The El Corazon Vision

CITY OF OCEANSIDE

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El Corazon Vision Concept, Economic and Market Parameters

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The Challenge of El Corazon

The donation to the City of Oceanside of 445 acres of undeveloped land known as "El Corazon de Oceanside" provides the community of Oceanside with a great opportunity to plan the heart of the City. The opportunity offered by this undeveloped site must be carefully balanced with the economic and physical constraints of the site in order to implement a viable vision for the City.

The site is located in the center of the city with easy access to and from all of the city's major entrances. El Corazon is part of an existing corridor of cultural and tourist oriented activities that spans from SR-78 to the south to SR-76 to the north, and includes Mira Costa College and Mission San Luis Rey.

The Vision for El Corazon developed by the community shows a variety of land uses including natural open space, active recreation, community, educational and cultural facilities and mixed use areas. The implementation of any, or all of these uses will contribute to the future of the City as a recreational and cultural center for Northern San Diego County.

The challenge for the community, its leaders and decision makers is to bring the Vision to reality within the constraints of current and future economic conditions as well as the constraints of the land itself.

Many challenging opportunities and issues await in deciding on the feasibility of various uses conceived for the site and the market support the uses might gain or the economic feasibility they might have. Feasibility for any of the uses envisioned for the property depends on the ability to fund the cost of development as well as operating costs. An economic analysis is provided as Attachment A to this report that further explains some of the realities which frame this decision-making process.

Background

In 1994 the U.S. Silica Company gave approximately 445 acres of vacant land to the City of Oceanside. The property is known as "El Corazon de Oceanside" (Spanish for "Heart of the City") due to its location in the geographical center of the City and its links to the surrounding area.

In early 1995, the City Council directed City staff to initiate a program for the development of a long-range use plan for El Corazon. The City's primary goal for the El Corazon planning process was to create a "Vision" for the use of the property based on input from a wide range of City residents. The resulting "Vision" for El Corazon is described below.

Vision Concept

The Vision Concept provides a general layout of possible land uses for the El Corazon property based on the community's input during the Vision program. The purpose of the Vision Concept is simply to convey how the range of land uses identified for El Corazon could be arranged on the site. The Vision Concept is not intended to be a final land use plan, as the distribution of land uses on the site is anticipated to evolve as proposals come forward for use of the site.

During the Vision program, twelve general "principles" forming the basis for the future of El Corazon were identified by the community. These principles are listed on the

Vision Concept Map on the following page.

A description of the general land use categories for the Vision Concept is provided below.

Natural Open Space/Passive Recreation/ Conservation Bank

Approximately 27% of natural open space/passive recreation is shown in the Vision Concept. This use is located primarily in the northern portion of the site, with a "finger" extending down to Oceanside Boulevard which would serve as an avian (bird) corridor providing connectivity through the site. The provision of this corridor would support the City's Subarea Habitat Conservation Plan by helping to conserve a viable movement corridor for California gnatcatchers north-south across the City. The provision of natural open space/passive recreation in these areas of the site takes advantage of the existing natural areas, including Garrison Creek, while providing land use buffering for adjacent land uses to the north, east, and west (principles 1, 4, 6).

Active Recreation

The final Vision Concept depicts approximately 41% of the site for active recreation. Active recreational areas are concentrated in the center of the site. The use of these portions of the site for active recreational uses could take advantage of vehicular access from El Camino Real, Oceanside Boulevard and Rancho del Oro Drive, while maintaining compatibility with adjacent land uses (principles 1, 12).

Public Facilities/Commercial (Mixed-Use)

Approximately 16% of the site is shown as mixed-use consisting of public facilities and commercial uses. These uses are located in the southwestern and southeastern corners of the project site. The public facilities/commercial area provides revenue generating opportunities (principle 3), and would accommodate public facilities (principle 7).

Educational/Cultural Facilities

The final Vision Concept includes approximately 6% of the site for educational/cultural facilities. The location of the educational/cultural uses in the center of the site, brings a central focus to the site (principle 2).

Vision Adoption and Future Planning Efforts

The Vision Concept is not a formal land use plan for the site, rather it is a statement by the Oceanside community of what general land uses are desired for this area in the future. The Vision Concept conveys how uses identified by the community could be arranged on the site considering its unique opportunities and constraints.

The Vision Program concludes with the adoption of the "Vision Concept" by the City Council. Adoption of the Vision Concept sets the foundation for ultimate decisions regarding the property. The Vision Program represents the beginning of planning efforts for the El Corazon property. Refined plans and environmental review will be necessary prior to any future development of this important site.

It is anticipated that it may take up to ten years before development occurs on the project site, however this will depend on the rate that reclamation of the site is accomplished, in addition to economic trends and other factors that control the rate of development. Interim uses will be allowed on the site which directly contribute to implementation of the reclamation plan for the site.

Summary of Development Feasibility

The feasibility of any type of land use activity on El Corazon is dependent on the interaction of three fundamental forces - social, physical and economic. The issue of development feasibility generally focuses on the ability to fund operating requirements on an ongoing basis and the ability to pay for the cost of development. Economic forces impact operating and development feasibility of a desired land use activity in a variety of ways. Please refer to the chart in Attachment A for a summary of uses.

A land use activity's operating performance dictates if it is dependent on external sources of funding support or attracting an adequate level of market support from the surrounding environment. Activities that are funding dependent must receive funding support from an external source or sponsor agency in order to cover the cost of operations and debt service. Self-funding activities may also need some level of external funding support, but also compete for market support (and associated operating receipts) that exist in a competitive environment.

Activities that represent a net fiscal benefit provide the opportunity to offset or minimize the added cost of activities that represent a net fiscal burden.

The feasibility of an activity depends on its ability to attract users and customers who might otherwise seek out an alternative location or alternative activity.

The mix of land use activities identified by the vision concept supports community growth objectives that call for development of public, educational, cultural and recreational and commercial land use. Actual feasibility of the envisioned land use activities depends on the City's ability to attract and facilitate commercial and recreation projects with a broad area or regional market appeal and the City's ability to establish a strong mix of self-funding recreation uses or absorb the cost burden associated with funding-dependent activities.

Development capacity associated with the supply of land allocated for public, educational, cultural, commercial, and recreational land use is significant and mandates that the El Corazon site achieve a dominant market presence if the site is to be fully developed. The potential of realizing a sustained program of development on the El Corazon property could be enhanced by an overlap in the range of activities envisioned