



The Corn Palace - Developer Staff Report

March 11, 2019

Property address: 1142 Dahlia Court, Sunnyvale, California (aka: The Corn Palace)

APN: 213-12-001

General Plan: Residential Low/Med

Zoning: R-1.5/PD

Gross Site Area per Title Report: 8.8 gross acres

Number of home proposed: 58 single-family 2-story homes (sizes 2,600 to 2,900 sq. ft.)

Gross Density: 6.6 homes per gross acre

Gross FAR: 0.48

Toyon, Lily and Dahlia Street improvements: 0.7 acres

Public Park dedication and purchase: 2.0 acres

Net Site Area: 6.1-acres

Net Density: 9.5 home per net acre

Net FAR: 0.71

Trumark is pleased to present a residential development proposal for 58 single-family detached homes on the Corn Palace site. Trumark Homes is a local home builder and land developer based in San Ramon. We have been developing residential communities for over 3 decades throughout the greater Bay Area. In 2018 Trumark won National Master Plan Community of the Year for the 5th year in a row, and we were named Homebuilder of the Year by Professional Builder Magazine. These great honors prove Trumark cares about the quality of home and community we build.

We met with Planning Commission back in October at a Study Session. Following your guidance we have made many changes which we would like to share with you tonight. We have worked extremely hard with Staff to create a distinctive high-quality home design style that pays respect to the historical character of Sunnyvale's architectural fabric and specifically, the Corn Palace site. Just as Commissioner Weiss asked, we have created an essence of the History through our architecture, paying respect to the rich agrarian character and story this site carries. The Heritage Committee echoed this sentiment asking for the park to also portray an agrarian character.

Trumark is very proud of the refinements made based on your direction and input from Staff and the Heritage Committee. We re-imagined the theme as a contemporary agrarian character that will blend the past with the current and future. A timeless design that is simple and authentic. Corn Palace has a legacy in Sunnyvale that needs to be remembered. The future 2-acre park is located exactly where the produce stand sold fresh goods for over 100 years. Every park needs a shade structure, right? That's exactly what the Corn Palace was; a shade-structure that kept the fruit, and shoppers, cool in the summer harvest season. The future park will be shaped by the community just like Seven-Seas Park and look how great that one turned out. Staff and the Heritage Committee have guided us to design our new neighborhood in a distinctive and appropriate theme based on the sites history. We have selected

an Agrarian style with contemporary elements. The details may remind you of orchard homes and their families, but they are built with modern windows, technology, efficiency and functionality for today's families.

Staff asked us to simplify the proposal to make it more coherent. We achieved this by removing 1 of the previous 5 floor plans and focusing on 2 strong elevation styles with 3 color schemes each. This means we have 24 different elevation and color combinations for 58 homes. Essentially only 2 homes across 5 blocks will have the same combination. The attention to detail is both exhaustive and exciting as seen in the conceptual architecture submittal set. The attention to detail including setbacks by design, varied materials, windows, authentic character elements, lighting and colors, work together to create a timeless high-quality neighborhood design aesthetic that blends into its surroundings.

Let's not forget landscaping. Trumark will design and install character enhancing landscaped front yards at the beginning, and all front yards will be HOA maintained in perpetuity.

Equally important to what the homes look like from the street is who the homes are designed for and how they live. Historically, Sunnyvale and more specifically, the existing Corn Palace neighborhood is one of the greatest places to raise a family. We are proposing 58 single family detached 2-story homes perfect for raising a family. As many of us have found out, raising a family requires a wide variety of home configurations. Raising a family today is not just taking kids to soccer practice. Raising a family today may also involve taking care of aging parents, or accommodating a boomerang kid needing a home after college to save money. Another fast-growing need at home is the ability to accommodate a home office. Homes of the past were not designed with this appropriate flexibility. A modern home is both adaptable, and responsible, meaning Net-Zero by next year.

Trumark has engaged a Green Point consultant to help us make sure that, early in the process, we are targeting a minimum 110 Green Point home based on the 2016 Green Point System. 80 is the minimum requirement. By adding solar to these homes, Trumark would be near 140 green points. We are all waiting to see the 2019 California Building Code so we can prepare for exceeding Net-Zero 2020 State guidelines and achieving a minimum 110 Green Points.

Finally, at Study Session, many of you questioned the proposed density. Based on current General Plan and Zoning, the site allows a maximum of 61 homes. We are already at the top end of the density range. Staff, Trumark and the neighbors mostly agree that maintaining an R-1.5, 2-story family-oriented detached home is most appropriate in this location. The streets and infrastructure was not designed to handle increased capacity. The previous discussions about 101 homes may have been favored by some, but not those living in and maintaining this neighborhood. For example, Toyon and Lily streets are not collector streets. I could see the point for this intensity if the site was allowed access from Lawrence expressway, but otherwise increasing density would choke this neighborhood.

Staff and Trumark believe the current proposal of 58 single-family homes is the appropriate density. This balance provides a diverse modern family-oriented home configuration to meet a wide-variety of modern families. Our 4 floor plans range from 2600 to 2900 square feet of living area allowing a variety of plans from 3 bedroom + office to 5 bedroom configurations – All plans have a bedroom or den on the ground floor, perfect for extended families, or working from home.

2 Deviation requests: FAR and Setbacks

The Trumark Homes Corn Palace proposal is supported by Staff except for 2 deviations to R1.5 standards: FAR and Setbacks. What we heard at our October 2018 Study Session was that the Commission was more concerned with design quality than exactly meeting FAR and Setback guidelines. Chair Rheaume asked for better quality, less tract-like, distinctive designs. Commissioner Howe was Okay with the FAR being relaxed to achieve density. Commissioner Oleusen asked us to pay attention to privacy.

FAR:

Floor Area Ratio is a planning tool often used for retail, commercial and industrial control, but much less often used for residential development control. It is a math calculation not a living calculation that is arguably out of touch with today's housing conditions, which is why most other communities don't use Floor Area Ratio's for housing and are adjusting their standards to allow more house and less lot. FAR is a math equation that doesn't align with how people want to live because a strict FAR requirement mandates that the homebuyer pays a significant portion of their mortgage on their yard, rather than their livable square footage. The high cost of housing in the Bay Area is not primarily a result of construction costs, it's a result of the incredible cost of land. As a result it's important and responsible to consider the major impact to housing affordability when the buyer is forced to dedicate a large part of their housing budget to excessive setbacks and unwanted yard. You don't live in your FAR, you live in your house.

The Corn Palace project presented to you contains 58 homes and a 2-acre park on 8.1 acres of land. The proposed FAR for the 8.1-acre project equals 0.48 FAR which is under the 0.5 FAR maximum. However, Staff is saying the 2-acre park is not a part of the project, therefore, they are not counting it in the FAR calculation. Therefore, according to Staff, the project FAR is 0.69. Trumark's original proposal did not consider a 2-acre park with only 58 homes on the site.

Traditional family oriented housing in Sunnyvale like the homes surrounding the Corn Palace site need particular spaces. We have designed our homes with the first floor of each home having a family gathering room, a kitchen, a place for the family to eat together, a bedroom for elderly parents, which may also be used as a den, a bathroom, a 2-car garage and a 2-car front driveway. The ground floor spaces are also designed to integrate with adequate outdoor living areas supporting outdoor dining and outdoor cooking. In order to meet the 0.5 FAR mandate without including the 2-acres of Corn Palace land for the park in the calculation, we would need to remove roughly 900 square feet from each second floor. 900 square feet is larger than a 4-car garage and leaves us with only enough room for 1 bedroom and 1 bathroom on the second floor. This is not a traditional family-oriented home.

A few years ago, Toll Brothers built homes on the West half of the Corn Palace property ranging from 2900 to 3200 square feet on 6,000 square foot lots. The difference between that phase and Trumark's is the City didn't take 2-acres away from Toll Brothers for a park like has been required of this property. If we had the 2-acres to spread evenly across the 58 proposed lots, we would have similar sized yards and a similar FAR as across the street.

Please consider this point of view: instead of 3,000 square foot homes on 6,000 square foot lots, Trumark is asking 58 future homeowners to collectively amass their excess yard areas into a 2-acre

community benefit to be shared by all in the area. This becomes a win-win for everyone because the 58 new residents don't want the yard in the first place.

1. They don't want to mow their lawns on Saturday. They want to walk over to the maintained park and play catch or throw the Frisbee around with their neighbors, and while at home, they still have a modern integrated indoor/outdoor patio home lifestyle with minimal maintenance.
2. By not having the 20' rear yard and 20' front yard, they save roughly \$500,000 on their mortgage. Equal function for a lower price. Building a home in Sunnyvale costs the same as anywhere else in the greater Bay Area, but the cost of the land is where housing costs escalate in Sunnyvale – the land needed for large front yards, back yards, side yards, and full 2-car driveway aprons is the number one factor driving up housing costs in Sunnyvale.

Please allow the FAR deviation keeping in mind that if Staff included the park acreage in the FAR calculation, no deviation would be necessary. Regardless of the FAR calculation, please acknowledge that the homes and neighborhood are of high quality design and function for families to live indoor and out.

Setbacks:

Staff sent us to visit many existing neighborhoods in Sunnyvale, including the Merritt Terrace and Alberta/Reston Terrace neighborhoods to study acceptable setbacks, and also told us to focus on front setbacks over rear setbacks. All of the neighborhoods studied had varying degrees of allowed and approved variances of sub-standard setbacks. At the direction of Staff, we studied these neighborhoods and have designed something better. As you can see, our homes have outstanding second floor setbacks toward the fronts where viewed from the public realm. We also focused on 2nd floor side setbacks paying attention to privacy issues such as bedroom and bathroom window alignments between homes, giving more setbacks where privacy is needed. First and second floor setbacks also vary to create interest, undulation and openness where needed most. The setbacks proposed are not blazing a new trail in Sunnyvale. Accepting these setbacks is not going out on a limb or setting a new precedent. Accepting the setbacks as designed at Corn Palace also comes with a 2-acre park, which none of the other neighborhoods you sent us to study included.

As mentioned in the FAR discussion, a 20' front yard and 20' rear yard add roughly \$500,000 to a mortgage in Sunnyvale. We are asking these be allowed to be reduced to help lower the cost of home ownership.

To summarize, we are bringing the community a 2-acre park, and 58 distinctive high-quality family-oriented homes. We are asking for reasonable relief from 2 standards that have been thoughtfully addressed. The deviations are NOT trail blazing, they have been allowed in Sunnyvale; they are not setting new precedent; you are not going out on a limb to approve. The deviations are only affecting these new 58 home owners, they are not affecting existing neighbors. The new home buyers will know what they are buying and appreciate more home at a lower cost with a new park down the street instead of yard to maintain.