

DATE ISSUED:

REPORT NO. PC-05-339

ATTENTION: Planning Commission  
Agenda of November 10, 2005

SUBJECT: Clairemont Mesa Community Plan Amendment – Chicago Street  
Supplemental Parking, Project Number 82079

REFERENCE: Planning Commission Report NO. P-03-087, Clairemont Mesa  
Community Plan Amendment Initiation

#### SUMMARY

Issue - Should the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council approve amendments to the Progress Guide and General Plan and the Clairemont Mesa Community Plan to provide policy language which would allow for supplemental off-site parking in a heavily impacted parking-deficient area of the Clairemont Mesa Community?

Staff Recommendation – Recommend that the City Council **Approve** amendments to the Progress Guide and General Plan and the Clairemont Mesa Community Plan.

Community Planning Group Recommendation – On October 18, 2005, the Clairemont Mesa Planning Committee voted 7-2-0 to recommend approval of the proposed amendment.

Environmental Impact – This activity is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 and categorically exempt from NEPA pursuant to 24 CFR Part 58, Section 58.34(a)(3).

Fiscal Impact – The preparation of a general/community plan amendment was funded by an allocation of Council District Six Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) reserve funds and North Bay Redevelopment funds.

Housing Impact Statement – The proposed plan amendment could potentially result in the use of the rear portion of six residentially-designated properties for supplemental off-site parking. The primary use of all six of these properties is currently residential. The proposed policy language requires that the primary use of these properties remain residential.

## BACKGROUND

The Clairemont Mesa community planning area is located in the central western portion of the City of San Diego east of Interstate 5, south of State Route 52, west of Interstate 805, and north of Interstate 8, approximately 6 miles north of downtown San Diego. Adjacent communities include University to the north, Kearny Mesa to the east, Linda Vista to the south, and La Jolla, Pacific Beach, and Mission Bay Park to the west.

The area affected by the proposed amendment is the west side of Chicago Street, between Ashton Street and Littlefield Street (Attachment 1 - Location Map). Land use designations for the area surrounding the proposed plan amendment includes: Low Density Residential (5-10 du/ac) along the west side of Chicago Street, with the exception of one lot designated Medium High Residential (30-45 du/ac); Neighborhood Commercial along Ashton Street; and Neighborhood Commercial, Medium High Residential, and General Commercial along Morena Boulevard (Attachment 2 – Community Plan Land Use Map). The existing development fronting Morena Boulevard consists of several restaurants, multi-family residential, a vocational college, offices and a small automobile dealership. Existing development fronting Ashton Street includes several restaurants and several commercial establishments. Existing development immediately to the east of Morena Boulevard within the identified area, separated by an alley, consists primarily of single-family residential. Immediately to the west of the identified area lies the railroad right-of-way and Interstate 5 (Attachment 3 – Existing Land Use Map).

In April 2003, an amendment to the Clairemont Mesa Community Plan was initiated to analyze whether parking deficiencies exist between Morena Boulevard and Chicago Street, south of Clairemont Drive and north of Littlefield Street and to develop policies which address the provision of supplemental off-site parking areas for commercial establishments. Over the course of the last three years, a number of business owners and residents of the Clairemont Mesa community became involved in addressing the severe parking shortages in the area of Morena Boulevard and Ashton Street. This community effort galvanized around a unanimous agreement that parking was a major problem around this particular block and that it would take a combined effort of the City and private businesses to resolve it. The result, based upon several years of stakeholder meetings and field analysis, is a recommendation to amend the Clairemont Mesa Community Plan to allow for alley parking on the rear portion of residentially-designated lots in a very specific geographic area.

## DISCUSSION

### **Community Plan Amendment**

This is a proposal to amend the Clairemont Mesa Community Plan to add policy language to address parking deficiencies in the specific geographic area of Morena Boulevard and Chicago Street, between Ashton Street and Littlefield Street.

On April 17, 2003 the Planning Commission considered an initiation for an amendment to the Clairemont Mesa Community Plan and the Progress Guide and General Plan to develop policies which address the provision of supplemental off-site parking areas for commercial establishments on

properties between Morena Boulevard and Chicago Street, south of Clairemont Drive and north of Littlefield Street. The Planning Commission voted 7 -0-0 to approve the initiation of the amendment requesting that a staff analysis include several additional issues. The issues raised at the Community Plan Amendment Initiation hearing and analyzed by staff are included in Attachment 4– Community Plan Amendment Initiation Analysis.

The Community Plan Amendment attempted to address parking deficiencies acknowledged in the Clairemont Mesa Community Plan, which states that many of the older commercial properties were developed under older commercial zoning which required minimal off-street parking. At one time, this parking deficiency was addressed through the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) process as supplemental commercial parking was allowed on the rear portion of residential lots with a CUP. This is visible along the alley as one travels north towards Clairemont Drive. However, this particular block is especially parking deficient as no CUP's were processed to implement this on this block at the time in which this was allowed. Currently, the option to process a CUP to allow for supplemental parking is no longer available.

At the time of the initiation, the scope of the perceived parking deficiencies was not fully known as field reconnaissance, surveys, and stakeholder meetings had not yet taken place. Due to the limited information available at the time of application for initiation, the owner of Baci's Ristorante, a restaurant near the southeast corner of Ashton Street and Morena Boulevard, solely took on the responsibility as the applicant to address the parking situation. Following the initiation, as stakeholder meetings and field reconnaissance began taking place, it quickly became apparent that the issue of parking deficiencies was larger than that of one particular business. It was at that time that the issue of addressing the parking deficiencies became a joint effort of neighborhood businesses, property owners, residents and the City of San Diego.

Following several years of meetings, including field reconnaissance of the area and consultant analysis of traffic and parking conditions, a number of potential options were developed. These options included: the establishment of a parking management district, off-site employee parking with a shuttle, the implementation of valet service, off-site and off-peak parking agreements, the acquisition of property to develop a central public parking lot, the retention of non-conforming parking spaces, the re-design of Morena Boulevard to incorporate on-street parking, acquisition/redevelopment of underutilized sites for parking, and the development of standards and design for alley parking. After a number of community-initiated meetings between business owners, residents and City staff, and based on analysis of traffic and parking conditions indicating a valid parking deficiency, and a consideration of all of the above options, it was determined that the allowance for alley parking was the best alternative. Additionally, while the issue of a shortage of parking is certainly not unique to this particular area, there is agreement amongst the stakeholders that this block has a unique character and its business owners and residents have taken a proactive grassroots approach to addressing the parking shortage as it pertains specifically to this block.

Based upon the above information, staff's recommendation is that the City Council adopt amendments to the Progress Guide and General Plan and the Clairemont Mesa Community Plan to provide policy language to allow for supplemental off-site parking in a specific geographic area of the Clairemont Mesa Community, if a strict set of criteria is met. This criteria consists of

five provisions. The first is that the primary use of the property must continue to be Residential, in order to protect the character of the surrounding neighborhood. The second is that access to the supplemental parking only be provided via the alleyway, as to minimize any adverse effects to adjacent neighborhoods. The third is that proposed parking areas be well-screened as to not impact the views from surrounding residential uses. The fourth is that proposed parking areas provide light for safety. The fifth criteria is that each proposed parking request go through the discretionary review process, specifically the Planned Development Permit (PDP) process, in order to ensure that each individual proposal receives thorough review.

This proposed community plan amendment would attempt to provide relief to a neighborhood currently impacted by a significant parking deficiency. It would achieve this through allowing for discretionary permits to be processed in order to remedy the parking shortage. The goal has been to increase the effective parking supply for the area, while not adversely affecting the quality, image, or productivity of the area. The proposed policy language is a means to achieving this goal as it will allow for the processing of discretionary permits to provide for supplemental off-site parking in the area identified as being the most parking deficient.

#### **Environmental Analysis:**

The proposed Community Plan Amendment is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Attachment 5 - CEQA Determination of Environmental Exemption). Additionally, since an expenditure of \$6,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds is being used in processing the proposed amendment, the proposal is also subject to NEPA review. The proposed Community Plan Amendment is categorically excluded from NEPA pursuant to 24 CFR Part 58, Section 58.34 (a)(3) (Attachment 6 - NEPA Statutory Worksheet and Attachment 7 - NEPA Certification of Categorical Exclusion).

#### CONCLUSION

Following several years of meetings led by community stakeholders, it was determined that an amendment to the Clairemont Mesa Community Plan should be prepared in order to address a parking deficiency in the area defined by Morena Boulevard, Ashton Street, Chicago Street, and Littlefield Street. Over the years, this group of stakeholders, comprised of business owners, residents, consultants and City staff, surveyed existing conditions, identified the issues, conducted field reviews, and discussed potential short-term and long-term strategies. Staff's recommendation is to provide policy language in the Community Plan that will allow for supplemental parking in this limited geographic area, through a discretionary review process.

#### ALTERNATIVES

1. **Approve** the proposed general/community plan amendment with modifications.
2. **Deny** the proposed general/community plan amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Brian Schoenfisch  
Senior Planner  
Long Range Planning

---

Betsy McCullough  
Deputy Director  
Long Range Planning

Attachments:

1. Location Map
2. Clairemont Mesa Community Plan Land Use Map
3. Existing Land Use Map
4. Community Plan Amendment Initiation Analysis
5. CEQA Determination of Environmental Exemption
6. NEPA Statutory Worksheet
7. NEPA Certification of Categorical Exclusion
8. Planning Commission Resolution No. 3369-PC
9. Proposed Community Plan Amendment Text
10. Draft Planning Commission Resolution
11. Aerial Map