



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

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)

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).

Project Planner: Gerri Caruso, (408) 730-7591, gcaruso@sunnyvale.ca.gov

BACKGROUND

General Plan Amendment Initiation (GPI) requests are heard on a quarterly basis through a recommendation from the Planning Commission and then action by the City Council. The process for considering a General Plan begins with a written request from a property owner or applicant. If Council approves the GPI, a formal application for a General Plan Amendment (GPA) can be filed by the property owner/applicant. While staff is processing the GPA application, the applicant may also file a project application and related items as applicable for concurrent processing. However, the City Council would need to approve the GPA before the project could be scheduled for a Planning Commission hearing.

Staff received a GPI request from the applicant (property owner) on July 30, 2015 (Attachment 1, Applicant Letter dated July 24, 2015 and Photos) to change the General Plan for 838 Azure Street and 842 Sunnyvale Saratoga Road, which consists of two addresses on one 0.34-acre parcel. The current General Plan designation is Residential Low Density (RLO 0-7 dwelling units per acre) (Attachment 2, General Plan Map). An RLO designation allows up to two dwelling units on the site.

The applicant is requesting that the General Plan designation be changed to Residential Low-Medium Density (RLM 7-14 dwelling units per acre). Depending on the zoning designation, an RLM designation could allow 3-5 dwelling units on the site. The applicant's current plan is to put four homes on the site. There are currently two single-family homes on the property. Both would be demolished to make room for a new development. The applicant has submitted a conceptual site plan showing how four units could be accommodated on the site with access from Azure Street.

Staff recommends Alternative 1 to initiate the General Plan Amendment study. Hearings for related projects would be reviewed at separate hearings.

EXISTING POLICY

The General Plan is the primary policy plan that guides the physical development of the City. When used together with a larger body of City Council policies, it provides direction for decision-making on City services and resources. The General Plan contains long-term goals and policies for the next 10-20 years and strategic actions for the next 5-10 years. Primary goals and policies pertaining to residential development that are relevant to the proposed amendment include the following:

Goal LT-3 Appropriate Mix of Housing - Ensure ownership and rental housing options in terms of style, size and density that are appropriate and contribute positively to the surrounding area.

Policy LT-3.4 - Determine appropriate density for housing based on site planning opportunities and proximity to services.

Action LT-3.4b - Locate lower-density housing in proximity to existing lower-density housing.

Goal LT-4 Preserve and enhance the quality character of Sunnyvale's industrial, commercial and residential neighborhoods by promoting land use patterns and related transportation opportunities that are supportive of the neighborhood concept.

Policy LT-4.1 - Protect the integrity of the City's neighborhoods; whether residential, industrial or commercial.

Action LT-4.1a Limit the intrusion of incompatible uses and inappropriate development into city neighborhoods.

Policy LT-4.2 Require new development to be compatible with the neighborhood, adjacent land uses and the transportation system.

Action LT-4.2a Integrate new development and redevelopment into existing neighborhoods.

Policy LT-4.4 Preserve and enhance the high quality character of residential neighborhoods.

Action LT-4.4a Require infill development to compliment the character of the residential neighborhood.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Environmental Review is 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).

DISCUSSION

The applicant's request is to amend the General Plan from Residential Low Density to Residential Low-Medium Density. The City Council may approve a General Plan Amendment upon finding that the amendment, as proposed, changed or modified is deemed to be in the public interest.

The project site is located on the east side of Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road just south of the split between Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road and Mathilda Avenue. It is on the western edge of a single-family neighborhood that is zoned R-O, Low Density Residential, and is immediately bordered to the north by a 59-unit neighborhood that is developed at low medium density (R-2/PD) (Attachment 3, Zoning Map).

The applicant has indicated the desire to construct four homes where there are currently two (Attachment 4, Conceptual Site Plan). A General Plan designation of Residential Low-Medium Density could correspond with development with either of the R-1.5, R-1.7 or R-2 zoning designations all with slightly different minimum lot size requirements resulting in three to five dwelling

units. If initiated, the proposed General Plan change would consider whether the site could be redeveloped with three to five dwelling units in a manner that could provide a reasonable land use transition with the adjacent low density neighborhood.

As part of the General Plan study, an appropriate zoning designation would also be considered. If General Plan and zoning changes are approved by the City Council, a project application can be considered at a subsequent Planning Commission hearing.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts associated with initiating a General Plan or Specific Plan Amendment study. All development processing and CEQA costs will be covered by the applicant.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact for the City Council hearing was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Senior Center, Community Center and Department of Public Safety; and by making the agenda and report available at the Sunnyvale Public Library, the Office of the City Clerk and on the City's website. Notices were sent to all property owners within 300 feet of the site (122 owners, Attachment 5, Location and noticing map); an email message with the notice was sent to the Cherry Orchard and Stratford Gardens neighborhood associations.

This application was heard by the Planning Commission at a public hearing on September 28, 2015. Two members of the public spoke, and the Commission recommended that Council 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 (Recommendation Alternative 1). Although not part of the formal motion, the Commission suggested that traffic calming in the neighborhood could be evaluated (based on comments from a member of the public). Minutes from that hearing are attached (Attachment 6).

ALTERNATIVES

1. 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.
2. Initiate a General Plan Amendment study to consider Residential Medium Density (RMED 14-27 dwelling units per acre).
3. Do not initiate a General Plan Amendment study.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: 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.

A Residential Low-Medium density project could be an appropriate transition between the adjacent Residential Low Density neighborhood to the south of the project site and the Residential Low-Medium Density (R-2/PD) neighborhood to the north of the site.

Prepared by: Gerri Caruso, Principal Planner
Reviewed by: Trudi Ryan, Planning Officer
Reviewed by: Hanson Hom, Director of Community Development
Reviewed by: Kent Steffens, Assistant City Manager
Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Applicant's Letter dated July 24, 2015 and Photos
2. General Plan Map of Site and Vicinity
3. Zoning Map of Site and Vicinity
4. Applicant's Conceptual Site Plan
5. Location and Noticing Map
6. Planning Commission Minutes of September 28, 2015