



CITY OF SAN MATEO

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330 W. 20th Avenue
San Mateo CA 94403
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Agenda Report

Agenda Number: 11

Section Name: {{section.name}}

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TO: City Council
FROM: Drew Corbett, City Manager
PREPARED BY: Community Development Department
MEETING DATE: May 17, 2021

SUBJECT:
480 East 4th Avenue and 400 East 4th Avenue – Site Plan and Architectural Review Modification

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution to approve a Site Plan and Architectural Review Modification for Kiku Crossing, a multi-family residential building located at 480 E. 4th Avenue and to the parking garage located at 400 E. 5th Avenue.

BACKGROUND:

On August 17, 2020, the City Council approved the Planning Application for the City-Owned Downtown Affordable Housing and Parking Garage Sites Project (PA-2019-033), now formally known as *Kiku Crossing*. The project includes the redevelopment of two City-owned sites into an affordable multi-family residential building located at 480 E. 4th Avenue and a separate five-level private and public parking garage on 400 E. 5th Avenue.

In preparation for building permit submittal, the applicant (MidPen Housing) identified site constraints that necessitate design modifications to avoid conflicts with existing and proposed utilities and to ensure adherence to MidPen Housing's design standards in response to best practices and affordable housing financing requirements.

On May 11, 2021, the Planning Commission formally reviewed planning application (PA-2021-013) and recommended that the City Council adopt a Resolution approving the Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR) Modification as described in this report. The proposed Resolution is included as [Attachment 1](#).

Proposed Site/Building Modifications

The applicant proposes several modifications to the approved design, which are summarized in the subsections below. The changes primarily affect the building setbacks, floor area and floor plan program, design of the exterior elevations, landscaping and open space design of the residential building, and the exterior façade panel treatment of the parking garage. The proposed design changes were formally evaluated by the City's design review consultant, Larry Cannon of Cannon Design Group. Mr. Cannon's design review letter has been included as [Attachment 2](#). His evaluation did not recommend design changes.

The project design team provided a comprehensive list and description of the proposed changes in a Project Description Letter ([Attachment 3](#)), and a Factual Data Sheet showing applicable development standards ([Attachment 4](#)).

Building Setbacks

The applicant proposes to increase the multi-family residential building's setbacks from the property lines along all four sides of the lot to avoid conflicts with various utilities. This modification would provide necessary clearance from overhead high voltage power lines along 4th Avenue and accommodate the proposed underground utilities within the landscaped perimeter area along 5th Avenue. This also allows additional landscaped area, increased ground level decks along S.

Claremont Street, and a deeper landscaped buffer between the railroad tracks along South Railroad Avenue.

Building Floor Area and Floor Plan Changes

The applicant proposes to reduce the multi-family residential building’s total floor area from 234,350 square feet (sq. ft.) to 211,970 sq. ft. across seven-stories as a result of the increase in building setbacks and changes to the floor plan program. The changes to the floor plans include minor reductions in unit sizes and internal corridor widths, removing a full second bath in the three-bedroom units so that those units now have 1.5 instead of 2 bathrooms, and eliminating the fitness room on the 7th floor. The primary driver of eliminating the fitness room was acoustical; because there are units below, the room could only be used for stretching, which MidPen believes would be an underutilized amenity at a family property. The bedroom unit mix has been slightly modified to increase the number of two-bedroom units, as described in the table provided below. The total number of dwelling units for the project remains the same at 225 units.

KIKU CROSSING BEDROOM UNIT MIX		
	As Approved (PA-2019-033)	As Proposed (PA-2021-013)
Bedroom Type	Unit Count	Unit Count
Studios	65	66
One-Bedroom	48	41
Two-Bedroom	53	59
Three-Bedroom	59	59
Total Units	225	225

Exterior Design Changes to the Residential Building

The applicant proposes to modify the exterior materials and windows to align with the wall articulation changes as a result of the revised building setbacks. The proposed exterior redesign utilizes the same finish material palette as the originally approved project.

The residential structure maintains the approved maximum building height of 74’-5” as measured to top of plate. However, the applicant proposes to increase the building’s overall parapet height by approximately 3 feet to meet the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (OSHA) fall protection requirements, which would not have been met by the original proposal. The proposed increase in parapet height would result in an overall maximum height of 82’-5”, as measured to the top of parapet.

Landscaping and Open Space Design

The proposed changes include minor paving score pattern changes and a reduction of one street tree on S. Claremont Avenue to provide the required clearance for transformers. The location of on-site trees has been adjusted to avoid conflicts with underground utilities, and the proposed number of on-site trees is increased from 30 trees to 35 trees. The noted increases to the building setbacks provide increased areas of landscaped open space around the perimeter of the residential building.

Exterior Design Changes to the Parking Garage

The public art for the project consists of images printed on façade screen panels on the exterior of the garage. In response to concerns raised by the City regarding public access to the back of the panels from within the 5th Avenue parking garage, the applicant proposes to install walls behind each panel to limit access for potential vandalism, such as graffiti or tearing of the screens. The applicant has proposed to remove one of the garage’s four panels located near the far interior end (east) of the lot along the railroad tracks to maintain non-mechanical ventilation thresholds and avoid mechanically ventilating the garage structure, which would significantly increase the long-term operational costs. In place of the removed panel, the applicant has proposed additional vertical fins featured on the columns of the garage. Additionally, the panel near the stairwell and elevator along 5th Avenue would be raised to the commence at the second level to minimize vandalism risk at the ground-level. A comparative plan set (approved vs. proposed design) is included in Attachment 5.

Amended Conditions of Approval and Additional Conditions of Approval

Amendments are proposed to Conditions of Approval numbers 78, 81, 82 and 83 approved under PA-2019-013 to clarify

that payment of each respective development impact fee is due prior to final inspection or the date of certificate of occupancy is issued, whichever occurs first per the terms for the adopted Disposition, Development, and Loan Agreement (DDLA). Condition of Approval number 53 is amended to accurately reflect the correct sewer lateral specifications (number and size) of the redesigned residential building. Finally, Condition of Approval number 25 is amended to specify the total number of existing public parking spaces the applicant is to replace and establishes a cap for the total number of additional parking spaces it is to provide up to, consistent with the terms adopted in the DDLA.

The proposed project modifications include Additional Conditions of Approval from both the Parks and Recreation Department and Public Works Department. Conditions of Approval numbers 1 and 2 are standard conditions of the Parks and Recreation Department requiring the previously approved arborist report/tree protection plan and measures be reflected on the project plans submitted for building permit. Public Works Department Condition of Approval number 3 requires the applicant show the required clearances between existing utilities and utility boxes and utility boxes out of the public right-of-way to the maximum extent feasible on the building permit plans. The condition also requires a licensed surveyor to prepare the plat and legal descriptions for any required easements for the proposed on-site utility boxes for City approval.

The Amended Conditions of Approval and Additional Conditions of Approval are included as Exhibit A and B respectively in the draft Resolution ([Attachment 1](#)). The redlined Conditions of Approval are attached for reference ([Attachment 6](#)).

Density Bonus Letter Amendments

MidPen Housing has amended Concessions #1 – *Floor Area Ratio* and #4 – *Open Space* of the approved Density Bonus Request letter to accurately reflect the changes to floor area and total open space provision as a result of the proposed design modifications. Similarly, Waiver #1 – *Bulk* was amended to indicate the building dimensions of the new building design. In addition, minor changes were made to the affordability mix in order to accommodate requirements from the project financing sources. Additional minor edits were made to the narrative text of the letter to provide added clarity. The DDLA will be amended later this year to reflect the changes to the affordability mix as approved in the Density Bonus Letter. The amended Density Bonus Request letter is included as [Attachment 7](#).

BUDGET IMPACT:

The proposed design modifications to the residential building and parking garage will not impact the financial terms of this public-private development project and therefore there is no net budget impact.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The City prepared an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), adopted by the City Council on August 17, 2020, as part of PA-2019-033. The IS/MND concluded the project would not have significant effects to the environment with the implementation of mitigation measures. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15162 specifies that when a negative declaration has been adopted for a project, no subsequent formal environmental analysis shall be prepared for that project unless the lead agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in the light of the whole record, implicate any of the factors outlined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15162.

The scope of work proposed under PA-2021-013 SPAR Modification includes a reduction to the residential building's total floor area, changes to the building footprint and floor plan program, minor exterior elevation and finish material changes, increases to open space and landscaped areas, and changes to the exterior elevations of the parking garage as described in this report. The proposed modifications do not substantially change the information or conclusions in the adopted IS/MND nor implicate any of the factors in CEQA Guidelines Section 15162, as:

- (1) No substantial changes are proposed in the project that will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
- (2) No substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken that will require major revisions of the previous EIR or Negative Declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or

- (3) No new information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete or the Negative Declaration was adopted, shows any of the following factors described CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 (3)(A-D).

As such, the City has determined that none of the circumstances requiring preparation of a subsequent EIR or require a major revision to the adopted IS/MND are present for the subject SPAR modification and, therefore, no additional CEQA review is required.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were submitted at the time of publishing this report.

NOTICE PROVIDED

In accordance with Government Code section 65091 and the City's Municipal Code noticing requirements, this item was noticed to the following parties at least ten days in advance of the City Council meeting:

- Published in the San Mateo Daily Journal on April 30, 2021
- 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 interested parties list which includes interested individuals who contacted the City and requested to be added to the project notification list.

ATTACHMENTS

Att 1 – Resolution

Exhibit A – Amended Conditions of Approval

Exhibit B – Additional Conditions of Approval

Att 2 – Cannon Design Group's Design Review Letter

Att 3 – Project Description Letter

Att 4 – Factual Data Sheet

Att 5 – Comparative Plan Set (Approved vs. Proposed)

Att 6 – Amended Conditions of Approval (track changes)

Att 7 – Amended Density Bonus Request Letter (track changes)

STAFF CONTACT

Phillip Brennan, AICP, Associate Planner

pbrennan@cityofsanmateo.org

(650) 522-7218