

## **CHATSWORTH-PORTER RANCH**

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# **Community Plan**

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# CHATSWORTH-PORTER RANCH

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## Community Plan

The Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan is a part of the General Plan of the City of Los Angeles. It consists of this text and the accompanying two maps entitled: Plan Land Use - Chatsworth-Porter Ranch, and [Equestrian Areas and Trails](#).

### PURPOSES

#### USE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan is to provide an official guide to the future development of the Community for the use of the City Council, the Mayor, the City Planning Commission; other concerned governmental agencies; residents, property owners and businessmen of the Community; and private organizations concerned with planning and civic betterment. For the Council, the Mayor and the Planning Commission, the Plan provides a reference to be used in connection with their actions on various City development matters as required by law.

The Plan is intended to promote an arrangement of land use, circulation, and services which will encourage and contribute to the economic, social and physical health, safety, welfare, and convenience of the Community, within the larger framework of the City; guide the development, betterment, and change of the Community to meet existing and anticipated needs and conditions; contribute to a healthful and pleasant environment; balance growth and stability; reflect economic potentialities and limitations, land development and other trends; and protect investment to the extent reasonable and feasible.

Because the Plan is general and cannot denote precise boundaries, it proposes approximate locations and dimensions for land use. Development may vary slightly from the Plan, provided the total acreage of each type of land use, the land intensities, and the physical relationships among the various land uses are not altered.

The Plan Map is **not** an official **zone map**, and while it is a guide, it does not imply any implicit right to a particular zone or to the land uses permitted therein. Changes of zone are considered under a specific procedure established under the Los Angeles City Charter and the Los Angeles Municipal Code, subject to various requirements set forth therein. Inasmuch as the Plan shows land uses projected as much as 20 years in the future, it designates conditionally more land in some areas for different zones and land uses than may be desirable for many years.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

1. To coordinate the development of the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community with that of other parts of the City of Los Angeles.

2. To designate lands in quantities and at densities, at appropriate locations, for the various private uses; and to designate the need for public facilities and the general locations thereof, as required to accommodate population and activities projected to the year 2010.
3. To make provisions for the housing required to satisfy the varying needs and desires of all economic segments of the Community, maximizing the opportunity for individual choice.

To encourage the preservation and enhancement of the varied and distinctive residential character of the Community. In hillside residential areas to:

- a. minimize grading so as to retain the natural terrain and ecological balance;
  - b. provide a standard of land use intensity and population density which will be compatible with street capacity, public service facilities and utilities, and topography and in coordination with development in the remainder of the City.
4. To promote economic well-being and public convenience through:
    - a. allocating and distributing commercial lands for retail, service, and other facilities in quantities and patterns based on Los Angeles City Planning Department accepted planning principles and standards.
    - b. designating lands for industrial development that can be used without detriment to adjacent uses of other types, and imposing such restrictions on the types and intensities of industrial uses as are necessary to this purpose.
  5. To provide a basis for the location and programming of public services and utilities and to coordinate the phasing of public facilities with private development.
  6. To make provisions for a circulation system coordinated with land uses and densities and adequate to accommodate traffic; and to encourage the expansion and improvement of public transportation service.
  7. To encourage open space for recreational uses, and to promote the preservation of views, natural character and topography of mountainous parts of the Community for the enjoyment of both local residents and persons throughout the Los Angeles region.
  8. To improve jobs/housing balance in the Community by providing more affordable housing opportunities for employees currently working in the Community's industrial areas;
  9. To provide design guidelines and/or objectives for development.
  10. To improve vehicular circulation patterns within the Community and encourage specific improvements to key streets and

intersections to improve the flow of traffic and accommodate future demand;

11. To address noise and air quality impacts and the potential for a diminished quality of life experienced by residents and others as a result of future build-out permitted under the 1974 District Plan.
12. To provide for the identification and preservation of cultural and historical monuments located within the Community;
13. To further define the link between the Chatsworth Reservoir, wildlife corridors, and the community by identifying natural wildlife habitats, migration paths, and archaeological/paleontological sites and planning for their preservation;
14. To develop and maintain equestrian trails, linkages, and bicycle facilities within the Community; and,
15. To study and evaluate existing and future drainage conditions below the Simi Valley-San Fernando Valley Freeway.

## **POLICIES**

The Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan has been designed to accommodate the anticipated growth in population and employment of the Community to the year 2010. The Plan does not seek to promote nor to hinder growth; rather it accepts the likelihood that growth will take place and must be provided for.

The Plan encourages the preservation of low density single-family residential areas, the conservation of open space lands, and the preservation and strengthening of the Chatsworth Community Business District.

Much of the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community is hillside and mountainous terrain and as much of the remaining undeveloped lands as feasible is to be preserved for open space and recreational uses.

The northwest border of the City of Los Angeles includes a wildlife migration corridor. The wildlife corridor through the Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains to the Santa Monica Mountains could be endangered by development and transportation arteries cutting through this vital link. The Plan encourages preservation by both public and private agencies of this critical natural feature. Within the Plan area, the Simi Freeway presents the most difficult barrier to wildlife. While there are several passes both under and over the freeway, they are predominately used by automobile traffic which presents a danger to wildlife. Culverts should be under the freeway west of Topanga Canyon Boulevard, constructed for wildlife and equestrians, and connected to trails.

The Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community is contiguous to unincorporated Los Angeles County lands to its north and west, most of which remain vacant. It is imperative that the development of these lands be compatible with that of Chatsworth-Porter Ranch, as proposed in this Plan, particularly with respect to land uses, circulation and open space, and their impact on drainage and sewerage. To help ensure compatible development of these

lands, the County area north of the Simi Freeway to the Oat Mountain ridge line should be considered for annexation. (Map Footnote No. 11)

It is desirable that development within the Los Angeles County adjacent to the City of Los Angeles be compatible with the City's adopted General Plan. Therefore, it is recommended that no cluster of high-intensity urban activity, including commercial, residential, or any combination thereof should be located within the County west of the City's boundary to the Ventura County line. (Map Footnote No. 10)

**Porter Ranch Specific Plan.** The adopted Porter Ranch Specific Plan, Ordinance No. 166,068, established a comprehensive set of development regulations for the Plan area which was guided by an Environmental Impact Report (State Clearinghouse No. 88-050420) and which formed the basis for the Development Agreement adopted by the City Council (CF No. 91-2400). The Specific Plan regulations and Development Agreement were consistent with and served as implementing tools of the Plan. The general policies and programs of the Plan relating to land use, service systems, and circulation generally indicated in the Plan text and map, are not intended to alter the specific policies, regulations and agreements relating to this area and as specifically indicated in the Porter Ranch Specific Plan and Development Agreement.

## LAND USE

### Commerce

#### Standards and Criteria

The commercial lands (not including associated parking) designated by this Plan to serve suburban residential areas in this Plan are adequate to meet the needs of the projected population to the year 2010, as computed by the following standards:

1. 0.6 acres per 1,000 residents for commercial uses for neighborhood or convenience-type commercial areas;
2. 0.2 acres per 1,000 residents for commercial uses for community shopping and business districts, including service uses and specialized commercial uses. Without effective transportation demand management strategies, such as carpool and vanpool or transit, off-street parking should be provided at a ratio of one parking space per 300 gross square feet of building. Surface parking areas shall be located between commercial and residential uses, where appropriate, to provide a buffer, and shall be separated from residential uses by means of a wall and/or landscaped setback. (Map Footnote No. 8)

#### Features

The Plan provides approximately 620 acres of commercial land and related parking uses. The Chatsworth Business District, Northridge Fashion Center and the Porter Ranch Regional Center will serve as focal points for shopping, civic and social activities for the Community. These commercial areas should contain professional offices, department stores, restaurants and entertainment facilities.

Medium and low-medium density apartments are proposed to be located near the Chatsworth Business District. Commercial designations along Devonshire Street and Topanga Canyon Boulevard within the Chatsworth Business District are limited in accordance with CPC 84-598 ZC and the Devonshire/Topanga Corridor Specific Plan, CPC 89-0031 SP. (Map Footnote No. 9)

The Plan indicates the presence of several highway-oriented commercial facilities located throughout Chatsworth. It is a policy of the Plan that existing Highway-Oriented Commercial sites should not be expanded. Marginal or temporary commercial uses in designated industrial areas will be phased out as industrial development takes place.

## **Housing**

### **Standards and Criteria**

The intensity of planned land use in the Plan and the density of the population which can be accommodated thereon shall be limited in accordance with the following criteria:

1. The adequacy of the existing and potential street circulation system, both within the area and in the peripheral areas;
2. The availability of sewer, drainage facilities, fire protection services and facilities, and other public utilities;
3. The steepness of the topography of the various parts of the area and the suitability of the geology of the area for development shall be guided by the following:

In areas designated for Minimum density housing, the dwelling unit density shall not exceed that allowed by the slope density ordinance (LAMC Section 17.05 C). Hillside areas designated Very Low I or Very Low II on the Plan Map which contain limited areas of exceptionally steep topography should be restricted to even lower densities. It is the policy of the Planning Commission that the Deputy Advisory Agency must consider lower densities, including Minimum density, when considering applications for development of such areas. Factors to be considered should include, but not be limited to steepness of slope, amount of grading, soil stability, erosion, land division patterns, vehicular access, etc.

4. The compatibility of proposed developments with the existing adjacent developments.

Recognizing the desire to preserve undeveloped hillside and mountainous terrain, to the extent feasible, the "cluster concept" may be utilized for the new residential development in hillside areas in order to use the natural terrain to best advantage and minimize the amount of grading required. This, however, shall not preclude development by conventional subdivision. The "cluster concept" is defined as the grouping of residential structures on the more level parts of the terrain while retaining the steeper portions in their natural state. Density patterns indicated on the Plan Map may be adjusted

to facilitate cluster developments provided that the total number of dwelling units indicated in any development is not increased.

Development within areas in the vicinity of natural vegetation or high fire danger should include special irrigation facilities, fire-retardant plantings and construction features for protection against brush fires.

To the extent feasible, new development adjoining arterials should be designed with lots siding or backing onto the arterial or with frontage on a service or frontage road. Local street patterns designed to discourage through traffic should be used wherever practical. Housing developments near freeways where noise and air pollution would pose special problems should be provided with features to mitigate these adverse impacts.

Multiple-residential developments should be provided with adequate open space and usable recreation areas. In housing for the elderly, provisions shall be made for passive recreation and other special features such as ramps.

Existing mobilehome parks are considered to be consistent with this Plan. Future mobilehome parks shall also be considered to be consistent with the Plan when developed in the RMP Zone. (Map Footnote No. 12)

### **Features**

The Plan encourages the rehabilitation and/or rebuilding of deteriorated single-family areas for the same use. Single-family housing should be made available to all persons regardless of social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds.

Several horsekeeping areas are proposed in the northerly and westerly sections of the Community. The Plan encourages the preservation of these land uses, especially north of Chatsworth Street and west of De Soto Avenue (including the east side of De Soto Avenue) to the City/County line. Provisions shall be made for equestrian access via Brown's Canyon Wash. Horsekeeping facilities with appropriate restrictions could be provided westerly and northerly to the City/County line.

Chatsworth-Porter Ranch includes large areas of open space and natural land forms. It is one of the more rural areas of the City and supports a substantial equestrian-oriented population. It is a policy of the Plan to place a higher priority on the preservation of designated horsekeeping areas than on other uses found in the RA Zone category. Toward this end, the Plan supports the establishment of "K" Horsekeeping Supplemental Use Districts in appropriate areas in order to ensure the preservation of this equestrian lifestyle. Efforts should be made to insure compatibility between the equestrian and other uses found in the RA Zone. In all instances, the RA Zone should be encouraged to emulate the existing rural landscape, whether horsekeeping is present or not.

The residential density categories and their capacities are:

## PLAN POPULATION AND DWELLING UNIT CAPACITY

Residential Density	Dwelling Units Per Gross	Persons Per Gross Acre	Gross Acres	% Of Residential Land (2010)	Pop. Capacity Cap.	% of Pop.
Minimum	(.5 to 1)	0 to 4	1659	16.2	2,260	1.7
Very Low I	(1+ to 2)	4 to 8	2292	22.4	16,520	12.2
Very Low II	(2+ to 3)	8 to 12	2478	24.2	25,030	18.5
Low I	(3+ to 5)	12 to 16	1559	15.2	21,980	16.3
Low II	(5+ to 7)	16 to 20	1258	12.3	26,920	19.9
Low Medium I	(7+ to 12)	20 to 30	513	5.0	15,640	11.6
Low Medium II	(12+ to 24)	30 to 50	145	11.4	6,130	4.5
Medium	(24+ to 40)	50 to 100	325	3.2	20,470	15.2
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>10,229</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>134,950</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Industry

#### Standards and Criteria

Industrial lands are located on a citywide basis without regard to the boundaries of individual communities, under the general principle that such employment should be available within a reasonable commuting distance from residential locations.

Without effective transportation demand management strategies, such as carpool and vanpool or transit, parking should be provided at a ratio of one parking space per 300 gross-feet of floor area of office or industrial uses which are primarily (over 50%) "high-tech" in nature. These uses may include research, development, manufacturing, assembly, repair, testing or high-technology type industries, and service industries, including computer programming, data processing and research laboratories.

On-street parking should be prohibited in industrial areas whenever possible.

The growth of new technological industries, the advent of sophisticated communication systems, and the affinity between office and industrial uses suggest the need for more flexible zoning.

The [Q]M1 Zone classification is permitted on those properties fronting on the following corridors: (1) the north and south sides of Nordhoff Street between De Soto Avenue and Topanga Canyon Boulevard; (2) the east side of Topanga Canyon Boulevard, from Nordhoff Street to the south side of Lassen Street; and (3) the south side of Lassen Street between Topanga Canyon Boulevard and De Soto Avenue. Such conditions of approval shall

prohibit smoke stacks, metal plating, toxic and noxious industrial uses, and any new retail commercial uses within these zone classifications.

Industrial acreage shown on the Plan should be protected from intrusion by non-industrial uses, except those corridors described above on Nordhoff Street, Topanga Canyon Boulevard, and Lassen Street should allow uses similar to those permitted in the M1 and M2 Zones. In keeping with the low-density residential character of the Community, to the extent possible, the Plan proposes preservation of all existing MR zoned lands, and classification of all undeveloped industrial land in the MR1 and MR2 Zones.

The Plan encourages continued development of research and development-type industries which do not generate excessive noise, dust, and fumes and are compatible with the residential character of the north and west San Fernando Valley.

**Features:** The Plan designates approximately 1,821 acres of land for industrial uses. To preserve this valuable land resource from the intrusion of other uses and insure its development with high quality industrial uses, in keeping with the urban residential character of the Community, to the extent possible, the Plan proposes classifying all undeveloped industrial land, as well as all industrial land used for industrial purposes, in restricted industrial zoning categories, such as the MR Zones.

## CIRCULATION

### Streets

#### Standards and Criteria

Streets shown on the Plan shall be developed in accordance with the standards and criteria contained in the Mobility Plan, an element of the General Plan and the City's Standard Street Dimensions.

Design characteristics which give street identity such as curves, changes in direction and topographical differences should be emphasized by street trees and planted median strips and by paving. Streets and freeways, when developed, should be designed and improved in harmony with adjacent development and to facilitate driver and passenger orientation.

Adequate roadway improvements shall be assured prior to the approval of zoning permitting intensification of land use in order to avoid congestion and assure proper development.

#### Features

The Plan incorporates the Mobility Plan, an element of the General Plan. Collector Streets are shown to assist traffic flow toward arterials.

The Plan designates, for potential dedication, several County roads indicated on the Los Angeles County Plan of Highways and Freeways. These will provide improved access to the Community. Precise alignments, widths, and

other standards are to be developed as part of a long-range proposal as a need for these roads arises.

The following improvements shall be considered as part of discretionary project approval when a nexus has been determined (to be implemented where feasible and in a manner consistent with the policies of the Mobility Plan):

All boulevardss should be re-stripped where feasible to provide three through lanes in each direction. Additional turning lanes should be created on most b o u l e v a r d intersections. Double left-turn lane configuration would result in six lanes on intersection approaches and require substandard widths (10 feet) for most lanes. Such a configuration could be accommodated within the existing 100-foot right-of-way on b o u l e v a r d s. Widening the approach to 104 feet is recommended where two left-turn lanes and adequate width in curb lane are necessary.

The Plan designates several A r t e r i a l s as Scenic Highways. The standards and criteria should include screening and buffering, appropriate sign control, street lighting, landscaping, green median strips, and potential for views.

The Plan encourages traffic congestion phasing programs in areas involving specific plans and minor modifications to exceed the industrial floor area ratio, whereby an assessment of the Level of Service at intersections is made and necessary improvements are required.

The Plan encourages Transportation Management Plans (TMP) to provide vehicular alternatives to the automobile for efficiently transporting large numbers of people to local and regional destinations. The TMP should emphasize the reduction of vehicle work trips through employee ridesharing and transit incentives, as well as participation in a Transportation Management Association; and emphasize the reduction of vehicle non-work trips through parking management and transit improvements. All new commercial and/or industrial projects that must obtain discretionary approvals shall be required, as a condition to approval, to participate in an approved transportation management association.

The Plan encourages a reduction in parking requirements where transportation strategies such as carpool and vanpool and transit incentives are implemented and monitored.

### **Public Transportation**

Bus routes and increased bus frequency should be added to the existing transportation system as the potential ridership increases in the Community with population growth.

The Plan requires traffic-generating activities to provide fixed transit facilities, such as bus shelters and pullouts, consistent with anticipated demand. These facilities should be located in areas convenient to pedestrian use.

### **Railroad Rights-of-Way**

A portion of the Southern Pacific Coast Main Line from Tampa Avenue into Los Angeles County, and a portion of the Southern Pacific Burbank Branch Line from Roscoe Boulevard to its connection with the Main Line, are two railroad rights-of-way that serve the community as well as providing through service from Los Angeles County into Ventura County and points west. The Plan should recognize the importance of these two railroad rights-of-way for rail transit purposes by:

1. Identifying the rights-of-way for rail transit purposes;
2. Identifying community transit centers that include commuter train station, mixed use commercial, day care center, and secured parking including park and ride.
3. Encouraging the preparation of a program in which the City and the owner(s) of the railroad collaborate in order to establish the uses of the rights-of-way for mass transit facilities, transit links between major centers and open space;
4. Encouraging new legislation amending the Municipal Code to result in discretionary review of any change in use that occurs on established transit rights-of-way;
5. Encouraging landscaping of the rights-of-way to provide both aesthetic and noise buffers to protect adjacent residential uses;
6. Requiring sound buffers (e.g. walls, landscape) adjacent to residential areas.

## **SERVICE SYSTEMS**

### **Standards and Criteria**

The proposed facilities shown on this Plan are to be developed in accordance with the standards for need, site area, design and location as expressed in the Service Systems Element of the General Plan. (See individual technical elements for specific standards.) Such development should be sequenced and timed to provide a workable, efficient, and adequate balance between land use and service facilities at all times.

The full residential, commercial and industrial densities and intensities proposed by the Plan are predicated upon the provision of adequate public service facilities, with reference to the standards contained in the General Plan. No increase in density shall be effected by zone change or subdivision unless it is determined that such facilities are adequate to serve the proposed development.

The Plan designates two standard types of local recreation sites. Short and intermediate range standards for these parks should be as follows:

**Neighborhood** - A minimum of 1 acre per 1,000 persons served, with a minimum site size of 5 acres. These sites should be designated at 1-mile intervals in residential neighborhoods. They will provide active recreational facilities for younger children as well as passive recreational facilities.

**Community** - A minimum of 1 acre per 1,000 persons served, with a minimum site size of 15 acres. These sites should be located at 3-mile intervals, and may serve several neighborhoods. Such a park is designated to serve residents of all ages with a much wider interest range than neighborhood parks.

The Plan designates Regional Park sites. These facilities, generally over 50 acres, may provide specialized recreational activities such as golf courses, tennis courts, campgrounds and museums which normally serve persons living throughout the City.

At times it will be necessary for portions of recreational sites to be used for public rights-of-way.

### **Features**

**Recreation:** The concept of a Federal or State assisted Santa Susana Mountains-Simi Hills Urban Recreation Area or Park is endorsed.

The Porter Ranch Park and open space system should be developed as generally indicated on the Plan Map and specifically indicated in the Porter Ranch Specific Plan and Development Agreement. Natural topography and wooded areas should be preserved, consistent with fire safety.

The Plan proposes utilization and development of flood control rights-of-way by the County of Los Angeles for open space purposes and/or hiking, bicycle and equestrian trails where appropriate. This type of recreation use is also proposed for power line rights-of-way.

**Schools:** The Plan proposes dual educational and recreational use of existing public school facilities by the general public after hours and on weekends. School grounds should be designed and landscaped by the Los Angeles Unified School District to facilitate after hour recreational use. The Department of Planning and the Los Angeles Unified School District shall work together to determine the location and development of new schools.

**Cultural and Historical Monuments:** The Overland Stage Coach Trail extending through the westerly portion of Chatsworth, the Chatsworth Community Church at Oakwood Memorial Park, the Spanish Kiln in the Chatsworth Reservoir and the 76 mature olive trees located near Lassen Street between Topanga Canyon Boulevard and Farralone Avenue are existing Cultural and Historical Monuments in the Community.

The Plan designates the area north of Stoney Point, east of Topanga Canyon Boulevard and south of the 118/Simi Freeway as a cultural/scenic landmark due to its geological, visual and historical characteristics.

**Archaeological Sites:** The Community is the location of many former Indian villages and camp sites which show evidence of pictograph drawings and other related artifacts. These archaeological sites should be preserved intact or protected whenever possible, and explored by competent professionals before any development occurs.<sup>1</sup>

**Bicycle Facilities:** The Plan delineates several bicycle facilities. These are designated as bike lanes when they are located in streets and bicycle paths when they are used exclusively by bicyclists along flood control channels and in parks and open space areas.

**Chatsworth Reservoir:** The reservoir was drained and taken out of service by the Department of Water and Power in 1969 and has since been declared seismically unsafe for use as a reservoir. This site provides a desirable open space amenity. The Plan designates this area as an Open Space "Nature Preserve" and is subject to requirements of CPC 90-0596 GPC. Transfer or sale of the Chatsworth Reservoir to any public agency or to a private party for any use other than a park or open space shall require the preparation and City Council adoption of a specific plan for the area, including all applicable environmental documentation prior to such development.

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<sup>1</sup> Primary sources for archaeological information in the Chatsworth area are: (1) Anthropology Department, Pierce College; (2) Northridge Archaeological Research Center, Anthropology Department, California State University, Northridge; and (3) Archaeological Survey, Anthropology Department, UCLA (which maintains the Master Records for the Southern California region).

## PROGRAMS

### PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

These programs establish a framework for guiding development of the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community in accordance with the objectives of the Plan. In general, they indicate those public and private actions which should take place during the initial five years following adoption of the Plan. The described actions will require the use of a variety of implementation methods.

#### Circulation

To facilitate local traffic circulation, relieve congestion, and provide mobility for all citizens, the following are required:

1. Continued development of the street system in conformance with existing traffic improvement programs;
2. Continued improvements to the public transportation system serving the Community; and
3. Monitoring of traffic mitigation measures for projects approved by discretionary review.

## Recreation, Parks and Open Space

1. Expansion and improvement of needed local parks throughout the Community should be accelerated, where feasible.
2. The City should encourage continuing efforts by the County, State and Federal agencies to acquire vacant lands for publicly-owned open space.
3. A minimum 100-foot buffer zone should be designated from the top of a channel bank for all riparian habitats. Projects that affect wetlands or natural waterways should comply with requirements of the California Department of Fish and Game and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

## Other Public Facilities

The development of other public facilities such as fire stations, libraries and schools should be sequenced and timed to provide a balance between land use and public services at all times.

### 1. Flood Control Channels

In connection with improving flood control channels, it is recommended that the County Flood Control District:

- a. Utilize concrete of a color that will blend with surrounding soil;
- b. Provide appropriate landscape plantings along the chain link fences;
- c. Vary the types and textures of plants and materials on channel slopes, and provide appropriate landscaping along the rights-of-way, particularly where the channels intersect with or run parallel to streets; and
- d. Incorporate unpaved equestrian and hiking trails and/or paved bicycle trails in the channel rights-of-way.

### 2. Underground Utilities

Where feasible, powerlines in new development should be placed underground. The Department of Water and Power should accelerate the program for placing existing powerlines underground.

### 3. Equestrian Trails and Bicycle Facilities

The Plan incorporates the Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan and Mobility Plan 2035, which are Elements of the General Plan, and it incorporates the [Guide to Existing and Potential Equestrian Trails, Twelfth Council District](#). To update the trails portion of the Plan, the continued aggressive approach to the acquisition and improvement of the trails is encouraged.

The accompanying sketches, entitled "[Cross Sections -Equestrian Trails and Bicycle Routes](#)", depict several suggested means of

incorporating a trail system into a street or subdivision. The trail system proposed by the Plan could be provided and maintained by various methods, including:

- a. Assessment districts consisting of concerned owners interested in establishing a trail system through horsekeeping areas; and
- b. Revenue from the equine licensing fee (Section 53.15.1 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code).

It is recommended that a task force of members from involved City departments be appointed to formulate a means of financing the development and maintenance of equestrian trails.

## **PRIVATE PARTICIPATION**

Citizen groups are encouraged to undertake private actions for community improvements such as:

### **Chatsworth Business District**

1. Initiation by property owners and merchants of programs to increase off-street parking facilities serving adjacent shopping areas;
2. Promoting street tree planting programs in commercial areas;
3. Sponsoring clean-up and beautification programs to improve the general environment;
4. Developing or remodeling shopping facilities and multiple-residential uses incorporating an appropriate theme such as Spanish Colonial;
5. Supporting the planning and construction of a Western museum depicting the colorful history of this area;
6. Adopting appropriate restrictions on the size and location of billboards and signs.

### **Chatsworth Industrial Area**

An industrial promotion program should be undertaken by property owners with the objective of marketing prepared industrial sites. A development plan should be prepared, featuring appropriate restrictions and controls such as: implementation of MR1 and MR2 Zones whenever feasible, a set of comprehensive performance standards and restrictive covenants except in those corridors described above on Nordhoff Street, Topanga Canyon Boulevard, and Lassen Street which should allow uses similar to those permitted in the M1 and M2 Zones.

## **PLANNING LEGISLATION**

Planning provisions of the Municipal Code and other legislation are continually being reviewed and amended. The following studies for amendments are suggested to aid in implementation of the Plan:

**Jobs/Housing Relationship:** An equal relationship between jobs and housing should be encouraged through revitalization of the Devonshire/Topanga Corridor, implementation of the Porter Ranch Specific Plan, implementation of floor area ratio limitations, and minor modification to exceed the industrial floor area ratio limitations.

**Circulation:** Implement current congestion management legislation and improve transit systems. Monitor and mitigate the impacts of new residential development on the circulation system.

**Design:** Require that all new and rehabilitated public and private facilities observe improved site design standards. The Devonshire/Topanga Corridor Specific Plan requires the Spanish Colonial style of architecture to promote the heritage of the area and achieve a unique sense of place in its designated commercial area. The Porter Ranch Specific Plan requires design review.

**Grading:** Consider possible amendments to the Zoning and/or Building Codes to limit the quantity of cut and fill grading in hillside and mountainous areas.

**Open Space Tax Relief:** The City Council, in its Annual Legislative Program (submitted to the State Legislature), should consider a proposal for tax relief for privately-owned lands assured for conservation and open space uses.

**Scenic Corridor Regulations:** Draft scenic corridor protection regulations for the Simi Valley-San Fernando Valley Freeway, including provisions for a corridor boundary. Land use, sign and grading controls, and maintenance provisions should be considered.

## **SEISMIC CONSIDERATIONS**

The earthquake of February 9, 1971 raised many questions relating to building codes, hillside zoning, and fault zones. Discretionary actions concerning land use should require earthquake protection measures, when practicable, commensurate with City earthquake policies and guidelines. Development should conform to the adopted Seismic Safety Plan and requirements of the Los Angeles Municipal Code. The Seismic Safety Plan sets forth standards for geologic evaluation, existing development, new development, non-structural elements, critical facilities, emergency preparedness, post-disaster and recovery.

## **ENERGY**

The Plan encourages energy conservation through allocating and distributing the location and intensity of land uses so that higher densities, including new housing opportunities, should be supported in centers and transportation corridors. The Plan encourages efficient design and landscape techniques such as strategic planting of deciduous trees, implementation of roof overhangs and glazing on south-facing exterior walls.

## FUTURE STUDIES

**Santa Susana Annexation.** The City of Los Angeles is concerned about the future development which may occur in the 12,800-acre area adjacent to the City of Los Angeles, north of the communities of Chatsworth, Porter Ranch and Granada Hills, in the Santa Susana Mountains currently in the unincorporated area of the County of Los Angeles. There is a need to protect and preserve the unique scenic quality, wildlife and vegetation of this steep mountainous area. (Map Footnote No. 11) There is also a need to limit any future development in this area to uses and densities which are compatible with its unique natural characteristics. The orientation of drainage and relationship of almost every other effect of this area is directed toward the City of Los Angeles. The public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice would be well served by the annexation of this area.

The Chief Legislative Analyst, City Administrative Officer and the City Planning Department are proceeding with the preparation of the necessary studies and recommendations for the City Council to annex this area.

**Trails.** The proposed trails, trail crossings, trail stops and assembly areas, as identified in the [Equestrian Areas and Trails Map](#), indicate areas and elements that further the desire to have a comprehensive equestrian trail system.

**RICHARD RIORDAN**, Mayor

James Kenneth Hahn, City Attorney  
Rick Tuttle, Controller

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April 21, 2005

All Interested Parties:

**RAS INTERPRETATION TO COMMUNITY PLAN FOOTNOTES  
DIRECTOR'S INTERPRETATION**

Attached is a copy of the Department of City Planning's interpretation of Ordinance 174,999, effective January 15, 2003, which established the RAS Zones. This published interpretation becomes final and effective 20-days from the date of this communication unless an appeal to the City Planning Commission is filed within this time period. Appeals shall be filed in duplicate on forms provided at any of the following public offices of the Department of City Planning, along with the required filing fee:

Planning Department - Public Counter  
201 North Figueroa Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone: (213) 482-7077

San Fernando Valley Office  
6262 Van Nuys Boulevard  
Van Nuys, CA 91401  
Phone: (818) 374-5050

If you have any questions regarding this case, please contact Jane Blumenfeld at (213) 978-1372 of myself at (213) 978-1274.

Sincerely,

CON HOWE  
Director of Planning

ROBERT H. SUTTON  
Deputy Director

CH/RHS:hkt

Attachment

cc: Council Planning Deputies  
Ray Chan, Building and Safety Department  
David Kabashima, Department of City Planning  
Jane Blumenfeld, Department of City Planning

April 21, 2005

**RAS RELATIONSHIP TO COMMUNITY PLAN FOOTNOTES  
DIRECTOR'S INTERPRETATION**

All Interested Parties:

**SUBJECT:**

Inquiries have been made regarding potential conflicts between Footnotes on the Community Plans and the RAS 3 and RAS 4 (hereafter referred to as RAS) Zones.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Residential/Accessory Services Zones (RAS) allow a greater floor area than commercial zones and greater height than otherwise allowed in height district 1VL.

"An example is:

Where a traditional C2-1VL with a Commercial plan designation is limited to a 1.5:1 FAR and a 45 height limit, the RAS 3-1VL and RAS 4-1VL shall not exceed a 3:1 FAR and 50 feet in height in accordance with the LAMC 12.10.5, 12.11.5 and 12.21.1."

The Community Plans as recommend by the City Planning Commission and adopted by City Council are a general guide to development for the community and city as a whole. Rarely do the Community Plans specify special planning rights or restrictions for particular parcels.

Some community plan maps contain footnotes regarding height and floor area. Footnotes appear on the map legend next to the commercial land use categories or in some cases on specific properties or areas. The footnotes that are attached to the commercial land use categories generally relate in a broad-brushed manner to all areas of the plan designated for that particular use. Typically such footnotes are not site specific, and as such, do not relate to specific locations, blocks, or parcels within the community plan area.

"An example of such a footnote which appears in most Community Plans reads:

Footnote 1: 'Height District 1VL'

This means all properties within the commercial land use category that have this footnote are limited to an FAR of 1.5:1 with a 45-foot height limit."

**DISCUSSION:**

When the City Council adopted the RAS Zones in 2002, their purpose was to promote mixed use development in the city's commercial zones, particularly in the commercial corridors which provide the greatest access to transit. In their adoption of the RAS Zones, the City Council recognized that

the additional floor area and height allowed by the RAS zones are necessary to make such primarily residential projects viable. However to protect the integrity of the Community Plans, the Council limited the residential density permitted in the RAS 3 and RAS 4 Zones to correspond to the residential densities permitted in the R3 and R4 Zones, respectively. Thus, they permitted RAS 3 and RAS 4 Zones in Plans that permit R4 and higher zoning but only permitted the RAS 3 Zone (and not RAS 4) in Plans that previously had R3 as the highest zoning category.

In one particular plan, the Plan Footnote on a Neighborhood Commercial area states:

"Floor Area Ratio 1:1."

In this specific situation it cannot be the intent of Council to allow a 3:1 FAR since they knowingly restricted the property to a 1:1 FAR.

#### INTERPRETATION:

It is hereby interpreted that the RAS Zones can exceed a Community Plan Footnote when that footnote is general in nature and generally refers to all parcels under that plan category. Where there is a specific footnote that refers to (a) specific parcel(s) that is more restrictive, the RAS Zone would not be permitted without a corresponding Plan Amendment.