

VIII. CONSERVATION ELEMENT

A. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this conservation element is to describe the ways in which environmental sensitivities have been incorporated into the specific plan design. The primary way in which this has been accomplished is through design criteria incorporated into the urban design element, and flood protection and revegetation plans incorporated into the river improvement element.

B. ENERGY

Certain components of the Atlas Specific Plan encourage the conservation of energy. The specific plan emphasizes the use of mass transit with the incorporation of access to the LRT in the site plans for the Town and Country and Hanalei site and commitment to funding an at-grade station and at-grade tracks adjacent to the Town and Country site. Pedestrian access to the LRT station, located adjacent to the Fashion Valley Shopping Center, is also included in the design of the Town and Country site. Implementation of the LRT system in Mission Valley will allow residents of other areas of the valley to travel to offices and recreation facilities in the specific plan area. As discussed in Section VI, Atlas Hotels, Inc. will fund and operate an intra-valley shuttle system between the Atlas Specific Plan sites in the Hotel Circle area, and the San Diego Lindbergh Field on a frequent schedule basis.

Landform and architectural elements of the specific plan are also designed to conserve energy. Buildings have been sited on the Hanalei Towers, and Town and Country sites to preserve solar access to the maximum extent possible, and to minimize shading of outdoor swimming pools, pedestrian plazas, and riverfront areas. In addition, the urban design element of this specific plan contains guidelines to encourage energy conservation. Among these is the stated goal that all major buildings should exceed Title 24 energy conservation standards.

C. WETLAND HABITAT

Existing wetland habitats within the specific plan area include open water, freshwater marsh, and riparian woodland. A revegetation plan has been incorporated into the design of the specific plan. The revegetation plan is described in detail in the river improvement element of this specific plan.

D. SEISMIC SAFETY

A geologic study of the Town and Country site was conducted by Geocon, Inc. in 1983. According to that study, alluvial materials exist on the Town and Country site which may be subject to liquefaction in the event of a moderate earthquake.

Based on a review of existing available geotechnical information, similar conditions appear to be present on the Hanalei Tower and Hanalei Hotel sites. Although no faults have been identified in the specific plan area, moderate magnitude earthquakes have occurred in recent history in the San Diego metropolitan area. The potential therefore exists for liquefaction within the specific plan area following development. The potential for liquefaction within the plan area is not, however, greater than that in other areas of Mission Valley, and would not be greater for new development than for existing development already within the specific plan area. Potential liquefaction hazards associated with development of the site can be reduced through implementation of normal grading and structural mitigation measures. Such grading and structural mitigation measures will be established prior to any grading activities within the specific plan area.

Future development of the specific plan area will occur through the City of San Diego's planned development permit process as discussed in the implementation element of this specific plan. That process requires conduct of a geologic reconnaissance by a qualified engineering geologist prior to recordation of a final map for major developments within the specific plan area. Such studies will be conducted prior to development and will include specific grading and structural mitigation measures to avoid potential geologic hazards.

E. HILLSIDES

Three sites within the specific plan area are located adjacent to the hillsides which form the southern border of the Mission Valley Community Plan area. These sites include Mission Grove Office Park, Kings Inn and Mission Valley Inn. Of these, only the Mission Valley Inn site contains significant amounts of property within the City's Hillside Review Overlay Zone. No site would involve hillside development. The urban design element of this specific plan includes site-specific guidelines to ensure sensitivity to the existing hillside in grading and site design, erosion control, slope maintenance, and revegetation.

F. OPEN SPACE

The primary open space feature of the specific plan is an open space corridor adjacent to the San Diego River. Enhancement of the river corridor and river-orientation of proposed developments are integral parts of the specific plan design. Both the river improvement and urban design elements of this specific plan contain detailed criteria for design, maintenance and use of the river corridor as an open space greenbelt.