



North Fair Oaks Community Council
San Mateo County Coordinated
Departmental Response



Date: September 19, 2014
NFOCC Meeting Date: September 25, 2014
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Members, North Fair Oaks Community Council
From: Planning Staff, County Planning and Building Department
Subject: Planned Unit Development Amendment for Siena Center Parking

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend to the Planning Commission that they recommend to the Board of Supervisors approval of an ordinance to amend the Planned Unit Development (PUD) 136 Zoning District Regulations to allow construction of a 20 space parking lot with community garden area on the SFPUC right-of-way located on the 2600 Block of Marlborough Ave, between Nottingham Ave. and Buckingham Ave.

PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND:

The applicant is proposing to amend the PUD-136 Zoning District, which was approved in 2011 and authorized the construction of the Siena Youth Center. The existing regulations call for a minimum of 37 off-street parking spaces to be provided. The proposed change will allow a minimum of 20 off-street parking spaces, plus a 10 raised box community garden area to be constructed on the nearby SFPUC right-of-way. The parking lot and garden area would be enclosed by a maximum 6 foot high chain-link fence, with security gates. Please see Attachment A, *Applicant's Proposal*, and Attachment B, *Project Plan*.

The Siena Youth Center was constructed and has been in operation since 2011. The Center provides a 9,577 s.f. gym/recreation center including a caretaker's living unit and a Sheriff's Substation. Activities for youth at the center include sports such as volleyball, basketball, soccer; classes in nutrition, cooking, CPR, digital story-telling; and a variety of other structured and fun activities. As anticipated when the Center was initially proposed, most of the children that attend the Center live locally within walking or biking distance. Some arrive by bus after-school from Selby Lane Elementary, and some are dropped off by parents.

With regard to parking, as required by the adopted PUD regulations, the Center has secured a shared parking arrangement with the nearby Regency Shopping Center (Target) to allow off-site parking at the Shopping Center when the Siena Center hosts the four special events that are allowed annually. The approved PUD also required that the facility maintain a minimum of 37 vehicle off-street parking spaces. At the time it was anticipated that the Center would obtain permission from the SFPUC to use part of their right-of-way to construct a parking lot. The SFPUC agreed to the concept, but construction of the lot could not proceed in 2011, since the proposed parking lot site was torn up and being used as a staging area for the SFPUC's pipeline replacement project. That project is now complete and the site is now available for construction of the Center's parking lot. However, rather than construct the 37 space parking lot as required by the approved PUD, the Center is proposing a 20 space lot, with space set aside for community gardens. The Community Development Director determined that this proposed change is not a "minor modification" to the approved project that could be approved administratively, but rather is a significant change that requires amendment of the PUD regulations prior to implementation

DISCUSSION:

The following information supports the proposal to reduce the number of parking spaces provided from 20 to 37, while adding additional community garden space:

1. Parking Plan/Impacts: The Siena Center has been in operation for the past 2 plus years without any vehicle parking provided, since the SFPUC property was initially unavailable for parking lot construction. During that time, the County has received no direct complaints about Siena Center patrons parking on neighborhood streets, although in response to outreach efforts, some residents who live near the Center expressed concern about the current parking situation. In response, the applicant surveyed Center participants, both youth and adults, and found that as expected, the majority of visitors either walk or bike to the site, take the bus, are dropped off/picked up by car, or they carpool. Very few drive and park single-occupant vehicles at the Center. As such, it is expected that the addition of 20 parking spaces will actually improve the parking situation in the area, offering existing users of the Center convenient parking, freeing up on-street spaces for local residents and the public. The parking facility will not be a large expanse of asphalt, but will be surfaced with crushed gravel, giving it a more natural appearance that will blend in with the surrounding residential properties. The facility will be secured with perimeter fencing and signage limiting the parking for the use of the Siena Center.

2. Community Garden/Compliance with NFO Community Plan: The St. Francis Center currently oversees a community garden located on another section of the SFPUC's Hetch Hetchy right-of-way, on the block between Buckingham Ave. and Devonshire Ave. As a current aerial photograph of the area shows (see Attachment C), this is the only community "green space" in the neighborhood. The applicant reports that there is currently a waiting list of families who would like a raised bed garden box to grow their own fruits and vegetables. The North Fair Oaks Community Plan identifies the need for additional park and open space in the community, and includes the following statements

and specific goals and policies that support the use of the SFPUC land for community garden space:

Land Use Goal 2.2/Policy 2D, pg. 31: Consider the use of centrally located vacant or underutilized parcels in residential neighborhoods for parks, play lots, community gardens and/or residential parking lots.

Health and Wellness Finding 1, pg. 89: North Fair Oaks has a few neighborhood parks, but there is high need for additional parks, play areas, and open space areas throughout the neighborhood.

Health and Wellness Goal 5.1, pg. 93: Provide safe neighborhood parks, playgrounds or greenways within a half mile actual walking distance of all homes in North Fair Oaks.

Health and Wellness Goal 5.1/Policy 1C, pg. 93: Develop additional parks, open space, or greenways along the Hetch-Hetchy right-of-way.

Health and Wellness Goal 5.4/Policy 4T, pg. 96: Collaborate with residents and community groups to build new community gardens on vacant public parcels in neighborhoods, school yards, church yards and potentially as part of private development projects.

In addition to the above goals and policies, Health and Wellness Goal 5.5 and Policies 5A through 5G on pg. 97 (see Attachment D) all directly support the proposal to establish additional community garden space at this location.

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL: For informational purposes, please see Attachment E for staff's recommended findings for the amendment of the PUD and recommended conditions of approval for adoption by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

NEXT STEPS: Because the amendment of the PUD is a rezoning/legislative action, it must be reviewed by the Planning Commission who will make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors must approve the PUD amendment before it can take effect. Staff has tentatively scheduled the Planning Commission hearing on this item for their meeting on October 8, 2014, and for the Board of Supervisors meeting on November 4, 2014.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Applicant's Proposal Statement
- B. Project Plan
- C. Aerial Photo of Project Neighborhood

- D. NFO Community Plan Health and Wellness Goals/Policies
- E. Recommended Findings and Conditions of Approval