

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE SOUTH GATE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2017

INTRODUCTORY PROCEDURES

Chairperson Carlos Velasquez called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice-Chairperson Guevara.

**ROLL CALL:** By Norma Cardenas, Recording Secretary

**Present:** Chairperson Velasquez, Vice-Chairperson Guevara, Commissioner Hurtado, Commissioner Sylvia Masushige, and Commissioner Delgado,

**Absent/Excused:** None

**Staff:** Community Development Director Joe Perez, Senior Planner Alvaro Betancourt, City Attorney Craig Hardwick, and Recording Secretary Norma Cardenas.

**REPORT ON POSTING:** By Norma Cardenas, Recording Secretary

1. MINUTES

The Planning Commission considered approving the minutes for the regular Planning Commission meeting of June 6, 2017.

Commissioner Hurtado moved and Commissioner Masushige seconded the motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes of June 6, 2017. The motion carried (5-0) with all commissioners in favor.

**2. PUBLIC HEARING**

**DENSITY BONUS FOR A PROPOSED  
SIXTY UNIT PERMANET SUPPORTIVE  
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT LOCATED  
AT 5610 IMPERIAL HIGHWAY.**

Community Development Director Perez introduced this item to the Planning Commission. This is a request to allow a density bonus of five (5) additional units for a proposed fifty-five (55) unit affordable supportive housing development for homeless veterans and others moving out of homelessness. The project would have a total of sixty (60) apartment units, consisting of

affordable studio and one-bedroom apartments with a two-bedroom manager's unit. The proposed building will be four-stories in height and contain 51,409 square feet.

The five additional units exceed what the City would normally allow, however, there is an allowance in the code for additional units if certain public amenities are provided. Senior Planner, Alvie Betancourt, described some of the amenities including a central landscaped courtyard with shaded outdoor gathering space, community garden area, recreational areas, community room with instructional kitchen for residents, secure gated entrance for parking and office space for staff. In addition, on site case managers will provide social services to residents and help them transition permanently out of homelessness.. He reminded the Commission that the request for 55 units is allowed in the CDR2 Zone per code and subject to an administrative review by the Community Development Director. He explained that the proposal before them was limited to the request for 5 additional units.

Director Perez added that the City received a letter from a resident in support of this project. A copy will be included as part of the public record.

Commissioner Hurtado stated that Lorie Julian, a South Gate resident submitted the letter in favor of the project.

Chair Person Velasquez opened the public hearing.

Amy Anderson, Executive Director of PATH Ventures, 340 Madison Avenue Los Angeles CA - Path is a nonprofit developer that was created in 2007. Path creates affordable rental homes that are paired with onsite services. They collaborate with 12 communities that contain about 700 units, at the moment they are working on another 400 units in 7 different developments. Since 2012, PATH has been collaborating with COG and local government organizations to address homelessness in South Gate and the Gateway cities as a whole. Path has a long history providing support to the local community.

Ms. Anderson explained that people who had fallen into homelessness are local and they want to stay in the area. PATH Villas at South Gate is a solution to that challenge. It is an affordable apartment community that will set aside 40 of its 60 units for veterans and the remaining units will be for individuals with chronic health issues who are frequent users of LA County emergency medical services. The project will have on site services provided by case managers on site. The services focus on empowerment, life skills, linking individuals to resources in the community including employment and educational opportunities. Path also partners with The John Stuart property Management Company that will manage the property. They will have a property manager on site to enforce the lease, address complaints, and maintain the building. She explained that with the City's support, Path was able to secure VASH-Vouchers from Section 8 that will cover the expenses for the property. The resident will only pay 30 percent of their income for rent.

Ms. Anderson asked that Planning Condition No. 2 regarding planning approval sunset be 36 months instead of 12 months in order to accommodate erratic funding deadlines that may

prolong the anticipated construction timeline. It is Path's goal to start the project by the end of 2018.

Gilbert Rocha, architect for Torti Gallas and Partners Inc. 601 W. 6th Street, Los Angeles CA. Mr. Rocha gave a brief presentation about the project. He described the industrial look of the building and highlighted the material schedule including corrugated metal, door and window schedule and color palette. He also identified the landscaping, parking and open space areas.

Meridith Burton, Regional Director for South County for Path 455 E. Artesia Boulevard, Long Beach CA – Ms. Burton works closely with the local agency Help Line Youth Counseling to provide services in the South Gate and broader South Gate region. The program reaches out to the community where they are people experiencing homelessness. They offer services and connect individuals to programs and resources to ultimately move them off the street and into permanent homes. Since 2012 Path has assisted 486 South Gate residents and has helped 77 move off the street. She encourages 5 additional units because it will help 5 additional veterans or individuals in need of assistance.

Patty Nunez, 208 1/2 West 48th Street Los Angeles CA, said she received help from Path to find a home for herself, her baby and her mother when they were homeless. She explained the project would help other people that are in the same situation. This will be the first step to end homelessness. She added that poverty does not discriminate and it comes unexpectedly.

Ann English, CHS the Corporation for Supportive Housing, stated that they are a national non-profit community development finance institution and have been working in Los Angeles for over 40 years. CHS has worked with PATH in the past and have had a great working relationship. She added that there is an incredible need for all housing types across the State and LA County. PATH understands the homeless population and how to help them overcome challenges and help them thrive. Path and CHS become partners to change the face of homelessness and create more affordable housing.

Carlos Ramirez, case manager for Path and South Gate residents, stated that he provides supportive services to individuals who are recently homeless and helps them find housing. He had clients from South Gate that needed to be relocated to other cities due to the lack of housing in the area. He also had seen an increase in homelessness around the city.

Steven Bazarro, 3526 Highland Park, said he lives in an affordable housing unit and was previously homeless. He is a disabled veteran. He was fortunate enough to get in contact with a VASH -HUD worker and they helped him find housing. On February 1, 2017 he was able to find permanent housing in Highland Park area. He is in support of housing for veterans.

Virginia Johnson, 5751 McKinley Avenue, said she understands the project but is concerned about how many occupants might live in each unit or if children will be allowed. She feels that 60 parking stalls for the possibly 100 tenants and staff and visitors are not sufficient for the project. Her main concern is that this part of South Gate is an extremely dangerous traffic area and feels adding housing units to it will only make it worse. She said there are pot holes all along the highway and almost no street lighting and that this will add an extra layer of traffic

impeding the massive rush hour traffic that already exists. Her second concern is drug usage in the building. She would like to know who will oversee the complex. She also would like to have more information about the age limit and if this include families and children since this is in a bad area.

Bill DeWitt, 5485 Gardendale Street, said he lives about half mile of this project. He spoke in favor of the project and added that the concept is good. He had visited different projects Path has done in Long Beach and Gardena and noted that they are all well done. He prefers that only honorably discharged veterans get selected as occupants. He suggested a bus stop or a loading and unloading area within the property would be helpful since the bus stops are not in close proximity. He asked to consider a pull out place for a bus to load passengers.

Nicolas Godoy, 8611 San Gabriel Avenue, said he agrees with Mr. DeWitt and would like for veterans to have to verify that they were honorably discharged. He supports the Path Ventures with this project.

Yolanda Mendez, previous South Gate resident currently resides at the Bell Shelter, she supports this project because she lived in the City and due to her husband's passing she became homeless. Rents in the area are high and was she not able to pay the rent. She expressed gratitude for Path's services and strongly supports projects like this.

Estela Alvarez, Homeless Services Manager, said she had the privilege to work with this community and got some funding this year to provide Homeless Prevention Rapid Rehousing services. She supports this project and added that there are many reasons why people become homeless and that part of the program has supportive services on site. The program had assisted many veterans that had dishonorably discharge for minor things.

With no additional questions from the audience, Chairperson Velasquez closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Delgado asked the developer about the tenant selection program. Ms. Anderson stated that for the veteran units the applicants will need to demonstrate that they qualify based on their income, demonstrate that they are a disabled veteran and verify status experiencing homelessness. She said applicants come from a referral process from the county service planning area (SPA) 7. Path is the lead coordinator for SPA 7. The other 20 units are being subsidized by the county Department of Health Social Services. DPSS has its own list and prioritizes families that are costing the county more money in emergency services. They will also prioritize people from SPA 7.

Commissioner Delgado asked about who will provide supportive services for this project. Ms. Anderson stated that Path Ventures will provide supportive services. They have the largest VASH program in the country. She added that this will be a mix gender facility where women veterans are welcome. She said that for studios the occupancy will be limited to one person. The one bedroom units the occupancy is limited to two because of fair housing requirements. Path cannot turn away and individual with a child or couples. The case manager ratio will be 15 to one. They anticipate three case managers from Path and one from VA.

Commissioner Delgado stated that there is a need for housing and South Gate can be a model for the South East cities. He said Path has great reputation and track record.

Commissioner Hurtado said he is familiar with Path and the level of work they have done. He feels that this will help veterans in the community.

Vice Chairperson Guevara agrees with both Commissioner and is in favor of the project. He feels that homelessness is a serious problem around the state and Path services are doing a great job with this facility. He added that affordable housing is also a concern. He asked the developer to elaborate on the subsidy of the project. Ms. Anderson stated that Path secured 25 Wash Vouchers and secured subsidy from the department of public housing for 20 subsidies. Path will apply to the county for capital funding in the fall. Also they will pursue section 8 vouchers and apply for tax credits in the March 2018.

Vice-Chairperson Guevara asked to see floor plan for the project. Ms. Anderson provided a floor plan showing a communal space and office space for the project. She added it will have a U-shape court yard building with the main entrance on Imperial Highway. A mail room and a property management office will be located at the entrance. The community room with a teaching kitchen opens up to the court yard along with residential units on the second, third and fourth floor.

Gilbert Rocha architect for the project, added that the courtyard will have picnic benches, tables and gardening area; it will be an outdoor living room for the residents. He added that all units will have balconies and first floor units will have terraces. Also, the entrance on Imperial will have a drop off zone.

Vice-Chairperson Guevara said he would like to see more color on the building. Director Perez stated that there is a condition of approval for colors and materials.

Vice-Chairperson Guevara requested a copy of the traffic study. Director Perez stated that it has been submitted to the Public Works Department and there are some final review items from the traffic engineer.

Vice-Chairperson Guevara asked the developer about the 13' dedication. The developer has taken into consideration the 13' dedication and Path will not eliminate any of the front landscape area.

Vice-Chairperson Guevara requested a development standard compliance table to better understand the project.

Vice-Chairperson Guevara asked the developer if there were any requests for concessions. Ms. Anderson said that for State affordable housing Path ask for smaller unit sizes and less common open space. Vice-Chairperson Guevara said he would like to see the concession requests in the future.

Vice-Chairperson Guevara asked if Path worked with Metro to provide bus passes for the residents or veterans in the past. Ms. Anderson stated that Path has some funds to cover emergency transit at the moment but is not anticipating Metro bus passes for the residents.

Commissioner Masushige said her concern is the traffic. She would like to see a pull up station for public transportation. Sr. Planner Betancourt said that a deceleration lane would add additional cost and will take out landscape area. He added that the parking and the drive way to the east meet code and fire standards.

Chairperson Velasquez said he is in favor of the project and he would like to see the traffic analysis. Director Perez stated that based on the traffic study the project is not anticipating a significant amount of additional traffic. He asked the developer if a bicycle station is part of the project. Mr. Rocha stated that 16 bicycle parking stations will be provided on the ground floor. Director Perez mentioned to the Commission that this could be part of the conditions of approval.

Ms. Anderson explained that they are not anticipating additional traffic since previous projects show only a third of the residents owned vehicles. She added that all utilities are included with the rent. Vice-Chairperson Guevara asked if funding was adversely affected if the project only had 55 units. Ms. Anderson stated that it will affect the mission to provide affordable and supporting units. However, Path will still be able to move the project forward with 55 units.

Ms. Anderson said she is requesting a change in timing requirement to 24 months or 36 months because affordable housing finance is complex, competitive and not straight forward. Path has been able to secure funding and anticipates will be successful in securing money from the county and securing tax credits. The pre-development period is longer for funders and lenders from a financial stand point and 24 or 36 months will be better.

Director Perez recommended amending condition No. 21 to add the words at “a minimum” 2 staff members will provide case manager services.

Director Perez recommended adding Condition No. 22 for Bicycle facilities that could read, “On site bike facilities shall be provided with materials and designs to be approved by the Community Development Department”. Ms. Anderson stated that she agrees with condition No. 22 to be added.

Vice-Chairperson Guevara would like for applicant to comply with art in public places program. Director Perez recommended adding Condition No. 23 “The developer shall comply with the Arts in Public Places program requirement as stated in the Municipal Code”.

After no further comments, Commissioner Hurtado moved and Commissioner Masushige seconded the motion to accept the determination that this project is Categorical Exempt under Class 32 Section 1531 of the California Environmental Quality Act; and Section 15192 Threshold Requirements of Exemptions for Affordable Housing; and 125194 Affordable Housing Exemption; Adopt the findings as outlined in Resolution No. PC2014-04; and Recommend that the City Council approve Density Bonus Permit No. 2017-01; subject to the recommended

conditions of approval, as contained in Resolution No. 2017-04, and any other limitations and/or conditions the Planning Commission may wish to impose; with the following modifications: That the 24 months replace the 12 months in condition No. 2; Condition No. 21 the words "a minimum" be added in terms of the number of staff members providing supportive services; Condition No. 22 be added stating that onsite bike facilities shall be provided with materials and designs to be approved by the Community Development Department; and Condition No. 23 be added requiring that Developer shall comply with the Art in Public Places Program. The motion carried (4-1) with Vice-Chairperson Guevara against the project.

Vice-Chairperson Guevara requested staff to provide a full set of plans with floor plans and a compliance table and a copy of the traffic study.

Vice-Chairperson Guevara said he wanted to make a motion to postpone the item until additional documents were received. The other Commissioners stated that the item was already voted and no Commissioners retracted their original vote.

**General Business** - None

**Audience Comments** -None

**City Staff Comments**

Director Perez shared with the Commission that a community meeting is being held on Thursday August 3rd at 5:30 p.m. at the Community Center regarding the former Adelpia Site. Also on August 17, we will have a Community Meeting at 5:30 at the South Gate Auditorium to discuss the Tweedy Boulevard Specific Plan and major City projects for additional public outreach.

**Planning Commission Comments**

Commissioner Hurtado asked for an update regarding the Cross Road tenants. Director Perez shared with the Commission that Cross Roads has new potential tenants: one is called Hiccups Tea House known for serving tea products. Churroholics also a chain for handcrafted churros and coffee and the paint store Sherwin-Williams is in the leasing process.

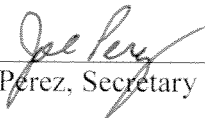
Chairperson Velasquez inquired about the status on the traffic study on Hildreth Avenue. Director Perez notified the Commission that Public Works is monitoring the effects of traffic patterns on parallel streets and impacts on adjacent streets.

Commissioner Masushige stated that the car wash at San Juan and Firestone continues to impede traffic during the weekend. Director Perez will forward her concern to the Police Department.


5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Planning Commission, Chairperson Velasquez moved and Commissioner Hurtado seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried (5-0) to adjourn the meeting to September 5, 2017. The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Respectfully,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joe Perez, Secretary

APPROVED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Carlos Velasquez, Chairperson