



Planning Commission Staff Report

June 14, 2006 ~~April 26, 2006~~
Item 6.c. ~~Item 6.d.~~

SUBJECT: PUD-51

**APPLICANT/
PROPERTY OWNER:** Generations Healthcare Inc.

PURPOSE: Application for PUD rezoning of a 0.49-acre open area from P (Public and Institutional) District to PUD-MDR (Planned Unit Development – Medium Density Residential) District and for development plan approval for a two-lot single-family residential project.

ZONING: The subject property is currently zoned P (Public and Institutional) District.

LOCATION: 300 Neal Street

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Exhibit A:
 - Site Plan, Floor Plans, Elevations
 - Grading Plan, Landscaping Plan
 - Green Building Check List
 - Tree Report
 - Color/Material Board
2. Exhibit B - Recommended Conditions of Approval
3. Exhibit C - Draft Negative Declaration/Initial Study
4. Exhibit D – Neighborhood Meeting Minutes
5. Exhibit E – Comments from Neighbors
6. Exhibit F – Uses allowed in the P District
7. Location Map

I. BACKGROUND

Generations Healthcare Inc. has submitted a Planned Unit Development application for a minor land division separating the southwestern 0.49-acre portion of the existing 3.54-acre parcel for to construct two single-family residences fronting Neal Street. The Planning Commission reviewed the preliminary application as a workshop item on January 25, 2006, and provided comments and directions on the proposal.

The site is currently occupied by an existing convalescent care facility since 1974. The existing approximately 145-foot front yard setback from Neal Street was created so that all visitors would drive on-site to possibly avoid using on-street parking. The area for the proposed development was designed with a large turf area with some shrubbery at the initial construction of the convalescent care facility, and it has been kept as a landscape area in front of the facility.

During the preliminary review process, the applicant has indicated that the proposed development area has not been utilized by the facility or its residents. It has become a potential liability since it is outside the management's general supervision area. This underutilized lot area is perceived by the neighborhood as "park like" or "open space" and it thus is forgetting at times it is a private property. Residents and visitors are rarely seen out in the front sitting area. The facility management is currently remodeling the existing courtyards within the facility so that these courtyards would be more available to the residents and be frequently used. Thus, the applicant does not see the need of maintaining an "outside" lawn area that is not used often but accruing maintenance costs and resulting in liability concerns.

PUD rezoning and development plan applications are subject to review by the Planning Commission and final approval by the City Council. If the rezoning and development plan are approved, the applicants must next apply for a minor subdivision (parcel map) to allow the lot to be subdivided in accordance with the development plan. Minor subdivisions are reviewed and approved by the City's Staff Review Board.

II. SITE DESCRIPTION

Generations Healthcare facility is located on the east side of Neal Street, between Second and Entrada Drive. It occupies an approximately 3.5-acre parcel. The existing facility is located approximately 150 feet from Neal Street, and is secured by an existing redwood fence surrounding the courtyard areas. A paved driveway on the northwest side of the property provides access to the facility. A total of 78 parking spaces are available on site.

The site has a downhill slope from Neal Street toward the east (the existing facility) and the northeast. The slope in the front portion of the site is very gentle. It turns into a 2:1 slope and ending before the existing redwood fence. There is an approximately 10-foot elevation difference the front and the rear of the site. A healthy heritage-sized Valley oak is located near the front property line. A six-foot wide sanitary sewer easement, a gas main, and a generator are located just inside the existing fence.

The area in the front of the convalescent facility beyond the existing redwood fence is landscaped with sod and a few trees. A meandering walkway connects the driveway to a small sitting area. Access to the outside sitting area is via the existing walkway next to the facility's main entrance.

III. PROPOSED PROJECT

The applicant proposes to separate a 0.49-acre portion of the existing 3.54-acre parcel consisting of the front lawn area from the convalescent facility, and to change the zoning designation from Public & Institutional district to Planned Unit Development Medium Density Residential District for the construction of two single-family residences fronting Neal Street. The proposed development standards, in terms of setbacks, building heights, and floor area ratio (FAR), would follow those required for the R-1-10,000 zoning district.

The architectural style of the residences reflects many of the design criteria specified in the Downtown Design Guidelines although the site is not within the Downtown Specific Plan area. The applicants are proposing to create two lots and construct a new single-family home on each lot.

Lot A, the relatively larger lot would measure approximately 11,082 sq. ft. and would be located adjacent to the existing driveway to the convalescent hospital. A 3,696 sq. ft., two-story house would be located on this lot. The Lot A house would be set back a minimum of 17 ft. from the front (Neal Street) property line, 10 ft. from the side property lines, 40 ft. from the rear property line. The Lot A floor area ratio (FAR) would be 37.4%. Unit A would be 33.5-feet tall, measured from grade to the roof ridge.

Lot B would measure approximately 10,270 sq. ft. and would be located to the southeast of Lot A, next to the Heritage Lane development. A 3,468 sq. ft., two-story house would be located on this lot. The Lot B house would be set back a minimum of 20 ft. from the front (Neal Street) property line, 10 ft. from the side property lines, and 31 ft. from the rear property line. The Lot B floor area ratio (FAR) would be 36.5%. Unit B would be 32-feet tall. Both units would have

an attached garage. Both houses would have a covered front porch located at 12 ft. from the front property line. The applicant proposes a garage credit of 400 sq. ft. in calculation of FAR. Please refer to the following table:

	Parcel A	Parcel B
Lot Size	11,082 square feet	10,270 square feet
Floor Area	3,696 square feet	3,468 square feet
Garage Size	848 square feet (400 sq.ft. credit)	685 square feet (400 sq.ft. credit)
Building Height	35 feet to the top of the roof	35 feet to the top of the roof.
FAR	40%	40%

Although not situated within the Downtown area, the proposed residences would use traditional architectural design elements that are typical of Downtown Pleasanton: horizontal siding, covered porches, gable roofs with dormers, wood corbels at the roof eaves, single-hung divided light windows, wood window and door trim, barn-looking garage doors, and wood rail at the front porches. Hardiplank lap siding would be used on both of the homes. In addition, Unit A would utilize cultured stone veneer at the base of the front porch posts. The upper portion of the posts would be routed square post attached to the wood trim at the top of the porch. Unit B would have turned post at the front porch. Unit A would have tan color tone and Unit B would have a grey color tone. Both units would have a composition shingle roof.

A Green Building Checklist has been prepared by the applicant. The checklist shows that the proposed development would meet the Green Building Ordinance (Chapter 17.50).

Both lots would contain a two-car attached garage offset from the Neal Street. The driveway on Lot A meanders around the existing Valley oak, and the driveway on Lot B is a straight-in driveway. Pavers would be utilized for the driveway to achieve more pervious surface.

The existing wood fence along the proposed rear yard property lines separating the proposed homes from the existing convalescent facility is in a deteriorated condition. The fence will be replaced as part of the proposed development. Additionally, the existing bench and the walkway connecting the driveway to the bench would be removed as they would be located on Lot A. A new walkway is proposed between the existing driveway to the convalescent facility and the proposed Lot A. A landscaped berm would be constructed to provide buffer between the walkway/driveway and the proposed private residence.

New six-foot tall, solid wood fences would be located between the proposed lots outside the front yard setback area.

IV. DISCUSSION

General Plan Compliance

The General Plan Land Use designation for the parcel is Medium Density Residential (MDR) with a density range of 2 to 8 dwelling units per acre. The two proposed units on the approximately 0.49-acre area equal a density of four dwelling units per acre and meets the General Plan's midpoint density of five dwelling units per acre.

The subject site is located in close proximity to Downtown Pleasanton. Although not subject to the Downtown Design Guidelines, the design of the house reflects City objectives for accomplishing the goals which have been created for the Downtown. The proposed development maintains the established character of Pleasanton's unique historical Downtown.

PUD Rezoning

The current zoning of the site is Public and Institution District, which conditionally permits uses such as airports, animal shelters, hospitals, convalescent hospital, public buildings and grounds, public and private schools, churches, and any other public or quasi-public use determined appropriate by the Commission. It does not include residential uses.

State Law requires that the zoning district conform to the General Plan land use designation. The applicant indicated the organization has no plans to expand the facility, but rather to maintain and upgrade the existing operation. For the best use of the site, the applicant has requested PUD rezoning and development plan approval in order to allow the subject site to be subdivided and developed as residential lots. The proposed new zoning would be PUD-MDR to conform to the proposed density and the General Plan land use designations of Medium Density Residential.

Permitted and conditionally permitted uses would follow the City's R-1 (Single-Family) Zoning District. Site development standards (i.e., maximum house size, height limits, setbacks, etc.) have been proposed for any future development of the subject parcels, such as additions and accessory structures.

Site Plan

A PUD development plan allows flexibility in applying Municipal Code standards in order to achieve a better overall plan for the site and the area. The current site plan was developed through several discussions with staff and the applicants. Staff worked with the applicants to position the homes and garages to provide adequate setbacks from the property lines, street

frontages, and neighboring homes while maximizing the usability of the private yard areas. Staff believes that the current plan meets these objectives and is appropriate.

The applicant has provided a table indicating the proposed site development standards (i.e., maximum house size, minimum parcel size, height limits, setbacks, etc.) for the two lots. The proposed development standards are in general follow those of the R-1-10,000 zoning district, however, not all of them. Specifically, the proposed the proposed front yard setback for both lots is shallower than that what is required for the straight R-1-10,000 district.

The following table shows the proposed development standards for the houses:

	Lot A	Lot B
Main Structure		
Lot Size:	11,082 sq.ft.	10,270 sq.ft.
Setbacks: Front:	17 ft. to the building;	20 ft. to the building;
	12 to the porch	12 ft. to the porch
Sides:	10 ft. min. on each side	10 ft. minimum on each side
Rear:	40 ft.	30 ft.
FAR:	40%	40%
Height:	35 ft.	35 ft.
Accessory Structure		
Setback: Side:	10 ft. from the side abuts the driveway to the convalescent facility;	5 ft.
	5 ft. from the interior side	
Rear:	10 ft.	10 ft.
Height:	15 ft.	15 ft.

The Pleasanton Municipal Code Section 18.84.140 Height Limits – Measurement states:

“The height of a structure shall be measured vertically from the average elevation of the natural grade of the ground covered by the structure to the highest point of the structure or to the coping of a flat roof, to the deck line of a mansard roof, or to the mean height between eaves and ridges for a hip, gable, or gambrel roof. The height of a fence or a wall used as a fence shall be measured from the higher finished grade adjoining the fence or wall. The average height of a wall of a structure shall be deemed the height of the wall.”

If measured according to the stated height measurement, the proposed buildings are

approximately 27 feet in height, thus meeting the maximum height limit of 30 feet of the R-1-10,000 zoning district.

Staff believes that the proposed site plan is acceptable in terms of floor area ratios and the size and shape of the lots. The proposed floor areas are below the typical 40% limit in the City's residential zoning districts. It would allow for flexibility should the future home owners choose to close the deck area in the rear and/or construct a shade structure in the rear yard. Additionally, staff believes that proposed FAR is comparable to the Heritage Lane PUD development, where the existing average FAR is 32.32% and the highest FAR is 37.2%.

The proposed homes would have a smaller front yard setback than what is required by the R-1-10,000 district (23 feet is required). The location considers the topography of site and not having significant grading to the rear portion of the lot to accommodate the footprint of the building. In addition, existing homes on Neal Street in or near the Downtown area have smaller front yard than what is required by the zoning district. A recently approved single-family PUD project at the corner of Fair Street and Division Street has reduced front yard. Thus, a traffic study was not conducted and the proposed front yard is acceptable.

Traffic and Circulation

The traffic to and from the proposed lots would be from Neal Street. The Pleasanton General Plan requires that intersections meet a LOS "D" or better to meet traffic circulation and safety needs. The proposed development of two single family homes will generate a negligible increase, which would not significantly affect traffic volumes or levels of service on adjacent streets. Therefore, no traffic mitigations are required for the subject project.

Architecture/Design

Staff believes that the proposed architectural features and materials of the homes are attractive, would be compatible with the architectural styles of the surrounding properties, and are appropriate for this near Downtown site. The design has also reflected the Planning Commission's comment of building mass and bulk on Lot A. Specifically, the front porch area has been revised so that it does not cover the entire width of the house and it no longer wraps around the corner of the building. This revision has reduced the massing of the building at the northwest corner, the closest area of the house to the existing driveway to the convalescent hospital in the rear. Additionally, the roofline has been revised so that a hipped roof is proposed at the second bedrooms. This roof design change has reduced the visual bulk appearance when viewed the building from Neal Street.

Staff notes that some of the second floor front windows on Unit A are not single-hung windows.

Given its next to Downtown location, staff recommends that single-hung windows be utilized on all elevations. A condition of approval addresses this item. Although the colored rendering is provided, and that elevation drawing indicated exterior materials, staff has added a condition require a color/material board that should include a large enough material sample to allow staff to determine if the composition roof has enough layers and/or shapes to provide an attractive roof. In addition, staff has added a condition that specifies that “architectural grade” composition roof shingles be used that are layered and typically have different shapes to improve the appearance over standard composition shingles.

The surrounding homes on Neal Street are predominately two-story in height. Staff believes that the applicants have responded to Commission’s comments by reducing the porch and by integrating a different roof design. Overall, staff feels that the proposed homes fit in with the size, massing, and setbacks of the surrounding properties and are appropriate.

Visual Streetscape

As required by the Planning Commission at the workshop, the project architect prepared a visual streetscape with the proposed homes. The visual streetscape shows that the proposed homes blends well into the existing neighborhood, and that the buildings would have a compatible massing with the existing homes.

Due to the size of the visual streetscape, it would be presented to the Planning Commission at the meeting.

Green Building

The City Council adopted the amended Green Building Ordinance (Chapter 17.50) on March 21, 2006. The amended ordinance requires all single-family projects achieve a “Green Home” rating on the Single-Family Green Building Rating System, which currently requires 50 points.

The applicant has prepared a Green Building Checklist.

Grading and Drainage

The area on each lot where the building is to be constructed is relatively flat and the applicants are proposing to generally maintain the existing grades on the property. The applicant does not propose grading to the rear yard where it slopes down toward the convalescent facility. Grading will be limited to the creation of the building pads and allowing proper drainage of the site.

In order to reduce stormwater runoff and pollutants from the site, the applicants have directed the drainage from the roof leaders into vegetated swales rather than directly connecting to the street gutter. In addition, surface drainage from most yard areas would travel through the vegetated swales before draining into catch basins. The driveway for both lots would utilize concrete pavers which would allow some stormwater to infiltrate into the soil. These are the type of stormwater runoff measures strongly supported by the Regional Water Quality Control Board and local agencies implementing the urban clean water runoff program. Overall, staff finds the proposed grading and drainage plan to be acceptable and that it incorporates a sufficient number of stormwater runoff measures

Utilities

Neal Street has overhead utility lines. This project would be required to underground the utilities (electric, telephone, and cable) within the site.

There are currently no Capital Improvement Projects planned to underground utility poles and lines on Neal Street. Therefore, the applicants have been conditioned to pay the City their pro rata share of removing the utility poles and undergrounding the utility lines at such time the City deems it necessary.

Landscaping and Tree Retention

Landscaping: Given the location of the proposed houses and the location of the existing Valley oak, the applicant is not proposing extensive landscaping in the front, reasons being that to properly preserve the existing oak, and there is very room for extensive landscaping. Preliminary landscaping is proposed on the berm area between Lot A and the existing driveway to the convalescent facility. To ensure that a landscaped buffer is provided between the proposed homes and the existing convalescent facility, staff has added a condition requiring trees to be planted along the rear property line. The trees should be 15 gallon size. A condition is added to address this item.

Lot A would be immediately occupied upon completion of construction. The proposed rear yard landscaping shows a terraced design for patio area and an outdoor fireplace. The reminding rear yard would be furnished with lawn areas to avoid significant grading. Lot B would be a spec home. Therefore, the rear yard landscaping would be completed by the future homeowners.

Tree Retention: Due to the proximity of the proposed development to the existing Valley oak in the front of the site, a tree report was prepared by Judith Thomas, one of the City's consultant arborist assessing the potential impact of the construction on the said tree. The report found that the tree is a heritage sized tree. It is appropriately situated and is in a healthy condition. The

report recommends the removal of this tree because it would be in the middle of the driveway on Lot A. At staff's request, the applicant chose to revise the site plan to retain the existing heritage-sized tree. Since the arborist report originally recommends the removal of the tree to accommodate the proposed development, staff has added a condition requiring the applicant submit a supplemental report addressing tree preservation and tree protection measures during construction.

Signage for the Convalescent Facility

The surrounding neighbors have expressed concern of the visibility of the existing convalescent facility, especially at night. Since there is not signage at the driveway on Neal Street, non-regular visitors often miss the entrance then use neighboring driveway to make a U-turn.

Since the proposed development is associated with the convalescent facility site, staff believes there is a nexus requiring the facility management install a sign at the entrance on Neal Street for facility visitors. Staff has added a condition address this item.

Planning Commission Workshop on January 25, 2006

The Commission commented on the bulk and mass of the houses, the architecture styles, and the loss of areas zoned Public and Institutional District. Commission requested that the following be provided at the formal review of the proposal:

1. Minutes of the neighborhood meeting
2. Comments (e-mails) from surrounding neighbors
3. List of uses allowed in P District
4. Prepare a streetscape

The applicant has addressed the mass and bulk issue by revising the building on Lot A (see discussion in "Architect/Design"). The neighborhood meeting minutes, comments from the neighbors and a list of uses in P District are attached to the staff report as Exhibits C through E. The streetscape of Neal Street including the proposed houses would be presented at the hearing.

V. PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of the proposed application was mailed to the surrounding property owners and tenants within 1,000 feet of the subject property. Please refer to Exhibit for comments received from adjacent property owners or tenants.

VI. PUD CONSIDERATIONS

The Zoning Ordinance of the Municipal Code sets forth purposes of the Planned Unit Development District and "considerations" to be addressed in reviewing a PUD development plan.

1. Whether the plan is in the best interests of the public health, safety, and general welfare:

The proposed project, as conditioned, meets all applicable City standards concerning public health, safety, and welfare (e.g., adequate emergency vehicle access, within a five-minute response time zone for fire service, not within a geologic or flood hazard zone, not on a steep slope, etc.). Adequate storm drain, sanitary sewer, and water service utilities are either now present or would be required to be installed by project developers to serve the new dwellings and accessory structures. The project will not generate volumes of traffic that cannot be accommodated by existing City streets and intersections in the area. The structures would be designed to meet the requirements of the Uniform Building Code and other applicable City codes. The proposed development is compatible with the adjacent uses and would be consistent with the existing scale and character of the area. Staff believes that the proposed PUD development plan is in the best interests of the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Therefore, staff believes that this finding can be made.

2. Whether the plan is consistent with the City's General Plan and any applicable specific plan:

The proposed density of four dwelling units per acre is within the two to eight dwelling units per acre MDR range. It also conforms to the General Plan's midpoint density of five dwelling units per acre. The proposed development is consistent with Housing Element Policy 42 which strongly encourages residential infill in area areas where public facilities are made to be adequate to support such development.

Therefore, staff believes that this finding can be made.

3. Whether the plan is compatible with previously developed properties in the vicinity and the natural, topographic features of the site:

The site is an infill property surrounded by residential uses and a convalescent facility.

The front portion of the land is relatively flat but the rear portion of land slopes down toward the rear. Grading will be limited to creating the building pads and providing proper drainage of the site, but such grading would be minor. The proposed units have been sited to minimize impacts on surrounding neighbors and have been designed to reduce their mass and not overpower the site.

Therefore, staff believes that this finding can be made.

4. Whether grading takes into account environmental characteristics and is designed in keeping with the best engineering practices to avoid erosion, slides, or flooding to have as minimal an effect upon the environment as possible.

The lot is relatively flat and the applicants are proposing to generally maintain the existing grades on the property. Erosion control and dust suppression measures will be documented in the building permit plans and will be administered by the City's Building and Public Works Departments. According to the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Hazard maps, no portion of the site is located in a flood hazard zone.

Therefore, staff believes that this finding can be made.

5. Whether streets and buildings have been designed and located to complement the natural terrain and landscape:

The project is proposed on an infill site in a developed area of the City and would not involve the extension of any new public streets. Development of the site complements the natural terrain by making only minor changes as necessary to the proposed building pad areas.

Therefore, staff believes that this finding can be made.

6. Whether adequate public safety measures have been incorporated into the design of the plan:

The public improvements associated with this project would be consistent with City design standards. As conditioned, the driveway entrance would be located and configured to provide an adequate line-of-sight viewing distance in both directions perpendicular to the vehicle and to facilitate efficient ingress/egress to and from the project site. The homes would be required to meet the requirements of the Uniform

Building Code, other applicable City codes, and State of California energy and accessibility requirements. Adequate access is provided to all structures for police, fire, and other emergency vehicles.

Therefore, staff believes that this finding can be made.

7. Whether the plan conforms to the purposes of the PUD District:

The proposed PUD development plan conforms to the purposes of the PUD district. One of these purposes is to insure that the desires of the developer and the community are understood and approved prior to commencement of construction. Another purpose is to encourage efficient usage of small, odd-sized or topographically affected parcels difficult for development by themselves. Staff believes that the proposed project implements the purposes of the PUD ordinance in this case by providing an infill project that is well-designed and efficiently sited on the subject property, that fulfills the desires of the applicants, and that meets the City's General Plan goals and policies. The PUD process allows for ample input from the public and for an ultimate decision by the City Council regarding appropriateness of the proposed use and development plan.

Therefore, staff believes that PUD development plan conforms to the purposes of the PUD district and believes that this finding can be made.

VII. CONCLUSION

The subject site is a sensitive one due to its being a part of an existing convalescent facility in an established neighborhood and due to it being an infill site with adjacent residences. Staff believes that the proposed PUD-MDR zoning and development plan are in conformance with the policies of the General Plan. Although located outside the Downtown area, the proposed development incorporates design elements as specified in the Downtown Design Guidelines.

Staff finds the site plan to be functional, yet sensitive to the adjacent residential properties. Adequate private yard areas have been provided for the proposed units. The deep rear yard setback and the required landscaping would provide the necessary buffer to separate the proposed homes from the existing convalescent facility. The meandered driveway on Lot A ensures the preservation of the Valley oak, a healthy heritage-size tree located in the front of the site. The garages have been located away from Neal Street, minimizing views towards the street. Green Building measures have been incorporated into the project. Staff believes that the architectural style of the homes is appropriate for the site and that the buildings will be an attractive addition to the Neal Street area.

VIII. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

A draft Negative Declaration accompanies this report. Based on an initial study, staff believes that there are no significant adverse effects on the environment. Additionally, the proposed residential development will have no potential for adverse impact on the site's wildlife and recommends that the Commission make a finding of De Minimis impact for purposes of the Department of Fish and Game fee structure.

IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission take the following actions:

1. Find that the proposed rezoning and Planned Unit Development plan are consistent with the General Plan and PUD Ordinance;
2. Make the PUD findings as listed in this staff report;
3. Adopt a resolution recommending approval of PUD-51 to the City Council for a rezoning of 0.49-acre portion of a 3.54-acre site from P (Public and Institutional) District to PUD-MDR (Planned Unit Development – Medium Density Residential) District for a two-lot residential development as shown in Exhibit A, subject to the conditions of approval listed on Exhibit B;
4. Find that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment and adopt a resolution approving the attached draft Negative Declaration; and Find that the project has a De Minimis impact on the site's wildlife;

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