CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

Meeting Date: 10/4/2021
Item Number: 4a
Time Estimate: 45 Minutes

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF A MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING 280 RESIDENTIAL UNITS, ACCESSORY USES, & 12,500 SF OF COMMERCIAL/OFFICE WITH ASSOCIATED EXCEPTIONS, GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT, & REZONE.

PROJECT ADDRESS: 600 Tank Farm

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FILE NUMBER: ARCH-0407-2021

FROM: Shawna Scott, Senior Planner

APPLICANT: Covelop, Inc.

REPRESENTATIVE: Stephen Peck

RECOMMENDATION

Review the proposed project in terms of its consistency with the Airport Area Specific Plan Design Guidelines, Community Design Guidelines, and provide comments and recommendations to the Planning Commission.

1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

The proposed project is a 280-unit mixed use project on an 11.7-acre site generally north of Tank Farm Road and west of Acacia Creek. Development would occur within 10.9 acres of the site, with the remainder for public rights-of-way. The project entitlements would change the existing land use designation and zoning from Business Park to Service Commercial with the Specific Plan overlay (C-S-SP), which would allow a mixed-use project providing up to 280 residential units and up to 12,500 square feet of commercial-service/office uses defined in Airport Area Specific Plan (AASP) Table 4.3. The project also includes a 2,250-square foot clubhouse building with a 2,800-square foot patio area. In addition, various offsite transportation improvements are not part of the development itself, but are required in order to facilitate the project, and are therefore also evaluated in the Project Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

The proposed project involves zoning-level entitlements: a General Plan Map Amendment, a rezone of the property, a Specific Plan Amendment to the AASP, Minor Subdivision and Major Development Review. Approval of these entitlements would allow a final Development Plan (consistent with the requirements of the granted entitlements), including grading permits, improvement plans and building permits to be handled by the City as ministerial approvals.

The project is requesting the following exceptions (as further described in the Project Description (Attachment A):

- Parking reduction (6.8% less than required)
- Ground floor residential along Santa Fe Road
- Encroachment of Buildings 14 & 21 into the 35-foot creek/riparian setback
- No additional third floor creek setback

General Location: Generally north of Tank Farm Road and west of Acacia Creek.

Zoning and General Plan: Currently Business Park (BP) and Open Space (OS) within the Airport Area Specific Plan; proposed Commercial Service (C-S-SP) and Conservation Open Space (C/OS-SP) within the Airport Area Specific Plan

Surrounding Uses:
East: Planned residential at 650 Tank Farm Road across Acacia Creek (designated C/OS and C-S-SP)
West: Undeveloped; in County jurisdiction (designated Commercial Service and Industrial)
North: Damon-Garcia Sports Fields (designated PF)
South: Undeveloped land across Tank Farm Road in County jurisdiction (designated Recreation)

Figure 1: 600 Tank Farm Road Project Site

2.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

Architecture: see discussion below
Design Details: see discussion below
Materials: various; see discussion below
Colors: various; see discussion below)

The project site would be developed at a density of 23.69 units per acre, with shared public and private open spaces, common yards, and a recreation center with a community building. The proposed residential development would include a mix of one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom units. Balconies and outdoor activity areas would be located on the north and east faces of the buildings to minimize exposure to vehicle noise from Tank Farm Road and aircraft flyovers from the San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport located south of the project site. The proposed zoning would allow for up to 12,500 square feet of commercial-service/office space.

There would be a total of 26 buildings, consisting of six building types. As shown in Figure 2, there are four residential building types proposed (shown as “Type A,” “Type B,” “Type “, and “Type D”), and two mixed use building types (“Type E” and “Type F”). All buildings would be of similar architectural style.

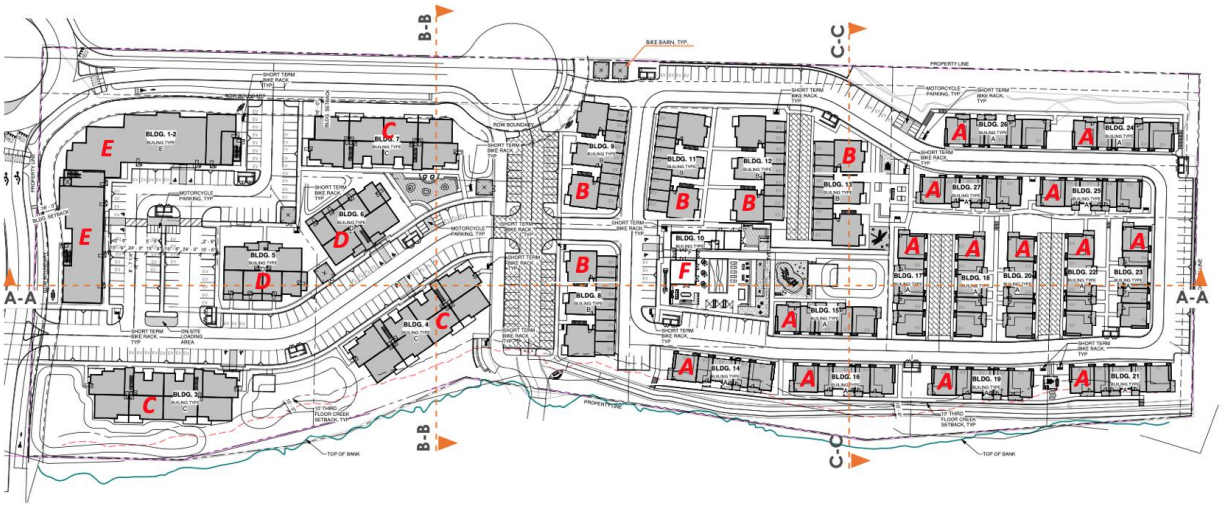

Figure 2: Architectural Site Plan

Examples of each of these building types and architecture are included as attachments to this agenda report (Attachment B). Table 1 below summarizes the various unit types by size and distribution within the project site.

Table 1: Project Characteristics

Unit Type	Size (sf)	Units	Residential Area (sf)	Non-Residential Area (sf)	Acres (net)	Units/Acre
Townhomes and Cluster Units	750-1,450	140	154,000	n/a	6.5	21
Stacked Flats	600-925	100	85,700	n/a	2.9	34
Mixed Use (studio and 1-bed)	450-625	40	21,500	12,500	1.5	26
Total	**450-1,450**	**280**	**261,200**	**12,500**	**10.9**	**25.7**

sf = square feet

The project plan set (Attachment B) shows build sections and elevations for each of the building types. The sections are found on Sheets A8 and A9, while the elevations are on Sheets A16, A18, A20, A22, A25, A26 and A28. Colors and materials are included on Sheets A29 through A32. In general, buildings are three stories, with heights up to 36 feet for occupied areas, and as much as 46 feet if unoccupied area is included.

Project architecture is inspired by the strong connection to the historic agrarian influences of the southern San Luis Valley between South Hills open space and Islay Hill. The architecture also takes cues from nearby commercial uses along Tank Farm Road in its mixed use concept, transitioning to more traditional residential forms as the project progresses deeper into the site. The architecture opens to a central gathering green, intended to maximize the views to the adjacent foothills and open space, and captures human interaction areas along Acacia Creek.

Project buildings include a variety of materials and colors. Building Types A through D include asphalt shingle or metal roofing, with board and batten siding in a color palette of grays, black and white. The mixed use building (Building E) also includes brick veneer and precast concrete in addition to the other elements included in the strictly residential buildings. The Clubhouse (Building F) expands on that further with the inclusion of wood plank siding.

Figure 3 shows a more detailed overall site plan that identifies a variety of design elements, including bicycle and pedestrian access and parking features, outdoor areas, public art and entry monument locations, and creek setbacks. This figure is also included as Sheet A33. A detailed site plan for the clubhouse is shown as Sheet A34.

Figure 3: Proposed Site Plan

Additional information about other proposed design elements, including site furnishing, landscaping, lighting, signage, parking area treatments, walls and fences may be found on Sheets A35 to A40.

3.0 PREVIOUS REVIEW

On April 21, 2020, the City Council approved the initiation of the project and authorized the issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project. The Council, with a vote of 5:0, provided direction to the applicant and staff to work toward a Development Agreement to accomplish the needed planning area infrastructure outlined in the AASP and maximize housing opportunities for those individuals in geographic areas included in the City's annual jobs-housing balance analysis (Attachment C, Council Initiation 4.21.20).

On July 16, 2020, the Active Transportation Committee (ATC) reviewed the conceptual design of the project and by consensus provided 21 directional items regarding the proposed bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and safety, as well as consistency with the latest updates to the City's Active Transportation Plan for the applicant to incorporate into the project design and associated materials (Attachment D, ATC Report and Comments 7.16.20).

On August 17, 2020, the Architectural Review Commission (ARC) reviewed the conceptual design of the project and by consensus provided nine directional items regarding building orientation in relation to site access and private/common open space areas, and provided comments on the architectural style of the project in terms of compatibility between the different uses for the applicant to incorporate into the project design and associated materials (Attachment E, ARC Report and Minutes 8.17.20).

On September 23, 2020, the Planning Commission (PC) reviewed the conceptual design of the project and by consensus provided seven directional items regarding building orientation in relation to Tank Farm Road, mixed-use development compatibility, and on-site and off-site pedestrian and bicycle circulation for the applicant to incorporate into the project design and associated materials (Attachment F, PC Report and Minutes 9.23.20).

The applicant has provided responses to each of the conceptual review comments as provided in the Attachment G (Conceptual Review Response Matrix).

4.0 FOCUS OF REVIEW

The Architectural Review Commission's (ARC's) role is to review the proposed project in terms of consistency with the AASP Design Guidelines and Community Design Guidelines (CDG) and applicable City Standards and 2) provide comments and recommendations to the Planning Commission concerning the proposed project design, focusing on building architecture and layout. The applicant has provided a set of project plans (Attachment A), some of the key sheets of which are referenced in Section 2.0 of this report.

Community Design Guidelines: https://www.slocity.org/home/showdocument?id=2104
The project is also located with the Airport Area Specific Plan, and thus subject to direction within that document. A link to that document may be found here:

Airport Area Specific Plan:
https://www.slocity.org/home/showpublisheddocument/4294/637493456364330000

5.0 COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES/DISCUSSION ITEMS

In a general sense, design related direction for the project is found in the Community Design Guidelines (CDG). Additional direction is also provided in the Airport Area Specific Plan (AASP), mostly in terms of general goals and policies, and in certain cases, within the text of the document.

The applicant has provided a response to each AASP design review standard applicable to the project as provided in Attachment H (AASP Conformity Matrix). In their review, staff has determined that the project is in general conformance with both the CDG and AASP. Relevant portions of each document are discussed below in the context of the proposed project.

Key Sections	Discussion Items
Community Design Guidelines	
§ Section 3.1: Commercial Project Design Guidelines	The mixed use buildings closest to Tank Farm Road would include ground floor commercial uses, and thus present as commercial buildings from the street level. This section of the CDG includes several key principles related to integrating project scale, site planning, appropriate architectural elements, parking/building orientation, and pedestrian orientation. More specifically related to architectural review, the section also calls for the use of a variety of "honest" materials, building articulation, and connectivity to pedestrian areas. Sheet A10 shows interior pedestrian circulation, while Sheets A16 through A34 illustrate architectural elevations, colors and materials. While the project seems generally responsive to these issues, and consistent with the intent of these principles, the ARC could discuss the following issues: 1) are the buildings sufficiently functional and attractive for residents of the buildings?; 2) is the mixed use building sufficiently integrated into the rest of the development to allow for easy pedestrian connection, or does the residential component of the mixed use building appear too isolated?; and 3) does the shared parking concept "work" for project residents?
§ Section 5.2: Subdivision Design and General Residential Design Principles	This section of the CDG includes several key principles related to integrating open space into the design, project scale, and pedestrian orientation. More specifically related to architectural review, the section also calls for durable and low maintenance finishes, the use of a variety of materials, building articulation, and garage orientation. Sheet A10 shows interior pedestrian circulation, while Sheets A16 through A34 illustrate architectural elevations, colors and materials. While the project seems generally responsive to these issues, and consistent with the intent of these principles, the ARC could discuss the following issues: 1) Does the design provide sufficient orientation toward planned or natural open space amenities?; 2) Is the parking design functional, efficient and attractive?; and 3) does the design allow for pedestrians to easily move on and off the site?

§ Section 5.4: Multi-Family and Clustered Housing Design	Among the principles articulated in this section of the CDG, the following includes: clustering units with direct walk-up access; providing garages as the preferred method of onsite parking; consistency with architectural styles in the vicinity, featuring porches, building articulation, and other features to enhance architectural interest; and stairway and building access design. The project is responsive to issues related to parking, as most units include a garage, which reduces the visual and functional impacts that can occur with large parking lots in multi-family developments. In terms of architecture, this section encourages substantial roof and façade articulation, which are included in the project as proposed. With regard to scale, the project includes three-story structures that are tightly clustered, separated by interior roadways, paseos, courtyards and small areas of open space. The project density has the potential to create some inevitable shading on lower stories because there are not large areas of separation between the buildings. Some of the larger units include balconies and porches, and all units have some sort of private open space area, which are consistent with the intent of the CDG's encouragement of these features. The different building types would include 12 to 24 units in each building, which is more massive than envisioned in the CDG Section 5.4.A.2., which suggests that buildings outside the downtown area should generally have no more than 6 units in each. As a discussion item, is the proposed density of housing within the buildings an appropriate design because other city goals with respect to providing sufficient housing are more achievable with such a design? With respect to parking design, the CDG encourages garages, but when they are not provided, recommends dispersed parking courts. While garages and parking courts are shown on northern side of the site associated with Building types A and B, onsite parking for Building types C and D is provided in a somewhat visually prominent longer linear fashion along major project entrance roadways rather than with dispersed parking courts. As a discussion item, is the proposed parking design appropriate, or should more covered parking be required?
Airport Area Specific Plan	
Section 5.0 *Community Design*	This section of the AASP encourages projects that promote openness, connectivity, transition, ruralness and diversity. Development that allows for views or does not block views is encouraged. Projects that provide pedestrian connectivity to other parts of the City, including creeks and open space, are encouraged. As designed, there would be direct pedestrian

	access to areas long Acacia Creek, with the Damon Garcia Sports Fields nearby. Landscaping would focus on native and drought tolerant species, promoting a transition from the urban to natural rural environment. The AASP also calls for "adjacent buildings to be of compatible styles, or separated sufficiently to allow each style to be appreciated independently of the other." The development includes a compatible architectural theme throughout, and is separated from nearby development either by Tank Farm Road or Acacia Creek. See Sheets A3, A10, A33, and A35 through A40. As a discussion item, does the project provide sufficient pedestrian orientation or connectivity to open space areas?
Goal 5.1. Streetscape edge and pedestrian activity	This goal supports pedestrian activity through various design elements. As designed, the project is walkable internally with various pathways, and includes onsite amenities such as the central clubhouse and nearby creek. It also has connectivity to existing or planned bikeways offsite. See Sheets A10, A33, and A34. As a discussion item, does the project appropriately orient to the two adjacent major streets, including Tank Farm Road and Santa Fe Road, such that the primary entrance from Santa Fe Road is obvious and easy to read?
Goal 5.2. Integrate new development with the open space framework	The project promotes views of nearby hillsides and open areas, and includes connectivity elements as described above. See Sheets A6, A11-A14, and A33. See previous discussion items that relate to open space and pedestrian connectivity.
Goal 5.3. Attractive outdoor pedestrian use areas adjacent to buildings	See the previous discussion.
Goal 5.4. Parking—safe, attractive, visually subordinate to development	Parking is designed to be broken into smaller lots distributed throughout the development, appropriately landscaped, appropriate in scale for the development, and visually unobtrusive. See Sheets A6, A10 and A33. See previous discussion items that relate to parking design.
Goals 5.5 and 5.6. Outdoor storage that are visually screened and unobtrusive	The project includes visually attractive and screened storage and trash enclosures. See Sheets A36, A38 and A38. As a discussion item, does the project provide for sufficiently unobtrusive trash and storage areas?
Goal 5.7. Maintain unobstructed views of scenic features from major roadways	The project promotes views of nearby hillsides and open areas, and includes connectivity elements as described above. See Sheets A6, A11-A14, and A33. As a discussion item: is the visual analysis provided sufficient to determine whether proposed development is sufficiently

	set back from roadways to maintain hillside views from public roadways?

6.0 PROJECT STATISTICS

Site Details	Proposed	Allowed/Required*
Density	256.88	260.16
Setbacks	16 feet between buildings and property lines along streets 10 feet between parking lots and property lines along streets 5 feet between parking lots and property lines along adjacent parcels	Per AASP Table 4-7: 16 feet between buildings and property lines along streets 10 feet between parking lots and property lines along streets 5 feet between parking lots and property lines along adjacent parcels
Creek Setback Upper Story Step Backs	**27 feet** **0 feet**	35 feet 10 feet
Maximum Height of Structures	36 feet (occupied); 46 feet (unoccupied)	36 feet (occupied); 46 feet (unoccupied)
Floor Area Ratio	0.59	0.6
Max Lot Coverage	65.6%	90%
Affordable Housing	11 units	3 units
Public Art	On-site	On-site or In-Lieu fee
Vehicle and Bicycle Parking		
Number of Vehicle Spaces EV Spaces	435 (6.8% requested reduction) 48 (EV ready) 117 (EV capable)	467 48 (EV ready) 117 (EV capable)
Bicycle Spaces Short-term Long-term	 63 563	 63 563
Motorcycle Parking	23	23
Environmental Status	A Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) has been prepared to analyze the effects of the project, and is available for review on the City's website at: http://www.slocity.org/government/department-directory/community-development/documents-online/environmental-review-documents.	

**2019 Zoning Regulations; Airport Area Specific Plan (updated October 2020)*

7.0 NEXT STEPS

The project is scheduled for review by the Tree Committee on September 27, 2021, which will provide a recommendation along with the ARC to be reviewed by the PC before being considered by the City Council.

8.0 ACTION ALTERNATIVES

8.1 Recommend approval of the project. An action recommending approval of the application based on consistency with the Airport Area Specific Plan Design Guidelines and Community Design Guidelines will be forwarded to the Planning Commission, so they can make appropriate recommendations to City Council for final action. This action may include recommendations for conditions to address consistency with the Community Design Guidelines and Airport Area Specific Plan.

8.2 Continue the project to a hearing date certain, or uncertain. An action continuing the application should include direction to the applicant and staff on pertinent issues.

8.3 Recommend denial the project. An action recommending denial of the application should include findings that cite the basis for denial and should reference inconsistency with the General Plan, Airport Area Specific Plan, Community Design Guidelines, Zoning Regulations or other policy documents.

9.0 ATTACHMENTS

A – Project Description
B – Project Plans
C – Council Initiation 4.21.20
D – ATC Report and Comments 7.16.20
E – ARC Report and Minutes 8.17.20
F – PC Report and Minutes 9.23.20
G – Conceptual Review Response Matrix
H – AASP Conformity Matrix
J – Final EIR (link at: http://www.slocity.org/government/department-directory/community-development/documents- online/environmental-review-documents)