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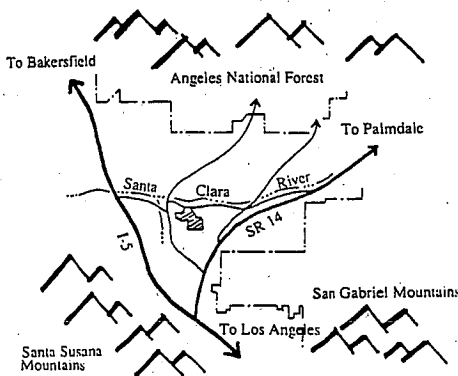
2.0 COMMUNITY CONTEXT & INTEGRATION

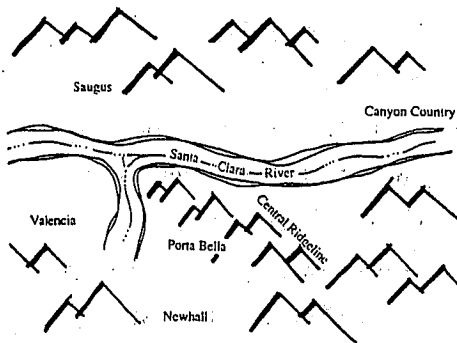
On December 15, 1987, the four communities which comprised the majority of the Santa Clarita Valley within the County of Los Angeles incorporated to become the City of Santa Clarita. One of the ideals behind this event was to gain local control of development within the Santa Clarita Valley. According to Santa Clarita's General Plan, total population within the valley is anticipated to reach over a quarter million residents within 20 years.

The draft General Plan for the City of Santa Clarita recognizes that growth in Santa Clarita is a part of a much broader trend. People are selecting to live in communities like Santa Clarita because it offers an alternative to the increasingly urbanized Los Angeles basin. The Santa Clarita General Plan charts a course to accommodate the anticipated growth of the of the Valley's population, as well as the resulting increase in influence this City will have as a place of regional importance. This Specific Plan will help to ensure the "charted course" is realized in a comprehensive manner, rather than by a series of smaller, unrelated developments.

2.1 Regional Setting

The City of Santa Clarita is located approximately 35 miles north of downtown Los Angeles, 70 miles south of Bakersfield and 40 miles east of the Pacific Ocean. The San Gabriel and Santa-Susana mountain ranges separate the valley from the San Fernando Valley and the Los Angeles Basin to the south, and from the San Joaquin Valley, Mojave Desert and Angeles National Forest to the north. The Santa Clarita Valley is generally circumferenced by the Los Angeles National Forest.





The Santa Clarita Valley is an irregularly shaped area, roughly 500 square miles in area. The Valley is bisected by a discontinuous ridgeline which runs centrally through the valley from southeast to northwest. The Porta Bella Specific Plan area is located on this discontinuous ridgeline, near its terminus at the intersection of San Fernando and Soledad Canyon Roads. The City of Santa Clarita, comprises roughly 150 square miles within the heart of the valley.

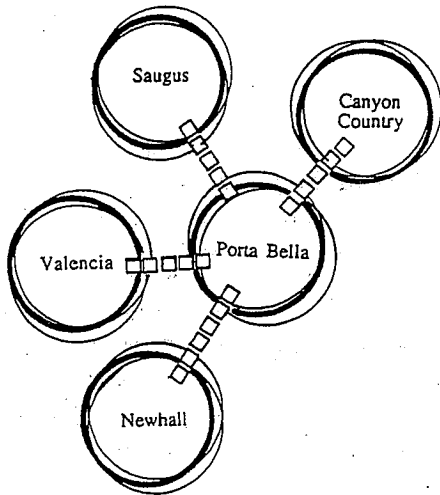
2.2 The Santa Clarita Communities

Gold was discovered in the Santa Clarita Valley in 1842, and with it came a population of miners, shopkeepers, farmers and settlers that began in earnest the settling of the Santa Clarita Valley. They brought with them their varied cultures and architectural ideas. In the 1870's, commercial oil wells and refineries were developed, which further rooted settlement in the Santa Clarita Valley. In the early 1900's, the infantile Hollywood movie studios utilized the rugged setting for Western movies. Four communities evolved from this influx of people to the area.

The following are excerpts from the City of Santa Clarita General Plan regarding the communities:

Newhall: Newhall is the earliest permanent settlement in the Valley, established in 1876 in conjunction with the construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad. This area was a typical Western town of oil, mining, and railroad workers. Large stands of oak trees are scattered throughout the community. Placerita Canyon is also a portion of this area.

Valencia: The community of Valencia is part of the original 37,500 acre Newhall Ranch, a Mexican land grant now owned by the Newhall Land and Farming Company. Named after its sister City in Spain, Valencia was dedicated in 1965 and developed as a planned community.



Saugus: Established in 1887, Saugus, named for the Massachusetts birthplace of founder Henry Mayo Newhall, also owes its existence to the Southern Pacific Railroad. The Saugus Speedway, a popular attraction and site of Saugus' famous Sunday Swap Meet, was originally designed in 1924 as a rodeo arena. The last great train robbery in the state took place behind the grandstands in 1928.

Canyon Country: With more than 30,000 residents, Canyon Country has the largest population of any community in the City. Canyon Country includes the area along Soledad Canyon Road east of Saugus and Friendly Valley. It contains a wide range of housing types. Commercial and manufacturing activities are concentrated along both sides of Soledad Canyon Road and along northern Sierra Highway. An industrial hub is also located in the Hornby and Golden Triangle areas. Sand Canyon is also a portion of this area.

The four existing communities are generally located around the central discontinuous ridgeline, creating an undeveloped center of the City. It is within this center area that the 996 acre Porta Bella extension to the communities of Santa Clarita is planned.

2.3 Existing Conditions of Porta Bella

Existing Land Use & General Plan Designation - The 996-acre project site is largely vacant, with several buildings remaining which are utilized by the Whittaker-Bermite Company for site maintenance, security and offices. Most structures for previous industrial-use facilities on the site have been torn down, or stand vacant and dilapidating. The existing buildings are within the lower elevation area near Soledad Canyon Road, as well as in the adjacent canyon area to the south. The area next to the defunct Saugus Speedway is currently utilized for parking for Metrolink.

The City of Santa Clarita General Plan states regarding the Porta Bella project area:

This area of land consists of approximately 1,000 acres of land located in the geographic center of the planning area. The area is currently vacant and has environmental problems associated with contaminated soils which is currently undergoing corrective measures. A substantial opportunity exists for the City and the property owner to create a City focus of a mix of uses including but not limited to specialty retail commercial, office park, low to high density housing, interconnected open space and greenbelts, educational facilities, a commuter rail station, and public parks. Care must be taken to assure that traffic, visual, and other environmental impacts are properly mitigated and that the ultimate plan is in accordance with the goals and policies of the General Plan.

Topography - Topographically, Porta Bella can be characterized as an elevated plane, rising gradually from the river valley and proceeding north easterly to the ridgeline. From the ridgeline, it drops off rather dramatically to meet the lower river valley elevation. Most of the project area is located to the west of this ridge. To the interior of the project area, smaller multi-directional undulations project throughout the site.

From the exterior of the project, the interior is nearly non-visible, in that it is largely surrounded by steep slopes and ridges. The topographical map and the contour analysis maps illustrate the character of the existing landform.

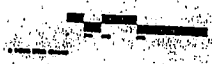
Porta Bella Specific Plan





Contour Analysis

Prepared by The SWA Group
May, 1990

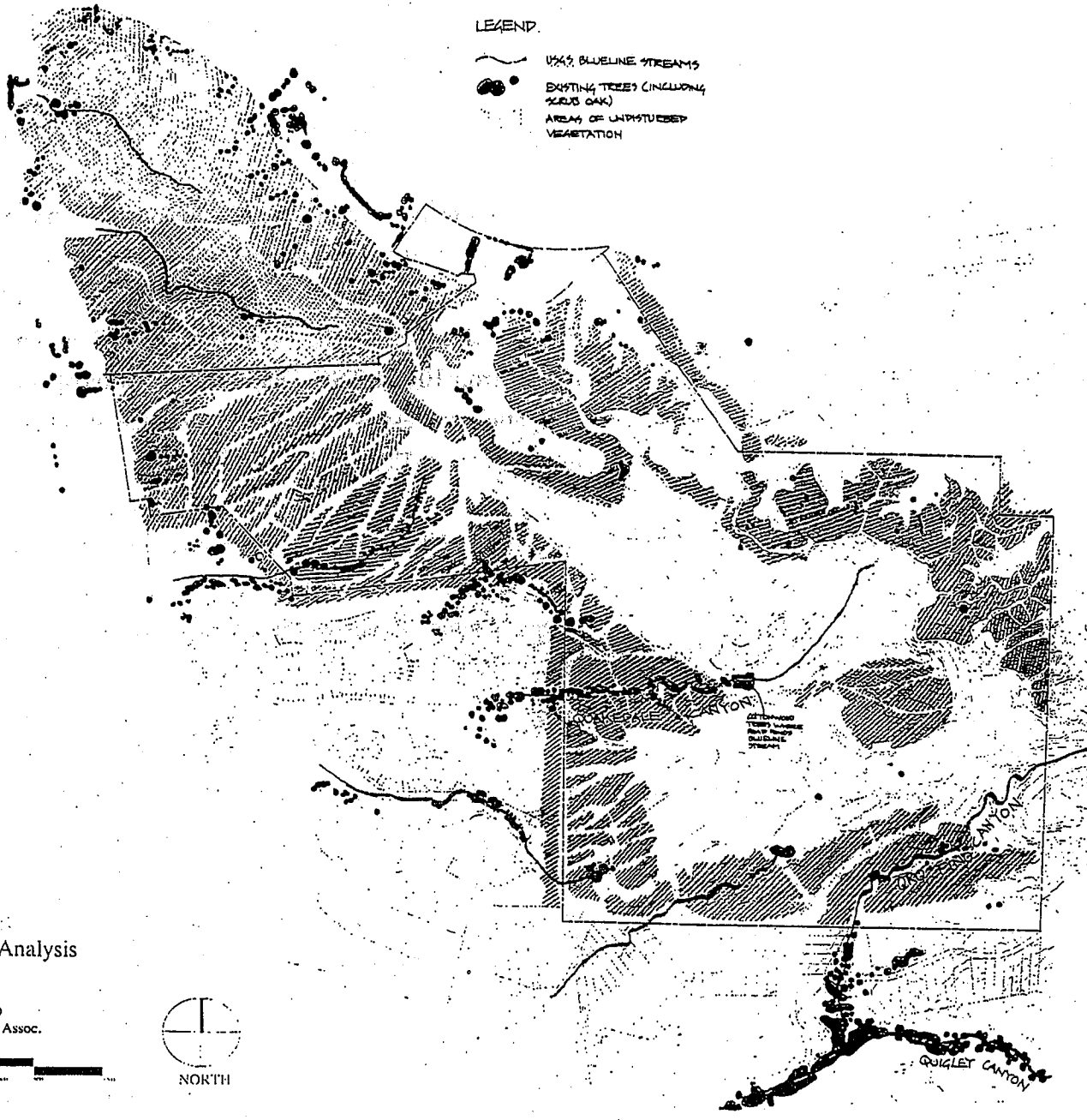


Previous Use - Whittaker-Bermite Company has owned the property since 1967 and manufactured ordnance (military ammunition and equipment) there from 1967 to 1987. Previous owners from 1934 included the Los Angeles Powder Company, Halifax Explosives Company, E. P. Halliburton, Inc., and Bermite Powder Company. These companies produced munitions and a limited line of explosives. Some of the manufactured products tested or produced on site are considered hazardous wastes and 14 sites were identified by the EPA for clean-up. Of the 14 RCRA sites, all but one have received closure from EPA/DTSC. Detailed description of these sites and their mitigation process is contained within the attached Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

As a result of the previous use, much of the site's interior is severely damaged due to grading for roads, building sites and fire breaks. The ridgeline which traverses the site is scarred from grading, as well as many areas of the exterior oriented slopes.

Biology - Most of the vegetation on-site have been disturbed to a degree. Much of the vegetation has been removed, with limited pockets of trees to the interior of the site. Most of the trees, including oaks, are found on the exterior slope banks of the site.

Within this Specific Plan and the attached EIR is further discussion which details the existing conditions, project impacts and proposed mitigations for the biology and wildlife found on site.

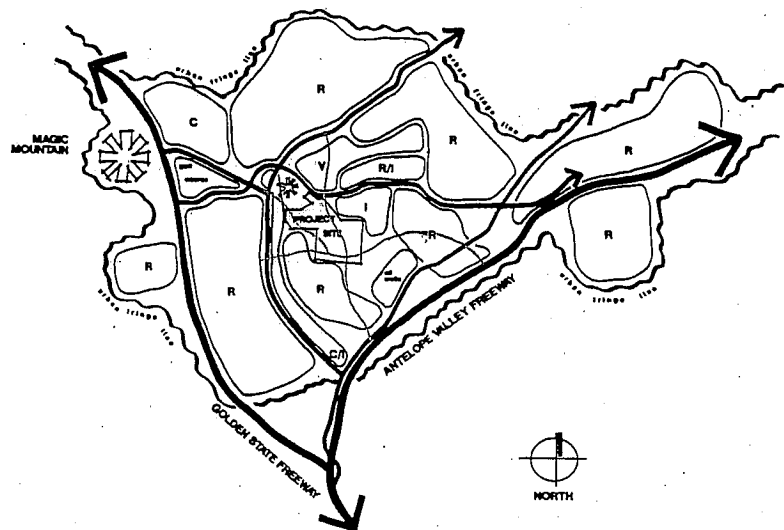


Biological Analysis

Prepared By:
The SWA Group
Tom Dodson & Assoc.



Surrounding Land Uses - North: A portion of the area north of the project site is owned by City of Santa Clarita. This 237-acre parcel is topographically related to the proposed Porta Bella area, as it is also located above the surrounding river valley. The City property is the point of land generally located at the south-east intersection Soledad Canyon and San Fernando Roads. The edge slopes of this land is largely visible in Santa Clarita, with the less visible interior comprised of oak grasslands and rolling meadows. The former Saugus Speedway was also to the north of the property, at the lower river valley level. The Southern Pacific Railroad is located between the northern edge of the site and Soledad Canyon Road. On the opposite side of Soledad Canyon Road is the Santa Clara River Plan's proposed greenbelt.



East: To the east of the project area is a partially developed business park. This development is located near Soledad Canyon Road, at the base of the ridge which rises up to the proposed development area. Most of the area east of the project site is vacant.

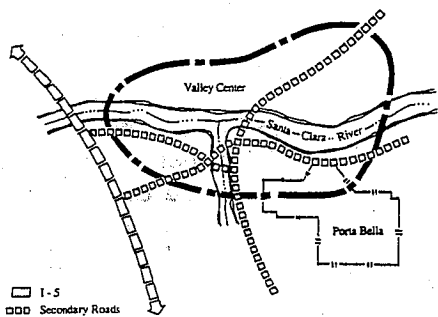
South: To the south of the project area is a mix of land uses, ranging from undeveloped land area, to oil fields, to a single family housing. The Circle J housing area shares much of the southern boundary of the project area.

West: To the west of the project area along San Fernando Road are commercial and light industrial land uses. Development along San Fernando Road was done incrementally over the years and lacks unified character, order or aesthetics. Again, the Southern Pacific Railroad is located between Porta Bella and the arterial highway (San Fernando Road). The Santa Clara River is located to the west of San Fernando Road.

Opportunities and Constraints Summary: The opportunities and constraints diagram summarizes the relationships of the elements discussed above with each other and the site. This diagram depicts several aspects of the site, being:

- Ridgeline
- California aqueduct
- Seismic setback
- Major slopes
- Vegetated areas
- Natural gas easement
- MWD water tunnel easement
- Existing trees & vegetation
- Heavily disturbed areas
- Developable areas

2.4 The Valley Center



The Porta Bella project area is, in part, a portion of a larger, relatively undeveloped special environment area identified by the City General Plan as the "Valley Center." This area extends roughly from Six Flags Magic Mountain on the west to the Golden Triangle area on the east generally between Valencia Boulevard and Newhall Ranch Road.

The City of Santa Clarita General Plan has stated about the Valley Center planning area:

Today the Valley finds itself with an outstanding opportunity to plan its center. Large blocks of vacant or under-utilized land in the core area of the City remain available. Unplanned and piecemeal development has not yet presented the ability to create a Valley Center. Development of a concept and direction from this area as described in this (General) Plan is essential now, before random development severely limits available opportunities.

The concept has been developed to build a Valley identity and unify the communities by designating the central "core" of the Santa Clarita Valley. The concept designates the central core area as the Valley's only higher density area for both residential and commercial office uses, thus maintaining lower profile, less intensive uses in the surrounding communities.

The concentration of higher intensities and densities of uses into a Valley Center Concept and only in the Valley Center area will foster City identity while at the same time preserve and protect outlying areas from overly intensive development. By focusing compatible higher intensities and densities of uses into the Valley Center and allowing mid-point densities or less elsewhere in the planning area, the Valley Center Concept becomes a growth management tool while achieving greater environmental quality objectives, both within and outside the Valley Center area.

The Valley Center area which intermingles with the Specific Plan area is called the "Civic Center/Entertainment/Information Component" by the City's General Plan. Within this area, the City of Santa Clarita General Plan envisions the following for this area:

This area is located generally southeast of Bouquet Junction and incorporates the City's "City Hall" property, a portion of the Bermite (Porta Bella) property, and surrounding commercial street frontages. Starting from the assumption that the City's future City Hall and Civic Center will be located here, a theme of Information and Government was developed. The type and variety of uses which relate to the City Hall/Civic Center and information center theme would include libraries, museums, cultural arts centers, education, conference centers, communication centers, government, and other offices and services grouped together with an interesting mix of shops, restaurants, plazas, and other uses in a pedestrian oriented village center. The concept envisions this mix clustered on the upper elevations of the property, commanding exceptional views of the Valley.

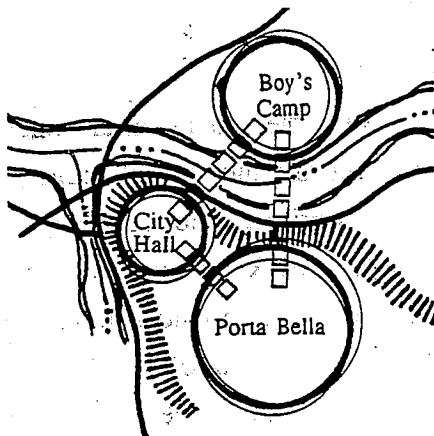
On the lower level of this area along Soledad Canyon Road, anchoring the eastern end of an office/financial corridor, would be an exciting mix of entertainment oriented uses, including a major restaurant cluster, performing arts center, theaters, nightclubs, and other day and nighttime activities. At this location would be a multi-modal transit center containing the commuter rail station and a major stop for a light transit loop system serving the entire Valley Center as well as the Valencia Industrial park and Six Flags Magic Mountain. Office and employment uses should also be attracted in this location due to its superior transit accessibility. An escalator system could be constructed to connect the two elevations of this site and further strengthen the attraction and theme.

It should be noted here, as with all the other Valley Center components, that inclusion of higher density residential development within and along the edges of the Valley Center and its components are an essential ingredient to the vitality and success of the Center. As such, higher density residential should be incorporated, even encouraged, in and around all these areas. Higher density could mean up to 50 units per acre provided that the development accommodates City goals and objectives.

The relatively undeveloped nature of the Valley Center and the closely related Porta Bella area offers the opportunity to plan meaningful systems for public open space, mobility, infrastructure, and recreation, as well as a special mixed-use Town Center planning concept. These systems will be discussed in further detail within this Plan.

2.5 Physical & Visual Connections

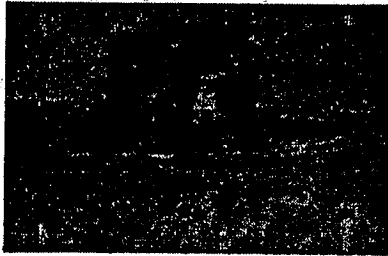
Because of the unique opportunity to plan an integrated mixed-use "Center", the City has suggested that the project site and the City owned property be planned in a coordinated manner. The City has also pointed out the opportunity to integrate other visually connected properties which surround both sites. One of these opportunities relates to the visual relationship of the Bouquet Canyon Boy's Camp to these properties.



Currently, physical linkage between these areas from the project site does not exist due to the separation created by the river valley, the wide and busy Soledad Canyon Road, the Southern Pacific Rail tracks, and the steep hillsides which lift the project site up from the Valley floor. However, it is these same topographical characteristics which create a strong visual connection between these parcels of land.

The design proposed by this Specific Plan suggests the possibility of both visually and physically connecting the river valley and the three related parcels of land through a coordinated series of land uses, connected pedestrian trails and an environmentally compatible landscape plan. An objective of this Plan is to establish an overall environmental design character for the entire Valley Center as well as a setting for the Town Center. This will require coordination with both public and private support.

2.6 Valley Center Design Character



The Santa Clarita General Plan suggests the Valley Center character should be based upon existing environmental conditions, creating a distinctive central community embodied with elements which will unify the undeveloped properties and the surrounding communities, yet not detract from the individual community attributes. One potential element to accomplishing this objective is that this character be established by incorporating and reestablishing the aesthetic environmental conditions within the Valley.

Beginning with a historical perspective of the Santa Clarita Valley's environmental condition, it is apparent that the Valley could lose some of the natural elements which comprise a major component of the Valley's charm. Areas of the Santa Clara River banks have been degraded with concrete embankments, some hillsides have been graded with little respect to landform, and the oak trees which were once abundant are now more rare, and therefore more precious.

The City of Santa Clarita is correcting these less sensitive development methods by preparing laws which ensure that development occurs in better harmony with the living environment. These steps toward better planning are seen in the City's new General Plan, Zoning Code, and through ordinances like the Oak Tree Preservation and the Ridgeline Protection ordinances.

The Vicinity Landscape Character which is a part of the Master Landscape Plan (Section 5) of this Plan incorporates and builds upon the environmental character goals described in the City's General Plan and River Study. This is done by establishing four special

environment treatments based upon the natural landscape character. Those treatments are:

- The Riparian River Treatment;
- The Oak Woodland Treatment;
- The Oak Grassland Treatment;
- The Natural Ridge Treatment.

Each of these treatments has associated with it a special landscape which is based upon the natural landscape of the Santa Clarita Valley. The intent of identifying these treatments is to enable an underlying, unifying City image based upon the natural environment to be implemented by the City of Santa Clarita. That is, to help reinforce the City's image upon its natural landscape qualities, instead of relying solely on architectural themes.

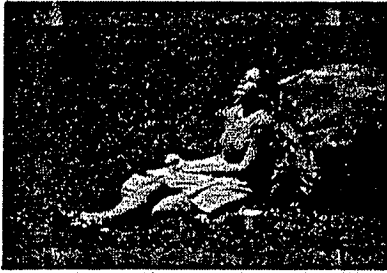
These four special environment treatments are discussed in more detail within the landscape section of this Plan.

2.7 Porta Bella Community Systems

Some places are better to live in than others. In planning the living environment within the Specific Plan area, several elements (systems) have been recognized as influences in creating the desired living environment. It is the intent of this Plan to address the components of each element as separately and together. These interrelated systems are:

- The Natural System
- The Mobility System
- The Lifestyle System

2.7.1 *The Natural System*



Good places to live almost always have a “natural system” accessible to the residents. This system may range from rugged wilderness to formal courtyards, depending upon the setting of the development and the desires and special needs of the residents. Within Porta Bella, the intended natural system is one which compliments the established oak-grassland character of the Santa Clarita Valley. The natural system will include athletic parklands, riparian wetland and oak grassland areas, and trails for hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrian enthusiasts.

The natural open space system will always be an integral component of life at Porta Bella. In addition, the Open Space areas will provide foreground and backdrop when viewing Porta Bella. The surrounding natural hillsides will be preserved, as well as the central ridgeline. The Natural System woven into the community will enable continuous interaction with the natural environment.

2.7.2 *The Mobility System*



It is recognized within the design of this Plan that the vehicular system must be accommodated in a convenient and safe manner. However, one of the objectives in designing the circulation & transportation facilities for Porta Bella was to provide meaningful alternatives to use of the automobile, as well as reducing the number of trips and distances necessary to travel when utilizing the automobile. To implement this goal, the Plan proposes a more pedestrian Town Center oriented with a closer (fine grain), mixture of land uses. In addition, streets are of the size and arrangement to allow people to enjoy walks and bicycle rides without feeling threatened by the automobiles. In Porta Bella, the size of neighborhoods, the scale of the

streets, and the character of the landscape have all been interwoven to create an enjoyable pedestrian and street level experience. Porta Bella will be a community that “feels right” when visiting or residing there.

In the contemporary sense, the automobile’s movement in and out of the community will be accommodated by the following elements:

- Regional road system circumferencing most of the community.
- Community road systems serving the inter-neighborhood travel within the community
- Neighborhood road system serving the intra-neighborhood travel within the various neighborhoods
- Convenient on-street and off-street parking for all land use areas.

In the traditional sense, mobility will be accommodated by:

- Interconnected neighborhoods and land uses, which will promote walking between communities and uses.
- Traditional sidewalk layout and landscape design with people in mind. Logical linkages, parkways with trees, minimal conflict with autos, reasonable street widths.
- Direct relationship and mixture of land uses, which will enable a pedestrian alternative to the automobile for basic services. This will also create a more pedestrian size for the neighborhood blocks within the neighborhoods.

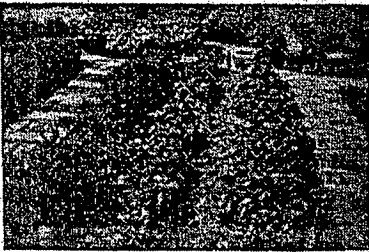


Land uses within the community are arranged for ease of mobility and interaction. Some of the areas enjoy a mix of uses, to create a vibrant and energetic town. Residential neighborhoods interact with one another, creating a sense of community. Private gated communities should not conflict with this interactive nature of Porta Bella. This mix of land uses is evidenced within all of the districts within the community, however it is most pronounced within the Town Center district. Here, a range of residential products relates to and intermingles with non-residential uses such as commercial, civic, service

and entertainment. The Town Center area will offer an opportunity for residents to live, work and relax in a dynamic, affordable environment.

Employment will be created for the Santa Clarita Valley, as well as the first light rail commuter system to link Santa Clarita to Los Angeles and Long Beach. No longer will the automobile be the only alternative for people to visit these areas. This multi-modal transportation system will accommodate the commuter rail, buses, automobiles, bicycles and pedestrians. A very significant component of mobility in Porta Bella will be the special escalator system which will connect the multi-modal transportation system with the Town Center. This is especially notable because it will be one of the first Cities in California to tap the market serviced by the expanding rail system.

2.7.3 The Lifestyle System



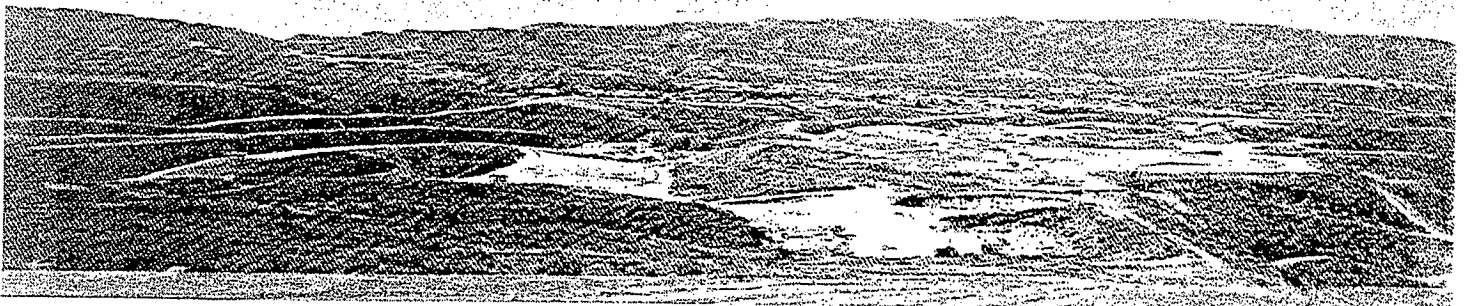
The Lifestyle System is a concept which recognizes that an increasing amount of people desire more than the basic necessities or standard amenities to enjoy a "livable environment." The lifestyle system suggests a more environmental and socially oriented way of life is possible and desirable in contemporary development. A goal of this Specific Plan is to allow and encourage environmental and socially conscious practices to be conducted within Porta Bella. Another goal is to create a sense of community pride and interaction within Porta Bella. Social barriers such as walls, cul-de-sacs and auto dominated streets have been replaced in Porta Bella with open, interactive neighborhoods supported by human-scale rights-of-way and buildings. The Porta Bella lifestyle will allow individual expression, social interaction and environmental pro-action.



City/Project Boundary
View West



North Development Area
View Northwest



South Development Area
View Southwest