



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

**DATE ISSUED:** January 26, 2016

**REPORT NO.** PC-16-012

**ATTENTION:** Planning Commission, Agenda of February 4, 2016

**SUBJECT:** MIDWAY – PACIFIC HIGHWAY COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE  
WORKSHOP #2

### SUMMARY

THIS IS A WORKSHOP TO UPDATE THE PLANNING COMMISSION ON THE MIDWAY – PACIFIC HIGHWAY COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION AT THIS TIME.

### BACKGROUND

The current Midway - Pacific Highway Community Plan was adopted in 1991, and includes a Local Coastal Program for the portion of the community within the California Coastal Zone. In 1998, the City Council amended the community plan for the North Bay Revitalization Program which included the Bay-to-Bay Canal link concept and its implementation through a Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone. However, in 2003 a feasibility study determined that the proposed canal water link was infeasible due to cost and environmental issues. The City Council initiated a comprehensive community plan amendment in 2004 to remove the Bay-to-Bay concept, insert a park strategy to link future parks with pedestrian and bicycle connections, and identify mixed-use transit oriented nodes. The amendment process was put on hold in 2006 pending the adoption of the General Plan Update.

The in-process update to the Midway – Pacific Highway Community Plan will include the revision of the Midway – Pacific Highway Local Coastal Program and the Midway – Pacific Highway Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone.

Since the kick-off of the community plan update in November 2010, City staff and the consultant team have had eleven community plan update advisory committee meetings to gather community input. The community has provided input on the existing conditions and recommendations from past planning efforts. A community walk audit was held in July 2011 to address existing conditions. A community workshop was held in October 2012 to discuss the vision and concepts for land use and mobility. During 2013, City staff and the consultant team prepared a “discussion draft” community plan to capture concepts from past planning efforts, community input, City Council direction from the 2004 community plan amendment initiation, and policies from General Plan. The discussion draft was released for public review in November 2013.

In 2014, staff and consultants developed additional urban design concepts and potential redevelopment concepts for the proposed Dutch Flats Urban Village and Sports Arena Community Village. In 2015, work has focused on preparing the public review draft of the updated community plan, which will include textual revisions, photographs, illustrations, and urban greening concepts prepared through the North Bay Urban Greening project in the final community plan document layout.

#### *2013 Planning Commission Workshop*

In September 2013, a Planning Commission workshop was held to review the Midway – Pacific Highway discussion draft community plan. At that workshop, Commissioners requested additional information and detail on the proposed urban design framework, concepts and policies included in the draft community plan.

The following summary of the key land use, mobility, and urban design concepts found in the community plan update provides context for a focused discussion on urban design at this second Planning Commission workshop.

## **DISCUSSION**

### *Land Use*

The draft Community Plan’s organizing concept is walkable-multimodal districts and villages with a complement of uses and linkages to parks, regional open space, shops, services, entertainment attractions, housing, and employment areas to enhance the livability and character of the community. The organizing concept is in essence the application of the General Plan’s City of Villages strategy to the Midway-Pacific Highway, which will assist in the community’s transition from auto-oriented to active transportation-friendly and allow the community to take advantage of its central location and proximity to transit.

It is envisioned that the larger super blocks in the Midway area will incorporate a greater mix of uses framed with new streets, creating distinct mixed-use villages. The land use concept recognizes and supports maintenance of the existing military and military-supporting uses, as well as the mix of small industrial and commercial uses, for their contributions to the local and regional economy. The community is within the voter-approved coastal height limit and any proposed development exceeding 30 feet above grade will require a vote of the people. Four of the twelve proposed districts and villages are described below:

*Sports Arena Community Village* is envisioned as a mixed-use commercial entertainment focused village at the City-owned Sports Arena property. This proposed village could include a combination of horizontal and vertical mixed-use or multiple-use development with office, retail and residential uses as well as parks and public spaces that allow for outdoor gathering, events, markets and recreation uses. A new or existing Sports Arena building with the potential for structured parking will serve as the anchor for the village. The draft plan envisions a pedestrian and bicycle connection from a village green space to the San Diego River.

*Dutch Flats Urban Village*, which includes the U.S. Navy’s Regional Plant Equipment Office and the Midway Post Office site, is envisioned as an employment-focused village. Dutch Flats’ large parcels will accommodate large floor plate buildings with a mix of small to large defense/high-tech and research

& development businesses, as well as residential, supporting smaller scale retail uses, and parks space in an urban environment. The Midway Post Office building has been acquired by a developer of industrial space who proposes to reuse the building; however, opportunities remain for site and frontage improvements and for future business park uses with complementary residential uses.

*Kemper Neighborhood Village* is envisioned as a mixed-use node along Kemper Street and Midway Drive with existing and future residential, office, visitor serving commercial and institutional uses. The Continuing Education Center will be the focal point of the village. The former Cabrillo Hospital building is being redeveloped for educational uses, which is compatible with the draft community plan's vision.

*Hancock Transit Corridor* is envisioned as a multiple- and mixed-use pedestrian-oriented transit corridor connected to the Washington Street Trolley Station. Pedestrian-friendly commercial and residential uses will be located along Hancock Street and Pacific Highway from Witherby Street to West Washington Street. Also, the land use plan supports the construction of shopkeeper units for artists and business owners through adaptive reuse of existing buildings or new development.

### *Mobility*

The draft Community Plan envisions the development of a balanced, multi-modal transportation network that improves pedestrian, bicycle and transit access while also addressing vehicular traffic capacity and improved regional access on heavily traveled roads. A major component of the plan is a proposal to expand the street grid network through the creation of new roadways and pedestrian facilities to break up the scale of larger developments and superblocks to remove local traffic from the major arterials. The draft Community Plan identifies the need to work with SANDAG to connect the Old Town Transit Center and the Sports Arena and Dutch Flats villages with a future rapid bus route and to work with SANDAG and Caltrans to improve regional freeway access and connections.

The "Bay to Bay" connection concept from previous planning efforts has been maintained in the form of an enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connection between Mission Bay and San Diego Bay. Additional enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connections are proposed for Rosecrans Street, Midway Drive, Sports Arena Boulevard, and Pacific Highway. Conceptual designs have been created for these connections through the North Bay Urban Greening Planning Study.

Another mobility improvement envisioned in the draft Community Plan is the conversion of Pacific Highway from an expressway into a multimodal boulevard in order to enhance the livability and identity of the corridor. The grade-separated intersections of Pacific Highway with Barnett Avenue, Witherby Street, and West Washington Street will be brought to grade, which will slow traffic and improve safety and access for cyclists and pedestrians.

The proposed Intermodal Transit Center (ITC), which is included in the Regional Transportation Plan, will become a hub for passenger rail, transit service, and future high-speed rail in the Kettner District of Midway-Pacific Highway. The ITC will provide new transportation options for San Diegans to reach San Diego International Airport, and will also provide new transportation access for the residents and employees within the community.

### *Urban Design*

The draft Community Plan seeks to improve the community character, create a sense of place, foster livability, and transform Midway-Pacific Highway into a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly community. High-quality building design, the pedestrian-oriented design of urban street-facing facades, and the creation of a pleasant streetscape environment through the implementation of reduced building setbacks, street trees and landscaping, pedestrian lighting and street furniture, will be key aspects to enhance the interface with the public realm and strengthen Midway - Pacific Highway's identity.

As mentioned above, the North Bay Urban Greening Planning Study that is being prepared concurrently with the Community Plan update will provide conceptual plans for active transportation-supportive facilities and improvements along the main thoroughfares in Midway-Pacific Highway, as well as concepts for storm water infiltration facilities, selections for street trees and street furniture, wayfinding and gateway signage designs, and proposed locations for the signage. Gateway elements, including signage, are encouraged to emphasize entry points into the community from Old Town, Downtown, Peninsula, Liberty Station, Mission Valley, San Diego Bay, Mission Bay/San Diego River, and the San Diego International Airport.

### *Public Spaces and Parks*

The draft Community Plan seeks to enhance the public realm through:

- Incorporating linear parks along existing streets to further encourage walking and bicycling;
- Developing linkages between parks in the community and regional recreational areas and open space (San Diego River Park, San Diego Bay, Mission Bay, and Presidio Park);
- Emphasizing the community's historic relationship to the Presidio, the San Diego Bay, Mission Bay and the San Diego River; and
- Integrating Midway - Pacific Highway with the surrounding communities.

The Community Plan's park strategy includes a combination of population-based parks, such as: neighborhood parks, mini-parks, and pocket parks; as well as park equivalencies, such as: non-traditional parks sites, and joint-use recreational facilities that are accessible to the public.

### **Next Steps**

Staff and the consultant team will continue to perform outreach to obtain community input and to refine the draft Community Plan and zoning through spring 2016. The Impact Fee Study for Midway – Pacific Highway will be prepared during spring-summer 2016.

The Notice of Preparation was issued and the Scoping Meeting was held for the draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) in November 2015, and a draft is expected to be released for public comment in September 2016. The adoption hearings are anticipated in January and February 2017.

**CONCLUSION**

Staff is seeking Planning Commission input on the draft Community Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



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TG/vw

**Attachments:**

1. Planning Commission Report PC-13-109: Midway – Pacific Highway Community Plan Update Workshop



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

**DATE ISSUED:** September 10, 2013 **REPORT NO.** PC – 13-109

**ATTENTION:** Planning Commission  
Agenda of September 19, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Midway – Pacific Highway Community Plan Update Workshop

### SUMMARY

THIS IS A WORKSHOP TO UPDATE THE PLANNING COMMISSION ON THE MIDWAY – PACIFIC HIGHWAY COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION AT THIS TIME.

### BACKGROUND

The Midway Pacific Highway community plan was adopted in 1991. Between 1998 and 2008 the following communitywide planning related studies and actions have occurred:

- 1998 – The City Council amended the community plan for the North Bay Revitalization Program which included the Bay-to-Bay link.
- 2002 – The City issued a request for qualifications to redevelop the Sports Arena site and surrounding property. The process was terminated due to community concerns.
- 2003 – The Bay-to-Bay Feasibility Study determined that the proposed water canal link was infeasible due to cost and environmental issues.
- 2004 – The Redevelopment Agency funded the North Bay Station Area Concept Plan that provided a vision of mixed-use development between the Sports Arena and the Old Town Transit Center.
- 2004 – The North Bay Business Association funded the preparation of the North Bay Concept Plan that provided urban design recommendations.
- 2004 – Council District 2 formed an ad hoc committee to address the redevelopment of the Sports Arena and surrounding property. Majority and minority reports were prepared.
- 2004 – The City Council initiated a comprehensive community plan amendment to remove the bay-to-bay concept, insert a park strategy to link future parks with pedestrian and bicycle connections, and identify mixed-use transit oriented nodes. The amendment process was put on hold in 2006 pending the adoption of the General Plan Update.
- 2008 – The City Council authorized the update to the Midway - Pacific Highway Community Plan. The update includes corresponding amendments to the zoning program and City of San Diego Local Coastal Program.

## DISCUSSION

Since November 2010, the City staff and the consultant team have had ten community plan update advisory committee meetings to gather community input. The community has provided input on the existing conditions and recommendations from past planning efforts. A community walk audit was held in July 2011 to address existing conditions. A community workshop was held in October 2012 to discuss the vision and concepts for land use and mobility. During 2013, City staff and the consultant team have been preparing a “discussion draft community plan” to capture concepts from past planning efforts, community input, and City Council direction from the 2004 community plan amendment initiation, and to be consistent with the General Plan.

### *Land Use*

The draft Community Plan organizing concept is composed of walkable-multimodal Districts and Villages with a complement of uses and linkages to parks, regional open space, shops, services, entertainment attractions, housing, and employment areas to enhance the livability and character of the community. It is envisioned that the larger super blocks will have a greater mix of uses framed with new streets, creating distinct mixed-use villages. The land use concept recognizes and supports maintenance of the existing military and military –support uses, as well as the mix of small industrial and commercial uses, for their contributions to the local and regional economy. The community is within the voter-approved coastal height limit and any proposed development exceeding 30 feet above grade will require a vote of the people.

*Sports Arena Community Village* is envisioned as a mixed-use commercial entertainment focused village at the City-owned Sports Arena property. This proposed village could include a combination of horizontal and vertical mixed-use or multiple-use with office, retail, residential, and park and public spaces that allow for outdoor gathering, events, markets and recreation uses. A new or existing Sports Arena building with the potential for structured parking will serve as the anchor for the village. The draft plan envisions a pedestrian and bicycle connection from a village green to the San Diego River.

*Dutch Flats Urban Village* is envisioned as an employment focused village which includes the U.S. Navy’s Regional Plant Equipment Office and the Midway Post Office, should these properties become available. Dutch Flat’s large parcels provide the ability to have large floor plate buildings with a mix of small to large defense/high-tech and research & development businesses, residential, supporting smaller scale retail uses, and parks space in an urban environment.

*Kenyon Neighborhood Village* is envisioned as a mixed-use node along Kenyon Street and Midway Drive with existing and future residential, office, visitor serving commercial and institutional uses with the Continuing Education Center as focal point of the village. Former Cabrillo Hospital provides an opportunity for health care related uses or residential, office and/or visitor commercial uses.

*Kurtz Transit Corridor/ North Corridor* is envisioned as a multiple and mixed use pedestrian-oriented transit corridor connected to the Washington Street Trolley Station, along with pedestrian-friendly commercial and residential uses along Hancock Street and Pacific Highway from Witherby Street to

West Washington Street, supporting the construction of shopkeeper units for artists and business owners incorporated to adaptive reuse of existing buildings or new development. Pacific Highway has the potential to be converted from an expressway into a multimodal boulevard to enhance the livability and community identity of the corridor.

### *Mobility*

The draft Community Plan envisions the development of a balanced, multi-modal transportation network that improves pedestrian, bicycle and transit access while also addressing vehicular traffic capacity and improved regional access on heavily traveled roads. A major component of the plan is a proposal to expand the street grid network and enhance the pedestrian environment, through the creation of new roadways to break up the scale of larger developments and superblocks to remove local traffic off the major arterials. The draft Community Plan addresses the need to work with SANDAG to connect the Old Town Transit Center and the Sports Arena and Dutch Flat villages with a future rapid bus route and working with SANDAG and Caltrans to improve regional freeway access and connections.

### *Urban Design*

The draft Community Plan seeks to improve the community character, create a sense of place and foster livability to transform the community into a vibrant pedestrian friendly community. High quality building design, the design of urban street-facing facades, and the creation of a pleasant environment through the incorporation of reduced building setbacks, shade trees, landscaping, pedestrian lighting and street furniture, will be key aspects to enhance the interface with the public realm and strengthen Midway - Pacific Highway's identity. Clear gateways are encouraged to emphasize entry points into and from Old Town, Downtown, Peninsula, Liberty Station, San Diego River, San Diego Bay, Mission Bay and the San Diego International Airport.

### *Public Spaces and Parks*

The draft Community Plan seeks to enhance the public realm through:

- Incorporating linear parks along existing streets improved to emphasize walking and bicycling;
- Developing linkages between parks in the community and to regional recreational areas and open space;
- Fostering the community's historic relationship to the Presidio, the San Diego Bay, Mission Bay and the San Diego River; and
- Integrating Midway - Pacific Highway with the surrounding communities.

The Community Plan's park strategy includes the combination of population-based parks, such as: neighborhood parks, mini-parks, pocket parks; and park equivalencies, such as: non-traditional parks sites, and joint-use recreational facilities that are accessible to the public.

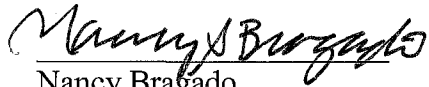
## **CONCLUSION**

Staff is seeking Planning Commission input on the plan concepts currently being developed. Staff and the consultant team will continue to obtain community input on the draft Community Plan and to complete technical studies to inform the plan update, including traffic modeling that is expected to be completed by the end of 2013. In early 2014, the draft plan will be prepared and work will begin on a




Program Environmental Impact Report. It is anticipated that the adoption hearing process will begin by mid-2015.

Respectfully submitted,



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TSG/NB