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July 12, 2002

The Honorable Byron Wear, Chair
Land Use and Housing Committee
City of San Diego
202 C Street
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: Kearny Mesa Public Facilities Financing Plan Update
July 17, 2002 Meeting Agenda

Dear Chairman Wear and Committee Members,

Please accept this letter as the comments from the Kearny Mesa Planning Group on the Kearny Mesa Public Facilities Financing Plan Update that is being discussed at the July 17 Land Use and Housing Committee meeting. As an initial comment, during the group's review of the Plan Update many recommendations were made by our members. We are pleased that the staff included some of those recommendations in this Plan Update. There remain a few proposed projects where we respectively disagree with the staff recommendations. However our main disagreement is really not with the Plan or staff but with a Park and Rec policy that they were required to incorporate into this Plan. The group voted 14-0-0 at our June 19 regular meeting to not make a specific recommendation on the Plan Update but only to offer the following comments on specific elements in the Plan where our opinion differs from staff.

1. Project P1 Neighborhood Park The group has previously recommended that a study and perhaps revision of the Population Based Park Standards be made as they apply to Kearny Mesa higher density in-fill type projects (Sunroad Centrum Process 2000 No96004778 comments Nov 21, 2001 and May 3, 2002, Strategic Framework Element March 11, 2002). Our recommendation asked for recognition of, and minimum standards for providing, private recreational facilities in planned higher density developments. Today, if a residential developer provides a pool, clubhouse, fitness center, sports courts or passive turf areas, no credit is provided toward the Population Based Park Standards, because they are private facilities. Instead a public park area is supposed to be dedicated to the City or in-lieu fees are paid to a park fund for facilities that will probably never be provided. We believe that some incentive should be given to developers to provide these private facilities, with a minimum standard, as they do meet many of the needs of their residents. Partial in-lieu fees then can be collected to "someday" provide for the other public recreational elements. With this change at least the residents of these newer projects will be provided some facilities. Current City policies provide incentive for the developers to provide nothing, as in-lieu fees are probably less expensive than providing the "private" facilities. Also most projects are not large enough to require the minimum sized public park on their own. The result is everyone loses. New residents must use the existing undersized facilities, if there are any. Existing residents find their current recreation facilities more crowded. A policy change to allow for minimum standards with partial

credit toward Park and Rec fees is needed. That is one change that we are advocating even though it is really beyond the scope of this Financing Plan. Private recreational facilities in new developments are better that no facilities. The only parks we have in Kearny Mesa were created privately, Missile Park, Hickman Field and Stonecrest Recreation Center. Encourage them.

A revision of these Population Based Park Standards is also recommended in the Strategic Framework Element - City of Villages program. It recognizes that the shortage of residential land is at odds with the shortage of park and recreation land. Meeting both future needs may not be possible and something must change. High density developments could provide for some future housing needs and then leave some land available for recreational uses, but developers are not building at 50 or 75 units per acre in Kearny Mesa. They are building 20 to 25 units per acre with two car garages so the entire site is developed as private streets and buildings. They call this "urban". This is the residential product that they believe people want. We do not have the answers to this policy problem for the City's future growth, but believe that current regulations and fees discourage higher densities and private recreation facilities, making the problem worse. We support the Strategic Framework Element suggestion that Park and Recreation Policies need revision.

Kearny Mesa is primarily an industrial and commercial area of about 3,600 acres and about 80,000 jobs. We also have 1700+ residential units with just less than 1000 in process. There remains very little vacant Kearny Mesa employment land. Overall the City is just as short of employment land as residential land. The residential product that is being encouraged by the City to help meet our housing crisis is high density urban type projects. What is being built is medium density and is it absorbing our remaining employment land. Our comments to the Strategic Framework Element suggested that a balance be created between future employment needs and housing needs. Both are interrelated, if no new jobs are created, then housing needs will decline. If there is no additional housing available, then employers will expand elsewhere to meet their employment needs. This Park and Rec standard is a third element that must be factored into the future City land needs. Employment needs, residential needs and recreation needs are all completing for the same limited resource, vacant or underutilized land. All needs must be quantified, forecast and balanced to set the growth policies for the future. Today's emphasis is only on solving the housing problem. All future requirements need to be studied and planned together. We support a lesser standard for public recreation facilities in "urban" communities such as Kearny Mesa, in conjunction with required private recreation facilities in larger planned developments, and the current standard in the suburban single family areas.

This proposed project requires fees for a 17.92 acres of park made up of either five or ten acres parcels. We recommend that the City and staff be realistic. There is little chance of ever acquiring the land or funds to create such facilities in Kearny Mesa. We have the opportunity for another 400 to 800 units to be developed in Kearny Mesa over the next few years. We believe that smaller parks are more appropriate and reasonably feasible projects. Hickman Field with its 44 acres of active sports fields meets those active recreation needs in Kearny Mesa. The future YMCA will also help. What future residents will need is smaller turf areas to walk and play on, near the new residential units. As all new residential projects in Kearny Mesa will be discretionary permits we believe that the City should encourage private recreations facilities of reasonable standards and use the past and future DIF to develop smaller public park areas adjacent to these new projects. The proposed Park and Recreation fee, while high, is probably not out of line with other current Plans. We just object to the City

collecting these Park and Rec fees and never getting anything in our area because the Park and Recreations standards are too high to ever be achieved.

2. Project T14 Convoy Street Bridge over SR-52 The Convoy Street Bridge crossing SR-52 is one of the major entries into Kearny Mesa. It is also the only access to the Miramar Landfill and the City's Waste Water Treatment Plan on the north side of SR-52. We believe that some significant portion of the bridge widening project should be a citywide assessment as the landfill traffic is a major component with citywide benefits. It is also our understanding that most times the State will provide significant funding for bridges over State routes. We do not understand why the State is shown as an "identified source" but all costs are allocated to Kearny Mesa. A better allocation would share the costs of this bridge with the Kearny Mesa DIF, citywide funds and the State.

3. Project T17 SR-52 Bike Path Convoy Street to Kearny Villa Road Originally the group did not see the need for this bike route connection as there is no existing "bike route" to connect with at present. The revised Bike Master Plan has this as a "second priority" project to help complete the bike path system. Eventually there will be bike path to this point paralleling SR-52 and therefore we agree that it should be included in the Kearny Mesa DIF.

4. Project T19 Balboa Avenue Median and Bike Lane I-805 to Kearny Villa Road The group disagrees with the Bike Master Plan on the suitability of having Balboa Avenue as a proposed Class 2 Bikeway. We believe that this highly congested roadway with higher speed traffic and numerous driveways is a poor area for a bikeway. However we realize that there are few alternatives available. The group's main objection with this project is the removal of the open median area on Balboa between Convoy and Mercury Streets. We believe this open median facilitates access into the numerous businesses on Balboa avenue which alleviates the need for U-turns at the already poor service level intersections of Convoy Street-Balboa Avenue and Mercury Street-Balboa Avenue. With the recent transfer of Balboa Avenue from the State to the City perhaps the median standards can be revised and this requirement removed. We recommend that the median improvement portion of this project be studied and if possible deleted from the Kearny Mesa Community Plan and that cost removed from the DIF.

5. Project T29 Traffic Signals The group has previously voted to give the traffic signal proposed for Ruffin Road and Ridgehaven Court a priority. This will greatly help one of our major tenants, Solar Turbines, who has realigned their driveway to complement Ridgehaven, with signalized access for their employees and suppliers. The group recommends this project with that particular intersection being the highest priority.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our comments on this Financing Plan for the future Kearny Mesa Public Facilities.

Sincerely,

Buzz Gibbs

cc: Cheryl Robinson