



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE ISSUED: June 19, 2014

REPORT NO. 14-001

ATTENTION: Planning Commission Agenda of June 26, 2014

SUBJECT: Workshop on the Southeastern San Diego and Encanto Neighborhoods Community Plan Updates and Euclid Gateway and National Avenue Master Plans

SUMMARY:

THIS IS A WORKSHOP TO UPDATE THE PLANNING COMMISSION ON THE SOUTHEASTERN SAN DIEGO AND ENCANTO NEIGHBORHOODS COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATES, AS WELL AS THE FINAL EUCLID GATEWAY AND NATIONAL AVENUE MASTER PLANS. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION AT THIS TIME.

BACKGROUND

As part of the City's work program to update community plans, the City embarked on the update to the Southeastern San Diego (SESD) Community Plan in April 2013. This effort will replace the 1987 SESD community plan with a new community plan for the Southeastern San Diego neighborhoods and a new independent community plan for Encanto Neighborhoods (Attachments 1 and 2). The update effort will also create two public facilities financing plans, rescind the existing Southeastern San Diego Planned District Ordinance and Mount Hope Planned District Ordinance and replace them with citywide zoning. A comprehensive Programmatic Environmental Impact Report is being prepared to analyze impacts associated with the plan updates.

Located just east of downtown, Southeastern San Diego is situated between Interstate 5 (I-5) and Interstate 805 (I-805), with State Route 94 (SR-94) to the north and National City to the south. The communities of Golden Hill and City Heights are to the north, Encanto Neighborhoods to the east, and National City to the south. It also lies near major

recreation facilities in Balboa Park and San Diego Bay. The planning area encompasses 2,950 acres, not including 121 acres of unincorporated San Diego County land (Greenwood Cemetery) in the eastern portion of the planning area.

The Encanto Neighborhoods community planning area is located east of I-805, west of Skyline and the City of Lemon Grove, and north of Paradise Hills and the City of National City. Encanto is proximate to major employment and commercial centers in the South Bay and Downtown and linked to them by freeways, trolleys and buses providing good access to local and regional designations. The planning area encompasses 3,811 acres.

As part of the existing conditions reports prepared for each community (presented to the Planning Commission in December 2013), the consultant team identified a number of key issues that have been addressed as part of the plan update process. These key issues include: recognizing the diversity of neighborhoods in planning for the future; addressing the lack of retail services; responding to demographic diversity and challenges; integrating recent planning efforts; strengthening corridors and neighborhood centers; establishing a vision for areas of change; incorporating creative ways to provide open space, the provision of gathering space and outdoor recreation; reducing potential environmental impacts and improving community health; enhancing connectivity that accommodates pedestrians with an emphasis on pedestrian safety and priority zones; capitalizing on transit access and multi-modal potential; ensuring compatibility between land uses and property upgrades; and incorporating street, freeway safety as well as mobility and bicycle facility improvements.

In conjunction with the General Plan goals and policies and with the key issues in mind, city staff and the multi-disciplinary consultant team developed two community plans to address not only the community's vision and desires but also the legislative and regulatory requirements set forth by the State of California and the City's regulations and policies. This report provides a summary of the planning objectives for: targeted growth and development around established transit stations; land use plan development; creation of the Village Districts and associated incentives; draft community plan elements; the National Avenue Master Plan and Euclid Avenue Gateway Master Plan; as well as the next steps to complete the plan update process.

DISCUSSION

Land Use Development

Based on a review of the existing conditions, the market demand report, the adopted land the Euclid + Market Land Use and Mobility Study, the Euclid Gateway Master Plan, the National Avenue Master Plan, and the Commercial and Imperial Avenues Corridor Plan,

City staff and the consultant team developed land use maps for each of the communities. The areas of change were focused on areas in close proximity to transit and along major street corridors. Areas of stability include the predominately single-family areas that comprise the majority of land uses in both communities. The proposed land use maps were presented in June 2013 to the two planning groups who both recommended that the City proceed forward with traffic modeling to understand the overall impacts from the proposed changes. As part of the development and assessment of land uses for the Encanto Neighborhoods, a higher density alternative was requested to be considered as part of the plan update. This higher density land use alternative is being considered on parcels that are either publicly-owned or owned by the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation, and located in the Village District surrounding the Euclid and Market Transit Station.

Areas of Change and Development of Village Districts

The policies and regulations developed as part of the plan update effort are focused on identified areas of change (Attachments 3 and 4) in each community to facilitate land planning for new housing, employment opportunities and business expansion. The proposed plans build upon the General Plan's City of Villages strategy and promote increased transit use with a pedestrian-friendly orientation. The policies further the community's goals for developing safe and pleasing pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streetscapes as well as providing the needed public facilities such as parks and police/fire stations to accommodate future growth.

The strategic placement of future higher-intensity residential and commercial/retail uses have been identified to occur within designated Village Districts that are located around the existing trolley stations at 25th Street, 32nd Street, 47th Street, Euclid Avenue and 62nd Street. The intent of placing higher density and intensity uses around the transit stations is not only to identify appropriate multi-modal areas for future growth, but also to preserve the established low-density residential neighborhoods that are the foundation (?) of both of these great communities.

Village District Incentives and Standards

The Land Use element of each community plan provides a package of development incentives, with an emphasis on reduced parking requirements, to spur development of properties within designated Village Districts planned in close proximity to transit stations. In addition, a transfer of development rights (TDR) program is included in the Village Districts that will allow new development to accrue additional density and intensity within the ¼ mile area around the existing trolley stations. A maximum development cap has been calculated for each of the Village Districts that will stipulate the maximum amount of development that may occur within the Village District areas.

Attachment 5 illustrates future development capacity for each Village District. For the Euclid Trolley Station Village District, a higher density alternative is also under consideration and is included as part of Attachment 5.

These incentives coupled with allowing most development to occur as a low level ministerial (staff decision) or discretionary (Process 2) process are anticipated to spur development soon after the plan update is adopted. As part of the plan update, the existing Southeastern San Diego and Mount Hope Planned District ordinances will be eliminated and new city-wide zoning will be implemented. Further, density minimum and retail required standards are incorporated into the community plans in order to ensure that the vision developed by the communities for walkable and vibrant Village Districts will be realized over the plan's horizon. Development of specific plans are also being considered for the Village Districts as a means to further facilitate plan implementation. Staff is working with Civic San Diego, Jacobs, the community and other interested stakeholders to determine if specific plans should be adopted concurrent with the plan updates.

Community Plan Element Development

Based on the community's vision statements and guiding principles, existing conditions studies, and market demand study, the staff and multi-disciplinary consulting team began preparation of the draft elements in September 2013. In addition to the Introduction and Implementation sections, each community plan includes the following elements: Land Use; Mobility; Urban Design; Economic Prosperity; Public Facilities, Services and Safety; Conservation and Sustainability; Recreation; Historic Preservation; and Arts and Culture.

An overview of the individual elements has been presented to the public and the respective planning group at the regular monthly meetings. The complete draft plan was released to both communities at a joint community workshop held at the Sherman Heights Community Center on June 21. The following provides an overview of each of the elements:

Land Use Elements

The Land Use Elements provide the land use frameworks including the existing land use snapshots for each community. The elements describe the classification of land uses including the active frontage requirement for projects along major pedestrian-oriented streets. Chart 2-2 provides an illustrative graphic that depicts the various development types and land use classifications. In addition, Table 2-3 provides a detailed description of the land use classifications and permitted densities and intensities. Land use distribution at plan build-out that includes distribution of acreage and percentage of the

total plan area is included in Table 2-4. Section 2.3 of the elements identifies and discusses the village areas and key corridors within the communities. Furthermore, the plans provide more detailed discussions on each of the land uses, including Residential (Section 2.5); Commercial, Employment and Industrial Land Use (Section 2.6); and Institutional Uses and Open Space (Section 2.7).

A discussion of Environmental Justice is included as Section 2.8, covering health and built environment, access to healthy food, parks and green space and health care of social services. Noise is also included in the Land Use Elements as Section 2.9. The Noise sections discuss noise sources, motor vehicle traffic, rail and airport activities as well as commercial and industrial activities.

Mobility Elements

The Mobility Elements consider all users of the transportation system and proposes a multi-modal mobility network to meet future needs. The Mobility Elements include specific sections that relate to Active Transportation that includes discussions about walkable communities and bicycling (Section 3.1); Public Transit (Section 3.2); Streets and Freeway Systems (Section 3.3); Intelligent Transportation Systems (Section 3.4); Transportation Demand Management (Section 3.5) as well as Parking (Section 3.6).

The overall goal of these Mobility Elements is to further the attainment of a balanced, multi-modal transportation network that improves mobility and minimizes environmental and neighborhood impacts. The elements include a wide range of policies that advance a strategy for congestion relief and increased transportation choices. Furthermore, the Mobility Elements work hand-in-hand with the Land Use elements to provide parking strategies that focus on shared parking opportunities and reduced parking standards for new development located within the Village Districts.

Urban Design Elements

Urban Design is intended to work in conjunction with the other elements of the community plans to create a pattern, scale, and character of development and public spaces that complement the existing built environment and build upon land use and mobility goals. The urban design elements implement General Plan goals and policies at the community plan level by including policies specific to Southeastern San Diego and the Encanto Neighborhoods.

Included in the Urban Design Elements are specific frameworks that identify specific objectives to be implemented over the life of the plans. These are identified in Tables 4-3. The Urban Design Elements include a section on Development Design (Section 4.2) which provides policies, guidelines and illustrative graphics. The elements also address

streetscape and public realm policies and standards in Section 4.3. In addition, Section 4.4 contains a comprehensive discussion on Urban Forestry and recommends increasing the tree canopies throughout these communities. Lastly, the Urban Design Elements include graphics in Section 4.5 that depict potential transformations to streetscapes including along the major street corridors along Market Street, National Avenue and other critical intersections.

Economic Prosperity Elements

The Economic Prosperity Elements emphasize the importance of maintaining a diversity of industries and ensuring a stable economy. The Economic Prosperity Elements tier off of the policies contained in the General Plan with a specific focus on encouraging manufacturing, research and development, and support functions in the Light Industrial and Business Park areas since they are base-sector industries, which also produce needed middle-income employment. Section 5.1 discusses market conditions and demand projections for each community. Employment generation and business improvement are discussed in Sections 5.2 and 5.3, respectively. The Encanto Community Plan incorporates Section 5.4 which lays out the establishment of entertainment district within the Euclid at Market Village District and along Imperial Avenue. Furthermore, each plan also includes a section dedicated to the financial feasibility of future development.

Public Facilities, Service and Safety Elements

The Public Facilities, Services and Safety Elements establish the public facilities and services needed to serve the existing population and any new growth anticipated with the community plan update. Included are specific policies regarding police, fire, water, sewer and storm water infrastructure, parks, schools, libraries, public utilities, street lights and the formation of maintenance assessment district(s). Health and Safety includes a discussion of geological and seismic hazards, hazardous materials and brownfields. The policies in these elements also apply to transportation, park and recreation facilities and services, with additional guidance found in other elements.

Recreation Elements

The Recreation Elements include specific policies and recommendations for addressing preservation, protection and enhancement of park and recreation facilities, open space and accessibility to the facilities. These policies and recommendations, along with the General Plan guidance, provide a comprehensive parks strategy intended to serve the recreational needs of the communities through the next twenty years. Tables 7-2 in each of the plans describe the population-based parks and the park equivalencies inventory. Due to the scarcity of park amenities in both Southeastern San Diego and the Encanto Neighborhoods, the Recreation Element includes "equivalencies" to address strategies to

expand recreational programming within existing public spaces. Sections 7.4 provide a discussion on open space lands and resource-based parks with a specific focus on Chollas Creek improvements along with enhancements to the valuable open space assets such as Radio Canyon located in the Encanto Neighborhoods.

Conservation Elements

The Conservation Elements goals and policies can be effective in managing, preserving, and thoughtfully using the limited natural resources of each of the communities. Topic areas include Climate Change and Sustainable Development, Resource Management and Preservation. The elements focus on conserving natural resources such as Las Chollas Creek; preserving and managing open space systems; providing urban runoff management and air quality policies; preventing and reducing pollution; promoting urban agriculture, community gardens and food security; supporting urban forestry; and ensuring preservation of quality of life in Southeastern San Diego and the Encanto Neighborhoods. Policies are proposed to help guide development and provide a conservation "blueprint" so that the environmental quality and natural resources are preserved, maintained and improved in a sustainable manner for current and future generations.

Historic Preservation Elements

The Historic Preservation Elements serve as guides for the preservation, protection and restoration of historical and cultural resources. Specific policies address unique Southeastern San Diego resources with a particular emphasis on the Sherman Heights and Grant Hill Park Historic Districts in order to encourage preservation and appreciation of the community's history and culture. The Encanto Neighborhoods historic framework provides for the potential historic preservation and enhancement of valuable assets. The elements and General Plan policies provide a comprehensive historic preservation strategy for resource preservation. The elements establish the identification and preservation of historical resources, historic context, designated historical resources, and potentially significant historical resources; as well as provide a discussion and policies pertaining to educational opportunities and incentives related to historic preservation.

Arts and Culture Elements

The Arts and Culture Elements focus on strengthening the cultural and arts centers identity of both communities with an emphasis on developing more arts and artistic expression opportunities in the Village areas as well as along Chollas Creek. Public art provides a means of expression in the environment, a way to create spaces that have a meaningful aesthetic, and an opportunity to educate about history, culture, nature, and current events.

Art takes many forms and shapes in the public realm including in streets and sidewalks, parks, plazas, and gateways. The Arts and Culture Elements take this into account and propose policies to strengthen arts and culture in Southeastern San Diego and the Encanto Neighborhoods.

Draft Zoning Program

As part of the plan update process, the adopted Southeastern San Diego and Mount Hope Planned District Ordinances (SESDPDO and MHPDO) will be repealed and replaced with citywide zones of the Land Development Code (LDC). Several new commercial and residential zones have been created to implement General Plan land use designations (Attachments 6 and 7, Draft Zoning Matrixes). The intent is to streamline the permitting process for sites within close proximity to the transit stations and within the Village Districts where the majority of future growth and development is anticipated to occur.

Euclid Gateway Master Plan

The Euclid Gateway Master Plan (Attachment 8) focuses on the segment of Euclid Avenue between SR-94 and Guymon Street in the Encanto Neighborhoods Planning Area. This plan updates the mix of land uses and building densities, and recommends balancing the needs of all travel modes along the corridor to improve safety and connectivity. The mix of land uses and densities proposed in this master plan is intended to create a welcoming roadway that enhances connectivity to residential areas, schools, parks, recreation, shopping and other commercial activities, and transit.

National Avenue Master Plan

The National Avenue Master Plan (Attachment 9) focuses on a 1.8-mile segment of National Avenue between Interstate 5 (I-5) and 43rd Street in the Southeastern San Diego Community Planning Area. It proposes an updated mix of land uses and building densities, and recommends balancing the needs of all travel modes along the corridor to improve connectivity with residential areas, schools, parks, recreation, shopping, and other commercial activities. Urban design recommendations enhance National Avenue's "Main Street" character, with streetscape improvements and more community gathering places. Plan recommendations have been integrated into the community plan urban design element and include the conversion of the industrial park west of State Route 15 into park and recreation use.

NEXT STEPS

Over the next three months, staff will work with the respective planning groups and the public on incorporating their comments into the draft community plans and making refinements to the draft zoning program. Staff and the community will also work together on developing the Encanto Neighborhoods and Southeastern San Diego Public Facilities Financing Plans (PFFP); considering the scope, content, and timing of specific plans; and reviewing and finalizing the program environmental impact report (PEIR). At the completion of the draft PEIR, the community plan update will be presented to the Planning Commission for a recommendation.

CONCLUSION

The Southeastern San Diego and Encanto Neighborhoods Community Plans will be consistent with and further implementation of the adopted General Plan. The plans will provide clear goals and policies for future growth and development within the two communities. The community plans address infrastructure and housing needs of these communities while providing for the preservation and expansion of commercial and industrial operations and their associated jobs.

In order to assist staff in moving forward with these plan updates, Planning Commission and public input is requested on the draft community plans and zoning program.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

1. Draft Southeastern San Diego (SESD) Community Plan
2. Draft Encanto Neighborhoods Community Plan
3. SESD Areas of Change Map
4. Encanto Neighborhoods Areas of Change Map
5. Projected Density and Intensity within Village Districts
6. SESD Draft Zoning Matrix
7. Encanto Neighborhoods Draft Zoning Matrix
8. Euclid Gateway Master Plan
9. National Avenue Master Plan