

Summary of the questions and comments received and responses provided during the Community Meeting held on 6/11/2019

On Tuesday, June 11th, 2019, MidPen Housing and the Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church of San Jose (IELC) hosted a community meeting to present the concept of a new housing development on the Church's property. The meeting format included a 25-minute introduction and presentation, followed by a 20-minute Question and Answer (Q&A) session. Once the Q&A session was complete, community members had the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments at 7 different stations that addressed the following topics: Architectural Design, MidPen Property Management, Supportive Housing Services, Development timeline, as well as an opportunity to meet representatives from the Church, Supervisor Ellenberg's office, the SJPD, and Councilmember Dev Davis' office.

The notes below are a summary of the questions, answers, and comments MidPen and IELC heard from community meeting attendees. We are making these notes accessible to ensure that community members are aware of the discussions that took place at these community meetings.

Written responses to some of the frequently asked questions included here can be found on the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page of the proposed development's website.

The purpose of this summary is to document the questions and feedback received. As of yet, design and programmatic decisions have not been finalized for the project.

Q&A

What will the rents be?

Approximately 32% of tenants' income with a Project Based Housing Authority Voucher.

Will the project impact parking congestion in the neighborhood?

The proposed plan will dedicate the 1st floor for on-site parking. In addition, MidPen's experience at other properties that serve formerly homeless individuals has shown that 1 out of 5 or 6 formerly homeless individuals own a car.

We will study this further through a parking study that we will commission this fall.

Will the Church parking be effected?

IELC and MidPen do not expect the Church's parking to be effected. Currently, the Church has access to around 50 dedicated parking spots at 655 Richmond Avenue (The Brooks House) in the ground level parking garage. The Brooks House is the apartment complex directly south of the church sanctuary.

Will this project serve homeless individuals or families?

We are proposing to develop studios and two 2-bedroom on-site manager's apartments. We expect the occupancy for the studios to be largely individuals. Under the Housing Authority's rules, a studio may house up to 2 people.

Is there any possibility for more units?

MidPen's design team studied the site to come up with a proposal that best meets the City's requirements, the neighborhood's context, and MidPen's operating standards.

Do the occupants have to have a job in order to live there?

We are using the Housing First model, a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on housing people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing supportive services as needed. In the past, individuals experiencing homelessness were expected to get clean and sober, find a job, or commit to treatment before receiving help to find a home. This model does not require people to have a job to apply for, and receive, housing. Once tenants move in, the County of Santa Clara Office of Supportive Housing and MidPen services staff will be dedicated to providing supportive services, which include employment development.

What are the rules, regulations? What is the turnover rate of these units?

MidPen has had a 98% housing retention rate for supportive housing units over the last 8 years. Tenants are required to abide by their lease and the House rules attached to it.

What will be the average age of the residents?

At least one of the household members will have to be over 18 years of age. There is no age limit.

Can we incorporate more greenspace and community garden?

We are planning to incorporate a community garden into the courtyard terrace for the future residents.

Two neighbors offered gardening space in their front yards for the residents to also use as a community garden.

Are you adding security?

We will have two on-site managers, a 24/7 desk clerk, and a check in/check out system.

MidPen Property Management

What operating subsidies are associated with the property?

There will be Project Based Vouchers from the County of Santa Clara.

Is it transitional housing?

No

Is MidPen a non-profit?

Yes.

Are all MidPen properties supportive housing?

MidPen owns and operates over 100 properties. Approximately 30% of our properties serve a population with special needs or resident who previously experienced homelessness.

How many units will be built?

We are proposing to build 107 studios, plus 2 manager's units.

Will any units be set aside specifically for veterans?

At the moment there are no units set aside specifically for veterans. We are still early in the planning process.

I am concerned about the elements that the property will bring to the neighborhood.

We will have continual property management team presence that is trained to work with formerly homeless residents.

What are the legal/ethical responsibility to take care of the grounds, crime, etc.

We enforce our lease and house rules. When they are not upheld, there are consequences for the residents (warnings, lease violation notices and if needed, eviction). We will have two onsite managers that live on the property. We also build strong relationships with neighbors and law enforcement.

When does the application process start and how can we find out?

The lease-up team starts approximately 7 months prior to the property opening. This specific property will receive referrals from the Housing Authority and the County of Santa Clara to ensure that individuals are connected with support and services needed to retain housing.

Can we have pets on the property?

Yes. There are sizes and breed restrictions, as well as a pet deposit. You can also put in a reasonable accommodation request for a companion animal.

Who is the targeted population? Seniors, or other?

Formerly homeless individuals who are connected to services through the County of Santa Clara's Office of Supportive Housing.

What if they (the residents) have no income?

All units will have Project Based Vouchers from the County's Housing Authority to help residents pay the rent. Most people will receive some government benefits to assist with paying rent.

What is the rent for a one-bedroom apartment?

There is no fixed rent. It is a sliding scale based on the household's income. Residents will pay approximately 32% of their income for rent.

Do people go on a waiting list?

Yes, the County of Santa Clara will maintain a waitlist and refer individuals to this property when apartments become available.

MidPen Resident Services/County Office of Supportive Housing

Is this MidPen first supportive housing residence in the South Bay?

No. MidPen has experience developing, owning, and managing apartments with supportive services at several properties in the South Bay, including Donner Lofts in San Jose, Fair Oaks Plaza, Onizuka Crossings, and Crescent Terrace in Sunnyvale.

Is MidPen with Whole Person Care?

No.

What is the typical turn-over at a MidPen supportive housing property?

We have a very low turn-over rate with 95% of residents retaining housing since 2011.

Are services voluntary?

All services are on a voluntary basis, however typically all residents choose to participate in the services that we offer.

Are there studies on the effectiveness of supportive housing?

The County's Office of Supportive Housing conducts annual studies and reports out on the effectiveness of supportive housing in Santa Clara County.

What programs are the most effective?

The County currently uses the harm reduction model in working with formerly homeless residents. Harm reduction incorporates a spectrum of strategies to meet drug users "where they're at," addressing conditions of use along with the use itself.

Where is the funding for this project coming from?

We are in the process of procuring funds from the County of Santa Clara, the city of San Jose, and low-income housing tax credits from the state of California.

Is there a priority for the homeless of the area?

Currently, there are no plans for a specific neighborhood preference, but the County will canvas the nearby area to make sure the homeless in the current neighborhood are assessed and entered in their system/waitlist.

Are there other County residences for homeless?

Yes, there are other examples owned and operated by a few different nonprofit housing providers throughout the County.

Architects

Integration with the neighborhood:

How are you designing the proposed community to make sure it connects to the public on Leigh?

We plan to put focus and emphasis on the lobby on the corner of Leigh and Moorpark. There will be a flex space built for the Church on the first floor of the building. This flex space will have a storefront presence along Leigh Avenue.

Will the design look/aesthetic be similar to the Church? How can you make it feel "San Jose"?

The proposed project will take inspiration from the unique design of the existing sanctuary and chapel built in the 1960's while also using modern design materials and features.

Building a community means integrating the proposed building with the surrounding neighbors, and interacting with the College.

Trash/Parking/Traffic

Concern about trash. Seems too small, and Richmond Avenue is too narrow for trash pick-up, also because of fire access. With parking, Richmond is currently a 1 lane road. Having trash pickup will mean losing parking on Richmond.

City College sometimes get very crowded (graduation, football games, etc.)

Visibility at corner of Leigh and Moorpark very important.

Green/Vegetation

More green, less concrete. We would like to see vegetable/roof gardens.

Tree maintenance/landscaping along streets

Consider use of roof space. Look into Mesa Verde.

Look into possibility for using raised community garden beds.

There is a noise concern for the units facing Highway 280 and you need to make sure the building has a lot of greenery so that the units are not just facing a freeway

Other

Tell us about the demolition process for the existing buildings. Need to make sure the demolition process is not too disruptive.

Ceiling fans/air circulation are important in the future apartments.

We would like to see building LEED certified.

Development timeline

Ordinary people lose their housing because of injury. Rent is too high, how can people afford it?

Will we have an Environmental Impact Review (EIR) amendment?

Once a proposal with an application is submitted to the City for review, the City will make the determination regarding environmental review

Construction issues involved? Concerned about noise

Construction will occur during regular working hours and possibly some Saturdays. MidPen and a professional and licensed general contractor will manage the process to ensure that disruption is minimized to the greatest extent possible.

Construction workers can't park in neighborhood, City College might be a good place for construction trailer.

How is MidPen financed? Where does the money come from?

MidPen is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation with a mission to provide safe, affordable housing of high quality to those in need and to establish stability and opportunity in the lives of our residents. The Staff time devoted to each property we develop is paid for through a one-time fee that is received on each project and is highly regulated by public entities and built into our budget. Other funds come from rental revenue and asset management fees. As a nonprofit, we regularly re-invest funds in furthering our mission.

What faster ways of building the project are we considering?

Labor is our biggest challenge, as there is a shortage. We are currently pursuing modular construction on a different MidPen Project and hope to learn lessons from that experience before applying them to a future project.

People are concerned about getting mugged between the 2 buildings

This project will bring more eyes and security in the neighborhood, which should reduce the risks of such an incident happening. MidPen will have a desk clerk/security at its building 24 hours a day.

Could MidPen schedule a meeting with Brooks House to address their concerns?

MidPen will work with the Church to get a meeting together as needed.

Church

The church has full-on support from the synod. The church will still continue to own the property and will enter into a long term ground lease with MidPen Housing.

What Church services in Spanish are in this location?

The Church intends to establish a medical non-profit for those speaking Spanish, maybe later this year.

What other outreach has been done?

Leadership workshops (COPA model, monthly) to equip for outreach. Door knocking, meeting with neighborhood associations.

There are 2 communities next to our project (Brooks House and Richmond-Menker tenants) that also need services.

Crime prevention unit noticed that lots of Richmond neighbors did not attend.

Would a Spanish speaking only event help?

SJPD/Office of Councilmember Dev Davis

What is happening to the property located at the old orchard supply location?

Orchard supply owns the property and it is closed.

I sit on the oversight committee of Whole Person Care (state initiative delegated to County) to look at homelessness, mental services, substance abuse. They have 3200 homeless enrolled in program and got 79 into housing. City created a mess by allowing Google and other companies to come into city with rising housing costs. Can money be spent up front to help with homeless issue? Could team up with Valley Med.

I moved in to this neighborhood last October. I feel like it's a relatively safe neighborhood. I have noticed that there are cars double parked, perhaps drug dealing.

Recommendations in these kind of instances:

- Call damage tip line
- Call 311 (non-emergency line) – helps with data tracking. Police is highly data driven
- Sign up on Next Door

If I am a property owner and I am not participating in STOP, can the police not come to on to our property? What if people are dealing damage?

STOP property is more for trespassing and allows police to come on site to private property (without the landowner being present) to arrest them.

Can City councilmember and City attorney require property owners to include in the lease that if they are going to rent in an apartment complex, then they need to have these rules? We need more teeth to enforce rules.

Issues raised to the Justice Enforcement Unit at SJPD will be emailed to the councilmember and then councilmember will route to police department so that it can be looked at.

I'm concerned about how fast people are driving along Leigh, Almost have been hit.

Coming from Leigh, most people don't stop before turning on Moorpark.

Has Councilmember Dev Davis looked at plans for this project yet?

MidPen had a meeting with her office to discuss the project's preliminary concept and a representative from her office attended the community meeting on June 11, 2019.

Community meetings in the evenings are hard for working families to attend to because they work, need childcare.