



City of Culver City

Staff Report

File #: 19-896, **Version:** 1

Item #: PH-1.

CC - PUBLIC HEARING: Adoption of a Resolution Approving an Exception to Culver City Municipal Code Subdivision Design Standard Requiring Lot Frontage along a Dedicated Public Street as Part of a Planning Commission approved Tentative Parcel Map that Allows the Development of a 2-Unit Townhome Style Subdivision at 4116 Higuera Street in the Two-Family Residential (R2) Zone.

Meeting Date: February 25, 2019

Contact Person/Dept: William Kavadas/Assistant Planner
Michael Allen/Current Planning Manager

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Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☒

Action Item: ☐

Attachments: ☒

Commission Action Required: Yes ☒ No ☐

Date: 01/23/19

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (02/19/19); (Posted) City Website (01/31/19); (Mailed) Property owners and occupants within a 500 foot radius of the Project site (01/31/19); (Sign) Posted on the site (02/04/19)

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (02/19/2019)

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council, after conducting a public hearing, adopt a resolution approving an exception to a subdivision design standard (Culver City Municipal Code or CCMC Section 15.10.700.C) requiring lot frontage along a dedicated public street or access to a dedicated public street with the "stem" of a "flag lot" (Attachment No. 1) in order to allow construction of a 2-Unit Townhome Style Subdivision at 4116 Higuera Street in the Two-Family Residential (R2) Zone (Project).

PROCEDURE:

1. The Mayor seeks a motion to receive and file the affidavit of publication and posting of the

public hearing notice.

2. The Mayor calls on staff for a brief staff report and City Council poses questions to staff as desired.
3. The Mayor seeks a motion to declare the public hearing open and the City Council receives public comment.
4. The Mayor seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented.
5. The City Council discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.

BACKGROUND:

On November 15, 2018, F Bar and A Kendall 1997 Revocable Trust and Nicolas Kendall-Bar (Applicant) submitted an application for a Tentative Parcel Map and Administrative Modification to allow the development of two (2) abutting townhome style residential units within the project site located at 4116 Higuera Street in the Residential Two Family (R2) Zone. The Project requires approval of the following:

- Tentative Parcel Map to allow the creation of a Two (2) Unit Townhome Style Subdivision.
- Exception to the subdivision design standard requiring lot frontage along a dedicated public street or access to a dedicated public street with the “stem” of a “flag lot”.

On January 23, 2019, the Planning Commission adopted Resolution No. 2019-P002 (Attachment No. 2) approving Tentative Parcel Map (TPM), P2018-0279-TPM and Administrative Modification (AM), P2018-0279-AM, and recommending the City Council approve the exception to the subdivision design standard as noted above. No appeals were filed on the TPM or AM and the Planning Commission decisions on those items are final. Culver City does not require Site Plan Review for residential projects of fewer than three units.

City Council is requested to act only on the exception noted above. Please see Attachment Nos. 3 through 6 (Planning Commission Staff Report, Preliminary Development Plans, Tentative Parcel Map, and Planning Commission Minutes) for a detailed review of the Project.

ANALYSIS

The State Subdivision Map Act and CCMC Chapter 15.10 regulate land subdivisions and require the submittal of a tentative parcel map for subdivisions resulting in four (4) or fewer parcels. In addition, CCMC Section 17.210.020 - Table 2-3, Residential District Development Standards (R1, R2, and R3), requires a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet or the average area of residential lots within a 500-foot radius of a proposed subdivision. However, this section 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 site will maintain its current 5,436 square foot lot area. The overall 45 foot lot width and 120.82 foot lot length will not change. The overall site lot configuration; area, width, and length will comply with the R2 development standards, subject to the Administrative Modification approved by the Planning Commission. Two (2) small land lots for townhome style development will be created within the existing conforming lot through the subdivision process.

The tentative parcel map process provides for the review of proposed subdivisions to ensure all necessary improvements and requirements are provided. The Public Works Department has reviewed the tentative parcel map (part of 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 Planning Commission approved conditions of approval (Attachment No. 2).

However, both lots are unable to meet the City Subdivision standard minimum street frontage of a 10 foot wide stem required for adjoining flag lots that provide street frontage through a stem (CCMC Section 15.10.700.C) which requires an exception through the subdivision approval process. A flag lot is defined in the CCMC as a lot having access to a public street by means of a privately owned right-of-way area of land; this private right-of-way area is the stem of the flag lot. Adjacent lots cannot share one stem and each must have their own stem (which can be adjoining). Per CCMC Section 15.10.700.C, each adjoining stem (attached to a specific flag lot) must be at least 10 feet wide.

As required by the Zoning code, the 45 foot wide lot with a 10 foot wide stem for each property, would result in a 20 foot wide driveway, with the 4 foot side setbacks. This configuration limits the ability to construct viable front yards and living spaces oriented towards the street. Alternatively, in order to provide for ample front yard space and facilitate a front facing unit, the Project provides a sixteen (16) foot wide driveway easement for both lots on which the dwellings will be located.

If the Project were a standard condominium or townhome development, the Project as designed would not require an exception. In condominium or townhome developments, the driveway along with the land surrounding the units are held in common and vehicular access easements would be secured through the condominium association Covenants, Restrictions, and Conditions (CC&Rs). Developed as "fee simple," the owner owns the dwelling, as well as the land around it, as opposed to both dwellings owning the land around them in common. The Project is consistent in design and function with condominium developments and does not have attributes of a typical single lot design.

An exception may only be made if it is not an exception to any requirement of the Subdivision Map Act. The requested exception does not violate the Subdivision Map Act because a sixteen (16) foot wide easement for common driveway purposes is provided assuring public right-of-way access for each lot within the development. All required subdivision findings can be made for the Project and all required vehicular, pedestrian, and utility/drainage easements will be made a part of the final map assuring both lots have required access to the public right-of-way (Attachment Nos 1 and 2). Also the Project site containing the two (2) small lots, as a whole, complies with R2 development standards such as setbacks, height, and parking thereby resulting in no impacts to adjacent and surrounding residents. This exception will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare nor injurious to the property or improvements in the immediate vicinity. For these reasons, findings can be made that the conditions affecting the property warrant and require that an exception be made to

the requirement for public street frontage and the minimum stem size required for access to the public street via a flag lot.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, a Categorical Exemption Class 15 - Minor Land Division, was adopted by the Planning Commission on January 23, 2019, which determined that the Project will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment. The exception is within the scope of the adopted Categorical Exemption (CE) and the circumstances under which the (CE) was prepared have not significantly changed and no new significant information has been found that would impact the CE, and therefore no new environmental analysis is required.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed project provides an atypical solution for providing a townhome style development on separate small land lots instead of the more common condominium project on a lot with airspace units. The Project design is harmonious with the neighborhood and the immediately abutting properties and minimizes massing to ensure greater compatibility with surrounding multi-family developments.

Based on the conditionally approved tentative parcel map and recommended approval of the exception, staff considers the Project to be 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 and believes the findings for the exception to certain subdivision design standards can be made as outlined in the City Council Resolution (Attachment No. 1).

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the adoption of the proposed resolution.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed City Council Resolution
2. Planning Commission Resolution No. 2019-P002 with Exhibit A - Conditions of Approval
3. January 23, 2019, Planning Commission Staff Report (without attachments)
4. Preliminary Development Plans Dated December 14, 2018
5. Tentative Tract Map No. 82489

6. January 23, 2019, Planning Commission Minutes

RECOMMENDED MOTION(S):

That the City Council:

1. Adopt a resolution approving an exception to a subdivision design standard (CCMC Section 15.10.700.C) requiring lot frontage along a dedicated public street or access to a dedicated public street with the “stem” of a “flag lot” in order to allow construction of a 2-Unit Townhome Style Subdivision.