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## Preliminary Draft Toro Canyon Plan

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### A. COMMUNITY PLAN LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES

#### Regional

The Toro Canyon Planning Area, "Toro Canyon," is located in southeastern Santa Barbara County, in the western portion of the Carpinteria Valley between the Santa Ynez Mountains and the Santa Barbara Channel (Vicinity Map, Figure I.A-1). The Carpinteria Valley is bounded on the west by the community of Summerland and east by Ventura County. Elevations range from sea level to 4690 feet in the Santa Ynez Mountains. Topography is marked by rocky mountain slopes and rolling hills.

Carpinteria Valley's urban development is mainly confined within Carpinteria's city limits and scattered neighborhoods along the coast and the valley floor. The valley is an important contributor to Santa Barbara County's agricultural productivity and has been host to intensive agricultural use since the 1870s. U.S. Highway 101, Highway 192/Casitas Pass Road, and Route 150 serve the Carpinteria Valley. The Southern Pacific Railroad also traverses the valley along the coastline.

#### Toro Canyon Planning Area

Toro Canyon is bordered by the Summerland and Montecito Community Plan areas to the west, the Pacific Ocean to the south, the Los Padres National Forest to the north, and Rancho Monte Allegre and Carpinteria City limits to the east (Plan Area Map, Figure I.A-2). The southern portion of Toro Canyon lies within the Coastal Zone.

Toro Canyon's 5,750 acres support large areas of agriculture including greenhouses, low density residential, some commercial and recreational areas, and undeveloped open space. There are approximately 1,000 parcels, 850 residential units and 4,663,000 sq. ft. of commercial and industrial space (including greenhouses). Major access roads into Toro Canyon include U.S. Highway 101, Via Real and State Route 192 (East Valley Road/Foothill Road). Residential development is scattered throughout Toro Canyon, generally with larger parcels to the north and smaller parcels to the south. Santa Claus Lane and Via Real at the eastern Padaro Lane/ Highway 101 interchange are the only commercial areas in Toro Canyon.

Toro Canyon supports a high diversity of biological resources, including southern oak riparian woodland, coastal scrub and chaparral. The watersheds of both Toro Creek and Arroyo Paredon Creek support stretches of relatively undisturbed habitat serving as wildlife corridors between the mountainous Los Padres National Forest and the Pacific Ocean.

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# Preliminary Draft Toro Canyon Plan

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Figure I.A-1: Toro Canyon Area Vicinity Map

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## **Preliminary Draft Toro Canyon Plan**

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Figure I.A-2: Toro Canyon Area Proposed Coastal Zone Boundary Adjustment

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## Preliminary Draft Toro Canyon Plan

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### B. LEGAL AUTHORITY, PURPOSE AND INTENT

#### Purpose and Intent

The Toro Canyon area was last reviewed for appropriate land use and zone designations in 1980 as part of the countywide update to the General Plan. Since then, development in the Toro Canyon area has raised concerns over issues such as the appropriate extent of development up into the foothills (loss of habitat, steep slopes, visual impacts), impacts of grading (scarring of hillsides, sedimentation into creeks), protection of agricultural land (residential/agricultural interface, loss of agricultural land, greenhouse development), biological impacts (removal of oaks, damage to riparian and other habitats), and safety (fire dangers, lack of access, water availability, unstable slopes). Without an updated plan for the area, the assessment of impacts from proposed development has been piecemeal.

The Toro Canyon Plan (Plan) updates the 1980/81 Santa Barbara County General and Coastal Plans for the rural and semi-rural area of Toro Canyon, by addressing local issues in Toro Canyon and preserving the unique character of the area. The Toro Canyon Plan provides the public, County decision-makers and landowners with a framework for planning in Toro Canyon. This Plan addresses opportunities and constraints to development. The Plan establishes the “ground rules” for land use, circulation, utilities, open space, design standards, public improvements and buildout potential that will define the future of Toro Canyon.

#### General Plan Requirements

California State Law (Government Code Sections 65300 *et seq.*) requires jurisdictions to prepare a comprehensive, long term General Plan with land use maps and text to guide development. Coastal areas also must have a Local Coastal Program (LCP), consistent with the state Coastal Act. The General Plan must include at least seven state-mandated “Elements”: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. Optional Elements are allowed. Santa Barbara County’s General Plan includes Agriculture, Energy, Scenic Highways and Environmental Resources Management Elements. All General Plan Elements and Area Plans must be internally consistent. General Plans must also be amended regularly to remain “current.” General Plans are further defined and implemented through zoning maps and ordinances which must also be consistent with the General Plan.

Local jurisdictions may prepare more focused *Community or Area Plans* for smaller geographic regions. Previously adopted Community Plans in Santa Barbara County include Los Alamos, Summerland, Montecito, Goleta and Orcutt.

#### What is an Area Plan?

Area Plans focus on general planning issues pertaining to an identified geographical area or community (Public Resources Code Section 21083.3). Area plans are adopted in the same manner as a general plan amendment and are similarly implemented by local ordinances (e.g., zoning). An area plan must include or reference each of the general plan's seven mandatory elements (State of California, General Plan Guidelines, Office of Planning and Research 1990).

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## Preliminary Draft Toro Canyon Plan

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The Toro Canyon Plan also includes (by reference) relevant policies of the County's General Plan and Coastal Land Use Plan. This Plan also contains Toro Canyon specific development policies, and measures to implement those policies. The policy direction and analysis of the Toro Canyon Plan will govern site-specific development proposals; however, site-specific environmental review and planning approvals are still required for specific developments. The applicable zoning ordinances in Toro Canyon are Articles II (coastal) and III (inland) of Chapter 35 of the Santa Barbara County Code.

### C. OVERVIEW OF THE TORO CANYON PLAN

#### Structure of the Toro Canyon Plan

The Toro Canyon Plan groups each of the seven-mandated General Plan Elements as three "Super Elements":

- Community Development;
- Public Facilities and Resources; and
- Resources and Constraints.

#### Organization and Definitions

Specific goals, objectives, policies, actions and development standards, as defined below, follow in each Super Element.

**Goal** - *A goal is an ideal future end, condition or state related to the public health, safety or general welfare toward which planning efforts are directed. A goal is a general expression of community values and therefore is abstract in nature (e.g., "An aesthetically pleasing community," or "Quiet residential streets").*

**Objective** - *An objective is a specific end, condition or state that is an intermediate step toward attaining a goal. It should be achievable and, when possible, measurable and time-specific (e.g., "One hundred affordable housing units for low-income households by 2000").*

**Policy** - *A policy is a specific statement that guides decision making that is based on a general plan's goals and objectives as well as the analysis of data. Policies should be clear and unambiguous (e.g., "Infill development at specified densities shall be encouraged, and scattered urban development shall not be allowed.").*

**Action** - *An action is a one-time action, program, procedure or development standard that carries out General Plan policy. Not all policies require actions.*

**One-time Actions** - *One-time actions usually are adopted concurrently with the Community or Area Plan.*

**Programs** - *Programs are actions that are primarily administrative functions, such as the development of an ordinance or study to address a goal (e.g., "A Tree Preservation*

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## Preliminary Draft Toro Canyon Plan

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*Ordinance shall be drafted”). Program Actions will be adopted with the goals, objectives and policies of the Plan.*

**Development Standards** - *Development standards are measures that will be incorporated into development projects to provide consistency with certain policies of the Community Plan. Not all policies require development standards.*

### Urban/Rural Boundary Line

The Urban/Rural Boundary Line promotes compact, efficient land development, and helps to preserve agriculture and open space. The Boundary Line separates areas adequately served by existing -- or logical extensions of -- public infrastructure (urban) and areas best suited for agriculture and open space (rural). As the developable areas are built out, expansion of the urban area may be considered to accommodate additional growth while continuing to protect agriculture and areas inappropriate for development, such as mountains. Outside the Coastal Zone, a transitional zone known as an “Inner Rural Area” may be designated.<sup>1</sup>

### Coastal Zone Boundary Line

The California Coastal Act defined the coastal zone boundary in 1976 (Figure I.C-1). As part of the Local Coastal Program, these state boundary lines were certified for Santa Barbara County in 1981. As allowed by state law, the Toro Canyon Plan proposes minor adjustments to the coastal zone boundary lines to follow more practical boundaries such as parcel lines, roads, and natural features, within the limitations allowed under the Coastal Act.

## D. COMMUNITY PLAN PROCESS

The Board of Supervisors first programmed work on the Toro Canyon Plan in 1996, with intensive work commencing in 1998. The County held a community meeting in Carpinteria (3/19/98) to familiarize the public with the planning process and to elicit suggestions about planning issues. A Toro Canyon Plan Issues Paper was mailed to interested residents and distributed at the community meeting. A survey was also mailed to all Toro Canyon property owners to solicit additional input regarding residents' interests, concerns and desires for Toro Canyon (5-6/98).

This Draft Plan will be subject to preliminary community and Board of Supervisors review, followed by a draft environmental impact report (EIR). Once environmental review is completed, the Planning Commission will hold public hearings on the Plan and its EIR where interested persons may provide testimony, and at that time alternatives and mitigation measures will be considered and changes may be made in the Plan. The Plan will then be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors who will also hold hearings on the Plan, and public testimony will again be taken. The Board may make additional changes to the Plan prior to final adoption. In addition, the portions of the Plan dealing with the Coastal Zone will be forwarded to the California Coastal Commission for their review and certification, and more changes may be made through this process.

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<sup>1</sup> Inner Rural Areas are not defined within the Santa Barbara County Local Coastal Program, and therefore are not designated within the Coastal Zone.

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## **Preliminary Draft Toro Canyon Plan**

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Figure I.C-1: Toro Canyon Area Proposed Coastal Zone Boundary Adjustment

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# Preliminary Draft Toro Canyon Plan

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## Community Survey

Of the approximately 1,000 property owners in Toro Canyon, 152 responded to the community survey. The survey focused on land use, quality of life, and existing and future community needs. Questions covered residential and commercial development, agriculture, traffic, roads, fire and flooding hazards, aesthetics, and recreational facilities (see Appendix A for a summary).

Many residents enjoy the “rural” atmosphere, open spaces, many trees, quietness, beautiful views, and an abundance of wildlife. However, residents are concerned with traffic safety, incompatible agricultural uses, excessive grading and obstruction of views, and flooding. The six most important issues as ranked by respondents were loss of open space/rural character, loss of agricultural land, loss of scenic views, fire safety, traffic volumes (i.e., number of vehicles), and traffic safety (e.g., speeding, roadway hazards).

Residents expressed a strong desire for little or no new development, with strong support for certain types of agriculture. Problems cited with roadways include speeding on lower Toro Canyon Road, blind intersections in many places and frequent flooding of certain areas. Development limits were suggested to reduce traffic and minimize access problems in upper Toro Canyon where access is most limited. Preservation of the rural character of the area by limiting development was the most commonly listed solution to fire hazards. Residents supported little or no new commercial development for both Santa Claus Lane and elsewhere in the area. The seven most important public improvements as ranked by residents were underground utility lines, road improvements/new roads, bicycle lanes/paths, multi-use trail system, sidewalks/pedestrian paths, tree planting, and building of a fire station. Some residents also indicated a desire to convert from existing septic systems to public sewers.

## E. EXISTING COUNTY PLANS AND POLICIES

Summarized below are Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan policies most relevant to the Toro Canyon planning area. The Toro Canyon Plan augments the Land Use, Circulation and other Comprehensive Plan elements to provide specific policy direction; however, countywide policies will remain in effect. The summaries presented here are an overview and do not contain actual policy language. These countywide policies provide context for the relationship between the County Comprehensive Plan and the Toro Canyon Plan.

### 1. LAND USE ELEMENT

The Land Use Element's four fundamental goals include:

*Environment - Environmental constraints on development shall be respected. Economic and population growth shall proceed at a rate that can be sustained by available resources.*

*Urbanization - In order for the County to sustain a healthy economy in the urbanized areas and to allow for growth within its resources and within its ability to pay for necessary services, the County shall encourage infill, prevent scattered urban development, and encourage a balance between housing and jobs.*

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## Preliminary Draft Toro Canyon Plan

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*Agriculture - In rural areas, cultivated agriculture shall be preserved and where conditions allow, expansion and intensification should be supported. Lands with both prime and non-prime soils shall be reserved for agricultural uses.*

*Open Lands - Certain areas may be unsuitable for agricultural uses due to poor or unstable soil conditions, steep soils, flooding or lack of adequate water. These lands are usually located so that they are not necessary or desirable for urban uses. There is no basis for the proposition that all land, no matter where situated or whatever the need, must be planned for urban purposes if they cannot be put to some other profitable economic use.*

The following Land Use Element policies are those most applicable to guiding development in the Toro Canyon area. Within the Coastal Zone, the Santa Barbara County Coastal Land Use Plan (CLUP) takes precedence over the Land Use Element. Many CLUP policies mirror those of the Land Use Element. These policies are referenced together below; where CLUP policies differ from the Land Use Element, a separate discussion is provided.

*Land Use Development Policies - These policies establish guidelines for development in order to respect constraints posed by geology, biology, and other physical environmental characteristics. In addition, these policies require the availability of adequate services and resources to serve a project prior to development.*

*Streams and Creeks Policies/CLUP Policies 9-37 through 9-43 - All permitted construction and grading within stream corridors shall be carried out in such a manner as to minimize impacts from increased runoff, sedimentation, biochemical degradation, or thermal pollution. These policies are directed toward regulation of development within stream corridors including the establishment of buffers, limits on grading, runoff and sedimentation, and prohibitions on the installation of septic systems and concrete channelization.*

*Hillside and Watershed Protection Policies/CLUP Policies 3-13 to 3-22 - Nine policies intended to guide development on hillsides and within watersheds are specified in the Land Use Element. These policies call for minimizing cut and fill, fitting development to the site topography, soils, geology, hydrology and other natural features, and specifying techniques for minimizing the effects of necessary grading.*

*Flood Hazard Area Policies/CLUP Policies 3-11 and 3-12 - The intent of these policies is to avoid exposing new developments to flood hazards and to reduce the need for future flood control protection devices and resulting alteration of streams by regulating development with the 100-year flood plain.*

*Historical & Archaeological Sites Policies/CLUP Policies 10-1 through 10-5 - These policies establish criteria for mitigation of potential impacts to historical and archaeological sites.*

*Parks and Recreation Polices - These policies state that opportunities for hiking and equestrian trails should be preserved, improved, and expanded wherever compatible with the surrounding*

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## Preliminary Draft Toro Canyon Plan

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*use. Bikeways shall be provided where appropriate for recreational and commuting uses. Future development of parks should emphasize meeting the needs of local residents.*

*Visual Resources Policies - These policies require structures to be compatible with the existing community and protect areas of high scenic value and scenic corridors.*

*Air Quality Supplement Measures - These measures are aimed at reducing the need to commute by automobile (e.g. mixed uses, infill development) and increasing the attractiveness of bicycling, walking, transit and ridesharing.*

The Land Use Element also contains Area/Community Goals specific to the Carpinteria Planning Area (Land Use Element, pp. 95-6). These goals address the rate and character of new growth, respect for environmental factors and constraints, maintenance of the agricultural economy and semi-rural qualities of the area, and a preference for only low-intensity recreational development.

**Applicability:** The Toro Canyon Plan takes into account these existing goals, particularly for environmental constraints (e.g., steep slopes, fire hazards, geology, sensitive habitats, aesthetics). With the adoption of the Toro Canyon Plan, the goals, policies, and development standards of the Plan would supersede these Area/Community Goals.

### 2. HOUSING ELEMENT

Housing Element policies require the County to plan for an adequate amount of housing based on community needs to provide a range of housing types and prices (e.g., single family, apartments, condominiums, etc.), provide incentives to developers for the inclusion of affordable housing in residential developments of five or more new units, and allow increases in housing densities to accommodate affordable housing.

**Applicability:** The Toro Canyon Plan provides for a range of housing types appropriate to a rural and semi-rural area, including farm employee dwellings and residential second units. Urban housing densities for affordable units are not appropriate given the area's semi-rural/rural character and substantial constraints, including CLUP policies prioritizing the preservation of agriculture within the Coastal Zone.

### 3. SEISMIC SAFETY AND SAFETY ELEMENT

The purpose of the Seismic Safety and Safety Element is to reduce potential deaths, injuries and damage to property caused by earthquakes, fires, geologic hazards and other natural disasters. Specific recommendations are given for these subjects.

**Applicability:** The Toro Canyon area contains several faults and areas of poor soil, high landslide potential, and steep slopes, and has areas located within floodplain and high fire hazard zones. Such hazards are given appropriate attention in the Plan.

### 4. NOISE ELEMENT

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## Preliminary Draft Toro Canyon Plan

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The purpose of the Noise Element is to protect the public from noise that could jeopardize health and welfare. The Noise Element identifies major noise sources, estimates the extent of their impact and discusses potential methods of noise abatement. Specifically, the Element identifies a maximum level of noise exposure for sensitive land uses (e.g. residences, schools, and hospitals).

**Applicability:** Toro Canyon includes areas located along Highway 101 and the Southern Pacific Railroad that could exceed the maximum noise level allowed for sensitive land uses. Development of new noise-sensitive land uses could be affected by these sources.

### 5. CIRCULATION ELEMENT

The Countywide Circulation Element (as amended 12/3/91) contains a policy specifying that the general standards of the Countywide Element do not apply to roadways and intersections within an area included in an adopted community or area plan. As with other adopted Community Plans, the Toro Canyon Plan establishes specific circulation-related policies and standards that apply within the Toro Canyon area, and that are incorporated into the overall Circulation Element.

**Applicability:** The Toro Canyon Plan is designed to achieve a balance between the land use designations and the standards of the Circulation Element.

### 6. CONSERVATION ELEMENT

The Conservation Element describes water resources, agricultural resources, ecological systems, historic and archaeological sites, and mineral resources, and recommends policies and programs designed to protect them.

**Applicability:** The Toro Canyon area has water and agricultural resources, ecological systems, and historic and archaeological sites that are addressed in the Plan.

### 7. OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The Open Space Element inventories public and private open space areas and contains recommendations and programs for preserving and managing those lands.

**Applicability:** The Toro Canyon area has substantial open space areas, including agricultural and recreational lands, that are addressed in the Plan.

### 8. AGRICULTURAL ELEMENT

The Agricultural Element contains policies for the preservation of economically productive farm and ranch land.

**Applicability:** Substantial portions of the Toro Canyon area contain existing agricultural uses and improvements, and appropriate agricultural uses are protected and promoted through the Plan.

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## Preliminary Draft Toro Canyon Plan

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### 9. SCENIC HIGHWAYS ELEMENT

This element presents the County's scenic highway goals and evaluates standards, preservation measures and procedures for obtaining official "Scenic Highway" designation for State and County roads. Preservation measures include detailed site planning and structure design, control of outdoor advertising, and regulation of grading and landscaping.

**Applicability:** The Plan recognizes the suitability of design guidelines for protecting the scenic qualities of the Highway 101 corridor and maintaining its status as a potential Scenic Highway.

### 10. ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ELEMENT (ERME)

ERME is a compendium and synthesis of the Seismic Safety and Safety, Conservation, Open Space, and Scenic Highways Elements and identifies specific factors that mitigate against urban development, such as prime agricultural lands, steep slopes, biological habitat areas, floodplain and floodways, and geologic hazards.

**Applicability:** The Toro Canyon Plan recognizes the existence of various ERME factors through its prevailing pattern of rural and semi-rural land uses and densities.

### 11. SANTA BARBARA COUNTY LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM (LCP)

The LCP includes policies related to beach access, recreation, marine environment, environmentally sensitive habitat areas, agriculture, visual resources, and coastal dependent energy and industrial development, including a separate Zoning Ordinance that implements the land use plan. These policies establish standards for future growth and development in the coastal zone and supersede other policies of the Comprehensive Plan where overlap may occur. Many specific policies were cited above in Section 1 (Land Use Element).

**Applicability:** The southern portion of the Toro Canyon area is within the coastal zone and therefore is subject to these policies. Policies and Land Use/Zoning Designations established in the Plan are consistent with pre-existing CLUP policies, and the portions of the Toro Canyon Plan that apply within the coastal zone will become part of the County's state-certified LCP.

### 12. CLEAN AIR PLAN

The Clean Air Plan (CAP) contains strategies for reducing ozone precursors and particulates, and for achieving and maintaining federal and state air quality standards. These strategies include transportation demand management and indirect source review.

**Applicability:** Santa Barbara County exceeds federal ambient air quality standards for ozone and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>). As such, development in the Toro Canyon area is subject to the policies of the CAP.

## F. PLAN GOALS AND KEY ISSUES

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## Preliminary Draft Toro Canyon Plan

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The following preamble to the Toro Canyon Plan has been adapted from that developed for the Montecito Community Plan, due to the striking similarity of many of the two areas' characteristics and circumstances:

*Toro Canyon is an area of mixed rural and semi-rural, agricultural and low-density residential uses of approximately 5,750 acres. The area's rural and semi-rural character and quality of life are reflected by narrow winding roads, the absence of curbs and sidewalks in most residential neighborhoods, no traffic lights, a variety of agricultural uses, a limited amount of low-density residential development largely confined to distinct neighborhoods, limited commercial and institutional uses and infrastructure development, significant areas of natural vegetative cover and ornamental landscaping, limited access to walking and riding trails, limited beach access, one major public park, and relatively clean air.*

*To allow development in a manner consistent with available resources and in keeping with the rural and semi-rural quality of life, the Toro Canyon Plan's Goals, Policies, and Development Standards shall guide development within the Comprehensive Plan for the Toro Canyon Plan area. The primary intent of the Plan shall be to improve the quality of new development that occurs within the area, to the enduring benefit of the area and its inhabitants.*

This preamble reflects community input from workshops and a survey held early in the planning process. Those issues, along with existing laws (especially existing Comprehensive Plan and CLUP goals and policies), serve as the basis for the Toro Canyon Plan's goals, policies, actions, and development standards. Below is a list of broad issues, goals and objectives gleaned from the community survey and public workshop:

- Preserve the existing rural and semi-rural qualities of the community;
- Protect public views of the ocean and the mountains;
- Preserve open space;
- Protect the scenic backdrop of the foothills and mountainsides, protect the watershed function of the mountainsides, and prevent excessive erosion and scarring from agricultural and other types of development;
- Protect sensitive habitats and other biological resources, and provide a balance between protection of habitats and various activities which can adversely affect natural vegetation and wildlife such as flood control, fire protection, and agricultural development;
- Preserve the narrow, winding roads and lack of curbs and sidewalks;
- Provide for limited additional development that largely maintains the existing scale and character of the area;

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## **Preliminary Draft Toro Canyon Plan**

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- Maintain adequate services and infrastructure to support development and provide for public safety, but with few major changes such as road widening and urban service extensions;
- Increase opportunities for beach access and recreation in a manner which accommodates concerns over the privacy and property rights of coastal landowners and the quality of the shoreline environment; and
- Improve the overall quality, vitality, and economic sustainability of the Santa Claus Lane commercial area.