

# Draft

## Clairemont Mesa Planning Committee Taskforce for a New Community Planning Vision

15 October 2008

The following is a summary of comments and suggestions developed by the members of the Visioning Task Force. The Task Force composed of several Committee members who met several times in open meetings to develop a strategy that the CMPC could consider for adoption as guidelines in the absence of a badly needed updated Clairemont Community Plan. The ideas are strictly suggestions to the CMPC and are not intended to be adopted without thorough discussion and Committee Vote. Further any ideas should be reviewed by our City Planning Representatives before they are implemented.

### Transportation/Mobility

Major transportation corridors including Clairemont Drive, Clairemont Mesa Blvd, Balboa Avenue and Mt. Acadia were not intended to receive the high volume of traffic they are experiencing. Clairemont Drive passes in front of housing duplexes and single-family residences. This creates a safety hazard for the children associated with those homes. Balboa doubles as an artillery highway and a high traffic-shopping street. Mt Acadia, a two-lane street is a major collector that passes several pedestrian sensitive activities including churches, schools, ball fields, retail and single-family residences. Several stop signs have been added to this street to act as a Band-Aid to the traffic problem. Alternate routes to collector streets have been used to avoid congestion. An example is Cowley Way, which parallels the, rush hour, congested Clairemont Drive. Several of these alternative routes have added speed bumps and stop signs. This was a desperate means to control the intrusion of increased traffic.

The collectors were intended to be in canyons. Fortunately the canyons have been protected but this has impacted many of the major streets.

Public transportation is crippled since the frequency and destinations do not efficiently serve the community. Jobs have moved away from the Cities' concentrated old industrial/commercial core. The new centers of employment are scattered across the North City/County with very fragmented bus service.

Most existing routes run North and South intending to serve the major employment/education centers.

Traffic along Balboa is both community and non-community based. The through traffic was intended to be diverted to Highway 52 for non-community vehicles. This has not happened. The associated strip commercial development further erodes the ability to promote neighborhood and community identity. See the Balboa Ave Plan for specifics of the needed changes.

We recommend the CMPC consider an inner community shuttle loop using the major collector streets to provide access to neighborhood resources for community members including students and the elderly. This could also serve as a collector for the future Trolley station at the foot of Balboa. Further this would allow the relocation of housing along those shuttle routes to accommodate the residents that are dependent on public transportation and promote future high frequency public transportation. See the housing portion of the report for details on recommended restrictions on multifamily housing.

### Pedestrian/Bicycle access and circulation

(To be provided by special taskforce)

### **Urban Design**

There needs to be better community identity. A better “sense of place”. Participation in the Cities Fine Arts Master Plan should be encouraged. Walkable neighborhoods as defined in the current Community Plan should continue to be a priority.

### **Public facilities**

The communities’ infrastructure needs significant repair and improvements. Aging fire stations and libraries are a case in point. Some of these improvements could be tied to future development. An example was the potential of trading an on site library at Clairemont Village for the residential developable land at the current adjacent library site.

Future growth must be tied to adequate utility infrastructure.

Better coordination needs to be encouraged between the City and the City Schools Planning.

### **Recreation/Open Space**

Clairemont’s System, of Canyons including Rose, Marian Bear and Tecolote Canyons are important community assets that must continue to be protected. While the potential to relocate the utilities out of the canyon is probably a long way off due to the attended cost, we need to minimize the impact on the canyons due to continuing repairs. We should defer our comments regarding Tecolote Canyon to the Canyon’s Planning Committee. Nonetheless they should be encouraged to review and incorporate the award winning Canyon Lands proposal.

### **Conservation**

Not Discussed except as identified above

### **Noise**

Not discussed

### **Historic Preservation**

Clairemont needs to celebrate its past to encourage community identity. This includes the historic churches such as Pioneer, St Marks and others. The old dairy and the revenue’s station in Bay Park and the old army camp at Balboa and Genesee. Plaques, monuments and descriptions help to build pride in the community.

### **Housing**

The City’s goal of community growth over the next twenty years appears to be easily accommodated by the current community accepted plans, specifically along Morena Boulevard and adjacent to Clairemont Village.

The City of Villages outlined in the Specific Framework Plan is a worthy goal but without adequate infrastructure it is impractical in Clairemont for the foreseeable future. Specific areas of concern include the lack of effective public transportation, poor collector streets and adequate public utilities.

Higher Density housing could be accommodated adjacent to major Freeways where access, public transportation and utilities are more available. If such sites were large enough, a Village concept could be accommodated. An example of a potential small viable village would be the shopping area along Morena Boulevard in Bay Park.

There is a large area of duplex development that could be redeveloped at a slightly higher density but affording more open space at a decreased floor area ratio.

Senior housing, especially along transportation corridors, should be encouraged. Special regulations regarding reduced area per unit and parking will work only if the City can maintain the senior-only occupancy.

Tandem parking should not be allowed until such time that public transportation is adequate enough to insure the occupants will not, out of frustration, park one car on the street further exacerbating street parking congestion.

High density mixed-use conversion of existing shopping centers should be discouraged unless adequate access as described above, problems of immediate neighbor shading and impacts are addressed as well.

Companion Units (Granny Flats), if structured properly, could be a great asset to Clairemont. It would allow seniors to remain in their homes by subletting the primary or secondary residence. It would allow seniors or children to live with their families in a semi independent environment. It could be a simple way to create affordable housing and help to relieve pressure on demand for increased density. That said. There needs to be restrictions as to the size of the units and onsite parking. The current City of San Diego requirements are too restrictive, requiring oversized lots to consider a companion unit.

In general, Clairemont should maintain its single family, low density character but allow growth along major corridors where seniors, the disabled and youth could access public facilities via improved public transportation. By allowing controlled growth along these corridors , we can resist external pressure for growth in undesirable areas while accommodating the needs of our citizens.

### **Land Use**

Both commercial office and industrial uses should be encouraged in Clairemont. The more people who live and work in our community the lesser the impact on our infrastructure particularly traffic congestion. That said there is considerable industrial areas at the north and north east portion of our community. Heavy industry is unlikely and should be discouraged as the citizenry wishes to protect it's bedroom community environment. Light industry and in particular research (R and D) related industry should be encouraged. Several corridors are suitable for office and or research. Of particular note is the Morena Boulevard corridor adjacent to Interstate 5. Any office or research facility should be located near freeways to preclude out of community employees from having to traverse our already congested streets.

As Clairemont becomes more diverse, the neighborhood school concept should be reinforced. As the City meets its integration mandates magnet schools should return to neighborhood schools to reduce bussing cost and to reinforce the children's sense of community.