

# Planning for 5255 Mt. Etna Drive



## FAQs

### Purpose and Specifications

#### 1. Why is the County of San Diego seeking to place a new affordable housing development at 5255 Mt. Etna Drive (former Crime Lab site)?

San Diego is experiencing a crisis of housing availability that must be addressed by increasing the supply of affordable housing. County of San Diego (County) staff was directed by the Board of Supervisors to assess whether potentially surplus County property could be made available to help alleviate this crisis. Utilizing excess land currently owned by the County drastically reduces development costs, removing the requirement to purchase land. The former Crime Lab at 5255 Mt. Etna Drive (Site) was determined to be suitable for near-term development. The County has chosen Chelsea Investment Corporation (Chelsea) as the developer and will enter into a public-private partnership, in the form of a ground lease, to provide affordable housing solutions for the community at this site.

#### 2. What will be built at this site?

The County has selected Chelsea as the developer to construct and manage a multifamily affordable home community on the site, but the specific details are still being worked out with input from the community, elected leadership, and key stakeholders. Chelsea proposes to develop an affordable home community where 100 percent of the units are for lower and moderate-income seniors and families earning up to 80 percent of Area Median Income (AMI), with some units set aside for people with a developmental disability, such as autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, or epilepsy. Once built, onsite resident services would be provided by Chelsea's nonprofit partners, Serving Seniors and Southern California Housing Collaborative.

### ACRONYMS

<b>AMI</b>	Area Median Income
<b>CEQA</b>	California Environmental Quality Act
<b>CPA</b>	Community Plan Amendment
<b>CPG</b>	Community Planning Group
<b>EIR</b>	Environmental Impact Report
<b>LEED</b>	Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design



### 3. Who will be eligible to live in the new development?

Chelsea proposes to develop an affordable home community for lower and moderate-income seniors and families earning up to 80 percent of AMI, with some units set aside for people with a developmental disability, such as autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, or epilepsy. Many seniors, recent graduates, and working professionals and families already living or working in the Clairemont community would qualify to live in the proposed community and enjoy more affordable rent.

### 4. How many units are anticipated to be constructed and will there be a commercial component?

Chelsea has proposed development of up to 404 units and is seeking that many units at this time. These details will be more clearly defined after receiving public comment on the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and engaging with the community, elected leadership, and key stakeholders. The final unit count and land uses, including non-residential options, will depend on the allowable density and land uses per the final approved Community Plan Amendment (CPA). Community input on these topics, as well as the findings of the EIR for the CPA under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will inform the final design of the development.

### 5. What percentage of the proposed development will be dedicated to affordable homes?

Chelsea proposes to dedicate 100 percent of the affordable home community for lower and moderate-income seniors and families. Lower and moderate income is 30% to 80% of the AMI, as shown in the table below. Some residents, such as seniors, may make as low as \$22,500, and others, such as working professionals and families may make as much as \$92,450. The AMI, as it relates to Affordable Housing, is released annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development (HUD) for the San Diego metropolitan area.

#### Qualifying Income for Proposed Family Apartments

AMI	1 to 5-person households (2019 figures)
80%	\$59,950 - \$92,450
60%	\$44,940 - \$69,360
50%	\$37,450 - \$57,800
30%	\$22,500 - \$34,700

#### Qualifying Income for Proposed Senior Apartments

AMI	1 to 2-person households (2019 figures)
80%	\$59,950 - \$68,500
60%	\$44,940 - \$51,360
50%	\$37,450 - \$42,800
30%	\$22,500 - \$25,700



## 6. What will the rent be for the community?

Rents are set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and are adjusted annually. In 2019, depending on where the resident's income falls in the range of 30% to 80% AMI, the rents would fall within the following ranges:

- 1 bedroom rents: \$601 - \$1,605
- 2 bedroom rents: \$722 - \$1,926
- 3 bedroom rents: \$834 - \$2,226

## 7. How will the residents of this property be selected? What are the application criteria that they will need to meet?

An interest list is opened three to six months prior to completion of the community. Shortly after that a mailer goes out to potential residents that have registered through the local housing authority as interested in affordable housing. Applications are made directly to the leasing / management company for the community. The first applications received are processed first. This continues until all homes are filled.

Those who don't get homes in the community are then placed on a waiting list. Those on the waiting list must confirm their interest to stay on the list annually when management mails out a confirmation for them to remain on the list. Every applicant is processed through credit and criminal screening. Credit screening primarily looks for any negative landlord history as well as certain credit factors. Criminal screening looks for felony convictions that would impact being able to live within the community. It should be noted that U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has guidelines for landlords performing criminal screening (not just at affordable properties – at all properties) that limit what can be looked at and specifying that the activity must bear relevance to community living. The property will not be developed to include Permanent Supportive Housing Units.

## 8. How high will the building(s) be? What is the combined square footage of the building(s)?

The maximum building height proposed in the draft CPA is 70 feet. These details will be more clearly defined after engaging with members of the community, elected leadership, and key stakeholders through community engagement activities and the parallel CPA and EIR processes. Generally, the height limit and the square footage of the future development will align with the final approved density within the CPA. Chelsea is currently undertaking community engagement to gather valuable feedback on the future development design.

## 9. Will the development use and/or apply green technologies and energy-efficient building components, i.e. be LEED Certified?

Yes, the development will, at a minimum, be built to LEED Silver or equivalent standards, will utilize solar energy to lower energy costs, and will include drought-tolerant landscaping.



## Community Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Report

### 10. What involvement does the City have with this development?

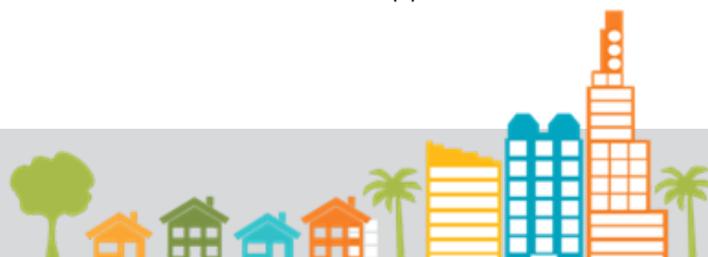
There will be considerable involvement by elected representatives from the City of San Diego (City) and City planning staff through the City's defined development process. While the site is owned by the County, it is located within the boundaries of the City of San Diego. The County has submitted a draft City of San Diego CPA and rezone to allow for multifamily housing at the site. The CPA process is a discretionary action by the City that requires an environmental impact analysis under CEQA. The CPA/CEQA efforts are necessary to allow for County demolition of existing structures and City approval of the appropriate land use and zoning designations to facilitate future residential development. The City will be considering density and traffic impacts as part of this approval. The community will have opportunities to provide comments on both the proposed CPA and corresponding EIR. Links to these items are posted on the project website: [5255MtEtnaDrive.com](http://5255MtEtnaDrive.com)

### 11. What is the density and height that is proposed in the draft CPA application? Is a retail space being considered?

The maximum height and density proposed in the CPA for consideration by the City of San Diego at the 5255 Mt. Etna site is 70 feet and 404 units respectively. The CPA also proposes 1,500 square feet of community accessible ground floor space that is open to the public. As part of the planning process, retail space along with other uses such as a community center or office space will be considered as a potential component of the future development. Feedback received from the community, the Community Planning Group and the City, as well as technical analysis from the EIR will inform the subsequent drafts and the final CPA.

### 12. The Community Plan references protecting the existing single-family community. For this reason, requests for rezoning or other discretionary actions in these areas that could result in construction of any type of residential structures other than traditional single-family residential dwellings, with one dwelling unit per lot, should be denied (Page 8). How will the County address this in the Community Plan Amendment?

The reference to the current Community Plan relates to protected single-family neighborhoods only. As shown in Figure 8 of the current Clairemont Mesa Community Plan, the site is not within a single-family protected neighborhood. Further, the site is not zoned for single-family residential use, and the proposed CPA would not involve any changes to existing single-family zoning within the community. As discussed, in the current Clairemont Mesa Community Plan (Page 43, Recommendations for the Community Core CPIOZ subsection), "the proposed growth of the community core would not encroach into single-family neighborhoods because of existing and well-established multifamily areas that serve as a buffer between the core and nearby single-family areas." The proposed CPA would be consistent with this approach as



it would allow for development of multifamily residences that would act as a buffer between the existing commercial areas adjacent to the north, east, and south of the site, and the single-family area located just west of the SDG&E easement.

### 13. This site is designated as part of the community core and has a commercial designation. Why is it being changed from commercial to residential?

The County is committed to helping alleviate the affordable housing crisis and this location presents an opportunity because the County already owns the site. The existing base zoning at the development site is Commercial-Office (CO-1-2), which currently allows for affordable multifamily residential uses. The CO-1-2 zone is intended to accommodate a mix of office and residential uses that serve as an employment center and also permits a maximum density of one dwelling unit for each 1,500 square feet of lot area. The CPA proposal is to provide for residential at the site with a density of up to 73 dwelling units per acre in order to facilitate the development and continued operation of affordable multifamily homes.

### 14. Changing the zoning removes jobs and tax dollars that could be reinvested into the community. How does the County respond to this statement?

Providing housing near existing commercial development will provide an additional customer base for nearby businesses. In addition, one of the goals of affordable housing is to lower housing costs for low and medium wage individuals, so that they have more discretionary spending dollars to input into the local community.

### 15. This amendment includes only a ministerial review. Please explain why the County is pursuing this process.

This process will first go through an extensive discretionary review, and only if it is approved, will the subsequent site development be ministerial, which is consistent with the City's planning regulations and the Municipal Code. This CPA process is discretionary and calls for community involvement. The future site development would need to be consistent with the Community Plan, including site specific CPIOZ A Supplemental Development Regulations as amended, in order to be processed ministerially. The Clairemont community does get a discretionary review and can provide input before this CPA would be approved. This CPA is intended to make the production of affordable housing more feasible on the site by entitling the site for residential development, while concurrently processing the EIR and demolishing the existing structure. The community has input opportunities during the CPA process, EIR, and subsequent development design.

### 16. What is a Transit Priority Area and how is it designated? How can this be considered a TPA when buses only run infrequently through this area?

A Transit Priority Area (TPA) is defined by the State of California, not the development team. The project site is located within a planned (2035) TPA as identified on the TPA map contained in SANDAG's San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan. In accordance with Senate Bill (SB) 743, TPA means an area within one-half mile of a major transit stop that is existing or planned. The City of San Diego's Multifamily Residential Parking

Standards defines a Parking Standards TPA as areas within one-half mile of an existing or planned major transit stop, if the planned major transit stop is scheduled to be completed within the planning horizon in SANDAG's Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) (City Ordinance 21057 Section 142.0528). Per the [City's Parking Standards](#), affordable housing developments within a TPA would have no minimum parking space requirements. However, the County and Chelsea are proposing sufficient on-site parking for this affordable home community given prior experience with recent, similar affordable and senior residential developments. More information about the City's Parking Standards can be reviewed at [sandiego.gov/planning/programs/transportation/mobility/tpa](http://sandiego.gov/planning/programs/transportation/mobility/tpa).

### 17. Did the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) study alternatives at a lower height and density level than the 404-unit density and 70-foot height limit proposed in the Community Plan Amendment (CPA) and rezone?

Yes, the EIR includes an alternative at a lower height and density. In order to foster informed decision making and public participation, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that an EIR describe a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives to a project, in this case the CPA and rezone. The alternatives would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the CPA and rezone but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the CPA and rezone. The EIR also evaluates the comparative merits of the alternatives. An EIR is not required to consider every conceivable alternative to a project or those that would be considered infeasible.

In addition, the EIR evaluated a "no project" alternative. The purpose of describing and analyzing a no project alternative is to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed CPA and rezone with the impacts of not approving it.

### 18. Will the public have an opportunity to review the draft CPA and draft EIR?

Yes, both the draft CPA and draft EIR are available online for review and comment during the publicly noticed public review period which ends on November 25, 2019. The Draft EIR and proposed CPA are available for review at [5255MtEtnaDrive.com](http://5255MtEtnaDrive.com) or at the following locations: County of San Diego, Department of General Services, 5560 Overland Drive, Suite 410, San Diego, CA 92123; City of San Diego, Balboa Branch Library, 4255 Mt. Abernathy Ave., San Diego, CA 92117.

### 19. How will impacts from the CPA be addressed?

Beyond identifying potential environmental effects from a project on specific resource areas such as traffic and infrastructure, an EIR is required to describe feasible measures, also known as mitigation measures, which could minimize significant adverse impacts such as transportation and circulation improvements. Any mitigation measure that is identified must be fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other legally binding instruments.



## Community Engagement

### 20. When does the County plan to engage the community on the proposed development?

In addition to months of engagement about the CPA, the County will continue to engage the community up to and including through construction. Opportunities to comment on the proposed CPA and the development include stakeholder meetings, public workshops, additional Community Planning Group meetings, the 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR and the public hearings before the City Planning Commission, City Council and County Board of Supervisors. Chelsea has begun community engagement to gather input on the design of the development. The schedule of upcoming meetings and workshops can be accessed at [5255MtEtnaDrive.com](http://5255MtEtnaDrive.com)

### 21. Will there be any opportunity for the community to give input on the design of the development?

Since early 2019, Chelsea has been engaging the community in order to collect input on different design components of the development. The community has been engaged in the design and has provided considerable input. Chelsea and the County have held several meetings and interviews with community stakeholder groups and elected officials, presentations to the Clairemont Town Council and Clairemont Community Planning Group, door-to-door outreach to homes near the site, a bus tour of other Chelsea properties, and a community workshop. In October 2019, Chelsea and the County have begun a second round of meetings with community stakeholder groups and elected officials and will be holding a second community meeting later in the year to continue to receive community input. The community can also provide input on the development through the County's process for the CPA and EIR. Chelsea and the County are committed to open, inclusive, and ongoing communication with the community throughout the planning and design processes. Chelsea and the County acknowledge community concerns exist and invite the community to participate in the process to ensure the community's input helps positively shape this new residential community.

## Development Finance and Schedule

### 22. What is the planning and design timeline for the development?

The planning and design timeline for the development is as follows:

- County initiated CPA/rezone with the City and associated CEQA analysis – September 2018
- Chelsea began community engagement on the development design – Early 2019
- Public review period for the Draft EIR – October 9, 2019 through November 25, 2019
- City Council will consider the approval of the CPA and certification of the EIR – January 2020
- Board of Supervisors Authorization to Advertise and Award Construction Contract for Demolition of Crime Lab structures, consideration of negotiated Ground Lease, and Certification of EIR – Spring 2020

### 23. When will demolition to the existing structures occur?

The County estimates that demolition of the existing structures would begin in Spring 2020, subject to all applicable discretionary approvals by the City and County.

### 24. What is the approximate date of groundbreaking/grand opening?

Groundbreaking would be expected to occur in Spring 2021 with an anticipated construction period of 18 to 22 months, and a grand opening expected by Winter 2022, subject to all applicable discretionary approvals by the City and County. Interest/wait lists for prospective residents will be formed once the development has been further defined.

### 25. How will construction be financed?

This affordable home community would be financed with a mix of public and private funds, including Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and tax-exempt bonds.

### 26. Can the County maintain and upgrade existing streets and facilities in Clairemont rather than spending money on additional housing?

The County and the City of San Diego are two separate local governments. Clairemont is located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City and is therefore outside of the County's jurisdiction for infrastructure maintenance. Street improvements, schools, libraries, and public utilities fall under the jurisdiction and responsibility of the City.



## Development Impacts

### 27. Will the infrastructure, schools, and public services in the area be expanded to accommodate the additional residential units?

The City of San Diego and San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) have both commented on this development. SDUSD does not believe further expansion is necessary per their correspondence dated July 19, 2019. The City of San Diego has had reviews from fire and other municipal infrastructure, which currently provides these services to the site. The site developer (Chelsea) would be required to pay any applicable fees and provide facilities adequate to meet the City's existing public services requirements. The development would be designed to tie into existing City infrastructure. According to the EIR, the proposed project would not require the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or an expansion of existing treatment facilities, and impacts to water and wastewater resources would be less than significant. In addition, the proposed project would not result in a physical impact associated with maintaining response times or performance objectives for fire protection or police protection services.

Additionally, the proposed project is estimated to generate between 167 and 335 students at the School District, including between 92 and 184 grade K-5 students, between 34 and 69 grade 6-9 students, and between 41 and 82 grade 9-12 students. According to the EIR and discussions with SDUSD, there is capacity to accommodate grade 6-8 and grade 9-12 students. However, Holmes Elementary School is currently at capacity. Other nearby elementary schools in the Clairemont Mesa community would likely have sufficient capacity to house the projected number of K through 5 students, should capacity at Holmes Elementary not be available, per SDUSD input. Furthermore, the need for additional school facilities associated with new development is addressed through compliance with school impact fee assessment. Payment of statutory fees by developers serves as CEQA mitigation to satisfy the impact of development on schools, per Sections 66000 et seq. of the California Government Code.

### 28. How will impacts to traffic and parking be addressed?

Chelsea and the County understand traffic and parking are concerns for the community. Parking will be provided on site, however, parking is not an issue required for analysis in CEQA documents. According to the EIR, the proposed project will not result in impacts related to traffic hazards, circulation movements and alternative transportation, and vehicle miles traveled. However, direct and cumulative impacts would occur related to trip generation and capacity. Project impacts to intersections and roadway segments studied would occur during the Existing plus Project phase, Near-term plus Project phase, and Cumulative plus Project phase. These impacts will be mitigated or partially mitigated, with the measures detailed in the EIR (including but not limited to lane restriping, optimization of signal timing, or traffic system management

strategies). However, a significant and unavoidable roadway segment impact along Balboa Avenue during each of these phases, and at two intersections and two roadway segments along Mt. Etna Drive and Balboa Avenue during the Cumulative plus Project phase, will occur, as there are no other feasible improvements that can be implemented for the impacted roadway segments.

Pursuant to Public Resource Code Section 21081 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15093, whenever significant effects cannot be mitigated to below a level of significance, the Lead Agency is required to balance, as applicable, the benefits of the project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project through a statement of overriding considerations.

Additionally, recent changes to the City of San Diego's parking requirements, designed to incentivize transit use by eliminating the requirement for a minimum number of parking spaces for new development, will not impact how parking will be addressed for this proposed affordable home community. Chelsea is committed to being a good neighbor and will include the appropriate level of on-site parking for its future residents.

### 29. How will potential impacts to safety be addressed?

There is no evidence that newly constructed affordable home communities cause increases in crime. Nevertheless, all applicants receive a criminal background check as a condition of tenancy. The County of San Diego requires all communities in which they invest in to have a Crime Free plan that outlines processes and procedures to ensure a safe community. Residents are also required to sign a Crime Free lease addendum that prohibits illegal acts on the property and subjects them to eviction for violation. In addition, Chelsea's success is built on its 30-year reputation for delivering high-quality apartment communities. Chelsea is committed to ensuring that for any community it builds, safety and security for both residents and neighbors is prioritized. Chelsea is a long-term owner and operator that ensures its housing communities benefit the neighborhoods in which they are located and thus has a vested interest in ensuring a safe location for all its residents. According to the EIR, the proposed project would not result in a physical impact associated with maintaining response times or performance objectives for any fire protection or police protection services.

### 30. How will we know that increasing density on this site won't result in high-density development all over Clairemont?

Although the property is owned by the County, a Community Plan Amendment and rezone is being sought through the City of San Diego to allow for future multifamily residential use on the site. Density in the City of San Diego is determined through the City planning process. The City is currently requesting public input regarding the Clairemont Community Plan Update, which includes density at this site and in the community. The Plan Update process is independent of Chelsea's work on this site and is not indicative of how future development may or may not be addressed by the City.



### 31. Please describe the potential benefits to the community of the proposed development.

San Diego is experiencing a crisis of housing availability and affordability that must be addressed by increasing the supply of affordable housing. The average household struggles to pay rent in the current rental market, but this especially impacts many lower income residents in the community, where over 60% of their income is spent on housing. By providing an affordable home, lower income families free up income that can be put in the local community, generating revenue. Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties often stabilize or increase surrounding property values, increase employment and business opportunities to construction trades, and often spur economic investments in the neighborhood.

Affordable communities provide additional housing and resources and inject new life and energy into an area, which leads to a positive financial impact in a community. In addition, the CPA process and associated EIR may identify required upgrades and fees for improvements to existing infrastructure (pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular transportation, water, public spaces, etc.).

This affordable home community would offer Clairemont residents and workers a more affordable housing option in their own community, while providing housing, green space, and services for seniors, families, and people with developmental disabilities. The proposed senior center would be open to the public and would provide additional supportive services to the community. Through a public involvement process, the County and Chelsea will work closely with the community to ensure the community's input helps positively shape this new residential community.

