

THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF SOUTHCREST



SETTING

The Southcrest neighborhood is bounded by State Route 15 and Interstate 5 on the west, Logan Avenue on the north, Interstate 805 on the east, and Gamma and Vesta Streets and the rescinded State Route 252 construction on the south. This area is located in the central portion of Southeastern San Diego, approximately five miles southeast of downtown San Diego and one-mile northeast of the naval and shipyard facilities on San Diego Bay. This neighborhood contains the Southcrest Redevelopment Project area, located between SR-15 and Interstate 5 on the west and 44th Street on the east, and an additional residential area between 44th Street and Interstate 805.

The Southcrest Redevelopment Project area comprises approximately 301 net acres, exclusive of public rights-of-way. The largest land use is residential with 149.12 acres. Commercial uses total 15.49 acres, and industrial uses total 0.85 acres. The remaining acreage is either in public and semi-public (27.85 acres) use or is vacant land (65.82 acres). The remainder of the neighborhood, outside of the redevelopment project area, is developed with residential developments, ranging up to 30 units per acre, and a public park.

The public and semi-public uses in the neighborhood include the Southcrest Park and Recreation Center, the Southeastern Athletic Area, Emerson Elementary School, St. Judes Elementary School, several churches and areas along Chollas Creek. Las Chollas Creek passes through Southcrest in a concrete-lined channel bounded on the north and south with protective fences.

Southcrest Redevelopment Project

This area was chosen for redevelopment because of the need to revitalize deteriorating commercial and residential areas, the need to redevelop the rescinded State Route 252 corridor, and the potential to provide business and employment opportunities as part of these efforts.

On April 1, 1986, the City Council adopted the Southeastern Community Plan Amendment - Southcrest Redevelopment Project by Resolution No. R-265347. As a redevelopment project

area, all projects in the area will be channeled through SEDC. Through this agency, projects will be subject to design review by the Planning Commission under the terms of disposition and development agreements. The Redevelopment Agency can also use the tools of property acquisition, relocation assistance, site preparation and rehabilitation to revitalize the Southcrest area and to meet the objectives of the Southcrest Redevelopment Plan. The guidelines for development contained in the redevelopment plan and the previous community plan amendment have been incorporated into this plan.

The specific projects anticipated in the Redevelopment Area are discussed in the Southcrest Redevelopment Project Report to Council. The report to Council identifies five major projects which are also recommended as part of this community plan:

1. Acquisition of blighted and nonconforming uses (principally along National Avenue and 43rd Street).
2. Improvement of the intersection of National/Logan, and 43rd Street.
3. Rehabilitation of Otto Square.
4. Acquisition and disposition of the SR-252 corridor.
5. Public improvements: streets, utility cable undergrounding, street landscaping and sewer/water replacement.

Additionally, the report to Council discusses the general development intent in the Redevelopment Area as shown on the Generalized Land Use Map and these recommendations are incorporated as a part of this plan.

Residential Development

There are approximately 1,530 housing units in the redevelopment project area with an estimated population of 5,100 people. The area is comprised primarily of single-family units with a number of duplexes and small apartment structures. The average density for the area is approximately ten dwelling units per acre. Of the SR-252 acres presently zoned for residential use, 147 acres are used for this purpose along with two acres which are zoned commercial.

Between 1968 and 1975, 280 housing units were removed in expectation of the construction of a freeway linking Interstate 805 with Interstate 5. Sixty-six acres were cleared and have been left idle.

Commercial Development

Existing commercial uses total 15.59 acres, with 26 acres of commercial and 14 acres of commercial/business park proposed in the Southcrest Redevelopment Project.

The redevelopment project area contains a few well-maintained businesses. However, the majority of the commercial structures are in a deteriorating condition. Otto Square Shopping Center, located on the north side of National Avenue, between 35th and 36th Streets was built in 1965 and occupies approximately six acres. There is parking for 350 cars. This center needs exterior maintenance to the buildings and the parking lot. It also has problems relating to crime, loitering, and illegal parking. The facilities are generally considered to be too old and too small to attract major tenants needed to make the center economically viable. The center has only one major tenant, a drug store. Many of the stores are not of the quality usually found in other neighborhood shopping centers. Because of concerns about quality and the physical conditions of the center, many residents prefer to go elsewhere for their shopping needs.

Industrial Development

There is no industrial zoning in the redevelopment project area and only a small amount of existing industrial uses (0.83-acre).

Transportation

National Avenue is the major east-west arterial traversing the Southcrest neighborhood, carrying 12,000 vehicles per day in only two traffic lanes. National Avenue connects the area to downtown San Diego on the west and ends at 43rd Street on the east. Logan Avenue, east of 43rd Street, then becomes the major east-west arterial for the area. The remaining east-west streets serve the residential areas. Traffic is congested along the National Avenue/Logan Avenue corridor, especially during the afternoon rush hours when the area is used by workers from the nearby naval and industrial facilities.

Forty-third Street is the major north-south arterial, with 35th and 38th Streets serving as north-south collectors for the neighborhood. Access to Interstate 805 occurs at the intersection of 43rd Street and the rescinded State Route 252 corridor. On the west, Vesta and Rigel-35th Streets provide access to the industrial area to the south of Interstate 5 in Barrio Logan, while access to State Route 15 is provided by 35th Street to the north.

The following table summarizes recommended land uses in the Southcrest Redevelopment Project area of the neighborhood:

Recommended Land Uses – Southcrest Redevelopment Project Area	
Land Uses	Acres (Net)
Residential	
5-10 units/net acre	28.21
10 - 15 units/net acre	125.10
15 - 17 units/net acre	25.91
15 - 30 units/net acre	49.22
Commercial	26.14
Commercial/Business Park	14.91
Park	17.06
Open Space	14.91
	300.74

Southcrest Objectives

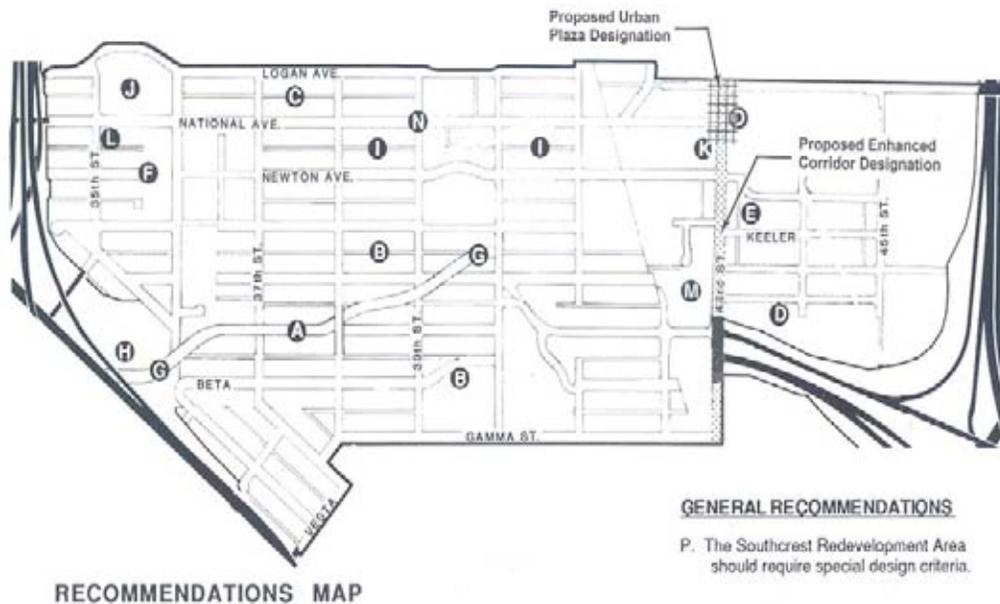
1. Redevelop the rescinded 252 freeway corridor.
2. Revitalize the commercial areas.

The strip commercial area at National Avenue and 43rd Street and extending south on 43rd to the vacant freeway corridor suffers from unsightly structures, traffic congestion and parking problems.

3. Provide employment opportunities.
4. Improve streets and circulation.

Street improvements are needed for both 43rd Street and National Avenue, as well as a major realignment of the intersection of these two streets. Additionally, many local streets are in poor condition and are discontinuous. Previously existing streets have been closed off and left to deteriorate in the SR-252 corridor. Only two streets have been left open to cross the corridor in its entire length of approximately one mile.

5. Create guidelines to achieve quality new development and enhance existing development.



Southcrest Recommendations

Residential

- A. Acquire the rescinded SR-252 corridor from the state of California.
- Develop thirty-two acres with residential development at densities of 15-17 units per net acre. Since this entire corridor is recommended for purchase by the San Diego Redevelopment Agency, all development in this corridor area should be subject to design review under the terms of Disposition and Development Agreements. A portion of the State Route 252 corridor will include single-family housing.
- B. Preservation and upgrading of the existing housing stock is recommended through continuation and expansion of the City's Housing Rehabilitation Program.
- Infill housing development is also encouraged on vacant land within the areas to the north and south of the rescinded State Route 252 corridor.
- C. Develop and redevelop a corridor along National Avenue and south of Logan Avenue with multi-family residential development at up to 30 units per net acre.
- The recommended density of up to 30 units per acre is intended to provide higher residential densities along the transportation corridors of Logan Avenue and National Avenue and near the commercial developments in the neighborhood. These densities can provide an incentive for redevelopment and also reflect some of the existing development intensities.
- D. Develop and redevelop the area south of Boston Avenue and east of 43rd Street with multi-family development at up to 30 units per net acre.
- This area is not completely developed and there is also an opportunity to redevelop many poorly utilized sites. Access to the commercial development along 43rd Street and the proposed industrial area east of 43rd Street is good and these blocks are also close to two parks.
- E. Retain the single-family or relatively low density character of several blocks located east of 43rd Street and north of Boston Avenue, as these areas are relatively stable and well maintained.
- F. Rezone the Emerson School to the Institutional Overlay Zone. This site should be developed with compatible private development only after it has been determined that it is not needed for use as a public facility. Where it is determined that residential re-use is appropriate, the density should be compatible with the density recommended for the surrounding area in this plan.
- G. The medium density (15-30 dwelling units per net acre, MF-1500) multi-family portion of the neighborhood located south of Logan Avenue between 36th and 41st Streets should be redesignated and rezoned for low-medium residential density (10-15 dwelling units per net

acre, MF-3000 Zone) and identified as a “Special Character ~~Multifamily~~Multi-Family Neighborhood” that would be protected with development standards recommended by the Urban Design Element.

Open Space

- H. The State Route 252 corridor lands offer an opportunity to develop a continuity of open space from Southcrest Park extending along the Chollas Creek channel all the way to Interstate 5.

The open space link will serve the new residential development proposed for the area. This open space, although modest in size, could be made effective if imaginatively designed and utilized. Encroachment into the flood channel should be avoided to maintain a visual open space corridor and to provide for passive and active recreational use of Las Chollas Creek. The plan recommends an 11-foot dedication on the north of the existing channel for passive use and 25 feet on the south for active use as a combination bike and pedestrian trail.

The following guidelines should be used while reviewing projects along the creek:

- 1) Development should not "turn its back" on the creek channel. Developments should instead enhance this creek area and use it as a positive feature of the project.
 - 2) Sufficient setbacks should be provided in order to allow for the future use of the channel edges as parkway linkages, including pedestrian and bicycle paths.
 - 3) Required off-street parking should not be located within the setback along the channel and should be sited so that landscaping can be provided between the parking area and the channel.
 - 4) Project landscaping and architectural treatments should contribute to an overall enhancement of the channel parkway.
- I. The western end of the State Route-252 corridor is recommended as open space. This 4.9-acre site is located east of Interstate 5 and 15, west of Acacia Street, south of Boston Avenue, and north of Beta Street. Alternative open space uses could include a neighborhood park, a community garden, or a botanical preserve. An assessment district or other mechanism should be established to maintain the open space.
- J. Eliminate illegal, non-conforming, and deteriorated commercial uses.
- Illegal, nonconforming, and deteriorated commercial uses are scattered along National Avenue from 36th Street to 43rd Street. The Redevelopment Plan recommends a residential revitalization effort here, eliminating the illegal and deteriorating commercial uses. The plan designates National Avenue for residential densities of 15-30 units per net acre.

Commercial Development

- K. Revitalize the Otto Square Shopping Center.

The Redevelopment Plan proposes the revitalization of the Otto Square Shopping Center which may include expansion of the site northward to Logan Avenue.

- L. Revitalization of the strip commercial uses along 43rd Street and at the intersection of 43rd Street and National Avenue is recommended through a rehabilitation program.

In addition, realignment of the intersection at 43rd Street and National/Logan Avenues is recommended. Retention of the commercial and institutional uses in this area and development of additional commercial uses on vacant or redeveloped land parcels is also encouraged. Specific development criteria will be prepared for the commercial area along 43rd Street, generally between Gamma Street and Logan Avenue as a part of the final legislation to implement the Project First Class Urban Design Program and this plan. (See Figure 33a.)

- M. An enlargement of commercial-designated areas on the south side of National Avenue at 35th Street is recommended.

This enlargement would result in a shift of 2.5 acres from residential to commercial land uses. Approximately 0.5 acres on the southwest corner of 35th Street and National Avenue is recommended for commercial uses. Additionally, two acres between 35th and 36th Streets, to a depth of 150 feet south of National Avenue, is designated for commercial use.

Industrial Development

- N. Develop a commercial/business park south of Southcrest Park and Keeler Street, west of 43rd Street, north of approximately Beta Street, and east of 41st Street.

This 14-acre site at the east end of the 252 corridor is proposed for mixed-use light industry/office commercial in the form of a commercial/business park with the exception of the two acres fronting on 43rd Street. The exact boundaries of this land use designation may be adjusted without the need to amend this community plan if, upon further study, the existing street pattern in this area is modified. If any adjustment to the boundary of the commercial/business park is made, the adjustment should reflect a sensitivity to reducing impacts to adjacent properties.

The site should be zoned M-1B or a similar zone and be developed according to the standards of a Planned Industrial Development Permit to ensure that development is of high quality, is well designed and is compatible with adjacent uses.

The commercial/business park should provide a 25-foot landscaped and bermed setback which will serve as a buffer. Special attention should be given to building placement, fencing and landscaping to reduce any incompatibilities between the commercial/business park development and adjacent development. In addition, specific attention should be given to the commercial/business park uses to ensure that air-contaminants, loud, unnecessary or unusual noises or hazardous materials do not adversely affect the area.

43RD STREET INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT



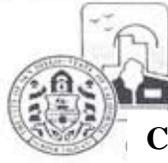
NATIONAL AND LOGAN AVENUE AT 43RD
With intersection realignment
Illustrative Plan

Credit to: Project First Class Urban Design Program, (Gerald Gast, AIA, Tectonics, Kercheval and Associates and G. Eckbo, FASLA, 1985)

PRESENT CONFIGURATION



PROPOSED CONFIGURATION



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FIGURE 33a

Transportation

- O. Widen National Avenue to become a four-lane major street between Interstate-15 and 43rd Street to accommodate the 14,000 expected weekday trips for the year 2000.

At selected intersections, this will likely require the prohibition of parking to allow room for left-turn lanes. According to the City's Engineering and Development Department, this link of National Avenue is carrying traffic volumes far in excess of the City's design standards and annually records an accident rate which exceeds citywide averages.

- P. At the intersection of 43rd Street and National Avenue, a realignment of the intersection is recommended.

This realignment would improve north-south circulation, enhance the visibility of the Educational/Cultural Complex, and streamline an existing circulation system bottleneck (see Figure 33a).

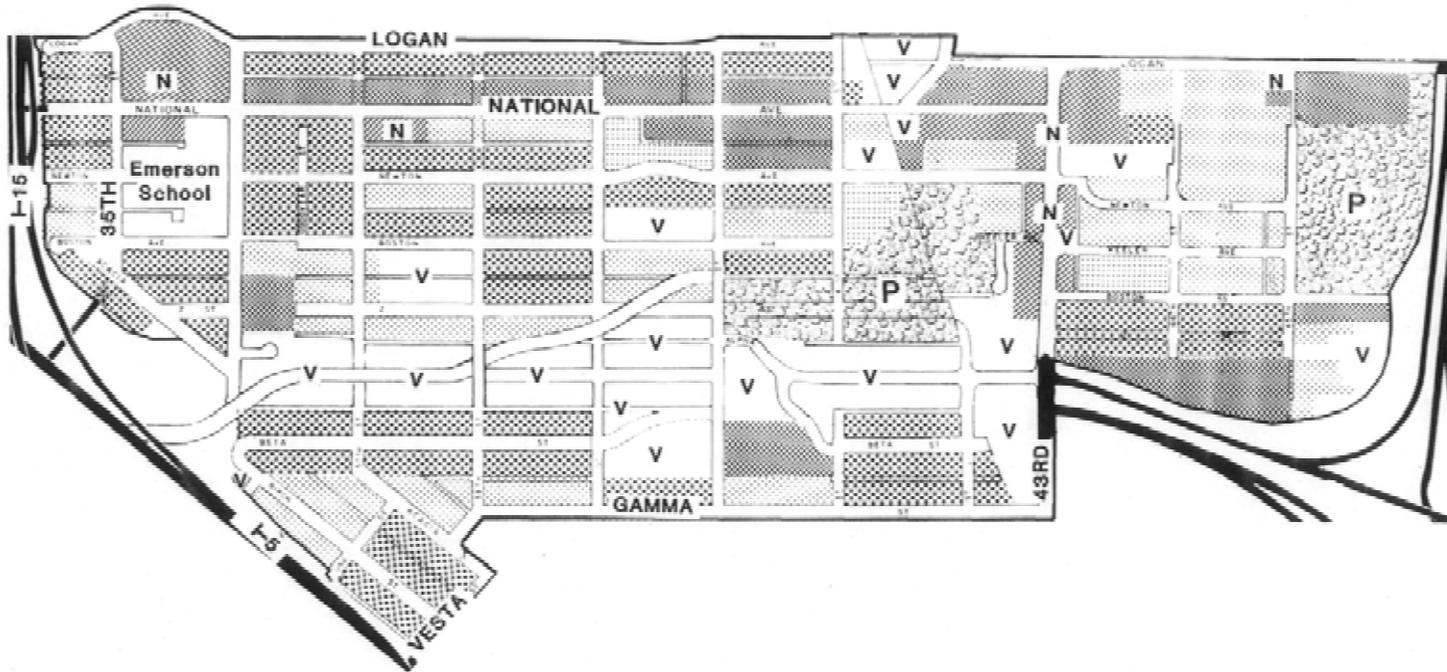
Selected improvements are also recommended within the existing right-of-way for 43rd Street from Logan Avenue to the Interstate 805 ramps.

Development Guidelines

- Q. The following guidelines should be considered in the review of all proposed projects in the Southcrest Redevelopment Area (in addition to the urban design element in the plan):
1. All projects should be evaluated for compatibility with adjacent developments, including architectural style, site design and setbacks, bulk and scale and colors.
 2. The preservation of historic areas and the conservation of older neighborhoods is desirable.
 3. New site developments should be carefully integrated with the existing street and sidewalk patterns of surrounding development in order to create a coherent circulation system, linking new development to the existing neighborhood fabric and to avoid the development becoming an enclave apart from the neighborhood.
 4. Within the site, orient buildings to define street spaces. Place as many buildings as possible in a manner which complements and relates to the street scene. Each residential dwelling should have a sense of fronting on the street. Hidden units on the back portions of the site, or behind other buildings, should be avoided.
 5. Landscaped breaks should be provided in parking areas. Parking areas should be buffered from the street with planting while allowing for natural surveillance if low shrubs and groundcovers are used.

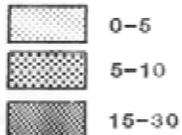
6. Every effort should be made to retain or enhance existing vegetation and topography, particularly along important streets. Street trees should be planted near the public right-of-way. Extensive landscaping should be used to tie buildings and site developments to existing streets and sidewalks.
7. Private usable open space areas should be provided to supplement the public park system.
8. Sidewalks should be provided from all parking areas and rights-of-way to structures on-site.
9. Night lighting should be provided along walkways, streets and at parking lots.
10. If a security fence is used, attention should be given to its design and materials. Wrought-iron fences and other security devices can become attractive architectural details.

EXISTING LAND USE



LEGEND

RESIDENTIAL (units per acre)



E INSTITUTIONAL
Schools
E Elementary
J Junior High
S Senior High

COMMERCIAL

G-GENERAL
N-NEIGHBORHOOD

P PARK
V VACANT

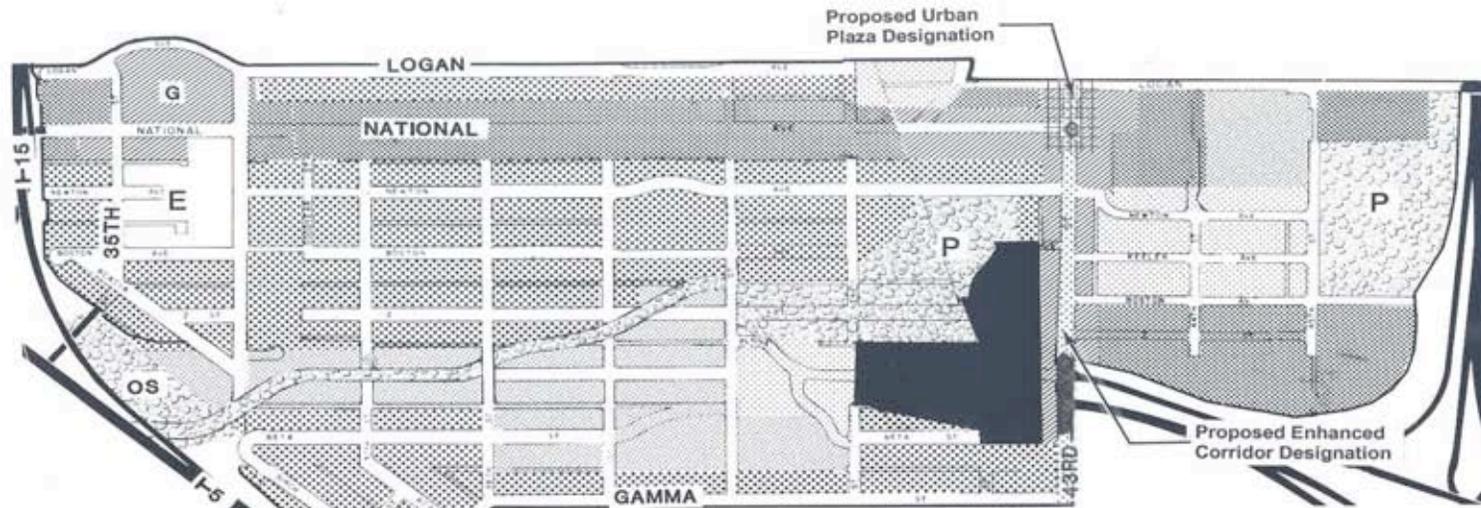


STONE CREST
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FIGURE 34

RECOMMENDED LAND USE



LEGEND

RESIDENTIAL (units per acre)

- 5-10
- 10-15
- 15-17
- 15-30

COMMERCIAL

- G-GENERAL
- N-NEIGHBORHOOD

E INSTITUTIONAL

Schools

- E** Elementary
- J** Junior High
- S** Senior High

P PARK

OS OPEN SPACE

BUSINESS PARK/OFFICE COMMERCIAL

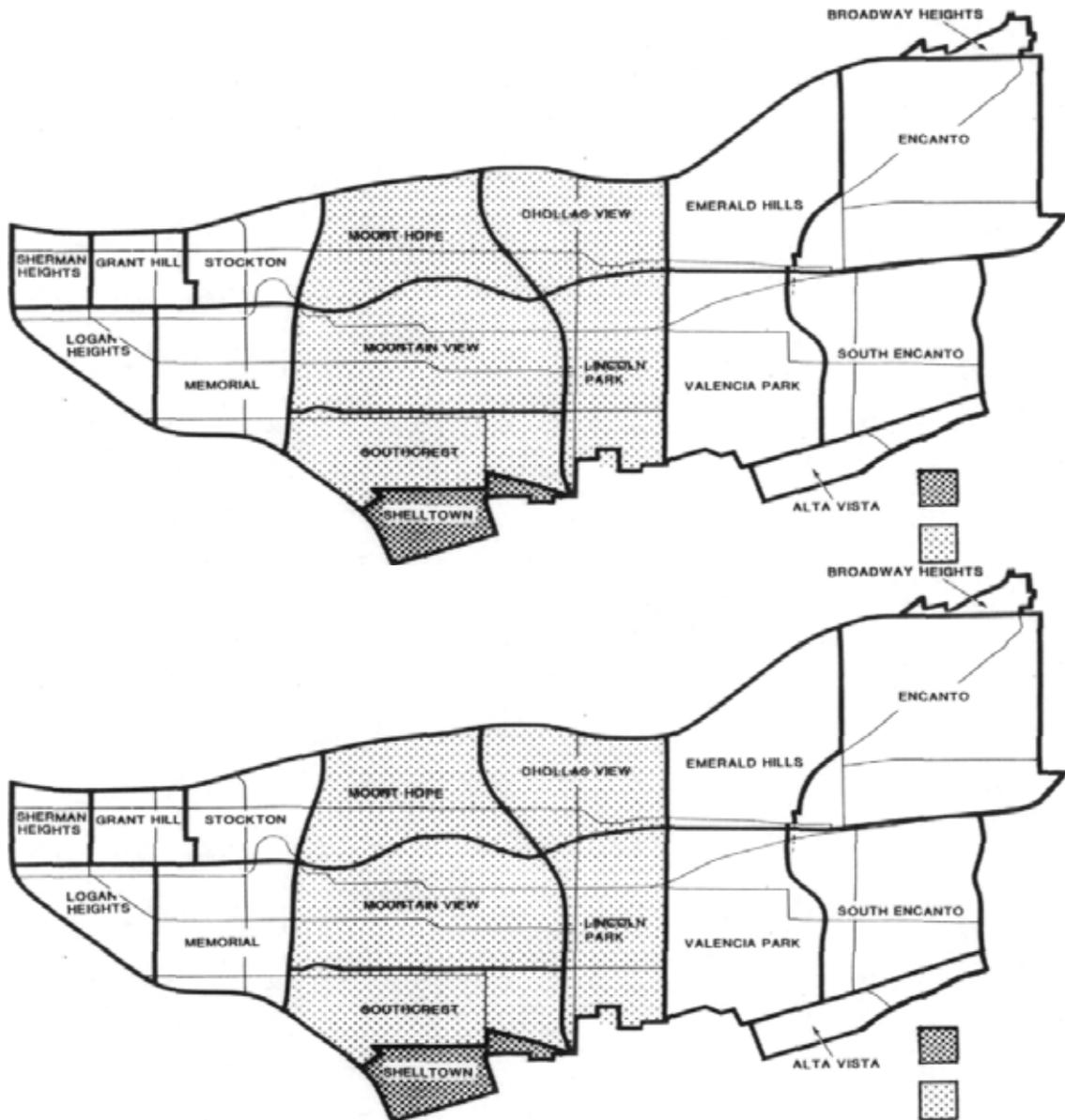


STONE CREST
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FIGURE 35

THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF SHELLTOWN



Setting

Shelltown is situated on approximately 166 acres in the south-central extreme of Southeastern San Diego, adjacent to National City. It is bounded on the north by Gamma Street, on the south by Division Street, on the west by Interstate 5, and on the east by 43rd Street and Interstate 805.

Due to the predominance of shells in the sandy soil, the neighborhood became known as "Shelltown." Located on a plateau just north and east of the 32nd Street Naval Station, Shelltown was a favorite location of housing for many of the early naval officers. Their ships were visible from their homes and were only moments away in the event they were called to duty.

The area is diverse in topographic features including steep and rolling hills and abrupt undeveloped canyons in the northern area, and a relatively flat plateau in the southern area.

Many locations have striking views of San Diego Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

One of the advantages of the railroad was its effect in attracting industry to San Diego. In the early 1910s the California Iron Works began operation along the bayfront tracks of the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. In addition, the San Diego Marine Construction Company was established in 1915, as well as several tuna canneries.

The Navy began its long association with the city when the 28th Street pier was rebuilt for the Naval Militia of California. In 1919, doubtless prompted by the increased military activity of the first World War, the City deeded 98.2 acres to the Navy for a Navy Docking and Fleet Repair Base. This property, which is today the site of the 32nd Street Naval Station, is not in the community of Southeastern San Diego, yet there is no doubt that the marine and industrial zone along the bayfront had an impact on the neighboring residential areas - including Shelltown. About 2,200 people reside in Shelltown, with an overall density of about ten dwelling units per acre. The population density is one of the lowest in the Southeastern San Diego community. The sense of "community" is strong in this family-oriented neighborhood, with a high percentage of owner-occupied homes. However, the neighborhood is a mixture of blighted and well-maintained structures and many houses are in need of rehabilitation.

The significant feature of this neighborhood is the 5.71-acre Balboa Elementary School, with its exceptionally high student population of 1,000. The school is located on 40th Street, between Epsilon Street and Birch Street. A major renovation and expansion project was recently completed on Balboa Elementary School, which was originally constructed in the early 1930s. In recent years, the school has had problems with vandalism, although an outreach program is now in place which has resulted in a decrease in losses related to vandalism.

Forty-third Street, which runs north/south and constitutes the eastern boundary of this neighborhood, and Division Street, which runs east/west and constitutes the southern boundary of the neighborhood, are the major streets serving Shelltown. Forty-third Street is an extension of Highland Avenue, which is a major thoroughfare in National City. Nearly all of the development in Shelltown along these two streets is residential.

The neighborhood is bounded on the north by the Southcrest Redevelopment Project, which was approved by the City Council on April 1, 1986. The Redevelopment Project outlines a development plan for the rescinded State Route 252 land, revitalization and widening of National Avenue, and redevelopment of 43rd Street between Beta Street and Logan Avenue. Back in the late 1960s, the State Route 252 corridor was cleared of nearly 200 homes and three north/south streets. This action in many respects cut off the properties to the south in the Shelltown neighborhood from the residential areas of Southcrest, as well as the commercial uses along National Avenue.

The condition of the streets is exceptionally poor. Potholes, cracked pavement, damaged sidewalks, junk cars and debris are common sights throughout the streets of Shelltown.

Inadequate street lighting adds to the hazard of traveling the streets. Bus service is available along 43rd Street then through the neighborhood via Delta Street to Vesta Street.

Existing land uses as of 1986 are summarized in the table below and are illustrated on Figure 36.

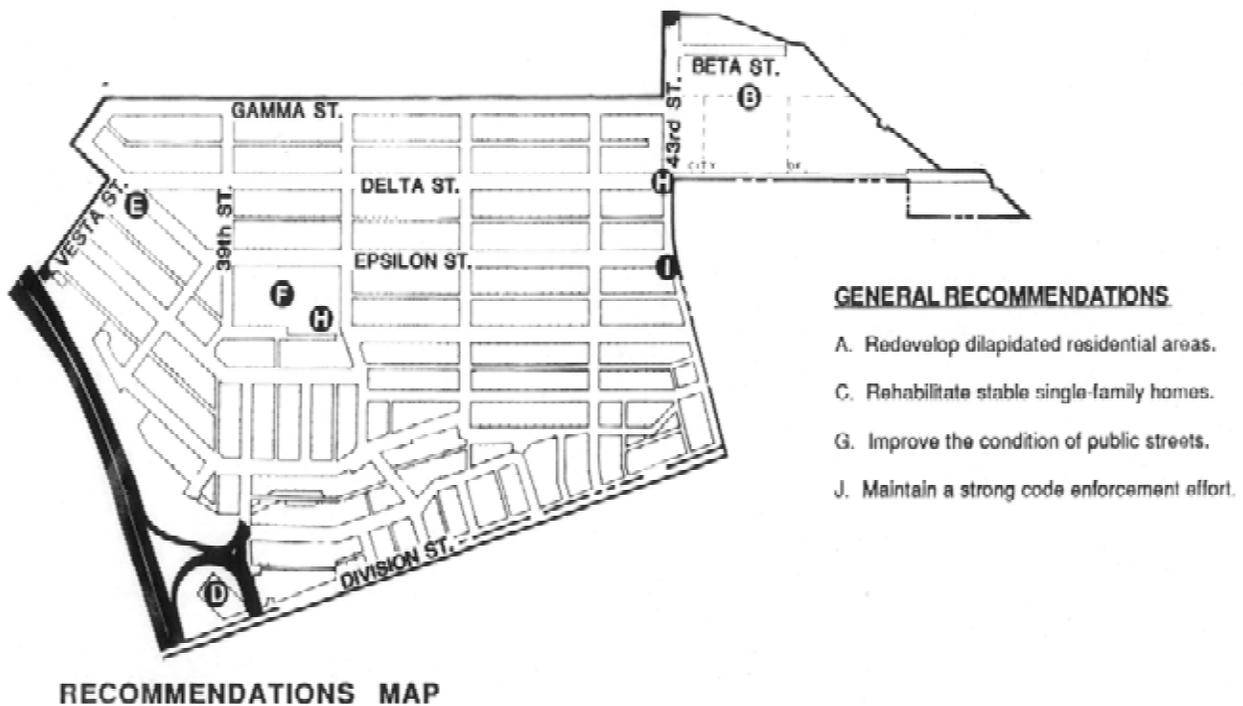
Existing Land Uses (1986)	
Type of Use	Percent
Residential	
Low Density (5-10 du/ac)	30%
Low-Medium Density (10-15 du/ac)	45%
Medium Density (15-30 du/ac)	15%
Commercial	2%
Industrial	2%
Institutional (Balboa Elementary School)	4%
Park	0%
Vacant	2%
	100%

Shelltown Objectives

1. Some of the residential areas in this neighborhood should be redeveloped to improve the quality of housing available here.
2. Decrease the frequency and extent of vandalism at Balboa Elementary School.
3. Improve the safety of traveling the neighborhoods streets. The streets in this neighborhood are considered by the community to be unsafe with deficient street lighting, drug and gang problems, high crime rate and a perceived deficiency in police surveillance.
4. Improve the physical condition of the street.

The physical condition of the streets is unacceptable to the community because of the abundance of potholes, cracked pavement, and broken sidewalks.

5. Improve the streetscape along 43rd Street.



Shelltown Recommendations

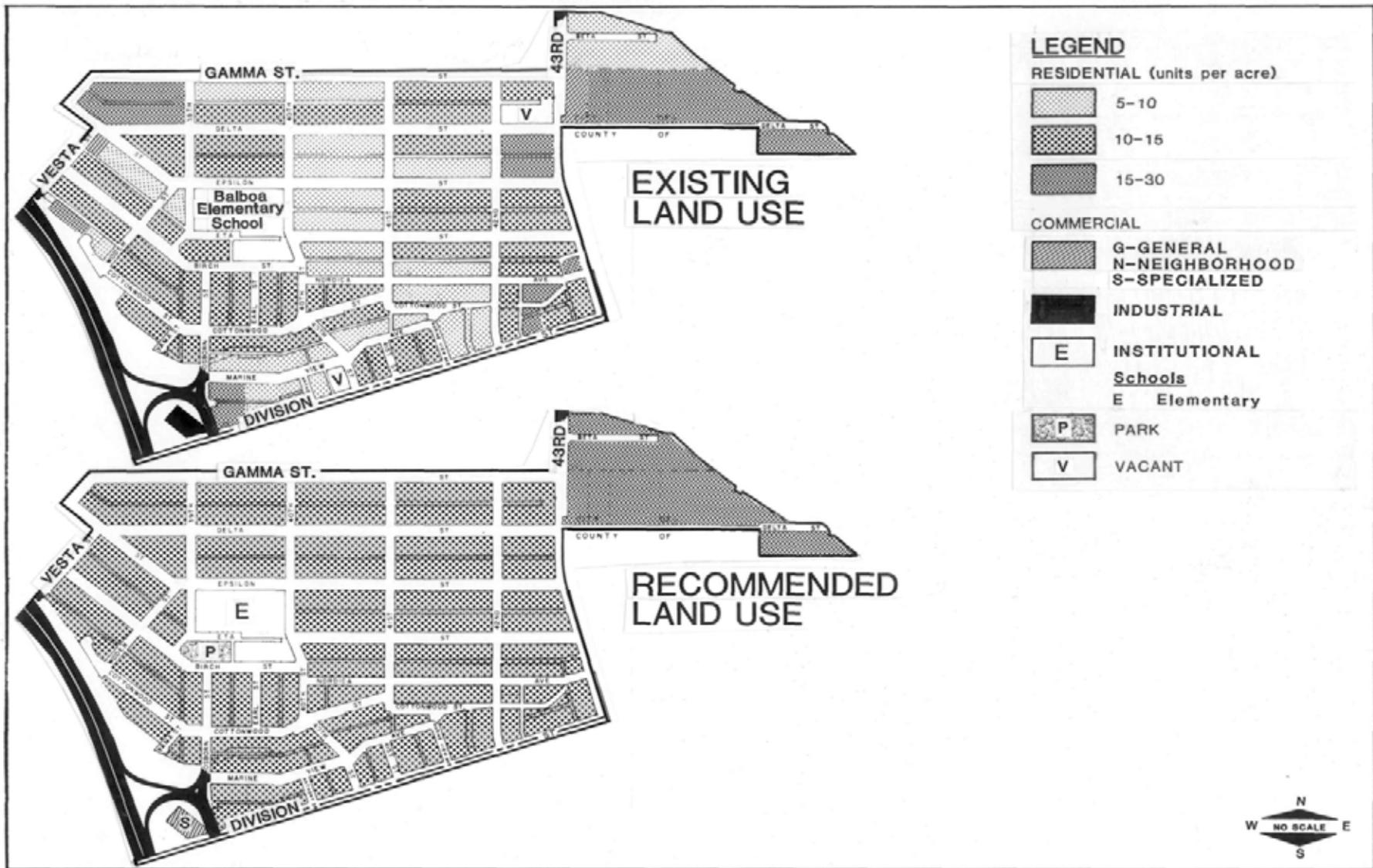
- A. Redevelop or rehabilitate dilapidated residential areas.

In situations where dilapidated structures now exist, demolition or rehabilitation is encouraged, thus allowing for new housing opportunities. The Housing Commission should earmark funds for this area for redevelopment use and for projects requiring the demolition of dilapidated structures. This plan recommends densities of 10-15 dwelling units per acre, which would be compatible with the existing R-3000 Zone.

- B. Rezone the area west and south of Interstate 805, east of 43rd Street, and north of National City to a residential density of 15-30 units per acre. This zoning will follow the current pattern of development in this area.
- C. Rehabilitate the stable single-family homes. This plan proposes that the City Housing Commission prioritize rehabilitation loans to be used in this area.
- D. The southwesterly corner of the neighborhood on Division Street is presently zoned MI-B and houses a gasoline docking facility and a motel. This plan recommends a change in designation to a specialized commercial zone to prohibit the range of uses allowed in the MI-B Zone.
- E. The Southeastern corner of Delta Street and Acacia Street is presently zoned CC (Community Commercial). This plan recommends a change in designation to residential

use. In the event the present businesses were discontinued, there would be no need to encourage the replacement of commercial uses since an abundance of services are available to the south in National City.

- F. Balboa Elementary School is in need of physical improvements, including a secured parking facility for staff and improvements to the existing school yard which is in poor condition due to erosion problems. Additionally, the neighborhood as a whole has a need for a recreation area, in order to increase neighborhood identity and decrease juvenile crime. Utilization of the existing yard at Balboa Elementary School should be considered in a joint project with the City of San Diego to create a mini-park and recreational area. Additional land acquisition could involve the vacation of Eta Street between 39th Street and 40th Street. The project should include plans for a shared parking lot that could be used by school personnel during operating hours. Balboa Elementary School should be rezoned to the Institutional Overlay Zone. Compatible private development re-use of the site should only be considered after public uses are found to be inappropriate. Where residential re-use is considered, the density should be 10-15 units per acre.
- G. Special attention should be given by the City of San Diego to the exceptionally poor condition of the public streets throughout Shelltown. Potholes, cracked pavement, damaged sidewalks, and junk cars are commonplace. Additionally, a regular street sweeping schedule is needed to improve the appearance and safety of the streets.
- H. A street lighting improvement district should be established, particularly for 43rd Street and the vicinity of Balboa Elementary School. This would ensure safer travel along city streets as well as act as a deterrent to neighborhood-related crimes.
- I. Forty-third Street should be included in the major corridor planting program.
- J. Continue concentrated zoning and building code enforcement in the residential areas.



**SHELLTOWN
 SOUTHEASTERN SAN DIEGO**

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FIGURE 36