



CITY OF CARSON PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

PUBLIC HEARING: December 11, 2007
SUBJECT: Design Overlay Review No. 1015-07
APPLICANT: Bizhan Khaleeli
2025 Paseo Del sol
Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274
REQUEST: To add two vehicular gates for Mosaic Walk on Via
Mattonella and Via Tessera in order to establish a
gated community.
PROPERTY INVOLVED: 22518-22606 South Figueroa Street

COMMISSION ACTION

- Concurred with staff
 Did not concur with staff
 Other

COMMISSIONERS' VOTE

AYE	NO		AYE	NO	
		Faletogo – Chairman			Graber
		Hudson – Vice-Chair			Saenz
		Cannon			Verrett

Item No. 11B

I. Introduction

The applicant, Bizhan Khaleeli, on behalf of the Mosaic Walk homeowner association (HOA), is proposing to add two (2) entry gates for the Mosaic Walk community: one on Via Mattonella on the Shadwell Street side; and one on Via Tessera on the Figueroa Street side. The subject property is located at **22518-22606 South Figueroa Street**.

The proposed entry gates/fences will be six (6) feet in height. The purpose of the gate/fence is to restrict vehicular access and stop “cut-through” traffic. Two six-foot-high pedestrian gates will be located next to the vehicular gate.

The entry gate/fence on Via Mattonella, which has a street width of 36 feet, will be set back 50 feet from Shadwell Street and will require removal of 4 parking spaces. The entry gate/fence on Via Tessera, which has a street width of 30 feet and 36 feet after, will be set back 50 feet from Figueroa Street. The proposed gate on Via Tessera will not require removal of any parking spaces.

The gates/fences will be made of wrought iron supported by decorative block columns to match the existing Mosaic Walk theme. The applicant is proposing call boxes for pedestrian and vehicular traffic at both entries.

The Mosaic Walk community is 4.37 acres, zoned RM-12-D (Residential, Multifamily – 8 du/ac – Design Overlay), has a General Plan designation of Medium Density Residential, and is located within Redevelopment Project Area No. 4.

Background

On June 3, 2003, the City Council held a public hearing approved the following:

- General Plan Amendment No. 02-12-071 to change the land use designation from Low Density Residential (8 du/ac allowed) to Medium Density Residential (12 du/ac allowed); and
- Zone Change Case No. 02-12-141 to change the zone from RS (Residential, Single-Family) to RM-12-D (Residential Multiple-Family – 12 units per acre – Design Overlay).

On June 24, 2003, the Planning Commission approved the following request:

- Design Overlay Review No. 02-12-809, which was for the architectural design of the homes as required for properties within a Design Overlay Review district. Mosaic Walk was approved to be an integral part of the existing neighborhood, particularly to the north which contains single-family homes. As such, there were no gates proposed, nor was the community designed to accommodate vehicular entry gates;

- Conditional Use Permit No. 02-12-535, for construction of multiple family residences (CMC Section 9121.1); and
- Tentative Tract Map No. 54179 for division of airspace for 45 condominium units.

II. **Analysis**

Required Findings

Site Plan and Design Review

Any construction or modification of a multi-family dwelling in a “D” designation zone is subject to the requirements contained in CMC Section 9172.23, Site Plan and Design Review. This section states that a Site Plan and Design Review shall be approved by the Planning Commission only if the project meets the following criteria:

- a. Compatibility with the General Plan, any specific plans for the area, and surrounding uses;
- b. Compatibility of architecture and design with existing and anticipated development in the vicinity, including the aspects of site planning, land coverage, landscaping, appearance and scale of structures and open spaces and other features relative to a harmonious and attractive development of the area;
- c. Convenience and safety of circulation for pedestrians and vehicles;
- d. Attractiveness, effectiveness and restraint in signing, graphics and color; and,
- e. Conformance to any applicable design standards and guidelines that have been adopted pursuant to Section 9172.15.

Staff can make most of the findings for the criteria above, however, because this is a proposal to install vehicular and pedestrian entry gates/fences for a community that was never originally designed as a gated community, staff has a number of concerns as discussed below.

Issues of Concern

- Issue – Fire Department and Sheriff’s Department Approval of Entry Gates/Fences: Staff’s main concern is that the gates/fences would obstruct Fire Department access. The proposed fences/gates were not part of the original approval granted by the Planning Commission in 2003, but are proposed by the current homeowners after completion of the development. As such, the proposed gate would not meet the regular requirements of the Fire Department and the City. Staff informed the applicant to consult with the Fire

Department in order to receive their approval. The applicant was able to obtain approval for an earlier plan. Staff received a copy of the approval letter from the Fire Department, however, the approved plan was not included. Once staff received a copy of the Fire Department approved plan, it was evident that a call box was not considered on the driver's side of the vehicle. Instead, a guest driver would have to exit a vehicle and walk around it to a call box located along the sidewalk. This would not only be inconvenient and impractical, but would be a safety hazard in that the vehicle would be left unattended. Furthermore, there is inadequate space to provide for a turnaround in front of the gates to allow vehicles to make U-turns, and inadequate queuing space in the event a call box island were installed. The City Traffic Engineer concurred with these concerns.

To address these concerns, staff recommends that the call box be located on an island in the driveway so that drivers can use the call box without exiting the vehicle. Staff contacted the Fire Department to get their position on a call box island located on the driver's side. Fire Department responded that the driveway width is too narrow to accommodate a call box island and that the driveway must remain clear and unobstructed for them to approve it.

The concerns from the Sheriff's Department also dealt with access. The Sheriff's Department indicated the use of a new remote control device in which they could easily access private gated communities.

As mentioned earlier, Mosaic Walk was constructed to be an integral part of the existing community. As such, the development was not designed to accommodate vehicular gates because there is inadequate driveway width on Via Mattonella and Via Tessera, inadequate space to accommodate a call box island on the driver's side of the vehicle, and inadequate queuing space to accommodate additional vehicles behind the call box.

Based on the City Traffic Engineer's review, it is staff's opinion that there is an acceptable alternative that would eliminate "cut-through" traffic. It would be possible to install a single vehicular gate on Via Tessera off of Figueroa Street that would meet both the City and the Fire Department's concerns. Cut-through traffic usually occurs with vehicles heading northbound on Figueroa Street and turning right on Via Tessera into Mosaic Walk. It would be unlikely that cut-through traffic would enter from Shadwell Street through the Mosaic Walk community and exit onto Figueroa Street since Figueroa Street has a center median that requires vehicles to make a right turn only. Vehicles exiting Mosaic Walk headed southbound on Figueroa Street must do so from Shadwell Street.

By restricting access to residents only on the Figueroa Street driveway (Via Tessera), no call box island would be required. Guest vehicles would have to enter Mosaic Walk from the un-gated Via Mattonella on the Shadwell Street

side. This solution would not only stop “cut-through” traffic, but would provide guests with safe and convenient access. If the Planning Commission is amenable to this alternative, the following conditions are proposed:

- *Proposed Condition/Change:* A condition has been added to require Via Mattonella on the Shadwell Street side to remain un-gated.
 - *Proposed Condition/Change:* A condition has been added requiring the applicant to comply with all requirements of the Los Angeles County Fire Department and Sheriff’s Department for access and locking devices.
 - *Proposed Condition/Change:* All other requirements of the Fire Department and Sheriff’s Department shall be met prior to installation of the fences/gates.
- Issue – Other Gates/Fences: The original approved plans from 2003 showed 42-inch high gates/fences for the homes along Shadwell. Staff has conveyed to the applicant that the gates/fences may be constructed in order to give those homes a more defined “front yard.” Another area in which a gate/fence may be constructed is around the playground/recreation area. The applicant has indicated that kids from outside Mosaic Walk loiter, graffiti, and vandalize the playground area. If the applicant wishes, staff can support a six-foot high wrought-iron fence/gate in this area.
 - *Proposed Condition/Change:* None required. Staff considers a gate/fence around the playground/recreation area a minor modification and can approve it administratively, unless the Planning Commission would like to review it.
 - Issue – Parking: Installation of the gates/fences would result in the permanent removal of 4 guest parking spaces. However, there would still be 50 guest parking spaces remaining, which is adequate to meet the minimum requirement of 45 spaces.
 - *Proposed Condition/Change:* No conditions or changes required.

III. Conclusion

Mosaic Walk has been regarded as a model development in the City of Carson. The developer, the Olson Companies, designed Mosaic Walk to be an un-gated, integral part of the surrounding neighborhood. The new property owners have expressed their concerns with cut-through traffic and kids loitering and defacing their private property. It is the homeowners’ intent to improve the safety and welfare of their community by making it a gated. However, doing so after-the-fact is difficult because the community was never designed to be gated; there is inadequate area to provide for a turnaround, call box island, and queuing area similar to other planned gated communities. It is staff’s opinion that a compromise can be reached by providing a

vehicular entry gate on the Figueroa Street side which is accessible only to residents since this would effectively stop cut-through traffic without creating additional safety hazards. Other improvements such as the 42-inch high fences/walls in front of homes along Shadwell Street and gating the playground/recreation area would also improve the safety and welfare of the community. These improvements would continue to enhance Mosaic Walk as an integral part of the surrounding neighborhood and as a model development for the City.

IV. Environmental Review

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15303(e), a fence/gate is categorically exempt.

V. Recommendation

That the Planning Commission:

- **ADOPT** the categorical exemption;
- **APPROVE** Design Overlay Review No. 1015-07; and
- **WAIVE** further reading and adopt Resolution No._____, entitled, "A resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Carson approving Design Overlay Review No. 1015-07 to construct a fence and vehicular and pedestrian entry gate for the Mosaic Walk community on Via Tessera adjacent to Figueroa Street. The subject property is located at 22518-22606 S. Figueroa Street."

VI. Exhibits

1. Resolution
2. Facsimile from the Fire Department indicating driveway "must remain clear and unobstructed" dated December 4, 2007
3. Letter from the Fire Department dated July 30, 2007
4. Memorandum from the City Traffic Engineer dated December 6, 2007
5. Letter from resident, Grace A. Lou, received via email on December 6, 2007
6. Examples of other entry gates
7. Development Plans

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