

850 Almar Ave (CP24-0047) Community Meeting Summary of Questions and Answers

There are two separate projects in the Almar Avenue/Rankin Street area that are in different stages of the application process, 831 Almar and 850 Almar. 831 Almar is currently in the preapplication process. This summary of Q&A for the community meeting is regarding 850 Almar Ave, which the City received a formal application for. The applicant is proposing a 3-story, 38-unit 100% affordable housing project at 850 Almar. The City is expecting revised plan sets to be submitted for 850 Almar Ave that will be posted to the project webpage once received.

1. How will the City make up for lost green space? Will there be more park space, dog runs, more trees and shrubs planted to make up for the loss of free and green space? Are there any planned improvements for other/new open space and parks in the City? More parking means less green space and more sealed surfaces. How will the City make up for that loss of public space? What environmental measures will be taken for the extra cars in the neighborhood?

There's no new parks or green space identified in the 2030 Parks and Rec Master Plan. The subject properties are privately-owned parcels. Garfield Park was recently improved in 2023. Public outreach/design feedback process for the Garfield Park improvements began in March 2022. Construction started in February 2023. Below is a list of the improvements at Garfield Park. The construction of the improvements was completed with the park and playground reopened on May 5, 2023. The playground project was funded by a grant from the State of California's Prop 68 2018 Parks and Water Bond.

- New outdoor game area including foosball, corn hole, tether ball and grade improvements to existing ping pong tables.
- Resurfacing of the existing basketball court.
- New site furnishings including benches, trash/recycling receptacles.
- New bottle filler - ADA accessible drinking fountain.
- New ADA accessible picnic and BBQ area.
- Pathway improvements to correct access and potential tripping hazards.
- 4000 sqft of new water-efficient landscape plantings.
- Newly renovated irrigation systems to incorporate drip irrigation systems to the new plantings.
- A new 200ft retaining wall to stabilize soil grades and protect neighboring residential fence lines.
- New playground structures for toddlers, kids, and care takers to play safely.
- New engineered wood fibers for surfacing within the playgrounds to provide for safety and accessibility.

2. How will the proposed development at 850 Almar Avenue be reviewed with the proposed development at 831 Almar Avenue? Density – this is first of multiple projects proposed or envisioned within a 1 block area on Almar. How is the planning for this project being coordinated with the others? Is there any master plan for transportation & parking infrastructure specific to the area surrounding the Almar Center retail area? (Transportation means pedestrians, cyclists, cars, buses)

The project at 831 Almar Avenue and 850 Almar Avenue are on two separate timelines as the project submitted at 831 Almar Avenue is a Preapplication and 850 Almar is a formal application, so the City is subject to state mandated timeframes to move the latter project forward.

The 831 Almar project is also located in a different zone district with different requirements, including density, and permitting processes depending on what they ultimately propose in the formal submittal. The 850 Almar project meets the density requirement in the R-L zone district, with a density bonus.

The 831Almar project is the only one of the two projects that requires a traffic study. The 850 Almar project is likely under the 50 trip threshold so it is anticipated that a traffic study is not required. The applicant is required to submit a trip generation memo to confirm this.

There will be a community meeting for 831 Almar as part of their Preapplication review but it has not been scheduled yet.

There's no specific transportation master plan for the Almar Center retail area, but there is a City-wide Active Transportation Plan that makes reference to Almar Avenue. Please see the following link: <https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/public-works/traffic-engineering/active-transportation-plan>

See below for street improvements that will be done as part of the project.

3. How will traffic be mitigated?

The 850 Almar project is likely under the 50 trip threshold so it is anticipated that a traffic study is not required. The applicant is required to submit a trip generation memo to confirm this. A Traffic Impact Fee (TIF) will be required during the Building Permit phase associated with increased vehicular travel volumes projected to be induced by the project. The applicant is required to make street improvements at the intersection of Almar Ave/Rankin St to improve pedestrian connectivity and 8-foot wide sidewalks are also required along Almar Avenue and Rankin Street.

4. How will Almar traffic be safe with two developments having exits onto Almar? Can residents on other streets have speed bumps, permit parking? Can city add a stop sign and lights at RR crossing/rail trail? Are there any street improvements required? What are the plans to improve or upgrade the intersection and crosswalk on Almar, stop sign at Rankin Street? It is already problematic for cars and pedestrians.

The location of the driveway on the 850 Almar project will need to be coordinated with adjacent properties. The RR crossing area is not under the City of Santa Cruz jurisdiction so the City is not able to add a stop sign and lights at that location. There are street improvements required with this project. The applicant will install 8-foot wide sidewalks along Almar Avenue and Rankin St, with sidewalks leading up to the railroad tracks. The applicant is required to improve the intersection of Almar Ave and Rankin St to ensure accessible crosswalks. The slip turn lane can be removed and this will need to be coordinated with Public Works. Public Works will also require a multi-directional ADA ramp with crosswalks at the intersection of Almar Ave and Rankin St to be evaluated by the City's Traffic Engineering Department.

5. Question for City: how will resident parking be protected, can we have permit parking?

Generally speaking, in order to establish a permit parking program, it is a process that needs to be initiated by residents, a fee is required and in order for the permit parking program to be established, a percentage of the neighborhood would need to agree to the program. Please contact

Public Works Department for more information and please see below link to Municipal Code Chapter 10.41 for more information regarding Citywide Permit Parking:
<https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/SantaCruz/#!/SantaCruz10/SantaCruz1041.html#10.41>

6. Does the current application meet the underlying zoning?

The property is currently zoned R-L (Multiple Residence – Low-Density District) and designated Low-Medium-Density Residential (LM) in the General Plan, which allows for 19 units on the maximum end of the General Plan density range. The applicant is proposing 38 units with a 100% Density Bonus project.

State Density Bonus Law is a law that’s been in place since the late 70’s but has been used by developers more extensively as of late. It allows for an increase in the number of units proposed on a site in exchange for affordable units and deeper levels of affordability, as well as allows for variations to underlying development standards in the form of proposed incentives/concessions or waivers. Requested incentives/concessions would result in identifiable and actual cost reductions to the project to provide for affordable ownership costs or affordable rents. The applicant may also seek waivers or modification of development standards that will have the effect of physically precluding the construction of a housing development eligible for a density bonus at the density.

As per State Density Bonus Law, it allows 100% affordable housing projects (excluding a manager’s unit) to be exempt from any maximum density if the project is located within one-half mile of a major transit stop. This project is located within a ½ mile of a major transit stop so there is no maximum control on density, other than applicable site development standards, as per State Law. The project is still under review but the staff report will discuss the proposed incentives/concessions and waivers.

7. There are currently no other 2+ story buildings on Almar or Rankin including existing industrial/retail buildings. What is the City of Santa Cruz strategic planning vision for the neighborhood particularly for height limits?

The subject properties are currently zoned R-L, which allows for a height of 30 feet.

Once the Coastal Commission approves the City’s Local Coastal Program, the subject properties will be re-zoned to Mixed-Use Medium Density (MU-M), which allows for mixed-use buildings to be four stories and 45 feet in height.

841 Almar Ave, 2111 Mission St and 2113 Mission St are all zoned MU-M. 831 Almar Avenue is zoned IG/Per-2, which allows for a height of 50 feet. There is a property on Rankin St zoned R-L. The rest of the properties along Rankin Street are zoned R-1-5 (Single-Family Residential), which allows for a height of 30 feet.

All of the zone districts in the vicinity of the project, including the subject properties, allow for two or more stories in height.

8. What approval is needed for the proposed project?

The project requires approval of a Coastal Permit, Design Permit, Lot Line Adjustment and Density Bonus project. The project will be heard at a public hearing by the Zoning Administrator. Once the project is approved, there is a 10-day appeal period. If no appeal is received, the permit will be in effect and the applicant can move on to the building permit phase. If an appeal is received, the

project will be heard at the Planning Commission, and if the project is appealed again, it will be heard by the City Council.

9. What types of trees will be required along Rankin St?

The applicant is required to work with the City Arborist to select appropriate street trees along Rankin Street and Almar Avenue. This can be done during the building permit phase of the project. Please see the following link to the City's Recommended Street Tree Planting List:

<https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/home/showpublisheddocument/9523/635418232770030000>

10. How will the City improve biking, walking, and public transport to accommodate all the extra people in the neighborhood?

The intersection of Almar Avenue and Rankin Street is required to be improved with multi-directional accessible ramps and crosswalks to improve the connectivity to and from the subject property. The sidewalks are also required to go all the way to the railroad tracks along Almar Avenue and Rankin Street, which will then allow people to connect to the Rail Trail located on the south side of the tracks.

11. What is the current median income level that this will be benchmarked against for affordability? And if you all don't know, how can we find that information elsewhere? Regarding questions related to the definition of "affordable" and what that cost is for the County of Santa Cruz, please see below handout provided by the applicant.

While there are levels of affordability required by the City's inclusionary requirements and State Density Bonus Law, the breakdown of the level of affordability will be provided by the applicant to be posted online.

12. The 1:1 parking ratio provided on site is not enough. Will the applicant be willing to consider an increased number of parking spaces?

The City recently updated the Zoning Ordinance in accordance with State Law (Assembly Bill 2097) which eliminates parking requirements for development within one-half mile of a major transit stop with specific exceptions. Since the subject property is located within one-half mile of a major transit stop, no parking is required for the proposed project. The applicant has proposed a 1:1 parking ratio even though no parking is required for the proposed project. At the community meeting, the applicant has indicated that currently their site plan does not give them the flexibility of providing additional parking spaces but they are hoping that the 1:1 parking ratio that they are providing will ease the additional cars that will be in the area and lessen the impact to the neighborhood.

13. The route for trash pickup is in close proximity to Seaside Street, and in part runs parallel. It will require the trash collection truck to backup w/ alarms. Would the City agree to limit trash collection days be limited to the current schedule to collect along Rankin St or Seaside Street?

Public Works cannot condition the project to same day collection service as Seaside/Rankin St. due to the type of service. Seaside/Rankin St are residential accounts and the housing project will require a commercial size trash enclosure. The frequency of pick-up may be once a week, but because this will be a commercial account, it might be possible that the trash pick-up will need to be twice a week depending on the size of the enclosure. The project must follow the City's Public Works refuse container storage facility standard design policy. The project is currently proposing a

rear load service trash enclosure, which is shorter in height when compared to a front load service enclosure. Front load service trucks can accommodate much larger dumpsters, but the enclosure would have to be made taller than that of a rear load service.

14. How many feet are planned between the rail trail and the beginning of the structure?

Per the current plans, approximately around 80 feet.

15. Once residents move in, who manages the property? Will the property manager live onsite?

As per the applicant, there is a manager's unit included in the project and an on-site manager will live on-site.

16. Will lessors be able to sublet their units?

Although this is not a City requirement, the applicant responded that lessors will not be able to sublet their units.