

City of Sacramento

Legislation Text

File #: 2019-01160, **Version:** 1

Title:

Fairgrounds Subdivision (P18-048) [Passed for Publication 08/20/2019; Noticed 08/23/2019; Published 08/23/2019]

File ID: 2019-01160

Location: District 6, 325 Fairgrounds Drive (APNs: 011-0370-001 through -021, -024 through -029, -032 through -039, -042; 011-0360-024 through -039; 011-0350-024 through -043; 011-0340-001 through -018; 011-0340-022 through -040)

Recommendation:

Conduct a public hearing and upon conclusion, adopt: 1) a Resolution adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration and the Mitigation Monitoring Plan for the Fairgrounds Subdivision Project; 2) a Resolution for a General Plan Amendment to re-designate 8.68± acres from the Traditional Neighborhood High Density to the Traditional Neighborhood Medium Density designation; 3) an Ordinance rezoning 8.68± acres from the Multi-Unit Dwelling (R-3) to the Single-Unit or Duplex Dwelling (R-1A) zone; and 4) a Resolution adopting findings of fact and conditions of approval for the Tentative Subdivision Map to subdivide 8.68 gross acres into 68 parcels and a Tree Permit to remove seven (7) protected trees with an accompanying tree replacement strategy.

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Presenter: Garrett Norman, Associate Planner, (916) 808-7934, Community Development Department

Attachments:

01-Description/Analysis

02-Background

03-Resolution: Environmental Mitigated Negative Declaration

04-Exhibit A: Mitigation Monitoring Plan (MMP)

05-Resolution: General Plan Land Use Designation Amendment

06-Exhibit A: General Plan Amendment Exhibit

07-Ordinance: Rezone

08-Exhibit A: Rezone Exhibit

09-Resolution: Project Entitlements for the Tentative Subdivision Map

10-Exhibit A: Tentative Subdivision Map and accompanying plans

11-Community Comments

Description/Analysis

Issue Detail: The applicant is requesting land use entitlements to subdivide 8.68 gross acres into 68 parcels for the future construction of 68 single-family homes. In order to subdivide the land into its proposed configuration, the applicant needs to obtain a rezone, general plan land use designation amendment, tentative subdivision map, and a tree removal permit, all requiring a final decision by the City Council. Currently, the site is zoned and designated for development with a minimum density of 18 dwelling units per net acre. The applicant is proposing a density of 10 dwelling units per net acre and therefore needs to amend the zoning and general plan land use designation to align with the project proposal. The general plan land use designation amendment is proposed from Traditional Neighborhood High Density (18-36 dwelling units per net acre) to Traditional Neighborhood Medium Density (8-36 dwelling units per net acre). The rezone is proposed from the Multi-Unit Dwelling (R-3) to the Single-Unit or Duplex Dwelling (R-1A) zone, which is compatible with the proposed general plan density requirements and is also consistent with the proposed single-family housing product on reduced lot sizes at 3,500 square feet.

Public/Neighborhood Outreach and Comments: The project was routed to several community groups including Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates, WalkSacramento, Environmental Council of Sacramento, Region Builders, Preservation Sacramento, Tahoe Park Neighborhood Association, and the Elmhurst Neighborhood Association. The applicant conducted two community outreach meeting with the Tahoe Park Neighborhood Association; the first was prior to submitting the application in June 2017 and the second was post application submittal in May 2018. Staff also mailed an early notice to all property owners within a 300-foot radius of the project site on April 29, 2019.

Staff has received a mix of opinions from the community on the proposed project. Some neighbors, including the Tahoe Park Neighborhood Association are supportive of the project and others are opposed. Below is summary of public comments and concerns received followed by staff and applicant's response. All community comments can be found in Attachment 11.

Support: On July 25, 2018, the Tahoe Park Neighborhood Association (TPNA) submitted correspondence voicing support for the project, specifically for additional residential housing in the area. The July 25th TPNA correspondence to staff also detailed community voiced concerns raised at the afore-mentioned community outreach meeting regarding existing traffic,

pedestrian, and vehicle conditions on Fairgrounds Drive and Broadway.

The applicant has agreed to do the following to address the concerns expressed by the neighborhood at the meeting:

1. The applicant will fully construct a rapid flashing beacon at the Fairground Drive/53rd Street and Broadway intersection. This rapid flashing beacon will alert motorists when a pedestrian is crossing. The beacon will improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility and safety for the current residents and future residents on Fairgrounds Drive and 53rd Street.
2. The applicant has agreed to provide a fair share monetary contribution in the amount of \$25,000 to upgrade the signal on the Fairgrounds Drive/56th Street and Broadway intersection to improve signal timing. The community has expressed the current signal timing at this intersection causes longer queue times, especially during peak hour trips. The monetary contribution will provide funding for a video-based detection and traffic controller which will help alleviate vehicle queuing times because the video allows for increased detection of vehicles waiting at the stop light.

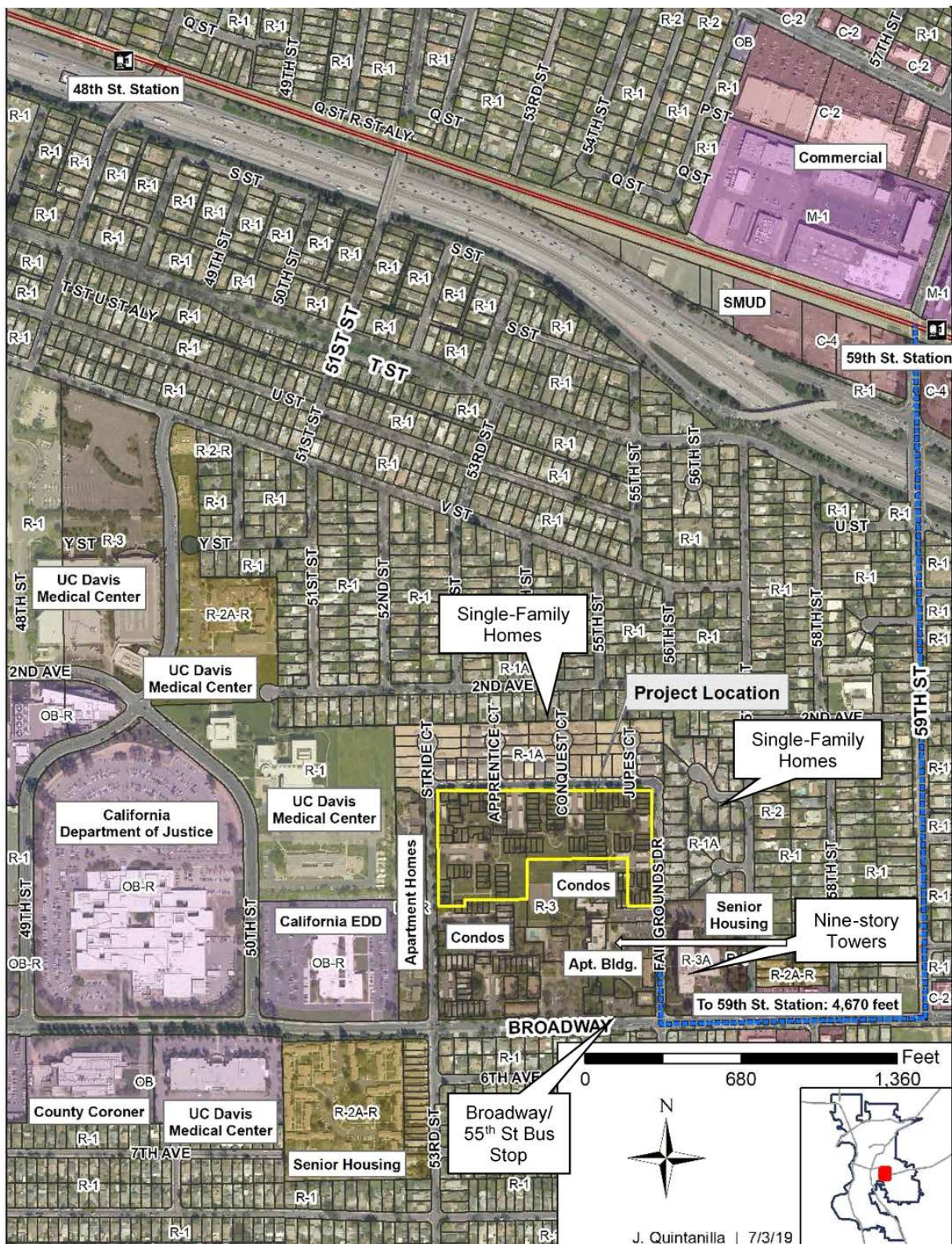
Opposition: Staff has received correspondence from neighbors citing concerns to downzoning the land from multi-family to allow for a single-family housing product, especially in a time-period where the City and State face a housing crisis. Correspondence also states concerns regarding a missed opportunity to densify this area as UC Davis Medical Center is proposing expansion and intensification with its Aggie Square project.

Staff understands these concerns shared by the community and would not oppose a denser housing type on the site, however, staff has thoroughly analyzed the long-term implications of downzoning the property and supports the proposed project as submitted.

Specifically, the City's General Plan Housing Element encourages diversification of residential densities to support a wider range of ownership opportunities throughout the City (Housing Element Policies: H-1.3.4, H-1.3.5, and H-6.2, listed below). Staff reviewed the composition of the existing housing stock within a half-mile radius of the project site and finds that there is a wide range of housing options (see Figure 1). The lots to the north are detached single-family homes on larger parcels between 5,000 and 6,000 square feet. This subdivision to the north, known as "Greenfair," subdivided 6.85 acres into 44 lots (± 6 dwelling units per acre) and is the most recent addition to the neighborhood and was approved by City Council in August 2015 (P14-040). This project requested similar entitlements, including a rezone and general plan amendment to reduce density. The lots to the east are also single-family homes, which were constructed around the 1980s. The development to the west is a garden-style apartment complex that is owned by Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency. To the south,

along Broadway, is a higher density development of two-story condominiums adjacent to a nine-story tower residential complex. Furthermore, there is a second nine-story tower for senior housing just east of Fairgrounds Drive and another single-story age restricted housing complex south of Broadway. The Land Use Map in Figure 1 illustrates the subject site in relation to described surrounding land uses.

Figure 1: Land Use Map



Staff believes the proposed small lot single-family product offers a good blend between the existing, higher-density rental and ownership units in the immediate vicinity. Specifically, the proposed project diversifies the housing options with smaller lot sizes. Also, the proposed density is compatible for this area because the higher residential densities are located closer to Broadway, with the density decreasing further away from Broadway, closer to the existing single-family homes.

As part of the contextual physical development review, staff considered proximity to transit routes. There are two existing Regional Transit (RT) Bus Line routes on Broadway in this area, the 38 and 212, with two stops close to the project site that are within walking distance. Route 38 has a headway of 45-60 minutes; according to RT's most recent quarterly ridership report for the period ending December 31, 2018, the route is not as heavily utilized as Route 51 on Stockton Boulevard (382 vs. 3,083 average daily trips). Route 212 has limited availability. It runs north to Rodeo Drive/N Street during the 7 am hour and south to Sim Park during the 3 pm hour. It does not operate on the weekends and ridership numbers are not available in the quarterly report. The nearest RT Light Rail station is the 59th Street LRT Station, which is almost a mile away (approximately 4,670 feet) by foot due to physical barriers within the existing neighborhood. This distance is not considered convenient for the average walker and therefore one may conclude that development at the subject site would not result in a substantive increase in light rail ridership. Route 51 on Stockton Boulevard has the highest average daily boarding of any bus route in the RT system and has an average headway of 15 minutes or better. The project site is more than a ½ mile walk to Route 51. In conclusion, while there is transit available in the area, staff would prefer to see multi-family projects and higher density focused near transit on Stockton Boulevard and does not object to the proposed small lot, medium density housing at the subject location.

As part of evaluating the existing surrounding housing stock, staff found that 1.6 acres of the subject property is identified as vacant land inventory in the City's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for future lower income households. Staff considered this information as part of our analysis and concluded that the City has adequate land capacity within our RHNA land inventory whereby rezoning this project would not prevent the City from meeting its RHNA low income housing goals.

Other concerns expressed by the neighbors included an increase in traffic on Fairgrounds Drive and a loss of existing green/open space that is utilized by residents of the Greenfair Apartments.

The Department of Public Works analyzed the traffic concerns and concluded that the addition of 68 residential units would account for approximately 729 new daily trips with 53 trips during the AM peak hour and 70 trips during the PM peak hour. The project does not meet the City's

threshold of generating 100 or more AM and PM peak hour trips which would then require a traffic study. Staff finds that the proposed project is not expected to cause any significant impacts to the environment as it relates to transportation.

The green space that is being removed by the proposed subdivision is an existing private amenity offered by the Greenfair Homeowner's Association (HOA). Private amenities collectively owned through a HOA are typically reserved for those residents' enjoyment because they are likely paying a monthly HOA maintenance fee. For the record, this HOA greenspace is identified as a "park" on Google Maps, which may be misleading, but staff has confirmed with the applicant and the City's Park and Recreation Department that this is a private park. In fact, the City's Park and Recreation Department has indicated that the City-owned Greenfair Park is truly located at the northeast corner of the intersection of 56th Street and Broadway, directly east of the nine-story tower senior housing development. The proposed project is not required to join the Greenfair HOA and is also not required to dedicate land for a new public park; however, the project is required to pay City Park in-lieu fees as part of its Quimby obligation. These fees are administered by the Park and Recreation Department and are typically used at nearby park facilities.

To address the neighbors' concerns, cited above related to the removal of greenspace, the applicant will construct and dedicate an off-site public sidewalk that will lead from the Fairgrounds Drive/56th Street sidewalk through the Greenfair Tower #2 property and into the City's Greenfair Park. This will facilitate a more direct path-of-travel to the City's park for the new and existing residents who reside along Fairgrounds Drive.

Policy Considerations: The property's current General Plan Land Use Designation is Traditional Neighborhood High Density. The applicant is proposing to change this designation to Traditional Neighborhood Medium Density to allow for a less dense residential project. The City's General Plan identifies traditional neighborhoods as well-established and generally well-preserved, with some areas experiencing higher pressures for infill development and streetscape improvements. It is expected that changes proposed in these traditional neighborhoods will focus on preserving and restoring the quality of such areas by protecting and enhancing features such as scale and quality of housing, neighborhood character, and housing choice. Traditional neighborhoods are predominantly single-family residential scale and include a mix of single-family units, second units, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and apartments (Traditional Neighborhood Urban Form Guidelines #1 of 2035 General Plan, page 2-49).

The following policies from the 2035 General Plan support this project:

- **Policy LU 1.1.5: Infill Development.** The City shall promote and provide incentives (e.g., focused infill planning, zoning/rezoning, revised regulations, provision of infrastructure) for infill development, reuse, and growth in existing urbanized areas to enhance community character,

optimize City investments in infrastructure and community facilities, support increased transit use, promote pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly neighborhoods, increase housing diversity, ensure integrity of historic districts, and enhance retail viability.

Approving the project would promote this policy by rezoning and amending the City's General Plan to facilitate infill development in a growing urbanized area. The project will also enhance community character by providing a compatible residential project in terms of density and scale on an underutilized piece of property adjacent to services. Lastly, the City has existing infrastructure (i.e. water and sewer) facilities on Fairgrounds Drive which helps maximize the use of prior investments.

- **Policy LU 2.1.3: Complete and Well-Structure Neighborhoods.** The City shall promote the design of complete and well-structured neighborhoods whose physical layout and land use mix promote walking to services, biking, and transit use; foster community pride; enhance neighborhood identity; ensure public safety; are family-friendly and address the needs of all ages and abilities.

The infill development project improves connectivity in the neighborhood by providing a new east/west roadway, with separated sidewalks, perpendicular to and connecting into both north/south segments of Fairgrounds Drive. This will help improve walkability for both new and existing residents. Furthermore, placing more single-family detached ownership units on an interior infill site within a community will result in new residents with a long-term stake in the neighborhood, thereby fostering a family-friendly neighborhood with increased community pride and public safety.

- **Policy LU 4.1.3: Walkable Neighborhoods.** The City shall require the design and development of neighborhoods that are pedestrian friendly and include features such as short blocks, broad and well-appointed sidewalks (e.g., lighting, landscaping, adequate width), tree-shaded streets, buildings that define and are oriented to adjacent streets and public spaces, limited driveway curb cuts, paseos and pedestrian lanes, alleys, traffic-calming features, convenient pedestrian street crossings, and access to transit.

The new roadways in the subdivision will include streets that are designed to City standards, requiring a 5-foot sidewalk separated from the curb line by a 6.5-foot landscaped planter. There are portions along Fairgrounds Drive south of the project site where sidewalks currently do not exist. City staff and the applicant explored the feasibility of filling in those sidewalk gaps, but discovered there are major obstacles, such as carports, trees, and parking spaces, that interfere with the sidewalk location and would require considerable improvements to the neighboring property. These improvements would also be costly to the applicant. There are several existing large trees on the project site which was formerly developed with apartments as part of the Greenfair housing project. The applicant has agreed to preserve as many trees

as possible to maintain the existing streetscape canopy. Where trees cannot be preserved, a replacement 15-gallon City street tree will be planted. This project also improves pedestrian safety at the Fairgrounds Drive and Broadway crosswalk by voluntarily installing a rapid flashing beacon at this intersection to alert motorists of pedestrian crossings. The project will keep the existing traffic-calming speed humps (undulations) on Fairgrounds Drive and additional speed humps may be installed if determined necessary by the Department of Public Works.

- **Policy LU 4.3.1: Traditional Neighborhood Protection.** The City shall protect the pattern and character of Sacramento's unique traditional neighborhoods, including the street grid pattern, architectural styles, tree canopy, and access to public transit, neighborhood services and amenities.

This project is within the City General Plan's Traditional Neighborhood land use designation and helps preserve this neighborhood's character by preserving as many trees as possible and by creating lot sizes that are compatible with surrounding lots. The roadway pattern provides short blocks in a grid-like pattern to maintain neighborhood connectivity to nearby services. Although no house plans/designs are proposed with this Tentative Subdivision Map, the proposed R-1A zoning allows for a maximum height of 35-feet with modest front yard setbacks, achieving a consistent building envelope as neighboring single-family homes.

- **Policy H-1.3.4: A Range of Housing Opportunities.** The City shall encourage a range of housing opportunities for all segments of the community.

The proposed housing product will facilitate additional home ownership opportunities in the neighborhood. The developer has indicated that because the lots are smaller than conventional R-1 zoned single-unit lots, the homes will be at a lower price-point. Additionally, the site is in direct vicinity of a wide range of housing options, including market-rate rentals, affordable units, and senior housing.

- **Policy H-1.3.5: Housing Type Distribution.** The City shall promote an equitable distribution of housing types for all income groups throughout the city and promote mixed income neighborhoods rather than creating concentrations of below-market-rate housing in certain areas.

As discussed in the previous policy, there is a diversity of housing choices that currently exist in the immediate area, ranging from market-rate rentals to low-income and age restricted units. Providing a homeownership opportunity will continue to diversify the housing stock in the area and contribute to creating a family-friendly neighborhood with a broad age range.

- **Policy H-6.2: Affordable Housing Types.** The City shall promote modest income

homeownership opportunities through alternative construction methods and ownership models, employer assisted housing and amendments to the Mixed-Income Housing Ordinance.

The developer has indicated that these homes will be generally more affordable by design because of the smaller lot sizes, which typically fosters smaller homes. Also, the land costs can be cheaper because the infrastructure improvements are spread amongst more homeowners.

The project area is within the Fruitridge-Broadway Community Plan and the following policies support the project.

- **Policy FB.H 1.1 Residential Design Criteria.** The City shall ensure variations in lot size, structure height, and setbacks, and that in lower-density residential subdivisions (4 to 8 dwelling units per net acre or 7 to 15 dwelling units per net acre) at least 25 percent of the structures should have front yard setbacks that are varied from the standard 25-foot setback within a range of 20 to 35 feet from the street right-of-way. Lots that front on major streets should have front yard setbacks that vary between 35 and 45 feet. Multi-family residential uses on major streets will be interspersed with other land use types and should offer a diversity of architectural designs, front yard setbacks, and building orientations.

The project proposes a density at 10 dwelling units per net acre in the R-1A zone which allows for a front yard setback at 20-feet. The proposed lot sizes are smaller than the adjacent single-family homes therefore creating variation, while also maintaining development compatibility.

Economic Impacts: Not applicable.

Environmental Considerations: The City of Sacramento, as the lead agency under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), prepared an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Fairgrounds Subdivision Project (P18-048). In accordance with the CEQA, the MND was circulated for a 20-day public review period which ended on February 25, 2019. The comment period was also advertised in a newspaper of general circulation and a notice of availability/notice of intent was sent to responsible agencies, regulatory agencies, neighborhood associations, residents, businesses and stakeholders in the project area.

Comment letters and responses to comments are provided in Appendix B of the Initial Study. The comments received do not change the environmental determination made in the Initial Study. The minor revisions to the entitlements and MND do not require recirculation pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15073.5(b). The Environmental Services Manager has determined that adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program are appropriate actions under the CEQA. The IS/MND, including comments and responses for the project is available at the

Community Development Department's office at 300 Richards Boulevard, Third Floor, Sacramento CA 95811, and webpage located at the following link:

<http://www.cityofsacramento.org/Community-Development/Planning/Environmental/Impact-Reports>

200-Year Flood Protection: State Law (SB 5) and Planning and Development Code Chapter 17.810 require that the City must make specific findings prior to approving certain entitlements for projects within a flood hazard zone. The purpose is to ensure that new development will have protection from a 200-year flood event or will achieve that protection by 2025. The project site is within a flood hazard zone and is an area covered by Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA's) Improvements to the State Plan of Flood Control System, and specific findings related to the level of protection have been incorporated as part of this project. Even though the project site is within a flood hazard zone, the local flood management agency, SAFCA, has made adequate progress on the construction of a flood protection system that will ensure protection from a 200-year flood event or will achieve that protection by 2025. This is based on the SAFCA Urban level of flood protection plan, adequate progress baseline report, and adequate progress toward an urban level of flood protection engineer's report that were accepted by City Council Resolution No. 2016-0226 on June 21, 2016 and the SAFCA 2018 Adequate Progress Annual Report accepted by City Council Resolution No. 2018-0445 on November 20, 2018.

Sustainability: The proposed tentative subdivision map creates a walkable neighborhood by tying into the existing street network and providing onsite and offsite sidewalks.

Commission/Committee Action: On July 25, 2019, the Planning and Design Commission held a public hearing on the Fairgrounds Subdivision project and passed a motion (seven ayes, five noes) to forward a recommendation of approval to City Council for all entitlements except for the Ordinance to rezone from R-3 to R-1A. The Commission didn't want to recommend approval of the rezone because if the project was never built, then it could still be developed with a higher density residential project. The rezone to R-1A is not necessary for the project to move forward as proposed. Commission discussion was primarily focused on the appropriate use of the site, with consideration to the site's current zoning to accommodate a denser residential project. Staff is moving forward with the recommendation to approve the ordinance for the rezone.

Rationale for Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the project based on the findings of fact and subject to the conditions of approval listed in the attachments of this staff report. Staff finds the project is consistent with the goals and policies of the 2035 General Plan by facilitating future homeownership opportunities on an 8-acre infill redevelopment site. Staff finds that the proposed lot sizes are smaller, thereby diversifying the housing product in the area and promoting a more equitable distribution of housing types for all income groups throughout the City. Also, the project will help increase pedestrian accessibility and safety, while improving vehicular flow and reduce queuing times on Broadway.

Financial Considerations: The applicant will provide a fair share monetary contribution in the amount of \$25,000 to upgrade the signal on the Fairgrounds Drive/56th Street and Broadway intersection to improve signal timing as part of the conditions for approval.

Local Business Enterprise (LBE): No goods or services are being purchased under this report.