



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 18, 2004

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT GP-03-03 AND REZONE R-03-01
2300 HARBOR BOULEVARD/380 WEST WILSON STREET

DATE: OCTOBER 5, 2004

FROM: DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT—PLANNING DIVISION

PRESENTATION BY: CLAIRE L. FLYNN, AICP, ASSOCIATE PLANNER

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: CLAIRE L. FLYNN, (714) 754-5278

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The Planning Commission recommends that City Council take the following actions:

- (1) Adopt mitigated negative declaration and mitigation monitoring program;
- (2) Approve General Plan Amendment GP-03-03;
- (3) Give first reading to the ordinance for Rezone Petition R-03-01.

BACKGROUND:

On December 2, 2002, City Council approved a General Plan screening request for the proposed project (Minutes Excerpt, Attachment 4). City Council was interested in further analysis of a low density residential development although Council also expressed concerns about opening Wake Forest Road, preserving the landscape berm/sound walls, and the property's proximity to Home Depot's loading dock.

On August 31 and September 14, 2004 community meetings were held to receive public comment on the proposed project and environmental document. Seventeen people were in attendance at the first meeting, and thirty-eight people attended the second community meeting.

On September 27, 2004, Planning Commission recommended approval of the General Plan amendment and rezone. Planning Commission reviewed the environmental analysis and believed that the proposed low density residential land use designation would not result in adverse traffic impacts to the College Park Neighborhood. Planning Commission also believed the project site was suitable for residential development.

ANALYSIS:

Project Location

The 1.49-acre project site is located at 2300 Harbor Boulevard (1.12 acres) and 380 W. Wilson Street (0.37 acre). The 1.12-acre parcel is located at the western terminus of Wake Forest Road and is a remnant parcel of Harbor Center. It is designated General Commercial by the 2000 General Plan and zoned C1-S, Shopping Center. The 0.37-acre parcel is located adjacent to Wilson Park and is designated High Density Residential, and zoned R3, Multiple-Family Residential. (Vicinity Map and Site Photographs, Attachments 1a through 1f).

Project Description

Habitat for Humanity proposes development of an eight-unit, single-family residential, common-interest development. The project also requires approval of a Final Master Plan and Tentative Tract Map (discussed in a separate report) and the following actions:

- General Plan Amendment GP-03-03 to change the General Plan land use designations from General Commercial (1.12-acre parcel) and High Density Residential (0.37-acre parcel) to Low Density Residential.
- Rezone R-03-01 to change the zoning from Shopping Center (C1-S) and Multi-Family Residential District (R3), to Planned Development Residential-Low Density (PDR-LD).

The existing General Commercial designation and corresponding zoning of the 1.12-acre parcel do not permit residential development. Residential development is only permitted on the 0.37-acre, High Density Residential parcel.

Land Use Policy Issues

Planning Commission Recommendation

In its recommendation to approve the proposed GPA/Rezone, Planning Commission deemed the project site suitable for future residential development for the following reasons:

1. Project is in conformance with 2000 General Plan. Planning Commission acknowledged that the most significant policy issue relates to the site's suitability for residential development. The Commission believed the project satisfied several General Plan objectives related to new housing development: (a) Objective LU-1A.4 encourages low-density residential uses and owner-occupied housing where feasible to improve the balance between rental and ownership housing opportunities; (b) Objective HOU-3.2 requires provision of opportunities

for the development of well-planned and designed projects; and (c) Objective HOU-3.7 requires the consideration of potential impacts on housing opportunities and existing residential neighborhoods when reviewing rezone petitions affecting residential properties. Since the project is in conformance with these Housing Element objectives, Planning Commission supported the GPA /Rezone.

2. Low Density Residential may result in less traffic impacts compared to existing General Plan. Planning Commission reviewed different land use and zoning alternatives to the proposed project. Low Density Residential development would result in an overall 45 percent reduction in average daily trips (ADT) compared to development of the commercial site under the existing General Plan (e.g. warehousing uses, combined with maximum development of the R3 parcels.) Comparison of the different traffic scenarios is provided in the following traffic table. In terms of increased traffic, Planning Commission concluded that a Low Density Residential land use would be comparable, if not environmentally superior, to commercial/high density residential development of the project site under the existing General Plan designations. However, it is important to note the benefits of the reduced traffic would be realized on a system-wide basis as the commercial development alternative does not access Wake Forest Road.
3. Noise Report finds that loading dock noise levels comply with Noise Ordinance. Planning Commission reviewed the Technical Noise Report (2004) for the Habitat for Humanity project. (Noise Report attached to Responses to Comments document). This report found that the noise levels approach but do not exceed the City's Noise Ordinance standards. The noise report also supported noise findings of two previous reports: (a) LSA Noise Report in 2001 and (b) Mestre-Greve Noise Report for Harbor Center in 1998. The 2004 Noise Report measured noise levels at the project site and at Wake Forest in the early morning (6 a.m. to 8 am.), mid afternoon (1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.), and late night (9 p.m. to 11 p.m.). The sound engineer from LSA Associates, Inc. found that the opening in the wall OR the entire demolition of the second easterly 14-foot block wall would result in a negligible effect on noise screening (approximately 1.5 decibel reduction, which is not perceptible to the human ear).
4. New residential community may have higher tolerance for noise disturbances. Planning Commission recognized that many of the ongoing noise disturbances resulted from failure to comply with the Harbor Center Master Plan's conditions of approval. Although these disturbances may not necessarily exceed the City's Noise Ordinance standards, Planning Commission agreed with the community's concerns. The Commission suggested measures to minimize future disturbances, including: (a) meeting with Home Depot management to implement policies educating new personnel of conditions of approvals; (b) painting "NO IDLING" on the asphalt of loading dock area; (c) continued Code Enforcement activity; and (d) follow-up on promises made by ICI Development for double-paned glass/air conditioning for select homes. Planning Commission

also imposed a condition in the Final Master Plan which required notifying the proposed project's future residents of: (1) proposed project proximity to Harbor Center, specifically Home Depot; (2) nature of loading/unloading activities; and (3) restrictions on specific noise generating activities.

5. Opening Wake Forest Road is necessary for reasonable site access. The College Park residents are opposed to opening Wake Forest Road. Planning Commission recognized that the only other access to the currently zoned R3 parcel (0.37-acre parcel) is from Home Depot. Access cannot be provided from West Wilson Street via the Wilson Park Townhomes because of a significant grade difference (about 6 feet) between the two parcels and the need to eliminate parking area from the townhomes. Given the projected 6 to 8 peak hour vehicle trips from the proposed project, Planning Commission believed that opening Wake Forest access would not adversely affect existing traffic and noise conditions in the College Park neighborhood.

Comparison of Traffic Generation for Allowable and Proposed Land Uses

	DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL	AM PEAK HOUR	PM PEAK HOR	AVERAGE DAILY TRIPS
CURRENTLY ALLOWABLE GENERAL COMMERCIAL LAND USE				
SCENARIO 1				
Existing General Plan With Commercial Uses & High Density Residential	19,166 sqft building (FAR 0.30) 7 dwelling units (20 units/ac)	38	126	1,375
SCENARIO 2				
Existing General Plan With Mini-Warehouse Use & High Density Residential	48,060 sqft building (FAR 0.75) 7 dwelling units (20 units/ac)	17	19	190
PROPOSED LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL LAND USE				
SCENARIO 3				
Proposed General Plan Under Maximum Buildout	11 dwelling units (8 units/acre)	8	11	105
SCENARIO 4*				
Proposed Project With 8-Unit Buildout	8 dwelling units (5 units/acre)	6	9	77
Notes: *Scenario 4 represents the proposed project. Detailed traffic analysis for the proposed eight-unit development is provided in the initial study/mitigated negative declaration.				

Alternative General Plan Designations

Alternative land use designations are typically evaluated as a part of the overall review of the General Plan amendment. The following alternatives to the proposed project represent the entire project site (including both the C1-S zoned parcel and R3 zoned parcel) as shown in the table below:

General Plan Alternatives for Combined 1.49-acre Site

Land Use	Maximum FAR	Potential Development	Examples
Low Density Residential <i>(proposed project)</i>	8 dwelling units/acre	11 dwelling units (PDR-LD zone)	Homes
General Commercial	0.30 FAR moderate traffic generating use	14,636 sq.ft. building	Retail Stores, Office, Restaurant
General Commercial	0.75 FAR very low-traffic generating use	48,678 sq.ft. building	Mini-Storage, Warehouse, Garden Center, Nursery
Public/Institutional	0.25 FAR all uses	16,226 sq.ft. building	Public Park, Outdoor Recreation Facility

The Planning Commission did not consider these alternatives as superior to the proposed project based on the following:

- Great demand for ownership housing in Costa Mesa. Planning Commission recognized that the General Commercial and Public/Institutional designations would not involve opening Wake Forest Road or expose homes to noise disturbances at Home Depot. However, the Commission made a policy recommendation that emphasized the value of new residential development that would contribute to the City's attainment of its regional housing goals.
- Site access questionable for public park. Planning Commission reviewed correspondence received by the community expressing support of a public park or institutional use of the project site. Depending on the type of public/institutional facility constructed, access to a public park or recreational area may be provided through Wilson Park or may require opening Wake Forest access. The Commission questioned the feasibility of access to the project site through Wilson Park. Without a definitive plan, the Commission did not believe a public/institutional land use was necessarily superior to a low density residential use.

Alternative Zoning Classifications

Alternative zoning districts are typically evaluated as a part of the overall review of a rezone request. During the City Council meeting for the screening request, City Council requested more information regarding the differences between R1 and PDR-LD zones. City Council was interested in a low density residential development with comparatively lowest environmental impacts.

Planning Commission found no significant differences in terms of density and ownership between R1 and PDR-LD zone because of the following:

- *Difference in maximum buildout potential may be a few units.* The 1.49-acre lot could have a theoretical maximum buildout potential of 10 units (R1 zone) or 11 units (proposed PDR-LD zone). However, it is likely that the development potential would be less because of the Code requirement for all new R1 lots to have frontage on a public street. Given that the proposed Master Plan involves only 8 units and does not capitalize on the maximum buildout allowed under a PDR-LD zone, the differences are not significant. Therefore, Planning Commission concluded that an R1 zone is not considered significantly superior to the PDR-LD zone.
- *Difference in average lot size is not significant.* There is a minor difference between average lot sizes in the R1 zone (minimum 6,000 sq.ft. lot) and PDR-LD (average 5,500 sq.ft. lot) zone. Also, the minimum lot size in a R1 zone is not considered significantly different than the proposed lot sizes. These range from approximately 5,025 to over 8,335 sq.ft., with an average lot size of over 6,582 sq.ft.
- *Both zones involve detached units for homeownership.* Given that the proposed Master Plan involves single-family detached residences for homeownership, there are no significant differences between an R1 zone and a common-interest development in the PDR-LD zone. The proposed project is similar in character, design, and density of homes in an R1 zone.

A primary advantage of the requested PDR-LD zone is that it does provide flexibility to respond to the locational, access, and dimensional constraints of the project site and irregular-shaped lot. Given the relative minor differences, the Planning Commission felt this benefit outweighed the consideration of the R1 zoning alternative.

Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

An initial study was prepared, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). According to the initial study and mitigated negative declaration, which reflect the independent judgment of the City of Costa Mesa, the proposed project could not have a significant effect on the environment. Proposed mitigation measures and

conditions of approvals would minimize significant impacts to below a level of significance.

ALTERNATIVES:

City Council may select the following alternatives:

1. Pursuant to Planning Commission recommendation, approve General Plan Amendment and rezone. City Council may concur with the Planning Commission's conclusions that the noise disturbances from Home Depot may be minimized by preventing violations of conditions of approval (e.g. truck idling, late night deliveries, back-up beeper noise from forklifts). Proposed residential development would be in conformance with the City's General Plan policy encouraging the conversion of existing marginal or vacant commercial properties to residential where feasible. An approval resolution is attached (Attachment 2).

2. Deny General Plan Amendment and rezone. City Council may not believe the project site to be suitable for residential development given the ongoing noise disturbances and violations of conditions of approval in the loading dock area. Council may consider a mini-storage facility or a garden center with access from Harbor Center as the best uses for this site.

3. Approve General Plan Amendment and corresponding R1 zoning (instead of PDR-LD). This alternative would be consistent with College Park residents' preference for an R1 zone if the General Plan Amendment is approved. This would likely involve a reduction in the proposed number of homes and adjustments to building setbacks. The applicant would need to propose another Master Plan.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The proposed project does not require fiscal review.

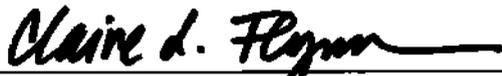
LEGAL ANALYSIS:

The City's Attorney's office has reviewed the draft resolution and ordinance and approved them as to form.

CONCLUSION:

Planning Commission considered various alternatives to the proposed project and found the site to be suitable for residential development. Specifically, Planning Commission believed the following: (a) a mini-warehouse facility or public park use

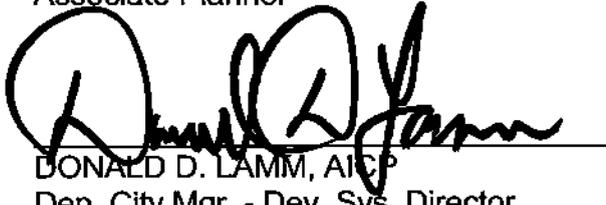
may not be necessarily superior to low density residential development in terms of traffic impacts; (b) there are no significant differences between R1 and PDR-LD zones with regard to density, intensity, and design; (c) opening Wake Forest provides reasonable site access, (d) enforcement of Harbor Center conditions of approval may minimize or eliminate noise disturbances from idling trucks, back-up beeper noise, and/or late night deliveries, and (e) new residents properly notified of noise environment may have a higher tolerance to noise occurrences. In summary, Planning Commission finds that the proposed GPA/Rezone strengthen and reinforce the City's land use vision for the immediate area.



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- Attachments:
1. Vicinity Map and Site Photos (1a-1f)
 2. Draft Council Resolution
 3. Draft Ordinance
 4. Minutes Excerpt of PC meeting on 9/27/04
 5. Minutes Excerpt of CC meeting on 12/02/02
 6. 9/27/04 Planning Commission Staff Report
 7. Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
(provided previously as a separately bound document)

cc:

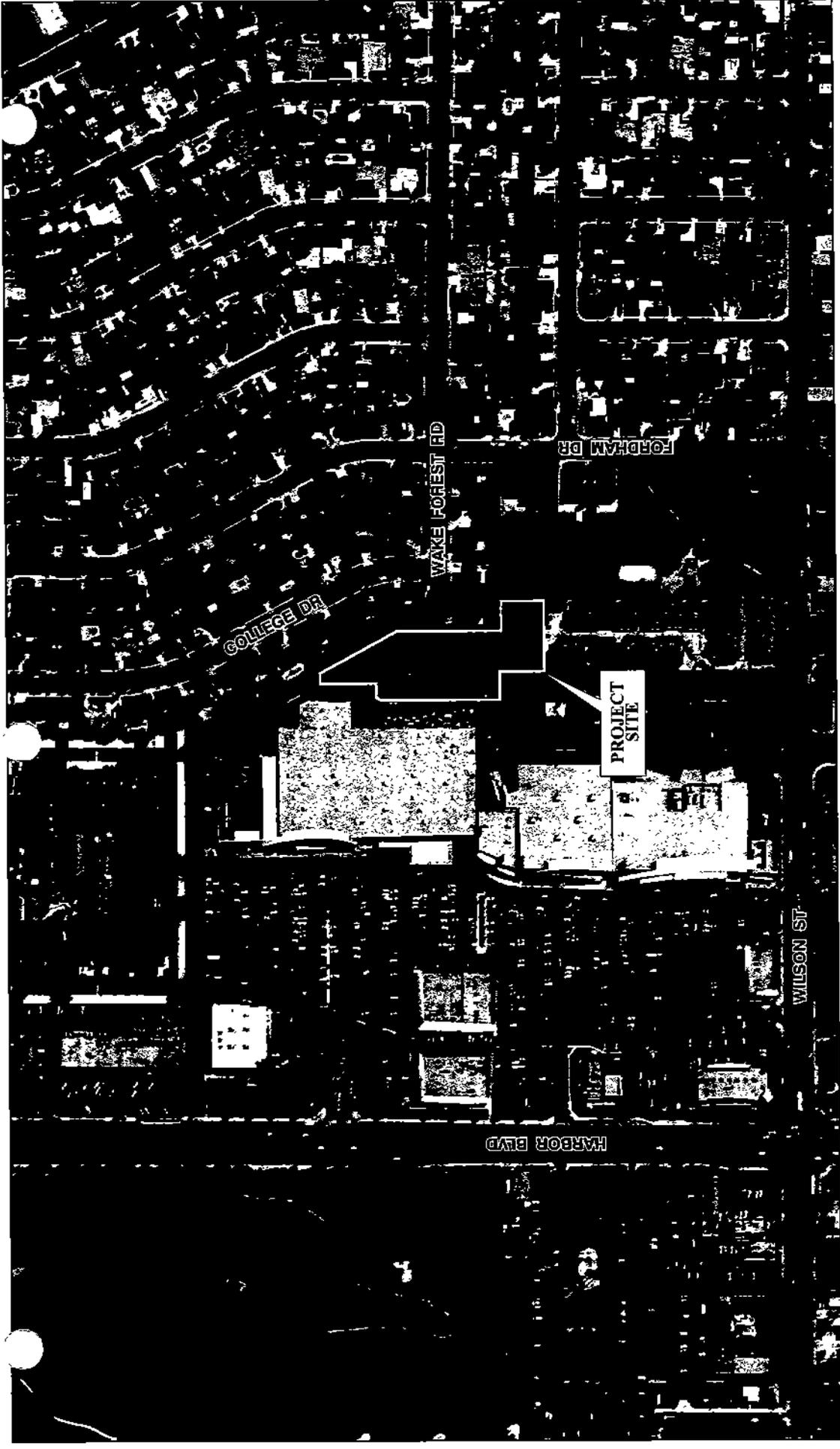
- City Manager
- Assistant City Manager
- Acting City Attorney
- Deputy City Mgr.-Dev. Svs. Director
- Public Service Director
- City Clerk (2)
- Staff (4)
- File (2)

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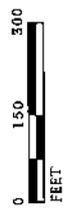
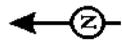
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Neighbors for Harbor Center

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LSA



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SOURCE: Eagle Aerial, 2002

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CITY OF COSTA MESA

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DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

**FOR ATTACHMENTS NOT INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT,
PLEASE CONTACT THE CITY CLERK AT (714) 754-5223**