
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The North City Future Urbanizing Area (NCFUA) is a 12,000-acre area stretching easterly from Interstate 5 (I-5) and Carmel Valley to the Rancho Peñasquitos and Rancho Bernardo communities. The NCFUA Framework Plan, adopted in October 1992, established five subareas as shown in **Figure 1-1**. A Subarea plan was to be prepared for each subarea; the document was to describe the open space, transportation, development and other definitive aspects of the proposed subarea upon buildout. This document is the plan for Subarea IV, which will be referred to as the Torrey Highlands Subarea. Subarea IV consists of 1,520 acres. However, the 386-acre Fairbanks Highlands property processed a map under the A-1-10 Zone, Planned Residential Development (PRD) Ordinance and City Council Policy 600-29. The City Council adopted this map in early December 1995. Consequently, while the 386-acre Fairbanks Highlands property is still part of Subarea IV, it was not included as part of the Torrey Highlands phase shift. Total acreage for Torrey Highlands that was the subject of the November 1996 phase shift vote, therefore, was 1,134. The boundaries for Fairbanks Highlands and Torrey Highlands within Subarea IV are illustrated in **Figure 1-2**.

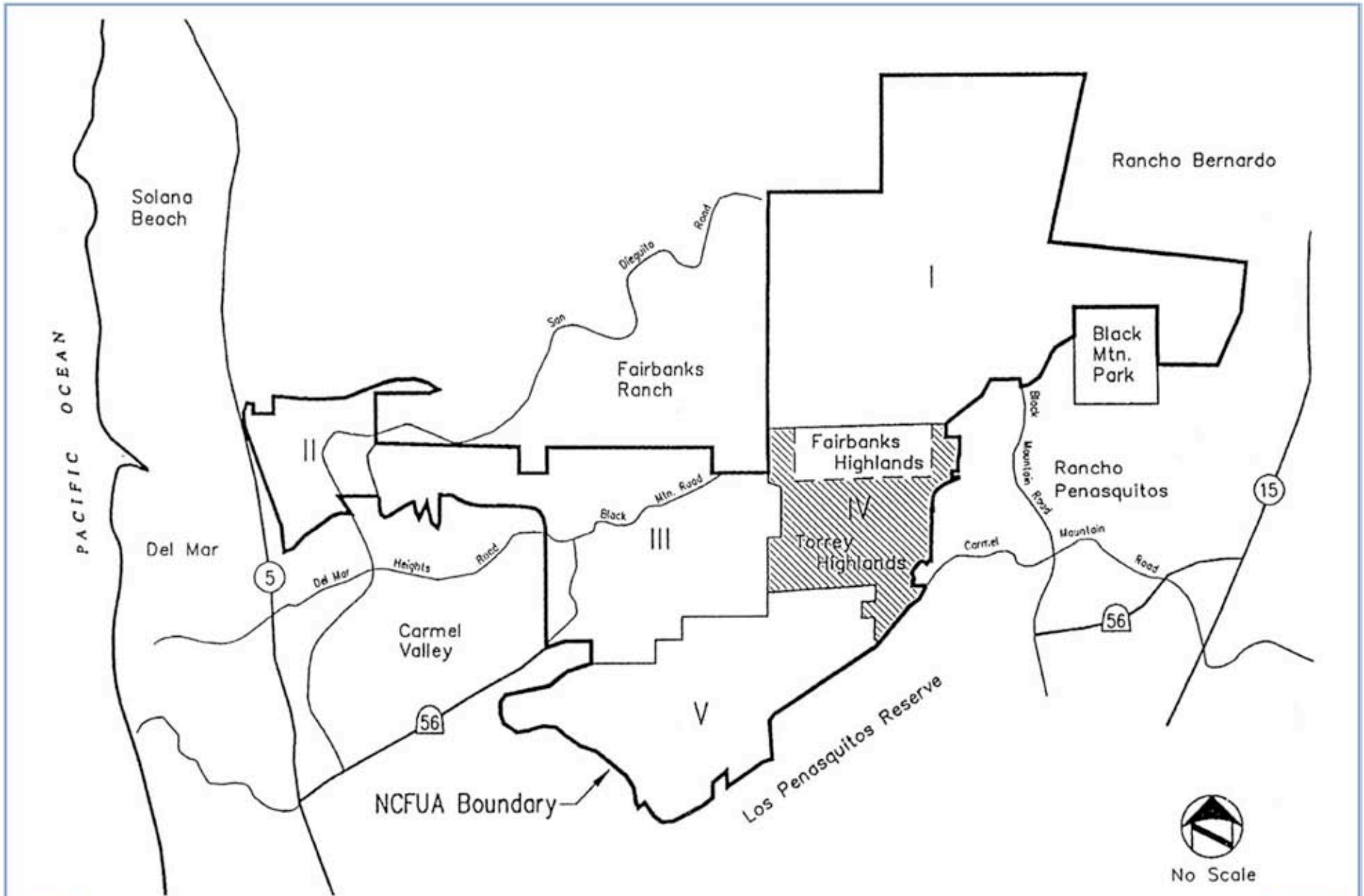
The originally adopted Torrey Highlands Subarea Plan (Plan) incorporated two alternative Caltrans alignments for State Route 56 (SR-56) that were the subject of an environmental impact report (EIR) processed by the City of San Diego. Two separate Torrey Highlands land use plans reflecting the central alignment and the northerly alignment were presented in equal detail. As always, the EIR also considered a “no project” alternative. In 1998, the northerly alignment of SR-56 was selected for implementation. This Plan was subsequently amended to reflect approval of the northerly alignment, eliminating the central alignment land use plan and corresponding discussion of the proposed central alignment.

1.1 PURPOSE AND NEED

The Framework Plan requires that individual subarea plans be prepared, prior to voter consideration of a phase shift for the NCFUA. The purpose of a subarea plan is to refine and augment the NCFUA Framework Plan within a particular subarea’s boundaries, while remaining consistent with the adopted goals and policies of the Framework Plan and the City Progress Guide and General Plan (General Plan).

The Torrey Highlands Subarea Plan refines the generalized Framework Plan based on the need to:

- Develop a refined land use plan within the context of the Framework Plan
- Develop alignments for the major circulation element roads (Camino Ruiz, Carmel Valley Road and Carmel Mountain Road)
- Provide for a future alignment for SR-56
- Define development boundaries consistent with the MSCP Preserve
- Locate public facilities
- Designate pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian trail corridors



Subarea IV Regional Location Map **1-1**

Torrey Highlands Subarea Plan **FIGURE**

1.2 PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Plan consists of text which sets forth goals, policies, proposals and recommended actions, and a land use map depicting land use designators throughout the community. The Plan text is organized as follows:

Chapter 1, Introduction describes the purpose, reasons and background for the Plan development.

Chapter 2, Open Space describes the adopted Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), which establishes a regionally significant open space system that will sustain biodiversity and connect to surrounding open space areas. The chapter also describes the open space amenities within the Subarea.

Chapter 3, Circulation describes the major circulation routes providing access to and through the community. In addition, this chapter describes motorized and non-motorized transportation alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicle, including bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian trails and paths, as well as transit.

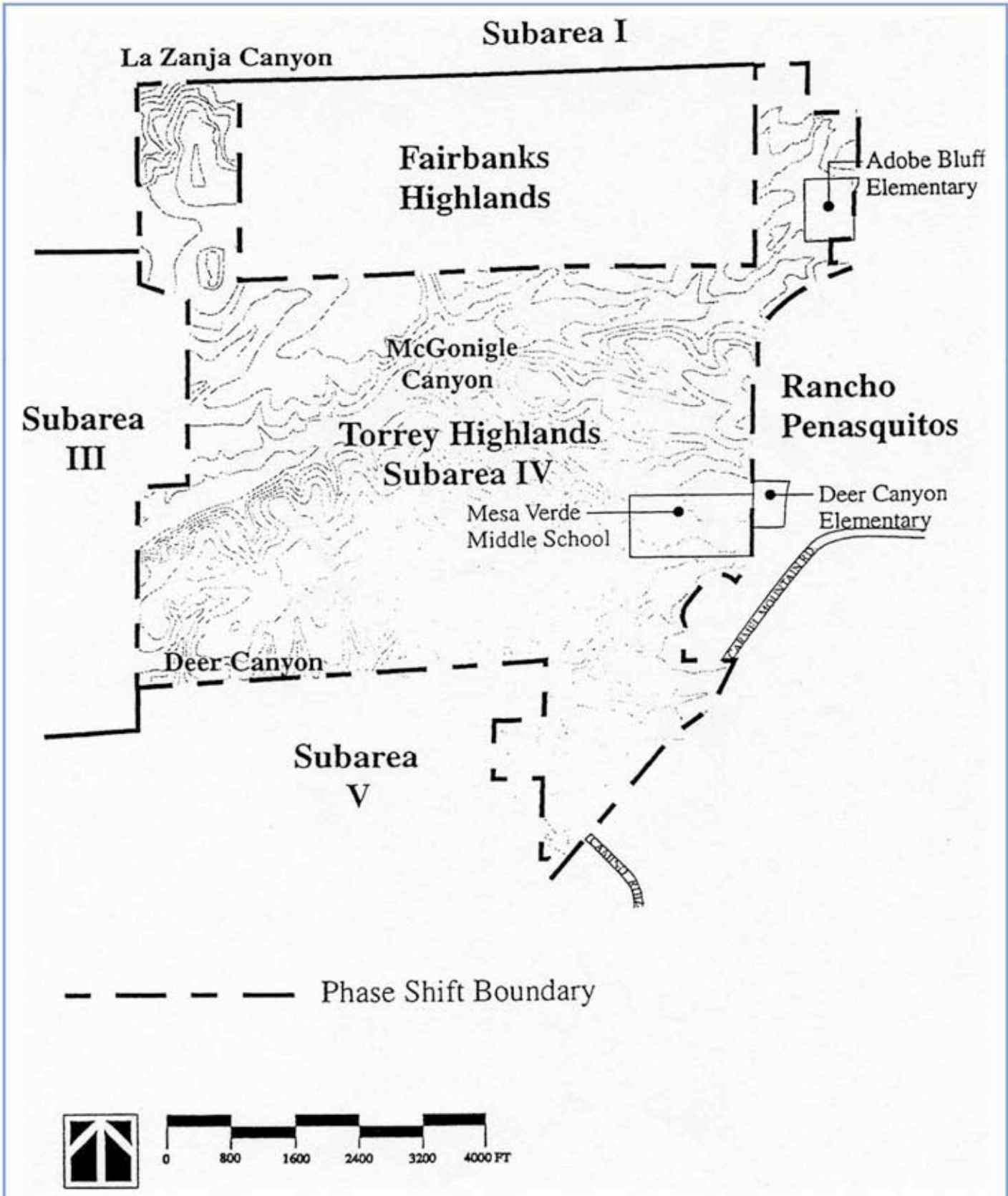
Chapter 4, Land Use, Chapter 5, Community Design Guidelines, Chapter 6, Community Facilities and Chapter 7, Housing respectively provide the land use plan for Torrey Highlands, establish goals for future development, identify policies to guide development, and describe more specific detail for policy implementation throughout the plan area.

Chapter 8, Implementation describes the required actions and mechanisms to achieve the Plan.

1.3 TORREY HIGHLANDS PLANNING PROCESS

Subsequent to the adoption of the Framework Plan in 1992, NCFUA property owners participated in a coordinated effort for the planning of four subarea plans within the NCFUA to allow these areas to shift from Future Urbanizing to Planned Urbanizing Area at one time. Consultant and property owner teams worked on separate plans for each of the subareas, with extensive coordination occurring in the areas of circulation/road alignments, MSCP/Environmental Tier refinement, and public facility location. Ongoing dialogue was maintained with community planning groups adjoining the subareas in planning. In March 1994, prior to the completion of the subarea plans, the City Council decided to place a phase shift measure on the June 1994 ballot for the entire NCFUA. It failed to gain a majority vote.

According to the Framework Plan, once a phase shift effort for the entire NCFUA has failed, then individual subareas are allowed to proceed for a phase shift vote if they comply with the Framework Plan, including completion of a subarea plan. The Torrey Highlands Subarea Plan that was begun in 1993 has been revised, updated and completed to comply with the requirements set forth by the Framework Plan and was



Phase Shift Map 1-2
Torrey Highlands Subarea Plan FIGURE

adopted by the City Council on August 5, 1996 and submitted for a phase shift vote on the November 5, 1996 ballot. The ballot measure passed, and this Plan became effective. (Additionally, several other requirements regarding schools, parks, financing and open space were met prior to the subarea plan becoming effective in October 1998).

The final land use plan for the Torrey Highlands community has been achieved as a result of planning steps taken to realize the specific goals of the Framework Plan. The first step involved the gathering of data and analysis of existing conditions including the review of on-site environmental opportunities and constraints. This step led to the refinement of the boundaries of the Environmental Tier through the application of MSCP planning criteria. These resource protection boundaries, in turn, have established the most significant opportunities and constraints for Torrey Highlands land use planning. The alignment of regional circulation roads was the next step, followed by the determination of required public facilities and their location within Torrey Highlands. The next step involved relating the development pattern to the Local Mixed Use Center consistent with neo-traditional planning concepts. This includes identification of pedestrian trails and bicycle links throughout Torrey Highlands. The final step involved combining all the elements to create two land use plans of equal detail for Torrey Highlands, which anticipated the two alignments for SR-56 that were under review by the City of San Diego and Caltrans. With approval of the northerly alignment in 1998, the land use plan showing the central alignment of SR-56 was eliminated from the Plan through an amendment process.

The Plan text defines the implementing principles and policies that will guide the development of the community. Upon its adoption in August 1996, the Plan became the guide for future discretionary actions including tentative maps, planned development permits, rezoning and other discretionary actions.

1.4 PLANNING CONTEXT

1.4.1 Physical Characteristics

Topography: Torrey Highlands is characterized by a wide range of landforms including a series of canyons and ridges, relatively flat mesas and floodplains, and gently to steeply sloping hillside terrain. Three canyons occur within or adjacent to the project area: McGonigle Canyon bisects the property in a southwesterly direction, Deer Canyon extends in an east/west direction just south of the project area, and the upper reach of La Zanja Canyon extends into the northwestern portion of the project area. Slopes with a gradient exceeding 25 percent occur along some of the drainages of these three canyons and a 100-year floodplain has been delineated per FEMA guidelines for McGonigle Canyon.

Visual Resources: Major visual resources in Torrey Highlands include on-site and off-site views that will be utilized in developing the community. Primary on-site views include the Pacific Ocean as seen from higher elevations in Torrey Highlands, Del Mar Mesa to the south, and Black Mountain to the northeast.

Several eucalyptus groves in McGonigle Canyon and the southeast portion of the subarea provide view opportunities as does Deer Canyon located to the south of the plan area. From off-site, most of the Torrey Highlands plan area is visible from the existing Rancho Peñasquitos developments to the east, Del Mar Mesa to the south and Subarea III to the west.

Vegetation: The majority of the project area has been disturbed by agricultural activities and is covered with non-native grasses. Various types of native vegetation on-site include Diegan coastal sage scrub, chamise chaparral and mixed chaparral. Several groves of eucalyptus trees occur within the project area. Coast and valley freshwater marsh, mule fat scrub, southern riparian scrub and southern willow scrub occur along portions of the on-site drainages. Small isolated patches of scrub oak chaparral also occur on-site.

1.4.2 Existing Land Uses

Existing land uses within the project area include commercial nurseries in the northwest and northeast portion of the site, equestrian facilities and several residences in the northwest and northeast portions of the site. Two schools operated by the Poway Unified School District exist along the eastern boundary of Torrey Highlands: Adobe Bluffs Elementary School, located along the northeast edge and Mesa Verde Middle School, along the southeastern edge of the project area. A 100-foot wide San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) transmission easement exists along the western project boundary containing wooden poles supporting 69-kilovolt (kV) lines and steel lattice towers supporting 230-kV lines. Black Mountain Road (also known as Carmel Valley Road or Del Mar Heights Road) exists as a two-lane dirt road through the northerly portion of the project area. A sewer line and easement exist along McGonigle Canyon and a water line and easement pass through the project area, south of the existing unpaved Black Mountain Road.

1.4.3 Surrounding Land Uses

Rancho Peñasquitos: Residential development within the Rancho Peñasquitos community abuts most of the eastern boundary of Subarea IV, including three neighborhoods that are adjacent to Torrey Highlands: the Bluffs on the northeast, Twin Trails to the southeast, and Parkview to the extreme southeast. These neighborhoods are currently in various stages of development and are predominantly single-family in nature. According to the Rancho Peñasquitos Community Plan, 51 percent of the community is designated as residential; with low-density (1-5 du/ac) housing comprising 87 percent of the residential development within the community. Parks and open space account for 34 percent, streets and utilities nine percent, institutional three percent, commercial two percent, and industrial one percent of the community.

1.4.4 Planned Land Uses

North City Future Urbanizing Area - Subareas: The North City Future Urbanizing Area surrounds Torrey Highlands to the north, south and west. Although subarea plans for all of the NCFUA were not completed when this Subarea Plan was prepared, the proposed land uses for the NCFUA were important to consider during planning of Torrey Highlands.

Subarea I is to the north and includes the Black Mountain Ranch tentative map and planned residential development (PRD), approved in November of 1992 and revised in October 1995, allowing development of single-family estate lots, affordable multifamily units, two golf courses and a series of associated uses including public and private schools, churches, public facilities and reservoirs. This development does not require a phase shift vote. A phase shift for the remainder of the Subarea was approved in November 1998. The Subarea I plan calls for an additional 4,279 dwelling units, 1,350,000 square feet of commercial uses, 650,000 square feet of office uses, a 300-room resort/hotel, and north and south village mixed-use centers (CMXU), providing pedestrian-friendly environments and public and quasi-public facilities/services.

Subarea III is located to the west of Subarea IV. The Framework Plan proposed a total of from 5,400 to 6,500 dwelling units, a mixed-use core and several neighborhood areas emphasizing pedestrian-friendly forms of development. The owner of a 72-acre parcel at the southwestern edge of the Subarea filed an application for a phase shift vote in November 1996. This project, called Seabreeze Farms Estates, proposed an Equestrian Center, 220 single-family homes and 55 multifamily dwelling units. The application was approved and was placed on the November 5, 1996 ballot. The proposition was approved by the voters. The Subarea III Plan, also called the Pacific Highlands Ranch Subarea Plan, was approved by the City in 1998, and was the subject of a successful phase shift vote in November 1998. The Subarea Plan calls for 4,974 residential units, a 33-acre Village area, a 20-acre employment center, seven school sites, a civic use area, and various areas of open space.

Subarea V (Del Mar Mesa) which is to the south, is primarily designated for very low-density development and open space resources. A specific plan, which contemplates the ultimate development of up to 688 dwelling units, was approved by the City Council on July 30, 1996. Implementation of the Del Mar Mesa Specific Plan does not require a phase shift vote.

Subarea IV includes Fairbanks Highlands and Torrey Highlands. Torrey Highlands has proceeded under a planning process in accordance with the Framework Plan. This subarea includes McGonigle Canyon, which forms an important wildlife corridor linking Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Deer Canyon, the San Dieguito Regional Park, La Zanja Canyon and Black Mountain Park. Torrey Highlands will also ultimately incorporate public facilities including a

high school, an elementary school and a portion of a middle school. The Torrey Highlands Local Mixed-Use Center (LMXU) will provide neighborhood-serving opportunities for shopping and employment. In total, the Torrey Highlands Subarea will contribute a maximum of 2,600 dwelling units, including affordable housing, to the region's housing stock. The employment center is being proposed to provide job opportunities for the northern part of the City of San Diego.

1.4.5 Planning Principles

The following planning principles guided the development of the Plan and are stated here to emphasize the overall goals for future development:

Environmental

- Preserve biodiversity, significant resources, landforms and habitat.
- Provide for and contribute to a comprehensive open space system.

Regional Planning

- Provide a well-integrated land use pattern that provides for a range of housing and employment opportunities.
- Promote development patterns complementary to the adopted plans and existing development patterns of existing communities.
- Provide recreational opportunities to serve the needs of Torrey Highlands residents and residents of existing, adjoining communities.
- Provide open spaces separating residential neighborhoods, while providing links through a series of pathways and trails.

Balanced Land Use

- Provide a range of residential housing alternatives, from very low-density single-family estate product types to LMXU density multifamily product types.
- Provide housing opportunities for persons with special needs. Integrate low- and moderate-income housing opportunities throughout the community.
- Provide for a diversified economic base that will contribute to supporting required public services in Torrey Highlands.
- Create employment opportunities for area residents including commercial development in the LMXU, as well as office and research development in the employment center.
- Distribute land uses and design facilities to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation through the inclusion of a bicycle and pedestrian network, as well as allowing for potential transit modes.

- Provide commercial and civic facilities in the LMXU to meet the daily needs of area residents.

Facilities Concurrent with Need

Throughout the plan area, as well as throughout the entire City of San Diego, it is important to provide public facilities and services as they are needed and in fact anticipate the need so as to not be in a continuous catch-up mode. Torrey Highlands Subarea's public facilities financing and phasing plan is structured to:

- Require public facilities and services to meet the needs of all residents.
- Provide for the convenient and efficient location of services and facilities.
- Provide for needed services and facilities within Torrey Highlands without undermining the tax base of surrounding communities.