

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: FEBRUARY 7, 2000

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT AND ZONE CHANGE FOR THE PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 1880 & 1900 N. FAIR OAKS AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council following a public hearing:

1. Adopt the Initial Environmental Study and the Negative Declaration (Attachment 2); and
2. Approve the De Minimis Impact on the State Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Attachment 3); and
3. Find that the proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Change is consistent with the General Plan, as stated in the body of the report; and
4. Approve the General Plan Amendment from MDR (Medium Density Residential, 0-16 units) to Institutional as shown in the attached map (Attachment 1), and direct the City Attorney to prepare a resolution; and
5. Approve the Zone Change from RM-16 (Multi-family Residential, 0-16 units/acre) to PS (Public and Semi-Public) as shown in the attached map (Attachment 1), and direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance; and
6. Direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination (Attachment 4) and a Certificate of Fee Exemption for the California Department of Fish and Game, with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission considered this case at a public hearing on January 12, 2000. Expressing concerns about the project's density, the Commission unanimously voted to deny:

1. The General Plan Amendment from MDR (Medium Density Residential, 0-16 units) to Institutional; and
2. The Zone Change from RM-16 (Multi-family Residential, 0-16 units/acre) to PS (Public and Semi-Public).

NORTHWEST COMMISSION

The proposal was presented to the Northwest Commission for review and comments at its December 8, 1999, meeting. Several members of the Commission expressed concern about the maximum density the PS zone would allow for senior housing, and questioned the

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appropriateness of the development standards that would result from the proposed PS zone. In addition, the Commission did not feel it was necessary to increase the area's existing density. As a result, the Northwest Commission recommended denial of the proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Change.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 10, 1999, Southern California Presbyterian Homes (SCPH) and Beacon Housing ("applicant") submitted an application for a General Plan Amendment and Zone Change for the properties located at 1880 and 1900 N. Fair Oaks Avenue. The project site is currently zoned RM-16 (Multi-family residential/0-16 units/acre), and has a General Plan Land Use designation of MDR (Medium-Density Residential/0-16 units/acre). The applicant is proposing to change the zone to PS (Public & Semi-Public), and the General Plan Land Use designation to Institutional. If approved, the applicant is proposing to demolish an existing single-family structure and a vacant institutional building to construct a three-story, sixty-five (65) unit, affordable senior citizen housing complex. A recent zoning code amendment, approved by the City Council on December 6, 1999, conditionally permits affordable senior citizen housing within the PS zoning district.

Approval of the proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Change will increase development opportunities at the site as greater flexibility is provided by the new General Plan and Zoning designations. In addition, the uses allowed as a result of the proposal will be compatible with and will benefit from the existing surrounding uses. The existing vacant building and blighted conditions at the site can be eliminated, and new development with the appropriate density and design, established in the conditional use permit process, will improve the appearance of the intersection and quality of life for residents in the area.

ANALYSIS

This proposal will amend the properties' Land Use and zoning designations to allow affordable senior citizen housing within 500 feet of a hospital or medical office, and other institutional uses such as schools, government offices, churches, etc. Affordable senior housing will be allowed at a density up to 48 units/acre with a 50% density bonus. All uses allowed within the PS district, including affordable senior housing, are conditionally permitted. Therefore, any project at this site will require detailed review to determine appropriate standards in relation to the proposed use and the surrounding area.

The proposed PS zoning designation allows many of the same uses currently allowed in the existing RM-16 designation (multi-family residential, churches, schools, cultural institutions, etc.). Similarly, a conditional use permit is also required for all uses, other than residential projects, in RM-16 districts. Therefore, the proposed change in designation is unlikely to create significant land use incompatibilities. The difference between the two zoning designations, with regards to the multi-family residential use, is the provision in the PS district allowing an increase in density for senior housing that is affordable and is within 500 feet of a hospital or medical office.

Due to the proximity of the project site to the Pasadena Community Health Center and other institutional uses in the area, the proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Change would essentially be an extension of the existing PS zone in the area. The uses allowed as a result of the new PS designation are compatible with, and will benefit from being adjacent to the

Health Center. In addition, the uses allowed, especially senior housing, will benefit greatly from being located close to the transit opportunities along Fair Oaks. Locating senior housing near existing medical offices, and existing and future transit services, is consistent with the objectives of the Land Use Element's transit oriented development policies. The appropriateness of having affordable senior housing, along with the other similar uses allowed in the PS district, was the basis for the recent PS code amendment to allow senior housing within 500 feet of a hospital or medical office.

The North Fair Oaks Zoning Study, prepared in April, 1999 as part of the Fair Oaks/Orange Grove Specific Plan process, notes that from an economic perspective, "Multi-family development appears to be more feasible than single family development in the North Fair Oaks corridor." Current market conditions, and staff's contact with developers, suggest that the private sector recognizes that opportunities for multi-family development and senior housing in the area exist. Re-zoning the property to a zoning designation that allows increased flexibility will provide greater opportunity for development to occur and eliminate the existing blighted conditions. Multi-family housing at an appropriate density is a feasible land use for much of the North Fair Oaks corridor, and independent senior housing could occupy a portion of this function, while also providing synergy with the Health Center.

Higher densities are frequently sought by developers to address the land and construction costs to make the affordable housing feasible. However, by conditionally permitting this type of use, there is an opportunity to carefully consider certain standards such as density at this site, particularly because of its history.

Development Proposal

If the General Plan Amendment and Zone Change are approved, the applicant is proposing to demolish two structures and construct a senior housing complex. The building is proposed to be 3-stories and will not exceed 45 feet in height. As the project has been submitted, parking for 31 vehicles is proposed. All of the units will be independent living units at affordable rental rates. The project also shows a thirty-foot front setback, and ten-foot rear and side setback. However, specifics to the development standards related to the proposed project will be established and reviewed in accordance with the proposed General Plan and Zoning designations during the conditional use permit process.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

A neighborhood meeting was held December 15, 1999 at the Jackie Robinson Center. The residents who attended were opposed to the proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Change. They considered that the existing RM-16 and MDR designations were appropriate for the area in terms of density and uses allowed, and that they should not be changed. They were not in opposition to the type of use proposed, however, specific issues were raised regarding the proposed density, parking, landscaping, and height. Staff explained that the appropriateness of these standards will be reviewed during the conditional use permit process, and necessary changes will be recommended at that time.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

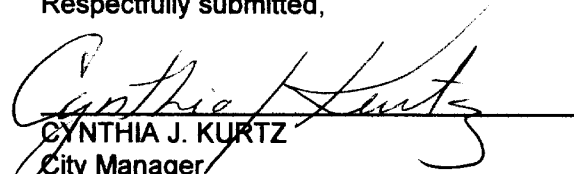
An initial study was conducted on the proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Change, and is included in this report as Attachment 2. The initial study concluded that the General

Plan Amendment and Zone Change, in and of itself, would not result in significant environmental impacts. In addition, there will be no impact on fish and wildlife and staff is recommending the adoption of a de minimis finding.

FISCAL IMPACT

Applying the new General Plan and Zoning designations to the subject site will result in additional staff time necessary to review new projects through the CUP process. The application fees collected for new development projects are intended to cover the additional workload that results from such proposals.

Respectfully submitted,


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City Manager

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Approved by:



Darrell Lewis
Director of Planning and Permitting

Attachments

1. Map of Proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Change Area
2. Initial Environmental Study and Negative Declaration
3. De Minimis Impact Finding
4. Notice of Determination
5. Site Plan & Elevations of Proposed Senior Housing Development