

GRANADA HILLS-KNOLLWOOD

Community Plan

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GRANADA HILLS-KNOLLWOOD

Community Plan

Chapter I INTRODUCTION

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

SETTING

The Granada Hills-Knollwood Community Plan area is situated in the northern portion of the San Fernando Valley in the City of Los Angeles. It is surrounded by the communities of Northridge, Chatsworth, Porter Ranch and Mission Hills.

PLAN AREA

The Granada Hills-Knollwood Community Plan Area, as defined by the City Planning Department for statistical and planning purposes, contains approximately 9,651 acres. The irregularly shaped plan area is generally bounded by Devonshire and Lassen Streets on the south, the Santa Susana Mountains on the north, the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch District on the west and the Golden State Freeway (I-5) and San Diego Freeway (I-405) on the east.

The community's topography is as varied as the underlying geology, ranging from nearly flat to rugged steep-sided canyons and ridges increasing from south to north. The residential pattern of development in the community is also varied. The area north of Rinaldi Street is characterized by large estate lots with view homes situated along curvilinear streets, and equestrian trails, greenbelt buffers and vast scenic open spaces. The Los Angeles Reservoir and Knollwood Country Club are located in the northeast sector, and the northwest portion includes O'Melveny Park, Bee Canyon and the Aliso Canyon oilfields.

The southern portion of the community, south of Rinaldi Street, is developed with moderate sized lots and generally older homes on tree-lined grid streets. Most of the multiple-family housing and commercial areas are located in this part of the community.

Residential areas are located throughout the community and constitute the predominant land use at 6,623 acres or 59% of the total land area. The residential areas are primarily single family and are 79% of the total housing stock. The community has the second highest ratio of single-family units in the City.

Commercial development consists of an approximately 3% of the total land area. Most of the commercial uses are located within the small-scale, central business district on Chatsworth Street and in a number of well-defined commercial areas on Balboa Boulevard and Chatsworth Street and Zelzah Avenue.

There is little industrial land use in Granada Hills and comprises only 0.1% of the total land area. Some limited industrial use exists where Balboa Boulevard meets San Fernando Road, and at the northern tip of the plan area adjoining the Golden State Freeway and where Chatsworth Street adjoins the San Diego Freeway. The uses are limited to storage facilities.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

| | |
|---|--------|
| <i>Existing Population (1990 Census):</i> | 56,352 |
| <i>General Plan Framework Community</i> | |
| <i>Plan Population Projection (2010):</i> | 61,529 |
| <i>Community Plan Population Projection</i> | 69,296 |

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 1990 Census, the population of Granada Hills was 56,352 persons, which represents approximately 1.6% of the City of Los Angeles' 3.5 million residents. The district's population increased by only 466 residents between 1980 and 1990. This represents an average growth of less than 0.1% per year. During the same period, the city and countywide population grew at a rate of 1.7% and 1.9% per year, respectively. Although, the Community experienced a relatively small increase, this is counter to trends of the 1970s when the population declined by 2,475 residents.

The Community's ethnic composition is predominantly non-Hispanic White at 72%, followed by the next largest group being Asians and Others at 14% of the population. Hispanics comprise 12% and Blacks 2% of the population. The Community has a relatively high proportion of high school graduates at 85% compared to a citywide average of 67%.

The median age of the Community's population is four years older than the citywide population (34.9 years v. 30.9 years). The largest age difference between the Community and the city occurs in the 45-64 age group which represents 23% of the Community's total population as compared to only 17% in the City.

The Community's household size declined from an average of 2.9 persons per household in 1980 to an average of 2.8 persons per household in 1990. The 1990 census showed that the community had an average household income of \$63,115 compared with a citywide average income of \$45,701. Census data also reveals that only 5.7% of the community's residents were below the poverty level. At the citywide level, over 18% of the population was below poverty.

COMMUNITY HISTORY ¹

Two hundred years ago, the area which included Granada Hills and Knollwood was discovered, and occupied by the Spanish and Indians. During the Spanish rule, the land was used for wheat fields and grazing for the San Fernando Mission's large herds of cattle. In 1855 Geronimo Lopez acquired land in what is now Granada Hills and built an adobe building that became the Valley's first English speaking school. The nearby Lopez station served the Butterfield Stage and the mule trains hauling silver to Los Angeles. Much of this area is now covered by the upper Van Norman Reservoir.

In the 1880s George Porter became owner of 21,000 acres part of which is now Granada Hills. The area was used for small ranching and farming. J. H. Mosier, a wealthy oil man from Oklahoma, purchased 4,100 acres and built the Sunshine Ranch in 1917. This was after water was brought to the Valley in 1913 through the Owens Valley Aqueduct. He planted citrus, walnuts and apricots.

In 1925 Mosier sold his property to a real estate firm who divided the land into acreage for rabbit farming. This was not profitable. In 1927 and 1928, 80 new homes and the first school were built on lots. On July 4, 1927 the then known Sunshine Ranch was renamed Granada, for its similarity to Granada, Spain. The Hills was added in 1942 because of confusion with a northern California town by the name of Granada.

For many years, the area remained semi-agricultural. The Deodar trees on White Oak Avenue were planted in 1933 by agriculturist John Orcutt whose efforts have resulted in one of the most beautiful streets in the Valley.

In 1945, the population of Granada Hills was 4,500. Today it is over 55,000 people. Throughout the depression and following waves of development, Granada Hills-Knollwood has maintained a small-town, rural feeling. Even Chatsworth Street, the area's active commercial "strip" contributes to the small-town environment.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The State of California requires citizen participation in the preparation. General Plan Government Code Section 65351 reads, "During the preparation or amendment of the general plan, the planning agency shall provide opportunities for the involvement of citizens, public agencies, public utility companies, and civic education, and other community groups through public hearings and any other means the city or county deems appropriate."

Drafting of the first community plan involved members of the community who helped to identify and define the needs, desires, resources and the unique nature of the community. Subsequent changes in the plan have served to broaden the community participation that took place with the formation of the original plan. Community participation helps to update the plan as to what changes have taken place since its adoption.

1 - Source - The City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, 1994

OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

1. To coordinate the development of Granada Hills-Knollwood with that of other parts of the City and the metropolitan area.
2. To designate lands at appropriate locations for the various private uses and public facilities in the quantities and at densities required to accommodate population and activities projected to the year 2010.
3. To make provision for housing as is required to satisfy the varying needs and desires of all economic segments of the Community, maximizing the opportunity for individual choice.
4. To encourage the preservation and enhancement of the varied and distinctive residential character of the Community.
5. To preserve well-maintained residential neighborhoods of single and multiple-family housing, and to rehabilitate areas of deteriorated housing.
6. To encourage the following in hillside residential areas:
 - 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.
7. To promote economic well-being and public convenience through the allocation and distribution of commercial lands for retail, service, and office facilities in quantities and patterns based on current planning principles and standards.
8. To provide for the location and programming of public services and utilities and to coordinate the phasing of public facilities with private development.
9. To make provision for a circulation system coordinated with land uses and densities adequate to accommodate traffic; and to encourage the expansion and improvement of public transportation service.
10. 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.

Chapter II

FUNCTION OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

California State Law (Government Code Section 65300) requires that each city prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for its development. It must contain seven mandatory elements including land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. State of California law requires that the Land Use Element be prepared as part of the city's General Plan, and that the Land Use Element be correlated with the Circulation Element. In the City of Los Angeles thirty five community Plan comprise the City's Land Use Element.

The Land Use Element has the broadest scope of the General Plan elements required by the State. Since it regulates how land is to be utilized, many of the issues and policies contained in all plan elements are impacted by and/or impact this element.

Government Code Section 65302(a) requires a land use element to designate the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses of land. The land use element shall include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan. The land use element shall identify areas covered by the plan which are subject to flooding and shall be reviewed annually with respect to those areas.

The Granada Hills-Knollwood Community Plan is a part of the General Plan of the City of Los Angeles. It consists of this text and the accompanying map. The Community Plan text states the objectives, policies and programs. The Community Plan map outlines an arrangement and intensities of land uses, the street system and the location and characteristics of public service facilities.

ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

The Granada Hills-Knollwood Community Plan is to provide a 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 people who live in the Community; guide the development, betterment and change of the area to meet existing and anticipated needs and conditions; contribute to the improvement of the quality of the environment and balance growth; reflect economic potentialities and limitations; and protect investment to the extent reasonable and feasible.

This Plan proposes approximate locations and dimensions for land use. The Plan is **not** an official **zone map**, and while it is a guide, it does not imply an implicit right to a particular zone or 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 into the future, it designates conditionally more land in some areas for different zones and uses than may be desirable for many years.

Notwithstanding any other language herein, this Plan does not commit the City to initiate any program or expend any funds for such programs as may be suggested.

This Plan is subject to periodic review and amendment to reflect changes in circumstance.

PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

The last comprehensive update of the Granada Hills-Knollwood Community plan was completed in 1974 and revised in 1987 through the AB283 General Plan Zoning Consistency Program. In the past 20 years the community has grown at a slower rate than the City. During the 1970's the community population declined by 2,475 residents. Since 1980, the community's population grew by only 466 residents representing an average growth of less than 0.1% per year. Despite the relative slow growth, considerable development has occurred in the hillsides. The plan update reflects current conditions and includes provisions for the protection of the hillside.

The Plan sets forth objectives, policies and programs, and designates a potential population capacity of 68,980 which is larger than is anticipated to be built during the life of the Plan (2010). During the life of the Plan, it will be monitored by Congestion Management Monitoring, Year 2000 Market Forecast Review, and other appropriate measures. If during the life of the Plan, population, employment or housing in the Plan are occurring faster than projected, then amendments will be proposed and building controls may be put into effect until the Community Plan is revised to reflect the change in growth patterns.

ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

This Plan sets forth objectives, policies and implementation programs that pertain to Granada Hills-Knollwood; whereas broader issues, goals, objectives, and policies are provided by the Citywide Framework, and the other mandatory and permissive elements of the Los Angeles General Plan.

The Plan is organized and formatted to facilitate periodic updates. The State recommends that the entire plan be comprehensively reviewed every five years to reflect new conditions, local attitudes, and technological advances.

The principal method for the implementation of the Land Use Map is the Zoning Ordinance. The City's Zoning Map must be updated to remain consistent with the adopted Land Use Map. Together, the Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map identify intensity of use and development standards applicable to specific areas and parcels of land within the community.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The City of Los Angeles has the responsibility to revise and implement the City's General Plan. State law requires that the General Plan be internally consistent. The Granada Hills-Knollwood Community, which is a portion of the City's Land Use Element shall be consistent with the other elements and components of the General Plan.

The Citywide General Plan Framework, currently under review, is the umbrella concept of the General Plan which will provide the overall guiding vision for Los Angeles into the 21st century. It is based on a directed growth strategy which targets residential and commercial growth along boulevards and corridors and clustered development around community centers. The directed growth strategy expands the Centers Concept, which was adopted by the City Council in 1974 as the City's long-range development strategy.

The General Plan Framework provides the following proposed 2010 projects for the Granada Hills-Knollwood Community Plan area:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| <i>Population (2010) Projection</i> | <i>61,529</i> |
| <i>Employment (2010) Projection</i> | <i>19,744</i> |
| <i>Housing (2010) Projection</i> | <i>21,632</i> |

In addition, to the seven State mandated elements, the City's General Plan includes a Service System element, a Cultural element and a Major Public Facilities and other elements. All the provisions and requirements apply to the Granada Hills-Knollwood Community Plan.

The thirty-five community plans, which constitute the Land Use Element, are intended to guide the location and intensity of the private and public facilities.

Neighborhood Plans, such as Granada Hills Specific Plan, involve the preparation of special plans which blend both policy and implementation functions for unique neighborhoods within a community. In addition to these specific plans, overlay zones also combine policy and implementation functions to address issues peculiar to a specific neighborhoods.

PLAN CONSISTENCY

Each plan land use category indicates the corresponding zones permitted by the Plan unless further restricted by the Plan text, footnotes, adopted Specific Plans or other specific limitations on discretionary approvals. The Plan recognizes that the residential densities and commercial and industrial intensities depicted on the Plan map are theoretical and will not occur due to plan and zone regulations, economic conditions, and the design limitations.

For each plan category, the Plan permits all identified corresponding zones, as well as those zones which are more restrictive, as referenced in Section 12.23 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC). Any subsequent action that modifies the Plan or any monitoring review that results in changes to the Plan must make new Plan consistency findings at the time of that decision.

Chapter III

LAND USE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

The Granada Hills-Knollwood Community Plan has been designed to accommodate the anticipated growth in population and employment of the Community to the year 2010. The Plan intends to guide development consistent with guidelines contained herein and in Citywide policies.

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 Granada Hills business districts.

Much of the 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.

LAND USE

HOUSING

Standards and Criteria

Property in residential zones permitting densities in excess of those designated on the Plan shall be reclassified to more appropriate zones.

The intensity of land use in the mountain and hillside areas, 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 circulation system, both within the area and in peripheral areas, to accommodate traffic generated by existing development and by the potential development of the plan.
2. The adequacy of sewers, drainage facilities, fire protection services and facilities, and other necessary public services to serve the area at the existing level of development and at the potential development of the plan.
3. The steepness of the topography of the various parts of the area, and the suitability of the geology of the area for development.
4. The compatibility of the proposed development with permitted land uses and existing development on adjacent properties.

HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT

Standards and Criteria

In hillside areas new residential development shall be further limited in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Ridgelines, shall be protected, preserved, and retained in their natural state to the greatest extent possible. Ridgelines are characterized as being prominent backdrops where development should not occur.

Ridgelines located north of Sesnon Boulevard have irreplaceable scenic value. To assure that the design and placement of buildings and other improvements preserve, complement and enhance views from other areas, in reviewing subdivisions located north of Sesnon Boulevard, the Advisory Agency shall establish lot elevations so that buildings and structural heights will be 50 feet below adjacent ridgelines. Additionally, to protect ridges, environmentally sensitive areas, and to prevent erosion associated with development, grading and density shall be limited to prevent visual interruption of the ridge profile.

2. To the extent possible, natural topography shall be preserved through discretionary review of the site plans and consideration shall be given to retaining an ecological balance with respect to the natural vegetation, soils, slopes and drainage.
2. Fire, flood, erosion, or other hazards to public safety shall not be created or increased.
4. The proposed project should keep with the low density and rural, horsekeeping character of the area.
5. Hillside Subdivision and Densities
 - a. Tentative subdivision maps shall include a site design plan prepared by a team of design professionals including a registered landscape architect and licensed civil engineer for the purpose of achieving subdivision that is both safe and sensitive to the natural topography and rural character of the hillside area. The site design plan shall indicate how homes will be sited and the design of structures should minimize viewshed impacts from adjacent residential areas. The plans shall also show the location and alignment of equestrian trails when required.
 - b. Hillside areas designated Minimum, Very Low I, or Very Low II density on the Plan map shall be restricted to the following lot limitations, except when the slope density ordinance is more restrictive. For areas north of Sesnon Boulevard, designated Minimum density, all lots shall be minimum lot size of 2 acres. For areas south of Sesnon Boulevard, west of Shoshone Avenue and Highwater Road, all lots shall be a minimum size of 1 acre.
 - c. To the extent feasible, the "cluster concept" may be utilized for residential development in the hillside areas in order to preserve the natural terrain, minimize the amount of grading required, and provide more open space for recreation and equestrian uses. The cluster concept is characterized by the grouping of residential structures on the more level parts of the terrain while retaining the steeper slopes in their natural state or in a park-like setting. The density pattern indicated on the Plan map may be adjusted to

facilitate development on the more level portions of the terrain provided that the total number of dwelling units indicated in any development is not increased over that allowed by the Plan based on the net area of development. All lots in K districts should include areas for equestrian facilities.

6. Hillside Grading

- a. All subdivision requests shall require a detailed grading plan to be submitted for the approval of the Deputy Advisory Agency. The grading plan shall indicate the amount and location of all cut and fill. It shall also clearly depict all existing and proposed grades, drainage facilities, and proposed building elevations and footprints.
- b. The natural terrain should be retained to the greatest extent possible, and should be the primary criteria used to determine the placement and/or alignment of houses, roads, drainage facilities, equestrian facilities, and other necessary structures. The landform grading approach and techniques as outlined in the "Planning Guidelines Landform Grading Manual" (Department of City Planning, Los Angeles) are to be utilized in site planning. The Hillside Ordinance (No. 168159) further governs development of hillside lots and establishes regulations for height, front and side yards, fire protection, lot coverage, parking, street access, sewer connections, grading, remodeling and additions. The plan encourages the use of split-level architectural design to reduce grading.
- c. Retaining Walls. This Plan discourages the use of retaining walls in subdivisions used to maximize lot and pad size or to fulfill grading requirements (as stated in Section 7). Where retaining walls are necessary, they should be limited to a maximum exposed area of 5 feet. To be aesthetically pleasing, retaining walls shall be surfaced with materials that blend into the natural terrain (such as natural or artificial stone veneer). Landscaping to mitigate the appearance of retaining walls is encouraged.

7. Multiple-unit residential standards and criteria:

The following standards and criteria shall apply for all new multiple-unit residential structures:

- a. Multiple-unit buildings on Devonshire Street should obtain vehicular access from rear service alleys only. No driveways should lead to Devonshire Street unless otherwise approved by the Department of Transportation.
- b. The design of walls and fences shall be compatible with that of the principal structures on the site. Walls or fences visible from a public street should be articulated by architectural detailing in the wall plane facing the public street. Examples are staggered walls, indentations in the wall, rhythmic spacing of columns, or series of raised planters.

- c. Projects adjacent to single-family dwellings should not provide a uni-dimensional facade without articulation, perforations or architectural detailing.

Features

The Plan proposes that the low density residential character of the Community be preserved, and that single-family residential neighborhoods be protected from encroachment by other types of uses.

In the mountain and hillside areas northerly of Sesnon Boulevard all natural slopes not yet developed and generally in excess of 15% have been designated for Minimum density and the Deputy Advisory Agency has the authority, in approving divisions of land, to limit density under the slope density ordinance to protect the hillsides.

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 background. Additional low and moderate income housing to meet the special needs of the elderly, disabled and other designated special needs groups is needed in all parts of the City. Such housing should be located near transit routes and necessary convenience and medical services.

Multiple residential dwelling units are proposed in proximity to commercial development. Mixed use development combining commercial and residential land uses is encouraged. Mixed use projects should be designed to mitigate potential conflicts between the commercial and residential uses such as noise, lighting, security and automobile access and provide adequate amenities for residential occupants.

The Community is expected to have approximately 61,529 residents by 2010, an increase of 5,177 from the 1990 population of 56,352 persons. The Plan provides a residential capacity for about 69,296 persons, approximately 12.6% in excess of the projected 2010 population.

The residential uses have been divided into the following categories and proportions:

PLAN POPULATION AND DWELLING UNIT CAPACITY

| Residential Land Use Category | Dwelling Units Per Net Acre Midpoint | Number of Dwelling Units | Net Acres | Persons Per Dwelling Unit (2010) | Reasonable Exp. Population (2010) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Minimum | 0.75 | 313 | 417 | 2.96 | 926 |
| Very Low I | 1.5 | 1,652 | 1,101 | 2.96 | 4,890 |
| Very Low II | 2.5 | 2,055 | 822 | 2.96 | 6,083 |
| Low | 5.0 | 15,600 | 3,120 | 2.96 | 46,176 |
| Low Medium I | 9.5 | 361 | 38 | 2.24 | 809 |
| Low Medium II | 18.0 | 1,512 | 84 | 2.24 | 3,387 |
| Medium | 32.0 | 3,136 | 98 | 2.24 | 7,025 |
| TOTALS | | 24,629 | 5,880 | | 69,296 |

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Standards and Criteria

The commercial lands (not including associated parking) designated by this plan to serve suburban residential areas are adequate in quantity to meet the needs of the projected population to the year 2010.

The Community's commercial districts, including the central business district on Chatsworth Street, shall remain small in scale and be developed in a manner to meet the needs of a local service area. The design of new development shall serve to visually enhance the Community and accentuate its identification with its origins through architecture that is consistent with the Spanish Colonial style. The Granada Hills Specific Plan (Ordinance No. 167,555 effective, March 3, 1992) provides specific regulations for land use, building height, landscaping and screening, parking, signage, and urban design features on the majority of commercial properties within the Community. The Granada Hills Specific Plan boundary is indicated on the Plan map and the Specific Plan text is located within the Plan Booklet.

Features

The Plan provides a total of 273 acres for commercial uses, including Community Commercial, Neighborhood and Office, Highway Oriented, and Limited Commercial uses.

1. The plan provides 141 acres for Community Commercial uses. The 82-acre Granada Hills Business District, located at Chatsworth Street and Zelzah Avenue and the 44-acre shopping area located at Devonshire Street and Balboa Boulevard, will be complemented by Medium and Low-Medium density apartments and townhouses on adjacent and nearby properties.

2. The remaining commercial acres are designated for Highway Oriented, Neighborhood and Office, or Limited Commercial uses at appropriate locations throughout the Community.

The plan designates 6 acres for industrial uses. These lands are located adjacent to the San Diego Freeway and Golden State Freeway and where Balboa Boulevard meets San Fernando Road at the northern tip of the plan area.

OPEN SPACE

Standards and Criteria

The Open Space designation for publicly owned land is to protect and preserve natural resources and natural features of the environment such as wildlife refuge and preservation areas; to provide outdoor recreation opportunities and advance the public health and welfare; to enhance environmental quality; to encourage the management of public lands in a manner which protects environmental characteristics; to encourage maintenance of open space uses on all publicly owned park and recreation lands, and to maintain open space public land which is essentially unimproved. The Open Space Zone is intended to be a corresponding zone for publicly owned property.

The Open Space designation for privately owned land is to protect and preserve natural resources and natural features of the environment such as wildlife refuge and preservation areas; to encourage the management of private lands in a manner which protects environmental characteristics, and to conserve large parcels which are essentially unimproved. The A1-1 Zone is intended to be a corresponding zone for privately owned property.

Features

The Plan designates 2,456 acres for Open Space. The Plan proposes that open space areas be preserved and conserved from encroachment by inconsistent uses.

Natural waterways should be preserved and maintained as natural open spaces whenever possible. A buffer zone should support native vegetation and be at least 100 feet from the top of a channel bank. Trails should be designed to be outside this buffer zone as much as possible. Access within these areas should prohibit off-road vehicles and motor bikes by fencing.

CIRCULATION

HIGHWAYS AND STREETS

Standards and Criteria

Roadways within the Community shall be developed in accordance with standards and criteria contained in the Highways and Freeway Element of the General Plan and the City's Standard Street Dimensions except where environmental issues and planning practices warrant alternate consideration.

Where feasible, highways and local streets shall be expeditiously improved to their greatest capacities to meet the existing and anticipated circulation needs.

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

New hillside streets shall be based upon a circulation system which follows the natural terrain.

Any additional improvements to White Oak Avenue between Rinaldi Street and Devonshire Street shall be limited to 54 feet in width between curbs, in order that the deodar trees, designated as a cultural and historical monument, may be preserved.

The full residential, commercial and industrial densities and intensities proposed by the Plan are predicated upon the development of the designated Major and Secondary Highways. No increase in density shall be effected by zone change or subdivision unless it is determined that the Local Streets and Major and Secondary Highways serving and in the area of the property involved are adequate to serve the traffic generated, and in mountain areas, until review and approval by the Fire Department.

The following improvements are required to mitigate traffic/ circulation impacts:

1. San Fernando Mission Boulevard - Widen San Fernando Mission Boulevard between Zelzah Avenue and Louise Avenue to provide 2 lanes in each direction.
2. Sesnon Boulevard - Restrict peak period parking, and re-stripe Sesnon Boulevard as follows to provide 3 lanes in each direction: in the eastbound direction between Tampa Avenue and Balboa Boulevard; and in the westbound direction between Reseda Boulevard and Balboa Boulevard.
3. Rinaldi Street - Restrict peak period parking, and re-stripe Rinaldi Street between Haskell Avenue and the I-405 southbound ramps to provide 3 lanes in each direction.
4. Devonshire Boulevard - Restrict peak period parking on Devonshire Boulevard between Lindley Avenue and Haskell Avenue to provide 3 lanes in each direction.
5. Reseda Boulevard - Restrict peak period parking on Reseda Boulevard between the SR-118 ramps and Plummer Street to provide 3 lanes in each direction.
6. In addition to the above improvement, additional turning lanes should be required at all intersections defined by secondary and major

highways. At many intersections with secondary and major highways, double left-turn lanes would be necessary. For major highways, such a configuration would result in two left-turn lanes, two through lanes, and a shared through/right-turn lane on intersection approaches. For those streets with a right-of-way of 100 feet, 10-foot interior lanes and 8-foot sidewalks would be required. For secondary highways, two left-turn lanes, a through lane, and a shared through/right-turn lane should be provided.

7. The Automated Traffic Surveillance and Control System (ATSAC) should be installed throughout the Plan area. This would be a necessary capacity improvement to maintain adequate levels of service.

Features

The Plan incorporates the Highways and Freeways Element of the Los Angeles General Plan. Collector Streets are shown to assist traffic flow toward Major and Secondary Highways. Sesnon Boulevard, Rinaldi Street, the Simi-San Fernando Valley Freeway (SR 118), the Golden State Freeway (I-5), the San Diego Freeway (I-405), and White Oak Avenue between Rinaldi Street and Devonshire Street which is the site of Deodar Trees Cultural Monument are all designated as scenic highways by the Scenic Highways Plan.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Buses and other modes of public transportation should provide improved service within the local area and convenient access to other areas of the city.

SERVICE SYSTEMS

Standards and Criteria

The Plan has been prepared to depict appropriate long-term land uses on the basis of information and policies at the time of adoption. The Plan map shows theoretical residential densities and commercial and industrial intensities beyond what is anticipated above the life of the Plan. The Plan has been designed to provide adequate infrastructure in accordance with reasonably foreseeable growth.

Public facility lands are publicly owned lands used for circulation, public recreation and use, and service systems form the internal framework of the community.

The public facilities shown on this Plan are to be developed in accordance with user needs, site area, design, and general location expressed in the Service Systems Element of the General Plan. (See individual facility plans for specific standards.) Such development shall be phased and scheduled to provide a workable, efficient, and adequate balance between land use and service facilities.

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 service the proposed development. In mountain areas no tentative subdivision map shall be approved until review and approval by the Fire Department.

The Plan designates two standard types of local parks. Standards for Neighborhood and Community recreational sites are found in the Public Recreation Plan Element.

Features

Schools: The plan proposes dual use of existing school facilities for the general public after school hours and on weekends. School grounds should be landscaped so as to facilitate after hour recreational use. The Department of Recreation and Parks shall work with the Los Angeles Unified School District to develop a program where both schools and parks can be used for recreational and instructional purposes. The acquisition and development of one new Elementary School is proposed.

Recreational Sites: Two additional Neighborhood park sites are proposed to serve surrounding neighborhoods.

Equestrian Trails: The Plan indicates the general location of an Equestrian Trail network as also shown in the "Guide to Existing and Potential Equestrian Trails," Twelfth Council District. Those trails near Sesnon Boulevard and the Simi-San Fernando Valley Freeway could connect to trails proposed in the Chatsworth and Sylmar communities. The trail along the power line could provide a continuous link to the Sepulveda Recreation Basin.

Bikeways: The Plan proposes routes for non-motorized bicycles along Bull Creek and the power line right-of-way. Careful consideration will be given in the design to minimize possible nuisance and disturbance to adjoining property and to protect rights of security and privacy.

Day Care: The plan encourages the establishment of day care facilities for children (including family day care homes).

Fire Prevention: The development of gated communities is discouraged and not permitted on City maintained public right-of-way. Gated communities delay the response time of fire and other emergency services. To minimize loss of life and property, gated communities should consider the use of the following: boxed-in eaves; insulated windows; non-wood roofs and sidings; sprinklers; noncombustible finishes; and irrigated and managed greenbelts or landscaped buffers. Gated communities that are established shall not limit access to equestrian or recreational areas and trails, as shown in the "Guide to Existing and Potential Equestrian Trails," Twelfth Council District.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Standards and Criteria

Wildlife. A detailed rare plant and wildlife survey should be conducted where there are existing native open spaces in the Santa Susana Mountains. Specific mitigation measures shall be developed for any sensitive species

found on a given site. In developing specific mitigation measures, the following measures should be considered in descending order:

- **Avoid** direct or indirect impacts.
- **Reduce** or minimize impacts to an insignificant level by preserving a viable portion of the population.
- **Compensate** for the impacts by transplanting, or by habitat enhancement elsewhere, or the preservation of population elsewhere.

Seismic. 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.

PROGRAMS

The following programs establish a framework for guiding development of the Granada Hills-Knollwood Community in accordance with the objectives of the Plan. In general, they indicate those public and private actions that should take place 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 actions should be taken:

1. Continued development of the highway and street system in conformance with the City's Five Year Capital Program and the Highways and Freeways Element of the General Plan as well as provisions in Circulation, Highways, and Streets.
2. Expanded planning and implementation of improvements to the public transportation system for the Community to reduce reliance on automobiles and serve the elderly, the disabled, and other residents with special needs. Improvements include bus schedule information, expanded public transit connecting residential and commercial areas, and specialized transportation services where needed.
3. Planning and development of bikeways to provide recreation and alternate means of transportation.
4. Studies to determine the future streets needed and their most feasible alignments in the undeveloped hillside areas to provide an adequate circulation system.

5. Development of scenic corridor plans for Rinaldi Street and Sesnon Boulevard to expand the circulation system while providing attractive landscaping and open space.

RECREATION, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Acquisition, expansion, and improvement of needed local parks throughout the Community should be accelerated where feasible.

The City should encourage increased efforts by County, State and Federal agencies to acquire vacant lands for publicly owned open space.

Where such acquisition is not feasible, the City should encourage private funding for open space with appropriate dedications or transfers to the City for administration and operation.

The City should accelerate its efforts to expand and improve the existing local parks, recreational trails and bikeways and related facilities, as well as any acquisitions of a similar nature.

Priority should be given to:

1. The expansion, modernization and improvement of Granada Hills, Zelzah, Bee Canyon, Aliso Canyon, and O'Melveny parks by providing an appropriate spectrum of athletic uses thereon.
2. Preserving excess parcels adjoining the Simi Valley-San Fernando Valley Freeway for use as strip parks and greenbelt.
3. Protecting and improving the existing and designated bikeways, equestrian trails and hiking areas.
4. The acquisition of sufficient lands adjacent to Sesnon Boulevard to transform it into a scenic highway with appropriate open areas and landscaping.

OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES

The development of other public facilities such as Fire Stations, Police Stations, Libraries, and Schools should be phased and scheduled to provide a balance between land use and public services at all times. New power lines and other utilities and services should be placed underground wherever feasible, and a program for the undergrounding of existing power lines and other utilities and services should be developed. It is the intent of this plan, that when any Public Facility transfers to private ownership, that it be rezoned to the most restrictive adjacent corresponding zone.

PRIVATE PARTICIPATION

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

1. Promoting street tree planting programs in commercial areas.
2. The establishment of a community-wide revitalization and beautification committee. This committee would inventory and identify areas that are in need of cleanup, repair and improvement, and would investigate means available to remedy these areas.

3. Initiating property owner and merchant programs to increase off-street parking facilities serving adjacent parking areas.

PLANNING LEGISLATION

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

Design: The Granada Hills 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 areas. The requirements of the Granada Hills Specific Plan shall apply to all commercial development within the specific plan area.

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.

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

FUTURE STUDIES

Parking in the Central Business District: This Plan encourages the establishment of a committee to study parking problems in the central business district and recommend parking alternatives.

Site Analysis: A detailed site analysis should be conducted for all remaining undeveloped portions of the hillside area. This study would include a site inventory, suitability analysis, design guidelines, and presentation of development alternatives.

Equestrian Areas and Trails: Portions of the Granada Hills Community Plan area are designated for horsekeeping. The Plan map shows existing and proposed horsekeeping areas and trails. (A more complete description of the status of the trails system is provided in the "Guide to Existing and Potential Equestrian Trails," Twelfth Council District, February 1991.) A Citywide ordinance is being prepared to determine standards for horsekeeping areas such as lot size, pad size, distance of equine enclosure from the habitable room of a neighbor's dwelling unit, and trail alignments. It is suggested that lots be a minimum of 1 acre with few sidewalks where riding is possible along the street or on grade separated trails. Street improvements and subdivision design should be compatible with the semi-rural character of the neighborhood.

Annexation up to the Santa Susana Crest: Prepare a study focused on the City of Los Angeles' interest in future development that may occur in the area adjacent to the City, north of Chatsworth/Porter Ranch and Granada Hills-Knollwood in the Santa Susana Mountains currently in the unincorporated area of the County of Los Angeles. Approximately 1,000 acres of this area may be annexed into Granada Hills-Knollwood. There is

a need to protect and preserve the unique scenic quality, wildlife and vegetation of this steep mountainous area. 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.

Water and Power Reservoir: The Water and Power reservoir, an important facility in the City's water distribution system, also serves as a desirable open space amenity. Further study is needed with respect to the future development of this facility for limited recreation or park use in its fringe areas while ensuring that no sacrifice will be made in water quality and service.

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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, 3rd 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.