

## **Mira Mesa Community Plan Update**

### **Plan Update Advisory Committee Meeting – Interactive Discussion on Urban Design**

**October 21, 2019**

#### **Summary and Themes of Input**

##### **Mira Mesa is a special place**

- *Moved our families here because of suburban nature*
- *Mira Mesa provides us all the amenities we need locally*
- *Do not want to be pushed out*

##### **New residential uses at shopping center will change Mira Mesa**

- *Will contribute to further gridlock on Mira Mesa Boulevard*
- *Do not want it to become downtown*
- *Will not enhance our quality of life*
- *Don't want to lose our retail anchors*
- *City's focus on more affordable housing will make us like Los Angeles. Don't want that.*

##### **Let us not succumb to NIMBYism**

- *Need to be forward thinking*
- *Consider needs of our children and future generations*

##### **Keep pedestrians and bicyclists safe**

- *Add protected bike lanes and safety countermeasures*
- *Wider sidewalks and better crosswalks*
- *Want my kids to safe on the streets*
- *Slow down cars*

### **Need more and better transit**

- *Any new uses or intensification must be preceded by investments in new transit infrastructure*
- *Mira Mesa Boulevard has poor transit service, although it is designated a transit corridor*

### **Don't take parking away**

- *Will always drive and keep our cars*
- *Will not pay for parking*

### **Focus first on fixing Mira Mesa Boulevard**

- *Gridlock needs to be addressed*
- *Make it easier for pedestrians to get across (consider ped bridges)*
- *Complete Carroll Canyon Road to take east-west burden off Mira Mesa Boulevard*

### **Meeting Minutes**

- Alex Frost (Project Manager) gave an overview of plan update process – noted that different possibilities were presented to the group in September, but nothing presented was final. The Planning department is performing the Mira Mesa Community Plan Update (CPU) because community plans determine how places grow and evolve, and they're meant to last 20 – 30 years. The City's General Plan (GP) and Climate Action Plan (CAP) are guiding documents. We have gone through Phase I of the process and are now in Phase II – concepts and alternatives. Phase III is when CEQA analysis occurs and Phase IV is when community facility needs are determined. The CPU Officially kicked off in October, about a year ago. Every month the Planning Department has met with the advisory committee. In addition, there has been an open house / workshop, an online survey, and stakeholder interviews were conducted. Phase II has included several market analyses, including housing needs, jobs / job growth, and commuter analysis. Traffic congestion, air quality, and safety are discussed as components of auto dependency.
- Project Manager notes that nothing is changing in terms of the existing retail mix – as long as the existing retail in Mira Mesa is profitable, they will stay in business – this is a plan for the next 15 – 20 – 30 years. An audience member notes that some of the businesses have been there for 20 years and folks are still going to them.
- Audience member asks if there is a mobility update going on with the CPU. Project Manager says yes, the Planning Department is looking at improving mobility and connections into the community as part of the CPU.

- Audience member asks if the planners live in Mira Mesa – the Planning Team does not, but the Community Planning Group and the CPU Advisory Committee serve that role.
- Audience member asks how parking spaces were calculated. The Urban Design consultant, Gaurav Srivastava, (consultant) explains parking assumptions include 1.5 units per dwelling unit and 3 spaces for every 1,000 SF of retail. These assumptions are concurrent and not combined – there is only a 5% – 10% rate of shared parking assumed for all scenarios.
- Audience member asks if the scenarios explore the two shopping centers in Mira Mesa or the entire region. Consultant says that we are looking at four focus areas, two of which are the retail centers.
- Jeff Stevens (Chair) begins non-agenda public comment period.
  - An audience member introduces herself as Marilyn Grimes: thanks committee for their work. Retired teacher and vice principal with SD Unified. Her family moved here because the community is diverse and family oriented. They bought their home in 1986 and live across the street from a park and elementary school. Their family wants to live in suburbia and if they wanted to live downtown then they would move downtown. Marilyn notes that people still move to Mira Mesa for the same reason. Marilyn also notes that the retail stores in the community need 75,000 people to support them. Marilyn is a senior citizen that cannot just walk to places – she needs her car. She supports businesses in Mira Mesa for local needs – she loves amazon, but she still buys her groceries in Mira Mesa or at Target. Marilyn wants to keep shopping centers as shopping centers. Mira Mesa has a pollution problem caused by the quarry, but the new developments in Carroll Canyon should improve the pollution. Marilyn wants other planned developments to be done before we plan for more.
  - An audience member introduces herself as Donna Glassy – Donna moved here in 1978 and she loves Mira Mesa, and she thinks that growth will push people out. Donna does not like the possible scenarios shown for the shopping centers. Donna says that the Planning Department does not have kids, and Mira Mesa is a community of young families. Donna never has to leave Mira Mesa and likes that.
  - An audience member introduces himself as Pat Akers – Pat describes what seems to be “contradictory things.” For example, a goal of the CPU is to free up roads and make driving easier, yet design renderings show parking centers for people that don’t live in Mira Mesa. Pat wants the existing roads fixed before development is allowed – Pat notes Gold Coast, Capricorn Way specifically. Pat says that people are “coming in here trying to gut this place” and turn it into downtown, and “they are going to come in here and tell us how to run things.” Pat says that Mira Mesa should stay the same and that “they should fix what is wrong.” He has been asking for stop sign at Jade Coast and “they won’t do it because it isn’t a high traffic area.”
  - An audience member introduces herself as Paula wall – Paula says that the planners should move to Mira Mesa. There is nonstop gridlock, and they do not need more people there. Mass transit is down 6% because no one will use it. It is a nightmare for her girls in LA to find parking and they also have a lot of gridlock – they don’t live where they work, that is not sensible. It won’t stop gridlock it makes it worse. If there isn’t adequate parking, it will be a nightmare. If someone lives a far distance (from shopping centers), they will see that it isn’t walkable and they will be excluded from being able to

access their own malls. Paula asks rhetorically why Mira Mesa was chosen for a plan update even though there are golf courses that could be turned into housing developments. Paula says Mira Mesa is always under construction.

- An audience member introduces herself as Alexa Kaplan – Alexa lives by the Post Office, and she has been there for 15 years. Paula doesn't want to see housing where retail centers are – there should be planned infrastructure and traffic mitigation before different land use scenarios are approved. No matter what, people will keep their cars and people will drive. These areas are only going to be walkable if you live in these commercial centers, and everyone else will have to drive and pay to park, and they will park on residential side streets instead. Alexa notes that the surveys and open house and community fair only reached 3% of people that live in Mira Mesa, and most people didn't know it was in the works.
- An audience member introduces himself as Ted Burtier – Ted has lived in Mira Mesa for 25 years. Ted asked the audience “who has children under 18 now?” (much of the audience raised hands). Ted wants a place that his kids can be safe, where they can get from one side of Mira Mesa to the other – safely. Ted says that there are a lot of people saying “I don't like it,” but the regional population is growing either way. There is a proverbial bus, and it is necessary to get on in order to help steer it. Ted wants to see the plan and give constructive feedback instead of hearing about 1978. Ted asks the audience who could afford to buy their own house now. When no one raised their hand, Ted said that he doesn't think that he could buy his house now.
- An audience member introduces himself as Thomas Knoble – Thomas is a retired scientist that has lived in Mira Mesa since 1973. Thomas says that the “same thing is going on time and time again – the Planning Department was talking about road impacts in the 1970s and 1980s – see how (Mira Mesa Boulevard) looks now.” Thomas said he is “disgusted by this plan.” Thomas says that unaffordable communities where contractors and middle-class service professionals can't afford to work, and the quality of life for everyone is headed down.
- An audience member introduces herself as Jacqueline Lee – Jacqueline lives in South Park and commutes to Scripps Ranch via the 235 Rapid. She bikes 1 mile east of the 15 to her destination, and she is very concerned about pedestrian and cyclist safety here. Jacqueline says that Westfield parkways and the areas around 15 should come with warnings so that motorists know that there are cyclists. Jacqueline notes that she previously emailed the Planning Group about this and she attended the meeting because everyone who doesn't own a car needs represented.
- Consultant thanks the audience for their comments and says that the Planners are on the same page with a lot of things mentioned – bike safety, pedestrian safety, aging in place, etc. The scenarios shown at the last meeting are adding more parking than what is currently available. Designers and planners recognize the relationship between parking and accessibility, and they also recognize that people care about where they live and work.
- An Advisory Committee member suggested that the community wants to see new infrastructure for traffic infrastructure – deferred infrastructure maintenance is one of the main concerns. Project manager said that the Planning Department will come back

to have a discussion on mobility – Mayor Faulconer has made deferred maintenance a priority, but it is difficult because the City of San Diego is spread out and sprawling, with a lot of infrastructure to maintain.

- An audience member noted that MTS was formed in the 70s, and nothing has come that they promised. 2,200 apartments were built against the 15 and people wonder why everything is congested – yet they want to do this in other places.
- Audience member asks what stakeholders are – Project Manager says people living here, working here, going to school here.
- An audience member notes that the CPU flyer specifically says that the CPU will not address maintenance of public facilities and infrastructure. Project Manager explained that this is long range plan looking at 20-30 years in the future. Gold Coast will be repaved, but this plan talks about future parks, housing, retail and roads.
- An audience member notes that Mira Mesa Boulevard is a major corridor, which won't change. To get people across it, Planners should look at elevated crosswalks like along Black Mountain Road – this is something that can be done now.
- Audience member asks if affordable housing “is it going to be financed off the normal tax base.” Project Manager says that the plan will include facilities benefits - everything you see at the new park, it's a fee that new developments pay.
- The Chair moves on to Advisory Committee comments – in 1992, the community plan had a facilities benefit assessment, which was 30-40k per unit – this is how things got built. How do you generate money for investment in your community? New development has a fee – goes into a pot of money for projects within the Mira Mesa Community Planning Area (CPA). The list of infrastructure was put together by the board. A Committee member noted that this money comes from the people that built their homes. It has taken 40 years to dig out of the hole that Mira Mesa is in (regarding lack of public facilities). The entire concept of a Facilities Benefit Assessment is the result of growth in Mira Mesa, because Mira Mesa was built without the proper amenities.
  - A Committee member notes that, despite all the talk about millennials and younger adults and kids under the age of 18 – his daughter can't afford to live in San Diego. New developments cost more than his current house – how do these projects address affordability when no one can live in them?
  - Project manager said that the city doesn't build housing – the City requires 10% of new housing to be inclusionary (or pay a fee), which helps. Although new construction is expensive to rent / buy in, when we add additional housing to the market, we reduce competition for housing and that stabilizes / drives down costs.
  - A Committee member said that many folks on the Board won't be around when this plan is implemented. Those still here will need to deal with transportation – the Uber and Lyft model may be subsidized, or perhaps it will not, but he believes we can address these things in this pan. Without addressing traffic, Mira Mesa would turn into New Delhi. Americans are terrible drivers and we need to deal with the very short-term issues. Mira Mesa is not bigger than Basel Switzerland, and it is time to rethink the way that we get around.
  - A Committee member thanks Alex for meeting with the community. She notes that the scenarios shown call for 1.5 spaces for multifamily, but the new TPA standards require

no parking at all. All of Mira Mesa Boulevard is a transit corridor, even though there is very sub-standard bus service. You cannot get anywhere on transit from Mira Mesa within 90 minutes – Mira Mesa needs more transit, and she wants to see these things in the plan.

- A Committee member notes that a big focus should be on Carroll Canyon Road – that is what is necessary to help with congestion.
- A Committee member noted that every time the Community Planning Group mentions installing a road, they get nothing. The notion of Mira Mesa Boulevard as a transit corridor is insane – Mira Mesa Boulevard is not a transit corridor. Transit will work, but it takes the government to subsidize it – it doesn't start on its own. There is no movement along those lines. Eliminating parking standards along Mira Mesa Boulevard is crazy. He noted that some people on the Committee have more experience with planning than others have been alive, and encourages the audience to come to these meetings more often to understand more.
- Two Committee members note that they are concerned about park space in Mira Mesa. The community is almost 70 acres short of the parks required for their neighborhood. Mira Mesa should have 3 community parks, but there are only 2. Mira Mesa will need a 4<sup>th</sup> if there are 1,100 units built at the shopping center where Home Depot is, and 800 built by the Target, etc. Committee members said that Facilities Benefit Assessment fees can only build new infrastructure, funds can't be used for infrastructure maintenance. They also noted that the pedestrian bridge by Galvin has been taken over by homeless, so it may not be a great idea to add more.
- An audience member said that she does not understand why there is a plan update when the City hasn't fixed "what the problem is."
  - Project Manager responded that the CPU is planning for the community for the next 20 years. Growth will happen, and now is the time to get a plan in place so the community can get things in there that they want to see.
- An audience member said that they want this place to be more walkable and more bikeable. The approach may not be best, but this is where the Committee comes in. "We need to tell them how we want it to work. Yelling at Alex isn't going to help – he isn't the problem. Council is the problem deciding to put people everywhere."
- Chair said that the Mira Mesa Community Planning Group are not NIMBYS with regard to multifamily housing. These projects are different – they don't cover the commercial facilities that the community uses. One of the things driving this is that the state is mandating housing across the state, and the city picks up on that. One of the things paying for this update is a grant that requires more housing. Other big projects do not count.
- Project Manager made some final remarks:
  - In regards to a guarantee for transit, the Project Manager noted that transit is what SANDAG and MTS do, but the City is working with both agencies through the CPU process.
  - In regards to a parking mandate, Project Manager clarifies that the City removed parking minimums for multifamily housing within Transportation Priority Areas, which is simply a transition from requiring parking to letting the market decide.

- In regards to 1,100 units at Home Depot and 800 at Target are not City proposals: the City isn't proposing this, that is the existing zoning that allows it by right today. 3000 additional units are allowed in the major shopping centers by right.
- In regards to why Mira Mesa is having a plan update where additional housing is explored: Mission Valley added 28k units, but they have the trolley. Kearny Mesa is proposing 20k units.