

TEMPORARY PARADISE?

A LOOK AT THE SPECIAL LANDSCAPE OF THE SAN DIEGO REGION



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A Report to the City of San Diego

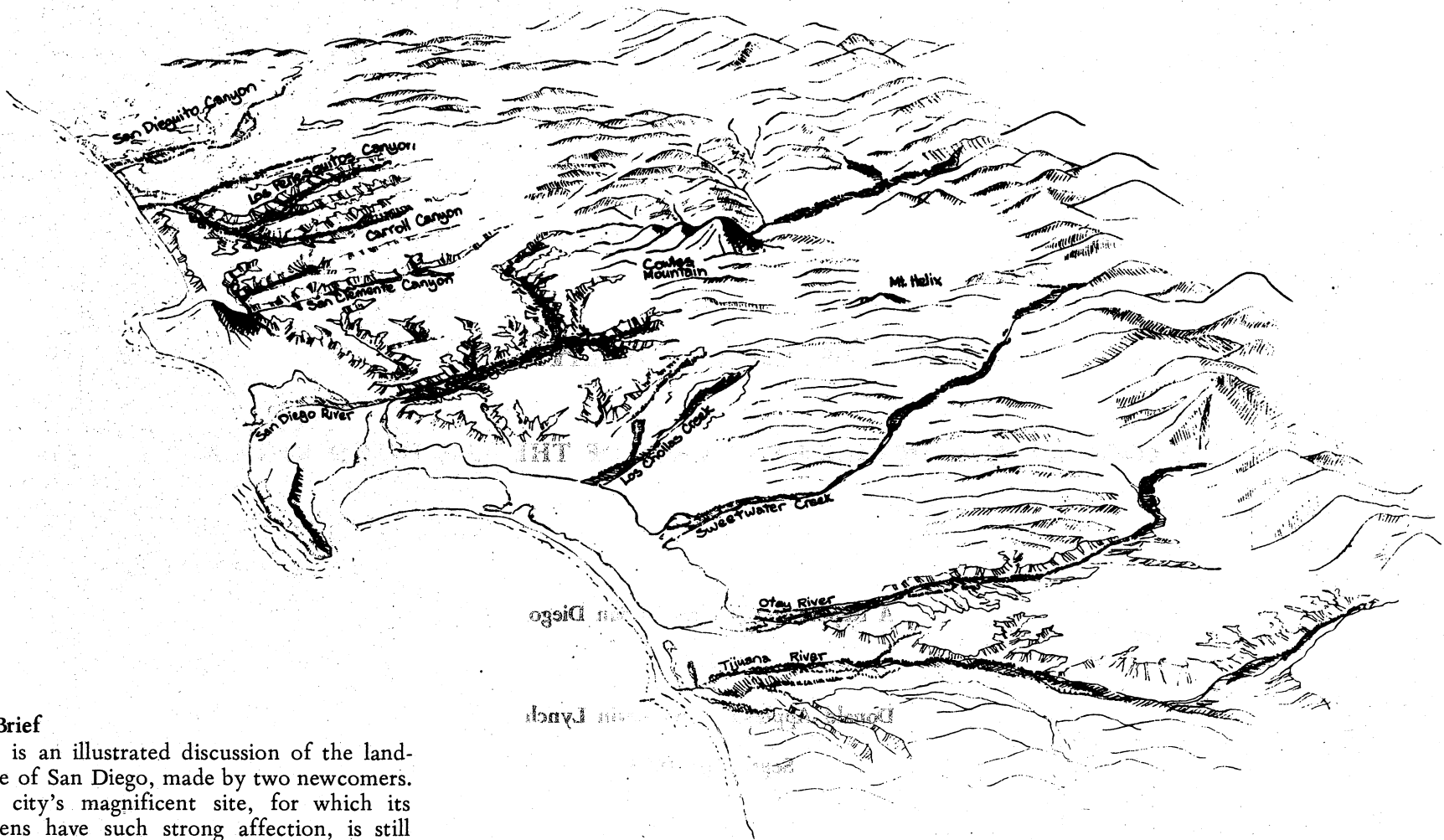
by

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In Brief

This is an illustrated discussion of the landscape of San Diego, made by two newcomers. The city's magnificent site, for which its citizens have such strong affection, is still intact, but may be losing its best qualities. In this report, we analyze these qualities, the history of the regional landscape, its meaning to its people, and how it stands today.

We make many suggestions about saving the valleys and the canyons, restoring the Bay to the people, rebuilding the neighborhoods, and renewing the major centers. We recommend slowing down and changing the form of suburban development while redirecting growth to the present urban areas, and thence along the coast. We suggest ways of doing it that will conserve water, energy, and the land, while making the landscape more humane. We discuss airports, highways, better transit systems, walkways and cycle trails. We try to show that Tijuana is an integral part of the San Diego landscape, and that the rapid changes going on there must be managed by strong joint action.

The situation of the region is chancy (when are human affairs not so?). But San Diego has a very possible future in which its splendid assets have been conserved, and its amenities shared more equitably among all its people. The city should begin to take thought for the long-term quality of its environment. We suggest a way to do that, and end up with a few questions and a few basic principles.

We hope San Diegans will find this report provocative, will agree and disagree with it, and will make their feelings known. Most of all, we hope that San Diego takes charge of its future.

What is This About and Who is it From?

This is about the land and how people have settled on it, and what this means for the quality of their lives. How does this physical place, San Diego, satisfy the needs of its people? What does its land, its water, and all its buildings and its streets mean to those who experience them every day? The human quality of the environment is fundamental to any decisions about the city. We will look at the city region as a whole since this is the arena within which the real forces shaping the environment are acting today.

What follows is a personal statement, based on a reconnaissance of the San Diego region. It is a report to the city, made possible by a generous grant from the Marston family. It is not city policy. It has no detailed proposals in it. It is a general analysis of the quality of San Diego and some ideas for preserving and improving it.

If some of these ideas seem controversial, they are. If they seem at times outrageous, please remember that, while we have one advantage of the outsider - - the ability to see certain questions fresh and whole - - we also have this disadvantage - - ignorance of many local facts and feelings. We hope that this report will raise important questions and help San Diegans to resolve them for themselves.

San Diego's Natural Base

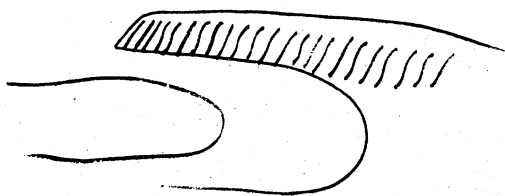
Look at the land as it was before any major settlement occurred upon it. This is the basis of the city's quality. We must work with that base, or pay an unremitting price.

This is an arid coast, with a dry mild Mediterranean climate. If you add water, and prepare the soil, this land will bloom. But its natural vegetation is, for the most part, low and dully colored.

At a distance of 20 miles, bold, rocky mountains parallel to the seacoast, a handsome backdrop for the landscape. Through the intervening mesas, small streams in deep valleys carry the intermittent mountain water back to the sea from which it came. Santa Margarita, San Luis Rey, Buena Vista, Agua Hedionda, San Marcos, Escondido, San Dieguito, Penasquitos, San Clemente, San Diego, Sweetwater, Otay, Tijuana - - the musical river names speak of an earlier occupation.

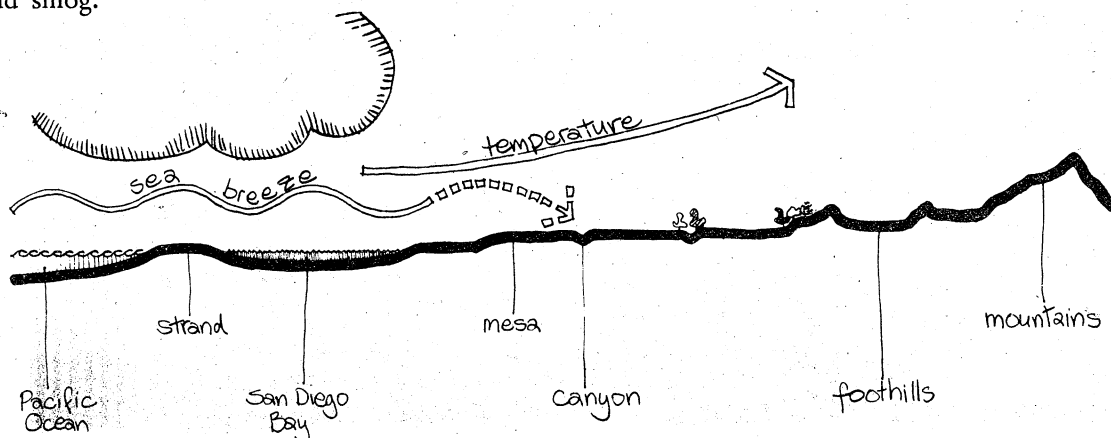
The ocean shore is a long arc of sand, which foofs bold bluffs, or seals off the dune-sheltered salt lagoons into which the rivers empty. This is still a clean ocean: the under-sea fauna are luxuriant, the lagoons and bays full of life.

Two large hills stand forward of this ocean arc: Mount Soledad and Point Loma. By interrupting that sweep of beach, they shelter the two great bays into which the San Diego River once alternately emptied. Thus the ocean shore is "doubled" here in the center of the region, forming the harbor that is the reason for the city's existence. But this "doubling" has also had important consequences for the quality of the region, since it saved at least one shoreline for public enjoyment, and produced a unique setting for the city. San Diego Bay has a very special scale: ample and yet intimately enclosed, changing its quality with every shift of light. The sunset is visible; one sees the relation of land and water; the city center can be seen from a distance, in its maritime setting. These views of the Bay are the symbol of San Diego.



Upland from the shore, above the first bluffs, the flat mesas rise gradually to the mountains. The ground is dry, and the soil, for the most part, thin and poor, covered with a tough, dull brush. What water there is in the valleys and here one finds the water-loving vegetation. The streams are quite small, but on occasion they will fill their valley with a wild torrent. The mesa tops are intersected almost everywhere by a branching network of deep, dry, V-shaped canyons, leading down to the flat-bottomed valleys, and so breaking up what otherwise might be a rather monotonous terrain. Behind all this lie the mountains, with their picturesque ridges and green valleys. Behind them is the desert.

At the shore the climate is mild and extremely stable. There is a steady breeze from the sea. Mornings are often cloudy, and afternoons bright. But there is little rain. Not far inland, the sea breeze dies away. The even climate becomes progressively more extreme as one goes inland: hotter in the summer and colder in winter. There is a little more rain, but still the air and land are dry and the sun shines almost without ceasing. The climate is harsh, more desert-like, the air still. This warm, stable air is very susceptible to haze and smog.



If we look at the natural region as a whole, we see that it is a very simple unit - - mountains, mesas and sea - - across which the water is cycled. Yet it has great variety within that unity: a variety of coastal form, the juxtaposition of mesa and canyon, the complex mountain shapes. Above all, it has strong contrasts within short distances as one goes inland. The natural gradient, therefore, is west to east.

This bold site, its openness, its sun and mild climate, the sea, the landscape contrasting within brief space are (along with its people) the wealth of San Diego. They are what have attracted settlers to the place and still attract them. They must not be destroyed.

A Miniature History

This natural base has been settled in a special way, which also helps to explain the quality of San Diego. The Indians who originally occupied the land hardly disturbed it. Of necessity, they respected the power and spirit of the place, and fitted their lives to it. Those few of their myths that have survived mirror the grandeur of the setting. Overrun and all but extinguished by the Spanish occupation, they have hardly left a trace, although they were among the more advanced of the California Indians. Even their name, the Dieguenos, is an imposition, a name transferred to them from their conqueror's name for their land.

The Spanish colonists and missionaries came up from the south, looking for grazing land and souls to save. They held the land for less than a century, and their occupation was thin and precarious, compared with other regions of Mexico, or even with the other California to the north. The land was too dry, and the Indians resisted, although dying of the white man's epidemics. There was some cattle ranching in the watered valleys, and a presidio and mission were established on a strategic spur of the mesa, commanding both bays and the mouth of the San Diego River.

The North Americans came down the coast from above and took the land once more. A land speculator moved the town from its strategic site to a characterless location along the edge of the southern bay and shaped it on a thoughtless gridiron, designed for profit. The San Diego River was blocked from entering the southern bay. The center of the city still suffers from the indecisive relation to sea and land which resulted.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which confirmed the U.S. seizure of Upper California, set the international boundary on a line from the junction of the Gila and Colorado Rivers to a point on the Pacific coast "one marine league south of the port of San Diego," which gave the U.S. the harbor and most of the cultivable land, while reserving a land connection to Baja California for Mexico. This arbitrary line slashed through the natural region, cutting diagonally across the Tijuana River Valley. It made San Diego a border town, a port separated from much of its natural hinterland. It completed the relative isolation of the area, which now became a remote "end-of-the-line" for both nations. That border line has now become a major feature of the landscape.

Even the North American town was precarious until the late 19th Century. Repeated declines of population came very close to causing its extinction. A direct and permanent railroad connection to the east was only completed in 1919. San Diego was outpaced by Los Angeles, her rival to the north, and never developed as an important port. Still today, it is much more dependent on exotic activities, that is, on the Navy and on tourism.

With the Indians gone, the Spanish settlement obliterated, and the early U.S. growth slow, the deposit of history on the landscape is quite thin and deceptively recent. There is no visible tradition of form, or style of life. It is hard to realize that this place has been a site of human occupation for millenia. Just the same, there is a substantial heritage of fine turn-of-the-century buildings in the center city. These buildings are ignored today or carelessly destroyed.

When the growth of San Diego finally began, the bay shore was the natural location for the railway, the wharves and the industries. This initial capture of the inner sea front was confirmed by military claims, then by the highways and the airports. The physical and visual barriers created by these uses, their noise, their smoke and smell carried inland by the sea breeze, are a detriment to the city. San Diegans are cut off from one of their principal landscape assets.

Luckily, the outer shore remained untouched. Except for military holdings, all of this is in civil public hands today. With a car one can reach a public beach, although one may have to pay a bridge toll, or annoy other people living at the shore. San Diego has a tradition, beginning with the first Nolen plan, of reclaiming its oceanfront for public enjoyment. Those who have no car, or are caught behind the military-industrial front along the south bay, are at a disadvantage. Much has been lost, but much has been saved or regained.

As the city grew, houses at first grouped about the center, or were sprinkled in other speculative town sites down south along the bay. Then the streetcar came, and pushed inland toward the existing settlement of El Cajon, encouraging the growth of a finger of urbanization eastwards from Hillcrest. The arterial shopping streets were created, and the houses pushed into a more difficult climate. But there was very little north of the San Diego River, except for some settlement in Clairemont, and La Jolla.

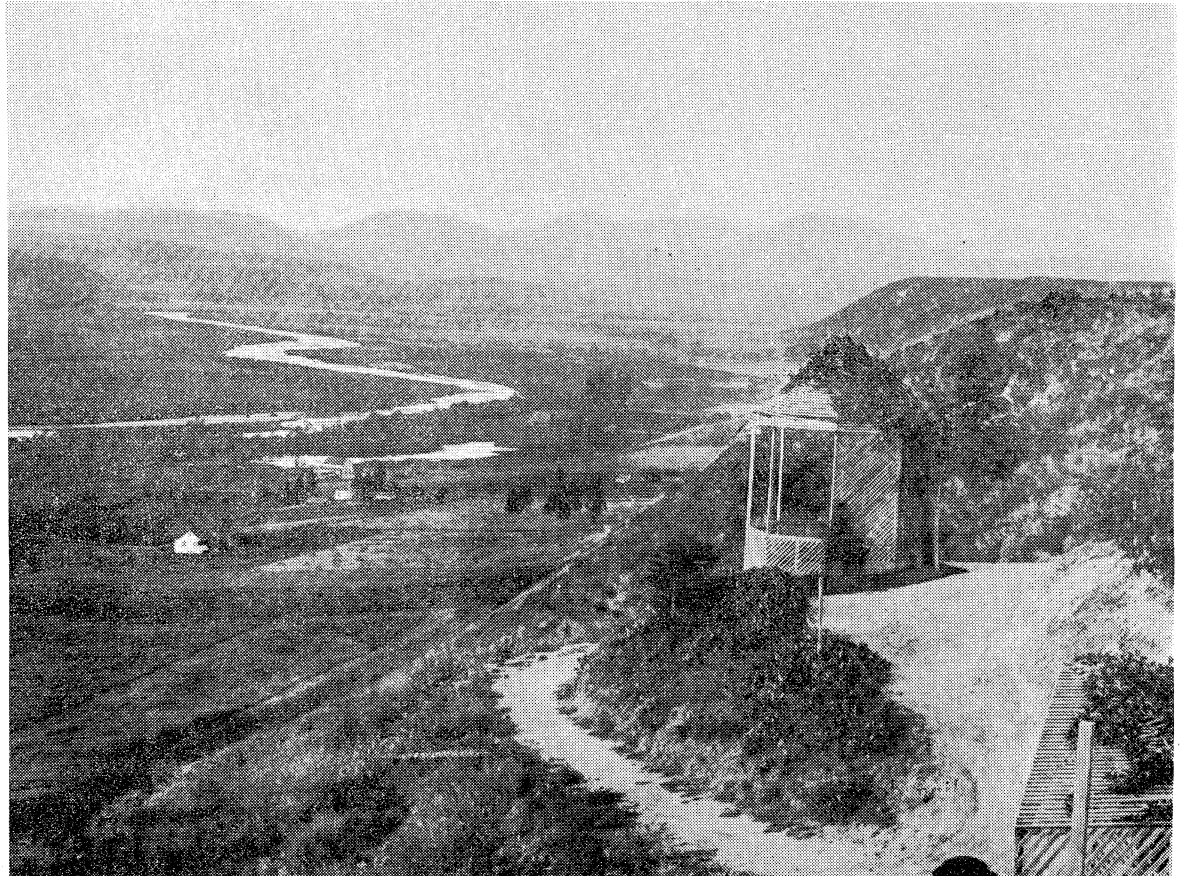
When the private car became available to most people, growth moved inland at many points. It jumped the river, and spread to the vast north space. As migrants poured in, attracted by new jobs and especially by the setting, they wanted a house of their own, just like the one back home. There was no tradition to oppose that, and, technically, it could be done.

The result was heavy traffic, smog, noise, expensive extension of schools, roads, and utilities, a necessity for air conditioning. In general, this was a wasteful use of land, energy, water, and public funds. Along with the rapid suburban growth came the first signs of central decay and abandonment.

In most places, the new suburban growth occurred on the tops of the mesas, where the land was extensive, cheap and flat. The watered valleys at first were left alone, and

many still are empty today. This historic reversal of development, from farming the valleys to suburbanizing the mesas offers San Diego the possibility of a two-level city as we will see later.

Unfortunately, this historic resource has already been squandered in some places. The most dramatic loss was the conversion of historic Mission Valley in the 1950's into a chaos of highways, parking lots, and scattered commercial buildings. The city should erect an historic monument to that tragic event. It struck a double blow: one directed both at the landscape and at the economy of the center city.



But during these same years of growth and intermittent mis-management, San Diego also did much to preserve its site, and, more noteworthy still, even to create fine new landscapes. Mount Soledad and Point Loma were kept open for public enjoyment along with much of the shore. Balboa Park is a breath-taking transformation of a dry, rather featureless mesa. Mission Bay is a huge man-made marine park, yet incomplete. The African landscapes of the zoo are nationally famous. The city has a knack for acting on a big scale.

Across the arbitrary border line, in the same natural region and the same terrain, the small agricultural settlement of Tijuana began to grow in the 1920's and 30's, when Prohibition was enacted in the U.S., and as prostitution, gambling, and boxing were pushed out of the Upper California cities. From this start as the "dark side" of U.S. society, Tijuana has recently grown into a center for family tourism and now has begun to attract a flood of migrants from farther south, who come looking for work or a chance to cross the border.

Today Tijuana is one of the fastest growing cities in the world. Its mushrooming subdivisions and squatter settlements fill the valley and the canyons, and spread out over the slopes and mesas to the south and east. Its form of settlement is in startling contrast to the neat single-family houses of the San Diego region.



Where the Region Stands Today

This is a special landscape, yet much of the development on it is a faithful copy of U.S. models. Freeways, arterial streets, airports, industries, shopping centers, the downtown renewal zone - - they all look familiar. The new suburbs are quite the same, if more closely-built and barren. At first glance, this is a standard American city, still new and clean, without trees, rather dried-up, dropped onto a big landscape.

But the fine climate and the dramatic site are not yet destroyed. Large open areas remain: underused military and industrial lands, numerous airports, flood plains, steep slopes, discontinuous urbanization, farms, waste lands waiting for development. San Diego is not yet committed, not yet seriously congested.

Within the city, a number of older communities, by slow growth and adaptation, have evolved a memorable character of their own, a character which is modest, comfortable, and humane. The city is a collection of communities, and the qualities of these communities can still be conserved. Indeed, in comparison with most U.S. cities, San Diego is still remarkably clean and quiet. Abandoned buildings or derelict areas are still relatively rare.

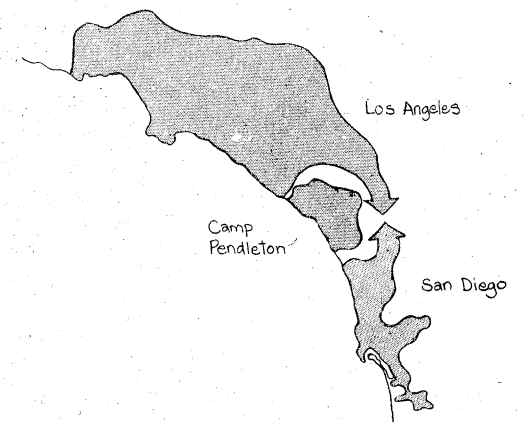
Finally, there are great civil enterprises accomplished or in process. Balboa Park is a stunning achievement. Mission Bay is in the making. The University of California is creating a new center of activity. The very growth of the region, while it creates tensions and threatens the land, also has given San Diego a new sense of life and excitement.

If one looks to see where these fine new man-made landscapes are located, one will see that they are almost all north of Mission Valley. Indeed, this has recently been the general pattern of public investment. The natural gradient may be west to east, but the social gradient is clearly north to south. This social slope is becoming steeper, and public actions tend to steepen it. South of

the border are the extensive slums, and the pattern runs right up to the North County. For prestige, a home buyer will locate as far "upstream" as he can afford.

Los Angeles was not unlike much of San Diego a half century ago: treeless, scattered, semi-rural, although its land was flatter and less varied. Much of the new growth in San Diego's North County is occurring to accommodate commuters to Orange and Riverside Counties to the north. The two metropolitan regions are beginning to merge, flanking Camp Pendleton. From a national perspective, it may seem inevitable that Los Angeles and San Diego will one day be a single urbanized region. The Southern California Association of Governments, the regional planning group based in Los Angeles, already enfoldes San Diego County. But, seen from San Diego's viewpoint, it is not yet inevitable that the urbanization of Southern California be unbroken, nor that it must all follow the Los Angeles model.

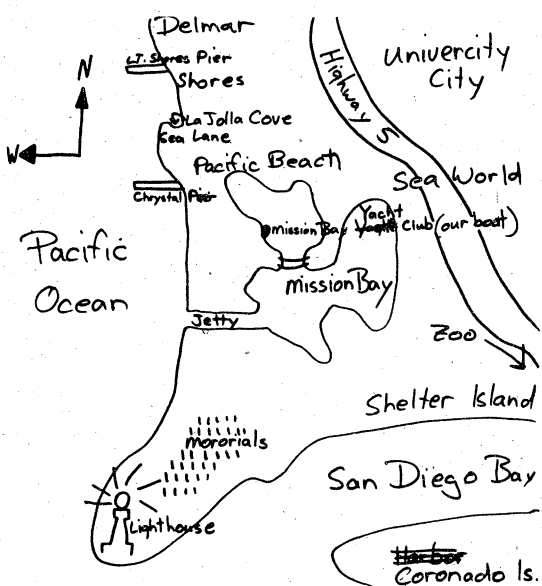
Still, if San Diego cannot hope for Los Angeles' giant size, it can easily imitate it in other ways: spread out its dry suburbs, channel its streams, fill its valleys and lagoons, choke its roads and darken its air, sharpen the social gradient, harden the border. Could we then rename it San Diego de Los Angeles?



Some Images of San Diego

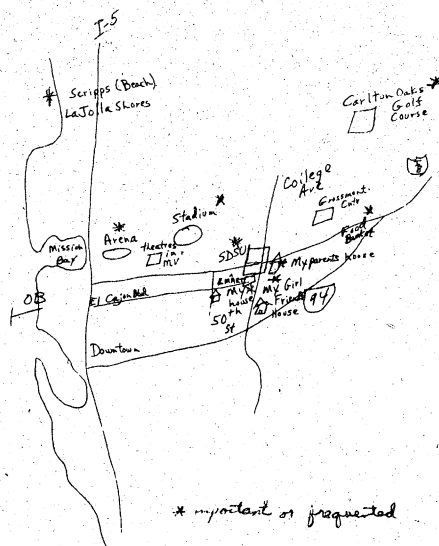
What do people think of when they imagine San Diego? How do they view their city? How do they use it? An earlier survey by the Comprehensive Planning Organization showed that people were especially concerned about air pollution, open space, and transportation. Since we were strangers, we wanted to learn more, so we sent out a simple questionnaire, mostly to community leaders, professionals, and high school students in various parts of the city.* They drew a map of San Diego, and noted how frequently they used different parts of it. They were asked what symbolized the city for them, what they liked and disliked about it, and what suggestions they had for the city's improvement. Some 200 people generously gave their time to complete this questionnaire. It is not a scientific sample of San Diego opinion. The sample is undoubtedly biased, and the questions were open-ended, rather than precise. But it gave us useful insights into how different groups perceive and use their city.

Overwhelmingly, those interviewed said that the first things that came to their mind when thinking of San Diego were the ocean, the beaches, and the climate. Then they spoke of parks, the zoo, the recreational activities, the bays, and the whole natural landscape setting. It is a remarkably consistent picture. Moreover, these are just the things that they most like about their city. San Diegans are fortunate, for their image of the city is generally positive, and full of affection. The physical setting appears as the most important feature. In many other cities, when asked to symbolize a place, or to recount what they like about it, people will mention relations with other people, or making a living, or a historic tradition. Here, it seems to be the land itself that is remembered and enjoyed.

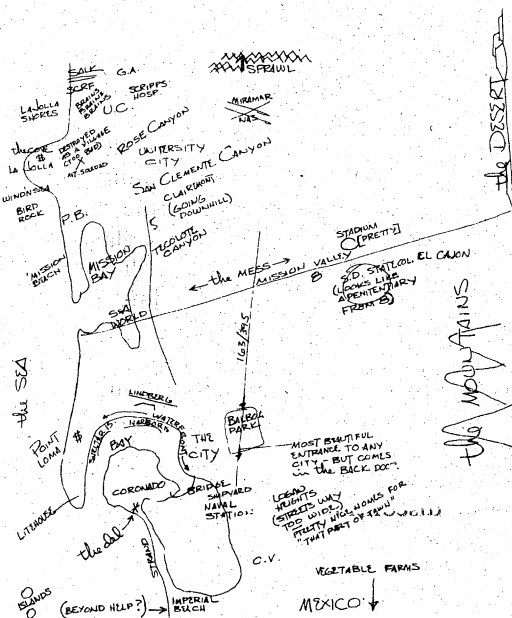


Map of San Diego by a La Jolla High School student.

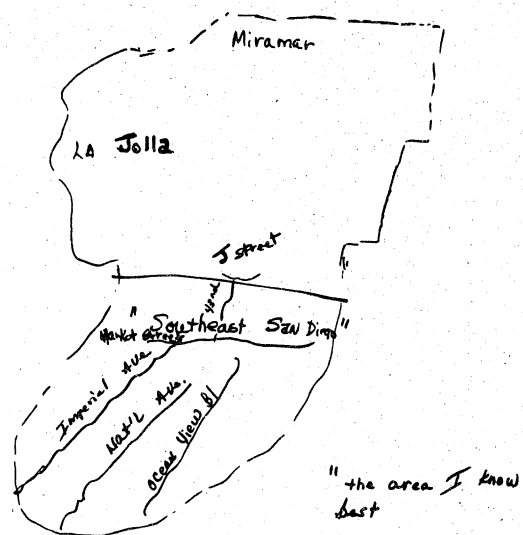
* Point Loma and La Jolla along the shore, Clairemont and Mira Mesa to the north, Navajo and the Patrick Henry High School to the east, and Uptown and South East San Diego in the inner city.



Map of San Diego by a San Diego State University student.



Map of San Diego by a University City resident.



Map of San Diego by a Logan Heights resident.

It is interesting to compare this image with the special picture of the city which is projected to tourists. In a typical tourist brochure, containing 44 views, all were taken along the coast, except two. All were taken

north of downtown, except for those of Tijuana. On the other hand, despite San Diego's youthfulness as a major city, 17 of the 44 photos are views of historic places. The more historic and interesting parts of the city all seem to lie in the coastal zone. The attractions of San Diego are epitomized in such phrases as "year-round attractions," "tropical greenery" (!), "aquatic recreation," "sheltered beaches," "maritime character," "great natural harbor," "leisurely pace," and "Latin atmosphere."

Yet this natural paradise is beginning to suffer the same problems that are experienced in other California cities, problems which undermine the very things for which people have so much affection. When asked what they most disliked, people wrote on the questionnaire about the smog which pollutes the climate, the urban growth which transforms the landscape and crowds the beaches, the traffic congestion and poor transit which impedes access. Most often, these problems were attributed to low quality development, poor planning, and to weak government.

San Diego's problems are not so very dissimilar from those of other cities but, so far, many of them are seen more as signals of a worse that might come. Already there is a nostalgia for the place that was. As one lady from Hillcrest put it,

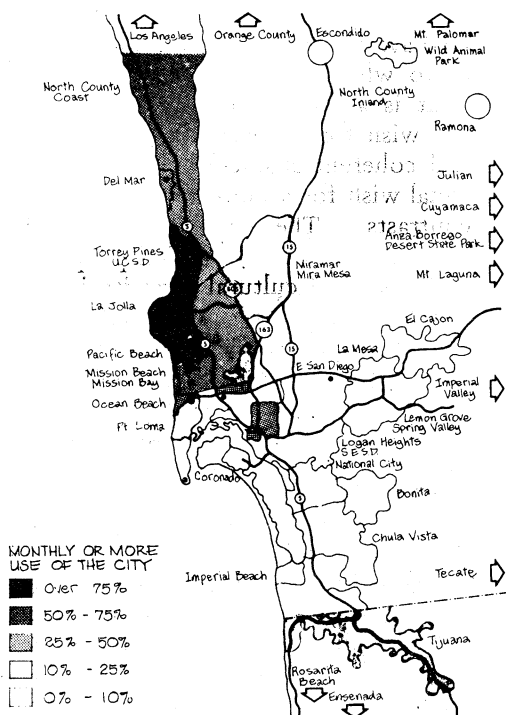
I enjoy the stream through Fashion Valley (what can be seen of it now!) and the green hillsides on the southern side of the valley. The north side is ugly, and the accelerated building in the valley flood plain is tragic. And the areas of parked cars waiting to be sold where once there was greenery and birds and peace and quiet. Imagine hearing spring peepers in the city. We use to!

And so, when they were asked to suggest improvements, these people naturally emphasized the control of growth, the preservation of open space, and the improvement of public transit, with a lesser but still quite significant plea for smog control, more parks, the improvement of downtown, and more control over building. It is a strong, coherent plea, indeed.

More diverse problems show up among the different groups, when they talk of their own communities. Those in Southeast San Diego are also concerned with the lack of jobs, with "corporate control pushing out small businesses," with poor housing, needed recreational facilities, the lack of shops, problems with the police, children on the street, dogs, freeways cutting through the area, and large apartment buildings. Clairemont people are worried about the "bull-doing of canyons and hills," "run-down areas," "the military," the schools, decreasing open space, billboards and signs, the lack of the arts, and the lack of rain.

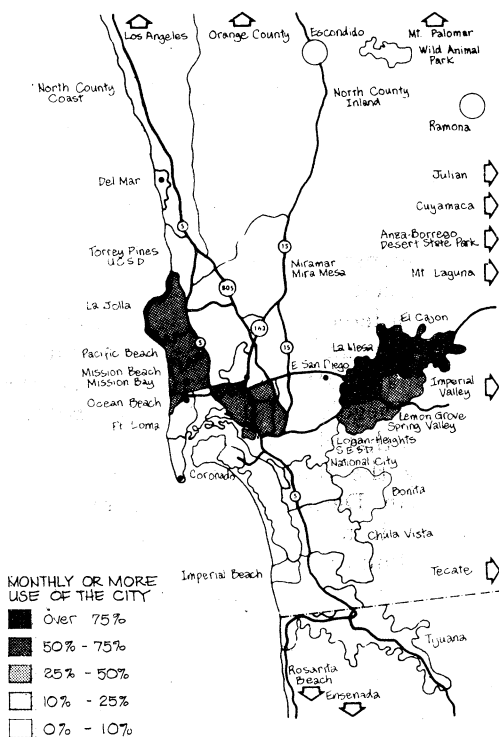
High school students from inland Navajo go frequently to the shore, particularly to Mission Bay and La Jolla. Navajo adults do so, too, although their center of action is El Cajon/La Mesa or downtown. People to the north, in Clairemont and Mira Mesa range over an extensive inland section, from their own communities inward to Downtown and Mission Bay. They travel widely. As one wrote, "I don't stay around San Diego too much - - I like to go to the mountains and the desert."

When one looks at the maps which show the areas regularly visited once a month or more often, it is striking to see how the use of the city varies, depending on where one lives. Those in the coastal communities tend to stay on the coast, those in the urbanized east come frequently out to the coast, those to the north range more widely, while those in the inner city are the most restricted in their local movement.

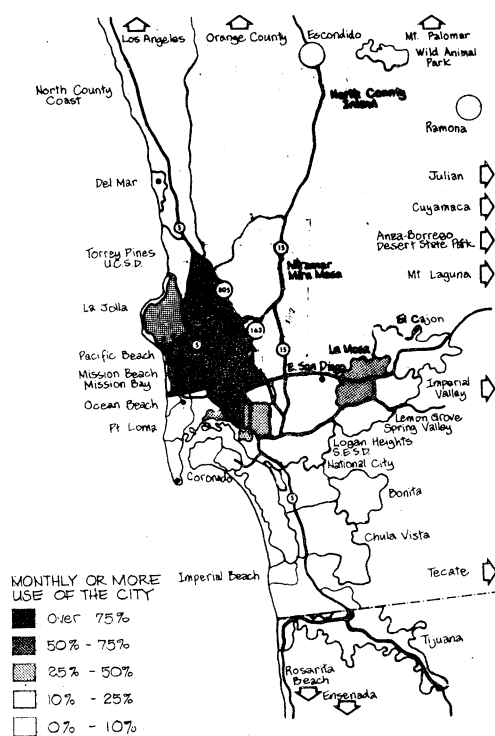


Use of the region by La Jolla High School students.

The high school students in La Jolla appear to spend their lives along the shore. Surfing is their pastime, and they know every pier. They cannot drive a car yet, and find it difficult to use transit. They seldom go south of Center City, or east of Balboa Park. Even the maps of the La Jolla adults, who, range more widely, tend to go vague south of downtown. Some have trouble drawing San Diego Bay. Farther south on the coast, in Pacific Beach and Point Loma, people go somewhat more frequently to the inner city, or inland as far as San Diego State University, but they also visit La Jolla at least monthly.

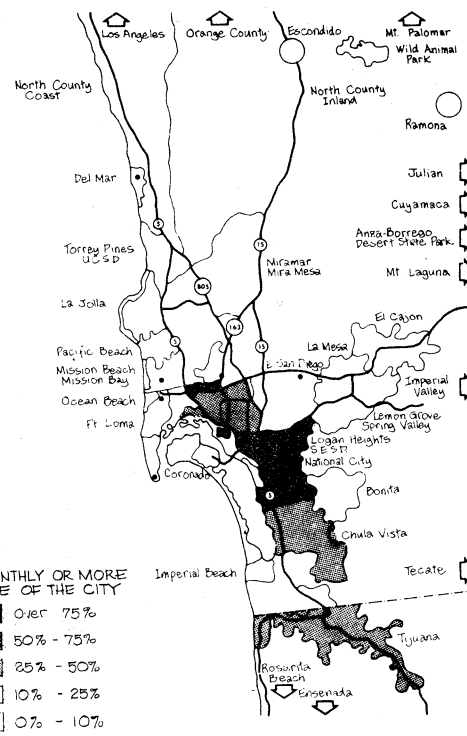


Use of the region by Navajo High School students.



Use of the region by residents of Clairemont.

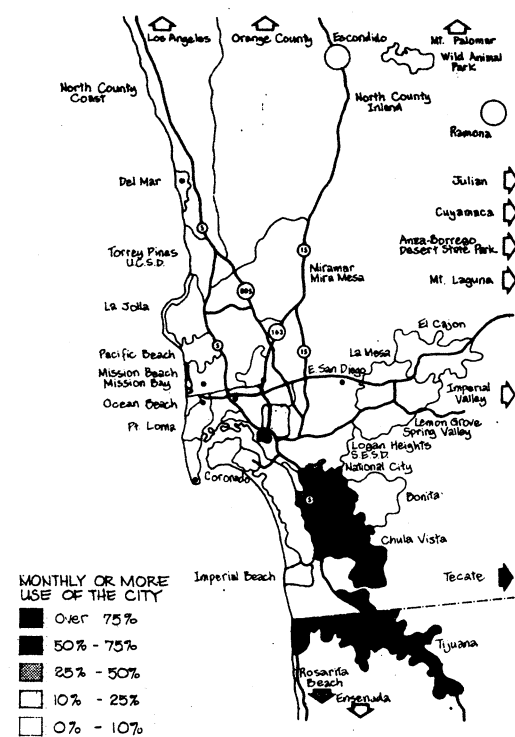
The inner city residents cluster more of their activity about Centre City. Hillcrest people use Centre City, Balboa Park, and Old Town intensively, and most of them visit Mission Bay, Mission Valley, and La Jolla monthly. Others go to other places along the coast, or go inland to El Cajon. Those in Logan Heights have the most restricted range of all. A majority use Centre City and Mission Valley, and a few visit Mission Bay or the coast. Their nearest beach is the Silver Strand, but they hardly use it. Bridge tolls and park entry fees may put them off. But more of them visit Tijuana and Los Angeles regularly than any other group.



Use of the region by residents of Southeast San Diego.

We received a few responses from Tijuana. Our Tijuana informants, who were mostly professionals, like Tijuana not for the natural environment which attracts San Diegans to the region. Their most common reason for liking Tijuana is its tourism and the presence of international commerce. Several said they like Tijuana because it is near to the U.S. and to San Diego. As one said, "it has the best of Mexico and the U.S." The central parts of the city - - the Avenida Revolucion, the Jai Ali, the flood channel - - are seen as its primary attraction. This affection for what is across the border and the desire for more relationships contrasts with the relative absence of such desires among our San Diegan respondents. Tijuana's attention reaches much more across the border. They do mention the natural environment, especially the beaches, but those take a back seat to their interest in the urban ambience.

Tijuana, however, have no illusions about their environmental problems. Over one-half were concerned about the need for planning their city better, for paving the streets, for planting vegetation and creating parks, for better ways of cleaning the city, and for provision of a more adequate supply of water. They are attracted to the city for what it might become as much as for what it is.



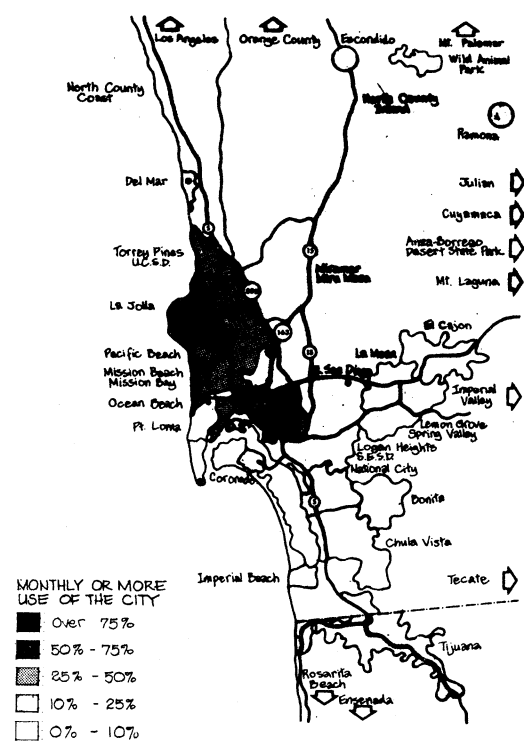
Use of the region by Tijuana residents.

Tijuana view San Diego as a very well organized city, one of them thought "a little too ordered." They remark mostly on the greenery and on the freeways, on its clean-lines and affluence. Most of all they like San Diego's parks, especially Balboa Park, assets that they clearly do not possess. They enjoy the cultural and recreational activities of San Diego and its fine buildings. San Diego in most senses appears to be an object of admiration. It seems they like all the attributes that Tijuana is presently missing.

Our Tijuana respondents travel regularly across the border. Almost all of them visit Chula Vista more than once a month, no doubt to shop at the regional shopping center. Some also frequently visit downtown and Balboa Park but few regularly travel further north.

These travel maps tend to point up the diversity of San Diego's communities. When citizens focus their activity in one locale, they tend to identify with it, and this can lead to participation in controlling its quality. This appears to work in some coastal communities - like La Jolla and Ocean Beach. Elsewhere this localization can generate a sense of isolation or powerlessness. A restricted range may not be voluntary. It is possible that people are being excluded from the amenities of the region.

There are places that are used in common. Centre City is still visited regularly by the people of most communities, even as far out as Mira Mesa. Mission Valley is almost as heavily used as is La Jolla. Public recreation is the other focus, especially Mission Bay and Balboa Park. Those splendid public investments are much used and widely appreciated. The downtown centers, the resort of La Jolla and the great parks, to which so many people gravitate, give San Diego its sense that, unlike Los Angeles, it is still one city.



Use of the region by all respondents.

We have frequently been asked our impression as to whether San Diego is "really a city." That is a double-edged question: It reveals the wish for a sense of regional community and coherent character; but it also reveals an equal wish for a more ample scale and greater contrasts. The common use of places is one sign of unity, but some people complain of the lack of cultural diversity in San Diego. The frequent visits to Los Angeles and Tijuana suggest that many people use the whole Southern California/Baja California region as their resource and range. The Point Loma group, for instance, frequent Los Angeles and Orange County more often than they do El Cajon.

While this small survey told us that there were some strong common feelings about the quality of San Diego's environment, they also gave us some insights into the diversity of environmental problems faced by each community. A true environmental plan for the city should be based on a far more careful understanding of each community than we have been able to gain through these few interviews.

San Diego will grow and change, but the city is already here and what is here will continue to be a major determinant of quality. A careful look at what should be saved and repaired in the existing city is our first task. Conservation of the natural setting is surely an urgent priority, and the finer parts of the city can also be preserved. But much of San Diego needs repair and restoration. As in any city that has grown fast, mistakes have been made. Public use and public access have been pre-empted. The public environment is all too often simply the left-over space between.

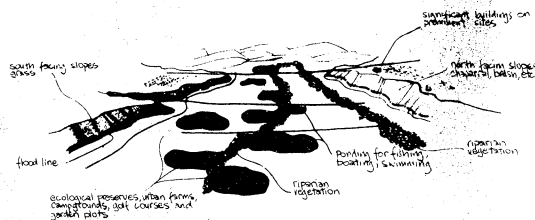


The Valleys and Canyons

The valleys and canyons are San Diego's priceless asset. The flat-floored valleys hold the water and the vegetation, and have been left open until very recently, since new housing has avoided the flood plain and occupied the high mesas. But now it is the turn of the valley: highways, shopping centers, stadia, industries and parking lots are beginning to appear there despite the flood dangers.

Fingering out from the long valleys, the narrow, brushy canyons, too steep for building, penetrate almost everywhere in the inland city. They are a naturally connected system of open space that is close to almost every locality. Many canyons show signs of use by local children, and a few have walking trails. Most lie unused - - inaccessible to their neighborhoods and most likely severed at their base where they connect to the valley. What's more, heavy machinery can now fill them over or terrace them to make flat buildings sites. But cost, flood danger, erosion, and respect for the land all argue against tampering with this natural drainage system.

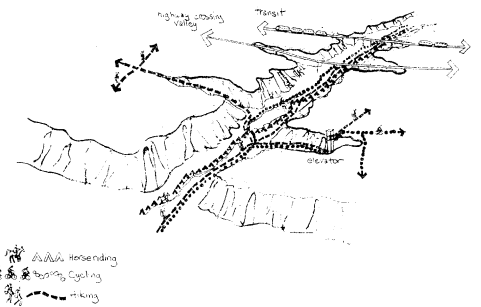
It is of great importance that San Diego now, at the last moment, preserve all the remaining undeveloped valleys and canyons. Keep the building up on the expansive flats above. Protect the valley sides and rims, as well as the floor, so that the rural character of the valley is preserved, even within the city, and erosion and flood damage is prevented. Flood plain and hillside zoning will help, particularly in saving the canyons, but the codes must be specifically applied and much more tightly drawn than they are today. Public purchase of valley land will also be necessary and perhaps the use of transferable development rights, as discussed below. Structures should be kept back from the rims, unless perhaps for some small landmark on some prominent nose where canyon and valley intersect. Valley sides should be left to their natural vegetation, and the flat floor be devoted to open uses which are unharmed by flood. No further channelling of the streams should be permitted.

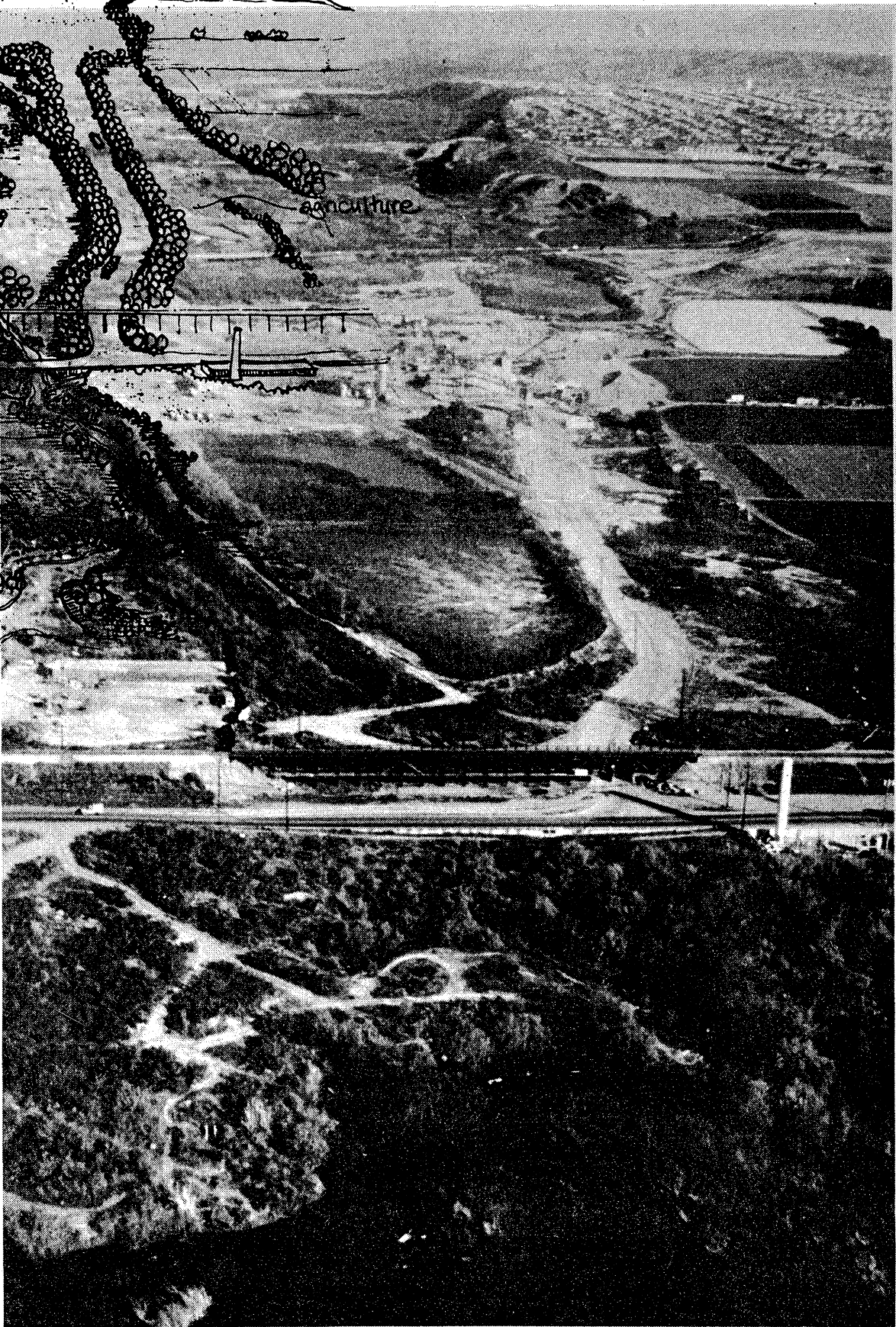
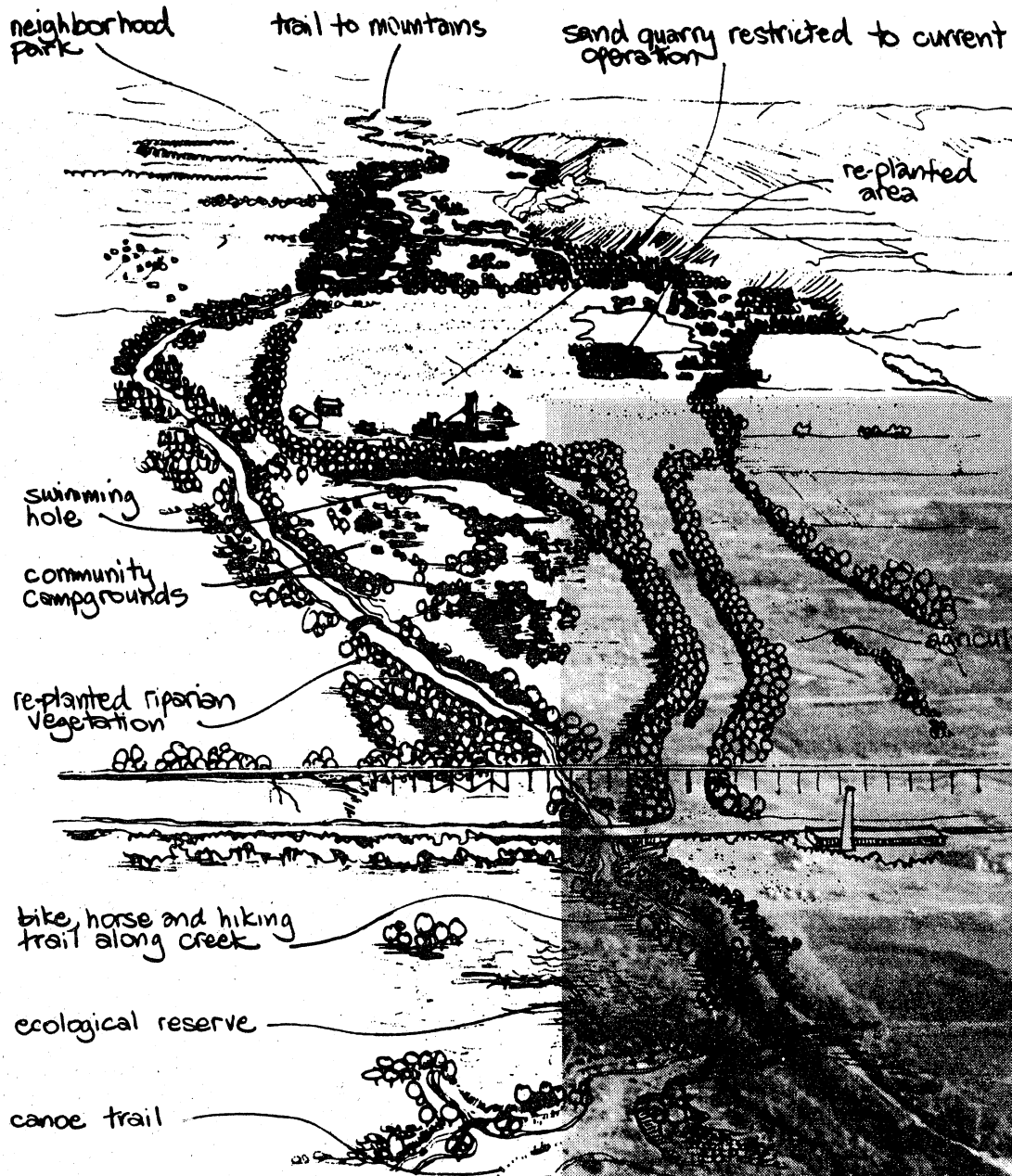


No more highways, not even transit lines, should be carried along these green fingers, however reasonable that may look at first glance. Not only do highways destroy the natural character, they inevitably bring further development. The uses which most need their access are up above, on the mesas, and this means even more ramps to get up there. Except for short local ways serving valley uses, roads should cross canyons and valleys at right angles - - dipping down perhaps, or even using a canyon mouth to ease a descending grade - - but staying above the valley floor, leaving the floodway open. San Diego has a unique opportunity to develop as a two-level city - - one level a greenway undisturbed by city traffic - - an opportunity that other cities must create laboriously by artificial means.

Parts of the valleys should be ecological preserves, others campgrounds and wild lands for children to explore. The watercourses could be ponded with small dams to be stocked with fish or used as swimming holes. The bottoms can be grazed or cultivated, perhaps in subsidized urban farms that provide educational jobs for the youth of the city. Or they might be parcelled into garden plots for the people nearby. Parks and sport uses could be located there, wherever the natural character can be maintained. But uses which mean large gatherings and extensive parking lots - - even public uses - - would not belong.

A complete trail system - - for walking, cycling, and horseback riding - - should be developed along these natural valleys. Since they penetrate the region at regular intervals and run from mountains to the sea on easy grades, they are ideal for recreational travel, and might even be a component in the movement of commuters. The trails will have their own rights-of-way, safe from cars and free of fumes, unlike those presently designed which flank the highways. Selected canyons could be developed as connectors between mesa communities and the valleys, while others will serve for strolling, exploration and local connections. Wherever there are major flows, there can be steps, benches, lights, and a clearance of vegetation. The canyon trail leading up to Presidio Park from the Camino del Rio is an excellent example of this treatment.

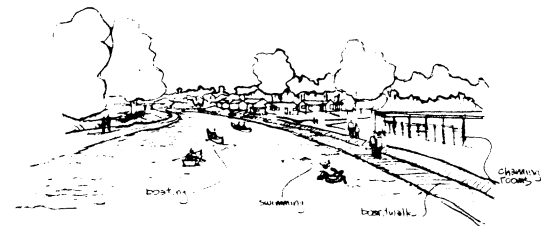
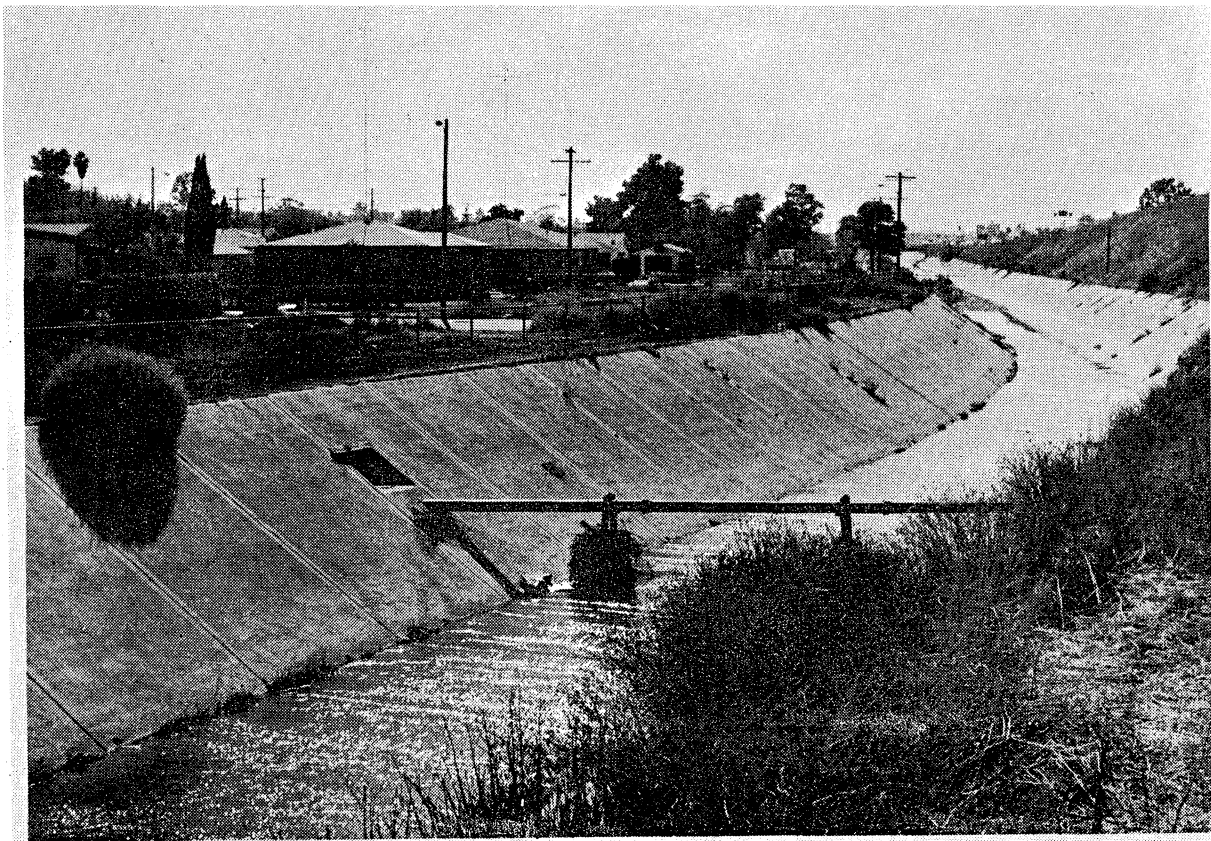
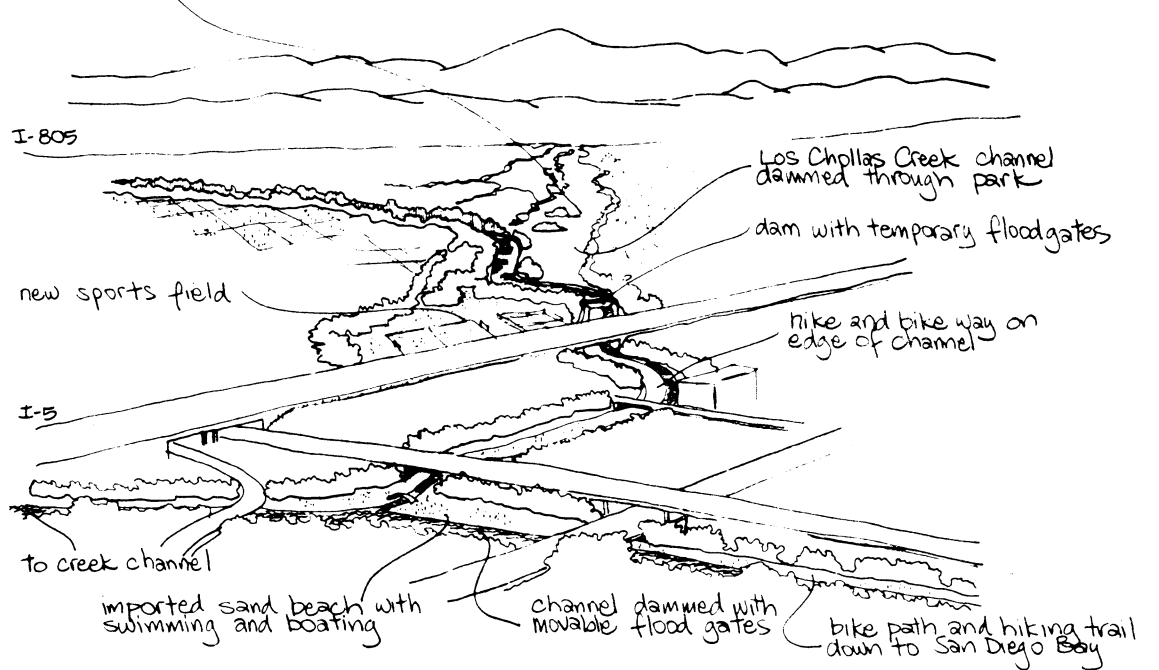




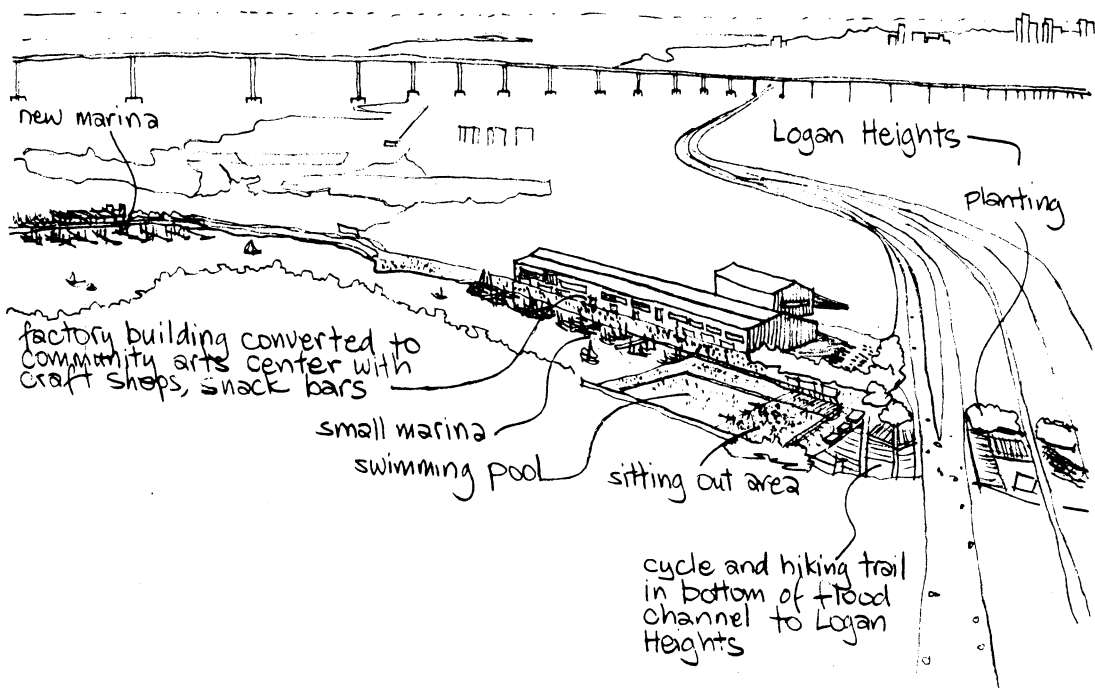
Saving the valleys which are still open has an obvious value. The qualities to be saved are clearly present. But what about those valleys which have already been assaulted? Look at two cases:

1. *Sweetwater Valley*. This shallow, swampy valley is being mined for sand and gravel, and some industry and commerce has located there. Development could be stopped; the sand and gravel operation restricted to its minimum size and be required to restore the worked-over areas; riparian vegetation could be replanted. This would be a place for low intensity recreation - - campgrounds and picnic areas - - and a trail leading to the bayshore.

proposed freeway alignment held as park site, with new low cost housing on border

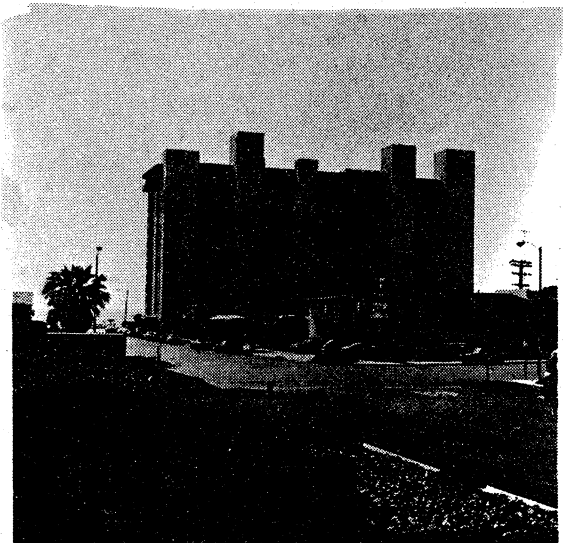


2. *Los Chollas Creek*. This creek has been channelled and submerged by highways and industry at its outlet to the Bay. Yet it is the only creek through South East San Diego. It could provide a trail through Logan Heights and an outlet to the Bay. Temporary floodgates in the existing park might convert that section of the creek into a long body of water. A cycle trail could use the bed of the channel except when it was in flood. Trees could be planted along it. At the outlet, there could be some intensive recreation in converted Navy or industrial buildings - - swimming pools, a small marina, shops and community facilities. A similar project is being carried out in Fort Mason, the old Army base by Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco.



The Seacoast

In people's minds the ocean shore is the most important asset of the city, as evidenced in our interview and in tourist literature. Beach attendance in the region has recently been increasing with giant strides: for the last decade at a rate which doubles every six years. Most of San Diego's outer shore is in public hands, although some of that is military ownership, and in other cases access is difficult, because of bluffs and steep slopes, or indirect routes, or the hostility of local shore communities. San Diego is one of the few cities in Southern California with a fairly wide range of income and housing in its coastal neighborhoods, but the pressures for higher densities and higher rents are increasing. Some objectionably large buildings have already appeared. Mission Beach and Ocean Beach could, like Miami, erect a solid line of high rise hotels and luxury apartments along the beach, walling it off from the people behind. The local opposition to this is quite justified.

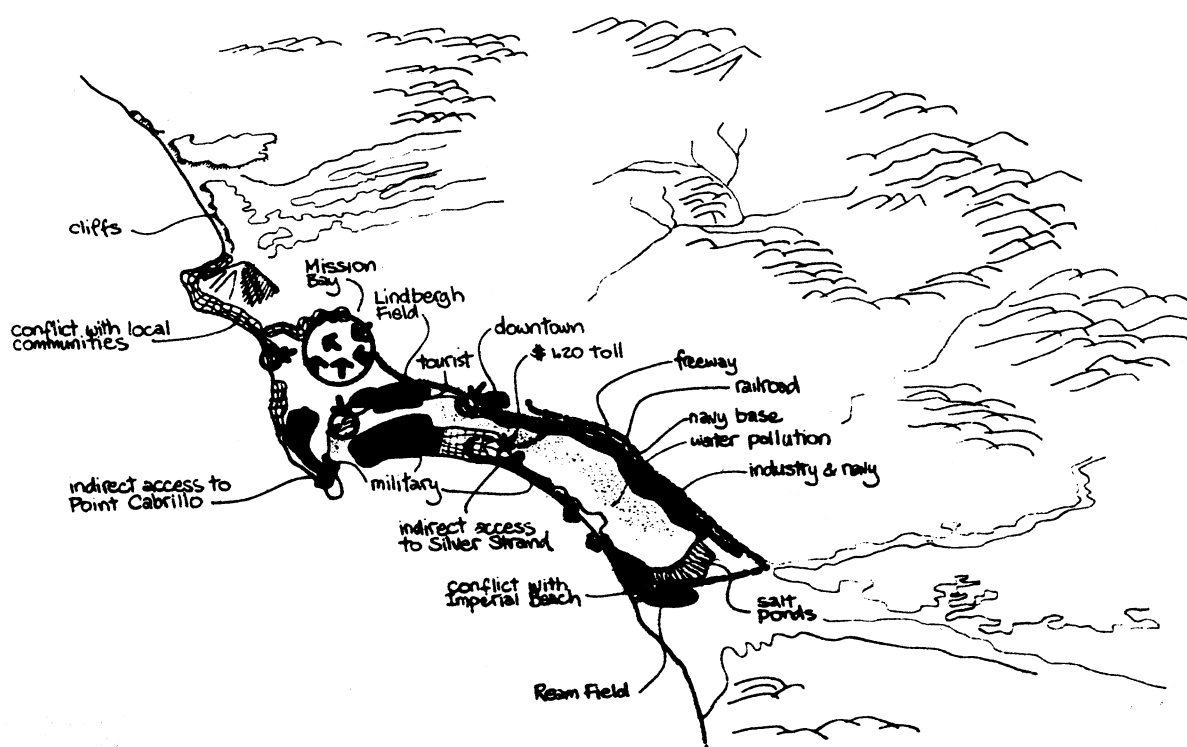


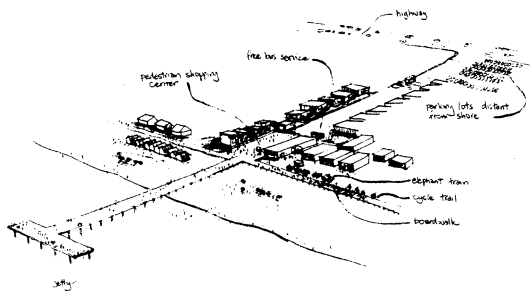
The Silver Strand, the logical beach for the southern communities, is mostly under Navy control and the approach is circuitous and expensive. San Diego Bay, a unique expanse, more intimate and less turbulent than San Francisco Bay, is scarcely accessible to its people, except at Spanish Landing. Even there, the artificial island is largely given to tourist inns. The Port Authority is prevented by state law from allowing any type of housing on the tidelands. The Coastal Commission was created to discourage all types of coastal development. It is a regulating, prohibiting agency, rather than one that can make things happen.

Mission Bay is remarkable - - one of the great public works of this country. Used intensively as it is, by people throughout the city, it is disappointing to see it only partially developed. Again, the more finished areas are given to tourists. Ocean Beach, Mission Beach, and the La Jolla shore are heavily used but parking is difficult and a source of friction. The bluffs at Torrey Pines shelter a magnificent strand, ideal for vigorous people willing to climb down to it, but inaccessible to others.

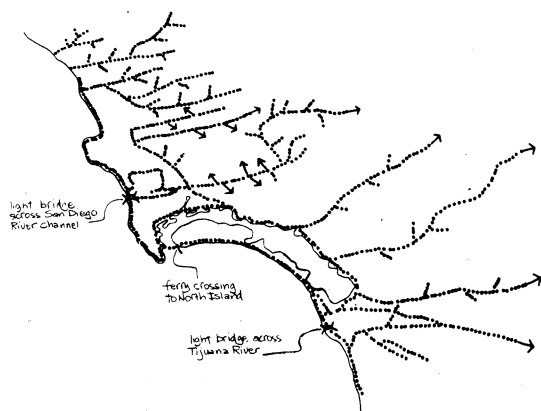
This is the basic question: how much of the shore should be accessible to whom, and by what means? For our part, we believe that the ocean shore should be the possession of all those who live in the region. Shore communities should not have exclusive rights, nor should tourist accommodations be able to appropriate special frontages. The diversity of beach character and diversity of access should be maintained. We think there will in the future be less reliance on the car, and more on feet, on cycle wheels, and transit lines. Maintain the mix of income and type in the present coastal communities, and give a greater number of people - - all of incomes - - the chance to live near the sea. Commercial, industrial, and military uses should be on the water only when they make active use of it, and then not for long, continuous reaches. This is a plea for open and equal access. Pursuing that principle, we recommend:

Keep private development back from the water's edge - - whenever possible, private land should be at least 100 yards back of the beach or shore and set well behind the brow of the bluff. In many places it should be set farther back. Forward of that line, the land should be given to water-related public recreation, or occasionally leased to moderately-priced commercial recreation open to the general public.



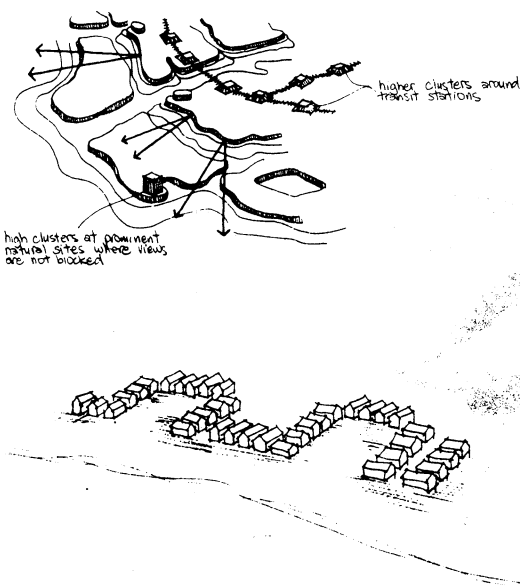
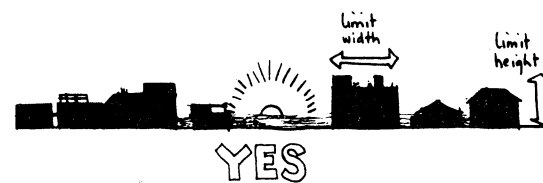


Make the beaches accessible without destroying the local communities behind them - - major transportation and parking should be kept well back of the beach, with free transit forward and frequent foot access. Elephant trains, bicycles, mini-busses, and boardwalks should predominate along the coast, reaching back to the major routes, while discreet public stairs and escalators run down the bluff faces. Continuous shore roads are not needed, but a connected cycle and foot trail should run along the ocean, both behind the strand and along the rim of the bluff, from the Tijuana estuary to Del Mar, and eventually even to Oceanside, crossing the mouth of Mission Bay on a light bridge and by raft ferry from Point Loma to North Island. A branch would circle the east bay shore, passing behind industry and the Navy where necessary, and connecting back to the outer ocean line through the valley of the Tijuana River.



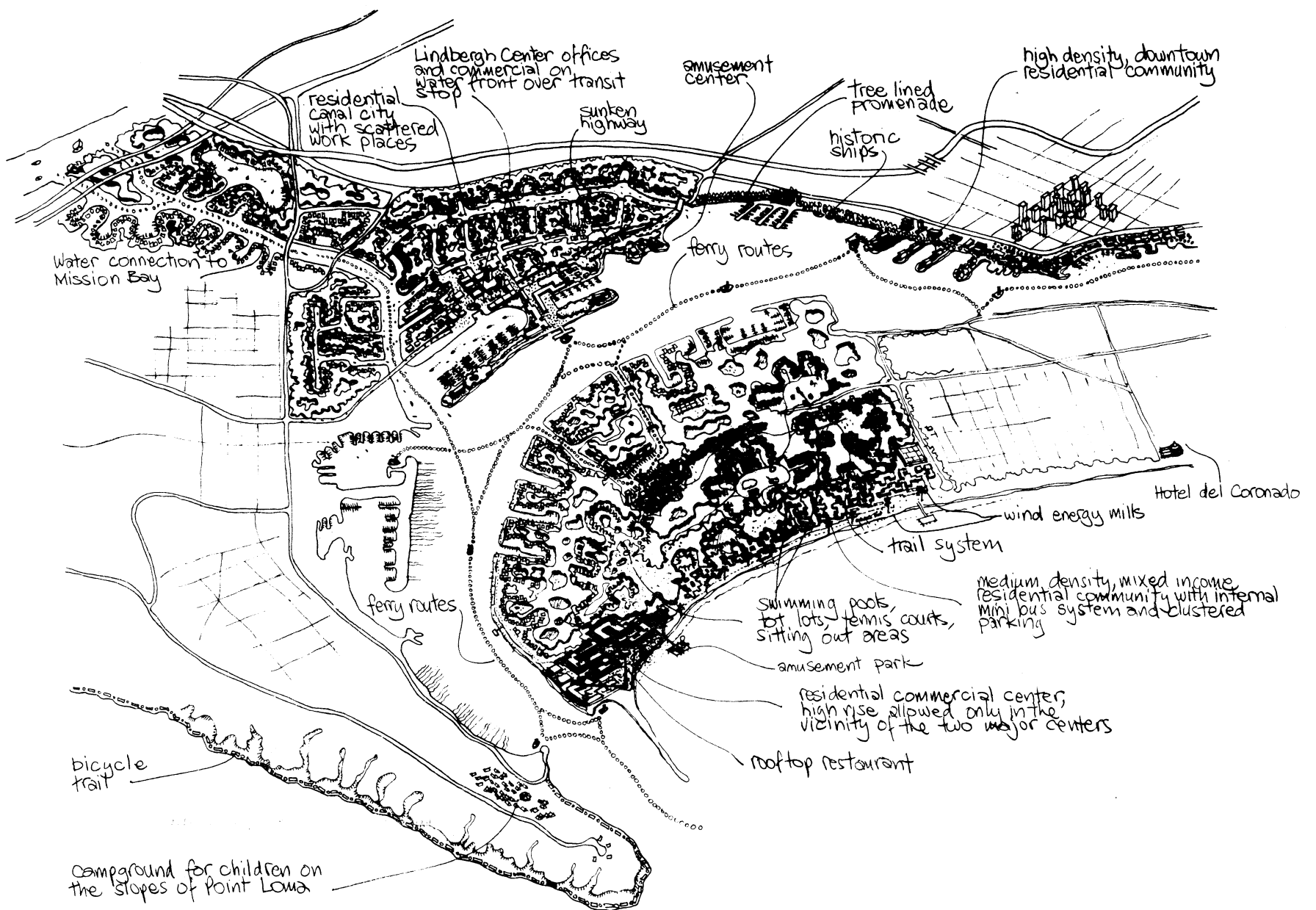
Encourage housing of mixed price and type to locate along the shore - - densities may be allowed to increase moderately in this favored zone, but bulk and character must be controlled as noted below. The existing mix of income should be protected, and a mix ensured in any new development. To replace lively, low-rise Mission Beach with high-rise, high-rent towers, for example, would be a serious step backwards. Quotas of moderately priced housing may have to be imposed, for the privilege of developing shorefront property. Residential use, and its attendant services and small scale employment should be the natural disposition of coastal land, except where there are fragile estuaries to be maintained in their natural condition.

Control the height and bulk of shorefront development - - tall buildings and massive beachfront walls block the view and impair access. In general, buildings should be low at the beach, and higher up on the bluffs and mesas in order to give everyone a look. Buildings close to the water should be limited in their dimensions parallel to the shore. Stairs, plantings, and other works on the highly visible face and rim of the bluff should be controlled to maintain the natural aspect. At the same time, and while maintaining their intimate character, residential densities could be increased in many beach communities. Prototype designs for shoreline residence and for combinations of recreational and residential use should be examined.



We do not recommend moving jobs away from the Southbay communities. We do say that access to the water should be opened up at many points relatively soon, and that the large blockading factories and military bases should be shifted to inland sites as this becomes possible. As residential zones take over the bayside, it will be entirely appropriate that small centers of employment be located within them.

What we criticize is any large single use, public or private, which excludes San Diegans from their Bay. Moreover, as will be seen below, we advocate an emphasis on industrial location south of Centre City, rather than north.

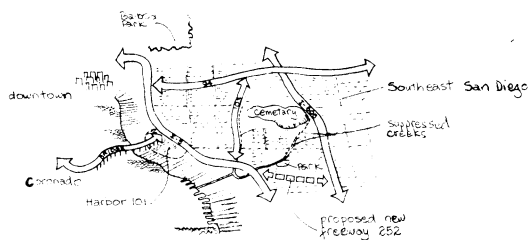


Productive activities actually related to the water - - such as shipping or commercial fishing - - should be retained, not only for the obvious functional reasons, but also because their presence adds to the liveliness and meaning of the Bay. Even where industrial or military installations have moved away, some of their large structures might be saved to be used for other purposes. Their presence will remind us of the historic use of the waterfront. Vast areas of land by the Bay could thus be opened up for residence and recreation - - some 2,500 acres and six miles of beach in North Island alone (which is sufficient for a population of 100,000 to 150,000 people, at moderate densities). Lindbergh Field and the Marine Corps Depot, together with some of the cluttered growth just north of them, would furnish another 2,000 acres in a strategic location through which waterways might run to relink the bays. None of these moves will be easy, and many will take a long time, but returning the Bay to San Diego will maintain the inner city as a prime place to live and ease the pressure for suburban growth.

Existing Communities

The San Diego region contains communities of all sizes, levels of cohesion, income, race, age, and environmental quality. A study by R. D. Jones* identifies 34 communities in the City alone, each with its own profile of problems. Many of them have already been the subject of plans worked out with community groups, but visits to some of them reveal that many recommendations have not been carried out. However, people are more aware of environmental problems than they were even a few years ago and less willing to accept poor conditions. Respondents to our questionnaire told us of many of these problems and offered many suggestions. Repair and restoration should begin where the people are living today.

Brief visits to Logan Heights and Harbor 101 told a typical story of regional invasion, inadequate public facilities and poor neighborhood conditions. The environmental problems of these areas have been well articulated. A recent study report that community concerns were particularly directed towards the threat of more freeways passing through the area, the long-promised educational-cultural facility, the lack of other public facilities, poor medical services, shopping centers, internal circulation and neighborhood conditions, unpaved streets and sidewalks, lack of landscaping and street lighting. Our own surveys confirmed much of this. The residents of South East San Diego are as aware and concerned about their environment as any other group in the city. By reason of their lesser mobility, they must spend more time in it. The solutions they propose are sensible and reasonable: they only cost money. The city must give these areas greater priority in making public environmental investments. When neighborhood improvements are proposed for other areas, the question should always be: are these needy areas getting their share?



Freeways, tuna fish plants, and parking lots for patrol cars end up here, when there is nowhere else to go. They take away housing and community facilities, and give in return a sense of loss and resentment. The Proposed freeway link between I-5 and I-805, for example, for which the right-of-way is already cleared, will not benefit South East San Diego. But if that land were combined with Los Chollas Creek and the present rather ominous expansion areas for the cemetery, it could provide valuable housing and recreation.

* R.D. Jones, "Community Organization and Environmental Control," unpublished monograph, San Diego State University, 1973.

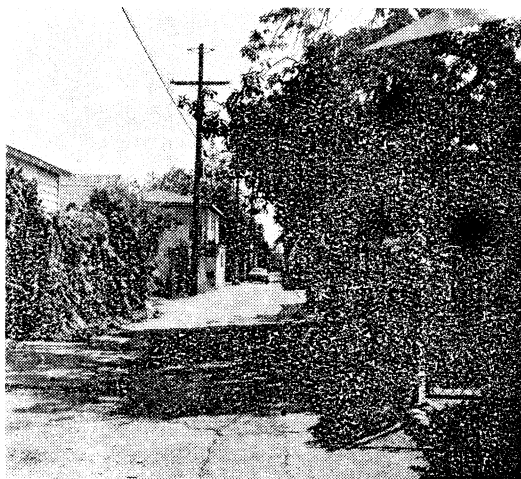


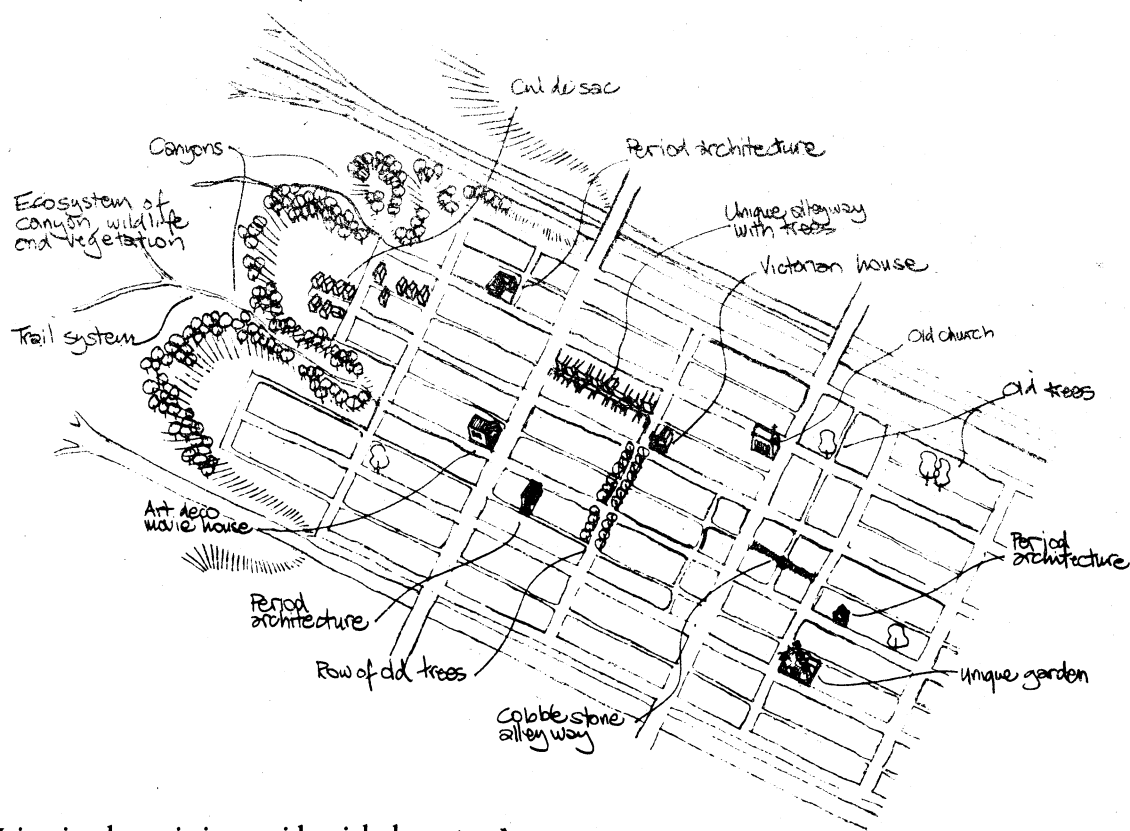
We look more closely at North Park as a typical inner city community. North Park began in 1911 as a settlement of small single-family houses built to a gridiron pattern on the flat mesa top. With the extension of the trolley lines eastwards, its main street shopping grew to regional importance, but was bypassed in the 1960's by the Mission Valley freeways. The population is mixed in age, race, and income. Many elderly people live there. Densities have increased by infill and piecemeal replacement: backyards are filled with second houses, and many walkup apartments have been built.

The community is concerned about its aging housing, the dangerous traffic, the heavy parking, the lack of parks, the threat of uncontrolled apartment growth, the aircraft

overhead, the poor walking conditions, the deteriorating commercial strips. The arterial streets, in particular, have been neglected in the push to build freeways, but they are the work horses of the transportation system, the main arteries of city life - - as well as a chaos of traffic and a disreputable front door. A 1969 plan attempted to improve access to the shopping but was quietly shelved. Still another proposed traffic control and a reduction of allowable densities.

But the area still has an intimate scale, well-grown trees, and quiet back alleys. The streets are wide, and many single-family houses survive. The population is diverse. Balboa Park is nearby, and the neglected canyons. Downtown is not far. What can be done to conserve an area such as this?



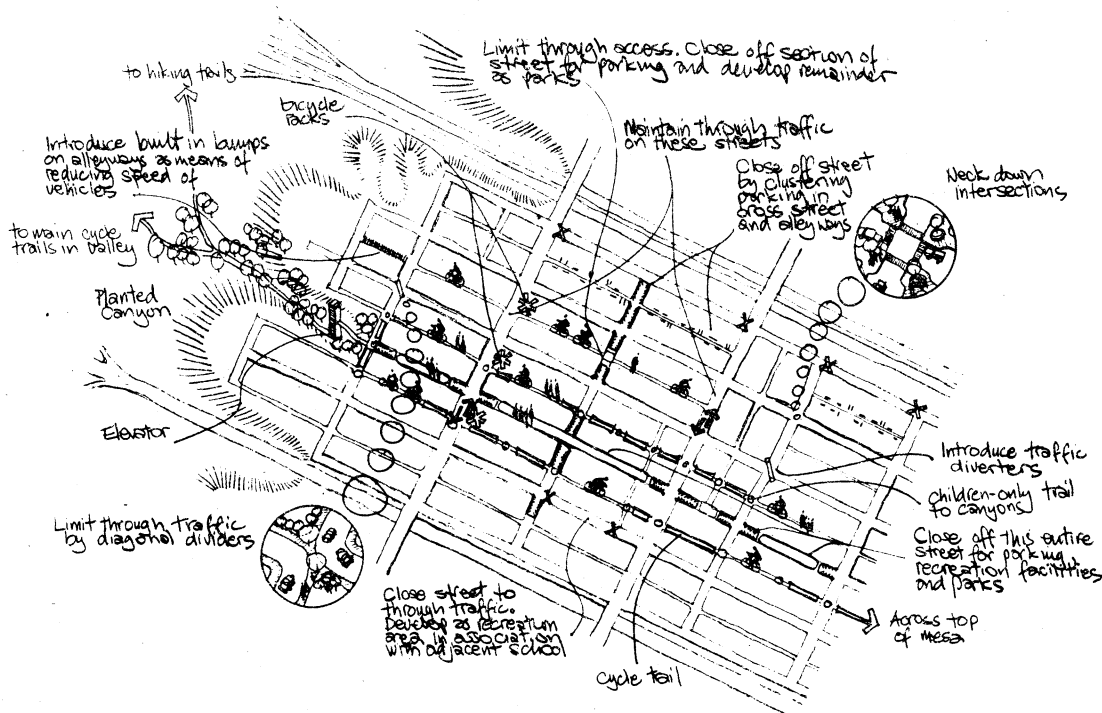


Maintain the existing residential character :-

Make a community survey to identify and then conserve the streets, landmarks, and areas that have a sense of place or history. Develop guidelines to keep new development in character, in regard to such things as height, bulk and setback, use, open space, parking, landscaping, roofs, wall materials, windows, balconies, and detail. It takes a detailed study to write guidelines that express the special quality of a place, and that still allow change. The La Jolla Shores design manual is a successful example of it. Every community, carefully observed, has its own character.

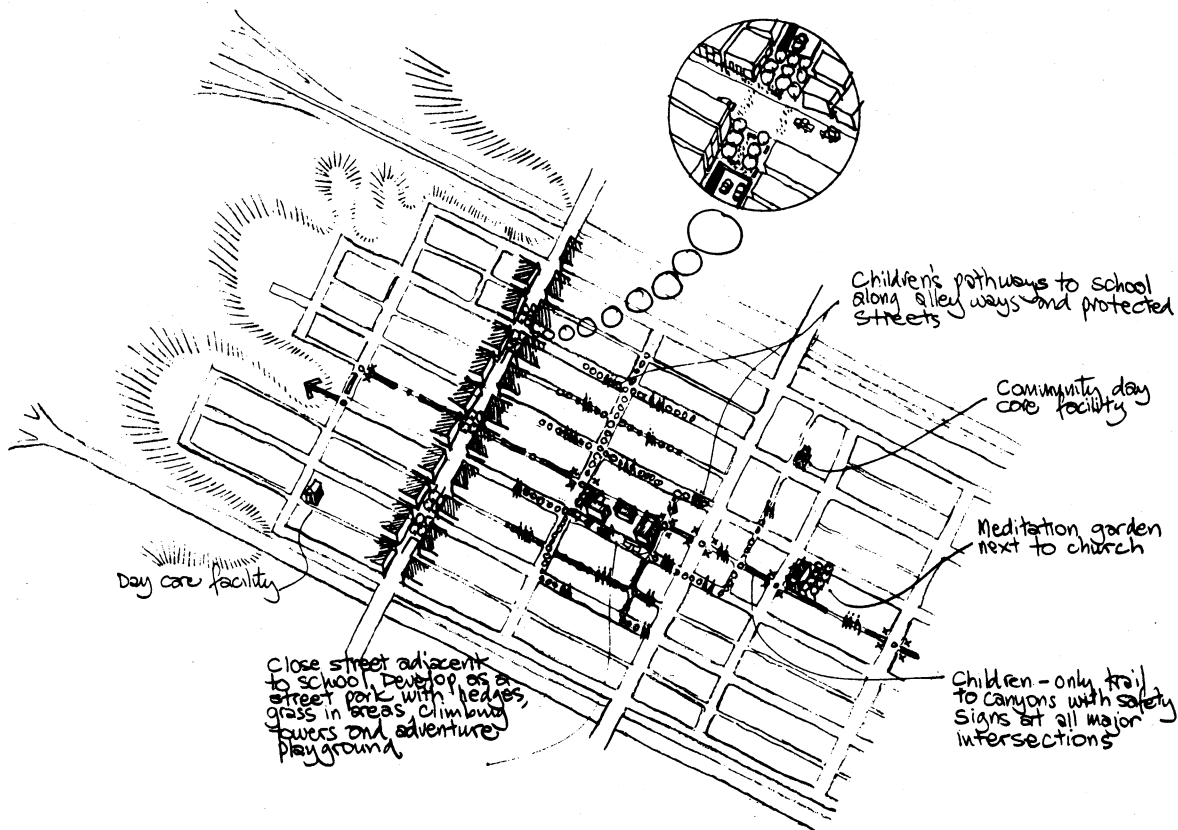
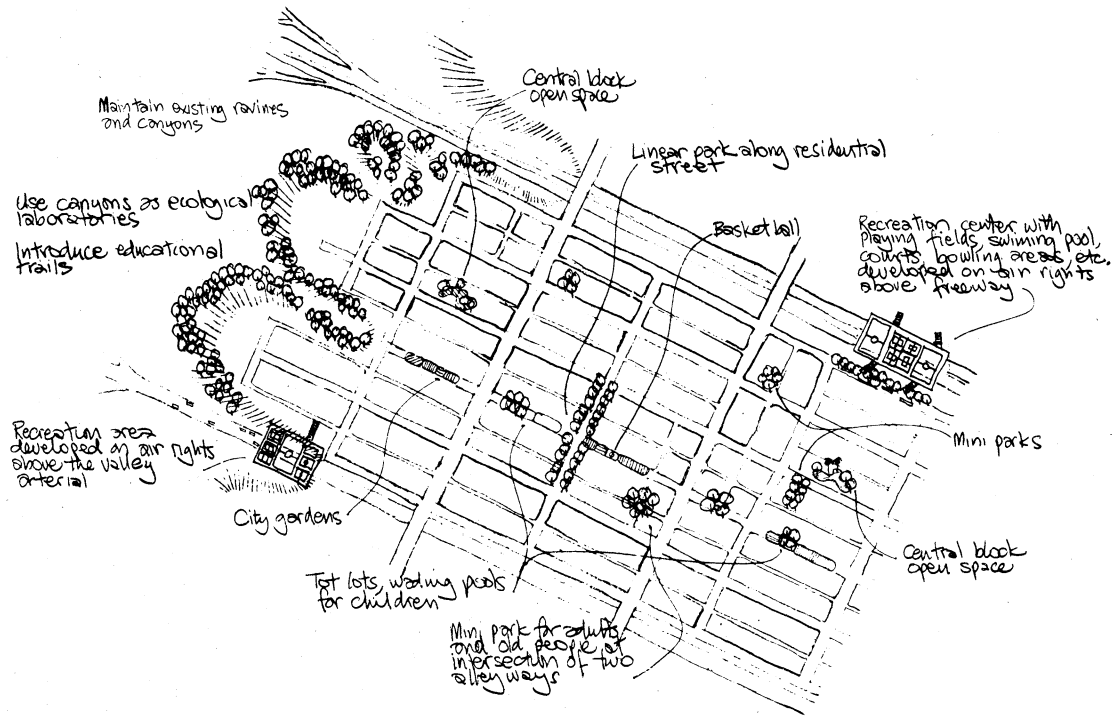
Protect the residential areas from through traffic -

Studies show that an increase of traffic on residential streets causes families to move, to withdraw from the street, to reduce their feeling of responsibility for it. Cars are noisy, polluting, and dangerous. There are simple ways of controlling traffic volume and speed. Diagonal diverters can be built at four-way intersections; street entrances can be necked down, traffic islands erected. By making some gridiron streets into cul-de-sacs, while using the alleys for auto access, clustered parking can be provided, as well as open space for neighborhood use. Changes of this kind will increase livability and attract new families. The capacity of the arterials may have to be increased, of course, to take the diverted flow.



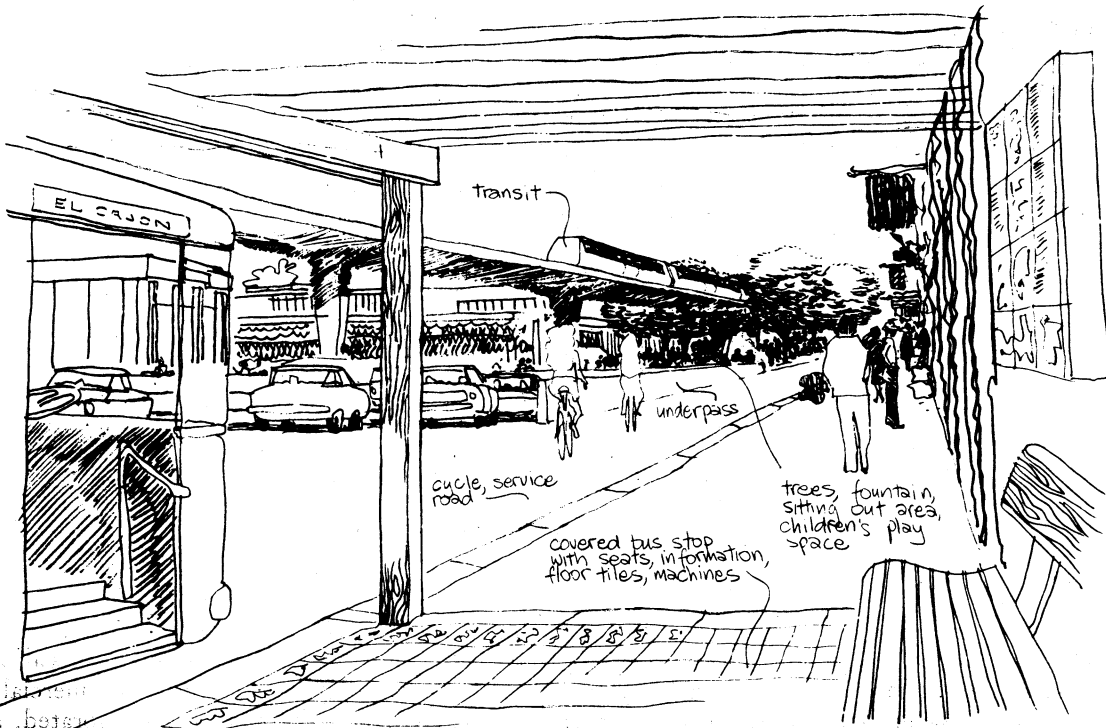
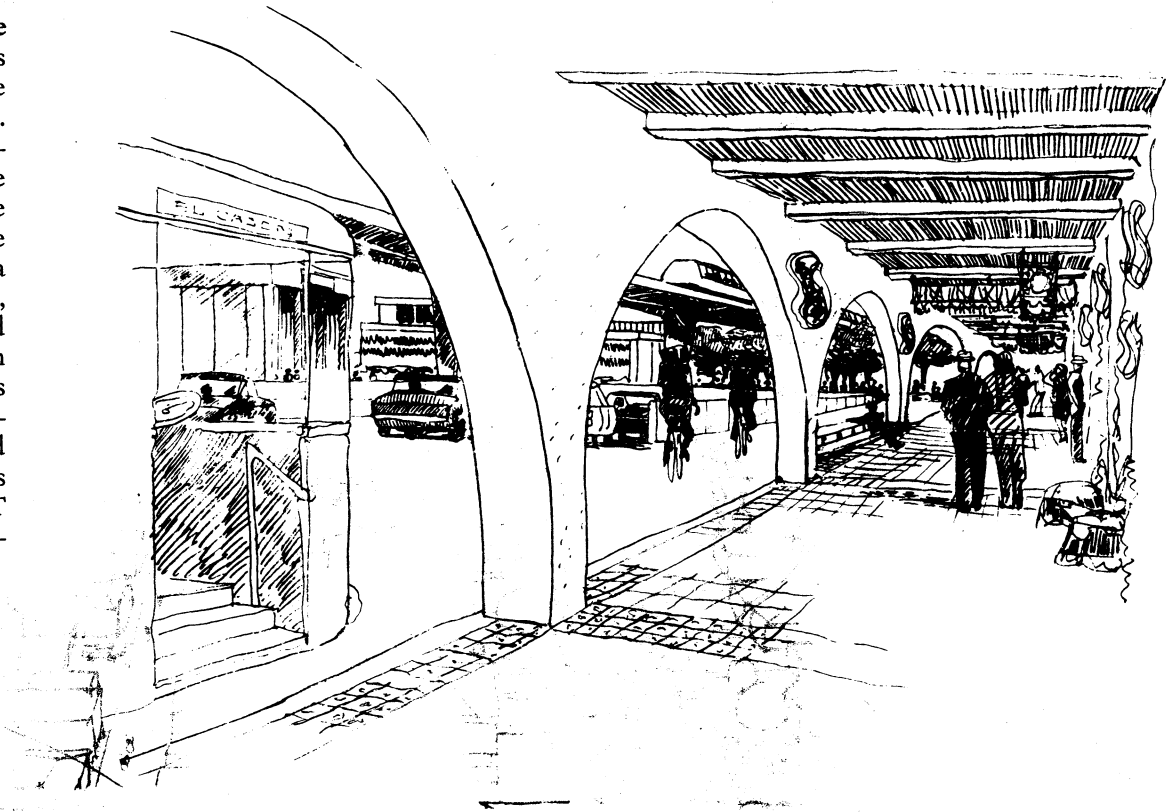
Bring more open space into use - - Street parks can be created by traffic management, vacant lots or canyons brought into use. Block groups may be encouraged to make and maintain their own mini-parks for children or to cultivate block gardens for vegetables or flowers. Individual yards are often too small for these amenities.

Improve the conditions for walking and cycling - - Closing off streets can provide more pleasant, safer walkways for children going to school and adults on their way to shop. Cycle trails can be built down these closed streets or along the alleys. A network of cycle trails on separate rights-of-way should connect shopping, bus stops, public facilities, the access canyons to the valleys, and, in this case, Balboa Park.

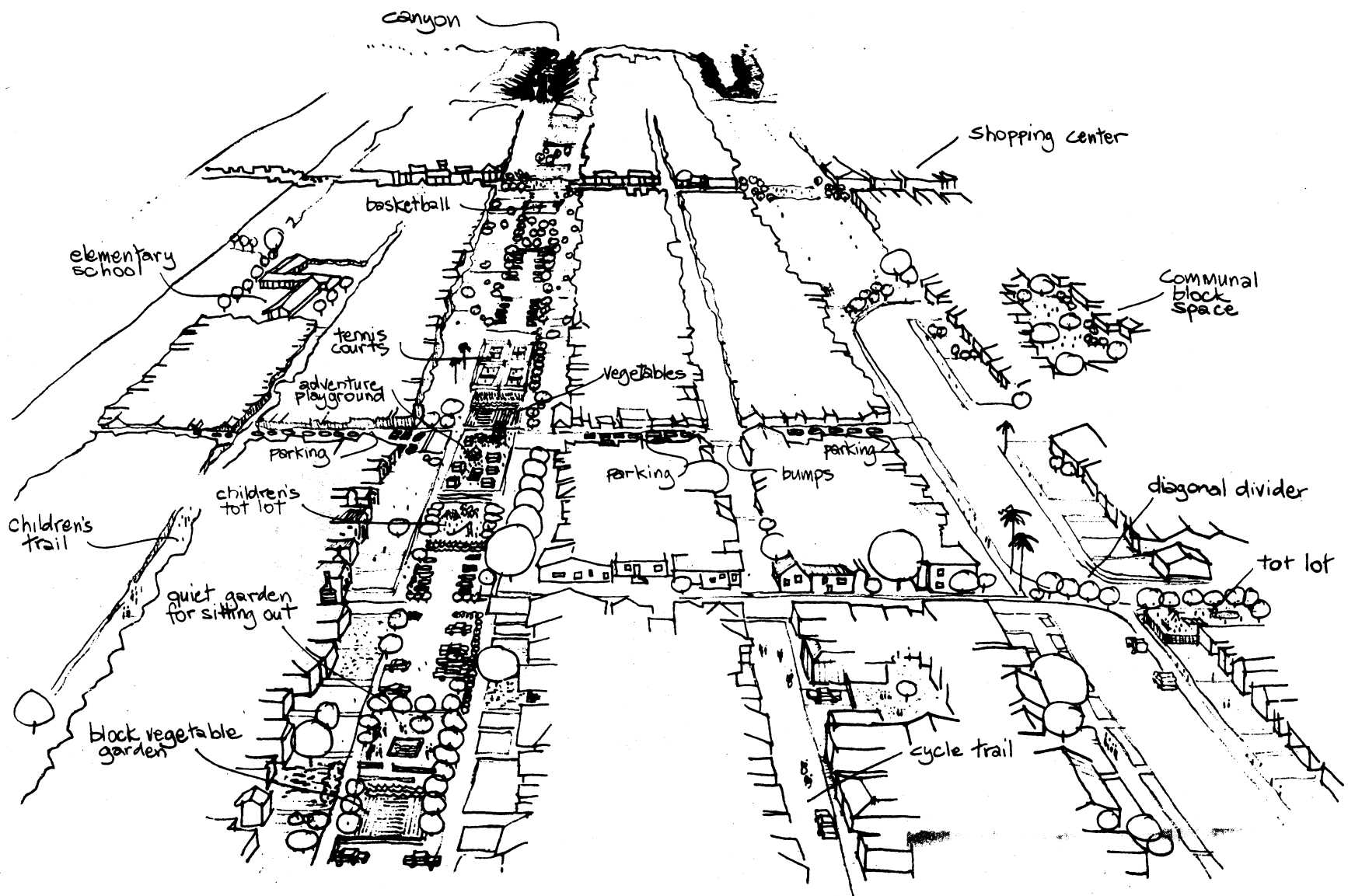


Improve the surroundings of schools, libraries, churches and community facilities - - In San Diego's climate many of the activities of these local institutions could have outdoor learning environments far more rich and interesting than the current asphalt and cyclone fenced playgrounds. Libraries and churches could have quiet sitting out spaces for contemplation and reading, outdoor exhibits and local art could be placed in public open spaces. Pedestrians precincts around these institutions could also protect them from traffic and noise.

Improve the pedestrian environment in the commercial strip - - Inner city shopping is designed as a string of sales outlets where automobile riders may stop off to buy. There are no trees, benches, or human amenities of any kind. Yet these streets are the local service centers. Facilities for those who walk, bike, or come by transit are urgently needed. Indeed, shopping can be a pleasant social activity. Wider sidewalks, shade, arcades, pedestrian crossings, and pedestrian signs can begin to create a human atmosphere. Convenience clusters at bus stops can be furnished with benches, rest-rooms, shade trees, fountains, newsstands and bulletin boards, and even some local works of art. Street rehabilitation over the BART system in San Francisco has achieved a transformation of this kind.



Increase the traffic capacity of the arterials - - An increase in arterial capacity will become urgent as present freeways fill up, and as residential areas reject through traffic. Handled in the usual manner, i.e., by increasing the width of the traffic pavement, this can negate any other improvement of the strip, and finally destroy its social and commercial function. If through traffic is diverted around the shopping street, the street is then cut off from its neighborhood. In this case, it is better to maintain and enhance the pedestrian turf on either side. Fortunately, San Diego's arterial rights-of-way are wide. Median strips and side strips, the prohibition of curb parking and curb entrances, better traffic control, shifting traffic pavements off-center to give a wide walkway on one side, the use of pedestrian overpasses and a lowered street all can help to increase capacity without reducing pedestrian amenity. Capacity in terms of persons transported (which is our aim, rather than the transportation of cars!) can be still further increased if special lanes are devoted to busses or bicycles.



Planting alone could raise the quality of San Diego's arterials far above their present mediocre level. Streets need not be lined with trees on the standard model. Problems of maintenance and the use of water set limits to this. But there could be frequent oases of lush planting, not located for visual reasons alone, but where they also serve to shade pedestrians. It is striking to the observer how few plants San Diego has along its major streets.

Signs can be more lively, more informative, and yet less cluttered - Billboards are out of scale with the strip and most signs simply confuse and detract. The chaos can be controlled by reducing sign size and movement, and by limiting signs to those building facades to which they refer. Signs about particular people and local establishments can be encouraged to develop an individual style. Mass-produced signs and those for products not related to the place can be clustered at places where they do not submerge the local scene. Other signs which convey information of general interest - time, the weather, the news, local history, local ecology, schedules of busses or events - can be added to the commercial ones. Signing

is a necessary art and can create character and sparkle, instead of simply assaulting the eye.

Lights and graphics can enliven the scene - - High, cold, uniform lighting benefits the passing traffic and no one else. Warmer, smaller lights grouped in clusters are more useful for those who walk along the sidewalks and gather at the bus stops. Special night lighting can create a new mood, or enliven a community event. Street murals can be painted on the walls of buildings, or on screens around the parking lot.

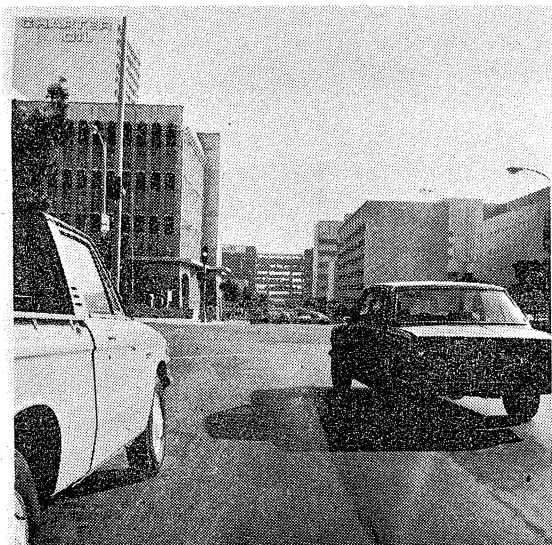
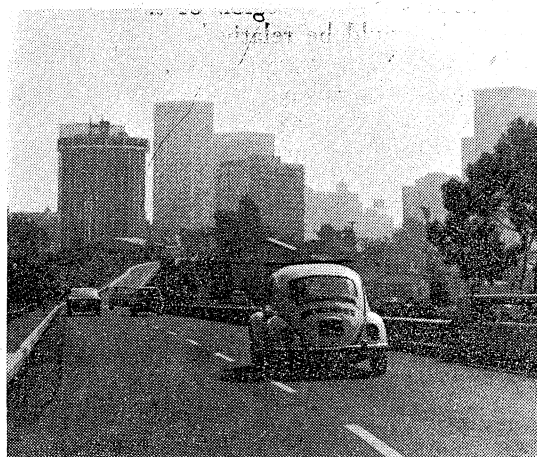
Coordinated management can bring people out to use the street - - The streets of San Diego, except for a few locations such as Horton Plaza, La Jolla, or Mission Beach, are remarkable for their emptiness at almost any hour and all the more remarkable when we consider the mild climate. Where an arterial street is the principal shopping for a community, coordinated management by community groups or merchant associations could arrange for street events and provide the places for social contact so that people can once again take possession of their public space.

In sum, North Park, as one typical example, offers many opportunities for restoration. Conservation treatment in the residential areas can protect threatened residential character and make use of unexploited resources. More thorough-going treatment of the commercial streets would transform those neglected arteries into useful social centers. Indeed, instead of subjecting large areas to public renewal, destroying housing and uprooting residents, we might consider renewal projects which focus on these long commercial strips, so vital to the city, so deteriorated, and so amenable to change without social dislocation.

The Major Centers

The centers of a city are the places that people identify with, sharing reflected glory or shame, depending on their quality. People are proud of cities whose unique centers present a clear image to themselves and to visitors. In other cities, they say there is nothing to see, no where in particular to go.

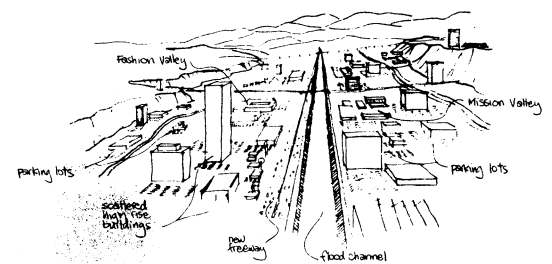
Downtown San Diego presents a clear image from the outside. Its buildings, although moderate in height and not unique, cluster well together. Horton's choice of the original site was not a happy one, and yet the Bay is close enough to provide a setting. Some recent structures which cross above the streets, and the prison tower at the critical corner nearest the Bay, have begun to seal the center away from that principal setting. Establishing a comfortable connection is still possible but will not be easy. Moreover, any further structures like the Royal Inn will disrupt the clustered image of downtown and destroy its outward views. Centre City renewal will have to be handled with care.



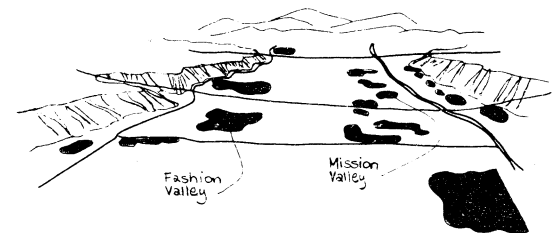
The new office area downtown has elegant buildings, well-designed landscaping, and elaborate street furniture. Most of the time, it seems empty of people, while Horton Plaza, brash and tawdry, is packed with action. It will be unfortunate if the renewal program banishes this liveliness and substitutes for it an empty space ringed by bank fronts.

Downtown suffers from a dichotomy of use. Its principal economic function is that of an office center, whose workers come and go in brief periods, and are most of the day indoors. (But even those who work in the high-rise buildings in other cities find them "cold, impersonal, oppressive.") Investments in the environment, naturally enough, are made to enhance this office function.

Yet downtown is the principal shopping and entertainment center for the lower-income neighborhoods around it. Their residents are more dependent on the facilities that downtown affords and use its public space more intensively. Yet they have least to say about its transformation.

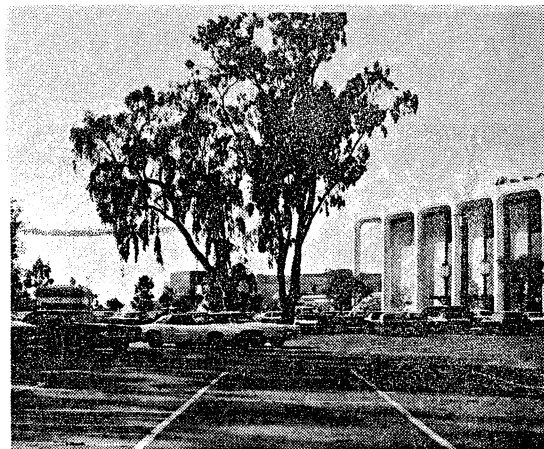
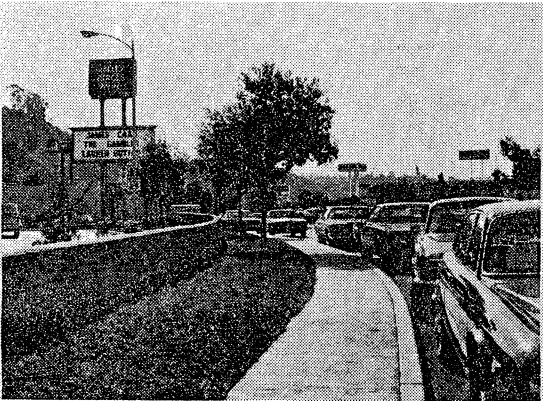
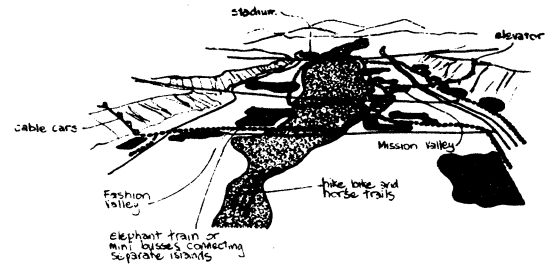


Mission Valley is the second "downtown" of the region and its future appears gloomy. It presents a fragmented and uninspiring image. High or bulky buildings are scattered about like pieces of an uncompleted jigsaw puzzle. Parking lots, storage yards, and fast roadways fill the spaces between. This central valley, the largest and most dramatic in San Diego south of the Penasquitos Canyon and the superb San Dieguito Valley is now just an urban trench. The freeway approach promises some excitement, but that promise quickly collapses. Down in the trench one must drive from one store to another; it is impossible to walk.



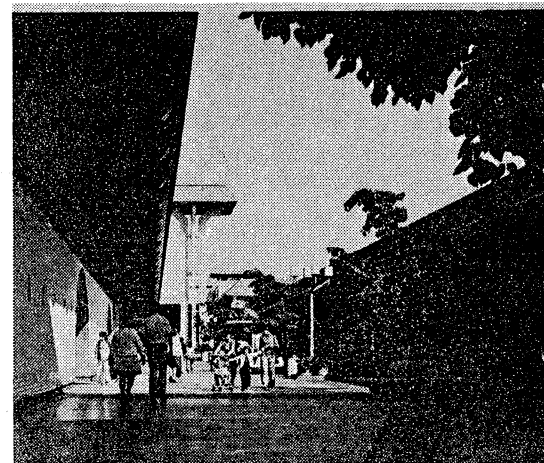
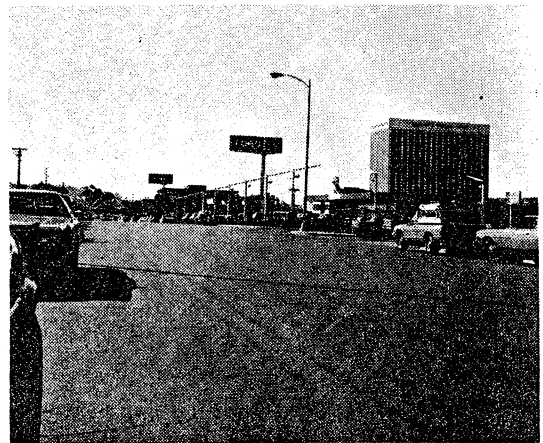
Yet this is the very place where people from all over the region could meet in an environment befitting the grandeur of the valley. The devices that would encourage them to do so are the same ones that we noted above in discussing local shopping centers, but here they could be applied more lavishly: pedestrian precincts, arcades, fine floor surfaces, pools, fountains and streams, gardens and plantations of trees, information centers, outdoor cafes, special lighting effects, unique street events.

A walk from Mission Valley to Fashion Valley.

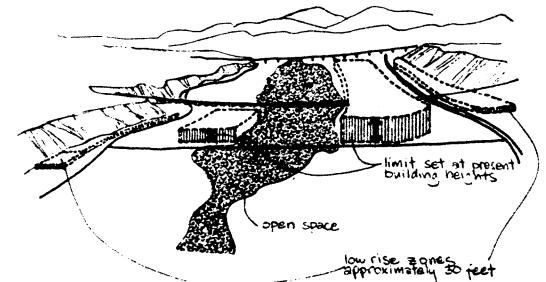
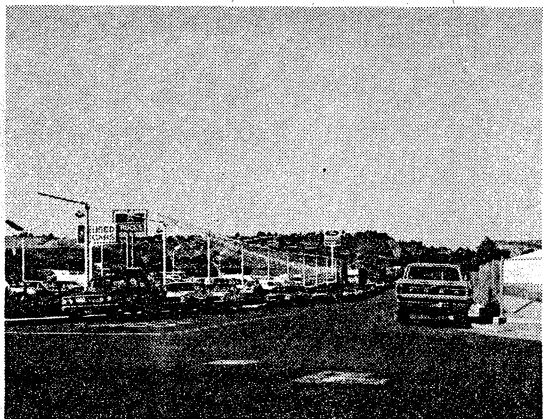


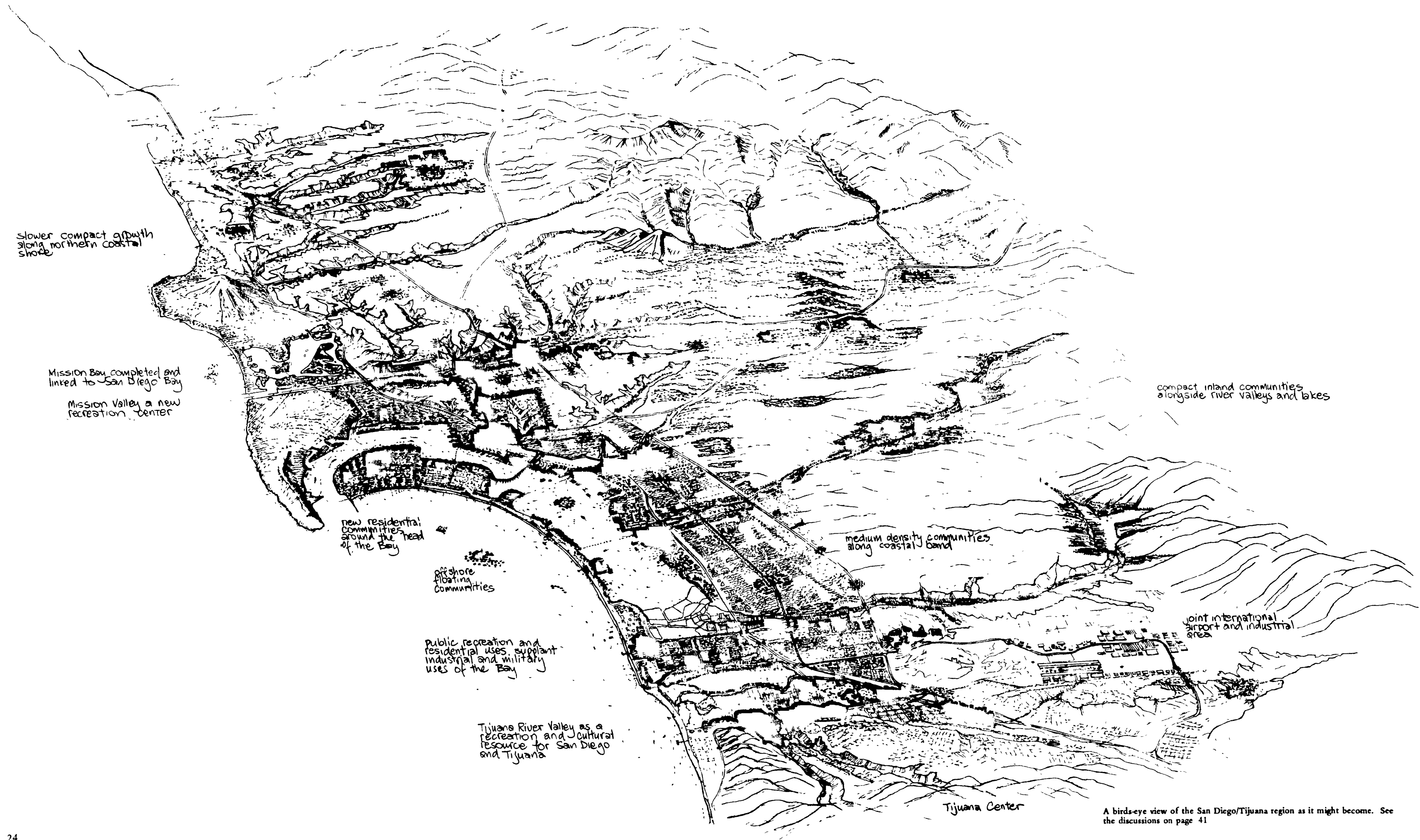
The scattered fragments should be connected with shaded pedestrian walkways and sitting out spaces, outside and between the complexes, not hidden in their interiors. One of our informants told us that it took her a year to discover that there were any pedestrian walks in Mission Valley; she usually drove in, shopped and drove out again. A field investigator was convinced it was illegal to walk there. A slow moving transport system such as an elephant train could connect these separate islands.

The north-facing slopes of the valley are still untouched, and could be saved. The center of the valley is still miraculously open; the creek flows unseen. Unbelievable as it may seem, a wooded trail could still be laid out along that creek, following it past the stadium and the shopping centers, through the country club to Mission Bay. Cycle elevators could link the creekway with cycle trails on the mesa above. In the region of the shopping centers, it would be relatively easy to create some large lakes on a grand scale on the site of the main floodway. One lake could be used for quiet boating -- no motor boats -- another could be ornamental. This area could take on the relaxed and delightful character of the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen. The lakes could reflect the numerous lights of the shopping centers and surrounding hillside communities -- a mirror of dancing activity.



High and bulky buildings should be confined to their present domain and height envelope, thus concentrating the external image of this center. The character of new buildings should be much more responsive to pedestrians who have to walk by them with active frontages at street level, human scale in the details, rather than huge faceless facades.





slower compact growth along northern coastal shore

Mission Bay completed and linked to San Diego Bay
Mission Valley a new recreation center

new residential communities around the head of the Bay

offshore Albatross Communities

public recreation and residential uses, supplant industrial and military uses of the Bay

Tijuana River Valley as a recreation and cultural resource for San Diego and Tijuana

medium density communities along coastal band

compact inland communities alongside river valleys and lakes

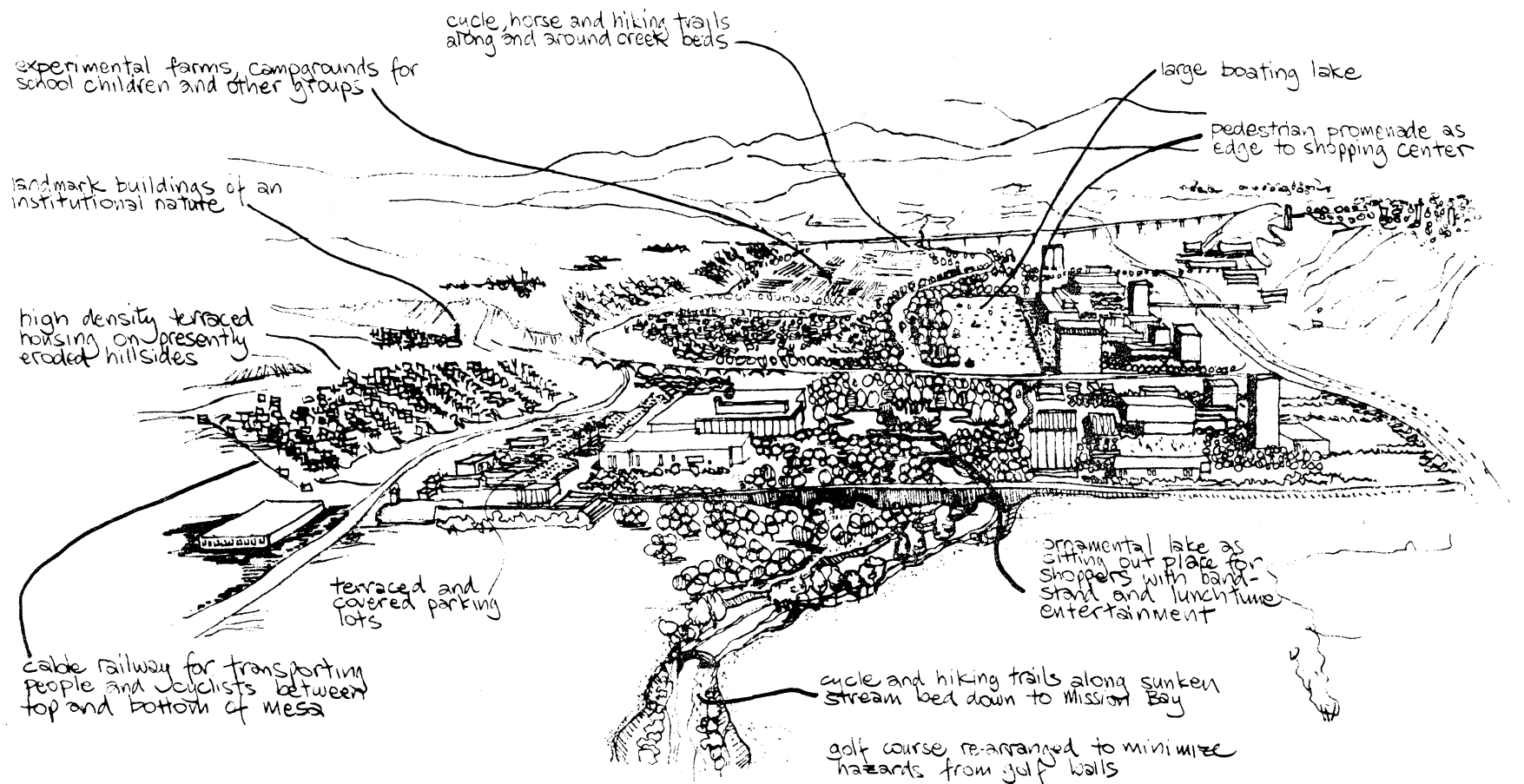
joint international airport and industrial area

Tijuana Center

A birds-eye view of the San Diego/Tijuana region as it might become. See the discussions on page 41

The south-facing slopes, already quarried and eroded, could in this exceptional case be recovered with a cascade of housing and new planting. Sites on the valley rim could be reserved for significant buildings at fine locations like that of the University of San Diego. Even the giant underpinnings of the freeways could be dramatized with light and color. Mission Valley is a landscape disaster, yet few disasters are beyond all repair. It is only that repair demands money, time and effort.

Mission Valley as it still could be.

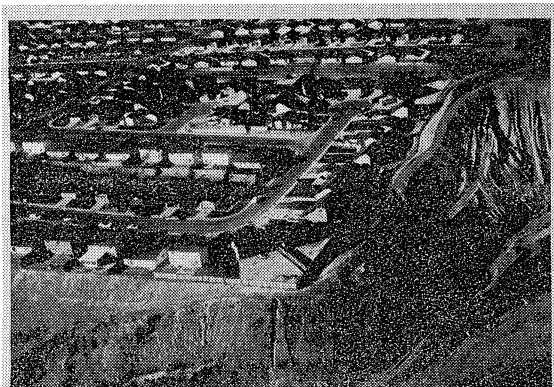


Growth Where? of What Kind?

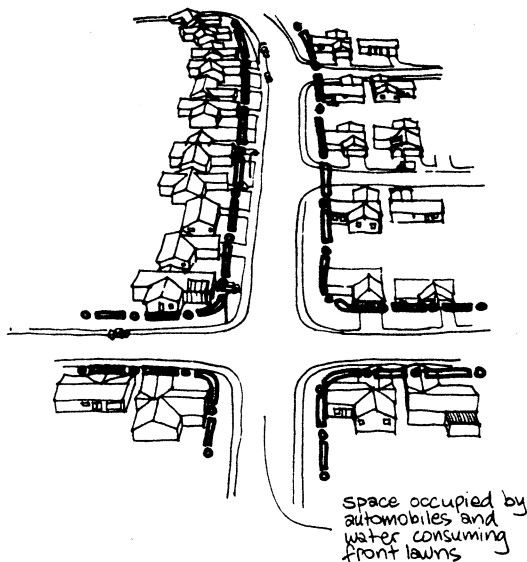
The continuing rapid growth of San Diego is a serious issue, as it is in much of the U.S. Environmental quality is only one element to consider in thinking about growth, but it is a key one. The growth of the region probably cannot be stopped, short of drastic national, even international, action. Although there are indications that the national populations may soon approach zero growth, yet the relative growth of the southwest is still a strong trend. Regional actions *might* be able to modify the rate of growth to some degree. But the region can certainly redirect the location of growth, and modify its nature. At this point, the considerations of environmental quality become crucial.

As one example, we looked at the rapidly developing suburb of Mira Mesa. What did we see?

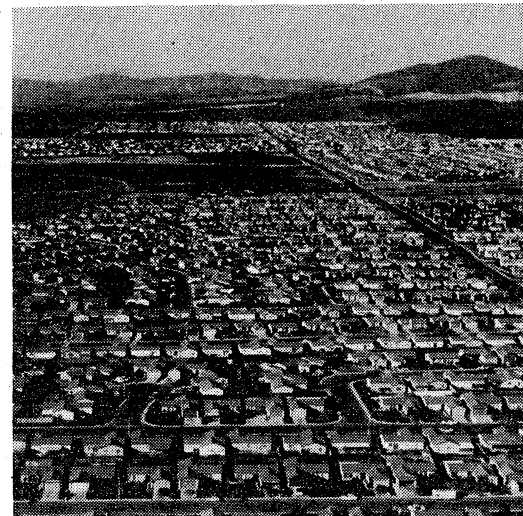
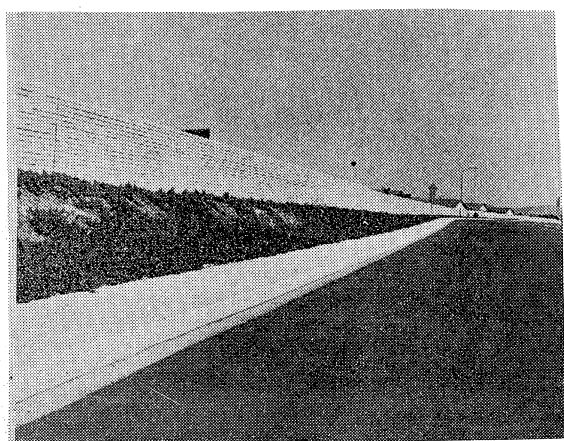
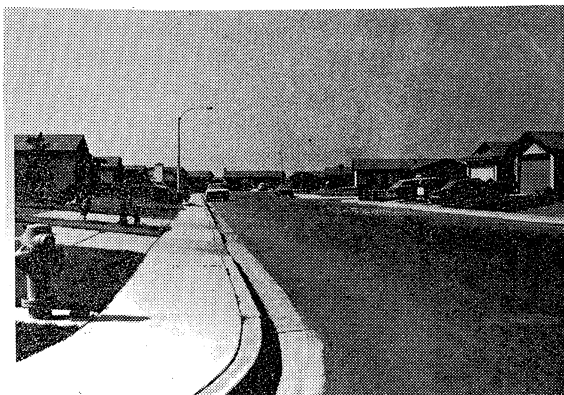
First, that rapid growth has outrun public services. There are not enough schools, even though there may be empty classrooms in the inner city. The main roads leading out of the community are congested. Community institutions are lacking. The *rate* of growth is too fast.



Second, the landscape is being carelessly destroyed. The tough natural cover and thin soil are being stripped off, leaving dusty, barren surfaces. Hills and banks are cut off, canyons buried. All the potentialities of the land are lost.



Third, the form of settlement itself, which is borrowed from the humid East, is inappropriate. Streets are too wide; yards are empty; houses and people are unprotected from the sun. The plants struggle with drought and poor soil. The public spaces are barren; the resulting landscape is hot, arid, empty, and monotonous. At the same time, it is wasteful of space and wasteful of water.



Fourth, development is at such a huge scale, and of such a single type, that not even skilled design could prevent a sense of endlessness, of remoteness from the natural setting. This in an area that is in fact still largely open! Small design decisions, such as a choice of roof form or wall color, become overwhelming when repeated so often. More serious, perhaps, the scale and homogeneity of development isolates people from work, from services, and from people who are not like themselves.

Finally, the location of this inland development puts more people in a climate which is hotter in summer and colder in winter, where they must expend more water and more energy to remain comfortable. It is farther from the sea, and increases their dependence on the car, with its attendant road congestion, oil consumption, smog, and its reduction of the independence of children and the elderly. These areas are more expensive to serve, while facilities in the inner city lie underused. In the process of relocation, people are uprooted from their familiar communities, and increasingly segregated by class.

Please note that these suburbs are *not* substandard in any legal sense. Their form abides strictly by the public rules: for construction, street widths, setbacks, street walls, bulk, and type of use. Their road patterns have been carefully reviewed. In official terms, they are properly done.

In sum, if we judge by Mira Mesa, it seems that the present suburban growth is too rapid, too poorly coordinated with public services, too extensive and homogeneous, too destructive of the land, inappropriate in form, and in the wrong place. Then why does it happen?

The immediate cause is speculative profit, of course. But why do people buy these houses, and so provide the opportunity for profit? Clearly, because in the suburbs they can get a new house at a price they can afford, one which they cannot find in the inner city. They can have the security and satisfaction of owning a home, and that home can have a familiar form which fits with the nuclear family. Along with this they have an initial sense of spaciousness, as they are the first occupants of the big mesas. That sense of space is illusory, however, and declines as development proceeds. The satisfaction of home ownership and of adequate housing at a reasonable price are more lasting. Might it be possible to discover a form of housing which is more appropriate to the site and climate, and which also gave the same satisfactions?

It is also likely that a good number of people who move out to the mesa do so because they prefer the bright sun and dry air to the coastal climate. Such a preference is perfectly reasonable, if they realize how precarious is

the clarity of that still, dry, haze-prone air and are willing to discipline themselves to preserve it - - and also if they are willing to pay the social costs of more water, energy and public service.

Moreover, there is a logic in the land that suggests something about development here. The flat mesa tops are easy to reach and to build on. They are not precious in any ecological or landscape sense. The ubiquitous canyons, if left alone, are historic, watered, rural, seemingly remote. They divide the huge mesas into many smaller places.

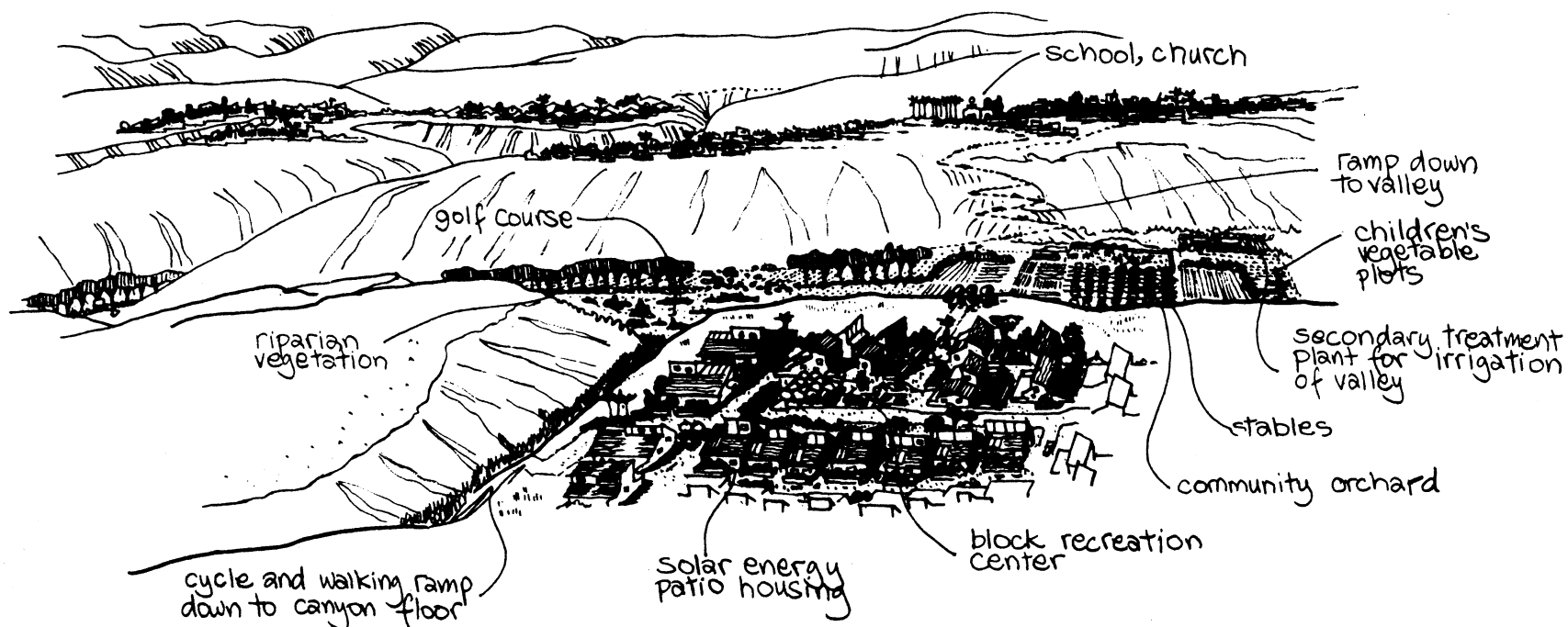
This analysis suggests some policies to us:

Slow down the inland suburban growth, but do not try to stop it. Extend public services gradually, on a phased basis, and not automatically, on the request of developers. Tie the pace of development strictly to that extension of service so that all public services (schools, utilities, roads, fire protection) are budgeted and provided *before* houses are complete. Find ways of levying the real public costs of extension directly onto the suburban developments that cause them - - not only the initial construction costs, but the running costs, and those more intangible losses of traffic, smog, wasted water, and so on. Use timed and transferable development rights to impose a control on the regional rate of development, while maintaining equity for

all those land owners who would prefer that their land be the next to develop.* In other words, don't rely on zoning and subdivision control to stem the tide. Experience shows that those familiar devices are often impotent where development pressures are strong, and there is no established community to make a resistance.

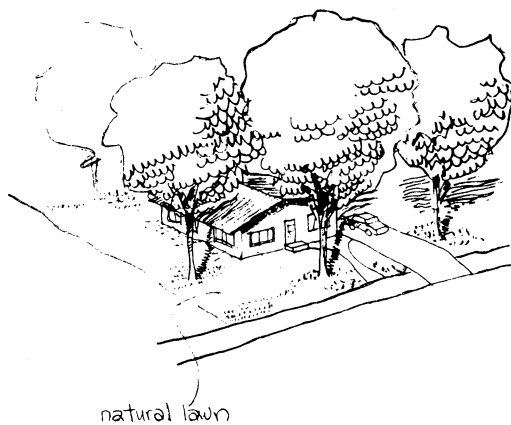
Encourage smaller, less homogeneous development. When development happens in smaller pieces, when there is a greater mixture of house type, and of employment and services with the housing, then a more interesting landscape is produced, as well as a community which is more varied in age and social composition. The journey to work and to shopping can be correspondingly reduced. This means much more flexible and fine-grained zoning and other public rules. It indicates a greater reliance on planned unit development techniques, and on performance standards rather than on use zone boundaries. Permits to develop land should be released in smaller pieces, perhaps in the same compartments which are formed by the canyons. Or a limit might be put on the maximum size of any contiguous development that could be carried out by any entrepreneur in a given period of time. It may even be sensible to *require* some minimum percentage of land use mixture. Fundamentally, this means a change in the way the land development business is organized, which will come harder. Could there be public ways of encouraging small builders and community enterprises?

* Timed and transferable development rights are a new idea, not yet tested in practice, whereby growth might be more strictly controlled in location and timing, without giving windfall profits to some landowners and causing severe losses to others. In brief, a total maximum growth rate would be set for some region, and specific, limited zones be designated in which that growth would be allowed to happen. At the same time, all landowners in the region would be given marketable development rights on some equitable basis. Developers in the favored areas would have to buy up rights from other owners in order to proceed with anything more than low-density building on their land. See Lynch, "Controlling the Location and Timing of Development by the Distribution of Marketable Development Rights," unpublished, 1973.

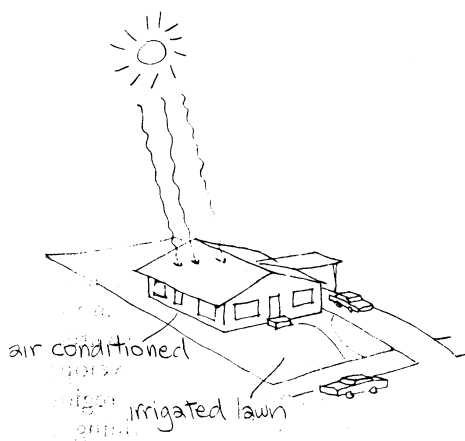




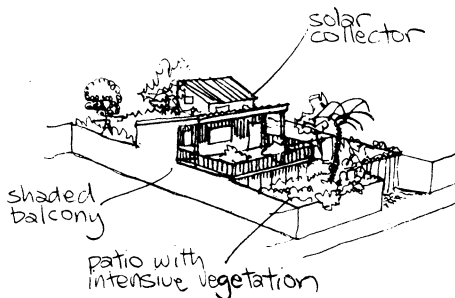
Use a more appropriate form of settlement, based perhaps on the Mediterranean prototype, which developed in this type of landscape. What is wanted is much more compact site planning, narrow (even shaded) streets, the use of roofs, interior courts and small intensive gardens in place of lawns and yards. In this dry air, rely on breeze and shade for coolness in place of air conditioning. Use native plants, and concentrate the application of water. Collect the abundant solar energy to power the houses. All this can be done without sacrificing family privacy, home ownership, or reasonable cost. But prototypes must be built to show how it can be done. It may be necessary to impose *minimum* densities, as well as the usual maxima, to encourage compactness and save the land. Minima would have to be accompanied by other rules, of course, to prevent that equally inappropriate form: the high tower set in an arid parking lot.



8. EAST COAST HOUSE

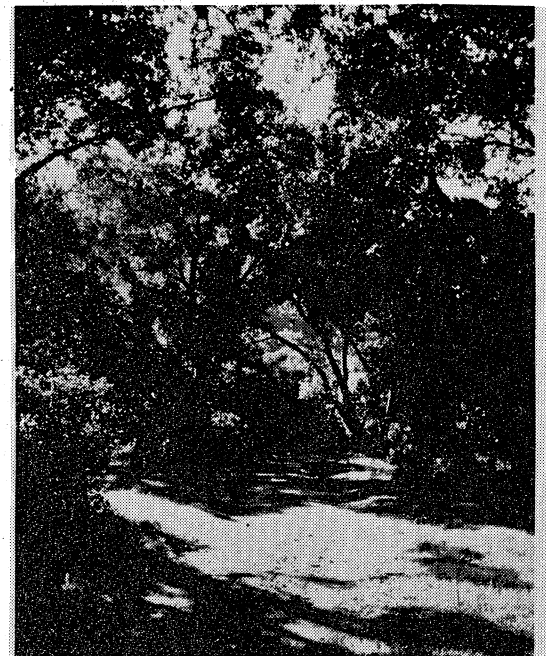


9. TRANSFERRED TO SAN DIEGO



10. ADAPTED TO CLIMATE

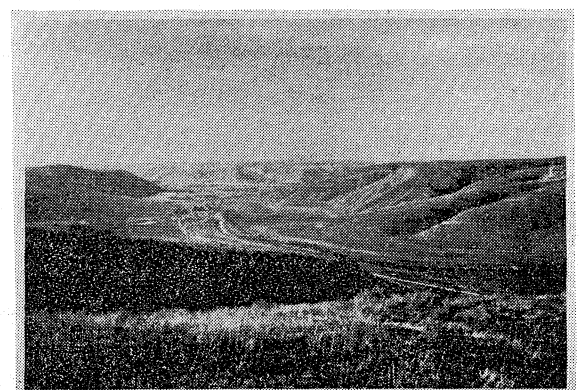
Respect the land. Keep the valleys and canyons, and their rims, out of development, using public purchase, and flood plain and hillside zoning with real teeth in them. The canyons automatically provide an open space network for recreation, food production, trails, small inland oases, and room for children and adults to wander, in contrast to the urbanized mesas above. Work *with* the ground; use native plants. Where possible, do not disturb the existing plant cover or the skin of the earth. This skin is very tender in an arid country. When disturbance is necessary, confine it to the flat tops.



Down in the valley.

Save water and energy. Concentrate the use of water, and recycle it to the canyons. Develop solar energy inland (and wind energy on the coast?) Minimize the use of the automobile, by dispersing employment and services to local areas, by developing cycle trails, by installing the small-scale, demand-activated transit ("dial-a-bus") which can operate at suburban densities. Perhaps it may even in time become necessary to ration, or to sell, a temporary right to park a car in a local area. We have had glimpses of the impending shortage of water and energy, but that shortage is still largely hidden to view. When it appears again, in a sharper form it may have serious social, economic, and environmental consequences. New suburbs should be designed so that they can adapt quickly to a low-energy, low-water regime.

The valley of the Penasquitos today.



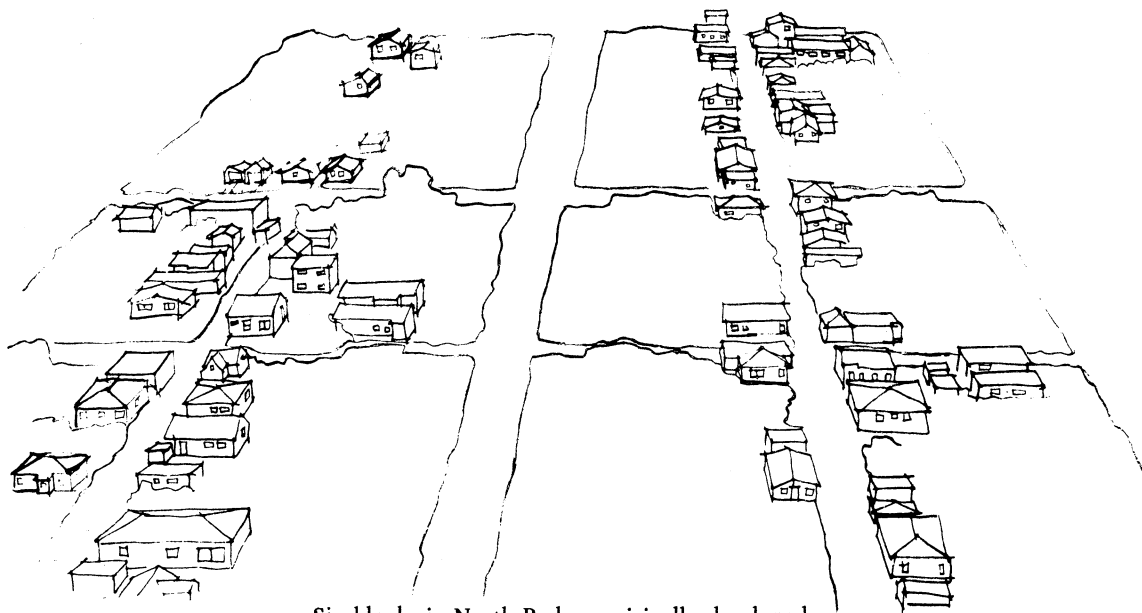
But the policies we have outlined for regulating suburban growth could be extremely dangerous, if no alternate location for growth were provided. San Diego cannot stop migrants at her borders, nor forcibly reduce its birth rate. A check in suburban growth alone will simply raise the price of housing and confine moderate income families to a shrinking, inadequate, inner city stock of houses. If there were acceptable ways of controlling the mix of house prices and rents, to prevent discrimination against the less affluent, or of directly supplying low cost

housing, then growth could be more severely controlled without loss of equity. As it is, a suburban slow-down must be accompanied by the encouragement of new growth in present urban areas.

Where could that happen? Isn't the building of new apartments just what the existing communities are most desperately resisting? Look at North Park again, to see an example of where "densification" - - the gradual addition of dwellings to an existing community - - is happening, and to see its problems.



The dwellings that have already been added.



Six blocks in North Park as originally developed.

The most visible kind of "densifying" happens where new apartments built on old single-family lots invade a block en masse. They transform the population, and thus overturn the community. They steal each other's light and air, display their tawdry fronts, and appropriate the curbs with their parked cars. They make a new, rather unpleasant, single use area, which will in time be ripe for its own decline.

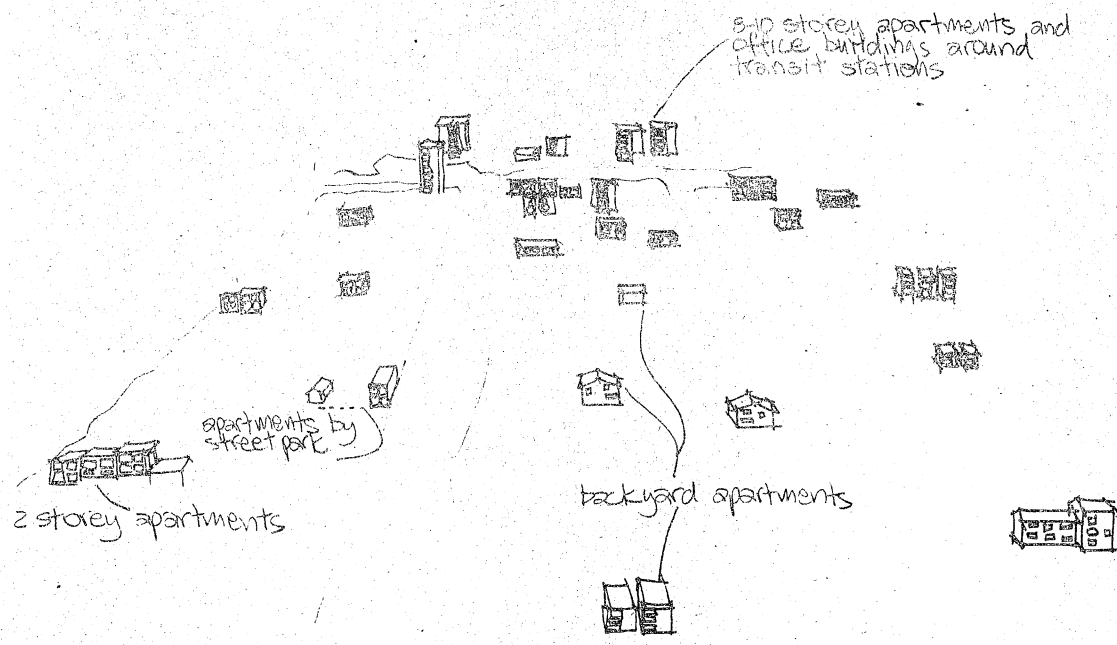
But, except for its wide streets, North Park is already quite dense for its type of housing, due to the gradual accumulation of rear houses and converted cottages, all still in good repair. The original density, in the area shown, perhaps five dwellings per acre has already come near to doubling. Indeed, this is an illustration of how a *slow and scattered* process of increase can come without disruption. Speaking purely in visual terms, the narrow alleys with their varied rear houses and garages are often the most interesting part of the North Park scene.

Even North Park can take more housing, but only if it is gradual and dispersed, so that the change does not upset the present mix of people and buildings, and only if most new buildings are low - - except at some special location such as a transit station. And only if the community is compensated for the new population load by corresponding new public investments: schools, parks, transit, street improvements, new services.

Given all that, existing houses can be rehabilitated, new units can be added in rear yards or filled in between existing single family units and occasional apartments can be built. The "densification" we propose is not massed apartments at 40 units to the acre, or highrise towers at 80, but a mix of individual homes and low, small, rental units at 10 to 15 units per acre. This will require new performance standards to handle such additions, plus means of preventing the conversion of extensive areas to apartments, and new ways of managing and discouraging parking. The automatic alarm of communities to a threatened increase in density could be converted to acceptance, if only they could be sure that the increase would be moderate, controlled, and in keeping with what they have.

Elsewhere in the city and county there are much better opportunities for "densification." There are plentiful waste lands between the developed zones, and frequent vacant lots. There will be opportunities at future transit stops. In the longer term, there are magnificent opportunities to bring people "back to the Bay," to occupy Lindbergh Field, North Island, or the south Bay shore with housing.

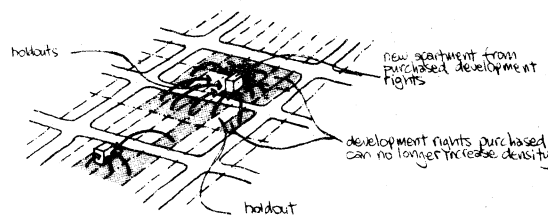
Unless there is a concerted policy for densifying the present urban area, suburban growth cannot - - and should not - - be checked. Based on surveys of the relative ability of city and rural lands to absorb growth (due to water, soils, energy use, climate, visual quality, hazards, transport, amenities, potentials, etc.), compared with the need for housing expansion, public agencies must indicate where densities may increase, and where they may not. Then agencies must key their land assessments and investments to those decisions. Any "densification" should follow certain rules:



New dwellings that might still be added without destroying the neighborhood.

It should be by the consent of the local community, a consent gained in return for public investment and services. We are not advocating total neighborhood control, since regional reasons must often prevail, as in building a connected transit system, for example, or in trying to diminish social segregation. But we do advocate a negotiated settlement, when regional and local interests clash.

Its rate and character should not destroy existing community character. Particular guidelines will be needed for each community. Guidelines can deal with the control of parking and paved areas, the provision of balconies and planting, the prevention of buildings which overlook or overshadow smaller neighbors, the use of materials, the activities which front the street, and indeed many other things. It all depends on the neighborhood character to be preserved. In general, additional units should be low, scattered, and added gradually. Relaxed spacing and density rules must be accompanied by new performance standards. A scattering in space and time might be ensured by requiring new apartments to purchase development rights from adjacent property owners, a sale which would then preclude higher densities on those adjacent sites. Some clustering could be allowed, however, as at major transit stops.

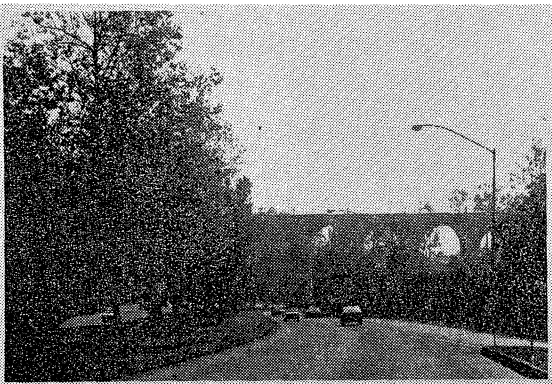
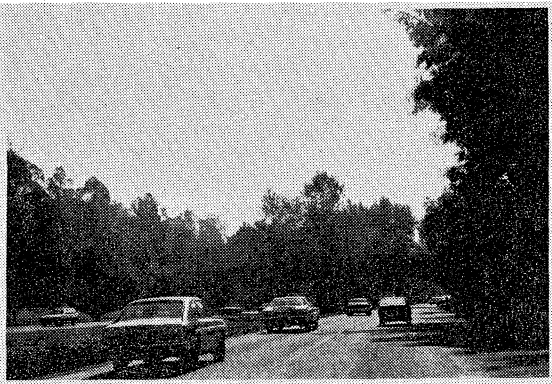
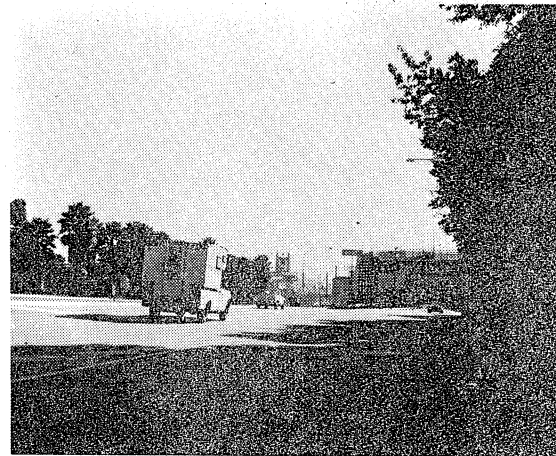
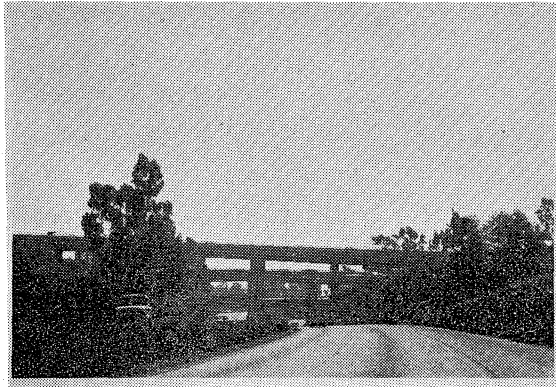


Public improvements should focus on the present urban areas, and not on the open land north of Mission Valley, as is presently the case. The old arterial commercial streets should be renewed, local streets and alleys reformed, small parks added, schools and libraries rebuilt. Suburban restraint and the revitalization of the existing city must go hand in hand.

How to Get About

People experience their environment by travelling through it. Transportation systems set the character of cities. These systems also affect the city inhabitant in other ways: he is rarely out of sight or hearing of a car, for example. In London, 25% of the population is wakened by traffic noise, or cannot sleep because of it. In San Diego, this may be more nearly true of the airplane.

In many parts, San Diego's freeway system is magnificent. It was put in place largely prior to development, and is still today not badly congested, except in certain locations and at certain times. Great ribbons of concrete snake through the canyons, pass over valleys and the Bay on splendid, massive supports, intersect in giant curves over sheets of ivy and ice plant. They are the masterpieces of 20th Century engineering. The Cabrillo Freeway, as it passes through the lush canyon of Balboa Park and into the beautifully landscaped intersection with I-5, was described by many of our respondents as their favorite piece of freeway. But then it arrives at that jumble of signs and buildings which is the back door of downtown -- a true anti-climax.



Other parts of the freeway system are less successful. Although almost all our respondents used the automobile, few of them found their journeys a very enjoyable experience.

"Have to pass through Mission Valley, an example of San Diego's continuing planning problems. Architecture in the area is poor, buildings clash with each other, freeway noise destroys Presidio Park, freeway on-and-offs are dangerous, telephone and power equipment should be under ground. Even with all the past mistakes, we allow new ones -- an example is the recent hacking off of the hillside at 395 and I-8" (Hillcrest man, 33)

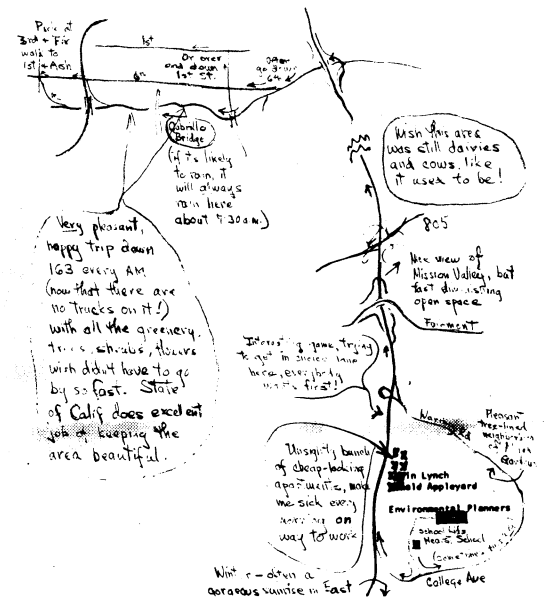
"It is about a 16-mile drive, although the road's not congested, the scenery tends to be monotonous, and during rush hour the drivers are tense. All along Mission Gorge and Friars Road to I-163 there are large industrial plants, there is little landscaping except by stadium." (female, 27)

"It's fast. The Fairmount Road goes through a typical San Diego non-green canyon. In this way I find it visually displeasing." (Student, East San Diego)

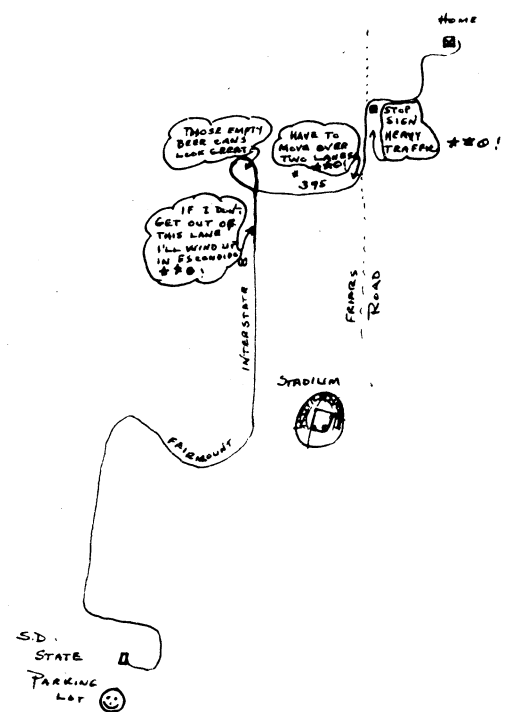
Q. "How pleasant is your journey?"
A. "Average. Looking down on El Cajon from Fletcher Hills, you see all the smog and gunk. Too many traffic lights, too much traffic."

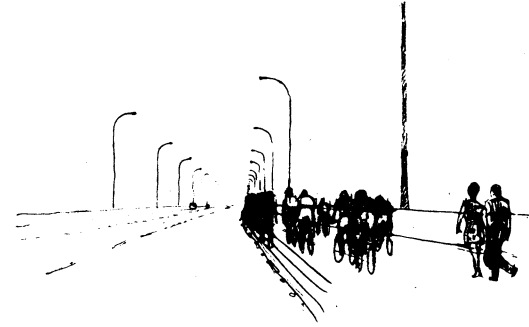
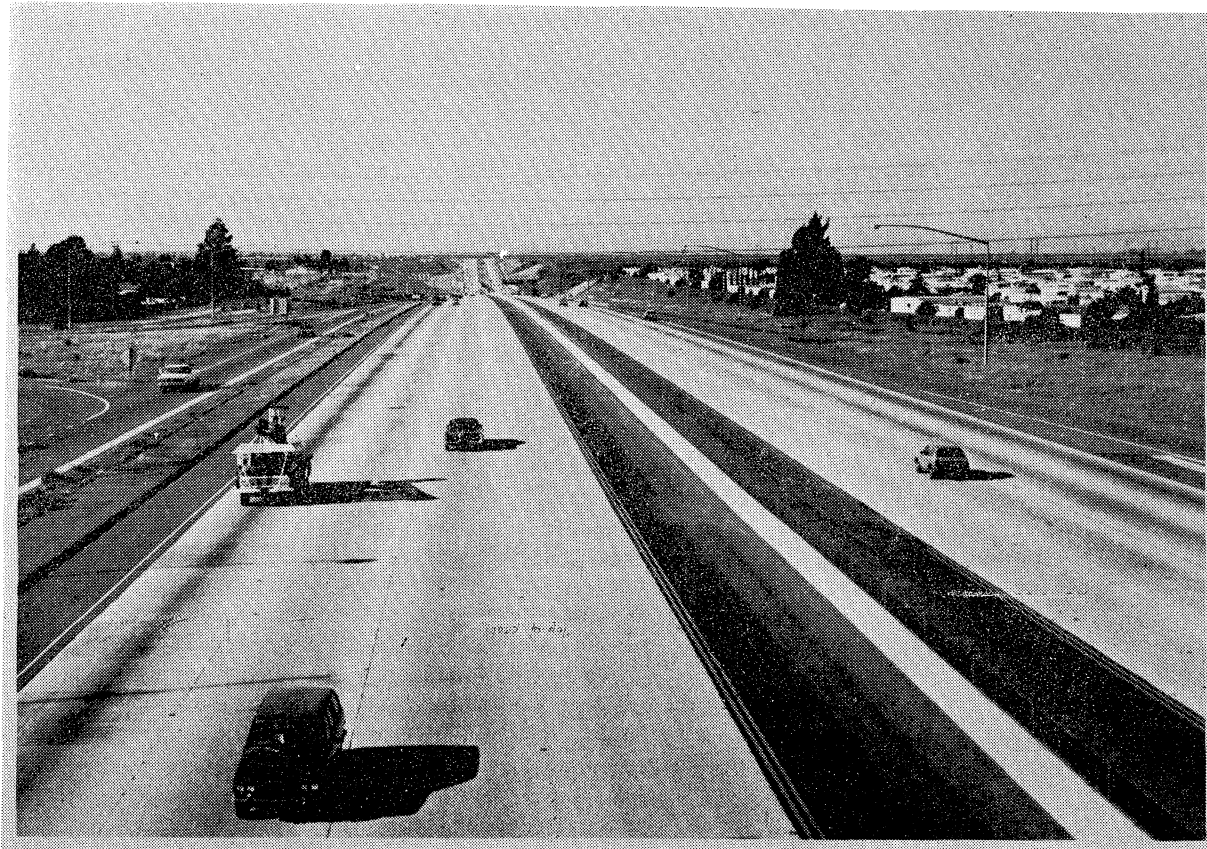
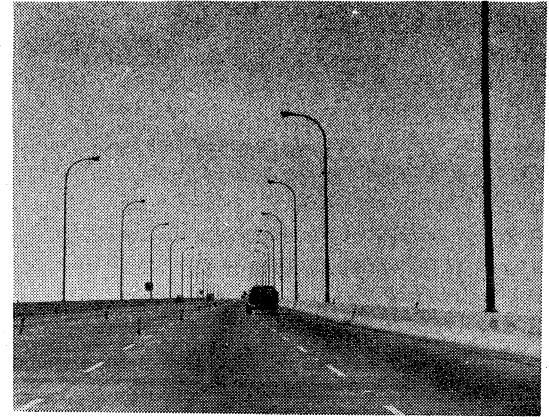
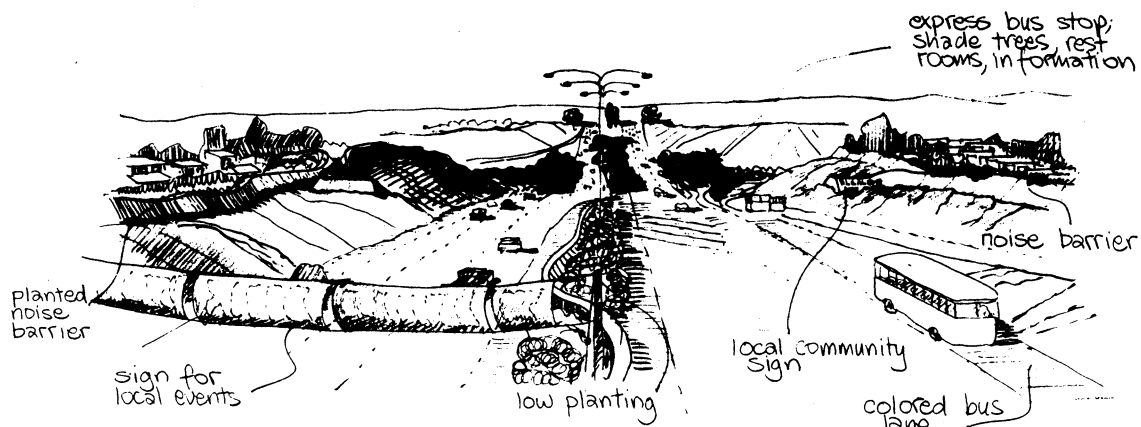
At times, it even is difficult to know which freeway one is on. Gravel pits, bare hills, graded cuts not yet recovered, scar the natural landscape. Elsewhere than in the confined Cabrillo canyon, with its lavish use of water and its old trees, the effort to create a green setting is abortive. The spaces are too big, too bare of trees, too open; it takes too much water. The adjacent urbanized land, which has its back to the freeway and yet is undergoing a rapid change due to that freeway access, is the effective visual setting, and it is nondescript. In some stretches, as for instance through La Mesa, the freeway is flanked by telephone poles and signs for steak and whiskey. When the glare from the concrete is coupled with this open, dry landscape, the experience can be arid and eye-scorching.

The freeways clearly cannot be replaced or relocated. But they need repair.



Two maps of typical auto trips.



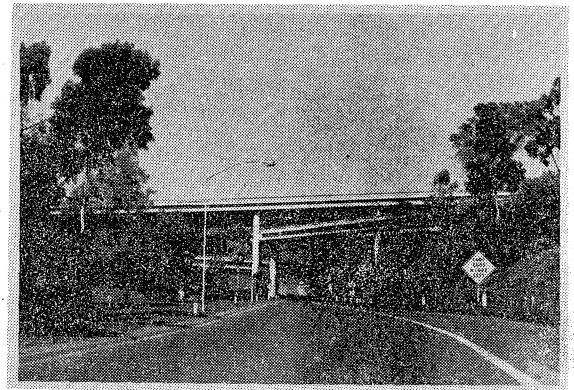
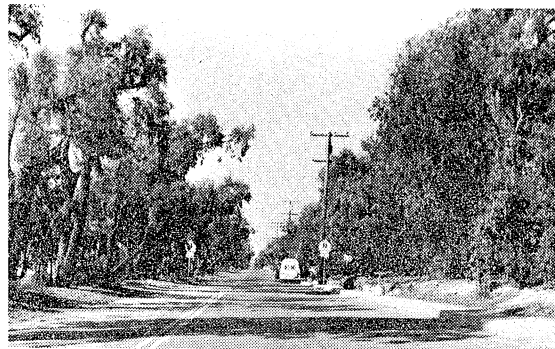


Accommodate other uses, other modes of travel. Express bus lanes can be designated, to support a fast transit system. Bicycles, even pedestrians, might have a lane across the Coronado Bridge. On very special occasions, a section of freeway, such as in the Cabrillo canyon through Balboa Park, might be closed to cars and used for some public event. A street fair, perhaps, to reassert possession of these car ways and to give the trees a breath of air.

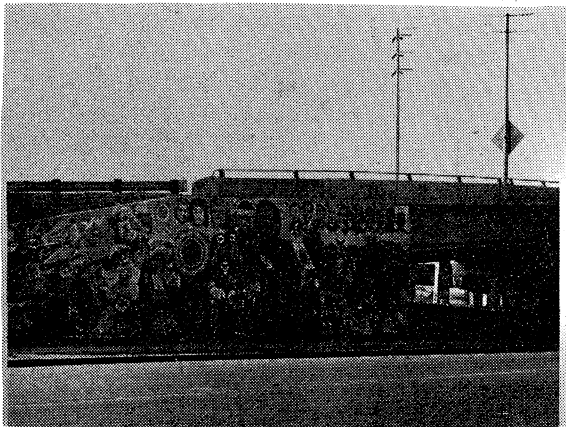
The city should pay attention to its highway landscape. This means a detailed evaluation, to see which settings should be preserved, and which can be rehabilitated. It means thinking of the highway in terms of the way it approaches important centers, the landmarks and gateways that are visible, the views of the ocean, the bays, valleys, and hills. Easements should be established to protect these better views. Landmark structures might be encouraged at significant locations.

Cluster vegetation, use native plants. It is too expensive and water-consuming to plant the freeways continuously. Intense clumps of vegetation are more effective than slim lines of trees, or narrow bands of ice plant. Native plants or drought-resistant trees may take time to grow, but it may be possible to use irrigated planting until the native species take over. Look at the old trees along the former Pacific Highway north of La Jolla to see how an unwatered planting of trees can in time give strong character to a road.

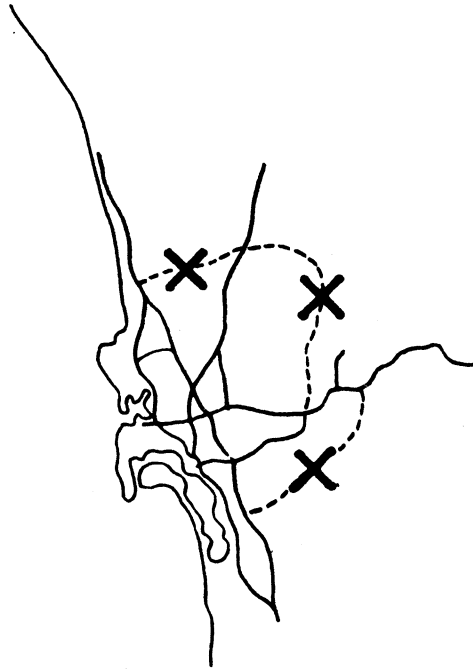
Use highway detail in non-standard ways. Coloring the pavement and the guardrails in dark green, blues and browns, could do much to relieve the sense of glare and heat. Varied lighting systems, or signs which had local character and conveyed local names and information would support a sense of place in the city. The core with which Mexican engineers have whitened selected stones and details on the Ensenada toll road is an example to follow. U.S. highway details are presently neutral, standardized over vast areas of the state and the nation.



Incorporate the freeway into the community landscape where feasible. Noise, fumes, and visual intrusions can be reduced by buffers and walls, but a consistent sound-proofing would lead to miles of monstrous, continuous walls, much like the walled-off arterials in Mira Mesa, but more gigantic. Buffers must be applied with care, and locally fitted. Communities can also be encouraged to make use of the supporting freeway structures. The murals applied in the Harbor 101 district humanize the enormous pylons of the Coronado Bridge approach.



San Diego is an auto city, but it is beginning to see the costs of its narrow transportation base. Air pollution is an immediate problem. San Diego already discharges far more than the allowable oxidant load into its atmosphere. At current rates of growth, it will continue to fall below federal standards indefinitely, unless there is an unexpected great leap forward in the technology of emissions control, or a decided shift away from the use of the car. Congestion is not yet as acute as in other cities, but the gasoline crisis hinted at the uncertainties of depending on cars. The rapid spread of the city region is associated with the automobile, and so is the disruption of residential neighborhoods by freeways. Less dramatic is the slow deterioration of older areas and shopping centers, and the effects on personal health of the lack of exercise -- not to speak of the disadvantages suffered by those who cannot drive: the old, the poor, the handicapped, the young. But it will take a massive effort to get people out of their automobiles, a two-pronged strategy of damping the growth of auto facilities, while speeding that of other modes.



The remainder of the freeway program should be delayed, once 805 is completed, thus precluding construction, at this time, of the outer circumferential freeway. EPA pollution standards may also limit large new auto-oriented activities. In the longer term, charges for the use of the freeway system may be levied on drivers or on the large traffic generators.

The bus is the fundamental unit of a public transportation system, but people will be attracted to them, and away from cars, only if the frequency, character, and location of service is much improved.

"I like (the bus) because it's cheap and convenient. Also helps to reduce smog and congestion. Don't like it now because it's too crowded and always hot in the winter months. Did you ever find a bus with a normal heating system? Also don't like it because the view in El Cajon Boulevard is atrocious. The ride on Route 163 through the park is just the greatest." (City employee, State College Area)

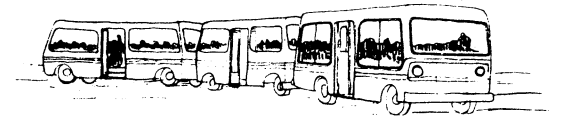
Q. *"How pleasant is (the bus) journey?"*
A. *"Quite enjoyable -- you meet a lot of people and see a lot of other people and see a lot of friends but the route should not go zig zag." (Logan Heights)*

"It is boring. I generally take something to read. Occasionally I have to stand. The trip through the Bay section is nice. Midway Drive is a mess of signs advertising food joints, topless bars, etc. That architectural monstrosity, the new postal distributing building, belongs right there with the rest of the crud." (Bus traveller from Mission Beach to Downtown)

"By car (20 minutes) I am able to avoid most of the rush hour traffic, so no big problems -- by bus (1 hour) trip takes three times as long as my car and bus is standing room only for entire trip." (Vista del Cerro to Downtown)

A recent survey in another city found that people criticized bus-riding because it was slow, roundabout, noisy, dull, and subject to crime, that it was difficult to carry things and there was too much waiting.

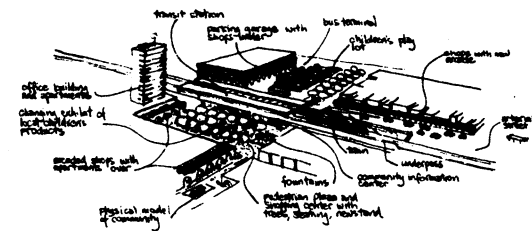
Long distance commuting busses might use their own freeway and arterial lanes. Bus stops could have seats, shade, parking, food and drink, restrooms, newsstands, information, night lighting. Mini-busses could operate in the suburbs on flexible routes. The internal comfort of vehicles could be improved, and made easier for the elderly to move about in. It should be possible to carry bicycles and vehicles for the handicapped. Some busses could be double-deckers, or have open tops for the pleasure of riding in them.



Fixed rail transit, now under serious consideration in San Diego, can offer a fast, comfortable trip, and if above grade, a fine view of the city. It frees the rider to read, think, or daydream in ways which are difficult in an automobile. If the system is safe and usable for children, and if it presents information about the areas it is passing through, it can be a unique resource for public education. The social image of the system must be attractive to a wide range of San Diegans; the quality of materials and detail should bring some glamour to the everyday commute and the recreational journey.

The choice of transit system will involve many environmental and design considerations. The size and design of the vehicles will affect the degree of privacy, awkwardness and comfort. The frequency of the stations will affect the speed of travel and ease of access, but also the number of local areas disrupted. System design can also influence the noise produced, heaviness of the structure, the ease of inserting alignments into the urban fabric.

Although the more exotic automated highway or personal rapid transit systems which attempt to combine the assets of the car with the capacity of transit are being discussed, the proven, fixed rail systems with slow and fast trains will probably be the most feasible system over the next twenty years.



The stations can be important community foci. Stations in some new systems -- such as San Francisco, Montreal, and Mexico City -- are fine pieces of public architecture. They can display local maps, local products, local news and local history, and open onto plazas around which stores and community facilities can locate. Stations should be located where they can reinforce existing centers and where higher densities are possible. Rather than surrounding stations with vast parking lots, bus, pedestrian and bicycle access to the stations should have equal consideration. Parking garages could compact the areas devoted to the automobiles.

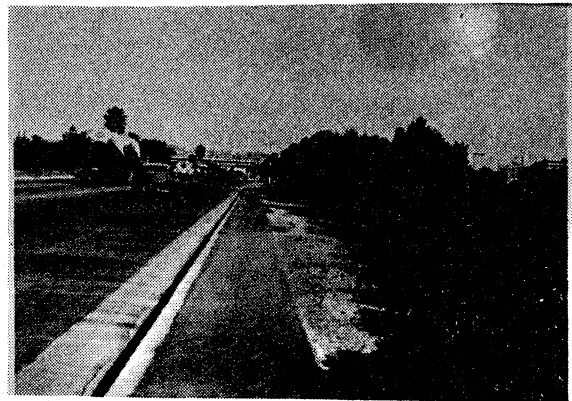
The detailed location and form of the lines and stations must respect the local fabric. Carelessly done, they can be as destructive as highways. Experience with the BART system in San Francisco shows that a system fits poorly into the landscape, and is unlikely to satisfy a broad range of travellers, if engineering criteria are dominant during design. Environmental surveys of the corridors should locate sensitive areas, areas of change, neighborhood and community territories, valued places, and good crossing points. Where possible, the lines should be elevated for the benefit of the traveller, preferably on light support structures, and along wide commercial streets, or other less sensitive edges. This will depend on how noise-free the system can be.



The general location of routes and stations will affect the form of regional growth. Since a transit system induces growth, just as a highway system does, the location of its routes and stations is critical for the future form of the city. Since we recommend that growth be directed to the present urban areas, and especially along the coast and southwards toward the border, the highest priority rail transit line, from our viewpoint, is that which will run from Mission Bay to Tijuana. This will serve much of the denser city, Mission Valley, Centre City, the industries, and the water-based recreation. It would make a link to Tijuana and the proposed international airport, relieve some of the border congestion, and bring isolated

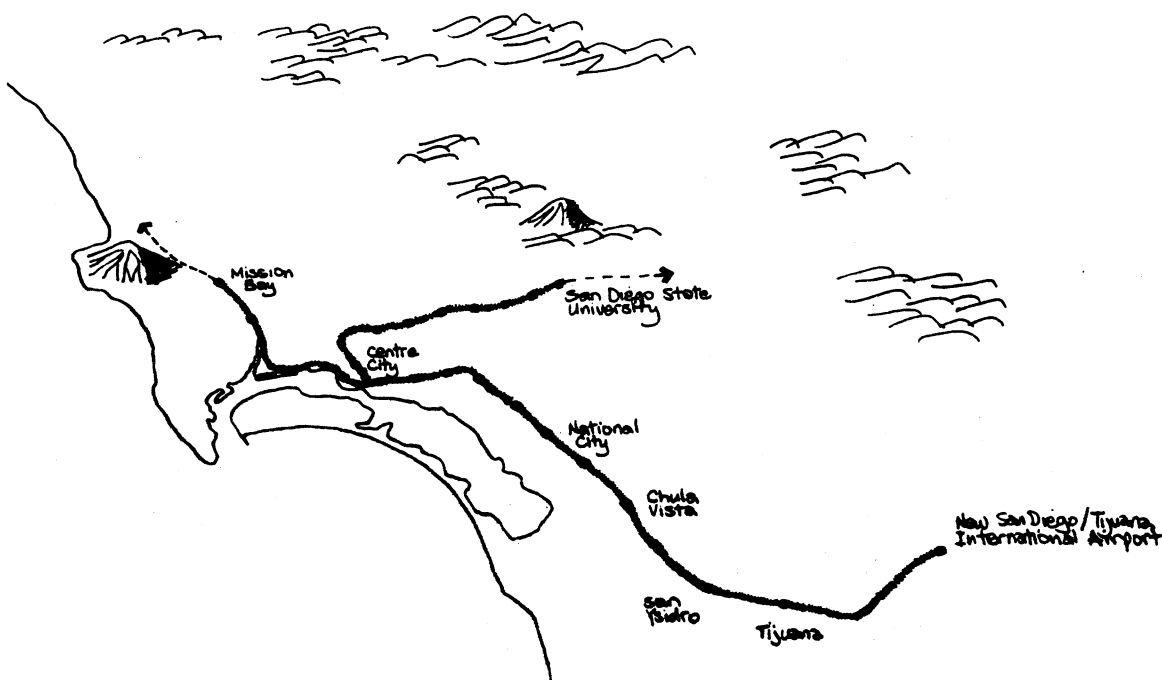
communities like San Ysidro closer to San Diego. It would encourage "densification" all along the coastal plain and to the south, and in the future to be the spine for residential renewal of the Bay shore.

From that same viewpoint, the next priority would be the eastern line through North Park to San Diego State University, to serve that heavily-settled area. Extending north from Mission Bay could be held back, in early years, to slow the northerly growth. In any case, congestion on I-5 above La Jolla is not predicted until after 1995.



Cycle trails in the valleys and canyons have already been proposed. Cycling to work is also possible -- the climate is ideal, and the grades are flat if one can move either up on the mesas or down in the valley. Transit vehicles should be able to carry cycles so that the cyclist can extend his range. A system on the mesas will require more than just setting up a few signs, however. Cycle rights-of-way which are separate from those for automobiles will be needed, along or in parallel with the arterial system.

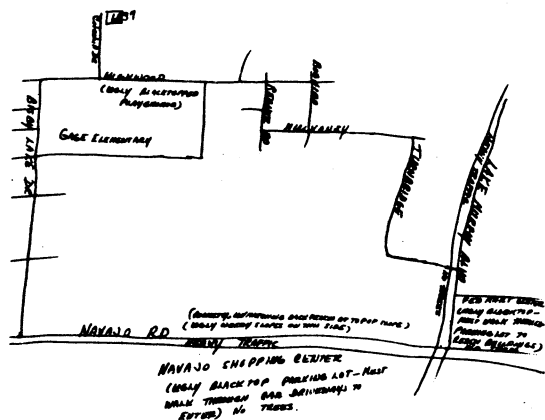
Bike riders could be given separate paths -- then I might even ride one. (Civil Engineer, Clairemont)



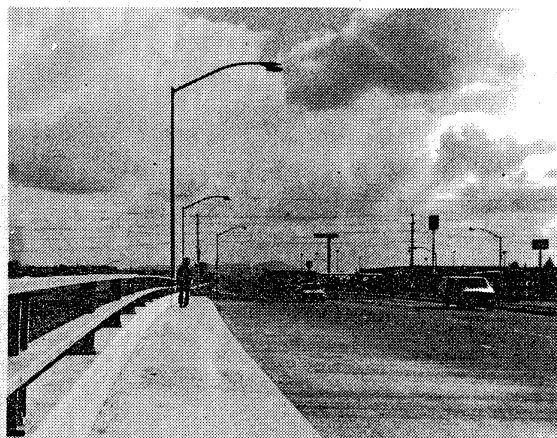
Dispersing work places into residential districts may make it feasible to walk to work. Pedestrians in San Diego are a rarity today. It takes courage and stamina to walk.

Walking to work in Navajo: Part of it is through fairly pleasant residential neighborhood, but there are not enough street trees, and those that there are not mature enough yet to make it really pleasant. There is no really attractive spot along the way - - no small park or open space, for example. One walks along the sidewalk with cars and motorcycles whizzing by. The worst stretch is along either Lake Murray Boulevard or Navajo Road where your view is ugly banks and fences on one side and heavy traffic on the other. How I wish San Diego had provided for the kind of footpaths through blocks one finds in English towns!

More separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic, preferably by easements permitting footpaths through some blocks, more trees, less cars parked in driveways so they block the sidewalk, provisions for pedestrians to reach shopping centers without walking among automobile traffic. (Female, Navajo)



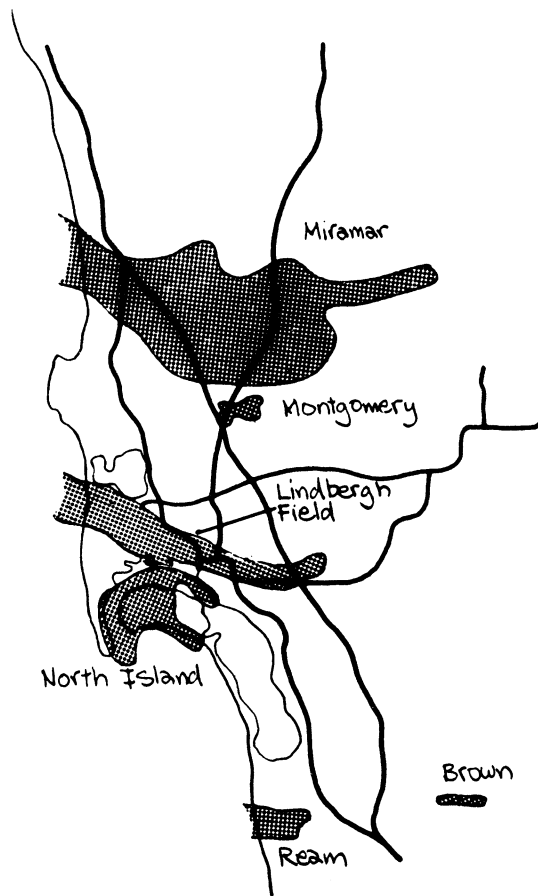
Map of a typical walking trip.



Walking to work in Mission Beach: Very enjoyable. I love to live and work in Mission Beach, close to ocean; air is cleaner than inland. (Registered nurse)

If as much attention were given to sidewalks as to streets, the walker would have a chance. For instance, since cars climb more easily than people do, streets should be raised or lowered to allow level pedestrian crossings, rather than vice versa. Footways need not always hug the road system. The importance of street-front activity, trees, seats, signs, lights, and walk surfaces, have already been underlined.

Airplanes dominate San Diego. They are constantly overhead. To see them come down over the Laurel Canyon onto Lindbergh Field is a dramatic spectacle, but the noise and the danger of a crash threatens many people. Miramar's noise blankets large areas north of La Jolla. Indeed, airplane noise may affect as many as 100,000 people in the region.



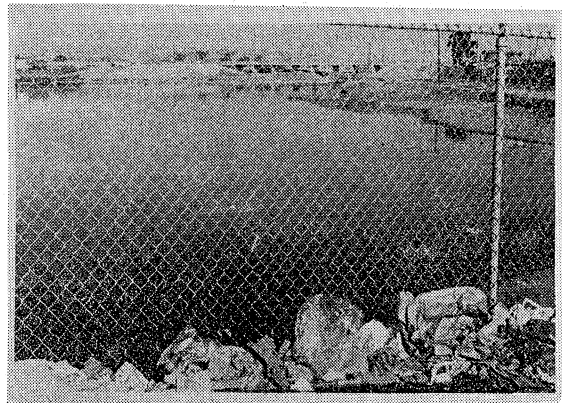
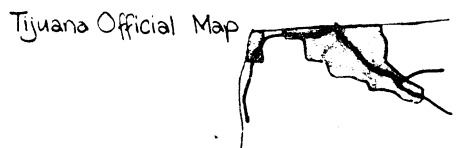
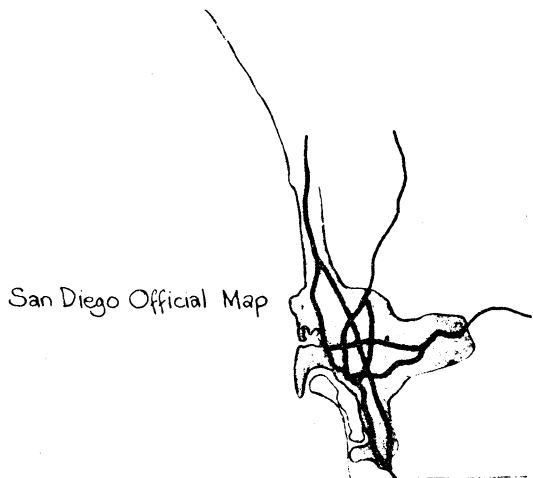
Areas blanketed by severe airplane noise.

Airports should be separated from residential areas. Since the coast and the Bay are prime locations for residence, and airplanes find no real pleasure in them, the airports should be moved. Lindbergh, as the most dangerous and annoying one, and the one now requiring expansion, should be the first. Of the three alternative sites which have been studied, the Carmel Valley and Miramar would continue to threaten residences, and would at the same time induce a northerly spread.

It may be that some site well inland would be the best of all, but of the three places examined, consolidation with the Tijuana airport at the border is clearly to be preferred. Flights can come in over underdeveloped land to the east, and over the flood plain of the Tijuana River to the west. Some 6,000 persons in San Ysidro will be affected, but that number is small relative to other locations, and none will be directly under the flight patterns. A border airport will be no more than 30 minutes from downtown San Diego, and could have a transit connection. It would encourage the industrial development needed to employ residents of Tijuana and of the South Bay communities.

North Island also occupies a valuable bay-shore site, as well as generating inner city noise. It is not clear to us how fixed it may be in its present location, but the city should do everything it can to encourage an eventual removal and consolidation with other military installations elsewhere. Lindbergh Field and North Island, together with the Marine Corps Depot, make up a magnificent opportunity for revitalizing the great Bay of San Diego - - the kind of transformation that is only very rarely afforded to a major city.

Ream Field, Brown Field, and Montgomery all could in time be closed, or consolidated with other landing fields. Miramar, in a longer term, should also be relocated out of the urbanized area, although for the time being its buffer of open space and its air noise tend to slow down northern development. San Diego must be freed of its aerial subjection, and this can be done without interfering with essential transportation. Further studies may show that it would in the future be possible to allow STOL aircraft, or dirigibles, to land at the bayside near the center, without creating a nuisance or danger. But heavy aircraft do not belong there.



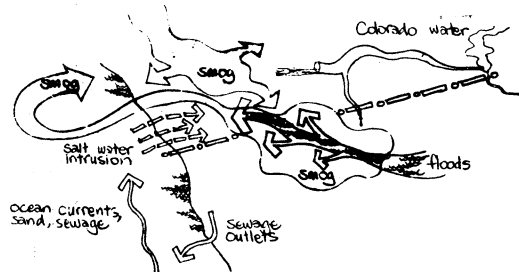
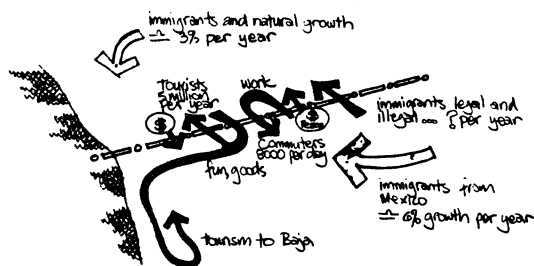
The Mexican Connection

All the official maps go blank at the border. The U.S. maps are white below the line, while the Mexican maps are white above. Even the special Border Area Plan of 1966 shows nothing across the line! Newspapers on either side give no more than 4% of their space to what is happening on the other side. To see the border from the air is a visual shock. The fence runs ruler-straight and heedless across valleys and mesas: open fields on one side, crowded settlements pressed right against the fence on the other. The Tijuana River dies in a muddy pool just by the big border crossing, which with all its slots and lanes for cars, looks for all the world like a giant starting barrier at the dog track. The clutter of signs on the old approach from the U.S. side are eloquent of the motives of many who cross the line going south.



But this is a single natural region, and a connected social landscape as well, despite the barrier. San Diego thinks of itself as a border town, but in reality it is part of the functioning metropolitan region of San Diego/Tijuana. Tijuana, with its estimated 400,000 people, is almost one-quarter of the total regional population today. It is one of the most rapidly growing cities in the world - - perhaps 6 or 7% per year, although there is no sure information. At these current estimated rates, Tijuana will have a population of 1.4 million by 1990 and will be as large as San Diego in 40 years.

Over 30 million persons cross the border every year, the largest volume of flow across any international border in the world. U.S. citizens go south for shopping or recreation; Mexican citizens go north to shop or to work. Legal and illegal immigrants move over the line, and many other things as well: piped water, sewage, smoke and dust, money, goods, floodwater.



Tijuana began as an escape hatch for U.S. vices. Many San Diegans still picture it that way, the exciting "dark side", where one can do prohibited things, or do them more cheaply. But gambling and prostitution have for many years been overshadowed by shopping and family tourism. Each year, five million tourists visit the Avenida Revolucion alone, as many as visit Disneyland or Niagara Falls. But tourism, while still important, is giving way to Tijuana's role as a staging area for immigration and, even more, as a reservoir of cheaper labor for domestic work north of the line and for U.S. industries and construction. Many residents of Tijuana commute to service or factory work on the U.S. side, or work in U.S. branch plants on the Mexican side. Tijuana, moreover, is building an industrial base of its own. Incomes are higher than elsewhere in Mexico, and migrants pour into this city of opportunity, as they are doing in major cities all over the underdeveloped world (indeed, as they did into U.S. cities only a few generations ago). Tijuana shows every sign of becoming a

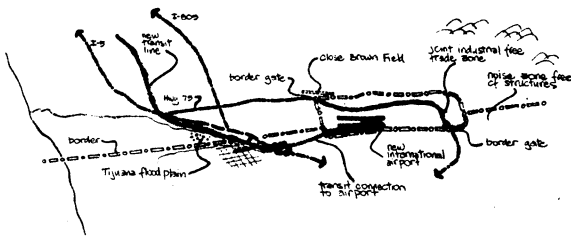
major industrial center, closely linked to the U.S. economy. Meanwhile, it plays a role in the San Diego region which is not unlike that of the larger inner-city slums of any big U.S. city. Only, in this case, the poor area is down at one end of town, rather than in the middle and it is masked behind a border screen.

The relation between these two halves of the landscape, belonging to two separate nations and to two vastly different economies, goes far beyond this report. But we hope that officials and citizens will begin to see the division, to understand that it is artificial, and that it is urgent that they attend to it. The destruction of the natural landscape in Tijuana, the pollution, poverty, and the social disruption to be found there, as well as the hopes and the vital energy, are the problem and the opportunity of the whole metropolitan region and will be so increasingly.

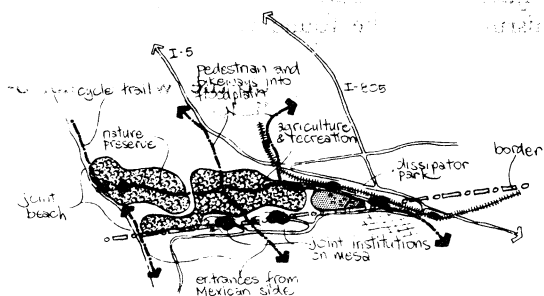
It is Tijuana that makes San Diego truly unique among the great U.S. cities. Vitality comes from the interchange between two cultures when they communicate with each other. The cultural liveliness of Montreal, the meeting point of French and English tradition, is an example of this.

The U.S. conquest of California in 1847 imposed an artificial boundary, which not only cut heedlessly through a local landscape, but separated the port of San Diego from its natural region of Baja California and the lower Colorado. San Diego became a remote U.S. border town, instead of a regional center. But once again now, if cooperation proves possible, San Diego/Tijuana, already a single metropolis, could become the center of an international region. Such a center could have a stable basis in its surrounding resources, rather than being dependent on such exotic and inherently unstable enterprises as tourism, military bases, and retirement. The international region need no longer be at the end of the line, neither in the U.S. nor in Mexico.

The key actions that are needed are economic, social, and political ones. Stable, equitable regional institutions must be built up. But actions in the environment might help to lead off, and might alleviate some present problems. For example:



Establish an international airport on the Otay Mesa to provide a major focus for growth. The airport could be located on or near the border, just north of the present Tijuana Field, and surrounded by a joint free-trade zone on both sides, with a new crossing for goods and workers. The industries which would be attracted here by the access and the freedom from customs duties would revitalize this relatively stagnant end of San Diego County, and give jobs to Mexican workers. The airport could be connected by rail transit to the centers of Tijuana and San Diego. Its alignment would confine its noise to the open river valley on the west, and to the as yet undeveloped land on the mesa eastward, where noise zones could still easily be pre-empted. Except for industry, the Otay Mesa on the U.S. side should be kept free of development, except, perhaps, on the west face of the mesa, in view of the sea, north of route 75 extended. Brown Field would naturally be closed in such an arrangement.

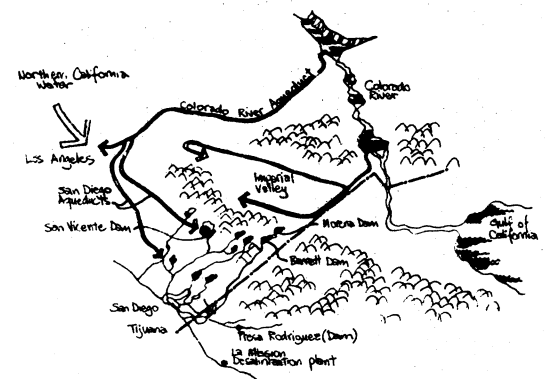


Keep the lower Tijuana River valley open for joint use. The floodplain of the Tijuana should be kept open for agriculture and for recreation, and the estuary protected as a nature preserve. Tijuana is desperately short of open space. For its 400,000 people, there is one tiny central plaza, a narrow beach at a distance, and one golf course for the well-to-do. The floodplain is a precious resource for joint open-air use, to the degree that it will no longer be used for agriculture. For example, the extensive flood dissipator area, that will be built on the U.S. end of Mexican flood channel, might be made into a unique outdoor sculptural park and playground. Pedestrian trails and bikeways could lead into the open plain from both sides, connecting with the south Bay and the Otay River, Tijuana center and the upper valley, Tijuana residential areas, and the shore trails. Some of the land might be leased to Mexican and U.S. families for growing food and flowers, or raising small livestock. Other portions might be used for horse farms, or nurseries, or as the site for celebrations and campgrounds.

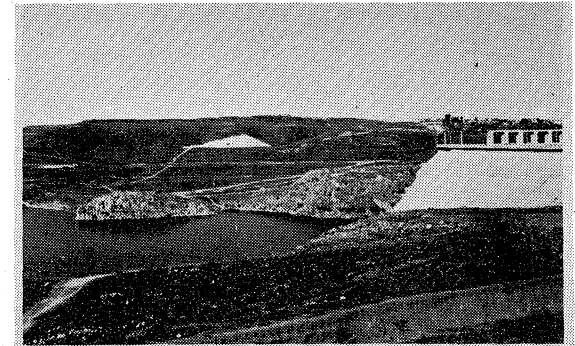
Build bicultural institutions on the mesas above the river valley. The sites at the tip of the mesas overlooking the valley from the south are magnificent locations with sweeping views. They are easily accessible from the Mexican side and that area is still lightly occupied. These are fine locations for one or more international institutions, such as an Interamerican University which would focus on the two cultural heritages. There are academic resources on both sides of the border which could be brought into such an enterprise. Or a training center for Mexican immigrants might be put there, to acquaint them with the U.S. life and language, and to give them economic skills. Conversely, it could be a training center for U.S. businessmen and tourists, an introduction to the Spanish-American culture intended as a prelude to a sojourn in Mexico. It might be a joint vocational institute, or a combined leisure and education center, or a locus for exhibitions, dramatic performances, and festivals. It could be any combination of these, or take some other form. Our basic suggestion is that it should be a *joint* institution, which emphasizes a bicultural exchange, whether it be scholarly, practical, or just entertaining.

Let the new center of Tijuana become the major southern sub-center of the San Diego/Tijuana region. This commercial center, to be built along the new flood channel, can complement San Diego's Centre City, Mission Valley, and the central functions likely in time to develop somewhere north of the University of California. (Alas, an opportunity missed! Had UCSD been located to the south, it would have given strong impetus to border cooperation and growth!) Transit connections between Tijuana center, the new airport, and Mission Bay will tend to strengthen this sub-center, and indeed the entire southern region. In time, one might see complementary service and shopping activities develop on the U.S. side to create an international commercial focus.

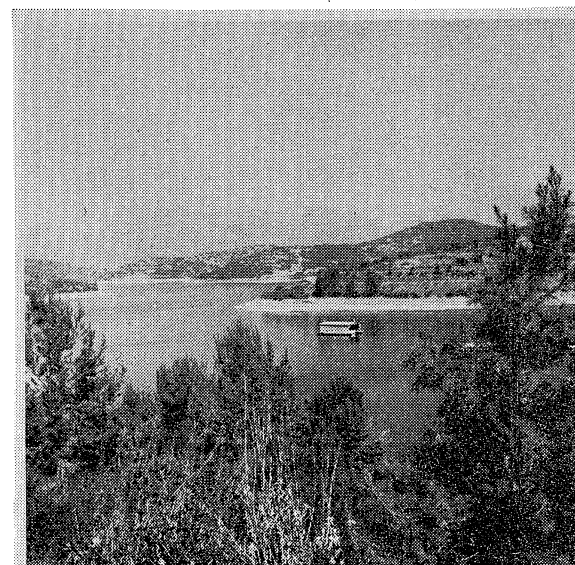
Joint action to protect the natural setting. Cooperative studies of pollution, of water and air movements, of the ocean, of the general ecology of the international region are sorely needed. So are joint efforts to

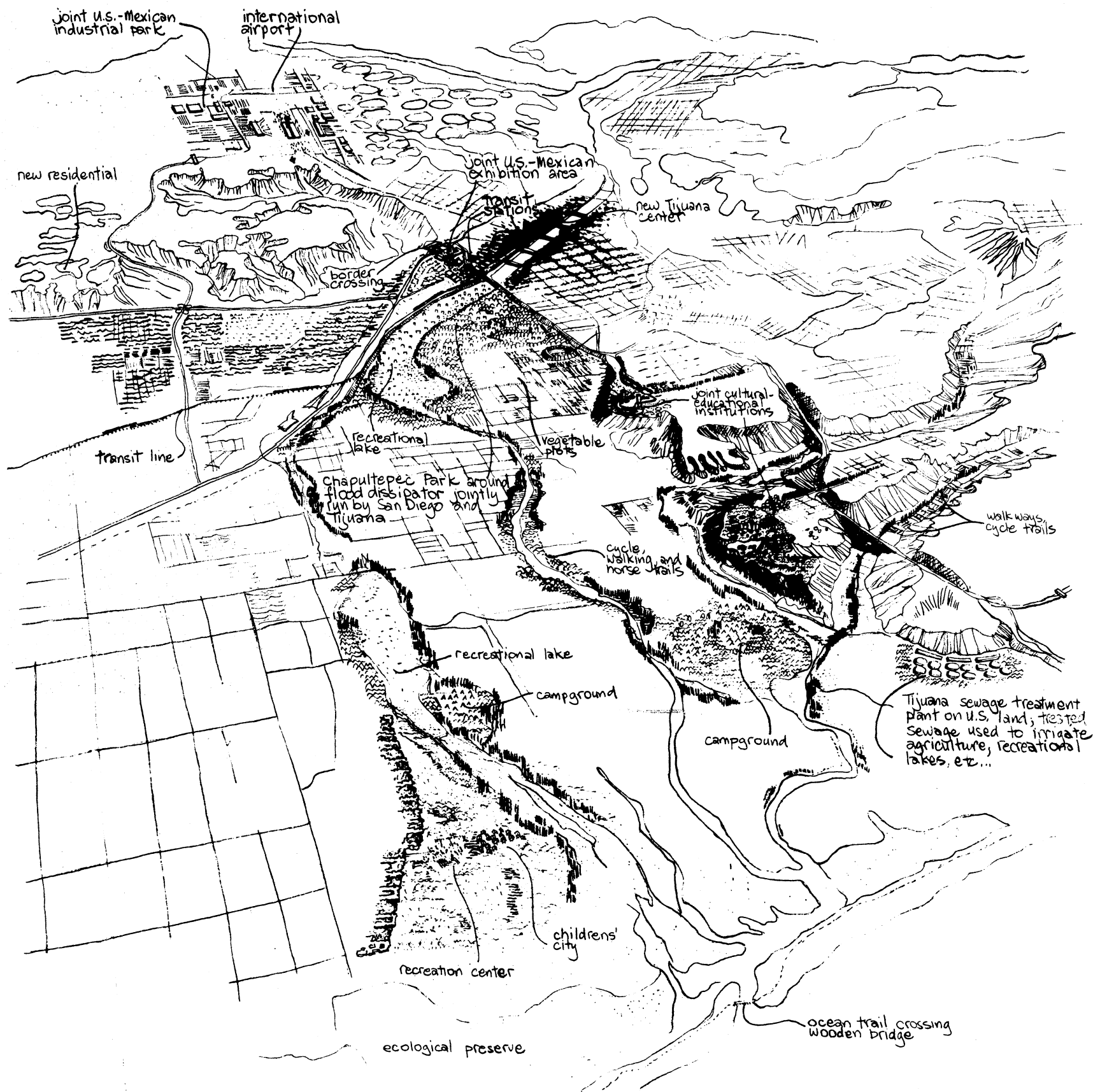


manage those phenomena: to control air and water pollution, treat sewage, supply water. Water is desperately short in Tijuana: the city can supply only some 60% of the requirements of its people. Half of its houses are not connected to any water system, and even those that are may get water for only a few hours in the day. The U.S. is supplying water temporarily (it is mostly Colorado water, which once flowed to Mexico). The water requirements of the whole metropolitan region must be considered as one unified system of supply and demand. Waste on one side of the line and shortage on the other cannot long continue. Creating a water-conserving landscape in San Diego is important - - even if for no other reason - - in order to meet the urgent needs of the whole region - - indeed the needs of Baja California as well, if it is ever to be developed.



Two reservoirs:
The Presa Rodriguez on the Mexican side is empty;
Lake Jennings in the U.S. is full.





Looking across the Tijuana River Valley at the border region as it might become.

Such a body might have limited jurisdiction over some border areas and services. It might assist Tijuana to achieve regional autonomy in the Mexican administrative system. But what such an institution should be, how it could be related to the two nations, to the CPO, to local authorities, is quite beyond our scope. The first step is to see the need. Action on the environment could be a catalyst which starts a much larger undertaking.

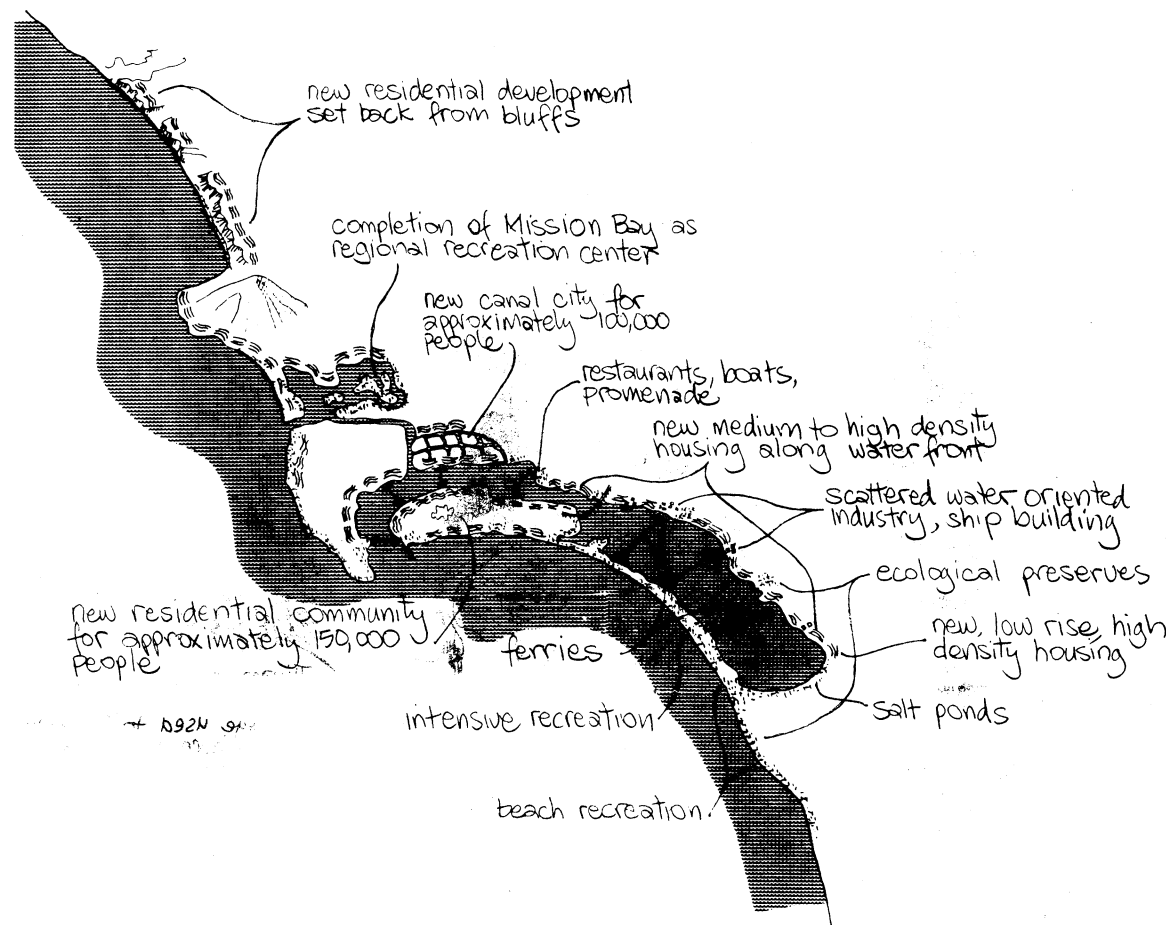
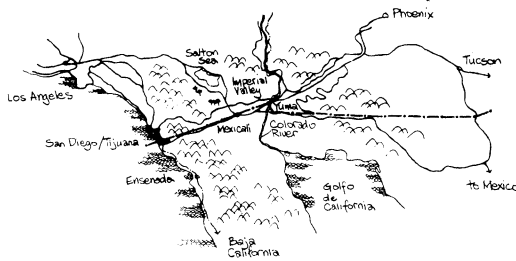
International studies are needed of the two populations, the two economies, the social changes. Fundamental demographic facts are unknown, even base maps are missing. The CPO is at work on the U.S. side, and there is courtesy Mexican representation on that body, but some truly regional institution is required - - one which is competent to analyze and to plan for the international region as a whole, which can speak to both nations of border needs.

What the Region Could Become

Dreams have some use. They give us hope, but they also move us to act. Can one dream about a region as large and as complicated as San Diego/Tijuana? We think so. There are dreams for the future region that one might realistically work for.

San Diego de Baja California

San Diego/Tijuana could be the center of a large international region, a vital meeting point of two living cultures. The metropolis would share its water, its energy, its landscape, its culture, its economy. The border would be converted into a zone of confluence.



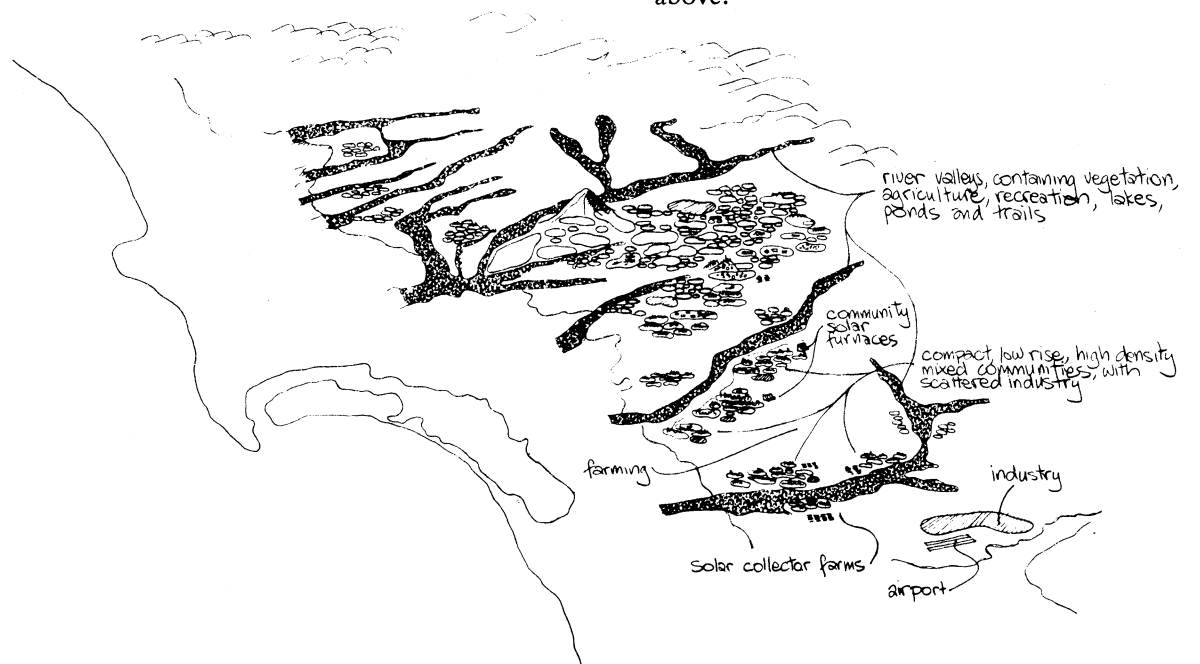
The coastal band. The great majority of San Diegans live in a compact low-rise urban band along the shore, a band rarely more than two or three miles deep, except where it projects out towards El Cajon or has moved up the Tijuana Valley. Thus, most people live within easy reach of the sea and the sea breeze, in a mild climate free of smog. Most of this is urbanized land today, except for the coast north of La Jolla and Clairemont, and this north coast would be held back from development until a late stage. The growth was a "densification" of the older areas, and was especially encouraged south to Tijuana and around the Bay. By regional policy, the north-south social gradient has been flattened out, Tijuana has been integrated into the region, there is a greater mix of people. All incomes and ages have opportunities to live throughout the coastal zone. There are two principal centers in the region: San Diego Center City/Mission Valley, and the new Tijuana/San Ysidro focus. The former is unfortunately still broken into two parts -- the old center and the lower Mission Valley -- but each part is connected to its bay and to the other part through the new water-threaded settlement where Lindbergh Field used to be. Internally, each center is a pedestrian domain, and their shaded walks, adorned with fountains, are lively with people. Elsewhere, there will be important sub-centers but most shopping is at a community and local scale, always associated with other activities: work, residence, service, recreation.

The public sea. The entire seafront would be in public ownership, accessible to everyone by all modes of transport. Many San Diegans would live near it, within reach of the sea breeze, within walk of the beach. Productive activities that depended on the water -- shipyards, boat docks, ferry slips, fish piers -- would still be there, to give the water life and variety. But the sea would be given to the people of the city, of all classes, to live near and to enjoy. The Bay is cleared of its airports, vast factories, and gloomy naval installations. It is an urban bay, surrounded by residences, an everyday sight and pleasure. The former Lindbergh Field and Marine Depot are a special place of canals, houses, and small workplaces where, strangely enough, one can both work, and live in delightful surroundings. North Island is a splendid new community. The two bays are re-connected once more. Ferries ply the waters, shipping of all kinds; there are piers and floating docks and underwater channels.

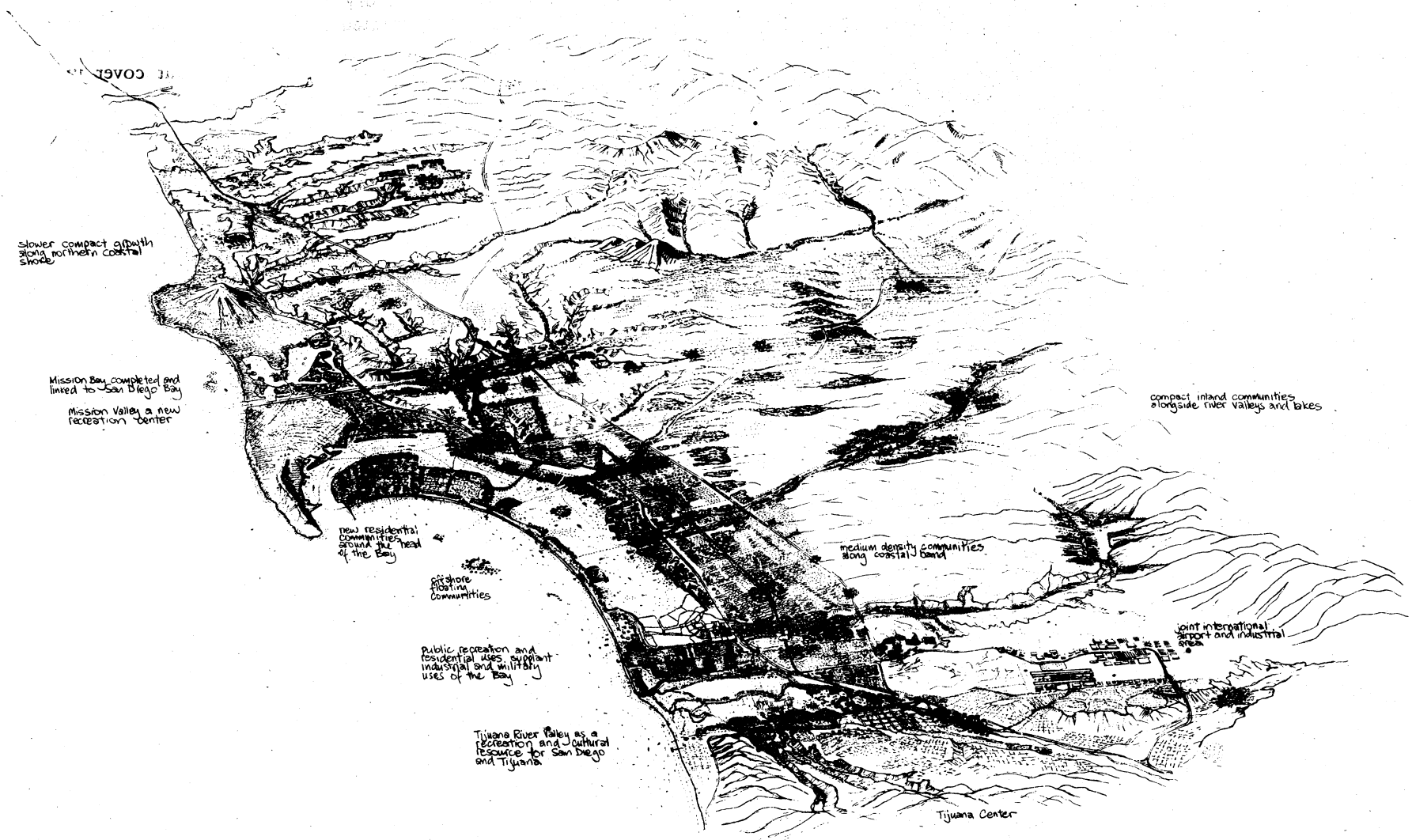
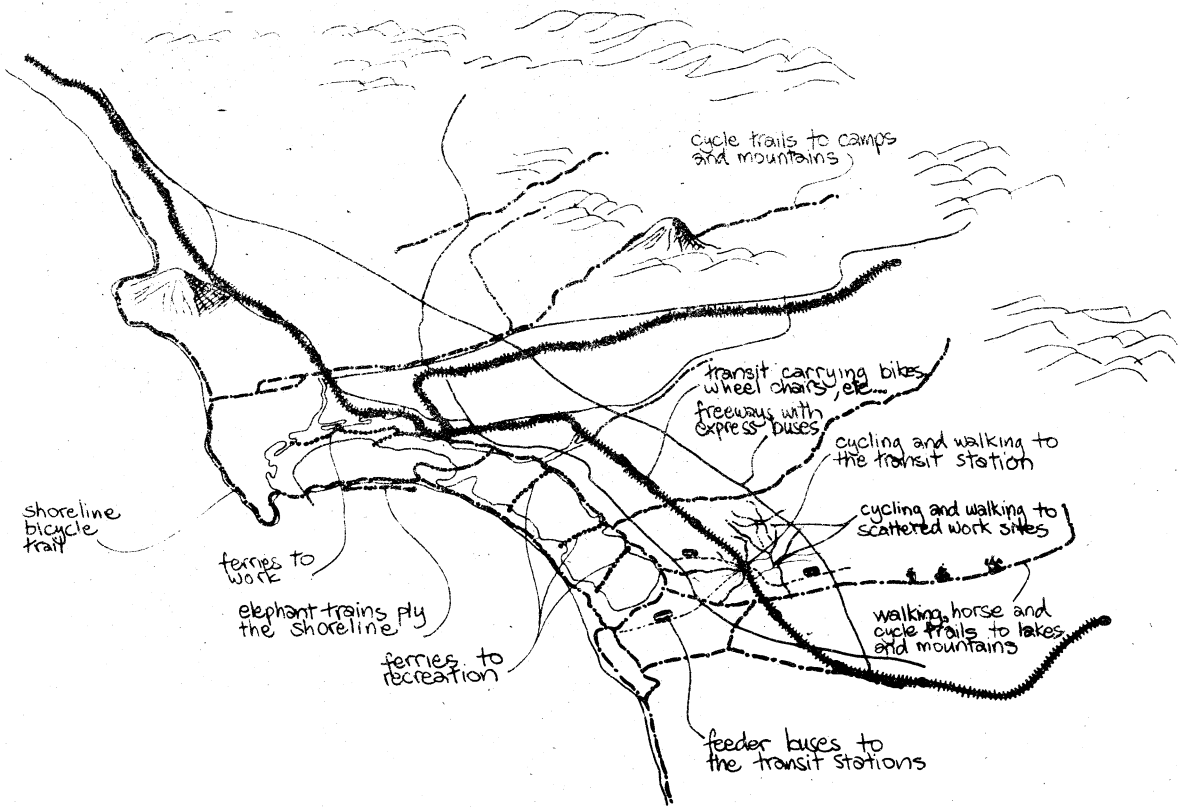


Communities of character. The growth of the older areas has been fitted to community character, and based on local advice, so that the distinctiveness of the local communities has been preserved. Fine existing buildings have been saved, and the new ones fit with them in intricate and interesting ways. Public reinvestment and private rehabilitation are continuous and complementary. The worn areas of Tijuana have been rebuilt and re-occupied, by citizens of both nations. The old commercial arteries are now fine shopping streets and community centers. Small work-places are widely distributed. There are many small parks; the canyons are open and green, the sea not far. Most structures are low. The high towers are clustered at a few strategic places: the major centers and sub-centers around the transit stations, or at some visual keypoint such as a strategic break in the coast, or on some prominent nose at the branching of two major canyons.

The inland kingdom. Inland of the coast the land is much more lightly occupied. No more than 20% of the region's population live here. They occupy low, dense communities of modest size and mixed income, many of them new, but which have grown only slowly. They are separated by large tracts of open land, used for farming, recreation, heavy industry, the collection of solar energy, military reservations, or airports. The residential communities are compact, designed for a minimum use of water in a hot, dry climate. Intense planting is concentrated in small courts and gardens, or in the canyons. Elsewhere, the land is undisturbed, the natural plant cover in place. The canyons and valleys thread the region, and lead from mountains to sea. Trails pass along them; food is grown there; water is collected in verdant oases. So the landscape expresses our ultimate dependence on water, and on power from the sun. Traces of the earlier Indian and Spanish occupation have been preserved. One senses the connection to the land and its history, to the mountains behind, the sea before, and the sun and stars above.



Travelling light. People go to work by cycle, bus, and ferry, and some can do it on foot. Since work weeks are flexible, there are no tense commuting peaks, nor any frantic weekend race. People can use the same varied means to shop, or to meet their friends, reach the sea or explore the countryside. Cycles are easy to rent and can be carried on any public vehicle, as can shopping packages. By foot and cycle, one can range the entire coast, go up any valley or major canyon. Rail transit is for longer trips up and down the urban band. Light aircraft and dirigibles go from center to center. Automobiles are for trips out of the city, or for the handicapped, or for special deliveries or emergencies. The arteries and freeways give as much space to busses and bicycles as they do to cars. Travelling has become a pleasure, a way of enjoying the region, and no one is confined.



Why Have Things Gone Wrong?

Many people might agree with us that this would be a desirable future. But it will never happen unless we understand how the city is actually built, and thus how it might be built differently. Why have so many mistakes been made? Why are so many parts of the city deteriorating? There are a number of reasons:

1. When a city is built rapidly, mistakes are inevitable. Developers, private or public, do not foresee the consequences of what they do.
2. Vast social changes - - immigration, the search for subsistence or comfort, new technology, shifting social and economic patterns, new ways of living - - are revolutionizing how we use the land. Public agencies cannot cope with these changes. Indeed, they are often unaware of them.
3. There are real conflicts between sections of the community, e.g., employment vs. conservation, city vs. county, rich vs. poor, growth vs. non-growth. Even so, many groups are not spoken for.
4. Private desires and profits are satisfied at the expense of the public environment and the natural environment. Thus the city becomes a collection of private islands, which ignore each other and ignore the general public.
5. Public development agencies, as well, concentrate on direct costs and their own main interest, ignoring the side effects of their activity on the environment.
6. Planning agencies and citizen interest groups are too weak and disorganized to control these single-purpose agencies and builders; they are reduced to the desperate defense of scattered amenities.

Still, things are changing. The real costs of disjointed, incremental building are coming home. People find they can no longer buy their way out of deteriorating conditions. Even the well-to-do cannot easily escape air pollution, traffic, and aircraft noise. The energy crisis, and the threat of inundation by Los Angeles, have added to the sense of disquiet. The first reaction, understandably, has been defensive and piecemeal: To preserve the Santa Fe railroad station, or to stop the building of high-rise towers along the coast. But *creative* action is required, and more comprehensive issues are at stake.

New agencies and departments have been created to deal with the new problem. Their creation sharpens our attention on selected aspects of the environment, but further fragments the decision process. Over 20 agencies now deal with some important aspect of San Diego's environment.* Very few of these agencies have trained environmental designers on their staff. Tijuana's planning is equally fragmented and, to make it worse, much of it is conducted far away in Mexico City.

The two agencies best situated to deal with environmental design issues in San Diego, and to relate them to general planning issues, are the CPO at the regional scale and the Planning Department within the City. The CPO concentrates on large scale issues of regional growth, the distribution of land use, alternative transportation systems, and the saving of regional open space. It advises local governments, makes predictions and gathers information, and exercises control primarily through the review of proposals requiring federal funds.

The Planning Department is more directly responsible for the quality of the city's environment. But it cannot cope with the sudden surge of public interest. It cannot maintain liaison with all the community groups formed to make community plans. Its environmental design staff consists of only three professionals, much of whose time is committed elsewhere.

While large-scale regional questions are beginning to be faced, their relation with the detailed quality of the physical environment must not be ignored. It is no use to save large open spaces if they lie unused or unseen, nor to sketch a regional bikeway system if its detailed design will preclude its use, nor to propose higher densities unless there is a way in which they can be achieved without community opposition. Many regional schemes have dreary outcomes because they neglect the impact of their general proposals on the everyday environment.

* The City Departments of Planning, Parks and Recreation, Environmental Quality, Community Development, Engineering, Police, Fire, and Sanitation; the Port District, the School District, the Gas & Electric Co., and the Transit Corporation; plus, at a larger geographic scale, the County Planning Department, the Local Agency Formation Commission, the Comprehensive Planning Organization, the Air Pollution District, the Water Quality Control Board, the Coastal Commission, State Parks and Recreation, Caltrans, the U.S. Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Navy, the Border Patrol, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

An Environmental Plan for San Diego

We recommend that these concerns be confronted more directly, by forming a special Environmental Planning and Design Section in the Planning Department of the city. The Section would have two jobs to do:

1. To produce, within two years, a plan for the environmental quality of San Diego;
2. To begin a continuous environmental planning process, in liaison with other public agencies, encouraging them to set up their own environmental design staff.

Within the first two years, the Section would:

1. Make the first detailed assessment of the quality of San Diego environment and how it is perceived and used by its people;
2. Analyze how the city's environmental quality is created today, and propose strategic changes in that process.
3. Propose images and policies for the future city that will stimulate public discussion and provide a framework for the present scattered efforts to improve the quality of San Diego;
4. Recommend effective public actions for some of the most urgent environmental issues (for example, such as the priority items we list below);

The environmental plan will not simply be a plan for conserving nature, nor just for beautifying the city (although it will include those). It will deal with six basic values, which might be thought of as the environmental rights of any citizen:

Livability: An environment in which one can act with competence, free from such dangers and discomforts as noise, pollution, accident, heat, glare, and fatigue.

Access: A region in which all groups - - including, the young, the old, the poor, the handicapped, and the Spanish-speaking - - have equal access to work places, educational and medical facilities, recreation and open space, and to public environments of equal quality.

Sense of place and time: A landscape which has that definite sense of place and history of which citizens can be proud, and where the different communities take pride in their own territories.

Responsiveness: An environment in the human scale, which allows for personal control and the expression of personal values.

Pleasure and Sensibility: A landscape that is a pleasure to live in, where the senses are heightened by its richness, esthetic quality, and sense of life.

Conservation: A place in which all valuable resources, both natural and urban, are cared for and conserved.

We propose that certain urgent questions be confronted by that plan, in a very concrete way. Selecting the urgent questions to be treated is a matter for local judgment. We see six of them as especially pressing, although a better informed choice could well be different:

1. In cooperation with the CPO, to make a survey of the urban and rural districts in the region, in order to judge their ability to absorb further growth. Where should densities increase to take expected growth, what form should that increase take, and how can the decision be carried out? Selected urban neighborhoods should be analyzed to see how they could take growth without damage to neighborhood character, and what public investment would be required. Illustrative designs, traffic management schemes, performance standards, private incentives, and public regulations would be drawn up. This work would be done together with neighborhood residents.

2. To make a long-term plan for the recapture of San Diego Bay for public use, including

the gradual replacement of inappropriate activity. The treatment of the shore and its access, and the re-use of bayside sites for residence and recreation. The work must be done together with the Port District, the Coastal Commission and the Military.

3. To make a plan for the conservation and public use of the valley and canyon network, including the required purchases, and new controls, and transfer of development rights the provision of foot and cycle trails (extended into the city fabric), the management of water, and the principles of landscaping and re-use.

4. In conjunction with Mexican agencies, to initiate some general studies of population, ecology, or the perception of the border landscape, and to search for some immediate, concrete projects which might be carried out jointly by "sister" agencies across the border (universities, water boards, airport authorities, etc.).

5. With the City Engineer to analyze some typical commercial arterials in the city leading to proposals for the public action needed to convert these "strips" into humane landscapes.

6. With the CPO and the transit authority, to analyze the proposed new rail transit lines and stations, in order to gauge potential problems of quality, encourage good joint development, and to improve the experience of the ride and the transfer. Guidelines would be laid out for the location and design of the routes, stations, and vehicles. Similar studies could be made of bus stops and routes.

To support the efforts of this Environmental Planning and Design Section, and to encourage the spread of similar activities throughout the region, we suggest that a region-wide citizens advisory commission on the Environment should be appointed. This would be a group which represents the key interests who have a stake in environmental quality, or who have an important influence on it: consumer and conservation groups, garden clubs merchants and developers representatives of the elderly and the handicapped, youth and ethnic groups, public health experts, environmental professionals, newsmen. The Commission would advise the Environmental Planning and Design Section and review its work, keep environmental issues before the public attention, and press for regional cooperation. It could be a vigorous, permanent force which lobbied consistently for the public interest in the quality of the city landscape. Organized initially by the City of San Diego, it should have region-wide representation from the start, and additional members could be appointed by the county and other jurisdictions, as they set up environmental design staffs of their own.

A Few Issues, a Few Principles

In conclusion, we see four questions that seek an answer:

1. Will San Diego and Tijuana continue as border towns, each at the end of its nation's line of development, and each dependent on an exotic and uncertain economy? Or can they realize their role as a bicultural metropolis, the center of a great natural region, safely sustained by the resources of that region?

2. Will San Diego grow as an extension of Los Angeles, and in that city's image, or can it find a new form, adapted to its own site and climate, a form which conserves water, air, and energy, and supports the well-being of its people?

3. Will the region make sure that its amenities are available to all its people, regardless of nationality or income, or will present inequities continue to grow at the regional scale?

4. How can this region organize itself to conserve and enhance the quality of its environment, without losing touch with the local people in whose name that quality is being conserved?

In the course of discussing those questions, we have presented many suggestions and possibilities. Our ideas can be reduced to just a few principles:

1. *Begin now to manage the environmental quality of the whole region in a coherent, effective way.*

2. *Save the shorelines, bays, valleys, and mountains, and restore them to everyone.*

3. *Retard suburban development, and change its form to one better adapted to the site.*

4. *Redirect growth to the existing urban neighborhoods. Restore and enhance the special character of each one. Shift public investment to those existing localities and increase the measure of local control.*

5. *Reduce dependence on the automobile, encourage all forms of nonpolluting lightweight transportation.*

6. *Reach across the border. Treat San Diego/Tijuana as one unified metropolis.*

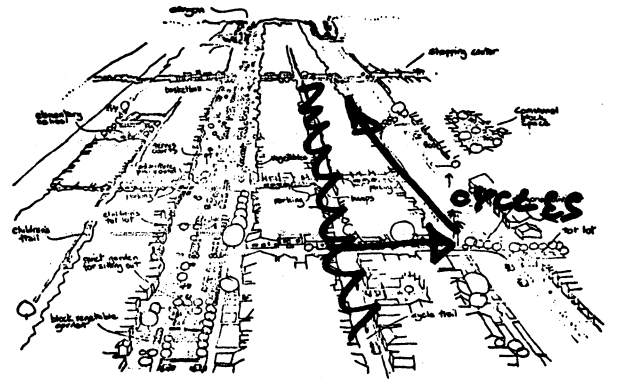
7. *Flatten the north-south social gradient, and exploit the east-west natural one.*

8. *Conserve water, conserve energy, conserve the land.*

Let Us Know

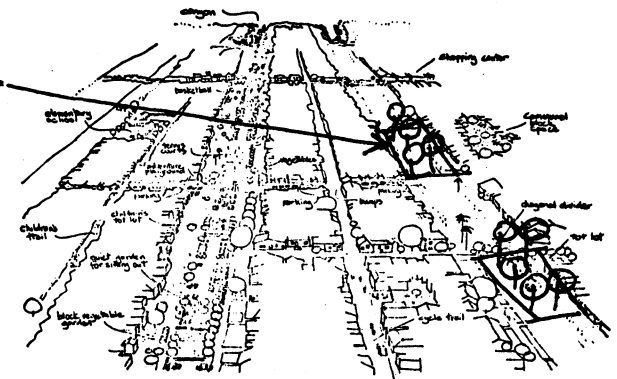
We want your own thoughts on these issues, and your reactions to our ideas. Are there other priorities, points you disagree with, or support? Tear out or xerox a part of this report that has interested or disturbed you. Put your own comments on the text, and re-draw the sketch as you think it should be. For instance, someone might comment this way:

**KEEP THE ALLEYS FREE
FROM CYCLISTS**



While someone else replies:

More streets like this
Agreed - just the place
for cyclists



Better yet, give us your own ideas in words or pictures, in the space below:

Send your comments to the San Diego City Planning Department, 202 "C" Street, San Diego, California 92101. If there are sufficient replies, they will be published.

Or let your local representative know how you feel.

Remember, this is *not* an official plan. We meant it to start a public discussion. We hope it does.

(CUT ON DOTTED LINE BELOW, FOLD IN THIRDS, SEAL, STAMP)

----- CUTLINE -----

11

FROM:

TO: SAN DIEGO CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
202 "C" STREET
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101