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File #: 19-0727, Version: 1

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### REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

#### SUBJECT

**Proposed Project:** Related applications on a 12,060 square-foot site:

**USE PERMIT:** to allow lot width and lot area less than the minimum required.

**DESIGN REVIEW:** to allow construction of three new single-family homes (2,035 square feet, 2,067 square feet and 2,354 square feet) resulting in overall Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 53.5%.

**TENTATIVE MAP:** to subdivide one parcel into three lots.

**Location:** 1268 Poplar Avenue (APN: 213-44-036)

**File #:** 2019-7117

**Zoning:** R-2

**Applicant / Owner:** Silicon Valley WZSU Capital, LLC

**Environmental Review:** Class 3 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions that include new construction of up to three single-family residences in urbanized area (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15303).

**Project Planner:** Aastha Vashist, 408-730-7458, avashist@sunnyvale.ca.gov

#### REPORT IN BRIEF

**General Plan:** Medium Density Residential

**Existing Site Conditions:** One-story single-family residence

##### **Surrounding Land Uses**

**North:** Two-story single-family residences

**South:** Two-story duplex

**East:** Two-story condominiums

**West:** Two-story fourplex

**Issues:** Neighborhood compatibility

**Staff Recommendation:** Alternative 1: Approve the Use Permit, Design Review and Tentative Parcel Map subject to recommended conditions of approval in Attachment 4.

#### BACKGROUND

##### Description of Proposed Project

The applicant proposes to subdivide the existing 12,121 square foot interior lot into three lots and construct three new single family homes with an overall FAR of 53.5%. The existing one-story single-family home is proposed to be demolished as part of this application.

This project requires a one-foot dedication in the form of an easement along the street frontage to widen the existing sidewalk, resulting in 12,060 square foot net lot area. The setbacks, lot coverage, floor areas and density are calculated based on the net lot area, which is the lot exclusive of the dedicated public right-of-way.

Following are the details for the three individual lots:

	Lot Size	Living Area	Garage	Floor Area	FAR
Lot 1 (Front)	3,875 s.f.	1,635 s.f.	400 s.f.	2,035 s.f.	52.5%
Lot 2 (Middle)	3,874 s.f.	1,667 s.f.	400 s.f.	2,067 s.f.	53.3%
Lot 3 (Rear)	4,311 s.f.	1,954 s.f.	400 s.f.	2,354 s.f.	54.6%
Total	12,060 s.f.	5,256 s.f.	1,200 s.f.	6,456 s.f.	53.5%

A Tentative

Parcel Map is required for subdividing a parcel into four or fewer lots. Three separate lots with no common lot are proposed as part of this application.

A Use Permit is required per Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) 19.30.020 as the lot areas and lot widths of the new individual lots are less than the minimum required for the R-2 zoning district.

A Design Review is required for construction of new houses to evaluate compliance with the City's development standards and Single Family Home Design Techniques. Planning Commission review is required for homes exceeding 45% FAR.

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

### **Previous Actions on the Site**

There are no previous planning applications or active Neighborhood Preservation complaints for this property.

### **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:

*Goal LT-7: Diverse Housing Opportunities Ensure the availability of ownership and rental housing options with a variety of dwelling types, sizes, and densities that contribute positively to the surrounding area and the health of the community.*

*POLICY LT-7.3: Encourage the development of housing options with the goal that the majority of housing is owner-occupied.*

*Goal LT-4: An Attractive Community for Residents and Businesses In combination with the City's Community Design Sub-Element, ensure that all areas of the city are attractive and that the city's image is enhanced by following policies and principles of good urban design while valued elements of the community fabric are preserved.*

*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.*

### **City Council Policy:**

*City Council Policy 1.1.12: Maximum Standards for Small Lot Single Family Residential Developments*

By providing three new single-family homes the proposed project provides ownership opportunities

consistent with the General Plan policies and established neighborhood.

**Applicable Design Guidelines:** The City's Design Guidelines as noted in the Single-Family Home Design Techniques provide recommendations for site layout, architecture, and design. These guidelines are referenced in the discussion and analysis below. Refer to Attachment 3 for the required findings regarding Design Review.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

A Class 3 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions that include new construction of up to three single-family residences in urbanized area (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15303).

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Site Layout and Architecture**

The property is in the Ponderosa neighborhood which is located north of East El Camino Real between Wolfe Road and Lawrence Expressway. The immediate neighborhood is comprised of a mix of one and two-story residential structures with single-family homes, duplexes and multi-family units.

Like the properties in the immediate neighborhood, the 12,121-square foot interior lot is long and narrow (202 feet in depth and 60 feet in width) with an access driveway leading to the existing detached garage at the back of the property. The existing single-family home sits at the front of the property.

The proposed subdivision would result in three lots with Lot 1 directly facing the street, Lot 2 in the middle and Lot 3 at the rear. The homes will be accessed from the street by an 18-foot-wide driveway along the north side of the property at the same location as the existing driveway. The proposed subdivision is similar to the properties at 1274-78 Poplar Avenue (Project# 2004-0857) and 1232-38 Poplar Avenue (Project# 2006-0593), which were previously approved by the Planning Commission.

The proposed homes have similar designs including characteristics associated with Craftsman-style architecture with a mix of hip and gable roofs, deep overhanging eaves, combination of stucco, siding and river rock, vertical board and batten at the gable ends, and square columns over stone piers. Windows are a combination of double-hung and casement, with heavy wood trim as an accent. Front entry and garage doors are paneled wooden doors, which further add to the Craftsman-style architecture.

The proposed front house and middle house (Lot 1 and Lot 2) also includes large front porches with railing, belly bands and wood trellises over the garages. The proposed rear house (Lot 3) has an asymmetrical façade with an entry porch, wall offsets on the second floor, roof segment between first and second floor, and decorative chimney feature.

All exterior material and finishes work together as a palette of grey and beige colors with white trim accents, creating a harmony with the surroundings. Staff finds the proposed design to be aesthetically pleasing and will enhance the existing streetscape of the neighborhood.

Refer to Attachment 6 for architectural and site plans.

**Floor Area Ratio:** Single-family residential project that exceed 45% FAR requires review by the

Planning Commission. The FAR of existing single-family homes in the neighborhood ranges from 8% to 75% with an average of 29%, and the floor areas within the neighborhood range from 996 square feet to 3,716 square feet. See Attachment 5 for a neighborhood comparison of Floor Area and FAR. The properties along the east side of Poplar have been undergoing changes as anticipated by the R-2 zoning and large lots.

The proposed 52.5% (Lot 1), 53.4% (Lot 2) and 54.6% (Lot 3) FAR, with an overall FAR of 53.5%, is well within the existing range in the neighborhood. The mass and bulk of the proposed new homes is consistent with the existing two-story homes in the neighborhood. The proposed design with well-articulated building façades and combination of high quality materials further helps in minimizing the visual impact of the project.

Since this neighborhood consists of several two-story homes and is not predominately one-story, the 35 percent second floor to first floor ratio design guideline is not applicable.

### **Development Standards**

The proposed project complies with all applicable development standards, as set forth in the Sunnyvale Municipal Code, such as overall setbacks, height, parking, landscaping and usable open space. In addition, staff has utilized Council Policy 1.1.12 (Maximum Standards for Small Lot Single Family Residential Developments), which helps to guide the design of small-lot, single-family subdivisions of 4,200 square feet or smaller.

**Setbacks:** The overall perimeter setbacks of the entire site meet the R-2 Zoning District requirements and are consistent with the setbacks that would be required if only one home were to be built on the site or if three homes were to be built on the site without the subdivision of the parcel. The second-floor side yard setbacks exceed the minimum required, in compliance with Council Policy 1.1.12. Refer to Attachment 2 for Project Data Table.

Staff also finds the separation between the homes to be adequate, with 17 to 23 feet between each of the three homes. Similar building separation has been approved for other small lot subdivisions, including 305 Beemer Avenue (2017-7219), 331 Beemer Avenue (2015-7886) and similar developments along Poplar Avenue. The proposed separation between units allows for adequate space for surface parking, yards and reduced privacy impacts to the homes within the development.

**Lot Area and Lot Width:** Through a Use Permit, SMC 19.30.020 allows for consideration of reduced lot areas and widths, provided the required density is met. The subject property meets the permitted density of 3,600 square feet lot area per dwelling unit, which allows for three units on a 12,060-square foot lot. The proposed project does not meet the per lot minimum area of 8,000 square feet and 76 feet lot width for R-2 zoned properties, which can be considered as part of a Use Permit.

Staff finds the proposed lot area and widths are reasonable as the lot area and widths are comparable to similar small-lot subdivisions along the street (see the table below). In addition, a triplex under one ownership would be a permitted use on this site. This proposed subdivision is consistent with the permitted density and creates three homeownership opportunities.

Address	Location	Lot Area (in square feet)	Lot Width	Project No.
1232 Poplar	Front	3,707	60'-0"	2006-0593
1236 Poplar	Middle	3,389	50'-0"	2006-0593
1238 Poplar	Rear	3,707	60'-0"	2006-0593
1266 Poplar	Front	6,360	60'-0"	2001-0053
1262 Poplar	Middle	2,880	30'-0"	2001-0053
1264 Poplar	Rear	2,880	30'-0"	2001-0053
1274 Poplar	Front	3,465	60'-0"	2004-0857
1276 Poplar	Middle	3,195	60'-0"	2004-0857
1278 Poplar	Rear	3,120	60'-0"	2004-0857
1280 Poplar	Front	3,465	60'-0"	2006-0752
1282 Poplar	Middle	3,195	60'-0"	2006-0752
1284 Poplar	Rear	3,120	60'-0"	2006-0752
<i>1268 Poplar (Proposed)</i>				
Lot 1	Front	3,875	60'-0"	
Lot 2	Middle	3,874	60'-0"	
Lot 3	Rear	4,311	60'-0"	

**Usable Open Area:** A minimum of 500 square feet of usable open space is required per unit. The project complies by providing 500 to 618 square feet of usable open space per unit within private yards. Council Policy 1.1.12 also encourages usable open space dimensions to be 15 feet or greater in every direction. The dimension range from 12 feet to 24 feet. Although the open space areas are not 15 feet in every direction, the project is consistent with the intent of the policy by generally providing more open space than the minimum required.

**Parking and Circulation:** An 18-foot wide driveway along the north of the property serves the three homes and uncovered parking spaces. Access to the Lot 2 (middle) and Lot 3 (rear) homes is provided through a driveway easement. The site meets the parking standards by providing two covered and two uncovered parking spaces for each of the three homes.

**Landscaping and Tree Preservation:** An Arborist report was provided, which evaluated health and disposition of all the trees onsite and the adjacent public right-of-way. The driveway has been designed to preserve the two mature Coast Live Oak trees (street trees) along the street frontage. The preservation of these trees is a positive element of the project, as they create an attractive entrance into the development and help to preserve the existing tree-lined streetscape. Refer to Attachment 7 for the Arborist Report provided by the applicant and Attachment 6 for the proposed landscaping plans.

Three trees on the property are considered "protected" per SMC 19.94.030 and proposed to be removed as part of this application. The trees proposed to be removed have either poor structure or located in the middle of proposed building footprint. The City Arborist has verified the acceptability of the proposed removal based on City criteria. The project includes seventeen 24-inch box Strictra Italian Cypress trees, which will mitigate the loss of the existing protected trees per the City's Tree Replacement standards.

**Solar Access:** SMC 19.56.020 states that no permit shall be issued for any construction which would interfere with solar access by shading more than 10% of the roof of any structure on a nearby

property. The project plans demonstrate that the shading would comply with this requirement (shades no roof area of the adjacent two-story structures).

**Neighborhood Compatibility and Impacts:** The surrounding neighborhood is eclectic with a mix of densities and house styles. It contains single-family homes, duplexes and multi-family apartments, includes one and two-story structures, lots with front, middle and rear units, and multi-unit developments. The proposed project is consistent with the common site layout, density and character of the neighborhood.

The immediate neighborhood has a mix of Ranch, Craftsman and Spanish style architecture. Staff finds the proposed Craftsman architecture to be compatible with the neighborhood and the existing streetscape. The proposed homes, with overall height of 25 feet, have compatible mass, scale and heights as the surrounding two-story structures. The use of roof segments, wall offsets and wall materials further helps in minimizing the visual bulk of the proposed house.

The proposed homes exceed the minimum required side yard setbacks from the neighboring properties. The second-floor windows facing the neighboring properties (except those required for egress) will have high sills to minimize the privacy impacts of the neighbors (Condition PS-1(a), Attachment 4). Based on the setback and location of the second-floor window, staff does not find privacy impacts to the neighbors.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Since the proposal results in two net new dwelling unit, the project is subject to Park In-Lieu fees, Transportation Impact Fees (TIF) and School impact fees. Other standard fees and taxes apply.

### **PUBLIC CONTACT**

#### **Neighborhood Outreach Meeting**

A neighborhood outreach meeting was hosted by the applicant, and attended by the project planner, at the project site, on July 2, 2019. This meeting was attended by three neighbors. They were generally supportive of the proposed development.

One of the neighbor had concerns about the removal of Jacaranda and Silk tree on the site. The Silk tree, which is located adjacent to the existing driveway along the side yard, will be retained. However, the Jacaranda tree located in the front yard is proposed to be removed as the Arborist report identifies that the tree is surpassed by the existing Coast Oak live tree and unlikely to survive the construction process.

#### **Notice of Public Hearing**

- Published in the *Sun* newspaper
- Posted on the site
- 430 notices mailed to property owners and residents within 300 feet of the project site

#### **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 received an email from a neighbor in Attachment 8, which primarily expressed concerns about the developer's outreach meeting notice not containing a return address and regarding density. The letter has been heavily redacted to omit expletives.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Approve the Use Permit, Design Review and the Parcel Map subject to recommended conditions of approval in Attachment 4.
2. Approve the Use Permit, Design Review and the Parcel Map subject to modified conditions of approval.
3. Deny the Use Permit, Design Review and the Parcel Map and provide direction to staff and the applicant on where changes should be made.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Alternative: Approve the Use Permit, Design Review and the Parcel Map subject to recommended conditions of approval in Attachment 4.

Prepared by: Aastha Vashist, Associate Planner

Reviewed by: Noren Caliva-Lepe, Principal Planner

Approved by: Andrew Miner, Assistant Director of Community Development Department

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Site, Vicinity and Noticing Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Recommended Findings
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. Neighborhood Square Footage Comparison
6. Arborist Report
7. Proposed Architectural and Site Plans
8. Letter from the neighbor