

DATE ISSUED: September 10, 2004

REPORT NO. PC-04-131

ATTENTION: Planning Commission
Agenda of September 16, 2004

SUBJECT: Initiation of an Amendment to the Progress Guide and General
Plan and the University Community Plan. Project No. 42-2965.

APPLICANT: Country Club Dr. LLC.

SUMMARY

Issue – Should the Planning Commission INITIATE a land use plan amendment to the Progress Guide and General Plan and the University Community Plan pursuant to Municipal Code Section 122.0103? An amendment to the Progress Guide and General Plan and the University Community Plan has been requested to allow mixed use (residential/commercial) on a site identified for neighborhood commercial uses and a bank in the Development Intensity Element of the University Community Plan.

Staff's Recommendation – INITIATE the plan amendment process.

Community Planning Group Recommendation – On August 10, 2004, the University Community Planning Group heard a presentation on the proposed initiation and requested that the applicant return with additional information in September. The applicant will be making a second presentation on September 14, 2004. Staff will provide the results of that meeting as part of the initiation hearing

Other Recommendations – None.

Environmental Impact – If initiated, the proposed plan amendment and future discretionary actions would be subject to environmental review.

Housing Impact – If initiated, the community plan amendment proposal would include a request to add housing units in a location that is limited to commercial uses by the Development Intensity Element of the University Community Plan. The applicant is proposing a mixed use project with up to 110 dwelling units. The proposed project would be subject to the City’s Inclusionary housing requirements (10% of onsite units affordable or payment of in-lieu fee). Within the University Community planning area there are 427 affordable low income (51-80% AMI) housing units that are regulated by the San Diego Housing Commission.

This initiation request does not constitute an endorsement of the project proposal. A staff recommendation will be developed once the project has been fully analyzed. This action will allow the staff analysis to proceed.

BACKGROUND

The project site is located within the University Community planning area on 1.5 acres at the southeast corner of Villa La Jolla Drive and Holliday Court (Attachment 1). The site is within the portion of the Central Subarea that is located west of Interstate 5. The project site is adjacent to commercial/office uses to the north and east, Community Commercial and residential uses to the south, and residential and commercial/office uses to the west. The University of California San Diego and the Veterans Administration Hospital are located north of La Jolla Village Drive. The University Community Plan designates this site Community Commercial (Attachment 2). The site is zoned CV-1-1 which allows for a variety of commercial uses and mixed use (commercial/residential) development. The site was developed consistent with Planned Commercial Development permit No. 17 approved in September 1975. The existing development implements the Community Commercial land use designation and the CV-1-1 zone. The site is also subject to the requirements of the Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ) Type “A”, the Parking Impact Overlay Zone, and the Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone. CPIOZ is intended to implement the uses and intensities of the Development Intensity Element, the Parking Impact Overlay Zone is used to address the need for supplemental parking in neighborhoods affected by college campuses, and the Coastal Overlay Zone is designed to apply supplemental height limits for specific coastal areas as enacted by the voters of the City of San Diego.

The University Community Plan contains a Development Intensity Element which provides thresholds that identify the maximum allowable intensity for properties. The purpose of the element is to allow development within the projected traffic capacity, based on the adopted circulation element of the University Community Plan. Whether a project site was developed or approved for development at the time of the plan adoption affects the maximum intensity stated in the plan. For some sites the maximum intensity is expressed as the existing or approved development, for others the maximum is stated in square feet per acre. It should also be noted that the University Community Plan acknowledges that projects’ uses and/or intensities may be proposed that differ from those in the Land Development Intensity Element, and that such projects would require a community plan amendment.

The proposed community plan amendment would revise Table 3 of the Development Intensity Element to change the description of Subarea 76 and retain the existing Community Commercial land use designation. The change would allow mixed-use development at a site that is currently limited to neighborhood commercial uses (Attachment 3). Specifically, the applicant request that the description be changed from “16,570 SF Neighborhood Commercial and 3,500 SF Bank” to “6,500 SF Neighborhood Commercial and 110 DU”. If initiated, staff analysis will include a recommendations on the appropriate amount of commercial use and/or residential density.

Within the University planning area there are currently five community plan amendment requests being reviewed. All five are in the Central Subarea of the University Community, east of Interstate-5. In addition to community plan amendments, UCSD, which is located in the adjacent Torrey Pines Subarea, is updating its master plan. Attachment 4 identifies the locations of these projects.

- *Qualcomm Inc.* was initiated in February 2001 to increase the development intensity of the project site. The project is located at the northern terminus of Campus Pointe Drive.
- *Spieker Properties* (Equity Office), was initiated in May 2001 for the purpose of changing the land use designation from Scientific Research to Office Commercial. The site is located south of Executive Drive, north of La Jolla Village Drive and west of planned Judicial Drive.
- *Westfield Corporation* (UTC), was initiated in February 2002 for purposes of analyzing increases to the existing retail square-footage, and adding office, hotel, and multi-family residential uses. The site is generally located in the are bounded by La Jolla Village Drive, Genesee Avenue, Nobel Drive, and Towne Centre Drive.
- *Costa Verde Hotel, LLC* (Monte Verde), was initiated in January 2003 for the purpose of analyzing multi-family residential uses on the site currently designated for a 400-room hotel. It is located at the southwest intersection of La Jolla Village Drive and Genesee Avenue.
- *Regency Centers, L.P.* (Costa Verde Retail), was initiated in February 2004 for the purpose of analyzing in increase of up to 75,000 square feet of neighborhood and community commercial uses. The site is located at the northwest corner of Genesee Avenue and Nobel Drive.
- *UCSD* is updating its Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) to address increased academic and research activities, and space requirements and land uses associated with the growth of the UCSD through academic year 2020-21. The proposed growth and expansion identified in the LRDP does not exceed that already anticipated by the Land Use and Development Intensity Element of the University Community Plan.

On June 10 of this year the Planning Commission conducted a workshop focused on the Urban Node of the University Community Plan. A number of topics were discussed at the workshop and staff was directed to return with a second workshop to addresses specific issues raised by the

Commission. Those issues were generally related to the Central Subarea and the Urban Node in particular. However, some requests for information went beyond the Urban Node and related to community/regional information. Staff will be returning to the Commission with that workshop as soon as the information can be gathered and organized. The applicant has requested that staff proceed with this request to initiate a Community Plan Amendment. Staff believes that the Holiday Court initiation request may be considered by the Planning Commission prior to a second workshop on the Urban Node. The site is physically separated from the Urban Node by Interstate 5, the surrounding character is less intense than that of the Urban Node, and the proposal has the potential to significantly decrease the intensity currently allowed in the Development Intensity Element of the University Community Plan.

Should the Planning Commission initiate this request, a planned development permit will be required in addition to the Community Plan Amendment.

DISCUSSION

Section 122.0104 of the Municipal Code requires that any one of three primary criteria, or all four supplemental criteria, be met before a community plan amendment may be initiated. The Planning Department does not believe that any of the following three primary initial criteria can be met:

- (1) The amendment is appropriate due to a map or text error or omission made when the original land use plan was adopted or during subsequent amendments;**
- (2) Denial of initiation would jeopardize the public health, safety, or general welfare;**
- (3) The amendment is appropriate due to a material change in circumstances since the adoption of a land use plan, whereby denial of initiation would result in a hardship to the applicant by denying any reasonable use of the property.**

The Planning Department does believe that all four of the following supplemental criteria can be met:

- (1) The proposed land use plan amendment is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Progress Guide and General Plan and the University Community Plan.**

The Progress Guide and General Plan provides goals, guidelines, and standards intended to shape development of the City. The University Community Plan provides specific guidance on development at the community level. The proposed amendment to allow for mixed use at this location would further a number of these goals, standards, and guidelines. The addition of residential use at this location would provide support for existing and proposed transit. The site is served by several transit routes within a quarter mile radius. Currently in place is peak hour express services to and from downtown, local service, and transit transfers that provide connections to numerous employment,

shopping and recreational destinations throughout the region. The site is within a quarter mile of the City Shuttle, which provides free service, to faculty, staff and students traveling between the UCSD campus and the University community. Additionally, the site is within a quarter mile radius of the La Jolla Village Square Super Loop Station proposed as part of the Mid-Coast Action Plan. The introduction of mixed use with a commercial component would provide the opportunity to activate the streetscape by locating commercial uses outward toward the street rather than inward to parking as does the existing commercial center. A mixed use development, when properly designed, would also promote safety and security in providing increased levels and hours of public activity at this location.

The Action Plan for the Strategic Framework Element of the Progress Guide and General Plan identifies this location and the commercial developments to the south of the site as a potential Neighborhood Village Center. The Element addresses the opportunities available for improving older strip commercial centers such as the one at this location and encourages well designed infill mixed use development. The proposal, which would represent a two-thirds reduction in the amount of commercial area currently allowed on-site, would not significantly impact the existing community since the site is adjacent to the La Jolla Village Center which provides neighborhood and community needs. The introduction of dwelling units at this location could also provide housing for students, faculty, and staff of UCSD, further reducing the number of ADTs given the site's proximity to the University and existing and proposed transit. As required by the Action Plan any development within a Neighborhood Village Center is the Transit Oriented Development Guidelines. Furthermore, as an infill redevelopment, the proposed project would represent an efficient use of land that would provide additional housing opportunities without encroaching into undisturbed and/or sensitive lands.

(2) The proposed land use plan amendment appears to offer a public benefit to the community or City.

The proposed amendment to the University Community Plan appears to offer public benefits to the City. The proposal would redevelop a 1.5-acre commercial center that was developed in the 1970's with a 6,500 square feet of commercial and up to 110 dwelling units. Such a development could result in up to a two-thirds permanent reduction in trips generated by this site (no transfer of ADTs is proposed with this amendment). The location of the site within a quarter mile radius of existing and proposed transit would also support and encourage transit rider ship the potential for further trip reductions in the neighborhood. The amendment would also result in additional housing stock in an area that is in close proximity to transit, shopping, and a University. Furthermore, since the amendment would result in an infill redevelopment, the benefit of increased housing opportunities would be delivered without impacts to the natural environment.

(3) Public services are available or are planned to be available to serve the proposed change in density or intensity of use.

Public services appear to be available to serve the proposed mixed use designation as it is located within an already developed neighborhood. The project would be served by existing water, sewer, fire, and police services. The adequacy of the *facilities* such as streets and parks would be analyzed in greater detail if the initiation request is approved.

(4) City staff is available to process the proposed land use plan amendment without any work being deferred on General Fund supported programs or on-going land use plan updates.

Staff is available to process this amendment request without delaying general fund programs or ongoing plan updates, as the Planning Department's work program includes staff time for non-general fund development projects. However, delays in processing the plan amendment could occur based on staff levels and workload. The costs associated with processing this amendment will be paid for by the applicant.

As delineated above, the proposed plan amendment meets all four required supplemental initiation criteria; therefore, the Planning Department staff recommends initiation of Country Club Dr. LLC's proposal to amend the Progress Guide and General Plan and the University Community Plan.

The following land use issues have been identified with the initiation request. If initiated, these issues, as well as others that may be identified, will be analyzed and evaluated through the community plan amendment review process:

- Whether it is appropriate to reduce neighborhood serving commercial uses while increasing residential use.
- The appropriate residential density and commercial square footage in a mixed use development at this site.
- Provision of onsite affordable housing.
- Physical compatibility with adjacent residential and commercial uses.
- Linkages between the site and nearby retail, office, residential, and transit.
- Opportunities for useable open space on- and off-site.
- Traffic impacts associated with the addition of residential use.
- Improvements that may be necessary, and appropriate, to assist in implementation of identified transit plans.

- Implementation of the Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines.

ALTERNATIVE

The alternative to initiating the proposed amendment is to deny the initiation and maintain the existing commercial center. This would include the potential for ministerial redevelopment of the site with a new commercial center that utilizes up to the maximum number of square feet and ADT's identified in the University Community Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

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- Attachments:
1. University Land Use Map and Project Site
 2. Central Subarea
 3. Subarea 76 - development intensity
 4. Community Plan Amendments Map
 5. Ownership Disclosure Statement