

# Chapter 2: Community Vision

## 2.1 Fanita Ranch History

Fanita Ranch has a long and rich agricultural legacy. The indigenous Kumeyaay people gathered edible plants, collected acorns, hunted on this site, built temporary communities, and expressed their spirituality here. Arriving in 1769, the Spanish mission fathers used the area for grazing. A Spanish land grant to Dona Maria de Pedorena in 1845 continued this practice. George and Jennie Cowles arrived in 1877 looking for a healthier environment, having suffered poor health on the east coast. George, experienced in farming, machinery, business and finance from previous ventures, purchased a large tract of land that included Fanita Ranch, and planted fruit trees, grapevines to produce raisins, olives, grains and potatoes. After George's death in 1887, Jennie remarried surveyor and land investor Milton Santee in 1890, who had a penchant for naming new towns, and the community soon adopted "Santee" as its name.

A regional train line arrived in the El Cajon valley in 1899 to service the rapidly growing towns of El Cajon and Lakeside. Santee remained a sparsely populated rural agricultural and ranching center. In 1912, Santee consisted of a train depot platform, general store, schoolhouse, church, hotel, blacksmith shop, hardware store, feed store, and small family farms and ranches. The tract of land that would become Fanita Ranch remained largely untouched during this period. Hosmer and Fannie McKoon purchased 10,000 acres in Santee in 1885 and named the property Fanita Ranch. The famous San Diego Scripps family bought the ranch in 1898, and used the land for a vacation home, and cattle and horse ranching. Josephine Scripps inherited the ranch and began operating a full working ranch on the property by 1941.

Following World War II, newcomers flooded into Southern California for jobs and the climate. Santee quickly became a suburb of San Diego. William Mast completed the largest County land transaction at the time when he paid \$1 million for 4,300 acres of the Fanita Ranch property for the newly formed Carlton-Santee Corporation. Residential subdivisions soon followed, and Santee grew from less than 2,000 residents in 1950, to more than 11,000 by 1960, and 26,000 by 1970. Mast's new "planned

community” included a golf course, parks, schools, and retail centers. Santee was incorporated as a city in 1980.

## **2.2 Development Plan Objectives**

The Santee General Plan designates Fanita Ranch as “Planned Development.” The Development Plan addresses land uses, mobility, public facilities, parks, recreation and open space, development regulations and design guidelines, and implementation. The objectives of the Development Plan are provided below.

### **2.2.1 Land Use Planning and Community Design Objectives**

- A. Create a new community that includes residential, commercial and agricultural land uses integrated with parks, recreational and public facilities, while establishing large, continuous natural open space as a Habitat Preserve.
- B. Cluster development into three connected Villages to preserve regionally significant natural resource areas, sensitive habitat and substantial landforms.
- C. Create development and land use patterns that are compatible with existing surrounding communities and land uses.
- D. Establish an agrarian-focused community centered on a working farm along with orchards and vineyards, where residents can connect with each other and with the land.
- E. Provide mixed-use Village Centers that serve as the social and commercial hub of each Village, with a complementary mix of land uses, services and facilities located within walking distances.
- F. Organize the community into Villages with individually unique identities and sense of place, while linking the Villages through physical and visual connections with key destinations and amenities.
- G. Encourage emerging housing concepts and provide a wide variety of housing types and sizes that respond to the City’s housing demands and appeal to a diverse range of incomes, ages, households and lifestyles.
- H. Design intimate, connected neighborhoods with authentic architecture and a human-scaled physical and social environment.

- I. Utilize smart growth principles that advocate thoughtful and sustainable development patterns to conserve resources, reduce impacts on the environment, promote active lifestyles, support livability, offer social engagement opportunities and achieve fiscal sustainability.
- J. Implement a comprehensive Fire Protection Plan that results in a fire-safe and fire-aware community through a multi-layered fire protection approach.

### **2.2.2 Mobility Objectives**

- A. Provide a highly connected Complete Streets system that supports various modes of transportation and offers alternatives to single occupancy vehicle travel.
- B. Create a safe and efficient circulation system that optimizes connectivity among land uses, minimizes impacts on environmentally sensitive areas and addresses functionality, aesthetics and traffic calming.
- C. Design a comprehensive trail system that accommodates a variety of users, connects Villages and community amenities, maximizes views, protects sensitive habitat areas and provides linkages to local and regional parks and trails.

### **2.2.3 Recreation and Open Space Objectives**

- A. Create an interconnected recreation and open space network that includes active and passive parks, trails and bikeways, recreational facilities and natural open space that meet the recreational needs of Fanita Ranch residents and visitors.
- B. Provide a community park, neighborhood parks and mini-parks and well-connected trails that meet the General Plan objectives, satisfy the parkland dedication requirements and meet the recreational needs of the residents.
- C. Provide an extensive system of pedestrian, bicycle and hiking trails for use by the public that connects neighborhoods within the community and links to regional trail and recreational facilities and open space areas.
- D. Protect open space and natural habitat areas that are a vital component of the health and well-being of the community and the environment.

### **2.2.4 Resource Conservation Objectives**

- A. Establish a Habitat Preserve to protect important natural, biological and cultural resources and assure continued support for sensitive species and their habitats through the implementation of long-term preserve management consistent with the Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) design guidelines and standards.
- B. Preserve open space connectivity and allow for continued wildlife movement through the site.
- C. Implement sustainable development practices to ensure water and energy conservation, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air quality impacts, facilitate alternative modes of transportation, encourage material conservation and reuse, and promote active and healthy lifestyles.
- D. Protect water quality through a comprehensive Low Impact Development (LID) approach that maintains a landscape functionally equivalent to pre-development hydraulic conditions and minimizes the generation of pollutants of concern.

### **2.2.5 Economic Objectives**

- A. Provide an adequate level of private development to ensure the economically feasible provision of public facilities and services required to serve the community.
- B. Create housing, commercial and employment opportunities that contribute to the economic viability of the City of Santee and Fanita Ranch.
- C. Adopt development regulations and design guidelines that encourage design innovation and provide flexibility to respond to changing economic and market conditions through build-out of the community, while establishing guidance for implementing the vision for Fanita Ranch.
- D. Adopt development regulations and design guidelines that allow for clustering of development, parking and facility sharing and other innovations which reduce the costs of providing public services.

## 2.3 Community Vision

Fanita Ranch proposes to make wellness a central theme of its development by focusing on the character of rural living: sensitive, sustained use of the land; an appreciation for nature; financially feasible food production; friendly hospitality; and healthy and active lifestyles. The design of Fanita Ranch focuses on a wide range of wellness and sustainability development features, including an extensive trails system, a community farm, orchards, vineyards and gardens throughout the community that promote healthy living and a thriving and protected natural environment.

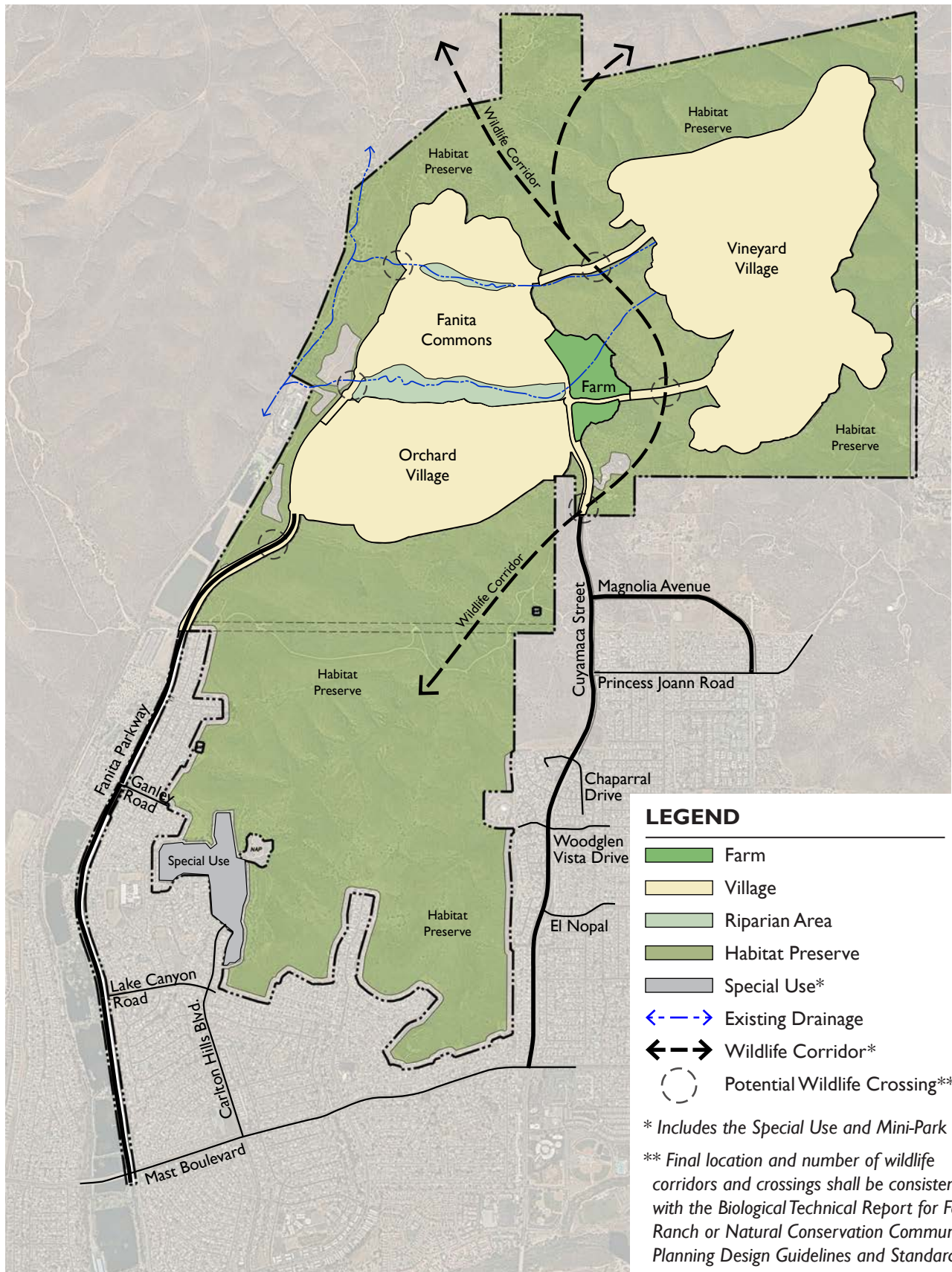
Habitat on the Fanita Ranch property has been severely degraded over the past few decades by illegal activities including trespassing, dumping, and off-road vehicle use. By clustering compact, walkable, sustainable, low impact development in strategic locations that minimize ecological impacts, development of the Fanita Ranch Development Plan will allow for the restoration of sensitive habitat areas and management of the Habitat Preserve. Implementation of the Development Plan includes establishment of a formal management entity and management plan to monitor and protect biodiversity. Furthermore, creating neighborhoods adjacent to a public trail system and providing community education programs about the area's natural resources will encourage community appreciation for nature, foster a sense of ownership and stewardship for the land, and encourage voluntary participation in preserving and maintaining these open spaces from further degradation. Fanita Ranch will preserve approximately 63% of the site in a Habitat Preserve, including many of the rock formations and vistas that characterize the property.

Development has been clustered into three unique Villages to protect the most ecologically and culturally sensitive areas on the property. These Villages include Fanita Commons, Orchard Village and Vineyard Village, as shown in *Exhibit 2.1: Development Concept*. Wide open space corridors between the Villages preserve connectivity and allow for continued wildlife movement through the site. Wildlife crossings at roadways are carefully and thoughtfully designed to support the safe and efficient movement of animals. In addition, existing drainages between the Villages allow for revegetation and restoration of these important features, which provide habitat and connectivity for wildlife.

As a community with a focus on health, wellness and life enrichment, Fanita Ranch incorporates agrarian lifestyle amenities which demonstrate the heart and identity of the community. The agrarian lifestyle at Fanita Ranch will be focused on enhancing the quality of life for residents through improving access to fresh local foods, creating wellness opportunities and offering community connections tied to the land. The Farm will offer educational programming, community events and retail opportunities aimed at providing residents and guests of all ages with unique, authentic experiences that foster community engagement and well-being.

The Farm is the centerpiece of Fanita Ranch and honors Santee's long tradition of agriculture. The Farm is intended to help "sow the seed" for community engagement and encourage everyone to connect with





**Exhibit 2.I: Development Concept**

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their food and the land. Community agriculture fosters the values of relationship-building, enrichment and creates a sense of place by bringing people together around an essential part of life – food. The Farm will be designed to create a symbiotic relationship with the community: the Farm can nurture the community and the community can nurture and support the Farm.

Located at a prominent location in Fanita Ranch, the Farm is planned to include a large barn that will set the architectural theme of the community and provide a venue for special events and farm operations. The working farm will also include terraced vegetable fields, pasture lands, limited housing for employees, raised gardens and small-scale animal husbandry. A Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, sometimes called a “subscription farm” because the consumer receives produce on a regular basis, will be offered. Food grown on the Farm may also be distributed to local schools, restaurants and other institutional facilities such as congregate care and assisted living facilities.

The Farm will allow for a range of community activities including farm-to-table events, community harvests, weddings and other celebrations and festivals. Farm-based education will be provided in the form of tours, volunteer opportunities, camps, workshops related to gardening and farmer training, nutrition, cooking, herbal medicines, home preservation of food and more. Within the adjoining Village Center, a Village Green will allow farm activities such as farmers markets and festivals to expand into the Village Center. Potential uses within the Village Center includes a retail nursery, gourmet farm-to-table restaurants, artisan bakeries or cheese-makers, craft breweries or other gourmet food shops.



*The Farm allows for a range of educational opportunities and social events such as farmer training workshop, education gardens and weddings.*



In addition to the Farm, Fanita Ranch will extend the agricultural theme throughout the community by incorporating additional agrarian components:

- *Orchards and Vineyards:* Fruit and nut tree orchards will add both aesthetic and health benefits to the Fanita Ranch landscape. They will add to economic opportunities for the Farm, provide food for the community, support wildlife habitat and enhance the rural character of the land.
- *Community Gardens:* Community gardens bring residents together to share, learn and grow food in a beautiful, accessible and nourishing space. These gardens provide fresh produce and plants as well as satisfying labor, neighborhood improvement, a sense of community and a connection.
- *Residential Gardens:* These gardens are intended to provide residents with an opportunity to grow food around their home. HOA regulations and guidelines will encourage native, edible and drought tolerant landscaping.
- *Edible Landscaping:* Edible streetscaping and landscaping is a hybrid between farming and landscaping in which greenspaces are used to grow food. Texture, color, seasonality and taste are all factors in designing an edible landscape. Fruit trees, berries, herbs, edible flowers and perennial plants make beautiful, delicious and functional options along streets, in park and in other landscaped areas throughout Fanita Ranch.



*The Farm offers a variety of activities and features such as “farm-to-table” events, small animal husbandry, community gardens, and vegetable fields.*



- *AgMeander*: An “AgMeander” is a series of trails and paths that unite nature and agriculture in an experiential journey. At Fanita Ranch, the AgMeander connects the central community Farm to the Villages, school site, parks and residences. It integrates agriculture into the entire community and strengthens its connection to the trails and open space. The AgMeander provides exercise and recreational activities in which people can hike, run and bike throughout the agricultural setting. It provides context for food production and is an example of how everyday landscape can be ornamental and edible.

The Farm is just one aspect of Fanita Ranch’s emphasis on healthy living. The design of Fanita Ranch will give residents and the entire community of Santee an opportunity to embrace wellness, as described below:

- A K-8 school site will be located near the Farm to provide the school district with the opportunity to incorporate agricultural activities into the curriculum and to explore “farm lab” opportunities, which give students access to healthy, locally grown food, school gardens and educational opportunities.
- An extensive trail system will connect to existing trails networks in the Goodan Ranch/ Sycamore Canyon County Preserve, Mission Trails Regional Park, and Santee Lakes Preserve to encourage outdoor activity and exercise.



*Fanita Ranch’s extensive trail system creates a highly connected community with opportunities for walking, hiking and biking.*

- Every home will be within walking distance of a park or a trail. Active sports-oriented parks, playgrounds, gardens and seating areas with views that provide meditative space will be spread throughout the community to allow residents ample opportunities for outdoor recreation.
- Traffic-calming innovations, such as narrowed streets, roundabouts, enhanced pedestrian crossings and landscaped parkways will make the roads safer and more inviting to pedestrians and bicyclists, encouraging active lifestyles.
- The design of Fanita Ranch will encourage social wellness with everyday interactions with nature and wildlife, farming and gardening and neighbors.
- The Village Centers will allow for co-working spaces and live-work units, which have the potential to reduce or eliminate commute times, thereby reducing stress and promoting wellness.
- Village Centers will allow for and encourage a wide range of health and wellness services including health spas, gardens, meditation and therapeutic garden spaces, religious and spiritual institutions, congregate care facilities, healthy restaurants and specialty markets and private recreation facilities.



*The Development Plan allows for and encourages uses that focus on health and wellness, stress reduction, healthy eating and activities and community support.*