



Agenda Report

Fullerton City Council

MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 2, 2021

TO: CITY COUNCIL / SUCCESSOR AGENCY

SUBMITTED BY: STEVE DANLEY, ACTING CITY MANAGER

PREPARED BY: GREGORY PFOST, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
HEATHER ALLEN, PLANNING MANAGER

SUBJECT: THE HUB STUDENT-ORIENTED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROJECT LOCATED AT 2601, 2701 AND 2751 EAST CHAPMAN AVENUE

SUMMARY

The Planning Commission recommended in a 3 - 2 vote that City Council approve this project, including the demolition of the existing office buildings and the construction of a student-oriented residential housing project. In response to Planning Commission and public comments regarding the adequacy of parking, staff has provided the Project as well as an Alternative Project (proposed to address parking adequacy) for City Council consideration. The Alternative Project removes 43 units (143 beds) and adds 210 parking spaces.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt the following resolutions:

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-XX - A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FULLERTON, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION, INCLUDING ANALYSIS OF THE POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT, PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES, STANDARD CONDITIONS, MITIGATION MEASURES AND MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR THE HUB FULLERTON STUDENT-ORIENTED HOUSING PROJECT ON A 3.55-ACRE PROPERTY LOCATED ON THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF CHAPMAN AND COMMONWEALTH AVENUES

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-XX - A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FULLERTON, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A MAJOR SITE PLAN FOR A

STUDENT-ORIENTED HOUSING PROJECT WITH 12,438 SQUARE FEET OF GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL SPACE ON A 3.55-ACRE PROPERTY LOCATED ON THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF CHAPMAN AND COMMONWEALTH AVENUES AND INCLUDING

- a. OPTION 1 (PROJECT) – 420 UNITS (1,251 BEDS) WITH 338 TOTAL RESIDENTIAL SPACES AND 38 RETAIL SPACES

OR

- b. OPTION 2 (ALTERNATIVE PROJECT) – 377 UNITS (1,108 BEDS) WITH A 548 TOTAL RESIDENTIAL SPACES

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-XX - A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FULLERTON, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP TPM 2020-173 TO CREATE ONE LOT UNDER COMMON OWNERSHIP ON A 3.55-ACRE PROPERTY LOCATED ON THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF CHAPMAN AND COMMONWEALTH AVENUES

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-XX - A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FULLERTON, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A GENERAL PLAN REVISION TO CHANGE THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TYPE FROM OFFICE TO HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ON A 3.55-ACRE PROPERTY LOCATED ON THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF CHAPMAN AND COMMONWEALTH AVENUES

2. Introduce the following Ordinances for first reading by title only and waive further reading of the ordinances:

ORDINANCE NO. XXXX - AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FULLERTON, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A ZONING AMENDMENT TO CHANGE THE ZONING CLASSIFICATION FROM OFFICE PROFESSIONAL (O-P) TO SPECIFIC PLAN DISTRICT (SPD) ON A 3.55-ACRE PROPERTY LOCATED ON THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF CHAPMAN AND COMMONWEALTH AVENUES

ORDINANCE NO. XXXX - AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FULLERTON, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING THE HUB SPECIFIC PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE LAND USE REGULATIONS ON A 3.55-ACRE PROPERTY LOCATED ON THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF CHAPMAN AND COMMONWEALTH AVENUES AND INCLUDING

- a. OPTION 1 (PROJECT, DRAFT SEPTEMBER 2021) – WITH A RESIDENT AND GUEST PARKING RATE OF 0.77 PER UNIT

OR

- b. OPTION 2 (ALTERNATIVE PROJECT, DRAFT OCTOBER 2021) – WITH A RESIDENT AND GUEST PARKING RATE OF 1.4 PER UNIT

PRIORITY POLICY STATEMENT

This item matches the following Priority Policy Statement:

- Fiscal and Organizational Stability.

FISCAL IMPACT

The applicant pays all City costs associated with the application review, processing, environmental analysis, plan check, permitting and inspections. Additionally, the Applicant will pay all associated impact fees related to parks, schools, utilities and others as well as bonds related to off-site improvements or mitigation measures identified in the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

DISCUSSION

The Applicant proposes redeveloping a 3.55-acre site located at 2601, 2701 and 2751 East Chapman Avenue, at the northeast corner of Chapman and Commonwealth Avenues.

The Applicant requests approval of the following applications:

- Major Site Plan (ZON-2020-0074) for review of site, architectural and landscape plans.
- Tentative Parcel Map (SUB-2020-0003 / TPM 2020-173) to create one parcel under common ownership.
- General Plan Revision (LRP-2020-0016) to change the site's community development type from Office to High-Density Residential.
- Zoning Amendment (LRP-2020-0017) to change the zoning classification from Office Professional (O-P) to Specific Plan District (SPD).
- Specific Plan (LRP-2020-0018) to establish the development standards and land use regulatory framework applicable to the project site.
- Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration to evaluate the potential impacts associated with project construction and operation including a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

The project site is an 862-foot-long property between Commonwealth Avenue and the southbound SR-57 freeway off-ramp. The site is currently developed with four office buildings totaling 55,322 square feet and an associated surface parking lot.

Major Site Plan (ZON-2020-0074)

Site Plan

The Applicant proposes construction of a new six-story student-oriented housing project with neighborhood-supporting commercial space on the ground floor. The project would provide a wide variety of residential unit types from micro and studio units to two-level townhome units with four beds and four baths.

The ground level of the proposed building would contain the commercial tenant spaces and associated outdoor public area ("paseo"); resident amenities, including leasing office and residential units. The remaining residential units would locate on all upper floors. The project proposes indoor and outdoor open space amenities throughout the property including patios, balconies, fitness areas and a roof deck including a pool.

A driveway on Chapman Avenue provides primary vehicular access to the site, restricted to right- and left-turns in / right-turns out. Parking is located generally in the northeastern corner of the site within a parking structure. A driveway on Commonwealth Avenue provides secondary access for emergency vehicles, commercial deliveries and waste pick-up, restricted to right-turns in / right-turns out.

The sidewalks on Chapman and Commonwealth Avenues provide pedestrian access as well as the on-site circulation system which includes a walkway along the north side of the property. Commonwealth Avenue includes a Class II bike lane in both directions. In addition, residents would have access to public transit in the project vicinity. Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Route 26 has a stop along the project's western property line. OCTA Routes 57 (Brea to Newport Beach), 123 (Anaheim to Huntington Beach) and 153 (Brea to Anaheim) all have stops within a 0.5-mile walk of the project site. The Metrolink / Amtrak Fullerton train station and OCTA bus depot are 2.5-miles from the project site and bus Route 26 connects the project to the station.

While the Fullerton Municipal Code (FMC) includes development standards for high-density multi-family residential development as well as mixed-use developments with residential and commercial land uses, it does not provide regulations unique to student-oriented housing with neighborhood serving retail. Therefore, the Applicant has prepared a Specific Plan discussed in detail in the following table. The table also includes an analysis of the Project and Alternative Project to the R-5 maximum density multi-family residential development standards, for comparison purposes.

Project

The Planning Commission recommends approval of the project which consists of 420 units (1,251 beds) with 12,438 square feet of neighborhood-supporting commercial space on the ground floor and a parking structure with 376 parking spaces (338 resident / guest and 38 retail).

Development Standard	R-5	Proposed	Consistent
Setbacks, Public Street	15 ft.	Arterial Street - 12 ft. Freeway - 8 ft.	Utilizes Specific Plan standard
Setbacks, Interior	Units – 5 ft. to 30.5 ft. with tiering Parking – 0 ft to 15.5 ft. with tiering	Units - All stories at 28 ft. Parking – All levels at 10 ft.	Utilizes Specific Plan standard
Height	Unlimited when greater than 100 feet from R-1 zone	80 ft. maximum; R-1 zone is 110 ft across Chapman Avenue	Yes
Lot Coverage	60%	58%	Yes
Floor Area Ratio	N/A	Specific Plan – 3.3 Project – 3.12	Utilizes Specific Plan standard
Density (dwelling units/acre)	Unlimited	Specific Plan – 120 du/ac Project – 118.3 du/ac	Yes
Open Space	Common – 55,097 sq. ft. Private – 28,140 sq. ft. Total = 83,237 sq. ft.	Specific Plan – 20% of site area minimum = 30,928 sq. ft.	Utilizes Specific Plan standard

		Project – Common – 58,876 sq. ft. Private – 13,150 sq. ft. Total = 72,026 sq. ft.	
Parking	Blended multi-family rate per unit of 2.5 resident and guest; total 1,036 spaces Commercial 4 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft.; 50 total spaces	Specific Plan – Blended student-oriented housing rate of 0.77 resident and guest; Commercial 3 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. Project – Blended student- oriented housing rate of 0.80 resident and guest; total 338 spaces (0.27 per bed); Commercial 3.056 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft.; total 38 spaces	Utilizes Specific Plan standard

The applicant bases the proposed student-oriented housing residential parking rate on the Applicant's portfolio of 32 housing projects supporting college campuses across the United States and is consistent with both the parking per unit and parking per bed rates of these existing similar projects (Attachment 8). The commercial rate of three spaces per 1,000 square feet is consistent with the City's non-residential parking rate for infill development (FMC Section 15.20.150).

Alternative Project

The Alternative Project consists of 377 units (1,108 beds) with 12,438 square feet of neighborhood-supporting commercial space on the ground floor and a parking structure with 586 parking spaces (548 resident / guest and 38 retail). Bold text identifies where the Alternative Project differs from the Project in the following table.

Development Standard	R-5	Proposed	Consistent
Setbacks, Public Street	15 ft.	Arterial Street - 12 ft. Freeway - 8 ft.	Utilizes Specific Plan standard
Setbacks, Interior	Units – 5 ft. to 30.5 ft. with tiering Parking – 0 ft to 15.5 ft. with tiering	Units - All stories at 28 ft. Parking – All levels at 10 ft.	Utilizes Specific Plan standard
Height	Unlimited when greater than 100 feet from R-1 zone	80 ft. maximum; R-1 zone is 110 ft across Chapman Avenue	Yes
Lot Coverage	60%	58%	Yes
Floor Area Ratio	N/A	Specific Plan – 3.3 Project – 2.85	Utilizes Specific Plan standard
Density (dwelling units/acre)	Unlimited	Specific Plan – 120 du/ac Project – 106.2 du/ac	Yes

Open Space	Common – 50,631 sq. ft. Private – 25,259 sq. ft. Total = 75,890 sq. ft.	Specific Plan – 20% of site area minimum = 30,928 sq. ft. Project – Common – 58,876 sq. ft. Private – 13,150 sq. ft. Total = 72,026 sq. ft.	Utilizes Specific Plan standard
Parking	Blended multi-family rate per unit of 2.5 resident and guest; total 943 spaces Commercial 4 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft.	Specific Plan – Blended student-oriented housing rate of 1.4 resident and guest ; Commercial 3 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. Project – Blended student- oriented housing rate of 1.45 resident and guest; total 548 spaces (0.49 per bed); Commercial 3.056 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft.; total 38 spaces	Utilizes Specific Plan standard

Architecture

The project has a contemporary design and considers the educational institution context of the surroundings. The colors and materials include natural tones and textures. To address the challenging 862-foot-long narrow site, the project uses two different, but complementary, aesthetics to break up the mass of the building. The building shifts to a more pedestrian residential aesthetic where townhomes land at grade on the eastern building. The western building uses toned-down neutral colors and a more public and commercial sense of place at grade. The paseo creates a dynamic outdoor space for seating, activities and public art for both the community and residents. To further break down the scale of the length of the building, the façade creates a series of smaller volumes to create more relief from the street. The building becomes a series of masses with distinguishable characteristics within each group, both interior and exterior. The Specific Plan provides standards supporting the design concepts and ensures that the project utilizes a variety of high-quality, durable materials to execute the design.

Landscaping

The project proposes landscaping around the building to both accentuate the ground floor uses and provide a buffer between the residential units and common walkways. The plant palette utilizes a mix of trees, shrubs and ground cover to create a layered appearance. Palm trees will remain in use as the street tree along Chapman Avenue. The project also proposes landscaping on portions of the upper levels of the street-visible exterior of the parking structure.

As detailed in the findings contained in the Resolution, the project as proposed and conditioned complies with the relevant development standards and design criteria.

Tentative Parcel Map (SUB-2020-0003 / TPM 2020-173)

The project proposes to combine the existing three lots with two owners into one property under common ownership.

As detailed in the findings contained in the Resolution, the tentative parcel map meets the City and State requirements with respect to subdivision.

General Plan Revision (LRP-2020-0016)

The project includes a General Plan Revision to change the site's General Plan land use designation (community development type) from Office to High-density Residential. The High-Density Residential community development type will "establish and protect opportunities for households that desire dense urban living within a compact, walkable neighborhood that is well served by transit, and to provide opportunities for neighborhood support uses and amenities." Potential land uses include attached dwellings and limited neighborhood serving commercial uses, among others.

Development Standard	Required	Proposed	Meets Requirement
Density	Over 28 du/ac	Specific Plan – 120 du/ac Project – 118.3 du/ac Alternative Project – 106.2 du/ac	Yes

Additionally, the project is located in the Education Focus Area in the City's general plan ("The Fullerton Plan"). The Education Focus Area centers around the colleges and universities in the area bounded by State College Boulevard on the west, Chapman Avenue on the south, Placentia Avenue / the City of Placentia on the east and extending north of Yorba Linda Boulevard. The Fullerton Plan envisions a dynamic neighborhood in which the colleges and universities form the hub where higher density multi-family housing, along with supporting retail and service facilities, will meet the demands of the increasing student population, staff and faculty. The highly appropriate community development types include High-Density Residential as proposed.

As detailed in the findings contained in the Resolution, the project is consistent with the density requirement for the High-Density Residential community development type in addition to consistency with the purpose of the development type and its associated land uses as well as those of the Education Focus Area.

Zoning Amendment (LRP-2020-0017) and Specific Plan (LRP-2020-0018)

The project includes a change in the zoning classification to SPD, Specific Plan District, and adoption of the corresponding Specific Plan regulatory document to facilitate the development of a student-oriented housing project with neighborhood serving ground floor commercial within the City's Education Focus Area.

The City allows utilization of a Specific Plan for a site such as this that has unique characteristics including a unique mix of land uses and specific community objectives. The Specific Plan is the best zoning tool for this project to implement the Planning Objectives for the Education Focus Area which include adding student and faculty housing as well as retail and gathering spaces that serve the students, faculty and population-at-large on a single property.

The SPD zoning classification may be used to implement every community development type and is therefore consistent with the High-density Residential general plan request. Furthermore, the student-oriented housing project on the west side of Commonwealth Avenue also has a zoning classification of SPD and a community development type of High-Density Residential.

As detailed in the findings contained in the Ordinances, the project's unique mix of uses which support the Planning Objectives of the Education Focus Area, justify the use of a Specific Plan and implement The Fullerton Plan. Furthermore, the project supports multiple goals of The Fullerton Plan supporting the Community Development and Design, Housing, Mobility, Bicycle, Growth Management, Noise, Economic Development, Revitalization, Public Safety, Public Health, Parks and Recreation, Water, Air Quality and Climate Change and Integrated Waste Management Elements as detailed in The Fullerton Plan Consistency Analysis (Attachment 9).

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on September 29, 2021 and recommended City Council approve the Project (See Draft Minutes, Attachment 10).

Environmental Review

The City, as Lead Agency, prepared a Draft Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration to identify the potential environmental impacts associated with the construction and implementation of the Project in conformance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines (Attachment 11). The Initial Study analyzed the project with respect to the following environmental factors:

CEQA Environmental Factors		
Aesthetics	Geology/Soils	Population/Housing
Agriculture and Forestry Resources	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Public Services
Air Quality	Hazards/Hazardous Materials	Recreation
Biological Resources	Hydrology/Water Quality	Transportation
Cultural Resources	Land Use/Planning	Tribal Cultural Resources
Energy	Mineral Resources	Utilities/Services Systems
	Noise	Wildfire

The analysis found Less than Significant Impacts or No Impacts for all of the environmental factors excepting Air Quality (construction) and Geology / Soils for which the analysis identified three mitigation measures which reduce the impacts to Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The Air Quality mitigation measures require the use of low VOC paint and off-road construction equipment meeting the highest EPA standards for emission reductions ("Tier 4"). The Geology / Soils mitigation measure requires compliance with the recommendations from the Geotechnical Investigation. Attachment 12 includes the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

Three agencies and one interested party commented on the Project. None of the comments received resulted in the need to recirculate the Draft Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration or prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Attachment 13 includes the letters and responses.

The Project as analyzed in the Hub Fullerton Initial Study included a reduction of trips for having a limited parking supply. Although the Alternative Project removes units, it adds parking spaces. Therefore, the Alternative Project could not take the limited parking supply reduction. The study evaluated the environment factors utilizing trip generation – operational air quality, greenhouse gases and operational noise –using the higher trip generation figure. This increase would not result in an additional environmental impact that would require recirculation of the Mitigated Negative Declaration / Initial Study pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15073.5. (See Memo, Attachment 14)

Correspondence

The City has received a letter of support from California State University, Fullerton (Attachment 15).

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – PowerPoint Presentation
- Attachment 2 – Draft Resolution No. 2021-XX – Mitigated Negative Declaration
- Attachment 3 – Draft Resolution No. 2021-XX – Major Site Plan
- Attachment 4 – Draft Resolution No. 2021-XX – Tentative Parcel Map
- Attachment 5 – Draft Resolution No. 2021-XX – General Plan Revision
- Attachment 6 – Draft Ordinance No. XXXX – Zoning Amendment
- Attachment 7 – Draft Ordinance No. XXXX – Specific Plan
- Attachment 8 – Parking Comparison
- Attachment 9 – The Fullerton Plan Consistency Analysis
- Attachment 10 – Draft Planning Commission Minutes dated September 29, 2021
- Attachment 11 – Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration dated August 2021¹
- Attachment 12 – Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- Attachment 13 – Response to Comments
- Attachment 14 – Hub Fullerton Alternative Project CEQA Memo
- Attachment 15 – Correspondence
- Attachment 16 – Site Plan and Elevations
- Attachment 17 – Landscape Plans
- Attachment 18 – Tentative Parcel Map and Conceptual Grading
- Attachment 19 – Revised Plan Sheets for Alternative Project
- Attachment 20 – Draft Specific Plan dated September 2021

¹ Technical Appendices available upon request and at:
<https://www.cityoffullerton.com/government/departments/community-and-economic-development/planning-zoning/development-activity>

- Attachment 21 – Revised Section 2 of Draft Specific Plan dated October 2021