

**CITY OF SAN DIEGO
M E M O R A N D U M**

DATE: August 19, 2004

TO: Planning Commission, Agenda of August 26, 2004

FROM: Juan Baligad, Development Project Manager, Development Services

SUBJECT: Towne Centre Corporate Plaza, Planning Commission Request for Continuance for Additional Information

REFERENCE: Rezone, Tentative Map, Site Development Permit, Coastal Development Permit and Site Development Permit, Towne Centre Corporate Plaza, Report No. PC-03-105
Project No. 1591

On August 12, 2004, City staff presented the Towne Centre Corporate Plaza, Project No. 1591, an application for a Rezone, Tentative Map, Site Development Permit, and Coastal Development Permit, before the Planning Commission. During the hearing, the Planning Commissioners requested a continuance of the hearing item to enable staff and the applicant to provide a response to specific questions related to the proposed sewer alignment, retaining walls, vehicular trip reduction, internal and external pedestrian circulation, storm water management, the future parking deck, and lighting. In response to the Planning Commission' request, three sheets were added to the 27-sheet project exhibit to help clarify issues in question. These sheets are included as Attachments 1, 2, and 5.

Proposed Sewer/Maintenance Access Road:

Exhibit Page C-8A (Page 10 of 30) has been added to provide additional plan level detail of the off-site sewer design (Attachment 1, "Key Map for Proposed Sewer Abandonment"). The original design concept was to have sewage from the project pumped up Towne Centre Drive and Westerra Court until it reaches a gravity system. An existing ten-inch PVC (plastic) sewer main presently serves Westerra Court, which branches off from Towne Centre Drive. This sewer main follows Westerra Court, then continues along a ridgeline south of the project site. At the end of the ridge line, the sewer main continues in south-southwest direction, down a steep hillside in the Multiple Habitat Planning Area (MHPA), to a 36-inch force main located at the bottom of the hill. Based on the sewer study, the applicant and City staff jointly concluded that this sewer main on Westerra Court has limited life. City access for maintenance on the steep hillside portion of the sewer main is difficult at best. In addition, the existing ten-inch sewer line provides no future capacity for increased flows.

The original concept design would require a very long force main, resulting in a longer detention time of sewer material within the main and within the pump station wet well. Such long detention time, coupled with waste material having to travel through a relatively small diameter force main, would allow sewer material to putrefy and allow odorous gases escape up laterals into plumbing, and up and out of the roof vents. Nuisance odors would then permeate into the area to a point where it would become unfit for people. Such odors are controlled with odor control equipment at large pump stations where professionally trained staffs are available to manage the facility. Such odor equipment also requires chemical treatment and deliveries that are not a normal part of the operation of a small private pump station.

As an alternative, the project proposes to redirect the sewage from both Towne Centre Drive and Westerra Court to the proposed sewer main to be constructed along the existing storm drain maintenance access road located south of the project site. The proposed sewer main would connect below to the existing 36-inch force main at the bottom of the hill. The remainder of the existing Westerra Court sewer main would be abandoned. The existing storm drain maintenance access road is presently susceptible to major erosion during rains. Its improvement would provide an all weather access to the existing storm drain and the proposed sewer. Again, the hillside portion of the existing Westerra Court sewer main is virtually inaccessible for maintenance.

The construction of the access road would be consistent with the standards established by the City's Sewer Design Guide. It is proposed at 12 feet in width, and accessed at the bottom of the hill. A hammerhead turnaround is proposed at the upper end of the road. The road surface would be constructed of class II recycled base with a binder topped with decomposed granite (DG), and designed to blend with native soils and to limit erosion by controlling concentration of flows and maintaining sheet flow where possible. This construction is similar to the historic road in Los Peñasquitos Canyon east of Interstate 15. Although this is one of the oldest roads in San Diego, it is in good condition. Slopes created by the construction of the access road would be hydroseeded with native mix and planted with one gallon native evergreen shrubs at a rate of ten per 1,000 square-feet.

The Council Policies 400-13 and 400-14 took effect on January 22, 2002. The policies are not applicable in the case of this project because the sewer study was approved in 2001, before the effective date of the Policy, and because the odors that would be produced by pumped alternative would create a public nuisance. In addition, because the project pump station alternative would cost well over 1.3 times the gravity option, the Council Policy would allow this project the gravity option. The 1.3 times cost comparison is a threshold that may allow a project to choose a canyon sewer location over a pump station alternative.

Retaining Walls:

Exhibit Page L-3A (Page 25 of 30) has been added to show a typical elevation of the proposed retaining walls. The elevation shows plantings with approximately two years of growth (Attachment 2, "Landscape Plan and Elevation Enlargements"). A note on the

plans has been added to require that the color of the wall would closely match the existing soil in the immediate area. Attachment 3 (“Landscape Plan with Retaining Wall Heights”) shows the heights of specific points on the proposed retaining walls.

Pedestrian Circulation and Vehicular Trip Reduction features:

The tree-lined sidewalks along Towne Center Drive are alternating contiguous and non-contiguous that meander on both sides of the mile-long stretch between the project site and La Jolla Village Drive. (The exception is that there is no sidewalk on the south side of Towne Centre Drive, between the project and Westerra Court because of steep slopes.) Transit does not serve this stretch Towne Centre Drive. The nearest transit stops are located over one mile from the project site at La Jolla Village Drive. The nearest transit stop from a downtown bus to the project site is 1.4 miles away at Genessee Avenue and Eastgate Mall.

An internal pedestrian circulation plan is provided by Exhibit Page C-2, Page 3 of 30 (Attachment 4, “Disabled Accessibility & Transportation Circulation Plan”). The proposed 685 automobile parking spaces include 57 carpool and 21 accessible parking spaces. Ten motorcycle parking spaces, six bicycle spaces, six bike lockers, and shower facilities are required to be maintained on the property (Permit condition number 26, Attachment 8). Pursuant to Land Development Code Section 142.0530, the project is required to provide a kiosk or bulletin board that prominently displays information of transit use, carpooling, and other forms of ridesharing (Permit condition number 27, Attachment 8).

Also, employee sitting areas, including picnic tables, are highlighted in (Attachment 5, Exhibit Page number L1A, Page 22 of 30, “Employee Seating Area Plan”). Staff has discussed the possibility of the applicant accommodating delicatessen or small restaurant on site. The applicant will discuss this possibility with the property owner and address this issue during their presentation.

Parking Deck:

To address the Planning Commission’s concern regarding the “possible future parking deck” (as shown on Exhibit C-1, Page 2 of 30, Attachment 4 of the staff report), staff and the applicant propose a change in permit condition number 29 of the (Attachment 8, Page 5) so that an amendment of the Permit is required prior to its construction. The proposed change also addresses visual issues related to the construction of the parking deck. The proposed change is shown in strikeout-underline format below:

The “Future Parking Deck” shall be subject to an amendment of this Permit Process ~~2 Substantial Conformance Review~~. The Permit amendment ~~Substantial Conformance Review~~ shall include the review and approval of a traffic/access/parking study. The study shall address the impact of any increase in the project’s average daily trips (ADT) on the area’s transportation network. The amendment shall also address visual issues

related to the parking deck. The submittal shall include elevation plans of the parking deck, and proposals to address visual issues, such as specific landscape and architectural elements.

Lighting:

Exhibit Page L-3A (Page 25 of 30, Attachment 2) illustrates that the lighting proposed by this project is confined to the project site. Permit condition number 58 ensures that the lighting plan is reviewed and approved by staff prior to building occupancy, and it ensures that lighting shines only on the project site. It also provides night time testing of the lights, if necessary.

Storm Water:

The design of the project's drainage system will result in the reduction of the amount of discharge into the adjoining down slope areas. The project proposes BMPs (best management practices) such as the reduction of impervious surfaces, the conservation of natural areas, and the provision of appropriate landscaping to filter storm water. The post development BMPs will divert storm water into catch basin filter inserts fossil filter mediums prior to release of storm water off site. Attachment 6 is a copy of the drainage notes found on Exhibit Page C-3 (Sheet 4 of 30 "Grading and Drainage Plan" found in Attachment 4 of the staff report).

- Attachments:
1. Key Map for Proposed Sewer Abandonment
 2. Landscape Plan and Elevation Enlargements
 3. Landscape Plan with Retaining Wall Heights
 4. Disabled Accessibility & Transportation Circulation Plan
 5. Employee Seating Area Plan
 6. Drainage Notes from the Grading and Drainage Plan
 7. Draft Permit