



Location Map
Clairemont Mesa Community Plan

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Clairemont Mesa is a well-balanced community offering a pleasant urban environment, conveniently located commercial services and job opportunities that has attracted approximately 81,600 residents as of 1987. Clairemont Mesa is a post World War II suburban community characterized by the single-family homes that were built in the 1950s and 1960s. The development is mostly low in scale, generally confined to the mesas and along the rim of Tecolote Canyon, Stevenson Canyon, San Clemente Canyon and into the hillside areas. The predominant topographic feature in Clairemont Mesa is the gently rolling mesa serrated by several canyons and hillsides. The planning area is located in the north central portion of the City and encompasses approximately 11 square miles (**Figure 1**).

Clairemont Mesa is an urbanized residential community with several shopping centers, parks and recreational facilities and educational opportunities. The community has well-established single-family neighborhoods with streetscape parkways. Many of the neighborhoods along the mesa overlook Mission Bay and the Pacific Ocean to the west, Fortuna Mountain and Cowles Mountain to the east and the open space canyon system (**Figure 2**). To protect some of these views, the West Clairemont Height Limitation Overlay Zone was adopted in 1972. The multifamily areas in Clairemont Mesa are traditionally located along major transportation corridors, such as on Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, Clairemont Drive, Genesee Avenue, Balboa Avenue and around shopping centers.

There are four suburban shopping centers in Clairemont Mesa that include Clairemont Square, Clairemont Village, Balboa Mesa and Genesee Plaza. These shopping centers are conveniently located throughout the community. They were built in the mid-1950s and early 1960s and have been refurbished over the years. The community also has approximately 186 acres of industrial land located on Morena Boulevard and Santa Fe Street, north of Balboa Avenue. Over the years, this area has provided job opportunities in research and development.

An attractive feature of the community is the number of parks and recreational facilities and educational opportunities. Clairemont Mesa has approximately 1,370 acres of City-owned property designated as open space for the public's enjoyment, e.g., nature trails and picnic areas. There are also 11 parks and 17 public educational facilities, including Mesa College.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Clairemont Mesa Community Plan (Plan) includes a series of recommendations and proposals designed to guide development in the community for the next ten to 15 years. The Clairemont Mesa Planning Committee, the officially recognized citizen planning organization, has participated in the formulation of this Plan through regular meetings with the Planning Department staff. This Plan contains a series of goals and objectives established by the residents, property owners and business owners of the Clairemont Mesa Community, and are also consistent with citywide policies. Once this Plan is adopted, any amendments will require public hearings held by the Planning Commission and City Council, as were required in the initial adoption of this Plan.

While this document sets forth development proposals, it does not establish new regulations or legislation, nor does it rezone property. Recommended rezonings will occur simultaneously with the Plan adoption, and any recommended actions relative to subdivision, transportation, building construction, public improvements and any other development related activities must be enacted separately as part of an implementation program.

This Plan should not be considered a static document. It is intended to provide guidance for the orderly growth of the Clairemont Mesa Community. However, in order to respond to the dynamics of city growth and unanticipated changes in environmental, social, or economic conditions, the Plan must be continually monitored and amended, as necessary, in order to remain updated and relevant to community and citywide needs.

COMMUNITY ISSUES

The Clairemont Mesa Community Planning Committee and other members of the community have identified the following issues of concern to the community:

1. The desire to preserve the low-density, single-family character of the community
 2. The need for housing rehabilitation in some areas of the community
 3. The proliferation of companion units and guest quarters
 4. The loss of commercial services due to residential development on commercially zoned sites
 5. The need for revitalization of development along the southern portion of Morena Boulevard
 6. The need for redevelopment of the industrial uses along Santa Fe Street and portions of Morena Boulevard
 7. The need to establish guidelines for the development of privately owned canyons and hillside areas to reduce erosion, alteration of hillside topography and vegetation, and other undesirable effects from development
 8. The need to improve public transportation
 9. The need to reduce traffic congestion along Balboa Avenue
 10. The need to eliminate present and prevent future contamination of Tecolote Creek and Rose Creek by urban pollutants, (i.e., sewage, industrial chemicals) and to reduce and prevent siltation
 11. The need to provide Clairemont Mesa with a community identity
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DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

The following development alternatives have been considered while preparing the Plan. The variations of each alternative largely pertain to differences in recommended residential densities.

NO GROWTH

The “No Growth” alternative would rezone properties to reflect the existing residential development. This alternative would rezone the vacant, privately owned canyons to a very low residential density and designate these canyons as open space. Existing single-family homes in the multifamily zones would be rezoned from R-3000 to R1-5000. Buena Vista Gardens, an existing multifamily project on Clairemont Drive, would be rezoned from R-1000 to R-1250 to be consistent with existing densities on the site.

This alternative was not selected because the plan would not provide any opportunities for growth in this community or for redevelopment of the Buena Vista Gardens site.

MAXIMUM GROWTH

The “Maximum Growth” alternative would intensify development along Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, Clairemont Drive and Balboa Avenue and around Clairemont Square and Clairemont Village shopping centers and the community core. Recommended rezonings of this alternative would permit new development to occur at an intensity twice that permitted by existing zoning on these sites.

This alternative was not selected because the density increases of this alternative would overburden community facilities and infrastructure. The low-density, single-family neighborhood character of the community would also change to a more intense character which is in conflict with goals of the Plan.

SLOW GROWTH

The “Slow Growth” alternative was selected for future development and is reflected by the recommendations of the Plan. The alternative recommends rezoning properties to reflect the existing residential development and preserving the open space system. The vacant, privately owned canyons would be rezoned to a very low residential density and be designated as open space. Some existing single-family neighborhoods would also be rezoned from R-3000 to R1-5000.

The existing R-1000 zoning on the Buena Vista Gardens site is recommended to be maintained in order to encourage redevelopment of this site. Development guidelines would be recommended for the redevelopment of this site in order to: help ensure that new development is compatible with the adjacent single-family neighborhoods to the north; maintain the park-like atmosphere along Clairemont Drive and Cowley Way; and, maintain

the 30-foot building height required by the West Clairemont Height Limitation Zone. The community core area is the focal point of the community and provides commercial services within walking distances of residential neighborhoods. Development guidelines are recommended for the integration of new commercial development in the core area with the surrounding commercial and multifamily development.
