



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

File #: 18-0371, Version: 1

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Proposed Project: A request for a Downtown Specific Plan Amendment Initiation to study changes to the development intensities and standards for Block 20 of the Downtown Specific Plan to increase the number of allowable residential units, an increase to the square footage of office allowed, and an increase in building height to allow up to five stories.

File #: 2018-7034

Location: 510 and 528 S. Mathilda Ave. (APNs: 209-29-060 and 061) and 562 and 566 S. Mathilda Ave. (APNs: 209-29-057 and 067)

Zoning: DSP (Block 20)

Applicant / Owner: SiliconSage Builders, LLC (applicant and owner 562 and 566 S. Mathilda Ave.) and Shawn Karimi (applicant and owner 510 and 528 S. Mathilda Ave.)

Environmental Review: The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(a).

Project Planner: Cindy Hom, (408) 730-7411, chom@sunnyvale.ca.gov

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION ACTION

The Planning Commission considered this item on April 9, 2018.

The Planning Commission voted to recommend initiation of a Specific Plan Amendment per the staff recommendation (Alternative 1), with additional study items:

- i) Revise design standards to ensure good architectural design and detailing, specifically at the ground floor pedestrian level.
- j) Improve the overall streetscape design on Mathilda frontage along Block 20, including sidewalk width, tree wells, and plant selection to accommodate estate size trees and tree shading.

The Planning Commission expressed interest in ensuring an active street experience along Mathilda Avenue, with the proposed office uses on the ground floor relating to the sidewalk. The vote was 6-0 with Commissioner Rheaume recusing himself due to a conflict of interest under the Political Reform Act.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact 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.

Several speakers provided input at the Planning Commission hearing, with most comments from

nearby residents on Taaffe Street voicing general support of the proposed amendments, and enforcing the staff recommendation to not allow additional height for future buildings beyond the current 40-foot height limitation (see Attachment 8 for Planning Commission minutes).

ALTERNATIVES

1. Initiate a Downtown Specific Plan Amendment study to consider amending the Downtown Specific Plan and provide direction to study/coordinate:
 - a) Entire Block 20
 - b) Change to Primary Uses land use designation from High Density Residential/Office to Mixed Use;
 - c) Increase in maximum number of residential units, before any allowed density bonuses from 51 to 103 and densities no greater than the DSP Transit Mixed Use Designation (65 units to the acres);
 - d) Increase in maximum office/commercial area from 16,400 square feet to 36,500 square feet;
 - e) No increase in height limit;
 - f) Updated development standards and design guidelines for proposed changes;
 - g) Traffic analysis, market and fiscal analyses, environmental, public infrastructure and utility capacity, and parking, etc.; and,
 - h) Community outreach and engagement.
 - i) Revise design standards to ensure good architectural design and detailing, specifically at the ground floor pedestrian level (*added by the Planning Commission*)
 - j) Improve the overall streetscape design on Mathilda frontage along Block 20, including sidewalk width, tree wells, and plant selection to accommodate estate size trees and tree shading (*added by the Planning Commission*).
2. Alternative 1, with modifications, such as applicants' requests for additional height or that the land uses to be studied would only apply to their properties.
3. Do not initiate a Specific Plan Amendment study and leave the current development capacity, land uses and development standards in place.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Initiate a Downtown Specific Plan Amendment study to consider amending the Downtown Specific Plan and provide direction to study/coordinate:

- a) Entire Block 20
- b) Change to Primary Uses land use designation from High Density Residential/Office to Mixed Use;
- c) Increase in maximum number of residential units, before any allowed density bonuses from 51 to 103 and densities no greater than the DSP Transit Mixed Use Designation (65 units to the acres);
- d) Increase in maximum office/commercial area from 16,400 square feet to 36,500 square feet;
- e) No increase in height limit;
- f) Updated development standards and design guidelines for proposed changes;
- g) Traffic analysis, market and fiscal analyses, environmental, public infrastructure and utility capacity, and parking, etc.; and,
- h) Community outreach and engagement.
- i) Revise design standards to ensure good architectural design and detailing, specifically at the ground floor pedestrian level (*added by the Planning Commission*)

- j) Improve the overall streetscape design on Mathilda frontage along Block 20, including sidewalk width, tree wells, and plant selection to accommodate estate size trees and tree shading (*added by the Planning Commission*).

Staff is supportive of studying additional housing opportunities in Block 20 and to consider a small increase in allowable office/commercial redevelopment to allow existing businesses to expand and to increase housing availability. Staff is concerned that buildings five stories and up to 55 feet in height may not be compatible with the nearby residential development; staff is concerned with the residential densities requested from the applicants. The adjoining residential neighborhood includes two-story apartments less than 30-feet in height and east of that the Taaffe-Frances Heritage neighborhood with one and two-story heritage homes. Further, staff finds that considering the remaining two properties closest to El Camino would provide a more cohesive review of the land uses on this block.

Prepared by: Cindy Hom, Associate Planner

Reviewed by: Gerri Caruso, Principal Planner

Reviewed by: Andrew Miner, Assistant Director, Community Development

Reviewed by: Trudi Ryan, Director of Community Development

Approved by: Kent Steffens, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Report to Planning Commission 18-0183, April 9, 2018 (without attachments)
2. Map of Active Downtown Specific Plan Projects
3. Downtown Specific Plan Block Map
4. Relevant General Plan and DSP Policies
5. Applicant's request Letter
6. Conceptual plans
7. Nearby Land Uses Block 20

Additional Attachments for Report to Council

8. Excerpt of Minutes of the Planning Commission Meeting of April 9, 2018