



City of Huntington Beach

File #: 19-666

MEETING DATE: 6/11/2019

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Ursula Luna-Reynosa, Community Development Director
BY: Nicolle Aube, AICP, Associate Planner

SUBJECT:
TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 18157/CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 17-042 (ELLIS AVE. CONDOS)

REQUEST:

To permit a one-lot subdivision and development of a four-story mixed-use building including 48 new condominium residences with 891 square feet of commercial space and three levels of subterranean parking and find the project exempt from CEQA.

LOCATION:

8041 Ellis Avenue (North side of Ellis Ave., between Beach Blvd. and Patterson Ln.)

APPLICANT:

Jeff Herbst, MCG Architecture, 111 Pacifica, Suite 280, Irvine, CA 92618

PROPERTY OWNER:

Tahir Salim, THDT Investment, Inc., 1307 W. 6th Street, Suite 202, Corona, CA 92882

BUSINESS OWNER:

N/A

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

1. Is the project proposal consistent with the City of Huntington Beach's adopted land use regulations (i.e. General Plan, Zoning Map and Zoning Code including the Beach and Edinger

Corridors Specific Plan)?

2. Does the project satisfy all the findings required for approval of a Tentative Tract Map and Conditional Use Permit?

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Planning Commission take the following action:

A) Consider the suggested findings for denial of Tentative Tract Map No. 18157 and Conditional Use Permit No. 17-042 as directed by the Planning Commission on May 28, 2019.

PROJECT PROPOSAL:

Background:

On May 28, 2019, the Planning Commission held a public hearing and considered the project proposal to consolidate three parcels for a one-lot condominium map and development of a 48 unit mixed-use project as described in the May 28, 2019 staff report (Attachment No. 2). The requested permits to allow such development included 1) Tentative Tract Map No. 18157 and 2) Conditional Use Permit No. 17-042. The Planning Commission held a public hearing, considered public testimony, deliberated on the project and expressed concerns related to the required findings, and directed staff to return with suggested findings for denial at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission scheduled for June 11, 2019 (Attachment No. 1).

Tentative Tract Map:

Per Huntington Beach Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance (HBZSO) Section 251.08(F), the Planning Commission shall deny approval of a tentative subdivision map if it determines that approval will result in **any** of the conditions as described in Government Code Section 66474. The conditions described in Government Code Section 66474 are as follows:

- (a) That the proposed map is not consistent with applicable general and specific plans.
- (b) That the design or improvement of the proposed subdivision is not consistent with applicable general and specific plans.
- (c) That the site is not physically suitable for the type of development.
- (d) That the site is not physically suitable for the proposed density of development.
- (e) That the design of the subdivision or the proposed improvement are likely to cause substantial environmental damage and avoidably injure fish or wildlife or their habitat.
- (f) That the design of the subdivision or the proposed improvements are likely to cause serious public health problems.
- (g) That the design of the subdivision or the type of improvements will conflict with easements, acquired by the public at large, for access through or use of, property within the proposed subdivision.

After considering public testimony the Planning Commission discussed the project and expressed concerns relating to conditions (b), (c), and (d) listed above. In particular, the Planning Commission expressed concerns that approval of the project would result in the following conditions for the reasons specified:

- Approval of the project would result in a design of the proposed subdivision that is not consistent with the General Plan and Beach and Edinger Corridors Specific Plan (BECSP) in that the project design fails to further a number of goals and policies contained within the General Plan and BECSP. More particular detail and analysis is contained below.
- Approval of the project would result in a site that is not physically suitable for the type of development in that the site will not function as an integrated development compatible with the vision of the BECSP by merging three existing lots into a single long and narrow 0.95 acre parcel. The long and narrow parcel is not physically suitable for the proposed mass, bulk, and intensity of the proposed four story mixed use project and does not complement the scale and proportion of surrounding one and two-story developments. The project will generate conflicts with vehicular circulation on Ellis Ave. and there will be no connectivity for bicyclists to continue onto Beach Blvd.
- Approval of the project would result in a site that is not physically suitable for the proposed density of development in that the proposed project results in a density of approximately 50 dwelling units per acre while the adjacent residential property is built at an aggregate density of 13 dwelling units per acre.

The proposed project does not further the following General Plan and BECSP goals and policies:

Land Use Element

Goal LU-1: New commercial, industrial, and residential development is coordinated to ensure that the land use pattern is consistent with the overall goals and needs of the community.

Policy LU-1D: Ensure that new development projects are of compatible proportion, scale and character to complement adjoining uses.

Goal LU-3: Neighborhoods and attractions are connected and accessible to all residents, employees, and visitors.

Policy LU-3A: Ensure that future development and reuse projects are consistent with the Land Use Map to provide connections between existing neighborhoods and city attractions.

Policy LU-3C: Ensure connections are well maintained and safe for users.

Circulation Element

Goal CIRC-1c: Through ongoing evaluation of jurisdiction, efficient transportation management provides the highest level of safety, service and resources.

Policy CIRC-1F: Require development projects to provide circulation improvements to achieve stated City goals and to mitigate to the maximum extent feasible traffic impacts to adjacent land uses and neighborhoods as well as vehicular conflicts related to the project.

Policy CIRC - 1G: Limit driveway access points, require driveways to be wide enough to accommodate traffic flow from and to arterial roadways, and establish mechanisms to consolidate driveways where feasible and necessary to minimize impacts to the smooth,

efficient, and controlled flow of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

The proposed lot consolidation, subdivision, design and improvement is not consistent with the above goals and policies of the General Plan or the BECSP because the infill project is not compatible in density, intensity, proportion, scale, and character with the surrounding land uses and does not complement the adjoining uses in that the proposed four story mixed use development is significantly more intense than the adjacent one-story commercial and two-story multi-family residential developments.

The BECSP encourages buildings to orient towards streets and provide enhancements to the pedestrian and public experience. However, in the proposed project, approximately five percent of the building length is oriented towards Ellis Ave. while the remainder is oriented to the established residences to the east and commercial uses to the west. Further, the project architectural design and scale is not compatible with the vision of the BECSP. The adjacent properties will be impacted by the height and massing of the proposed project. The length and height of the proposed building is not compatible with the long, narrow characteristics of the 0.95 acre site because it is too bulky and too intense for the available land area. The project does not support the vibrant commercial corridor envisioned in the BECSP Five Points District because only one and a half percent (1.5%) of the total square footage of the project is allocated to commercial use.

The proposed project does not create continuity with new and existing development along the Beach Boulevard corridor because the project does not propose to augment or expand the existing bikeways. Furthermore, ingress and egress to the project site generates conflicts with the flow of traffic on Ellis Ave. There is no access or connectivity to the project site from Beach Blvd and insufficient vehicular access is provided via a single driveway along Ellis Avenue. Motorists exiting the project site will be unable to safely turn left onto Ellis Ave. from the driveway and motorists entering the project site from eastbound Ellis Ave. will be unable to turn left into the project site due to congestion and narrow roadway widths. Residents and visitors cannot directly access the project site from eastbound Ellis Ave. and must continue past the project to Patterson Ln. to make a U-Turn on Ellis Ave., resulting in inefficient vehicular movements. Additionally, even though motorists will be required to exit the project via a right hand turn onto Ellis Ave., motorists who do not abide by this restriction may create vehicular hazards and conflicts due to frequent congestion and queuing on Ellis Ave.

Per Section 251.08(F) of the HBZSO if the Planning Commission determines that any of the conditions listed in Government Code Section 66474 (and listed in this staff report for reference) would result as a consequence of approval of the project, the Planning Commission shall deny approval of the tentative subdivision map. These findings are reflected in Attachment No. 1.

Conditional Use Permit:

Per HBZSO Section 241.10, related to required findings for conditional use permits and variances, subsection C requires the Planning Commission to deny a conditional use permit if it cannot make ***all*** of the required findings under subsection A, which are as follows:

1. The establishment, maintenance and operation of the use will not be detrimental to the general welfare of persons working or residing in the vicinity nor detrimental to the value of the property and improvements in the neighborhood.

2. The granting of the conditional use permit will not adversely affect the General Plan.
3. The proposed use will comply with the provisions of the base district and other applicable provisions in Titles 20 through 25 and any specific condition required for the proposed use in the district in which it would be located.

After considering public testimony the Planning Commission discussed the project and expressed concerns relating to finding 3 listed above. In particular, the Planning Commission expressed concerns that the project does not further the vision of the Town Center Neighborhood Segment of the BECSP, which envisions a vibrant commercial corridor within the Five Points District of the BECSP. The proposed project is located within the Five Points District and does not further a vibrant commercial corridor because only one and a half percent (1.5%) of the total square footage of the project is allocated to commercial use, there is insufficient vehicular ingress and egress to the site, and the project proposes marginal public open space that does not contribute to the BECSP's vision of walkability and pedestrian connections between public and private property.

Per Section 241.10, subsection C of the HBZSO, if the Planning Commission cannot make all of the required findings under subsection A (listed in this staff report for reference) the Planning Commission is required to deny the conditional use permit. These findings are reflected in Attachment No. 1.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Suggested Findings for Denial of TTM No. 18157 and CUP No. 17-042
2. May 28, 2019 Planning Commission Staff Report

SUGGESTED FINDINGS FOR DENIAL
TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 18157
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 17-042

SUGGESTED FINDINGS FOR DENIAL - TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 18157:

The Planning Commission finds and determines that certain conditions (b), (c) and (d) listed in Government Code Section 66474 would result as a consequence of approval of Tentative Tract Map No. 18157, for reasons more particularly described herein:

1. Approval of the project would result in a design of the proposed subdivision that is not consistent with the General Plan and Beach and Edinger Corridors Specific Plan (BECSP) in that the project design fails to further a number of goals and policies contained within the General Plan and BECSP. More particular detail and analysis is contained below.
2. Approval of the project would result in a site that is not physically suitable for the type of development in that the site will not function as an integrated development compatible with the vision of the BECSP by merging three existing lots into a single long and narrow 0.95 acre parcel. The long and narrow parcel is not physically suitable for the proposed mass, bulk, and intensity of the proposed four story mixed use project and does not complement the scale and proportion of surrounding one and two-story developments. The project will generate conflicts with vehicular circulation on Ellis Ave. and there will be no connectivity for bicyclists to continue onto Beach Blvd.
3. Approval of the project would result in a site that is not physically suitable for the proposed density of development in that the proposed project results in a density of approximately 50 dwelling units per acre while the adjacent residential property is built at an aggregate density of 13 dwelling units per acre.

The design and improvement of proposed Tentative Tract Map No. 18157 does not further the goals and policies of the General Plan or the BECSP as follows:

Land Use Element

Goal LU-1: New commercial, industrial, and residential development is coordinated to ensure that the land use pattern is consistent with the overall goals and needs of the community.

Policy LU-1D: Ensure that new development projects are of compatible proportion, scale and character to complement adjoining uses.

Goal LU-3: Neighborhoods and attractions are connected and accessible to all residents, employees, and visitors.

Policy LU-3A: Ensure that future development and reuse projects are consistent with the Land Use Map to provide connections between existing neighborhoods and city attractions.

Policy LU-3C: Ensure connections are well maintained and safe for users.

Circulation Element

Goal CIRC-1c: Through ongoing evaluation of jurisdiction, efficient transportation management provides the highest level of safety, service and resources.

Policy CIRC-1F: Require development projects to provide circulation improvements to achieve stated City goals and to mitigate to the maximum extent feasible traffic impacts to adjacent land uses and neighborhoods as well as vehicular conflicts related to the project.

Policy CIRC – 1G: Limit driveway access points, require driveways to be wide enough to accommodate traffic flow from and to arterial roadways, and establish mechanisms to consolidate driveways where feasible and necessary to minimize impacts to the smooth, efficient, and controlled flow of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

The proposed lot consolidation, subdivision, design and improvement is not consistent with the above goals and policies of the General Plan or the BECSP because the infill project is not compatible in density, intensity, proportion, scale, and character with the surrounding land uses and does not complement the adjoining uses in that the proposed four story mixed use development is significantly more intense than the adjacent one-story commercial and two-story multi-family residential developments.

The BECSP encourages buildings to orient towards streets and provide enhancements to the pedestrian and public experience. However, in the proposed project, approximately five percent of the building length is oriented towards Ellis Ave. while the remainder is oriented to the established residences to the east and commercial uses to the west. Further, the project architectural design and scale is not compatible with the vision of the BECSP. The adjacent properties will be impacted by the height and massing of the proposed project. The length and height of the proposed building is not compatible with the long, narrow characteristics of the 0.95 acre site because it is too bulky and too intense for the available land area. The project does not support the vibrant commercial corridor envisioned in the BECSP Five Points District because only one and a half percent (1.5%) of the total square footage of the project is allocated to commercial use.

The proposed project does not create continuity with new and existing development along the Beach Boulevard corridor because the project does not propose to augment or expand the existing bikeways. Furthermore, ingress and egress to the project site generates conflicts with the flow of traffic on Ellis Ave. There is no access or connectivity to the project site from Beach Blvd and insufficient vehicular access is provided via a single driveway along Ellis Avenue. Motorists exiting the project site will be unable to safely turn left onto Ellis Ave. from the driveway and motorists entering the project site from eastbound Ellis Ave. will be unable to turn left into the project site due to congestion and narrow roadway widths. Residents and visitors cannot directly access the project site from eastbound Ellis Ave. and must continue past the project to Patterson Ln. to make a U-Turn on Ellis Ave., resulting in inefficient vehicular movements. Additionally, even though motorists will be required to exit the project via a right hand turn onto Ellis Ave., motorists who do not abide by this restriction may create vehicular hazards and conflicts due to frequent congestion and queuing on Ellis Ave.

SUGGESTED FINDINGS FOR DENIAL - CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 17-042:

The Planning Commission finds and determines that it is unable to make all of the required findings, contained in Section 241.10(A) of the HBZSO, for reasons more particularly described below:

1. Conditional Use Permit No. 17-042 for the development of a mixed-use building consisting of 48 condominium residences and 891 sf. of retail space will not comply with the provisions of the base district and other applicable provisions in Titles 20 through 25 and any specific condition required for the proposed use in the district in which it would be located in that the project does not further the vision of the Town Center Neighborhood Segment of the BECSP, which envisions a vibrant commercial corridor within the Five Points District of the BECSP. The proposed project is located within the Five Points District and does not further a vibrant commercial corridor because only one and a half percent (1.5%) of the total square footage of the project is allocated to commercial use, there is insufficient vehicular ingress and egress to the site, and the project proposes marginal public open space that does not contribute to the BECSP's vision of walkability and pedestrian connections between public and private property