

4.0 Country Club Heights District

4.1 Introduction

The Country Club Heights District is located within the central area of the City, generally bordered by Nichols Road to the northwest, Chaney Street to the southeast, and Lakeshore Drive to the southwest (Figure CCH-1). State Route 74/Riverside Drive runs through the center of the District. The lake is located just beyond the adjacent Lake Edge District to the southwest and Temescal Wash, a 100-year flood plain that has been partially improved with a concrete channel borders the length of the northeastern boundary.

“The hilly area lying just north of Downtown, with its commanding views of the Lake, and proximity to both entertainment and employment uses offers attractive amenities that create significant development potential.”

The Country Club Heights District is juxtaposed between the residential neighborhoods of the Alberhill District to the north, the City’s mixed use residential and commercial Riverside District to the west, the heart of the City in the Historic Downtown District to the south, and the main industrial and commercial area in the Business District to the east. The Lake Edge District surrounds the lake along the northeast, northwest and a corner of the southwest boundary of the lake. The Country Club Heights District to the southwest is a hilly area lying just north of downtown. The District has commanding views of the lake, and is in close proximity to both entertainment and employment, two significant amenities that attract interest from the development community. Development potential within the Country Club Heights District is constrained by a number of environmental issues, which include steep topography, a shortage of public services, difficulty providing infrastructure for those services, and limited access.

The Country Club Heights District is distinctly marked by its steep hillsides, views of the lake and the City, and is a key part of Lake Elsinore’s history. The issues mentioned above have presented development constraints for Country Club Heights since its historic beginnings dating back to 1912. The area was the target of an elaborate land scheme promoted in Los Angeles. The Mutual Benefit and Loan Society of Los Angeles acquired two (2) pieces of dry, “hill-land” within a few miles north of “town-land” that the *Press* claimed was not worth ten (10) cents an acre. The Mutual Benefit and Loan Society offered to give a 25x100-foot lot to anyone who asked; however, the person receiving the lot had to pay ten (10) dollars for a membership in the society, and one dollar per month dues for five (5) years.

In 1923, the Clevelin Realty Corporation, headed by Henry Schultz, began selling additional lots in Country Club Heights and launched an unprecedented for its size real estate sales promotion in the area. Later, in 1925, W.R. Covington and Associates of Santa Monica purchased 650 feet of lake frontage and three blocks of slightly improved land across Poe Street from Warm Springs Park. A clubhouse, swimming pool, and other facilities projected to cost \$200,000 were built on this property. No records have been found to provide the date when a fire destroyed

the clubhouse, but remnants of the burned structure and surrounding trees examined in 1942 indicate that the fire must have occurred soon after the building was constructed.

Noteworthy sites in the Country Club Heights District include the Bredlau Castle, built on a hilltop of Country Club Heights in 1926 by Henry Schultz, who had originated the Clevelin development. The beautiful building overlooking the lake was the site for many social gatherings. The Castle is over 9,000 square feet, including a hidden room with a sliding bookcase door that was used during Prohibition. In October of 1928, Aimee Semple McPherson, a renowned, noted evangelist, built a palatial home in Country Club Heights, which has since won fame as “Aimee’s Castle.” Aimee’s Castle served as the evangelist’s part-time home until 1939 when it passed to new ownership. Since then it has changed hands many times. As additional growth occurs in the City, the Country Club Heights District will continue to transition into a unique estate community.



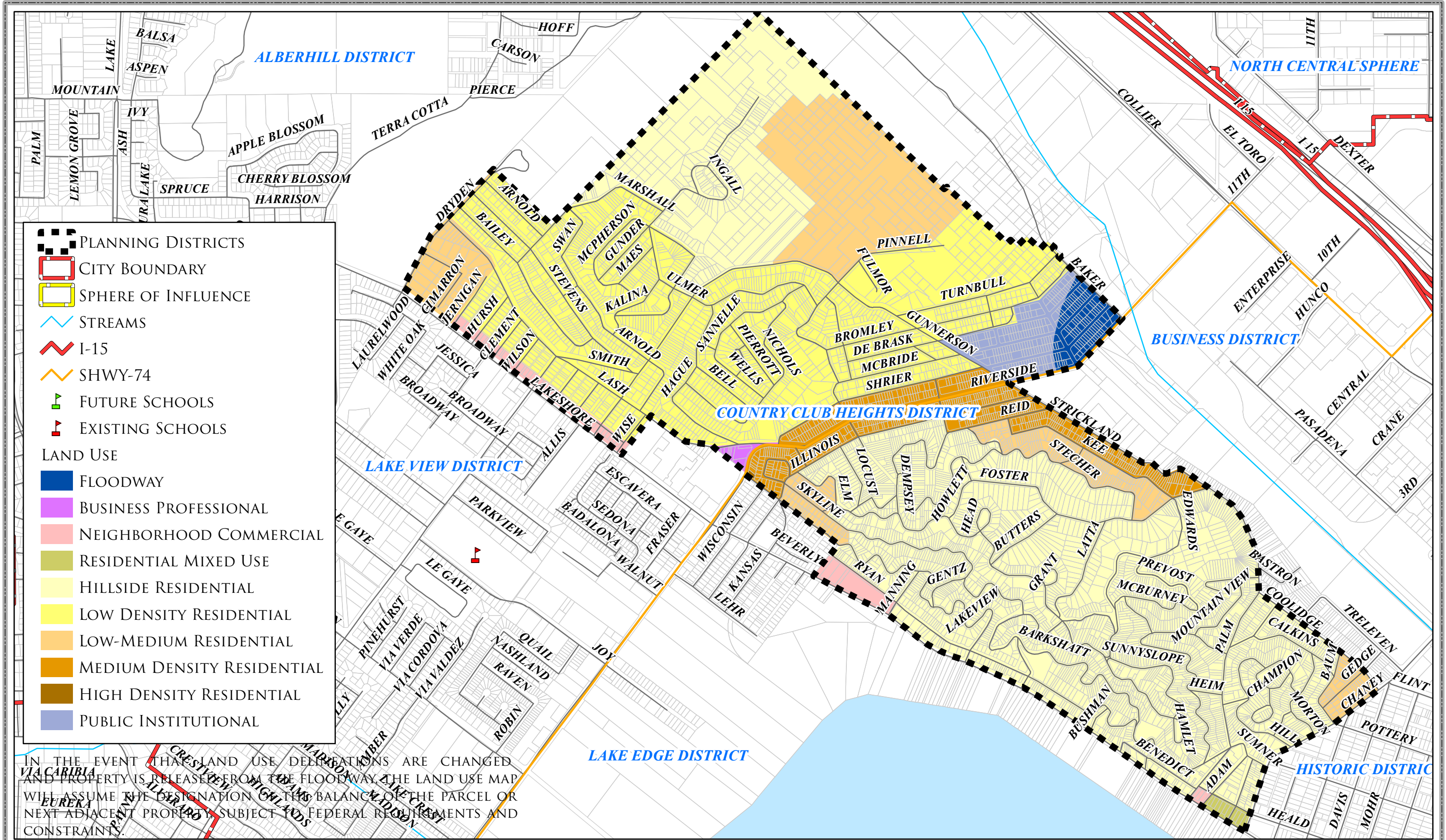
Aimee’s Castle, circa 1935
(Photograph used by permission of Lake Elsinore Historical Society)

4.2 Description

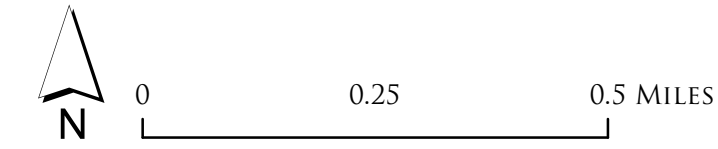
The County Club Heights District contains approximately 995 acres with lots varying in size from 171 square feet to 6.5 acres. There are a number of existing dwelling units spread throughout the Country Club Heights District but it remains largely undeveloped due to severe environmental constraints. There is a limited roadway network throughout the Country Club Heights District that ranges from dirt roads and narrow, one-way paved roadways, to the heavily used Riverside Drive, which runs through the central portion of the District. A number of the constraints, such as provision of water and sewer services, limited access roads, natural physical characteristics of steep hillsides and potential fire hazards (as determined by Riverside County Fire) present more significant challenges.



View of Lake Elsinore from Country Club Heights



SOURCES: CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE, COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE



CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE
COUNTRY CLUB HEIGHTS DISTRICT LAND USE PLAN
FIGURE CCH-1

BACKSIDE OF FIGURE

4.3 Land Use

4.3.1 Unique Attributes

The unique characteristics of the Country Club Heights District include its steep topography, proximity and views of the lake, mountains and City environs, and central location to the downtown area. The Country Club Heights District is equally unique considering its limited provision of sewer and water services caused partially by the steep terrain. The Country Club Heights District is also the sole remaining area of the City that is serviced by the Elsinore Water District, a small water service district.

The steep topography has also constrained development of adequate transportation infrastructure. Access to much of the Country Club Heights District is extremely limited due to only a small number of internal roadways with no direct access to some individual lots. Some of the dirt roads that currently exist were not created in the City's right of way.

The Gunnerson Street Pond is within the Country Club Heights District and is located in an area designated as floodway which will restrict any future development.

Lastly, the Country Club Heights District is comprised of a large number of various sized lots, some of which are larger and developable, but many contain extremely steep slopes of greater than 25 percent, making development difficult. Currently, legally created parcels within the Country Club Heights District can be individually sold, leased, or financed and developed even though they may not meet today's subdivision minimum lot sizes. However, all new construction must meet current City development standards.



4.3.2 Planned Land Use

The Country Club Heights District is an area with a number of issues associated with the development of individual substandard lots. For example: inadequate roads and access raise issues of traffic, fire response and public safety; small parcels with inadequate area for septic fields raise water quality issues; and small parcels on steep slopes raise erosion, public safety, fire hazard, and aesthetic issues.

Hillside Residence in Country Club Heights

The primary land use designations are low density residential and hillside residential at approximately seventy-seven (77%) of the total number of acres. Table CCH-T1 below

COUNTRY CLUB HEIGHTS DISTRICT



summarizes the distribution of land use designations within the Country Club Heights District. Chapter 2.0, Section 2.3 of the General Plan defines each land use designation in terms of the allowable uses and density and intensity standards. Figure CCH-1 illustrates the distribution and location of the land use designations.

Table CCH-T1. Distribution of Land Uses – Country Club Heights District

General Plan Land Use Designation	No. of Acres	Percentage of Total Land Area
Business Professional	2.3	0.23%
Floodway	10.3	1.03%
High Density Residential	0.1	0.01%
Hillside Residential	467.5	46.98%
Low Density Residential	301.0	30.25%
Low-Medium Residential	121.0	12.16%
Medium Density Residential	53.2	5.34%
Neighborhood Commercial	15.3	1.53%
Public Institutional	21.8	2.19%
Residential Mixed Use	2.7	0.27%
Total	995.2	100.00%

4.3.3 Country Club Heights District Goal and Policy

Goal 1 The primary goal of the County Club Heights District is to develop as a lower density residential estate neighborhood, maximizing the lake views and historical character of the area while preserving the integrity of the natural features.

Policy

CCH 1.1 Consider the establishment of policies and development standards that create buildable residential lots.

Implementation Program Through the design review and CEQA processes, the City shall encourage the establishment and precedence for an estate neighborhood..

Agency/Department Community Development Departments

4.4 Urban Design

The existing character of the Country Club Heights District consists of scattered homes with an eclectic mix of styles, ranging in size and age. The areas along the west-facing hillsides and ridgeline (Skyline Drive and Sunnyslope Avenue) contain larger houses with attractive and distinct architecture. Residential structures along the east-facing slopes and in the small valleys along the base of the hills tend to be small, of simple design and in somewhat poorer condition. The existing narrow roadways are both paved and unpaved with many terminating into dead-ends at random points.

The historical remnants (such as the ornamental concrete streetlamps), commanding views of the lake, hillsides, and general notoriety associated with the Country Club Heights District create significant potential for successful low density residential estate development. In 2030, the Country Club Heights District is envisioned to be a distinctive residential neighborhood with preserved hillsides, narrow, tree-lined, winding roadways, and scenic views of Lake Elsinore set apart as a “village in the hills” community.

4.4.1 Goal and Policies

Goal 2 Encourage new development that preserves and enhances the distinct Country Club Heights District character.

Policies

- CCH 2.1 Consider the development of design guidelines that will integrate the historical character of the Country Club Heights District and ensure unique District design in all residential, landscape and roadway development.
- CCH 2.2 Through the project and CEQA processes require conformance with hillside development policies to preserve the natural topography of the Country Club Heights District.
- CCH 2.3 Encourage the installation and construct of community identification signs/gateway monuments and street lamps at the main points of entry to the Country Club Heights District and neighborhoods.
- CCH 2.4 Through the project and CEQA processes require lots to have direct access to a City-maintained roadway and to provide a private access-way with a width of no less than 16-feet.
- CCH 2.5 Allow legal non-conforming lots to develop with appropriate set backs, lot coverage, septic or sewage disposal systems, emergency vehicular access capabilities, and appropriate drainage techniques.

CCH 2.6 Through the project and CEQA processes require Country Club Heights District roadways to conform to the existing topography as much as possible to provide safe and adequate access yet maintain the country character.

Implementation Program Through the design review and CEQA processes, the City shall support land use applications that preserve and enhance the character and identity of the Country Club Heights District, and that meet the requirements for safe access.

Agency/Department Community Development and Engineering Departments

4.5 Historic Preservation

The Country Club Heights District has a rich history including its inception as the target of a land scheme out of Los Angeles. Considering that the initial subdivision of land gave away parcels “for free” in return for membership fees and dues, and the subsequent division of land by the Clevelin Realty Corporation in 1923, the area has seen little development with the exception of a few residential homes and the construction of the Country Club from which the District receives its name.



Country Club Heights Streetlight

The few remaining (unofficial) historic characteristics consist of old streetlamps, a number of foundations and chimneys, and Aimee Semple McPherson’s Castle. No places or sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, California Points of Historical Interest or the Riverside County General Plan were identified as a significant historical resource, nor do any registered significant transportation routes exist in the area. Aimee’s Castle, located on Skyline Drive is recognized as a locally significant historical resource.

4.5.1 Goal and Policies

Goal 3 Restore and enhance the historical characteristics of the Country Club Heights District as development occurs.

Policies

CCH 3.1 Encourage the restoration of the ornamental concrete streetlamps to working condition. New identical streetlamp features shall be fabricated and placed at key entrances to the Country Club Heights District.

CCH 3.2 Encourage the preservation of the integrity of the design, character and structure of Aimee's Castle as a locally significant historic resource.

Implementation Program Through the design review process, the City shall support land use applications that preserve and enhance the character and identity of the Country Club Heights District.

Agency/Department Community Development Department

4.6 Transportation/Circulation

The roadway network throughout the Country Club Heights District is heavily constrained by topography and existing public right-of-ways (ROWs) and provides limited access because of incomplete roadways and substandard and improperly aligned rights-of-way. Improving the circulation system within the Country Club Heights District is necessary in order to develop the area. A redesign of the circulation system is recommended.

The circulation system is currently comprised of internal local streets with substandard widths that provide access to more traveled roadways, such as Chaney Street, Riverside Drive, Gunnerson Street, and Lakeshore Drive.

4.6.1 Local Roadways

Many of the Country Club Heights District's ROWs cannot be developed due to terrain constraints, but the City may support developments that would result in practical road improvements. Much of the paved roads, where slopes exceed ten percent (10%), have paved widths of less than twenty feet (20') with no shoulders. The City's standard is forty feet (40') of paved width on a ROW of sixty feet (60'). However, most of the street ROWs have a width of only forty feet (40'). As a result, recommended guidelines for Country Club Heights local streets include minimum pavement width of 34 feet, minimum radius of 250 feet, design speed of 25 MPH, and no street parking allowed.



Unpaved Roadways in Country Club Heights

4.6.2 Lakeshore Drive

The new special roadway cross section depicted on Figure 2-2 in Section 2.4 of the General Plan has been created specifically for Lakeshore Drive between Riverside Drive and Chaney Street. Preservation of the existing ROW is important due to topography, adjacent small lots, and the

COUNTRY CLUB HEIGHTS DISTRICT



lake frontage. Three (3) intersections are proposed including Manning Street, Lawrence Way, and Wilson Way.

The circulation element identifies standardized roadways as well as the addition of alternative transportation routes such as bikeways. The circulation element's Truck Route Map follows portions of Riverside Drive, which is a segment of State Route 74. The following table reflects the circulation element's Roadway Plan and Bikeway Plan for the Country Club Heights District.

Table CCH-T2. Roadway Plan and Bikeway Plan – Country Club Heights District

Roadway Name	From	To	Roadway Classification	Bikeway Classification
Gunnerson Street	Lakeshore Drive	Riverside Drive	Collector	
Chaney Street	Trelasen Avenue	Lakeshore Drive	Secondary	
Strickland Avenue	Riverside Drive	Chaney Street	Collector	Class II
Lakeshore Drive	Riverside Drive	Manning Street	Secondary	Class II
Lakeshore Drive	Manning Street	Chaney Street	New Special Roadway	Class II
Lakeshore Drive	Terra Cotta	Riverside Drive	Urban Arterial	Class II
Riverside Drive	Riverside District	Business District	Urban Arterial	Class II

4.6.3 Goal and Policies

Goal 4 Provide a safe and comprehensive roadway network for vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic within the Country Club Heights District, with additional access points into/out of the area.

Policies

CCH 4.1 Consider road cross-sections that are unique to the Country Club Heights District as necessary and used for local roadways in areas south of Riverside Drive to Chaney Street and the areas enclosed between Gunnerson and Riverside Drive.

CCH 4.2 Consider a new special roadway cross section for Lakeshore Drive between Riverside Drive and Chaney Street and locate intersections at Manning Street, Lawrence Way, and Wilson Way.

CCH 4.3 Consider a pedestrian sidewalk along Lakeshore Drive that integrates a multi-purpose trail along Lakeshore Drive.

CCH 4.4 Encourage a minimum sight-distance of 250 feet within the Country Club Heights District.

CCH 4.5 Consider the roadway network to include one-way streets where ROW or buildable widths are limited.

CCH 4.6 Through the project and CEQA processes integrate roadway and other public services infrastructure as development occurs to create efficient use of land.

CCH 4.7 Consider the feasibility of assuming control of the entire segment of State Route 74, located within the Country Club Heights District.

Implementation

Program Through the design review and CEQA processes, the City shall support land use applications that provide safe access and the efficient use of land.

Agency/Department Engineering Departments

4.7 Parks and Recreation

The proximity of the lake along the western edge of the Country Club Heights District, and the recreational amenities it provides, offers the main recreational opportunities for Country Club Heights. As the District develops into an estate community, easy access to the lake through pedestrian trails, walkways, and bikeways, rather than population-based provision of park space should be emphasized. Development of trail systems can be integrated into the framework of the multi-purpose trail proposed within Lakeshore Drive and link the Alberhill District to the lake through the Country Club Heights District. The opportunities for smaller pocket parks exist within the Country Club Heights District, which could be developed to provide opportunities both for neighborhood connection as well as public views of the lake. Larger park sites such as community or regional parks are restricted by the Country Club Heights District's natural features such as topography and wetlands.

4.7.1 Goal and Policies

Goal 5 Provide an active open space and recreational system, which provides connections to the City environs and preserves the natural features by connecting the Country Club Heights District to usable recreational networks within the City through the creation of open space and recreational opportunities, maximizing key view sheds, maintaining hillsides, and preserving the integrity of the Temescal Wash wetlands and drainage areas.

Policies

CCH 5.1 Through the project and CEQA processes develop a comprehensive pedestrian trails network that both provides access from the Country Club Heights District to the lake and Historic Downtown District as well as provides a linkage to those areas from the Alberhill District.

CCH 5.2 Consider the development of a minimum of one park at a key scenic view shed site to provide an opportunity to feature the views of the lake.

Implementation Program Through the design review and CEQA processes, the City shall support land use applications that provide active open space and recreation areas which maximize viewsheds to the lake.

Agency/Department Parks & Recreation and Community Development Departments

4.8 Community Services and Utilities

The topography of the Country Club Heights District limits the ability to adequately provide public services and utilities to its residents. Historically, the Country Club Heights District has been unable to supply sufficient wastewater services, constrained by topography, and has limited water infrastructure delivery systems.

The adequate provision of services is an issue that needs to be addressed in order to allow development to occur within the Country Club Heights District.

4.8.1 Goals and Policies

Goal 6a Provide adequate, consistently responsive, efficient and customer-oriented public safety services and facilities.

Goal 6b Support private utility companies and public utility districts to provide adequate levels of utility services to the Country Club Heights District residents and businesses, and ensure that necessary infrastructure is constructed.

Policies

CCH 6.1 Encourage the pursuit of innovative techniques to deliver adequate public services in a cost-effective and responsive manner.

Implementation

Program Through the design review and CEQA processes, the City shall support land use applications that provide efficient and innovative public safety services and facilities.

Agency/Department Community Development and Engineering Departments

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