

# ITEM 7-B

## CITY OF ALAMEDA

### Memorandum

To: Honorable President and  
Members of the Planning Board

From: Andrew Thomas, City Planner

Date: June 22, 2015

Re: **PLN14-0701 – 2100 Clement Avenue – Applicant: City Ventures.** Public Hearing to consider a draft Vesting Tentative Map and Density Bonus application and a resolution approving a Development Plan, Design Review, and Density Bonus application to Permit Construction of 52 Units on a 2.78 Acre Parcel Located at 2100 Clement Avenue. The proposal is categorically exempt from further review under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 Infill Development Projects.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes a proposal to construct 52 residential units and a publically accessible open space on a 2.78 acre property located at 2100 Clement Avenue. The subject property is designated in the General Plan Housing Element as a housing opportunity site with a realistic capacity of 53 units.

The first five pages of this report describe the proposed development and the changes that the applicant made to address comments received from the Planning Board on March 9, 2015 and from the neighbors and staff at a number of subsequent meetings. On page 6, staff requests direction from the planning board on two final issues related to the on-site parking plan. The applicant's draft plans and subdivision map is attached as Exhibit 1 and Exhibit 2.

As a result of a number of changes made to the site plan in late May by the applicant, City Ventures was not able to submit their revised draft Vesting Tentative Map to the City for final review until the afternoon of June 4, 2015. Given the late submittal of the revised map, the City staff was not able to complete its review and prepare the necessary conditions of approval for the Vesting Tentative Map in time to meet the Sunshine Ordinance deadlines for public distribution of the recommended conditions of approval for the Vesting Tentative Map. Therefore, staff is recommending that the Planning Board continue its review of the Vesting Tentative Map to July 13, 2015, and approve the Design Review, Development Plan and Density Bonus application.

### BACKGROUND

City Ventures, a residential development company, is requesting Tentative Map, Development Plan, Design Review, and Density Bonus approvals to develop 52 residential townhomes on a 2.78-acre property bounded by Clement Avenue, Willow Street and Eagle Avenue at 2100 Clement Avenue. The requested approvals and the proposal are described in this report and the Project Plans (Exhibit 1 and 2).

In 1990, the City of Alameda City Council amended the General Plan to designate the property at 2100 Clement Avenue, and a number of nearby properties, as the MU-5 Northern Waterfront Specified Mixed Use Area. The intent of the MU-5 designation is to allow for the transformation of the former industrial and manufacturing properties to a combination of mixed use and residential land uses.

In 2009, the City Council rezoned the property from M-2 manufacturing to R-2/PD, a residential zoning district to permit medium density residential uses on the property and to implement the MU-5 General Plan designation. In 2012, the site was identified as a housing opportunity site in the City of Alameda Housing Element to meet the City's regional housing needs obligation.

In 2014, City Ventures submitted an application to redevelop the site with 58 residential units. On March 9, 2015, the Planning Board held an initial study session to review and comment on the proposal.

Since the March 9, 2015 study session, City Ventures has been meeting with neighbors of the property and has revised their original application to address comments received at the March 9th study session and neighborhood concerns.

## ANALYSIS

Site Conditions and History: The subject property at 2100 Clement Avenue is a 2.78-acre parcel (approximately 121,096 square feet), with frontages on Clement Avenue, Willow Street and Eagle Avenue. The site is adjacent to the Clement Avenue truck route and four blocks from Park Street retail, services, and transit.

The site faces the Navy Operational Support Center on the other side of Clement Avenue. To the east, the site faces Thompson Field and an adjacent Alameda School District warehouse. Along Eagle Avenue and Willow Street, the site faces single family homes and former single family homes that have been altered to accommodate multifamily residential uses.

The site is currently occupied by three warehouses. The warehouses were built on the site by the U.S. Navy for the Pacific Bridge Company's Shipbuilding Yard No. 2. Based upon a historic analysis by Page and Turnbull, the site does not include historically significant architecture, and is not associated with any historically significant individuals. The property is not eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources or the City of Alameda's Historic Resources Inventory. None of the buildings on the site are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, or in the City of Alameda's Historic Resources Inventory. The property does not appear in the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), indicating that no record of previous survey or evaluation is on file with the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP).

The site does include a 20-foot City utilities easement (approximately 4,158 square feet) on the eastern edge of the project that runs from the foot of Mulberry Street to Clement Avenue.

Building Types: The current proposal includes 52 units (six less than the original proposal) in seven triplex structures (21 units), three six-plex buildings (18 units), one five-plex building (five units), and one eight-plex building (eight units). Triplex buildings face the single family and multi-unit homes on Eagle Avenue and Willow Street. The larger five, six and eight-plex buildings face Clement Avenue and the interior of the property.

In response to neighborhood requests, the density of project decreases across the site from Clement Avenue (highest density and building mass) to Eagle Avenue (lowest density and building mass).

In response to Planning Board comments, all of the units on Clement and Eagle Avenues and Willow Street face the street and provide a front door onto the public right-of-way. Access to the front door of approximately 23 of the 52 homes is provided by internal 26-foot wide landscaped "paseos". The balance of the front doors face Willow Street, Clement Avenue, or Eagle Avenue. No garage doors face onto Clement Avenue, Eagle Avenue, or Willow Street.

Architectural Design: The architectural design for the project is intended to compliment the late 19th century and early 20th century design of the homes on the adjacent blocks of Eagle Avenue, Willow Street, and Clement Avenue. The proposed designs include a combination of wood siding finishes and low-slung shingled roofs with either gable or hipped roof lines, and wood accent features such as balconies, shutters, and covered entries.

In response to the Planning Board, neighborhood, and Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) direction, the City Ventures incorporated revisions to the building designs, such as projected gable ends, variation in siding treatments, variation in gable pitches from building to building, improved window designs, and column treatments that have helped in enriching the character of the buildings while staying consistent with the architectural heritage of the neighborhood. (See Sheet G-4 for Conceptual Details).

Building Heights: Along Willow Street, the buildings are designed as two-story buildings with a maximum height of 36 to 39 feet. Along Eagle and Clement, the buildings are designed as three stories with a maximum height of approximately 32 feet. The height limit in the R-2 District is 30 feet, but the Planned Development zoning district requires that the Planning Board establish the appropriate heights for the buildings through project-specific conditions of approval.

Given the location and physical conditions in the neighborhood and the vicinity of the project site, staff believes the proposed heights of the building are appropriate for the site. Along Clement Avenue, a variety of buildings exist or have been approved, that include townhomes and row housing that exceed three stories. A recent example includes the townhomes currently under construction on Clement Street and Buena Vista Avenue at the Marina Shores project. In addition, the three-story buildings along Clement Avenue at the Alameda Marina are well over 30 feet in height. Along Eagle Avenue, most of the existing homes are between 25 and 35 feet in height to the peak of their roofs.

Setbacks: Similar to heights, the Planning Board may approve project-specific setbacks that may vary from the front, side, and rear setbacks in the R-2 zoning district. The setbacks in the R-2 zoning district (15 foot front, five foot side, and 20 foot rear) are designed for single-family and two family dwellings on 4,000 to 5,000 square foot lots, with automobile parking access from the street. In this case, automobile access is being provided from the rear of each home by an internal alley, and the majority of the open space is being provided in common park areas instead of private back yards.

Along Eagle Avenue and Willow Street, the front porch of each residential structure is set back seven feet 10 inches, or eight feet from the property line and approximately 10 feet from the

edge of the public sidewalk. Along Clement Avenue the corner building is eight feet from the sidewalk and the rest of the townhomes facing Clement Avenue are set back 15 feet from the property line and sidewalk. (The project is widening the Clement Avenue sidewalk to six feet. It is currently about 24 inches wide.) Given the location of the site and physical conditions in the neighborhood, staff believes that the proposed setbacks as shown on the site plan are appropriate.

*Affordable Housing Plan and Density Bonus* – The project includes a “base plan” with 43 units (see Exhibit 3). The project will provide 5% of the units (two units) as very low-income, which qualifies the Applicant for a 20% density bonus which equals a total of nine units, or 52 units with the density bonus. In addition, two (2) low-income units and three (3) moderate-income units are proposed for a total of seven affordable units. The applicant is not requesting any incentives or concessions as defined in the Alameda Municipal Code Section 30-17.10. The Density Bonus application is attached as Exhibit 3.

Pursuant to the Density Bonus Ordinance (Section 30-17), the applicant is requesting a waiver from Alameda Municipal Code 30-53 Prohibition on Multifamily Housing in order to accommodate the additional units permitted under the density bonus. The two most important zoning regulations limiting the density permitted on the property are: 1) the multifamily housing prohibition and 2) the open space requirement of 600 square feet of open space per unit. As shown in the attached submittals, to physically fit 52 units on the property, the City must waive one or both of the two requirements.

To address the open space needs and concerns in the neighborhood, the proposed project complies with the City of Alameda Open Space zoning code requirements. To physically accommodate the 52 units and the required 31,200 square feet of useable open space, the project requires a waiver from AMC Section 30-53 Multifamily Housing Prohibited. The requested waiver from the prohibition on multifamily development is justified to enable provision of important open space and minimize unusable spaces between buildings to meet the building separation requirements.

*Universal Design:* Eight homes along Willow Street (15% of the 52) have a ground floor bedroom, full bathroom and kitchen facilities. Four of the eight homes will be designed with no steps from the public sidewalk along Willow into the home. The other four include a step that can be easily adapted with a ramp, if necessary. In addition, the 34 of the town homes have a ground floor bedroom/den and full bathroom facilities on the first floor. All ground floor facilities include:

- Accessible route or easily adapted route of travel to the living space primary entrance.
- Accessible route of travel from garage/parking to the unit’s primary entrance.
- Minimum 32” clear primary entry doorway and a “no step entry” (1/2” or less threshold) with dual peephole and doorbell.
- All exterior/interior doors shall meet Chapter 11a. code required maneuvering clearances, hardware, thresholds, and strike side clearances.
- An accessible route of travel with a minimum 42” wide hallway to all bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens, and bathrooms.
- Light switches, electrical receptacles, and environmental controls at accessible heights on the primary accessible floor.
- Rocker light switches throughout entire unit.

- Minimum required work/floor clearance of 30"x48" in front of stove, refrigerator, dishwasher, sink, and oven.
- Accessible countertops with a 30" wide workspace and/or one or more 15" breadboards installed between 28"-32" high.
- Under-cabinet lighting.
- At least one full bathroom on accessible route of travel equipped with standard shower stalls and toilet with grab bar reinforcement.
- Bathroom with removable base cabinets.
- Lower towel racks and robe hooks.
- Accessible toilet tissue holder.
- All garages will include hook ups for laundry facilities, in the event that the resident wishes to move the laundry facilities from the upper floors to the ground floor to accommodate a disable resident.

*Sustainable Energy Efficient Design:* City Ventures utilizes Green Key design as a standard feature in all of its homes. Green Key design measures include solar panels on each home and electric vehicle charging stations in each garage and energy efficient appliances, advanced heating and cooling systems, and Smart Home Technologies to allow homeowners to better understand and control of their energy usage. Per Planning Board request, the Applicant has provided additional detail regarding the placement and design of the solar arrays on the buildings, and this information is included on Sheet "Solar- A-1." A mechanical well on the roof of the row houses allows for both solar panels and air conditioning units to be installed out of sight on the roof (see Sheet "Solar – A-1").

*Transit Services:* To minimize automobile trips associated with the proposed development, the homeowners association will be funding and providing through a third party transit services from the property to the regional transportation facilities, including BART. To ensure funding for the program, the project includes a Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (the "Declaration"), to which these conditions shall be attached as an exhibit. The provisions of the Declaration shall provide a requirement and mechanism of annual funding by the Homeowners Association. The funding shall be provided on a permanent basis as a Common Expense of the HOA through the HOA's assessments on the lots and units in the project as established under the Declaration for the Project. The HOA's participation and funding for program services is mandatory and shall be considered an obligation and requirement of the HOA under the Declaration. These obligations, requirements and provisions cannot be amended, revised, deleted or rescinded by the HOA or its membership without the prior written approval of the City's Transportation Commission and City Council.

Each of the 52 units shall be assessed an initial amount of \$450 per year for the required transportation services to be provided under this condition. The 2015 initial annual assessment fee of \$450 per unit per year shall be subject to annual adjustment according to the annual changes in the Bay Area Consumer Price Index.

The HOA shall be responsible for providing an annual report for Transportation Commission and City Council review and approval which shall include peak hour automobile counts at the two project entries and surveys of project residents to determine whether the 10% reduction requirement is being achieved annually. In the event that the development fails to achieve the 10% reduction in any given year, the annual report shall identify additional measures that shall be taken to further reduce automobile trips during the peak periods. Two consecutive years failing to meet the 10% reductions may be the basis for the Transportation Commission and City

Council to increase the assessment by an additional 5% annually. An annual report which shows that the project is generating more than 32 AM peak hour automobile trips or more than 40 PM peak hour trips shall be the basis for the Transportation Commission or the City Council to determine that the project is failing to achieve its 10% trip reduction requirement.

*Internal Circulation:* In response to neighborhood and Planning Board concerns, City Ventures revised the internal circulation system to provide a primary vehicular entrance on Clement Avenue and a secondary entrance at the intersection of Eagle Avenue and Mulberry Street. All of the private parking and guest parking is accessed from the internal drive.

Pedestrian access into the site is provide by five pedestrian access points, including the park space along Eagle Avenue. A direct public pedestrian path from the park on Eagle to Clement Avenue is provided across the middle of the site.

The existing 20-foot City easement located along the eastern edge of the property will be improved to serve as the vehicle access from Mulberry Street and Eagle Avenue and a future bicycle and pedestrian extension from Mulberry Street through the site to Clement Avenue. (See Exhibit 1-Sheet L-1 and L-2 for section). The final connection through to Clement Avenue will not be possible until such time that the Alameda Unified School District redevelops its warehouse property or the District provides public access across its portion of the easement to Clement Avenue.

***Issues for Planning Board Consideration:***

At the public hearing, staff will request that the Planning Board and neighbors consider two final issues related to the public open space and parking plans:

*Issue #1: Should the Park Areas be enlarged by reducing the number of guest parking spaces?*

In response to requests from the neighborhood, that applicant revised the original plans to accommodate as much open space and as much parking as possible. As a result, the project meets the open space requirements and exceeds the parking requirements of the City of Alameda Municipal Code.

The project exceeds the AMC requirement of 2 spaces per unit by providing a parking ratio of 2.28 per unit, which is comprised of a private two car garage for each housing unit and 15 guest parking spaces, In addition, the project preserves all of the public on-street parking spaces on Clement Avenue, Eagle Avenue and Willow Street that is currently used by the existing neighbors.

The project provides approximately 14,000 square feet of publically accessible common open space. At the request of staff and the neighbors, the applicant moved the public open space areas adjacent to Eagle Avenue to encourage joint use of the space by new residents and existing neighbors. The park is well situated on the site plan to provide an excellent opportunity for old and new neighbors to gather and recreate.

Unfortunately, as shown on the plans (See L-1 and SP-1), the central open space on Eagle Avenue is interrupted by the 15 space guest parking lot. With 15 cars parked in the middle of the public open space, the public open space is less useful and less attractive. The quality and size of the park could be significantly improved if the number of guest parking spaces were reduced and/or relocated.

For Planning Board and public discussion, staff has identified three options that would improve the quality and usefulness of the open space for the existing neighbors and the new residents:

Option 1: Eliminate guest parking spaces 8 through 15, which will maintain 7 guest parking spaces and increase the 5,608 square foot Eagle Avenue park area by approximately 1,300 square feet. Reduce the parking per unit ratio to 2.13 spaces per unit

Option 2: Eliminate guest parking spaces 1 through 15 and increase the park area by approximately 2,600 square feet. Redesign the park with a patterned decorative paving that can be crossed by cars and bicycles, but also serves as a public plaza area between the two green areas. Create 5-6 new guest parking spaces on the location of Unit 44. Eliminate Unit 44.

Option 3: Approve the plan as proposed with the 13 guest parking spaces.

A transit oriented residential project within four blocks of the City's best Transit corridor (Park Street) could easily operate with less guest parking without impacting the adjacent neighbors. Reducing or eliminating the guest parking would improve the open space plan and provide a more pleasant public open space for the neighborhood and community building. At the public hearing, the Planning Board and interested neighbors should identify the desired number of guest parking spaces.

A staff recommended condition is included in the draft resolution that the applicant prepare a final public open space and street tree design plan for Planning Board review and approval prior to issuance of building permits.

Issue #2: Should the private parking garages have garage doors? Some neighbors suggested that the need for guest parking might be reduced if the new home owners use their garages to park their cars instead of using the garages to store personal belongings. They suggested that if the private parking was designed as carports instead of garages with doors, it would be more likely that the new residents would put their cars in the carports instead of on the street or in the guest parking spaces. (The 31 unit townhome project at Alameda Landing is designed with carports instead of garages.) City Ventures prefers garage doors, so the project includes garage doors with windows and CCR restrictions that would prohibit use of the garages for personal storage. Although such restrictions are important, they will likely be less effective than the carport approach.

The draft resolution of approval includes a condition that all garage doors include windows, as proposed by City Ventures. At the public hearing, staff anticipates that some members of the community will ask the Planning Board to require that the garage doors be removed.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Staff is in support of the proposed land use entitlements for the project at 2100 Clement Street based upon the following findings:

- General Plan and Zoning Consistency: The proposal is consistent with the General Plan and Zoning designations for the property. The residential use and density is consistent with the R-2/PD Zoning, and the residential use implements the General Plan MU-5 mixed use land use designation. Furthermore, the development of the site with 52 residential units, including seven deed restricted affordable housing units, is consistent with the goals and

objectives of the City of Alameda's General Plan Housing Element and helps the City achieve its regional housing needs allocation. Finally, the proposed project is consistent with Plan Bay Area, the Bay Area's long-range integrated transportation and land use/housing strategy through 2040 for the San Francisco Bay Area to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, combat climate change, and reduce vehicle miles traveled to reduce regional traffic congestion.

- Affordable Housing: Alameda, and the Bay Area as a whole, is experiencing a housing crisis. The lack of housing in the Bay Area, and Alameda in particular, is resulting in dramatically escalating housing costs and rents and growing concerns about displacement of long-time Alameda residents. This proposal provides 52 new housing units for the Alameda community. Seven of the units will be deed restricted for very low, - low, - and moderate-income households. The other 45 units will be market-rate townhomes, which are typically more affordable than a single-family home in Alameda.
- Neighborhood Compatibility: The proposal provides a well-designed site plan that will complement and support the neighborhood. The proposed project has been revised to address concerns and suggestions provided by the Planning Board and the adjacent neighbors to ensure that the project complements and supports the residential environment and setting in the area. The expansion of the park area to Eagle Avenue will provide an opportunity for the new residents to interact and socialize with the existing residents in the neighborhood and facilitate neighborhood activities, relationships, and community building. In addition to the common, public open spaces, the project provides private open space for each unit in the form of a front yard and porch area. Although private, these spaces line the public sidewalks on Clement, Eagle, and Willow Street, which will support a pedestrian friendly, community oriented environment along the public streets, where neighbors can meet each other, look out for each other, and develop relationships that build community.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The project is categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15332 In-Fill Development Projects, based upon the following criteria, which were documented in this report and the exhibits:

- a. The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and policies and zoning designation and regulations.
- b. The proposal is located within the city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.
- c. The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species. The site has been developed and operated as a light manufacturing and warehousing facility since the 1940s.
- d. The project would not result in significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality or water quality. (See Exhibit 4-Initial Study).
- e. The site is adequately served by all required utilities and public services. As documented in the General Plan and Housing Element, the site is adequately serviced by existing services.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Hold a public hearing and:

Item 7-B  
June 22, 2015  
Planning Board Meeting

1. Continue discussion of the Vesting Tentative Map to July 13, 2015 to provide additional time of public review of the staff recommended conditions of approval.
2. Adopt the draft resolution approving the Development Plan, Density Bonus, Density Bonus Waiver, and Design Review applications

Respectfully Submitted By:

Andrew Thomas  
City Planner

Exhibits:

1. Design Review and Development Plan Submittal
2. Tentative Map Submittal
3. Density Bonus Application
4. Initial Study
5. Resolution approving the Development Plan, Density Bonus, Density Bonus Waiver, and Design Review applications
6. Public Comment