
URBAN DESIGN

Clairemont Mesa is an attractive place to live, work and play because of the community's many attributes. The visual aesthetics of the nearby canyons in an urban environment, for example, has contributed to the community's sense of place, of diversity and of distinction from other areas of San Diego. This Plan identifies Clairemont Mesa's distinctive image, and how this image can be preserved and translated into the built environment.

Recommendations have been incorporated throughout the Plan that address how planning, design and the development of the physical environment will be compatible with the community's image.

One of Clairemont Mesa's attributes are the well-established single-family neighborhoods with houses on the mesa, overlooking Mission Bay, the Pacific Ocean, the mountains to the east and the canyons (**Figure 3**). This Plan preserves neighborhoods by maintaining existing single-family zoning and by recommending a Planned Infill Residential Development (PIRD) permit for the development of new units in those neighborhoods when variations of the development regulations of the underlying zone are required. A PIRD helps assure that new development will be compatible with the existing surrounding development, in terms of site design, architecture and density. The existing low-scale character of the community as well as vistas from Bay Park to Mission Bay and the Pacific Ocean will be preserved by maintaining a 30-foot height limit throughout the majority of the community. The Clairemont Mesa Height Limitation Zone, introduced on September 18, 1989, established this height limit.

Another distinctive feature of neighborhoods in Clairemont Mesa is the low-density residential development adjacent to canyons and parks, and local streets with a parkway setting. Clairemont Mesa's canyon system and the low-density development have given the community a "rural" image while being located in an urban environment. This image will be preserved by rezoning privately owned canyons to a very low residential density and rezoning the City-owned canyons to open space. If development does occur in the privately owned canyons, it must follow the natural contours of the land with minimal grading, as required by the Hillside Review Overlay Zone and Tecolote Canyon Rim Development Guidelines (see **Residential** and **Open Space and Environmental Resources Elements**).

The low-density neighborhood image is further enhanced by neighborhood parks and public schools which are numerous and evenly distributed throughout the community. Several public schools are located adjacent to parks and the canyon system, providing opportunities for recreation. Parks and the canyon system will be preserved by rezoning them for open space (see **Open Space and Environmental Resources** and **Population-Based Parks and Recreation Elements**).

The older neighborhoods in Clairemont Mesa have a park setting with trees planted in street medians and along sidewalks. These neighborhoods are particularly visible at the community's points of entry on Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, Clairemont Drive, Balboa

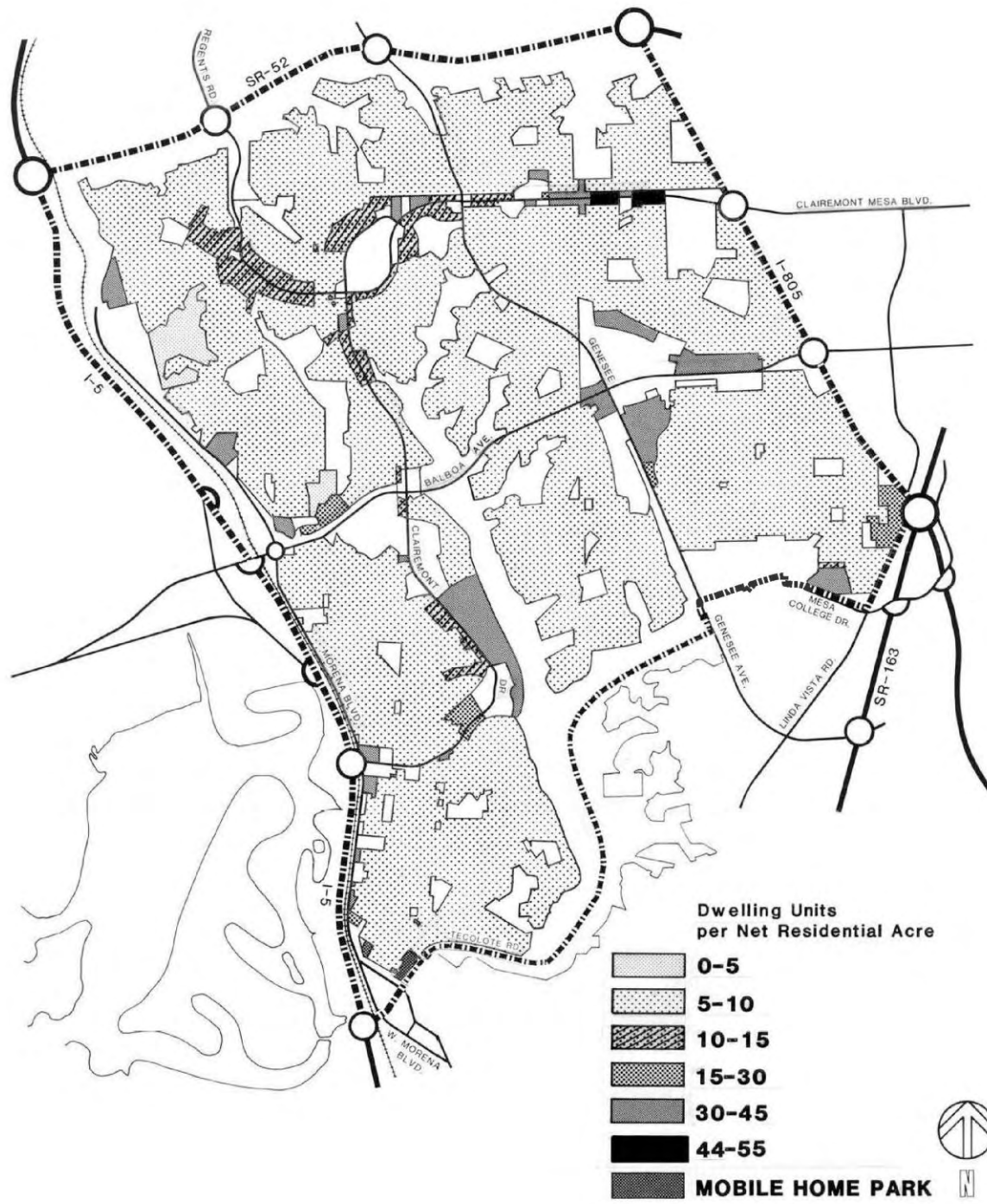
Avenue and at the community core. Tree plantings have contributed to the image of the community by providing a park atmosphere along the public right-of-way. The Plan recommends that new development should incorporate existing streetscape elements into the design of new projects (see **Figure 28, Transportation Element**).

Clairemont Mesa's three shopping centers are evenly distributed within the community. These centers are completely automobile-oriented and surrounded by parking lots. The Plan recommends to visually and functionally integrate the centers and improve the pedestrian environment. The Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ) is recommended for these centers with guidelines for redevelopment addressing landscaping, architectural design and establishment of identifiable pedestrian and bicycle circulation elements.

The two industrial centers in Clairemont Mesa are the gateway areas to the City of San Diego and the community. The Plan recommends to rezone portions of these industrial areas so that new development along Morena Boulevard will include architectural and site design features to improve the appearance of these areas from the adjacent Interstate 5 (I-5) corridor.

Clairemont Mesa is a well-established community whose entry points do not properly reflect the natural beauty of its setting. One way for Clairemont Mesa to identify itself as a vital community in the City's central area is to make the entryways into the community identifiable as entry points into an exciting community. An objective of this Plan is to enhance the community's image through streetscape improvements, including landscaping and paving, and unique community identification signs along major streets at eight identifiable entryways: three Bayside, two San Clemente and three eastern entries. The Plan's **Transportation Element** lays the groundwork for a public-private implementation program that will help create Clairemont Mesa's positive self-image.

The goal of this Plan is to preserve Clairemont Mesa's identity for future generations. In the last 30 years, the community has attracted over 80,000 people. The community's central location in the City has given residents convenient access to nearby job resources in downtown San Diego, Mission Valley, Kearny Mesa and La Jolla. Recreational opportunities, such as Mission Bay, Torrey Pines State Park, Tecolote Canyon Natural Park and the beaches are also nearby. The future construction of the Light Rail Transit North Line will also enhance the community's accessibility to nearby employment and recreation areas. These distinctive qualities will continue to make Clairemont Mesa a pleasant place to work, live and play in San Diego.



Existing Residential Development
 Clairemont Mesa Community Plan

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