



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Planning Commission

DATE ISSUED: July 25, 2017

REPORT NO. PC-17-058

HEARING DATE: August 3, 2017

SUBJECT: Kearny Mesa Community Plan Update Workshop

### **SUMMARY**

This is a workshop to update the Planning Commission on the Kearny Mesa Community Plan Update. No action is required on the part of the Planning Commission at this time.

### **BACKGROUND**

The community plan update for Kearny Mesa is a collaborative effort to help the City and community determine how Kearny Mesa will develop so it continues to thrive as a key employment center, while capitalizing on the diverse opportunities that the community has to offer.

The plan update process has been initiated to address the following issues, as well as others that arise through the update process:

- Strengthening Kearny Mesa as a major employment area
- Planning land uses around future transit locations in Kearny Mesa
- Revitalizing activity centers, including the Convoy corridor as a walkable destination
- Addressing Climate Action Plan (CAP) strategies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
- Facilitating the implementation of Smart Growth Areas
- Identifying appropriate locations to support a diversity of office, commercial, and mixed-use land uses
- Addressing infrastructure needs

Kearny Mesa's needs are changing. The current community plan does not have the land use plan and policy framework to support employment intensities and mixed-use development that implements the City of Villages strategy and the City's CAP. The update provides an

opportunity to re-evaluate the needs of employers in industrial lands, the character of activity centers, and the location of new transit-oriented development. There is a desire to strengthen the existing employment base and add high quality jobs for San Diegans while also connecting Kearny Mesa to the future. During the community plan update process, the City will consider development standards that provide opportunities for employment to grow while providing more options for employees to live closer to work and use alternative modes of transportation.

The General Plan identifies Kearny Mesa as a Subregional Employment Area due to its industrial land use base supporting manufacturing, distribution, and office uses. Kearny Mesa's central location also make it an attractive option for providing workforce housing choices in areas where residential uses do not conflict with industrial lands employment goals. An updated community plan for Kearny Mesa will establish goals and policies to address more sustainable land use, mobility, urban design, and public facilities.

## **DISCUSSION**

Kearny Mesa is a major industrial, office, and commercial center at the geographic center of the City of San Diego. The Kearny Mesa Community Planning area is approximately 4,400 acres, bounded by State Route 52 (SR-52) to the north and Interstate 805 (I-805) and Interstate 15 (I-15) on the west and east, respectively. The southern boundary of the planning area consists of properties lying to the south of Aero Drive, and properties extending to Friars Road along the western edge of I-15 (Attachment 1).

### What is prompting the community plan update?

Kearny Mesa is one of the region's key employment centers and has strong potential for future growth and transit-oriented development that accommodates a variety of business types and sizes and workforce housing, where appropriate. The planned extension of the trolley system to include a new purple line will expand the transit network and connections to Kearny Mesa. Transit options are important for existing commuters and for providing new connections and increased transit ridership opportunities from neighboring communities. Kearny Mesa is also increasingly seen as a regional attraction because of the popularity and momentum of the Convoy District. Finally, the City has received a Smart Growth Incentive Program grant from SANDAG to update the land use and zoning strategy and consider opportunities to expand the employment potential and allow complementary residential uses in a mixed-use setting along Clairemont Mesa Boulevard in two Smart Growth Areas (SGA) (Attachment 1).

### Where should opportunities for change be focused in Kearny Mesa?

An important part of the update is identifying areas of transition and obtaining input on target areas for increased employment uses through new land use recommendations consistent with a smart growth strategy. Most of Kearny Mesa is located within a Transit Priority Area (TPA), with the potential to better connect land uses. An existing conditions **Map Atlas** was prepared that details some of the constraints and opportunities for future development. The Map Atlas is also available for review on the project website at this link: [http://kearnymesaconnected.com/wp-content/uploads/20170608\\_KMCPU\\_MapAtlas\\_CPGSC-Final-Version.pdf](http://kearnymesaconnected.com/wp-content/uploads/20170608_KMCPU_MapAtlas_CPGSC-Final-Version.pdf).

### What is the status of the community plan update?

The update is in the early stages, with a focus on understanding existing land use patterns and constraints in locating new mixed use development with commercial, office, and residential uses and corresponding connections and facilities. The project team will work to facilitate community input on priorities, prepare land use, mobility, and design concepts, and incorporate citywide goals and policies—which now includes the City’s CAP—over a three-year process.

An informational open house was held in June 2016 to generate interest in the community plan update. Community members were invited to learn more about the plan update process, and how to get involved through the standing subcommittee of the Kearny Mesa Community Planning Group. In the fall of 2016, work began on the existing conditions phase. Reports that have been completed include:

- Existing Conditions Map Atlas - The Map Atlas is an informational document that focuses on mapped resources relating to land uses, natural resources, urban form, and mobility infrastructure. It was created to develop an understanding of the existing land uses and frame the discussion about opportunity areas in Kearny Mesa.
- Mobility Existing Conditions Report - This report is the initial step towards updating the Kearny Mesa Community Plan's Mobility Element. The content of this report covers an analysis of existing physical and operational conditions related to the mobility system within Kearny Mesa.
- Economic Context Report - Kearny Mesa supports a regionally significant concentration of major employers, jobs, and prime industrial lands. This report compiles existing conditions for Kearny Mesa’s economic base, fiscal revenue, real estate context, demographic and socio-economic characteristics.

The Kearny Mesa Community Plan Update Subcommittee held monthly meetings from February to June 2017. At the first meeting, Subcommittee members were given a presentation on the planning context and regulatory setting of update. This included an introduction to the City of San Diego General Plan and the need for an update to reinforce Kearny Mesa as an employment center, enhance commutes, revitalize key activity centers, promote the Convoy Corridor as a walkable destination, and plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Recent meetings have focused on the results of the existing conditions documentation, which is available on the [project website](http://kearnymesaconnected.com/plan-documents/) or this link: <http://kearnymesaconnected.com/plan-documents/>.

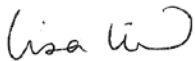
In accordance with the Planning Department’s Work Program, an outreach strategy was developed for the Kearny Mesa Community Plan Update, named *Kearny Mesa Connected* (Attachment 2). Current tasks include ongoing community outreach, continued work on the SGAs, and a summary of issues and options. Detailed technical studies related to land use, mobility, and environmental constraints will be developed in later phases of the process.

Recent outreach includes the Existing Conditions and Opportunities Workshop on July 27, 2017 and online activity intended to obtain diverse input from the public about the plan. The activity will be available through August 31, 2017 and can be accessed on the [project website](http://kearnymesaconnected.com/) or through this link: <http://kearnymesaconnected.com/>. For the first time, the online engagement was designed for users to complete on a mobile device with the goal of expanding outreach. The input received will lead to the development of land use, mobility, and urban design concepts to enhance the existing character of the community, provide new connections, and guide transit-oriented development.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Planning Commission has expressed a desire to have a workshop early in the plan development process, where Commissioners could share their ideas and priorities for the update. The workshop is timed to incorporate input on the community outreach efforts that are ongoing prior to development of alternatives.

Respectfully submitted,



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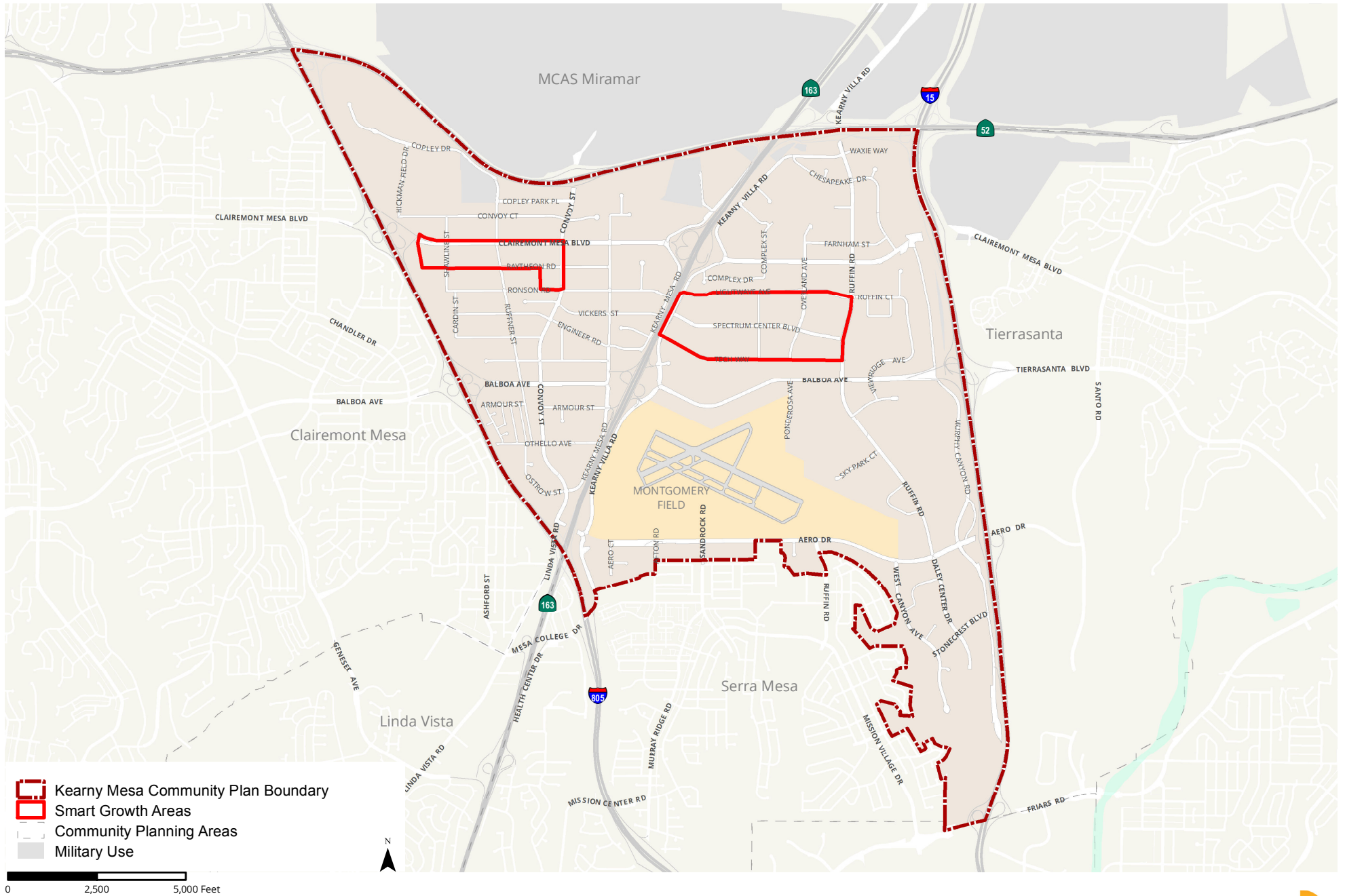
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Brian Schoenfisch  
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Attachments:

1. Kearny Mesa Planning Area Map
2. Kearny Mesa Community Plan Update Process Chart

# Attachment 1: Kearny Mesa Planning Area



Data Source: City of San Diego, 2015; SANGIS Regional GIS Data Warehouse, 2015. ([www.sangis.org](http://www.sangis.org))  
AECOM, 2016



## KEARNY MESA CONNECTED SCHEDULE

A draft Community Plan, including a draft land use and transportation plan, will be developed, and an environmental impact report will be prepared.

