



AGENDA REPORT

Meeting of the San Marcos Planning Commission

MEETING DATE: January 4, 2016
SUBJECT: Active Neighborhood Mini-Park ("Richmar Park")
CASE: P15-0057; GPA15-004; R15-003; SP15-006; SDP 15-012; ND15-007

Recommendation

Conditionally approve a General Plan Amendment, Rezone, Specific Plan Amendment, and Site Development Plan to construct and operate a 2.86 acre active neighborhood mini-park site ("Richmar Park" or "Park") within the Richmar Neighborhood, and adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration (ND).

Introduction

The project site consists of eight parcels comprising 2.86 acres of vacant land and two existing parking lots (Attachment A). An existing non-native Peruvian pepper tree is located in the western portion of the site.

The project area is bound by Firebird Lane on the west, Richmar Avenue on the south, and Twin Oaks Valley Road to the east (Attachment A). The site is surrounded by public and institutional uses (Post Office, Senior Center, and Fire Station) to the northeast and south, the Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee on Antipoverty in San Diego County, Inc. (MAAC) Project Preschool to the north, the Post Office parking lot to the east, and a vacant parcel/older single-family residences to the west.

The Conceptual Mini-Park Site Plan ("Plan") recreational amenities will include a Children's Play Area, Open Turf Area, Picnic Seating, Half-Court Basketball, Shade Structure, and the installation of over 60 varied large species trees, including two 48" box oak trees at the park entries, on 1.70 acres. The remaining 1.16 acres on-site will consist of new improvements to an existing parking lot to the east shared with the post office, and a new parking lot to the northwest side of the proposed park improvements, to comprise a total of 85 parking spaces.

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The Plan will be implemented over an estimated three to four phases, with Phases 1 and 2 establishing many of the proposed amenities scheduled for construction in the Spring/Summer of 2016. Phase 1 will include site grading, installation of bioretention basins, a pedestrian footbridge-type element, restroom building, open turf area, plaza areas, pedestrian walking paths, and reconfiguration of three parking spaces for accessibility to disabled persons in the eastern parking lot. The park will be for daytime use only and will not require night lighting except for security lighting.

Phase 1 will also incorporate Low Impact Design and permanent Best Management Practices (BMPs) for storm water, including natural infiltration into landscape areas, drainage of roof water to landscape areas, bioinfiltration basins, and minimization of impervious areas. Additional BMPs will be implemented to reduce dust and sediment transport off the site during construction. Phase 2 would involve the construction of a restroom facility and associated infrastructure. Although the project is programmed in the City Capital Improvement Budget as two phases, Phase 1 and Phase 2 will be constructed at the same time to reduce impacts to the park site and its surroundings.

Background

In 2009, three Mini-Park Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives were compiled by City staff and consultant to initiate the development of the project site. The site is identified in the City's General Plan Parks, Recreation and Community Health Element as a future mini-park that will serve the Richmar Neighborhood.

In January 2010, a public workshop was held to discuss the future Richmar and San Marcos Elementary Park proposals. In February 2010, the Community Services Commission (CSC) approved one of the alternative designs for the Richmar Park. The City Council officially named the Park as "Richmar Park" (CC Resolution 2011-7515); the City obtained a Housing Related Parks Program (HRPP) grant in 2014 that resulted in an amount of \$1,481,950.00 for the construction of Phase 1. In 2015 another grant application was submitted to HRPP which resulted in an additional grant award of \$449,900.00 for the construction of phase 2 of the park. As additional funding becomes available to the City, at future dates, the park will be expanded to its final Plan buildout.

At the August 19, 2015 CSC public hearing, the previously approved Conceptual Park Master Plan (the "Plan"), and an alternative to the plan with some design refinements, were presented at a public workshop. The CSC approved the refined alternative Park Plan, which is the park design presented in this report (Attachment D).



Discussion

The current General Plan Designations and Zoning Codes of the entire Park Site Plan area are summarized below:

APN	ACREAGE	EXISTING GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION	EXISTING ZONE
2203200700 *	0.17	Med Density Res 2	Residential-3-10
2203200800	0.18	Med Density Res 2	Residential-3-10
2203200900	0.23	Med Density Res 2	Residential-3-10
2203201000	0.18	Specific Plan Area: 15-20 du/acre	SPA
2203201100	0.18	Specific Plan Area: 15-20 du/acre	SPA
2203201200	0.17	Specific Plan Area: 15-20 du/acre	SPA
2203201300	0.17	Specific Plan Area: 15-20 du/acre	SPA
2203202200 **	1.58	Specific Plan Area:C /Med Density Res 2	SPA/Residential-3-10
Total	2.86		

*No Rezone/GPA proposed at this time; ** Split Zoning

As outlined above, the project site parcels current General Plan designations are Medium Density Residential 2 and Specific Plan Area, and the current zoning classifications are R-3-10 (Residential) and Specific Plan Area Heart of the City (SPA HOC).

General Plan Amendment (GPA): The project entails processing of a GPA to change the site's designation from Specific Plan Area (2.02 acres) and Medium Density Residential 2 (0.67 acres) to "Parks" designation (Attachment E). The SPA HOC boundary will also be modified to reflect the removal of the 2.02 acres from the SPA HOC. In the City's Parks, Recreation and Community Health Element of the General Plan, the Richmar Park project area is currently designated as a future mini-park. The proposed GPA will bring the project area's General Plan designation into compliance with the City's General Plan. The proposed project is consistent with the objectives of the adopted City-wide Land Use Element Policy in that the proposed Plan is within close proximity to public transit, and adjacent to public institutional and multi-family uses to ensure land use diversity and balanced development that encourages an efficient and responsible relationship between land use, transit, and recreational uses.

Zone Change (Rezone): The project site is currently designated as "Multi-Family Residential Zone R-3-10" and the "Specific Plan Heart of the City (SPA HOC) Zone". The proposed project involves re-zoning 2.69 acres of the site as "Public and Institutional Zone" (PI) (Attachment F). The PI zone of the City regulates development criteria for public uses allowing parks as permitted uses. The PI zone thereby allows for orderly and harmonious development of public uses, including recreational facilities. The proposed zone change would be consistent with the City's Parks, Recreation, and Community Health Element of the General Plan to allow for parkland on the project site. According to Figure 5-1 in this element, the project site is designated as future parkland. The addition of Richmar Park on an underutilized site in a



mixed-use environment would also help the City attain its goal of increasing access to parks. The proposed park would also complement the adjacent residential and public institutional land uses adjacent to the project site.

Of the 2.86 acre of the proposed park site, 2.02 acres are located within "SPA HOC." The proposed "SPA HOC" rezone to "PI" will not conflict with the SPA HOC development, since the project site is identified as a "Park" site in the General Plan. The SPA HOC Amendment will remove 2.02 acres on the five SPA parcels located west of Twin Oaks Valley Road, north of Richmar Avenue (Attachment G). Thus, the 2.02 acre rezone will not cause any detriment to the continued implementation of the SPA.

Of the 2.86 acres site, 0.67 acres are currently zoned "Multi-Family Residential Zone (R-3-10)" and proposed for rezone to PI. The rezone from R-3-10 to PI will not significantly reduce the multi-family zoning in the City and will be consistent with the City's General Plan.

Site Development Plan (SDP): A Site Development Plan Review (SDP 15-012) is required to guide the design of the park site to promote orderly and harmonious development of the park to meet the needs of the San Marcos Community in accordance with the PI Zone.

The park design will include a primary entry plaza, located adjacent to the parking lot at the eastern end of the site to welcome visitors and offer opportunities for picnicking under a shade structure while providing access to the restroom building. A children's play area would be located adjacent to the entry plaza. A wide tree-lined promenade of decomposed granite would traverse the park westward from the entry plaza to the southwest corner of the site, passing through the stage and other circular gathering spaces. This promenade would transition into either a footbridge or a concrete path with a culvert that spans a bioretention basin in the southwest portion of the site, emerging at a colored concrete entry plaza at the intersection of Firebird Lane and Richmar Avenue.

The remaining 0.17 acres of the project site (Assessor Parcel Number 220-30-07-00) is currently designated as "Medium Density Residential 2" in the General Plan and zoned "R-3-10" and not proposed for a GPA or Rezone at this time. This area is currently used as a surface parking lot and owned by the Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee on Antipoverty in San Diego County, Inc. (MAAC). Any future park improvements on this parcel would necessitate a General Plan Amendment and Rezone of this parcel to allow future shared parking between MAAC and the park.

During previous meetings with City staff, MAAC has expressed a desire to expand their facility and enter into an agreement with the City to allow joint use of the parking lot to the north as a future phase of the proposed park as depicted in the Plan. The City has not yet executed an agreement with MAAC.



Environmental Review

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (ND 15-007) (Attachment H) was prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) California Code of Regulations Section 15063 for the project. ND 15-007 was circulated for a 21 day public review period from October 8, 2015 to October 29, 2015. Comments received during the public comment period included two emails from Hitzke Development in support of the project, and one letter from Pechanga recapping their request for tribal consultation.

The environmental analysis in ND 15-007 project description considered project entitlements and phased park construction, including detailed construction information for Phases 1 and 2.

The MND evaluated impacts associated with traffic, noise, hydrology and water quality, geology and soils, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, biological, and cultural resource impacts. The MND concluded that two areas of potential impacts requiring mitigation measures are Cultural Resources and Biological Resources. With the incorporation of mitigation measures, the Park's impacts can be determined to be less than significant (Attachment H).

Recommendation

Approve a General Plan Amendment and Rezone on 2.69 acres, approve a Specific Plan Amendment on 2.02 acres, a Site Development Plan on 2.86 acres, and adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration ND 15-007 to allow the construction of the proposed Park.

Attachments

- A – Aerial Site Boundary Map
- B – Requested Entitlements
- C – Site & Project Characteristics
- D – Conceptual Richmar Park Site Plan
- E – Proposed General Plan Amendment Exhibit
- F – Proposed Rezone Exhibit
- G – Proposed Heart of City Boundary Change Exhibit
- H – Mitigated Negative Declaration

Prepared by:

Susan Vandrew Rodriguez, Associate Planner

Approved/Submitted by:



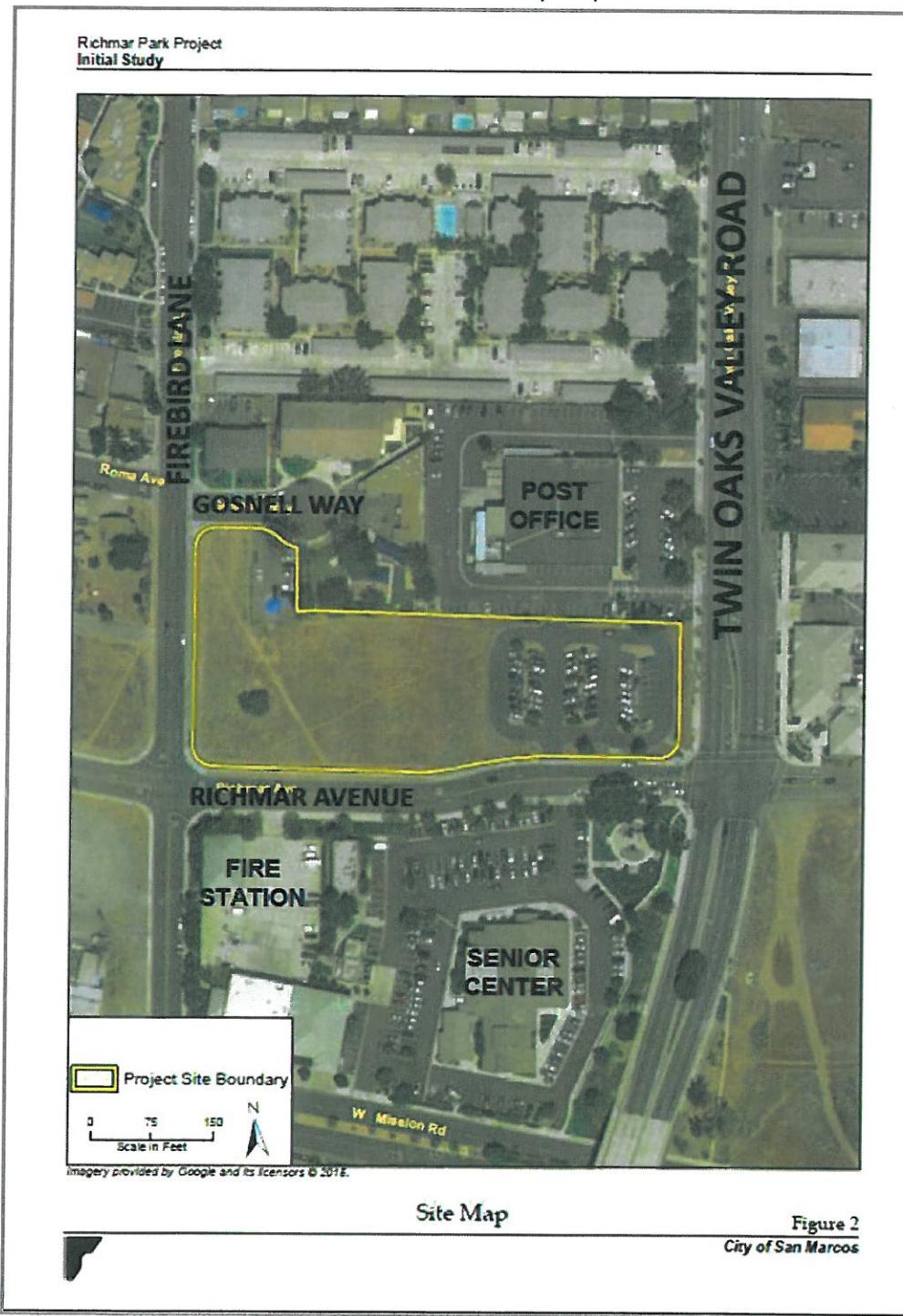
Karen Brindley, Planning Division Manager

Reviewed by:

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Attachment A
Aerial Site Boundary Map





ATTACHMENT B
Requested Entitlements

- Approval of a General Plan Amendment (15-004), Rezone (15-003), and Specific Plan Amendment (Heart of the City) (SP15-006) on 2.68 acres as well as a Site Development Plan (SDP 15-012) and adoption of a Negative Declaration (ND 15-007) and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program to allow the development of a neighborhood mini-park over 3-4 phases of construction on a 2.86 acre site.



ATTACHMENT C
Site & Project Characteristics

Property	Existing		General Plan
	<u>Land use</u>	<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Designation</u>
Subject	Vacant/Parking Lot	SPA/R-3-10	SPA HOC/MDR2
North	MAAC Preschool	R-3-10	MDR2
	Richmar Terrace Apartments	R-3-10	MDR2
South	Senior Center	SPA	SPA HOC
	Fire Station	SPA	SPA HOC
West	Vacant/Single-Family Res.	R-3-10	MDR2
East	Post Office Parking Lot	SPA	SPA HOC
Flood Hazard Zone	____yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no		
Sewer	____yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no		
Septic	____yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no		
Water	____yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no		
Gen. Plan Conformance ¹	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes ____no		
Land Use Compatibility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes ____no		

¹With approval of the GPA

HOC: Heart of the City

MDR2: Median Density Residential 2

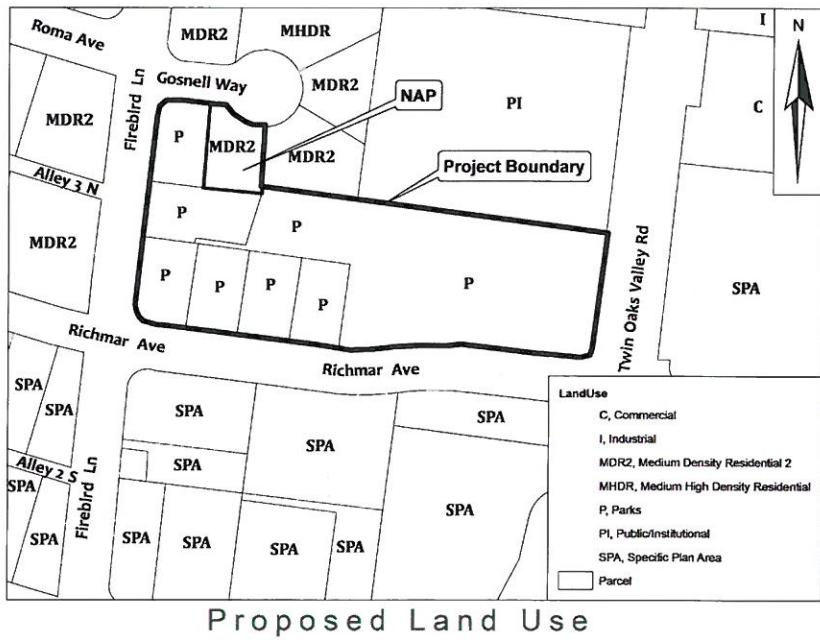
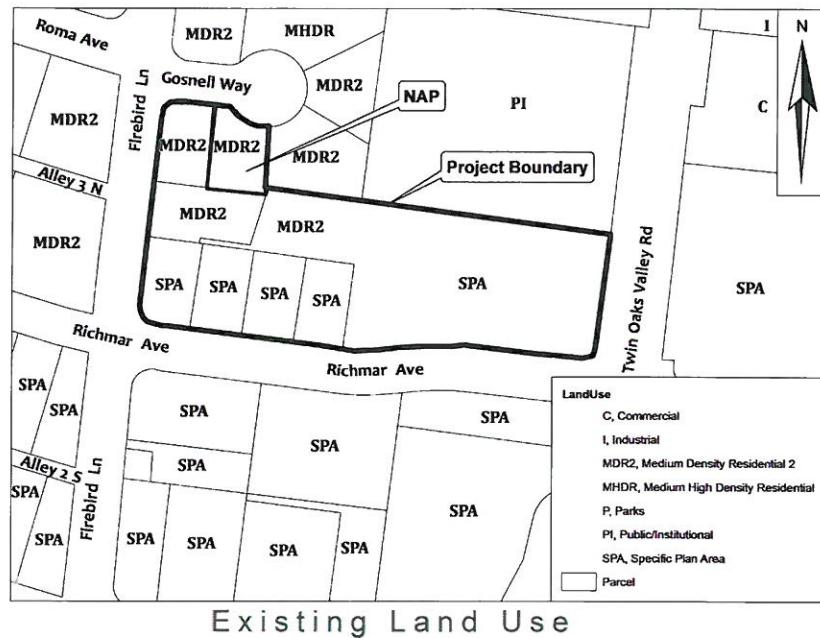


Attachment D
Conceptual Richmar Park Site Plan



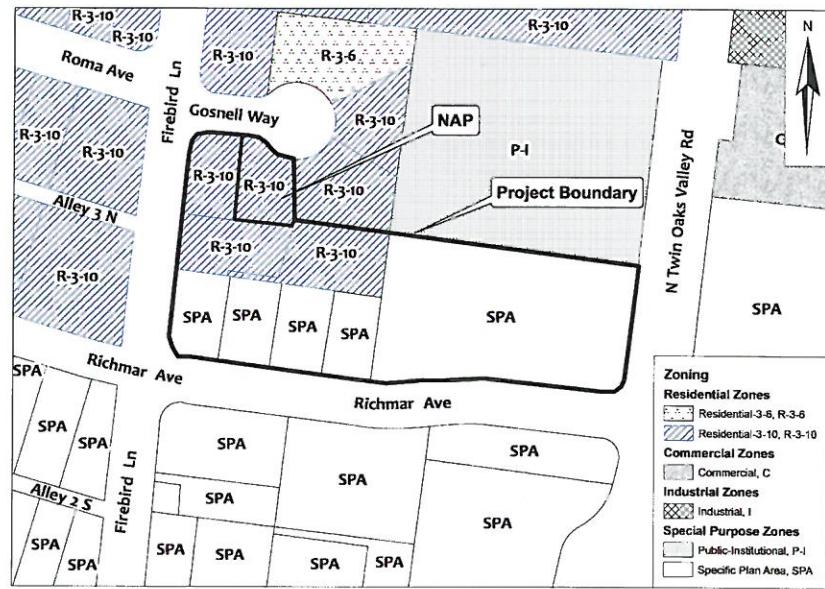


Attachment E
Proposed General Plan Amendment Exhibit

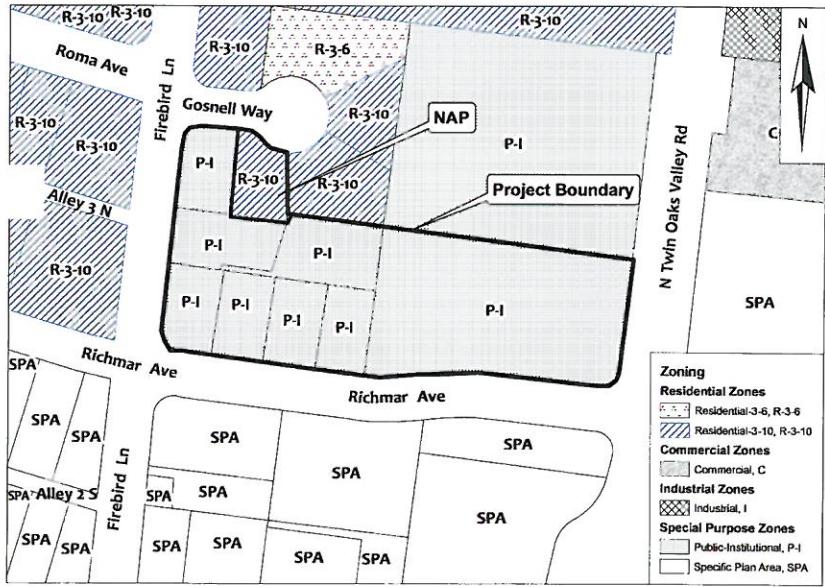




Attachment F Proposed Rezone Exhibit



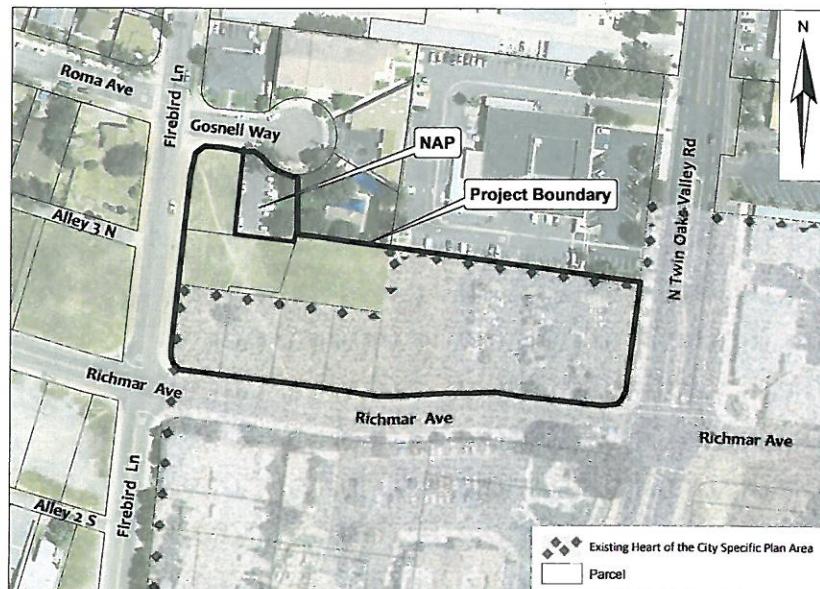
Existing Zoning



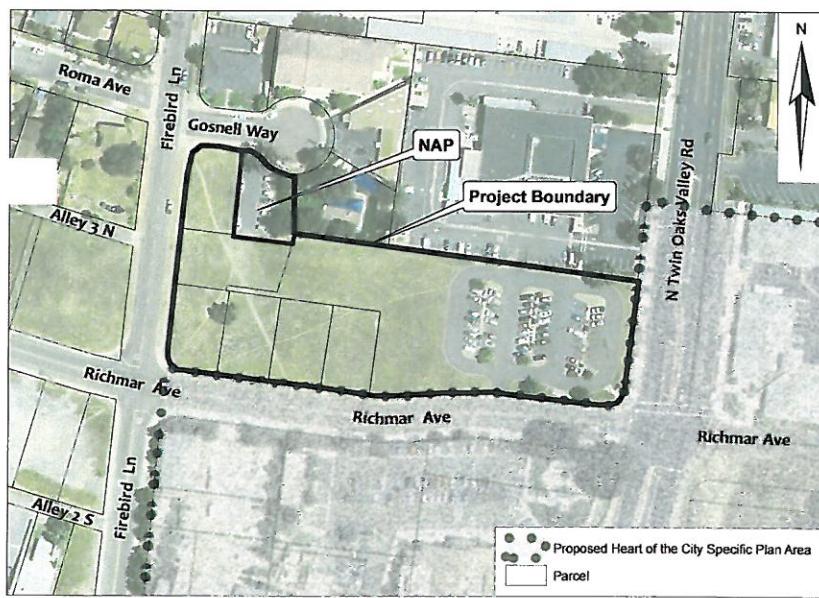
Proposed Zoning



Attachment G
Proposed Heart of City Boundary Change Exhibit



Existing HOC Boundary



Proposed HOC Boundary



Attachment H
Negative Declaration