



*Clover leaf with dairy on left side looking west from Madison Street, November 1954*

## **PLAN SUMMARY**

The plan is based on a realistic land use proposal. Specific plans with a multiple land use emphasis are proposed for large undeveloped tracts of land along Friars Road. The transportation plan has been developed based primarily upon land use assumptions provided by the property owners. The limitations on the permitted intensity of development has been based on the capacity of the surface street system. The transportation element has an additional dimension; it permits increases in intensity (bonuses) when commitments are made for public transit systems (regional light rail transit and an intra-Valley transit system).

The open space element is the key, not only to open space recommendations, but also to urban design recommendations as well. Urban design focuses on the river, hillsides, and transportation corridors. The open space element discusses development criteria for the flood control facility, hillsides, and park and recreation areas.

The San Diego River Wetlands Management Plan, contained in Appendix G, is an integral part of the implementation of the San Diego River element. The Wetlands Plan provides a framework for integrating the protection of wetlands with land development, transportation facilities and flood control.

Implementation envisions the development of new zoning legislation to address development intensity, urban design guidelines and multiple uses. Bonus provisions for intensifying permitted development upon the implementation of a public transit system are also included. A table identifying responsibilities for the development of public facilities within the community is included as part of the Implementation Element.

## **PLAN DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

### **1. Traffic Circulation**

The present transportation system has inadequate capacity. As currently developed, it will be unable to handle future local circulation and regional transportation needs. The Mission Valley Community Plan in conjunction with the SANDAG-CALTRANS Interstate 8 Corridor Study proposes major structural and operational transportation improvements, including: a) encouraging the completion of the regional freeway system; b) closing gaps and remedying other deficiencies in the local (non-freeway) street system; c) reducing the effects of flooding on the transportation network; d) mitigating congestion by providing incentives for the use of modes of transportation other than the automobile; and e) instituting operational improvements (for example ramp meters) within the Interstate 8 corridor (both within and adjacent to the Mission Valley community).

### **2. Form and Intensity of Development**

Development to date in Mission Valley has been occurring in a largely unplanned fashion. There has been little coordination to ensure compatibility of contiguous developments. The issue of form and intensity of future development has been addressed in the community plan

through the establishment of: a) development intensities related to the planned transportation network, designated activity centers, and river-related open spaces; b) design guidelines to shape development adjacent to the river and north and south rim hillsides; c) encouragement of multiple use complexes which offer environments for living, working, shopping, and related activities; and, d) design guidelines for streets and other public rights-of-way, placing a new emphasis on the environmental quality of pedestrian-oriented spaces.

### **3. Flood Protection**

Flooding of the San Diego River has become a major problem in Mission Valley since urbanization became prevalent in the flood-plain area. This issue has been addressed in terms of: a) protection of lives and property; b) the use of land adjacent to flood control facilities; c) environmental constraints of wetland preservation and mitigation; d) equitable financing and maintenance of flood control facilities; and e) aesthetic appearance.

### **4. Public Facilities and Services**

The Mission Valley community contains major regional facilities for entertainment, recreation, shopping, dining and lodging. Yet, facilities of a local or neighborhood nature serving the resident population are nearly nonexistent. Residents must rely upon other communities for “neighborhood” facilities to fulfill their daily needs, including schools, parks, libraries, emergency medical services, and a post office. This situation has become an issue in Mission Valley. The provision of “neighborhood” services should help reduce the number and length of automobile trips within and through the Valley and otherwise enhance the livability of the community.

### **5. Physical Environment**

The physical environment of Mission Valley continues to play a significant role in planning for the community's future. This is true with respect to constraints as well as opportunities. The potential for flooding, and liquefaction during earthquakes affects much of the Valley and must be considered when planning for any new development. Portions of the natural environment still exist, and if managed properly could provide opportunities for creating an urban center of high environmental quality. The San Diego River floodway should become a scenic resource with which projects can be integrated. Other environmental assets are the hillsides which provide the green backdrop on the Valley's south side. Proposals contained within this Plan provide development standards to assure a measure of protection for the natural assets of Mission Valley.

### **6. Economic Impacts**

The public facilities required to provide the level of service desired in the community (roads, transit, flood protection, etc.) need to be financed primarily by the property owners and developers in the Valley, since they will receive the direct benefits of such improvements. Additionally, as the flood control facility is constructed in the San Diego River corridor, it is anticipated that new areas (formerly prone to flooding) will become available for development, offsetting some of the initial costs of the facility.

## **7. Regional Impacts**

Existing development, extensive freeway access, and a location near the geographic center of the urban San Diego region, make Mission Valley a major activity center. The predominant land use in the Valley is commercial, including retail, recreational, and office development. The Plan proposes to encourage this activity in combination with other uses. It is expected that Mission Valley will continue to expand as the regional commercial center, complementing the other two other regional activity centers: Center City (government/ financial center); and University City (educational/high technology center).

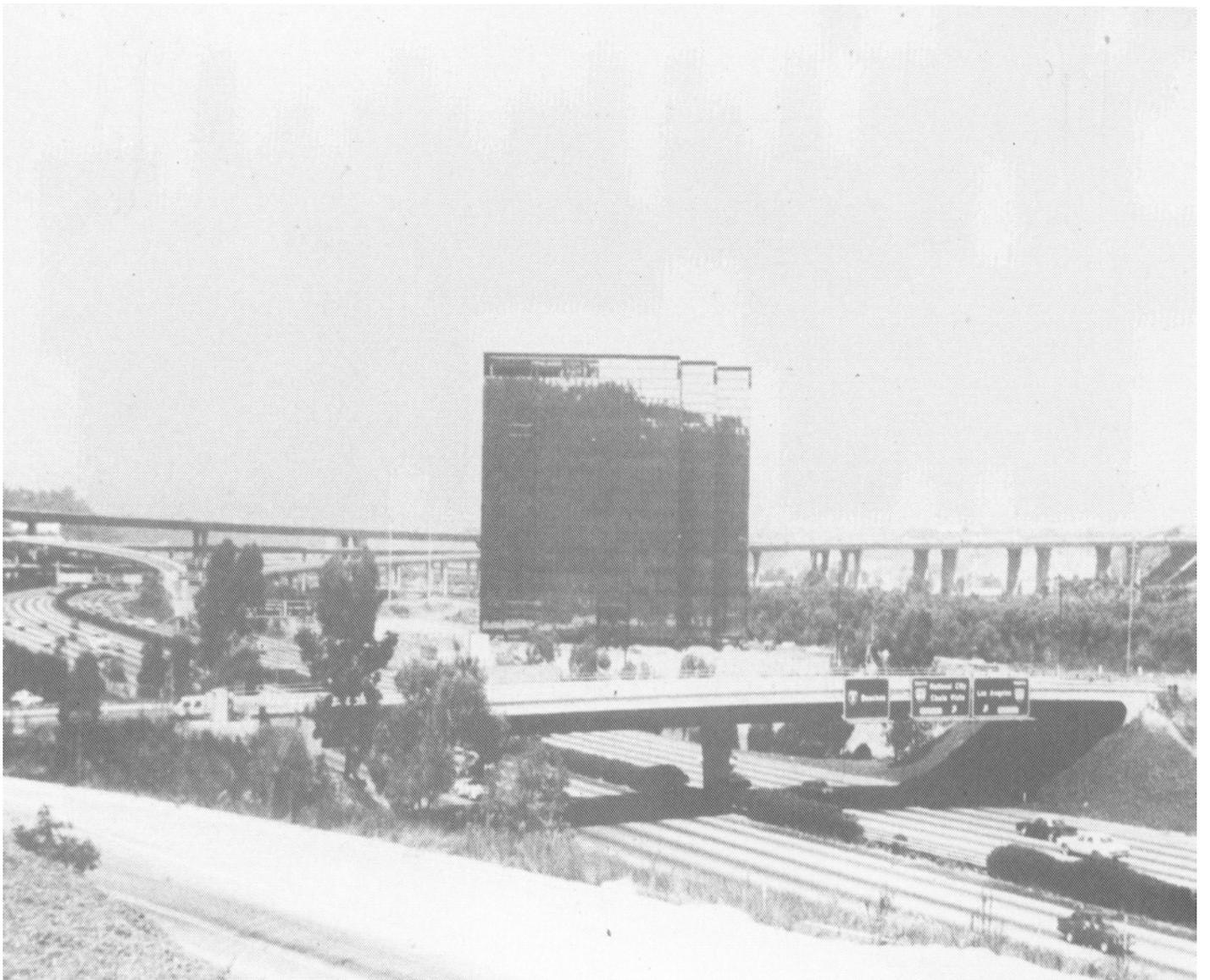
## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Overall Goal**

To provide a Community Plan for Mission Valley which allows for its continued development as a quality regional urban center in The City of San Diego while recognizing and respecting environmental constraints and traffic needs, and encouraging the Valley's development as a community.

### **Overall Objectives**

- Encourage high quality urban development in the Valley which will provide a healthy environment and offer occupational and residential opportunities for all citizens.
- Provide protection of life and property from flooding by the San Diego River.
- Provide a framework for the conservation of important wetland/ riparian habitats balanced with expanded urban development.
- Facilitate transportation through and within the Valley while establishing and maintaining an adequate transportation network.
- Provide public facilities and services that will attend to the needs of the community and the region.
- Provide guidelines that will result in urban design which will be in keeping with the natural features of the land and establish community identity, coherence, and a sense of place.



## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT**

### **PLAN ALTERNATIVES**

Although an infinite number of plan alternatives could be formulated and evaluated, the following eight alternatives offer a comprehensive variety, satisfying the objectives of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and illustrating feasible approaches to community planning options in Mission Valley in terms of land use classification and development intensity. The selected alternatives are briefly summarized and then followed with more detailed descriptions. The alternatives are:

1. No Mission Valley Community Plan (The “No Plan” Alternative).
2. Limited Development (No Comprehensive Flood Protection Program).
3. Intensive Development.
4. Moderate Development - Commercial Office Emphasis.
5. Moderate Development - Integrated Use Emphasis.
6. Moderate Development - Residential Emphasis.
7. Development to SANDAG Series V Projection Levels.
8. Planning Committee Alternative: Multiple Use - Integrated Use Emphasis.

**TABLE 1**  
**MISSION VALLEY COMMUNITY PLAN ALTERNATIVES ISSUES**

| <b>Plan Alternatives</b> | <b>Flood Protection</b>  | <b>Transportation/ Transit</b>   | <b>Land Use</b>  | <b>Development Intensity</b>  |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Concept 1                | Existing FW, FPF Zones   | Surface Street improvements on project-by-project basis to be financed by developers as part of project approval. Transit-buses. | Continuation of existing uses.   | That permitted by existing zoning.  |
| Concept 2                | Apply FW Zone where FPF Zone now exists prohibiting all new structural development within the floodplain.  | No significant improvements to existing surface street system.   | Continuation of existing uses, addition of non-structural uses such as agriculture, grazing, campgrounds | Only low intensity uses permitted. Capacity of existing streets determines extent of development.   |
| Concept 3                | Concrete channel   | Major improvements to freeways and surface street system. Transit: LRT line, shuttle buses, trams, and bikeways.                 | Continuation of existing uses.   | High intensity, high-rise development.  |
| Concept 4                | Natural appearing, soft-bottom floodway with 100-year flood capacity in a natural setting.   | Improvements to street system. Transit: improved bus system, bikeways, and intra-Valley tram.                                    | Emphasis on new commercial-office development which includes other commercial and/or residential uses.   | Moderate levels of development.   |
| Concept 5                | Natural appearing, soft-bottom floodway in natural setting, accommodating recreational uses, habitat-conservation, flood control.                                | Improvements to street system. Transit: LRT, improved bus system, bikeways, and intra-Valley tram.                               | Emphasis on multi-use which includes commercial-retail, recreation, office, residential.                 | Moderate levels of development.   |
| Concept 6                | Natural appearing, soft-bottom floodway approx. 700'-800' wide to carry 111,000 cfs in park-like setting.  | Improvements to street system. Increased number of small local streets.  | Emphasis on new residential development with support services.   | Moderate levels of development.   |
| Concept 7                | Existing FW, FPF Zones   | Surface street improvements on project-by-project basis to be financed by developers as part of project approval. Transit-buses. | Continuation of existing uses.   | That permitted by existing zoning.  |
| Concept 8                | Natural-appearing soft-bottom floodway with optional augmentation by means of a supplemental diversion facility with the capacity to contain the 100-year flood. | Improvements to street system. Transit: improved bus system, bikeways, and intra-Valley tram.                                    | Emphasis on multi-use which includes commercial, recreation, office or residential.                      | As permitted by existing zoning or proposed CA2 Zone and other ordinances in plan implementation, CA-2 Zone permits FAR of 2.0. (1,400 trips per acre - office & hotel development. 2,500 trips per acre for retail development.) |

## CONCEPT 1. NO MISSION VALLEY COMMUNITY PLAN

This “No Plan” concept assumes: a) retention of existing general and area plans, including the **Progress Guide and General Plan** for The City Diego and the **East Mission Valley Area Plan**; b) continuation of current trends of development; c) continuation of current zoning classifications and other land use controls; d) minimal street improvements; and e) no flood control facility.

Following the construction of the San Diego Jack Murphy Stadium, Hotel Circle visitor facilities, and the two regional shopping centers, four major categories of land uses have located in the Valley. These are office, commercial-recreation, retail and multiple dwelling residential uses. These uses are designated in a general fashion by the **Progress Guide and General Plan** for The City of San Diego. The sand and gravel extraction operations located between Mission Center Road and the Stadium are shown for natural resource extraction. The **East Mission Valley Area Plan** (a development plan) covers Mission Valley east of Interstate 805. A major departure from that plan is the concentration of multiple dwelling units around the Mission San Diego de Alcala. Much of that area was designated for commercial-recreation use in the **East Mission Valley Area Plan**. The office, commercial-recreation and retail areas are not single-purpose use types. Recently, office uses have been interspersed among the visitor facilities located along Hotel Circle, Although offices prevail along Camino Del Rio South, a random mixture of freestanding retail uses currently exists between SR-163 and Texas Street.

The zoning pattern throughout the Valley strongly reflects the random mix of land uses. Pockets of CR, CO, CA and R-3 zoning resulted from the absence of an adopted community plan containing specific guidelines. This is especially true in the Hotel Circle South and Camino Del Rio South areas. This trend toward “undefined mixed uses” or “any use” is likely to continue if remaining vacant land and redevelopable areas urbanize without the guidelines of a community plan.

The surface street system also will remain fragmented and disjointed unless a comprehensive effort is utilized to finance completion of an internal street system. Although the City can require local street widenings for individual projects, those projects could develop a “piece meal” fashion, resulting in traffic flow difficulties. There would also be little effort to balance the heavily automobile-oriented transportation system with buses and other modes of public transit.

The approach to flood protection in use today is land use regulation by zoning. The FW Zone defines the extent of the 100-year frequency flood (based upon 36,000 cubic feet per second). This zone is the basis for the “open space” designation along the San Diego River by The City of San Diego's **Progress Guide and General Plan**. Land uses permitted by the FW Zone are limited to non-structural uses unaffected by flooding. No structural flood control facilities are planned under Concept 1. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has withdrawn its participation in a flood channel for Mission Valley, based upon their 1975 cost-benefit analysis. Efforts to implement short-term solutions (i.e., pilot channels to handle low flows) have met with limited success to date. Some property damage occurred in three past consecutive rainy seasons (1978, 1979, 1980) and is likely to occur again in the future under the “No Plan” Alternative.

In summary, existing plans covering Mission Valley do not provide a comprehensive set of policies for future land use, transportation and flood protection. Equally important is the lack of a comprehensive implementation program, including financing, to provide needed improvements.

## **CONCEPT 2. LIMITED DEVELOPMENT**

This “Limited Development” concept assumes that no new structural development will occur in any areas subject to flooding, including both FW (Floodway) and FPF (Floodplain Fringe) zoned property, and will limit development located outside the flood-prone areas. Of the 1,982 net acres of land in Mission Valley, about 432 acres are contained in the FW Zone and about 900 acres in the FPF Overlay Zone as of October 1980. This means that about 1,332 acres (67 percent of Mission Valley) are subject to flooding and therefore, could be excluded from new structural development under Concept 2. As indicated, the City now provides flood protection by application of the FW and FPF zones. The FW Zone precludes any structural development. The FPF Overlay Zone permits structural development, but requires that measures such as diking, filling or special development techniques be undertaken to mitigate potential flood damage. Concept 2 proposes to replace the FPF Overlay Zone with FW zoning. Concept 2 also limits new development outside the floodplain areas. In addition to potential flooding, the traffic carrying capacity of the existing road system would be a major factor used to limit and direct new development.

In terms of land use, Concept 2 would result in no new development in the two-thirds of the Valley subject to flooding, and only limited development elsewhere. Some relatively low intensity uses that could remain include sand and gravel extraction and golf courses. Some possible new uses within the flood-prone area could include campgrounds, miniature golf courses, truck crops, livestock grazing and other non-structural uses. The overall impression would be a wide, partially developed greenbelt extending the length of Mission Valley. Outside of individual flood protection projects for existing development, no major expenditures of public or private funds would be anticipated for flood protection. No significant improvements to the transportation system would occur under the Limited Development concept. There would be little incentive by private development to provide needed street connections or even widenings because few new projects could be built.

## **CONCEPT 3. INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT**

This “Intensive Development” concept assumes that urbanization would occur to the greatest extent possible. This high degree of development intensity would require: a) a light rail transit (LRT) system supplemented by feeder lines and tramways; b) extensive freeway and surface street improvements; and c) a concrete channel to control floodwaters along the entire length of Mission Valley.

The land use pattern could change dramatically from its current relatively open character to one dominated by intensive high-rise development. Open space would be virtually eliminated, especially along the San Diego River. New developments possible under Concept 3 include a major hotel/convention complex located west of San Diego de Alcalá and on the golf courses north of the San Diego River and major hotel and office complexes elsewhere. This approach to development would be like that under the “No Plan” Alternative except that provision of a concrete channel for flood protection and an upgraded transportation network would encourage development on a highly intensive scale. Traffic (trip generation) under Concept 3 would be so extreme that development of a public transit system would be mandatory for Mission Valley.

The Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) has under study the alignment for a “transit corridor” extending from Center City northward to Escondido along Interstate 15. Concept 3 proposes that an LRT line be extended through the Valley to the Stadium. This proposed east-west line could connect with future lines serving the La Mesa/El Cajon area. The LRT system would be supplemented with a coordinated internal public transit network consisting of shuttle buses, trams, bikeways and other alternative transportation modes. Additionally some street improvements might still be required.

#### **CONCEPT 4. MODERATE DEVELOPMENT – COMMERCIAL OFFICE EMPHASIS**

This “Moderate Development - Commercial Office Emphasis” concept assumes the following: a) a planned multiple use approach to development; b) an emphasis on commercial/office uses; c) a balanced transportation system, and d) a natural appearing, soft-bottomed floodway approach to flood protection to contain a 100-year flood under the year 2000 conditions.

A “Multiple Use Option” approach (employed in Concepts 4, 5 and 6) is intended to permit greater flexibility in project design than is possible through strict application of conventional zoning regulations. It permits developers to combine land uses in such a way that community and individual project “self-containment” can be achieved. “Self-containment” means that all support facilities and services associated with a project are located either within the project or within a short walking distance. Examples include banks, restaurants, health facilities and food markets. “Self-containment” should reduce the number of intra-valley automobile trips, resulting in fuel conservation, decreased air pollution and less traffic.

Concept 4 encourages development of an urban community with an emphasis on commercial office projects, with little land devoted to new housing. The pattern of a mix of land uses has already been established; there are no residentially oriented support facilities (schools, parks, libraries, for example), and there has been high economic demand for new office and retail space. This concept requires a considerably upgraded road system supplemented by a greatly improved bus service, bikeway system, and possibly, an internal tram or “people mover” line. Although a light rail transit line is not part of Concept 4, one could ultimately be of great benefit to Mission Valley.

Also embodied in this concept is a different approach to flood protection in Mission Valley. This is the “natural appearing soft-bottomed flood-way,” derived from the “grass-lined swale” recommended by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers in the 1975 **San Diego River-Mission Valley Flood Control Task Force Report** and the supplementary design memorandum. This approach consists of a major flood control facility to contain the year 2000 100-year frequency flood (based upon 49,000 cubic feet per second) and a low-flow or “pilot channel” design to handle the year 2000 10-year frequency flood (4,600 cfs). The overall appearance of this flood protection system would be that of a river in a greenbelt setting with water in the low-flow channel on a year-round basis. Creation of this flood control facility within the river corridor area would make more land available for development than is presently the case. Indeed, the riverbank areas could be designed to accommodate a variety of outdoor recreational uses compatible with habitat preservation.

## **CONCEPT 5. MODERATE DEVELOPMENT - INTEGRATED USE EMPHASIS (Recommended Alternative)**

The “Moderate Development - Integrated Use Emphasis” concept includes: a) an emphasis on an integration of commercial-retail, commercial-recreation, office and residential uses; b) encouragement of residential development in order to complement the commercial and office development presently occurring in Mission Valley; c) the addition of resident-oriented community facilities and services; d) a comprehensive transportation system with an emphasis on achieving a viable internal circulation network; and e) a natural appearing soft-bottomed floodway solution to flood protection in order to contain a 100-year flood under the year 2000 conditions.

Concept 5 is an attempt to complement existing and future commercial office development with an appropriate amount of residential development. In order to provide residents with the opportunity to live close to employment, shopping and recreational opportunities, a comprehensive integrated use development approach is necessary.

Mission Valley is characterized by an abundance of regionally oriented shopping, office and recreational facilities, but lacks resident-oriented support facilities despite considerable residential growth. It is felt that a residential growth, as provided by this concept, would justify providing such local support facilities as supermarkets, and other neighborhood retail and service facilities, medical clinics, etc.

A balanced transportation system is an essential ingredient of Concept 5 with an emphasis on achieving a viable internal circulation network. This concept requires a significantly upgraded surface street system in order to reduce, or eliminate entirely, current reliance upon use of the freeway system to travel within the Valley. Public transit improvements would include higher levels of express and urban route bus services as well as the addition of an intra-Valley shuttle bus system. A light rail transit (LRT) line is an important part of Concept 5. The future extension of an LRT line from Center City through Mission Valley to the stadium (and possibly north along I-15 to the city of Escondido) could reduce dependence upon the automobile and reduce traffic congestion and parking problems in the Valley. Public transit modes would also be supplemented by an extensive walkway and bikeway system linking many of the Valley's major activity centers.

Concept 5 embodies the “natural appearing soft-bottomed floodway” previously described in Concept 4. Continued urbanization in the San Diego River Basin is expected to increase runoff rates through at least the year 2000. The U.S. Army’ Corps of Engineers estimates that the 100-year frequency flood will increase in magnitude from 36,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) in 1975 to approximately 49,000 cfs by the year 2000. Concept 5 recommends that the 100-year flood control facility be designed and constructed to the year 2000 standard of 49,000 cfs in order to provide flood protection for the Valley.

The overall appearance of this flood protection system would be similar to that of a river greenbelt with water year-round in the low-flow (year 2000, 10-year flood) channel and preservation or revegetation of much of the extensive riparian/wetland habitat. Development of this facility would make more land available for structural development. Indeed, the river

corridor itself could conceivably be designed to accommodate a variety of active outdoor recreation uses, which would complement the abutting land uses and provide multi-purpose uses of flood protection, critical habitat conservation, and recreational facilities for the community and region.

## **CONCEPT 6. MODERATE DEVELOPMENT – RESIDENTIAL EMPHASIS**

This “Moderate Development - Residential Emphasis” concept is the third plan option which is based on a “multiple use” approach to development. However, Concept 6 differs from Concepts 4 and 5 in several important respects. These include: a) a heavy emphasis on new residential projects; b) a full complement of community facilities and services to support this new residential development; c) less extensive transportation improvements; and d) a natural-appearing soft-bottomed floodway to handle the year 2000 Standard Project Flood.

The major objective of Concept 6 is to build a substantial amount of new housing in Mission Valley, catering to families and senior citizens at all income levels as well as to the young adult market. A variety of housing types, including townhouses, garden apartments and high-rise structures would be encouraged. In addition, development of modular housing could provide affordable units for low- and moderate-income households. A residential community would require substantial new support facilities and services if the goal of “self-containment” (as discussed previously in Concept 4) is to be achieved. These would include: a) neighborhood shopping centers with full line supermarkets; b) schools; c) libraries; d) public parks and recreational facilities; and e) health care facilities. These services are presently provided in areas adjacent to the Mission Valley community.

Maximum protection from floods is another major objective under Concept 6, due to the anticipated large number of residential dwellers. In addition, flood facilities should be aesthetically pleasing in appearance. To achieve both objectives, Concept 6 proposes a natural appearing soft-bottomed floodway large enough to accommodate the Standard Project Flood. The standard project flood (SPF) represents the flood that would result from the most severe combination of meteorological and hydrologic conditions considered reasonably characteristic of the region. It normally is larger than any past-recorded flood in the area, and can be expected to be exceeded very infrequently. In 1975, it was calculated to be 95,000 cfs. It would average about 700-800 feet in width and would have approximately twice the handling capacity of the year 2000 “100-year” floodway. Although more land would be placed within the SPF floodway than the 100-year floodway, the Floodplain Fringe (FPF) Overlay Zone could be eliminated from Mission Valley.

The configuration and cost of transportation improvements for Concept 6 would be substantially different from those proposed under Concepts 3,4 and 5. The size and number of major street facilities needed would be proposed under Concepts 3, 4 and 5. The size and number of major street facilities needed would be reduced substantially due to the generally lower traffic generation rate of residential development (as compared to that generated by office or retail uses). However, it is probable that there would be more local streets providing access to housing units than would be the case under the commercial office alternative. Still, the overall cost of providing adequate transportation should be lower under Concept 6 than under Concepts 3, 4 and

5. As in Concepts 3 and 5, an LRT line through the Valley would be beneficial, especially if combined with improvements in bus service or the addition of an intra-Valley transit system. However, an internal transit system would not be needed as immediately in a residential community as compared to a commercially oriented one, but it would be equally desirable.

#### **CONCEPT 7. SANDAG SERIES V DEVELOPMENT FORECASTS (1978-2000)**

The SANDAG (San Diego Association of Governments) Development Forecast is based primarily on the continuation of existing development patterns in Mission Valley. It assumes that current zoning will remain the same and that most of the developable vacant land will be used for multi-unit residential construction. It does not address the existence of or need for a flood protection facility. It also assumes that the surface street system remains the same, with only normal maintenance, but no substantial additions or deletions.

The SANDAG Forecast identifies four types of land use activity: 1) residential; 2) basic or exportable commercial and industrial; 3) non-basic or local service and commercial; and 4) vacant. Residential development would be located primarily in the western end of the Valley. The acreage used for residential purposes would expand 61 percent, an increase from 126 to 327 acres. This translates to a 54 percent increase in the total number of housing units. The forecast also estimates a 55 percent increase in the number of multi-family units (from 2196 to 4919). The increase, however, is based on an R-2 density (a maximum of 14 dwelling units per acre). This would result in a projected residential population of 9,716.

Basic or exportable commercial and industrial activity includes any enterprise in which the goods or services produced are to be used or sold outside of the region. This aspect of the economic base in Mission Valley will change very little. The acreage used for this type of commercial activity is expected to increase from 106 to 110 acres, or slightly less than one percent.

Local economic activities include commercial-office and retail uses which serve the region. These kinds of activities are expected to expand to 25 percent in terms of area (from 509 to 674 acres), and 36 percent in terms of employment (from 11,767 to 17,709 employees). The majority of the growth, both employment and acreage, is forecast to occur in the western portion or the Valley.

In essence, the SANDAG Forecast is a reflection of the anticipated changes in housing unit and employment figures for the year 2000, based upon existing zoning and past trends. The effects of such growth are discussed in the "No Plan" concept. The same basic assumptions hold true.

#### **CONCEPT 8. PLANNING COMMITTEE ALTERNATIVE: MULTIPLE USE - INTEGRATED USE EMPHASIS**

*(This alternative was prepared by the Mission Valley Unified Planning Committee. The alternative is included as submitted by the Planning Committee. For additional detailed information see Appendix H.)*

*Overall Goal* - To provide a community plan for Mission Valley which allows for its continued development (through market initiative) as a quality regional urban center in the City of San Diego while recognizing environmental concerns, the Valley's traffic needs and encouraging the Valley's development as a community.

The “Planning Committee Alternative - Integrated Use Emphasis” concept includes: a) a multiple use approach to development; b) an emphasis on an integration of commercial-retail, commercial-recreation, office and residential uses; c) encouragement of residential development in order to complement the commercial and office development presently prevalent in Mission Valley; d) the addition of resident-oriented community facilities and services; e) a comprehensive transportation system with an emphasis on achieving a viable internal circulation network; and, f) a natural appearing, soft-bottomed flood-way solution to flood protection, with optional augmentation by means of a supplemental diversion facility in order to contain a 100-year flood.

This concept assumes the following: a) all developable and redevelopable property is to be designated “multiple use” unless the property owner elects to retain the existing zoning applicable to the property; b) existing CA, CO, and CR zoning remain on developed properties at the option of the property owners; c) all future development intensity is regulated by a maximum floor area ratio of 2.

A balanced transportation system is an essential ingredient of Concept 8 with an emphasis on achieving a viable internal circulation network. Public transit modes would be supplemented by an extensive walkway and bikeway system linking many of the Valley's major activity centers. This concept also requires a significantly upgraded surface street system in order to reduce, or eliminate entirely, current reliance upon use of the freeway system to travel within the Valley. Although a light rail transit (LRT) line is not an integral part of Concept 8 at this time, one could ultimately be of significant benefit to Mission Valley. The future extension of an LRT line from Center City through Mission Valley to the stadium (and possibly north along I-15 to the city of Escondido) could reduce dependence upon the automobile and reduce traffic congestion and parking problems in the Valley.

The open space element is the key, not only to open space recommendations, but urban design recommendations as well. Urban design focuses on the river, hillsides, and transportation corridors. The open space element discusses development criteria for the flood control facility, hillsides and park and recreation areas.

Implementation envisions the development of new zoning legislation to address development intensity and multiple use. A financing plan that envisions the establishment of assessment districts to provide funds for the development of public facilities within the community is included as part of the implementation plan.

## **RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE**

Concept 5, the “Moderate Development - Integrated Use Emphasis” alternative, represents the recommended approach in achieving the Goals and Objectives established for Mission Valley.

Concepts 1,7 and 8 were discarded, as they would not result in a coherent, well-designed community. Likewise, Concept 2 was rejected, because it would be unrealistic to bring development to a virtual standstill in Mission Valley. Concept 3 was also rejected because such a high intensity of development would be detrimental to the physical environment and quality of life. Concept 6 was eliminated because of the cost of providing major residential support facilities and a standard project flood control facility and the lack of demand for such a development pattern. Concepts 4 and 5 were similar in terms of community goals. It was felt that concept 5 was more responsive to the private market constraints and opportunities than was Concept 4. Under Concept 5, the emphasis is on moderate levels of development which includes an integration of commercial-office, retail, recreation, and residential uses with improvements to the circulation and public transit systems, a natural appearing floodway, and limits to development intensity.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **CONCLUSIONS:**

Implementation of either the Planning Department's community plan alternative for Mission Valley (Concept 5) or the Mission Valley Unified Planning Committee's alternative (Concept 8) would create an urban environment very different from today's conditions. Mission Valley of 1984 contains about 5.1 million gross square feet of commercial office space, and all land uses generate about 0.3 million Average Daily Trips (ADT). Concept 5 could lead to creation of 17.2 million gross square feet of office space, with traffic doubling to 0.6 million ADT. Development under Concept 8 could result in 65.7 million square feet of office use, with ten times more traffic (3.4 million ADT) than is present today. (It is important to note that development under the existing General Plan and East Mission Valley Community Plan would permit about twice as much intensity as Concept 5: 1.3 million ADT vs. 0.6 million ADT.)

Either concept would lead to significant environmental impacts. Mitigation measures can reduce the significance of many impacts associated with Concept 5. The intensity permitted by Concept 8 would create unmanageable and extreme environmental conditions. The following paragraphs explain in greater detail the impacts of the two community plan alternatives.

#### **Traffic**

Traffic forecasts show that traffic volumes generated by the land use intensity under Concept 5 can be accommodated on Mission Valley's proposed horizon year circulation system with congestion in some areas of the valley during peak periods. In order to accommodate the traffic generated by the level of development proposed under Concept 5, the traffic forecast assumes that several regional highways will be completed (e.g., SR-52, SR-56, and SR-125), and that development will be limited to the intensity designated in Concept 5. Nonetheless, SANDAG's Draft 1983 Regional Transportation Plan projects heavy congestion would exist on Interstates, 5, 8, and 805, and on SR-163 within Mission Valley.

The intensity of development allowed by Concept 8 could not be accommodated by any feasible street system. Only three miles of streets would function above a Level of Service of "F"; 39 miles of the valley's total of 42 would be at LOS "F" (system failure). Interstate 8 and SR-163 would carry twice as much traffic as the most congested freeway in California; Friars Road would carry six times as much traffic as the most congested freeway in California. Communities to the north and south of Mission Valley would be very negatively impacted. For example, Texas Street in Park Northeast would carry as much traffic as Interstate 8 does today. Such volumes are clearly impossible to accommodate, and the freeways would be unable to perform their role as regional traffic arteries.

#### **Air Quality**

Because development under Concept 5 would cause congestion on several roadways, direct air quality impacts would result. The elevated pollutant levels associated with poor traffic flow might delay but would likely not prevent attainment of Federal ambient air quality standards.

The level of intensity and emissions associated with Concept 8 would preclude the region from achieving the air quality standards. In addition, the extreme congestion created by Concept 8 would produce elevated carbon monoxide levels throughout the valley, creating a direct threat to public health.

### **Biological Resources**

Further development of Mission Valley will result in additional confinement and channelization of the San Diego River. In recognition of this, the community plan (both concepts) includes a Wetlands Management Plan which is intended to improve habitat value and recreational opportunities along the river as flood-control improvements are made. While the plan incorporates extensive requirements for enhancement and revegetation of the river corridor, it will be difficult to fully offset the loss of biological resources as development proceeds. The ultimate river corridor will be much narrower, and will be far more segmented by roadway and trolley crossings. Future development will provide greater access to the river, but with a minimal buffer. The improvements provided in the river corridor will probably be aesthetically successful, but extraordinary revegetation and maintenance efforts will be necessary to restore the river's biological value.

### **Visual Quality/Urban Design**

Both alternative plan concepts contain an urban design element which, if implemented, could improve the visual character of Mission Valley. However, without a mechanism to ensure implementation of the design guidelines, continued chaotic development is possible. Adoption of a requirement that all new projects be subject to the planned development (Planned Commercial Development, Planned Residential Development) or specific plan process would substantially reduce the possibility of new development blocking views of the south slopes of the valley, restricting views and access to the San Diego River, obstructing visual access to community landmarks, or creating disharmony in building scale relationships.

### **Public Facilities**

Both Concept 5 and Concept 8 would result in traffic congestion which would affect the ability of fire and police vehicles to respond to calls.

### **RECOMMEND MITIGATION MEASURE:**

The planning concepts and objectives presented in Concept 5 can only be achieved if new regulatory controls are available to ensure implementation of the community plan's guidelines. Satisfactory mitigation of traffic, air quality, biological, urban design impacts and public facilities can occur only if discretionary approval is required for new development. Several parcels could be redeveloped under existing C, CA, or CO zoning without regard to the community plan's recommendations. **To ensure that mitigation measures are implemented, it is recommended that a regulatory system be adopted which requires that all new development in the valley be processed through planned development permits or similar discretionary approvals.**

Unless this (or an equivalent) mitigation measure is adopted, project approval will require the decision maker to make specific and substantiated findings which state that: a) the recommended mitigation measure is infeasible; and b) these impacts have been found acceptable because of specific overriding considerations.

*Note: The above discussion of the governmental impacts of this community plan is an excerpt from the Environmental Impact Report. The complete Environmental Impact Report (EQD No. 84-0194), as prepared by the Environmental Quality Division of the Planning Department, is on file in the Environmental Quality Division and is available for public review.*