(and the walls came tumbling down)

Planning and Designing for Children, Youth and Families in San Joaquin County

by David F. Driskell
Bachelor of Arts in Urban Studies, Stanford University, 1986

submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

Founded on the belief that the physical environment plays an important role in human development, the thesis observes and responds to the increasing failure of urban environments in meeting the needs of children, youth and families. In doing so, the thesis focuses on the conditions and opportunities in San Joaquin County, California, as a context in which policies, guidelines and implementation strategies can be considered.

The thesis considers and criticizes planning and design responses to children’s needs that focus on building playgrounds and specialized, isolated facilities, and asks what we can do to make the community environment as a whole a better place for all people, including those under age eighteen.

To answer that question, the thesis:

- Examines the shortcomings and opportunities of the existing physical environments in San Joaquin County, as well as the institutional, economic, social and political forces that have developed and perpetuated those environments;

- Describes the key characteristics we would hope to find in neighborhood and city environments that support the needs of children, youth and families;

- Presents potential policies and guidelines for three topic areas—Streets and Circulation Systems, Parks and Open Space, and Childcare Environments—to illustrate how planning and design might create such environments; and

- Considers the barriers to implementation as well as the components of a successful implementation strategy, presenting five steps that could be taken to begin the process of planning and designing for children, youth and families in San Joaquin County.

Thesis Advisor/
Gary Hack, Professor of Urban Design
Preface

This thesis represents part of a continuing effort towards creating urban environments that better meet the needs of children, youth and families. That effort, under the banner of *The Playful City*, was formally initiated in the summer of 1990 when a group of 150 planning and design professionals and teenage representatives from around the country and the world gathered at Stanford University for five days to develop a vision and subsequent policies for creating and sustaining physical environments to meet the needs of children, youth and families.

The focus of *The Playful City*, like that of the thesis, is on the planning and design of physical environments. While acknowledging the importance of "program" in addressing issues of importance in the lives of children and youth, *The Playful City* is concerned with how the physical environment can support those programmatic responses and better meet children and youth's developmental needs.

The thesis builds on the theoretical framework articulated in *The Playful City Conference Workbook* (and the years of environmental design research represented therein) as well as the discussions and outcomes of the conference proceedings. Its intent is to begin exploring "the next step"—considering how the ideas and theories behind *The Playful City* might be implemented in a real-world context by identifying potential policies, design guidelines and implementation strategies for San Joaquin County. As such, the thesis is seen as a starting point more than as an end in itself, providing a foundation for further exploration into methods and strategies for addressing the needs of children, youth and families in the planning and design of cities and neighborhoods in San Joaquin County and beyond.
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Overview
 Origins

This thesis, and the body of research and practice on which it draws and (hopefully) builds, believes in a world where the sensitive application of knowledge and intelligence, whether in process or product, will create environments (physical, social, economic, political, cultural) that improve the quality of life and support the full development of human beings, both as individuals and as a collective.

Such a perspective on the world and its development is shared by most planners and designers. Indeed, most endeavors in the planning and design fields arise from this belief. However, a statement of this belief also poses many questions:

- Through whose eyes do we view the world and how does this determine our priorities regarding "the quality of life?"
- When there are conflicting priorities, whose will prevail?
- What do we mean by "sensitive application?" Who is being sensitive to whom?

This thesis views the world through the eyes of young people and considers how that world might better respond to their needs as developing human beings. It focuses on young people because of their special needs and circumstances, the collective future they represent, and the belief that by meeting the needs of society’s most susceptible members, we will better meet the needs of us all.

The thesis is concerned with the physical environment. However, such a concern is often inseparable from concerns that are political, social, economic and institutional in nature. Thus, while it focuses on the physical, the thesis also addresses those forces which affect and shape its form, content and management.

Chapter 2 discusses the relationship between physical environment and human behavior. In particular, it considers the role of environment in the lives of children and youth, and how well or poorly we as a society (and a planning profession), have acknowledged and responded to this reality.
Motives

Implicit in the preceding discussion, the thesis observes and is prompted by a physical environment that in many ways fails to meet the needs of children and youth. These prompts arise not only from the form of the physical environment, but also from how that form is developed, used and managed.

In a broader sense, the thesis views environmental shortcomings related to children and youth as part of a larger problem in which physical planning is driven by mechanistic orientations, short-sighted perspectives and general inattentiveness. These causal factors together with their effecual outcomes motivate the thesis and its responses.

The motivating question for the thesis can be summarized as: How can we realistically respond to shortcomings in our urban environments in order to better support the needs of children, youth and families? This question is set forth in Chapter 3 together with an outline of the process by which the thesis attempts to answer it.

Focus

California's San Joaquin County is used to illustrate environmental shortcomings related to children, youth and families, and to provide a context for consideration of potential responses. The County was selected because:

- It is fairly typical of urban areas in the U.S. (a struggling civic center with expanding suburban communities, an auto-dependent pattern of development, and an increasingly diverse population);
- It is growing rapidly, providing opportunities for, and necessitating, immediate, meaningful intervention; and
- There seems to be potential for building a coalition of legislative, governmental and private sector forces necessary to implement the vision being considered.

Chapter 4 considers the shortcomings and opportunities which exist in the physical environments of San Joaquin County as well as the institutional, economic, social and political forces that have developed and perpetuated those environments.
Vision

Having considered "where we are," the thesis looks to where it is we ought to be going (and subsequently, how we intend to get there).

Visions, stated or assumed, are central to any planning process. In the past several decades, numerous environmental design researchers have studied, quantified, qualified and expounded upon the need for physical environments that meet the needs of children and youth. Out of these efforts, we have begun to formulate a vision of how a physical environment might look and function if it were planned and designed to meet the needs of children and youth.

Chapter 5 describes the key characteristics we would hope to find in neighborhood and city environments, from suburban to center-city urban, in order to support the needs of children, youth and families. Together, these characteristics represent a criteria framework by which we can evaluate existing environments as well as new development proposals.

Reality

The thesis is an exploration of how the processes and priorities of planning and design have failed to create environments that meet human needs, particularly those of young people. Given our understanding of human-environment relations, why have we been unable to apply that knowledge towards improving the quality of our neighborhoods and cities? Why do we seem doomed to repeat our past mistakes? How can we institutionalize more thoughtful and sensitive planning and design and establish a process of learning, responding and innovating?

While these questions may sound naive (in their presumption that answers exist), the thesis attempts to be resolutely practical in suggesting responses (I will not be so bold as to call them answers or solutions).

Based on the criteria set forth in Chapter 5, the thesis focuses its efforts on the presentation of concrete policies, guidelines and strategies for transforming the vision of a child-youth-and-family-supportive urban environment into reality. When a planner is...
reviewing a development plan, what should he or she look for, recommend or require? When a public works engineer is designing a new street, how can he or she make it a safe place for children’s play as well as a passage for autos? How should cities respond to childcare needs in their planning documents and land use policies?

Chapter 6 begins the process of answering these questions by identifying potential policies and guidelines for meeting the needs of children, youth and families in relation to three areas of design and planning: Streets and Circulation Systems, Parks and Open Spaces, and Childcare Environments.

Change

Rome wasn’t built in a day, and change won’t occur overnight (or even automatically). Compilation of a set of policies and guidelines will not transform San Joaquin County into an earthly paradise.

The physical environment is shaped by the interaction of many people and forces: decisionmakers, bureaucrats, developers, planning and design professionals, community members, economics, demographic change. To be effective, policies and guidelines must be formulated within a comprehensive strategy for change. What policy and planning framework will be necessary? What actions will need to be taken by whom? Chapter 7 considers the difficulties inherent in implementing environmental change and presents a potential strategy framework for San Joaquin County.

Finally, Chapter 8 reviews the thesis presentation and considers the future directions and possibilities for success of related efforts.
The Emperor Has No Clothes
Statements of the seemingly obvious regarding the importance of physical environment in the lives of children and youth.

Like the boy in the story of *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, the following statements point out what we all know to be true but, in our rush to make the absurd seem palatable, we may fail to acknowledge or fully appreciate.

The statements concern the importance of physical environment in relation to children and youth. The ideas they encompass form the very basis of the thesis. However, I will not spend a great deal of time expounding on them or developing arguments or proofs in support. This has been done elsewhere by individuals much more capable than myself. The purpose here is to state the critical thoughts and ideas upon which the thesis is based so that the reader may better know the beliefs and biases of the thesis.

The chapter is, in essence, a statement of assumptions. However, they are not assumptions presented merely for the purpose of an academic exercise. They represent my fundamental belief system about planning and design. If I may use the words of those who have gone before me, I hold these truths to be self-evident...

1 There is a relationship between the physical environment and human behavior.

This statement should be fairly acceptable to a wide range of readers. Certainly it is a statement at the core of most planning and design thought, not to mention psychological, sociological, anthropological and developmental thought. Adherents, albeit to varying degrees and from different perspectives and to different ends, would include Plato, Jean Piaget, Sigmund Freud, Albert Speer (who I hesitate to include, but I think it helps prove the point), Margaret Mead, Jane Jacobs, Thomas Dewey, Maria Montessori, William Whyte, Kevin Lynch, and Donald Appleyard, among many others.

(If the backing of these individuals is not enough to convince, may I suggest spending a morning in downtown Manhattan followed by an afternoon in the Hudson River Valley. Then reconsider whether the environment has any affect on behavior.)

The last several decades have witnessed the development of a new field of academics and professionals concerned with environ-
ment-behavior interactions. These environmental psychologists, environmental behavioralists and environmental designers have documented "design behavior" in many different settings with many different populations. Their work provides the foundation, though not the focus, for the thesis.¹

A final point, distinct yet related, is made by Wolf Von Eckardt in *The Social Impact of Urban Design*. "Design... begs the question of its effect on behavior. Design is an effect of behavior." The design of our cities, "how we build and rebuild, how we use urban space and how we place and design our buildings and areas within the city...is the result of our collective behavior, a manifestation of our caring or uncaring response to the range of factors that constitute the city and its people."²

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¹ For further information on design behavior research, particularly as related to children, see the references list in the appendix.

The physical environment can either enhance or inhibit the development of a child.

This statement may not be quite as obvious as the preceding statement, but it is nonetheless true. The physical environment does affect, positively or negatively, the development (physical, mental, emotional and social) of children. The degree and nature of its affect may be debatable; however, its relevance as a factor in the life of a growing child is not.

The physical environment's influence on the developing child is analogous to the growth of a seedling. If you plant a seedling in the desert, it is likely to die. This is not always true, there are species that thrive in the desert, taking root and even blossoming into specimens of unique beauty. In general, though, this is rarely the case. The scattered, scrub vegetation of the desert environment attests to this fact. However, plant the same seedling in an environment where it has access to light, fresh air, soil and water (and maybe even some pruning) and it will grow to be healthy and mature, perhaps even blossoming and bearing fruit.3

Similarly, children are affected by the environments in which they grow and develop. As Medrich points out, "while children often display extraordinary initiative and imagination in coping with their surroundings... neighborhoods do reflect substantially different opportunity sets which invariably affect what children do and can do."4 This finding is well in keeping with the concept of child development advanced by Jean Jacques Rousseau in the eighteenth century, and carried forth by Jean Piaget, Heinz Werner, John Dewey, Maria Montessori and others in the twentieth century. As Rousseau wrote, the child is actively engaged with "his environ-

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ment, using it to suit his interests. He fits his abilities to the world in play and in the solving of problems, not as a passive recipient of the tutor's instruction... but as a busy, testing, motivated explorer. Knowledge is not an invention of adults poured into willing or unwilling vessels; it is a joint construction of the child in nature and the world.  

There are a number of factors that influence any human’s development as an individual and member of society, and no single factor will affect two people in the exact same way. In American culture, factors that tend to be given societal weight are the attitudes and attentions of parents, relations with peers and teachers, and economic status (translating into access to resources). The author of this thesis and many, many others believe that the environment is also an important determinant in child development, albeit to varying degrees with various individuals. It also plays an important role in the continued life support system of the mature adult.

A child who grows up with access to nature (trees, mud, marshes, bugs, birds), sees different people in the community (young, old, rich, poor, white collar, blue collar, black, white, yellow), observes different vocations (post service, grocery, law officer, barber, printer, undertaker) and participates in the community’s systems of transit, communication, politics and exchange, is much more likely to understand and participate successfully in the life of that community when she grows older than if she had grown up in isolation from that environment, in an asphalt playground behind a fence somewhere.

\[\text{The physical environment is an important influence on a child's development, but only one of many.}\]

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I am reminded of the childhood description of one of the more remarkable people I've ever met. Her name is Kathy Namphy, a professor at Stanford University and Resident Fellow of my freshman dormitory. Kathy grew up in the Cascade Mountains of Washington State, where her father was a forest ranger. Being far from any schools, Kathy's teacher was her invalid mother. Kathy would spend four days a week at her mother's side studying lessons; three days a week she would be free to roam the forests, mountains and streams of the Cascades—dreaming, writing and even building her own log cabin. At fourteen she entered high school in nearby Yakima. In two years she graduated and enrolled in the University of Washington, where she majored in English and Chemistry, was student body president and star highjumper on the track team. Graduating in three years, she turned down an invitation to join the first American athletic team to tour the Soviet Union in favor of studying linguistics in the Amazon Basin. The next year she realized a childhood dream and followed the route of Marco Polo through Asia, a 21 year old female alone in her '67 Beetle.

3 Cities don't just happen. They are consciously and purposefully built by willful individuals and organizations.

This is perhaps absurdly obvious, but I think worth pointing out. City building is a complex process that happens over time and results from the interaction of many different forces and individual actions. "Reading" the physical environment of a city is like reading the story of its social, economic, cultural, political and personal history. The older a city is, the more complex and rich is the story it has to tell.

But despite all its complexity, city building is not a mysterious process over which humans have no control. Cities are not natural or even supernatural phenomena beyond the grasp of mortal men. People build cities, and they build them either well or poorly.

Looking at American cities today, we can read the values on which they have been built. In older cities, we see the value placed on park space (e.g., Central Park in New York, the Emerald Necklace in Boston, etc.)
and on monumental government buildings expressing our civic ideals and Greco-Roman notions of democracy. But what is overwhelming about American cities today is the autocracy of the automobile. The primary feature of most American cities is the system for movement and storage of cars. While Los Angeles is the supreme example, we don’t have to look far (if at all) in any American city to find equally convincing illustrations. Even Boston’s treasured Emerald Necklace has been studded with parking lots.

In many American cities, the massive freeway building programs of the ’50s and ’60s were stopped by angry citizens to prevent the further destruction of their neighborhoods. Yet today that destruction continues to take place, although in more subtle forms. Perhaps the best illustration can be found in the current Central Artery Project in Boston, hailed for removing the auto from the urban landscape and reclaiming city space for non-auto uses. However, the decisionmaking behind the project was not motivated by such considerations, but rather by a desire to increase the artery’s auto-carrying capacity. While the Commonwealth and Federal governments cut employment, education spending and health programs, they dedicated billions of dollars to move more cars into, through and out of downtown Boston.

Plato declared that while the city arises for the sake of life, it is for the sake of good life. Albert Eide Parr, former director of the American Museum of Natural History, continued that idea when he addressed a meeting on the topic of "The Happy Habitat." As Colin Ward recounts, "Imagine his effrontery in suggesting that the function of the city might be the promotion not merely of business, not solely of entertainment, nor even of public safety, but of happiness."  

7 Ibid.
Our existing urban environments are failing to meet the needs of children and youth.

We are all familiar with the litany regarding the contemporary lives of children and youth in the United States. It is a litany of alienation, disconnectedness and despair in the midst of the world's most materially wealthy society. School drop-out rates are high, teen suicide rates have soared, drug abuse is widespread, teen pregnancy has risen, literacy has dropped and the nation's workforce is increasingly unable to compete in the global market.

The sources of these problems are many, and the solutions are often elusive (and will remain so until we truly dedicate ourselves to finding them). What we are concerned with here is the ways in which the physical environment aggravates or alleviates these symptoms and their root causes.

In most of the Western world (and increasingly the non-Western world as well), it is possible to walk through a downtown area and see few if any children and youth (or any sign that they are represented in the city's population). Despite society's increasing concentration in urban areas and the fact that, on average, nearly 25 percent of any given population is aged 0 to 18, society's future voting citizens do not take part in daily community activities; most do not even passively observe what those activities are.

In the winter of 1990 I was involved with a teen planning project in the community of Roxbury, a low-income neighborhood of Boston. The goal of the project, sponsored by the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, was to propose designs for two community facilities being planned for the community. As part of the process, we took a field trip one evening to the campus of MIT. The physical distance from Roxbury to MIT is approximately two miles. The social, economic and cultural distance is much, much further. Many of the teens in the group, many only a few years from high school graduation, had never been to the campus before and were unfamiliar with what the Institute was about. MIT, a world-renown institute of research and education and a major presence in the civic life of Boston, was a distant, foreign place to them. Many of the same teens were
also unaware as to the location of City Hall or the name of Boston's mayor. In their eyes, these places and people were not a part of their world. And in many respects, they are quite correct.

In the modern city, a world of children has been developed separate from the world of adults. Childhood itself has been encoded in the physical environment through a complex network of urban systems and settings that contain the young people's lives. Schools, daycare centers, recreation facilities, playgrounds, social activities (afterschool programs, church groups, etc.) children's museums and even special television programming are parts of this system.

Certainly, there are a number of reasons for the existence of this system: the desire to provide a safe, nurturing environment for child development; the disintegration (or at least reconfiguration) of the family unit, requiring social support systems to complement or replace the traditional roles of parents; the reconfiguration of communities, with separated living and working functions requiring a system of surrogate caretakers in living areas to substitute for absentee parents.

These reasons are legitimate, and they require a response. The system which we have developed provides several benefits in this regard. However, we must also consider its shortcomings and costs. After having spent eighteen years isolated from "the world" by literal and figurative walls, we should not be surprised when young adults have difficulties participating as adult members of society--as employees, employers, voters, decisionmakers, parents or homeowners.

We cannot continue to perpetuate a system of specialized, isolated environments to meet the developmental needs of children and youth. The challenge before us is to provide environments that meet children and youth needs for security while at the same time connecting them with the communities in which they live, exposing them to the stimulation their world has to offer.
We have the ability to create environments that are supportive of children and youth needs. What we lack is the determination.

The fields of environmental psychology and environmental design are based on the idea that we can understand the nature of the relationship between environment and behavior and subsequently design better buildings, better public spaces and, in the end, better cities. This thesis believes the same.

It is not unrealistic to imagine a city that has been developed to provide a healthy environment for the development of its younger citizens, a place that is simultaneously nurturing, secure and stimulating. Such a vision is not incompatible with the vision of a city that is economically prosperous and functionally efficient. In fact, the vision of the former necessitates the vision of the latter (children benefit from economic development and efficient urban systems too).

All of the things discussed in this thesis are knowable and realizable. In most cases, the environments and systems discussed already exist somewhere, in one form or another. We can point to examples of streets that provide both automobile access and a safe play environment for children, "environmental yards" and open space systems adjacent to school facilities that support environmental education and adventure play, even school programs that operate without classrooms, using the city itself as a setting for learning.

The focus for our energies need not be on proving that such systems and environments are achievable. The challenge is in finding ways to create such systems and environments as the norm in our cities. We have to move beyond the cosmetic, beyond painting flowers on the wall. Child- and youth-supportive environments must form the very framework of our urban system, rather than exist as isolated events within a largely hostile environment.
Looking Before Leaping
A brief presentation of the thesis approach and methodology.

**Asking The Right Questions**

In any problem-solving exercise, developing the correct answers requires identifying the right questions. As stated in Chapter 1, the summary motivating question for this thesis is: *How can we realistically respond to shortcomings in our urban environments in order to better support the needs of children, youth and families?*

This question arises from a number of related sub-questions, which include:

- **Why is it important to develop urban environments in a manner that supports the developmental needs of children and youth?**

- **What exactly do we mean by "an urban environment that supports the developmental needs of children and youth?"**

- **How could that environment be created in built reality?**

- **What barriers exist to developing such a built reality and how might those barriers be removed or overcome?**

**Approaching the Answers**

Developing answers (or at least responses) to these questions was the focus of the thesis process. Following is a brief description of the key steps in that process.

**Background Research.** To better understand the state of the art regarding children, youth and families in the built environment, research was begun in the Fall of 1990 as part of the thesis preparation period. This research, consisting primarily of a literature search and review, but also including discussions with professionals and academicians in the field, contributed to background knowledge already gained as a participant in the Playful City Conference of August 1990 and editor of the conference workbook.

**Initial Project Definition.** To ensure a focus and final product applicable to the needs of San Joaquin County, an initial project meeting was held with a small focus group in the offices of the San Joaquin County Family Resource and Referral (SJCFRR) in Stockton. Attending that meeting were Joan Richards, Executive Director of SJCFRR; John Carlson, Community Development Director for Stock-
ton; Bob Green, a minister and board member of Stockton Metro Ministry (funding agency); Sandy Huber, childcare and developer representative; and Cindi Martin, community representative on the county childcare task force. The purpose of the meeting was to define the project goals, identify potential information and data resources, and discuss the project process and timeline.

Data Collection. To provide the background data for the project, information was gathered through interviews, observations and existing planning and policy documents. Interviews were conducted with members of Stockton’s Departments of Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works, facility planners for the Stockton and Lodi Unified School Districts, local developers and representatives of county childcare providers. Planning documents consulted included the city and county General Plans, Park and Recreation elements of those plans, and public works Standards and Specifications Manuals. Site visits were made to several areas of new development in the county as well as to older residential areas and Stockton’s downtown neighborhoods.

Development and Review of Draft Policies and Guidelines. Based on the background research and data, draft policies and guidelines were developed. Three review meetings were held in late April to present and discuss these initial ideas and concepts. The first meeting was held with the Director of the San Joaquin Building Industries Association (BIA) and his assistant. The BIA represents developers in the County on issues of public policy and keeps the development community informed on matters of relevance or interest. The second review session involved representatives from the first project scoping meeting as well as the Director of Parks and Recreation for Stockton and a representative from Stockton’s Public Works Department. The final review session was held with representatives from the planning departments of the towns of Ripon and Lodi.

Revision and Final Document Development. Based on comments from the review sessions, revisions were made and a final set of policies and guidelines were developed (presented in Chapter 6) as well as accompanying strategy ideas for implementation.
A Model For Change

The thesis approach and structure can perhaps be more clearly understood from the diagrams and text that follow. They present a strategic planning process that strives for change by clearly understanding existing and desired conditions, and the paths (ideal and practical) between the two.

Identifying Point A. Before journeying to any new point on a literal or figurative map, it is essential to know your current location. The thesis considers our current location on the map of meeting children and youth needs in the physical environment by describing and evaluating the existing environment in San Joaquin County (Chapter 4). In doing so, it describes both the physical characteristics of that environment as well as the policymaking structures and decision-making processes that shaped and formed them. The interviews and review of County and city planning documents were intended to ground the thesis research firmly in the ground of reality, helping ensure that the discussions and suggestions of the thesis responded to a real place and time.

Envisioning Point B. Having identified where it is we are, it is necessary to consider where it is we would like to arrive. Building on previous efforts and background research on the relationship between physical environment and child development, the thesis describes the characteristics we would expect to find in a community environment that meets the needs of children and youth. These characteristics, which essentially form a criteria framework by which we can judge existing environments and guide new developments, are presented in Chapter 5.

The Ideal Path From A To B. In order to move ourselves from our existing position to our desired position, we must travel the path from A to B. To help us along this path, Chapter 6 suggests physical planning and design guidelines and policies that might be implemented in response to the criteria framework described in Chapter 5. Immediate and comprehensive application of these guidelines might be considered the ideal path, i.e., shortest distance, between Points A and B.
The Pragmatic Path. The shortest distance between two points is not always a straight line, particularly when there are barriers and frictions blocking the direct path. From a pragmatic point of view, it is entirely possible and indeed quite expectable that the journey from A to B will be achieved in increments, along a less-than-straight though perhaps-less-resisted pathway. Keeping the long-term destination in mind, the pragmatic path strives towards goals that are realistic and achievable in the short-term. Moving to the next short-term goal and subsequent medium-term goals, the final long-term goal draws nearer and becomes realizable. Chapter 7 discusses the components of an implementation strategy and identifies actions that could be taken in the short- and medium-term to begin moving towards the ultimate goal of creating cities that are good places for children, youth and families.
Of Barriers And Bureaucracies
A description of existing conditions in San Joaquin County, focusing on the physical environment and the social, economic and institutional forces which have shaped it.

Before considering "the world that we want," it is helpful to understand "the world that we have" (so we know where we are and how far it is we have to go). This thesis arises from a critique of "the world that we have" which concludes that it is not all it could or should be. In particular, it sees existing urban environments as falling far short of meeting the needs of children and youth, important members of the urban population.

To better understand the conditions in existing urban environments, the thesis focuses on the geographical and political entity of San Joaquin County in California. The following chapter describes some of the conditions in San Joaquin County and how they are failing to meet the needs of young people. It begins with a physical, economic and social description of the County and then provides an overview of the decision-making environment and planning framework that guide physical development in the County. Lastly, it summarizes some of the problems in the existing environment in relation to children, youth and family needs.

Physical Setting and Character

San Joaquin County is located in the Central Valley of California, immediately east of the San Francisco Bay Area and south of the Sacramento metropolitan area. The County covers 1,440 square miles and contains seven incorporated cities, twelve unincorporated towns and over 460,000 residents.

The County is defined geographically by the Sierra Nevada mountains on the east and the San Joaquin/Sacramento River Delta on the west. The Delta, spreading over the northwest corner of the County as well as lands beyond, covers an area of 750 square miles. It is formed by the conjunction of several Sierra rivers, particularly the San Joaquin and the Sacramento, where they meet the San Francisco Bay and Pacific Ocean. The interlacing channels of the Delta and its extensive flood control system create a complex of islands, many of which are below sea level. This ecosystem of islands, wetlands and waterways supports a diverse population of bird, animal and plant life.
The County is primarily agricultural in character, containing some of the most productive farmland in California and the nation. This character has been changing rapidly in the past ten years as the expanding populations of the San Francisco Bay Area and the Sacramento metropolitan area have moved into the County in search of affordable housing.

**Population and Demographics**

San Joaquin County is a place of rapid growth and increasing diversity. The County’s current population is estimated at 460,000, a 35 percent jump in ten years (outpacing the State’s growth rate of 20 percent during the same period). The Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy predicts that the San Joaquin Valley will be California’s fastest-growing region in the 1990s, with an estimated 300,000 new residents joining the County population in the next twenty years (a 65 percent increase). Some County communities, such as Tracy, Lathrop and Ripon, could as much as double in size in that time period.
As the County’s population grows, it is becoming increasingly diverse. In 1989 it was reported that 32 languages were represented in the County’s schools. The two fastest growing racial groups are Latinos (growing from 19 percent of the population in 1980 to nearly 25 percent of the population in 1989) and Asians (growing from 6 percent of the population in 1980 to 8 percent in 1989). Much of the growth in the Asian population has been from Southeast Asia, particularly Cambodia and Vietnam, while growth in Latino communities has been mostly from Mexico and Central America. The White and Black populations have been shrinking as a percentage of population, representing 63 percent and 5 percent of the population, respectively, in 1989.

**Economic Conditions**

San Joaquin County’s economic base has traditionally been in agriculture. While this continues to be true, government is now the County’s number one employer and the manufacturing services and trade industries have become increasingly important in the past decade.

However, while County employment has grown in the past decade, it has failed to keep pace with population expansion. The new residents fueling County growth are mostly commuters to employment centers in Sacramento and the Bay Area, leaving San Joaquin County with the greatest jobs/housing imbalance of any urban county in Northern California.

This situation can lead to severe future budget problems for local governments in post-Proposition 13 California. With strict limits on property tax increases, local services must be funded through local business taxes and other revenue sources. Jobs/housing imbalances mean high demand for local services and limited funds with which to provide those services. While short-term need for facility construction (roads, sewers, parks, etc.) can be met through development fees (impacting home affordability), long-term maintenance funding requires major local resource commitments, limiting government’s ability to meet other pressing needs.
In addition, San Joaquin's wage structure tends to be well below state and national averages, reflecting agriculture's role in County employment. In 1989, the County's median annual household income was $27,450, having grown from $16,000 in 1980. The County also has the highest Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) rate in California. According to 1988-89 public school data, there were 24,119 students on AFDC that year, accounting for 28 percent of the students in grades K-12.

The Development and Planning Framework

Planning in San Joaquin County takes place within the structures of California's General Plan Law and related land use legislation. These laws attempt to provide a framework by which policies and priorities guiding land use and development are articulated through a public planning process and periodically updated in response to new conditions.

The single most important element of this planning framework is the General Plan. In San Joaquin County there are eight general plans—one for the County and one for each of the seven incorporated cities (each city plan being, by law, consistent with the county plan). These documents guide long-term land use and development in the County within a policy framework of goals, objectives and implementing programs. Each plan contains seven elements: land use; circulation; housing; conservation; open space; noise; and safety.

While often criticized for "following" development rather than "leading" it, general plans have proven useful to groups able to use its legal framework to their advantage. By focusing efforts on ensuring that their views become general plan policy, community and special interest groups can monitor subsequent development decisions to ensure that they conform with the plan's policies. When there are inconsistencies, they can block developments by challenging them in court. General plan processes have thus become highly politicized, particularly in areas experiencing rapid rates of growth.

The appendix of this report provides an overview of general plans and other documents and programs that guide and control land development in San Joaquin County.
Decisionmaking Bodies

San Joaquin County's land use and development policies are developed and approved by several important decisionmaking bodies in the county and city governments. These include the County Board of Supervisors, the councils of the seven incorporated municipalities, planning commissions and development review committees. Other decisionmaking bodies also play roles in land use and development at various points in time, particularly the overseeing bodies of federal and state agencies operating in the County and the elected and appointed committees of city departments for public works and parks and recreation. City and County staff also play a very important role in making daily decisions that affect the direction and quality of land development.

The key public decisionmaking bodies guiding land use and development decisions in San Joaquin County are briefly described in the appendix.

The Political and Decisionmaking Environment

The preceding sections and their appended information describe the basic structure and framework for land use and development planning in San Joaquin County. However, understanding the operation of that structure requires understanding the nature of its politics and decisionmaking processes. Following are some issues and conflicts that seem to characterize San Joaquin County's political and decisionmaking environment.

Multiple Jurisdictions. In San Joaquin County, land development and management decisions are made by numerous public agencies that often have overlapping jurisdictions. Federal agencies concerned with land use in the County include the Bureau of Land Management, National Forest Service and Department of Transportation; State agencies include the Department of Forestry, Department of Transportation (CalTrans), Water Authority and State Department of Parks and Recreation. County government and its various agencies oversee and manage (or coordinate management of) unincorporated areas in the County while the seven
cities oversee and manage development decisions within their urban growth boundaries (which often include some unincorporated areas). There are also thousands of private landowners, most of whom own only small parcels (usually their home lot), but many of whom own large agricultural parcels of hundreds of acres. These landowners have considerable influence on land use policies and decisionmaking.

As might be expected, inter-agency coordination of land use and development decisions is often problematic. Communication between agencies, especially agencies at different levels of government (i.e., federal, state, county and city) is typically limited. Thus, while documents such as the County General Plan are intended to provide overall direction, many important decisions are made in isolation from other affected agencies. The result is disjointed and arbitrary patterns of land use and development, decisions that may be challenged in court by other jurisdictional agencies, and frustrated private landowners who receive varied and potentially conflicting directives from multiple agencies.

**Misrepresentation.** Minority groups represent an increasing proportion of the County population. By the year 2000, it is expected that there will no longer be a "majority" in San Joaquin County (i.e., no group will represent more than half the population).

This demographic fact could go completely unnoticed if one were to look at the racial composition of County and city decisionmakers. But for rare exceptions, elected and appointed decisionmakers in the County and its many jurisdictions are white (and most often male). While some of these officials may have the interests of minority groups in mind, it is likely that they have an incomplete understanding of these groups' needs. It is also likely that when forced to decide between the interests of a minority group and the interest of their own group, they will favor their own groups' platform or agenda. This is not unnatural; it is fully expected and certainly continues a well-documented historical pattern that exists throughout the country and world.

It is not the point here to question the personal integrity of those holding office. How-
ever, it is an issue that a large portion of the population (a portion of the population that on average has more children and lower incomes) is not directly and proportionally represented on important decisionmaking bodies at every level of government.

**Lack of Political Accountability.** Related to the previous point, California's political system, like political systems in most of the country, is largely controlled by "big-money" interests and a campaign finance system that favors incumbent candidates. Despite efforts at campaign reform, there have been few if any changes in the system that has controlled California elections for years.

While not true of all elected officials, this system has elected and perpetuated many officials who are more responsive to the needs of large landowners and business concerns than to the needs of the majority of voters who elected them. The "big-money" concerns in San Joaquin County tend to be agribusiness and land development, industries dominated by whites. It is not surprising that white candidates continue to predominate in a largely minority region.

**Bureaucratic Inertia.** Many of the decisions affecting land use and development occur at the bureaucratic level. City managers, planning departments, public works agencies, and park and recreation districts are all managed and staffed by bureaucrats who tend to outlast their elected overseers. Thus, even given change in the elected leadership, previously ingrained priorities and interests may continue to direct the everyday decision-making process in county and city bureaucracies. This bureaucratic inertia coupled with little changeover in elected leadership, can lead to static public policy decisionmaking that maintains previous priority structures and decisionmaking systems in the face of dramatically changed circumstances. These circumstances seem to prevail in many San Joaquin County jurisdictions (and, indeed, in most public agencies I have known).

Given this point, it is interesting to compare the bureaucrats I encountered during my research for the thesis in San Joaquin. Planning officials and other bureaucrats from the county's smaller, newly incorporated communities were, on average, much more enthusiastic about discussing
and considering ways in which their communities could be made better places for families. This is partly due, I suspect, from the fact that families with children predominate in their communities. It is also due, I think in large part, to these cities' lack of decisionmaking baggage. They have relatively clean slates; it is not necessary to "redefine" priorities or policies because everything has yet to be defined. In older bureaucracies, the ideas in the thesis were often met with skepticism or were outright rejected prior to any consideration. There was a lack of interest among these bureaucrats to question past practices or the assumptions on which those practices were based.

The Oldtimers vs. the Newcomers. In San Joaquin County, this classic "battle" is alternately referred to as the "city slickers vs. the farmers" or the "yuppies vs. the aggies."

It is not uncommon for a community that is undergoing rapid change to experience divisions (economic, racial or social) between those who were there before and those who came after. In San Joaquin, there are several such divisions. One of the most obvious is between the traditional powerbase of agricultural interests and the growing population of white-collar, suburban residents, most of whom commute outside the County to work.

Each group eyes the other with mistrust and sees their interests in conflict (which they often are). While the new residents have fueled explosive growth and its effluents (massive subdivisions, traffic congestion, higher home prices, etc.), they are typically the most vocal anti-growth advocates. They moved to the County for its "rural character" and want to see it stay that way. Meanwhile, the "oldtimer" agricultural landowners loath the newcomers' lifestyles (if not the newcomers themselves) and the ef-
fects of growth on their community. However, they are also enthusiastic about the new profit-making potential of their land in a subdivided environment. They are protective of their right to sell and develop their land as they see fit, and angered by yuppy attempts at telling them what they will or will not do.

However, these two very broadly defined groups have been driven more closely together than they might otherwise be due to the presence of a third (equally broadly defined group)—minorities.

Minority groups have been important members of the County's population since the beginning of its modern development. Chinese workers built many of the rail lines that first stimulated growth in the County and Mexican migrant farmworkers have long been the backbone of the County's agricultural economy. Nonetheless, throughout that time and into the present, these groups have had little if any representation on local decisionmaking bodies. Now, however, due to rapid growth in the minority population and projections that there will no longer be a "majority" group in the County within fifty years, minority communities are increasingly being seen by many whites as a threat to their control over local politics and resource allocation decisions. Thus, the urge to cooperate has overcome most feelings of mistrust between the county's two broadly defined majority interest groups.

Nonetheless, relations between whites and minority groups in the County have remained genial for the most part, at least on the surface. Efforts towards political organization (e.g., by the United Farm Workers) have strained relations in the past, as have periodic outbreaks of violence (e.g., the shooting of Cambodian school children in a Stockton playground several years ago). At the moment, an outbreak of gang violence in Stockton has been attributed to Latino youth and is increasingly looked upon by the white community as a cultural or racial problem.
Environmental Concerns and Business Growth. This conflict was alluded to in the discussion of "oldtimers vs. newtimers," but is worthy of discussion in its own right due to its importance in land use and development decisionmaking.

As population growth continues to fuel residential development, local governments throughout San Joaquin County are likely to pursue business development as a means of providing an adequate local tax base to fund local services. These business development efforts, in addition to land development for residential uses, are likely to lead to conflict between the county's growing environmental interests and those carrying the banner of business growth.

Again, this conflict can be partly characterized as a conflict between newcomer city-slickers who want "their piece of the country" and oldtimer landowners who want "their piece of the action." However, it will also involve much larger interests with powerbases outside the county borders. These interests include statewide and national environmental organizations (such as the Sierra Club, headquartered in San Francisco and with a large chapter in the Delta area) as well as the powerful, statewide lobbies of agri-business and the development industry. These interests, which have clashed previously throughout the State, are likely to come into increasing conflict in San Joaquin as the County continues its phenomenal rate of growth.

Battles over the preservation or development of areas such as this will be a focus for land use decisionmaking in the County for many years.
General Assessment

The preceding discussion provides an overview of decisionmaking issues and structures that affect land planning and decisionmaking in San Joaquin County. Following is a brief overview of the built environment that these decisions have created, from the perspective of children, youth and family needs.

Auto-oriented and scaled environments.
Probably the most overwhelming physical attribute of San Joaquin’s built environment is its orientation toward the automobile. Cars are ubiquitous and the systems that support them (streets, parking lots and driveways) create the primary framework for community life. Certainly not unlike most developed areas of the western United States (or anywhere in the United States, actually), it is nearly impossible to walk from most residential environments in the county, particularly in new developments, to retail or office areas. In one new residential development, much-touted for its attention to "family needs," the primary entrance consists of an eight-lane wide intersection, the same width as the nearby interstate highway. Although a textured paving surface has been installed to define the pedestrian crossing at this intersection, it is a mere gesture; the crosswalk is (and will likely continue to be) completely uninhabited. Who wants to cross a street where you can’t see the other side?

Poor bicycle and pedestrian circulation. The two modes of transit most accessible to children and youth—bicycling and walking—are poorly provided for in San Joaquin. While a bicycle path system has been established on paper, it has only been partially implemented, failing to create a continuous path system that leads from one destination to another. Walking, if the distance that must be travelled is not too far, often requires crossing busy thoroughfares and competing with cars for sidewalk space, which is repeatedly interrupted by driveways and parking lot entrances. On some of the major thoroughfares in Stockton, sidewalks have been well-designed and maintained in some spots. However, they form a discontinuous system of little benefit as one 200-yard stretch of "good" sidewalk is often followed by 100-yards of "bad" or even no sidewalk.
Sidewalks have been provided in most new residential areas, but are little used since most destinations (shopping, work, etc.) would require a walk of a half hour or more.

**Distinct but disjointed communities.** While communities in the County are distinct, often with quite unique character, they are also fairly disjointed. Many communities, even when immediately adjacent, are physically and psychologically cut off from one another. The level of segregation, economic and racial, between communities is high, with most neighborhoods being relatively homogenous even though the city as a whole is highly diverse. There are, certainly, exceptions to this rule. But they remain just that, exceptions.

**Abundant but inaccessible natural areas.** The County's physical environment has abundant natural areas that could support both numerous recreational activities and diverse (and often fragile) ecosystems. Such areas can be valuable resources for children and youth, providing opportunities for environmental education and exploration. While fragile ecosystems must be protected (and therefore off-limits to rampaging children), parts of these areas can be carefully managed as environmental education resources while less-fragile environments serve as unbounded places for play and discovery. Unfortunately, such natural environments in the County are usually difficult for children and youth to access without assistance from adults. Most residential areas have not been planned to retain significant natural areas in close proximity to schools and housing and the incomplete bike and pedestrian path system does little to assist youth in reaching distant destinations.

**Well-structured planning framework; little innovation.** The planning framework under which the County operates is well-structured and clearly articulated. It is a valuable tool for translating policies into actions and, eventually, built environments. Unfortunately, there has been little innovation in using this framework as a tool for ensuring the development of viable communities (socially as well as physically) in the County. Instead, the focus has been on ensuring that streets are wide enough and sewers are provided at adequate capacity.
This situation is due in part to a resurgent American attitude, particularly prevalent in the West, that regards the role of government as being to "get out of the way of private initiatives." Thus, rather than lead and shape development, planning has tended to follow it, ensuring only that new developments meet certain minimal requirements. Planning initiatives that have attempted to be more proactive in thinking about issues of environmental design have typically met with significant resistance from policymakers (who usually must answer to the developers and other big-money interests who finance their campaigns). The result has been developments where short-term profits are high but the long-term quality of living environments is low.

A sprawl without a center. Downtown Stockton, for years the visible, physical center of the County and the focus of much of its business and cultural activity, has become a place avoided by most residents. It is viewed by most as an undesirable, unsafe and dirty area, where one goes if one has to by day, but certainly does not venture by night. These attitudes are reflected in office rents in the downtown, which are well below rents in suburban office developments. They are also reflected by actions such as that taken in April to close one of the last remaining downtown park areas (to curtail its use by the local indigent population). Yet while downtown has declined as the community's center, no new center has formed to take its place. The new foci of activity are the linear strip developments along main arteries in Stockton, typically accessible only by auto and void of any community interaction. Despite efforts to redevelop the downtown area, it is unlikely that it will become a community focus at any time in the near future. The entire structure and character of new development is against that happening.
When The Eye Leaps Over The Wall
The title of this chapter is a metaphor used by a children's program in northern Italy. It refers to the walls which keep us from seeing the world as it might be (if it weren't the way it is) and the necessity of peering over those walls, at least in our imagination, to see what else might exist.

The metaphor refers in particular to the walls of adults. Walls that have been built over the period of many years; walls of banality, inertia and official reticence.

Thinking about how we can create cities that are good places for children and youth requires that we leap over our individual and collective walls (i.e., moving beyond "it can't be done" and thinking of more than playgrounds as ways of meeting children's needs). Children and youth can be valuable resources for helping us see a world other than the one we know; they tend to be unencumbered by the walls of adults.

Once we have created a vision of the world as we would like to see it, we can dedicate ourselves to tearing down our walls and transforming that vision into reality. That is what this thesis is about.

Following is a description of the characteristics we might attribute to a city environment supportive of the needs of children, youth and families. These characteristics were identified at the Playful City Conference in the summer of 1990, where nearly 200 professionals and teenagers spent four days leaping over the walls of the world they knew and creating visions of the world they willed to see.

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1 David Driskell, et. al., eds., The Playful City Conference Workbook (Berkeley, CA: MIG Communications, 1990), pp. 2.1-2.6.
Safety and Security. In many communities, the lack of safety and security is a major barrier that prevents children from having free access to their surroundings, thus limiting, if not eliminating, the learning potential of their community environment.

The design, programming and management of environments should help ensure real and perceived safety from dangers that may threaten the life or well-being of young people, both physically and psychologically. At the same time, however, we must allow children to take risks. Roger Hart has differentiated "danger" from "risk" by defining dangers as "elements and situations in the environment that defy learning through experimentation by certain aged infants and children because they are beyond their physical or perceptual abilities." Risks, on the other hand, are "other parts of the environment [that] are simply 'unpredictable' to children; they await experimentation and learning."²

Accessibility. Accessibility is a measure of the extent to which a given environmental system or setting allows people of different abilities to freely and easily access resources. This criteria can be applied to a specific site or facility (i.e., is it accessible, physically and psychologically, to people of different abilities) as well as to local and regional transportation systems. For children and youth, who do not drive cars, local and regional accessibility relies heavily on pedestrian and bicycle circulation and on the availability of public transit.

Diversity. An environment that is diverse, socially and physically, includes and stimulates children, youth and adults of different ages, sexes, ethnicities, cultures, incomes, and abilities. It promotes social interaction and integration, helping children understand, appreciate and successfully operate within an increasingly diverse society. This is an important area because children in general are more likely to accept new social

experiences than adults. The degree of interaction of young people with different social, economic, and ethnic groups can be greatly affected by land use patterns, residential layout, and housing type, just as the amount of interaction in a shared play space can be strongly influenced by its design, the range of settings it contains, and the type of play programming provided.

**Play and Learning Value.** Urban environments should support and stimulate a diversity of playing and learning activities for children and youth. The design and programming of recreational environments, schoolyards and neighborhood parks and play areas must consider development of the whole child, making sure to cover all principal dimensions of child development: social, physical, cognitive, emotional, sensory. Play areas that simply accommodate physical play (e.g., swings and slides) ignore the role of play in developing creativity, social skills and cognitive abilities.

**Age Appropriateness.** The design, programming and management of the environment must accommodate intended age groups, segregating or integrating them depending on the intended activities. In some environments—play areas, for example—it is important that preschoolers have a separate area away from settings for older groups. In other environments—for instance, public buildings—it is more likely that child-friendly settings require accommodation for the needs of all age groups.

**Programming Potential.** This refers to the ability of a facility or environment to adapt to changing needs and uses in both the short and long term. Through appropriate design and management, a facility such as a schoolyard can accommodate many formal and informal education and play programs. The "programmability" of an environment can significantly contribute to helping achieve a number of the objectives listed here: diversity, play and learning value, and safety, for examples. Depending on its design, the physical environment can help or hinder the development of creative, stimulating programs.
Empowerment. Users of a given environmental system or setting should be able to influence or control its form and content to serve their needs. Development of the physical environment can provide an excellent opportunity for empowerment and the building of self-esteem through participation. This is an extremely important goal for children and today's disenfranchised youth.

Balance of Public and Private Space. Children, like adults, have times when they need to be alone as well as times when they need to be together. The design of the environment should accommodate these needs, for young people as well as adults, by providing places to be alone as well as places where people can come together in small or large groups, or as an entire community.

Humor. The design and programming of the environment should offer the potential for humorous interactions between people and their surroundings. There are many ways in which humor can be introduced into the physical environment by design, especially by involving community artists, youth and children in the process.

Global, Environmental, Historical and Cultural Awareness. Children need to be aware of their community's history, the cultural backgrounds of its peoples, its relationship to the natural environment, and its connection with a larger social and economic system. The design and programming of the environment can contribute to these goals, for example by preserving places of historical or environmental significance and providing places for community gatherings and cultural celebrations.

Economic Benefit and Cost Effectiveness. Children and youth, like adults, benefit from a strong economy and the efficient allocation of resources. However, children and youth, unlike many adults, have a vested interest in allocation decisions that are efficient in the long-run as well as the short-run. Land use and development decisions as well as environmental maintenance issues should consider the extent to which costs can be justified in comparison to the economic and social benefits generated in both the short and long term.
Risk Management. Environmental design and management should be developed to reduce the risk of accident, liability, and lawsuit. Effective risk management is the principal means of addressing liability issues. It is an important goal, but one that is admittedly difficult to implement. Solutions and case studies of success are needed.

Legal Feasibility. Risk of suit, and the general climate of increased liability, have had a dramatic negative effect on the quality of many children's environments. Legal feasibility is a criteria that must be satisfied while at the same time finding ways to increase play and learning value in children's environments (including risk taking).

Implementation and Management. The systems and structures necessary to implement, manage and maintain environments must be developed with the above criteria in mind. In many ways, the effectiveness of management and maintenance will determine the degree of success for the original design or plan (e.g., a path that is designed as accessible will quickly become unaccessible if it is not properly maintained).

In addition, children and youth should be involved in the implementation and management processes as much as possible, so that the system or setting becomes a vehicle for further connecting children with their communities, encouraging them to personally invest in their cities' and neighborhoods' futures.
On Your Mark, Get Set
This chapter presents policies and guidelines responding to the needs of children, youth and families in San Joaquin County. Its intention is to illustrate how some of the ideas and concepts presented in the previous chapter might be translated in physical design.

The chapter focuses its discussion and recommendations on three areas:

- Streets and Circulation Systems;
- Parks and Open Space; and
- Childcare Environments.

These areas were chosen because of their importance in the lives of children and youth. They are also areas on which a great deal of previous research and study has focused, facilitating the development of informed, meaningful policies and guidelines. It is hoped that this presentation will provide a starting point for development of policies and guidelines related to other aspects of the environment in San Joaquin County (e.g., housing, schools and public buildings). The resources from which these guidelines were developed are listed in the appendix.

**Streets and Circulation Systems**

Streets, sidewalks, pedestrian paths, bikeways and transit—together they form both a means of transportation and a series of play environments in the lives of children and youth. Before addressing policy and design issues related to these systems, some introductory notes are in order:

*Children do not drive.* They rely entirely on self-locomotion (feet, bikes, skateboards) and on assisted transit (adult-driven cars and public transit) to move through their neighborhoods and access their destinations (schools, childcare centers, recreation facilities, libraries, shopping, etc.).

*Kids play in streets.* streets have always been and always will be among the favorite play spaces of children. Designed to provide direct access to each housing unit, the surfaces of streets, driveways and sidewalks become a paved open space network that ties the neighborhood together and provides a stage for community interaction. Asphalt and concrete surfaces are ideal for ball play, wheeled toys and games requiring chalkline grids or definition. Even in communities...
where other open space networks and linkages have been established as a way of discouraging children's street play (e.g., Radburn, NJ, or Village Homes in Davis, CA), the street network remains a prominent (if not dominant) place for community interaction and children's play. Aside from strict prohibitions and enforcement, children will continue to play in streets.

**Cars are bigger than kids.** It's really no contest. Any conflict between a child and a motor vehicle is bound to be won by the motor vehicle, as accident statistics confirm. In a Canadian study conducted in 1978, motor vehicle accidents were shown to be the leading cause of death for children age 5 to 14, with children age 0 to 15 representing 45 percent of all killed or injured pedestrians and bicyclists. The same study showed that a "typical" accident occurred near home, on a weekday and in the evening (4 to 9 pm) and that the summer months had higher accident totals than other seasons—a definite correlation between children playing in streets and being hit by passing automobiles.

**Children are not adults.** Children do not possess the same physical and psychological abilities, attitudes and experiences as adults. When children are involved with an object, a game or their own emotions, they can be completely oblivious to traffic risks. Because they are often considered small adults, their "carelessness" is usually blamed for accidents when in fact, children are generally unable to control their unpredictable behavior until they are much older. "Dashing out" is a term coined by adults to express their view. From a child's point of view, it is the vehicle which "rushes" at them.

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3 Ibid., p. 11.
Children often cannot interpret signs in the ways that adults intend them to be interpreted. A survey in The Netherlands asked children the meaning of the sign at right. Out of 25 children, 10 thought it meant to hold your child's hand while in the park, 10 though it marked a pedestrian crossing, 4 thought it meant no entry for pedestrians, and one thought it was a warning to beware of child kidnappers.

Policies and Guidelines

The following policy and guideline suggestions respond to the needs of children and youth in relation to streets and other circulation systems.

Children have difficulty synthesizing details and assessing complicated situations. Young children in particular are often overwhelmed by intersections where "too many things happen at once," and prefer to cross the street at mid-block. Children also have smaller peripheral vision than adults and have difficulty in perceiving objects in motion and in judging their speed. Lastly, children's size is an issue, particularly around parked cars that obstruct their own vision as well as hiding them from passing drivers.

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4 Ibid., p. 12.
Articulate General Policies Regarding Residential Streets.

It is critical that city and county policy documents give equal emphasis to the rights of pedestrians in residential streets as to the rights of automobiles. These documents should state a dual goal of providing convenient automobile and emergency vehicle access to residences and providing a safe pedestrian environment. Pedestrian safety should not be treated as ancillary to automobile circulation; it must be given equal consideration and power.

Reduce Traffic Speeds.

Slow traffic speeds on residential streets should be required by law and encouraged through design modifications. Requiring such speed limits on residential streets within a well-structured street system (where drivers must travel only several blocks on a residential street before reaching a higher speed arterial) will dramatically reduce traffic-related deaths without significantly increasing travel times for motorists.

15 m.p.h. Speed Limit. A residential zone speed limit of 15 miles per hour should be enacted and enforced by relevant agencies (city and county councils, city police, sheriff, highway patrol and California Department of Motor Vehicles). This reduced speed would immediately create safer residential environments without significantly increasing travel times for motorists. DMV literature and training could emphasize the residential speed limit, while local newspapers and public service announcements on radio and television stations encourage community and motorist awareness.

Traffic speeds can be reduced on residential streets at little or no cost to public agencies and with little impact on drivers' travel times.

A 15 m.p.h. speed limit could potentially (and literally) save many children's lives.
In the Netherlands, this sign tells drivers they have entered a “woonerf,” or residential street.

Signage. A comprehensive and consistent system of signage should be developed and placed at the entrance to housing areas to notify drivers that they have entered a 15 mph residential zone where children may be at play.

Signs in Germany use graphic symbols to identify entrances and exits to residential areas.
**Rumble strips.** These have been used in many cities to alert drivers to special conditions (unexpected stop signs and school crossings in addition to residential areas). They are relatively inexpensive to install and can take a variety of forms.

![Rumble strips diagram](image)

**Textured paving.** A more aesthetic (and more expensive) variation of the rumble strip, textured pavement can be installed at pedestrian crossings, at entrances to residential zones or throughout a residential/pedestrian area to make drivers aware that they are in a special pedestrian zone.

![Textured paving diagram](image)

**Speed bumps.** Speed bumps, or "sleeping policemen," can be very effective at reducing traffic speeds. If not well-marked, however, they can become dangerous (damaging cars and causing unexpecting drivers to temporarily lose control). If installed, speed bumps should be gently sloped and well-marked.
Street widths in an Everett WA, planned residential community were reduced, accommodating more community open space and more housing units while also reducing residential traffic speeds.

Narrow the street width. This slows down cars and allows pedestrians to cross streets more freely and safely. The provision of off-street parking may be necessary to make a narrow street possible (in order to allow emergency vehicle access). Such an approach has worked well in the Village Homes development of Davis, CA.
"Dechannel" the street. This represents the most dramatic design modification presented in this list, and arguably the most effective. Breaking up the street path so that it is no longer a "channel" for traffic encourages slow driving speeds and makes a strong physical statement that the street is a pedestrian zone just as much as it is a place for automobiles. The modifications can consist of changes in the street path and parking configurations, plantings, fences, walls and differentiation of the street surface.

The Dutch "woonerf," or residential street, is the most widely implemented example of this design idea, having been used extensively in street designs for the past two decades. The idea has been transferred to the U.S. and Canada in limited fashion, often being blocked by city development codes that place efficient traffic movement ahead of pedestrian safety.
Sidewalk bulges, or "chokedowns." This simple design modification has become increasingly common in the U.S. in the past ten years. It extends the sidewalk into the parking lane at street corners, narrowing the street-crossing distance for pedestrians and signaling motorists to travel slowly and watch for pedestrians.

Traffic circles. These relatively simple traffic control devices have been used in numerous cities to reduce traffic speeds and accident rates with minimal inconvenience to drivers. Through placement of a planter or other physical barrier in the center of an intersection, motorists are forced to slow their speed. The City of Seattle and others have developed point systems and neighborhood involvement processes that determine where traffic circles are located and how they are implemented.
3 Reduce Through-Traffic On Residential Streets.

The volume of traffic on residential streets can be greatly reduced through street planning that discourages or prohibits through-traffic. A policy of through-traffic reduction must be stated in planning documents, subdivision regulations and public works codes.

Street Hierarchies. Residential streets can be more effectively protected if they exist as part of a street hierarchy of arterials and connectors. Establishing a residential traffic zone of no through traffic and reduced speeds cannot be accomplished if the street is being used by non-residents to get from one side of the area to the other. Controlling traffic speeds is also hampered if drivers cannot reach an arterial street within several blocks (i.e., they will not be willing to travel far at a 15 m.p.h. speed limit).

Hierarchical street systems have traditionally been created in two ways:

- The Cul-De-Sac System. This system, commonly practiced in new developments in the U.S., reduces traffic in residential areas by creating "dead-end" streets that do not connect through the community. However, unless implemented in conjunction with an extensive pedestrian and bicycle path system, the cul-de-sac system can make it equally difficult to access the neighborhood by foot or bike, actually increasing dependency on the automobile.

- The Altered Grid System. Working from the traditional grid street pattern, this system establishes a grid of arterials with a broken grid of residential streets between. These streets, while providing convenient pedestrian and bike access throughout, are blocked to automobile through-traffic, creating quiet, protected residential areas. This system has been accomplished in several cities through retrofitting of an existing street grid.

An altered grid system identifies residential streets within a framework of arterials and then implements measures to reduce speeds and discourage through-traffic in the residential areas.
Traffic Barriers. These have been used in existing street networks to alter vehicle circulation patterns. Because they disrupt existing patterns, they are often resisted (except by those on the block that will benefit). However, they effectively reduce through-traffic and improve pedestrian safety.

Entry Gates. Gates operable only by residents can be placed at the entrance to residential areas so that the street essentially becomes a parking lot and play area. Such systems in the U.S. have tended to be high-tech and expensive, and can only be found in high income, "gated" communities. However, use of less expensive technologies might make this a more realistic and widespread design response.
Time Restrictions/Traffic Controls. In Boston, a traffic control system was implemented in one area that allows for only one-way traffic during specific hours of the day. This system was implemented to prohibit high-speed drivers from using the neighborhood as a short-cut to nearby clubs during night hours. When circumstances allow, similar restrictions can be used to protect neighborhoods during evening and weekend hours, when children are likely to be playing outdoors.

4 Improve Driver-Pedestrian Visibility.

Many of the auto-related injuries and fatalities to children and youth could have been avoided if fewer visual barriers existed on residential streets. In addition to slowing cars and reducing through traffic, residential streets can be made safer places for children by improving the visual connection between drivers and pedestrians.

Parking. One of the primary visual barriers on residential streets is parked cars. The story of a child running from behind a parked car into the path of an oncoming vehicle is told too often. Parallel on-street parking blocks visibility to pedestrian areas and can be extremely dangerous where children are playing. Elimination of on-street parking through creation of off-street parking bays can help address this situation on low-traffic and limited access streets. In places where on-street parking must be maintained, sidewalk chokedowns at corners and bulges at mid-block can help pedestrians view around parked cars to see on-coming traffic.
This intersection design incorporates sidewalk bulges, raised sidewalks and textured paving to create a safer pedestrian environment. The separation of parking areas from intersections improves visibility for all concerned.

**Intersections.** Street intersections often present "blind spots" due to vegetation, parked cars or odd street configurations. Vehicle parking should be prohibited within 15 feet of an intersection (this is a common law in most states) and trees and shrubs should be located (and kept pruned) to ensure adequate visibility in all directions. Sidewalk bulges (see page 52) can also contribute to establishing stronger driver-pedestrian visual connections at intersections. Crosswalks should be located at the street intersection and should be well-marked by signage and zebra-striping.

**Vegetation.** Trees and shrubs add a great deal to the character and aesthetic of a street and should not be abandoned as such. However, care must be taken in the selection of tree species and the location of plantings to ensure that key visual connections are not blocked. Avoid trees with low branches or street-side shrubs with dense foliage or heights of more than two feet.
Facilitate Pedestrian And Bicycle Circulation.

Policies regarding non-motorized transportation (pedestrian and bicycle) should not consider these as secondary systems. For nearly a quarter of the population, they are a primary means of transit. Establishing more comprehensive, visible and usable systems for pedestrians and bicycles will increase their use among the adult population as well. With San Joaquin's climate and topography, the bicycle could be a primary means of transportation for many people, reducing energy consumption, noise and air pollution. Implementation of these circulation systems requires resources, and therefore strong policy support, funding mechanisms and agency coordination.

Link Destinations. Pedestrian and bicycle circulation should be designed to link residences with age-appropriate destinations for children and youth. These include schools, childcare centers, youth recreation and activity centers, sports facilities, local and regional parks, libraries, shopping areas and places of teen employment. A system that leads nowhere will go unused.

Utilize Existing Systems. Sidewalks and road shoulders can and should be utilized as part of the pedestrian and bike path system. However, be sure to provide adequate safety buffers along high-speed roadways (anything over 25 mph) through adequate curbing and spacing between pedestrian paths and auto lanes. Trees and other vegetation can also be used as buffers (taking care not to impair visibility).

Sidewalks. Paved, curbed sidewalks should be required on all residential streets. They represent an important part of any pedestrian circulation system, following the routes known to community residents and visible to a large number of people. In areas where a more "rural" aesthetic is desired, street shoulders can be left unpaved in lieu of a sidewalk, but should be adequately buffered from street traffic with curbs and a strip of vegetation. Dirt shoulders just off the road edge are extremely dangerous places for pedestrians.
Path and Sidewalk Width. Pathways and sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate two people walking comfortably side by side. Where possible, pedestrian and bicycle lanes should be physically separated. At minimum, paths should maintain a five foot width.

Path Surfacing. This need not be expensive, but should withstand climactic conditions. Asphalt is preferred, but dirt surfaces can be fine if they are hard packed and graded for drainage. Gravel and sand surfaces should not be used as they are impossible for wheelchair users and dangerous for bicyclists.
Bike Lanes and Bike Paths. Bike paths separated from auto traffic lanes should be provided whenever possible. When it is not possible, wide street shoulders can be paved as bike lanes. It is imperative, however, that these lanes be well marked and adequately buffered from auto traffic. Bike lanes should not run alongside car parking areas or areas where there is a great deal of cross-traffic entering or exiting parking areas. At intersections, bike lanes must be carefully managed and marked for both bikers and motorists. At minimum, bike lane markings should be continued across the intersection and signage should alert drivers to the bike lane location.

Biker Education Programs. In-school education programs should be developed and implemented to teach bike-safety practices to children and youth. Children must be made aware of and take seriously their responsibility as bicyclists, especially when they must share road space with automobiles.
Crosswalks. Places where pedestrian and bike circulation intersect with automobile circulation can be dangerous if not well-designed and managed. Crosswalks should be located at corners or at well-marked mid-block locations. Signage and zebra-striping should clearly identify crosswalks to motorists. In heavily trafficked areas, traffic lights and special pedestrian crossing signals (visual and audio) should be installed. Crosswalks can also be raised one to two inches above the road plane to further demarcate them as special pedestrian zones.

Visibility. Paths should be located so that they are visible from roadways, residential areas and other areas of activity. Avoid placing them in heavily vegetated areas or places removed from well-travelled routes. At the same time, however, if paralleling a roadway, provide adequate physical separation from car traffic.

Lighting. Ensure adequate lighting, particularly in areas away from the lights of residences and streets.

Multi-Use. Where possible, widen paths to provide opportunities for sitting or other activities (e.g., a small play area, picnic table, exercise station, etc.). Use the paths part of the larger recreation system.

Surveillance. A consistent and comprehensive system of signage should identify pedestrian and bicycle path routes, destinations and distances.
Provide special traffic controls near schools, childcare centers and other children and youth facilities.

Places with large volumes of children require special attention to traffic controls and pedestrian safety. The demarcation of "school zones" with reduced speed limits on roads adjacent to school areas is a common practice in the U.S. Such measures help reduce traffic injuries and fatalities in these areas. However, few communities have considered ways in which physical design can contribute to pedestrian safety in school zones and streets adjacent to childcare centers and other children and youth facilities. Many of the proposals previously presented are applicable to these areas (e.g., rumble strips, sidewalk bulges, attention to driver-pedestrian visibility, raised crosswalks, etc.). Several additional design modifications and responses include:

**Facility Location.** When locating schools and other child and youth facilities, place them on dead-end streets with cul-de-sacs or turn-arounds for emergency vehicles. This will eliminate all but facility-related traffic. However, such dead-end streets should be designed with convenient access to an arterial, ensuring that school traffic is not routed through residential streets.

**Pick-Up/Drop-Off and Bus Zone.** Design the school access road to provide easy pick-up and drop-off in an area that does not also serve as a major pedestrian crosswalk. A similar zone should be designed for buses, so that parents and bus drivers are not competing for the same spot (buses are a major visual barrier for other motorists; be sure the bus zone does not block driver-pedestrian visual connections).

**Temporary Barriers.** Barriers such as gates, bollards or traffic cones can be used easily and quickly to limit traffic access to school streets during before and after school hours when children are in transit. With a well-marked and accessible pick-up/drop-off zone and bus zone, such barriers can ensure
that other parts of the street where large volumes of children may be crossing are protected as pedestrian-only zones without requiring major alterations of street design or permanent disruption of normal traffic flows. Such strategies can also be effective for testing potential permanent changes in street design before dedicating large amounts of time and money to the cause.

**Signage and Traffic Lights.** Most U.S. cities have signage programs for school zones. Similar zones and signage should be established on streets adjacent to large childcare centers and other facilities serving children and youth. In such zones, traffic speeds should be reduced, crosswalks should be especially well-marked, special attention should be given to driver-pedestrian visibility and, as necessary, traffic lights and pedestrian crossing signals should be installed.

7

**Integrate streets with the larger open space system.**

When residential streets become places that meet the needs of pedestrians as much as they meet the needs of automobiles, then they become part of the larger system of open space serving the residential community, particularly children and youth. Care should be taken in the planning of such streets and open spaces, therefore, to ensure they are connected with other community open space resources. Residential streets can link various parts of the community open space system, allowing children and youth to easily access open space resources throughout their community. Pedestrian path systems that utilize sidewalks can link streets with internal open spaces and local as well as regional parks and recreation facilities. The section on Parks and Open Spaces discusses the nature of an open space system and how streets can be thought of as part of that system.
Provide convenient and safe public transit.

It is often difficult for children and youth to get to where they need to go by bike or foot. The distance may be too far, the weather may be bad or they may need to transport items too heavy or awkward to carry. A comprehensive public transit system is essential for meeting child and youth transportation needs, as well as the needs of others in the community, particularly elderly and low-income residents. Bus transit also reduces auto traffic, energy consumption, noise, and air pollution. The following discussion focuses on bus transit as the primary mode of public transportation.

Bus Stop Locations. Bus stops should be located so that a stop is within walking distance (less than five minutes, or no more than five to six blocks) of every residence and immediately adjacent to important destinations for children and youth. Bus stops should also be situated so that they do not block driver-pedestrian visibility at intersections and crosswalks. For safety, locate bus stops near activity centers or, at the very least, in places of high visibility.

Bus Stop Design. Seating, shelter and lighting (for routes operating in early morning or evening hours) should be provided at all bus stops. Also, it may be desirable to widen sidewalks at bus stop locations in order to provide more room for seating and to facilitate buses stopping at the curb. This will cause the bus to stop in the traffic lane, which may be a problem on high-volume streets.

Routes and Schedules. Transit routes and schedules should be designed to connect with the places children and youth want to go, when they want to go (e.g., service to and from after-school destinations, to local theaters in the evening, to local and regional parks or athletic facilities on weekends, etc.).

Fares. Children and youth should be able to use the transit system at reduced fares. Some cities have inexpensive monthly passes for passengers under 16. These help advertise and promote transit services for children and youth.
**Signage.** Bus stop locations should be clearly marked, with route and schedule information clearly posted (at child-reading height) at each stop as well as on-board. Bus graphics should be bold and simple to facilitate understanding by children, youth, elderly and disabled (the user groups that rely on transit service for their transportation needs!). Consistent graphic information should be available in printed form too. Maps and information specifically geared to children (describing how to use the bus system, who they can contact for help, and pointing out how to get to places they may want to visit) can be extremely helpful.

**Regional Connections.** Local transit service must connect with larger regional transit systems (e.g., light-rail or commuter train station) so that, when necessary, young people can travel to more distant destinations.

**Driver Training.** Bus drivers should be trained to be aware of children’s needs and how to assist them in using the transit system.

**Vehicle Design.** Transit vehicles should accommodate the needs of children and families. Kneeling buses, bike racks on buses, storage space for strollers and seat belts for small children are ways in which vehicle design can meet these needs.

**Sharing Resources.** In some cities with open-enrollment school plans, school and city bus services share resources to provide adequate cross-city bus service to school children. Such cooperation could be broadened to enhance the transit options available to children and help stretch limited transit resources.
9 Education/awareness programs for motorists, parents, youth and children.

The most sensitively designed street or circulation system can continue to be a dangerous place if it is not understood and used appropriately by motorists and children. A comprehensive education program conducted through the Department of Motor Vehicles, local school districts and local childcare centers can contribute to ensuring that motorists and children are aware of the meanings, functions and purposes of traffic control devices, including signage and physical design elements. Children need to be made aware of traffic hazards and experienced in safety practices related to street environments.

10 Modify Land Use Policies.

The ability of children and youth to access community resources relies largely upon the proximity of those resources to the places they live. Current land use and zoning policies tend to segregate living, working and shopping areas, often separating these land uses by significant distances. It has become difficult to impossible for children and youth to get to these places without being driven there, relying on inadequate public transit or endangering themselves by walking or biking along heavily trafficked routes.

While some land uses are inappropriate in or near residential areas (e.g., heavy industrial), much of our zoning has been driven by auto-oriented land use ideas. While the automobile will continue to be the primary form of transportation in San Joaquin County, land use policies should be developed that encourage (or at the very least, make possible) the use of other transportation forms, most notably foot and bicycle. San Joaquin’s moderate climate and relatively flat terrain are ideal for both.
Land use policies should encourage the clustering of retail, professional, office and community facilities in or near to residential areas. While the scale of such developments should be limited (i.e., non-highrise), they should be of a density that supports economic activity and establishes a strong "town center" for adjacent neighborhoods. Schools, libraries, community centers, childcare centers and athletic facilities can and should be located close to one another along with shopping, restaurants and office uses. Having such centers in a walkable or bikable distance from residences will help reduce traffic volumes and make community resources accessible to children and youth. Safety will also be enhanced by creating places that are active all day and evening.

Land use is a complex issue, requiring consideration in a level of detail that will not be attempted here. It is, however, an issue of critical importance if we are to truly create urban environments that meet the needs of children and youth and support the type of street and circulation systems discussed in these guidelines.

**Parks and Open Spaces**

The world of children is contained in residential environments. It is where they make their first friends, experience their first adventures and begin to understand the world in which they live. As adults, the residential environment is but one part of a much larger world in which we move. For children, particularly those under 12, it is as large as the world gets (weekend outings aside). As children grow older, the boundaries of their world expand. They begin to venture out of the known world of their neighborhood and begin to explore the relatively unknown worlds of other neighborhoods in their city.

For children of all ages, and adults too, open spaces are a valuable part of residential environments. For young children, natural settings close to home allow for creative play and exploration of nature (collecting leaves, damming streams, watching insects). As children grow older, parks provide places to meet with friends and to play sports. For adults, open spaces are places for family outings and opportunities to play and be with children as well as space in which to be alone.
Unfortunately, many neighborhood parks and open spaces have fallen into disuse due to concerns about children’s safety. Local parks, natural settings and streets—children’s favorite places to play—have become places off-limits to kids.

If neighborhoods are unsafe places for children to be, then it is likely that they will continue to be segregated from the communities in which they live, denied the richness that comes from active play and interaction with the world. No piece of play equipment can adequately substitute for a natural stream and no video programming can approximate active participation in a neighborhood street game.

Planning and design cannot solve all of the problems facing children in the 1990s. But thoughtful attention to the planning and design of residential environments can at least contribute to providing a secure and stimulating place in which to live and grow.

Some of the important issues related to the design and planning of parks and open spaces are listed and briefly discussed.

Safety. Increasingly, urban parks and playgrounds are going unused because parents are afraid for children's safety. Such fears, based on real or perceived threats, must be acknowledged and responded to in planning and design. For example, residential street design can inhibit through-traffic, thereby reducing the presence of non-residents in a neighborhood. Design can also promote "eyes on the street" and create play spaces as part of active common areas. Such design responses can help residents be aware of strangers entering the neighborhood, reduce traffic dangers and increase passive community supervision of playing children.

Parks and open spaces can and should be central elements in neighborhood design, promoting security and community interaction while providing stimulating places for children's play. Neighborhood parks in the "leftover" corners of new communities are sure to be unused, unwatched and unsafe. Parks in older communities that are narrowly programmed or poorly maintained and underlit, discourage use by neighborhood residents and invite non-resident groups to claim the park as their turf.
**Access.** There are two aspects of accessibility with which we are concerned. The first is related to age, the second is related to ability.

With regard to age, it is important to remember that the home range of children, particularly young children, is extremely limited. Depending on the child and the parents, children up to age 10 or 12 are rarely allowed to leave the block on which they live. As they grow older, children's boundaries gradually expand, but they continue to be limited for the most part to the neighborhood in which they live.

The planning and design of parks and open spaces must acknowledge and respond to this reality of children's lives. A tot lot in a neighborhood park will be unused except by children in housing immediately adjacent to the park or by children accompanied by an adult.

With regard to ability, parks and open space must be accessible to people of different abilities. A wheelchair, brace or other disability should not prohibit a child, teenager or parent from using and enjoying neighborhood open space along with others.

Accessibility for all abilities must be considered in the planning, design and management of all park and open space facilities.

**Diversity.** When we think about open space planning in residential developments, we need to think more broadly than tot lots and picnic areas. Community parks and open spaces are used by diverse groups of people with diverse needs. Too often, park and open space design responds more to the needs of park maintenance staff or to the aesthetic concerns of the park's landscape designer. The design and programming of parks and open space should reflect and respond to the diversity of needs represented in the groups that will use them.

**Linkages.** Parks and open spaces can link the community together physically, provide places for different members of the community to meet and interact, and bring aspects of "the world beyond the home" into the lives of children. In many ways, parks and open spaces are the "glue" that holds the neighborhood together, the places that give a neighborhood a special identity.
Policies and Guidelines

The following policy and guideline suggestions have been developed in response to the needs of children and youth in the outdoor environment and the necessity of meeting those needs at the neighborhood level.

1 Establish a policy framework.

City and county planning and land use policies should promote the establishment of diverse and linked open spaces at the neighborhood, city and regional level.

2 Conserve natural resources and special childhood places.

Significant natural resources (streams, riparian areas, ponds, hillsides, wooded lands, etc.) should be identified and protected through the coordinated efforts of public, private and non-profit entities. Likewise, places of special significance to children should be identified and conserved (i.e., their essential character retained or intrinsic qualities enhanced). These places might include vacant lots, special trees, sand hills, or other features that support children's play. Such resources should provide the foundation of a neighborhood open space system, with natural features such as stream beds, river sides or ridgelines creating a natural, continuous path route between different parts of the community.
Create a diverse, linked system of parks and open spaces.

A network of parks and open spaces should be established at the neighborhood, community and regional levels. Similar to a transportation network, such a system should consist of a hierarchy of linked spaces that meet local as well as regional needs. As in transportation, such a system must be supported by policies, design standards, funding mechanisms and management systems.

To meet the needs of different age groups and different people with different abilities and desires, a community park and open space system should provide:

- Places for children to run, jump, skip, hop, sprint, climb, tumble, roll, slide, throw and toss;
- Places to be alone and places to be with others;
- Natural settings where children can dig in the sand, dam streams, watch insects, collect leaves, and make believe;
- Green spaces;
- Places to sit and relax, alone or with someone else;
- Protected, supervised places for young children to play;
- Places for large community activities such as festivals and picnics;
- Facilities for sporting events such as soccer, baseball and soccer;
- Places for walking, jogging and biking.

Some of the types of spaces that should be included in an open space network in order to meet these needs include:

**Pocket parks.** These are informal places of greenery scattered throughout residential areas on "vacant" or "left-over" land. Uses are generally limited, ranging from a bench to tot lots to small community gardens. Some of these places should also be left wild, especially if they contain special features such as streams, ravines or hillsides.
Designed and programmed pocket parks are often developed and generally maintained by local residents, with materials and technical assistance provided by the city or county.

**Neighborhood parks.** To meet the needs of local residences, neighborhood parks should include space and facilities for community gatherings, informal sports events (a large adaptable field that can be used for soccer, baseball, football, etc.), a hard-surfaced area for basketball and tennis, a "rough" area of trees and unmowed grass, and a play area to accommodate both young and old children's play. Community gardening and a small area for animals (e.g., chickens, rabbits, etc.) can be valuable assets if managed properly (this is easiest if located next to a school or childcare center).

These parks should be located to minimize walking distance from the residences being served and to take advantage of significant natural features in the neighborhood. When possible, they should support local child-serving institutions such as elementary schools and childcare centers.
**Community parks.** These parks should be designed to serve several neighborhoods. Planning units for community parks could be contiguous with high school planning districts, with community park facilities located adjacent to high schools to facilitate joint use and management. Facilities at community parks could be oriented towards large group activities and organized athletics, including ball play areas (grass fields and hard-surfaced courts), tennis courts, baseball diamonds, swimming pools, group picnic facilities, young and older children’s play areas, natural settings and restrooms.

**Regional parks.** Regional parks provide opportunities for conserving and utilizing the region’s significant natural features and resources. They also provide opportunities for utilizing regional and state financial resources to develop and manage facilities and programs not possible at the community level. Features of regional parks might include natural preserves, environmental education centers, hills and viewpoints, large stands of forest, lakes, boating facilities, large athletic complexes, hiking trails and even overnight camping facilities. These parks may be located in urbanized or rural areas, but regardless should be well-connected to residential areas by limited access roads, bikeways and pedestrian paths.

**Schoolyards.** Schoolyards should be considered as valuable components of the overall park and open space system. As mentioned above, neighborhood and community parks can be located adjacent to elementary schools, middle schools or high schools, designed and managed to serve students during school hours and the general community during evening and weekend hours. Such an approach will ensure active utilization of these valuable resources and will thus contribute to facility safety.

In addition, schoolyards should be designed and managed as integral parts of the education environment. Outdoor classrooms and environmental laboratories can become valuable assets for teachers and students as places for learning about plant and animal biology, physics, natural chemistry and meteorology. They can also be settings for art classes, literature readings, drama and music.
The Washington Environmental Yard in Berkeley, CA, transformed an asphalt school yard into a place of meadows, trees, a stream and other natural areas to create outdoor classrooms, opportunities for environmental education and places for stimulating play experiences.
Urban wilds are often among children's favorite play spaces, supporting a wide variety of stimulating play experiences. Unfortunately, land ownership and liability concerns often lead to such areas being fenced off. The play value of these areas must be acknowledged and ways of making them accessible to (and safe for) children found.

*Urban wilds.* Natural settings and "left-over" places unclaimed by adults are among children's favorite play spaces. Such "urban wilds" should be planned into new developments and conserved where they exist in older developments. Linear wild spaces occur naturally in ravines and stream beds and can provide valuable, complex play environments for kids. New developments should recognize and preserve such elements in their site plans.

*Historic sites and special community places.* Places of historical significance can become focal points for parks and open spaces, giving the site special identify and reminding the community of its past. Other places of special significance, while perhaps not official historic sites, can also be incorporated into community open space systems. These places often become focal points and places of pride for the community. Well-known places in California that are both open spaces and important historical or community places include Telegraph Hill/Coit Tower in San Francisco, Old Sacramento and its riverfront area, Jack London Square in Oakland and old missions throughout the state.
**Playgrounds.** Playgrounds represent most people's first response when thinking about children's outdoor recreation needs. Indeed, traditional playgrounds of slides, swings and climbers do respond to one of children's play needs—that of physical activity. But they fail to respond to other equally important play needs—those of creative and manipulative play; those of dramatic and fantasy play; those of cooperative, socializing play. Playgrounds, whether in school yards, a neighborhood park or a community or regional park, should be included as part of the open space system. They should also, however, be thought of (and subsequently designed) to meet a broader spectrum of play activities than simple physical activity.

**Recreation facilities.** Facilities for individual and team sports, whether organized or informal, are also important parts of the traditional parks system. These facilities tend to serve teenagers and adults mostly, and must therefore be planned and designed with their needs in mind. Thought should be given to bicycle and auto access to the site and adequate provision made for parking and bike storage. The relation of recreation
facilities to other open space activities should also be considered, with "family parks" providing facilities to serve young children and elderly people in addition to adult-serving sports facilities.

**Community gathering places.** Places for small and large community gatherings can exist in neighborhood, community and regional parks. They can also exist in public plazas, shared courtyards between housing developments, and closable streets (e.g., shut to traffic on certain weekends to allow community festivals to take place, as is done in New York and other major cities during the summer months). Such spaces should be planned into new developments. In existing developments, the existence of such spaces should be mapped and then supported through maintenance or expanded through retrofitting.

**Places of solitude.** An important function of an open space system is to provide opportunities to "get away from it all." This can include getting away from everyone else. Places of solitude—a park bench, a viewpoint, an oak grove or rooftop—are valued by young and old alike. They should be consciously planned and designed for in open spaces. Provisions for safety can be made without destroying the feeling of solitude (e.g., night lighting or location near a phone or area where people are likely to be).

**Wildlife habitats.** Even in dense urban settings, there is often significant wildlife, typically including squirrels and birds, but sometimes including deer, raccoon and other small mammals. The presence of wildlife can greatly enhance the character of a neighborhood and its feeling of being a special place. Wildlife habitats can be supported through identification and preservation of natural areas that support wildlife populations, education of adults and children on how to act towards wildlife species, and programs to support or even re-introduce wildlife in particular areas (e.g., feeding programs in areas where the natural food supply has been diminished due to development or human presence).
Environmental education opportunities.
Open space areas and even developed park spaces can become valuable places for the environmental education of community members, particularly children and youth. Some communities have supported environmental education through the provision of environmental interpretation centers (some elaborate, some simple), nature walks (with signs identifying plant species or special features of the topography) or public information programs (explaining the fragility of local nature areas, safety tips for using these areas, and rules for protecting natural and wildlife resources.

Streets. One of the largest consumers of urban land is streets. They are truly ubiquitous in the American urban landscape. While we don't often think of them as open space opportunities, they can be a valuable component of a well-planned open space system. In residential areas, streets can become pedestrian zones and places for play when residential traffic is controlled (see the first section of this chapter). Streets also provide valuable connections for autos, bicyclists and pedestrians between different areas of the community and between different open space resources. Attention to sidewalk and bike lane design and safety issues can enhance the function of streets in this regard. Lastly, streets can be temporarily transformed into places for community gatherings and special events through use of portable barriers. In some urban parks, streets in park areas are closed to auto traffic every weekend to accommodate large numbers of pedestrians, bicyclists and rollerskaters. Such regular street closings could also be used in residential areas to create weekend ball play areas or community gathering spots without significantly disrupting the traffic circulation system.

Pedestrian paths and bikeways. Pedestrian paths and bikeways serve the important function of linking open space resources for non-auto transport users (especially children). Parents are more likely to allow children to travel to nearby parks if they know there is a safe route protected from auto traffic. Such paths can function at the neighborhood level as well as at the regional level for older users, including recreational bicyclists. At all levels, paths and bikeways should be
planned and designed as part of the open space system, serving the important function of transportation connection as well as facilitating recreational uses. Paths can be widened at points to accommodate benches, exercise stations or small play areas or to take advantage of natural features (rock formations, trees, streams, etc.).

A pathway system should be established both within and leading to open space areas. This hierarchy should include:

- **Paved paths and sidewalks.** These should provide the primary circulation between and within parks and open spaces.

- **Unpaved formal paths.** These can compliment and extend (at low cost) the paved path system. Such paths may even be preferred to paved paths as a way of maintaining a natural aesthetic and undeveloped character. Care must be taken, however, to surfacing material and slope grading to ensure accessibility for wheelchairs. Sand and gravel surfaces and steep slopes must be avoided.

- **Unpaved informal paths.** These paths invite exploration by children. They should not be used to provide primary circulation in a park and should not be the only means by which park areas or features can be accessed. They are seldom designed as paths, but are rather created by park users over time. This does not mean, however, that such paths cannot be planned for or even instigated by designers to enhance a park as a play setting and place for exploration.

4. **Ensure safety in park and open space areas.**

Safety is a key issue in ensuring that parks and open spaces are accessible to (psychologically as well as physically) and used by neighborhood residents, particularly children and youth who may not always be able to have an adult accompany them. While design and planning cannot address every safety issue, they can help ensure that park areas are as safe as possible. Some strategies for ensuring safety in park and open space sites include:
Lighting. Adequate night lighting can go a long way towards ensuring park safety. Many parks are relatively safe during daylight hours, but become areas of crime and fear after dark. Such fears do not always subside during daytime and park use by neighborhood residents often decreases. Providing lighting throughout a park space, and particularly along primary pedestrian routes, can help ensure park safety at night. Such lighting must be carefully placed and maintained. Uneven lighting that creates dark spots will fail to ensure safety, making the entire lighting investment useless. In addition, pathway lighting that creates a wall of light through a canyon of darkness will not aid pedestrian comfort or safety. Lighting should be diffused beyond the path to illuminate the path edge on both sides.

Visibility. The planning and design of park areas and open spaces intended for active use should establish and maintain “sight lines” that encourage park safety. Parks should be located and designed so that use areas (paths, playgrounds, picnic spots, etc.) are visible from residences, businesses or traffic routes. This does not mean that such areas need to be located immediately adjacent to non-park uses; it simply means that they should be visible. For example, a playground surrounded by dense vegetation is more likely to become an unsafe place than a playground that, though it may be backed into a vegetated area, is visible from the passing roadway.

Activity. One of the best ways to create a safe place is to create an active place. Parks and open spaces should be designed and programmed to encourage a wide variety of uses during a wide range of hours. Schoolyards that provide recreation for adjacent community and childcare facilities are much more likely to be safe places than schoolyards that are vacant of life every evening, weekend and summer. While care must be taken to ensure that non-compatible activities are not programmed for the same space at the same time, equal care must be taken to ensure that spaces are not designed for disuse. A park that is vacant of people and activity invites vandalism and other deleterious uses.
Childcare Environments

The quality of childcare environments is a critical issue for the well-being and healthy development of children in the United States. At present, well over fifty percent of infants and toddlers in the U.S. are in childcare. In major cities, the proportion is much higher.

In October 1988, Time magazine reported that in 57 percent of U.S. couples with children, both the husband and wife hold jobs (up from 43 percent in 1978). In 1950, only 12 percent of mothers with children under six years old worked outside the home; more than 57 percent do so now. Over the past ten years, in fact, the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. labor force has been mothers of children younger than three years old. More than half of these women have jobs today, up from a third in 1976. Projections for the labor market anticipate continued growth in this sector. The Hudson Institute, a nonprofit research organization, estimates that 3 out of every 5 people entering the workforce during the next twelve years will be women. Most will have children at some point in their careers.

As the number of people seeking childcare services has risen, childcare-related issues have received increasing attention in the media and in public policy debates. Tax policies, employment benefit packages and zoning ordinances have all felt the impact of childcare demand and have begun to respond to the needs which exist. In California, most cities have funded Resource and Referral agencies and many have conducted, or are in the process of conducting, childcare needs assessments. Long range master plans for meeting community childcare needs are becoming increasingly common and last year the City of West Sacramento was the first California community to officially adopt a Childcare Element as part of its General Plan. Several other cities and counties are soon to follow.

In considering planning and design policies and guidelines related to childcare environments, it is important to keep several points in mind:
Different families have different childcare needs and constraints. Different families rely on different types and permutations of care at different stages in their children's development. No single type of care will meet the needs of all families at all times. Even in the course of a single day, one family may utilize several different childcare options—dropping their child at a daycare center in the morning, having them go to a recreation program in the afternoon, and hiring an at-home babysitter at night. Factors that often determine a family's childcare needs include the age of the child, the parents' work schedules, family structure (e.g., presence of older siblings or other relatives), family values and household income.

Childcare arrangements are very diverse. Most people envision a traditional childcare center facility when the subject of childcare comes up. However, such facilities provide only a small percentage of childcare services. Other arrangements include family daycare (kids taken care of in private homes), in-home care (hiring a care professional to work in your own home), care by relatives, preschools, share-care (several parents taking turns caring for each other's children), after-school programs (of all types) and special programs such as summer camp. Special care services for sick children and children with special needs are also important parts of the childcare system.

Each type of care has different facility and program support needs—different types and structures of staffing, different space requirements, different levels of programming, different levels of parent involvement, different types of marketing, etc. The ability of care providers to effectively and efficiently meet these needs is likewise impacted by a number of factors—access to an appropriate and adequate labor pool, proper zoning codes and local ordinances to support family daycare location and operations, access to necessary capital financing, links with community information networks for resources and referrals, etc.

Some children spend a significant amount of time in childcare. For many children, the childcare environment is as significant as home or school. Depending on children's school schedules and parents' work
schedules, children might spend an hour in care prior to school, several hours in care afterschool, and full days in care during summer weekdays. Childcare has become more than "babysitting." It is an increasingly important education environment as well, with programs to support child development and special curriculum.

Childcare will continue to be an important social issue. While the baby-boom generation has brought childcare to the forefront of public policy debate, the issue is not likely to pass as that generation matures (though it may not be the top priority it often is now). As employers compete for talented workers in a shrinking labor pool, childcare will become (and is already becoming) an important employee benefit. Innovative on-site childcare has become an important attraction for new employees, and many employers are becoming increasingly involved with the childcare issue at the local level to ensure that their employees' needs are met (and their employees continue to report to work).

Policies and Guidelines

Following are policy and guideline suggestions for responding to children and youth needs in the planning and design of childcare environments.

1. Promote a system of care approach.

A community planning process aimed at ensuring quality childcare for all residents must focus on providing and supporting a system of care options. Families must have the freedom to choose the type of care that best suits their needs based on their own finances, schedules, values and children's abilities or stage of development. Failure to provide such choice will force families to stretch finances, alter schedules, go against their value system or place their child in inappropriate care—each of these responses increases stress on both parents and children, an outcome exactly opposite of what we should be trying to achieve in the provision of childcare.

A system of care should include:
Center-based care. This is the most typical form of out-of-home care and the image that most people have when discussing childcare. Centers vary greatly in size, management philosophy and type of management. They can be public, private, cooperative, non-profit, franchised or subsidized. They can be affiliated with a church group or community group. They can be in a converted home, a storefront, a church basement or in a facility built specifically for childcare. The features they have in common are: they are licensed; they are not in a family’s home; they have paid staff; and they charge a fee.

Family Daycare. This is a very popular care option in which an individual provides care in his or her home. Most states require that these providers be licensed and place limits on the number of children they can care for at any one time. Some states also require that family daycare providers have some minimal training and certification. This type of care relies heavily on resource and referral services, though as licensing requirements become more strict (increasing operation costs), many of these providers are operating more informally and without licenses.

In-Home Professional Care. This is also a popular care option, though it is more expensive (and less common) than family daycare. An "old-fashioned" but nonetheless contemporary version of in-home care is a nanny or au pair. The more up-dated version (at least in terminology) is a licensed childcare specialist who cares for children in peoples' homes, usually during parent working hours only. Several parents (friends or neighbors) may "team-up" and share the cost of in-home care, trading-off on whose home the care is provided in.

In-Home Nonprofessional Care. This is more commonly referred to as babysitting. It provides a valuable, low-cost, part-time care alternative to parents who may not require or be able to afford a full-time, professional care provider. Individuals providing this type of care are often high school or college students who are available evenings and weekends. However, many parents will use similar arrangements to provide afterschool care for their children. This type of care relies heavily on resource and referral agencies, word-of-mouth and the "kid down the street" or the "teenager of a friend of mine."
**Shared Care.** This care arrangement is becoming increasingly popular as more two-working-parent families come into being, flexible working hours become more common and childcare costs rise. In shared care, two, three or more parents share responsibility for caring for each other’s children on different days of the week or different hours of the day. For example, five parents might work four days a week, each taking a different day off and being responsible for everyone’s kids on that day. Or two parents might alternate working mornings and afternoons, alternating childcare responsibility as well. Because of the coordination it requires, shared care is not as common as other arrangements. However, particularly for after-school care, it is increasingly common.

**Friends or Relatives.** This tried-and-true form of care is relatively straightforward. Your infant/child/teenager is cared for by your mother/father/sister/niece in the morning/all day/on Tuesday/etc.. It can be at your home or theirs, it can be regular or irregular, and paid or unpaid. (If it’s a friend, you’ll probably have to return the favor.)

**Parents At-Home.** Yes, parents staying at home to look after their children is a type of childcare (and a very important one too). It is important that it not be forgotten when planning for a system of care. Parents at home require appropriate environments and support services just like other childcare providers.

**Self-Care.** The people providing this type of care are the oft-referred to "latchkey children" of our society. They leave school and look after themselves until their parents return home from work. Children in self-care also require appropriate environments and services, even more so than children in other types of care.

**On-Site, After School Care.** This is a broad category of care including both formal and informal programs that take place in school facilities between the time classes end and the time parents return home. It can include athletic programs, music programs, special courses (computer classes, art classes, etc.) or even children getting together informally to play some games.
**Drop-In Care.** This is a valuable childcare service that can be provided in centers or family daycare. It means that parents can drop children off on an irregular basis, often unannounced, and be assured quality care. Drop-in services are often difficult to provide because of the irregular nature of the business and thus are most often provided as a small portion of a larger, full-time care center or only in areas with high volumes of potential customers (i.e., shopping areas or employment centers).

**Sick Care.** This is a highly specialized, expensive type of care for children who are ill. Because sick children must often be isolated from healthy children, centers or family daycare providers must provide separate facilities or make attempts to keep sick children separate from healthy ones. Also, because of the nature of sick children, such services must be provided on a drop-in basis (or as an added service in a full-time center). They also require higher levels of staffing because of the additional attention and expertise required by children who are ill.

**Scheduled Recreation/Social Programs and Events.** Little League, soccer teams, Boy and Girl Scouts, YMCA programs, swimming lessons, etc. All of these programs and events provide care services for children during afterschool hours. Parents who can rely on children being supervised in these activities do not have to worry about finding other care arrangements during those times.

**Cultural Facilities.** Libraries, museums and cultural centers provide environments and services which many parents rely upon for regular or irregular "childcare." Libraries in particular have become popular places for children as they have incorporated video services, children's reading hours and other programs for children and youth.

**Special Programmed Events.** Community festivals, teen dances, church socials and other special events can be held (even planned for and put-on by children and youth) as valuable components of the system of care. These events can be incorporated as part of other care programs (e.g., sponsored by childcare centers, supervised by afterschool youth groups, etc.).
Teen Employment, Internships and Volunteer Placement. When teenagers are employed, interning or volunteering, parents can relax knowing that their kids are in a (presumably) safe, supervised and (hopefully) stimulating environment. These arrangements can also be valuable opportunities for teenagers, connecting them with the "real world" and allowing them to check-out possible career paths. Special internship programs at organizations that teens find intriguing (e.g., television and radio stations, design firms, park and recreation departments) are valued by both teens and parents alike.

2 Use a "system of care" approach in city land use planning, strategic planning and resource allocation.

Like schools and parks, childcare facilities are physical community resources that help meet community needs. As such, they must be considered and planned for in the community planning process, especially in land use decisions.

The community land use planning process must consider the entire system of childcare provision: mapping existing childcare resources (centers, family daycare, drop-in care, etc.); considering existing and projected need (based on demographic, growth and employment projections); and planning (new service locations, funding targets, etc.) for how best to meet new service demands and ensure adequate choice throughout the system and community.

Conduct a comprehensive survey and evaluation of childcare facilities and resources. This will help determine the extent and quality of the community's existing system of care. Such evaluation processes should involve the school district, parents, care providers, youth and city staff.

Determine childcare demand. Using population and employment data and projections, estimates of existing and future childcare demand can be made. These figures, in conjunction with information from a community childcare survey, can help identify existing and future gaps in meeting community childcare needs.
**Develop a strategy plan.** This plan should identify current and projected childcare needs and resources, and set forth a strategic action plan for maintaining and improving the community’s system of care. It should address land use, funding, information needs and coordination issues. Local policymakers, parents, childcare providers, employers, school district representatives, and park and recreation staff should all be involved in developing such a plan.

**Modify local zoning ordinances and building codes.** It is critical that zoning laws be written to support establishment of childcare services in appropriate areas. Many zoning ordinances currently prohibit childcare facilities in residential areas (categorizing them as commercial land uses) or restrict the operation of family daycare homes (particularly large family daycare homes). At the same time, it is important that building codes and design guidelines ensure that all childcare facilities meet minimum safety and accessibility standards in their siting, design and construction.

**Support a system of care in planning policies and documents.** A city’s general plan should explicitly address the issue of childcare and state support for establishment of a system of care in the community. Potential locations (either specific sites or general areas) suitable for each category of childcare (center care, family daycare homes, etc.) should be identified, ensuring a broad range of location types (near to work, home, schools, shopping). Issues regarding agency coordination (school district, childcare agencies and park and recreation district) should also be addressed.

3

**Promote childcare centers as community centers.**

Childcare facilities are often isolated from the communities in which they are located. These communities represent valuable learning resources for children by providing children experiences with different age groups, ethnicities, economic backgrounds, cultures and vocations. They also can provide visual, aural and other sensory stimula-
tion that heighten children’s awareness of the world in which they live. While it may be necessary to maintain a certain degree of physical separation from the surrounding community for safety or operational reasons, every effort should be made to integrate childcare facilities with the life and activity of the community. Since some children spend over ten hours a day, five days a week in childcare, such interaction becomes vital for developing individuals and citizens who feel connected with the neighborhood where they live and comfortable interacting with other community members.

*Locate childcare facilities near community activity centers.* Parks, schools and town centers can be excellent neighbors and resources for childcare facilities. Childcare centers are required to have substantial outdoor space by law. When located near a neighborhood park or schoolyard, arrangements might be developed to share outdoor resources. While the childcare center will want to have some outdoor space under its immediate control (particularly for use by toddlers and young children), spaces for older children might be cooperatively managed and maintained with the school district or park and recreation district. Such arrangements require clear legal definition of rights and responsibilities, but are achievable and would better utilize limited community resources. They could also make neighborhood parks and schoolyards safer places to be, with supervisory staff present during most of the week.

*Develop facilities that house childcare as well as other community resources.* Several agencies in a community might pool resources to construct a single facility or cluster of facilities. Such a facility can be more efficient (avoiding duplication of services such as a photocopy machine and receptionist) and can even have a synergistic effect on agency operations. For example, a childcare operator and a seniors program might be housed in the same facility (in separate quarters), facilitating interaction between young people and old people for those who so chose. Such arrangements have been developed in some communities and are considered successes.
Utilize school facilities for childcare. Nearly every community has a school facility, complete with resources such as recreation space, library, kitchen, computers, and arts and crafts space, that go unused most evenings, weekends and summers. School districts should develop afterschool programs or contract with community-based agencies to provide care services in school facilities. This would help address the transportation problem faced by most kids (i.e., how to get from school to childcare) and would make better use of a resource that community members are already paying for.

4

Support family daycare providers.

A significant share of childcare is provided in private homes. These homes, called family daycare homes, can be small (a couple of children) or large (10 to 12 children) and occur in all neighborhoods. While they are among the most popular forms care, they are also among the least recognized, least understood and least supported. Resource and Referral agencies are among the few resources available to family daycares to provide information and other assistance.

There are a number of ways in which the physical environment can be better planned and designed to support family daycare. In addition to many of the traffic control methods and issues discussed under parks and open space that would contribute to better environments for family daycares, planning and design responses could include the following.
Clustered housing plans such as the ones here create protected open spaces for children's play and support the sharing of resources among care providers.

Clustered housing to support family daycare providers. Housing units can be clustered to create a shared, protected and easily monitored central area that can accommodate children's play and other common uses. These spaces can be marketed to family daycare providers as well as to families with children. The design can help support the sharing of resources between family daycare providers or even the provision of "share care" among working parents (i.e., parents care for each other's children on a rotating schedule).
Development of housing to accommodate family daycare. Large, specially designed housing units capable of accommodating family daycare services can be constructed in close proximity to schools and open space. Such homes, designed for large family daycare, would serve as both "mini childcare centers" and living quarters. They would be valuable, long-term components of a system of care. The New American Home design developed by Jacqueline Leavitt at UCLA in response to the needs of single-parent households is an excellent example of a home design that would also respond to the needs of family daycare providers.

Flexible housing design. Housing units can also be designed to accommodate easy conversion into family daycare homes. Such designs can help meet a wide range of special housing needs, serving a market much larger than family daycare providers alone. Home design can achieve greater flexibility by creating initial layout plans to accommodate future additions or modifications, or by providing adequate utilities in garage spaces to support easy conversion into use as a children’s play room.
Let's Go
The policy and guideline suggestions presented in the previous chapter will not transform San Joaquin County into a better place for children, youth and families. As mentioned previously, people build cities. Guidelines don’t.

The questions remain:

- How can we create urban environments that meet the needs of children, youth and families?

- What steps need to be taken to implement the suggested policies and guidelines, or others like them?

- Are we wasting our breath and effort, because the barriers that exist are so great they cannot be overcome?

This chapter addresses itself to considering these questions and exploring potential answers.

We have the ability to create environments that are supportive of children and youth needs. What we lack is the determination.

This was the final statement in the thesis introduction, and is worth recalling as we approach its conclusion.

The policies and guidelines suggested in the thesis document are not new or based in fantasy; they have all been presented or discussed before in one form or another. Many of them have even been implemented and can be found in the built environment, albeit in isolated and limited examples. It is evident that we have the ability to create such environments. It appears that the problem lies in having the will to implement them.

The following is a consideration of actions that might be taken to overcome barriers to implementation (or at least to begin developing a stronger will). The barriers to implementation are many and complex; a several page discussion in a thesis document of how to overcome them will be invariably over-simplified. However, the ideas presented do provide an initial (and, I think, realistic) response to a critical situation.
The Barriers

Following is a quick overview of some of the barriers to implementation:

**Adult decisionmakers.** Adults are not children, and most who are in office do not have the interests of children in mind, except to the extent that children have parents.

However, even for the enlightened public decisionmaker, the chasm between childhood and adulthood is great. Adults do not see and use the world the way a child does. They do not spend their days playing in neighborhood streets or exploring the local streambed. The adult mind is focused on raising revenues, reducing inefficiencies and keeping things under control. It is not surprising that adult decisionmakers are perplexed by the activities of youth gangs in modern urban settings; they are too far removed from the realities of being a teenager, particularly a poor, minority teenager, in today’s world.

**Kids don’t have money.** Pick up most any newspaper on most any day and you will find an article about some public official accepting money from someone in order to act a particular way on a particular issue. It’s not new; it’s the way politics works in most parts of the world. What we read in the newspaper is only about those who do it illegally and get caught. A striking similarity in all these news stories is that the person giving the money is usually over the age eighteen.

Kids have no money and they don’t vote. They therefore have no political clout.

**Kids are increasingly invisible.** Due to the system of containment we have created for children’s lives (schools, daycare centers, youth programs, special television programming), we don’t see them very often. Increasingly, as more parents work (as single parents or double income households) and commute further and further to get to work, even they are seeing less and less of their children. We now have professional staff to care for and raise our children. The rest of us need not worry.
Our society is notorious for failing to address problems that are not staring us in the face (e.g., the environment is not an issue until we have to bulldoze Love Canal, building codes are not an issue until after the earthquake, banking reform is not an issue until hundreds of savings and loans have failed, etc.). If we don’t see and interact with children daily, we aren’t going to see their needs as an important issue of public policy (even then it may be difficult). Perhaps the one positive outcome of gang violence is that adults are paying attention to young people. Perhaps the lack of attention is why the gangs are being violent.

"I need it by tomorrow." The 1980s were a lesson in planning for the short-term, responding to immediate needs and desires. It is a legacy that continues in the 1990s, even as its costs are beginning to mount. We plan our budgets year to year, trying to make up for last year’s shortfalls; we strive to increase quarterly profit, even if it means long-term loss; we buy the VCR today with credit, even if we’re not sure how we’ll pay for it when the bill arrives at the end of the month.

The same perspective often guides our approach to land development. We build housing to meet immediate housing needs and make a quick profit; very seldom do we give much emphasis to building a long-term, viable community. In such an environment, a discussion that focuses on children’s needs and the economic and political needs of our society in twenty years’ time will find few attentive listeners.
Elements of an Implementation Strategy

In order to develop an implementation strategy that might overcome these barriers, it is helpful to first consider the elements that such a strategy might include. The following list was developed in part from Doren Madey’s discussion of “a framework of intergovernmental policy implementation” and from John Horberry’s article on organizational accountability in development assistance agencies.

Education. People need to know about and understand the conditions that exist in their community as well as the ways in which those conditions might be changed. Many of the problems we face are invisible to or overlooked by many people, particularly decisionmakers and particularly regarding issues related to children and youth (as well as other dispossessed groups in our society).

People (policymakers, parents, community leaders, architects, planners, urban designers) must be educated on the role of the physical environment in child development and on ways that we can better plan, design, program and manage urban environments to meet the needs of young people. They need to see and understand the ways in which their existing community environment might be failing to meet such needs as well as ways in which it is succeeding, and they need to know ways in which it might be improved, either through developing new solutions or by looking at what has worked elsewhere.

Achieving the level of education necessary for implementing change (environmental, institutional, political, social) requires information (packaged for and targeted to the appropriate audience) and communication. Public agencies, community advocates,


schools (especially professional education programs) and community and professional publications all have a role to play in supporting education.

Advocacy. It is usually not enough to simply provide "educational materials;" persuasion requires a more active approach. Because children do not represent a political constituency in and of themselves, the role of the advocate is essential. The purpose of advocacy is to develop public support and demand for responsible policies and change, be it environmental, political or institutional. In the case of children and youth needs in the urban environment, advocates can help educate public decisionmakers, organize parent and youth lobbying efforts, work with local developers and contractors, and encourage editorial support from the local press.

Advocates can be individuals or organizations, and can be either official or unofficial in their capacities. Advocates arise from the ranks of the educated and from among those with a direct interest in achieving change. The most effective advocacy is typically the result of a well-organized network of concerned individuals and organizations that are able to quickly disseminate information and coordinate active responses (letter-writing campaigns, rallies, boycotts, etc.). There are numerous examples of successful advocacy groups, ranging from Greenpeace to the National Rifle Association. Political campaigns are also a form of advocacy, either for a candidate or an issue, and hold valuable lessons on how to develop advocacy networks that draw on existing organizations with previously identified constituencies and political connections (getting "the right lists" and gaining the endorsement of key individuals and organizations can mean success or failure in many elections).

Lobbying. This is related to advocacy, but distinct. While it is concerned with "winning people to the cause," it is also about flexing muscles to encourage action in accordance with the cause. Effective lobbying and its supportive political organization can gain necessary legislative and bureaucratic support because it has the right connections and resources to force change, even if it is not fully supported by those who are actually ap-
proving and implementing it (the NRA and others have perfected the art of "strong-arm" lobbying). Lobbying by itself can be problematic, however, when effective change relies on the efforts of bureaucracy staff. If those who are responsible for implementing change do not believe in its goals, it is unlikely that they will be effective implementors. Lobbying is important for adding strength to advocacy efforts; but it cannot be relied upon solely for achieving real, lasting change.

Organization. Effective organization is critical for achieving change. One or several individuals acting alone in an uncoordinated fashion are likely to duplicate efforts and cause confusion among those to whom they are advocating. Effective organizations have a well-defined mission and clearly articulated structure of goals and programs to meet that mission. Decisionmaking authority and staff responsibilities, even if broad, are also defined, understood and agreed upon. The organization must also be capable of responding to the context in which it operates, particularly if there are significant external forces that impact its internal operations.

Policy Framework; Policy Statements. Change in the built environment, particularly large-scale, structural change, requires a framework linking policies with actions. In California, general plans provide the legal framework for achieving environmental goals. The publicly developed and adopted plans state the policies guiding land development as well as specific objectives and implementing programs. If a city council or planning commission approves a development that is contrary to a stated policy in the general plan, their decision can be challenged in court. Such a framework is an important tool and legal statement in support of policy implementation.

Within such a framework, policies that will lead to the desired actions and programs are needed. In California, the general plan policy framework is not so much the problem as the stated policies, which generally place auto circulation as the primary goal of community planning. Advocacy groups and organizations that wish to achieve environmental change in the interest of children and youth must ensure that general plan policies support such change.
Financial and Human Resources. Money makes the world go 'round, and is the fuel for environmental change. Without financial resources, significant change will not occur. Thus, in implementing any vision, it is necessary to consider how financial resources will be attained and allocated. In a capitalist system, economic benefit must be demonstrated to those who will provide financial backing. Even government agencies must be shown that the use of their monies is likely to leverage additional monies, or that their actions represent prudent investment decisions. Initially, special attention should be given to identifying implementing actions that have low or no cost compared to existing practices. Even better is to identify actions that will result in cost savings.

Similarly, human resources must be considered as part of the implementation strategy; like financial resources, they are essential to successful implementation. A plan for environmental change requires an implementing agency, or network of implementing agencies, whose staff understand and believe in the goals of the change being pursued and are competent in the methods necessary for achieving it.

A final point that is important to remember: resource allocation decisions are made by people, and are based upon their priorities. If decisionmakers and their constituents are educated as to the importance of an issue and persuaded as to why they should make it a priority (i.e., convinced of the necessity and benefits of action), resources will be allocated. The environmental movement in this country is a good example. Education efforts begun by environmental groups in the 1960s and 1970s are now showing fruition in the 1990s. "The Environment" is an important issue in local, state and national elections, nearly every major city has initiated a recycling program, and national advertisers are trying to out-do each other in their "environmental correctness." While there is certainly a long way to go in addressing environmental concerns, there has been substantial advances compared to the environmental malaise and ignorance of twenty years ago.
Institutional Systems and Incentives. How will implementing actions be enacted? How will various agencies be coordinated? Who is responsible for what, and when? What will motivate the implementors?

These are questions that require realistic and carefully articulated answers for implementation to succeed. In planning and design, many different actors will play a role in an implementation process. Systems and procedures are therefore necessary to direct and coordinate their actions, maximize utilization of resources and minimize conflict or redundancy. Equal attention must be given to ensuring adequate incentives, either internal or external, to motivate implementing agencies' staff and management to act in accordance with the stated policy.

The case of San Francisco's Childcare Ordinance provides an excellent illustration of how a lack of systems and procedures can undermine public policy implementation. Several years ago, San Francisco became the first major city in the country to pass a comprehensive development ordinance regarding childcare. The ordinance established a nexus between downtown office development and local childcare need, and instituted a new development requirement whereby new developments must either provide on-site childcare or contribute to a city-wide childcare fund to finance construction and operation of childcare elsewhere in the city. Unfortunately, the ordinance was implemented without having adequate systems and procedures in place to determine where and how monies in the new childcare fund would be spent. The ordinance has yet to result in construction of a single square foot of office space because no developers have opted for on-site facilities and the accumulating childcare fund has remained untouched. There is likely to be months, if not years, of politicking over these monies before any implementation is seen.

Enforcement. Nearly every implementation strategy requires some form of enforcement, just as speed limits require traffic cops and building codes require inspectors. Modes of enforcement can vary from passive (speed bumps) to active (a cop on every corner) and can impose penalties ranging from lenient to severe. Not surprisingly, active enforcement
with severe penalties tends to have more impact and success than passive enforcement with no penalty.

The type and degree of penalty depends on the policy being implemented and the societal consequence of non-compliance (e.g., we impose higher penalties for murder than we do for shoplifting). Both the penalty (fine, imprisonment, chastisement, capital punishment) and the form of enforcement (e.g., constant supervision, periodic monitoring, "good faith") are typically attributable to the level of public awareness about the problem and the perceived urgency for solving it (i.e., from the perspective of those making decisions and allocating resources). Many problems (e.g., youth gangs, declining school quality) are receiving increased public attention but continue to be "non-urgent" problems for decisionmakers because those problems are not, as yet, direct threats to their well-being. The most immediate and direct responses to gang violence have been in response to violence perpetrated against whites or in predominantly white neighborhoods.

Perceptions change over time. Education and advocacy play important roles in changing perceptions, thereby supporting effective enforcement. Looking at the environmental movement again, the 1990s have seen significant increases in the fines imposed on illegal dumpers of toxic wastes and on polluters such as Exxon in the Valdez oil spill. While education and awareness efforts have unfortunately been driven by substantial environmental catastrophes (at great environmental cost), they have succeeded in developing popular support for increased enforcement efforts.

**Evaluation and Adjustment.** Implementation strategies cannot be static. They must respond to changing conditions. Therefore, a key element in any implementation strategy is a mechanism by which the strategy can be periodically evaluated and adjusted. This might be in the form of an annual review meeting involving relevant individuals and agencies in considering the past year's performance and accomplishments, addressing important issues and problem areas, and determining goals and programs for the coming year. A more complex mechanism might
require a special agency or individual for monitoring and evaluating the implementation program, suggesting adjustments and refinements as the need arises. This can be extremely beneficial at the initial stages of implementation, particularly if the strategy's operating systems and procedures are wholly new creations or require new relationships and coordination efforts between existing agencies.

5 Steps Towards Making San Joaquin County a Better Place for Children, Youth and Families

Creating urban environments that are more amenable to children, youth and families will take a long time. (As you will recall, Rome wasn’t built in a day.)

Implementation of a vision is not achieved in a single step, but through many sequential steps. Following are five action steps that could be taken to begin the process of implementation and change in San Joaquin County. They have been identified based on the preceding discussion of implementation strategy components as well as knowledge of existing conditions and barriers in San Joaquin County. They are actions that might be taken to "get the ball rolling"—ways of leveraging further action on the part of a wider range of individuals and organizations, broadening and strengthening the advocacy efforts for environmental change to meet the needs of children, youth and families.
1 Fund a full-time child and youth advocate.

In order for an effort towards significant environmental change on behalf of children, youth and families to take form and gain momentum, a catalyst will be needed. Ideally, we might hope such a catalyst to come from within an existing institution addressing children and youth needs or addressing physical planning and design issues. However, because of the wide range of agencies, organizations and interest groups that must respond in order for the effort to succeed (developers, school districts, park and recreation departments, city planners, public works agencies, etc.), it may be unrealistic (and even perhaps undesirable) to expect one single agency or organization to serve as catalyst. Involvement and ownership must be widespread.

An initial consortium of interested organizations (Family Resource and Referral, County Board of Supervisors, city councils, school boards, Building Industries Association) should create and fund the position of "Child and Youth Advocate for San Joaquin County" for an initial two-year period.

The purpose of this position would be to begin the process of developing an advocacy network and strategy plan as described in the remaining four action steps. The Child and Youth Advocate would be an educator, organizer, lobbyist, resource person, process manager and catalyst for change, responsible for "winning people over to the cause" and ensuring that the cause remains directed and focused.

Eventually, one would hope that this position and its various activities would be institutionalized within the legislative and administrative branches of government (an advocate to propose and review legislation and an agency responsible for monitoring and enforcement). Even more so, one would hope that the ideas, policies and programs being promoted would be formalized within the spectrum of agencies and organizations concerned (e.g., in the general plans and land development regulations of cities and the County; in the subdivision design practices of developers; in the facilities design and management sections of school districts, etc.).
By sharing the cost for the position among a group of agencies, ownership of the effort will be more widely spread. However, care must be taken that the position's autonomy is ensured so that it does not become a political puppet or a battleground for agency disagreements. Funding should be committed for at least a two-year period to ensure that there is ample time to initiate the network and an action plan. At the end of the two-year period, the effort and position could be re-evaluated and re-strategized if necessary.

2

**Assemble an action network.**

The principal responsibility of the Child and Youth Advocate would be to develop a network of committed individuals and organizations to undertake action on behalf of children and youth. This network should draw upon existing agencies, organizations and individuals serving children and youth (e.g., youth groups, school districts, teachers, parents, childcare providers, YMCA, recreation programs) and should make every effort to involve teenagers and children. County supervisors, city councilmembers, planning commissioners, planners and architects should also be encouraged to join.

Members of the action network could choose the level of involvement with which they are comfortable. Similar to many advocacy organizations, a core committee representing key interest groups and organizations could provide ongoing direction while ad-hoc committees and local chapters take on special projects or specific issues. It will be important that a clear structure of decisionmaking and responsibility be defined and articulated.
3 Develop and implement a strategic, targeted education program.

As one of its first tasks, the action network should develop and implement a targeted information and education program aimed at broadening the base of involvement and strengthening commitment to creating environments that support children, youth and families. Under the direction of the Child and Youth Advocate, an ad-hoc committee of network members could identify the individuals and organizations who will be critical to achieving change (developers, policymakers, school board members, planning commissioners, city staff, local newspapers, etc.) as well as the messages and information that will be most critical for "winning over" each group. For example, information on economic and marketing benefits could be targeted to developers; political benefits to policymakers; information on "how to get involved" to parents; etc. Active involvement of local newspapers in the form of positive coverage and favorable editorials will be very invaluable.

4 Lobby for general plan policies that address child and youth issues.

With a well-developed and growing advocacy group in place, efforts can be targeted at incorporating appropriate policies in the County General Plan as well as the general plans of each of the seven cities in the County. These policies can be developed and adopted as part of existing elements or could be organized as part of a new "Children, Youth and Families" element to specifically and comprehensively address issues of land use and development from the perspective of children, youth and family needs. The adoption of these policies will be an important symbolic as well as practical first step towards achieving real environmental change.
5

Develop a long-term strategy plan and action agenda.

In addition to developing a strong advocacy organization and adopting supportive general plan policy statements, an important outcome of the first two-year planning effort will be a long-term strategy plan and action agenda for the ongoing activities of the action network. This plan should clearly state the mission and goals of the organization, articulate its decisionmaking and organizational structure, and identify key actions to be taken in both the short and long term to begin moving towards realization of its goals. Periodic reviews and updates of the strategy plan should be held to monitor progress made and re-align goals and programs as necessary in response to new developments in the County or within the organization itself. Ongoing information and education activities will be critical, as will the pursuit of model projects to demonstrate how the guidelines and ideas described in this document and elsewhere could actually be implemented in the built environment.
Directions
This thesis is a starting point, not an end in itself. While the author firmly believes in the premises on which the thesis is based, he understands that the recommendations it presents are incomplete at best. They require further review, further debate, further clarity and more precise definition. Most importantly, they require actual experimentation through a process of implementation.

The thesis has drawn on many sources and pre-existing ideas of environmental design in order to identify "the things we can do" to make our neighborhoods and cities better places for children and youth to be. There are many other ideas, policies and guidelines that could be recommended, both in the areas discussed by the thesis and in other areas as well (e.g., health facilities, public buildings, work places, etc.). Its intention has not been to provide a comprehensive listing, but to illustrate how ideas about child-and-youth-friendly environments can be translated into planning and design practice. These illustrations form the foundation for a much longer and more comprehensive listing.

If the author hopes to accomplish one thing, it is that anyone reading the thesis will leave it with many questions, and a desire to pursue answers. At the very least, it is hoped that one message is clear: we must include children and youth in the design of our cities, and that means more than just building playgrounds.

But can we succeed?

The most difficult questions facing the thesis are those regarding implementation. If we know what to do, why can't we get it done?

Given the magnitude of the problems that exist, it is easy to feel pessimistic about the probability for achieving even the most simple of the ideas discussed. From many perspectives, the barriers to implementation are impenetrable and insurmountable.

However, change does occur and walls do come tumbling down. It just takes a great deal of effort and, quite often, a very long time.
The environmental movement in this country is a good example of a process of fundamental change that is making gains, even if more slowly than we might hope. Thirty years ago, ideas such as recycling and emission standards were "far out" ideas discussed by hard-core environmentalists. Today they are mainstream. Today at the corner coffee shop I can save a dime by bringing my own re-usable cup, and a sign by the counter states "we are no longer using styrofoam cups in an effort to help save the environment."

Achieving such fundamental changes in societal attitudes requires massive education and awareness campaigns. Certainly, in the United States, the media, particularly television, has played a key role in raising awareness about the environment. Much-publicized environmental disasters as well as the potential environmental catastrophes of "the greenhouse effect," global warming and ozone-layer depletion have motivated many people to action and made the environment one of the most important political issues of the 1990s.

The environmental movement has a long way to go in addressing many pressing issues. However, it has succeeded on many fronts, offering hope and many lessons for efforts concerning children and youth in the urban environment.

The Horizon

Achieving fundamental change in how we think about and approach the planning and design of our cities may be difficult, but it is not impossible.

Communities around the country are increasingly focused on "quality of life" as the goal for planning policies. While vague in its definition, this concern is a distinct change from previous decades in which a smoke-stack on the horizon was a sure sign of a community's success and desirability. Today cities compete for employers by touting their "livability" and employers compete for employees with advertisements that sell a lifestyle as much as they do a job.
This pursuit of "quality of life" has driven one of the most fundamental demographic shifts of the century, with millions of people relocating from the Northeast and Midwest to areas of the West and Southwest. The Seattle area, often publicized as "the most livable city in America," has been one of the most rapidly growing regions in the country during the past decade.

At the same time, the media is giving increasing attention to issues affecting children and youth, particularly education, gangs, drugs and childcare. This coverage is raising awareness among the general public and, as a result, such issues are receiving more attention from politicians and public policymakers.

These trends are creating an environment in which efforts aimed at improving urban areas in the interest of children, youth and families may meet with increasing success. Particularly in an area of rapid growth such as San Joaquin County, where decisions are made daily that will affect community quality for years to come, there is no time like the present in which to begin.
Appendices
Appendix a: The San Joaquin County Planning Framework

Appendix b: List of Illustrations

Appendix c: References
Appendix a/
The San Joaquin County Planning Framework

The following is a brief overview of the key policy documents, programs and decision-making bodies guiding physical development in San Joaquin County. This information is a supplement to the discussion presented in Chapter 4.

Key Policy Documents and Programs

County General Plan. This policy document provides comprehensive, long-term direction for physical development in the county. It is directly responsible for lands in unincorporated areas of the county and indirectly affects planning in incorporated areas, where city general plans must be consistent with the county plan. By State law, county and city general plans must include seven elements: land use; circulation; housing; conservation; open space; noise; and safety. The county general plan is the guiding document for land use decisions made by other jurisdictions in the county. Coordination between jurisdictions and their policies is a key role of the county general plan.

While often criticized for "following" development rather than "leading" it, general plans have proven useful to groups that use the plan's legal framework to their advantage. By focusing efforts on ensuring that their views are incorporated in general plan policies, community and special interest groups can then monitor future development decisions to ensure that those decisions conform with general plan policy. In cases where inconsistencies arise, these groups have been able to block developments by challenging the decision in court. General plan development processes have therefore become highly politicized, particularly in communities experiencing rapid rates of growth.

City General Plans. Like the county general plan, these plans are comprehensive policy documents that guide the long-term physical development of incorporated areas. Consisting of seven mandatory elements (and often several optional elements, such as economic development or human services), general plan documents must be updated, by law, every ten years.
City general plans also guide development in unincorporated areas that lie within a city's sphere of influence area. These areas are defined under State law as "the probable ultimate physical boundary and service area of a local agency." Boundaries are determined by LAFCOs (Local Agency Formation Committees) and typically, though not necessarily, reflect the ultimate annexation and growth limits of an urban area.

**Specific Plans.** A specific plan is a tool for systematic implementation of general plan policies in a limited geographic area. Specific plans usually are more detailed than general plans in the location and extent of uses and standards. They also often include financing components.

**Zoning.** A county or city zoning map and ordinance reflect current and near-term land use. A zoning ordinance must, by law, be consistent with the land use policies stated in the general plan.

**Subdivision Regulations.** The State of California Subdivision Map Act established statewide uniformity in local subdivision procedures, but left the standards for regulating design and improvement of subdivisions to local government. The city or county can therefore regulate subdivision design and require dedication of public improvements as part of its subdivision regulations.

**Capital Improvement Program.** In order to keep pace with public facility needs, counties and cities prepare and annually revise capital improvement programs. These allocate annual expenditures for acquisition, construction, rehabilitation and replacement of public facilities such as streets, sewers and other public improvements that impact the development of land and distribution of land use.

**Redevelopment Plans.** Under California Redevelopment Law, counties and cities are able to identify areas in need of redevelopment where private sector efforts alone have proven unsuccessful. Redevelopment areas, under the authority of separately financed and operated redevelopment agencies, have detailed development plans that, again, must be consistent with general plan policies.
Key Decisionmaking Bodies

County policy documents and programs are developed and approved by several important decisionmaking bodies in San Joaquin's County and city governments. These include:

County Board of Supervisors. The five-member board is the only elected decisionmaking body at the county level. It is responsible for final approval of the county general plan and land use development decisions in unincorporated county areas.

City Councils. Each city has its own council, ranging from seven to nine members. These councils are responsible for approval of the city general plan and other land development policies. It also has the final say in individual development decisions, including the granting of zoning variances and project approvals.

Planning Commissions. These bodies, at both the county and city levels, have appointed members who advise elected officials on land use, development and design matters. Although they do not have ultimate decision-making authority, their recommendations typically carry considerable weight with elected officials.

Development Review Committees. In several jurisdictions, special development review committees have been formed to help coordinate the various agencies who must review and approve new development proposals. Typically, members of the committee include representatives from planning, public works, the city manager's office, parks and recreation, and the local school district. In most cases, final approval of a plan map will not be granted until it has met the requirements of each member agency on the committee.

City Staff. While they do not have final decisionmaking authority, most planning and design decisions affecting new development are made at the staff level and are then carried through to the commission and council. Many decisions, unless contested, never reach the level of city council, but are simply made and implemented by city planning staff (or other agency staff concerned with land development, such as parks or public works).
Appendix B/
List of Illustrations

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24/ Winter Vineyard, Richard Hammond in The San Joaquin Valley...a portrait (Visalia, CA: Rick Hammond Photography).

25/ Map of San Joaquin County from the San Joaquin County Planning Department, in Cities and Towns of San Joaquin County since 1847, Raymond Hillman and Leonard Covello (Fresno: Panorama West Books, 1985).

27/ *Water Tower*, Richard Hammond, *The San Joaquin Valley...a portrait*.

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52, top/ Chokedowns illustration, from Peter Bosselman, "Redesigning Residential Streets in *Public Streets for Public Use*, p. 325.
52, bottom/ Seattle traffic circle, from Traffic Circles: Neighborhood Traffic Control Program brochure, Seattle Engineering Department, Transportation Division.

53/ Arterial/residential street grid, San Francisco Urban Design Plan, Livable Streets, p. 311.

54, top/ Berkeley traffic barrier, Livable Streets, p. 222.


56/ Street design illustration by Peter Bosselmann, Public Streets for Public Use, p. 325.

58, top/ Path and sidewalk widths, illustrations by Yoshiharu Asanoumi, Play For All Guidelines (Berkeley, CA: MIG Communications, 1987), p. 68.

58, bottom/ Path surfacing, illustrations by Yoshiharu Asanoumi, Play For All Guidelines, p. 66-7.


71, top/ Pocket parks, illustrative neighborhood plan, author.

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74/ "Heather squeezing under railings to get to the 'blackberry place'...", photo by Robin Moore, Childhood's Domain (Berkeley, CA: MIG Communications, 1990), p. 71.

75/ Flood Park master plan, Menlo Park, CA, in Play For All Guidelines, p. 194.

90, bottom/ Clustered housing perspective drawing, *Cohousing*, p. 28.


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113/ Photo by Roger Mayne in *The Street Photographs of Roger Mayne*.

126/ Laughing man, from the menu of *The Blue Diner*, Boston, MA.
References

Note: The policies and guidelines of Chapter 6, unless specifically referenced, were developed based on ideas presented in many overlapping sources. The key references for that chapter are marked with an asterisk in the list below to assist the reader in conducting further research in each topic area.


Spencer, Christopher; Blades, Mark; and Morsley, Kim. *The Child in the Physical Environment: The Development of Spatial Knowledge and Cognition* (Chichester, UK: John Wiley and Sons), 1989.


The end.