

CITY OF SAN JOSÉ, CALIFORNIA  
Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement  
801 North First Street, Room 400  
San José, California 95110-1795

Hearing Date/Agenda Number  
P.C. 3/10/04 Item: 3.e.

File Number  
PDC03-088

Application Type  
Planned Development Rezoning

Council District  
9

Planning Area  
Cambrian/Pioneer

Assessor's Parcel Number(s)  
569-06-043

## STAFF REPORT

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Completed by: Lori Moniz

Location: North side of Blossom Hill Road opposite terminus of Croydon Avenue (12385 Blossom Hill Road)

Gross Acreage: 0.44

Net Acreage: 0.36

Net Density: 19.4 dwelling units per acre

Existing Zoning: A Agricultural

Existing Use: Vacant

Proposed Zoning: A(PD) Planned Development Proposed Use: Seven (7) single-family detached residential units

### GENERAL PLAN

Completed by: LM

Land Use/Transportation Diagram Designation  
Medium High Density Residential (12-25 DU/AC)

Project Conformance:  
 Yes  No  
 See Analysis and Recommendations

### SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

Completed by: LM

North: Single-family attached residential units A(PD) Planned Development

East: Single-family detached residential units R-1-8 Residence District

South: Single-family detached residential units R-1-8 Residence District

West: Single-family residence/future fire station A Agricultural District

### ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Completed by: LM

Environmental Impact Report found complete  
 Negative Declaration circulated on  
 Re-use of previously adopted Negative Declaration

Exempt  
 Environmental Review Incomplete

### FILE HISTORY

Completed by: LM

Annexation Title: Jarvis No. 14-A

Date: September 19, 1973

### PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION

Approval  
 Approval with Conditions  
 Denial  
 Uphold Director's Decision

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Action  
 Recommendation

### APPLICANT/OWNER/DEVELOPER

San Jose Conservation Corps  
Attn.: Ken Fuller  
2650A Senter Road  
San Jose, CA 95111-1121

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**PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED**

Completed by: LM

**Department of Public Works**

See attached memo

**Other Departments and Agencies**

See attached Fire Department memo

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**GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

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None received.

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**ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**BACKGROUND**

The applicant, San Jose Conservation Corps, is requesting a Planned Development Rezoning of a 0.44 gross acre site located in the A-Agriculture Zoning District to allow up to seven (7) affordable single-family detached residences on the subject property. The project site is currently vacant.

The site is bordered by a townhouse development to the north, single-family detached residential uses to the east and across Blossom Hill Road to the south. A existing single-family house to the west is proposed to be demolished to accommodate a new City fire station.

Project Description

The proposal consists of seven (7) affordable single-family detached residences. The average lot size is approximately 2,300 square feet. The residential units are two-stories and are approximately 1,342 square feet in size. Each of the units has a private rear yard and an attached two-car tandem garage. Parking for guests is provided by four on-site surface parking spaces and three or more on-street parking spaces on Blossom Hill Road.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Under the provisions of Section 15280 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project is found to be exempt from environmental review because it will result in the construction of 100 or fewer affordable single-family residences in an urbanized area.

**GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE**

The proposed project has a net density of 19.4 DU/AC, which conforms to the site's General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of Medium High Density Residential (12-25 DU/AC). Since the density of this affordable housing project is in conformance with the General Plan and doesn't

require a density bonus, it is not necessary to impose affordability requirements as a condition of this rezoning.

## **ANALYSIS**

Over the last few decades, the City has looked favorably towards opportunities for appropriately located higher density affordable housing developments. This project is unique within the realm of affordable housing projects in that it is for “detached” ownership units rather than for “attached” rental units. This project is also unique in that with just seven (7) dwelling units it is rather small in scale. The location of this site, situated in an area with a mix of attached and detached residential unit developments, is within easy walking distance of public transit, schools and shopping areas. All this combined makes this property an excellent location for an affordable housing development.

During the development of the project’s site design, the key issue that substantially influenced the current design proposal was the need to ensure an appropriate interface, including setbacks, with the adjacent existing or planned developments. In order to ensure an appropriate interface with the surrounding properties and provide a density at a level necessary to maintain affordable units, it was very clear that the inclusion of a new standard public street (cul-de-sac) would pose the most significant site design constraint. The use of even the smallest of traditional public cul-de-sacs would dramatically reduce the front setbacks and amount of landscaped areas to significantly substandard sizes. The key challenge for this project was to explore and create a new “alternative” street section that would not require any compromises that would negatively affect the appearance, function or livability of the new housing units.

### Site Design/Neighborhood Interface

#### *Perimeter Setbacks*

The most sensitive surrounding uses directly adjacent to this site include two existing single-family detached residences to the east. The Residential Design Guidelines typically recommend a 20-foot setback where adjacent to rear yards of existing single-family residential lots. For the unit proposed on lot 6, a 20-foot setback will be provided. A slightly smaller setback, averaging about 15 feet, is proposed for the unit on lot 7, which abuts another existing single-family parcel. Staff feels that since the rear yard of the adjacent parcel is exceptionally large and has a substantial perimeter with no abutting structures, a slightly smaller than normal setback to accommodate the relatively small proposed house should not create an overly obtrusive visual impact.

This project has an interface with an adjacent condominium development to the north. The Residential Design Guidelines recommends a 5-foot setback where adjacent to the common areas of such uses. This project meets that requirement in that small one-story building elements are proposed with such a setback. The wider two-story elements of the proposed units will have a setback of about 12 to 14 feet.

The setback adjacent to the future fire station has been maximized to exceed the recommended setback of 10 feet in an effort to minimize impacts with future potentially incompatible uses. At the Planned Development permit stage, second story window types and placement will be addressed to minimize privacy impacts from and to all adjacent uses.

### *Street Section*

The Residential Design Guidelines encourage the use of traditional streets complete with sidewalks and park strips for all new single-family detached housing developments. Ideally, such streets should be public to avoid the need for the creation of a homeowners association for the project. Generally, accommodating such streets on small infill parcels can be challenging since street sections often utilize a high percentage of the project site area.

A particularly problematic design aspect of new streets for small infill sites is the creation of a cul-de-sac bulb that is of suitable size to facilitate turn-around maneuvers for emergency vehicles. In this case, since the cul-de-sac associated with this project is less than 150 feet in length, it was determined by the Fire Department that emergency vehicles would not need such a turn around since such vehicles would most likely stage activities from the intersecting street. The cul-de-sac bulb with a radius of 20 feet and no curbside parking is sufficient to accommodate turnarounds for most vehicles. The two common driveways at the terminus of the proposed street, which must be kept clear for general residential access to garages, will provide extra areas to accommodate turn around activities for larger vehicles if necessary.

An overall street section with a curb-to-curb dimension of 16 feet is proposed for the main portion of the street. Sidewalks and landscaped park strips will be provided on both sides of the street. This narrow street design does not provided curbside parking, but limited curbside parking will be available along Blossom Hill Road to the east. A narrow street section, such as proposed, will directly help to maximize the front yard landscaping opportunities and help provide more room on this site to ensure appropriate rear setbacks next to the surrounding properties.

This public street section represent a unique “test case” for new narrower street designs that may be considered for formal adoption as a standard City street option for other small infill development properties serving a limited number of dwelling units.

### *Parking*

A total of 21 parking spaces is required for this project. In this case, two covered parking spaces are provided for each unit, as well as four communal parking spaces provided on site. Additional curbside parking on Blossom Hill Road will provide the balance of required parking. Currently, parking has been restricted on Blossom Hill Road to discourage its use by students at nearby Pioneer High School. This street, however, has sufficient width given the current lane stripping configuration to accommodate curbside parking. The City’s Department of Transportation has indicated that only a small portion of the curbside parking nearest the project site will be made available. Restrictions to preclude the use of parking during certain daytime periods may be imposed to prevent the use of parking by Pioneer High School students.

### *Internal setbacks along street*

This project proposes a 10-foot building setback next to the new proposed street. Although this is two feet less than the 12 feet recommended in the guidelines, staff feels that there are appropriate compensating factors included in the project to justify the proposed reduced setback. Normally, such

development on 3,000 square foot lots would have individual garage doors and driveways facing the street. In this case, there are only three driveways that connect to the street. Each of these is comparatively narrower than a typical two-car wide driveway contained in most newer subdivisions. The resulting design allows for more overall front yard landscaping adjacent to the cul-de-sac, which more than compensates for the two-foot reduction in the front setback.

### *Open space*

The proposed project more than meets the minimum private open space requirements for residential development of this type. Each unit has private open space ranging in size from 540 to 1087 square feet. The minimum requirement identified by the Residential Design Guidelines is 400 square feet per unit. Common open space is not required for such projects.

### Architecture

This project consists of two-story units with wood shingle siding. The unit type and general style of the proposed structures are reasonably compatible with the existing neighborhood. However, the architecture at this stage is not at an acceptable level and needs improvement. As proposed, the architectural elevations are flat and unarticulated. The architecture of the units could be greatly enhanced with additional articulation on the sides facing the streets, including windows, building pop-outs and front porch elements. As is typical at the Planned Development Rezoning stage, the architecture that is shown is considered “conceptual”. The design will undergo further review by staff at the Planned Development Permit stage whereby it is expected that the building design will be refined appropriately.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

Pursuant to the City Council’s Public Outreach Policy, notices for the public hearing for this project were distributed to the owners and tenants of all properties located within 500 feet of the project site. A notice was also published in the San Jose Mercury News. This staff report was also posted on the Department’s website in advance of the public hearing.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Planning staff recommends the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the City Council to adopt an ordinance rezoning the subject site for the following reasons:

1. The proposed project conforms to the site’s General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of Medium High Density Residential (12-25 DU/AC).
2. The proposed project is in substantial conformance to the objectives of the Residential Design Guidelines.
3. The project furthers the goals and objectives of the City’s infill housing strategies.
4. The proposed rezoning is compatible with existing and proposed uses on adjacent properties.