OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ELEMENT

I. SUMMARY

Open space can be defined as any land area that is generally free from development or developed with very low-intensity or recreational uses that respect natural environmental characteristics. Open space can also include urban areas such as developed parks, private recreational facilities, plazas or malls. Open space can serve a wide range of functions in a community including the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, protection of public health and safety, historic and cultural preservation, the control of urban form or design, and scenic or aesthetic enjoyment. The open space and recreation element identifies open space areas in the community which should be retained and enhanced and provides guidelines for their functional integration.

II. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The open space in the University planning area serves primarily three functions: the preservation of topographic or biotic resources and habitats for resident and migratory birds, the provision of outlets for active or passive recreation and the protection of public health and safety. The community possesses a varied and largely undeveloped topography, which provides the opportunity to develop an outstanding open space system.

A. Regional and Resource-Based Open Space

Much of the open space in the community has a regional significance and attraction. The Torrey Pines mesa and coastal area contains the Torrey Pines State Reserve and the Torrey Pines City Park and golf course. The outstanding beach, sheer cliffs, native vegetation and scenic views of the Pacific Ocean make this an area of outstanding beauty. Rose Canyon and San Clemente Canyon are also considered regional resources.

Torrey Pines State Reserve consists of approximately 1,100 acres on the northern edge of the community plan area. The reserve contains a variety of landforms and habitats including a beach, coastal bluffs and canyons, mesas and a portion of an estuary. The primary function of the reserve is to preserve natural resources, most notably the Torrey pine tree, but also maritime scrub vegetation, native animal species, coastal aquatic habitat and major geologic landforms. Most of the reserve is located within the community plan area on both sides of Torrey Pines Road. The hiking trails, scenic vistas and beach provide recreational opportunities for the region.

1. Torrey Pines City Park

   The Torrey Pines City Park consists of 144 acres of land south of the State Reserve. The park includes a 1,000-foot-long strip of City beach, coastal bluffs, two coastal canyons and a section of mesa top. The park is generally undeveloped, but current uses of the site include hang gliding, model gliding and beach-associated recreation.

2. Torrey Pines Golf Course

   The Torrey Pines Golf Course is located northeast of the Torrey Pines City Park. The two golf courses on this mesa have attained national recognition. In addition to the golf course proper, the area includes some lease sites for commercial facilities supportive of the golf course.

3. Rose Canyon

   Rose Canyon consists of a well-defined valley floor bordered on the south by steep slopes. Vegetation in the canyon includes mature sycamore and oak trees and other riparian vegetation in the valley bottom, native chaparral species, particularly on the north-facing slopes, and grasses. Major branches of Rose Canyon extend to the north, particularly in the areas east of I-5 and east of the town center. The steep slopes and pronounced valley floor are important scenic assets to the community and can serve to separate and define the neighborhoods to the north and south.

4. San Clemente Canyon

   San Clemente Canyon consists of a fairly broad floodplain and steep slopes. Dense stands of mature oak and sycamore trees make this canyon particularly valuable for its native riparian habitat and associated fauna. Approximately 467 acres are owned by the City of San Diego comprising the partially developed Marian R. Bear Memorial Park. Park development has been restricted to a few parking lots, picnic tables, restroom facilities and a hiking trail. Several branches of San Clemente Canyon extend to the north and three branches in the University community are currently preserved as open space by easement. A branch of the canyon also extends into Standley Community Park. Although the update of the Clairemont Mesa Plan shifted the boundary between the University and Clairemont Mesa communities from the southern boundary of the park to SR-52, San Clemente Canyon remains a major open space resource for the University community.

5. Sorrento Valley and Soledad Canyon

   The hillsides and canyons along Sorrento Valley and Soledad Canyon form a natural northern boundary to the community. Some of these slopes contain dense stands of native chaparral, while other sections have been disturbed and are vegetated primarily with grasses. This scenic system of slopes preserves native species and natural topography, has value in identifying and separating communities and serves as a scenic resource. Portions of this area are impacted by the noise and crash hazard from NAS Miramar.

B. UCSD Open Space

The UCSD campus, although not regulated by these Plan recommendations, is an integral part of the "functional community." Given the close physical, social and economic relationship of UCSD to the University community, the recreational facilities and open spaces of the campus should be integrated with those of the community.

The recreation areas on campus serve primarily the students, faculty and staff of the University. The UCSD main campus contains 61.4 acres of recreational facilities and a total of 126.4 recreational acres are proposed in the Long Range Development Plan (1989). The recreation areas will be located along North Torrey Pines Road and in the central campus area, on both sides of I-5. Currently, 300 acres are undeveloped but long-range plans propose 140 acres as a natural reserve area. Most of the nature reserve would be located on the south side of Genesee, west of I-5 and adjacent to open space slopes along I-5 and adjacent to open space slopes along I-5 and Sorrento Valley.

C. Other Open Space Areas

Several open space areas are interspersed throughout the community, primarily in the form of easements or private open space in planned residential developments. The slopes on the east side of Gilman Drive are preserved as open space by easement and provide a scenic entrance to this part of the community from I-5 and Sorrento Valley.

The land in Navy ownership within the community plan area is currently vacant. It is anticipated that much of this land will remain in open space because of the noise and crash hazard from NAS Miramar activities. In addition, some of the land north of Eastgate Mall and east of I-805 will remain undeveloped because of Navy easements limiting coverage to 25 percent, as well as steep hillsides and other environmental factors.

D. Population-Based parks

In addition to open space areas of regional significance the University community contains population-based parks to serve local recreation needs. Population-based parks include neighborhood parks, community parks and recreation centers. Neighborhood parks ideally serve between 3,500 and 4,000 persons living within a walking distance of one-half mile. Community parks should serve 18,000 to 24,000 residents within a 1-1/2 mile radius. The community park is intended to provide a wider range of facilities than neighborhood parks, including athletic fields and courts, picnic and play areas, and a recreational building. Existing parks and their development status are listed in **Table 9**; park locations are illustrated on **Figure 24**.

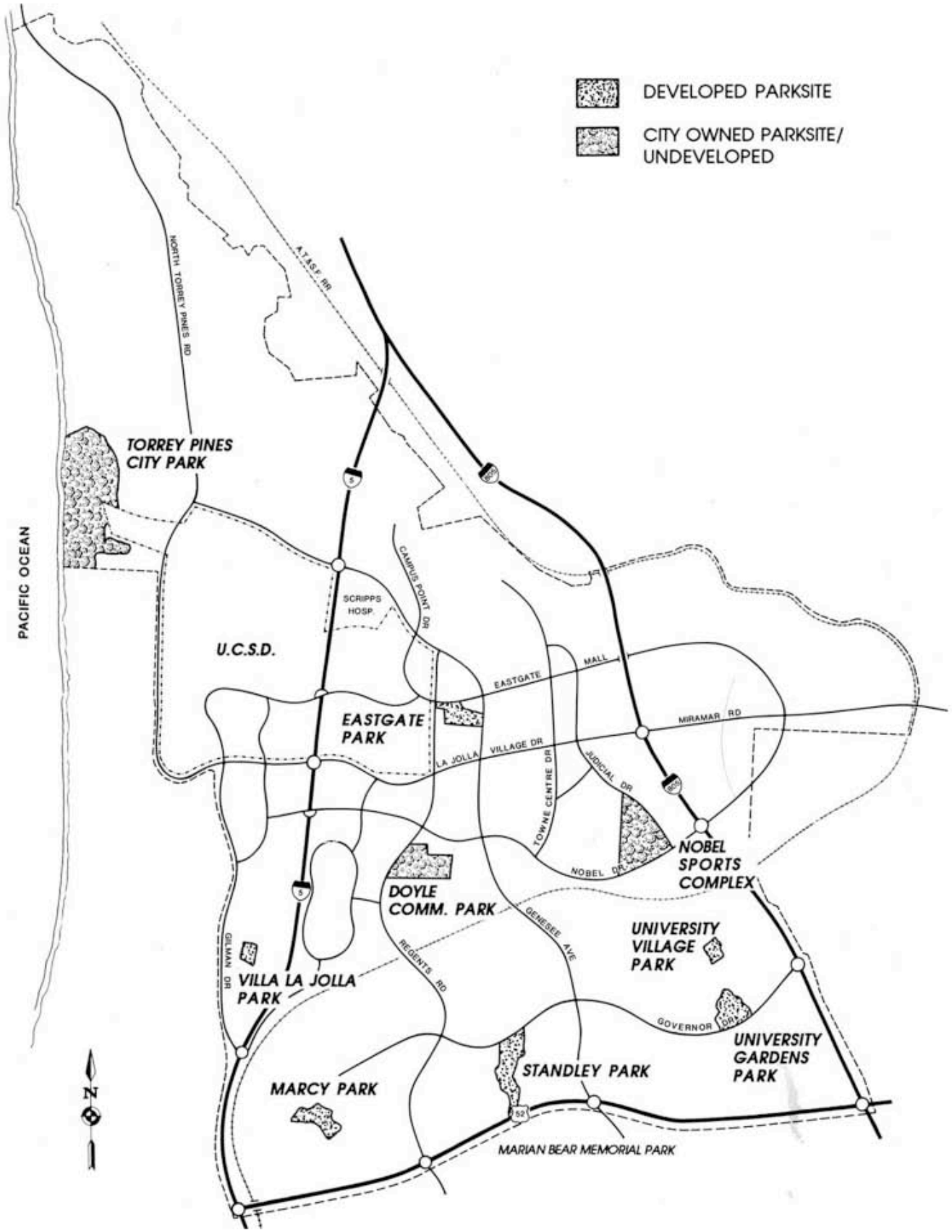
TABLE 9
EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

Name	Usable Acreage	Developed	Dedicated
Population-Based			
Standley Community Park	6.5	Yes	Yes
Doyle Community Park	24.0	No	Yes
Marcy Neighborhood Park	3.5	Yes	Yes
University Village Neighborhood Park	2.5	Partial	Yes
University Gardens Neighborhood Park	10.0	Yes	Yes
Villa La Jolla Neighborhood Park	5.6	Yes	Yes
Proposed Park on Unratified Pueblo Land	28.0	No	No
Eastgate Mall Neighborhood Park	10.5	Yes	Yes
Total	**90.6**		
Resource-Based			
Torrey Pines State Park	1,100		
Torrey Pines City Park	249		
Torrey Pines Golf Course	367		
Marian Bear Memorial Park (adjacent to the community)	467		

E. Other Recreational Areas

The University of California provides recreational facilities on-campus. These facilities include sports fields, two gymnasiums, tennis courts, and a natatorium. In addition, each of the colleges and married/graduate student housing complexes contain minor recreational facilities.

Private residential projects often include facilities for the residents, particularly residential developments. Urban plazas at UCSD and in other community centers can also provide a place for recreational activities.



Developed and Undeveloped Parksites
University Community Plan
36 FIGURE

III. GOALS

A. Preserve the natural resources of the community through the appropriate designation and use of open space. Major topographic features and biological resources should be preserved as undeveloped open space.

B. Provide a system of population-based parks to meet the community's needs for outdoor recreation.

C. Establish an open space system that will utilize the terrain and natural drainage system to guide the form of urban development, enhance neighborhood identity and separate incompatible land uses.

D. Promote public health and safety by designating areas with high potential for landslides, earthquake faults or aircraft accidents as open space.

E. Develop a linkage system to connect recreational and natural open space areas throughout the community.

IV. PROPOSALS

A. Regional and Resource-Based Open Space

1. General

   It is proposed that the Torrey Pines Mesa and coastal area, Sorrento Valley and Soledad Canyon hillsides and canyons, Rose Canyon, San Clemente Canyon and areas most severely impacted by aircraft overflights be preserved as open space. Designated open space is illustrated in **Figure 25**.

2. Torrey Pines City Park

   The park should be developed to enhance unique recreational opportunities, such as beach access and gliding activities, while preserving existing biological and archaeological resources and topographic features.

   a. Future improvements to the City Park should be designed to promote public safety and minimize future environmental damage.

   b. The two coastal canyons should be preserved in a natural condition. Presently disturbed vegetation should be restored.

3. Torrey Pines Golf Course/Hotel Development

   The golf course facilities should continue to be operated for the benefit of San Diego residents. The additional development of hotel or other facilities should be compatible with the Miramar Naval Air Station.

4. Sorrento Valley - Soledad Canyon Open Space

   This open space system includes 1) the Torrey Pines State Reserve, east of North Torrey Pines Road, 2) slopes with a 25 percent or greater gradient on the edge of the Torrey Pines Science Park, Campus Point and adjacent properties, 3) the branch canyon adjacent to I-5 and penetrating the UCSD campus, and 4) the slopes on the south side of the AT & SF Railroad right-of-way, 5) Torrey Pines Science Center.

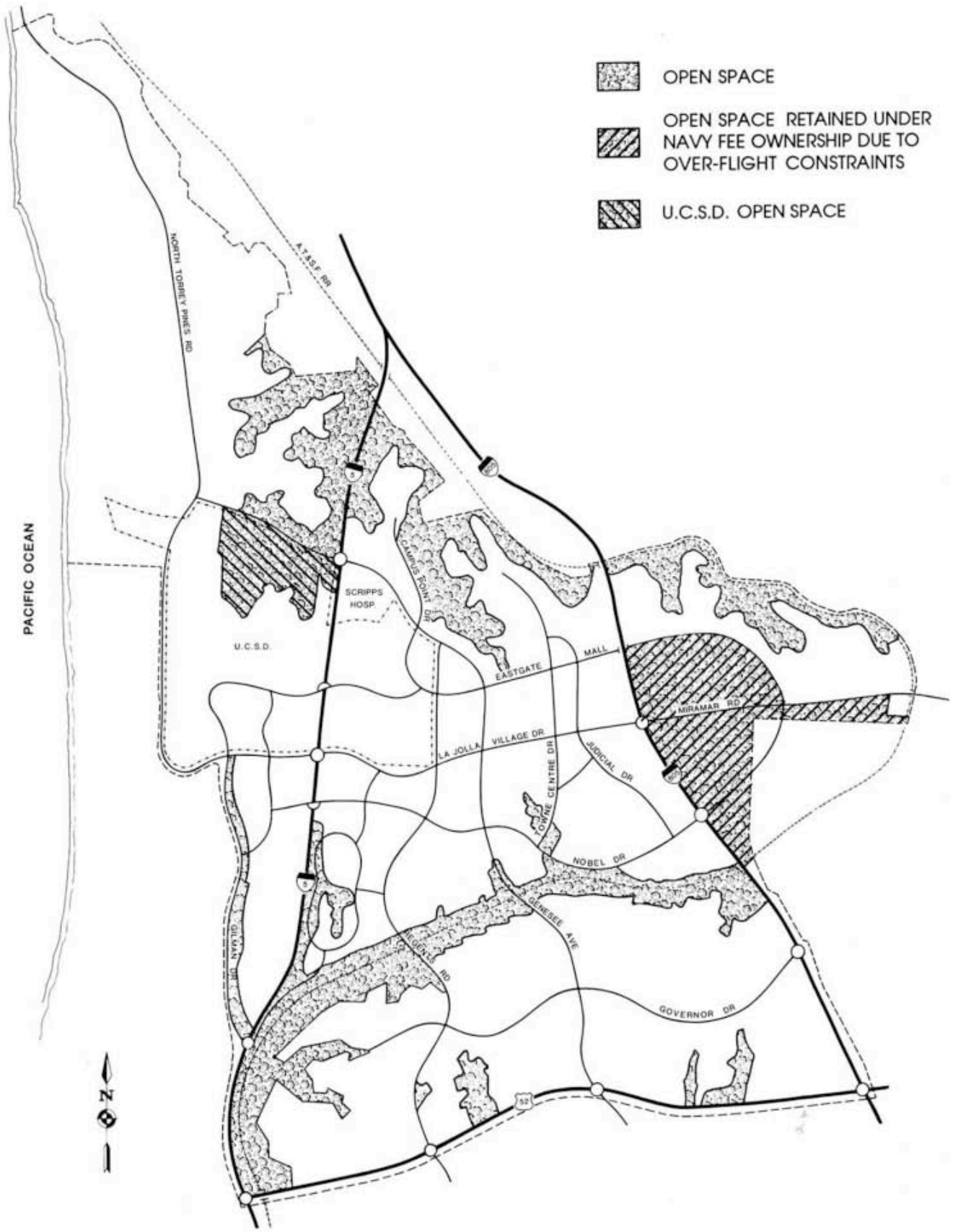
   a. These areas should be retained in an open and natural state and should either be preserved as natural open space easements or deeded to the City of San Diego for open space.

   b. Any disturbance of the hillsides should be mitigated by contour grading and revegetation with native species.

   c. Steep hillsides facing the canyons should be preserved by establishing open space easements in conjunction with new development.

5. Miramar Naval Air Station Impacts

   In the interest of public health, safety and welfare it is recommended that certain areas influenced by NAS Miramar activities be retained as open space per the existing fee ownership of the Navy. (**Figure 20**)



Designated Open Space
University Community Plan
37 FIGURE

6. Rose Canyon

   City-owned land within Rose Canyon should be preserved as dedicated open space.

   a. Future uses of Rose Canyon should consider the topography, vegetation and scenic value of the canyon. For this reason, passive recreational uses are recommended rather than active uses requiring major grading and construction.

   b. Pedestrian and bicycle paths should be constructed as illustrated in **Figure 11** of the **Transportation Element** and in the **Urban Design Element**.

   c. The San Diego Unified School District should consider the granting of an easement along the north side of the University City Senior High School to permit public access through Rose Canyon and under the railroad track to the north.

   d. An open space easement with access permitted should be granted along the north side of the AT & SF Railroad between I-5 and I-805.

   e. Developments along the northern edge of Rose Canyon should provide open space easements bordering the canyon. If grading within the easements is required for development, the final grading and revegetation should blend with the natural canyon features. The existing open space easement between Regents Road and Genesee Avenue should be maintained; access rights should be acquired to permit pedestrian and bicycle paths linking this area with Rose Canyon.

   f. If a linkage can be made to an equestrian center outside the community, an equestrian trail could be developed in Rose Canyon in accordance with the adopted Plan for Equestrian Trails and Facilities. No developments or staging areas are proposed by this designation.

7. San Clemente Canyon

   Marian Bear Park should be preserved and maintained by the City of San Diego as a regional, resource-based park. The canyon and its riparian vegetation, including the mature oak and sycamore trees, should be preserved in their natural state.

   a. Pedestrian bicycle paths should be constructed to connect Standley Park and Marian Bear Park, utilizing the existing SR-52 undercrossing.

b. Three branches of the canyon which extend northward into South University should be preserved as open space by retaining existing open space easements. These areas include 19.47 acres between Stadium Street and Tulane Street, approximately three acres west of Kantor Street and 15.47 acres east of Gullstrand Street, developed as a golf course.

8. Gilman Drive Slopes

The slopes along Gilman Drive between I-5 and Via Alicante should be preserved as undeveloped open space. In addition, properties bordering Gilman Drive should provide a visual extension of the open space corridor north from Via Alicante to La Jolla Village Drive. Landscaping and site design on private properties abutting the street and adjacent to the canyon should enhance the visual quality and continuity of this open space corridor. An existing partial bike lane should be continued to connect the UCSD with the Rose Canyon bikeway via Gilman Drive.

B. Population-Based Parks

1. Summary of Proposed Facilities

The University community is proposed to be served by two community parks and six neighborhood parks totaling 114 gross acres and 90.6 usable acres of park area (**Table 9**). Eastgate Park will be developed as a privately operated park and community recreation center open to the general public. In addition, recreational facilities at public schools should be made available for community use. University Village Park in South University is partially developed. The emphasis of this park should be on less intense recreational uses such as open play lawns and picnic facilities. The public park facilities are illustrated on **Figure 24**.

2. Community Park

A community park should be provided on approximately 20 acres, adjacent to and north of Doyle Elementary School. The improvements could include ball fields, multipurpose courts, tiny tot lots, open play and picnic areas and a recreation building. The North University City Public Facilities Financing Plan and Facilities Benefit Assessment provides for site acquisition, design and development of this park and construction of a recreation building.

3. Sports Field Complex

A sports field complex (designated as a neighborhood facility) should be developed on approximately twenty-eight acres in the vicinity of I-805 and Nobel Drive. Funding will be provided by the Facilities Benefit Assessment (FBA).

4. General Plan Standards

The General Plan indicates that population-based parks should consist of one community park for each 25,000 persons and one neighborhood park for each 5,000 persons. (The community park is also the neighborhood park for the area in which it is located.) Depending on their location with respect to schools, the community parks are to consist of 13 to 20 acres while the neighborhood parks are described as five to ten acres. Thus, the General Plan Standards for acreage for population-based park acreage varies between 1.32 and 2.4 acres per thousand depending upon whether all or none of the park sites are adjacent to school.

According to the General Plan the University community should be served by a total of two community parks, one of 13 usable acres and one of 20 usable acres, and 11 neighborhood parks, one of five usable and ten of ten acres each (**Table 9**). For a community with an estimated population of 58,263 the population-based park acreage should total 138 acres. As is indicated in **Table 9**, the proposed population-based park acreage is 90.6 acres, a shortfall of 47.4 acres. The proposed facilities would result in approximately 1.5 acres per 1000 residents.

This shortfall in population-based parks is mitigated by the four resource-based parks located in or adjacent to the community totaling over 2,065 acres. Three of the population-based parks are also adjacent to schools, enabling the school sports field to be used in conjunction with the parks. Although they cannot be counted towards the population-based park acreage, these leased areas also mitigated the identified shortage.

Further mitigation of the population-based neighborhood park shortage in the University community should be accomplished by the provision of private recreation areas in planned residential developments (PRDs). The role of PRDs in providing this open space is addressed below.

5. Use of School Facilities

Recreational facilities at the City public schools should be made available for community-wide use. School sports fields and courts should complement and contribute to the recreational potential adjacent neighborhood parks.

C. Other Recreational Facilities

1. University Recreation

The University of California should be encouraged to develop recreational facilities, pedestrian paths and bike lanes which in addition to accommodating

its needs, complement open space uses in the Plan area and integrate UCSD more fully with the community.

2. Planned Residential Developments

   Major planned residential developments proposed in the North University area should include recreational facilities and open space areas as key elements in the project design. These private recreational areas should provide enough usable open space to compensate for a lack of neighborhood parks within walking distance of most residences. The private open space areas should connect to the extent feasible with adjacent open space canyons and the overall park and open space system of the plan area.

3. Commercial Recreation

   Private commercial development should contribute to the recreational opportunities of the community.

D. Open Space Connections

1. Linkage System

   An open space trails linkage system should be implemented to connect the major canyons with the neighborhood parks, schools and private open space areas. Pedestrian pathways and bicycle lanes should also connect recreational areas with major activity centers such as the town center core and UCSD. The backbone of the proposed trail system and bicycle routes is illustrated in **Figure 11** in the **Transportation Element** and in the **Urban Design Element**. Consideration should also be given to the utilization of utility easements as trail linkages.

2. Private Open Space

   Open spaces within residential or commercial developments should be linked, wherever feasible, to nearby parks or open space canyons. The design of the projects should encourage access to recreational areas by means of pedestrian and bicycle movement.

E. Hillside Development

Development within canyon bottoms and on slopes with greater than 25 percent gradients should be strongly discouraged. However, if development does occur on canyon bottoms, along bluffs or on steep slopes, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Planned Residential, Commercial and Industrial Developments

   It is recommended that planned developments be used in developing hillsides to permit clustering the structures on the more level areas and to reduce grading.

2. Grading Principles

   In steep terrain, padded areas should be made in smaller increments to minimize bank height and level areas should be created more by building structures than by grading. The creation of standard, level building pads should be avoided. As a general guideline, only a small portion (ten percent) of the slopes with 25 percent or greater gradients should be graded.

3. Vegetation

   Except as necessary to provide adequate fire buffers around structures, the natural vegetation on slopes should be retained. Disturbed slopes should be revegetated with native flora.

4. Coastal Development

   Development, alteration or grading of natural landforms should not occur along bluffs or cliffs, within drainage canyons or on slopes of 25 percent or greater in the Coastal Zone in order to prevent erosion and to protect existing native plant communities and visual resources.

5. Visual Impacts

   The design of hillside developments should relate to the existing topography and should be compatible with the scale and character of surrounding development. Attention should be given to building scale, roof design, materials and color. Visual access to open space areas from public roadways should be maintained.

6. Safety

   Development on slopes or near bluffs should not contribute to erosion or geologic instability of the site or adjacent properties. A detailed drainage plan should be required for all new bluff-top development. Any geologic constraints to development should be identified prior to project approval.

7. Use and Future Standards

   Each open space area can serve a variety of functions beyond the more readily apparent primary uses. The multiple functions of the major open space areas in the community are summarized in **Table 10**. These functions should be considered when determining future uses of the open space areas and when determining the design and type of adjacent development.

TABLE 10
FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE AREAS

Areas	Recreation[1]	Urban Visual	Design	Safety	Resource Conservation[2]
Torrey Pines State Reserve	P	X		X	B, L, H, C
Torrey Pines City Park	A, P	X		X	B, L, C
Torrey Pines Golf Course	A	X			
Sorrento-Soledad Hillsides/Canyons		X	X	X	B, L, C
Rose Canyon	P	X	X		B, L
San Clemente Canyon	P	X	X		B, L
Population-Based parks	A, P	X	X		

(1) Active (A), Passive (P)

(2) Biological Resources (B), Landform (L), Historic (H), Cultural (C)