

ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Kelley

The minutes for May 10, 2022 were tabled until the next Planning Commission meeting.

Vice Chair Fritz moved to approve the minutes of December 13, 2022 as amended.

Commissioner Oetinger seconded the motion.

AYES: Chair Fernandez, Vice Chair Fritz, Commissioners Burnes and Oetinger
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Kelley

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. 7631 Healdsburg Avenue – Conditional Use Permit for Residential Use in a Commercial District

Application from Kathy Austin on behalf of Pacific Realty Development for a Conditional Use Permit to allow the conversion of a first floor commercial space into two residential units located at 7631 Healdsburg Avenue. The Conditional Use Permit is required for a residential-only use in a Commercial Zone. The project proposes to convert the interior vacant retail space to two (2) one-bedroom, one-bathroom units. One of those units will be fully accessible and the other will be ADA adaptable.

Associate Planner Jay presented the staff report.

Chair Fernandez asked for Planning Commission questions of staff.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

In Exhibit B, Recommended Conditions of Approval, there are two number ones, but my question has to do with the first number one. There's a reference to light fixtures and exterior lighting be reviewed by the Design Review Board. Does this have to go back to design review after this point?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I would say no, these are minor changes that would be administrative.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

So then do we need that condition about the exterior light fixtures? We just strike that then?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I would not strike it, only because it's a standard condition. If they did decide to change the lights we still don't want the light shining up in the sky or into the street. The applicant can probably note whether or not she's changing the lights.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

So isn't that light fixture issue in the standard conditions of approval?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I don't believe it is in the standard conditions of approval. It is in our General Plan and we do that in design review. The project is so old I don't know if it was done in the original conditions.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

In Item 6C, regarding construction activities, it looks like maybe there's something missing from the second sentence. It says, "An encroachment permit shall be required for any..."

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

"...work within the public right-of-way." That is actually in the standard conditions, so we could just strike that.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

Yes, leave the first part about closures of Healdsburg Avenue, and then just strike the second half a sentence. I see that they are trying to provide some open space on the ground floor for the two new units. Is that something that we have the ability to waive for this project, or is that just a requirement that we have to do it?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

It is in our Zoning Ordinance as a zoning standard, so we don't have the right to waive it, but they did find a way to propose it.

Chair Fernandez asked for further Board questions of staff. Seeing none, he opened public comment.

The applicant gave a presentation and was available for questions.

Chair Fernandez asked for Planning Commission questions of the applicant.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

I'm looking at your site plan. Maybe do something on the west side on Murphy in that kind of landscaped area. It's such a small little space it doesn't seem like it's going to be particularly useful or desirable to use as open space, and also because of its proximity to the accessible aisle between the parking spaces—there's kind of a curb there—and I have some concerns that it's such a small space and people just falling off the curb there. That's why I asked to waive that requirement, because I agree, I don't really see a need to have the open space here, but if we have to have it do you think it's possible to put it on the Murphy side of the project rather than right adjacent to that walkway with the curb there? I guess if the answer is no and you have to put it where that curb is, then I would suggest maybe some kind of fencing or barrier along that edge just so people don't fall off of it.

Kathy Austin, Applicant

I get your point, Chair Fritz. I would actually like Associate Planner Jay to address this. He met with the owner out at the site and they looked at different parts of the site and seemed to feel that this proposal was the best. My concern on the Murphy side was that it's kind of a busy or noisy location, and also unfortunately PG&E required that giant vault where it would have been nice to have some open space.

John Jay, Associate Planner

In that side over there there's a pretty steep drainage swale on that side, so it's hard to have some sort of flat area. The area that's marked off in that red perimeter that we noted in the staff report is the most flat general area. I did look at the front to see if there was a way of doing some sort of frontage small space along Healdsburg, but felt that that part of the open space could be too busy and would definitely require some sort of fencing out there to keep people off the street. It would be a good way to engage the street, so my initial response is to start there and then work around to the backside of the building.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

I'm looking at the photographs and I see that the single-family house has a fenced yard area, and in between that fenced yard area in the back of sidewalk is some space with the existing oak tree. Can that be kind of common open space?

Kathy Austin, Applicant

I did suggest under the tree there as one option. I'm not opposed to really any place. It's hard to know how someone might use the space. I think we could put in pavers where we're proposing an open space so there is a flat level space, and you can see in this picture the lattice fence that I was suggesting, and that's what I would put around there. I agree, I know there's a little curb there because of the ramp. I'm thinking that under the tree is an odd spot also, because this wasn't designed to be residential and obviously this is an afterthought. I will point out that the units above have their patios upstairs, and the house has both a front and rear yard, so they won't be impacted if the two residences needed to use some space outdoors. I think my preference is to do the area on the south side, and if you feel a fence is necessary I propose using the same lattice style fence that you see in this picture in front of the house and see how it goes. If it seems like it's not a very inviting space, we can do something under the tree. The thing is we don't want to do any kind of paving under the oak tree; it was conditioned to just be mulch there because of the root zone, so it's not like we could level it out or make an obvious spot to sit under there.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

I'm just wondering from a staff perspective, if we say that they need the open space, can we call that the open space? I think it's nice to have the landscaping outside that unit; you have a couple of trees there. It would be nicer for the unit to have those trees and the landscaping outside the window rather than just a hardscape, so I'm trying to see if there's a way that we can have the common open space under the tree. Do we care how they use it, or if there is a bench, or if it's even that usable? Again, I don't think that the space between the sidewalk and the building is going to be that usable for anyone either, so I'm trying to figure out how do we allow this to go ahead and meet the conditions of the Zoning Code in terms of this open space requirement? There's obviously more than enough space there, and if it's mulched you could still put a blanket down and sit down there, or stand out there and smoke a cigarette. You've got 50 square feet of open space.

Kathy Austin, Applicant

I really appreciate your creativity in addressing the issue, and we're happy to work with you. Yes, I agree landscaping is nice, and that's why I was pushing back against doing it in the front of the building, because I think it really needs the softening of the landscaping between the public sidewalk and the building on Healdsburg Avenue. I think we could still landscape the back, but maybe carve out less. It's 200 square feet, and we're only required to do 100 square feet, so what we could do is the combination of some landscaping, maybe some shrubs between the sidewalk instead of a fence, and a little bit of vertical shrubbery between the sidewalk and the building that could be used as an open space. I'm happy to do whatever; I'm just really hoping you'll approve this.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

And I would actually suggest maybe just the trees, because if you did pavers and the trees, then at least the roots are getting some water, and you could put a chair out there. Shrubs and things are just going to take up more space and make it less usable. But maybe if there's almost a tree and a tree grate kind of thing, at least you'll get a tree and be able to get some shade for that bedroom window and for the people sitting there; it might make it more appealing.

Kathy Austin, Applicant

I'm happy to do that.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

If staff doesn't think that the oak tree area works, I guess.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I can respond about the project history, because I do agree with Kathy that the retention of that tree in front, the large oak tree, was definitely a concern for the City a couple of times, and we would not want to have any additional grading. It's already had roots cut from the foundation, so our preference would be to leave that alone and not have folks being invited to trample over it and potentially compact the roots. I also agree with Kathy that you would not want to do pavers or anything. From a practical standpoint in terms of the Planning Department, we do have a number of requirements in the Zoning Ordinance for open space, that it not be the teeny little strips between parking. Or like the drainage swale on the west side, which is really a drainage swale and a slope, that can't really be your open space. I think there are some viable options, but I think Associate Planner Jay can speak to that better than I, being the project planner.

John Jay, Associate Planner

Maybe a potential other one. I don't know the exact square footage, but on the screen now, just to the right of the traffic cone there seems to be some space there that could potentially be at least one of the 50 square foot open space requirements, and that's just right off that window there, which I don't remember which windows you're changing out.

Kathy Austin, Applicant

That won't be affected; that would be a kitchen window, but it is right next to the trash enclosure there. I still think you're spot on the south side makes the most sense for us, and my clients are supportive of it.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

You could put a little bistro table and a couple of chairs out there and enjoy the sunshine and have a conversation with a friend kind of thing, even though it's a small space.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

What is the distance between the building and the sidewalk?

Kathy Austin, Applicant

I don't have that dimension. I think it's at least 6 feet, which is what a typical front porch would be.

Kathy Oetinger, Commissioner

I guess this is going back to staff again, because we're looking at an existing commercial site and we're changing it to residential. It already comes with some givens. Because it was

commercial it seems that's a good reason to waive any particular requirement or to ease it somehow. If I lived there, I would want to go out that back door and sit on a bench with a planter, and the tree would be nice, but I think it's perfectly reasonable to waive it under this situation since it's conversion of commercial to residential.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

My interpretation of the Zoning Ordinance would be that it is in the development standards for the zone, therefore it would need a variance if you were to waive it, however, with our new Housing Element we will be looking at making some of these standards easier to have that flexibility—let's call it flexible zoning—to make sure it isn't small things like this potentially holding something up. In essence, they have found about 200 square feet of open space, and whether it is used or not it is there and available to them, so we don't need to waive it, and in this case it would require a variance, because we don't want people coming in all the time and saying it's fine, I don't need open space, when it is nice. I've lived in 500 square foot and 640 square foot apartments for a number of years, and it was really nice to have somewhere to go to be outside and put a plant or two.

Kathy Oetinger, Commissioner

I totally agree with that.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

That flexible zoning stuff is potentially reducing the requirement from conditional use permit like this to do 100% residential, to doing it in kind, to being able to do it by right in certain areas, so that's something we'll certainly have input on in the next year to year-and-a-half.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

Regarding the conditions of approval regarding how long the project has taken and the neighbors having endured noise and dust, etc., and where staff therefore recommends the following conditions of approval, are those conditions acceptable and understood, and are there any questions or issues with any of those conditions?

Kathy Austin, Applicant

I had gone back and forth a bit with Kari before she wrote it up and we revised the conditions to allow work on the interior of the space on Saturdays, because initially she just had Monday through Friday and we really want to get this done as quickly as possible, and if we could be painting or putting up drywall inside, it shouldn't disturb neighbors. We were very grateful for that, so we have no problems with any of the conditions.

Chair Fernandez asked for further Planning Commission questions of the applicant. Seeing none, he opened public comment.

Carol Caprira, Healdsburg Avenue

The lighting was an issue for us. There are 14 lights on the corner building and 7 lights on the single-family home that were on 24/7 for the past several weeks. The lighting is very bright and goes across the street into our home where we have to keep our shades drawn in the evening and at night because it is so bright. I'm grateful that the lighting has been turned off since the agenda went out on Thurs with the conditions, and it was such a relief. We would like to make it known that it should be a consideration for the neighborhood. Secondly, certainly switching over to apartments is a good idea, but those folks in those apartments are going to be basically living on the street. We're on a knoll that is set back and still the house shakes; we hear the noise. Anything that could be done to those two apartments to make them soundproof, livable, and enjoyable, should be done. How does Section 8 and affordable housing play into apartments that are going to be for rent? Lastly,

is there a way we can be notified by the Planning Department about upcoming agendas and important information for the entire City, not just for people who live in the immediate neighborhood? The conditions regarding working hours of 9-5 and 7-8 were confusing.

Glen Pinot (phonetic), Healdsburg Avenue

I live across the street from this proposed project. It's ironic that if you're going to convert a commercial building to a residential building, why doesn't the lighting reflect that you're going into a residential situation? It's glaring. My neighbors on Dufranc have commented that this project has been an eyesore and a glaring intrusion as one comes up to Healdsburg Avenue. I would like it put in the conditions that they either remove some of the lighting, or insist that the lighting is shielded so that we're not looking at bare bulb lighting on this project. The lighting in front of the main door is appropriate for a residential, but the way it's lit up it feels like I'm living across the street from a convenience store. I'm really concerned about traffic mitigation. I don't know when the Planning Commission is going to address this, but as you move forward to look at the other project I really insist that Caltrans gets involved, because the traffic mitigation on the corner of Murphy, Dufranc, and Healdsburg Avenue needs great attention, particularly if the Bodega Avenue project goes through and people find a way to skirt the traffic off Bodega.

Chair Fernandez asked for further public comments. Seeing none, he closed public comment.

The Commission discussed the application as follows:

Evert Fernandez, Chair

A good point was brought up: this was a multi-use project initially. If it were entirely residential it would need to meet certain lighting requirements. Does that meet those requirements, and what could be done based on the comments from the neighbors?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

In terms of lighting, we don't have different design guidelines for residential versus commercial. Our design guidelines were adopted in 2011, so certainly when this project initially went through this was part of the review. Those design guidelines talk about minimizing light glare on adjoining properties. It may be a detail that got missed in the plans, but you could discuss it with the applicant and put further conditions. We updated the General Plan in 2016, which I think was after the approval for this project, in which we talked about the exterior lighting and the dark sky policies that the City now has in a more enhanced way, because it's now in our General Plan as well as our design guidelines, and so that's why we put that condition on, knowing it wasn't going to design review but we wanted to make sure that any changes would reflect that, so that's certainly something that the Commission could consider.

Kathy Austin, Applicant

I'm actually appalled that that's the condition out there. I did not specify those lights, so I am immediately going to talk to the owner about changing the fixtures. We need to figure out something that is not causing that issue. I'm a big dark sky compliant person. The lights are facing down, but the fact that you're seeing bare bulbs or that it's on 24/7 is unacceptable. There's no one living there now, so there's no one going in and out and turning switches on and off, and so I need to talk to the owner about setting a timer so that either dims or goes off at a certain time. I also would like to see a change in the fixtures so they're not causing this problem. I'm really sorry; I had no idea that was a problem. We did specify dark sky compliant lighting for this project originally, but not as many fixtures as were put on the building. Once the project was sold from my original client I really had no

control whatsoever on what happened with the building, but we have a good owner now. As you can see, he finished it out, but I definitely want to address the lighting issue and I'm very sorry to the neighbors that this has been a problem.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

Could you make a comment regarding the soundproofing?

Kathy Austin, Applicant

I don't know what the construction is of the neighbors, because sometimes just simple wood frame transmits more noise than a stucco building, and the more mass you have the less of a problem it is. We can double sheetrock inside if it's needed. The windows are designed for commercial use, so I am not sure what the sound mitigation measure is on those windows; I am hoping that it's not an issue. We're also going to have to do some sort of window covering system, shades of some sort. That really won't help the sound though, but I've done projects next to freeways and there are ways of mitigating that, but I don't think it's going to be as much of a concern with the construction method that was in this building as perhaps some of the older wood frame buildings across the street. But yes, it's definitely a commercial location and whoever lives there is going to know what they're getting, and a lot of people like more urban living.

Deborah Burnes, Commissioner

Back to the lighting, thank you so much for being so considerate and concerned about the neighbors regarding that. It's great you want to put the lighting on a timer now, but when tenants move in and they have the capacity to control their own lighting, how can you ensure that this won't become an ongoing issue?

Kathy Austin, Applicant

I think what we need to do is look at changing the fixtures so that they are more contained, that there is no light spill, that light is where it should be. These are not the right choice of fixtures and I think we can handle it with the fixtures.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

Kari, there was a question regarding traffic on Murphy, and I know there's a lot of stuff coming up and I thought you might want to comment.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I've got traffic, the notification question, and the affordable housing question, so I'll start with the traffic. As I said earlier, we did update the General Plan in 2016; that was adopted by City Council and went through the Planning Commission as well. Part of that looks at circulation improvements throughout Sebastopol in order to address anticipated growth, such as this project and the project next door. There are three locations in the City that were identified for potential traffic control, which could either be a stoplight or a roundabout. One of those is Covert Lane and 116, so up by Redwood Credit Union. One is Healdsburg and Murphy, so we do recognize that this is a location that would need traffic control. The other is Fircrest and 116 down on the south side of town. Our traffic consultant looks at triggers and thresholds for what is the traffic being added, and we have a meeting with him as well as with Engineering. Toni Bertolero, the City Engineering Manager, is on this meeting as well, so she's hearing this. Given those larger projects and the project next door we've been discussing about where the thresholds are in terms of when we might need... I could safely say Healdsburg/Murphy doesn't have space for a roundabout, so it's probably a traffic signal. Covert Lane could be either; there is a lot of right-of-way there. Both of those involve working with Caltrans. For this project the traffic anticipated is actually less for the residential than it would have been for the retail, but when the project

next door goes forward there will be a traffic study done to check in and look at those things. We always look at the other projects around that are cumulative and where we're going to break that threshold. We already have the Woodmark Apartment project down on Bodega included in that traffic model. I'll go to the notification next, because this is part of how you might find out about this and other things. The City's notification procedures for a private project like that that comes to the Planning Commission is to do that mailed notice postcard as well as put it in the paper; we use the Press Democrat. Then of course the notice post cards are 600 feet anywhere from the property line. Outside of that, if you go the City's website, which is ci.sebastopol.ca.us, you will see the subscribe button on every page and you can connect and get any number of email lists you want, including City Council agendas, Planning and Design Review Board meetings, Housing and Homelessness, Fire Department Emergency Preparedness, etc. Then we also have a regular e-newsletter that the City sends out. Then you will get those agendas even if you don't get a notice postcard. The last question was about affordable housing and Section 8. Any projects five units or larger in Sebastopol are subject to our inclusionary housing requirements, so this project is. They would have the option of either making one of the units deed restricted affordable—moderate would be the requirements—or they can pay the impact fee in lieu, providing the unit if it is a rental project. It sounds like they will probably go with the fee, but they haven't decided. We have it in the conditions of approval that they need to show compliance with our Inclusionary Housing Ordinance prior to issuance of building permits, so we'll need to know by then how they plan to handle it. It is illegal to discriminate against Section 8 vouchers anywhere in the State of California. If you hear about someone discriminating about that, please contact the Planning Department. We do have contacts like Legal Services of Northern California for enforcement, but we need to know about it. And if it is a deed-restricted unit, then we monitor and we make sure they've got the income levels and all that.

Chair Fernandez asked for further questions or comments.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

I want to weigh in on the light fixtures. I would suggest since the building is now all-residential and not so much commercial to maybe eliminate some of the light fixtures, because there are a lot of them on the project. Maybe just the ones by the doors are all that is necessary; I'm thinking of the residents having lights shining in their own windows.

Kathy Austin, Applicant

I agree 100%. I've been scrolling through my pictures here and am appalled at how many light fixtures there are; it was not part of my design! So capping off some of these, or making something more decorative and getting rid of the light, I would agree. I'm going to have a nice conversation with the owner about it.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

I'm very supportive of 100% housing in this district and I think this makes more sense as a residential than as commercial space; I don't see it being a super useful commercial space, so I'm happy to support this application.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

Is there some way to add the lighting to the conditions of approval?

John Jay, Associate Planner

Changing that on 1A to a lighting scheme proposed by the applicant that staff can review and approve compared to what is currently there: "The light source for all exterior fixtures shall be shielded from adjacent properties and then cut sheets provided to the Design Review Board, or planning application." I think it would be better to address it in that condition than what is currently there.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

And we should still keep that the fixtures should be shielded, because it is an entitlement that runs with the land.

Kathy Austin, Applicant

I'm totally supportive of that.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

Are we agreeing that this is a staff thing or Design Review Board? It seems like something staff should be able to handle and we shouldn't need to go to the DRB for this?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Correct.

Chair Fernandez made a motion to approve a Conditional Use Permit for residential use in a commercial district for 7631 Healdsburg Avenue, with the following changes in the conditions of approval:

- Applicant shall provide a lighting scheme to the Planning Department for their review and approval.
- 7C: strike, "An encroachment permit shall be required for any..."

Vice Chair Fritz seconded the motion.

AYES: Chair Fernandez, Vice Chair Fritz, and Commissioners Burnes and Oetinger

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Kelley

B. GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY FOR THE SUNSET AVENUE/TAFT STREET PEDESTRIAN ENHANCEMENTS PROJECT

Director Svanstrom and Engineering Manager Toni Bertolero presented the staff report.

Chair Fernandez asked for Planning Commission questions of staff.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

One thing that is mentioned is traffic calming striping on Sunset Avenue. What does that consist of?

Toni Bertolero, Engineering Manager

Usually what happens is there will be some edge striping just to channelize cars better so they don't speed around that corner.

Paul Fritz, Vice Chair

I know on the north side of the street it's all red curb. Has allowing parking ever been considered? That would also have a traffic slowing effect; parked cars on both sides of the

street helps to narrow the lanes a bit. Also, there are no sidewalks on the stretch where Sunset turns into Johnson. There's a worn dirt path on one side of Johnson Street, but it would be nice if that were a sidewalk. Is that being considered?

Toni Bertolero, Engineering Manager

Regarding the parking on the north side to slow traffic down, I don't know if that was considered but I could check with the traffic engineer with W-Trans who will be designing this project and see if that has been considered or is a possibility. Of course we'd have to talk with the school district on the project as well with respect to some of these proposed changes. I will get back to Kari and she can pass on the response to the Planning Commission. The second question has to do with sidewalk on Johnson Street, and yes, that was actually identified as part of a Safe Routes to School report, however, that is not part of this particular project, because we didn't have enough money, however, that is something that will be considered in the future CIP.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

Just for public information, could you tell us how Council approves the project and why it comes to us for the conformity for General Plan?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Per State law and the enabling acts for zoning in general, all cities must adopt a general plan with certain elements, including the circulation element in this case is the transportation. The Planning Commission is the designated body for recommendation on any items contained in the Zoning Ordinance to City Council, and obviously you have decision-making on certain items based on that. You are also the body that is responsible for reviewing and recommending the General Plan to City Council. What follows on to that is any project the City is doing also needs to be consistent with the community's General Plan, which is really that guiding document; that all comes to the Planning Commission for review and guidance. You guys are the technical experts when it comes to that and making recommendations to the City Council.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

I have to ask this question, being an Analy High School alumni, is it possible to paint the crosswalks the school color blue instead of the green? What would it take to have that done?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Toni Bertolero and I have discussed doing crosswalks with different kind of painting, because I've seen them where they actually have zebra strips in different countries.

Toni Bertolero, Engineering Manager

That's a good question. With crosswalks we have guidelines and standards that we have to follow, so my understanding is they can only be a certain color and type. I could find out with W-Trans. I have seen stamped concrete, for example, with crosswalks and they look quite nice, so in some cases you can have a little more flexibility, but I'm not particularly sure about this location. Are you talking about all the crosswalks that we're looking at, or just the one on Sunset and Taft?

Evert Fernandez, Chair

Any ones that would be next to the school or students walking away from the school. Eventually the one on High School Road as well, but either color of design. I know we have all these guidelines, but let's do a little school spirit.

Toni Bertolero, Engineering Manager

I'll follow up on that and let you know.

Chair Fernandez opened public comment.

Debra Capria

I live at 6775 Sunset Avenue. I'm still not sure what the calming striping is. Did I read somewhere that there are going to be lights going in somewhere, or was that just the lights on the crosswalk?

Toni Bertolero, Engineering Manager

Yes, there are also streetlights in particular locations.

Debra Capria

And I'm not sure what kind of streetlights those will be and where exactly they will be located. Sunset Avenue is narrow, especially when there are cars parked on the side of the street where I live and then across the street where it's red. Parents park there temporarily to pick up their students and it backs up and is an accident waiting to happen. I don't know if you could make that an open area where cars can park. There's a crosswalk up by Taft and Sunset and there is no other crosswalk until you get all the way around at the end of Morris Street and Highway 12, and if you're thinking about putting another crosswalk in there, maybe at Johnson and Sunset. If you're making an area for wheelchairs, the foliage is so far out on the sidewalk where I live, and the cars drive really fast on that street; there's a straightaway, and then there's a turn on Johnson, and it's another straightway, so something to mitigate all that speeding would be really helpful. The people on our street have thought about speed bumps, but we haven't had enough accidents so we can't do anything. My neighbors and I would like to be updated on what is going to happen. What you're doing to the crosswalk with the lights is a great idea, because kids are looking at their phones and just walking out into the street, and people come around that corner very quickly.

Carol Capria

My sister and I walk and drive on Sunset, Taft, and Johnson a lot, and this is a project that has been way overdue. We've talked with various City staff and departments for years and are really happy to hear crosswalks will be put in on Johnson and Sunset, and Taft and Sunset; I'm sorry to hear you can't afford to do another at the other end. Sunset Avenue is a very narrow street with all the cars parked on the right and no cars parked in the red zone; it is a challenge for two cars to go by each other, and big trucks with their mirrors out. I constantly stop on Taft and Sunset to let cars come. On Taft you've got both sides of the street parking and that's almost more of a challenge because you've got the cars, and it also seems a little bit narrower than Sunset. It's unsafe and has been unsafe for a long time, so I'm really excited to hear about this project and that it is being rectified.

Chair Fernandez asked for further public comment. Seeing none, he closed public comment and asked staff to comment on the public comments.

Toni Bertolero, Engineering Manager

There was a question regarding if there is going to be a crosswalk at Sunset and Johnson, and the answer is yes, we are looking to add a crosswalk, ADA ramps, and a streetlight. There was a lot of interest in what the design looks like and I recommend taking the concept-level design to City Council; that way the design could be posted and the neighborhood would have an opportunity to look at it before we go through final design in case there are some comments. I agree with all the comments about the street being

narrow, and there was a question about traffic calming. I guess you've already got traffic calming in a way because the street is narrow, but there is also congestion, so when they do the traffic calming design on there we'll have the traffic engineer see if there is anything else that could be added to that for purposes of traffic calming.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

We have a resolution for this item, which we're asking the Planning Commission to consider and adopt. This is not for the idea of the project, but that it's consistent with our General Plan. There are several General Plan findings included in that. The main one is that we routinely incorporate sidewalks and enhance pedestrian crossing facilities as part of new street construction, or in this case enhancements to existing streets, and it certainly is aligned with both the City and the General Plan's focus on pedestrian safety and a walkable community.

Vice Chair Fritz made a motion to approve the resolution of General Plan conformance for the Sunset Avenue/Taft Street Pedestrian Enhancements Project.

Commissioner Oetinger seconded the motion.

AYES: Chair Fernandez, Vice Chair Fritz, and Commissioners Burnes and Oetinger
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Kelley

6. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

- A.** Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS) Quarterly Informational Report (as required by Use Permit)

Director Svanstrom presented the staff report.

Gregory Fearon of Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS) gave a presentation and was available for questions.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

Are you saying that the site that you're on now you can continue to operate indefinitely, or it for a period of time until it's decided?

Gregory Fearon, Sonoma Applied Villages

Not perpetual. They don't give you any more than a year. The \$780,000 that Measure O is giving is July 1st of this year to June 30th or next year. ARPA has a little more of a time frame; it's saying four or five months ago to December 2024. So it's the biggest, widest, but it's \$2 million. There are other sources coming online through the legislature, and the amount of money that the COC is playing with now is twice as big as they've ever had. We used to be the ones pounding on the door and saying let us in, now I think we're being let in. Whether that means we'll be always in is dependent on whether we do a good job.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

Let's say you do a good job and you continue to get funding, do you have a limit as to how long you and the developers can be (inaudible)?

Gregory Fearon, Sonoma Applied Villages

(Inaudible) has been in since 2005. The sources of low-income housing and what we are doing is moving into the low-income housing area from the shelter temporary housing if HUD recognizes—and we believe it to be possible in the next year or two—that a trailer on a foundation connected to a sewer is a house. You’ve got Park Village over here trying to get that decision right now. Then what we are doing, the way we build it will be eligible for Section 8, for permanent housing for the CDC, just like Burbank housing, and if we can break into that territory and be considered the traditional, then we’ll be a little more certain. In the arena of temporary housing, shelter, transitional, we’re becoming pretty traditional and that isn’t going to go away. But even if we build hundreds or thousands of other cheaper housing, Burbank-like type stuff, one-bedroom, studios, or get them in permanent housing, it won’t solve the problem. We’re always going to have a huge amount of people who are going to be in transition, and if the economy gets bad we’ll have even more, so we may be one foot in both worlds: building things that look very much like permanent housing and taking people from the street to there.

Kathy Oetinger, Commissioner

The reason we wanted you to come back and report was because we wanted to know what the plans were for actually vacating you site and putting it a more permanent place. Is there another site that you’re looking at?

Gregory Fearon, Sonoma Applied Villages

We’re planning on staying where we’re at and building one twice as big. But if we have to leave because we don’t have money coming to operate and we have to close, and Jack and everybody else wants to start doing a permanent housing thing, we will transition those people somewhere. We’re not abandoning people. We may have to abandon a site if we don’t get enough money to do that site. Building a bigger one in Santa Rosa makes us capable of having another place for people to move to. We work very closely with West County Community Services, and so we all know who each other’s clients are and where they’re moving. We’ve had people go from our place to theirs, so if our purpose is to help someone from the street get to someplace that they can stay for some period of time, it’s a ladder with rungs and we’re building the rungs. I kept telling people you can have all the 80-90% of AMI Burbank-built houses in the world, but unless you get people capable of being that tenant, of solving the problems they need to solve, to have a property manager take a risk, having their own lives together enough to make the leap into a permanent rental home you’ve got to provide some rungs to get them there, and we’re providing those rungs. There are so many barriers to getting people to that point and we’re trying to help reduce them.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

West County Community Services operates Park Village, which is a mobile home park. They have 1-10 units that are actually owned by West County Community Services as the long-term tenants have vacated; usually their units are in a condition that they just need to be removed. The fixed mobile homes also are susceptible to flood damage; in 2019 a number of units were damaged. WCCS is now doing fifth wheels that can be towed out, and they have a new tiny home, also on wheels so that it can be evacuated in case of a flood. Also the City wrote and received a grant to install two pads with RV hookups. I think what Gregory is alluding to is that WCCS is that next step up where it’s not the safe parking kind of a site, it is village, Park Village, and it has mostly long-term tenants, is owned by the City, and operates in a mobile home park zone and operates as such. There is a case manager onsite that meets with folks in terms of job training, finding housing, those types of things. Those folks might transition from the SAVS to there, and then from there an RV potentially to another site, or into affordable housing that’s more permanent elsewhere, so

it's that continuing of care. WCCS also does rapid rehousing, which is really people who are in immediate danger of being evicted; I think Sonoma County Legal Aid talked about that. They actually receive funding for assisting people as part of some of the funding that they get from that continuing of care to prevent that person from becoming homeless in the first place.

Gregory Fearon, Sonoma Applied Villages

There are 500 units. Dave Kiff is the Homeless Services Director for the County and is pulling State money into to buy like Sebastopol and... But there are others being just plain built, and those units are dedicated in many of the senses to the lowest income, homeless, and mentally ill clients. I have one down the street from where I live in Santa Rosa called Sage Commons that had a \$10 million allocation from the State and required that it go for the hardest to house homeless mentally ill. It's a perfect place for some of the clients coming out of our place. It's permanent, it's Section 8 funded, it's operational, it doesn't have to worry about going back to the CDC to get its money every month, because it's like every apartment complex you know: it's got a source of money that pays the rent of the people there at a price that will pay the loans that it took to build it. If we don't have to charge high rents we could put the money into support services our clients need in order to get their lives together.

Chair Fernandez opened public comment. Seeing none, he closed public comment.

7. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

A. Libby Park Fencing Subcommittee assignment

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

The subcommittee toured Libby Park and looked at the fencing and discussed removing it. Community members have strongly advocated for some sort of fencing because of the number of children using the park. The Rotary Club has volunteered to construct the fence and the subcommittee would need to come up with a design in the next few months. Director Svanstrom requested a couple Planning Commission members work with her and the Public Works Superintendent to help on that effort. Materials would need to be purchased by June 30th.

Chair Fernandez and Chair Burnes volunteered to work with the Libby Park Fencing Subcommittee on the fence design.

The Commission asked questions of Director Svanstrom.

8. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Svanstrom provided updates.

The Commission asked questions of Director Svanstrom.

9. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Fernandez adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 9, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.