

# **Attachment No. PC 2**

Applicant's Project Description

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**Ford Road Project**  
**Site Development Review Project Description and Justification**

***Project Description***

This signature project located at the Southeast corner of Macarthur Blvd. and Bonita Canyon Drive at the gateway to Newport Beach benefits from an SB 330 Preliminary Application that was deemed complete by the City on April 7, 2025. As a result of this deemed complete status, this project is permitted to proceed through this entitlement process without being subject to any City ordinances, policies, and standards adopted after the date of submission, except as specified in California Government Code Section 65589.5(o).

The intent of this development project is to provide much needed for-sale housing in the area close to UCI and the Irvine Business Complex. This area of Newport Beach is almost exclusively comprised of single family detached homes – for sale attached housing in this area is desperately desired particularly for families as starter homes. The total existing parcel is 1.06 acres and will be increased under the vesting tentative tract map to provide a 1.16-acre residential property and a separate gated parking area for the AT&T facility. The proposed project includes 27 townhomes within four proposed buildings that are aligned to provide ample landscape setbacks along Bonita Canyon Drive and at the same time block the Southern view of the unaesthetic AT&T building. The primary orientation of the buildings face toward the existing Bonita Canyon Sports Park – the project will connect to the existing trail on the North edge – this will keep ‘eyes on’ the park at all times of day and night creating a safer environment for all Newport Beach residents.

The vehicular access will come from the end of Ford Road that has little traffic. The entry will be shared with the AT&T parking lot. Fire aerial ladder access is easily available from Ford Road and Bonita Canyon Drive – however the project has been designed to accommodate the fire radius at entry and a ‘T’ (hammerhead) at the center of the project, if desired by the Fire Marshal. Each home includes a 2-car garage and there are an additional 13 guest parking spaces located on the project site. Residents will be required to use their garages for the parking of their vehicles to avoid any parking impacts on the adjacent community.

This project meets or exceeds all of the City’s objective design standards for multi-family projects. Where the project exceeds a standard, a waiver is technically required and explained below in the justification section. The architectural style has been designed to portray the character and quality of the nearby Port Street neighborhood. Architectural articulations and high-end stone, brick, wood siding have all been used to portray the elegance of the community. The floor plans are all designed light and bright with huge indoor/outdoor spaces including a 4th level Lanai in several of the plans. Within the community there are two common open space areas that will serve as social amenity areas including a cozy fire pit and picnic BBQ area.

The property that houses this project was included within City Council Resolution No. 2025-13, which adjusted the height limit for various properties within the HO-4 Subarea to accommodate residential development within the intended prescribed density range of 20 to 50 dwelling units per acre. Specifically, the City Council adjusted the height limit for this property to 48 feet, which is below the maximum height allowed for this area of 50 feet for flat roofs and 55 feet for sloped roofs. However, as explained in the justification section below this project would have independently qualified for a height adjustment under Newport Beach Municipal Code (“NBMC”) Section 20.30.060(C)(3).

### ***Justification***

Major Site Development Review – In accordance with NBMC Section 20.52.080(F) (Site Development Reviews), the City may approve or conditionally approve a site development review application, only after first finding that the Project is:

Finding:

*A. The proposed development is allowed within the subject zoning district.*

- The Project is allowed within the Zoning District. The Property is located at the terminus of Ford Road in the City of Newport Beach adjacent to Bonita Canyon Sports Park, and is identified by the City of Newport Beach as Housing Opportunity Site No. 141 in HO-4.
- The Project has been designed to comply with applicable standards of the Housing Overlay and other applicable zoning code regulations.

*B. In compliance with all of the following applicable criteria in NBMC Section 20.52.080(C)(2)(c):*

- a. Compliance with this Section, the General Plan, this Zoning Code, any applicable specific plan, and other applicable criteria and policies related to the use or structure;*
- b. The efficient arrangement of structures on the site and the harmonious relationship of the structures to one another and to other adjacent developments; and whether the relationship is based on standards of good design;*
- c. The compatibility in terms of bulk, scale, and aesthetic treatment of structures on the site and adjacent developments and public areas;*
- d. The adequacy, efficiency, and safety of pedestrian and vehicular access, including drive aisles, driveways, and parking and loading spaces;*
- e. The adequacy and efficiency of landscaping and open space areas and the use of water efficient plant and irrigation materials; and*
- f. The protection of significant views from public right(s)-of-way and compliance with NBMC Section 20.30.100 (Public View Protection).*

- The Project complies with the purpose and intent of the City's Housing Overlay, which allows for the development of residential housing units.
- The Project complies with all applicable development standards, including, but not limited to, floor area ratio, setbacks and parking.
- The Project has been designed to fully integrate pedestrian and vehicle access in a safe and efficient manner.
- The Project has been designed to include finished materials and landscaping to ensure it blends seamlessly with the surrounding residential development currently located within the Port Streets.
- The proposed design, bulk, and scale of the development is consistent with the existing neighborhood pattern of development. The open design, architecture and orientation of the Project helps ensure compatibility with the existing and long-term development pattern of the Port Streets.
- On site-parking is available to residents, guests, and visitors alike. The parking was developed to ensure the most efficient use of all available spaces, and to afford a greater interface with the adjacent rights-of-way to ensure compatibility with the pedestrian environment.
- There are no existing significant views through or across this property.
- Proposed landscaping complies with NBMC Chapter 14.17 (Water Efficient Landscaping) and NBMC Section 21.30.075 (Landscaping) including the installation and maintenance of drought tolerant and noninvasive species.

*C. The proposed development is not detrimental to the harmonious and orderly growth of the City, nor endanger, jeopardize, or otherwise constitute a hazard to the public convenience,*

- The Project is consistent with the development goals for the Housing Overlay. The Project fits in and complements the existing surrounding residential developments.
- The Project architecture is timeless, elegant and blends seamlessly with the architecture of the Port Streets. The Project will be a visual upgrade to the existing site and area.
- On site vehicular and pedestrian circulation has been designed to provide safe and efficient public access.

- The Project has been designed to accommodate safe and effective emergency vehicle access. Emergency vehicles will have access to the development from Ford Road.
- The construction will comply with all Building, Public Works, and Fire Codes. All ordinances of the City and all conditions of approval shall be complied with.

### **Objective Design Standards**

*Request for limited waiver of Multi-Family Objective Design Standards under NBMC Section 20.48.185(C), because the proposed project design standards exceed the City's standards. The Planning Commission may waive any of the design and development standards in this section upon finding that:*

- 1. The strict compliance with the standards is not necessary to achieve the purpose and intent of this section; and*
- 2. The project possesses compensating design and development features that offset impacts associated with the modification or waiver of standards.*

*(1) 20.48.185(N)(2)(b) (Landscape and Paving Zone (LPZ)) A four-foot minimum width zone shall be provided. The zone shall be landscaped a minimum of twenty (20) percent of the total site abutting a building. A combination of vines, ornamental, grasses, shrubs, ground cover, and ornamental trees shall be provided. Landscaping in pots is permitted.*

The current plan provides a 3.5' wide LPZ at most driveway areas, with a minimum width of 3' where the units are offset. These offsets contribute to enhanced building articulation, resulting in a more visually appealing elevation. Modifying the plan to meet the 4' minimum requirement would reduce the size of the amenity and landscape areas in front of the buildings due to setback and grading constraints. Our preference is to prioritize more landscaping in these front amenity areas rather than in front of the garages. The plan, as currently designed, complies with the 20% landscaped minimum requirement.

*(2) 20.48.185(R)(1)(a) (Horizontal Modulation – Maximum Building Length) No building shall be greater than one hundred fifty (150) feet in length.*

With the assumption that the original intent being to avoid lengthy, plain building masses, we've incorporated varied roof forms, deck recesses/projections, facade projections, and material variation individual to each unit from the next, providing the appearance of individual townhomes, rather than a long single building. The 8-plex building length is also limited by minimum garage widths and utility closet depths, so any further reduction would result in loss of a unit.

*(3) 20.48.185(R)(1)(c) (Horizontal Modulation –Minimum Depth) All recesses or projections shall be a minimum of two feet in depth.*

For the projections less than the 2 feet depth, varied material types and colors are provided at the projections for additional visual articulation.

*(4) 20.48.185(R)(1)(d) (Horizontal Modulation - Maximum Number) No facade shall have more than two total recesses or projections per facade.*

Due to the length of the 8-plex and the townhome arrangement of the units, limiting the modulation over full length wouldn't allow for enough material breaks to individualize the units between one another, and further emphasizing the original purpose for limiting the building length to avoid lengthy building masses.

### ***Height Adjustment Through Site Development Review***

Under NBMC Section 20.30.060(C)(3), the review authority may approve a site development review to allow an increase in the height of a structure above the base height only after first making all of the following findings:

*a. The project applicant is providing additional project amenities beyond those that are otherwise required.*

Under the Housing Overlay the project is subject to zero setbacks from the property line for the first floor. This project voluntarily integrates varying setbacks of up to 20 feet at points along the first floor with additional setbacks on the higher levels, and is purposely not built out to the property line. These setbacks help create more open space than would otherwise be required by code. The setbacks offer a project amenity beyond those otherwise required and contribute to a more visually appealing project for the neighborhood and community.

*b. The architectural design of the project provides visual interest through the use of light and shadow, recessed planes, vertical elements, and varied roof planes;*

Special time and attention have been focused on the architectural design of the project to provide visual interest through the use of light, shadow, vertical elements and varied roof planes. Specifically, the project embraces an architectural style that has been designed to portray the character and quality of the nearby Port Street neighborhood. Architectural articulations and high-end stone, brick, wood siding have all been used to portray the elegance of the community. The floor plans are all designed light and bright with oversized indoor and outdoor spaces including a 4th level Lanai in several of the plans.

*c. The increased height will not result in undesirable or abrupt scale changes or relationships being created between the proposed structure(s) and existing adjacent developments or public spaces. Where appropriate, the proposed structure(s) provides a gradual transition to taller or shorter structures on abutting properties; and*

The project has been specifically designed to ensure that it blends in with the community, and avoids undesirable or abrupt scale changes with existing adjacent developments or public spaces. The project is separated from the homes to the north by a major arterial roadway (Bonita Canyon Drive) and there is approximately 185 feet of separation from the project's structures to the closest residential property line. To the south, the project

is separated from the homes along Port Sheffield Place by approximately 230 feet when including setbacks. This separation ensures that the change in scale provides a subtle and gradual transition from existing uses.

*d. The structure will have no more floor area than could have been achieved without the approval of the height increase.*

The project is not seeking any additional floor area than could otherwise be achieved without the approval of the height increase. This project is proceeding under the City's Housing Overlay, which establishes a minimum dwelling unit density of 20-50 units per acre.