



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Planning and Building



Date: October 1, 2014
Board Meeting Date: November 4, 2014
Special Notice / Hearing: Newspaper and 10-Day
Notice to Property
Owners within 500 feet
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Steve Monowitz, Acting Community Development Director

Subject: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Public hearing to consider a Zoning Text Amendment to amend the Planned Unit Development (PUD) 136 Zoning District to permit a 20 space parking lot and community garden area rather than a 37 space parking lot for the Siena Youth Center located at 2625 Marlborough Avenue; the parking lot/garden area is to be located on the San Francisco Public Utility Commission (SFPUC) Hetch Hetchy right-of-way on the 2600 Block of Marlborough Avenue between Nottingham Avenue and Buckingham Avenue in the unincorporated North Fair Oaks area of San Mateo County.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt an ordinance amending the Planned Unit Development (PUD) 136 Zoning District to permit a 20 space parking lot and community garden area in the San Francisco Public Utility Commission (SFPUC) right-of-way for the Siena Youth Center and waiver of reading of the ordinance in its entirety.

BACKGROUND:

The applicant, St. Francis Center, proposes to amend the PUD-136 Zoning District, which was approved in 2011 and authorized construction of the Siena Youth Center. The existing regulations call for a minimum of 37 off-street parking spaces to be provided. The proposed change will allow a minimum of 20 off-street parking spaces, plus a raised box community garden area to be constructed on the nearby SFPUC right-of-way. The parking lot and garden area would be enclosed by a maximum 6-foot high chain-link fence, with security gates.

On October 8, 2014, the Planning Commission recommended that the Board of Supervisors adopt an ordinance amending the PUD-136 Zoning District to permit a 20 space parking lot and community garden area in the SFPUC right-of-way for the Siena

Youth Center. At its meeting on September 25, 2014, the North Fair Oaks Community Council also expressed support for the project.

DISCUSSION:

The Siena Youth Center was constructed and has been in operation since 2011. The Center provides a 9,577 sq. ft. gym/recreation center including a caretaker's living unit and a Sheriff's substation. Activities for youth at the Center include organized sports and classes. The approved PUD required that the facility maintain a minimum of 37 vehicle off-street parking spaces. At the time, it was anticipated that the Center would obtain permission from the SFPUC to use part of their right-of-way to construct a parking lot. The SFPUC agreed to the concept, but construction of the lot could not proceed in 2011, since the proposed parking lot site was torn up and being used as a staging area for the SFPUC's pipeline replacement project. That project is now complete and the site is now available for construction of the Center's parking lot. However, rather than construct the 37 space parking lot as required by the approved PUD, the Center is proposing a 20 space lot, with space set aside for community gardens.

The following information supports the proposal to reduce the number of parking spaces provided from 37 to 20, while adding additional community garden space:

1. Parking Plan/Impacts: The Siena Youth Center has been in operation for the past two plus years without any vehicle parking provided, since the SFPUC property was initially unavailable for parking lot construction. During that time, the County has received no direct complaints about Siena Youth Center patrons parking on neighborhood streets, although in response to outreach efforts, some residents who live near the Center expressed concern about the current parking situation. In response, the applicant surveyed Center participants, both youth and adults, and found that as expected, the majority of visitors either walk or bike to the site, take the bus, are dropped off/picked up by car, or they carpool. As such, it is expected that the addition of 20 parking spaces will actually improve the parking situation in the area, offering existing users of the Center convenient parking, freeing up on-street spaces for local residents and the public.
2. Community Garden/Compliance with North Fair Oaks (NFO) Community Plan: The St. Francis Center currently oversees a community garden located on another section of the SFPUC's Hetch Hetchy right-of-way, on the block between Buckingham Avenue and Devonshire Avenue, which is the only community "green space" in the neighborhood. The applicant reports that there is currently a waiting list of families who would like a raised bed garden box to grow their own fruits and vegetables. The North Fair Oaks Community Plan identifies the need for additional park and open space in the community, and includes a number of Land Use and Health and Wellness goals and policies that specifically support the use of the SFPUC land for community garden space.

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As detailed further in the attached staff report, staff has determined that the findings required to amend the PUD regulations can be made. While the proposal will result in the construction of fewer parking spaces, it will provide a vital open space/recreational amenity for the neighborhood that will be in harmony with surrounding residential uses.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the Ordinance as to form.

The approval of the proposed amendment to the PUD-136 Zoning District regulations contributes to the 2025 Shared Vision outcome of a Livable Community by efficiently using limited open space to provide both valuable parking and much needed community garden space.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact.