THE CITY OF NORFOLK
CITY PLANNING

Inter Departmental Memorandum

TO:	The Honorable City Council
REVIEWED:	Ronald H. Williams, Jr. Deputy City Manager
FROM:	George M. Homewood, AICP, CFM, Director, Department of City Planning
COPIES TO:	Leonard M. Newcomb III, CFM, Assistant Director, Department of City Planning Susan Pollock, CFM, Principal Planner, Department of City Planning
SUBJECT:	Rezoning from R-8 (Single-Family) to Conditional R-9 (Single-Family) – 1510 Colon Avenue - DT Builders
DATE:	January 8, 2016

On the January 26, 2016 public hearing agenda, City Council will be reviewing a request to rezone the property located at 1510 Colon Avenue from R-8 (Single-Family) to Conditional R-9 (Single-Family). This site is located within the Campostella neighborhood on Colon Avenue between Campostella Road and Wilson Road on land that has recently had a single-family home constructed on the western half of the property. The applicant acquired the property, demolished the existing house, and commenced construction of a new house on the western half of the site prior to seeking a rezoning in order to erect an additional house on the remaining eastern half of the site.

The site is currently zoned R-8 which requires a minimum lot width of 50 feet and a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet. Approval of the rezoning to R-9 would allow the applicant to resubdivide the existing 87.5 foot wide lot into two lots, each with approximately 44 feet in width with less than 5,000 square feet in lot area per lot. While the direct impact – 6-foot narrower lots – may seem minimal, it begins to change the character of an area as well as sets a precedent for future requests.

There are several existing single-family houses along this block which could be acquired and demolished, and also rezoned to R-9 in order to permit two new houses on sites that currently only have one house. This type of development would further disrupt the existing character along Colon Avenue. Currently, the Campostella neighborhood is not considered a neighborhood in transition for which this type of character-changing development would be appropriate.

Planning staff recommended **denial** of the application because the rezoning request is inappropriate for this area given that the lot pattern consists predominately of lots that are larger and wider than lots permitted within the R-9 district.

The proposed development will result in two new lots being smaller than the majority of lots in the neighborhood, which could have a negative visual impact on the neighborhood. While the development of the new home will be required to go through the administrative design process, the home on the western portion of the parcel did not because of the manner in which the rezoning application was timed. The purpose of the "narrow lot" administrative design process is to help ensure that homes proposed on lots that are narrower than the predominate character are compatible with the surrounding architectural character of the neighborhood. This request is atypical of previous rezoning requests which normally include a proffer that both new homes will be required to obtain the zoning certificate.

Approval of a rezoning which is out of character with the existing lot pattern may establish an undesirable precedent for future inappropriate rezoning requests. A Lot-Pattern Analysis shows the following range of similar residential lots and their percentages within the area.

Lot Pattern Analysis (R-8 to R-9)

Lot-Size Range	Within 1,000 feet radius		Along same block (Colon Avenue)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Lots in character with the proposal or smaller (Less than 50 ft. in width, or less than 5,000 sq. ft.)	39	**34%**	15	**45%**
Lots in character with the existing R-8 zoning (Greater than or equal to 50 ft. in width, and greater than or equal to 5,000 sq. ft. of lot area)	75	**66%**	18	**55%**

The applicant appeared before the Campostella Civic League on November 9th to present the proposal to the community. A letter was received from the civic league which expressed that the civic league voted to **deny** the rezoning application.

After conducting a duly advertised public hearing on December 10, 2015, at which the applicant provided comments, the City Planning Commission voted **5 to 1** to recommend **denial** of the application. The majority voted for denial based on staff recommendation of denial, neighborhood opposition and the incompatibility of the proposal with the existing character of the neighborhood. The minority voted for approval based on the desire to allow more development to occur within the neighborhood.

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