

DATE ISSUED: October 13, 2005 **REPORT NO. PC-05-300**

ATTENTION: **Planning Commission, Agenda of October 20, 2005**

SUBJECT: SEWER GROUP 665 – PROJECT NO. 25783. PROCESS FOUR

**OWNER/
APPLICANT:** THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO ENGINEERING AND CAPITAL
PROJECTS DEPARTMENT/WASTEWATER FACILITIES DIVISION

SUMMARY

Issue(s): Should the Planning Commission approve an application for a Site Development Permit to allow for the rehabilitation and replacement of six-inch and eight-inch sewer mains, portions of which are within Environmentally Sensitive Lands, at various locations within the Uptown and Old Town Community Plan areas?

Staff Recommendation:

1. **CERTIFY** Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 25783, and **ADOPT** the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program; and
2. **APPROVE** Site Development Permit No. 69897.

Community Planning Group Recommendation:

1. On April 6, 2004, the Uptown Planners voted 14-0-1 passing a motion recommending approval of the proposed project with the provision that the city continue to communicate and work with various community groups regarding the environmental issues (Attachment 8).
2. On April 14, 2004, the Old Town Community Planning Committee voted 10-0-0 passing a motion recommending approval of the proposed project including a request that the project implementation be sensitive to the needs of the residents (Attachment 8).

Environmental Review: The City of San Diego conducted an Environmental Initial Study which determined that the proposed project could have a significant environmental effect on Land Use, Biological Resources, Historical Resources (Archaeology), and Paleontological Resources. Subsequent revisions in the project proposal create the specific mitigation identified in Section V of Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 25783. The project as revised would avoid or mitigate the potentially significant environmental effects previously identified, and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report would not be required.

Fiscal Impact Statement: None. All costs associated with processing this project are recovered from the project's individual Capital Improvement Project account fund.

Code Enforcement Impact: None.

Housing Impact Statement: The project is an Engineering and Capital Improvement project and all work associated with the repair and rehabilitation of existing sewer mains is located within public rights-of-way or land designated as open space within the Uptown and Old Town Community Plans. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on existing or proposed housing developments within the area.

BACKGROUND

The project site for Sewer Group Job 665 is located in various segments of improved right-of-way sections and canyon areas within the Uptown Community and Old Town San Diego Community Plan areas. Specific street locations include portions of Harney Street, Hortensia Street, Arista Court, Presidio Drive and an alley located between Hortensia Street and Trias Street. Canyon areas include Trias Canyon, Heritage Canyon and Presidio Canyon which are designated as Open Space in the Community Plan and include portions of the City's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) area .

The existing sewer lines were installed in the 1920's presumably as a part of the original subdivisions in the communities. While the sewer lines have received periodic maintenance over the years, the Sewer Group 665 project represents the first system wide rehabilitation and replacement effort on the original lines.

DISCUSSION

Project Description:

The project proposes the replacement or rehabilitation of existing six-inch and eight-inch sewer main lines within areas of existing public rights-of-way and portions of open space canyons in

the Uptown and Old Town communities. The project requires a Site Development Permit due to unavoidable deviations from the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Regulations. Replacement of 920 linear feet of sewer mains would occur within street and developed areas of Old Town and Heritage Park and would be completed by open trenching. Rehabilitation of 8,546 linear feet of sewer mains would occur in Trias Canyon, Presidio Park/ Palm Canyon (Palm Canyon), and Heritage Canyon with trenchless technology commonly referred to as slip-lining. The slip-lining process includes the insertion of a synthetic lining into existing sewer mains through existing manholes. Other related work would entail the connection of laterals to rehabilitated mains, manhole rehabilitation and several point (spot) repairs in canyon areas. Necessary point repairs would be accessed either through existing channel bottoms with no vegetation or temporary foot paths.

Community Plan Analysis:

The Land Use Elements of the Uptown and Old Town Community Plans designate the area as Open Space. The Plan encourages the systemic improvement of water and sewer lines throughout the community. The subject sewer improvements are proposed in three significant and sensitive canyon systems as identified in the Open Space Elements of the Plans.

According to the Plans, the area falls within the Biological/Geological Zone (Zone 1) which is the highest priority preservation zone. It includes any slope of 25 percent gradient or greater, and the canyon bottoms. Recommendations embodied in the Plan also recommend that no grading or vegetation removal should be permitted within the undeveloped portion of this zone, unless required due to the necessity to stabilize areas within the project site. Any graded areas in this Biological/Geological Zone area should be re-vegetated with a native vegetation mix to minimize erosion and soil instability.

As part of the sewer replacement efforts, mitigation measures would include construction monitoring, native plant species re-vegetation as well as project maintenance and monitoring for a three to five year period. Therefore, the proposed improvements would not adversely affect the policies embodied in the Uptown Community Plan or the Old Town Community Plan.

Environmental Analysis:

An Environmental Initial Study (EIS) concluded that the proposed sewer rehabilitation work within the canyons could potentially impact Biological, Historical (Archeological) and Paleontological resources. Additionally, the EIS concluded that while individual impacts to specific resources would be individually limited, the impacts may be cumulatively considerable when taken as a whole.

Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 25783 includes a Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) that establishes mitigation for potential impacts that may result from the project. Specific measures include plan check requirements, qualification standards, pre-construction meetings, on site monitoring, notification procedures, post-construction reporting

and required conditions of approval. The Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program is tailored to outline and implement an inclusive planning process throughout the permitting and construction activities associated with the project. The project as now designed and the inclusion of the MMRP would avoid or mitigate the potentially significant environmental impacts previously identified, therefore the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report would not be required.

Project-Related Issues:

Based on the location of the existing sewer system within open space canyons and the City's MSCP area, certain unavoidable impacts to environmentally sensitive resources are associated with the project. Impacts to environmentally sensitive resources would be due to the need for creating access to specific areas of the project as well as the performance of point repairs on portions of the pipe. The point repairs would be necessary to clear obstructions from the lines prior to installing the synthetic linings within the existing sewer mains. The proposed access to perform the point repairs and install the lining would utilize existing channel bottoms with no vegetation when available or through temporary footpaths. All of the work within environmentally sensitive lands including the point repairs and the temporary access paths would be accomplished manually using only hand tools. Areas disturbed as part of the repair process would be revegetated and additional mitigation would be achieved off-site through a monetary contribution to the City's Habitat Acquisition Fund.

City Council Policy 400 -13 and 400-14

The planning and design of Sewer Group Job 665 was completed prior to the adoption of City Council Policy 400-13 which addresses the implementation of restoration procedures when impacts result from the abandonment and redirection of flow when removing sewer lines out of the canyon systems, and City Council Policy 400-14 which establishes a feasibility and planning framework for the redirection of sewage away from canyons and environmentally sensitive lands and considers the quantitative and qualitative costs and benefits of the alternatives.

Regardless the project is consistent with 400-13 in that all work would be performed in a manner that minimizes impacts to environmentally sensitive resources and all areas disturbed through grading activity would be immediately returned to preexisting conditions. Similarly, the project is considered to be consistent with 400-14 in that redirecting the large volume of sewage carried by the existing sewer alignments within the canyons would require a system wide reconfiguration. A formal cost estimate was not prepared for this project however it is readily assumed that the cost of a system wide redirection within the canyons would far exceed the 35 percent inflation figure provided for in 400-14.

Critical Project Features to Consider During Substantial Conformance Review

Draft Findings supporting the Site Development Permit are based on the relatively minor impacts associated to the environmental resources and the mitigation requirements within the MMRP.

Any modification to the proposed project should not result in an increase to the impacts to environmentally sensitive resources nor propose any decrease in the proposed mitigation measures established for the project in Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 25783.

Conclusion:

The existing sewer mains within the project site are approximately 85 years old, and while periodic maintenance has been performed over that time, the proposed rehabilitation and replacement project is imperative to the continued use of the system and Sewer Group Job 665 is considered a high priority project with the Engineering and Capital Projects Department. Critical project issues involved the potential impacts associated with the access and repair activities within canyons containing environmentally sensitive resources. These potential impacts would be avoided or reduced below a level of significance with the adoption and implementation of the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program. The proposed repair and rehabilitation of the existing sewer lines would directly benefit the businesses and residences in the Uptown and Old Town communities with sewer system upgrades and San Diegans in general by proactively updating and improving the City's aging infrastructure. Therefore, the Development Services Department recommends that the Planning Commission approve the project.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve Site Development Permit No. 69897, with modifications; or
2. Deny Site Development Permit No. 69897, if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,

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STROHMINGER/JPH

Attachments:

1. Project Location Map
2. Aerial Photograph

3. Community Plan Land Use Maps
4. Project Data Sheet
5. Project Site Plans
6. Draft Permit with Conditions
7. Draft Resolution with Findings
8. Community Planning Group Recommendations
9. Ownership Disclosure Statement
10. Project Chronology