

# Allen Matkins

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**Jeffrey A. Chine**  
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Direct Dial: 619.235.1525 File Number: 391389.00001/4879-9320-0428.1

## **Via Electronic Mail**

July 29, 2022

Greg Humora, City Manager  
City of La Mesa  
8130 Allison Avenue  
La Mesa, CA 91941

### **Re: Alvarado Specific Plan - Upcoming Planning Commission Hearing**

Dear Mr. Humora:

On July 13, 2022, I wrote to you requesting a long-overdue Planning Commission hearing for the above-referenced project. As you know, a Planning Commission recommendation is a prerequisite under state zoning and planning law to have the project considered for approval by the City Council. On July 14, 2022, you responded by email indicating that the matter would be docketed for the August 17, 2022, La Mesa Planning Commission agenda.

The project's representative, Chris Wahl, spoke with you and senior City staff on July 28, 2022, about the upcoming proposed hearing. Staff indicated a preference that the hearing would not be for the purpose of soliciting a project recommendation from the Planning Commission. Instead, the hearing would enable staff to "seek input" and "guidance" from the Planning Commission on the application, as a public workshop, presumably with the intent of modifying the project in some respect based on such input and then later, at some unspecified future date, returning the project to Planning Commission for a formal recommendation.

Mr. Wahl indicated that staff's proposal was not in keeping with the applicant's previous requests for a Planning Commission hearing decision and would likely not be acceptable to the applicant. Staff also stated that if the public workshop is not accepted by the applicant, staff will recommend project denial.

Needless to say, the applicant is disappointed by staff's position. A public workshop-style meeting may have been appropriate two years ago, but not now, after four years of processing and long after the project Draft EIR has been circulated for public review. Having taken the City's assent to a Planning Commission hearing as positive news that the project would at last be moving forward, it appears that staff's agreement to a public hearing may have been intended simply as a means for further delay.

Allen Matkins Leck Gamble Mallory & Natsis LLP  
Attorneys at Law

Greg Humora, City Manager

July 29, 2022

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Please accept this letter as the applicant's demand for the upcoming Planning Commission hearing to result in a recommendation to the City Council. We are unaware of any basis for a staff recommendation of project denial. In fact, given the desperate need for additional housing in La Mesa, the region and our State, we had hoped that City staff would be enthusiastically recommending approval of this project. The singular issue of project concern recently raised by staff as a basis for not taking the project to public hearing was the design standards/guidelines contained in the Specific Plan. The applicant responded by submitting SB 330 compliant standards on June 6, 2022, to which staff has not provided any written comments to date.

Please include this letter in the administrative record for the project.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey A. Chine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeffrey A. Chine

JAC:sn

Attachments

cc: Reza Paydar  
Christopher Wahl  
Dave Witt  
Crista Sosenko, Esq.  
Glenn P. Sabine, Esq.  
Kerry Kusiak  
Robin Huntley  
Jose Ayala  
Matthew T. Struhar, Esq.

# Allen Matkins

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Direct Dial: 619.235.1525 File Number: 391389.00001/4864-0504-0936.1

## **Via Electronic Mail**

July 13, 2022

Greg Humora, City Manager  
City of La Mesa  
8130 Allison Avenue  
La Mesa, CA 91941

### **Re: Alvarado Specific Plan**

Dear Mr. Humora:

As you know, this firm represents RV Communities/The Paydar Companies, the joint applicants (hereafter, “**Applicant**”) for the proposed Alvarado Specific Plan (“**ASP**”). The purpose of this letter is to again request that the City of La Mesa (“**City**”) allow the project to proceed to public hearing. The Applicant hereby demands that the City honor its commitment to notice the project for Planning Commission review on August 17, 2022. For your convenience, attached as Exhibits 1-3 are the Applicant's prior written requests for a public hearing, dated December 29, 2021, January 28, 2022, and March 31, 2022, respectively. The project application was submitted in September 2018, approaching four years ago. The Draft EIR was circulated for public comment in September of 2020. To our knowledge there is no impediment to prompt Planning Commission review.

While the Applicant does not doubt the sincerity of your prior statements that the Applicant will be afforded public hearings, the reality is that the project has been subjected to a deliberate pattern of delay, lack of responsiveness, and general disinterest, if not hostility, by City personnel with the responsibility to diligently process the application. This despite the fact that the project, as described below, is the right development in the right location, consistent with local, regional and state housing, transportation and environmental policies. Most recently, after repeated requests for a public hearing dating back to 2021 (see Exhibit 1), the City agreed to an August 3, 2022, Planning Commission hearing date, then pushed it to August 17<sup>th</sup>. As outlined below in connection with Senate Bill 330 compliance, City staff later changed its mind, informed the Applicant’s representatives that the project would not proceed to hearing in August, and offered no alternative hearing date. Once again, the project is in limbo.

Some staff members privately have expressed the view that the project is too ambitious, too big or too controversial for La Mesa. We firmly believe the project will be embraced by the public and elected officials alike once they’ve heard all the facts. The Applicant simply seeks an opportunity to make its case. The refusal or further delay of public hearings, or attempts to frustrate

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July 13, 2022  
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the project by other means in the hopes it will “go away” is not acceptable, and we respectfully ask that as the City Manager you remedy the situation.

We note that as of this writing the City’s Housing Element is out of compliance with state law, according to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (“HCD”) website. Given the importance of the project to the City’s Housing Element, we have copied HCD with this letter. This is a decision not taken lightly, given the inherent risk of local agency retribution. Yet, at this point in time the Applicant has few options to address the stalemate. With several millions of Applicant dollars spent over several years on project planning, City processing fees, third-party consultants hired by the City at the Applicant’s expense, and now the necessity of lawyers, we believe this to be an appropriate course of action. In this regard, the exigency of present project circumstances require that we provide relevant history and context, necessitating this lengthy letter and degree of formality.

## **I. THE PROJECT**

ASP is a proposed master development plan for a multi-family transit-oriented development of 950 units on roughly 12 acres located just south of Interstate 8, separated only by Alvarado Road, near the City’s western border with the City of San Diego. The MTS light-rail (“LRT”) 70th Street Trolley Station is immediately west of the project site and the double track LRT Green Line is just south of the site. The project will be phased, with a total of four buildings, three of which will consist of up to five floors of residential construction atop Type I concrete parking structures. Given the close proximity of San Diego State University to the west, and the immediately adjacent LRT station which links to the University, student housing is planned for one these buildings. The fourth building, adjacent to the MTS Trolley Station, will consist of 60 units with one level of structured parking.

The project site is bisected by the Alvarado Creek. As a result of upstream development over many years, the Creek regularly floods, creating a nuisance as well as health and safety risks, as explained in the draft Specific Plan. (See ASP, pp. I-10 – I-13.) Consequently, the project proposes significant site improvements to address FEMA mapped flood prone areas while retaining storm water flows within the creek’s defined flood channel. The project also will restore and revegetate the creek with appropriate plant materials and construct a pedestrian bridge over the creek, thereby improving flood protection, implementing clean water mandates and providing an amenity for the enjoyment of future project residents. Moreover, the project proposes significant pedestrian and bicycle facilities to improve safety on Alvarado Road and enhance connectivity with the adjacent Trolley Station.

The Draft EIR concluded that any potentially significant impacts associated with the project would be reduced to below a level of significance. The Draft EIR and ASP are available on the City’s website at <https://www.cityoflamesa.us/1639/Alvarado-Specific-Plan>.

Greg Humora, City Manager

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## II. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION OF CITY HOUSING ELEMENT AND IMPORTANCE IN ACHIEVING REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS

In the 1980's, the City embarked on a major redevelopment effort to improve the Alvarado Creek corridor, with the goal of removing perceived blight, solving the ongoing flooding issues, and installing needed public improvements. The project will accomplish these goals. The La Mesa General Plan Land Use & Urban Design Element designates the project site as Regional Serving Commercial, and describes the designation as follows:

This land use designation is assigned to those areas of the City which are suitable for more intense urban activities, such as high volume retail sales, and other sales and services which are expected to draw local and Regional customers. Areas designated Regional Commercial are served by convenient freeway access and public transportation. Grossmont Center, Fletcher Parkway and *Alvarado Road* are examples of areas where the designation is applied.

Examples of uses intended in the Regional Commercial designation include retail shopping centers, large office complexes and uses providing services to the traveling public such as restaurants, service stations, hotels, and motels. Entertainment uses such as movie theaters and nightclubs may be conditionally permitted. *Within larger areas of the City, which have been designated Regional Serving Commercial; there may be areas which are suitable for mixed-use or high density residential developments. The appropriate mix of uses permitted within these areas will be determined on a case-by-case review or by the amendment or adoption of a specific plan which will also establish the appropriate residential density.*

(LU&UD Element, p. LD-32, emphasis added.)

The Land Use & Urban Design Element of the General Plan emphasizes the importance of encouraging transit-oriented development:

Local jurisdictions have worked with SANDAG to develop the Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy to mitigate the adverse effects of traffic congestion and reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions. An important part of this strategy is commitment of more of the region's transportation resources to improve the public transit system. Transit systems work best in neighborhoods characterized by dense residential and commercial development. The La Mesa General Plan encourages Transit-

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Oriented Development, by permitting an intensification of a mix of uses adjacent to trolley stations and along transit corridors.

(LU&UD Element, p. LD-26.)

The Housing Element includes a variety of “Implementing Programs,” including the following:

9. Facilitate the Development of Higher Density Housing

In an urbanized area like La Mesa, land represents a significant cost component in both multi- and single-family development projects. One way to lower the cost of land per unit is to allow a greater number of dwelling units per acre of land. Increased density generally results in a lower land cost per unit, and greater unit affordability.

As a means of reducing residential land costs, La Mesa will encourage development at the upper end of its residential density ranges, particularly in targeted areas such as the mixed use districts along the City’s transit corridors. The City has identified 12 opportunity sites/expected projects to accommodate a significant portion of the City’s remaining RHNA of 2,274 units.

(Housing Element, p. 106.)

Acknowledging the suitability of the project site for high density residential development, the City’s Housing Element designates the project site as an “Opportunity Site” in Table HE-49, with the following description:

The [Alvarado] Specific Plan will provide 900 units of housing at above moderate income.

(Housing Element, Table HE-49, p. 91.)

The Housing Element also states:

It should be noted that based on allowable density of 40 to 80 du/acre, all of the [opportunity] sites are feasible to facilitate lower income housing, but the City is using 65% of the realistic capacity to accommodate for the lower income RHNA. The only opportunity site that did not utilize the 85% of maximum density is the Alvarado

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Specific Plan, which has been set to provide 900 above moderate income housing units.

(Housing Element, p. 90; note that the reference to 65% above appears to be a typographical error and should read 85%.)

The project is critical to the City's satisfaction of its Housing Element goals and achieving Regional Housing Needs Assessment ("RHNA") requirements in the 6<sup>th</sup> Housing Element Cycle (2021-2029). ASP accounts for 900 of the total 1,643 above moderate income dwelling units identified within the Opportunity Sites. (Housing Element, Table HE-49.) Of the 3,797 total dwelling units required to meet the City's RHNA requirement, ASP accounts for 24%. (Housing Element, Table HE-53, p. 116.) With regard to the above moderate household RHNA requirement of 1,874 dwelling units, ASP represents 48%. (*Ibid.*) Of the "remaining RHNA of 2,274 units" referenced in the Housing Element above, ASP represents 40%.

There are no other housing projects being processed by the City that approach the size of ASP. The only other Opportunity Site of statistical consequence in achieving RHNA goals is Grossmont Center, which could produce 496 above moderate income units, as well as affordable housing. (Housing Element, p. 91.) The Housing Element pledges to "[i]nitiate the master planning of the Grossmont Center" by 2025, with the goal of "completing the planning effort" that would allow construction to start before the next Housing Element Cycle. (Housing Element, pp. 106-107.) Given the entitlement timeline to date for ASP, the City's anticipated timeline for Grossmont Center entitlement is unrealistic and unachievable, making the success of ASP all the more critical.

### **III. PROJECT COMPLIANCE WITH SENATE BILL 330**

Effective January 1, 2020, as part of a package of legislation commonly referred to as SB 330 and intended to address the housing crisis, Government Code section 65589.5 was amended to mandate the application of objective design standards to housing development projects, to the exclusion of subjective standards. The City of La Mesa has not adopted objective design standards. The Housing Element alternatively commits that such standards will be adopted, using SB 2 grant funds, no later than 2021 and 2022. (See Housing Element, p. 103 and p. 113, respectively.)

ASP was last revised in February 2020, and did not at that time include objective design standards in accordance with SB 330. Understanding that the City has no objective standards and has yet to commence that process in earnest, the Applicant submitted proposed ASP objective design standards to the City consistent with the SB 330 requirement to avoid further project delay. (See Exhibit 4.) City staff and the third party consultant hired by the City to advise on planning matters rejected the submittal without written comment or proposed revisions after taking weeks of review time. At that time, staff informed the Applicant that the project would not be considered by the Planning Commission in August, and offered no new hearing date. Should staff elect to

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provide written comments/suggestions, the Applicant will consider them. However, the standards proposed by the Applicant are compliant with applicable law. Absent timely City input which would not further delay public hearings, including a Planning Commission hearing date of August 17<sup>th</sup>, we request that the submittal as drafted be considered as part of the project.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The Applicant's ask is simple: allow the project finally to move forward by honoring the City's previous commitment to schedule an August 17, 2022, Planning Commission hearing. The Applicant's proposal is to construct much needed quality housing for the community and simultaneously remedy existing infrastructure deficiencies and persistent flooding problems not of the Applicant's making, at no expense to the City or the public. The project will result in no significant environmental impacts and satisfies a raft of local, regional and state policy objectives, a few of which are addressed above. The Applicant and its team remain committed to a cordial and professional relationship with City staff, and are available to discuss these issues, yet insist that the project be allowed to proceed to public hearing for the reasons outlined above.

Very truly yours,



Jeffrey A. Chine

JAC:sn

Attachments

cc: Reza Paydar  
Christopher Wahl  
Dave Witt  
Crista Sosenko, Esq.  
Glenn P. Sabine, Esq.  
Kerry Kusiak  
Robin Huntley  
Jose Ayala  
Matthew T. Struhar, Esq.



# **EXHIBIT 1**

# PAYDAR ♦ PROPERTIES

December 29, 2021

Mr. Greg Humora  
City Manager  
City of La Mesa  
8130 Allison Avenue  
La Mesa, CA 91942

Re: Alvarado Creek Development Agreement

Dear Mr. Humora:

I am writing to inform the City of my decision to discontinue our development agreement negotiations. I have made this decision reluctantly after much thought, and only after we arrived at an impasse in our discussions over appropriate development agreement terms. As you know, the difference of opinion between my development team and City personnel assigned to the development agreement negotiations is the extent of public benefit afforded by the proposed project.

Without belaboring the point, which has been the subject of multiple meetings, draft terms sheets and correspondence (some of which is attached for your reference), I firmly believe that the project provides significant public benefit to the City of La Mesa, its residents and the region, more than sufficient to support the approval of a development agreement. The proposed Specific Plan will enable the development of new, energy efficient homes immediately adjacent to public transit and freeway access.

It is worth noting that the 12 acre project site, comprised of four parcels, will be developed in phases similar in size and scope to several other successful residential projects that have been approved in La Mesa. This is a rare opportunity for the City to achieve an important and substantial contribution to its housing stock, spread out over roughly 15 years, and regulated by a Specific Plan to ensure the quality and consistency of the overall project.

The project also would eliminate an existing legally non-conforming use, remedy a persistent and dangerous flooding threat to the community and provide critical public infrastructure – all at no cost to the City. The project neither seeks nor requires public subsidies and will pay all appropriate impact fees. Moreover, the Environmental Impact Report demonstrates that the project causes no significant environmental impacts. To the contrary, the project will implement important state and local policies addressing climate change.

However, based on our negotiations it is clear that City staff believes additional financial concessions from the project are required in return for the vested rights afforded by a development agreement. My team has repeatedly emphasized that due to existing physical conditions at the project site and in order to satisfy standard City improvement requirements for a project of this nature, development costs already are very high. The scope and extent of the additional financial

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burden City staff proposes as part of the development agreement render the project financially infeasible. Consequently, I have decided to forgo a development agreement.

During our negotiations staff referenced other projects, in other jurisdictions, of a different nature, as the basis for their expectations of this development agreement. The reality, however, is that development projects must make economic sense or they cannot obtain financing. This project simply cannot bear the additional burdens staff believes are necessary in order to support a development agreement. I want to make clear that my decision is not intended in any way as criticism of City staff, which I believe genuinely feels it is acting in the best interest of La Mesa residents.

During our development agreement negotiations, and perhaps in part engendered by my frustration over the lack of progress, I perceived an indifference towards the project and what I believe is speculative fear that some in the community might oppose it unless the City extracts additional financial concessions from the developer. This saddens me greatly. As you know, we have spent over four years conceiving, planning and processing the project, at great expense, roughly \$3.2 million to date. While this is a private development project, the housing and associated infrastructure provided will benefit the community. I never would have embarked on this venture had I felt at any time that the proposal was not strongly supported by La Mesa staff and elected officials. As I've indicated, the existing use is acceptable to me, but is not the ultimate highest and best use of the land. My intention is for the project to leave a positive legacy for my children and the residents of the City.

I am confident that the Planning Commission and City Council, as well as the residents of La Mesa, will recognize the public benefits afforded by the project and embrace its forward-thinking nature. Therefore, it is my desire to have the project proceed as quickly as possible to public hearing without a development agreement. Please consider this letter notice of withdrawal of my application for such an agreement. I will have Dave Witt follow up with you in this regard.

Respectfully,



Reza Paydar

Attachment

cc: David Witt

## Benefits to City and Community for Project with Extraordinary Costs.

Similar projects developed over the past 10 years, up stream, benefited from  
Redevelopment Funding and City Bonds (Contractor Budgets 2019)

\$4.8M

Types of building designs in order of cost to build:

Garden Style

Wrap

Podium

1	<i>Benefit</i>	STORM WATER MANAGEMENT, FLOOD CHANNEL IMPROVEMENTS  <u>Mitigates City Risks associated to future flooding and property damage</u>	\$1.0M
2	<i>Benefit</i>	SEWER DEGRADATION  <u>Mitigates City Risks of continued degradation of existing sewer line. with full replacement.</u>  <u>Mitigates City Pollution Risks associated to volume of sewage serviced by existing line</u>	\$500k
3	<i>Benefit</i>	RELOCATION OF HIGH TENSION POWER LINES  <u>Positions property for a "Best Use" condition for the future</u>	\$900k
4	<i>Benefit</i>	IMPROVES EXISTING DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS IN FLOODPLAIN  <u>Positions property for a "Best Use" condition for the future</u>	\$1M
5	<i>Benefit</i>	IMPROVES PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE AND SAFETY  <u>Safe Pedestrian Access to Trolley, Bike Paths, Pedestrian Bridge</u>	\$800k
6	<i>Benefit</i>	CONSISTANT WITH CITIES CLIMATE ACTION PLAN  <u>Promoting Metro Ridership vs auto use</u> <u>Energy efficient living spaces</u>	
7	<i>Benefit</i>	SUPPORTS CITY IN RHNA COMMITMENT	
8	<i>Benefit</i>	IMPROVES UTILIZATION OF TROLLEY IMPROVEMENTS	

# **EXHIBIT 2**

# Allen Matkins

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**Via Electronic Mail** [GSabine@cityoflamesa.us](mailto:GSabine@cityoflamesa.us) / [glennsabine@cox.net](mailto:glennsabine@cox.net)

January 28, 2022

Glenn Sabine, Esq.  
La Mesa City Attorney  
City of La Mesa  
La Mesa City Hall  
8130 Allison Avenue  
La Mesa, CA 91942

**Re: Proposed Alvarado Specific Plan Project**

Dear Glenn:

Thanks for taking the time to speak with me this week about the Alvarado Specific Plan project (the "Project") proposed in the City of La Mesa. As you know, my office represents the applicant, Reza Paydar. On December 29, 2021, Mr. Paydar wrote the City to request that the Project be scheduled for consideration by the Planning Commission as soon as reasonably possible. As outlined in Mr. Paydar's letter, the applicant determined that after many months development agreement negotiations with City staff had reached impasse and he thus withdrew his request for such an agreement. He wishes to proceed with public hearings for the Project without a development agreement.

Today you confirmed that the City is willing and prepared to notice a Planning Commission hearing for Project, with the purpose of making a recommendation to the City Council. You indicated that you will check with the Planning Director and let us know the potential hearing dates for the matter. I look forward to hearing from you next week.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Very truly yours,



Jeffrey A. Chine

JAC:sn

cc: Greg Humora, City Manager ([GHumora@cityoflamesa.us](mailto:GHumora@cityoflamesa.us))  
Mr. Reza Paydar ([reza.paydar@paydarcompanies.com](mailto:reza.paydar@paydarcompanies.com))  
Mr. David Witt ([davewitt29@gmail.com](mailto:davewitt29@gmail.com))

# **EXHIBIT 3**

# Allen Matkins

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**Via Electronic Mail** [GSabine@cityoflamesa.us](mailto:GSabine@cityoflamesa.us) / [glennsabine@cox.net](mailto:glennsabine@cox.net)

March 31, 2022

Glenn Sabine, Esq.  
La Mesa City Attorney  
City of La Mesa  
La Mesa City Hall  
8130 Allison Avenue  
La Mesa, CA 91942

**Re: Proposed Alvarado Specific Plan Project – Repeated Request for Planning Commission Hearing**

Dear Glenn:

My client, the applicant for the above referenced housing development project, has twice requested in writing (on 12/29/21 and 1/28/22), as well as several verbal requests, that City staff calendar a Planning Commission hearing for the project. On February 9, 2022, project consultant Dave Witt spoke with you and the City Manager, Mr. Humora, again requesting a public hearing. Dave was told that staff would get back to him within a couple weeks with a proposed Planning Commission hearing date. Since then, we've heard nothing.

Is it the City's intention to schedule a Planning Commission hearing for the project, and if so, when?

As always, I'm available to discuss the project with you.

Very truly yours,



Jeffrey A. Chine

JAC:rch

cc: Greg Humora, City Manager ([GHumora@cityoflamesa.us](mailto:GHumora@cityoflamesa.us))  
Mr. Reza Paydar ([reza.paydar@paydarcompanies.com](mailto:reza.paydar@paydarcompanies.com))  
Mr. David Witt ([davewitt29@gmail.com](mailto:davewitt29@gmail.com))



# **EXHIBIT 4**

# CHAPTER III

## Development Standards and Design Guidelines

Previous chapters in the Alvarado Specific Plan include the planning background and policy foundation for a new and forward looking land use plan for this unique location. The Specific Plan Area has a history that has been impacted by the growth and development major transportation infrastructure in La Mesa. The Alvarado Specific Plan represents a “master development plan” for the revitalization of the Area in a manner which is consistent with the goals and policies of the La Mesa General Plan. As discussed in Chapters I and II, implementation of the development plans is anticipated to occur in two major phases of construction. The Specific Plan will be implemented as primarily private development projects in partnership with the City of La Mesa and other affected public Agencies to achieve the public safety, environmental protection and enhancement, and infrastructure needs in the Specific Plan Area.

This Chapter provides the land use and regulatory framework for development projects and public improvements to be implemented in the Plan Area to:

- create a high quality “transit-oriented development” with a diversity of new multi-family housing
- provide for the construction of the needed public improvements in the Area;
- be financially feasible as a private investment in future of La Mesa;
- be a fiscally sound land use change through the revitalization of the Area; and,
- be a “good fit” within the existing fabric of the Specific Plan vicinity and the community as a whole.

The purpose of the development standards and design guidelines is to provide direction and clarity to owners, design professionals and builders, City staff, public decision makers and the public in the process of designing and approving future projects within the Plan Area. The Development Standards and Design Guidelines are intended to assist in achieving the goals and objective of the Specific Plan and not to unnecessarily limit flexibility and creativity through the implementation of these provisions. Project designs that vary from the plan illustrative concepts in the Plan, yet are able to meet the design intent and vision for the Alvarado Specific Plan can be deemed in substantial conformance through the implementation process. A project can be determined to be in conformance with the Specific Plan without the project being consistent with every development standard or design guideline.

This Chapter contains project development guidelines that provide the basis for project evaluation through the City’s review process as outlined in Chapter IV. Objective Design Standards are provided

that combine the elements of the Development Standards and Design Guidelines. The Objective Design Standards are included to implement Senate Bill (SB 35) signed into law in 2017 and SB 330 (which in part amended the Housing Accountability Act) signed into law in 2019, and will apply to projects within the Specific Plan Area which meet the requirements of such state laws. Projects in the Plan Area qualifying under SB 35 or SB 330 are subject to the objective design standards within this chapter. These projects are not subject to subjective design guidelines as a matter of state law; however, the intent and application of subjective guidelines is encouraged to be implemented by developers to the greatest extent feasible to ensure high-quality development that is consistent with the community identity of the Plan Area.

## III – A. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

### III - A. 1. Consistency with Specific Plan

This Chapter serves to outline the regulatory development standards and design guidelines to be used in the final design and basis of review for the development projects that will implement the private and public improvement plans described within the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan will be the guiding reference for the implementation and project review steps which are further described in Chapter IV - Implementation. As the guiding regulatory tool for all subsequent implementing projects, each future discretionary and ministerial project authorized by the Plan will be subject to a finding of “substantial conformance” with the Alvarado Specific Plan and the supporting Program EIR documentation for the Plan.

### III – A. 2. Substitution for Zoning Ordinance

All subsequent projects to implement the Alvarado Specific Plan will rely on the Plans, Development Standards and Design Guidelines approved by the City and subject to a finding of “substantial conformance” with the Alvarado Specific Plan and the project EIR. As described in this Section, the Specific Plan will substitute for the land use and zoning standards that would traditionally be used to regulate new private development in the Specific Plan Area. Documentation of this transfer of regulatory standards will be implemented through the approval of an “Alvarado Specific Plan Overlay Zone” to clearly establish the implementation area, role, and authority of the Specific Plan as outlined in Chapter IV - Implementation.

### III – A. 3. Form-Based Development Approach

As describe above, a new approach is proposed to clearly communicate what development standards are to be used to review and evaluate individual projects within the Alvarado Specific Plan Area. This section of the Plan defines a **“form-based”** approach as an effective means to ensure the goals and policies of the Plan are met at the project review level. This Section includes the set of defining characteristics and limiting factors that can achieve the development goals and policies of La Mesa for the Specific Plan Area. Application of the Development Standards and Design Guidelines will:

- create a high quality “transit-oriented development” with a diversity of new multi-family housing
- provide for the construction of the needed public improvements in the Area;
- be financially feasible as a private investment in future of La Mesa;
- be a fiscally sound land use change through the revitalization of the Area: and,
- be a “good fit” within the existing fabric of the Specific Plan vicinity and the community as a whole.

The form-based approach serves to clearly communicate with text and diagrams the type, size, location, mix of uses, open spaces, landscaping and quality of the development that is authorized by the Specific Plan. The form-based approached established by the descriptions and diagrams in the Specific Plan provides a much more well defined and predictable image of the what will be built and how it will fit into the site and surrounding community than the traditional general plan/zoning classification approach.

This approach is in contrast to the traditional zoning regulations which focus on separation of uses, setbacks from adjoining properties, parking ratios and density calculations, with little emphasis on the unique characteristics or constraints of an actual location. Equally as important, this method describes the project review process and defines elements within each phase for providing the site improvements, public improvements, environmental enhancements, open space elements and transit connectivity, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other infrastructure that is not as clearly defined by a traditional zoning approach.

Figures 39 and 40 show a diagram of the overall site area and illustrate site sections through the project to specify the key dimensions that will define the proposed building envelope, distribution of uses, limiting factors that describe the individual multi-family residential buildings and the site improvements for the Alvarado Specific Plan. The descriptive elements in these diagrams correspond to the overall Site Development Plan shown in Figure 12 and described in detail in Chapter II – Land Use and Development Plan.

There are two key elements that have been used to create this “form-based” definition for the Development Plan. One is the overall site plan which has been designed to reflect the site’s physical characteristics and constraints in concert with the broader land use goals and infrastructure needs for the Area. The second primary basis for the development standards is the application of the current applicable Building Codes in California that define the limiting dimensions allowed for the proposed multi-family residential construction type over a Type I parking garage structures.

Within the “form-based” building envelope established by the Specific Plan, it is intended that the Plan may permit flexibility during implementation through the City’s Site Development Plan and Urban Design Program review process to achieve a determination of consistency with the Plan through an alternative mix of residential unit types and/or architectural design approaches.

Figures 41 to 44 define the areas in which Buildings 1-4 will be constructed in relation to the Alvarado Road improvements and the interior private street/emergency access road. Figures 40 and 41a - d provide typical site sections to define:

the overall height limits for the primary structures,

the requirements to comply with the minimum floodway elevations, and

the maximum number of residential floors above the parking levels.

Figure 42 provides an oblique view of the overall Specific Plan Area with a simplified graphic representation of the building envelopes that are defined by the site

Figures 43a - e illustrate the typical floor levels for Buildings 1-4 to define arrangement of uses with project vehicle parking levels, parking access points, and multi-family residential uses on levels above the parking structure podium deck level.

Figure 43 - c represents the location and design concept for “liner units” that will be permitted on building facades oriented to the interior of the site and away from Alvarado Road.

On the Building facades oriented to Alvarado Road, parking levels will be adjacent to the pedestrian sidewalk and bicycle facility zone and required to be architecturally screened as described in the Design Guidelines section of this Chapter.

Figure 39 Alvarado Specific Plan Land Use and Development Plan (with details identified)

Figure 40 Form-based Development Standards Plan View

Figure 41 a. b. c. d. Form-based Development Standards Section Views

Figure 42 Form-based Development Standards Schematic View of Development Envelopes

Figure 43 a. b. c. d. e. Form-based Development Standards Typical Building Plan View by Floor Level

Figure 44 Plan View to Show Site Access Points and Distance to Parking Structure Entries and Sec Gates

### III – A. 4. Multi-family Residential Unit Mix

**Multi-family Apartments:** The unit mix for buildings 1-4 will include Studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units. Final unit mix will be set at the time of Site Development Plan and Design Review by the City. The total number of residential units in an individual project will be limited by the location, site area, height and building massing parameters set in the form-based development standards established in this Chapter.

**“Liner” Units:** Buildings may incorporate liner units located below the parking structure podium deck levels on the interior elevations of the projects not directly oriented to the Alvarado Road frontage. The liner units may use a “loft” style design concepts within the mix of studio, one- and two-bedroom units. This design concept may also employ designs which include a front “stoop” element where direct access is available to the creek side interior private street and pedestrian pathways and open space areas. The liner units will meet the Flood Overlay zone requirements.

**Student Housing:** As described in the Land Use and Development Plan, Building 2 may be built as a “student housing” project focused on serving college and university students in the community with an economical housing option and direct and convenient existing Trolley access to the campus. Although the same standards for building location, size, and mass within the “form-based” concept described above apply, the net residential unit count for Building 2 will be lower with the “student housing” option due to the use of larger shared living design concepts as shown in Chapter II. The unit mix with the “student housing” concept may include a mix of: one-bedroom/one-bed units; two-bedroom/two and four-bed units; and four-bedroom/four-bed units.

The student housing configurations are much closer to dormitory style housing, allowing for independent living, yet within a fully managed and operated residential concept. Some of the key elements of the Student Housing project will include:

- Fully furnished units
- Limited access and secured building
- 24/7 Security presence
- On-site management and professionally trained staff
- Defined policy on resident behavior and enforcement

### III – A. 5. Parking and Vehicle Access

Although the Alvarado Specific Plan is conceived as a Transit Oriented Development, parking and vehicle access still remains an important development and design standard. Implementation of the Specific Plan requires review and approval of Site Development Plans as described in Chapter IV - Implementation. Individual projects will provide vehicle parking and access as described in Chapter III – Land Use and Development Plan. The development standards for parking and project circulation are outline below and illustrated in Figure 44.

**Parking Structures:** Resident vehicle parking for each Building will be provided within a multi-level parking structures as illustrated in Figures 41 – 43 above for Buildings 2,3, and 4. Building 1 plans for one level of structured parking. Each parking structure will provide adequate ingress and egress to the interior private street. Parking structure access locations will provide sufficient distance from Alvarado Road for queuing space on-site and away from public street traffic.

**Parking Ratios:** For Buildings 2,3, and 4, within the multi-level parking structures to be constructed, the estimated parking ratio will be approximately 1.4 spaces per dwelling unit as described in Chapter II. This off-street parking ratio will be compatible with the reduced parking and automobile dependency objectives for a transit-oriented development (TOD). This same parking volume will be provided in the student housing option for Building 2 which results in a similar parking amount when correlated with the planned “bed” count with fewer but larger residential units. For Building 1 with an estimated 60 residential units above one level of parking, the off-street parking ratio will be approximately 0.5 space per residential unit.

These parking levels will serve as the total off-street parking requirements for the project and will be inclusive of the anticipated demand for guest parking and the secondary resident-oriented mixed uses that may be permitted on a limited basis within the project.

**Guest Parking:** Guest parking within each project is accounted for in two general areas. A limited number of exterior spaces surface parking spaces will be provided in the vicinity of the main entry/leasing office for each project as shown on the Specific Plan diagram in Figure 39. Visitor parking spaces will also be designated within the lower level of Buildings 2-4, and near building leasing offices and parking garage entrances.

**Security:** Resident parking within the parking structures will be secured with gates and require an automated access control system within the parking structure. Along the private interior streets, there will also be security gates beyond the parking garage entrances to prevent through vehicle traffic and reserve this area as primarily a part of the pedestrian pathways and creek-side open space. Limited vehicle access will be permitted beyond the security gates for deliveries and move-ins.

**Unbundled Resident Parking:** As described in Chapter II - Land Use and Development Plan, all on-site vehicle parking provided within the required parking areas and structured parking levels may be unbundled from any requirement for an on-site parking per-unit ratio or an assigned residential unit parking space designation. With this unbundled

parking standard, the management, use, and charges for resident on-site parking for each Building will be the responsibility of the project owner(s).

**Services, Deliveries and Move-ins:** The Alvarado Specific Plan has been designed with serious consideration given to the changes that have occurred in how people shop and live in a contemporary multi-family environment. As a result, the site development plan will provide access and space for vehicles within the site for service and delivery vehicles, as well as move-in locations that will maintain the required emergency vehicle access requirements. This is intended to assist with maintaining the interior private street and pedestrian pathways and primarily on open space feature and to keep traffic flow and safety directed to Alvarado Road.

**On-street Parking:** The streetscape plans for Alvarado Road in the Specific Plan include the construction of improvements along the entire length of the site Area as part of Phase 1 projects. This includes on-street parallel parking spaces along the south side of the Alvarado Road frontage in areas that insure proper site distances from primary project ingress/egress locations. The on-street parking areas are planned to be delineated by “bulb-out” features as part of the streetscape plan. This concept proposes to dedicate a limited number of spaces in the vicinity of each primary project entry as “timed parking” and/or “loading zones” to facilitate and encourage the use of shared transportation options, such as ride sharing and delivery services.

- **Alternative Transportation Support:** As a transit-oriented development, a key goal of the project is to facilitate future tenant use of alternatives to the single person vehicle trip.
- **Bicycle Parking:** All multi-family residential projects will include bicycle parking facilities.
- **EV Charging Stations:** All multi-family residential parking structures will incorporate spaces dedicated for electric vehicle charging stations.
- **Transit Access:** The primary feature of the project supporting this objective is the adjacent 70<sup>th</sup> Street Trolley Station. The project proposes constructing new public pedestrian improvements for access to the Station on Alvarado Road to complete the missing public links to the MTS station. Phase 1 projects will also improve and complete pedestrian access for project tenants from the interior private streets along Alvarado Creek to the Station.
- **Transit Passes:** It the intent of the Specific Plan to work with MTS and project developments to incorporate incentives for transit use by project residents.

### III – A. 6. Open Space and Site Landscaping

Two of the most important design elements in the Alvarado Specific Plan are the mix of high-quality open space concepts and landscaping solutions. These two key areas were assigned a high priority in the formulation of the Land Use and Development Plans. This



commitment in the Plan can work within the physical demands of the site and still create a very livable and transformative environment the future tenants of the Area and achieve the objectives of La Mesa's General Plan.

To balance the physical demands of the site improvements and with the goal of creating a quality living environment for the future tenants and the community as a whole, the master plan provides for a mix of well-designed and highly functional open space and landscaping solutions.

An illustration of the basic elements of the open space concepts and the major landscaping features of the project is shown in Figure 45. The overall site development plan shown in Figure 39 also graphically represents the important role of open spaces and landscaping elements distributed throughout the project Area. Each of these key components is briefly described below:

### **Alvarado Road Streetscape Improvements:**

The proposed frontage along Alvarado Road includes parallel parking, a minimum 25 foot wide pedestrian/bicycle and landscaping zone along the entire Alvarado Road frontage. The shared pedestrian sidewalk and bicycle shown in Figure 46 includes street trees with tree grates, foundation planting, and vines planting at the building façade to assist in screen garage levels. The streetscape design also proposes a new pedestrian bridge that will provide a crossing over Alvarado Creek providing a contiguous sidewalk connection within the project limits to the existing 70th Street trolley station. The streetscape concept also will provide for on-street parallel parking zones defined by pop-outs that will include tree planting.

### **Interior Private Street and Creek-side Pedestrian Pathway:**

The project proposes a pedestrian promenade around the perimeter of the building that embraces the Alvarado Creek, providing pedestrians better access to the new landscape areas and a visual connection to the Creek. Figure 47 illustrates the key design elements to be incorporated into the interior street plans. The pedestrian pathways have several nodes that are designed for outdoor activity. Improvements may include shade elements, park benches, and synthetic turf. Each node accentuates and highlights the existing creek habitat while also increasing the outdoor walkable open space that also serves as the projects Emergency Vehicle Access plan. The pathway will be secured with and incorporate decorative fencing, lighting and paving to provide safety as well as enhance the pedestrian experience. Some creek side areas along the interior streets may also serve as part of the on-site storm water retention systems to meet regional water quality standards.

### **Exterior Courtyard Open Spaces and Indoor Amenities:**

Each building is proposed with exterior courtyards landscaped to provide residents a variety of outdoor spaces and indoor facilities to meet the open space and recreational activity needs of residents. The open space concepts include passive restorative spaces, social nodes, and flexible spaces for a wide array of community activities. Furniture and social elements animate the spaces while garden landscapes and pools and water features help refresh and provide a sense of retreat. The courtyard amenities are planned to accommodate features such as pool and spas, outdoor seating, cabanas, water and fire elements, and barbeques with picnic tables. The project features are illustrated in Figure 48. In addition, as shown in the Development Standards, Buildings 2-4 will evaluate the feasibility of providing “sky deck” outdoor spaces that provided an additional amenity for residents and capture the opportunity to provide longer vistas of the surrounding community.

### **Alvarado Creek Flood Improvements and Urban Creek Restoration:**

In concert with the interior private street, described above, is the goal of restoring and maintaining the riparian environment within Alvarado Creek as a key visual element of the open space plan. A goal of the Specific Plan is to address the impact from flooding and urban storm-water drainage from much of north La Mesa on the site by improving and maintaining Alvarado Creek as a valued open space resource for the future residents of this newly created urban village. Figure 49 illustrates the proposed Alvarado Creek restoration and maintenance area.

Figure 45 Open Space Concept Plan

Figure 46 Plan View of Alvarado Road Streetscape Improvement Plans

Figure 47 Plan View of Interior Street Improvement Plans

Figure 48 Plan View to Illustrate Podium Deck Open Space and Landscaping Concept

Figure 49 Plan View to Illustrate the Alvarado Creek Planting and Restoration Area

## **III – A. 7. Site Grading and Flood Chanel Improvements**

The Specific Plan site characteristics and constraints are described in detail in Chapter I which outlines the planning context and history associated with the Area. While the site has many challenges, it is also unusual for La Mesa in that it is relatively flat. Developed originally in the 1950’s with the alignment of Interstate 8 and Alvarado Road as a freeway frontage road, the initial urbanization of the site created an essentially flat site for use as a mobile-home park. The site has a very low slope gradient from east to west generally matching the flow line of Alvarado Creek.

The development plans for public improvements and multi-family housing will require grading of nearly all of the site area with the exception of the areas within the defined Alvarado Creek channel. Grading of the project site is largely driven the Alvarado Creek floodplain and floodway. The project will increase the capacity of the flood channel so that the required 100-year flood flows will be contained within the channel. This will be done through a combination of minor widening the channel width and raising the elevation of the top of the bank. Retaining walls will steepen the creek edge, thus allowing the bed of the Creek to be widened without significantly impacting the developable area of the building pads. The top of bank elevation for the site and garage entry elevations will all be elevated a minimum of 1.0 foot above the 100-year flood elevation.

Grading within the channel will be limited to the minimum needed to construct the retaining walls and the relocation of the City's sanitary sewer trunk line from the channel to a new easement within the interior private street as shown in Figure 50. The flood control improvements will actually increase the area of the channel and allow for additional planting of appropriate riparian plant materials as an environmental enhancement from the past conditions.

All earth work in the channel and the site which is within the FEMA mapped "floodplain" will be part of the required multi-agency cooperation and authorization needed to implement the Specific Plan. In addition, all grading and earthwork construction activity will be subject to any mitigation measures and monitoring requirements established by the Project EIR.

## III – A. 9. Public Improvements, Utilities, and Infrastructure

The public improvements that will be provided through the approval of the Specific Plan and its implementing actions are described below. These improvements will be constructed in conjunction with the Phase 1 development plans as part of the private development requirements. The agencies that will be involved in coordinating and approving the plans are listed with each project.

**Alvarado Road:** Improvement of Alvarado Road will include the following components: Streetscape improvement plans to include sidewalks, curb and gutter, street lights, street trees, bulb-out landscape tree planting area, on-street parallel parking land, pedestrian connection to 70<sup>th</sup> Street Trolley Station, pedestrian bridge on south side of Alvarado Creek bridge, a traffic safety signal west of the Alvarado Creek bridge (City of La Mesa, MTS).

**Overhead Power and Communication Line Relocation:** The existing 12KV and communications lines that cross I-8 from Parkway Drive currently cross overhead in the San Diego RV Resort facility. This major power transmission line will need to be relocated underground generally around the west end of the project area before going overhead again to its current location on the south side of the MTS light rail tracks (City of La Mesa, SDG&E, Caltrans, MTS).

**Flood Channel Improvements:** The project includes seeking approvals to finally address the FEMA mapped need to address the flooding of the project site from Alvarado Creek. This will involve multi-agency approval to make the necessary channel improvements with engineered retaining walls within the San Diego RV Resort property (City of La Mesa, MTS, Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Fish and Wildlife, State Fish and Wildlife, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, City of San Diego).

**Sanitary Sewer System Improvements:** The environmental improvements to Alvarado Creek will include the relocation of one City sewer trunk line out of the channel and under the planned interior street. The sewer work will also address the removal of abandoned sewer lines in the creek and raising and capping an existing manhole that cannot be relocated to above the flood flow levels (City of La Mesa, Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Fish and Wildlife, State Fish and Wildlife, San Diego Regional Water Quality Board, City of San Diego).

Figure 50 Preliminary Grading Plan and Sections for Flood Channel Improvements

Figure 51 Plan View with Major Public Improvements and Utilities

## III – B. Specific Plan Project Design Guidelines

Implementation of the Specific Plan will require all the multi-family residential projects to complete the City's Site Development Plan and Design Review process. The two primary objectives of the implementation steps will be to make sure the future projects are: one, consistent with the Alvarado Specific Plan; and two, meet the principles of the City's Urban Design Program.

Principles from the Urban Design Program that have been employed in formulating the Land Use and Development Plans for the Specific Plan projects include:

- *Preserve and enhance the community character and sense of place by delivering projects and programs that build upon positive design features.*
- *promote a positive community identity and imageability;*
- *enhance the visual quality and continuity of the community through circulation patterns, definition of community edges and boundaries, distinct gateways;*
- *assure high quality community design for new construction;*
- *encourage energy conservation and safety conscious design methods for new development; and,*
- *provide specific project elements that will provide the attributes including: vitality, function, spatial form and quality, safe and efficient access, structural orientation, congruence, safety and defensible space principles, and stability. La Mesa Urban Design Program, page 13.*

The design guidelines that can be applied more directly to the projects as part of the implementation steps for the Specific Plan are outlined in the following sections.

## III – B. 1. Site Design

- a.) The Alvarado Road streetscape improvements will use a coordinated set of street lighting, tree grates, street trees, landscaping, and paving materials to establish a strong design statement that ties the four development parcels into a cohesive project area.
- b.) Within the private interior streets, a coordinated palette of enhanced paving, decorative fencing and gates, lighting, street furniture, shade structures, tree planting and landscaping will be used to tie the overall site development plan together.
- c.) Project lighting and landscaping along Alvarado Road, the interior private streets and pedestrian pathways connecting to the 70<sup>th</sup> Street Trolley Station will be used to create a safe and secure residential environment.
- d.) Project signs may include entry monument signs and/or signs incorporated into the project architecture. Each sign shall be so designed to complement the architectural style of the main building. Project signs should add clarity and direction to the project circulation system.
- e.) Throughout the Specific Plan Area, a unified system of site features and signage will be used to enhance the wayfinding character of the pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- f.) As a unique location that will be transformed from a challenging freeway oriented location, landscaping will play a strong role in creating a vital residential environment. Key areas that should be the focus to meet the project design objectives with landscaping solutions will be the:
- Alvarado Road streetscape street tree types, frequency and initial planting sizes.
  - Significant role of planting areas and materials within the podium deck open space and recreation areas
  - Coordinated use of planting materials and design features along the interior private street creek side pathways and socializing nodes
  - Alvarado Creek flood channel plant restoration and maintenance plan

## III – B. 2. Architectural Design Guidelines

- a.) All four primary multi-family residential project buildings should have a coordinated and unifying overall architectural style or theme, yet express an individual character with varying forms, features and materials to avoid an overuse of a single design concept for the Specific Plan Area.
- b.) As a major new land use change and highly visible gateway statement along the I-8 corridor, individual project design will provide strong forms and architectural elements at the primary project entrances to the interior private streets.

c.) On the northern Alvarado Road facades, where balconies may not be feasible due to noise attenuation requirements, buildings will use sufficient architectural design forms, features and changes in materials to provide visual interest and variance in the elevations from the I-8 view corridor.

d.) On the Alvarado Road frontages with exposed parking garage levels, buildings will incorporate both architecturally coordinated building materials and landscaping solutions to add value to the pedestrian scale and environment along the Alvarado Road streetscape zone.

e.) Roof top mechanical equipment should be architecturally screened from views from locations above the site to the south.

f.) Interior elevations viewed from the podium deck open space areas and elevations fronting on to the interior private street pathways should reflect sufficient architectural interest with forms, massing, fenestration, balconies and viewing locations to enhance a sense of an active residential environment.

### III – C. Objective Design Standards

TO BE ADDED AS ADDENDOM

## ALAVARADO SPECIFIC PLAN

## CHAPTER III UPDATE

**DRAFT OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS – 6/6/2022**

## A. PURPOSE AND INTENT:

The purpose and intent of the Alvarado Creek Specific Plan Objective Design Standards are to provide clear direction and understanding of the City's expectations for multi-family residential projects that are proposed within the Specific Plan Area. The following Objective Design Standards have been written to be consistent with the goals, objectives, development plans and guidelines established by the Alvarado Specific Plan. The Objective Design Standards shall be applied to projects which qualify under state housing laws which mandate the application of objective design standards, such as the Housing Accountability Act (HAA). Projects that meet these requirements shall be deemed to be in substantial conformance with the goals, objectives and policies of the Alvarado Specific Plan and any requirements established by the Alvarado Specific Plan Project EIR.

## B. LAND USE:

1. The primary land use within the Specific Plan Area shall be multi-family residential located in Buildings 1-4 (See Exhibit 37). The primary multi-family residential structures will comply with the Form-Based Development Standards established by the Specific Plan and further described within the Development Standards below, which define the building locations, massing, orientation, separations, setbacks, description and distribution of open spaces, parking, circulation, and public improvements, as shown in Figures 37, 38, 39a-g, 40 and 41a-e.
2. Parking to serve each primary multi-family residential structure (Buildings 1-4) shall be provided within structured parking levels for each Building. Development Standards for off-street parking are described further below.
3. Non-residential uses shall be permitted, but not required within each of Buildings 1-4. Such uses shall be limited to uses providing commercial and service uses intended primarily for the residents of the SP projects. Such non-residential uses shall be limited to a maximum of 5,000 square feet within any one Building.

## C. SITE DEVELOPMENT:



1. All new residential structures and the improvements to the Alvarado Creek channel will be constructed to meet the requirements of the City's Floodplain Ordinance.
2. Contingent upon approvals from all required Federal, State and local agencies, the project will construct improvements to the Alvarado Creek channel as illustrated in Figure 48. As part of the Flood Channel improvements, the improvements will require restoration of any disturbed area of the channel with appropriate plant materials defined by the permitting agencies.
3. Individual multi-family residential projects as defined by the Alvarado Specific Plan are to be developed in a coordinated manner that can be completed in Phases as further defined in the Specific Plan. All development of projects in Building sites 1-4, whether constructed individually or grouped by phases, shall guarantee all necessary site preparation, including but not limited to: site grading, installation of public utilities, construction public improvements and public utilities, and public safety access, as a condition of occupancy.
4. All site grading shall be in accordance with the overall project development plans established by the Alvarado Specific Plan and the City's grading regulations and standards.

#### D. MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS:

1. Form Based Development Standards: As described in this Chapter, a Form Based Development Standards is used to define the physical locations and limits of the primary multi-family residential projects authorized by the Alvarado Specific Plan. This concept is described in detail in both the text and exhibits within the Specific Plan. The following Development Standards apply to multi-family development projects within the Specific Plan Area, as illustrated in Figures 37, 38, 39a-g, 40 and 41a-e.

##### a. Building Height and Step-Backs:

- (1). Maximum height per California Building Code
  - (a). 75' to top of habitable floor.
  - (b). 85' to top of roof sheathing

(2). No vertical step-backs required (see Massing Articulation section below)

##### b. Building Setbacks and Encroachments:

(1). Building Height encroachments are permitted for non-habitable roof appurtenances of up to a maximum of 12'-0".

(2). Where no minimum setbacks are provided, residential units shall be located a minimum 5' from back of a pedestrian path or walkway.

2. Off-street parking shall be provided for each of the proposed Buildings 1-4 within parking garage structures as illustrated in Figures 37, 39a-g, 41a-c, and 42, and shall meet the following standards:

a. Off-street parking will be provided for Buildings 2-4 in three levels and will meet the City's structured parking garage design requirements for size, access and circulation. Building 1 will provide just one level of structured parking at the ground level.

b. All off-street parking spaces located within parking structures will utilize Universal Parking Space dimensions of 9' wide by 18' deep with 24' wide two-way travel lanes.

c. The only exception to structured parking locations will this be for limited on-site parking spaces outside the parking structures that will serve as visitor parking as shown on the Alvarado SP site development plan.

d. All off-street parking spaces provided in Buildings 1-4 shall be "unbundled" and made available residents of the individual buildings as part of the rent for the residential unit as managed by the project owners. Parking spaces within the parking structures can be reserved for related uses such as, but not limited to, deliveries, guest parking, and shared EV charging stations.

e. All parking structures shall provide secured bicycle parking enclosures at the ground level.

f. All off-street parking shall comply with the number, distribution and location of spaces to meet the requirements for Disabled Persons.

#### E. MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS:

##### 1. Massing Articulation and Building Design:

a. Vertical plane breaks – Min. 3' deep x 10' wide break every 150' maximum

b. The horizontal composition of building planes shall provide visual breaks as follows:

- (1). Base and top definition for buildings 3 stories or lower
- (2). Base, middle, and top definition for buildings over 3 stories
- (3). Vertical plane continuity is allowed for a maximum 40% of the façade length

c. Building entrances shall be visible from, and face, the public right-of-way or a publicly accessible pedestrian walkway, incorporating at least one of the following:

- (1). Change of massing through vertical or horizontal plane breaks (see above)
- (2). Change of exterior finish color and/or materials
- (3). Change of transparency by using glazing for a minimum of 50% of the entrance width

d. Roofline variation: Vertical and horizontal variation every 150' maximum using one or more of the following in combination:

- (1). Varying parapet heights by a minimum of 12"
- (2). Eave overhangs
- (3). Parapet offsets every 150' following vertical plane standards above

e. Buildings shall carry the same design theme and pallet of colors and materials on all exterior elevations. For the purpose of this standard, a theme includes primary (non-accent) forms, materials and colors. Exterior Finish Materials and Colors for Buildings 1-4 shall use:

- (1). A minimum two (2) exterior finish materials, each material must cover min. 20% of building façade
- (2). A minimum two (2) exterior colors, each color must cover min. 20% of building façade
- (3). Material changes with a minimum 6" offset in depth or equivalent as appropriate to the materials used
- (4). No mirrored glass

f. Mixed-Use Spaces shall be integrated into the Form-Based Standards for Buildings 1-4 and required to be differentiated from residential and commercial/retail spaces through the use of:

- (1). At least one contrasting material and one contrasting color
- (2). Massing breaks (see Section E.1. above)
- (3). Storefront and glazing for a minimum of 50% of the retail/ commercial frontage

g. Building shall clearly differentiate residential and non-residential service/commercial spaces through the use of:

- (1). At least one (1) contrasting material and one contrasting color
- (2). Massing breaks (see Section E.1. above)
- (3). Storefront and glazing for a minimum of 50% of the retail/ commercial frontage

h. Primary Buildings 1-4 shall incorporate a distinctive vertical corner design element to identify the primary entry location for each Building in the immediate vicinity of the driveway entry serving that Building.

i. All mechanical equipment located on building rooftops shall be screen with visual screening panels or devices with a minimum height of 42".

2. Liner Units: Interior elevations (not facing Alvarado Road) that include liner units, shall incorporate a pallet of materials and colors that clearly differentiate these lower floors from the residential floors above the podium deck level.

a. As shown in Exhibit 16a, 16b and 16c, liner units are proposed along the interior facades for Buildings 2,3, and 4. The liner units add more direct interaction and visibility for the pedestrian promenade areas. If incorporated into these locations, the ground level liner units located within 36" of adjacent finished grade shall provide direct access to the promenade via steps and/or ramps.

3. Podium Deck Open Spaces: Buildings 2-4, which incorporate a Podium Deck Area as part of the active and passive open space amenities provided for the project. The Podium Deck Area for Buildings 2-4 is defined by the space created by the location of a double-loaded interior corridor serving residential units that face either to the building's exterior or to the Podium Deck Area (see Figures 37, 38, 39a-g, 40 and 41a-e). Due to

the irregular shape of the Specific Plan Area each Building site results in an irregularly shaped parking structure and corresponding Podium Deck open space area is defined by the residential unit arrangement around the perimeter of the parking structure.

- a. Each unique Podium Deck Area will be oriented toward the interior of the Specific Plan Area (i.e., away from I-8) and incorporate at least one segment that is open to views of the pedestrian promenade area and Alvarado Creek.

4. Exterior Parking Levels: All elevations with exposed parking garage levels above grade facing Alvarado Road shall use a combination of architectural screening materials and landscaping to differentiate the parking level elevations from the residential floors above podium deck, and to screen all views of parked vehicles on the interior of the parking structures.

5. Signs: Primary Buildings 1-4 shall incorporate building identification with project naming signage and street numbers, and located on the building façade in a location that assists in directing people to the appropriate project address and entrance.

- a. Monument signs shall be permitted in the vicinity of each primary Building entrance in a limited in size and location that will not limit site visibility for vehicles, pedestrians or bicycles.
- b. Building identification signs shall be indirectly lighted and shall not use internal illumination.

#### F. MOBILITY AND CIRCULATION:

1. No direct access to individual parking structures will be permitted from Alvarado Road.

- a. Access to off-street parking for all residential units will from driveway entrances to the interior loop roads serving Buildings 1-4. Parking garage entrance and exits shall be located as shown in the Specific Plan to allow sufficient queuing on the project site and prevent waiting for turning movements on Alvarado Road.
- b. All security gates defining the pedestrian promenade area shall be located beyond the parking structure entrances to allow free vehicle movements into the structure.
- c. Recess gates at vehicular entrances to parking structures shall provide a minimum of 20' from the primary building facade.

2. A combined public pedestrian walkway and bike lane will be constructed along the Alvarado Road frontage of the SP Area. These public improvements will include a pedestrian bridge of a minimum 15' in width to cross Alvarado Creek on the south side of the existing Alvarado Road bridge within the City's right-of-way to maintain connectivity between the public sidewalk and bike lane from the building sites for Buildings 1-3 and Building 4.
3. The Alvarado Road streetscape improvements shall include: planting of street trees, installation of tree grates and decorative street lights in accordance with the City's standards for spacing and design.
4. Project improvements shall include the construction of pedestrian connections from the Alvarado Road frontage improvements and from the private interior ring road improvements to the 70<sup>th</sup> Street MTS Trolley/Bus Station.
5. All parcels developed for Building 1-4 shall provide for reciprocal access for the shared use of the interior pedestrian promenade areas along the restored Alvarado Creek areas.
6. The interior ring road area improved to provide pedestrian access to the linear open spaces along the restored Alvarado Creek shall incorporate a unified set of landscape planting, street furniture, pedestrian scale lighting, enhanced paving materials, creek-side viewing nodes and wayfinding signage.
7. The interior ring road will provide control gates at locations beyond the parking garage entrances to prevent through vehicle traffic except for service vehicles and move-in locations.

#### G. PUBLIC SAFETY:

1. Emergency access to serve Buildings 1-4 shall be provided by the interior loop roads provided for Buildings 1-3 to the west of the Alvarado Road bridge and for Building 4 on the east side of the Alvarado Road bridge.
  - a. The interior ring road will be constructed to meet the City's specifications for access and load bearing capability for Fire Department vehicles. A dedicated Fire Lane shall be executed for the emergency access use of the interior loop road.
2. If Building 2 is developed with the Student Housing option described in the SP, the project will be required to operate with the following services:
  - a. Fully furnished units

- b. Access to the building via a secured entry with a staffed 24/7 presence
  - c. On-site management and professionally trained staff
  - d. A designated staff liaison with San Diego State University
  - e. A clear policy requiring a lease agreement with provisions regarding resident behavior and enforcement for all tenants
3. As shown on the approved Alvarado SP site development plan, automated securing gates will be installed in locations beyond the parking garage level access points with pedestrian gates to maintain the value of the promenade area as part of the project open space and to provide access to the adjacent transit facilities.
4. Site Lighting: All development projects shall comply with the following standards to create a safe environment for the residents of the Specific Plan Area:
- a. All active outdoor open spaces, including the Creekside pedestrian area, the Alvarado Road streetscape area, the Alvarado Creek pedestrian bridge, podium level open space areas, and pathways connecting the project to the 70<sup>th</sup> Street MTS Trolley/Bus Stations shall provide dusk to dawn pedestrian scale safety lighting with a uniform design standard throughout the Specific Plan Area. Other than street light installed in the Alvarado Road public sidewalk and bike lane, freestanding lighting fixtures shall not exceed twenty-five (25) feet in height, unless approved by the Director of Community Development
  - b. All outdoor lighting, shall be focused, directed, and arranged to minimize glare and illumination of streets, the night sky, or adjoining property. This will require the use of shields and the appropriate lighting design and specifications, and can limit the location, type and height of light fixtures.
  - c. Service area lighting shall be contained within the service area boundaries
  - d. Lights shall be durable, recessed, or otherwise designed to reduce the problems associated with damage and vandalism
  - e. All electrical meter pedestals and light switch/control equipment shall be located with minimum public visibility if possible or shall be screened with appropriate plant material
  - f. All community landscape common areas, private facilities, streetscape areas, and other use Specific Plan areas are permitted, at the discretion of the project developer or builders, to use accent or other night lighting elements

#### H. UTILITIES, SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE:

1. All existing overhead utilities will be placed underground and all new utilities will be placed underground. The existing SDG&E electrical transmission line that crosses the site will receive a down pole on the Alvarado Rd frontage and continue underground to the south side of the new residential structures where it will connect with a new up-pole on the north side of Alvarado Creek to continue in service to the south of the SP Area.
2. All trash collection facilities shall be located within the parking structure serving each of Buildings 1-4 individually.
3. Contingent upon the execution of a mutually agreed upon reimbursement agreement, to the extent feasible, the project will facilitate the relocation of the existing sewer main located within the SP Area in the Alvarado Creek channel to a new location in a public easement within the proposed ring road serving Buildings 1-3.
4. Improvements to the Alvarado Creek Flood Channel as described above.

#### I. LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE

1. Open space will be provided in elements that are shared throughout the Specific Plan Area and in locations that are provided for the use of residents of the in each multi-family development project. Open spaces for the benefit of the Specific Plan Area shall include both active and passive spaces and uses. To reflect the unique characteristics and opportunities as outlined in the Specific Plan (illustrated in Figures 43-47), the Open Space objectives will be provided within the following areas which will combine both active and passive open space functions:
  - a. Outdoor podium deck areas and adjoining interior facilities for community rooms, gym spaces serving Buildings 2-4. Building 1 shall include interior spaces for active recreation and community room
  - b. Interior promenade areas adjacent to Alvarado Creek and within the vehicle control gates
  - c. The Alvarado Creek restoration area
  - d. The Alvarado Road shared pedestrian path and bicycle lane, including landscape areas
  - e. Landscape areas included within required stormwater management facilities
2. Podium deck areas for Buildings 2-4 shall consist of a network of gardens, social nodes, flexible use areas, and planting include at least 4 of the following elements:



- a. Pool
  - b. Landscaping to include canopy trees and low planting materials to define spaces within the podium deck
  - c. Seating areas for individuals and group settings
  - d. Shade structures and/or umbrellas
  - e. Direct access to adjoining recreation and community activity rooms
  - f. BBQ facilities or adjoining community room with cooking facilities
  - g. Alvarado Creek viewing areas
3. All project landscaping shall comply with the City of La Mesa Water Efficient Landscaping standards and Model Water Efficient Landscape ordinance.
4. Alvarado Road streetscape improvements shall be constructed along the Alvarado Road frontage within the Alvarado Specific Plan Area as illustrated in Exhibit 48 to improve traffic and pedestrian safety, provide stormwater management, enhance the streetscape environment, and implement the City's General Plan Circulation Element policies. The facilities to be constructed as part of the Alvarado Road streetscape improvements shall include:
- a. Curb, gutter, sidewalk, bike lane, pedestrian bridge crossing Alvarado Creek, driveway aprons, street trees with tree grates, and street lighting to meet the City's standards and specifications. Street trees species, size and distribution shall meet the City's specifications and standards.
  - b. The shared 16'-0" bike lane and pedestrian sidewalk shall extend from the easterly property line frontage, connect with the planned pedestrian bridge at Alvarado Creek, and extend westerly to connect with the existing MTS 70<sup>th</sup> Street Trolley Station. The shared bike lane and pedestrian sidewalk will be paved and striped to define 8'-0" for the bicycles and 8'-0" for the pedestrian zone.
  - c. A minimum of one short-term bike rack shall be located with the streetscape improvements in the vicinity of each entrance to Buildings 1-4.
  - d. A minimum 5'-0" landscaped buffer area shall be provided between bike lane/pedestrian sidewalk and the building facades facing Alvarado Road. The planting design and materials in this area shall be coordinated with the project

requirements for screening the parking structure elevations facing Alvarado Road.

5. The interior roadway serving as the linear creek-side pedestrian promenade open space element shall include:

- a. Enhanced paving
- b. The promenade/fire lane shall be secured with decorative vehicular and pedestrian gates at all vehicular points of entry and exit
- c. Bench seating and gathering nodes distributed throughout the project area with a minimum of 100' spacing
- d. Pedestrian scale lighting
- e. Canopy trees that will not interfere with access or movement within the dedicated fire lane
- f. Wayfinding signage
- g. Landscaped bioswales area

J. SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS:

1. All new residential dwelling units will use electrical services and appliances only.
2. All new residential buildings will be constructed to meet or exceed Calgreen requirements.