

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** MARCH 30, 2009
FROM: CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: PRE-APPLICATION CONFERENCE FOR A NEW MIXED-USE
PROJECT AT 880 E. COLORADO BOULEVARD

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is being provided for information only.

BACKGROUND:

This project summary is being presented to the City Council per Pre-Application Conference (PAC) guidelines, which require staff to present projects of community-wide significance to the City Council for informational purposes.

RTKL Architects, on behalf of Singpoli Pacifica, LLC, has submitted a Pre-Application Conference proposal for a new mixed-use development on the south side of E. Colorado Boulevard between Lake Avenue and Mentor Avenue. The project proposes to redevelop the 1.9 acre (85,136 square feet) site by establishing a new hotel in a newly constructed space as well as reuse of an existing building, constructing a new office building and retail shops, and constructing a new subterranean parking garage to be used by the new development. The remainder of the existing buildings and the two-story parking garage would be demolished in phases.

Project Description

The project would be developed in three phases:

Phase 1 includes renovation of the existing eight-story building (originally constructed in 1926 as a hotel, now vacant) at E. Colorado Bl. and S. Mentor Ave. for use as a new hotel. After renovation, the hotel would be operational with 114 guest rooms and five residential condominiums. Temporary parking for the hotel would be accommodated nearby at off-site parking garages for the first phase only.

Phase 2 includes construction of a four-story addition to the rear of the hotel building to accommodate 42 additional hotel rooms, bringing the total to 156 rooms. This phase would include a one-story retail component to temporarily accommodate the existing Bank of America customer branch (8,640 square feet), which currently operates on the site but would be demolished in this phase. Also included is a public use plaza with a reflecting pool and fountain adjacent to the hotel, and the first portion of the subterranean garage and temporary surface parking lot with 212 parking spaces to serve the hotel and retail shops.

Phase 3 includes construction of a new seven-story office building of 188,810 square feet. The ground floor would be permanently occupied by a Bank of America customer branch. This phase includes the completion of two-story retail shops of 46,640 square feet along E. Colorado Bl. located between the office building and the hotel. The retail shops include a raised terrace with gardens for public use. All parking for the project would be provided on-site in the subterranean garage with 653 spaces.

The vehicular access to the project site would be from a new east/west-oriented driveway located behind the buildings on the southern end of the property. Ingress and egress would be from S. Lake Ave. and S. Mentor Ave. No driveways are proposed on E. Colorado Bl. The buildings have ground floor pedestrian entrances facing E. Colorado Bl.

Architecture and Design - The hotel building is historic and designated as a landmark. It would be preserved, cleaned, and renovated in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The exterior renovation and rear addition would receive advisory review by the Historic Preservation Commission and final design review by the Design Commission.

The new seven-story office building at the corner of E. Colorado Bl. and Lake Ave., which is 90 feet in height, incorporates the Height Averaging standards of the Zoning Code. It is designed with a combination of traditional and contemporary architectural features, a pier-and-spandrel design with punched window openings, large areas of glazing, step-backs on the upper stories, and asymmetrical massing. This main building would be joined by two distinct and 30-foot tall one-story modules that front E. Colorado Boulevard: a prominent glass atrium at the street corner that highlights the pedestrian corner entrance to the building; and retail storefronts that are roughly centered on the site, facing the street. These one-story structures are conceptually designed in a contemporary style. They are intended to anchor the new development with pedestrian-oriented uses and to create an inviting atmosphere to encourage pedestrians to use the podium level gardens and open space. These smaller scaled modules and single-story podium allow for a large separation (approximately 75 feet) between the historic hotel and the new office building.

Discretionary Reviews

Consistent with the Central District Specific Plan, the project would require several zoning entitlements: a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a new project over 25,000 square feet; a Minor Conditional Use Permit (MCUP) for a project located within a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area; and a Certificate of Exception (Lot Line Adjustment) to consolidate the existing parcels into one single parcel. Following approval of the entitlements by the Hearing Officer, the Design Commission would review the proposed design and height averaging request.

Predevelopment Plan Review Summary

On January 15, 2009, staff conducted a meeting between the applicant and City Departments. This meeting identified several issues (see discussion below). After the meeting, the applicant revised the proposal to eliminate Variances and an Adjustment Permit that would have been required for the previous proposal. The applicant submitted an application for the required land use entitlements on March 2, 2009.

Environmental Review: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review of the project will address issue areas including traffic and circulation, parking, air quality, aesthetics, and historic preservation. Based on the scope and location of the project, the environmental impacts of the project will be reviewed in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Currently, the staff is preparing a contract with an approved EIR consultant.

Because the project proposes three different development phases, the final EIR will review the environmental impacts of each phase individually as well as assess the cumulative impacts of the project based on the final build-out scenario. The EIR will require implementation of required mitigations for each respective development phase at the time of its completion.

Transportation and Parking: The final project includes the construction of 653 subterranean parking spaces. This parking requirement is based on the reduced TOD standards for all components of the mixed-use project. A Traffic/Parking Study will be prepared to assess the potential traffic and parking issues for this project, including the impacts associated with each individual phase and the off-site parking scheme for the first phase.

Transit Oriented Development: Due to the project's proximity to the metro Gold Line Station, the project must obtain a Minor Conditional Use Permit in order to ensure compliance with the City's TOD standards. One of the findings will require the project to enhance pedestrian access and other non-motorized modes of transportation to public transit. The project must also encourage pedestrian activity.

Design & Historic Preservation Review: The Design Commission will review the proposed project as part of the Concept and Final Design Review process prior to approval of an application for a building permit. The Design Commission will also review the Height Averaging proposal for the new office building. Some design issues that will be reviewed in Design Review include architectural styling, massing, compatibility with existing development, the site plan, and landscaping.

Timeline

Date	Activity
November 5, 2008	Application submitted for Pre-Application Conference
January 15, 2009	Preliminary Plan Review meeting with applicant
April – December 2009	Draft EIR preparation (including preparation of related studies—traffic, air quality, historic preservation, etc.). The Transportation Advisory Committee and the Design Commission will review the project at a public scoping session.
Early 2010	Hearing Officer Public Hearing for land use entitlements and CEQA findings
Following Hearing Officer approval	Advisory Review by Historic Preservation Commission and Design Review by Design Commission

FISCAL IMPACT

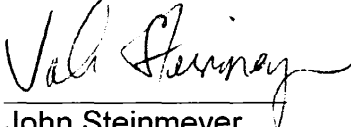
The applicant will be required to pay fees for processing of the land use entitlements (CUPs) and staff processing of the Environmental Impact Report. The project will also generate plan check and permit fees in an amount that cannot be determined at this time.

Respectfully submitted




 Michael J. Beck
 City Manager

Prepared by:



 John Steinmeyer
 Senior Planner

Approved by:



 Richard J. Bruckner
 Director of Planning and Development

- Attachment 1: Aerial View of Existing Site
- Attachment 2: Colorado Bl. Elevation (Phase 3 – Final Project)
- Attachment 3: Site Plan (Phase 3 – Final Project)