

DATE ISSUED: September 10, 2004 REPORT NO. PC-04-145

ATTENTION: Planning Commission, Agenda of September 16, 2004

SUBJECT: A-1 SELF STORAGE – PROJECT NO. 14953. PROCESS 5.

REFERENCE: 1. Planning Report No. P-03-108, CPA Initiation (Attachment 7)  
2. Planning Commission Resolution No. 3390-PC (Attachment 8)

OWNER/  
APPLICANT: Las Vegas II Storage, LLC; Brian R. Caster, Manager (Attachment 15)

#### SUMMARY

Issue(s) – Should the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council the approval of an application for:

1. Community Plan Amendment (CPA) No. 32958 to Amend the Mission Valley Community Plan to allow self-storage uses in commercial areas where they are now only permitted in industrially designated areas, with the approval of a Planned Development Permit;
2. Planned Development Permit (PDP) No. 39904 to accommodate a self-storage use within a commercial zone of the Mission Valley Planned District, as currently proposed by the requested amendment to the Mission Valley Community Plan;
3. Site Development Permit (SDP) No. 39906 to accommodate commercial development on a premise containing environmentally sensitive lands, within the Mission Valley Community Plan Area; and
4. Rescission of Mission Valley Development and Resource Protection Ordinance (MVD/RPO Permit No. 98-0455), which approved the development of a 65-room hotel on the site?

Staff Recommendation:

1. **RECOMMEND CERTIFICATION** of Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) Project No. 14953 and **ADOPTION** of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) prepared for the Project;
2. **RECOMMEND** that the City Council **APPROVE** CPA No. 32958, PDP No. 39904, SDP No. 39906, and Rescind MVD/RPO Permit No. 98-0455.

Community Planning Group Recommendation – On July 7, 2004, the Mission Valley Unified Planning Committee voted 14-2-1 to recommend approval of the application. The Committee recommended that the project incorporate ‘Elevation D’ which resembles an office building (Attachments 13 and 10.c.).

Environmental Review – MND No. 14953 has been prepared for the project in accordance with State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. A MMRP has been prepared and will be implemented which will reduce, to a level of insignificance, any potential impacts to Biological, Historical (Archaeology) and Paleontological Resources.

Fiscal Impact – All staff costs associated with processing this project are recovered from a separate deposit provided and maintained by the Applicant.

Code Enforcement Impact – None with this action.

Housing Impact Statement – The site is currently vacant, and the new use will be commercial in nature therefore there will be no housing impacts.

BACKGROUND

On April 8, 1999, the Planning Commission approved Mission Valley Planned District and Resource Protection Ordinance (MVP/RPO) Permit No. 98-0455, which allowed the development of a 65-room hotel, with porte-cochere entry, swimming pool and spa, associated retaining walls, landscaping and minor improvements within the public right-of-way. Copies of this approved permit and resolution are included as Attachment 14. Approved exhibits indicate that the impact of the approved development extended north from the 100-foot contour line, as noted on the Grading and Public Improvement Plan (Attachment 14.a.). No impacts to the property were approved within natural steep slopes located south of the 100-foot contour line. The site has been graded in accordance with this previously approved Permit and is currently vacant.

The proposed storage facility is not a use which is currently allowed in commercial zones, per the Mission Valley Community Plan (‘Plan’). Therefore, a Community Plan Amendment (CPA) is required to allow the proposed use under limited conditions as described within the Development

## Guidelines of the Plan.

On April 9, 2003, the Applicant submitted an application for an Amendment to the Mission Valley Community Plan. The CPA proposes to allow self-storage uses in commercial areas under certain circumstances, where they are now only permitted in industrially designated areas. Proposed additions to the community plan text state that these uses, when proposed to be located in commercially designated areas, require a Planned Development Permit. The Municipal Code provides that permitted uses, with the approval of a Planned Development Permit, include those permitted in the underlying zone, and uses explicitly permitted in the applicable land use plan.

## Community Plan Amendment

The proposed community plan language would significantly limit the number of such self storage uses (Attachment 9). Among the 12 conditions under which they could locate in commercial areas with the approval of a Planned Development Permit are that they must be –

1. Located either north of Friars Road or south of Interstate 8;
2. Not located within a pedestrian oriented area; and
3. A maximum of two acres in size.

There are very few if any vacant, developable parcels that fit this description, and the potential for a parcel to redevelop to this use is very limited.

On June 12, 2003, the Planning Commission considered an initiation for an amendment to the Mission Valley Community Plan and the Progress Guide and General Plan to allow a self-storage use on a lot designated for Commercial Office or Commercial Recreation use (Project No. 6748). Report No. P-03-108 is included as Attachment 7. On June 12, 2003, the Planning Commission voted 6-1-0 to approve the initiation of the amendment requesting that a staff analysis include several issues. These issues and staffs response are included below.

1. Analysis of the need for self-storage use outside of industrial areas.

Staff Response – There are several self-storage complexes in the industrial areas of Mission Valley and surrounding communities, including the Morena area of Linda Vista and Grantville in Navajo. Indications are that these facilities are fully utilized. Mission Valley’s industrial areas are now fully built out. Little or no vacant land is available in Morena and Grantville, although some areas are underutilized. With the substantial ongoing development of higher density, multiple dwelling unit projects in Mission Valley, as well as office development, there will be a need for additional self-storage facilities. High-density residential developments tend to have less area for residents to store personal belongings at their units. Self storage facilities located in close proximity to residential areas will help meet this need. Often, industrial areas are inconvenient for residents to access.

2. The impact of the use on surrounding businesses, including traffic, noise, and visual impact.

Staff Response – Traffic from a self-storage facility is significantly lower than that from other uses allowed in the commercial designations. Larger trucks do not frequent these facilities due to the limited size of the individual storage units. Restrictions on the use prevent loading and unloading during late hours, outdoor storage, and business use of the facility. The proposed design of the facility closely resembles an office building, and no access to industrial storage units will be visible. Also, no outdoor storage will be permitted.

3. Site design issues related to the proposed site, including scale, massing, relationship to the hillside (e.g., consider terracing up the hillside), relationship to surrounding structures and hotel/visitor uses intended for the surrounding area, color (including the rooftop, considering the view from Mission Hills), and the role of the site as a gateway to Mission Valley.

Staff Response – As further described under the Project Description below, the project is tucked into the hillside, with a maximum height of 40 feet on the north side and 10 feet on the south side. To help blend the structure with surrounding structures, one level has been placed entirely underground. As this is a gateway to the valley, this design is intended to maintain views up and down the valley and of the hillside behind the structure. Nearby structures range in height from two-to-four stories. The structure has been designed to resemble an office building, which is currently permitted on the site. The neutral, two-toned mauve façade is compatible with the surroundings.

4. Conditions under which self-storage use could be allowed in commercially designated areas.

Staff Response – As described in Attachment 9, a number of restrictions have been placed on the ability of this use to locate in commercial areas to prevent disruptions to surrounding uses and to limit their proliferation. A Planned Development Permit will be required to allow the use and ensure compliance will all requirements in the community plan.

5. The cumulative effect of future requests for self-storage facilities in non-industrial areas.

Staff Response - The extensive restrictions on allowing this use in commercial areas are intended to limit any significant cumulative effect. Staff considered the option of amending the Mission Valley Planned District Ordinance to allow storage facilities in commercial zones. However, this option would allow the use in any commercial area. Requiring a Planned Development Permit will implement siting restrictions in the community plan and consider any future proposal on a case-by-case basis.

6. Consideration of a time limit on the duration of the use, in that other uses may be more appropriate in the future.

Staff Response - The extensive restrictions on allowing this use in commercial areas are intended to limit any significant cumulative effect.

7. A thorough analysis of other potential uses, including the number of dwelling units or hotel rooms that the site could accommodate, whether or not they are currently permitted.

Staff Response - Given the site limitations, including the topography and Average Daily Trip limitations of the community plan and planned district zoning, the site could accommodate a 71-room hotel, a 21,000 square-foot office building, or 71 residential units (assuming that all development regulations could be met).

8. Explore the feasibility of multiple uses to achieve a more active use of the site, such as with a tennis club on the roof or another active use in front of the self-storage use, or other amenities to contribute back to the community, such as in an environmental way.

Staff Response - The project includes a retail component for the sale of products related to moving and storage. Staff believes that the design of the facility contributes to the community by tucking the structure into the hillside, providing a compatible facade, and providing a needed community service.

The 1.92-acre project site consists of two adjacent parcels addressed as 2231-2245 Hotel Circle South (Attachment 4) located south of Interstate 8, east of Taylor Street and west of Hotel Circle Court. The area is designated for Office of Commercial Recreation land use within the Mission Valley Community Plan (Attachment 2.a.), and is zoned MV-CO-CV (Commercial-Office and Commercial-Visitor) within the Mission Valley Planned District. This zoning permits those uses included in 'Appendix A', Attachment 16. Surrounding properties include undeveloped open space and natural steep slopes to the south, commercial uses to the west and east, and Interstate 8 to the north.

The two irregular shaped parcels slope upward from an elevation of 53-feet adjacent to Hotel Circle South, approximately 107-feet, to an elevation of 160-feet at the southwesterly corner of the property. The northerly one-half of the property has been graded pursuant to the previously approved MVD/RPO discretionary permit. This grading resulted in a two-stepped pad with a manufactured slope on the northerly one-half of the site, along the southern edge of Hotel Circle South. The southerly one-half of the property consists of relatively undisturbed steep slopes of 35 percent or greater and native vegetation. The footprint of the proposed development would be located within the previously graded area and no additional impacts to steep slopes, sensitive habitat or species would occur (Attachment 14.a.).

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Site Plan (Attachment 10.a.) indicates that the proposed 139,558 square-foot building consists of four-stories (28,258 square-feet each) with a basement (26,256 square-feet) and office area (948 square-feet). Two, 30'-0" wide driveways provide access from Hotel Circle South to the fourteen required off-street parking spaces intended to serve the self-storage facility. These driveways are located at the westerly and easterly ends of the Hotel Circle South frontage. The Conceptual Grading Plan (Attachment 10.b.) indicates that grading of a northerly 1.12-acre portion of the site would consist of 20,000 cubic yards of cut, all of which would be exported off-site. This grading is located within that portion of the site which has been graded in accordance with the previously approved MVD/RPO Permit. No grading or other impacts would occur southerly of the 100-foot contour line. Retaining walls not to exceed ten-feet in height are proposed to be located along the northerly portions of the site. These walls will be utilized to retain earth to accommodate the driveways accessing the facility and leading to required off-street parking.

Site Elevations (Attachment 10.d.) indicate that the proposed development will observe a maximum height of 40'-0" at the northerly façade and approximately 37'-3" at a mid-portion of the building. The west and east elevations indicate that four stories of the building will be visible from Hotel Circle South. The building will be embedded into the hillside so that four stories will be below grade at the southerly portion of the development. Although the south elevation is not shown, a visual analysis of the west and east elevations indicates that an approximate ten-foot high portion of the building (including parapet) would be visible in a south elevation. Palette colors include white and travertine stucco finish with grey plant on façade treatments. As recommended by the recognized planning group, the Applicant has utilized "Elevation D", in which the façade resembles that of an office building.

Floor Plans indicate a total of five levels which include access to individual storage units from 25-square-feet (5x5) to 350-square-feet (10 x 35) in area.

Landscape Plans (Attachment 10.e.) indicate that a variety of vegetation including accent palms, deciduous and evergreen trees will be utilized with bushes, shrubs and groundcover along the perimeter of the site.

## DISCUSSION

The proposed Community Plan Amendment, Planned Development Permit and Site Development Permit would allow for the construction of a four-story with basement self-storage facility, with office and retail area, on a vacant 1.92-acre parcel. The storage facility would occupy a previously graded, approximate 1.12-acre northerly portion of the site. The remaining portion of the site would remain undeveloped natural open space. The proposed building would observe a maximum height of approximately 40 feet and be accessed by two 30-foot wide commercial driveways. Fourteen parking spaces would be provided along the building frontage.

Earthwork quantities associated with site grading are estimated at 20,000 cubic yards of cut at a maximum depth of 25-feet. A total of 185 linear feet of retaining walls are proposed for the project, with a maximum height of approximately ten feet. A variety of trees and shrubs are proposed along the perimeter of the retaining wall and site landscaping would comply with all applicable City of San Diego landscape ordinances and standards.

The City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program Subarea Plan maps the project site as developed on the north and Coastal Sage Scrub to the south. A portion of the property is within the MHPA. The site is zoned MV-CO-CV (Commercial-Office and Commercial-Visitor) with a land use designation of office or commercial recreation and is subject to the Mission Valley Planned District Ordinance. The property is bordered to the south by open space, commercial uses to the west and east, and Interstate 8 to the north. Access to the subject property will continue to be from Hotel Circle South.

The project site lies within the boundaries of the City's Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) Subarea, and is mapped as being developed within the north and occupied by coastal sage scrub habitat in the south. In addition, the southern portion of the project site has been mapped within the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA). The MHPA Land Use Adjacency Guidelines which would apply to the project would include lighting and barriers, and brush management. To ensure consistency with the Guidelines, the project proposes to shield external lighting away from the MHPA. The southern elevation would be constructed with a four-hour firewall which would eliminate the need for brush management within the MHPA. A twenty-five-foot zone is typically required for brush management; however, the four-hour firewall precludes the need for this zone, thereby allowing greater preservation of the MHPA.

Due to the location of the proposed development area at the bottom of the steep slopes on-site, drainage from the newly created developed area would flow northerly towards Hotel Circle South. The MHPA lands are located south of the development in a topographically higher locale. Therefore, drainage would not flow toward the MHPA.

#### CONCLUSION:

The proposed project includes a multi-use development which provides needed support facilities nearby residential development. Although an industrial use, its design is compatible with commercial and residential development in Mission Valley. The project accommodates the significant community increase in multiple dwelling units with their limited storage area, and addresses the lack of industrial property on which to develop these facilities where they are currently permitted. Traffic congestion in the Valley warrants placement of these facilities near their customers, and the greater availability of these facilities may reduce the use of the garages for storage rather than for parking. The Applicant has worked with staff and members of the community to address aesthetic concerns. Therefore, staff can support this project and the findings included in the draft Resolution (Attachment 12).

ALTERNATIVES:

1. RECOMMEND to the City Council, Approval of Community Plan Amendment No. 32958, Planned Development Permit No. 39904, and Site Development Permit No. 39906, with modifications.
2. RECOMMEND to the City Council, Denial of Community Plan Amendment No. 32958, Planned Development Permit No. 39904, and Site Development Permit No. 39906, if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,

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- Attachments:
1. Aerial Photograph
  2. Community Plan Land Use Map – Mission Valley
  3. Community Plan Land Use Map – Uptown
  4. Project Location Map
  5. Project Data Sheet
  6. Project Chronology
  7. Planning Report No. P-03-108 (CPA Initiation)
  8. Planning Commission Resolution No. 3390-PC (Approving CPA Initiation)
  9. Draft Community Plan Text and Graphics
  10. Project Plans
    - a. Site Plan
    - b. Grading Plan
    - c. Elevation ‘D’
    - d. Elevations
    - e. Landscape Plan



11. Draft Permit with Conditions
12. Draft Resolution with Findings
13. Community Planning Group Recommendation
14. Mission Valley Planned District and Resource Protection Ordinance  
Permit (MVP/RPO) No. 98-0455
  - a. Copy of Approved Grading Plan
15. Ownership Disclosure Statement
16. Mission Valley PDO, Appendix "A"