

February 10, 2020

Marlon Pangilinan, emailed
Senior Planner, City of San Diego
Planning Department

Regarding: Clairemont Community Plan Update, Community Discussion Draft January 2020

Hello Marlon,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the following comments. In addition to my review I am also referencing comments by Architect John Ziebarth in his February 5th letter to you. The comments relating to Mr. Ziebarth's letter are underlined. Please consider these my preliminary comments to be refined and finalized after public input and prior to the public comment period deadline on March 6, 2020.

1. Vision statement, Page 3 – The Mayors “Complete Communities Housing Solutions Initiative” as well as efforts at the state level to maximize housing density “by right” seems to be in conflict with two bullet points in the community Vision “Maintain single family neighborhoods, and Development that compliments neighborhood scale”. How will those conflicting policies be resolved?
2. Figure 1-2, Page 5 – I agree with the neighborhood designations except the portion that is shown as “Clairemont Village”. We have lived in the Bay Park community for over 35 years and besides the actual Village shopping center we have never heard of any residential area referred to as Clairemont Village. It would be much more appropriate, in my view, to make the entire area bordered by Balboa to the North, and Tecolote Canyon to the East as **Bay Park**.
3. Land Use and Economic Prosperity Element Goals, Page 11 – Agree with Mr. Ziebarth's comment.
4. Community and Neighborhood Village, Page 13 - Agree with Mr. Ziebarth's comment.
5. Business Improvement, Attraction, Retention, and Expansion, Page 14 – I am unfamiliar with the concern regarding Prime Industrial in Mr. Ziebarth's comment.
6. 2.1 Planning Horizon, Page 15 – number of persons per household and percent occupancy is not filled in. This is obviously required to calculate future household population.
7. 2.4 Villages and Districts, Page 16 – Clairemont Town Square is envisioned to be mixed use. I believe there should be a direct mention of residential uses in this paragraph. There are a number of residential opportunities even without modifying the existing retail uses. The Rose Canyon Gateway paragraph should include notation that this site is ideal for affordable housing.
8. Community Core, Page 16 - Agree with Mr. Ziebarth's comment.
9. Rose Creek/Canyon Industrial District, Page 18 – No opinion regarding Mr. Ziebarth's comment.

10. Land Use and Economic Prosperity Element Policies, LUEP-4.1 Page 21 – Mr. Ziebarth is concerned over the high volume of traffic on Mt. Etna calling it a “Village Main Street”. I need to be better educated by him, but at this point don’t see the harm in this designation. La Jolla Blvd in Bird Rock, for example, has huge traffic volumes yet functions as a “Village Main Street”.
11. Land Use and Economic Prosperity Element Policies, LUEP-4.2 Page 21 – Mr. Ziebarth is concerned about this item. But I believe the vision for this north/south connection is to create a more activated internal street connection rather than driveways terminating in parking. I see no problem with this item.
12. Land Use and Economic Prosperity Element Policies, LUEP-4.5 Page 21 – Mr. Ziebarth is concerned about this item. I don’t see the harm and believe the goal of connectivity to the surrounding neighborhood and especially the SDG&E corridor is worthy of inclusion. I see no problem with this item.
13. Land Use and Economic Prosperity Element Policies, LUEP-4.6 Page 21 – I agree with Mr. Ziebarth’s comment. I also don’t understand what is being proposed to “Create a linear park and multi-use path along both sides of Genesee and Balboa Ave”. Perhaps staff can clarify how this would work.
14. Land Use and Economic Prosperity Element Policies, LUEP-4.7 Page 21 – Please strike the reference to “palm trees” as accents. There are a lot of palm trees in the shopping centers but the median landscape palette along Balboa Avenue is sensitive to the canyons in our region by including beneficial shade trees, not palm trees. I would rather encourage inspiration from the median landscape themes, rather than encouraging more palm trees in our community. Poor future palm tree choices can lead to invasive palm species in our canyons.
15. Land Use and Economic Prosperity Element Policies, LUEP-4.8 Page 22 – I don’t understand this policy. Is this for the Village Shopping Center at Clairemont Drive and Burgener Blvd? I don’t understand the benefit within this smaller center.
16. Land Use and Economic Prosperity Element Policies, LUEP-4.9 Page 22 - Agree with Mr. Ziebarth’s comment.
17. Land Use and Economic Prosperity Element Policies, LUEP-4.11 Page 22 – I see no problem with this item. This is a long-range vision.
18. Land Use and Economic Prosperity Element Policies, LUEP-4.12 Page 22 - Agree with Mr. Ziebarth’s comment, although I think it is a worthy goal. I would like to see how this could be implemented.
19. Rose Canyon Gateway Village, Page 23 – I strongly request that a percentage of affordable housing over and above Council Policy be included for this parcel. This site is ideal for affordable housing, it is linked by a pedestrian bridge to the trolley station, is it well below Morena Blvd and will not block views, and it is controlled by the City.

20. LUEP – 4.27 Page 23 – This section proposes “taller buildings concentrated towards the rail corridor transitioning to lower buildings along Morena Boulevard” Then it goes on to say that “terracing buildings across the village site so that buildings follow the topography”. These seem to be conflicting requirements as terracing toward Morena from the rail corridor would create building rising toward the east wouldn’t it? The site is currently over 30 feet below Morena. Shouldn’t it start lower at the railroad corridor and terrace up to the east? This would maximize views and blend more seamlessly with the surrounding topography. This also aligns with LUEP – 4.28 and 4.29.
21. LUEP – 4.27 Page 23 – This section proposes a connection from Damon Avenue to Morena. There is currently over an 80 to 90 ft elevation difference between Damon and Morena which would have to pass under the railroad corridor. This seems like a worthy goal for pedestrians and bicyclists but I question what impact a road in this location would have on the land available for development.
22. Balboa Trolley Station Village Area Page 23 – To be consistent with the Balboa Station` Specific Plan, please include the recommendation to construct a pedestrian and bicycle bridge (not underpass) between the trolley station and Magnolia Avenue or similar to the west.
23. LUEP – 4.74 Page 26 - Agree with Mr. Ziebarth’s comment.
24. LUEP – 4.75 Page 26 – No opinion regarding Mr. Ziebarth’s comment.
25. LUEP – 4.77 Page 26 – I don’t share Mr. Ziebarth’s concern and have no issue with this item.
26. LUEP – 4.79 Page 26 – I believe “eyes on the street” is a worthy goal and I don’t share Mr. Ziebarth’s concern as I don’t think this precludes the goals he referenced. I have no issue with this item.
27. LUEP – 4.80 Page 26 – I don’t think this item requires the extensive small-scale blocks Mr. Ziebarth references. I guess I need to be educated but I have no issue with this item.
28. LUEP – 4.82 Page 26 – Agree with Mr. Ziebarth’s comment.
29. LUEP – 4.86 Page 26 – I don’t share Mr. Ziebarth’s concern and have no issue with this item.
30. LUEP – 4.102 Page 27 – Agree with Mr. Ziebarth’s comment to eliminate 4.80.
31. LUEP – 4.105 Parking Page 28 – Disagree with Mr. Ziebarth’s comment, I think “where feasible” is implied throughout the document as they are general goals and policies.
32. LUEP – 4.107 Page 28 – I don’t share Mr. Ziebarth’s concern and have no issue with this item.
33. LUEP – 4.113 Page 28 – I don’t share Mr. Ziebarth’s concern and have no issue with this item. I think it is sound policy to avoid views of unsightly roofs since there are properties above this area.

34. LU EP – 4.114 Page 28 – I don't share Mr. Ziebarth's concern and have no issue with this item. I think it is sound policy (as a goal) to encourage successive building floors on sloping sites.
35. LU EP – 4.115 Page 28 – I agree with Mr. Ziebarth's that requiring buildings to be set into a slope is not always practical but it is a worthy goal. I would add "when practical" at the beginning of the sentence.
36. LU EP – 4.117 Page 28 – Agree with Mr. Ziebarth's comment.
37. LU EP – 4.118 Page 28 – Disagree with Mr. Ziebarth's comment, agree with this item to connect Denver to Mayo Street.
38. Mobility ME-6.3 Page 48 – Disagree with Mr. Ziebarth's comment, if "where sufficient on-street and off-street parking is available" makes this recommendation mute. I have no issue with this item.
39. Urban Design Element Goals Page 53 – Please add reference to urban forestry and public art to enhance the urban design experience. Add a section encouraging public art in section 4.1.
40. Urban Design UD-2.2 Page 57 – I have no opinion on this item.
41. Urban Forestry UD-2.2 Page 57 – Please provide Figure 4-x.
42. Urban Forestry UD-2.7 Page 57 – I do not agree that in all cases street trees or trees in general should be spaced at equal intervals. There are times when drifts of trees may be appropriate such as adjacent to open space. Recommend to strike this item.
43. Community Gateways UD-2.20 Page 57 – References a Figure 4-x, please provide. Note that the locations of monuments should be placed to identify not only the community of Clairemont but the designated neighborhoods per figure 1-2 as modified.
44. Landscaping suggest to add UD-5.10 Page 59 – Rather than hiding bio-retention basins in low visibility portions of properties encourage the design of them as amenities and featured decorative elements in the landscape.
45. Building Scale, Massing & Articulation Page 60 – 6.7-6.11 are worthy goals but it is confusing how much they are required. They use different terms such as "Encourage, Incorporate, Establish, and Consider". What is the requirement to conform to these items based on the variety of verbs?
46. Building Corners UD-6.13 Page 60 – I do not agree that the corners of buildings should always be accented with larger specimen plants and trees, etc. I would strike this item as it is concerning to generalize about treatments of the corners of buildings that can vary so widely in purpose and site parameters.

47. Building Materials, Finishes & Colors UD-6.15 Page 60 – I do not agree that consistent use of materials, textures, colors in a development is always preferred. Neighborhoods such as Hillcrest or North Park, for example, have charming character because of the various unique and eclectic styles, colors and textures that are used on buildings in those neighborhoods. I recommend striking this item.
48. Public Facilities Police and Fire-Rescue Page 65 – We have received public input that questions the capability of existing fire station facilities to address significant fires in the community and canyons. Is there more quantitative data that backs up the assertion that the public fire facilities can handle the growth projected in the CPU?
49. Recreation Goals Page 75 – The Urban Land Institute has developed a popular “10-Minute Walk Campaign” to provide access to parks and open spaces in close proximity to where people live. I don’t see accessibility to recreation facilities within a 10-minute walk as a priority. This can be accomplished with access to open space, parks, plazas, etc. Could this be an added goal?
50. Recreation Goals Page 75 – How is this section coordinated with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan that is currently being completed?
51. Parks and Recreation Facilities 6.3 – Add a reference here to the SDG&E easement property.
52. Park Development, Preservation, and Access RE-3.14 – This item requires all stormwater and urban run-off drainage into resource-based parks or open space park are filtered before entering the area. I don’t think this is practical in all cases. Furthermore, the MS4 permit allows more regional solutions to water quality solutions. I would rather not preclude water treatment in parks. Can this item be deleted?
53. Historic Preservation Element HP 3.1 – I have no opinion on this item commented on by Mr. Ziebarth.

Sincerely,



Glen Schmidt, FASLA