

On The Roads

(in places like Valley Center)



For small towns and rural communities like Valley Center the character of our roads makes all the difference.

Different places in Valley Center need different kinds of roads



Roads throughout the unincorporated County are similar in the variety of places they traverse and in the mix of activities that people enjoy in these places. Country dwellers ARE drivers of cars. AND we are owners and customers of local businesses; and shoppers, runners, walkers, cyclists, horseback riders. We march in parades, attend community gatherings, meet-up with friends, walk our pets.

We want different things from roads in different places.

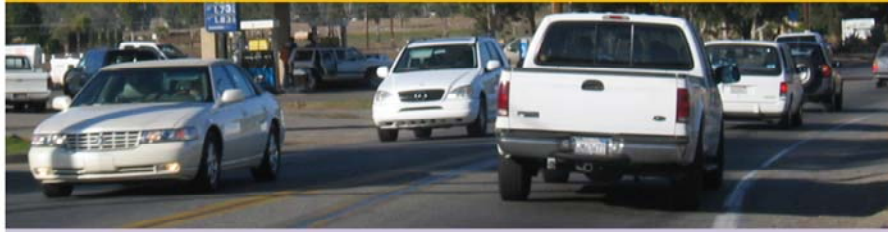
County Road Standards cater to the needs of drivers.



Roads being built today to County Road Standards cater to the needs of people doing just one activity – driving.

County standards produce uniform roads

Even though people want roads to be different in different places



Singular focus: *Moving motor vehicles*

- Design speed determines all other features
- Lane widths all 12'
- Shoulders all 8' paved
- Parkways all 10'
- Medians all 14' curbed with concrete maintenance strips
- Bike Lanes require parking prohibitions
- ROW all cleared/graded

County standards create the same roads through different places BECAUSE the standards have one objective: to move motor vehicles. Regardless of surrounding land uses and activities, road design is based on auto capacities. Capacities determine design speeds. Design speeds determine sight distances, horizontal road curvature, vertical grade and so forth. Widths of lanes, shoulders, medians, bike lanes, and parkways are THE SAME across road classifications -- one size fits all.

Modifications are inadequate & the process fails too often

Characters of semi rural and rural neighborhoods are disturbed and homogenized by roads that don't fit in these contexts



Incremental widening

Left lane =12' Right lane=20' & trail
ROW mature trees destroyed,
Curbs and gutters installed.

ADTs projected on GPU <500



10 home subdivision

2 lanes each 12' plus 9' shoulder= 33' paved
Dead end street, curbs, gutters

ADTs @ 12 per unit = 120

Small subdivisions are most likely to fall through the cracks and result in incremental improvements that are excessive & overly urban.

The only way to obtain a different road design is to request a MODIFICATION to the standard – on a project-by-project basis. This process CAN work for large Specific Plans. BUT too many smaller projects slip through the cracks.

The rules prevent communities from initiating modifications for private projects. And for developers of smaller projects, modifications are often mysterious, costly and time consuming. For these reasons, AND because DPW customarily issues conditions AFTER community review and WITHOUT local notification -- most incremental “improvements” come as a surprise to the community with construction.

Valley Center Road

Design is uniform despite dramatic changes of contexts and user needs.



55 MPH Design Speed up the grade



55 MPH Design Speed thru the South Village business district

Further, as we've seen with Valley Center Road, when modifications are focused on auto capacity, they don't produce context-sensitive, multi-modal roads.

Valley Center Road was built to a 55 mph design speed. 55 mph makes sense when traveling up the grade -- but NOT in the village business district.

The 55 mph design speed through the heart of town discourages drivers from turning into businesses, makes walking extremely unpleasant, makes pedestrian crossing treacherous, and makes bicycling dangerous -- on this route to Palomar Mountain which is increasingly popular for cyclists.

To build this road to a design speed of 55 mph through town required substantial blasting, grading and straightening of curves, and the removal of hundreds of mature oaks. The 55 mph design speed also prevents planting shade trees at the road edge, generates more traffic noise for residents who live along this road, and WILL lead to sound wall requirements for new residential development.

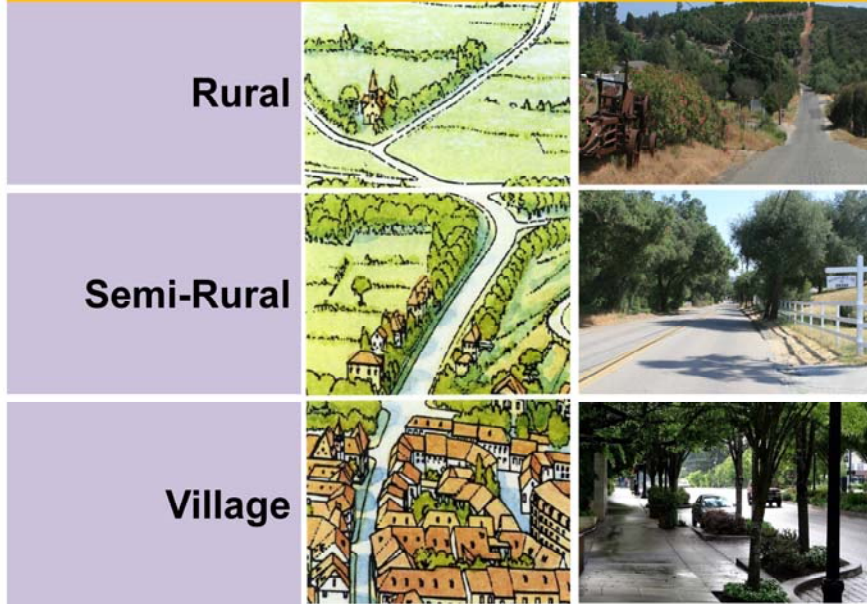
Further, DPW conditions for ADDITIONAL turn lanes on this road are undermining the design of the North Village, which the Planning Group and Design Review Board have worked on with the developers for the past 3 years.

On the other hand, auto traffic IS moving briskly at 60-65 mph most times of the day.

But, we might have spent less than \$54 Million to build a slower road that would allow us to walk, cycle, drive, stop AND shop all at the same time.

Valley Center Contexts are NOT all the same

Align with GPU categories AND vary within these contexts, as well.



In small towns and rural communities, roads traverse very different sorts of places. What people need a road to be and do differs a great deal depending on its location. We need a larger toolbox of road standards – as well as a process that makes it easy to match road design features to a range of needs in different parts of town.

(Small towns also need adequate road NETWORK planning to built roads in the right places as growth occurs -- but the network discussion is for another day.)

Village Roads

Walkable, pedestrian-oriented **Village neighborhoods** cannot be built with auto focused, capacity based standards.



In Village areas, we need more variety. Thru-roads should be slow enough for motorists and delivery trucks to pull into businesses; slow enough to allow large street trees and avoid sound walls.

In the heart of our business and commercial villages we also need narrow streets with wide sidewalks that invite shoppers + walkers + cyclists + community events. In village residential neighborhoods, we need quiet, slow streets that are shaded, peaceful, and safe for kids to play and visit friends. This variety requires a better assortment of options, applied flexibly to suit circumstances.

Semi-Rural and Rural Contexts

Need more design options & more flexibility ...



In semi-rural and rural areas, we need options that protect the character of country roads and neighborhoods, and accommodate activities that people actually do in these places. People drive, bike, walk, and ride horses on country roads. (On-street parking here is rare and yet it takes a Board action to eliminate it.)

For instance, we need options for slower design speeds and more narrow travel lanes, shoulders and parkways. And we need options for unpaved shoulders; pathways on one side of the road, and off-road pathways; bike lanes combined with shoulders; swales instead of gutters; natural road edges instead of curbs ... and right-of-way policies that preserve mature trees.

County Road Standards

- ✓ **New** design options
- ✓ **New** flexibility
- ✓ **Community** involvement throughout the design process



Our goal is to expand the road design options for San Diego County's small towns and rural communities. We need road standards that balance automobile traffic with community character needs, and the safety and comfort of all users. We need the right roads in the right places, and a process that ensures this outcome.