



Legislation Text

File #: 15-322, **Version:** 1

PRE15-0001; Work Session on a proposed Planned Development to construct a multi-story 60-unit multi-family residential building at 1659-1695 Washington Avenue (northwest corner of Washington Avenue and Thornton Street.). Assessor's Parcel Numbers 75-6-5-1 and 75-6-6-1; J. Burns II, Collaborative Design Architects, LLC, applicant; G. Galvan, property owner; DA-1 Downtown Area 1 District.

SUMMARY

The Planning Commission work session is an opportunity for the Planning Commission and the community to hear a presentation by staff and the applicant, to ask questions and to provide feedback prior to the applicant's formal planning submittal for the proposed 60-unit multifamily residential development at 1659-1695 Washington Ave located in the Downtown Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Strategy plan area.

It is important to note that the plans for the project are in the schematic stage of design and the precise building sizes, locations, precise building floor plates and parking lot design may change prior to the applicant's formal planning submittal. Once the Planning Commission provides their preliminary feedback during the work session, the applicant will refine the project plans and provide additional details related to site planning, building architecture, landscape and hardscape design.

While no formal action by the Commission is required tonight, the work session will provide an opportunity to:

1. Review the proposed schematic plans;
2. Provide comments regarding density, site layout, parking and preliminary architectural design;
3. Request additional information/material for the future formal public review by Planning Commission of the project; and
4. Ask questions of staff and the applicant.

Following tonight's work session, staff will work with the applicant to respond to the Planning Commission and public feedback.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING STATEMENT

See attached.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING AREA

The subject property is located at the northwest corner of Washington Avenue and Thornton Street. It

is east of the San Leandro BART station. The site is in the Downtown TOD area and within walking distance to the downtown.

The subject property is comprised of two parcels, a 15,202 square foot corner lot and a 7,500 square foot interior lot adjacent to the north. This totals 22,702 square feet (0.52 acre). The corner lot is occupied by an automotive repair facility (Quality Tune-Up) and interior lot is developed with a single-family home. The adjacent properties to the west include a duplex and two single family homes; adjacent to the northwest and north is Bank of the West and its parking lot. Across the street to the east are the Scribner Shopping Center, a bar, and a two-story mixed use building. Across the street to the south are two duplexes.

The subject property and the properties to the north and east are zoned DA-1 Downtown Area 1 District. The properties to the south are zoned DA-2 Downtown Area 2 District. The adjacent properties to the west and northwest, containing the residential uses and the western half of the Bank of the West parking lot, are zoned CC Community Commercial District.

BACKGROUND

The applicant and property owner proposes a Planned Development (PD) to construct a 60-unit four-story multi-family residential building above one and one-half parking levels at the northwest corner of Washington Avenue and Thornton Street. It would be a mix of mainly one bedroom units (57) with three two bedroom units, facing Washington Avenue.

The proposed project advances the purpose and goals of the Downtown TOD strategy to bring more housing and to have more residents living in Downtown San Leandro in order to be a more vibrant and inviting place. The preliminary plan reflects an attractive and sustainable urban design. In addition, the new project is within walking distance to BART, multiple AC Transit lines, and San Leandro LINKS Shuttle and enhances usage of public transit.

DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

Site Plan

The applicant proposes to combine and redevelop the two sites that make up the subject property. The proposed residential building would have varying setbacks from Washington Avenue (one- to five-feet) and Thornton Street (one- to six-feet) from the right-of way lines (property lines); and zero setbacks at the interior northern and western property lines. The varying setbacks along the street frontages allows for pockets of landscaping and varying wall planes and porches for the architecture of the building. (See Exhibits A and E).

Washington Avenue would have three stoops and porches for the three, two-bedroom units facing the street and a stairway for exiting the building at the northern end of the Washington Avenue frontage. Thornton Street has the main door to the lobby of the multi-family residential building, driveway opening to the parking garage and a trash enclosure/utility area.

Ground Level and Subterranean Level

The ground level and subterranean level makes up one and one-half levels of indoor vehicle parking that comprise 76 spaces (see Exhibits C and D.). The main level contains 51 spaces and the lower level 25 spaces. Each level of the building including the parking and the residential floors above are

connected and served by an elevator and stairwells.

Residential Floors

The first floor of the building includes the most features and amenities. In addition to the three two-bedroom units that face Washington Avenue and the main door for the building on Thornton Street, this level contains nine one-bedroom units, a fitness center, property management office, and an outdoor courtyard for common use (see Exhibit E.). The courtyard comprises approximately 4,800 square feet. The second, third and fourth floors will each include 16 one-bedroom units (see Exhibits F, G and H.).

Floor Plans - Mix of Units

The proposal has seven different one-bedroom unit size types that would range from 520 square feet to 810 square feet (see Exhibits J, K and L; Exhibit J contains a table for the mix of units on each floor.). Two of the two-bedroom units would comprise 1,130 square feet and one would have 1,250 square feet. In addition, each unit is provided with a private deck or balcony.

Building Design and Architecture

The proposed architecture is a contemporary rectilinear design that features varying roof lines and wall planes, as well as the use of different materials, colors and finishes, specifically along each 150 feet of frontage along Washington Avenue and Thornton Street (see Exhibits Q-Y.). The highest levels of the building's roof lines would be a range of 58.67 feet when measured at the western edge to 63.3 feet when measured along Washington Avenue (eastern edge) of the site (see Exhibits M-P.). The building exterior consists of multiple colors of stucco, stone or brick, and horizontal siding. Most balconies will be appointed with ornamental metal railings. The rooflines will be finished with a cornice. The main door to the building facing Thornton Street will be punctuated with a brick or stone arch and the entry doors recessed within the arch and constructed with glass. The driveway to the parking garage and the trash enclosure/utility area would be secured by roll up metal grilles.

STAFF ANALYSIS

In the initial concept plan, the applicant proposed an initial design that was four stories of multi-family residential that had 38 units made up of four one-bedroom units, 26 two-bedrooms units, and eight three-bedroom units. The parking spaces were partially subterranean and would have satisfied the minimum 1.5 spaces per unit with 57 spaces. An outdoor courtyard was also included in the design. Although the project conformed to the basic zoning requirements, the rental income for the project would not support the project costs.

In addition, the applicant studied a second design of row houses/townhouses that consisted of 14 three-bedroom townhouses, with each unit having a two-car garage. The project would have been under the allowed density for the area, however the project costs could not be supported by the income.

After going through the first two design concepts, the applicant's team concluded that the only way to make the project financially feasible was by increasing the density and decreasing the size of the units. The "price point" for smaller one bedroom units allows a higher price per square foot rental while keeping the actual rents within a competitive "price point" of other rental units within the market area.

The applicant proceeded with the current iteration where the 60 unit project's footprint, height and mass fit within the building envelope of the original 38 unit design. Subterranean parking was included to increase the parking count to 1.27 spaces per unit, or 76 spaces. In addition, various amenities and design criteria that enhance the quality of the living environment and appearance of the project were added by the applicant. Some of the amenities and enhancements have already been listed previously in this report, but are summarized as follow:

1. The building footprint or massing is not any larger than what could be permitted as a 38 unit project.
2. The exterior architecture of the building is well articulated so that it is not massive in appearance.
3. The units along Washington Avenue have been placed at street level and its stoops and porches are connected to the sidewalk.
4. The vehicle driveway and vehicle parking are de-emphasized in the design.
5. There is a large usable outdoor courtyard which would be furnished for residents.
6. A fitness center for residents.
7. An on-site property management office.

In addition, the proposed project will have a positive impact on public transit ridership and on downtown revitalization.

In the General Plan, the subject property is designated Downtown Mixed Use (MUD). It is zoned Downtown Area 1 District (DA-1). In the Zoning Code, multi-family residential in the DA-1 District requires a Conditional Use Permit (Zoning Code Section 2-636 B. 23.). The minimum density is 35 units per acre (one unit per 1,245 square feet) and the maximum density is 75 units per acre (one unit per 581 square feet). Thus the 0.52 acre site would permit a maximum of 39 units. The required parking in the DA Districts, not adjacent to BART, is 1.5 spaces per unit. The proposed building height of 63.3 feet is below the maximum permitted height of 75 feet in the DA-1 District.

The proposed 60-unit project on 0.52 acre equals 115 units per acre and the parking that will be provided is 1.27 spaces per unit. The appropriate application for the project is a Planned Development (Zoning Code, Article 10), but at future public hearings, the Planning Commission and the City Council will consider whether to allow the proposed exception to density and parking requirements, and other flexibility for site planning and designing the building. The Planning Commission, and ultimately the City Council, may use its discretion in approving a development project with exceptions based on the merits of the proposed project.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Once a formal application has been made, staff will review the project and prepare the necessary environmental documentation under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

PUBLIC OUTREACH

As a courtesy, notices for the work session were mailed to the property owners and business owners within 500 feet of the subject property, the Peralta Citizens Homeowners Association and the Downtown Business Improvement District Association. In addition, notices were posted on utility

poles adjacent to the subject property.

ATTACHMENTS

Applicant's Supporting Statement

Vicinity Map

Exhibit A - Location Plan - Site Plan (Cover Sheet), C0.0

Exhibit B - Site Survey Existing Conditions, C1.1

Exhibit C - Garage, Entry Floor Plan, Street Level, A2.0

Exhibit D - Garage Subterranean, 1/2 Floor below Street Level, A2.0a

Exhibit E - First Floor Residential, Second Floor Structure, A2.1

Exhibit F - Second Floor Residential, Third Floor Structure, A2.2

Exhibit G - Third Floor Residential, Fourth Floor Structure, A2.3

Exhibit H - Fourth Floor Residential, Fifth Floor Structure, A2.4

Exhibit I - Roof Plan, A2.5

Exhibit J - Individual Unit Plans 1A-1C, A2.6

Exhibit K - Individual Unit Plans 1D-1G, A2.7

Exhibit L - Individual Unit Plans 2A-2B, A2.8

Exhibit M - Exterior Elevations South and East, A3.1

Exhibit N - Exterior Elevations South and East (Rendered), A3.1a

Exhibit O - Exterior Elevations North and West, A3.2

Exhibit P - Exterior Building Sections, A3.3

Exhibit Q - Perspective East Elevation Facing Washington Avenue (Stone Façade)

Exhibit R - Perspective East Elevation Facing Washington Avenue (Brick Façade)

Exhibit S - Perspective Corner Facing Washington Avenue and Thornton Street (Stone Façade)

Exhibit T - Perspective Corner of Washington Avenue and Thornton Street (Brick Façade)

Exhibit U - Perspective South Elevation Facing Thornton Street (Stone Façade)

Exhibit V - Perspective South Elevation Facing Thornton Street (Brick Façade)

Exhibit W - Perspective South Elevation Western Corner (Stone Façade)

Exhibit X - Perspective South Elevation Western Corner (Brick Façade)

Exhibit Y - Perspective Courtyard

Aerial and Street views of the Subject Property