

Mira Mesa Community Planning Group

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To: San Diego City Council Land Use and Housing Committee

Re: Mira Mesa Community Plan Update, on agenda for November 17, 2022

Councilmembers:

We appreciate the work that the Planning Department has done on the Mira Mesa Community Plan Update. The draft Mira Mesa Community Plan paints an optimistic picture of a future Mira Mesa with additional housing added following urban design principles, frequent transit and better support for bicycles and pedestrians. However, the proposed Plan has some significant deficiencies that need to be corrected to realize its objectives. The Plan as currently proposed is deficient in public facilities, fails to meet the City standards established in the Parks Master Plan and other City policies, has significant unmitigated impacts, and engages in too much wishful thinking.

The Mira Mesa Community Planning Group has made 13 specific recommendations to address these deficiencies, which follow on the next page. However first I want to address some issues with the staff report and the Planning Commission hearing.

1. The staff report says 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. The recommendation of the Park & Recreation Board was to approve the Mira Mesa Community Plan Update with the incorporation of the parks and recreation-related recommendations proposed by the Mira Mesa Community Planning Group. Staff's paraphrasing weakens the intent of the motion.
2. The Mira Mesa Community Plan Update shows a 3100 point park deficit relative to the Park Master Plan standards. The excuse that the Planning Department made for the 3100 point park deficit is that we don't yet know how much of the development will actually occur. In other words, if all identified public facilities are built and we end up with 31,000 fewer people than the Plan allows, it will meet the PMP standards. The City needs to decide whether we are planning for 54,000 or 23,000 new residents. Parkland is not going to get easier to find in the future.
3. The Planning Commission did not express any disagreement with our recommendations but considered them "implementation issues" and so did not explicitly include them in their motion. While it is true that most of our recommendations require considerable follow-up, this follow-up is critical to

the success of the Plan, and the City Council should direct Planning Department and other City departments to do so.

4. In response to our recommendation to develop a Public Facilities Financing Plan, the Planning Director said “We are not doing that anymore”. Until this is done, there is no guarantee that any of the public facilities in the Plan will be built. Staff has put together a list of public facilities derived from the Community Plan, which will be an appendix to the Community Plan. That is the first step, but we also need cost estimates for each and some idea of income so we can determine at least approximately when to expect them to be built. The City Council should direct staff to create a Public Facilities Financing Plan for all Community Plan Updates.

Recommendations of the Mira Mesa Community Planning Group on the Mira Mesa Community Plan Update

1. **Public Facilities:** Under “Guiding Principles, the Plan says "Investment in new public facilities to meet community needs” but there are no specifics about how this is to be done.

The Plan needs to be accompanied by a Public Facilities Financing Plan with cost estimates, schedule and funding mechanism for all of the public facilities identified in or implied by the plan.

2. **Transit:** Under "Guiding Principles" the Plan says, "A transportation network ensures safe, accessible, and efficient travel with a convenient, frequent, and user-friendly public transit network." Currently the transit network is very limited and there is no funding assured to improve it. The Plan assumes that it will work.

An endpoint analysis needs to be done to ensure that destinations throughout San Diego are reachable in a reasonable amount of time. Funding for the study and transit need to be provided.

3. **Micro-Transit:** The proposed transit network is limited to major roads such as Mira Mesa Blvd and it is not easily accessible to many residents, particularly those who live in the Sorrento Valley Blvd-Calle Cristobal corridor. Because of the structure of the streets on the South side of Calle Cristobal and the long, narrow shape of Pacific Ridge very few of the residents will be within a one-half mile or 10-minute walk to a transit hub or bus stop. Although micro-transit is acknowledged on p. 53 of the Community Plan, a more explicit plan needs to be outlined that is comparable in detail to those for the major streets in Chapter 3 of the Community Plan.

4. **Traffic:** The PEIR only considers VMT and has no analysis at all of traffic congestion. This may meet the legal requirements, but for current residents this is a big issue. The traffic study did analyze congestion and showed that all major intersections at rush hour are at level of service F.

The City needs to complete its section of Carroll Canyon Road as soon as possible and assess other traffic improvements throughout the community that reduce traffic congestion.

5. **Water and Sewer Infrastructure:** The EIR states that while San Diego has sufficient water to support the additional population, the water and sewer systems are aging and will need to be upgraded.

Water and sewer systems need to be upgraded before problems occur and so need to be scheduled and budgeted.

6. **Schools:** SDUSD demographers estimate a potential increase of 7,614 students from the future additional dwelling units under the proposed CPU. Breakdown by grade:
 - a. K-5: 4,029
 - b. 6-8: 1,573
 - c. 9-12: 2,012
 - d. K-12: 7,614

This means Mira Mesa High School could see an increase of 2000 students. The SDUSD letter to the City says "Implementation of the Draft Mira Mesa Community Plan Update will likely require significant expansion of school facilities in Mira Mesa. The district does not currently have any long-range facility plans that could possibly accommodate the estimated number of generated students." No school locations are identified in the Plan except for one elementary school site intended to support Stone Creek. It is not going to get easier to find land for schools in the future.

Planning should begin now for how this increase in students will be managed.

7. **Parks:** The EIR has a section titled "Deterioration of Existing Neighborhood Parks and Recreational Facilities," which says the following: "The proposed project would result in a buildout of approximately 58,741 dwelling units and a population of Approximately 143,000 residents by 2050. In order to maintain the Value Standard established by the City of San Diego for parks and recreational facilities, the community of Mira Mesa would be required to provide park facilities totaling 14,300 Recreational Value Points upon buildout under the proposed CPU. The existing and planned park facilities at this time totals 11,196 Recreational Value Points, leaving a deficit of recreational facilities. Due to the increase in population and the deficit of

appropriate recreational facilities, it is possible the increased use of the facilities could result in substantial physical deterioration." The Value Standard was established in the Parks Master Plan to make it easier to meet than the previous acreage requirement. It is inexcusable to develop a new Community Plan that falls 3,000 points below the new standard.

The Plan should be amended to identify an additional 3,000 points of Park Value.

- 8. Recreation Centers:** The Plan says "To meet the guidelines for a minimum of 17,000 square feet per 25,000 residents, Mira Mesa's potential buildout population results in the need for 97,240 square feet of recreation center building space to meet General Plan standards (1 recreation center per 25,000 residents.) The need is the equivalent of 5.7 recreation centers sized at 17,000 square feet each." Mira Mesa has two recreation centers, one shared with Miramar College and there is one recreation center planned for 3Roots park, so we are far short of 5.7.

Locations and funding should be identified for new recreation centers.

- 9. Aquatic Complexes:** The Plan says "An aquatic complex serves a population of 50,000. To meet the aquatic center guidelines, Mira Mesa's potential buildout population results in the need for approximately 2.86 aquatic complexes to meet the General Plan standard." We have one aquatic complex under construction and one shared with Miramar College and Scripps Ranch.

Location and funding should be identified for an additional aquatic complex.

- 10. Incomplete Public Facilities in the Adopted Community Plan:** There are several important public facilities in the adopted community plan that have not been completed and are at risk with the termination of the FBA program as well as increased costs from long delays in construction. These projects need to be prioritized and completed. The most important are:

- a. Aquatic Center and other improvements at Mira Mesa Community Park. This is in progress but not yet fully funded.
- b. Recreation Center at 3Roots Park. This was moved from Mira Mesa Community Park when the 3Roots site became available.
- c. Carroll Canyon Road between Camino Santa Fe and Carroll Road. This has been designed and a feasibility study done. It has an estimated cost of about \$40 million. State or Federal money could be available for it.
- d. Canyon Hills Park. This site was purchased for a park in 1989 and a GDP was developed recently. It needs to be constructed.
- e. Renovation of recreation center and pool at Hourglass Park. This is required at 55 years (9/25/2044) to continue with the lease for another

44 years. There was money in the FBA to pay for part of it. This must not be overlooked, or Mira Mesa could lose one of its most important recreation sites.

11. Canyon Trail System: Several new trails have been added to the Mira Mesa Community Plan and are listed in Figure 6-2. These trails are a welcome addition to the Community.

Funding sources and a mechanism for funding the trail enhancement need to be specified.

12. Bicyclist Protection: Sorrento Valley Blvd and Calle Cristobal are extensively used by cyclists. Although bicycle lanes are marked, speeding cars and inattentive drivers of commonly observed drifting into the bicycle lanes.

Add buffered bike lanes to this 5+ mile section for the protection of the cyclists.

13. Unpredictability: Over the past 30 years Mira Mesa has developed in accordance with a community plan that allowed us to predict the type and location of development and future population, and to site and fund facilities needed to support the new population. Consequently, the Mira Mesa Community today looks very much like the Community Plan developed 30 years ago. In contrast, the proposed Plan has a wide range of possible future population and so far no property owner or developer has committed to building the urban villages proposed in the Plan. The future population of Mira Mesa could therefore be anywhere between 90,000 and 144,000. How do we plan for this?

We need a financing and phasing plan that will build as much of the infrastructure as possible early and plan for additional population, then phase in the rest of the improvements as the population grows.

Jeffrey L. Stevens
Chair, Mira Mesa Community Planning Group