

Agenda Report

DATE: September 14, 2009

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF PUBLIC TREE REMOVAL
AT 2345 EAST COLORADO BOULEVARD

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve the removal of one *Ficus microcarpa* 'nitida', Indian laurel fig tree located at 2345 East Colorado Boulevard, which will allow for the redevelopment of the Vons Store property.

URBAN FORESTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At the Special Meeting of July 20, 2009, the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee (UFAC) reviewed the staff supported proposal from Vons to remove one *Ficus microcarpa* 'nitida', Indian laurel fig tree from the parkway located at 2345 East Colorado Boulevard. The UFAC voted to not support the removal of the tree until the developer considered other design options that would retain the tree.

At the Special Meeting of August 12, 2009, the UFAC reviewed various design options submitted by the developer. After review of several design options, a motion was unanimously approved to forward a statement to the Council that, "the UFAC understands that the City Council has a policy to not remove live green trees. However, the UFAC understands that this project may be important to the City, and the UFAC defers the decision to the City Council regarding the tree removal. Per UFAC request, the applicant has brought several site plan alternatives for review and it appears that the tree can not be saved without reducing the size of the project."

BACKGROUND:

Safeway Incorporated is proposing to redevelop the site located at the northwest corner of Sierra Madre and Colorado Boulevards. The proposed redevelopment includes the demolition of the existing 53,163 square foot commercial building currently occupied by Vons and Rite Aid, and the construction of a new 60,800 square foot Vons

grocery/pharmacy store with an additional 14,000± of retail space. The \$24.5 million project is expected to create 250 new construction jobs, and 62 additional permanent jobs.

The overall placement of the grocery store and ancillary retail spaces is limited by various City requirements. For one, the project is located within the East Colorado Specific Plan area. The specific plan requires the overall project be "pedestrian oriented." Second, the Zoning Code requires a maximum five-foot set back along Colorado Boulevard. In addition, Pasadena Municipal Code Section 17.46.70, "Driveway Visibility" requires that a driveway must be more than 50 feet from an intersection. The corner also includes a bus stop which further limits the placement of a driveway. Transportation staff has stated that the proposed placement is satisfactory with Metro and the bus stop.

Vons has designed the placement of shops along the westerly side of the property to reduce the visual blight of the adjacent property to the west along Colorado Boulevard. In addition, Vons also placed the ancillary retail space along the street corner to meet the requirements of the Specific Plan. To create viable and rentable retail space, the building should be a minimum 65 foot deep, with good visibility from on and off-site traffic and a strong pedestrian presence on Colorado Boulevard. This placement requires that the driveway be moved easterly approximately 65 feet, requiring one *Ficus microcarpa* 'nitida', Indian laurel fig tree to be removed. Vons also investigated the possibility of splitting the driveway to go around the impacted tree – ingress on one side and egress on the other. However, the Public Works arborist declined this option as the tree could not sustain the amount of root pruning required for the driveway segments to be installed.

Vons supports the City's position regarding the preservation of street trees and has considered every possible configuration in an effort to retain the tree. However, this is not feasible considering all of the other requirements. As such, Vons proposes to provide street trees and landscaping on the perimeter of the site as well as the parking lot. Currently, there are no trees along Sierra Madre Boulevard where Vons proposes to plant twelve street trees in conformance with the Street Tree Master Plan. The development will plant two new trees on Walnut Street as a condition of the development.

Staff is recommending the removal of one *Ficus microcarpa* 'nitida', Indian laurel fig tree located on Colorado Boulevard west of Sierra Madre Boulevard.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

This development project's proposal to improve safety for ingress/egress involves the removal of one ficus tree. However, it will assist in the renewal of the urban forest by planting 14 new trees and is a demonstration of the continued commitment to the development of sustainable growth.

FISCAL IMPACT:

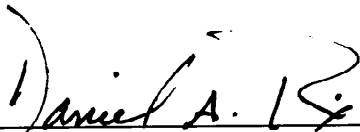
With this support, the developer will be required to pay the assessed value of the tree (\$2,448), the removal cost (\$1,500) and replacement cost (\$1,050) for a total of \$4,998 which will be used for the planting of street trees elsewhere in the City.

Respectfully submitted,



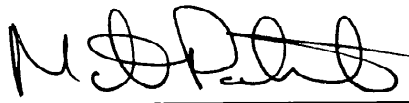
MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

Prepared by:



Daniel A. Rix, City Engineer

Approved by:



Martin Pastucha, Director
Department of Public Works

9/10/09

My Pet Garden, Inc.
2245 East Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91107

Re; Proposed construction project at Sierra Madre and Colorado Blvd.

To Whom It May Concern:

As I understand it there is a proposed construction project to take place at the North West corner of Colorado and Sierra Madre, and that this project will be at least in part a new and improved Vons as well as smaller retail spaces. Also that this project is scheduled get underway soon.

As an independent retailer located just to the West of Sierra Madre Blvd. in the Roosevelt Shopping Plaza I could not be happier. Such a project is extremely well received. Having such an improved retail establishment will really give this area a boost and I firmly believe be a much better use of this prime location which will certainly serve the surrounding communities much better then the current use.

However as I understand it there are objections to this project based on an issue to do with the removal of a tree. Let me say that it would be a great shame if this project did not move forward for such a reason. The fact that a great many trees could be planted to replace this tree (which will help to beautify this highly visible corner) as well as the fact that such an improvement to this corner far outweighs any concerns over the removal of a single tree.

Again, as an independent retailer with first hand experience of this area, I strongly urge you to proceed with this project.

Thank you,


Joel Tatum
Owner/ My Pet Garden, Inc.