



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Planning Commission

DATE ISSUED: October 20, 2016 REPORT NO. PC-16-063
HEARING DATE: October 27, 2016
SUBJECT: University Community Plan (UCP) Transportation Element Amendment.
Process 5

SUMMARY

Issue:

Should the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council certification of the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and approval of the UCP Transportation Element Amendment which evaluated the impacts and identified mitigation measures associated with the removal of Genesee Avenue Widening and Regents Road Bridge projects from the community plan?

Objective:

City Council initiated an amendment to the UCP on September 29, 2014, and directed the Planning Department to address the issues and impacts relating to right-of-way acquisition and construction of improvements in Rose Canyon associated with the proposed Genesee Avenue Widening and Regent Road projects (CIP projects S-00852 and S-00729). These include a variety of technical, environmental, and community concerns, as well as further regulatory permitting by resource and wildlife agencies from impacts to sensitive biological resources.

Staff Recommendation:

1. RECOMMEND to the City Council **CERTIFICATION** of the Final PEIR (Sch. No. 2015121011).
2. RECOMMEND to the City Council **APPROVAL** of a resolution amending the University Community Plan and General Plan to adopt the No Construction of Regents Road Bridge and Reconfiguration of Genesee Avenue Alternative as described in Final PEIR.

Community Planning Group Recommendation:

On July 12, 2016, the University Community Planning Group (UCPG) voted 11-1-3 to recommend approval of the UCP amendment which removes the Genesee Widening and Regents Road Bridge; 11-1-3 to recommend approval of a letter in response to the Draft PEIR; and 10-1-4 to add language to the response letter which states opposition to proposed mitigation measures TRA-1.6 and TRA-2.3, and support for proposed mitigation measures TRA-1.8, TRA-1.9, TRA-1.10, TRA-2.6, and TRA-2.5. The minutes of the July 12, 2016 UCPG meeting are included as Attachment 4.

Environmental Review:

A Program Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2015121011) has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the above referenced project (Attachment 3). A Notice

of Preparation (NOP) soliciting input on the scope of the PEIR was issued on December 2, 2015. The Draft PEIR was made available for a 45-day public review beginning May 24, 2016. The Final PEIR, which includes the NOP, Draft PEIR, and public comments along with City staff responses, are attached to this report.

Housing Impact Statement:

The proposed community plan amendment does not alter land use and would have no impact on the total number of units identified in the adopted community plan.

BACKGROUND

Community Overview:

The University Community Planning Area encompasses approximately 8,500 acres. The community is bound by Los Peñasquitos Lagoon and the east-facing slopes of Sorrento Valley on the north, MCAS Miramar and Interstate 805 (I-805) on the east, State Route 52 (SR-52) on the south and Interstate 5 (I-5), Gilman Drive, and the Pacific Ocean on the west (Attachment 2).

Community Participation and Public Outreach

Public outreach for the plan amendment provided stakeholders with regular updates to the project website and notices for opportunities to become involved throughout the plan amendment process. Planning Department staff provided updates at regularly scheduled UCPG meetings regarding project status, key dates and milestones. Planning Department staff also presented the UCPG with a comprehensive overview of the Existing Conditions Mobility Report and scope of the Traffic Impact Study on February 9, 2016, and the proposed amendment to the University Community Plan on June 14, 2016.

DISCUSSION

Why is review of the Genesee Avenue Widening and Regents Road Bridge within the current University Community Plan needed?

The current University Community Plan (UCP) that included the proposed Genesee Avenue Widening and Regents Road projects, was adopted by the City Council on July 7, 1987. Since the adoption of the Plan and completion of the environmental technical analysis, the UCP has been amended 14 times. The development patterns, traffic conditions, and mobility priorities are different than previously anticipated and modeled. Furthermore, mobility improvements including the Caltrans North Coast Corridor Project, the Mid-Coast Corridor Project, the Super Loop Bus Rapid Transit service, and certain UC San Diego circulation improvements within North UC were not known or evaluated in the traffic analysis or EIR prepared for the 1987 UCP.

The Genesee Avenue Widening and Regents Road projects have been on hold due to a variety of technical, environmental, and community concerns relating to issues such as right-of-way acquisition and construction of improvements in Rose Canyon. The Regents Road Bridge requires permits from United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

What does the University Community Plan amendment accomplish?

The UCP Amendment (project) would result in the removal of the proposed Genesee Avenue road widening and the connection of Regents Road over Rose Canyon (Attachment 1). Future improvements would be prohibited in the area and the present infrastructure would remain.

What alternatives were considered?

In addition to the proposed project, as initiated by City Council, five scenarios were analyzed for their ability to meet the project objectives and environmental impacts. Most scenarios included combinations of roadway and access improvements that would reduce or eliminate effects on Rose Canyon. The No Construction of Regents Road Bridge and Reconfiguration of Genesee Avenue alternative would be similar to the project in that it would avoid construction of a bridge structure and widening within Rose Canyon; however, roadway improvements within the existing right-of-way are included to increase vehicular capacity for the north/south connections.

Two scenarios which focused on pedestrian/bicycle connections and emergency access were included, one included the widening of Genesee Avenue and one that avoided impacts associated with widening Genesee Avenue. Both of these alternatives would result in construction impacts to Rose Canyon resulting from the pedestrian/bicycle bridge, although the area of disturbance would be reduced due to the narrower bridge structure required.

The No Project alternative, which involves the construction of the Regents Road Bridge and widening along Genesee Avenue is presented, along with a second alternative which involves construction of the bridge and no widening along Genesee Avenue, to provide an updated and comparative analysis of the circulation system as compared to the proposed project.

What is the rationale for staff's recommendation?

Review of the project and alternative scenarios highlighted two scenarios, the proposed project and the No Construction of Regents Road Bridge and Reconfiguration of Genesee Avenue, which met the primary objective per the city council resolution of addressing the technical, environmental and community issues associated with construction of infrastructure within Rose Canyon. Furthermore, the environmental analysis within the PEIR concluded that overall impacts would be less for both of these scenarios in light of the project objectives than any of the alternatives involving construction of a bridge structure.

With respect to the updated circulation network analysis for all scenarios, it was demonstrated that with or without construction of the bridge, vehicular circulation within the University Community Plan area in the future would result in failing levels of service. Each alternative network scenario results in impacts to street segments and intersections associated with its unique travel pattern. All alternative network scenarios may result in impacts that overlap at intersections and street segments. However, the No Construction of Regents Road Bridge and Reconfiguration of Genesee Avenue results in slight improvements to vehicle congestion along Genesee Avenue and provides an improved pedestrian and bicycle connection while meeting the project objective of minimizing impacts to Rose Canyon.

As noted above, there will be failing levels of service to street segments and intersections with or without construction of the bridge which would affect emergency response and accessibility. Scenarios which include construction of the Regents Road Bridge do not substantially reduce

emergency response and accessibility as compared to the proposed project. However, the No Construction of Regents Road Bridge and Reconfiguration of Genesee Avenue alternative provides slight improvements to vehicle congestion along Genesee Avenue which would provide for improved emergency response and accessibility within the University Community while meeting the project objective of minimizing impacts to Rose Canyon.

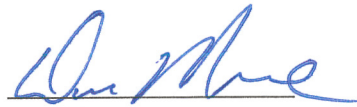
CONCLUSION

Planning Department staff recommends the No Construction of Regents Road Bridge and the Reconfiguration of Genesee Avenue alternative. This alternative would result in fewer impacts when compared to the proposed project and would meet the project objectives of addressing the technical, environmental and community issues associated with construction of infrastructure in Rose Canyon. In order to reflect the Planning Department's recommendation, staff requests that revisions to two pages in Attachment 1 be incorporated as part of the Draft University Community Plan Transportation Element Amendment. The revisions are highlighted and provided as Attachment 5.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

1. Draft University Community Plan Transportation Element Amendment
2. University Community Planning Area
3. Final Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR)
4. University Community Planning Group Minutes of July 12, 2016
5. Staff recommended revisions to Attachment 1