
SOCIAL NEEDS ELEMENT

PRIMARY GOAL

Establish social services and cultural facilities and programs responsive to changing physical and socioeconomic needs of the community.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

At present, social activities, programs and institutions are relatively limited in the Rancho Peñasquitos community. In addition, community facilities to house such social activities are limited in number and diversity. Because social needs may be expected to increase as the community grows larger and older, it is necessary that social institutions and programs develop to adequately meet these needs. It is likely that most of the needs can be made on a community basis, with activities responsive at the community and neighborhood levels.

ISSUES

One of the most critical issues in Rancho Peñasquitos in terms of social needs is the lack of organized youth activities and programs. There are very few opportunities within the community for after school activities, and virtually no traditional events to integrate and involve young people. Except for the Town Center shopping area, there are currently no common areas or landmarks within the community where youths can meet, gather or engage in routine socializing.

POLICIES

- Social programs should maximize opportunities for the human development and interaction of residents of both sexes and of all ages and backgrounds.
- Programs and activities should be provided which assist youth in realizing their potential while learning to be responsible citizens.
- Sufficient area for library and cultural facilities and services should be assured to meet the needs of present and future community residents.
- The community should be involved in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of social service programs within the community.
- A senior center should be located in the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Educational Programs and Facilities

Public schools should be used for recreational activities, meetings, vocational and adult education programs, children's and youth activities and general interest classes. The establishment of a community education program which would use the schools at night and draw from the varied employment and avocational interests of community residents is encouraged.

Recreational Programs and Facilities

Both private and public recreational programs and facilities are encouraged, as described in the **Parks and Recreation Element**. Recreational programs should consider overall community requirements as well as serving individual neighborhood and target group needs.

A senior center should be sited in the community center or in a community recreation center or teen center.

The major community recreation building proposed for the Hilltop Community Park should develop a range of recreational programs for children, youths, adults and the elderly, as well as provide meeting space for community groups. Sports leagues and scout programs should be provided.

Civic Activities and Buildings

Continuation of activities by the planning board, other civic groups and renter and neighborhood associations is essential. These organizations allow residents to participate in decision-making for their community or neighborhood. Participation is also encouraged in the planning and decision-making activities and community relations programs of public and semipublic service agencies, such as the Poway Unified School District and the San Diego Police Department.

Religious Groups and Buildings

Eight religious institutional sites from three to seven acres in size are designated in the Plan. Other sites may be designated in residential or commercial zones as the community grows. Plans for religious building development should provide for adequate landscaping and maintenance, and sufficient parking so as not to disrupt surrounding uses. Religious facilities are encouraged to offer meeting rooms, develop day care programs, set up children and teen recreational and educational activities and provide supportive care for individual community members, as well as conduct religious activities.

Public Service

The establishment and operation of social services funded partially or fully by the public is recommended when needed by the community. Such services may include emergency hotlines, health and mental health services, youth employment programs, dial-a-ride and carpool matching and other similar services. These programs may use the community facilities outlined above, or rented space in commercial centers.

Self-Organized Activities and Facilities

The community currently supports few formal self-organized activities and services. Such programs can be organized and managed by community residents to serve their own needs. Opportunities for self-organized activities and facilities include such things as neighborhood gardens, cultural events, cooperatives, communitywide events and development corporations.

Cultural events could be organized by the community, such as concerts, amateur theatrical productions and craft fairs, which serve other communities as well as Rancho Peñasquitos residents. Cooperatives are ordinarily organized and operated by members to meet some community socioeconomic need, such as inexpensive food (food co-op or buying club), credit and financial service (credit co-op or co-op bank), or a day care center (day care co-op). Community-wide events enlarge a sense of community identity and pride, such as an annual holiday parade or a community-wide holiday celebration. Development corporations may function as nonprofit, community-based organizations that can contract to provide social services as well as promote local economic development and operate profit-making enterprises serving local needs.

Community Communications

Adequate communications within the community can promote a sense of community identity as well as make residents aware of social and economic opportunities and activities in their community. Kiosks and bulletin boards should be erected and used in prominent locations, such as the Town Center commercial area, food stores, parks, the post office and the library. Similarly, neighborhood communications are important. Display and bulletin boards should be set up in common areas as neighborhood schools and parks. In addition, the communications media should encourage community participation and provide community coverage. The Peñasquitos News, a weekly newspaper, is urged to provide community-wide distribution. Cable communications should carry community-oriented programming and coverage of community events.