



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE ISSUED: January 5, 2006 REPORT NO. PC-05-269

ATTENTION: Planning Commission
Agenda of January 12, 2006

SUBJECT: Initiation of an Amendment to the Progress Guide and General Plan and the San Ysidro Community Plan and Local Coastal Program to Allow for Mixed-Use Development in the Commercial Element's District 4 Recommendations (PTS 72409).

OWNER/
APPLICANT: Olson Company

SUMMARY

Issues – Should the Planning Commission INITIATE an amendment to the Progress Guide and General Plan and the San Ysidro Community Plan pursuant to Municipal Code Section 122.0103? The amendment has been requested to allow mixed-use development in the Commercial Element's District 4 recommendations where it is currently precluded.

Staff's Recommendation – INITIATE the plan amendment process.

Community Planning Group Recommendation – On August 16, 2005, the San Ysidro Planning and Development Group voted 7-1-1 to recommend approval of the initiation of the general/community plan amendment process. On October 18, 2005, the San Ysidro Planning and Development Group voted 9-0-0 to clarify that the August motion was intended to recommend analysis of mixed-use development throughout all of Commercial Element District 4 (see Attachment 1).

Environmental Impact – If initiated, the proposed plan amendment and future discretionary actions will be subject to environmental review.

Fiscal Impact – None. Costs associated with processing this application would be reimbursed by the applicant.

Housing Affordability Impact – The San Ysidro Community Plan Commercial Element District 4 designates approximately 30 acres as Community Commercial. The existing

land use designation and zoning do not allow residential development on the properties within District 4. The proposed addition of mixed-use language to the Commercial Element's District 4 recommendations would allow residential development of up to 29 dwelling units per acre, which could accommodate up to 870 dwelling units where residential development has been precluded.

This initiation request does not constitute an endorsement of the project proposal. A staff recommendation will be developed once the project has been fully analyzed. This action will allow the staff analysis to proceed.

BACKGROUND

The subject area of the proposed amendment is located in the San Ysidro Community Planning Area (see Attachment 2). San Ysidro is an urbanized community bounded by the Tijuana River Valley on the west, Otay Mesa-Nestor to the north, Otay Mesa to the east, and the United States-Mexico international border to the south.

The San Ysidro Community Plan designates the subject area Community Commercial (see Attachment 3). The objectives of the Commercial Element recommend the provision of neighborhood-serving commercial development and the provision of adequate commercial facilities to meet the needs of both residents and visitors. The San Ysidro Community Plan divides the commercially-designated properties into six districts, with Districts 1, 2, 3, and 5 having language that supports residential development within commercial areas (see Attachment 4). When the San Ysidro Community Plan was being updated, community members were concerned with the lack of community-serving commercial uses in the northwestern portion of the planning area, and therefore requested that residential development not be allowed in District 4. The proposed plan amendment would allow for mixed-use commercial and residential development within District 4 of the Commercial Element of the San Ysidro Community Plan, where there is currently no language that addresses or supports mixed-use development.

The subject area includes all of District 4 of the Commercial Element of the San Ysidro Community Plan (see Attachment 5). District 4 includes two areas of approximately 15 acres each, one in the northwest quadrant of the community immediately east of Interstate 5 and one in the southeast quadrant of the community just south and west of Interstate 5 (see Attachment 5). The northern portion of District 4 fronts Dairy Mart Road and West San Ysidro Boulevard, with existing uses that include strip commercial development and vacant properties. Surrounding uses include both single-family residential and multifamily residential. The southern portion of District 4 fronts Calle Primera and Willow Road, with existing uses that include vacant property, motels, gas stations, and other Community Commercial uses. Surrounding uses include multifamily residential and an elementary school to the east. District 4 is currently zoned CSF-2 and CSF-3 within the San Ysidro Implementing Ordinance, which do not allow mixed-use development.

While the San Ysidro Community Plan does not include the term "mixed-use development," it does include language that supports mixed-use development. One of the communitywide recommendations advises limiting residential development in commercial areas on San Ysidro and Beyer Boulevards to above the street level only. The Residential Element recommends

limiting the commercial areas where residential is allowed to San Ysidro and Beyer Boulevards, above the street level only. The Urban Design Element recommends that commercial development be oriented to the pedestrian with ground floor retail and the Transportation Element recommends ground floor retail on all development fronting commercial streets.

The applicant, the Olson Company, is proposing residential development on a one-acre site within District 4 of the Commercial Element (see Attachment 5). The applicant originally proposed to redesignate the one-acre site from Community Commercial to Medium-Density Residential (15-30 du/nra). However, the Planning Department discouraged the applicant from proposing a redesignation to residential because many of San Ysidro's commercial areas have been utilized for purely residential projects and few community-serving commercial areas remain. In addition, the proposed project area is located in the northern portion of San Ysidro which lacks community-serving commercial use. Finally, the community will be losing more commercially-designated acreage with the reconfiguration of the San Ysidro Port of Entry. Thus, the Planning Department encouraged the applicant to consider a mixed-use project and pursue a mixed-use designation which could accommodate both residential and commercial uses. In addition, rather than pursuing a redesignation for the project site in isolation, the Planning Department also directed that the amendment should address the entirety of District 4. If initiated, it is anticipated that the general/community plan amendment would be processed with a rezone and all necessary permits required through the entitlement process.

Recent general/community plan amendments within the community include the Beyer Boulevard Affordable Housing Amendment which redesignated approximately 2.5 acres from Industrial to Medium-Density Residential (15-30 du/nra). Wakeland Housing is currently constructing 60 affordable units on the Beyer Boulevard site. An amendment that was initiated and is still in process is the Vista Lane Amendment, where the applicant submitted 13 properties totaling approximately 9.5 acres along Vista Lane and Blackshaw Lane for redesignation from Low-Density Residential (5-10 du/ac) to Low-Medium Density Residential (10-15 du/ac). The amendment would permit an increase in density and allow for smaller lot development. The Mi Pueblo Pilot Village General/Community Plan Amendment was initiated through an amendment to the Las Americas Development and Disposition Agreement, and is one of the Pilot Village projects. The Mi Pueblo General/Community Plan Amendment anticipates identifying all text and graphics within the San Ysidro Community Plan where the current community plan's goals and objectives may not support the intensity of development proposed. The Mi Pueblo amendment would bring forward recommendations for all appropriate changes to the San Ysidro Community Plan that will support the intensity of development proposed by the Mi Pueblo Pilot Village (see Attachment 6).

DISCUSSION

Before a community plan amendment can be initiated, Section 122.0104 of the Municipal Code requires that any one of three initial criteria or all four supplemental criteria, specified in the code, must be met. The Planning Department does not believe that any of the following three initial criteria can be met:

- (1) The amendment is appropriate due to a mapping or textural error or omission made when the original land use plan or local coastal program was adopted or during subsequent amendments;**

- (2) Denial of initiation would jeopardize the public health, safety or general welfare;**
- (3) The amendment is appropriate due to a material change in circumstances since the adoption of a land use plan or local coastal program whereby denial of initiation would result in a hardship to the applicant by denying any reasonable use of the subject real property.**

The Planning Department does, however, believe that all of the following supplemental criteria can be met:

- (1) The proposed land use plan amendment is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Progress Guide and General Plan and the San Ysidro Community Plan.**

The proposed general/community plan amendment would allow for mixed-use development in the Commercial Element's District 4 where mixed-use has been previously precluded. Mixed-use is generally supported by the goals and policies of the Progress Guide and General Plan, the Transit Oriented Development Design Guidelines, and the San Ysidro Community Plan.

The proposed amendment would help implement the Progress Guide and General Plan Housing Element's goal for the provision of adequate and affordable housing by allowing the development of multifamily dwelling units. The Progress Guide and General Plan Urban Design Element's goals for improving the neighborhood environment and increasing personal safety, comfort, pride and opportunity could be implemented through the development of multifamily dwelling units with eyes on the street and homeownership opportunities. The proposed amendment would allow for activation of an underutilized commercial center and help implement the Urban Design Element's recommendation to promote mixed usage as a key to an active, lively urban environment.

The Transit Oriented Development Design Guidelines recommend maximizing the use of existing urbanized areas accessible to transit through sensitive infill and redevelopment and protecting the community character. Further recommendations include the provision of a diversity of housing types and fostering a more vital, interactive, and secure community. The proposed amendment would help fulfill the recommendations through the infill development of multifamily dwelling units on vacant property within an underutilized commercial center which is serviced by public transit.

The proposed amendment would help implement the San Ysidro Community Plan's recommendations to create a safe and healthy living environment, to link residential development to the provision of adequate community facilities and services, to develop a more physically cohesive San Ysidro community, and to improve the appearance of dilapidated commercial structures. If initiated, the amendment would allow development of multifamily dwelling units with proximity to schools, transit, and commercial services on vacant property within an aging and underutilized commercial center.

While the proposed general/community plan amendment conforms to many of the goals and objectives of the Progress Guide and General Plan, the Transit Oriented Development Design

Guidelines, and the San Ysidro Community Plan, the Planning Department acknowledges that community members involved in the 1991 community plan update did not want residential within District 4, and the project could adversely affect one of the goals of the San Ysidro Community Plan. The plan states that residential development should be limited to commercial areas on San Ysidro and Beyer Boulevards. If initiated, the appropriateness of allowing residential development into District 4 would be fully analyzed. Given that the proposed amendment is consistent with a number of goals and objectives as mentioned above, staff recommends that this supplemental criterion be considered fulfilled for the purposes of this initiation process, with the understanding that further analysis of the proposed land use change would take place through the community plan amendment review process.

(2) The proposed land use plan amendment appears to offer a public benefit to the Community or City.

The potential benefit of the proposed land use amendment to the San Ysidro Community Plan is that it would allow for the addition of residential components in areas where residential development has previously been precluded. The amendment would allow residential development while still accommodating needed commercial development. The proposed addition of language that supports mixed-use development to Commercial District 4 recommendations would allow for the development of housing stock at a density range comparable to the adjacent existing development. The proposed density range would help maintain the neighborhood character within the San Ysidro community area. Infill development such as this would provide housing of an affordable nature within the San Diego region at a time when the City of San Diego is searching for areas that can accommodate additional residential units. In addition, the proposed plan amendment would provide more efficient use of the site by locating commercial and residential uses together.

(3) Public services appear to be available to serve the proposed increase in density or intensity of use.

San Ysidro is an urbanized community and all needed public services are available in the community. If the plan amendment is initiated, analysis of public services and facilities will be conducted with the review of the plan amendment.

(4) City staff is available to process the proposed land use plan amendment without any work being deferred on General Fund supported programs or ongoing plan updates.

Staff is available to process this amendment request without delaying General Fund programs or ongoing plan updates, as the Planning Department's work program includes staff time for non-General Fund development projects. However, delays in processing the plan amendment could occur based on staff levels and workload. The costs associated with processing this amendment would be paid for by the applicant.

As outlined above, the proposed plan amendment meets all the supplemental initiation criteria; therefore, the Planning Department staff recommends the proposed amendment to the Progress Guide and General Plan and the San Ysidro Community Plan be initiated.

The following issues have been identified with the initiation request. If initiated, these issues, as well as others that may be identified, will be analyzed and evaluated through the general/community plan amendment review process:

- The appropriate land use designation, density range, and zoning within District 4;
- The compatibility of mixed-use development with adjacent residential and commercial development;
- The availability of adequate community-serving commercial uses in the northwest portion of San Ysidro;
- The impact of potential residential development on public services and facilities;
- The evaluation of any traffic impacts associated with the addition of a mixed-use component within District 4;
- The availability of transit;
- The potential noise and health impacts related to the proximity of residential development to the Interstate 5 freeway;
- Housing availability and affordability;
- Walkability and pedestrian connectivity.

Although staff believes that the proposed amendment meets the necessary supplemental criteria for initiation, staff has not fully reviewed the applicant's proposal. Therefore, by initiating this general/community plan amendment, neither staff nor the Planning Commission is committed to recommend in favor or denial of the proposed amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

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- Attachments:
1. San Ysidro Planning and Development Group October Minutes
 2. San Ysidro Location Map
 3. San Ysidro Community Plan Land Use Map
 4. San Ysidro Commercial Districts Map
 5. Commercial District 4 Map with Proposal Site
 6. Initiated San Ysidro Community Plan Amendments Map
 7. Ownership Disclosure Statement
 8. District 4 Parcel and Ownership Information