

DATE ISSUED: December 1, 2005 REPORT NO. PC-05-336

ATTENTION: Planning Commission
Agenda of December 8, 2005

SUBJECT: Initiation of an amendment to the Progress Guide and General Plan and the Barrio Logan/Harbor 101 Community Plan and Local Coastal Program to redesignate approximately 2 acres from Light Industry/Commercial to High Density Residential (45-74 du/ac) in the Barrio Logan community planning area.
PTS 72409

OWNER/
APPLICANT: 939 Associates, Inc.

SUMMARY

Issues – Should the Planning Commission INITIATE a land use plan amendment to the Progress Guide and General Plan and the Barrio Logan/Harbor 101 Community Plan pursuant to Municipal Code Section 122.0103? The amendment has been requested to redesignate approximately 2 acres from Light Industry/Commercial to High Density Residential (45-74 du/ac).

Staff's Recommendation – DENY the initiation request.

Community Planning Group Recommendation – There is no recognized community planning group for the Barrio Logan community planning area.

Other Recommendations - The subject area includes three sites located within the Barrio Logan Redevelopment Project area. On October 19, 2005, the Barrio Logan Project Area Committee (PAC) recommended approval of a redevelopment plan amendment to change the land use designation for the projects' sites.

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

Fiscal Impact – None. Costs associated with processing this application are reimbursed by the applicant.

Housing Affordability Impact – The project sites are designated Light Industry/Commercial, and as such, a strictly residential development could not be developed. However, the sites do allow for live/work lofts where a portion of any unit developed would have to be available as work space. The proposed amendment to High Density Residential would allow for development of approximately 148 units on the three sites that total approximately 2 acres.

BACKGROUND

The proposed amendment area is located in the Barrio Logan/Harbor 101 Community (see Attachment 1). Barrio Logan is an older residential-industrial community bounded by the San Diego Bay on the west, the Center City Redevelopment Area to the north, Interstate 5 to the east and National City to the south.

The proposed initiation request includes three sites totaling approximately two acres (see Attachment 2). The subject area includes a 24,000 square foot site at 1668 National Avenue, a 20,000 square foot site at 1629-51 National Avenue and a 44,000 square foot site at 1668 Newton Avenue. The sites are currently vacant, and are developed with an auto dismantling business and heavy industry. Existing uses surrounding the sites include office, single and multi-family dwelling units, a convenience store, auto salvaging, dry cleaning, and a meat distribution center.

The Barrio Logan/Harbor 101 Community Plan currently designates land uses on the subject sites as being within the Redevelopment Project Area (see Attachment 3). The uses are further defined as Light Industry/Commercial (see Attachment 4). The sites are zoned Light Industry/Commercial within the Redevelopment Subdistrict per the Barrio Logan Planned District Ordinance. The purpose of the Light Industry/Commercial designation is to serve as transitional land use areas between residential and larger industrial uses. The plan recommends that industrial offices, commercial, and small warehousing be located in this buffer area. The Plan further recommends the preservation of the area's existing employment base and promotion of the development of local job opportunities.

An amendment to the Barrio Logan/Harbor 101 Community Plan is proposed to change the land use designation on the subject sites to a new High Density Residential designation with a density range of 45 to 74 dwelling units per acre. If approved, this designation would allow up to 148 dwelling units on the three sites. The applicant is proposing the amendment to accommodate a three phased project totaling approximately 177 units. The total exceeds the maximum that would be permitted by the proposed land use designation because the applicant intends to pursue an affordable housing density bonus. If initiated, it is anticipated that the general/community/redevelopment plan amendment would be processed with any required development permits, including a rezone.

The original 1978 Barrio Logan /Harbor 101 Community Plan designated large areas of the community, including the subject sites, for Residential/Commercial/Industrial land use. The intent of this permissive designation was to promote a diversified community with a mixture of uses. However, conflicts occurred as industrial uses were unable to assemble land in sufficiently large sizes for their operations and instead scattered piecemeal throughout the community thereby creating conflicts and health hazards.

The Barrio Logan Redevelopment Plan was adopted in 1992 for a portion of the community, including the subject area. The Barrio Logan/Harbor 101 Community Plan was amended in conjunction with the adoption of the Redevelopment Plan to provide for a greater separation of land uses. The subject sites are located in an area that was redesignated to Light Industry/Commercial to provide a transitional area between exclusively industrial areas to the north and west and residential uses to the east. The plan recommends that industrial offices, commercial and small warehousing be located in this transitional area.

DISCUSSION

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

- (1) **The amendment is appropriate due to a mapping or textural error or, omission made when the original land use plan or local coastal program 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 or local coastal program whereby denial of initiation would result in a hardship to the applicant by denying any reasonable use of the subject real property.**

Furthermore, the Planning Department does not believe that all 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 Barrio Logan Community Plan.**

The Industrial Element of the Progress Guide and General Plan recommends undertaking special redevelopment programs in older industrial areas in order to upgrade their utility and function as industrial

districts. The Commercial Element recommends the rehabilitation of older commercial areas by allowing industrial-serving commercial within industrial designations. Implementation of these recommendations would help to achieve the goals that insure that the industrial and commercial land necessary for a balanced economy and land use are met consistent with environmental considerations.

The Barrio Logan/Harbor 101 Community Plan designated the area for Light Industry/Commercial to implement the community plan's recommendation to act as a buffer zone to serve as transitional land use areas between residential and the larger industrial uses to the west and north. The plan recommends that industrial offices, commercial, and small warehousing be located in this buffer area.

The initiation proposal would remove approximately 2 acres from the existing Barrio Logan community plan's Light Industry/Commercial designation. The Planning Department is currently in the process of updating the Progress Guide and General Plan for the City of San Diego. At a recent Council Committee workshop, the Land Use and Housing Committee requested that no net loss of Industrial lands occur through the update process. The proposed redesignation from Light Industry/Commercial to High Density Residential would be in conflict with the committee's direction and the Planning Department's update of the Progress Guide and General Plan for the City of San Diego.

The California Air Resources Board recently introduced recommendations for siting sensitive land uses in proximity to freeways, rail yards, ports, distribution centers, chrome platers, and dry cleaners. The proposed sites for redesignation may be within the recommended buffer zone to one or more of the above uses, and would further promote development of incompatible adjacent uses.

The proposal to introduce a new high-density range on three specific sites would constitute an isolated land use designation change rather than a comprehensive approach to introduce higher density into the Barrio Logan community planning area. The isolated land use designation would also introduce a density range that is higher than what is currently allowed in the Redevelopment Area, and well beyond the range of the community planning area outside of the Redevelopment Area. Rather than introduce an isolated designation, it may make more sense to take a comprehensive approach to any redesignation through a community plan update to analyze adjacency issues, appropriate land uses, appropriate residential density ranges, and potential health risks to community members. However, the Planning Department work program does not have the capacity to embark on any new updates at this time. Because of the previously described issues associated with an isolated designation, the

potential loss of industrial lands, and the potential health risks associated with locating residential uses in proximity to freeways and industry, the proposed land use plan amendment is not considered to be consistent with goals of the Progress Guide and General Plan and the Barrio Logan/Harbor 101 Community Plan.

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

The potential benefit of the proposed land use amendment to the Barrio Logan/Harbor 101 Community Plan is that it would allow for the addition of residential development in an area where residential development has previously been precluded. Infill development such as this would provide housing of an affordable nature within the San Diego region at a time when the City of San Diego is searching for areas that can accommodate additional residential units. However, because of the previously described issues associated with an isolated designation, the potential loss of industrial lands, and the potential health risks associated with locating residential uses in proximity to freeways and industry, the proposed land use plan amendment's potential benefit is outweighed by potential detrimental impacts.

(3) Public services appear to be available to serve the proposed increase in density or intensity of use.

Barrio Logan is an urbanized community and all needed public services are available in the community. If the plan amendment is initiated, analysis of public services and facilities will be conducted with the review of the plan amendment.

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

Because of the preceding described issues associated with an isolated designation, the potential loss of industrial lands, and the potential health risks associated with locating residential uses in proximity to freeways and industry, all of the supplemental criteria required for the initiation process have not been met. At this time, the Planning Department cannot support the applicant's general/community plan amendment initiation

application. If the Planning Commission should support the initiation, the following land use issues, as well as others that may be identified, would be analyzed and evaluated through the general/community plan amendment review process:

- The appropriate land use designation, density range, and zoning
- The compatibility of adjacent residential/industrial/commercial development;
- The potential loss of industrial/commercial lands;
- The impact of potential residential development on public services and facilities;
- The availability of transit;
- The potential noise and health impacts related to the proximity of residential development to industrial/commercial uses, port activity, and the I-5 freeway;
- Housing availability and affordability;
- Walkability and pedestrian connectivity.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Aerial Photo of Subject Area
3. Barrio Logan Community Plan Land Use Map (page 16)
4. Subject Area on Barrio Logan Land Use Map
5. Ownership Disclosure Statement