

News

Prop D Would Change Land Use Designation

By Melanie Nickel
The Beacon

Do the Naval Training Center (NTC), Lindbergh Field and Harbor Island look like undeveloped open space?

Certainly not, but one might expect them to be, based on the city's General Plan Map. It designates these areas as a "future urbanizing" zone, defined as "land which is presently vacant and for the most part zoned for agriculture," according to the City of San Diego's Progress Guide and General Plan, adopted by the City Council in 1979.

Proposition D on the March 26 ballot is aimed at correcting this apparent inconsistency in the city's planning documents. It would change the designation of the airport, NTC, the Marine Corps Recruit Depot and Harbor Island to "urbanized." The change is being submitted to a citywide vote because of the requirements of the Managed Growth Initiative (1985's Proposition A), which requires a public vote to remove land from the "future urbanizing" category.

"There has been considerable discussion of this classification at the city in recent months," said deputy city attorney Rick Duvernay. "Our opinion was that it never belonged (in the future urbanizing category), but it was there. The Council decided not just to correct it, but to submit the map to the electorate for clarification. They didn't feel comfortable just making the change."

No opposition to the proposal has surfaced. The ballot argument in favor of it is signed by Mayor Susan Golding as well as representatives of the League of Women Voters, the Sierra Club and the Greater San Diego Chamber of Commerce. The prime organizers of the Managed Growth Initiative also recommend a "yes" vote.

"It's a non-controversial correction," said John Seymour, chairman of the Peninsula Community Planning Board, whose boundaries include NTC. "Our planning committee has not taken a position, but I am personally in favor of it. The Mayor favors it and so does our City Councilman, Byron Wear."

The areas may have been included in the future urbanizing category by accident, Duvernay stated. "The phased development map was the only definition of the different areas — urbanized, planned urbanizing and future urbanizing — and it was not very precise," he explained. "It was somewhat ambiguous whether certain areas were included or not. The map was printed as a three-color document and the future urbanizing areas were white. It was never really clear whether these particular areas were white because they were intended as part of the future urbanizing area, or because the city had no jurisdiction over lands owned by the federal government and the Port."

Passage of Proposition D will permit the utilization of NTC when the base closes, Duvernay said. The proposition says nothing about what the ultimate use of the property will be. So far, the land is not zoned, and the City Council will establish zones only after the land is released by the federal government.