



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Planning Commission

DATE ISSUED: October 26, 2022 REPORT NO. PC-22-050

HEARING DATE: November 3, 2022

SUBJECT: Mira Mesa Community Plan Update

REFERENCES: [March 14, 2019 Mira Mesa Community Plan Update Workshop, Report No. PC-19-015](#)
[March 18, 2021 Mira Mesa Community Plan Update Workshop, Report No. PC-21-014](#)
[July 21, 2022 Mira Mesa Community Plan Update Workshop, Report No. PC-22-036](#)

SUMMARY

Issue: Should the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council approval of the update to the Mira Mesa Community Plan?

Staff Recommendations:

1. RECOMMEND to the City Council CERTIFICATION of the Mira Mesa Community Plan Update Program Environmental Impact Report SCH No. 2022090061 and Adoption of the Mitigation And Monitoring Reporting Program for the Mira Mesa Community Plan Update.
2. RECOMMEND to the City Council APPROVAL of a resolution adopting the Mira Mesa Community Plan and amending the community's Local Coastal Program and the General Plan.
3. RECOMMEND to the City Council APPROVAL of an ordinance amending the Land Development Code Chapter 13, Article 1 Division 7, and Chapter 13, Article 2, Division 14, and amending the City's certified Local Coastal Program.
4. RECOMMEND to the City Council APPROVAL of amendment to the Historical Resources Guidelines of the City's Land Development Manual to exempt specified areas within the Mira Mesa Community Planning Area from potential historic resource review under SDMC 143.0212.
5. RECOMMEND to the City Council APPROVAL of an ordinance rezoning land within the Mira Mesa Community Planning Area consistent with the Mira Mesa Community Plan.

Mobility Board Recommendation: On October 5, 2022, the Mobility Board voted unanimously (7-0-0) to recommend the Draft Mira Mesa Community Plan.

Community Planning Group Recommendation: On October 17, 2022, the Mira Mesa Community Planning Group (MMCPG) voted (17-0-1) to provide thirteen recommendations (Attachment 2) to the Mira Mesa Community Plan Update. The stated purpose of the proposed recommendations is to make the Planning Commission and City Council aware of Community Plan Update deficiencies and to encourage the City to address the issues raised by the MMCPG.

Park & Recreation Board Recommendation: On October 20, 2022, the Park & Recreation Board voted (6-0-1) to recommend the Mira Mesa Community Plan Update and to consider incorporation of the parks and recreation-related recommendations proposed by the Mira Mesa Community Planning Group.

Historical Resources Board Recommendation: On October 27, 2022, the Historical Resources Board (HRB) will vote on a recommendation for amendment to the City's Historical Resources Guidelines of the City's Land Development Manual for the Mira Mesa Community Plan Update. Staff will report the results of the HRB vote at the November 3, 2022 Planning Commission hearing.

Environmental Review: The City of San Diego, as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), prepared a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) SCH No. 2022090061 covering this activity. The public review period to comment on Draft EIR ended on October 21. A Final EIR with responses of comments is being prepared.

Fiscal Impact Statement: NA

Code Enforcement Impact: NA

Housing Impact Statement: Currently, the Mira Mesa Community Planning Area (Planning Area) has approximately 26,800 homes and 305 deed-restricted affordable homes. The adopted 1992 Mira Mesa Community Plan has an estimated total build out of 34,000 homes (Attachment 3). The Mira Mesa Community Plan Update would provide capacity for 24,000 additional homes to be built for an estimated total buildout of 58,000 homes. This is a 71 percent increase over the 1992 Community Plan.

BACKGROUND

Mira Mesa is a major suburban employment center and a residential community located in the north central portion of the City. The Mira Mesa Community Planning Area is one of San Diego's largest communities in terms of land area, population, and employment. The community plan area consists of 10,729 acres and is located between Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar on the south and Los Peñasquitos Canyon open space on the north, and between Interstate 805 and Interstate 15 (Attachment 4).

Mira Mesa is identified as one of the City's Subregional Employment Areas due to its concentration of employment and contribution to the economic prosperity of the City. Approximately 45 percent of the Planning Area is within a Transit Priority Area (TPA), or within a half-mile of a major transit stop. Given its central location, status as an employment center, and planned improvements to the regional transit system within the community, the conditions are optimal for Mira Mesa to transition into a

community that balances its employment, commercial, and residential uses within vibrant mixed-use Urban Villages.

The Planning Department initiated the Mira Mesa Community Plan Update to address the City of Villages Strategy and the City's Climate Action Plan goals, so Mira Mesa continues to thrive as both an employment center and residential community and support future transit investments. From public engagement events, surveys, and meetings with the community (Attachment 5), a vision emerged for Mira Mesa as a vibrant employment center, that includes eclectic urban villages, and active neighborhoods for all ages and abilities. The proposed Community Plan Update's compact land use strategy, policy framework, and multimodal network achieve the vision and accommodate growth consistent with the General Plan City of Villages Strategy and the City's Climate Action Plan goals (Attachment 6). The land use and multimodal strategy and vision were also based on and evaluated by multiple technical studies (Attachments 7).

DISCUSSION

A. Why is an update to the current Community Plan needed?

The current 1992 Community Plan planned for the development of industrial, business park, commercial and residential uses primarily on remaining vacant land. Current planned land uses and the auto-oriented mobility network for the Planning Area were developed during a time with a development context that is dramatically different from what is present today. In addition, the 1992 Community Plan has been amended nine times. For the next phase of Mira Mesa's growth, the proposed updated Community Plan envisions a shift to a well-connected employment area with opportunities for people to live closer to job centers.

The proposed Community Plan Update (CPU) builds on the 1992 Community Plan by adding capacity for employment uses while also identifying areas for residential uses in mixed-use settings within urban villages. The updated land use plan for Mira Mesa is designed to facilitate transit-oriented development near existing and future transit routes. The updated Community Plan also incorporates a mobility network that supports all travel modes and provides multimodal connections for more efficient trips. To support mobility and address recreation needs, the proposed CPU identifies an urban pathway system to provide new connections and opportunities for linear parks. The accompanying rezone and amendments to the Land Development Code are intended to provide additional capacity and flexibility for businesses to grow, facilitate a transition in land uses in the proposed mixed-use villages, and support the economic growth of an important subregional employment area.

The proposed CPU is a significant step in implementing the Climate Action Plan and General Plan City of Villages Strategy by increasing the capacity for future jobs and workforce housing in Transit Priority Areas, reinvesting in existing communities, addressing the housing crisis, and reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions. Overall, the proposed CPU creates a better balance between employment and housing in Transit Priority Areas and provides a mobility network and land uses that function for more people and for a greater range of users, from employees to residents and visitors.

B. What are the more significant changes being proposed by the Mira Mesa Community Plan Update?

1. Vision and Land Use

The proposed planned land uses locate the highest residential density land uses near job centers and transit corridors in seven Urban Villages.

- The proposed Urban Villages at Mira Mesa Gateway and Mira Mesa Town Center along Mira Mesa Boulevard build on an area with a mix of restaurants, entertainment, retail, and office uses. These two areas serve as a community and regional destination and attraction for Mira Mesa and surrounding communities.
- The proposed Urban Employment Villages in Plaza Sorrento, Pacific Heights Boulevard, and Barnes Canyon Road provide new opportunity for residential development within a major employment hub in Sorrento Mesa.
- The proposed Miramar Gateway along Miramar Road includes light industrial, commercial, and office uses builds on the variety of uses by providing additional mixed-use areas and multi-family residential uses, close to cultural center, future park, recreation facilities and retail center.

As the community grows, the proposed Urban Villages will support job growth, create housing, encourage non-auto travel, and provide quality public spaces. Adding homes closer to jobs coupled with mobility improvements has the potential to shift more trips to active transportation and reduce vehicle miles traveled for commutes to work.

Figure 1 shows the total housing and employment buildout capacity for existing and proposed land use. This includes the existing and adopted community plan capacity and the proposed CPU capacity for the proposed land use scenario.

*Figure 1: Planned Land Uses - Total Potential Buildout**

	Homes	Jobs
Existing	26,800	85,000
Remaining Capacity (adopted community plan)	+7,200	+27,000
Proposed CPU Capacity	+24,000	+5,000
Total	58,000 Homes	117,000 Jobs

**Rounded to the nearest hundred.*

2. Economic Prosperity and Prime Industrial Areas

As a part of the proposed CPU, an amendment to the General Plan Economic Prosperity Element and Prime Industrial Lands is proposed with a new Prime Industrial Land category, called Prime Industrial Land – Flex, that allows new land use flexibility to meet the demands of innovation sectors and workforce housing (Attachment 8). The proposed CPU incorporates Prime Industrial Land – Flex in the Sorrento Mesa Prime Industrial Lands to allow for mixed-use development.

The proposed CPU has mixed-use land use designations that are strategically located in Sorrento Mesa and Miramar subareas. These designations allow for a new development where primary employment uses are balanced with potential residential uses. The proposed CPU

retains the majority of existing employment lands while creating flexibility in key nodes for a compatible live/work/play village. The integration of employment and residential uses in a job-rich community like Mira Mesa can benefit the community and City as a whole. The infusion of mixed-use development with housing in walkable Urban Villages will benefit the current and future San Diegans who call Mira Mesa home.

3. Mobility

The proposed CPU envisions expanding personal mobility options for Mira Mesa residents, employees, and visitors alike and promoting a safe and sustainable transportation system that meets the needs of people of all ages and abilities. The proposed CPU builds upon the General Plan's goal for a balanced, multimodal transportation system and identifies multimodal connections that promote sustainable travel via walking, rolling, biking, and riding transit. Incorporating infrastructure like well-connected, separated bicycle facilities, landscape-buffered sidewalks, and paseos, as well as transit priority lanes, aerial skyway and enhancements to first/last mile connections to transit are all part of the overall strategy to make Mira Mesa cleaner, safer, and healthier. When paired with smart land use, these improvements will help transition Mira Mesa into a more active, equitable, and sustainable community.

The proposed CPU contains a mobility network for pedestrian, bike, transit, and automobile that focuses on the following primary strategies:

- Enhance walkable connections for residents, students, employees, and retail visitors;
- Create a network of separated bikeways & parallel low-stress routes for local trips;
- Make transit a competitive and reliable option; and
- Maximize roadway efficiency to move more people.

4. Public Facilities, Services, and Safety

The proposed CPU envisions an adequate network of public facilities, such as libraries and schools, as well as public services, such as police and fire-rescue, to sustainably support a growing population and maintain public safety within Mira Mesa. A new fire-rescue station is identified in the Miramar subarea and a new school location is identified in the proposed Stone Creek Master Plan area. The majority of proposed land use changes are located outside major flood zones and the Very High and High Fire Severity Zone to support climate resilience.

According to the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) assessment of potential student generation, the implementation of the proposed CPU may result in 3,844 to 7,614 TK-12 students. Based on the 2021-2022 school enrollment data, there is capacity for 1,766 additional students while the draft plan identifies one future school location within the Stone Creek Master Plan area with a potential new student capacity of 450 students, for a total availability to accommodate 2,216 students. In addition, the proposed CPU provides policies to:

- Site future school as part of a mixed-use development;
- Encourage the construction of multi-story school facilities since many existing schools will require renovation in the future (8 schools built in 1980); and
- Collaborate with Miramar College for siting school facilities.

The proposed CPU plans for multiple pathways to accommodate the potential generation of new students. The City and SDUSD will also continue to work closely together to explore options for the provision of TK-12 grade educational facilities to serve Mira Mesa students as needed.

5. Historic Preservation

The proposed CPU envisions a quality built and natural environment enriched by the identification and preservation of significant historical resources within Mira Mesa and establishes policies to support the identification and preservation of the historical, archaeological, and tribal cultural resources of the community. More detailed historical narratives are provided by a Historic Context Statement, Historical Resource Reconnaissance Survey, and a Cultural Resources Constraints Analysis, and are included as appendices to the PEIR. The results of the survey also informed the proposal to exempt portions of the community from San Diego Municipal Code Section 143.0212 also known as the historic review process for buildings or structures 45-years old or older (Attachment 9).

6. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

The proposed CPU envisions a well-connected system of parks, recreational facilities, and open space that provide opportunities for passive and active recreation, social interaction and community gathering, the enhancement of the public realm, and the protection of sensitive natural resources. The plan's goal is to provide parks where they are most needed. Additional park amenities, such as plazas, linear parks, urban pathways, and other public spaces are planned for the Urban Villages via Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ) Supplemental Development Regulations.

To increase value and use, the community's network of parks and recreational facilities should be well-connected by a variety of pathways (such as sidewalks, trails, and paseos, etc.), bikeways, and transit. In addition, parks should vary in programming and design, from dog off-leash areas to community gardens and exercise stations, for example, to cater to the diverse needs of Mira Mesa's park users. The proposed CPU calls for new parks and for additional recreation amenities to be added to existing neighborhood parks.

Over 58 acres of proposed parks and one recreation center are planned in the Carroll Canyon area, in particular at the approved 3 Roots Master Plan area and at proposed Stone Creek Master Plan area. Mira Mesa has an abundance of natural open space areas and trail planning and conservation are key in the park planning efforts, with over 17 miles of proposed trails that have been identified to enhance outdoor experiences.

The proposed CPU is utilizing the Recreation Value Points system adopted in the Parks Master Plan to address future park needs. Figure 2 highlights existing built and proposed CPU - Recreation Value Points analysis for Mira Mesa with additional recreational facilities that have been added since receiving public feedback on the proposed CPU. Community input has focused on planning for additional active recreation facilities. The proposed CPU addresses this issue by identifying potential park lands for future acquisition.

Figure 2: Recreation Value Point Analysis

	Existing	Proposed CPU
Total population	77,935	143,414
Population/1,000	77	143
Recreation Value Points Goal, 100 points per thousand	7,792	14,300
Existing/Planned Recreation Value Points	6,880.71	11,196
Existing/Planned Recreation Value Points deficit	(-912.29)	(-3,104)

Recreational value emphasizes the activities and experiences that residents can enjoy, rather than solely the acreage of parkland. It measures the inherent benefits of park spaces – the ability for park facilities to support active recreation and exercise; encourage socializing; link people to transit, bike facilities, trails, and active public areas; and invite activity throughout the day. The proposed parks, trails and recreation spaces in the proposed CPU are planned to maximize the recreation opportunities that will serve the increasing number of community residents. While new parks and recreation investments are not all specifically identified in the community plan, the CPU allows for and facilitates the continual process of identifying additional opportunities that may become available as the community plan area develops.

As more homes come on line, based on the development activity, location, and needs of the residents that new facilities would serve, the City will continually work to identify, plan, and deliver more park and recreation facilities as the community continues to grow. The approximate 3,100 Recreation Value Point deficit would only be realized if all the CPU housing capacity is actually built and occupied and this would also assume that additional park opportunities did not become available as the community developed.

7. Urban Design

Mira Mesa is at a stable juncture to transition, where appropriate, into a community that balances its employment, commercial, and residential uses within vibrant Urban Villages. The proposed CPU envisions the infill development within areas near transit into Urban Villages that are pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use, and amenity-rich. Supported by a well-designed public realm, urban forestry and greening that fosters walkability, connectivity, and sustainability, as well as complementary amenities for living and working, Mira Mesa's Urban Villages will bring new vitality to the overall community.

The proposed Urban Village areas are currently characterized by either employment or commercial uses. Sorrento Mesa and Miramar sub-areas, for example, are major employment centers in the technology, life science, and manufacturing/industrial sectors. The commercial developments along Mira Mesa Boulevard provide retail amenities, goods, and services to residents, employees, and visitors. The majority of these areas are defined by auto-oriented development patterns, such as single-use "superblocks" that can impede walkability and connectivity and exacerbate traffic.

The proposed CPU envisions retrofitting these areas into more human-scaled and pedestrian-oriented developments with new amenities for a growing Mira Mesa community. Developed alongside commercial centers and offices, new mixed-use developments will allow Mira Mesa employees and residents to live near their jobs and be within walking distance of desired

amenities, such as dining, shopping, entertainment, services, and public spaces, in addition to housing to reduce vehicle trips and facilitate the implementation of the Climate Action Plan.

C. How does the Community Plan Update implement the Climate Action Plan?

Community plan updates play a role in implementing greenhouse gas reduction strategies of the Climate Action Plan related to Bicycling, Walking, Transit & Land Use. The proposed CPU complies with the Climate Action Plan community plan-related actions by: directing growth into Transit Priority Areas (TPAs); applying land use designations, residential densities, and implementing zoning to support transit-oriented development; providing policies and planned improvements to support transit operations and access; and designing a planned multimodal mobility network with robust pedestrian and bicycle facilities that connect people to transit (Attachment 10).

D. How will the Community Plan be implemented?

Community plans guide decisionmakers, staff, property owners, and citizens engaged in community development. Key implementation actions include private investment through development consistent with the zoning program; public facilities included in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that are funded in part through impact fees; and other sources of public, private, and non-profit investment and initiatives such as regional transportation improvements, districts, grants, and programs for enhanced facilities and maintenance.

1. Base Zones

Areas within the Planning Area would be rezoned with Citywide zones consistent with the updated Community Plan (Attachment 11).

2. Supplemental Development Regulations

Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ) Type A, which provides ministerial Supplemental Development Regulations (SDRs) for new developments and parks in the Urban Village areas (Attachment 12) will help implement a network of interconnected streets, private street connections, and multi-use pedestrian and bicycle pathways that break up superblocks to foster walkability, social activity, and "eyes on the street." Proposed CPIOZ SDRs will also incentivize new development within Urban Villages to implement a variety of public spaces, such as parks, plazas, and pathways that can act as focal points for community gatherings, activities, or events, such as farmers markets and festivals. By leveraging adjacency and relationship to nearby natural open spaces and recreational amenities, Urban Villages will also provide new and accessible connections to creeks, canyons, and trails, and integrate them into developments.

3. Land Development Code Amendments

To implement the updated Community Plan, amendments to the San Diego Municipal Code's (SDMC) Land Development Code (LDC) Chapter 13 Article 1 Division 7 would modify secondary use requirements and clarify the allowed uses in Table 131-07A for the EMX base zones within Prime Industrial Land and Prime Industrial Land – Flex to help implement the new land use designations (Attachment 12). These changes would apply Citywide.

4. Historical Resources Guidelines Amendments of the City's Land Development Manual

Amendment to the Historical Resources Guidelines of the City's Land Development Manual to exempt specified areas within the Mira Mesa Community Planning Area from potential historic resource review under SDMC LDC Chapter 143.0212 (Attachment 9).

5. Streamlining for Infill Projects

PEIR SCH No. 2022090061 has been prepared for this project pursuant to CEQA (Attachment 13). CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162, 15183, and 15183.3 allow the City to streamline environmental review for individual infill projects meeting specified criteria. Under Section 15183.3, future development projects can rely on the analyses in the PEIR if the project meets applicable criteria for an infill project but would need to address project-specific impacts not addressed in the PEIR.

CONCLUSION

Through the extensive public engagement process, the proposed CPU expresses a new vision and recommends a land use plan and zoning program for vibrant employment centers, eclectic urban villages, and active neighborhoods for all ages and abilities along with a supportive mobility network, urban design framework, and parks and recreation strategy. The updated Community Plan aims to improve mobility options for a greater number of people and provide infrastructure that can influence travel mode choice toward active transportation modes and transit use. The policies in the updated Community Plan stress the importance of a connected, walkable community with more transit-oriented development, all of which help put the community on a positive trajectory to meet the goals outlined in the City's General Plan and Climate Action Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

1. Draft Mira Mesa Community Plan
2. Mira Mesa Community Planning Group Recommendation
3. Mira Mesa Community Plan Housing & Demographics
4. Mira Mesa Community Plan Area
5. Community Plan Update Outreach Summary
6. Community Plan's Key Objectives
7. Community Plan Update Technical Studies
8. General Plan Economic Prosperity Element Amendment

9. Amendment to the Historical Resources Guidelines of the Land Development Manual
10. Mobility Modeling Results
11. Draft Rezone Ordinance and Rezone Parcel List
12. Draft Mixed-Use/Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone Ordinance
13. Mira Mesa Community Plan Update Draft PEIR & Comments
14. Mira Misa Community Plan Revisions
15. Other Major Planning Efforts in the Mira Mesa
16. Draft Resolution Mira Mesa Community Plan Update and General Plan Amendment
17. Draft Resolution PEIR Certification