



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Planning Commission

DATE ISSUED: February 21, 2019

REPORT NO. PC-19-004

HEARING DATE: February 28, 2019

SUBJECT: University Community Plan Update Workshop

### **SUMMARY**

This is a workshop for the Planning Commission to provide early input on the University Community Plan Update. No action is required on the part of the Planning Commission at this time.

### **BACKGROUND**

University is a major employment, residential and educational center located in the north central portion of the City of San Diego. The University Community Planning Area as shown in Attachment 1, encompasses approximately 8,500 acres. The southern portion of the community is primarily residential with a business park at I-805 and Governor Drive. Rose Canyon divides the southern and northern portions of the community. The northern portion of the community contains the higher intensity and density commercial and residential core and the high-tech and biotech industrial areas. The portion of the community west of I-5 is within the coastal zone and coastal high limit overlay zone. While a part of the community, the development of the UC San Diego campus is guided by the 2018 Long-Range Development Plan.

The University Community Plan was adopted in 1987. Since then, there has been 18 amendments to the Community Plan. The current community plan controls residential density and commercial, institutional, and industrial intensity through the allocation of building square footage and dwelling units per net acre. Most of the amendments have resulted in increased development intensity and/or transfers of development intensity between properties. In 2016, the community plan was amended to remove the Regents Road bridge over Rose Canyon and widening of Genesee Avenue projects from the community plan. The City is currently working with UC San Diego to construct a new fire station on the Campus near the intersection of North Torrey Pines Road and Genesee Avenue.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Community Plan Update (CPU) for University is a collaborative effort with community members and stakeholders to guide long-term development.

The CPU process will assist in the implementation of the General Plan City of Villages strategy and Climate Action Plan (CAP).

### **What are the objectives of the community plan update process?**

- Ensuring the community continues to thrive as a major regional employment center;
- Increasing density and intensity of residential and employment land uses within Transit Priority Areas (TPAs), this includes capitalizing on the regional investment into the Mid-Coast Trolley Extension:
- Facilitate the implementation of Smart Growth Areas;
- Revitalize major activity centers as walkable destinations;
- Identify appropriate locations to support a diversity of employment and mixed-use land uses; and
- Address Climate Action Plan (CAP) strategies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions;
- Preservation and protection of open space in the community; and
- Addressing public facilities and infrastructure needs.

The University Community's land use needs are changing. Although the current community plan includes a land use mix within the urban core to support employment intensities and mixed-use development consistent with the General Plan's City of Villages strategy, improved connectivity and revitalization of older properties are needed to better align with the strategy and implement the CAP. The CPU provides an opportunity to re-evaluate the needs of employers in industrial lands, the character of activity centers, and the location of new transit-oriented development. During the CPU process, the City will consider providing opportunities for employment growth while providing more options for employees to live closer to work and use alternative modes of transportation.

The General Plan identifies the University community as a Subregional Employment Area due to its industrial land use base supporting scientific research, manufacturing, and office uses. The community's location and proximity to the UC San Diego and Sorrento Mesa also make it an attractive option for providing workforce housing choices in areas where residential uses do not conflict with industrial lands employment goals. An updated community plan will establish goals and policies to address more sustainable land use, mobility, urban design, and public facilities.

### **What is prompting the community plan update?**

University is a major regional employment center and has strong potential for future growth and transit-oriented development that accommodates a variety of business types and sizes and high density housing, where appropriate. The Mid-Coast trolley line is currently under construction and will provide increased levels of transit service through primary employment areas of the community. There will be six trolley stations within the

community, including two on the UC San Diego campus. Construction of the Mid-Coast line is underway, and service is anticipated to begin by 2021.



*Mid-Coast construction at Genesee Avenue and Esplanade Court – June 4, 2018*

#### How will the SANDAG grant be used to support the Community Plan Update?

The City has received a Smart Growth Incentive Program grant from SANDAG which will be used to support the basic principles of smart growth by building upon the community's role as a major employment, retail, education and housing center interconnected by an expanding regional transportation system. Funds would be utilized to inform a study of how to best capitalize on the community's role as a smart growth area and identify opportunities to increase housing choices near one of the country's leading life sciences centers.

#### Where are the opportunities for change located in the University community?

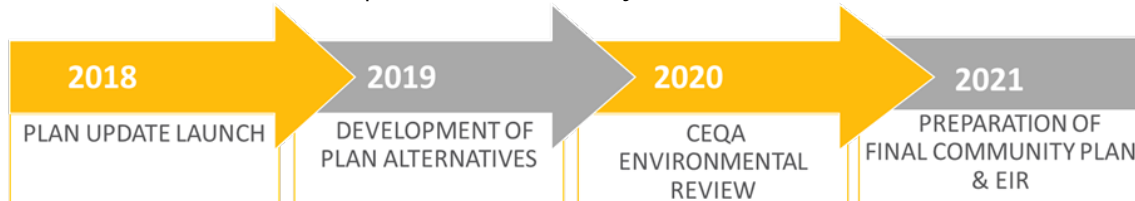
An important part of the update is identifying areas of transition and obtaining input on focus areas for increased employment uses and housing opportunities. This would be accomplished through land use recommendations consistent with a smart growth strategy adjacent to major transit stops and trolley stations. Most of the University community is located within a TPA with the potential to better connect land uses. An existing conditions [Community Atlas](#) was prepared that details some of the constraints and opportunities for future development. The University Community is within the Airport Influence Area for MCAS Miramar. A portion of the community falls within the Accident Potential Zone II associated with the MCAS Miramar flight corridor which limits employment intensity and does not allow for multifamily residential development.

The Community Atlas is also available for review on the project website at this link:

[https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/final-10172018\\_university\\_community\\_atlas.pdf](https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/final-10172018_university_community_atlas.pdf)

### What is the status of the community plan update?

The CPU is in the early stages, with a focus on understanding existing land use patterns and constraints in locating opportunities for new mixed-use development with commercial, office, and residential uses and corresponding connections and facilities. Planning Department staff will work to facilitate community input on land use plan, mobility, and design concepts over a three-year process. The community plan will also have tailored goals and policies consistent with General Plan, CAP, and plans in development such as the Parks Master Plan and Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Plan.



In the spring of 2018, work began on the existing conditions phase and, as mentioned above, an Existing Conditions Community Atlas was completed in September 2018. The Community Atlas is an informational document that focuses on mapped resources relating to land uses, natural resources, urban form, and mobility infrastructure. It was created to develop an understanding of the existing land uses and frame the discussion about opportunity areas in University.

An informational open house was held in September 2018 to generate interest in the community plan update. Community members were invited to learn more about the plan update process, and how to get involved through a subcommittee of the University Community Planning Group. There were over 115 members of the public who attended the event and planning staff received hundreds of comments related to land use, mobility, parks and open space. Major themes addressed by the comments include:



*University Open House - September 26, 2018*

- Preserve and protect the community's open space areas
- Support expansion of multi-modal transportation
- Improve and expand population-based parks
- Long term balanced development for Economic "Upward" development in North University without sprawling "outward"

### How will the community be involved with the update process?

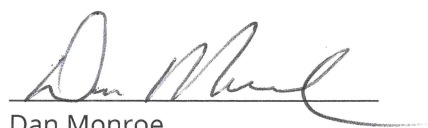
The University Community Plan Update Subcommittee (CPUS) was formed in October 2018, and has begun monthly meetings, the first of which was held in January 2018, to cover administrative details such as selection of the CPUS Chair. Planning Department staff and their consultants will present at the CPUS to obtain input on CPU topics which include land use, mobility, urban design, conservation, public facilities, and parks and recreation as shown in Attachment 2.

Recent outreach includes the Open House event and presentations at the full University Community Planning Group and University Community Plan Update Subcommittee. During the planning process, an online survey and other public engagement tools will be used to obtain diverse input from the public about the plan and will be available on the [project website](https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/cpu/university) or through this link: <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/cpu/university>. Input received at the CPUS, in person and through online engagements will help to inform the development of land use, mobility, and urban design concepts to provide new pedestrian and bicycle connections, increase housing and employment capacity, and guide transit-oriented development.

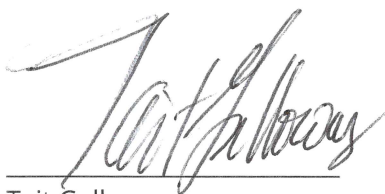
## **CONCLUSION**

The Planning Commission has expressed a desire to have a workshop early in the CPU process, where Commissioners could share their ideas and priorities for the update. The workshop is timed to incorporate input on the community outreach efforts that are ongoing prior to land use, mobility and urban design concepts.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

1. University Community Planning Area
2. University Community Plan Update Schedule

# University Community Plan Update



SANDAG Technical Services - GIS

---+---+---+ Coast Rail

  Community Plan Boundary

  UCSD Campus



0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet



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# UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE TIMELINE

| 2018                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 2019                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 2020                                                                                                                                | 2021                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>PLAN UPDATE LAUNCH</b><br><br>Data Collection<br>Existing Conditions Documentation<br>Existing Conditions Presentation<br>Begin Monthly Community Plan Update (CPU) Subcommittee Meetings<br>Website Launch | <b>DEVELOPMENT OF PLAN ALTERNATIVES</b><br><br>Land Use Alternatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Urban Design</li> <li>- Economic Prosperity</li> <li>- Public Facilities</li> <li>- Open Space &amp; Recreation</li> <li>- Conservation</li> <li>- Noise</li> <li>- Historic Preservation</li> </ul> Mobility Concepts Subcommittee Meetings<br>Online Engagement | <b>CEQA ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW</b><br><br>Draft Community Plan<br>Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)<br>Public Facilities Zoning | <b>PREPARATION OF FINAL COMMUNITY PLAN &amp; EIR</b><br><br>Public Hearing Process |