

5. Recommend that the City Council **Approve** Rezone Action No. 261645; and
6. Recommend that the City Council **Approve** General/Community Plan Amendment No. 261643.

Community Planning Group Recommendation: On February 8, 2006, the College Area Community Council voted 8-3-4 to approve the project with denial of the requested parking deviations. Please see the report's Discussion Section and Attachments 24, 25, and 26 for further information.

Environmental Review: An Addendum to Negative Declaration No. 33812 has been prepared for the project in accordance with state of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines.

Fiscal Impact Statement: All costs associated with the processing of this project are paid from a deposit account maintained by the applicant.

Code Enforcement Impact: None with this action.

Housing Impact Statement: The General and Community Plan Amendment associated with the project, proposes to redesignate approximately 1.96-acres from Low Residential (1 to 10 dwelling units per acre) to Low-Medium Residential (10 to 15 dwelling units per acre). The project would include 33 market-rate, for-sale units and would result in the loss of one existing single-family unit for a net gain of 32 dwelling units.

According to the College Area Community Plan, the existing land use would allow 1 to 19 dwelling units on the 1.96-acre site. The proposed land use change would allow 19 to 29 dwelling units on site. Although the total number of units proposed for this project exceeds the density range for the 1.96-acre site, the project would be processed as an amendment to the previously approved, 2.12-acre initial development phase of the Mesa Commons project. The combination of the two development phases would allow a greater density range over a larger project area that would accommodate the 85 total units proposed with both phases of the Mesa Commons project. No affordable housing units are proposed with this project; therefore, the applicant would be meeting the requirements of the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance by paying an in-lieu fee.

Park Impact Statement: The City Progress Guide and General Plan guidelines recommend a minimum 10.0-acre neighborhood park for every 3,500-5,000 residents located within ½ mile service radius and a minimum 20-acre community park and a 17,000 square foot recreation center for every 18,000-25,000 residents located within 1½-mile service radius. This results in a range of 2.8 to 3.9 acres per 1,000 residents. For every 50,000 residents, a community swimming pool complex is recommended within 1½ - 2 miles service radius.

Based on the 2000 U.S. Census, SANDAG population projections indicate that the College Community Planning Area should have 47.06 usable acres of population-based parkland and associated facilities. Currently, the College Community has 2.85 usable acres of neighborhood parks, resulting in a 30.76 usable acre deficiency, and 0 usable acres of community parks, resulting in a 13.44 usable acre deficiency. By the year 2030, the deficit is projected to increase to 47.19 usable acres for neighborhood parks and 21.80 usable acres for community parks. Additionally, the community has 0 recreation centers, which represents a deficiency in the City-recommended standard square footage and minimum number of facilities per 25,000 residents. The community has 0 swimming pools, which represents a 100% deficiency in the City-recommended minimum standard.

The proposed project will generate approximately 78 residents which would require an additional 0.22 acres of population-based park land, 0.3% of a community recreation center and 0.2% of a community swimming pool complex. The College Public Facilities Financing Plan (PFFP) is in the process of being updated and will include the proposed park acreage and recreation facilities needed to serve the new residents. The PFFP update should process concurrently with the proposed project's discretionary action.

The PFFP update will identify park and recreational facilities to serve the new residents of the proposed project, therefore, no population-based park impacts will be created assuming the DIF fees paid at time of building permit issuance reflect the PFFP update.

BACKGROUND

The project site is located at 4883, 4905, & 4915 Catoctin Drive and 6456 El Cajon Boulevard within the College Area Community Planning area (Attachment 2). The 408 -acre site has street frontages on both El Cajon Boulevard and Catoctin Drive, northeast of Art Street. The Mesa Commons II project (1.96-acres) is an amendment to the Mesa Commons I site (212 -acres and 52 dwelling units) which was approved by the City Council on March 1, 2005. The amendment proposes to add the 1.96-acre Mesa Commons II site (for a total of 408 -acres) and 33 dwelling units (for a total of 85 dwelling units) to the previously approved Mesa Commons I site.

The 1.96-acre Mesa Commons II site is designated Residential, 1-10 dwelling units per acre in the College Area Community Plan, and is zoned RS-1-7. Other than an existing single-family home, which fronts on Catoctin Street, the property is currently vacant. The neighborhood surrounding the Mesa Commons II site includes a variety of land uses including a private school site to the north, single and approved multi-family residential development to the west and south, and a park to the east.

On February 3, 2005, the Planning Commission initiated an amendment to the College Area Community Plan and the Progress Guide and General Plan to redesignate the Mesa Commons II site from Low Residential to Low-Medium Residential density. In addition to analyzing the project within the context of the College Area Community Plan, the Planning Commission directed City staff to address a number of issues which are discussed in greater detail in the General/Community Plan Amendment Analysis (Attachment 23).

The developments to the north and east are zoned RS-1-7, to the south, RM-1-2 and CU-2-3, and to the west, RS-1-7. The applicant is requesting a rezone to RM -1-2, a Residential-Multiple Unit zone. A College Area Community Plan and a Progress Guide and General Plan amendment are also required to allow multi-family use at this site.

DISCUSSION

Project Description:

The proposed Mesa Commons II project would include the demolition of an existing single-family home and construction of 33 for-sale residential dwelling units. The development would meet the City of San Diego Inclusionary Housing Ordinance by paying the required in-lieu fee.

The 33 units would consist of twenty-six (26) attached rowhome style units in seven buildings with four, three-unit buildings, one, four-unit building, and two, five-unit buildings totaling 53,300 square-feet (including garages); and seven (7) detached single-family home style units totaling 14,618 square-feet (including garages). The project would also include a roof-mounted photovoltaic system consisting of solar panels; fire-sprinklered buildings; 20,100 square-feet of on-grade open space with picnic tables; 3,226 square-feet of open space on 2nd floor balconies; two, four-foot wide pedestrian walkways connecting the Mesa Commons development to the adjacent Montezuma Park; and the addition of landscape screening materials buffering the development from the adjacent park.

The attached rowhome style units would consist of 14 three-bedroom, three-bath, end units at 1,733 square feet and 12 four-bedroom, three and one-half bath, interior units at 1,664 square-feet. The detached single-family style units would consist of three, two-story, three-bedroom two and one-half bath homes at 1,604 square-feet and four, two-story, three-bedroom, two and one-half bath units at 1,702 square-feet. All of the attached and detached units would include two-car garages.

The proposed project consisting of 7 single-family style units and 26 multi-family (rowhome style) units is estimated to generate 271 average daily trips with 22 morning peak-hour trips and 27 afternoon peak-hour trips. A traffic study was not required.

Approval Descriptions:

The project as proposed would require a College Area Community Plan and City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan Amendment to redesignate the land use from Residential, 1 to 10 dwelling units per acre, to Low-Medium Density Residential, 10 to 15 dwelling units per acre (Process 5); a Rezone to rezone the 1.96-acre Mesa Commons II site from the existing RS-1-7 to RM-1-2 (Process 5); a Planned Development Permit (PDP) for sustainable development which deviates from the regulations of the underlying zone and to amend the existing PDP to add additional units and modify the site and parking plan (Process Four); a Site Development Permit (SDP) for a multi-unit development that exceeds 4 dwelling units on lots which are consolidated or otherwise joined together for the purpose of accommodating the development and to amend

the existing SDP (Process 3); and a Vesting Tentative Map for condominium purposes for the 1.96-acre Mesa Commons II site (Process Four).

The request for the Rezone and amendments to the Progress Guide and General Plan and College Area Community Plan requires the Planned Development Permit, Site Development Permit and Vesting Tentative Map to be decided in accordance with Process 5 (City Council as the Decision Maker). Since the Municipal Code requires that approvals be consolidated, the project must be considered by the Planning Commission prior to a final decision by the City Council. All discretionary actions have been processed concurrently, with a Recommendation hearing scheduled at the Planning Commission before a final decision is rendered by the City Council, in accordance with Process Five.

Community Plan Consistency Analysis: The proposed project site is located in the College Area community. The College Area Community Plan designates the site for Low Residential (1 to 10 dwelling units per acre) emphasizing development that is single family in character. A General and Community Plan Amendment is proposed to redesignate the site to Low-Medium Residential (10 to 15 dwelling units per acre) in order to accommodate a 33-unit development consisting of single-family detached and rowhome housing units.

The overall residential goal of the College Area Community Plan is to maintain the predominately single-family character of the community. The Urban Design Element of the community plan further supplements this goal by recommending that new development of vacant lots or redevelopment should be compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding development. The proposed project would implement this recommendation by proposing 26 rowhome units within the rear of the project, while locating seven single-family, detached units along Catoctin Drive. These seven units would maintain the single-family character of the neighborhood and provide a transition to the slightly higher density row homes.

Due to a lack of park and recreational facilities in the community the Housing Element of the community plan recommends that new multi-family residential projects provide a variety of on-site recreational facilities. In addition to being located next to the 1.56-acre Montezuma Neighborhood Park, the proposed project would provide private rear yards for both the single-family detached and row home units, as well as direct pedestrian access to the adjacent neighborhood park. Additionally, a common open space area containing benches and a table would also be provided for passive recreational opportunities.

On February 3, 2005, the Planning Commission initiated a General and Community Plan Amendment and authorized staff to undertake an analysis of land use issues and project impacts associated with the proposed plan amendment. A comprehensive analysis of these issues is provided as Attachment 23. The analysis includes an evaluation of such issues as the project's compatibility with the goals and objectives of the Progress Guide and General Plan's Strategic Framework Element and the Transit-Oriented Development Design Guidelines; a comparison of current land use and zoning designations with the proposed land use and zoning; and the feasibility of creating pedestrian linkages from new development to the adjacent neighborhood park. The analysis also addresses impacts related to the community circulation system; housing

availability and affordability; pedestrian amenities, streetscape improvements, and impacts to public facilities.

Environmental Analysis:

On February 2, 2006, staff completed an environmental Initial Study for the Mesa Commons II project. Based upon the Initial Study, staff found that there is no substantial evidence that the project would have a significant effect on the environment, and therefore determined that an Addendum to Negative Declaration No. 33812 (Mesa Commons I) was the appropriate environmental document for the project. Addendum to Negative Declaration No. 33812 has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. Please see the attached draft Environmental Resolution (Attachment 27).

Project-Related Issues:

College Area Community Council (CACC) Action: On February 8, 2006, the College Area Community Council voted 8-3-4 to approve the project with denial of the requested parking deviations. As stated by the CACC in the minutes of their February 8, 2006 meeting (Attachment 24, page 4), “the CACC strongly recommends against parking deviations anywhere within the community plan area, and especially on Catoctin Street, where on-street parking is already deficient due to traffic associated with drop-off and pick-up for the students of the Language Academy. All units on Catoctin Street should meet parking requirements on-site and not on-street.”

In summary, the parking related deviations requested by the applicant involve a reduction in setback and driveway depth for the seven single-family homes, and the number of parking spaces being provided by the project. The project proposes to provide seven parking spaces, required for the single-family homes, in front of the Language Academy and/or Montezuma Park. Given that the peak demand for the single-family homes and the school do not conflict, that the applicant has designed the single-family homes’ driveway curb-cut configuration to allow ample room to park a vehicle in front of six of the seven units, and that the San Diego Municipal Code allows on-street parking, staff supports the applicant’s request for the parking deviation. The requested parking and parking related deviations are listed in Attachment 25, followed by specific staff justification in support of the requested deviations.

Deviations - The SDMC allows flexibility in the application of development regulations (deviations) for developments where strict application of the base zone development regulations would restrict design options and result in a less desirable project, through the processing of a Planned Development Permit. The intent of the Planned Development Permit regulations is to accommodate, to the greatest extent possible, an equitable balance of development types, intensities, styles, site constraints, project amenities, public improvements, and community and City benefits.

In addition to the parking deviations described in Attachment 25, the project proposes to deviate from the San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) requirements for height, setbacks, and the length

of the required building façade. Staff believes that the City Council can make the appropriate findings based on the following information.

Height - The maximum height allowed in the RM-1-2 Zone is 30 feet. The project is designed with a building height of 37 feet, eight inches for the rowhomes and 30 feet, ten inches for three of the seven single-family homes. The measurement of 37 feet, eight inches for the rowhomes applies to the top of the chimney for each of the proposed rowhome units. The addition of the interior fireplace with each rowhome unit allows for a more desirable product type. Alternatively, the height measured to top of structure roof is 34 feet, four inches, closer to the maximum height allowed.

The applicant intentionally located the rowhome product within the interior of the project to maximize the visual prominence of the single-family product proposed on the frontage of Catoctin Drive. The rowhomes would not be directly visible from Catoctin Drive and as a result, would minimize any potential negative impact created by the height deviation.

A height deviation is also requested for the single-family homes proposed for Catoctin Drive. Although the height for these homes is 30 feet, ten inches as measured to the top of chimney, no single-family structure (as measured to top of roof) exceeds 28 feet. This minor height deviation allows for the inclusion of an interior fireplace and corresponding chimney for each unit. These amenities would result in a more desirable product.

Approving the requested height deviations would allow for additional architectural details, such as a chimney and expanded interior ceiling heights that would not be present if structure height were limited to 30 feet. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the requested height deviations.

Setbacks – The project’s single-family product type (on Parcel One) is designed with a *rear yard* setback that ranges from 10 to 15 feet, when the RM 1-2 Zone requires a *rear yard* setback of 15 feet. The project’s single family product type (on Parcel One) and rowhome product type (on Parcel Two) are designed with a five-foot *side yard* setback, when the RM 1-2 Zone requires a standard *side yard* setback of eight feet and a minimum *side yard* setback of five feet. The project’s single-family product type (on Parcel One) is designed with an eight-foot *front yard* setback when the RM 1-2 Zone requires a standard *front yard* setback of 20 feet, with a minimum *front yard* setback of 15 feet.

The deviations are requested in order to provide larger interior living areas of the units and are not inconsistent with the underlying purpose of the RM-1-2 Zone. The proposed setbacks deviations on Parcel One will accommodate a single-family detached product within the Mesa Commons project, and allow the project to simultaneously meet other goals such as improving architecture and landscaping and facilitating circulation within the interior of the project. By maintaining strict conformance with the front yard setback requirement, the proposed rowhomes on site could not be as easily facilitated. In order to retain the proposed number of units on-site, the applicant requested, and staff supports deviations to the project’s setback requirements.

Building Façade - The seven single-family homes on Parcel One deviate from the requirement of maintaining 40 % of the length of the building façade dedicated to habitable area, in that nine feet is proposed where 12 feet is required for the 30-foot-wide units.

The proposed deviation is requested due to the limited area of frontage along Catocin Drive and allows for (1) greater side yards for each unit and (2) the development of additional homes in a time when the City is experiencing a housing shortage. The additional side yard gained from minimizing the length of the building façade would be greater enhanced through the 5-foot side yard access easements present for six of the seven units. These will result in ultimately larger lots for each home and additional yard space for future residents. In addition, architectural detailing, meant to emphasize the varied roof levels, offsetting planes and mixed building materials, would offset the reduced front building facade.

The deviation allows for additional single-family detached homes in a community where few have been built in recent years. Per the applicant's correspondence with the community, provision of this type of housing is vital in order to maintain quiet, family-oriented neighborhoods. Therefore, staff supports the requested building façade deviation.

Critical Project Features to Consider During Substantial Conformance Review

- Intensity of Development: An increase in the number of units shall not be allowed, unless an increase in the amount of land is included as a part of any proposed Substantial Conformance Review.
- Parking/Circulation: Parking spaces shall not be reduced unless the numbers of residential units proposed and/or number of bedrooms proposed are also reduced.
- Landscaping: The additional landscaping and two improved pedestrian access points shall not be reduced or eliminated as a part of any proposed Substantial Conformance Review.

Conclusion:

The Mesa Commons II project proposes a residential development with an assortment of housing types and unit sizes. The project is located within the core of the College Area Community on a site that includes both vacant undeveloped land and one, single-family home. The project proposes an amendment to the College Area Community Plan and a Rezone action to allow for the increase in the proposed residential density. The overall residential goal of the College Area Community Plan is to maintain the predominately single-family character of the community. The Urban Element of the community plan further supplements this goal by recommending that new development of vacant lots or redevelopment should be compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding development. The proposed project would implement this

recommendation by proposing seven single-family detached units along the frontage of Catocin Drive and rowhome units towards the rear of the project site.

The project has been reviewed in accordance with all applicable development regulations including the Land Development Code, Central Urbanized Planned District Ordinance, Progress Guide and General Plan, College Area Community Plan, the Subdivision Map Act and the California Environmental Quality Act. Staff has considered the issues and determined the project complies with the applicable development regulations and would be consistent with the purpose and intent of the underlying zone. Further, staff has analyzed the proposed General/Community Plan Amendment and concluded the project would not adversely impact the overall goals and recommendations of the College Area Community Plan.

Other than the requested deviations, for which staff believes that findings can be made, staff finds the proposed project would be consistent with the recommended land use, design guidelines, and development standards in effect for this site per the San Diego Municipal Code and would not have an adverse effect on the adopted College Area Community Plan, and City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan. Staff believes the proposed residential project is well designed and overall would be an asset to the neighborhood. Therefore, staff has provided the required findings to affirm the project and recommends that the Planning Commission forward this application to the City Council with a recommendation of approval.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Recommend that the City Council **Certify** Addendum to Negative Declaration No. 33812; **Approve** Planned Development Permit No. 261644, amending Planned Development Permit No. 93412; **Approve** Site Development Permit No. 312203 amending Site Development Permit No. 93413; **Approve** Vesting Tentative Map No. 294170; **Approve** Rezone Action No. 261645; and **Approve** General/Community Plan Amendment No. 261643, with modifications.
2. Recommend that the City Council **Not Certify** Addendum to Negative Declaration No. 33812; **Deny** Planned Development Permit No. 261644, amending Planned Development Permit No. 93412; **Deny** Site Development Permit No. 312203 amending Site Development Permit No. 93413; **Deny** Vesting Tentative Map No. 294170; **Deny** Rezone Action No. 261645; and **Deny** General/Community Plan Amendment No. 261643, if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments:

1. Location Map
2. Aerial Photograph
3. Community Plan Land Use Map
4. Project Data Sheet
5. Site Plan – Mesa Commons I and II
6. Title Sheet & Site Plans
7. Row Homes - Floor Plans
8. Row Homes – Roof Plans
9. Row Homes – Elevations
10. Single-Family Homes - Floor Plans
11. Single-Family Homes – Roof Plans
12. Single-Family Homes - Elevations
13. Vesting Tentative Map
14. Landscape Plans
15. Montezuma Park Access Plan
16. Draft Vesting Tentative Map Conditions and Subdivision Resolution
17. Draft Permit with Conditions
18. Draft Permit Resolution with Findings
19. Draft Rezone Ordinance with B Sheet
20. Planning Commission Community Plan Amendment Initiation Resolution No. 3644 PC (February 3, 2005)

21. Draft City Council Community Plan Amendment Resolution, including Text & Graphics
22. Draft Planning Commission Recommendation to City Council Resolution
23. Planning Commission Initiation Land Use Issues
24. College Area Community Planning Committee (CACC) Minutes of February 8, 2006
25. Parking Deviations – Concern of CACC with Staff Response
26. Peak Parking Demand
27. Draft Environmental Resolution
28. Ownership Disclosure Statement
29. Project Chronology