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**GROWTH AND CONFLICT AT THE SUBURBAN FRINGE: THE CASE OF  
THE LIVERMORE-AMADOR VALLEY**

*University of California, Berkeley*

Ph.D. 1986

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Growth and Conflict at the Suburban Fringe:  
The Case of the Livermore-Amador Valley

By

Douglas Andrew Greenberg

B.S. (University of California) 1972

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DISSERTATION

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## ABSTRACT

Growth and Conflict at the Suburban Fringe:  
The Case of the Livermore-Amador Valley

by

Douglas Andrew Greenberg

The Livermore-Amador Valley is located southeast of Oakland, California. Despite a strong booster tradition, through World War II Livermore and Pleasanton were small mercantile centers characterized by slow population growth. The 1952 opening of the University of California Radiation Laboratory brought rapid residential development to Livermore. The arrival of hundreds of scientists and engineers, however, created an enduring split between oldtimers and the laboratory professionals.

Bedroom-type development spilling over from the East Bay first occurred not in Livermore or Pleasanton, but in tiny Dublin. Alameda County permitted the construction of a large, unincorporated "master-planned" community. The sudden appearance of "San Ramon Village" triggered accelerated residential development throughout the valley.

Two new interstate highways made the area attractive for homebuilding. During the sixties, the infrastructure necessary for rapid growth was provided, but within a fragmented governmental structure.

As the valley population increased by 8-10% per year, growth-related problems developed.. In Livermore, a group of scientists and engineers organized to force homebuilders

to increase lot sizes, build more varied subdivisions and shoulder more infrastructural costs. Meanwhile, planning in the west valley was hampered by a bitter interjurisdiction dispute between the City of Pleasanton and the special district agency providing services for Dublin. In Pleasanton, moreover, city council approval of numerous residential density increases generated strong protests.

By 1971, air pollution was severe, Livermore schools were overcrowded, and there was an impending shortage of treated water. The discovery that the principal west valley wastewater treatment plant was overloaded resulted in a moratorium on new sewer connections.

In response to these crises, some Livermore scientists founded Save All Valley Environments, SAVE Inc. Supported by a liberal local newspaper, this group led a successful 1972 initiative campaign in both cities to stop growth until infrastructural problems were resolved.

After the SAVE vote, Livermore revised its general plan to permit only 2% annual population growth. More progrowth Pleasanton established a similar policy, but mainly because sewer capacity was restricted. Environmental quality held a high priority in state and federal policymaking during the seventies. Because of the valley smog problem, grant funding for a large wastewater conveyance facility was restricted to accommodate just 2% annual population growth.

By 1978, both Livermore and Pleasanton established residential growth management programs, designed to screen

competing housing proposals and limit new construction. By 1981, however, a new building boom arrived in the west valley, this time involving offices and other types of commercial development. The approval by Pleasanton of the giant Hacienda Business Park meant that ultimately the community would become a regional job center. In response to the impending jobs surplus, Pleasanton then moved to relax restrictions on homebuilding. Envious of Pleasanton's new-found wealth, Livermore voters elected a strongly pro-growth city council in 1985.

The growth control problem stems from the contradictory nature of suburban development. Suburbanization was facilitated by a very weak system of controls over land development. Residents' expectations for a pastoral environment, however, are frustrated by continuing land conversion. The SAVE movement resulted from the concentration of highly-educated professionals in Livermore. A vocal minority of local scientists and engineers was able to effectively, if temporarily, thwart the pro-growth interests that usually dominate suburban politics.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

During the quarter-century following World War II, the U.S. economy grew in spectacular fashion. For most citizens, the postwar boom meant steady employment, rising income and a cornucopia of affordable consumer goods. Ideologically, this abundance reaffirmed the long-standing American faith in economic growth as a crucial benchmark of human progress. In the words of economist Walter Heller, growth was "the pot of gold and the rainbow" (Hodgson 1976: 80).

At the heart of postwar affluence was the residential suburbanization process. During the fifties, over three-quarters of the population increase within U.S. Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas occurred within suburbs; by the sixties, this figure exceeded ninety-five percent (Muller 1981: 22). As new housing tracts arose on lands occupied previously only by cattle or orchards, the dream of home ownership became a reality for millions of families. By 1970, over sixty percent of U.S. homes were owner-occupied.

By the close of the 1960s, however, both the reflexive identification of growth with progress and the unbridled process of suburban homebuilding were under widespread criticism. Ironically, this attack was launched in part by affluent suburbanites who had benefitted substantially from

economic growth. As the tranquility of formerly-outlying small communities was marred by "sprawl" and pollution, some citizens began to view land development as more a curse than a blessing.

From New York to California, citizen-activists organized grassroots movements to curtail or even halt growth altogether. Typically, such movements arose in places that had undergone particularly rapid development during the previous decade. Because of unrelenting growth, formerly rustic landscapes were now urbanized, and voters were requested regularly to bond for schools and other infrastructure that would mainly benefit new residents. In response, suburban activists sought to implement ordinances which, through a variety of techniques, would restrict the issuance of residential building permits.

To these citizens, "growth control" represented at least a partial solution to local environmental and fiscal problems. However, inasmuch as unfettered suburban development had been an integral part of the postwar city-building process, the antigrowth revolt represented a major challenge both to the building industry and to urban policymakers at all levels of government.

This dissertation analyzes the origins, goals, tactics and achievements of a grassroots growth control movement in the Livermore-Amador Valley, California. In the work that follows, both the suburban growth process and the accompanying political struggles within the communities of Livermore and Pleasanton are reviewed and evaluated.

### The Background of This Study

This research was motivated in part by a series of works by Richard A. Walker (1977, 1978, 1981), in which he argued that suburbanization has functioned as a "solution" to certain economic problems and social tensions intrinsic to American capitalist development. Walker demonstrated that as early as the 1830s wealthy urbanites began to relocate their residences to the outskirts of Atlantic seaboard cities. The resulting spatial separation of social classes served to ameliorate potential antagonism. By the 1880s, the construction of new streetcar suburbs provided a significant outlet for capital investment, thus helping to stave off the threat of overaccumulation and economic stagnation. Finally, suburban life redefined for Americans their relationship with nature. For millions of workers, industrialization provided only a degraded form of contact with nature in the workplace. What was taken away in the realm of production, however, ultimately was returned in the form of the suburban lifestyle and consumerism.

By the suburban boom of the 1950s, the scale of development was sufficiently grand to create seemingly endless markets for homes, autos, petroleum products, appliances and other accoutrements of the suburban way of life. Meanwhile, the accessibility of home ownership and a consumer lifestyle to a large portion of the population served to blunt what had been significant labor unrest

during the Great Depression.

Residential suburbanization clearly abetted the stability of the American socio-economic system during the postwar decades. Moreover, by the late 1960s a consensus evolved among academicians that the new suburban subdivisions provided a viable solution to what had been a severe wartime housing shortage. Although popular literature such as John Keats' The Crack in the Picture Window (1956) and William H. Whyte's The Organization Man (1956) portrayed the new suburban housing tracts as sterile, boring enclaves of conformity, Scott Donaldson (1969) lambasted such works for perpetrating what he termed the "suburban myth." Herbert Gans' experiment in participant-observation in Levittown, New York led him to conclude that the instant community was in fact "a good place to live" (1967: 432). Furthermore, a study of Milpitas, California, by sociologist Bennett Berger (1960) dispelled the notion that suburbs necessarily housed only the "middle class." Berger showed that there were indeed working-class suburbs, with which their inhabitants seemed reasonably satisfied.

As the sixties drew to a close, however, it was apparent that the city-building solutions of one era can become the source of problems for the next. The polynucleated, decentralized system of suburban land-use conversion facilitated the rapid construction of millions of inexpensive homes with but minimal planning. Consequently, as suburban communities continued to grow, some of the very amenities for which suburban residents had moved from the

central cities were eroded. Small community size, open space, clean air, the balance between rural and urban lifestyle--all were threatened by continued growth. Increasingly, the interests of early suburban migrants became antagonistic to those of both the homebuilders and potential newcomers. Apparently, the one-time "solution" had begotten a spate of new problems, ultimately manifested in the rise of growth-control movements.

#### Previous Work on Growth Control

In the wake of the growth control "explosion" of the early 1970s, a voluminous literature developed addressing the legal and planning issues associated with this new movement. In a three-volume collection of readings edited by Scott (1975), a survey of growth-control cases and techniques was presented. The orientation of this Urban Land Institute publication was pragmatic, aimed at helping developers and planning professionals to cope with this sudden challenge to the prevailing system of land conversion. Other planning-oriented works were published by Brower et al. (1976), Burrows (1978), Finkler, Toner and Popper (1976), Franklin (1973), Hughes (1974), and Mocine (1976). Some discussions (Bosselman 1974, 1976; Potomac Institute 1974) focussed upon constitutional questions raised by the new growth management programs established in such towns as Petaluma, California, and Ramapo, New York. Deutsch (1974) was the first to review these issues with respect to Livermore.



A series of cost-revenue studies sought to determine whether residential development "pays its way" in terms of taxes generated versus services required. The Associated Home Builders (1972) and Gruen, Gruen & Associates (1972) concluded that it did; Appelbaum et al. (1974) and Livingston and Blayney (1971) argued that at least in some cases, it did not.

Once growth controls were enforced in communities across the nation, researchers labored to establish the extent to which these and other forms of land-use regulation might raise housing costs (Dowall 1979, 1984; Seidel 1978, Nicholas et al. 1982). Finally, a detailed case study was published evaluating the administrative and political consequences of a growth management program in Fairfax County, Virginia (Dawson 1977). This planning-legal literature has continued to grow, with the publication of a fourth ULI volume of readings on growth management in 1978 (Schnidman ed.), and a fifth in 1980 (Schnidman and Silverman eds.).

Comparative research has shown that growth control movements arise most commonly in particular types of cities. On the basis of a brief overview of Boulder, Petaluma, and Boca Raton, Rosenbaum (1978) postulated that receptivity to growth controls was strongest in communities of between 15,000 and 75,000 that are characterized by 8-10% annual population increase, an independent employment base, prior land use planning experience, rising property taxes, and an

infrastructural crisis of some kind. Although Gottdeiner and Neiman (1981) claim that support for growth controls in Riverside, California cut across class lines, a survey of Northern California growth-control communities by Protash and Baldassare (1983) showed that "mobilization against growth" is most likely to occur in fast-growing "white-collar" communities with a high percentage of owner-occupied units.

In matters in which self-interest and civic ideals are closely intertwined, it is extremely difficult to ascertain the "real" motivations underlying political beliefs. Not surprisingly, then, there is no consensus regarding the subjective origins of anti-growth sentiment. Most literature has associated the phenomenon with increasing affluence and environmental concern. In the 1973 Rockefeller Brothers Fund Task Force Report, The Use of Land, William K. Reilly referred to a "new mood" in America emphasizing "quality of life." That such an attitude did emerge among well-educated, affluent Americans was suggested in a bestselling 1970 book by Charles Reich, and was supported by an extensive survey study by Ronald Inglehart (1977). Inglehart found that young, well-educated citizens of several Western countries did embrace what he terms "post-materialist" values, including a high level of environmental concern. Studies of the environmental movement itself confirm that it is a white, upper-middle-class phenomenon (Buttel and Flinn 1974; Harry, Gale and Hendee 1969; Van Liere and Dunlap 1980).

A case study supporting these linkages between upper-middle-class standing, environmentalism, and growth control sentiment was published in 1980 by geographer David Ley. The temporary ascendancy to power in Vancouver of a grassroots coalition stressing "quality of life" was linked to the transformation of that city during the seventies from a blue-collar industrial center to a "post-industrial" metropolis dominated by office functions.

While agreeing that growth-control sentiment is strongest within the professional, white-collar population, some scholars have rejected Riley, Ingelhart and Ley's essentially sympathetic interpretation of "the new mood." MIT professor Bernard Frieden, for example, has claimed (1979) that the anti-growth crusade is little more than a ploy by suburbanites to protect their idyllic preserves at the expense of those who have not yet partaken of the American Dream of home ownership. According to Frieden, the rhetoric regarding "new values" and "quality of life" is all merely part of "the environmental protection hustle," a new version of a very old game: class-based exclusionary zoning practices (cf. Danielson 1976; Dyke 1971; Ellickson 1977).

This more jaundiced view of environmentalism in general has been shared by Aaron Wildavsky (1981) and William Tucker (1982). Even some Marxist analysts have concurred with this cynical position, maintaining that the "ecology" movement is merely a convenient vehicle for middle-class interests (Enzenberger 1974; Castells 1978). Perhaps because of a

prevailing bias against the relatively affluent denizens of the suburbs, those on the political left have been little inclined to appraise the suburban growth-controls movement as part of the widespread grassroots urban activism of the post-sixties period. Whereas Boyte (1980) ignores suburban issues completely, Hoch (1980) dismisses growth control advocates as selfish elitists, in much the same manner as Frieden. Only Gottdeiner (1983; also Gottdeiner and Neiman 1981) and Walker and Heiman (1981) have presented the issue as a legitimate grassroots struggle over state management of the local development process.

#### Overview of This Study

The emergence of growth management as a prominent issue during the seventies has been well-documented. To date, however, the historical treatment of individual cases has been cursory at best. No research has demonstrated, for example, the ways in which the growth revolt evolved out of previous problems and concerns within a suburban community; nor has there been a careful documentation of the evolution and trajectory of a specific grassroots movement. This dissertation provides such a study.

Above all else, the struggle over local growth control will be presented as a crucial element within a broader process of geographical evolution. Accordingly, no overriding hypothesis is proven, but a number of themes emerge. First, it is demonstrated that some growth-related problems can be traced to the very structures, institutions

and practices that facilitated suburban development for a decade or more prior to the growth revolt. In other words, suburbanization has proven to be a contradictory process.

Second, it is shown that there has long been a disjuncture between the localized suburban political structure and the regional, even national orientation of the economy. Consequently, the cherished ideal of community self-determination that underlies the ideology of "home rule" has consistently been shattered. In reality, outside forces largely govern the rate and type of development that a suburban city will receive.

Third, the control-growth struggle that enveloped the Livermore-Amador Valley is shown to have emerged primarily from social divisions within the city of Livermore. Consistently, a progrowth stance has been championed by local business interests, as represented by the local newspapers and the chamber of commerce. The control-growth position, on the other hand, was advanced by members of the new professional-technical strata--most notably, scientists and other educated professionals associated with a giant nuclear research laboratory. The growth-control campaign evolved, in fact, out of a much longer-term effort by these professionals to exert control over community development.

Fourth, the importance of leadership within a grassroots political movement is stressed. Although the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory professionals provided the

core constituency for the growth control campaign, it is likely that without a handful of key individuals the movement would never have become significant.

Finally, this study supports the conclusions of Gottdeiner (1983) that what fundamentally motivates the leaders of growth control movements is not a desire to exclude the poor and minorities, but a typically-liberal expectation that local government should plan rationally and should protect the quality of life for all citizens.

It should be added at the outset that descriptions and analyses are included which are tangential to these growth-oriented themes. Partly, this is a reflection of a secondary goal of this research: to produce a viable work of local history, a careful documentation of the evolution of a specific place during an eventful time in its development. I have tried where possible to convey the complexity of real history, the flavor of political debate, and the zeitgeist of postwar suburban public life.

In Part One, composed of Chapters II and III, the communities of Livermore and Pleasanton are introduced, including an overview of their histories through World War II. Much of this section is descriptive; a reader who wishes to concentrate upon the postwar growth process may choose to skip over this material. The modern era for any locale, however, is rooted firmly in its past. This section on early history documents not only a legacy of frustrated local ambitions for growth, but also the contribution of small-town boosterism to a counter-productive parochialism

within each valley community.

Part Two analyzes the postwar suburbanization process that transformed the Livermore-Amador Valley during the fifties and sixties. Chapter IV provides an overview of postwar suburban growth, including significant laws and institutions that influenced its direction and form. Chapter V depicts the first wave of growth in Livermore, resulting from the opening of the Radiation Laboratory in 1952. The arrival of hundreds of scientists and engineers created a "town and gown" split within the community which has continued since. Chapter VI analyzes an unfortunate contribution by county-level politicians to subsequent planning problems. Approval of a giant "planned community" near the tiny hamlet of Dublin set off a new era of "bedroom" development in the valley, but also triggered a lengthy period of unproductive interjurisdictional strife between the new community and the city of Pleasanton. Chapter VII traces the myriad ways in which infrastructural obstacles to growth were overcome during the early sixties. Through a fragmented political structure, the highway access, schools, water, and wastewater treatment capacity necessary to subsequent development were provided. Chapters VIII and IX analyze the growth boom of the sixties in Livermore and Pleasanton, respectively. It is shown that the general plan ideals of community-controlled, balanced growth were cast aside in the face of apparently unstoppable pressures for residential development. As open

land within the valley was transformed into suburban "sprawl," some Livermore citizens organized politically to exert stricter controls over the homebuilding process. Elected officials, however, were both unable and unwilling to alter significantly the course of development.

Part Three analyzes the period of "controlled" growth that has characterized the valley between late 1971 and 1985. Chapter X introduces the environmental and growth control movements that burst upon the national scene during the late sixties and early seventies. In Chapter XI, the problems resulting from rapid growth in the Livermore-Amador Valley are discussed, along with the political backlash that culminated in the imposition of growth controls. Chapters XII through XIII trace the evolution of public debate and government policy at the local, state and federal levels as these two communities lurched toward permanent solutions to their growth-related problems. Chapter XIV shows the fragility of the growth-control consensus. Within a context of inflating home prices and economic uncertainty, the progrowth forces were able to launch an effective counter-attack against growth restrictions. Chapters XV and XVI provide a preliminary sketch of growth management during its first, tumultuous years, and discusses the possible erosion of these systems as renewed pressures for growth become irresistible. Finally, in Chapter XVII, the major themes emerging from the preceding chapters are reviewed and evaluated.



## Theory

Whereas over-preoccupation with theory can be crippling to empirical research, there is no such thing as pure, concept-free observation. Inquiry inevitably proceeds in accordance with prior knowledge and values, including unacknowledged ideological assumptions. Out of a virtual infinity of possible "facts," we focus upon certain aspects of reality rather than others, and interpret them in particular ways. Because theory and method are unavoidable, then, some discussion of the underpinnings of this study is in order at the outset.

Like all academic disciplines for which human activity is a central object of inquiry, human geography has undergone considerable ferment over the past several decades concerning methodological issues. Partly in reaction to the unsystematic inquiry typical of previous scholarship, and also in accordance with trends within the postwar social sciences as a whole, there emerged during the fifties a "quantitative revolution" in human geography. Through statistical analysis, geographers believed that the discipline could be placed on a fully "scientific" footing (e.g. Bunge 1969; Haggett 1966; Amadeo and Golledge 1975). Theory would be constructed through rigorous use of mathematical testing. The most thorough programmatic statement of this approach was David Harvey's 1969 tour de force, *Explanation in Geography*.

The ultimate failure of the quantitative revolution was

due to flaws not in its mathematics, but in its positivist philosophical underpinnings. A first major weakness is the assumption that social processes can be inferred from spatial patterns of human activity (Olsson 1969). Second, critics point out that in their search for objective facts, positivists necessarily transform human subjects into objects, assemblages of data to be measured and manipulated (Pred 1981). Third, positivists fail to appreciate that social life is linguistically-mediated, hence founded upon intersubjective meanings that cannot be captured through mathematical representation (Taylor 1971).

Overall, under the rigid assumptions of the new quantitative geographers, much of the essence of social life is obliterated for the sake of maintaining a "scientific" method. Such flawed abstraction processes were long ago dismissed by Alfred North Whitehead (1929) as "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness."

Opponents of positivist inquiry have also attacked its political implications. The claim that social science can be value-free has been soundly criticized (see Keat and Urry 1982). Moreover, particularly in the highly-charged social atmosphere of the Viet Nam war era, it was alleged that a "scientific" geography is inherently manipulative; predictive knowledge regarding spatial behavior can easily be used for social control (Rieser 1973).

Although heavily criticized, positivist research in geography has by no means disappeared (Golledge and

Couclelis 1984). However, some sophisticated scholars of the "quantitative revolution" have become disenchanted. Like Wittgenstein before him, Gunnar Ollson (1969, 1978) turned to complex forms of linguistic analysis in search of a new philosophy of inquiry that would transcend the imprisoning structures imposed by conventional forms of representation. David Harvey, on the other hand, adopted Marxism as an alternative basis for a truly "scientific" approach to spatial phenomena (1973, 1978, 1982).

Meanwhile, methodological approaches to geographical inquiry have proliferated. Phenomenologists, existentialists, and other "humanist" geographers stress meanings, values, being, and perceptual aspects of human-environment relations (Buttimer 1976; Tuan 1974, 1976; Relph 1976; Seamon 1984). In doing so, however, they implicitly reduce the complexity of social existence to the summation of individual perceptions and beliefs. Although more rooted in material life, Weberian writings (e.g. Ley 1980, 1981) are based upon a neo-Kantian separation between erklären (explanation) and verstehen (understanding). Because the objective-structural and subjective determinants of human behavior are not adequately integrated, Weberians tend to treat volitions and belief-systems in a voluntaristic manner.

Inasmuch as its inspiration is drawn from the work of Richard Walker, this inquiry bears the stamp of Marxist thought. Accordingly, it is maintained that economic processes and class relations provide the fundamental bases

for political and ideological phenomena. At the outset, I intended to follow the structuralist approach that has become popular within contemporary Marxist analysis (e.g. Althusser and Balibar 1970, Castells 1977). This involves focussing not upon the consciousness of individuals but the generative properties of the social system (Bhaskar 1979). Such structures impel individuals to act in accordance with particular class and gender roles, and also govern the macro-level logic of capital accumulation.

Structuralism, however, cannot provide a satisfactory foundation for a case study of this type. There is no proper way to write local history without detailed attention to unique circumstances and the influence of individuals. Although people are strongly shaped by social forces, they cannot be treated as mere "bearers" for economic, social, and ideological structures (Thompson 1978, Duncan and Ley 1982). The determinants of specific human actions are complex, including personality traits stemming from experiences unique to a particular life-path (Pred 1984).

The tension between structure and agency that shapes human history was well expressed by Karl Marx himself when he declared: "Men make their own history, but not of their own free will" (1973: 146). The most ambitious attempt to reconcile this duality is the "structuration" approach proposed by Anthony Giddens (1979). Within this perspective, "structure" is treated not as a rigid determinant of human behavior, but as the set of generative rules and resources

from which individuals draw creatively during social interaction. People then can be viewed as complex and reflective sources of thought and action. At the same time, however, in pursuing their goals individuals are impelled by preexistent, wider circumstances that they did not themselves create.

With regard to this case study, additional reflection will be required before the explicit links between structure and agency can be posited. Here, the objective has been merely to analyze the history of the battle over growth in the Livermore-Amador Valley. Still, the perspectives acquired through the exploration of structural-Marxism and the structurationist alternative have informed both the research process and the presentation.

#### Method

The core of this work is a reconstruction of the events that have influenced the growth process in the Livermore-Amador Valley. Toward this end, the raw materials for research were essentially threefold: local newspapers, government documents, and interviews. I reviewed thousands of issues of local newspapers, mainly spanning the period between 1950 and 1985. Regarding such source material, I was fortunate; during the postwar period, as many as three local papers covered growth-related events simultaneously.

Beyond newspaper accounts, a vast and ever-expanding array of government documents exists germane to local growth

issues. These include city and county general plans, minutes from city council meetings, and numerous reports prepared by government agencies or consulting firms pertaining to such specific problems as water supply and sewage disposal. Since 1970, the trickle of government documents has turned into a torrent, as environmental impact reports have been produced for innumerable proposed construction projects. These reports have become a valuable source of background material regarding geography, demography, and economic development.

Although the editorials and letters published in newspapers revealed some local opinions regarding political issues, interviews with long-term residents provided the "between the lines" understanding that an outsider otherwise would miss. Beginning with my initial seminar papers on the Livermore-Amador Valley, I interviewed over sixty-five individuals. In determining who should be interviewed, I employed a "snowball" technique, asking interviewees who else might be considered a valuable source of insight or information. Some influential figures were interviewed several times. Interviews ranged in length from forty-five minutes to over six hours. On the whole, people were remarkably cooperative and accommodating: only two former public officials rebuffed repeated requests for an interview.

Although some individuals proved invaluable in providing information, I could not count on interviewees to

recall complex events that in some cases occurred twenty-five or more years previously. Consequently, in preparing for interviews, I tried to have a general understanding of "the facts" beforehand. My questions, then, would involve matters of opinion, interpretation, and reflection.

Finally, it should be added that an important, but intangible aspect of my method was my ongoing physical presence within the Livermore-Amador Valley itself. My many automobile trips from Berkeley to The valley gave me ample time to see the neighborhoods, construction projects, and landmarks to which my written sources referred. Whether driving to the Livermore Public Library for a marathon session reviewing microfilm, or studying the road map to find the address of my next interview, I had the opportunity to study the valley as its landscape was transformed before my eyes. That I found this valuable reflects, perhaps, my absorption of the philosophy of the field-oriented "Berkeley School" of geography. My field experience, however, confirmed my belief that raw observation is never naive. As I learned more about valley history, I "saw" a different landscape. My fieldwork, then, involved a dialectic between observation and study, as the place that I read and heard about merged ever more closely into the place that I observed.

## PART ONE

### The Era of Slow Growth

Every human landscape, every habitation, at any moment is an accumulation of practical experience....The geographer cannot study houses and towns, fields and factories, as to their where and why without asking himself about their origins....If the object is to define and understand human associations as areal growth, we must find out how they and their distributions (settlements) and their activities (land use) came to be what they are.

Carl O. Sauer, "Foreward to Historical Geography," 1941 (1963: 360).

The suburbanization process that transformed the Livermore-Amador Valley after 1952 did not take place on a featureless plain, but within a distinctive physical environment long occupied and highly modified by human activity. The following two chapters introduce the land and its early inhabitants. The lengthy period during which the valley remained pastoral and sparsely-populated bequeathed a legacy not only of land-use patterns and economic relationships, but also of traditions and attitudes that conditioned the subsequent period of rapid development.



## Chapter II

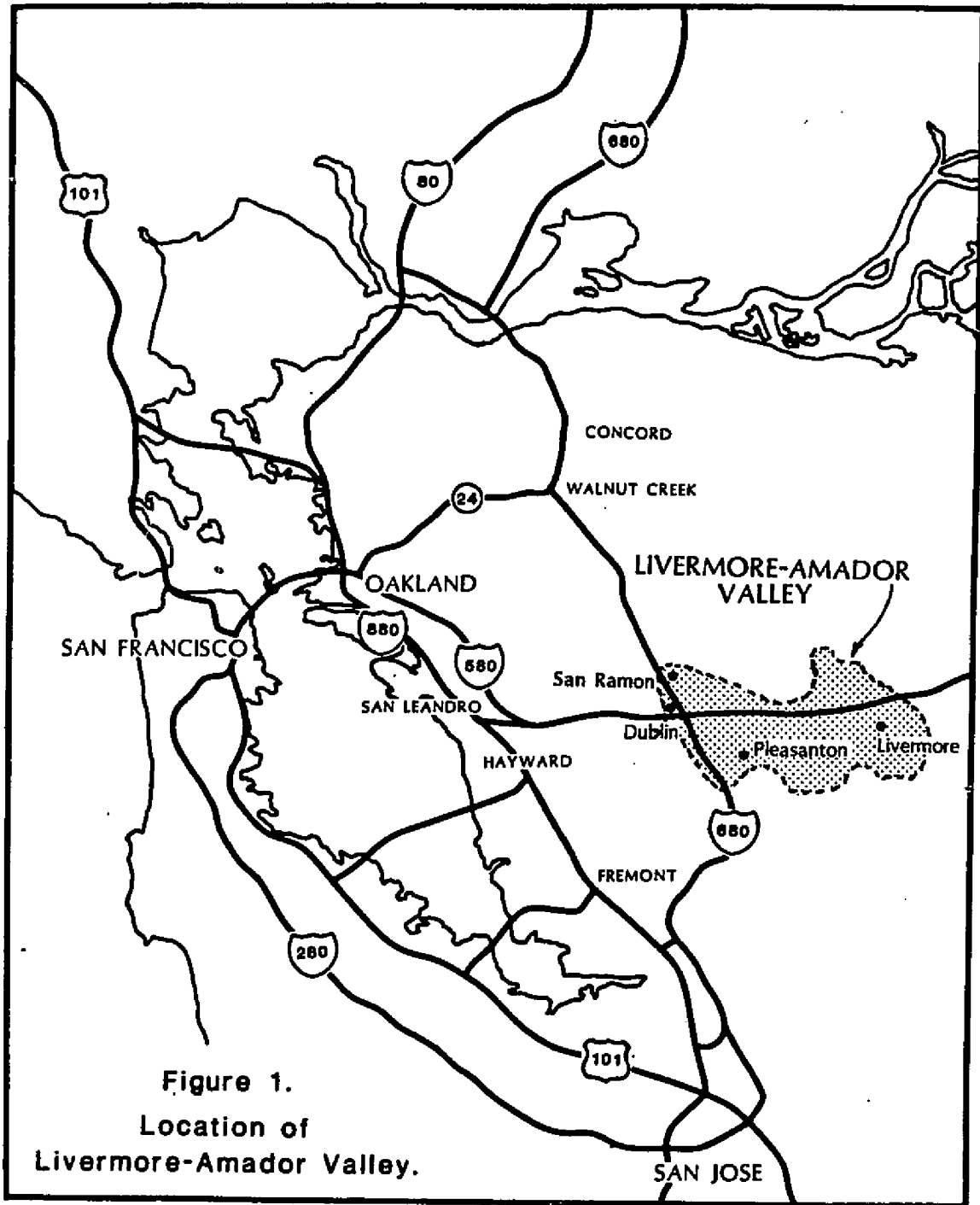
### Geographical Setting and Early History

Located among the rugged ridges of the Diablo Range, the Livermore-Amador Valley lies slightly inland from the California coast, "between the sea and the San Joaquin" (Figure 1). Definitions of the Livermore-Amador Valley are a source of confusion, since the area can be considered either as four distinct geographical subareas, or as a single entity characterized by a distinctive hydrological drainage pattern. From the western edge of the Amador Valley eastward across the Livermore Valley to the Altamont Hills, the terrain slopes gently upward from 350 to around 650 feet in elevation over a distance of fourteen miles (Figure 2). To the north of the city of Livermore, the small Las Positas Valley extends northward approximately three miles. The overall north-south width of this three-valley area varies from three to six miles. From Dublin, the southern San Ramon Valley extends four miles northward to the low divide that separates the South San Ramon and San Ramon Creek watersheds.

For the purposes of this study, the Livermore-Amador Valley,<sup>\*</sup> or simply "the valley," shall generally be

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\* This same territory is sometimes called the "Tri-Valley" area, with reference to the Livermore, Amador, and southern San Ramon Valleys. This name will not be used here.



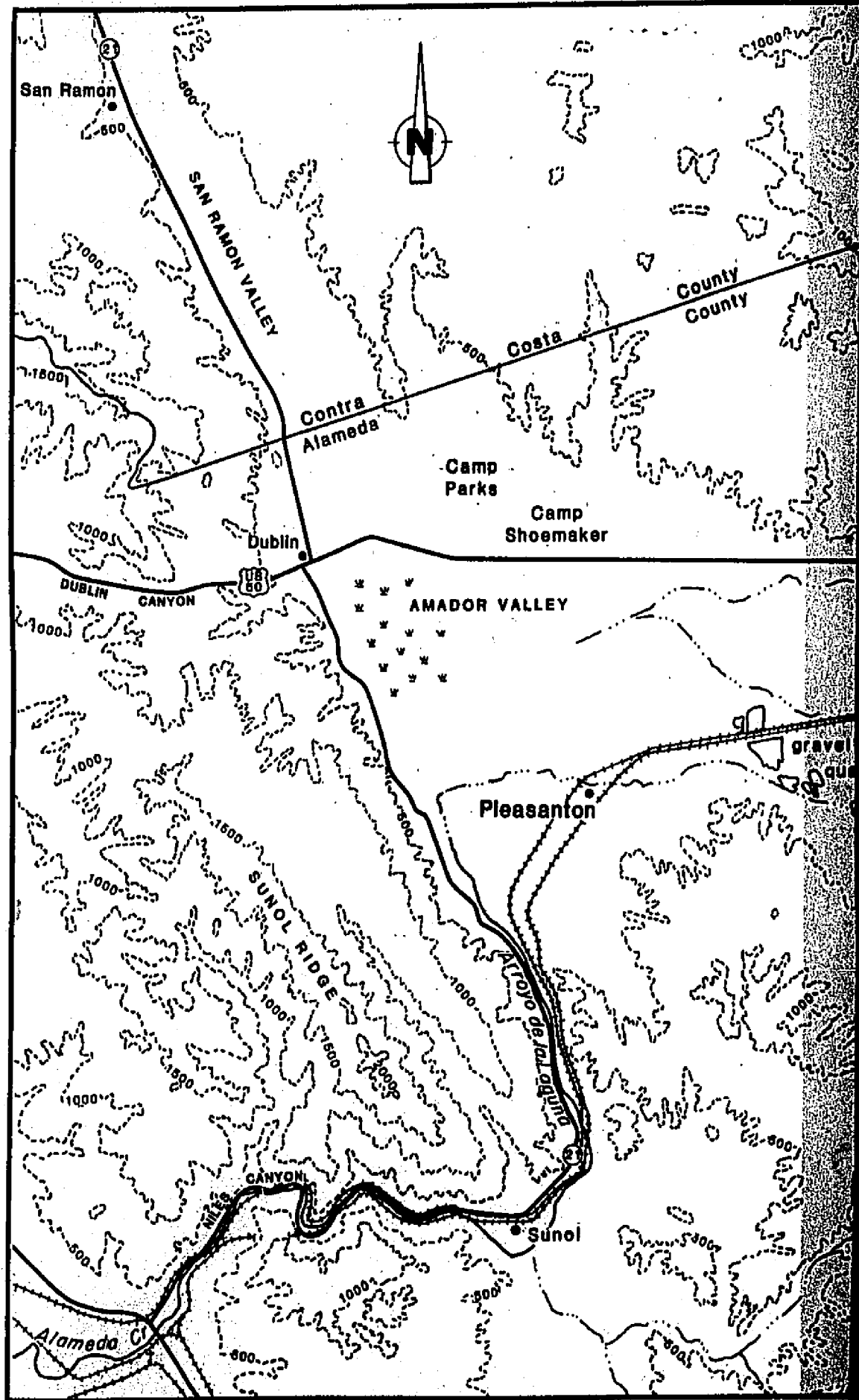
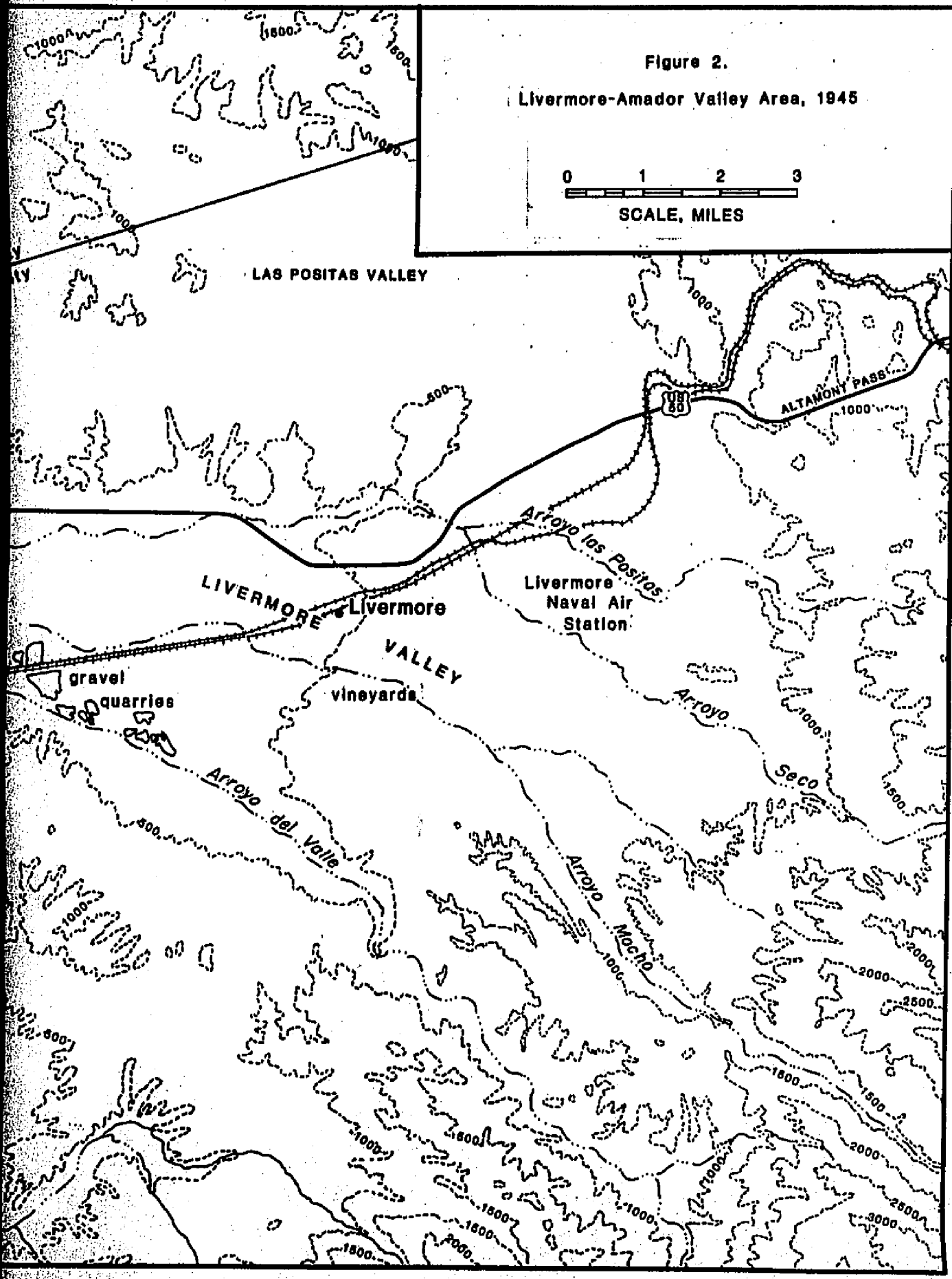


Figure 2.  
Livermore-Amador Valley Area, 1945

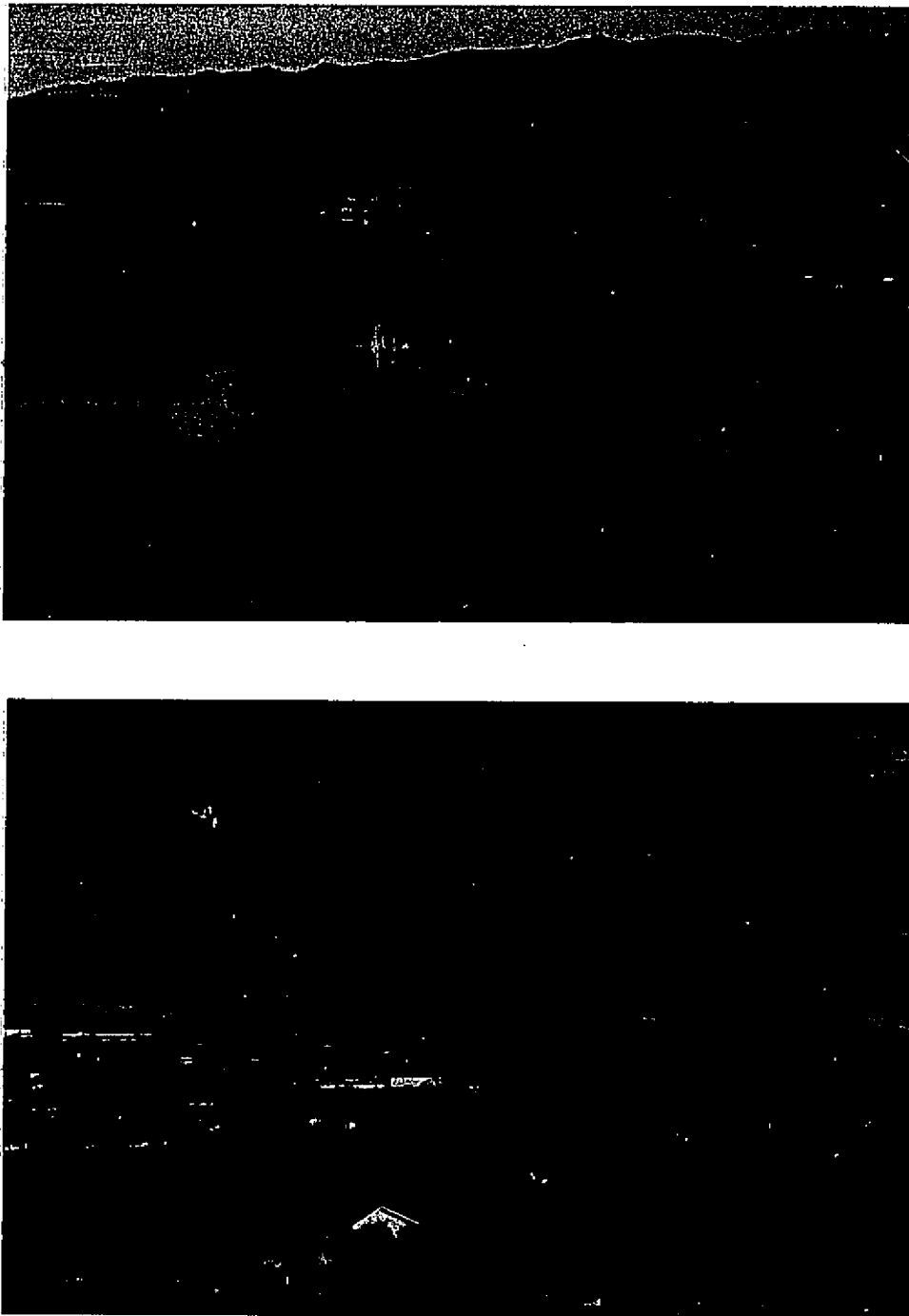


treated as a single entity. The four distinctly-named subareas comprise, in fact, parts of a single watershed system. A series of small, seasonal creeks flow into the Arroyo de la Laguna, so named for a lake several hundred acres in size that once occupied the poorly-drained area southeast of the present junction of Interstate Highways 580 and 680. Although early in the present century reclamation efforts eliminated both the lake and a surrounding marshy area, even in 1985 several inches of standing water would remain for weeks after a heavy rain (Figure 3).

The Arroyo de la Laguna is a tributary to Alameda Creek, which winds westward through Niles Canyon to empty ultimately into San Francisco Bay.\* Complementing this surface drainage pattern, a common groundwater basin underlies the four valley areas. With up to 400 feet of gravelly, water-bearing sediments lying just beneath the valley floor, the area historically has borne a large reservoir of underground water. In the south-central portion of the Amador Valley, groundwater levels were at one time sufficiently high to produce artesian conditions.

A small percentage of local runoff drains from the groundwater basin through the porous gravels of the Niles Cone, which presently provides a major portion of the water supply for the cities of Fremont, Newark and Union City. A significant feature of valley hydrology is the tendency for all salts, natural or man-made, to be flushed

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\*The average flow of Alameda Creek between 1892-1962 was 123 cubic feet per second (U.S. Geological Survey 1984).



**Figure 3. Natural Factors.**

Above: Cattle stay cool by wading in water still standing several weeks after 1985 winter rains.

Below: Poor visibility is due to photochemical smog induced by thermal inversion conditions on a summer afternoon. View is from western end of valley (above Dublin) looking southeast.

ultimately into the Alameda Creek drainage system. Consequently, very small amounts of upstream pollution can be of concern to downstream water users.

Like most of coastal California, the valley is characterized by a mediterranean climate. Cool, wet winters alternate with warm, dry summers. Since winter storms travel from west to east, the Amador Valley receives far greater rainfall than does the Livermore. Whereas average annual precipitation in Pleasanton is over 21 inches, in the city of Livermore the total is but 14 1/2 inches. The location of the valley slightly inland causes temperatures to be somewhat hotter in summer and cooler in winter than in the Bay Area to the west.

Because the valley is surrounded by ridges from one to three thousand feet in elevation, it is subject to periodic thermal inversions. These occur commonly during the hot, dry summer months, when air circulating out of the offshore Pacific high pressure cell descends, warms, and forms a thermal cap over cooler air beneath. In modern times, this meteorological phenomenon has contributed to an air pollution problem that reached its most severe levels during the late sixties and early seventies (Figure 3).

Its location and topography have caused the valley to serve as a natural corridor linking two neighboring lowland areas, the San Francisco Bay plain and the San Joaquin Valley. So central has this function been within valley development that local historians Reginald and Grace Stuart

entitled their book describing the first years of white occupation of the area Corridor Country (1966). Long before the arrival of the first Spanish explorers, in fact, inland aboriginal groups such as the Miwok used the valley both as a trade route and a pathway to and from the rich shellfish beds of the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay (Davis 1974).

The valley served as a home not only for the Costanoan Indians, but for a rich fauna and flora as well. In the oak woodlands of the hills and perennial bunchgrass savannas of the lowlands, elk, antelope, mountain lions, and even grizzly bears abounded.

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#### The Spanish and Mexican Periods

Such varied and spectacular wildlife would undoubtedly still exist today, were it not for economic and political changes in Europe which from the sixteenth century onward caused explorers, merchants, and missionaries to venture into the so-called New World in search of empire, riches and converts to the Christian faith. By the mid-eighteenth century, California had fallen within the Spanish sphere of imperial influence. Although "Alta California" was considered a distant, unimportant corner of the Spanish empire, King Charles III became concerned that the Russians would move southward from their fur-trapping outposts along the northern Pacific Coast to capture the semi-arid but

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Sources for this and the following section include: Halley (1876), DeNier (1928), Stuart and Stuart (1966) Newton (1968), Calhoun (1973), Burns (1975), and Davis (1976).



potentially rich territory. Consequently, after 1769 Spain sent expeditions composed of military and clerical personnel into California to assert Spanish influence, and hence secure the region for the crown.

Led by Pedro Fages and Father Juan Crespi, the first Spanish explorers reached the Livermore-Amador Valley in April 1772, while in search of a land route to Drake's Bay. No attempt was made to settle the region, however, until the arrival of missionaries a quarter-century later. On June 11, 1797, Mission San Jose de Guadalupe was founded at a site located within the present-day city of Fremont. Soon thereafter, the Amador Valley (then called el Valle de San Jose) and the surrounding uplands became part of the mission grazing lands. Although the Franciscan priests who founded the California missions controlled vast acreages in their efforts to Christianize the aboriginal population, formal title to mission lands remained with the Spanish crown.

During the Spanish period, the largely inadvertent destruction of the native inhabitants of California commenced. Although some became Christianized, many more either ran away or else succumbed to European diseases, to which they had no resistance. At the same time, extermination of the big game of central California began, and the natural vegetation was forever altered through the introduction of European annual grasses.

The most far-reaching changes in land-use patterns in coastal California, however, did not occur until the

repercussions of Mexican independence (achieved in 1821) finally reached the more distant outposts of the Hispanic settlement area. Between 1822 and 1824, Spanish authority over Alta California ended. After a decade passed during which the missions continued to function independently of any centralized authority, the new Mexican government ordered that all mission lands be secularized. Thus began the era of the so-called Californios, those fortunate few who benefitted from the issuance by the Mexican government of generous grants of land either as political favors or as rewards to military officers for their loyal long-term service in remote Californian outposts.

In November 1836, the California representative of the Mexican government, Governor Juan B. Alvarado, ordered the secularization of Mission San Jose, with its mainly aboriginal population of two thousand inhabitants. By 1839, the mission lands and much of the surrounding area that lay within the present-day Livermore, Amador, south San Ramon and Las Positas Valleys had been parcelled out into five separate grants. A grant of 16,517 acres was issued to the former major-domo of Mission San Jose, Jose Maria Amador. Amador (1794-1883), who had lived near the present-day site of Dublin since 1827, applied for his grant in 1829, and received title to his lands five years later. South of Amador's Rancho San Ramon, Mexican soldier Jose Dolores Pacheco was granted 8,894 acres for his Santa Rita Rancho in April 1839. Pacheco never lived on this land, however; the rancho was overseen by Francisco Alviso. Alviso was also

the grantee for the 17,760 acre Canada de los Vaqueros rancho, located mainly in what presently is Contra Costa County. By far the largest grant issued in the area, however, was awarded in 1839 to military men Agostin and Juan Pablo Bernal, Antonio Sunol, and Antonio Maria Pico. Rancho el Valle de San Jose encompassed 48,436 acres, including the present-day sites of both Pleasanton and Livermore.

A fourth grant was issued in 1834 to a former New York blacksmith named William Gulnac (Newton 1968: 71-72). Gulnac's interests, however, ultimately passed to Robert Livermore and Jose Noriega. Born in Springfield, England, Livermore (1799-1858) had grown disillusioned with life as an English sailor, and had deserted his trading ship the Colonel Young in 1822. After drifting between settlements for several years, Livermore resided for a time in the Sunol Valley. He then stayed with Amador at Rancho San Ramon before moving eastward a few miles to occupy his own lands. Livermore accommodated himself to his new homeland first by becoming a member of a prominent Californio family through his marriage to the widow Josefa Higuera Molina in 1838, and then by securing Mexican citizenship in 1844.

The period between 1833 and 1848, during which the Californios ruled, is portrayed by some historians as a pastoral golden era during which life was elegant and comfortable (e.g. McCann and Hinckel 1937, De Nier 1928). Although certainly the immediate families of land grantees

lived the high life characteristic of feudal nobility, the hard work on the ranchos was performed by native Californians. Not surprisingly, there were sporadic rebellions against the ranchers and their allies throughout the 1830s by such aboriginal groups as the Miwoks and Yokuts. Several of these raids passed directly through the Livermore-Amador Valley "corridor," and were resisted vigorously by those very men for whom these areas subsequently were named.

Beginning in the late 1830s, the spectre of American occupation and annexation loomed over California. The entry into Californian economic life of adventurers like Robert Livermore was but the beginning of a torrent of non-Hispanic Europeans and Americans who would arrive in search of land and wealth.

#### The Americans Arrive

The passage of political and economic dominance over the valley from Mexicans to Americans was achieved both through conflict and by peaceful means. Viewing the takeover of California as a part of the "Manifest Destiny" of the United States, some American settlers, diplomats, and military men treated the Californios with disregard even before the actual seizure of California by the U.S. government. Colonel John C. Fremont, for example, reputedly stole 47 of Jose Amador's horses during an 1846 passage through Rancho San Ramon (Calhoun 1973: 26). After the so-called Bear Flag Rebellion of that same year, the conquest

of California by the United States became all but inevitable. As a result of war and the subsequent Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo signed in February 1848, Mexican rule over California ended. On September 9th, 1850, California became the 31st of the United States of America.

The onset of the California gold rush in 1849 placed further pressures upon the ranchers. Although Robert Livermore became known for his hospitable treatment of argonauts as they passed through the valley en route to the gold fields, Agostin Bernal became concerned over swarms of American squatters who had designs upon his landholdings at Rancho el Valle de San Jose.

Attempts at preemption by American settlers, and attendant conflicts over title to the original Mexican land grant areas became, in fact, commonplace throughout coastal California. This was both because Americans tended not to recognize the previous authority of Mexican law, and because the Mexican system for surveying lands and establishing boundaries was inexact, to say the least. Disputes over the legitimacy of land grants resulted finally in the establishment of a United States Land Commission in 1851, the task of which was to review the claims of the grantees and their families, and hence to determine the ownership status of the lands involved.

After arduous court reviews that lasted from five to twenty years, the legitimacy of all of the Californio grant claims in the valley ultimately was upheld (although the

Livermore Rancho was reduced by the commission to 4,000 acres). Even so, particularly after 1871, a significant amount of land outside of the rancho boundaries became available for preemption. Under the preemption laws, squatters could claim up to 160 acres, provided that they occupied the land for a specified period of time, and made demonstrable improvements.

In response to the mounting pressures upon the original landholders, some of the Californios began to sell their lands. As early as 1846, Francisco Alviso had sold his Canada de los Vaqueros grant to Livermore and Noriega, greatly expanding the holdings of the Englishman and his partner. Around this same time, Jose Amador sold 100 acres of his Rancho San Ramon to two Americans, Michael Murray and Jeremiah Fallon, who established the first permanent "Anglo" settlement. Dublin was located at the natural crossroads where traffic moving north to south down the San Ramon Valley intersected that traversing the now well-known Livermore-Amador Valley corridor linking the East Bay with the Central Valley and the Mother Lode. Financially stressed and wishing to mine gold himself, Amador sold the remainder of his holdings in 1852 to James Witt Dougherty for \$22,000. Located very close to Dublin, the settlement established by this Tennessee native became known as "Dougherty's Corners," and served as the hub of valley commerce for the next two decades. At the time of his death in 1879, Dougherty held title to some 17,000 acres.

In 1853, Alameda County was created by the California

Legislature, composed of six townships. Named for that early resident of the Dublin area, Murray Township encompassed around 500 square miles, including all of the Livermore-Amador Valley area that lies within Alameda County (a new Pleasanton Township was formed in August 1902). The formation of a local government apparatus merely accelerated the ongoing passage of control from the old Californio families to a new generation of opportunistic Americans.

In 1854, American dominance over the valley was increased when J. D. Pacheco sold his Santa Rita Rancho to Samuel and J. West Martin for a reported \$10,000. The liquidation of the vast Rancho el Valle de San Jose occurred less through direct sale than as a result of the marriages of several second-generation Californio women to American men. The principal landholder in the area was Juan Pablo Bernal, who had augmented his already-large acreage in 1848 by purchasing lands previously belonging to Antonio Sunol. When Juan Pablo's daughter Maria Refugia Agosta Bernal married Austrian-born John W. Kottinger (1819-1892) in 1850, the latter received 4,500 acres of Amador Valley land as a dowry. The largesse of his wealthy father-in-law played no small role in facilitating Kottinger's rise to prominence in the small community of Alisal (named for the sycamores which grew along the Arroyo del Valle) during its early period of development.

In 1861, a foreman at the Livermore ranch, Joshua A. Neal, married Agostin Bernal's daughter Angela, and

consequently gained title to 530 acres of land from the Bernal family holdings. That same year, Robert Livermore's son, Robert Jr., cemented his family's already powerful position in the valley through his marriage to yet another Bernal daughter, Teresa. Hence, through preemption, sale, and marriage, the Americanization of the landholding pattern in the valley was quickly accomplished.

A significant turning point in valley history occurred in 1862 when the United States Congress authorized construction of the transcontinental railroad. The westernmost segment of this important east-west thoroughfare ran from Sacramento south to Stockton, then west across the Livermore-Amador Valley and on through Niles Canyon, finally terminating at the port of Oakland.

The construction of the tracks and associated facilities through the valley produced a mini-boom for the area; a hotel built by Alphonso Ladd at the present-day intersection of Junction Ave. and Old First St. in Livermore reportedly did a healthy business during the construction years. More importantly, however, some local landholders realized the potential increases in real estate values that would result from the arrival of the railroad in the area. In 1868, long-time Californian William H. Mendenhall shrewdly donated twenty acres of land along the railroad right-of-way to the Western Pacific Company (an affiliate of the Central Pacific, which was later absorbed into the Southern Pacific) for the expressed purpose of constructing a depot. Once regular operations of the trains began, this



land, a half-mile west of "Laddsville," would increase greatly in value. Mendenhall called his new settlement Livermore, after the late English pioneer rancher.

At the same time, in nearby Alisal Joshua Neal and John Kottinger decided to plat their lands for the purpose of subdividing them for sale. During this early period of development, Kottinger occupied a prominent position in the nascent community. As judge, justice of the peace, and principal landholder, "his private property served as the justice court and county government center for Murray Township" (Davis 1976: 10). Moreover, in 1864 Kottinger became the proprietor of the first hotel in the area, the Farmers', an establishment which still operates today (as a restaurant) under the name of The Pleasanton Hotel. In honor of a Union general in the Civil War, Neal and Kottinger named the new community "Pleasanton." A transcription error by a county clerk, however, altered this forever to "Pleasanton." Maps of both communities from an 1878 atlas of Alameda County are shown in Figures 4 and 5.

Once the first Pacific Express train rolled through Livermore and Pleasanton in August 1869, the future prosperity of these settlements seemed assured. The following decade marked a period of intensive community-building. In 1874, publication began of Livermore's first newspaper, The Enterprise. Local chapters of civic organizations such as the International Order of Oddfellows and the American Legion of Honor were formed.

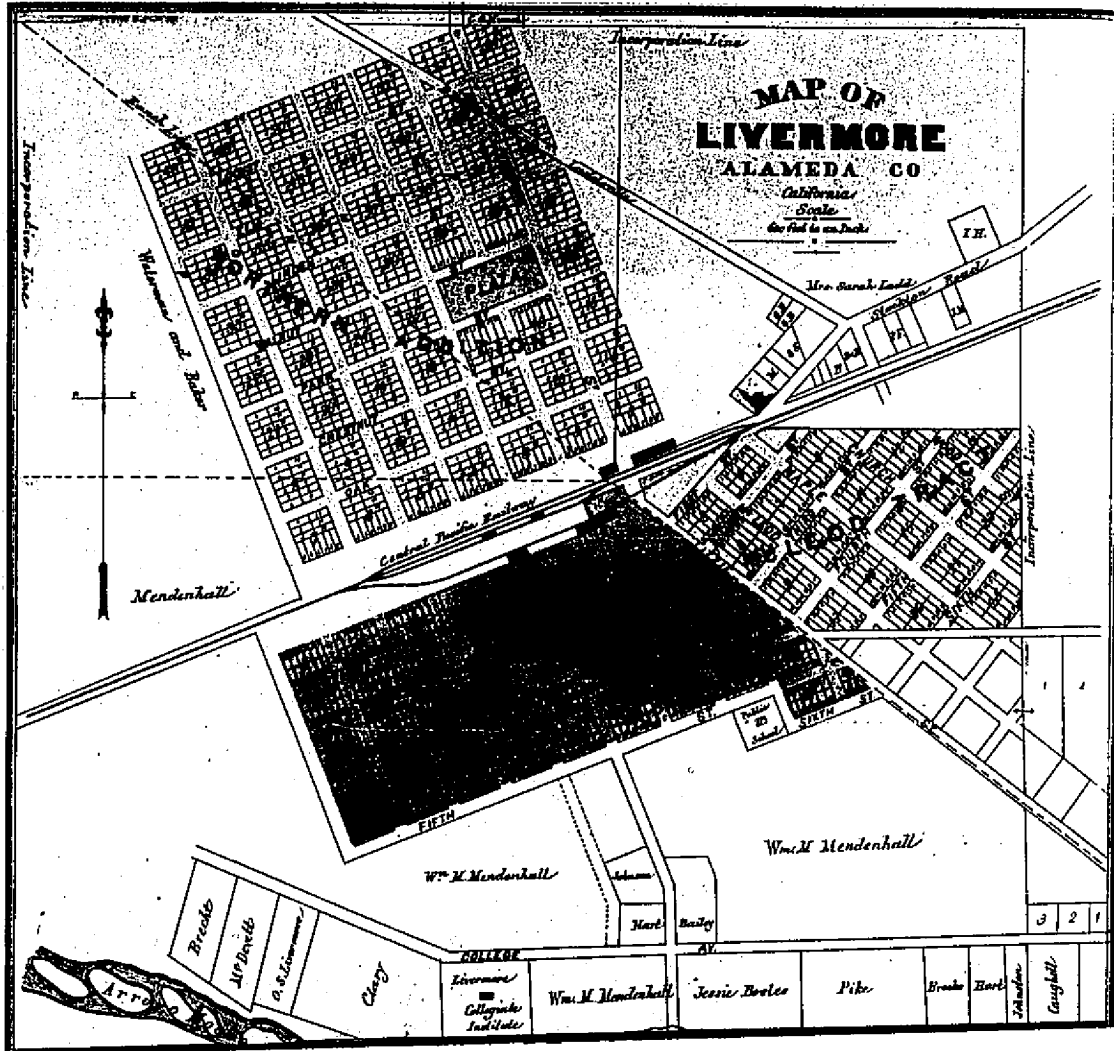


Figure 4. An early map of Livermore, showing the grid pattern typical of towns platted for speculative purposes. The small size of land parcels set a precedent for later subdivision practices.

Source: Thompson and West (1878)



What might have been a fierce rivalry between Livermore and neighboring Laddsville, however, was ended in 1875 when much of the latter community was destroyed by fire. In April of the following year, the Town of Livermore, population 830, was granted a charter of incorporation by the State of California. The city boundaries, including 610 acres in total area, remained unchanged until the first municipal annexation was approved in 1949.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Livermore residents were optimistic that the valley would grow and prosper. William Bartlett, who renamed the local newspaper the Herald when he assumed its proprietorship in 1877, was an energetic booster for the town. As local historian G. B. Drummond writes, "Bartlett's 1889 panoramic view of Livermore is a fine example of a real estate promotional" (1979: 2). Under the name of The Livermore Board of Trade, local businessmen published an elaborate pamphlet in 1887 extolling the virtues of the valley.

During the 1880s, Livermore became caught up in the land speculation fever that swept through much of California, and a flurry of subdivision activity ensued. According to Drummond, Livermore during these years was "a real-estate developer's paradise" (1979: 1). Some of the areas for which maps were drawn, however, never actually were developed during this era.

The principal bases for such optimism regarding the local economy were the alleged fruit-growing potential of the area, and the increased commercial traffic that passed

through the valley because of the railroad. Once the rail line began operation, the hub of commerce (mainly agricultural) shifted from Dublin to Livermore. Pleasanton also benefitted sufficiently, however, to justify its municipal incorporation in 1894.

Orchards never prospered in the valley, because there are too many nights when frost occurs. Moreover, any hopes that the valley would develop autonomously into a great metropolitan center proved unrealistic. A major blow to local prosperity was delivered in 1878, when the transcontinental railroad route was altered. Instead of passing through the valley, the trains now travelled south from Sacramento to Benecia, where a new ferry delivered them across the Carquinez strait to Port Costa. To be sure, both freight and passenger rail traffic still traversed the Livermore-Amador Valley corridor, but the route was now merely a spur line.

Even the arrival in 1910 of a second railroad, the Western Pacific (no relation to the earlier W.P. mentioned above) did not alter the fundamental reality that overall, the economic destiny of the valley was increasingly tied to the neighboring Bay Area to the west. While the populations of San Francisco and Oakland expanded rapidly, Livermore and Pleasanton remained tiny (Table 1). For decades to come, it would be as a rural hinterland to the neighboring urban colossus that the valley would continue to evolve.

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 Table 1

 Population of Selected Bay Area  
 Cities, 1870-1940

	Livermore	Pleasanton	San Francisco	Oakland
1870	830	--	149,473	10,500
1880	855	--	233,959	34,555
1890	1,391	--	298,997	48,662
1900	1,493	1,100	342,782	66,960
1910	2,030	1,254	416,912	150,174
1920	1,916	991	506,676	216,261
1930	3,119	1,237	634,394	284,063
1940	2,885	1,278	634,536	302,163

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 Sources: Androit (1983); Vance (1964).

## Chapter III

### Forces in the Economy, 1850-1945

The economic fortunes of valley residents have been shaped to some extent by natural factors. Climate, soils and geology have influenced what crops could be grown and which industries located in the area. Almost from the beginning of white settlement, however, the most important determinant of local growth patterns has been the relationship of the valley to the San Francisco Bay Area to the west. As long as the valley served only as a hinterland for that urban complex, the energetic civic boosterism exhibited by Livermore and Pleasanton residents attracted few new residents and little investment.

#### The Hinterland Economy

##### Agricultural Beginnings

Since the late eighteenth century, cattle ranching has been a mainstay of the valley economy. During the Spanish era, thousands of scrawny, half-wild bovines grazed freely across the mission lands. Establishment of the ranchos after 1835 brought the institution of private property to the valley, but effected few changes in the prevailing system for raising livestock. What was new, however, was the involvement of the Californios in a far-flung system of

world trade. The hides and tallow produced on valley ranchos were sold mainly to Russian traders at Bodega Bay (Cook 1971).

After California was seized by the United States, fortunes continued to be earned from ranching. During the early 1850s, Juan Pablo Bernal and his son-in-law John Kottinger drove cattle annually to the Mother Lode, where they would trade the animals for gold dust.

Although in recent decades the importance of ranching has declined, its place in the valley's economy and cultural legacy is secure. Ranchers have remained influential in valley politics. Moreover, since 1918, local ranchers have sponsored an annual rodeo, first held as a fund-raising activity for the Red Cross. Finally, the cowboy will forever be the mascot of Livermore High School.

Although throughout the 1850s over 50,000 cattle and horses roamed the valley and surrounding uplands, the following decade brought change. During the 1860s low cattle prices forced some ranchers to lease land to farmers. Joseph Black, for example, leased 800 acres from the Bernals for \$2,000 per year (Valley Times, September 19, 1979: 22). Dryland agriculture became the mainstay of the area: wheat, and then barley were grown in abundance.

The success of grain crops was but a portent of the agricultural bonanza that followed. In his Centennial Year Book of Alameda County, California published in 1876, William Halley wrote of the area:



The richest land in (Murray) township...is that between Pleasanton and Dublin, in the San Jose and Santa Rita Ranches, and the crops that are here cut every year are almost incredible. As high as seventy-five bushels to the acre has been taken off. Anything belonging to the vegetable kingdom may be cultivated along the west side of the township, on the low lands, and among the foothills.

(1876: 493)

Grain continued as the principal valley product through the early 1880s (Lauer 1959: 8). During the 1870s, the area also began to produce large amounts of hay, both to feed local livestock and to supply the horsepower needs of the Bay Area. The cultivation of higher-value crops was slow to commence near Pleasanton, because much of the prime acreage was still held in large parcels. These major landholders, some of whom were descendants of the original grantees, chose either to raise field crops that required little labor, or else simply to run cattle over their holdings.

Within a crescent-shaped region stretching across the southern end of the valley (see Figure 2), it was discovered during the 1880s that the gravelly soils were well-suited for viticulture, particularly those varieties of grapes used to produce dry white wines. Within a few years, wineries were established by the Wente, Concannon, and Wetmore families, to name but a few. At the peak of vineyard production between 1885 and 1910, some 15,000 acres were planted in grapes, and 25 wineries operated in the valley (Welch 1982). The wine industry subsequently all but collapsed, however, because of a market glut at the turn of the century, outbreaks of the disease phylloxera, and the

implementation of Prohibition in 1920.

By the mid-1890s, some of the largest estates in the Pleasanton area finally were subdivided into smaller parcels for sale to farmers. The new landholders found the soils suitable for a multitude of crops. In the heavy, wet soils exposed by the drainage of the Laguna and its swampy surrounding area around 1900, hops and sugar beets grew prodigiously. At its peak of operations just after the turn of the century, the Pleasanton Hop Company employed up to three thousand pickers during the August and September harvest, including both local residents and migrant laborers. Much of the hops was exported to the Guinness Brewing Company in England. Sugar beets were transported only through Niles Canyon to nearby Alvarado, home of the Alameda Sugar Refining Company.

When pumpwell irrigation was introduced in the Amador Valley after 1910, commercial truck farming expanded. Pleasanton growers raised tomatoes and other vegetables for sale in nearby urban markets. The valley also provided an ideal environment for the cultivation of flowers; after Jackson & Perkins established growing and wholesaling operations in 1939, Pleasanton was known for a time as the "rose capital of California." This labor-intensive industry attracted numerous Filipino, Japanese and Mexican laborers (Calhoun 1973: 59).

Dairying also figured prominently in the local economy. A 1935 brochure issued by the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce advertised the town as a place "Where Dairying Ranks First."

It was not, in fact, until well into the 1960s that the last local dairy moved its operations to Tracy.

### Spring Valley Water Company

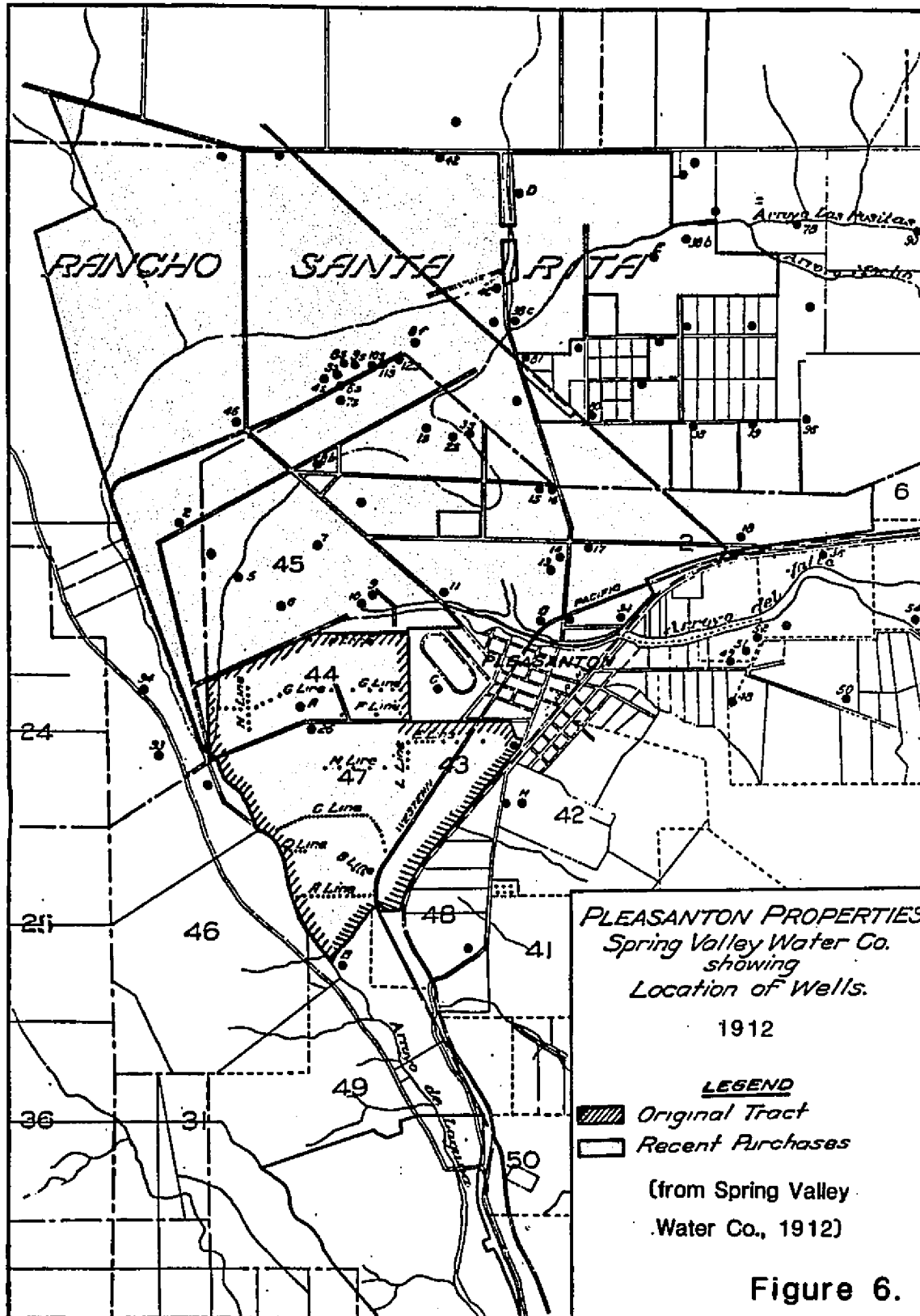
The ultimate agricultural potential of the valley was never realized, however, because the once-abundant groundwater supply was largely depleted by the Spring Valley Water Company. As noted above, the valley economy from an early date was shaped by the needs of the San Francisco-Oakland metropolis. Nothing illustrates this point more clearly than the capture and export of the valley water supply by a private firm serving the city of San Francisco.

Since San Francisco has virtually no natural water supply, Spring Valley Water Company was formed to meet the demands of that thriving city during the post-gold rush boom. As early as 1865, the company began extensive studies of water sources both on the peninsula to the south, and in the East Bay. It developed an "Alameda Creek plan," aimed at diverting a significant portion of the outflow of that stream. In 1875, the company quietly began to buy up property and water rights both at the eastern mouth of Niles Canyon and at the site of what became Calaveras Reservoir. During 1887-88, the company constructed its original Alameda Creek diversion works (Spring Valley Water Company 1912: 101). Construction and expansion continued for several decades; by 1908, 14 million gallons per day were exported from the Alameda Creek watershed.

Some authorities saw the Livermore-Amador Valley as a

possible permanent water source for San Francisco. In 1912, the Spring Valley Water Company published a lengthy report as part of an unsuccessful campaign to dissuade San Francisco from proceeding with its Hetch-Hetchy dam project. In one chapter, William Mulholland and J. B. Lippencott, architects of the Los Angeles water system, presented a survey of the Livermore-Amador Valley. They declared its hydrologic conditions to be parallel to those of the San Fernando Valley, from which Los Angeles drew much of its early water supply (1912: 187-193). Andrew C. Lawson of the University of California Geology Department declared that the valley gravels could store twelve billion gallons of water (228). According to geologist J. C. Branner of Stanford, the valley constituted "a great storage basin," "capable of enormous development" (231).

During the 1890s, the Spring Valley Company had begun to buy up lands in the Amador Valley; by 1912, its holdings were nothing short of remarkable, encompassing a significant portion of present-day Pleasanton (Figure 6). In 1898, the firm drilled the first of around one hundred wells in the Pleasanton area. The water from the wellfields was conveyed to the Sunol filter galleries, where it was mixed with softer water from the southern Alameda Creek watershed. The water was then sent to Niles Reservoir, and on to the large Crystal Springs Reservoir on the Peninsula. The peak year for water export was 1924-25, when 12,800 acre-feet were withdrawn from the valley wellfields (California Department



of Water Resources 1963: 28).

Local farmers fully realized the threat to their livelihood. It was not, for example, the arrival of Prohibition but the incessant pumping of groundwater that spelled doom for the Pleasanton Hop Company. Consequently, in 1916 the Pleasanton Township County Water District was formed, in an attempt to protect what little control local residents still maintained over their water.

Despite these efforts, pumping by the Spring Valley Company and its successor, the San Francisco Water Department (San Francisco purchased the Spring Valley operations in 1930) led to a severe decline in the water table, particularly during the drought period 1928-1933. Between 1928 and 1931, the level from which water could be pumped from some wells was lowered from 40 feet beneath the ground surface to 130 feet (California Department of Water Resources 1963: 40).

As San Francisco acquired the water delivery facilities of the Spring Valley Company, the latter sold off its landholdings to farmers. In most of the Amador Valley, however, San Francisco still held water rights. Although the SFWD permitted farmers to pump freely from wells located on their own holdings, the costs of drilling ever-deeper wells as the water table dropped became prohibitively expensive.

After San Francisco began to develop the Hetch-Hetchy project, the importance of Amador Valley water diminished. By 1940, water export ceased. However, San Francisco still maintained considerable land and water rights.

Consequently, when new barrels of the Hetch-Hetchy pipeline were being constructed between 1947-1949, valley water was exported once again. San Francisco still owns much land in the area (mostly around Sunol), and it was not until 1960 that Pleasanton completed negotiations to purchase the last of San Francisco's water rights in the valley.

#### Mineral Wealth

Although agriculture was the mainstay of valley life prior to World War II, there also were extractable minerals. In 1863, the discovery of small coal deposits in the hills southeast of Livermore produced a miniature mining boom. Centered in Tesla, mining passed through several boom-and-bust cycles before the last operation closed permanently in 1908 (Mosier 1978). The rugged hills south of the valley also yielded small quantities of magnesite, and since the 1920s oil has been pumped periodically from the area west of Patterson Pass.

The mineral resource of greatest import within the local economy, however, has been gravel, which accumulated in thick layers on the valley floor during Quaternary times. Along the Arroyo del Valle in particular, sand and gravel have been mined in impressive quantities since Henry Kaiser began his operations at Radum (between Pleasanton and Livermore) during the 1920s. According to a 1927 Livermore Chamber of Commerce publication, over 7,000 carloads of gravel were exported from the valley in 1926 alone.

### Haven for Health

Few corporations established industrial facilities in the valley during its early decades of development. An exception was the Coast Manufacturing & Supply Company, which relocated its fuse works from Oakland to Livermore in 1914. However, the very pristine nature of the non-industrialized landscape provided an attraction of a different sort. By the 1880s, the area had become something of a weekend retreat for the well-to-do of the Bay Area. In 1886, for example, mining tycoon George Hearst purchased 500 acres on the ridgeland west of Pleasanton for a hunting preserve. During the following decade his wife, noted philanthropist Phoebe Apperson Hearst, built a palatial estate on the land, where she resided from 1899 until her death in 1919. Designed in part by architect Julia Morgan, the Hacienda del Pozo de Verona attracted a multitude of affluent visitors, for whom access by rail was made quite convenient. In return for the railroad right-of-way through the property, Mrs. Hearst had insisted that the Western Pacific provide a regular train stop, called "Verona."

Another celebrity of sorts who recognized the amenity values of the valley was Christopher A. Buckley. "The Blind Boss," who rose to fame as one of the last great "machine" politicians in San Francisco, built a 75-acre estate near Livermore, which he called Ravenswood (Bullough 1979: 124). Buckley devoted a portion of this land to viticulture, and eventually established himself as a vintner of some repute.

As part of this function as a recreational retreat for



the Bay Area elite, the valley became a prime area for the breeding of racehorses. In 1874, Agostin Bernal built the county's first racetrack on his Amador Valley lands; there has been horseracing in Pleasanton ever since. In October 1912, Pleasanton hosted its first Alameda County Fair, with the fairgrounds located adjacent to the racetrack. The fair was held again in 1914-15, but subsequently the tradition languished for two decades. After parimutuel betting was legalized in 1933, it was decided that a fair should be held annually. In 1939, the first "modern" county fair took place. Since 1963, an independent County Fair Association has handled the event (Doss 1984).

The mild climate and sparse population of the valley proved attractive for the establishment of several hospitals and sanitariums. The private Livermore Sanitarium opened in 1900. After World War I, a county tuberculosis hospital called Arroyo del Valle Sanitorium was established. Five miles south of Livermore, the United States Government built the Veterans' Bureau Hospital No. 102 in 1924, devoted to the care of tuberculosis-infected war veterans. The presence of so many convalescent facilities led the town fathers to adopt the slogan, "Live longer in Livermore."

On the more healthful side, Pleasanton, along with the neighboring community of Niles, served as a site for moviemaking by several Hollywood film companies during the twenties and thirties. Pleasanton's near-perfect small-town appearance led to its selection as the setting for "Rebecca

of Sunnybrook Farm," starring Mary Pickford, and "It Ain't Hay," featuring Abbott and Costello.

#### Transportation Corridor

As in the past, the corridor function of the valley figured prominently in its economic development during the twentieth century. When San Francisco constructed the Hetch-Hetchy system, the pipeline conveying pure mountain water toward Crystal Springs reservoir in San Mateo County was routed through a tunnel bored under the hills just south of the Livermore and Amador Valleys. Construction of this facility between 1927 and 1934 provided several hundred much-needed jobs for valley residents during the Great Depression.

As the automobile began to eclipse the railroad as a means of passenger travel, the valley was included within an important early federal highway route. In 1914, the two-lane road connecting Stockton with Hayward was declared part of the short-lived "Lincoln Highway," which spanned the nation from coast to coast. As increasing numbers of cars passed through Livermore, the town board of trustees considered constructing a public restroom facility as a means for luring distressed travellers into the business district.

By the 1930s, the highway through the valley was part of the major east-west thoroughfare, U.S. Route 50. A realignment of Route 50 through Altamont Pass was completed by 1938. Although by the outbreak of World War II the valley was still at the outermost fringes of metropolitan development, its location along such an important

transportation corridor led local boosters to believe that the future was bright indeed.

### The Federal Role

The construction of the Veterans Hospital south of Livermore provided an important infusion of federal funds into the valley. This was, however, but a portent of the role that military-related spending would play within the local economy. During World War II, the San Francisco area became a major embarkation point for the Pacific theater. Consequently, the rural expanses inland from the East Bay hills provided an ideal location for the training of troops.

Between 1942 and 1944, the federal government spent \$32 million dollars to construct and operate several facilities in the Livermore-Amador Valley. These included the Livermore Naval Air Station and two major bases, Camp Parks and Camp Shoemaker. Activated in January 1943, the former was a Naval Construction Battalion ("Seabees") replacement and recuperation center; the latter became a naval personnel distribution center. Camp Shoemaker included a 1,000 bed Naval Hospital, plus a "brig" facility called Greystone.

At the peak of wartime activity, there were up to 20,000 men stationed at the two bases, plus 5,000 at the Livermore Air Station. The presence of so many young men who enjoyed at least occasional freedom to spend their time and money in nearby towns was definitely an asset to the local economy. In the long run, however, it would be not the men themselves but the facilities they built and occupied that

would play the most vital role in the transformation of the valley economy.

### Boosterism and Local Growth

During these early years, valley growth trends were determined largely by forces beyond local control. The success of agricultural or mining enterprises, for example, was dependent upon such exogenous factors as the demand for primary commodities and the machinations of unpredictable market institutions. Moreover, some of the construction and service activities from which residents earned their livelihood were derivative of the tremendous growth experienced by San Francisco and Oakland, plus the urban area surrounding those cities. Finally, the arrival of thousands of servicemen in the valley during the war resulted from War Department decisions regarding where to locate support facilities for the great bayside embarkation centers.

In an interdependent, complex economy, no community can claim to be self-created or self-sufficient, and to this Livermore and Pleasanton were no exceptions. This should not imply, however, that valley residents exerted little effort to influence their collective destiny. On the contrary, citizens worked energetically both to develop their own enterprises and to promote the prosperity of the region as a whole.

In 1887, local businessmen joined forces to publish the elaborate promotional booklet mentioned in Chapter II. The

stated objectives of this publication included the following:

To urge substantial improvements, and the thorough development of the latent resources of this district.

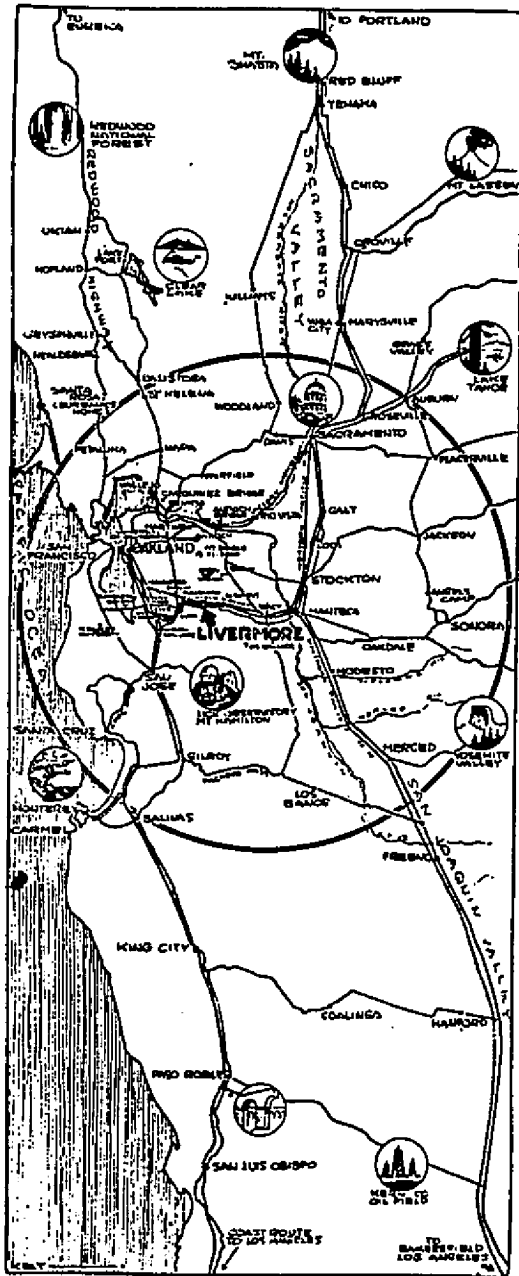
To induce large land owners to sub-divide their lands and to sell in small tracts.

To publish and disseminate information concerning the advantages of this district for health and pleasure seekers.

To make known to the world its great natural resources, and the advantages here offered for profitable investment; to receive strangers and people seeking homes and prosperity; and so far as can be done, to direct them to such lands and other conditions as each may desire.

A Livermore Chamber of Commerce began meeting informally in 1915; it was established officially in 1926. The following year, the chamber issued a major brochure, a portion of which is reproduced here as Figure 7. In 1939, the chamber sponsored a "Livermore Day" at the San Francisco World's Fair, with the hope that firms would take notice of the small city as a potential location for industry (Livermore Chamber of Commerce 1939).

Indeed, the routine publication of such booster literature, often at taxpayer expense, continued well into the contemporary era. Pamphlets issued by the City of Pleasanton during the 1960s boasted that the community was an ideal site for business, referring to the town as the "bright new light on the aurora that is San Francisco Bay" (City of Pleasanton 1969).



**LIVERMORE**  
**CALIFORNIA**  
 BETWEEN THE SEA  
 AND THE SAN JOAQUIN  
*"The Home of Health  
 and Industry"*

Prosperous and  
 Growing Community  
*where*  
 Factories from  
 Crowded Cities  
 Find Ideal location

**LIVE LONGER IN LIVERMORE**

REPLICA OF A 1927 LIVERMORE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BROCHURE  
 Published by Chet Fankhauser as a project for the  
 Lincoln Highway Museum Restoration Fund of the Livermore Heritage Guild

Figure 7.

### Boosterism: An American Tradition

Such self-promotion should be seen not merely as a few individuals' efforts at local puffery, but as manifestations of civic boosterism, the local chauvinism through which people derive feelings of personal worth from the size, character, and importance of their home town. Such enthusiasm does not necessarily imply a commitment to growth. Interviews revealed that an intense loyalty to place characterizes nearly all contemporary residents, regardless of their views on local development.

Throughout most of American history, however, boosterism has been inextricably intertwined with the American growth ethic. This refers to the interrelated set of ideas linking economic and urban growth, technological development, and the domination of nature, and equating them with "progress."

Although the ideology of growth-as-progress has its origins deep within Judeo-Christian and Greek thought, it has been within the American context that it has reached its most extreme forms. Beginning with Alexis de Tocqueville, observers have commented that a materialistic conception of progress is an integral aspect of the American character (e.g. Potter 1954). Indeed, the growth ethic is a long-standing element within mainstream American ideology.

As historian Daniel Boorstin (1965) has shown, small-town boosterism stemmed largely from the efforts of pioneer entrepreneurs to create new communities within a rapidly-developing but extremely competitive economy. In stressing

the importance of the booster creed during the nineteenth century, Boorstin writes:

Not to boost your city showed both a lack of community spirit and a lack of business sense....An American city had to 'attract' people. The primary community service was to make it easier, cheaper, and pleasanter for people to join your community.

(Boorstin 1965: 117-118)

In a discussion of contemporary America, sociologist Harvey Molotch (1976) has characterized the U.S. city as a "growth machine," with an institutional framework imbued with a powerful drive toward economic, demographic and territorial expansion.

That Americans typically exhibit pro-growth attitudes is hardly surprising. After all, it is widely accepted that growth has benefitted most people. For the individual, growth can be a key to upward mobility and personal success. For the nation as a whole, growth has served to provide an ever-larger economic pie from which to divide relatively fixed income shares.

Locally, the rationale for growth is equally compelling. Particularly prior to World War II, many small-town households were headed by the proprietors of small businesses. Such denizens of Main Street reasoned that an expanding population would yield a larger volume of business for enterprising individuals like themselves.

Finally, the attraction of land development and real estate speculation as means for accumulating wealth in our society should not be underestimated (Sakolski 1932)--and



urban America has never lacked for realtors and financial schemers. Overall, then, self-interest has long served as a powerful impetus to boosterism.

Growth, however, is not perceived as beneficial by all of the people all of the time. Boosterism sometimes has been offset within small towns by resistance to change, particularly when growth depends upon expenditures of public funds. (Lingeman 1980: ch. 9). The forging of a pro-growth public consensus is a more complex matter than it may first appear. In order to understand how Livermore and Pleasanton, like so many other communities, ultimately were able to function as "growth machines," the processes through which the pro-growth ideology has been promulgated must be examined a bit more closely.

In The German Ideology, Karl Marx (1970) observed that ideology frequently functions to mask the material interests of an elite. Even in the very smallest communities there invariably emerges a constellation of leading citizens. Just as typically, such "town fathers" are local businesspeople who espouse the virtues of growth in the most adamant fashion (Molotch 1976). Correctly or not, supporters of the local growth ethic have tended to equate their own self-interest with the long-term progress of the community as a whole.

It is the nature of ideologies, however, that within their conceptual intricacies and rhetorical flourishes, self-interest appears to recede in favor of lofty principles and appeals to natural law. Consequently, promoters of

growth have presented the process not simply as enriching to local business, but as "progressive," "far-sighted," and most important of all, "inevitable."

#### Valley Boosterism

In Pleasanton and Livermore, the proprietors of local businesses (including some farmers) dominated municipal politics until well after World War II. Whereas the members of a city council (or, until 1927 in both communities, a board of trustees) surely had their disagreements, on the desirability of growth there was consensus.

The most important booster organizations in the valley have been the chambers of commerce. A host of other service clubs, however, proliferated from an early date. In addition to the typical American panoply of Odd Fellows, Eagles, Lions, followers of the Eastern Star, Masons, Rotarians, Legionnaires and Foresters, there were such indigenous organizations as the Women's Improvement Clubs. In Pleasanton, the Women's Club not only founded the first library, but also erected the distinctive signature sign which still spans Main Street (Figure 8). Pleasanton was also boosted by the Alisal Improvement Club, founded in 1923. Partly as a means for generating local income during the depression years, between 1936 and 1939 Pleasanton held a "Fiesta del Vino," which was ended when the county fair became permanently established.

Livermore hosted not only a chapter of the Stockmen's Protective Association, but its own League of Progress.

Comprised mainly of local businessmen, this group also maintained a women's auxiliary. These civic groups helped to sponsor local events and festivals such as the annual rodeo and the "Chautauquas" held after World War I.

The festivities and pageantry associated with these events served not only to solidify a sense of civic identity, but to perpetuate a particular view of local history. The folklore surrounding such events glorified the valley's "founding fathers," including Livermore, Amador, Mendenhall and Kottinger. While surely promoting a healthy appreciation of local heritage, such pageantry also promulgated an unrealistic image of civic harmony and unity.

Of utmost importance in promoting the booster spirit in American towns and cities has been that venerable American institution, the hometown newspaper. In both Livermore and Pleasanton, the local papers generally reflected the viewpoint of downtown business. The mundane affairs of local service groups were routinely covered on the front page. Underscoring the function of the community press as publicist for the local "establishment," even a birthday party honoring the wife of Pleasanton's mayor was deemed newsworthy (Pleasanton Times, November 23, 1934: 7).

The involvement of some newspapermen in civic affairs went further than the publicizing of social events and meetings, however. Long-time publisher of the Herald William Bartlett was energetically involved in land development in Livermore. Both he and his successor, Arthur L. Henry, used the forum of the newspaper to build an image

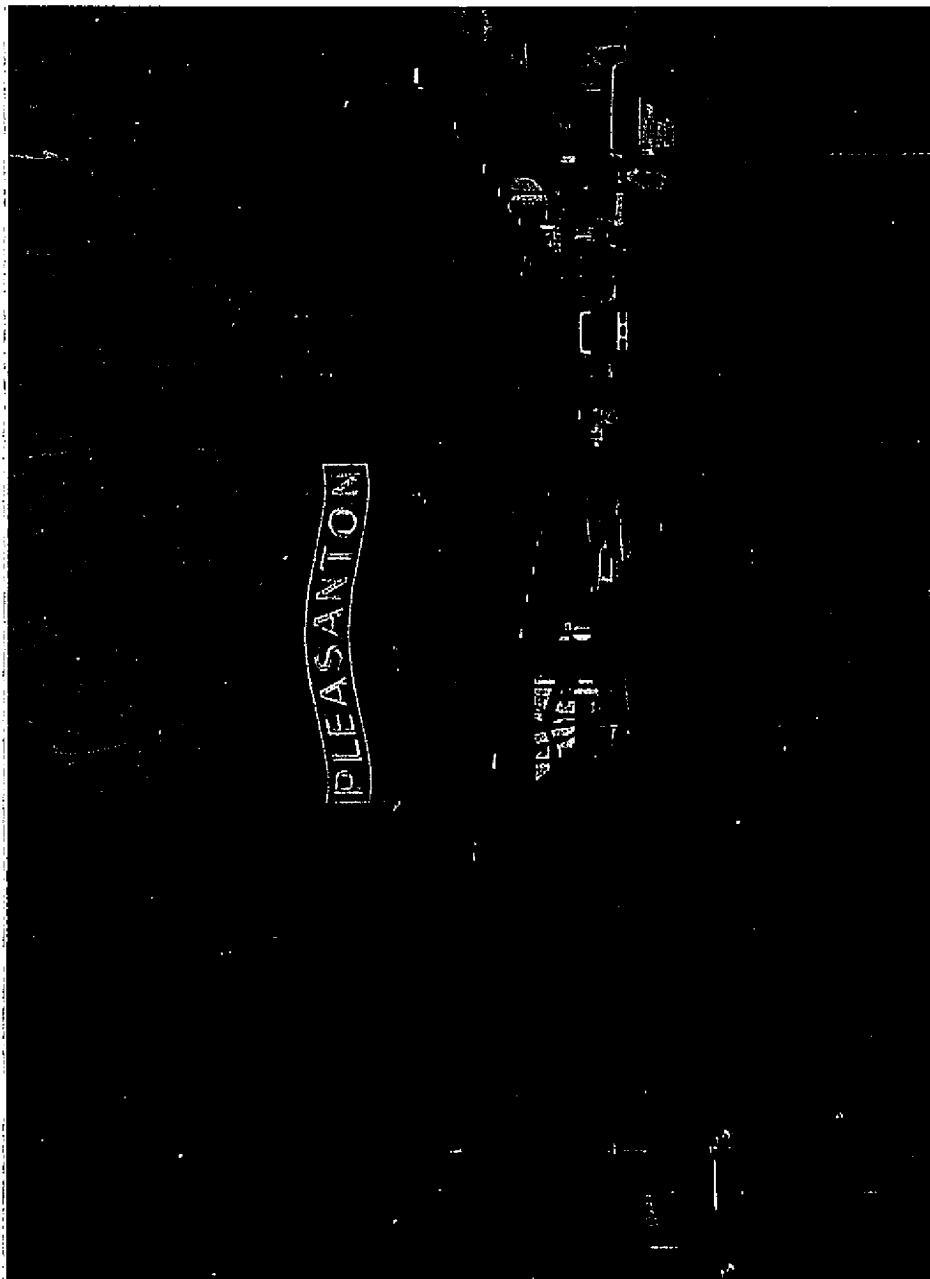


Figure 8. The distinctive Pleasanton "signature" sign was provided by the Women's Improvement Club in 1923.

of expansion and prosperity for the town. In a 1908 issue, for example, Henry declared:

Contracts for new dwellings are being let every week in Livermore. The old houses are occupied as fast as they are vacated for the new ones. This indicates growth, and rapid growth at that. There is no boom but steady, healthy development which will make Livermore one of the most thriving towns in the state if her citizens will do their part toward making it attractive to homeseekers.

(November 14, 1908: 6)

In another issue, Henry employed the common booster tactic of invoking the quasi-sacred name of the first English-speaking pioneer in the area, declaring:

The name of Livermore and the Livermore Valley, like its founder is a synonym for enterprise, energy and progressiveness....To do exact justice to the community would require many pages which are not at our disposal at this time, but in summing up it is safe to declare that no community in the State has a better location, a better climate or better prospects than our own flourishing Livermore.

(January 5, 1907)

In 1921, proprietorship of the Herald was assumed by Arthur Henry's son Maitland, who continued the cheerleading tradition initiated by Bartlett. Declaring the Herald to be the "official newspaper of Livermore," the younger Henry did his utmost to portray the community as growing and prospering. Statistics regarding local building activity and economic performance were front-page news (e.g. Livermore Herald, February 13, 1931). On the editorial page, or even the front page, Henry would publish inspirational poems or songs. Some of these praised the virtues of small-town life in general--or as this example illustrates, one favored town in particular:

There never was, in all this land,  
 Livermore our Livermore,  
 A better bunch, we understand,  
 Livermore our Livermore,  
 To help in all the town may need  
 To raise a shout that all may heed  
 and make our town a HOME indeed,  
 Livermore, our Livermore.  
 (April 8, 1931)

During the weeks preceding the annual Livermore Rodeo, the pages of the paper would be filled with discussion anticipating that momentous event. On one occasion, in his "Reflections" column, Henry suggested that the reader ask himself, "Am I a Rodeo Booster?" He concluded with the obvious answer that such a label "is only a synonym for a Loyal Livermorean." (Livermore Herald, July 3, 1931).

Like his predecessors, Maitland Henry editorially supported proposals that would in his view ensure the growth of the town. Just as Bartlett had campaigned for the community's first sewer line in 1907, Henry supported the creation of a zoning ordinance and planning commission in 1931, because such measures would regulate property uses "to protect home investments" (Livermore Herald, December 12, 1930: 8). These innovations were viewed as progressive because, as Molotch has observed, "such good planning is a long-term force that makes for even more potential future growth" (1976: 316).

In Pleasanton, The Times was founded in 1882. Over the following decade, it absorbed several smaller papers, including The Star. The early editors of The Times, including A. C. Wrenn, William T. Davis and Luther W. Rood,

campaigned for schools, sewers, and other civic improvement measures. During a successful campaign to pass a \$35,000 sewer bond issue, The Times went so far as to propagate a wild rumor that a \$100,000 hotel would be built in the city if the bond measure was approved (December 18, 1909).

Within the booster world-view, it is vital that the town present a cheerful face to the outside world. In a 1916 editorial essay entitled, "A Sketch of Our Town," Times publisher William T. Davis maintained that Pleasanton was "peculiarly well situated to be caught up in the tide (of growth) and ride proudly forward on the topmost wave of prosperity" (February 18, 1916: 4). He warned, however, that

There is no quicker way to take the life, growth and energy out of a town than for its citizens to be constantly holding up the dark side of the picture to the gaze of the inquirer...

In this editorial, Davis expressed a viewpoint which would still characterize the booster position in the valley over a half-century later.

#### The Failure of Boosterism

During these first decades of the twentieth century there were, of course, signs of change. In 1910, Livermore obtained \$10,000 from Andrew Carnegie to construct a new library building. In 1927, both towns decided to reorganize as cities. In 1931 a zoning ordinance was instituted in Livermore, featuring a 5,000 square foot minimum lot size for single-family detached dwellings. As noted above, the upgrading of U.S. Route 50 during the thirties into a modern

highway brought a promise of future prosperity. As reflected in a piece on Livermore included in a special "development edition" of the neighboring Byron Times, it was widely believed that the increased traffic along this thoroughfare would "add to Livermore's growth and development," "opening up territory which will add to its greatness" (Anon., 1930-31: 106).

All of these signs of progress notwithstanding, and despite unceasing promotion efforts, growth throughout the first half of the twentieth century was slow. As late as 1940, only 2,885 inhabitants could be counted in Livermore, while Pleasanton's population was a mere 1,278. During the decades following the arrival of the railroad, Dublin had declined so markedly that its local postmark was eliminated in 1910. On the eve of World War II, the tiny hamlet supported less than 50 residents.

#### The Legacy of Slow Growth

Although change came to the valley at a glacial pace during this early era, its location, pattern of land use, and social character ultimately would be conducive to rapid suburbanization. Situated along a major highway adjacent to the ever-expanding Bay Area, the valley was well-placed for an eventual boom. Nearly all of the flat valley lands were owned by ranchers and farmers who potentially could earn healthy profits from the sale of their holdings to developers. Just as significant for future growth, however,



was the eagerness of the Livermore and Pleasanton business communities for outside investment of any type. What meager fruit had been borne by decades of boosterism had been nurtured by the economic and social needs of the Bay Area. Consequently, longtime valley residents became accustomed to a relative lack of self-determination in economic matters.

Finally, this early period of development had an enduring influence upon the character of the two valley cities. Hot, flat, and hardscrabble, Livermore evolved as a no-frills "cowtown," an unpretentious mercantile center through which travellers passed on their way to somewhere else. In contrast, because of Pleasanton's picture-book Main Street, its location off the beaten path tucked up against a scenic ridge, and its proximity to Phoebe Hearst's Hacienda del Pozo de Verona, some residents of that town developed aspirations for gentility that were never manifest in Livermore. Even decades after the beginning of suburban development, the original differences between the two communities would influence their respective growth patterns.

## PART TWO

### The Era of Rapid Growth

Although World War II resulted in millions of casualties plus billions of dollars in property damage, it also set the stage for the greatest economic boom in U.S. history. Unscathed by warfare, and buoyed by the tremendous industrial might generated through the military effort, the United States assumed its new role as premier capitalist superpower. America established a global military network unrivaled even by that of its principal nemesis, the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the enhanced position of the U.S. abroad was complemented by a prosperous economy at home. Homes, autos, and consumer goods became available and affordable as never before.

This economic expansion featured the initiation of a new phase of city-building. In metropolitan areas across America, numerous suburban housing tracts, shopping centers, and superhighways were constructed; industrial deconcentration accelerated. Homeownership became diffused through much of the population. "Suburbia" was born.

These epoch-making global and domestic developments ultimately transformed the Livermore-Amador Valley. Even as wartime installations were abandoned by the military, the onset of cold war tensions triggered a nuclear arms race

between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Consequently, new facilities were needed for the design and production of weapons. This competition for military superiority would have direct repercussions within the valley. At the same time, the accelerating pace of migration into the Bay Area meant expansion of the San Francisco-Oakland urban complex. Eventually, the valley would be drawn into this widening metropolitan gyre. No longer merely part of the exurban hinterland, the valley by the early 1960s became caught up in the homebuilding fever that infected much of California.

## Chapter IV

### The Suburban Boom

The suburbanization of the Livermore-Amador Valley was conditioned by forces operating at the national, and even the international level. The overall prosperity of the postwar period resulted in part from the victorious war effort itself, plus the continued militarization of the economy. Moreover, citybuilding trends were shaped by a "suburban-industrial complex," composed primarily of banking, automobile, petroleum, real estate and homebuilding interests. Finally suburbanization was abetted politically by a decentralized governmental structure which placed few restrictions upon the conversion of rural land to housing subdivisions and other low-density land uses.

### The Role of War

In terms of enhancing economic recovery, a brief period of war mobilization accomplished what eight years of New Deal experimentation could not. In 1940, the U.S. gross national product was \$100 billion. By 1944, that figure had swelled to \$210 billion. Unemployment, which had remained high despite public works programs and moderate deficit spending, plummeted from 14.2% in 1940 to 4.7% in 1942, finally reaching a low of 1.9% in 1943.

War-related government spending propelled this

recovery. Federal expenditures rose from \$9 billion in 1940 to \$98.6 billion by 1945. Between 1940 and 1944, over \$175 billion in prime defense contracts were issued, including \$17 billion in facilities for the production of war materiel. After the war, these plants, many of which were constructed in suburban locations, were sold to a handful of private corporations for one-quarter or less of their full market value (Kolko 1976: 313).

The war effort put millions of men and women back to work; it also altered forever the geographical distribution of the American population. Thousands of war-related jobs were located in California. The population of the Bay Area swelled by a half-million between 1941 and 1945, as newly-arrived workers took their places at the Kaiser Shipyards in Richmond, the Mare Island Naval Yard near Vallejo, and other facilities. Overall, \$4 billion in war supply contracts were awarded to the Bay Area through 1944 (Scott 1959: 256).

Although war brought full employment, it created problems, as well. Workers earned steady incomes, but with industrial production geared to the military effort, few consumer goods were available for purchase. People were forced by circumstance to build their personal savings. Because such vital commodities as rubber and gasoline were tightly rationed, many workers had to rely upon an overtaxed public transportation network to reach their jobs. For countless individuals, the daily journey to and from work became a nightmare of delays and congestion.

Fearing that military equipment and personnel could not be moved quickly in the event of an enemy attack, Congress in 1941 passed the Defense Highways Act. This bill authorized 75% federal funding for access roads to military installations (Leavitt 1970: 24-25). The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944 called for establishment of a National System of Interstate Highways, not to exceed 40,000 miles. The lasting significance of this legislation would not become apparent until later; this bill provided the legal basis for the elaborate interstate highway system that was initiated in 1956.

There were other problems. A precipitous drop in the construction of new homes contributed to a housing shortage. For the nation as a whole, housing starts fell from 706,000 in 1941 to 141,800 in 1944. The housing shortage was exacerbated by the rapid demobilization that followed the cessation of hostilities. By 1947, somewhere between 2.75 and 4.4 million families were "doubling up" within single housing units, and a half-million more were occupying transient or non-family quarters (Checkoway 1980: 22).

Overall, the war brought drastic changes to the American metropolis, including new industry, a long-range commitment to a highway-centered urban transportation system, and a pent-up demand for housing, backed by millions of dollars in personal savings. The effects of these changes were felt particularly acutely in the San Francisco-Oakland region. In fact, in terms of the transformation in urban morphology that would occur over the following quarter-

century, "The Second World War was," according to James Vance, "in many ways, the 'take off' period for the Bay Area" (1964: 66).

#### Postwar Growth

As the war drew to a close, many politicians, economists, and businessmen feared that recession conditions would return. After all, an economic slump had occurred within a year after the the end of World War I. Although there were four significant recessions between 1946 and 1961, impressive economic expansion characterized the postwar period as a whole. Measured in constant (1972) dollars, the gross national product in 1946 stood at \$477 billion; by 1950 it grew to \$534 billion, and by 1955 that figure reached \$655 billion. A decade later, the GNP topped \$926 billion. Between 1945 and 1965, spendable average weekly earnings grew during every year except 1957-58 (Blumberg 1980: 68).

This remarkable growth was spurred by international conditions favorable to American investment. Because of widespread war devastation in Japan and Western Europe, the U.S. would have little industrial competition within the capitalist world for years to come. In 1947, the U.S. accounted for nearly half of the world's manufactured goods (Wolfe 1981: 14). Moreover, participants at the 1944 United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, had established the American dollar as the

standard currency for all postwar trade and banking. The groundwork had thereby been laid for the establishment of a U.S.-dominated world credit system centered around such institutions as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank group (Block 1977).

Domestically, a new growth coalition maintained the economic momentum generated by the war effort. According to political scientist Alan Wolfe,

The rise of the growth coalition was facilitated--some would say mandated--by the economic transformations taking place in America. The three most important were economic concentration, growing state intervention, and expansion overseas.

(1981: 24)

During the postwar boom, so long as corporate growth continued and output per man-hour increased, workers could expect regular pay raises. Consequently, a political climate developed in which the principal objective of public policy was not the redistribution of wealth, but expansion of the economic "pie." As Wolfe writes:

growth was the agreed-upon goal....Debate would concern means, not ends. Major questions of public policy were simply removed from debate....Growth, in short, presupposed the suppression of fundamental political choice. The purpose of campaigns and elections was to ratify technical decisions about how expeditiously growth was occurring, not to mandate radical departures in policy.

(1981: 30)

Policymakers realized that military spending had propelled the U.S. from the doldrums of the Great Depression. Despite the drastic demobilization that followed the surrender of the Axis powers, since 1945 there



has continued uninterrupted the development of a permanent war-making apparatus, including a stupendous arsenal of nuclear weapons. Defense expenditures between 1946 and 1980 totalled \$2 trillion dollars. In some areas of the country, including much of Southern California and the Santa Clara Valley, military spending became the bread-and-butter constituent of the local economy.

Although the importance of "defense" spending as a foundation for growth should not be underestimated, a second basis for prosperity was suburbanization. According to historian Geoffrey Hodgson:

The driving force behind the postwar boom, in fact, was not so much the military-industrial complex....It was the fusion of demographic trends, government policy and business interests into something like a suburban-industrial complex.

(1976: 51)

Similarly, geographer Peter Muller claims:

There is little doubt that the start of this great suburban boom in the forties and fifties was the key to speedy postwar national economic recovery and reestablishment of 1920s-style prosperity. In fact, many economists believe that without the enormous wave of construction of new suburban homes, highways, and other public facilities after the war, the country would have returned to a depressed economy.

(1981: 52)

This accords fully with Walker's hypothesis that suburbanization functioned as a "solution" to a threat of economic stagnation that seemed very real at the close of World War II.

## The Suburban-Industrial Complex

### Banking

Instrumental to postwar suburbanization was a series of banking reforms instituted during the Great Depression. During the early 1930s, the dream of universal homeownership had suffered a severe setback. From a 1925 peak of 937,000 units, housing starts fell to 93,000 in 1933. Moreover, countless families lost their homes through foreclosures. The Roosevelt administration responded by creating institutions and programs to make home loans a more secure investment for lenders. Presumably, this would channel additional funds into home mortgages, and thus enable more families to purchase homes.

Of the many banking reforms initiated by Roosevelt, the more important for housing were the Savings and Loan Act and the creation of two new agencies: the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the Federal National Mortgage Association (FNMA). The Savings and Loan Act enabled certain banking institutions to pay higher interest to investors, so long as a specified percentage of loans was issued toward the purchase of single-family homes. Created in 1934, FHA guaranteed many home mortgages that private lenders otherwise would not consider attractive risks (a similar Veterans Administration mortgage insurance program was created in 1944). In essence, this guarantee provided security against loss for lenders, but not for the homebuyers themselves. FHA mortgages also made possible

lower interest rates and longer-term mortgage loans than had previously been available, and required smaller down payments.

Between 1935 and 1954, 23% of home purchases were insured by FHA (National Commission on Urban Problems 1968a: 100). This portion has since declined, as cheaper private mortgage insurance has become available. The construction standards established by FHA, however, quickly became the norm followed by builders. Moreover, FHA biases favoring single-family over multiple dwellings and larger over smaller builders became instrumental in encouraging postwar suburban tract-type development (Gelfand 1975).

Finally, in 1938 Congress bolstered the secondary market for unwanted mortgages by creating the Federal National Mortgage Association (FNMA, or "Fannie Mae").

### The Automobile

Motorized movement to, from, and within the new suburbs was dependent upon the automobile, which became, once and for all, the dominant mode of passenger transportation. Auto registrations more than doubled between 1945 and 1956, while ridership on public transit declined (Bello 1958: 33-34).

The federal commitment to an elaborate system of superhighways had been established in 1944; the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, however, finally provided the blueprint for the 41,000 mile interstate highway network. The key innovation within the 1956 bill was the Highway Trust Fund, a source of roadbuilding revenue fed by taxes on gasoline

and lubricants, plus excise taxes on trucks and buses (Davies 1975: 23). The interstate system would consist of both interurban highways and intraurban "beltways" surrounding metropolitan areas. In the East Bay, a portion of U.S. Route 50 was slated to become I-580. Another planned intraurban arterial was I-680, running from Cordelia Junction in Solano County south to San Jose, by way of the San Ramon and Amador Valleys.

The campaign to construct highways was waged not just in Washington, but nation-wide. In California, it was particularly successful. Focusing its lobbying efforts upon the State Senate Transportation Committee headed by pro-highway Senator Randolph Collier (D-Yreka), the "freeway establishment" included special interests ranging from the California State Automobile Association to heavy equipment operators, from the state and local chambers of commerce to the trucking industry (Simmons 1968). In 1959, the 12,000-miles-plus California Freeway and Expressway Plan was revealed; by 1969, "Randy's Ratpack" could claim major responsibility for the 158,000 miles of highways and roads that crisscrossed the state.

The economic multiplier effect from road construction alone was enormous. The triumph of an auto-centered transport system, however, involved more than the pouring of asphalt. As the California example indicates, there evolved an entire complex of interests, including oil, steel, automobiles, tourism, and retail merchandising, the

destinies of which were tied to expanding auto use.

The auto-oil-highways complex was instrumental in facilitating urban deconcentration. As the National Commission on Urban Problems concluded in 1968, "Probably there is no more important single determinant of the timing and location of urban development than highways" (1968a: 231). Indeed, growth followed the new roads into the countryside surrounding metropolitan areas. Since two interstate routes passed directly through the Livermore-Amador Valley, the impact of the highway program upon its ultimate development was destined to be enormous.

### Housing

Although motorized transit was important, the lynchpin of suburbanization was the housing industry itself. The principal postwar response to the wartime housing shortage was a proliferation of suburban subdivisions. The success of the homebuilding industry is indicated by the sheer numbers of homes erected (see Table 2). After only 7.4 million housing units were constructed during the entire decade of the forties, between 1950 and 1959 15 million were built, with over a million completed during 1950 alone. By 1957, William H. Whyte estimated that 3,000 acres of suburban land were bulldozed each day so that new subdivisions could be created (1958: 115).

Responding to a strong American predilection for private homeownership, postwar policymakers promoted the construction of new single-family homes. As the nation

Table 2

Private U.S. Housing Starts, 1950-1983  
(in thousands of units)

1950.....	1908	1967.....	1292
1951.....	1420	1968.....	1508
1952.....	1466	1969.....	1467
1953.....	1402	1970.....	1434
1954.....	1532	1971.....	2052
1955.....	1627	1972.....	2357
1956.....	1325	1973.....	2045
1957.....	1175	1974.....	1338
1958.....	1314	1975.....	1160
1959.....	1495	1976.....	1538
1960.....	1252	1977.....	1987
1961.....	1313	1978.....	2020
1962.....	1463	1979.....	1745
1963.....	1603	1980.....	1292
1964.....	1529	1981.....	1084
1965.....	1473	1982.....	1062
1966.....	1165	1983.....	1703

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1971, 1985).

became increasingly urbanized, what once had been a widespread desire to own a farmstead evolved into a craving for a house on a lot. As President Hoover had declared at a 1931 national housing conference:

Those immortal ballads, "Home Sweet Home," "My Old Kentucky Home," and "The Little Gray Home in the West," were not written about tenements or apartments....They never sing songs about a pile of rent receipts.

(Eichler 1982: vii)

This sentiment favoring homeownership stemmed not only from the venerable appeal of the house-in-the-garden ideal, but from a widespread understanding of the profits that were possible from real estate investments. The already-apparent pecuniary advantages of homeownership had been augmented during the thirties; Congress approved legislation allowing home purchasers to deduct mortgage

interest and property tax payments from their taxable incomes. By the early seventies, this loophole was resulting each year in a loss to the U.S. Treasury of over \$5 billion dollars in potential revenues (Hartman 1975: 108).

The profits from homeownership were hardly restricted to the homebuyers themselves. Just as there was an "automobile lobby," so too was there a powerful constellation of interests dedicated to a "free enterprise" solution to housing problems. As John P. Dean wrote in a book published just prior to the postwar housing boom:

The home ownership movement...is vigorously promoted by a variety of business interests with a stake in having families buy homes. A full roster would include at least the following: realty interests, builders and subdivision developers, construction groups, architects, mortgage lenders, business groups dealing in building materials, household equipment, and home furnishing, public utilities, household magazines, newspapers, and chambers of commerce. These groups encourage the glamorous merchandising of homes and thus afford a fertile field for high-pressure selling methods.

(1945: 19)

The institutional reforms of the New Deal had created a stable financial structure to channel bank funds into private home mortgages. That most homes would be single-family detached and suburban was all but guaranteed by the mortgage insurance guidelines adopted by the Federal Housing Administration (the FHA also encouraged restrictive covenants that excluded blacks and other minority groups).

Suburbanization was further encouraged by Congressional

passage of the Housing Act of 1949. It was Title I of this legislation that gave impetus to so-called "urban renewal" projects, whereby areas of low-cost housing in central cities were razed and then sold at cut-rate prices to private developers. Since urban renewal projects usually involved construction of government facilities, retail stores or office buildings, the program was a de facto endorsement of the "suburban solution" to the housing problem.

Meanwhile, advancements in the homebuilding industry itself facilitated a new, mass-production approach to home construction. In such early postwar suburbs as the "Levittowns" built by Joseph Levitt and his sons in Long Island, New York (1947) and Bucks County, Pennsylvania (1952), hundreds of single-family detached dwellings were designed, built, and sold simultaneously. These homes were priced extremely low (often less than \$11,000), and could be purchased without a down payment by individuals qualifying for G.I. Bill of Rights benefits.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, an example of such an "instant community" was San Lorenzo Village, erected near San Leandro by David D. Bohannon. As Mel Scott describes:

Begun in 1944 as a wartime housing project of 1,500 units, it was expanded toward the end of the decade with an equal number of dwellings on lots measuring 55 by 110 feet. By 1955 it included more than 4,600 houses and had a community center, a shopping center, schools, churches and recreation areas.

(1969: 456)



Most houses within such subdivisions were purchased by first-time homebuyers, usually young couples who began almost immediately to raise families. The new suburbs became known as the "bedrooms" of postwar America. It was this proliferation of new neighborhoods seemingly homogeneous in terms of architectural appearance, class, age-structure, ethnic makeup, and lifestyle that inspired social critics to lampoon the "ticky-tacky" suburbs, and to decry the cultural impoverishment allegedly represented by them (e.g. Keats 1956).

#### Suburbanization of Industry and Retailing

The suburbanization process involved more than the decentralization of metropolitan residential patterns. There was a considerable outward movement of industry, as well. The construction of new industrial facilities in suburban or exurban locations had commenced by the turn of the century (Ashton 1978; Taylor 1915). This trend was accelerated during the World War II. During the postwar era, the lure of inexpensive land, along with easy trucking access via a new network of highways, encouraged the further suburbanization of industry. Also important was the belief by some businessmen that labor relations would be more congenial in suburban locations (e.g. Commonwealth Club of California 1948).

Because the Bay Area was not as heavily industrialized as many eastern and midwestern metropolitan centers, industrial dispersion was not as extensive. Still, there

was some expansion of a sizable bayside complex in northern Contra Costa County, which already included petrochemical refining and other heavy industries. Furthermore, IBM and FMC Corporations established major operations in the San Jose area, and the Santa Clara Valley became a center for aerospace and electronics research and manufacturing. Also noteworthy was the transfer by Ford of its auto assembly plant from Richmond to Milpitas in 1955.

In Alameda County, industrial deconcentration was abetted by a conscious policy formulated by local businessmen and bankers. In 1935, the Oakland Chamber of Commerce had adopted a thirty-year strategic plan, whereby new industrial development would be directed toward the southern Alameda County suburbs--now considered part of the "Metropolitan Oakland Area" (Hayes 1972). Consequently, after the war there was a significant expansion of the Oakland industrial complex into Hayward and San Leandro. Another example of this policy coming to fruition was the decision by General Motors to move its Chevrolet assembly plant from Oakland to Fremont in 1960. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the expansion of the University of California Radiation Laboratory into the Livermore Valley could be considered an unusual but real part of this trend toward industrial deconcentration.

As urban decentralization proceeded, retailing patterns altered, as well. Suburban shopping centers proliferated. During the fifties, such centers tended to be small, dominated in many cases by moderate-order convenience stores

(Muller 1981: 122). During the sixties, however, large shopping malls developed, often at the junctions of major highways. In some cases such malls ultimately became major social gathering places, and even centers for community public life.

The postwar metropolis was complex; to describe it even during the fifties in terms of a dichotomy between "inner city" and "suburb" was to oversimplify. Indeed, as Vance (1964: 76) points out, the commuting patterns that quickly evolved within the Bay Area included not just the suburban-to-downtown journey-to-work, but a complex pattern of cross-commuting, whereby more workers moved between "non-central areas" than into and out of the old core cities. Vance has suggested in fact that the Bay Area became composed of a number of distinctive "urban realms," each characterized by distinctive topography, commute patterns, shopping facilities, and in some cases, cultural identity.

#### The Structure of Suburban Development

After 1945, suburban development was propelled by a strong economy, a revamped banking system, a powerful auto-oil-highway lobby, pent-up demand for housing, and the emergence of mass production techniques within the homebuilding industry.

Moreover, support was widespread for the spatial dispersion of both metropolitan populations and economic activities. Urban experts such as Lewis Mumford (1938) and

Clarence Stein (1951) called for the creation of new towns, settlements on the urban periphery that would be established within permanent greenbelts. Such suburban satellites ostensibly would relieve metropolitan congestion and promote a local sense of "community." Some businessmen, on the other hand, pushed for decentralization as part of a dubious strategy to diminish the threat of nuclear annihilation in case of war with the Soviet Union (Richert 1948).

Essential to the creation of the now-familiar low-density, "sprawling" form of urban growth, however, was the diffuse combination of private and public controls which has characterized the American land conversion system. Whereas European countries typically have maintained centralized governmental systems, the U.S. Constitution placed strict limitations upon the capacity of the federal administration to regulate local affairs. According to Article X of the Constitution, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States, respectively, or to the people."

As Ann Markusen has noted, "The American federal system is unique among capitalist nations, a trait which extends especially to the form and functions of local government" (1976: 51). Although the tradition of granting "home rule" to municipalities through charters of incorporation dates back in English law to the time of the Norman conquests, it has been within the U.S. that this separation of powers in a spatial sense has reached its fullest expression. Under

the American system, state governments have granted important "police powers" not just to cities, but also to counties and other local administrative units. In California, these powers are discussed in Article XI, Section II of the state constitution:

any county, city, town, or township may make and enforce within its limits all such local police, sanitary and other regulations as are not in conflict with general laws.

Consequently, at the subregional level, power is not exercised by a single, multi-purpose government, but is divided among numerous local agencies. This dispersion of power has offered some advantages. It has enabled Americans to feel, for example, that they maintain a strong degree of local control in the conduct of the day-to-day affairs of government. Robert Wood (1958) claimed in fact that the opportunity to participate in local government has lured some former inner city residents to the suburbs.

It should be noted that a fragmented pattern of local governance did not become clearly established until the latter part of the nineteenth century. As post-Civil War industrialization and mass immigration fueled the rapid growth of American cities, upper and upper-middle class families elected increasingly to retreat to suburban areas, made accessible by streetcar or train. For a time, new suburban communities were forced to annex to the central cities in order to receive services. Between 1870 and 1900, huge municipal annexations were carried out in such cities as Philadelphia and New York (Jackson 1973). Reflecting the

class antagonisms developing within American society, however, suburban residents preferred not to be controlled by downtown "machine" politicians, nor to shoulder the often-sizable municipal tax burden imposed by city governments (Markusen 1976).

Consequently, as early as the 1870s, some state governments passed legislation facilitating the establishment of discrete suburban communities. Laws were passed enabling independent utilities to serve outlying areas; this diminished suburban dependency upon the central city. An early example of a suburban community that incorporated separately was Brookline, Massachusetts, in 1873 (Warner 1970).

During the early twentieth century, many states passed laws or constitutional amendments making suburban charters of incorporation easier to obtain. By the 1920s, the era of central city expansion had ended in most metropolitan areas; the current pattern of numerous, separate suburban cities ringing the inner city was firmly established.

The resulting multiplicity of governments has produced a certain rivalry between suburban places regarding growth and amenities. To succeed in this competition, communities have desired not only to grow, but to attract the "right" kind of growth--the type that will "improve" the community as a whole. Cities have strived to attract so-called "clean" industry and other "ratables," that is, developments that pay high levels of property taxes relative to their cost in terms of services. Also, suburbanites typically

have favored low-density development, not only because it allegedly is more pleasing aesthetically, but because the purchasers of larger lots are thought to comprise a class of people superior to those who live in apartments (Perin 1977). Seymour Adler has termed the resulting institutional practices "urban mercantilism," that is, "the attempt to defend and advance the economic and governmental interests of particular places" (1980: 323).

Consequently, postwar suburbanization can by no means be considered an unqualified success story. The diffuse allocation of power over land use has made strict control of development difficult. Local governments have in fact done little to discourage suburban "sprawl." Elected officials typically have been adamantly pro-development. A major reason for this is revealed by Marion Clawson:

Most suburban counties have found it very difficult to enlist able, dedicated talent to attack their problems of growth and land use planning, except those people directly financially interested in the matter--primarily present landowners, real estate dealers, and developers.

(1971: 71)

Even where construction projects are unobjectionable individually, there has been little regard for the emergent effect of numerous developments upon the landscape. According to Elaine Moss, this is because "typically, local governments have been parochial in their interests, with little concern for the regional repercussions of their actions" (1977: 317). A suburban area is transformed one small piece at a time, and because there is often a

significant time lag between initial approval and final completion of subdivisions, the negative net impact upon the landscape may not be realized by local citizens until it is too late.

### The Planning Panacea

Local police powers over land development have consisted mainly of zoning, subdivision controls, eminent domain, and the right to annex territory. Additionally, since passage of the Standard City Planning Enabling Act in 1927, states have permitted or even required local governments to prepare a general plan as a guide to development. Planning has been facilitated by such legislation as the 1954 Housing Act, section 701 of which calls for the issuance of federal grant money to finance planning efforts by local governments applying for urban renewal programs.

During the early postwar era, it was widely believed that "good planning" would enable cities and counties to grow while maintaining an orderly, attractive environment. Local planning, however, has not lived up to these expectations. Planning has entailed largely the drafting of a planning map illustrating the desired pattern of physical separation of land uses. Prior to the the 1970s, the text of the typical "general plan" consisted mainly of a series of statements revealing community goals which arguably had no real binding authority over land-use decision-making.

Implementation of the land-use pattern indicated by the



planning map has depended upon local zoning ordinances. Zoning has its origins in English law regarding "nuisance" (Heyman 1968); in the U.S., zoning itself was first established to restrict land uses deemed undesirable by the well-to-do (Toll 1969). City zoning laws were legally validated by a famous 1926 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court (Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co., 272 U.S. 365). Within a few years of that decision, most municipalities and many counties had established zoning ordinances and maps, usually in accordance with the Standard Zoning Enabling Act drafted by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

As noted by Babcock (1966), Heyman (1972) and others, however, a major flaw of zoning is the ease with which lands can be redesignated from one category to another through rezoning or the granting of variances. On the other hand, the enforcement of strict and inflexible zoning is conducive to the creation of a dull, monotonous landscape of segregated single uses. Finally, the legacy of zoning as an exclusionary tool for the wealthy is still very much alive: zoning provisions establishing very large minimum lot sizes have been used in upper-class communities to prevent the construction of any lower-income housing (Schoenbrod 1969; Dyke 1971).

Subdivision regulations establish standards that must be met before land can be platted into individual lots. These relate to the size and location of streets, water and sewer lines, and in some cases the provision of sites for public facilities such as parks and schools. Largely in

response to fraudulent real estate practices that victimized consumers during a land boom during the 1920s, the California legislature passed a series of regulations controlling subdivision practices. The most important of these was the Subdivision Map Act. Even today, the subdivision regulations adopted by most communities are drawn directly from the current state guidelines.

Until the 1960s, a city or special district agency was able to annex new territory simply through a favorable vote of the owners of a majority of the assessed valuation of the affected land. Strip annexations were permitted, whereby a finger of land only 200 feet wide might connect the older portions of a city to a new chunk of territory. Communities with strongly pro-development elected officials pursued aggressive annexation policies, with unfortunate results.

A case study cited by Robert Fellmeth (1973) traces the evolution of the confusing boundaries of San Jose, California. Single-minded annexations of all available lands during the fifties and sixties produced a swiss-cheese-like pattern of incorporated city area. San Jose did nothing to prevent so-called "leapfrog" development, whereby a developer would shun the lands adjacent to the already-developed urban area, acquiring instead cheaper lands further away. A sympathetic city administration would then provide the water and sewer lines necessary to service the quasi-isolated areas, with the taxpayers as a whole paying the extra expense.

During the first quarter-century of the postwar era, then, local government was oriented toward accommodating, not controlling growth. At best, regulation served as a quality control mechanism whereby a city or county could ensure that new subdivisions were properly laid out in terms of location, form, and construction quality. The actual design both of the new tracts and of the homes within them were controlled by the homebuilders, along with the architects and engineers with whom they worked.

### The Intergovernmental Maze

Procedural confusion and interjurisdictional conflict frequently have plagued suburban areas, because too many government agencies and officials have become involved in the growth process itself. In its 1968 study of U.S. urban problems, the The National Commission on Urban Problems reported that there were some 76,000 elected officials in the nation's 228 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

In California, political fragmentation has been particularly acute. Since the gold rush era, when numerous single-purpose water agencies were established in the Mother Lode area, the special district has held a prominent place in the state's governmental pattern. The proliferation of such state-chartered agencies has been rapid. Special districts have assumed authority over schools, parks, solid waste disposal, flood control, sewage treatment, libraries, and even mosquito abatement.

In 1951, California passed legislation permitting a

single special district administration to perform multiple functions. As will be shown in the case of the Dublin-San Ramon area, this made it possible for developers to set up what is called a community services district, which can serve as a quasi-municipal agency within an urbanized, yet unincorporated area.

The propensity for local government to promote growth was abetted by the expansionary interests of public agencies concerned with suburban development. The motives behind this expansionism were varied. They included, for example, the desire for a broader tax base, and the belief that there were economies of scale to be gained from providing services over a larger area (Walker and Williams 1982). Just as important, however, were the career interests of professional administrators. As with their counterparts in the corporate sector, growth was considered a yardstick of success. To preside successfully over a public agency during a period of rapid growth was a possible ticket to a better job elsewhere.

For elected officials, the expansionary impulse also reflected hometown chauvinism. Sometimes, expansionism was a reactive phenomenon. A city or special district felt compelled to claim territory because it was coveted by a neighboring agency. To remain passive while adjacent lands were gobbled up by other jurisdictions did not sit well with local voters.

Finally, within a system in which the principal actors

were homebuilders, realtors, attorneys, and others directly involved in land development, there was tremendous pressure for local officials to "play ball"--that is, to orient public policy toward accommodation of new construction proposals.

Because power over land use has been divided among so many different private actors and local jurisdictions, in some cases the appearance of the emergent metropolitan landscape would suggest that no planning has been practiced at all. After studying suburbanization in Nassau and Suffolk Counties on Long Island in New York, sociologist Mark Gottdeiner (1977) labelled the outcome of this peculiar system "planned sprawl." In the following chapters, the evolution of planned sprawl in the Livermore-Amador Valley will be described.

## Chapter V

### The Atomic Valley

The westward stampede that began during the war did not abate after 1945. In anticipation, those who would profit from continued in-migration waxed enthusiastic. In the 1945 Yearbook of the Oakland Tribune, Berkeley Realty Board President Mark G. Reid declared:

Measure California's development by any yardstick--industrial growth, population increase, increase in number of family units--and you'll conclude that the nation's current theme song is: "California Here We Come!"

(67)

It quickly became apparent that growth during the postwar era would occur mainly at the urban periphery. Overall, between 1940 and 1950 the Bay Area population grew by 55% to nearly 2.7 million. Whereas San Francisco and Oakland residents comprised 54% of the nine-county metropolitan area in 1940, a decade later that portion had fallen to 43%.

Despite this trend, the Livermore-Amador Valley remained outside the main orbit of the postwar boom in the suburban East Bay. Throughout the fifties, Pleasanton remained a small agricultural community. Early in the decade, however, the legacy of one war and the spectre of another brought an infusion of growth to Livermore. In some respects, the arrival of the Radiation Laboratory provided the prosperity so long sought by Livermore boosters.

However, the scientists, engineers, and other newcomers associated with the facility differed considerably in experience and outlook from the long-time residents. Consequently, Livermore's arrival into the "modern" world produced a split within the community that would shape its politics for years to come.

### Bay Area Growth

By the late 1950s, the California population was increasing by over a half-million per year. The annual growth rate was from two to three times that of the nation as a whole. As a result, the proportion of U.S. citizens residing in the Golden State increased from 6.9% in 1950 to 8.7% in 1960 (California Department of Finance 1982: 14).

Within a state experiencing heavy in-migration, Alameda County grew particularly rapidly--a fact that was viewed through rose-colored glasses by county officials. In 1957, a brochure issued by the planning department asked rhetorically:

"WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF ALAMEDA COUNTY?" The answer was emphatic:

Alameda County's future is big! Our population is now over 800,000, the second largest of any county's in California. It is expected to reach 1,000,000 in about ten years, and will be double its present size in about 40 years...

Our cities, now 12 in number, will contain more and more people. Cities will continue to expand into presently underdeveloped hill lands, lands now used for agriculture, and filled lands along the bay. Several new cities may be formed.

(Alameda County Planning Dept. 1957)

Table 3

## Population Growth in Selected Bay Area Cities, 1940-1960

County/ City	Census Year		
	1940	1950	1960
<b>San Francisco</b>			
San Francisco	634,536	775,357	740,316
<b>Alameda</b>			
		*	
Fremont	n.d.	10,040	43,790
Hayward	6,736	14,272	72,700
Livermore	2,885	4,364	16,058
Oakland	302,163	384,575	367,548
Pleasanton	1,278	2,244	4,203
San Leandro	14,601	27,542	65,962
<b>Contra Costa</b>			
Concord	1,373	6,953	36,000
Richmond	23,642	99,545	71,854
Pleasant Hill	n.d.	5,686	23,844
Walnut Creek	1,578	2,420	9,903

Source: Androit (1983).

\*

unincorporated (data from Harold F. Wise Associates, 1956).  
n.d.-- No data.

As elsewhere in the nation, development was most rapid at the suburban fringe. In Alameda County, this included Hayward, San Leandro and unincorporated Castro Valley. In nearby Contra Costa County, fast-growing communities included Concord and Pleasant Hill. The dramatic development of Hayward and neighboring San Leandro between 1946 and 1952 is indicated not only by their respective annexations of 1,732 and 1,098 acres of new territory, but



by the doubling of their populations between 1940 and 1950, followed by even greater increases over the subsequent decade (California Legislature 1951: 191; also see Table 3).

#### Whither the Livermore-Amador Valley?

Although a 1949 Oakland Chamber of Commerce publicity booklet mentioned Livermore as a possible location for industry (Livermore Herald, July 15, 1949), most postwar discussions of the valley still focussed upon its agricultural prowess and healthful environment. At best, according to one account, Livermore and Pleasanton were destined to play a "companion role" to Hayward, which clearly was the center of southern Alameda County (Hope 1945: 128).

One possible source of economic vitality for the valley was the expanding state highway system. By 1946, the Division of Highways already was studying the widening of U.S. Route 50 between Castro Valley and Greenville (near Altamont Pass). To justify this expansion, the department pointed to the benefits of a larger thoroughfare. Not only was Route 50 a vital corridor for military traffic and agricultural deliveries from the San Joaquin Valley, but it also provided an important avenue for "pleasure driving" (California Division of Highways 1946: 9). Moreover, an improved highway would ostensibly ameliorate driving fatigue, reduce accidents, and eliminate congestion.

Its importance as an urban arterial, however, was downplayed. In its summary, the report declared:

The area contiguous to the project with the exception of Castro Valley, has not indicated any rapid development in the past, nor is any expected in the near future. (emphasis added)

For a while longer, at least, Livermore and Pleasanton were expected to remain small and exurban.

The most pressing issue confronting valley communities during the postwar years was not growth, in fact, but its opposite. The military was abandoning some wartime facilities. By 1946, the 890-acre Livermore Naval Air Training Station was idle. Over the next several years it was suggested that the site (1) be turned over to the Livermore school system; (2) be given to the University of California for an engineering college; (3) be converted to a correctional institute for boys; and (4) become the home of the new United States Air Force Academy. In 1947, the "brig" portion of Navy's Camp Shoemaker was leased to Alameda County for use as a civilian prison farm. The 170 "temporary" housing units that comprised Komandorski Village ultimately were given to the Pleasanton Housing Authority (established in 1943) for use as low-cost public housing. Other small military housing units turned over to local authorities included Villa Gulf in Livermore and Kottinger Village in Pleasanton.

Camp Parks, however, was not abandoned. In August 1951, as the U.S. military remobilized following the outbreak of the Korean war, jurisdiction over the facility was transferred from the Navy to the newly-formed Air Force. By 1954, this fledgling branch of the armed forces

had converted the base into a full-scale indoctrination center. As of 1956, Parks Air Force Base had 795 full-time employees and trained up to 10,000 men simultaneously (San Francisco Chronicle, July 12, 1956: 5).

Valley boosters hoped that the base would continue to expand, perhaps ultimately to employ 7,000 persons, with facilities to train up to 30,000 recruits. In July 1958, however, Parks was declared "excess" property by the Air Force, and a timetable was established by which the facility would be closed permanently.

During the years that followed, there were rumors that the Atomic Energy Commission might acquire the land to construct a gigantic accelerator device called a bevatron; the base was also mentioned as the possible location for a new state college campus (Pleasanton Times, March 5, 1958). By mid-1958, however, there were indications from Washington that the Army would occupy the Parks site.

Surprisingly perhaps, this news was greeted with gloom in neighboring communities. Apparently, Contra Costa County Congressman John F. Baldwin (R-Martinez) had tried for some time to convince the Army to abandon its 1,800-acre Camp Stoneman site near Pittsburg (about 20 miles north of Pleasanton), in order to free the land for private development. The base was manned by only a skeleton staff, and consequently injected little economic vitality to the area. The Livermore-Amador Valley business community was concerned that transferring this underutilized facility to

the potentially productive land parcel along Highway 50 would retard the development of the valley as a whole (Pleasanton Times, August 27, 1958).

Such local reservations notwithstanding, in July 1959 the Sixth U.S. Army took over the base; to this day, the Army has retained control over the facility. Although since 1964 Camp Parks has primarily served as a reserve unit training facility, it has also included a satellite tracking station. Additionally, the base was used for a time by the Defense Civil Preparedness Agency to conduct radiation-related experiments, including fallout shelter testing. Lingering radiation from these tests has rendered some parts of the base unusable even today.

To complete the story of Camp Parks, between April 1965 and June 1969 a portion of the base functioned as a Job Corps training center operated by Litton Industries. In 1971, 445 acres of the installation were turned over to the East Bay Regional Parks District as a "land bank." This area remained within the jurisdiction of EBRPD until 1981, when the Army reclaimed the land.

#### Livermore Laboratory

Far from remaining a potential "white elephant" (Oakland Tribune, November 13, 1947: C-7), the Naval Air Station east of Livermore proved crucial to the subsequent development of the valley. This was largely a consequence of geopolitical conflicts and high-level decisions transpiring thousands of miles away.

After the Soviet Union exploded its first nuclear device in 1949, President Truman announced on January 31, 1950 that the United States would proceed with the development of thermonuclear weapons. In order to achieve this breakthrough in destructive technology, Nobel laureate Ernest O. Lawrence and his staff at the University of California Radiation Laboratory in Berkeley determined that a device called a Materials Testing Accelerator was needed. The purpose of this large and formidable apparatus would be to demonstrate the feasibility of producing fissionable materials such as tritium and plutonium through the bombardment of lithium and uranium (respectively) with high-energy neutrons.

Since sizable tracts of open land were by this time scarce in the Berkeley area, Lawrence and his colleagues examined possible sites in Concord, Antioch, and Suisun, all of which proved too small. Finally, at the suggestion of Alameda County Supervisor Thomas Caldecott, Lawrence turned his attention to the Livermore Naval Air Station facility (Livermore Laboratory Newsline, September 1972: 4).

The Livermore Materials Testing Accelerator project was administered by the Atomic Energy Commission through its offices in Chicago. By June 1950, work on the device had commenced, under the direction of the California Research and Development Corporation, a subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company of California. The following month, ground was broken toward construction of the first building designed

specifically for use by the laboratory (Livermore News, July 20, 1950).

Meanwhile, in 1951 physicist Edward Teller proposed that a new major national weapons laboratory be established to supplement (and compete with) the existing facility in Los Alamos, New Mexico. In February 1952, Teller and Lawrence agreed that the Livermore site currently occupied by CRDC was appropriate, and that the U.C. Radiation Laboratory should operate the facility (Liberatore 1982: 3). In July 1952, the Livermore branch of the Radiation Laboratory was activated, manned by an eight-member staff.\*

Because sizable uranium deposits were discovered in the American southwest, the accelerator (known as "Mark I") proved unnecessary for the production of fissionable materials. Consequently, the device was dismantled beginning in December 1953, and the contract with California Research and Development lapsed in June 1954. Nevertheless, the development of the Livermore Laboratory as a weapons research facility was underway.

When Mayor H. W. Anderson of Livermore toasted with a bottle of bourbon the agreement to accept the laboratory into the community, he was informed that the facility would likely never employ more than 500-1,000 people. This prognostication proved far from accurate. Although LRL had a staff of only 75 when it opened officially on September 2,

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\*The facility was renamed the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in 1958, after the death of E. O. Lawrence. It was changed again in 1980 to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

Table 4  
Employment Levels  
Livermore Laboratory, 1952-1985

Year	Number of Employees		
1952 . . . . .	75	1968 . . . . .	5,898
1954 . . . . .	1,548	1970 . . . . .	5,568
1956 . . . . .	2,082	1972 . . . . .	5,538
1958 . . . . .	3,026	1974 . . . . .	5,445
1960 . . . . .	4,234	1976 . . . . .	6,025
1962 . . . . .	4,716	1978 . . . . .	7,035
1964 . . . . .	5,522	1980 . . . . .	7,313
1966 . . . . .	5,725	1983 . . . . .	7,650
		1985 . . . . .	8,100

Data include part-time workers, plus employees at Site 300 near Tracy, and the Las Vegas Nuclear Test Site.

Source: LLNL Office of Community Relations

1952, by March 1958 the number had swelled to 3,000, and by 1962 the payroll included over 4,700 individuals (Table 4).

The impact of the nuclear weapons industry upon the community was increased in 1956 when Sandia Laboratories, operated for the United States Government on a non-profit basis by Western Electric in Albuquerque, New Mexico, opened a branch of its ordnance facility directly across East Avenue from the Livermore Radiation Laboratory. By 1957, Sandia employed over 150 full-time workers, and this number ultimately exceeded 1,400.

Partly because of the proximity of the Radiation Laboratory, but also because the Hetch-Hetchy pipeline was close by to provide high-quality cooling water for experimental nuclear reactors, in 1956 General Electric

built its own nuclear research facility in the Vallecitos Valley, south of Pleasanton. To herald the rosy dawn of the commercial atomic age, G.E. held an "Open House" on May 25, 1957, at which free soft drinks were served and the film, "A is for Atom" was shown to all interested individuals. The first 50 megawatt reactor at Vallecitos was activated in 1958.

#### Livermore: Cold War Boomtown

As indicated by Figure 9, Livermore during the mid-fifties was still a small town. Like so many places struck by a sudden burst of growth, however, it was almost overwhelmed by newcomers and the problems of accommodating them.

As of 1956, a reported 49.7% of Radiation Laboratory employees resided in Livermore. The fact that many people understandably wished to live near their workplace contributed to a tremendous demand for housing. Both the construction force at work on new laboratory facilities and the still-sizable Parks Air Force Base population placed further pressures upon the already-overburdened local housing stock. Periodically during the early fifties, federally-administered rent controls were enforced.

As the decade proceeded, the housing shortage eased. The post-Korean war economic boom that buoyed the construction industry nationwide affected Livermore as





Figure 9.  
Aerial Photo of Livermore taken in 1954. Pleasanton can be seen in the upper left (southwest) corner; U.S. Route 50 bisects the picture from the top center to the lower right-hand side (Pacific Aerial Surveys).

well. In 1954 and 1955 alone, 670 new single-family homes were constructed. Most were part of either a large development along East Avenue undertaken by Livermore builder Roy Jensen, or the Valley View tract constructed by Jack Stifle on the west side of town along Olivina Avenue. Also built during these years were the first homes erected by Iranian-born Masud Mehran. Mehran's Sunset Development Company ultimately would become the leading homebuilder in Livermore.

The presence of the rapidly-growing "atomic industry" meant that Livermore would continue to be the economic and demographic center of the valley. Anticipating a boom, Alameda County planning officials began in 1953 to prepare a zoning ordinance covering the unincorporated portions of Murray Township surrounding the city.

Completed in 1954, this planning process confirmed that an urbanized, industrialized future was expected for the area. According to the rather modest projections presented by County Planning Director John Jay Thomas, over a 25-30 year period Livermore was expected to attract a population of 35,000. Acknowledging the failure of communities such as Hayward to plan adequately for postwar development, Thomas declared that Livermore presented "an unexcelled opportunity to do the right thing in the first place" (Livermore News, October 29, 1953).

A bright future for Livermore was also foreseen by G. W. Koch, manager of the Alameda County New Industries Committee. Koch declared that industry would surely come to

the valley, once problems of zoning, flood control, and water supply were resolved (Livermore Herald, November 5, 1954).

Such optimism was supported subsequently by a panel of business leaders brought together in Berkeley in January 1957 by the Urban Land Institute to consider the industrial prospects for Alameda County. During the meeting, George W. Cox, Assistant to the President of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad System declared that "The Panel was particularly impressed with the valley in which Pleasanton and Livermore are located. It is an attractive valley, and is certainly suitable for industry" (ULI 1957: 34). "A cooperative approach" was necessary, however, in order to handle the problems of industrial development:

We would suggest the formation of a single district to cover the entire valley, rather than individual action by Pleasanton and Livermore singly, because any action of one of those communities is going to affect the other.

By 1956, optimism was already building among local merchants. Always a booster, editor Maitland Henry of the Herald exuded excitement over the community's prospects. In the January 27, 1956 issue, Henry declared that "Livermore Valley is destined for a tremendous future." He went on to explain:

Livermore has the great advantage of advance knowledge that the growth is coming. Many other cities have suffered greatly because they were uninformed.

Henry warned, however, of a potential problem:

There is one place where Livermore has been caught short--there is not nearly enough land within or near the city limits zoned for all of the industry needed to pay the greatly increased costs that go with increases in population and services.

He concluded that Livermore "must make a bold move," that is, immediate annexation of all possible industrial land between the Pleasanton Township line (around a half-mile east of the northernmost gravel quarries shown in Figure 2) and Greenville. Several large annexations were in fact undertaken soon thereafter by the city council.

To complement this more aggressive annexation policy, municipal officials authorized the development of the city's first general plan. In April 1956, preliminary work on such a document commenced; in July, the Palo Alto firm of Harold Wise and Associates (later renamed Pacific Research and Planning) was hired to assist the city in this effort.

Characteristically, those who advocated rapid development took comfort in believing that good planning would allow Livermore to maintain its traditional character, a belief encouraged by planning professionals. At a September 1956 public relations dinner at the Livermore Business and Professional Women's Club, consultant Harold Wise declared that by planting trees, and by regulating street widths and lot sizes, Livermore could grow and yet remain "like a small town" (Livermore Herald, September 28, 1956: 14).

Although the first drafts of the general plan were circulated as early as 1957, it was not until May 1959 that the plan was adopted by the city council. In the meantime,

local homebuilders and realtors convinced the planning commission and council that modestly-priced homes would be most marketable in Livermore. Consequently, a larger portion of the general plan map should be designated "low-density" (4 homes per acre), with a smaller area devoted to "acreage" lots (2 homes per acre). Because of these changes, the 1980 population projection was increased from 60,000 to 70,000.

The general plan featured an anticipated municipal airport and a series of thoroughfares that would encircle the city. The key to the city's future, however, was the huge industrial area (totalling over 1,500 acres) located east of town.

### Growing Pains

Between 1950 and 1957, the population of Livermore tripled, from 4,364 to 12,595. Since far more inhabitants were added during this seven-year period than ever had lived in the town previously, it is not surprising that there developed problems of inadequate infrastructure, as well as some social tensions. Insufficient sewage treatment capacity, the need for a reliable long-term water supply, and the inevitable clash between oldtimers and newcomers were the most acute problems confronting Livermore during the fifties.

### Wastewater Treatment

Financed largely by the federal government, Livermore's ancient sewage treatment plant had been given a

\$100,000 overhaul in 1952. Subsequently, in November 1954, voters approved two bond issues totalling \$500,000, which financed the upgrading of sewage trunk and interceptor lines, enlargement of the old treatment plant, and improvement of the storm drainage system.

By 1956, however, the treatment plant capacity had been reached. The situation became sufficiently critical that the Federal Housing Administration refused as of February 1956 to guarantee financing for any new homes until the problem was resolved (Livermore Herald, February 17, 1956).

Clearly, the shortage of sewage treatment capacity had become an impediment to continued growth. Consequently, a crucial election was scheduled for April 10, 1956. On that date, a \$1 million bond issue to finance construction of an entirely new wastewater reclamation plant would be voted upon by Livermore citizens.

The Herald campaigned vigorously for passage of the growth-facilitating bond issue. Municipal officials also lobbied for approval. City Attorney R. M. Callaghan stated his support in highly dramatic terms:

Passage of this sewer plant bond is a 'must' if Livermore is going to continue growing....If we don't pass it we will pull an iron curtain down around ourselves right now.

(Livermore Herald, February 10, 1956)

One councilman even proposed that the city hold a "Sewer Plant Day," during which citizens would be escorted through the overburdened treatment facility and thereby be convinced of the need for a new plant (Livermore Herald,

February 24, 1956).

The people of Livermore demonstrated their willingness to spend tax money for community improvement by passing a high school bond issue on March 27, 1956. However, on April 10, voters failed to support the sewer bonds by the necessary two-thirds majority. Although the vote tally was 1,122-819 in favor of the bonds, the precinct that included the heart of "old" Livermore voted 360-374 against the proposal. This was less the result of principled opposition to growth than the belief by some longtime citizens that the project was unnecessarily expensive. Moreover, there were rumors that a local developer held an option on the proposed sewage plant site, and consequently stood to earn a windfall profit.

The city council rebounded quickly from this defeat; a new election was scheduled for the following year, as soon as was legally possible. Also, the Brown and Caldwell consulting firm was hired to undertake a new sewage study. Meanwhile, in May the city enlisted a 51-member citizen committee, chaired by veterinarian John B. Shirley to assess the sewer situation (Livermore Herald, May 11, 1956). After an energetic civic campaign waged by the city government, downtown business, and the local newspapers, the sewer bonds (this time valued at \$1.3 million) were finally passed on September 24, 1957. By June 1959, the first stage of the new wastewater treatment facility was completed, with a capacity of 2.5 million gallons per day (dry weather flow).

Meanwhile, chamber of commerce officials recommended

construction of a major sewer trunk line to serve the newly-annexed industrial areas. In devising this strategy, city merchants proposed to emulate nearby San Leandro's postwar success in wooing industry (Livermore Herald, October 11, 1957).

#### Water

Securing a reliable, long-term water supply for the valley was a more complex matter. During the 1930s, both Livermore and Pleasanton had rejected the opportunity to contract for water delivered through the Hetch-Hetchy aqueduct. By the early fifties, however, excessive pumping--this time by local users--once again was depleting the valley groundwater. Because significant growth was projected for the area, it was apparent that the threat of a depleted or degraded water supply could not be remedied at the local level.

Consequently, valley landholders and public officials such as Alameda County Supervisor Chester F. Stanley became interested in Sacramento discussions regarding a "California Water Plan." The major goal of this scheme was to transport Northern California water to agricultural areas in the Tulare Valley, and to metropolitan areas south of the Tehachapi Mountains. However, the "State-wide Water Resources Investigation" initiated in 1947 also generated suggestions that Feather River water be delivered to any of several possible reservoir sites in the hills surrounding the valley (including Doolan Canyon, Arroyo Mocho, and



Arroyo del Valle). Reflecting the undeveloped state of the valley in the early fifties, an early mention of the subject in the News emphasized the value of the water for agriculture far more than for urban use:

Such a pipeline, it is believed, might make the Livermore Valley the bread basket for the Bay Area.

(Livermore News, November 15, 1951: 8).

For the valley to partake of this potential water source, a legally-authorized public agency would have to contract with the state. A logical candidate was the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, created by the state legislature in October 1949. Under the terms of the agency's charter, general administrative and planning costs were financed on a county-wide basis, but taxes for public works could be levied only in those "zones" in which voters had authorized activation of the district.

In 1953, it was proposed that a new Zone 5 be created, encompassing Washington, Pleasanton and Murray Townships. Opposition was widespread in the valley, however, particularly among farmers. It was felt that under the proposed system, flood control benefits would accrue disproportionately to those west of the hills, whereas taxes would fall heavily upon valley residents. In the special election held on January 12, 1954, valley voters soundly rejected the proposal by a four-to-one vote.

In January 1955, there emerged a new proposal to create a zone within the ACFC & WCD that would include the valley

only. Key provisions included local control through a seven-member board elected for four-year terms (this differed from the other zones, which were governed directly by the board of supervisors), and strict limits upon the agency's taxing and spending powers. In another special election held June 18, 1957, the new Zone 7 was approved by a 1,941-328 vote (Livermore Herald, June 21, 1957). Zone 7 officially was established on July 7.

1960 proved a pivotal year for valley water development. On November 8, California voters narrowly approved Proposition One, authorizing the issuance of bonds for the construction of the State Water Project. In June of that same year, valley voters approved Zone 7's Project One, by a vote of 3,775-806. This involved the sale of general obligation bonds (totalling \$5,764,000) to finance both flood control and water supply activities. The bonds would be repaid through an ad valorem property tax.

On November 20, 1961, Zone 7 became a wholesaling agency for State Project water scheduled to be delivered through the new South Bay Aqueduct in 1962. Contracted water deliveries would begin slowly, with but a few thousand acre-feet per year. Maximum entitlements available to Zone 7, however, were quite sizable and would increase over time. According to the initial agreement with the state, entitlements would reach a peak of 40,000 acre-feet per year by 1997.

During its initial decade, the governing board of directors for Zone 7 was controlled by large valley

landholders. Five of the original seven boardmembers were ranchers or farmers (the others included a realtor and a mortician). The agency, in fact, represented an ideal means for large landowners to pursue both immediate and long-term objectives. In the short term, "the Zone" would provide flood control protection and drainage facilities for the Amador Valley, while recharging the water table to the benefit of farmers. In the long run, the availability of a guaranteed source of water increased the attractiveness of valley lands for real estate development. Consequently, in the time-honored tradition of California water resources development, the establishment of Zone 7 proved a veritable windfall for the land-rich.

#### Schools

One final growth-related problem faced by Livermore residents was the need for new schools. Establishment of the Radiation Laboratory brought in thousands of new residents, but did not in itself augment the property tax base. As a federal facility, the institution was exempt from taxation. To offset the potentially devastating effect of the lab's tax-exempt status, the federal government provided "federal impact aid," mainly under provisions of Public Law 874. As will be explained in a later chapter, the availability of this money to the community was a mixed blessing.

### Social Stresses: Town and Gown

In her 1959 thesis examining the community press in Livermore, Lillian Lauer commented:

The rapid population influx into Livermore has caused problems. Sewers, schools, fire protection, zoning laws are inadequate. Recreational facilities, shopping areas, civic improvement are areas of concern for oldtimers and newcomers alike. In addition to overburdening the physical facilities of the town, the population influx has created problems of assimilation. Today Livermore is a small city in conflict, the old with the new.

(Lauer 1959: 1)

Problems stemming from the need for new infrastructure were in some ways minor in comparison with the social and economic tensions generated by the city's development. Downtown merchants, for example, suddenly found their livelihood threatened by that most inevitable of suburban institutions, the neighborhood shopping center. As new retailing areas were constructed on East Avenue and at the junction of Rincon Avenue and Pine Street, merchants became concerned. Partly in response to downtown pressure, some proposed centers were blocked by the city council (the ostensible reason was their proximity to neighborhood schools) (Livermore News, March 7, 1955). As Lauer comments further:

Conservative Main Street has so far maintained mercantile supremacy, successfully thwarting shopping center promoters with rigid zoning ordinances. Local merchants argue that the town's merchandising dollar would be spread too thin if another shopping area were established within the community. However, it is doubtful whether such resistance to change can withstand indefinitely further population increase.

(Lauer 1959: 17)

A more significant source of social divisiveness was the tension between the long-established residents and the newcomers, most of whom were associated with the Radiation Laboratory. By 1956, more than 1,000 lab employees and their families lived in Livermore. Even considering that over half of the facility's staff was composed of clericals, machinists, and other support personnel, this meant that several hundred scientists and engineers suddenly were part of the community.

Livermore traditionally had been a conservative town; as recently as 1954 a proposal to fluoridate the local water supply was defeated by voters (Livermore Herald, April 16, 1954). Although the newly-arrived engineers and scientists were mostly patriotic advocates of the "peace through strength" philosophy that propelled the international arms race, their diverse backgrounds and high educational levels meant that their world-views were generally quite different from the oldtimers'. A definite split developed within the community, which more than one observer termed a case of "town and gown." Many oldtimers considered lab scientists to be strange or eccentric; some lab employees regarded Livermore as a "cowtown," and life there a form of professional hardship duty.

According to a former mayor, 1956 marked the beginning of the city's "modern era." Not only did the city initiate its general plan during that year, but it also hired its first city manager. Moreover, it was during 1956 that the

"rad labbers" began to make inroads into the local power structure. Mayor Bernard O. Birch (a physician at a local sanitarium) triggered this mini-revolution when he decided not to reappoint a long-time planning commissioner, replacing him instead with "newcomer" John B. Shirley. Shirley himself was not a "rad labber" but a veterinarian. The act, however, was a symbolic acknowledgment that the hegemony of the oldtimers was ending. To protest the move, the rest of the planning commissioners resigned. Two of the vacant spots were subsequently filled by lab employees.

Lab personnel quickly achieved success in electoral politics. In 1956, electrical engineer Harvey Owren became the first LRL worker to serve on the city council. Strongly concerned as a group with education, nuclear research personnel also became active in local school affairs; by 1960 three Radiation Laboratory or Sandia employees served on the Livermore Elementary School District board, and another was on the Livermore Union High School District board. Hence, whereas the Radiation Laboratory as an institution kept an exceedingly low profile with regard to local politics, its employees most certainly did not.

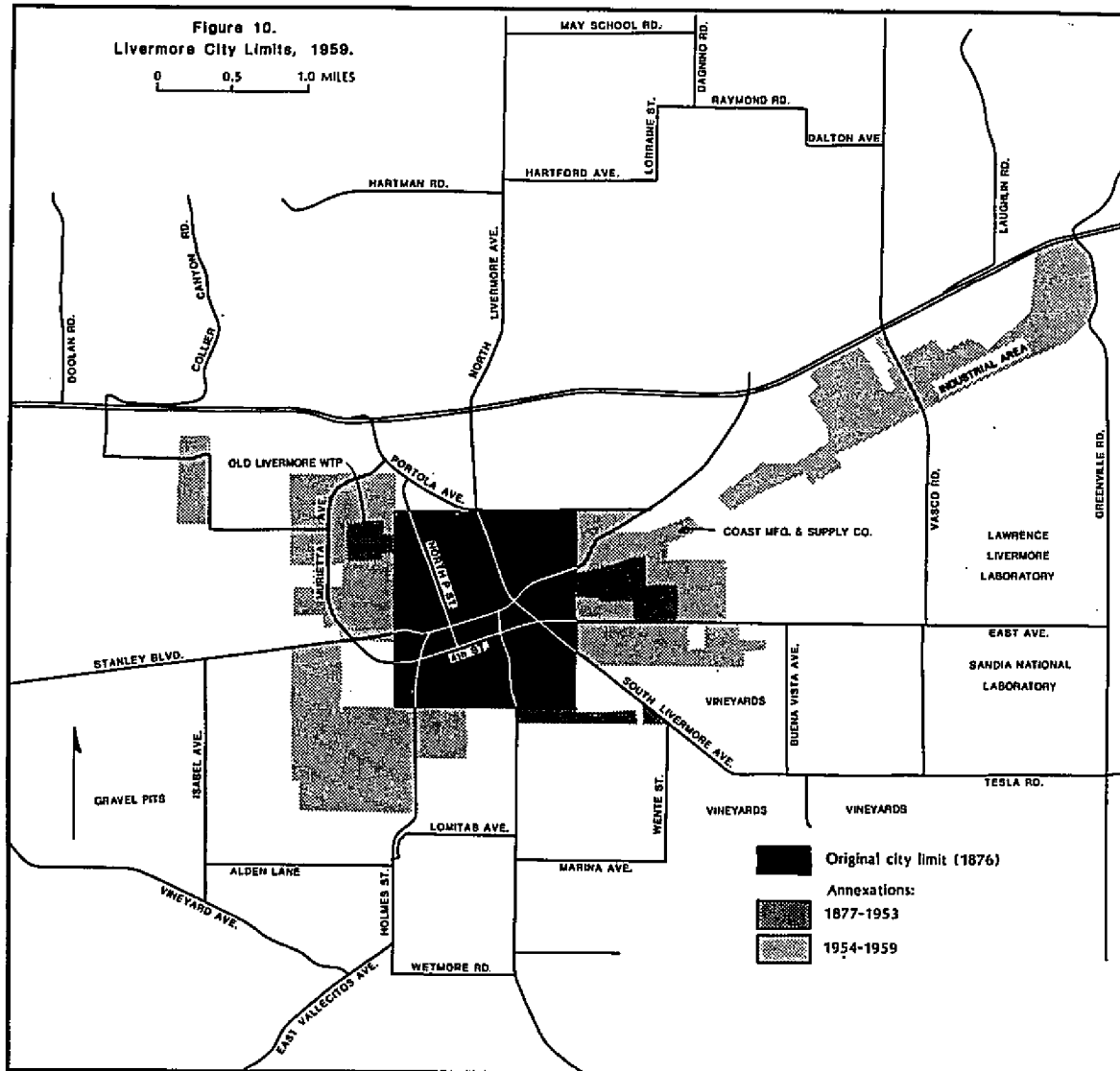
So sharp was this apparent division between oldtimers and newcomers that in April 1959 the Wall Street Journal sent a reporter to Livermore to write a story concerning the unusual character of the rapidly-growing town (Spivak 1959). The article recounted apocryphal tales reflecting the eccentricities of lab scientists and devoted considerable space to what were termed the "intermural conflicts" between

lab employees and "townspeople." These included not only differences over city planning, taxing and spending issues, but the allegation by local merchants that lab people preferred to do their shopping in Hayward.

#### Retrospect: Livermore in 1960

By 1960, Livermore was a rapidly-growing community with a population exceeding 16,000. Its territorial expansion is illustrated in Figure 10. For the time being, the city's water and sewerage problems were under control. Citizens could point with pride to a brand-new general plan, and looked forward to a future as a center for clean industry and scientific research.

Still, as Lillian Lauer observed in 1959, Livermore was a town caught between the old and the new. As growth continued, many of the recently-arrived lab intellectuals busied themselves revising city policy to ensure not only that future development would be of high quality, but that to the greatest extent possible, it would not burden present residents with higher taxes. In 1958, for example, the city sharply increased its sewer connection fee. Alarmed by any move that would increase their building costs, the developers took the city to court (unsuccessfully) to void the ordinance, through their trade association, the Associated Home Builders of the Greater East Bay. This was but the beginning of a long-term adversarial relationship between the homebuilders and the city. At the same time,





newcomers who advocated any sort of public planning were often branded by oldtimers as "communists" (John Shirley, personal interview). With friction between lab intellectuals and both oldtimers and homebuilders becoming routine, politics in the city began to take on a distinctive and often bitter flavor.

### The West Valley Backwater

While the arrival of the Radiation Laboratory generated a growth spurt in Livermore, the western end of the valley remained largely undeveloped (Figure 11). In Pleasanton, continuing attempts by local citizens to boost the community met mainly with frustration. Opportunities for large-scale development were offered, but subsequently withdrawn by outside forces over which Pleasanton residents had little control.

Between 1950 and 1960, the population of Pleasanton almost doubled, from 2,244 to 4,203. Numerically, however, this increase was hardly significant. A few subdivisions were, in fact, quietly approved by city or county officials during the early to mid-fifties. Livermore builder Roy Jensen opened his first Pleasanton development, Walnut Drive, in 1952. That same year, the 27-unit Amador Court project was undertaken by Allen & Riedeman. March 1955 brought the opening of the 211-unit "Pioneer Village" development built by Jensen on a 48-acre site across from

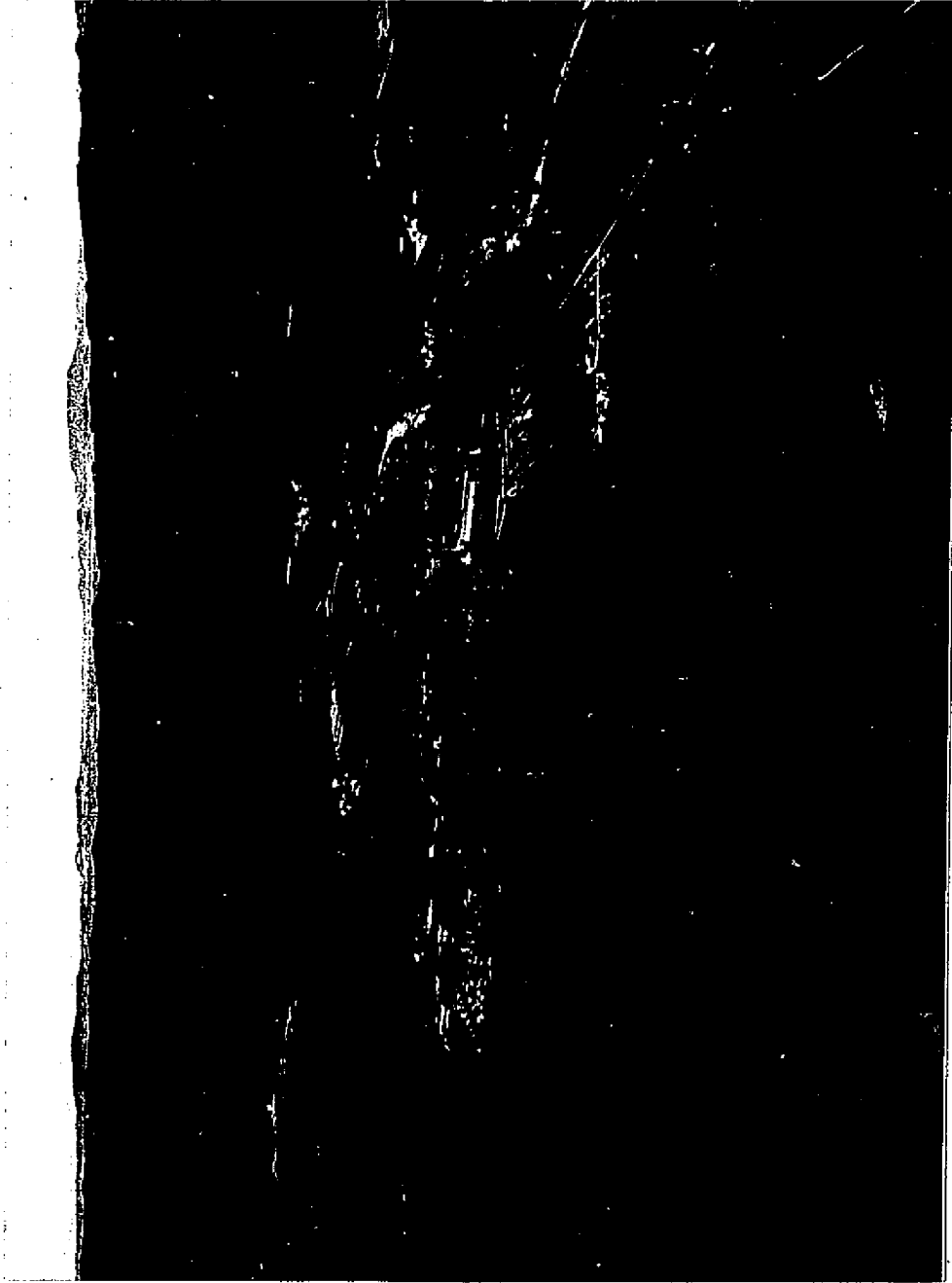


Figure 11.  
Aerial Photo of Pleasanton, 1950  
(Pacific Aerial Surveys).

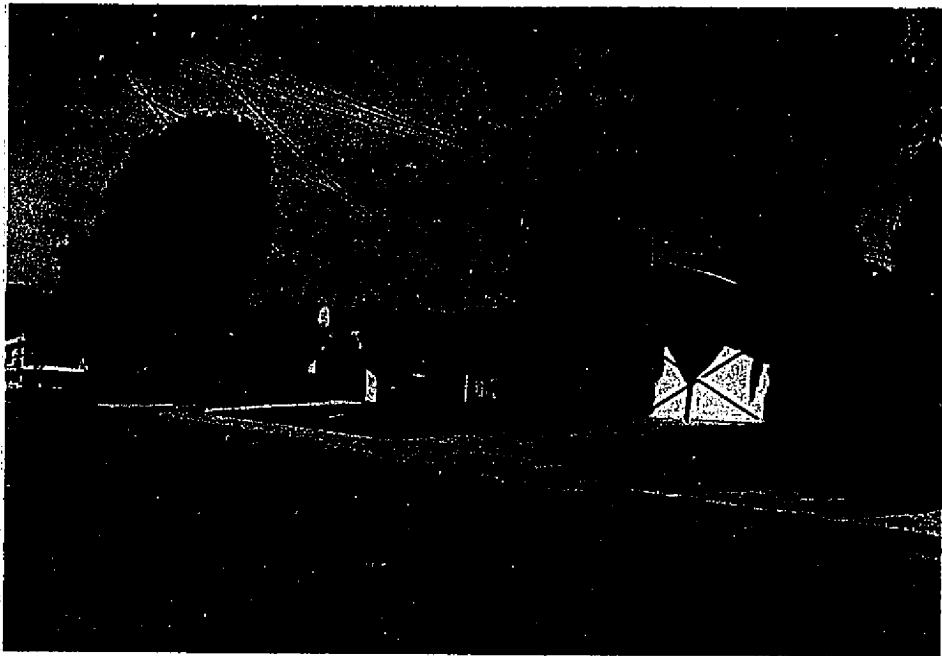


Figure 12. These homes are part of the first large subdivision built by Roy Jensen in Pleasanton during the mid-fifties.

Amador High School (Figure 12). Soon afterward came construction of the small Christina Court subdivision by F. J. Leonardo & Son, plus the first homes within prestige-oriented "Pleasanton Heights."

Slow development in Pleasanton was due partly to its location, still distant from the urban fringe that was advancing south and eastward. Some local officials reportedly contributed to the town's isolation, however, through a cautious approach to new development that discouraged potential builders. A few citizens, including Pleasanton Times editor and publisher John Edmands, hoped that the city would someday become a "new Piedmont," in reference to an exclusive municipality that forms a veritable island of affluence in the middle of Oakland (Pleasanton Times, June 2, 1965).

#### The Park View Proposal

North of Pleasanton, the barriers to development were natural rather than institutional. Although the marshy area south of Route 50 had been partly drained decades previously, the land was still subject to winter flooding. Until further drainage was provided, the constant threat of inundation would dampen the spirits of any aspiring builder.

Early in 1955, however, some speculators calling themselves the Park View group announced a proposal to construct a 3,000-home, veritable mini-city of inexpensive homes within the floodplain along Highway 50 between Hopyard

and Santa Rita Roads (Pleasanton Times, February 17; March 3, 1955). The developers promised to make all necessary improvements to make the project viable.

This was not the type of housing desired by most Pleasanton residents. Faced with the gigantic project, however, city officials felt it would be wiser to annex the area than to permit an unincorporated development so close to the city's borders. The belief that Pleasanton should accommodate rather than stop this proposal reflected a belief that growth was inevitable. Mayor James Trimingham revealed this attitude when he told local merchants that the city had to prepare itself for a tremendous growth problem in the near future, a growth that "we couldn't stop or change even if we wanted to" (Pleasanton Times, March 3, 1955).

In October, the Park View group presented preliminary tract maps to the county planning commission detailing the first 749 homes to be constructed. Although the commission itself was sympathetic to development in such unincorporated areas as Castro Valley, its staff recommended that Park View be rejected. According to its report, such a development was premature within an agricultural area, and would be too costly to provide with services.

Doubts also were expressed by editor Edmands of the Pleasanton Times. These reflected as much concern over possible loss of the hoped-for "exclusivity" of the community as adherence to sound planning principles. In a

front-page story in the November 10, 1955 issue, Edmands wondered aloud whether Park View might be Pleasanton's "one big chance" to launch a great era of growth, or, conversely, whether it represented

a doubtful project utilizing sub-marginal land at the expense of flooding out neighboring properties; is it a low-income tract that would break down all the barriers and shatter the dreams of some to make Pleasanton Valley the "New Piedmont of the East Bay?"

Some members of the new Pleasanton Planning Commission also opposed the project, as did the Orloff and Hansen families, owners of still-viable large farms located just outside the city limits. Viewing development as inevitable, however, the city council endorsed the endeavor, and according to the only available press report, there actually was little public opposition expressed by Pleasanton residents (Pleasanton Times, November 17, 1955).

Unlike Murray Township, Pleasanton Township was not yet governed by a zoning ordinance; consequently, the county could not stop the project, provided that ample infrastructure was available. On that score, however, matters ultimately turned sour. In June, a proposal had emerged to construct a huge new wastewater treatment facility to serve the west valley (Pleasanton Times, June 9, 1955). Since any such treatment plant would require considerable time and expense to plan and construct, however, the only available interim solution was to upgrade the primitive Pleasanton sewer plant on Sunol Blvd. (which had been equipped for secondary treatment only as recently

as 1948). To serve Park View would require the construction of a long sewer line linking the facility to the new development. Agreement could not be reached regarding the way to accomplish and finance this connection (Pleasanton Times, December 15, 1955).

All plans for the mini-city were ultimately wiped out late in December, when heavy rains inundated 2,000 acres between Hopyard and Santa Rita Roads. Its grandiose plans aborted, the Park View group finally sold nearly all of its holdings to the Southern Pacific Railroad. As if to underscore the wisdom of the decision to scrap the Park View plans, in 1958 the expansive Hopyard-Santa Rita Road area was flooded once again.

#### Opportunity Lost: The South County College

In early 1955, it was proposed in Sacramento that a new state college be constructed in southern Alameda County. Among the several sites considered, the strongest candidates were Pleasanton and Hayward. Largely because of opposition from officials from the University of California and San Jose State College, the proposal suffered several setbacks in the state legislature. The battle over the new college and where it would be built, however, continued for several years. Through the efforts of Hayward's Democratic Assemblyman Carlos Bee, state college classes began to be offered at Sunset High School in Hayward in July 1957. The following year, old Hayward High was used.

During the spring of 1959, it was decided that a

permanent "South Alameda County College" would indeed be constructed. At one point, it appeared that Pleasanton had been named as the site for the campus. In response, joyous Pleasanton citizens staged an impromptu parade down Main Street (Oakland Tribune, June 12, 1959: 1). Mayor Bernard Gerton declared that "What Stanford did for Palo Alto, the college will do for Pleasanton and the Livermore-Amador Valley." A large portion of the Orloff farm just north of the city was all but sold to the state for the college campus site (Dagmar Fulton, personal interview).

The influence of Hayward's Democratic politicians, however, was considerable. In a complex, series of maneuvers taking place over several months' time, the state campus was re-awarded to a 345-acre site on what formerly had been the Salz property in the hills above Hayward. The ostensible reasons for this decision were the proximity of Hayward to established population centers, and the fact that classes already were being offered in that city. To Pleasanton residents, however, it was clearly a case of political spoils falling to the powerful.

#### Pleasanton in Transition

Despite this setback, stirrings toward change continued. In the municipal elections of April 1958, two new, strongly pro-growth city councilmen had been elected. Despite the tendency for small-town elections to be decided on the basis of personalities as much as on substantive issues, editor Edmands of the Times felt the election was



a mandate from well over half of the record-busting 858 voters for a change...a change to a stepped-up program of growth, a change to a lowering of the high standards that both the city council and city planning board have placed on potential new residential builders in the city area.

(Pleasanton Times, April 9, 1958: 2)

Symptoms of this philosophical shift emerged quickly. In 1958 Pleasanton began preparation of its first, rather modest general plan. Prepared by Pacific Planning and Research of Palo Alto, the plan was adopted in 1960. Although encompassing only 2,433 acres, the plan projected development that seemed rapid by past standards; Some 25-30 years hence, Pleasanton would support a population of around 25,000 people. Considering the tremendous growth that many felt would be triggered by the promised expansion of U.S. Highway 50, however, such a projection seemed cautious indeed.

Apparently, the planners believed that Pleasanton's destiny was to become not a "little Piedmont," but a middle-income residential community. Although a small area in the hills to the southwest would be an enclave of half-acre properties for the wealthy, over 60% of the city would be devoted to single-family homes on 6,000 square foot lots.

The greatest hope for industrial development was that the City of San Francisco might lease a portion of its 600-acre parcel south of Bernal Avenue (under the terms of the Raker Act municipalizing the San Francisco water system, land owned by the city for watershed purposes cannot be sold). The large area south of Highway 50 but north of the

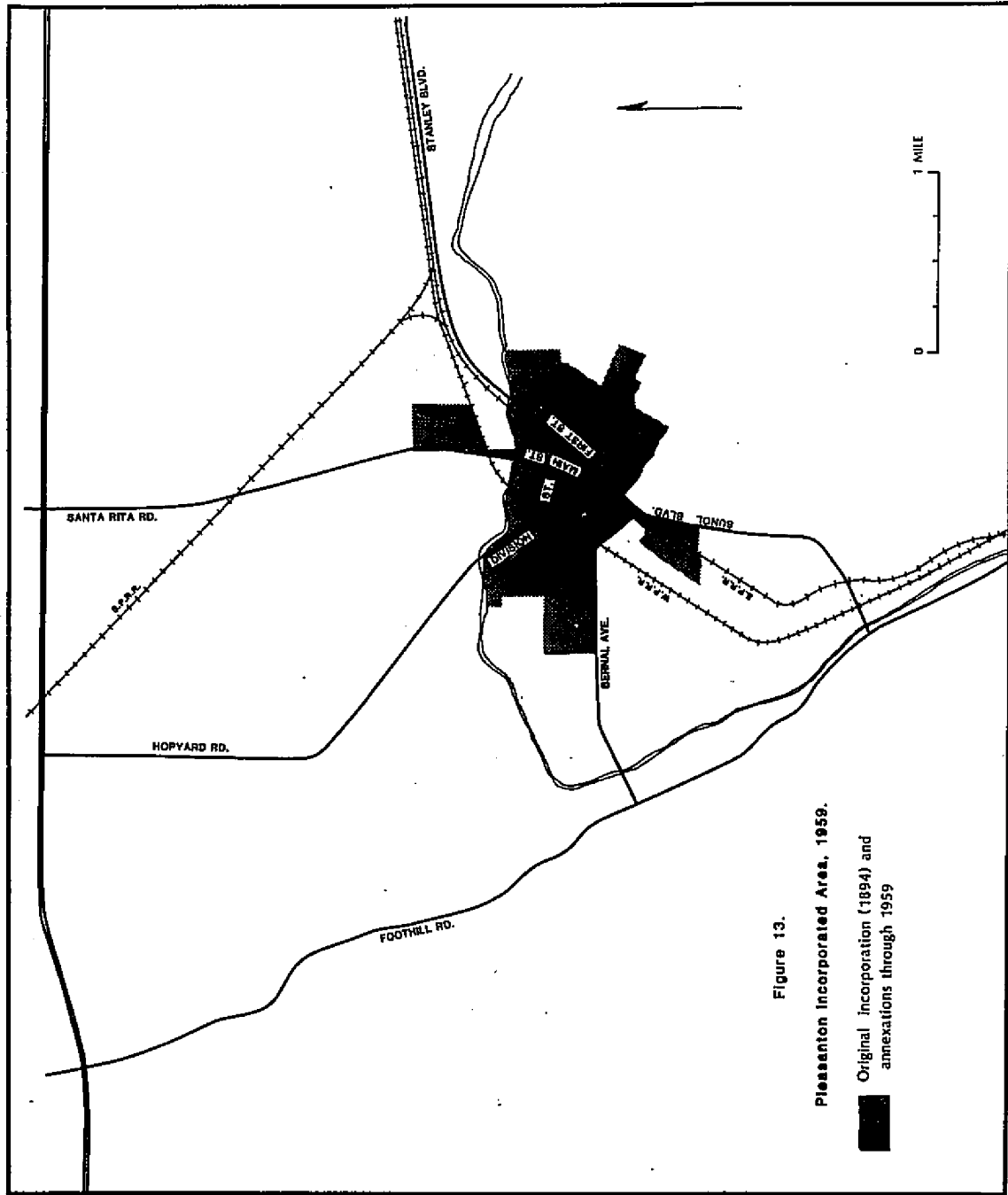


Figure 13.  
Pleasanton Incorporated Area, 1959.  
Original incorporation (1894) and  
annexations through 1959

Table 5

## Pleasanton Residential Land Use to 1980

Density per acre	Land Area/ Dwelling Unit	No. Acres	No. Units	Est. Pop. Capacity
2 families	20,000 sq. ft.	80	160	550
4 families	6,000 sq. ft.	1,555	6,200	20,450
6 families	3,000 sq. ft.	110	660	2,150
8 families	1,500 sq. ft.	70	560	1,850
		1,815	7,580	25,000

(Source: Pacific Planning and Research 1958: 7).

the planning area was considered an "industrial reserve area," which "should remain in agriculture until needed" (1958: 9).

Another striking feature of the plan was the paucity of areas zoned commercial; it was claimed that "over-zoning for commercial uses should be avoided" (1958: 5). Consequently, outside of the 30-acre central business district, on only 75 acres could commercial activity be initiated. This helped give rise to the notion that Pleasanton was hostile to commercial development.

As the 1950s drew to a close, Pleasanton was almost two different communities at once: whereas the promise and imminence of tremendous growth seemed undeniable, current development actually was rather slow, as reflected in the conservatism of the general plan. The period of intensive growth for Pleasanton would arrive, but it still lay in the future.

## Chapter VI

### Bedroom Development

Rapid Bay Area development continued during the sixties. Growth was based partly upon continued industrialization. In Hayward, a successful 1958 bond issue financed construction of new water and sewer trunk lines and wide lead-in streets to serve a bayside industrial area that became known as "The Wall" (Eden Writers 1975: 149). After 1965, South Bay expansion was fueled by Viet Nam war defense contracts awarded to Santa Clara Valley aerospace and electronics firms. Meanwhile, San Francisco pursued its destiny as an international financial center, while the modern Port of Oakland, equipped to handle containerized cargo, became a major West Coast center for shipping.

As the Bay Area homebuilding boom continued, construction activity was most intensive at peripheral locations ever-more distant from the older urban core (Table 6). Contra Costa County growth was most vigorous in Walnut Creek and Concord, but reached as far north as the delta cities of Antioch and Martinez. Along the East Bay shoreline, Hayward continued to attract new housing, although multiple units increasingly eclipsed detached dwellings as the major enterprise of developers (Table 7). Meanwhile, the principal locus of single-family homebuilding moved southward to the newly-incorporated city of Fremont.

It was during the early sixties that the suburban fringe finally reached the Livermore-Amador Valley. Once again, outside forces dictated the course of local development. The second wave of growth in Livermore (and the first in the west valley) was the "bedroom" type, involving an influx of commuters and their families. Surprisingly, this growth occurred first not in Livermore or Pleasanton, but in the form of a "planned community" erected quickly by a well-financed Southern California development firm. Ultimately, it was "San Ramon Village" that launched the new era of subdivision politics in the valley.

#### San Ramon Village: an Overnight Community

As of the late fifties, obstacles still existed to large-scale homebuilding around Pleasanton. Much land was either located on a floodplain or else owned by farmers who were not yet ready to sell. Also, adequate sewage treatment capacity was not available. County officials, however, realized that the west valley was ripe for development. Consequently, it came as no surprise when early in 1960 the board of supervisors looked favorably upon a proposal to create an entirely new community featuring moderately-priced homes on unincorporated land in and around the tiny hamlet of Dublin.

Indications that such a project might be undertaken came in April 1959, when it was announced that a preliminary study of a possible new community in the upper Amador and

Table 6  
Population Growth in  
Selected Bay Area Cities, 1950-1980

County/ City	Census Year			
	1950	1960	1970	1980
<b>San Francisco</b>				
San Francisco	775,357	740,316	715,674	678,974
<b>Alameda</b>				
Dublin/ San Ramon	100**	250**	13,641 4,084	13,496 22,356***
Fremont	10,040*	43,790	100,869	131,945
Hayward	14,272	72,700	93,058	94,167
Livermore	4,364	16,058	37,703	48,349
Oakland	384,575	367,548	361,561	339,337
Pleasanton	2,244	4,203	18,328	35,160
San Leandro	27,542	65,962	68,698	63,952
Union City	n.d.	6,618	14,724	39,406
<b>Contra Costa</b>				
Antioch	11,051	17,305	28,060	42,683
Concord	6,953	36,000	85,164	103,255
Martinez	8,268	9,604	16,506	22,582
Pleasant Hill	5,686	23,844	24,610	25,124
Richmond	99,545	71,854	79,043	74,676
Walnut Creek	2,420	9,903	39,844	53,643
<b>Santa Clara</b>				
San Jose	95,280	204,196	459,913	629,442
<b>Solano</b>				
Fairfield	3,118	14,968	44,146	58,099
<b>Sonoma</b>				
Petaluma	10,315	14,035	24,870	33,834
Santa Rosa	17,902	31,027	50,006	83,320

Sources: Androit (1983); U.S. Bureau of the Census (1983).

n.d.--no data

\* Harold F. Wise Associates (1956).

\*\* Dublin Chamber of Commerce (1978). Includes areas in both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

\*\*\* Includes north San Ramon.

Table 7  
Residential Building Permits Issued, 1960-1973

Year	Single Family Homes/ Total Permits							
	Livermore		Pleasanton		Hayward		Fremont	
1960	403	471	52	62	409	988	1840	1878
1961	210	253	60	60	90	1385	1675	1970
1962	386	452	41	51	559	802	2204	2448
1963	714	893	37	143	182	1605	n.d.	2474
1964	541	666	249	279	231	1575	1214	1516
1965	804	884	429	435	284	762	1083	1617
1966	783	855	687	724	48	227	483	536
1967	250	480	331	368	64	413	786	973
1968	675	690	1195	1258	94	332	552	1301
1969	681	723	906	998	75	332	814	2115
1970	784	859	780	938	317	911	1219	1315
1971	1338	1756	1460	2070	364	714	1772	3470
1972	1116	1401	231	356	231	826	1039	2730
1973	508	508	620	751	389	1111	596	979

n.d. -- no data

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Construction Reports, Series C-40.

south San Ramon Valleys had been conducted by James Gillies of the UCLA School of Business Administration (Pleasanton Times, April 15, 1959). A Los Angeles-based syndicate headed by the Carl M. Buck building company held options on over four thousand acres of land in the vicinity of the crossroads of U.S. Highway 50 and State Route 21. The proposed development would straddle the border separating Alameda from Contra Costa County. Land procurement was handled by the Geldermann Realty Company of Danville.

The Buck proposal never came to fruition, however, largely because of problems in arranging adequate wastewater treatment for such a sizable development. In autumn 1959, the Buck options were picked up by another Los Angeles firm headed by two Stanford graduates, Kenneth Volk and Robert McLain. The most notable accomplishment to date of Volk-McLain Communities, Inc. had been the 16,000-home Carlton Hills development, located just outside of San Diego.

Volk-McLain's interest in this new undertaking, called "San Ramon Village," was spurred by the 1959 closure of the huge Convair Aircraft plant in San Diego. With 20,000 people suddenly unemployed, demand for new homes in that area slowed. Consequently, Volk-McLain charged into its new Northern California project with sudden vigor. The firm quickly commissioned sewer and drainage studies, and contracted for aerial surveys.

The final proposal called for up to 13,580 dwelling units on 3,895 residential acres, included 17 schools, and devoted 600 acres to industrial development (Oakland



Tribune, May 11, 1960: 16-E). In early 1960, however, there was nothing like the stringent environmental review procedure that would become mandatory a decade later for projects of this magnitude. The only significant step toward project approval was a simple rezoning of the area from agricultural use only to a combination of single-family residential, multiple residential, commercial, and industrial. The decision would be made by the two county boards of supervisors, based in part upon the recommendations of their respective planning commissions. Since the area to be developed first was located in Dublin, the planning process was coordinated by the Alameda County Planning Office in Hayward.

On March 15, 1960, the planning department called together representatives of the affected jurisdictions and public agencies to discuss the proposed Upper Amador Valley Master Plan Amendment. In preparation for this intergovernmental conclave, the department had contacted the various officials and solicited written reactions from them. From response letters and statements made at the meeting itself, it was apparent that some individuals were aware of all the potential environmental problems that ultimately would plague the valley. Nevertheless, opposition to San Ramon Village was mild. One participant, in fact, recalled that approval of the project was virtually a fait accompli.

Certainly, there were reservations expressed, particularly by jurisdictions that might be adversely

affected. For example, J. H. Turner, General Manager and Chief Engineer of the San Francisco Water Department, claimed that San Ramon Village sewage discharges would degrade water quality in the aquifer still partially controlled by San Francisco:

This Department wishes to protest the waste discharges in the San Ramon Valley area and especially the latest proposal of the Volk-McLain Company. It is felt that the ever-increasing waste discharge into this area ...could well destroy the underground waters of this basin for drinking water.

(Letter dated March 17, 1960)

This concern over wastewater was not surprising. In 1956, the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Pollution Control Board had passed Resolution 226, which called for careful monitoring of water quality in Alameda Creek. It had even been considered that no further development be allowed in the valley until a sewer line to San Francisco Bay was constructed. Just days prior to the hearing on Upper Amador Valley Master Plan Amendment, however, the Alameda County Health Department backed down from such a recommendation. Such "harsh requirements" would not be enacted if it was not "economically possible" (Livermore Herald, March 18, 1960: 3). Under Resolution 330, issued May 5, 1960, the RWPCB issued water quality standards for the new wastewater treatment facilities that would serve the Volk-McLain project.

In order to monitor and control air quality, the San Francisco-based Bay Area Air Pollution Control District had been created in November 1955. Appearing before the county

planners at this meeting, Chief of Air Analysis Elmer Robinson warned prophetically of the adverse effect that large-scale development might have upon the future air quality of this inversion-prone area:

The whole Livermore Valley is an area which the District is watching with concern, because the valley is not one of the Bay Area's best ventilated sections.

Regarding the potential loss of food production or open space resources, there was no notable protest, despite the fact that over 4,000 acres of farmland would be converted to urban use. In a letter to the planning commission, Robert C. Harkens of the University of California Extension Service declared:

There are many, many thousands of acres of land of this type in California and certainly a project of this kind is better used on this land than on some of our prime agricultural land.

Ultimately, the parties most immediately affected by the new development would be the cities of Livermore and Pleasanton. After deliberations, however, Livermore planning commissioners determined that their community would not be harmed by the project. Although recognizing that competition from "Dublin" might slow Livermore's own growth, they believed the long-established city would benefit from the stimulation of valley commerce as a whole (Livermore Herald, March 11, 1960).

Subsequently, Planning Director George Musso represented the city at the Hayward meeting. In prepared remarks, Musso acknowledged potential problems regarding

sewage disposal, water supply, and air pollution, but finally he merely conveyed Livermore's hope that the Dublin-San Ramon development would be "orderly," and "directed toward being a self-sufficient economic unit" (Letter dated April 12, 1960).

Residing much closer to the proposed development, Pleasanton officials reacted differently. As indicated by Figure 14, the proposed rezoning extended significantly across Highway 50. Although none of the area claimed for San Ramon Village was included within the existing Pleasanton general plan, officials in that city believed the territory south of U.S. 50 should fall ultimately within the political sphere of the older community. Faced with the near-certainty of a gargantuan development by an aggressive builder, however, Mayor Bernard T. Gerton made the following overture to Robert McLain:

After considerable discussion the Pleasanton City Council and the Pleasanton Planning Commission have concluded that it might be mutually advantageous for the City and your organization to explore the possibility of annexing all of or a part of your holdings in Alameda County to the City of Pleasanton.

As though to assure McLain that Pleasanton was not simply interested in its own expansion, Gerton added:

The City's only interest in this matter is the best development of the San Ramon-Amador Valley.

(Letter dated March 25, 1960).

Volk and McLain had other ideas; they preferred to develop under county rather than municipal control. This refusal to annex the Dublin area to Pleasanton, however,

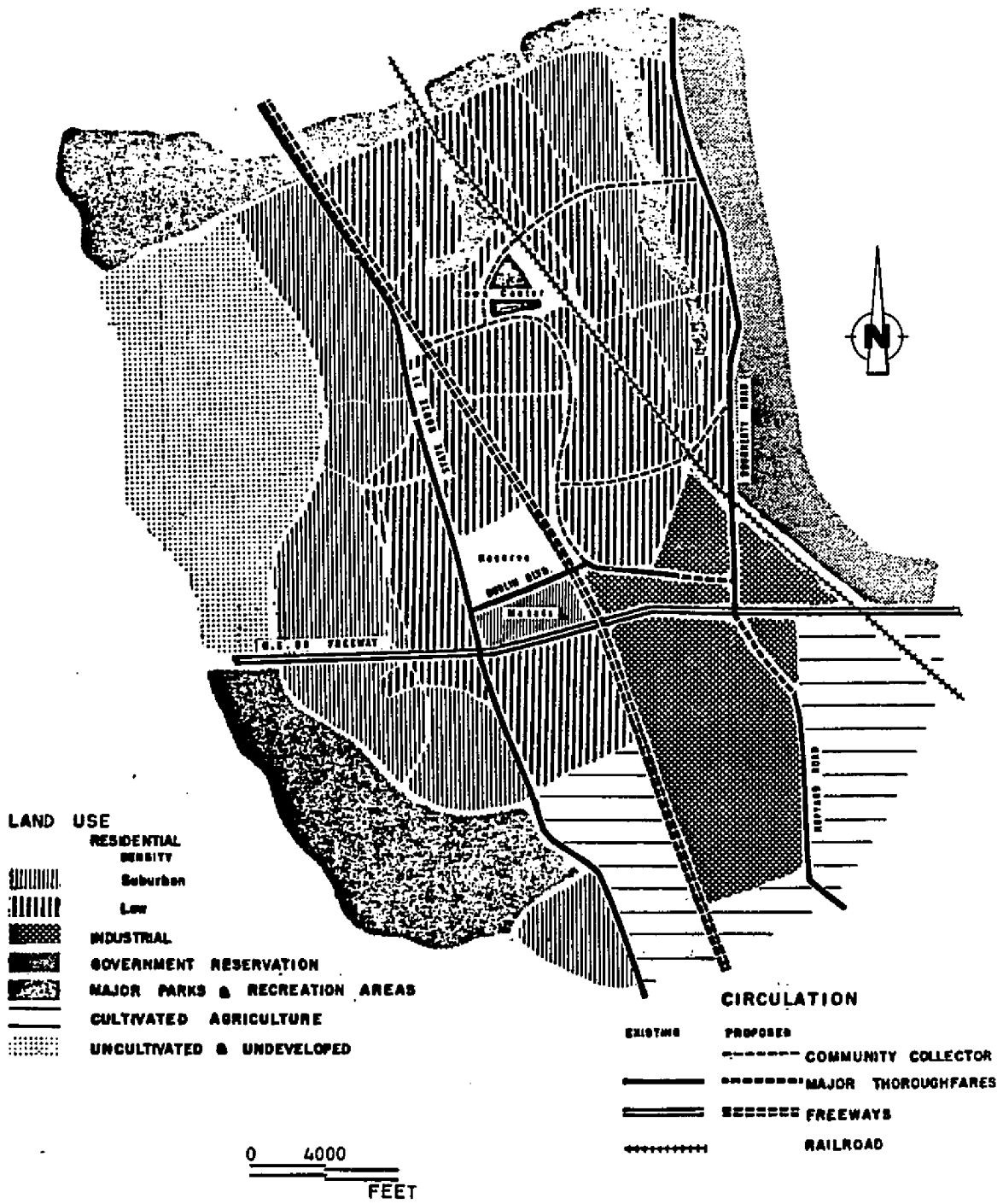


Figure 14.  
Upper Amador Valley  
Preliminary Community Plan, 1960.

would by no means mark the end of political intrigue between the neighboring settlements in the west side of the valley.

The Upper Amador Valley Master Plan was approved by the Alameda County Planning Commission on April 13, 1960; on May 10, the board of supervisors gave its assent. Construction of San Ramon Village proceeded quickly. Ground was broken in July; a series of model homes was completed by September. After being treated to a giant, "Hollywood-style" barbecue, the first homebuyers moved into their new houses on November 3 (Valley Times, November 2, 1975: 4). A neighborhood shopping center, "Shamrock Village," was opened in April 1961. By September 1962, enough homes had been occupied that the development could hold its "grand opening." Population within the planning area grew rapidly, expanding from perhaps 250 when the project was initiated to over 8,400 by 1964, and 17,000 by 1970. By the time-standards of valley history to this point, the new community had sprung into existence practically overnight.

#### Valley Community Services District

The principal institution handling infrastructure and services within the two-county community was a special district agency called the Valley Community Services District. As mentioned in Chapter IV, community services districts were sanctioned by a 1951 act of the California State Legislature. Officially established in September 1960, VCSD actually was a revitalized version of previously-existing agency. Parks Community Services District had been

formed in 1953 by some absentee upper Amador Valley landowners who hoped to encourage development by negotiating for the use of the Parks Air Force Base sewage treatment facilities. Although this effort was unsuccessful, the PCSD remained a legally viable entity.

Reorganized, expanded, and renamed, VCSD was an ideal vehicle for Volk-McLain to provide services for its new tracts. The district undertook the construction of a modern, highly expandable \$2 million wastewater treatment facility near the old Parks sewage ponds south of Highway 50. The agency also sold water, handled fire protection, collected garbage, and operated the local parks system. VCSD was governed by a five-member elected board which in many ways came to operate the district as though it were a bona fide municipal government.

As part of its development plan, Volk-McLain had provided the financing for the wastewater treatment plant. Over a period of years, the district would collect funds to repay the firm for its capital outlay. VCSD acquired revenues through sewage service charges, the sale of water, and a property tax assessment. Expansion would be financed through water and sewer connection fees paid by builders. Until it was ended by court action in 1978, the resulting compensation arrangement was extremely advantageous to Volk-McLain. Some Dublin-San Ramon residents claimed that Volk-McLain was reimbursed several times over for the treatment facilities. Moreover, the developers encouraged the VCSD

directors to take an aggressive approach to the operation of the district, since they benefitted directly from its territorial expansion.

#### Planned Community or Instant Eyesore?

The first homes constructed in Dublin-San Ramon were typical of the mass-produced subdivisions that had sprung up across the nation during the 1950s (see Figure 15). In 1960, a three-bedroom, two-bath home could be purchased for a mere \$13,500; four-bedroom models started at \$15,000. In keeping with the traditions of suburban home marketing, the various tracts within the overall project were endowed with mellifluous-sounding names. In the Alameda County portion of the new community were Briarhill and Silvergate; on the Contra Costa side, new residents might call Walnut Hills or Country Club Estates their home. Such nomenclature was consistent with the oft-repeated slogan featured in the original San Ramon Village advertising campaign: "City Close, Country Quiet."

The project was highly praised in some circles. According to the construction industry journal California Builder, the project was "thoroughly masterplanned according to newer community-planning concepts of the Sixties" (California Builder 1969: 10). Moreover, it was stated that "in one fell swoop," "without incessant wrangling or piecemeal and slipshod measures," the community had become a "'haven' from noisy hubbub and turmoil while still making itself an integral and functional part of the whole



surrounding urban organism" (13). Both Volk-McLain and the giant Property Research Corporation of Los Angeles (which handled the properties after Volk-McLain's interests were purchased by Boise-Cascade and Perma-bilt Enterprises in 1967) were given high marks for their planning efforts.

The emergent landscape, however, could hardly be mistaken for a wealthy suburb such as Orinda or Danville, nor for a planned "new town" community such as Columbia, Maryland. Indeed, during the first years of the project, at least, little effort was made to cultivate an image of "exclusivity" within the community (Figure 15). Dublin quickly attracted numerous small shopping centers, fast-food outlets, and other manifestations of strip-type commercial development.

Some Livermore and Pleasanton citizens came to share the view expressed by Christy Hunt Henle in her 1973 study of the San Ramon Valley:

Much development of land in the San Ramon Valley appears to have been planned with little concern for the way in which the individual aspects fit into the surrounding community and region.

(Henle 1973: 108)

Despite the ostensible aesthetic shortcomings of the new development, there was little discernable dissatisfaction among the residents themselves. After all, Volk-McLain's original budget-priced houses in Dublin allowed many young couples their first opportunity to own a home, and provided "move up" buyers with good value for their money. The houses proved, in fact, to be good

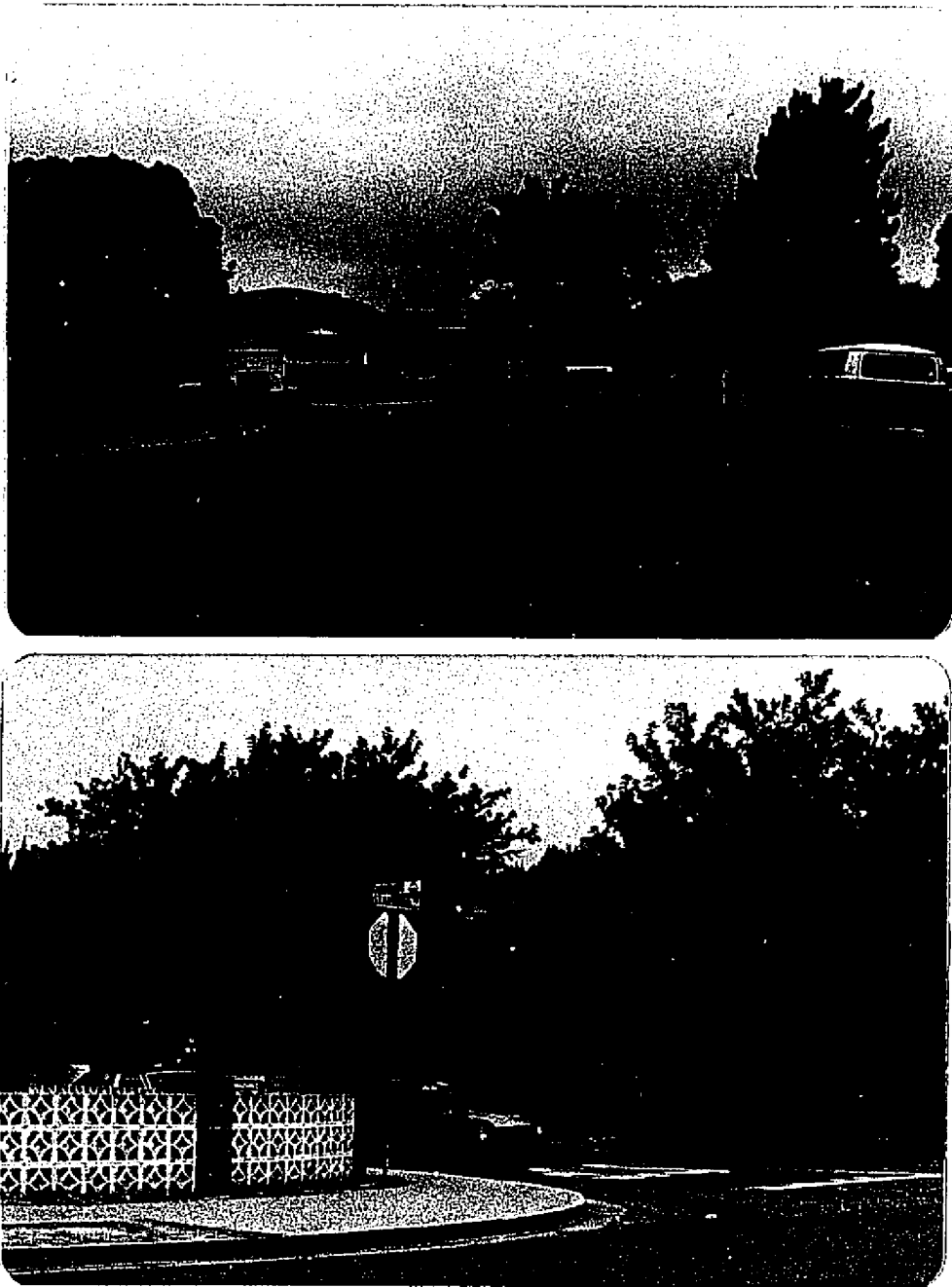


Figure 15. San Ramon Village

Above: Oxbow Lane, located in the first Dublin subdivision built by Volk-McLain.

Below: The lack of snob appeal within San Ramon Village is illustrated by some of its street names.

investments. By 1980, homes that sold originally for \$14,000 could be resold for \$80,000 or more.

Largely because of zoning changes instituted by Contra Costa County, houses constructed later in the sixties and during the seventies within the San Ramon subdivisions were generally more expensive than those in Dublin. San Ramon homes also sold briskly, and increased impressively in resale value. The establishment of San Ramon as a more exclusive suburb, however, created a class-based schism that ended any hope that the communities might incorporate jointly as the first trans-county municipality in California.

The new era of bedroom development was underway. With remarkable ease, Volk-McLain had received county approval to construct a major, mainly residential development. To accomplish this, the long-dormant Parks Community Services District had been quickly converted into a means for handling vital services. Although the rapid ascendancy of Volk-McLain to a prominent position in the valley was perceived as threatening by Pleasanton leaders, county officials apparently did not foresee the problems that might result from the creation of another major nucleus of growth in the west valley.

Establishment of San Ramon Village, however, was practically guaranteed to result in conflict. It quickly became apparent that both the developers and the VCSD directors intended to expand their respective domains deeply into the undeveloped area south of Highway 50. If

Pleasanton was to attain a reasonably large sphere of influence, it would have to expand more aggressively itself, or else risk being all but crowded out of the valley by its powerful new neighbor to the north. This competitive situation was hardly conducive to a well-planned, orderly growth process.

## Chapter VII

### Putting The Pieces Into Place: Infrastructure And Services

In constructing San Ramon Village, Kenneth Volk and Robert McLain perceived correctly that the valley was ripe for residential development on a massive scale. For growth to occur, however, not only must an area be located favorably within an expanding metropolitan region, but services and infrastructure must be available. There also should exist a governmental structure adequate to the tasks of co-ordinating growth and regulating civic life. This chapter will describe how valley-wide growth was facilitated through provision of certain vital services after the arrival of San Ramon Village. Adequate transportation and school facilities, water, and wastewater treatment were in fact provided, but within a fragmented political structure in which there was virtually no overall coordination and planning.

#### Highways

U.S. Highway 50 had long been a major east-west thoroughfare. It was, in fact, one of the first roads selected by the state Division of Highways for modernization after World War II. Widening of some stretches of the road commenced as early as 1951. Even as this project was still

underway, plans were revealed in 1957 to upgrade the thirteen miles between Dublin and Greenville to freeway standards. (Oakland Tribune, October 8, 1957: 39). Ultimately, the four-lane "expressway" would be expanded to eight lanes, with all existing grade intersections eliminated.

Running north to south, State Route 21 was but a two-lane road. The potential importance, however, of a highway connecting northern Contra Costa County with San Jose by way of the San Ramon Valley was not difficult to perceive. As early as 1955, Route 21 was slated to be part of the grandiose California Freeway System.

The ultimate impetus (and major funding) for the transformation of these two arteries into superhighways, however, came not from the 1959 California Freeway and Expressway Plan, but from the federal government. The 41,000 mile National Interstate Defense Highway System first approved by Congress in 1944 was finally realized through passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956. The legislation launched in earnest the multi-billion dollar, 90-95% federally-financed interstate highway program.

A key part of the system was the "beltways" encircling urban areas. These highways promised to accelerate the long-term trend toward decentralization of industry and residences; it was also claimed that such urban arterials would combat the threat of "strangulation" of the inner city by automobile traffic. Although critics such as Lewis Mumford warned that passage of the interstate system

demonstrated that the American people "hadn't the faintest notion of what they were doing" (1964: 244), other urban spokesmen such as Robert Moses of the Port Authority of New York lobbied heavily for approval of the intracity portion of the program (Leavitt 1970, Caro 1974).

Both the upgrading of Highway 50 into Interstate 580 and the creation of the new Interstate 680 took place over a period of several years. In accordance with contracting procedures established under the Federal Aid Highway Act, the construction of new highways occurred in several stages, including planning, location, design, and actual construction. Because money allocated to the states by the federal government had to be spent within two years, highways were built in short segments, generally no more than 10-15 miles in length.

The construction of freeway interchanges connecting I-580 with major valley thoroughfares took place between 1963 and 1965. In January 1964, the section of I-680 called the "Mission Pass Freeway," stretching from San Jose to Sunol was completed, followed soon thereafter by the segment between Danville and Walnut Creek. In 1966, an elaborate interchange linking I-680 with I-580 was completed. In September 1966, the Danville to Dublin section was opened. The final segment, opened in November 1967, was the long stretch connecting Scott's Corners (near Sunol) with the 680/580 interchange. In late 1970, the widening to eight lanes of the portion of I-580 west of Dublin Canyon began.

By autumn 1971, all of I-580 had been upgraded, with the exception of a single ten-mile stretch between the Highway 238 interchange in Castro Valley and Dublin.

Livermore and Pleasanton residents did not react passively to these developments. During the fifties and sixties, most people viewed the construction of multi-million dollar freeways as a sign of progress and a harbinger of future prosperity. Consequently, the hometown boosters waxed ecstatic over the new highways. In Livermore, prominent billboards were erected along I-580 advertising the city's (largely-vacant) industrial acreage. For Pleasanton, completion of I-680 was cause for a civic celebration. City officials, however, were rankled that the first freeway signs marking the Bernal St. exit failed even to mention the existence of a place called "Pleasanton." Subsequently, highway authorities in Sacramento were petitioned successfully to include the city's name on a new set of signs.

It should be added that not all highways planned for the area were constructed. State Route 84, connecting Fremont with Altamont Pass by way of the Vallecitos Valley, was slated to be upgraded to a freeway that would bypass the existing route through downtown Livermore. However, a shortage of highway funds and significant local opposition to a thoroughfare that would cut through the valley's viticultural acreage postponed the project indefinitely.

Completion of I-580 and I-680 provided the single most significant guarantee that growth pressures would accelerate



within the valley. Other pieces, however, were necessary before the growth picture was complete.

### Water

The passage in June 1960 of the Zone 7 Project One bond issue ensured an adequate water supply for the valley for a decade or more. The cornerstone of Project One was the purchase of State Water Project water delivered through the new South Bay Aqueduct beginning in 1962 (see Figures 16 and 17). Although originally the 1990 maximum entitlement amounted to 40,000 acre-feet per year, in 1963 this allotment was increased to 46,000 acre-feet. As late as 1971, however, only 5,210 acre-feet were actually purchased by Zone 7.

Some of the SWP water was treated at the Patterson Pass Treatment Plant, and then piped directly into Livermore. Water was also released at turnouts in the South Bay Aqueduct into the Arroyo Mocho, Arroyo Seco, and Arroyo del Valle, in an effort to recharge the groundwater basin. In 1964, Zone 7 leased the Hopyard wellfield from the Army (the field was acquired in 1972); in 1967, the Mocho wellfield was constructed. These wells in turn supplied water to the Valley Community Services District. Figure 16 shows the location of these facilities.

For several years, the City of Pleasanton did not purchase water from Zone 7, because officials were convinced that water rights held through the venerable Pleasanton

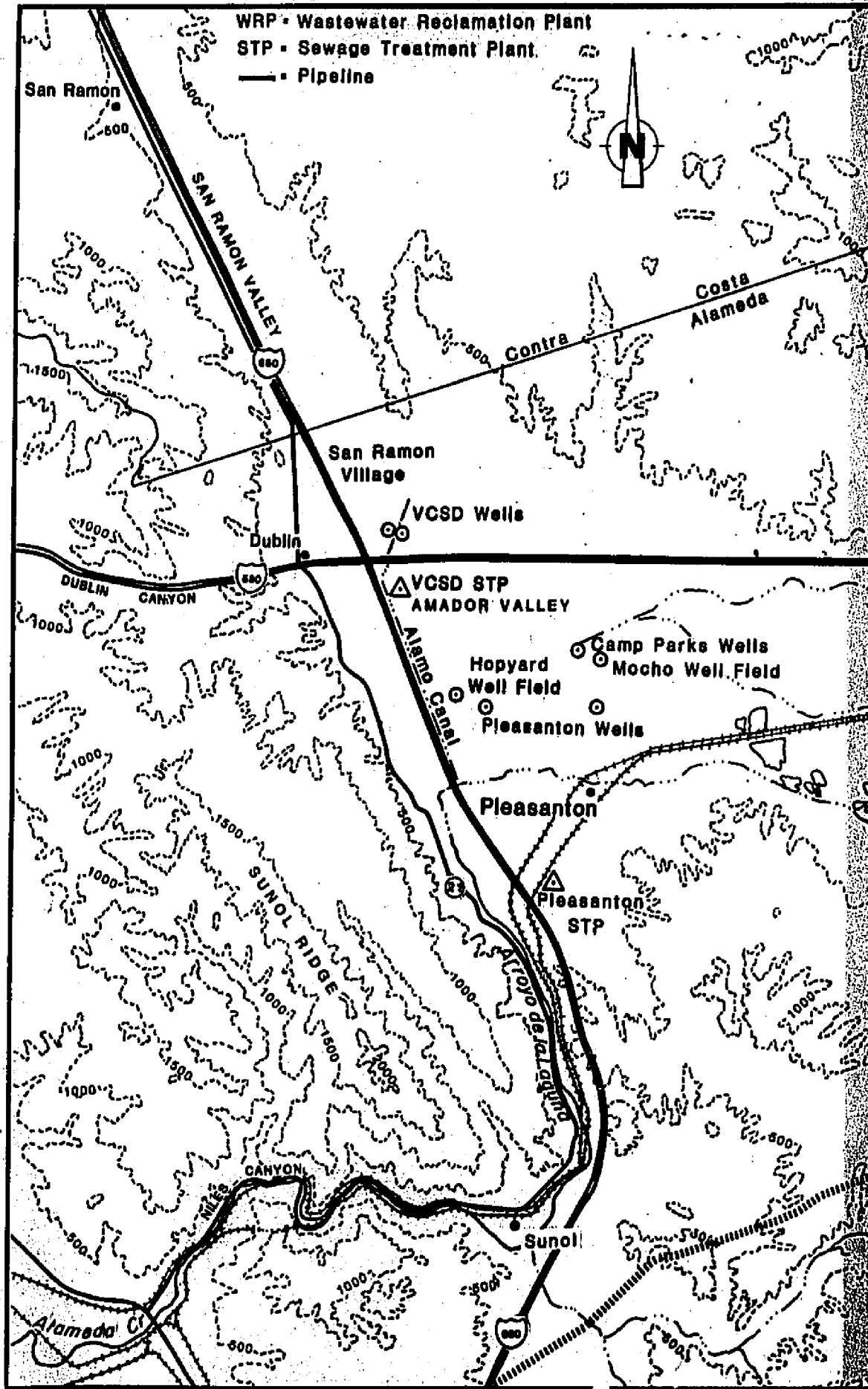
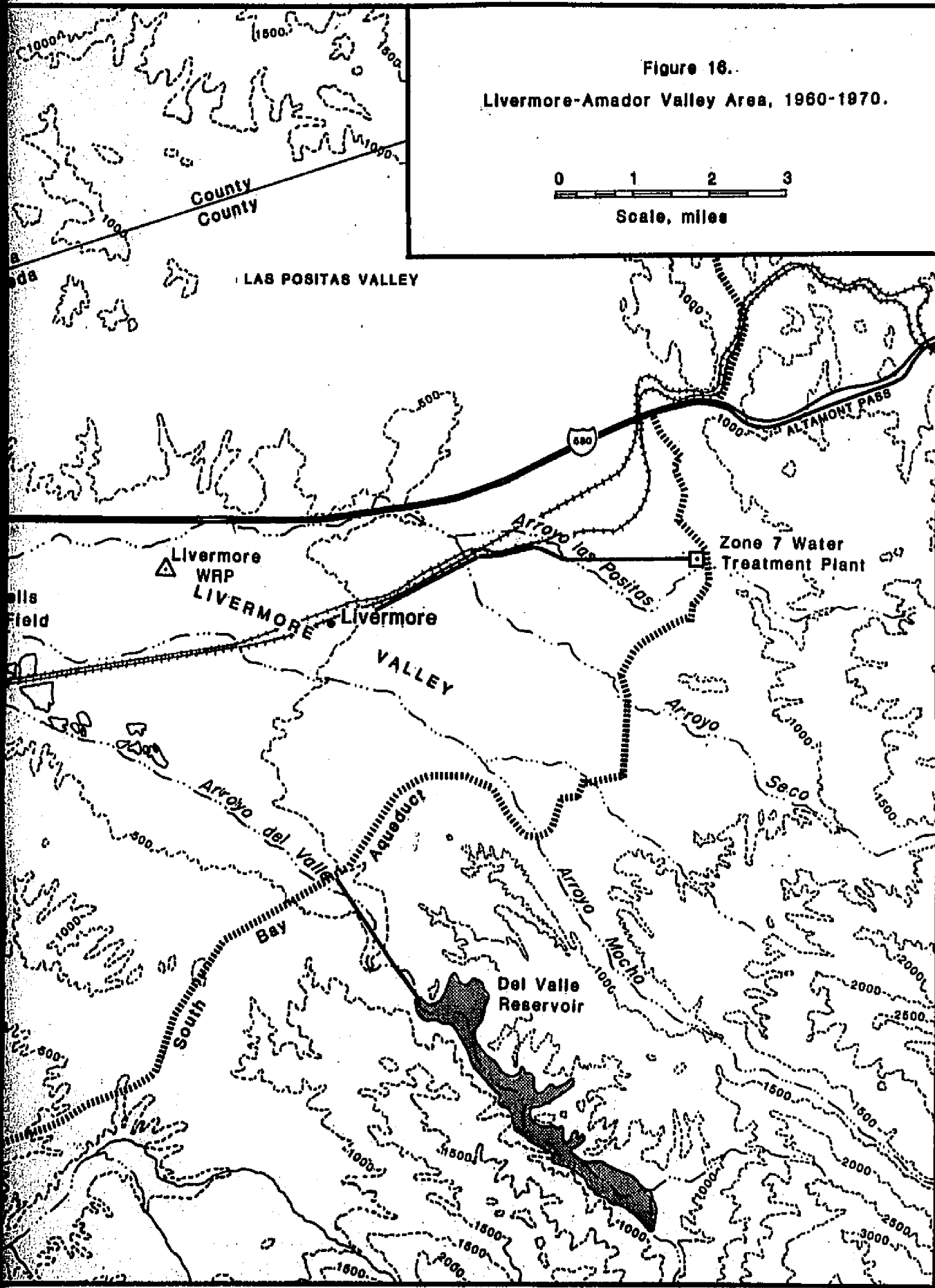
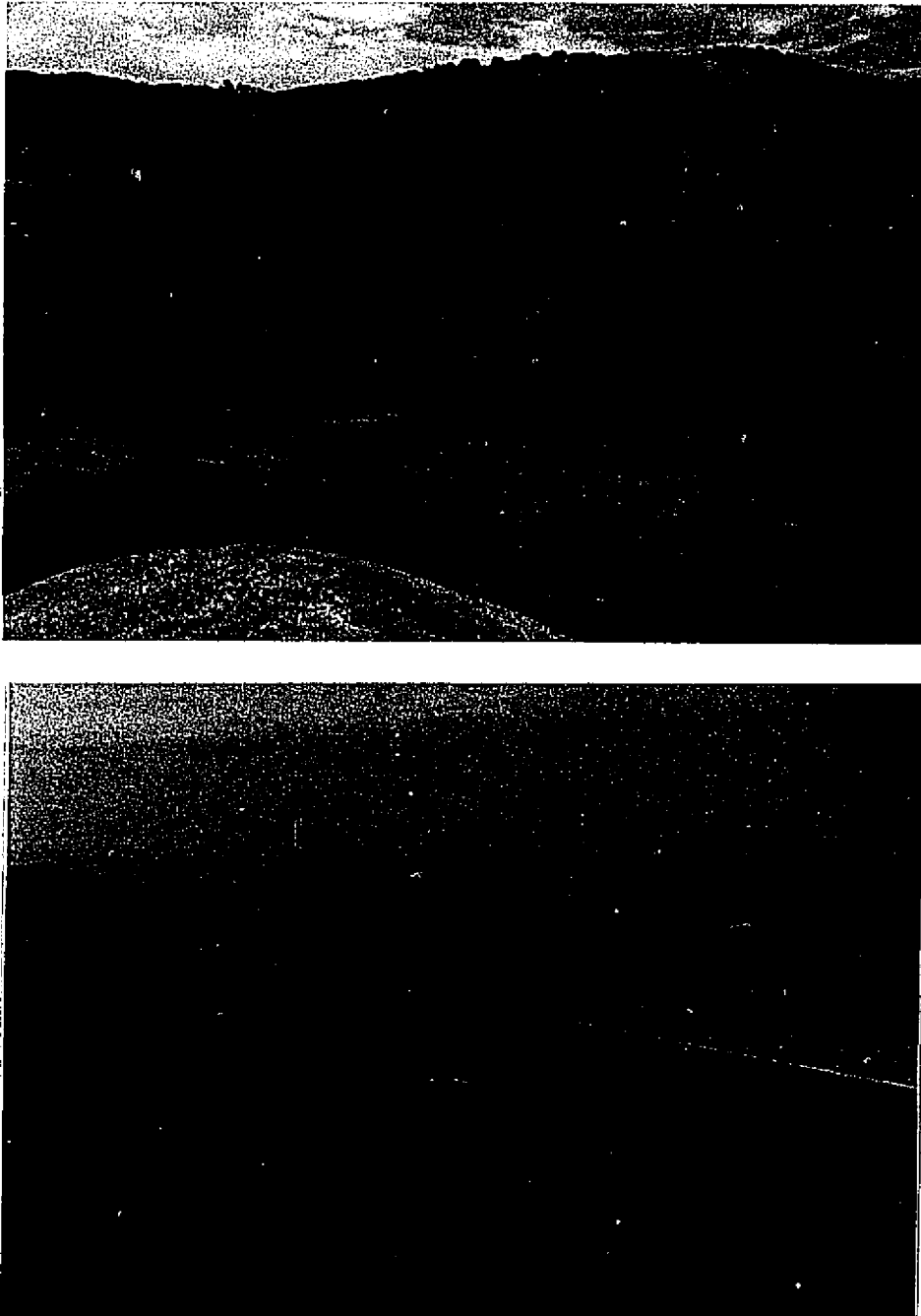


Figure 16.  
Livermore-Amador Valley Area, 1960-1970.





**Figure 17. Valley water development facilities.**

**Above:** Del Valle Reservoir was created when Del Valle Dam was completed early in 1969.

**Below:** The South Bay Aqueduct conveys State Project water to Zone 7, the Alameda County Water District, and the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

Township County Water District were adequate for municipal needs. PTCWD claimed rights to the "surplus waters" of Del Valle Creek. However, what was actually delivered to local customers was groundwater pumped from the largely-depleted west valley aquifers. Although this water cost the city less than half the price of State Project water, it was laden with high levels of minerals. Moreover, the failure of Zone 7 and Pleasanton to negotiate a contract also meant that flood control improvements for the troublesome area south of Highway 580 were postponed indefinitely.

Finally, in 1967 Pleasanton and Zone 7 reached an agreement whereby the functions of PTCWD would be eliminated after 1971. Ultimately, Zone 7 would serve as wholesaler for nearly the entire valley. Retailing agencies for Zone 7 water included not only the City of Pleasanton, but also VCSD, the privately-owned California Water Service Company (which served most of Livermore), and the City of Livermore.

Not all valley water users, however, have been served by Zone 7. In late 1966, residents of south San Ramon (in Contra Costa County) voted unanimously to substitute Mokelumne River water supplied by the East Bay Municipal Utilities District for the poor-quality well water delivered by VCSD. Also, because the mineral content of South Bay Aqueduct Water is far higher than that transported through the Hetch-Hetchy Aqueduct (around 200 ppm total dissolved solids, versus 30 or less from Hetch-Hetchy), both the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory and the G.E. Vallecitos nuclear research facility have purchased Tuolumne River

water supplied by the City of San Francisco.

In early 1969, Del Valle Dam was completed. The lake created thereby (Figure 17) not only provided flood control protection, but also served as a reservoir for water to be recharged into the groundwater basin through release into the Arroyo del Valle.

This water supply system proved adequate to facilitate growth in the valley during the 1960s. As early as 1968, however, Zone 7 officials already were concerned that continued growth would soon cause demand for water to outstrip treated supply (ACFC & WCD Zone 7 1969). At that time, the staff was instructed to prepare a report on the development of a second major project to serve the area into the 1980s.

#### Wastewater Treatment and Disposal

As noted previously, sewage treatment in the valley has presented special problems, since water draining from the basin inevitably percolates into the Niles Cone, which provides fresh water for the Alameda County Water District (serving Fremont, Newark, and Union City). In 1956, the Regional Water Pollution Control Board passed Resolution Number 226, stating that it would monitor closely the quality of water drawn from the Niles Cone.

Echoing proposals first aired during the mid-fifties, a report prepared by Kennedy Engineers for Alameda County in December 1960 recommended that all valley wastewater

eventually be treated at a single facility, and that a 25-mile outfall sewer be constructed leading to San Francisco Bay (Kennedy Engineers 1960). In June 1961, Regional Water Pollution Control Board Resolution 366 urged a valley-wide solution to the sewage disposal problem.

If there was in fact a logical entity to undertake such a project, it was the Zone 7 water agency. In 1965, the Zone was empowered by the state legislature to handle waste treatment. The following year, Kennedy Engineers recommended publicly that Zone 7 take on this new responsibility (The Independent, July 6, 1966). Because of the enormous expense involved, however, the idea of a valley-wide supersewer remained a pipe dream.

During the sixties, six separate entities treated wastewater in the valley, and released effluent either into the ground or into local streams. The treatment plants operated by the Castlewood Country Club, the Veterans Administration Hospital near Livermore, and Camp Parks were quite small (the flow from the latter was diverted into the VCSD system in February 1967). The three other dischargers, however, constituted major governmental entities.

In the face of the San Ramon Village proposal, the Regional Water Pollution Control Board consented to let the Valley Community Services District dump effluent from its new plant into the Alamo Canal, which empties into the Arroyo de la Laguna, which in turn feeds Alameda Creek. Constructed in 1961, the VCSD plant was engineered to meet exceedingly strict treatment standards; moreover, it was

built to be easily expandable from its original 2.5 million gallons per day capacity (dry weather flow) to an ultimate treatment capability of 16 mgd. Hence, the plant conceivably could serve a population of 216,000 (Pleasanton Times July 30, 1969: 8). This enabled the district to take an expansive attitude toward the use of its facilities, offering openly to serve neighboring territories. In a resolution dated September 5, 1961, the directors of VCSD declared:

WHEREAS, all sewer and water lines have been oversized to serve, not only the properties now within the boundaries of the District, but also all surrounding properties in the drainage basin susceptible of development....

BE IT RESOLVED that it is the policy of this district to make its sewer plant, water facilities and other facilities and services of the District available for use by other public agencies by contract...

(VCSD Resolution 52-61, September 5, 1961)

During the mid-sixties, VCSD made overtures to both Pleasanton and Livermore to combine all valley sewage treatment under its auspices. As described below, Pleasanton finally consented to the proposal; Livermore, however, saw no advantage to abandoning its own facilities.

The City of Livermore had taken a major step toward resolving its own sewage disposal problems in 1959 when the new treatment plant funded through the 1957 bond issue was completed. For several years, treated effluent from the facility was percolated into ponds overlying a portion of the abundant valley gravel beds. By 1962, however, the percolation beds were becoming filled with silt. The city



then began to dump its effluent into the nearby Arroyo Las Positas, which emptied into the Arroyo Mocho, and then into the Alamo Canal.

A problem soon developed because household detergents containing the foaming agent alkyl benzene sulfonate (ABS) were dissolved within the city's wastewater. Since ABS is extremely difficult to remove even through high-quality secondary treatment, by November 1962 reports began to circulate that mountains of foam up to six feet high were frothing menacingly down Alameda Creek.

In a resolution dated February 21, 1963, the RWPCB ordered Livermore to remedy the problem (RWPCB Resolution 446). Between July 1963 and November 1964, the city was prohibited from dumping any treated wastewater into the Arroyo. As work began on the expansion of the now-overloaded 2.5 mgd. treatment facility, the city considered purchasing an expensive "suds stripper" to remove the persistent ABS from its wastewater.

The phenomenon of foaming detergents in wastewater was, in fact, a nation-wide problem. Soon after the U.S. Congress threatened in 1965 to force the detergent industry to create ABS-free detergent formulas, such new products were in fact devised (Commoner 1966: 20-22). This washday miracle saved the city from some very expensive modifications of its treatment process.

Financed by federal grant funds and sewer connection fees, in 1966 the capacity of the plant was doubled to five million gallons per day. Moreover, some potential pollution

problems were averted when the city began to use treated effluent during the summer to irrigate nearby agricultural fields, the new Livermore Airport, and the municipal golf course.

On average, however, some 80% of the treated wastewater was still routinely discharged into the Arroyo Las Positas. It was not surprising, then, that this did not mark the end of Livermore's sewage-related problems. Pressured constantly by the Alameda County Water District, what was now called (as of September 20, 1963) the Regional Water Quality Control Board began to set increasingly rigorous requirements for Livermore's discharged wastewater. Consequently, although the city strived to meet the cleanup schedules set by RWQCB, the threat now loomed periodically that the standards would not be met, and the board might issue a "cease-and-desist" order. Such a declaration would bring new sewer connections to a sudden halt in Livermore.

Meanwhile, Pleasanton continued to operate its small, antiquated sewage plant on Sunol Boulevard. Although in 1960 the plant had been modified and expanded, it was subsequently determined that this facility should be phased out; eventually, all Pleasanton sewage would be channelled through the new VCSD treatment plant. Acrimonious relations between the City of Pleasanton and VCSD, however (discussed in Chapter IX), postponed this transition for several years. In June 1967, a Master Agreement was finally reached whereby VCSD would treat wastewater from the rapidly-growing

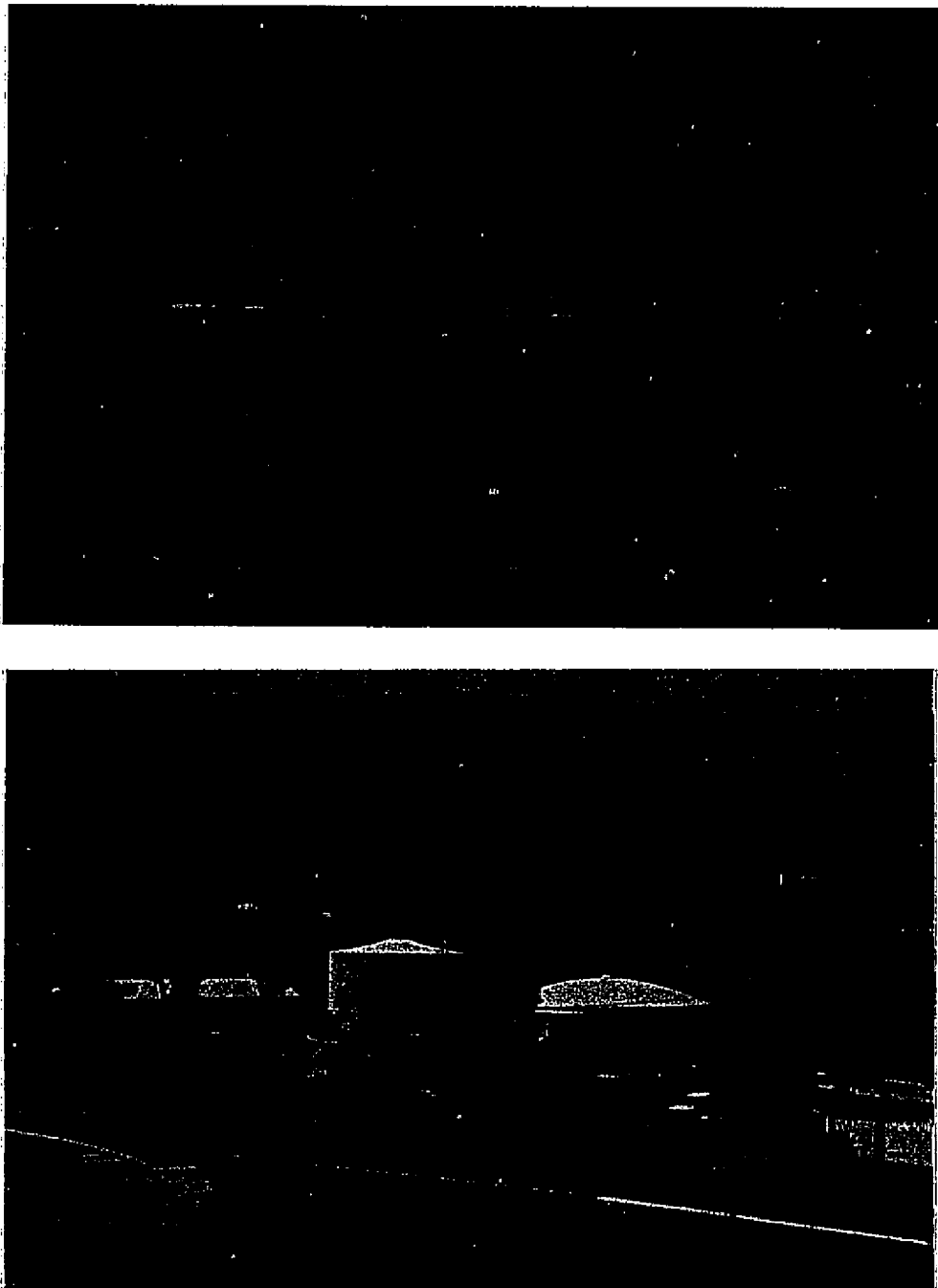
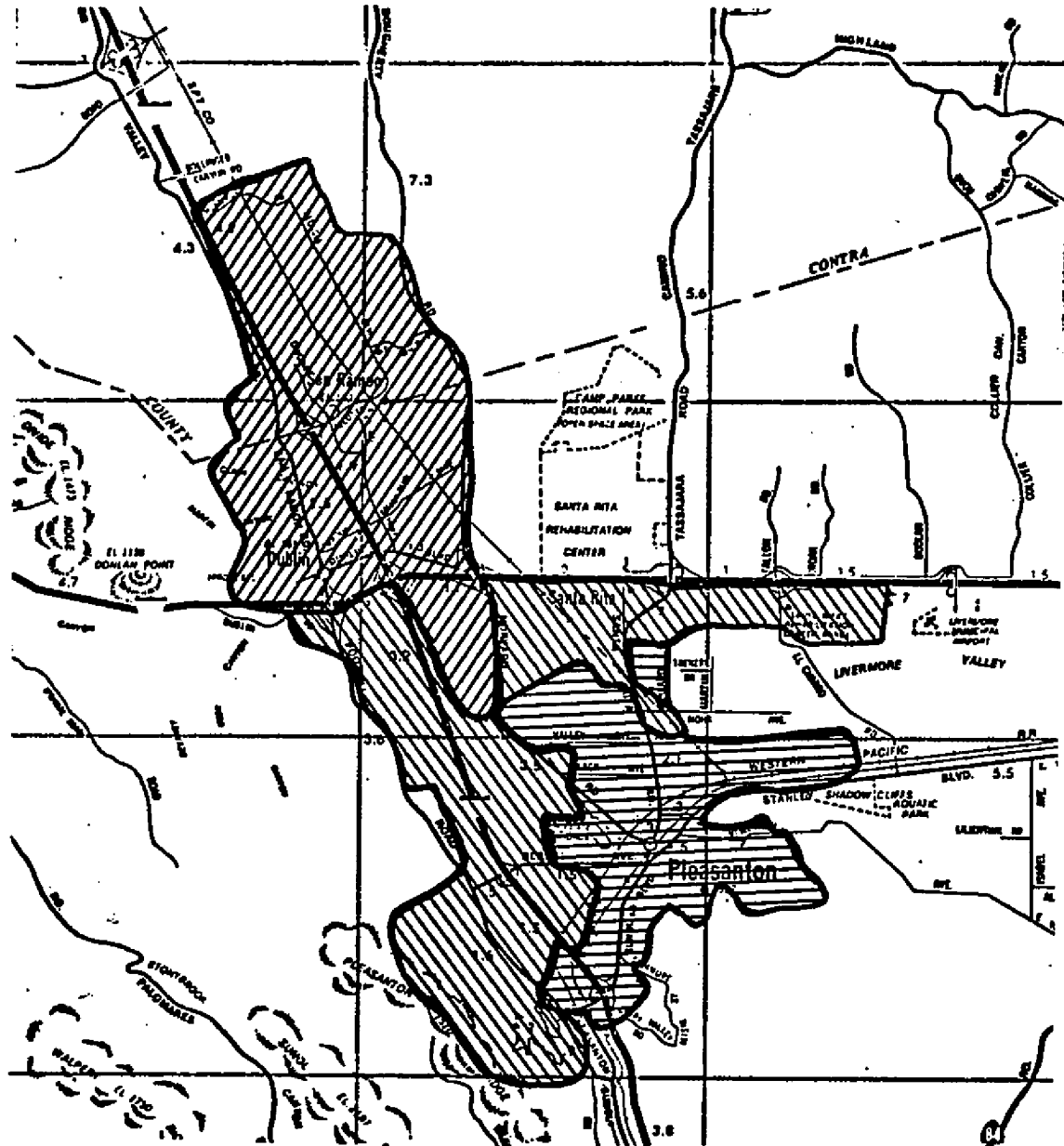


Figure 18. West valley wastewater treatment technology.  
Above: The state-of-the-art VCSD plant built by Volk-McLain.  
Below: The now-defunct City of Pleasanton Plant on Sunol Blvd.



- VCSD SERVICE AREA, TREATED BY VCSD
- CITY OF PLEASANTON, TREATED BY VCSD
- CITY OF PLEASANTON, TREATED BY PLEASANTON TREATMENT PLANT

Figure 19. West Valley Wastewater Service Areas.

Source: Arthur D. Little, Inc. (1974)

northern and western parts of Pleasanton. But it was not until 1980 that the quaint little blue treatment plant on Sunol Blvd. was finally closed.

### Schools

Typically, homes within new postwar "bedroom" suburbs were purchased by young couples entering their childrearing years. As a result, tremendous pressures were placed upon school districts to provide new facilities to meet mushrooming school enrollments. At the same time, particularly within middle-to-upper-income communities, quality educational programs were actively sought by local citizens. Consequently, the schools commonly became an arena for political strife.

The short-term planning problems posed by rising enrollments were complicated by the uncertainty of long-term need--whereas new subdivisions with young families placed the greatest demands upon elementary schools, the age structure of such neighborhoods invariably changed over time. As the local population aged, school enrollments eventually would level off or decline. Consequently, there was a financial risk involved in guessing when, where, or whether new schools would be needed.

During the period under consideration, California school districts were financed largely (50% or more) by local property taxes. Consequently, to build schools a community would have to float one or more general obligation bond issues. The difficulty with bonds was that

garnering the two-thirds majority necessary for passage was problematic. Even if most citizens favored a quality educational system, there invariably was resistance to increased taxation. Because of this, school finance often became the most emotional and trying issue within suburban politics.

As mentioned in Chapter V, Livermore schools were dependent upon the vagaries of Federal Impact Aid under Public Law 874. The Lawrence Livermore Laboratory was a boon to the local community in terms of its payroll, but the facility itself paid no taxes. With Livermore being an otherwise tax-poor municipality, funding from P.L. 874 comprised up to 15% of the annual operating budget for the Livermore Elementary and Livermore High School Districts; federal aid provided an even larger portion of their construction budgets. Between 1950 and 1959, the Livermore Elementary School District spent \$2.2 million for school construction. Of this sum, over \$950,000 came from federal funding (Bronzan 1973).

Because of the peculiar machinations of the U.S. Congress, this money could not be counted upon to arrive in time to pay the bills. Meanwhile, enrollment in the critical K-6 grade levels increased from 2,652 in 1960 to 6,804 in 1970. This combination of financial uncertainty and unrelenting growth meant that school construction in Livermore consistently lagged behind enrollment increases. Still, twelve new elementary schools were constructed

between 1958 and 1972, and the new Granada High School was opened in early 1963.

#### The Unification Campaigns

The first Livermore school had opened in 1866, four years after formation of the Livermore Elementary School District. As the rural economy thrived, numerous small school districts had been formed in the areas surrounding Livermore. Later, however, enrollments fell, and many of these districts ultimately lapsed. By 1950, only four remained. By 1965, only two were left: the Green and the Inman School Districts, serving 161 and 27 students, respectively (Bronzan 1973).

Beginning in the early sixties, the State of California began to offer subsidy bonuses to school systems that consolidated what in some cases were numerous local districts into a single entity. Consequently, in 1965 a campaign was initiated to merge the Livermore Elementary and Livermore High School districts with the two neighboring rural districts. Most voters from the small Green and Inman districts opposed giving up local control. There was overwhelming support for the move within Livermore, however, and in the election held on May 25, 1965, unification was passed by a composite vote of 2,494 to 914. The Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District was officially created on July 1, 1966.

As will be explained more fully in Chapter XI, the new school district was quickly beset by difficulties. Not only

were there serious financial problems, but classes within the lower grade levels were almost constantly on double sessions. Within an education-oriented community, it is not surprising that these shortcomings became a significant cause of discontentment by the end of the decade.

In the west valley, there were three school districts: the Pleasanton Joint School District, serving grades K-8; the Amador Valley Joint Union High School District; and the Murray School District, which served northern Pleasanton as well as Dublin and south San Ramon. Although faced with many of the same growth pressures as Livermore, Pleasanton and Dublin-San Ramon were more fortunate in avoiding administrative and financial difficulties. This was partly because P.L. 874 did not complicate school finance, but also because the heaviest growth in these areas came somewhat later than in Livermore. When the Pleasanton elementary district opened two new schools in 1968, these were the first to be completed in eight years. By the time the west valley homebuilding boom commenced in the late sixties, the state was taking a more active role in alleviating financial pressures on rapidly-growing districts.

In response to state pressures similar to those that prompted the unification campaign in Livermore, it was proposed in 1965 that the Pleasanton elementary, Murray, and neighboring Sunol Glen school districts be merged. However, resistance by Sunol and Dublin voters to a loss of local control caused the effort to fail. In an election held in June 1965, the proposal was defeated, 681-1,265. In both



Dublin and Sunol, the measure was turned down by a decisive 4-1 margin. Only in Pleasanton was the measure narrowly passed. For vainly approving consolidation, however, the Pleasanton districts were rewarded by the state with extra funding.

### Changes in Governmental Structure

By the sixties, the governmental structure in California metropolitan areas was already exceedingly complicated. By the early 1970s, there were 342 special districts in Los Angeles County, and 72 in Alameda County. By 1980, there were approximately 5,000 special districts in the state overall, including 1,300 school districts (Bell and Price 1980: 288). As this chapter has shown, the situation in the Livermore-Amador Valley with regard merely to water, sewage, and schools was quite complex, and destined to become more so.

Even by the early 1960s, this situation had become sufficiently troublesome to state and federal lawmakers to inspire some far-ranging reforms.

#### Regional Government

Most ambitious was the attempt to establish regional government agencies. Advocacy of regional authority was nothing new; in 1923, Lewis Mumford, Benton MacKaye and their colleagues in the Regional Planning Association of America had drafted a plan for the Greater New York area, using what today would be termed "ecological" guidelines.

Special-purpose regional agencies empowered to deal with specific problems were in fact common by the late 1950s. In the Bay Area, the Regional Water Pollution Control Board was established in 1949; in 1955 the Bay Area Air Pollution Control Board was born, and in 1957 the 5-county Bay Area Rapid Transit District was formed. Rarely, however, has comprehensive regional planning become more than an idea on paper. This is mostly because local governments have resisted reforms that would limit their own powers. Supported frequently by land developers accustomed to exerting influence at the local level, these small bodies collectively have maintained the political clout to prevent regional government from acquiring significant statutory authority.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, since the turn of the century efforts have emerged periodically to create regional planning agencies. In 1907, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, under the auspices of the Greater San Francisco Association, advocated the implementation of a borough system for the Bay Area much like that recently established in New York. Largely because of opposition from Oakland residents, the plan was defeated (Scott 1959: ch. 9).

During the closing months of World War II, executives from several large companies formed the Bay Area Council, a sort of clearinghouse for corporate views on public issues. Although the BAC's 1958 proposal for a "Golden Gate Authority" was defeated (mainly because of fierce resistance by suburban governments), the BAC has

continued to play an influential role in regional politics, largely because of the wealth and power of its individual members.

It was, in fact, in response to the perceived threat of a centralized, corporate-dominated regional agency that suburban governments agreed to form the alternative Association of Bay Area Governments in 1961. Since the sixties, a significant volume of useful data and regional planning suggestions have emerged from the ABAG offices; moreover, the federal grant review authority allotted to ABAG in 1969 because of its status as a regional Council of Governments (COG) rendered some of its decisions important to the development of areas like the Livermore-Amador Valley. For the most part, however, the agency has remained a "toothless tiger," possessing no real enforcement powers. As the valley entered its period of most rapid growth, then, planning was practiced only on a localized, piecemeal basis.

#### LAFCO

Aware of the interjurisdictional tangle that was developing as a result of "balkanized" suburban politics, Governor Edmund G. Brown in 1961 established a special commission to study California metropolitan problems. On the basis of the findings of this commission, in 1963 the legislature passed a bill requiring that a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) be established in all counties except San Francisco. Composed of two mayors, two county supervisors, and an at-large member selected by the other

four, these commissions were at first empowered simply to review annexation proposals. In 1965, the power of each LAFCO was expanded to include the review of incorporation proposals; the agency was also to act as an intergovernmental "referee," ruling as to which city or other governing body should have jurisdiction over a particular parcel of land. In 1971, as a consequence of the passage of Assembly Bill 2870 sponsored by Assemblyman John Knox (D-Richmond), LAFCO authority was expanded to include determination of the territorial "spheres of influence." These represented a projection of the probable ultimate physical boundary and service area of a local government within a time frame of ten to twenty years (Eells 1977: 12-13).

As might be expected, establishment of this watchdog agency was not popular with local government officials. Livermore City Manager William Parness, for example, declared that it was "a ridiculous process for us to go through" (Livermore Herald and News, February 5, 1964: 3). To some extent, this attitude reflected an expectable resentment in response to a reduction in local autonomy. Ultimately, however, there was good reason for cynicism toward LAFCO. In making its decisions, each commission was supposed to be nonpartisan, acting in accordance with clearly-delineated technical guidelines. Given that the commissions were composed of elected political officials, however, this assumption of neutrality was at times highly suspect. Neutral or not, however, the Alameda County LAFCO

would play a pivotal role within valley development from the mid-sixties onward.

It is a matter of conjecture whether a powerful regional planning agency would have prevented the growth-related problems that will be described in the following chapters; after all, a regional agency may be susceptible to political pressures from the same special interests that have influenced city governments. It will become apparent, however, that the governmental system that did prevail was inadequate to prevent the onset of serious environmental problems, and was both unwilling and unable to slow down a growth process that by the late sixties was out of control.

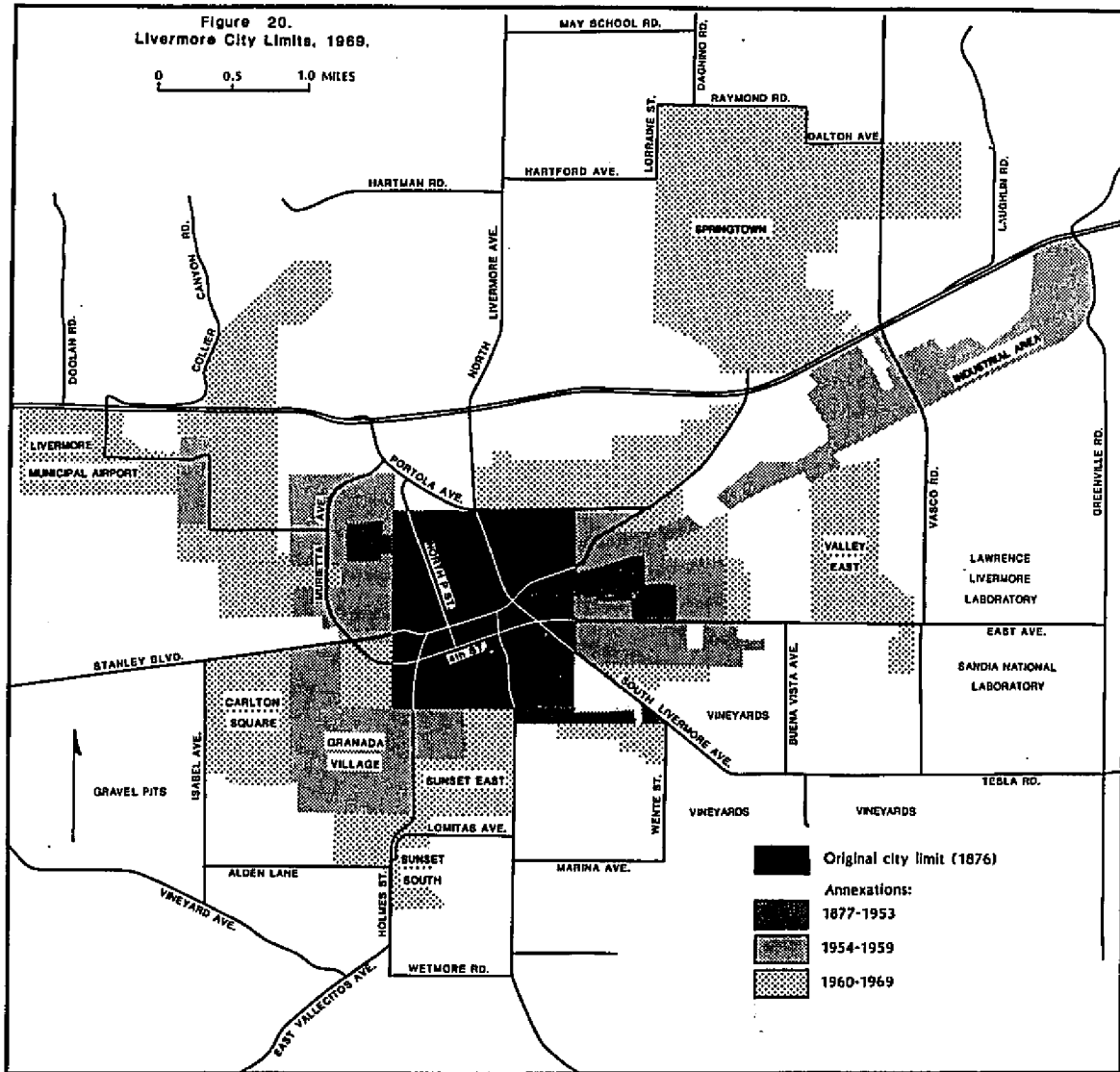
## Chapter VIII

### Livermore: Unbalanced Growth, Polarized Politics

The arrival of the Radiation Laboratory had produced a growth boom in Livermore during the 1950s, with accompanying problems and social stresses. It was during the sixties, however, that the city underwent its most rapid development. Between 1960 and the onset of the construction slump of 1974-75, the population rose from 16,058 to around 45,000, an increase of nearly nine percent per year. The territorial expansion of Livermore during the sixties was considerable, as illustrated by Figure 20. The reality of unrelenting "bedroom" development was far different from the steady, balanced growth anticipated by many residents. Moreover, the homebuilders and lab professionals had very different ideas regarding what types of housing should be provided. Consequently, by the mid-sixties the community was divided over zoning and planning strategy.

### The Commuter Influx

To some degree, the continued homebuilding boom in Livermore was sustained by ongoing expansion of Lawrence Laboratory. Between 1960 and 1964, the total number of lab employees rose from about 4,200 to over 5,500 (Table 4, p. 107). Although the workforce continued to increase slowly (peaking at 5,900 in 1968), federal cutbacks in research and



development caused a decline to under 5,500 by 1974. Just as important to Livermore growth, between 1960 and 1970 the percentage of lab employees residing in Livermore increased from 44% to nearly 57%. Overall, lab workers accounted for the addition of several thousand new Livermore residents during the sixties.

A major change, however, was that after 1965, population increase was not matched by expansion of the job base. Overall, whereas the valley population grew from 30,100 to 79,100 between 1960 and 1970, employment increased only from 10,300 to 21,150 (City of Livermore 1976: 10,13). This trend toward unbalanced growth continued through the seventies.

The greatest source of new population was the penetration of the "commuter frontier" into the valley after completion of the interstate highway projects. Improved access made a valley address both feasible and attractive for many whose jobs were located as far west as San Francisco, as far north as Walnut Creek and Concord, and as far south as San Jose. Because land values were substantially lower, houses were cheaper than along the bay plain. On average, a comparable home sold for between ten and twenty percent less in Livermore than in Fremont.

Valley homebuilders attempted to attract potential buyers throughout the East Bay, placing large ads in the Sunday real estate section of the large-circulation Oakland Tribune. In 1966, for example, the Hofmann Company purchased a half-page space to herald its moderately-priced



(\$17,000-\$20,000) Carlton Square homes in western Livermore. The pitch to potential commuters was clear. In bold print, the ad declared: "New MacArthur Hiway 50 freeway cuts driving time to Oakland and San Francisco in Half" (Oakland Tribune, April 3, 1966: 1-C).

Similarly, Masud Mehran's Sunset Development Company sought to appeal to the desire of city-weary residents to escape to the peaceful countryside. Accompanying a picture of parents with three young children, the ad copy read:

This is an especially lovely time of the year in the vintage valley of Livermore. The hills are blessed with the soft, green mantle of spring. In this quiet valley, flowing inward from the bay, you and your family may retreat from the congestion, sounds and hustle of the city. In the clean, crisp air, family fun seems to take on a brighter perspective. And this is just ONE of the many, many reasons why the community of SUNSET is one of the fastest-growing in the entire East Bay.

(Oakland Tribune, April 3, 1966: 2-C)

With new homes accessible to East Bay employment centers available at attractive prices, thousands of families moved into the valley. According to one report, during 1965 60% of new homes in Livermore were sold to commuters (The Independent, August 10, 1966: 14).

Although a sizable commuter population emerged during this period, Livermore was by no means simply a bedroom for the greater East Bay. In 1970, 78% of Livermore wage-earners still worked within the Livermore-Amador Valley, as compared with 46% of Pleasanton workers and only 10% of those living in Dublin and San Ramon (Arthur D. Little, Inc.

1974: 27). This was attributable mainly to the high employment levels at the Lawrence and Sandia Laboratories.

### The Search for a Job Base

Despite the continuing demographic weight of the LLL population, the civic influence of the laboratory community was diluted somewhat by the commuter influx. Moreover, this process was abetted, albeit slightly, by the diversification of the community job base. Some new jobs derived from the provision of services (such as schools) that accommodated the growth already occurring, plus the construction industry itself. Another job-providing institution was the new 46-bed Valley Memorial Hospital, built in 1961 on a site donated by the Kaiser Sand and Gravel Company. In 1964, Control Data Corporation built a branch office near the intersection of Vasco and East Avenues, from which it leased sophisticated computers to the Lawrence Laboratory. Finally, in 1968 the Hexcel Corporation acquired Coast Manufacturing and Supply, taking over the latter's glass fabrics operations on Trevarno Road. All of these investments combined, however, accounted for but a small number of additional jobs.

To community boosters, the failure to generate significant primary employment was disappointing. The 1957 Urban Land Institute panel study had concluded that with adequate sewerage and water supply, and with a reasonably uncomplicated government structure, the Livermore Valley had

bright prospects for attracting industry. Strenuous efforts by the Livermore city government and chamber of commerce to draw industry had begun during the late fifties. The industrial sewer line and storm drainage system had been installed by 1960; South Bay Aqueduct water became available in 1962.

In this campaign to solicit industrial development, the chamber was acknowledged as the "advertising and promotional" agency for the city; it was provided up to \$10,000 per year to finance its booster-oriented activities. In March 1962, a sign was placed along Highway 50 to inform passing motorists that one could "Grow With Southern Alameda County" by locating a business within the 600-acre Livermore Industrial Area. A new sign erected in October 1964 proclaimed Livermore as the "City of Energy." Also in 1964, the chamber's Industrial Development Committee prepared a handsome map depicting the facilities available to potential clients. Although the maps were distributed widely to industrial realtors and corporations, the response was minimal. Throughout the decade, the official chamber "progress shovel" was brought out for all too few groundbreaking ceremonies.

Clearly, the campaign to attract industry was unsuccessful. There were some near-misses, such as the 1962 decision by International Harvester not to open a new plant in Livermore, after having taken an option on a site for that purpose. The heavy equipment manufacturer instead moved its Emeryville plant to an old Dodge automobile

facility in San Leandro (Livermore Herald and News, September 11, 1962; December 19, 1962). Similarly, Trailmobile Corporation decided at the eleventh hour to locate in Union City, rather than Livermore. Even such locational cliff-hangers were exceptional, however. Corporations simply were not interested in moving to the "City of Energy."

In response to this legacy of frustration, there was a certain amount of finger-pointing by local residents. There reputedly was some doubt regarding the commitment of the citizenry to industrial development. Cited most often was an alleged anti-business attitude on the part of certain "rad labbers" within the Livermore city government. According to the city manager at the time, William Parness (personal interview), industrial realtors told him repeatedly that the hostility toward business of many LLL scientists and engineers was a discouragement to potential clients. Nevertheless, he could recall no instance in which a company decided not to locate in Livermore because of this attitude.

The chamber of commerce claimed that corporations were reluctant to move to the valley because the available labor pool was inadequate. The consequences of this belief could be summarized by the slogan, "jobs follow housing." This bit of lay industrial location theory caused the chamber to strongly support unrestricted residential development, even in the absence of balanced growth. As long as a good "business climate" was maintained, so the thinking went,

industry would eventually arrive.

While somewhat valid as a general principle, this argument was spurious with regard to Livermore. The valley was sufficiently populous to staff three nuclear research laboratories; moreover, thousands of residents commuted daily to jobs elsewhere in the East Bay.

Ultimately, there were three principal reasons for the lack of corporate interest in Livermore. First, the Lawrence Laboratory turned out not to produce a sizable multiplier effect. There appeared nearby only a few small companies specializing in precision electronic instruments or other sophisticated technological equipment. In one case, Lawrence Lab engineer-turned-entrepreneur Michael Uthe complained that valley realtors refused to offer the short-term leases needed for an uncertain new venture (Uthe ultimately located his UTI Instruments Corporation in Mountain View). More significantly, however, the bulk of research conducted within the university-run facility was highly specific to nuclear weapons design and did not generate the "spin-offs" that contributed to spectacular growth within the electronics industry in the nearby Santa Clara Valley. Finally, laboratory subcontracting was handled on the basis of strict competitive bidding; apparently, there was no real cost advantage to firms that might locate nearby. Consequently, except for building construction, very little local subcontracting was offered.

Second, in terms of regional development, the expectation for industry in the Livermore Valley was

premature. Relative to the existing job-producing centers in the Bay Area, the city was in an outlying location. As will be discussed in the following chapter, even the Dublin-San Ramon and Pleasanton industrial areas, attractively located close to the junction of two interstate freeways, were largely vacant throughout this period.

According to one account, the semi-remote location of Livermore made the costs of conducting even routine business prohibitive. Bob Hampton, whose Lox Equipment Company (manufacturers of cryogenic vessels) moved from Oakland to Livermore, claimed that his phone bills after the move were higher than his rent had been in his previous location (The Independent, March 29, 1967: 13).

That the valley was not ready for large-scale industrial development is underscored by another oft-cited phenomenon: the apparent indifference of the largest landowners within the area zoned industrial. The Southern Pacific and Western Pacific Railroads reputedly took little interest in the potential uses of their holdings, except to insist that any industrial leasee be able to produce carloads of freight for rail transport. According to City Manager Parness, this reflected not apathy, but their own appraisal that the development of the Livermore area lay in the future. As a result, the real estate divisions of these giant corporations would routinely redirect potential clients to their holdings in other parts of the Bay Area, or even other parts of the state. Parness cited the Trailmobile

case, where the Southern Pacific Company apparently encouraged the last-minute move to Union City.

### Downtown Redevelopment

In terms of the overall development of the city, the industrial strategy was complemented by an effort to revitalize Livermore's downtown area. As in so many postwar suburbs, new subdivisions were accompanied by small shopping centers easily accessible by automobile. Although the first proposals for neighborhood centers were fought by downtown merchants, such opposition was short-lived.

For those shopping needs that could not be satisfied at the neighborhood centers, many Livermore residents traveled west to Hayward, or else north to Walnut Creek, the two major regional retail centers closest to the valley. Moreover, by the late sixties, the accessibility of Dublin-San Ramon by highway was facilitating its own transformation into a sub-regional shopping area.

By 1963, there was speculation that Carlton Development Corporation might construct a 60-acre regional center along East Stanley Boulevard west of town. Whereas this was in fact mere conjecture, it was cited as further evidence that downtown Livermore was in trouble. The cluttered appearance of the commercial area was exacerbated by the fact that First Street served the dual function of "main street" and conduit for State Highway 84, running southwest to northeast.

In response to the widespread perception that downtown

Livermore was languishing, the city initiated a study in December 1964 to assess the prospects for upgrading the area. After a "trade study" was completed by the consulting firm Development Research Associates (1967), a Downtown Development Commission was established in August 1967, at the behest of the city council. In November, it was recommended that city commercial development be suspended while alternatives for downtown revitalization were under study (Livermore City Council Minutes, November 27, 1967).

Although funding never became available for a complete facelift for downtown, some changes were made as a result of "The Livermore Plan," formulated during 1969-70. After arduous negotiations, Southern Pacific Railroad agreed to move its tracks and right-of-way 700 feet to the north, to run parallel with those owned by the Western Pacific. This consolidation of the railroads was complemented by a proposal to build new roadway underpasses at P St. and Livermore Avenue. As a result of all this activity, a large strip of land south of Railroad Avenue would be freed for commercial development. Additionally, on First St., an overpass would be built to facilitate traffic flow. As part of the same overall revitalization program, trees were planted, gaudy store signs and overhead power lines were eliminated, new light fixtures were installed, and a fountain was erected at the junction of Livermore Avenue and First Street.

Downtown revitalization was not completed until well



into the 1970s, because the process did not go smoothly. Many local residents resented paying extra taxes to subsidize the downtown area. Moreover, a prime section of First Street real estate was (and still is) controlled by an absentee landlord with little apparent interest in Livermore affairs. Because of resistance to the prospect of increased taxes citywide, a special assessment district was created, through which only property owners likely to reap direct benefits from the revitalization would pay the extra taxes to fund the improvements.

In retrospect, some residents believe that the city erred in remaking its downtown according to a "modern" image (Figure 21). The city center lacks the charm of Main Street in Pleasanton. Still, compared with the jumble of telephone poles, railroad crossings, signs and delapidated buildings that existed before revitalization, the area was definitely enhanced. Economically, however, inner-city Livermore has continued to stagnate.

#### The Politics of Residential Development

Despite unceasing local efforts to generate commerce and industry, most development proposals in Livermore involved housing tracts composed of single-family detached dwellings. Consequently, debate within the community's public sphere crystallized around the politics of subdivisions.

The occupational breakdown provided in Table 8 reveals

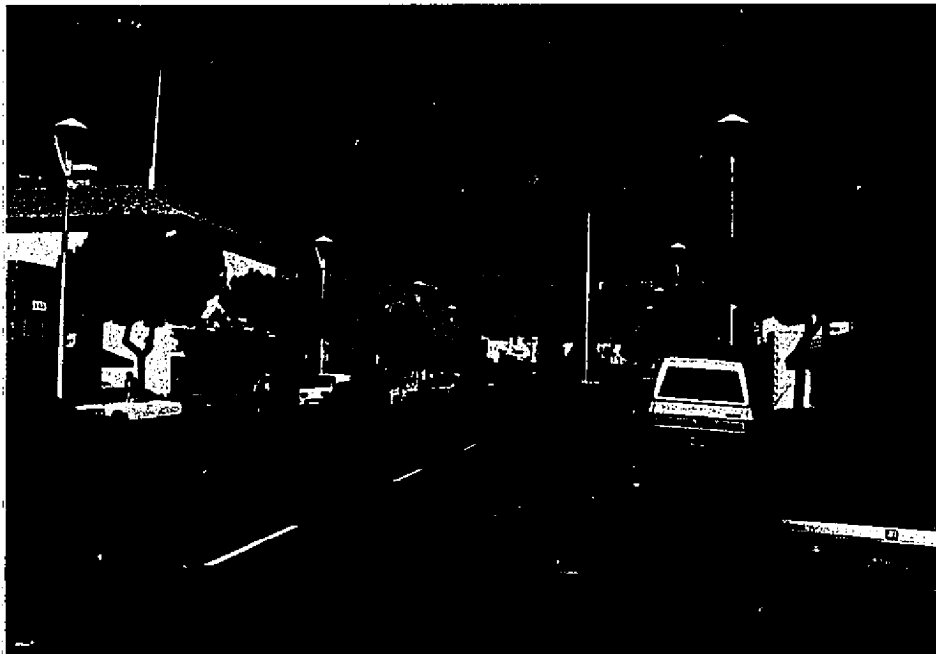


Figure 21. The changing face of downtown Livermore.  
Above: First Street during the early 1950s.  
Below: The same area in 1985.

that by 1970 Livermore was largely a "white collar" community, in which a high percentage of residents were professional-technical workers. These census categories, however, do not convey adequately the social basis for the tumultuous dynamics that characterized Livermore development politics. Consequently, the present discussion will be framed in terms of five principal influential factions: the landowners, land developers, downtown merchants, weapons lab professionals, and commuters.

The landowners included ranchers, vineyard operators, and the few remaining local farmers. Since not many large landowners lived within Livermore itself, they could not participate directly in municipal politics. However, their influence was deeply felt by the school districts and the Zone 7 Board of Directors, and at the county level. Although most vintners and ranchers expressed no immediate desire to sell their holdings (despite in some cases the prospect of huge profits), they believed firmly in private property rights, and hence opposed legislative proposals to restrict land development.

Consequently, on growth issues the landowners were usually allied with the second major faction, the homebuilders and associated development interests. As in any rapidly-growing area, speculators, land developers, and realtors were plentiful in the valley during the sixties. Not surprisingly, more than a few individuals from these professions were active politically.

For example, the county supervisor from the First

District (which encompassed the valley and the Fremont area), was a Pleasanton realtor and insurance agent, John D. Murphy. Murphy, who was appointed by Governor Edmund G. Brown to succeed Chester F. Stanley after the latter's death in 1960, was believed by political opponents to be allied closely with what was dubbed the "Hayward machine." This development-oriented coalition of homebuilders, realtors, and construction union officials allegedly included Assemblyman Carlos Bee and such prominent attorneys as Jack Smith and George Oakes, both of whom were also land developers and one-time mayors of Hayward. The sprawling spectre of Hayward itself led opponents to claim by the end of the sixties that its politicians would unhesitatingly turn the Livermore area into "another San Fernando Valley." In addition to the Democratic party, the pro-growth interests exerted influence through such organizations as the Associated Home Builders of the Greater East Bay (which represented some 200 building firms), and the construction trade unions.

As indicated in Chapter V, it was a group of Hayward Democrats who in 1959 had convinced Governor Brown to award the new state college campus to Hayward rather than Pleasanton. The perception that there existed a "Hayward machine," however, was accurate only inasmuch as all of the individuals and groups mentioned above viewed the valley primarily in terms of its potential for development.

The third faction participating in Livermore politics

Table 8

Occupational Structure of  
Pleasanton, Livermore and Dublin, 1970

(% , by category)

	Pleasanton	Livermore	Dublin	U.S.
White Collar	66.4	61.0	53.7	48.3
Professional, technical, and kindred workers	24.9	30.0	16.6	14.2
Managers, administrators	15.2	8.5	11.5	10.5
Sales Workers	9.1	6.9	9.4	6.2
Clerical & kindred workers	17.2	15.6	16.2	17.4
Blue Collar	22.9	26.4	33.9	35.3
Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers	13.1	14.4	18.4	12.9
Operatives, excluding transport	4.1	4.6	7.0	17.7
Transport equip. operatives	2.8	3.2	5.5	
Laborers, except farm	2.9	4.2	3.0	4.7
Service	10.1	11.8	12.2	12.4
Services workers, except household	8.7	11.0	11.4	--
Private household workers	1.4	0.8	0.8	--
Farm Workers	0.6	0.8	0.2	4.0
Farmers and farm managers	0.3	0.3	--	--
Farm laborers	0.3	0.5	0.2	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1973, 1983).

was the downtown business community, as represented by the chamber of commerce and the local newspapers, the Herald and the News (the two papers began publishing jointly in 1962 as the Herald and News). As the most vociferous of local boosters, the downtown merchants usually were allied with landowners and developers on land-use issues. Once dominant in city politics, this group had but one or two representatives on the city council at any given time during the sixties. However, the alleged ties between the local chamber and the "Hayward interests" became tighter after 1965, when the Herald and News was purchased by Floyd Sparks, conservative Republican publisher of the Hayward Daily Review.

Fourth, there were the "rad labbers" and their families. Although forming a declining proportion of the total population, this group (including both LLL and Sandia employees) remained remarkably and disproportionately influential in local politics. Beginning in 1956, there were always lab personnel on the city council and planning commission; during most of the period after 1960, they formed a majority on both panels. Highly educated, motivated, and feeling the strong stake in local affairs that comes from working and living within the same community, lab professionals and their spouses seemed to dominate Livermore politics.

Despite the fact that the weapons laboratory provided the population base for a liberal, anti-developer faction within the community, however, lab employees were hardly of

a single viewpoint on development issues. First, about half of the LLL workforce was composed of technical and clerical support staff. This blue collar and lower-level white collar component within the Livermore community was unpredictable regarding growth issues. Second, another 5-10% of the lab staff consisted of managers and other administrative personnel. This group was active within local politics, and some of its members were as supportive of growth as the chamber of commerce. With their strong educational background and cosmopolitan outlook, however, they also adhered to principles of "good planning," and could be persuaded to support fiscal measures to make growth self-supporting.

What gave Livermore its distinctive politics was the one-third of the LLL staff that consisted of scientists, mathematicians and engineers. It was this group, and in particular the scientists, that provided the foundation for a "residentialist" politics. Residentialism refers to a political outlook that stresses the interests of citizens qua homeowners and long-term members of a community, rather than as business owners or land developers. Prominent in such university towns as Boulder, Madison, Ann Arbor and Palo Alto during the sixties, the residentialist banner was carried by a small cadre of highly-committed individuals with the intellect and energy to foray into the combative sphere of local politics.

The Livermore residentialists saw themselves as

committed to quality development, a balanced, attractive community, and local control over growth. Their opponents, however, dismissed their efforts as a self-interested campaign to protect their suburban enclave from any further development that might bring in the "wrong type" of people.\*

It was largely because of the lab population that Livermore became the home of an unusual suburban newspaper, The Independent. Beginning in September 1963, the paper was published by Smith College graduate Joan Kinney. After earning a graduate degree in English from the University of Chicago, Kinney had come to the valley to work for the short-lived Livermore Pioneer. Discovering that Livermore was a cosmopolitan community in which, for example, the plays of Bertolt Brecht were performed by an amateur theater company, Kinney decided to seek financial backing to start her own controlled-distribution newspaper. Kinney's own increasingly liberal political views found a receptive audience within the lab professional community. Soon after its inception, The Independent became the indispensable voice for the residentialist viewpoint, balancing the prodeveloper attitudes of the other local newspapers.

The final and somewhat mysterious demographic element was the commuter population, a minority constituency that became increasingly prominent after the mid-sixties.

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 \* Some residentialist concerns parallel those of neighborhood homeowners' associations. They differ in that issues usually are city-wide in scope, and are framed in terms of the "community good," rather than individual property values. What is controversial is the sincerity of this apparent selflessness.



Because the (usually male) head of household spent considerable time outside the valley, the political participation level of this faction was reputedly low. Although the wives of commuters were more rooted within the community, male domination of household priorities was sufficiently powerful during the sixties to discourage women from independent involvement in political affairs. Still, because commuters viewed their city from the "consumption" perspective only, they were not as instinctively pro-growth as the local business community. When (and only when) growth-related problems became severe, their allegiance could be mobilized to the residentialist cause.

#### Residentialists vs. Developers

Out of this volatile mixture of social factions, the greatest tension within the Livermore political community was between the homebuilders and the residentialists. The former had an interest in constructing new dwellings at the highest possible profit levels, hampered by the fewest requirements and restrictions. The latter, spearheaded by lab professionals, wished to develop a "quality" community, in terms of parks, schools, and amenities, at the least cost to taxpayers.

The terrain of this struggle was the power of the city to regulate residential development. Because of its peculiarly talented population, Livermore became a pioneer community in its planning practices. The 1958 sewer connection fee increase had been an early manifestation of a

hard-nosed attitude toward builders. In 1961, the city won a major victory when the California Supreme Court upheld Livermore's requirement [Associated Home Builders v. City of Livermore (1961) 56 Cal. 2d 847]. With this victory, however, the city also earned the undying enmity of the developers.

To some extent, the tightening of restrictions came in response to problems afflicting early subdivisions. Several residentialists recalled that homebuilders cut corners whenever possible in order to increase their profit margins. For example, the reluctance of one builder to provide an adequately-wide streetside planting strip caused the trees to crack the sidewalks as they grew; ultimately, many of them had to be removed.

#### Granada Village

A pivotal event in Livermore's development experience was the Granada Village project undertaken by Masud Mehran's Sunset Development Company. Proposed in 1958, this gigantic series of subdivisions was designed to include ultimately over 2,000 homes on 507 acres (Livermore Herald, April 11, 1958: 7). Constructed between 1959 and 1961, the Granada development was in many respects the quintessence of "progressive" tract design. Streets were curvilinear, in contrast to the grid pattern characterizing most previous tracts. Soundwalls were erected along collector streets. Mehran, however, included only a few acres of parkland for the entire "village," and little attention was paid to the

effectiveness of collector streets in handling traffic flow into and out of the new neighborhoods (John Shirley, personal interview).

Partly in response to the shortcomings of the Granada project, in 1962 a parks dedication requirement was drafted by the city government, to be incorporated into annexation agreements. So that such legislation could be adopted by ordinance, an enabling bill was passed in 1965 by the state legislature in Sacramento. As with the sewer connection fee, local developers opposed all parks dedication requirements, and attempted to prevent their passage into law. The legality of parkland dedication ordinances was upheld by the California Supreme Court in 1971 [Associated Home Builders of the Greater East Bay v. City of Walnut Creek (1971) 4 Cal.3d 633].

### Springtown

Another crucial event was the rise and fall of "Springtown," a large "planned adult community" located north of Highway 50. More than a few residents expressed serious reservations regarding this "leapfrog" development, for which a major general plan amendment was necessary. The Springtown proposal, however, was heralded as a thoroughly planned, 1,000-acre self-contained community of up to 3,600 homes and 440 multiple units to be sold only to individuals 50 years and older (consequently no schools would be needed). Its developer, the Marnel Development Company of San Diego, had already constructed Palm City, a successful

retirement community near Palm Springs. The company had also become well-known in homebuilding circles for its Severin Grossmont Hills luxury homes development in La Mesa, south of San Diego. Surely, this company represented "quality development." Moreover, the developers eliminated one potential problem when they agreed to construct the sewer trunk line connecting the new homes to the Livermore wastewater treatment facility. Finally, it was argued by Springtown proponents that if Livermore would not accommodate the project, it would be built anyway, under county control.

Consequently, even though the community constituted a leapfrog and included home lots smaller than the city minimum 6,000 square feet (Figure 22), no councilmembers and only one planning commissioner (local merchant Burt Duke) opposed the planned unit development proposal when it came to a vote in May 1962 (Livermore Herald and News, May 15, 1962).

In January 1963, Springtown held its official "grand opening." The festive mood was short-lived, however. Over the following months, several problems became apparent. To venture from Springtown to the rest of Livermore, for example, motorists were forced to negotiate a hazardous highway crossing. During 1963, five people were killed making the attempt. By the time construction of a \$1.3 million freeway overpass was finally initiated late in 1964, that toll had risen to eight. In January 1964, it was

announced suddenly that Marnel had cut back its Springtown sales and maintenance staff, and had sold its Palm City development (Livermore Herald and News, January 8, 1964). By April, it was apparent that Marnel was experiencing financial difficulties. Its offices were closed late in May (The Independent, May 27, 1964). Marnel finally defaulted to the City of Livermore on \$36,000 dollars worth of improvement bonds.

Ultimately, the development was aborted, then sold to Sproul Homes of Newport Beach. For the 400 or so homes that were built, the requirement that they be purchased only by older adults was dropped. The shopping center and other facilities that would have made Springtown a somewhat self-contained community were never built. Springtown was merely a partially-completed, leapfrog subdivision.

### The Zoning Controversy

The shortcomings of Granada Village convinced some residentialists that even high-quality developers such as Masud Mehran had to be dealt with from a basis in specific, codified requirements. The Marnel fiasco, on the other hand, reminded Livermore citizens that no matter what might be promised by homebuilders, ultimately they are not part of the local community and take no responsibility for their impact upon a city's growth.

With the parks dedication requirement and sewer connection fee already in effect, the trend toward tougher development standards continued in 1964, when the city

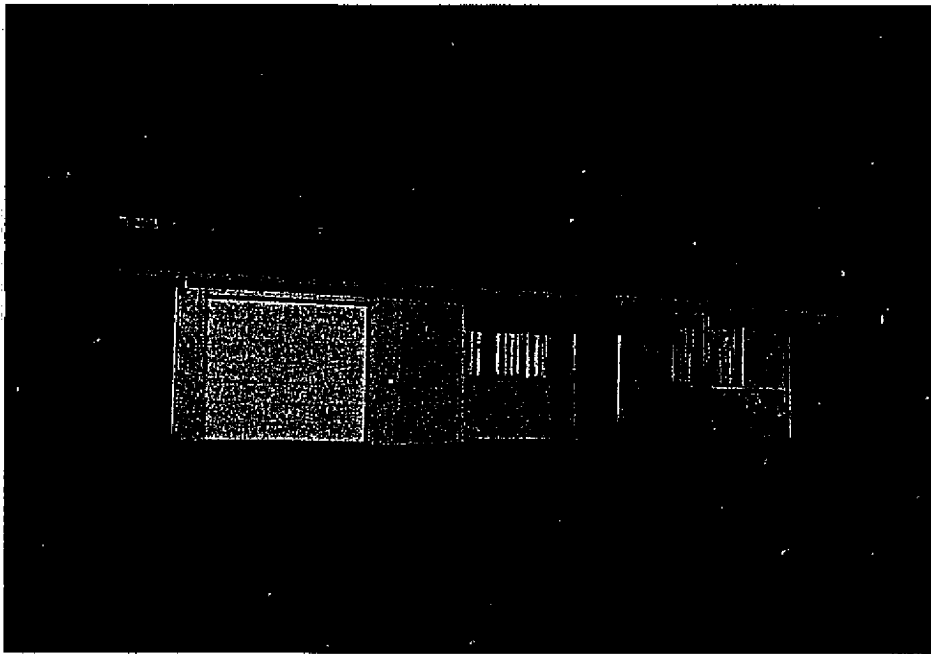


Figure 22. Homes in two giant Livermore subdivisions.  
Above: A typical home in Granada Village, built  
by Sunset Development Company.  
Below: Many of the original Springtown homes were  
small, built to suit an expected population of  
retirees.

revised the section of its zoning ordinance dealing with residential density. It was during this process that Lawrence Laboratory chemist Donald Miller emerged as a principal spokesman for the residentialist point of view.

Miller's political involvement was inspired in part by a geographical anomaly regarding subdivision practices. Whereas quarter-acre or larger lots have been the norm in much of the suburban U.S., California developers from a very early date provided homes with but meager front, rear, and side yards. This was in part a reflection of the power of land speculators (including the railroads) to influence the morphology of urban development during the early decades of growth following the gold rush. Small lots allegedly were satisfactory to home purchasers, because the semi-arid climate made gardens difficult to maintain. In any case, small lots had become customary within California housing tracts by the 1920s.

Raised in Oakland, Miller spent time as a postdoctoral fellow at Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York. While on Long Island, he was impressed by the large residential lots that apparently were a standard part of the new home "package." After arriving in Livermore in 1956, he searched in vain for a home on a lot larger than 6,000 square feet. It was this experience that motivated Miller to become involved in local politics.

At public meetings, Miller routinely argued for a 10,000 square foot minimum lot requirement, a size which homebuilders considered outrageous. In his unflagging

defense of strict city controls to ensure high-quality development, however, Miller was sufficiently articulate and compelling to mobilize many in the community who otherwise might never have taken the slightest interest in side-lot requirements and other technical aspects of residential zoning ordinances (Joan Kinney and Joan Boer, personal interviews).

By early 1964, many residents felt the zoning standards adopted in September 1960 (shortly after completion of the general plan) were no longer adequate. Specifically, it was felt that too many subdivisions consisted of monotonously similar homes crowded together on small (6,000 square foot) lots. The city council allegedly was caving in to the wishes of builders to construct nothing but uniform, medium-density subdivisions, in which the largest possible house (up to 2,700 square feet) was squeezed into the smallest possible lot.

In response, there was a movement led by Miller to increase the minimum lot size. In a long letter to the editor of The Independent dated May 9, 1964, he claimed that

despite our original intent to become a pleasant suburban community, we are rapidly becoming a high-density city, crowded with apartments, with everyone else on small lots crammed close to his neighbor.

(The Independent, May 9, 1964: 4)

Miller claimed that since the drafting of the first (1957) version of the general plan, the proportion of total city residential area designated for one-third acre ("acreage") residential lots had steadily diminished from



62% to 15%, with a corresponding increase in the area devoted to smaller lots\*

Miller and others who advocated larger-lot zoning cited the following justifications: (1) the average size of the homes being built was increasing, partially because of increased family size; (2) recreation-oriented families needed larger side-yards to store boats and trailers; (3) larger lots ensured increased privacy; and (4) residents wished to avoid monotonous, high-density "ticky-tacky" tract development.

On this and other important issues, City Planning Director George Musso sided with the residentialists, supporting a proposal to increase the minimum lot size from 6,000 to 7,000 square feet. Not surprisingly, there was vehement opposition from the homebuilders, who appraised Livermore to be a non-exclusive, middle-income suburb. They argued that requirements for larger lots would increase home prices so dramatically that moderate-income families would no longer be able to purchase homes in the city. The builders were supported in their position by the chamber of commerce.

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\* This reflected the high densities permitted by the Springtown general plan amendment, plus the reversion of some residential parcels to agricultural, as well as redesignation to higher density of some "acreage" areas.

### The "Community Party"

The matter ultimately ended in compromise, with a vote by the city council on June 29 to increase the minimum lot size to 6,500 square feet, with overall density limited to 4.2 homes per acre (The Independent, July 1, 1964). However, the unwillingness of the council to go farther in regulating development led some residentialists to consider waging an organized, unified political campaign for the first time.

In preparation for the 1966 council elections, a loosely-knit "community party" began to emerge. Its core constituency was Lawrence Lab and Sandia professionals, many of whom were also members of the local Presbyterian Church. The minister of this church, John Turpin, had mobilized his parishioners in support of the Rumford Fair Housing Act and other social causes. This politicization of some Presbyterians made them more prone to become involved in community growth issues, as well. To capture control of the council, the residentialists would need to elect three candidates. The citizens group, however, was reluctant to run a full three-member slate; allegedly, such a tactic would smack of "big city" politics. In April 1966, two zoning-reform candidates were elected: LLL engineer Michael Uthe, and Sandia engineer Gilbert ("Gib") Marguth.

Predictably, after the election a renewed movement emerged to toughen residential building standards. Initiated in August 1966 by a controversial report to the city council

by freshman member Uthe, the struggle focussed upon the section of the zoning ordinance covering residential subdivisions. Claiming that a sufficient number of unused small lots of record already existed within the community, Uthe suggested in his "white paper" that for future tracts, Livermore should establish a 10,000 square foot minimum lot size. The chamber of commerce reacted angrily, vowing to oppose vigorously any such proposal. In a statement issued in December, the chamber accused the city of being "under the domination of the scientific community."

Uthe further antagonized the chamber by declaring openly that Livermore perhaps was growing too rapidly for its own good (Oakland Tribune, November 9, 1966: 34). Chamber president and former mayor (1958-60) James Nordahl expressed the view from Main Street that it was irksome that Uthe would "go public" with a statement that would reflect divisiveness within the community over the growth issue.

Partly in response to the Uthe report, a review of existing subdivision standards was initiated within the planning commission. Having been named to that body in 1966, Donald Miller again emerged at the center of the controversy. Most of the general plan area designated for residential development was zoned under the classification RL (low-density residential). Under this category, lot sizes were uniform within each tract, in most cases 6,000 square feet. The new proposal was to place newly-zoned areas under the more flexible category RS (suburban

residential).

According to Miller and fellow planning commissioner Mel Harrison, this would enable the city to exercise more strict controls over subdivisions, providing not only for larger lots but also mixed densities, clustering, and other innovations suggested by urban experts (e.g. Whyte 1964) to increase diversity within suburban residential areas. Going a step farther than traditional zoning measures, Miller even advocated that the city exert control over the design of subdivisions (The Independent, January 27, 1967: 3). This would be accomplished by bringing all areas of the city zoned RS under conditional use permit regulations by considering them as planned unit developments (PUDs).

During the debates that followed, those opposed to stricter standards charged that the legislation was intended to exclude the poor and minorities. James Messinger, representing the civil engineering firm of Mason & Co., declared at the March 13 city council meeting: "I believe (that) if it is the Council's intention to make this an upper income, all white, large lot community, they should have the intestinal fortitude to come out and say so" (The Independent, March 15, 1967: 9).

Similarly, in testimony before the National Commission on Urban Problems in San Francisco in 1967, William T. Leonard of the Associated Home Builders of the Greater East Bay mentioned that Livermore was increasing its minimum lot size. This inspired the following exchange with Commission Chairman Senator Paul H. Douglas (D-Ill.):

Mr. Douglas: I had always understood that the average intelligence quotient of people in Livermore is probably the highest in the country....Well, how do you account for this fact: Here are extraordinarily able people barring a large proportion of population from living there. How do you account for this fact in this highly intelligent group?

Mr. Leonard: Senator, in my statement I said that many growing suburban communities--including those with many Ph.D's as well as without Ph.D's--if they had their "druthers," want cream.

Mr. Douglas: This is true of the great intellects as well as of the average people?

Mr. Leonard: Yes, I think so.

(National Commission on Urban Problems, 1968b: 222-224).

If only single-family houses were built, the lowering of overall densities would almost certainly increase home prices sufficiently to exclude some moderate-income purchasers. For those favoring restrictive zoning regulations, however, the defenses against claims of exclusionary intent were fivefold. First, allowing "the market" to determine the distribution of housing stock was not providing truly low-income or minority housing in the valley. According to the 1970 Census, Livermore was 97% white (down from 98.5% in 1960), and only 4.7% of its residents earned incomes placing them below the official poverty line (compared with 12.2% in Oakland).

Second, the builders, realtors and businessmen who in this case appeared to champion the cause of the oppressed had an unimpressive record in terms of supporting civil rights, fair housing laws, and other measures to protect minority interests.

Third, a provision of Miller, Uthe and Harrison's RS

zoning proposal that was fought vigorously by the homebuilders was a 25% maximum floor area coverage requirement for single-family homes that, in contrast to existing practices, would force builders to construct small, inexpensive (and in some cases, expandable) houses on the city's smaller lots.

Fourth, a principal aim of the RS ordinance was to encourage cluster housing, as long as sufficient open space was provided to keep overall densities within specified limits. It was not the residentialists but the builders and realtors who opposed this, claiming that Americans preferred small, individual dwellings over all forms of attached housing.

Finally, many of those who campaigned to toughen subdivision regulations were also involved in efforts to bring more low-income housing to Livermore. A long-term ally of Donald Miller, for example, was LLL chemist Clarence Hoenig, head of the Valley Communities Economic Opportunities Organization. At one public hearing concerning the RS ordinances, Hoenig backed the Miller-Harrison plan, adding that low-income housing could not be achieved through reforms of lot size requirements, but only by utilization of state and federal housing programs specifically aimed at helping the poor.

As in the previous (1964) review of residential density requirements, debate over the issue ended in compromise. According to the RS ordinance adopted in late June 1967,

rear yards could be as shallow as 15 feet, instead of the 50-foot minimum sought by Miller. The side yard minimum was 10 feet on one side (24 feet total), while front yards could be as small as 15 feet. The 25% maximum floor area coverage requirement was expanded to 30% for the smallest (6,000 square foot) lots. For larger lots, the 25% maximum was enforced, with a provision that coverage could be increased to 30% after two years (City of Livermore Ordinance 624).

By now, a pattern was emerging: the city council invariably was more accommodating to developers than was the planning commission. Contributing to this schism was an apparent shift in sentiment by Councilmember Marguth. Although he remained liberal on social issues, Marguth demonstrated a consistent willingness to compromise with developers once he took office.

In 1968, yet another round of the battle over neighborhood density was waged, as the residentialists attempted to rezone land classified RL to RS. The goal of this move was again to force developers to provide more variety in their subdivision designs. Although these changes were approved by the planning commission, the more business-oriented city council rejected the rezoning.

Meanwhile, the residentialists pushed for other legislation to limit the power of builders and other businessmen to control the growth and appearance of Livermore. In late 1967, for example, an ordinance was passed that regulated the size and design of signs that businesses could erect on their property.

### Is Growth the Problem?

During the sixties, the most hotly-contested municipal issues concerned the appearance of the city. While some lab professionals hoped to cultivate a low-density, yet varied community, the homebuilders and their allies in the chamber of commerce believed Livermore's immediate destiny was as a middle-income, tract-home suburb. Ultimately, however, zoning issues receded to insignificance before the sheer volume of growth brought by unrelenting, large-scale homebuilding. As shown in Table 9, the pace of final tract map

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Table 9

Livermore Final Tract Map Approvals, 1961-72

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Year	Number of Maps Approved	Total Numbers of Lots
1961	3	131
1962	4	645
1963	6	703
1964	8	1051
1965	9	976
1966	6	401
1967	5	434
1968	11	1050
1969	5	301
1970	6	497
1971	7	579
1972	2	456

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(Source: City of Livermore Engineering Dept.)

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approvals by the city council was remarkable for a city of Livermore's size--and according to general plan revisions approved in 1964, this growth was only the beginning of the residential boom. A municipal population of 165,000 was projected for 1990, and 300,000 ultimately would be housed within the 139-square mile Livermore planning area.

By mid-1968, worsening air pollution and continued overcrowding in the schools led Donald Miller and The Independent to begin advocating that the growth process be curbed (e.g. The Independent, August 18, 1968). There was, however, very little statutory basis for limiting growth or stopping subdivisions, so long as landowners wished to sell, developers wished to build homes, and the market for houses remained strong. According to the Subdivision Map Act, housing proposals had to be approved if they conformed with zoning and subdivision regulations. If the city council refused to act on a map, it would be approved automatically after forty days.

Moreover, there was not yet a public mandate to control growth. The 1968 municipal election produced a mixed result. Assisted by a 200-member brigade of political volunteers, Miller was elected to the city council. The second new councilman, however, was chamber-backed petroleum distributor Roger Silva. After the death of councilman and downtown businessman Manuel Medeiros in December 1968, LLL engineer Clyde Taylor was appointed to fill the vacancy. A moderate on growth-related issues, Taylor became a swing vote, siding at times with Miller and Uthe against Silva and

Marguth. In 1970, however, businessmen Cy Beebe and Robert Pritchard were elected (both Uthe and Marguth chose not to seek second terms) and a solidly pro-growth majority existed once more.

Livermore was still a conservative city, as demonstrated by the overwhelming defeat by referendum in February 1969 of a council-backed proposal to establish a Human Rights Commission with subpoena powers. Accordingly, although people might support connection fees, park dedication requirements, and zoning measures that promised to improve the appearance of their community and increase their property values, stopping growth seemed a radical, unrealistic proposal. For most citizens, growth was natural and inevitable, and besides, there was no way to stop it. Consequently, it required three more years of worsening problems before a campaign to slow growth truly began to gather steam.

## Chapter IX

### The Pleasanton Land Boom

The opening of the Radiation Laboratory in 1952 had triggered rapid development in Livermore. By the late sixties, the aggravations of overcrowded schools, strained infrastructure, and a populace divided over zoning issues seemed merely a continuation of a long-standing situation. In Pleasanton, by contrast, the sixties began quietly, but went out with a lion's roar. Homebuilding pressures swiftly became greater in Pleasanton than in Livermore. Consequently, land-use problems seemed to arrive all at once. Ultimately, the unbridled conversion of rural land to suburban uses in Pleasanton produced a heated political backlash.

In terms of development, there were similarities between Livermore and Pleasanton. Both were small agricultural communities that suddenly were inundated with new residents. In both cities, new housing was composed overwhelmingly of single-family detached dwellings. This resulted in another likeness: by the mid-sixties, dissatisfaction mounted over the monotony of a built environment dominated by medium-lot subdivisions. Finally, both, broadly speaking, were middle-class communities, as contrasted with Dublin, with its larger blue-collar population (Table 8, p. 191).

Yet, significant differences distinguished the two cities. First, Pleasanton was a more homogeneous community than Livermore. There were fewer blue-collar households, and only a small number of scientists and engineers formed the nucleus for a residentialist faction. Second, whereas Livermore remained a sort of industrial satellite dominated by the weapons laboratories, Pleasanton developed quickly into a bedroom community. Finally, the situation faced by each city vis-à-vis development of the valley as a whole was considerably different. For Pleasanton, the politics of local expansion were complicated by the presence of aggressive neighbors to the west and north, Hayward and Dublin.

Although near the end of the decade efforts emerged to halt residential density increases, the lack of a sizable activist constituency prevented this movement from attaining the long-term prominence that it achieved in Livermore. Moreover, the political character of Livermore was shaped by its internal divisions, whereas Pleasanton's struggles against external adversaries encouraged consensus sufficiently to postpone, at least, the onset of growth-related political strife.

### The Community

The Pleasanton population was composed of the same social groups as Livermore, but in different proportions. In the west valley, the diminishing landowner class consisted mainly of cattle and horse ranchers, along with a

very few dairymen and vegetable farmers. As mentioned in Chapter V, two prominent farming families resisted pressures during the fifties to sell their lands to developers. With the arrival of Volk-McLain, however, it became clear that the future of the Amador Valley would be urban, not agricultural. Consistent with the strategies of large property owners nationwide, the farmers then developed a keen interest in ensuring high profits when the inevitable moment came in which their holdings were liquidated.

As always, the pro-growth allies of the landowners were the realtors, builders, engineers and attorneys whose livelihood stemmed from land development. Reputedly, there was a more cohesive development network in the Amador Valley than in Livermore. Realizing the desirability of Pleasanton as a location for housing, these new generation "town fathers" counseled a patient development strategy that would ensure a quality community in the future. In part, this was born of a shared confidence in the beneficence of the climate and setting of the city. Also influential was the presence of the small but prestigious Castlewood residential district west of town. With Phoebe Hearst's Hacienda del Pozo de Verona perched regally in the hills nearby, it was expected that development in Pleasanton should be a cut above that proceeding in Livermore.

The downtown merchants also favored growth. On most issues, "Main Street" was represented in print by the venerable weekly newspaper, The Pleasanton Times, still

published and edited by John B. Edmands. Edmands beat his journalistic drum incessantly in praise of the progress of his hometown. For example, in the midst of an editorial discussing the important annexation decisions facing the city during spring 1964, Edmands rhapsodized:

God has not looked as generously on any other land as he has on this one small valley....Tomorrow has arrived. The great press of growth is here, as inevitable as the certainty of California's own postwar story of change.

(Pleasanton Times, March 18, 1964: 5-A).

The Pleasanton commuter population was sizable, partly because Pleasanton did not have a gigantic government laboratory perched along its borders. Although surely a major facility, the General Electric Vallecitos research center never employed more than about six hundred people. It is difficult to generalize about the commuters, a large and diverse group whose common characteristic was the decision to purchase a new home in a Pleasanton subdivision. A composite sketch, however, would reveal that the working individuals for whom Pleasanton served as a "bedroom" were young, white, middle-managerial or administrative employees of slightly greater than average income (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1973). Their political interests at the local level centered around maintaining the city as a suitable environment in which to raise a family, without undue increases in taxation. During the sixties, however, the rapidly-growing white-collar commuter faction produced few politicians or community activists.

Finally, there was a small but influential group of

Lawrence Laboratory employees. Overall, only around 6-8% of lab personnel lived in Pleasanton. Viewed another way, less than 4% of employed persons in Pleasanton worked at LLL, as opposed to nearly 25% in Livermore. Still, two mayors and two other councilmembers were on the Lawrence Laboratory payroll during the 1960-71 period. Significantly, none of these men was a scientist: one was an engineer and three were administrators. All were essentially sympathetic to growth, as long as it was well-planned.

The principal political schism within Pleasanton pitted those who wished the city to become an exclusive bedroom community against those who were less critical about the type of growth--whether residential, commercial, or industrial--that was attracted. The former viewpoint was maintained by some prominent LLL employees, and by many new arrivals who were commuters. The latter was typical of the Pleasanton Area Chamber of Commerce and local realtors.

#### The Politics of Rivalry

The sudden arrival of San Ramon Village convinced Pleasanton business and political leaders that a more aggressive expansion policy was necessary if their city was to grow. Any lingering notion that Pleasanton would become a "new Piedmont"--a small, peaceful residential paradise--was abandoned.

The lack of an overriding political authority in the west valley meant that both Pleasanton and the Valley

Community Services District felt compelled to expand, even if actual development of outlying lands was years away. This accelerated rush to annex territory was prompted by the perception that without preemptive action, the rival jurisdiction would "steal" those lands through annexations of its own. Consequently, the expansionist strategy pursued by Pleasanton during the sixties was to some degree a reactive phenomenon.

Between 1954 and 1960, 186 acres were annexed to the city. Efforts to achieve larger annexations were resisted by the proprietors of still-profitable farming and dairying operations in the fertile lands north and west of town. These landowners were not anti-development; they believed, however, that it was not yet time to sell their holdings. In the meantime, annexation to the city would mean higher taxes, since their property would be reassessed at its potential value as residential land.

As early as 1961, however, VCSD officials began negotiating with landowners south of Highway 50 for the rights to provide sewage service for possible future development. After all, a considerable area south of the highway was recognized by Alameda County as part of the Upper Amador Valley Planning Area that Volk-McLain was slated to develop. Volk-McLain wanted VCSD to expand its service area as rapidly as possible, so that the agency could repay the developers for its wastewater treatment plant. Consequently, the VCSD Board of Directors aspired to nothing less than provision of vital municipal services from



San Ramon south along the foothills to Sunol. Essentially, the special district agency sought to block the expansion of Pleasanton to the north and west.

The first signs of interjurisdictional strife came in 1962, when two major landowners, Schulte-Blackwell and the Stoneson Development Corporation, expressed interest in annexing to Pleasanton, rather than developing their holdings under county (and VCSD) jurisdiction. This move was thwarted, however, when a group of San Ramon Village citizens filed for the municipal incorporation of Dublin in autumn 1962. This effort was led by Lawrence Wilson, a deputy with the Alameda County Sheriff's Department who allegedly had close ties with Volk-McLain. The emergence of competing claims for the same territory triggered the first of several legal battles between VCSD and the City of Pleasanton, one result of which was the retardation for several years of development south of Highway 50.

#### The General Plan Revision

By mid-1963, Pleasanton civic leaders realized that the existing general plan was inadequate for the imminent new era of rapid growth. In February 1964, work began on a new plan. The city hired a well-known San Francisco consulting firm, Livingston and Blayney, to coordinate the efforts of a citizens' committee and to produce the final documents. Work was completed by the end of 1964, and the new plan was adopted by the city council on March 1, 1965.

The goals to be implemented through the plan were spelled out clearly:

To create a community of distinctive physical form, avoiding the monotonous subdivisions, the strip commercial thoroughfares, and the undifferentiated street and land use patterns that have made "slurbs" of so many communities at the edges of California's rapidly-growing metropolitan areas.

To provide the best possible living environment for a wide range of income groups.

To attract to the city the single regional shopping center that the Amador-Livermore Valley can support during the next 25 years.

To attract diversified, non-nuisance industries that will provide employment equaling the number of employed residents of the planning areas.

A striking feature of the plan was the tremendously increased planning area claimed by the city, as compared with its predecessor. The planning map now covered 43.75 square miles (28,000 acres). Although this was still less than one-third the size of the Livermore planning area, it represented an eleven-fold increase over the previous plan.

To be sure, continuities linked the old document and the new. For example, there was still a commitment to low-to-medium-density residential development. Nearly half of the planning area was devoted to the "slope conservation," "low," and "medium" density categories. Partly in response to the nationwide trend toward larger houses, however, actual lot sizes were ultimately increased. When a revised zoning ordinance was passed in 1968, huge areas of the city were zoned R-1-6500, signifying single-family dwellings with a minimum lot size of 6,500 square feet (6,000 square feet

had been the standard previously).

In a departure from the the first general plan, it was determined that the "Santa Clara County urban economy" would provide the "most likely model for Pleasanton's future" (Livingston and Blayney 1964: 13). Huge parcels within the proposed planning area were committed to industry. Even excluding the large areas along the railroad rights-of-way devoted to gravel mining and the 1,500-acre General Electric Vallecitos atomic research facility, over 3,000 industrial-zoned acres remained.

Slated for industry was most of the flat area south of Highway I-580 (formerly U.S. 50), from the Arroyo de la Laguna east to Santa Rita Road. Here, however, winter flooding was still an annual threat. Although the problem would be ameliorated somewhat when Del Valle Dam was completed in 1969, an improved drainage system was also needed.

For the time being, the best location for industry was along Sunol Boulevard in southwest Pleasanton. Already, some modest successes had been registered. In 1963, Harper and Row located a small textbook distribution facility on this land. Next came Scholastic, Inc., then D.C. Heath. In this area, becoming known locally as "publishers row," the biggest prize was garnered in 1964, when Kaiser Industries announced plans to construct an elaborately-landscaped research center. Finally opened in 1969, the Kaiser Center for Technology was precisely the type of "non-nuisance"

facility that Pleasanton planners hoped to attract.

Once "publishers row" was built up, the remaining short-term hope for industry was the 640-acre "Spring Valley" parcel still held by the City of San Francisco. In 1961, the San Francisco Water Department had prepared plans for a 480-acre industrial site on the property, but the investor who was to supply the development capital reportedly withdrew from the project (City of Pleasanton 1965: 11).

In the 1960 plan, only a meager area had been devoted to commercial acreage. Although the new plan more than tripled the territory zoned commercial (from 105 to 362 acres), this increase was minimal, in view of the expanded planning area. Almost reluctantly, the planners designated 140 acres for "service commercial" use, vowing that the "ugly commercial strips" characteristic of "most cities" would be avoided (1965: 14). However, as indicated in the plan goals, if at some future time a regional shopping center were to be constructed, Pleasanton wished to claim that prize. Accordingly, there were three locations suggested, most notably the Stoneson land at the intersection of the new Interstates 580 and 680 (Stoneson already had constructed major shopping centers in San Francisco and San Mateo).

Any reticence in terms of outlying commercial development was balanced by intense interest in revitalization of the city's tiny downtown area. There was, in fact, a separate Central District Redevelopment Plan

appended to the general plan, which called for steps to maintain downtown as the main commercial area, and foresaw its emergence as a small office center by 1990. This attentiveness to the downtown reflected not only local pride in its attractive, "New England village" appearance, but also the fact that the chamber of commerce was composed almost entirely of downtown merchants.

Overall, the image nurtured by those participating in the planning process was one of immaculately-landscaped, upper-middle class comfort. Revealing in this regard was the following statement from the final document:

If it is not to be prematurely obsolete, Pleasanton must be built to the development standards of the '70's and '80's, not the standards of the '50's. If shopping centers cost more to build and operate in Pleasanton because landscaping is required, this does not mean that Pleasanton housewives will pay more for groceries. If the current high standards of new industries in Pleasanton become the norm, it is doubtful that the City will lose desirable industrial development. The residential densities proposed by the General Plan are reasonable and need not be compromised in the name of economic necessity. The argument will always be made that the developer cannot afford to do better, that the City is stopping progress....Pleasanton can afford to wait; in fact slow growth usually is less costly to the taxpayers. If one development proposal is rejected, another will be made if there really is a need for the development.  
(City of Pleasanton 1965: 31)

And so Pleasanton strode confidently into its new era of rapid growth. Some minor revisions were made in the planning map in 1968, but the goals and text of the plan itself remained unchanged.

### Struggles with VCSD

The people of Pleasanton learned, however, that turning beautiful plans into reality can be difficult. Much of the 1963-67 period was marked by what one city official called retrospectively a "battle for turf:" a struggle over the "no-man's land" south of Interstate 580. Whether or not as part of a campaign to incorporate a new city of Dublin, VCSD wished to expand its frontiers across I-580 and southwest along the foothills toward Sunol.

During this incipient conflict, land developers discovered that it was not predetermined whether they would build under city or county jurisdiction; they could attempt to play one side against the other. Consequently, some annexation agreements ultimately secured by Pleasanton were advantageous to developers in terms of proposed zoning and commitments to provide services. Years later, these concessions by the city would loom large.

The attempt to block the Pleasanton north and westside annexations--initiated formally in early 1963 by Lawrence Wilson and James Kolb--was turned down in a March 1964 Superior Court ruling (Pleasanton Times, March 4, 1964). A subsequent First Court of Appeals decision in August 1965 overturned the original verdict. In December 1965, however, the California State Supreme Court ruled unanimously in Pleasanton's favor, on the basis that the annexation attempt was filed prior to the Dublin incorporation petition [City of Pleasanton v. Bryant (1965) 63 Cal.2d 643; 47 Cal. Rptr.

807, 408 P.2d 135]. No matter what the outcome, however, such litigation prevented any development from proceeding.

Between 1960 and the end of 1963, Pleasanton filed 11 annexations totalling 790 acres, more than doubling the size of the city. Continuing legal conflict with VCSD, however, slowed further expansion. With the exception of the annexation vs. incorporation suit mentioned above, the forum for these battles was not the courts but the newly-created Alameda County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO).

Pleasanton fared well in LAFCO annexation decisions since according to LAFCO strictures, annexations to established municipalities are favored over expansions of special districts. The first major victory for Pleasanton was approval of the 632-acre "Fairlands" annex in early 1964. This addition brought the city limits up to Highway 580 for the first time. A major blow to the VCSD "foothills" strategy came in December 1964, when a 700-acre annexation comprised largely of the Golden Eagle Ranch southwest of town was approved, despite objections by VCSD.

In the midst of what was becoming known as the "land rush of 1964" (during which 1,148 acres were annexed by Pleasanton), Volk-McLain made a move that became the source of renewed tension between the neighboring communities. The development firm held a 700-acre parcel south of I-580 and west of Hopyard Road that, according to the Upper Amador Valley Plan, was zoned for industry. Volk and McLain realized, however, that it might be years before industry

was attracted to the valley. By this time, the Volk-McLain firm was in the initial stages of dissolution, and the two men wished to reap some profit from their lands. Consequently, they petitioned the county in August 1964 to change the zoning designation from industrial to residential. This eliminated any pretense that Dublin-San Ramon would evolve as a "balanced community." Clearly, the development was becoming a suburban bedroom.

Joining Volk-McLain in this rezoning bid was the Church of the Latter Day Saints, which had used its own 135-acre parcel east of Hopyard Road as a farm. The Mormons now wished to sell the land and move their agricultural operations elsewhere.

Pleasanton fought the rezoning attempt, arguing that the land was needed for its own future industrial development. Although the Volk-McLain request was approved by the Alameda County Planning Commission, it subsequently was rejected by a 3-2 vote of the board of supervisors in June 1965.

#### The Dublin Annex

In April 1966, the Pleasanton City Council moved to annex the 2,100-acre "industrial" area north of the city. Extending from I-680 east to Santa Rita Road, and from just south of the Arroyo Mocho to I-580, this tract included the holdings of Volk-McLain and the Mormons, plus the Southern Pacific Company and several other landowners. Plans to absorb the territory were halted, however, by a LAFCO



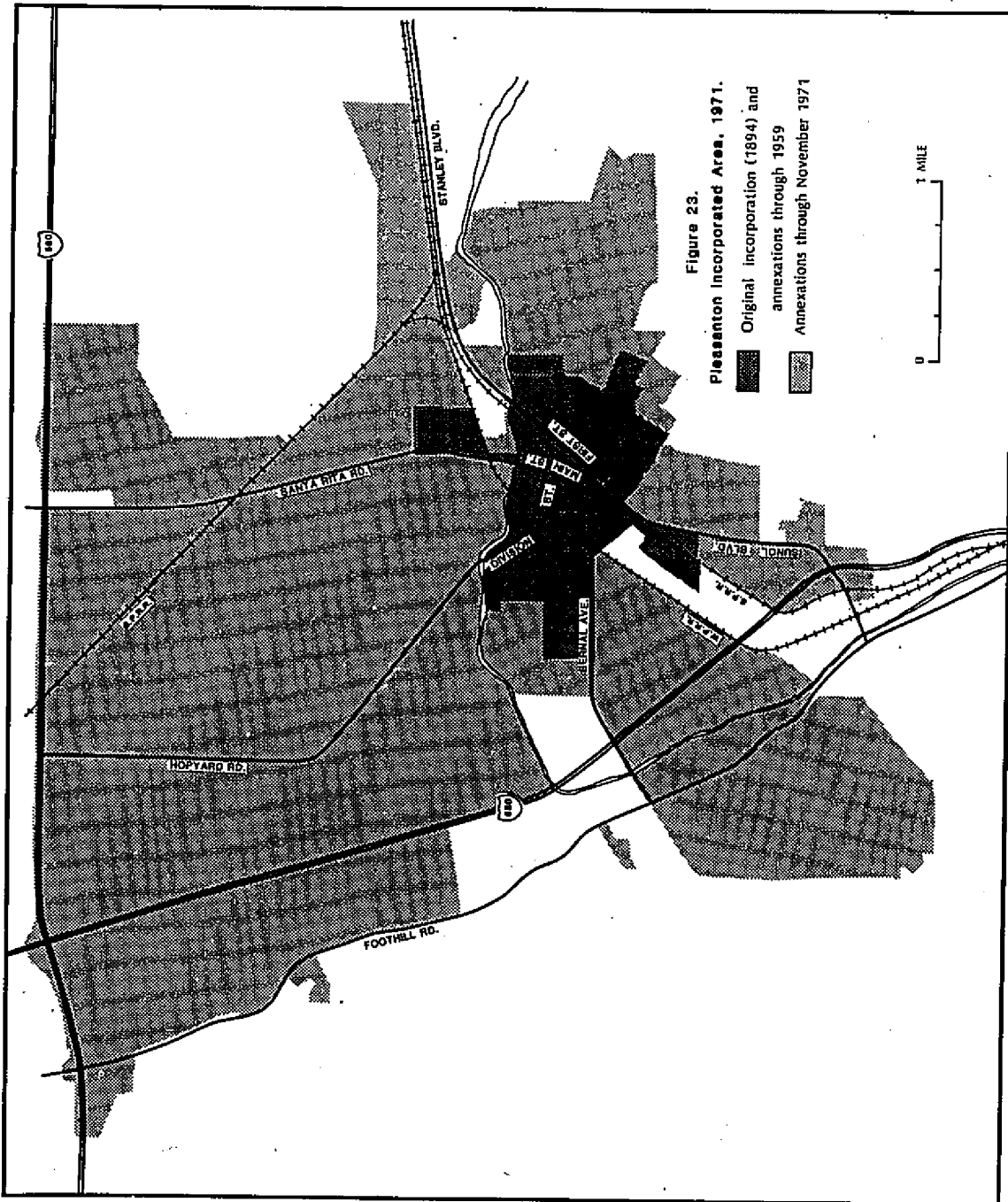


Figure 23.  
Pleasanton Incorporated Area, 1971.

Original incorporation (1894) and  
annexations through 1959  
Annexations through November 1971

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decision on December 1, 1966 that the best way to resolve the west valley land war was to consolidate the entire area into a single city. Specifically, it was recommended that Dublin be annexed to Pleasanton.

In order to become a reality, the proposal had to be approved by a majority of voters in both communities. Although the idea was well-received in Pleasanton, Dublin residents were less enthusiastic. Many believed the "merger" would involve not a fusion between equal entities, but rather the devouring of their community by its rapidly-growing neighbor to the south. Such suspicions were increased when Pleasanton officials announced early in 1967 that a new civic center would be constructed along Bernal Avenue, on a site inconvenient to the Dublin population (see Figure 24).

Other factors influenced the outcome of the merger election. It still seemed possible that the county might grant Volk-McLain the same Hopyard Road rezoning that had been denied in 1965. In order to avert the horrific prospect of a high-density "sea of homes" built under county jurisdiction just north of its present borders, Pleasanton made an agreement with Volk-McLain allowing the southern 310 acres of its 700-acre holdings to be redesignated residential, but only after annexation to Pleasanton. The remainder of the Volk-McLain property would be maintained for future industry. Consequently, Pleasanton requested an "uninhabited annexation" of the southern portion of the Volk-McLain tract. In January 1967, this

annexation was approved by LAFCO.

This alleged "land grab" by Pleasanton did not help the cause of the merger. On June 13, 1967, the "Dublin annex" was buried under an avalanche of negative ballots cast by Dublin voters. Although the measure carried, 957-762 in Pleasanton, in Dublin an impressive 59% voter turnout defeated the proposal, 467-1,737.

Immediately following the election, Pleasanton announced a new attempt to annex the disputed industrial lands. In November, this bid was accepted by LAFCO, partly as a reward to Pleasanton for championing the unsuccessful Dublin annexation proposal. After a lengthy delay during which water service was arranged, the 1,828-acre "annex 56" officially became part of Pleasanton on September 30, 1968.

Although the defeat of the Pleasanton-Dublin merger disappointed those who believed such a consolidation would be conducive to sound land-use planning, an even grander proposal emerged late in 1967 to form a single valley-wide "supercity," including Livermore. Although backed by The Independent and some environmentalists, the proposal was never popular in Pleasanton or Dublin, and was effectively abandoned by the end of 1968. Out of this debate, however, emerged the Valley Planning Committee, a voluntary forum through which representatives of each valley community, plus Alameda County, could discuss matters of intergovernmental concern. Since the committee had no real powers, however, it was not taken truly seriously by any of its constituent

members. In particular, county representative Supervisor Murphy became notorious for almost never attending VPC meetings.

Pleasanton was consistently victorious in its struggle to control the "no man's land" south of I-580. This success is indicated by the annexation figures in Table 10 below. As discussed in Chapter VII, however, VCSD also won a victory when that agency was empowered to provide sewage service to a large portion of Pleasanton.

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Table 10

Pleasanton Annexations, 1960-1972

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Year	Number of Annexations	Total Acres
1960	1	17.5
1961	2	0.7
1962	4	29.3
1963	4	742.6
1964	5	1147.6
1965	6	1145.4
1966	7	920.0
1967	4	1087.7
1968	2	1836.1
1969	5	182.4
1970	2	29.3
1971	2	80.0
1972	0	0

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Source: City of Pleasanton Engineering Department

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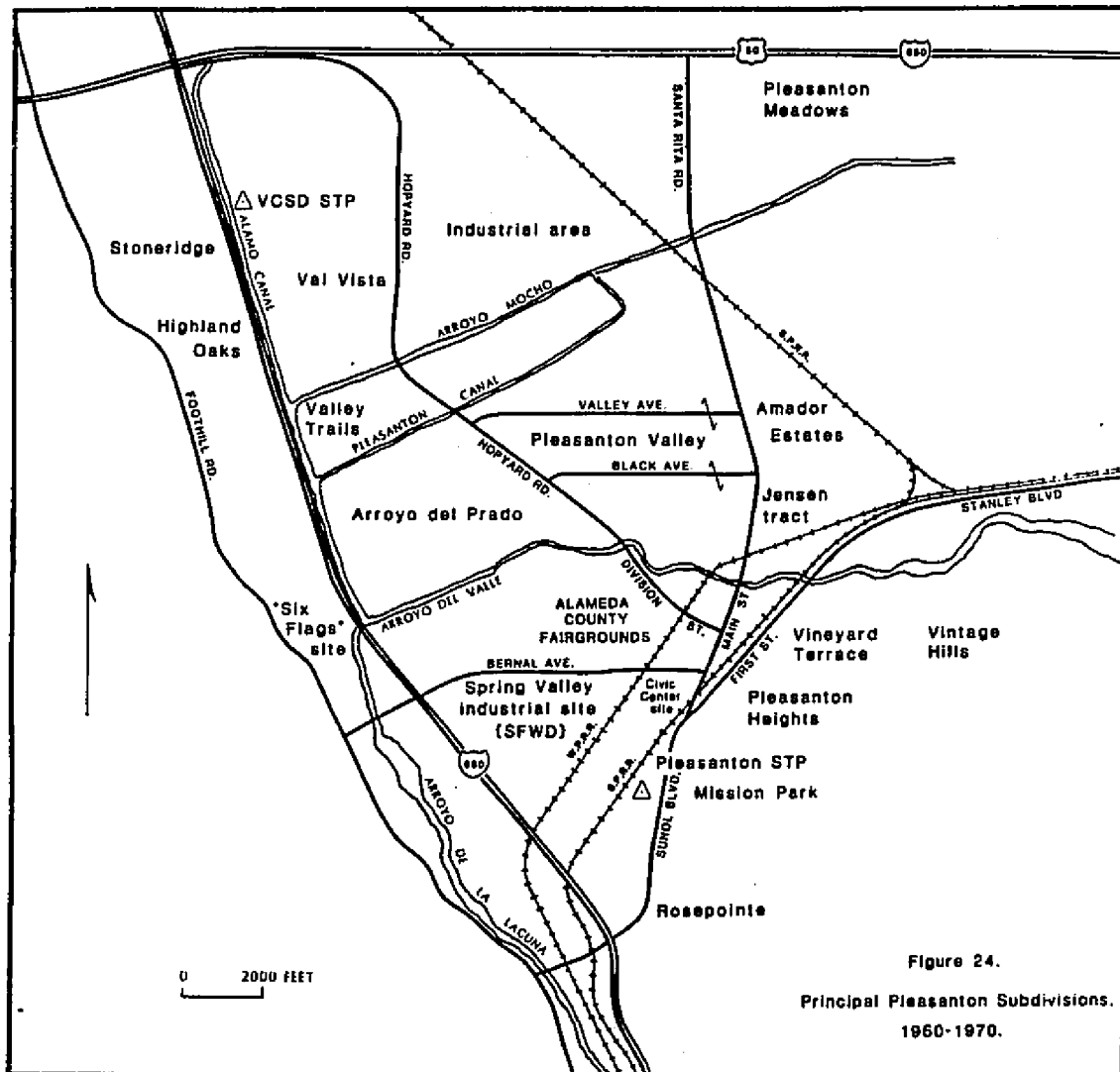


Figure 24.  
Principal Pleasanton Subdivisions.  
1960-1970.

### Industrial Famine

Pleasanton was successful in acquiring the territory claimed in its 1965 general plan. Encouraging actual development in accordance with the plan, however, sometimes proved difficult. Residential development proceeded vigorously (discussed below), and in 1966 Stoneson revealed plans to construct a regional shopping center along Foothill Road. Attempts to attract industry, however, met mainly with frustration.

First, Pleasanton was unable to influence the City of San Francisco to take an active interest in its Spring Valley parcel. Because San Francisco is prohibited under the terms of the Raker Act from selling its watershed lands, the only avenue for development is through negotiation of a lease. Although nebulous plans for industry were discussed throughout the sixties, no deal was ever consummated. Even today, the area is still leased for farming (Figure 25).

The hard-won expanses between Foothill and Santa Rita Roads had long been slated for industrial development. In April 1968 the city approved a plan by Willow West, Inc. to construct a 287-acre complex including a lake, hotel, golf course and industrial site (Pleasanton Times, May 1, 1968: 8). The proposal was in fact incorporated into the revised 1968 general plan map. This formerly marshy area, however, continued to pose drainage problems. Many who were optimistic regarding its potential for development had not been present during the floods of 1955 and 1958. They were

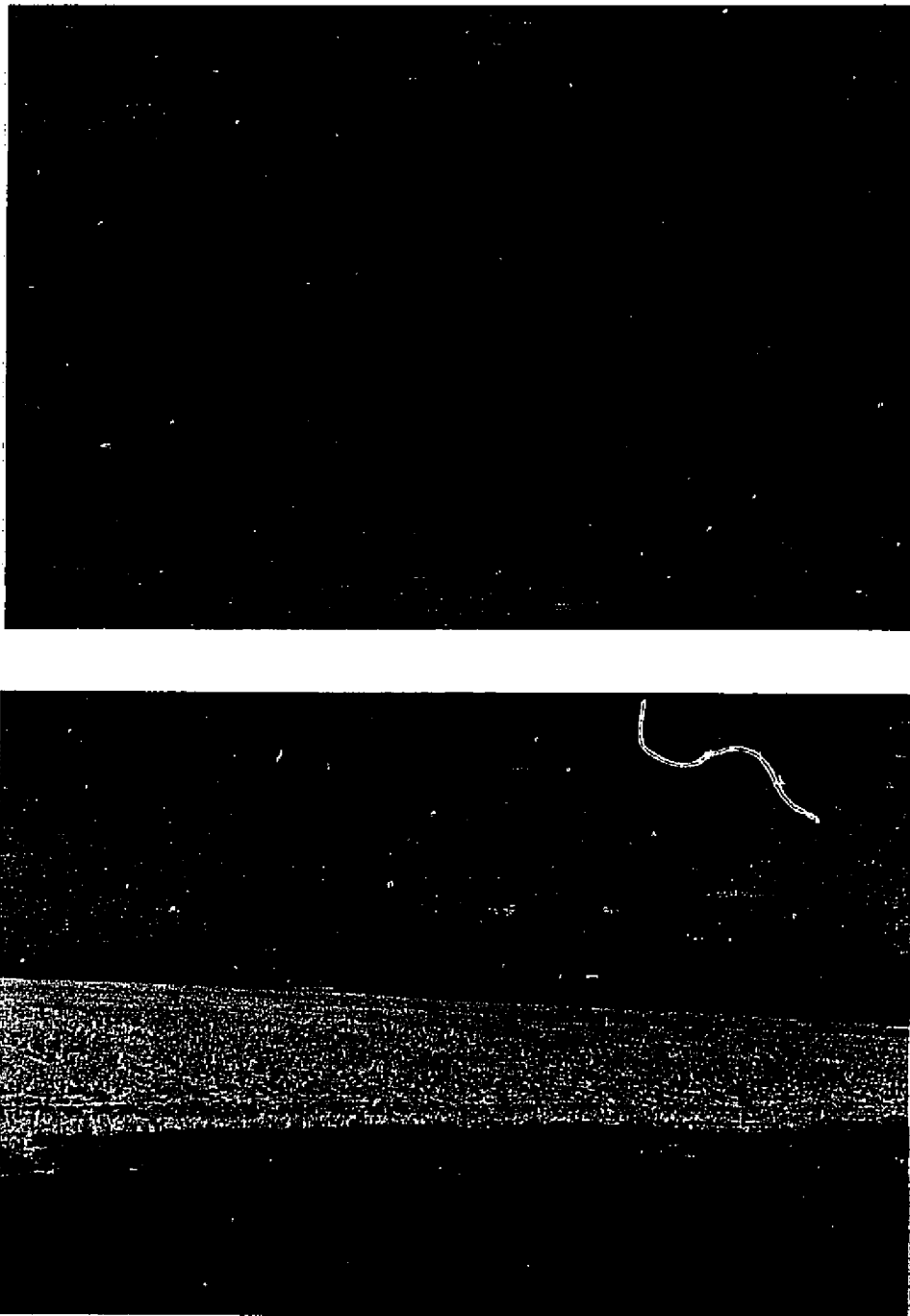


Figure 25. Two potential Pleasanton development sites.  
Above: The City of San Francisco Spring Valley parcel  
is still leased for farming.  
Below: The old Meadowlark Dairy site was considered  
for a possible amusement park.

sobered, however, by the torrential rains of January 1969, which produced yet another round of flooding. Beneath a large photo of "Our Industrial Park," The Times offered this doleful comment in its January 29, 1969 issue:

the current storm proved once again that the 1000-plus acres set aside as 'Pleasanton's industrial base' is little more than a gigantic lake after a good rainfall.

Without adequate drainage, and with no clear arrangements to provide wastewater treatment and other services, the Willow West proposal languished.

There was, in fact, only one noteworthy new facility opened during the late sixties. In July 1968, Volkswagen of America announced that the West Coast VW distribution center operated by Reynold C. Johnson Co. would be moved from Burlingame to a site just southeast of the 580-680 interchange (Pleasanton Times, July 17, 1968). The facility was opened in October 1969.

#### Dublin-San Ramon Development

Overall, more commerce was attracted to Dublin-San Ramon than to Pleasanton. Although the "San Ramon Industrial Park" did not prosper noticeably, some industry, wholesaling, and even corporate offices trickled into the area by the late sixties.

In 1965, Foremost-McKesson opened a new research facility on Dublin Blvd., employing about fifty people. In 1970, Western Electric opened a plant to manufacture telephone parts and switching components. At its peak, the



facility provided over 600 jobs. That same year, a small factory was opened by the Security Devices Corporation.

As indicated by the willingness of Volkswagen of America to bring an auto distribution center to Pleasanton, the I-580/I-680 interchange proved an attractive location for warehouses and other bulk marketing facilities. In 1970, the Hawaii-based Amfac Corporation opened a 243,000 square foot distribution center on the northwest side of the freeway interchange, employing 350 persons to serve its Northern California Liberty House stores. Over the next several years, several smaller wholesalers located warehouses nearby. After rejecting the San Francisco Water Department site near Pleasanton as a location, Eastman Kodak announced in June 1966 that it would move its Pacific Northern distribution center from San Francisco to San Ramon. The facility was opened in December 1969.

The first sign that corporations might find Dublin-San Ramon attractive for offices came in 1967, when Hexcel, manufacturer of lightweight aerospace materials, moved its headquarters and research and development operations to Dublin from Berkeley. In part, the move was designed to take advantage of the "large pool of scientific workers in the Valley" (The Independent, March 1, 1967). The move also complemented Hexcel's acquisition of Coast Manufacturing and Supply in Livermore.

In 1972, Lucky Stores moved its corporate headquarters to Dublin from San Leandro. This was but a portent of the stampede of offices into the west valley area that would

commence a decade later.

These successes notwithstanding, and despite a location highly accessible to intraregional transportation arteries, the upper Amador and south San Ramon Valleys did not attract the large-scale industrial development originally envisioned by Volk-McLain. In fact, much of the area originally zoned industrial was redesignated residential or commercial, one small bit at a time. One result of this piecemeal rezoning was the evolution of a lengthy commercial strip along Dublin Boulevard.

#### Six Flags Over Pleasanton?

Dublin-San Ramon attracted commerce because of its favorable location, lack of immediate infrastructural problems, and the working-class character of Dublin itself, which guaranteed an appropriate labor force. Moreover, although Pleasanton lacked the vociferous residentialist faction present in Livermore, the town gained a reputation for being demanding in its approach to development. As evidenced by the general plan policies and goals discussed above, Pleasanton strived for "quality." For homebuilders, this could be seen as a blessing, a guarantee of high real estate values; hence their willingness to annex their lands to Pleasanton. Some commercial developers, however, reportedly believed they would receive more favorable treatment from county officials.

The limitations to Pleasanton's pro-growth stance are

illustrated by a curious episode in which the city apparently won and then lost the chance to have a Texas-sized amusement park erected along its western flank. In August 1968, the Great Southwest Corporation, a subsidiary of the Penn Central Railroad headquartered in Arlington, Texas, proposed a \$20 million amusement park in Pleasanton similar to its "Six Flags Over Texas" facility. The prospective site was a still-unincorporated 147-acre parcel comprising a portion of the old Meadowlark Dairy, just west of Interstate 680 and north of Bernal Ave. (Figures 24 and 25). Designated under the general plan for moderate-density residential development, the land was purchased for \$9,000 per acre as part of the estate settlement of former Meadowlark owner Walter Briggs. The dairy itself, with its 500 head of cattle, had already been moved to Tracy.

Scheduled to open by 1971, the park ostensibly would have produced millions of dollars in revenue and employed up to 1,500 local youths (Pleasanton Times, August 21, 1968). The informal proposal to annex the parcel and amend the general plan was initially welcomed by the chamber of commerce and some city councilmembers, eager to attract industrial development to balance the hundreds of homes being constructed. The Great Southwest organization further impressed local people by flying a contingent of prominent citizens to Texas to demonstrate the virtues of the Six Flags operation.

The request by Pleasanton officials that the amusement park be supplemented by other types of industry, however,

apparently went unheeded by the Texans. Moreover, some residents along Foothill Road began by late 1968 to express concern over the traffic, dust, and noise that might be generated by a giant recreational facility. The business community was now divided over the issue. Some, including banker and former Mayor Warren Harding, believed it would be wrong to override the general plan to accommodate the Six Flags proposal.

In late February 1969, Great Southwest president Angus G. Wynne Jr. announced suddenly that the firm was cancelling the Pleasanton project. In explaining this change of heart, he claimed there was simply too much local opposition. Some residents, however, felt the real reason for the pullout was a determination by the company that the park would be less profitable than originally anticipated. Others cited financial difficulties at Penn Central.

A few officials were devastated; Councilman Chris Beratlis called the move a "slap in the face" (Pleasanton Times, February 26, 1969). The loss of Six Flags, however, was not unpopular among the people as a whole. In a bedroom community, new residents in particular may express opposition to projects they feel will threaten the amenities for which they moved to the community in the first place. In essence, when large, garish projects like Six Flags are proposed, some normally passive citizens will find themselves opposed to the chamber of commerce, which is far less critical of development proposals.

### The Residential Boom

Except for a desire to maintain the picturesque appearance of Main Street, there was little apparent nostalgia for "old" Pleasanton. Early in 1964 the city began, in words of a local reporter, to wage

war against ancient buildings...dilapidated, dangerous and unsightly shacks and dwellings that never were much when they were built...75 years ago or more.

(Pleasanton Times, February 19, 1964: 3)

Some older homes were destroyed, to be replaced in a few cases by modern apartments. On the local political agenda, however, this mini-"redevelopment" process was overshadowed by matters regarding where and how new subdivisions would be erected. As a torrent of proposals was submitted to the planning commission for review, the problems that arose were similar but not identical to those affecting Livermore during the same period.

During the 1964-65 general plan revision process, six principal subdivisions were under construction within the city (Figure 24, p. 231). In southwest Pleasanton was Mission Park, located uncomfortably close to the municipal wastewater treatment plant. In the hills to the east, the prestige-oriented Pleasanton Heights, Vineyard Terrace and Vintage Hills developments were underway (homes within the latter ostensibly were designed for the "young executive"). Along Santa Rita Road, near the already-completed Pioneer Village (Jensen) tract, were the moderately-priced Amador

Valley Estates. Finally, in north-central Pleasanton, D & V (Morrison) Homes began to construct its large Pleasanton Valley project on the site of the old Orloff farm.

For all homebuilding ventures, the approval procedure was similar. Typically, a developer would divide his holdings into separate tracts varying in size from less than thirty to over 150 lots. Pleasanton Valley, for example, ultimately included 1,600 homes in nineteen units. Each unit was mapped and reviewed individually. Consequently, it might require several years to complete a subdivision.

As in Livermore and Dublin, the various tracts shared certain aesthetic features. Streets were endowed with evocative, thematic names. In Vintage Hills, streets were named for wine grapes. One Pleasanton Valley tract had an ornithological motif (Figure 26). Minor architectural and landscaping differences notwithstanding, new neighborhoods had a similar look, thanks to their characteristic curvilinear roadways, sound walls, and uniform lot sizes.

Before the new general plan was adopted, three projects were approved that represented blatant leapfrog development. Along Sunol Boulevard, the Nomark Development Company constructed Rosepointe, comprised of 53 "distinguished, prestige-styled homes" on one-third-acre lots. Ultimately attracting physicians, attorneys, and other prominent citizens, Rosepointe was later described by a city planner as a "little gem of a development."

To the northwest, in 1965 Schulte-Blackwell began to

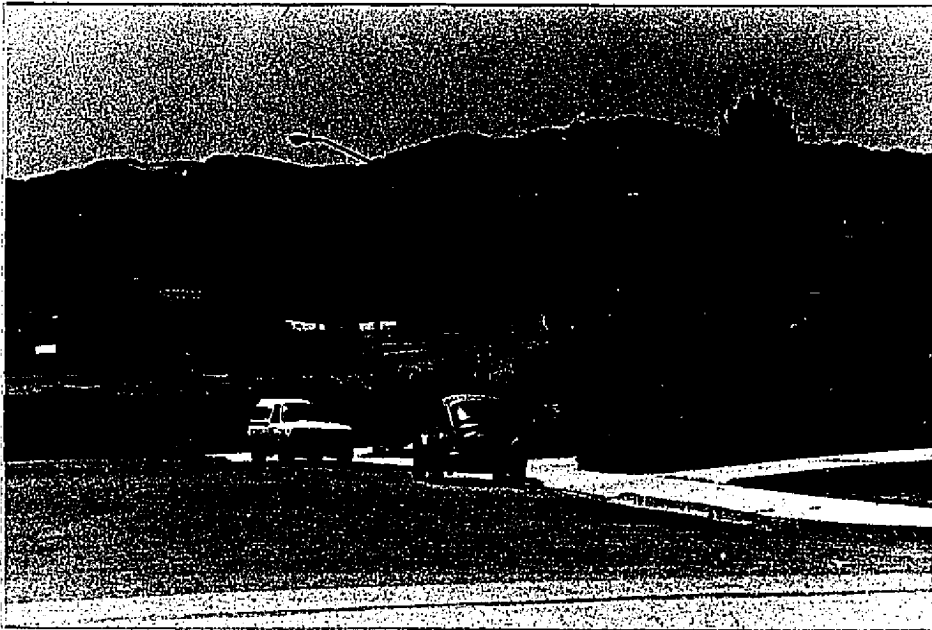


Figure 26. Aesthetic features of Pleasanton subdivisions.  
Above: Street sign in Pleasanton Valley evokes natural imagery.  
Below: Highland Oaks combines rural and urban amenities.

construct Highland Oaks (Figure 26). With its sole traffic outlet connecting to Foothill Road, this tract was from the outset isolated from the rest of Pleasanton. Consequently, for several years Highland Oaks was considered to be virtually a community unto itself.

Finally, on the site of the old Rose Ranch near Interstate 580, Oliver Rousseau and George Oakes gained approval late in 1964 for their 267.5-acre "Fairlands" planned unit development (also called Pleasanton Meadows). Rousseau and Oakes had built over 5,000 homes in Hayward. None of this experience, however, could help speed resolution of the jurisdictional dispute between Pleasanton and the Valley Community Services District. Construction of the first Fairlands tracts could not proceed until after the June 1967 signing of the Master Agreement authorizing VCSD to treat sewage in Pleasanton's northern and western subdivisions.

According to conventional planning wisdom, leapfrog developments are undesirable because they strain infrastructure and use space inefficiently. In activist Livermore, the Springtown proposal had provoked a spirited protest. In Pleasanton, however, there were no significant objections to any of these outlying tracts. Since they were located far from existing neighborhoods, they apparently bothered no one.

As Pleasanton annexed huge chunks of territory, subdivision approvals followed quickly. In 1963, three



final tract maps were filed with the Alameda County Recorder's Office; in 1964, 8 were filed. As the new freeways were completed, the pace of real estate activity quickened. In 1965, 9 subdivision maps were filed. Reflecting only mildly a nationwide building slump, in 1966 the number fell to 7, but in 1967-69 there were 14, 11 and 12 approvals, respectively. At the cyclical peak of homebuilding in 1968, there were an average of 5 homes completed per working day--over 1,100 in all.

As the open spaces surrounding the city center began to fill with houses, a few Pleasanton residents sought to ensure that general plan goals calling for "a community of distinctive physical form" and "a wide range of income groups" were achieved. By late 1966, the city had adopted such progressive planning measures as a parks dedication ordinance and provisions for so-called "salt and pepper" mixed-lot zoning.

As in Livermore, however, builders preferred to construct single-family detached dwellings. Consequently, some citizens became concerned that the cityscape was becoming monotonous. Perhaps surprisingly, these critics included Pleasanton's pro-growth city manager, James M. Fales. In a report to the city council, Fales warned that if present development practices continued, "in the end a 'slurb' will be the result, a better than average 'slurb' to be sure, but a 'slurb' just the same." In suggesting what needed to be done, Fales wrote:

One possibility lies in the area of completely new types of housing, with other than traditional pricing, with more rather than less diversity, and with more rather than fewer social, recreational and cultural accompaniments which assist in making life, particularly urban or suburban life, worth the effort involved.

It is in this area that I believe something really different, unique and better can be accomplished; something that will be practical enough to sell to the home buyer in the place of the choice he now has, and something which will assist in evolving a healthy and fresh environment which enables the accomplishment of the other important community-wide goals of a growing city.

(Published in The Independent, May 31, 1967: 5)

In response to Fales' report, Councilman and Lawrence Laboratory administrator Gene Rega drafted an emergency zoning ordinance. The ordinance called for a minimum average lot size of 8,000 square feet in new subdivisions, but included a requirement that lot sizes and home price levels be mixed.

Rega's proposal was strongly supported by the liberal Independent. In remarks dated May 21, editor Peter Carey expressed the hope that the zoning ordinance would "shoehorn the worst developers out of the market for Pleasanton land before the bulldozers begin to grind in earnest this summer." Perhaps Rega's ordinance would be merely the start of greater changes, as a result of which

hopefully Pleasanton will be able to force the planning of subdivision (sic) that offer row houses, cluster houses, condominiums, an even greater mixture of economic levels and a real sense of community. In short, a place for everybody.

(The Independent, May 21, 1967: 2)

As in Livermore, however, most businesspeople opposed any measure that would restrict builders unduly from following their own perceptions of market demand. Ultimately, advocates of forced variety in housing were unsuccessful. The vote came on June 1, 1967. For the measure to pass, four of the five council votes were needed; when realtor Bernard Gerton and banker Warren Harding voted "no," the emergency ordinance was rejected.

#### The Affordable Housing Issue

The defeat of one zoning ordinance notwithstanding, the pattern of development did change over the following several years. This was attributable as much to national construction trends, however, as to local pressures.

The price of housing was escalating rapidly. New homes were becoming larger, and hence more expensive. Moreover, in April 1969 it was reported that Pleasanton homes selling for \$17,000 in 1966 could be resold for \$25,000 (Pleasanton Times, April 30, 1969). Fearful that the "affordable" home was becoming a relict of the past, some homebuilders sought ways to construct cheaper, more saleable units.

Running counter to sentiment favoring affordability, however, was the traditional opposition within Pleasanton to "cheap" housing. Those proposing affordable homes always risked appearing to denigrate the community as a whole. In 1964, in fact, Lawrence Lab engineer John Long had been elected to the city council and subsequently named mayor on a platform of "higher standards and lower density"

(Pleasanton Times, April 22, 1964). When Stoneson Development Company proposed in 1966 to mix lot sizes on part of its holdings, Long had been a staunch opponent. Councilman Gerton commented that "maybe the city needs to do something for ordinary people." Long's reply revealed the elitism shared by many residents:

Maybe we aren't doing enough for the rich people either....the only place they can buy a home around here is in Castlewood or over near San Ramon...These are nice people too!

(Pleasanton Times, March 30, 1966)

In 1967, a small step to provide lower-cost housing was taken with the approval of Val Vista, a 1,000-unit subdivision located on the recently-annexed lands formerly owned by Volk-McLain. Partly because they were built adjacent to the VCSO sewage plant, Val Vista homes (built by Besco, a subsidiary of Singer, Inc.), were several thousand dollars cheaper than others in Pleasanton.

Late that same year, another "affordable" project emerged. In the Valley Trails development proposed by D & V Homes, costs would be trimmed through such measures as the elimination of sidewalks from one side of the street (Figure 27). The project was also distinguished by a "cul-de-sac park" street design.

More controversial than efforts to produce inexpensive single family homes was a movement by builders beginning in 1968 to construct more multiples. The actual number of attached units built in Pleasanton was low compared with Hayward, Fremont, and trends nationwide (Table 7, p.138;

Neutze 1968). In 1968, 63 permits divided among eleven structures were issued. In 1969, 92 such permits were taken out; in 1970, 153. Only in 1971, when permits for over 600 units were issued, was there a significant boom in multiples.

Relative to their numbers, however, apartments and townhouses caused considerable furor. Protests over "high-density" development constituted in fact the first significant grassroots opposition to local growth.

Although the ostensible reasons for objections involved traffic and noise, there likely were deeper reasons for dissention. Constance Perin (1977) has shown that many suburban residents believe apartment structures, with their connotation of transient lifestyles and lower-income denizens, violate the appropriate "order" within the local landscape. New arrivals in particular are alarmed to discover that "the city" is following them into the suburbs. The situation is made worse because few residents check a general plan map before moving into a new home. Only when the bulldozers arrive might they realize that an adjacent area is designated for multiples.

In January 1968, the first proposal emerged to construct apartments adjacent to single-family homes. In response to neighborhood protest, the city council downzoned the 5-acre parcel on Black Avenue from 29 to 17 units maximum per acre.

This was but the beginning of the battle over multiples. Also early in 1968, 735 petitioners from the

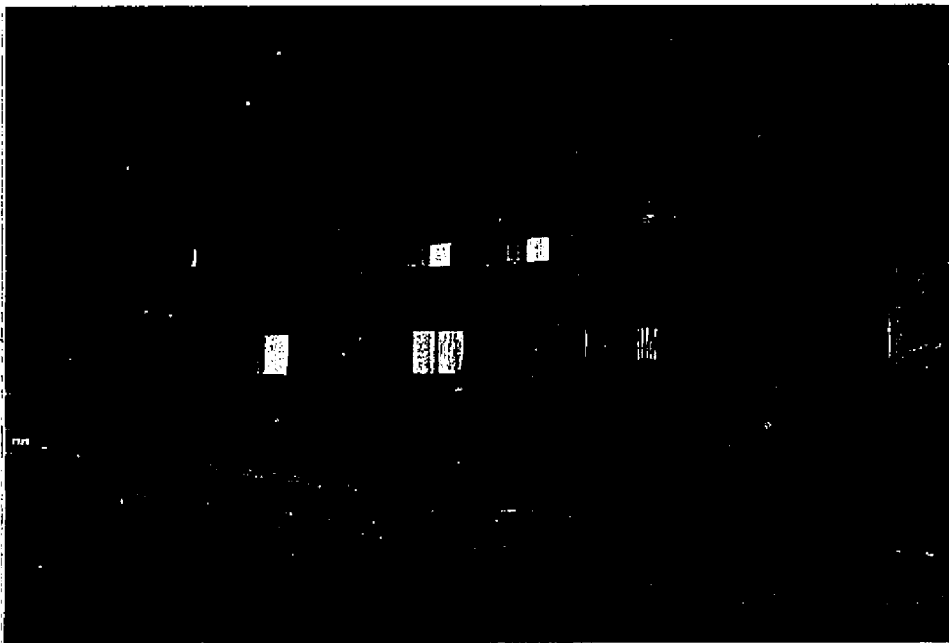


Figure 27. Late sixties affordable housing in Pleasanton.  
Above: The Valley Trails subdivision eschewed sidewalks for the sake of affordability.  
Below: An upzoning granted so that these sixplexes could be built within the Fairlands development caused a storm of protest among homeowners neighbors.

Pleasanton Valley Homeowners Association protested a 41-acre proposal by D & V Builders to construct multiples along Hopyard Road. After a lengthy battle, the council finally approved a compromise "Garden Court" homes proposal, consisting of zero-lot line townhouse units.

This volatile situation was aggravated by the willingness of a new city council to grant rezonings to builders seeking higher densities for multiple projects. More because of their personal popularity than their positions regarding growth, realtor Chris Beratlis and young Cheese Factory proprietor George Spiliotopolos were elected to the council in April 1968. During the following four years, the two newcomers joined with longtime councilman Bernard Gerton to form a strongly pro-developer council majority.

In June 1969, the council rezoned a parcel within the Fairlands development to permit construction of seven sixplexes (Figure 27). To facilitate the change, the council advised developer George Oakes to package the project as an amendment to the Fairlands planned unit development. The revised PUD would permit construction at a gross density of 1,500 square feet per unit, where 2,500 had been the minimum permissible previously.

In November, a proposal from Stoneson to rezone 30 acres from R-1-6500 to a PUD including townhouses was approved by the city council even though a reported 90% of nearby residents opposed the project (Pleasanton City

Council Minutes, November 10, 1969). During succeeding months, the council also authorized the introduction of mobile home parks along Vineyard Avenue. The only major apartment project to be clearly rejected was a proposed complex adjacent to the prestigious Rosepointe tract.

As citizen opposition to higher-density development continued, discord between the council and its growing legion of detractors became more bitter. There emerged a small band of activists whose struggles against density increases evolved into a broader protest against "runaway growth." In leading an unsuccessful protest against the Fairlands rezoning referred to above, Kaiser Center for Technology chemist Robert Pearson became the leading spokesman for the incipient residentialist forces in Pleasanton. Pearson and a handful of fellow activists formed an ad hoc group called Citizens for Planned Progress.

In public debate, CPP eschewed elitist arguments, protesting instead on environmental grounds. Moreover, it was claimed that rezonings provided developers with windfall profits, since land values automatically rose when density was increased. The council majority defended its zoning decisions by citing the need for affordable housing, plus the right of developers to respond to changing market conditions.

Divisiveness over the density issue became more acute in 1970. Morrison Homes' 105-acre "Four Villages" proposal along Santa Rita Road called for densities of 6.7 units per acre, where the general plan allowed only 4.7. In response,



a petition with 925 signatures was presented to the city council, demanding that densities in excess of general plan limits be forbidden.

To blunt the protest, the council appointed a 25-member general plan review citizens committee. Reflecting the council's own predilections, the majority view maintained that "market forces," not council action, should determine growth patterns. Not surprisingly, the report was roundly criticized by Citizens for Planned Progress.

In April 1970, Pearson was elected to the city council as a "control-growth" candidate. With the entry of Pearson into the public forum, the emerging split within Pleasanton between oldtimers and newcomers became highly visible. During yet another rezoning battle early in 1971, Pearson warned during a council meeting that the "city will resemble San Jose in 10 years, and Los Angeles in 20 years if we don't do something to slow the growth rate" (The Independent, January 6, 1971). In response, George Spiliotopolos snapped: "Why don't you and the others not here in 1965 move out? Why don't you do us a favor and move out?"

Spiliotopolos, Beratlis and Gerton subsequently antagonized residentialists by refusing to oppose a county proposal to construct a "parkway" along Pleasanton Ridge between Sunol and Castro Valley. Although Beratlis and Spiliotopolos claimed they simply were reluctant to discourage improved access to the ridge, parkway foes pointed out that a road would facilitate development of the

pristine area.

The residentialist viewpoint was reflected in an Independent editorial entitled "Pleasanton's Brutality," in which Robert Several wrote

the (Pleasanton) government is exhibiting itself to be so grossly ravenous in its land planning that the developers themselves might as well be running it.

(February 28, 1971: 4)

The council responded by passing a resolution on March 1 condemning The Independent for "yellow journalism."

#### The Foothill Road Referendum

The furor over zoning and development reached a climax during mid-1971. City council approval of a 16-acre planned unit development at the corner of Foothill Road and Bernal Avenue was an echo of the earlier annexation wars with VCSD. When Castlewood Enterprises, owners of the property, agreed to annex to Pleasanton, the city had consented to zone the parcel for intensive use. Some eightplex condominiums were, in fact erected during the late sixties. By approving a somewhat altered version of the original land use proposal (including a small commercial area plus more high-density dwelling units), councilmembers claimed they were merely living up to a promise already made.

Almost a decade after the original agreement, however, both geographical and political conditions had changed. The completion of Interstate 680 nearby transformed Foothill Road from a major thoroughfare to a scenic byway. To those already opposed to high-density development, the proposed

Castlewood project seemed inappropriate.

Not surprisingly, council approval of the Castlewood complex drew the ire of the incipient anti-growth forces. In the wake of the council vote, a group calling itself "Rural Foothill Defenders" quickly gathered the necessary signatures (comprising 10% of the electorate) to place the development before voters as a referendum measure.

Led by the usual pro-growth forces, including realtors, local developers, and the chamber of commerce, defenders of the Foothill Road development formed their own group, Citizens United Pleasanton. Even though CUP outspent RFD by three to one, the Castlewood rezoning was vetoed by Pleasanton voters in the special election held in August, 2,279 to 794. Following their victory, the RFD leaders immediately pressed to have the parcel downzoned for large-lot single-family home development.

Stunned by the decisiveness of the election outcome, a councilman who had approved the rezoning commented that perhaps he and his colleagues had been out of touch regarding the growth issue.

#### Toward a Growth Crisis

Extraordinarily rapid valley growth during the sixties was spurred by cheap land, new highways, and a booming economy. As long as local infrastructure remained adequate, there were few real restrictions to inhibit land conversion. The homebuilders responded by providing housing that by today's standards was remarkably inexpensive.

Apparently, the "suburban solution" to the postwar housing shortage was working. Unrelenting development, however, seemed guaranteed to produce an eventual backlash. According to a Livermore survey, people moved to the valley either because their job was nearby, or because of its affordable housing (Corey, Canaparis & Galanis 1973). In Dublin-San Ramon, low taxes and a lack of crime were mentioned prominently (Henle 1973: 134). In both cases, however, people valued open space and a "country atmosphere." By the late sixties, continued development threatened to undermine those amenities.

To protect their "quality of life," residents relied upon the police powers of local government. These bodies, however, had but limited authority to direct development. The Livermore and Pleasanton City Councils did establish high standards for construction. In some subdivisions, utility wires were placed underground. Curvilinear streets, street trees, and the dedication of parkland became mandatory. Meanwhile, the consultants responsible for local general plans encouraged the belief that countless individual homes could be blended into an harmonious landscape. They claimed, moreover, that even as rapid growth continued, a "small town atmosphere" could be maintained. Finally, the magic of planning would help to attract industry to the valley, thereby providing a tax base and local employment.

Expectations that construction standards and land-use

planning would upgrade the appearance of the landscape as a whole, however, proved unrealistic. Although residents seemed satisfied individually with their homes, an undistinguished cityscape was inevitable, so long as the prevailing mode of development consisted of tract homes surrounded by small individual yards, with transit provided exclusively by the private automobile. The scattered morphology of the suburban landscape was worsened by leapfrog development, and was aggravated further by the fragmented pattern of political authority. With two rival valley cities already in existence, the county-controlled establishment of San Ramon Village created yet another center of homebuilding activity.

It is hardly surprising, then, that aesthetically, some outside observers held the valley in low esteem. The authors of a regional architectural guide, for example, dismissed the area as follows: "There is little of architectural importance in the area, most of which is an object lesson in suburban sprawl" (Gebhard et al. 1973: 313).

In one instance, criticism was sufficiently clever that residents could react with amusement rather than offense. In 1973, Livermore photographer Bill Owens published a photo essay entitled Suburbia. The work was composed of stark black-and-white images of life in valley subdivisions, accompanied by often-embarrassing statements attributed to individuals in the photos. Featuring high-contrast printing, wide-angle distortion, and unflattering photographic perspective, Owens' images portrayed the new

neighborhoods as sterile and monotonous, and their young denizens as shallow and materialistic. Such heavy-handed social criticism notwithstanding, Owens revealed sufficient affection for his subjects that the book was popular among valley residents.

By the late sixties, there was mounting pressure for reforms that might preserve the aesthetic amenities which people had sought upon moving to the valley. In Livermore, Lawrence and Sandia Laboratory professionals had formed a "community party." These residentialists attempted to work within the system, advocating such measures as the RS zoning ordinance, a sign ordinance, and later, establishment of a design review process. In Pleasanton there was a smaller constituency for city-wide legislation, but apartment proposals mobilized homeowners out of immediate self-interest.

Residentialists discovered the limits of mainstream legislative efforts. Real power over creation of the built environment remained with the developers, who in turn acted in accordance with broad market trends. Despite the flexibility allowed by the RS ordinance, for example, Livermore homebuilders refused to construct "cluster housing." Citing the American preference for single-family units, they could not gamble that multiples combined with common open space would command the same price as individual houses with yards.

As growth became associated with landscape destruction

and demands for new infrastructure, frustrated residents searched for ways in which the system might be vulnerable. The provision of some types of infrastructure was in fact dependent upon public approval. Moreover, the dramatic victory by a coalition of neighborhood activists in the Foothill Road referendum was highly significant, since it demonstrated that the progrowth forces could indeed be defeated.

Dissatisfaction with the growth process as a whole, however, was by no means universal. The continued election of progrowth officials in both Livermore and Pleasanton reflected the view of many citizens that continued development would enhance, not degrade the community, or else that growth was inevitable. Moreover, as revealed in Figure 28, there remained considerable open space in the valley; even in 1975 it hardly resembled Los Angeles, nor even San Jose.

Ultimately, anger over unceasing development and its negative consequences would fuel a movement valley-wide movement to control growth. At all times, however, the issue remained divisive and bitterly-contested. The evolution and fate of these growth-control politics is described in Part III.



Figure 28.  
Aerial Photo of the Livermore-Amador Valley, 1975.  
(Pacific Aerial Surveys).



### PART THREE

#### The Era of Controlled Growth

Part II showed how rapid growth reached a peak throughout the valley between 1968 and 1971. In this final section, the ecological, social and political repercussions of this development will be analyzed. Because local government could not cope adequately with unrelenting population growth, problems involving schools, water supply, wastewater treatment and air quality reached crisis levels by late 1971. In response, grassroots concern over residential densities and zoning practices evolved into a political movement to curb growth. The conflict between those favoring and those opposing "growth controls" has shaped valley politics ever since.

## Chapter X

### Reform Movements

The building boom in the valley reflected, albeit in exaggerated form, a national pattern. It is not surprising, then, that in terms both of ideology and the circumstances motivating its political expression, the campaign to slow development within the valley also paralleled broader trends. It was in fact during the late sixties that both the environmental and land-use reform movements emerged as potent political forces. This change in social and political consciousness, discussed in this chapter, provides the background for the drama that subsequently unfolded within the Livermore-Amador Valley.

#### The Environmental Movement

As geographer Clarence J. Glacken (1967) has shown, both the idea that the earth is an "harmonious whole" and the realization that human agency can significantly damage the landscape can be traced back within Western thought to the ancient Greeks. As early as the 13th century, concern was expressed over air pollution in London (Gimpel 1976). Still, the notion that environmental pollution and the exhaustion of resources could pose actual threats to civilization is relatively recent. In 1864, George Perkins Marsh warned of the dangers of deforestation and other

environmental abuses in his book Man and Nature. In response to waste and depletion associated with post-Civil War industrialization, the first significant American "conservation movement" emerged during the 1890s. Led by such well-known individuals as Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, the early conservationists echoed the broader themes of Progressivism, advocating the "scientific" management of forests, mines, and grazing lands; their watchword was "efficiency" (Hays 1969).

Major strides toward resource planning were made during the Great Depression, particularly with regard to soil conservation. However, concern over the environment remained an undercurrent, both in public policy and in popular thought, until the 1960s. Two books released early in that decade were particularly important in bringing environmental issues to the fore. The first was Silent Spring, published in 1962 by marine biologist Rachel Carson. Appearing first as a series of articles in the New Yorker magazine, Carson's book was a powerful indictment of the "miracle" pesticide DDT, cataloging the potentially devastating effects of the chemical as it became concentrated through the food chain. Although vilified by the petrochemical industry, Carson found a receptive audience for her ideas among American scientists and intellectuals. The second book was The Quiet Crisis, a 1963 survey of environmental problems presented by Secretary of Interior Stuart Udall.

It was, in fact, a legion of scientists that carried the banner of "ecology" during the revival of environmental concern that followed the publication of Silent Spring. In Science and Survival (1966), botanist Barry Commoner warned of the hazards posed by contemporary technology. Two years later, Stanford biologist Paul Ehrlich gained notoriety by publishing The Population Bomb, a short polemic cataloging the grim consequences of global overpopulation. Other prominent environmentalists with training in the sciences included Garrett Hardin (genetics), Rene Dubos (microbiology), Kenneth Watt (zoology), Raymond Dasmann (wildlife biology), and Loren Eiseley (anthropology, history of science). Meanwhile, environmental issues were presented regularly in Science, the prestigious journal of the American Academy for the Advancement of Science (e.g. White 1967; Hardin 1968; Marx 1970; Wagar 1970). As will become apparent in succeeding chapters, a natural affinity of perspective linked scientific spokespersons for the emergent ecological viewpoint, and at least some of the researchers at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory.

If the writings of scientists ultimately formed part of the intellectual corpus upon which environmentalists drew during the late sixties, their acceptance by the general public was conditioned by the realities of life, both environmental and political, within the U.S. First, air and water pollution were perceptible to millions of urban dwellers. Long associated with such inversion-prone areas as the Los Angeles basin, smog became commonplace within

many U.S. cities. Some rivers were used as sewers, receiving industrial and municipal effluent. According to one account, Lake Erie was "now a stinking, septic mess" (Ehrlich and Ehrlich 1970: 186).

Second, an image of American industry as irresponsible and uncaring was fostered by the giant oil spill that fouled the beaches of Santa Barbara, California in February 1969. Third, the social divisions wrought by the civil rights movement and the Viet Nam War made many college students receptive to arguments that the "establishment" not only oppressed minorities at home and waged war against Third World peoples abroad, but also ravaged the environment.

Whether or not one embraced the notion conveyed by a popular bumper sticker that ecology might be "the last fad," it was widely accepted that an environmental crisis did exist. Explanations for the sudden spate of problems, however, varied considerably. Historian Lynn White, Jr. (1967) claimed that the Old Testament directive to "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it" (Genesis I: 28), fostered a mind-set prone to ecological destruction. Similarly, journalist Gene Marine (1969) blamed a dominant American "engineering mentality." Although wildlife biologist Aldo Leopold died in 1949, a new generation of followers supported his idea that the lack of a "land ethic" has led us to abuse the environment (Leopold 1949; Udall 1963).

Not all explanations focussed upon attitudes and ideas.

Barry Commoner (1966, 1971) argued that the nonbiodegradable nature of petrochemical products and the polluting nature of much modern technology has made our affluent lifestyle ecologically destructive. Paul Ehrlich, on the other hand (1968), declared that a tidal wave of overpopulation threatens to engulf mankind, which causes all other factors to pale into insignificance. Welfare economists revealed the institutional basis for pollution as a form of "market failure." They showed that industries and individuals can avoid the costs of cleaning up pollution by "externalizing" them, i.e. by dumping pollutants into commonly-shared resources such as waterways and the atmosphere (Barkley and Seckler 1972, Kapp 1971, Edel 1973).

Just as there was little agreement regarding the cause of environmental problems, so too was there a variety of proposed solutions. These ranged from an extreme "free-market" approach--including the buying and selling of "pollution rights" (Ruff 1970)--to calls for the radical de-industrialization of modern societies (Roszak 1973). From some quarters came appeals for the rapid dissemination of new values appropriate to an impending "age of scarcity." In addition to the revival of Leopold's "land ethic" (e.g. California Office of Planning and Research 1979), attempts were made to borrow concepts from the science of ecology as the foundation for a new, "holistic" world view. The ecosystem was depicted as a complex, self-regulating mechanism in which plants, animals, and their environments are interconnected and interdependent. Consequently, to

disturb anything is potentially to disrupt the entire system because, as Barry Commoner put it, "everything is connected to everything else" (1971: 29).

Steeped in the ideology of growth and progress, possessed of a powerful, uncontrolled technology, and insufficiently cognizant of the delicacy of natural balances, Western peoples have, so the reasoning went, torn the ecological "web" asunder. Only by adopting the goal of a low-consumption, "steady-state" system, in which energy flows, population, and stocks of resources are all in equilibrium, can the ultimate destruction of the ecosystem be averted. This point was made most dramatically in The Limits to Growth, a 1972 Club of Rome report in which a computer model was used to argue that continued unchecked economic and demographic growth would bring about environmental destruction as early as the beginning of the next century (Meadows et al. 1972).

The notion of the "stationary state" itself was drawn not from ecology, but from the writings of nineteenth century political economist John Stuart Mill (1909). Although capital accumulation by the individual firm and continuous growth for the economy as a whole have been the sine qua non within capitalist societies for two centuries, some modern economists began to explore the notion of a non-growth, "steady state economy" (Georgescu-Roegen 1971; Daly 1973, 1977; Renshaw 1973). E. J. Mishan (1973) attacked the "growthmen" as shortsighted and foolish; Kenneth Boulding

(1966) wrote that we should substitute a closed-system "spaceship" economy for our current, wasteful "cowboy" economy. Perhaps most widely-read of all was E. F. Schumacher (1973), who advocated a "Buddhist" economics, and popularized the notion that "small is beautiful."

It would be wrong to assert that these proposals for new values had no impact upon American life. Certainly, popular support for environmental causes became widespread. Although media attention to ecology peaked perhaps on Earth Day, April 22, 1970, public demands for pure water, clean air, and open space did not simply dissipate, as had been predicted by skeptics such as Anthony Downs (1972). Between 1966 and 1981, membership in the Sierra Club grew from 39,000 to 182,000. Moreover, thousands of people began to recycle cans and bottles, and to utilize biodegradable household cleaning products. Small, fuel-efficient autos became increasingly popular, particularly in California. Environmentalists could even claim the philosophical sympathies of major politicians: Edmund G. Brown, Jr., Governor of California between 1975 and 1983, became well-known for his Buddhist affinities and his advocacy of "lowered expectations;" Richard Lamm was elected Governor of Colorado in 1974 on a controlled-growth platform. Even during the tenure of the anti-environmentalist Reagan administration, public opinion polls have consistently shown strong support for tough environmental legislation (e.g. The Gallup Report 1982: 14) .

The radical, long-term changes in values called for



from some quarters, however, have not been forthcoming. Although desiring a clean environment, Americans still cherish a materialistic lifestyle, and it is a growing, not a steady-state economy that is considered a harbinger of good times. Such faddish accoutrements of the "ecological" lifestyle as granola cereal and "natural" shampoos were easily transformed into mass-produced consumer goods by large corporations.

Environmental concern has in fact consistently been strongest among white, highly educated, upper-middle-income individuals (Van Liere and Dunlap 1980). This group comprises what is variously called the "new middle class" (Mills 1971), the "new class" (Bruce-Briggs 1979), the "professional-managerial class" (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 1979), the "professional-managerial sector" (Albert and Hahnel 1979), or the "professional-managerial-technical stratum" (Walker and Greenberg 1982). The core of this growing demographic subgroup includes scientists, engineers, administrators, and other highly-educated professionals. The strength, in fact, of the campaign to control suburban growth in the Livermore-Amador Valley was partly attributable to the heavy concentration of such individuals within the valley.

Ultimately, the major legacy of the environmental movement was a series of innovations that were not philosophical but political and legal. At both the national and state levels, a spate of laws was passed, and a host of

new agencies created, all within the span of a few years. Although some will be mentioned here, more detailed accounts will be offered in subsequent chapters.

In 1969, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was passed by Congress; among its many provisions were the establishment of a Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ), and the requirement that for all "significant" federal construction projects, an environmental impact statement (EIS) must be filed before approval can be granted.

In 1970, major amendments to the 1967 Clean Air Act were passed, setting air quality standards and requiring each state to formulate an implementation plan to meet these standards. Also in 1970, the Environmental Protection Agency was created. In 1972, new amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948 were approved. These established a goal of attainment, where possible, of fishable and swimmable waters nationwide by 1983. To control pollutants from point sources, the law established a permit program: the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Moreover, Section 208 of the law required "water quality management plans" to be implemented for all areas of each state, including the handling of long-term (twenty-year) wastewater treatment needs.\*

Reflecting an environmentally-conscious constituency, the State of California adopted a number of independent

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\* Grant provisions of the 1972 Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments, plus the California Clean Water Bonds law are discussed in Chapter XIII.

environmental regulations, in some cases prior to and more stringent than the federal rules they paralleled. In 1967, the state legislature passed the Mulford-Carrell Air Resources Act, creating the Air Resources Board. The act required the new agency to set the state's own air quality standards, and to divide California into separate air basins.

In 1969, the legislature passed the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Among other provisions, this law required preparation of water quality control plans for each of the sixteen major hydrographic basins in California. The bill also granted broad powers to each Regional Water Quality Control Board to set and enforce wastewater discharge standards. In case of violations, the RWQCB could not only issue cease-and-desist orders halting new sewer hookups, but could assess stiff fines and set time schedules for compliance.

Having already established a strong water pollution control system of its own, after 1972 the state took responsibility for several key features of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, including Section 208 planning and the NPDES permit system.

In 1970, the California Environmental Quality Act was passed; CEQA called for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for any project "that would have a significant effect on the environment." In what became a famous decision by the California State Supreme Court, it was determined subsequently that an EIR was required for any

private project requiring a government permit [Friends of Mammoth v. Board of Supervisors of Mono County (1972) 8 Cal. 2d 1, 104 Cal. Rptr. 16, 500 P. 2d 1360].

Finally, in November 1972 California voters approved by ballot initiative the creation of a new Coastal Zone Commission to regulate development along the state's thousand miles of shoreline.

At the regional level, the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District and the Regional Water Quality Control Board were supplemented by a new Bay Area Sewage Services Agency, created in 1971 to develop a wastewater disposal master plan. Although in some ways the responsibilities of BASSA paralleled those of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the new agency possessed the power to construct sewage disposal facilities, if that became necessary. Also in 1971, what had been the Bay Area Transit Study Commission (BATSC) was reorganized as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. In 1969, the Association of Bay Area Governments acquired the federal funding review authority granted under Office of Management and Budget Circular A-95. In 1970, ABAG adopted its first Regional Plan for the San Francisco Bay Region.

By the mid-seventies, there existed a veritable maze of agencies, regulations, plan requirements, and grant funding procedures; the preparation of environmental impact reports became a minor industry in itself. Guiding all of this bureaucratic activity was a neo-Progressivist ideology which

maintained that through scientific study and proper management, both a cleaner environment and a healthy economy could be maintained.

Some have argued that the environmental reforms of this period, and particularly the Clean Air Act, have been eroded over time as the result of anti-regulatory lobbying by large corporations (e.g. Walker and Storper 1978). Moreover, enforcement of federal anti-pollution laws during the Reagan administration has been at times non-existent. To some extent, the professionalization and bureaucratization of environmental "management" has made it increasingly difficult for the ordinary citizen to understand, let alone remain involved in the ongoing struggle to achieve and maintain environmental quality. Still, as of the mid-eighties the public was supporting stronger, not weaker, environmental laws (Business Week 1983: 87).

#### The Land-Use Control Movement

An important aspect of the environmental ferment of the sixties was a widely-shared dissatisfaction with the land development process. Although postwar growth had provided housing for millions of families, it had also destroyed prime farmland, eliminated valuable wetlands, and created monotonous, "sprawling" suburban landscapes in areas like the Livermore-Amador Valley.

During the early sixties, incipient attempts to overcome problems in local land-use controls included such innovations as planned unit developments and clustering, and

the establishment of LAFCOs in California counties. In 1965, Congress established the National Commission on Urban Problems to study the urbanization process and recommend reforms. Publication in 1968 of the commission's report, Building the American City, became a landmark event within a growing movement to revamp existing land-use law.

By the early seventies, protest movements had arisen in response to numerous land-use problems, including excessive central city high-rise construction (Brugmann et al. 1971), the destruction of agricultural lands and urban open space (Whyte 1968), as well as uncontrolled suburban growth. Citing the grassroots nature of these early movements, William K. Reilly (1973) characterized the land use reform impulse as a reflection of a "new mood" on the part of middle-class Americans, indicative of a post-scarcity concern with the "quality of life."

Most reform efforts were directed at municipal or county level governments. Some land-use experts, however, viewed the diffuse, localized thrust of this political ferment as threatening in the long run to an orderly system of development. According to Frank Popper, many planners, land-use attorneys and environmentalists have been mistrustful of locally-generated legislative efforts (1981: 15-16). They believe local government is too parochial, and that a situation in which developers are confronted by countless small entities, each with its own set of requirements, leads to market distortion and regulatory

chaos.

Overall, the predominant professional response to land-use problems was to advocate regional, state, and even federal reforms. A manifesto of sorts for this philosophy was issued in 1971 by two prominent land-use lawyers, Fred Bosselman and David Callies. Published through the Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ), their report declared that a "quiet revolution in land use controls" was underway. During subsequent years, the "quiet revolution" was promoted in different ways by a battery of organizations, including the Urban Land Institute, the Conservation Foundation, and the American Law Institute (Walker and Heiman 1981). In addition to the CEQ document, prominent works prompted by the movement included the Rockefeller Brothers Fund Report, The Use of Land (Reilly 1973), and the ALI Model Land Development Code (1976).

Each year between 1968 and 1976, a bill to establish a National Land Use Policy Act was introduced into the U.S. Congress. It never, however, became law. The legislation, which would have subsidized state-level land-use planning, came closest to passage in 1974, but was defeated in the House of Representatives when President Nixon withdrew his support in order to gain a few votes in his struggle to avoid impeachment (Plotkin 1980). New land-use control efforts at the state level centered upon management of such "critical" zones as coastal areas, marshes, and forest preserves. Also subject to new regulations were strip mining and the siting of power plants (Healy 1976).

Popper (1981) has interpreted this top-down approach as an outgrowth of a New Deal liberalism which maintains that centralized controls best protect the public interest. Indeed, such prominent analysts as Lewis Mumford (1938) and Mel Scott (1959) have long argued that at least regional-level controls are necessary to establish an orderly and rational urban system. Walker and Heiman (1981), however, maintain that some contemporary reformers actually have been allied not with the ordinary citizen, but with the large corporations which by the early seventies were investing heavily in land development projects. Centralized regulation can represent a means through which local resistance to large real estate projects can be overridden, slow-growth communities forced to provide their "fair share" of regional housing needs, and the entire environmental approval process streamlined.

#### Pioneer Communities in Growth-Control

Within this context, it is not surprising that the land-use reform "establishment" was lukewarm toward municipal growth control ordinances. Local governments have long possessed some capacity to influence development patterns. Moreover, as Peter Wolf has pointed out, "The police-power authority of local and state government has been increasing for several decades" (1981: 92). Pioneered in such communities as Ramapo, New York, and Petaluma, California, growth control ordinances extended this



authority to include the timing, as well as the spatial characteristics of development. Such growth curbs quickly became controversial. Whereas the grassroots reformers saw themselves as public-spirited Davids fighting the Goliath of land development interests, their opponents within the construction industry viewed the movement as a successor to large-lot zoning, that is, a new attempt to protect the exclusivity of affluent white communities.

Growth controls represent at once an outgrowth of previous regulatory authority, and a significant new step to augment public control over land development. This continuity between past and present practices is recognized by Burrows (1976), when he discusses growth management in terms of "first generation" and "second generation" techniques. Some first generation techniques already have been reviewed with respect to Livermore and Pleasanton: zoning, subdivision standards, exactions and developer fees. Also important is the purchase of lands for public use through the power of eminent domain.

Some noteworthy early attempts to control local growth involved utilization of these "first generation" powers. In Palo Alto, California, for example, a 1970 design study conducted by the Livingston and Blayney consulting firm concluded that the city would be better off fiscally by maintaining its vast, undeveloped foothill area as open space, rather than allowing intensive development. Palo Alto ultimately zoned the area for very large lot minimum acreage. In response, the affected landowners took the city

to court, claiming that the zoning constituted an unfair "taking" of their property without compensation. Ultimately, the courts agreed with the plaintiffs (Eldridge v. City of Palo Alto (1976) 57 Cal.App. 3d 613); Palo Alto finally purchased the land for \$7.5 million.

It was the perceived failure of established regulatory techniques to ensure an orderly growth process and a desirable built environment that prompted the creation of "second generation" growth management techniques. The new approaches have included adequate public facilities programming, population "cap rates," and building permit limitations. In many cases, the mechanism for growth regulation has been control over such vital services as wastewater treatment. Just two of the best-known early experiments in growth management will be reviewed here: Ramapo, New York, and Petaluma, California.

#### Ramapo

Located in Rockland County, Ramapo was truly innovative in its approach to regulation of development (see Reilly 1973: 91-94). The construction of two major new highways nearby made Ramapo ripe for bedroom development by the mid-sixties. After establishing a comprehensive plan in 1966 aimed at preserving the town's rustic character, Ramapo declared a temporary moratorium on development. In 1969, a timing and control ordinance was devised. This included a six-year capital budgeting program regulating when and where capital facilities would be made available for new

development. This program would be followed by two additional successive six-year capital improvement plans, which would provide a sequence for future infrastructure additions. A developer could receive a residential development use permit only when facilities became available. This availability was measured through a point system; different public facilities, including fire protection, sanitary facilities, roads and parks, were allocated different numbers of points. Significantly, developers could advance their approval date or evade the system entirely by financing capital improvements themselves.

In what became a landmark court case, a developer named Golden sued the Town of Ramapo. The lower court sustained the ordinance, but it was overturned on appeal. In 1972, however, the New York State Supreme Court upheld the law, ruling that phased growth was within the powers granted to local governments to regulate capital improvements [Golden v. The Planning Board of the Town of Ramapo (1972) 30 N.Y. 2d. 359, 285 N. E.2d 291].

#### Petaluma

After imposing a freeze on development in early 1971, the Sonoma County city of Petaluma (population 25,000) initiated an extensive general plan review process (Cranston 1973: 109-116). In August 1972, the city adopted a Residential Development Control System (RDCS), which limited the annual number of new residential units to 500. Under

this original system, the city council could require that from 8 to 12 percent of new residential units be allocated for low-to-moderate income housing. Applications from developers were reviewed by a 17-member Residential Development Board (RDB), composed of public officials and interested citizens. This board evaluated each application according to very specific technical and architectural criteria, and scored the proposal on a point system. If, after public hearings and review, a proposal was approved, a developer was given six months to begin construction.

The Petaluma plan was not severely growth-restrictive, allowing around a 5% annual increase in dwelling units during its first years of operation. Moreover, in an advisory referendum held in June 1973, the new growth control system was supported by 82% of voters. Nevertheless, soon after implementation of the plan, the city was taken to court by the Construction Industry Association of Sonoma County. The builders claimed that because of the quota system utilized, the plan was exclusionary, and consequently violated the constitutionally-guaranteed right to travel.

In the Federal District Court decision issued in April 1974, Judge Lloyd Burke ruled in favor of the plaintiff (375 F. Supp. 574), maintaining that since the growth control measure did not reflect a "compelling state interest," the restriction of growth to a level below the market rate did constitute a violation of the right to travel.

In August 1975, however, the verdict was overturned in the Ninth District Court of Appeals (522 F. 2d. 897). The

Court ruled that the Construction Industry Association had no legal standing to object to Petaluma's policy, because it did not represent persons denied housing in Petaluma. Moreover, the court cited previous cases, including Village of Belle Terre v. Boraas [(1974) 416 U.S. 1], where the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a city's right to preserve its residential character through restrictive zoning. In 1976, the Supreme Court refused to hear the case, hence permitting the Petaluma ordinance to stand.

The Ramapo and Petaluma cases influenced the thinking of some Livermore and Pleasanton residents. Yet the pathways toward controlled growth taken by the valley communities were also innovative in their own right.

## Chapter XI

### The Onset of Crisis

On April 11, 1972, Livermore and Pleasanton joined Petaluma and Ramapo as pioneer communities within the incipient growth-controls movement. Voters in both cities passed an initiative measure prohibiting the issuance of residential building permits unless adequate water, school facilities, and sewage treatment capacity were available. Conceived by a citizen group called Save All Valley Environments, Inc., the measure became known as the "SAVE initiative." This chapter analyzes the crises giving impetus to the SAVE movement.

The surge of grassroots resistance to growth that culminated in the SAVE campaign was triggered by several specific problems: (1) severe air pollution; (2) an impending water shortage; (3) overloaded sewage treatment facilities in the west valley; (4) overcrowded schools, particularly in Livermore; and (5) a "slurb"-like landscape that some felt was beginning to resemble the San Fernando Valley.

The controversy surrounding these problems was fueled, however, by the long-standing philosophical split between those who believed a city should grow in accordance with market forces, and those who maintained that strong

municipal regulation is necessary to shape a quality community. The SAVE election represented, in fact, a major escalation of the battles over zoning and planning that had commenced during the sixties.

#### Air Pollution: a Visible Menace

Since the Livermore-Amador Valley is nearly encircled by hills, it is subject to frequent thermal inversions. When a layer of warm air traps cooler air beneath, contaminants cannot disperse into the upper atmosphere, and severe pollution can result. There are two types of inversions. During calm winter nights, cold air sinks toward a valley floor; as the surrounding hills are heated by morning sunlight, the warmed air rises and traps the cooler air beneath. Such radiation inversions do occur in the valley, but they are not a major problem. Of greater concern are the subsidence inversions that occur between May and October. Descending air moving cyclonically out of a high pressure cell warms as it is compressed, forming a thermal cap, most commonly during the afternoon. Meanwhile, sunlight causes a photochemical reaction among the trapped pollutants, resulting in eye-smarting smog.

Air pollution has numerous components, including particulates, nitrous oxides, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons. The most common measure of smog, however, has been the total oxidant level, or more recently, ozone (O<sub>3</sub>). According to the rules established by the Environmental Protection Agency under the Clean Air Act

Amendments of 1970, the primary standard for photochemical smog was 0.08 ppm oxidant. In February 1979, this standard was relaxed somewhat to 0.12 ppm ozone. According to EPA, this change was justified by health research. Critics, however, claimed that the change came mainly in response to pressures from the automobile and oil industries (Walker and Storper 1978: 255; San Francisco Chronicle, January 27, 1979: 1). In any event, a widely-used index of air quality has been the number of days during which a locality has experienced high-hour ozone levels of more than the (new) primary standard of 0.12 ppm.

Overall, smog in the Bay Area has been far less severe than in the Los Angeles basin. Ozone levels of 0.20 ppm, constituting a first stage advisory/alert, are recorded from fifty to seventy times more frequently in Los Angeles than in the Bay Area. Whereas in 1978 alone there were 23 days in which a second-stage alert level of 0.35 ppm ozone was recorded in Los Angeles, such levels have never been reached in the Bay Area (Bay Area Air Quality Management District 1980: 6).

Within the overall cleaner context of the San Francisco Bay Air Basin, however, the Livermore-Amador Valley has been a problem area. Officials of the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District had warned of the potential smog danger in the valley from a very early date (see Chapter VI). By the mid-sixties, photochemical smog had become a familiar phenomenon. By February 1967, the BAAPCD was



publicly expressing concern over the valley air quality situation. One air pollution engineer for the district stated that the area might become seriously "smog impacted" once the population exceeded 150,000 (The Independent, February 19, 1967). As of 1969, Livermore was considered the "non-attainment center" for ozone within the entire Bay Area (BAAQMD 1980: 1).

Between 1967, when monitoring equipment was first installed in Livermore, and 1971, the city experienced the largest number of days in which high-hour oxidant was in excess of the federal standard of any reporting station within the air basin. The worst year for smog was 1969, when the existing standard of 0.08 ppm. oxidant was exceeded on 110 days (had the new standard been in effect, the number of days would be reduced to 53). In 1970, the area was deemed a "critical air basin" by the California Air Resources Board.

Undeniably, there was a problem. The precise cause of pollution, however, was highly controversial. Evidently, prevailing westerly breezes pushed pollutants originating along the bay plain into the valley through Dublin and Niles Canyons. To the extent that smog was externally generated, the valley was an innocent victim of geography. The low-density nature of urban settlement in the valley itself, however, resulted in significant automobile-generated pollution (Arthur D. Little, Inc., 1974: Ch. IV-V). As the smog problem worsened during the late sixties, this issue of locally vs. externally-caused pollution became increasingly

controversial. If indeed a significant portion of air pollution were locally-generated, then arguments to curb the growth of the valley would be strengthened.

In 1967, the Livermore City Council appointed an Air Pollution Control Study Committee, chaired by meteorologist Todd Crawford. Issued in April 1968, the first committee report concluded there were an equal number of days on which smog was generated locally and externally. It was maintained further that over ninety percent of total pollutants were caused by auto emissions. Recommendations included provision of public transit, discouragement of further freeway construction and multiple auto ownership, and most controversial of all, restrictions on population growth.

The idea that growth might be curbed was repugnant to the local business community. The seriousness of the air quality situation was demonstrated, however, when at a November 1969 Pleasanton City Council meeting, Mayor Bernard Gerton asked the city attorney to investigate whether the city could legally restrict auto ownership to one per family by 1972, phase out automobiles by 1975, and sue communities whose pollutants blew westward into the valley (Pleasanton City Council Minutes, November 3, 1969).

Had smog been the only problem resulting from the growth boom of the sixties, there might well have been restrictions placed on valley development, even if only temporarily. However, deteriorating air quality was only the first of several crises.

### The Water Shortage

Securing a dependable water supply had been a precondition for rapid growth in the valley during the sixties. Augmented by local runoff, the 46,000 acre-feet per year from the State Water Project to which Zone 7 ultimately held rights seemed to eliminate concern regarding water for decades to come. As of 1970, around 25% of valley water was provided by the SWP, including 60% of that used in Livermore (Brown and Caldwell 1972: 41). The proportion of imported water was scheduled to increase steadily over the remainder of the century.

Even when water is available, however, it must be treated before delivery to consumers. By the end of the sixties, demand threatened to outstrip the treated supply that could be provided through Zone 7's Project One facilities. In 1969, a new Project Two was proposed, calling for construction of the following facilities: (1) a new Del Valle Treatment Plant south of Livermore; (2) a pipeline connecting this plant with the distribution network serving Livermore; and (3) a Cross-Valley Pipeline that would convey water both directly into Pleasanton and to west valley groundwater recharge sites. Improved well water was needed especially in Dublin, where residents complained about the hard, boron-laden water delivered to residents by VCSD (Richard Fahey, personal interview).

Project One had been financed through the issuance of general obligation bonds, for which two-thirds voter

approval was required. This necessity of gaining electoral approval subjected the agency to close public scrutiny, and made its proposals vulnerable to the vagaries of valley politics. As of 1970, all property owners within the district were levied a tax of 42 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation to help finance Project One facilities. In order to repay the new general obligation bonds associated with Project Two capital facilities expansion, property taxes might be raised by another 25 cents per \$100.

This arrangement ran counter to mounting sentiment that new growth should "pay for itself." With regard to sewer connections and parkland dedication, Livermore had pioneered policies reflecting the philosophy that existing residents should not bear the financial burden of new subdivisions. As anti-developer sentiment began to build during the mid-sixties, Councilman Michael Uthe and other residentialists had argued this position with increasing vehemence. When Uthe was joined on the Livermore Council by Don Miller in 1968, the growth-pay-for-itself position was strengthened politically.

In 1970, Project Two became the focus for a new round of the "who pays for growth?" battle. Those opposed to the bond issue argued that water distribution facilities expansion should be financed not by higher taxes but by connection fees.

If the growth subsidy issue had been the only controversial aspect of Project Two, it still might have triumphed at the polls. However, "Measure F" on the

November ballot did not even have the unanimous support of the pro-growth forces in the valley. Many Pleasanton residents were not yet convinced that expensive Zone 7 water was needed in their city. The Pleasanton Township County Water District still held rights to the surplus waters of Del Valle Creek, which were now stored behind Del Valle Dam. Either Zone 7 should compensate the city for its water rights, it was argued, or Pleasanton could handle its water supply independently. There was discussion, in fact, of a "Pleasanton Plan," under which the new water treatment plant would be built in Pleasanton instead of the proposed Del Valle site. Consequently, The Times opposed Measure F, and the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce refused to take an official stand. On November 3, Measure F went down to defeat by a vote of 11,903 to 12,126, gaining a majority only in water-poor Dublin.

During the year following this election, some of the obstacles to passage of a new bond issue were eliminated. In December, the Zone 7 Board established a \$450 water connection fee for each new residential unit. In February 1971, Pleasanton transferred its Del Valle water rights to Zone 7 in exchange for increased groundwater pumping rights.

These developments notwithstanding, a new election to finance Project Two could not be held until November 1972. Consequently, it was simply a matter of time before a shortage of treated water would develop. According to the Zone 7 staff, there would be shortages in Livermore by the

summer of 1972, and in Pleasanton a year later.

In October 1971, Livermore City Manager William Parness announced that only 1,600 more building permits could be issued before city-wide water rationing would become necessary. To avoid this, the city contracted with the California Water Service Company for additional quantities of poor-quality water to be pumped from that firm's wells. In response to the impending crisis, Donald Miller advocated a moratorium on the issuance of building permits. The chamber of commerce and pro-growth Councilmen Roger Silva and Cy Beebe opposed this, however, declaring that such a limitation would harm the image of the community.

Finally, on December 13, 1971, Livermore Council passed Ordinance Number 767, limiting new water hookups to 1,500, and restricting new construction to existing lots of record. The water situation was becoming a bottleneck to development. It should be emphasized, however, that in this case overtaxed infrastructure did not result directly from growth. The water shortage was of political origin, the result of disputes over facilities policy and financing.

**Sewage Plant Overload:  
The Mysterious Case of the Missing Million**

The precarious position already facing valley communities with respect to sewage disposal has been discussed in both Chapters VI and VII. It was apparent by the mid-fifties that wastewater discharges into Alameda Creek could contaminate the Niles Cone. Although by 1971

both Livermore and VCSD had plans to expand their respective treatment facilities, the Regional Water Quality Control Board had established standards and procedures to be followed before such expansions could be completed (e.g. RWQCB Resolutions 70-89, 71-76).

The RWQCB itself was in the process of formulating a water quality management plan for the San Francisco Bay Basin, in accordance with the requirements of the Porter-Cologne Act. An interim plan was adopted on June 14, 1971, which called for an eventual ban on all sewage discharges into "non-tidal waters." This meant that ultimately, valley dischargers would have to devise an alternative to the current practice of dumping effluent into tributaries to Alameda Creek. Toward this end, in January the board had ordered Livermore, Pleasanton, VCSD and Zone 7 to commence a study that would provide the basis for a comprehensive water quality management program for Alameda Creek above Niles (RWQCB Order 71-3). Soon afterward, the Brown and Caldwell consulting firm was hired to conduct the study.

Even as this planning was carried out, however, new problems emerged with regard to existing valley wastewater treatment practices. Under the Master Agreement reached in June 1967, VCSD was treating wastewater originating in the rapidly-growing northern and western portions of Pleasanton. In order for this arrangement to work smoothly, clear communication between the two entities was necessary regarding how much sewage treatment capacity was available through VCSD at any particular time, and how many housing

units were in fact being proposed in Pleasanton. The long-standing animosity between the two entities, however, made such cooperation difficult.

The problem of poor communication was compounded by pressures upon both agencies to accommodate growth. The progrowth predilections of the City of Pleasanton during this period were reviewed in Chapter IX. At the same time, according to one investigative report, VCSD was "under the control of the development interests by whom it was created" (Harris & Associates 1976: 5-6).

Philosophical commitments notwithstanding, financial incentives favored development. A major source of revenue for both jurisdictions was the "up front" fees paid by developers before construction actually commenced. Consequently, a slowdown in permit approvals would mean diminished income. This problem of "growth addiction" had been openly acknowledged by Pleasanton officials. In June 1970, Pleasanton Financial Director William Edgar described the origins of the city's precarious financial situation this way:

The problem gets slightly worse when you realize that much of our income from new growth comes in before we are required to provide all the services....connection fees for a new subdivision, for instance, is (sic) well ahead of the demand for police and street services in the same subdivision....But that also means we already have spent the money needed to take care of those people as they move in.

(Pleasanton Times, June 10, 1970)



Although no public officials admitted as much, the pressure to generate revenue may have contributed to an uncritical attitude regarding the avalanche of subdivision proposals confronting the Pleasanton Planning Commission and city council, and a failure by VCSD to keep close tabs on its own treatment capacity.

The progrowth attitude of the Pleasanton city government was hardened by its commitment through annexation agreements to provide sewer connections to residential developers. Consequently, city officials were not willing to consider seriously that the wastewater treatment facilities upon which continued growth depended could become overburdened. As early as 1969, some citizens had warned of an impending sewage overload (e.g. Pleasanton City Council Minutes, November 10, 1969). The response by municipal officials to mounting public concern, however, was defiant. Early in 1970, a memorandum to the city manager was issued from the Office of the Director of Public Works, which concluded with the following statement:

it is my opinion that sewerage service, including treatment and disposal, is not a factor that need be considered in any consideration of growth regulation. It has been adequately planned and will be properly effected regardless of the rate of growth of the City of Pleasanton.

(Memorandum dated February 11, 1970: 6)

This assessment proved incorrect. Just as growth was proceeding at its most feverish pace, on July 25 1971, the following events took place:

At approximately 12:45 p.m. two wastewater treatment plant personnel, Mr. Robert Anderson and Mr. Joseph Medly, investigated a "hissing" sound in the plant instrument panel and found a leaking air line in the effluent meter system. Mr. Anderson repaired the air line by cutting off the cracked end and reattaching the tube fitting. The entire procedure took approximately ten minutes and resulted in an instantaneous increase in the metered flow of approximately 0.65 MGD....

By superimposition of the flow record before and after the anomaly recorded at 12:45 p.m., July 27, 1971 it is apparent that the increase in metered flow was not a momentary fluctuation but a permanent increase of 0.65 to 0.75 MGD.

(Harris & Associates 1976: 5-7,5-8)

At this time, the plant was believed to be operating very close to its capacity of 2.5 mgd. This discovery meant that in fact the facilities were considerably overburdened.

The existence of what became known as the "mystery million" gallons of excessive wastewater flow was made public in early September. Finally confronted with this catastrophic situation, the VCSD Board of Directors voted at its September 9 meeting to allow no further sewer hookups until the problem was resolved. The first real growth freeze was in effect.

Why the "mystery million" mishap occurred may never be fully known. Some citizens held the builders responsible, claiming that they must have misinformed VCSD regarding the number of sewer connections they were installing. Others blamed the Pleasanton city staff, the city council, or VCSD itself. Although it is entirely possible that, as claimed by VCSD, the excess flow went undetected because of a faulty metering system, it is difficult to believe that no

one responsible for sewage treatment would have suspected that the tremendous numbers of new residential hookups both in Pleasanton and Dublin-San Ramon might overload the treatment plant. According to a 1969 report issued by Brown and Caldwell, the VCSD plant was operating at 2 mgd (80% of capacity) as early as August 1968 (1969: 54). Despite rapid housing construction, the plant was reported to be operating at the same level in June 1969 (52). Then on July 3, the flow, including both maximum and minimum rates, "abruptly dropped by 0.5 MGD" (56). According to the firm which later investigated the "mystery million:"

While no conclusive evidence can be found to link this anomaly with the nearly mirror image anomaly which was to occur in 1971, the striking similarity of time and occurrence and flow differential deserves reflection.

(Harris & Associates 1976: 5-7)

Even considering the difficulties of measuring sewage flows precisely (including the complications introduced by groundwater infiltration), it would seem that this curious drop in flows should have triggered a critical inquiry by VCSD officials. The overall institutional atmosphere, however, dictated that growth be accommodated, not stopped.

The sewer ban had repercussions that have lasted until the present day. In the immediate term, however, VCSD found itself confronted with outraged developers whose construction plans suddenly were uncertain. On September 29, the 28 affected developers petitioned VCSD to lower its treatment standards rather than enforce a ban on new hookups. Faced with the wrath of the Regional Water Quality

Control Board, however, the directors of VCSD refused to back down from their previous decision (The Independent, September 29, 1971).

On October 28, the RWQCB issued a cease-and-desist order to VCSD, effective at least through July 1972. Pleasanton considered accommodating new growth by expanding its own ancient treatment plant, but the odor problems associated with that facility caused the board on November 23 to issue a ban on new hookups to the City of Pleasanton, also.

A long-pending VCSD grant application to the State Water Resources Control Board for treatment plant expansion funds was approved on November 16; these improvements would increase treatment capacity from 2.5 to 4 mgd, by sometime in 1973. In the meantime, however, both VCSD and Pleasanton faced a difficult situation.

On November 3, twelve of the affected developers filed \$53 million in lawsuits against the City of Pleasanton and VCSD. According to their attorneys, they were losing millions of dollars in taxes and financial charges while their construction operations were idled.

A direct result of an overly-zealous commitment by two governmental agencies to development, the sewage treatment situation suddenly constituted a major obstacle to future valley growth.

### Overcrowded Schools

The water and sewer crises that struck during fall 1971 provided the immediate inspiration for the growth controls initiative campaign. The founders of SAVE, however, were also incensed over the long-term problem of school overcrowding in Livermore.

The Livermore school system had a legacy of problems. During the fifties, the elementary district serving the city had operated frequently on double sessions. The inability to keep up with rising enrollments was to some degree a direct result of unrelenting growth. This is because whereas a new home can be constructed within a year, it takes from two to three years to build a school. A complicating factor, however, was the uncertainty surrounding the procurement of federal funds under P.L. 874.

When voters in 1965 approved school district unification for the Livermore area, they did so partly because the change allegedly would facilitate more efficient operation. The school situation, however, actually worsened following unification. Soon after its formation in 1966, the new unified district was beset by policy problems and financial woes (Bronzan 1973). There was a bitter controversy over the firing of a teacher, and warfare erupted between the district administration and the local teachers' organization. Fiscal problems stemmed in part from inaccurate projections of enrollment levels, which resulted in overestimation of the federal aid that was forthcoming.

Moreover, the district apparently had committed itself to an artificially low taxation rate in order to garner political support for the unification proposal.

By January 1969, the district was deeply in debt; it was announced that \$400,000 were needed in immediate budget cuts. Both the district superintendent and business manager resigned. To make matters worse, the latter pleaded guilty to charges of having stolen \$10,000 in district funds. A citizens' committee appointed in 1968 to investigate the school situation concluded in July 1969 that serious mismanagement was largely responsible for district problems.

Although new acting superintendent Edwin C. Rundstrom moved quickly to reestablish the fiscal integrity of the district, public confidence in the LVJUSD was, not surprisingly, at a low level. Consequently, some voters were reluctant to approve the bond and tax measures so vital to the operation of an expanding district. Beginning in June 1969, four consecutive efforts to pass bond issues, raise taxes, or authorize state loans were unsuccessful. One problem was the requirement that general obligation bond issues garner two-thirds voter approval. On more than one occasion, over sixty percent approval was achieved, but the positive vote fell just short. With each successive election, the tax rate increases were reduced, and the bond issue requests diminished.

Finally, in June 1971 a 45-cent tax increase was passed by voters. This victory was bittersweet, however. Upon

unification, the district had joined the State School Building Program, an arrangement whereby the state offered subsidies to districts unable to generate sufficient income locally. One requirement of the program, however, was that the district maintain bonded indebtedness equal to 10% of its total assessed valuation. In the same June 1971 election in which the small tax increase was passed, a \$4.5 million bond issue was defeated. With this defeat, the district no longer qualified for the state subsidy program.

Meanwhile, classroom overcrowding was worsening. Whereas in 1969 39 classes were on reduced schedule or double session, by 1971 the number had risen to 54 (Bronzan 1973). The new district administration attempted to ameliorate the situation through provision of "demounted" (disassemblable) classrooms to several schools. In November 1971, with the overall growth crisis already manifest, the city council passed Ordinance Number 762, requiring developers to provide all new homebuyers with a letter from the school district stating that adequate school facilities were or would soon be available to serve a proposed subdivision. Also, an ad hoc committee on school housing was formed, comprised of representatives of the school district, the city council, and local homebuilders. As a result of this effort, one builder donated a school to the district, and another provided much-needed money.

By this time, however, the growth situation was such that some citizens held little faith in voluntary efforts. No ad hoc committee deliberations would change the fact that

in a city claiming a large number of distinguished scientists and engineers, district expenditures per pupil were far below the county average.

Livermore citizens were faced late in 1971 with both an impending water shortage and overcrowded schools. Although growth pressures did place a strain upon west valley school districts, they as yet faced only sporadic episodes of overcrowding. Still, growth was proceeding so rapidly in Pleasanton that the city moved to require developers to erect signs within new subdivisions warning that adequate school facilities might not be available. Moreover, the growth problem was the principal issue in the 1971 Pleasanton Elementary School District Board election. That two "control-growth" candidates were not elected reflected the still-manageable condition of the Pleasanton school systems. Residents of Pleasanton and Dublin, however, were confronted by the legal repercussions of a sewer ban, and all valley residents breathed air that was regularly polluted. It was all these problems together that inspired a small group of citizens to form what eventually became the SAVE organization.

### The SAVE Initiative

In Part Two, it was shown that the accelerating pace of development in the valley during the late sixties was accompanied by mounting political acrimony regarding residential densities, subdivision design, and the proposal



to construct a giant amusement park in Pleasanton. In Livermore, an informal "community party" became a formidable political force, while in Pleasanton the residentialist perspective was ultimately represented by Citizens for Planned Progress.

As the construction boom intensified, local activism increased correspondingly. Although the principal arenas for political debate remained the Livermore and Pleasanton City Council chambers, some citizens felt that neither council was sufficiently responsive to growth-related problems.

In the campaign against the proposed Foothill Road development in Pleasanton, a new tactic had emerged: the use of the referendum process. The electoral victory for the Rural Foothill Defenders occurred just prior to disclosure of the "mystery million" gallons of VCSD sewage, and in the midst of debate within Livermore regarding an impending water shortage. Not surprisingly, there soon followed a new, more ambitious usage of those lawmaking powers reserved to citizens as a result of the 1911 amendments to the California State Constitution.

During early fall 1971, a Citizens Initiative and Referendum Committee was formed in Livermore, headed by LLL scientists Clarence Hoenig and James Day, and former Councilman Michael Uthe. The group contacted around 200 citizens, soliciting small donations of \$20 or less. In all, about \$2,000 was raised. In devising its political strategy, the group sought advice from the Santa Clara

Environmental Law Society and from University of California professor of law and city planning Ira Michael Heyman.

In a press release issued October 16, the formation of an organization called Save All Valley Environments, or SAVE, Inc., was announced. Its leadership nucleus, consisting initially of Hoenig, Day and Uthe, sooned included Marjorie Gardner, a Pleasanton housewife who had been active in the Foothill Road referendum, and Lawrence Laboratory engineer Bill Moore, Pleasanton chairman of (yet) another activist group, the Clean Air Coordinating Committee.

Explaining the aims of SAVE, Hoenig declared that the group's principal intention was to delay residential growth "until other segments of the Valley community can catch up and bring about more balance to the Valley as a whole" (Tri-Valley Herald and News, October 17, 1971).

In November, SAVE enlisted the services of attorney Gary Near, who recently had participated in an anti-highrise campaign in San Francisco. SAVE leaders felt that Near's experience with the initiative process would be valuable during the legal battles that surely lay ahead.

On December 8, SAVE filed an official notice of intention to gather signatures for its own initiative measure. Expressing disappointment with city council attempts to respond to growth-related crises, the organization's leaders revealed the text of their proposed ordinance prohibiting residential growth unless

"satisfactory solutions" to the problems of water supply, sewage treatment, and schools were available. Specifically, the following requirements were listed:

- 1) Educational Facilities--no double sessions in the schools nor overcrowded classrooms as defined by the California Educational Code.
- 2) Sewage--the sewage treatment facilities meet the standards set by the Regional Water Quality Control Board.
- 3) Water Supply--no rationing of water with respect to human consumption or irrigation and adequate reserves for fire protection exist.

On the advice of attorney Near, the group had dropped from the initiative a provision that addressed the smog problem. This was done, in part, because any requirement that current air quality standards be met might stop all growth for many years to come. This would weaken considerably potential support for the initiative measure.

Speaking for SAVE, Hoenig not only underscored the group's immediate concerns, but its environmentalist, limits-to-growth philosophy:

The citizens of Livermore and Pleasanton do not want smelly overloaded sewage plants, they do not want their water rationed, and they will no longer tolerate serious overloading of their school facilities. Public inconvenience is turning into hardship. The whole concept of 'growth is good' and 'bigger is better' is being called into question everywhere.

(The Independent, December 10, 1971)

In order for the proposal to qualify for the April ballot, volunteers would have to gather around 1,700 signatures in Livermore and 900 in Pleasanton. Although there was interest in placing the measure before Dublin and San Ramon voters, the unincorporated status of those

communities meant that no local election regarding growth policy was possible.

During the weekend of January 7-8, 1972, over 200 volunteer "walkers" roamed the residential neighborhoods of Livermore, explaining the SAVE initiative and seeking petition signatures so that it would qualify for the ballot. During those two days, over 5,700 signatures were gathered, comprising around a third of the total electorate. Soon thereafter, the necessary signatures were obtained in Pleasanton as well.

During the following months, two attempts were made to block or undermine the SAVE initiative. Under California law, the city councils in Livermore and Pleasanton could simply have voted the measure into law. Not surprisingly, neither council was disposed to take such a step. The Livermore Council, however, on February 9 approved a proposal by Councilman Roger Silva to place a substitute ordinance before the voters. Whereas the SAVE initiative was listed as Measure B on the ballot (and Measure 4 in Pleasanton), the substitute "Measure A" was somewhat milder in its requirements with respect to schools. The "Silva Ordinance" asked only that classroom facilities insure "a quality of education equal to or above the average for School Districts in the State of California." More importantly, however, the Silva proposal provided that both determination of adequacy of services and control over the number of building permits issued would be controlled

directly by the city council. Under the aegis of a growth-oriented council, the measure would be far less restrictive than the SAVE measure.

The second attempt to sidetrack the initiative occurred in mid-February, when two local carpenters, backed by the Associated Home Builders of the Greater East Bay, went to Alameda County Superior Court and obtained a restraining order preventing the SAVE measure from appearing on the ballot. On March 6, however, this order was lifted by Judge Gordon Minder, who ruled that the legality of an initiative could be determined only after an election was held.

#### The SAVE Campaign

Between January and April, a spirited campaign was waged by both sides in the dispute. Growth advocates and those favoring a halt to development each advanced substantive arguments in support of their positions. True to the mudslinging traditions of American politics, however, participants on both sides took every opportunity to portray their opponents in the worst possible light.

Significant institutional support for SAVE came, predictably, only from The Independent. The Sierra Club also endorsed the measure. Although officers and members of the League of Women Voters were active SAVE supporters, the league itself took no official stand on the measure.

Reflecting what is perennially a principal concern within the suburban public sphere, SAVE proponents focussed their arguments upon fiscal issues. In some instances

citing the Livingston and Blayney Palo Alto foothills design study, they claimed that the costs of providing public services for new residential development outweighed the taxation benefits. Echoing arguments raised during the 1970 Zone 7 bond election, SAVE backers claimed that growth should pay for itself. Toward this end, Livermore residentialist city council candidate Archer Futch suggested adoption of a new \$1,000 per home "school development fee."

Moreover, the spectre of a horrifying environmental future was raised. In his campaign ads in local newspapers, Lawrence Laboratory physicist Futch used a dramatic aerial photo of the Los Angeles basin shot in 1949 by University of California professor of environmental design William Garnett. First published in a 1960 Sierra Club book entitled This is the American Earth, the photo dramatically illustrated the monotony of the landscape that suburban-type development could produce. "This city was 'planned' by land developers," read the ad caption, "Don't let this happen here."

Such rhetoric suggested that developers essentially were greedy carpetbaggers. This theme appeared repeatedly within pro-SAVE arguments. One letter-writer quoted University of California geographer Daniel B. Luten: "When a man tells you that growth is good, look him in the eye and ask how much of that good will end up in his pocket" (The Independent, April 6, 1972: 4).

In sum, the SAVE issue was portrayed by its backers as

a matter of "the people" standing up to "special interests." Whether or not the ordinance was ever enforced, the initiative measure itself would be perceived as a "message" to local government officials who clearly were out-of-touch with their constituents (Figure 29).

Opposition to SAVE came from the Herald and News and The Times, the Oakland Tribune, from local FM radio station KYTE, and the chambers of commerce in both communities. In addition, the anti-SAVE Citizens for Rational Valley Planning included prominent local political figures not closely associated with the chamber, including former mayors Gib Marguth (1968-70), Milo Nordyke (1965-67) and Robert Patterson (1960-61, 1967-68).

SAVE opponents claimed the measure was objectionable for the following reasons: (1) it was vague and unworkable; if passed, SAVE might prevent the construction of patios, swimming pool covers, fences, and other home improvements; (2) passage of the ordinance would damage the business climate in the valley, and might "freeze out industry" indefinitely; (3) drastic restrictions on growth would lead to lowered property assessments on some lands, which would diminish the city's tax base; (4) many jobs would be lost as a result of a construction halt; (5) the SAVE measure by itself would not contribute to the resolution of any of the problems it supposedly addressed; and (6) a halt to growth might mean less chance for an extension of the Bay Area Rapid Transit System into the valley, or for construction of a new junior college.

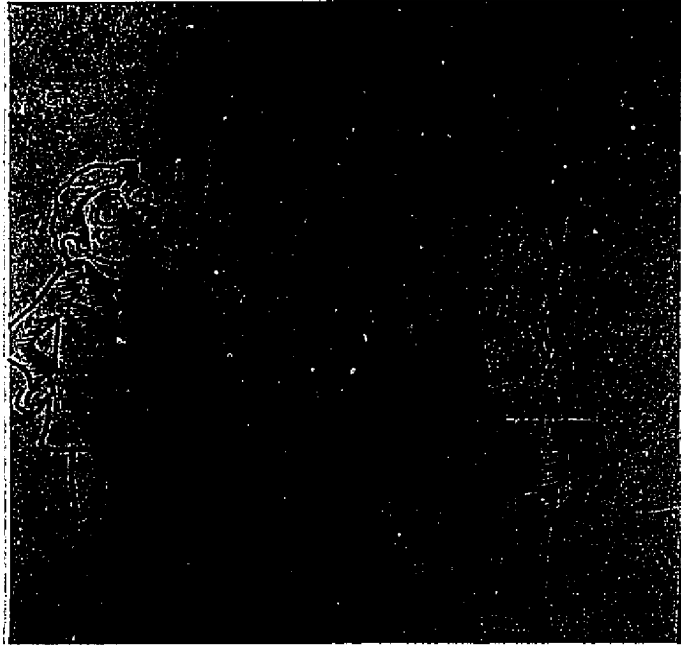


Figure 29. This pro-SAVE political cartoon appeared in The Independent on April 9, 1972.



Some anti-SAVE arguments were less practical than philosophical. In a letter to The Independent, Citizens for Rational Valley Planning leader Marguth presented a viewpoint that constituted a pioneering use of organic metaphor:

All growing, living and healthy bodies, be they human beings, cities, or nations, must struggle through those difficult years called adolescence. Each of us suffered the embarrassment of pimples, the awkwardness of our first dance and the physical and mental pains of growth....But nobody stopped our growth....Our Valley is today in its own adolescent stage. If our leaders will forcefully stand up, recognize our problems, propose solutions and lead us to our own maturity we can become a healthy, contributing, and living part of our society.

(The Independent, January 9, 1972: 4)

There was considerable opposition to SAVE within both communities. The most formidable foe faced by the SAVE committee, however, was the Alameda County construction industry. Most visible in this regard was the Associated Home Builders organization. Not unreasonably, the homebuilders believed that SAVE might produce a sort of "domino effect;" if growth controls were passed in Livermore and Pleasanton, the practice might eventually become widespread. Such limitations upon construction activity were anathema to the homebuilding industry. Consequently, its trade organization was prepared to spend money freely in an effort to defeat the upstart initiative measure.

In February, the homebuilders issued a "fact sheet," which echoed the familiar argument that tax revenues would

be lost if growth stopped. It was claimed, moreover, that from 2,000 to 3,000 construction jobs would be lost if SAVE were passed. To bolster these substantive arguments, the homebuilders assaulted the character and integrity of SAVE's sponsors. Associated Home Builders Executive Vice-President William T. Leonard had done battle on several previous occasions with Livermore's residentialists. With respect to the minimum lot size issue, he had portrayed them as elitists. In this new struggle, the criticism did not stop with this charge, but went on to include a vituperative anti-intellectual attack. At an "Environment versus Jobs" conference attended by over one hundred carpenters, Leonard characterized SAVE proponents as living in the "sterile isolation of their ivory towers, living off other people's taxes, working for public agencies, who never met a payroll, made a product or stood in an unemployment line" (The Independent, March 26, 1972). Leonard went on to add a psychological twist:

SAVE is a product of 'scientists' in Livermore, working on instruments of destruction during the day and then at night, in order to salve their wounded psyches, parading as super ecologists, crusading for zero growth, vowing to save mankind from destroying himself and the world. These people want to preserve the past and they fear the future.

(Tri-Valley Herald and News, March 26, 1972)

To add dramatic emphasis to the position taken by construction workers, on the Saturday before the election two hundred carpenters from Union Local 1622 in Hayward marched down Second Street in Livermore carrying a 40-foot

coffin, representing the ostensible fate of the building industry in the event that the SAVE measure were passed.

The carpenters' efforts were to no avail. Although some SAVE sponsors recall that support for the measure was waning during the final days of the campaign, on April 11 a 68% voter turnout passed the ordinance in both cities. In Livermore, the vote was 6,339 to 5,159; in Pleasanton, it was 3,710 to 3,240. These totals represented majorities of 55.1% in Livermore and 53.4% in Pleasanton. At the same time, the Silva Ordinance was defeated in Livermore, 4,013 to 6,765.

In both cities, support for SAVE was strongest in the newer tracts, and weakest in the older areas. One reason for this pattern was that households within recent subdivisions were more likely to have school-age children. In Pleasanton's Val Vista tract, there was an added motivation for protest: some houses were less than one hundred yards from the odoriferous, overloaded VCSD sewage plant. Finally, although few would admit it publicly, some recent arrivals undoubtedly wished to "draw up the gangplank" to the two cities--that is, to stop growth so that their own enviable positions at the very margins of development would be preserved.

The primary basis for the anti-SAVE vote in "old" Livermore and Pleasanton was the presence in those areas of the original merchant and blue-collar populations. These families believed most strongly that growth would bring prosperity to their city and themselves. In Livermore,

moreover, there was considerable sentiment that the original community had already been lost with the arrival of the weapons laboratory workforce (Barbara Bunshah, personal interview). Some hoped that new growth would dilute the lab influence in the community.

An important yardstick for the strength of the control-growth philosophy was the degree to which SAVE sympathizers were successful in the city council elections held concurrently with the SAVE vote. In Livermore, by far the two leading candidates were control-growth advocates Archer Futch and Donald Miller. When Futch joined Miller and Mayor Clyde Taylor on the council, the residentialists regained the three-vote majority they had lost in 1970.

In Pleasanton, the results were less conclusive. The election was carried by three perceived "moderates" who had received the endorsement of The Times, including LLL administrator William Herlihy and pharmaceutical salesman Ed Kinney. Most surprising was the victory by economics teacher Floyd Mori, who used the support of Pleasanton's sizable Mormon community as a springboard to a first-place finish. Pro-SAVE candidates David Bigger, Charles Seymour, and Ted Lannin ran well behind the leaders. At the same time, not even an endorsement from Oakland Raiders star Fred Biletnikoff could prevent incumbent George Spliliotopolos from finishing a distant fifth in the balloting. Whereas in Livermore the election could be considered a smashing rejection of "business as usual," in Pleasanton the politics

of moderation and consensus emerged victorious.

The election results, however, hardly marked the end of the controversy surrounding SAVE. On the day following the vote, the homebuilders promised to fight the measure "all the way to the Supreme court," if necessary (Livermore Herald and News, April 13, 1972). In the issue of California Builder published just after the election, William Leonard made this dramatic declaration: "We predict this is just the start, the first battle in the no-growth war" (1972: 14).

#### The Significance of SAVE

The central focus of the SAVE campaign was "growth;" and yet, of the principal crises that ostensibly motivated the SAVE movement, none was caused exclusively by an overly-rapid growth rate. Air pollution resulted partly from prevailing winds that transported pollutants from the west. The water shortage was a consequence of the failed Project 2 bond election in November 1970, attributable mainly to its potential effect upon the tax rate. School overcrowding was the product of a succession of failed bond issues, in which a lack of voter confidence in the Livermore school administration played no small part. Only the west valley wastewater disaster could be linked directly to negligence caused by growth pressures. Even here, however, the peculiar problems associated with valley wastewater disposal made the consequences of overloading the VCSD plant particularly serious.

"Growth" became the issue, however, because continued homebuilding aggravated air pollution and made necessary regular requests for new infrastructure. Moreover, residents feared that the construction boom would never end, and that what the future held in store was a San Fernando Valley-like landscape. Finally, the growth theme was a product of the times. In the context of national and even international discussions regarding global limits to growth, it was natural for residents to perceive their own valley as suffering from the disastrous effects of runaway growth.

Since existing structures governing local land conversion could not be used to control the rate of development, pioneering new legislation was required. Ostensibly concerned solely with the adequacy of infrastructure, SAVE became in fact a rallying-point for broader discontentment with the development process. Approval of SAVE served as a protest against the apparent lack of local control over community development, and the passivity of local government in the face of endless proposals for new subdivisions.

Frustrated by the limitations of local land-use police powers, the weapons lab professionals were willing and able to conduct the necessary research to formulate a new and untested ordinance. Moreover, they were able to mobilize an army of citizen volunteers to carry the campaign into every neighborhood in the city.

By later admission of William Leonard, the homebuilders

erred in attacking the Livermore scientists with such vehemence during their campaign. This made it possible for the SAVE leaders to appear as local heroes standing up to powerful outside moneyed interests. Indeed, in the years to come, possession of an original SAVE membership card was considered a "badge of honor" by many residents.

As subsequent chapters will show, the SAVE measure itself met an ambiguous fate, and growth control in Livermore became the focus for continuing struggle. In one regard, however, the homebuilders' "domino" theory indeed proved valid: the passage of SAVE established a successful model for the use of the initiative process to curb growth.

## Chapter XII

### Local Steps Toward Controlled Growth

Passage of the SAVE initiative marked a watershed in valley history. It conveyed an emphatic message to local politicians that the freewheeling development that had typified the sixties would no longer be tolerated. Moreover, it placed the growth issue squarely at the top of the political agenda. Whatever impact the SAVE campaign wielded, however, was not attributable to the statutory effectiveness of the ordinance itself; the initiative measure quickly became the subject of litigation that continued for over four years.

Inasmuch as growth was indeed curbed, it was the result of: (1) local efforts to enact the "spirit of SAVE" through general plan revisions and establishment of growth management programs; and (2) the growth-limiting policies of state and federal agencies, in accordance with a host of new environmental regulations. In this chapter, actions at the local level will be evaluated. The role of higher levels of government is the subject of Chapter XIII.

### Slower Growth

Although it would not have been immediately apparent to the casual observer, the valley entered a new era of slower growth after passage of the SAVE ordinance. Between 1970 and



1974, the population of Livermore grew at a 5% annual rate, increasing from 37,700 to around 48,300. That significant building activity continued past April 1972 was the result of over 1,600 building permits having been issued during the five frantic months preceding the SAVE election (over 600 were purchased by leading homebuilder Masud Mehran alone). Between 1974 and 1980, the population remained essentially stable.

In Pleasanton, the number of residents climbed over the course of the decade from 18,328 to 35,160. Because of the moratoria on new sewer connections instituted by the Regional Water Quality Control Board, however, the growth process decelerated after 1971. During the single year ending in March 1972, the city's population grew by one-third, from 21,750 to 28,925. Although periodically over the next several years the RWQCB allowed limited numbers of new sewer connections, between 1972 and 1980 the annual growth rate was a mere 2.5%.

In Dublin, there was little remaining land available for residential development; consequently, the population levelled off at around 13,500. By contrast, just outside of the Livermore-Amador Valley, in northern San Ramon rapid growth continued unabated. With wastewater treatment capacity plentiful in those areas not sewered by VCSD, the overall population of San Ramon grew from around 4,000 in 1970 to over 22,000 ten years later.

### The Fate of the SAVE Ordinance

The SAVE ordinance went into effect officially on April 28, 1972. True to their word, however, the Associated Home Builders filed suit in Superior Court against the City of Livermore, seeking to invalidate the measure.\* The suit was argued on two main grounds: that the law was an infringement upon nonresidents' right to migrate to the city, and that the ordinance was in excess of the municipal police power. There was no trial; both parties moved for a judgment on the pleadings.

In a decision issued on December 29, 1972, Judge Lyle E. Cook declared the entire ordinance "invalid and void." First, he ruled that the measure was unreasonably vague. Second, he objected that no provision was made to resolve the problems to which it referred; hence, it could conceivably be used by Livermore to freeze growth indefinitely. Finally, Judge Cook ruled that the ordinance was an illegitimate use of the initiative process for zoning.

Led by its pro-SAVE majority, the Livermore City Council voted 3-1-1 to appeal the decision. The Pleasanton Council, however, chose not to join in the appeal. The Court of Appeals decision finally came on September 10, 1974 [41 Cal. App. 3 677, 166 Cal. Rptr. 326]. Its ruling upheld

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\* The homebuilders did not sue Pleasanton because, as William T. Leonard declared in a later interview, "in Pleasanton they were pleasant" (i.e. not antagonistic to the construction industry).

Judge Cook's original decision. The major determination during this round of litigation was that SAVE was a zoning ordinance, which cannot be enacted by initiative.

Two days later, the Livermore Council voted 4-0 to appeal the decision to the California Supreme Court. On November 9, 1974, the city was informed that the Court would hear the case. Before arguments were presented in September 1975, however, two other court decisions were delivered that would influence the outcome of the Livermore case. The first bode well for Livermore. In December 1974, the California Supreme Court overturned a precedent dating back to 1929 when it ruled in a San Diego case that zoning by initiative was in fact permissible under California law [San Diego Building Contractors Association v. City Council (1974) 13 Cal.3d 205, 216, 118 Cal.Rptr. 146, 529 P.2d 570].

The effect of the second case was uncertain. In Southern Burlington County NAACP v. Township of Mt. Laurel [(1975) 67 N.J. 151, 336 A.2d 713], the New Jersey Supreme Court invalidated a municipal ordinance that restricted the construction of low-to-moderate income housing. Ruling that a "developing community" must accommodate its "fair share" of regional housing needs, the Court determined that the right of a community to control development must be weighed against the effects of such regulation upon regional welfare (see Rubin 1982).

The decision in the case of The Associated Home Builders v. City of Livermore was finally delivered on

December 17, 1976 (557 P.2d. 473, 135 Cal. Rptr. 41). Consistent with its long-standing support for local land-use controls, the Court by a 4-2 vote overturned the Superior Court ruling. In the opinion by Justice Tobriner, it was held that: (1) the SAVE measure represented a proper use of the initiative process; (2) the standards set by the ordinance were not unconstitutionally vague; and (3) the limitations on migration established by SAVE were not shown to be contrary to the welfare of the region as a whole. The case was remanded to Superior Court for a possible full trial. In any trial, the homebuilders would have to prove that the SAVE ordinance had a detrimental effect upon the regional welfare. Since the building industry chose not to pursue the matter through the courts, the SAVE ordinance went into effect permanently when the legal statute of limitations expired in December 1979.

The California Supreme Court ruling was a significant legal victory for those championing the cause of locally-based growth controls. By the time this decision was delivered, however, the process of establishing a long-term growth management system already was well underway.

#### The General Plan Revisions

During the year following the SAVE election, in both Livermore and Pleasanton general plan revisions were initiated, in accordance with the anticipated shift toward slower growth. In Livermore, this change was supported enthusiastically by the council majority. The Pleasanton

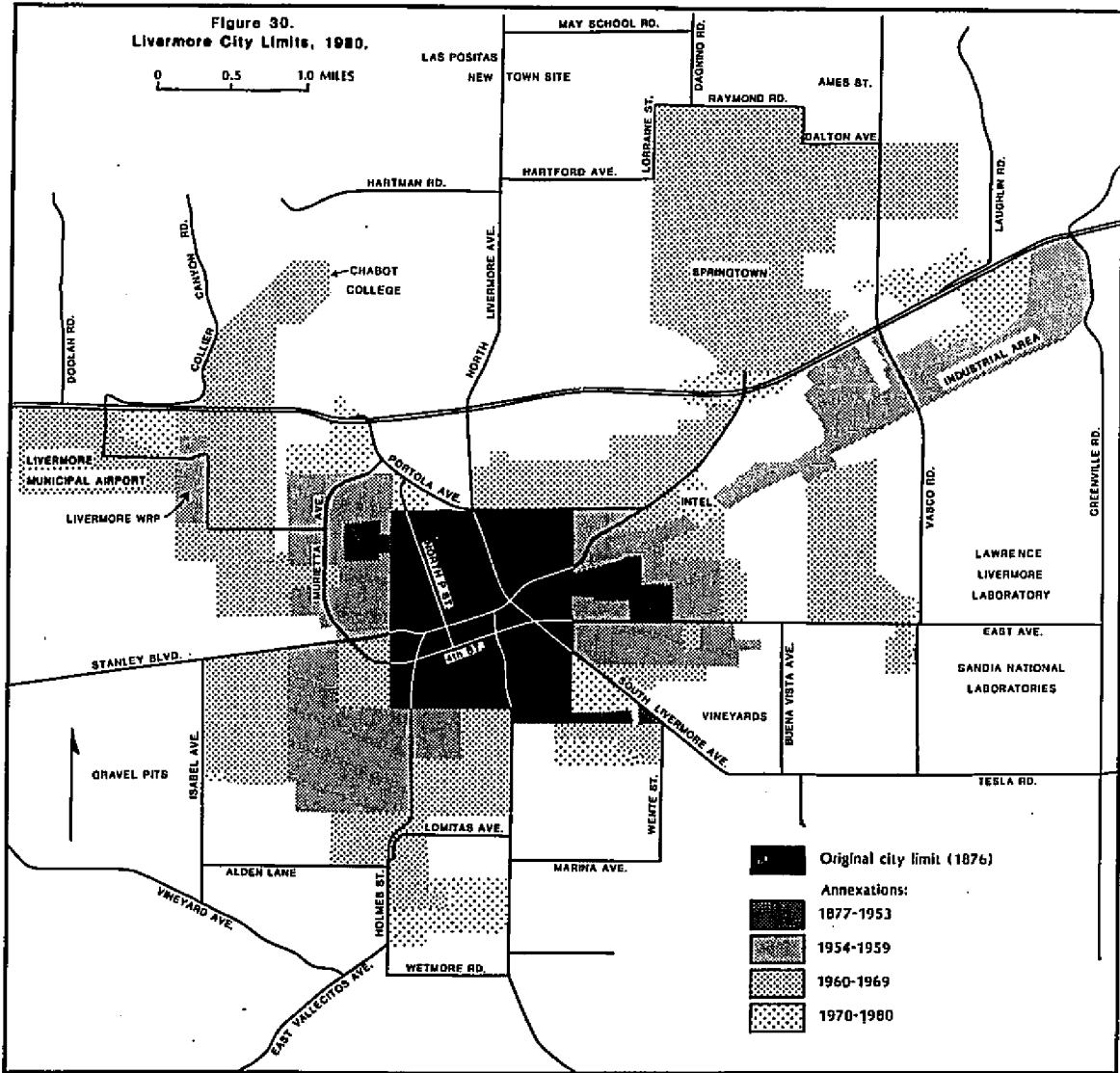
Council, on the other hand, was motivated in part by necessity; with a sewer freeze imposed by the RWQCB, there was really no alternative to controlled development.

#### Livermore

In February 1973, Livermore Planning Director George Musso and City Attorney John A. Lewis collaborated to develop a step-by-step strategy for instituting a growth control system for the city. One basis for this program had been provided by the California Legislature when it passed A.B. 1301 in October 1971. This bill amended the state Subdivision Map Act such that cities could reject proposed tract maps if they were in violation of "applicable general or specific plans." Consequently, if the tenets of the SAVE initiative could be incorporated into the Livermore General Plan, a legal basis would exist for slowing growth under crisis conditions.

As a first step, the city council on March 13 passed an emergency ordinance under Section 65858 of the State Government Code (City of Livermore Ordinance No. 813). The ordinance rezoned all undeveloped lands within the city limits for agricultural use only, while revisions were being made in the general plan, zoning and subdivision ordinances. During this period, new construction was limited to existing lots of record. Ultimately, this moratorium was extended to its legal maximum of two years.

In June, a hundred-member citizens' committee began work to revise the city's general plan. The Steering



Committee was chaired by Planning Commissioner Helen Tirsell. As a part of this process, the city contracted with a private polling firm to survey residents' attitudes regarding growth (Corey, Canapary & Galanis Research 1973). The Citizens Committee on General Plan Goals incorporated these findings into its Final Report, issued in May 1974.

Between September 28 and October 14, 1973, the firm conducted 502 interviews. The interviewers found that the population as a whole valued the "small town atmosphere" of Livermore, and wished to see it maintained. When asked what were the most urgent problems facing the city, citizens under 40 years of age emphasized air pollution and overcrowded schools. Older residents, on the other hand, stressed high taxes. At all age levels, a lack of public transportation was considered a major shortcoming.

Whereas only 6% of respondents felt that growth "must be stopped," 74% agreed with the following statement: "Livermore should grow at a controlled rate, provided services to the residents do not suffer." Overall, what emerged from the study was that a majority of citizens favored a "controlled growth" future, in which residents could work and shop in the community where they live. Consequently, an overwhelming majority (86%) favored the active pursuit of new job-producing industry; the possible acquisition of open space surrounding the city was favored by 70%. Consistent with the results of the SAVE election, support for limited growth was strongest within the new tracts and among younger residents.

Ultimately, the Citizens' Committee Housing

Subcommittee made the following recommendation:

We have concluded finally that two limits on averaged-annual population growth rates should be incorporated into the General Plan as a primary goal. The average is to be taken over two to three years to permit the city to take advantage of unusual circumstances. First, over the duration of the General Plan, this averaged growth rate shall not exceed two percent (2%). Second, because of the unique topography of Livermore with its present air pollution threat to the health of its citizens...and because of the excessive growth rates experienced in the last five to ten years, during the next five years the growth rate should not exceed the range of one (1) to two (2) percent. At each five year interval thereafter, the genuineness of the threat of air pollution to the health of Livermore citizens should be reviewed to assess whether this range of growth rate limit should be retained for an additional five years. (Livermore Citizens Committee on General Plan Goals, Housing Subcommittee Report: II-14, II-15)

Additionally, it should be city policy that "the present imbalance between commercial, industrial, and residential growth of the city be corrected" (IV-12). It was recommended that "The City Council establish a mechanism (perhaps an advisory board) to administer a detailed system for controlling the issuance of building permits" (IV-13). In order "to protect against judicial objections," it was suggested that "criteria be specific and precisely spelled out," and that "provision be made to include 10% or more low-to-moderate income housing in the General Plan."

Overall, there was an apparent consensus within the city favoring this change toward controlled growth. The chamber of commerce and some private citizens, however, continued to oppose drastic measures to curb growth.



Accordingly, there was a Housing Subcommittee "minority report" prepared by former mayor Milo Nordyke and Herald editorial writer Susan Scott, which advocated a less restrictive approach to development. According to this dissenting view, the Housing Committee had

approached the final report by selecting a growth and growth rate (sic) for the community and justifying it as best as possible. There was no thought for the community in 2000--only a desire to discontinue what exists in 1974. ("Minority Report of the Housing Subcommittee": 1)

It was pointed out that some problems attributed to high growth rates, such as air pollution and loss of "rural atmosphere" actually were a function of population size. Moreover, overcrowding in schools was as much a result of failure to pass school bonds as rapid growth per se. Overall, the majority view that growth was "excessive" was believed to be founded as much upon subjective biases as documented facts. Ultimately, the minority group recommended establishment of a broad range of possible upper population limits for the city (between 80,000 and 140,000 was mentioned), and that a gradually-declining rather than fixed growth rate be followed toward meeting this limit.

Overall, it was claimed that in future decades, the advent of rapid transit, high-rise buildings, factory housing and new land-use practices such as transfer of development rights might make a higher population possible without environmental damage. The majority view, however, "inherently thinks of the future of Livermore in terms of today's patterns" (p.6).

## Pleasanton

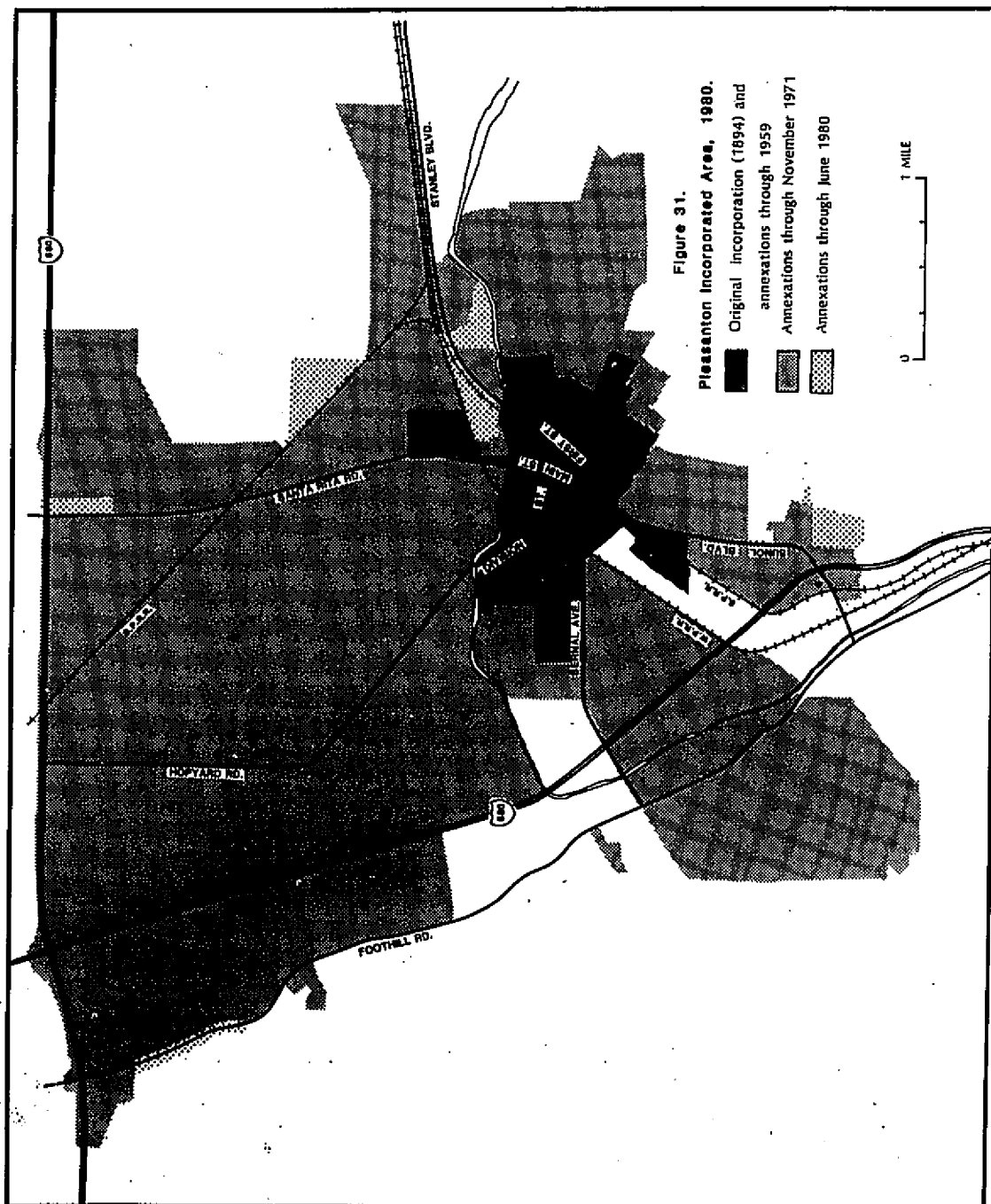
In Pleasanton, a majority of voters apparently wished to control growth; this consensus, however, was weak and short-lived. The electorate had passed the SAVE ordinance, and in April 1973 Robert Pearson became the city's first (and only) control-growth mayor. The abruptness with which the 1971 sewer moratoria had halted development, however, produced a general atmosphere of crisis. Consequently, it was widely felt that Pleasanton was being compelled by outside forces to control growth, rather than doing so voluntarily. Within the city staff, there was serious concern that Pleasanton should demonstrate its willingness to meet its legal and moral obligations to developers' (Richard Glenn, personal interview).

Meanwhile, Pleasanton officials were unhappy over their dependency upon VCSD to provide relief from the sewer pinch. The city accused that agency of dragging its feet in terms of seeking adequate expansion capacity. By the summer of 1972, Pleasanton boosters already were anticipating the dawn of the next big era of development. Between July and November, for example, agreement was reached with the Stoneson Corporation whereby that firm could begin development of a regional shopping mall on its lands along Foothill Road.

Despite continued rumblings from the pro-growth forces, however, it was apparent that Pleasanton was headed for slower growth. In late 1972, the city established an

interim Limited Growth Policy, to remain in effect until further sewage treatment capacity became available, or until January 1, 1976, whichever came first. Under this policy, new annexations were virtually halted (Figure 31), and rezonings were restricted to "possible commercial and industrial developments that would broaden the tax base." Finally, the policy dictated that the planning commission should "refrain from accepting residential tentative maps to the extent legally feasible," and should seek rezonings that would "reduce the existing residential commitments of the City."

Pleasanton moved quickly to revise its own general plan. By October 1972, the Livingston and Blayne consulting firm had already put together a report evaluating alternative growth policies for the city. At the same time, a large Citizens Review Committee began to formulate a new set of priorities and goals. By December 1973, a tentative plan had been adopted. The plan called for a much slower rate of growth than had been projected previously; the "holding capacity" of the 44 square-mile planning area was reduced from around 121,500 to 76,000 people. Large areas previously designated for housing, particularly in the hilly areas west and south of town, would now remain open space. To ensure this, an "urbanization line" was established, past which no structures could be built before the general plan period ended some twenty years hence. Adoption of a final plan was delayed by the desire of the council to include a new growth management element; the city also awaited a



long-term solution to wastewater treatment and disposal problems.

As these changes were made, pressures for new development were alleviated somewhat by the real estate slump of 1974-75. From a peak of over 280,000 units in 1972, the number of housing starts in California fell to 129,000 in 1974 (California Department of Finance 1984: 156). Ultimately, growth would proceed anew. It would take place, however, according to an altered set of rules.

#### Toward a New Growth Structure

The growth crisis of 1971 had been triggered by problems involving air quality, water supply, sewage treatment capacity, and school overcrowding. During the years following SAVE, the water and school issues were resolved, at least temporarily. It was the air quality and sewage disposal problems that constituted the ultimate barriers to growth.

Mainly because of opposition to the tax increase that would accompany general obligation bond financing, the Zone 7 Project Two proposal had been defeated in 1970. By the time voters were faced with a new proposal in November 1972, however, its passage was virtually assured. First, a water connection fee had been instituted. Second, the board determined that the new project should be financed not by general obligation bonds, but through \$8.2 million in revenue bonds, which required only a simple majority vote for approval. Two-thirds of the funds to repay the

bondholders would be obtained from connection fees, with the remainder collected from the profit on the sale of water. Under this plan, there would be no need to raise taxes or water rates. This arrangement would seem to satisfy those who had argued that growth should "pay for itself."

Opposition, however, persisted. Some residentialists actually considered the new proposal to be growth-inducing. This was because under revenue bonding, the fees from between 800 and 1,000 new connections annually would be mandatory, in order to repay the bondholders. Consequently, such staunch anti-growth officials as Donald Miller opposed "Measure E." Although professing to take a neutral stand, editor Robert Several of The Independent made clear his own lack of enthusiasm for the proposal: "The issue is no longer growth-pay-for-itself, but growth" (The Independent, November 5, 1972: 4).

Although forcefully expressed, such sentiment was not widespread. Measure E, which would facilitate a 50% expansion of Zone 7's peak water delivery capacity, passed by a vote of 27,182 to 8,210. Subsequent to the election, however, the misgivings of Project Two opponents proved in some respects justified. Because of concern over diminishing water hookups (hence declining revenues), the Zone 7 Board voted in August 1973 to authorize up to a 37% future increase in wholesale water rates. Critics of the agency were incensed, claiming that "the Zone" had gone back on its pre-election promises. Under the leadership of Donald

Miller and fellow Lawrence Laboratory scientist Paul Brown, a new group was formed, called Citizens Against Water Rate Increases (CAWRI). Although CAWRI gathered enough signatures to call a referendum election on the Zone 7 action, Alameda County officials ruled that such an edict was an administrative action, and could not be made subject to a referendum.

Over the next several years, Zone 7 began to use revenues from the increased water rates to pay off its Project Two bond obligations. Connection fees were placed into a special Enlargement, Improvement, and Replacement (EIR) Fund. Through this device, the Zone might not have to rely upon voter approval for future capital facilities expansion. These maneuvers by Zone 7 produced a sufficient voter backlash to elect "reform" candidates Robert Pearson and Richard Ryon to the board in June 1974. However, by the time the Project Two facilities were completed in June 1975 (Figure 32), the water shortage had evaporated.

The educational problem did not disappear quite so readily. Double sessions in Livermore elementary schools continued into the 1974-75 school year; overcrowding in the high schools persisted for several years more. However, the situation was eased ultimately by two factors: changes in the structure of school financing, and a levelling off and subsequent decline in enrollments. First, as a consequence of the 1971 amendment to the subdivision code, developers had been required to provide homebuyers with a letter stating that adequate school facilities were or would soon

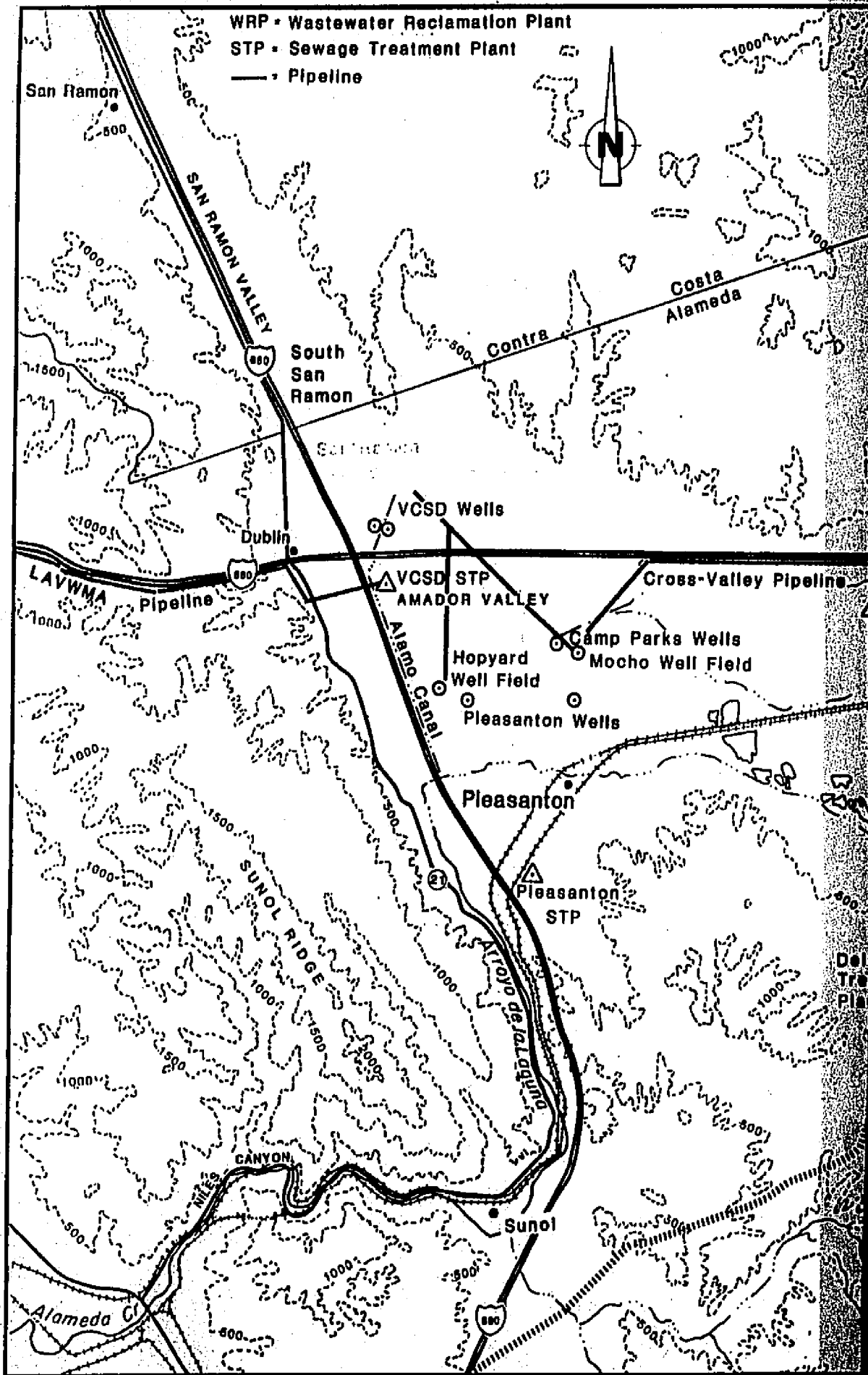
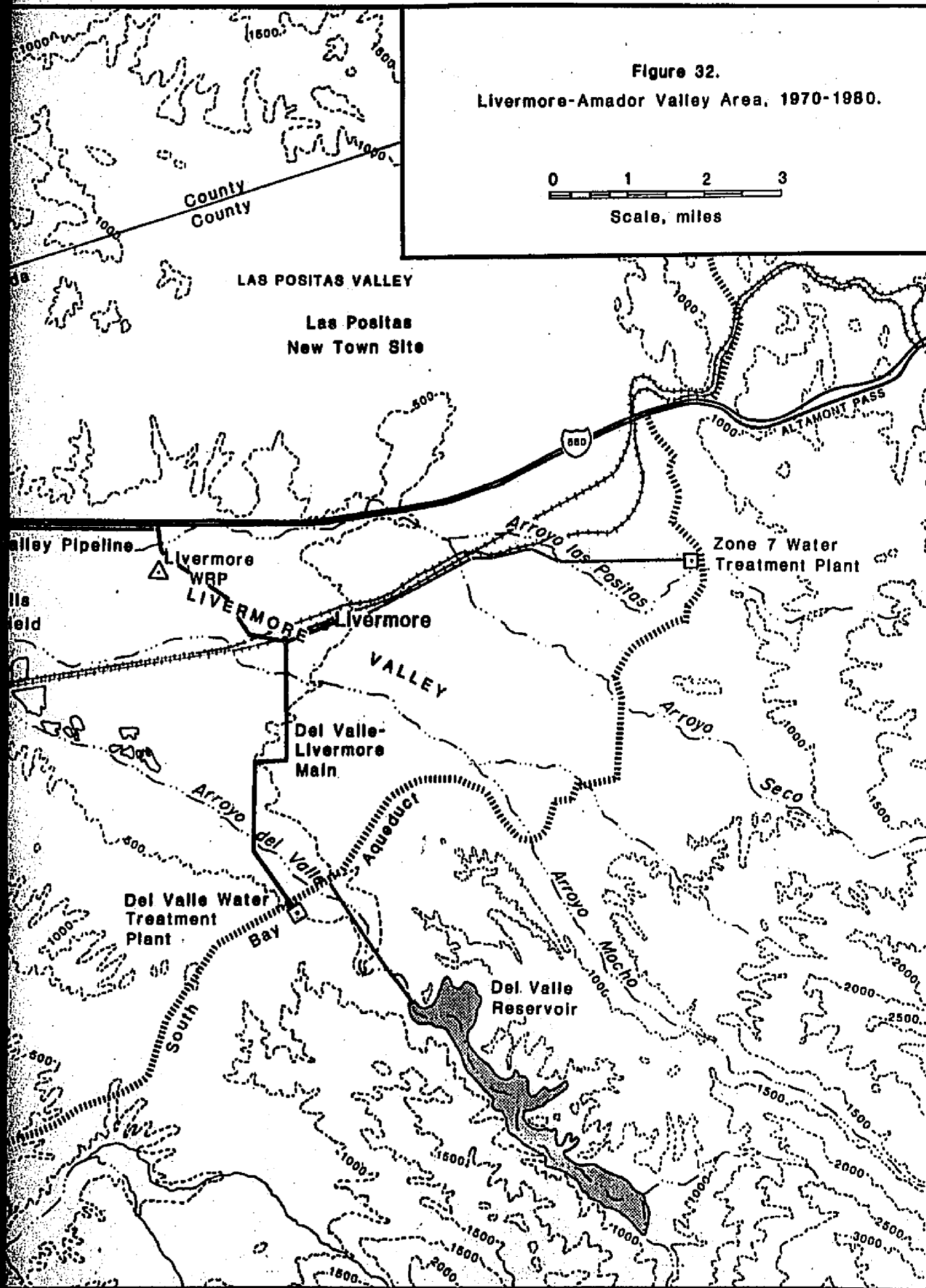




Figure 32.  
Livermore-Amador Valley Area, 1970-1980.



be available within a new tract. Based upon this law, the school district was able to impose a school development fee of up to \$800 per home. Second, in 1975, passage by the California Legislature of a new Lease Purchase Bonding Act made possible a new system for school financing. Under this arrangement, a public corporation could be established, which would be considered the developer of new school. The school district would then lease the facilities from that corporation for a nominal fee. What made the system attractive was that passage of a bond issue to finance such a program required only a simple majority of votes.

In 1975, LVJUSD proposed a \$10.35 million capital improvement plan, designed to accommodate the present level of enrollment, but provide for no further expansion. The plan would be financed by \$9.2 million in lease/purchase bonds, with another 1.16 million to be raised through an increase in the revenue limit tax rate. On March 4, the electorate passed both measures by a 55% majority. Crowding problems finally began to ease after enrollments peaked during the 1975-76 school year. Enrollments have declined steadily since that time. Between 1975 and 1980, the total number of children enrolled in Livermore schools fell from 14,058 to 11,853.

#### Wastewater Treatment: Impediment to Growth

During the two years following passage of the SAVE initiative, the separate valley jurisdictions struggled to resolve their respective sewage treatment problems. During

this period, Livermore was interested mainly in upgrading its wastewater reclamation plant to provide what was close to tertiary treatment; state and federal grant money was obtained for this purpose. By mid-1974, the post-SAVE rush of new hookups brought the city's treatment facility perilously close to its 5 mgd limit. The city sought grant money for an increase of 1.25 mgd. This funding process was delayed first by an EPA and State Water Resources Control Board policy prohibiting treatment plant expansion until steps were taken to ameliorate air quality problems (discussed in Chapter XIII). Further delays were caused by procedural errors by the SWRCB. Consequently, the Livermore Wastewater Reclamation Plant expansion was not authorized until 1980 (work was completed in early 1983). Despite these problems, no crisis of overloaded capacity ever occurred.

Pleasanton, on the other hand, was faced with a treatment capacity shortage that showed no signs of abating quickly. Instead of phasing out its old municipal plant on Sunol Blvd. as had been planned, steps were taken to expand its capacity from 1.2 to 1.7 mgd. For all additional sewer capacity, Pleasanton was dependent upon VCSD.

As discussed in Chapter IX, the city had sown the seeds of its own difficulties. During the period when Pleasanton was battling VCSD over annexation of lands south of Highway 580, the strong bargaining position of the developers had compelled the city to sign annexation agreements that included specific commitments to provide sewer hookups for

completed subdivisions. When the moratoria were imposed during fall 1971, then, the city found itself in an unenviable legal situation. Pleasanton maintained, however, that VCSD had failed to meet its own agreement to provide adequate sewer capacity.

The problem of overcommitted sewer capacity would not likely be resolved quickly. Although VCSD plant capacity would be expanded from 2.5 to 4.0 mgd (the work was completed in 1974), the continued existence of the "mystery million" (actually 700,000) gallons meant this would add only a minimal amount of new capacity. A new VCSD proposal to expand the plant yet further languished far down the SWRCB Clean Water Grant priority list. For a time, there was talk of using the old Camp Parks sewer ponds to store effluent for spray irrigation until adequate expansion could be arranged. This plan, however, was scuttled when Democratic Congressman George P. Miller was convinced by local residents that the resulting odor problems would be overwhelming.

Not surprisingly, the homebuilders whose north Pleasanton projects were halted by the sewer ban were greatly distressed over the events of late 1971. They had paid fees and borrowed funds in anticipation of completing their tracts within a relatively short time frame; consequently, the delays caused by the sewer moratorium cost them huge sums of money. They looked both to Pleasanton and VCSD for relief. The legal tangle that resulted seemed temporarily resolved in November 1972, when an out-of-court

settlement was reached allocating existing and future sewer capacity to the various developers affected (Alameda County Superior Court Judgment No. 423134). Under what became known as the 1972 Settlement Agreement, a priority system was established whereby several thousand future sewer permits would be issued, over a time period that might extend for many years.\*

This hardly marked the end of the sewer crisis, however. As part of the Settlement Agreement, VCSD promised to seek further treatment capacity increases. There was, however, wrangling between Pleasanton and VCSD over the scale of such expansion. With an eye to sizable commercial-industrial growth, Pleasanton pushed for a plant capacity of 8 mgd; the VCSD Board of Directors, however, wanted only 6.5 mgd. In the wake of the 1971 sewer freeze disaster, some VCSD Boardmembers now held a control-growth outlook. This stemmed not only from concern over air pollution, but also the realization that Dublin and south San Ramon were unlikely to grow much larger. There seemed no reason to advocate a huge, expensive sewer plant expansion that would mainly serve Pleasanton.

By now, it also was apparent that simply expanding treatment facilities would not resolve the long-term

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\* A separate lawsuit was brought against the City of Pleasanton by Morrison Homes, developers of the Pleasanton Valley subdivision. In May 1976, a State Court of Appeals ruled that Pleasanton was obligated to provide sewer connections as specified in annexation agreements, and also awarded damages to the plaintiff (Morrison Homes Corp. v. City of Pleasanton, 58 C.A. 3d 724: 130 Cal.Rptr. 196).

problem. The day would inevitably arrive when effluent could no longer be dumped into the Alamo Canal. According to new interim effluent limits promulgated by the RWQCB on January 11, 1973 (Order 73-3), discharges by VCSD into Alameda Creek could contain an average total of only 28,500 lbs. of dissolved salts per day between May and October, and 31,200 lbs. per day between November and April. Under the long-term requirements due to go into effect on July 1, 1978, over a ninety-day period effluent could contain a mean level of no more than 250 parts per million total dissolved solids (TDS). Meanwhile, the Pleasanton water supply already contained an average of over 400 ppm; VCSD water averaged 521 ppm (Environmental Protection Agency 1975: 2-4). Although the increasing amounts of South Bay Aqueduct water within the local supply would eventually reduce these TDS levels, it was a case of too little, too late. Resolution of valley wastewater problems would require a large-scale, expensive project. This would necessitate outside financing and the participation of higher levels of government.

## Chapter XIII

### The State and Federal Roles

During the years following the passage of the SAVE initiative in Livermore and Pleasanton, growth-control fever swept through suburbs across the nation. This was an accelerating movement, fueled by environmental concern and outrage over the often-rapacious nature of development during the building boom of 1968-73 (Fellmeth 1973, Downie 1974). Although at the end of 1972 only a dozen communities nationwide reportedly employed growth controls (Dowall 1984: 3), during the following two years over two hundred municipalities followed suit. However, as even the distant Washington Post observed, the impulse to slow growth was strongest in environmentally-conscious Northern California (Gustaitis 1972).

Although these programs were initiated locally, it was inevitable that higher levels of government would become involved in the resolution of growth-related problems. This was not only because the often-parochial actions of local governments can adversely affect neighboring jurisdictions, but because cities, counties and special districts lack the fiscal and administrative resources to resolve complex interjurisdictional pollution problems.

By the early seventies, new environmental legislation mandated the cleanup of air and water pollution; moreover,

both the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act deemed the enhancement of the environment a high priority within the planning process related to all significant construction projects. This incipient involvement of state and federal agencies in actively protecting environmental quality represented a significant shift away from the traditional growth-facilitating role generally played by government in American history.

This chapter shows the importance of state and federal actions in shaping growth management in the Livermore-Amador Valley. Of particular prominence were the de facto planning powers exercised by certain agencies through their control over funding of infrastructural projects such as highways and wastewater treatment and disposal facilities.

#### The Land-Use Planning Chimera

The "quiet revolution" in land-use control (Chapter X) proved of little immediate consequence for the Livermore-Amador Valley. At the regional level, there was much planning, but to little effect. In 1970, the Association of Bay Area Governments had developed a "regional plan," under its powers as a metropolitan Council of Governments. The proposal was controversial, inasmuch as it called for much slower Bay Area growth than had characterized the previous two decades. The plan, however, had no binding legal effect upon ABAG members. ABAG also formulated an



open space plan (1972), whereby some 3 million acres would be protected permanently from development. Finally, on October 11, 1973, the agency adopted a "Growth Policy Statement," which maintained that local growth policies were needed, but they had to be developed and utilized within a "regional framework."

The status of this regional framework itself, however, remained shaky. Although Assemblyman John Knox (D-Richmond) regularly introduced bills into the state legislature that would create a regional government agency with real enforcement powers, opposition from interests championing "local government" repeatedly prevented their passage (Woo 1975).

Partly as a consequence of the real estate slump of 1974-75, the impetus behind other ambitious top-down land-use planning efforts (including the attempt to introduce a National Land Use Policy Act) dissipated after 1975. It was through more indirect avenues that federal and state authority over land use was exercised throughout the remainder of the decade.

#### Diamonds for Interstate 580

The first significant instance in which state and federal funding powers were used to address directly the valley growth problem involved the ongoing development of the regional highway system. The importance of the interstate highway program to valley development during the sixties was discussed in Chapter VII. Although it cannot be

claimed that new highways caused growth, they certainly facilitated the spillover of bedroom-type development from neighboring East Bay communities. The new Interstate 680 stretched southward through the San Ramon Valley, intersecting San Ramon, Dublin, and Pleasanton before veering to the southwest toward Fremont. Oriented west to east, Interstate 580 retraced the venerable route of Highway 50 through Dublin Canyon, before crossing the Amador and Livermore Valleys toward Altamont Pass. By 1971, I-580 had been widened to eight full lanes over its entire length with the exception of the 10.2 mile stretch between Dublin and the Highway 238 interchange in Castro Valley.

By the time the expansion of this final section was proposed, however, the political climate both in the valley and state-wide had shifted significantly. The draft environmental impact statement for the plan to widen I-580 through Dublin Canyon was submitted in autumn 1971, precisely at the time when the growth-controls movement was gathering momentum in Livermore and Pleasanton.

Toward the end of the sixties, an increased emphasis upon public transit within the transportation planning process had emerged nationwide. Consequently, the State Division of Highways and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) were convinced to include an eighty-foot wide transit corridor within the median strip separating the proposed two sets of four lanes. It was thought that in

this corridor an extension of the Bay Area Rapid Transit system might someday be built. Although BART had by this time begun to study such an eastward extension from its Bay Fair station in Hayward (Livingston and Blayney 1974), the system as a whole was having numerous problems handling existing operations, and there were no immediate plans to expand.

When the proposal encountered intensive opposition, then, the major immediate issue was the widening of the highway itself. Opponents of the plan were led by George Bing, LLL physicist and leader of the Livermore-Amador Valley Chapter of the Sierra Club. Bing argued that it was unwise to improve accessibility into an area with consistently poor air quality. Widening the highway would facilitate more growth, which would worsen the air pollution problem. If the highway were left essentially unchanged, growth would be discouraged, and those commuting through Dublin Canyon would be encouraged to carpool or use public transit.

Echoing arguments it had used since the early sixties to justify highway expansion in the area, the Division of Highways claimed that the full eight lanes were essential to accommodate growth that was in fact already projected for the Livermore-Amador Valley area. Using the 1966 Alameda County General Plan "High" population projections as its basis, the division claimed that there would be 235,000 people in the valley by 1990. Moreover, it was concluded from the division's own study of the smog situation (1972) that

widening the road would actually reduce potential pollution levels, since traffic would flow at higher speeds. Given projected levels of traffic, the highway agency warned, intolerable congestion and deteriorated air quality would inevitably result from failure to expand the roadway to the full eight lanes.

The case for eliminating or modifying the proposed project was strengthened by the Air Resources Board designation of the valley as a "critical air basin" within the San Francisco Bay Air Quality Maintenance Area. In accordance with this ruling, EPA was pressured to invoke provisions of Section 109(j) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act, which sought to assure that highways constructed using federal funds "are consistent with any approved plan for the implementation of any ambient air quality standard for any air quality control region designated pursuant to the Clean Air Act, as amended." This designation prompted EPA to consider invalid the previous high-growth population projections. Instead, the California Department of Finance E-0 projection series was used. These were based upon the assumption of no net in-migration, and an average of 2.11 offspring per female. For the county as a whole, the E-0 growth rate was 0.4% per year. The "disaggregated" rate for the Livermore-Amador Valley alone amounted to 2%. Even using the disaggregated rate, EPA considered doubtful the necessity or desirability of widening I-580 to eight lanes.

In response to the deepening controversy, the new

Metropolitan Transportation Commission refused to give its approval to the eight-lane proposal, and elected to undertake its own investigation. MTC evaluated the air quality impacts of six project alternatives, ranging from a "do-nothing" plan to enlargement to the full eight lanes favored by the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans).\* A third significant possibility was a "downscoped" version of the CalTrans proposal. This called for enlargement of I-580 to six lanes only, with one lane in each direction restricted to the use of busses and carpools during commute hours.

In a preliminary report issued November 1974, MTC concluded that an eight-lane highway would result in significant air quality deterioration in the Livermore Valley. By 1990, the (old) ambient standard for oxidant might be exceeded on as many as 24 days per year (1974: 75). Just as important as this conclusion, however, was an assertion within the report regarding the relationship between highway accessibility and growth within the Livermore-Amador Valley:

If accessibility to the Valley were improved (by widening the freeway and/or adding a rapid-transit extension), the Valley would become a more attractive location for young families to locate in than...other areas due to the availability of cheaper housing sites.  
(Metropolitan Transportation Commission 1974: 27)

A key assumption influencing the MTC evaluation of the

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\* In 1973, the State Division of Highways was consolidated with several other agencies into the new State Department of Transportation, or "CalTrans."

I-580 project was stated as follows: "Accessibility to the Livermore Valley is the prime regional development factor that can still be effectively controlled by public policy" (28). A few pages below, it was added: "The peak period capacity of both the freeway and transit modes through Dublin Canyon will become the single most important factor determining future population levels in the Livermore Valley" (30). MTC considered highway access to be a potential growth-inducing factor; consequently, the curtailment of convenient access was viewed as a viable tool for the control of growth.

CalTrans and the Federal Highways Administration disagreed with EPA and MTC, refusing to heed the latter's tacit recommendation for modification of the project. The same month that the MTC report was issued, the FHWA gave final approval for the full eight-lane widening plan. In March 1975, CalTrans advertised for bids on the first six miles of the 10.2-mile project.

#### The Compromise

On April 15, the Sierra Club responded by filing a legal complaint against CalTrans and FHWA, claiming that the proposed eight-lane improvement was in violation of the Federal Aid Highway Act and the Clean Air Act. CalTrans was eager to avoid becoming bogged down in litigation that might drag on for years. The State Division of Bay Toll Crossings (now also part of CalTrans) had seen its bid to construct a new Dumbarton Bridge between Newark and Menlo Park delayed

for over five years by legal problems arising from citizen opposition to the project. Moreover, the CalTrans highway-building budget had been losing its purchasing power for nearly a decade. This was because first, the construction cost index for roads had risen at a rate even faster than the consumer price index, whereas the gasoline taxes that fed the Highway Trust Fund remained at fixed levels (this despite the fact that gasoline prices had nearly doubled over the previous two years). Second, the trust funds themselves were no longer exclusively for highway use; local governments now could elect to use their shares of the federal revenues for mass transit programs under the auspices of the Federal Mass Transit Administration. In light of these trends, CalTrans was abandoning large segments of its original Freeway and Expressway Plan, still only around one-third completed.

Under these conditions, CalTrans wished at the very least to finish all projects that were part of the interstate highway system, and hence eligible for 90%-plus federal financing. Fearful of the possibility that the funding for I-580 might be withdrawn if finalization of the contracts was delayed past June 30, 1975, CalTrans chose to negotiate an out-of-court settlement with the Sierra Club.

In an accord reached on May 25, 1975, CalTrans and the FHWA agreed to construct a project essentially identical to the "downscoped CalTrans" proposal referred to above. The roadway was to be graded to eight-lane width, but one lane

in either direction would be used solely as a separation between two normal traffic lanes and a specially-designated "high-occupancy vehicle" (HOV) lane restricted to the use of carpools and busses except during weekends. Identified by a diamond-shaped insignia on the roadway, these special lanes quickly became known as "diamond lanes."

The diamond lane concept had the full support of the new administration of Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. in Sacramento, as represented by its Secretary of Transportation Adriana Gianturco. This preferential-lane innovation was seen as part of a new approach to transportation planning, stressing "balance" and the need to move boldly away from reliance upon the one-person-per-auto commute pattern so typical of the contemporary journey-to-work.

To its adherents, the HOV lane arrangement was a noble experiment aimed at conserving fuel, limiting vehicle-miles within a critical air basin, and discouraging growth by rendering a lengthy commute somewhat inconvenient. This was, however, a pyrrhic victory for controlled-growth advocates. Long before the first six-mile section of specially-designed roadway was opened to traffic in December 1977, it was obvious that support for the program was far from unanimous. A similar experiment involving a portion of the Santa Monica Freeway in Los Angeles had failed miserably in 1976 when motorists protested en masse against the system.

The concept proved unpopular in Northern California, as well. The vast majority that could not or would not ride



three-to-a-car resented being subjected to endless traffic jams through the Dublin Canyon corridor. Outrage was expressed at the Sierra Club for having forced this arrangement upon the highway agencies. There was, moreover, significant dissension within the Sierra Club itself, with many members of the local chapter opposing the club's official position supporting the lane restrictions.

Some of this criticism was unjustified. Because the widening project was not yet complete, there remained an aggravating section of roadway where busses, carpools, and single-passenger vehicles all were jammed into two lanes in each direction over a distance of more than four miles east from Castro Valley. Rightly or not, however, the diamond lanes remained controversial. Within weeks after the lanes were opened for use, State Senator John Holmdahl (D-Oakland) introduced a legislative resolution urging CalTrans to renegotiate its agreement with the Sierra Club, and advocating completion of the I-580 project to its originally-planned eight lanes.

By 1980, opposition was becoming increasingly vehement. In an editorial dated April 1, the Herald complained that the diamond lanes were "jammed down the throats" of valley residents, and represented "an example of a bunch of muddle-headed, anti-growth advocates taking matters into their own hands" (5). In an advisory election held a few days later in both Pleasanton and Livermore, residents voted overwhelmingly to abolish the HOV lanes. In Livermore, 81%

voted against the lane restrictions; in commute-oriented Pleasanton, the tally was a solid 88%.

According to studies conducted during the early eighties by CalTrans as part of its EIR for the project to widen the last four-mile section of highway, the high-occupancy vehicle lanes did not reduce air pollution, nor did they ameliorate traffic congestion--because very few people rode in carpools (CalTrans 1982). This time, the approved proposal called for a final road configuration of eight lanes, none of which would be of the HOV type. Finally, because of efforts by Democratic Congressman Fortney "Pete" Stark, in January 1983 a rider attached to a federal bill to increase the gasoline tax outlawed the use of lane restrictions in "rural Alameda County." In something of a media event, Stark helped cut down the "diamond lane" signs on January 7, 1983. According to Stark, the lanes were "a well-meant experiment that didn't work" (The Independent, January 12, 1983).

**LAVWMA:  
Key to Growth Management**

The second and ultimately most important instance in which state and federal funding programs influenced growth policy in the valley concerned the resolution of the wastewater disposal problem. Nearly twenty years after Regional Water Pollution Control Board Resolution 226, and three years after discovery of the "mystery million" gallons of VCSD sewage halted development in the west valley, steps

were taken to devise a water quality management system that would finally end contamination of the Niles Cone.

Since 1956, small amounts of federal funding (\$50 million per year) had been available through grant provisions of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. Grants based upon this legislation could cover 30% of the cost of a municipal wastewater treatment plant. Under the 1966 amendments to the act, the program was expanded to cover up to 55% of project costs. Both the City of Livermore and VCSD had taken advantage of this program during the sixties. By the seventies, the apparent urgency of water pollution problems convinced Congress to expand the treatment facilities funding program yet further. Under Section 201 of the 1972 Amendments to the Water Pollution Control Act, up to \$18 billion were made available to the states for new wastewater treatment facilities, with the federal share of costs increased to 75%.

Obtaining money under this program involved a four step process. First, proposals initiated locally went through a preapplication review, whereby the responsible state agency would rank the project on a priority list. Projects given a sufficiently high priority ranking would then proceed in accordance with a three-step grant application procedure, covering facilities planning, design, and construction of the approved project. The goal of these federally-subsidized endeavors was to resolve a local wastewater treatment problem for a twenty-year period.

In California, the Section 201 money was administered through the State Water Resources Control Board in Sacramento. In addition, California had its own funding program providing 12 1/2% of construction costs, under the terms of the \$250 million Clean Water Bonds program approved by voters in November 1970. The overall program directed by the SWRCB (in conjunction with the EPA through the latter's District IX Offices in San Francisco), could provide up to 87.5% of total project costs.

#### The Joint Powers Agreement

Because the individual valley jurisdictions could not possibly meet the updated effluent discharge standards promulgated by the RWQCB, it was clear that a comprehensive project of some sort was necessary--for which funding was now available. There was, however, a problem to be addressed: what agency should be empowered to coordinate and handle such a project? In 1973, the RWQCB had requested the formation of an agency to provide for implementation of its basin-wide Water Quality Management Plan. For some, an obvious candidate was the Zone 7 water agency (e.g. Brown and Caldwell 1972: 189). Since 1965, the Zone had been empowered to treat wastewater, in addition to its water supply and flood control responsibilities. Given such broad capabilities, the agency could conceivably manage water quality in a rational, comprehensive manner.

This prospect, however, was not attractive to city councilmembers in Livermore and Pleasanton, nor to VCSD

Boardmembers. First, whereas Zone 7 was a subdivision of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, a portion of the area served by VCSD lay in neighboring Contra Costa County. More importantly, the areal jurisdiction of Zone 7 was far larger than the combined areas represented by the three existing treatment agencies. Since its governing board had a history of strong representation by rural landowners, urban officials feared that granting broad sewage treatment powers to Zone 7 would encourage large-scale development in previously unsewered unincorporated areas.

In early 1974, an alternative solution was devised. Under California law, separate agencies can form a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement to serve a specific function such as the disposal of wastewater. By May, the essential provisions for such an agreement between Pleasanton, Livermore, and VCSD had been worked out. Created officially on June 18, 1974, the new entity was called the Livermore-Amador Valley Water Management Agency, or LAVWMA. The agency was governed by a 6-member board of directors, composed of two elected officials from each jurisdiction.

#### Project Selection

In 1972, Brown and Caldwell had recommended for the valley a system for wastewater disposal involving a combination of impoundment, reuse and "salt routing" (1972: Ch. 10). Treated effluent would be stored in a reservoir in Doolan Canyon (located in Contra Costa County north of

Interstate 580). During the summer, effluent would be used for certain types of irrigation. During the wet winter months, wastewater would be released into Alameda Creek, hence transporting stored salts out of the valley basin.

This plan was approved initially by the RWQCB, but then was subsequently dropped, for both technical and political reasons. First, the reuse aspects of the proposal were found to be in conflict with Zone 7's goals for upgrading the quality of valley groundwater. Second, for salt routing to work, released wastewater had to be diluted by the natural flow of Alameda Creek. Early in the winter rainy season, however, it would be uncertain whether adequate dilution would be possible. This problem would be exacerbated during dry years. Third, it was discovered that the Doolan Canyon Reservoir site was unstable geologically. Finally, the Alameda County Water District never liked the plan, and threatened lawsuits if violations of discharge standards occurred.

Consequently, in October 1974 the SWRCB issued a Step 1 grant to LAVWMA to study a new set of project alternatives for dealing with the long-term sewage disposal problem. As a result of the studies conducted by the John Carollo Engineering firm for LAVWMA, 15 alternative projects were considered. Eventually, these were reduced to five viable possibilities, including demineralization of effluent through reverse osmosis, and a new salt routing proposal calling for storage of wastewater in a holding reservoir

located in Sinbad Canyon, west of Pleasanton Ridge. Echoing suggestions dating back twenty years, it was alternatively proposed that effluent be exported through a pipeline to San Francisco Bay, either through Niles Canyon or Dublin Canyon. The final alternative called for export initially, but with plans for future demineralization for reuse.

After screening by the SWRCB, the RWQCB, and EPA, the alternative entitled "Treatment and Export to East Bay Interceptor Line" was selected. Under this plan, valley sewage would continue to be treated at the Livermore and VCSD facilities (it was assumed that the City of Pleasanton plant would soon be phased out). Treated effluent would be exported through a pipeline, the route of which would lead westward over Boehmer Summit in Dublin Canyon. The LAVWMA pipeline would be connected into a much larger pipeline operated by the newly-formed East Bay Dischargers Authority (which collected wastewater from urban areas between Fremont and San Leandro). Ultimately, the wastewater would be discharged into San Francisco Bay from a deep-water outfall south of the Oakland Airport.

According to the agencies making the decision, selection of this project was based upon cost-effectiveness and consideration of environmental impacts. Some local politicians claimed, however, that the choice of a sewer line to the bay was all but preordained, in accordance with the desire of state and federal officials to create a basin-wide system of "supersewers." This never-completed arrangement would have included wastewater collection

pipelines surrounding the east, west and south bay areas (see BASSA 1975). According to some pipeline foes, in fact, an overriding consideration in the selection of the LAVWMA proposal was the benefit to EBDA of the additional hydraulic pressure provided by the LAVWMA effluent as it flowed downhill from Boehmer Summit.

### The Smog Factor

Under different conditions, a wastewater disposal project might have been built to accommodate twenty years of sixties-style rapid development. Long before the LAVWMA project reached the planning stage, however (covered by the Step 2 grant), the possible growth-inducing impact of such a facility was well understood by all involved.

Soon after passage of the 1972 Amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, it became apparent that the generosity of its grant provisions might work at cross-purposes with the broader goal of environmental quality. In response to this and other concerns, in August 1973 an attachment to Office of Management and Budget Circular A-102 contained the following provision regarding federal grants-in-aid to state and local governments:

Contracts and subgrants of amounts in excess of \$100,000 shall contain a provision which requires the recipient to agree to comply with all applicable standards, orders, or regulations issued pursuant to the Clean Air Act of 1970...

(U.S. Office of Management and Budget 1973)

Subsequently, in 1974 an influential report was issued,



entitled Interceptor Sewers and Suburban Sprawl (U.S. Council on Environmental Quality 1974). This study documented that grants awarded to local governments for sanitary facilities were in some cases being used to construct oversized projects that encouraged rapid local growth.

It was apparent that accordance with the legislation cited above required consideration of the potential "secondary" environmental effects of projects funded through EPA construction grants. In a memorandum dated June 6, 1975, EPA Director Russell Train instructed all branch officials to consider such effects in the evaluation of all grant proposals. He went on to prescribe the impact of this policy upon the grants process:

Where careful analysis leads to the conclusion that the secondary effects of a project can reasonably be anticipated to contravene an environmental law or regulation, or a plan or standard required by an environmental law or regulation, the Regional Administrator shall withhold approval of a Step 2 or Step 3 construction grant until the applicant revises the plan, initiates steps to mitigate the adverse effects, or agrees to conditions in the grant document requiring actions to minimize the effects.  
(U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 1975a)

With respect to the Livermore-Amador Valley, the Environmental Protection Agency was in the pivotal position of planning for the resolution of both water quality and air quality problems. Under the terms of the Federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970, each state was required to formulate an Air Quality Maintenance Plan, which included the identification of problem areas, and an implementation plan

to ameliorate the air quality problems within those areas. By the early seventies, the Livermore-Amador Valley was known as the "smog capital of Northern California." If a LAVWMA pipeline was to be constructed, then, it could not facilitate growth that would result in degradation of the environment.

However, in the case of the LAVWMA project, any growth at all would aggravate the air pollution problem in the valley. As part of the Environmental Impact Statement for the project prepared by the EPA and the URS Research Company of San Mateo, it was determined that only if its population were reduced to half of the current level (i.e. to around 50,000) could the Livermore-Amador Valley meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (1975b: 24-25). According to the report, "The air quality of the valley should improve noticeably within the next 15 years due to improved stationary and mobile source controls." However, it was added: "(a)ir quality should worsen again after 1990 as further growth, and the increased sources associated with it, overcome the benefit of improved emission controls" (23).

Consequently, EPA, the SWRCB, and the California Air Resources Board mandated jointly that the pipeline be constructed only as part of a broader program to reduce air pollution. The pipeline itself would be designed as a growth-control device. Under this policy, it was determined that the facility should be built to accommodate

only a twenty-year population increase of 2% per year. This figure was drawn from the "disaggregated" E-0 projections for the area issued by the California Department of Finance. In light of past valley growth patterns, to restrict growth in accordance with such guidelines seemed drastic indeed.

The LAVWMA project was supposed to be part of a total air quality maintenance program. Both Livermore and Pleasanton were required to provide EPA with proposals delineating how cleaner air would be achieved. Suggestions included new mass transit systems, bicycle paths, the I-580 HOV lanes, and a growth strategy encouraging compact, "in-fill" development, rather than further sprawl. This last suggestion was influenced by the findings of the report, The Costs of Sprawl, issued by the Real Estate Research Corporation (1974). This publication documented the long-term inefficiency of low-density development, particularly in terms of air pollution and energy costs.

An important element of the plan was the encouragement of job-providing, non-nuisance industry. With more jobs available, so the logic went, fewer residents would commute out of the valley to work. For this reason, a significant amount of pipeline capacity was specifically reserved for "industrial and commercial" use. In Livermore, the city amended its general plan in March 1975 to allocate 50% of its remaining sewage treatment capacity to "non-residential uses" (City of Livermore Resolution 46-75).

The draft general plans in each city included mitigating measures against possible growth-related

environmental deterioration. Through lower overall residential densities, the banning of construction in environmentally-sensitive areas such as floodplains and steep hillsides, and the inclusion of plans to encourage non-automotive transit, Livermore and Pleasanton seemingly demonstrated the commitment of their citizens to long-term environmental quality.

#### Political Rancor, Procedural Chaos

By late November 1975, the draft EIS for the LAVWMA project was complete. After a series of public hearings (e.g. U.S. EPA 1976), the final EIS was published the following April. There remained, however, one obstacle to the construction of the pipeline. A key provision of the LAVWMA charter (added at the insistence of activists Donald Miller and Robert Pearson) maintained that voter approval would be needed for any capital expenditure that would cause the wastewater conveyance capacities of the LAVWMA project to exceed a 13 mgd peak capacity, or else would require expenditures of over \$1.5 million.

The proposed capacity of the pipeline was 15.62 mgd, and would have required voter approval in any case. However, pressure mainly from Pleasanton officials led the LAVWMA board to add an additional 4.1 mgd capacity for industrial-commercial use only in Pleasanton and Livermore. This extra capacity would be paid for by the local governments, which in turn would collect the revenue

through sewer connection fees. The total local share of the 19.72 mgd proposal was \$8.2 million.

Still anticipating a boom in commercial development, Pleasanton actually had pushed originally for a pipeline capacity of 25 mgd. The addition of even the lesser reserve capacity, however, turned out to be a political liability for LAVWMA. In a bit of poor prophecy, growth-control advocates argued that the valley could not possibly utilize as much industrial capacity as was being provided; they insisted that the extra capacity would be released ultimately for residential use.

Even without the extra capacity issue, however, there was considerable criticism of what was being called the "uphill sewer." Despite claims by EPA and the RWQCB that land disposal methods for treating wastewater were not yet practicable, some environmentalists argued that in-basin reuse was still a superior alternative. Others felt it was a waste of energy to pump wastewater over Boehmer Summit. Finally, many citizens simply were not convinced that any such grandiose project was needed at all.

Overall, there was sufficient public resistance to the pipeline that the bond proposal, Measure U on the November 2, 1976 ballot, was defeated, 15,796 to 19,221. Although the measure was narrowly passed by a 52% majority in Pleasanton, it was buried by a 59% negative vote in Livermore, and by 54% "nays" in the VCSD service area.

In early December, a furious Regional Water Quality Control Board slapped a new cease-and-desist order on all

valley wastewater agencies. New arrangements to get the project built had to be devised quickly, or else LAVWMA faced a September 1977 cutoff date for federal and state grant funds. To make matters worse, it was revealed later that same month that the company designing the pipeline had underestimated the construction costs significantly. Not only did this dictate hiring a new engineering firm, but it all but precluded the possibility of building the full 19.72 mgd project.

In 1977, the entire process of project selection was repeated. This time, some 66 alternatives were studied, under the direction of the CH M Hill engineering consulting firm. New alternatives included such exotic possibilities<sup>2</sup> as the growing of water hyacinths to consume sewage nutrients. However, it again was determined that the pipeline over Boehmer Summit was the most cost-effective project. The proposal called for a capacity of 15.62 mgd, plus one mgd for "overflow."

Before a new bonding proposal could be finalized, some changes were made in the LAVWMA joint powers agreement. At the insistence of the Livermore and VCSD board members, it was determined that for all decisions regarding capital expenditures, a unanimous, rather than majority vote of the six-member board would now be needed. This rule would be crucial in future expansion proposals.

Although smaller than the previous proposal, the pipeline was still a sufficiently large project to mandate a

public vote--and at this point, LAVWMA was not eager to face another possible bond election defeat. In May 1977, the agency made use of an emergency provision of California bonding law in order to go forward with the project. Under this statute, a declaration by the RWQCB that failure to construct the pipeline would result in a clear threat to public health and safety would enable LAVWMA to issue bonds without voter approval.

#### The Eleventh-Hour Wild CARD

Even at this late stage, a small band of citizens attempted to halt the project. This particular group had organized previously as part of a successful campaign to block the formation of a redevelopment district in Pleasanton. According to the abortive 1974 redevelopment plan, tax revenues generated by the new Stoneridge regional shopping mall would have been channelled into the city's downtown (Hempill 1976). The funds could then be used to upgrade that attractive but ailing commercial area. Some citizens, however, felt that the proposed Redevelopment Agency would grant a governmental agency overly-broad powers to condemn property and plan the future of "old" Pleasanton. A small group of around thirty activists calling themselves Citizens Against Redevelopment (CARD) fought the proposal at every turn. With some influential downtown businessmen also opposed, by late 1975 the redevelopment idea was all but dead.

The CARD group, however, was still very much alive. It

now directed its energies toward combatting the LAVWMA pipeline proposal. After all legal maneuvering to get the project underway was completed early in 1978, CARD attempted to force a voter referendum; when this failed, the group threatened a lawsuit against LAVWMA. One resourceful activist even telephoned the New York brokerage authorized to sell the LAVWMA project bonds, in an attempt to discredit both the project and its sponsors.

All of these efforts, however, came to nought. The project would be built; the wastewater disposal bottleneck would finally disappear. By May 1978, Pleasanton was able to sign an agreement with VCSD, now renamed the Dublin-San Ramon Services District, whereby the flow of sewage from the Sunol Avenue plant would be transferred to the newly-expanded DSRSD plant. Meanwhile, Livermore still awaited final approval of its own 1.25 mgd plant expansion.

Environmentalists were hopeful that sufficient safeguards had been built into the LAVWMA agreements that the control of growth would be guaranteed for at least twenty years. There were, however, three factors that they did not perhaps fully appreciate. First, the actual capacity purchased by LAVWMA from the East Bay Dischargers Authority was considerably more than the 16.62 mgd that was publicly discussed; an extra 20% was provided as "overflow" capacity. Second, the capacity of the pipeline could be increased through such engineering modifications as larger pumps, holding ponds and expansion of certain sections of the pipeline. Finally, just what would constitute violation



of the grant agreements, and what the consequent penalties might be was unclear. If the pipeline capacity were exhausted in advance of the twenty-year time horizon, at worst it might mean that no more Clean Water Grant money would be available to LAVWMA. At some future date under an entirely different set of political and economic circumstances, however, that particular threat might be all but meaningless.

### Growth Management

With the LAVWMA pipeline project finally underway, there remained but one more significant step to complete the new growth management system. Both cities completed their general plan revisions in 1976. Livermore's plan called for a growth rate of "not more than two percent." Pleasanton, by contrast, reasoned that annual growth increments should be fairly constant rather than increasing over time. Consequently, that city devised a system of population "benchmarks:" for 1986, the target population was 43,300; for 1996, it was 48,700. Although the annual rate of growth over the entire twenty-year period would be two percent, there actually would be a higher growth rate during the 1976-86 period than between 1986 and 1996.

In order to meet these goals, each city needed a legal mechanism whereby a limited number of residential building permits could be allocated on a basis that was systematic and fair. By March 1978, Pleasanton had devised such a

system; in October of that same year, Livermore followed suit.

#### The Residential Allocation Program

Pleasanton moved quickly to develop and adopt a growth management ordinance. Faced with an immense backlog of unbuilt residential units under the terms of the 1972 Settlement Agreement, city councilmembers were eager to allow construction to begin once again. By July 1977, the city legal and planning staff, with assistance from a citizens' committee, had drafted what became known as the Residential Allocation Program (RAP), along with a new growth management element of the general plan. Both were adopted by the city council on March 13, 1978.

According to the growth management element, the following goals were to "serve as ideals toward which Pleasanton shall strive as it grows:"

Goal 1: To achieve and maintain a balance among land uses as the city develops.

Goal 2: To develop in an efficient, logical, and orderly fashion.

Goal 3: To attain and maintain a high standard of environmental quality in all development.

There were two principal avenues toward achieving this balanced growth. First, it would be city policy to "encourage commercial and industrial development which strengthens the local tax base and provides the shopping and employment facilities necessary for Pleasanton residents." Second, the city would "regulate residential growth yearly to provide a constant growth rate roughly equivalent to the

'E-zero' growth rate, roughly two percent per year." In order to carry out the latter policy, the city intended "To develop a residential allocation program which will regulate the yearly number of residential units, their location, and their timing." As part of this growth policy, the city intended to provide 25% multiple units (Policy 22), and "To make 13 percent of all future housing units available to lower-income households" (Policy 23).

The objectives of the RAP ordinance were first, to regulate the pace of growth in keeping with the limits of available infrastructure; and second, to facilitate development that reflected community priorities in terms of environmental impacts, housing type and design. According to RAP, each summer the city planning staff would present a report to the city council regarding the current housing situation, including projected housing needs. After a public hearing, the council would then select the number of units that would be permitted for the following year.

At the heart of RAP was a point system derived in part from Petaluma's pathbreaking growth management system. Competing projects would be awarded points for design, environmental features, availability of capital improvements, and "lower-income housing factors." If the number of building permits requested by developers was greater than the number available, the city council ultimately would decide which projects would be approved. This decision, however, was strongly influenced by the point allocations

determined by the planning staff.

Although the essential idea behind RAP was simple, the legislation was quite complex, and destined to become more so. From the beginning, there were exemptions from the point competition. First, the ordinance did not apply to commercial or industrial developments. Second, all projects involving four or fewer units were exempted. Also excluded were houses on lots of 20 acres or more. Finally, ten percent of each year's allotted units would be reserved for subsidized, low-income housing.

Within the project competition, a maximum of just over 100 points was possible. Points were awarded for design, location, and environmental considerations such as energy conservation features. In keeping with Pleasanton's new policy of requiring new growth to pay for itself, developers were rewarded heavily for contributions toward capital improvements. Related to this, a controversial aspect of RAP was the awarding of points to developers for monetary contributions to the city's capital improvement fund. A project would be awarded 15 points for the maximum contribution of \$525 per dwelling unit. In order to encourage project variety, a maximum of 50 permits per year could be issued to a given developer. In some cases, larger projects could be phased-in over two to three years.

The system was complicated by the lingering effects of the 1971 sewer crisis. For a number of years to come, all of the competition for building permits within the DSRSD service area would be restricted to those builders listed

on the priority schedule issued as part of the 1972 Settlement Agreement. All projects within a given rank level within the agreement would be allowed to build before those from a lower rank level would be considered.

#### The Residential Development Policy

Livermore's Residential Development Policy was formulated largely by the city planning commission, in conjunction with Planning Director Howard Nies. The system was modelled in part after Pleasanton's ordinance, but was also influenced by Ramapo's Capital Improvement Program and the City of Davis' Housing Development Priority Program. The RDP was largely complete by the time it was presented to the city council in July 1978. After some minor changes, the ordinance was passed on October 16.

The RDP was similar to the RAP, inasmuch as it was a competitive system based upon point allocations for desirable project features, and was aimed at maintaining a two per cent annual growth rate. In some respects, however, it differed. First, there were fewer exemptions. Aside from commercial-industrial projects, the only exempt proposals during the first year were small, in-fill projects of four or fewer units, with a maximum of 25 units available on a first-come, first-served basis. Second, although points were awarded for provision of public services, there was no provision for direct monetary contributions to the city. However, incentive points were offered for inclusion of low-to-moderate income housing; 2 points (out of a

possible 100) would be awarded for each 1% of a project that fit into these categories.

Overall, then, in both cities the ordinances were attempts to employ a rational, public process to achieve controlled growth in accordance with environmental, fiscal, and social goals. With the adoption of these programs, the new era of managed growth was apparently underway.

#### The Path to Controlled Growth: A Summary and Assessment

Between 1971 and 1978, the means by which growth in the Livermore-Amador Valley was limited evolved from an unplanned series of infrastructural crises to a codified system for controlling development. This achievement was commendable, if only for the coordination that was required between the local, state and federal levels of government.

Undoubtedly, the initial impulse for growth control came from the grassroots level, as Livermore activists sought ways to extend the local police powers regulating residential development. Even in the absence of state and federal support, in fact, it is likely that growth controls would have been implemented in Livermore. In Pleasanton, on the other hand, such sentiment was far weaker. Although the electorate passed the SAVE initiative, the city council was more concerned about making good its sewer capacity commitments to a spate of angry homebuilders than about devising a long-term growth management system. Ultimately, it was the cease-and-desist orders from the Regional Water

Quality Control Board that maintained the lid upon new construction in Pleasanton.

Although SAVE was a local issue, in both cities the impetus to controlled growth was furthered considerably by state and federal actions. The high-occupancy vehicle lane experiment on Interstate 580 ultimately did little to enhance the credibility of growth restrictions (if anything, it undermined growth-control efforts politically). At the time of its implementation, however, the "diamond lanes" arrangement was indicative of changes within the government policymaking process whereby environmental protection had achieved at least as high a priority as expansion of the highway system.

More decisive in terms of long-term growth policy was the commitment of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the State Water Resources Control Board, the California Air Resources Board, and the Environmental Protection Agency to establishment of a water quality management system for the valley that would also mitigate the air pollution problem. As this chapter has shown, limitation of the LAVWMA pipeline capacity to accommodate only 2% annual population growth was not primarily a response to lobbying by valley activists, but was fully in accordance with the environmental (and fiscal) priorities guiding state and federal grant policies.

Local pressures, however, did influence the manner and extent to which state and federal policy guidelines were carried out. The principal basis for the construction grant

condition requiring local "mitigating measures" was the findings of the 1975 LAVWMA project Environmental Impact Statement. Although an EIS was required under the terms of the 1970 National Environmental Policy Act, one analysis of EPA grant policy points out that as of December 1974, an EIS had been written for less than 2% of Clean Water Grant projects (Moss 1977: 84). Overall, such documents apparently were prepared on a "squeaky wheel" basis. According to one former state official involved in expediting the project, the LAVWMA project EIS would not likely have been as thorough, particularly with regard to air pollution and related mitigating measures, were it not for local officials and activists who "bird dogged" the process through.

Finally, it should be added that the very creation of the LAVWMA joint powers agreement was a growth-controlling measure, inasmuch as it inhibited Zone 7 from extending sewage treatment service into rural areas. Moreover, the provision within the LAVWMA charter requiring voter approval for capital facilities not only made possible the defeat of the initial, larger pipeline proposal, but made the importance of the wastewater conveyance issue to local growth management efforts far more visible to the public.



## Chapter XIV

### Countercurrents

By 1978, it appeared that the valley was poised for a lengthy era of controlled growth. New general plans in both Livermore and Pleasanton called for slower development than had characterized the sixties. To implement these plans, each city had devised a complex residential growth management ordinance. These programs limited increases in residential units to 2% per year, while allowing commercial-industrial development to flourish. The ultimate basis for restricted growth would be the limited capacity of the LAVWMA pipeline. Rejection by voters of the November 1976 bond issue suggested that any future proposal for an "oversized" project might be greeted with hostility. Finally, as if to underscore the political commitment to controlled growth, the same 1976 election in which the LAVWMA bond issue was turned down saw Livermore environmentalist Valerie Raymond narrowly defeat sixteen-year incumbent First District Supervisor John D. Murphy.

This apparent mandate for "managed" growth, however, was in fact extremely fragile. The Bay Area continued to expand economically and demographically, and the traditional boosters in the valley remained active and powerful. With considerable open land still available for

construction so close to the burgeoning East Bay, a slow-growth future was by no means accepted as a fait accompli by members of the business and land development communities.

The latent weakness of the control-growth political forces soon became evident. First, there was a well-financed effort to establish a "new town" development in the Las Positas Valley north of Livermore. Although the proposal ultimately was defeated, the political influence and financial prowess of its sponsors were amply demonstrated. Second, moneyed interests from both inside and outside the valley began to translate economic power into political muscle at an ever-intensifying level. Such activity included an advertiser boycott of the liberal newspaper, The Independent, and well-heeled campaigns to defeat environmentalist political candidates. Third, serious internal divisions emerged within the ranks of local residentialists. Finally, the political vigor of environmentalism was sapped by non-local influences. These included the onset of double-digit inflation in housing during the mid-seventies and a business-inspired anti-regulatory political movement nationally, spurred by the energy crisis of 1973-74 and the recession of 1974-75.

#### The Las Positas New Town

At the same time that Livermore and Pleasanton were revising their general plans, a new proposal was hatched by Danville developer Harlan Geldermann that simultaneously would promote valley growth and punish Livermore growth

control advocates. In September 1973, Geldermann announced plans to construct a "new town" in the Las Positas Valley, north of Interstate 580 (see Figures 30 and 32). Promising a balanced mix of jobs and housing, its developed area ultimately would include the following:

Residential (15,000 units)	--	2,200 acres
Commercial	--	90
Industrial	--	290
Public Facilities	--	228
Recreation, Parks, Greenbelts	--	760
Circulation	--	145
<hr/>		
TOTAL		4,213 acres

The project was designed by Wilsey & Ham, the firm which previously had built Foster City, a "new town" constructed during the sixties at a bayside location on the San Francisco peninsula.

The idea of a new town on the northern edge of the valley had a certain appeal. Ever since Ebenezer Howard composed his famous Garden Cities for Tomorrow (1898), the concept of self-sufficient, fully-planned "satellite communities" at the urban fringe has been popular within the city planning fraternity. In the U.S., Lewis Mumford (1938) and Clarence Stein (1951) vigorously supported the establishment of "greenbelt" cities.

Although numerous new communities have been built under government auspices in England and in some Scandanavian countries, the only public effort to create new towns in the United States was the short-lived New Deal experiment which resulted in the partial construction of Greenbelt,

Maryland, Greenhills, Ohio, and Greendale, Wisconsin. The Suburban Resettlement Division new communities experiment was terminated in 1938; between 1948 and 1954, the federal government liquidated its interest in the fledgling communities. Whatever the faults of these projects (such as their high cost), the principal reason for their abandonment was strong political resistance by private construction and real estate interests to direct government participation in housing construction (Scott 1969: 341-42).

Produced for private profit, the "new towns" built since World War II have not truly been self-sufficient communities, but essentially "super suburbs" (Downie 1974). In nearly all cases, market forces have caused initial plans for balanced, integrated communities to go awry. Indeed, it should be recalled that when first proposed in 1960, Volk-McLain's San Ramon Village was touted as a "master planned" community.

The attractiveness to large builders of new town proposals was increased when Congress passed the New Communities Act of 1968 and the New Communities Development Act of 1970. Under this legislation (included as sections of the Housing and Urban Development Act), the government attempted to lower the risks of new town development projects by pledging to guarantee the financing and in some cases providing direct loans and grants to builders. All applications for such funds had to be approved by the regional Council of Governments acting as a "clearinghouse"

for federal money under the terms of the 1969 Office of Management and Budget Circular A-95. On the basis of these programs, it was hoped that up to 110 new communities might be constructed by the private sector before the year 2000.

#### Spheres of Influence: Livermore vs. LAFCO

The Las Positas Valley had been claimed by Livermore as part of its planning area since adoption of the city's first general plan in 1959. By the early seventies, some of the ranchers holding property in the area (including original Zone 7 Boardmember Thornton Taylor) were eager to sell to developers. However, in 1973 Livermore began revising its general plan to emphasize "city-centered" growth, encouraging in-filling rather than outward expansion. According to the timetable for development now contemplated by the city, the Las Positas Valley would not be developed until the 1990s. After informal discussions with municipal officials, Geldermann concluded that it would be futile to expect to develop his new town under the auspices of the City of Livermore.

The alternative for Geldermann was to pursue his project under county, rather than city control. To accomplish this, he had to convince the Alameda County Local Agency Formation Commission to sever the Las Positas area from any proposed "sphere of influence" established for Livermore. The means by which this was accomplished has been reviewed by John Eells (1977); the present discussion is drawn in part from his work.

During the summer of 1973, such a "sphere of influence" was being considered by the LAFCO staff, in accordance with guidelines laid out in a document published by the agency during the previous March (Alameda County LAFCO 1973). Issued on July 31, 1973, the staff recommendation for Livermore's sphere included roughly half of the proposed Las Positas area. Such an arrangement would not be conducive to the construction of the new town.

Although LAFCO ostensibly is a non-partisan body, Geldermann was well-connected within its membership. All five commissioners disapproved of Livermore's growth-control policies. In a highly irregular move, Commissioner (and then still First District Supervisor) John D. Murphy brought Geldermann to attend a workshop held by LAFCO on August 2, 1973. Subsequently, copies of a proposal for a separate Las Positas sphere of influence were distributed to all LAFCO members (Wilsey & Ham 1973).

The principal argument in support of the proposal was the claim that Livermore's current policies contradicted LAFCO's requirement that an agency claiming an area as part of its sphere of influence must demonstrate "ability and willingness to provide services," and demonstrate evidence of "capability beyond its own internal needs to provide services" (Alameda County LAFCO 1973: 193). In the Wilsey & Ham proposal, it was claimed that "The City of Livermore has a 'no-growth' policy" (5), and "is unable to provide the services a new community will need to prosper" (7). Moreover, the 1972 SAVE measure was referred to as a "no-

growth initiative" (42), and Livermore was accused of having an "anti-growth bias" (51).

At the first public hearing held on September 6, representatives for Geldermann were allotted forty-five minutes to make a formal presentation, while Livermore officials were granted just fifteen. During the discussion period, some commissioners expressed concern that Livermore was now "unwilling" to develop the area north of I-580. After a second LAFCO hearing on October 4, 1973, the commission moved to sever the Las Positas area from the proposed Livermore sphere of influence.

Final action on this move was halted, however, when the California Supreme Court ruled in a Ventura County case that provisions of CEQA were applicable to LAFCO proceedings [Bozung v. Local Agency Formation Commission of Ventura County, (1974) 13 Cal. 3d 263]. Consequently, it was now necessary to issue an Environmental Impact Report on all sphere of influence proposals. The draft EIR for the proposed Livermore sphere was completed in December 1974.

With the sphere of influence issue still under consideration, Geldermann petitioned the Alameda County Board of Supervisors in January 1974 to rezone the Las Positas area from agricultural/suburban residential to mixed residential, commercial, and industrial. On December 19, 1974, the board voted 3-2 to approve the rezoning, with Supervisor Murphy casting the deciding vote. Then, on February 27, 1975, the LAFCO Commissioners approved without

comment both the final EIR and the proposed Livermore sphere of influence itself. On May 20, Geldermann filed with LAFCO a Notice of Intention to create a County Service Area to serve his new town. "Las Positas" seemed well on its way to becoming a reality.

Livermore, however, was given a respite on two bases: first, there was an unusual show of resolve by the advisory regional agency ABAG; and second, a legal technicality voided the board of supervisors approval of the general plan amendment permitting Las Positas to proceed.

In response to indefatigable lobbying, mainly by Livermore Councilmember Helen Tirsell, the ABAG Regional Planning Committee agreed to review the Las Positas proposal. In January 1975, the RPC appointed a task force to issue a report on the new town. Submitted to the ABAG Executive Board on April 17, 1975, the Las Positas Review Report concluded that the new town was "premature." In essence, the report found that the proposal constituted an elaborate leapfrog development that would violate ABAG's commitment through its regional plan to "city-centered" growth.

Defying a threat by Alameda County Supervisor Fred Cooper to pull the county out of ABAG if that agency reported negatively on the new town, the executive board concurred with the task force that Las Positas was the "wrong project" in the "wrong place." The task force report was accepted by a vote of 23-2. Although no federal funding for "new communities" was available at the time anyway, the



ABAG vote effectively eliminated any possibility of government subsidies being issued to Geldermann.

Another ruling favorable to Livermore followed in June. In response to a lawsuit brought against the county by the City of Livermore, Superior Court Judge George W. Phillips ruled that the board of supervisors had violated the Alameda County charter by granting the Las Positas redesignation. Under the laws applicable at that time, only three general plan amendments per calendar year were permissible. Las Positas had been the fourth such amendment, and hence was illegal. The full significance of this ruling could not immediately be appreciated; by the time the board reconsidered the Las Positas matter in 1977, Murphy had been replaced by Valerie Raymond, a staunch opponent of the project.

Soon after the ABAG decision, the City of Livermore filed a "Complaint in Declaratory Relief and Petition for Writ of Mandate" against the Alameda County LAFCO, claiming that: (1) the EIR on the sphere of influence issue was inadequate; (2) insufficient weight had been given to the EIR process in the decision-making process; and (3) LAFCO was violating its own codified principles by encouraging non-municipal development of the Las Positas area by a single developer.

#### The Reconsideration

Even as Livermore pressed its case through the court system, there was a new move afoot by pro-growth interests

to punish that city for its heretical stance toward land development. During the spring of 1975, a number of letters were sent to LAFCO by landowners within the proposed Livermore sphere of influence, but outside of the city itself. These landowners petitioned the agency to cut Livermore's sphere yet further, this time to its existing city limits. Again, the claim was made that the city had neither the intention nor the ability to allow the area to develop. Consequently, a sympathetic LAFCO passed Resolution 75-19 on October 9, 1975, stating that the commission would "reconsider the sphere of influence it has set for the city of Livermore."

In the EIR for this reconsideration presented by the LAFCO staff in November, the proposal to cut Livermore's sphere of influence yet further was discussed in clearly negative terms. Staff objections notwithstanding, after two public hearings, the commissioners voted on February 3, 1976 to strip Livermore of all undeveloped lands outside of its present northern city limits.

In summarizing the episode, John Eels has written:

The actions taken by Alameda County LAFCO throughout the three year development of the Livermore sphere of influence appear to ignore the letter of the law as well as its spirit. LAFCO did not direct its efforts toward preventing urban sprawl or promoting the orderly formation of local governmental agencies. Instead, the Commission sought to give a Carte Blanche card to Mr. Geldermann to help insure (sic) the success of Las Positas (1977: 68).

Eels also cited Alameda County as an "example of an unsuccessful LAFCO sphere of influence program" (37).

"Alameda County LAFCO", he wrote, "clearly illustrates the dangers from misuse or abuse of LAFCO powers."

#### The Supervisors' Vote

The election of Valerie Raymond to the board of supervisors in 1976 proved a telling blow to Geldermann. Raymond became the leading critic of the new town proposal. On September 22, 1977, the Las Positas general plan amendment was turned down by a 3-2 vote. Joining Raymond and Oakland Supervisor John George in rejecting the project was Joseph Bort of Castro Valley.

Harlan Geldermann died in 1979, never having seen his grandiose plans come to fruition. Large projects, however, seldom die; they merely are tabled temporarily. In 1981, Las Positas was proposed again, this time under the tutelage of former Hayward Mayor Jack Smith.

#### Residentialism in Decline I: The Boycott of The Independent

The defeat of "Geldertown" was a major victory for Livermore's residentialists. However, by the time of the final vote by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, it was apparent that the years of struggle against pro-development interests in the valley were taking their toll upon control-growth advocates. Within a land-use system founded upon private property rights, resistance by moneyed interests to growth-restrictive public planning measures was vigorous and unrelenting. Indeed, members of the business

community were anxious to stem what they considered an unreasonable trend toward government abridgement of free enterprise. One manifestation of this ongoing effort to reestablish the supremacy of pro-growth ideology in the valley was an advertiser boycott of The Independent, organized just prior to the 1972 SAVE election.

Typically, small-city newspapers have shared the boosterism of the chamber of commerce. Since it commenced publication in September 1963, however, The Independent has been something of a journalistic enigma. Although the paper depends upon advertising revenue for its income, Joan Kinney and her editors have consistently supported political positions regarding growth that contradict those of the local business community. Whether a manifestation of journalistic courage or, as claimed by some detractors, the result of a "death wish," the unyielding adherence of the paper to its environmentalist principles proved costly.

Despite its politics, The Independent was for nearly a decade a highly successful venture. As of mid-1971, the paper held the largest local share of advertising lineage from grocery and drug stores, the most important accounts in the suburban market. Many businesspeople disapproved of the editorial positions taken by The Independent. However, they continued to buy advertising space because of its strong market position.

In 1971, however, things began to unravel for The Independent. At this time, a spate of new retail businesses opened in the valley (particularly in Dublin), including,

for example, a large Payless drug store. Hayward newspaper magnate Floyd Sparks, who had purchased the Herald and News in 1965, was able to use his enormous wealth and personal influence to procure most of these new accounts for his paper. Then, in September 1971, the Walnut Creek-based Dean Leshner newspaper organization acquired The Pleasanton Times. This touched off a "newspaper war" between the two journalistic potentates, in which each was willing to lose enormous sums of money in order to drive the other out of the valley. Both papers offered attractive "package" rates to advertisers, through which an ad would appear simultaneously in several papers owned by the same chain. Faced with these organizations' "deep pockets," The Independent had difficulty competing.

The onset of the heated growth politics of late 1971 inspired what residentialists considered the newspaper's finest hour. It also brought new problems. Numerous participants in the SAVE campaign declared in retrospect that the measure might have been defeated had it not been for editorial support from The Independent. Coverage of the SAVE issue by the paper earned it, in fact, a nomination for a 1972 Pulitzer Prize. The emotions generated by SAVE, however, led some Livermore businessmen to organize an advertiser boycott in February 1972. Revenues plummeted rapidly over a three-month period, and continued to decline slowly over the remainder of the decade. Although some large advertisers refused at first to participate in the

boycott, the paper's deteriorating market position led them eventually to withdraw their support.

The attrition process was ameliorated by financial assistance from an unexpected source. Joan Kinney's family owns a major share of Intermatic Incorporated, the manufacturer of timing devices located in Spring Grove, Illinois. After foundering financially for years, the company began earning sufficient profits during the early seventies to pay stock dividends. Kinney was able to use this money to keep her beleaguered newspaper afloat. Moreover, some community backers of The Independent provided additional monetary support. Ultimately, however, Kinney was forced to cut staff and curtail her publication schedule. After being issued three times per week for many years, the paper was down to a single weekly edition by late 1980.

#### Residentialism in Decline II: Political Setbacks

In terms of its unity as a movement, the "community party" reached its zenith during the 1972 political campaign. Not only was the SAVE initiative passed, but the election of Archer Futch to the Livermore City Council produced a control-growth majority that continued until 1978. Although the residentialists were politically successful during these six years, both in controlling growth and in defeating the new town proposal, the Lawrence Laboratory-based group ultimately suffered the slings and

arrows that come with incumbency.

The post-SAVE period in Livermore was characterized by all-out political warfare. As evidenced by the maneuvering by LAFCO to facilitate construction of the Las Positas project, the residentialist Livermore City Councils were viewed with contempt by many Alameda County politicians. Furthermore, between 1974 and 1978, tensions within Livermore itself ran high. The rhetoric employed by local newspapers on both sides of the growth issue became increasingly strident. This, in turn, contributed to further polarization within the community. Even as The Independent suffered through an advertiser boycott, it defiantly refused to back down from its environmentalist positions. Meanwhile, the Herald engaged in verbal assaults against Donald Miller and other residentialist councilmembers. Contributing to the tension was a tendency for supposed allies within the "community party" to quarrel among themselves.

#### Internal Tensions

In any political movement, personal and ideological differences can cause divisiveness; to this the "community party" was no exception. Donald Miller was Jewish; his political supporters had always been somewhat distinct from those of the "Presbyterian group." Michael Uthe reportedly had not wanted Miller to serve on the SAVE committee, and during the subsequent 1972 election campaign there was antipathy between supporters of Miller and Futch. Taylor

never endorsed the SAVE measure; Futch did so somewhat reluctantly, and only after the campaign was well underway. Such disagreements however, were suppressed during the euphoric post-election period.

A more significant manifestation of conflict emerged after the 1974 election, when Planning Commissioner Helen Tirsell became Livermore's first woman councilmember. Married to a LLL physicist, Tirsell had served as Futch's campaign manager in 1972, before acting as steering committee chair for the Citizens Committee on General Plan Goals. As the 1974-76 council took shape, there was already tension between Tirsell and Futch on the one hand, and Miller on the other.

Although Miller must be considered the single most influential figure in modern valley political history, he consistently incited controversy regarding both his stands on growth-related issues and his personal style. Whereas most residentialists advocated slow, controlled growth for the valley, Miller argued unflinchingly that no further population growth should be permitted. Citing the health dangers from air pollution, he would consent at most to the strict 0.4% E-0 growth rate applicable to Alameda County as a whole; he felt the "disaggregated" 2% E-0 rate was indefensible.

Miller did not believe in compromise. He began to classify people either as "white hats" or "black hats;" there was no in-between. His ability to argue and persuade became legendary; through the sheer power of his intellect,



he consistently was able to prevail in council meetings. Those toward whom his arguments were directed, however, frequently emerged from the exchange angry and bitter.

Although agreeing with most of Miller's substantive positions, Tirsell and Futch felt that he was too unyielding, too abrasive, and too extreme in his advocacy of zero growth. They believed that after assuming the mayoral podium in 1973, Miller had contributed unduly to the polarization of the community. In their view, he had been invaluable on the council as a minority critic, but as mayor, his efforts all too often were counterproductive.

It was customary for a mayor in Livermore to serve for two one-year terms. After the March 1974 election, however, Tirsell and Futch decided it would be better for the city if Miller did not serve a second year as mayor. At the first meeting of the new council, mortician and political moderate Robert Pritchard was named to the post. Although publicly it was made to appear as an "harmonious transition," Miller was in fact understandably bitter over the maneuver.

Miller's defenders believed that Futch and Tirsell were too quick to compromise, too willing to "give everything away" to pro-growth interests. Revealing an increasingly belligerent stance toward all who did not share its viewpoint, The Independent did not allow the mayoral "coup" to pass without comment. A front-page editorial branded the displacement of Miller as symptomatic of a "Futch-Tirsell Image Cult." It went on to call the move "a sell-out to

those who believe that Livermore must go humbly and apologize before development-oriented governmental authorities for passing the SAVE initiative and rejecting political hacks such as Supervisor John Murphy" (The Independent, March 14, 1974).

One manifestation of the differences within the residentialist camp arose when it became necessary in 1974 to extend water and sewer lines to the site of a new Livermore branch campus of Hayward's Chabot Junior College, to be located along Collier Canyon Road north of I-580 (Figure 30). Tirsell and Futch believed that oversizing the lines somewhat would demonstrate to Alameda County officials that Livermore did intend to provide services to its northern frontier, and consequently could be counted upon eventually to develop the Las Positas Valley. Miller, however, opposed providing pipe any larger than would accommodate the college itself. To construct any additional infrastructural capacity, he claimed, would be growth-inducing. Miller lost this particular battle, but not without a spirited fight.

This schism within the "community party" should not be exaggerated; on most issues, including the new town proposal, Miller, Futch, Tirsell and others worked together toward the common goal of controlling valley growth. The bitterness, however, lingered. In 1978, then-Mayor Tirsell was defeated for reelection by a mere twenty-three votes. Believing her personal style to be "too arrogant," Miller had failed to support her. Miller claimed he could easily

have garnered those votes for Tirsell. Like many citizens, however, he believed that her reelection was assured. Claiming he did not want her to win by too great a margin, Miller chose to sit out the election.

#### External Pressures

Vilification of Livermore politicians by pro-development interests began long before the SAVE election. During the fifties and sixties, the homebuilding industry had fought vigorously against efforts by the city to institute fees and reform zoning laws. During the SAVE campaign itself, the Associated Home Builders spent thousands of dollars in an unsuccessful effort to defeat the initiative. Afterward, the organization fought the measure all the way through the California court system. Moreover, the eagerness of pro-growth politicians to line up against Livermore was demonstrated by the willingness of LAFCO to curtail the city's sphere of influence.

The enmity of developers toward Donald Miller in particular was in some cases personal as well as philosophical. On more than one occasion, Miller reportedly embarrassed homebuilders in public by quickly calculating the potential costs to taxpayers of apparently beneficial subdivision proposals (William Fraley, personal interview).

Demonstrating the lengths to which progrowth politicians would go to neutralize residentialist opposition, during the Las Positas struggle Supervisor Murphy attempted to thwart growth-control advocates by applying pressure to

their employer. In January 1975, Murphy wrote a letter to LLL Director Roger Batzel, complaining about the apparent ease with which lab employees took time off during the day to attend meetings, at which they would voice opposition to projects not related to laboratory affairs (The Independent, February 2, 1975). Lab officials replied that since the employees were using vacation time, they were breaking no rules; hence, there were no grounds for discipline or official comment of any kind.

During the mid-seventies, new efforts to mobilize the valley electorate against "no-growthers" emerged. At the behest of Herald publisher Floyd Sparks, the Valley First Committee was formed in 1976. The purpose of the committee was to promote pro-growth political causes, mainly through direct financial support. The core membership of VFC was composed of, in one sympathizer's words, "little old ladies in tennis shoes with a knack for finding money" (Valley Times, June 6, 1982: 3). Some of these "little old ladies," however, were prominent current or former landholders in the valley, including an heiress to the Orloff farm properties, Dagmar Fulton. Other major contributors included developers and real estate firms, as well as Sparks himself.

### The 1976 Zone 7 Board Election

The most notable effort by the Valley First Committee was a concerted campaign to defeat Donald Miller in the Zone 7 Board of Directors election in June 1976. Since Zone 7 is a special district agency, its board elections seem unimportant to many residents. The role of "the Zone" within the growth struggle, however, has in fact been pivotal. Not only is Zone 7 empowered to provide water anywhere within its sizable service area, but since 1965 it also has been granted the authority to treat wastewater.

During the battle over the Las Positas project, it became apparent that an agreement by Zone 7 to provide water and sewage treatment facilities would comprise a giant step forward for the new town proposal. "Geldertown" proponents argued that since Zone 7 was not a land planning agency, its role was to provide services where they are requested, not to determine whether or not a project should be built. Control-growth advocates, however, cited the California Environmental Quality Act as justification for withholding sewage service from non-municipal areas within Zone 7. According to CEQA:

It is the intent of the Legislature that all agencies of the State government which regulate activities of private individuals, corporations, and public agencies which are found to affect the quality of the environment shall regulate such activity so that major consideration is given to preventing environmental damage. (Calif. Res. Code, Div. 13, Ch. 1, Sec. 2100)

Las Positas had been intentionally excluded from the LAVWMA service area. There was, subsequently, controversy over potential groundwater contamination if the new town were permitted to treat wastewater through use of a self-contained, "package" sewer plant. In any event, if for no other reason than the continuing air pollution problem, environmentalists felt that allowing construction of "Geldertown" would violate CEQA.

The broader legal issue regarding under what circumstances a public utility is obliged to provide services to new residential areas remains unclear (Cranston et al., 1973: 61-64). As of early 1976, however, there were sufficient control-growth votes on the board to block serious consideration of such an expansion of services by Zone 7. In part, this was a lingering consequence of the 1974 voter backlash against the raising of water rates to repay the Project 2 revenue bonds. Only if three pro-growth candidates were elected in June 1976 could Zone 7 begin to pursue policies that would facilitate non-municipal growth in the valley.

Since Zone 7 elections are held concurrently with the June party primaries, voter turnout is disproportionately high relative to people's understanding of the issues. Consequently, through their endorsements, the local newspapers can exert a significant influence upon the electoral outcome. In 1976, the Herald campaigned vigorously for former Livermore Mayor (1968-70) Gib Marguth, former Pleasanton Mayor (1975-76) Ed Kinney, and VCSB Boardmember

Tom Schweser. Standing in the way of this clean sweep, however, were Archer Futch and Donald Miller, both of whom had decided to run for the Zone 7 board, rather than seek reelection to the Livermore City Council.

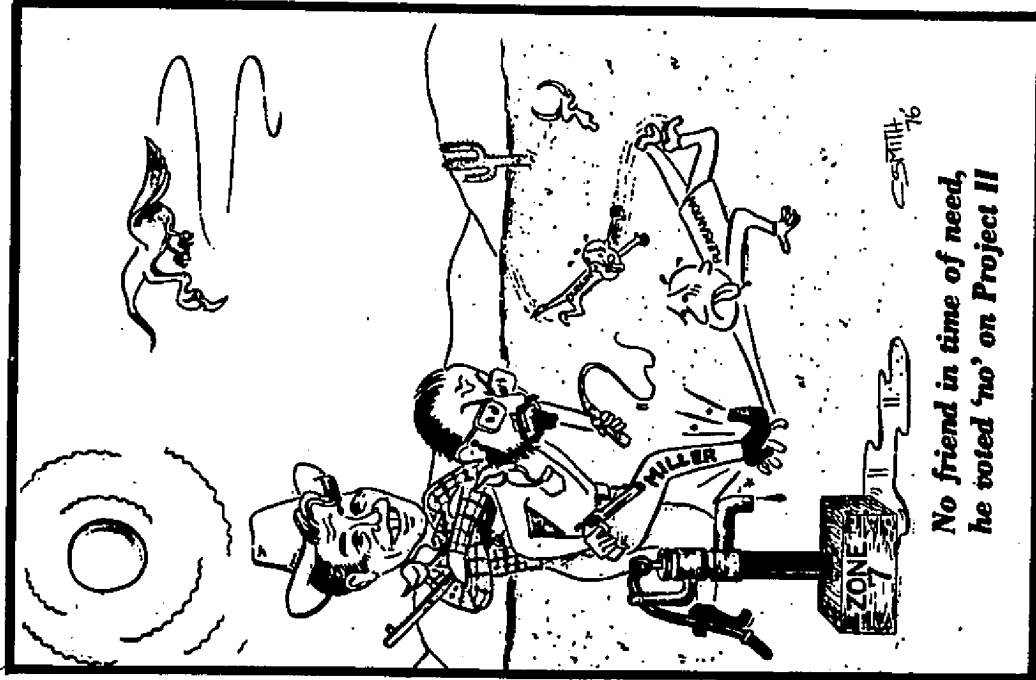
The battle lines were drawn; it was a brutal, mud-slinging campaign. Miller in particular was singled out for both verbal and pictorial abuse. In one editorial, for example, he was held responsible for the "necessity" of the Las Positas new town proposal:

He hates the idea of a city in Las Positas Valley, but he was the one who forced it into being...If Miller hadn't pushed and shoved and fought with every government agency in the valley and county, New Town might never have been anything more than a twinkle in someone's eye....He created the atmosphere that made the New Town concept possible.

(Tri-Valley Herald, June 6, 1976: 8)

In a bit of revisionist history, the Herald implied further that Miller singlehandedly had caused the electoral defeat of the first Project 2 bond issue in 1970. In an editorial cartoon (Figure 33), Miller was depicted as cruelly denying water to thirsty west valley residents. In truth, as discussed in Chapter XI, the proposal had been turned down in no small part because of opposition from Pleasanton business interests.

It is difficult to ascertain to what extent this journalistic overkill was responsible for the election results. Although a victory by Futch prevented the pro-development sweep, the Herald scored a minor triumph in that Miller was indeed defeated.



*Livermore pipeline politics*

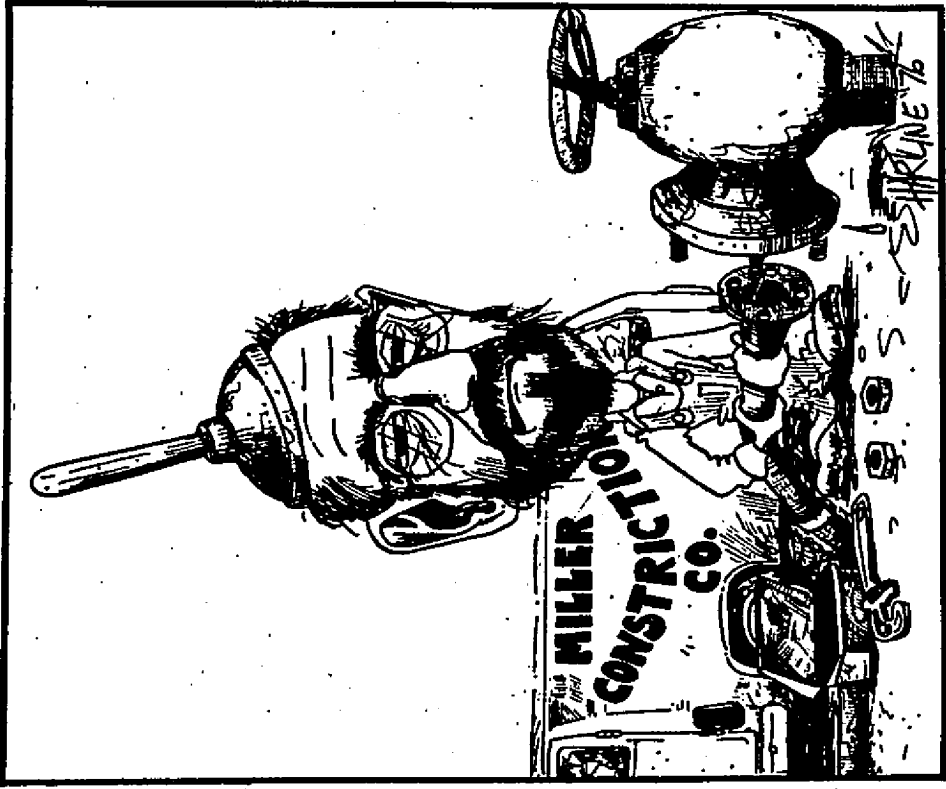


Figure 33. Anti-Don Miller Editorial Cartoons from The Herald, June 1976.



A second target for the progrowth forces was Supervisor Valerie Raymond. Married to LLL administrator William Raymond (an activist in his own right), the English-born former League of Women Voters president had served as co-manager for Don Miller's successful 1972 city council reelection campaign. Consequently, in the eyes of political opponents she was part of the "Don Miller machine." Early in her term, Raymond had angered ranchers by advocating that the minimum lot size for subdivided lands within the county zoned for agriculture be raised from 100 to 320 acres. In response, rancher and retired developer Donald Excell founded the Alameda County Property Owners Association as a vehicle for mobilizing the political interests of large rural landholders. ACPOA worked successfully to block the minimum-acreage increase. More importantly, it organized valley ranchers and developers toward a successful effort to defeat Raymond in the 1980 election.

#### Residentialism in Decline III: Inflation, Recession and Backlash

State and federal agencies had contributed significantly to the establishment of a growth management system in the valley. Partly because of the smog problem, the Air Resources Board, State Water Resources Control Board, and Environmental Protection Agency limited funding for the LAVWMA sewage conveyance facility to that which could construct a pipeline accommodating 2% annual population growth over a twenty-year period.

Just as environmental considerations figured prominently in government policymaking throughout the early-to-mid-seventies, however, new priorities eroded the environmental mandate toward the end of the decade. An energy crisis, recession, rampant housing inflation and a backlash by business against "overregulation" resulted in pressure for a more permissive attitude toward growth.

In some respects, the "Energy Crisis" that caused gasoline prices to double late in 1973 was an impetus to environmentalism. The need for energy conservation, however, was more than balanced by pressures to relax pollution controls and encourage exploration for new energy sources. When the most severe recession since World War II struck in 1974-75, there were further pressures upon government to pursue policies that would encourage business investment.

A major feature of the recession was a severe slump in housing starts during 1974-75. Even before this recession ended, however, home prices began to rise dramatically. Significantly, values rose particularly rapidly in the San Francisco Bay Area, where the growth-controls movement was strongest. As shown in Table 11, between 1970 and 1980 the average value of a home more than tripled; during 1977 alone, prices for existing homes in the San Francisco Bay Area increased by an average of 18% (Dowall 1984: 8). By 1982, the median price for a Bay Area home was \$120,000, nearly double the national average of \$68,000 (People for Open Space 1983: 13). Meanwhile, as indicated in Table 12,

family income rose far more slowly.

That home price hyperinflation coincided with the rise of environmentalism and the first wave of growth control ordinances in suburban communities was noted both by the building industry and by academic researchers studying the

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Table 11

Value of New and Existing One-Family Houses, 1969-1979

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	1969 House Values Median in Dollars	1979 House Values Median in Dollars
Livermore . . . . .	23,400	86,100
Pleasanton . . . . .	31,200	114,000
Dublin . . . . .	25,400	88,300
San Ramon . . . . .	30,800	123,400
California . . . . .	23,100	84,500
S.F.--Oak. SMSA . . . . .	26,900	99,000
United States . . . . .	23,100	62,600

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Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1972, 1982, 1985).

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Table 12

Family Income, 1969-1979  
Median in dollars

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	1969	1979
Livermore . . . . .	12,440	26,664
Pleasanton . . . . .	14,466	30,830
Dublin . . . . .	10,301	26,232
San Ramon . . . . .	14,408	32,796
S.F.--Oak. SMSA . . . . .	11,802	24,599
California . . . . .	10,828	21,537
United States . . . . .	9,867	19,917

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Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1973, 1983, 1985)

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housing situation. In 1979, Professor Bernard Frieden of M.I.T. launched a spirited attack against growth-control advocates in a book entitled The Environmental Protection Hustle. Frieden blamed environmentalists directly for the drastic rise in home prices. Because of local opposition to construction projects, he claimed, it was probable that in the San Francisco Bay Area between 1970 and 1977 "a full year's normal homebuilding" was "wiped out" (1979: 4). In analyzing this trend, Frieden declared that although "(r)esistance to growth began as a very reasonable shift,"

as it gathered power...it turned into general hostility toward homebuilding for the average family, using the rhetoric of environmental protection in order to look after the narrow interests of people who got to the suburbs first.

(1979: 5)

Frieden argued rightly that prospective homebuyers are disenfranchised, inasmuch as they are not represented within the local land-use decision-making process. Moreover, he cited examples of the self-interested nature of much environmentalist activism. Finally, there is truth to the assertion that administrative restriction of the housing supply has contributed to higher prices. According to more recent research completed by University of California professor David Dowall, land-use restrictions, higher subdivision standards, fees and delays may have added between 18 and 34 per cent to the price of new homes built in the Bay Area during the late seventies (1984: 134).

Frieden and Dowall's argument is supported by figures published in a 1982 issue of California Builder (Table 13).

Table 13  
 Housing Cost Trends, Major California Areas  
 Conventionally-financed average home price  
 (in dollars)

SCSA/SMSA	1981	1976	% change
Los Angeles-Orange Co.- Riverside . . . . .	116,000	60,400	+92%
San Francisco-Oakland- San Jose . . . . .	130,680	59,200	+121%
San Diego . . . . .	107,400	57,000	+88%

Source: California Builder (1982: 17)

These show that between 1976 and 1981, home prices rose faster in the Bay Area than in the Los Angeles and San Diego metropolitan areas, in which far fewer growth-restrictive measures were enforced.

Defenders of growth controls pointed out that despite building restrictions, home prices in Livermore during this period rose no more rapidly than those within the Bay Area as a whole. This, however, not only reflects the widespread existence of growth controls, but also the far stronger demand pressures within certain housing submarkets, particularly Marin County and the job-rich Santa Clara Valley. Moreover, price increases in Livermore were ameliorated somewhat by the availability of even cheaper housing in such outlying communities as Tracy.

Still, assessment of the effects of growth controls is complicated by numerous factors. Frieden himself provided

some of the best arguments against his own case, admitting in one passage:

Local growth controls are important contributors to the recent increase in house prices, but by no means the dominant cause. The basic cost-push comes from factors such as high interest rates, energy prices, and rising costs of building materials and labor.

(1979: 13)

Real estate inflation has been fed also by the entry en masse of baby-boom children into the housing market, an ongoing reduction in average household size, and the creation of over 500,000 new Bay Area jobs between 1975 and 1980. Moreover, Frieden himself noted that after 1975, real estate inflation was fueled by rampant speculation; by early 1977, an estimated 15-20 percent of home purchases in California metropolitan areas reportedly were speculative (p. 151). This led the Federal Home Loan Bank Board in San Francisco to warn lending institutions against issuing home mortgage loans to buyers who would not occupy the houses they purchased. Indicating the seriousness of the problem, one builder reportedly erected signs on sale properties that read: "Our homes are planned for owner-occupants, not for investor/speculators" (San Francisco Examiner, May 1, 1977: D-1).

There were other valid objections to Frieden's argument. First, whereas much of his anger was directed toward the allegedly antihousing policies of the Sierra Club, Frieden apparently made no effort to contact the club directly to clarify its views on urban development (Kunofsky 1979). Second, although writing in 1978 he could not have

forseen the downturn in homebuilding that began in 1980, the truth is that during more than half of the decade spanning 1974 and 1983, the construction industry was crippled not by growth restrictions, but by high interest rates and recession. Finally, in his own book Dowall admits that "(a) review of the literature on the beneficial effects of land use and environmental regulations reveals that benefits are many, and frequently significant" (1984:12). Neither Dowall nor Frieden, however, make any attempt to measure these benefits. Overall, Frieden's book must be viewed as more polemic than analysis.

#### Proposition Thirteen

Ironically, the great real estate bubble of the seventies culminated in a political uprising that in the short run, at least, became a source of support not for faster, but slower residential growth. Because of tax reform legislation passed by the California legislature in 1966 (A.B. 80), it was required that all properties be assessed uniformly at 25% of full market value (Kuttner 1980). Consequently, as real estate prices inflated, so did taxes.

In 1978, longtime Southern California tax reformer and real estate promoter Howard Jarvis and conservative lobbyist Paul Gann sponsored a statewide initiative measure that would roll back property assessments to their 1975-76 levels, and limit future taxation to 1% of a house's full

market value. "Proposition Thirteen" would also restrict future increases in assessed valuation to 2% per year, and would make it extremely difficult for state and local governments to raise taxes.

Although new tax assessments were not due to be released until after the June election, in some counties it became known that homeowners' assessments would be at least double what they had been but a few years earlier. This prospect, combined with a huge state budget surplus accumulating in Sacramento, convinced California voters to approve Proposition Thirteen by nearly a 2-1 margin.

Whereas the law provided a \$6 billion tax reduction windfall to property owners, it proved devastating to local governments dependent upon property tax revenues (particularly counties and special districts). There was, however, an unexpected side effect from the Jarvis-Gann initiative: the drastic reduction in tax revenues ended any debate over whether residential development could "pay for itself." Beyond a doubt, all but the most high-cost housing was now a financial liability. During the years following June 1978, numerous municipalities adopted growth control measures (California Office of Planning and Research 1980). Moreover, cities stampeded to follow the examples of Livermore and Pleasanton by raising "up front" fees to provide needed infrastructure. In the post-Proposition Thirteen world of California politics, then, it was normal, even expectable for a city to wish to control residential growth.



### The Crusade Against "Overregulation"

Although Proposition Thirteen did encourage local growth controls, it was also the harbinger of a more conservative mood in terms of public support for spending programs and government regulation of business. Indeed, Frieden's was not the only book in which environmentalists were pilloried as self-serving elitists (e.g. Tucker 1982). At the same time, both developers and some representatives of land-use "think tanks" complained that the construction approval process had become too complex, too bureaucratic, and too costly (Bosselman et al. 1976; Seidel 1978). Although such claims were hardly new (e.g. National Commission on Urban Problems 1968a; Association of Bay Area Governments 1970a), this round of construction industry lobbying became part of a broader campaign waged by business against "overregulation." In 1977, the American Enterprise Institute began publishing Regulation, a journal devoted entirely to discussion of the ostensibly pernicious effect upon society of government laws and programs.

This trend was abetted by the legacy of the energy crisis and subsequent recession. Business leaders were convinced that strict environmental legislation was inhibiting investment. One casualty of this anti-environmentalist backlash was the Clean Air Act, which was weakened considerably as a result of amendments passed in 1977 (Walker and Storper 1978). Another was a new

Environmental Management Plan prepared by the staff of the Association of Bay Area Governments, with funding from Section 208 of the 1972 Federal Water Pollution Control Act. After intensive lobbying by business organizations such as the California Council for Economic and Environmental Balance and the Bay Area Council, provisions for regionally-administered land-use regulations were dropped from the plan prior to its final adoption in 1979.

Meanwhile, a campaign against local restrictiveness toward housing construction was conducted at the state level. Because of concern that growth controls would exacerbate the housing squeeze already affecting moderate-income homeseekers, in 1977 the state mandatory general plan housing element guidelines were amended to require each municipality to be included within a regional "fair share allocation plan" covering "non-market share households." For the Bay Area, these housing goals would be established by ABAG. Local governments were not required to meet these goals, but to make a "good faith effort" to do so.

These guidelines were the first of a series of state laws aimed at alleviating the "housing problem." On September 26, 1980, Governor Brown signed a series of housing bills, all of which had been sponsored or supported by the California Building Industry Association. Most significant was A.B. 3252, which in effect countermanded the 1976 California State Supreme Court decision upholding the SAVE initiative. Although the law did not apply to already-enacted initiative measures such as SAVE, it required a city

controlling growth to demonstrate that it is providing adequately for the regional welfare. Previously, a plaintiff would have to prove in court that the city was not doing so.

Another bill in the CBIA housing package was A.B. 2853, which required all cities and counties to consider regional housing needs in all planning and zoning. There also was an Executive Order requiring all state agencies enacting regulations that might affect housing costs to revise their actions to offset such cost increases or else explain why this could not be done.

By the late seventies, the responsibility of government to promote profitable investment was displacing environmental protection as a national priority. Politically, the nation was drifting toward the right. Concerned over inflation and the apparent ineffectiveness of many government social programs, enough voters turned to pro-business candidates to ensure a significant political shift at both the state and federal levels. With the election of Ronald Reagan to the Presidency in 1980, and the ascendancy of conservative Republican George Deukmejian to the office of Governor of California in 1983, local environmentalists lost much of the institutional support they had enjoyed during the seventies. This was illustrated to some extent by the sudden termination in 1983 of the "diamond lanes" experiment on I-580.

Vilified by developers, criticized by academicians,

targetted by political opponents, and monitored by officials at all higher levels of government, residentialists were on the defensive as the seventies came to a close. It was within this embattled context that the growth management programs in Pleasanton and Livermore took effect in 1978-79.

## Chapter XV

Growth Management in Practice,  
1978-1985

It is difficult as yet to assess the long-term impact of locally-administered growth controls. Although more than a decade has passed since the SAVE campaign, the residential development program (RDP) in Livermore and the residential allocation program (RAP) in Pleasanton were approved only in 1978. Furthermore, valley history is not a controlled experiment; it will forever be uncertain how the area might have developed had growth controls never been invoked.

So far, however, growth management has brought mixed results. On the one hand, the screening of residential development proposals has allowed each city a modicum of control over the type and quality of housing that is built. Particularly in Livermore, more lower-cost housing has been provided than developers would have proposed otherwise. At the same time, increased fees (totalling up to \$6,000 per home) have eased the tax burden on existing residents, and no new infrastructural problems have occurred. On the other hand, ostensible limits upon the number of new residential units have proven more porous than growth-control activists had hoped. Moreover, as Chapter XVI will suggest, growth limits in the valley apparently have encouraged accelerated development elsewhere. Meanwhile, local growth pressures

have been exacerbated by an unexpectedly vigorous office-building boom, which has brought a new era of massive commercial-industrial development to the area. This, in turn, renders doubtful all existing commitments to residential growth limits. In light of fifteen years of political tumult regarding growth, however, any drastic policy changes will inevitably result in renewed local struggle. Far from bringing an end to growth-related strife, then, growth management may merely have altered its form somewhat.

#### The Conservative Context

By 1978, the state and federal commitments to environmentalism were waning. In response to business lobbying, policy emphasis now favored development (particularly of housing) and eschewed "overregulation." Not surprisingly, this change became manifest at the local level, as well.

Throughout the post-SAVE period, support for controlled growth had been far stronger in Livermore than in Pleasanton. Reflecting this, the Pleasanton City Council never embraced growth limits with enthusiasm, accepting them instead as a necessity imposed by outside forces. In Livermore, on the other hand, the growth management program was the product of six years of sustained effort by residentialist councilmembers and planning commissioners. It is ironic that its completion coincided with a crushing electoral defeat for the "community party."

### The 1978 Election

By 1978, the hostility of the Herald, internal disunity, and the very fact that the crises of the early seventies had faded from memory made the Livermore residentialists vulnerable to defeat. Meanwhile, real estate inflation caused citizens to worry that their children would be unable to live as adults in their own home town. Since 1974, there had been little new construction. The water moratorium, the general plan review, and then a lack of sewer capacity had all but halted new subdivision approvals in Livermore for over six years. Between 1974 and 1978, in fact, only 391 building permits were issued (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Construction Reports, various dates). The unbridled homebuilding of the years prior to 1972 was now but a fading memory.

Consequently, the 1978 municipal election produced a more development-oriented city council than any since the pre-SAVE period.\* Banker Dale Turner had previously been allied with Don Miller, but his political roots ultimately lay within the business community. Although an advocate of lower-income housing, attorney John Staley was markedly more

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 \* A ballot measure passed as part of the same 1978 election produced another significant change. Beginning in 1980, the city would elect its mayor, instead of rotating the post between city councilmembers. The separate mayoral election itself was less important than the package of powers that would now accompany the office. After Dale Turner became the first elected mayor in April 1980, he was granted sole authority to appoint city commissioners, including planning commissioners. Under Turner's control, the planning commission would no longer serve as a "conscience" for a progrowth city council.

pro-development than the candidate he narrowly defeated, Helen Tirsell. The decisive change, however, was the surprising victory of nuclear engineer-businessman, political maverick, and "free enterprise" advocate Marlin Ebert. Openly and consistently, Ebert opposed growth control. Turner, Staley and Ebert joined optometrist and former chamber of commerce president Marshall Kamena to form a pro-growth majority that endured until 1982.

### The Achievements of Growth Management

Even in the absence of strong city council support, growth management operated with some effectiveness during its initial half-decade. Residential development proceeded at what seemed a controlled pace. Annual population growth within each city remained below 2%. Between 1978 and 1985, Pleasanton grew from around 34,000 to 40,700, while the number of Livermore residents increased from 48,000 to just over 52,000. All approved residential projects were thoroughly reviewed, and the availability of infrastructure was assured in advance. By 1980, water supply, wastewater treatment and overcrowding in schools ceased to be major civic concerns.

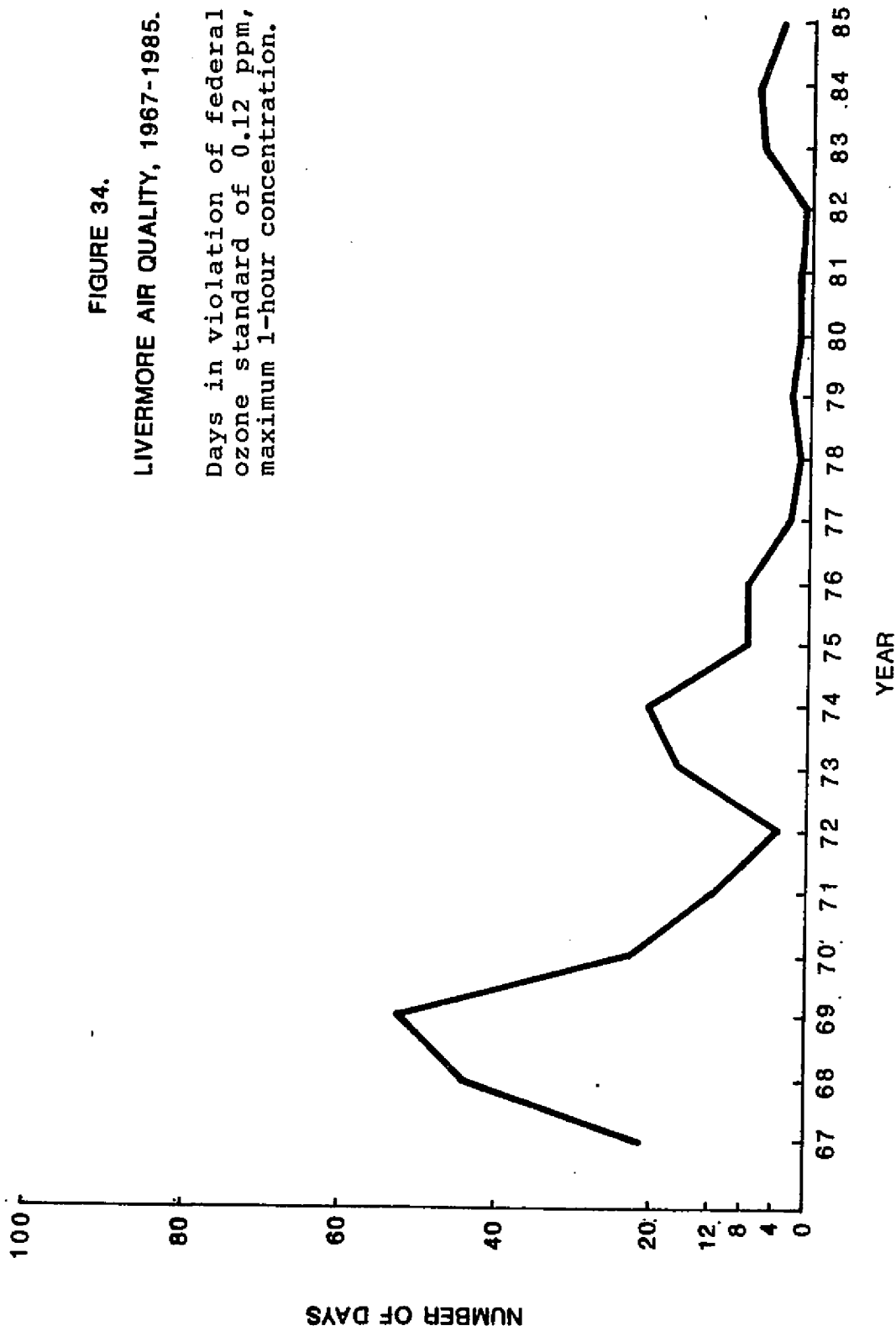
Meanwhile, air quality in the Livermore-Amador Valley improved dramatically (Figure 34). According to Bay Area Air Quality Management District spokesperson Teresa Galvin Lee (personal interview), Livermore between the early seventies and early eighties showed the "most remarkable improvement" of any Bay Area location.



FIGURE 34.

## LIVERMORE AIR QUALITY, 1967-1985.

Days in violation of federal ozone standard of 0.12 ppm, maximum 1-hour concentration.



The contribution of growth management to these successes was real, but should not be overrated. Inasmuch as in-fill was encouraged, rather than sprawl-type development, it is likely that growth management helped prevent further deterioration of air quality. In Livermore, moreover, the establishment in 1978 of the "Rideo" municipal bus system provided a mass-transit alternative to the private automobile. Amelioration of the smog problem, however, was mainly attributable to state-mandated auto emissions controls, along with successful efforts by the BAAQMD to control organic emissions from "point sources" such as factories.

The most significant limitations on growth stemmed in fact from the onset in 1980 of the second serious economic recession in less than a decade. Worsened by the anti-inflationary, tight-money policies of President Reagan and Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul Volker, this downturn was even more severe than the 1974-75 slump. The resulting depression in housing construction lasted well into 1983. Consequently, 1980-82 would have been a slow-growth period in any event. Not surprisingly, some projects approved under the RAP and RDP ordinances during this time were not built immediately. As late as May 1985, in fact, there still were over 600 outstanding building permits in Livermore alone.

## The Erosion of Growth Management

An overview of the evolution of growth management policies in each city reveals the extent to which such programs can be manipulated in response to city council priorities. In Livermore, the goal of providing a mix of housing types was used to justify circumvention of growth rate limitations. In Pleasanton, the system ultimately was completely revamped not only to obfuscate numerical limits, but to allow the council to assert more direct control over housing development.

### Livermore: RDP as Political Football

The Livermore City Council that approved the Residential Development Program (RDP) ordinance in October 1978 was unenthusiastic about the program. Most hostile to controlled growth was conservative Marlin Ebert. Claiming that his election demonstrated a pro-growth "mandate," Ebert led an unsuccessful move to oust the entire planning commission (mostly holdovers from previous residentialist councils) during May and June of 1978. In July, Councilman Turner further undermined the principal general plan goal when he declared: "I have a feeling that the 2% growth rate will have a tough time standing the test of time" (The Independent, July 19, 1978).

The council was reluctant to place the RDP into effect officially, and hence begin the project competition. The ostensible reason was that sewer capacity was still quite limited. Although the city for several years had

anticipated grant funding for an additional 1.25 million gallons per day capacity for the water reclamation plant, only 80,000 gallons per day currently were available for new residential connections. Until sewer capacity became available, the council majority advocated approving projects on a first come, first-served basis.

On May 22, 1979, however, the council bowed to public pressure and placed the RDP ordinance into effect. It soon became apparent that the program would prove inadequate for achieving certain goals, and consequently would be modified by the council. One continuing source of revisions was the commitment of the city to the construction of "affordable" housing. As specified in the Livermore General Plan, it was city policy to

Require that a minimum of 10 percent of the housing units in each proposed new residential development be low and moderate income housing or that an "in lieu" provision be made to the City for the implementation of the low and moderate income housing program.

(City of Livermore 1976: 108)

The provision of "non-market share" housing became increasingly important in light of the impact of the Mt. Laurel court case cited in Chapter XII. Precisely how such housing would be provided, however, was not specified.\*

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\* Nor was it clear what the terms "low and moderate income" really meant. Subsequently, as part of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines to be used in determining local "fair share" housing plans, the following categories were established: A "very low income" household earned less than 50% of the median income within the SMSA as a whole. A "low-income" household earned between 50 and 80%; "moderate"-income was from 80-120% of the median.

One possible approach was "mandatory set-asides," that is, simply requiring developers to provide 10% low-to-moderate income units. If these units were offered at below-market rates, however, the loss to the developer would be made up through higher prices on the remaining units. Moreover, the purchaser who was fortunate enough to buy a below-market unit might quickly resell the home for a windfall profit. To make such "inclusionary zoning" work would require screening of homeseeking applicants, plus a system of controls regarding resale practices.

Another option was to seek state and federal housing subsidies. To help local governments meet mandated demands for lower-cost housing, several programs were available. Under Section 8 of the 1974 Housing and Urban Development Act, federal money could be procured to assist low-income rental households. All rent in excess of 25% of family's income would be paid by the government directly to the landlord. That way, subsidized rental housing could be provided without the stigma of "public housing." Section 8 also provided for federally-assisted new housing. Finally, under a State of California program, money could be obtained to "bank" parcels of land to be used for future subsidized housing.

A problem with all such efforts, however, was that just as these subsidies were most needed to offset housing inflation, the increasingly parsimonious state and federal governments were stabilizing or even reducing their funding (Struyk, Meyer and Tuccillo 1983).

By late 1979, it became apparent that on those rare occasions when subsidy money for lower-income projects became available, the city council would have to act quickly to procure the funds; the cumbersome and lengthy RDP process was inadequate for this task. Consequently, in January 1980 the ordinance was amended to allow approval of up to 150 low-to-moderate income units annually without RDP review, up to a four-year limit of 350 units. Immediately following this change, one highly successful apartment project was approved. Built by Lexington Homes, the 135-unit Meadowbrook Apartments on North Murrietta Avenue (Figure 35) included 47 units in which tenants received Section 8 subsidies.

Whereas this RDP exemption might be construed as justified in the public interest, another change adopted in 1979 for 1980 arguably was not. This involved expansion of the exempt category for small in-fill projects. This first-come, first-served category had been established so that individuals or small builders constructing but a few housing units would not have to compete with large developers for RDP approval. Under the revised rules, the exemption was expanded from 25 to 50 total units; the maximum per builder was raised from four to ten. Soon after the permits became available in January 1980, it was revealed that Councilmembers Ebert and Staley each had requested and received ten permits. Whereas Ebert, at least, never profited notably from this maneuver, it was perceived as a

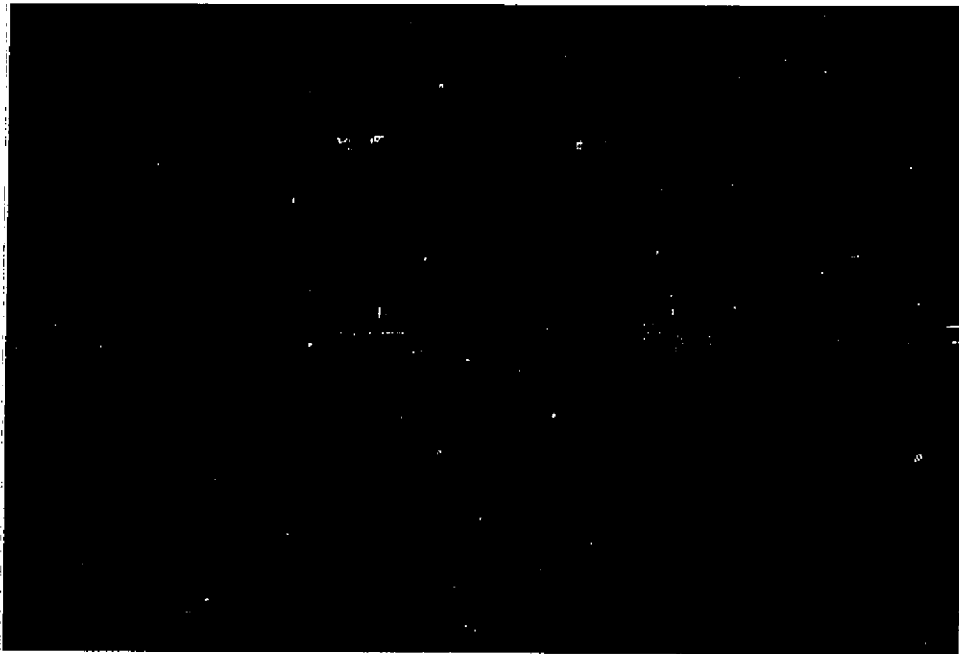
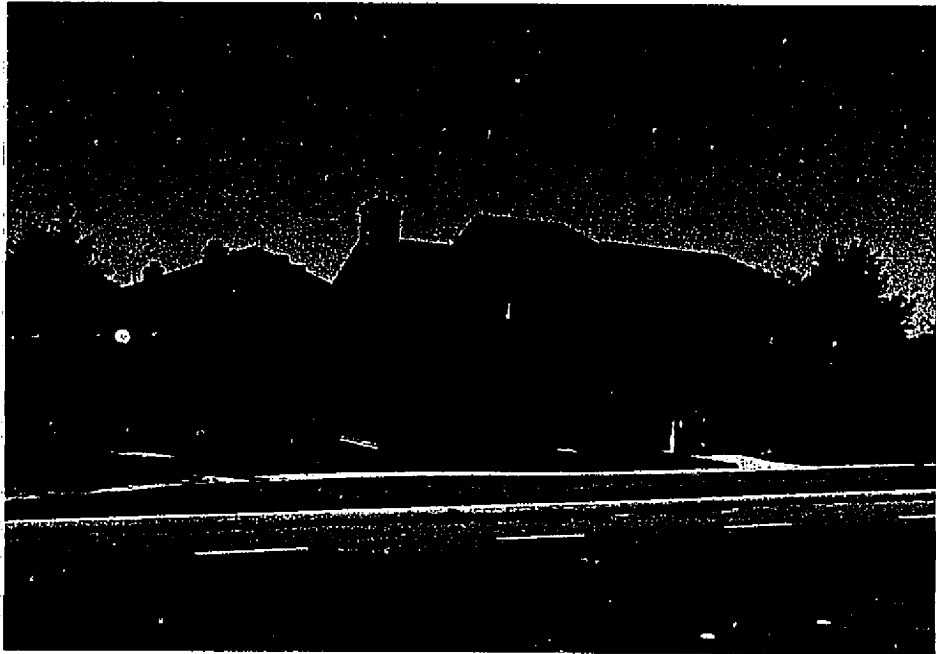


Figure 35. Two Livermore "affordable" housing projects.  
Above: The Meadowbrook Apartments are an example of a subsidized project that many citizens consider attractive.  
Below: This project on Portola Avenue will be enhanced by landscaping, but it still has a barracks-like appearance.

conflict of interest by many voters, and undoubtedly contributed to the defeat of both men in the 1982 election.

In February and March 1981, the council further amended the RDP, combining the allocations for 1981 and 1982, and creating a separate competition for 75 "custom lots" of one-half-acre or more. The now-notorious in-fill provision was reduced once again to 25 units, with a limit of four per project.

Beginning with the allocations for 1980, during the first three years of RDP competition the council had approved 343, 369, and 373 units successively, remaining within the 2% target growth rate in housing units. On a 3-2 vote in September 1981, however, the council approved an amendment exempting all projects containing 20% or more "subsidized or low-income units" not only from the point competition, but from the 2% annual limit. According to its supporters (Turner, Staley and Ebert), this move was supposed to facilitate the construction of badly-needed affordable housing.

By the time this provision went into effect, however, a new type of "subsidy" had been devised: the issuance of tax-free municipal bonds by the city could lower the costs of construction financing for multiple-unit projects. This, in turn, enabled developers to lower rents on the mandatory 20% of units needed to qualify as a "low-to-moderate income" project. In response to this innovative approach to "affordable" housing, the total numbers of housing units



approved shot up to 515 for 1983, and 794 for 1984. Growth-control advocates objected that the affordable housing program was becoming a convenient mechanism for overriding the general plan-dictated limitations on development.

Under the modified RDP, not only was the rate of development approaching 4%, but residents began to complain about the quality of some projects. Most often mentioned was a barracks-like series of structures located at the northwest entrance to the city along Portola Avenue (Figure 35). The condominium units were by current standards "affordable," but their stark appearance contributed to public pressure to change the RDP once again, this time emphasizing more rigorous design criteria.

The election in 1982 of control-growth candidates Cathie Brown and John Stein brought an end to the "subsidized housing" loophole, and a return to the two-percent growth limit. By now it was apparent, however, that the RDP was becoming a political football. Although it created a framework for the critical review of competing projects, and facilitated construction of considerable moderate-income housing (particularly in the Springtown area), it also has come to reflect the political predilections of the current city council.

#### **Pleasanton: From RAP to GMP**

The purpose of Pleasanton's Residential Allocation Program was to enforce the goals of the growth management and housing elements of the general plan. These goals

included meeting the population "benchmarks" for 1986 and 1996, the provision of 13% of new housing for "low-income" households (a number reflecting the percentage of low-income residents counted in the 1970 census), and the provision of 25% of the housing stock as multiple units (defined as more than eight per acre).

As with Livermore's RDP, changes in RAP came quickly. In 1978 and 1979, new exemptions were added, including all homes on lots of 20,000 square feet or more, plus apartment projects of ten or fewer units. At the same time, however, two Pleasanton councilmembers rebelled against the city's stated commitment to low-income housing. Although on December 11, 1979, the council rejected (3-2) a resolution opposing the use of government subsidies for low-income housing except that serving senior citizens, it became apparent that there was little grassroots support for such proposals in white, upper-middle class Pleasanton.\*

As a consequence of its as-yet unsuccessful policy of setting aside building permits for low-cost housing, by August 1981 Pleasanton had accumulated 200 unused permits, which were made the object of an "affordable housing competition." In a city where prime residential land sold

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\* However, neither did many citizens embrace overt racism. In a thinly-veiled attempt to capitalize on exclusionary sentiment within the community, conservative Councilman Frank Brandes used the subsidized housing issue as the centerpiece of his 1980 reelection campaign. "Where do you stand?" he asked in his newspaper ads. Once again, however, moderation carried the day in Pleasanton: Brandes was defeated by Karen Mohr, whose principal achievement to date had been leadership of a successful fight to ban gravel trucks from downtown streets.

for \$75,000-100,000 per acre by 1982, however (compared with \$40,000-50,000 in Livermore), few builders were interested in low-cost housing. Nevertheless, placing low-to-moderate income housing proposals on a "fast track" did produce several high-density projects in southeast Pleasanton along Vineyard Avenue, including the 48-unit Shadow Creek condominiums shown in Figure 36.

Although this maneuvering over lower-income housing was (and still is) an important aspect of the city's growth management program, Shadow Creek was the last such project to be approved under the RAP ordinance. Widespread unhappiness with RAP led to its demise in 1982. The construction industry had never made a secret of its distaste for RAP (some builders called it the "rape" ordinance). Under the old system, developers had faced a relatively straightforward approval process. Now, they had to compete for points, with no assurance that a proposed project would ever be built. Between the time a proposal was submitted to the city and the time final approval was granted, nine months or more might pass.

If the builders disliked RAP, city councilmembers felt likewise. To them, the most irritating characteristic of the program was its baffling complexity. The combination of the RAP point structure and the enduring complications brought by the 1972 Settlement Agreement made it difficult for councilmembers to evaluate the relative merits of competing projects. According to one Pleasanton councilman,

only the author of the measure, assistant city attorney Brian Swift, was capable of interpreting the ordinance.

The ordinance was not only complicated, it took considerable power away from the council, in terms of negotiating directly with developers. Consequently, on November 24, 1980, Mayor Kenneth Mercer requested that the city staff prepare a report on RAP, with an eye to simplifying the ordinance. On February 19, 1981, a motion was passed instructing the staff to prepare a draft ordinance abolishing RAP and replacing it with a new system (City of Pleasanton 1981).

By May 1982, the council had adopted a new Growth Management Program (GMP). Not based upon a point system, the GMP was more flexible than RAP. Although the council still rationed building permits, the actual approval process resembled more the old system of informal negotiation and backroom discussion. It now became even more important for builders to perform "good works" for the community. Projects would be viewed favorably if developers provided significant capital improvements or paid money directly to the city. The mandatory fees just for GMP approval included not only \$525 per dwelling unit for capital improvements, but also \$400 to be placed in a fund for low-income housing. In return for the largesse of developers, the city frequently agreed to phase in large housing projects through long-term development agreements stretching over more extensive periods than had been possible under RAP. Under these complex new arrangements, it became increasingly

difficult to ascertain precisely how much growth was actually being permitted on an annual basis.

Despite the often-narrow predilections of a profit-oriented housing industry, the council was able to use the GMP to generate a variety of housing types. Projects have ranged from moderate-income apartments and condominiums to townhouses and other attached dwellings, to enormous homes in the hills south of Sunol Boulevard. As of 1985 the city had apparently met its goal of providing 25% multiples, an impressive achievement within a housing market in which single-family homes sold far more briskly than all other types. By admission of Mayor Kenneth Mercer, the system had failed only with respect to very low-income housing and the provision of basic, "no-frills" single-family homes. With individual builders restricted to fifty or fewer homes per year, they will only propose housing tracts in which a high per-unit profit can be expected.\*

Despite this success in terms of housing variety, Pleasanton's commitment to growth limitations seemed to unravel as the homebuilding recession came to an end. In 1982, the city council authorized 506 housing units, followed by 483 in 1983, 529 in 1984 and an expected 700 in 1985. With belated construction also proceeding on projects previously approved, the pace of development suddenly

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\* This type of "market reorientation" has been noted by Dowall as a "commonly occurring indirect effect of regulation" (1984: 141).

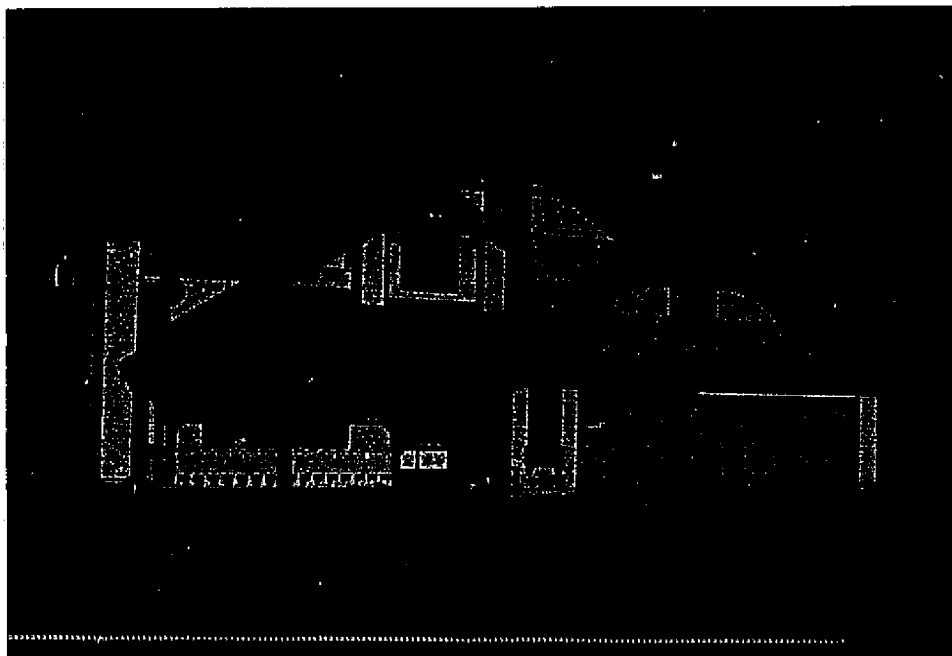


Figure 36. Two Pleasanton Growth Management Program projects.  
Above: Shadow Creek Condominiums are "affordable" housing, but still listed for \$100,000 in 1985.  
Below: A giant "modern Victorian" home in the hills of south Pleasanton.

reached a level that had not been equalled since before the 1971 sewer freeze.

Technically, the city still remained faithful to the population growth goals established in its 1976 general plan. Under the system of "benchmarks" (Chapter XIII), growth at an average rate of 3.4% per year was permissible, so long as the population did not exceed 43,300 by 1986; purportedly, a slower annual growth rate of 1.25% would be followed thereafter, in order to meet the 1996 benchmark of 48,700.

As Pleasanton began to approach the post-1986 decade of projected slower growth, however, city officials began discussing not only abolition of the population benchmarks, but the possible elimination of all specific limits on development. Growth management might be redefined in the future primarily as a means for ensuring the availability of capital facilities. Certainly, this shift was consistent with the long-term willingness of the Pleasanton Council to accommodate developers. It also came in response, however, to greatly increased pressures for residential development generated from a new source: an unexpectedly vigorous boom in local office construction.

## Chapter XVI

### A New Era?

After 1980, the pattern of valley growth was altered dramatically by three events: completion of the LAVWMA project, the opening of Stoneridge Mall, and most important, the acceleration of a regional suburban office-building boom. The floodgates were opened for massive office and light industrial development in Pleasanton, which in turn created renewed pressures for residential development. Following the precedent set by the arrival of the Radiation Laboratory in 1952 and the construction of San Ramon Village in 1960, outside forces threatened once again to dictate the nature and pace of valley development.

#### LAVWMA

The completion of the LAVWMA pipeline in February 1980 finally removed a nearly decade-old impediment to new construction. Although the conditions under which funding for the pipeline had been granted caused residential sewer capacity to be rationed, there were no such limitations upon "industrial-commercial" sewer connections. The eagerness with which valley residents sought job-creating investments was underscored on June 3, 1980, when voters approved the first LAVWMA project expansion. The ballot measure authorized increasing the system's overall capacity by one



million gallons per day, restricted to industrial-commercial use only. Of this total, half was allotted to Pleasanton, 40% to Livermore, and 10% to the still-unincorporated Dublin-San Ramon area.

### Stoneridge Mall

The opening of the 1,262,000 square-foot Stoneridge Mall in September 1980 occurred well over a decade after the project had first been proposed. Although the valley did not yet have the 150,000 minimum population supposedly necessary to support a regional center (the 1980 valley-wide population was around 110,000), the big "anchor" stores, including Macy's and Emporium-Capwell, were apparently confident that the requisite growth would soon occur.

### The Office Boom

The "suburban solution" to American housing problems had been predicated upon a particular sexual division of labor, whereby men commuted to work and women performed unpaid labor in the home (see Markusen 1980). By the early seventies, however, both the influence of the women's movement and the need for two incomes to make household ends meet convinced many "housewives" that paid employment was a superior alternative to remaining at home.

That there was in fact a significant untapped labor market in the valley had been perceived as early as 1973 when Intel Corporation, a Santa Clara-based manufacturer of microprocessors, opened a small fabrications plant in

Livermore (Figure 30, p. 320). Initially employing around 200 people at "Fab 3," Intel mainly hired women who had not previously been working, but who were ready to enter (or reenter) the labor force. At the time, Livermore boosters had hoped that Intel might be the first of many "Silicon Valley" firms to discover the Livermore-Amador Valley as a location for industry.

When a job-producing boom finally arrived, however, it came primarily from a different source and direction. During the 1960s, the nation's employment base began to shift decisively, as industrial jobs were eliminated or else moved to low-wage areas overseas (Bluestone and Harrison 1982). With banks, corporations, and all levels of government becoming larger and more internally complex, coordinative, "white-collar" tasks proliferated (Bell 1973; Gershuny 1978). Meanwhile, like so many areas within the so-called "sunbelt" (Sternlieb and Hughes 1975), the Bay Area continued to attract massive economic investment. One consequence of these trends was a tremendous boom in high-rise office construction in San Francisco (Brugmann et al. 1971).

As San Francisco office rents soared during the seventies, however, corporations began to move routine, non-headquarters functions to lower-cost East Bay locations, most notably Walnut Creek and Concord (Nelson 1984). Between 1970 and 1980, over 2.1 million square feet of new office space was provided in central Contra Costa County (ABAG 1981: 52).

This trend toward office deconcentration accelerated during the late seventies; consequently, developers sought construction sites further south along I-680 (Kroll 1984). After 1981, investment in offices and other commercial property became markedly more attractive, as a result of new accelerated depreciation schedules permitted as part of the tax reforms instituted by the Reagan Administration (Crenshaw 1984).

In early 1981, a proposal surfaced to construct a gigantic office complex on a San Ramon Valley site formerly owned by Western Electric. Alex Mehran of Sunset Development Company (son of longtime Livermore builder Masud Mehran) actually had wished to erect only housing on the land that became the 8.5 million square-foot "Bishop Ranch Park." Objections by the San Ramon Homeowners Association, however, convinced him to alter the project. So eager were Contra Costa County officials to approve the proposal that no environmental impact report was required.

Over the next several years, it became apparent that an office boom was underway throughout the I-680 corridor. By early 1984, newspaper stories began to describe a wondrous, wealthy new metropolitan subregion called "ContraCostopolis" (e.g. San Francisco Chronicle, January 9-12, 1984). Some firms explained their move to the San Ramon Valley in terms of low rents and the attractiveness of the area to both middle-level managers and research and development personnel. New office tenants also hoped, however, that

the long-established residential communities along I-680 would provide an educated, tractable, largely female workforce for low-level clerical and data-processing jobs.

#### Pleasanton Office Development

With vast expanses of unused land zoned for industry situated close to the junction of I-680 with I-580, Pleasanton proved a prime location for office construction. It quickly became apparent, however, that the legacy of more than a decade of rancor over residential growth would influence the ultimate course of this new phase of development.

The first major project in Pleasanton was a plan by Southern California builder Robert Meyer to construct three high-rise office buildings on an 82-acre parcel along Hopyard Road formerly owned by Volk-McLain (see Chapter IX). Almost immediately, pressures from local activists began to affect the planning process. As first presented in January 1981, the Meyer project included one fourteen-story and two eight-story buildings. In a city with no tall structures of any kind, this proposal immediately raised a storm of controversy. Some citizens pressed for a three-story limit on all new structures. The city council responded by instituting a 65-foot height limit. As finally approved by the council, the Meyer project consisted of three five-story buildings on 71 net acres, providing around one million square feet of office space.

The scaling-down of the Meyer proposal ameliorated, but

did not end the controversy. Although most residents of the job-starved community viewed the revised Meyer project as a boon to the local economy, since the mid-sixties a sizable minority has preferred that the city remain a small, bedroom-type suburb. Consequently, opponents of the Meyer project were able to gather sufficient signatures to call a referendum election.

The outcome was not even close. Aided by \$66,000 in donations from developers funnelled through the Valley First Committee, "Measure A" on the November 1981 ballot was passed by a margin of better than 2-1. Pleasanton's office boom was underway.

#### A Piece of the Rock: Hacienda Business Park

Between 1980 and 1982, the Pleasanton City Council approved 22 "commercial-industrial" projects, comprising around fourteen million square feet of space devoted principally to offices and "industrial research and development." Of this total, over half was associated with a single, immense project: Hacienda Business Park.

Proposed publicly immediately after the Meyer referendum, Hacienda was a joint venture involving the Prudential Insurance Company of America and a Sunnyvale development firm, Callahan-Pentz Properties. Hacienda would be located in the long-vacant, often flooded expanses along Hopyard Road south of I-580. This "industrial" land had been annexed to the city in 1968, following the unsuccessful bid to annex Dublin to Pleasanton. Subsequently, it had

been the site for an abortive mixed-use development plan sponsored by Willow West Properties, Inc.

Phase I of the Hacienda project would include a series of low-rise buildings (from one to five stories) for office, research and development, and commercial uses distributed over a 587-acre area. At full buildout by the year 2000, more than 7.3 million square feet of office space would be available, providing up to 24,000 jobs. When the 4.4 million additional square feet from the 300-acre Phase II was added, Hacienda would become the largest "business park" in Northern California, with perhaps 46,000-50,000 total employees.

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Table 14

Ten Largest Pleasanton Commercial/Industrial Projects  
(as of November 1984)

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Project Name (Projected # of employees)	Net Acres	Total Gross Square Feet of Building Space
Hacienda I (23,774)	492	7,325,000
Meyer (4,183)	71	1,170,435
Reynolds and Brown (2,745)	51	808,500
Stoneson/Daon (3,323)	44.8	1,020,100
Fromm Business Park (2,900)	85	1,160,000
Valley Business Park (2,245)	60	852,000
Devcon Construction (694)	14.11	208,337
Kacor (673)	7	175,000
Farmers Insurance Group (615)	14	160,000
Sammis Co. (558)	10.2	144,894

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Source: Housing Element Update of the Pleasanton General Plan (November 1984).

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Suddenly, Pleasanton faced the prospect of transforming from a labor-exporting to a labor-importing community. In 1980, over 70% of primary wage earners in Pleasanton commuted outside of the valley to their jobs, an even higher percentage than a decade previously. According to figures compiled by the Association of Bay Area Governments (1983), there were around 19,000 working residents in Pleasanton, but less than 10,000 jobs. Once business park development commenced, however, this situation would change drastically. By the year 2005, there might be 50,000 total jobs, but only 35,000 working residents. According to studies conducted for Hacienda by the Gruen, Gruen & Associates consulting firm (1982), a significant, though undetermined percentage of jobs within the "business park" eventually would be filled by local residents who would vacate positions elsewhere in the East Bay. At the same time, however, Pleasanton undoubtedly would become a regional job center, attracting thousands of commuters.

Nearly all citizens agreed that the Hacienda proposal was of high quality. Backed by the financial might of Prudential, developer Joseph Callahan was willing to invest millions of dollars in flood control works, roadway improvements, and extensive landscaping.\* The philosophy

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\* To handle anticipated traffic problems associated with office park development, a special North Pleasanton Improvement District was formed, through which all commercial-industrial property owners (not just Hacienda) would contribute to roadway, freeway, and freeway interchange improvements.

underlying the project was that heavy financial burdens at the outset would pay handsome dividends over the long run.

The potential Achilles' heel of the proposal, however, was its sheer immensity. Particularly when it was considered together with the smaller office complexes already approved (Table 14), Hacienda would irreversibly alter the character of Pleasanton, if not the entire valley. As such, many residents viewed the proposal with an equal mixture of awe and alarm.

Faced with the prospect of local opposition, Prudential and Callahan-Pentz were willing to make further commitments and concessions. Under what officially was called "PUD-81-30," Phase I of the Hacienda project was subjected to 110 conditions of approval, formulated by the Pleasanton planning staff. Some of these conditions were quite remarkable: condition number 107, for example, declared that:

The City, at developer expense, shall hire a qualified atmospheric scientist or air pollution expert to evaluate project-generated air quality impacts, establish air quality standards to minimize air quality impacts from the project and ensure that State and Federal standards for primary pollutants are met at the site and along access routes, and develop a monitoring program which can be used to evaluate air quality impacts as the project develops. In the event such standards would be exceeded by any incremental development proposal, the particular project shall not be approved.

Hacienda also agreed to place all utilities underground, establish noise controls, operate its own bus system, and implement an innovative Transportation Systems



Management Program, in order to alleviate the inevitable congestion resulting from the floodtide of new commuters. Other noteworthy features of Phase I included the provision of a child-care center to serve Hacienda employees.

In return for this largesse, the developers insisted that Pleasanton sign a long-term development agreement, committing the city through 1996 to the terms of the PUD. Although the city would still review each proposed new building, it could not rezone any part of the project property.

#### The Battle Over Hacienda

There was never any real doubt that the Pleasanton City Council would approve the project. After all, Hacienda would take responsibility for major capital improvements, provide a lucrative tax base, and save the city from the task of master-planning its "industrial" acreage. The project would, moreover, include no objectionable industrial land uses. If Pleasanton balked because of Hacienda's size, Prudential and Callahan-Pentz hinted that they might seek more sympathetic treatment elsewhere.

After the Hacienda Phase I PUD was approved by a unanimous council vote in June 1982, the Pleasanton business community was ecstatic. On more than one occasion, former Mayor Warren Harding, who had presided over the annexation of the belatedly-developing lands, stated that Hacienda represented nothing less than the fulfillment of Pleasanton's "destiny." Indeed, the passage from the 1965

general plan declaring that "Pleasanton can afford to wait" for quality development now appeared remarkably prophetic.\*

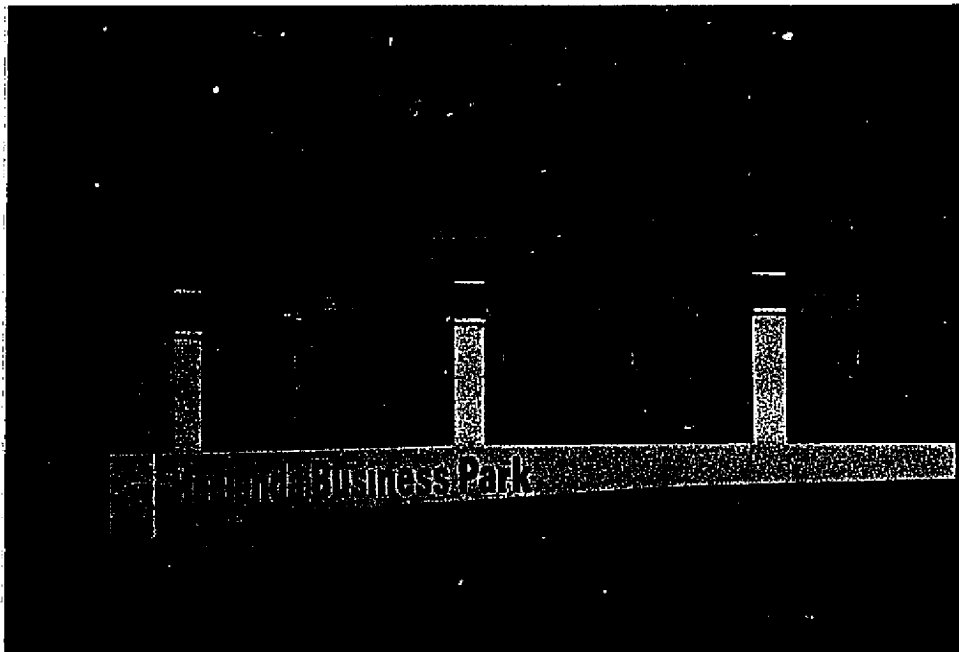
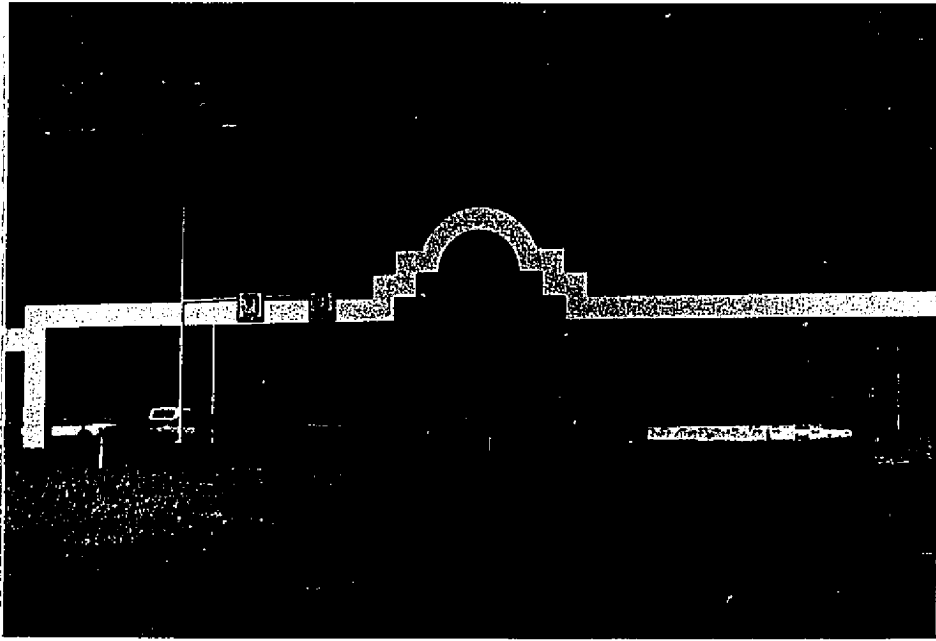
On October 27, the Pleasanton Area Chamber of Commerce held its first "Preview 2000" event at the Castlewood Country Club. The theme of the meeting was that the city had been far-sighted in reserving such vast expanses of industrial land (The Independent, November 3, 1982). Laudatory speeches were delivered by consultant Claude Gruen and Bay Area Council President Angelo Siracusa.

City council approval of Hacienda, however, was by no means the end of the controversy over large-scale office-commercial development. Arguably, the "balance among land uses" provision of the growth management element of the Pleasanton General Plan was being violated. It became a matter of controversy whether "balance" referred to: (1) numbers of people matching numbers of jobs; or (2) acreage of land devoted to job-producing activities, as opposed to residential uses. If the latter was the case, the city was acting consistently with its stated goal; if the former were true, however, Pleasanton was deviating from the general plan, and perhaps could be forced by legal action to curb its industrial expansion.

Critics of Hacienda argued that construction of the huge project would place an unwarranted burden upon existing residents in terms of housing, traffic, air pollution, water

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\* See Chapter IX, p. 220.



**Figure 37. Hacienda Business Park.**

Above: The Hacienda archway was designed to resemble the downtown Pleasanton signature sign (Figure 8, p. 64).

Below: Housing Callahan-Pentz and other project offices, the Chabot Center was one of the first buildings completed at Hacienda.

supply and wastewater treatment capacity. Some opponents vowed to halt the business park by any means available, including referenda and lawsuits.

Attempts to fight the project from within Pleasanton, however, were doomed from the start. After all, the city would be capturing millions of dollars in revenues and infrastructural improvements, plus thousands of jobs. The problems, though undeniable, would be shared with neighboring communities.

There was, however, sufficient uproar within Pleasanton that the city council offered to initiate an Industrial General Plan Review process aimed at mitigating potentially harmful aspects of the office boom. This proposal effectively split the anti-development forces into two groups. Many activists from outside Pleasanton (mostly from Livermore) viewed the review as an empty gesture by a pro-development council. Some Pleasanton residents, however, including longtime activist Robert Pearson, felt that the legacy of control-growth sentiment as a minority viewpoint with the city mandated that Hacienda opponents avoid immediate confrontation. Pearson and others chose to participate in the general plan review process.

Handpicked by the city council, the General Plan Review Steering Committee initially was balanced between "homeowner" and "business" representatives. Critics of Hacienda were dismayed to discover, however, that the review specifically excluded lands already committed to approved

projects. Consequently, no previous council decisions could be rescinded. Ultimately, the committee did in fact recommend that certain land parcels, including the City of San Francisco Spring Valley property, be redesignated from industrial to residential or mixed uses (City of Pleasanton 1984). However, the overall message of the committee report was that the city should begin planning for accelerated growth, both industrial and residential.

Opponents of Hacienda who had refused to go along with the "industrial review" felt vindicated. They believed the committee report proved the entire process was a sham. Subsequent events, however, would demonstrate that the pro-development conclusions of the review committee did indeed represent the sentiments of Pleasanton residents as a whole.

#### The Lawsuit and Referendum

The opposition group that had participated in the general plan review called itself Citizens for a Balanced Community. In October 1982, the more militant residentialists formed a new activist organization called Citizens for Balanced Growth. The CBG leadership reflected the valley-wide scope of concern regarding the potential effects of office development in Pleasanton. Although high school teacher Curt Altschul lived in Pleasanton, organizers from Livermore included Donald Miller, former CARD activist David Eller, and Zone 7 Boardmembers Margaret Tracy and Gerald Dzakowic. There also were representatives from San Ramon and Sunol. CBG claimed that it did not oppose

Hacienda per se, but wanted the project scaled down to where a long-term jobs-housing balance would be maintained.

At around the same time that CBG was formed, concern over untrammelled office construction was heightened when the San Francisco-based People for Open Space organization issued a report (1982) warning of the immense negative impact that the office boom would have upon the agricultural and other open space resources of the 680 and 580 corridors. If current trends continued, POS predicted that the valley would become merely a smaller version of the overdeveloped Santa Clara Valley.

In December, CBG sued the City of Pleasanton in Alameda County Superior Court, claiming that Pleasanton had violated its general plan goals, and that the environmental impact report for Hacienda Phase I had failed to consider adequately its cumulative regional impacts. During the lawsuit proceedings, the sponsors of Hacienda claimed the project could not feasibly be reduced in size. Both its "marketability" and the economies of scale underlying the huge infrastructural investments already made mandated the full Phase I development.

Meanwhile, the project managers stepped up their public relations campaign. In mid-December, Prudential and Callahan-Pentz took out a full-page advertisement in each of the three valley newspapers, at a total cost of \$2,800. In the ad, it was claimed that by 1991, at least nine million dollars in benefits would accrue to Pleasanton from the Hacienda project. The Hacienda Business Park Owners

Association also began to publish Pleasanton Pathways, a monthly newspaper delivered free to every household in the city. Furthermore, Callahan-Pentz donated money generously to local civic causes, including the renovation of the Amador High School auditorium, and the conversion of the old police station (and former city hall) into a new Amador-Livermore Valley Historical Society Museum.

On January 3, 1983, Alameda County Superior Court Judge Raymond Marsh ruled against the City of Pleasanton. In his decision, he declared that "The respondent's (i.e. the Pleasanton City Council) action in approving the Hacienda project was taken in the absence of evidence that the project was consistent with the City's general plan." Essentially, the Court ruled against the Hacienda PUD approval on the grounds that it would transform the community from labor-exporting to labor-importing. Despite this setback, the project was not halted. On January 26, Judge Marsh refused to enjoin Hacienda from completing twelve buildings already under construction.

The city was faced with the choice either of demanding that Hacienda scale down its project, or else amending the growth management element of the general plan to accommodate the imbalance between jobs and housing that the "business park" would produce. After considerable civic debate regarding what should be meant by "balance," the city council voted on November 8, 1983 to amend the growth management element to allow for imbalances between jobs and

housing "from time to time" (Resolution 83-501).

Again, the Pleasanton City Council had reaffirmed its commitment to growth, but again the issue was not yet settled. Citizens for Balanced Growth, along with yet another activist group called Pleasanton Today and Tomorrow, quickly gathered the necessary signatures to call a referendum election. The spirited campaign that followed was characterized by a veritable alphabet soup of political organizations. Opposed to "Measure A" were CBG and PTT; supporting Hacienda were PROUD (Pleasanton Residents of United Direction), and PLAN (Pleasanton League of Active Neighbors).

During the campaign, the civic rivalry between Pleasanton and Livermore played an influential, though non-decisive role. Hacienda opponents within Pleasanton were hampered by the widespread knowledge that it was "Livermore no-growthers" who had instigated the anti-Hacienda lawsuit. Outspent by a ratio of thirty to one, opponents of large-scale industrial development were easily defeated on April 10, 1984, 6,159 to 3,962.

#### Offices in Livermore?

With the approval of the general plan amendment, no obstacles remained to all-out office-industrial development. By this time, although most construction activity was still concentrated along the I-680 corridor, new development proposals began to reach Livermore. A series of low-slung office buildings were erected near the Livermore Airport,



and projects were initiated even in the long-dormant Livermore "industrial" tracts east of town. Attracted by the lower land costs in the eastern end of the valley, the Bank of America expressed interest in building a warehouse facility in Livermore. Most notable, however, was a proposal by the Triad Corporation, Sunnyvale-based manufacturers of computer software, to build a 3.6 million square-foot office and research complex on a 300-acre site north of I-580 near the Chabot Junior College campus. Overall, although the short-term rate of buildout was far slower than in Pleasanton, the amount of office space tentatively planned for Livermore was impressive: by late 1985 the nineteen largest announced projects were slated to include nearly 14 million square feet of office-research space (Owens 1985: A-7).

#### **The Turnabout: Too Many Jobs, Not Enough Housing**

An immediate goal of growth management was to slow residential development until more jobs became available locally. In both Livermore and Pleasanton, industrial-commercial development had been exempted from all growth restrictions, in hopes not only of generating taxes, but of mitigating the valley's air pollution problem. With local employment available, fewer residents would commute to workplaces elsewhere in the Bay Area. Consequently, the total vehicle-miles travelled within the valley would be reduced. The intention, then, was to establish a balance of

land uses, maintained through controlled, slow growth.

When "industrial" development did occur, however, it was proposed at a grand scale that had not been widely anticipated during the seventies. Approval of the Hacienda Business Park dashed any lingering hopes that a balance between local housing stock and available jobs could long be maintained. The original imbalance of housing over jobs would eventually be stood on its head.

#### Trouble in ContraCostopolis

Throughout the I-680/I-580 corridor (Figure 38), the nascent office boom has threatened to create traffic gridlock and local housing shortages, particularly for moderate-income households. According to projections by ABAG (1985a), a net increase of 220,000 jobs is expected within the area between 1980 and 2005, but under current zoning classifications a maximum of only 132,000 new housing units will be built. As a consequence, the ratio of jobs to housing units within the I-680/I-580 area will increase from 0.66 to 0.79 (ABAG 1985b: 7). Furthermore, whereas new jobs will be concentrated in the territory between Concord and Livermore, a disproportionate amount of new housing is slated for peripheral communities such as Pittsburg and Antioch. Meanwhile, many thousands of residents will continue to commute to jobs located elsewhere in the Bay Area. Overall, there will not be improved local balance between jobs and housing, but increased levels of commuting into, out of, and within the area.

This grim forecast reflects in part an impending disjuncture between the types of jobs created and the available housing supply. According to ABAG projections, 79% of new jobholders will earn less than \$25,000 annually (in 1979 dollars). This would classify them as "low-income," according to HUD housing-income formulas (see page 413). Although many of these jobs will represent second incomes within more affluent households, ABAG estimates that between 1985 and 1995 alone, up to 38,000 new households will require housing costing less than \$125,000 per unit. Within the stretch of I-680 between Pleasanton and Concord, single-family homes typically sell for far more than this figure (Table 15). Consequently, unless thousands of new apartments, townhouses and condominiums are built, legions of office workers face lengthy commutes along increasingly

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Table 15

Typical Home Prices By Community  
Within the I-680/I-580 Corridors  
(August 1985)

Brentwood . . . . .	\$130,000	San Ramon . . . . .	\$155,000
Pittsburg . . . . .	99,000	Dublin . . . . .	130,000
Concord . . . . .	155,000	Pleasanton . . . . .	162,000
Walnut Creek . . . . .	185,000	Livermore . . . . .	115,000
Alamo . . . . .	329,000	Tracy . . . . .	95,000
Danville . . . . .	269,000		

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Prices are for an average three-bedroom, two-bath home.  
Source: San Francisco Examiner, March 9, 1986: R-7

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congested freeways.

Such higher-density housing is unlikely to be provided, given current zoning patterns emphasizing single-family dwellings, and the reluctance of suburban residents to permit significant upzoning. This situation is exacerbated by the fragmented governmental structure, which encourages each city to hope that the bulk of such lower-cost housing will be supplied elsewhere.

As a consequence, the principal immediate result of the "affordable" housing shortage has been a growing influx of commuters from areas previously considered outside of the Bay Area commute-shed, including the eastern Contra Costa County communities of Oakley and Brentwood, and the Central Valley cities of Tracy and Manteca. In the Livermore-Amador Valley, other recent responses to the impending "imbalance" have included lobbying by business organizations for modification or elimination of residential growth restrictions in Pleasanton and Livermore, and the revival of the dormant proposal to construct a "new town" in the Las Positas Valley.

#### The New Commuters

Even in the absence of growth management, homes in Livermore and Pleasanton would sell for considerably more than comparable properties in Tracy and Manteca. Because of lower land costs and the prevalence of non-union construction labor, houses in these communities sell for 20-40% less than homes in Livermore, which in turn has the

lowest-cost housing in the Livermore-Amador Valley. Just as significantly, developers in these outlying cities are willing to construct the no-frills "starter homes" that are not being built in Pleasanton. By way of the eight-lanes of I-580 that wind through Altamont Pass, it is a thirty-minute commute from Manteca to Livermore, and forty-five minutes to Pleasanton (Figure 38). Not surprisingly, first-time homebuyers in particular will overlook a relative lack of urban amenities for the sake of an affordable home.

Reflecting this commuter-oriented homebuilding boom, between 1980 and 1985 the population of Tracy grew from 17,000 to 24,000; in Manteca, the increase was from 24,000 to 33,000. Meanwhile, some intrepid commuters reportedly are journeying to Livermore from as far away as Modesto and Stockton.

#### Pleasanton Replans the Future

No public officials have endorsed the creation of a new set of bedroom communities as a viable solution to the housing problems that threaten to develop as the Livermore-Amador Valley becomes a subregional job center. Local businessmen, office park developers, and lobbying groups such as the Bay Area Council apparently believe it necessary to plan for more housing within the valley itself. Appearing before the Pleasanton City Council in June 1984, for example, BAC representative (and former Hayward Mayor) Ilene Weinreb declared that the city's two per cent growth rate was creating "a significant mismatch between jobs and

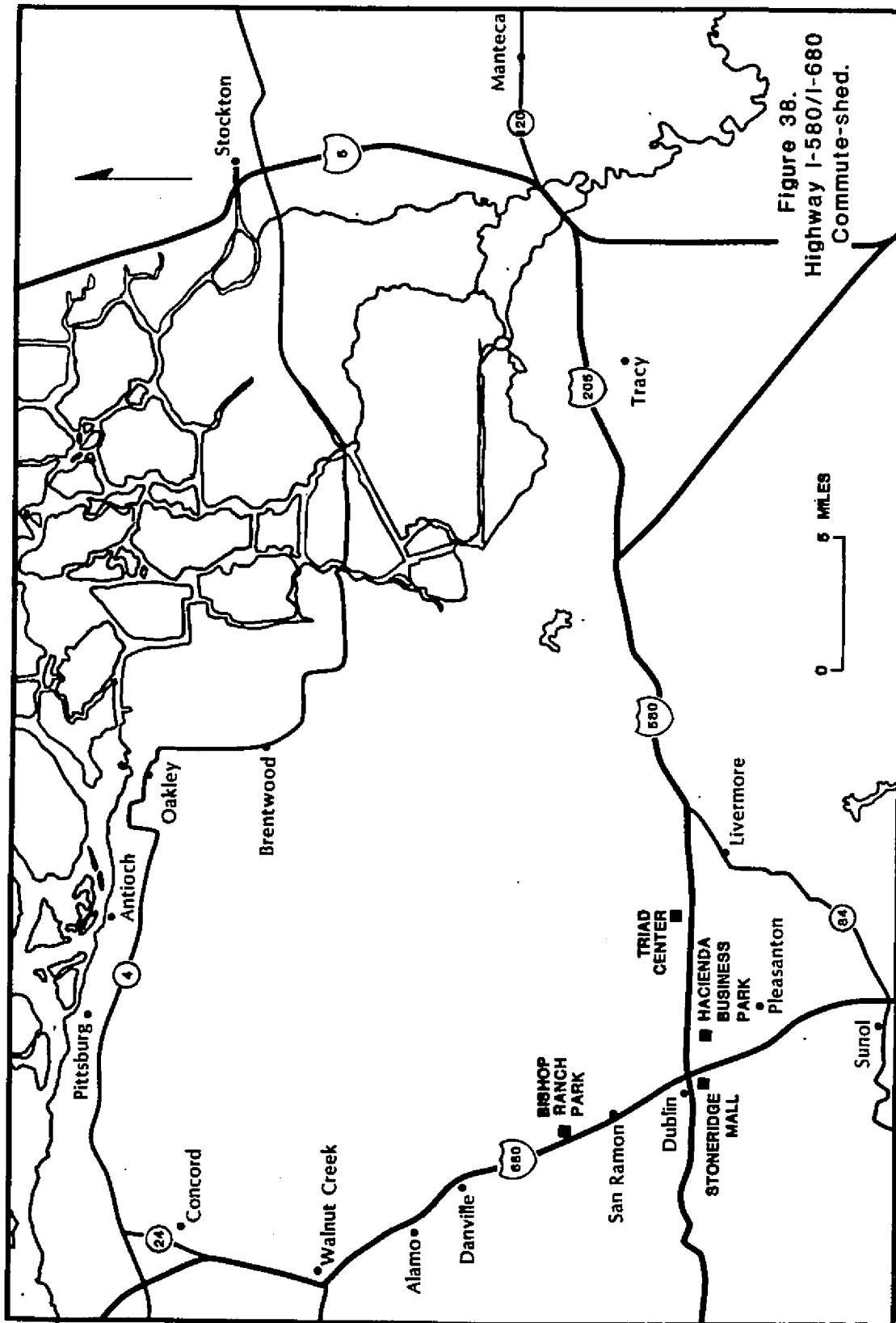


Figure 38.  
Highway I-580/I-680  
Commute-shed.

housing" (The Independent, July 4, 1984).

In light of both Pleasanton's huge commitment to office development, and its consistently more accommodating attitude toward homebuilders, it is hardly surprising that efforts to relax building restrictions were more immediately successful in that city. The environmentally-oriented 1976 general plan was now considered obsolete. Having already completed an industrial general plan review in January, the city council in November 1984 authorized a complete general plan revision, beginning with a review of residential growth policies.

In devising new policies, the city had to walk a tightrope: on the one hand, it felt compelled to accelerate development sufficiently to take some responsibility for the growth induced by its office park approvals. Excessive residential growth, however, would be unpopular within Pleasanton itself, particularly if it involved apartments and other "affordable" types of housing.

Completed in July 1985, the report of the hundred-member residential review citizens committee was a manifesto for stepped-up growth. Among its recommendations was a 75% increase in the city's planning area (to 73.4 square miles) to include the Vallecitos Valley and the Sunol area. The document also called for a slight increase in the "holding capacity" of the original planning area, plus abolition of the population benchmarks, based as they were upon "outdated projections." Instead of a target population growth rate of two per cent per year, between 260 to 650 new housing units

would now be permitted annually. This limit, however, would not include such exempted categories as "affordable" housing projects, subdivisions of four or fewer units, and lower-income rental projects (City of Pleasanton 1985: 19-21). Although the rate of growth ostensibly would decrease over time, in the short run this represented a minimum increase of roughly two to five percent per year, with no clearly established maximum.

Under the existing population benchmarks, the city had aimed for a population of 48,700 by 1996. As a result of these new recommendations, however, the number of Pleasanton residents might now exceed 60,000 by that same date (Tri-Valley Herald, November 19, 1985).

At least part of the previously-undeveloped ridgeland to the southwest would be made available for housing construction. According to the report, however, "Pleasanton should control it to ensure a high quality, low density residential environment like Orinda or Saratoga" (1985: 6). After all these years, at least part of Pleasanton might indeed become a "little Piedmont." At the same time, permissible densities would be increased in other locations within the planning area, most notably in northeastern Pleasanton.

In sum, the acceptance by some Pleasanton residents of accelerated residential development reflected the pro-growth attitude that had always typified much of the community, even during the years of limited growth; it also



represented, however, a sense of obligation to handle at least part of the housing shortage generated by the office-building boom from which the city would benefit so greatly. In general, Pleasanton citizens seemed to believe that although the new era of growth would produce problems, with proper management these could be mitigated or eliminated.

#### **Livermore: The Residentialists Strike Back**

Once attractive new opportunities for growth were presented, Pleasanton willingly abandoned the commitment to growth limits that had been necessary to expedite the LAVWMA project. In Livermore, on the other hand, the continued strength of control-growth sentiment and the political acumen of the residentialist leadership produced a more volatile politics. Ultimately, ~~the~~ pro-growth forces did triumph, but not without a struggle.

Although the 1978-82 Livermore council attempted repeatedly to modify the Residential Development Program (Chapter XV), its capacity for broader action to encourage development was circumscribed by the knowledge that any controversial legislation might be subjected to a voter referendum. In one case, the council in late 1978 amended the long-controversial RS zoning ordinance to permit greater maximum floor area coverage than was previously permitted (see Chapter VIII). In response, the irrepressible Donald Miller organized the Citizens Protection League, which quickly gathered over 3,600 signatures to force a referendum on the ordinance. Faced with this public pressure, the

council rescinded the zoning changes in early 1979.

A second example occurred early in 1982, when the council approved a 91-unit subdivision of custom homes in the hills on the northern edge of Livermore. Because some of the homes would be visible from I-580, the council had amended the general plan to override a provision of the scenic route element calling for maintenance of a "scenic corridor" along the highway. This time, a citizens group called the Save Our Hills Committee gathered 3,400 signatures and forced a referendum on the measure. Although the developers outspent SOHC by a factor of eleven (\$16,464 to \$1,409), the voters rejected the general plan amendment by a thousand-vote margin on June 8.

With a pitiful 27% voter turnout, the municipal election in March 1982 was hardly a mandate for slow growth; through an unusual set of circumstances, however, it restored a residentialist majority to the city council. Incumbent Councilmen Marlin Ebert and John Staley were hampered in their reelection bids by conflict-of-interest charges stemming from a 1979 RDP amendment through which they had stood to benefit financially. Of the three candidates who were elected, only Planning Commissioner and GE Vallecitos engineer John Stein was clearly identified as a growth-control advocate. The highest vote total went to Planning Commissioner Cathie Brown. Best known for having founded a shelter for battered women, Brown did not emphasize the growth issue in her campaign. Surprising some of her supporters, however, she emerged as a strong

control-growth councilmember.

Perhaps the key to the new council was an apparent shift in outlook by the previously business-oriented Councilman Marshall Kamena. As will be explained below, between 1982 and 1985 the majority represented by Brown, Stein and Kamena was able to prevail with regard to several important growth-related issues.

### The Return of Las Positas

Between 1982 and 1984, Livermore's internal politics were deeply influenced by the December 1981 resubmittal of the Las Positas new town proposal to the Alameda County Planning Commission. In 1973, the project had first emerged within a political atmosphere dominated by environmental concerns. This time, however, the 18,000-home "planned community" was presented as an ideal solution to an apparent housing shortage. Las Positas was openly backed by a majority of Alameda County Supervisors, including new First District representative Donald Excell. Reflecting a belief within the valley business community that approval of the new town would expedite industrial growth, the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce endorsed the project. Although the Livermore chamber took no official stand, a majority of its members reportedly favored the new town.

As had been the case a decade previously, however, opposition from valley residents was formidable. Even pro-growth officials in Livermore and Pleasanton would not dare to endorse the project publicly, since all were sworn to

unswerving loyalty to "city-centered growth."

As is so frequently the case, contingent events played a significant role in the outcome of this new battle. Resolution of the Las Positas controversy actually was conditioned by a different, unrelated issue. In April 1983, the board of supervisors approved "Rancho Sunol," a subdivision of 85 luxury homes along Pleasanton Ridge, north of the small town of Sunol (prices would range from \$500,000 to \$1.5 million). Assisted by the Sierra Club, Sunol residents gathered over 44,000 valid signatures, more than enough to force an unprecedented county-wide referendum. In response, on May 24 the board rescinded its approval of the project. Ultimately, the Rancho Sunol site was purchased for parkland by the East Bay Regional Parks District.

Realizing the expanded potential for grassroots mobilization to stop large projects, new Livermore councilmember Cathie Brown founded an activist group called Save Our Cities (SOC). SOC threatened to mount another county-wide referendum drive if the supervisors approved Las Positas; to avoid the embarrassment that might result if such a move were successful, the board preempted the referendum, voting 4-1 in July 1984 to permit the new town to be constructed, conditional upon the assent of a majority of Alameda County voters. Evidently, the supervisors were confident that the proposal would be approved.

The campaign that followed matched the financial

proress of the Las Positas Land Company against the grassroots resourcefulness of the Save Our Cities group. In preparing for the November election, the pro-Las Positas forces spent nearly \$700,000 on a direct mail and media campaign that touted the virtues of the new town concept. Save Our Cities relied upon door-to-door canvassing, leafletting at shopping centers, and unrelenting lobbying by Cathie Brown. At city council meetings throughout the county, Brown debated Hayward developer Jack Smith and other Las Positas sponsors. Newspaper coverage of the debates provided free publicity for the anti-Las Positas position. Another important accomplishment of the anti-Las Positas campaign was its success in gaining endorsements from such influential north county Democrats as Congressman Ronald V. Dellums.

By election day, most county voters were apparently convinced that the project would drain off jobs from other parts of the county, cost taxpayers millions of dollars in subsidies, and destroy one of the few remaining rural areas in the county. On the same day that President Ronald Reagan was reelected by an overwhelming majority, Las Positas was turned down by a 2-1 margin.

#### Defending Slow Growth

Las Positas was a decisive victory for growth-control advocates. As the campaign against the new town proceeded, the Livermore residentialists were able to project a favorable image as courageous fighters against well-

financed, outside special interests.

Within this political context, they advanced an aggressive control-growth position on municipal issues, as well. The council refused, for example, to advocate accelerated city-controlled development of the same Las Positas Valley, as part of a campaign to convince LAFCO to reinstate that area as part of the city's sphere of influence.

Most significantly, however, a series of attempts to abolish the two percent growth rate limit in Livermore met only with frustration. Mayor Turner and the chamber of commerce argued that almost every aspect of the 1976 Livermore General Plan had been reviewed except the growth rate; he believed that a citizen group should be appointed to determine whether or not the city was still committed to the two per cent figure. In support of this idea, a position paper issued in early 1984 by the chamber pointed out that none of the individual problems that had inspired the SAVE movement were currently relevant; hence, the growth restrictions should be modified or eliminated.

Defenders of the two percent limit replied that the city was implicitly committed to this growth rate until the end of the planning period in 1996. Even with the office boom, a jobs-housing "balance" would not be reached for at least five to ten years. It was argued that if there was no commitment to two percent, this would indicate a lack of long-term commitment to growth limitations of any kind. Privately, however, slow-growth advocates feared the

possible consequences of such a review. One problem was the appointment power granted to Mayor Turner as a result of the shift to an elected mayor system. It was possible that a commission to review the two percent rate might be stacked by the pro-growth mayor to favor accelerated growth. Even if this did not occur, however, it was quite likely under the changed conditions of the eighties that a citizen group would recommend a higher homebuilding rate. Consequently, on more than one occasion, formal requests to "review" the growth rate were rejected by a 3-2 council majority.

#### Demise of the Residentialists?

In the midst of a nascent office-industrial boom, the residentialists could not avoid the fate of previous control-growth councils: being labelled by opponents as "anti-business." As in the past, the charge had little concrete substance, except with regard to the perennial philosophical antipathy between the residentialists and the business community. Significant office and industrial development in Livermore had, in fact, been approved by the residentialist council. Meanwhile, new plans were being formulated to renovate downtown Livermore with a "heritage" theme. Ultimately, it was hoped, downtown might complement the local vineyards and wineries as potential attractions for tourists.

The approach of the council majority toward new construction, however, remained too slow and restrictive to suit developers, particularly in light of stepped-up

pressures for homebuilding, which the residentialist councilmembers steadfastly ignored. Business money began to flow into an effort to unseat incumbents Stein and Kamena in the election scheduled for November 1985. As part of this campaign, a lobbying organization called Citizens Advocating Planned Progress (CAPP) was formed, which distributed a free, business-oriented newsletter to all homes in Livermore. One headline article in the Livermore Newsletter claimed that the current city government was driving businesses out of the city. A "long-time Livermore resident" reportedly blamed the problem on "The liberal City Council--the Don Miller clique," which "never let any business in" (July 27, 1985: 2). The article was blatantly misleading, citing normal figures on lapses in business licenses as evidence that commerce was pulling out of Livermore at an alarming rate.

During the weeks preceding the city council election, CAPP wrote favorably about two chamber of commerce-supported candidates, businessman Tom Vargas and office manager Judy Bartoli, both members of prominent "old Livermore" families. Because it was not a campaign organization, however, CAPP was never required to disclose who its financial backers were, nor how much money it had received.

As the balloting approached, the mood of the electorate was difficult to ascertain. One year earlier, voters had rejected the Las Positas new town. On March 5, 1984, however, Livermore citizens joined the other valley



communities in approving the second expansion of the LAVWMA conveyance facility (bringing the total system capacity to 21 mgd). On November 5, the council election outcome was decisive: Bartoli and Vargas were elected by a landslide margin.

Although the voter turnout was low (31%), the election was interpreted as a mandate for accelerated growth. Voters apparently found the construction boom in Pleasanton not disturbing but exciting, and wanted Livermore to get its share. In an upsurge of the longtime rivalry between the two communities, many citizens were chagrined at the prospect of Pleasanton succeeding Livermore as the "hub" of the valley.\*

It remains to be seen whether the evident enthusiasm for office-commercial construction extends to additional housing, as well. The answer will come soon, since the new council moved almost immediately to "review" the two percent growth rate limit. Within a context of accelerated regional development pressures, then, the Livermore-Amador Valley as a whole appears committed to a more permissive attitude toward growth. The era of truly restricted growth may have come to an end--at least temporarily.

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\* Growth, however, is never the only issue influencing the outcome of local elections. The anti-incumbent vote also reflected widespread discontentment with council criticism of police handling of problems associated with teen "cruising" along First St.

### Toward a Future Growth Crisis?

For three main reasons, there may be a temporary respite from growth conflict in the valley. First, public satisfaction with office-industrial development will likely be strongest during its initial phases. Job-creating construction projects bring vitality to a community; people may also become excited as restaurants, specialty stores, and other urban amenities become available. There also will be significant financial benefits: already, Pleasanton is flush from the taxes and fees paid by developers. Facing the enviable task of handling a budget surplus of \$14 million over the next four years, City Manager James Walker declared in one interview that he felt "like a kid in a candy store" (San Francisco Chronicle, February 18, 1986: 21). Given Livermore's history as a tax-poor municipality, the commercial development that seems imminent there will be similarly welcomed.

Second, valley growth may actually proceed more slowly than originally anticipated. Soaring office vacancy rates have made apparent the speculative nature of current development. During early 1985, the reported vacancy rate within Pleasanton office parks was between 20 and 40 percent (San Francisco Examiner, March 24, 1985: H-1, H-12). By 1986, this figure had risen to over 45%.

Third, after fifteen years of almost continuous political tumult, grassroots activism may be waning. In Pleasanton, the small band of office-park dissenters has

become dispirited from repeated defeats. Even in Livermore, there is a certain exhaustion within the "community party." Moreover, there are few new activists to bolster the ranks of the old. On the whole, younger LLNL scientists and engineers seem disinclined to become involved politically. Equally important, many women who formerly could devote themselves to political activity now work full-time. Finally, with each new election, progrowth interests spend increasing sums of money.

This political quiescence, however, may well prove temporary. Even as valley voters have endorsed increased development, growth has become a contentious issue in several Contra Costa County communities with no prior history of such conflict. Protesting the traffic congestion linked with unrelenting office development, in November 1985 Walnut Creek voters enacted a moratorium on buildings containing more than 10,000 square feet of interior space. Similar movements have emerged in Pleasant Hill, Concord and Moraga (San Francisco Chronicle, January 30, 1986: 29). In suburban areas nationwide, in fact, protests against what is perceived as excessive office and commercial development have suddenly proliferated (Lindsey 1985).

Largely as an indirect consequence of the residential growth battles of the seventies, office development undoubtedly will be better planned in the Livermore-Amador Valley than in Contra Costa County. Inevitably, however, problems will occur. Partly because of the activist tradition, but also because The Independent continues to

provide a forum for the antigrowth viewpoint, valley residents' tolerance for inconvenience may be exceedingly low.

Traffic and conflicts stemming from pressures for "affordable housing" will likely be the principal problems of the next decade. Already, the Pleasanton office boom has produced unexpectedly heavy commute traffic; despite an innovative Traffic Systems Management ordinance aimed at reducing peak period commuting trips by 45%, Hopyard Road has become jammed routinely at rush hour. As the "business parks" build out, traffic problems are expected to worsen. Meanwhile, no satisfactory solution has been devised to the impending shortage of "affordable" housing (San Francisco Business Journal 1985, Cohen 1985). Interjurisdictional competition to attract "ratables" and yet force such low-end housing on neighboring cities will continue, and may even intensify in light of the belated, separate 1982 municipal incorporations of Dublin and San Ramon.

Even if these immediate problems are resolved, on the horizon loom three familiar bottlenecks to growth: limited wastewater disposal capacity, a potential water shortage, and air pollution.

#### Wastewater Disposal

Depending upon the pace of growth, the capacity of the twice-expanded LAVWMA system reportedly will be exhausted sometime between 1990 and 1992, well before the original 1996 target date. Anticipating the need for a new project,

Pleasanton, the Dublin-San Ramon Services District and Alameda County have jointly financed a new series of studies regarding wastewater disposal alternatives.\*

Wishing to avert the LAVWMA by-laws requiring unanimous board approval of capital expenditures and voter approval of all new projects, the three governments forged a new joint powers agreement, creating the Tri-Valley Sewer Agency. Preliminary studies by the CH M Hill consulting firm (1984, 1985) have recommended running a new gravity-flow pipeline northward along the old Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way through the San Ramon Valley to an outfall in Suisun Bay. A dry-weather discharge capacity of 21 million gallons per day has been discussed, with plenty of room for expansion. With virtually no state or federal funding available, however, the financing for such a venture remains uncertain. Such innovative approaches as the pre-selling of sewer permits have been discussed. Much like selling revenue bonds, however, this system would commit the valley in advance to an intensive level of growth.

#### Water

An adequate water supply appears guaranteed until the year 2000. Because it has placed significant revenue in an enlargement, improvement, and replacement (EIR) fund, Zone 7 will be able to build additional treatment and conveyance

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\* Because capacity for a still-possible Las Positas new town was included in the study, the residentialist-dominated Livermore City Council refused to participate. The new council, however, has reversed this position.

facilities without voter approval. Unless a cross-delta water transfer facility such as the Peripheral Canal is built, however, it is possible that the state will be unable to provide the full, 46,000 acre-foot entitlement expected by Zone 7. Under drought conditions, this amount could be curtailed by as much as half. Meanwhile, per capita water demand has risen sharply as a consequence of large-scale landscaping in the new Pleasanton "business parks." Anticipating a possible future shortage, Pleasanton and DSRSD officials have inquired about future water purchases from the neighboring East Bay Municipal Utilities District. Because this would probably entail diluting high-quality Mokelumne River water with poorer-quality water within the EBMUD system as a whole, however, this proposal would be opposed fiercely by residents of northern Alameda County.

#### Air Quality

Improvement in air quality over the past decade has greatly abetted the resurgence of pro-growth sentiment. There are, however, still days each year on which the federal ozone standard is exceeded. Moreover, the 1975 LAVWMA EIS predicted that air quality would improve until roughly 1990, after which it would deteriorate. Although no clear trend is yet evident, the data in Figure 34 (p. 410) hints, at least, that air pollution may be worsening. Given the projected increases in valley commuter traffic, it is unlikely that the impressive air quality improvements achieved during the seventies can be sustained.

In considering possible sources for future growth struggles, it is significant that both wastewater disposal and water supply expansion decisions have now largely been removed from public scrutiny. The use of connection fees to pay for new infrastructure reflects in part the triumph of the "pay-as-you-go" philosophy professed by the Livermore residentialists themselves. It also, however, fulfills the desire of progrowth public officials to avoid the electoral setbacks that delayed service expansions during the seventies. Consequently, in the future it will be more difficult for citizens to halt growth through ballot-box rejection of public facilities. Still, in view of the legacy of the past twenty years, any of the potential problems discussed above could provide sufficient basis for future activism. As long as regional pressures for land development continue, the acrimony over growth will likely remain a persistent feature of valley political life.

## Chapter XVII

### Summary and Conclusions

This study has reviewed the transformation of the Livermore-Amador Valley over the past century and a half, focussing upon postwar growth and the consequent struggle over the growth-control issue. Part I showed how the settlement of the valley by fortune-seeking Mexicans and Americans culminated in the incorporation of the towns of Livermore and Pleasanton. Although in subsequent decades local businessmen boosted their communities energetically, both towns remained small mercantile centers serving a mainly agricultural economy until well after World War II. Part II reviewed the suburbanization process that commenced with the arrival of the Livermore Radiation Laboratory in 1952. After the establishment of San Ramon Village in 1960 triggered "bedroom" development, the valley population increased by 8-10% per year over the course of a decade. This growth resulted in air pollution, overburdened infrastructure, and overcrowded schools. Part III analyzed fifteen years of political turmoil stemming from grassroots efforts to regulate growth. Passage of the SAVE initiative in 1972 triggered general plan revisions in both Livermore and Pleasanton. Reflecting both slow-growth sentiment and the requirements of state and federal grant policies, the new plans incorporated goals for limiting population growth



to 2% per year. In accordance with the restrictive capacity of the new LAVWMA sewage conveyance facility, both cities established growth management systems by 1978. Since 1981, however, a new burst of office-industrial construction has threatened to undermine previous commitments to "controlled" residential growth.

#### A Framework for Analysis

This work consists of a single, intensive case study. Although the wealth of material contained herein hopefully is valuable for its own sake, the task of this final chapter is to evaluate what significance this particular history might hold for geographical processes beyond the boundaries of the Livermore-Amador Valley.

The central challenge associated with any case study is to abstract general processes from more locally contingent events and causes. This must be done cautiously, for as Andrew Sayer observes:

The over-extension commonly associated with concrete research consists in the illegitimate extrapolation (or generalization) of specific findings about a particular (contingent) conjuncture of a system to the rest of the system, when in fact it may be unrepresentative.

(1984: 218).

The discussion that follows will offer some explanations for the rise and subsequent demise of a growth-control movement in the valley. In many respects, the area represented a microcosm of the wider postwar suburbanization process. Accordingly, a principal aim is to identify

phenomena that reflect general, even essential properties of the American socio-economic and political systems. The very strength of a local study, however, is its potential for revealing the peculiarities of geography and human biography that contribute to specific historical outcomes. Consequently, contingent factors and events will also be identified and discussed.

### The Structural Impetus to Growth

The complex historical sequence presented here cannot easily be distilled into a single hypothesis. If anything, however, this research has demonstrated that the suburban growth process proved contradictory. During the postwar period, an alignment of economic, political and ideological structures facilitated the rapid dispersion of urban functions, especially housing. The very rapidity of suburban land conversion, however, contributed to environmental and infrastructural problems that provoked opposition to further growth.

This process can be analyzed in terms of the generative economic, political and ideological structures that supported rapid suburban development in areas like the Livermore-Amador Valley.

#### Economic

In American history, investment in land and buildings has been a vital aspect of the expansion of the economy as a whole. Since the establishment of the U.S. rectangular

survey system in 1785, land has been viewed primarily as a commodity. As long as credit is available through the banking system, capital flows easily into land investments. Consequently, many a fortune has been accrued from ownership of real estate (Sakolski 1932).

As Walker has argued (1977), suburbanization has long functioned to enhance the reproduction and expansion of the American capitalist system. Homeownership has given millions a "stake in the system," and the separation of social classes has ameliorated potential social antagonisms. Also important, however, have been the profits derived from suburban land conversion itself. These have not been restricted to landowners, speculators, and builders. They have been shared directly by bankers, realtors, and land-use attorneys, and indirectly by a host of economic interests ranging from appliance manufacturers to automobile and petroleum companies (Chapter IV).

Moreover, since growth usually occurs in places with preexisting populations, there inevitably is a network of local business interests which benefits both from the construction process and the arrival of new, income-earning residents. Through their chambers of commerce, local merchants have constantly sought such outside investment. As long as the valley remained outside the main orbit of Bay Area growth, however, no amount of local effort could induce significant economic development. Only once the time was right could downtown merchants join with incoming

homebuilding interests to create a "growth machine," which has since functioned much as Molotch (1976) has suggested with respect to American cities as a whole.

Differences in outlook between merchants, landowners, and developers have consistently been suppressed in the interests of promoting growth. Only in rare instances, such as the "Six Flags" proposal in Pleasanton (Chapter IX), has there been a significant split within the local business community. At the same time, the chambers have lobbied their city councils in opposition to policies ranging from development fees to zoning restrictions that might raise housing prices, or otherwise be construed as "anti-business."

Surely, though, the ease with which residential subdivisions were erected during the fifties and sixties was the result of more than merely business self-interest. The supply of inexpensive homes met a definite demand. Millions of Americans undoubtedly believed that the construction of single-family homes within auto-centered suburbs represented a sensible solution to the postwar housing shortage. The attractiveness of the new tracts was fostered by the prospect of appreciated home values upon later resale, and the promises of lower taxes, safer streets, and racial and class homogeneity that the suburbs represented. Adding to the appeal of valley homes was their low price relative to comparable homes within bayside communities such as Fremont.

## Political

The most distinguishing characteristic of the American political system has been its comparatively decentralized structure. With regard to land-use issues, direct authority has been granted to the states, which in turn have delegated significant police power to counties and cities.

At all governmental levels, American political institutions have been implored to promote suburban growth. Important federal policies have included construction of the interstate highway system, plus tax deductions for local property tax and mortgage interest payments, and various mortgage insurance and banking programs (discussed in Chapter IV).

In the valley, the construction of Interstates 580 and 680 contributed immeasurably to the impetus for development after the mid-sixties. It should also be noted that the overall trajectory for postwar growth in the valley was strongly conditioned by wartime investments made by the U.S. military.

At the state level, the most significant single action was creation of the State Water Project in 1960. Without the SWP water purchased by Zone 7 of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, growth might well have been halted by the mid-sixties. The state has also established guidelines for local planning, zoning, and subdivision standards.

Most active within the growth process, however, has been local government. Local police powers have included

the administration of zoning and subdivision ordinances, the preparation of general plans, and provision of much infrastructure, including water, sewers, and schools. Until the 1970s, these powers rarely, if ever, were used deliberately to slow growth; at most, they served as means for ensuring the quality of development.

Essentially, local government powers were created to regulate, not control growth. Cities have been expected to cooperate with builders, as part of their "duty" to accept growth generated at the regional, state, and even national levels. Usually, this is done willingly. In some cases, people who benefit directly from growth have served on planning commissions and city councils. In the valley, the pre-SAVE Pleasanton City Councils in particular were dominated by local businessmen, including realtors. Moreover, between 1960 and 1976, the county supervisor from the First District was a realtor and insurance agent.

Although direct conflicts of interest were rumored on occasion, far more significant was the ongoing presence in government of individuals willing to see things from a "business point of view." Such officials were prone, for example, to sympathize with builders' requests to rezone residential properties to higher densities, in accordance with the logic of allowing the "highest and best" use of land.

Even among city staffmembers and public officials with no personal stake in growth, a willingness to facilitate

development evolves as a response to persistent, day-to-day pressures exerted by individuals interested in land conversion. In the formulations of general plans, for example, builders' expectations have influenced the land-use recommendations included in the planning map.

The growth process, however, has never truly been dependent upon the willingness of public servants to use local police powers to promote development. Fundamentally, the political structure has remained subordinate to the economic. Even the presence on the Livermore Council after 1966 of growth-wary Lawrence Laboratory scientists and engineers had little actual impact upon the rate of homebuilding prior to 1972. The city government was forced to permit development, so long as proposals were in accordance with statutory guidelines.

Until the creation of the Local Agency Formation Commissions, the growth process was facilitated further by the ease with which new government entities could be created. The creation of new agencies does not always promote growth directly. It does, however, fragment authority and inhibits overall planning.

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors accelerated valley growth immeasurably when it approved the San Ramon Village "new community" project in 1960. Contributing to the long-term impact of the project was the conversion by Volk-McLain of the Parks Community Services District into the Valley Community Services District as a means for handling sewage treatment, water, parks, garbage collection

and fire protection.

Perhaps equally significant was the creation in 1957 of Zone 7. As a public water agency, Zone 7 was able to contract for State Project water. Governed by a landowner-dominated, independent board of directors, Zone 7 was free to pursue growth-promoting policies such as subsidizing new hookups through water rate revenue collected from existing customers. As a special-purpose agency, however, the Zone could always claim that its function as a supplier of water had no direct bearing upon land-use policy.

#### Ideological

The American predilection for suburban life has been conditioned by a long-standing ambivalence toward cities (White and White 1964). From an early date, rural and small-town life were idealized; partly, this was inspired by the fear of some upper-class Americans that urbanization would reproduce the degraded conditions typical of such English factory cities as Manchester (Kasson 1977: Ch. 2). Cities were seen as artificial and disorderly, characterized by vice, misery and threats of working-class insurrection. By the mid-nineteenth century, the nascent residential suburbs were perceived by the taste-making wealthy as the consummate blend of country and city. At that time and since, the suburban ideal has also represented an attempt to mystify and avoid the unpleasant social consequences of urban capitalist industrialism (Walker 1978).

As indicated in Chapters VIII and IX, many homebuyers



moved to the valley precisely because of its pastoral environment and the small-town atmosphere of its cities. Expectations that such features would endure were generated by the homebuilders themselves through their marketing techniques.

The longtime permissiveness of suburban residents toward local growth was conditioned by several fundamental aspects of American ideology: beliefs in private property rights and progress, individualism, plus a pervasive localism.

Private ownership of property has long been accepted by Americans as a natural reflection of an egoistic, acquisitive human nature. Consequently, the essential sanctity of the land development process has gone unquestioned. Moreover, widespread homeownership has allowed suburban residents to feel some identity of interests with larger propertyholders.

As homeowners, individuals relate to the community at least partly in terms of a calculus of benefits and losses, particularly with regard to taxation and spending issues. Were this all that determined growth attitudes, support for local development would occur only where people believed growth to be financially beneficial.

There are, however, other ideological elements at work. Growth has long been associated with "progress;" consequently, growth is perceived as good, or perhaps more commonly, as inevitable. Accordingly, as described in

Chapter III, a powerful booster ideology has been promulgated by local businesspeople, in part through hometown newspapers such as the Livermore Herald and the Pleasanton Times.

Booster ideology has been bolstered, moreover, by a pervasive localism. This belief extends to the virtues of citizen participation both in civic organizations and the governmental process. Ultimately, the notion that people at the grassroots can best handle their own affairs included support for "good planning." During the fifties and sixties, however, planning and zoning were viewed not as growth-limiting, but merely as means to ensure efficiency. The alleged virtues of planning were such that professional planning consultants could promise that as the inevitable growth was accommodated, the "small town character" of a community like Livermore would be maintained (Chapter V).

Localism could induce interest in local planning, but it also inhibited valley-wide cooperation on development issues. The venerable rivalry between Livermore and Pleasanton has amply illustrated the allegiance of people to the "interests" of their home town.

### The Contradictions

During the fifties and sixties, this growth structure functioned to the apparent satisfaction of most valley residents. The lack of restrictions upon development helped keep housing affordable. With gasoline inexpensive, people embraced eagerly an automobile-centered transportation

system. Although the valley communities did suffer some infrastructural problems (overloaded sewage treatment facilities and overcrowded schools in Livermore, poor water quality in the west valley), these were more than balanced by the available mixture of urban and rural amenities.

By the mid-sixties, however, signs of dissension emerged. By 1971, the valley's problems were manifold: smog, inadequate sewage treatment and water supply, overcrowded schools, discord over increased residential densities, and complaints about a landscape that was becoming "another Los Angeles." What had happened?

As discussed in Chapter XI, the infrastructural problems were caused in part by contingent factors ranging from school district mismanagement in Livermore to an undetected broken air hose at the VCSD wastewater treatment plant. Air pollution, moreover, was partly explainable by the location and topography of the valley.

All of the problems contributing to the crisis atmosphere surrounding the SAVE movement, however, were exacerbated by the intensity of development during the late sixties. Year after year, cheap land, the appeal of "small-town" life, and a convenient commute to East Bay job centers made the valley a prime location for homebuilding. Ultimately, the very rapidity and extensiveness of the growth process itself both strained infrastructure and undermined the amenities originally cherished by homebuyers.

Inevitably, rapid growth causes problems. The severity

of development-related troubles in the valley, however, has been exacerbated by three fundamental contradictions within the growth process. These will be discussed in turn.

First, a contradiction exists between an uncoordinated, piecemeal decision-making process and the emergent, collective nature of the built environment. In the absence of an overall directing authority, a lengthy series of utilitarian micro-decisions can produce an outcome that no one intended. Schelling (1974) has termed this process "the tyranny of small decisions."

The valley landscape was transformed through innumerable incremental actions by individuals, businesses and governments. Environmental problems including smog and sprawl-type development represented the unintended consequences of the optimizing behavior of countless actors. Landowners sought to profit from appreciated land values; homebuilders built subdivisions in accordance with current market demand; home buyers preferred detached units with private yards. People travelled exclusively in automobiles because this was convenient; it also was the only available means of transportation. Auto manufacturers, in turn, saw no profit in voluntarily installing emission controls systems in new cars.

Overall, the system operated in accordance with short-term market forces. No strong central authority determined in advance how the landscape should appear at some future date; however, neither did any "invisible hand" harmonize the separate pieces into an attractive landscape.

Eventually, some established residents began to perceive that continued growth was undermining their own welfare. As Hirsch (1976) has argued, a house on the suburban fringe represents a "positional good," "limited in absolute availability by the context of surrounding conditions and influences" (38). The value of a home so situated is diminished by the continued transformation of raw land to subdivisions.

The second contradiction is that between the localized, fragmented political structure and the diffuse, yet far more powerful economic and political forces that actually determine local growth patterns. As noted above, suburban development has been abetted by the decentralized, multinucleated system of government, in which local powers over land-use control were designed to guide but not slow the growth process. It is not local government, however, but powerful regional or even national forces that mainly determine the rate and type of investment in the built environment.

Each major stage of valley growth actually has been initiated and controlled by outside forces. The decision to establish the weapons research facility near Livermore was made by the Atomic Energy Commission and officials from the U.C. Radiation Laboratory. The facility turned out, in fact, to be far larger than the 500-1,000 employees originally envisioned. The burst of bedroom suburban growth beginning in 1960 was conditioned by the overall growth of

the East Bay, then triggered by the decision by Alameda County to permit Volk-McLain to drop San Ramon Village into the upper Amador Valley. Once underway, this growth proceeded at a furious pace, governed only slightly by fluctuating interest rates. The office boom of the eighties has again been spurred by events elsewhere, including interregional and intersectoral shifts of capital, federal tax policy, advances in telecommunications technology, and an impending scarcity of land closer to the urban core.

Rooted spatially, each community is in fact reactive in the face of capital, which is mobile and footloose. Consequently, local governments in fast-growth areas do not really plan, they react. As actual building pressures contradict local general plans, these are amended, and then revised. Most recently, the arrival of massive office development has caused Pleasanton to scrap its environmentally-oriented 1976 plan and begin anew.

While the decentralized, "balkanized" political structure facilitated short-term growth, it created long-term difficulties. The original establishment of two cities in the valley during the late nineteenth century instigated a competitive relationship that has persisted since. Complicating local politics further was the ill-advised approval by Alameda County of Volk-McLain's "new community." The ultimate result of this experiment was the creation of not one but two new cities. Construction of San Ramon Village also triggered the "land war" between Dublin and Pleasanton, which culminated in the troubled arrangement by

which Pleasanton became dependent upon VCSD for sewage treatment. The problems surrounding this relationship contributed to the "mystery million" sewage crisis of 1971.

Once created, agencies tend to endure, and in some cases induce the creation of yet more governmental entities. To avert the selection of Zone 7 as a valley-wide sewage treatment/disposal agency, Livermore, Pleasanton, and VCSD signed the Joint Powers Agreement creating LAVWMA. To circumvent the LAVWMA by-laws, yet another sewer agency has now been created. Through this step-wise addition of government entities, the system over time becomes increasingly complex and unwieldy.

Attempts to overcome this proliferation of government bodies have met with limited success. The county-level LAFCO has established standardized procedures for handling annexations, mergers, and the creation of new agencies. As the first Los Positas new town battle demonstrated, however (Chapter XIV), LAFCO is itself simply another special-purpose agency that can be used to implement the political agenda of its boardmembers.

Regional government has produced a similarly ambiguous legacy. Valley residents applauded ABAG for thwarting Las Positas, but have exhibited no enthusiasm for granting enforcement powers to a regional agency pertaining to land use or housing policy. The only effective regional-level authorities have been such special-purpose agencies as the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Bay Area Air

Quality Management District.

If anything, the problems stemming from localism and fragmentation in government are likely to worsen during upcoming years, as separate jurisdictions compete for office development and high-end housing, and hope that lower-income housing is supplied elsewhere.

The third contradiction involves ideology. Some of the expectations and values brought by homebuyers into suburban communities have conflicted with the realities of the development process described above. The homebuilders themselves fostered high expectations, attracting potential buyers with promises of "country living," safe streets, good schools, and low taxes. Conditioned by an individualistic, materialistic culture rooted in two centuries of capitalist development, homeowners approached the polis with an orientation toward a bottom-line appraisal of property values, urban amenities, and the tax structure.

Given this self-interested perspective, it is not surprising that homeowners sought to protect their open-space amenities. Moreover, given the suburban expectations for low densities and class homogeneity, it followed that citizens might object to multiples projects that threatened to attract a "transient" population. Finally, the potential always existed for some individuals to seek lower homeownership costs by shifting the fiscal burden of new infrastructure onto builders and incoming residents.

The ideology of localism led people to believe that local government would protect their interests, and that



planning could solve problems stemming from growth. Such expectations were shattered, however, by the reality of unceasing, externally-controlled development, about which local government apparently could do little.

Overall, then, in the very creation of bedroom suburbs lay the seeds of control-growth politics.

### The Growth Control Movement

By 1972, the problems that afflicted the Livermore-Amador Valley provided sufficient justification for a political movement to curb growth. The actual emergence of such a campaign, however, was not inevitable. Although today grassroots movements to control growth in suburban areas are common, in 1972 they were all but unprecedented.

Militating against such action was the pervasive progrowth ideology, the private, family-centered nature of suburban life, and the inhibitions against political involvement that most people experience. Moreover, since the political structures were devised to accommodate rather than stop growth, curbing development required legislative innovations that few citizens would venture to attempt.

Comparisons with other fast-growing suburbs of the same era could ascertain whether the crises that affected the Livermore Amador Valley were in fact unusually severe. No matter how troublesome the objective conditions, however, the SAVE movement undoubtedly was contingent upon the presence of an unusual group of residents: scientists and

engineers employed by the weapons research laboratories.

The importance of laboratory personnel in generating and sustaining the growth-control movement cannot be overemphasized. Of forty individuals who were consistent participants in valley antigrowth political campaigns, nearly 90% were either employees of one of the research laboratories, or else married to a lab employee.

The adversarial relationship between lab professionals and both the homebuilders and the chambers of commerce reflects a wider cultural antagonism between intellectuals and businessmen (Hofstadter 1963). That scholars frequently become advocates for social reform has been suggested regularly since the Renaissance (Lipset 1979: 67). More recently, social critics such as C. Wright Mills (1963) have looked to academicians as agents for social change.

Seymour Martin Lipset has suggested that the increasing dependency of U.S. institutions upon the production of knowledge may ultimately result in considerable dissension against prevailing economic relations:

if...the contradiction of capitalism was was its dependence on an ever-growing working class brought together in large factories, the contradiction of post-industrial society may be its dependence upon large numbers of intellectuals and students for research and innovation on great campuses and in a few intellectual centers of communication and influence.

(1969: 85)

The political role of intellectuals and other professionals engaged in "mental labor" has in fact become a controversial topic among American and Western European

leftists (e.g. Walker 1979). Whether these individuals comprise a discrete "professional-managerial class" or, as suggested by Wright (1979), they occupy "contradictory class locations" combining elements of capitalist, working class and petit-bourgeois social relations, their educational level, humanistic values, and habits of independent work and thought put many of them at odds with capital over social and environmental issues.

Ultimately, the suggestion by Lipset that American intellectuals hold the potential for truly subversive behavior should be viewed with skepticism. Although the "New Left" of the 1960s was composed mainly of university students, adult professionals are a relatively affluent, privileged group. They are, consequently, not prone to truly radical politics. Many do, however, uphold a liberal reformism borne of a belief that through scientific study, rational planning and sound government management, the ills wrought by untrammelled capitalism can be ameliorated (Walker and Greenberg 1982).

On a national level, the political impact of the "professional-managerial-technical stratum" is largely neutralized by the far greater power of large corporations to influence policy. On a local basis, however, such highly-educated individuals can become an effective force for reform. Although Livermore is not a college town, a great number of LLNL researchers might alternatively have been employed as university professors. According to survey research, natural scientists are far more liberal as a group

than the general population (Ladd and Lipset 1975: 33). As will be discussed below, an essentially liberal outlook provided the basis for the ideology underlying SAVE.

The lab professionals had no direct stake in the local economy, hence no financial interest in growth. They suffered no risk of punishment or unemployment because of their political activity. Moreover, since they lived either in Livermore or Pleasanton, they avoided the fragmented sense of place that characterizes commuter life. Lab professionals could quickly master the nuances of the governmental system, and many were accustomed to speaking in public.

It should be stressed that such activists never represented a majority of lab professionals. Particularly in a facility devoted mainly to the design of nuclear weapons, there undoubtedly has been a certain self-selection for conservatives. Out of any sizable population of scientists and engineers, however, it is not surprising that a small number would be disposed to challenge the business community over the growth issue. Of the hundreds of highly-educated employees at the Livermore Laboratory, it required but a handful to launch the "community party" in 1966.

Even given this constituency for activism, the movement would never have achieved such success were it not for key individuals such as Donald Miller, Michael Uthe, and Clarence Hoenig. Also indispensable was the public forum provided by Joan Kinney and her editors at The Independent,

most notably Robert Several. It was the lab, however, that brought Miller, Uthe and Hoenig together; Joan Kinney chose to start The Independent in Livermore precisely because, in her view, at least a portion of the community exhibited heightened cultural and political awareness. Hence, the emergence of the growth-control movement was not automatic, but was strongly conditioned by the presence of the laboratory in the valley.

Further research could determine the extensiveness of similar reform efforts by suburban intellectuals. There have been growth-control movements in Davis, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Palo Alto, Boulder, and Ann Arbor; perhaps there are other examples. It is also worth investigating whether such movements have evolved in parallel fashion; that is, whether growth curbs have been preceded by frustrated efforts at planning and zoning reform similar to those described in Chapters VIII and IX.

#### **Ideology and Goals**

In this work, those who sought to reform the development process have been called "residentialists." This term did not originate here, but was in fact used by some activists to describe themselves. This movement emphasized that the community interests of a majority of citizens often conflicts with those of local businessmen and land developers. The planning and zoning problems that inspired early residentialist activism ultimately provided an experiential foundation for the growth control movement.

Ultimately, "growth control" itself was an umbrella issue, uniting people of diverse political viewpoints in support of a common cause. Their motivations for controlling growth involved different combinations of environmental, fiscal, and exclusionary goals.

1) Environmental and aesthetic goals changed over time. The original insistence by citizens that lot sizes be increased and parkland dedication be required was inspired by the desire for an aesthetically-pleasing community. The onset of severe air pollution gave rise to the notion that growth actually was environmentally harmful. Most recently, resurgent urbanization pressures have caused demands for protection of the vineyards, the ridgetops and other open space to become prominent (e.g. Kiefer 1986).

2) Fiscal concerns were reflected directly by the insistence that residents not be required to pay for growth-facilitating expansions of infrastructure. This was partly justified by the claim that homebuilders could afford to internalize some of these costs. Underscoring the disdain that some scientists felt for businessmen, Donald Miller and Robert Pearson constantly pointed to windfalls earned from rezonings and the cutting of regulatory corners as evidence for avaricious intent.

3) Since people often will not admit to class or racial prejudices in public, the possible exclusionary aspects of control-growth sentiment are more difficult to evaluate. With regard to residential densities, for example, it is hard to ascertain where concern over environmental quality

ends, and a desire to exclude lower-income residents or those with "transient" lifestyles begins. Evidence for an "environmental protection hustle," however, emerged most clearly from Pleasanton, where the only consistent manifestation of residentialist sentiment has been efforts to block the construction of apartments.

For the SAVE leaders, exclusionary intent did not appear to be a strong motivation for activism. Fundamentally, the movement represented an outgrowth of the liberal ideology mentioned above, which maintains that government has a duty to regulate business in the long-term public interest. For certain individuals, activism was inspired further by resentment over the apparent power of developers to control the growth and appearance of the city. At the same time, such community leaders as Donald Miller, Clarence Hoenig, Archer Futch, Helen Tirsell, and more recently, Cathie Brown, have balanced advocacy of low-density development and open space preservation with support for racial integration and the provision of lower-income housing. The editorial policy of The Independent has similarly reflected a liberal viewpoint.

In evaluating the broader basis for support for controlled growth, it must be noted that the liberalism of the residentialist leadership has never extended to the population as a whole. Overall, Livermore is a conservative community. In 1969, the electorate turned down overwhelmingly the establishment of a human rights

commission with subpoena powers. In 1984, 69% of Livermore voters (and 70% in Pleasanton) supported the reelection of Ronald Reagan, as compared with 39% in a real university town, Palo Alto.

Clearly, growth controls have not been inspired entirely by idealism. Its adherents have appealed to voters' self-interest. It is likely that, as charged by Frieden and others, many homeowners have indeed desired to "pull up the drawbridge" to their communities at least partway, in order to protect their suburban lifestyles. Court decisions have implied, however, that such local self-interest is justifiable, as long as it does not conflict unduly with the "regional welfare."

#### Achievements

The accomplishments of this movement have been significant, but should not be overestimated. In slowing the growth process over the past fifteen years, activists were assisted by business conditions and cooperation from higher levels of government. With the LAVWMA pipeline, for example, state and federal grant policies meshed fortuitously with the local interest in growth control. Tax-cutting Proposition 13 unexpectedly encouraged curbs upon residential growth. Finally, two severe housing recessions served to control residential growth more completely than any local statute.

Even considering such fortuitous circumstances, the influence of the valley residentialists since the mid-sixties has been considerable. Their growth-pay-for-itself



approach to urban development has become standard throughout much of the nation. Twice, they have blocked construction the Las Positas new town. The growth slowdown has prevented deterioration of air quality, helped preserve the vineyards, and maintained much open space that otherwise might not exist today. Finally, they have managed to devise systems for limiting residential growth that incorporate provisions for significant amounts of low-to-moderate income housing.

An irony of the adversarial role, however, is that some positive consequences of activists' actions ultimately are credited to their opponents. For example, many of the myriad conditions that have made the Hacienda Business Park a model development were undoubtedly devised in order to prevent the entire project from being scuttled by referendum. In public discussion, however, praise for such "farsighted" measures is directed exclusively to the developers and the Pleasanton City Council.

On the negative side, growth curbs have contributed to some unknown extent to housing inflation, and have caused some growth to leapfrog into the Central Valley towns of Tracy and Manteca. Moreover, although no such evidence was uncovered in this study, it remains possible that the residentialist influence has inhibited businesses from moving to Livermore. The question of whether there has been a "capital strike" against Livermore or other control-growth cities should be pursued further. If business has in fact boycotted Livermore, this is largely a political, not an

economic act. With the exception of such cosmetic matters as the size of signs, the residentialists did little to discourage industry and commerce from moving to Livermore. Businessmen antagonistic to Miller's philosophy, however, might understandably wish to avoid rewarding such heresy, and consequently look elsewhere.

### The Longer View

Largely because of pressures for reform from environmentalists, the land-use planning process has become more thorough during the past twenty years. To verify this, one need only compare the rapidity with which San Ramon Village was approved in 1960 (Chapter VI) with the lengthy proceedings associated with the ill-fated Las Positas project. Regarding Hacienda Business Park, the Phase II environmental impact report bibliography lists over eight full pages of government documents, engineering reports and planning studies germane to the project and its potential effects upon the surrounding area (Owens 1985).

Hacienda itself represents a contemporary trend toward larger, better-planned units of development. At the same time, the increased up-front fees for infrastructure paid by all builders have to a considerable extent weakened the fiscal objections to land development.

Such advancements, however, still occur within a political structure that remains fragmented and weakly-coordinated. Furthermore, no matter how well-planned and

soundly-financed individual developments within fast-growth suburban areas become, the fundamental contradiction will remain: the massive conversion of open land to urban uses diminishes environmental values for existing residents.

Consequently, it is likely that grassroots growth control movements will continue to emerge. As the American workforce becomes increasingly white-collar, the constituency for controlled growth is expanding. Between 1970 and 1982, the proportion of "professional and technical" workers within the U.S. labor force increased from 14.2% to 17% (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983b: 417). Such individuals, moreover, tend to be concentrated within certain affluent suburban communities. Meanwhile, whereas environmentalist philosophy has become diffused widely, progrowth ideology seems far less pervasive than a generation ago. This change is particularly pronounced in Northern California; a wider investigation of geographical differences might prove revealing in this regard.

Most importantly, there is now considerable precedent for controlling local growth. Although the control-growth movement began as a response to residential building pressures, it has expanded during the eighties to include curbs on other types of development, as well. Burgeoning office construction in Contra Costa County has generated a wave of voter initiatives to control growth. Such exercises in "ballot-box democracy" can trace their origins to the pathbreaking use of the initiative process by the sponsors

of SAVE. Particularly in those states in which the initiative and referendum processes provide citizens with legislative means to redress grievances, the legal mechanisms for slowing growth will remain easily available.

It is uncertain, however, whether growth control will become an ongoing practice within suburban communities, or simply a periodic crisis-response tactic. For five main reasons, the latter will more likely be the typical case.

First, the number of individuals willing to combat the "growth machine" on a sustained basis is limited. Politics is an arduous, time-consuming activity. Most citizens will become involved politically only in response to crises that affect them directly. Over an extended period, it is extremely difficult to sustain a political movement dependent upon grassroots energy. In political campaigns, pro-growth interests are invariably far better financed. Meanwhile, individuals with the resiliency of a Donald Miller are rare; within a short time, many activists suffer "burnout."

Once crisis conditions are alleviated, public interest diminishes. In this respect, Pleasanton has shown itself to be perhaps more typical than Livermore. Once the essential problems that generated SAVE were resolved, the impetus to further reform in Pleasanton dissipated. Follow-up investigations of other early control-growth communities such as Petaluma and Ramapo might reveal the extent to which such movements can be sustained.

Second, the peculiar nature of land development is

that, like a ratchet, the process moves in one direction only. Except in rare cases when open space is purchased for parks, undeveloped lands such as the Las Positas Valley or Pleasanton and Sunol Ridges can be "saved" repeatedly; only one approval, however, is necessary to mobilize the bulldozers and hence transform the landscape permanently. The persistence of development pressures can become a discouragement to long-term growth control efforts.

Third, there are serious structural limitations upon land use controls at the local level. Undoubtedly, the expansion of local police powers to include the timing of growth was a significant change. Within the total land conversion process, however, the ultimate decision-making authority regarding investment has remained the prerogative of the private sector. Lacking the resources to construct the mix of housing and industry that would enable a city to achieve its general plan goals, local governments remain essentially supplicatory in relation to capital. To advocate direct government control over investment in the built environment would be to embrace some form of socialism; such a radical proposal is not likely to gain a sympathetic ear in suburbia soon.

Overall, what Calvin Coolidge declared in 1925 remains true: "The business of America is business." The hegemony of the private sector as a model for efficiency and legitimacy was emphasized inadvertently even by Livermore activist Donald Miller. On more than one occasion, he

declared that his aim was to "run government like a business instead of for business." Government, supposedly inefficient and ineffectual, must consistently apologize for its exercise of power with respect to all but military affairs.

This problem of legitimation relates closely to the fourth limitation upon local growth controls: the tendency for such reforms to be eroded or coopted for the sake of accelerated development. Within a fast-growing region, the apparently "parochial" nature of local controls can easily be attacked by pro-development interests. Particularly if infrastructural crises are successfully averted, developers argue that controls are unnecessary. Within a context of escalating housing costs, any below-market growth limit can be made to appear extreme, the product of exclusionary motivations.

As the case of Pleasanton has shown, in the face of strong pressures for growth, it is a simple matter for the original system of fixed limits to be discarded in favor of a more "flexible" system of growth management. As a means for ensuring capital facilities availability and screening competing housing proposals, the growth management structure will likely endure, but the overall process of land conversion will be slowed but minimally.

Finally, even if maintained over time, growth control will be discredited to some extent by its own internal failures and negative external effects. It has been argued here that the goals of growth-control advocates were not

primarily exclusionary, but were aimed at establishing a mix of land uses balancing open space, housing, and industry. This image, however, suggests a situation of near-autarky, in which citizens of each separate community live, work and shop locally.

Such a goal reflects a flawed understanding of the interdependent nature of the contemporary metropolis. The private automobile has made possible an extended journey-to-work; the advent of two wage-earner households may be causing the existent pattern of lengthy commutes to become even more pronounced. Under these circumstances, even if a local "balance" between jobs and housing were established in Livermore and Pleasanton, a large percentage of workers would continue to commute out of the valley, while others commuted in.

As indicated above, moreover, local growth control does produce some negative impacts at the regional level. Although the extensiveness of these effects with respect to Livermore and Pleasanton has not been established, growth limits in the Livermore-Amador Valley almost certainly have caused homebuilding pressures to increase within such outlying communities as Tracy and Manteca. Growth management, then, has apparently resulted in a grandiose form of leapfrog development.

Growth-control advocates answer such criticism by claiming that an accelerated buildout in Livermore and Pleasanton would unfairly burden those communities with growth pressures that are in fact regional in scope. This

would suggest that regional-level planning might provide a superior long-term answer to the problem of uneven growth. A powerful regional authority could mandate higher-density development near job centers, while at the same time protecting open space, and limiting growth within environmentally-sensitive areas.

Ignoring for the moment the formidable political obstacles to establishment of such a regional authority and the resistance of suburban residents to high-density development, the fact remains that the Bay Area is growing at such a rapid pace that even regional-level planning could not alleviate local growth pressures satisfactorily. According to the Association of Bay Area Governments (1985a), 1.4 million jobs may be added within the Bay Area between 1980 and 2005. Overall, the nine-county area must accommodate more than one million new residents. In all, some 558,000 additional housing units may be required. If this is indeed the case, then growth could hardly be spread thin enough throughout the region to ameliorate potential local conflicts.

Obviously, such growth pressures are not manifest everywhere in the United States. The Bay Area boom is occurring, in fact, within a national context in which some regions are growing rapidly, while others decline (Sternlieb and Hughes 1975, Perry and Watkins 1977, Sawers and Tabb 1984). Ultimately, then, the phenomenon of uneven growth can most logically be addressed at the national level. It



might seem reasonable to advocate a federal effort to redirect jobs and investment toward presently-declining areas in the northeastern and midwestern parts of the country.

The prospects for such a policy are not bright. Since World War II, there has been considerable effort in Western Europe to encourage the establishment of "growth poles" within "lagging" regions (Sundquist 1975). Even for governments with strong planning powers, however, it is difficult to counteract the economic forces that encourage continued investment in areas that already are growing (Pred 1977). To date, attempts to disperse urban growth have met with minimal success.

Partly in recognition of such failures, the federal government has come to accept intraregional and interregional shifts as "natural." In a 1980 report prepared for the Carter Administration, The President's Commission for a National Agenda for the Eighties called for an urban policy that accommodates uneven growth, "that allows places to transform and assists them in adjusting to difficult circumstances" (1980: 98).

Underscoring this apparent commitment to the beneficence of the "invisible hand" of the marketplace, the report authors declare:

Priority should not be assigned to the implementation of a spatially sensitive policy effort designed to retard or reverse the emergence of new economic patterns and relationships within and among the nation's settlements (p. 99).

Under the more business-oriented Reagan administration, capital has proceeded unconstrained toward western and southern metropolitan regions, including the "high-tech" Bay Area.

With no end in sight to the current pattern of intensive, localized growth pressures, the future portends continued sporadic clashes over suburban land conversion and its attendant problems. In illuminating a single episode of growth, crisis, and the subsequent struggle to establish new means for regulating development, this study perhaps will help prepare some of its readers to think constructively regarding how best to cope with such future situations.

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## Newspapers

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- 1) The Livermore Herald, 1876-1962.
- 2) Southern Alameda County News, 1933-45; combined with the Livermore Journal to become
- 3) The Livermore News, 1946-1962.  
(1) and (3) were jointly owned as of October 1, 1956; they combined to become
- 4) The Livermore Herald and News (May 1962-December 1972).  
This paper was purchased by Hayward Daily Review publisher Floyd Sparks in 1965. The paper was renamed the Tri-Valley Herald and News as of January 1, 1973. This was shortened to The Tri-Valley Herald in September 1973. The Herald was purchased by Garden State Newspapers, Inc. in May 1985. Since 1973, the Herald also has published a controlled-distribution shopping edition called The Enterprise.
- 5) The Independent (Livermore), September 1963--present.
- 6) The Pleasanton Times, 1886-1975. Published as The Times (Pleasanton), from 1958 until 1971. Ownership was transferred to Contra Costa Times publisher Dean Leshner (Walnut Creek), as of January 1, 1971. Finally incorporated into
- 7) The Valley Times, August 1, 1971--present .

Citations from other newspapers, including major metropolitan dailies, are included within the text. Prominent feature stories are listed in the "articles" section of this references list.

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