



Planning Commission
Agenda Report
April 23, 2025

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Alex Hamilton, Interim Director of Community Development
Nancy Lee, Development Services Manager

BY: Gabriel Salazar, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Conditional Use Permit No. 2024-01/ Precise Development Plan No. 2024-02/ Tentative Tract Map No. 084624/ Director Approval Request No. 2025-05 to redevelop and subdivide a 4.5- acre site currently occupied by a 53,450 square foot (sq.ft.) bowling alley and retail tenant spaces into a mixed-use development composed of 83-three-story townhomes and 10 three-story live-work units, landscaping improvements, and associated infrastructure on a 4.5-acre lot located at 11459 Imperial Highway (APN: 8023-008-004). Environmental: Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project will not have a significant effect on the environment per section 15332 (In-Fill Development Projects) of the CEQA Guidelines. Section 15332 involves in-fill development within urbanized areas.

Recommendation:

That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt Resolution No. 25-03, to approve Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 2024-01 subject to the Conditions of Approval contained in Exhibit "A".
2. Adopt Resolution No. 25-04, to approve Precise Development Plan (PDP) No. 2025-02 subject to Conditions of Approval contained in Exhibit "A".
3. Adopt Resolution No. 25-05 to approve Tentative Tract Map (TTM) No. 084624, subject to the Conditions of Approval contained in respective Exhibit "A".
4. Adopt Resolution No. 25-06 to approve Director Approval Request (DAR) No. 2025-05, subject to the Conditions of Approval contained in respective Exhibit "A".
5. Consider and find that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines pursuant to Section 15332 (In-Fill Development Projects)

Authority:

Section 17.02.205.D.1 ("Precise Development Plans") of the Norwalk Municipal Code ("NMC") authorizes the Planning Commission of the City of Norwalk ("Planning Commission") to review and approve precise development plans for new construction in compliance with the NMC, that such development meets the standards and criteria, and find that the proposed development will not be detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare nor adversely affect property values or the present and future development of surrounding areas.

NMC Section 17.02.210.A authorizes the Planning Commission to review Conditional Use Permit applications involving the mixed-use development in the C-3 zone.

NMC Section 17.02.203 authorizes the Director at his or her discretion to refer any Director Approval Request to the Planning Commission for review.

NMC Section 16.02.080 authorizes the Planning Commission to review applications and render decisions on Tentative Maps.

Introduction/Background:

The Subject Property is located at 11459 Imperial Highway (APN No. 8023-008-004). The subject site, at approximately 4.5 acres, has a General Plan designation of General Commercial and a zoning classification of General Commercial (C-3). The project site is situated on Imperial Highway, between Firestone Boulevard and Orr and Day Road to the west, Roseton Avenue to the east, and Gettysburg Drive to the north. There is a driveway entrance to the South of the property along with a driveway entrance to the North and a third access point along the eastern edge through the Imperial Highway frontage road.

The Subject Property is currently developed with a commercial building with a primary tenant and retail tenant spaces totaling 53,450 square feet (sq. ft.) constructed in 1957 per Los Angeles County Assessor Records. The primary tenant is a bowling alley, and other tenants include billiards and hair salon. The current site has minimal perimeter landscaping as the commercial lot is predominately covered in asphalt.

The Subject Property is located within a fully developed area and surrounded by Single-Family Residential (R-1) zone to the north and east, General Commercial (C-3) to the southwest and south, and Specific Plan Area No. 6 to the northwest.

Project description:

Johanna Crooker (Applicant), on behalf of MLC Holdings, Inc., the developer, and the property owner Robert Steuber, HAS Enterprise, is requesting approval of PDP No. 2024-02-06, CUP No. 2024-01, TTM No. 2024-01 and DAR No. 2025-05 to demolish an existing commercial building to construct a mixed-use development consisting of 83 three-story town home units

and 10 live work units with on-site parking, landscaping improvements and associated infrastructure. The proposed project density is 22 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). The project would provide 223 total on-site parking spaces, including 186 two-garage spaces, 30 open guest spaces, and seven open guest spaces for the live-work units.

Site Plan

The site is designed with buildings situated on either side of a primary drive aisle, with a park area, including amenities on the rear of the property. Thirteen buildings are proposed with seven located on the west side and six located on the east side. There will be three distinct building types. Courtyard areas are located in front of the townhomes with abundant landscaping proposed along the perimeter of the development. Pedestrian connections facilitate access throughout the site, to the amenities and the live-work units. The 10 live work units front Imperial Highway set back 15 feet from the southern property line, and, along with the townhomes will be setback 40 feet from the northern property line and 15 feet from the eastern property line and 10 feet from the western property line. The live work and townhomes will have a maximum height of 38 feet, seven inches measured from the finished grade to the top of the roof. Each live-work and town home unit contains a private patio or balcony ranging from 24 sq. ft. to 114 sq. ft.

The live work units front the major arterial street of Imperial Highway with a 26-feet wide enhanced plaza with decorative paving at the entrance and landscaping providing separation and buffer from the street. The site is bordered by an entry monumentation wall with decorative concrete paving to match the development and entrance along with accent trees on each side. Primary access to the site will be through Imperial Highway with emergency access only along Gettysburg Drive. Amenities to the project will include a community space area with barbeque stations, covered common patio areas, and a water fountain located at the rear of the site. A laundry room will also be provided for each unit. Abundant landscaping and trees are woven throughout the site, surface parking and perimeter.

Floor Plan

The project includes 13 buildings with three different building configurations: five plex, a seven plex, and an eight plex, each with their own color scheme. The unit sizes for the townhomes vary from 1,215 to 1,773 sq. ft. with two and three bedrooms.

The 10 three-story live-work units will consist of the five-plex buildings located along Imperial Highway. These units will offer pedestrian friendly access from the public right of way on the ground floor. The live work units will feature a workspace (approximately 130 square feet) on the first floor beneficial to entrepreneurs that have home based businesses such as a boutique business or sole-proprietor service professional studio space. These units will have the second and third floors as their residential living areas. The live work units will range from 1,863 square feet to 2,002 square feet with standard parking spaces.

The 83 townhome units will either be situated in the seven plex or the eight plex buildings. These buildings have three different configurations ranging from two bedrooms and two bathrooms to three bedrooms and three bathrooms. These units vary in size from 1,215 sq.ft. to 1,773 sq.ft. Of the 83 townhomes, 45 will have standard two-car garages and 33 will have two-car tandem parking garages. Garages will be equipped with ample space for storage of the trash collection bins.

Landscaping

Additionally, the project will include approximately 37,200 sq. ft. of open space of landscaping, covering approximately twenty percent of the site. Landscaping will include 24-inch and 36-inch box trees, including Palo Verde, Chaste, Strawberry, Austrian Willow, Crape Myrtle, Lacebark Elm, Tipa and Mondell Pine Forest. The project will also include additional shrubs, vines, grass and ground cover throughout the Proposed Project site.

The proposed landscaping as proposed, which requires 36,068 sq. ft. meets the minimum required with 36,070 sq. ft. provided. The proposed landscaping will enhance the visual aesthetic of the project, provide curb appeal, complement the mixed-use project and provide shade for vehicles, residential homeowners, and visitors.

Elevations

The Proposed Project will feature a contemporary farmhouse characteristics style with board and slat siding, lap horizontal siding, covered balcony, wrought iron railings, gable roof accents, and concrete tile roofing. The lower level in the townhome and live work units each have a covered porch area, entrance which provides variation in the elevation as the second floor level includes a deck or balcony. Additionally, the townhomes deck and patio areas contain tile roofing serving as decorative buffer between the levels. The live work units will be more vertical with balconies on the second level and third level.

Off-Street Parking and Site Circulation

Pursuant to NMC Section 17.03.040, the off-street parking requirement for mixed-use developments may be calculated in two ways:

- 1) required parking for multiple-family dwellings plus required parking for commercial uses, or
- 2) as determined by parking analysis for the specific project.

Based on the first approach, the required parking is 301 parking spaces (294 for residential and seven for commercial) with an overall ratio of 3.2 spaces per unit. Per multifamily standards, the parking ratio is two spaces per unit with one or two bedrooms and one additional space per additional bedroom. Guest parking is one space for every three units.

The commercial parking requirement is a space for every 250 square feet of commercial floor area.

The Proposed Project is providing 223 parking spaces and exercising the second method of analysis for the determination of adequate parking. Urban Crossroads (Attachment I) submitted a parking study that compares calculated parking ratios based on comparable projects, parking generation rates based on the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), and hourly shared parking demand and utilization per the Urban Land Institute's Shared Parking, 3rd Edition 2020. Based on the parking study, per the ITE's Parking Generation Manual which evaluated parking based on the uses, specifically multi-family low-rise residential and small office building the project requires 121 parking spaces when the ITE Parking Generation Manual criteria is used. Additionally, the parking study notes that the proposed land uses have parking demands that peak during different times of the day which facilitates shared parking. Shared parking encourages the multiple use of a parking space throughout the day. For instance, the parking supply needed for residential uses during the early morning or late evening may be utilized by a live work client during midday hours.

The parking study also compared the Proposed Project to other comparable projects. Comparable projects in the study had parking ratios from 2.0 – 2.3 spaces per unit. In comparison, the Proposed Project would have a ratio of 2.4 spaces per unit providing more parking per unit and supporting the proposed parking demand for both tenants and visitors without impacting surrounding neighborhoods. Therefore, in conclusion, based on the parking study, the Proposed Project with a parking ratio of 2.4 spaces per unit and 235 total parking spaces exceeds the required number of stalls 121 per the ITE parking generation application.

Being that the project will create areas of common ownership, a condition of approval has been added to require the creation of a homeowner's association for the project. The association will be responsible for the maintenance of common area landscaping, shared driveways, and the exterior restoration of all buildings, structures and walls on the site. The homeowner's association Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions must be approved by the City Attorney prior to finalization of the project/issuance of building permits.

Analysis:

The Proposed Project is located in the General Commercial (C-3) zone. Due to there being no residential standards for townhomes the project is analyzed and compared to the Multi-Family High Density Residential Zone (R-4). The following table compares project compliance with the applicable R-4 zone development standards (NMC Section 17.05):

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS	NMC REQUIREMENT	PROPOSED
Building Site	25,000 sq. ft.	189,921.6 sq. ft.
Maximum Height	35'/ 3 stories	38'-9" (29'-7" to base roof) Height above allowed per NMC 17.03.230
Minimum Front Yard Setback (from Imperial Highway)	15'	15'-5" (South Lot Line)
Minimum Side Yard Setback:	-	-
From single-family residential	10'	15' (East Lot Line)
from commercial area	5'	10'-10" (West Lot Line)
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	15'	40'-6" (North Lot Line)
Minimum Amenities	4 minimum	4 Provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbecue area • Common covered patio • Laundry room • Water fountain
Density	23 to 30 du/ac	22.1 du/ac
Minimum Common Open Space	Total: 35,600 sq. ft. 2 bedrooms – 300 sq. ft. (4,800SF) 3 bedrooms – 400 sq. ft. (30,800SF)	Total: 40,067 sq. ft. 35,365 sq. ft. 2 bedrooms – 4,800 sq. ft. 3 bedrooms – 30,800 sq. ft.
Minimum Private Open Space	4,650 sq. ft. total (50 sq. ft. per unit)	4,702 sq. ft. (open space decks/balconies)
Required Landscaping	20% of the development site (36,068 sq. ft.)	Approximately 36,070 sq. ft.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS	NMC REQUIREMENT	PROPOSED
Required Off-street Parking	Total – 301 parking spaces Or Parking Study – 121 spaces (1.3 spaces per unit)	Covered: 186 Uncovered: 37 223 spaces (exceeding parking supply)
Minimum off-street parking spaces for offices	1,790 sq. ft. 1 space/250 sq. ft.	7 Uncovered spaces
Minimum Unit Size	2 bedrooms – 850-1,000 sq. ft. 3 bedrooms – 1,100+ sq. ft.	2 bedrooms – 1,215-1863 sq. ft. 3 bedrooms – 1,496-2,002 sq. ft.

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

The purpose of the conditional use permit is to ensure that the degree of compatibility required by this title shall be maintained with respect to the particular use on the particular site, giving consideration to other existing and potential uses within the general area in which such use is located or proposed to be located.

In the C-3 zone, a CUP is required to develop a mixed-use project involving apartment with a commercial component. Previous similar mixed-use projects have also included live work units with townhomes. Staff has determined that the proposed use of townhomes and live work units are consistent with the zoning. Furthermore, the Proposed Project as proposed in ensuring health, safety and welfare are analyzed and consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. The subject site will have primary ingress and egress on Imperial Highway. There will be only emergency access on Gettysburg Drive which will ensure and maintain the integrity of the single-family residential neighborhood, north of the project site

PRECISE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The purpose and intent of requiring precise development plan review is to achieve a reasonable level of quality in harmony with precise plans and community objectives for social, economic and physical well-being, and to protect existing and potential developments and uses on adjacent and surrounding properties.

It is staff's assessment that the Proposed Project will have a positive impact on the surrounding neighborhood, redevelop an existing commercial site into housing, diversify housing stock, and improve the economic vitality of the site. New landscape improvements and architectural building treatments will enhance the overall area. The Proposed Project is

consistent with the General Plan as it provides much needed housing adjacent to single-family residential with a transition to commercial uses.

TENTATIVE TRACT MAP

The site currently is composed by only one parcel of land approximately 4.35 acres. The applicant proposes a subdivision of this parcel into ninety-three (93) townhome units, of which ten (10) units will be live-work units. Accessibility to the site will be via Imperial Highway with emergency vehicle access along Gettysburg Drive. Along with the construction for the units, infrastructure in the area will be upgraded to service the Proposed Project, including driveways, sidewalks, curb, gutters, and parkway landscaping. The site will meet City standards with regards to these upgrades. The subdivision of land will result in the collection of parkland dedication fees, per NMC 16.03.090. The Engineering Division will review the tract map for compliance with Title 16, Subdivisions, of the NMC. The Final Tract Map requires approval by the City Council.

Per NMC 16.03.090, the project shall comply with the "Quimby Act" (parkland, park and recreation and fees). Per the NMC an applicant shall dedicate land, pay a fee in lieu thereof, or a combination of both, prior to approval of the final map. Therefore, staff has incorporated COA No. 4 (Resolution No. 25-05) to the project.

DIRECTOR APPROVAL REQUEST

The purpose of the director approval request is to provide a streamlined process for administrative approval of certain requests to encourage existing property and business owners to make improvements to their properties and/or businesses and allow new businesses to open and operate more quickly, while ensuring they meet the intent of the General Plan and this title.

The site is a "through lot" pursuant to NMC 17.01.060 which signifies "having front lines on two parallel of approximate parallel streets". The Proposed Project includes a 214-foot block wall and gate within the front setback along the rear property line that is inconsistent with NMC 17.05.420, since a 15-foot setback is required. The Proposed Project also proposes a six foot high block wall along the side property lines to the front property line. Per NMC 17.02.203B, the Director of Community Development has the authority to "include the approval of certain minor development and land use requests and adjustments or waivers of certain development standards" and "at his or her discretion refer any request to the Planning Commission for review". Currently, at the rear property line a six-foot high block wall combined with wrought iron fence serves as a buffer and separation from the surrounding residential neighborhood. Staff has conditioned that such fencing is covered with landscaping and shrubs. Staff is supportive of the block wall encroaching on the front setback along Imperial Highway. The proposed fencing and block walls although within the setback areas would minimize disruption to the adjacent residential community, ensure privacy, and that

the Proposed Project maintains the health, safety, and welfare of the neighborhood and is consistent with the ingress and egress access solely from Imperial Highway.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The Applicant hosted a community meeting on January 30th, 2025, at the Norwalk Arts and Sports Complex from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., with 23 residents attending. At the meeting, the community raised concerns about privacy and wall height abutting the single-family homes, noise, demolition and construction hours, displacement, and possible traffic issues. In response, the applicant has noted that the third-story windows will be opaque, so as to obstruct viewing of the adjacent residential homeowners back yards. There will be a six-foot block wall with landscaping to create a buffer as well. Concerns regarding vermin were brought up and the applicant mentioned that an exterminator will be fumigating the project site prior to demolition. Construction will take place per the City standards, typically 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Also, there will be no residents from the Proposed Project exiting to Gettysburg Drive as that exit will only be for emergency vehicles. The Proposed Project is a private development that will provide many benefits such as new housing, distinct in the form of townhomes and an opportunity to purchase a home for first-time homeowners.

Notice of this public hearing was published in The Norwalk Patriot and posted at the City's three designated posting sites and the City website on April 10, as well as mailed to 617 property owners and interested parties within 1,000 feet of the property on Thursday, April 10, 2025.

Environmental assessment:

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15332, this project would not have a significant effect on the environment and is listed as a Class 32 Categorical Exemption, which involves in-fill development within urbanized areas. The project proposal will consist of 83 townhome units and 10 live work units on a 4.36-acre site which will be serviced by all required public services. The applicant has conducted various studies involving traffic, noise, air quality and water quality. Based on the studies, the proposed project would be consistent with all criteria listed in CEQA Section 15332 and would not exceed thresholds triggering disqualifying exceptions. Also, the memorandum provided demonstrated that the Proposed Project would not have a significant effect on the environment and not subject to CEQA pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(3).

Summary:

The Proposed Project will have a positive impact to the surrounding neighborhood, redevelop an existing commercial site into housing, diversify housing stock, and improve the economic

vitality of the site. The project complies with applicable city codes and based on submitted studies and reports and the recommended conditions of approval, provide adequate parking, vehicular circulation, and pedestrian access. The project as proposed is consistent with General Plan objectives and policies including providing a balanced distribution of multi-family housing throughout the city. New landscape improvements and architectural building treatments will enhance the overall area. The Proposed Project is consistent with the General Plan as it provides much needed housing adjacent to single-family residential with a transition to commercial uses.

The Proposed Project will be an enhancement to an existing dated commercial building along a major highway street in Imperial Highway and revitalize the site with additional residents and new housing. Therefore, staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the Proposed Project and approve Resolutions No. 25-03, 25-04, 25-05, and 25-06.

Attachments:

- A. Resolution No. 25-03 (Conditional Use Permit No. 2024-01)
- B. Resolution No. 25-04 (Precise Development Plan No. 2024-02)
- C. Resolution No. 25-05 (Tentative Tract Map No. 084624)
- D. Resolution No. 25-06 (Director Approval Request No. 2025-05)
- E. Location and Vicinity Map
- F. Code Requirements Letter
- G. Project Plans Dated April 2, 2025
- H. CEQA Memorandum
- I. Trip Generation and Parking Study