



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE ISSUED: June 1, 2006 REPORT NO. PC-06-169

ATTENTION: Planning Commission
Agenda of June 8, 2006

SUBJECT: Initiation of an amendment to the Torrey Hills Community Plan and Progress Guide and General Plan to redesignate approximately 10 acres east of Vista Sorrento Parkway from Industrial to Residential.

OWNER/
APPLICANT: Coast Income Properties, Inc.

SUMMARY

Issue – Should the Planning Commission INITIATE a land use plan amendment to the Progress Guide and General Plan and the Torrey Hills Community Plan pursuant to Municipal Code Section 122.0103? This amendment has been requested to redesignate approximately 10 acres east of Vista Sorrento Parkway from Industrial to Residential.

Staff Recommendation – INITIATE the plan amendment process.

Community Planning Group Recommendation – On November 15, 2005, the Torrey Hills Community Planning Board voted (6-1-0) to recommend approval of the initiation of the community plan amendment process.

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 are reimbursed by the applicant.

Housing Impact – The request to redesignate 10 acres from Industrial to Residential is being proposed to accommodate 484 residential units. The plan amendment initiation proposes a redesignation that would allow up to 484 market-rate multi-family residential units that are not anticipated by the adopted Torrey Hills Community Plan. This proposal could help ease the city wide housing shortage. The proposal does not include affordable units, however the incorporation of an affordable housing component will be evaluated if the plan amendment is initiated. If initiated, the proposed plan amendment would

accommodate an increase in housing in this community as well as opportunities to pursue the City's inclusionary housing objectives.

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 site is located east of Vista Sorrento Parkway and south of Calle Mar de Mariposa within the Torrey Hills community plan area (see Attachment 1 – Vicinity Map). The site consists of four lots (referred to as Lots 1-4) that total 22.3 acres. The site is currently vacant and has been previously graded into developable pads and associated sloped areas. (see Attachment 2 – Location Map) Of the 22.3 acres, approximately 10 acres are designated for Industrial use with the slopes to the west and south designated as Open Space. The applicant is requesting a community plan amendment initiation to redesignate 10 acres of the 22.3 acre site from Industrial to Residential. As stated previously, the 10 acres proposed for redesignation represents the developable acres of the site.

Adjacent land uses include industrial, residential and open space (see Attachment 3 – Land Use Map). Development surrounding the subject site includes single-family residences to the east, multi-family residential buildings to the north, industrial land (primarily multi-tenant office uses) to the north and southeast and Open Space slopes to the west and south along Vista Sorrento Parkway. The Torrey Hills Elementary School is located further east along Calle Mar de Mariposa (see Attachment 4 – Aerial Map).

The current community plan land use designation of the subject site is Industrial (see Attachment 5 – Industrial/Business Park Land Uses Map). The Torrey Hills Community Plan calls for company headquarters and scientific research and development uses on this site. The community plan discusses the subject industrial site's proximity to residential uses and the need to design a development that ensures a sensitive transition with surrounding land uses. The majority of the Torrey Hills Community Planning Area is subject to a master development agreement. The development agreement (and the community plan) contains building intensity tables allocating buildable square footage and average daily trips (ADT) to provide a framework for development in the community. The community plan allocates building intensity over a larger area than the subject site and existing development has absorbed a larger share of the allowed ADT. Previously, Lots 1-4 received individual permits for construction of office and bio-medical developments, however, the entitlement process was legally challenged in court by a Torrey Hills residents group and the entitlements for Lots 1-4 were rescinded by the court. The square footage of future allowable development for Lots 1-4 was not specified by the courts decision. The development allowed on Lots 1-4 is further confused by inconsistencies within the community plan intensity tables related to traffic, industrial development and the master PID for the area.

The industrial area which includes Lots 1-4 is relatively isolated from the larger employment area south of Torrey Hills located in the Sorrento Mesa/University area and the surrounding

neighborhood is characterized by residential and school uses. While there are neighboring industrially designated sites, these have been developed with a mix of Research & Development (R&D) and office uses. The R&D uses appear to be in the form of engineering and software development that is preformed in an office setting.

Topographically, Lots 1-4 are situated in closer proximity to the surrounding residential uses. While the industrial sites to the north of Lots 1-4 take access from Vista Sorrento Parkway, a four Lane Major, Lots 1-4 and Lot 5 are set back from Vista Sorrento Parkway and take access from West Ocean Air Drive. West Ocean Air Drive is a two Lane Collector which serves the industrial uses and residential uses to the east.

The applicant has requested the initiation of a General Plan and Community Plan amendment to redesignate the developable portion of the subject site from Industrial to Residential in response to land use compatibility concerns raised by the residents group and the courts decision. The applicant's preliminary proposal includes 484 multi-family residential units (approximately 22 dwelling units to the acre), 4,000 square feet of retail commercial and a one-acre park. The proposed land use amendment would reduce the availability of industrially designated lands within the Torrey Hills Community Planning Area. If initiated, additional analysis would be required to determine the most suitable use and efficient use of the site.

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 Torrey Hills Community Plan.**

The proposed land use change from industrial to residential is consistent with the objectives of the General Plan and Community Plan. The Torrey Hills Community Plan acknowledges the sensitive nature of the site as it is adjacent to residential uses and near an elementary school. While the Community Plan contemplates industrial or office uses on this site, residential uses would eliminate potential use and design conflicts with the adjacent residential neighborhood. The building intensity necessary for marketable industrial use results in larger buildings than those that have been achieved even on the neighboring industrially designated sites.

A primary goal of the Industrial/Business Park Land Uses Element of the Torrey Hills Community Plan is to provide region-wide employment opportunities in high-end industrial/business park complexes that remain sensitive to community resources and adjacent land uses. The draft Economic Prosperity Element of the General Plan provides criteria for analyzing land use changes and conversion of industrial designated areas. Staff has determined the conversion of Lots 1-4 from industrial to residential would not impact a prime industrial area. Prime industrial land refers to areas attractive to manufacturing, research and development, wholesale distribution, and warehousing. The University/Sorrento Mesa subregional employment area is identified as prime industrial lands in the draft Economic Prosperity Element and is located south of Torrey Hills. This employment area does not include the scattered industrial sites within the Torrey Hills community plan area.

The proposed land use change would offer 484 additional multi-family residential units, a small retail commercial area and a one acre park. The Residential Land Uses Element of the Torrey Hills Community Plan recommends providing a variety of housing products available to a range of income levels and to create flexibility in residential building types. Single family detached development predominates residential land uses planned for the community. According to the Residential Land Use Element of the Torrey Hills Community Plan, 36% of the community is allocated for residential use with 7% allocated to Medium Low density (15-29 du/ac) characterized by multi-family residential development. The proposed land use amendment would provide additional multi-family housing and provide alternative housing opportunities for a larger range of income levels.

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

The proposed land use amendment will benefit the community by providing additional multi-family housing, retail commercial and park space on a currently vacant site. The site may not be optimal for prime industrial uses. The existing employment uses in the area are characterized by office uses. The land use change from industrial to residential would be compatible with the existing residential neighborhood to the north and be within close proximity to the elementary school. The City of San Diego has acknowledged the need for land to

accommodate additional housing units to meet regional housing needs. The proposed plan amendment would increase the amount of residentially designated land in a community with limited multi-family housing opportunities. The development of 484 multi-family units addresses this City wide need and will add diversity to the housing types available within the Torrey Hills planning area.

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

Public services appear to be available to serve the proposed use, as Torrey Hills is an urbanizing community. However, the adequacy of all public services and facilities to serve the proposed density will be examined in more detail if the initiation request is approved.

(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 will 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 Torrey Hills Community Plan and the Progress Guide and General Plan be initiated.

The following land use 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 community plan amendment review process:

- Conformance of the land use change with the proposed General/Community Plan amendment and the City's General Plan and Strategic Framework Element, and Housing Element;
- Comparison of current land use and zoning designations with proposed land use and zoning designations;
- Impacts to housing availability and affordability;
- Feasibility of developing a mixture of market rate for-sale and affordable units on site;
- Feasibility of increasing the commercial/retail component on site;

- Implementation of the Torrey Hills Community Plan design recommendations to provide enhanced pedestrian circulation between the street, park, commercial and residential elements;
- Identifying the necessary ADTs for granting entitlements on this site;
- Impacts to park and open space resources;
- Any impact of the land use change on public services and facilities;
- Feasibility of rezoning the designated open space slopes to an open space zone; and
- Compatibility with the remaining industrially developed site to the south.

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 community plan amendment, neither staff nor the Planning Commission is committed to recommend in favor or denial of the proposed amendment.

ALTERNATIVES

- Find that the proposed land use plan amendment does not meet the criteria as described and deny the General/Community Plan amendment initiation request.

Respectfully submitted,

Cecilia G. Williams, AICP
 Program Manager
 Planning Department

Sara Osborn
 Associate Planner
 Planning Department

CW/SO

Attachments:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Location Map
3. Land Use Map
4. Aerial Location Map
5. Industrial/Business Park Land Uses Map
6. Ownership Disclosure Statements