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## NAIOP working with city to protect loss of employment land to incompatible uses

By JENNIFER WHITELAW, Special to the Daily Transcript

Thursday, November 8, 2007

The National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP) San Diego chapter urged the city of San Diego to consider how new language in the proposed General Plan, intended to protect base sector industries and industrial zoning, could have an unintended, adverse affect on multitenant office uses.

As a result, the city modified language in the prosperity element of the General Plan to allow more flexibility to accommodate a changing, technology-driven economy, but NAIOP is still concerned about language in the land use element and about the corresponding prime industrial land maps.

After the city rolled out the first version of the General Plan update and the prime industrial land maps, NAIOP and the Kearny Mesa planning group objected to language that restricted large areas of employment land to base sector industries only and disallowed multitenant office uses, which is at odds with current zoning codes and community plans.

The city responded to the objections by removing language in the prosperity element of the General Plan that specifically prohibited multitenant office space, but has not made corresponding changes to the land use element of the General Plan or to the maps.

"The land use element and the maps create conflicts between the zoning code and the General Plan," said Ted Shaw of **Latitude 33, Planning & Engineering** and a NAIOP legislative committee member. "The zoning code says multitenant office is permitted and the draft General Plan says it is not."

At issue is protecting San Diego's employment land from an invasion of incompatible uses like schools, churches and houses, a goal shared by large, base sector employers and NAIOP.

Base sector industries include those that manufacture a product in San Diego and then export it to other areas. Examples include **Qualcomm** (Nasdaq: QCOM), **Kyocera** (NYSE: KYO) and **Cubic** (NYSE: CUB).

While NAIOP hopes the city will continue to modify the proposed general plan, members of NAIOP's legislative committee are pleased with the working relationship they've developed with Bill Anderson, Director of Planning and Community Investment, and the rest of the city's planning staff on this issue.

"We must work together to strike a balance between protecting what exists today and providing flexible land use policy for the future, as new job creation is driven by ideas and technology," said NAIOP legislative committee co-chair Stephen Haase.

John Turpit, architect with **RJC Architects**, co-chair of NAIOP's legislative committee and a member of the Kearny Mesa planning group, says employers who are also large property owners can gain protection through modifications to the zoning code without creating land use conflicts or losing potential property value through down zoning, which will occur if the land use element and maps are adopted in their current form.

"The proposed land use element of the General Plan and the maps still indicate that multitenant office is not permitted in industrial zones, although these zones permit them today," he said. "This clearly is down zoning, and some of the major employers/land owners don't yet realize that this can devalue their land and decrease their flexibility in the future."

Identification of prime industrial lands, according to NAIOP, should instead occur during the community plan update process that engages all stakeholders in creating the future vision for the particular community.

The Kearny Mesa planning group has been working with the city to modify the maps and language in the general plan. NAIOP is now concentrating their efforts on Rancho Bernardo and Scripps Miramar Ranch.

"We're finding that a lot of large employers who are also property owners, especially in Scripps Ranch and Rancho Bernardo, didn't know about these proposed changes," said Turpit. "As a result, we are notifying all of the property owners affected in those areas and letting them know how they can respond to the city."

Other industrial areas affected by the proposed General Plan changes include Torrey Pines, University City, Miramar Ranch North, Carmel Mountain Ranch, Sabre Springs, Navajo, Mira Mesa/Sorrento Mesa, Clairemont Mesa and Barrio Logan/Centre City.

The Kearny Mesa planning group took action early on this issue and reached out to property owners in the area of their community affected

by the proposed map. They asked these owners to indicate whether or not they want to have their property restricted to prime industrial uses. As a result, the city's proposed map shrank from seven blocks to two blocks. The remaining two blocks are located on the south side of Balboa Avenue and the area west of Ruffin Road to Skypark. The planning group submitted the revised map to the City Planning Commission, which scheduled Nov. 1 for consideration of this citywide issue.

Following the Planning Commission hearing, the City Council's Land Use and Housing Committee will review the public hearing draft of the General Plan on Dec. 5. City Council adoption is anticipated in early 2008.

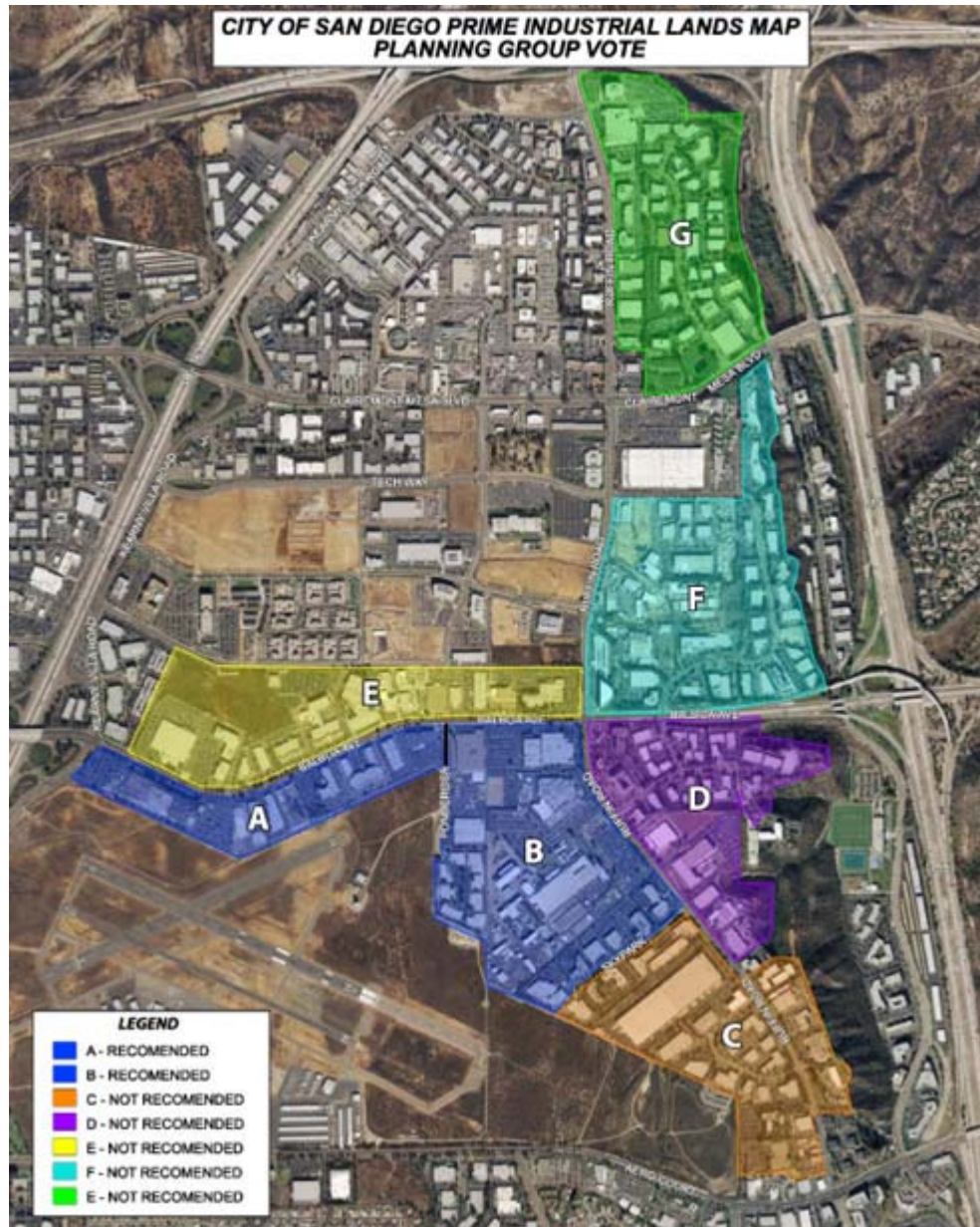
Haase said the city must maintain zoning flexibility to ensure future prosperity.

"We would prefer that the city builds in enough flexibility to maintain economic competitiveness," he said. "Our entire region should welcome emerging and innovative industries and businesses to stay competitive."

Brad Black of **CB Richard Ellis** and a Kearny Mesa planning group member, agreed.

"With the globalization of our economy, manufacturing is moving out of San Diego," he said. "Our future is more likely to consist of high-tech and biotech companies that tend to be office users rather than industrial users."

"We don't know where the next big employment base sector industry will start," added Shaw. "It could start in someone's garage or in a multitenant office building. The proposed map and land use element, by restricting multitenant office, potentially precludes the next great industry."



This graphic represents the vote taken at the Kearny Mesa Planning Group on Sept 19. This is not the official City Prime Industrial Map, but rather the planning group's recommendation.