



Item No: 1  
Meeting Date: 5/22/2012

To: Planning Commission

Date: 5/14/2012

Submitted By:

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**Subject:** PA 12-018 The Nueva High School Pre Application  
2600 S. Delaware Street (APN 035-320-290)

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## RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission review the proposed high school project on a preliminary basis and provide input to the applicant and staff.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

The Bay Meadows Phase II project is an 83-acre transit-oriented development with a range of land uses, including housing, commercial, parks, and open spaces, located close to the Hillsdale Caltrain station. There are a number of past approvals that provides the framework for the redevelopment of the Bay Meadows Race Track with a transit-oriented development project. The project site is located in the San Mateo Rail Corridor Transit-Oriented Development Plan Area and the Bay Meadows Phase II Specific Plan Amendment area. Other documents that apply to the project site include the Bay Meadows Phase II Design Guidelines and Development Standards. A full description of the City entitlement history for the Bay Meadows II project site, including a map and table showing the approved program on each block is included as Attachment 1.

The project site is a 2.75 acre portion of the 3.75 acre Mixed Use 1 (MU1) block on the northwestern portion of the Bay Meadows II project site. This is the only remaining block of the 18 block project site that does not have an approved SPAR planning application. The illustrative plan showing the approved building footprints and overall site plan is included as Attachment 2.

Block MU1 also contains the one acre affordable housing site on the western portion fronting the Delaware of the block that is required to be dedicated to the City for affordable housing under the Bay Meadows II Development Agreement.

The southern portion of the parcel includes an 18-foot public access easement for the 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue Promenade. This easement is an important part of the bicycle and pedestrian connectivity of the Bay Meadows Phase II project site. It visually link the Community Park and Delaware Street via a Class I multi-use path in a landscaped setting.

The project site is adjacent to the Bay Meadows Community Park. This park will be offered for dedication to the City. In 2011 the City Council approved plans for interim parking improvements at the park, consisting of a turf, multi-purpose play field, a wetlands garden area, a baseball backstop, a lighted perimeter pathway, open turf areas for informal use, a restroom facility, and other improvements such as benches, bike racks, trash cans, etc. Construction on these improvements is anticipated to begin this summer with the park opening to the public in 2013.

Construction Status: Infrastructure construction commenced in September 2009 and is still underway in the northern and eastern portions of the project site, which is authorized under the Phase I Site Development Permit. Infrastructure work includes the rough grading of the building pads on the private blocks but primarily involves work on the public streets, including the installation of the streets and sidewalks and associated improvements including street lights, street trees, etc. Building permits have been submitted and are currently under review for the construction of 63 townhomes on Block RES 3, and the community and neighborhood parks.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Nueva High School is a private high school for up to for up to 600 students. The Nueva School, located on a 33-acre campus in Hillsborough and founded in 1967, is a nationally recognized independent school serving gifted and talented students in grades PreK-8. The progressive, child-centered school emphasizes integrated studies, creative arts, and social-emotional learning. It provides a constructivist program, project-based learning, and special-area teachers in visual art, reading, math, science, music, physical education, technology, and social and emotional learning. The new high school would be a satellite campus to the main Hillsborough campus serving only high school students. Administration staff and other facilities would remain in Hillsborough. The applicant has prepared a project description which is included as Attachment 3. Additional details regarding the school's specific activities, expected day, weekend and summer use hours, types of special events, and other operational issues related to a private high school will be provided with the formal planning application submittal.

Total square footage of the educational building is 134,790 square feet plus an 18,220 square foot parking garage with 70 parking spaces that is tucked under a classroom building. The proposed floor area ratio is 1.13, which is below the maximum of 2.5 permitted on the entire block. There is one main building that is divided into a series of smaller sections that include classroom space, theatre (425 seat), gym (regulation size high school basketball court and two half courts), library, cafeteria and other space. The project would be phased with the theatre and one portion of the classrooms being developed after the first phase. Project plans are included as Attachment 4. A data form has been prepared that shows how these preliminary plans meet the development standards for the project (Attachment 5).

The General Plan designation for the site is Transit-Oriented Development. The zoning classification is Bay Meadows Specific Plan. Schools are a permitted use in this district. The project will require approval of a Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR) Planning Application which would be reviewed by the Planning Commission. The SPAR findings are included as Attachment 6.

Access to the site is proposed from one entrance off of Delaware Street. This driveway is proposed as a one-way driveway with an exit on 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue aligned with the signalized intersection at Kyne Street. The driveway also serves as a 20-foot wide emergency vehicle access way. The 70 parking spaces are intended to serve staff and parent visitors with no student parking on site. It is anticipated that 50 percent of the staff would park on site, with the majority of parking provided for parent and guests.

The student drop off/pick up area is located on site. Normal school hours will likely be from 8:30am - 3:30pm, with limited start time of 7:30am for some classes. Staggered drop-off times may be used to alleviate congestion. Staff and faculty arrive and leave at different times than drop-off period, which will avoid congestion. A private bus and carpool program will be implemented to reduce traffic flow.

The applicant prepared a LEED Checklist that documents achievement of a Platinum level, which exceeds the Green Building Ordinance requirement of meeting the LEED Silver level for this project type (Attachment 7).

### **CODE AND POLICY COMPLIANCE**

Bay Meadows Phase II Specific Plan Amendment: The Bay Meadows Phase II Specific Plan Amendment sets the broad framework for the creation of a Transit-Oriented Development on the 83-acre former race track facility. The development program outlined in the Plan includes office, residential and retail uses to create a dynamic, mixed use neighborhood that promotes the utilization of transit to reduce vehicle trips. The Plan permits school uses on the site and does not include any specific provisions for this type of use.

Design Guidelines and Development Standards: The Bay Meadows Phase II Design Guidelines and Development Standards include design standards that apply to this project. These guidelines and standards built upon the project framework laid out in the Specific Plan Amendment. They also override the Zoning Code in certain specified areas. An excerpt of the document with the most significant standards is included as Attachment 8. One key requirement is that the project provide an architectural feature on 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue at the visual terminus of the Linear Park. This architectural feature is intended to be an element that focuses attention through special massing, roof forms, windows, window patterns, entrance portals, or other architectural elements to provide a visual emphasis. The project design proposes a large scale vertical element integrated into the deeply mullioned glazing system that incorporates both signage and a flag pole.

As noted in the document, each applicant for a SPAR must be prepared to explain how their proposed design is consistent with the overall design intent and goals of the guidelines and standards, as well as the Specific Plan Amendment. However, the document explains that a SPAR application may be approved even if one or more specified standards and guidelines are not met, if the proposed design is found to be consistent with the overall design intent and goals of the Design Guidelines and Development Standards and the Specific Plan Amendment. Deviations from the document are described in Attachment 9.

The most significant variation is that the proposed project is a private high school rather than the anticipated residential or commercial use. Because an educational use was not contemplated in the Design Guidelines and Development Standards, there is a lack of direction regarding the appropriate site layout and architectural design principles for this use. Likewise, there is nothing in the Specific Plan Amendment that provides direction for the design. Some design guidelines can still be applied to educational buildings. For example, there is a design desire to create a variety of building heights and articulation and variation in building forms. Articulation of building walls through the addition of protruding elements or indentations and step backs serve to break up building walls and reduce the apparent mass of tall walls.

Project Design Review: This project will require design review by the City's design review consultant. His review will focus on conformance with the Bay Meadows Phase II Design Guidelines and Development Standards as applicable. The City has experience in the review of private school design, and the most important design component is respecting the context of the surrounding site. The surrounding context at the Bay Meadows site include modern office and retail space on Delaware Street and high density residential on blocks MU 2 and RES 1.

Environmental Review: Additional studies and analysis of traffic, parking, noise and other environmental topics will be completed to confirm that the findings of the EIR prepared for the Specific Plan Amendment which was certified in 2005 are still valid.

Requirements for Parking and Traffic Management: The Specific Plan Amendment and related Rail Corridor TOD Plan does not set any parking standards for this type of use. The documents require the preparation of a Parking Management Plan at the time of the SPAR planning application. This Parking Management Plan would include management practices and related TDM measures to ensure parking demand is managed through parking controls. The policy intent of the Corridor Plan with respect to parking is that a project such as this would have a lower parking demand than that of similar uses outside the Corridor Plan are since the project is located near a CalTrain station, various bus lines, and is required to implement transportation demand management strategies to maximize non-automobile trips.

One significant concern with parking on the Bay Meadows II site is that residential guest and employee parking is located on the street, and therefore there is not available parking identified on the street for overflow parking if on-site parking is insufficient to meet demand. Therefore, a very detailed analysis of parking demand and how various TDM measures serve to reduce that demand will be necessary.

A Parking Management Plan and a related Traffic Management Plan were prepared and approved as part of SPARs 1-3. There is also a project trip budget with associated trip monitoring required. The Traffic Management Plan makes assumptions about the MU1 block being developed with 187 residential units. The change in use to a school will affect the trip budget calculations. No development on block MU 1 was assumed prior to completion of the grade separations under 28<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> avenues. This will need to be considered for modification since the timeframe for construction of the grade separations is unknown at this time. Additionally, TDM measures will need to be developed. Potential items include basic items such as participation in the TMA and on-site commuter assistance. Specific TDM measures could include subsidies for use of public/ private shared transportation options including Caltrain and SamTrans or private buses, and transportation ride match program. The measures would be monitored for effectiveness and modified as necessary to ensure compliance with trip reduction goals.

The Bay Meadows II Parking Management Plan and Traffic Management Plan will need to be updated along with a more detailed dedicated section on parking and drop off management at the school, including special events, parent education, access points, monitoring, etc similar to those prepared for other private schools.

## ISSUES

Parking Provided: As noted above, the parking requirements for the project are to be set with the SPAR approval through a Parking Management Plan and a related Traffic Management Plan. Currently the plans provide a total of 70 parking spaces on site intended to serve 50 percent of anticipated staff and parent visitors with no student parking on site. The City's Zoning Code contains parking standards for private high school uses, which serve as a starting point for this project. This standard requires one parking space for each school employee plus one parking space per 6 students. Based on this requirement, approximately 170 parking spaces would be required for the proposed high school. Additionally, the Code requires adequate on-site access and loading for buses.

The City has experience with the parking provided at Serra High School as part of their Master Plan approved in 2003. The Zoning Code required 248 spaces for their 1000 students and 80 staff members. However, 328 on-site spaces were provided. This resulted in the project exceeding the City's parking standards by 80 spaces, or 32 percent. The additional parking was provided as a result of neighborhood concerns over a lack of parking on the site. In addition, Serra leases an additional 200 parking spaces at the Elks club for use by their students. Serra also developed a parking and access management plan.

Up to this point shared parking or the provision of additional parking underneath the development footprint of the two sites has not yet been examined. The issue will be evaluated in more detail with the submittal of the formal planning application and the required updated Bay Meadows II Parking Management Plan and Traffic Management Plan. The Commission should give a preliminary indication as to the adequacy of the proposed number of parking spaces.

On Site Circulation and Driveway Locations: Access to the site is proposed from one entrance off of Delaware Street. This driveway is one-way with an exit on 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue aligned with the signalized intersection at Kyne Street. The student drop off/pick up area is located on site. One preliminary concern about this location is whether the queue distance is sufficient enough to prevent traffic from backing up on Delaware Street while waiting to enter the project site driveway. An additional inbound driveway lane may be warranted along with multiple, parallel drop off zones on site. Traffic out of the site would be at a signalized intersection and pass over the Class I multi-use path on 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which may also create a backup on site depending on the turning movement out of the site. Additional analysis of the access into the site, the size and location of the drop-off/pick-up area, and the queue distance would be studied by the City's traffic engineering consultants, Hexagon. Their analysis would include field review of other private high schools including Serra High School.

Affordable Housing Access and Interface: Block MU1 contains the one acre affordable housing site on the western portion fronting the Delaware of the block that is required to be dedicated to the City for affordable housing under the Bay Meadows II Development Agreement. The City has retained Brookwood Group to provide advisory consulting services to assist in the evaluation of the design and development viability of this one acre site. Brookwood Group will help to identify and analyze key issues and define the limitations that will impact the project's future design flexibility. The City's initial goals with respect to this site are to provide approximately 68 below market rate (BMR) units with approximately 1.7 parking spaces per unit.

The initial findings for this site is that circulation and access are limited due to the corner location. The ideal access point would be on Delaware Street, as far north as possible. It may be possible to share a driveway with the high school either for primary access or service-only access (loading and refuse/recycling). City staff will continue to collaborate and refine the site access points for both sites. Should a shared access way not be pursued, a separate driveway would be needed that is 1) located a sufficient distance from the corner of Delaware Street and 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue to avoid conflicts with the intersection and 2) be located a sufficient distance from the high school driveway to avoid circulation conflicts.

A significant issue for consideration and further refinement is the relationship between the BMR housing and the high school on their shared property line. The preliminary project plans do not include an elevation of the western building façade which would include the back of the theatre building and classroom space. The site plan for the high school shows a ten foot setback on the western property line with buildings approximately 51-foot high facing the housing. No step backs or articulation are provided, but windows are likely to be located along this façade. The location of balconies and open space on the BMR housing site would need to be examined.

Community Park Interface: City Park and Recreation Department staff have reviewed the plans and met with the applicant to review the interface between the project site and the adjacent community park. Currently the plans show a fence adjacent to the park with a sliding gate that would provide direct access to the park site from the high school. The Park and Recreation Department, as well as the Police Department, have expressed concerns over the direct access to the park as it may create security concerns both for students as well as the public at the park. More detailed design information relating to the fence and gates along the park property line will be required with the formal planning application submittal. The interface of the school buildings with the park will also need to be examined. Depending on the outcome our discussion for shared use the project may need to go the City's Park and Recreation Commission prior to the final Planning Commission review of the SPAR planning application.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT**

The applicant conducted a neighborhood meeting on May 14, 2012. A total of eight persons attended the meeting. Residents were generally supportive of the project, with questions posed related to the window types, parking spaces onsite and for special events, facilities at the Community Park, and phasing of the project.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH/COMMENTS:**

Notice of this meeting was published in the Examiner newspaper 10 days before the meeting. In accordance with the City's Municipal Code noticing requirements, this hearing was noticed to the following parties ten days in advance:

- Approximately 290 property owners, residential tenants and business tenants within 1,000 feet of the project site; and,
- The City's "900 List" which contains nearly 100 Homeowner Associations, Neighborhood Associations, local utilities, media, and other organizations interested in citywide planning projects.

A public comment letter was submitted and is included as Attachment 10.

## SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

At this time, staff is seeking Planning Commission comments and input on the following issues:

- Location and Amount of Onsite Parking – Parking amount and location.
- On Site Circulation and Driveway Locations. Adequacy of site to accommodate required on site circulation, including the queuing and drop off area for the school use. Location of driveway entrances and one way exit on 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Preliminary Design – Architectural style, massing, architectural feature, and building form. Relationship with the affordable housing site with the western elevation and the park on the eastern elevation.

Following this study session, the applicant will revise the plans as necessary to respond to comments from staff and the Planning Commission and submit a formal planning application.

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Entitlement History, Map and Table with Approved Program for Bay Meadows II
2. Illustrative Site Plan for Bay Meadows II
3. Project Description
4. SPAR Findings for Approval
5. Reduced Project Plans
6. Data Form
7. LEED Checklist
8. Applicable Bay Meadows Phase II Design Guidelines and Development Standards
9. List of Exceptions to Bay Meadows Phase II Design Guidelines and Development Standards
10. Public Comments

### CC (AR and attachments)

Janice Thatcher, Wilson Meany  
Kim Havens, Wilson Meany  
Michael Stoner, Lake Street Ventures  
Bill Leddy, LEDDY MAYTUM STACY Architects  
Charlie Stott, LEDDY MAYTUM STACY Architects  
Rick Holmstrom, Menlo Equities  
Terry Lee, The Nueva School  
Diane Rosenberg, The Nueva School  
Bob Baum, GouldEvansBaumThornley  
Doug Thornley, GouldEvansBaumThornley  
Alan Katz, Brookwood Group  
Shep Heery, Brookwood Group

### CC (Email Notification)

Interested Parties and Neighborhood Meeting Attendees (If email address was provided)