

**DATE ISSUED:** May 18, 2006 **REPORT NO. PC- 06-157**

**ATTENTION:** **Planning Commission, Agenda of May 25, 2006**

**SUBJECT:** QUALCOMM BUILDING “N” HELISTOP  
PROJECT NO. 73455  
PROCESS 5

**OWNER/  
APPLICANT:** Qualcomm, Incorporated (Attachment 10)  
Architects Delawie Wilkes Rodrigues Barker

**SUMMARY**

**Issue:** Should the Planning Commission recommend City Council approval of a an elevated helistop on a ten-story research and development building at 5665 Morehouse Drive within the Mira Mesa Community Plan?

**Staff Recommendation:** **Approve** Conditional Use Permit No. 224802

**Community Planning Group Recommendation:** The Mira Mesa Community Planning Group met on September 19, 2005 and voted 12-1-1 to approve the project as presented with the condition that the helicopter flight approach and departure pattern avoid Wateridge and Pacific Ridge residential projects to the north, no re-fueling be permitted, and that the project receive approval from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

**Environmental Review:** The project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to Article 19, Section 15311, Accessory Structures, of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The environmental exemption determination was made on July 20, 2005, and the opportunity to appeal that determination ended August 10, 2005.

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

**Code Enforcement Impact:** None with this action.

**Housing Impact Statement:** The request for a Conditional Use for the proposed construction of a rooftop helistop will not result in the creation of additional housing units, nor result in the loss of any existing housing in the Mira Mesa community.

## **BACKGROUND**

The 18.02 acre site is located at 5665 Morehouse Drive. It lies east of Interstate 805, west of Lusk Boulevard, north of Mira Mesa Boulevard and south of Barnes Canyon Road. The proposed project site lies in a land use area designated as “Industrial Park” and is within the IL-2-1 and Airport Environs Overlay Zones of the Mira Mesa Community Plan. The IL-2-1 Zone allows for a mix of light industrial and office uses with limited commercial uses (Attachment 5). The surrounding neighborhood includes land use designations of industrial to the north, south and west and commercial to the east. Existing land uses include offices to the west, light industrial to the northwest, offices to the northeast, lodging and restaurant to the east and industrial to the south. The heli-stop is a component of a larger, ministerially-approved development which includes the construction of the new ten-story Building “N” and its associated seven-story parking garage, which is currently underway at the Qualcomm Morehouse Campus.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Project Description:**

The project proposes a Conditional Use Permit for an elevated helistop on the roof of a ten-story, 475,218 square foot research and development building at 5665 Morehouse Drive in IL-2-1 and Airport Environs Overlay Zones within the Mira Mesa Community Plan (Attachment No. 5). The ten-story research and development building is currently under construction along with a seven-story parking garage known as Garage “B”. Together, the two buildings are located in the northern corner of the Qualcomm Morehouse Campus, at the corner of Morehouse Drive and Lusk Boulevard. They will be accessed via existing driveways connecting to Morehouse Drive and Lusk Boulevard, which also provide access for three adjacent, existing Qualcomm office buildings located to the south, and two existing parking garages.

Section 126.0303 (c) of the San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) requires a Conditional Use Permit to be processed for the proposed construction of a helicopter landing facility. According to San Diego Municipal Code Section 126.0305 *Findings for Conditional Use Permits*, the decision maker may approve a Conditional Use Permit for the purposes of the construction of a helicopter landing facility if the decision maker finds the proposed project complies with the requirements of the San Diego Municipal Code. Staff reviewed the proposed project, and determined it complies with the Municipal Code.

### **Environmental Analysis:**

The Environmental Analysis Section (EAS) has reviewed the Helistop Noise Assessment Study (Alliance Acoustical Consultants, Inc., April 2005). The following noise reduction measures, as recommended on page 15 of the noise report, shall be incorporated in the Conditional Use Permit. First, helistop operations should not exceed fifteen (15) landings per month. Second, the number of evening and nighttime operations should be minimized as much as possible. Third, helicopter idle time should be minimized as much as possible. And fourth, noise monitoring should be conducted during the initial stages of operations to determine compliance with local noise criteria. In the event that the noise criteria are exceeded, the operations should be reviewed to determine further noise control measures.

### **Project-Related Issues:**

#### Staff Review

EAS staff reviewed the noise study submitted by the applicant for the proposed project. EAS staff concurs with the noise reduction measures identified in the report as project features. The applicant is required to obtain a license to construct and/or operate a permanent helistop, pursuant to SDMC § 68.0207. The draft permit (Attachment 6) includes these conditions.

#### Community Group

The Mira Mesa Community Planning Group met on September 19, 2005 and voted 12-1-1 to approve the project as presented with the conditions that the helicopter flight approach and departure pattern avoid Wateridge and Pacific Ridge residential projects to the north, no onsite fueling be permitted, and the project receive approval from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The permit has been conditioned so that flight paths shall be designed to avoid nearby residential areas. There will be no re-fueling facilities or activities involved with this helistop, and FAA approval of this proposed helistop was granted on June 29, 2006.

### **Critical Project Features to Consider During Substantial Conformance Review:**

#### Accessory Uses/Structures

Any changes to the identified construction height limitations, or deviations from the FAA's stated conditions for the helistop, should be re-examined through the submittal of FAA Form 7480-1 to notify the appropriate agencies and formal resolution of conflicts at that time.

#### Environmental Documents

A noise study shall be submitted for any substantial conformance review which may be conducted for any modifications to this Conditional Use Permit.

**Conclusion:**

Staff has reviewed the request for a Conditional Use Permit for the construction of a helicopter landing facility and found the project is in conformance with the applicable sections of the San Diego Municipal Code regulating Conditional Use Permits [SDMC 126.0303 (c)] and the operation of a helicopter landing facility (SDMC Chapter 6, Article 8, Section 2). The draft permit has been conditioned to incorporate the noise reduction measures identified as project features in the noise study submitted for the project and the applicant is required to obtain a license to construct and/or operate a permanent helistop, pursuant to SDMC § 68.0207. Staff believes the required findings can be supported and recommends the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council to approve the project as proposed.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. **Recommend to the City Council to approve Conditional Use Permit No. 224802 with modifications.**
2. **Recommend to the City Council to deny Conditional Use Permit No. 224802 if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

---

**Mike Westlake**  
**Program Manager**  
**Development Services Department**

---

**Robert P. Tucker**  
**Development Project Manager**  
**Development Services Department**

HALBERT/RPT

Attachments:

1. Aerial Photograph
2. Community Plan Land Use Map
3. Project Location Map
4. Project Data Sheet
5. Project Plans
6. Draft Permit with Conditions
7. Draft Resolution with Findings
8. Community Planning Group Recommendation

9. MCAS Miramar Review Letter (August 16, 2005)
10. Ownership Disclosure
11. Project Chronology