

DATE ISSUED: November 7, 2007 REPORT NO. PC-140

ATTENTION: Planning Commission
Agenda of November 15, 2007

SUBJECT: Linda Vista/Clairemont Mesa Open Space –Rezoning/ Community Plan
Amendment/Park Dedication

OWNER/
APPLICANT: City of San Diego/San Diego Community College District

SUMMARY

Issue - Should the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council approve amendments to the Progress Guide and General Plan and the Linda Vista and Clairemont Mesa Community Plans (Attachment 1), Rezone No. 445143 (Attachment 2) and the dedication of approximately 13.67 acres in the amended Linda Vista Community Plan as Park? (Attachment 3)

Mayor's Recommendation – Recommend that the City Council **Approve** amendments to the Progress Guide and General Plan and the Linda Vista and Clairemont Mesa Community Plans, Rezone No. 445143 and the dedication of park land.

Community Stakeholder Group Recommendations –On April 17, 2007, the Clairemont Mesa Planning Committee voted 12-0-0 to support the proposed rezone, General/Community Plan Amendments and park dedication (minutes not available). On June 25, 2007, the Linda Vista Planning Committee voted 7-3-0 to recommend denial of the proposed rezone, General/Community Plan Amendments and park dedication (Attachment 4). Additionally, on May 8, 2007, the Linda Vista Recreation Council voted 6-0-0 to not support the proposal on May 16, 2007, the Tecolote Canyon Citizen's Advisory Committee voted 9-0-0 to support the proposal (Attachment 5), and on July 10, 2007 the Kearny Mesa Park Recreation Board voted 12-0-0 to not support the proposal (minutes not available).

Environmental Impact – This activity is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Attachment 6).

Fiscal Impact – The preparation of a rezone and General/Community Plan Amendment and dedication of park land was funded by the San Diego Community College District, as a condition of the adoption of Council Resolution R-30225 (Attachment 7) .

BACKGROUND

The proposed rezone, General/Community Plan Amendment, and park dedication is located along the northern boundary of the Linda Vista Community Planning Area and the southern boundary of the Clairemont Mesa Community Planning Area between Armstrong Street to the east and Genesee Avenue to the west. The surrounding land uses include school (Mesa Community College) to the north; community park (Kearny Mesa Park) to the south; community park, institutional uses and multi-family residential to the east; and park/open space to the west.

A small portion of the subject area (approximately 0.93-acres) is owned by Mesa College, however the majority is owned by the City of San Diego. Much of the subject area is located on the former public right-of-way that had been intended for the extension of Mesa College Drive from its current terminus to Genesee Avenue. On January 19, 1999, the City Council approved the deletion of the extension of Mesa College Drive from both the Linda Vista and Clairemont Mesa Community Plans as part of the Linda Vista Community Plan update.

On January 8, 2007, the City Council initiated amendments to the Linda Vista and Clairemont Mesa Community Plans to adjust the Community Plan boundaries and designate the City-owned land as Open Space; initiate the rezoning of the City owned land to an Open Space zone; and direct staff to prepare an ordinance that would dedicate in perpetuity the area designated/zoned Open Space as park land (Attachment 8).

The action by the City Council to initiate a Community Plan Amendment to the Linda Vista and Clairemont Mesa communities was the result of a project before the City Council at that time which placed some of the City-owned land within the ownership of Mesa College, located within the Clairemont Mesa Community Planning Area for an expansion of their college campus (Attachment 9). At that time, questions arose as to the status of the remaining City-owned land that had been intended for Right-Of -Way but was now part of the canyon and open space system. The overall purpose of these proposed actions is to preserve open space for the lasting enjoyment and benefit of the people of the City of San Diego.

The City of San Diego is the applicant and, upon direction of the City Council, is proposing the following actions:

- Rezone 6.6 acres (City -owned) from RS-1-7 to OP-2-1.
- Dedicate 6.64 acres as park land.
- Dedicate an additional 7.03 acres (adjacent, City-owned land) as park land.
- Shift 6.64 acres from the Clairemont Mesa Community Plan to the Linda Vista Community Plan.
- Shift 0.93 acres (recently acquired by the Community College District) from the Linda Vista Community Plan to the Clairemont Mesa Community Plan.
- Redesignate 6.64 acres from School and Park/Open Space to Open Space.
- Redesignate 0.93 acres from Open Space to School

DISCUSSION

The goals of the proposed rezone, General/Community Plan Amendment, and park dedication are in conformance with both the Linda Vista and Clairemont Mesa Community Plans as well as the Progress Guide and General Plan. Specifically, this proposal will increase open space opportunities by preserving undeveloped canyon land and preserve sensitive resources. The Linda Vista Community Plan contains a number of policies relating to the preservation of canyon and hillside resources, including the specific proposal to rezone city-owned land in Tecolote Canyon and its tributary canyons to the OP-2-1 Zone. Likewise, the Clairemont Mesa Community Plan includes similar policies to preserve existing canyon and natural open space systems. Further, the proposed adjustment of the community plan boundaries (Attachment 10) would consolidate the newly acquired parcels along the northern edge of the canyon into a single land-use designation and zone that would preserve the integrity of the overall canyon area within the Linda Vista planning area. The proposed boundary adjustment would also consolidate newly-acquired parcels owned by Mesa College, into one contiguous School-designated site within the Clairemont Mesa planning area. Finally, the proposed dedication of approximately 13.67 acres of additional park land will implement an important Draft General Plan policy to pursue formal dedication of existing and future open space areas throughout the City.

CONCLUSION

San Diego's canyons are a valuable resource which create a unique setting that fosters biodiversity, a sense of place and provide passive recreational opportunities and visual enjoyment. As part of the City's ongoing effort to preserve and protect its urban canyons, the proposed rezone, General/Community Plan Amendment, and park dedication would result in a net gain of approximately 6.64 acres of designated open space and 13.67 acres of dedicated park land. Over the years, development pressures on diminishing resources have placed additional importance on the preservation of the remaining undeveloped canyons and slopes throughout the San Diego region. Known for their contribution to species/habitat conservation, passive recreation, water quality, outdoor educational opportunities, and visual relief, urban canyons offer surrounding communities with a diversion from the built environment. Today's generation has inherited the tremendous responsibility to protect the remaining undeveloped canyons for habitat preservation, public use and enjoyment. The proposed rezone, General /Community Plan Amendment, and park dedication, while relatively small geographically, are a big step in ensuring the preservation of the Linda Vista and Clairemont Mesa communities resources and character.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Recommend **Approval** the proposed rezone, general/community plan amendment and park dedication with modifications.
2. Recommend **Denial** the proposed rezone, general/community plan amendment and park dedication.

Respectfully submitted,

Cecilia Gallardo, AICP
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Attachments:

1. Proposed Community Plan Boundary Adjustments
2. Proposed Rezone
3. Proposed Park Dedication
4. Linda Vista Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
5. Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes
6. Determination of Environmental Exemption
7. January 8, 2007 City Council Meeting Minutes and Financially Responsible Party Declaration.
8. January 25, 2007 Memo from Councilmember Frye to Mayor Sanders
9. Kearny Mesa Park Boundary Map and Grant Deeds relating to the sale of adjacent properties
10. Strikeout/Underline of Linda Vista and Clairemont Mesa Community Plans