



REPORT to the MAYOR and MEMBERS of the CITY COUNCIL  
From the CITY MANAGER

DATE: July 8, 2025

SUBJECT: RATIFICATION OF DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL OF  
PHASE 1 OF THE GROSSMONT SHOPPING CENTER  
RENOVATION PROJECT 2025-0903

DESCRIPTION: RATIFICATION OF DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL FOR  
PHASE 1 OF THE GROSSMONT SHOPPING CENTER  
PROJECT; 5500 GROSSMONT CENTER DRIVE, (APNS  
490-261-09-00 AND 490-261-10-00) IN THE C-G-D  
(GENERAL COMMERCIAL / GROSSMONT OVERLAY  
/ URBAN DESIGN OVERLAY) ZONE

ISSUING DEPARTMENT: Community Development

SUMMARY:

Issues:

Does the proposed design meet the intent of the Urban Design Program policies and the Grossmont Specific Plan?

Recommendation:

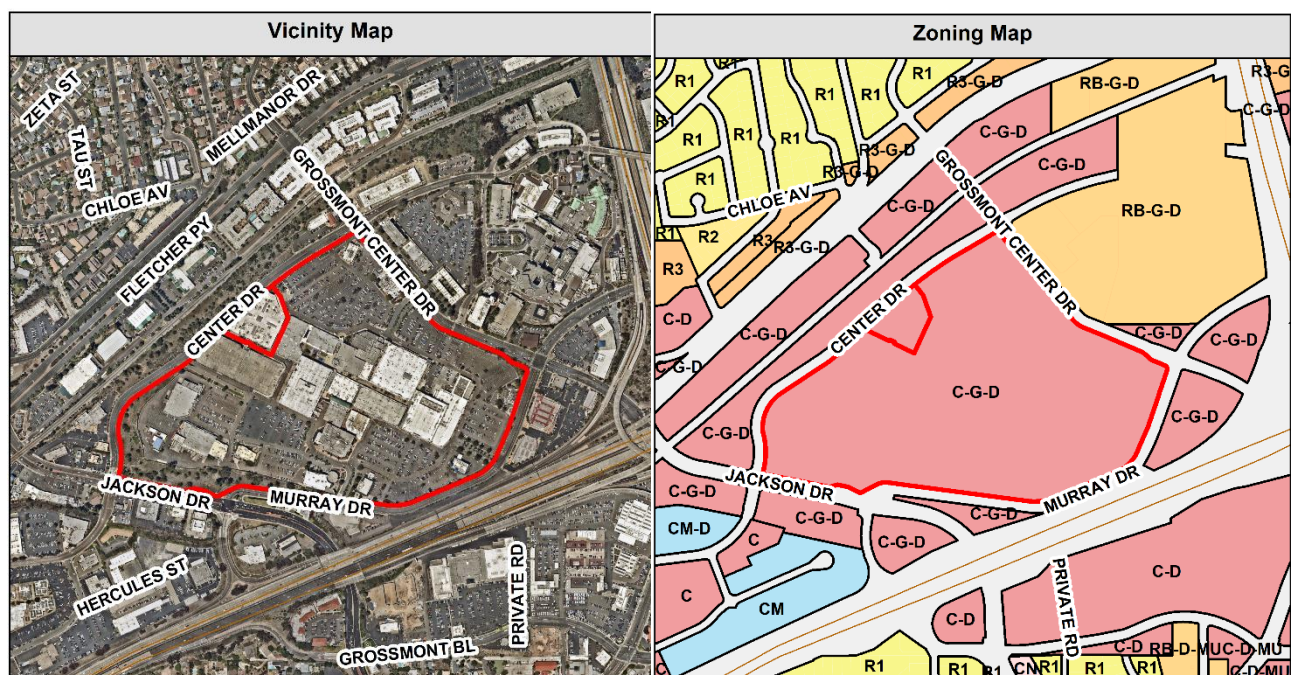
Ratify the Design Review Board approval of Project 2025-0903 (**Attachment A**).

Fiscal Impact:

There is no impact to the General Fund related to this project. The City's policy is to recover 100% of the cost of staff time through application processing fees.

## BACKGROUND:

The proposed project includes the renovation of several tenant spaces and an exterior refresh of the portion of the Grossmont Shopping Center (Grossmont Center) that is located along the northern portion of the existing site. The overall site is approximately 64-acre property that is comprised of two lots located at 5500 Grossmont Center Drive, bounded by Center Drive to the west, Murray Drive to the east, and Jackson Drive to the south, as shown on the vicinity map below. The lot is roughly rectangular in shape. Photos of the project site are provided as **Attachment B**.



No right-of-way improvements are proposed for this phase of renovations. Various renovations that have occurred over the years have resulted in a disjointed and dated design aesthetic. To create a more uniform design theme and to ensure the success of all tenants, the entire shopping center will be renovated, proposed to be completed in three phases.

- Phase 1, the subject of this project, addresses the northern storefronts of the Grossmont Center that are between the two primary anchors at the west and east end of the mall, currently occupied by Target and Walmart, respectively. Target and Walmart are not included in the renovation project.
- Phase 2 is proposed to focus on renovation of the anchor tenant building on the southwest side, currently occupied by Macy's.

- Phase 3 is proposed to include renovation of the buildings and facades along the south and southeast portions of the Center, between the current Macy's and Walmart.

Target and Walmart are not included in the proposed phases of the renovation project.

Signage will be processed under comprehensive sign program, once tenant details and agreements are finalized. The comprehensive sign program would be reviewed and subject to approval by Planning Commission.

Projects that involve major renovations or remodeling of property within the Urban Design Overlay zone shall be subject to the Urban Design Program. The City's Urban Design Program and Grossmont Specific Plan prescribe urban design principles to projects that are located within the subject overlay zones. Project entitlement consists of Design Review by the Design Review Board (DRB), subject to City Council ratification. The DRB considered and approved the proposed project on June 23, 2025.

### DISCUSSION:

The Urban Design Program identifies Grossmont Center as a major commercial node, which are complexes of buildings and other site development elements having a uniform or related design theme. Similarly, the Grossmont Specific Plan specifies the importance of applying superior design principles to the Grossmont Shopping Center, as well as incorporating landmarks into its design. The DRB determined that the proposed project meets the intent of the Urban Design Program and Grossmont Specific Plan through the site design and architectural design as discussed below.

### URBAN DESIGN PROGRAM SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### *Site Design*

The proposed renovations will improve upon the existing shopping center under these considerations:

- The project will establish a unified design theme that is simple, crisp, and modern, allowing each tenant's identity to shine through. Design consistency will be upheld with an overall color and material palette, which consists of neutral hues, a warm wood tone, and a cool, fresh accent color that will be used in discrete doses.
- The storefronts will be renovated to meet the requirements of the Urban Design Program by increasing the storefront continuity and improving the appropriate proportion to the pedestrian scale. Additionally, new architectural details, such as wood paneling, stone bases, and pops of blue accent walls, will make the overall building scale to a much more pedestrian-friendly scale.

- The renovated central plaza and entry paseos strategically integrate sitting areas, pedestrian-focused design, and accessible open space to create a vibrant community hub that aligns with the Urban Design Program. The central pedestrian mall and entry paseos will feature enhanced outdoor seating oriented toward primary circulation paths to activate the space and create natural rest points. The design incorporates pedestrian-appropriate amenities including distinctive planting, a central fountain, decorative paving elements, and shade canopies that provide human-scaled visual interest and comfort. The central plaza will serve as an accessible community gathering node connecting all mall buildings through the integrated pedestrian system, featuring a stage for events, interpretive play elements, and flexible gathering areas.
- The project's exterior lighting design uses wall sconces, path lights, tree lights, and string lighting to illuminate entrances, walkways, and seating areas while enhancing the architectural and landscape design.

### *Landscape Design*

The proposed landscaping includes a combination of accent and broad-spreading shade trees, accent plants and shrubs, and turf areas. The plants proposed are low-maintenance, low-water, and native to Southern California. The combination of trees, accent plants, and shrubs provide visual focal points and shade from the sun.

For Phase 1, a total of 30 trees are proposed, including six street trees along the entrance from Grossmont Center Drive, and 24 on-site trees.

### *Off-Street Parking Design*

While there are no significant modifications to the existing parking areas, there are proposed changes limited to the loading zone and striping in front of Buildings 9 and 12. These improvements include widening the sidewalk at the northwest corner of Building 9 and replacing the paving and updating the ADA striping at the secondary pedestrian entrance between Buildings 9 and 12. The existing parking facilities include interior and perimeter landscaping around the paved areas with curbing, striping and wheel stops that all comply with the City's Parking and Landscape Standards and Off-Street Parking Design Guidelines.

### *Energy Conservation*

The project will meet all energy conservation requirements and the Energy Conservation Guidelines through its site orientation, open spaces, and landscaping. The orientation and siting of structures and landscaping considers water conservation, by management of water run-off and use of plant materials appropriate to the climate.

### *Safety Design*

Security bollards with lighting along the northern facades provide a clear separation from the vehicular and pedestrian circulation, while new exterior-facing storefronts increase natural surveillance. The project meets the intent of the safety design guidelines by creating a clear distinction of semi-public space on the property and incorporation of strategic light placement.

## URBAN DESIGN PROGRAM ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

### *Architectural Design*

The project addresses the Urban Design Program's architectural elements for architectural design including design theme, consistency, form and texture, human scale, pedestrian interest, and entries. The modern design theme features simple, crisp lines with varied surface planes, forms, and textures that create visual interest across building elevations while maintaining consistency. Facades renovations break up blank walls, through horizontal and vertical dimensional additions, creating varied window sizes organized in consistent patterns that contribute to the human scale and appropriate building massing. Buildings 9 and 13 will undergo major façade renovations, while Building 12 will receive minor improvements pending future tenant decisions.





### *Architectural Finish and Details*

The building design utilizes varied colors and materials for visual interest, featuring plaster surfaces with metal canopies and siding, composite wood panels, and stone base accents. Colors include white, dark grey, blue, brown, and copper, creating a neutral theme that complements current and future Grossmont Shopping Center tenants. The color scheme and materials align with Urban Design Program Guidelines by providing visual contrast while remaining compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

### **GROSSMONT SPECIFIC PLAN SITE AND BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The Grossmont Specific Plan identifies the importance of creating landmarks for the Grossmont Shopping Center that are highly visible from the community and located at major entrances through landmark buildings, signage, and distinctive landscaping. The primary entrance from Grossmont Center Drive will have enhanced landscaping leading to a renovated gateway featuring a new entry portico that reflects the modern design, enhancing the visual presence of Grossmont Shopping Center from the public right-of-way.



### **CONCLUSION:**

Staff recommends the City Council ratify the Design Review Board's approval of Project 2025-0903.

Reviewed by:



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Greg Humora  
City Manager

Respectfully submitted by:



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Lynnette Santos  
Director of Community Development



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Amanda Lee  
Assistant City Manager

Attachments:

- A. Design Review Board Certification of Action for Project 2025-0903
- B. Site Photographs (Existing Photos and Proposed Renderings)