



## **CITY OF WEST COVINA**

### **PLANNING COMMISSION**

**JUNE 22, 2021, 7:00 PM  
REGULAR MEETING**

**CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
1444 W. GARVEY AVENUE SOUTH  
WEST COVINA, CALIFORNIA 91790**

**Livier Becerra, Chair  
Nickolas Lewis, Vice Chair  
Brian Gutierrez, Commissioner  
Shelby Williams, Commissioner  
Sheena Heng, Commissioner**

On March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency in California as a result of the threat of COVID-19. On March 17, 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-29-20, suspending certain requirements of the Brown Act relating to the conduct of public meetings. Pursuant to the Executive Orders, Planning Commissioners may attend Planning Commission meetings telephonically and the Planning Commission is not required to make available a physical location from which members of the public may observe the meeting and offer public comment.

On June 18, 2020, the California Department of Public Health issued guidance mandating that people in California wear cloth face coverings in specified circumstances, including when they are inside of, or in line to enter, any indoor public space.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 emergency and pursuant to State and County public health directives, the City Council Chambers will have limited seating available on a first-come, first-served basis for members of the public to attend and participate in the Planning Commission meeting in person. All persons attending the meeting are required to wear cloth face coverings and observe social distancing protocols. Members of the public may also watch the Planning Commission meeting live on the City's website

at: <https://www.westcovina.org/departments/city-clerk/agendas-and-meetings/current-meetings-and-agendas> under the "Watch Live" tab or through the West Covina City YouTube channel at [www.westcovina.org/LIVE](https://www.westcovina.org/LIVE).

If you are experiencing symptoms such as fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, or sore throat, the City requests that you participate in the meeting from home by watching the meeting live via the links set forth above.

#### ***E-MAILED PUBLIC COMMENT:***

Members of the public can submit public comments to the Planning Commission via e-mail at [Planning\\_Dept@westcovina.org](mailto:Planning_Dept@westcovina.org). The subject line should specify "Oral Communications – 6/22/2021" or

"Public Hearing Item # - 6/22/2021. Please include your full name and address in your e-mail. All emails received by 5:00 P.M. on the day of the Planning Commission meeting will be posted to the City's website under "Current Meetings and Agendas" and provided to the Planning Commission prior to the meeting. No comments will be read out loud during the meeting. All comments received by the start of the meeting will be made part of the official public record of the meeting.

***Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices prior to entering the Council Chambers***

### ***AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT***

The City complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need special assistance at Planning Commission meetings, please call (626) 939-8433 (voice) or (626) 960-4422 (TTY) from 8 to 5 Monday through Thursday. Please call at least one day prior to the meeting date to inform us of your particular needs and to determine if accommodation is possible. For sign language interpreter services at Planning Commission meetings, please request no less than four working days prior to the meeting.

### ***PUBLIC COMMENTS/ADDRESSING THE COMMISSION***

Any person wishing to address the Planning Commission on any matter listed on the agenda or on any other matter within their jurisdiction is asked to complete a speaker card that is provided on the speaker podium and submit the card to a Planning Department staff member.

***Please identify on the speaker card whether you are speaking on an agenda item or non-agenda item.***

Requests to speak on non-agenda items will be heard during "Oral Communications" before the Public Hearing section of the agenda. Oral Communications are limited to thirty (30) minutes. Generally, comments are limited to five minutes per speaker unless further time is granted by the Chairperson. ***The Chairperson may also, at his or her discretion, further limit the time of each speaker in order to accommodate a large number of speakers and/or to ensure that the business of the Planning Commission is effectively conducted.***

Any testimony or comments regarding a matter set for Public Hearing will be heard during the public hearing for that item.

### **MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER/MEDITATION**

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **ROLL CALL**

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Regular meeting, June 8, 2021

### **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

This is the time when any member of the public may speak to the Commission on any matter within the scope of duties assigned to the Commission relating to non-agendized or consent calendar items. Other matters included on this agenda may be addressed when that item is under consideration. For all oral communications, the chairperson may impose reasonable limitations on public comments to assure an orderly and timely meeting. The Ralph M. Brown Act limits the Planning Commission and staff's ability to respond to public comments at this meeting. Thus, your comments may be agendized for a future meeting or referred to staff. The Commission may ask questions for clarification, if desired, at this time.

By policy of the Commission, Oral Communications at this time on the agenda is limited to a total of 15

minutes. Persons who are not afforded the opportunity to speak at this time may do so under "Continuation of Oral Communications" later on the agenda.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

2. **GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 20-04  
PRECISE PLAN NO. 20-09  
TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 83216  
TREE REMOVAL PERMIT NO. 21-03  
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT  
APPLICANT: Aaron Talarico, Meritage Land Company  
LOCATION: 1600 - 1616 W. Cameron Avenue  
REQUEST: The project consists of a request for the approval of a precise plan and vesting tentative tract map to demolish all existing buildings/uses on the site and construct 84 residences (attached three-story townhome style units, ranging from 1,210 sq. ft. to 1,796 sq. ft.), internal drive aisles, common open space, guest parking spaces, and other associated incidental improvements on a 3.25 acre site. A tree removal permit is required to remove 5 significant trees on the site (3 Little Leaf Figs, 2 Banyan Figs).**

**The project also involves a request for a General Plan Amendment to change the general plan land-use designation from Neighborhood Medium to Neighborhood High.**

## **NON-HEARING ITEMS - None**

***TEN-DAY APPEAL PERIOD: Actions taken by the Planning Commission that are not recommendations to the City Council will become final after ten (10) calendar days unless a written appeal with the appropriate fee is lodged with the City Clerk's Office before close of business on the tenth day.***

## **COMMISSION REPORTS/COMMENTS AND MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

This is the time when any member of the Commission may bring a matter to the attention of the full Commission that is within the scope of duties assigned to the Commission. Any item that was considered during the Agenda is not appropriate for discussion in this section of the agenda. **NO COMMISSION DISCUSSION OR ACTION CAN BE CONSIDERED AT THIS TIME.** If the Commission desires to discuss an issue raised by a speaker or take an action, the Commission may vote to agendaize the matter for a future meeting.

### **3. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

- a. Forthcoming - July 13, 2021

### **4. CITY COUNCIL ACTION:**

This is an oral presentation of City Council matters and actions, which are in the Commission's area of interest

## **ADJOURNMENT**

# A G E N D A

**ITEM NO. 1.**

**DATE: 06/22/2021**

**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Planning Division  
**SUBJECT:** Regular meeting, June 8, 2021

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## **Attachments**

Minutes, 6.8.21

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**PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT**

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**SUBJECT**

**GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 20-04**

**PRECISE PLAN NO. 20-09**

**TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 83216**

**TREE REMOVAL PERMIT NO. 21-03**

**MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

**APPLICANT: Aaron Talarico, Meritage Land Company**

**LOCATION: 1600 - 1616 W. Cameron Avenue**

**REQUEST:** The project consists of a request for the approval of a precise plan and vesting tentative tract map to demolish all existing buildings/uses on the site and construct 84 residences (attached three-story townhome style units, ranging from 1,210 sq. ft. to 1,796 sq. ft.), internal drive aisles, common open space, guest parking spaces, and other associated incidental improvements on a 3.25 acre site. A tree removal permit is required to remove 5 significant trees on the site (3 Little Leaf Figs, 2 Banyan Figs).

The project also involves a request for a General Plan Amendment to change the general plan land-use designation from Neighborhood Medium to Neighborhood High.

**BACKGROUND**

The property site is a 3.25-acre property consisting of two assessor parcels (8468-015-010 and 8468-015-024) located on the southwest side of West Cameron Avenue, between its intersections with Orange Avenue and Sunset Avenue. The site is currently developed with office buildings and surface parking lots. Both parcels have parking lot trees, ornamental shrubs, and grassy knolls around the buildings. The site is in an urban area that is developed on all sides.

To the north the project site is bordered by the Floor & Decor shopping center; the residential development by the same applicant (Cameron 56 Townhomes) is to the east; single-family residential properties on Sawyer Street are along the south; and office uses are along the west. There are three existing driveways to the site; these will all be removed and a new driveway constructed near the center of the site.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
<b>ZONING AND GENERAL PLAN</b>	Downtown Plan, T4 General Urban Zone; Neighborhood - Medium (NM)
<b>SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING</b>	<u>East: Shopping Center and medical office; Downtown Plan, T-5 Urban Center Zone (north of Toluca) and T-4 General Urban Zone (south of Toluca)</u> <u>Northwest: Medical office; Downtown Plan, T-4 General Urban Zone</u> <u>West: Single-family neighborhood; Single-Family Residential (R-1) Zone</u> <u>Southeast: Cameron 56 Townhomes; Downtown Plan, T-4 General Urban Zone</u>
<b>CURRENT DEVELOPMENT</b>	Office buildings, parking lot, and landscaping

<b>LEGAL NOTICE</b>	Notices of Public Hearing have been mailed to 93 owners and occupants of properties located within 300 feet of the subject site. The Public Hearing Notice has also been posted on the City's website and published in the San Gabriel Valley Tribune.
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## DISCUSSION

The applicant proposes to build an 84-unit residential project consisting of attached, rowhouse-style single-family residences. The units will be distributed among 8 buildings; two buildings with 12 units each along Cameron Avenue; and six buildings, each with 10 units, will be located interior to the site. Parking will be provided with 2-car garages for each unit plus 15 guest parking spaces (including 1 Americans Disability Act (ADA) -compatible space) arranged in parallel configuration along the westerly side of the property. A precise plan, general plan amendment, and vesting tentative tract map are required to allow the development of the project. The subject property is located in the Downtown Specific Plan T-4 General Urban zone; the General Plan designation is proposed to change from Neighborhood Medium (NM) to Neighborhood High (NH). A Vesting Tentative Tract map (No. 83216) has been submitted to resubdivide the site and create individual properties for the homes. Because the project includes a request for a General Plan Amendment, the City Council is the final decision-making authority for the project.

### General Plan Amendment

Approval of a General Plan Amendment (GPA) is required to enable the project to be built at the proposed density of 25.8 dwellings per acre. The existing designation of Neighborhood Medium (NM) allows from 9 to 20 dwelling units per acre; the Neighborhood High (NH) designation allows from 21 to 54 dwelling units per acre. This designation supports a range of land uses, including residential.

The project is in the T4 General Urban Zone of the Downtown Specific Plan. The T4 General Urban Zone is intended to be a transitional zone between the T5 Urban Center and T4 Urban Neighborhood zones. New buildings are to be block scale, up to three stories in height with buildings moved forward to the right-of-way. The proposed project is designed to meet the intent of the Downtown Specific Plan. The Plan does not have a minimum or maximum allowed density. It is a form-based code, emphasizing the design of the buildings and their presence in the public realm. The proposed project adheres to the standards of the T-4 zone and the rowhouse style of building proposed. The buildings are a maximum of 3 stories tall. The rowhouse design is one of the allowed styles in the zone. The buildings are pushed to the street and incorporate a front stoop along the Cameron frontage. The project provides sufficient parking.

The proposed project is consistent with the following General Plan policies and actions:

- *Policy 3.3 New growth will complete, enhance, and reinforce the form and character of unique West Covina neighborhoods, districts and corridors.*

The project is located on a street in transition. The former Kmart site across the street is vacant. A 3-story tall residential project, Cameron 56, by the same developer was constructed adjacent to the project site. The design of that project is very similar to that of the proposed project.

- *Policy 3.4 Direct new growth to downtown area and the corridors. Adapt economically underused and blighted buildings, consistent with the character of surrounding districts and neighborhoods, to support new uses that can be more successful. Provide opportunities for healthy living, commerce, employment, recreation, education, culture, entertainment, civic engagement, and socializing.*

The project site is in the Downtown Plan. It will be urban infill on a site suitable for residential development, in the style recommended by the Downtown Plan.

- *Policy 3.6 Reduce West Covina's production of greenhouse gas emissions and contribution to climate change, and adapt to the effects of climate change.*

By promoting infill development, the project creates needed housing without sprawl. This helps reduce impacts to climate change.

The proposed project is consistent with the following Housing Element Goals:

- *Goal 2 Provide a variety of housing types to accommodate all economic segments of the City.* The project will create new for-sale housing in the downtown at densities designed to more affordable than traditional detached housing.
- *Goal 4 Promote equal housing opportunity for all residents.* The project will meet current requirements that ensure new housing is available to anyone who might be interested.
- *Goal 5 Identify adequate sites to achieve housing variety.* The project will be an infill development of a site in transition in the downtown area. It will help revitalize the street. It will provide for-sale, attached housing as an alternative to more traditional detached housing forms or attached apartments.

The proposed project supports the following Goals, Policies and Actions of the Downtown Specific Plan:

- *Goal 3 Reinforce the Downtown West Covina brand as a Great Place to Live, Work and Play in the San Gabriel Valley.*
- *Policy 3.1 Direct new growth in the downtown area to create vibrancy and invest in key public improvements.*

The project is infill development within the Plan area. It creates new housing and promotes a healthy mix of uses within the area.

- *Goal 6 Make great places by insisting on the highest standards of quality in architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture.*
- *Action 6.1a Adopt new form-based development code for Downtown area that emphasizes pedestrian orientation, integration of land uses, treatment of streetscapes as community living spaces.*

The project complies with the standards of the Downtown Specific Plan. The buildings along Cameron Avenue have pedestrian orientation. The design of the front stoops will help promote an active streetscape.

- *Goal 7 Provide high-quality, urban housing for a diverse range of income levels.*
- *Policy 7.1 Provide a production of a range of housing types that meet the diverse needs of the community.*
- *Action 7.1b Facilitate the development of higher intensity and high-quality residential projects with a mix of product and unit types, and ownership (a range of affordable housing, live-work spaces, co-housing opportunities, senior housing and assisted living facilities).*

The project creates infill residential development with high quality architecture. It will provide for-sale housing at a density that should support a more affordable product. It will help to re-invigorate downtown.

### **Precise Plan**

The proposed project is an 84-unit residential project consisting of rowhouse-style single-family residences. Three floor plans will be provided:

- *Plan 1 - has two bedrooms, a two-car garage and totals 1,210 square feet.*
- *Plan 2 - has three bedrooms, a two-car garage with tandem parking and totals 1,500 square feet.*
- *Plan 3 - has three bedrooms, a two-car garage and totals 1,796 square feet.*

The two buildings fronting Cameron Avenue each contain 12 units and are 3-stories tall. These building incorporate a front stoop, as required by the Downtown Specific Plan. Eight more 3-story buildings, each with 10 units, are located across the middle of the site. The site is flat. The precise plan is for the review of the site plan and architecture.

The table below summarizes how the project compares with the Downtown Plan and Code standards:

<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>EXISTING</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>	<b>REQUIRED/ALLOWED</b>
<b>Lot Area</b>	3.25 acres - 141,570 sq. ft.	Vesting Tentative Tract Map combining two lots, creating condominium development	Existing Legal Lots
<b>Building Type</b>	1-2 story commercial buildings	Rowhouse	Rowhouse, Flex, Court, Hybrid, Linear, Live-Work
<b>Frontage Type</b>	Conventional with parking in front	Stoop	Stoop, Forecourt, Shopfront, Gallery, or Arcade
<b>Setbacks</b> Front (street) Side Rear	20-30 ft 0' > 50'	7'-0" max. 7.2' min. 50' min.	0' min. 10' max. 0' min. 50'
<b>Building Height</b>	1-2 stories	3 stories, 34'-10" w/in 100' of SFR; 36'-6" max. w/ on Cameron Ave. (beyond 100' from SFR)	35'-0" within 100' of SFR; up to 40'-0" beyond
<b>First Floor Height</b>	Approx. 16 feet	10'-0"	10'-0"
<b>Rowhouse &amp; Pedestrian Access</b>	---	From primary street	From primary street
<b>Rowhouse Vehicle Access &amp; Parking</b>	---	Enclosed garages and open	Enclosed, covered, or open
<b>Parking</b>		168 garage spaces, 14 parallel, 1 ADA (183 parking spaces total)	2 per unit, 168 total
<b>Private Open Space Min. Area</b>	---	Plan 1: 140 sf Plan 2 & 3: 101 sf	100 sf min
<b>Min. Dimension</b>		6' upper floor space	6' min.

The proposed development will be visible from the surrounding area, including the homes in the single-family neighborhood along Sawyer Avenue behind the project site. Each of the homes along Cameron Avenue has an entrance facing the street, opening onto a raised stoop. The buildings along Cameron have 5 to 7-foot front setbacks, a 10-foot setback to the northerly property line, and a 20-foot setback to the southerly property line. The buildings are just over 12 feet from the entrance driveway and 4.3 feet from the interior street (Street B) providing access to the garages for these units. Building 3, located near the northerly property line, has interior setbacks of 7.2 to 10.5 feet from the northerly property line, at least 50 feet from the westerly property line, approximately 10 feet from the extension of Street east of the building, and 4 feet from Street south of the building. A 4-foot path runs along the northerly property line and provides access to the front doors of the units. The garages of Buildings 3 and 4 are separated by over 40 feet across Street. Buildings 4 and 5, and Buildings 6 and 7, are separated by 4-foot wide paths. They are 8 feet apart measured at the patio fences, at least 20 feet from front door to front door of Plan 2 units, and 24 feet from front door to front door of Plan 3 units. Buildings 5 and 6 are each 3.4 feet from Alley. Building 6 and 7 have identical interior separations as Buildings 4 and 5. Buildings 4, 5, 6 and 7 are 5 feet from Street and 9 feet from Street. Building 7 is 8.8 feet, and Building 8 is 3 feet, from Street. Building 8 has a 7.5-foot minimum and 10.5-foot maximum setback from the southerly property line. It is 10 feet from Street, 3 feet from Street, and at least 50 feet from the westerly property line. A 4-foot path runs along the northerly property line and provides access to the front doors of the units. Buildings 7 and 8 are 39.3 feet apart from garage to garage. All setbacks conform to the standards of the Downtown Plan. Setback details are provided on sheet S-3.

The homes in the project come in 3 different floor plans; only plans 2 and 3 are used in the buildings fronting Cameron Avenue. The buildings along Cameron are designed with an elevated front stoop as required by the Downtown Specific Plan. The homes in the other buildings are at-grade. Floor plan 1 and 2 units have the front door behind an unfenced porch, while the front door for plan 3 units is within a fenced patio.

Air conditioning condensers for all dwellings are at the ground level. The condensers for some dwelling units along Cameron are within the front setback. Others are located at each end of the buildings. They will be screened by a combination of metal screens and landscaping. The location of all condensers is shown on plan sheet L-3. Screening and stoop details are shown on plan sheet L-2.

A single driveway to Cameron Avenue provides access to the site. The driveway and the internal drive aisles that also function as fire lanes will be 26-feet wide. There will also be a 20-foot-wide alley separating buildings 5 and 6. There will be 28 feet between the garage doors facing this alley providing adequate backup distance for vehicles entering and exiting the garages along the alley.

### ***Architecture***

All buildings on the site are the same contemporary style. Buildings along the Cameron Avenue frontage each have 12 dwellings and are raised above grade to incorporate a front stoop. Total height of the buildings along Cameron Avenue, including the stoop, will be 36 feet 6 inches. The buildings behind the frontage are at-grade and will have an overall height of 34 feet 10 inches. The Downtown Plan allows rowhouses to be 3-stories or 40 feet tall. The buildings will have two color schemes, one primarily in grey tones with white trim and brownish-orange front doors. The other scheme uses dark green and olive tones with white trim and light tan front doors. The buildings are finished with stucco, lap siding and brick and composition shingle pitched roofs. Color schemes and material details are shown on plan sheet A-21.

An existing 7-foot-tall metal fence along the westerly property line will be retained and painted black. New 6-foot-tall concrete block walls will be constructed along the northerly and southerly property lines. Wall and fence details are found on sheet L-3. Light poles, approximately 21 feet tall to the fixture, will be located along the westerly property line, illuminating the parallel parking spaces. Low bollards and sconces will provide illumination throughout the rest of the site. Lighting details are shown on sheet L-5.

### ***Parking***

The parking requirements for the T-4 General Urban Zone are 2 spaces for dwellings with two or more bedrooms. The total parking requirement is 168 spaces. In addition to a two-car garage in each unit, 15 parallel

parking spaces, including 1- ADA compatible space, are located along the westerly side of the property.

### ***Landscaping***

The applicant is proposing to install landscaping on all non-paved/non-built surfaces of the site, primarily around the buildings. Tulip trees, or other street trees approved by the City, will be planted along Cameron Avenue within the parkway. Brisbane Box, California Sycamore and Magnolias will be planted along the north, south and westerly property lines. Specimen Olive trees will be planted at the northwest and southwest corners of the site. Queen and Date Palms will be planted beside the entrance driveway. Australian Willows, Italian Cypress, Crepe Myrtle and Strawberry Trees will be planted as accents in various locations. A variety of shrubs and groundcovers will also be planted. Approval of a final landscape and irrigation plan is required per the conditions of approval.

### ***Tree Removal***

An arborist performed a tree survey of the site as part of the environmental review. There are a total of 70 trees either on-site or immediately adjacent to the property that could be impacted by development. Development of the site will require removal of all 62 of the on-site trees and 7 street trees. Of these, 5 trees are Significant Trees. Per Section 26-289 of the West Covina Municipal Code, a significant tree is a tree located on private and/or public property that meets one (1) or more of the following requirements:

- a. is located in the front yard of a lot or parcel and has a caliper of one (1) foot or more;
- b. is located in the street-side yard of a corner lot and has a caliper of one (1) foot or more; and
- c. is located anywhere on a lot, has a caliper of six (6) inches, or more, and is one of the following species: Valley Oak, California Oak, Canyon Oak, Scrub Oak, Mesa Oak, Live Oak, California Sycamore, or American Sycamore.

In addition, a California Sycamore located offsite near the northerly corner of the site is Significant and could be affected by site development. The removal of the on-site trees requires the approval of a tree removal permit by the Planning Commission. Mitigation measures are proposed as part of the Precise Plan Conditions of Approval and Mitigated Negative Declaration to address the loss of the 5 Significant Trees and to protect the offsite California Sycamore. The 5 significant trees are required to be replaced on a 1:1 ratio with 5 - 36" box-sized trees. The applicant proposes to plant a total of 111 trees of various species on the property, including 16 street trees and 42 trees 24-inch box size or larger.

### ***Open Space***

Each unit has private open space in the form of decks on the upper floors. Plan 1 has a 70 square foot deck on both the 2nd and 3rd floors, totaling 140 square feet. Plan 2 has a 101 square foot deck on 2nd floor. Plan 3 has a 101 square foot deck on the 3rd floor. In addition, the Plan 3 units that are in buildings 4 and 5, and 6 and 7, have a ground floor patio approximately 101 square feet in area enclosed by a low stuccoed wall. There will also be small common areas in the northwest and southwest corners of the site that will feature pet areas, seating and the community mailboxes.

### ***Public Art***

The project is subject to the provisions of the Art in Public Places ordinance (WCMC Section 17-41). The project has elected to pay an in-lieu fee. This will be enforced by a condition of approval.

### ***Development Impact Fees***

The City adopted Development Impact Fees in December, 2015. In this case, the fees are currently (for FY 2020/2021) \$1,297 per attached residential unit. The estimated cost for the development impact fee is \$108,948.

### ***Signs***

The applicant is proposing to construct two entry signs for the project on either side of the entry driveway. An example of these monument signs is shown on sheet L-3 (detail 8). Other details have not been provided.

Section 26-342 of the WCMC allows one monument sign per street frontage up to a maximum of two. The sign may be up to 40 square feet in area and up to 6 feet tall. Signage will be approved ministerially under a separate review process.

### **Tentative Tract Map**

The applicant has applied for a Vesting Tentative Tract Map (No. 83216) to resubdivide the land and create parcels for home ownership. The project will have 84 individual for-sale lots and 6 street and alley lots in common ownership. The project will utilize a Homeowner's Association (HOA) that will be responsible for maintaining the entire project, except for the interior of the units. Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) will be created to regulate the HOA. The HOA will maintain all streets, curbs, and gutters, utilities, perimeter walls, building exteriors, common open space areas, sidewalks, site walls, entrance monument, and exterior lighting.

The proposed project density will be 25.8 units per acre. The proposed General Plan designation of Neighborhood High allows a maximum density of 54 units per acre.

### **Community Outreach**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a typical community meeting could not be held. Between April 3, 2021, and April 10, 2021, the applicant scheduled video conference calls with interested neighbors. Notices of the meeting were mailed to the 93 property owners and occupants within 300 feet of the property (Attachment No. 5). According to the applicant, the plans were revised to address the neighbor's concerns. The applicant has continued to reach-out to concerned neighbors.

### **REQUIRED FINDINGS**

Findings are required to all the Planning Commission to approve the required precise plan and vesting tentative tract map. Findings are not required for approval of a general plan amendment. The findings for entitlements are included in each individual resolution (Attachment Nos. 2 and 3) and are also presented below.

Findings necessary for the approval of a **Precise Plan** are as follows:

*a. The proposed development plans and the uses proposed are consistent with the General Plan and any applicable specific plan.*

The project is a request for a Precise Plan to allow for the construction of an 84-unit, rowhouse-style residential development. There will be 168 garage parking spaces and 15 parallel parking spaces along the driveway adjacent to the westerly property line. The applicant is also requesting approval of a General Plan Amendment from Neighborhood Medium (NM) to Neighborhood High (NH) to change the allowed residential density to accommodate the proposed density of 25.8 dwelling units per acre. The project is also requesting approval of a Vesting Tentative Tract Map to create individual lots for sale. The proposed project is consistent with the following General Plan policies and actions:

Policy 3.3 New growth will complete, enhance, and reinforce the form and character of unique West Covina neighborhoods, districts and corridors.

The project is located on a street in transition. The former Kmart site across the street is vacant. A 3-story tall residential project, Cameron 56, by the same developer was constructed adjacent to the project site. The design of that project is very similar to that of the proposed project.

Policy 3.4 Direct new growth to downtown area and the corridors. Adapt economically underused and blighted buildings, consistent with the character of surrounding districts and neighborhoods, to support new uses that can be more successful. Provide opportunities for healthy living, commerce, employment, recreation, education, culture, entertainment, civic engagement, and socializing.

The project site is in the Downtown Plan. It will be urban infill on a site suitable for residential development, in the style recommended by the Downtown Plan.

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By promoting infill development, the project creates needed housing without sprawl. This helps reduce impacts to climate change.

The proposed project is consistent with the following Housing Element Goals:

Goal 2 Provide a variety of housing types to accommodate all economic segments of the City.

The project will create new for-sale housing in the downtown at densities designed to more affordable than traditional detached housing.

Goal 4 Promote equal housing opportunity for all residents.

The project will meet current requirements that ensure new housing is available to anyone who might be interested.

Goal 5 Identify adequate sites to achieve housing variety.

The project will be an infill development of a site in transition in the downtown area. It will help revitalize the street. It will provide for-sale, attached housing as an alternative to more traditional detached housing forms or attached apartments.

The project is consistent with the following Goals, Policies and Actions of the Downtown Specific Plan:

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The project is infill development within the Plan area. It creates new housing and promotes a healthy mix of uses within the area.

Goal 6 Make great places by insisting on the highest standards of quality in architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture.

Action 6.1a Adopt new form-based development code for Downtown area that emphasizes pedestrian orientation, integration of land uses, treatment of streetscapes as community living spaces.

The project complies with the standards of the Downtown Specific Plan. The buildings along Cameron Avenue have pedestrian orientation. The design of the front stoops will help promote an active streetscape.

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Policy 7.1 Provide a production of a range of housing types that meet the diverse needs of the community.

Action 7.1b Facilitate the development of higher intensity and high-quality residential projects with a mix of product and unit types, and ownership (a range of affordable housing, live-work spaces, co-housing opportunities, senior housing and assisted living facilities).

The project creates infill residential development with high quality architecture. It will provide for-sale housing at a density that should support a more affordable product. It will help to re-invigorate downtown.

*b. The proposed development is consistent with adopted development standards for the zone and complies with all other applicable provisions of the Municipal Code.*

As documented in Section III of the report, the project conforms to the proposed General Plan

designation of Neighborhood High (NH), and the standards of the T-4 General Urban zone of the Downtown Specific Plan, and all other applicable development standards in the Zoning Code.

*c. Granting the permit would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, and welfare and would not unreasonably interfere with the use or enjoyment of property in the vicinity of the subject property.*

The proposed project is on a rectangular site currently developed with one and two-story office buildings. The site will be developed according to applicable development standards. A similar project to the south abuts the project site.

The project will include required parking. The site will be landscaped. Mitigation measures and conditions of approval will ensure that the site is developed such that it will not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, and welfare and would not unreasonably interfere with the use or enjoyment of property in the vicinity of the subject property.

*d. The site is physically suitable for the type, density and intensity of the development being proposed, including vehicle access and circulation, utilities, and the absence of physical constraints.*

The proposed project will be located on Cameron Avenue near the intersection with Toluca Avenue. The site is 3.25 acres, flat and is physically suitable for the proposed project and adequate to accommodate the size and shape of the buildings, parking and all required development standards set forth in the Downtown Specific Plan. The site is served by all necessary utilities. A similar project was developed adjacent to the project. Appropriate mitigation measures and conditions of approval will ensure that the site is improved in a manner consistent with City standards.

*e. The architecture, site layout, location, shape, bulk and physical characteristics of the proposed development are compatible with the existing and future land uses, and do not interfere with orderly development in the vicinity.*

The buildings are contemporary in style and provide for a variety of articulation in building surfaces and a variety of materials. The eight buildings on the site are three stories tall. The buildings along Cameron have a stoop that increases the overall height to 36 feet 6 inches. The other buildings on the site are at-grade and have a height of 34 feet 10 inches. The buildings will have two color schemes, one primarily in grey tones with white trim and brownish-orange front doors. The other scheme uses dark green and olive tones with white trim and light tan front doors. The buildings are finished with stucco, lap siding and brick and composition shingle pitched roofs. New concrete block walls will be constructed along the northerly and southerly property lines. The design characteristics create an attractive project with substantial landscaping and buildings with visual interest.

Findings necessary for the approval of a **Vesting Tentative Tract Map** are as follows:

*a. The proposed map is consistent with the general plan and any applicable adopted specific plans.*

An amendment to the City's General Plan land-use map to change the designation of the project site from Neighborhood Medium to Neighborhood High (21 to 54 units/acre) would be required in order to develop the site. The proposed density will be 25.8 units per acre, which is consistent with the proposed designation. As listed in Finding A for the General Plan Amendment, the project is consistent with a number of Goals, Policies and Actions of both the General Plan and the Downtown Specific Plan.

*b. The design or improvement of the proposed subdivision is consistent with the general plan and applicable adopted specific plans.*

The design and improvements of the proposed subdivision and precise plan are consistent with the General Plan in that the proposed condominium subdivision is compatible with single-family and multi-

family residential and commercial uses in the vicinity. The project involves changing the land use designation of the project site from Neighborhood Medium (NM) to Neighborhood High (NH) to allow the construction of an 84-unit multiple-family residential development. The project conforms to the standards of the Downtown Specific Plan and all other applicable development standards in the Zoning Code.

*c. The site is physically suitable for the type of development.*

The 3.25-acre site is flat and is a size and shape compatible with the proposed development. Residential uses are to the west and southeast; commercial uses are to the north and east. Adequate provisions have been incorporated into the design to accommodate the required development standards as specified in proposed Specific Plan. The site has access from Cameron Avenue.

*d. The site is physically suitable for the proposed density of development.*

The proposed project type is consistent in form with style recommended by the Downtown Specific Plan. The proposed development will be accessible from a driveway along Cameron Avenue. The site is 3.25 acres and, as conditioned, is physically suitable for the proposed project and adequate to accommodate the size and shape of the buildings, parking and all required standards of the proposed Specific Plan subject to the approval of the Zone Change and General Plan amendment. The proposed General Plan designation of Neighborhood High allows a maximum density of 54 units per acre. The proposed project density will be 25.8 units per acre. Additionally, there is a condition that requires that CC&Rs be recorded as a part of this project to ensure orderly operation. The site will be developed in accordance with the grading and construction requirements of the West Covina Municipal Code and the City Engineer.

*e. The design of the subdivision or the proposed improvements are not likely to cause substantial environmental damage or substantially and avoidably injure fish, wildlife or their habitat.*

The site consists of a 3.25-acre parcel developed with office buildings, parking and landscaping. No known endangered, threatened or rare species or habitats, or designated natural communities, wetlands habitat, or wildlife dispersal, or migration corridors are present on site. A mitigated negative declaration was prepared for the project, which included required mitigation measures for Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Noise, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Utilities and Service Systems, to ensure that the project will not cause substantial environmental damage or injure fish, wildlife, or their habitat.

*f. Neither the design of the subdivision nor the type of improvements are likely to cause serious public health problems.*

The proposed map and improvements will have access to a public sanitary sewer system for the removal and disposal of wastewater and to other necessary utility services. The site will be developed in accordance with the standards of the Engineering Division, the Municipal Code, the Uniform Building Code, and other applicable requirements.

*g. The design of the subdivision or the type of improvements will either (i) not conflict with recorded or adjudged easements, acquired by the public at large, for access through or use of, property within the proposed subdivision; or (ii) alternate easements, for access or for use, will be provided, and these will be substantially equivalent to ones previously acquired by the public.*

There are no easements on the property that would be affected by the implementation of the proposed project. Access to the site will be provided via Cameron Avenue.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

The Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact (MND) prepared for the project disclosed that

the project will not have a significant impact on the environment. Mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project's design and as conditions of approval to reduce impacts on the environment to a less than significant level. The MND has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended and was circulated for public comment for 20 days (from May 19, 2021 to June 8, 2021).

Comments were received from the County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County and from two concerned individuals. A Response to Comments was prepared and is provided as Attachment No. 6.

### ***Traffic***

Ganddini Group prepared a traffic analysis for the project in November, 2020, to assess traffic impacts. The traffic analysis evaluated potential project-related traffic impacts on Cameron Avenue and at the Cameron Avenue/Toluca Avenue intersection.

The existing uses on the site were estimated to generate a total of 342 daily trips. The proposed use was estimated to generate 457 daily trips. The net impact was an increase of 115 daily trips, but 11 fewer trips during the AM peak period and 3 fewer during the PM peak period. The project Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) impact was assessed in accordance with the City of West Covina VMT guidelines and guidance from City staff. The proposed project was found to satisfy the criteria for projects in a Transit Priority Area (TPA), and is therefore presumed to result in a less than significant VMT impact in accordance with City guidelines. The traffic impact analysis determined that the addition of project-related trips to existing traffic levels would have less than significant impact on the study intersection, and that project traffic would fall below significant impact thresholds with the implementation of various traffic design features.

### ***Air Quality***

According to the Air Quality Study (Attachment A of the Initial Study), the construction and operation emissions are below the regional thresholds of significance. The cumulative short-term construction-related emissions and long-term operational emissions from the project will not contribute considerably to any potential cumulative air quality impact because short-term project and operational emissions will not exceed any SCAQMD daily threshold. Conditions of Approval are included to minimize construction emissions, including watering of the site, covering truck beds leaving the site and limiting idling times for diesel equipment.

### ***Required Mitigations***

The environmental study concluded that mitigation measures are required for the following topics:

- Biological Resources (nesting birds and tree protection);
- Cultural Resources (archeological resources);
- Geology and Soils (paleontological resources);
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials (materials in buildings to be demolished, potential soil contamination);
- Noise (protecting residents from elevated noise levels in new buildings);
- Transportation (implementing design features to ensure safe turning movements entering and exiting the site);
- Tribal Cultural Resources;
- Utilities and Service Systems (replacing sewer lines).

A Mitigation Monitoring Program is an exhibit of Attachment No. 1 and provides information on the mitigation measures and monitoring by responsible agencies.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Resolutions Nos. 21-6084 through 21-6087,

recommending to the City Council approval of the Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact, General Plan Amendment No. 20-04, Precise Plan No. 20-09, and Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 83216.

## **LARGE ATTACHMENTS**

A copy of the plans and Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact is posted on the City website at <https://www.westcovina.org/departments/community-development/planning-division/projects-and-environmental-documents>

**Submitted by:** Jeff Hamilton, Contract Planner

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### **Attachments**

Attachment No. 1 - Mitigated Negative Declaration Resolution

Attachment No. 2 - General Plan Amendment Resolution

Attachment No. 3 - Precise Plan Resolution

Attachment No. 4 - Tentative Tract Map Resolution

Attachment No. 5 - Neighborhood Outreach Letter

Attachment No. 6 - Responses to Comments

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# A G E N D A

**ITEM NO. 3.a.**

**DATE: 06/22/2021**

**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Planning Division  
**SUBJECT:** Forthcoming - July 13, 2021

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## **Attachments**

Forthcoming 7.13.21

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