



**THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

DATE: September 23, 2020

TO: Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Martha Blake, Development Project Manager, Development Services Department

SUBJECT: Costa Verde Revitalization Project No. 477943 – Response to University Community Planning Group (UCPG) Recommendations

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The University Community Planning Group voted 10-3, with one refusal to recommend approval of the project with recommendations (please see attachment for the full recommendation).

This memo is to document City Staff response to those recommendations.

**Recommendation 1:** *Provide a Class IV cycle track on the south side of Nobel Drive to compliment the proposed cycle track on the north side of the Nobel between Genesee Avenue and Regents Road.*

Staff Response (*from EIR Response to comments (RTC) – SANDAG letter*): Section 5.2.4.2 of the EIR describes improvements to expand the local alternative transportation network, including bicycle improvements the project would construct. The Costa Verde project proposes bicycle improvements along Nobel Drive between Genesee Avenue and Regents Road to provide a one-way cycle track on the north side consistent with the ongoing University Community Plan Update Draft Bicycle Network Recommendations (March 2020). The City typically requires development projects to construct bicycle improvements along their project frontages. The Costa Verde project frontage along Nobel Drive extends between Genesee Avenue and Costa Verde Boulevard but the Project's proposed Class IV bicycle improvement extends beyond its frontage westerly to Regents Road.

In addition to the one-way cycle track, the following items will be implemented with the project to encourage bicycle use (EIR p. 5.2-69):

- Provide bicycle access to the Mid-Coast Trolley Station and UTC Transit Station.
- Provide elevators to the Trolley Station that are sized to accommodate bicycles.
- Provide runnels and/or elevators at all stair locations to facilitate bicycle access.
- Provide a bicycle route through the site that would connect to existing bicycle lanes along Genesee Avenue and Nobel Drive. Appropriate on-site signage will be included to formalize locations where bicycle activity is allowed.

- Provide bicycle lockers and parking on site to support bicycle circulation.
- Provide showers to enable bicycle usage for commuting.

**Recommendation 2:** *Extend the TDM programs from three years to five years and include mode share targets to help meet City-wide CAP goals.*

Staff response (*from RTC from UCPG*): The Climate Action Plan (CAP) mode share goal reflects a citywide goal for mode share in Transit Priority Areas, and is not a standard or threshold used for individual project analysis, nor is it directly comparable to the 13 percent Project specific mode share estimate made for the purposes of the Transportation Impact Analysis. The City encourages and incentivizes non-vehicular travel, there is no requirement imposed by the City or CEQA mandating that land development projects meet a specific mode share percentage. Each project evaluated is context-specific, and dependent on project location, land use mix, and accessibility to transit, among other factors. Lastly, the Transportation Impact Analysis was conducted conservatively by using the lower non-vehicular mode share calculated using the SANDAG MXD Model (13 percent) rather than assuming a City-wide mode-share goal (20 percent). This conservative approach ensures that potential traffic congestion is not underestimated.

The project applicant has agreed to a TDM Monitoring and Reporting Program to assess the estimated net reduction in project trips due to the proposed TDM measures. Traffic counts and data relating to paid parking, nonvehicular usage, carpool/vanpool usage, and transit subsidies will be collected using on-site person surveys, field visits, coordination with the property owners and tenants and traffic counts. Annual TDM Reports will be prepared and submitted to the satisfaction of the City Engineer. The implementation, maintenance, and monitoring of the TDM Program will be a condition of the discretionary permit. Staff typically would expect a TDM Plan to be implemented on a long-term basis, with a monitoring and reporting program conducted annually for a period of five years. The project applicant has agreed to conduct the monitoring program annually for a period of three years, as reflected in the draft SDP/PDP/NDP conditions.

**Recommendation 3:** *UCPG is concerned that the water run-off from area where the Chevron gas station and McDonald's restaurant are located will not be connected to the storm water collection system constructed for the project site, and request that area be included.*

Staff Response (*from RTC from UCPG*): Drainage from the parcel with the existing McDonalds and Chevron would remain unchanged in the proposed conditions. Please note, the drainage patterns for sub-basins A13 and A14 are identical in Exhibit B (Existing Drainage Exhibit) and Exhibit C (Proposed Drainage Exhibit) of draft EIR Appendix G1. Node #107 is the discharge point for the site and therefore runoff generated from sub-basins A13 and A14 would not be routed to the detention system. Because the Project does not propose work in these areas, additional treatment of associated stormwater is not required.

ATTACHMENT: University Community Planning Group Letter dated September 15, 2020

September 15, 2020

Martha Blake  
Development Services Department  
City of San Diego

Dear Martha,

At the University Community Planning Group meeting on September 15, 2020, the following recommendation to approve project PTS 477943 as presented was passed by a vote of 10 Yes, 3 No, 0 Abstentions, and 1 Recusal. The project as presented consists of approximately 178,000 sq. ft. of retail, 40,000 sq. ft. of office space, 360,000 sq. ft. of R&D space, and a 200 room hotel.

The UCPG also makes the following recommendations:

1. Regency should complete a class IV cycle track on the south side of Nobel Drive between Genesee Ave. and Regents Road to compliment the class IV cycle track, which Regency proposes for the north side of Nobel Drive between Genesee Ave and Regents Road.

Justifications:

This recommendation reinforces SANDAG's comment letter (RTC-9): *"SANDAG appreciates that the project proposes to install one-way Class 4 Bikeways on the Nobel Drive frontage, but one-way bikeways in one direction leave critical gaps for people who bike. The project should include Class 4 Bikeways on both sides of Nobel Drive and Genesee Avenue."*

The project will add 4,981 new daily trips. The EIR projects that 87 percent will be *automobile trips*. Proposed parking greater than city requirements reinforces expectations that this is an auto-oriented project. Mode share of 13% transit/bike/ped does not meet San Diego's urgent need to shift transportation mode share city-wide including through conformance with Climate Action targets. It does not meet expectations for critical Transit Priority Areas such as this one.

Increased bicycle mode share in this project is essential to shifting mode share overall. The surrounding neighborhood is very bicycle unfriendly. The UCPG considers being able to ride a bicycle both to and

from Costa Verde to be critical for this transportation mode; the single track on the north side of Nobel only provides a one way connection.

2. Extend TDM programs to five years (from the present proposal of three). TDM programs should include mode share targets that encourage progress toward meeting City-wide CAP goals.

Justifications:

3-year TDM programs are too short to capture and respond to project operation at full occupancy; a longer window will allow program review and appropriate responses to ensure maximum transit/bike/ped mode share over longer term.

Transit Oriented Development must work at a site rich in transit assets or the Climate Action Plan cannot work in practice. Longer term TDM programs with mode share targets supports progress toward meeting city wide climate action goals.

3. The UCPG is very concerned that storm water run-off from the Chevron Station/Car Wash and the McDonalds will not be connected to the storm water collection system that Regency will construct for the remainder of the project. We request this connection be reviewed for inclusion in the project and be made as soon as possible.

Justifications:

Water run-off from the Gas Station/Car Wash and McDonalds is heavily polluted.

Excluding significantly polluting sections of the Costa Verde Specific Plan from new storm water containment planned for the rest of the site will continue to pollute the Rose Creek watershed (Mission Bay).

Sincerely,



Chris Nielsen  
UCPG Chair  
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