



# City of Huntington Beach

**File #:** 21-620

**MEETING DATE:** 9/14/2021

## PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION

**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Ursula Luna-Reynosa, Community Development Director  
**BY:** Ricky Ramos, Senior Planner

**SUBJECT:**  
**GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 20-002, ZONING MAP AMENDMENT NO. 20-002, TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 19136, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 20-024, MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION NO. 20-002 (GISLER RESIDENTIAL)**

**APPLICANT:**  
Derek Spalding, Brookfield Residential, 3200 Park Center Drive, Suite 1000, Costa Mesa, CA 92626

**PROPERTY OWNER:**  
Huntington Beach City School District, 8750 Dorsett Drive, Huntington Beach, CA 92646

**LOCATION:**  
21141 Strathmoor Lane, 92646 (west side, south of Bluefield Drive)

### **PROJECT PROPOSAL:**

The applicant is proposing to subdivide and redevelop the approximately 13.9 gross acre former Gisler School site into 85 two story single-family residences (Attachment No. 2). The project includes the following requests:

General Plan Amendment (GPA) No. 20-002 - To amend the land use designation from Public-Semipublic (underlying Residential Low Density) (PS(RL)) to Residential Low Density (RL).

Zoning Map Amendment (ZMA) NO. 20-002 - To amend the zoning designation from Public-Semipublic (PS) to Residential Low Density.

Tentative Tract Map (TTM) No. 19136 - To subdivide a 13.9 gross acre site into 85 single family residential numbered lots and 15 lettered lots for private streets, open space, and landscaping.

Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 20-024 - To allow retaining walls over 2 feet tall topped with a 6 foot tall wall/fence.

Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) No. 20-002 - To analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project.

The former middle school has Public-Semipublic land use and zoning designations. Single-family residences surround the project site on three sides while a City park and parking lot are located to the south and east (Attachment Nos. 1 and 3). Project access is proposed off Strathmoor Lane with emergency access on Bluefield Drive. Common areas will include the private streets, an open space lot that will serve as a water quality and detention facility for the project, and landscaped areas throughout to enhance the aesthetics of the development. The private streets comply with the standard residential street width of 40 feet curb to curb, which allows parking on both sides. The applicant has submitted three residential floor plans that are two stories and range from about 2,800 to 3,200 square feet with up to four and five bedrooms and two- and three-car garages (Attachment No. 4).

The project will have retaining walls not exceeding two feet tall along most of the project site perimeter and between some proposed residential lots and will be topped with a six foot tall wall/fence. The few retaining walls over two feet tall topped with a six foot tall wall/fence and subject to CUP approval are located primarily along the western corners of the project site adjacent to Gisler Park and a couple of existing residences. The tallest retaining wall is 4.4 feet topped with a six foot wall and located on the northwest corner of the project site behind five feet of landscaping. Project grading will require some cut and fill with a net import estimated at approximately 35,000 cubic yards with a more conservative estimate of 50,000 cubic yards analyzed in the MND.

The project is proposed as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) and includes residential lots with reduced size and width. The proposed residential lots average 4,952 square feet and 50 feet wide, in lieu of minimum 6,000 square feet and 60 feet wide required in the RL zone. The lot sizes range from 4,661 to 9,241 square feet with the most common lot size at 4,750 square feet (50 by 95 feet). Project density is 6.23 dwelling units per net acre, consistent with the proposed RL designation, which permits up to seven units per acre.

In accordance with Huntington Beach Zoning Subdivision Ordinance (HBZSO) Section 210.12 (Planned Unit Development Supplemental Standards and Provisions), the project is required to provide mutual community benefits for the new residents as well as the general public that exceed the minimum infrastructure improvements required for the project itself. The mutual benefits proposed by the applicant include improvements to Gisler Park located immediately south of the project site. The Gisler Park property is owned by Edison but the City has a license agreement to use it for park purposes. The applicant is proposing to:

- Replace the existing tot lot area and construct a new combined play area with new play equipment, benches, and planter areas;
- Replace over 3,500 linear feet of walking path with a 10 foot wide grey concrete path;
- Provide a new walking path in certain sections;
- Replace existing trash cans; and
- Contribute \$250,000 towards the installation of sports field lights on a Huntington Beach City School District Property and allow access by a non-profit(s) for recreational use. The money shall be paid to the City prior to issuance of building permits and will be held in an escrow

account for two years until the School District is ready to use the funds for the lighting project. The City will have the right to use the funds for another community benefit project if the School District does not complete the lighting project within two years of City Council approval of the project.

The project will also pay park in lieu fees to satisfy Quimby Act requirements pursuant to Chapter 254 of the HBZSO.

**BACKGROUND:**

Gisler Middle School operated from 1973 to 1986. Subsequently, Brethren Christian School entered into a lease in 2001 and operated at the site until June 2019. On October 15, 2019, the Board of Trustees of the Huntington Beach City School District adopted a resolution declaring the school as surplus property with the intent to sell. Brookfield Residential submitted the winning bid and entered into a purchase and sale agreement to develop the proposed project.

**CEQA:**

A Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for the project (Attachment No. 5) and concludes that no significant impacts are anticipated with implementation of mitigation measures in the areas of biological resources, cultural resources, geology, noise, transportation, and tribal cultural resources. The MND was available for a 20-day public review period from July 22 to August 10, 2021. A response to comments received will be prepared and forwarded to the Planning Commission prior to action on the project.

**PLANNING ISSUES:**

- Land use compatibility of the proposed project with the surrounding area;
- Project design and site layout;
- Proposed community benefits; and
- Compatibility of the proposed retaining wall/fence.

**PUBLIC HEARING DATE:**

The tentative Planning Commission public hearing date for this project is September 28, 2021.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Vicinity Map
2. Project Narrative dated Aug. 27, 2021
3. Existing and Proposed General Plan Land Use and Zoning Maps
4. Project Entitlement Plans
5. Draft MND No. 20-002 - available at

<https://www.huntingtonbeachca.gov/government/departments/planning/major/major-projects-view.cfm?ID=105>