

September 2, 2021

**CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS**

City of Long Beach

California

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Accept Categorical Exemption 21-055; approve a Site Plan Review for the construction of 84, three-story, townhomes, a 567 square foot community room, and a 2,294 square foot commercial space on a vacant 3.20 acre site; and approve Tentative Tract Map No. 83407 to create two lots, with 84 airspace residential condominiums on Lot 1, and a 3,600-square-foot site for the commercial use on Lot 2, located at 5801-5893 Atlantic Avenue, 5882-5892 Linden Avenue and 501 E South Street in the Mixed Use 3-A Zoning District (MU3-A). (District 9)

**APPLICANT:** Brandywine Homes  
c/o Brian Geis  
16580 Aston Street  
Irvine, CA 92626  
(Application No. 2105-07)

**DISCUSSION**

The site consists of an entire city block bound by 59<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Atlantic Avenue to the east, South Street to the south, and Linden Avenue on the west in the Mixed-Use 3 (MU3-A Series) Zoning District. The site has a General Plan Land Use Element PlaceType designation of Neighborhood-Serving Center or Corridor - Moderate (NSC-M). The 3.20-acre project site encompasses 30 parcels and has been vacant (Attachment A - Vicinity Map) since the City acquired the site through the Redevelopment Agency. Previous uses of the subject site included automobile gasoline sales and a dry-cleaning use. Accordingly, the applicant has been working closely with the Department of Toxic Substances Control to draft a site cleaning plan to prepare the soil for this project. Adjacent uses are typical of a commercial corridor and are described in Table 1 below.



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TABLE 1: Uses Adjacent to the Subject Site		
Location	Zoning Designation	Land Use
North	R-3-T, RMU3	Residential, Commercial
East	MU3	Library, Commercial
South	MU2	Commercial, Residential
West	MU3, R-3-T	Commercial, Residential

The subject site is served by a variety of multi-modal transportation options. The subject site is located within one-half mile of a High-Quality Transit Corridor or Major Transit Stop as defined by State law. Long Beach Transit operates high-frequency bus services (15 minutes or less in peak hours) on Atlantic Avenue (via Route 61) and South Street (via Route 192). The site is also served by bicycle facilities; a Class III bicycle lane on Linden Avenue abuts the site, and the site has been designed to accommodate future planned bicycle facilities on Atlantic Avenue. The Interstate-710 (I-710) freeway is located approximately 1.5 miles west of the subject site, and the 91 Freeway is located approximately one mile to the north.

The proposed project consists of the construction of 84 dwelling units arranged as three-story townhomes over two-car garages, 13 of which are proposed to be live-work units along Atlantic Avenue. As proposed, the units are market rate; the project is not subject to inclusionary housing requirements because it is not located within the Midtown Plan Area (SP-1) or Downtown Plan Area (PD-30) that are subject to the inclusionary housing ordinance (ORD-21-0006) that went into effect on March 6, 2021. Nevertheless, the additional housing units add to the City's housing supply and thus contribute to reducing the City's housing shortage. The project also includes 2,294 square feet of commercial space, a 567-square-foot community room, and 19 surface parking stalls that serve as parking for guests and commercial uses (Attachment B - Project Plans). The townhomes are configured in three (3) model types as shown in Table 2, below. Private open space is provided via patio decks and balconies while common open space features a centrally located pool and community room.

TABLE 2 Dwelling Unit Details				
Model Type	Number of Homes in Project	Number of Bedrooms per Unit	Number of Bathrooms per Unit	Floor Area of Unit
TH-A	27	2	2.5	1,335 SF
TH-B	28	3	2.5	1,166 SF
TH-C	29	3 OR 4	3.5	1,898 SF

The project's architecture incorporates a mix of exterior building materials and architectural articulation carried across the development. The modern slate color palate introduces eye-catching and playful colors peppered throughout which adds visual interest. The midblock structure along Atlantic Avenue serves as a community room and a coffee stand uses the playful color and helps break symmetry along the street. Additionally, the corner commercial two-story structure at Atlantic Avenue and South Street merges the materials and colors found throughout the development to create a neighborhood focal point and is expected to house a restaurant. Through the Site Plan

Review process, Staff collaborated with the developer to bring attention to this corner commercial space. The planned commercial activity is envisioned to be a local community hub and assist the reinvigoration of the Atlantic Avenue corridor. Staff further collaborated with the Public Works Department and the developer to bring forth a design to Atlantic Avenue itself which meets the requirements of existing policy documents of the General Plan.

Initial iterations of the project design included narrow sidewalks and diagonal parking on Atlantic Avenue that dominated the project frontage. As proposed, the project now includes an activated pedestrian-friendly design with full-width sidewalks, parallel rather than diagonal parking on right-of-way abutting the project's front façade, and bulb outs at the intersections that extend the sidewalk area at intersections and shorten pedestrian crossing distances. The project design and associated right-of-way configuration will also accommodate a planned protected bike lane on Atlantic Avenue. The combination of these features ensure that the project will strengthen the area's identity and sense of place and serve as the community anchor that has long been envisioned at this site, given its prominent location across from the Michelle Obama Library. This design further aligns with the Mobility Element and Bicycle Master Plan. These project features also promote traffic-calming designs as recommended by the Public Works Department Staff. The result is a planned public right of way which incorporates multimodal transportation with an emphasis on public safety.

The project also includes a Tentative Tract Map (Tract Map No. 83407) that would reconfigure the 30 existing ground lots into a two-lot subdivision. As designed, Lot 1 will be approximately 3.11 acres in size and Lot 2 will be approximately 3,600 square feet in size. Pursuant to Title 22 of the Long Beach Municipal Code, the minimum lot size for a new subdivision in the MU3-A Zoning District is 3,000 square feet. The map is intended for condominium proposes and would create 84 individual residential condominiums on Lot 1 (Attachment C - Tentative Tract Map) and a commercial tenant space on Lot 2. A Tentative Tract Map can be approved by the Planning Commission when positive findings can be made regarding compliance with the General Plan and Specific Plan, as well as the suitability of the subdivision design and site plan. The proposed subdivision creating residential condominiums is consistent with the requirements of the General Plan as it creates additional homeownership opportunities (Attachment D - Findings). The proposed subdivision is consistent with Housing Element Policy 4.2, which encourages a balance of rental and homeownership opportunities, including high-quality apartments, townhomes, condominiums, and single-family homes to accommodate the housing needs of all socioeconomic segments of the community, including large families."

The proposed project is the first to be designed in accordance with MU-3-A Zoning District, one of several mixed-use zones adopted by the City Council in 2019 and established to be consistent with the 2019 General Plan Land Use Element and implement the Neighborhood Serving Corridors and Centers PlaceType designation. The project complies with all applicable development standards of the zoning district, including setback and parking requirements, among others.

Public right-of-way dedications along 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Atlantic Avenue provide benefits to the surrounding neighborhoods as these allow for full-width sidewalks and parkways throughout the

project, and the extension of the Bicycle Master Plan's proposed bike lane along Atlantic Avenue while implementing a much-needed traffic calming design to the street as recommended by City traffic engineers (Attachment E - Conditions of Approval).

### **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE/OUTREACH**

A total of 244 notices of public hearing were distributed on August 18, 2021, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Zoning Regulations. As of the preparation of this report, no letters in response to the project were received.

Although not required by the municipal code, the applicant conducted a robust public outreach campaign prior to the code required hearing notifications. In addition to an onsite informational poster with contact information, the applicant also reached out to geographically adjacent neighborhood groups via email, mailers and held a community meeting with the Deforest Park Neighborhood Association.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines, a Class 32 Categorical Exemption (CE21-055) (Attachment F - CEQA Findings) was prepared for this project. The Class 32 exemption applies to projects that are consistent with the General Plan and all zoning regulations. As required by CEQA, the project is located within the City, occupies less than five acres, and is surrounded by urban uses. The site is served by all required utilities and public services. The project site has no value as a habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species. Technical Studies were prepared for the following topics per the Class 32 Categorical Exemption, Traffic, Noise, Air Quality, and Water Quality. Will-serve letters were obtained from the following utilities: Southern California Edison, Long Beach Water, and Long Beach Energy Resources.

Based upon the evidence contained in the technical reports noted above for the project, there will be no impact from the project on the environment, in accordance with the thresholds stated in Section 15332 (Infill Development) of the CEQA Guidelines.

However, based on the Phase 1 and Phase 2 studies prepared for the property, in conjunction with the buyer's due diligence, it was determined that the soil located in the southernmost portion of the property near the intersection of South Street and Atlantic Avenue is mildly contaminated and in need of clean-up due to prior uses on the site which included a dry-cleaning business and automobile repair. The Developer has applied to the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) on a voluntary basis to clean up the portion of the property and that proposed effort is currently under review. According to verbal conversations with representatives of DTSC, the cleanup of the site is relatively minor, and those actions associated with the cleanup will not have an impact upon the surrounding area as shown in the technical reports on file with the City.

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Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

- Attachment A - Vicinity Map
- Attachment B - Project Plans
- Attachment C - Tentative Tract Map
- Attachment D - Findings
- Attachment E - Condition of Approval
- Attachment F - Categorical Exemption