

TOWARD PERMANENT PARADISE

Adopted by the C-3 Board September 14, 1998

INTRODUCTION

A vision exists for the San Diego region. It is called "*Temporary Paradise?*"

Citizens Coordinate for Century III (C-3) is committed to the vision espoused by *Temporary Paradise?* and to the goals and challenges presented in the document to preserve the natural and man-made assets of our unique region.

C-3 believes that the principles outlined in *Temporary Paradise?* are as valid today as when the document was first written by Kevin Lynch and Donald Appleyard in 1974. For this reason, we reaffirm our support of its three major principles as guidelines for the future development of the San Diego region:

- The first principle is that we live on top of a system of river valleys and canyons -- natural open spaces linking the Pacific Ocean to the mesas, and to the foothills and mountains beyond. The mesas are appropriate for carefully planned development; the river valleys, less so; the canyons, not at all.
- Second, urban development should be greatest toward the west, where the climate is most moderate, thus conserving heating and air-conditioning energy. The water's edge, whether bay or ocean, should, however, be freed of non-water-related activities, and should be kept physically and visually open and accessible to residents and tourists alike. Foothill and mountain development should be minimal.
- Third, the need to conserve and upgrade older communities is imperative, in order to preserve our heritage, enhance diversity, and discourage sprawl. Participation of local residents in this planning process is critical. *Temporary Paradise?* warned against amorphous suburban development spawned by freeway construction and uncontrolled extensions of urban infrastructure.

The principles of *Temporary Paradise?* have influenced programs such as the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), which is now being implemented to preserve open space and natural habitats throughout the region. However, the direct result of the MSCP and other conservation programs is to redirect growth into existing communities. In many cases these communities lack the infrastructure to support increased population. As a result, new development, which is frequently insensitive to established community character or amenity, lessens the livability of older communities. Lynch and Appleyard warned against new growth (in-fill development) unless urban design standards developed by neighborhood residents were in place to guide new development and community infrastructure was enhanced and upgraded.

Drawing from Lynch's and Appleyard's work, this document discusses principles and guidelines within 10 major issue areas.* The reader may observe that some of the goals and recommendations contained in this document -- as well as in the original version of *Temporary Paradise?* -- may not be completely attainable. C-3 is aware of this possibility; however, we have made a conscious decision to strive for the ideal rather than to compromise our position with a lesser standard. C-3 recognizes that good planning - and faithful implementation - require both: (1) public debate and citizen participation; and (2) flexibility. It is C-3's objective that the principles and guidelines contained in this document will serve as the basis to formulate plans and policies on issues of concern to the region.

In furthering this objective, C-3 recommends the following key implementation steps:

1. Promote this vision of the San Diego-Tijuana region to guide its future development;
2. Establish policy positions on regional issues;
3. Educate the public and stimulate discourse to ensure public participation in the planning process; and
4. Rigorously measure regional progress in attaining the principles and guidelines embodied in the following 10 issue areas.

VALLEYS & CANYONS

Our region is one of the few major metropolitan areas of the world built on a canyon system. The valleys and canyons combine to create a naturally connected system of open space that is close to almost every locality. They define many of our communities and neighborhoods. The San Diego region has the unique opportunity to develop as a two-level city - one level a greenway undisturbed by city traffic - an opportunity other cities must create laboriously by artificial means. It is important that the region identify the remaining undeveloped valleys to preserve, and master plan those where development may occur to protect their ecological functions and scenic beauty. It is equally important that the region preserve all remaining undeveloped canyons.

- Preserve the major river valleys and canyons of the region from further development by maintaining agricultural and open space zoning, and by using public and private funds to acquire conservation easements over time.
- Prepare and implement Specific Plans for all river valleys. Such plans shall identify areas for preservation, recreation, and development. Private development shall be clustered to preserve open space.
- Adopt and enforce ridgeline protection ordinances to protect views of the natural topography and the region's scenic river valleys and canyons.
- Prohibit further development within canyons, and use public and private funds to purchase remaining private development rights within canyons.

THE SEACOAST

The ocean shore is the possession of all those who live in the region. Public access to the ocean and bays is precious. The seacoast is finite, while demands upon it grow as the population grows. Our beaches are diverse and their character must be maintained. While a major regional resource, the beaches are as importantly the front porch or backyard of individual coastal neighborhoods. All planning must start with an understanding that the waterfront is first and foremost a public space.

- Establish and enforce setbacks that keep private development back from the water's edge
- Make the beaches accessible without destroying the local communities behind them. In many cases, this will mean that the car cannot be the only, or even the principal, means of access to the beach - and we must plan accordingly.
- Prepare design and development guidelines that recognize the unique scale and character of each coastal neighborhood and that allow diversity. Control the design and location of public spaces and view and access corridors rather than overly regulate the building process.
- As opportunities arise, remove all uses from the shore which are not ocean-related, residential, or recreational.

THE ENVIRONMENT

The environment is our quality of life. It encompasses our natural and built surroundings, and their mutual integration. The environment is more than conserving nature or beautifying the city. It is livability and creating a sense of place, for all, not just for those that can afford it. The quality of our environment is what brought many of us and here. It is our economic comparative advantage. We must not just protect it, but must enhance it. We must be good stewards.

- Coordinate and implement the region's species habitat conservation plans.
- Pass policies and ordinances for development standards that encourage conservation, and require findings of "public environmental benefit" for development proposals that require discretionary approval.
- Prepare regional environmental report cards, and hold environmental awards events.
- As jurisdictions update their General Plans, evaluate each proposed land use, housing, conservation, and transportation policy in terms of their contribution towards improving the region's air, water, noise, and visual quality.
- Coordinate land use plans, the telecommunications network, and the transportation network to reduce the region's dependency on the automobile. Enhance the public's access to alternative forms of public and private transportation, by linking major higher-density employment and residential centers, creating mixed land use districts to reduce the number of automobile trips required to perform daily tasks, and facilitating telecommuting and flexible commuting hours.
- Hold private action and public action equally accountable.

GROWTH WHERE? OF WHAT KIND?

San Diego County will continue to grow - an expected 1.2 million more people by 2020 - the equivalent of adding another City of San Diego onto the landscape. We cannot escape this growth. Almost two-thirds will come from us, through natural increase (births minus deaths), while only one-third will come from people moving here. Tijuana will triple in size to 3.3 million people. By 2020, the San Diego-Tijuana region may reach 7.1 million - twice the size of the City of Los Angeles today. Rapid growth outruns public services and regional infrastructure, and, if careless, can destroy the landscape. In order to redistribute this inevitable new growth -- it cannot be stopped -- we must have a coordinated regional strategy. Ideally, each jurisdiction with land use authority must agree to, and enforce, uniform land use policies and urban design standards. Changing local land use plans to accommodate new growth in existing communities, adjacent to transit facilities and in, or adjoining, existing commercial centers (downtowns) could accommodate a portion of the region's growth. Without these kinds of changes in local plans, development pressures will grow in the more rural areas, threatening to destroy the region's remaining unique landscape and environment, as well as the neighborhood qualities of existing communities. But even in the event of more compact development, substantial pressure on natural resources and open space will be great.

- Amend local land use plans and ordinances to set minimum residential and employment densities, encourage mixed-use development, and ensure pedestrian access to public transportation. Increase densities in our major centers.
- Write zoning regulations to allow forms of settlement appropriate for our climate and landscape -- more compact site planning, narrow and shaded streets, small intensive gardens in place of large lawns and yards, the use of native plants, and the collection of solar energy for home use.
- Establish and implement an open space and habitat preserve system, and identify those lands where development can occur.
- Establish an "urban limit line" that preserves agriculture, natural resources, and habitat areas, and directs development into the cities where urban infrastructure and services exist or can be more easily provided.
- Establish and enforce a strategy that fairly redirects growth throughout the region and provides a high standard of design that insures that new growth is accommodated in a way that enhances the livability of existing communities.
- Redevelop existing blighted and under-developed urban areas rather than allowing sparse, more costly new development in the rural parts of the region.
- Establish a financial plan to fund preservation of the region's habitat as well as public facilities in the older urbanized areas.

GETTING ABOUT

People experience their environment by traveling through it. Transportation systems set the character of cities. San Diego's transportation system should be built to serve, rather than shape, our distinctive neighborhoods and topography. While in many ways San Diego's freeway and road system work well, we are experiencing the problems of being a primarily auto-oriented city. Air pollution, landform impacts, and disruption of neighborhoods are continuing costs of our ever-increasing swatches of asphalt, and we unknowingly subsidize the high environmental and social costs of our automobile system. While some new and wider roads are necessary, there needs to be an emphasis on creating places where people can walk, cycle, and take transit as an alternative to driving. Major bus stop and trolley station areas should become important community activity centers and support higher densities. Pedestrians need to be given greater consideration. If as much attention were given to sidewalks as to streets, the walker would have a chance.

- Adopt street design guidelines that favor the convenience of pedestrians and the character of neighborhoods over the speed of automobile traffic.
- Landscape all transportation corridors as linear parks to enhance landmarks, views, and community character.
- Upgrade and expand existing transportation systems. Improve the schedules, coverage, comfort, and efficiency of the public transit system. Integrate transit with a comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle network, for which San Diego's mild climate is ideally suited.
- Plan transit and land use together to create mixed-use communities and active "people-oriented" places, and to achieve greater efficiencies in the public transit system.
- Plan communities and developments with good pedestrian paths, interconnected streets, bicycle facilities, and convenient connections to transit and each community's center.

OLDER NEIGHBORHOODS

Most of San Diego's older neighborhoods are centrally located to employment, commerce, and recreation. Their older housing stock is a resource, much of it worthy of preservation. Most of these neighborhoods are internally ordered, conveniently located, culturally diverse, and relatively affordable. Many suffer the consequences of aging, but can and should, with attention and resources, become the livable environments they were when first built. They need infrastructure, infrastructure, infrastructure -- not just to replace what is old, but to improve standards and compete. If they die, the social and economic costs will be greater.

- Identify older neighborhoods by their boundaries, population, land use, physical characteristics, and culture, and assess their physical, social, and economic health. Insure that General Plans identify them as a resource, and that they commit to methods and time frames for revitalizing them
- Landscape older neighborhoods, especially along commercial streets. Reconstruct their original self-contained, pedestrian-oriented environments, and link them by transit to other population and employment centers. Add vitality by mixing residential and special commercial uses.
- Develop financing plans and funding mechanisms to improve the infrastructure and public facilities in older neighborhoods, at standards that allow them to compete for private investment.
- Require a multi-disciplined approach to revitalization, involving the schools, public safety providers, employers, merchants, and, most importantly, the residents.
- Form a Business Improvement District in every large commercial district in older neighborhoods. Require that any proposals to change zoning to accommodate new major commercial centers must evaluate the economic impacts to existing commercial districts.
- Formulate leading economic and social indicators to measure the quality of life status of communities, and to identify areas of potential decline early in order to establish reinvestment priorities.

THE MAJOR CENTERS

The world's great cities are known by their centers. The San Diego region's geography and climate sets the framework for a great city-region, with varied and distinct communities punctuated by urban centers where mixed-use, urban development is concentrated. A rational regional transportation system shall connect these centers, bringing people together to share culture, commerce, and experiences. At the heart of our region is Downtown San Diego.

- Treat Downtown San Diego as the first among the multiple urban centers that serve us.
- Insure that the region's General Plans define the hierarchy of the region's urban centers by location, composition, size, and function.
- Locate the region's most important cultural, recreational, medical, religious, commercial, financial, and governmental facilities in the major centers.
- Locate the region's higher-density housing in the major centers, with Downtown San Diego designated for the highest density.
- Insure regional mobility by linking the various centers, and the destination points within those centers, by public transit.
- Formulate design, zoning, and parking standards to guide new development and redevelopment in our major urban centers, with emphasis on creation of self-contained, pedestrian-oriented communities.

THE MEXICAN CONNECTION

It is the symbiotic relationship between Tijuana and San Diego that makes our region unique among the world's large metropolitan areas. Tijuana will triple in size to 3.3 million people by 2020. By 2020, the San Diego-Tijuana region may reach 7.1 million. Our border has over 60 million crossings each year, the highest number in the world. Our histories are linked. Our economies are one. Each issue that we face to the north, our neighbors face to the south. Topography and pollution know no borders. The issues are regional. Our region has made some progress, we are talking, and cooperative agreements have been established between San Diego and Tijuana. Urban plans now show both sides of the border.

- Strengthen cultural, economic, social, and civic ties through border organizations and activities in order to further our understanding of one another and to promote the developing goodwill and cooperation among the two nations. Facilitate commercial,

residential, and tourist interaction, while continuing to enforce the laws of both nations.

- Jointly prepare a regional border plan, with shared goals, land use strategies, information systems, and infrastructure. o Focus industrial development on either side of the border on those industries that conserve the region's limited supply of water.
- Preserve the Tijuana River Valley for agriculture and recreation.
- Challenge our existing agencies to work in a cooperative and coordinated manner, without creating additional government agencies. Investigate joint undertakings - water, other utility pipelines, telecommunications, and special binational education.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Historically, the San Diego economy has depended on the twin pillars of the defense and tourism industries. Our region's environment, available labor pool, and quality of life attracted these industries. In the competitive global economy of the next century, it will be important to continue to diversify our economy, nurture small businesses in high-growth sectors, and preserve our quality of life. Our regional prosperity relies on a healthy and expanding infrastructure - both physical and human. Public policy must recognize the important relationships among a strong educational system, a healthy environment, safe and vital neighborhoods, well-maintained infrastructure, and a growing economy with expanding opportunities. Our competitive advantage is our quality of life.

- Require an Economic Development Element in the region's General Plans to establish policies for maintaining and expanding a vital economy, linking regional economic growth to all communities, and improving real per capita income. Recognize that maintaining a high quality of life is part of this strategy.
- Publicize the benefits of cooperation between educational institutions and development/expansion of business and employment. Promote new relationships among colleges/universities, the K-12 school system, local government, and community groups.
- Adopt public policies that favor both high value-added industries with well-paying jobs and opportunities for a skilled work force in service-oriented jobs. Focus priorities and efforts on the basic industries that will be important to the region's future economy.
- Recognize the historic importance of the agricultural sector both as a major source of employment and income and as a means of preserving open space.
- Promote employment development at all levels through the provision of available funding mechanisms, adequate land supply, and an appropriate permit/fee structure. Expand existing programs to assist small businesses in key growth sectors.

SOCIAL EQUITY

Access to opportunity for all San Diegans is an integral component of a healthy economy and balanced community. This is particularly important in an era when the region is increasingly diverse ethnically, and income disparities are growing. Moreover, San Diego's location at the juncture of the Pacific Rim and Latin America ensures continued foreign in-migration. Assimilation of new residents, and expanding educational and employment opportunities to reach all residents, should remain important regional goals.

- As the region's communities update General Plans and Community Plans, emphasize the importance of "sustainable communities" that provide access to education, housing, health care, and services for all residents.
- Assure an equitable distribution of public investment in infrastructure in older communities vs. new growth areas.
- Assess the size and status of the indigent population, their needs, and available opportunities on a periodic basis. Concentrate on enhancing the positive aspects of the poorest areas of the region.
- Strengthen and expand relationships between K-12 schools and major corporations to ensure that educational programs provide the labor force with skills appropriate to local employment opportunities.
- Ensure employment development opportunities close to where people live, in both urban and suburban communities, and provide a broad range of housing opportunities so that workers can live closer to their employment.
- Adopt policies that alleviate de facto discrimination in education, housing, and employment.

SUMMARY

Gazing into the future, we envisage the twin cities of San Diego and Tijuana, surrounded by smaller independent cities and towns, each separated from adjoining ones by natural open spaces. Planning would be a cooperative undertaking throughout the binational region.

North of the border, San Diego itself would evolve into a city of individual, self-contained neighborhoods of unique and distinct character, bordered by canyons that form part of a regional open-space network. This open-space network would, in conjunction with the bayfronts and seashore, act as interlinked recreational and ecological preserves. Green fingers would define and contain individual neighborhoods, towns and cities, and constitute a shared resource that could gradually be developed with footpaths, bicycle lanes, bridle trails, and other recreational facilities.

Each individual community would have its own center, character, and sense of place. Circulation within the center, and to it from the surrounding neighborhoods, would be planned to give highest priority to pedestrians and other non-motorized traffic, then to public transit, and finally to the automobile, in that order. Wherever possible, each community would have pedestrian or non-motorized access to the open-space network. Communities would be linked by a transportation system that emphasizes fast, convenient public transit and private automobiles, but also provides for safe, non-motorized access. The transportation system would be designed to facilitate access for all to beaches and other recreational and cultural activities. High landscaping standards for streets, arterials and freeways would make San Diego a city and a region of beautiful streets and parkways.

There would be one major regional center, Downtown San Diego, with a large assortment of special cultural, business, commercial, residential, and nighttime entertainment developments. Downtown would be physically and visually open to the waterfront, and vice versa. There would also be a select number of secondary centers within the San Diego city limits, and one each in several of the larger neighboring cities. Secondary centers would complement Downtown San Diego. Commercial and industrial employment centers would be clustered, rather than dispersed among all neighborhoods, so that they can be efficiently served by public transit.

Regional housing stock would be highly diverse both as to location and type, offering wide choice and unrestricted access to a culturally and ethnically diverse population at various stages of life. Choice of housing would only be limited by economics. Good schools would be available to all, regardless of location.

The region's economy would maintain stability, full employment, and prosperity by continually strengthening its four-legged basis: as a center for high-technology, diversified, and environmentally benign industry; as a major Navy and Marine Corps base; as a world-class tourist attraction; and as an important agricultural center.

We realize that this is an ideal vision, in practice limited by geography, past development, and the need for consensus. Nevertheless, it should be pursued diligently, but not rigidly. It should serve as a guide as we apply creative and flexible planning to our region. In this way, our region, uniquely gifted by nature and history, can realize its great potential. This vision will, however, remain elusive unless we can bring into being:

1. A well-informed citizenry that shares the vision and is willing to help us pursue it with passion and long-term dedication;
2. Community leaders throughout the region who take action to implement the vision;
3. A coordinated effort by planning professionals throughout the region to develop the tools needed and then to apply them with vigor, creativity, and focus in order to help achieve our goal: to make temporary paradise permanent.

*In re-visiting *Temporary Paradise?*, C-3 has re-stated the key issues and recommendations. Some of the original issues are not addressed in this document; we encourage you to read the original 1974 report. For example, the re-use of the Lindbergh Field site for marine-oriented commercial and residential development, as recommended by *Temporary Paradise?*, is not discussed in this text. C-3 supports the continued effort to find a relocation site for Lindbergh Field in the long term; however, in the short term we are committed to projects which enhance the function and utility of the existing facility to serve regional San Diego.