

- 5 [15-0189](#) **FILE #:** 2015-7636
Location: 838 Azure Street and 842 Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road (APN: 211-18-030)
Proposed Project:
 General Plan Amendment Initiation request to study changing the General Plan from Low Density Residential to Low Medium Density Residential.
Applicant/Owner: Xin Lu (owner)
Project Planner: Gerri Caruso, (408) 730-7591, gcaruso@sunnyvale.ca.gov
Environmental Review: Not required to initiate a General Plan study. The potential General Plan change and future projects will be subject to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Trudi Ryan, Planning Officer, presented the staff report.

Comm. Olevson clarified with Ms. Ryan the definition of the General Plan designations Residential Low Density (RLO) and Residential Low Medium Density (RLM).

Comm. Simons commented on few areas in the City being designated for large lot homes, and confirmed with Ms. Ryan that most single family residential lots are designated RLO and that lots measuring a third of an acre have mostly disappeared.

Chair Melton and Ms. Ryan discussed the scale of the conceptual site plan and the size of the proposed units on the property.

Chair Melton opened the public hearing.

Roger Griffin, with Paragon Design Group representing the applicants, discussed the reasoning behind and benefits of initiating the General Plan Amendment (GPI) study.

Joseph Cammarata, a Sunnyvale resident living near the subject property, discussed his opposition to the request and expressed concern with the current traffic situation. Chair Melton confirmed with Mr. Cammarata that there is no driveway into the subject property on Azure Street.

Joe Vojvoda, a nearby Sunnyvale resident, discussed his concern with the liquidambar trees on the subject site and requested that they be removed if a General Plan Amendment (GPA) is approved. Comm. Simons and Mr. Vojvoda discussed the frequency with which a resident can request removal of a

liquidambar tree.

Mr. Griffin addressed Commissioners' and neighbors' concerns.

Chair Melton closed the public hearing.

Comm. Klein moved to recommend to City Council Alternative 1 to initiate a General Plan Amendment study to consider changing the site designation from Residential Low Density (RLO 0-7 dwelling units per acre) to Residential Low Medium Density (RLM 7-14 dwelling units per acre), and to consider possible RLM zoning designations of R 1.5, R 1.7 and R 2.

Comm. Olevson seconded.

Comm. Klein said this is a transitional property when you are looking at the density north and south of it, and that changing the configuration and closing down that driveway exit onto Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road would be a big benefit in the long run if and when this property is developed in the future. He said this is one step toward staff and Council looking at the request to change the zoning designation on the property, and that removing the driveway and adding homeownership opportunities in the neighborhood is a positive change. He said he understands the neighbor's concern about density, and that he would like staff to look at working with other departments to determine what issues are happening here and whether traffic calming measures should be put in place to alleviate some of the issues with pass through traffic coming into this neighborhood. He said rezoning the property is in line with General Plan goals and is appropriate for this site.

Comm. Olevson said he is supporting the motion based on the comments of the owner wanting to upgrade this area, and that having a transitional property makes sense, but that he does not know that with certainty. He said hearing the comments from the neighbors, it is clear that we have many unknowns and a study is entirely appropriate to determine if this makes sense for Sunnyvale and this neighborhood. He said because we are not here to discuss a specific design, a study of transitional zoning makes sense.

Comm. Simons said he will be voting against the motion partly because when you study it you do change it, mostly if it is converted to a different designation. He said this is potentially a lost opportunity for a large lot house which is rare, and he feels the same way with industrial areas that get converted to housing. He noted that he is not against the Industrial-to-Residential (ITR) designation and has watched the City convert large sections, but that large contiguous areas are a rare thing, and we

lose the ability to host large corporate headquarters when that land is lost. He said here we are creating more of the same housing that is very plentiful in the City, and that it may not even be appropriate to get a 6,000 square foot house or two smaller homes connected as one place. He said he is not expecting four houses but five houses on this site because that is what the zoning allows, and he recommended staff look into having the liquidambar trees taken out.

Chair Melton said he will be supporting the motion and quoted Mayor Jim Griffith who has said he loves studying things especially when he does not have to pay for them. He noted that the fiscal impact of developing the property and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements will be covered by the applicant. He said he supposes it is worth studying a zoning change of one lot that is adjacent to another, but that the prospect of this change is very underwhelming. He said some good could come out of it by getting a driveway off of Sunnyvale-Saratoga and getting some traffic calming measures in place, but he will reserve judgment until a later time. He added that he is willing to study it and that would be his recommendation to City Council.

MOTION: Comm. Klein moved to recommend to City Council Alternative 1 to initiate a General Plan Amendment study to consider changing the site designation from Residential Low Density (RLO 0-7 dwelling units per acre) to Residential Low Medium Density (RLM 7-14 dwelling units per acre), and to consider possible RLM zoning designations of R 1.5, R 1.7 and R 2.

Comm. Olevson seconded. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Melton
Vice Chair Harrison
Commissioner Olevson
Commissioner Klein
Commissioner Rheaume

No: 1 - Commissioner Simons