



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Planning Commission

DATE ISSUED: November 27, 2018

REPORT NO. PC-18-066

HEARING DATE: December 6, 2018

SUBJECT: Clairemont Mesa Community Plan Amendment Initiation – Mount Etna

Project Number: 615352

**OWNER/
APPLICANT:** County of San Diego, Department of General Services

SUMMARY

Issue: Should the Planning Commission INITIATE an amendment to re-designate 4.09 acres from Commercial-Community Center to Residential-High, 45-73 dwelling units per acre, amend the Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ) from CPIOZ Type B to CPIOZ Type A to allow residential use onsite and provide site design standards for the site, and rezone from CO-1-2 to RM-3-9?

Staff Recommendation: INITIATE the plan amendment process.

Community Planning Group Recommendation: On November 20th, 2018, the Clairemont Community Planning Group (CCPG) voted 14-1-0 to recommend denial of the community plan amendment initiation for not meeting the initiation criteria and voted 15-0-0 to recommend that the applicant pursue an alternative process that allows the CCPG to review more project details and that addresses the information in the County's feasibility study (Attachment 1).

Environmental Impact: This activity is not a "project" under the definition set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15378. Should initiation of the community plan amendment be approved, environmental review would take place at the appropriate time in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15004.

Fiscal Impact Statement: No fiscal impact. All costs associated with the processing of the application are recovered through a deposit account funded by the applicant.

Code Enforcement Impact: None

Housing Impact: If initiated, subsequent approval of the proposed Community Plan Amendment would allow 184 to 299 multi-family residential dwelling units, where none are currently allowed under the CPIOZ Type B. The proposed amendment could potentially allow up to 448 dwelling units onsite

through the use of a 50 percent density bonus for affordable housing in accordance with Land Development Code Section 143.0720.

The initiation of a plan amendment in no way confers adoption of a plan amendment; neither staff nor the Planning Commission is committed to recommend in favor or denial of the proposed amendment, and the City Council is not committed to adopt or deny the proposed amendment.

BACKGROUND

Site Location

The 4.09-acre subject site is located within the commercial core of the Clairemont Mesa community planning area and west of Genesee Avenue between Balboa Avenue and Mount Etna Drive. The site is currently occupied by the County of San Diego, Sheriff's Criminal Investigations Division, also known as the "Sheriff's Crime Lab" and was the location of the former Clairemont General Hospital. The subject site includes a one-story building approximately 66,000 square feet in size and a two-story building approximately 36,000 square feet in size. The buildings on the site and adjacent to the site were primarily built in the late 1960s and early 1970s and are automobile orientated with shared surface parking and access in both the front and back of the buildings.

Existing Adjacent Uses

The site is adjacent to the Balboa Towers which contains over 100,000 of office uses within a 7-story building and 10-story building with ground floor commercial, drive-thru fast food restaurant, and a Rite-Aid. On the east side of the site is a 3-story, 16,000 square foot medical office building. Multi-family development is located further south across Balboa Avenue. The site is separated on the west from the a nearby single-family neighborhood by a 150-foot San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) easement with electrical transmission lines. Genesee Plaza, anchored by Target and Home Depot, is a 518,000 square foot commercial shopping center located east of the site across Genesee Avenue (Attachment 2). Additionally, Genesee Plaza contains grocery stores, eating establishments, community serving retail and neighborhood serving retail uses. Liberty Park Plaza is a 1 and 2 story 70,000 square feet office and retail center north of the site across Mount Etna Drive.

Transit

The site is within a Transit Priority Area (TPA) and is located approximately 2.3 miles east of future Balboa Avenue Mid-Coast Trolley Station. The site is currently served by Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) local bus routes 27 and 41. Route 27 travels between Kearny Mesa and Pacific Beach and stops every 30 minutes at the intersection of Balboa Avenue and Genesee Avenue. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Regional Plan shows Route 27 being replaced with light rail transit service by 2050. Route 41 travels between University of California, San Diego/UTC and Fashion Valley and stops every 15 minutes or less during morning and evening peak periods at the intersection of Mt. Etna and Genesee Avenue (Attachment 5). The SANDAG Regional Plan shows Route 41 being upgraded to Rapid Bus service by 2035. MTS is currently developing a plan for adjusting bus service in Clairemont and adjacent communities to better serve the new Mid-Coast Trolley extension when it is operational in 2021.

Public Facilities

The Balboa Branch library is 0.5 miles from the site. The Mount Acadia Park and the Mount Etna Park

are both 0.6 miles from the site. Holmes Elementary School is 0.8 miles from the site. The John Muir School and Sequoia Elementary School are both 0.9 miles from the site. Marston Middle School is 1.4 miles from the site. Both Madison High School and Clairemont High School are 1.5 miles from the site.

Community Plan Designation and Zoning

The Community Plan designates the site as Commercial-Community Center (Attachment 3). The site is zoned CO-1-2 (Commercial-Office) and is subject to a 30-foot height limit under the community-wide Clairemont Height Limit Overlay Zone (Attachment 4). It is also within the Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ) Type B.

Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone

The proposed amendment would amend the CPIOZ Zone Type B to CPIOZ Type A, to allow residential use on site and provide site design standards. The existing underlying CO-1-2 zone allows for mixed-use development, including residential development at 29 dwelling units per acre, however, the CPIOZ Type B development standards in the current community plan do not permit residential land uses. The CPIOZ Type B requires a Site Development Permit and compliance with design standards to ensure that development will occur with a unifying architectural sign and landscaping theme, including pedestrian walkways and bikeways. Under the proposed amendment, these architectural and site design standards would be applied under a CPIOZ Type A which would allow ministerial approval for any future development upon compliance with the CPIOZ supplemental development regulations and the base zone regulations. Additional architectural and site design standards could also be applied as part of the CPIOZ Type A requirements.

County of San Diego

The County of San Diego is the owner of the site and the applicant. On February 13, 2018, the County Board of Supervisors directed County staff to seek an affordable housing developer to lease the site for 99 years. County staff conducted a request for proposals and selected Chelsea Investment Corporation (Chelsea) to develop and operate an affordable development for families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. While Chelsea has shown a potential development concept for two 5-story buildings surrounding a parking structure, the County of San Diego as the applicant has not submitted a site-specific proposal. The County is preparing an environmental document for the demolition of the existing building and lease of the property. A Board of Supervisors approval is needed to approve the demolition of the existing structures, the 99-year ground lease to Chelsea, and to certify the environmental document.

If initiated by the Planning Commission, the County would seek approval of a community plan amendment and rezone that would allow 184 to 299 multi-family residential dwelling units. If the amendment is approved by City Council, the affordable housing developer would submit for ministerial building permits. The affordable housing developer could potentially utilize a density bonus for affordable housing up to 50 percent to allow 448 dwelling units.

Existing Affordable Housing

Within the Clairemont Community planning area, there are five affordable housing developments with a total of 318 affordable housing units for seniors and 300 housing units for individuals or families. Of the five existing affordable developments, three are operated by the San Diego Housing Commission. The Belden Street Apartments, with 243 housing units, located at 7705-7795 Belden Street and the North Village Garden Apartments with 120 housing units for seniors located at 7720-

7780 Belden Street. Both developments are adjacent to each other in the East Mesa portion of the community near I-805. Genesee Villas is a 11-unit townhome complex located at 2615-2665 Genesee Avenue near Linda Vista Road. The Community also has two other affordable developments not operated by the San Diego Housing Commission. The Sorrento Tower Apartments has 198 one-bedroom and studio units for seniors located at 2875 Cowley Way. The Cerro Pueblo Apartments has 46 one-bedroom units located at 2835 Clairemont Drive. Wakeland Housing is proposing a senior apartments development with 52 housing units located at 5858 Mount Alifan Drive.

Community Outreach

The County of San Diego has attended five public community meetings to discuss the proposed initiation and the future affordable housing development. On September 18th, 2018, County staff presented the proposal as an informational item to the Clairemont Community Planning Group (CPG). On October 29th, 2018, County staff presented the proposal to the CPG's Mt. Etna Community Plan Amendment Ad-hoc Subcommittee. On November 20th, 2018, County staff presented the proposal to the full CPG for their recommendation. The County also held two scoping meetings for the environmental document on September 25th and October 15th of this year.

Housing & Demographics

As of 2016, SANDAG estimated there were approximately 80,600 people living in the Clairemont Community Planning Area. This is almost a 3 percent increase from the 78,300 people living in the community in 2000 as reported by the US Census. In 2016, the Community had 32,930 housing units with a vacancy rate of 3.4 percent and a persons-per-household rate of 2.53. Between 2000 and 2016, the Community has only added 171 housing units which is a 0.5 percent increase. In 2000, the Community had 32,759 housing units with a 2 percent vacancy rate and persons per household rate of 2.43. Currently, there are 59 single family homes under construction or recently completed in the Community, which includes 52 single family homes at the former Stevenson Elementary School site and 7 single family on the corner Ticonderoga Street and Morena Boulevard.

Other Planning Efforts

There are several planning efforts in process within Clairemont. The Morena Apartment Homes (Project No. 526167) which proposes to re-designate a 6.21-acre site from Low-Density Residential (10-15 dwelling units per acre) and Mobile Home Park to Medium Density Residential (15-30 dwelling units per acre) and construct 150 condominium units. The Morena Corridor Specific Plan, which includes planning efforts in both Clairemont and Linda Vista, proposes to increase residential density in Linda Vista and includes mobility improvements in both Linda Vista and Clairemont along Morena Boulevard. The Balboa Avenue Station Area Specific Plan, which also includes planning efforts in both Clairemont and Pacific Beach, includes mobility improvements in the vicinity of the Balboa Avenue Trolley Station. Both Draft Specific Plans are not proposing to increase residential density within the Clairemont Community (Attachment 6).

Additionally, a comprehensive update of the Clairemont Mesa Community Plan is in process. Policy LU-D.4 of the General Plan allows applications for community plan amendments to be accepted until the final land use scenarios for the community plan update have been established. City staff has been meeting with the CPG Community Plan Update Ad-hoc Subcommittee to discuss the draft goals and policies for each plan element. A community-wide open house to obtain input on land use options will be held in late January 2019 with up to two or more subsequent meetings with the CPG Subcommittee to discuss and identify land use options. If the proposed amendment is approved by

City Council, it would be included as part of the Comprehensive Community Plan Update.

DISCUSSION

The City is unique among jurisdictions in that the process to amend the General Plan and/or a community plan requires either Planning Commission or City Council initiation before the plan amendment process and accompanying project may proceed. Community plans are a component of the City's General Plan. The proposed amendment is anticipated to result in revisions to the Community Plan and may include mapping changes to the General Plan. A recommendation of approval or denial of the initiation is based upon compliance with all three of the initiation criteria contained in the General Plan:

(1) The amendment request appears to be consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan and Clairemont Mesa Community Plan:

The General Plan's Housing Element identifies measurable goals and policies to address the City's critical housing needs by 2020. A key goal is to ensure the provision of sufficient housing for all income groups to accommodate San Diego's anticipated share of regional growth over the next Housing Element cycle 2013-2020. The proposed amendment which would have the potential to accommodate additional housing opportunities, would support the implementation of the following recommendations in the Housing Element:

- Policy HE-A.6. Encourage affordable housing on publicly-owned sites not needed for public use. If it is determined that land designated for public use is not currently needed and will not, in the foreseeable future, be needed for public use and is located within close proximity to transit and services, it should be considered for re-designation to mixed-use designations that include housing and promote affordable housing.
- Policy HE-I.4. The City's highest housing priority shall be to provide housing for very low- and low-income families and special needs populations.

The proposed amendment would also meet objectives for residential development identified in the Residential Element of the Clairemont Community Plan associated with providing a diversity of housing options in selected locations in the community and locating higher density housing near commercial areas and along transportation corridors where there are adequate services. As proposed the community plan amendment would also have the potential for accommodating affordable housing units onsite and would meet recommendations in the Residential Element of the Community Plan for encouraging the construction of additional affordable housing units in the Clairemont community.

(2) The proposed amendment provides additional public benefit to the community as compared to the existing land use designation, density/intensity range, plan policies or site design; and

The proposed amendment would benefit the community by providing additional housing opportunities, including the potential for affordable housing units during a time at which the City Council has declared a housing state of emergency. The proposed amendment would also amend the existing CPIOZ and allow residential development in an existing community

center which would allow future residents to live in close proximity to commercial goods and services, schools, employment, and transit consistent with the General Plan City of Villages strategy.

The area that contains the site as well as adjacent development to the north of the site contains over 186,000 square feet of office and retail space. The nearby Genesee Plaza contains 518,000 square feet of retail space. The proposed amendment would not reduce the amount of existing floor area for office and retail uses for the community.

(3) Public facilities appear to be available to serve the proposed increase in density/intensity, or their provision will be addressed as a component of the amendment process.

Public facilities do appear available to serve the proposed amendment. However, a full analysis of public facilities would be included as part of the Community Plan Amendment analysis should this request be initiated.

The following land use issues have been identified by City Staff. If initiated, these issues, as well as others that may be identified, will be analyzed and evaluated through the Community Plan Amendment review process:

- Analysis of impact of potential residential development on public services and facilities.
- Analysis of traffic impacts associated with increased density.
- Analysis of bulk and scale simulations in relationship to the adjacent buildings surrounding neighborhood.

While Chelsea has shown a potential development concept, the County of San Diego as the applicant has not submitted a site-specific proposal; therefore, by initiating this Community Plan Amendment, neither the staff nor the Planning Commission is committed to recommend in favor or denial of the proposed amendment, and any associated discretionary permits.

Respectfully submitted,



Marlon I. Pangilinan
Senior Planner
Planning Department



Laura C. Black, AICP
Deputy Director
Planning Department

MIP/lcb/tg

Attachments:

1. Community Planning Group Recommendation
2. Vicinity Map

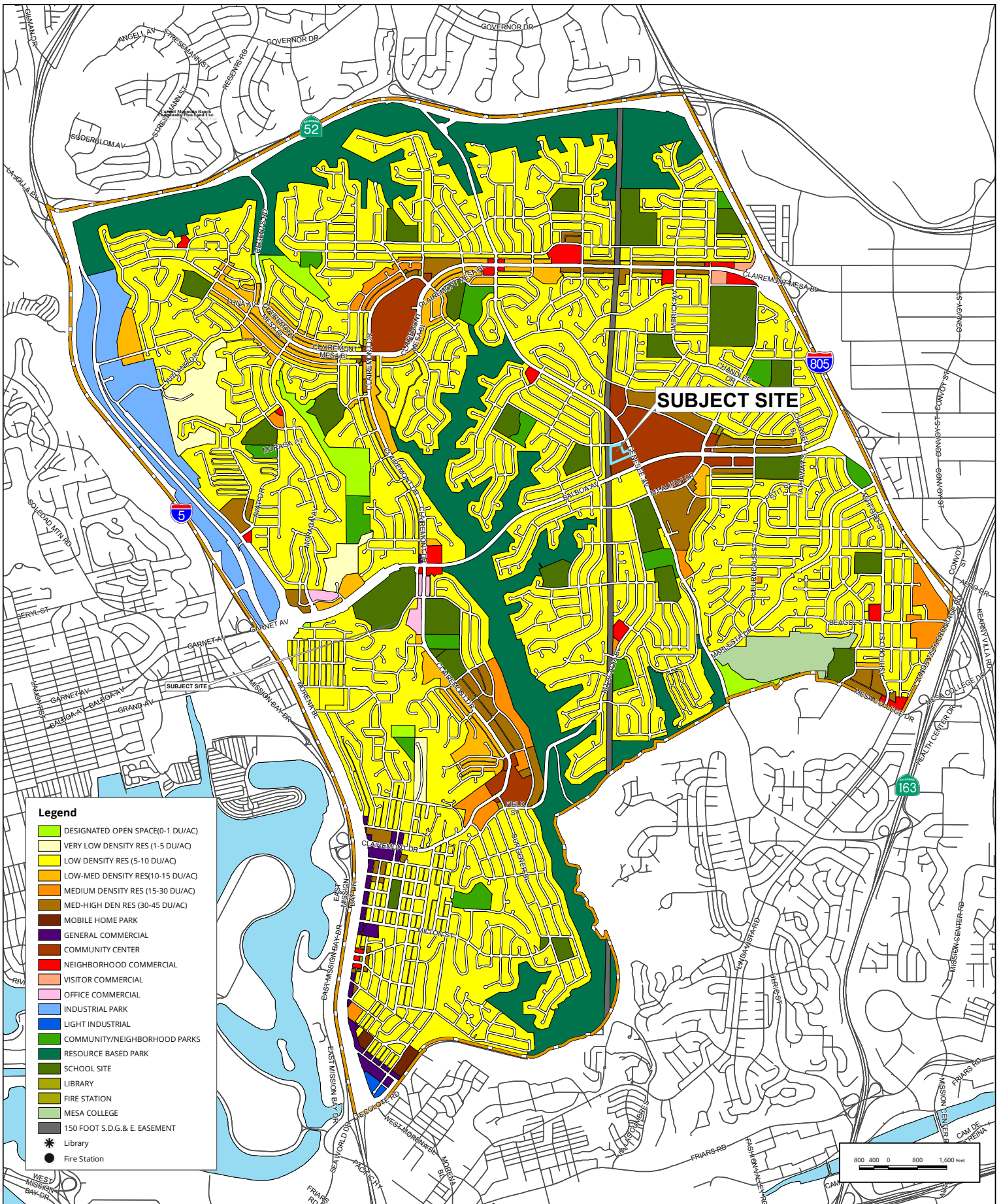
3. Adopted Plan Land Use
4. Zoning Map
4. Existing Transit Routes
5. Current Community Plan Amendment and Planning Efforts
6. Ownership Disclosure Statement

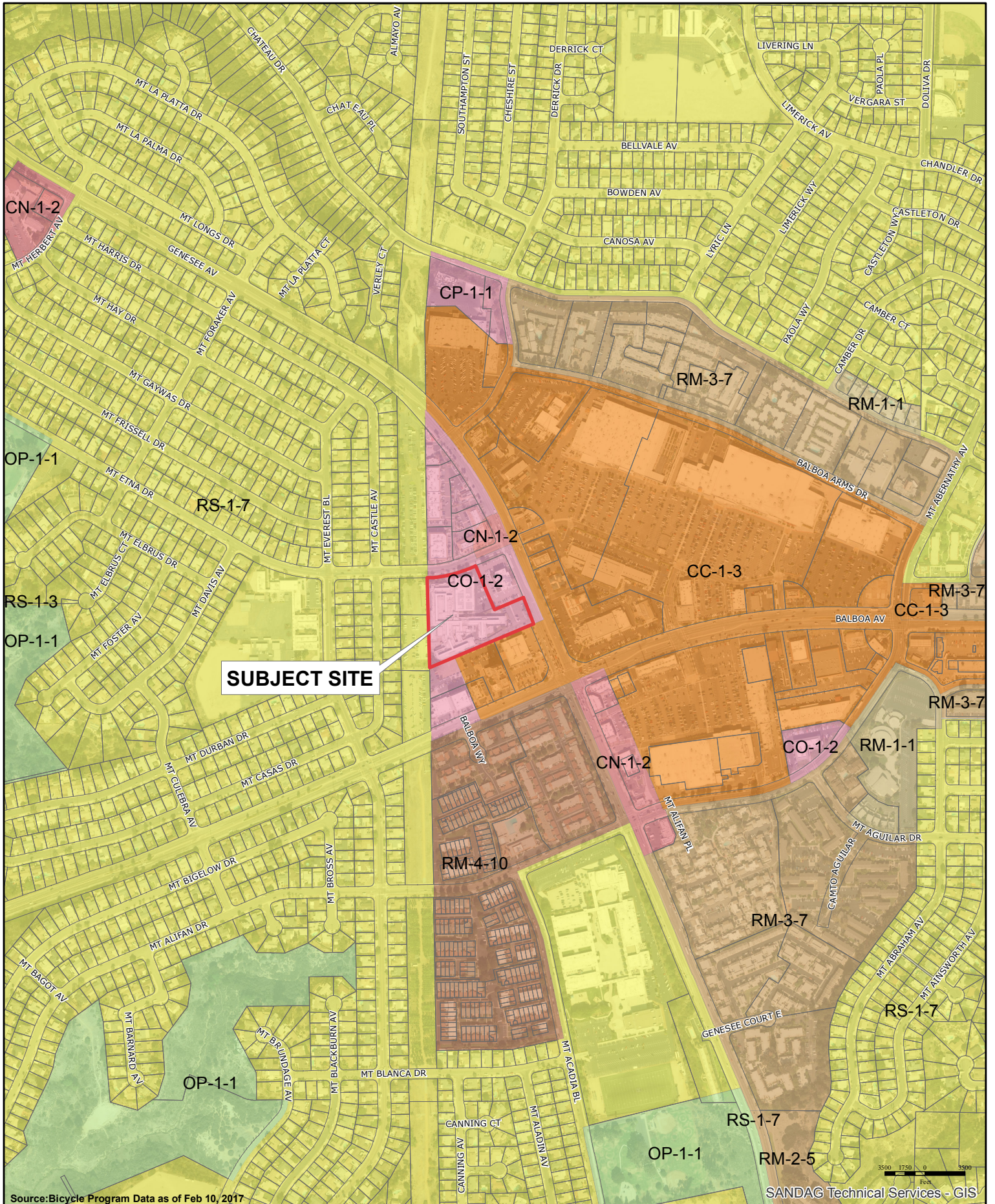
Clairemont Community Planning Group Recommendation

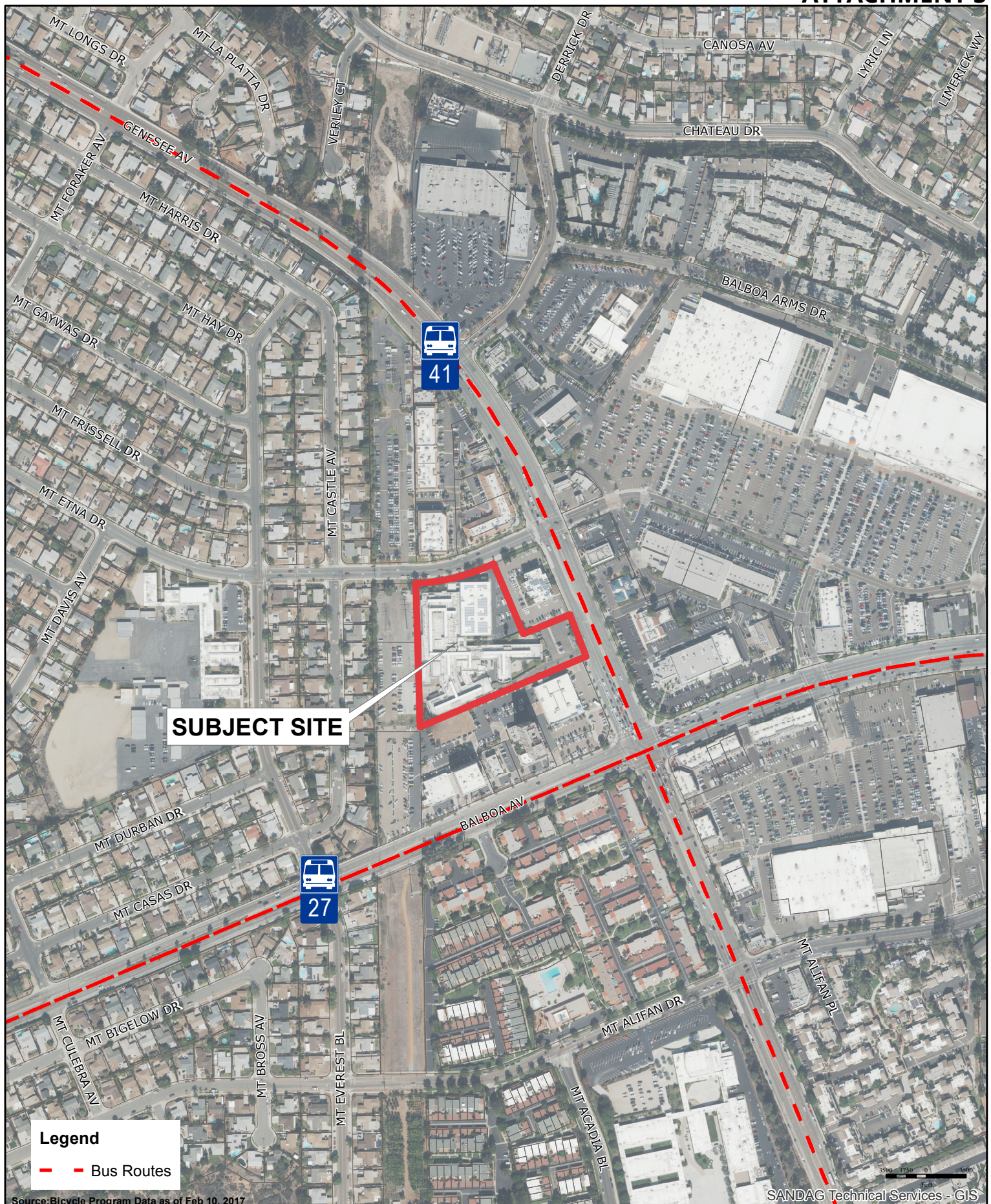
On November 20th, 2018, the Clairemont Community Planning Group (CCPG) passed two motions related to the request to initiate a Community Plan Amendment to the Clairemont Community Plan. The following is a summary of their recommendations, as official CCPG minutes of their consideration of the initiation request were not available in time for inclusion in the staff report:

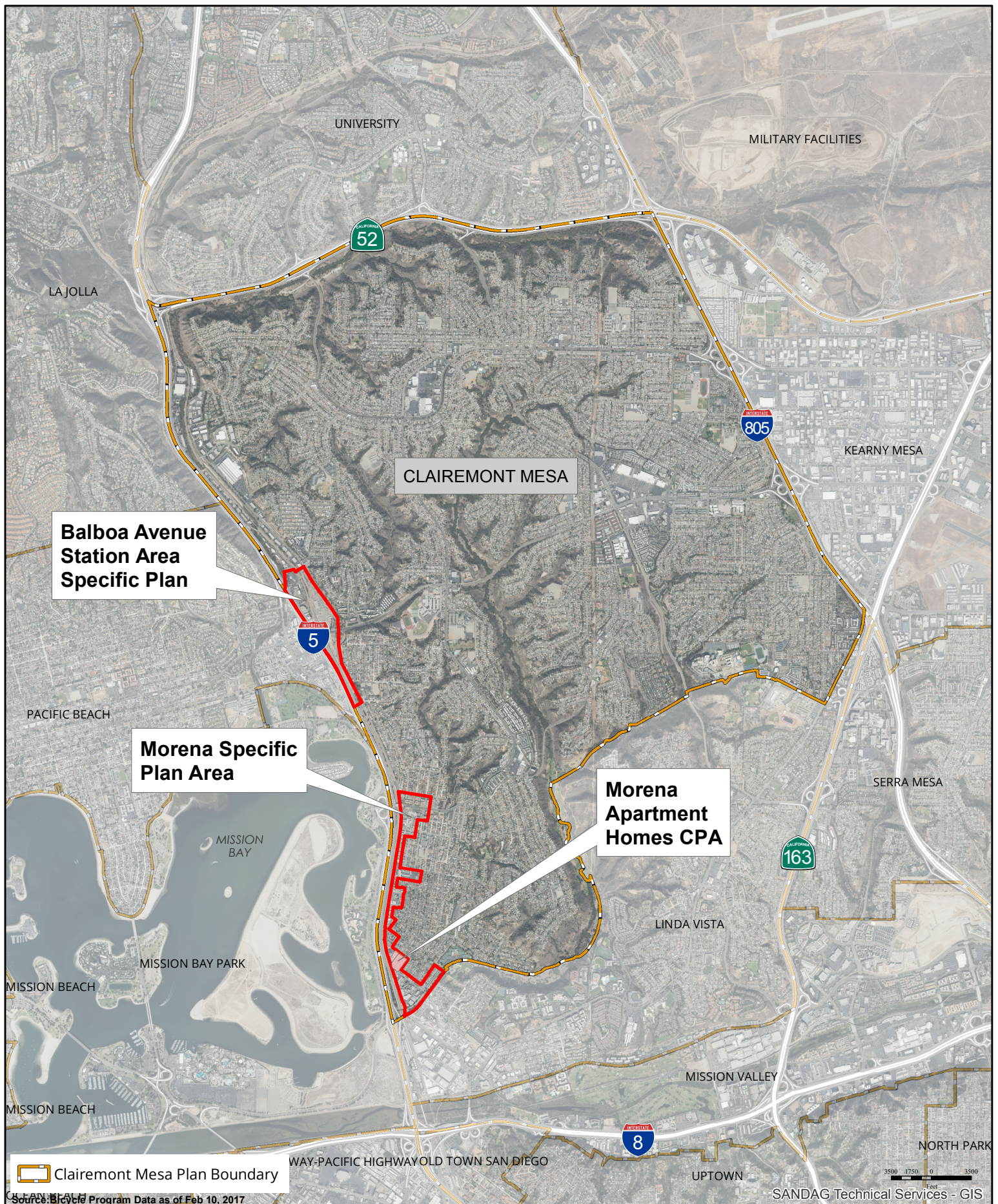
- Motion #1: Find that the County of San Diego's request for an Community Plan Amendment Initiation does not comply with the initiation criteria and should be denied. Motion passed 14-1-0.
- Motion #2: Recommend that the County of San Diego pursue an alternative development review process and provide more development project detail and address the information in the County of San Diego's feasibility study for the CCPG to review. Motion passed 15-0-0.













**City of San Diego
Development Services**
1222 First Ave., MS 302
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 446-5000

Ownership Disclosure Statement

**FORM
DS-318**

October 2017

Approval Type: Check appropriate box for type of approval(s) requested: ☐ Neighborhood Use Permit ☐ Coastal Development Permit
☐ Neighborhood Development Permit ☐ Site Development Permit ☐ Planned Development Permit ☐ Conditional Use Permit ☐ Variance
☐ Tentative Map ☐ Vesting Tentative Map ☐ Map Waiver ☒ Land Use Plan Amendment • ☐ Other _____

Project Title: Mt. Etna Clairemont Mesa Community Plan Amendment and Rezone

Project No. For City Use Only: 615352

Project Address: 5255 Mount Etna Drive, San Diego, CA 92117

Specify Form of Ownership/Legal Status (please check):

☒ Corporation ☐ Limited Liability -or- ☐ General - What State? _____ Corporate Identification No. _____ Municipality _____

☐ Partnership ☐ Individual

By signing the Ownership Disclosure Statement, the owner(s) acknowledge that an application for a permit, map or other matter will be filed with the City of San Diego on the subject property with the intent to record an encumbrance against the property. Please list below the owner(s), applicant(s), and other financially interested persons of the above referenced property. A financially interested party includes any individual, firm, co-partnership, joint venture, association, social club, fraternal organization, corporation, estate, trust, receiver or syndicate with a financial interest in the application. If the applicant includes a corporation or partnership, include the names, titles, addresses of all individuals owning more than 10% of the shares. If a publicly-owned corporation, include the names, titles, and addresses of the corporate officers. (A separate page may be attached if necessary.) If any person is a nonprofit organization or a trust, list the names and addresses of **ANY** person serving as an officer or director of the nonprofit organization or as trustee or beneficiary of the nonprofit organization. A signature is required of at least one of the property owners. Attach additional pages if needed. Note: The applicant is responsible for notifying the Project Manager of any changes in ownership during the time the application is being processed or considered. Changes in ownership are to be given to the Project Manager at least thirty days prior to any public hearing on the subject property. Failure to provide accurate and current ownership information could result in a delay in the hearing process.

Property Owner

Name of Individual: County of San Diego Department of General Services ☒ Owner ☐ Tenant/Lessee ☐ Successor Agency

Street Address: 5560 Overland Avenue, Suite 410

City: San Diego State: CA Zip: 92123

Phone No.: 858-694-2047 Fax No.: _____ Email: Marc.Cass@sdcounty.ca.gov

Signature: Cass, Marc Digitally signed by Cass, Marc
DN: cn=Cass, Marc, o=County of San Diego, email=Marc.Cass@sdcounty.ca.gov, ou=County of San Diego, c=US Date: 8/24/2018

Additional pages Attached: ☐ Yes ☒ No

Applicant

Name of Individual: County of San Diego Department of General Services ☒ Owner ☐ Tenant/Lessee ☐ Successor Agency

Street Address: 5560 Overland Avenue, Suite 410

City: San Diego State: CA Zip: 92123

Phone No.: 858-694-2047 Fax No.: _____ Email: Marc.Cass@sdcounty.ca.gov

Signature: Cass, Marc Digitally signed by Cass, Marc
DN: cn=Cass, Marc, o=County of San Diego, email=Marc.Cass@sdcounty.ca.gov, ou=County of San Diego, c=US Date: 8/24/2018

Additional pages Attached: ☐ Yes ☒ No

Other Financially Interested Persons

Name of Individual: _____ ☐ Owner ☐ Tenant/Lessee ☐ Successor Agency

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone No.: _____ Fax No.: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Additional pages Attached: ☐ Yes ☐ No