Pat Norris
Phil Conner	Elmer Olson
John Cooper	Louis Ojeda
Russ Crane	Bill Pfender
Frank Darling	Ted Pierce
Guy Deeks	Dick Pilgrim
Darryl De Silva	Rick Randol
Neil Douglas	Dick Scott
Jack Edwards	James Smyth
Jean Eichorn	Marilyn Tighe
Lou Elkins	Anne Trammell
J. Elke Ertle	Dorothy Vadnais
Mark Evetovich	Pete Vivoli
Bill Gills	Frank Wahl
Ed Goodwin	William Walker
Russell Grant	Marvin Washburn
E.W. Hale	John White
Kent Hales	Ruth Whitehead
Dicken Hall	Bruno Witte
Dawn Hill	Richard Wright
Dave Hopphaus	Sam Zanin
H.B. Jenkins	

### ***Members involved with the 2000 Plan amendment***

Kathy Elliott, President	Peggy Lacy
Jackie Ander	Nina McCarthy
Michael Barbusca	Barbara McLachlan
George Delabarre	Carol Ann McManus
Lowell Farris	Clark Rasmussen
Mary Johnson	Tim Reeves
Karl Krohn	Barbara Ryan
Sandi Kuperstein	Joan Sounder

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# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
Preface .....	3
<b>PLAN ELEMENTS</b>	
Plan Elements .....	6
Housing Element.....	7
Existing Conditions .....	7
Goal .....	9
Objectives.....	9
Proposals .....	9
Commercial Element .....	13
Existing Conditions .....	13
Goal .....	14
Proposals .....	14
Parks and Recreation Element .....	17
Existing Conditions .....	17
Goals.....	18
Proposals .....	19
Community Facilities Element .....	21
Existing Conditions .....	21
Goal .....	25
Objectives.....	25
Proposals .....	25
Employment Center Element.....	27
Serra Mesa Health-Institutional Complex .....	27
Montgomery Field.....	30
Transportation Element.....	33
Existing Conditions .....	33
Future Travel Forecasts.....	37
Goal .....	41
Proposals .....	41
Environmental Management Element.....	45
Existing Conditions .....	47
Objective .....	48
Proposals .....	48
Physical Environment - Urban Design .....	49
Socio-Economic Environment .....	51
Implementation Element.....	55
Plan Review and Maintenance .....	55
Citizen Participation .....	56
Development Phasing.....	57
Rezoning Proposals .....	58
Footnotes.....	68
<u>Appendix - Airport Influence Area.....</u>	<u>69</u>

## *List of Figures*

Figure 1. General Location Map .....	2
Figure 2. Subareas and Neighborhoods .....	6
Figure 3. Residential.....	8
Figure 4. Housing.....	10
Figure 5. Commercial.....	12
Figure 6. Parks and Recreation.....	16
Figure 7. Community Facilities.....	20
Figure 8. Employment Center .....	28
Figure 9. Street Classification .....	32
Figure 10. Traffic Flow 1976 .....	34
Figure 11. Functional Street System .....	36
Figure 12. Bikeways and Pedestrian Walkway .....	38
Figure 13. Multiple Habitat Planning Area (MHPA).....	44
Figure 14. Environmental Management (Open Space).....	46
Figure 15. 1977 and 1987 Zoning .....	59
Figure 16. 2000 Rezoning .....	60
Figure 17. Community Plan Land Use (1990).....	67

## *List of Tables*

Table 1. Optimal School Enrollment and Usable Site Area Standards .....	21
Table 2. Inventory of School Facilities Serving Serra Mesa.....	22
Table 3. City of San Diego Street Design Standards.....	39
Table 4. Summary of Plan Projects .....	61
Table 5. Summary of Plan Proposals .....	62
Table 6. Plan Summary .....	66

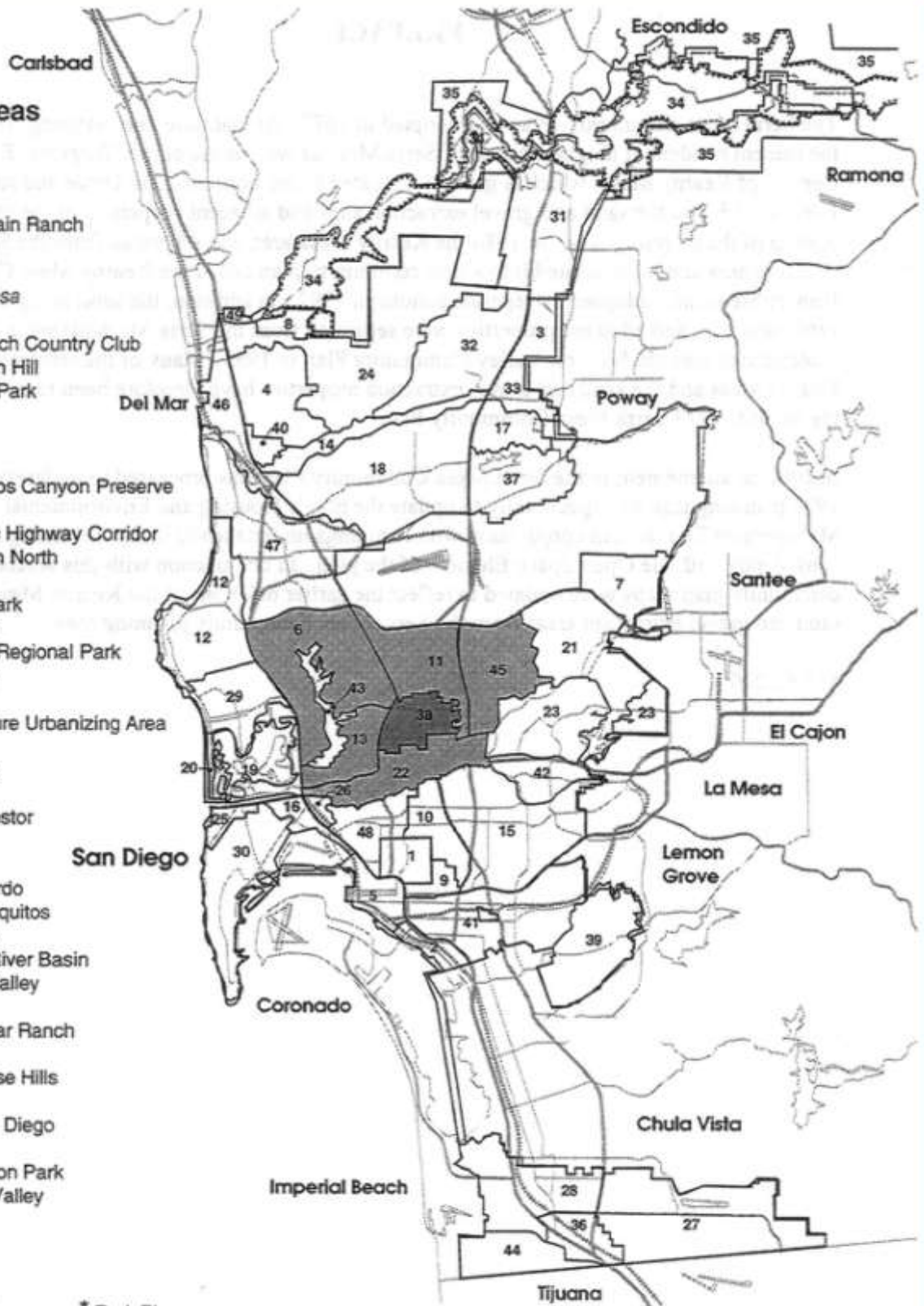


# INTRODUCTION

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**Planning Areas**  
April, 1996

- \* 1. Balboa Park
  - 2. Barrio Logan
  - 3. Carmel Mountain Ranch
  - 4. Carmel Valley
  - 5. Centre City
  - 6. Clairemont Mesa
  - 7. East Elliott
  - 8. Fairbanks Ranch Country Club
  - 9. Greater Golden Hill
  - 10. Greater North Park
  - 11. Kearny Mesa
  - 12. La Jolla
  - 13. Linda Vista
  - \* 14. Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve
  - 15. Mid-City
  - 16. Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor
  - 17. Miramar Ranch North
  - 18. Mira Mesa
  - \* 19. Mission Bay Park
  - 20. Mission Beach
  - \* 21. Mission Trails Regional Park
  - 22. Mission Valley
  - 23. Navajo
  - 24. North City Future Urbanizing Area
  - 25. Ocean Beach
  - 26. Old San Diego
  - 27. Otay Mesa
  - 28. Otay Mesa/ Nestor
  - 29. Pacific Beach
  - 30. Peninsula
  - 31. Rancho Bernardo
  - 32. Rancho Peñasquitos
  - 33. Sabre Springs
  - 34. San Dieguito River Basin
  - 35. San Pasqual Valley
  - 36. San Ysidro
  - 37. Scripps Miramar Ranch
  - 38. **Serra Mesa**
  - 39. Skyline/Paradise Hills
  - 40. Sorrento Hills
  - 41. Southeast San Diego
  - 42. College Area
  - \* 43. Tecolote Canyon Park
  - 44. Tijuana River Valley
  - 45. Tierrasanta
  - 46. Torrey Pines
  - 47. University
  - 48. Uptown
  - 49. Via De La Valle
- \* Park Plans



**General Location Map** **1**  
**Serra Mesa Community Plan** **FIGURE**

# INTRODUCTION

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## PREFACE

The Serra Mesa Community Plan (Plan) was adopted in 1977. At that time, the planning area included the present residential neighborhoods of Serra Mesa as well as the entire “Regional Employment Center” of Kearny Mesa, which is generally located to the north of Aero Drive and adjacent to Interstate 15 (I-15) and the sand and gravel extraction sites and adjacent properties in the southerly portion of the planning area. In 1986, the Kearny Mesa area was separated from the Serra Mesa planning area and incorporated into a new community plan called the Kearny Mesa Community Plan, subsequently adopted by separate actions in 1992. In addition, the sand and gravel extraction sites and adjacent properties were separated from the Serra Mesa planning area and incorporated into the Mission Valley Community Plan in 1985. Many of the references to Kearny Mesa and the sand and gravel extraction properties have therefore been removed from the original 1977 Serra Mesa Community Plan.

In 2000, an amendment to the Plan was processed to update the outdated 1977 plan language and specifically to update the Plan’s Housing and Environmental Management Elements in conjunction with rezonings undertaken to bring the zoning into consistency with the **Open Space Element** of the Plan. In conjunction with this amendment, all community plan maps were updated to reflect the earlier deletions of the Kearny Mesa and I-15 sand and gravel extraction areas from the Serra Mesa community planning area.

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# PLAN ELEMENTS

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The Serra Mesa Community Plan is divided into seven “elements” or categories of land use considerations. The Plan elements are devoted to precise proposals and recommendations for land use and community improvement. Each of the first seven elements contains information on existing conditions and trends, problems and issues where significant goals and objectives (statements that reflect what conditions should be achieved) and proposals (statements as to what should be done to achieve the desired goals and objectives). These are related to five “Overriding Community Goals” that were established for the community. The **Implementation Element** outlines how the proposals could be put into effect and establishes priorities. It also states whether responsibility is primarily that of public agencies or private interests and indicates where close cooperation of public and private interests is necessary or desirable. The elements are as follows:

## **HOUSING**

## **COMMERCIAL**

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

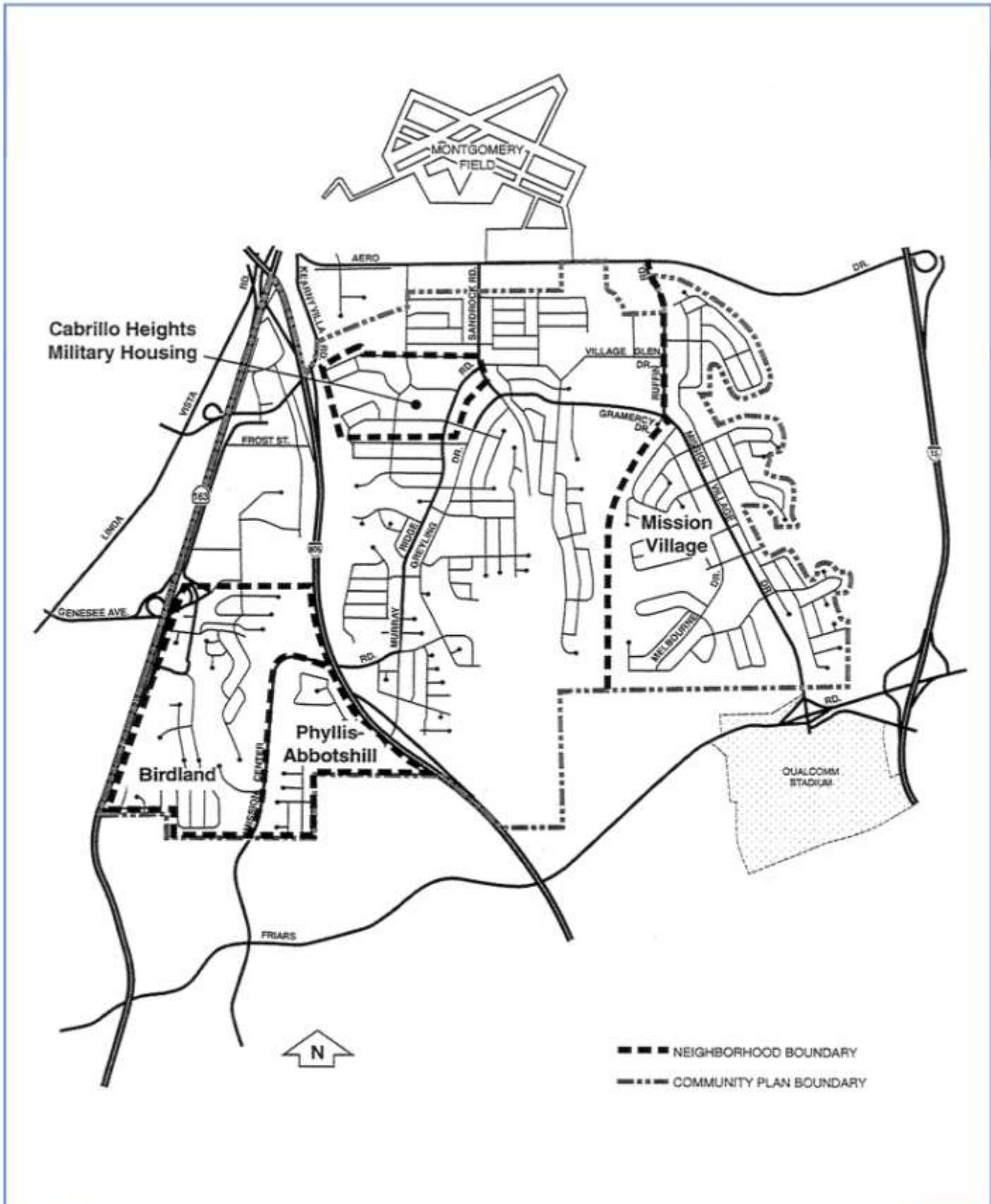
## **REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT CENTER**

## **TRANSPORTATION**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

The established Overriding Community goals are below:

- RETAIN THE RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER OF SERRA MESA.
- PROVIDE ADEQUATE COMMUNITY SERVICES.
- ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR THE UTILIZATION OF HILLSIDES AND CANYONS.
- ENHANCE THE PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT.
- FOSTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RACIALLY, ETHNICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITY.



**Subareas and Neighborhoods**  
**Serra Mesa Community Plan**

**2**  
**FIGURE**

# HOUSING ELEMENT

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## EXISTING CONDITIONS

After experiencing a period of rapid growth (3,825 in 1955 to 27,269 in 1970), population in the study area leveled off and declined somewhat (25,182 in 1976 and 24,400 in 1998). The decline is attributable to several factors. These include the tendency for grown children to leave home, changing life styles (fewer children, higher divorce rate) and recent emphasis on adult housing.

There were approximately 8,100 housing units in Serra Mesa in 1977, and 8,361 units in 1998. Although the community is overwhelmingly single-family in character on an area basis, 42 percent of the units are classified as multifamily. Virtually all construction since 1970 has been in apartments and other multifamily products, such as townhomes, reflecting the scarcity of vacant land readily available for residential use. Most of this new apartment construction has occurred adjacent to the Mission Village Shopping Center.

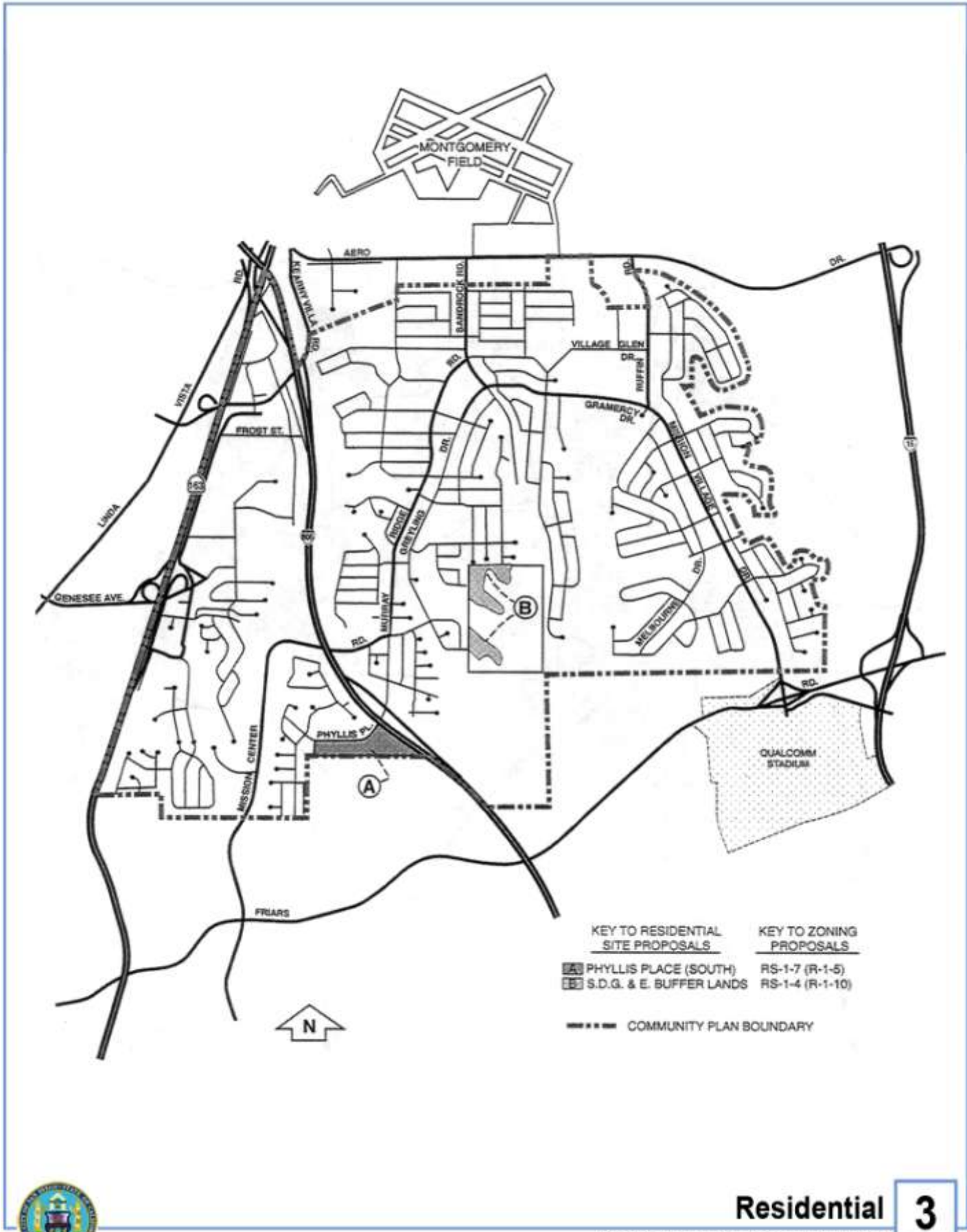
Multifamily units are clustered near shopping facilities and the health-institutional complex. These range in density from about 14 to 61 units per net acre. The 812-unit Cabrillo Heights Military Housing Project is built to a density of ten units per net acre. It provides housing for enlisted military personnel and their families. Since this housing is old, it may soon be replaced and the preferred alternative is 900 units (see **Figure 2**).

The overall condition of the housing stock is excellent, with 97 percent considered to be sound. No redevelopment is anticipated during the period through 2000, but some older units will require rehabilitation or extensive repairs.

A major attraction to Serra Mesa has been the availability of moderately priced housing. Originally, new houses sold for about \$13,000 and the median value had risen to only \$22,950 in 1970. Median home prices were over \$40,000 in 1977, and in 1990 the median value was \$173,000.

Of the 71 acres considered suitable for new housing in the community in 1977, there are 21 left, much of it located adjacent to environmentally sensitive lands. Of this land, few acres are readily developable without major landform modification. Included is a two-acre piece planned for a 51-unit retirement complex. The remaining 49 acres consist primarily of mesa rim land overlooking Mission Valley and tributary canyons. Of the 49 acres, 30 are owned by sand and gravel or related interests. These 30 acres are excluded from future resource extraction plans. The final 19 acres consist of several promontories included in buffer lands owned by San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) and several isolated pieces scattered about the community.

It should be pointed out that 781 people resided in non-household quarters in 1977. These consist primarily of institutional facilities such as Juvenile Hall and several convalescent homes near Sharp Hospital. This figure has risen to 1,095 in 1998, with additional growth expected if further development of this kind occurs as anticipated.



**Residential** **3**  
**Serra Mesa Community Plan** **FIGURE**



Finally, the decline in household size is expected to bottom out and rebound slightly before the end of the century. Many of the “empty nesters” will likely be replaced by households with one or two children.

If the Plan is implemented, approximately 9,000 units from the 1977-unit count are anticipated by 2000. Multifamily units will probably approach parity with single-family dwellings. The 1998 population is 24,400 in Serra Mesa and is projected to grow to 25,100 by the year 2020.

## **GOAL**

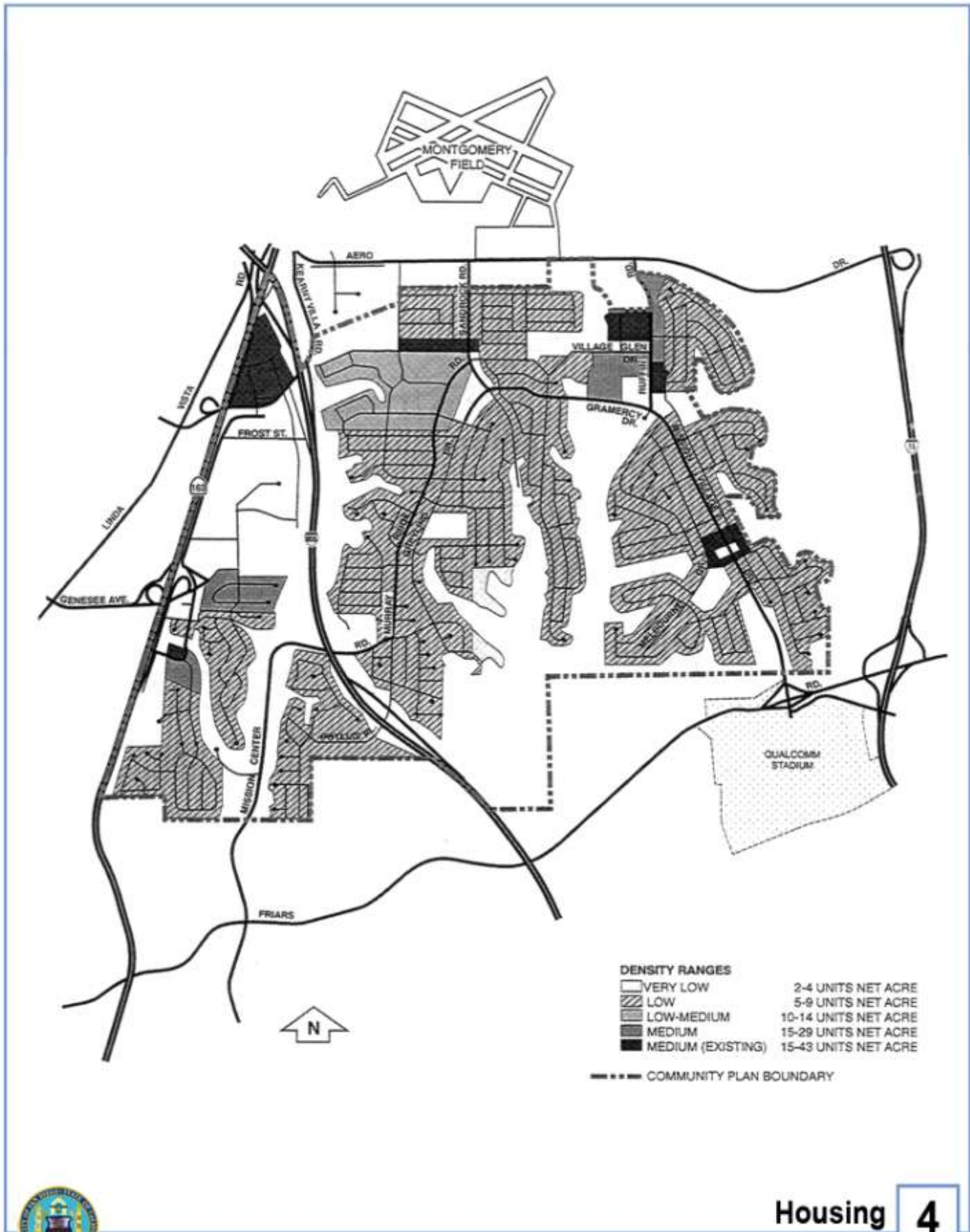
TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF EXISTING RESIDENCES AND ENCOURAGE A WIDE VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Retain a wide variety and choice of housing types in all economic ranges throughout the community.
- To promote “pride in the community” campaigns to maintain and enhance the existing housing stock.
- To maintain a stable community by discouraging replacement of single-family residences by multifamily units, even along major streets.

## **PROPOSALS**

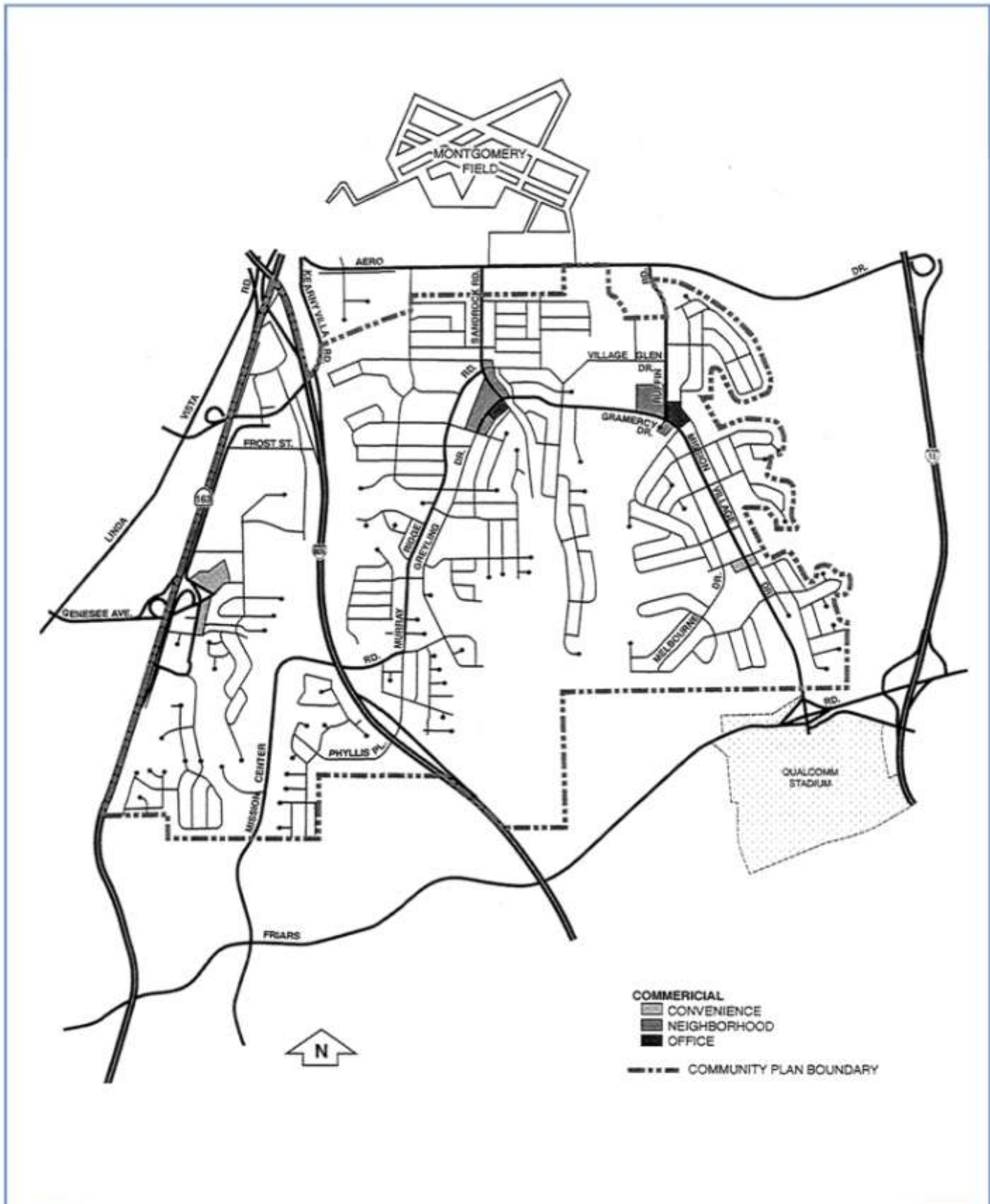
- While the Serra Mesa community is, and will continue to be, a relatively low-density area, it is proposed that a wide range of residential densities be encouraged to develop. The proposed maximum density of existing development is 43 units per net acre; that for new development, 29 units per net acre. Proposed density ranges include 15-29 and 15-43 (medium-density), 10-14 (low-medium density), and 5-9 (low-density). These density ranges will encourage single-family dwellings, duplexes, townhouses and apartments. The intent is to accommodate a wide choice of life styles appealing to all segments of the population (see **Figure 4**).
- A very low residential density of zero to four units per net acre should be applied to hillsides and canyons designated for open space but not acquired because of excessive land costs or other factors. Development in these areas, including those in the Hillside Review Overlay Zone, should be guided by the following additional criteria:
  1. Slopes of 0-12 percent should be permitted to develop up to four dwelling units per net acre.
  2. Slopes of 13-24 percent should be permitted to develop up to two dwelling units per net acre.
  3. Slopes of 25 percent or greater should be permitted to develop to no more than one dwelling unit per net acre.
  4. Slopes of 25 percent or greater should be permitted to develop to no more than one dwelling unit per net acre.



**Housing** **4**  
**Serra Mesa Community Plan** **FIGURE**

5. Slopes of 25 percent or greater should be permitted to develop to no more than one dwelling unit per net acre.
  6. Properties located in open space sensitive habitat designated areas covered by the Multiple Species Conservation Program should be developed to a one unit per ten-acre density and zoned accordingly.
- New multifamily construction should be contiguous to existing shopping facilities and multifamily developments. All such development should incorporate good design standards in relation to building location, parking and landscaping. Driveway cuts along major streets should be minimized.
  - The Cabrillo Heights Military Family Housing complex should be retained to provide affordable housing. However, if the military should relinquish ownership, transfer to public ownership or control should be guaranteed.
  - A wide variety of housing types combined with open space preservation should be accomplished by Planned Residential Developments (PRD) and the housing type should be in character with the surrounding neighborhood. This approach shall be required on the limited mesa rim lands still available.
  - The following are criteria recommended for specific portions of the approximately 21 acres still available for residential development (see **Figure 3**).
    1. South side of Phyllis Place, west of Interstate 805 (I-805), approximately six acres. This site overlooks Mission Valley. It is bordered on the south by a major sand and gravel operation. A large religious institution and retirement units are located to the north. This site is specifically excluded from extraction plans. An overriding community concern is to preserve the integrity of the single-family neighborhood located to the west of the property. The site appears suitable for low-density residential development to a maximum of seven to nine units per net acre. Development could be constrained by existing overhead transmission lines and towers. Development must be done through the use of a PRD and in character with the single-family neighborhood to the west.
    2. San Diego Gas & Electric Buffer Area (south of Kobe and Chauncey Dr. and east of Zencaro and Sandmark Ave), approximately 15 acres. This group of developable sites consists of several promontories of rim land extending into the Ruffin Canyon system. These promontories appear capable of accommodating very-low density development to two to four units per net acre. Approximately 53.65 acres, excluding the three promontory sites, are designated open space (see **Environmental Management Element**). Views are spectacular despite the overhead transmission lines and towers converging on the Mission Switching Substation.

Kobe and Chauncey Drives, Zencaro and Sandmark Avenues should be extended onto the three promontories and cul-de-sacs created. The Chauncey Drive/Zencaro Avenue promontory should include a public viewpoint and pedestrian access for the Ruffin Canyon system. Development must be done through the use of a large lot single-family Planned Residential Development (PRD) and in character with the single-family neighborhood to the north and west.



**Commercial** **5**  
**Serra Mesa Community Plan** **FIGURE**

# COMMERCIAL ELEMENT

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This element deals with retail facilities intended to serve residents of the community.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The two neighborhood shopping districts in Serra Mesa are Serra Mesa, located at Sandrock Road and Greyling Drive, and Mission Village, located at Mission Village Drive and Ruffin Road.

The 9.1-acre Serra Mesa Shopping District includes a shopping center and adjacent commercial development. Major uses include a supermarket, drugstore and variety store within the center, and a bank, three service stations, medical-dental offices, post office and a branch library. There are 38 establishments in the district, equivalent to a community shopping center. Many of the businesses are small and marginal and the district suffers from a lack of maintenance.

The newer Mission Village Shopping District is 12 acres in size and is located at Mission Village Drive and Ruffin Road. Major occupants of the Mission Village Shopping Center are a supermarket and large drugstore. These two major uses are supplemented by 15 additional establishments. A service station and a professional office complex are located outside of the shopping center. Efforts have been made to make the center attractive to shoppers. The supermarket and adjoining stores have been extensively remodeled, new shops being built with contrasting materials. Parking has been provided at a relatively generous 2.5 to 1 ratio and is attractively landscaped.

The Mission Village Shopping District appears to have the more advantageous long-term position. It has room for expansion and could benefit from additional nearby residential development. However, the Serra Mesa Shopping District was established first and for a decade was the only neighborhood center in Serra Mesa. It has virtually functioned as a community shopping center, reinforced by the nearby location of a bank, branch library and post office. As a result, the Mission Village Center has operated at a competitive disadvantage being only marginally successful despite extensive improvements.

These larger shopping districts are supplemented by two convenience facilities, each covering less than two acres. The major uses of the Shawn Avenue facility are a small convenience market, service station and delicatessen. The delicatessen occupies an attractively designed wood-faced commercial structure that blends with adjoining residential uses. The Starling Avenue center includes a small convenience market, service station and three other stores.

The small commissary serving the Cabrillo Heights Military Housing project provides day-to-day convenience goods. As its range of goods is limited, military personnel shop elsewhere for meat and produce.

There are two Serra Mesa neighborhoods effectively isolated by topography from existing shopping facilities. These are Birdland, located south of Mockingbird Drive and west of Mission Center Road, and Phyllis-Abbotshill, located between Mission Center Road and I-805. Residents must drive up to two miles to provide for everyday needs.

There are no movie theaters, bowling alleys or other forms of commercial recreation, savings and loan institutions, bookstores or record shops within Serra Mesa. There is only one bank and only one family restaurant and the variety store is marginal and poorly situated. Finally, the centers serve only commercial functions, rarely being used for other community activities.

## **GOAL**

TO ENCOURAGE COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS WHICH PROVIDE A WIDE VARIETY OF GOODS AND SERVICES TO SERRA MESA BUT ALSO ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT.

## **PROPOSALS**

### **Neighborhood Shopping Facilities**

#### Serra Mesa

- The Serra Mesa Shopping District should be designated as a neighborhood shopping center even though the number of establishments exceeds that usually found in typical neighborhood centers. The library, post office and establishments across the street support this neighborhood activity center. Appearance should be enhanced by removing sign clutter and rehabilitating structural exteriors. If the Military Housing Project is removed, the Serra Mesa Shopping District should be incorporated into any redevelopment plan, including redesign of the street system.

#### Mission Village

- The Mission Village Shopping District should be designated as a neighborhood shopping center. Because of the center's location, it has the potential for becoming the nucleus for a community activity center, integrating cultural, recreational and educational functions with retail and office uses. Adjacent facilities that could relate to this center are: Taft Junior High School, Saint Columbia Church and Parochial School, Serra Mesa Community Park and Recreation Center, Wegeforth Elementary School and Extended Day Care Center and Cubberley Elementary School.
- At least one facility suitable for club or organizational meetings should be provided.
- Pedestrian and bicycle access to the center should be provided. These paths should connect the center with nearby community facilities and land uses.
- The parking lot should be redesigned to minimize internal traffic conflicts.

- The use of the center for community “happenings” such as pancake breakfasts, school band concerts and art exhibits, should be encouraged.
- The “village” atmosphere of the Mission Village Center should be maintained. The density should not exceed 29 units per net acre.

#### Shawn and Starling

- The Shawn and Starling convenience shopping facilities should be maintained.

#### Military Housing

- A well-designed small activity center should be encouraged, including the commissary, recreation hall and “tot lot” mini-park in the military housing project.

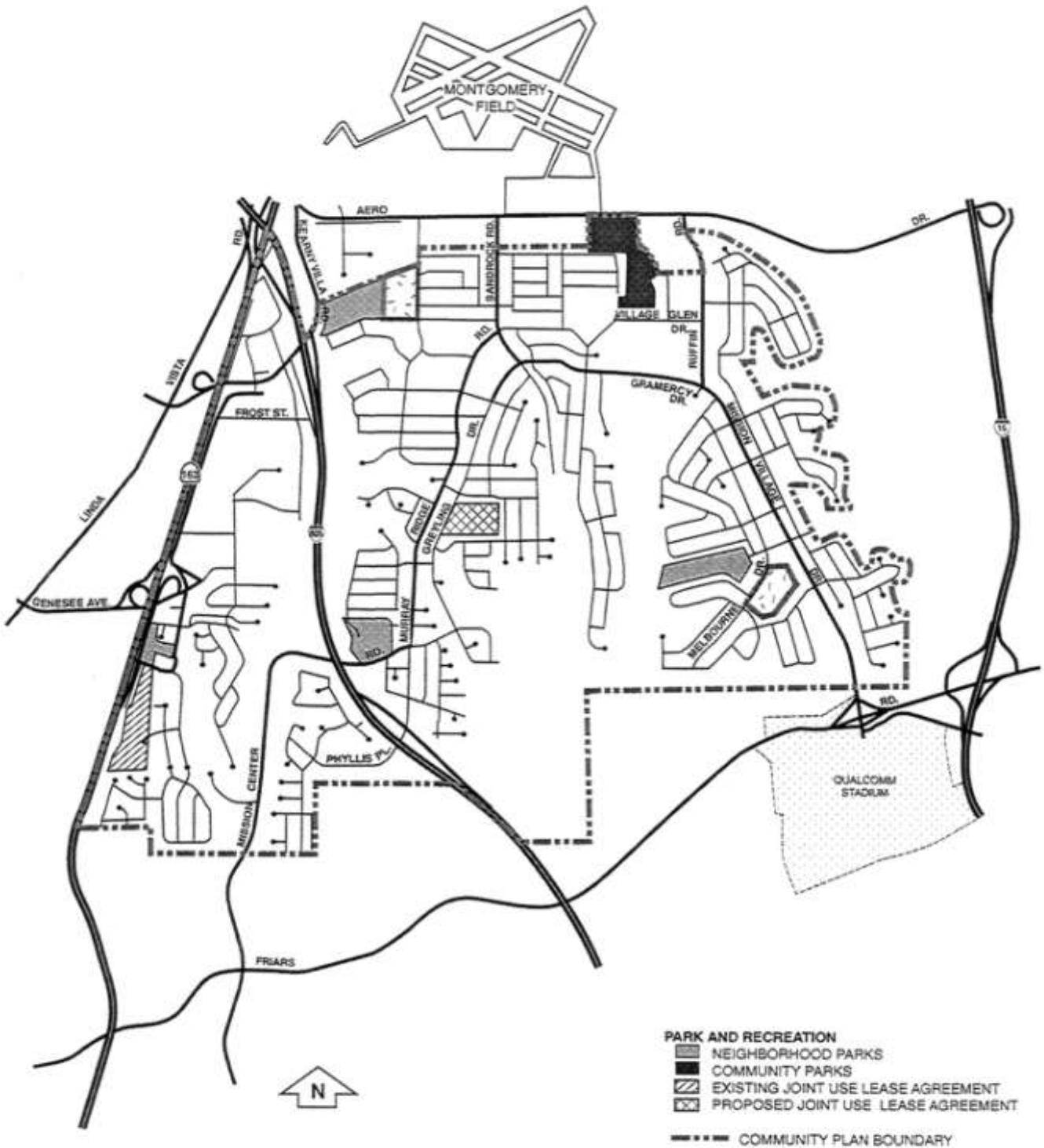
#### Birdland

- A convenience shopping facility, conforming to the CN (PCD) Zone, should be developed at the southeast corner of Cardinal Road and Genesee Avenue.

#### Professional Offices

- Professional offices should be retained in their present locations at the northeast corner of Mission Village Drive and Ruffin Road and along Greyling Avenue west of Sandrock Road.

See **Figure 5: Commercial**.



**Parks and Recreation**  
**Serra Mesa Community Plan**

**6**  
**FIGURE**



# PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT

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## EXISTING CONDITIONS

There are two developed neighborhood parks, one partially developed community park and three joint-use school/park sites in the Serra Mesa community. Cabrillo Heights Neighborhood Park is on a 13.68-acre site located adjacent to Angier Elementary School and Murray Ridge Neighborhood Park is on an 11.09-acre site located northwest of Murray Ridge Road and Mission Center Road. The partially developed Serra Mesa Community Park is on a 22.55-acre site stretching south from Aero Drive to Village Glen Drive; Wegeforth Elementary School is located immediately to the west. The 7.40-acre and 5.20-acre joint-use facilities at Fletcher Elementary and Juarez Elementary Schools address additional park needs for the community. A four-acre joint-use facility at Algiers Elementary School has not been developed under the original lease.

Cabrillo Neighborhood Park includes lighted multi-sport fields, children's play area, picnic facilities, a concession stand, two comfort stations (restrooms) and parking. Murray Ridge Neighborhood Park is developed with a multi-purpose court, tennis court, horseshoe area, open play areas, a comfort station and picnic facilities.

Serra Mesa Community Park site occupies a 20.55-acre site of which ten acres are developed. Existing facilities include the Serra Mesa Recreation Center, lighted sports fields, multi-purpose courts, playgrounds and parking. The long-range plan for the remaining portion of the community park, adjacent to Aero Drive, at one time called for additional active recreational uses such as lighted ball fields, children's play area, open lawn, picnic facilities, concession stand/comfort station and parking. This area of the community park is now proposed to house a new Serra Mesa/Kearny Mesa Branch Library.

The community's joint-use facilities are used by the children of the San Diego Unified School District during school hours and by the general public after school hours, on weekends and during holidays. The Fletcher Elementary School joint-use lease area, referred to as "Birdland Neighborhood Park," contains a children's play area, picnic facilities, turf ball fields, hard court game area and parking. The Juarez Elementary School joint-use lease area contains decomposed granite ball fields, picnic facilities, children's play area and hard court area. The Angier Elementary School joint-use area was once proposed for development by local citizens but was never built. The decomposed granite fields are used by the Little League.

Recreational opportunities within the Serra Mesa community are somewhat limited for adult usage since the majority of the current facilities serve the youth of the community. The recreation center is heavily used and in need of improvement; meeting rooms within the building are not conducive to public use due to noise impacts from the gymnasium located in the same building. The proposed Serra Mesa/Kearny Mesa Branch Library is planned to have meeting space to serve the needs of the general public.

A 1999 evaluation made of Serra Mesa’s park and recreation needs, and the community’s compliance with the City’s Progress Guide and General Plan (General Plan), established the following park needs:

1. General Plan Standard For Neighborhood Parks	One neighborhood park per 3,500-5,000 people, ten acres in size or five acres if adjacent to an elementary school.
2. General Plan Standard	One community park per 18,000-25,000 people, 20 acres in size or 13 acres if adjacent to a junior high school.
3. General Plan Standard Resource Based Parks*	15-17 acres per 1,000 people.

Serra Mesa, with an ultimate buildout of approximately 25,100 population (according to the San Diego Association of Governments’ 2020 Cities/County Forecasts), has a park acreage need based on General Plan standards shown in the table below.

Population	Neighborhood Parks	Community Parks	Resource-Based Parks*
Existing Conditions 1999	3 Parks	1 Park	444 acres
24,000 population	3 joint-use agreements		
General Plan Standard for Build Out	5 Parks	1 Park	376 acres (15-acres per 1,000 people, times 25,000 population)
25,100 population			

## GOALS

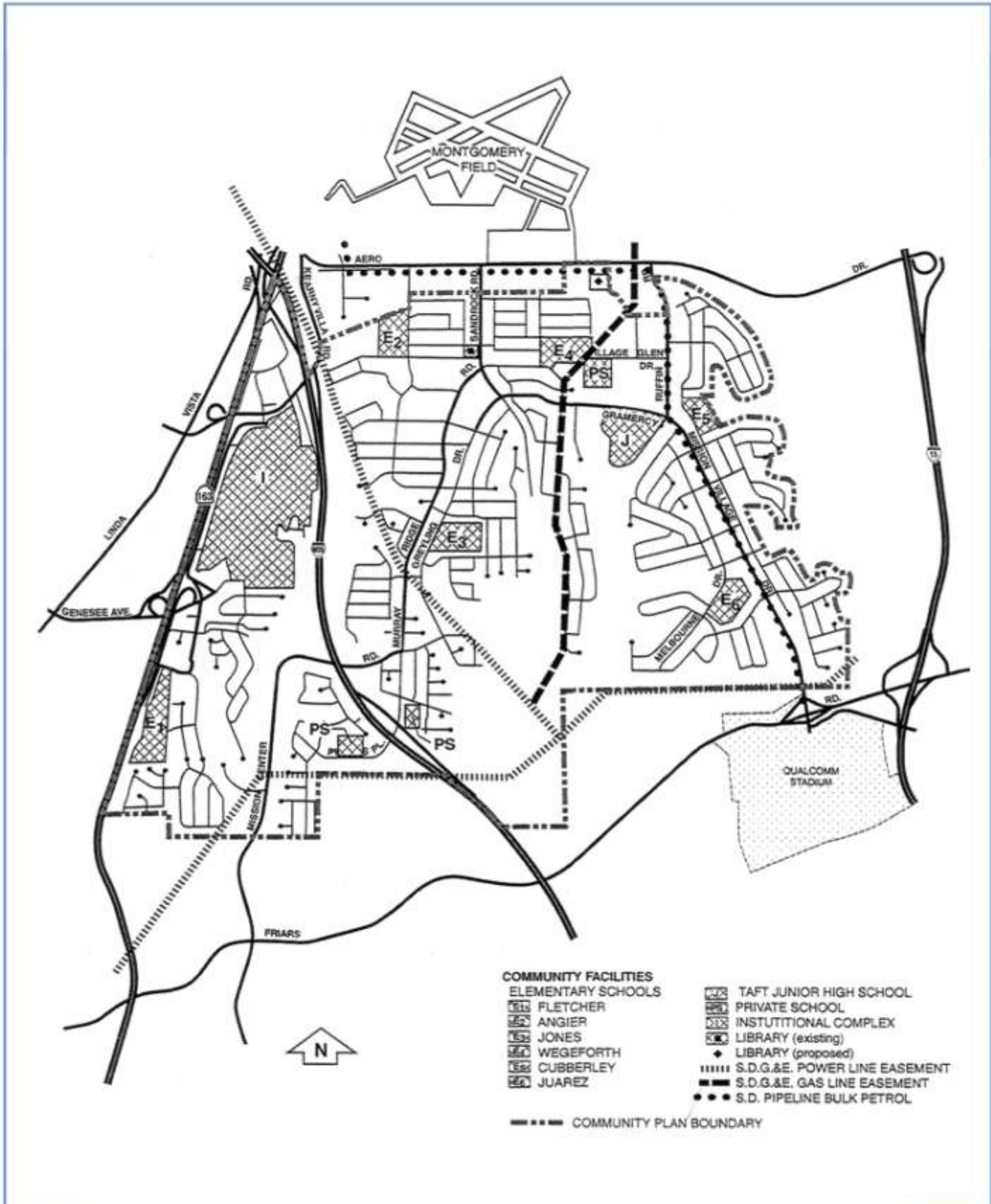
- TO DEVELOP SUFFICIENT AND CONVENIENT PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO SERVE THE EXISTING AND FUTURE RESIDENTIAL AND WORKING POPULATION OF THE COMMUNITY.
- TO DEVELOP PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE LINKAGES CONNECTING OPEN SPACE, NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY PARKS, SCHOOLS AND SHOPPING FACILITIES.
- TO FOSTER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO AND THE SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT TO PROVIDE JOINT-USE FACILITIES, INCLUDING TURFED MULTI-SPORTS FIELDS, FOR THE RESIDENTS OF SERRA MESA.

\* The Progress Guide and General Plan defines Resource Based Parks as natural hillsides, canyons and other natural areas that are designated open space in the community plan.

## PROPOSALS

- Serra Mesa Community Park should be enhanced as follows:
  1. The recreation center building should be extensively upgraded and expanded to relieve the chronic overuse of the existing facility.
  2. The portion of the community park near Aero Drive should be improved with active and passive recreational facilities to the extent feasible while also accommodating the needs of the proposed Serra Mesa/Kearny Mesa Branch Library.
- Serra Mesa Community Park should be combined with the Wegeforth Elementary School playground and the eight acres of City-owned land in Research Park subdivision addition. This would provide a park with a full range of recreational facilities, including tennis courts and a community pool. The community park and recreation center should be integrated with the Mission Village Community Activity Center. The proposed park expansion would enhance the working environment in the San Diego Research Park and could be considered support facility for the working population.
- Cabrillo Heights Park should be retained as a developed park with four baseball diamonds.
- The Murray Ridge Neighborhood Park should be retained as a neighborhood park, emphasizing picnic and leisure activities.
- A five to ten-acre neighborhood park site should be developed in Park District 391 (Juarez Elementary School). The parcel at the west end of Shawn Avenue appears to be the best potential site.
- A joint-use agreement between the City of San Diego and the San Diego Unified School District should be considered for joint-use improvements at or adjacent to the Jones Elementary School site. Additionally, the Angier Elementary School site should also be evaluated for joint-use opportunities.
- A three-acre neighborhood park site should be acquired and developed in Park District 402 (Fletcher Elementary School, Birdland). The vacant piece located on the west side of Cardinal Road north of Cardinal Drive appears to be the best potential site. This proposed park site could be supplemented by turfing a portion of the Fletcher School playground. This could be accomplished by a joint development agreement between the City and the school district.
- A least one facility for quiet meetings or passive indoor recreation should be designated in the community, preferably in the proposed Serra Mesa/Kearny Mesa Branch Library.

See **Figure 6: Parks and Recreation**



**Community Facilities**  
**Serra Mesa Community Plan**

**7**  
**FIGURE**

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

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This element deals with Schools, Fire Protection, Police Protection, Library Services, Postal Services, Utilities and Emergency Medical Services. Only local community facilities are included.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Schools

The following two tables summarize school information as of this writing. **Table 1** gives the optimal school enrollment and usable site standards of the San Diego Unified School District. **Table 2** provides an inventory of public and private school facilities serving Serra Mesa.

**TABLE 1**  
**OPTIMAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**  
**AND USABLE SITE AREA STANDARDS**

San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD)

School	Enrollment	Usable Site Area
Elementary	500 - 700	7 acres
Junior High	1,200 - 1,500	16 acres
Senior High	1,800 - 2,000	36 acres

Exceptions are made for existing school sites.

Council Policy 600-22 (adopted June 26, 1975, and last updated November 4, 1985), is concerned with the ability of schools to accommodate school-age children living in new housing developments. One important consideration is the availability policy of each individual school district. A school is considered overcrowded by the San Diego Unified School District if enrollment exceeds the stated school capacity. (See SDUSD Policy for determining the availability of schools - revised March 15, 1977 and 1998). The Council Policy realizes, however, that a particular development project may have varying impact on school enrollment depending on the intended market.

Kearny Senior High in 1999 had an enrollment of 1,683 which exceeds the school's capacity (1,613).

**TABLE 2**  
**INVENTORY OF SCHOOL FACILITIES SERVING SERRA MESA**

<b>Schools</b>	<b>Enrollment October 1976</b>	<b>Enrollment October 1998</b>	<b>Usable Acres</b>	<b>Construction Date<sup>a</sup></b>
<b>Public Elementary</b>				
Angier	685	439	7.4	1953
Cubberly	399	349	8.1	1959
Fletcher	310	307	8.2	1960
Jones	523	426	9.4	1958
Juarez	345	333	8.8	1961
Wegeforth	467	308	8.0	1958
<b>Public Junior High</b>				
Montgomery <sup>b</sup>	1,408	804	12.8	1942
Taft	1,227	925	16.3	1962
<b>Public Senior High</b>				
Kearny <sup>b</sup>	2,554	1,683	32.8	1954
<b>Public Community College</b>				
Mesa <sup>b</sup>	9,582	23,313	76.7	1964
<b>Private School</b>				
St. Columbia (K-8 <sup>th</sup> )	346	312	3.5	1958

Notes:

a. Date of original construction.

b. Serve the study area, but are located outside the community.

Total enrollment of the six public elementary schools in Serra Mesa peaked at 5,023 in 1969, declining steadily to 2,729 in 1976 and to 2,162 in 1998. The drop is attributable to the general decline in family size and birth rates occurring since the mid-1960s. Enrollment at the two junior high schools and Kearny High peaked in 1975. Enrollment declined at Kearny High (from 3,090 in 1975 to 2,554 in 1976), at Taft Junior High (from 1,592 to 1,227) and at Montgomery Junior High (from 1,961 to 1,408). In 1999, a portion of the school population came from outside the Serra Mesa community area.

### **Fire Protection**

Station 28, located on Kearny Villa Road north of Aero Drive, is the only station within the study area. Its service area includes Serra Mesa (east of I-805). Station 28 maintains one engine and one truck company and accommodates eight personnel. This station also serves as a maintenance and repair facility.

Station 23, located at Comstock and Ulric Streets in Linda Vista, serves the Birdland neighborhood.

Station 39, located at La Cuenta Drive and Tierrasanta Boulevard, in Tierrasanta, also serves the area west of Interstate 15 (I-15).

As a rule, response times in the City are rated as (a) commercial/industrial areas, two minutes; (b) "target hazards" (schools, hospitals, rest homes, etc.), four minutes; (c) residential areas, six minutes; and (d) medical emergencies within eight minutes. The community appears to have adequate fire protection.

### **Police Protection**

Patrol units are assigned to the Serra Mesa planning area from the Eastern Division Police Sub-station on Aero Drive. Service is considered adequate according to police department records.

### **Library Services**

Serra Mesa Branch Library is located immediately north of the Serra Mesa Shopping Center on Sandrock Road. Circulation peaked in the 1971 Fiscal Year at 219,600 volumes then dropped substantially when the Balboa Branch Library opened in October, 1971. The most recent circulation volume was 160,850 in Fiscal Year 1976. In 1997, the library held 50,000 items (including books, videos and compact discs) and 122,000 items were checked out. The Library was opened in 1963 and contains 4,860 square feet.

In the early 1990s, a fund-raising effort was begun to provide a larger replacement library for needed community meeting space, a computer lab and other services. The goal is to develop a 15,000 square-foot Serra Mesa/Kearny Mesa Branch Library on the portion of the Serra Mesa Community Park site fronting Aero Drive.

### **Postal Services**

The Serra Mesa post office station is located on Greyling Drive across the street from the Serra Mesa Shopping Center. Its service area (zip code 92123) includes Serra Mesa. However, there are enough post office boxes at the station to satisfy demand.

### **Utilities**

- Gas and Electricity:

Gas and electric service is provided for the entire Serra Mesa planning area.

- Water and Sewer Services:

The City of San Diego provides water and sewer services to the community.

All of the mesa areas of the community are served by water from the Miramar Filtration Plant. The water flows from Miramar through two major pipeline systems to a central distribution facility along I-805 between Clairemont Mesa Boulevard and Balboa Avenue. A major crosstie pipeline is planned along Clairemont Mesa Boulevard from I-805 to Santo Road. This will weld the pipelines together to complete the Miramar Loop. This

project will be needed soon to assure reliable water service to the city north of Mission Valley from the Pacific Ocean to Camp Elliott. The Mission Valley fringe of the community is served by the Alvarado Filtration Plant.

The Mission Valley/Kearny Mesa trunk sewer system collects all liquid wastes from the study area.

- Telephone Service:

Telephone service is provided to all parts of the community on demand. No major projects are anticipated and service is adequate.

- Cable TV (CATV) Service:

Cable television service is provided to all parts of the community on demand.

- Bulk Petroleum Pipeline:

A high pressure underground pipeline that brings liquid fuels from Norwalk, California, to the petroleum tank farm located at Friars Road and I-15. The pipeline, built in 1963, extends from Ruffner Street near Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, southeastward along Kearny Villa Road and Aero Drive, then south of Ruffin Road and Mission Village Drive to Friars Road.

Although the pipeline serves the community only indirectly, it is worthy of discussion because of safety risks. It could develop leaks by either natural deterioration or mishaps occurring during periodic maintenance.

- Emergency Medical Services:

(also, see Institutional Complex Section that follows)

Donald N. Sharp Memorial Community Hospital is the only general medical facility in the community. It provides emergency care for Serra Mesa and nearby communities.

Children's Hospital provides medical and emergency care for children and Mary Birch Women's Hospital provides facilities for women. All these are part of the Serra Mesa Medical Campus located between State Route 163 (SR-163) and I-805.

Kaiser Permanente operates a hospital on Zion Avenue near Mission Gorge Road in the Navajo community. All health services, including emergency care, are available to Kaiser Plan members. Kaiser/Permanente also operates a medical facility on Clairemont Mesa Boulevard at I-805 in the Kearny Mesa area.



## **GOAL**

TO ASSURE THAT A HIGH LEVEL OF ALL COMMUNITY SERVICES IS REACHED AND MAINTAINED BY ADHERING TO STANDARDS SET FORTH IN THE PROGRESS GUIDE AND GENERAL PLAN.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **Schools**

- To urge maximum utilization of school facilities for educational, recreational, cultural and other activities.
- To assure all students direct, safe access to schools.
- To encourage community participation in identification, evaluation and implementation of the educational needs of the community.

### **Community Facilities**

- To assure that all community facilities and services adequately respond to changing community characteristics.

## **PROPOSALS**

### **Schools**

- All schools should be maintained in accordance with board of education policy and the highest possible standards.
- Elementary school attendance boundaries should generally remain stable. However, changes should be considered when necessary to ensure safer access and balance school enrollments.
- If the board of education classifies any schools as “surplus property” the community and the City should be given the opportunity to acquire the land for public purposes before the property is sold for private development.
- Available space at Taft Junior High School should be reserved for a community swimming pool as an alternative to the proposed site at Serra Mesa Community Park. This would be consistent with current board of education policy.

### **Fire Protection**

- Evaluation of fire protection should be continued to assure adequate coverage in the community.

## **Police Protection**

- The present response time should be continually evaluated. Police emphasis should be placed on protection of the community. Crime prevention, community relations and crime-inhibiting design programs should be emphasized both in residential and in commercial/industrial areas.

## **Library**

- The Plan anticipates that the Serra Mesa/Kearny Mesa Branch Library will relocate and be expanded on City-owned property adjacent to Aero Drive. This branch should eventually be expanded in accordance with library department standards.
- Periodic studies should be conducted to ensure that adequate sewer, water and drainage facilities are provided in the community.
- Flood control facilities should be designed to ensure adequate protection for the community while preserving the natural topography and minimizing adverse environmental effects.

## **Emergency Medical Services**

- The emergency medical support system should be improved through better utilization of existing ambulance services, increasing the level of paramedic training and improving the use and development of communication equipment.

See **Figure 7**: Community Facilities.

# EMPLOYMENT CENTER ELEMENT

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A Kearny Mesa Community Plan was prepared and adopted by City Council in 1992 to address development issues within this area.

## **SERRA MESA HEALTH-INSTITUTIONAL COMPLEX**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The 127-acre health-institutional complex is located between SR-163 and I-805, in the Birdland neighborhood of Serra Mesa. The complex consists of specialized medical and custodial facilities serving the San Diego region.

#### **Medical Facilities**

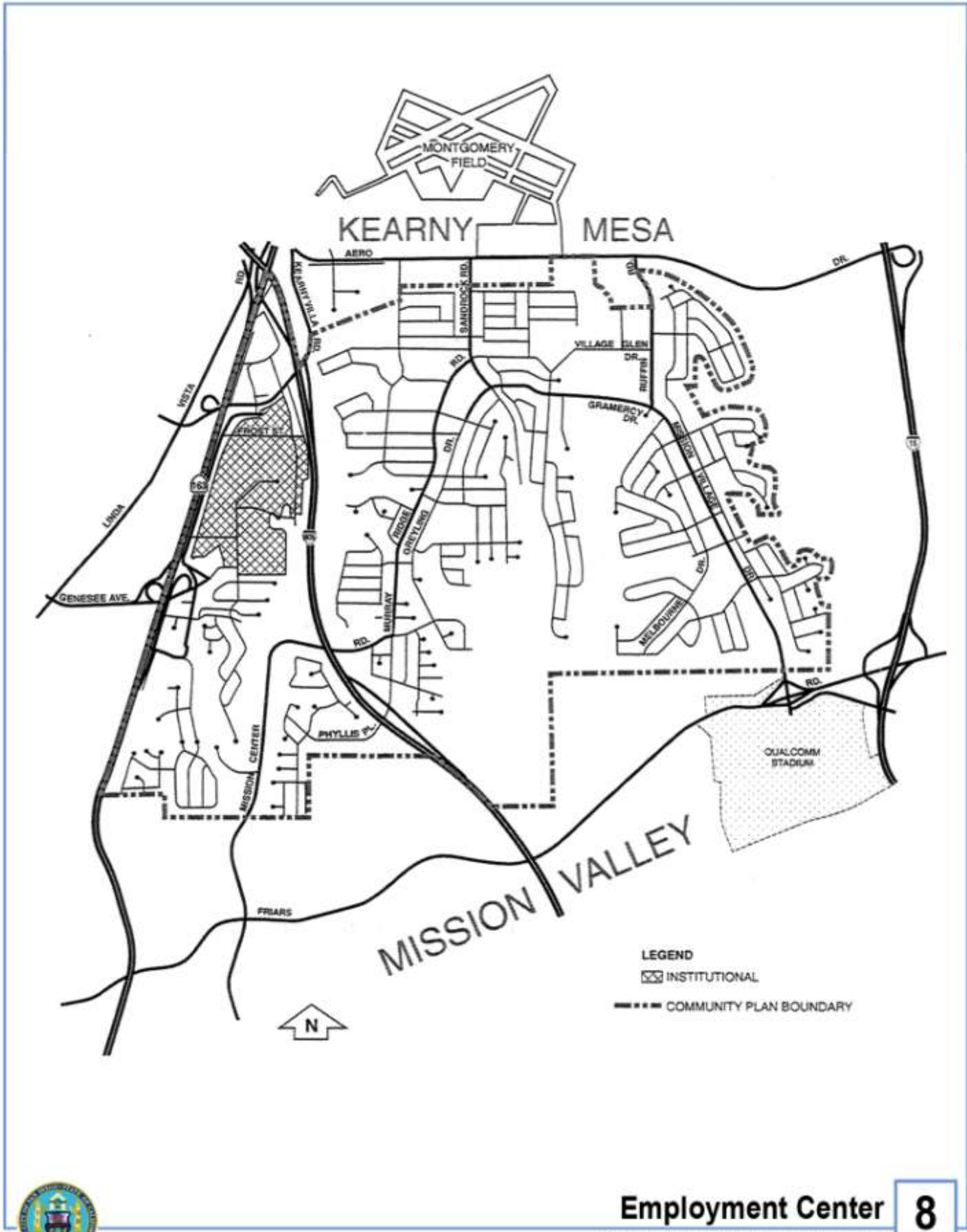
There are several types of health care facilities that constitute a medical campus within the health-institutional complex. General acute facilities include Donald N. Sharp Memorial Community Hospital, Mary Birch Women's Center and Children's Hospital and Health Center. Children's Hospital also offers specialty care services. Mesa Vista Hospital is an acute psychiatric facility. Skilled nursing facilities include four convalescent hospitals (Frost Street, Knollwood West, Meadowlark and Saint Mary's) and the Genesee East Mental Health Center. Other specialized health facilities include the Cerebral Palsy Center and several clinics. San Diego Medical Center, Starling Plaza and other ever-growing medical support facilities contain in excess of 115,000 square feet of office space. All specialized facilities are within easy walking distance of the hospitals.

#### **Custodial Facilities**

The juvenile division of the San Diego County Probation Department is headquartered in the health-institutional complex. Probation department offices, juvenile hall and juvenile courts are located here. Private non-profit institutions include the Door of Hope (Salvation Army), comprised of a home for unwed mothers and a women's alcohol detoxification center and Children's Home Society, an adoption agency specializing in the placement of very young children. Expansion plans call for additional juvenile court facilities.

### **PROBLEMS AND ISSUES**

Roles of medical facilities in the regional context and future growth are significant issues confronting the Serra Mesa Health-Institutional Complex. Transportation issues, including parking, internal circulation and transit, are discussed in the **Transportation Element**.



**Employment Center**  
**Serra Mesa Community Plan**

**8**  
**FIGURE**

The Comprehensive Health Planning Association (CHPA) produced a report called the 1975 Health Systems Plan. It proposes a regional health-care delivery system for San Diego, Imperial and Riverside counties. A major goal is to prevent unnecessary duplication of very costly, infrequently used (tertiary level) facilities. The report recommended tertiary level responsibility for the Serra Mesa Health-Institutional Complex in four specialties - rehabilitation, convalescence, general pediatrics and high-risk neonatal (newborn) care. These functions would complement tertiary level general acute care provided by the designated regional facility, the Uptown Medical Complex (UCSD and Mercy Hospitals) in Hillcrest.

Sharp's, Mary Birch, Children's and Mesa Vista comprise one of several medical centers designated by the health systems plan. All hospitals are regulated by Master Conditional Use Permits (CUP). It is expected that over time, as the hospital complexes cope with the new requirements and growth, new proposals for improvements will be brought forward. These should be accommodated since the hospital uses are a major activity with substantial public service and provide economic and employment resources to Serra Mesa and the City of San Diego. The success of the medical campus has generated demand for other ancillary facilities such as doctors' offices, clinics and childcare facilities. These facilities provide general and emergency care (primary) and frequently used specialized care (secondary) for significant geographic areas. In this case, the service area includes Serra Mesa, Kearny Mesa, Linda Vista and southeast Clairemont Mesa.

## **OBJECTIVE**

- To foster coordinated development of the Serra Mesa Health-Institutional Complex as a regional human care facility comprised of a medical campus, a juvenile hall-probation center and related medical and custodial agencies and services.

## **PROPOSALS**

- The following kinds of facilities should be encouraged for remaining developable land in the complex: rehabilitative, convalescent, psychiatric, children's health, high-risk neonatal care, medical office and laboratory.
- Development of tertiary care facilities offered by the Uptown Medical Complex and the Kearny Mesa Health-Institutional Complex should be jointly planned.
- Sharp's and Children's Hospitals should continue to give high-priority outpatient, primary care and emergency services.
- The provision of adequate public transit and off-street parking, including garages if necessary, should be required as a condition for future expansion of facilities.
- Juvenile hall should be rezoned to a zone consistent with the remainder of the Health-Institutional Complex.

- A network of paths, planting strips, benches and other street furniture should be provided along Birmingham Drive in the vicinity of the convalescent hospitals and the Cerebral Palsy Center. Emphasis should be placed on environmental enhancement and pedestrian safety.
- The medical campus area of the Serra Mesa Health-Institutional Complex should be rezoned commercial office. Complex development will be governed by the “long-range” plan for expansion and development (i.e., Master Conditional Use Permit, DEP No. 89-1416) for Children’s Hospital and Health Center, San Diego Medical Center and Donald N. Sharp Memorial Community Hospital which includes the Mary Birch Women’s Center. Future development for the described facilities that exceed the projected 24,575 ADT evaluated for this Master CUP will be subject to Environmental Review and a traffic study in order to identify and provide necessary mitigation measures.

## **MONTGOMERY FIELD**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Montgomery Field is located north of Serra Mesa in Kearny Mesa adjoining SR-163 and Aero Drive. The total area is 588 acres, including the approach way northwest of Murphy Canyon. Although Montgomery Field is located just outside of Serra Mesa, its function impacts the Serra Mesa residents and, due to that fact, it is discussed in this Plan.

Montgomery Field is a municipal airport that includes leased property developed with businesses hotels and golf course adjacent to Aero Drive and several airport operators and stored aircraft.

Aircraft operations (takeoffs and landings) have increased dramatically from 156,000 in 1965, to 324,500 in 1975, and 340,500 in 1979, but declined during the 1980s. In 1998, there were 266,308 takeoffs and landings. These volumes make Montgomery the busiest airport in San Diego County and the 22<sup>nd</sup> busiest in the nation, however no increase is anticipated. In 1998, about 600 aircraft were based at Montgomery. Users of Montgomery Field include recreational, executive and business flyers (mostly prop-driven craft but also a few small jets and helicopters), air flight instructors, flying clubs and small charter operators.

### **PROBLEMS AND ISSUES**

The role of Montgomery Field as part of a regional transportation system should be mentioned. Montgomery Field is designated by the FAA as a reliever airport. Issues that concern Serra Mesa residents and other nearby communities include noise, approach pattern-crash hazards. The basic task appears to be reconciliation of City policies with regional and FAA regulations and policies, demands of business interests and the concerns of nearby residents.

Montgomery Field is one of four general aviation (non-commercial and non-military) airports serving San Diego. The others are City-owned Brown Field in south San Diego and County-owned Gillespie Field and Palomar Airport. Montgomery is the busiest because of its

central location and excellent freeway accessibility. It is expected to maintain its lead for at least the next 20 years. Accommodation of large scheduled airliners is not expected even on a relief or emergency basis. However, short hop commuter services utilizing small short take-off and landing (STOL) aircraft is a possibility in the distant future. Airspace requirements of [NAS Marine Corps Air Station \(MCAS\)](#) Miramar must be considered in expansion plans or operating procedure changes.

Although not exceeding technical standards, aircraft noise attributable to Montgomery Field operations is still an important local issue. Even though the major landing approach is over Murphy Canyon, aircraft frequently fly over residential areas.

A parallel issue is potential crash hazard. Although serious incidents have occurred, crash hazard would increase with heavier usage. Airport safety, [noise, overflight, and airspace](#) issues are considered in the [1984 Montgomery Field Comprehensive Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan](#), which discusses airport premises as well as surrounding areas within the airport's influence area." [Refer to the Airport Influence Area Appendix for additional discussion of the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.](#) A related plan, which only addresses the airport premises, is the Montgomery Field Airport Master Plan. ~~The Montgomery Field Airport Master Plan will be updated in 1999.~~

A 1,200-foot extension to Runway 28-R was completed in 1995. It was designed to reduce aircraft noise by allowing planes to take off further east and gain higher altitude as they fly over residential areas. This has not changed the type of aircraft served. The approach system is the same.

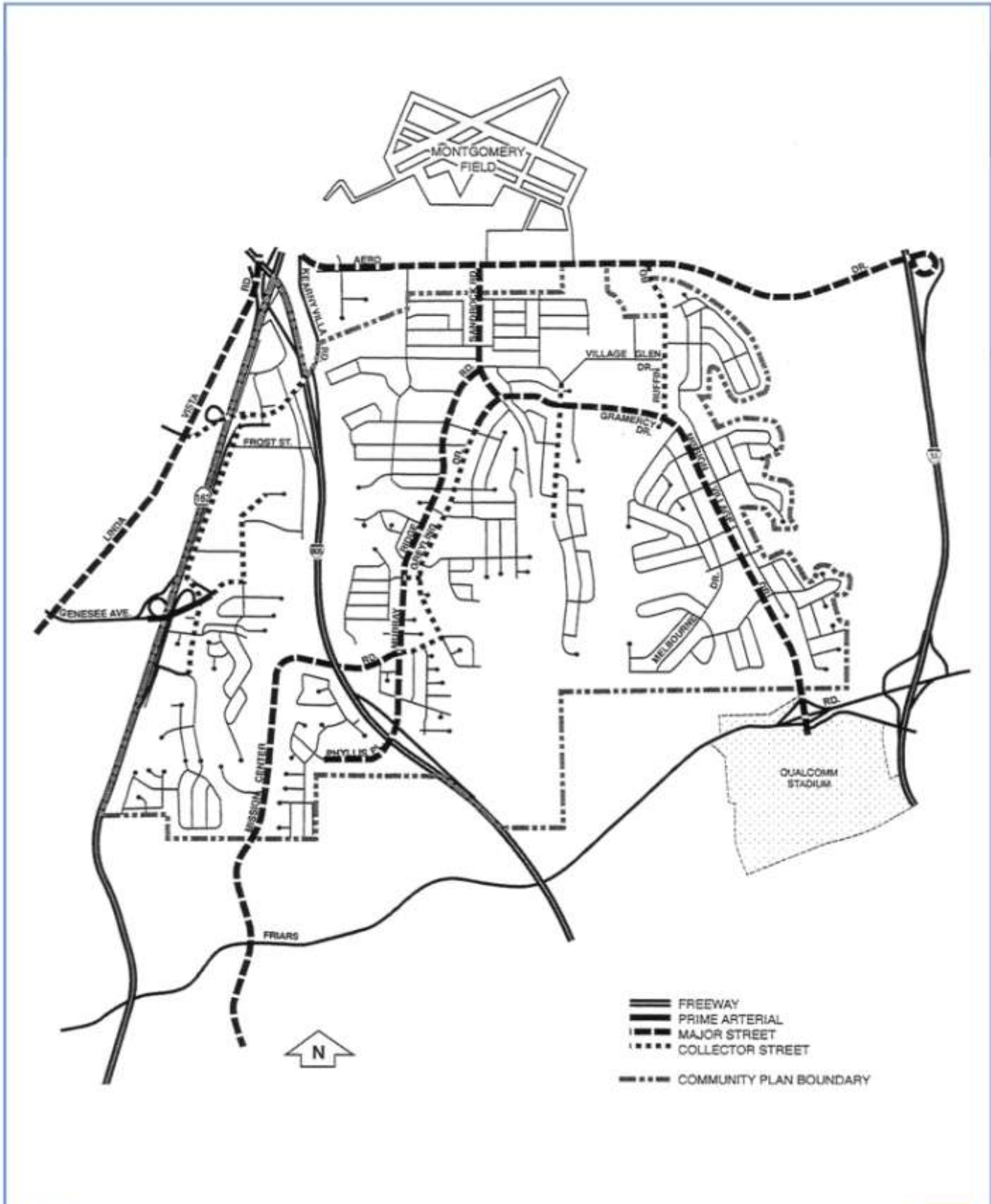
## **OBJECTIVE**

- To mitigate adverse environmental impacts of noise, crash hazards and visual appearance affecting adjacent areas.

## **PROPOSALS**

- A noise monitoring system was installed in 1985, and is used to enforce airport noise limits and to ensure compliance with state airport noise standards.
- Noise effects on nearby residential areas have been minimized through enforcement of noise regulations.

See **Figure 8:** Employment Center.



**Street Classification**  
**Serra Mesa Community Plan**

**9**  
**FIGURE**



# TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

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The movement of people and goods is one of the most important considerations in the planning process. Ideally, the transportation system should be well balanced between individual and mass transit conveyances and offer a wide choice among modes of travel. The transportation system in Serra Mesa community planning area falls short of the ideal in several respects. This will be seen in the existing conditions analysis to follow. Topics include: Street System, Parking, Transit System, Bicycle Routes, Pedestrian Walkways and Equestrian Trails.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Street System

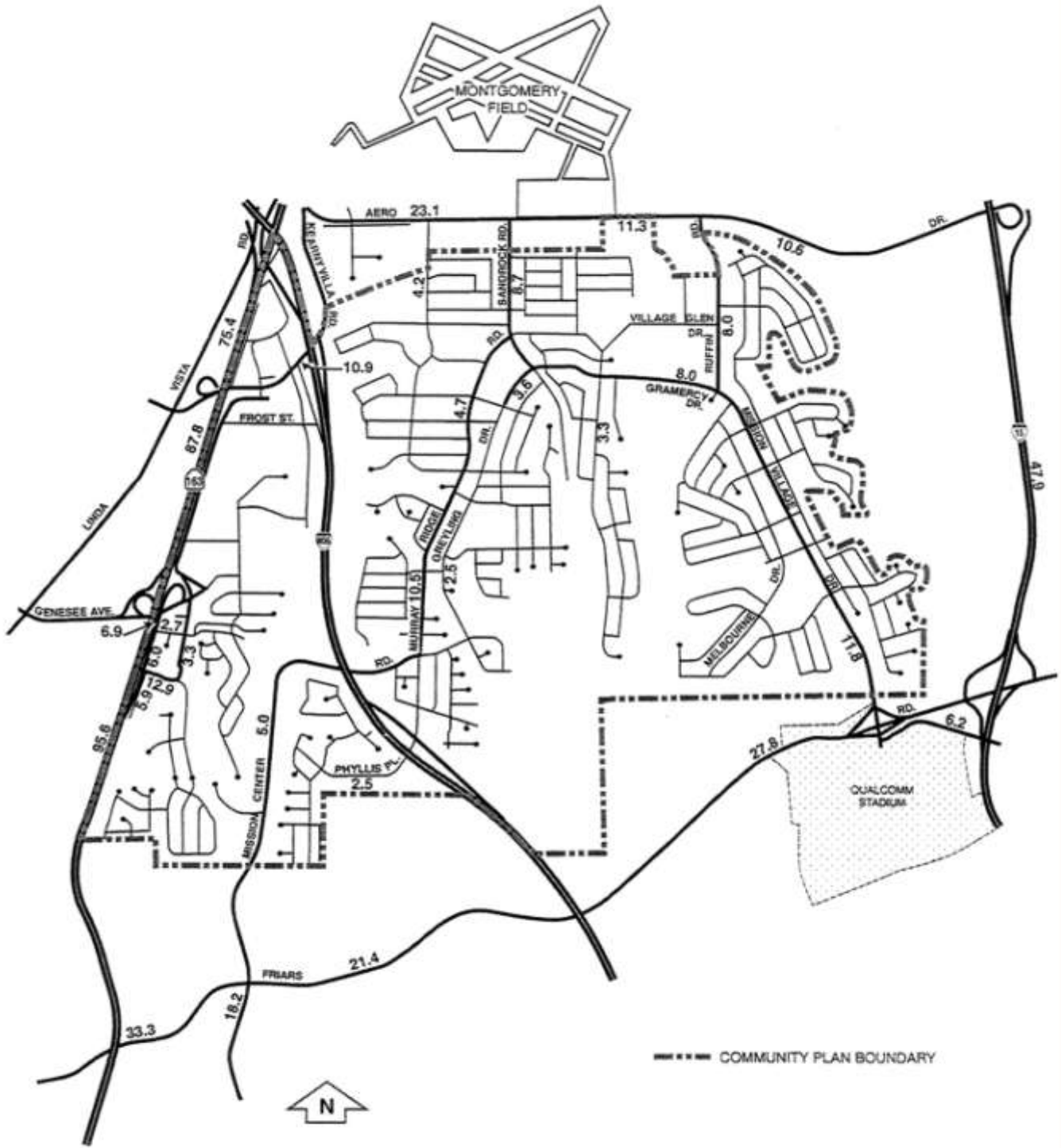
The street system in the community is characterized by five functional classifications: Freeways, Primary Arterials, Major Streets, Collector Streets and Local Streets. Freeways may have four or more lanes, with full access control and grade separations at intersections. Their primary function is to carry high volumes of traffic at high speeds between points. Primary arterials are usually four to six lanes wide with limited access, grade separations and extra lanes where conditions require. They are designed for through-traffic but usually have signals at major intersections. Major Streets are also usually four to six lanes wide. Although designed primarily for through traffic they also provide access to abutting property. Collector Streets are typically two to four lanes wide. They function as feeders of traffic to the major street system and provide continuity with local streets. An equally important function is that of providing access to abutting property. Local Streets serve adjacent land uses. They may be two-lane minor streets or one-lane alleys.

Efficiency of the primary arterial-major street network in the community varies considerably. Friars Road and Aero Drive function smoothly most of the time because there are few intersecting streets and virtually no driveways.

Several traffic generators may cause local congestion. San Diego Stadium traffic can overload Friars road and increase the load on nearby residential streets. Traffic generated by Mesa College and Kearny Senior High School affect the Mesa College/Kearny Villa Road major street system.

See **Figure 9**: Street Classification.

See **Figure 10**: Traffic Flow 1976



Traffic Flow 1976  
 Serra Mesa Community Plan **10**  
 FIGURE

## **Parking**

On-street parking occurs either by necessity, because parking lots are inadequate or non-existent, by individual choice to avoid fees or for convenience. Examples of inadequate off-street parking are found in the Kearny Mesa Health-Institutional Complex and the Serra Mesa Shopping Center. On-street parking has been a source of irritation in some residential areas. Patrons of San Diego Stadium park along Mission Village Drive and adjacent residential streets to avoid parking fees. Another problem area is along Ruffin Road north of the Mission Village Shopping Center.

## **Transit**

An element of the transportation network destined to become more important as pressure mounts to relieve traffic congestion conserve energy and to improve air quality, is the public transit system.

Currently serving the northern portion of Serra Mesa along Aero Drive is Route 25, providing service between Clairemont and downtown San Diego. Route 25 provides direct service to Kaiser Clinic, Sharp Hospital and Fashion Valley and Mission Valley shopping centers. Two transfer points on Route 25, the Kearny Mesa and Fashion Valley Transit Centers, offer connections to the following routes: 6, 16, 20, 27, 41, 81 and 990, offering access to destinations such as Escondido, UCSD, Old Town, La Mesa, SDSU, Pacific Beach, Tierrasanta, Carmel Mountain Ranch, Hillcrest, Linda Vista and downtown San Diego. Route 25 offers 30-minute frequency during weekdays and 60-minute frequency on evenings and weekends. Route 16 provides service through the southern portion of Serra Mesa with destination points of the Euclid Trolley Station and Mission Village. Route 16 provides 15 and 30-minute frequency during weekdays and 60-minute frequency during evenings and weekends. A concern of residents is direct access to the Mission Valley West trolley line.

In 1999, two transit studies are underway. One is to evaluate existing internal service in the Serra Mesa area, service to destinations outside of the area, and address concerns voiced in a survey of residents.

## **Bicycle, Pedestrian and Equestrian Trails**

Non-motorized forms of transportation have achieved great popularity in recent years in response to increased concerns over personal and environmental health. The result has been a boom in bicycling, walking, jogging and horseback riding. Although these activities are oriented to both transportation and recreation, trails are a part of the circulation system.

An important issue in the community is the establishment of an adequate bicycle route plan. Major bicycle generators include the six public elementary schools, St. Columbia Parochial School, Taft and Montgomery Junior Highs, Kearny Senior High, the library and the community park and recreation center. Problems confronting bicyclists are: (1) steep roads leading out of the community, (2) on-street parking along designated route lines and (3) general traffic.



**Functional Street System** **11**  
**Serra Mesa Community Plan** **FIGURE**

High costs preclude the provision of separate bike trails throughout the community. The only alternative is to utilize existing streets for most of the bicycle route system.

Fortunately for pedestrians, nearly all streets are improved with sidewalks. Pedestrian over crossings at SR-163/Cardinal Lane and I-805/Othello Avenue provide access to schools and parks outside the community. However, few walkways intended solely for pedestrians exist in the study area. There is a need for separate pedestrian access to parts of the Mission Village Shopping Center and other activity centers. Hiking trails have not been designated in the community but the regional bikeways could serve as major hiking routes. These could be linked to urbanized areas by trails through the attractive natural canyons.

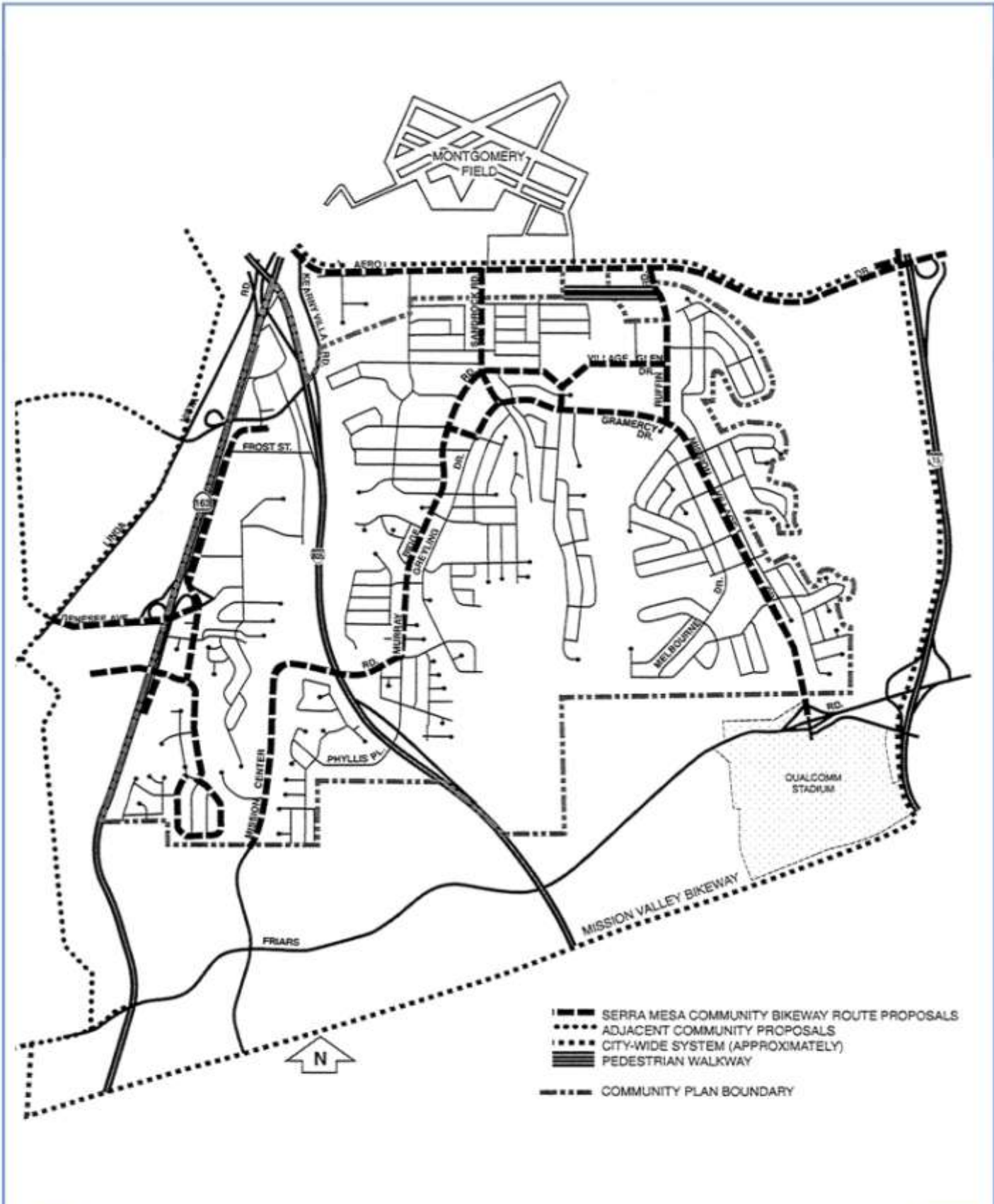
Horseback riding has also increased in popularity, necessitating trails and facilities, (see A Plan for Equestrian Trails and Facilities). A major trail is recommended that would connect San Clemente Natural Park with Fortuna Mountain through ~~NAS-MCAS~~ Miramar lands. The trail would cross I-15 north of its intersection with SR-163, with the alignment continuing along State Route 52 (SR-52). A local trail from Ruffin Court through Shepherd's Canyon to Fortuna Mountain is already in use.

## **FUTURE TRAVEL FORECASTS**

### **Street and Highway System**

While increases are forecast in pedestrian, bicycle and transit usage, the auto should remain as the dominant form of transportation in the community for the next 15 to 20 years. Using the City's Streets and Highways Standards (**Table 4**) as a guide, the projected 1995 traffic demand volume, expressed in auto trips, is translated into street requirements on the 1995 Street System map.

As auto trips begin to exceed the street capacity, safety performance will diminish and congestion, driver irritation and delay will occur. Because the circulation system is already established, remedies for future conditions must necessarily involve changes to existing streets. These changes are basically limited to parking removal, street widening, left-turn prohibitions during "peak" periods, costly grade separated interchanges, access control and establishment of one-way pairs.



**Bikeways and Pedestrian Walkway** **12**  
 Serra Mesa Community Plan **FIGURE**

**TABLE 3**  
**CITY OF SAN DIEGO STREET DESIGN STANDARDS**

<b>Functional Street Classification</b>	<b>Number of Lanes</b>	<b>Approximate Maximum ADT</b>	<b>R.O.W. Width</b>	<b>Curb or Other Width</b>	<b>Median Width</b>	<b>Shoulder Width</b>	<b>Minimum Radius of Curve</b>	<b>Maximum Grade</b>
Primary Arterial	6	47,000	122' (1)	102'	14'	8' (4)	1000'	6%
	4	28,000	98' (1)	78'	14'	8'-10' (4)	1000'	6%
Major	6 (2)	32,000	122' (3)	102' 78'	14'	8'-10' (4)	1000'	7%
	4	25,000	98' (3)	68'-78'	14'	8'-10' (4)	1000'	7%
	4	18,000	88'-98' (5)		4'	8'-10' (4)	1000'	7%
Collector Street	4	10,000	84'-98' (5)	64'-78'	0-14'	8'-13' (4)	500'	12% (6)
	2	5,000	60'-70' (7)	40'-50' (7)	0'	8'-13'	300'	12% (6)
Local Street (8)								
Industrial	2	5,000	70'	50'	0'	13'	200'	8%
Commercial	4	10,000	84'	64'	0'	8'	200'	8%
	2	5,000	60'	40'	0'	8'	200'	8%
Residential	2	5,000	60'	40'	0'	8'	200'	8%
	2	1,500	56'	36'	0'	8'	200'	8%
	2	700	52' (9)	32'	0'	8'	200'	8%
	2	200	50' (9)	30'	0;	8'	200'	8%
Bikeways	2							
Separated Facility		---	12'	8'-10' (10)	0'	---	15'	7%
Within Street								
R/W (11)	2	---	10'-16' (12)	10' (13)	0'	---	15'	Grade St.
Within Roadway								
(14)	2	---	---	5'8'	0'	---	15'	Grade St.
Alley	2	---	20'	20'	0'	---	100'	15%
Sidewalk (15)	2	---	---	4'-5' (16)	0'	---	---	Grade St.

### FOOTNOTES FOR TABLE 3

1. Full control of access from abutting property.
2. Used only where property owners elect and are authorized to construct additional lanes to convert a four-lane primary arterial to a major street in order to gain access.
3. Access and parking control at critical locations. Additional width required for double left turn lanes.
4. Ten feet where state or federal design standards apply.
5. Ninety-eight feet required where left-turn lanes are needed.
6. Eight percent in commercial areas.
7. Seventy percent R.O.W. and 50-foot curb width in industrial areas.
8. Frontage roads or other single-located streets. R.O.W. and curb widths may be reduced in residential areas to provide streets of 47/32 feet (5000 ADT), 43/28 feet (1500 ADT) and 41/26 feet (700 and 200 ADT). R.O.W. may be reduced five feet in commercial or industrial areas with no decrease in curb width.
9. Where no parking will be allowed, curb-to-curb width may be reduced to 24 feet with right-of-way width of 44 feet (R.O.W. 34 feet where sidewalks are provided separately from streets).
10. Ten-foot facility where substantial amount of traffic volume is anticipated (e.g. near schools).
11. Located in curb to property line area.
12. 16-foot provides for six-foot landscaped separation between bikeway and roadway along major/primary arterials.
13. Street lights, hydrants, etc., accommodated within paved ten-foot area.
14. One-way traffic on each shoulder, no parking. Separation from traffic lane varies from six inches white line to two-foot island.
15. Sidewalk on each side except on single-loaded streets.
16. Minimum clear unobstructed width, four-foot residential areas, five feet in commercial and industrial areas (excludes curb top width, fire hydrants, light poles, transformers, etc.).

\*Note: These are standards applicable primarily to newly developing areas without unusual terrain problems. In difficult terrain and in older developed areas where flexibility is lost, they may represent only desirable goals which the designer attempts to achieve.

See **Figure 11**: Functional Street System.



In the Kearny Mesa Health-Institutional Complex, increased demand on health and custodial services combined with existing internal circulation problems necessitates the extension of Berger Avenue to connect with Birmingham Drive.

All other streets in the Serra Mesa area are considered to be adequate to handle future travel demands. Projected traffic flow on these streets may result in increased congestion, but will not require major operational or reconstruction changes. The freeways serving the area are marked by a substantial increase in travel demand which cannot be allocated to an individual community. Rather it must be treated on a regional basis.

Interstate 15 between I-8 and SR-163 will be constructed subject to the availability of state funds. Major interchanges are planned along I-15 at Aero Drive and Friars Road.

## **GOAL**

TO PROVIDE A SAFE, BALANCED, EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM WITH MINIMAL ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS.

## **PROPOSALS**

### **Streets and Highways**

- The freeway network should be completed as soon as monies are available.
- Hillside and canyon views should be preserved when new streets are constructed.
- Street widening and other improvements should be minimized and compatibility with the total landscape should be assured.
- Curb cuts along designated primary arterial and major streets should be discouraged.
- Unsightly barricades at the ends of minor residential streets should be replaced with attractive cul-de-sacs and loop streets. These should be constructed by developers of mesa rim lands.
- The City Manager's office should evaluate alternatives for:
  1. Improving the intersection design at the intersections of: (1) Kearny Villa Road and Health Center Drive and (2) Kearny Villa Road and I-805.
  2. Improving Health Center Drive to four lanes. Projected 1995 traffic volumes for this street exceed the City standards for desirable daily traffic volumes. The recommended improvement should be incorporated into the City's 20-year needs list for determining a priority and timetable for completion. Such improvement may be accomplished by parking removal and/or widening.

3. Signalizing the following intersections when warranted: Health Center Drive and Frost Street, and Murray Ridge and Mission Center Roads.
  4. Giving highest priority to parking removal on the following streets: Health Center Drive, Frost Street.
- The internal street network in the Kearny Mesa Health-Institutional Complex consisting of Berger Avenue and Birmingham Drive should be completed. The intersection of Mesa College Drive and Berger Avenue should be designed to control left turn traffic.
  - A name change for Ruffin Road should be made to avoid confusion between the two segments within the community.

### **Public Transportation**

- Studies should be conducted to determine the feasibility of an express bus pickup point at the intersection of Murray Ridge Road and I-805. This would be connected by shuttle bus to the rest of Serra Mesa via the Murray Ridge-Sandrock-Gramercy-Mission Village-Shawn major street link.
- Express bus and/or other mass transit services linking Serra Mesa with major employment centers and other destinations should be accorded the highest priority.
- Studies should be conducted to determine the feasibility of an express bus terminus in the vicinity of Genesee Avenue and Health Center Drive.
- Bus service to the Kearny Mesa Health-Institutional Complex should be improved with scheduling taking into account the 24-hour operating basis of medical facilities.

### **Parking**

- On-street parking along Ruffin Road south of Aero Drive, and non-residential parking along Mission Village Drive and adjacent residential streets should be recognized as sources of irritation. Although there is no practical way to discourage these kinds of parking, the community should look into means of persuading people to park elsewhere.

### **Pedestrian Walkway**

- A walkway should be established connecting Ruffin Road with Serra Mesa Community Park.

### **Bicycle Routes**

- A community bikeway system should be designated as shown on the Bikeways Map. This system should be developed so as to adequately serve the major bicycle traffic generators identified in the Plan and connect with the bicycle route systems in adjoining communities.

- Three access routes should be established linking the mesa to regional bikeways serving Mission Valley and Murphy Canyon. One route should follow Mission Center Road from Murray Ridge Road to the Mission Valley bikeway. Should this route prove unfeasible, studies for an alternative route should be carried out. A second route should connect Aero Drive with the Murphy Canyon Bikeway. A third route should serve the Mission Village area. On a near term basis, a route connecting Mission Village Drive to the Mission Valley Bikeway should be investigated, possibly involving the City-owned slope easement on the west side of Mission Village Drive.
- Means of improving transportation linkages and lessening the impact of motorized vehicular traffic on the environment should be considered. Two possibilities are the “bicycle park-bus ride” and “piggy back” bicycle-bus transportation concepts.

See **Figure 12**: Bikeways and Pedestrian Walkway.



**Multiple Habitat Planning Area (MHPA)**  
**Serra Mesa Community Plan**

**13**  
**FIGURE**

# ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ELEMENT

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This element of the Plan considers the total community environment and how it should be managed to achieve the quality of life desired by the Serra Mesa community.

The **Environmental Management Element** sets forth guidelines dealing with the environment, consistent with the following general goal:

TO MANAGE THE PHYSICAL, BIOTIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SAN DIEGO REGION, TO ASSURE IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE, RESPECT ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS AND PRESERVE COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR ALL RESIDENTS AND SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS.

This element will be presented in three sections:

- Open Space and Hillside Conservation
- Physical Environment - Urban Design
- Socio-economic Environment

## OPEN SPACE - HILLSIDE CONSERVATION

### What is Open Space?

The issue, which has generated the greatest citizen interest in the community, is the preservation of undeveloped canyons as open space.

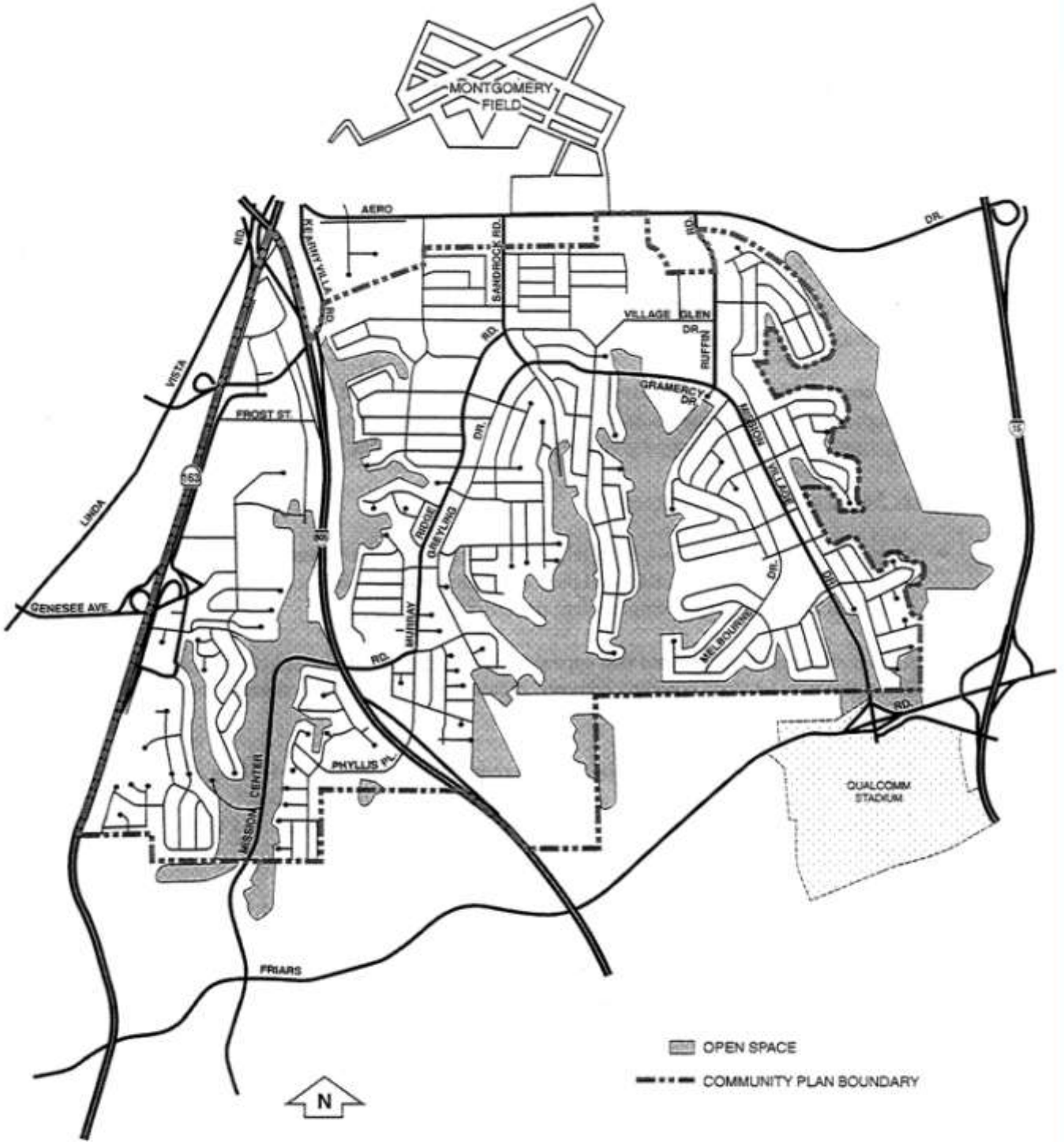
Open Space may be defined as:

Any urban land or water surface that is essentially open or natural in character, and has appreciable utility for park and recreation purposes, conservation of land, water or other natural resources and historic or scenic purpose.

- The psychological effects of open space have only recently been recognized. A 1968 study observed:

It is possible that most valuable purpose open space serves is its affording visual and psychological relief from the dreadful tedium and tension of interminable urban development. The human spirit must surely languish when confronted daily with a continuous and confused panorama of buildings, pavements and automobiles.

In that it provides a physical patterning for the metropolitan fabric, open space helps give the urbanized area and its constituent communities a desirable



**Environmental Management (Open Space)**  
**Serra Mesa Community Plan**

**14**  
**FIGURE**

definition, coherence, and character, which would otherwise be lacking. In turn, individual residents are better able to identify, and be identified with, their communities. The importance of these factors, while intangible, is not to be underestimated.

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The Serra Mesa community contains an open space subsystem of hillsides and canyons, identified in the report, A Plan for the Preservation of Natural Parks for San Diego<sup>4</sup>. The westerly branches of Murphy Canyon, all of Ruffin-Sandroch Canyon and portions of Murray Canyon are included in the open space system.

The Multiple Species Conservation Program adopted in 1997, identifies a number of areas that provide helpful support to multiple species of plants and animals. Most of these include the large canyon systems, their wetland-canyon bottoms, slopes and finger canyons.

In addition, the central portion of Murphy Canyon is worthy of inclusion in the open space-hillside protection system. Murphy Canyon is a major scenic feature visible from I-15.

Serra Mesa is characterized by spectacular canyons and hillsides that provide welcome breaks in the urban landscape. These attributes are reflected in premiums of ten to 25 percent for canyon lots. Certainly open space has a true economic value and contributes to the public welfare through higher property assessments and tax revenues.

Countering these benefits, however, is an economic problem - the cost of land to be included in the open space system. The possibility exists that not all land worthy of designation as "open space" can be acquired. Although public funds may become available for open space purposes, the Park Procedural Ordinance (assessment district) method is likely to be the only means of direct acquisition of open space for the foreseeable future. This means of preservation requires a monetary contribution by surrounding property owners.

### **Acquisition vs. Conservation**

In view of the growing possibility that not all canyon and hillside land can be acquired, two approaches appear appropriate — acquisition of a selected open space system and conservation of remaining ecologically-sensitive land by rigorous application of strict development controls.

Lands designated for acquisition are characterized by the following qualities: are recognized by residents as being highly significant to the community, are readily visible and accessible, contain valuable and fragile natural and biotic resources, pose potential risks to development and possess slopes of 25 percent or greater. Approximately 400 acres, including the recently acquired Sandroch Open Space Park, are publicly owned at present. However, the Hillside Review Overlay Zone has been applied to the entire area.

Land designated for conservation is not as significant or as readily accessible, but still possesses the following qualities that warrant consideration: possess slopes of 25 percent or greater, pose potential risks to development such as slope instability, liquefaction and flood danger and contain fragile environments that should be conserved and protected from adverse effects of slope modification. Hillside should be protected by development controls to conserve their scenic and ecological values. The **Housing Element** of this Plan establishes density guidelines for development in identified open space areas and various slope categories.

## **OBJECTIVE**

- To designate Multiple Species Conservation areas, canyons and hillsides for preservation as open space and for strictly controlled utilization for the enjoyment of this generation and in perpetuity.

## **PROPOSALS**

- Multiple Species Conservation areas identified in the Multiple Special Conservation Program Subarea Plan adopted by City Council in 1997 should be zoned for minimal development with provisions for open space dedication of remaining natural and unbuilt areas conjunction with any development review and approval.
- Open space should be preserved and hillsides conserved by rigorous development controls as shown on the accompanying map. Open space and hillside conservation areas are limited to slopes of 25 percent or greater, pose potential risks to development and are otherwise environmentally sensitive.
- Open space should be initially maintained in its natural condition. Studies should be undertaken to determine uses compatible with the open space concept. Examples of open space utilization are:
  1. Outdoor recreation, such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, golfing, archery, sightseeing, picnicking, camping, wildlife observation, botanical gardens (natural and man-made) and fossil study.
  2. Cultivation for food; ornamental landscaping.
- Steep hillsides and canyons should be protected and preserved in a natural state. Where development is permitted, very low-density urbanization should occur. Natural features should be enhanced and areas of high scenic value and environmental sensitivity, conserved. This proposal can be implemented with steep hillside guidelines, open space zones and PRD which is in character with the surrounding neighborhood.
- The community should be given an opportunity to preserve designated open space affected by the following City Council actions: approval of a Tentative Subdivision Map, Planned Residential Development, Conditional Use Permit, or a Hillside Review Permit



appealed from a decision of the Planning Commission within the open space. Upon demonstration by the community of an interest to acquire open space by assessments levied against benefiting properties, a resolution would be passed by the City Council to hold a hearing on the formation of an proposal could then be deferred for up to one year to provide time to accomplish the acquisition. Should the open space effort fail, the original development proposal would be approved.

- If excessive land costs or other factors preclude purchase of proposed open space, development should be limited to ~~very~~ “low-density” residential use (zero to four dwelling units per net acre, depending on slope), appropriate PRD, or other uses compatible with the open space concept. (See **Housing Element**.) Any unbuilt, vacant or natural open space areas that are part of an approved development should be revegetated with native vegetation and preserved through dedicated open space easement, an open space lot designation or non-buildable easement to assure conservation of this open space area.
- Any public improvements such as roads, drainage channels and utility services or any lessee development should be compatible with open space objectives. Public road improvements within open space areas are often not feasible due to the steep terrain and habitat preservation requirements, therefore, unimproved public road easements located within open space areas should be vacated and remain unbuilt. No through roads should be permitted to traverse designated open space.
- Open space linkages should be established with the regional open space system. Hiking, biking and equestrian trails should be built in Murphy Canyon to connect Fortuna Mountain, San Clemente Canyon and Mission Valley.
- Open space linkages should be established among major activity centers, major public facilities (especially parks and schools) and within the designated open space system.
- Open space that is owned by the City of San Diego should be ~~dedicated.~~”

See **Figure 13**: Multiple Habitat Planning Area (MHPA).

## **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT - URBAN DESIGN**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Most aspects of the physical environment have already been discussed elsewhere in the Plan and do not need to be repeated here. The following section focuses on a highly significant, but often overlooked aspect of the physical environment, urban design.

The discipline of urban design entails the process of integrating human activity and the natural environment. Urban design considers the overall ~~impression~~” or ~~image~~” of the community as seen by residents and visitors. It has been called ~~the mortar that enables all the plan’s elements to cohere.~~”

The following comments were drawn from *Temporary Paradise?*, the report of a “regional reconnaissance” of San Diego by the noted urban designers, Donald Appleyard and Kevin Lynch.

The image of the City has important psychological effects upon its residents. It provides organization and measures relationships that convey a sense of time and place. Additionally, views of a pleasant and varied pattern give a comforting sense of living with the environment.

Their image of the City also helps people to identify communities and neighborhoods, particularly those in which they themselves live. Recognition of such areas by their prominent features, their edges and their centers of activity breaks up a large and intense city into units that are visually and psychologically manageable.

Prominent features, “edges” and activity centers give one a “sense of place” in a community or neighborhood. The Serra Mesa community possesses sharply defined edges, both natural and manmade. Mission Valley and the canyons contrast sharply with the mesa. The freeway network and sand and gravel sites also form important edges. Locational reference to any of these focal points can create an immediate “sense of place.” The top of the mesa, however, is virtually flat and few dominant features are visible. If one is not intimately familiar with his surroundings, disorientation can easily occur, especially in the interior portions of large residential neighborhoods.

## **OBJECTIVE**

- To preserve and enhance the physical environment, visual appearance, safety, identity and character of the Serra Mesa community through aesthetic improvement and careful urban design.

## **PROPOSALS**

- Community resources and development constraints are environmental considerations that should be respected at all times.
- Potential sources of water contamination should be monitored, especially sand and gravel operations, sanitary sewers and petroleum distillate storage facilities.
- The visual appearance of the community should be improved by: systematic undergrounding of utility distribution lines, encouraging the use of cable television and removal of television and other outdoor antennas, imposing sign controls in all areas, limiting the size and number of billboards and off-premises advertising structures, installing street trees and landscaping along heavily traveled streets and freeways and shielding residences facing Mission Valley from lights emanating from San Diego Stadium.

- The effects of noise should be mitigated by: controlling flight patterns (especially Montgomery Field), discouraging residential uses in areas impacted by environmental noise exceeding 65dB CNEL ~~or Ldn~~, using noise-buffering material in all new construction, retaining noise-absorbing native vegetation in open space areas and rigorously enforcing all local, state and federal laws relating to noise abatement. **Findings of the SANDAG study The Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan** should be incorporated into the environmental review process.
- Energy resources should be conserved by: encouraging efficient land use and transportation patterns, making available energy-saving modes of travel as alternatives to the automobile, using alternative sources of energy to conventional fossil fuels (for example solar, wind, geothermal), recycling solid waste materials whenever possible and encouraging remodeling and rehabilitation of deteriorating structures in preference to replacement.
- An Environment Impact Report (EIR) or equivalent should be prepared for each project, whether public or private, that would have a significant effect on the environment.
- Litter cleanup and prevention campaigns should be conducted and the weed abatement ordinance vigorously enforced.
- On-street parking of campers, trailers, boats and other pleasure vehicles, trucks and buses should be discouraged. On-site storage should be encouraged in screened parking or storage areas.
- Safety considerations should be introduced into the planning process, including: placement of hydrants to better control canyon fires, adequate assessment of geologic hazards for all new development and installation of devices in institutional care facilities and industrial plants capable of detecting toxic fumes and gases.
- Development proposals should be consistent with the overall growth management policies of the City.
- Development should be managed through appropriate zoning and other development controls.
- Diversity within neighborhoods should be encouraged to improve “sense of place” by: varying the type of street surfaces, sidewalks, lights, signs and other street furniture, innovative yet tasteful remodeling and individually distinctive landscaping.

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT**

It is appropriate to address social and economic issues based on (1) the need to achieve social comprehensiveness, (2) the desire to enhance the social environment and (3) the realization that plan implementation is largely dependent on economic reality.

The purpose of this section of the Plan is to recommend guidelines for the best social and economic use of physical and human resources in order to improve the quality of life in the community.

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The community's pattern of physical development was largely established during the 1950s and early 1960s. Although physical appearance of residential neighborhoods has changed little, subtle shifts in social characteristics have been occurring.

Population and the average number of persons per household have been declining, despite a growing number of households. Although the decline in household size coincides with a national trend that began about 1955, it strongly suggests that Serra Mesa has matured as a residential community. Initially, the moderately-priced new housing attracted young families with young children. By necessity, community facilities and services were oriented to this group. These included recreational facilities such as baseball fields, elementary schools and heavy emphasis on juvenile books in the library.

Another indicator of community maturation is the age profile. A shift in age group distribution has occurred between 1960, 1975 and 1998. The largest age group in 1998 was "25 to 34" years of age compared with "zero to four" in 1960 and "15 to 19" years of age in 1975. This shift has been strongly reflected in school enrollment figures. In twenty years, it is possible that the cycle will begin anew, with another generation of young families with young children.

Although Serra Mesa has remained a stable middle-income community, two changes in work patterns have occurred. Working women, including mothers with young children comprise a much larger proportion of the labor force than formerly. Secondly, there has been an increase in leisure time (three-day weekends and longer vacations). These two factors have long-term planning implications.

The community is relatively homogeneous in terms of socio-economic characteristics, but there is one readily identifiable subgroup. This group is comprised of military enlisted personnel and families occupying the Cabrillo Heights housing development. Due to rapid turnover, this subgroup has managed to retain the social profile that characterized the entire community in 1960, (large family with young children).

## **PROBLEMS AND ISSUES**

A basic community issue is the existing and future social environment. Problems include:

- Alienation from authority.
- Lack of activities for specific age groups, especially senior citizens and teenagers.
- Inefficient utilization of community facilities (for example, overuse of the recreation center and under-use of schools).
- Economic problems including inflation, joblessness, lack of childcare facilities.

In addition, there are regional issues to be considered. These are:

- Commitment to a socially, ethnically and economically balanced community.
- Growing realization that public funds are limited and must be allocated with care for both physical improvements and social good.

These concerns will be addressed in the objectives and proposals that follow.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To encourage the most efficient social and economic use of physical and human resources.
- To ensure the maximum opportunity for social and intellectual development of every individual.
- To assist youth in maximizing their potential.
- To ensure that policies and programs funded wholly or in part by government will include provisions to improve the quality of life for the aged and disadvantaged.
- To strive for economic, social and ethnic balance in the community in concert with citywide policies.
- To enable the military families in the Cabrillo Heights housing development to assimilate into and contribute to the community.

## **PROPOSALS**

### **Community Facilities and Services**

- –Rap” sessions should be encouraged between authority figures (police, fire fighters, teachers, principals and the like) and youth in the community. Crime and substance abuse prevention programs should be encouraged and well publicized.
- The City Library Department should continue to evaluate population characteristics and adjust book collections accordingly. Also, additional operating hours should be considered for the Serra Mesa Library.
- A community bulletin board or marquee should be established to announce community-wide events.
- One or more meeting places in the community should be designated to alleviate overtaxed conditions at the recreation center.
- –Community schools” programs should be established at each of the elementary schools and at Taft Junior High School, modeled after the successful Fletcher Community School. Such programs would make schools available to all age groups in the community and would enable more complete utilization of school facilities.
- Alternatives to the conventional K-6, 7-9, 10-12 separation of elementary, junior high and senior high schools should be considered to redistribute enrollment to underused school facilities in the community.

- Religious institutions should be encouraged to offer space and facilities to the community for meeting rooms, movies, recreation, childcare and other activities.
- The location of mail pickup boxes should be evaluated to better service the community, especially with respect to the elderly.

### **Housing and Other Development**

- Housing for the elderly should be encouraged on remaining vacant land located near the Mission Village Shopping District and in the Phyllis-Abbotshill neighborhood.
- Government-assisted housing for low and middle-income households should be encouraged throughout Serra Mesa in accordance with the density proposals of this plan.
- Principles of “defensible space” should be applied, wherever feasible, for individual structures as well as project layouts. Architectural design that prevents or inhibits crime should be strongly encouraged.

### **Transportation**

- The use of carpool formation services (for example “Commuter Computer”) should be encouraged to reduce automobile usage.
- The needs of the elderly and handicapped should be considered when determining bus design, sequencing of signals at intersections and wheelchair ramps located at pedestrian crossings that connect shopping facilities and residential areas.

### **Other Social and Economic Proposals**

- Merchants, churches, schools, hospitals and other facilities and organizations should be encouraged to provide volunteer and paid work for teenagers, senior citizens and other groups lacking meaningful employment or activities.
- Activities should be organized that appeal to teenagers, the elderly and other groups. Examples may be skateboarding contests, racquetball and handball contests, movies for young and old, sewing bees.
- Skills training opportunities should be encouraged in the community schools’ programs.
- The need for childcare facilities should aid military families in becoming a viable part of the community.
- The community should be made aware of social services available in the community and the San Diego region. Examples include crisis intervention centers, senior citizen affairs, suicide prevention and child abuse hotline.
- The Serra Mesa Community Planning Group and its successors should continue as a clearing-house for community issues, even after adoption of this plan.

See **Figure 14:** Environmental Management.

# IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT

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The Serra Mesa Community Plan has set forth a wide range of goals and proposals aimed at enhancing the community, with careful consideration of the environment. Specific actions must be undertaken to realize the Plan. These actions and related financial obligations require joint efforts by private citizens, enterprises, community organizations and government at local, state and federal levels. Some implementation programs, however, may be carried out by private initiative only.

The community is relatively new and developed to relatively high standards. It does not require extensive redevelopment. Implementation will emphasize the retention and enhancement of those qualities that have made the community a desirable place in which to live and work.

The following section of the Plan summarizes the implementation proposals necessary to fulfill the goals of the Serra Mesa community. The proposals are presented by category as follows: plan review and maintenance, citizen participation, development phasing, rezoning proposals (to bring zoning into consistency with the plan), a summary table of public facilities (existing and proposed) and a summary table of major plan proposals.

## PLAN REVIEW AND MAINTENANCE

The Serra Mesa Community Planning Group (SMCPG) has been instrumental in preparing this Plan. Once the Plan is adopted, continued citizen involvement is vital for its implementation. The SMCPG and succeeding private citizen organizations should provide leadership for the following plan review and maintenance proposals:

- **ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT PLAN PROPOSALS SHOULD BE INITIATED.** These actions vary widely. They may be direct actions such as petitions for forming assessment districts or initiating rezonings. The community may assert itself in other ways to bring about desirable changes such as the formation of a citizen task force to clean up litter.
- **DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY IN THE SERRA MESA COMMUNITY SHOULD BE CONTINUALLY MONITORED.** The planning group should review all future public facility improvements, rezonings, and subdivisions, Conditional Use Permits, Hillside Review Permits, planned residential and commercial developments. The planning group should also review and respond to all Environmental Impact Reports relative to public and private projects. These objects and environmental statements should receive strong recommendations regarding their individual conformance to community plan goals and objectives.
- **DEVELOPERS SHOULD BE PERSUADED TO INCORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS INTO PROJECTS.** Some of these considerations are not incorporated into existing ordinances. It is essential that development located on and near canyon rims and hillsides be designed with great care. This can be accomplished through

good design and environmental concern on the part of the developer. Through cooperation between developers and the community, environmentally attractive developments can be realized without total reliance on ordinances that may rigidly dictate the form of new development.

- **THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM SHOULD BE REVIEWED.** Each year the City prepares a Capital Improvements Program which lists urgent projects that must be financed within the following six years. The first year of this program is formally adopted by the City Council. The community should review the Capital Improvements Program and make recommendations. These recommendations should be consistent with the Plan's goals, objectives and proposals.
- **THE PLAN SHOULD BE CONTINUALLY MONITORED TO ENSURE ITS TIMELINESS.** This Plan should not be considered a static document. The Plan's intent is to provide guidance for orderly growth and to respond to changing environmental, social and economic conditions. The Plan should also be reviewed with respect to the legislative framework. It should conform to all applicable federal, state and local ordinances. As the Plan is a policy guide, it should also conform to City Council policies, and to those formulated by other public agencies having jurisdiction. In order to accomplish these aims, the Plan must be continually monitored and amended when necessary so that it remains relevant to community and City needs. This process will probably involve a yearly review and a major overhaul and revision every five to ten years. The planning group should be responsible for this task.

## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

Although the City Council has ultimate responsibility for carrying out the Plan, the true burden rests with an interested, active citizenry. The following proposals are intended to encourage constant citizen participation in community affairs in accordance with Council Policy 600-24, Operating Procedures and Responsibilities of Recognized Community Planning Committees:

- **THE PLANNING GROUP SHOULD CONTINUE TO MEET ON A REGULAR BASIS AFTER PLAN ADOPTION.** These meetings should be open to the public. They may be held either downtown when staff assistance is required, or at a designated meeting place in the community. Although these meetings will generally be concerned with issues of direct relevance to the Plan, they may function as forums for other matters of community concern and interest.
- **IF NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES WARRANT COMMUNITYWIDE ATTENTION THE PLANNING GROUP SHOULD CALL SPECIAL MEETINGS.** These special meetings should be held in the neighborhood affected by the issue. Suggested meeting places could be local elementary schools or churches. The planning group can respond more effectively by going to the affected neighborhood than by requiring all neighborhood matters to be heard at regularly scheduled community meetings.



- **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION SHOULD BE BROADLY BASED AND EXTEND TO “GRASS ROOTS” LEVELS.** The planning group should assume the leadership role in a “community government” that should enable every member of the community to have a voice in neighborhood and community affairs. This may be accomplished through the establishment of a “town hall” in a designated meeting place known to all. Issues brought forth at these meetings then could be made known to the City or other agencies for appropriate responses.
- **COMPOSITION OF THE PLANNING GROUP SHOULD BE TRULY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMUNITY.** Procedures should be established to ensure that the planning group reflects a wide range of opinions and that a maximum number of citizens participate. These should be accomplished by periodic, democratically conducted elections of representatives to the planning group by all members of the Serra Mesa community.
- **ALL GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES SHOULD SOLICIT CITIZEN INPUT BEFORE MAKING DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THE COMMUNITY.** The “community planning” approach should be extended to all facilities and services planning. A hypothetical example is neighborhood park design. A park that is technically well designed but not used by the community would be frustrating to the park designer. Members of the community could have made the park designer aware of neighborhood problems not immediately apparent to an outsider.
- **ALL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD MAKE THE COMMUNITY AWARE OF THEIR EXISTENCE AND ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION.** A marquee should be established at a prominent location in the community. It should list the names of the organizations together with their meeting times and places. Many of these organizations can be vehicles for implementing Plan proposals.

## **DEVELOPMENT PHASING**

Although Serra Mesa is largely developed, events can plausibly occur that could place heavy pressure on public facilities. City Council Policy 600-10 states that development should proceed only if adequate public facilities are assured.

The following basic requirement is set forth to guide development as proposed in the Plan.

**ALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED SHALL BE PREDICATED UPON THE ADEQUACY AND AVAILABILITY OF ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES TO SERVE THE DEVELOPMENT.**

In addition, it must be emphasized that the processing of rezonings, PRDs, Conditional Use Permits and tentative maps must comply with normal City requirements. These include: Council Policy 600-4, Standards for Public Rights-of-Way Improvements; Council Policy 600-10, Adequacy of Public Services in Connection with Development Proposals; Council Policy 600-19, Fostering of Balanced Community Development for the City of San Diego,

Council Policy 600-22, School Availability; Environmental Impact Report requirements and all other City policy requirements.

## **REZONING PROPOSALS**

Council Policy 600-6 states that zoning should be used to implement proposals in adopted community plans. This policy is an indication of the City's intent to follow through on its proposed plans.

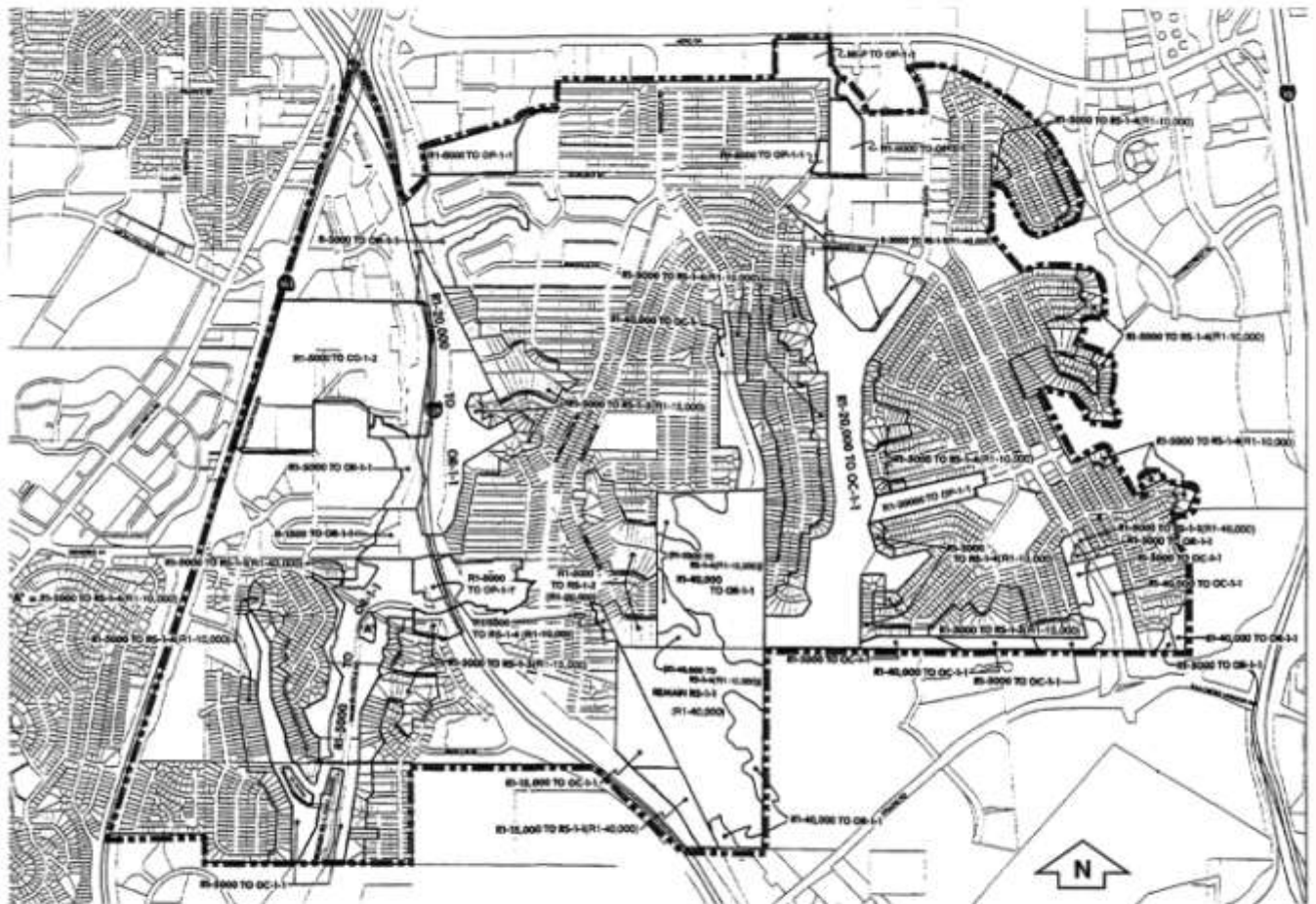
The following maps illustrate those situations where Plan proposals and present zoning are inconsistent. The first map shows the zoning as it existed in October, 1976. The second map specifies the 1987 zoning after amendments to the community plan at that time and the third map shows rezonings to accommodate the 2000 plan amendments.

See **Figure 15**: 1977 and 1987 Zoning.

See **Figure 16**: 2000 Rezoning.



1977 and 1987 Zoning **15**  
 Serra Mesa Community Plan **FIGURE**



--- COMMUNITY PLAN BOUNDARY



**TABLE 4**  
**SUMMARY OF PLAN PROJECTS**

		<b>Priority</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Streets and Highways</b>			
I-15 reconstruction		Mid-range	Pending availability of state funds
<b>Park</b>	<b>(Park District #)</b>		
Serra Mesa Community Park and Rec. Center	#390	---	Existing, expansion proposed
Neighborhood Park	#391 (Shawn)	Mid-range	Proposed for acquisition
Neighborhood Park	#392 (Rancho Cabrillo)	Immediate	Being acquired
Neighborhood Park	#392 (Cabrillo Heights)	---	Existing
Neighborhood Park	#402 (Fletcher)	Mid-range	Proposed for acquisition
<b>Schools</b>			
Angier Elementary		---	Existing
Cubberley Elementary		---	Existing
Fletcher Elementary		---	Existing
Jones Elementary		---	Existing
Juarez Elementary		---	Existing
Wegeforth Elementary		---	Existing
Taft Junior High		---	Existing
<b>Other Public Facilities</b>			
Branch Library		---	Existing
Fire Station		---	Existing
Northeast Police Substation		Immediate	Proposed in recent consultant study conducted for Police Department

**TABLE 5**  
**SUMMARY OF PLAN PROPOSALS**

The following is a summary table of implementation projects, including priorities, type of action, responsibility, and, if pertinent, means of financing.

**HOUSING ELEMENT**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1. Encourage density ranges (5-9, 10-14, 15-29, 15-43 du/ac) to develop and/or maintain these densities as shown on Plan Map.	Continuing	Allow no rezonings that conflict with plan proposals. Initiate rezonings to conform to Plan.	Planning Commission and City Council
2. Relate dwelling units to topography.	Immediate	Work with property owners, realtors and developers to encourage PRD concepts.	Planning Department
3. Encourages maintenance and enhancement of existing housing stock.	Immediate and continuing.	Work with property owners, military (Cabrillo Heights).	SMCPG*
4. Investigate use of housing subsidies and lease programs in the Serra Mesa community.	Continuing	Investigate state and federal housing subsidy and City leased housing programs.	City Council, City Manager, Private Developer
5. Public ownership of Cabrillo Heights Military housing need should be guaranteed even if the military relinquishes ownership.		According to effect transfer of City Council, City ownership from Navy to public agency if the military relinquishes ownership.	Manager

\*Serra Mesa Community Planning Group and successors.

**COMMERCIAL ELEMENT**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1. Rezone parcel at southeast corner Genesee and Mockingbird from R-1-5 to CN.	According to need	Work with owner and/or developer, using CN (PCD) zoning.	Private
2. Enhance appearance of Serra Mesa Shopping District.	Immediately	Work with owners and tenants.	SMCPG
3. Retain CN zoning at Shawn and Starling convenience center.	Continuing	Monitor situation.	SMCPG
4. Develop small activity node at Military Commissary	Continuing	Work with military	SMCPG

**TABLE 5  
SUMMARY OF PLAN PROPOSALS (continued)**

**PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Financing</b>
1. Expand Serra Mesa Community Park, including leisure areas, tennis courts, swimming pool.	Immediate	Work with School District, private developers.	Planning Department, Park & Recreation Department, Property Department	CIP, *land trade, assessment district
2. Retain Cabrillo Heights Park, ball diamonds.	Continuing	Monitor situation, maintain facilities	Park and Recreation Department	
3. Develop Rancho Cabrillo Neighborhood Park	Immediate	Acquire land and construct improvements	Park and Recreation Department	CIP – Park fees
4. Provide neighborhood park near Juarez School.	Immediate	Acquire land and construct improvements.**	Park and Recreation Department**	CIP – Park fees Env. Growth Fund
5. Provide neighborhood park near Fletcher School.	Immediate	Acquire land and construct improvements.**	Park and Recreation Department**	CIP – Park fees
6. Improve recreation and “tot lot” facility in Cabrillo Heights housing project.	Immediate	Enhance “tot lot” facility; clean up ravine to west.	Military; residents in area	

\* CIP – Capital Improvements Program

\*\* Alternate: Turfing of school playgrounds by joint development agreement with San Diego Unified School District.

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Financing</b>
1. Schools: Encourage most efficient utilization of schools in the community.	Immediate	Work with San Diego Unified School District to investigate alternatives to conventional class structure.	SDUSD, SMCPG, community action	
2. Encourage Community Schools programs at all schools in the community.	Immediate	Survey neighborhoods for needs that can be served by community schools. Establish programs to fulfill those needs.	SDUSD, SMCPG, community action	SDUSD, Stuart Mott Foundation
3. Police, Fire Protection, Library, Sewer, Water and Drainage Facilities	Continuing	Monitor needs; improve when necessary.	City of San Diego	
4. Emergency Medical Services; Improve emergency services	Immediate	Work with Donald N. Sharp Memorial Community Hospital to improve emergency medical services.	Sharp Hospital, County agencies	

**TABLE 5**  
**SUMMARY OF PLAN PROPOSALS (continued)**

**TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Financing</b>
<b>Streets</b>				
1. Construct I-15 between Friars Road and Route 52.	ASAP	Construct freeway	Caltrans, Transportation Planning	Highway trust fund gas tax
2. Complete internal street network in Kearny Mesa Health-Institutional Complex.	Immediately, according to need	Construct Birmingham Avenue loop to Mesa College Drive.	Adjacent property owners as part of expansion plans	Private property owners
3. Widen Health Ctr. Dr. to four lanes (widening and/or parking removal).	According to need	Schedule into CIP according to need.	Transportation Planning	CIP
4. Provide misc. Special treatment	As needed	Monitor and determine needs for increasing capacity of road system.	Transportation Planning	CIP and/or City general fund
<b>Public Transportation</b>				
5. Increase frequency and hours for Routes 25, 25A and 27.	Immediately	Implement plans.	Transit company	Not determined
6. Provide direct express service from Serra Mesa to Downtown and other employment centers.	ASAP	Implement plans.	Transit company	Not determined
7. Institute area mini bus shuttle system supplementary to express service.	Long range	Develop and implement local service plan linked with citywide.	SMCPG, S.D. Transit, private	Not determined
<b>Bikeways</b>				
8. Develop community bikeway system coordinated with City and regional system.	ASAP	Follow through by implementing approved plans.	Transportation Planning, SMCPG	CIP, Bikeway fund, City general fund



**TABLE 5**  
**SUMMARY OF PLAN PROPOSALS (continued)**

**ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ELEMENT**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Financing</b>
<b>Physical Environment - Urban Design</b>				
1. Improve grading, landscaping, standards and control of hillside cuts.	Immediate	Amend PRD, PCD and HR requirements to provide better protection and enhancement of environment. Enforce adopted standards.	Planning	
2. Underground utilities on following streets: Gramercy Dr. FY 1980 Mission Village Dr. FY 1981 Ruffin Road FY 1981 Sandrock Rd., FY 1982	ASAP	Schedule undergrounding of utilities on major streets; local neighborhoods when feasible, transmission lines when feasible.	Community action, SMCPG, SDG&E	Utility Company, Assessment District, CIP
3. Extend cable TV; require master antenna in new PRD's and multifamily projects.	ASAP	Approach fancies operator re: expenditure service-follow up. Require master antenna in PRD's through Council action.	SMCPG, community action, Planning Department	
4. Extend sign controls	Immediate	Adopt city zone changes City Council to achieve sign controls.		
5. Control environmental pollution.	Immediate	Enforce existing anti-pollution legislation; develop new programs and practices.	Community action, City Council	
<b>Open Space - Hillside Conservation</b>				
6. Establish open space system; Ruffin-Sandroek Canyons; Cardinal Canyon, west forks of Murphy Canyon, hillsides adjacent to Mission Village Drive (Total 400 acres).	Immediate. Acquisition should occur as early as possible, not until threat of development occurs.	Initiate proceedings for hearing and Council action on establishment of assessment district or districts. Apply HR zone overlay over all land meeting criteria; R-1-40 zone in designated open space areas and other open space zones as appropriate.	SMCPG, City Council, community action	Park Procedural Ordinance (assessment districts), Environmental Growth Fund
<b>Socio-Economic Environment</b>				
7. Monitor community facilities and services to ensure they serve the changing social and economic needs of the population.	Immediate and continuing	Organize a task force of community leaders and experts, in social problems to evaluate socio-economic conditions in the community and recommend appropriate action.	SMCPH, community City Human Resources Dept.	

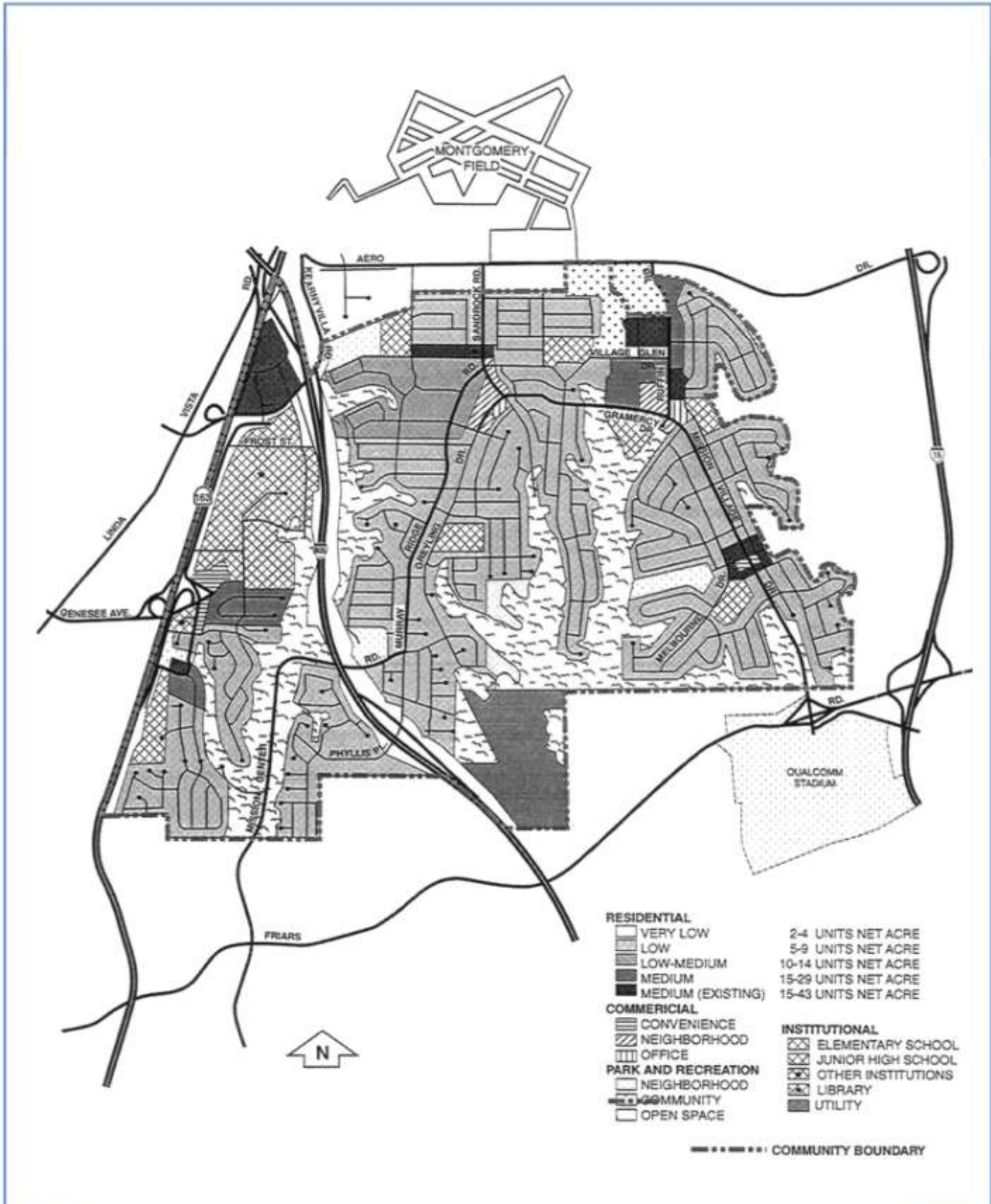
**TABLE 6  
PLAN SUMMARY**

**PROPOSED LAND USE ALLOCATIONS**

<b>Uses</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Low Density Residential (5-9) a, b	944
Low-Medium Density Residential (10-14) a, b	85
Medium Density Residential (15-29) a, b	54
Medium Density Residential (15-43) a, b	45
Professional Office (Serra Mesa Subarea)	2
Local Commercial (Neighborhood and Convenience)	23
Community Shopping Center	26
Regional General Commercial	150
Recreation-Visitor Commercial	15
Health-Institutional Complex	127
Other Regional Facilities (SDG&E, School Support)	97
Parks and Recreation	62
Schools and Other Community Facilities	84
Open Space	425
<b>Total Net Area</b>	<b>5,479</b>
Streets, Other Public Rights-of-Way	1,117
<b>Total in City of San Diego</b>	<b>6,596</b>

Table 6 Notes:

- a. Density is calculated as the number of dwelling units per net residential acre (DU/NRA).
- b. Residential use allocations include certain non-residential uses for which no separate plan element is given. These include religious facilities, private day care centers and the like.



**Community Plan Land Use 1990** **17**  
**Serra Mesa Community Plan** **FIGURE**



## FOOTNOTES

1. San Diego City Planning Department, *A Plan for Equestrian Trails and Facilities*; October, 1974.
2. San Diego City Planning Department, *A Plan for the Preservation of Natural Parks for San Diego*; April, 1973, page 2.
3. San Diego City Planning Department, *Open Space for San Diego*; May 1968, page 7.
4. San Diego City Planning Department, *A Plan for the Preservation of Natural Parks for San Diego*; April, 1973, page 26.
5. San Diego City Planning Department, *The General Plan for San Diego - 1995*, unpublished preliminary draft, September 1975, p.316. Full title of the Appleyard-Lynch study was *Temporary Paradise? A Look at the Special Landscape of the San Diego Region*, published September 1974. Much of that study has been incorporated into the Urban Design Element of the proposed *General Plan for San Diego - 1995*.
6. Ibid., page 317.
7. Two types of noise measurement are used in California. Aircraft noise is expressed in terms of Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) and motor vehicle noise in terms of day-night average level (Ldn). The unit of measurement is the decibel; CNEL and Ldn take into account average noise levels over a 24-hour period. The calculation of CNEL requires the addition of five decibels to evening (7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.) and ten decibels to nighttime (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.) noise levels. Ldn calculations add ten decibels to nighttime noise levels only, since the evening hours are treated as a part of the daytime period [Abstracted from the *General Plan for San Diego - 1995*, unpublished preliminary draft. pp. 260-261].

## **APPENDIX – AIRPORT INFLUENCE AREA**

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The Airport Influence Area for Montgomery Field affects the Serra Mesa Community Plan. The Airport Influence Area serves as the planning boundaries for the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for 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 Plan for Montgomery Field to establish land use compatibility policies and development criteria for new development within the Airport Influence Area to protect the airport from incompatible land uses and provide the City with development criteria that will allow for the orderly growth of the area surrounding the airport. The policies and criteria contained in the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan are addressed in the General Plan (Land Use and Community Planning Element and Noise Element) and implemented by the supplemental development regulations in the Airport Land Use Compatibility Overlay Zone within Chapter 13 of the San Diego Municipal Code. Planning efforts need to address airport land use compatibility issues consistent with airport land use compatibility policies and regulations mentioned above.