

## PRECEDENT STUDY OF SAN DIEGO, CA.

### LOCATION:

San Diego is located within the southwest corner of California in the southernmost coastal area within San Diego County. San Diego is 120 miles south of the city of Los Angeles and 20 miles north of Tijuana, Mexico and Baja California. Elevation ranges from sea level to 1,591 feet in the city, to 6,500 feet in the county. San Diego is bordered to the west by the Pacific Ocean and to the east and north by mountainous ranges that vary in context from lush forests to desert. San Diego has the advantage of being considered to be one of the few cities within the world to be considered to have the near perfect sub tropical climate. The history of San Diego is a very colorful with one of the original mission settlements on the West Coast, which gave rise to the popularity of the mission style of architecture so prevalent along the southern West Coast.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

The revitalization of San Diego can be traced to the opening of Horton Plaza in 1985. Horton Plaza is the centerpiece of the new downtown. The 11.5-acre shopping complex includes three major department stores and 150 specialty shops and restaurants, two performing arts theatres, and a 14-screen cinema. Cultural exhibits and daily entertainment programs give the plaza the feel of a festival marketplace and an enhanced upscale experience. The complimentary Horton Plaza Shopping Shuttle picks up and drops off shoppers from various locations around the downtown area, including the Cruise Ship Terminal (on Wednesday), the San Diego Convention Center, and various hotels.



## **CONTEXT DEMOGRAPHIC AND HISTORIC**

### **HISTORY:**

San Diego is the birthplace of California. Portuguese explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo (who is memorialized in Cabrillo National Monument here) landed in what is now San Diego Bay and claimed the area for Spain 454 years ago in 1542. Sixty years later Sebastián Vizcaíno, a Spanish navigator, visited the site of the city and named the bay either for San Diego de Alcalá (St. Didacus) or for his flagship, the San Diego. In 1769 Spaniards led by Father Junípero Serra established here California's first presidio and its first mission the Mission San Diego de Alcalá (restored 1931), a primary link in his chain of 21 missions that later extended to Northern California. Originally populated by Indians, the area has been governed by the Spanish, Mexicans, and (since 1846) the United States. A community, centered at the presidio, developed slowly, and by the early 1800s it had a small trade in furs. Commerce at the harbor increased in 1827 when San Diego began to export cattle hides to New England. In 1846 the United States gained control of the community from Mexico, and from 1850 to 1870 it was known as an important whaling center. The coming of the railroad in 1884 spurred growth, which accelerated in the 20th century. Two international expositions in 1915 and 1936 stimulated the development of the city's 1,200-acre Balboa Park, and launched the location as a tourist and cultural center. The city continued to see infrastructure improvements and growth particularly after 1940, with the establishment of military installations and defense-related industries. San Diego is an international port city with several business sectors responsible for the success of the city for most of the twentieth century.

There is a relatively large and diverse amount of cultural and social points of interest in and around the city. The cultural

heart of San Diego is Balboa Park, which contains the noted San Diego Zoo; the San Diego Museum of Art; the Old Globe Theatre, a reproduction of Shakespeare's theater in England and various other museums. Other cultural amenities include live theater, ballet, symphony, opera and major sports stadiums and theme parks. Also of note are the Old Town district and the Gaslamp Quarter. Both areas contain museums and examples of 19th-century buildings. Palomar Observatory is nearby, in Cleveland National Forest. Although nearly one-quarter of all Californians are of Hispanic descent, San Diego is uniquely influenced by its large Hispanic community, owing to its proximity to the Mexican border. There are several subcultures that seem to coexist effectively within San Diego. Active people abound in variety from beach lovers on the outer beaches of Coronado, with sailing enthusiasts in San Diego's Seaport Village, to surfers in La Jolla and Del Mar, to tourists in Horton Plaza and the world famous San Diego Zoo. The obvious draw to this dynamic area is San Diego's mild climate, combined with the natural terrain, consisting of coastal, mountain, and desert regions all within close proximity in the county.

### **SIZE, POPULATION & ECONOMY:**

Total land area is 319.6 square miles for the city and 4,255 square miles for the county. The city encompasses 72.7 square miles of water area. The population is approximately 2.7 million for San Diego County, and 1,183,102 (1993) for the city, making San Diego the sixth largest city in the United States. Population census data provides these values (1980) 875,538; (1990) 1,110,549.

Major industries within the county are manufacturing, government, tourism, agriculture, aerospace, electronics, fishing, shipbuilding, transportation and port

activity. Other products include printed materials, machinery, fabricated metal products, processed food, furniture, clothing, and chemicals. The San Diego area is also a center for aquatic research (UCSD's Scripps Institution of Oceanography) and biomedical research for example Jonas Salk Institute. Important to the city's economy are several major military installations including a big U.S. Navy shipyard and a Navy training base. An important note is that the visitor and convention quotes that tourism contributed more than \$4 billion in 1996 to the local economy and provides 123,800 jobs. San Diego's equable climate, its extensive sand beaches, and its many cultural attractions make it a popular retirement spot and a year-round vacation and convention center. Lindbergh Field, and international airport serve the city.

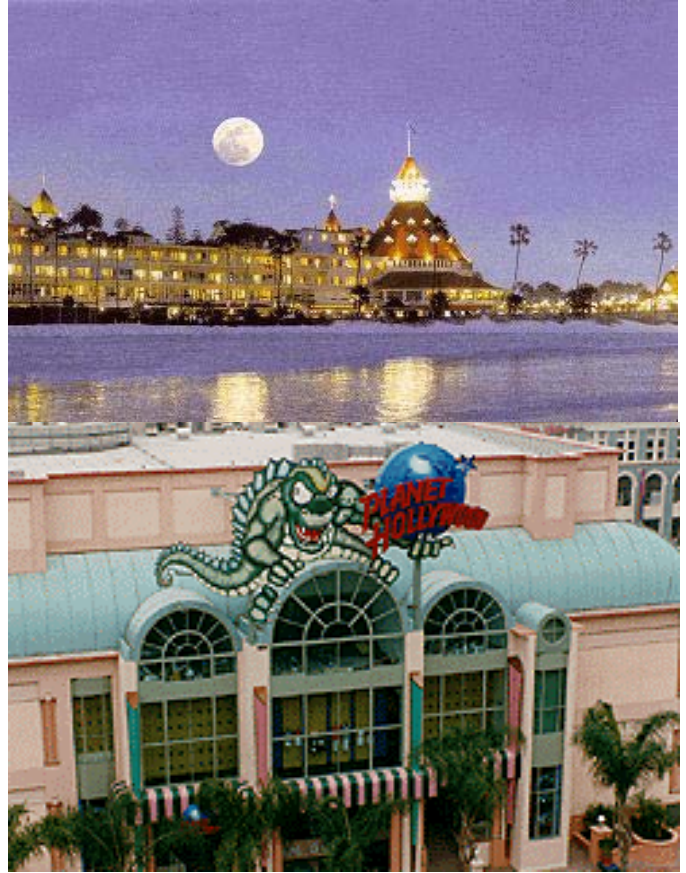
## KEY FEATURES

- *Architectural Unity and Historically Influenced Structures maintain Culturally Diverse Heritage*

Both new and renewed buildings in the downtown core maintain their architectural roots. The Mission Style in formal and informal application is quite evident within the historic core surrounding Horton Plaza. Other architectural styles also are celebrated from the sleek Art Deco to the Post Modern within the urban center to the harbor district.

- *Effective Intermodal Transit System*

In the urban core there are many various types of transportation utilized. San Diego is likely the best example of varied public transit anywhere in the state of California. Visitors and residents alike are encouraged to take the trolley system and shuttles provided at various locations.



- *Pedestrian experience*

This city seems made for walking, there exists a myriad of free guided walking tours that highlight some unusual, as well as classic, attractions. From Old Town State Historic Park, the birthplace of California, to San Diego's vibrant downtown, these tours offer relaxing, educational and scenic excursions in America's sixth largest city.

- *Urban Residential Experience*

The amount of urban housing utilization and development has increased dramatically in the periphery area surrounding Horton Plaza and continuing towards the San Diego Convention Center and the San Diego Bay.

- *Major urban parks with wilderness areas within the San Diego City limits*

Including open civic amphitheaters and landscape pavilions. These parks provide residents and visitors with an amazing array of city, county, state and national parks and reserves for exploration. In order to preserve areas of environmental, archaeological, or historical significance, San Diego County established 43 parks (representing nearly 25,000 acres) for recreational activities

## **MEASURE OF SUCCESS, KEY DATES TIMELINE**

Since 1985's opening of Horton Plaza the city of San Diego has seen dramatic growth and national attention. Following Horton Plaza's opening was the construction of the San Diego Convention Center opened in 1989. Following these major developments



were the construction of major hotels and financial institution buildings in the vicinity. Horton Plaza is the nucleus of the revitalization of San Diego downtown, has world-renowned architecture, shopping and entertainment within its 140 associated shops. The development scheme made Horton Plaza a place to be discovered, with new and interesting things are around every corner of the 7 levels twisted through 6 1/2 city blocks. The upscale theme of the plaza encourages pedestrian exploration.

San Diego's revitalized central city offers a mix of historic preservation in the Gaslamp Quarter and state-of-the-art architecture with Horton Plaza. Near Horton Plaza, the Paladion San Diego, downtown's upscale fashion center, is designed in the manner of great department stores created in the first third of the century. Parks and mixed-use commercial complexes, many in historic landmark structures, complement modern high-rise office and residential buildings of the downtown core. In fact there continues to be significant construction of downtown residences in the areas between Horton Plaza and the convention center. The San Diego Convention Center, which opened in November 1989 and overlooks San Diego Bay, offers the latest in convention and trade show facilities. The dramatic \$165 million San Diego Convention Center is a distinctive architectural landmark to the city's skyline. Located at the foot of Fifth Avenue overlooking the Bay, the 760,000 sq. ft. convention center (1.7 million sq. ft. total) also provides amenities for the general public, including a bayside amphitheater and an elegantly landscaped outdoor plaza and terrace areas that are perfect for bay viewing. Plans are to expand the convention center virtually doubling its exhibit space size. The San Diego Concourse, located in the heart of downtown, is a meeting and exhibit facility featuring a flexible design that can handle a wide range of gatherings. The Civic Theatre, part of the Concourse, is home to the San Diego Opera, and various stage and musical productions.

## **RELEVANCE TO LOCAL CONDITIONS, WHY CHOSEN**

San Diego offers a profusion of attractions and seems made to explore; free guided walking tours highlight some unusual, as well as classic attractions, from Old Town State Historic Park, the birthplace of California, to San Diego's vibrant downtown. These tours encourage relaxing, educational and scenic excursions in one of America's most respected centers for arts and culture.

Niagara Falls is another fine example of a city able to offer so much to the visitor. The natural spectacle of Niagara Falls is the major tourist draw element but it should be just the beginning of the experience. Although San Diego utilizes its variety to attract visitors so could Niagara Falls, since these to cities contain some very similar dynamics.

## **SOURCES LIST, BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FURTHER READING**

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