



# City of Culver City

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## Staff Report

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**File #:** 15-686, **Version:** 1

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**Site Plan Review, P2016-0034-SPR; Tentative Tract Map, P2016-0034-TTM; and Variance, P2016-0034-VAR, for the development of ten (10) proposed for-sale single family dwellings on five R2 Zoned lots (two units per lot) at 4044 to 4068 Globe Avenue in Residential Two Family (R2) Zone.**

**Contact Person/Dept:** Jose Mendivil, Associate Planner  
Thomas Gorham, Planning Manager (3/16/16)

**Phone Number:** (310) 253-5757

**Fiscal Impact:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**General Fund:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**Public Hearing:** ☒

**Action Item:** ☐

**Attachments:** ☒

**Public Notification:** Mailed to all the property owners and occupants within a 500 foot radius; Emailed to the City's Master Notification List; and Posted on the City's website on March 2, 2016; Sign Posted on the subject property on March 2, 2016.

**Department Approval:** Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (3/16/16)

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt a Categorical Exemption as stipulated in CEQA Section 15303, Class 32 - In Fill Development, finding that there are no potentially significant adverse impacts on the environment.
2. Approve Site Plan Review, P2016-0034-SPR and Variance, P2016-0034-VAR and recommend to the City Council Approval of Tentative Tract Map, P2016-0034-TTM, subject to the Conditions of Approval as stated in Resolution No. 2016-P004 (Attachment No. 1).

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. Chair calls on staff for a brief staff report and Planning Commission poses questions to staff as desired.
2. Chair opens the public hearing, providing the applicant the first opportunity to speak, followed by the general public.
3. Chair seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented.
4. Commission discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In June 2005, the former Culver City Redevelopment Agency (Former CCRA) purchased seven surplus properties on Globe Avenue (Site) from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) with Housing

Set Aside Funds for the purposes of creating affordable housing. The Site is comprised of seven lots totaling 32,361 square feet and is zoned R-2 which allows the development of up to two residential dwelling units per lot. The City commenced pre-development studies in 2007 to determine the best use of the Site.

On June 13, 2011 the former CCRA Board selected Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles (Applicant) as the affordable housing developer and on December 5, 2011, approved a Disposition, Development and Loan Agreement (DDA) for the construction of 10 affordable ownership housing units with Former CCRA financial assistance including mortgage assistance funds.

Subsequently, the State dissolved all redevelopment agencies with the intent of assigning all Former CCRA assets to the taxing entities including proceeds from the Housing Set Aside Funds. The Successor Agency to the Culver City Redevelopment Agency (Successor Agency) eventually retained the Site. The Applicant continued the process with drafting of pre-development plans, meeting with City staff, and conducting several community meetings. A more detailed timeline is included in Attachment No. 6. In addition, Attachment No. 7 contains a power point by the applicant that they presented at the last community meeting. It contains information on the Applicant, their operations/mission, and the project presented in this staff report.

### Request

On February 1, 2016, the Applicant submitted an application for a Site Plan Review, Variance, and Tentative Tract Map to allow the development of ten (10) proposed single family dwellings on five R2 Zoned lots (two units per lot). Each lot will contain two single-family homes for sale as airspace condominiums. The proposed land subdivision to reduce the current seven land lots to five land lots with two airspace condominium lots each. A variance is required to allow a reduction to the zoning code minimum lot length and width standards for certain lots due to the prior I-405 Freeway widening that shortened the depth of some lots. The applicant has not requested a density bonus for the project.

Eight of the 10 units will be sold as affordable at the low and moderate income levels and the remaining two will be sold as workforce housing units. Based on the California Health and Safety Code, for 2015 a low-income household is defined as 50%-80% of Area Median Income (or up to \$68,300 for a household of 4 persons). A moderate income-household is defined as 81%-120% of Area Median Income (or up to \$77,750 for a household of 4 persons). The two workforce housing units will serve households up to 192% of Area Median Income (or up to \$124,400 per year for a household of 4 persons). The level of 192% was determined to be the most optimal based on the types of jobs in Culver City and the incomes they provide, the lack of affordability to purchase an average priced home in Culver City for middle and upper middle income workers, and the State established maximum percentage of income (35%) to be allocated toward housing.

### Existing Conditions

The site is located on the east side of Globe Avenue, between Washington Place and Washington Boulevard and directly west of the I-405 freeway (see the Vicinity Map - Attachment No. 2). The site is generally flat in topography and contains 7 irregularly shaped vacant lots. In 2010 the vacant, dilapidated housing on the site was demolished to make the property ready for development.

### Surrounding Area/General Plan/Zoning

The surrounding area includes mainly 1-story single family dwellings with some 2-story dwellings and at least one duplex. The City's General Plan Land Use Element designates the site as Low Density Two Family and it is zoned Residential Two Family (R2). Surrounding zoning and existing land uses are outlined below (Globe Avenue is considered north/south orientation):

### Project Description

The project involves construction of 10 two-story single family dwellings with two units per lot, on five lots, and with an average height of 21 to 22.5 feet. Three of the lots will have two detached dwellings for a total of six detached dwellings and the remaining two lots will each have a duplex (two attached dwellings) for a total of four detached dwellings. Each unit will have a two-car, covered parking area contained in garages for the duplexes and in carports for the detached units. All parking spaces will be located with direct access to their corresponding units. The detached units are arranged with front entrances and porches facing Globe Avenue and will be separated from each other by a 12 foot common driveway and an additional 4 to 4.5 feet of walkway per unit. The 12 foot driveway opens into a 28 to 29 foot wide back up area separating the carports on either side. The carports are either attached to the rear of the units or separated by 5 feet from the rear of the units. The duplexes are adjacent to each other and share a common 11.5 foot wide driveway that opens into a 27 to 29 foot wide back area for the garages. The units are arranged in a linear pattern from the front of the lot to the rear with the front of the unit closest to Globe Avenue facing the street and the front of the rear unit facing the rear lot yard. The units attach only at the ground level where their respective garages share a common wall. There are 5 floor plans in the project which are shown in the table below:

| House Plan | No. of Units | Bed/Bath  | 1 <sup>st</sup> floor | 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor | Total         |
|------------|--------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| A          | 4            | 3/2.5     | 527 sq.ft.            | 826 sq.ft.            | 1,353 sq.ft.  |
| B          | 2            | 3/2       | 682 sq.ft.            | 624 sq.ft.            | 1,306 sq.ft.  |
| C-1        | 1            | 3/2       | 681 sq.ft.            | 623 sq.ft.            | 1,304 sq.ft.  |
| C-2        | 2            | 3/2       | 681 sq.ft.            | 623 sq.ft.            | 1,304 sq.ft.  |
| C-1 HC*    | 1            | 3/2 + Den | 882 sq.ft.            | 621 sq.ft.            | 1,503 sq.ft.  |
| Total      | 10           |           |                       |                       | 13,439 sq.ft. |

\*HC=Handicap Accessible

## **ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:**

The project is consistent with the R2 Zone density limits of two dwelling units per lot. As illustrated in the Project Summary (Attachment No. 3), the proposed development conforms to all regulations of the R2 Zone except for lot width and depth which are discussed in the Variance Section below.

### 1. SITE PLAN REVIEW

#### Architectural Design

The dwellings are designed as traditional craftsmen style homes with the second level devoted to wood-like siding and the first level comprised with a mix of wood-like siding and stucco. Each dwelling has a covered front porch and the rear duplexes have front entry patios covered by trellises. The front porches are accented with stone veneer base walls or columns and wood railing fencing and the roofing is asphalt shingle. With an overall traditional design glazing is comprised of multi panel windows with mullions and wood trim instead of the contemporary large single-panel windows. The units will be painted earth tone colors of beige, off-white, greenish grey, and tan will be finished with

brown and white trim colors. Overall, the design is compatible with other single family residential structures in the neighborhood that also have traditional designs of mainly stucco with some veneer and wood siding accents. The relatively low 22 foot high 2-story dwellings mix well with the mainly single story neighborhood and street fronting setbacks combined with floor areas that do not exceed 1,500 square feet per unit help to reduce the sense of massing. The surrounding homes also have multi-paneled windows, covered front porches and earth tone colors similar to the project's design.

### Landscaping

There are minimal landscape requirements for single, two-family, and three-family dwellings; only the front setback area has to be landscaped. The project will provide a mixture of drought tolerant shrubs and plants mixed with decorative stones, mulch, and decomposed granite in front setback areas and portions of sides adjacent to the dwellings. Trees will be planted in the rear to provide shade and possibly shrubs will be installed along the rear freeway wall. Any planting directly next to the freeway wall will require Caltrans approval. The rear yards and portions of the side yards will remain as dirt and left to the individual homeowners to landscape as they wish. Currently street trees line both sides of the parkway and the existing street trees along Globe Avenue will remain to the extent feasible. The applicant will be required to provide a report prepared by a registered consulting arborist that will evaluate the survival of the street trees which may be affected by removal and replacement of sidewalk. A condition of approval requires two trees be planted for each tree removed. Overall landscaping for the project is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

### Open Space

In the R1 through R3 zones there is no minimum open space requirement other than the required side, front, and rear setbacks. The lots meet all required setbacks. Additionally the compactness of the dwelling footprints allow for varying side setbacks ranging from 5 to 10 feet in excess of the minimum 4 foot side setback requirement. Portions of the rear setbacks along the various lots will also exceed the minimum 10 foot setback ranging from 11 feet to 25 feet. The front portions of the homes are setback 18 to 20 feet exceeding the minimum 15 foot front setback. The project will provide ample areas for passive and active activity because setbacks exceed minimum code standards.

### Neighborhood Compatibility

The project will result in 10 dwellings with a net increase of three units; the previous seven lots each contained one home. The R2 Zone allows up to two units per lot and the each lot will contain two units with six detached and four in two duplexes each. The duplexes are designed in a linear orientation so that from the street only one unit is visible. The majority of the street is comprised of 1-story, single-family dwellings. The project is designed to continue the look of this single-family pattern because as noted above the duplexes are situated with only one of the two units visible to the street and the remaining six dwellings are detached with a 12 foot wide driveway separating the units on each lot. When the project is complete the resulting street fronting will appear as eight homes - one more than the previous seven homes. The project maintains a low building height (up to 23 feet for a two story home) that is not excessive given the building heights in the neighborhood as demonstrated in the height survey below:

| ADDRESS                                          | HEIGHT                       |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 4085                                             | 15'                          |
| 4077 (2 <sup>nd</sup> unit over detached garage) | 15'(front)/24' (rear garage) |
| 4073                                             | 15'                          |
| 4069                                             | 20'                          |
| 4063                                             | 18'                          |
| 4059                                             | 18'                          |
| 4051                                             | 18'(front)/25'(rear)         |
| 4041                                             | 15'                          |
| 4043/4045 (duplex)                               | 18'(front)/30'(rear)         |
| 4037                                             | 18'(front)/30'(rear)         |
| 4033                                             | 25'(front)/35'(rear)         |
| 4027                                             | 20'                          |
| 4023                                             | 25'                          |
| 4017                                             | 25'                          |

Maximum dwelling sizes per lot will be approximately 1,000 to 1,500 square feet less than the Code allows. Overall, the project's dwelling footprints will be compact because unit sizes will be less than the code maximum. The combination of modest 1,300 to 1,500 square foot units with traditional craftsmen style architecture, earth tone colors, and wood like and stucco finishes will result in compatibility with surrounding homes.

#### Traffic, Parking, and Circulation

Globe Avenue is 50 feet in width and adequate to serve the proposed development. The curb, gutter, sidewalk, and driveway approaches along the project's frontage will be removed and replaced as appropriate per City standards.

Each of the 10 units will have the code required two covered parking spaces. Driveways and back up maneuvering areas are sufficient in length and width to accommodate vehicles parked in front of the garages and carports thereby meeting homeowner needs while not impacting street parking. After reconfiguration of driveway aprons for the new dwellings there will be room for approximately 10 to 11 vehicles to park along the curb adjacent to the project. Currently 13 cars can park along the project frontage. The curb space reduction of approximately two to three parking spaces will occur because of changes in drive approach locations. This decrease in parking spaces is not considered a significant impact. The new dwellings will have their on-site required parking similar to the existing homes in the neighborhood. There has been an effort to minimize removal of street trees along the project frontage.

Towards the center and rear of each lot there will be sufficient back up space into and out of the garages with 27 to 29 foot wide back up areas. Each unit will have an at-grade pedestrian walkway directly from the sidewalk similar to the surrounding existing homes and there will be direct access from garages to units. The proposed means of vehicle and pedestrian ingress/egress to and from the site and units provides adequate access for emergency vehicles and services. The configuration of the proposed onsite driveway and vehicle maneuvering areas are designed in accordance with all

applicable CCMC standards. There is no required guest parking and guest parking is not provided. The density of the development will not create significant traffic impacts and is well below the threshold for requiring a traffic study.

## 2. VARIANCE

The project is adjacent to the I-405 Freeway. From 2004 to 2007 Caltrans completed a freeway widening project that included the Site and resulted in an overall area reduction and reconfiguration of the lots. The Zoning Code requires a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet and a minimum lot width of 50 feet and minimum lot depth of 100 feet for R2 lots. Several of the existing seven lots now have less than the minimum 100 foot required lot depth. In reducing the seven lots to five lots there is no physical way to accommodate the code minimum 50 foot wide by 100 foot deep parcel for each lot given the residual area created by the freeway widening. Further, the curvature of the street at the south end (needed to create a standard 90 degree intersection with Washington Boulevard which is situated at 50 degrees from Globe Avenue) creates a lot at the south end of and adjacent to the project site that leans into the project site. This results in non-standard lot lengths that are not parallel to each other at this end of the site. Lot 1 will have a nonstandard lot depth of 79 to 90 feet; Lot 2 will have a nonstandard lot depth of 90 feet; and Lot 4 will have a nonstandard lot width of 45 feet at the street frontage. Lots 3 and 5 meet the minimum lot width and depth requirements.

Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 17.550.020.B, the following findings must be made in order to approve a variance:

1. There are special circumstances applicable to the property (e.g., location, shape, size, surroundings, and topography), or to the intended use of the property, so that the strict application of this Title denies the property owner privileges enjoyed by other property owners in the vicinity and under identical zoning districts.
2. The strict application of the applicable development standard creates an unnecessary, involuntarily created hardship or unreasonable regulation which makes it obviously impractical to require compliance with the development standards.
3. The Variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of substantial property rights possessed by other property owners in the same vicinity and zoning district and denied to the property owner for which the Variance is sought.
4. The project is consistent with the General Plan and complies with all other applicable provisions of this Title.
5. Approval of the Variance would not be detrimental to the public health, interest, safety, or general welfare and would not be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity and in the same zoning district.

Based on the above noted site constraints staff believes that all of the findings necessary to approve a variance from the minimum lot width and depth requirements can be made as noted in draft Resolution No. 2016-P004 (Attachment No.1).

## 3. TENTATIVE TRACT MAP

The State Subdivision Map Act and CCMC Chapter 15.10 regulate land subdivisions and require the submittal of tentative tract map for subdivisions. In addition, CCMC Section 17.210.020 - Table 2-3,

Residential District Development Standards (R1, R2, R3), requires a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet or the average area of residential lots within a 500-foot radius of proposed subdivision and lot widths and depths of 50 feet and 100 feet respectively. The project will create five new land lots and two airspace condominium units per lot. As noted above in the variance section physical circumstances do not allow the ability to provide the standard lot width and depth for certain lots and variance findings are in the resolution as noted above. CCMC Section 17.210.020 - Table 2-3 also states that condominium, townhome, or planned development projects may be subdivided with smaller parcel sizes for ownership purposes, with the minimum lot area determined through the subdivision review process, provided that the overall development site complies with the minimum lot size requirements of the Zoning Code. The overall project will create five land lots ranging in area from 5,175 square feet to 7,883 square feet - more the minimum 5,000 square feet. Thus the overall project lot configuration - area, width, and depth will comply with the R2 development standards except for the variances already discussed.

A key objective of the tentative tract map process is to allow the City to review the proposed subdivision to ensure all necessary improvements and requirements are provided. The Public Works Department has reviewed the tentative tract map (Attachment No. 5) for the proposed subdivision and found it to be in compliance with all applicable State and local regulations as more specifically outlined in the findings and recommended conditions of approval (Attachment No. 1 Resolution No. 2016-P004 and Exhibit A Conditions of Approval). In condominium or townhome developments the driveway along with the land surrounding the units are held in common and vehicular access easements will be secured through the condominium association Covenants, Restrictions, and Conditions (CC&Rs). The project is providing 11 to 12 foot wide driveways for each lot to be shared by the two units on each lot. Lots 4 and 5 share a driveway and use of said driveway will be secured by a standard mutual access agreement.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

The City has engaged the surrounding neighborhood in extensive dialogue regarding the proposed redevelopment of the property to create affordable housing. The community reaction was varied. Key concerns were the perception of a density that would be out of character for the neighborhood, increased traffic, and parking congestion. The original plan was to maintain the seven lots and create 14 units - a 50% increase. In response to the density issue, the City worked with the applicant to reduce the lots to six with 12 units total and then down to five with 10 units total resulting in a net increase of just three dwelling units from what had previously existed on the site. A review of the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) manual indicated that at most 12 units would create a total 12 trips maximum in the PM peak and less in the AM peak. The 10 units will create even less trips - no more than 10 total for any peak hour. This is consistent with any low density neighborhood. Parking congestion concerns were addressed through the creation of a parking district that exist today in the neighborhood. Other concerns included massing and height which were addressed through reduced heights and small building footprints as noted in the Analysis above.

Since formal application submittal the applicant held three community meetings - two on February 10 2016, at the Veterans Memorial Complex and one on February 25, at the Culver City Presbyterian Church next to the project site. No one attended the meetings at the Veterans Memorial Complex and about 12 people attended the meeting at the Church. Three people expressed opposition to the project and restated concerns that were noted above in previous meetings. Three to four people expressed support for the project and asked questions about construction time lines and project financing. Other questions brought up were related to how residents will be selected, and what income levels will be accommodated.

### Comments Received During Public Comment Period

As of the writing of this report, staff has not received any written public comments on the proposed project.

### **CONCLUSION/SUMMARY:**

This project will add eight affordable dwelling units into Culver City's affordable housing stock. It will address a part of the City's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) target goals for the current 2013 to 2021 Housing Element cycle (108 affordable units in the cycle). Additionally two workforce housing units will be provided that will assist people who make above moderate incomes but still cannot afford housing in Culver City. The project has been designed to respect the low density character of the neighborhood and staff has worked closely with both the Applicant and the Community addressing the needs of both stakeholders. The project meets the area density, exceeds minimum setbacks requirements, provides relatively low heights for two story dwellings, and is fully parked. Based on the proposed preliminary development plans and recommended conditions of approval, staff considers the project: compatible with the surrounding neighborhood; adequately served by public facilities; and, consistent with the General Plan, Zoning Code, and all CCMC and State subdivision requirements. Staff believes the findings for Site Plan Review, P2016-0034-SPR; Variance, P2016-0034-VAR; Tentative Tract Map, P2016-0034-TTM, can be made as outlined in Resolution No. 2016-P004 (Attachment No. 1) and recommends approval of the project.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, initial review of the project by the City established that there are no potentially significant adverse impacts on the environment and the project has been determined to be Categorically Exempt per CEQA Section 15332, Class 32 - In-Fill Development. The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan Low Density Two Family Land Use Designation and the R2 Zone; the proposed project is within the Culver City city limits on a 0.74 acre site surrounded by urban uses; currently, as an urban vacant lot that once contained seven dwelling units, it has no value as a habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species; trip generation analysis using the 9<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Institute of Transportation Engineers Trip Generation Manual determined that the project will not have significant traffic impacts and vehicle trips for any one peak period will be less than 50; as a two unit per lot use surrounded by single family and nearby two-family and multi-family dwellings, noise generated by the project will be within established noise thresholds; as a two unit per lot use, greenhouse gases and air quality impacts will not be significant; less than significant impacts to water quality and the water table are expected because of implementation of applicable storm water run-off standards and the absence of subterranean parking; and the project can be adequately served by utilities and public services.

### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

The following alternative actions may be considered by the Planning Commission:

1. Approve the proposed project with the recommended conditions of approval if the applications are deemed to meet the required findings.
2. Approve the proposed project with additional and/or different conditions of approval if deemed necessary to meet the required findings and mitigate any new project impacts identified at the meeting.
3. Disapprove the proposed project if the applications do not meet the required findings.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Draft Resolution No. 2016-P004 and Exhibit A Conditions of Approval
2. Vicinity Map
3. Project Summary
4. Preliminary Development Plans dated January 20, 2016
5. Tentative Tract Map No. 73084
6. Project Timeline
7. Habitat Background Power Point Presentation
8. Public Comments (if received prior to final drafting of staff report)