



Agenda Report

19-476

Agenda Date: 6/4/2019

REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Action on Early Consideration of a General Plan Amendment from Right of Way to Medium Density Residential for the 2.47 Acre Property Located at 2330 Monroe Street (Affordable Housing Project)

BACKGROUND

On February 21, 2019, HKIT Architects and Freebird Development Company, LLC (Freebird) filed a project development plan application to amend the General Plan designation for the 2.47 acre parcel located at 2330 Monroe Street. The existing General Plan designation for the site is Right of Way and the site is zoned Single Family Residential (R1-6L). The subject site is a vacant City-owned property located at the southeast corner of Monroe Street and San Tomas Expressway (2330 Monroe Street). The proposed amendment would change the land use designation for the site to Medium Density Residential to allow construction of a multi-family affordable housing project.

Following an extensive community outreach process in 2018, the City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development of an affordable housing project on the subject property. At the September 11, 2018 meeting, the City Council approved the staff recommendation for selection of Freebird as the developer for the project and subsequently approved the Exclusive Negotiation Agreement (ENA) to allow the project to proceed on December 12, 2018.

Pursuant to the City's Early Consideration Policy for General Plan Amendments, the applicant has conducted community meetings.

DISCUSSION

The project site is a vacant City-owned parcel adjacent to single-family houses to the south, two-story multifamily residential across Monroe Street to the east, and by San Tomas Expressway to the west and to the north. The land appears as a right-of-way on the General Plan map and has no official General Plan designation. The City was designated to assume all housing assets (including land) after the redevelopment agencies (RDA) were dissolved on February 1, 2012, with the intent to provide housing that is 100% affordable to persons and families of low and moderate income. The proposed amendment would change the General Plan designation from Right of Way to Medium Density Residential, which is intended for residential developments at densities ranging from 20 to 36 units per gross acre.

The parcel is a remnant of a large parcel that was initially acquired by the County as part of the construction of San Tomas Expressway and then subsequently acquired by the City as an affordable housing site once it became surplus to the Expressway project. The current Right of Way General Plan designation reflects the previous use of a portion of the parcel for San Tomas Expressway.

The project application includes a proposal to develop the site with a single building ranging in height from two to three stories with a total of 65 residential affordable units in a mix of studios, one, two- and three-bedroom units.

The early consideration process prescribes an initial hearing within a few months of application submittal with the goal to minimize costs and work associated with the review of a General Plan Amendment application should an amendment not be viable. Proposed General Plan Amendments should be evaluated for consistency with the Major Strategies and other high-level goals and policies of the General Plan to determine if there is clearly a conflict that would indicate further evaluation of the proposal is not warranted. The General Plan Major Strategies identify the importance of maintaining a land use plan that supports other goals and policies, preserving the City's fiscal health, promoting quality of life, preserving and cultivating existing neighborhoods and promoting sustainability. As the site in question was previously acquired for the purposes of development of an affordable housing project, the City has already taken multiple actions in support of residential use of the site consistent with the proposed General Plan Amendment, including recent actions by the Council on the Request for Proposals and Exclusive Negotiating Agreement involving the proposed project. Providing affordable housing is an important element for the overall development of a healthy and sustainable community. A significant amount of community outreach has also been conducted for the project to address its compatibility with the adjacent neighborhood. Consistency with the Major Strategies is also reflected through consistency with other General Plan goals and policies.

The City's General Plan includes various goals and policies that support the development of the proposed affordable housing including the following:

5.3.2 G3 Affordable housing units dispersed throughout the City to avoid a concentration in any one neighborhood.

5.3.2 P7 Construct and preserve affordable housing for low and moderate income households through the use of public subsidies, regulatory incentives and flexible development standards.

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.

Based on an initial review, the proposed General Plan Amendment is potentially consistent with the City's General Plan and there are no identified areas of significant conflict with the overall General Plan strategies, goals and policies.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

If this proposal moves forward, the project review will include analysis in accordance with California

Environmental Quality Act.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact to the City other than administrative staff time and expense. Staff costs associated with review of the proposed GPA are generally recovered through application fees paid by the project applicant

COORDINATION

This report was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

PUBLIC CONTACT

In accordance with the Early Consideration Policy, a noticed community meeting was conducted to present the development proposal to neighbors and interested parties and engage public input. The meeting was held at the City Hall Cafeteria from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on February 21, 2019 and was attended by 21 community members. Public notice of the meeting was mailed to property owners within 1000 feet of the project site and posted on the City's Community Meetings webpage.

Prior to submitting an application with the City, the developer conducted two additional noticed community meetings on October 17, 2018 and November 5, 2018 at the City Hall Cafeteria at 6:00 p.m. Both the meetings were well attended by community members, who expressed general interest in the proposal with concerns mostly regarding the impact of the project on the adjacent residential development.

Public contact for this report was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall Council Chambers. A complete agenda packet is available on the City's website and in the City Clerk's Office at least 72 hours prior to a Regular Meeting and 24 hours prior to a Special Meeting. A hard copy of any agenda report may be requested by contacting the City Clerk's Office at (408) 615-2220, email clerk@santaclaraca.gov or at the public information desk at any City of Santa Clara public library.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council direct staff to continue processing the subject General Plan Amendment from Right of Way to Medium Density Residential for the 2.47 Acre Property located at 2330 Monroe Street.

Reviewed by: Andrew Crabtree, Director of Community Development

Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Statement of Justification
2. Site Plan