



## Retreat Center Project Workshop #1 Summary Conducted August 4, 2020

On August 4, 2020, the City of Sierra Madre, with the assistance of MIG, Inc. (urban planning and design consultants), conducted a community workshop to introduce a concept development plan on a portion of the Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center property. Three two-hour workshop sessions were conducted to ensure the number of participants complied with COVID-19 public gatherings’ restrictions. Each workshop was structured with two parts: 1) as an open house during the first 30 minutes to allow attendees to review presentation boards of the proposed subdivision and park and 2) as a presentation with a question and answer session during the following 90 minutes. During the question and answer session, MIG staff graphically recorded the questions and comments from attendees, as well as responses from City staff and applicant team representatives. Those interchanges are presented below from each of the three sessions. Also, attendees had the opportunity to record comments and ideas on a card. Card responses are presented following the graphic recording summary.

Workshop presenters included:

### City Staff

- Gabe Engeland – City Manager
- Vincent Gonzalez – Director of Planning and Community Preservation

### Applicant Team

- Jonathan Frankel – New Urban West
- Cameron Thornton – Mater Dolorosa Development Task Force

In addition to the in-person workshop, the City conducted a similar workshop via Zoom the evening of August 5, 2020. A video recording of that meeting is available on the City’s website.

## Session #1 Questions and Comments

Comment/Question	Response
Net zero project components are?	- 20-year contribution to water fund - Water/Resource Programs; low-flush toilets
Water capture opportunities	- LID water detention - Channel - Pervious surfaces - Dry creek as buffer and water capture
Hillside parcel protection?	No development – potential trail opportunity
Development – gated?	No
Public access to Retreat Center?	Will reopen post Covid-19
Access to Bailey Canyon?	This will be a secondary access road
Lot width and depth?	Yet to be determined

Will roads be widened, including Bailey Canyon access?	<i>To be determined</i>
Plan to widen Sunnyside?	<i>No</i>
Who pays for infrastructure?	<i>Developer</i>
Lighting?	<i>Will respond to night sky ordinance</i>
• Link trail to existing system, including landscape	<i>Yes - Respond to tree ordinance</i>
How large will park be?	<i>3 acres</i>

## Session #2 Questions and Comments

Comment/Question	Response
Consider broader housing needs	- <i>Housing advocates</i> - <i>Higher density</i>
How large will the homes be?	<i>2,600 to 3, 800 square feet</i>
Parking at park?	<i>Yes</i>
Mitigate the size of new homes	
Any modifications to retreat parcels?	<i>None planned at this time</i>
Park uses should potentially be placed below	<i>Setting like Sierra Vista</i>
What will happen in the 45 acres of hillside?	<i>Trails or preservation</i>
Need active recreation space, like ball fields	
Construction schedule?	<i>From complete entitlement: 2-3-year construction period</i>
Sunnyside circulation will suffer	<i>Widened access via Carter is possible</i>
Consider limiting construction on traffic to Michillinda	
Outreach during COVID-19: bad timing	
Preserve open space for wildlife	<i>This is private property but the city is engaged.</i>
Impacts from added traffic are of concern	
Sunnyside has limits to widening	<i>Carter will be an access.</i>
3-acre park remaining for development?	<i>No</i>
Two-story or one-story homes?	<i>Not determined</i>
Fire risk mitigation?	- <i>Fire separation regulations</i> - <i>Sprinklers</i> - <i>Section 7A noncombustible</i> - <i>Vegetation regulations</i>
What is the lot size for 2,600-square-foot home?	- <i>8,600 square feet</i> - <i>Specific Plan could require alternative</i> - <i>Could reduce park size</i>
Smaller homes and lots = larger park	
Infrastructure maintenance responsibility: City vs. developer?	<i>Developer</i>
Any reduction in Bailey Canyon Park?	<i>Unknown</i>
Bailey Canyon - keep nature feel	<i>Improvement - ADA</i>

Comment/Question	Response
Will new homes include pools?	<i>Not determined</i>
Loss of privacy for Sunnyside homes	
Residential use not compatible with Retreat	

### Session #3 Questions and Comments

Comment/Question	Response
Are buildings larger than needed?	<i>Concepts only shown at this time</i>
Impacts to adjacent neighbors: - Traffic speeds and volumes - Views/privacy - Decline in home values - Proximity to new development – neighbors - Must consider density/buffers: 20 ft buffer inadequate	
How will impacts on water resources be addressed?	<i>Supply is adequate for additional development Net-zero water use committed</i>
Fire risk	<i>Built to new state regulations</i>
Westside home impacts	
Impacts- light pollution Consider solar power motion-sense light	<i>Shield toward ground</i>
Use pervious pavement	<i>LID water capture will be included</i>
Will Bailey Park improvements be done?	<i>Possibly parking improvements</i>
Construction impacts: noise/dust	<i>To be studied in EIR</i>
Easement? Buffers removed?	<i>Backyards will provide buffers</i>
Recent weed abatement has destroyed vegetation	
Will earthquake faults cancel the project if they exist?	<i>Unknown</i>
Fire insurance will be hard to acquire	
Will park include parking?	<i>Yes</i>
Gated vs open?	<i>Open</i>
Why is lighting provided?	<i>Safety</i>
Use of natural area (above Retreat) will be?	<i>- Open space - Walking</i>
Consider no park	
Could bring visitors from other areas	

## Comment Cards

Twelve comment cards were received from the three sessions. Comments are transcribed here, edited for punctuation and clarity.

### #1

Thank you for your thoroughness of information. It is my hope that no plan uses only Sunnyside. Might it be possible to develop both Carter side and Sunnyside for in/out because Sunnyside will be overloaded by the increased traffic if the only way in or out, regardless of whatever project happens. And will the gates be removed? I live 4 houses down Sunnyside currently. Will I be able to walk to park at an hour of my choosing? (even if eaten by bear). Thank you again for all the information and openness!!! Keep park open 24/7!!!!

### #2

- I am totally opposed to this project. I have lived on the westside of the Monastery.
- I am concerned about the effect of the development with health concerns.
- I have lived here for 45 years and never have seen the meadow in the current condition.
- I have also contacted Retreat Center regarding any spraying on their property and was told that they no longer did any spraying.
- If the Monastery needs money, why they cannot think of something else, how about a cemetery?
- Also, the Monastery was always concerned at having anyone on their property and fenced their property. How will they prevent all the new development from going onto their property?

### #3

I love the idea for the hillside parcel left alone

### #4

Gabe- Good job! It will be developed. So, your approach is approved for the city.

### #5

- Still worried about water use, as most if not all residents have already retrofitted their property for low water use, including low-flow fixtures.
- Also, re: street access. Ingress needs to be considered in getting out in case of fire. Traffic patterns considerate to impact all streets, not just Sunnyside and Carter.
- Differentiate house design, placement, setbacks, color, layout, roof design.

### #6

Crowding another lot of homes in that space creates a hazard. Are rent and insurance premiums going up? Some homes are not insurable any longer. All these homes with views are going to lose \$100,00 to \$200,000 value in home prices. Plus, all the noise, traffic, and dust for the next two years. There will be no longer any peace and quiet. That little piece of nature will be lost forever. Very sad!! Leave the natural landscape alone. Also, there is no water pressure at this time.

## **#7**

I did appreciate the invitation to listen and participate in this community workshop. I cannot deny my frustration and disappointment that this property development is happening and to the scale as proposed. I wish the interest to monetize would envision more passive use. My dream has been they consider a Hospice Center as a quiet and spirited location for individuals and their people to face dying peacefully and with integrity. Developing huge, unnecessarily large homes simply perpetuates the wasteful ugly side of our consumer-focused society. I will make an effort to attend as many other workshops or meetings that follow.

## **#8**

1. Medical Issues – asthma, allergies, pulmonary
2. Soil testing results mailed to the residents. The field was sprayed with chemicals and it's shown no progress. How was it done? Powder, spray? I questioned it; no call back.
3. Where is the water coming from?
4. Fire hazard
5. Pollution
6. Stop the development. There are too many problems.
7. Property values
8. Enjoyment of life

## **#9**

1. Too close on the westside to the westside neighbors
2. Need to know if 1-story is maximum height
3. Net zero water use idea will hurt us in another drought
4. Traffic and congestion in town
5. Displacement of wildlife
6. Traffic on Sunnyside and Carter
7. What about views, privacy, and loss of land value for immediate neighbors?
8. Why moving forward during a pandemic?

## **#10**

Why are the houses being built in front of the monastery? Would be so nice if this land were saved and a beautiful park built on all the property.

## **#11**




I think the low-density housing project is an optimal project for this site. I would just like to make sure the park is complementary to Bailey Park. Bailey Park could use newer picnic and BBQ facilities, an outdoor amphitheater or meeting space would be great too. I would love to see public art element incorporated as well. But overall...thumbs up!

**#12**

I do not support this project whatsoever. It is unacceptable that the city is ever considering this huge project. The city should have a moratorium in place until the pandemic is over. It is not the same as a property request for residents. I guess it's easier to get something like this through during a global pandemic. I'm disappointed with the monastery; they are supposed to propagate faith and instead are more concerned with monetary. I'm concerned Sierra Madre will be changed in a bad way irreparably with this project.

**Park Amenities**

The comment cards asked participants to weigh in on conceptual park amenities.

<b>Public Park Amenities</b>			
Picnic Area	4	4	3
Community Garden	4	1	6
Fitness Station	3	0	7
Playground	4	4	2
Open Field	6	3	1
Children's Garden	5	1	4
Nature Trail	5	5	1

**Any other Ideas for park amenities?**

Native Garden to support – Bees, Birds – Butterflies.

Little League, Tee Ball, Softball field and soccer field.

Leave natural land as is – No homes, no traffic, no noise, and less crime.

What is the distance of the proposed trail? Will it be walking/running only? Will bikes and skateboards/hover craft be permitted?

More open space and trees than amenities.

Have Bailey Canyon next door – resident – are tied in with Bailey Canyon – or better develop use access – with parks, etc. – be a coherent pair.