

## Uptown Community Plan Update

### **July 2012 Draft Proposed draft Land Use Plan Summary of Changes and Community Input**

The revised draft proposed Land Use Plan was distributed for community review this past July. Staff has received comment from various community stakeholders and groups as well as comments presented at subsequent Uptown Planners meetings. To fill out the discussion, the community input provided below focuses mainly on concerns we received outside the planning meetings rather than the input received at the planning meetings. The goal is to assist Uptown Planners with gathering additional community input to develop a recommendation at a future meeting.

Staff can also consider one or two alternatives if there is no concurrence on the proposed draft. Certain concerns can also be discussed in the text and policies developed rather than being reflected on the land use map. Revisions may also be considered when traffic, air quality, noise and other environmental studies are available at a later date.

The major changes from the existing plan are summarized below as well as community input received. Input related to reducing density also applies across categories.

- 1 A reduction in the highest residential density range from 110 dwelling units/acre to 74 du/ac is proposed within all areas where this range occurs in the adopted plan. For residentially designated areas, the proposed range is 45-74 du/ac and for commercially designated areas 0-74du/ac. This proposal would affect the central core of Hillcrest and portions of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues in Bankers Hill/Park West.

#### Staff Considerations:

- The existing 1988 Uptown Community Plan previously allowed 110 dwelling units per acre as an incentive for parcel accumulation. Staff is also evaluating whether public amenities could be incentivized through density bonus mechanisms.
- Although lower densities may reduce the incentive to redevelop property, they may also reduce traffic and facilities impacts and allow more realistic density bonus incentives for public amenities to be considered.
- Proposed densities within mixed-use corridors support transit as density above 15/acre meets this requirement (and employment intensity above 25 jobs/acre).
- Development proposals for retail and professional or medical office mixed-use would not be affected. Proposals could also consider adding office or hotel floors within residential mixed-use projects to offset the reduction in residential density.
- Downtown and Mission Valley will continue to add and attract office, retail (general merchandise) and high density residential development thus limiting growth within Uptown.

- Allow density bonuses for public amenities. Staff believes pocket parks and public parking are amenities most needed within the corridors.

Concerns:

- Density reductions within commercial corridors do not support the development expectations of property owners and projects either under consideration or in the pipeline.
- Further, density reductions could affect the potential to increase the commercial vitality and pedestrian activity along corridors.
- The cost and availability of development sites is also a limitation in a mature community, with few remaining developable lots.
- Keep existing plan densities within all commercial corridors or work with individual neighborhoods on specific recommendations (e.g. consider stepping down densities from the high density commercial corridors to the residential areas).

- 2 The highest density range for the residential mixed-use option in Office Commercial areas is proposed to be reduced from 0-73du/ac to 0-44du/ac. Areas within the Medical Center, Hillcrest core and along 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the Bankers Hill/Park West neighborhoods would be affected.

Staff Considerations:

- The density reduction is consistent with the General Plan range for mixed-use office development as well as existing development patterns.
- This land use functions as a transition to lower density residential areas.
- The City's economic study identified a possible long-term need for additional medical office near existing medical facilities.

Concerns:

- The real estate market is currently limited for office use.

- 3 A reduction in the residential density range is proposed for portions of the Hillcrest neighborhood east of SR-163 to reflect existing development and lot patterns in this unique commercial corridor while still allowing a residential mixed-use option at a potentially smaller-scale. For residentially designated areas, the proposed range is 30-44 du/ac and for commercially designated areas 0-44 du/ac.

Staff Considerations:

- This is consistent with the adopted plan's framework of keeping higher densities within the Hillcrest core and lower density along the University Avenue corridor.
- The location, size and configuration of much of the older storefront commercial space are desirable for small and sole proprietor businesses.

Concerns:

- Many existing retail businesses along the corridors require more foot traffic to draw customers and would benefit by more residents in the corridor.
- Densities along the University Avenue corridor should be higher than in the Hillcrest core because the wider street can accommodate more intensity.
- This portion of the community should be positioned for the possibility of attracting high-tech and creative districts by maintaining higher intensity land uses.

- 4 Reductions in residential density are proposed in the University Heights neighborhood along the west side of Park Boulevard from 44 du/ac to 29 du/ac to reflect the lot patterns and commercial main street character of this segment of Park Boulevard.

Staff Considerations:

- Lower densities may result in smaller projects making community character protection easier, but within much of the community's overall density range there is no clear link between apparent building size and density (reference staff slide presentation).
- While there are many lots developed under planned density, the existing development pattern is more reflective of the density in the adopted plan.
- Concerns related to urban design may be addressed through development of design guidelines that require context sensitive design and implement lower scale buildings within the front portion of lots within blocks that have retained a similar character.

Concerns:

- The neighborhood is currently impacted by multi-family and commercial development that does not provide enough parking and further development and population growth will negatively impact the neighborhood.
  - The loss of the remaining single-family homes will largely eliminate the historic character of the neighborhood.
- 5 Restrictions on residential development are proposed within portions of the office and commercially designated areas of the Bankers Hill/Park West neighborhood due to airport and freeway impact considerations. The residential density allowed within the portion of the Office Commercial area along 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue south of Laurel Street is proposed to be reduced from 44 du/ac to 29 du/ac. This is the same density allowed within adjacent portions of this office district. Residential development is proposed to be prohibited within the portion of the Office Commercial area south of Fir Street and within the Neighborhood Commercial area along State Street due to freeway and airport impact considerations.

Residential development is proposed to be prohibited within the Community and Neighborhood Commercial areas adjacent to the freeway in the Middletown

neighborhood due to freeway and to a lesser extent airport impacts. These commercial districts also provide a unique and diverse range of commercial business that serve the community and could be negatively affected by intensification of residential use.

Considerations:

- Various state guidelines recommend a buffer between 500-1000 feet from freeways due for residential and other sensitive receptors to potential long-term health effects from air quality and noise impacts.
- A health-risk assessment is required by for residential growth within areas subject to reduced air quality (adjacent to freeways). An air quality analysis is currently being prepared to identify any health risks posed by proximity to freeways and other sources of particulate pollution. All freeway interfaces will be modeled. However, the I-5 corridor is a main concern due to existing freeway volumes as well as the lack of vertical separation between adjacent land uses.
- Lodging, retail and offices are not considered sensitive receptors and would still be permitted.
- The existing height limit of the commercial zones in this area is fairly restrictive at 30'. This height limit can be increased to encourage future office mixed-use and hotel development.
- Wait for the air quality report before considering alternatives adjacent to freeways.

Concerns:

- Restricting residential development could affect the potential to increase the commercial vitality and pedestrian activity along commercial areas.
- The close proximity of the Washington Street trolley station provides an opportunity to encourage residential-commercial mixed use.
- Keep existing plan densities within all commercial corridors or work with individual neighborhoods on specific recommendations (e.g. Middletown).

- 6 Reductions in residential density are proposed within the Mission Hills neighborhood to reflect existing development conditions and preserve neighborhood character. Areas affected are the commercial core and adjacent residential blocks as well as the residential area along Goldfinch Street and Reynard Way.

Considerations:

- The reduction to single-family density removes an incentive to redevelop neighborhoods that have a predominant single-family character.
- Other density reductions generally reflect existing development patterns.

Concerns:

- Small-scale residential properties adjacent to commercial corridors are impacted by the intensity without any benefit. Consider allowing lower intensity commercial uses as a transition to residential.

- Density reductions in multi-family areas remove an incentive to redevelop older, unattractive apartment buildings.
- Reduction in residential density especially along Reynard (which is a public transit route) would diminish opportunities to revitalize this portion of Mission Hills.