



RECUPERO & ASSOCIATES, INC.

31877 DEL OBISPO STREET, SUITE 204, SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, CA 92675

March 24, 2021

Ms. Erica Roess, Senior Planner
City of Laguna Niguel
30111 Crown Valley Parkway
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

Re: The Cove at Laguna Niguel Development – Updated Project Description [Site Development Permit SP 16-04 and Tentative Map TT 17721]

Dear Ms. Roess:

Per our CEQA kick-off meeting last week, please find below an updated project description for the Cove at El Niguel Project referenced above.

The proposed Cove at El Niguel Development Project (“Project”), submitted by Laguna Niguel Properties Inc., is located on Crown Valley Parkway at Playa Blanca, opposite the intersection of Crown Valley Parkway and Paseo Del Niguel. The 4.2-acre property (“Property”) is currently vacant and has a General Plan Land Use Designation of Residential Attached and Zoning of RM, Multi-family District. The Project is surrounded by residential uses, including single family homes to the west and north, La Vista Condominiums to the south, and Crown Valley Parkway on the east.

The Applicant is requesting a Site Development Permit (SP 16-04) and Tentative Tract Map (TT 17721) for 22 homes (duplex and triplex configurations) on a 2 acre lot (1.4 acre buildable footprint), preserving approximately 2.9 acres of open space. The proposal is supported by the existing General Plan and Zoning requirements.

The topography of the Property is generally sloping downward from the west to the east. The proposed final grades are approximately 130 feet lower than the closest westerly neighbor’s pads, 30 feet lower than the closest neighbor immediately to the north, and 25 feet lower than the southerly multifamily development.

The Project involves the redevelopment of the Property which contained 41 homes (“Previous Project”) that were demolished following the Via Estoril Landslide in March 1998. Following the landslide, the Property and surroundings were remediated in coordination with the City and regulatory authorities for geotechnical and drainage purposes, including installation of a caisson wall with tieback anchors, removal of existing buildings, partial removal of the landslide mass, installation of subdrains, and construction of a compacted fill buttress.

The development footprint has been reduced substantially as compared to the Previous Project to avoid the upper portion of the property. The smaller footprint: a) minimizes units and associated impacts; b) maintains a substantial open space between the Project and its westerly neighbors; and c) keeps the existing earthen buttress along the westerly portion of the Property. While increasing the open space, the Project

maximizes the efficient use of the buildable area to provide as many units as possible to help meet the City's recognized need for housing.¹

In order to maintain the open space, earthen berm, and to respect the 25-foot scenic corridor setback requirements from Crown Valley Parkway, the buildable pad area has been reduced and certain alternative design standards and minor adjustments from development standards are required. This includes, for example, an over-height retaining wall behind (westerly side) of the proposed homes which also allows the minimization of the retaining wall along Crown Valley Parkway. Additionally, alternative development standards are requested for building height from existing grade² as well as active recreation area³.

Access to the Project is by a single driveway which is unchanged from the Previous Project's approved entry. Turning movements to and from Crown Valley Parkway include a right turn in, right turn out and a left turn in using the existing turn pocket. No left turn out is proposed onto Crown Valley Parkway.

The Project is parked to meet the existing municipal code requirements for homeowner and guest parking. It includes both private garages for each unit and shared surface spaces.

The development is configured into 6 triplex and 2 duplex 3-story buildings on the site. The Spanish architecture proposed at The Cove at El Niguel is consistent with the City's vernacular, honoring the precedent while updating certain elements to reflect the needs and wants of a younger demographic than resides in much of the City. The basic design elements that identify Spanish architecture are simple asymmetrical forms, arched entries, predominantly stucco wall finishes, and shallow gabled 'S' tile roofs that all animate the elevations. Similarly, grouping of accent windows and vertical forms of openings reinforce the character. Material blending of slump stone, simulated wood corbels, shutters, shaped wood trims and posts, decorative metal railings and downspouts are purposefully composed to enhance the overall design character on every side of each building.

Consistent with the objective to attract a younger, active demographic, the Project includes some unique community features not otherwise found in Laguna Niguel. For example, the product floor plans are intended to accommodate work from home occupants. Each unit contains an oversized garage space providing residents the chance for in-home exercise and recreation equipment. Additionally, the Project will feature an active recreation hill climb component allowing residents to view the surrounding open space and perform a self-guided cardiovascular program utilizing a proposed path and fitness station on the southwestern portion of the project. This type of amenity has been found to appeal to younger demographics looking for something beyond traditional "active recreation" areas which are typically grass "pocket parks."

¹ The most recent adopted California State Housing and Urban Development Regional Housing Needs Assessment requires 1,207 new housing units, including low income, moderate, and above-moderate units, to be provided in Laguna Niguel by 2029.

² Building height meets the existing 35' City height requirement when measured from proposed grade to top of roof sheathing.

³ This is due to the fact that the grade of a portion of the proposed active recreation area exceeds the City's grade requirement for recreational spaces.

*SP 16-04 and Tentative Map TT 17721 – Project Description
March 24, 2021*

Accordingly, the Project requests a minor development amendment to accommodate this exercise facility.

We look forward to working with staff to process this project through entitlement and would be pleased to provide any further information as you deem necessary. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Michael Recupero
RECUPERO AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

CC: Peter Carlson, Carlson Strategic Land Solutions