



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE ISSUED: September 10, 2013

REPORT NO. PC – 13-109

ATTENTION: Planning Commission
Agenda of September 19, 2013

SUBJECT: Midway – Pacific Highway Community Plan Update Workshop

SUMMARY

THIS IS A WORKSHOP TO UPDATE THE PLANNING COMMISSION ON THE MIDWAY – PACIFIC HIGHWAY COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION AT THIS TIME.

BACKGROUND

The Midway Pacific Highway community plan was adopted in 1991. Between 1998 and 2008 the following communitywide planning related studies and actions have occurred:

- 1998 – The City Council amended the community plan for the North Bay Revitalization Program which included the Bay-to-Bay link.
- 2002 – The City issued a request for qualifications to redevelop the Sports Arena site and surrounding property. The process was terminated due to community concerns.
- 2003 – The Bay-to-Bay Feasibility Study determined that the proposed water canal link was infeasible due to cost and environmental issues.
- 2004 – The Redevelopment Agency funded the North Bay Station Area Concept Plan that provided a vision of mixed-use development between the Sports Arena and the Old Town Transit Center.
- 2004 – The North Bay Business Association funded the preparation of the North Bay Concept Plan that provided urban design recommendations.
- 2004 – Council District 2 formed an ad hoc committee to address the redevelopment of the Sports Arena and surrounding property. Majority and minority reports were prepared.
- 2004 – The City Council initiated a comprehensive community plan amendment to remove the bay-to-bay concept, insert a park strategy to link future parks with pedestrian and bicycle connections, and identify mixed-use transit oriented nodes. The amendment process was put on hold in 2006 pending the adoption of the General Plan Update.
- 2008 – The City Council authorized the update to the Midway - Pacific Highway Community Plan. The update includes corresponding amendments to the zoning program and City of San Diego Local Coastal Program.

DISCUSSION

Since November 2010, the City staff and the consultant team have had ten community plan update advisory committee meetings to gather community input. The community has provided input on the existing conditions and recommendations from past planning efforts. A community walk audit was held in July 2011 to address existing conditions. A community workshop was held in October 2012 to discuss the vision and concepts for land use and mobility. During 2013, City staff and the consultant team have been preparing a “discussion draft community plan” to capture concepts from past planning efforts, community input, and City Council direction from the 2004 community plan amendment initiation, and to be consistent with the General Plan.

Land Use

The draft Community Plan organizing concept is composed of walkable-multimodal Districts and Villages with a complement of uses and linkages to parks, regional open space, shops, services, entertainment attractions, housing, and employment areas to enhance the livability and character of the community. It is envisioned that the larger super blocks will have a greater mix of uses framed with new streets, creating distinct mixed-use villages. The land use concept recognizes and supports maintenance of the existing military and military –support uses, as well as the mix of small industrial and commercial uses, for their contributions to the local and regional economy. The community is within the voter-approved coastal height limit and any proposed development exceeding 30 feet above grade will require a vote of the people.

Sports Arena Community Village is envisioned as a mixed-use commercial entertainment focused village at the City-owned Sports Arena property. This proposed village could include a combination of horizontal and vertical mixed-use or multiple-use with office, retail, residential, and park and public spaces that allow for outdoor gathering, events, markets and recreation uses. A new or existing Sports Arena building with the potential for structured parking will serve as the anchor for the village. The draft plan envisions a pedestrian and bicycle connection from a village green to the San Diego River.

Dutch Flats Urban Village is envisioned as an employment focused village which includes the U.S. Navy’s Regional Plant Equipment Office and the Midway Post Office, should these properties become available. Dutch Flat’s large parcels provide the ability to have large floor plate buildings with a mix of small to large defense/high-tech and research & development businesses, residential, supporting smaller scale retail uses, and parks space in an urban environment.

Kenyon Neighborhood Village is envisioned as a mixed-use node along Kenyon Street and Midway Drive with existing and future residential, office, visitor serving commercial and institutional uses with the Continuing Education Center as focal point of the village. Former Cabrillo Hospital provides an opportunity for health care related uses or residential, office and/or visitor commercial uses.

Kurtz Transit Corridor/ North Corridor is envisioned as a multiple and mixed use pedestrian-oriented transit corridor connected to the Washington Street Trolley Station, along with pedestrian-friendly commercial and residential uses along Hancock Street and Pacific Highway from Witherby Street to

West Washington Street, supporting the construction of shopkeeper units for artists and business owners incorporated to adaptive reuse of existing buildings or new development. Pacific Highway has the potential to be converted from an expressway into a multimodal boulevard to enhance the livability and community identity of the corridor.

Mobility

The draft Community Plan envisions the development of a balanced, multi-modal transportation network that improves pedestrian, bicycle and transit access while also addressing vehicular traffic capacity and improved regional access on heavily traveled roads. A major component of the plan is a proposal to expand the street grid network and enhance the pedestrian environment, through the creation of new roadways to break up the scale of larger developments and superblocks to remove local traffic off the major arterials. The draft Community Plan addresses the need to work with SANDAG to connect the Old Town Transit Center and the Sports Arena and Dutch Flat villages with a future rapid bus route and working with SANDAG and Caltrans to improve regional freeway access and connections.

Urban Design

The draft Community Plan seeks to improve the community character, create a sense of place and foster livability to transform the community into a vibrant pedestrian friendly community. High quality building design, the design of urban street-facing facades, and the creation of a pleasant environment through the incorporation of reduced building setbacks, shade trees, landscaping, pedestrian lighting and street furniture, will be key aspects to enhance the interface with the public realm and strengthen Midway - Pacific Highway's identity. Clear gateways are encouraged to emphasize entry points into and from Old Town, Downtown, Peninsula, Liberty Station, San Diego River, San Diego Bay, Mission Bay and the San Diego International Airport.

Public Spaces and Parks

The draft Community Plan seeks to enhance the public realm through:

- Incorporating linear parks along existing streets improved to emphasize walking and bicycling;
- Developing linkages between parks in the community and to regional recreational areas and open space;
- Fostering the community's historic relationship to the Presidio, the San Diego Bay, Mission Bay and the San Diego River; and
- Integrating Midway - Pacific Highway with the surrounding communities.

The Community Plan's park strategy includes the combination of population-based parks, such as: neighborhood parks, mini-parks, pocket parks; and park equivalencies, such as: non-traditional parks sites, and joint-use recreational facilities that are accessible to the public.

CONCLUSION

Staff is seeking Planning Commission input on the plan concepts currently being developed. Staff and the consultant team will continue to obtain community input on the draft Community Plan and to complete technical studies to inform the plan update, including traffic modeling that is expected to be completed by the end of 2013. In early 2014, the draft plan will be prepared and work will begin on a

Program Environmental Impact Report. It is anticipated that the adoption hearing process will begin by mid-2015.

Respectfully submitted,



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TSG/NB