

## **COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Interim City Manager Alex Posada  
Prepared by: Director of Community Development Chuen Wu

**SUBJECT: Santa Maria Cemetery District Expansion General Plan Amendment, Zone Change and Planned Development Permit at the 600 Block of East Newlove Drive**

Description:

The City Council will consider approving a General Plan Land Use Map Amendment and Zone Change (GPZ2021-0003) FROM MDR-12 (Medium Density Residential) land use designation and R-2 (Medium Density Residential) zoning TO CF (Community Facilities) land use designation and PF (Public Facilities and Institutional) zoning designation and a Planned Development Permit (PD2022-0014) for the Santa Maria Cemetery District to construct a 2,550-square-foot prefabricated storage building with attached 544-square foot office and break room, with a 15,900-square-foot gravel base storage area and associated site improvements on a 0.87-acre site.

Environmental Notice: Environmental Review for this project was completed through the preparation of an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH #2023040484) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines.

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### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Adopt a Resolution to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the General Plan Land Use Map amendment, zone change, and Planned Development Permit for Santa Maria Cemetery District Expansion, located in the 600 block of East Newlove Drive; and
2. Adopt a Resolution amending the General Plan Land Use Policy Map for approximately 0.87 acres FROM MDR-12 (Medium Density Residential) TO CF (Community Facilities) for the Santa Maria Cemetery District Expansion, located at the 600 block of East Newlove Drive; and
3. Introduce for first reading, and continue to a future meeting, an Ordinance amending the General Plan Land Use Policy Map for approximately 0.87 acres FROM MDR-12 located at the 600 Block of East Newlove Drive from PD/R-2 (Planned Development/Medium Density Residential) TO CF (Community to PD/PF (Planned Development/Public Facilities) for the Santa Maria Cemetery District Expansion, located at the 600 block of East Newlove Drive; and

4. Adopt a Resolution approving Planned Development Permit PD2022-0014 for the Santa Maria Cemetery District Expansion, located at the 600 block of East Newlove Drive.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The project site is located in the 600 block of East Newlove Drive, in a land-locked parcel directly south of addresses 670 and 690 East Newlove Drive, and west of the Santa Maria Cemetery District South Lawn (Attachment A – Vicinity Map). Surrounding land uses include residential neighborhoods (Single Family and Medium Density Residential), and the Santa Maria Cemetery District, with R-1, R-2, and PF zoning, respectively.

### **South Cemetery Expansion Master Plan**

In 2004, the Planning Commission approved a development plan for a 29.16-acre expansion of the Santa Maria Cemetery district facilities to meet the future needs of the community for the next 60 to 100 years at the time. Since then, the expansion has been broken into five phases. Currently, the northerly portion, Phase I, is fully constructed and is in use. Phase II roads and turf are installed but are not yet in use. An administrative office located at the terminus of Meehan Street is in plan check for building permits.

### **Planning Commission Review**

The project was reviewed by the Planning Commission at a study session on May 18, 2023, and at a public hearing on July 19, 2023, where it was recommended on a 3-0-2-0 vote (Commissioner Mohajer and Chair Seifert absent) for approval to the City Council.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **General Plan Amendment and Rezone**

The Santa Maria Cemetery District is requesting a General Plan Amendment and Zone Change to amend the land use designation and zoning of the site from MDR-12 (Medium Density Residential, 12-units per acre) land use designation and R-2 zoning to CF (Community Facilities) land use designation and PF (Public Facilities) zoning. The project also includes a Planned Development Permit for the construction of a 3,050-square-foot prefabricated warehouse and office building for cemetery maintenance operations.

The subject parcel is currently zoned for residential uses but has remained undeveloped as it is a landlocked property with no street frontage, and previously contained an un-remediated abandoned oil well head/sump. Since the Cemetery District purchased the property, the oil well and contaminated soil have been cleaned up through a Remedial Action Plan under the direction of the Santa Barbara County Department of Environmental Health Site Mitigation Unit. Rezoning the property to the PF zoning is consistent with the existing adjacent cemetery PF zoning and will allow the cemetery to construct the proposed warehouse and office building on the property as an accessory structure to the cemetery use.

The request is consistent with the City's General Plan, which aims to ensure that adequate land is provided for those institutional and public activities that will serve new development consistent with the established standards of the General Plan (Objective L.U.2h). Rezoning the site from Medium Density Residential to Public Facilities will not

result in a reduction in available land for housing in the City. The project site is not identified in the City of Santa Maria's Housing Element inventory of sites, and the remaining sites identified in the City's Housing Element are adequate to accommodate the City's remaining unmet Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA).

#### Planned Development Permit

The Cemetery District Maintenance Building development is comprised of one single-story prefabricated metal building containing a 2,550-square-foot maintenance warehouse with four garage/storage bays and a 545-square-foot office with break room. Access to the site will be from the east, via a gate from the cemetery, which has driveways on South College Drive and East Newlove Drive.

#### *Building Architecture*

The proposed building is prefabricated metal and is proposed to be painted an inconspicuous green and white color. The maximum height of the single-story building is 20 feet in height at the peak of the garage/storage bays and 12 feet high at the attached break room and office. The building is set back from the adjoining residential boundaries by at least 20 feet, which is twice the required setback required in a PF zoning district.

#### *Landscape and Screening*

The project includes ample landscaping primarily along the perimeter of the site to screen the building and yard from both the residences and the cemetery proper. The twenty-percent landscape area coverage exceeds the required 15 percent required for industrial and commercial sites. Additionally, the entire site will be screened from the east by a chain-link fence with green privacy slats and lush shrubs. The existing masonry walls along the residential boundary are six to eight feet tall and are proposed to remain. The large, California-native perimeter shrubs (California Wax Myrtle, *Morella californica*) are evergreen, fast-growing, and are anticipated to mature to a height of 20 to 30 feet, with a span of 10 to 20 feet wide. These shrubs will effectively create a "green wall" to help screen the project from view.

#### *Outdoor Storage*

Due to the unique needs of the cemetery operations, approximately 15,800 square feet or 41 percent of the site is proposed for outdoor storage of excess stockpiled soil that remains from excavation of burial plots. The excess soil is removed on an as-needed basis, typically every two months. Also proposed within the outdoor storage area are cement vaults that are delivered periodically but vary on any given day. The concrete construction of the vaults prevents more than two from being stacked on top of one another. Two roll-off containers, used for green waste and trash, are proposed to be serviced by Bedford Solid Waste, a contract waste removal company. The Public Works Department and Utilities Department have accepted this solid waste arrangement; however, the project is conditioned by the city to reserve the right to require conventional solid waste service in the unlikely event the aforementioned arrangement proves to create a nuisance on the site.

#### *Parking*

The Municipal Code requires warehousing establishments to provide one parking space per each 1,040-square-foot of gross floor area, but not less than one space per employee. Office uses are required to provide one space per 260 square feet of floor area. Based on these calculations, and including parking spaces for six employees, eight parking spaces are required. Nine parking spaces have been provided on the site.

#### Alternative(s)

The City Council, through written findings, may determine that the proposed project is not consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and programs of the General Plan, and deny the project. Any future development of the 0.87-acre site would require review by the Community Development Department through either a Conditional Use Permit or a Building Permit, consistent with the current General Plan and R-2 zoning standards.

#### Environmental Review

Under the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared and circulated for public review from April 19, 2023, to May 18, 2023. Mitigations are recommended for the areas of Air Quality, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Noise, and Tribal Cultural Resources to reduce any potential impacts to *less than significant* levels. Staff recommends that the Mitigated Negative Declaration be adopted. No additional environmental review is required.

#### Fiscal Considerations

There are no significant fiscal impacts expected to result from the land use change. The loss of the landlocked parcel for residential land could have impacts on reduced housing potential, however other residential land in the City is still available for development. The construction of the new maintenance building will be required to pay impact fees that will go towards providing services, such as fire and police, and maintaining public facilities.

#### Impact to the Community

The proposed Cemetery District Expansion and maintenance building will benefit the City by allowing the Santa Maria Cemetery District to continue to provide burial services and plots which will serve new and existing development.

#### ATTACHMENTS

- A: Vicinity Map
- B: CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
- C: Mitigation Monitoring Program
- D: Existing and Proposed Land Use and Zoning Maps
- E: Planning Commission Resolution No. 2820
- F: Planning Commission Resolution No. 2821
- G: PD2022-0014 Permit
- H: PD2022-0014 Plan Set