



Agenda Report

22-418

Agenda Date: 3/30/2022

REPORT TO DEVELOPMENT REVIEW HEARING

SUBJECT

Action on proposed 65 affordable units located at 2330 Monroe Street

File No.(s): **PLN21-15411**

Location: **2330 Monroe Street**, a 2.47-acre site located at the southeast corner of Monroe Street and San Tomas Expressway; APN: 224-37-068; project site is zoned Single-Family (R1-6L).

Applicant: Robin Zimble, Freebird Development Company, LLC

Owner: Housing Authority, City of Santa Clara

Request: **Architectural Review** for an approved 2-3 story building containing 65 affordable residential units in a mix of studios, one-, two-, and three-bedroom units, including 25 percent of the units set aside for people with developmental disabilities. The application utilizes Assembly Bill 3194. The previous Architectural Review (File No. PLN2019-13764) was approved at the Architectural Review Committee meeting on February 5, 2020 and has expired. There are no changes to the design that was previously approved.

Project Data

Available as Attachment 1

Points for consideration

Summary

- At a publicly notice meeting on January 28, 2020, the City Council approved a General Plan Amendment, Rezoning, and Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program associated with the project application (File Nos. PLN2019-13723; PLN2019-13763, PLN2019-13764, CEQA2019-1067).
- The Architectural Review for the application was approved at the Architectural Review Committee meeting on February 5, 2020. Per Section SCCC 18.76.020 (m), an architectural review granted is automatically revoked if not used within the two years of the original grant. While the applicants have been actively pursuing the required building permits for the project, and are very close to getting them issued, the construction has not yet started. Since construction has not started, the architectural review permit has expired. The approved General Plan Amendment by the Council on January 28, 2020 from Right of Way to Medium Density Residential is in effect.
- The applicant has submitted a new application (File No. PLN22-00142) for architectural review using Assembly Bill (AB) 3194 (2019), which prohibits a local agency from requiring rezoning if a proposed project is consistent with the General Plan, but the zoning for the project site is

inconsistent with the General Plan. Further, a local agency may require the proposed housing development project to comply with the objective standards and criteria of the zoning code that is consistent with the General Plan; however, the standards and criteria are to be applied to facilitate and accommodate development at the density allowed on the site by the General Plan and proposed by the housing development project. The project proposes to use the objective standards of Transit-Oriented Mixed Use (TMU) Combining Zoning District.

- There are no changes to the architectural design for the project (File No. PLN2019-13764) that was previously approved by the architectural committee.
- The applicant proposes to redevelop the 2.47-acre City-owned vacant site with 65 affordable units. All units will be deed restricted for affordable housing.
- The 65 residential units consist of 7 studios, 23 one-bedroom units, 29 two-bedroom units and six three-bedroom units. All the units are designated as affordable allowing occupancy based on household income tiers between 30-120 percent of area median income (AMI).
- The density range for the Medium Density residential designation is 20 to 36 dwelling units per acre. The project proposes a residential density of 26 dwelling units per acre (du/ac).
- The project reserves 25% of the units (16 units) for intellectually and/or developmentally disabled persons that are unlikely to own a vehicle.
- The project design is an outcome of the community input and preferences that were gathered through surveys at four community meetings that were conducted in the City Hall Cafeteria.
- The proposal aligns with several goals and policies in the General Plan to create affordable housing for people with various income levels and abilities.
- A neighborhood notice was distributed within a 1,000-foot radius of the subject site for this project review.

Building Design

- The project would involve the development of an eclectic style, approximately 73,470 square-foot building ranging in height from two to three stories oriented towards the northern portion of the site along San Tomas Expressway and Monroe Street. The maximum height of the building would be 43 feet 4 inches.
- To address privacy and noise concerns, the proposed building is oriented away from the existing single-family residences, creating the form of a L-shape with the longest length adjacent to, and set-back from, San Tomas Expressway.
- Both ends of the L-shape building would be lower in height (two-stories), which would provide a step-up that would visually break up the bulk and height of the building.
- Overall, the building would contain a mix of exterior angles and materials, including cement panels with redwood finish, fiber cement lap siding with various color finishes, cementitious panels, decorative wall sconces, and perforated aluminum sunshades.
- The mixture of material finishes applied to the exterior elevations, together with the offsets incorporated into the building design provide varied textures and create visual interest. The use of divided light windows and alternating use of materials provides a rhythmic cohesion and symmetry in the design. Offsets in the building elevations, recessed windows, and simplified

roof forms provide breaks in mass and scale of the buildings and roof structures. Metal canopies are incorporated in the design over the entrance of the building adding to the visual interest.

- The project would include on-site amenities such as a fitness center located on the second floor, a game room on the third floor, a laundry room and a community room located on the ground floor that opens to a large outdoor community area.
- The project would construct a 6-foot-high precast concrete sound wall along San Tomas Expressway and an 8-foot-high wooden privacy fence along the southern boundary, where the site abuts existing single-family homes. The privacy fence near the entrance to the site will be precast concrete to further attenuate the noise from the incoming vehicles.

Open Space and Landscaping

- The project includes approximately 32,000 square feet of open space that will provide area for active recreational uses intended for use by building residents and guests. Included are a universal design (all abilities) outdoor play area, a landscaped and furnished park-like quiet area with half size bocce court, recreational community gardens, a family barbecue area, a fitness pathway with outdoor fitness equipment, and a putting green (artificial turf).
- The three trees removed with demolition of existing conditions on-site would be replaced in excess of the 2:1 requirement with a total of 125 trees which are to be planted around the entire perimeter of the site and within the common open space area. The replacement plan includes native and climate-adapted trees, many of which would serve to screen/line the project site perimeter. Of the nine species, six are proposed to be drought tolerant.

Parking

- The project would be accessed by a single point of ingress and egress from Monroe Street by a 26-foot wide driveway that would lead to the surface parking lot with a two-way drive aisle, also 26 feet wide.
- The surface parking lot would provide a total of 98 parking spaces, including six accessible stalls, three stalls designated for future EV charging stations and a loading/drop-off/paratransit stall.
- The project provides the parking at about one and a half parking spaces for each unit with 10 percent of the total parking spaces dedicated for guest parking.
- The proposed project would provide 37 bicycle parking spaces; 33 Class I bicycle parking spaces would be located within the building to serve residents, and four Class II bicycle parking spaces would be outdoors and uncovered to serve visitors.

Findings

1) *That any off-street parking area, screening strips and other facilitates and improvements necessary to secure the purpose and intent of this title and the general plan of the City area a part of the proposed development, in that;*

- The development provides a total of 98 on-site parking spaces and provides adequate circulation for vehicular access.

2) *That the design and location of the proposed development and its relation to neighboring developments and traffic is such that it will not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood, will not unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring developments, and will not create traffic congestion or hazard, in that;*

- The proposed project would not generate an increase trip to the level of significant impact as determined in the Mitigated Negative Declaration.
- On balance, the project is consistent with the City's General Plan as discussed in Table 1.

TABLE 1 PROJECT CONSISTENCY WITH SANTA CLARA GENERAL PLAN LAND USE POLICIES

Land Use Policies	Project Consistency
5.3.1-P2: Encourage advance notification and neighborhood meetings to provide an opportunity for early community review of new development proposals.	City conducted a community engagement program prior to issuing the RFP and engagement with the developer. Thereafter, the developer conducted public outreach through mailings and conducting four community meetings to involve neighboring property owners in the design of the project.
5.3.1 P8 Work with property owners to improve or redevelop underutilized and vacant properties. 5.3.1 P9 Require that new development provide adequate public services and facilities, infrastructure, and amenities to serve the new employment or residential growth.	The project would utilize the currently vacant city owned property for the construction of 65 affordable units with onsite amenities and infrastructure improvements that include private street and utilities, guest parking, and landscape recreation and open space to serve the development.
5.3.1-P10: Provide opportunities for increased landscaping and trees in the community, including requirements for new developments provide street trees and a minimum 2:1 on-site replacement for trees removed as part of the proposal to help increase the urban forest and minimize the heat island effect.	The proposed development plan includes landscaping of the site and the project street frontages with a variety of plant and tree species and would replace the four trees removed with redevelopment at a higher ratio for a total of 125 trees.
5.3.1 P12 Encourage convenient pedestrian connections within new and existing developments.	The project includes the replacement of the existing sidewalks along Monroe Street fronting the project site with a landscape park strip and sidewalk consistent with the Complete Streets design standards including a 10-foot-wide sidewalk with a 4-foot-wide planter strip with street trees. Street trees are proposed within the park strips.

5.3.1-P26: Support a community-initiated planning process so that existing neighborhoods can participate in developing more detailed plans for street, landscape and pedestrian facility improvements.	The community engagement process was initiated early on, in advance of the formal Planning application submittal.
5.3.1 P29 Encourage design of new development to be compatible with, and sensitive to, nearby existing and planned development, consistent with other applicable General Plan policies.	The single building ranging in height from 2-3 stories is oriented away from the existing single-family development to avoid any privacy concerns. The onsite parking provided addresses the public concerns about the parking spill over to the adjacent neighborhoods.
5.3.2 G1 Equitable housing opportunities within the community for persons of all economic levels, regardless of religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, race, color, age, source of income or mental or physical disability. 5.3.2 P6 Provide adequate choice for housing tenure, type and location, including higher density, and affordability for low and moderate income and special needs households. 5.3.2 P10 Create opportunities for affordable housing and housing to support special needs populations, including Extremely Low-Income households. 5.3.2 P13 Participate in local, regional, State and federal programs that support affordable, transitional and permanent housing.	The project proposes to build 65 affordable units. All units will be deed restricted for use by households at income tiers between 25 to 120 percent of area median income and 25 percent of the units will be reserved for intellectually and/or developmentally disabled persons.
5.5.2-P1: Require that new development incorporate building articulation and architectural features, including front doors, windows, stoops, porches or bay windows along street frontages, to integrate new development into the existing neighborhood	The project incorporates offsets along the building planes and a mixture of exterior materials, finishes and architectural features to create visual breaks and interest in the design for compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.

5.5.2 P4 Provide adequate separation between incompatible land uses in order to minimize negative effects on surrounding existing and planned development. 5.5.2-P3: Implement site design solutions, such as landscaping and increased building setbacks, to provide buffers between nonresidential and residential uses. 5.5.2 P5 Require that new development provide an appropriate transition to surrounding neighborhoods. 5.5.2 P9 Improve pedestrian amenities, including sidewalks and bicycle paths, to promote neighborhood compatibility.	The proposed building is oriented towards the northern portion of site, away from the existing single-family development along the southern and eastern boundary, providing increased setbacks. The space south of the proposed building is developed as open community space, parking, internal private street and landscaping to provide adequate separation and transition from multifamily to single family development.
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3) *That the design and location of the proposed development is such that it is in keeping with the character of the neighborhood and is such as not to be detrimental to the harmonious development contemplated by this title and the general plan of the City, in that;*

- The development is a two to three story medium density residential structure that is compatible with the existing residential uses in the area.

4) *That the granting of such approval will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, materially affect adversely the health, comfort or general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of said development, and will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injuries to property or improvements in said neighborhood, in that;*

- The project is subject to the California Building Code and City Code requirements, which serve to regulate new construction to protect public health, safety and general welfare.
- The use, scale, and design of the development, as conditioned, are consistent with the General Plan and is designed to be compatible with the uses in the surrounding area.

5) *That the proposed development, as set forth in the plans and drawings, are consistent with the set of more detailed policies and criteria for architectural review as approved and updated from time to time by the City Council, which set shall be maintained in the planning division office. The policies and criteria so approved shall be fully effective and operative to the same extent as if written into and made a part of this title, in that;*

- The proposed design and form of the building is consistent with the City's Design Guidelines and General Plan policies.
- The project provides for an attractive and functional site arrangement of the building on a currently vacant parcel to provide affordable units consistent with the General Plan. It provides a high quality architectural and landscape design, while addressing the privacy concerns of the adjacent single-family residences.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Conditions of Approval are available as Attachment 2.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

[Mitigated Negative Declaration and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program <https://www.santaclaraca.gov/home/showdocument?id=65080>](https://www.santaclaraca.gov/home/showdocument?id=65080) associated with the project application (File Nos. PLN2019-13723; PLN2019-13763, PLN2019-13764, CEQA2019-1067) was approved by the Council on January 28, 2020.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no impact to the City for processing the requested application other than administrative staff time and expense typically covered by processing fees paid by the applicant.

PUBLIC CONTACT

On March 18, 2022, a notice of public hearing of this item was posted in three conspicuous places within 300 feet of the project site and mailed to property owners within 1,000 feet of the project site. The planning Staff has not received any public comments for this application at the time of preparation of this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the Architectural Review for an approved 2-3 story building containing 65 affordable residential units in a mix of studios, one-, two-, and three-bedroom units, including 25 percent of the units set aside for people with developmental disabilities, subject to conditions.

Prepared by: Nimisha Agrawal, Associate Planner, Community Development

Approved by: Lesley Xavier, Planning Manager, Community Development

Attachments:

1. Project Data Sheet
2. Conditions of Approval
3. Development Plans