

## CHAPTER 8 COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

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### 8.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

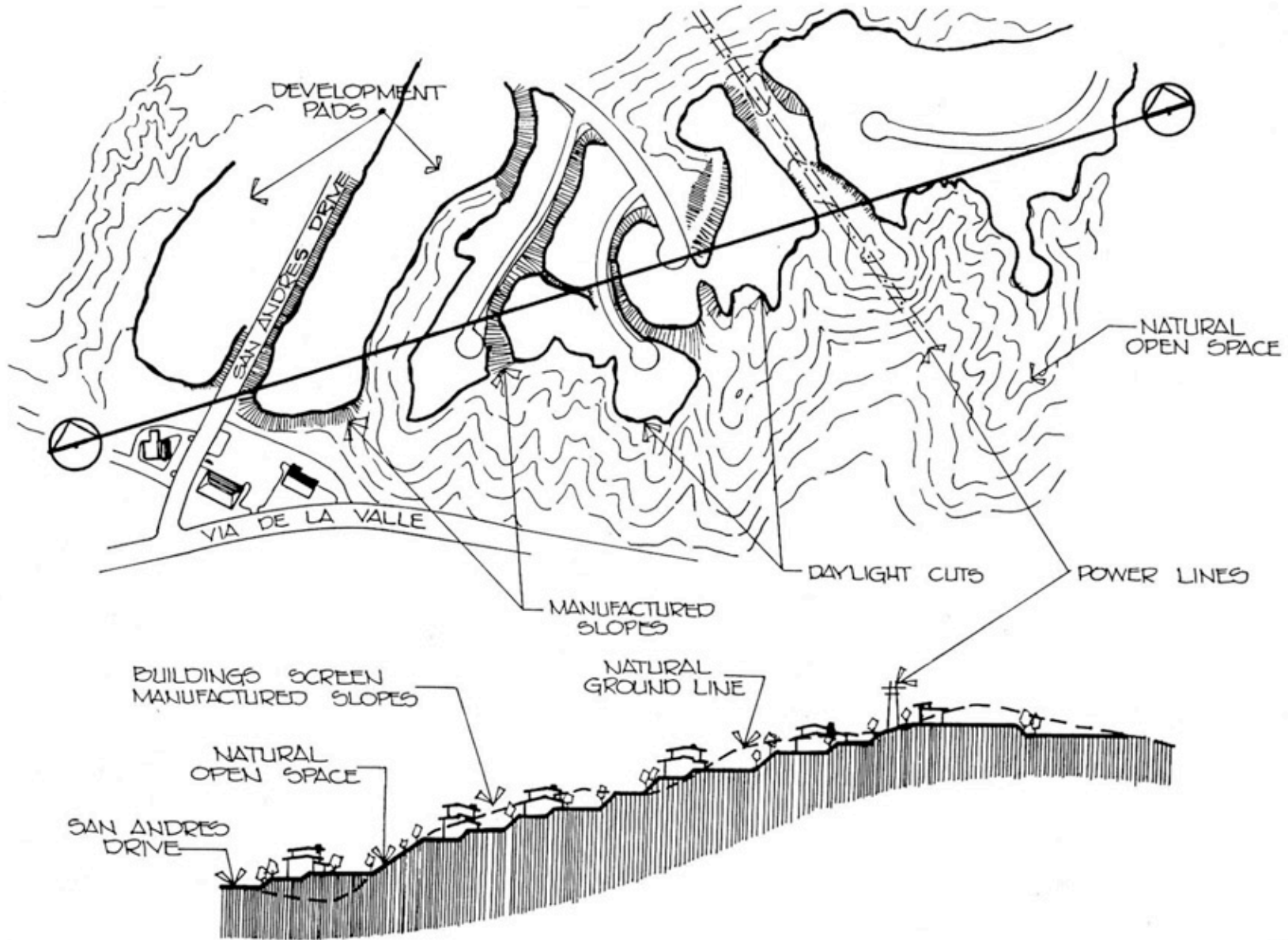
The overall goal of the Community Design Element is to PROMOTE A HIGH QUALITY, COHESIVE DESIGN THEME THROUGHOUT THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA WHILE GRANTING THE INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY OWNERS AS MUCH DESIGN FLEXIBILITY AS POSSIBLE. The following objectives elaborate this goal further:

- Encourage a variety of architectural and site designs between individual property owners which are compatible and provide a sense of continuity throughout the plan area.
- Encourage the varied use of building materials and roofscape design which will enhance the view of the site from the surrounding community.
- Establish a landscape concept that creates visual continuity throughout the planning area and harmonizes with the existing site character and citywide Landscape Regulations as outlined in the Municipal Code and the City's adopted Landscape Technical Manual.
- Implementing brush management in an environmentally appropriate manner that requires a gradual reduction in the amount and continuity of highly flammable fuel while maintaining plant coverage for soil protection and in accordance with citywide Landscape Regulations as outlined in the Municipal Code and the City's adopted Landscape Technical Manual.
- Maximize the view potentials from the site by preserving the view access points and corridors throughout the site as feasible.

### 8.2 DESIGN COMPATIBILITY

Design compatibility is an important element in maintaining a project identity and developing a cohesive environment. The Via De La Valle properties are currently owned by six separate property owners. The objective is to prepare a plan in which six individual parcels may be developed independently but still retain a neighborhood or community identity.

The objective may be achieved through a number of design techniques. The intent of design compatibility is to tie six individual development projects together in appearance, while also working to limit the number of development restrictions placed upon the property owners. The following design criteria should be met to improve design compatibility.



Visual Slope Profile  
Via De La Valle Specific Plan

**17**  
FIGURE



## 8.2a Building Materials

Encourage the use of building materials which blend in with the natural surroundings. The planning area is highly visible from the surrounding community. The building materials which are selected should soften the visibility of the buildings from the surrounding area.

Appropriate building design shall incorporate the following features:

- Exterior building materials include wood and stucco; or other material which are complementary to the site.
- Exterior color schemes shall utilize earthtone colors.
- Building forms and rooflines will be designed to create visual interest, to follow the visible profile of the property, and to be of an appropriate scale to complement the site.

## 8.2b Outdoor Lighting

All street lighting on interior streets and private outdoor lighting within the Specific Plan will conform to the county of San Diego Dark Sky Policy, as set forth in the county of San Diego Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 6322 and 6324.

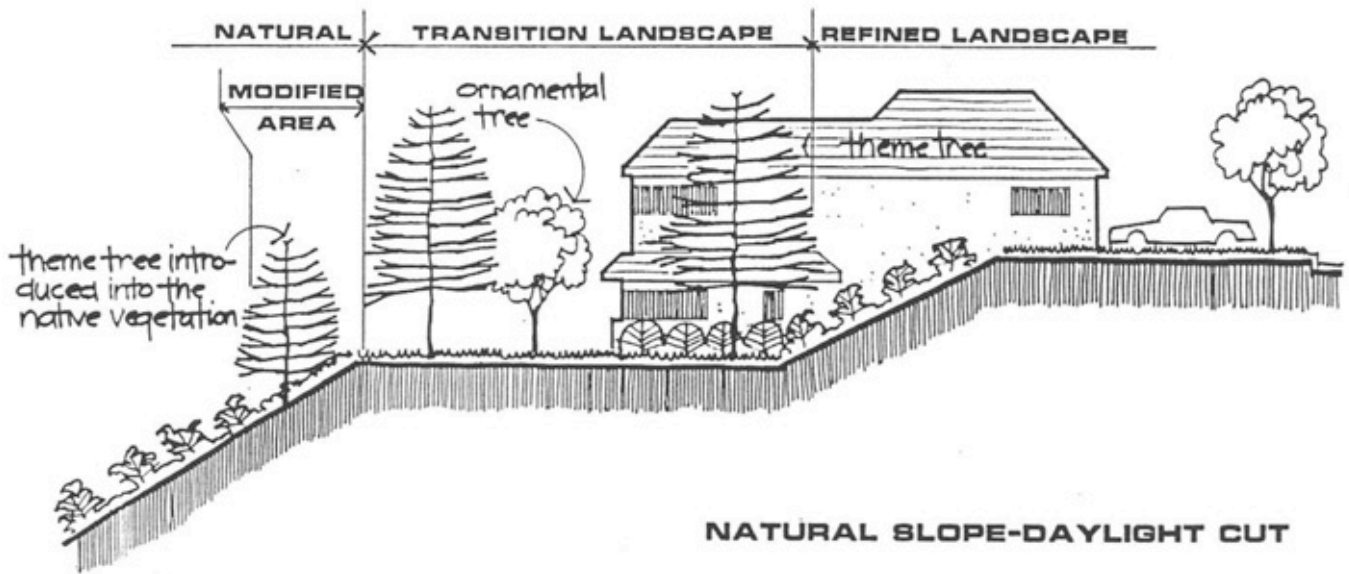
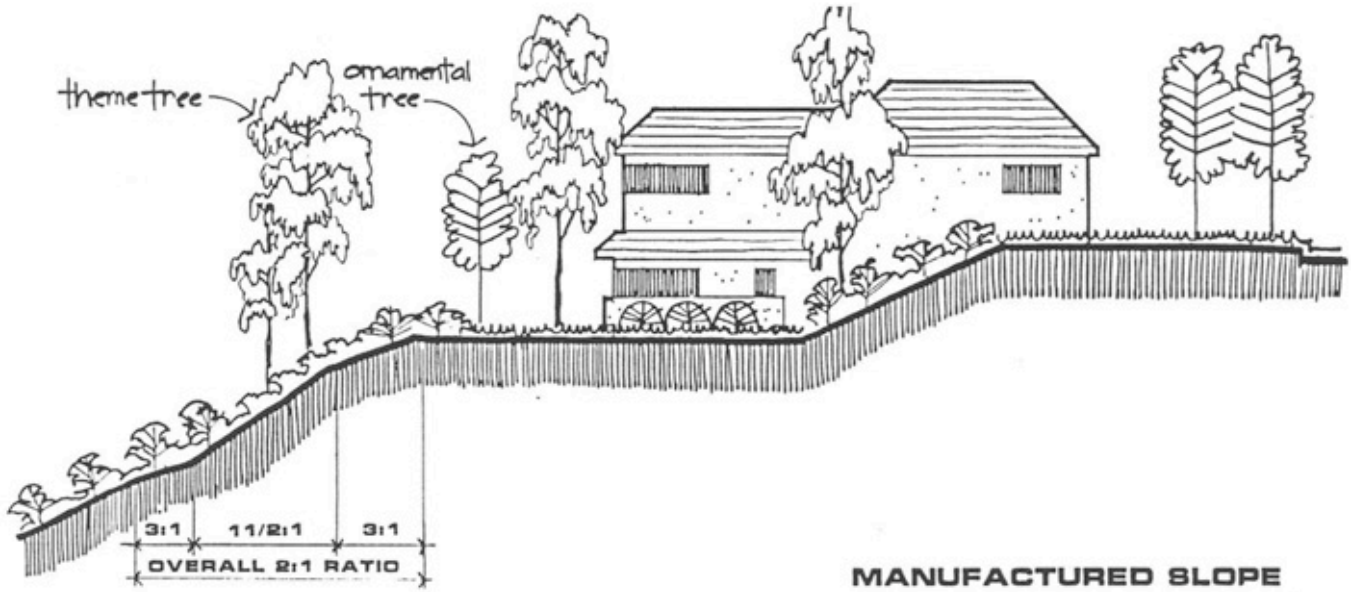
## 8.2c Landscape Concept

The landscape concept helps create a common identity for the developments within the planning area. It does this by requiring the accenting of nodes and theme plantings which link the different developments together in an appropriate manner. Special interest plants will accent entries and focal points. Streets, both public and private, will have theme streetscapes creating continuity throughout the planning area. Man-made open space and the edge (interface) areas between the natural open space and building areas shall also have a theme landscape. These themes will create a visual transition between the natural vegetation and the refined landscape within the developments. **Figure 17, Visual Slope Profile**, illustrates the relationship between the natural and manufactured slopes.

**Figure 18** represents a close-up view of the landscaping of a "typical" slope within the Specific Plan area. All transition areas shall have a common theme tree making up a minimum of 70 percent of all trees planted in that area and will be limited to native species.

Plantings in the natural areas of the open space easement shall be individually watered on a temporary basis until they are able to survive the annual wet/dry weather cycle without supplemental watering (two-three years). Only native species shall be introduced into the natural open space system.

The streetscape along the north side of Via de la Valle shall provide for screening of noise walls and houses from Via de la Valle and river park.



**Typical Slope Treatment**  
 Via De La Valle Specific Plan

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 FIGURE

The main themes of this landscape concept are:

- Streetscape
  - Via De La Valle  
Theme tree: London Plane Tree (multi-trunk) trees planted in groups at the bottom of each draw.
  - San Andres Drive  
Theme tree: London Plane Tree  
Support tree: Aleppo Pine, Eucalyptus sideroxylon.
- Open space/interface area:
  - At elevations between 50 feet to 150 feet  
Theme tree: Eucalyptus species  
Support tree: Australian Tea Tree
  - At elevations above 150 feet  
Theme tree: Torrey Pine  
Support tree: Holly Oak

- SDG&E Easement:

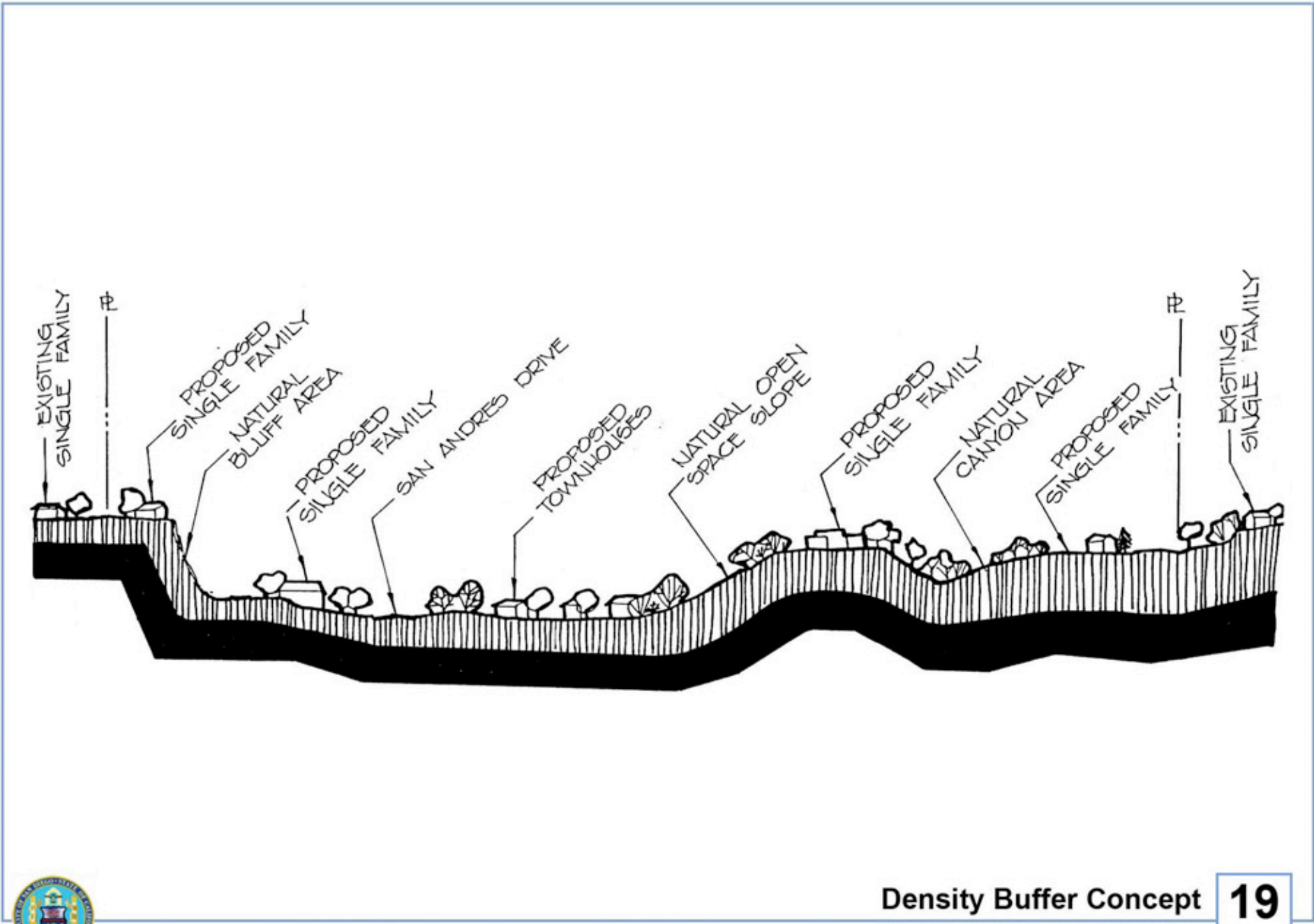
Revegetation of any portion of this 150-foot-wide easement with native species shall be performed by the Homeowners Association. The character and level of this revegetation will be appropriate for the proposed use of the area, and approved by SDG&E. The landscape criteria outlined by SDG&E are as follows:

- The underground gas and fuel lines will maintain a minimum three feet or maximum five feet of cover.
- No trees may be planted within ten feet of the gas and fuel lines.
- Trees which grow over 25 feet tall will not be planted within the easement.
- Landscaping shall not impede access to the easement.

Portions of the residential development proposed for Development area 2a, 2b will have direct views of the 150-foot-wide power easement. The portions of this easement which will affect views from dwelling units will be landscaped to improve its aesthetic appearance. Recreation or other suitable uses that do not interfere with the purpose of the easement are encouraged.

- Natural open Space

Revegetation areas adjacent to natural open space, shall harmonize in character. Plants shall be selected from the approved list plus annual grasses.



Density Buffer Concept  
Via De La Valle Specific Plan

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FIGURE



List of plants approved for planting within natural areas:

Arctostaphylos species (Manzanita)  
Atriplex species (Salt Bush)  
Ceanothus species (Wild Lilac)  
Coreopsis species (Sea Daisy)  
Dendromecon species (Bush Poppy)  
Eriogonum species (Buckwheat)  
Fremntodendron species (Flannel Bush)  
Garrya species (Silk Tassel)  
Heteromeles arbutifolia (Toyon)  
Opuntia species (Cactus)  
Prunus lyoni (Catalina Cherry)  
Quercus species (Oak)  
Rhamnus species (Coffeeberry)  
Rhus species (Sumac)  
Yucca species (Yucca)

#### **8.2d Pedestrian Circulation**

Pedestrian access will be provided throughout the developed portions of the site. Sidewalks shall be provided on both sides of public streets. Private streets and drives will have a sidewalk on either one or both sides where necessary for safety reasons.

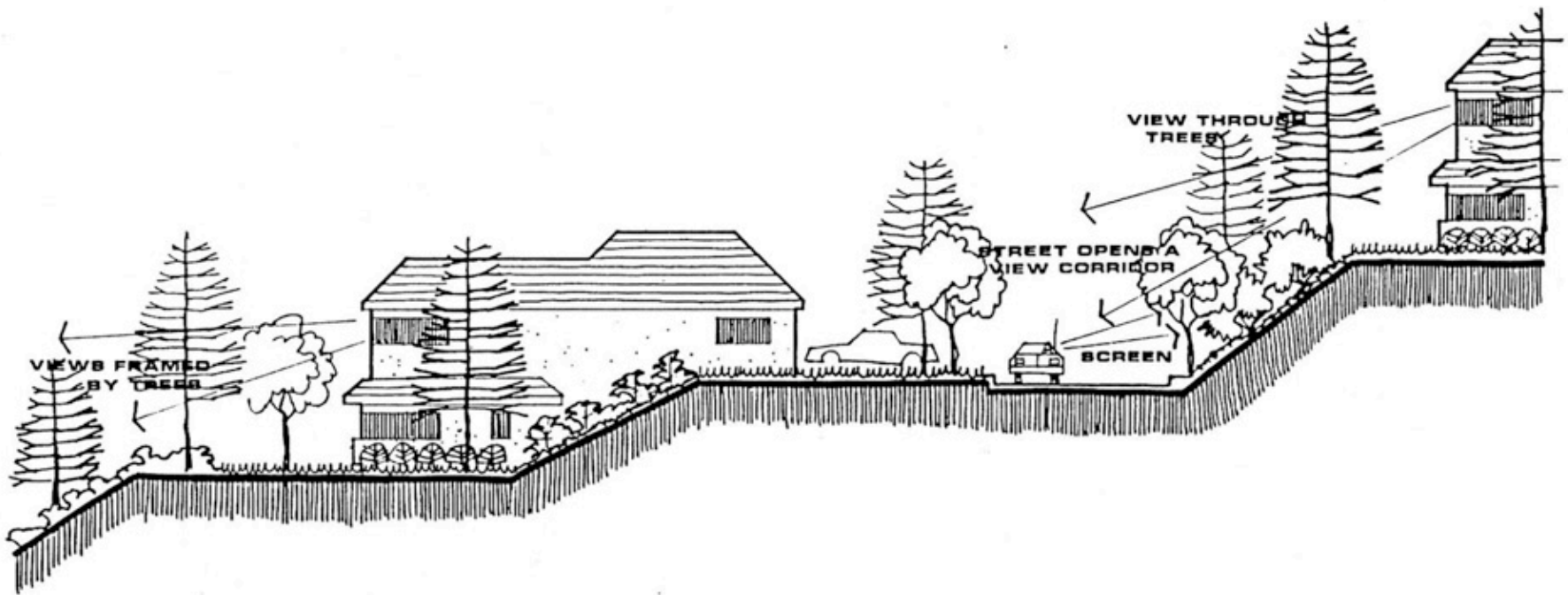
They should be avoided in development areas 1a, 2b, 3, and 4 to be compatible with adjacent development which was constructed without sidewalks. Walkways will also provide pedestrian links to all recreation areas. There will be no pedestrian access or hiking trails provided in the natural open space due to erosion and safety concerns.

#### **8.2e Community Identity**

The existing commercial development, on the south entry to the project, hampers any type of major entry statement. At Via De La Valle the visual impact of the bluffs themselves provide identity, but there is a lack of identity for major and minor entries into the Specific Plan area itself. Continuity of plant materials, architecture, and construction materials, will be utilized to achieve community identity, as well as an architectural entry statement at the primary access into the development areas.

#### **8.2f San Andres Drive**

The bisection of the development San Andres Drive necessitates sensitivity in terms of project entry statements, community identity, noise, and visual impact. The streetscape shall be designed to provide visual and psychological relief.



View Preservation  
Via De La Valle Specific Plan

**20**  
FIGURE



## 8.2g Density Buffers

Density buffers will be used for transition into the lower-density areas located adjacent to the property. Care will be taken to avoid disturbing existing view corridors. **Figure 19** illustrates the anticipated concept for providing a density buffer to adjacent residential areas. **Figure 20** illustrates a technique for preserving view corridors. Appropriate buffer techniques include placing detached single-family homes at the perimeters of the planning area; elevation differences between subject areas; and landscaping buffers.

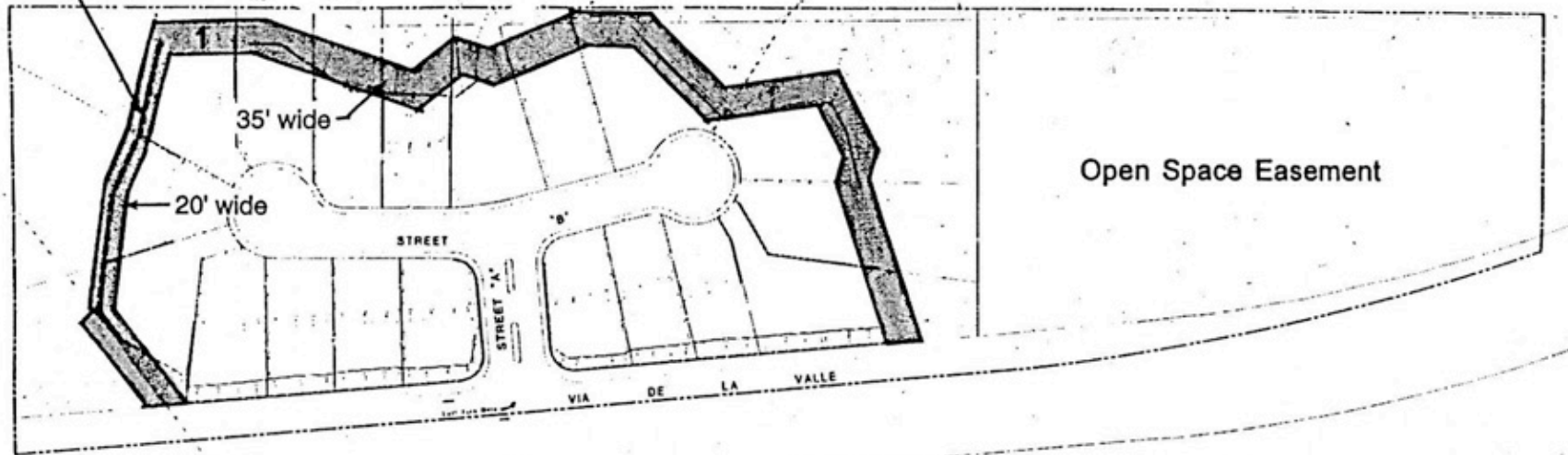
## 8.2h Brush Management Program


A brush management program to increase fire safety by reducing the readily flammable fuel adjacent to structures is required for the Specific Plan Area 6 and will be detailed in the PRD, **Figure 21**. Brush Management is accomplished by pruning and thinning of native plants, revegetation with low fuel volume plantings, or a combination of the two. Implementing brush management in an environmentally appropriate manner requires a gradual reduction in the amount and continuity of highly flammable fuel while maintaining plant coverage for soil protection. Such a transition will minimize the visual, biological and erosion impacts which reducing the risks of wildland fires. SDG&E's Land Management Section shall be contacted for input regarding appropriate plant materials for use within SDG&E's existing easements.

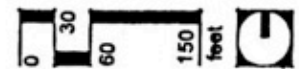
The guidelines and requirements for creating a transition are organized into three brush management zones as described below. The City of San Diego Fire Department and the City's adopted Landscape Technical Manual establish the required depth of each zone based upon the fire hazard severity class. Together these zones provide for a transitional buffer of 50 to 110 feet between structures and undisturbed native vegetation. Alternatives for reducing Zone 1 through the use of fire-resistive architectural features and building design are discussed in the City's adopted Landscape Technical Manual:

- Zone 1 consists of plantings adjacent to structures. While these plantings typically consist of irrigated, ornamental non-native species, native plants may also be used. When used, native plants should be able to survive with no summer water.
- Zone 2 can be implemented in a variety of ways, the simplest being the selective thinning and pruning of the native plants. Long-term ongoing thinning cost may be reduced by the introduction of low-growing fire retardant shrubs and groundcovers that are visually and horticulturally compatible with the native vegetation. Zone 2 plantings can also be established in disturbed areas that have been cleared of native vegetation by replanting appropriate native plant species in combination with appropriate non-native plant materials.

Proposed 6' high Masonry Wall



 Extent of Zone-1 Building Restricted Easement



## Development Area 6 – Brush Management Zones on the Project Site

Via De La Valle Specific Plan

**21**

FIGURE

- Zone 3 is the first line of defense for fire safety and involves the selective thinning and pruning of native vegetation in a way that preserves the natural appearance of the area while reducing the fuel load.

### **8.3 SITE PLANNING**

The extent of the site planning performed for the Specific Plan is only at a preliminary level of detail. The Specific Plan establishes a general street pattern, and the perimeters of each development area. The more detailed levels of site planning will be examined at the Planned Residential Development and Tentative Map stages.

Precise site planning will consider the total context of the planning areas, more specifically: views, building pads, brush management, the placement of buildings on the lots, the relationship between the various development projects, manufactured slopes, and transitions to natural open space areas. The buildings will be sited to maximize views from the site and to protect views from residents outside the planning area. The objective here is to produce a sensitive grading plan which preserves the natural terrain and visual aesthetics of the property as seen from the roadways and surrounding community.