PRESERVING CALIFORNIA CITY:
AN EXPLORATION INTO THE CITY PLAN PRESERVATION
OF A MID-CENTURY, MASTER-PLANNED COMMUNITY

by

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ABSTRACT

Plan preservation has been a preservation tool for decades, but it is not often used, and even less understood. How it can be used or where it should be used remain unclear to many within the field. This thesis explores the possibilities of preserving a city plan using California City, CA, as a case study. California City is a mid-twentieth-century, master-planned city designed by noted architecture firm Smith and Williams in association with the Community Facilities Planners, and located in the Mojave Desert. Imagined as a city to rival Los Angeles, it never fully developed. However, because of what was actually built or designed, the central city contains intriguing remnants of an important past, one shared by many master-planned communities designed after World War II. This thesis investigates California City’s intended design versus its current landscape in an effort to determine what needs protecting, and how one would do so. It concludes that while plan preservation in California City may not be the best tool available, analysis of the original master plan offers many lessons. Plan preservation in California City can and should be seen as a tool for future development, rather than a hindrance to it. Furthermore, planned cities approaching or surpassing the fifty-year mark will need to be evaluated and protected, and plan preservation may be an effective strategy.
i. INTRODUCTION

i.1 The Plan

There are many ways to identify and protect historic resources. There are surveys, which find the potential resources; designations, which recognize them as significant; and regulations, which ensure they are maintained and their integrity is not compromised. Some of these efforts, such as surveys, are more proactive in recognizing resources; by identifying a potential resource ahead of time, there is a more likely chance that it may be protected in the future. However, whether intentionally or not, preservationists often react once something becomes endangered. This leaves many resources vulnerable to future development.

In the United States, the field of heritage conservation and tools such as designation and incentives are structured under the umbrella of preservation planning, as identified by the National Park Service (NPS). The NPS defines preservation planning as “the rational, systematic process by which a community develops a vision, goals and priorities for the preservation of its historic and cultural resources.”¹ The action of preservation planning is implemented after historic resources have already been identified and been assigned a cultural or historical meaning. By preparing a plan to protect the resources, the hope is that future development will not destroy them, and their stories can be passed on to future generations. This system, while not foolproof, has led to many successes in heritage conservation. However, as the field advances, the extent of what needs protection and how it should be protected has understandably broadened. For example, heritage conservation now identifies not only individual resources, but also districts and landscapes. It is becoming more clear that in heritage conservation, protection of the larger whole—the setting, the context, the community—can be just as, if not more, important than protecting the individual resource. Therefore, one resource that needs further discussion is the element that organizes all the smaller pieces—a city’s (or community’s) master plan. What happens when the plan itself is the entity that is significant and needs protecting? Can protecting the plan be a proactive tool to ensure protection of resources in the future?

i.2 Master Planned Communities

One of the United States’ most noted planners, Frederick Law Olmsted, explained, “City planning is the attempt to exert a well-considered control on behalf of the people of a city over the development of their physical environment as a whole.” More simply, it is understanding the idea of how a community should develop and what should go where. This thesis will analyze the idea of the city plan as utilized in master-planned communities. Master-planned communities are one type of planned community; in technical terms, the American Planning Association (APA) classifies a planned community as a “planned unit development” (PUD). The APA considers a master-planned community as an extreme case of clustered PUDs, where the plan “involves substantial acreage and combines employment, office, retail, and entertainment centers with associated self-contained neighborhoods.” Authors George Hjelte and Jay Sanford Shivers consider master-planning as a dynamic process, one that “suggests neither conclusiveness nor finality.” It should guide development based on extensive research and an understanding of the site and community.

Master planned communities are not uncommon to the United States, and date as far back as the sixteenth century, as in the case of St. Augustine, Florida. Other examples over the course of history include Jamestown, New Haven, Williamsburg, and Savannah. However, in the mid-nineteenth century, master planned communities became especially prevalent, due to immigration between states, and subsequent increased populations in need of housing. As the idea of this community typology developed, and more master planned communities were constructed, developers had to become more creative with how to attract people to these new places. At the same time, they also became the canvas in which noted players in design professions, such as architecture, landscape architecture and planning, could experiment with ideas and unprecedented designs.

The extent to which development teams planned these communities is truly remarkable. In many, everything in the community could be strategically laid out, from the assignment of

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4 Ibid.
public and private spaces to the design of a lamppost or road sign, in order to create a sense of unity and comfort. As both a “type of development and a process,” a successful planned community would need to provide for the needs of the people and be a pleasant place to live. Unfortunately in some instances, the outcomes of these developments fail to reflect this initial creativity or drive for greatness. This is to be expected. With changing social, political and economic factors, the needs of the people often change the way a city develops. Arguably, it is impossible for a small team to predict the growth of a large community of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of people. But as a community evolves, the original planned spaces and unique built resources may be threatened or completely lost. It seems logical that the security of the original plan can be used as a tool for both protection and development. This would ensure that valuable spaces and places are not endangered as the city grows organically.

This idea is not revolutionary to heritage conservation in the United States, but it also hasn’t been embraced. This is because the idea itself is tricky, and many questions arise from its implications. First, how does one even protect a plan? Is the idea too stifling, restricting a city to a certain path of development instead of letting it grow naturally and in response to the people’s needs? In contrast, what is the point of a city plan if not to follow it? Is the work of the original team to be forgotten? Currently, there are few cities whose master plans are specifically designated as historic in the National Register of Historic Places; perhaps the most well known is the “L’Enfant Plan of the City of Washington, District of Columbia.” While plenty of towns and communities are designated as historic districts, the plan for Washington, D.C. is designated for its identity as a plan, and is not considered a historic district. There have been few similar designations since D.C.’s plan designation in 1997; because of its precedence, it sets up a starting point for discussing city plan designation in a broader forum. Even more so, it shows how a city can capitalize on its own history, by protecting its original city plan and using it as a tool for efficient, but complementary, development.

i.3 Thesis

This thesis aims to present a discussion of the designation and preservation of city plans, using California City, California as a case study. California City’s history and current state is

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much different than that of Washington D.C.’s. Located in Kern County’s Mojave Desert (in the Antelope Valley), just over 100 miles northeast from Los Angeles, this master-planned city had its origins only 57 years ago, in 1958. Developer Nat K. Mendelsohn purchased over 80,000 acres in the desert, essentially creating a city out of thin air. He believed the city, incorporated in 1965, would one-day rival Los Angeles. The team of prominent Southern California planners, architects and landscape architects he assembled intricately planned the city, the concept a mix of recreational planning and Garden City principles catering to multi-generational families – from small children to the elderly. When construction began it was heavily documented and marketed. Much excitement arose about this oasis in the desert, but when momentum slowed a decade later, few actually moved there. A city designed to house millions of people, now has a current population of only 14,120 residents. Only a handful of the architects’ original designs were built, and since their construction, most have been demolished. Streets were graded, paved and given names but have since eroded, present only as dirt roads. Lots stand empty, the desert environment slowly overtaking the built one (Figure i.1).

Figure i.1: City Boundaries of California City, California City, CA [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; Google Maps. Google.

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8 “All About California City,” California City, accessed December 15, 2014, http://californiacity.com/about.html; This number is from the 2010 U.S. Census.
Surprisingly, new growth has occurred in areas originally dedicated to similar programming. Though battered, residential roads are still physically present. Original buildings spared from demolition peek out beneath layers of stucco. There is still reason to believe that California City’s original city plan is worth preserving, and an opportunity to discuss how that could be accomplished. Referencing Washington, D.C.’s plan designation as a precedent, I will examine California City’s master plan, and understand it architecturally, socially and even culturally. This thesis will look at the factors influencing the original design of the plan by prominent Los Angeles architecture firm, Smith and Williams; analyze the original idea through drawings, diagrams and sketches; evaluate how the city looks today as compared to the original plan; and discuss whether the preservation of the city’s plan would be beneficial to its future development. In doing so, this thesis will provide a more comprehensive understanding of plan designation at any municipal level and can be presented as a tool for city development and proactive preservation planning.
1. A BRIEF CONTEXT OF PLANNING IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The evolution of city planning in the United States has a long history, spanning over a century, and originating outside of the U.S. Therefore, before beginning an in-depth analysis of the design of California City’s master plan, it is important to have a general understanding of the phases of planning and design that affected California City specifically. California City’s plan appears to be a product derived from three different phases in Garden City planning, combined with popular recreational planning principles of the early-to-mid-twentieth century; it is this era that is arguably one of the most influential times in U.S. planning. It was during this time that urban planning became an actual profession, and went beyond the ideas of architects or designers. It was also a time when some felt the need for an “urban cleansing.” That is, planners began trying to repurpose their cities, giving them a fresh face and rebelling against the harsh, industrial environments that many had succumbed to. Ebenezer Howard had already proposed a solution to this in the United Kingdom by 1898. Known as the Garden City Movement, Howard sought a city that provided ample green, open space, while facilitating a harmony between town and country. The idea itself was physically implemented in only a handful of situations in the U.K. However the concept became of increasing fascination and interest, especially within the United States. This second phase of Garden City planning continued with Clarence S. Stein. An admirer of Howard’s, Stein adapted the principles of the movement to the urban conditions of the U.S. Stein organized a team of urban professionals (and friends) into the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA) to help brainstorm and implement ways to make America’s cities better. The RPAA worked from 1923-1933 on different planning projects; like the Garden City Movement in the U.K., few were completed in the States, but those that were have left us with a vast amount of information about this period in urban planning history. Furthermore, the projects and the ideas implemented provided a foundation for another wave of planning projects around the mid-twentieth century. Urban planners and developers again adapted Garden City principles into master-planned cities developed in response to changing conditions including

increasing industry, population booms, and an interest in architectural experimentation. This final phase of Garden City planning in the 1930s and 1940s can be seen in the design of the Greenbelt communities of Maryland, Ohio and Wisconsin. It was also adapted on the West Coast in superblock, garden apartment communities such as Baldwin Hills Village. California City’s master plan is an amalgamation of these three phases of planning, in combination with planning principles catering to recreation and leisure. Planners and designers, such as Wayne R. Williams of Smith and Williams, believed that recreation was crucial to the social, mental and emotional health of the general population and, therefore, it must be integrated into all design and planning projects. This chapter will give a brief overview of these planning principles, which will later become more apparent in the exploration of California City’s master plan.

1.1 Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City Movement

In response to a region that had been overcome with pollution, overcrowding, ill health, and city plans that no longer fit social and physical needs, Ebenezer Howard visualized a city that would contain clusters of self-sufficient communities protected by greenbelts of open, natural space. While he was an advocate for rural life, he understood that many people who had flocked to urban city centers in the later part of the nineteenth century could not be easily enticed back to rural environments. Therefore, he needed to create a city that could provide urban and rural advantages, a harmonious relationship between town and country. He envisioned a diagram of three magnets, Town, Country and Town-Country, and listed the qualities of each. Through this diagram, Howard found that, while Town and Country provided both advantages and disadvantages to dwellers, “…neither the Town magnet nor the Country magnet represents the full plan and purpose of nature. Human society and the beauty of nature are meant to be enjoyed together.” This resulting magnet represents the social, economic and physical advantages of both the Town and County magnets (Figure 1.1).

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1.2 Clarence Stein, the RPAA and Radburn

In early-twentieth century United States, Americans began to become entranced with picturesque street design and landscapes, such as those of Andrew Downing and Frederick Law Olmsted.\textsuperscript{16} They saw images of how these carefully calculated landscapes, with rolling hillsides, winding roads, handsome trees and gothic cottages, could create beautiful visual effects.\textsuperscript{17} The ideas for Howard’s Garden City fit well within this picturesque identity, which included curving streets, vegetation and both a visual and physical separation between automobiles and


\textsuperscript{17} Breisch, Lecture.
pedestrians. This became an attractive idea for many Americans, who felt their cities were following in the footsteps of those in the U.K. and succumbing to “social and moral degeneration.” Many planners and designers began to think of ways to plan towns that encompassed these new ideals, and that would be rid of the toxic social standards that could be seen in the urban metropolis. Urban planner Clarence Stein’s response was “to connect a diverse group of friends in a critical examination of the city, in the collaborative development and dissemination of ideas, in political action and in city building projects.” While many people filtered in and out between 1923 and 1933, the group’s active years, the core five members consisted of Clarence Stein, Benton MacKaye, Alexander Bing, Lewis Mumford, and Henry Wright. The men created different commissions that focused on different types of planning projects. While the group worked on many different types of planning projects, Stein and Wright took on the idea to experiment with Garden City planning, with an intent to “bridge the gaps between the city, the suburbs, and the open region.” Their work resulted in two garden city projects: Sunnyside Gardens in New York and Radburn in New Jersey. Stein acknowledged that Radburn diverts somewhat from the Garden City principles as Howard had envisioned them, but today it is recognized as one of the few communities in the country that most resembles a Garden City. Though many of Howard’s ideas seemed to get lost in transition from the U.K. to the United States, it is still important to understand how the RPAA envisioned their own Garden City, because it provides the foundation for the post-war, master-planned communities of the mid-twentieth century.

Radburn, New Jersey is often considered a “successful failure,” even by Stein himself. This is in part due to the fact that it was envisioned in 1929, just before the stock market crashed and the Great Depression hit. While many ideas were envisioned for Garden Cities in general, many could not be financially carried out. Another reason for its “failure” may have been the adaptation of the original Garden City principles to fix the issues found significant by the RPAA.

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21 Ibid, 462 and 463.
24 MacKean, “Greenbelt America,” 74.
Radburn was considered a community designed for the motor age, because one of the highest priorities was to separate pedestrians from motor vehicles. Because of this, Radburn arguably could be considered a transitional city—one between a Garden City and a New Town. Stein explains:

> In our minds’ eye we still had the theme that Ebenezer Howard had created so vividly…We believed thoroughly in green belts, and towns of a limited size planned for work as well as living…We did not fully recognize that our main interest after our Sunnyside experience had transferred to a more pressing need, that of a town in which people could live peacefully with the automobile—or rather in spite of it.

This thinking almost became unique to the problems faced in the United States, and this type of planning can be seen in other types of developments such as Central Park in Manhattan. The solution was known as the “superblock,” in which topography, site and landscape became a canvas for streets to be easily developed and mapped out. This strategy made it easier to separate vehicles and pedestrians. In the superblock tradition, cars were restricted to the perimeters of neighborhoods, while open green space ran through the blocks as continuous park spaces. Among the superblock, other elements of the “Radburn Plan” included specialized roads (designed to have a specific function), houses turned inwards towards parks and gardens, rather than outwards towards the street, and parks that acted as the backbone to the superblocks. Unfortunately, some elements that Howard advocated for, such as the greenbelt, were sacrificed. Radburn was planned as a system of three neighborhoods with a combined population of 25,000, and the area proved too small to support a greenbelt. Furthermore, only two of the three neighborhoods were even started, and neither was ever fully completed. Stein and Wright’s experiences with Radburn, as well as the future issues that Stein and other planners had while working on the greenbelt communities of the 1930s, illustrate the challenges of adapting Garden City guidelines to a completely different region of the world. While Howard’s ideas were welcomed by planners of the RPAA (Stein proclaimed himself a “disciple” of Howard), they

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27 Ibid, 220-221.
28 Ibid, 221.
29 Ibid., 224-226.
32 Ibid, 232.
33 These greenbelt communities include Greenbelt, Maryland, Greenhills, Ohio, and Greendale, Wisconsin.
were forced to accept and evolve the successful results of these cities in ways that were more appropriate to the circumstances in the United States.  

Fortunately, there were successes among the failures at Radburn. The community turned out to be incredibly safe, due to the separation of automobiles and pedestrians. At the time Stein wrote “Towards New Towns for America” in *The Town Planning Review*, in which he detailed his experiences planning Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn, there had only been two road deaths in the community, only one of which was between a vehicle and a pedestrian. Radburn had successfully incorporated elements to separate these two entities, such as overpasses and underpasses, which not only provided safe passage around the community, but also acted as points of reference for citizens (Figure 1.3).

![Figure 1.2](image.jpg)

*Figure 1.2:* This photo captures the separation between automobiles and pedestrians in Radburn. Pedestrians use pathways under the bridges while cars use separate roadways. Clarence S. Stein, “Towards New Towns for America,” *The Town Planning Review* 20, no. 3, (Oct. 1949), Plate 42.

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36 Ibid, 234-235.
Radburn also successfully integrated recreational spaces into its plan. The planners placed emphasis on recreation by centering the neighborhoods around elementary schools and playgrounds.\textsuperscript{37} They also constructed two swimming pools that became the “centers for outdoor life in the summer.”\textsuperscript{38} Ultimately, the development of Radburn (and the future greenbelt communities) instilled a set of main principles that became basic to good planning: separation of pedestrians and vehicles, superblocks with green space, cul-de-sacs, footpaths and overpasses, relation of outdoor spaces to indoor ones, shared common land and a town center, and places for recreation and leisure activities.\textsuperscript{39}

1.3 The Greenbelt Communities

Radburn could not be completed as it was envisioned because the financial backing for the project was affected when the world fell into an economic depression. Other greenbelt communities were eventually created between 1935 and 1937 by Rexford Guy Tugwell, as part of the New Deal Resettlement Administration, which was developed in response to the Great Depression to provide employment.\textsuperscript{40} These communities were smaller than those of Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn, due to the idea that there could be many smaller Garden Cities “scattered across the landscape.”\textsuperscript{41} These communities—Greenbelt, Maryland, Greendale, Wisconsin and Greenhills, Ohio—were based on the Garden City model, though advertised as more affordable and better planned, with more public and green spaces.\textsuperscript{42} Unfortunately, in reality they became “the meager remnants of a far larger project: the remaking of the American landscape envisioned by individuals like [Rexford Guy Tugwell]…and by the members of the RPAA before him.”\textsuperscript{43} Though 3,000 greenbelt towns were envisioned by Tugwell, only three were actually constructed, and only partially at that.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, 231.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, plate 40.
\textsuperscript{40} MacKean, “Greenbelt America,” 3.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, 14.
\textsuperscript{42} MacKean, “Greenbelt America,” 9.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid, 18.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid, 18. Tugwell left while the greenbelt communities were under construction, so much of the original form of the towns was lost.
In its marketing, the Resettlement Administration (RA) linked the greenbelt design to major players in the Garden City Movement, including Ebenezer Howard and the RPAA.\(^{45}\) Like previous garden cities, Greenbelt communities were designed to enable community development, and were intended to have open, social spaces in order to “guarantee healthy growth patterns.”\(^{46}\) Author Molly Timmins MacKean explains, “The greenbelt communities constituted not simply an alternate physical planning model, but also a whole new social and economic order with which to house the nation.”\(^{47}\) Greenbelt, Maryland is credited with being the most fully envisioned and the most similar to the RPAA’s plans for Radburn. Designed around the superblock, Greenbelt featured row housing and pedestrian networks similar to that of Radburn, while Greendale and Greenhills were designed more like traditional suburbs.\(^{48}\) MacKean also explains, “In Greenbelt, the RA therefore came close to realizing the kind of environment for social learning that the RPAA had sought to establish at Radburn.”\(^{49}\) However, one problem that the RA began to discover was that it was difficult to adapt their Garden City plan to the different sites selected. Therefore, each community was interpreted and designed in a very different way, and designs were compromised.\(^{50}\) For example, while Greenbelt was able to take advantage of pedestrian networks and open spaces, Greenhills provided many challenges for design. For that site, “the town’s designers struggled to provide the public spaces, clustered homes, and pedestrian networks that made Greenbelt, Maryland so famous a site for social learning.”\(^{51}\) The topography made it difficult to construct superblocks and clustered dwellings; while the site provided scenic views, it did not provide a stable terrain.\(^{52}\) In combination with budget constraints, Greenhills had to greatly sacrifice Garden City principles as defined by the RPAA.\(^{53}\)

Also like Radburn, construction for these communities began before the RA completed fully formed community plans.\(^{54}\) This ambitious approach, as well as the timing of the communities being constructed during the Great Depression, contributed to the “successful

\(^{45}\) Ibid, 102.
\(^{46}\) Ibid, 90.
\(^{47}\) Ibid, 21.
\(^{49}\) Ibid, 121.
\(^{50}\) Ibid, 118.
\(^{51}\) Ibid, 130.
\(^{52}\) Ibid, 127-128.
\(^{53}\) Ibid, 135-136 and 138.
\(^{54}\) MacKean, “Greenbelt America,” 116.
failure” of the RA’s greenbelt methodology. While more than 100 cities were initially selected to house greenbelt communities implemented by the RA, the number decreased to twenty-five, then five and finally three. Similarly, the number of housing units in each community decreased as well. However, despite the seemingly large number of failures in regards to the greenbelt communities, MacKean reasons that “all three greenbelt communities nonetheless constituted an unprecedented federal venture into the planning of public communities.” Again like Radburn, the greenbelt communities contributed greatly to how Garden City planning was interpreted, implemented and accepted in the United States.

1.4 Garden Apartments

Garden City planning principles also made a transition to the West Coast during and after World War II, particularly to Southern California, where there was a need for higher density housing due to a major population boom. Greg Hise, author of Magnetic Los Angeles, states that war-driven population growth in California was 1.5 million people. Los Angeles alone experienced a boom of 301,410 residents, a 20% increase from the preceding decade. Southern California-specific housing response came in the form of garden apartment communities. Post-war garden apartments evolved as a “paradigm of the planning principles of the RPAA,” offering higher density buildings, with less green space and more opportunities for recreation. While the design of these spaces again lost the expression of some Garden City principles due to different needs in Southern California, it is important to conclude this Garden City Movement analysis with garden apartments, since they were likely some of the most significant precedents studied by the designers of California City.

Just before World War II, some architects in Los Angeles were experimenting with Garden City development. This included Reginald D. Johnson and Lewis E. Wilson, who worked on slum clearance projects, clearing out the Beaudry Street slums and building a new community in its placed based on the design of Radburn. Architect Lloyd Wright also

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55 Ibid, 73-74.
56 Ibid, 73-74.
57 Ibid, 144.
60 Architectural Resources Group, Garden Apartments, 24.
experiment with garden city development in place of slums.61 By 1938, Stein had traveled to California, calling for larger future developments with “varied community space.”62 He consulted on two housing projects, Carmelitos and Harbor Hills; his Garden City philosophies were eventually embraced by the federal government and became the design standard for public housing.63

In 1941 and 1942, both the City and County Housing Authorities of Los Angeles constructed sixteen garden apartments, with the intention to fit within a propose Master Plan for Los Angeles.64 The garden apartments were designed with superblock site planning whenever possible, which catered to higher density housing and separation of pedestrian and automobile.65 Garden City planning principles where implemented when possible, but “federal guidelines on unit count and cost prohibited the relegation of land to community and recreation facilities and common green space at a degree comparable to that of pre-war complexes.”66 Again, the interpretation of Garden City planning principles were adjusted to react to the needs of the people—in Southern California, these were World War II defense workers.

The first garden apartment community in Los Angeles, Wyvernwood, was constructed in 1939.67 However, the Federal Housing Act of 1937 enabled more housing to be constructed post-World War II.68 At least twelve garden apartments were constructed in Los Angeles between 1949 and 1950, due to a fear that funding for construction would soon run out.69 While many garden apartments were publicly funded, some, such as Baldwin Hills Village (now known as Village Green), were privately funded and targeted middle-class residents.70 Stein consulted on the planning and design of Baldwin Hills Village, which opened in 1941. He considered the seventy-acre community one where “his tenets came together in their most fully realized form,” and where the design team was finally able to “tame the car.”71

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61 Architectural Resources Group, Garden Apartments, 24.
63 Ibid, 24 and 16.
66 Ibid, 27.
67 Ibid, 39.
68 Ibid, 26-27.
69 Ibid, 40.
70 Ibid, 38.
In early garden apartment communities, planning for recreation was seen as a priority for both children and adults. “For both public housing and privately funded garden apartments, recreational facilities were considered a vital and integral part of the designs, encouraging residents to get out into the landscape and interact with one another.” Unfortunately, once the race for garden apartment construction began in the late 1940s, recreation became a lower priority, as higher density resulted in less open space. However, while garden apartment architects lost this focus, other community planners and designers, such as Smith and Williams, were becoming more interested in recreation-minded planning.

1.5 Recreational Planning

Post-World War II, many developers realized that industry was at an all time high, and successful communities would need to cater to working people, even more so than Howard had predicted in his Garden City plan. In particular, wartime aircraft manufacturing for the war:

…led to the creation of new satellite communities around Los Angeles and Southern California…Home builders anticipated an influx of defense workers drawn by these employment centers and selected sites in close proximity to new production facilities for the plotting and construction of new communities. In their location, design and construction they adhered to the dictates of modern community planning.

As these communities were created, a stronger emphasis was placed on recreation. Architects and planners advocated for parks and recreation facilities as the social and cultural centers for neighborhoods. Architect Wayne R. Williams, of architecture firm Smith and Williams, claimed that these spaces began to become necessities even at the start of World War II, to “ease the tensions generated by all-out war.” Again, the idea of green open space was adapted to fit the changing needs of the time. What started as simply getting away from the toxins of the urban, industrial city in the U.K., grew into a need for safety within communities, which then transitioned into a need for social and leisure activities.

72 Architectural Resources Group, Garden Apartments, 36.
73 Ibid, 40.
74 Hise, Magnetic Los Angeles, 124-125.
76 Ibid.
Planning for recreation can be traced as far back as the 1890s, when it became more acceptable to preserve open spaces specifically for recreational purposes.\textsuperscript{77} As the process evolved, it became clear that general societal planning was inseparable from recreational planning.\textsuperscript{78} Some even argued that general planning and recreational planning together would result in master plans, because the social implications of the two went beyond the need to plan for individual projects.\textsuperscript{79} This need also arose because of the belief that in modern community planning, it was recreational spaces such as parks or playgrounds that were the most sacrificed.\textsuperscript{80} Thinking of recreational planning on a larger scale protected these spaces.

Recreational planning was revisited after World War II. During this time, much thought went into what recreation meant in the modern world; there needed to be room for interpretation because it began to be considered necessary in daily living. In 1958, the same year California City was founded, one of its designers, Wayne R. Williams, wrote a book specifically about designing recreational places: their importance, what they should look like, and how they should function. He consulted different planners, designers, researchers and educators, who understood “recreation” in a myriad of ways. John E. Burchard, Dean of Humanities and Social Studies at M.I.T, defined it as “refreshment of the strength and spirits after toil; diversion; play.”\textsuperscript{81} James J. Cox, Staff Head of the Pasadena Welfare Council claimed, “In general terms, the ultimate goal of recreation should be to re-create the whole human not only from a physical point of view but socially and emotionally as well.”\textsuperscript{82} George Hjelte, Administrator, Department of Recreation & Parks at the City of Los Angeles: the “vast collection of activities which are voluntarily engaged in by all people…” with the intent of creating “a happy and cultured society.”\textsuperscript{83} Hjelte also emphasized that recreation is both objective and subjective, in that it is both the personal experience of the individual, as well as the subjective reflection on the recreation of others.\textsuperscript{84} In his own book entitled \textit{Planning Recreational Places}, Hjelte added to his argument, “As progress

\textsuperscript{78} Shivers and Hjelte, \textit{Planning Recreational Places}, 39.
\textsuperscript{79} Shivers and Hjelte, \textit{Planning Recreational Places}, 22.
\textsuperscript{80} Shivers and Hjelte, \textit{Planning Recreational Places}, 50
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
is made in educating the public to its own needs, greater emphasis will be placed on the social role of planning as well as its physical capabilities…”\textsuperscript{85} It becomes clear that there was a sociological approach to recreational planning, because by definition, recreation catered to the social and emotional tendencies of the human population.

With such a heavy emphasis on recreational spaces in city and community planning, players like Hjelte and Williams developed a broad set of principles in recreational planning. Recreational experiences or services should be:

- “…essential in the daily lives of people.”
- “…a vital function of government at all levels.”
- “…available to all of the people.”
- “…controlled development of all resources.” \textsuperscript{86}

By designing places based on these principles, designers and planners could ensure that the resulting communities would enrich peoples’ quality of living “through the constructive use of leisure…”\textsuperscript{87} Williams and Hjelte both agreed that in all types of planning the needs of the people were the most important and that planners should focus on making neighborhoods livable, where all peoples’ needs are met.\textsuperscript{88} This would be most successfully accomplished by planning communities around buildings and sites that encourage and reinforce leisure activity and recreation.

In his book \textit{Recreation Places}, Williams makes extensive predictions about the future of the United States related to recreation. Particularly, he states, “Productivity will increase considerably. Leisure time will multiply by about one third.”\textsuperscript{89} He also predicts that the automobile will have a great effect on the evolution of recreation, because with more automobiles, travel will increase, “largely in pursuit of recreation.”\textsuperscript{90} He believed that with an increase in production, many people would be working and transitioning into different ways of life, specifically by either changing jobs, moving to new places or meeting new people.\textsuperscript{91} This would make the neighborhood less stable in the future, and recreation was the answer to this

\textsuperscript{85} Shivers and Hjelte, \textit{Planning Recreational Places}, 22.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 47-48.
\textsuperscript{87} Williams, \textit{Recreation Places}, 237.
\textsuperscript{89} Williams, \textit{Recreation Places}, 35.
\textsuperscript{90} Williams, \textit{Recreation Places}, 235.
\textsuperscript{91} At the time the book was written, the President’s Commission on Materials Policy was predicting that people would be working thirty-four hours per week by 1975. So even though productivity would be increasing, time physically at work would be decreasing, leaving more time for leisure and activities.
problem. By integrating recreation into everyday life as a necessity in the form of neighborhood recreation centers and parks, families would adapt more easily to unfamiliar environments, and neighborhoods would again stabilize. Williams’ own ambitious goal for the following twenty years was “to provide the new, larger recreation parks and facilities that will be required; and to redesign, enlarge or replace some of the existing areas that are no longer ‘good enough.’” One of Williams’ first attempts at this was the creation of California City.

Another prediction for the future was that people would start retiring at an older age. This meant that cities needed to plan for an influx of seniors, who needed to be kept busy and integrated in society. This concept wasn’t fully embraced by the general public. People associated aging with disability, declining energy, cosmetic changes and “the loss of [the] earlier adult role.” In a document entitled Recreation for our Older Citizens, the North Carolina Recreation Commission argued that these reasons were exactly why older adults needed recreation in their lives. Whitney R. Smith, the other half of the architecture firm Smith & Williams, agreed, “To many people, an equation for later years is: old age= retirement= recreation= leisure= ’killing time’...Because old age is so closely associated with recreation, it becomes possible to make recreation a catalyst for a fuller life.” With an increase in the development of entire retirement communities such as Del Webb’s “Sun City” or Ross Cortese’s “Leisure World,” it became natural for communities to make recreation a higher priority, in order to service people of all ages and with many different needs.

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92 Williams, Recreation Places, 236.
93 Ibid, 236-237.
94 Ibid, 236.
95 Ibid, 235.
97 Williams, Recreation Places, 208.
Southern California’s transformation in response to World War II made it an incredibly dynamic place to be in the mid-twentieth century. The effects of the war on Southern California’s biggest cities, such as Los Angeles and San Diego, created the unique landscapes we see today, which include not only the densest of areas, but also those that attempted growth, particularly in outlying regions. Historian Clark Davis explains, “The Second World War provided the full realization of Southern California’s economic potential, first significantly tapped in the 1920s.” It was World War II, above all else, that contributed to the economic, social and cultural consequences that would eventually lead to the creation of California City in the Mojave Desert. This included an unprecedented population migration throughout the country, a stronger belief in industry, production and worker culture, and an ever-increasing dependence on the automobile. With a stabilizing economy and renewed sense of prosperity, developers and planners felt safe in pushing the boundaries of development into untouched landscapes.

2.1 World War II and Planning

Despite the advances in Garden City planning before World War II, and the emphasis on leisure and recreation that matured in the 1950s, the action of city planning was actually stunted during the war and somewhat chaotic immediately after it ended. Though “the war benefited city planning somewhat, [it] did not create, for city planning, a revolution, transformation, second Gold Rush, or cataclysmic change.” Between 1941 and 1945, the main stretch of the war, little to no new planning legislation was created; additionally, city planning became difficult for local governments because workers were already so overburdened with other tasks (Figure 2.1). When the post-World War II population boom and subsequent housing shortage became increasingly intense, planning became improvisational, with planners intuitively carving out parts of the landscape for the buildings and programs needed. Planning in the short term was

100 Lotchin, “World War II and Urban California,” 147, 148.
incredibly difficult due to “pell mell urbanization.” Fortunately, this only reinforced the importance of planning in the long-term. Historian Roger Lotchin argues,

The war produced nothing comparable to the garden city, new town zoning, public housing, or comprehensive planning concepts of earlier eras. To the extent that the war induced a renaissance in planning thought, it stimulated a burst of familiar ideas. In neither programmatic nor a conceptual sense did the war establish the planning agenda for the future.

Again, the most important thing the war did for planning was establish that it was direly needed. This gave planners and developers the ammunition to get projects going.

Table 1: Progress Chart
CITY OF LOS ANGELES MASTER PLAN
SUMMARY—December 31, 1946

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Date of adoption</th>
<th>Adopted by</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Traffic Arteries</td>
<td>10-9-34</td>
<td>City Planning Commission</td>
<td>Being revised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Center (Gicnic center)</td>
<td>12-23-40</td>
<td>City Planning Commission</td>
<td>Officially adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-24-41</td>
<td>Regional Planning Commission</td>
<td>(being revised by the Civic Center Authority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-30-41</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-30-41</td>
<td>County Board of Supervisors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Original Zoning Ordinance</td>
<td>11-30-21</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>Officially adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6-1-46</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In process of study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shoreline Development</td>
<td>8-5-41</td>
<td>City Planning Commission</td>
<td>Officially adopted</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12-29-41</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Monica Bay Development</td>
<td>8-30-45</td>
<td>Regional Planning Commission</td>
<td>Officially adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9-4-45</td>
<td>City Planning Commission</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9-4-45</td>
<td>County Board of Supervisors</td>
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<td>10-16-45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parkways</td>
<td>6-25-41</td>
<td>City Planning Commission</td>
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<td>Housing</td>
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<td>11-6-45</td>
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Figure 2.1 “City of Los Angeles Master Plan Summary” shows that planning for Parks and Recreation, Housing and Community Redevelopment in Los Angeles were all put on hold or “In process of study” during the war. Roger W. Lotchin, “World War II and Urban California: City Planning and The Transformation Hypothesis,” Pacific Historical Review 62, no. 2 (1993): 149.

102 Ibid, 151.
103 Ibid, 167.
2.2 Industry, Production and the Defense Worker

Southern California was a place of major industry during and after World War II. In particular, six major industries provided people with jobs, and helped stabilize the economy after the Depression: aircraft (being the largest), ships, ordnance, ammunition, metal products, and machinery.\textsuperscript{104} It was this defense industry that caused a great migration to Southern California during the war, with an estimated 150,000 young workers coming to Los Angeles between 1940 and 1941.\textsuperscript{105} Nearly a decade later, between 1950 and 1957, manufacturing employment in the Los Angeles area had increased by 379,000.\textsuperscript{106} The influx of workers related specifically to this wartime industry resulted in a need for housing that was adjacent to production and employment sites.

Development of defense worker housing followed a very similar pattern to that of agricultural worker housing in Southern California’s pre-World War II past. Author Greg Hise explains,

In short, beginning in 1941, the production technologies and community planning principles the [Farm Security Administration] had put into practice during the 1930s to create rural new towns for seasonal agricultural workers and their families were redirected toward the housing of defense workers.\textsuperscript{107}

He also stressed that defense housing was not a “secondary act,” but was directly related to industrial production; it not only helped fix production problems by ensuring there were enough workers but also provided for the social needs of the workers.\textsuperscript{108} With expanding industry, homebuilders and developers sensed the growing need for worker housing. They strategically “selected sites in close proximity to new production facilities

\textsuperscript{104} Morrison Handsake, “The Postwar Labor Market in Southern California,” \textit{Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science} 222 (1942): 162; It is important to note the importance of the aircraft industry to Southern California; this breakthrough was so location-specific, and was really the driving force behind industry in the area. It seemed that many realms—employment, education, and technology—were directly related to the aircraft industry. Not only did the introduction of the aircraft in wartime industry offer technological breakthroughs, it insured the economic market because the government made continuing aircraft purchases. Additionally, educational institutions began offering specialized training related to the aircraft industry, so anyone that came to Southern California had a chance at employment; see Allen J. Scott and Doreen J. Mattingly, “Aircraft and Parts Industry in Southern California,” \textit{Economic Geography} 65, no. 1 (1989), 50.

\textsuperscript{105} Handsake, “The Postwar Labor Market,” 163.


\textsuperscript{107} Hise, \textit{Magnetic Los Angeles}, 116.

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid, 121.
for the plotting and construction of new communities.”109 Large housing tracts developed in response to this growing need.110 In big cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego, these new tracts and communities were aggressively marketed.111 For example, Marlow-Burns’ Westside Village project in Los Angeles advertised “super models,” that promised the “Greatest Galaxy of Modern Features That Ever Embellished a LOW DOWN PAYMENT HOME Regardless of Cost!”112 In the San Fernando Valley, Kaiser Homes justified the construction of Panorama City as “Building a City…where a City belongs.”113

2.3 Housing for the Population Boom

The influence of wartime industry and convenient worker housing contributed to the unprecedented population boom in Southern California following World War II. This post-war population boom is an undeniable, contributing factor to Southern California’s evolutionary history, and another one of the reasons planners and developers felt comfortable in beginning large-scale projects in various parts of the region. A 1944 report claimed that war-driven population growth in California estimated an additional 1.5 million residents since the 1940 census.114 The county of Los Angeles had a population increase of 49% between 1940 and 1950, and an additional 45% increase the following decade.115 The city of Los Angeles alone experienced a 20% increase in population in the 1940s, growing from 1,504,277 residents to 1,970,358.116 Population in the Los Angeles-Long Beach Metropolitan Area continued to increase by approximately 263,000 persons per year after 1950.117 There was no precedent for a migration such as this in Southern California’s history, and little sense of what was to come.

This boom understandably created a greater need for housing in Southern California, to accommodate families moving to the area. A Women’s Wear Daily survey estimated that 90% of those who had moved to Los Angeles during the war planned on staying, three-quarters of them

111 Hise, Magnetic Los Angeles, 125-126.
112 Ibid, 139.
113 Ibid, 212.
114 Ibid, 154.
with intentions to build housing.118 By 1946, only a year after World War II ended, Los Angeles was in the midst of an extreme housing shortage.119 Yet while one problem was created, another was fixed. World War II actually helped the U.S. economy, enabling it to bounce back from the Depression.120 In order to ensure there was not a post-war recession, the Los Angeles government initiated large-scale public works projects, which included housing developments, freeways, schools and parks.121 The federal government also instilled the philosophy that “home-ownership was sound and should be encouraged,” and helped to ensure that people would actually be able to afford the homes. While the National Housing Act (1934) and the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) already provided large loans for potential homebuyers, the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, or the GI Bill of Rights, ensured even more opportunities for thousands of veterans returning from World War II to purchase homes, go back to school and receive unemployment pay.122 The GI Bill is estimated to have provided approximately 2.4 million home loans for World War II veterans between 1944 and 1952.123 So while “residential construction never eradicated housing need, the speed of recovery and the number of units begun and completed each successive year outpaced most forecasts of what home builders would produce.” Southern California finally had a plan, and that plan was to produce housing, create jobs, and expand industry and production.

In Southern California, the single-family residence was the default home model in housing developments. In order to build more quickly, the developer or community builder would provide buyers with a variety of home models to choose from, while also preparing subdivided lots for building. Then, “visitors to the model would financially commit themselves to a selected lot, choosing one of the variants of the floor plan and exterior trim packages from a set of illustrations.”124 With an efficient strategy for development, large housing tracts infiltrated the suburban areas of Los Angeles. When that land filled up, the tracts replaced open areas even further out, such as Westchester, Panorama City, Covina and Azusa.125 These rings of

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118 Hise, Magnetic Los Angeles, 154.
120 Ibid, 254.
121 Ibid, 272.
123 “Education and Training.”
124 Ovnick, The End of the Rainbow, 257.
125 Ovnick, The End of the Rainbow, 283.
development grew increasingly farther from the city center. However, with the growing popularity of the automobile, and an extensive transportation infrastructure to accommodate it, these far-reaching, largely undeveloped areas became an attractive opportunity to developers.

2.4 Transportation and the Automobile

The City of Los Angeles first wrote legislation for the construction of freeway systems in 1939; by 1940, the first freeway was constructed.\textsuperscript{126} Though the automobile had already been in use for some time, the implementation of such a widespread network of roadways enabled people to travel farther, faster. This combination of car and road affected drivers both physically and mentally. It gave people the physical opportunity to go greater distances, and also instilled excitement at the idea of being able to accomplish so much more. By the 1940s and 1950s, car culture in Los Angeles had completely taken over, and been incorporated into many industries, including film and architecture. It completely altered the landscape, contributing “the sense of random and rapid movement that marked the cityscape at all hours.”\textsuperscript{127}

More than anything, the automobile and the accompanying freeway system provided freedom. In Los Angeles, this meant freedom from rail lines that had previously dictated where suburban development would occur, since people needed to be able to walk to rail stops.\textsuperscript{128} One article written in 1959 estimated that by that time, 2,750,000 cars were owned in Los Angeles.\textsuperscript{129} With this freedom and such a widespread access to the automobile, Los Angeles’ city center became decentralized, and commerce moved elsewhere. Areas in between former rail stops became the new homes of residential and commercial development. Author Reyner Banham argued that the “plains,” these in-between spaces, were where the most interesting aspirations for land and development occurred and where land was the most manipulated.\textsuperscript{130} At the rate that Los Angeles was growing and at which its landscape was being manipulated in response to the automobile and the new freeway system, it is understandable that developers would take the risk of moving further outside the region to entice residents.

\textsuperscript{127} Ovnick, \textit{The End of the Rainbow}, 273.
\textsuperscript{128} Nelson, “Artificial Landscape,” 95.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{130} Banham, \textit{The Architecture of Four Ecologies}, 143.
2.5 Other Occurrences

In addition to the most obvious and direct causes of growth in and around Los Angeles, more subtle occurrences contributed to the general idea that more was better (and possible) in post-World War II Southern California. For example, tourism resulted from the heightened quest for leisure and recreation in daily life.\(^{131}\) In the two decades following the war:

Southern California’s population explosion radically altered the region’s features. Urbanization and modernization could not destroy the climate, but they did affect its tranquil and resort-like appeal. Over three and a half million inhabitants and nearly a million tourists a year now shared the area’s beaches, deserts, and mountains. Los Angeles had emerged as the major metropolis in western America. However strong the Ramona myth continued to be, the reality of Southern California in the 1930s was that of a bustling and rapidly expanding Los Angeles.\(^{132}\)

The opening of tourism hotspots such as Disneyland (1955) gave people direct access to leisure activities and resulted in the “modern tourist industry.”\(^{133}\) Regions used tourism to attract people, capitalizing on the post-World War II culture of needing “things to do.”\(^{134}\) Those developers who planned for recreation in their brand new cities could also incorporate a plan for tourism that would be economically beneficial.

Another occurrence was the realization that older citizens thrived in warmer, dryer environments that were designed specifically to meet aging needs. Author Judith Ann Trolander argues, “age-restricted, active adult communities have played a significant but overlooked role in some major planning trends since World War II.”\(^{135}\) This is because some of the biggest age-restricted communities, those designed specifically for the elderly and constructed in the decades following World War II, were completely unprecedented. The first ever age-restricted community was called Youngtown and was constructed in Phoenix in 1954.\(^{136}\) It’s developer Ben Schleifer, who had originally moved to Phoenix with the hopes that the dry weather would cure his asthma, wanted to “create a place where old people could enjoy some autonomy, ‘stay active,

\(^{131}\) Leisure and recreation in response to World War II and in residential planning is discussed more in depth in Chapter 1.
\(^{132}\) Davis, “From Oasis to Metropolis,” 367.
\(^{133}\) Ibid, 361.
\(^{134}\) Ibid.
\(^{135}\) Ibid.
live their own lives, and not lose their identity.’’

Dell Webb’s Sun City in Phoenix (1960) and Ross Cortese’s Leisure World in Seal Beach (1960) followed. Again sited in warm, arid environments, these age-restricted communities used aggressive advertising to draw thousands of people to the expansive sites. They also put a greater emphasis on recreation, something Youngtown hadn’t done, and marketed it as “active retirement.” Again, “taking a concept like Youngtown, combining it with the amenity-rich appeal of retiree trailer courts, then building it on a huge scale, and finding phenomenal success in the process was something unprecedented in history.”

Interest in desert living went beyond retirement communities for seniors. By the post-war period, desert communities like Palm Springs were gaining in popularity. Originally envisioned as a winter health resort in 1908, Palm Springs experienced a great influx of people immediately after World War I who hoped that the dry desert air would help cure them of the flu. In the 1920s, Hollywood discovered the area; “only a few hours by car from Los Angeles, the isolated desert village offered privacy and relaxation, warm winter sunshine and stunning natural beauty,” that was attractive to this crowd. The post-World War II boom in Palm Springs led to winter populations nearing 30,000 people in the 1950s. By this time, tourists were also infiltrating the area, those who sought “the good life previously…available only to the very rich.” This unexpected success in the desert proved that people would be willing to move to dry, warm, and isolated environments centered on leisure, recreation and the idea of living healthy, productive lives.

Finally, the desert became an attractive location for military training and testing during and after World War II; “the flat, untenanted wastelands could be quickly converted to air bases,

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137 Ibid.
138 Advertising and marketing new cities was perhaps a result of an increasing a competitive attitude that likely also pushed developers to develop bigger and better. In Lotchin, “World War II and Urban California,” 156, he cites a prediction by Homer Hoyt from 1943 that there would be competition amongst American cities after the war because of how many people were uprooted and how much new industry would be created.
139 Trolander, From Sun Cities to the Villages, 43 and 47.
140 Ibid, 47.
142 Ibid, 15.
143 Ibid, 21.
144 Ibid.
ordnance depots, heavy weapons ranges and desert training centers.” In 1933, Edwards Air Force Base began using lakebeds in its desert environment for planned and emergency landings. Along with these ideal landscapes, the desert offered 350 days of flying weather per year. This immense military center measures at over 301,000 acres, and by the 1960s, was producing $100 million a year in business. This income benefitted the local economy in Antelope Valley as well, and those at the base hoped to use this to create strong relationships with local communities (the base is so large that it extends into three different counties: Los Angeles, Kern and San Bernardino). In a 1964 Los Angeles Times article, Brig. Gen. Irving L. Branch, commander of the Air Force Flight Test Center, was quoted:

As we move toward delivery of these systems of tomorrow and the day after we are always aware of the partnerships which exist not only at Edwards but also the partnerships which exist between us and our Antelope Valley neighbors. Your tax dollars give you shares in our business and a voice in running it…We also depend upon you and Kern County merchants for supplying many of our needs.

Many desert communities sprung up in response to promises like these, such as Los Angeles County’s cities of Palmdale (1962) and Lancaster (1977). Now, the desert not only offered health benefits, but rich opportunities in the wildly successful military industry.

2.6 We Can Do Anything

More than anything, Southern California’s post-World War II years reveal a sense of excitement about the future. The idea of the “American Dream” almost took on a magical meaning: one could literally create something out of nothing. One Life magazine article from the era written about Los Angeles was entitled “The City that Started with Nothing But Sunshine

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148 “High Desert Birthplace;” Thompson, “$100 Million Industry.”
149 Thompson, “$100 Million Industry.”
150 Thompson, “$100 Million Industry.”
Now Expects to Become the Biggest in the World.”\textsuperscript{152} The goal was to urbanize open space, beyond all else. Another 1950s article excerpt illustrates this attitude:

Although large areas of wild landscape remain on mountains and in some desert areas, the mark of urban man heavy upon it…He hikes through it, camps in it, and gets lost in it. In season he skis down its slopes and breaks his bones on them. He burns it and litters it, until the wild landscape too, is in a sense urbanized.\textsuperscript{153}

This mentality resulted in such a dramatic change in the physical landscape, that those involved in its manipulation and development surely believed they could continue building and growing forever.

\textsuperscript{152} Davis, “From Oasis to Metropolis,” 375.
\textsuperscript{153} Nelson, “Artificial Landscape,” 81.
3. CHOOSING CALIFORNIA CITY

While the site of California City may seem like an unlikely place to create a city, many saw in it a potential for greatness. Beyond the circumstances pushing people outside the developed areas of Southern California, the site already had a rich industrial and agricultural history, which suggested it could support a more substantial community. The city also had widely-known and respected architects, planners and developers encouraging its creation. Finally, it was so intensely marketed that it is no wonder many people initially flocked to the “oasis in the desert.” And yet, people didn’t stay. The dream of California City never fully came to fruition, and the only current reminder of what it could have once been is the city’s plan, carved into the desert landscape. The following exploration establishes a local history for California City, identifying key events and players that led to its creation.

3.1 “Pre-History”

The site of California City once played a small, but crucial role in the transport of borax from Death Valley. When Borax was discovered in Death Valley in 1881, workers began exploring different routes to move it through the desert. The Harmony Works trail, more commonly known today as the Twenty Mule Team Trail, measured 165 miles long across the Mojave Desert and took a twenty-mule team ten days to travel the length of the route.\(^\text{154}\) It hosted trips until 1888.\(^\text{155}\) Small mining towns sprung up along the trail and eventually, “due to cheap and abundant land, numerous recreational opportunities, a warm climate, and proximity to national parks, many of these small towns grew into large cities.”\(^\text{156}\)

At the end of the nineteenth century, ranchers found that there was also an opportunity for agriculture. Brothers Gregorio Mendiburu and Oscar Rudnick founded the M & R Ranch on the site of what is present day California City (located in the Boron Valley), with its headquarters located approximately twenty miles north in the town of Cantil.\(^\text{157}\) The M & R Ranch constructed


\(^{155}\) Ibid, 28.


eleven water wells to harvest water from an immense underground lake. The ranch used the water to grow cotton and alfalfa (Figure 3.1). This water supply and the existing water wells were to become a key factor in the selection of this portion of the desert as the home of California City. When founder Nathaniel (Nat) K. Mendelsohn “discovered” the ranch in 1956, “there seemed to be an inexhaustible supply of water under the Boron Valley.” Reflecting on his arrival to the area, Mendelsohn would later exclaim, “Where grains and cotton grew, where bands of sheep grazed in pastoral quietude, a new town is rising.”

![Figure 3.1: “California City’s Cotton Crop, ca. 1960.” Photo from USC Libraries Special Collection; filename CHS-45207 (http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15799coll65/id/7501/rec/2).](http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15799coll65/id/7501/rec/2)

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160 Ibid.

161 N. K. Mendelsohn, *Annual Report to California City Residents and Property Owners*, December 1, 1961, 2, California City Branch Vertical File: California City History 3, California City Branch, Kern County Library.
3.2 Nat K. Mendelsohn

Nat K. Mendelsohn had a vision for the Mojave Desert (Figure 3.2). He recognized that Southern California’s major cities were growing in population and economically expanding, and that another city could potentially take in the overflow of people that was sure to occur. He also felt that the desert, near enough to the major metropolis of Los Angeles but far enough away to have its own identity, would be the best place for this to happen.

Figure 3.2: Nat K. Mendelsohn, Photographer unknown. East Kern Historical Museum Society, accessed June 1, 2015, http://ekhms.weebly.com/m--r-ranch.html.

Mendelsohn was born in Czechoslovakia in 1915; his family moved to the United States in 1920.162 After receiving a Master of Arts degree from Columbia University, he continued at Columbia, teaching rural sociology under Professor Edmund Brunner.163 Mendelsohn was

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162 “Nat Mendelsohn.”
163 “Nat Mendelsohn”; It is unclear exactly what field Mendelsohn received his degree in.
interested in “land usage in rural America,” and began conducting research projects for the
Department of Agriculture.\footnote{164} However, he gained much of his knowledge of finance when he
worked with the Office of Price Administration, researching farm income and economy.\footnote{165} He
went on to become treasurer for power generator manufacturing company called Cyclohm
Motors.\footnote{166} As his career progressed, Mendelsohn began putting his acquired knowledge and
income towards the construction of large-scale developments. His first venture was Arlanza
Village in Riverside County, in which he converted an abandoned army facility and industrial
park into a company town.\footnote{167} He then partnered with developer M. Penn Phillips to develop the
town of Hesperia, located in Victor Valley.\footnote{168} His largest and most ambitious project became the
development of California City, which he hoped would be the “perfect city” to catch Southern
California’s overflow and, one day, rival Los Angeles in size and global acclaim. Los Angeles
County Regional Planning Commission’s Director of Planning, Milton Breivogel, predicted that,
due to growth, at least 200,000 additional acres of land would be required for development in
Southern California. Mendelsohn claimed, “It seemed to me we had an unusual chance to do
something different—to prevent Los Angeles happening again.”\footnote{169}

As president of Great Western Cities, Inc., Mendelsohn secured funding for California
City from its parent company Great Western United Corporation.\footnote{170} Then, he created the
California City Development Company (CCDC) to implement his vision. Mendelsohn chose the
Mojave as the perfect setting for his city. In an article in the Los Angeles Times discussing this
decision, the author reasoned, “Mendelsohn thinks of California City and neighboring Mojave as
‘one integral area.’ What’s good for one is good for the other…”\footnote{171} Residing in Hollywood Hills
during California City’s development gave Mendelsohn direct insight into how to plan for

\footnote{164} “Nat Mendelsohn.”
\footnote{165} Ibid.
\footnote{166} Ibid.
\footnote{167} Ibid.
\footnote{168} Ibid.
\footnote{169} “A Plan for the City of Tomorrow,” Los Angeles Examiner, January 22, 1961, 18, California City Branch Vertical
File: California City History 2, California City Branch, Kern County Library.
\footnote{170} M & E Koppel, “The Dream that Became California City,” California City Branch Vertical File: California City
History 1, California City Branch, Kern County Library.
\footnote{171} Howard Ginold, “Realty Promoters Cash in as Desert Lures Thousands,” Los Angeles Times, June 8, 1961,
California City Branch Vertical File: California City History 1, California City Branch, Kern County Library.
California City, and what notable planners, engineers and architects would be suitable for the job.172

3.3 Community Facilities Planners

To begin this impressive endeavor, Mendelsohn hired a team of architects and planners to translate his vision into reality. He first enlisted the Community Facilities Planners, a group of architects, planners and engineers working under the same roof in a South Pasadena office, to help with the city’s planning and design components.173 The Community Facilities Planners began working together in the mid-1950s, and their body of work included large-scale projects such as parks, master plans and commercial centers.174 Those that played a large role in the development of California City included the architecture firm Smith & Williams (Whitney R. Smith and Wayne Williams with associate Peter Holdstock), landscape architect Garret Eckbo, and city planner Simon Eisner.175 Mendelsohn also hired engineer Charles Clark.176 From 1961-1968, Smith and Williams had control over the overall three-dimensional design and aesthetic quality of the city.177 Each player provided their own acquired expertise; for example, much of the recreational vision for California City came directly from Wayne Williams, who had a passion for recreation as a necessity in daily life. Williams embraced the opportunity to “bring beauty and pleasure into daily living.”178 Smith likely played a greater part in designing the residential and commercial centers, as by this time he had already amassed extensive experience

172 “Nat Mendelsohn.”
173 Art Seidenbaum, “The Next Noise You Hear May be Your Last,” Los Angeles Times, January 29, 1967, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times, C9, http://libproxy.usc.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.libproxy.usc.edu/docview/155638994?accountid=14749; The Community Facilities Planners’ worked out of a shared office space, located in South Pasadena and designed by architecture firm Smith and Williams. Smith and Williams worked as the architectural and design component of the team, Simon Eisner as the city planner, Kariotis and Kesler as the structural engineers, Selje and Bond as interiors and graphics, and Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams as landscape architects. Many of these team members helped design California City. The Community Facilities Planners had worked on at least thirty planning and design projects by 1967.
175 “A Plan for the City of Tomorrow;” Koppel, “The Dream.”
177 “A Plan for the City of Tomorrow;”
in residential design and community planning. Working with the Retirement Home Planners of Pasadena, the duo also helped to create California’s City’s Older Adult Living Plan.

It is important to emphasize that both together and individually Smith and Williams can be considered noted architects of their time within Southern California. Smith’s resume included a number of successful residential designs based around garden concepts, including Case Study Houses No.5 (the Loggia House) and No. 12 (the Lath House), both designed in 1946. He also worked on larger-scale developments such as the Linda Vista Shopping Center in San Diego. His residential works that emphasized interior gardens, as well as his large regional works, likely influenced his designs in California City. Williams found a deep passion for recreation, writing an entire book about the subject, and using it to guide his designs with Smith. When they joined forces in 1946, they created an extensive and beautiful collection of work, which is more thoroughly documented in Appendix A. In general, the firm’s particular style of design offered as much in pragmatism as it did in popular architectural style. The idea that how people feel when they are in a building is just as important as how the building looks was something the firm felt strongly about. This social element in architecture was something that the firm shared with Mendelsohn. It is speculated that wood post-and-beam construction, popular in design studios at the University of Southern California in the 1940s and 1950s at the same time that Smith studied there, made the design of free flowing, flexible spaces easier to accomplish. This type of plan related back to the social aspects of design that Smith and Williams advocated for. While Smith and Williams steered clear of assigning any particular “style” to their work at the time, this type

180 “What the Older Adult Can Look Forward to In California City,” California City Sun, November 15 1961, 3, California City Branch Vertical File: California City History 2, California City Branch, Kern County Library.
181 Howell-Ardila, “The USC Connection.” 103. While both of these case study houses were never built, Smith did have an extensive resume of homes that were constructed. Appendix A gives a more thorough overview of Smith’s individual work, and the work of Smith and William together. It also speculates on what projects provided Smith and Williams with experience and inspiration for their design of California City.
of construction became prevalent in their designs, including those buildings they designed for California City.\textsuperscript{185}

Besides a shared interest in social architecture, it is unclear exactly why Mendelsohn chose Smith and Williams and the Community Facilities Planners to create California City. However, it could be attributed to the team’s vast collection of institutional, residential and commercial projects, both individual and master-planned. Nevertheless, the planning for California City became the start of a long-lasting relationship between Mendelsohn and Smith and Williams. Not only did the firm design Mendelsohn’s Colorado home (1964), they worked with him on projects outside California City, including the redevelopment of Old Sacramento (1961), a subdivision plan in Colorado (1967), and an urban development plan for North American Towns Incorporated in Mexico (1970).\textsuperscript{186} Smith and Williams’ design for California City would go on to win an “Award of Merit” by \textit{Sunset Magazine} in 1961, chosen by a panel of AIA and \textit{Sunset} editorial experts.\textsuperscript{187} That these incredibly accomplished designers played such a major role in the design of California City over the course of nearly a decade, and the fact that this was the firm’s only city-scale project, suggests the potential significance of the original design.\textsuperscript{188}

### 3.4 Initial Planning for California City

As early as 1956, the California City Development Company purchased 82,000 acres, or 206 square miles, of land in the upper Mojave Desert, located in Boron Valley.\textsuperscript{189} This is approximately 140 square miles less than the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles (Figure 3.3).\textsuperscript{190} In total, the land cost $6,021,000 with a final project investment estimated at $150,000,000.\textsuperscript{191} The site was 2,400 to 3,700 feet above sea level and was scattered with small buttes.\textsuperscript{192} The environment offered dry, arid weather, with a generally pleasant climate year

\textsuperscript{185} Gibbs, “Outside In,” 15.
\textsuperscript{186} “Selected Projects,” 186-187.
\textsuperscript{188} Gibbs, “Outside In,” 36.
\textsuperscript{189} “California City Early Years”; Today Boron Valley is known as Fremont Valley, and is located adjacent to Antelope Valley.
\textsuperscript{191} Mendelsohn, \textit{Annual Report}, 1961.
\textsuperscript{192} Mendelsohn, \textit{Annual Report}, 1961.
round, and plenty of water. These factors made the Mojave site an attractive place to build. Furthermore, the surrounding area already boasted extensive industry, including the Rio Tinto Borax mine, opened to mining in 1927, and the Edwards Air Force Base, its first training site built in 1933.\textsuperscript{193} These industries, and the jobs they provided, played a major role in making the California City dream a reality. Finally, the Kern County Planning Commission had also expressed interest in establishing two urban centers within the Boron Valley.\textsuperscript{194} Armed with Kern County’s approval and a set of planning criteria for Boron Valley, “Policies for Planning the Boron Valley,” the creation of California City could commence.


\textsuperscript{194} Kern County Planning Commission, Policies for Planning the Boron Valley, (Bakersfield, California, 1958), 4, California City Branch Vertical File: California City History 1, California City Branch, Kern County Library.
Figure 3.3: California City, CA, 206 square miles (Top) as compared to the San Fernando Valley, CA, 345 square miles (Bottom). *California City, CA* and *San Fernando Valley, CA* [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; *Google Maps*. Google.
Mendelsohn and his teams envisioned California City as a unique combination of urban density and desert landscape. This concept fits well within Ebenezer Howard’s initial concept for a Garden City, in which the best of both the Town and the Country come together to create the ideal city. Figures 3.4 and 3.5 below, rendered by Stan Repp in 1961, illustrate Smith and Williams initial idea for combining the Town (Los Angeles) with the Country (the desert). Per the book *Outside In: The Architecture of Smith and Williams*, the sketches are a “creation myth for California City, imagining its discovery and settlement as Old California meets the freeway.”

**Figure 3.4:** The “creation myth” for California City. Sketch by Stan Repp (1961), courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder “Smith and Williams 770 California City, 46/1518 IV.D.

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This whimsical communion is indicative of what the city’s planners, architects and developers hoped California City would one day become. Smith and Williams used this concept in determining their own design standards, which sought to maintain a unified architectural landscape throughout the city.

While the California City Development Company hoped that eventually they would get the population overflow from Los Angeles, they predicted that, in the short term, much of their housing demand would be based on growth from adjacent Edwards Air Force Base. Because housing was the greatest demand, their strategy for growth was to rapidly subdivide and sell plots of land. After the city was incorporated in 1965, it was able to establish the California City Community Services District, a municipal agency “empowered by law to provide…every type of city service essential to good community development.” This included sewage disposal, plumbing, streetlights and road development. The Community Services District introduced plumbing and electrical infrastructure over larger areas of land by selling plots distanced from each other. They also graded and paved residential streets throughout the city. The faster this

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196 Policies for Planning. 4.
197 “Airpark Village in California City – Tract 2528,” original source unknown. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder “Smith and Williams: Project Files: California City 770; “3 Years of Dynamic Growth,” California City, CA 8/129 IV.C.
198 Jennifer Wood, meeting with author in California City, February 9, 2015.
type of groundwork was put in place, the faster lots could be sold. However, with housing and services spread out, the need arose for a more extensive transportation infrastructure.

In the Boron Valley, automobiles and transportation were one of the most important factors of city and valley growth: “Perhaps the most important basis for recent growth in the desert, and for the possible success in Boron Valley, is fast, comfortable, individual transportation by automobile on good highways.”\textsuperscript{199} The placement of automobile circulation is perhaps the largest difference between the Community Facilities Planners’ city design, and Garden City principles. Separation between pedestrians and automobiles was not as much an issue at the macro-scale. For a city as big as California City, in a landscape that had little to no transportation infrastructure, automobile circulation was considered a necessity (Figure 3.6). Furthermore, Williams felt that the automobile was becoming more desirable because people needed it to get to places of recreation.\textsuperscript{200} So, while automobile circulation was carefully planned around the perimeters of American garden cities, the Community Facilities Planners decided it necessary to integrate it directly within California City’s layout.

\textbf{Figure 3.6:} California City road infrastructure showing the extent to which infrastructure was planned, when it was still unclear that people would actually move there. \textit{California City, CA [map].} 2015. Scale undetermined; Google Maps. Google.

\textsuperscript{199} Policies for Planning. 5.
\textsuperscript{200} Williams, \textit{Recreation Places}, 235.
The firm embraced automobile culture, and incorporated it directly into the city’s identifying elements. For example, they named streets after car brands, including Cadillac Boulevard, Chrysler Drive, Dodge Court, Chevy Drive and Buick Boulevard.\textsuperscript{201} So while Smith and Williams did plan for safety from the automobile, through the design of garden apartments and cul-de-sac “tot lots,” they did so within individual neighborhoods and commercial centers. As a whole, the Community Facilities Planners and the California City Development Company felt strongly that the city’s plan was “a concept which is almost certain to be studied and copied in dozens of places across the United States.”\textsuperscript{202}


\textsuperscript{202} “A Plan for the City of Tomorrow.”
4. THE LAYOUT AND DESIGN OF CALIFORNIA CITY

As the Community Facilities Planners began designing California City, the Kern County Planning Commission produced a document entitled “Policies for Planning the Boron Valley.” This proposal established planning and land use criteria for two cities that were to be located in Boron Valley, based on the premise that Boron Valley was the ideal site for large-scale growth. The document acknowledged the frightening potential of California City’s failure, but also stood firm on the idea that smart planning would lead to its success:

It is difficult to belittle the importance of the Boron Valley – whatever degree of success may result. If it is successfully developed and poorly planned, the result could conceivably be less desirable than if it had ‘just growed.’ [sic] If it is successfully marketed but incompletely developed, an unprecedented redevelopment problem may result. If water is available for only a low population for a short period of time, the backfire would be detrimental to everyone involved.

Therefore, the County of Kern, responsible to the people who may inhabit Boron Valley and to the taxpayers who are seriously affected by resulting economy or miseconomy of wise or unwise planning, has an unusual interest in the soundness of the plan and even in the success of the development.

The planning policies also suggested municipal and social “opportunities” to avoid “the problems which have plagued American cities for the last several decades.” These opportunities are presented as functions that can essentially be mixed and matched to complement and service each other; they consisted of trafficways, commerce, public facilities, neighborhoods and communities, and industry and safety. The Commission predicted that some problems would arise during development of the Boron Valley, including insufficient water resources, lack of variety and “scatteration,” resulting from the speculative nature of the planned cities. With the acknowledgement of the potential obstacles the project faced, the Commission established standards and objectives for consistency of development. These objectives served as the guiding principles for the Community Facilities Planners as they embarked on their design for California City.

203 Boron Valley was part of what is now known as Fremont Valley.

204 Kern County Planning Commission, Policies for Planning the Boron Valley, (Bakersfield, California, 1958), California City Branch Vertical File: California City History 1, California City Branch, Kern County Library. Any information pertaining to California City’s planning principles within this chapter comes from this document, unless noted otherwise.

205 Policies for Planning the Boron Valley defines “scatteration” as essentially development that is widely dispersed, potentially resulting in the “inconsistency of the character of each area and…premature blight.”
Smith and Williams later devised their own planning document entitled “California City: A Planning Approach.” This document was prepared in 1968, a decade after the duo had begun designs for California City; it appears that the document was a reflection of the planning principles followed by the team, specifically in response to traffic circulation, as they commenced on their ambitious journey to design the city. It was also more conceptual in nature, offering a number of conceptual diagrams that would lead to finalized circulation patterns for the city. Along with the policy-based approach of Boron Valley’s planning documents, the team was able to integrate their own ideas for city design with requirements for the desert’s development.

The following description and analysis aim to convey the incredible thought and detail that went into planning California City, and the firm belief in its success. Smith and Williams’ plan for the city is the entity in which its architecture and infrastructure was allowed to evolve. Those elements related to each theme within this chapter are those that ultimately make up California City’s unique identity. In one of Mendelsohn’s “Annual Reports” to the citizens of California City, he discusses the “fourth dimension” in the city’s plan: “social architecture.” He elaborates, “We recognize that the location and character of each element…must relate to, and be judged by, the effect on the whole picture. In other words, the California City plan is total community planning.”

4.1 General and Schematic Land Use Plans

The initial concept for California City was the design of seven satellite cities of 30,000 people each, surrounding a central city of 85,000 people. The Los Angeles Examiner described the satellite cities as “each with its own nucleus and each with its own ‘reason to be.’” Plenty of space was left untouched with the idea that every resident would have a view of the desert; the city was intended to be part of the desert not separated from it. Smith and Williams wrote, “In California City by grouping large land users (inter community) and small land users (intra

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206 Mendelsohn, *Annual Report to California City*.
207 Ibid.
209 “A Plan for the City of Tomorrow.”
210 Ibid.
community) together we obtain a sense of order immediately.”211 They emphasized a distinct formula of open (inter) and urban (intra) spaces in which, “You may stand in a plaza of one town, view across inter community space and view another town. Because the ‘open space’ intercedes between towns, each town has a positive definition.”212 These concepts can be seen in the original Schematic Land Use Plan created by the Community Facilities Planners, as well as the Inter-Intra Space Diagram from Smith and Williams’ “A Planning Approach” (Figures 4.2 and 4.1, respectively).

![Figure 4.1: Smith and Williams’ Inter-Intra Space Diagram for California City. This original concept, in which there is a consistent dispersal of open and urban spaces, leads to a more realistic vision represented in the Schematic and General Plans. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams 770 California City, 8/138 IV.C.](image)


212 Ibid, 9.
The schematic plan became a more coherent version of the inter-intra concept originally diagrammed by Smith and Williams once the team was able to integrate the following four objectives for planning established in the “Policies for Planning the Boron Valley”:

- **The Individual**: “To preserve and strengthen the physical environment in which an individual may freely participate and identify himself…”
- **The Land**: “To obtain the optimum usefulness of land by providing the physical setting for it stable value…and the preservation of its natural qualities.”
- **The Community**: “To strengthen the unity, tradition, vigor and integrity of each neighborhood.”
- **The Facilities**: “To provide community facilities in proper variety and number, in effective locations…”
The schematic plan is the first type of plan discussed under “The Planning Process” of “Policies for Planning the Boron Valley.” Also known as the “Boron Valley Plan,” it lays out regional highways, urban centers, major land use areas, and major rail and air terminals and lines. In the schematic plan, each satellite city had a combination of mixed-density residential, parks and schools (including universities), neighborhood centers, quasi-public offices, a medical center, and mixed industrial spaces. However, what is most apparent in the diagram are the circulation patterns, which were carefully planned out by the firm, who believed “in order for people to move from one neighborhood to another or one community to another, in a defined, efficient manner, a traffic circulation system must be carefully defined.” The thick, red line surrounding the city represents what would someday become a freeway system. Boron Valley’s planning policies noted, “Highways placed in high frequency tend to limit specialization for the benefit of both traffic movement and use of land.” Smith and Williams supported this, rationalizing freeways, or traffic corridors, were to be located in “intercom” (inter-open space) communities only, which is likely behind the reasoning for the particular placement of the freeways along the city peripheries. Major streets located within the city boundaries were to remain straight in intra-urban areas, and could only become curvilinear in the inter-open spaces. Smaller, local streets were then organized to keep order within each individual community: “Residential streets are kept free of traffic. Collector streets lead to the neighborhood center. Secondary streets perform the intra community function and major streets perform the inter community function.” Circulation was clearly a major component of California City’s plan at both the citywide and neighborhood scales, as seen in Figure 4.3.

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213 Smith and Williams, A Planning Approach, 13.
More information about land uses and circulation patterns is revealed in the city’s general plan, as illustrated by Smith and Williams (Figures 4.4-4.6). This type of plan was listed as a “City Plan” in Boron Valley’s planning document, and laid out the following:

- Community, industrial districts and central business district boundaries
- Population densities (general location)
- Additional urban highways
- Major recreation areas, junior college and major special land uses
- Sewer and drainage (general)
Figure 4.4: Smith and Williams’ General Plan for California City illustrating more specific land uses and circulation patterns. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection, Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams 770 California City, 46/1517 I.V.D.
Figure 4.5: General Plan Detail showing the central part of the city.

Figure 4.6: General Plan Legend.
Within the study area of the General Plan, there is a great deal of emphasis placed on institutional (or “public” per the plan’s legend) facilities like schools, recreational spaces, and commercial areas. The diagram represents more specifically where all of these functions were to occur. In abundance are the green and white striped triangles, representing neighborhood parks, and green and white striped squares, representing schools for different age levels. These parks are representative of William’s belief that a city should have a unified system of parks, and that “the effectiveness of any particular recreation park depends upon its being carefully related to other recreation facilities.”\textsuperscript{217} The park-school sites were adjacent or overlapping with areas predicted for medium-density housing, represented by the yellow ovals, or high-density housing, represented by orange ovals. Low-density housing filled in the spaces between. There were also a number of neighborhood commercial centers, represented by the pink and pink-and-white striped squares. The pink-and-white striped circles were intended as commercial areas for professionals or business. Industrial parks, represented by blue and green stripes, were kept outside residential centers. Golf courses, represented by the green-shaded areas with a black flag, were to be abundant within or just outside of the study area. In the General Plan, the Community Facilities Planners planned for eleven golf courses.

The Schematic Land Use Plan and General Plan illustrate the very specific path for development intended for California City. While it is not uncommon for a city to have diagrams such as this, it is intriguing to see how clearly the vision of Smith and Williams reflects the occurrences of the era, and how truthfully their passions, recreation in particular, were transferred to paper. Detailed drawings of various neighborhoods then provided a more holistic view of how Garden City and recreational planning principles were fused together to create a modern image of the city. The following plan falls under the heading of “Major Area Land Use Plans” in Boron Valley’s planning documents, which assigned specific functions to Communities, the Central Business District and Industrial Districts.

Figure 4.7 shows the intersection of California City Boulevard and Conklin Boulevard, located in the central city, and four programmed neighborhoods surrounding it. The plan depicts how the golf course (the dark shaded area), which started in the Central Park and wove its way through the landscape, could become fully integrated into different “major areas.” In this

\textsuperscript{217} Williams, \textit{Recreation Places}, 240.
approach, there was always green space and recreation space available to a resident, whether they were in the Central Business District, the Older Adult Area, or the Quasi-Public Area, as outlined in the drawing. With an idea of how the city was intended to look at a macro-scale, it is possible to investigate each different type of land use, its significance, and how it fit within the larger city context.

Figure 4.7: The intersection of California City Boulevard and Conklin Boulevard, and the programmed zones surrounding it. Report for California City Development Co.: “California City Story”: Three Short Years of Dynamic Growth, Prepared by Community Facilities Planners courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder “Smith and Williams: Project Files: California City 770; “3 Years of Dynamic Growth,” California City, CA 8/129 IV.C.

This general plan for the city proved popular with potential residents. Almost immediately, potential residents began purchasing lots within the city. When 376 lots became available for purchase in May, they sold out by the second day on the market.218 Three months later, another 427 lots sold.219 The first twenty homes in the city did not actually complete

218 “12-year California City History Marked by Gains,” Bakersfield Californian, July 8, 1970, California City Branch Vertical File: California City History 1, California City Branch, Kern County Library.
219 Ibid.
construction until September, though property sales reached $3.5 million by the end of the year.\textsuperscript{220} That number jumped to $15 million by August 1960, with more than 8,000 families economically invested in the city.\textsuperscript{221} By 1961, three years after the city was founded, Mendelsohn boasted about the 175 homes that had been built.\textsuperscript{222} The following decade would bring an additional couple thousand housing units, and 500 mobile home units.\textsuperscript{223} For a city that almost literally started with nothing, each lot purchased, house constructed, and new resident moved in was an exciting accomplishment.

4.2 Recreational Parks and Centers

In his 1961 Annual Report to the citizens of California City, Nat Mendelsohn claimed, “Recreation places are ‘built-in’ to the community and are to be as conveniently available to people as are shopping centers.”\textsuperscript{224} At that time, existing recreational establishments included riding stables and trails, lakes, a golf course, tennis courts, baseball diamonds, and a lawn bowling green.\textsuperscript{225} Most everything was within two major parks: Central Park (known as Wonderland Park in the original design documents), which anchored the western half of the city, and Galileo Park (now known as Silver Saddle Ranch), which anchored the eastern half. It was understood that many smaller neighborhood parks would be scattered throughout the city near institutions that also had recreational qualities, such as schools. Property owners were offered full access to all recreational facilities at no extra cost.\textsuperscript{226}

Three years earlier, Wayne Williams outlined the goals and functions that he believed should be achieved through the implementation of municipal parks and city recreation areas in his book \textit{Recreation Places}. He claimed “…the primary responsibility of municipal parks is to provide \textit{open spaces for free play} and a background of \textit{basic facilities, qualified leadership, and services} on a community-wide basis.”\textsuperscript{227} This was to be done by:

\textsuperscript{220} “California City Early Years;” “History Marked by Gains.”
\textsuperscript{221} Mendelsohn, \textit{Annual Report}, 1960.
\textsuperscript{222} Mendelsohn, \textit{Annual Report}, 1961.
\textsuperscript{223} “History Marked by Gains.”
\textsuperscript{224} Mendelsohn, \textit{Annual Report}, 1961.
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{226} \textit{California City in Beautiful Boron Valley}, Brochure, Jack Maguire Local History Room, Beale Memorial Library, Kern County Library.
\textsuperscript{227} Williams, \textit{Recreation Places}, 124.
• Keeping spaces in their natural states and to “act quickly to save these open spaces.”
• Organizing activities that encourage people to interact.
• Providing a stage to encourage these organized activities.
• Guiding “poorly adjusted individuals and groups through activities.”

Presumably, Smith and Williams based their concepts for Central Park and Galileo Park on these guiding principles in park and recreational development.

The duo also followed strict guidelines in determining park locations and sizes, initially outlined in “Policies for Planning the Boron Valley.” The Boron Valley planning documents provided planning principles for different types of parks: neighborhood parks, community parks, golf courses and open areas. Neighborhood parks were the smallest, around five to seven acres in size and serving 3,000 to 5,000 persons. These parks were anticipated as “integrated with elementary schools, to permit use of school playgrounds for active recreation, thereby eliminating the need for duplicate facilities.” Essentially, neighborhood parks and elementary schools shared so many basic recreational functions that it made sense for them to be designed and constructed together. They were each to be located no further than one half mile from those using them. Community parks, twenty to twenty-five acres in size and serving 25,000 to 40,000 persons, were “integrated with high schools, comparable to those for neighborhoods” in design and program. The parks had a service radius of two miles. Golf courses were to be 150 to 160 acres, serve 30,000 to 40,000 persons and located no more than five miles from those they served. With these guiding principles, “recreation parks [could be] more numerous, more readily accessible, more inviting in every way...”

Based on these policies, the 160-acre Central Park was considered a golf course park, though it actually offered many recreational services in addition to golf. Construction began in 1960, when California’s Community Services District sold $400,000 in bonds for funding. Over the next seven years, portions of the park developed. A 24-acre lake was carved into the

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228 Williams, Recreation Places, 124.
229 Ibid, 236.
desert floor, sealed with polyethylene, and then filled with over 30 million gallons of water. Eventually the golf course and a sports center opened as well. Before long, the park was actively used for boating, fishing, golfing, swimming, or simply relaxing. Its central location provided easy public access and it soon became the central focus of the entire city (Figure 4.8-4.11).

Figure 4.8: A vision for “Wonderland Park” (now more commonly known as California City Central Park). Illustrator unknown, Report for California City Development Co.: “California City Story”: Three Short Years of Dynamic Growth, Prepared by Community Facilities Planners. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder “Smith and Williams: Project Files: California City 770; “3 Years of Dynamic Growth,” California City, CA 8/129 IV.C.

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Figure 4.9: Postcard of Central Park Lake, produced by ColourPicture Publics, Inc, distributed by Chris Cards, date unknown. Used as marketing material circa 1970s. Photo courtesy of Van and Albert Pray and www.ilovecaliforniacity.com.
Figure 4.10: Central Park Lake with a cascading waterfall, photographer unknown, no date. Photo courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams 770 California City, 46/1520 IV.D.
Central Park is also where many of Smith and Williams architectural designs are seen. The lake bathhouse in particular conveys the post-and-beam style that is a Smith and Williams’ hallmark. (Figure 4.12).
However, the park also provided a canvas for architectural experimentation. Most prominent was a pavilion that extended out into the middle of Central Park Lake, covered by winged “parasols” constructed of “eight graceful plywood fins.” Beyond a unique design, the firm found that construction of the fins was economically and architecturally beneficial: “1. It cost half as much. 2. It is more stable in extremes of desert heat. 3. It could be shaped to fit right at the site with ordinary tools.”\(^{232}\) This design element was a repetitive theme in a handful of built and planned buildings throughout the central city, including the California City Congregational Church, and is a great example of what Smith and Williams were designing at an architectural scale. The pavilion itself became a focal point within the park and now serves as a reminder of the city’s original visionary design (Figure 4.13).

\(^{232}\) Ad No. 64-202-2 for the California City Congregational Church, Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder “Smith and Williams: Project Files: California City 770; “3 Years of Dynamic Growth,” California City, CA 8/129 IV.C.
Galileo Park was designed as a western-themed recreational center, or “a ‘rugged’
complex, which includes rodeo grounds, picnic facilities, and the start of a museum to represent
the pioneer era.”\textsuperscript{233} The park offered equestrian activities such as horseback riding, accompanied
by a barn and stable, as well as spaces for camping; it also had its own administration center,
which was used to manage the site.\textsuperscript{234} Located on a hill just over 15 miles northeast from the city

\textsuperscript{233} “History Marked by Gains.”
\textsuperscript{234} California City Chamber of Commerce, \textit{Community Economic Profile for California City, Kern County, California}, October 5, 1982, Jack Maguire Local History Room, Beale Memorial Library, Kern County Library.
center, the park was named after Mendelsohn’s hero, Galileo Galilei.\textsuperscript{235} It was upon this hill that Mendelsohn once stood and looked over the land he envisioned as California City. Naturally, an observation tower was placed at the very top.

By Boron Valley’s park planning standards, Galileo Park would also be considered a golf course park. The exact acreage of the original site is unclear; today it is approximately 130 acres, though it was most likely larger to include housing within the park. In a preliminary site plan, five small neighborhoods in starburst-like configurations surrounded the center of the park; per this site plan, each neighborhood had approximately seventy parcels, though it is unclear if each parcel would be occupied by a residence, and exactly what type of residence was to be constructed. It is also unclear if the residential communities would directly abut the park or be separated from it, though it does appear that no direct circulation was planned from the communities to the park center. A small section of the park was also planned to have rancho-inspired residences, fitting in with the pioneer-era theme for the park. The golf course does not appear in this initial plan (Figure 4.14 and 4.15).

\textsuperscript{235} “Nat Mendelsohn.”
Figure 4.14: Smith and William’s Site Plan for Galileo Park (1961), located outside the central city, number 770 177/A. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder 394 IV.E, Smith and Williams, California City, Galileo Hill Development, California City, CA (1961) #770.
Another detailed site plan provides a more comprehensive view of how the park was to function (Figure 4.16). For example, it shows where the driving range, 18-hole golf course and golf club house would be built. It also features more recreational spaces, such as a tennis ranch, a marina, a beach, a vacation trailer park, more camping areas, and multiple sites for swimming. The rancho area was expanded, as was the circulation system throughout the park. The observation tower at the top of the hill was replaced with a hilltop resort, with an aerial tram connecting it to the marina at the bottom of the hill.
Galileo Park was a realistic representation of William’s hypothesis that “…in a locality with high summer temperatures a recreation park on an elevated site with cooler temperatures than lower areas might attract people from a wide radius.”\(^{236}\) The Mojave landscape, where the hot, dry desert floor was scattered with small buttes providing opportunities for cooler temperatures, was the ideal spot to test this theory out. And while the park seems inconveniently located for everyday recreation, it actually would have been accessible to California City’s residents, had development continued eastward from the city center.

In general planning terms, popularized in recreational planning in the mid-twentieth century, both Central Park and Galileo Park would also be considered “recreational complexes.” A recreational complex was defined as:

any parcel of land in excess of 100’ or more acres, having either geological and topographical features, together with man-made structures of various types…Most specifically, a recreational complex should be a spacious property with interesting terrain containing hills and woods and lakes, streams, and/or shoreline.\(^{237}\)

\(^{236}\) Williams, *Recreation Places*, 247.
The sites chosen for both parks were ideally suited because they offered diversity in natural features that could be blended easily with man-made recreational structures. Since the landscape didn’t have natural water channels or bodies of water, Smith and Williams carved out their own; this can be seen in Central Park in the form of Central Park Lake and the fishing pond, and Galileo Park in the form of the boat marina. Planning principles for recreational complexes also stressed the importance of landscape design that capitalized on views of or from the site: “any scenic views that can be observed from the complex, either to foothills, mountains, or marine areas, should be incorporated as part of the environmental exterior design.”238 These criteria are reminiscent of nineteenth century park principles, which evolved during the picturesque landscape-era and which eventually were integrated into Garden Planning principles. California City’s Central Park and Galileo Park were enjoyable, landscaped spaces offering a variety of recreational activity to all citizens.

In park planning, site reservation was crucial because it was widely accepted that areas for recreation and green, open space were the hardest to retrieve once they were gone. This was why so much emphasis was placed on acquiring land early and beginning the development process for California City’s parks while the land was still undeveloped.239 However, Boron’s planning policies also stressed the importance of site reservation for institutional spaces such as schools and other public buildings, because it could “reduce costs considerably, enable convenient and economic operation and assure potential residents and businesses that those services will exist in the right locations when warranted.”

4.3 Schools and Other Institutional Spaces

California City’s parks and schools were considered interconnected entities sharing many of the same programs.240 As such, they were sited and designed together, as seen in both the city’s Schematic Land Use and General Plans. In “Policies for Planning in Boron Valley,” schools were to be built adjacent to neighborhood parks in order to eliminate the need for duplicate facilities. Schools were also strategically located based on the Valley’s planning principles to account for the safety of the children attending them. In 1961, twenty sites had

239 Williams, Recreation Places, 241.
240 Shivers and Hjelte, Planning Recreational Places, 249-250.
already been set aside for schools with the first school scheduled for 1962; ultimately the city’s first school, Robert P. Ulrich Elementary, was completed in 1966.241

“Policies for Planning in Boron Valley” outlines detailed principles in identifying school sites, from elementary schools to junior colleges.242 It even provides a system for estimating enrollment based on site locations. The document provides four principles for choosing an elementary school site (defined as grades K-6):

1. Sites should be located so that the proposed service area boundary is identical with the neighborhood boundary and defined by major traffic ways.
2. Sites should be located and designed to be integrated with a park, with a minimum of five acres.
3. Sites may be slightly off-centered in each service area so that prevailing afternoon winds are at the back of most children walking home.
4. Street patterns within the elementary school service area should be designed so that children cross a minimum number of intersections while walking to or from school.

Additionally, elementary schools were to serve around 635 students each, be located no more than three quarters of a mile walking distance from the students’ homes, and be around ten net acres in size. Like Radburn, neighborhoods were always to be centered around elementary schools and playgrounds, ensuring accessibility and safety.243 And while California City children still had to share some residential streets with automobiles, safety for children was always a top priority.

Based on these principles the site chosen for Robert P. Ulrich Elementary lay within the city center, one block south of California City’s main commercial thoroughfare, California City Boulevard. The streetscape surrounding the school eliminated the need for students to cross multiple intersections. While the school was fully developed, it is unclear if a neighborhood park was constructed next door, as predicted in a map of the city center (Figure 4.17). The construction of a park would have been a top priority for those developing the city, who would have wanted this site to set a precedent for schools to follow. Like the bathhouse and pavilion in

241 Mendelsohn, Annual Report, 1961; “History Marked by Gains.”
242 This section will only review the principles for planning an elementary school, since Robert P. Ulrich Elementary was the only school developed under the direction of Smith and Williams.
Central Park, design was also a consideration because of the ideal that “distinctive architecture adds to the attractiveness of the scene” (Figure 4.18).244

Figure 4.17: Map showing potential school/park sites within California City’s central city. Photo courtesy California City in Beautiful Boron Valley, Brochure, Jack Maguire Local History Room, Beale Memorial Library, Kern County Library. Edited by author.

244 Robert P. Ulrich photograph caption, Newspaper Clipping in California City Branch Vertical File: California City History 1. California City Branch, Kern County Library.
Another important institutional space in California City was the church. “Policies for Planning in the Boron Valley” provided planning guidelines for choosing church sites, but beyond that, Smith and Williams brought their unique vision for the design of the California City Congregational Church. Along with the winged lake pavilion in Central Park, the original church was one of the most recognizable buildings in the city.

In California City, church sites were inherently related to school and park sites. Neighborhood and Community churches were to service 1,200 families and 10,000 respectively and were to be “adjacent to or near the school and park.” Additionally, “all sites should be located on corner properties near trafficways which serve the respective neighborhood, community or urban area.” This would have been the reason the California City Congregational Church was situated at the corner of California City Boulevard and Conklin Boulevard, in the heart of the city center. And though Smith and Williams had to follow a particular set of guidelines for choosing the location of the church, their creativity was not compromised. Designed in 1961, the church became representational of the type of architecture that could be created inside a cohesive, comprehensive community plan (Figures 4.19-4.21).
Figure 4.19: Smith and Williams’ drawing of California City Congregational Church as it was envisioned (1961). Courtesy of Olson-Spencer & Associates and the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams 770 California City, 46/1522 IV.D.
Figure 4.20: Exterior photograph of California City Congregational Church as it was built, photographer not listed, no date. Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams: Photographs/Negatives; California City, City Plan, California City, CA (#770), 46/1519 IV.D.
4.4 Residential Design

Residential planning and design was imperative to California City’s success. It had to be attractive and affordable, in order to entice people to purchase lots, and it had to be well-functioning, to encourage them to stay. Planners of Boron Valley were well aware of the “endless miles of bedroom subdivisions [that] typify the post-war American suburb.” Therefore, they wanted to ensure that “neighborhoods and communities can be planned with meaningful centers and boundaries which give them an individuality similar to towns or small cities.” Smith and Williams took this endeavor very seriously. They designed a variety of single-family residences under $20,000 for potential residents to choose from. They also implemented important Garden City principles such as green belts and pocket parks to keep them happy and safe, so “persons can proudly identify themselves with their area.” Initially the homes, or at least
the idea of them, were popular. Within California City’s first year (1958), more than 800 lots were sold, and property investments totaled $3,500,000. Two years later, 500 residents lived in the city, and investments had increased to $15 million. It was clear that the collection of homes that Smith and Williams designed and their concepts for neighborhood development resonated with buyers early in California City’s development.

Neighborhood planning also resulted from a specific set of principles outlined in “Policies for Planning in Boron Valley.” These principles guided location selection for neighborhoods, but also stressed the importance of neighborhoods evolving into close-knit, functioning communities. They are as follows:

1. Residential areas should be formed into unified neighborhoods and communities, with clearly defined boundaries and integrated commercial, school and park facilities.
2. Residential areas should be varied in residential density, housing type and design to provide a maximum range of choices based on economic ability, family composition and personal taste.
3. Multi-family housing parcels should be large enough for flexible site plans and maximum utilization of land.
4. The number of access points between highways and neighborhoods or communities should be limited to protect both highways and residential areas, yet be sufficient for desired movement.
5. Neighborhood street patterns should be designed to provide convenient movement from highway access points to the neighborhood center and prevent the movement of disruptive through traffic.

Like earlier garden cities, residential sites were to have an intentional disconnect from high traffic thoroughfares. The Community Facilities Planners wanted residents to feel safe within their neighborhoods, but made sacrifices in having complete separation between pedestrians and automobiles. Instead, Smith and Williams enhanced neighborhoods by incorporating open, usable green space. They also designed distinct housing typologies that aimed to create active, social communities.

Within California City, Smith and Williams created concepts for housing typologies that catered to both private and social individuals. Landscaping was a highlight in each concept. For those who wanted complete privacy, the team offered the “Atrium (Walled Garden)"

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245 “History Marked by Gains.” Most of California City’s early marketing material implies that lots were purchased by individual families, rather than speculators buying numerous plots for development.

Home, “a house that turns in on its own garden and is literally walled off from the exterior native environment.” (Figure 4.22) As seen in the sketch, the natural environment was brought directly into the living environment.

Figure 4.22: Smith and Williams’ Diagram of the Atrium (Walled Garden) home typology, no date. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams 770 California City, 46/1518 IV.D.

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This concept is reminiscent of many of Smith’s residential designs, a style that he had mastered. In 1946, he designed the unbuilt “Garden Wall House” for the Barr Lumber Company, which was envisioned as “an intimate garden out of which the house rises.”248 This design “clarified his priorities: garden and site first, buildings second, tailored around nature.”249 It was also Smith’s practice to create a plan first, from which the elevation and form of the building would be derived.250 This would explain why there are so many conceptual plans for housing in California City, though many never materialized.

For those who wanted the option of social interaction, but also valued privacy, there was the Town-House Village (Figure 4.23).

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**Figure 4.23.** Smith and Williams’ Diagram of the Town House Village typology, no date. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams 770 California City, 46/1518 IV.D.

249 Ibid.
The Town-House Village consisted of clusters of the Patio-Town House property type (Figure 4.24). This property type was described as a home “for the urban dweller,” where “enclosed courts provide privacy and outdoor living space” (Figure 4.24). The town houses were available in a variety of different sizes, and most included more than one patio space, some located off the exterior facades and some located in the middle of the homes. In “Outside In: The Architecture of Smith and Williams,” Debi Howell-Ardila lists Smith’s design essentials (evident in the town house plans): “a large living/dining room off the terrace, a kitchen with cross light and air, and two bedrooms offering garden views, one with outdoor access.” Each layout took clear advantage of the patio spaces, which also offered privacy. Residents in this village were able to retreat to their private patios when they did not feel like socializing in the communal areas of the community.

Figure 4.24: Smith and Williams’ Diagram of the Patio-Town House typology, no date. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams 770 California City, 46/1518 IV.D.

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251 Smith and Williams, “Atrium (Walled Garden) Homes.”
A more neighbor-oriented, single-family residence option was the appropriately named Neighbor-Oriented plan (Figure 4.25). Also equipped with a back patio, Smith and Williams utilized landscaping to delineate property lines. This residential type was considered the “more usual suburban house...placed facing the street.”

Though Garden City principles typically had homes facing away from the street, to ensure safety for children, Smith and Williams wanted this option to create a unified streetscape, which each lot being part of a street design. This proved different from Smith’s usual approach to home design. He often received requests for the plans of a home he had already designed for a client, so that others could replicate its design. He always refused, saying that each house was particularly suited to his client’s individual needs. In his and Williams’ design for California City residences, the houses were thought of collectively, with the understanding that each plan would be replicated and would need to create a cohesive neighborhood pattern.

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**Figure 4.25**: Smith and Williams’ Diagram of the Neighbor-Oriented house typology, no date. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams 770 California City, 46/1518 IV.D.

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253 Smith and Williams, “Neighbor-Oriented” sketch, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara.

254 Ibid.

Most in line with Garden City residential design principles was the concept for Park-Oriented housing. A Park-Oriented house was one that “looks out on, or is in a park” (Figure 4.26).²⁵⁶

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²⁵⁶ Smith and Williams, “Park-Oriented” sketch, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara.
It was this idea that Smith and Williams probably assumed would be most popular within California City, due to the expectation that a number of parks, of all sizes, would be built. They reasoned, “As many parks are planned, many residences will be able to take advantage of this opportunity. Regulation of fences on this type of house will allow the park atmosphere to flow around and include the house site.”\textsuperscript{257} A shared driveway situated clusters of single-family residences deep into their park settings so they could be fully integrated into nature. This also took the houses off the main residential streets, providing safer spaces for children to be. As seen in the sketch, houses varied in orientations, still providing an element of privacy.

Smith and Williams designed five original housing models for California City for residents to choose from. These models were variations of the Park-Oriented neighborhood concept and the Atrium House design. Only a handful of these plans were actually constructed. The models were affordable, the most expensive sold at $18,500, making them attractive to potential residents.\textsuperscript{258} An advertisement encouraging residents to choose their favorite plan described the houses:

All five models have in common a special charm and character but each has special features and values to appeal to the particular needs of various owners. Which house is right for you? All share many of the same advanced features which include perimeter heating and draft-free comfort, all-electric kitchens, custom cabinet work, air-conditioning, spacious floor plans and panorama windows for spectacular views.” The five houses are name for five of the world’s most beautiful lakes.\textsuperscript{259}

Examples of the different models can be seen in Figure 4.27.

\textsuperscript{257} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{258} Report for California City Development Co.: “California City Story”: Three Short Years of Dynamic Growth, Prepared by Community Facilities Planners, no date. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder “Smith and Williams: Project Files: California City 770; “3 Years of Dynamic Growth,” California City, CA 8/129 IV.C
\textsuperscript{259} Ibid.
A more detailed drawing of how “The Constance” and “The Geneva” plans fit with the Park-Oriented neighborhood setting is seen in Figure 4.28 below. Though different sizes, the two plans are integrated directly within the landscape, surrounded by trees and other landscaping. Both include the essential patio element. Following are sketches of two different models set within a lush, desert park environment (Figures 4.29 and 4.30).
Figure 4.28: Smith and Williams’ “The Geneva” plan (left) and “The Constance” plan (right) integrated into the Park-Oriented neighborhood concept, scale 1”=20’, no date. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams 770 California City, 46/1520 IV.D.

Figure 4.29: Stan Repp Sketch of “The Constance” model (1962) in Report for California City Development Co.: “California City Story”: Three Short Years of Dynamic Growth, Prepared by Community Facilities Planners. Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder “Smith and Williams: Project Files: California City 770; “3 Years of Dynamic Growth,” California City, CA 8/129 IV.C.
California City’s architectural boom in residential development lasted through the end of the 1970s. During the first wave, which I’ve estimated to have been within California City’s first five years as a community, at least three of Smith and Williams’ model home designs were constructed for the masses, though the exact number remains unclear. Many of those exist today in various neighborhoods (Figure 4.31).
Figure 4.31: Interior photo of “The Como” model built in “Fairway Estates,” photographer not listed, no date. Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara. Folder “Smith and Williams: Project Files: California City 770; “3 Years of Dynamic Growth,” California City, CA 8/129 IV.C.

Many can also be seen within the cul-de-sacs flanking Heather Avenue within Central Park. Also in the mid-1960s, Smith and Williams designed a garden apartment complex called the Eastlake Condominiums, their most realized version of a garden apartment. The Eastlake Condominiums were to encompass the entire corner of N. Loop Boulevard and Randsburg Mojave Road, reaching to the lakefront of California City’s Central Park Lake, reflecting the principles that seemed to guide much of California City’s growth: bigger is better (Figures 4.32).
Another wave can be seen in 1966, just after California City’s incorporation as a city. By this point, U.S. Steel Homes had developed a tract just northwest of the intersection of California City Boulevard and Neuralia Road. While Smith and Williams and the Community Facilities Planners were still involved with California City at this time, it is unclear if they had a hand in designing the modest homes that can be seen in this tract and throughout the city. The same can be said for the ranch homes seen in Applewood Estates, located just east of California City’s Central Park off Randsburg-Mojave Road, which opened between 1969 and 1970. This appears to be the end of cohesive residential development at the neighborhood scale.

The purpose of examining these residential ideas at such an intimate scale is to make it easier to understand how they fit within a fully realized neighborhood. At the neighborhood scale, a union between the different residential models designed by Smith and Williams was achieved, at least on paper. The plan became the incubator in which all of the conceptual residential designs were able to generate and evolve into realistic, livable spaces. For example, Figure 4.33 is a site plan for a neighborhood located just north of Central Park, bounded by North Loop

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260 Stevenson, “Nat Mendelsohn.”
Boulevard on the south, Conklin Boulevard on the west, Mendiburu Road on the north and Randsburg-Mojave Road on the east. Though speculation, this thesis will refer to this neighborhood as Fairway Estates, a neighborhood where Smith and Williams actually built a number of their model homes. This neighborhood mixed the Atrium (Walled Garden) house, the Neighbor-Oriented house, and (undocumented) two-story houses.²⁶¹

**Figure 4.33:** Smith and Williams’ Site Plan for, presumably, the Fairway Estates neighborhood, scale 1”=600’, no date. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams 770 California City, 46/1520 IV.D.

²⁶¹ I found no evidence of any plans for two-story house designs by Smith and Williams, nor do I believe that any were actually constructed.
In the plan, one sees how landscape and park space is used in the formation of the neighborhood. Arguably, it is what is most apparent about the plan. A variety of planting was used to delineate property lines or provide separation and privacy. The winding green patch through the middle of the neighborhood, which is actually the location of a wash, served as its “backbone,” and was packed with landscaping and green space. This reflected the “park as backbone” Garden City principle that was adapted by Stein and Wright. The use of cul-de-sacs provided spaces for “neighborhood parks.” So while Smith and Williams, again, did not completely separate vehicles from pedestrians as in the Garden City tradition, they compromised by creating spaces where pedestrians could be safe and private from automobile traffic. Smith and Williams made a great effort in designing these parklets, differentiating them and utilizing them throughout the neighborhood (Figure 4.34).

Figure 4.34: Smith and Williams’ Diagrams for various parklet strategies in California City, no date. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams 770 California City, 46/1520 IV.D.

262 Architectural Resources Group, Garden Apartments, 14.
The duo intended the cul-de-sac parklets to be utilized as tot lots, but also realized that using these in-between spaces rather than whole properties for park space would be more economically beneficial to the city. They reasoned, “By eliminating certain through-streets and replacing them with cul-de-sacs, a ‘tot-area’ can be created without loss of salable lots.” They utilized this approach in residential intersections as well, which can be seen in the top left of Figure 4.33. The team also designed a “mother’s area” that could be built around the “no-parking” areas next to fire hydrants. This can be seen in both perspective and plan in the center of the same figure. Perhaps used most often in the neighborhood site plan in Figure 4.32 were the landscaping techniques seen in the bottom left and right corners of Figure 4.33 Known as the “terminal vista,” the idea was a “combined architectural and planning device used throughout this project. Here it is used with landscape forms to add a focal point to the neighborhood. Smith and Williams argued that “focal points and ‘play-streets’ can be made by landscape techniques, change in paving width and material.”263 Subtle changes in the street layout resulted in a unique, dynamic streetscape in which the Atrium and Neighbor-Oriented house designs could then be placed.

This example of a typical neighborhood layout is only one way that Smith and Williams envisioned California City’s neighborhoods to be. And while there is no documentation of other housing plans and formations to this extent, a variety of other housing typologies were anticipated, particularly in California City’s Older Adult Area. With Smith and Williams’ passion for recreation came a passion for including seniors in daily life. Therefore, the team took extra consideration in designing the Older Adult Area, an all-inclusive community that included housing, recreation, commercial and other institutional spaces.

4.5 Senior Citizens in California City

Planning for senior citizens deserves its own section within this chapter because it was an essential part of California City’s original plan, one to which Smith and Williams paid extra attention. Planning for senior citizens was being taken into consideration in many areas of the United States, as seen in the development of age-restricted communities such as Sun City (1960) in Phoenix, Arizona and Leisure World (1960) in Seal Beach, California. However, despite the

263 Smith and Williams’ Parklet sketch, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara.
development of these seniors-only communities, Mendelsohn argued that senior citizens didn’t actually want to be segregated. The older adult “should live close enough to make himself felt in the vital life of the community.” So, in enticing seniors to California City, Mendelsohn promised that the city’s plan would aim to integrate them into the general community, not leave them out. “Policies for Planning the Boron Valley” did not include provisions for senior planning, so it seems that California City’s senior community represented the personal visions of Mendelsohn and Smith and Williams, who all shared similar views on senior living. They enlisted the Retirement Home Planners of Pasadena to turn the ideas into reality.

In the mid-twentieth-century, planning principles typically advocated for senior-related programming to be located in or around a community park, under the rationalization that “older folks, senior citizens, have become more and more dependent upon the community for recreational opportunities.” This principle is followed in the siting of California City’s “Older Adult Area,” which was to be located directly west of Central Park (Figure 4.35). With the park nearby, senior citizens would be able to “reach the largest variety of facilities.” The Community Facilities Planners promised:

The lake with a variety of water recreation, the neighborhood shopping centers, the cultural center, the crafts and hobby center, the church, all are within the older adult area or adjoining it. All types of life-styles will be accommodated within the center, from trailer living to luxury apartment, from single family homes to high-rise residence hotels.

The amenities of the city’s Central Park were to be directly at the senior community’s disposal where they could share them with “their younger fellow-citizens.” They could also “enjoy the quiet seclusion of their own residential area” with many features restricted to seniors only.

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265 “The Older Adult,” 1.
267 “The Older Adult,” 1.
268 Shivers and Hjelte, Planning Recreational Places, 263.
269 “Older Adult Area,” Report for California City Development Co.: “California City Story”: Three Short Years of Dynamic Growth, Prepared by Community Facilities Planners, Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder “Smith and Williams: Project Files: California City 770; “3 Years of Dynamic Growth,” California City, CA 8/129 IV.C.
270 “Older Adult Area.”
271 “The Older Adult,” 6.
272 Ibid.
The “Older Adult Area” was all-inclusive for those that did not wish to venture outside the community. For example, a system of “circulation parks” offered recreation specifically geared to seniors. The “circulation parks” were envisioned as:

A system of pedestrian walks, bicycle and bridle paths and pathways restricted to similar transportation methods [that] lead to all area-components in a cool and shady landscaped environment. Along the paths are found such recreation facilities as bowling on the green, shuffleboard, bocce, croquet and clock golf.273

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273 “Older Adult Area.”
The circulation park, which is illustrated by the dark winding form weaving its way through the “Older Adult Area,” was intended to be the connector between three major park centers with dedicated programming: the water center, the craft center and the village center (Figure 4.36). Cars were not permitted within this area, though golf carts were encouraged.274 In this sense, the Older Adult Community was most in line with Garden City principles.

Figure 4.36: “California City’s Uniquely Planned Older Adult Area, in the Midst of Churches, Shops, Lake, Parks, Golf Course, Medical Center, Craft Center, Varied Recreational Facilities.” Drawing courtesy of “What the Older Adult Can Look Forward to In California City,” *California City Sun*, November 15 1961, 4-5, California City Branch Vertical File: California City History 2, California City Branch, Kern County Library.

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274 “The Older Adult,” 6.
Descriptions for the three centers are as follows:

- **Water Center:** “…a pleasantly landscaped park with cooling fountains playing over shadd[ed] pools surrounded by benches and quiet activity areas. A bait and fly casting pool is provided for the sportsman.”

- **Craft Center:** “…a complete hobby and crafts facility where recreation activity is both consumed and produced. Here a retired craftsman may lend of his experience and gain himself from his ability to ‘contribute.’”

- **Village Center:** “Set like the New England ‘common’ in a park meadow environment will be the hub of daily shopping, exchange of news and visiting. Here also is found an ‘exchange’ for both volunteer and paid employment or activity seekers.”

Also seen within the illustration is the variety in housing typologies anticipated for seniors, including multi-level apartments, single-family residences (predicted to be a mix of Atrium or Park-Oriented housing), guesthouses, Ranch Estates, and garden apartments (Figure 4.37). Seniors would even be able to live in a trailer park village. Single-family residences were “small enough to make housekeeping easier” but “nevertheless large enough for gracious living (Figure 4.38).” They also included features that would make living easy for older adults, such as grab-rails. These units were priced at a more affordable rate of $10,900. For health related issues, a nursing home was to be located on the perimeter of the community, providing medical and therapeutic care and “supervised recovery of minor ailments.”

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275 “Older Adult Area.”
276 “The Older Adult,” 5.
277 Ibid, 6.
278 Ibid, 5.
279 Ibid, 4-5.
Figure 4.37: Sketch for what appears to be a garden apartment, illustrator not listed, no date. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams 770 California City, 46/1520 IV.D.

Figure 4.38: Smith and Williams’ Illustration of Older Adult Area as it was envisioned, illustrator not listed, no date. Photo courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams: Project Files: California City, Promotional Materials, 770, California City, CA (1961), 8/136 IV.C.
The “Older Adult Area” promised much to the potential senior citizens of California City. Mendelsohn himself assured:

You can, if you like, retire to ‘the quiet life’ enjoying the benefits of a fine climate and a pleasant ‘small town’ community life. Or, you can lead as active a life as you ever have had. A life filled with a variety of recreational, social and cultural pursuits in an air that is clear and friendly and a community that you will love…

It was this type of inter-generational planning that made the California City unique and enticing during the mid-twentieth century.

4.6 Industry

California City’s planners expected that industry and production would bring people and money into the new town. While the desert location of the city boasted an existing boron industry and military facilities like the Edwards Air Force Base, the city’s founders felt that other industries could be introduced. The city’s 1960 Annual Report predicted that $20,000,000 of industrial uses were planned or already constructed. In response to increasing excitement about the aircraft and aerospace industries, California City constructed an airport with promises of jobs for its residents.

The enthusiasm about industry was prevalent across all of Boron Valley, so planning for industrial districts was understandably taken into account in “Policies for Planning the Boron Valley.” In the documents, industry was divided into three district types: Commercial-Industrial, Limited Industrial, and General Industrial. While each type of district was configured to different uses, planning principles sited the districts far enough away from residential areas to ensure they wouldn’t be affected by harmful production, but close enough that they were easily accessible, since it was assumed most every working resident in California City would be working in one of the nearby industries. Distance to and from major transportation arteries was important. One planning principle reads: “All districts should have maximum service from all forms of transportation and utilities.” Similarly, the development of industrial districts was directly related to transportation: “Districts should be compact to rationalize highway patterns and strengthen

public transit…” Nevertheless, design and layout were always taken into account, including landscaping.

There were certain industries that Smith and Williams hoped would flourish in and around California City. A list of these industries is seen in Table 4.1, along with notes reconciled from “California City: A Planning Approach.” All of these major industries were located (or to be located) in California City or in adjacent towns such as Mojave. The employment numbers seen in the table were based on statistics from 1968, when Smith and Williams recorded them in their planning documents. These industries considered “new” were those that were established since California City’s founding in 1958. Those labeled “existing” were already established before 1958.
Table 4.1. California City Industry, Smith and Williams, “California City: A Planning Approach,” June 10, 1968

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number/Map</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Existing/New</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Edwards Air Force Base</td>
<td>Existing</td>
<td>Current employment – 12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>U.S. Borax &amp; Chemical Company</td>
<td>Existing</td>
<td>Borax mines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Johannesburg-Randsburg</td>
<td>Existing</td>
<td>Gold, tungsten and silver mines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Great Lakes Carbon Corporation</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Monolith Portland Cement Company</td>
<td>Existing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>California Portland Cement Company</td>
<td>Existing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Los Angeles Water &amp; Power Station</td>
<td>Existing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Naval Ordnance Test Station</td>
<td>Existing</td>
<td>10,000+ employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Texas Aluminum Company</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Built by California City Development Co.; in operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Purdy Company</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Large RR car salvage operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>United Carbon Co.</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>In process of building a $5,000,000 plant near Mojave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>American Potash and Chemical Corp.</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Planned $15,000,000 plant between Mojave and CA City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kern County Airport #7 and industrial district</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Proposed 2,8000 acre site, including 700,000 SF of buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>California City Airport and Industrial Park</td>
<td>New</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>California City Recreation - Land</td>
<td>New</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>National Aeronautics and Space Administration</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The map in Figure 4.39 illustrates where each industry was located in relation to California City’s city center (cross-referenced to the Number/Map column in Table 4.1). Some of the most important industries were Edwards Air Force Base (reflecting the major technological advancements of the military post-World War II) and the U.S. Borax and Chemical Corporation (reminiscent of the Mojave’s historic connection to Borax mining in the 1800s). Mendelsohn’s
partner M. Penn Phillips claimed, “There is nearby the rapidly expanding Edwards Air Force Base; the largest flight test center in the United States, which will be doubling its civilian work force in the next ten years…” 282 He also noted that the borax site “has the world’s largest supply of boron which is a vital factor in defense and missile development because of its use as an ingredient in ‘exotic high energy fuel,’” making a strong connection between two of California City’s major industries. 283

Figure 4.39: Map of California City Industry in Report for California City Development Co.: “California City Story”: Three Short Years of Dynamic Growth, Prepared by Community Facilities Planners. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection, Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder “Smith and Williams: Project Files: California City 770; “3 Years of Dynamic Growth,” California City, CA 8/129 IV.C.

282 “Missile Center,” Newspaper Clipping in California City Branch Vertical File: California City History 2. California City Branch, Kern County Library.
283 Ibid.
What was arguably the most anticipated industry for the city was the California City municipal airport, located just northwest of the city center, and especially Smith and Williams’ “Airpark Village” (Figures 4.40 and 4.41):

…a modern industrial complex, a well planned community airport, a graceful, sheltered residential community, and an ultra modern recreational center, all as a unified whole, yet separated, so that one does not intrude on the other.284

The complex was expected be a major source of employment, while the park provided housing so that employees were only steps from their work place. The actual airport facility, designed by Smith and Williams in 1960, was only one portion of the airpark, serving corporate and private aircrafts (Figures 4.42).285 Just south of the airport the industrial village supported a residential neighborhood, with both multi- and single-family housing. Under the supervision of the California City Community Services District and the Airpark Village Association, an “airpark village green” and recreational facilities were to be operated and maintained for residents.286 An advertisement compared the village common to the “quiet community parks found in the English countryside.”287 This residential area was also to include school and park sites so that working families were not excluded.288

284 “Airpark Village in California City.”
285 “Airpark Village in California City;” Don Downie, “The $1 Airport,” Airport World (1973): 24, California City Branch Vertical File: California City History 1, California City Branch, Kern County Library.
286 “Airpark Village in California City.”
287 Ibid.
288 Ibid.
**Figure 4.40:** Drawing of the proposed California City Airpark Village, original source unknown. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder “Smith and Williams: Project Files: California City 770; “3 Years of Dynamic Growth,” California City, CA 8/129 IV.C.

**Figure 4.41:** Aerial View of the Airpark Village, illustrator not listed, no date. Report for California City Development Co.: “California City Story”: Three Short Years of Dynamic Growth, Prepared by Community Facilities Planners. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder “Smith and Williams: Project Files: California City 770; “3 Years of Dynamic Growth,” California City, CA 8/129 IV.C.
One can see the processes by which Smith and Williams and the rest of the Community Facilities Planners designed and laid out the city, from the neighborhood scale to the building scale. The Airpark Village represents another plan-within-a-plan that the team hoped would one day become commonplace within the city boundaries. The plan of neighborhoods or districts was always the first element to be conceived; the construction of individual buildings came later. Then, each piece would evolve to become a cohesive part of the larger city whole. The next section will show how commercial areas, such as the city’s Central Business District, fit into the overall plan for the city.

4.7 Commercial Districts

In planning for Boron Valley, commerce was considered one of the main areas where conflict between pedestrians and automobiles could be avoided. Again, compromises were made in this relationship, due to the necessity of cars. However, planners were aware that “the mere separation of traffic and commerce…can reduce the barnstorming method of site location and design, and eliminate the jammed debris character of traffic movement;” they made this their goal. Additionally, commercial areas presented prime opportunities to plan ahead for parking and
landscaping, so that both existed in a happy medium. Initial planning designated a large Central Business District adjacent to both Central Park and the Older Adult Area. Local Commercial Centers were planned for the rest of the city.

In “Policies for Planning the Boron Valley,” much focus was put on including pedestrian circulation within commercial areas like the Central Business District, with parking and traffic on the peripheries of these spaces. Principle Five described an acceptable site plan for this area as one “…based on peripheral parking, and internal pedestrian moved [sic] (except possibly for service vehicles) with malls, plazas and structures arranged according to advanced principals of architecture and landscape design.” Parking, structures, and “landscaping and pedestrian” was regulated by the “ration of space allocation,” which advised a 3:2:1 ratio, respectively. “Unified Use Areas” characterized the programming of the Central Business District. Initially, a small area (30 acres) of the overall district was to be used as “General Commercial.” As the city grew, it was expected that the uses of the Central Business District would change as well. Boron’s planning documents made provisions for this, stating “after the first area is outgrown, further development should be guided into relatively more specialized use areas.” These areas included retail, auto, business and financial, medical, civic, cultural and travel and entertainment. Each use started off with an initial amount of acreage; when it outgrew its space, it was allotted an additional amount. Therefore, the total initial size of the Central Business District was predicted as 270 acres. Once the district grew, it was predicted to be 530 acres.

Local commercial centers, like the one built at the intersection of California City Boulevard and Neuralia Road, were expected to be either fifteen to thirty acres, and offer a wide range of goods and professional services to 25,000 and 40,000 persons. Though smaller and more widespread than the Central Business District, these centers were nevertheless expected to minimize conflict between automobiles and pedestrians. They were also to be pleasantly landscaped spaces. California City’s Aspen Mall is the only built example of a commercial center. Constructed in 1970 and opened to the public in 1971, this ¼ mile commercial strip reflected Boron Valley’s original planning principles for commercial spaces (Figure 4.43). All parking was restricted to the front of the mall, while the buildings were spaced out so that landscaped areas could fill in-between.

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289 “History Marked by Gains.”
In planning for California City, no stone was left unturned, including the design that went into the city’s smallest elements, such as signage. With a clear idea of where everything was to be placed within the general plan for the city, the small “accessories” are reminders of the creative minds that believed in California City’s growth and success.

4.8 Ancillary Features

It does not appear that there were any principles guiding design for small community elements at the Valley level. Instead, it seems that Smith and Williams had fun being creative with the details of the city such as signage. They took full advantage of having complete design control, designing everything from simple wooden signposts to a sign for the historic Twenty
Mule Team Trail. Everything had a place and a purpose, rounding out Mendelsohn’s “social architecture” dream.

The subtle design differences seen in the drawings above emphasize the original concept Smith and Williams had for California City, in which a modern day city springs from an old, pioneering landscape. For example, one shopping center sign shows a simple, sleek design, most likely to have been placed at the Aspen Mall commercial center (Figure 4.45). Figures 4.45 and 4.46 were likely designed for the less urban areas, injecting a rustic country feel into the city. No detail was overlooked; in fact, the team even spent time experimenting with fonts for official California City signage.

Figure 4.44: Smith and Williams’ Elevation for California City signage (1963). Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder 407 IV.E., Smith and Williams, California City Signs, California City, CA (1961).
Figure 4.45: Smith and Williams’ Elevation for California City signage (1966). Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder 407 IV.E., Smith and Williams, California City Signs, California City, CA (1961).

Figure 4.46: Smith and Williams’ Elevation for California City signage (1966). Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder 407 IV.E., Smith and Williams, California City Signs, California City, CA (1961).
Smith and Williams also designed certain elements to adapt to the city’s landscape as it evolved over time. For example, a wash runs throughout California City, and the team planned for residential and commercial infrastructure on both sides of it. Recognizing that the wash would collect water over time and potentially widen, the duo pictured how the landscape might evolve with it. They predicted that eventually, infrastructure would be needed so that people could still get around those parts of the city that bordered the wash. The sketch in Figure 4.47 shows how this might have happened. By 1980, it was likely that simple bridges would need to be placed throughout the city along the wash.

**Figure 4.47:** Smith and Williams’ Diagram of the evolution of California City’s wash, no date. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams 770 California City, 46/1517 I.V.D.

### 4.9 Landscape Features

Because Garden City principles played such a large part in the planning for California City, it is important to take a brief, but closer, look at some of the landscaped community features Smith and Williams had planned for the city. Many of these landscapes have already
been discussed as features of residential or recreational spaces. However, an element that has yet to be discussed is the series of landscaped medians that were intended for major vehicular connectors around the city. Because of the high number of residents expected within the city, the Community Facilities Planners planned thoroughly for increased traffic patterns, and ways to safely accommodate them. Therefore, they intentionally separated lanes of traffic with heavily landscaped medians, as seen in Figure 4.48.

![Figure 4.48: Illustration of California City built-out. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder Smith and Williams 770 California City, 46/1517 I.V.D.](image)

This kind of strategic planning, attention to detail, and ambition for safe but visually pleasing assets within the community is characteristic of the Community Facilities Planners’ work throughout California City.

This chapter unveils a better understanding of the design and planning processes that Smith and Williams and the Community Facilities Planners went through in creating California City. The plan for California City reveals itself to be the product of modern day Garden City planning principles and recreational planning, in which open, green space and major areas of
recreation were achieved. Furthermore, it became the canvas in which Smith and Williams was able to create some of their most unique and experimental designs at an unprecedented city scale.
5. CALIFORNIA CITY: THEN AND NOW

What is left of the original vision and realization of California City? What new development has occurred? The answers to these questions are important because they determine whether or not the city’s plan, in and of itself, is worth preserving. Most of California City’s infrastructure and urban fabric did not develop, in any way, shape, or form. But what did develop, in the central portion of the city and within Galileo Park, can provide clues about the city’s present landscape and how it relates to Smith and Williams’ original city plan. The investigation includes individual elements of the built infrastructure, like houses and parks, as well as those that are spread over the broader landscape, such as circulation and large, programmed districts. Is the “social architecture,” as Nat K. Mendelsohn once envisioned, expressed today? How does the current image compare to his original one? Can any part of this history be saved, and if so, how?

A number of new questions need to be answered in order to understand the full extent to which California City’s “social architecture” – the master plan and all that remains within – came to fruition. These questions apply to all sections within this chapter, divided into the same themes discussed in Chapter Four, because each theme is a remnant of the intended legacy for California City. They include:

- Are the original goals of this theme maintained? If so, to what extent and in what ways?
- Is this theme contributing to or strengthening the existing form and function of the original city plan?

It is also necessary to establish what can be considered California City’s “original” build-out versus recent development. Because it appears that Smith and Williams and the Community Facilities Planners were involved with the project for at least ten years, infrastructure is considered “original” if it was built or conceived between 1958 (the city’s founding year) and 1970 (the year one of the last major housing developments was constructed). Smith and Williams designed many of California City’s buildings between 1961 and 1968, so these years in particular are significant within California City’s history.

290 I refrain from calling this a period of significance, simply because I have not yet proven whether California City’s resources are significant.
In the twenty-first century, California City official approved a new general plan, which outlines the vision and goals for the city from 2009 to 2028.\textsuperscript{291} Whatever is uncovered from the analysis of California City’s “original” infrastructure is a critical component in understanding what the city has planned for the future. Perhaps adherence to the original Smith and Williams plan would benefit the future development of the city, guiding new growth within the original structure of the plan while allowing flexibility in developing a new sense of place. Whether or not parts of California City are determined to be intact and significant enough to protect, it is essential to evaluate the city’s master plan in its entirety, both past and present.\textsuperscript{292}

5.1 General and Schematic Land Use Plans

California City did not develop into seven satellite cities as planned. Instead, the central city’s road and utility infrastructure and buildings and open spaces were constructed, newcomers trickled in and settled down, and growth dwindled to a sluggish pace. Instead of a bustling urban core of 85,000, California City currently has only 14,120 citizens. Because of this, there is more built infrastructure than there are people to use it, and the “scatteration” that Boron Valley’s planners once feared is widespread. Nevertheless, the city’s development is comparable to what was expected of the city during its first decade. So, with a comprehensive understanding of the city today, larger-scale redevelopment could be prevented, and scatteration corrected, while preserving the city’s original elements.

This is reflected in the city’s vision for land use from its new general plan, which states that the overall goal is to:

Promote land use distribution which provides for safe residential neighborhoods, bolsters’ economic prosperity, protects property value, preserves open space and natural resources, allows for recreational opportunities, and enhances the overall quality of life in California City.

While less specific in concept than Smith and Williams’ satellite cities, many goals remain similar: safety for residents, recreational opportunities, and a connection to the city’s unique desert landscape. However, unlike Smith and Williams, the city understands that future development must be concentrated in the central core. It can no longer afford to spread itself thin

\textsuperscript{291} California City City Council, \textit{California City Master General Plan 2009-2028} (California City, CA: California City Planning Department, 2009), PDF, \url{http://www.californiacity.com/20092028ccfinalgeneralplan.pdf}. Any information pertaining to the Master Plan within this chapter comes from this document, unless noted otherwise.

\textsuperscript{292} A list of extant buildings within California City constructed no later than 1970 can be seen in Appendix B.
throughout its 82,000 acres. Instead, the urban core is given high priority, as well as “contiguity with existing development.”

Because California City is so expansive, the city introduced nine planning sub-areas to manage future growth. Planning Sub-Area 1 is the central core of the developed city, and will be the main focus of the analysis in this chapter. Recalling Smith and Williams’ original master plan, the central city was designed to accommodate specific city uses (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: General Plan overlay on Google Aerial map highlighting California City’s central core, giving a general idea of where original programming was meant to occur compared to the landscape today. California City, CA [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; Google Maps. Google. Edited by author.

Figure 5.2 shows a portion of the original General Plan (the central city) overlaid with a Google Aerial View of the same area. This illustrates how the original placement of city functions compares to the current fabric of the central city. The legend uses the same characters from the original master plan to convey programming:

- Orange oval – Medium-density residential
- Green circle – Park/golf course
- Pink-and-white square – Commercial center
- Green-and-white square – School
- Green-and-white triangle – Neighborhood/Community Park
- Green-and-blue stripes – Industrial area
Most of the developed neighborhoods within California City are medium-density residential, as previously planned. Those neighborhoods occur mainly adjacent to schools, commercial centers or parks. Most commercial centers occur along California City Boulevard, the city’s main street, which was originally envisioned as a commercial and recreational thoroughfare. Recreation within California City has mainly evolved around or within Central Park. Multiple schools now exist within the area, though only two of the four are adjacent to a community or neighborhood park. Industrial areas occur around the perimeter of the central city, as intended. In a two-dimensional analysis, the cityscape looks very similar to that foreseen by California City’s creators.

The city’s new general plan ensures that similar development will continue to occur. That is because the plan’s principles for the existing central core are intent on creating a cohesive, sustainable community:

- Preserve existing residential neighborhoods whose identity is characterized by the quality and maintenance of existing construction, stability, and reputation as a “special” place in the community;
- In-fill vacant parcels at densities that are consistent with existing land uses, and utilize sustainable principles;

Figure 5.2: California City program today. California City, CA [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; Google Maps. Google. Edited by author.
• Provide for redevelopment and the intensification of areas which are physically or economically depressed; and
• Provide linkages, where feasible, to open space areas and recreational opportunities.

In reference to general land use, it becomes clear that there is an acute awareness and acknowledgement of working with the existing environment at the local municipal level. This is further emphasized in one of the city’s overall policies: to “preserve existing significant sound residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, and industrial areas.” The criteria for understanding the city’s definition of significance (likely different from a preservationist’s definition) remains to be seen.

This vision also becomes clear in the city’s list of goals for sustainability, the creation of jobs, and urban development, which include (but are not limited to):

• Accommodate new development which is compatible with and complements existing land uses within the General Plan planning area.
• Accommodate new development which is sensitive to and capitalizes on the General Plan planning area’s natural environmental setting.

A connection to the city’s built infrastructure, as well as its physical landscape, is a constant theme throughout its new master plan.

In relation to California City’s original plan, this focus is promising. That is because three-dimensional elements were always considered just as important as those that appear in the second-dimension, a prime characteristic of Nat Mendelsohn’s “social architecture.” Unobstructed arteries, views and vistas are some examples of essential elements that need to be protected, and that may be if the city adheres to its new planning principles. In designing California City, Smith & Williams made clear the importance of having visual connections between different parts of the city as well as a visual connection to the desert landscape (Figure 5.3).
Along with the street pattern, these visual cues have also been maintained, however unintentional this may have been. Currently, these visual connections have occurred because plots of land remain empty. Neighbors can see each other’s homes simply because another person failed to build next door or across the street. Similarly, some of the city’s major thoroughfares highlight views of the desert landscape (Figure 5.4). Because California City is so undeveloped, many of these views are maintained. So, “scatteration” may inadvertently create opportunities for the future. Protection of the plan’s three-dimensional qualities could encourage growth while ensuring visual connections to the city’s surroundings. As a crucial component of the Smith and Williams’ original mater plan, a focus on preserving these visual connections should be a critical goal of the new general plan.

Figure 5.3: Desert views in California City, 2015. Photo by author.
Circulation is also one of the longest enduring remnants of Smith and Williams’ “California City: A Planning Approach” and Kern County’s “Policies for Planning the Boron Valley.” It was one of the first elements of California City’s General and Schematic Plans to be physically carved into the desert landscape. While freeways surrounding the city were never constructed, collector and residential streets were graded and paved in full. Today, the central city has fully developed circulation patterns as seen in Figure 5.5.
While the central city roads continue to be maintained, those extending to undeveloped parts within the city boundaries are deteriorating. Nevertheless, ghosts of these roads still convey the community traffic patterns conceptualized by Smith and Williams, as discussed in Chapter Four. This concept, which created a grid-like pattern within intra-urban areas and a free-flow pattern within inter-open spaces, can be seen in below, albeit absent of homes or businesses (Figure 5.6).  

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Inter-open and Intra-urban spaces are explained in more detail in Chapter Four.
The grid-like patterns on the left and right sides of the photo indicate residential areas of, presumably, two different satellite communities (intra-urban areas). The curvilinear streets in the center signify the boundary between these communities (inter-open space). These would have been low-density, in-between areas intended for citizens of each community to view their neighboring towns. Similarly, the desert landscape would be readily apparent, maintaining the sense of the city’s placement within its natural environment. Clearly, many of these streets are no longer in use. In fact, much of these outlying areas have been allocated as other uses, such as natural wildlife preserves, recreational off highway vehicle (OHV) parks, and even religious pilgrimage sites. Before long, these residual streets may no longer be able to communicate Smith and Williams’ original concept, due to overuse by vehicles combined with a lack of maintenance.

Fortunately, circulation is also a big concern for the city today. Per the new master plan, the overall goal of current and future circulation is to “provide a balanced circulation system to meet the needs of the residents, business, and visitors to California City.” The city hopes to accomplish this by providing “adequate vehicle capacity,” creating a multi-modal transportation
system, and making it easier for citizens to access regional transportation systems. In its master plan, it has used existing circulation patterns as a starting point to accomplishing these goals.

Despite underwhelming growth, the city has come to realize the importance and value of its open land. It is attempting to create defined edges of the central core, so vacant land is protected as the central city continues to develop. Views and vistas of the natural landscape is not enough to protect it. Instead, the new master plan stresses that “open space is an irreplaceable resource and one of the most valuable assets within the General Plan Planning Area…once it has been committed to urban development, it will not be recoverable as open space.” Although emphasizing the same ideals primarily in regards to recreation spaces, Smith and Williams nevertheless also understood the value of open space in an urban city.

5.2 Recreational Parks and Centers

Recreation continues to be an important theme in California City. In fact, both Central Park and Galileo Park continue to function in their original capacities as recreation centers. They also maintain the same landscapes and infrastructures that they were originally designed to have. While new buildings have been constructed, different management has taken over, or certain areas have expanded or changed use, the original concepts behind both parks remain in place. Similarly, neighborhood parks cater to more modern recreational activities such as those related to off-roading vehicles. The city hopes “to promote development of land uses which would enhance California City’s potential appeal as a ‘destination recreational community,” just as the city’s creators had always hoped for.
**Table 5.1: Summary of Recreation Parks in California City**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Name</th>
<th>General Location</th>
<th>Original Park Type</th>
<th>Present-Day Features</th>
<th>Size (acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Park</td>
<td>Central city – intersection of California City Boulevard and Conklin Boulevard</td>
<td>Golf course, recreational facility</td>
<td>Community center; tennis, basketball, volleyball, handball courts; swimming pool; baseball fields; BBQ pits</td>
<td>82.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-hole PGA Golf Course</td>
<td>Central city – intersection of California City Boulevard and Conklin Boulevard</td>
<td>Golf course, recreational facility</td>
<td>Golf course</td>
<td>157.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galileo Hill and Park “J”</td>
<td>Northeast of central city – off 20 Mule Team Parkway between Rutgers Road and Bucknell Road</td>
<td>Golf course, recreational facility</td>
<td>Commercial radio broadcasting site; not open to public</td>
<td>187.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balsitis Park</td>
<td>Central city – off California City Boulevard between Yerba Boulevard and Isabelle Boulevard</td>
<td>Between Neighborhood Park and Community Park</td>
<td>Baseball, softball, soccer fields; basketball, volleyball courts; BBQ pits</td>
<td>15.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California City Memorial Park (Public Cemetery)</td>
<td>Randsburg-Mojave Road heading out of Central city</td>
<td>Between Neighborhood Park and Community Park</td>
<td>Public cemetery</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiosk Park</td>
<td>Central city edge – intersection of Randsburg-Mojave Road and 20 Mule Team Parkway</td>
<td>Neighborhood Park</td>
<td>Recreational vehicle waste disposal; picnic area</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borax Bill Park</td>
<td>Northeast of central city – off 20 Mule Team Parkway just past Rudnick Boulevard</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>Recreational vehicle parking; picnic area</td>
<td>31.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal City MX Park</td>
<td>Northeast of central city – off 20 Mule Team Parkway and Chrysler Drive</td>
<td>Between Neighborhood Park and Community Park</td>
<td>Motocross track</td>
<td>10.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Today, California City’s Central Park is mainly a space for golf, picnicking, sports, swimming, fishing, community activities and general relaxation. Many of the park’s most popular attractions, like the waterfall, once aggressively marketed and promoted, have fallen into disrepair. The remains of other recreational spaces, such as the boat docks and the sports center, are completely gone. Surprisingly enough, the lake pavilion, with Smith and Williams’ winged parasols, remain an intact memento of the past (Figures 5.7-5.11 below).

Figure 5.7: Central Park pavilion and winged parasols, 2014. Photo by author.
Figure 5.8: Central Park waterfall and bridge connecting waterfall to site of (demolished) sports center, 2014. Photo by author.

Figure 5.9: Another bridge in Central Park near the fishing pond, 2014. Photo by author.
Figure 5.10: Central Park bath house, 2014, recently closed due to fire. Photo by author.

Figure 5.11: Central Park Lake and new recreation center, 2015. Photo by author.
Below are two diagrams depicting existing infrastructure versus new infrastructure, and how Smith and Williams’ original plans for the park compare to how it exists today. The overlay of their drawing on a Google Aerial View shows that the evolution of the park appears to be very cohesive with the original plan (Figures 5.12 and 5.13). It is through this lens that we gain a better understanding of what is still held together by the plan. It is not only the built structures, such as the bridges or the residential communities. The lake, the golf course, the fishing pond, and the waterfall remain as well. These are all a part of the original image for Central Park from California City’s visionaries. While the site retains its role as a place for recreation, it also contains physical elements that enable it to carry out this role. The new development, such as the recreation building, does not detract from this. No matter its aesthetic value, it actually strengthens the role of the park as a recreation center.

Figure 5.12: California City Central Park program in 2015. California City, CA [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; Google Maps. Google. Edited by author.
Figure 5.13: Overlay of original Smith and Williams’ drawing for Central Park onto Google Maps Aerial View of the park. California City, CA [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; Google Maps. Google and Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara. Edited by author.

Galileo Park, now known as Silver Saddle Ranch is now a private, resort community that offers family friendly recreation to visitors. While some of the land around the park is still owned by California City, Silver Saddle itself is not (see map in Appendix C).

Per its website, it is described as:

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294 CA City Master General Plan 2009-2028, p. 119, http://www.californiacity.com/20092028ccfinalgeneralplan.pdf; The map in Appendix C appears to show that a portion of the park area that reflects Smith and Williams’ design is the portion still owned by the City, while newer hotel construction to the north is what is privately owned by Silver Saddle.
…A wonderful getaway experience for everyone from families looking for some together time to groups needing a retreat space, couples wanting a unique weekend away and individuals looking for solitude. From cool, grassy, park-like settings to rugged desert trails, Silver Saddle Ranch has something for everybody.295

A closer analysis of Galileo Park/Silver Saddle Ranch shows how close in design and plan the park is to Smith and Williams’ original plan. Though it appears that the park’s current owners believe otherwise, Galileo Park was always designed to have the rustic, southwestern theme it retains today. The buildings and layout that exist today, products of Smith and Williams, maintain the original themes. It is clear that the original plan has heavily influenced future development both directly and indirectly. The clear presence of the original plan for the park, as well as many of its original buildings, makes the preservation of this plan all the more necessary. Figures 5.14 and 5.15 below show how Smith and Williams’ drawn plan for Galileo Park compares with a Google Aerial view of what is seen at the property today.

Figure 5.14 Galileo Park Site Plan Detail (1961), number 770 182A. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder 394 IV E, Smith and Williams, California City, Galileo Hill Development, California City, CA (1961) #770.

Not surprisingly, the drawn plan is almost an exact outline of how the park now functions. While much of the housing that was envisioned to surround the park never developed, the central area of the park – where the rustic-themed recreational activity was to occur – remains almost exactly as it was first designed, albeit with an expanded grounds and some change in programming. A road leading up to an observation tower at the peak of the hill, the location where Mendelsohn once stood and surveyed his new city, can be seen at the bottom center of the overlay.296

It is important to note that in Galileo Park, complex street layouts and circulation patterns have not been retained as they have been within the rest of the city. Over the years, egress and ingress into the park changed in order to accommodate Silver Saddle Ranch. Streets have been rerouted or don’t exist as intended at all. However, Figure 5.16 clearly shows that much of the programming and original buildings still exist as proposed by Smith and Williams. While certain

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areas have evolved, such as the campgrounds, the infrastructure of how this place was visualized is still very apparent.

![Figure 5.16: Labeled Smith and Williams’ Galileo Park detail of original layout, circa 1961. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder 394 IV.E, Smith and Williams, California City, Galileo Hill Development, California City, CA (1961) #770. Edited by author.](image)

Many of the key functions that were originally anticipated continue to uphold and complement the theme of Silver Saddle Ranch as it is known today. In the area just north of what is seen in Figure 5.17, the park has expanded to include a hotel, a lake and other recreational activities. However, it was the original vision of a barn, stables, rodeo ring, campgrounds, etc. that set the precedent for the rustic, country-like atmosphere of the park over fifty years ago.
Figure 5.17: Galileo Park detail of current layout, 2015 (excludes new development in northern section of park). California City, CA [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; Google Maps. Google. Edited by author.

So what has changed of the built infrastructure within the park? How do all the pieces compare to the overall whole? Today, an equestrian center, one of the main attractions of the park, is extant, offering an original barn, stables and rodeo ring (Figure 5.18). A contact zoo and campgrounds exist as well (Figures 5.19 and 5.20). The administration building appears to be somewhat altered, but its form reflects Smith and Williams’ main idea for the management headquarters (Figures 5.21 and 5.22). Most significantly, the cantilever the building once had looks as though it has been made into additional, useable space. Nevertheless, this building is one of the few that Smith and Williams’ originally designed for California City.
Figure 5.18: Galileo Park barns, 2015. Photo by author.

Figure 5.19: Galileo Park petting zoo, 2015. Photo by author.
Figure 5.20: Galileo Park tipi in campgrounds, 2015. Photo by author.
Figure 5.21: Galileo Park administration building, 2015. Photo by author.

Figure 5.22: Smith and Williams’ south elevation of Galileo Park administration building, circa 1961. Courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara, folder 394 IV E, Smith and Williams, California City, Galileo Hill Development, California City, CA (1961) #770.
At the top of the hill, though difficult to access, is the observation tower (Figure 5.23). Today, it functions as a communications tower and is closed to the general public.\textsuperscript{297} Alongside it are the remains of a performance stage, no doubt another activity offered to visitors at some point during the park’s history (Figure 5.24). While it is unclear when this stage was constructed, the rest of the buildings discussed were designed and built before 1970.

\textbf{Figure 5.23:} Galileo Park observation tower, 2014. Photo by author.

\textsuperscript{297} Jennifer Wood, meeting with author in California City, March 13, 2015.
Since these original developments, new parks have evolved, such as Balsitis Park, a neighborhood park that consists of a series of baseball fields located on the western edge of the central city. There is also Borax Bill Park, located northeast of the central city along 20 Mule Team Parkway. Borax Bill Park has become the check-in spot for the off highway vehicles (OHV) that frequent the city’s abandoned country roads. Borax Bill has adapted its space for the recreational activities popular today, while Balsitis Park is more representative of the neighborhood park typology defined in “Policies for Planning the Boron Valley.” Kiosk Par and California Memorial Park are a couple others that round out the city’s collection. However, even the city believes that “park facilities (particularly neighborhood parks) have not been developed in the existing urban core.” Creating new parks “for active and passive recreation to meet the needs of existing and future residents” has since become another primary goal in the city’s new master plan. The policy “that public parks provide a diversity of recreational uses, including a mix of active athletic facilities and passive open space uses” echoes some of Smith and Williams’ most fervent recreation ideals.

While Central Park and Galileo Park anchor the city geographically within the Mojave Desert, existing neighborhood parks, and those that will hopefully be created within the city in the next two decades, will be the strongest channels that the city has in fulfilling its recreational goals. But the original parks have gained another role as well. They have become a direct connection to the city’s past—a link into the minds of the city’s designers and what they believed was necessary for their city’s residents. The particular resiliency of Central Park and Galileo Park’s plans through decades of (subtle) change, confirms how a strong idea can continue to nurture its original features while naturally guiding future development.

5.3 Schools and Other Institutional Spaces

Only one school, Robert P. Ulrich (RPU) Elementary, was designed and constructed before 1970, California City’s early, flourishing years. Since then, RPU has been joined by California City Middle School (1992), Hacienda Elementary School (2007), and California City High School (2007). Though these three schools opened decades after RPU, educational infrastructure was always a high priority of the original city master plan. The fact that three schools have been added to the system despite low growth of the city overall is a testament to the importance of education in California City. Presently, the city has also identified many opportunities to “entice educational institutions to come to the area.”

While the drive to develop educational facilities has remained strong, their sense of placement within the city has been lost. The three newer schools were not constructed in any of the originally institutional sites identified in Smith and Williams’ master plan. What even further differentiates these sites from Robert P. Ulrich Elementary is that they are placed on the perimeters of the developed portion of the city, rather than within residential neighborhoods. Mayor Jennifer Wood explained that this was likely in response to more availability of large land parcels on the periphery of the city.299 Therefore, students must cross multiple intersections when walking to and from school, and the idea of safety in travel to school is nearly lost. Additionally, none of the schools appear to have a relationship to any of the existing parks, negating the original idea that two different programs could share infrastructure. As such, Smith and Williams and the rest of the Community Facilities Planners would likely consider this an unwise use of available space today, at least within a Garden City context. Because the schools

299 Jennifer Wood, meeting with author in California City, February 9, 2015.
are spread out from each other, and are located peripherally around the city, they essentially lose significance as a part of the city image as Smith and Williams’ visualized it.

A survivor of Smith and Williams’ original collection of work, Robert P. Elementary School is structurally intact and heavily used. A simple, mid-century modern building with angular detailing, it nevertheless has become a precedent in school design in California City (Figures 5.25 and 5.26). While the three newer schools deviate from the original policies for choosing school sites, their designs are perhaps the most unique of any contemporary architecture in California City today (Figures 5.27).

Figure 5.25: Robert P. Ulrich Elementary School overhang detail, 2015. Photo by author.
Figure 5.26: Robert P. Ulrich Elementary School sunshade, 2015. Photo by author.

Figure 5.27: Hacienda Elementary School, 2015. Photo by author.
The fact that California City has found different sites for schools than those originally chosen during its first decade does not mean that the choices made were wrong. It would be difficult for any city to implement every policy for city infrastructure determined over half a century before. Three recent, fully functioning schools within a city with only 14,000 residents is an accomplishment. Furthermore, the city has made it a priority to “encourage the development of institutions of higher education and adjacent areas for education…” in their new general plan. So while the site standards established for schools in “Policies for Planning the Boron Valley” were not met, the social and educational goals are essentially maintained. All those who worked on California City within its first decade believed in and encouraged a thriving educational system, especially as the complementary function to the city’s ultimate goal: recreation. In this, they succeeded. Now, only time will tell how the city will attempt to make these institutional spaces safe and protected for the students using them, in the same manner as RPU.

Development for churches has occurred in much the same way. In California City’s first ten years, church architecture was perhaps more important to Smith and Williams than the location standards established by Kern County. California City Congregational Church was one of the firm’s most architecturally unique designs in California City, and arguably within their entire body of work. The central location of this church not only provided easy access to the religious center for seniors and other residents, it became a symbol within the city: that anything could be created here. Today, all that is left of the church is a small, detached wooden structure, as seen in Figure 5.28 below. While the winged parasols and stone walls of the original church were demolished for the construction of the church that stands today, the simple mid-century modern structure continues to be reminiscent of the vernacular architecture that Smith and Williams designed for the city.300

This remnant lies on a lot now occupied by the newer California City Community Church, at the northwest corner of California City and Conklin Boulevards. Having been constructed in the late 1980s or early 1990s, the building is completely different in scale, design and materiality.\textsuperscript{301} Just south lies the older but equally sizable Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, founded in 1969.\textsuperscript{302}

The churches built in place of the original California City Congregational Church are modest in design compared to Smith and Williams’ original work (Figures 5.29 and 5.30). And while a small connection to the original building remains, the unprecedented architectural design has been lost. Proof that California City was once a place of unique, experimental architecture is slowly diminishing. Nevertheless, the continued use of this major city intersection for two

\textsuperscript{301} Sparks, “Community Church of California City.”

churches preserves the purpose of the site as a religious center. “Policies for Planning the Boron Valley” instructed the city’s designers to locate churches near trafficways that easily serve their respective areas. They also encouraged these locations to be adjacent to schools and parks. The California City Community Church and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church continue to accomplish these goals.

Figure 5.29: California City Community Church, 2014 – the remaining Smith and Williams structure lies directly behind this building. Photo by author.
At least eighteen other churches have been built on various lots throughout the central portion of the city. The table below shows how each conforms or deters from the planning principles established for Boron Valley. It appears that most every church follows at least one of the standards for location of church sites established in the “Policies for Planning the Boron Valley.” However, church development does not seem to have occurred in the intended pattern.
Table 5.2: Church sites compared against the church location criteria outlined in “Policies for Planning the Boron Valley.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Defined by Major Traffic Ways</th>
<th>Adjacent to School or Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Life</td>
<td>21924 Calhoun Drive</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Baptist Church</td>
<td>8770 Lupine Loop Drive</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid Rock Missionary</td>
<td>21232 Kenniston Street</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victory Baptist Church</td>
<td>10173 S. Loop Blvd.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Desert</td>
<td>10441 S. Loop Blvd.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Lady of Lourdes</td>
<td>9970 California City Blvd.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Christian Center</td>
<td>21009 Conklin Blvd.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California City Church of Christ</td>
<td>20546 Lehigh Street</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Outreach Ministries Holiness</td>
<td>19261 97th Street</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity Christian Church</td>
<td>10160 Redwood Blvd.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desert Song Four Square</td>
<td>20849 Hacienda Blvd.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lord’s Missionary Christian Ministry</td>
<td>8131 Aspen Mall</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Church</td>
<td>21001 Conklin Blvd.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingdom Hall</td>
<td>19649 Airway Blvd.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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Even those buildings that may be considered vernacular by architectural standards follow the original criteria for placement throughout city. For that reason alone, the contributions these buildings make to the original plan may one day be considered significant. In preserving Smith and Williams’ original plan, the city can ensure that it preserves both the institutional nature of California City’s original religious center at California City Boulevard and Conklin Boulevard and any designed elements that have contributed to this purpose, such as Smith and Williams’ original church remnant.
5.4 Residential Design

California City’s failure to develop as planned has led to its notably sparse residential development. The majority of subdivided tracts remain vacant, and there is hardly a street where every lot is filled by a house. This is partially the result of the city’s strategy for quick growth. Lots could be purchased independent of the home models offered by Smith and Williams. This meant that a resident could purchase a lot, and never build a home. A relevant example is that of the private Sierra-View Estates neighborhood, located south of the central city. Advertised as “ranch estates” in 1961, those interested were encouraged to buy the two-and-one-half acre parcels fast, as only twenty-eight remained at the time. Ads such as this implied that many lots in California City were selling quickly, but that didn’t mean they actually had anything constructed on them. Case in point is the neighborhood today, seen below in Figure 5.31.

![Figure 5.31: The ghost of the Sierra-View Estates community. California City, CA [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; Google Maps. Google.](image)

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Per the same advertisement, “These ranch estates, like 10 city lots, provide you and your family with an important stake in California’s future…” ³⁰⁴ The future that resulted is a far cry from that envisioned in 1961.

It would be difficult to reason that any of California City’s residential neighborhoods formed into the unified and integrated communities that they were meant to be. Furthermore, very few have clearly defined boundaries or vary in density and housing type. Most importantly, at least within the context of California City as a Garden City, almost none take advantage of the parklets and open green areas provided to them through Smith and Williams’ distinctive approaches. However, via its master plan, the city has acknowledged that some neighborhoods have character worth maintaining. As California City continues to develop, it hopes to “encourage maintenance of the residential character of specially identified neighborhoods through such mechanisms as architectural design, use of xeriscaping…and property setbacks.” They also hope to “retain existing residential neighborhoods and allow for the in-fill of residential land uses which are compatible with density, scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.” Perhaps most importantly, the city wants new residential projects to “accommodate the recreational needs of there [sic] residents through the provision of parks and recreational amenities.” While the plan doesn’t specifically state these “specially identified neighborhoods,” they are presumably more architecturally cohesive developments such as Applewood Estates. However, at least one original Smith and Williams’ neighborhood still contains the “ghosts of planning past” and should also be considered in this policy for protecting residential character. This neighborhood is Fairway Estates. ³⁰⁵

Fairway Estates was the community discussed in Chapter Four, understood through Smith and Williams’ diagram of street and landscape patterns, parklet sites, house types, and existing and planned locations for residential construction within the neighborhood (Figure 5.32). An aerial of the community today is seen in Figure 5.33.

³⁰⁴ “Display Ad 341.”
³⁰⁵ The location of Fairway Estates is speculation. While there is proof that a neighborhood called “Fairway Estates” was developed, I have not been able to confirm exactly where that neighborhood is. I can only speculate based on the neighborhoods that I know contain original Smith and Williams model homes.
Figure 5.32: Smith and Williams’ Site Plan for the Fairway Estates neighborhood. Photo courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara.

Figure 5.33: Fairway Estates today. California City, CA [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; Google Maps. Google.
Today, the neighborhood is zoned to accommodate both high-density and low-density residential development, though this is not readily apparent. However, the overall function of the neighborhood has remained residential since the 1950s. To get a better idea of how the neighborhood form has changed, we must look at the defining neighborhood characteristics of Fairway Estates, such as the existing street patterns, any extant Smith and Williams homes, and the use of individual lots. Though it would be overly cumbersome to analyze every neighborhood in the city in this manner in this thesis, this approach could be used to evaluate how “specially identified neighborhoods” can help guide future residential development, so that neighborhoods remain visually and spatially cohesive, as identified in the new city master plan.

The street plan for this neighborhood originally had subtle, yet noteworthy, features that were likely anticipated as a constant motif throughout the city. The use of cul-de-sacs is fairly obvious from the diagram; Smith and Williams chose to utilize the parcels in between two abutting cul-de-sacs as parklets and tot lots, rather than as lots for homes. These spaces were intended as safe havens for residents away from the streets. Unfortunately, they were never brought to fruition. Many of the spaces remain empty, while some were eventually used as residential lots (Figures 5.34 and 5.35).
Figure 5.34: Unused parklet spaces in Fairway Estates. California City, CA [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; Google Maps. Google. Edited by author.

Figure 5.35: Parklet spaces used as residential lots in Fairway Estates. California City, CA [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; Google Maps. Google. Edited by author.
Where these parklet spaces have been left untouched, there remain opportunities to utilize them. Though zoned for residential uses, many liberties can be taken on what that actually means. Community recreation facilities, gardens, parks and playgrounds are all viable options.\textsuperscript{306} So while the original purposes for these spaces may no longer be relevant to this community, the areas could still be used to benefit the people of California City today. The original plan of this neighborhood continues to suggest other opportunities for these spaces.

In another instance within the neighborhood, Smith and Williams created a small barrier between the main residential road and the driveways of adjacent homes (Figure 5.36). This was called a “play-street”, and was intended as both a landscaping technique and focal point of the neighborhood. Presumably, it was also a safety measure – an attempt to separate cars and pedestrians (it is unclear why this is the only street in the neighborhood that was to have this feature).

Today, there are virtually no traces of this unique detail. The most that can be seen is from an aerial view of the street (Figure 5.37). Looking closely, one can see the faint outline of an arched cut-out on both sides of the street. What is even more telling are the stunted driveways which would have met the street had it still retained its original shape. Some residents have since attempted to extend their driveways, but the nature of the original driveway setbacks remains clear. Though this element is barely legible, close examination shows that at the very least it reinforces the idea that original plan can still be present, despite constant change over decades of use.
Finally, circulation patterns such as pedestrian walkways are still visible within the neighborhood plan. First documented in 1963 tract maps, these pedestrian walkways allow pedestrians to cross over the wash that winds its way through the neighborhood (Figure 5.38).
Figure 5.38: Tract map showing wash with pedestrian walkway highlighted, California Tract Map No. 2252, July 21, 1960. Drawing courtesy of Kern County Assessor’s Office, Engineering, Surveying and Permit Services. Permission pending. Edited by author.
Per Smith and Williams’ diagram of the area, it seems as though they were attempting to take advantage of the wash as a landscaped element (Figure 5.39).

Figure 5.39: Wash and pedestrian walkway. Drawing courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara. Edited by author.
Though the wash remains a natural feature of the entire city and is seen in many other neighborhoods, the landscaping intended to flank the portion of the wash in Fairway Estates is almost non-existent. However, the pedestrian pathway itself is extant and appears to be in use (Figures 5.40 and 5.41). Though seemingly arbitrary or insignificant, it is the smallest of details that tell the story of the original plan. Evaluation of a city plan should take into account less how something was meant to look, and more of how it was meant to function in reality. This brings the significance of a plan from a two-dimensional understanding to a three-dimensional one.

**Figure 5.40:** Pedestrian walkway across wash today. *California City, CA [map].* 2015. Scale undetermined; *Google Maps*. Google. Edited by author.
While certain Garden City elements like parklets, greenbelts and other pedestrian-vehicular buffers did not develop, the city recognizes that there is a need for safety features in residential neighborhoods. One overall policy for the city states, “uses are sited to take advantage of pedestrian green belts, recreational amenities, and natural environmental resources.” A *Mojave Desert News* article about California City’s future goals goes into even further detail:

A primary recommendation is the establishment of “greenbelts” and “buffers” which would be created between development projects along arterial roads and undeveloped section lines…Additionally, fencing and landscaping requirements would be reviewed and updated for developments within a mile of residential neighborhoods…

A renewed interest in these features reflects the original intent of Smith and Williams for California City. With a series of Garden City strategies already created for them over fifty years

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ago, the city could easily and efficiently implement these types of open spaces once again, but perhaps in a more sustainable manner.

There are approximately fourteen existing Smith and Williams home models in Fairway Estates (more information on these homes is included in Appendix B). Smith and Williams diagram of Fairway Estates (which is the only available document in which to analyze the original neighborhood) shows that fourteen homes had already been constructed, probably sometime around the mid-1960s. Presumably, further development never managed to get beyond that point. The homes were designed in the atrium and neighbor-oriented house typologies, such as the Como model, seen below (Figure 5.42).

![Figure 5.42: Two Como home models. California City, CA [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; Google Maps. Google.](image)

These homes are direct links to the past. Again, the form or changes they’ve undertaken are less important than the fact that they’ve survived the last half-century, when odds were stacked against them. If an original Smith and Williams home is understood as a defining feature of the plan, rather than as a historical resource in and of itself, the plan becomes the significant element in which both past and present resources exist together. Future development within this neighborhood could complement the scale and character of these original buildings, while bringing in a new phase of architectural design. This would follow the city’s new master planning principles for residential development, while preserving the city’s most long-standing features.

One element that never came to fruition was the two-story house, indicated in the legend of the diagram. I found no other documentation or marketing for two-story homes during California City’s first decade. It appears that at some point multi-level homes were anticipated, whether requested by clients who purchased lots in the neighborhood, or as part of Smith and Williams’ vision for the completed outcome. Today, there is no indication that the lots chosen
for two-story homes influenced those who ultimately purchased and built upon them. While some of the dedicated lots did experience two-story construction, others have one-story homes on them. Similarly, two-story homes were constructed on various lots that were meant for one-story buildings (Figures 5.43 and 5.44).

**Figure 5.43:** Detail of Fairway Estates neighborhood plan (Figure 5.32) showing anticipated locations of two-story houses, represented by black squares. Photo courtesy of the Smith & Williams records, Architecture and Design Collection. Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara.
With the right resources, many of California City’s other neighborhoods, such as those constructed by U.S. Steel or the Applewood Estates, could be evaluated in a similar manner. Again, the evaluation would compare the neighborhood design today to its original plan and determine what goals were met through both existing infrastructure and program. This in turn would be a guide for how residential development could proceed in the future. In Fairway Estates, it seems that residential infrastructure is generally evolving as expected. Clearly, the recreational open spaces that were intended are lacking. However, the original vision for this neighborhood remains present to this day. It has the potential to come back to life with the proper care and implementation of the principles from the City’s new master plan. California City does not have to be frozen in time to honor the original master plan. Instead, consciously adapting the plan to today’s needs and standards are what will revive the connection to the city’s past.
Smith and Williams also designed a multi-family condominium community called Eastlake Condominiums. Today, this community is known as the Lakeshore Condominiums. While the name has changed, much of the physical fabric remains the same, though now the Lakeshore Condominiums takes up only a small portion of the lakefront (Figures 5.45 and 5.46).

**Figure 5.45:** Lakeshore/Eastlake Condominiums location today. *California City, CA [map].* 2015. Scale undetermined; *Google Maps.* Google. Edited by author.
This community appears to be influenced by the Garden Apartment movement of post-World War II. Its residents enjoy large greens both separate and integrated with the buildings themselves. Building entrances face courtyards, rather than streets, and vehicular circulation and storage is confined to garage courts (Figures 5.47). The buildings now appear somewhat dilapidated, but the materials imitate the rustic, earthy appearance common to Smith and Williams’ other work in California City (Figure 5.48). Documentation for this community reveals little about the specific design details, unlike the sketches and diagrams for Fairway Estates. However, it is clear that the retention of green open spaces throughout reinforces the original Garden City principles on which the town was founded, and strengthens the community’s relationship to Central Park.
Figure 5.47: Lakeshore Condominiums parkway today. Photo by author.
There is no doubt that the Lakeshore Condominiums is a more fully realized Smith and Williams community than Fairway Estates and remains a clear vision of the multi-family communities envisioned for California City in the 1960s. Next door to the Lakeshore Condominiums is the newer California Terrace Apartments, which continue this identity. These communities are continuing the idea of the city as a “plan-within-a-plan.” That is, a plan that in itself remains a strong tie to the past, but also contributes to the original social, recreational and architectural ideas of the master plan at the citywide scale.

5.5 Senior Citizens in California City

The most unrealized theme of California City is the Older Adult Area. While some development dedicated to seniors transpired, such as a senior residential community and a senior
center, none of it occurred within the area of the original plan that was dedicated to older adults. Today, a small section is mixed use, while the rest remains almost entirely vacant (Figure 5.49).

Currently, this portion of the city is zoned for both medium-density and high-density residential, community medical, neighborhood commercial and government. In the southwest corner lies the city’s civic center, containing a city hall, a post office and a library, all constructed in the 1960s. It also contains a more recently developed police station. A small medical center resides in the northwest corner of the block, soon to be joined by a city museum. A small residential neighborhood is located in the southeast corner. While there is sure to be development within this area due to its location along California City Boulevard and adjacency to Central Park, there is no indication that this part of the city was once designated for senior citizens.

Instead, housing for senior citizens has developed in other areas of the city. The Desert Jade senior community lies just west of the original Older Adult Area, while The Legends senior community is adjacent to the Lakeshore Condominiums. Additionally, a senior center exists within the heart of Central Park, home to activities organized by the Senior Citizen Association of California City. Lunch programs, game nights and annual senior appreciation days are
planned on a regular basis for the seniors of California City. Even though seniors only comprised approximately 9% of California City’s population, they are treated as a major component of the city’s social and physical infrastructure. So while senior facilities are not located exactly where Smith and Williams had originally intended, the fact that current senior housing and programs are conveniently located in proximity to recreational offerings is a strong reminder of the passion the firm had for senior activity and integration within the community. Should the plan be determined to hold any power in future development, there are ample opportunities to dedicate to senior citizen activity.

5.6 Industry

Industry is a driving force behind California City’s continued growth and development. Both Edwards Air Force Base and U.S. Borax (now the Rio Tinto Mine) remain two of the city’s most thriving industries. In more recent years, the California City Correctional Center and the Hyundai/Kia Automotive Test Facility, both located within the city boundaries but outside the city center, have become strong suppliers of jobs and have advanced economic development as well. Most industrial enterprises are sited on the periphery of the city, a safe distance from the developed city center (Figure 5.50). Today, one of the city’s most important goals is to “retain and attract manufacturing and industrial uses within designated areas.

Figure 5.50: Current major California City industries. *California City, CA* [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; *Google Maps*. Google. Edited by author.

Some of these designated industrial zones actually occur near the city center, such as the California City Municipal airport and the accompanying business park (Figure 5.51). Though not the bustling center it was once meant to be, the California City Municipal Airport is still very much in use, particularly as a recreational airfield. The airport, located on the original property as designated in 1958, became the site of a popular skydive center, and continues to be used for the takeoff and landing of gliders and small airplanes. It also offers a variety of aviation facilities and amenities including aviation fuel, oxygen service, aircraft parking and maintenance, and flight training.311 Surrounding the airport are a number of functioning businesses such as Cal-Aero and U-Store City.

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311 “California City Municipal Airport,” AirNav.com, information effective March 5, 2015, [www.airnave.com/airport/L71/A](http://www.airnave.com/airport/L71/A).
Unfortunately, the distinctive airport building designed by Smith and Williams’ was replaced by a new facility at an unknown date. Figure 5.52 is a photo of the California City Municipal Airport building as it appears today. Though different in style, the airport remains the anchor of the industrial airpark.
What never did come to fruition was the Airpark Village, described in Chapter Four. Its residential streets are scattered with a few houses here and there, but mostly, the area has succumbed to the natural desert environment. It is interesting that the entire area, the airport, industrial park and “airpark village,” retain almost the exact zoning requirements as predicted by Smith and Williams. Looking at California City’s zoning map, one may never guess that the area isn’t entirely as developed as hoped. The airport and its surroundings continue to be zoned for light industry, while the airpark is zoned for medium-density and high-density residential in the single-family home locations and apartment locations, respectively. The original business park is appropriately zoned, but in present day, California City has expanded the commercial areas within the park, reducing some of the residential areas originally planned. That being said, much of California City is zoned for certain land uses, without there actually being future plans for developing those uses. But the framework and physical infrastructure for this area is strong enough to warrant controlled development, similar to what was originally planned for the area. This industrial hub again has the potential for economic life close to the central city.
5.7 Commercial Districts

California City’s commercial districts, at both the neighborhood and citywide scales, have naturally accrued along the city’s main thoroughfare, California City Boulevard, rather than in a designated Central Business District, as originally planned (Figure 5.53).

![Figure 5.53: California City Boulevard commercial districts/centers. California City, CA [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; Google Maps. Google. Edited by author.](image)

Local commercial centers scattered throughout the city are present, but minimal. The City hopes to correct this through its new master plan, by encouraging “the clustering of commercial development in compact areas” and allowing “for the development of a low density ‘village-like’ center…in the central core area.” This is reminiscent of Smith and Williams’ master plan, which created a series of neighborhood centers at different scales throughout the city, and one Central Business District in the central core. This original Central Business District did not come to fruition; rather commercial development is spread along California City Boulevard. Similarly, the policies originally in place to separate and protect pedestrians from vehicles and created aesthetically enjoyable spaces don’t appear to have been met. Again, this is something that the city’s new plan hopes to correct by requiring that “commercial development provide design features…between the boundaries of adjacent residential land uses designation so as to reduce impacts on residents” and ensuring that “new commercial uses adjacent to existing commercial uses…be of compatible height, setback, color and materials.” The plan also hopes to enhance “pedestrian activity in principal activity centers within the planning sub-areas.”

One of the main reasons California City Boulevard has become commercialized, other than the logical reason that commercial centers would want to establish themselves on the city’s most heavily utilized street, is that it has since been rezoned for commercial activity.312 This has

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resulted in various strip malls and individual commercial buildings located along the boulevard. In the city’s first years of development, portions of the boulevard were actually zoned for residential, which is why some of California City’s first residential neighborhoods, such as the one completed by U.S. Steel in the mid-1960s on the northeast corner of California City Boulevard and Neuralia Road, were developed directly abutting the boulevard, save for a narrow frontage road. Today, one sees many homes along California City Boulevard due to this allowance, integrated with neighborhood commercial, community commercial, commercial/office, service commercial and regional commercial uses. The residences that exist along the boulevard are exempt from these new zoning designations, as long as they remain residential in use. Should any change of ownership occur, the building must transition into a commercial use. This policy results in interesting mixed-use development. As of now, California City’s new zoning goals and perimeters are not consistent with the goals of the master plan. In order to limit California City Boulevard’s commercial activities, and instead concentrate them within smaller, scattered clusters, both the zoning code and the master plan will need to become compatible.

California’s City’s first local commercial center, the Aspen Mall, currently exists in an altered, but somewhat legible, state. Much of its original wood architecture has been covered in stucco, and the spaces intentionally left in between buildings filled in. If one looks close enough, or ventures to the alley behind the mall, original structural elements peek out from underneath years of stucco and layers of paint (Figures 5.54 and 5.55).
Figure 5.54: Aspen Mall, 2014. Photo by author.

Figure 5.55: Back alley of Aspen Mall, 2014. Photo by author.
The only portion of the mall that appears to be nearly untouched is at the mall’s western end (Figure 5.56). These simple, mid-century modern buildings demonstrate the vernacular, commercial architecture designed by Smith and Williams, though with a few recent facelifts. It is unclear why they have been kept in their original states. However, should the design policies in the city’s new general plan be implemented, any new commercial development should be considerate of these original Smith and Williams’ buildings. It is unclear if the City understands the potential significance of the Smith and Williams designs specifically, but at very least, it appears that it wants to take measures in protecting what it believes is part of the original built environment.

Figure 5.56: Office in Aspen Mall, 2014. Photo by author.

California’s City’s Central Business District, located along California City Boulevard just south of Central Park, while not completely devoid of commercial properties, is not yet the bustling commercial center it was originally meant to be (Figure 5.57). Just south of the city’s
new civic center (once designated for the Older Adult Area), it is currently home to a Rite Aid and a McDonalds. At the northeastern corner of the district at the intersection of California City Boulevard and Conklin Boulevard is a church, while the western edge houses the city’s original fire department building (Figure 5.58). The area gets more use due to the fact that the Central Park golf course has extended into the district. Some residential development fills the space along the golf course, though much of the area remains vacant. At some point within the next decade, the city has plans to construct a community college on the northeast corner of the original Central Business District.313

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313 Jennifer Wood, meeting with author in California City, February 9, 2015.
Today the area is zoned for medium-density residential, with community and regional commercial centers located on the peripheries and edges because commercial business has naturally gravitated towards California City Boulevard and major intersections. Additionally, the residential street layout, though dictated by the golf course, no longer reflects the intentions of the Smith and Williams’ era. However, if the City truly does want to create a more centralized “village-like” commercial center, as stated in their master plan, this area could still be the place where that might occur. This district is a clear representation of how the city has had to adapt to changing conditions, but is also an obvious opportunity for future commercial development.

5.8 Ancillary Features

California City’s smaller designed elements, such as signage, almost appear to be obsolete, until something pops up unexpectedly and transports you to a simpler time, in this case,
when Smith and Williams were designing the city. The firm had a very clear aesthetic for the city, which is not so apparent today. However, California City’s new master plan, like that of Smith and Williams’, wants to again “develop a distinctive identity for California City which differentiates it as a unique place in the region.” They hope to do this by coordinating “a consistent design vocabulary for all signage, including fixture type, lettering, colors, symbols, and logos” and encouraging “the use of creative and distinctive signage which establishes a distinctive image for planning sub-areas and identifies principal entries to the City, unique districts, neighborhoods, and locations.” Arguably, the city has had a unique identity since 1958, and, perhaps unknowingly, still has a detailed design vocabulary documented through Smith and Williams’ original drawings and sketches. While it is unclear how many physical remnants of signage still exist in California City, there is a vast portfolio of what could have been (Figures 5.59 and 5.60).

Figure 5.59: Originally Galileo Park signage, 2014. Photo by author.
Even if the city wants a different identity than what was originally planned, they could utilize original design documents to help them in the process of deciding what that identity might be. However, this does not necessarily appear to be the case (Figure 5.61 and 5.62).

**Figure 5.60:** Likely original apartment signage, 2014. Photo by author.
Figure 5.61: Recent city entrance signage, 2015. Photo by author.

Figure 5.62: Recent Central Park signage, 2014. It appears that the city made a conscious effort to give the signage a rustic theme similar to existing signage. Photo by author.
5.9 Landscape Features

Like the previously discussed parklets, “play streets,” and green belts, most smaller designed landscape features were never completed, or failed to stand the test of time. While California City Boulevard now has a landscaped median running along its center, the Community Facilities’ Planners’ vision for fully separated lanes on heavily used roads never came to fruition. But again, like many features throughout California City, the ghosts of the original plans remain, and now serve as confusing remnants of the past. For example, Mendiburu Road just north of Fairway Estates shows the grading and paving for a four-lane road, assumed to be separated by medians. However, no landscaping actually exists (Figure 5.65).

![Figure 5.63: Mendiburu Road at Randsburg-Mojave Road showing the remnants of what should have been vehicular lanes separated by landscaped medians. California City, CA [map]. 2015. Scale undetermined; Google Maps. Google.](image-url)
Per a conversation with Mayor Wood, it seems that the city does not know quite what do with these areas. But while this may seem like a hindrance for some, California City actually has an opportunity to utilize these spaces as once intended, making traffic safer (there are currently no stop signs or other safety features on the dirt areas of the road) and more visually appealing. Again, it is these small elements that bring the “big idea” of California City’s master plan down to an understandable and relatable human scale. In assessing them, it appears that both old and new elements are significant to the overall plan of the city. That is because together, they provide an identity for the city that was first created in 1958, and that is being reintroduced once again.

5.10 Evaluation of California City’s Resources

California City’s master plan is difficult to evaluate as a historic resource, partially because of the size and scale to which it was conceived and developed, and perhaps most importantly because it was never finished. Within the contexts presented in this thesis – Garden City planning, recreational planning, senior planning, and the post-World War II landscape in Southern California—the original “big idea” of California City developed by Smith and Williams could be considered significant. Additionally, the fact that the city itself was Smith and Williams only master planned city is a significant aspect.

However, the city today is a far cry from what was conceived by the firm. It is only through a very focused lens that one begins to see what still remains from the city’s first decade of development. Some areas, like Central Park, Galileo Park, Fairway Estates, and the California City Airport and industrial park, can still relay the city’s history through their uses, circulation patterns and architecture. Additionally, almost every local and main vehicular thoroughfare remains the same, views of the surrounding landscape have been maintained through low-scale development, and new city zoning is similar to that of the original General Plan.

But what is most telling is the fact that written into California City’s new general plan (meant to service the city from 2009 until 2028) are land use, circulation and programming principles that are not only very similar to the vision that Smith and Williams had for the city, but that also aim to protect parts of the original built infrastructure. So while the built infrastructure many not be significant enough to warrant protection on its own, it is undeniable that California City has developed in a very similar way and has a new master plan that shares goals of the original plan. This adds a new layer to what significance of the plan actually means.
Preserving the original plan could be the key to protecting parts of California City’s built infrastructure, while providing an opportunity for the city to develop more efficiently because the ideas, concepts and strategies for development are already in place.
6. PRESERVING CALIFORNIA CITY’S PLAN, TODAY

6.1 Opportunities for Plan Protection

The idea of preserving a city’s master plan, rather than individual buildings or a portion of a city, is a relatively novel idea. The United States has countless historic districts, many found significant for the community planning principles in which they were first created. However, due to size, scale and other intricacies of a city, preserving a master plan is nearly unprecedented, save for a few unique instances. In the specific case of California City, in which there is not necessarily enough original and significant built infrastructure to warrant protection, but whose plan is still intact, classification as a historic district or individual resource as understood by preservationists today may not be the best approach. There are a number of other opportunities to protect California City’s plan, which include designating the city’s actual master plan as significant, classifying it as a planning district, or even applying a “master plan overlay.” No matter how this occurs, it is clear that California City’s unique circumstances warrant an entirely new strategy for protection—perhaps even a mixture of the tools preservationists already use. In this, preservationists may find that as cities grow older, and the concept of significance continues to evolve, there will be a greater need for different ways to protect historic and cultural resources.

One of the tools currently available for preserving a city’s master plan is the actual designation of the plan itself as a historic resource. One of the only instances in which this occurs in the United States is the designation of the L’Enfant and McMillan Plan for Washington D.C. The plan is nominated under three National Register Criteria: A, for its relationship with the creation of the new United States of America and its capital city; B, because of its relation to Pierre L’Enfant and other persons and groups related to its design; and C, as a “well-preserved, comprehensive, Baroque plan with Beaux Arts modifications.”314 A brief statement of significance is described as:

The historic plan of Washington, District of Columbia – the nation’s capital – designed by Pierre L’Enfant in 1791 as the site of the Federal City, represents the sole American example of a comprehensive baroque city plan with a coordinated system of radiating avenues, parks and vistas laid over an orthogonal system.315

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The designation goes on to interpret the plan as a three-dimensional entity, rather than a two-dimensional one. Among the contributing elements in the plan are vistas, defined as “the area between the farthest points on a straight alignment,” which are perhaps the most significant in propelling the plan designation into the third-dimension.\footnote{Ibid, 7.} The radiating avenues that extend across the orthogonal city grid create these unique vistas intended by L’Enfant. The plan is not only made up of streets and landscapes; it also encompasses tangible, three-dimensional objects, like buildings, and intangible, three-dimensional elements, like views and open space. For example, the nomination includes the protection of open space above city streets, because of height limits enacted in the Height of Buildings Act of 1899 and the extension of the act in 1910.\footnote{Ibid, 8.} Per the nomination, the legal height limit “has preserved the broad, horizontal baroque nature of the city, allowing light and air to reach the pedestrian level…”\footnote{Ibid, 7.} The restrictions on open space above buildings ensure that modern intrusions or obstructions are not detrimental to the city plan. In this sense, the city plan is a living, breathing organism that organizes the city spatially into what we experience today.

This brief description of Washington D.C.’s nomination is included to unveil the little known possibility of plan designation, and to show how the nominators went about doing so. The nomination concludes:

> Within an international context, [Washington, D.C.] is the only completely planned national capital that physically and politically has been sustained and preserved during the continual history as a federal headquarters. The commemorative and symbolic location of buildings, structures, and vistas collectively establish the historic Federal city as the singular American example of an urban core that from inception has physically expressed its political role as a designed national capital using baroque design principles. The L’Enfant-McMillan plan reflects significance in the interwoven areas of community planning, landscape architecture, transportation, and community planning, landscape architecture, transportation, and politics/government.\footnote{National Register of Historic Places, L’Enfant Plan, 35.}

The nomination and designation reveals a very thorough and well-rounded argument for the significance of the plan, unprecedented at that time. However, the question remains: what does
the protection of a city’s plan mean in the historic preservation environment of today, nearly twenty years later?

In a paper entitled “The Vision of Pierre L’Enfant” for Georgetown University Law Center, author Glen Worthington explores the preservation efforts of the original plan and offers other ideas to help protect the plan in the future. While his analysis offers up his own personal solutions, his exploration of current preservation efforts actually shows that current legislation used to protect individual resources or districts can be used in much the same way to protect the city plan, which at its most basic form is simply the “big idea” of those who created it. Current legislation that could impact L’Enfant’s plan designation includes the National Historic Preservation Act, the Department of Transportation Act, and the D.C. Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978, among others.\textsuperscript{320} The ideas he proposes (specifically for the protection of L’Enfant’s plan) include “continued professionalization of historic preservation efforts,” “increased documentation of the plan’s significance,” “growing public awareness of L’Enfant’s brilliance including a growing realization of the plan’s modern day benefits,” and “increased political vigilance.”\textsuperscript{321} Worthington explains that by listing the plan in the National Register, it guarantees that associated agencies will “…at least consider the ramifications of alterations to the plan prior to government development of reservations and government occupation of right-of-ways.”\textsuperscript{322} He continues: “[Section 106] has a substantive effect: the more the L’Enfant plan is considered, the more it will become part of the public consciousness and the more difficult it will be for politically accountable bodies to alter the plan.” A more specific example could be the use of easements for plan protection. Worthington explains that “…the government of a preservation group would only need to hold an easement against one large structure on at-risk city blocks,” in order to prevent blockbuster structures that would affect the integrity of the plan.\textsuperscript{323} This proves that in special cases, at the most basic level, current legislation can protect plans and the larger implications they may have by ensuring that certain

\textsuperscript{320} Glen Worthington, “The Vision of Pierre L’Enfant: A City to Inspire, A Plan to Preserve” (Historic Preservation Seminar, Georgetown University Law Center, 2005), 7.

\textsuperscript{321} Ibid, 7.

\textsuperscript{322} Ibid, 43.

\textsuperscript{323} Worthington, “The Vision of Pierre L’Enfant,” 46; This kind of protection would only occur if there were a historic property on each block that qualified for an easement; similarly, plan designation would apply only to specific cases as well. This illustrates how different strategies work under different circumstances in preservation.
character defining features are not affected, much like how these laws apply to individual historic resources.

This interpretation comes in response to what is perhaps the most insightful and intriguing argument of the paper, which is that “…preserving the plan is more than preserving a mere roadmap. Rather, when speaking of preserving the L’Enfant plan, it is best to speak of preserving L’Enfant’s vision for what a capital city should be.”324 In broader terms, Worthington is arguing that city plan designation is more focused on preserving the “big idea”—the foundation on which the planners or designers intended the city to grow and be perceived. This is especially important to remember in plan designation, since many elements, as noted previously in the examination of D.C.’s nomination, are intangible. In California City, the “big idea” is perhaps one of the biggest “character-defining features” of the plan, which is why plan designation is a viable option for protection. Furthermore, incorporating the original “big idea” into the city’s new master plan in order to more efficiently develop the city would be benefitted by the plan’s designation as a historic or cultural resource.

However, the history that accompanies California City’s plan cannot be compared in any way to that of Washington D.C., except in the abstract. The state of the built infrastructure and the plan itself is also nowhere near as unaltered as the L’Enfant Plan. It is difficult to say if the plan would be eligible for nomination at any municipal level for these reasons. Nevertheless, the National Register nomination for D.C.’s plan brings up many applicable criteria and evaluative tools that could be used to protect California City’s plan, in whatever form that may occur. For example, vistas and views are a major character-defining feature of the city’s plan, due to the original nature of the plan intended by Smith and Williams, which still exist today. A visual connection to the expansive desert and scattered buttes was essential in maintaining the city’s place within the landscape. In preserving the city’s plan, any future development would have to be sensitive to this. Additionally, the city’s unique street layout would need to be protected both at the city-wide scale and at the neighborhood scale. Concepts like intra-urban and inter-open circulation patterns (Chapter Four) have helped define the identity of the city today. Even at the smallest of scales, protection of street layouts—cul-de-sacs and ghosts of tot lots or play streets—would be important. Because programming and zoning was such a specific requirement of the original plan, one that the city is attempting to reinforce today, actions would need to be taken to

protect recreation, commercial, institutional, and residential districts as well. In terms of the context in which the plan was conceived, it is arguably significant as a result of post-World War II population growth and planning principles in Southern California. However, one potential hindrance to this method is that a nationally designated resource would trigger CEQA, a California policy that requires disclosure to the public of any potential effects that any project conducted or approved by a state public agency may have on the existing environment.325 Historic resources that are nationally designated are considered part of the environment, and are therefore subject to review under this policy.326 If an entire city plan were designated as historic resources on the National Register, any change to any contributing element of the resource would, presumably, trigger CEQA; essentially, the city would constantly be under state review.

Another tool for protection of the city’s master plan is to classify it as a kind of “planning district.” This term is taken from Los Angeles’ city-wide historic and cultural resource survey, SurveyLA, though the concept is used in a variety of ways across the country (at times referred to as “conservation districts” or “zones”). Per SurveyLA,

Planning Districts are areas that are related geographically and by theme, but do not meet eligibility standards for designation. This is generally because the majority of the contributing features have been altered, resulting in a cumulative impact on the overall integrity of the area that makes it ineligible as a Historic District…These areas have consistent planning features – such as height, massing, setbacks, and street trees – which warrant consideration in the local planning process.327

The significance of planning districts, more commonly known as “conservation districts” in other parts of the country, is evaluated in a similar process to that of individual historic resources or historic districts. That is because in a planning district, the themes in which the area was developed are somehow significant within the context of Los Angeles. But unlike historic or potentially historic resources, changes to the physical fabric are readily apparent, and usually irreversible. An evaluation of the Los Angeles neighborhood Cheviot Hills warranted the following conclusion:

326 Ibid.
Many of the original properties in Cheviot Hills have been entirely replaced or are extensively altered, often through expansion including an additional story that radically changes the massing of the houses. Therefore, the overall integrity of the neighborhood has been compromised such that it does not appear to be eligible for listing as a historic district. However, an essential characteristic of the neighborhood has always been its lack of homogeneity, as reflected in its varied topography, irregular street patterns, and the diversity of architectural styles, all of which contribute to the district’s Old World charm. Due to these aspects of the district’s overall character, it may warrant special consideration in the local planning process.\textsuperscript{328}

California City’s existing resources can be evaluated in much the same way.

This survey tool is particularly applicable to California City’s central core, and even Galileo Park. The analysis of the city has proven that it is lacking in historic infrastructure that would render it eligible for designation. However, the analysis has also shown that California City’s plan has led to certain design features and programming that contribute to the character of the central core. This includes its street layout and the retention of certain neighborhoods as envisioned by Smith and Williams. In California City, the plan becomes a reminder of the principles that were once established for the city, and a guide for the new planning principles that the city wants to follow in the future. Determining the city as a planning or conservation district could ensure that these planning principles remain a part of the city’s decision making in the future, while also protecting any extant resources from the city’s first decade. Furthermore, this kind of local designation would not trigger review by CEQA. Local designation, such as a planning district, would only trigger whatever local reviews are currently in place, forgoing the CEQA process. This issue is something California City would have to address and continue to regulate. However, designating the city as a planning district also results in a familiar issue, which is that this method has rarely (if ever) been used to designate an entire city plan. How would a planning district apply to a complete city plan, where multiple elements, including the physical plan, are significant? Again, this definition would need to be customized to California City’s unique circumstances, rendering it ineligible as the only option that can be used to protect the plan.

Because California City has been reworking its general plan and zoning code, another option for protection of the plan would be some kind of zoning overlay. This would adapt zoning regulations for particular parts of the plan to ensure that those areas stay protected in the future. An example of this method is already in use in Los Angeles, and is known as the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) program:

An [HPOZ] is an area of the city which is designated as containing structures, landscaping, natural features or sites having historic, architectural, cultural or aesthetic significance. To receive such designation, areas must be adopted as an HPOZ by the City Planning Commission and the City Council through a zone change procedure…Once designated, areas have an HPOZ overlay added to their zoning, and are subject to special regulations under…the Los Angeles Municipal Code.329

Similar to traditional historic district designation, properties within an HPOZ are subject to city review anytime change is proposed, to ensure all development is compatible with the historic character of the district. While to some this may seem stifling, it aims to ensure that these districts retain an “enhanced sense of community,” and makes them eligible for tax reductions and preservation expertise from the city.330

HPOZs are specific to Los Angeles and are the City’s way of designating and regulating historic districts. The advantage of zoning overlays is that they can be customized to fit a city’s particular needs, and therefore do not need to be applied specifically to historic resources. Should California City find that it only has the capacity to protect certain areas of the city—perhaps those that most reflect the original principles shared in their new general plan—they could create zoning overlays for those areas. They could choose to protect certain elements by customizing overlay zones; for examples spaces originally designated for parklets or tot lots can be protected as “open space overlay zones”, street circulation patterns as “circulation overlay zones”, and even larger areas of land such as the proposed Central Business district from Smith and Williams’ as “commercial district overlay zones.” By first identifying those resources and areas that may be considered significant in the context of the city’s history, the city will gain a better sense of what areas may be most benefitted by a zoning overlay. Thus, rather than being forgotten, these areas will help guide future city development as the city enters a new era of growth.

330 “About the HPOZ Program.”
6.2 Plan Preservation as a Tool for Development

Once a strategy for protecting the city’s original plan is in place, California City can adapt and modernize it to meet current need. The city is already attempting to do that with the implementation of the California City Master Plan 2009-2028. However, in order to more efficiently use its limited resources, it would be wise for the city to more fully integrate the original planning principles with those that are similar in the current master plan. This resulting hybrid-plan ensures the original plan’s protection, but does not limit future development that would benefit city residents. Additionally, the city could also incorporate certain development tools that will help the city grow sustainably. This includes the implementation of a city vision statement and strategic plan known as Vision 360, and the establishment of sustainable development strategies such as an urban growth boundary around the city’s central core, promoting the city’s valuable land assets through the use of land banking, and regulating rightsizing of blighted areas.

Over the past couple of years, former California City councilwoman and current California City mayor Jennifer Wood has been advocating for Vision 360. Wood finds that creating and establishing Vision 360 is incredibly important for the city’s future growth and well-being because it would ultimately prioritize the city’s development goals and provide a roadmap towards accomplishing them. Said Mayor Wood,

We are experiencing a resurgence of investment in the community by small local business owners, business and industry at the Airport, as well as new retail outlets that bring more sales tax and choices for the consumer…Home ownership is also making a modest return.

The City is positioned to realize continued growth and development. What we are lacking is a Vision of what we hope California City will look like in 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 years from now…

With this vision, we will be in a better position to attract the types of businesses and job producing industries that we need. We also need to develop a healthy community that will attract more families, homeowners and retail to our City.331

More simply, Vision 360 attempts to answer the questions, “Where are we going and how do we get there?”332 While the current city master plan documents the most detailed aspects of the city’s

331 Council Member [Jennifer] Wood to Mayor and City Council, March 18, 2014, City Council Staff Report, California City, CA.
planning and zoning guidelines, Vision 360 has pulled from it those goals that are most important and most feasible to getting the city back on track to enhanced growth and development. Vision 360 also prioritizes those goals so that they are accomplished efficiently.

At a presentation of Vision 360 to the Mojave Chamber of Commerce in 2014, Wood presented findings, strengths, weaknesses, challenges and areas for opportunity within California City. Through this exercise, modeled after the vision statement and plan for Hesperia, the city found that it could prioritize its development goals. Vision 360’s first challenge was to create a list of California City’s main identities, which helped to establish future goals. The city found that they most identified as a bedroom community, a retirement community, a recreation destination, and an ideal location for industry, warehousing and manufacturing. While there are many opportunities for development within each of these areas (not coincidentally the same identities that Nat Mendelsohn, Smith and Williams, and the Community Facilities Planners first sought for the city), the city must first overcome the weaknesses and challenges that impede its growth, including:

- City resources need to be better managed
- Multiple infrastructure issues
- City government not accountable
- Limited workforce, no motivation, limited education
- Problem with overall community conservation
- Lack of community pride

Similarly, the city faces a number of threats, such as:

- Economic base declining
- Cal [sic] City going bankrupt
- Empty and half built homes

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333 Coincidentally, Hesperia was also developed by California City’s founders, Nat K. Mendelsohn and M. Penn Phillips. This was not the reason the city chose to model their vision statement after Hesperia’s, as Mayor Jennifer Wood did not know the two cities shared the same developers.
335 Ibid.
336 Ibid.
• Silly spending
• Too many agendas
• Business to restricted and stifles growth
• Not operating on a clear budget

It is clear that California City wants to grow, without the threat of growth being stifled. The first step in recognizing the obstacles it faces is crucial to prioritizing the goals that are most important to the city.

However, the City has not yet recognized how to utilize its existing resources, such as the planning documents for the city’s initial growth. Incorporating those documents, as well as the information presented in this thesis, into Vision 360 will help the city accomplish its goals more efficiently. That is because many of the goals Vision 360 has identified are parallel to those first identified in the initial phases of planning for the city. This includes enhancing recreation spaces (currently this is for modern recreation activities such as OHV and skydiving), enticing “educational institutions to come to the area,” developing the airport and industrial park, and growing a relationship with Silver Saddle.337 Because Silver Saddle is privately owned, this last goal is especially important because of the history the two areas share. Capitalizing on this history is only one of the many opportunities for the city to enhance community pride, and promote stronger involvement by the city’s residents.

Vision 360 is still a work in progress, but its creation is a step in the right direction for identifying the areas with the most potential for growth. However, efficiency will be determined if and how the city decides to incorporate the numerous existing planning, design, and infrastructure resources at its disposal. Protection of the city’s master plan is one way to identify overlapping goals of California City’s early years and those of today. Instead of inhibiting growth by classifying everything as historic or significant, the concept of “significance” is redefined as those areas that can be most improved using original planning principles and infrastructure. Then, these become the priorities of California City’s new Vision 360.

In narrowing down the scope of development in California City, certain sustainable tools may be needed to ensure targeted growth. This includes further emphasizing an urban growth boundary, taking note of Silver Saddle’s land banking enterprise and restructuring the city’s

337 “Mojave Chamber Presentation.”
approach to rightsizing. All of these strategies can be accomplished more efficiently by first preserving the city’s original master plan, and incorporating it into its new vision.

Because California City has fallen victim to one of its original fears, “scatteration,” it would be wise for the city to enforce an urban growth boundary around the central core. Described as part of a master planning process, urban growth boundaries,

...are planning tools that promote more efficient, orderly, and compact development. For communities adopting them, they are...designed to uphold community character, protect water and other natural resources, promote efficient development and use of public infrastructure, stimulate community and economic development, and impart long term, comprehensive thinking about the community’s future.338

Urban growth boundaries can be used to protect assets valuable to a specific city, whether that is natural resources or infrastructure already existing within a developed core. In California City, both of these examples would apply. An urban growth boundary can also be used simultaneously with the preservation of Smith and Williams’ master plan, as an urban growth boundary is an adjustable, customizable approach to targeted growth.

Another tool that may be useful to California City is landbanking. In preservation and sustainability, the concept of landbanking occurs when land is acquired by an institution known as a land bank, which then “transfers property to a new owner in a way that supports community needs and priorities.”339 It is used in managing vacant properties and viewing them as assets, rather than hindrances.340 Similarly, “landbanking is an effective way to unlock the potential of vacant urban land.”341 This same concept can easily be applied to California City, where vast amounts of land should be seen as valuable, rather than unmanageable. Silver Saddle Ranch & Club is currently using this system to manage its 1,020 acres of developable land around their resort.342 Per Silver Saddle’s website,

340 Ibid.
341 Ibid.
LandBanking and The Galileo Project at Silver Saddle Ranch & Club provide an opportune real estate investment vehicle for those smaller investors who would like to participate in the area’s growth. The Galileo Project surrounds the Silver Saddle Ranch & Club which, with its 130-acre resort oasis, provides the ideal anchor for adjacent real estate development opportunities.343

Essentially, Silver Saddle is encouraging the investment of smaller dollar amounts into a parcel of land, with the expectation that the investors will have a say in how the land is developed. Because the land already has public infrastructure and zoning codes in place, the area can accumulate a mix of both smaller residential investors who hope to take advantage of amenities the resort has to offer, and major industry investors that see the value of expansive amounts of land.344 California City could benefit from this smart growth tool as well. By first preserving the master plan, then establishing an urban growth boundary around the central city to increase density and grow the economy, the surrounding land becomes more valuable. Through this strategy, the city can more confidently justify the value of its vacant land.

Landbanking is similar in concept to “rightsizing,” another practice that can benefit cities whose footprints have become unmanageable. It is defined as a response to,

…sustained population loss by demolishing vacant and abandoned property and curtailing services in neighborhoods beyond redemption, to concentrate investment in other neighborhoods through rehabilitation and new construction.345

At times, rightsizing can be a concern to preservationists, because vacant properties that are determined historic are in danger of being demolished, especially those whose significance is not readily apparent. In preservation, rightsizing is a strategic process that involves choosing and rehabilitating “the best neighborhoods—those with solid and once attractive housing and other amenities – and by letting going of lesser areas to concentrate resources…”346 Protection of the original master plan is an effective way to evaluate significance and integrity of certain neighborhoods. Incorporating the protection of these neighborhoods into the city’s new general plan helps to identify and prioritize “the “best neighborhoods” for rehabilitation and development. Furthermore, protecting the master plan first could ensure that whatever resources

344 Ibid.
346 Ibid.
are deemed historic are also protected from redevelopment. In California City, where the city never experienced a significant population loss because it was always under populated and has many areas with similar developmental issues, this method is should be used as a tool for determining which neighborhoods need the most investment right now. Rightsizing need not be an intimidating approach; rather, it should be redefined as a way to target growth towards the central city while continuing to protect the city’s significant resources.
7. CONCLUSION

Plan preservation is a tool that can be used to protect historic and cultural resources in the preservation field. California City may not be the model community in which to preserve, but at the very least, the analysis of the city has proven that the preservation of a city plan is a complicated concept, and is probably most effective if customized to a particular city. There will be cities, like Washington D.C., where the significance of the city’s history and its character-defining features are undeniable. Others, like California City, may have histories and origins that, while no less significant, are not be as easily visible today. Mid-century, master planned communities in particular played such a huge role in our country’s history. While young in preservation years, their significance will continue to grow and must not be discounted. There will likely never be another endeavor at the scale California City, yet its story tells us so much about California’s history in design, war, housing and planning. In this, the city and its plan are priceless.

I cannot ignore the undeniable possibility that the original intentions for California City ultimately failed, due to a variety of different circumstances. Because of this, the original master plan may not be worth preserving at all. And even if it were, the city’s modern condition is not entirely conducive to sustainable development today. Preserving the City’s plan would be incredibly complicated, and perhaps not entirely appropriate. However, this study of California City has shown how, in general, preservation of a city plan can actually be used as an efficient and resourceful tool for development. Preservationists often advocate for reuse or rehabilitation of a building as a more sustainable way to develop cities, and preservation of a city plan is no different. The roads, neighborhood layouts, recreation centers, and even areas reserved for parklets and greenbelts are still visible throughout the California City. Furthermore, most all of the original design documents exist in the archives at the University of California, Santa Barbara and are available to California City. A study of the City’s new master plan has proven the similarities between its new vision and that of the city-founder, Nat K. Mendelsohn. Therefore, the City need only take advantage of original design documents, and the remnants of the original city, to build upon their community today. While rehabilitation is more commonly used on a singular building or structure, the rehabilitation of a city plan can become a useful tool in modern city planning, and help the preservation field shed its reputation for being an expensive, inefficient, or selective practice.
As a preservation tool, there is still much to learn about the extents and limitations of plan preservation. However, if used appropriately, those resources that are unable to fit within current preservation confines may be protected in the future. Further research of this subject will need to more closely analyze each of the plan preservation strategies presented in this thesis. That could be accomplished by preparing an eligibility study for California City or any other city that hopes to preserve its city character but faces many development obstacles. What eligibility criteria would the city be significant under? What would its designation include? Do the same rules apply for evaluating its integrity? The scale of California City’s original is almost unfathomable compared to the city landscape of today. It has become clear through this thesis that plan preservation may be more successful if limited to the central city, where development has actually occurred. In this instance, it will be important to understand the flexibility of plan preservation, should the City ever want to expand and develop outside the central city boundaries.

There are many opportunities for further research of plan preservation outside California City as well. Because of the abundance of master planned communities (particularly within Southern California) that will soon be reaching the fifty year mark, and therefore “historic,” there will also be ample opportunities to experiment with plan preservation. For example, how can plan preservation be applied to large scale communities like Ross Cortese’s Leisure Worlds? Or to the countless master planned suburb communities scattered throughout Southern California, in response to housing needs? How will significance be determined, when so many of the communities have a shared history? Other master planned cities, such as Irvine, appear to be slowly developing, and are already following their original master plans. In those cases, will there ever be a need for plan preservation? It will be interesting to see how plan preservation can be applied to these different (yet similar) communities, and if a standard for the tool will ever develop.

Protection of a city master plan is a preservation tool proven to work given the right circumstances. But because it is not widely used, the extent to which it works is understandably limited. Because of D.C.’s rich, historic city fabric, designation of the plan ensures that L’Enfant’s original vision remains in place for many years to come. In California City, where historic infrastructure is scarce, preservation of the plan can instead become a tool for future development. It also has the potential to protect the intangible nature of “the big idea,” something that preservationists continue to struggle with. Furthermore, it becomes a catalyst for
old and new ideas to exist in harmony. With a deeper understanding of protecting city master plans, the opportunities for preservation of any type of resource become increasingly limitless.
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Appendix A: Shortened Timeline of Design Endeavors by Whitney Smith and the Smith and Williams firm

This extremely shortened timeline of projects envisioned and completed by Whitney Smith individually, Smith and Williams together, and Smith and Williams with the Community Facilities Planners shows the breadth of experience held by all parties. It also speculates on what types of projects may have been precedents or inspiration for the Smith and Williams’ designs seen in California City. The majority of the single-family residences that the firm worked on are left out of this table.

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Architect</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<td>Linda Vista Shopping Center</td>
<td>Linda Vista, CA</td>
<td>Whitney Smith</td>
<td>Experience with large-scale commercial</td>
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<td>1945</td>
<td>Case Study House 5 (unbuilt)</td>
<td>La Canada Flintridge, CA</td>
<td>Whitney Smith</td>
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<th>Notes</th>
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<td>1946</td>
<td>Barr Lumber Company Garden Wall House (unbuilt)</td>
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<td>Whitney Smith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Case Study House 12 (unbuilt)</td>
<td>La Canada Flintridge, CA</td>
<td>Whitney Smith</td>
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<td>1947</td>
<td>Mutual Housing Association, Incorporated, Crestwood Hills housing tract</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Whitney Smith, A. Quincy Jones, Edgardo Contini w/ Wayne Williams and Jim Charlton</td>
<td>Experience with planning for housing tracts</td>
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<td>1948</td>
<td>Neighborhood Church, Nursery School building</td>
<td>Pasadena, CA</td>
<td>Whitney Smith</td>
<td>Experience with institutional development</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Wayne Williams house</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Whitney Smith</td>
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1949 – Wayne R. Williams becomes a partner with Whitney Smith to form the architecture firm of Smith and Williams.

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<th>Notes</th>
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<td>W. C. Phillips house, model house for tract development</td>
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<td>1950</td>
<td>United States Navy, Ordinance Test Station</td>
<td>Inyokern, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
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<td>1951</td>
<td>Mrs. S. C. Armstrong garden house</td>
<td>Pasadena, CA</td>
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<td>1951</td>
<td>Neighborhood Church master plan</td>
<td>Pasadena, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
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<td>1952-53</td>
<td>Blue Ribbon Construction Company (Myron Aiches tract housing)</td>
<td>Reseda, CA</td>
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<td>Adult Recreation and Day Care Center</td>
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<td>Smith and Williams</td>
<td>Experience with recreational development, particularly geared towards seniors</td>
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<td>Children’s Chapel for Neighborhood Church</td>
<td>Pasadena, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
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<td>1953</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. William Dunn house, extensive remodel of Greene &amp; Greene James Culbertson house (1902)</td>
<td>Pasadena, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>City of Needles riverfront recreational development</td>
<td>Needles, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Better Homes and Gardens model house “Five Start Plan No. 2409” (unbuilt)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Crawford’s Country Market</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Local 770 Retail Clerks Home for the Aged</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>W. R. McCloskey apartments</td>
<td>Unknown location</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Smith and Williams work on at least seven different tract housing projects</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>City of Lakewood recreational development and designs for Mayfair Park and youth center</td>
<td>Lakewood, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams w/ Community Facilities Planners</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Richard Roe and Associates, Charter Oaks Shopping Center</td>
<td>Charter Oak, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams w/ Community Facilities Planners</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>City of Arcadia, Wilderness Park, Santa Anita Canyon</td>
<td>Arcadia</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Buena Park Civic Center</td>
<td>Buena Park</td>
<td>Smith and Williams w/ Community Facilities Planners</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Community Facilities Planners</td>
<td>South Pasadena, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams w/ Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Firm</td>
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<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Dr. and Mrs. Paul Hoagland garden room house</td>
<td>Pasadena, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**1958 – California City Founded**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, Panorama Playground and clubhouse</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Mrs. Louis Miler, the Glades Swim Park</td>
<td>Los Angeles County, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Scripps College swimming pool and bath house</td>
<td>Claremont, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>City of San Diego, Mission Bay Development master plan</td>
<td>San Diego, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams w/ Community Facilities Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>Hathaway Home for Children recreational building</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Morro Bay Land Investment Development Company, commercial and recreational development</td>
<td>Morro Bay, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**1961-68 – California City Development Company master plan, housing designs, church and recreational planning w/ Community Facilities Planners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Firm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Costa Mesa Park and Recreation District</td>
<td>Costa Mesa</td>
<td>Smith and Williams w/ Community Facilities Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Old Sacramento Redevelopment (w/ N.K. Mendelsohn), historic district planning</td>
<td>Sacramento, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams w/ Community Facilities Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Omo Motel</td>
<td>California City, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Twenty Mule Team Parkway System road improvements</td>
<td>California City, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td>Capital Company, Camelback residential development</td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Pyramid Lake Marine Center recreational development</td>
<td>Washoe County, NV</td>
<td>Smith and Williams w/ Community Facilities Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>N.K. Mendelsohn</td>
<td>Colorado City, CO</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

205
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Client/Developer</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Thunderbird-Capistrano Company recreation and residential development</td>
<td>Dana Point, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
<td>apparently splitting his time between California and Colorado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-68</td>
<td>California State Exposition and Fair, various recreational buildings</td>
<td>Sacramento, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>N.K. Mendelsohn Colorado City planning and development for subdivision</td>
<td>Colorado City, CO</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Kern County Land Company, California State College, Bakersfield</td>
<td>Bakersfield, CA</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>N.K. Mendelsohn, North American Towns Incorporated, urban development plan</td>
<td>Lake Texoco and Netzahualcoyotl, Mexico</td>
<td>Smith and Williams</td>
<td>Continued to work with Nat Mendelsohn after work in California City; Mendelsohn continued to work on large-scale urban plans despite California City’s failure</td>
</tr>
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## Appendix B: Existing Smith and Williams Resources in California City

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Photo</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residences</td>
<td>21200 Bancroft Court</td>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Photo" /></td>
<td>Character defining features of some homes are driveways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21160 Bancroft Court</td>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Photo" /></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21148 Bancroft Court</td>
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<td><img src="image3" alt="Photo" /></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21136 Bancroft Court</td>
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<td><img src="image4" alt="Photo" /></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21124 Bancroft Court</td>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Photo" /></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21307 Bancroft Court</td>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Photo" /></td>
<td>May be original</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21313 Bancroft Court</td>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Photo" /></td>
<td>May be original</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10249 Rea Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10243 Rea Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10225 Rea Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10231 Rea Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10236 Rea Avenue</td>
<td>May be original</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10244 Rea Avenue</td>
<td>May have been replaced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10218 Rea Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobile Home Park</strong></td>
<td>21009 Conklin Blvd.</td>
<td>Original church demolished; ancillary building still exists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Robert P. Ulrich Elementary School</strong></td>
<td>9124 Catalpa Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Park (formerly Wonderland Park)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Original features include the lake pavilion, bathhouse, swimming pool, waterfall, and multiple bridges. Also original and extant is the layout of the park.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Galileo Park Observation Tower</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Galileo Park Administration Building</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>California City Fire Department</td>
<td>20890 Hacienda Blvd.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.calcityfire.us/about/ccfd-history">Link</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Aspen Mall</td>
<td>20908 Neuralia Road</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspen Mall</td>
<td>20906 Neuralia Road</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspen Mall</td>
<td>8016 California City Blvd.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspen Mall</td>
<td>California City Blvd. between Neuralia Road and 82nd Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Wash</td>
<td>8217 California City Blvd.</td>
<td>Appears to be similar in style to many other Smith and Williams designs for California City</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Galileo Park Map from California City’s Final General Plan 2009-2028

This map shows the California City-owned portion of the Galileo Park area as compared to the Silver Saddle owned portion of the park. It sheds some light on what areas have been kept intact by the city and what portions have been changed by Silver Saddle’s owners, explained in further detail in Chapter Five.