

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE COASTAL HEIGHT LIMIT OVERLAY ZONE IN THE MIDWAY-PACIFIC COMMUNITY

POSITION: The Chamber's Transportation & Land Development Committee voted to SUPPORT the proposal on April 21, 2020. The Public Policy Committee voted to SUPPORT the proposal on May 12, 2020. The Chamber's Board of Directors voted to SUPPORT the proposal on May 28, 2020.

RATIONALE: Increasing the height limit in the Midway-Pacific community would further transform the neighborhood into a center of economic activity. While already a sub-regional employment center and residential hub, the new density would allow the neighborhood, its residents, and the local workforce to take advantage of new transit opportunities and create a more livable and lively urban environment.

STATUS: The proposed amendment will go before the San Diego City Council's Rules Committee on May 13, 2020. Later in the summer (June-August), the City Council will vote to place the measure on the November 2020 ballot. The measure would then become a citywide ballot measure and would need a simple majority to be successful.

SUMMARY:

The Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan was updated in September 2018. The City's Planning Department worked closely with the Midway Planning Group, community members, and the public for several years prior to finalizing the plan. During the updating process, local stakeholders and the Planning Commission suggested the coastal height limit overlay (30 ft limit) be removed in the neighborhood. While not included in the new community plan, residents, property owners, and others have called on the City to consider the change.

Councilmembers Campbell and Cate propose that the City Council Rules Committee consider placing a measure on the November 2020 ballot to amend the coastal height limit overlay zone section of the San Diego Municipal Code. This amendment would exclude the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan area from the overlay zone and would not affect any other neighborhoods within San Diego.

The Chamber's Transportation & Land Development Committee applauded the Councilmembers' proposal and many committee members believe this would lead to significant private and public sector investment in the area.

INDUSTRY/IES IMPACTED

Property owners, residents, and businesses within the Midway-Pacific neighborhood will be impacted directly.

SUPPORTERS

- Midway Community Planning Group
- BIA Urban Council Committee

OPPONENTS

- None known

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

- Should the ballot measure be successful, this project will bring significant economic investment to the neighborhood.
- New development opportunities would create increased revenue for community infrastructure improvements through Development Impact Fees. This potentially includes improvements to/new parks, fire stations, pedestrian infrastructure, roads, and more.
- While the proposed amendment does not directly relate to the NAVWAR project, the proposal would complement investment being made to the NAVWAR site.
- Removing the height limit in the Midway-Pacific Highway neighborhood would increase neighborhood density, thus reducing the need for personal vehicles and increasing the use of public transportation and alternate forms of transit.

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

- The Coastal Height Limit was approved by San Diego voters in 1972 and should be honored.
- With the height limit removed, highrise residential and commercial buildings will be constructed throughout the neighborhood, disrupting the character of the neighborhood and negatively effect pre-existing ocean views.

MORE INFORMATION

The map below shows the boundaries of the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan area.

