

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** DECEMBER 2, 2002
FROM: CYNTHIA J. KURTZ, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW FOR THE PROPOSED CONFERENCE CENTER EXPANSION PROJECT AT 300 EAST GREEN STREET.

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is being provided for information purposes only.

BACKGROUND:

This project summary is being presented to City Council as part of the Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) guidelines, which directs that a report for projects of community-wide significance be presented to the City Council for information purposes only. The Pasadena Center Operating Company (PCOC) has submitted a proposal to develop a new, expanded conference center at 300 East Green Street. PPR has been conducted on the proposal and it has been determined that Design Review, a Conditional Use Permit for a Major Project, and an EIR will be required.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project site is located in the Central District. The site is bound by Green Street to the north, Marengo Avenue to the west, Euclid Avenue to the east and Cordova Street to the south. The site is presently developed with a conference center facility, the Pasadena Civic Auditorium and Ice Rink/Ballroom. The site area is 388,747 square feet (8.9 acres) and the existing structures total 256,489 square feet (excluding parking area).

The PCOC is proposing to demolish the existing conference center structure located at the western edge of the site. The building will be replaced with a 160,768 square foot structure comprised of meeting rooms and exhibit halls. Building height will vary to accommodate modulation and interior space needs, however the height will be consistent with that permitted per the draft Central District Specific Plan. The existing conference center building located at the east end of the site will remain. As proposed, the structure will be remodeled and expanded. The existing structure is 49,344 square feet and the new structure will be 60,905 square feet. The new structure will house meeting space, offices, and a new kitchen facility. Also proposed is an addition at the rear of the building to accommodate a 55,653 square foot ballroom. The structure will be remodeled to be architecturally compatible with the new building at the west side of the site.

The total proposed new floor area for the site is 216,421 square feet. This, in addition to the existing structures on site results in a proposed total floor area of 435,815 square feet (exclusive of parking area). The project proposes a total 1030 parking spaces, however, a parking study is presently being conducted to evaluate parking demands for the site.

REVIEW OF DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS:

The purpose of the PPR process is to identify the requirements of the various city departments, to give applicants direction regarding their projects, and to outline the development schedule. Staff reviewed the developer's proposal and has determined the following:

General Plan Review:

The General Plan designation for the project site is Specific Plan. The site is within the area designated as Central District Specific Plan, area a7 - Civic Center Master Plan area. In the Central District, the General Plan envisions a diverse mix of land uses designed to create the primary business, financial, retailing, and government center of the city. The General Plan envisioned up to 1,317,000 square feet of new non-residential development in the Civic Center area. The project proposes to add approximately 200,000 square feet of new development, so it is within the General Plan goal.

As proposed, the project is consistent with the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The changes being proposed in the updated Element do not effect the consistency of this project.

Environmental Review:

An Initial study will be required to determine the primary focus of the EIR. At this time, it is anticipated the EIR will examine major areas of impact such as Traffic and Parking, Aesthetics, Historic Resources, Noise, Land Use and Planning, Recreation, Air Quality, Public Services and Utilities. A consultant has been selected to prepare the EIR. Staff will recommend that the City Council authorize staff to execute the contract for the EIR and work will commence in mid December.

Traffic and Transportation Assessment:

It has been determined that a detailed traffic analysis will be required for this project. The traffic analysis will be conducted as part of the EIR and will focus on issues such as parking and loading as well as on-site and off-site circulation. In addition to the traffic analysis, a parking study is presently being conducted to determine if an adequate amount of parking is being proposed. The results of the parking study will be incorporated into the EIR and CUP analysis.

Planning Assessment:

Based on the plans and application materials submitted, staff has preliminarily determined that the following entitlement is necessary: Conditional Use Permit for a major project exceeding 25,000 square feet. Additional information resulting from the parking analysis will determine if adequate on-site parking can be provided or if the PCOC will propose a shared parking agreement. A Minor Conditional Use Permit will be required for shared parking or loading.

Per the draft Central District Framework the maximum allowable floor area for the site is 874,680 square feet (388,747 site area x 2.25 ratio). The proposed total floor area of 435,815 is under the maximum permitted.

The plan framework states that the maximum height for the site is 60 feet and that up to 30% of the building footprint may exceed the height limit (up to a height of 75 feet) provided that the average height of that footprint does not exceed the otherwise permitted height for the site. Height averaging requires approval by the Design Commission. The preliminary elevations appear to meet this requirement. The Plan also permits a setback of up to five feet on all sides. As proposed the new building varies in setback for tree protection and to incorporate architectural design features. The tree ordinance states the Design Commission can approve a setback to protect public trees. A variance may be needed for setbacks not related to tree protection.

The PPR application has identified 108 trees on site. It is anticipated that approximately 73 trees would have to be removed or relocated. All trees are considered public trees and are thereby protected regardless of the size or type of tree. The PCOC will be required to complete public tree removal applications for each tree that is proposed for removal. The Tree Protection Ordinance requires that the City Manager notify the City Council, Design Commission and any neighborhood groups prior to the removal of three or more public trees.

Applicable Design Guidelines include: Citywide Design Principles; Design Guidelines for the Central District Specific Plan; Civic Center / Midtown Design Guidelines, Section 10; Civic Center / Midtown Streetscapes Refined Concept Plan; streetscape improvements should be consistent with this plan.

Concept Design Review and Final Design Review will be required for this project. Concept design review addresses basic project design, including massing, modulation, siting, proportions, solid-to-void relationships, compatibility with surroundings, and compliance with design guidelines. Final Design review focuses on compliance with the conditions (if any) of concept design and on construction details, paint colors, finishes, doors and windows, landscaping, exterior lighting, location/screening of mechanical equipment, etc.

Based on the schematic design proposed, staff finds that the proposal achieves architectural differentiation to that of the civic auditorium. Differentiation is further articulated through color, massing, and design style. While this is an appropriate solution for new developments adjacent to historic buildings, the proposed design requires further refinement and should appear subordinate to the civic auditorium. These issues will be further studied through the Design Review process.

Inclusionary Housing:

This project does not contain a residential component and is not subject to the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

Cultural Affairs Review:

The project is subject to the Public Art Requirement for new development. One percent (1%) of the building valuation must be allocated for public art. Cultural Affairs will review and approve the art program.

TIMELINE

The following schedule outlines the major stages in the process:

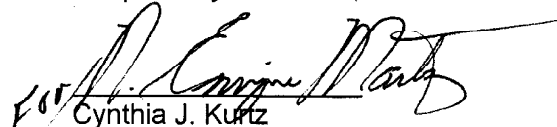
11/21/02	PPR meeting between applicant and city department representatives
12/02/02	PPR report to City Council as an information item
12/02/02	City Council authorizes contract to initiate EIR process

7/03 CUP Hearing/EIR Certification
7/03 Concept Design Review
11/03 Final Design Review

FISCAL IMPACT:

The project will generate plan check and permit fees estimated to be approximately \$2,000,000.


Respectfully submitted,


Cynthia J. Kurtz
City Manager

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Approved by:


Richard J. Bruckner
Director of Planning and Development

Attachments: 1. Project Plans
2. PPR Comments