



City of Lafayette

Staff Report

Design Review Commission

Meeting Date: February 13, 2017

Staff: Niroop K. Srivatsa

Subject: **DR13-14DDII Lennar Homes (Applicant), C-Zoning:** Request for: (1) Review of Phase II Design Plans to construct a new three-story, mixed-use development (66 for-sale residential units, 5,400-sq. ft. of commercial, and 169 on-site parking spaces) located at 3666, 3672 and 3682 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, APNs 241-020-013, 241-020-005, 241-020-008. *(The Planning Commission approved the project on March 7, 2016 subject to 61 conditions including this subsequent design review.)*

Executive Summary

Lennar requests approval of the design development plans for a 66-unit residential condominium project. This is the final stage in the City's discretionary review process.

Staff requests that the Design Review Commission focus on the site details at the February 13 meeting. Building details will be considered at a subsequent meeting. Staff will draft a resolution for the Commission's consideration only after it has reviewed all the components in the design development plans.

Background

On March 7, 2016, the Planning Commission adopted Resolution No. 2016-01, adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring or Reporting Program and approving a 66 unit residential condominium project, subject to conditions. Prior to the Planning Commission's review, the Design Review Commission had considered the application in four hearings which were organized around the Downtown Design Guidelines and the design review findings related to general site, architectural and landscape considerations. On January 11, 2016, the Design Review Commission adopted Resolution 2016-02 unanimously recommending approval of the project to the Planning Commission.

Included in the conditions of approval is the following requirement pertaining to the current review:

Phase II Design Plans - The applicant shall submit detailed design development plans to the Design Review Commission for approval. This review shall include but not be limited to, building articulation, roof forms, fenestration, wall sections, building materials and colors, window and door sections, colors, materials and trim, garage gates, chimney design, vents, balcony design, trellises, fencing and railings, grading, drainage and storm water facilities, location, quantities, and species of trees and plant material,

retaining walls, boulder locations and sizes, building and ground lighting, outdoor furniture, fountains, arbors, pavers, and landscape steps. As directed by the staff and/or the Design Review Commission, the applicant may also be required to provide an in-field mock-up including but not limited to, building materials and colors, window and door framing and trim, and fencing and railings.

The purpose of this round of review is to evaluate the design details of the plans in conformance with the Commission's previous comments and the condition listed above. The Design Review Commission will take final action on the application. The Commission's action can be appealed to the Planning Commission within 14-days of the final action. Any significant changes to the project that are proposed post-approval will require review and approval by the Commission, prior to execution.

The application was considered by the Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan Implementation Committee (DSIMPIC) in December 2016. The landscape plans were revised to incorporate DSIMPIC's comments. The attached table lists the committee's comments and the applicant's responses.

Project Details

General

The Lennar Homes development is comprised of a complex of two three-story buildings with subterranean parking. In addition to the 66 for-sale residential units, the project also proposes a 4,000 square foot full-service restaurant and a 1,400 square foot flex commercial space on the ground floor of the eastern building. A plaza with public art separates these commercial spaces along the boulevard.



The majority of parking for the project - 169 spaces - is provided in the basement and parking for all residential units, including guests, is located entirely within the basement. Restaurant and retail parking is in the basement and on Mt. Diablo Blvd. The existing on-street parking spaces on Mt. Diablo Blvd. are reconfigured as diagonal parking and an additional 12 spaces are added on the street.

On-site (Private) Improvements

Resident amenities: the project contains two lobbies, a club room, a fitness room and a storage room for bicycles. Each of the buildings has private landscaped courtyards. The ground floor units of the western building fronting the boulevard have individual entries /stoops leading to small private courtyards. A landscaped berm and large trees shield these units from the main street.

Outdoor spaces: Public plazas are located along the boulevard on each side of the corner restaurant. Additionally, each building has its own private courtyard. The courtyard in the western building is 26' x 30'. As a comparison, Lafayette Mercantile's front courtyard with the fountain is 30' x 30' in size. The eastern building's courtyard is 43' x 61' at its widest, which is similar in size to the outdoor dining patio

at the Metro restaurant. Planters, benches, and other amenities are provided for the benefit of the residents (See Sheets L1 and L2 for details).

Mews: Pedestrian access is provided from the boulevard to the EBMUD aqueduct ROW through a 24' wide landscaped public alleyway or mews. In addition to steps, an elevator is proposed at the northern terminus of the mews to gain access to the aqueduct ROW. The applicant will install Tivoli-type string lights along the mews and in the private courtyards. (See Sheets L1 and L2 for details)

Lighting: The applicant proposes four types of lighting within the project - uplights in planters (fixture B); LED strip lights tucked up underneath planter wall caps for indirect lighting (fixture D); inset wall lights in raised planters (fixture C); and Tivoli lighting in open areas (fixture F). (See Sheet L1). No wall mounted lights or light poles are proposed.

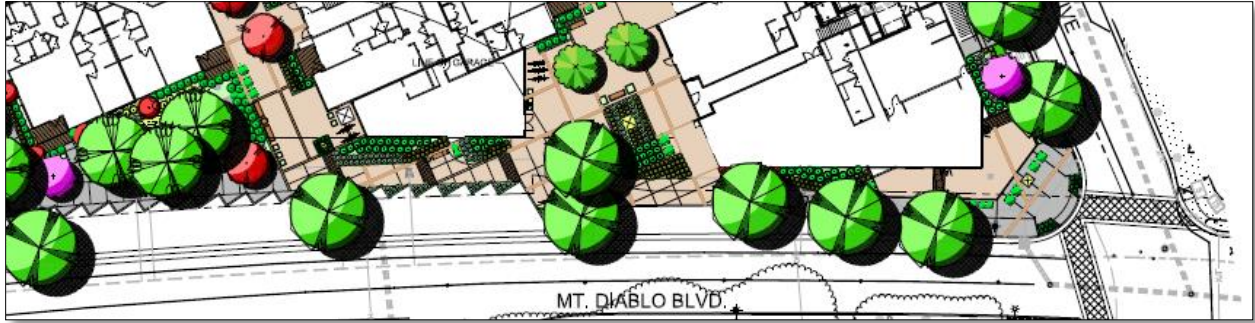
Landscaping: Japanese maples, Redbuds, Eastern Dogwoods and Crape Myrtles are proposed in planters in the interior courtyards and in the mews. Thirty five raised landscaped planters spread throughout the site will capture and treat the storm water before it is released into the storm drain system (See Sheet L4 for details).

Public art: Public art installations are proposed in the plaza west of the restaurant and at the mews. The installations have not yet been chosen and the applicant will be required to return with a proposal to be reviewed by the Public Art Committee and approved by the City Council.

Off-site (Public) Improvements

Signal and medians: Lennar will install a new signalized intersection on Mt. Diablo Blvd. at its western property line which aligns with the Desco office building on the south side of the boulevard. The signal is intended to safely facilitate maneuvers to and from the western access driveway and also to organize and reduce existing conflicting traffic movements on Mt. Diablo Blvd. along the project frontage. Two new crosswalks at this signalized intersection will enable pedestrian mobility across the boulevard. These crosswalks and the two at the north and west legs of the Dolores Drive intersection will be finished with the City's decorative pavers. The existing east-west bike lanes on Mt. Diablo Blvd. will be preserved. The applicant will also construct new medians on Mount Diablo Boulevard to channelize turn movements at the new signalized intersections as well as proximate properties. The new median layout preserves full access (all movements) to Diamond K's easterly main driveway, while limiting movements at the westerly driveway to right in/out only. (See Sheet 8 for details)

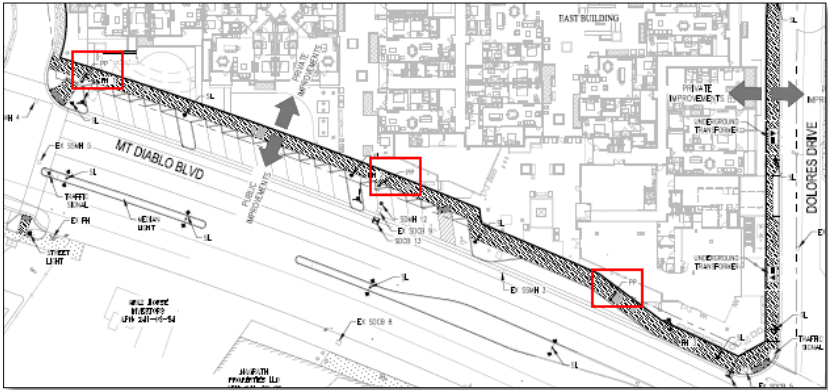
Loading: A loading dock for trash service is located on Dolores Drive. A loading zone is proposed parallel to the Mt. Diablo Boulevard frontage. This space is envisioned as a location for passenger drop-off, delivery trucks and moving trucks.



Sidewalks: Sidewalks ranging in width from 8' to 10' will be constructed along the project frontages on the boulevard and Dolores Drive. Based on direction from DSIMPIC, decorative pavers will be used only on the Mt. Diablo Blvd. sidewalk from the Dolores Drive intersection to the western edge of the mews (see above). From that point west, a standard concrete sidewalk will be installed. Three bicycle racks are provided west of the loading zone (See Sheet L4, L5 and L2 for details).

Trees: Based on direction from DSIMPIC, seven five 24" box Shumard Red Oaks and 24" box Coast Live Oaks will be planted as street trees on the boulevard and Dolores Drive respectively. A number of Crape Myrtles and Southern Live Oaks are also proposed on private property in the setback between the western building and the boulevard (See Sheets L4 and L5 for details).

Lighting and undergrounding of poles: City-specified street lights will be installed along the project frontages and in the landscaped medians. There are currently five power poles on the Mt. Diablo frontage. All existing poles are to be removed; however, three new guy poles will be installed on the project side to support the existing overhead electric lines on the south side of Mt. Diablo Blvd.



The City has a long standing requirement for downtown development projects that all utility poles be undergrounded prior to occupancy. The applicant has indicated that undergrounding the three guy poles would be too costly. These poles serve as supports for the transmission lines and poles on the south side of the street, and thus, if the poles along the project frontage are to be undergrounded, the poles on south side would have to be as well. Staff is working with the applicant and PG&E on this the matter. (See Sheet 8)



EBMUD aqueduct ROW: The ROW will be improved with a 10' wide pedestrian/bicycle pathway, consistent with the City's aqueduct pathway plan. The proposed plant palette is native consisting mainly of toyons, manzanita and grasses. A small turf area consisting of non-mowed native grass is proposed

between the pathway and Lennar's small, triangular parcel to the north. Six 24" box Coast live oaks are proposed on the triangular parcel. It should be noted that the future use of this parcel has not yet been determined. Prior to the framing inspection, the applicant, EBMUD, and staff will meet to develop a solution that is acceptable to all parties and staff will bring the matter back to the Design Review Commission for approval (See Sheet L4 for details).

Public Notice & Comment

Property owners within 300'-0" of the subject property were mailed a notice of public hearing, and the immediate area was posted at least ten days prior to the initial scheduled public hearing. No comments were received at the time this staff report was prepared.

Staff Comments

The City Engineer and planning staff reviewed the site and civil plans in December and January and provided comments to the applicant. The attached plans reflect the changes that were made to address the majority of staff's comments. The attached table lists the outstanding items.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission review the proposed site and landscape plans and details, provide direction to the applicant and continue the matter to the February 27 meeting for additional review.

Attachments


1. Table with DSIMPIC and staff comments
2. Project plans

DSIMPIC Comments, December 2016

No.	Comments	Changes made after meeting
1	Do not use City's downtown pavers on the entire sidewalk on Mt. Diablo Blvd. but rather use bands of it either at the street trees (if that makes sense) or other logical points along the frontage and tie it in with the project's proposed pavers. A logical terminus to the decorative paving is the public mews.	Changes made. See Sheet L1. The City paver locations will be at key locations on the Mt. Diablo Blvd. sidewalk.
2	Tree grates are not allowed. Use City's standard tree planting detail.	Grates removed. See Sheet L5.
3	Add more planting against building frontage and in small planters at front of parking stalls especially at the west end of the project.	Additional planting added. Note that Sheet L4 does not include plantings in front of the parking stalls at the west end of the project. The sheet will be revised to include plantings before the DRC takes final action.
4	Use City decorative pavers in crosswalks at Dolores and Mt. Diablo to finish off what was started with the one existing crosswalk and then do not use pavers at the new signalized intersection; just stripe the crosswalk.	Changes made. See L1.
5	Use double armed street lights in medians and the City's downtown 'pedestrian light' 14 foot pole along project frontage if the foot candles work rather than the taller light pole.	Changes made. See Sheet L2.
6	The use of contemporary bench is okay. Add a few benches in the public ROW if they fit. Trash receptacle to match bench. No recycled wood seats.	Benches have been added. See Sheets L1 and L2.
7	Add signage to show that the public mews is for public use.	Signage will be added before the DRC takes final action.
8	Quercus shumardii okay as street trees and median trees but on site, in front of the west building use Quercus virginiana which is evergreen.	Changes made. See Sheet L4.
9	Quercus agrifolia okay as a street tree on Dolores Drive.	Changes made. See Sheet L4.
10	Eliminate the Flowering Plum.	Changes made. See Sheet L4.
11	Transition to a more native palette especially at the west end for median and sidewalk plantings.	Changes made. See Sheet L4.

No.	Comments	Changes made after meeting
12	Incorporate some of the same plants as used in both buildings through-out the frontage to create continuity but it is still okay to have a distinction between buildings to reflect the different architectural styles of the buildings. It is okay to use textural plants in the East building and softer suburban palette to the west end.	Changes made. See Sheet L4.

Staff Comments

No.	Sheet	Issue	Staff Comments
1	L4	Landscape pockets at new signal	Show landscape details at the north west and south west legs of the intersection.
2	8	Three new PG&E guy poles	<p>Underground all poles along the project frontage. The three new poles will mar the high quality project proposed by Lennar.</p> <p>There are currently five power poles on the Mt. Diablo frontage which will be removed. However, three new guy poles will be installed on the project side to support the existing overhead electric lines on the south side of Mt. Diablo Blvd. The applicant has indicated that undergrounding these poles would be too costly. The poles serve as supports for the transmission lines and poles on the south side of the street, and thus, if the poles along the project frontage are to be undergrounded, the poles on south side would have to be as well. Staff is working with the applicant and PG&E on this the matter.</p> <p>The City has a long standing requirement for downtown development projects that all utility poles be undergrounded prior to occupancy. Installing three new poles, each approximately 35' in height, would hinder the City's efforts over the last three decades to underground all utilities within the downtown.</p>
3	L1	Railing on wall along Dolores Drive	Provide detail.
4	L2	Aqueduct fence detail	 <p>Proposed fence appears too institutional. Replace with a fence style that is more compatible with the project.</p>
5	4 and Section GG in 5	Retaining wall along northern boundary. Wall ranges in height from 8' to 24' and is finished	Commission to confirm that the finish is acceptable.

Master list of City comments
Lennar Design Development Plans

No.	Sheet	Issue	Staff Comments
		with smooth stucco over concrete with color to match buildings	
6	All sheets showing site plan	North-south pathway to triangular piece of property	Extend pathway from the 10' ped/bike pathway up to the triangular shaped parcel.
7	L4	Landscaping in triangular shaped parcel	Landscaping is not approved. Determination on future use of this parcel will be made by the DRC prior to the framing inspection.
8	2	Water meter detail on decorative sidewalk and other ground level utility features	The water meter is located in the middle of the sidewalk that will otherwise be finished with decorative pavers. Consider a custom cover for manholes and other utility covers to be approved by the DRC. Note that this was a condition of approval for the KB Home project.
9	2	Signal design	Submit the final design of the signal to the City Engineer for approval.