

DATE ISSUED: December 9, 2004 REPORT NO. PC-04-191

ATTENTION: Planning Commission  
Agenda of December 16, 2004

SUBJECT: Midway Community Plan Amendment Workshop – Discussion of proposed land use amendments to the Progress Guide and General Plan and the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan.

REFERENCE: City Council hearing of April 12, 2004; Resolution No. R-299076 (Attachment 1)

APPLICANT/  
OWNER: The Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Diego

SUMMARY:

THIS IS A WORKSHOP REGARDING AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO PROGRESS GUIDE AND GENERAL PLAN AND THE MIDWAY/PACIFIC HIGHWAY CORRIDOR COMMUNITY PLAN ASSOCIATED WITH REMOVING THE BAY-TO-BAY CONCEPT AND MAKING OTHER CHANGES. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION AT THIS TIME.

BACKGROUND

On April 12, 2004, the Council of the City of San Diego, at the request of the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Diego, initiated an amendment of the City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan and the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan to remove the Bay-to-Bay concept and insert policies relating to open space and recreation, landscaping, architectural design, and mixed-use urban development that would promote mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development including parklands in the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor area. A consultant, CityWorks, was selected to engage the community in defining this general/community plan amendment. As part of the community engagement process, a Planning Commission workshop is being held to brief the Commission on the amendment process and to gain the Commission's input early in the process to guide decisions regarding community involvement, land use issues and final work product.

The Midway area consists of an urbanized commercial core containing numerous shipping centers and institutional facilities which cater to the commercial needs of nearby residential and visitor populations. A few multi-family residential complexes are located in the western portion of the community, adjacent to the Point Loma area. The Pacific Highway Corridor, located between Interstate 5 and the Lindbergh Field Airport, contains some of the City's oldest industrial area. The image of the corridor is sharply defined by large scale buildings and unscreened commercial parking lots in the southern portion, and smaller scale, low lying industrial buildings.

Several plans and planning efforts have been prepared and/or conducted in the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor area. These include the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan and Local Coastal Program (LCP), the North Bay Redevelopment Project, the Bay-to-Bay Concept, the Calthorpe Study, and the North Bay Conceptual Plan. These plans and efforts are described in the following paragraphs:

The Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan and LCP was adopted by the City of San Diego Council on May 28, 1991, and encompasses approximately 800 acres of relatively flat land which is situated north of the Centre City area between Old Town and Point Loma. The community is comprised of two basic elements: the central Midway area and the narrow, linear-shaped Pacific Highway Corridor (see Attachment 2). The Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan map (see Attachment 3), is a visual representation of the major land use designation as set forth in the plan. Commercial use is the dominant feature in terms of net acreage, followed in descending order of net acreage by industrial, residential, public and semi-public, and vacant lands.

A majority of the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor community was included in the 1998 North Bay Redevelopment Project Area (see Attachment 4). The Redevelopment Project was initiated, in part, as a result of the impending closure of the Naval Training Center resulting in a significant physical and economic impact on the community already exhibiting characteristics of physical deterioration and economic decline. The redevelopment plan contains general land uses and development controls, a full listing of redevelopment agency powers, a listing of public improvements to be provided, provisions for owner participation, and the proposed financing methods.

On January 19, 1999, the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Plan was amended by the City Council to insert the Bay-to-Bay Concept (see Attachment 5). The concept provided a basis by which a canal linking San Diego Bay to Mission Bay via the San Diego River could be developed, and was viewed as a critical step towards revitalizing the community. The 1999 amendment also inserted language that proposed an alternative to the Bay-to-Bay canal of providing a linear park or waterway without connections to the San Diego Bay or Mission Bay.

Several years later, a consultant-based feasibility study, commissioned and accepted by the City, concluded that a Bay-to-Bay link would be cost prohibitive and would involve engineering, environmental, real estate, and other issues that could be detrimental to the community. On January 14, 2004, the Midway/Pacific Highway Community Planning Group voted unanimously to recommend that the Bay-to-Bay Concept be removed from the community plan, and the minutes of the meeting are included as part of this report (see Attachment 6). On March 3, 2004, the North Bay Redevelopment Project Advisory Committee voted 13-1 to: 1) oppose the Bay-to-

Bay water link; and 2) support the development of alternative strategies to create multiple parks in the North Bay area, and the minutes of the meeting are included as part of this report (see Attachment 7).

In October 2003, the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Diego retained the consulting services of Calthorpe Associates to hold a series of community-based workshops with the general intent of developing a community preferred vision for the Midway community. The efforts of Calthorpe Associates, as a result of a series of community workshops coordinated with the Midway Community Planning Group, were expressed in a final report and conceptual sketch plan (see Attachment 8). In summary, the conceptual plan addressed the issues of improving circulation and the street grid, creating livable mixed-use neighborhoods, improving open space, preserving light industrial uses, and retaining the Special Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR). The intent of the conceptual site plan is not to show particular land uses within the site but to demonstrate a flexible pattern of uses that can change according to the needs of the community.

The North Bay Conceptual Plan: A Vision of the Midway/Sports Arena Community, was commissioned by the North Bay Association, and prepared by New City America, Incorporated. The conceptual plan document was developed as a guide to improve the physical appearance and image of the entire North Bay area as well as new development and the improvement of existing development. The plan contains recommendations for land use changes, streetscape design, landscaping, and architectural themes. In addition, the plan recommends that the Bay-to-Bay concept be eliminated and replaced with a system of park and open spaces.

#### Concurrent Community Plan Amendments

Two amendments of the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan are being processed at the present time (see Attachment 9), and if approved, would add 158 additional units of residential development.

Mission Brewery Mixed-Use Village – The requested amendment would change the land use designation of a 1.95-acre parcel from Commercial-Transportation Related, to Mixed-Use. The change would allow for construction of approximately 105 dwelling units, and 15 commercial storefronts. Thirty percent of the units are proposed to be affordable to households earning 80 percent to 120 percent of area median income.

1895 Hancock Street – The requested amendment would change the land use designation of a 1.26-acre site from Light-Industrial to Multiple-Use. The change would allow for construction of approximately 56 dwelling units, 21 of which would be live/work elements fronting Hancock Street. A percentage of the units are proposed to be affordable to households earning 80 percent to 120 percent of the area median income.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In order to memorialize the planning and design recommendations of the various planning efforts that have been conducted over the past several years, an amendment to the City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan and the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan is proposed. The amendment proposes to: 1) remove the Bay-to-Bay concept from the

Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan and LCP land use plan; 2) insert into the community plan an alternative strategy for open space and recreation, in which several parks linked by pedestrian routes would be developed throughout various strategic locations in the Midway Community; 3) insert policies and recommendations regarding architectural and landscaping guidelines into the community plan that are similar to those identified for implementation by the Midway Community Planning Advisory Committee in the North Bay Conceptual Plan; 4) identify portions of the community where mixed-use, urban, transit-oriented development should be encouraged; and 5) make other appropriate changes.

## DISCUSSION

### Remove the Bay-to-Bay Concept

The Bay-to-Bay link is delineated as a preferred Canal/Open Space alignment in the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Planning area, and the alignment traverses through several land use designations, including land designated as Neighborhood Commercial, Multiple-Use, Medium Residential, and Institutional Uses.

Removing the Bay-to-Bay Concept from the community plan would involve amending text and maps to delete specific references. The changes would include, but would not be limited to deleting the entire Bay-to-Bay Connection Element, changing the Canal/Open Space designation of the Existing Land Use map, removing the Conceptual Canal Alignment, Canal Segments, Alignment, Reach 1, 2 & 3, Canal Dimensions and Perspective, and various pedestrian walkway and commercial and residential building design concept illustrations. The proposed amendment would also replace the concept with alternative strategies for open space and recreation as described below.

### Alternative Strategy for Open Space and Recreation

The Calthorpe Study and the North Bay Conceptual Plan include many ideas for converting the Bay-to-Bay concept into a system of parks and public spaces linked by well designed and landscaped pedestrian pathways.

The North Bay Conceptual Plan envisions three kinds of open space, described as Commons, or pocket parks, full-service parks, and mixed-use open space (see Attachment 10). The commons would be small, compact, heavily landscaped areas next to heavily traveled streets. Landscaped streets and pedestrian corridors would link the common spaces to the rest of the area. The conceptual plan also suggests that substantial new residential development in the area should be accompanied by the creation of a full service park or parks. Further, the conceptual plan recommends that open space be created by incorporating commercial uses with the recreational uses. The envisioned mixed-use open space would take the form of open-air markets, promenades, plazas, and amphitheaters.

The Calthorpe Study identified the importance of working with existing open space such as the San Diego River, and also adopted a strategy of smaller, diverse spaces scattered throughout the site and strong links to the surrounding, larger open spaces. The Calthorpe Study proposes up to ten acres of open space consisting of four to six pocket parks to serve residents and visitors, and includes a bicycle and pedestrian link to the San Diego River.

Nearly all of the public parks and recreation facilities used by residents of the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor lie outside the boundaries of the planning area. Due to the abundance of nearby regional-serving recreational areas, the community's need for park space and recreation facilities is difficult to gauge by using standard measures. The population based standards contained in the City's Progress Guide and General Plan stipulate that a neighborhood park should be provided for a residential population of 3,500 to 5,000 persons within a half-mile radius. Community facilities should serve 18,000 to 25,000 residents within a one- and one-half mile radius. The present community population is 4,933 residents.

#### Policies and Recommendations regarding Architectural and Landscaping Guidelines

The North Bay Conceptual Plan identifies architectural design standards for three concept design styles or vocabularies to promote visual consistency within the community plan area at the scale of individual buildings. The three styles described in the plan are the Naval Training Center (NTC) Revival, the Warehouse/Loft, and the Neo-Modernist Style. NTC Revival takes its cues from the older, historic architecture of the former NTC site. The Warehouse/Loft theme references industrial uses and, although without specific precedence in the North Bay, was deemed appropriate for the new image being sought. Similarly, the Neo-Modernist style would allow for architectural expression that while without specific area precedence, was deemed to be consistent with contemporary development in other areas.

The North Bay Conceptual Plan also identifies landscape standards that provide for street trees and shrubs that further regulate and define the image of the area. The discussion identifies portals, streetscapes, nodes, project areas, and site embellishments that are intended to compliment the architectural standards, and to create an urban forest that will improve the image of the area as well as provide the benefits of heat reduction and improved air quality.

The conceptual plan identifies five distinct community portals or entryways (see Attachment 11) that would provide an opportunity to define the character and image of the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Planning area. The entryways would be located at Interstate 8, west Interstate 8 near Ingraham Street bridge, Pacific Highway at Barnett, Point Loma, and Old Town. Streetscapes would be developed along Camino Del Rio West and Rosecrans, Sports Arena Boulevard, Pacific Highway, Midway, Taylor Street, and West Point Loma.

The conceptual plan identifies two major nodes for grand design opportunities. The East Node would be located along Rosecrans Street, and the West Node would be located near the confluence of four separate streetscapes – Midway, Sports Arena Boulevard, West Point Loma, and Ingraham Street.

#### Encourage Mixed-use, Urban, Transit-oriented Development

Most of the Midway community falls within ten minutes walking distance easterly to the existing Old Town Transit Center, which includes the San Diego Trolley, Amtrak, Coaster, and transfers to more than 20 bus lines. Because of its direct access to transit, freeway access, and central location, the Midway community has the unique potential to become an important center for mixed-use, transit-oriented development. The Calthorpe Study concluded that new development should be characterized by pedestrian-scaled two or three story structures, with street-level retail and offices or residences above, and suggests that a mixed-use designation should be placed on a

large portion of the area. In addition, amenities should be included in all development that would make sidewalks and streets welcoming to all users.

### Other Appropriate Changes

The City's established policies will be referenced and incorporated while crafting the amendments to the City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan and the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan. These include policies from the Strategic Framework Element and policies about Transit Oriented Development.

The Strategic Framework Element contains new policy directions in the areas of urban form, neighborhood character, historic preservation, public facilities, conservation, mobility, housing affordability, economic prosperity, and equitable development. It is intended that over time, each community plan will be reviewed to incorporate the element's objectives and to remove conflicting language. The Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan will be evaluated in the context of the Strategic Framework Element and appropriate recommendations for change will be forthcoming in conjunction with the analyses accompanying the community plan amendment.

The goal of the Transit-Oriented Development Design Guidelines is to direct growth into compact neighborhood patterns of development, where living and working environments are within walkable distances. Transit or pedestrian-oriented development can take place in new development areas as well as in existing communities provided that community context, infrastructure and public facility needs are addressed. It is recommended that the City take a proactive approach to designating and planning for mixed-use and transit-supportive land uses, and incorporating the guidelines into community plans. The Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan will be evaluated in the context of the Transit-Oriented Development Design Guidelines and appropriate recommendations for change will accompany the analyses of the community plan amendment.

### Anticipated Issues to be addressed for amending the City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan and the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan

Along with reviewing the previous community concept plans and implementing the City's policies, this process anticipates that the following areas of issue will require analyses: Traffic, Land Use, Open Space, Parks, and Housing.

Traffic - The Community Plan includes specific recommendations regarding future roadway improvements and urban design that will achieve the overall policy of improving vehicular circulation and reduce traffic congestion, while promoting access, safety, and ease of circulation throughout the community for autos, public transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Removing the Bay-to-Bay link from the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan may not have a direct impact on the approved Circulation Element, and although an evaluation of traffic issues was not included in the scope of the community plan amendment, staff is cognizant of the relationship between land use and transportation systems. Impacts associated with any future land use change as required by deleting the Bay-to-Bay link will be evaluated as part of the environmental review process for the proposed amendment. Recommendations regarding the area's transportation facilities will be based on the results of future analyses.

Land Use - The Bay-to-Bay link is delineated as a preferred Canal/Open Space alignment in the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Planning area, and the alignment traverses several land use designations, including land designated as Neighborhood Commercial, Multiple-Use, Medium Residential, and Institutional Uses. Removing the Bay-to-Bay link may require changes to the land use designation in the area of the former Canal/Open Space alignment. Identifying areas for mixed-use, urban, transit-oriented development may also require changes to the land use designations of the community plan.

Open Space - The North Bay Conceptual Plan and the Calthorpe Study, while differing in the amounts and types of open space needed, both conclude that open space is a critical factor in establishing a desirable quality of life. The previous studies suggest that the Midway area, while close to regional open space resources such as the San Diego River, Mission Bay, and the San Diego Bay, would benefit from a strategy of creating smaller, diverse spaces scattered throughout the site with strong links to the surrounding, larger open spaces. In both instances, a smaller comprehensive open space plan was selected in contrast to the larger Bay-to-Bay concept which has been rejected.

Park - The Community Plan Amendment Initiation directed staff to consider alternative strategies for creating open space and parks to replace the Bay-to-Bay link. The North Bay Conceptual Plan and the Calthorpe Study both conclude that providing additional park and open space areas will benefit the neighborhood and provide recreational opportunities that will make the area a better place to live, work and visit. Of equal importance is the perceived need of bringing parks and recreational opportunities closer to employment centers, and the absence of employment-based standards in the Recreational Element of the Progress Guide and General Plan.

Housing - Removing the Bay-to-Bay link from the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan may provide an opportunity to review the availability of housing stock in the area, and offer solutions for increasing the number and type of housing options. If increased housing opportunities are recommended in conjunction with the amendment, then any additional residential construction in the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor planning area could be limited due to Lindbergh Field flight operation noise levels which are higher than 65 decibels. Areas with noise levels below 65 decibels include a portion of the Sports Arena site, the Kurtz Street light industrial between Camino del Rio West and Rosecrans Street, and a small area adjacent to the Pacific Highway which is currently occupied by the County Health Services Complex. While residential use on the Sports Arena site or in the Kurtz Street area is not compatible with existing zoning, it is possible that new residential opportunities may be created in the future through redevelopment plans.

#### Community Involvement and Participation in the Amendment Process

The amendment process will include direct outreach to various stakeholder groups in the community, including business, residential, institutional, entertainment, jurisdictional, and the media. It is the intent to seek a diverse and broad range of points of view, thus the process will include a series of three community-based workshops, beginning in January 2005. The first

workshop will include a review of past documents, the direction provided by the City Council, and a walking tour of the project area. The second workshop will provide an opportunity for smaller group discussions in order to form recommendations for various aspects of the amendment. The final workshop will be an opportunity for the participants to validate their work as reported by staff and the consultant. All three workshops will be conducted in a coordinated effort with City Staff and the consultant (CityWorks) contracted by the Redevelopment Agency to assist in the processing of this Community Plan Amendment. The workshops, conducted under the auspices of the Midway Community Planning Group, are an effort to reach the greatest number of stakeholders and to arrive at a community consensus. Their recommendations will be forwarded to the Planning Commission at a time when the Community Plan Amendments are ready for consideration and hearing.

### CONCLUSION

Planning Commission input is requested on the issues identified above and other issues related to amending the City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan and the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan. This input will be utilized when review of the Progress Guide and General Plan/Community Plan Amendment proceeds. Following this workshop, the consultant for the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan will coordinate with City staff to begin the Community Plan Amendment process; including formal submittal of the Community Plan Amendment to the City, identification of strategies for achieving effective public outreach (including multiple community-based workshops), preparation of environmental analysis, per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and further coordination with the various stakeholders in the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor community.

Once community consensus is established relative to the design and land use components proposed for the Community Plan Amendments, the necessary CEQA analysis has been completed, recommended changes to the community plan text have been identified, and a formal recommendation from the Midway Community Planning Group has been provided relative to the proposed Community Plan Amendments; the project will return to the Planning Commission for a public hearing to consider a formal recommendation(s) to the City Council.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments:

1. City Council Resolution R-299076
2. Project Location Map
3. Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Land Use Map
4. North Bay Redevelopment Project Area
5. Bay-to-Bay Concept Plan
6. Midway Planning Group Minutes, January 14, 2004
7. North Bay Redevelopment PAC Minutes, March 3, 2004
8. Calthorpe Conceptual Sketch Plan
9. Concurrent Community Plan Amendments Location Map
10. North Bay Redevelopment Concept Plan
11. North Bay Redevelopment Concept Plan: Entryways and Portals
12. Ownership Disclosure Information