

Neighborhood Meeting

Downtown San Mateo Opportunity Sites March 07, 2019

PLANNING APPLICATION:	PA18-077 480 E. 4th Avenue & 400 E. 5th Avenue – City Owned Former Redevelopment Sites – Affordable Housing Pre-App
PROJECT LOCATION:	480 East 4 th Ave & 400 East 5 th Ave, San Mateo
MEETING LOCATION:	San Mateo Public Library – Oak Room
MEETING DATE/TIME:	March 7, 2019, 7:00pm
ATTENDEES:	Public – See Sign-In Sheet
PURPOSE OF MEETING:	Pre-Application neighbor outreach to provide a description of proposed project to obtain feedback and answer questions or concerns.
WELCOME/INTRODUCTION:	Mollie Naber, Project Manager for MidPen Housing Corporation (Developer) welcomed the attendees and reviewed the agenda for the meeting.
PRESENTATION:	<p>Part 1: Introduction</p> <p>Kathy Kleinbaum, Assistant City Manager for the City of San Mateo, gave an overview of the site history, ownership, partnership with MidPen Housing Corporation, and the framework for this development. Roscoe Mata, Project Planner for the City of San Mateo, gave an overview of the City approval process. The Developer will submit a planning application in Fall 2019, attend a Planning Commission Public Hearing in Summer/Fall 2020, and request City Council approval in Fall 2020.</p> <p>Part 2: Proposed development</p> <p>Mollie Naber, Project Manager, lead the presentation on the proposed development. The project proposes 164 affordable apartments in a five-story residential building and a minimum of 699 parking spaces in a five-story parking structure. The plans also include a public plaza at the residential site and a community serving space at the ground floor of the parking structure. The proposed unit mix for the residential building is 9 studios, 70 one-bedroom units, 46 two-bedroom units and 39 three-bedroom units. The rents will target low and moderate income families, defined as those earning between 30-120% Area Median Income (AMI) for the County of San Mateo.</p>

COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, AND ANSWER SESSION:

#	Speaker	Comments/Questions/Responses
1.	Neighbor 1	<p>Expressed support for the project and opinion on public art: I am pleased to see this development come online. The design is very thoughtful. I would like to see the art and either the green wall or metal structure as a façade element on the parking structure.</p> <p>Question about public plaza: Q: Would the lack of sunlight significantly impact the ability to put in greenery at the western public plaza location? A: A public plaza on the western corner of the residential site would be in the shade. A: The design plans are early, so if the community wants the public plaza on the western corner near Claremont, instead of on the eastern corner near the railroad tracks, we can work with the landscape architect to make it work.</p>
2.	Neighbor 2	<p>Question about rents: Q: I'm unsure how the rents work and how incomes work A: Rents are based on the household income. Half of the units are for lower income households earning between 30-60% AMI; half of the units will target moderate income households earning 80-120% AMI. Q: Is there a list where you sign up? A: We will open up the application interest list several months before we complete construction. A: Normally there is a 2-3 week application period during which we accept applications, then we conduct a lottery. The preference for families living or working in the City of San Mateo will then be applied: if you qualify for the preference, you float to the top. From there, we make our way down the list.</p>
3.	Neighbor 3	<p>Question about income targeting and affordability: Q: Can you give me an example from your building next to Michael's [Peninsula Station] -- how many residents make less than \$25,000 a year? A: There are no studios at Peninsula Station. There are 8 1-bedrooms where we mostly have seniors. The average affordability level there is about 42%. Q: Did the affordability levels at that project change between the time you proposed the project and the time construction was completed? A: They did go up a little bit when the HUD rents went up. However, we worked with the City to maximize affordability and in some of the cases the rents went down.</p>
4.	Neighbor 4	<p>Question about accessibility: Q: I think this looks great and we obviously need housing. My only concern is people with a physical disability or a mother with young kids. How will they navigate from the garage to the units—will there be any disabled parking or short-term parking that would make the residential building more accessible? A: We are considering a loading zone at the entry. The pedestrian bridge between the parking structure and the residential building will provide protected access for residents to get between the buildings. There will be elevators at both ends of the bridge. The handicapped parking will be close to the elevator.</p>
5.	Neighbor 5	<p>Comment about design: I'm impressed with MidPen, but I must say as a retired architect, I am very disappointed with new developments the City allows. For this development, you need to soften the façade. A: Thank you, these comments are very welcome as we are early in the design process.</p>

6.	Neighbor 6	<p>Question about exterior lighting:</p> <p>Q: I am wondering about the exterior lighting.</p> <p>A: We will comply with dark sky policies. There will be lighting in the parking structure that can be seen across downtown so people will know where to park and how to return to their cars. We are considerate of light pollution and will keep the lighting within the site perimeters.</p> <p>Q: Are there sensor lights when people walk?</p> <p>A: There will be sensors in the corridors of the residential building; the exterior lights at residents' homes will likely be individually controlled.</p>
7.	Neighbor 7	<p>Question about noise abatement and gardening plots:</p> <p>Q: I am curious about the noise abatement and the possibility for gardening plots.</p> <p>A: We work with an acoustical engineer on noise mitigation initiatives. This project is designed to exceed the California building code, this is financing requirement; the sound insulation quality will be similar to high end condos near transit.</p> <p>A: Right now we don't have a community garden in the plans but as we work with our landscape architect and the community, we'll look at what makes the most sense given the population and available space</p> <p>Q: Can you put a community garden on the roof?</p> <p>A: We tend not to for safety and maintenance reasons. We also don't have the space: the development is required to have solar hot water on the roof, if we have any remaining space, we intend to add solar panels.</p>
8.	Neighbor 8	<p>Question about design:</p> <p>Q: How will such a structure affect this block? I agree the façade needs softening. I don't like art that is too metallic or square, which I've seen elsewhere in the City. It would be nice to have a closer look at the art proposed here. I would like the plaza in the western location because it's further from the noise of the trains, even if it's shady.</p> <p>A: There is a Civic Arts Committee who reviews the art application for all new developments. We are trying to diversify the art. Any feedback you provide to MidPen or the Committee, particularly early on, is helpful to allow for a more thoughtful proposal. Public engagement is welcome at the Civic Arts Committee meeting as well. People who have signed up for the project's communication list will be notified of when public art at these sites is discussed at the Committee.</p>
9.	Neighbor 9	<p>Question about traffic mitigations and local artists:</p> <p>Q: Any plans for MidPen to contribute to traffic mitigations? There are a lot of local artists, will any of their work be used? San Mateo is home to the largest Markers Faire, it would be good to tap into that talent.</p> <p>A: MidPen is a member of the Transportation Management Association and we work in partnership with the City—if we can invest in traffic mitigation together it is ideal. If you have any ideas on where we can make smart investments, we would welcome that. Right now we're looking at providing bus passes and supporting ridership. We also pay impact fees as required by the City. Any special traffic impacts associated with the development will be identified in the environmental studies and considered. Providing workforce housing with a live/work preference is itself an important mitigation.</p>
10.	Neighbor 10	<p>Question about parking:</p> <p>Q: I am concerned with the amount of parking—it's way too much and the amount of money it takes to build this. It could be used for affordable housing instead. There's a public benefit component of Measure P that allows developers to go up to 7 stories—and affordable housing is the biggest challenge the City and County is facing right now.</p> <p>A: There are areas that are allowed to go to 75 feet but these sites are not in those areas. This site is restricted to a height of 55 feet. The City conducted a Parking Management Plan identified a gap of 300 parking spaces; the added parking is an identified need in that study. We also have several garages where the structures are nearing the end of their useful life. If</p>

		<p>parking needs change, then these older structures could be demolished and put to better use in the future.</p> <p>Q: The parking garage being built first disappoints me—the housing waiting lists are miles long—is it possible to build the housing before the parking?</p> <p>A: Neighbors are concerned about too much of the existing parking at the sites being offline at a given time; the downtown community and businesses are asking for one of the parking lots to be online during construction, which is why the parking structure must be built first.</p>
11.	Neighbor 11	<p>Question about integration:</p> <p>Q: How does this integrate businesses and housing in Downtown?</p> <p>A: The City has an existing Downtown Plan that the City is in the process of updating with the General Plan. These sites have always been identified as housing sites so the proposed use is consistent with the plans.</p>
12.	Neighbor 12	<p>Question about design:</p> <p>Q: I'm happy to see a significant number of people will be comfortably housed. I'm a proponent of walkability and streetscape, but the stoops don't make the ground level of the residential building feel homey. Avoid the pitfalls of making it too unintelligible. I'm a fan of green walls and the more greenery we have it, the better. The western location for the public plaza is better for having conversations.</p> <p>A: Thank you for the comments, we will consider them as we continue to work on the design</p>
13.	Neighbor 13	<p>Question about design:</p> <p>Q: Could you plant fruit trees in the residents' outdoor areas, and place vertical planters in the balcony spaces?</p> <p>A: Thank you for the comments, we will consider them as we continue to work on the design.</p>
14.	Neighbor 14	<p>Question about MidPen contribution to the school district:</p> <p>Q: How much does MidPen actually donate to the San Mateo/Foster City School District? Sunnybrae School is struggling. Also, I live near Second and South Fremont and have been trying to get the City to do something about the traffic issues. There is a lot of traffic to enter the theater's parking garage and it raises safety concerns for the pedestrians.</p> <p>A: We pay significant impact fees to the school district and have already started meeting with the school district about enrollment planning. The school district may also benefit in terms of employee retention from the project's goals to provide workforce housing for low and moderate income people who live or work in the City of San Mateo; a portion of the units will have an additional preference for public employees, including teachers. We will study nearly two dozen intersections in our traffic analysis and the appropriate mitigation measures will be identified.</p>
15.	Neighbor 15	<p>Question about the Worker's Resource Center:</p> <p>Q: I agree with the previous point regarding softening the architecture. An important concept to follow is eyes on the street for safety reasons; Metropolitan exhibits this in their design. I'm concerned with the impact of temporarily moving the Worker Resource Center to the Kinko's site (480 East 4th Avenue) while the parking garage is built, as this would further reduce available parking. The neighborhood will lose a lot of parking and we need that parking. It might be easier to keep it closed for 12 months and see what happens.</p> <p>A: The City has not yet determined what will happen to the Worker Resource Center during construction; the City's first choice would be an alternate location if one is available.</p>
16.	Neighbor 16	<p>Question about the public plaza:</p> <p>Q: Studies say that children's hearing is 10x more sensitive than adults. This is a good reason that the public plaza shouldn't be located so close to the train tracks, but rather on the western corner of the residential site.</p>

		A: Thank you for the comments, we will consider them as we continue to work on the design. The inner courtyard will be protected from the noise and the units will be protected through sound mitigation measures identified by the acoustical engineer. At Peninsula Station, the window assembly is such so you can open it but we do have ventilation through the air conditioning.
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