

CRITERIA FOR INITIATION OF AMENDMENTS TO LAND USE PLANS

Before a community plan amendment can be initiated, Section 122.0104 of the Municipal Code requires that any one of three initial criteria or all four supplemental criteria specified in the code must be met. The Planning Department does not believe that any of the following three initial criteria can be met:

- (1) The amendment is appropriate due to a mapping or textual error or omission made when the original land use plan or local coastal program was adopted or during subsequent amendments;**
- (2) Denial of initiation would jeopardize the public health, safety or general welfare; or**
- (3) The amendment is appropriate due to a material change in circumstances since the adoption of a land use plan or local coastal program whereby denial of initiation would result in a hardship to the applicant by denying any reasonable use of the subject real property.**

The Planning Department does, however, believe that all of the following supplemental criteria can be met:

- (1) The proposed land use plan amendment is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Progress Guide and General Plan and the Serra Mesa Community Plan.**

The goal of the Transportation Element of the Serra Mesa Community Plan is “To provide a safe, balanced, efficient transportation system with minimal adverse environmental effects.” However, the Serra Mesa Community Plan does not indicate that there should be a street connection at the proposed location. The proposed street connection would provide vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle connections between Serra Mesa and Mission Valley and provide an additional and more direct street linkage between the two communities and to I-805. It would also help relieve projected congestion on Mission Center Road, the current nearest connection between Serra Mesa and Mission Valley.

The proposed Phyllis Place street connection is consistent with policies in the Progress Guide and General Plan as it is proposing a street connection that would protect the residential areas from through traffic. Phyllis Place is designated as a major street in the Serra Mesa Community Plan, and as such is a logical street to link the two communities. The proposed street connection is proposed to be approximately 600 feet west of the I-805. The south side of this section of the street is vacant land. The Assembly of God Church is located on the north side of the street and the church has

indicated support for the street connection. The proposed location of the street connection will direct traffic away from the Abbots Hill neighborhood to the west (in Serra Mesa) thereby keeping through traffic off of local streets.

The adjacent Quarry Falls project is identified as an urban village site in the Strategic Framework Element opportunities area map. The proposed street connection is consistent with the goals in the Strategic Framework Element of the General Plan in that it is proposing an interconnected system of streets to retrofit existing neighborhoods to enhance walkability, bicycling and distribution of traffic. The inclusion of the street connection would provide a more direct route between the communities and to destinations in both communities.

Because the Quarry Falls project is identified as an urban village site, the Strategic Framework Element recommends applying the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines to the site. The Phyllis Place street connection helps implement the TOD guidelines by creating a system of local streets that reduce the use of arterial streets. Moreover, the guidelines recommend developing projects with a system of streets that include connector streets. The connector streets should be designed to carry moderate levels of local traffic smoothly, in a way that is compatible with bicycle and foot traffic. There should be a network of connector streets that provide for alternative paths through neighborhoods. The TOD Guidelines also recommends “T” intersections to reduce through traffic and reduce speeds. If approved, the street connection to Phyllis Place will fulfill these TOD Guideline policies.

The proposed street connection would also be consistent with the Mission Valley Community Plan. The Mission Valley Community Plan includes in the Transportation Element a recommendation for a street connection between Friars Road and Phyllis Place. The Mission Valley Community Plan also recommends the closing of gaps in the surface street system, and states that public streets of adequate capacity to connect Stadium Way [now Qualcomm Way] and Mission Center Road with Interstate 805 at Phyllis Place will be needed when urban development occurs north of Friars Road between Mission Center Road and Interstate 805. This policy statement is relevant to Serra Mesa because a street connection to implement this recommendation of the Mission Valley Community Plan can not be made without amending the Serra Mesa Community Plan. The community plan amendment initiation request should address this discrepancy between the two community plans. The proposed street connection should help fulfill the policy goals set forth in the Progress Guide and General Plan, Strategic Framework Element, the Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines, Serra Mesa and Mission Valley Community Plans.

(2) The proposed land use plan amendment appears to offer a public benefit to the community or City.

The addition of a new street connection to Phyllis Place would provide motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists the opportunity to access the adjacent proposed Quarry Falls project (if approved) and Friars Road from a connector street between the communities.

The addition of the Phyllis Place street connection would provide a needed additional freeway connection for Mission Valley and a more direct connection between Serra Mesa and Mission Valley, reducing travel distance and time. Preliminary discussions with the Fire Rescue Department indicate that this would be an important link between Station 28 in Kearny Mesa and this area of Mission Valley, which is currently underserved. The Fire Rescue Department has reviewed the street connection request and supports the connection as it would assist in lowering their response times to calls in the both communities.

While preliminary traffic studies indicate that some areas of both Serra Mesa and Mission Valley may experience additional congestion with the connection in place, these studies also show that the connection has the potential to relieve congestion in larger areas of both communities. The issue will require further analysis to determine the net effects of the connection.

(3) Public services appear to be available to serve the proposed increase in density or intensity of use.

This amendment does not propose an increase in density or intensity of use. The subject street connection could help alleviate traffic in some parts of Serra Mesa and Mission Valley. If initiated, a full traffic study of adjacent streets will analyze with and without the street connection.

(4) City staff is available to process the proposed land use plan amendment without any work being deferred on General Fund supported programs or ongoing plan updates.

Staff is available to process the plan amendment request without delaying general fund programs or ongoing plan updates, as the Planning Department's work program includes staff time for non-general fund development projects. However, delays in processing the plan amendment could occur based on staff levels and workload. The costs associated with processing this amendment will be paid for by the applicant.

As outlined above, the proposed plan amendment meets all of the supplemental initiation criteria as described; therefore, the staff recommends that the amendment to the Serra Mesa Community Plan and the Progress Guide and General Plan be initiated.

The following land use issues have been identified with the initiation request. If initiated, these issues, as well as others that may be identified, will be analyzed and evaluated through the community plan amendment review process:

- Traffic impacts as they relate to the Phyllis Place street connection and adjacent streets.
- Analyze the need for the street connection to Phyllis Place.
- The design of the potential street connection between Friars Road and Phyllis Place.
- The redesign of Phyllis Place as it relates to the potential street connections and adjacent neighborhood should be studied for impacts.
- The potential for pedestrian and bicycle connections between the communities.
- The potential to create significant public view corridors to the valley via a public street.
- Traffic impacts to Mission Valley with and without road connection.

Although staff believes that the proposed amendment meets the necessary criteria for initiation, staff has not fully reviewed the applicant's proposal. **Therefore, by initiating this community plan amendment, neither the staff nor the Planning Commission is committed to recommend in favor or denial of the proposed amendment.**

