

Agenda Report

January 24, 2011

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Planning Department

SUBJECT: PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION OF AN URBAN HOUSING PROJECT AT 167 EAST WALNUT STREET (WALNUT/MARENGO)

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is provided for information only.

BACKGROUND:

This project summary is presented to the City Council as specified in the Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) guidelines that requires staff to present projects of community-wide significance to the City Council for informational purposes.

Project Description

Proposed is the new construction of a five-story housing project consisting of 100 market-rate residential units with two levels of parking, located at 167 E. Walnut Street. Currently the site is used by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) for the maintenance and support of the abutting MTA light rail tracks. The proposed project will measure 72,335 square feet, with 125 parking stalls over three levels of parking. Also proposed is a recreation room measuring 1,265 square feet. The subject parcel is narrow and abuts the MTA light rail easement as it leads up to the 210 freeway and measures 50,372 square feet. The parcel has frontage on Chestnut Place and Townsend Place. Abutting the site is a City-owned parcel that measures 22,692 and currently provides vehicle access to the MTA's equipment that occupies the subject site. The property is located within the Memorial Park Urban Village District and is zoned CD-1 (Central District, Sub-area 1-Old Pasadena). In addition, the project is located within the boundaries of the Downtown Redevelopment area.

Consideration regarding the possible sale of City-owned property

The City owns a parcel that abuts the subject site with street frontage on Walnut Street. The applicant has approached the City about the possibility of acquiring the parcel via sale, lease or easement, in order to incorporate into the proposed development. Said action is not necessary in order for the project to move forward. This parcel would be

improved to accommodate a new two-way driveway as well as provide pockets of open space. No portion of the new development will encroach onto this parcel, nor will the square footage of this parcel be incorporated into the allowable density, floor area of the primary site.

Discretionary Reviews

The proposed use is permitted within the boundaries of the Central District Specific Plan. Along with this site, the Specific Plan has identified certain remaining areas within the CD-1 for development to meet the needs of the public, while preserving and enhancing areas of historic and architectural significance.

The following chart references the various entitlements required for the project:

Entitlement	Reason	Review Authority
Variance	To exceed the allowable height of 60 feet. Per the Zoning Code, height is measured from the lowest point along existing grade which in this case would be immediately adjacent to the light rail tracks, resulting in height of approximately 92 feet.	Hearing Officer
Minor Variance	To provide a setback that is greater than the required five feet along Walnut Street (Assuming City parcel is acquired).	Hearing Officer
Tentative Tract Map	To consolidate two parcels into one, if parcel owned is acquired by applicant.	Hearing Officer
Preliminary Design Consultation	Intended to provide staff and the Design Commission input prior to significant investment being made on detailed architectural drawings.	Design Commission
Concept and Final Design Approval	Design Review.	Design Commission
Environmental Study	An Environmental Initial Study is required in order to determine whether a negative declaration or E.I.R. is appropriate for the proposed development.	Environmental review may be brought to one or more advisory commissions before public hearing with the hearing officer

Summary of Predevelopment Plan Review Comments

On October 1, 2009 staff conducted a meeting between the applicant and other City departments. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the applicant of the potential conditions that would be imposed as a result of this project. Present, were members of Transportation and Public Works. Specifically, Transportation informed the applicant of the potential traffic impacts that would result from egress/ingress onto Townsend Place. The preparation of a traffic study was recommended in order to further assess those potential impacts. Subsequent meetings took place starting in April of 2010 to discuss the acquisition of the City parcel. Although the City parcel is not required for development of this site, the acquisition would divert traffic onto Walnut instead of Townsend Place. The meetings included members of Fire and Public Works. Their primary concerns were with the need to provide easements for emergency and maintenance issues respectively. The applicant has expressed that this will not be a problem if an agreement on the parcel is made.

Land Use and Parking

The subject property is zoned CD-1 (Central District Specific Plan, Subarea 1, Old Pasadena). It is also located within the Central District Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) area, as well as within the boundaries of the Downtown Redevelopment area.

Per the Zoning Code, the applicant must provide one parking space for each unit 650 square feet or less. For units over 650 square feet, 1.5 spaces up to a maximum of 1.75 spaces must be provided. In addition, guest parking at a ratio of one space per ten units is required. To meet this requirement, the applicant is proposing 125 parking spaces.

Per the Zoning Code, the allowable height for all new construction is 60 feet. In this particular case, the new building will measure 92 feet in height as measured from the lowest point along existing grade which is immediately adjacent to the MTA light rail tracks. In order to allow this deviation, approval of a Variance will be required. As part of the variance consideration, it is worth noting the proposed structure will not exceed a height of 60 feet as measured from grade along Walnut Street. Compliance with the allowable height would result in a substantial reduction of floors and permitted number of dwelling units at this location.

Traffic

The thresholds outlined in the Traffic Impact Review Guidelines require that a full traffic impact and parking analysis be conducted. As part of that process, Transportation Staff will review to see if there will be any significant impacts on Chestnut Street/Townsend Place intersection. If necessary, appropriate traffic impact mitigation measures will be determined in conjunction with Public Works.

Design & Historic Preservation Review

The site is located within the CD-1 (Old Pasadena) sub-area of the Central District Specific Plan. The site is an undeveloped lot that abuts a multi-family housing project to

the west. As part of the review process, the applicant will present before the Design Commission to obtain direction on the proposed design. These recommendations, will address the height, style or materials of the proposed structure. Preliminary review by the Design commission will occur following the PPR report to the City Council.

Timeline:

Date	Activity
July 27, 2009	Application submitted for Pre-Application Conference
October 1, 2009	Preliminary Plan Review meeting with applicant
October 2009- Present	Discussion with applicant regarding density, size, parking, and possible acquisition of City parcel.
February 2011	Preliminary Design Consultation with the Design Commission.
To be determined	Public hearing with hearing officer on applications for Zoning entitlements.
To be determined	Final Design Review by the Design Commission

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The review of potential projects of community-wide significance is consistent with the City Council's Strategic Plan goal to support and promote the quality of Life and Local Economy.

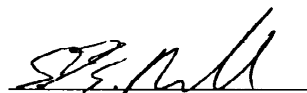
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The PPR review identified a need for an environmental initial study. The proposed environmental study will identify the potential impacts that may result with the construction of 100 residential units. Those specific impacts will address traffic, noise and air.

FISCAL IMPACT:

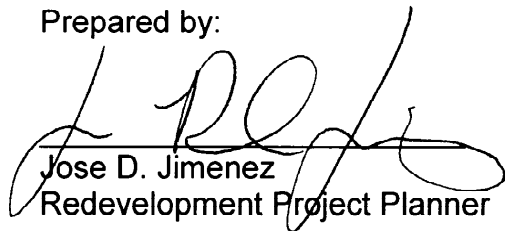
As part of the proposal, the applicant will pay fees for processing the necessary land use entitlements as well as fees for the environmental review, traffic assessment, plan check and permits and construction tax on a building permit.

Approved by:




STEVE MERMELL
Assistant City Manager

Prepared by:



Jose D. Jimenez
Redevelopment Project Planner

Respectfully submitted,



MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

Attachment A: PPR (Revised) Submittal Drawings