

City of San Leandro
Community Development Department
Planning Services Division
Staff Report

DATE: October 20, 2011

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Sally Barros, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: **PLN2009-00006**; Planned Development and a Condominium [Vesting Tentative Tract] Map; General Plan Map Amendment from Office to High Density Residential; Rezone from P(AU)-Professional with Assembly Use Overlay to RM-1800(PD)-Residential Multi-Family with Planned Development Overlay; Development Agreement (DA); and an Initial Study, a Mitigated Negative Declaration and a Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program; to build a new residential development consisting of 66 rental apartment units: 17 one-bedroom apartments, 48 two-bedroom apartments and one manager's unit in a Recreation building with other site amenities at 2450 Washington Avenue. The project comprises seven apartment buildings with five units per building; five apartment buildings with six units; a Recreation building with manager's unit; and private roads, landscaping, surface and attached parking for 135 parking spaces. (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 77D-1410-25 and 77-556-104; Wm. Matthews, Inc. (Applicant and Property Owner); P-Professional Zoning District.)

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The applicant and property owner propose to redevelop the subject site with a new 66-unit residential rental project, with a mix of 17 one-bedroom units, 48 two-bedroom units and one guest unit within a Recreation building at the Washington Avenue frontage. The subject property is on the Washington Avenue commercial corridor, near the intersection with San Leandro Boulevard and is currently developed with a 43,200 square foot medical/professional office building.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take public testimony on the environmental documents and the overall merits of the project. Staff further recommends that the Planning Commission consider staff's proposed Findings for project approval (attached Recommended Findings of Fact) and adopt the attached Resolution Recommending that the City Council:

- A. Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration;
- B. Approve a General Plan Land Use Map Amendment for the subject site from Office to High Density Residential;

- C. Approve a Rezone of the subject site from P(AU) Professional District with Assembly Use Overlay to RM-1800 (PD) Residential Multi-Family (Planned Development Overlay District);
- D. Approve a Planned Development to develop a 66-unit apartment complex, subject to the recommended conditions of approval
- E. Approve a Vesting Tentative Map, Tract 8003, to allow the two lots to be merged into a larger lot totaling approximately 2.85 acres and to create a condominium lot with 12 different ownership unit (whole apartment building) and common space (driveway, open space areas, landscaping, Recreation building, pool and other site amenities), subject to the recommended conditions of approval.
- F. Recommend City Council approval of a Development Agreement.

SURROUNDING AREA

The subject site comprises two separate parcels that together encompass 124,469 square feet (2.85 acres). It is located on the east side of Washington Avenue at the north corner of San Leandro Boulevard. Commercial and residential sites on Washington Avenue are developed with residential uses including a mobile home park to the south and east (Trailer Haven and San Leandro Court), single-family residential to the north (Sandpiper Condominiums), and auto oriented commercial/industrial businesses to the west across Washington Avenue. The site was formerly part of the Singer-Friden business machine, calculator, circuit board, cash register and sewing machine manufacturing plant from approximately 1968 to 1976.

PROPOSAL

Background of Planning Commission Review

Preliminary plans were presented Planning Commission to review at work sessions on January 14, and May 20, 2010. The Planning Commission provided extensive comment to the applicant at the January 2010 workession. The applicant subsequently revised the site plan, floor plans and site details in consultation with City staff. The result of these changes were presented to the Commission in May 2010 upon which the Commission provided further comments and a general endorsement of the project. The project is in substantial conformance with the iteration seen by the Planning Commission in May 2010; additions to the project presented to the Planning Commission at this hearing is the consideration of the Development Agreement and the Vesting Tentative Map.

Detailed Proposal

The detailed Project Description attached provides a full narrative of the project proposal. Below is a summary outline of the proposed project:

Site Plan

The subject property would be merged into one single 2.85 acre property for the project. A two-way, 24-foot wide driveway from Washington Avenue serves as access to the project, with three 24-foot wide drive lanes serving the six apartment buildings.

The site plan is broken up into 12 five- or six-unit buildings, with an open promenade running in between buildings. The six buildings along the southern edge of the promenade and the building close to the entrance contain five units while the five buildings along the main private road contain six units. Entrances for the Gatehouse, Lofts, Townhomes and ground-level Flats are off the main courtyard while entrances for the Carriage and upstairs Flats are along the central promenade.

The Recreation Building is oriented along the frontage of the site at an approximate 20-degree angle and includes a guest apartment and an office. It is set within a large landscaped area and includes the community site amenities of a pool and spa for use by the residents.

All garages are oriented toward the private drives and contain internal entries to the apartments (except for the upstairs Flat B apartments). The illustrative site plan (Exhibit A) shows a total of 135 off-street parking spaces, 85 of which are within the attached garages and 50 in open spaces. The open spaces are lined up along the 30-foot main driveway along the north edge of the site; of those, 12 are placed outside the main gate for visitors.

The building setback for the recreation building fronting Washington Avenue is approximately seven feet at the northwest corner and approximately 18 feet at the southwest corner of the building. The apartment buildings are set back approximately 10 feet from the south property line, 48.5 feet from the north property line, and 19 feet from the east property line.

Floor Plans

The floor plans for the units within the apartment building are varied, with flats, townhomes, lofts and the “carriage house” units stacked and layered within the 12 two-story buildings. Color-coded floor plans illustrate the respective layout of these units in Exhibits E and F. The recreation Building includes site amenities such as an exercise room, bathrooms, a kitchen, a conference room and leasing office space and a community hall as well as a one-bedroom manager’s unit. The recreation building is single-story, with vaulted ceilings over the central recreation space, with a floor area of 1,450 square feet.

Elevations

The proposed design presents a Craftsman-like architectural presence, including a transition from a more subdued look for the apartment buildings to a stronger, bold form of the recreation building at the Washington Avenue frontage. Stucco is the overall building material, with accents

provided by stone wainscoting, wood trim and patios and architectural composite shingle roof materials. The rows of apartment buildings would be primarily visible from the street as you look down the main driveway into the site, with the recreation building providing the visual focus of the project. The residential units and the garages have been staggered to provide vertical articulation for the apartment blocks. The small “gatehouse” unit on the northernmost buildings along the main drive provide additional building articulation

Landscaping and Fencing

A preliminary landscape plan has been submitted, with an extensive palette of trees, shrubs and groundcover. The hardscape plan shows sections of “enhanced pavement” in a circle pattern at the front entry and along the walking paths within the interior drives. Three-point turnarounds are proposed at the end of the feeder drive lanes. A wood fence is proposed for the perimeter of the site and the auto and pedestrian gate is proposed as metal gates with the river rock stone pilasters. The front façade is delimited by a six-foot tall masonry wall with a pedestrian roofed entry way and metal gate.

Vesting Tentative Map

The two subject properties would be merged into one single lot with approximately 2.85 acres in area for the development and a condominium map created for the 12 apartment buildings, with all other areas designated as common space under the jurisdiction of the future property owners association (POA). The individual apartment units within each building are not proposed as condo for-sale units, but would be under the control and ownership of the apartment building owner.

STAFF ANALYSIS

General Plan Amendment

The General Plan’s Land Use Diagram designates the site as Office. In order to allow for this multi-family residential project, proposed with a density of 23 dwelling units per acre, the General Plan Land Use map is proposed to be amended to a residential designation that would support this residential development. Given that the Washington Avenue vicinity is residential and is oriented to the north, south and east of the site, a modification to the General Plan Land Use Map to a Residential designation is an appropriate action.

Staff proposes a General Plan Amendment to High Density Residential (which allows up from 19 to 25 units per acre) and a Rezone to RM-1800 Residential Multi-Family (where the allowed density is up to 24 units per acre.) In addition, minor exceptions are requested to the Zoning regulations for the RM District, including an exception to the minimum setbacks. To address these exceptions, the application will be processed as a Planned Development, which allows for leniency in development standards in return for higher-quality aesthetic and site development.

The following General Plan policies are relevant to this residential project:

Policy 2.05: Alterations, Additions and Infill

Ensure that alterations, additions and infill development are compatible with existing homes and maintain aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods.

Policy 3.01: Mix of Unit Types

Encourage a mix of residential development types in the City, including single-family homes on a variety of lot sizes, as well as townhomes, row houses, live-work units, planned unit developments and multi-family housing.

Policy 3.04: Promotion of Infill

Encourage infill development on vacant or underused sites within residential areas.

Policy 13.04: Transit-Oriented Development

Ensure that properties adjacent to City's BART stations and along heavily used public transit routes are developed in a way that maximizes the potential for transit use. Such development should be of particularly high quality, include open space and other amenities, and respect the scale and character of nearby neighborhoods.

Based upon the recommended General Plan Map Amendment for the site from Office to High Density Residential, the proposal is consistent with City goals, objectives and policies related to housing and land uses outlined in the General Plan. The project increases the housing supply in a manner that will be compatible with the existing area. The development will result in an improvement in appearance to the property, which is currently underutilized. In addition to aesthetic quality, the new apartment buildings will be designed, constructed and equipped to provide an adequate level of safety and security for the residents. Furthermore, the site will be adequately served with public services, including utilities.

Rezoning

The Zoning Map designates the site P (AU) Professional with an Assembly Use Overlay District. The applicant has requested a rezone of the two parcels to RM-1800 (PD). This would be consistent with the High Density Residential which is proposed for the site. Following project approval, the applicant will complete a final map to create a single-lot condominium lot zoned RM-1800 (PD).

The Planning Commission may recommend approval of the rezone to the PD overlay, upon finding that the Planned Development concept plans are consistent with the adopted Land Use Element of the General Plan (as amended) and other applicable policies of the General Plan, and is compatible with surrounding development. Staff supports approval of the rezone per the attached Findings of Fact.

Planned Development

As proposed, the project does not meet all of the underlying development standards for the RM district. The City of San Leandro Zoning Code (Article 10) provides a mechanism through the Planned Development (PD) zoning overlay to allow for minor variations to the underlying development standards. This ensures that such land uses that are compatible with the surrounding context are developed in an orderly manner and with high quality urban design.

The table below compares the proposed project with required standards, with highlighted cells indicating where the project is less than the required standard

Standard	RM Regulation	Proposed Project
Min. Lot Area	10,000 sf	124,581 sf
Min. Lot Width	100 feet	214.8 feet
Min Building Setbacks		
Front	15 feet	7 feet (north) 19 (south)
North Side	Min 6 feet; avg 10 feet	48.5 feet
South Side	Min 6 feet; avg 10 feet	10 feet
Rear	15 feet	19 feet
Max. Height	50 feet	
Max. Lot Coverage		
Min. Open Space	200 sf per unit (total = 13,200)	28,314
Parking - Covered	114	85
Parking - Open	21	50

Staff believes that the above minor exceptions to the underlying development regulations are warranted due to the shape of the property and its location on Washington Avenue close to transit. Due to the relatively narrow shape of the site, the reduction of the covered parking in carports for the surface spaces will enhance the openness of the site. The angled frontage of the site makes conformance of the Recreation Building to the front setback difficult for the north corner of the building, while the south corner exceeds the required setback. Staff notes that the applicant is providing high quality building design and over twice the amount of required open space, which is the type of project enhancement that is expected for consideration of a Planned Development.

Elevations/Architecture

The project's strong Craftsman architectural design is an attractive feature of the proposal, particularly as it is presented in the Recreation Building along Washington Avenue in relation to the apartment buildings arrayed to the rear. The dramatic features of the Recreation Building create a focal point for the street frontage that is carried into the site by the consistent use of strong Craftsman detail on the apartment buildings. Per the Planning Commission request at the May 2010 worksession, a streetscape has been provided in the attached exhibits (Exhibit T),

which shows the Recreation building in the foreground and the apartment buildings in the background. The elevations of the buildings from the perspective of the main street are shown on the landscape plan (Exhibit R). These exhibits demonstrate that the varied use of color married with the ubiquitous Craftsman detail provide both variety and consistency for the overall project.

Site Plan and Details

The placement of a promenade (“allee”) along the center both provides a lively environment for the main pedestrian connection through the site and creates a physical break between the residential building blocks. The applicant has also made a point that the long, linear shape of the site dictates a more regular street layout. Because of the parcel shape, placing some of the homes along the north property line and creating a non-linear road layout would have the effect of adding more pavement to the overall site. The articulation of the Carriage House buildings helps to diminish the linearity of the site layout and elimination of the car ports in favor of open parking spaces create a more open feel to the main private road.

Parking/Circulation

The Zoning Code requires 2.25 spaces for the two-bedroom units and 1.5 spaces per one-bedroom unit. The fractional units of parking can be uncovered, guest spaces. For this proposal, with a total of 18 one-bedroom units and 48 two-bedroom units, the total requirement is 114 covered spaces and 21 uncovered spaces for a total of 135 spaces. Covered spaces are provided in the 85 single- or two-car garages; the uncovered spaces are provided with 50 open parking stalls for a total of 135 spaces, which meets the parking requirement in number perfectly, but with a slight change in the mix of covered versus uncovered stalls supplied. Planning staff believes that this mix of parking supply is appropriate, particularly as it provides a more open aesthetic to the site with the removal of the carport structures. This very minor exception can be covered by the parameters of the Planned Development, as outlined above. Because the project is relatively small and the site is a short walk from AC Transit stops, staff supports this deviation from the onsite parking requirement.

Ingress/egress to the site will be accomplished via two-way circulation with the entryway to the site on the northernmost edge of the parcel. Per staff recommended conditions of approval, the plans submitted for building permits must include a stop sign at the back of the public sidewalk on Washington Avenue and a yield sign where the minor drive aisle intersects the roundabout. Stop signs are also required to include a stop sign where they intersect the main drive. Corresponding marking of the pavement with “STOP” or “YIELD” is also required, per the attached recommended conditions of approval.

Engineering and Transportation staff as well as the Deputy Fire Marshall of the Alameda County Fire Department have reviewed the parking and circulation plans and have approved the proposed site plan with standard conditions of approval such as requiring no parking on the fire lanes and verifying minimum fire truck turning radii.

Landscaping/Fencing

The amount and variation of landscaping being proposed by the applicant is a major asset of the project. Open space is approximately 0.65 acres, or 22.7% of the overall site. The preliminary landscape plan shows a variety of tree species, selected for various roles within the site as street trees, accent trees, visual buffer, etc. The tree palette is accompanied by a range of shrubs and groundcover. All landscaping is described as “conforming to the basic principles of natural systems”; however, staff notes that final landscape plans submitted in the future must also conform to the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELO) as embodied in the San Leandro Zoning Code Article 19. This will ensure that the final landscape plans include water budget analysis, hydrozoning of plant types and low-flow water usage, as well as certain elements of the Bay-Friendly Landscape protocol such as the use of recycled materials and plants with reduced pruning needs.

As stated previously, the proposed site fencing is a high-grade masonry wall along the Washington Avenue frontage and decorative wood fencing along the south, east and north perimeter of the site. The masonry wall’s stone veneer pilasters and wood-like finish will add a Craftsman-style architectural element to the main entry and street frontage. The proposed trash enclosures continue this architectural style with stone veneer and trellis elements to blend in with the proposed Craftsman building architecture. Staff has included a standard condition of approval requiring coordination with the Environmental Services Department and the local waste hauler for placement of appropriate trash and recycling containers. The number of four trash enclosures proposed exceeds the minimum required of three for the site.

Staff supports approval of the Planned Development for the construction of the 66-unit apartment development, subject to the recommended Conditions of Approval as this project provides:

- Superior urban design in comparison with the typical development under the base Residential Multi-Family district;
- Adequate provisions for utilities, services, and emergency vehicle access;
- Site plan elements provide harmonious and orderly development that is compatible with its surroundings;
- Buildings have adequate articulation, with appropriate window placement, use of detailing and changes in building planes to provide visual interest. The exterior materials, finishes, detailing, and colors are compatible with and/or superior to those of surrounding structures. Visually incompatible elements are fully screened from public view;
- Landscaping complements the architectural design, with an appropriate balance of trees, shrubs and living ground covers, and provides adequate screening and shading of parking lots and driveways;
- Detail features such as fences, walls, and lighting (with implementation of recommended Conditions of Approval

School District Impact

The project description of this project was sent to the San Leandro Unified School District for their review and comment in October 2011. District officials responded with an approximate projection of a maximum student generation of 26 students from this project, with the caveat that the projected number could be lower because of the mix of unit types and size of the apartment units.

Condominium [Vesting Tentative Tract] Map

A standard recommended Condition of Approval would require the developer to draft, for the City's and City Attorney's review Covenants, Conditions, and Requirements (CCRs) prior to the approval of the Final Map. The CCRs shall specify that the POA shall maintain all common areas and provide for activation of the POA upon sale by the applicant of the first condominium unit. It also shall establish a continuity in design for the overall project into the future.

Staff believes that the proposed Condominium [Vesting Tentative Tract] Map provides the most orderly form of property development by maintaining a single-lot subdivision that creates common areas of all roadways, open space and site amenities (Recreation Building and swimming pool) while providing opportunities for the applicant to divide the property between family members, with apartment buildings able to be sold or provided to family members for individual ownership. The proposed map has been reviewed thoroughly by the City of San Leandro Engineering and Transportation Department staff as well as the Fire Marshal's office in the Alameda County Fire Department and their recommended Conditions of Approval for the map are incorporated in the attachments.

Development Agreement

The Development Agreement is a legally binding agreement between the City and the applicant, Wm. Mathews, Inc., which provides a greater degree of certainty to the applicant that they may proceed with development in accordance with policies, rules and regulations in effect at the time of project approval. It also provides a greater degree of certainty to the City that the development of the project will promote the orderly planning of public improvements and services, and builds in a cost escalation for the development impact fees according to published indices that would otherwise be frozen at the time of the entitlement approval.

The Development Agreement is a contract that has been negotiated and voluntarily entered into by the City and the Applicant containing conditions, terms and provisions including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Term of Agreement: allows for the approvals to be extended over a period of ten (10) years, with an option to extend for another five (5)-year term upon review and approval by the Planning Commission;

- Fees and Exactions: freezes the categories of fees and exactions that the project is subject to, but the fee amounts will be adjusted periodically for inflation based on the amount in place at the time the fee is due;
- Exemption to future moratoria: the project will be exempt from any future development moratorium unless the moratorium is mandated by other agencies;
- Future condominium-processing: the applicant agrees that it will not pursue a further subdivision of the apartment buildings into individual condominium units.

Staff supports the terms of the Development Agreement and believes that the agreement provides certainty that the development will provide orderly planning of public improvements and services and that costs are allocated to achieve maximum utilization of public and private resources in the development process.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for the project by the City of San Leandro and released for public review on October 14, 2011. Environmental topics for which mitigation was indicated in order to bring potentially significant impacts to a level of insignificance include: aesthetics, air quality, cultural resources, geology/soils, hydrology/water quality, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, and utilities.

The state mandated 30-day public review period is from October 14 to November 14, 2011. To date, no comments have been received. All comments received by staff will be forwarded to the City Council as the final decision makers on this project. The City Council hearing is tentatively scheduled for November 21, 2011.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Notification of the October 20, 2011 Planning Commission hearing was sent to property owners and businesses within a 300-foot radius of the site as well as to various public agencies. A legal ad was also published in the local newspaper, the Daily Review, ten days prior to the October 20, 2011 Planning Commission meeting

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution Recommending that the City Council adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration; approve a General Plan Land Use Map Amendment from Office to High Density Residential; approve a rezone of the subject site from P Professional District to RM-1800 (PD) Residential Multi-Family (Planned Development Overlay District); approve the Vesting Tentative Map, Tract Map 8003, for condominium purposes; approve a Development Agreement; and approve a Planned Development to develop a 66-unit apartment complex, subject to the recommended conditions of approval

ATTACHMENTS

Vicinity Map

Resolution Recommending that the City Council Approve a Mitigated Negative Declaration, a General Plan Amendment, a Planned Development, and a Development Agreement for the 2450 Washington Apartment Multi-Family Housing Project, including the below exhibits:

Resolution Exhibit A – Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration

Resolution Exhibit B – General Plan Amendment

Resolution Exhibit C – Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Resolution Exhibit D – Recommended Conditions of Approval for Planned Development and Vesting Tentative Map

Resolution Exhibit E – Draft Development Agreement

Initial Study

Recommended Findings of Fact for PLN2009-00006

Excerpt of the May 20, 2010 worksession with Planning Commission

Applicant Statement

Project Plan Exhibits:

Exhibit A – Illustrative Development Plan/Vicinity Map (1)

Exhibit B – Building Elevations (A1)

Exhibit C – Standard Elevations (A2)

Exhibit D – Gatehouse Elevations (A3)

Exhibit E – Main Floor Plan (A4)

Exhibit F – Upper Floor Plan (A5)

Exhibit G – Roof Plan (A6)

Exhibit H – Site Section (A7)

Exhibit I – Shadow Studies (A8)

Exhibit J – Elevations, Recreation Building (A9)

Exhibit K – Elevations, Recreation Building (A10)

Exhibit L – Recreation Building Floor and Roof Plan (A11)

Exhibit M – Utility Structures (A12)

Exhibit N – Details (A13)

Exhibit O – Code and Accessibility Analysis (A14)

Exhibit P – Code and Accessibility Analysis (A14.2)

Exhibit Q – Dimensioned Site Plan (E1)

Exhibit R – Landscape Plan (L-1)

Exhibit S – Plant List

Exhibit T – Washington Avenue Streetscape

Exhibit U – Vesting Tentative Map, Tract 8003, for Condominium Purposes

Exhibit V – Boundary and Topographic Map

Exhibit W – Dimensional Site Plan

Exhibit X – Preliminary Grading and Utility Plan

Exhibit Y – Typical Sections

Exhibit Z – Truck Turning Exhibit