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# Scenic Highways

<b>5.0 SCENIC HIGHWAYS</b>
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**I. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

A Scenic Highway Element is no longer required by the State of California to be included in each City's General Plan. Recent changes have deleted this requirement and suggest that a Scenic Highways element be prepared if local conditions warrant. California Government Code Section 65303 states:

*The General Plan may include any other elements or address any other subjects which, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county or city.*

Once the Scenic Highway Element is adopted, it becomes a component of the General Plan with the same legal status as one of the mandatory elements.

**II. OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS (ISSUES)**

Evaluation of the scenic corridors led to the identification of the following issues:

1. The City contains corridors and locations from which scenic vistas can be viewed. Development along these corridors has the potential to impact significant views since all of these are not protected.
2. The construction of new roads in the inland ranch areas presents the opportunity for additional scenic corridors.

**III. OVERVIEW OF SCENIC HIGHWAY POLICIES**

This portion of the Scenic Highway Element establishes goals, objectives, policies and implementation programs to guide the development maintenance and protection of scenic highways and corridors in the community. The policies stated in this section contains a direct relationship to the desired goals of the community and are intended to achieve the vision San Clemente has for the future.

The Scenic Highway Element, once adopted, is intended to create a network of highways that will develop a special community awareness of, and become an integral part of, the urban fabric of the City of San Clemente. The policies in this section address the following:

1. Presenting and creating visual corridors.
2. Integrating scenic highways with open spaces and recreational corridors.
3. Siting and designing future development of scenic highways to protect visual corridors and open space/landscape areas.

#### IV. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The following presents the goals, objectives, and policies for scenic highways in the City of San Clemente. Implementing programs are contained in the following subsection. Listed at the end of each policy is a capital "I" and number(s) in parentheses, which refers to the pertinent implementing program(s).

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##### *A. Preservation And Creation Of Visual Corridors*

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###### **Goal**

Maintain the visual quality and scenic views along designated corridors where they contribute and become an essential part of the community's urban fabric.

###### **Objective**

- 5.1 Enhance existing view corridors along scenic corridors and identify opportunities for the designation of new corridors.

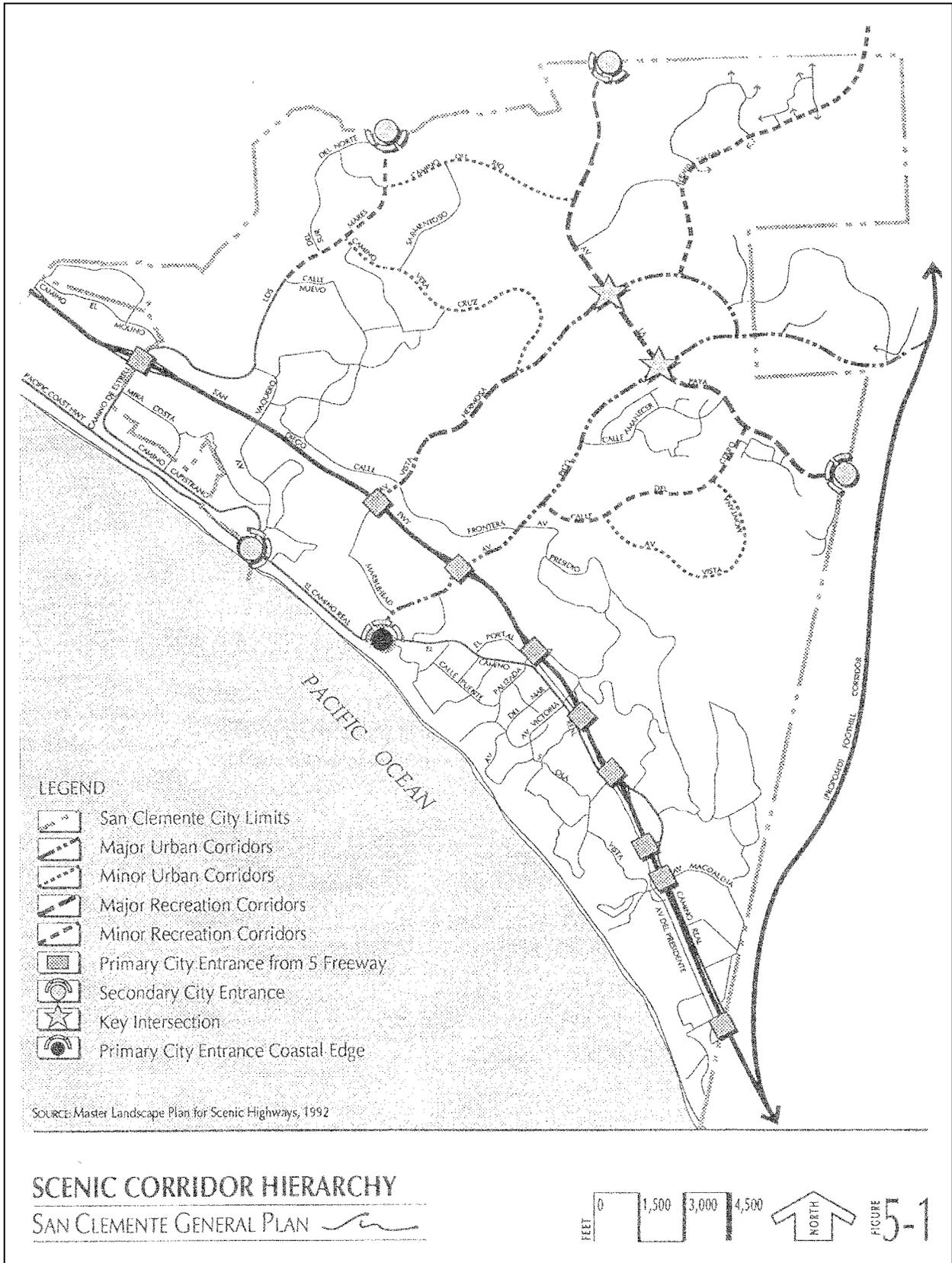
###### **Policies**

- 5.1.1 Require the following roadways be maintained and preserved as major or minor scenic corridors with key entry points as shown in **Figure 5-1**:

Avenida Vista Hermosa  
 Avenida La Pata  
 Avenida Pico  
 El Camino Real/Pacific Coast Highway  
 Ola Vista  
 El Camino Real  
 Camino De Los Mares  
 Camino Vera Cruz  
 Camino Del Rio  
 Calle del Cerro  
 Avenida Vista Montana  
 Avenida Talega

Urban and Recreation Corridor designations seek to distinguish different roadway characters throughout the City. Like the major and minor designations, the distinction between an urban and recreation corridor is to establish the scenic hierarchy as well as the overall framework for the City (I 5.1, I 5.2, and I 5.3).

- 5.1.2 Require bridges, culverts, drainage ditches and other roadway ancillary elements be of an appropriate design quality for visual corridor functions (I 5.1).
- 5.1.3 Require side slopes and earthen berms adjacent to roadways be natural in appearance to minimize visual impacts along scenic highways (I 5.1).



- 5.1.4 Provide simple design statements such as monument signs and/or plantings to designate key entry points into the scenic highway system (I 5.1, I 5.2 and I 5.4).
- 5.1.5 Expand or designate new scenic highways where the protection of community resources warrant their preservation and/or protection (I 5.3 and I 5.5).
- 5.1.6 Prioritize the following secondary streets for focused improvements: Ola Vista (excellent recent improvements have been completed between Valencia and Calafia), Avenida Del Mar, Calle Puente, Camino Capistrano, Camino Del Rio, Camino Vera Cruz, Calle de Cerro, and Avenida Mira Costa (I 5.1 and I 5.2).

**Objective**

- 5.2 Integrate scenic highways with open space and recreational corridors, enhancing public spaces and providing appropriate transitions between differing uses.

**Policies**

- 5.2.1 Require scenic highway systems to safely accommodate various forms of transportation, i.e., motorist, cyclists, pedestrians, etc. (I 5.2).
- 5.2.2 Require that all landscaping located within designated scenic corridors be designed in accordance with established standards in the Master Landscape Plan for Scenic Corridors (I 5.1 and I 5.2).

**Objective**

- 5.3 Ensure that development is sited and designed to protect scenic corridors and open space/landscape areas; blending man-made and man-introduced features with the natural environment.

**Policies**

- 5.3.1 Require development to provide compatible landscaping themes with the visual character of the designated scenic corridors (I 5.1 and I 5.2).
- 5.3.2 Review the heights and setbacks of all structures to ensure the preservation of visual corridors and the maintenance of an open, scenic quality within each corridor (I 5.1).
- 5.3.3 Require the review of the size, height, numbers, and type of on-premise signs to minimize their impact to scenic corridors (I 5.2).
- 5.3.4 Prohibit the construction of billboards within designated scenic corridors (I 5.2).

- 5.3.5 Locate new and relocated utilities underground when possible. All others shall be placed and screened to minimize public viewing (I 5.2 and I 5.5).
- 5.3.6 Require the proper design, installation and maintenance of scenic highways and scenic corridor elements, and strictly enforce the responsibilities for the maintenance of landscaping and roadway surfaces to be fulfilled by Associations, Districts, private owners and/or public agencies (I 5.4).

## V. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

The following lists the programs to implement the scenic highway policies contained in the preceding subsection of the Plan. The capital "I" and number preceding each program are referenced by the policies which it implements.

- I 5.1 Utilize development concepts described and detailed in the City's Master Landscape Plan for Scenic Corridors for the specific design standards and guidelines of all corridor elements in City designated major and minor highways.

*Responsibility:* City of San Clemente Community Development Department/Engineering Division.

*Funding Source:* City of San Clemente General Fund; with possible reimbursement from affected property owners and developers tax increment redevelopment funds and/or any other available funding sources approved by the City.

*Schedule:* Ongoing as funding is available.

- I 5.2 Utilize the City's design review process to evaluate developments within visual/scenic corridors. Proposed developments shall be analyzed by criteria established in a Master Landscape Plan as well as other relevant City standards and guidelines.

*Responsibility:* City of San Clemente Community Development Department.

*Funding Source:* City of San Clemente General Fund and/or fees from development applications.

*Schedule:* Ongoing, as development proposals are submitted or as funding permits.

- I 5.3 Review and update the Master Landscape Plan for Scenic Corridors to identify opportunities for the designation of additional scenic highways, intersections and entries as determined by community need when they are altered or added.

*Responsibility:* City of San Clemente Community Development Department and Beaches, Parks, and Recreation Department.

*Funding Source:* City of San Clemente General Fund and/or other available funding sources approved by the City.

*Schedule:* Review and modify Master Landscape Plan as new opportunities for scenic designations occur and as funding permits.

I 5.4 Landscaping installation responsibilities should be coordinated among the City, Caltrans and other affected property owners for parkways, medians, and entry landscaping. These responsibilities as well as long-term maintenance and grooming shall be assigned within the Master Landscape Plan for scenic highways.

*Responsibility:* City of San Clemente Community Development Department/Engineering Division, and Beaches, Parks, and Recreation Department.

*Funding Source:* City of San Clemente General Fund; with possible reimbursement from affected property owners/developers and/or any other available funding sources approved by the City.

*Schedule:* Ongoing, as funding permits.

I 5.5 Consider amending the City's Zoning Code to preclude locating ground utilities within front yard setback areas.

*Responsibility:* City of San Clemente Community Development Department.

*Funding Source:* City of San Clemente General Fund

*Schedule:* Within 18 months of General Plan adoption in concert with the preparation of the revised zoning ordinance or as funding permits.

**VI. GLOSSARY**

- A. *Scenic/Visual Corridor*** - The visible area outside the highway's right-of-way, generally described as "the view from the road".
- B. *Scenic Highway*** - A segment of a state or local highway or street that the City, County or State has designated "Scenic".
- C. *Urban Corridor*** - A roadway with a formal character which acts as a spine to the urban areas of the community.
- D. *Recreation Corridor*** - A roadway with a slightly informal design character which facilitates linear recreational movements and acts as a spine suburban areas of the community.
- E. *Urban Fabric*** - The elements of a community (i.e., roads, structures, etc.) which give the community shape and character.