

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

DATE: JULY 12, 2006

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: GREG RAMIREZ, CITY MANAGER

BY: MIKE KAMINO, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: CONDUCT A PRE-SCREEN REVIEW AND PROVIDE DIRECTION REGARDING A REQUEST TO AMEND THE GENERAL PLAN CIRCULATION ELEMENT AND VACATE THE MOST EASTERLY AND UNIMPROVED PORTION OF THOUSAND OAKS BOULEVARD, EAST OF CARELL AVENUE, AND TO REMOVE A SLOPE EASEMENT (CASE NO. 06-PSR-002)

CC&R, Inc., on behalf of Mr. Henry Halimi, is seeking direction from the City Council regarding their client's desire to amend the General Plan Circulation Element in order to vacate the most easterly and improved portion of Thousand Oaks Boulevard, which extends across the southern portion of Mr. Halimi's vacant property. The applicant is also seeking input from the City Council on their request for the City to remove a slope easement from the property. The purpose of the pre-screen review is to provide an opportunity for the City Council to offer comments to assist the applicant in determining whether he should proceed with a formal request for the street vacation and removal of the slope easement.

Mr. Halimi's 8-acre, vacant parcel is located east of Carell Avenue and directly north of Agoura High School. The property is within the Local Park (P) zoning district, but is within the Restricted Open Space (OS-R) land use designation of the General Plan. The Restricted Open Space land use designation allows for the development of no more than one (1) single-family residence on the parcel.

Upon City incorporation, the City Council vacated all portions of Thousand Oaks Boulevard that extended into Old Agoura. Although Mr. Halimi's property was vacant at the time of this street vacation, the street easement on his parcel was retained. In fact, the General Plan Circulation Element calls for this portion of Thousand Oaks Boulevard to be improved as a 4-lane secondary arterial street that would connect with Easterly Road to the southeast. The applicant is requesting removal of this 4-lane secondary arterial from the General Plan Circulation Element. A majority of the 1000-foot long street easement is 50 feet in width. The eastern 255-foot length of the easement is 100 feet wide.

The City does not have current plans to improve the extension of Thousand Oaks Boulevard to Easterly Road. Per the General Plan, Thousand Oaks Boulevard would not be extended further beyond Easterly Road due to impacts on the Old Agoura neighborhood. However, staff recommends that the City retain its street easement in the event that the land could facilitate traffic circulation improvements to Agoura High School. Las Virgenes Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Donald Zimring submitted his attached letter in which he states the District's opposition to the street vacation. The District is considering providing new parking lots and a possible performing arts center on the north side of the campus, both of which may be aided with better access from Thousand Oaks Boulevard. The District also desires to retain opportunities to improve vehicular circulation around the high school campus. The District does not have any easements on Mr. Halimi's property.

For development of a single-family residence on Mr. Halimi's parcel, access could be taken either from Thousand Oaks Boulevard, on the west side of the property, or from Fountain Place, which currently terminates at the southeast corner of the lot. Mr. Halimi is considering developing a residence on the west end of the property and desires to use a portion of the City-owned street easement for development purposes. This would result in the placement of the house lower on the hill and, thus, necessitate less grading. Should the City retain the easement, no development could occur within the easement, other than street access to the building. This would result in the house being placed higher on the slope and, likely, additional grading. At this time, staff is uncertain of the extent of street improvements that would be required for development of the property. Also, it is common for the City to remove slope easements from private property, which were established by Los Angeles County prior to City incorporation for road maintenance purposes. However, this is typically done in conjunction with development entitlement, and staff recommends that slope easements on Mr. Halimi's property remain until they are analyzed with his development application.

If the City Council supports the applicant's request, the applicant will be required to file a General Plan Amendment application to vacate the street easement. The General Plan Amendment and street vacation would first be considered by the Planning Commission in a public hearing. The Planning Commission's recommendation would then be considered by the City Council in a public hearing for final action. If the City Council does not support the applicant's request, the City will retain the street easement, and the applicant could still pursue development of a single-family residence on the parcel.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council provide non-binding comments to the applicant as to whether he should proceed with his request to amend the General Plan Circulation Element and vacate the most easterly portion of Thousand Oaks Boulevard, east of Carell Avenue, and to remove a slope easement.

Attachments: Letter from Applicant
Letter from Donald M. Zimring, Ph.D. (LVUSD)
Assessor's Parcel Map
Map of General Plan Circulation Plan
Vicinity Map