

**PARADISE DRIVE**

**SAN CLEMENTE DRIVE**

**SPECIFIC PLAN**

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**ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 17, 1979**

# TOWN OF CORTE MADERA

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## I. PURPOSE

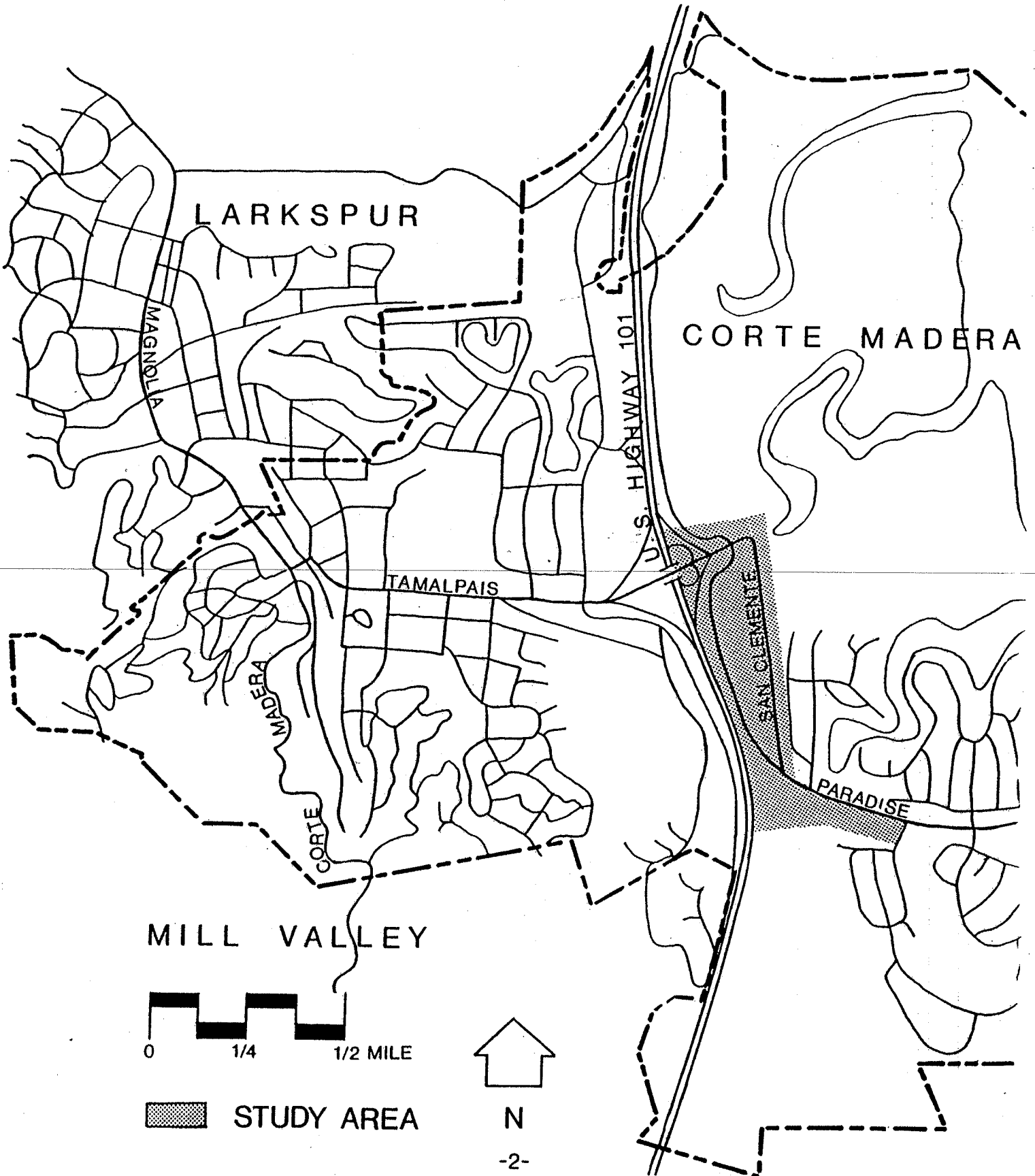
The Paradise and San Clemente Drive area included in this specific plan serves as both the gateway to East Corte Madera and the most prominent representation of Corte Madera viewed from U.S. 101. Since the early 1970s, residents of the Town and members of its Boards and Commissions have expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the area's development and the image it presents to people traveling through the Town. The General Plan adopted in 1975 notes:

"Fragmented parcelization has made it impossible to establish a cohesive development pattern. Located at a major entryway into Corte Madera and visible from vehicles passing through on the freeway, the older development is a visual liability to the Town."

To improve the quality of development and to ensure that each project contributes to a cohesive design for the area, the General Plan calls for establishing standards for landscaping, building siting, and design (including height, materials, and form) in the area near the freeway; and for improving the landscaping, lighting, and buffering of the Paradise Shopping Center.

Therefore, in accordance with Government Code Section 65450 and Municipal Code Chapter 18.40, this specific plan has been proposed for the systematic execution of the Community Services Element of the General Plan, and in particular, to implement its provisions regarding development standards for the Paradise Shopping Center and San Clemente Auto Sales Area. Additional specific objectives are listed for each of the design standards.

# PARADISE/SAN CLEMENTE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA VICINITY MAP (FIGURE 1)



## II. BACKGROUND OF THIS PLAN

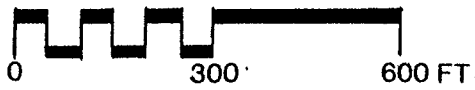
This plan is the result of community concerns dating as far back as 1971, when San Clemente Drive was completed. The Planning Commission then requested the Town Council to adopt landscaping and other standards for new development along San Clemente. No standards were approved, however, and when the first buildings were constructed there in 1974, Council and Commission members expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the quality of development. The General Plan policies quoted earlier in this report were the result.

The present planning effort was initiated by the Board of Design with a field trip to the area in October 1976. Before recommending adoption of this plan, the Board toured the site four times, held several special meetings to draft guidelines, and met twice with the Planning Commission to review those initial drafts. The area's property owners were notified of those meetings and sent drafts of the guidelines. Both the Board and Commission recognized the importance of street trees to unify development in the area, and the Town Council authorized the retention of a landscape architect and soils firm to prepare a street tree plan. The recommendations of Paul Leffingwell's Paradise-San Clemente Street Tree Plan have been incorporated into this specific plan.

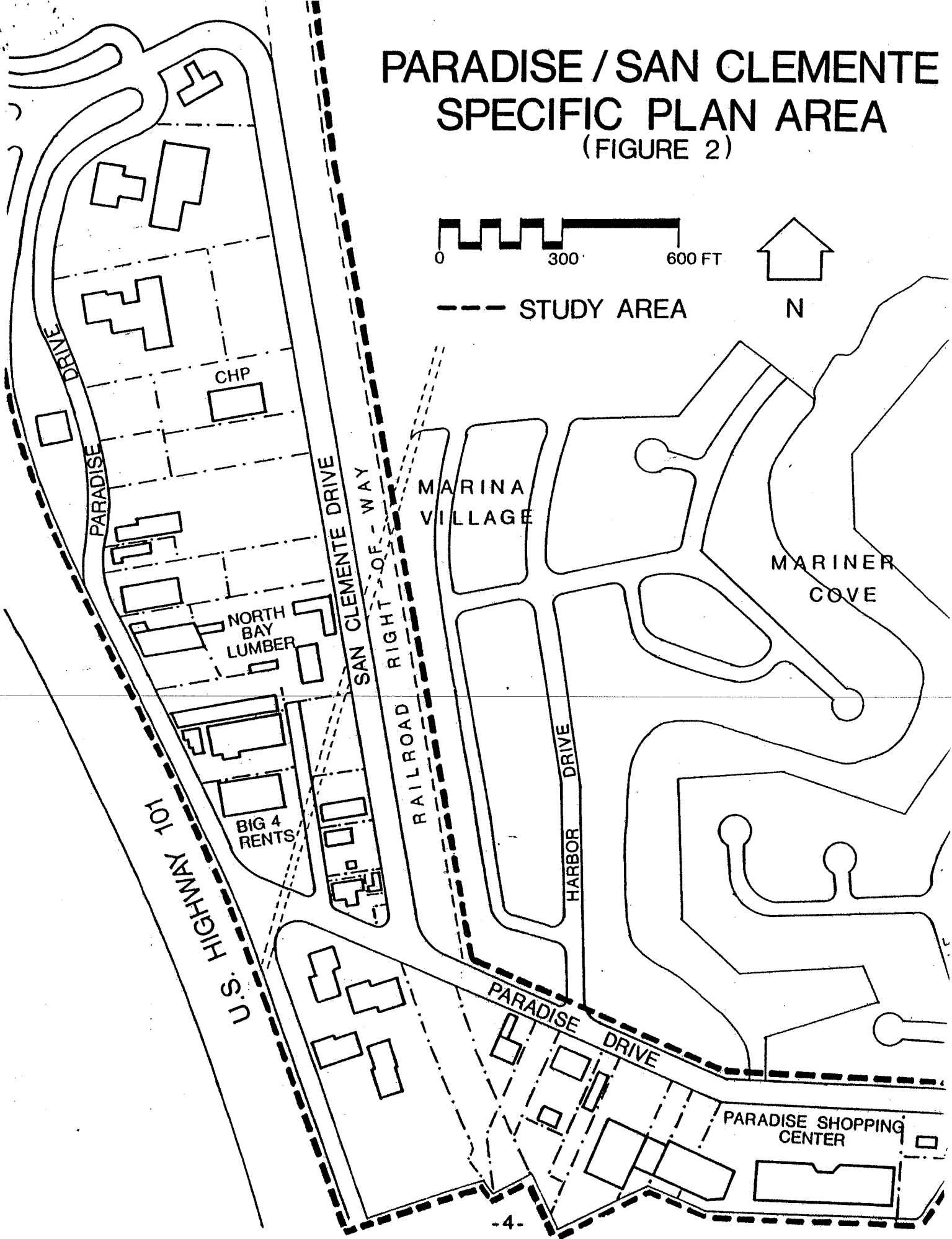
Planning for the area is not complete, and it is likely that ~~this plan will be modified as additional studies are completed.~~ In particular, the cumulative impact of traffic generated by new developments here may have significant effects on the Tamalpais/U.S. 101 interchange. If traffic studies show that this is the case, it may be necessary to limit the amount of traffic produced by new projects. Modifications are also needed to San Clemente Drive to accommodate driveways and bicycles safely. If the railroad right-of-way is acquired by the Town, a plan for its development may also be incorporated here.

Nonetheless, adoption of this plan can be expected to produce noticeable improvements in the quality of new development. It is hoped that this plan addresses those community concerns expressed as long ago as 1971.

# PARADISE / SAN CLEMENTE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA (FIGURE 2)



--- STUDY AREA



### III. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The design standards in this plan are designed to correct several specific design deficiencies in this area. Those are described below.

- A. Use and Building Design. The area between San Clemente and Paradise Drives is zoned C-4 (Service Commercial), which permits such uses as auto dealers, auto repair shops, warehouses, lumber yards, tire sales and services, service stations, and motorcycle sales. As a consequence, the buildings are generally box-like with flat roofs, the predominant finish material used is stucco, the mechanical equipment is not adequately screened, and there is no design consistency between buildings or among elevations on any one building.

The Paradise Shopping Center, south of San Clemente, is zoned C-1 (Local Commercial), which permits such uses as food stores, retail shops, and local services. The quality of the buildings here, too, is poor, for a variety of reasons: the odd-shaped parcels and fragmented pattern of ownership; the age of the center; and the small size of the East Corte Madera service area.

Given this background, this plan imposes standards for design excellence to ensure that it is achieved.

- B. Landscaping and Screening. Only minimal landscaping exists in front of most of the buildings constructed prior to 1977, and parking lots and storage areas are highly visible from both U.S. 101 and Paradise and San Clemente Drives. In addition, there is no coherent pattern to the landscaping that has been installed. Street trees, shrubs, and groundcovers differ from site to site and are often not appropriate for the area, which has high winds and a high water table. The width of the landscaped strip varies from site to site, and the landscaping has been designed for individual projects, with no consideration given to its relation to adjacent landscaping.
- C. Grading. Because the area is subject to periodic flooding, federal flood regulations require structures to be at grades three to six feet above existing street grades. Generally, the transition from the street to the new grades has been handled poorly, and two-story buildings, in particular, appear to loom massively above the street.

- D. Vehicular and Pedestrian Access. There is a proliferation of driveways providing access to the arterial streets, with some sites having as many as three driveways. This causes conflicts between arterial traffic and drivers maneuvering to enter and exit from driveways. Facilities for bicycles and pedestrians are minimal.
- E. Signs and Exterior Lighting. Signs have no consistent pattern to direct a traveler's eye to a given part of the site. Some are excessively prominent and bear no relation to the structure they identify. Some exterior lighting is too bright, and the light sources are visible from off site.
- F. Public Improvements. Utilities on Paradise Drive are above ground, resulting in a maze of wires and poles which are viewed as one approaches the Town from U.S. 101. No street tree planting or other improvements have been made to the right-of-way, and it appears weedy and unkempt.

The following standards are intended to address all of these problems.

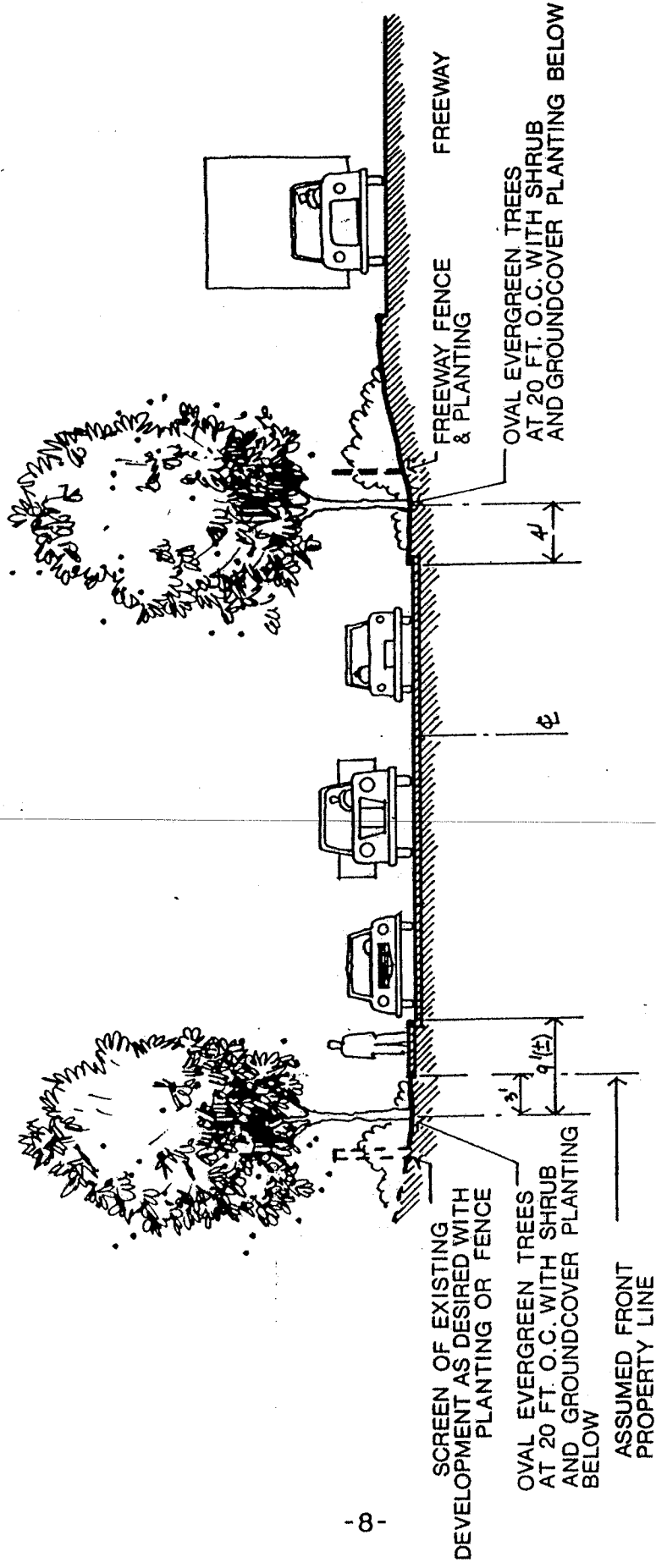
## IV. DESIGN STANDARDS

These standards are in addition to the requirements included in the Town's Zoning Ordinance and normally required of all new developments. As authorized by Section 18.40.010 of the Corte Madera Municipal Code, they may modify specific Zoning Ordinance requirements. Where this plan and the Zoning Ordinance are in conflict, the specific plan supersedes the Ordinance.

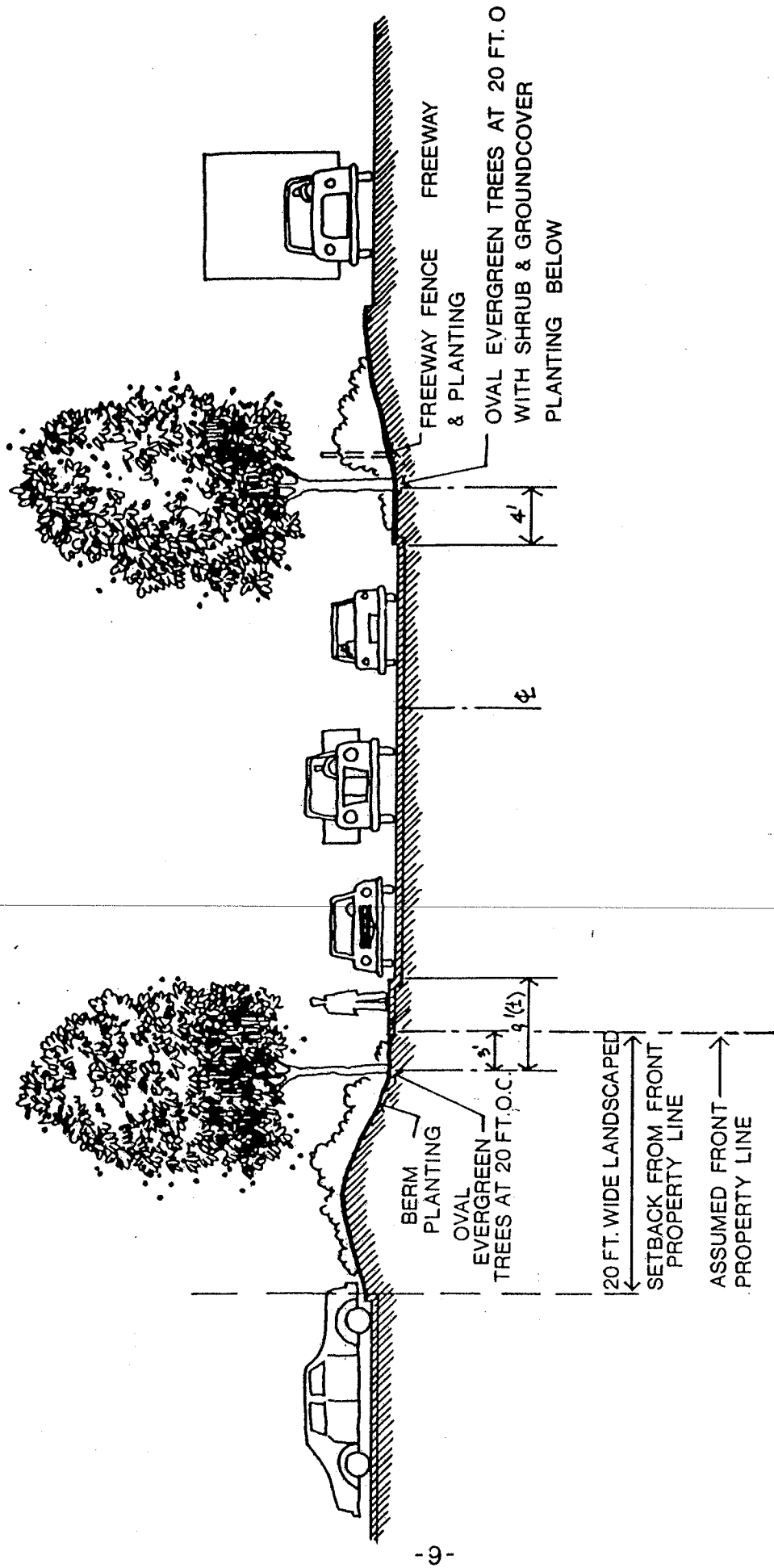
This specific plan does not duplicate all Zoning Ordinance provisions applicable to this area, such as the requirement that all mechanical equipment be screened from view. Those interested in preparing plans for new developments should refer to both these standards and the ordinance. Zoning district maps and portions of the Ordinance applicable to these properties are available as an appendix to this report.

All new buildings, additions, and modifications to site plans and landscaping must conform to these standards, unless exceptions are granted as provided in Section VI. In addition, when reviewing additions or modifications to existing buildings, the Board of Design and Planning Commission may, to the greatest extent feasible, require additional changes conforming to these standards and with the Zoning Ordinance.

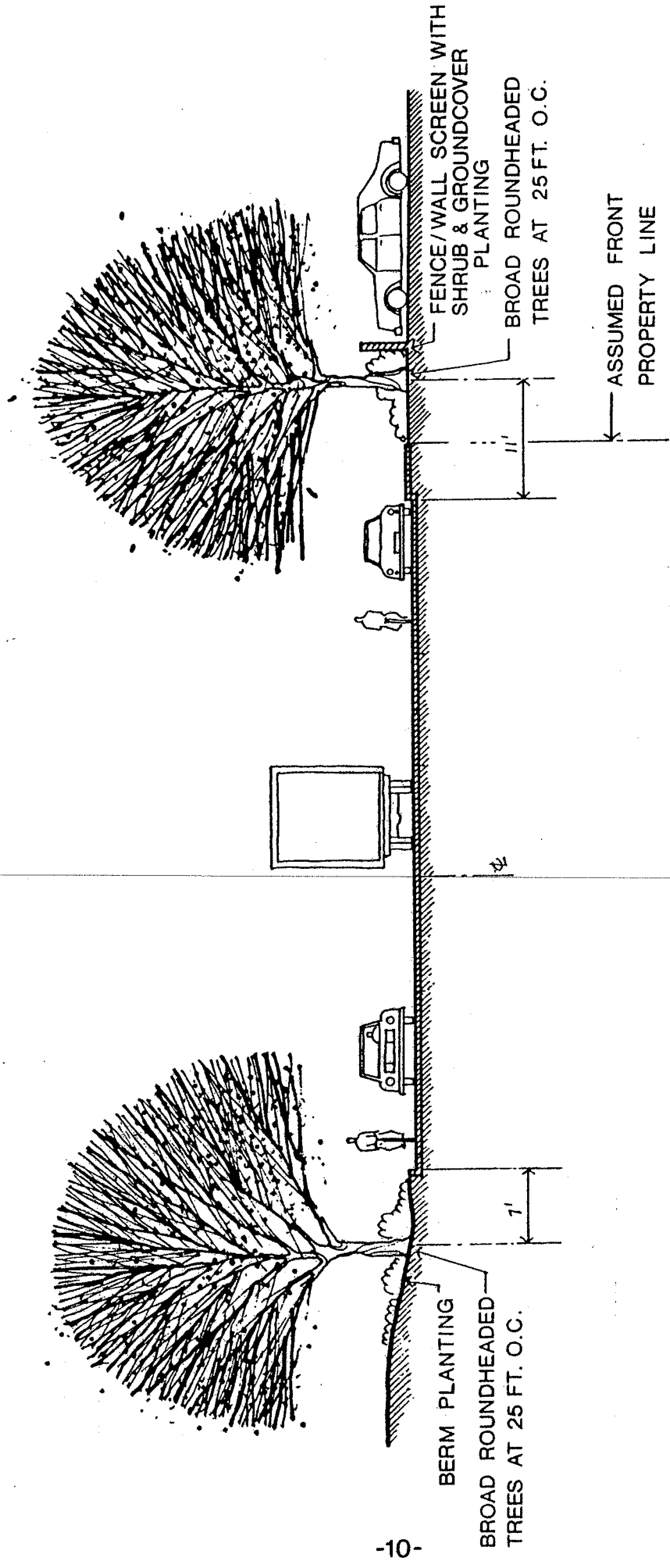
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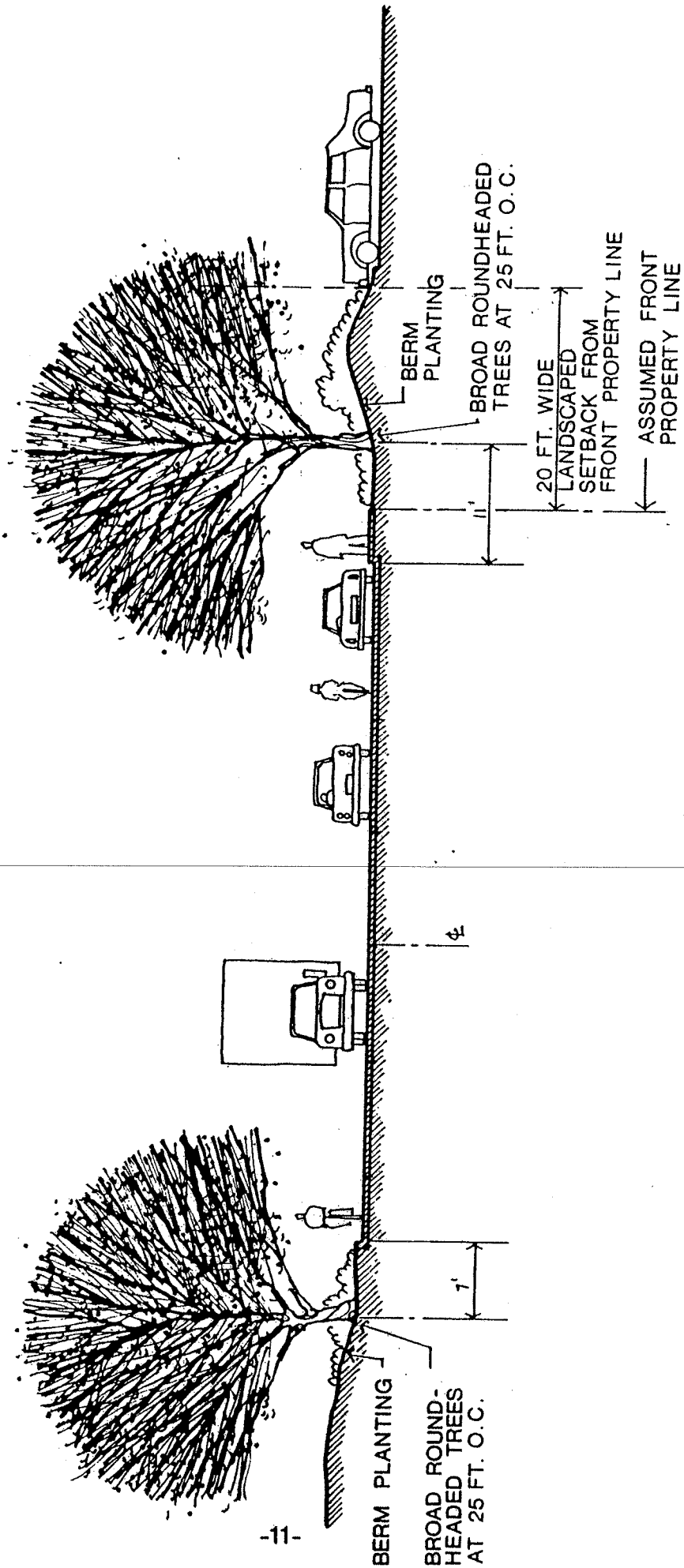
EXISTING DEVELOPMENT  
**PARADISE DRIVE**  
 WEST OF SAN CLEMENTE DRIVE



FUTURE DEVELOPMENT  
**PARADISE DRIVE**  
 WEST OF SAN CLEMENTE DRIVE  
 (FIGURE 4)



EXISTING DEVELOPMENT  
**SAN CLEMENTE DRIVE**  
 AND PARADISE DRIVE EAST OF  
 SAN CLEMENTE DRIVE  
 (FIGURE 5)



FUTURE DEVELOPMENT  
**SAN CLEMENTE DRIVE**  
 AND PARADISE DRIVE EAST OF  
 SAN CLEMENTE DRIVE  
 (FIGURE 6)

## A. STREET TREES AND FRONT YARD LANDSCAPING

### Objective:

To create an attractive visual image which will act as a unifying element in the area; to better define and unify Paradise and San Clemente Drives; to screen unattractive buildings and uses from view; and to specify plant materials that require little water or other maintenance, are adapted to a high water table, can survive in a strong wind, provide some color, and screen well.

### Special Paradise Drive Objective:

To specify an evergreen street tree with a medium-sized, delicate leafed oval form which will unify the disordered street scene; be open enough to allow selected views of businesses from the freeway; yet strong enough to conceal undesired views.

### Special San Clemente Drive Objective:

To specify a street tree with a large round-headed broad spreading form to give the street a sense of scale and relegate the disorder on the west side to the background.

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### Standards (Street Trees):

- 1a. On Paradise Drive west of San Clemente Drive, Red Iron bark (Eucalyptus sideroxylon 'rosea') shall be planted at intervals of 20 feet on-center on both sides of the street. Closer spacing may be appropriate on the west side of the street adjacent to U.S. 101.
- b. All street trees planted on this portion of Paradise Drive shall be of fifteen gallon size, seven-to eight-feet high with a two- to three-foot spread and one- to one-and-one-fourth inch caliper.
- 2a. On San Clemente Drive and on Paradise Drive east of San Clemente Drive, California Pepper (Schinus molle) shall be planted at intervals of 25 feet on-center on both sides of the street. To retain existing Bay views, greater spacing may be appropriate in certain areas.
- b. All street trees planted on San Clemente Drive and this portion of Paradise Drive shall be of fifteen

gallon size, seven- to eight-feet high with a two- to three-foot spread and one- to one-and-one-fourth inch caliper, and with a straight trunk branched at five-and-one-half to six feet.

3. All trees shall be young plants with an excellent root condition and not rootbound.
4. The street trees shall be planted as far from the sidewalk as possible, consistent with the plan's goals of creating a line of street trees near the street and of utilizing berms in the front yard area. In addition, adjustments may be made in the location of the trees if necessary to prevent damage to existing utilities.

If lifting of sidewalks does occur in the future, asphalt ramps in the sidewalk area would be acceptable to preserve the trees.

5. All trees shall be planted and staked as shown in the attached detail.
6. Permanent automatic irrigation shall be provided for all street trees located on private property. Temporary irrigation or use of a water truck may be permitted for street trees located on public property. Wherever feasible, recycled water should be used for irrigation.

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Standards (Shrubs and Groundcovers)

1. Shrubs planted within 20 feet of the front property line should be limited to the following species:
  - a. Arctostaphylos species (Manzanitas) - selected varieties on berms.
  - b. Grevillea noelli
  - c. Hecteromeles arbutifolia (Toyon)
  - d. Leptospermum scoparium varieties (New Zealand Tea Tree)
  - e. Ligustrum japonica 'Texamum' (Texas Privet) for strong screening.
  - f. Pittosporum tobira (Tobira)
  - g. Raphiolepis indica varieties (India Hawthorn)
  - h. Xylosma congestum (Shiny Xylosma)

2. Groundcovers planted within 20 feet of the front property line should be limited to the following species:
  - a. Arctostaphylos uvi-ursi (Bearberry)
  - b. Baccharis pilularis (Dwarf Coyote Brush)
  - c. Juniperus chinensis 'San Jose' (San Jose Juniper)
  - d. Hypericum species (St. John's wort)
  - e. Dimorphotheca varieties (Capte Marigold)
  - f. Gazania varieties (Gazanias)
  - g. Juniperus horizontalis varieties (Ground juniper)
3. Masses of shrubs and the major ground covers (Baccharis, Junipers, Carpobrotus and Dimorphotheca) should be large and in scale with the street rather than relating only to the project where planted. Large interwoven plant masses should be provided which do not reflect individual property lines.
4. Shrubs and ground covers should be planted on three- to five-foot high uniform berms located in the landscaped area within 20 feet of the front property line.
5. Shrubs and ground covers should be designed to be complementary to the street trees.
6. Shrubs and ground covers shall be located as shown on the attached sections.
7. All shrubs shall be planted and staked as shown in the attached detail.
8. Permanent automatic irrigation shall be provided for all shrubs and ground covers. Whenever feasible, recycled water should be used for irrigation.

## B. SETBACKS

Objective: To mitigate the massive appearance of two-story buildings in this area caused in part by fill requirements, and to provide an area for a uniform landscaping scheme.

- Standards:
1. The minimum front yard setback for a one-story structure (up to 15 feet high) shall be 20 feet, with the front portion landscaped as described previously.
  2. The minimum front yard setback for a structure or the portion of a structure that has two stories or is over 15 feet high shall be 50 feet. The first 20 feet within the front setback shall be landscaped according to the specified guidelines.
  3. A variety of setbacks are encouraged.

## C. BUILDING DESIGN

Objective: To encourage excellence in building design

- Standards:
1. All buildings must be designed consistently on all visible elevations without abrupt changes in form, materials, and the like.
  2. Buildings should not be designed as a "box" form without appropriate parapets, textures, materials, landscaping, and the like.
  3. The use of wood materials and sloping roofs for new buildings is encouraged.
  4. Softer building lines and the use of wood beams, arbors and trellises to break up the building form are encouraged.

## D. DRIVEWAY ACCESS TO ARTERIAL STREETS

Objective: To limit the number of driveways to those which are actually needed to accommodate safely the traffic generated by each development; to provide adequate spacing between driveways so conflicts between maneuvering vehicles and adjacent driveways do not arise; to minimize conflicts with arterial traffic; and to avoid reducing roadway capacity.

- Standards:
1. Driveways providing joint access to more than one property must be provided wherever feasible.
  2. A drawing must be submitted describing the internal circulation and parking system of each site and exploring the possibility of shared access.
  3. Adequate sight distance must be available at every driveway.
  4. Unnecessary driveways should be eliminated wherever possible.

## E. PARKING LOTS

Objective: To mitigate the visual impact of large parking lots.

- Standards:
1. Parked cars must be screened from public streets and adjacent properties with berms, fencing, and generous landscaping.
  2. Substantial landscaped areas must be provided within parking lots. To maintain visibility for public safety, secluded niches and corners should be avoided. Two-story landscaping that includes both large canopy or oval trees and low shrubs (not exceeding 30 inches in height) is encouraged.
  3. Shared parking is encouraged to reduce the total amount of required parking.
  4. Twenty-five percent of all parking spaces should be designed for compact cars.

## F. BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Objective: To reduce automobile trips and to encourage bicycle and pedestrian access to businesses along San Clemente and Paradise Drive.

- Standards:
1. Safe, well marked pedestrian access shall be provided from the sidewalk to the entry to each building or use. Wherever feasible, pedestrian access shall be separated from automobile access and parking and shall be marked with distinctive paving, landscaping, and the like.
  2. Secure bicycle storage shall be provided on all streets.

## G. SCREENING

Objective: To screen outdoor storage of autos, vehicles, lumber, and other materials.

- Standards:
1. Screening should be provided by landscaping and landscape features such as trellises wherever possible. Where landscaping acts as a screen, large shrubs should be planted closely together.
  2. Where landscaping does not provide adequate screening, would be difficult to maintain, or is otherwise inappropriate, attractive solid wood fencing should be provided. Chain link fences with wood slats are not acceptable. Fences should be high enough that they cannot be scaled.

## H. SIGNS (Amended June, 1984)

Objective: To specify a sign and design theme which provides adequate identification; maintains the attractiveness of the Town; unifies Paradise and San Clemente Drives; and prevents loss of views and commercial identification caused by excessive signing.

- Standards:
1. On San Clemente Drive, each site may have one low, freestanding monument sign, with a dark background and light colored letters, with a maximum size of 50 sq. ft. and a maximum height of four feet. It should be landscaped at the base and located in the landscaped berm area at right angles to the street. Facia or wall-mounted signs which are visible from San Clemente Drive or other streets are not permitted. Signs such as directory sign which are not visible from San Clemente Drive may be permitted.
  2. On Paradise Drive, all signs mounted on buildings and visible from Paradise Drive or other streets must consist of individual letters, which may be individually illuminated, mounted on the facia of the building. In addition, each site may have one low, freestanding monument sign, with a dark background and light colored letters, with a maximum size of 50 sq. ft. and a maximum height of four feet. It should be landscaped at the base and located in the landscaped berm area at approximately right angles to the street.
  3. A sign program must be presented to the Board of Design along with the building design and must be integrated with the building in terms of materials, quality, scale, color, and the like.

## I. EXTERIOR LIGHTING

Objective: To reduce the nighttime glare of lights and the visibility of light sources, and to conserve energy.

- Standards:
1. All light sources must be screened from offsite viewing.
  2. The minimum lighting level consistent with public safety is encouraged.
  3. Low, well focused, vandalproof, and well designed lighting fixtures integrated into the building are encouraged.

## V. PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

The Town recognizes that public improvements may also substantially improve the visual quality of the area. In recognition of the efforts made by private property owners to improve their property, the Town intends to pursue the public improvements listed below. They will be constructed as soon as feasible given available financing and overall Town priorities.

- A. Underground Utilities. Paradise Drive and Koch Road south of Paradise Drive have been given the highest priority for use of Rule 20 money, provided by P.G. & E. for undergrounding public utilities.
- B. Street Tree Planting. Use of gas tax, assessment district, and other funds for planting and maintenance of street trees in the Town right-of-way east of San Clemente Drive and west of Paradise Drive will be pursued to the greatest extent feasible. The Town will also ask for Caltrans' cooperation in improving the landscaping within their right-of-way.
- C. Entrance Sign. The Town will explore the possibility of placing an entrance sign on Tamalpais Drive east of U.S. 101.
- D. Railroad Right-of-Way (Bicycle Trail and Linear Park). The Town will continue to apply for all available funds to purchase the portion of the railroad right-of-way east of San Clemente Drive for use as a bicycle path and linear park, in conformance with the General Plan.

If the Town does succeed in purchasing this property, it will pursue additional funding sources for preparation of a site and landscaping plan; installation of street trees; construction of a pedestrian and bicycle path; and development of a linear park.

- E. Pump Station and Tool Room. When the Central Marin sanitary districts become one consolidated district, the tool room adjacent to San Clemente Drive, which is owned by Sanitary District No. 2, will no longer be needed. It can then be demolished, and landscaping conforming to this plan may be established in its place.

## VI. PROCEDURES FOR EXCEPTIONS TO DESIGN STANDARDS

On occasion, strict adherence to the design standards may not be necessary to achieve the purposes of the specific plan, may cause hardships to a property owner, and may be justified by unusual conditions applicable to the property.

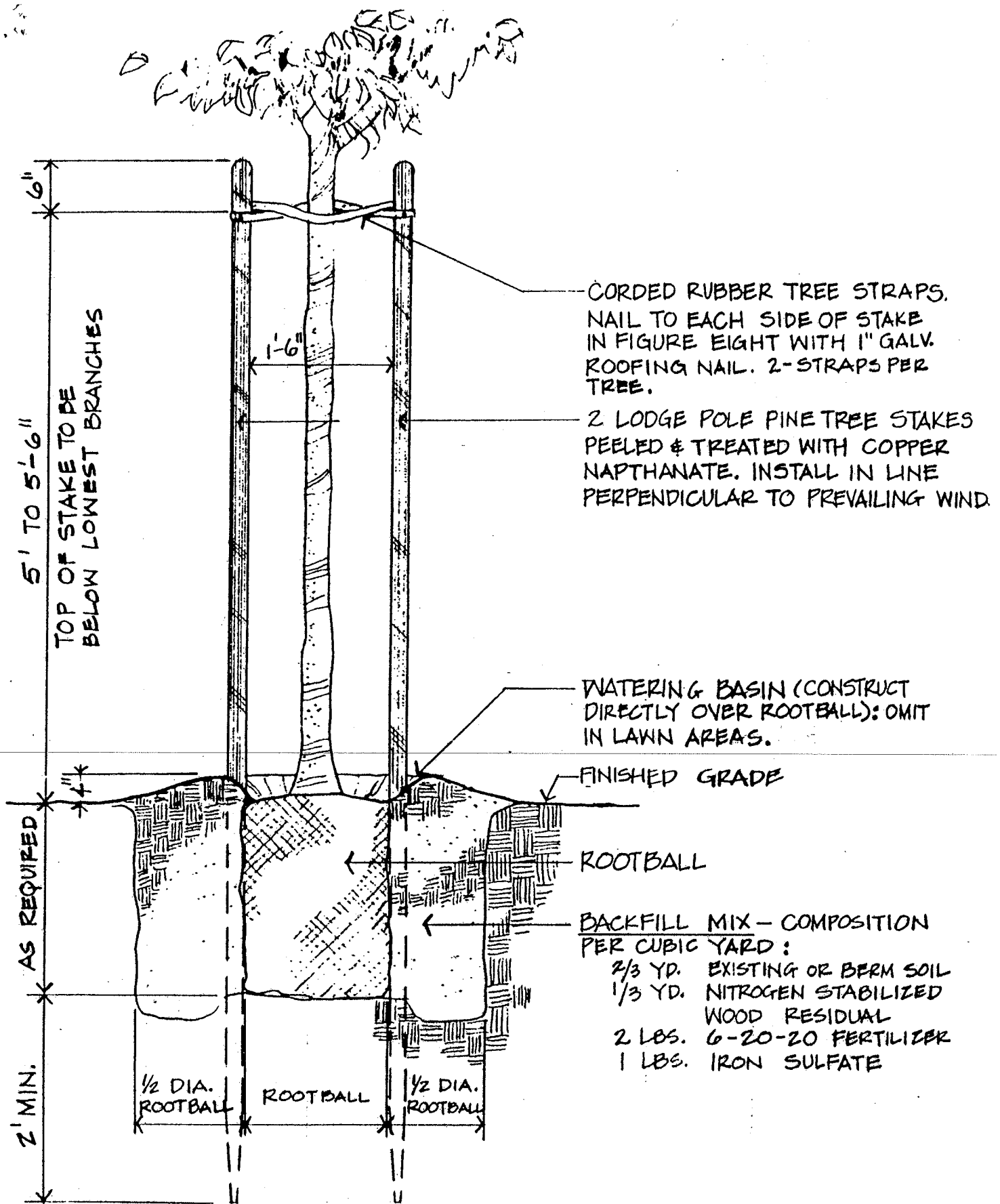
Therefore, the Board of Design may grant an exception to these standards, to the extent to which they are more restrictive than the Zoning Ordinance, if it can make all of the following findings:

1. Adherence to the design standards would cause practical difficulty or unnecessary physical hardship.
2. Special circumstances applicable to the property, which may include its size, shape, topography, the location of existing structures, street locations, or traffic conditions, cause the practical difficulty or unnecessary physical hardship.
3. If the exception is granted, development on the site will achieve the special purposes of this specific plan and will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other property in the vicinity.

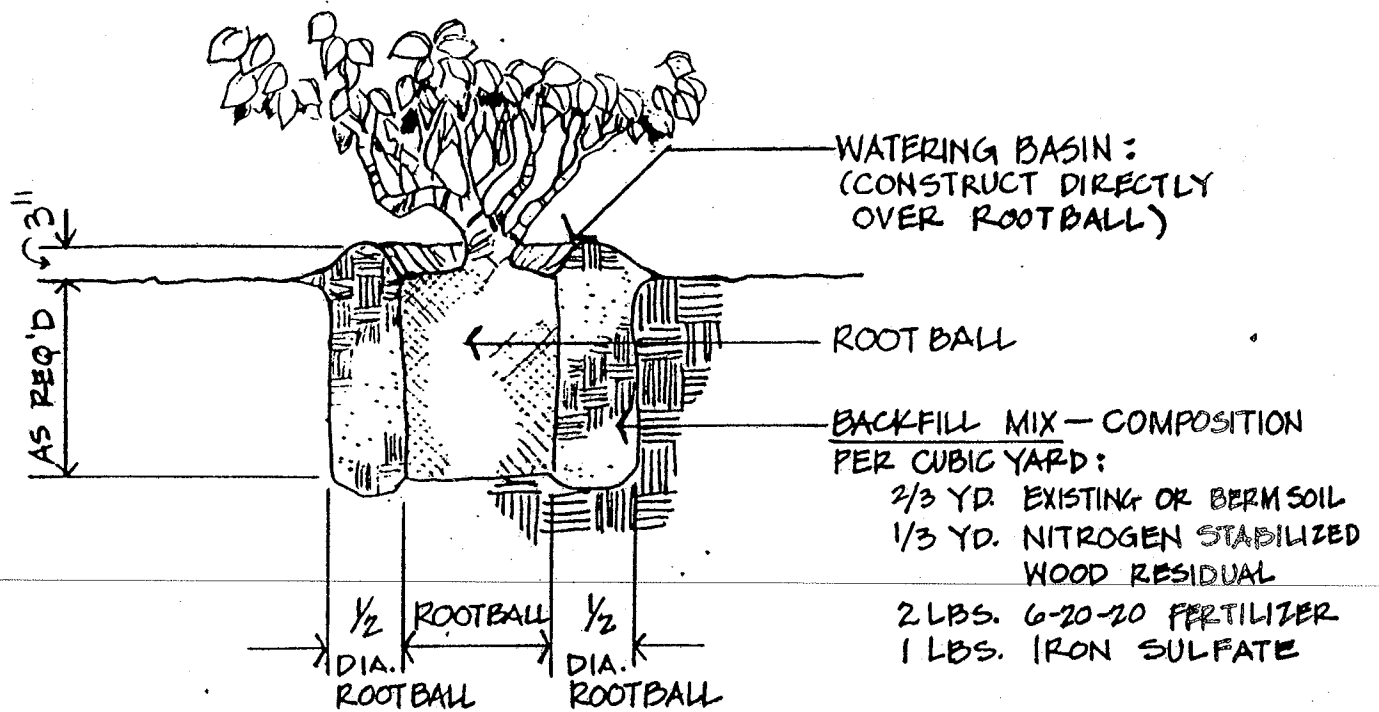
## VII. REFERENCES

1. Town of Corte Madera General Plan
2. Paul A. Leffingwell, Johnson, Leffingwell, and Guthrie, Paradise-San Clemente Street Tree Plan (March 19, 1979)
3. Bruce W. Parkinson, Soil and Plant Laboratory, Agricultural Suitability and Soil Fertility Analyses (February 15, 1979)

All references are on file in the Town Planning Department.



TREE PLANTING AND STAKING DETAIL



SHRUB PLANTING DETAIL