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## COMMERCIAL ELEMENT

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### EXISTING CONDITIONS - 1988

The Plan designates 204 acres for commercial uses ranging from a 53-acre Town Center to several neighborhood shopping centers conveniently located within the community. The area designated for commercial use represents approximately three percent of the total land area in the Plan.

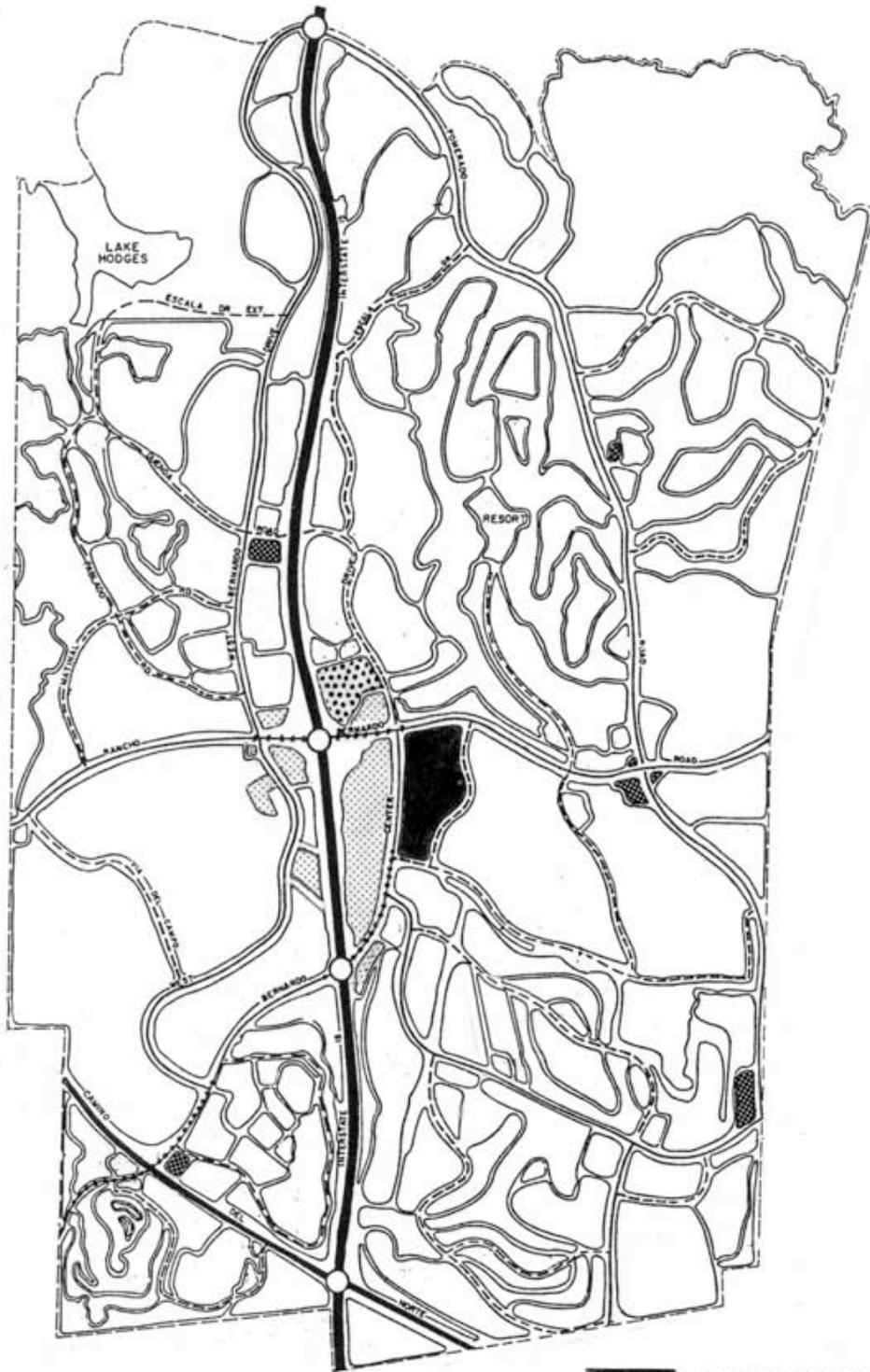
Presently, 187.5 acres have been developed for commercial use. The largest concentration is in the vicinity of Rancho Bernardo Road and Bernardo Center Drive where there are approximately 108 acres developed. Development on the Town Center site consists of a shopping center, restaurants, financial and institutional uses and a retirement facility.

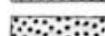
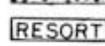
Specialized commercial uses and business office complexes are oriented toward visitor and special community activities and have easy access to I-15. These uses include banks, savings and loans, service stations, a hotel, post office, fire station, branch library and telephone exchange. The Mercado, located on a 7.5-acre lot north of Bernardo Center Drive and Rancho Bernardo Road, includes retail shops and restaurants.

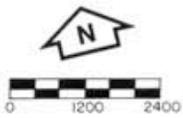
A five-acre commercial site at West Bernardo Drive and Rancho Bernardo Road has been developed with a service station, a restaurant and a motel. A motel, restaurant and three service stations occupy 5.5 acres in the industrial area south of Rancho Bernardo Road. A hotel is planned on a 3.5-acre site on West Bernardo Court. These freeway-oriented facilities provide food and lodging to persons conducting business in the community. Development in the Town Center and surrounding specialized commercial areas continues.

A corporate office complex has been developed on a 20-acre parcel located north of the Mercado between I-15 and Bernardo Center Drive. This complex has been sensitively sited on a prominent knoll within the community.

Five neighborhood commercial centers on 21 acres presently serve the community. One, located at Rancho Bernardo and Pomerado Roads, consists of six acres and offers a variety of commercial goods and services, including a major food store. A 1.3-acre neighborhood center providing convenience goods is located on Oaks North Drive just east of Pomerado Road. A six-acre neighborhood center has been developed west of I-15 on West Bernardo Drive. A six-acre site at Bernardo Heights Parkway and Pomerado Road is developed with an assortment of commercial establishments including neighborhood retail uses, financial institutions, restaurants and a major food store. A fifth neighborhood center is located on a two-acre site at Bernardo Center Drive and Maturin Drive.



-  TOWN CENTER
-  NEIGHBORHOOD
-  SPECIALIZED
-  OFFICE
-  RESORT



## Commercial Areas

### Rancho Bernardo Community Plan

FIGURE  
**4**

## COMMERCIAL OBJECTIVES

- To accommodate commercial retail and office uses that serve the community, as well as provide an employment base for area residents.
- To provide commercial facilities necessary to serve the needs of travelers and visitors to the area.
- To design commercial developments so as to incorporate attractive lighting, landscaped parking, screening of loading and service areas, architecturally compatible buildings and to provide safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access to these facilities.
- To provide a focal point for the community in the town center and to encourage a mix of commercial, office, financial, governmental, entertainment and cultural uses.
- To encourage commercial facilities to be designed so as to reduce the potential for criminal activity.
- To ensure that any redevelopment of commercial retail or office use is sensitive to the needs and conditions of the community.

## COMMERCIAL PROPOSALS

### • **Bernardo Town Center**

The 53-acre Town Center should function as a focal point for the Rancho Bernardo community. It should accommodate a diverse array of facilities and services including:

- A community shopping area devoted to stores and shops providing groceries, convenience and other shoppers' goods;
- Personal, professional and financial service establishments;
- Restaurants and entertainment centers;
- Public and semi-public institutions and cultural and social facilities; and
- Two residential retirement facilities consisting of 246 dwelling units, a 59-bed skilled nursing facility and 100 assisted care units.

The zoning on the Town Center site should be changed from CA-S to CA-RR. The CA-RR zone permits development of community and regional commercial uses by right while permitting residential uses only if a Planned Commercial Development (PCD) permit is obtained. Application of the CA-RR zone to the Town Center would, therefore, ensure that residential uses could not be developed without an opportunity for the Planning Department and the Rancho Bernardo Community Planning Board to review a residential

proposal and participate in a public hearing on the merits of the proposal. However, the City would be under no obligation to approve proposals for any additional residential units in the Town Center if the CA-RR zone were applied to this property. The CA-RR zone is necessary to prevent residential uses from usurping land needed for commercial uses to serve the community. Residential development, which is permitted by right in the existing CA-S zone, could exceed the projected total unit count for this community and could strain roadways and other public services.

While the Bernardo Town Center will draw trade from outside the community, it is not intended to be a full-fledged regional center. Shopping facilities should offer depth, variety and choice in various lines (e.g., wearing apparel), but should not be dominated by major department stores and large appliance and automotive establishments. The development should be characterized by shops and establishments which meet the diverse needs and tastes of community residents rather than the demands of large regional markets.

The Town Center is centrally located and provides a focus to the community. It has excellent accessibility to the community circulation system, as well as to the interchanges of I-15. Direct access to the site is available from Rancho Bernardo Road, Bernardo Center Drive and Lomica Drive. The perimeter of the site is developed and landscaped to complement adjacent residential areas. Within the site, building areas are oriented to interior pedestrian movements through malls, plazas or paseos or toward view potentials. Site planning accommodates parking, interior circulation and landscaping criteria within a low-profile architectural development concept. Emphasis should continue to be placed on achieving a mix of uses capable of sustaining lively day and evening activities.

- **Specialized Commercial Development**

Commercial areas which accommodate visitor-oriented, commercial-recreation and special community-serving commercial activities are grouped in one land use category. In general, these use areas provide sites for establishments that are primarily highway-oriented and serve a trade area extending beyond the community. The Plan allocates 112 acres to specialized commercial uses.

The zoning in the specialized commercial areas east of I-15 should be changed from CA-S to CA-RR for the reasons stated in the Town Center discussion in this Plan. Application of the CA-RR zone would help to ensure that the commercial uses in this area would not be usurped by residential development. Residential development should not be permitted under any circumstances on the specialized commercial areas west of I-15. These areas should be preserved for commercial-recreation and special community-serving commercial uses. The CR and CV zones should be retained in these areas.

Existing development is centered around the I-15/Rancho Bernardo Road interchange area. Visitor-oriented uses (motels, restaurants, service stations) are primarily located on the west side of the freeway in the vicinity of Rancho Bernardo Road and West Bernardo Drive. In this area, establishments have good access and visibility to regional routes and

are well located to serve the industrial park. Significant hotel, convention, restaurant, entertainment and recreational facilities are located east of I-15 at the Compri Hotel and the Rancho Bernardo Inn complex. Other visitor-oriented uses are provided within the Mercado shopping area and in connection with restaurant development in the Town Center.

The specialized commercial area lying between I-15 and Bernardo Center Drive provides for such uses as automobile agencies, furniture stores, commercial-recreation facilities, financial institutions, offices, clinics and similar establishments. Most of these facilities provide essential community services while also serving an extended trade area. Development in these areas should not occur without recognizing the functional relationships and visual effects such development would have on adjacent use areas and arterials.

A privately-developed park has been provided in association with the specialized commercial development west of Bernardo Center Drive. This area, known as Webb Park, is well integrated with the commercial development and includes a small lake. This 4.63-acre private park is an important amenity in the commercial area and should be retained. For many years, the park has provided a visual amenity and an outdoor activity area for the users of the commercial facilities surrounding it. Any future development plans for this area should include this open area as an important element of the design concept.

The development standards of the underlying commercial zone do not provide sensitive site design guidelines which would ensure preservation of a park-like environment on the Webb Park site if future redevelopment is proposed for this property. In order to ensure that development of the site will retain an open, park-like character, a Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ), Type B should be applied to the property. The CPIOZ permit should require the preservation and enhancement of the park-like atmosphere and ensure that redevelopment be in conformance with all the guidelines of the PCD Ordinance (see **Figure 5**).

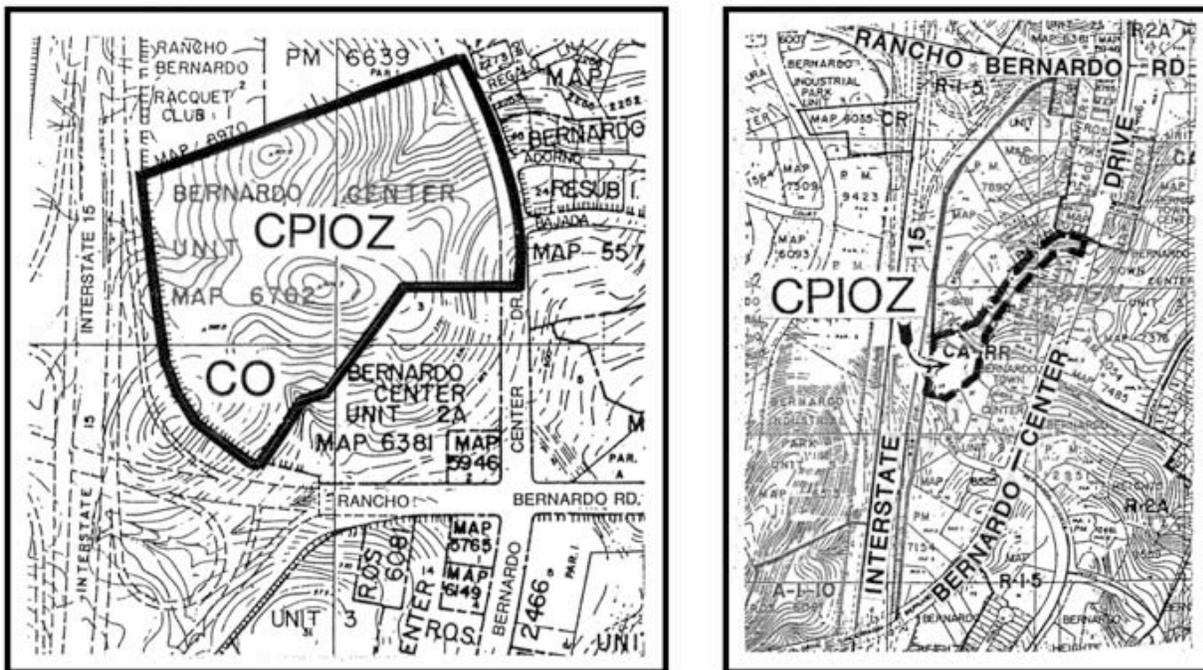
As the needs of the community and the region change, and/or the needs of the businesses change, these specialized commercial developments may expand or redevelop. Proposals for expansion or redevelopment should be processed in association with PCD permits to ensure the incorporation of appropriate uses into the project, as well as to provide for community-wide review of design, compatibility with adjacent uses and potential impacts to the circulation system.

- **Office Development**

While professional and business offices should locate within the Town Center and other commercial areas within the community, a regional office complex of 20 acres has been developed north of the Mercado between I-15 and Bernardo Center Drive. This area is intended for use by corporate offices wishing to locate within the community. The development at this site is characterized by two and three-story buildings in a campus-like

environment. Expansion or redevelopment of the existing facilities should maintain the overall characteristics of the existing development. The area is well served by the circulation system and has close proximity to the Town Center, major community facilities, the industrial park and adjacent higher-density housing areas.

The existing development occupies a prominent knoll adjacent to I-15 and is visible from many areas within the community. As a result of the site's visual prominence, it is important that any redevelopment of the site preserve the topographic character of the knoll, as well as retain the open, uncluttered nature of the site. Such sensitive site design is not guaranteed through the development standards of the underlying CO (Commercial Office) zone. Under the existing CO zone the property could redevelop with a permitted residential density of 29 DU/NRA. This would be inconsistent with the densities in the surrounding neighborhood. The intended use for this site is business and professional office use. These uses should not be preempted by residential uses. The CO zone also permits development at a scale and bulk that could conflict with the character and visual amenities of the neighborhood. In order to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood, to enhance and preserve the scale and character of the neighborhood, and to preclude residential uses, discretionary review of development is necessary. Therefore, the CPIOZ should be applied to the property. (See **Figure 5**)



ALLSTATE SITE

WEBB PARK SITE



Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone

Rancho Bernardo Community Plan

FIGURE  
**5**

The CPIOZ will establish guidelines for review relating to architectural design, building scale, site coverage, permitted uses, landscaping, trip generation, parking, signage and roof treatment for the purpose of preserving the visual quality of the site. The Type B CPIOZ permit procedure (Municipal Code Section 101.0457.2) would require a discretionary development permit and a public hearing process for an expansion or redevelopment on this property. The Type B CPIOZ development permit would be required to address the following issues:

1. Architectural Design: The proposed development should include a building design that is compatible in style, as well as in terms of bulk and scale, with surrounding developments in the area. The maximum height of the buildings should also be determined based on compatibility with surrounding development, as well as the visual prominence of the site. Development should be consistent with the design, landscaping and signage guidelines of this Plan.
2. Site Planning: Buildings should be sited so as to complement the existing topography and provide landscaped setbacks (minimum of 50 feet) adjacent to I-15 and Bernardo Center Drive. Site development should continue to be characterized by low-profile structures not exceeding three stories in height and incorporating open space areas. A campus-like environment should be maintained by fully integrating site planning, architectural and landscape design considerations into a unified development proposal. Vehicular access should be aligned to complement the existing topography. Vehicular use areas should be sited to minimize their visual prominence.

Due to the necessity of maintaining a campus-like environment and the height and setback limitations, it should not be assumed that the maximum site coverage and floor area ratio permitted by the underlying zone would be permitted. However, use of underground or structured parking may make it possible to achieve these maximums.

3. Permitted Uses: The Plan designates this site for commercial office uses. However, other commercial uses may be considered, through a PCD Permit, provided it can be demonstrated that there are adequate facilities (including transportation facilities) available to serve the proposed development and that the uses can be provided without compromising the overall site design. Residential development on this site should be prohibited. This is the only site in Rancho Bernardo that is designated and zoned specifically for commercial office use. This site is needed to provide for business and professional offices and should not be preempted by residential uses.
4. Landscape Architectural Design: Landscape design should address, but not be limited to, the following:
  - Views of the site from Bernardo Center Drive, I-15 and all other significant vantage points within one-half mile;
  - Views from the site;
  - The natural character of the site;
  - The architectural style and function of proposed structures;
  - The existing design character of the surrounding community.

Specifically, street frontages (public and private) shall be designed with street trees in a parkway. Views of parking areas from public rights-of-way should be effectively screened and plantings within parking lots shall meet or exceed the requirements of the Citywide Landscape Ordinance. For purposes of water conservation, extensive use of turf grass shall be avoided.

5. Signage: Signage on the site should be limited to two monument signs; one located adjacent to I-15 and the other adjacent to Rancho Bernardo Road.
6. Roof Treatment: All rooftop equipment shall be completely screened from view. Roof design should be consistent with that of the surrounding community.

- **Neighborhood Centers**

The Plan identifies five neighborhood shopping centers to meet the daily convenience needs of local residents. While sites should customarily contain six usable acres, the exact sizes were determined on the basis of specific planning considerations. The five neighborhood centers in the Rancho Bernardo community consist of 21 acres and range in size from six acres to one acre.

Typically single-story in construction, the centers provide ample parking, landscaping and screening of service areas and show design sensitivity in relationship to adjacent residential areas. While these sites may be located at intersections of arterial or collector streets, they must be convenient to local neighborhoods.

Since the neighborhood centers provide necessary services to the community, they should not be preempted by noncommercial uses. Residential development in the neighborhood centers should not be considered as an acceptable land use and proposals for residential development on any of the neighborhood commercial sites should be denied.