

CITY OF SAN JOSÉ, CALIFORNIA
Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
801 North First Street, Room 400
San José, California 95110-1795

STAFF REPORT

Hearing Date/Agenda Number
P.C. 2-13-02 Item No. 4.a.

File Number
PDCSH 01-10-096

Application Type
Planned Development Rezoning

Council District
6

Planning Area
South San Jose

Assessor's Parcel Number(s)
455-20-063, 455-20-066, 455-20-067

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Completed by: Alison Hicks

Location: Northeasterly terminus of Evans Lane between Almaden Expressway and Route 87

Gross Acreage: 6.21

Net Acreage: 5.11

Net Density: 47 DU/AC

Existing Zoning: LI Light Industrial and A
Agriculture

Existing Use: Mini Storage

Proposed Zoning: A(PD) Planned
Development

Proposed Use: 240 multi-family residential units

GENERAL PLAN

Completed by: AH

Land Use/Transportation Diagram Designation
Light Industrial

Project Conformance:
 Yes No
 See Analysis and Recommendations

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

Completed by: AH

North: Route 87 and Almaden Expressway

LI Light Industrial

East: Route 87 and industrial

IP Industrial Park

South: Mobile home park

R-MH Mobile Home Residential

West: Almaden Expressway and residential

A (PD) Planned Development

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Completed by: AH

Environmental Impact Report
 Draft Negative Declaration circulated for public review on December 21, 2001

Exempt
 Environmental Review Incomplete

FILE HISTORY

Completed by: AH

Annexation Title: Canoas No. 18

Date: January 3, 1978

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION

Approval
 Approval with Conditions
 Denial
 Uphold Director's Decision

Date: _____

Approved by: _____
 Action
 Recommendation

APPLICANT/DEVELOPER

Mark Lazzarini, Community Home Builders, 675 North First Street, Suite 610, San Jose, CA 95112

PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED

Completed by: AH

Department of Public Works

See Attached Memoranda.

Other Departments and Agencies

See attached memoranda from Fire Department, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department, and Environmental Services Department.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

Letter from Mark Lazzarini, Community Home Builders, received January 30, 2002; letter from Rod Diridon, Norman Mineta International Institute for Surface Transportation Policy received January 29, 2002; letter from Gay Pang, Pang Engineers, Inc., received January 28, 2002; letter from Marin Arreola III, President/CEO, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, received January 28, 2002; letter from Manny Diaz, received, January 24, 2002; letter from Linda Murray, Ph.D., San Jose Unified School District, received January 24, 2002; letter from Randy Sekany, President, Local 230, Bob Cocilova, President, Retirees Association, and Don Demers, President, Peace Officers Association received January 10, 2002; letter from Roy Molseed, Senior Environmental Planner, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, received December 3, 2001; letter from Colleen Haggerty, Assistant Engineer, Community Projects Review Unit, Santa Clara Valley Water District, received November 5, 2001.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**BACKGROUND**

The applicant, Community Home Builders, is requesting a Planned Development Rezoning from LI Light Industrial and A Agriculture to A(PD) Planned Development to allow the development of approximately 240 affordable multi-family residential units (47 DU/AC) on the subject property.

The parcel is approximately 6.2 acres in size, currently developed with a mini-storage facility and almost completely paved. The site is bounded by State Route 87 to the north and east with industrial uses beyond and by a narrow vacant parcel and Almaden Expressway to the north and west with residential uses beyond. A mobile home park is located directly south of the site. Land uses further to the south on Evans Lane and Canoas Garden Avenue include an apartment complex, a women's correctional facility and a recreational vehicle and boat storage facility.

A bus stop for Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) bus route No. 26 is located on Curtner Avenue, within walking distance of the site. The Curtner Light Rail Station is located just south of Curtner Avenue approximately 2000 feet from the project site.

Project Description

The project proposes approximately 240 affordable multi-family attached residential units within four podium buildings with four-story elements adjacent to State Route 87 that step down to two-stories at the

southerly boundary of the site adjacent to the mobile home park. As shown on the attached conceptual site plan, Buildings One and Two are constructed around interior plazas. Buildings Three and Four are L-shaped with open space areas oriented toward the adjacent mobile home park and Rt. 87, respectively. Additional open space areas are proposed at the northwest and southeast ends of the site. Balconies and ground-floor patios provide private open space for individual units. These well-landscaped open spaces accommodate a pool, tot lot and other recreational facilities. Partially sub-grade parking is proposed under the buildings, with the podium extending a maximum of 5 feet above grade. As a possible alternative to podium parking under Building One, the applicant is proposing the option of providing off-site surface parking on the adjacent vacant parcel to the west (see alternative conceptual site plan). Architectural elements include cross-gable roofs, individual entry stoops to first floor units and inset balconies. Detailing includes divided light windows, wood roof bracketing and plaster trim. Pedestrian sidewalks along the entry drive connect the buildings to the end of the Evans Lane cul-de-sac bulb and the applicant proposes the completion of continuous pedestrian facilities within the public right-of-way from the project frontage to the Evans Lane/Canoas Garden Avenue intersection. The one-, two- and three-bedroom units are proposed to be 100% affordable and marketed as workforce family housing.

Pending General Plan Amendments

A General Plan amendment has been initiated by staff to change the land use designation for this site from Light Industrial with the Mixed Industrial Overlay to Very High Density Residential (25 to 50 DU/AC) to reflect the density of the proposed project. A second General Plan Amendment has been initiated for approximately six acres located at the east side of Evans Lane just northerly of Canoas Garden Avenue to change the land use designation from Light Industrial with a Mixed Industrial overlay to Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC). A portion of the site located behind the Woman's Residential Detention Facility is currently vacant. The remainder of the site is occupied by a recreational vehicle/boat storage facility.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

A community meeting for the project was held on Wednesday, December 19, 2001 at the Masonic Temple on Masonic Drive. Residents of the project area who attended the meeting expressed concern regarding a number of existing problems in the neighborhood focused primarily on traffic, and pedestrian safety. A follow-up meeting held at the Willow Glen Mobile Estates clubhouse provided a progress report from City departments working with the Council District 6 Office to address existing concerns and provided an additional opportunity for comment on the project. Additional concerns were expressed regarding the increased residential population and associated traffic, parking, and pedestrian safety problems.

Notices of the public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council were published, posted on the City of San Jose web site and distributed to the owners and tenants of all properties located within 1,000 feet of the project site. A Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration was mailed to all properties within 1,000 feet of the project site and was posted on the City web site. Staff has been available to discuss the project with members of the public.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Initial Study prepared for this project indicated that mitigation proposed by the applicant would reduce all potentially significant environmental impacts to a non-significant level. Based on this Initial Study, the Director of Planning circulated a Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration for public review on December 21, 2001. A formal protest of the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was filed on the last day of the public

review period, January 11, 2002. After reviewing the environmental concerns raised in the protest, the Director of Planning adopted the MND and scheduled a hearing on the Negative Declaration for February 13, 2002. The protest of the Negative Declaration will be considered by the Planning Commission immediately prior to this agenda item.

The primary environmental issues addressed in the Initial Study were traffic, noise, flooding and archaeology as summarized below:

Traffic

A traffic analysis prepared for this project addressed four signalized intersections in the vicinity of the project site to determine conformance with the City's Transportation Level of Service Policy in both the a.m. and p.m. peak hours. The report indicates that all intersections will operate at the minimum acceptable Level of Service "D" or better with the addition of project traffic. Public Works staff have reviewed the analysis and have determined that the project is consistent with the Transportation Level of Service Policy. An operational analysis prepared to address existing plus and project traffic on Evans Lane indicates that the addition of project traffic will result in traffic volumes typical for a local residential street.

Flooding

The project site is located within the 100-year floodplain as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA regulations prohibit the construction of below-grade parking garages beneath residential buildings within the 100-year floodplain; consequently, the applicant is proposing to fill the site to a maximum depth of 5 feet and to file a Letter of Map Revision to remove the site from the floodplain. The project has been conditioned to require that a Letter of Map Revision for this site be approved by FEMA prior to issuance of a Public Works Clearance. The proposed fill will slope down at the property edges where 1.5 to 4-foot retaining walls will be installed. Drainage facilities will be installed along the interior of the walls to ensure that the site drains to the street and that no storm water from the subject site extends onto the adjacent property.

Noise

A noise analysis prepared by Edward Pack and Associates recommends mitigation measures that have been included in the project to ensure that noise levels within the building interiors meet City Standards. These measures include increasing the height of the existing sound wall along State Route 87 to a uniform 16 feet, extending the existing soundwall located between Evans Lane and Almaden Expressway to the north and providing solid balcony rails and sound-rated windows. The applicant has provided an additional acoustic design measure not required as mitigation in the report. In order to provide additional noise attenuation for Building One, the building with the greatest exposure to noise from State Route 87, the applicant is proposing a single-loaded corridor on the easterly side of the building. The exterior wall of this corridor will shield the units while providing an opportunity for appropriate fenestration and detailing that will avoid the appearance of a blank sound attenuation wall.

Archaeology

Due to the site's location in an area of archaeological sensitivity, the applicant has proposed to provide monitoring of subsurface work by a qualified archaeologist. A condition has been included in the project identifying a protocol for mitigating impacts to any subsurface cultural resources discovered on the site.

GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE

The proposed project conforms to the San José 2020 General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of *Light Industrial with the Mixed Use Overlay* based on the Discretionary Alternate Use Policy for 100% affordable housing projects. The policy allows 100% affordable housing in the Light Industrial with Mixed Use Overlay designation so long as the project is compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with the General Plan housing distribution policies. Based on the analysis below staff finds the proposal to be compatible with surrounding land uses and consistent with the City's Residential Design Guidelines. The proposal is consistent with the City's housing distribution policies in that it provides affordable housing for lower-income workers and their families, a segment of the community that is currently under-served by affordable housing. An affordability agreement will be executed for this project prior to approval of a Planned Development Permit. Located within 2000 feet of the Curtner Light Rail Station, this project also furthers the goals and strategies of the General Plan for high-density, infill housing within the Urban Service Area and proximate to transit facilities. The project's maximum allowed height of 60 feet conforms to the General Plan height policy for projects proximate to light rail stations.

ANALYSIS

The primary issues associated with this proposal are conformance with the Residential Design Guidelines and land use compatibility.

Conformance with the Residential Design Guidelines

The Residential Design Guidelines (RDG) for multi-family development focus on: 1) building design and structured parking; 2) pedestrian orientation, 3) open space; and 4) setbacks.

Building Design and Structured Parking

The project is proposed as podium cluster housing. The RDG recommend that the articulation and massing of podium cluster housing provide such developments with visual richness. All highly visible facades should maintain a pedestrian scale. Materials should be consistently applied and be chosen to harmonize with adjacent materials. Landscaping on top of podiums should mask the artificial character of the podium.

The project proposes four buildings arranged around six common open spaces and accessible from a private street. All building facades are visible to residents either as they walk or as they use outdoor areas. As such, all facades of the buildings should provide the richness and scale necessary to relate to outdoor users of the site. Staff will work with the applicant at the Planned Development Permit stage to provide appropriate articulation, materials and details.

The project proposes the parking structure entrances away from the public street where they are not visible from the street and proposes a maximum height of 5 feet above grade for the podium. Stoop entrances from the podium level serve to partially obscure the garage ventilation. Staff will work with the applicant at the Planned Development Permit stage to provide appropriate architectural grills and landscaping to further screen the garage openings and to ensure adequate landscaping of the podium courtyards.

Pedestrian Orientation

The RDG specify that projects should include direct and attractive pedestrian access to nearby commercial areas and transit stops and stations, and that sidewalks and walkways should be bordered by attractive landscaping. The rezoning proposes a pedestrian entrance at the bulb end of Evans Lane. A sidewalk from

the building frontage to Curtner Avenue will provide pedestrian access to nearby commercial areas, transit stops and stations. Attractive landscaping borders all on-site sidewalks.

Open Space

According to the RDG, podium cluster housing should provide a minimum of 60 square feet of private outdoor space per unit and 100 square feet of usable common open space. The project complies with these recommendations. It proposes six discreet well-landscaped common open spaces. Two of the spaces are courtyards surrounded by Buildings One and Two, two are lawn areas between Buildings Two and Three, one is a pool area sheltered by L-wings of Building Three, and one is a children's playground at the southeast tip of the site. Balconies and ground-floor patios are proposed to provide private open space in conformance with the RDG requirement.

Setbacks

The RDG specifies setbacks to allow adequate noise attenuation, privacy, air and light in units as well as to provide space for landscaping and an enhanced pedestrian experience. The project is in compliance with the recommendations of the RDG for building setbacks with the exception of the recommended setback from State Route 87. This setback is recommended to be 35 feet or an average of 40 feet with a minimum dimension of 25 feet. The average setback from the freeway proposed for this zoning is greater than 40 feet, but the corner of Building Four extends to within 12 feet of the property line. Staff finds this small encroachment to be acceptable. The other building with a setback of less than 35 feet is Building One which includes the single-loaded sound attenuation corridor greatly enhancing the building's interface with the freeway.

For all of the above reasons, staff concludes that the proposed project is in substantial conformance with the Residential Design Guidelines.

Land Use Compatibility

The Evan's Lane area is in transition from an industrial to a residential neighborhood resulting in a current mix of incompatible land uses and incomplete pedestrian facilities and street improvements. This proposed rezoning will remove the last industrial use at this end of Evans Lane, provide continuous pedestrian facilities between the site and Canoas Garden Avenue, and generally enhance the residential environment of the area. The pending residential General Plan Amendments referenced above will provide an appropriate opportunity for an assessment of the improvements and facilities that may be necessary to support additional high density residential uses in this area. For these reasons, staff concludes that the proposed project is compatible with surrounding uses and that it will significantly bolster the residential character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, staff concludes that the proposed rezoning provides a significant opportunity to further important goals and strategies of the General Plan for transit-oriented, affordable, high-density, infill development within the Urban Service Area, and that the project is in conformance with the Residential Design Guidelines and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends that the City Council approve the subject rezoning for the following reasons:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the San José 2020 General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of Light Industrial with a Mixed Industrial Overlay based on the Discretionary Alternate Use Policy for 100% affordable projects.
2. The proposed project conforms to the Residential Design Guidelines.
3. The project furthers the City's goals and objectives for affordable, infill housing proximate to transit facilities.
4. The proposed rezoning is compatible with existing and proposed uses on the adjacent and neighboring properties.

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