



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

**DATE ISSUED:** August 1, 2013 **REPORT NO. PC-13-092**

**ATTENTION:** Planning Commission, Agenda of August 8, 2013

**SUBJECT:** LA JOLLA COMMONS III COMMUNITY PLAN  
AMENDMENT INITIATION – PROJECT NO. 324533

**OWNER:** HSPF La Jolla Commons III Investors, LLC.

**APPLICANT:** Paul Twardowski, Senior Managing Director

### SUMMARY

**Issue:** Should the Planning Commission initiate an amendment to the University Community Plan to remove residential use from the La Jolla Commons Subarea (Subarea 29) in Table 3 of the Development Intensity Element of the University Community Plan?

**Staff Recommendations:** INITIATE the plan amendment process.

**Community Planning Group Recommendation:** On July 9, 2013, the University Community Planning Group voted 15-0-0 to recommend approval of the community plan amendment initiation (Attachment 4).

**Environmental Review:** This activity is not a "project" under the definition set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15378. Should initiation of the community plan amendment be approved, environmental review would take place at the appropriate time in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15004.

**Fiscal Impact Statement:** All costs associated with the processing of this project are paid from a deposit account maintained by the applicant.

**Code Enforcement Impact:** None with this action

**Housing Impact Statement:** The proposed amendment would eliminate development of 86 multi-family dwelling units approved as part of a previous Substantial Conformance Review of Planned Development Permit No. 252591.

**Development Services • Planning Division**

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DIVERSITY  
CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

## **BACKGROUND**

The subject site is located at the northeast quadrant of Judicial Drive and La Jolla Village Drive within the University Community Planning Area (Attachment 1). The subject site is designated for high density residential, visitor and office commercial, and scientific research uses in the University Community Plan (UCP) (Attachment 2). The project site is located in Subarea 29 and 31 in the Land Use and Development Intensity Table (Table 3) of the Development Intensity Element of the UCP (Attachment 3). The goals of the Development Intensity Element include creating an Urban Node with high density mixed-use development in the University Town Center area, developing an equitable allocation of development intensity among properties based on the concept of the "urban node", and providing a workable circulation system.

The original La Jolla Commons project (Planned Commercial Development/Resource Protection Ordinance Permit No. 99-0762) was approved in association with a community plan amendment on November 14, 2000, by City Council. The community plan amendment revised Table 3 in the UCP to identify a mix of visitor and office commercial, scientific research and residential uses. The specific intensity and density of the project included a 15-story, 327 room hotel, a 20-story, 450,000 square foot office building, a 2-story, 30,000 square foot scientific research building and a 32-story, 115 residential dwelling unit tower. In an amendment to PCD/RPO 99-0762 approved in 2006 (Planned Development Permit No. 252591), the same overall mix of uses remained on-site; however, the density and intensity of specific uses were shifted resulting in an increase in residential units and a decrease in total office square footage and hotel square footage/rooms. The amount of scientific research square footage did not change as part of the amendment. PDP No. 252591 allowed 268 residential units in a 32-story, residential and hotel tower with 213 hotel rooms, a 32-story residential tower, a 15-story, 340,405 square foot office building, and a 2-story, 30,000 square foot scientific research building. As a result of this amendment, the total number of Average Daily Trips (ADT's) were reduced by 941, and were not to be used, sold or transferred by owners/tenants of the project site or other properties within the community as a condition of the amended permit.

The project site is near the United States Marine Corps Air Station Miramar (MCAS Miramar) and is within the Airport Environs Overlay Zone (AEOZ). As part of the original project approval, MCAS Miramar restricted all proposed buildings on the project site not to exceed 703 feet above mean sea level (AMSL). The amended project adhered to this restriction and would not have exceeded 703 feet AMSL.

In 2006, construction of the 340,405 square foot, 15-story office building began and was designed with a maximum structure height of 576 feet AMSL, well within the 703 feet AMSL restriction of the previous permit approvals. Pursuant to Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations, part 77, construction of the office building required review by the Federal Aviation Association (FAA) for a determination of hazard to air navigation at MCAS Miramar. Initial findings by the FAA indicated that the office building would have exceeded obstruction standards and /or would have had an adverse physical or electromagnetic interference upon navigable airspace or air navigation facilities. The

structure was presumed to be a hazard to air navigation and construction of any structure over 550 feet AMSL would have warranted a Determination of Hazard to Air Navigation by the FAA.

The applicant held numerous conversations with the FAA and MCAS Miramar on how to resolve the issue and have the FAA issue a Notice of No Hazard for the office building. The result was a reduction in height of the office building to 549.5 feet AMSL, and a reduction in Gross Leasable Area to 252,332 square feet. However, the Notice of Presumed Hazard issued for the original height of the office building indicated that there would be similar determinations for the residential and visitor commercial components of the site which were approved at heights taller than the office building. This prompted submittal of a Substantial Conformance Review (SCR) application for La Jolla Commons to adjust and re-allocate the project's vertical intensity in structures with a reduced height to ensure a determination of No Hazard by the FAA. The SCR resulted in a significant reduction in the number of residential units (268 to 86) and hotel rooms (213 to 64) and re-allocated that intensity in terms vehicle trip generation to office use. The current proposal would amend Table 3 of the Development Intensity Element to remove the residentially designated portion of the site and allow the remaining intensity to develop either as office use, a hotel, or a mix of hotel and office use.

## **DISCUSSION**

The City is unique among jurisdictions in that the process to amend the General Plan and/or a community plan requires either Planning Commission or City Council initiation before the plan amendment process and accompanying project may actually proceed. Community plans are components of the City's General Plan. The proposed amendment is anticipated to result in revisions to the community plan, but would not necessitate text or mapping changes to the General Plan. The staff recommendation of approval or denial of the initiation is based upon compliance with all three of the initiation criteria contained in the General Plan. The Development Services Department - Planning Division believes that all of the following initiation criteria can be met:

(1) **The amendment request appears to be consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan and University Community Plan:**

The site is currently designated for office, hotel and residential use. The proposed amendment would allow flexibility in how the remaining development intensity can be used for build-out of the La Jolla Commons campus. The proposed amendment would increase the allowable development intensity of office use on-site, would allow development of a standalone hotel consistent with the current designation, or would allow development of a mix of office and hotel use within the same structure. The site is adjacent to an area identified as an Urban Node within the UCP. The Urban Node is a high intensity, high density area in the center of the community where a mix of uses exist and are well served by transit.

Although the proposed amendment would remove residential use from the site, there have been several development approvals in and around the Urban Node in

recent years which have added residential units to the community for no net loss of residential use. To the south of the site across La Jolla Village Drive, the La Jolla Crossroads II project would add 309 multi-family units to the 1500 multi-family units already constructed as part of the original La Jolla Crossroads project. The Master Plan for Westfield UTC includes the ability to develop up to 300 multi-family units and across the street from Westfield UTC is approval for 560 multi-family units as part of the Monte Verde project (Attachment 3). Removal of residential use at this site would not diminish the area's function as an Urban Node within the community. However, the City would like to analyze the potential of keeping residential use on-site as an option in addition to potential development of office and/or hotel use to retain flexibility should residential use be deemed appropriate in the future.

The General Plan's Economic Prosperity includes a goal where new employment growth is encouraged in existing sub regional employment centers connected by transit to minimize the economic, social, and environmental costs of growth. The project site is located within the University/Sorrento Mesa Subregional Employment Center as identified in Appendix C, EP-3 of the City's General Plan. The site is currently served by transit via the Super Loop BRT service which provides connection to the existing bus transit station and future Trolley station at Westfield UTC. The efficient location of high-density employment office uses adjacent to high-density multi-family developments with retail services and transit access enhances the potential for pedestrian oriented village development in an area identified as an Urban Node.

- (2) **The proposed amendment provides additional public benefit to the community as compared to the existing land use designation, density/intensity range, plan policy or site design; and**

The proposed community plan amendment to remove residential use from the site would allow for the efficient development of the final lot on the La Jolla Commons campus while providing the opportunity for additional employment opportunities in an area identified as a Subregional Employment Center. This would help balance new employment opportunities with all the new multi-family residential approved in the area over the past several years.

Development of hotel at this site would also help balance the mix of uses within the Urban Node and is located in an area with convenient access to surrounding employment areas, retail services and regional transit access. This convenience could help reduce the reliability on automobile use by visitors which in turn would help reduce green house gas emissions.

- (3) **Public facilities appear to be available to serve the proposed increase in density/intensity, or their provision will be addressed as a component of the amendment process.**

The University Community planning area is an urbanized community and all necessary

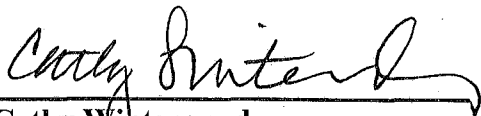
public services appear to be available. If the plan amendment is initiated, an analysis of public services and facilities would be conducted with the review of the amendment.

As outlined above, the proposed plan amendment meets all of the above criteria as described; therefore, staff recommends that the amendment to the University Community Plan be initiated.

The following land use issues have been identified by City Staff. If initiated, these issues, as well as others that may be identified, would be analyzed and evaluated through the community plan amendment review process:

- Ensure consistency with the Miramar Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan
- Evaluate the potential reduction in traffic generation from the proposed amendment
- Evaluate the ability to retain residential use as an option in place of or in addition to office and/or hotel use
- Ensure the remaining development design is compatible with the existing structures on-site
- Ensure adequate parking is provided for all land uses on-site

**Respectfully submitted,**



**Cathy Winterrowd**  
**Interim Deputy Director**  
**Development Services Department**



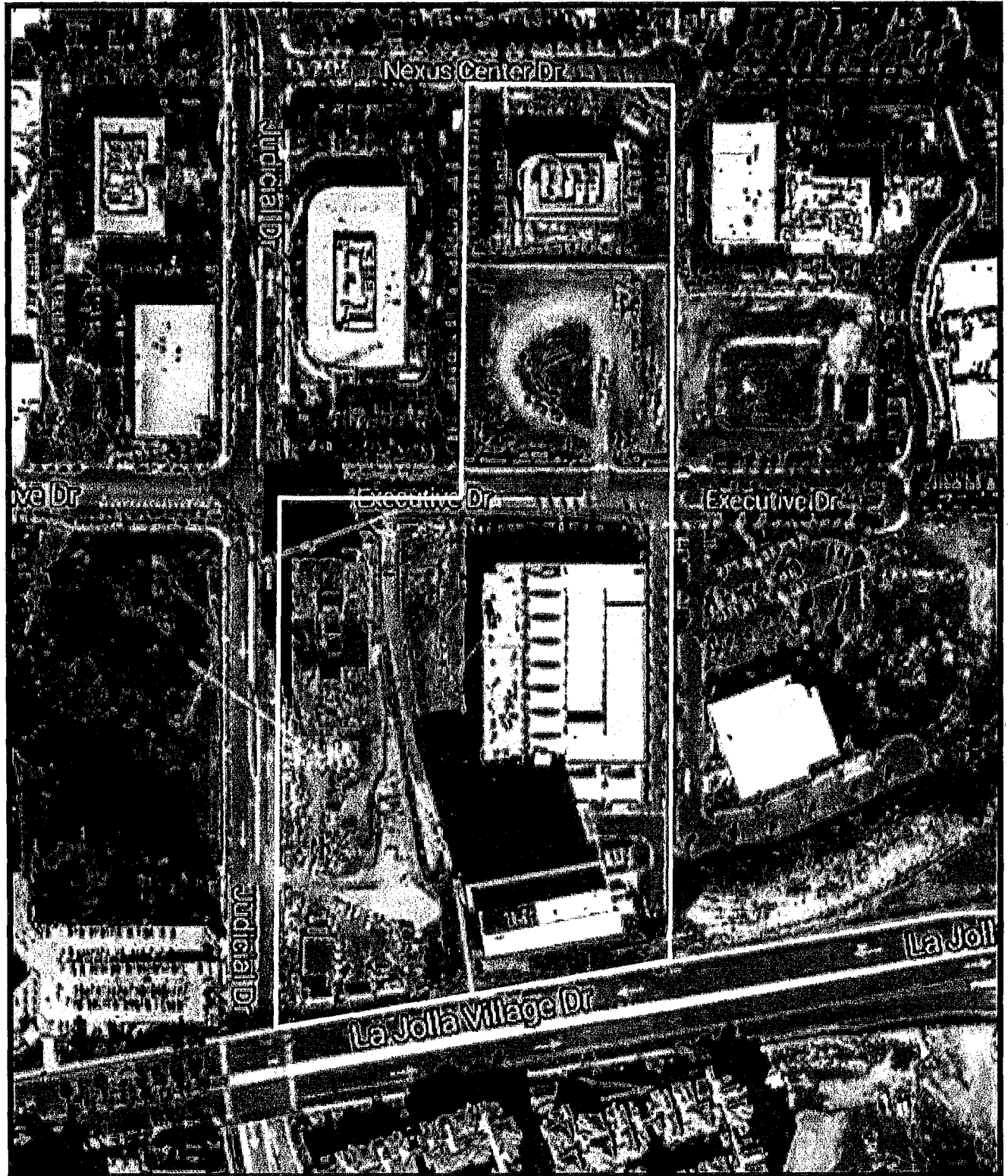
**Dan Monroe**  
**Senior Planner**  
**Development Services Department**

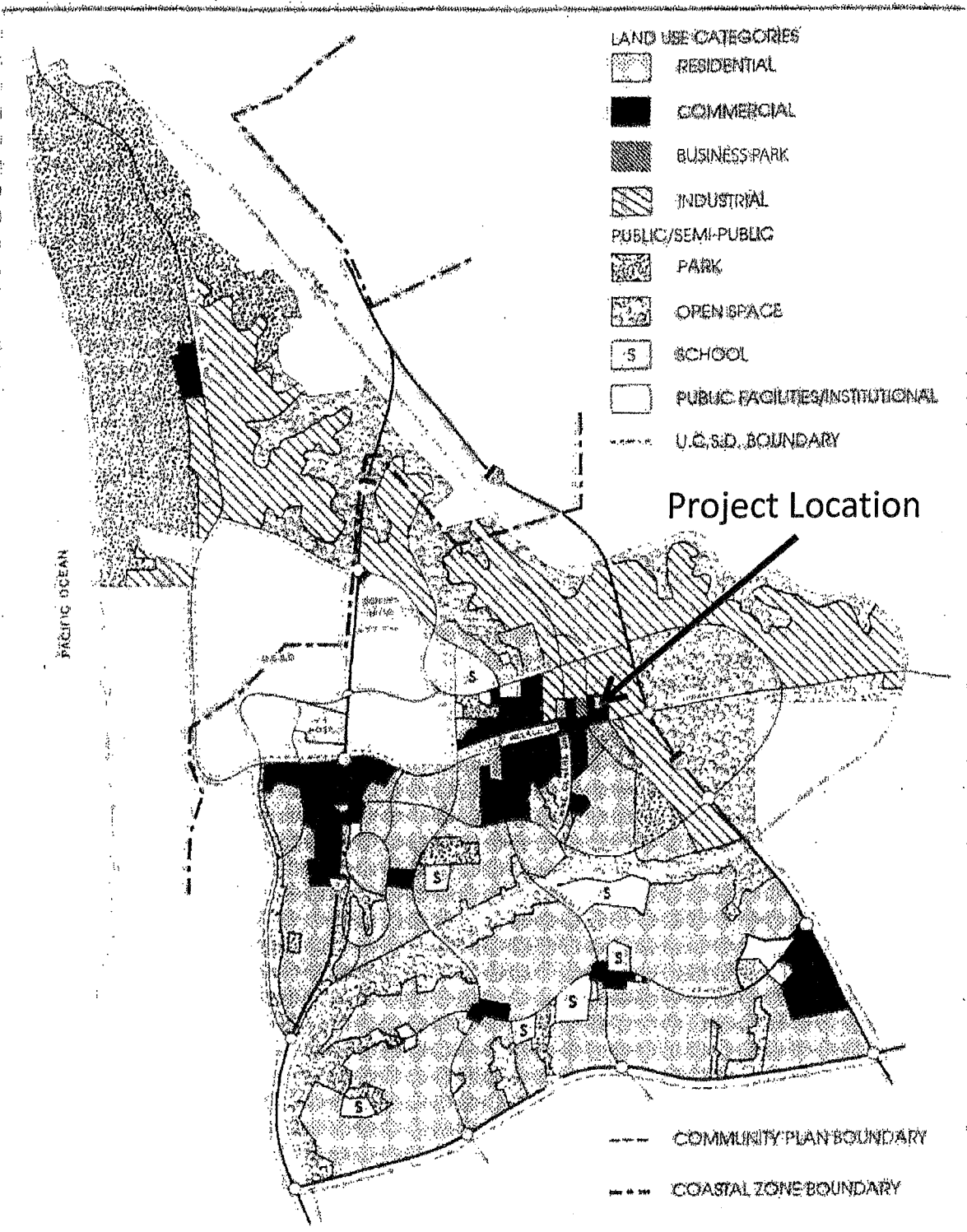
CW/DMM

Attachments:

1. Aerial Photograph
2. Community Plan Land Use Map
3. Table 3 – Land Use and Development Intensity Table
4. University Community Planning Group Recommendation

# Aerial Photo – Site Location



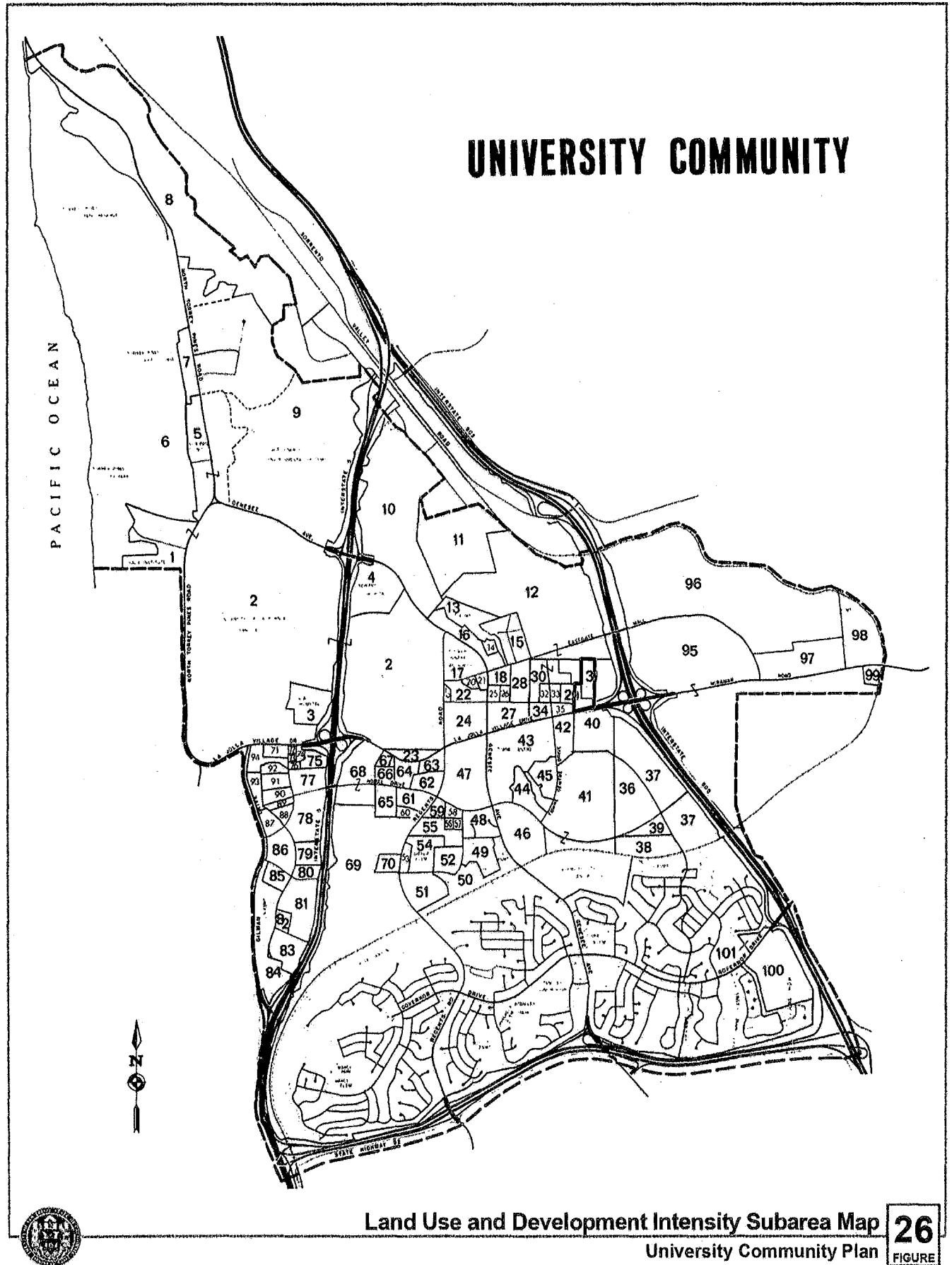


Project Location

Proposed Generalized Land Use Plan  
University Community Plan

4  
FIGURE





Land Use and Development Intensity Subarea Map  
University Community Plan





**TABLE 3 (continued)**  
**LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY**

Any changes to this table for properties in the Coastal Zone shall require an amendment to the Local Coastal Program.

Subarea/Name	Gross Acres	Land Use and Development Intensity
13. Open Space Easement	26.00	
14. Utility/SDGE	2.89	
15. Condominiums	25.26	365 DU
16. Apartments/Condominiums	17.95	481 DU (PRD required)
17. La Jolla Country Day School	23.98	School <sup>(5)</sup>
18. Churches	6.16	2 Institutions <sup>(5)</sup>
19. Pacific Telephone	1.66	22,480 SF
20. Fire/Police	3.20	23,400 SF
21. La Jolla Eastgate Office Park	1.97	46,000 SF
22. Neighborhood Park Jewish Community Center (CUP)	10.49	92,700 SF
23. La Jolla Village Tennis Club Condominiums	7.64	120 DU
24. Regents Park (PCD)	27.46	360 Rooms - Hotel 574 DU 30,200 SF - Neighborhood Commercial 754,000 SF - Office
25. La Jolla Bank and Trust	3.63	156,000 SF - Office
26. Park Plaza (PCD)	3.07	69,764 SF - Office
27. The Plaza (PCD)	16.85	841,300 SF - Office 8,700 SF - Restaurant
28. Chancellor Park	16.61	542,000 SF - Office
29. La Jolla Commons <sup>(6,7)</sup> (PCD)	11.85	327 Room Hotel 450,000 SF Office 115 DU
La Jolla Centre III (7a) (PDP)	5.00	340,000 SF - Business Park
30. Nexus Specific Plan	22.50	Specific Plan
31. Private Ownership	23.79	20,000 SF/AC - Scientific Research
Biomed Innovation Center	7.07	35,000 SF/AC - Scientific Research
32. Devonshire Woods (PRD)	3.98	95 DU
33. La Jolla Centre II (PCD)	4.67	133,750 SF - Office 4,500 SF - Retail 3,500 SF - Athletic Facility
34. Embassy Suites (PCD)	4.90	335 Suites - Hotel 4,400 SF - Restaurant
35. La Jolla Centre I (PCD)	3.17	162,250 SF - Office
36. Neighborhood Park	30.00	

(5) Expansion of these uses is permitted, subject to discretionary review.

(6) This Plan encourages the development of Subareas 29 and 40 through a master plan.

(7) ADT was transferred from Regents Park to La Jolla Commons (Goodwin/Smith PCD).



City of San Diego  
 Development Services  
 1222 First Ave., MS-302  
 San Diego, CA 92101

**Community Planning  
 Committee  
 Distribution Form Part 2**

<b>Project Name:</b> La Jolla Commons III - CPA Initiation		<b>Project Number:</b> 324553	<b>Distribution Date:</b> 7/9/2013
<b>Project Scope/Location:</b> Initiation of a Community Plan Amendment to the University Community Plan to remove the High Density Residential land use designation from the project site located at the northeast quadrant of La Jolla Village Drive and Judicial Drive.			
<b>Applicant Name:</b> Paul Twardowski		<b>Applicant Phone Number:</b> (858) 435-4000	
<b>Project Manager:</b> Laura Black	<b>Phone Number:</b> (619) 236-6327	<b>Fax Number:</b> (619) 321-3200	<b>E-mail Address:</b> lblack@sandlego.gov
<b>Committee Recommendations (To be completed for Initial Review):</b>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Vote to Approve</b>	<b>Members Yes</b> 14	<b>Members No</b> 0	<b>Members Abstain</b> 0
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Vote to Approve With Conditions Listed Below</b>	<b>Members Yes</b>	<b>Members No</b>	<b>Members Abstain</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Vote to Approve With Non-Binding Recommendations Listed Below</b>	<b>Members Yes</b>	<b>Members No</b>	<b>Members Abstain</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Vote to Deny</b>	<b>Members Yes</b>	<b>Members No</b>	<b>Members Abstain</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>No Action (Please specify, e.g., Need further information, Split vote, Lack of quorum, etc.)</b>			<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Continued</b>
<b>CONDITIONS:</b> none			
<b>NAME:</b> Janay Krueger		<b>TITLE:</b> Chair	
<b>SIGNATURE:</b> Janay Krueger		<b>DATE:</b> 7/11/13	
<i>Attach Additional Pages If Necessary.</i>		Please return to: Project Management Division City of San Diego Development Services Department 1222 First Avenue, MS 302 San Diego, CA 92101	
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