



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Planning Commission

DATE ISSUED: February 13, 2020 REPORT NO. PC-20-010

HEARING DATE: February 20, 2020

SUBJECT: 770 Washington Community Plan Amendment Initiation

PROJECT NUMBER: 653705

OWNER/APPLICANT: SEVA Property Holdings, LLC / Ryan Leong, SRM, Development

### **SUMMARY**

Issue: Should the Planning Commission INITIATE an amendment to the Uptown Community Plan to redesignate the 1.08-acre site from Community Commercial (0-109 DU/acre) to Urban Village (0-218 DU/acre)?

Staff Recommendation: **Approve** the initiation of the community plan amendment process.

Community Planning Group Recommendation: On February 4, 2020, the Uptown Planning Group voted 8-4-1 in favor of initiating an amendment to the Uptown Community Plan (Attachment 1).

Environmental Review: 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 Section 15004.

Fiscal Impact Statement: None with this action. All costs associated with this action are paid from a deposit account maintained by the applicant.

Code Enforcement Impact: None.

Housing Impact Statement: If initiated, subsequent approval of the proposed community plan amendment would allow for a total of 235 multi-family residential units. This would be an increase of 117 dwelling units above the adopted community plan and zoning.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Site Location and Existing Uses**

The 1.08-acre subject site is located at 770 Washington Street at the northwestern corner of Washington Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The subject site is located west of State Route (SR) 163 and east of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue within the Uptown Community Plan area (Attachment 2). The subject site is currently occupied by an approximately 21,000 square foot, 3-story office building with structured parking.

### **Existing Adjacent Uses**

The subject site is primarily surrounded by a mixture of office, residential, and hospital uses. Land designated Community Commercial (0-109 du/acre) borders the site to the south. Land designated Institutional borders the site to the north and west, and a mixture of high density Residential (45-73 du/acre) and Community Commercial (0-109 du/acre) uses are located east of the subject site (Attachment 3).

### **Community Plan Land Use Designation and Zoning**

The subject site has a land use designation of Community Commercial (0-109 DU/acre), and the underlying zone is CC-3-9 (Attachments 3 and 4). The proposed project site is located within the Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ) Type A - Building Heights. The CPIOZ identifies areas within the community where ministerial approval is granted for proposed development projects with buildings or structures that do not exceed 65 feet. For development projects with buildings or structures that exceed 65 feet, the CPIOZ requires a Site Development Permit.

### **Transit**

The subject site is within a Transit Priority Area (TPA). The subject site is served by Metropolitan Transit Service local bus routes 1, 3, 10, 11, and 120, with a bus stop on Washington Street approximately 0.25 miles west of the site, and multiple bus stops on University Avenue approximately 0.25 miles southwest of the site (Attachment 5).

### **Circulation**

The subject site fronts Washington Street and 8th Avenue. Washington Street is a 4 Lane Major Arterial, and 8th Avenue is a local street, as identified in the Uptown Community Plan. Washington street is a Corridor Sidewalk Pedestrian Route, which supports moderate pedestrian levels in moderate density business and shopping districts (Attachment 6). The Uptown Community Plan recommends complete streets and mobility improvements along Washington Street including bulb-outs/curb extensions, enhanced crossing treatments, traffic calming, leading pedestrian intervals, continental crosswalk phases, and pedestrian recall phases. The Uptown Community Plan identifies the need for pedestrian improvements that promote safe connections along Washington Street over SR-163 and identifies the need for more definable pedestrian connections between the Medical Complex neighborhood and Hillcrest. Currently, there are no Bicycle Facilities on Washington Street or 8th Avenue. The Community Plan and the Bicycle Master Plan identify a Class II bicycle lane along Washington Street (Attachment 7) to connect Uptown to North Park.

### **Public Facilities**

The subject site is within 0.5 mile of the Mission Hills - Hillcrest Knox Library, located on Washington Street. The site is within 0.5 mile of Fire-Rescue Department Station 5, located on 9th Avenue. Florence Elementary School is within 0.5 mile of the site. The Mission Hills Park/Pioneer Memorial Park is located just over 1 mile west of the subject site.

#### Housing & Demographics

As of 2018, SANDAG estimated approximately 47,781 people living in Uptown. This is a 29 percent increase from the 37,109 people living in the community in 2010. As of 2018, there were 23,433 housing units in Uptown. Between 2010 and 2018 the community added 599 housing units, which is a 2.6 percent increase. As of 2020, there are 623 existing affordable housing units in Uptown. There is also a 379-bed transitional housing facility in Uptown.

#### Other Planning Efforts

The subject site is within the Hillcrest Focused Planned Amendment area. As part of the 2016 adoption of the Uptown Community Plan, the City Council along with residents, businesses, and property owners identified the need for a more detailed level of planning for the Hillcrest core. The Focused Plan Amendment effort will address land use, mobility, and public and recreational space needs within the Hillcrest core. The process is currently underway and is expected to be completed by 2022.

#### Other Development Efforts on Adjacent Sites

A 9-story parking structure and a new pedestrian bridge is proposed directly north and downhill of the subject site. The proposed parking structure will replace the existing parking lot along 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The pedestrian bridge will replace the existing pedestrian bridge spanning over 6th Avenue to serve the Scripps Mercy Campus. A 5-story multifamily residence, consisting of 28 dwelling units, was recently constructed directly east of the subject site.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### Proposed Community Plan Amendment

The initiation request proposes to redesignate the property from Community Commercial (0-109 DU/acre) to Urban Village (0-218 DU/acre) and would require a rezone from CC-3-9 to RM-4-11, or one of the recently approved residential mixed-use zones. Both zones allow for retail uses. The proposed amendment would analyze the potential of increasing the amount of residential development from a total of 118 dwelling units, currently allowed by the Community Plan, to 235 dwelling units. If initiated, the applicant has stated their intention to develop up to 300 dwelling units by seeking an affordable housing density bonus with a minimum of 10 percent of the proposed dwelling units as onsite affordable dwelling units.

#### Community Plan Amendment Criteria

The City is unique among jurisdictions in that the process to amend the General Plan and/or a community plan requires either a Planning Commission or City Council initiation before a plan amendment process and accompanying project may proceed. Community plans are components of the City's General Plan. The staff recommendation of approval or denial of the initiation is based upon

compliance with all three of the initiation criteria contained in the General Plan. The Planning Department has provided an overview of how the following initiation criteria are addressed by the proposed amendment:

(a) **The amendment request appears to be consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan and community plan and any community plan specific amendment criteria.**

The proposed amendment would be consistent with the General Plan and Uptown Community Plan. If initiated, the amendment would have the potential to accommodate additional housing opportunities, consistent with the General Plan's Housing Element, which has a key goal of ensuring the provision of sufficient housing for all income groups to accommodate San Diego's anticipated share of regional growth. The amendment would help implement the General Plan Land Use Element by increasing the City's supply of land designated for various residential densities (LU-C.3).

The General Plan and the Uptown Community Plan have policies that aim to provide a variety of housing types and sizes for all age, income, and social groups in residential and village developments, and to provide a variety of different types of land uses within a community to offer a diverse mix of uses. The proposed amendment would have the potential to accommodate a variety of housing opportunities, ranging in price and product type, and the applicant has stated their intention to provide affordable housing units on site consistent with Housing Element goals and policies (HE-1.1 and HE-1.8).

The proposed amendment would be consistent with the Uptown Community Plan. The site is within the Medical Complex neighborhood which marks the transition from Hillcrest's pedestrian-oriented retail district to the more automobile-oriented medical center uses. Development intensities are generally higher in the Medical Complex neighborhood than in the majority of Uptown due to the hospitals and medical office buildings having a higher intensity of building floor area.

The subject site is identified as a Community Village in the Community Plan, which supports very-high residential densities along major commercial transit corridors and nodes in order to focus growth in mixed-use activity centers that are pedestrian friendly, centers of community life, and linked to the transit system. If initiated, the amendment would contribute to the village characteristics identified along Washington Street.

(b) **The proposed amendment provides additional public benefit to the community as compared to the existing land use designation, density/intensity range, plan policy or site design.**

The proposed amendment would allow for additional housing capacity near transit at a time when the City Council has declared a housing state of emergency. If initiated, the applicant has stated their intention to develop up to 300 dwelling units by seeking an affordable housing density bonus with a minimum of 10 percent of the proposed dwelling units as onsite affordable dwelling units.



The proposed increase in dwelling units would be within the Transit Priority Area which supports the City's Climate Action Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Affordable housing onsite would support a variety of household incomes, consistent with the General Plan.

**(c) 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.**

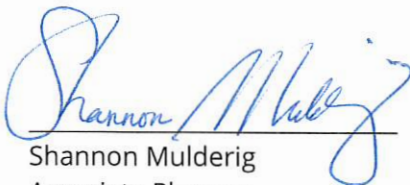
All necessary public services appear to be available to serve the amendment site. If the amendment to the Community Plan is initiated, an analysis of public services and facilities would be conducted with the review of the amendment.

As outlined above, staff has determined that the proposed initiation can meet all of the initiation criteria. The following issues have been identified by City staff. If initiated, these issues, as well as others that may be identified, would be analyzed and evaluated through the community plan amendment review process:

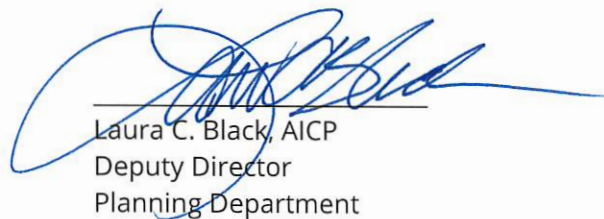
- Appropriate land use designation, residential density, and zoning for the site;
- Ground floor retail or office space;
- Public spaces, pedestrian-scale elements, and other urban design elements;
- Pedestrian and vehicular circulation access; and
- Sustainable development features;

Although staff believes that the proposed amendment meets the necessary criteria for initiation, staff has not fully reviewed the applicant's proposal. Therefore, by initiating this community plan amendment, neither staff nor the Planning Commission is committed to recommend in favor or denial of the proposed amendment.

Respectfully submitted,



Shannon Mulderig  
Associate Planner  
Planning Department



Laura C. Black, AICP  
Deputy Director  
Planning Department

**Attachments:**

1. Uptown Community Planning Group Draft Minutes for February 4, 2020
2. Vicinity Map
3. Uptown Community Plan Land Use Map
4. Current Zoning Map
5. Transit Map
6. Street Classifications Map
7. Bicycle Facilities Map
8. Ownership Disclosure Statement
9. Initiation Request Letter



Uptown Community Planning Group Draft Minutes for February 4, 2020

In Attendance: Bob Daniel, Dennis Seisun, Bill Ellig, Roy Dahl, Tom Mullaney, Michael Brennan, Soheil Nakhshab, Zach Bunshaft, Brer Marsh, Matthew Medeiros, Stu McGraw, Amy Hayes, Steve Cline.

Absent: Bill Smith, Tim Gahagan, Gail Freidt, and Clint Daniels.

I. Meeting called to order by Soheil at 6:02pm

1. Introductions

Soheil said that Gail Freidt & Clint Daiels cannot and won't be teleconferencing into the Uptown Planners meeting.

2. Adoption of agenda and minutes

Agenda approved by acclamation.

3. Approval of December Minutes

Minutes approved by acclamation

4. Treasurer's Report

No activity since last report.

5. Chair Report

No report.

6. CPC Report

No report.

II. Subcommittee Reports

1. Ad/Hoc Operations/Outreach - Matt

The next meeting not listed yet, but there will likely be one in March.

2. Design Review - Brer

There has been no Design Review subcommittee meeting since last full Uptown Planners meetings.

III. Public Communications

1. Sarah Davis spoke about her campaign

2. Sol Schumer would appreciate page numbers on minutes and agendas and would appreciate past agendas be posted on the Uptown Planners website. Michael Prinz sent an email to staff at the City to keep the City website updated with past agendas.

3. Chris Olsen, a candidate for City Council in District 3, visited the Uptown Planners for his last time before the March Primary and announced meet and greets.

4. David Mier announced that the UC Regents approved a plan in November to move forward with the Hillcrest Health Campus, now in design phase and philanthropic fundraising. Construction will begin within next three months and neighbors will be informed of noise and clearing of land. Additionally, UCSD entered into an MOU with the County to develop a plan for the 3rd Avenue Behavioral Health Hub.

#### IV. Representatives of Elected Officials

Jawad Al Baghdadi spoke from Susan Davis's office.

Randy Wilde spoke from Todd Gloria's office. Announced failure of SB - 50. More efforts being made in future to address housing crisis. Tracking NAVWAR project closely in case of State role. Announced their office's ability to assist with Real ID and DMV related issues.

Bill Ellig asked about the possibility of the DMV moving to Mission Valley. Randy stated that a Regional means assessment is taking place and the DMV is essentially going back to the drawing board. Randy will try to get more information.

Chevelle spoke from Toni Atkins office and introduced herself as the new Community Representative for the Uptown area and all of D3. Chevelle said that Senator Atkins committed to a bill that increases housing supply this session. The Pro Tem typically has about three bill packages due to nature of the role in the Senate, but Housing will be the focus of one of them.

Tom echoed that community planning groups do not want SB 50 as well as CPC. Chevelle responded that Senator Atkins understood some community opposition, but wanted to move the bill forward in its early stages and continue crafting it and forward the important conversation.

Ty Burch spoke from Councilmember Chris Ward's office. He thanked everyone for attending the Rainbow Crosswalk reveal. Councilmember sent out budget priorities. Looking to put more into homeless diversion projects. An overhead flashing light at the crosswalk on Albatross and Washington was requested to Mayor's office. Still working on better lights on Vermont Street. Updated the Uptown Planners that we could not split DIF funds with Old Town to work on the one way street on Presidio and Cosoy. Councilmember is supportive of mixed use of DMV site if they choose to move.

#### V. Consent Agenda

1. Letter of support: San Diego LGBT Pride

Zach moved to approve, Matt 2nd, unanimously approved (14/0/0).

## VI. Action Items

### 1. Amendment to Uptown Community Plan: 770 Washington Street

Speakers: Nancy Allen - SRM Development; Karen Ruggels, Brittany Ruggels Wallace - KLR Planning

Brittany Ruggels Wallace presented their initiation request to explore a different plan for the site than the general plan currently states. They are not asking for the amendment now. This would allow the ability to move forward with exploration to see if that will be something they will be seeking in the future. Rezone would be needed and determined in consultation with City staff. City staff recommended urban village land use designation, a subdivision of general use.

#### Public Comment:

Sharon Gehl - urged support. Believes the community plan was a failure. Believes this will create housing near jobs, reducing traffic, and bring down housing costs.

Patrick Santana- Urged support of the request. Believes we are in a much different place than when the general plan was updated.

Amanda Nelson - Supports the project. She works in North Park and takes bus to work. Wants more people her age to be able to live here.

Oscar Tavera- Loves this area, friends love this area, but remark how difficult it is to find housing in this area. Wants to offer the choice of not having parking.

Parker Schutltz - Stated Existing bonus' allows for possible 250 units, but figured out that this change would allow for smaller more affordable units.

Mat Wahlstrom - State he is aware that this is preliminary, but he is cautious about going down this road. He doesn't like the idea of spot zoning and believes current zoning is already zoned for enough.

#### Board Comment:

Amy - Does not have specific issues with density, but has issues with heights. She requested an estimate of the height, but it is too speculative at this point.

Stu - Echoed concerns of spot zoning and traffic in the area.

Steve- Supportive.

Matt- Would approve of how this would fit into Hillcrest Gateway.

Brer - Believes this is a tough site with freeway off ramp. Directly across the street is residential and this would be consistent. Urged the possibility of contributing to MAD.

Soheil - Clarified that traffic study process will be needed through with City so traffic concerns shouldn't hold up this project now. Urged to engage with community and Uptown Planners going forward. As for

"spot zoning" concerns, he believes the City isn't "cookie cutter" and a custom approach may be necessary.

Michael- Echoed sentiments of community input being necessary.

Tom- Does not like the location near the 163 ramp. Believes the City has already paid a lot to look at traffic impacts here. Believss a lot of units can already be built here.

Roy - Believes traffic will be worsened and neighborhood is not walkable as is. Wants to see this be a walkable neighborhood first and create step backs for walkability. Urged that we follow the model of mission hills that is more walkable.

Bill - Focused plan amendment coming in the next year. Believes this should be rolled into the focused plan update.

Dennis - Wants to know the need for going from 236 units to 300. Believes there's a lot of money to be made. Wants to know about the possibility of a pedestrian footbridge. Ultimately, believes they should be able to at least look into jumping through the hoops.

Bob - Not supportive. Believes it should maybe be folded into the Hillcrest focused plan update.

Michael Prinz - Focused plan expected June of 2022. Applicant can wait or move forward but City has no certainty of timeline. In regard to the fear of "spot zoning," the City has proposed a process within the general plan to review on a parcel by parcel basis. After that process, the applicant would need to make findings to re-zone, then update the City plan, and be approved.

Matt moved to support the initiation required to explore the possibility of a future amendment to the general plan, Brer 2nd

Dennis, Roy, Michael, Zach, Brer, Matt, Steve, Amy in favor.

Bob, Bill, Tom, Stu opposed

Motion passes (8/4/1) Soheil abstained as his vote as chair was not necessary.

## 2. Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment Subcommittee

Priority was given to members. Zac was out of town and Michael was left out. Modification of committee may be needed.

There were two final openings and Michael.

Tom expressed no need to expressly have only Hillcrest residents. We are all elected to represent all of Uptown.

Roy expressed that instead of kicking someone off the subcommittee, have a meeting of the whole.

Michael Prinz - Soonest it could start would be end of February, early March.

Public Comment:

Oscar Tavera spoke the inclusion of hillcrest dedicated individuals though no need to only have Hillcrest residents.

Mat Wahlstrom - Believes a committee of the whole is the best way to approach this

Tom believes motion to have committee of a whole for the first meeting change as it goes, Michael 2nd, unanimous.

Michael Prinz will coordinate with Soheil for a date for a special meeting for this purpose

3. Operations & Outreach be made permanent subcommittee

Matt moves to make this a permanent subcommittee, Michael 2nd, unanimous.

I move to put Matt as co-chair, Steve 2nd, unanimous minus Matt abstaining.

4. Subcommittee Members: Brer Marsh would like to discuss the option of naming board members to the Design Review Subcommittee.

If 5 people named, 3 need to show up. Recommendation to not appoint more than 3 sitting members so as not to reach a quorum.

Matt requested without need to update bylaws to change subcommittee to recommend each committee chair appoint 3 members as sitting members.

Lu Rehling: Didn't understand why only Design review. Correction that this is not and it applies to all.

Mat Wahlstrom believes this is a solution in search of a problem and possibly a power grab.

unanimous, Dennis abstains because he didn't fully understand the action item.

5. March 2020 Board Meeting Date Change

Public comment:

Kathy Keehan encourages the change especially for those who are poll counting.

Mat Wahlstrom believes there are always issues arising with the first Tuesday of the month. Would like the City to look at a better date of the month for all the meetings.

Soheil tasking for future meeting to operations and outreach. For March, we are waiting to hear back from Joyce Beers about availability.

Matt, this is a new issue with the updated March primary. According to bylaws, must occur in March on the same date of a general meeting. Possibly on a Saturday or a Sunday. Possibly at the Mission Hills library, but preference for usual site.

Michael Prinz recommended Vote can be made tonight for the chair to have the discretion set a date, time, and location, bcc everyone to avoid serial comms, if a quorem confirmed, date can be set. 3rd Wednesday and 2nd Tuesday should be avoided.

Bob makes this motion, Roy 2nd, unanimous.

## 6. Election Committee Creation

Meeting requirement clarification

Public Comment: Parker didn't know he had to sign in to qualify, claimed he attended multiple meeting but no public comment made in the past.

Soheil determined must be consistent with past procedure of minutes/sign in sheet.

Michael Prinz: In order to serve on the subcommittee must have taken the COW or ECOW training. Recommend appointing 3-5 members.

Roy stated we need to get the word out for people to run since we did not have a meeting last month.

Bob, Michael, and Steve interested in sitting on committee.

Matt moved to appoint these members with Steve as chair, unanimous.

Applications needed to be added to the website. Application deadline needed. Set by Soheil at February 25th. Encourage all to apply! If don't qualify, don't qualify.

## VII. Information Items

### 1. Request for more information forco-investing in One-Way Street Traffic study

Answered by Ty, now not relevant.

### 2. Scoping Meetings for Revitalization of NAVWAR facilities on the Navy Old Town Campus at Naval Base Point Loma.

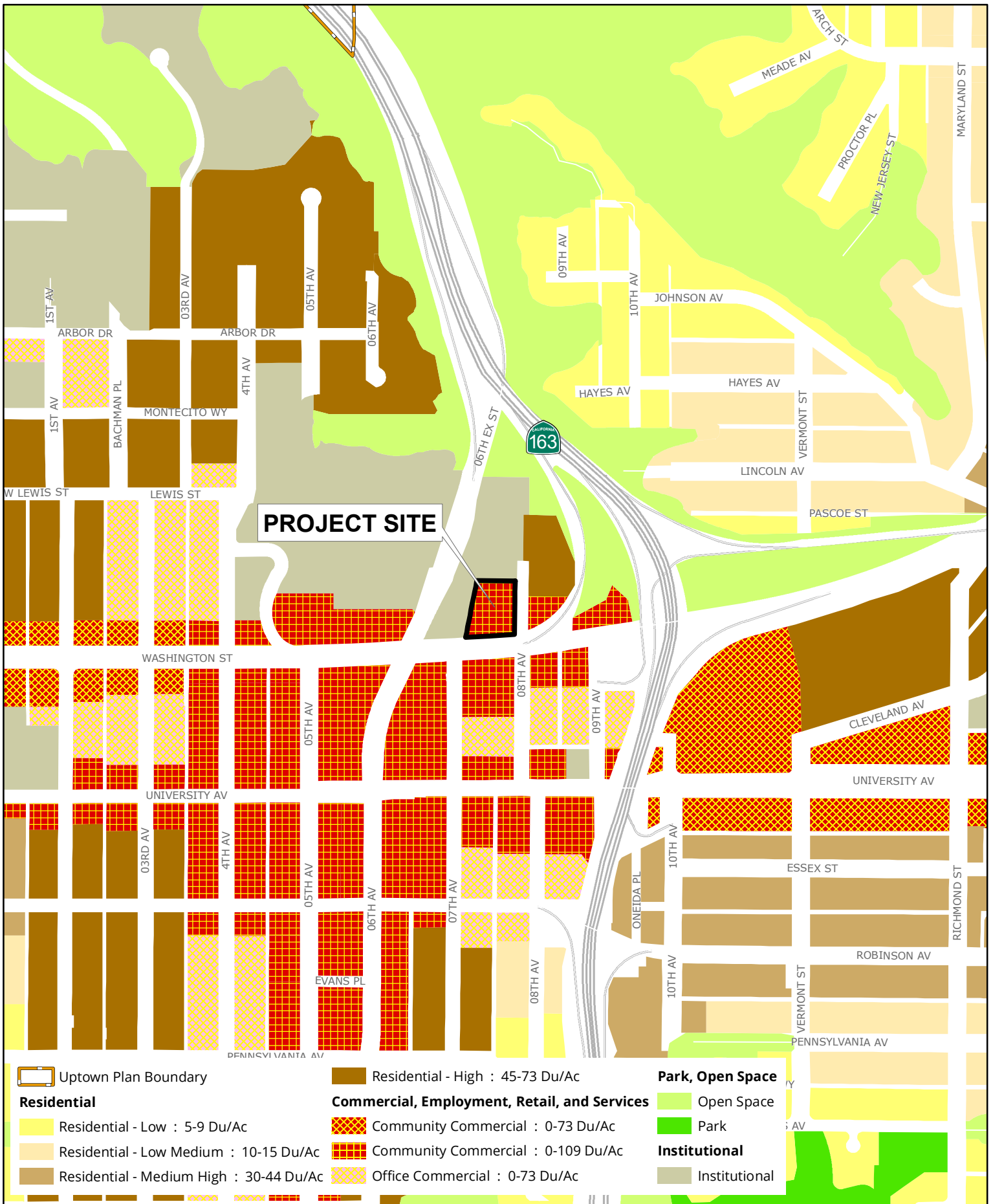
Public meetings will be held February 13th and 19th. See supporting document.

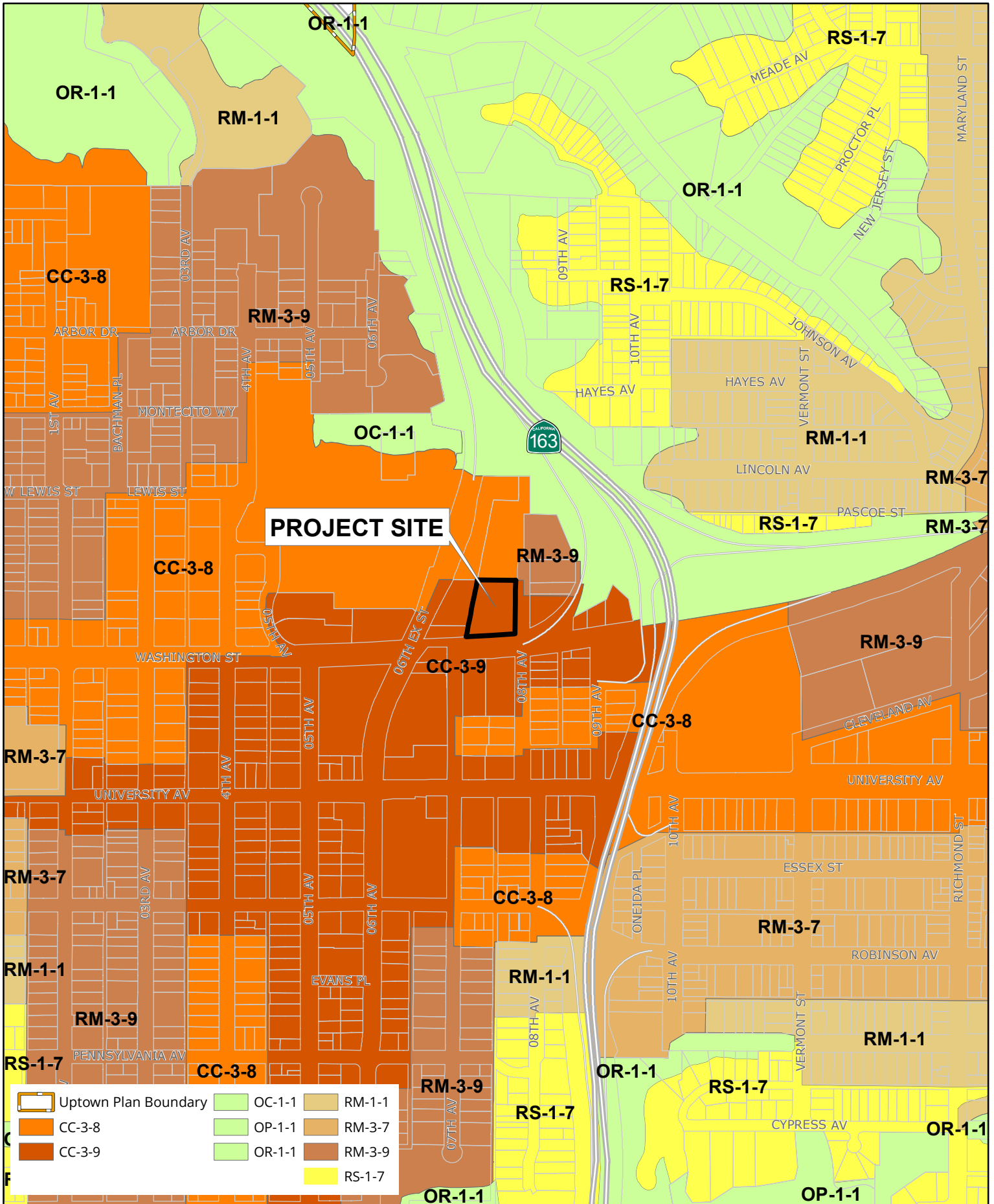
Matt moved to adjourn, Zach 2nd, unanimous,

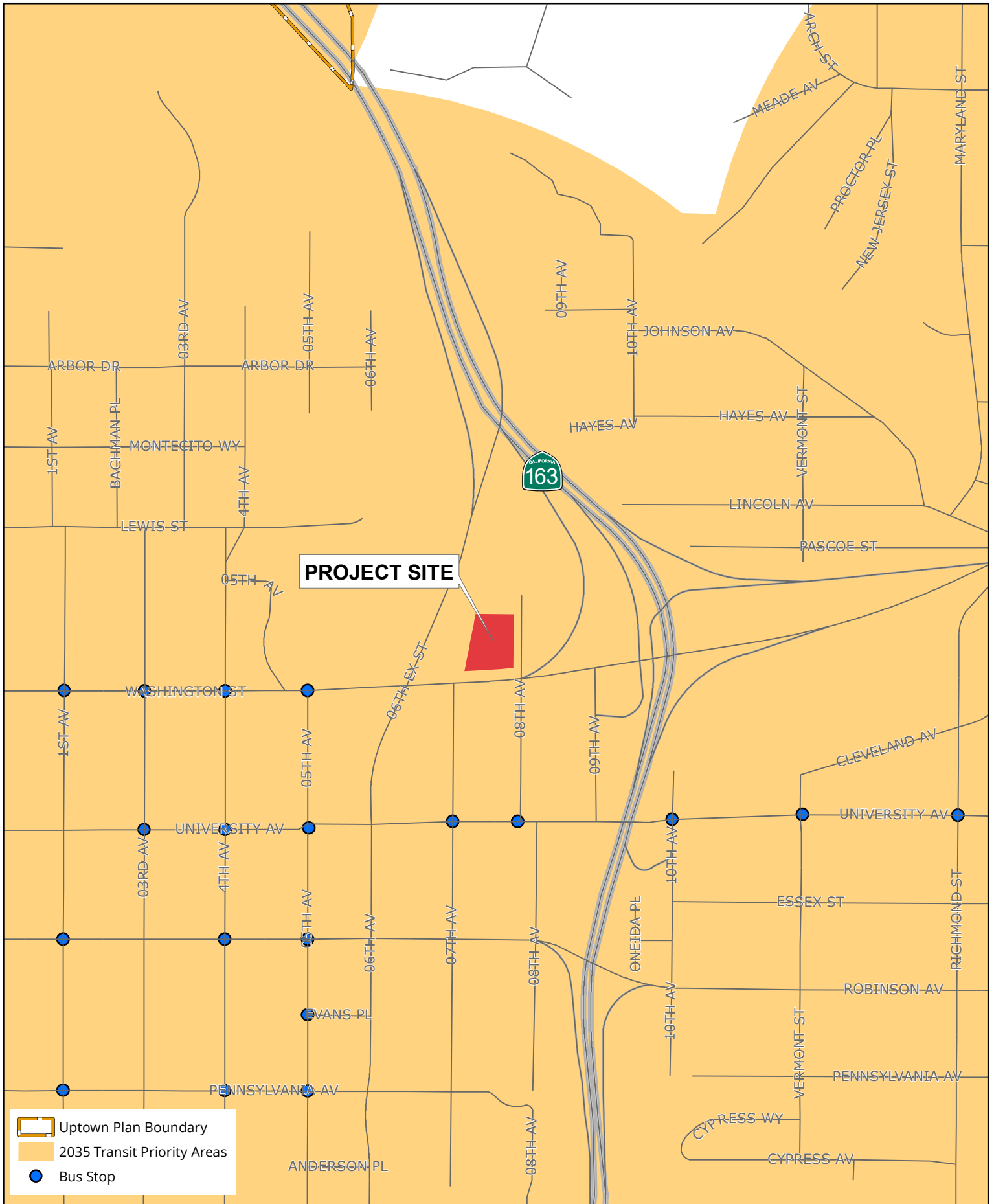


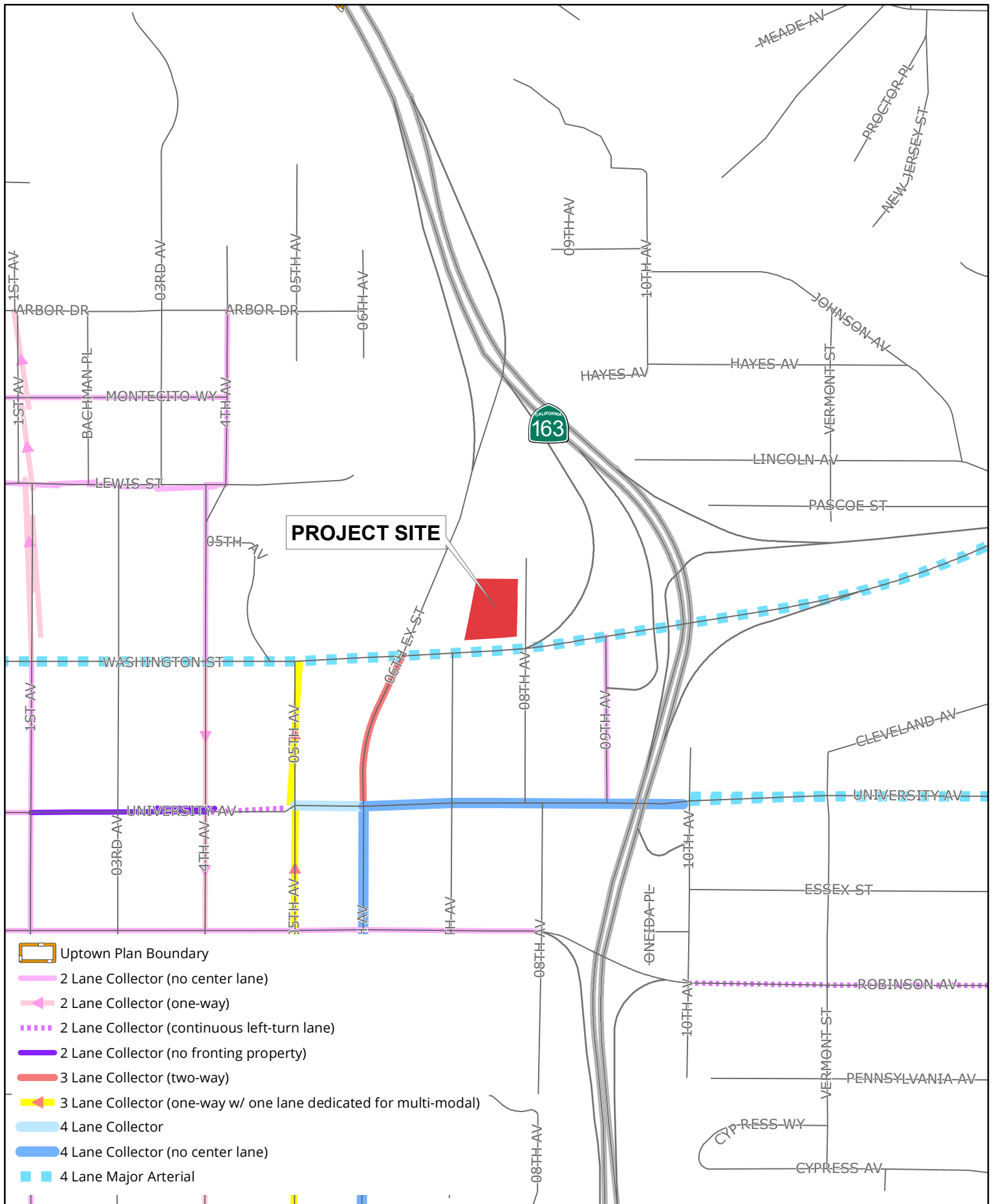




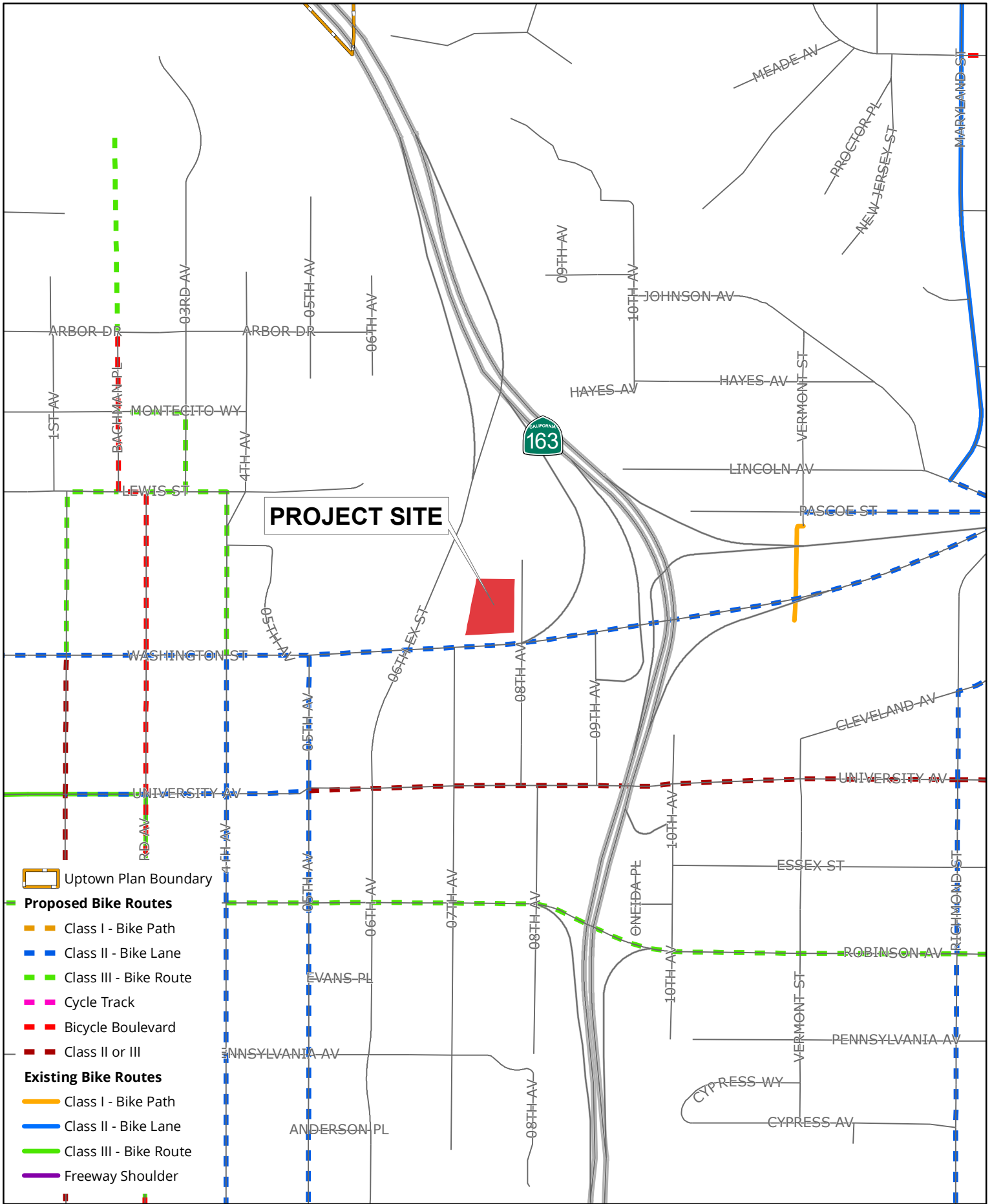









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	<b>City of San Diego Development Services</b> 1222 First Ave., MS 302 San Diego, CA 92101 (619) 446-5000	<h1 style="margin: 0;">Ownership Disclosure Statement</h1>	<b>FORM DS-318</b>  October 2017
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**Approval 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:** 770 Washington

**Project No. For City Use Only:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Address:** 770 Washington Street, San Diego 92103

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

☐ Corporation ☒ Limited Liability -or- ☐ General - What State? \_\_\_\_\_ Corporate Identification No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ 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: SEVA PROPERTY HOLDINGS, LLC - VISHAAL MEHRA ☒ Owner ☐ Tenant/Lessee ☐ Successor Agency

Street Address: 770 WASHINGTON STREET, SUITE 200

City: SAN DIEGO State: CA Zip: 92103

Phone No.: 619-318-2636 Fax No.: 858-278-3660 Email: vmehra@artemis-research.com

Signature:  Date: 25 Nov 2019

Additional pages Attached: ☐ Yes ☒ No

**Applicant**

Name of Individual: SRM DEVELOPMENT, LLC - RYAN LEONG ☐ Owner ☐ Tenant/Lessee ☒ Successor Agency

Street Address: 111 N POST, STE 200

City: SPOKANE State: WA Zip: 99201

Phone No.: 509-455-5477 Fax No.: 509-838-0933 Email: ryan@srmddevelopment.com

Signature:  Date: 11/25/2019

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

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P.O. Box 882676  
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 karen@klrplanning.com  
 619.578.9505

November 27, 2019

Mr. Mike Hansen  
 Planning Director  
 City of San Diego  
 9485 Aero Drive  
 San Diego, California 92123

RE: LETTER OF REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY PLAN/GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT INITIATION  
 FOR THE **770 WASHINGTON STREET PROJECT** IN THE UPTOWN COMMUNITY  
 IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO, GENERAL PLAN, 2008

APN: 444-560-3600

APPROXIMATELY 1.08 ACRES

Dear Mike,

On behalf of SRM Development, we are pleased to submit this request for initiation of an Amendment to the Uptown Community Plan for the **770 Washington Street** project. The 770 Washington Street project proposes the redevelopment of the existing office building and parking located at the 770 Washington Street, San Diego 92103.

Encompassing approximately 1.08 acres at the intersection of Washington Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the Uptown Community Plan area, the project site is occupied by an approximately 21,000-square-foot three-story office building with structured parking (see Attachment A – Aerial Photograph). The 770 Washington Street project would propose that the site be redeveloped with very high density multi-family residential use. Preliminary concept plans for this redevelopment/in-fill project envision approximately 300 units.

The project site is designated as Multiple Use on the City of San Diego General Plan Land Use and Street System Map (General Plan Figure LU-2; see Attachment B) and Community Commercial: 0-109 Du/Ac on the Uptown Community Plan Community Plan Land Use Map – East (Uptown Community Plan Figure 2-3; see Attachment C). The project proposes an amendment to the Uptown Community Plan to redesignate the project site as Urban Village (see Attachment D – Proposed Land Uses). The proposed Community Plan land use designation aligns with the draft vision for the Focus Plan Amendment being contemplated by City staff to allow for doubled residential density within a portion of the core of the Hillcrest neighborhood. The proposed land use change would remain consistent with the General Plan designation of Multiple Use as multiple uses may occur within the City's high density residential zones.

At this time, we are contemplating a rezone from the current CC-3-9 zone to the RM-4-11 zone, which would allow up to 218 dwelling units per acre. The project is also anticipated to include 10 percent of the residential units to be marketed to affordable income residents. Consistent with the provision of the Affordable Housing Infill Ordinance, by implementing a density bonus, the project proposes approximately 300 units.



In addition to the Community Plan Amendment/General Plan Amendment and Rezone, Process Five, other discretionary actions that would may be required include a Planned Development Permit (if proposed site plan and design result in any deviations to the proposed zone), and a Site Development Permit (to develop taller than 65 feet in height).

The following section addresses the criteria associated with the plan amendment process, as outlined in General Plan Land Use Policy LU-D.10:

*LU-D.10. Require that the recommendation of approval or denial to the Planning Commission be based upon compliance with all of the three initiation criteria as follows: a) the amendment request appears to be consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan and community plan and any community plan specific amendment criteria; b) the proposed amendment provides additional public benefit to the community as compared to the existing land use designation, density/intensity range, plan policy or site design; and c) 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.*

We believe that all three criteria can be met. The findings and our initial responses are as follows:

- a) *The amendment request appears to be consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan and community plan and any community plan specific amendment criteria.***

#### General Plan Consistency

There are numerous goals and policies of the City of San Diego General Plan with which the amendment would be consistent. For concision, however, the core of planning in the General Plan is the Strategic Framework and the City of Villages Strategy. The City of Villages Strategy “focuses growth into mixed-use activity venters that are pedestrian-friendly districts linked to an improved regional transit system” (pg. SF-3). Further:

*A “village” is defined as the mixed-use heart of a community where residential, commercial, employment, and civic uses are all present and integrated. Each village will be unique to the community in which it is located. All villages will be pedestrian-friendly and characterized by inviting, accessible and attractive streets and public spaces. Public spaces will vary from village to village, consisting of well-designed public parks or plazas that bring people together. Individual villages will offer a variety of housing types affordable for people with different incomes and needs. Over time, villages will connect to each other via an expanded regional transit system.*

*Implementation of the City of Villages strategy relies upon the designation and development of village sites. There are many factors to consider when designating village sites including the capacity for growth, existing and future public facilities, transportation options, community character, and environmental constraints. Precise village boundaries, the specific mix of uses, architectural form, needed public facilities, and the type of public space within proposed village areas will be determined through community plan updates or amendments.[...] (pg. SF-3)*

The proposed amendment would reinforce the foundation for a village in a location identified by the City of San Diego as having moderate to high village propensity (General Plan Figure LU-1; see Attachment E). Additionally, this is an area with existing transit opportunities and a walkable street network, with a transit- and pedestrian-supportive development intensity just west of the project site. The proposed amendment would allow for very high density residential use designed with a pedestrian focus along local transit and pedestrian routes. Although this amendment would not create a village by itself, it supports the developing village fabric of the community in this area and provides the framework for a greater village to evolve

around the project site and in adjacent areas, as envisioned by the Uptown Community Plan and the Focus Plan Update process.

#### Community Plan Consistency

The Uptown Community Plan includes 13 Land Use Element goals. The following goals relate to the proposed project:

- Residential densities appropriate to each Uptown neighborhood.
- A variety of housing types for all age, income, and social groups.
- Multifamily development that does not detract from its surrounding neighborhood.
- Active commercial districts that benefit from a sustainable level of residential density and multiple mobility options.
- Compatibility of uses within established neighborhoods.

The proposed land use plan amendment would be consistent with these goals. The project would include very high residential density in an area actively being explored for such density. The project would provide multi-family housing units in a range of sizes, as well as on-site affordable housing. The proposed development would not detract from its surrounding neighborhood, as this area is in transition and includes a diverse mix of land uses and development types. Similarly, as such, the project would be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Although the project at this time does not envision retail at this time, the rezone would be likely be to a very high density residential zone, which would allow for ground floor retail. Furthermore, by providing additional residential units in very close proximity to the walkable core of Hillcrest, the project would indirectly support the active commercial district to the west.

(The Uptown Community Plan does not include any specific amendment criteria.)

***b) The proposed amendment provides additional public benefit to the community as compared to the existing land use designation, density/intensity range, plan policy or site design.***

The project site is currently designated for community commercial land uses with a residential density of up to 109 du/ac. Although this is not a low residential density, there is a demand for housing within the City of San Diego (and particularly within walkable urban villages) and the various other existing site parameters (such as the development regulations of the existing underlying zone) allow for far greater residential density than the zone and land use designations density limit allows. Sidewalks are not enhanced, and there are no bicycle facilities adjacent to the project site.

The proposed land use plan amendment would allow for development of a pedestrian-focused project that would provide synergy not only between the proposed project, newly constructed multi-family housing on the east, and other residential land uses, but also with adjacent employment and retail uses, which include such valuable services and amenities as hospital and medical offices, dining, and shopping. The proposed amendment envisions a project designed with expansive pedestrian entrances, inviting residents and visitors into the site and providing open-air gathering space that may take the form of dining and gathering areas, a corner plaza, or other outdoor settings. The density that would be accommodated by the proposed amendment would provide a concentration of potential users for area transit and would allow for an infusion of active transportation users. All of these features contribute positively to the community identity and sense of place, and are a public benefit.

***c) 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.***

The proposed amendment represents a fully-developed site within an urbanized community of the City of San Diego. Public facilities, services, and utilities exist to serve the uses on-site today. As a component of the amendment process, the environmental document required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) would provide an in-depth analysis of the potential impacts of the proposed project on a number of issues areas, to include public facilities, services, and utilities.

We respectfully request that the City of San Diego Planning Department process this land use plan amendment initiation request to study the potential for a change to the current land use, allowing for the potential redevelopment with a vibrant, urban mixed-use project that can provide much-needed housing to the community (and City as a whole) and support the existing and evolving mobility options, all while preserving and expanding employment opportunities. We urge staff to schedule our request for a hearing at the City of San Diego Planning Commission at the earliest possible opportunity.

Thank you for your attention to this project. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 619.204.9757 or [brittany@klrplanning.com](mailto:brittany@klrplanning.com).

Sincerely,

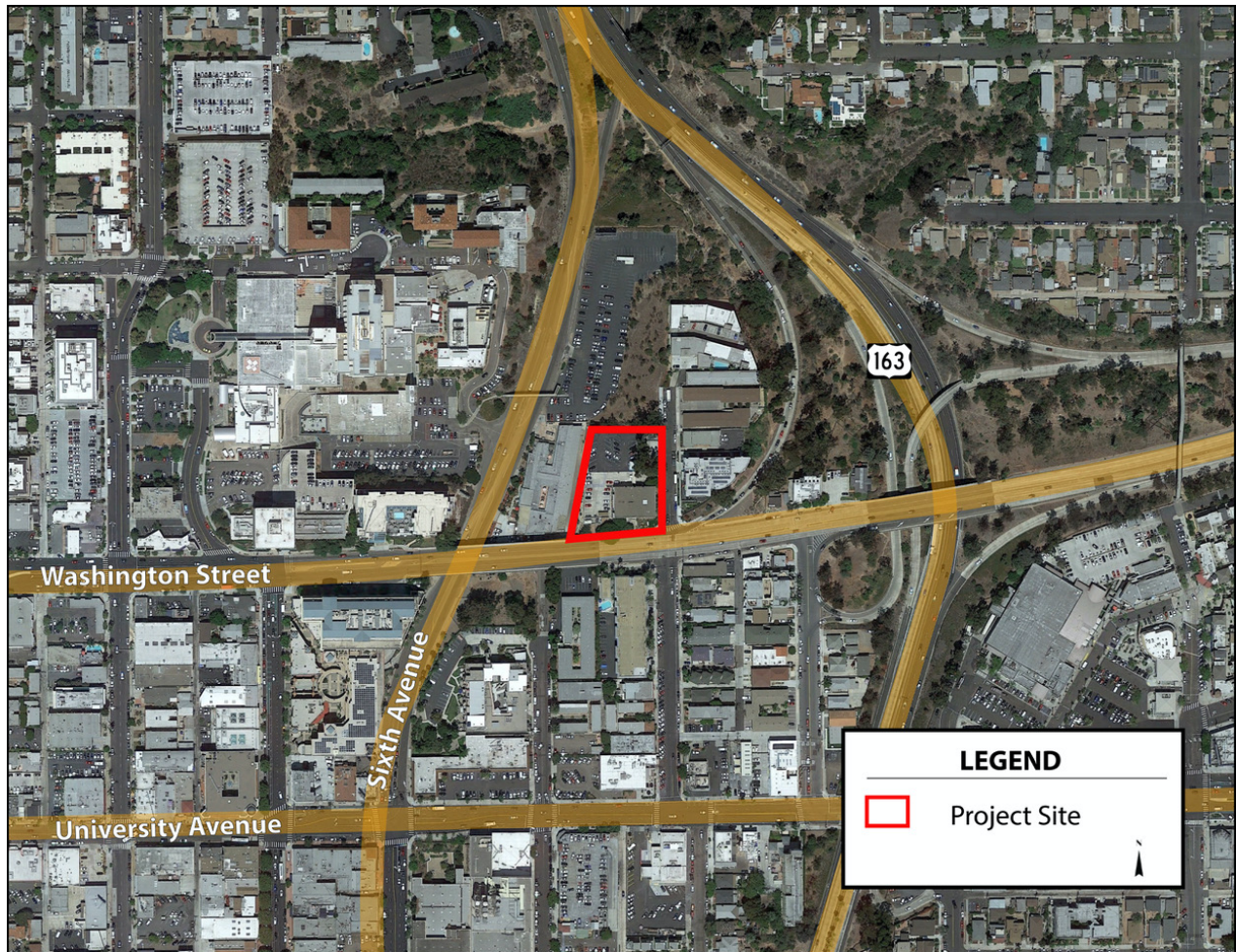


Brittany Ruggels Wallace  
*Senior Project Manager*

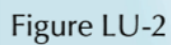
Cc: Ryan Leong, SRM Development  
Karen L. Ruggels, KLR PLANNING

Attachments: A – Aerial Photograph  
B – City of San Diego General Plan Land Use and Street System Map  
C – Uptown Community Plan Community Plan Land Use Map – East  
D – Proposed Land Uses  
E – City of San Diego General Plan Village Propensity

Attachment A – Aerial Photograph









## Attachment D – Proposed Land Uses





## Attachment E – City of San Diego General Plan Village Propensity

