



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

File #: 18-0506, Version: 1

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Proposed Project:

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT: To modify the architectural design and site layout of 94 homes (75 flats and 19 townhomes) previously approved as part of the Sunnyvale Town Center project (CityLine).

Location: 333 W. Iowa Ave., 221 W. Iowa Ave., 379 S. Sunnyvale Ave. (APNs: 209-34-020, 209-35-024, 209-35-013)

File #: 2017-7527

Zoning: DSP (Downtown Specific Plan) Block 18

Applicant / Owner: STC Venture, LLC

Environmental Review: No additional environmental review is necessary; the proposed architectural modifications are within the scope of the previous environmental analysis for the Downtown Program Improvement Update, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c)(2).

Project Planner: Noren Caliva-Lepe, (408) 730-7659, ncaliva-lepe@sunnyvale.ca.gov

REPORT IN BRIEF

General Plan: Transit Mixed-Use

Zoning: Downtown Specific Plan

Existing Site Conditions: Vacant parcels

Surrounding Land Uses

North: Public parking garages and Target (CityLine)

South: Residential, across W. Iowa Avenue

East: Residential, across S. Sunnyvale Avenue

West: Bank and S. Mathilda Avenue, across future Aries Way

Issues: Architectural design and neighborhood compatibility

Staff Recommendation: Find that the proposed modifications do not require additional CEQA review, and approve the Special Development Permit with the attached findings in Attachment 3 and conditions of approval in Attachment 4.

BACKGROUND

A master land use and site development plan for the Sunnyvale Town Center project (now referred to in this report as CityLine) that covers Block 18 of the DSP was approved by the City Council on February 6, 2007 (SDP 2007-0030). The plan envisioned a mixed-use pedestrian-oriented development with Block 18 divided into six sub-blocks (commonly referred to as Blocks 1 through 6) by extending McKinley Avenue, Murphy Avenue and Taaffe Street through the project site (see Overall CityLine Site Plan in Attachment 5).

A total of 292 residential units were approved for the overall CityLine project, of which 198 units are

currently under construction. The remaining 94 units were approved on the southern parcels facing W. Iowa Avenue, on Blocks 1, 4 and 5. The southern parcel of Block 1 was approved with 72 stacked flats within a four-story building (referred to as F-1), Block 4 was approved with eight three-story townhomes (N-1), and Block 5 was approved with 13 three-story townhomes (T-1). The 94 homes were not constructed and the parcels have remained vacant.

Description of Proposed Project

The current property owner of the Sunnyvale Town Center development, STC Venture, LLC, proposes architectural and site modifications to the approved project. Modifications primarily include shifting the mass of the F-1 building away from the Iowa Avenue street frontage, removing two townhomes from T-1 and adding two units into F-1, and a change in the architectural style of the buildings from traditional to contemporary. The project does not constitute an intensification of use, as the total number of units would remain at 94 units. The applicant currently proposes all 94 units as rental.

See Attachment 1 for a map of the vicinity and mailing area for notices and Attachment 2 for the Data Table of the project.

EXISTING POLICY

General Plan Goals and Policies: The following are key goals and policies from the Land Use and Transportation Chapter of the General Plan which pertain to the proposed project:

Policy LT-4.1 Preserve and enhance an attractive community, with a positive image, a sense of place, landscaping, and a human scale.

Policy LT-4.3 Enforce design review guidelines and zoning standards that ensure the mass and scale of new structures are compatible with adjacent structures, and also recognize the City's vision of the future for transition areas such as neighborhood Village Centers and El Camino Real nodes.

Policy LT-4.4 Avoid monotony and maintain visual interest in newly developing neighborhoods, and promote appropriate architectural diversity and variety. Encourage appropriate variations in lot sizes, setbacks, orientation of homes, and other site features.

Policy LT-5.3 Require new development, renovation, and redevelopment to be compatible and well-integrated with existing residential neighborhoods.

Policy CC-3.1 Place a priority on quality architecture and site design, which will enhance the image of Sunnyvale and create a vital and attractive environment for businesses, residents and visitors, and be reasonably balanced with the need for economic development to assure Sunnyvale's economic prosperity.

Policy HE-4.5 Provide opportunities and incentives for mixed use, multi-family infill, and transit-oriented development in Downtown Sunnyvale as part of the City's overall revitalization strategy for the area.

Downtown Specific Plan Design Guidelines: The Downtown Specific Plan Design Guidelines provide recommendations for site layout, architecture, and design. These guidelines generally encourage quality architectural design and materials that help to reduce visual bulk and mass, and require a strong pedestrian scale. The guidelines also encourage that a variety of roof forms, wall planes, and openings be used to add visual interest and allow for compatibility with surrounding

neighborhood. The proposed modifications were evaluated using these guidelines, which are further discussed in other sections of this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

No additional environmental review is necessary; the proposed architectural modifications are within the scope of the previous environmental analysis for the 2003 Downtown Program Improvement Update, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c)(2).

Active monitoring and remediation associated with groundwater and soil contamination continues on Block 5, where the T-1 townhomes are planned. The contamination was previously analyzed as part of the prior environmental analysis for the overall CityLine project and no new analysis or mitigation measures are required. Staff has added Condition of Approval E1 to ensure continued compliance with State and Federal regulations (see Recommended Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4).

DISCUSSION

Present Site Conditions

The F-1 parcel is currently vacant and enclosed by an existing 8-foot tall wooden fence. The property backs up to an existing public parking garage, referred to as PD-1. The N-1 parcel is currently an open lawn area directly in front of the Target building, which includes public parking on the ground floor with retail above. The T-1 parcel is also vacant and enclosed with a wooden fence. The adjacent public parking garage, referred to as PD-5 or “Penney’s Parking Garage”, is currently being upgraded to be consistent with the design of the two-story grocery store and theater building that is under construction (see Overall CityLine Site Plan in Attachment 5).

Special Development Permit

The proposed project maintains the general development intensity of the previously-approved project by maintaining the number of residential units, bedroom count, building stories, landscaping and parking. The following is a summary of changes requested for each parcel.

F-1:

Architecture and Site Layout

The F-1 building was previously designed as Spanish-style. The first floor included row homes leading to the public sidewalk along Iowa Avenue, with additional floor area within a mezzanine level. The upper four floors contained flats. The height of the building was approved at approximately 64 feet, with roof and architectural features reaching approximately 70 feet (see Previously-Approved Elevations in Attachment 6).

The applicant proposes to modify the architectural style to be Contemporary, with rectilinear wall and roof forms, textured off-white and brown stucco and masonry (with plaster finish), and brown horizontal siding. Decorative accents include metal canopies, decorative balcony railings and wall scoring. Front stoops are maintained along the ground-floor units from the original design. The landscaped common open area on the second floor has been relocated from the back of the building to the Iowa Avenue street frontage, and creates a visual break in the building in the upper floors. A recess on the first floor has been added to the middle of the building, with a staircase leading from the public sidewalk to the second-floor common area. In addition, the building height has been reduced to slightly over 56 feet for the main roof structure and 68 feet for additional roof projections (see Proposed Site and Architectural Plans in Attachment 8).

Staff considers the proposed architectural modifications as improvements from the original design. The contemporary architectural style and design is in keeping with the design of the other CityLine apartment buildings facing Washington Avenue and McKinley Avenue, with variations in building shapes and application of colors and materials. The varying wall and roof planes, window shapes and recesses, horizontal canopies and balconies help to reduce mass and create distinct breaks in the building stories. The pedestrian scale is reinforced with stoops and large expanses of windows on the ground floor, recessed upper floors, and a break in the middle of the building facing Iowa Avenue. The reduced building heights and overall shift in building mass away from the Iowa Avenue street frontage helps to allow for compatibility and reduced visual and privacy impacts to the adjacent neighborhood.

Circulation and Parking

The overall circulation pattern and parking is consistent with the previously-approved project, with a new driveway along Aries Way for access to on-site parking spaces tucked behind the residential units on the ground floor. Additional assigned parking spaces will be within the off-site underground parking level of PD-1, which is currently striped and secured with a chain link fence. An elevator adjacent to the secured parking spaces will lead residents to the upper floors. Agreements to allow for cross access and parking within PD-1 have already been secured.

The project complies with the minimum parking requirements by providing 75 total assigned parking spaces (one per unit), with 8 on-site parking spaces and 67 off-site spaces in PD-1, as contemplated in the original approval. In addition, the project complies with the minimum 63 unassigned/guest parking spaces that are required. A total of 37 unassigned/guest spaces are provided on-site and the remaining 26 spaces will be absorbed in the open pool of shared public parking spaces throughout the CityLine project.

Landscaping and Usable Open Space

The project conforms with the landscaping requirements with over 9,000 square feet of landscaping (27% of the lot size), and has been modified from the previously approved plan to comply with current water-efficient landscaping requirements. Landscaping consists of a combination of groundcover, shrubs, and trees within the common open space areas on the ground floor and second floor.

The project exceeds the usable open space requirement by providing approximately 114 square feet of usable open space per unit within the common open space areas, where 50 square feet minimum per unit is required. A 700 square-foot clubroom and 560 square foot fitness room is also provided on the second floor.

Trash and Recycling

The project maintains the general trash and recycling plan, with a trash room on the first floor to serve the ground-floor units and trash chutes on the upper floors. A secured trash room is located on the ground floor and the trash bins will be pulled out and staged within the loading zone area along Aries Way during pick-up times.

Conditions of Approval

Attachment 7 contains the Master List of Conditions of Approval for the larger CityLine approval as reference. Attachment 4 includes staff's recommended conditions that pertain to the architectural design of F-1, N-1 and T-1. Staff recommends Conditions A9.2, A9.3, A9.4, A9.7 and A9.8 be

removed, as they are no applicable to the revised architectural style and design of the F-1 building. No new conditions are recommended for the F-1 building.

The Department of Public Works also recommends new conditions of approval on pages 3 through 5 in Attachment 4, to clarify current City standards for right-of-way improvements and utilities.

N-1:

Architecture and Site Layout

The previous N-1 design included eight three-story townhome units facing Iowa Avenue, with one corner unit wrapping around Taaffe Avenue. The homes were designed as Contemporary in shape and form, with more traditional materials and detailing. Heights range from 33 feet to 39 feet.

The proposed project is similar in architectural style and materials as the F-1 building, with more variation in wall forms, planes and colors. Windows shapes, depth and gridding pattern is also similar to the F-1 building. The pedestrian scale includes entry stoops and private patios enclosed with 3-foot tall fences along the Iowa Avenue frontage. The rear elevation will continue to face the Target building, and includes garage entries on the ground floor. The height of the building is reduced to 32 feet 7 inches to the main roof structure, to 36 feet 7 inches at the highest roof form. Staff recommends more variation in the design of the garage doors to help create more distinction between units along the rear elevation (see Recommended Conditions of Approval A10.6 in Attachment 4).

Staff finds that the proposed modifications to N-1 help to strengthen the pedestrian scale of the building. The changes in wall plane, variety of wall and roof forms, and reduced height help to break up the visual mass from the street frontage.

Circulation and Parking

The previously-approved project included a main driveway off Iowa Avenue, with an off-site secondary access off Taaffe through the Target parking garage driveway. The proposed project maintains the Iowa driveway but limits access through the Target garage to service vehicles only, such as emergency vehicles and trash trucks. Staff finds the limitation to the secondary driveway to be an improvement, as conflicts between the vehicles of N-1 residents and the public accessing the Target parking garage are reduced.

The proposed project maintains the two-car garages per unit in the previously-approved design, where only one covered parking space minimum is required. In addition, a minimum of eight unassigned/guest parking spaces are required. Similar to F-1, the unassigned/guest parking spaces are to be absorbed in the open pool of shared public parking spaces throughout the CityLine project and not specifically on the subject property, as contemplated by the prior approval.

Landscaping and Usable Open Space

Approximately 4,428 square feet of landscaping (22% of the lot size) is provided and meets the zoning standards, and has been modified to comply with current water-efficient landscaping requirements. Landscaping consists of a combination of groundcover and shrubs. Several 24-inch box trees have been added to the corner of Iowa Avenue and Taaffe Avenue and along the driveway entrance. In addition, the landscaping strip along the north side of the driveway, adjacent to the Target parking garage, will be lined with 24-inch box Podocarpus and Coast Redwood trees. These trees help to soften the visual impact of the garage to the future N-1 residents.

The project exceeds the usable open space requirement by providing more than 50 square feet of usable open space per unit within the common landscaped areas, front patios and on the second-floor balconies. The landscaping plans also show air conditioning units within the front yard patios, which is not uncommon for townhome developments. Staff recommends that the applicant work with staff on the final design to ensure that the air conditioning units are screened to full height behind front yard fencing, screening lattice and/or shrubs (see Recommended Condition of Approval A10.7 in Attachment 4).

Trash and Recycling

The project maintains the general trash and recycling plan, with individual carts stored within the over-sized two-car garages and staged along the private driveway during pick-up times.

Conditions of Approval

Staff recommends a minor correction to condition A10.5 to require all townhome units to be visually distinct, which the current design achieves (see Recommended Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4). Staff also recommends two new conditions, A10.6 (garage door design) and A10.7 (screening of air conditioning units), which are discussed above.

T-1:

Architecture and Site Layout

The T-1 parcel was previously approved with 13 three-story townhome units, with ten units facing Iowa Avenue and three units facing Sunnyvale Avenue. The homes were designed as Craftsman in style. The first floors were partially submerged underground, with the building heights at 30 feet (from top of curb) and architectural projections reaching 33 feet.

As previously noted, two units from T-1 have been relocated to the F-1 building and the modified project now includes 11 units on the T-1 parcel. The proposed project is similar in architectural style and materials as the proposed N-1 building, with a more vertical wall orientation and balconies on the third floor facing Iowa Avenue. Front porches and entry doors face the streets, with stairs that are parallel to the sidewalk. Decorative tile has been applied around the entry doors to add visual interest to the pedestrian level. The rear elevations will continue to face the PD-5 parking garage. The buildings have increased in height from the original design and range from 33 to 36 feet in height. Similar to the N-1 garage elevation, staff recommends more variation in the design of the garage doors (see Recommended Condition of Approval A10.6 in Attachment 4).

While the overall height of the T-1 buildings has increased, staff finds that the scale is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and that the architectural design is in keeping with the intent of the Downtown Specific Plan design guidelines. The reduction of units on this parcel and increased spacing between the buildings further reduces the visual mass and bulk from the street frontage.

Circulation and Parking

The previously-approved design contained two vehicular access points to the site through the PD-5 parking garage with no driveways from the public streets. The current design removes the access from the PD-5 parking garage, and includes a new driveway off Iowa Avenue. Staff finds that the new circulation plan helps to reduce vehicular conflicts between T-1 residents and the public parking in PD-5, which will primarily serve patrons of the grocery store and theater. The driveway sited in the middle of the Iowa Avenue frontage also helps to break up the mass of the building, which was

previously continuous across the street frontage.

The proposed project maintains the two-car garages per unit in the previously-approved design, where one covered parking space minimum is required. A minimum of 13 unassigned/guest parking spaces are required. Similar to N-1, the unassigned/guest parking spaces are to be absorbed in the open pool of shared public parking spaces throughout the CityLine project.

Landscaping and Usable Open Space

Minimal landscaping was provided in the previously-approved design. The modified project includes approximately 2,090 square feet of landscaping (8.8% of the lot size), which has been modified to comply with current water-efficient landscaping requirements. A new common landscaped open space area has been added along the PD-5 garage elevation, perpendicular to Sunnyvale Avenue, and includes seating and a barbeque pit. In addition, the landscaped area between the buildings at the corner of Sunnyvale Avenue and Iowa Avenue has been increased and creates a landscaped plaza. The areas in front of the buildings primarily consist of groundcover and shrubs. The common area and plaza also includes several 24-inch box Podocarpus and Water Gum trees.

The project exceeds the usable open space requirement by providing more than 50 square feet of usable open space per unit within the common landscaped areas, front patios and on the third-floor balconies. Similar to N-1, staff recommends that the applicant work with staff on the final design to ensure that the air conditioning units are screened (see Recommended Condition of Approval A10.7 in Attachment 4).

Trash and Recycling

The project maintains the general trash and recycling plan, with individual carts stored within the over-sized two-car garages and staged along the private driveway during pick-up times.

Conditions of Approval

As discussed in the N-1 section, condition A10.5 is modified and conditions A10.6 and 10.7 are new (see Recommended Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4).

Green Building Requirements

The project complies with the current green building requirements by achieving at least 80 points on the GreenPoint Rated Checklist, which will be verified by a Green Point Rater during building permits. In addition, the project complies with the CALGreen Mandatory Measures required by the State.

Below Market Rate (BMR)

The project is required to comply with the current BMR agreement for the CityLine project, which governs the BMR standards for all 292 approved residential units, including the 94 subject units. The current agreement requires that 12.5%, or 11 units, must be available for BMR households either for sale or rent within this development, and payment of the fractional difference is required.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impacts other than normal fees and taxes are expected. Payment of traffic impact and park in-lieu fees will be required, as noted in Attachment 4.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Neighborhood Outreach Meeting: The applicant hosted an open house meeting on November 15,

2017 at Fair Oaks Park. Approximately ten residents, primarily neighbors of the development, attended. Staff answered questions regarding the project history and future right-of-way improvements that are partially underway. There appeared to be general support for the project.

Planning Commission Study Sessions: The first Planning Commission study session occurred on November 13, 2017, in which all three parcels were discussed. Commissioners commented on the building colors, roof forms and heights, pedestrian scale, windows, site layout, and compatibility with the design guidelines in the Downtown Specific Plan. The Planning Commission had many comments and suggestions for improvement to the architecture and design of all buildings. Following that study session, staff worked with the applicant on reconsidering aspects of the design to meet the Planning Commission's goals for the project. Two subsequent study sessions were held, one for the F-1 building and one for N-1 and T-1 in order to focus on each product type.

The study session for F-1 was held on January 22, 2018, at which the applicant described changes made since the previous study session, consisting primarily of refinements to colors, trim and wall planes, and an addition to the building recess and staircase to the public sidewalk. Commissioners generally supported the modifications. Additional comments were made regarding landscaping, wall textures and window design.

The study session for N-1 and T-1 townhomes was held on February 26, 2018. Similar comments were made regarding landscaping, building materials, colors, and window design. Subsequent to that study session, the N-1 townhomes were modified to include more variety between the individual townhomes and roof planes. The T-1 townhomes were modified to include decorative tile around the entry doors, and buildings were slightly shifted to allow the addition of the common landscaped area at the back corner of the site.

Notice of Public Hearing, Staff Report and Agenda:

- Published in the *Sun* newspaper
- Posted on the site
- 4,244 notices mailed to property owners and residents within 2,000 feet of the project site, as well as all neighborhood associations

Staff Report

- Posted on the City's website
- Provided at the Reference Section of the City's Public Library

Agenda

- Posted on the City's official notice bulletin board
- Posted on the City's website

Public Contact: Staff has not received any correspondence or phone calls from neighbors at the time of writing of this report.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Find that the proposed modifications do not require additional environmental review the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the reasons stated in the staff report as the proposed modifications are within the scope of the previous environmental analysis for the

Downtown Program Improvement Update, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c)(2).

2. Approve the Special Development Permit with the attached findings in Attachment 3 and recommended conditions of approval in Attachment 4.
3. Approve the Special Development Permit with the attached findings in Attachment 3 and modified conditions of approval.
4. Deny the Special Development Permit and provide direction to staff and applicant on where changes should be made.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Find that the proposed modifications do not require additional environmental review the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the reasons stated in the staff report as the proposed modifications are within the scope of the previous environmental analysis for the Downtown Program Improvement Update, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c)(2); and

Alternative 2: Approve the Special Development Permit with the attached findings in Attachment 3 and recommended conditions of approval in Attachment 4.

Prepared by: Noren Caliva-Lepe, Senior Planner

Reviewed by: Gerri Caruso, Principal Planner

Approved by: Andrew Miner, Assistant Director of Community Development

ATTACHMENTS

1. Site, Vicinity and Public Notice Mailing Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Recommended Findings
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. Overall Site Plan for CityLine
6. Previously-Approved Project Plans
7. Master List of Conditions of Approval
8. Proposed Site and Architectural Plans