



CITY OF SAN MATEO

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Agenda Report

Agenda Number: 3

Section Name: STUDY SESSION

File ID: 19-1979

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Ron Munekawa
PREPARED BY: Community Development Department
MEETING DATE: October 22, 2019

SUBJECT:
2655, 2755, 2800, and 2988 Campus Drive - Peninsula Heights Pre-Application (PA-2019-028)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Planning Commission review the proposed project on a preliminary basis, receive public comments, and provide input to the applicant and staff pertaining to three project elements:

- A. Special Use Permit for Residential Uses
- B. Site Plan
- C. Building Design

BACKGROUND:

Project Description

The subject pre-application proposes the demolition of four office buildings to construct a 291-unit, for-sale townhome development. The development is arranged between two parcels along Campus Drive identified in the project plans as the "Northern Parcel" and "Southern Parcel" that contain 128 and 163 units respectively.

The proposed townhomes range between approximately 1,400 to 1,900 square-feet in size and contain either two or three bedrooms. All units are three stories in height and are arranged in four to eight-unit clusters. Each townhome is equipped with an attached two-car garage in either a tandem or side-by-side configuration accessible along proposed private streets. In addition to each unit's two-car garage, each parcel would provide off-street visitor parking, a loading space, and both long-term and short-term bicycle parking.

The proposed architectural style is best characterized as contemporary in its use of stucco, board and batten, and lap siding to express different building volumes. Usable open space is provided in a combination of private roof decks and public pocket parks and trails. All units consist of a private fourth-level roof deck and second-level balconies. The development also proposes publicly accessible walking paths and approximately 3.3 acres of open space between both parcels. A combination of retaining walls, screening trees, and biotreatment areas are proposed along the perimeter of each parcel.

The project plans showing the development's site plan, floor plans, and open spaces are included in Attachment 1.

Project Site

The project site consists of four parcels within an existing office park along Campus Drive. The proposed project would merge the four parcels into two parcels (Northern and Southern Parcel) with a combined site area of approximately 15.45 acres. The Northern Parcel has an approximate site area of 7.04 acres and is adjacent to existing single-family dwellings in the Verona Ridge neighborhood to the north along Live Oak Drive. The Southern Parcel has an approximate site area of 8.41 acres and is adjacent to existing single-family dwellings in the Beresford neighborhood to the east. State Route 92 is

located west of the project site, and the Laurelwood Shopping Center as well as the Oak View Apartments are located south of the project site. Given their natural physical features, each parcel consists of upper and lower portion that each contain access along Campus Drive. The existing emergency vehicle access road along the southern edge of the Southern Parcel connecting Campus Drive and 26th Avenue would remain inaccessible to the public and for emergency use only.

A location map showing the project site's vicinity is included as [Attachment 2](#).

Applicable Code and Policy Review

General Plan

The General Plan Land Use Plan designates both the Northern and Southern parcels as Executive Office. It should be noted that Appendix B of the General Plan allows residential uses ranging from low to high densities in all non-residential land uses except service commercial, manufacturing/industrial and parks/open space, and where otherwise excluded by specific area policies. The applicant is expected to provide further clarification and additional information in the formal planning application to confirm compliance to all applicable General Plan policies.

A preliminary list of applicable General Plan policies is included in [Attachment 3](#).

Zoning Code

Both parcels are zoned E1-1 (Executive Office), which outlines development standards pertaining to floor area ratio (FAR), setbacks, and open space. The E1 zoning district permits residential units on parcels without a residential overlay subject to the approval of a Special Use Permit and subject to the development standards pertaining to density in the R3 zoning district.

As presently designed, the development conforms to the applicable development standards of the E1 zoning district. The total FAR in the Northern and Southern Parcels are 0.87 and 0.93 respectively where a FAR of 1.0 for each parcel is permitted. In addition, the proposed building height is approximately 41 feet where 55 feet is permitted. The development also proposes a density below the maximum density permitted in the R3 zoning district. The proposed density in the Northern and Southern Parcels are approximately 18.18 units per acre and 19.38 units respectively where the maximum permitted density for each parcel is 34.84 units per acre. The applicant will be required to provide additional plan details in the formal planning application, which will be reviewed for conformance to all applicable Zoning Code standards.

The applicable and proposed Zoning Code development standards are listed in the Factual Data Sheet included as [Attachment 4](#).

State Density Bonus Law

California Government Code Section 65915 outlines density bonus standards for residential projects that include certain percentages of below-market-rate housing units. As presently designed, the applicant proposes to devote ten percent of the total 291 units to the low-income category, which would comply with the City's affordable housing requirements and would make the project eligible for a density bonus request, reduced parking standards, incentives or concessions, and waivers. The project includes some garages in a tandem configuration, which is not permitted under the Zoning Code because not all spaces would be independently accessible. Under Government Code Section 65915, however, the proposed percentage and income level of below-market-rate units deems the project eligible for tandem parking. Other than tandem parking, the development is currently below the maximum density and has been designed to meet all other applicable development standards. Despite the stated intent to comply with the City's development standards, the applicant may request additional density bonus standards upon filing of the formal planning application, which will be evaluated in greater detail.

Housing Accountability Act

California Government Code Section 65589.5 outlines application review limitations for projects subject to the Housing Accountability Act (HAA). As a development project with residential units only, the project is subject to the HAA, which is intended to limit a local agency's ability to deny, reduce the density of, or render housing development projects infeasible if objective standards are met. The HAA outlines that if a housing development project, whether affordable or market-rate,

is consistent with the City's objective development standards, the local agency may deny or reduce the density only if certain findings pertaining to adverse impacts to public health or safety are made. An excerpt from the Housing Accountability Act is included in [Attachment 5](#).

Design Review

Upon filing of the formal planning application, the proposed development will be reviewed by the City's design review consultant for consistency with the General Plan Urban Design Element, Multi-Family Design Guidelines, and to address comments expressed by the Planning Commission. A discussion of the project's building design is included in the Discussion Items section below.

Sustainable Design

Upon filing of the formal planning application, the proposed development will be evaluated for conformance with California Green Building Code mandatory measures, the City's adopted Green Building and Energy Reach Codes and Climate Action Plan. Applicable measures include but are not limited to: minimizing contributions to the waste stream both during and after construction; minimizing the project's stormwater runoff; sustainable building product; and efficient, low-energy electrical and mechanical systems. The applicant has indicated in the subject pre-application that prewiring for solar photovoltaic panels, prewiring for electric vehicle (EV) charging in garages, and low-energy appliances will be proposed. In addition, biotreatment areas are proposed along a portion of each parcel's perimeter.

Citywide Pedestrian Master Plan

Upon submittal of the formal planning application, the proposed development will be evaluated for consistency with the Citywide Pedestrian Master Plan. For both the Northern and Southern Parcel, the applicable sidewalk standard for the project frontage along Campus Drive is *Pedestrian Design Guideline A.5 Residential Type C New Development*, which requires a minimum overall sidewalk width of 9'-6" inclusive of a minimum:

- 5'-0" Through zone
- 4'-0" Planter/furniture zone
- 0'-6" Curb

Staff anticipates that the overall sidewalk width will extend into the subject property due to the existing, narrow sidewalk widths along Campus Drive. Staff also anticipates recommending sidewalk standards found in the Citywide Pedestrian Master Plan for the privately maintained sidewalks in each parcel.

The project's applicable sidewalk standard in plan and cross section views in Guideline A.5 is included in [Attachment 6](#).

Discussion Items

Special Use Permit for Residential Use

As mentioned previously, the subject parcels are within the E1 zoning district in which residential uses require approval of a Special Use Permit. The project is not anticipated to require either a Zoning Reclassification or a General Plan Amendment given the request for a Special Use Permit and given the General Plan's allowance for residential uses in all non-residential land uses except service commercial, manufacturing/industrial and parks/open space, and where otherwise excluded by specific area policies.

The project site is in the Campus Drive vicinity identified in the General Plan as a prominent regional office center with immediate freeway access and separation from single-family neighborhoods. Single-family residential uses, however, do exist northwest of the project site in Verona Ridge, and east of the project site in the Beresford neighborhood. Important considerations in granting a Special Use Permit include the requested land use's compatibility with adjacent uses and locational need. The project would remove four office buildings totaling approximately 222,000 square feet and would accommodate 291 residential units.

Required findings for approval of a Special Use Permit are included in [Attachment 5](#), which, in summary, require that the granting of the Special Use Permit will not have an adverse effect on the general health and/or welfare of the community and will not cause disturbance to adjacent property by impacts such as traffic, odor, and noise. An important issue raised by neighboring residents is keeping the access lane connecting Campus Drive and 26th Avenue open to emergency vehicles only. Neighboring residents have expressed that opening the access lane to public motorists would create a direct corridor to State Route 92 causing a negative impact to existing residents. In recognizing this concern and the potential impact, the applicant plans to design the site and the buildings to keep the access lane open to emergency vehicles only. In the subject pre-application plans, the applicant proposes improvements to widen the access lane and install a new gate or bollards for emergency vehicle access only.

Upon formal submittal of the planning application, a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) will also be prepared to identify the project's vehicular trip generation and potential traffic impacts. To reduce the impact to traffic, a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan will also be prepared. The nearest Caltrain station, the Hillsdale Station, is located approximately two and one-half miles from the project site. Example TDM measures the applicant has indicated in this pre-application are bikeshare, carshare, and improvements the Caltrain shuttle service currently serving the office campus to increase and encourage Caltrain ridership.

Site Plan

As currently proposed, the project consists of three-story townhomes arranged in clusters of four to eight units between two separate parcels. Two access points for the Northern and Southern Parcels each are along Campus Drive, which then open to private streets. Due to the site's natural, physical features, each parcel contains an upper and lower portion connected to each other by access stairs. The private streets are lined mainly with the individual garages, visitor parking spaces, and landscaping. Both parcels also incorporate publicly accessible pocket parks in varied locations and sizes.

The Northern Parcel abuts single-family dwellings in the Verona Ridge neighborhood to its north. For lot lines that abut residential districts, the E1 zoning district requires a deeper, landscaped setback of 15'-0" or one-half the building height, whichever is greater. Screening trees and a minimum building setback of 15'-6" are provided. Along Campus Drive, the project proposes a front setback range of approximately 17'-0" to 32'-1". The Northern Parcel abuts an existing, three-story office campus to its west in which a setback of approximately 64'-4" is provided. These proposed setbacks conform with the setback requirements for lots abutting residential districts. The Southern Parcel provides a front building setback range of approximately 24'-7" and 72'-5" along Campus Drive. The Southern Parcel is adjacent to undeveloped open space to its rear in which a setback range of approximately 15'-0" to 36'-9" to its rear lot line is provided.

Staff is seeking the Planning Commission's input on the proposed unit mix and where additional housing types are appropriate given the site plan and layout. The project currently consists of townhomes of varied sizes from roughly 1,400 square-feet to 1,900 square-feet excluding attached garage areas. Given the lot area of each parcel, there may be opportunity for a greater variety of housing types at more diverse levels of affordability. Different housing types may also be appropriate in different parts of the project site. Providing lower-height, single-family dwellings, for example, may also soften the transition between the project and adjacent single-family neighborhoods.

Building Design

The development presents a building design best characterized as contemporary in its expression of projections and height changes through variation in materials including stucco, siding, and metal. Traditional building design elements are also incorporated through material selection such as composite shingle roofing and stone veneer. Individual townhomes have a defined width ranging from sixteen to eighteen feet and are attached to each other on either a single or both sides. The proposed color palette appears mostly neutral through white stucco and grey stone veneer but also incorporates a range of blues and browns for various siding materials. Each building appears mostly uniform in their height, unit width, and massing.

The applicant has provided example floor plans and elevations found in the project plans in [Attachment 1](#). All townhomes are three stories and approximately 41 feet at their highest roof peak. This would result in a net height reduction from the three-story office buildings occupying the sites currently with higher ceiling and roof enclosure heights. The bases of each unit consist of metal garage doors in one-car and two-car widths. In addition to a fourth-level roof deck, the building design incorporates second-level balconies enclosed by metal railings. The building design also incorporates step-backs and projections in intervals of approximately ten to fifteen feet. These design features are repeated throughout for both the Northern Parcel and Southern Parcel.

Staff is seeking Planning Commission's input on the building design and whether a sufficient variety of architectural styles and massing are proposed. The current building design overall appears uniform without many distinguishing features between units. As mentioned previously, staff is also seeking input on providing different housing types. A second outcome of this would be a greater variety of architectural massing, bulk, and heights. Alternative massing and designs may be appropriate for instances where units are adjacent to existing single-family residences or where they interface with the street or public open space.

ENTITLEMENTS:

As currently proposed, the project is anticipated to require the following entitlements:

- Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR) for the demolition of the existing structures and the construction of 291 townhome units;
- Special Use Permit (SUP) to permit residential units on parcels zoned E1-1;
- Tentative Map for the creation of condominium units and to merge four existing lots into two lots; and,
- Site Development Planning Application for grading and the removal of major vegetation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The applicant held a formal pre-application neighborhood meeting on October 3, 2019 in which approximately 10 community members attended. Community members expressed the following comments on the project:

- Opposition to opening the emergency vehicle access lane to the public
- Impacts to traffic and school capacity
- Unit types and sizes
- Anticipated construction timeline
- Impacts to privacy to adjacent single-family residences

A summary of the neighborhood meeting prepared by the applicant is included as [Attachment 7](#), and public comments are included as [Attachment 8](#).

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

In accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21065, the review of a pre-application is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because the Planning Commission is not taking action at this time. An environmental review will be conducted as part of the formal planning application in conformance with CEQA.

NOTICE PROVIDED

In accordance with Government Code Section 65091 and the City's Municipal Code noticing requirements, this study session was noticed to the following parties more than ten days in advance of the neighborhood and Planning Commission meetings:

- Property owners, residential tenants and business tenants within 1,000 feet of the project site.
- The City's "900 List" which contains nearly 100 Homeowner Associations, Neighborhood Associations, local utilities, media, and other organizations interested in citywide planning projects;
- The City's Planning "Notify Me" email list; and,
- The interested parties list, which includes interested individuals who contacted the City and requested to be added to the project notification list.

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS:

At this time, staff is seeking the Planning Commission's comments and input on the following items:

- A. Special Use Permit for Residential Uses – Evaluation of the proposed residential land use's compatibility with existing, adjacent uses.
- B. Site Plan – Evaluation of the site plan design and consideration for varied housing types.
- C. Building Design – Evaluation of the overall architectural style and design approach, including uniformity of the building design and the consideration of varied massing with different housing types.

Following this study session, the applicant will revise the plans as necessary to respond to comments from staff and the Planning Commission and submit a formal planning application.

ATTACHMENTS

- Att 1 – Project Plans
- Att 2 – Location Map
- Att 3 – Applicable General Plan Elements and Policies
- Att 4 – Factual Data Sheet
- Att 5 – Sample Findings
- Att 6 – Citywide Pedestrian Master Plan – Applicable Sidewalk Standard
- Att 7 – Neighborhood Meeting Minutes
- Att 8 – Public Comments

STAFF CONTACT

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