

Oakland City Planning Commission

Directors Report

September 7, 2016

Case File Number PLN15-378; ER15-004

SUMMARY

On July 27, 2016, the Design Review Committee was presented with an overview of the Oak Knoll development project (Project), and requested that staff present an informational Director's Report to inform the full Planning Commission on the status of the Project. The purpose of this Report is to provide information to the Commission on progress to date, as well as to prepare the Commission for upcoming documentation and hearings of importance regarding the Project. Staff will return with details about the Project and discussion regarding the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (Draft SEIR) and specific topic areas of interest.

BACKGROUND

The Oak Knoll site consists of approximately 165 acres of the former U.S. Navy medical facility, approximately 15 acres of adjacent and undeveloped property, and approximately eight acres of City-owned property, for a total of 188 acres. The former U.S. Navy medical facility was decommissioned in 1996 and, with the exception of two separate private parcels now occupied by the Sea West Credit Union and Seneca School (not a part of the Project), is now owned by Suncal (the Applicant).

- Planning for the development of the Oak Knoll site began in the 1990s pursuant to federal military base reuse procedures, when the former NMCO was declared a surplus military property. A Reuse Plan for the NMCO was prepared in 1996.
- The U.S. Department of the Navy and the City of Oakland prepared an Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report for the Disposal and Reuse of the Oak Knoll Naval Medical Center Oakland in 1998. The City of Oakland certified the 1998 EIS/EIR and adopted the Reuse Plan in July 1998, and the Navy used the certified environmental document in its preparation of a Final Finding of Suitability to Transfer (FOST) in 1999.
- In 2006, Suncal proposed an Oak Knoll Mixed Use Community Plan pursuant to the approved Reuse Plan. That 2006 proposal was analyzed in a 2008 Draft Supplemental EIR (SEIR); however, the SEIR was not finalized or certified, and the prior 2006 Oak Knoll Community Plan was not considered for adoption.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Suncal is now seeking City approval for a number of land use entitlements that, if granted, would enable development of the Project site. Sections 17.140 and 17.142 of the City of Oakland's Planning Code include regulations that govern Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) that are intended to encourage comprehensive planning of larger tracts of land, and to provide flexibility in the application of certain regulations in a manner consistent with the general purposes of the zoning regulations. These PUD regulations are applicable and appropriate for master planning the development of the large Oak Knoll site.

Suncal intends to serve as Master Developer for the Oak Knoll Project, and intends to pursue a PUD permit that establishes a comprehensive plan for the entire site. They also intend to conduct site preparation activities necessary to ready the site for development, to construct the major "backbone"

improvements necessary to serve future development, and to create individual large parcels that they will then sell to future home and commercial builders, who will in turn build the residential and commercial uses of the Project.

Preliminary Development Plan

All applications for a PUD are required to include a Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) of the entire development showing relevant information to clearly establish the scale, character and relationship of buildings, streets, and open spaces. Suncal has submitted a Planned Unit Development Permit Application and PDP for the City's review that includes:

- A land use program that provides for development of 935 residential units, 72,000 square feet of primarily neighborhood-serving commercial uses, and approximately 14,000 square feet of a combination of commercial and civic uses;
- Approximately 85 acres of permanent open space, including many of the more sensitive areas of the site such as the Rifle Range Creek corridor, visible high points (i.e., the Knoll), and heavily wooded areas;
- A circulation and "Complete Streets" network intended to serve all categories of users including pedestrians, bicyclists, persons with disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, users and operators of public transportation, emergency responders, seniors, children, youth and families;
- Conceptual architectural designs for the Project's new single family homes, townhomes and condominiums, and the Retail Village area;
- Park designs for a centralized community park/community center and several neighborhood parks; and
- Relocation and reuse of Club Knoll, a historic two-story building originally constructed in 1924 as the Oak Knoll Country Club and golf course clubhouse, and later used as a restaurant and Officer's Club by the U.S. Navy until it was decommissioned in 1996.

Final Development Plans

Suncal has also submitted a Final Development Plan (FDP) that depicts the Master Developer's proposed "backbone" infrastructure and site preparation improvements for the Oak Knoll Project. This set of FDP materials includes schematic designs prepared at a sufficient level of detail to demonstrate the intended final appearance for each of the Master Developer improvements, and will guide the even greater detailed plans pursuant to:

- An Oak Knoll Vesting Tentative Tract Map;
- A Master Grading Permit containing schematic designs for corrective grading due to soil conditions, slope stabilization, creek corridor restoration, and creation of building pads and associated embankments and retaining walls;

- City P-Job Permits for streets and utility designs including schematic designs for streets, sidewalks, street lighting, streetscape planting, and monumentation and signage for the Project's major and secondary entries and entries into each local neighborhood;
- Stormwater treatment plans subject to subsequent NPDES permit consistency;
- Tree Removal and Tree Preservation Permits. Overall, the Project will result in removal of 4,191 trees within the Project limits of disturbance of which 3,511 trees are protected under the Oakland Tree Ordinance, and 2,539 of which are native species. The proposed tree replanting program provides for planting of 5,378 new trees including 4,795 new trees within the restored Rifle Range Creek corridor and in open space, woodlands and sloped areas, 350 trees within the streetscape of new major streets, 53 new trees at the Community Center, and 180 trees within in-tract parcels within the Project development area; and
- A Creek Protection Permit. Substantial re-grading of the on-site creeks is proposed to reduce channel side-slopes and to establish suitable conditions for stabilization and re-planting. The restoration approach involves daylighting existing culverts; removing non-native vegetation and replanting with native plants; removing obsolete infrastructure; stabilizing deeply incised reaches of the creek, and using a combination of grading and biotechnical methods to stabilize actively eroding bank areas that are too steep to support riparian vegetation. Once restored, Rifle Range Creek will provide a natural, continuous corridor through the site.

As Master Developer of the Project, Suncal intends to sell large parcels of entitled properties within the Project site to future home and commercial builders, who will then build the residential and commercial uses of the Project. These future home and commercial builders will need to submit subsequent FDPs for their individual commercial and residential projects, and for phase-specific streets and utilities. These subsequent FDPs must demonstrate consistency with the overall PDP as may be approved.

Rezoning

The Project applicant has requested a rezoning of the Project site. Staff anticipates that the Oak Knoll site will be re-zoned with unique, Oak Knoll-specific zoning districts consistent with the Project's proposed land use plan. These unique zoning districts will provide an accurate reflection of the Oak Knoll PDP and will codify the specific development standards for new development under the Oak Knoll PUD permit.

PUBLIC PROCESS

Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board

On May 19, 2016 staff and the applicant presented to the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board the applicant's proposal to relocate and rehabilitate the Club Knoll building so it can be used as a community center and commercial space for the Project. This proposal involves taking the building apart in a manner that saves intact the largest components of the building possible, replacing the building onto a new, code-compliant steel frame, and then reassembling and restoring the building for reuse. The LPAB gave this proposal a qualified endorsement, subject to greater detail on the proposed relocation and rehabilitation methodology.

Design Review Committee

On July 27, 2016 staff presented the Design Review Committee with certain preliminary information about Oak Knoll's draft PDP and draft FDPs; briefed the DRC on Planning staff's thoughts regarding these design-related materials; and solicited recommendations, suggestions and opinions of the Committee on design-related issues. Generally, the DRC expressed support of the current Oak Knoll Project, but desired follow-up detailed information regarding

- A more technical review specific to the proposed Creek Restoration Plan;
- A comparison of other retail centers to better understand scale of the proposed Village Center, with possible case studies of other noteworthy projects of a similar nature
- More detailed information on grading and aesthetics, inclusive of a 3D computer model or potentially an actual physical model; and
- Specific recommendations pertaining to landscape and architecture:

Environmental Review

City staff and our environmental consultants are now concluding preparation of a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (Draft SEIR) for the proposed Oak Knoll Project, supplementing the 1998 EIS/EIR with analysis specific to the current Project. As of the preparation of this Director's Report, the Draft SEIR is expected to be published on August 29, 2016. Opportunities for public comment on that Draft SEIR are tentatively scheduled (please note that dates may change subject to circumstances) as follows:

- Landmarks Board Advisory Board – 9/12
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission – 9/15
- Planning Commission - 10/5

All comments that are received on the Draft EIR will be responded to in writing in a Final SEIR; and that Final SEIR will be considered by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, other advisory boards and commissions, the Planning Commission and the City Council before making any final decisions on the Oak Knoll Project.

CONCLUSIONS

As this Director's Report is an informational briefing only, Staff is not requesting any formal recommendations or comments at this time. However, as Staff continues to work with the applicant to refine and finalize their application materials and to process the required environmental review, we are interested in the Commission's thoughts on how we best bring information forward in a manner most helpful for the Commission's understanding and consideration.

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