

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda date: July 26, 2022
Reviewed by: NA

Subject: Storm Drain Improvements Related to Planned Housing Development
Located at 540 San Pablo Avenue

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SUMMARY

City Staff is working with the 540 San Pablo Avenue development team on a mutually beneficial resolution to relocate a storm drain culvert from directly beneath the subject property while maintaining adequate drainage capacity for the “Middle Creek” watershed draining to the culvert. The purpose of the agenda item is to provide City Council with an update on the discussions to date and associated next steps.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

For information and discussion only. No action required.

BACKGROUND

The subject site is 2.18 acres with existing commercial spaces approximately 37,700 sq. ft. in area. On October 18, 2021, the City Council approved Resolution No. 2021-107, approving Design Review, Density Bonus, and street tree removal request for the 207-unit mixed use apartment project at 540 San Pablo Avenue (Attachment 1). Building permits for the project are currently being processed by the Community Development Department and the Public Works Department.

Existing Drainage Conditions

The project is located above an existing storm drain pipe extending from the intersection of San Pablo Avenue and Clay Street to the northwest and crossing Adams Street approximately 300 feet north of the intersection of Adams Street and Clay Street. Flow continues in a box culvert below residential properties in the 500-block of Adams Street before daylighting in an open channel south of the State of California’s Orientation Center for the Blind. This storm drain captures much of the storm water runoff from the northeast portion of the City.

The 1998 City of Albany Watershed Management Plan (WMP) describes the existing 48-, 42- and 45-inch storm drain pipes below the property as having inadequate ten-year storm capacity. The WMP also identified two segments of arch pipe contributing to constriction of the drainage system: (1) the segment connecting the 45-inch pipe below 540 San Pablo Avenue to the culvert crossing Adams Street, and (2) the segment connecting the culvert crossing Adams Street to the open channel to the west. The latter segment of arch pipe is located beneath existing residential properties and upgrades to this segment are infeasible. Therefore, evaluation of storm drain improvements and potential configurations were completed with the assumption that this segment of pipe would remain the same size.

The City does not have an easement agreement to access the segment of storm drain underneath the property for maintenance. Attachment 1 shows the locations of the drainage structures at the property.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Council a briefing on the need for a cost sharing agreement with the housing project developer related to the relocation and capacity expansion of the storm drain infrastructure. It is expected that City staff will return to a future Council meeting with a proposed agreement that details the storm drain size, alignment, cost sharing formula, property easements, and funding sources.

Storm Drain Capacity

The project area involves challenges related to inadequate storm drain pipe capacity and concerns about constructing a new housing structure directly above an aging storm drain pipe. During project planning, the development team and the City discussed the benefits of relocating the undersized pipe from beneath the property to a new alignment along Clay Street and turning down Adams Street to the Adams Street culvert crossing. See Attachment 1 for the proposed relocation alignment.

Staff worked in coordination with engineering consultant HDR to review the proposed alignment and assess the new storm drain capacity compared to the anticipated flow from a ten-year storm event. HDR evaluated the watershed and concluded that the relocated storm drain pipe would need to be larger than its existing size and that an additional storm drain relief line would be needed to reduce flow through this segment and prevent localized flooding.

Proposed Actions

Based on HDR's findings, the following actions are planned:

Relocate the Existing Storm Drain

Abandon the existing storm drain pipe beneath the Subject Property and install a new, larger pipe in the proposed alignment around the property, along Clay Street and Adams Street.

The new storm drain along Clay Street is proposed to be in the public right-of-way. The new segment along Adams Street would be located within the property boundary to avoid an existing gas main under Adams Street. An easement would be created to allow the City to access and maintain this line.

Construct Adams Street Relief Line

Construct a new stormwater overflow relief line from the Adams Street culvert toward the north to Cerrito Creek. This relief line would be constructed in two phases with the first phase connecting into an existing line (12-inch to 18-inch) located at the northern terminus of Adams Street discharging to an outfall to Cerrito Creek. The second phase would upsize the existing line.

See Attachment 1 for the location of the Adams Street relief line.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE

As a standalone project, the proposed storm drain replacement at 540 San Pablo will qualify for a categorical exemption from the requirements of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Section 15302, “Replacement or Reconstruction” of the CEQA Guidelines, which exempts replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities. The housing development was determined to be categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA per Section 15332, “In-Fill Development” of the CEQA Guidelines, which exempts in-fill development.

SUSTAINABILITY

One of the four strategies contained in the 2019 Climate Action Plan encompasses a series of actions centered on accelerating resilience. In particular, Action 4.2.1 of the Climate Action Plan calls for ensuring that the capital improvement project infrastructure be designed with forecasted changes in climate patterns in mind.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The final design of the storm drain pipe relocation and relief lines, including pipe size and horizontal/vertical alignment, are incomplete and costs have not been finalized. City staff has been working with the development team to obtain a clearer estimate of the storm drain improvement costs in order to better discuss sharing in the costs of this mutually beneficial project. The City’s portion of the project cost, which benefits the overall storm drain system, is anticipated to be funded from the Street and Storm Drain Fund (Measure F).

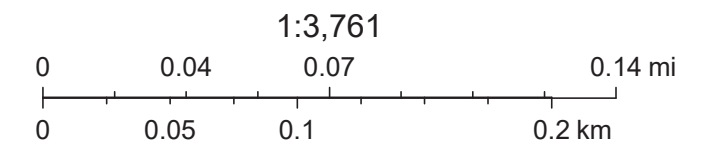
Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Project Location and Storm Drains Map

Storm Drain Map



6/1/2022



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community