

Agenda Report

February 25, 2013

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PROJECT LOCATED AT 254 E. UNION STREET

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is intended to provide information to the City Council, no action is required.

BACKGROUND:

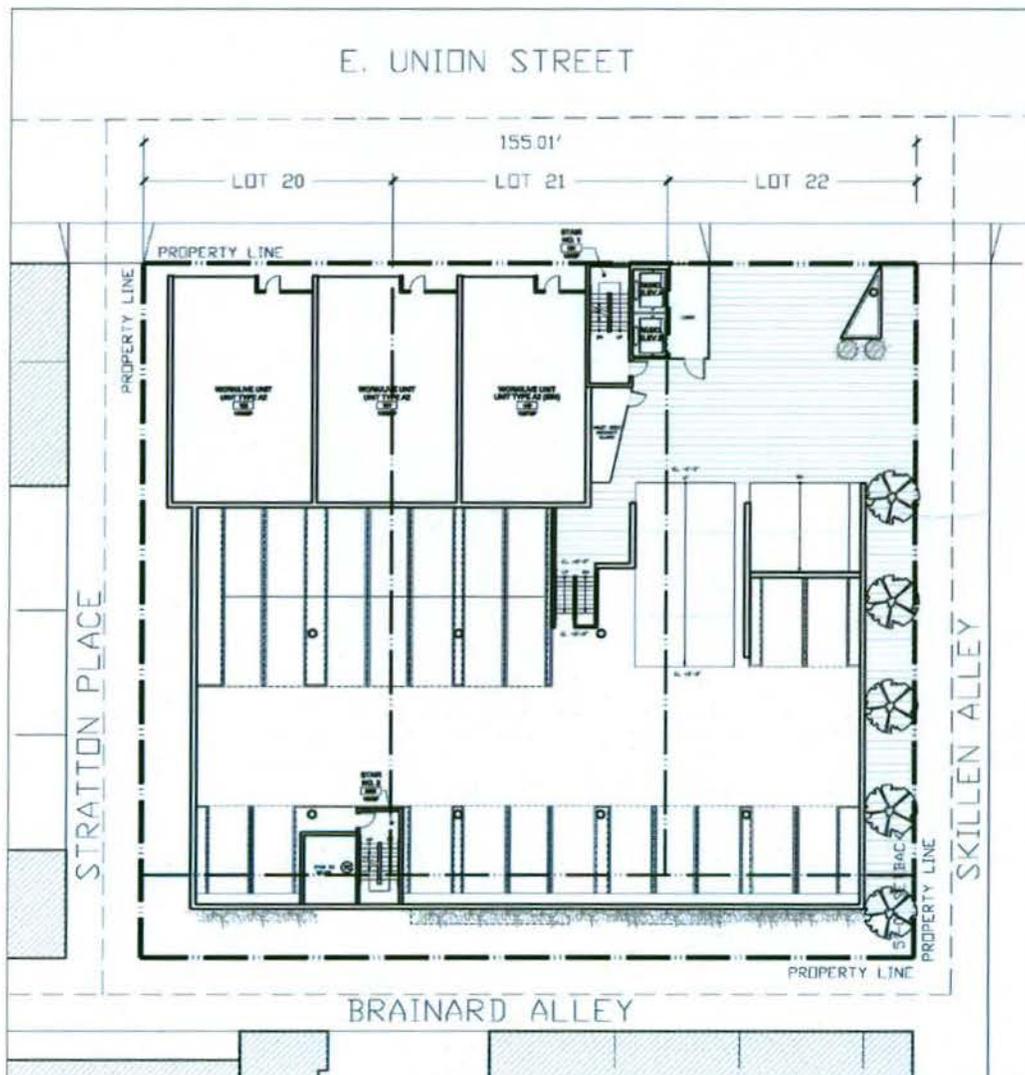
Barker Pacific Group has submitted a Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) application to develop the property at 254 East Union Street. The site is currently used as a surface parking lot supporting the building at 225 E. Colorado Blvd., which is under the same ownership. The subject site is located within the boundaries of the Central District Specific Plan. The PPR process was established to achieve better projects through early consultation between City staff and applicants, identify issues that may arise during application processing such as community concerns, achieve consistency with City regulations and policies, and avoid significant investment in the design of a project without preliminary direction from City staff. Importantly, the PPR process also serves to inform the City Council and the public of development projects that are of community-wide significance.

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The subject site is comprised of a single parcel on the south side of East Union Street, west of North Garfield Avenue. It is immediately west of the main post office and surrounded on three sides by public alleys: Skillen Alley on the east, Brainard Alley on the south and Stratton Place on the west. The parcel is approximately 21,741 square feet in size. The site has a small building at the northern end with two three-car garages flanking a guard booth and vehicular access portals. A sign, which currently reads "Parking for 225 Colorado Building," is attached to the northern roof edge of this building. The sign is a designated historic sign, which was recently rehabilitated when the Citizen's Business Bank vacated the 225 E. Colorado Boulevard building. The remainder of the site is uncovered surface parking.

The proposal for the property is to develop a five-story, 42,241-square-foot mixed-use building with three work/live units on the ground floor and 49 residential units. The project would also replace the existing parking in addition to providing the number of parking spaces to serve the building as required in the Zoning Code. Consequently, parking will be provided in two underground levels, one semi-subterranean level and one mezzanine level (behind the work-live units).

The proposed site plan (including a plan of the building's first floor) is shown below:



Discretionary Entitlements

The project as currently designed will require a Minor Conditional Use Permit to allow 75% of the non-residential parking to be tandem parking. The project will also require design review, with the Design Commission as the review authority.

PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY:

On December 20, 2012 staff conducted a preliminary informational meeting regarding the proposed project with the applicant and representatives from various City Departments, including the Current Planning and Design and Historic Preservation Sections of the Planning & Community Development Department's Planning Division, the Fire Department, the Finance Department (First Source Local Hiring), the City Manager's Office (Economic Development Division), the Department of Public Works and the Department of Transportation. Written comments were also provided by the Building, Cultural Affairs and Community Planning Divisions of the Planning & Community Development Department, the City Manager's Office (Enterprise Zone) and the Power Division of the Department of Water & Power. Review and comments on the proposal identified the following issues:

Zoning Code

The site is within the CD-2 (Central District Specific Plan, Civic Center / Midtown sub area) Zoning district. Mixed-use projects are a permitted use in the CD-2 zoning District. Additionally, work/live units are a permitted use in the CD-2 Zoning District. The property is within the Central District Transit-Oriented Development Area, and therefore shall meet the requirements of Section 17.50.340 of the City's Zoning Code. Below is a breakdown of those requirements as they relate to this project:

Residential Density. The maximum allowable residential density on the subject property is 87 dwelling units per acre. For the subject 21,741 square foot site, a maximum of 43 residential units are permitted. The applicant is proposing development of 49 units, with four units reserved for affordable housing. Section 17.43.040 of the City's Zoning Code allows for increase in the allowable density upon the provision of affordable units as part of the proposed project. Density bonus is allowed up to 35 percent; as such, the maximum potential permitted number of units on the subject site, if affordable housing is provided, is 58 units. Additional information (such as the affordability of the units – very low, low, or moderate) is required in order to determine if the four affordable units provided warrant the additional density proposed.

Setbacks. The Central District Specific Plan does not require front, rear or side setbacks in this area, although a ten-foot minimum sidewalk width is required along Union Street. It appears from the submitted plans that the project is set back to adhere to the minimum sidewalk width standard.

Height. The maximum allowed height for the subject site is 60'. As proposed, the project height at 57'-6" complies with the height requirement.

Parking. A minimum of 73 spaces but no more than 85 spaces must be provided on the site. Within the Transit Oriented Development Area, a site may exceed the maximum allowable number of parking spaces if the parking is approved to serve as joint parking.

The applicant is proposing to provide two levels of subterranean parking, one level of semi-subterranean parking and one level of above-ground parking with a total of 150 spaces. Of that total, 60 spaces will be joint parking spaces to serve the 225 E. Colorado Boulevard building. Based on the mix of uses and allowance for joint parking, the number of parking spaces provided appears to comply with the Zoning Code requirements.

The City's Zoning Code allows up to 75 percent of the total nonresidential off-street parking provided to incorporate tandem spaces, but only upon the approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit. Eight of the parking spaces serving the nonresidential component of the project are proposed as tandem parking, which may be allowed with the approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit.

Environmental Review. Pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) may be prepared to analyze the project's potential to result in significant impacts, as identified by State and local environmental guidelines. Staff will execute a contract for environmental services after a formal application is submitted.

Design and Historic Preservation

The property is located immediately adjacent to the Pasadena Civic Center Historic District and the Civic Center Financial Historic District, both of which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. As such, the design review process outlined in these comments will place particular emphasis on design guidelines for new buildings in close proximity to historic resources. In addition, The "Parking for Citizen's Bank & Building" sign (recently rehabilitated to state "Parking for 225 Colorado Building") is listed in the City's Historic Sign Inventory and, according to the historic preservation ordinance, is a designated historic resource. As such, the sign should be incorporated into the design of the project or there should be an alternative proposal to preserve the sign off site.

Because the project consists of new construction in excess of 10,000 square feet within the boundaries of the Central District Specific Plan, design review is required, with the Design Commission being the reviewing authority. The applicable design guidelines for the project are the Citywide Design Principles in the Land Use Element of the General Plan and the design guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan.

The design of the building will be highly scrutinized due to the proximity of the site to important historic resources. It is highly recommended that applications for design review include illustrative studies that explain how the massing, style, fenestration, materials selections and detailing relate to the buildings in the surrounding district. Additional comments about specific design issues such as siting and orientation; height, massing & modulation; solid-to-void relationships; architectural style and details; preliminary materials; and landscaping were also provided.

General Plan

The property's General Plan Land Use designation is Specific Plan (Central District). The Specific Plan is further broken down into sub-districts, with the project site located within the CD-2 sub-district (Civic Center/Midtown District). This sub-district is intended to strengthen its role as the symbolic and governmental center of the City, supporting civic, cultural, and public service institutions, while augmenting the character of the area with a complementary mixture of uses. The following Land Use Policies and Objectives of the General Plan may be applicable to the project:

- Objective 1 - Targeted Development: Direct higher density development away from Pasadena's residential neighborhoods and into targeted areas, creating an exciting urban core with diverse economic, housing, cultural and entertainment opportunities.
- Policy 1.3 - Transit-Oriented and Pedestrian-Oriented Development: Within targeted development areas, cluster development near light rail stations and along major transportation corridors thereby creating transit oriented development "nodes" and encouraging pedestrian access.
- Policy 5.5 - Architectural and Design Excellence: The City shall actively promote architectural and design excellence in buildings, open space and urban design and shall discourage poor quality development.
- Policy 20.3 - Bicycles/Pedestrians: Promote the use of non-motorized modes of transportation, such as bicycles and walking within the City.

The Central District Specific Plan contains the following relevant objectives:

- Objective 2 - Identify Growth Areas. Downtown growth and development will be directed toward the most appropriate locations, with the intention of 1) protecting existing residential neighborhoods; 2) supporting transit usage; 3) and revitalizing underutilized areas.
- Objective 6 - The distinctive character of Downtown and its unique Sub-districts will be maintained and further enhanced. New development will respond to the area's architectural heritage with sensitivity and offer creative design solutions.

General Plan Caps

In 1994 the General Plan allocated 5,095 new housing units and 6.2 million square feet of new non-residential development to the Central District Specific Plan area. As of December 31, 2012, the Central District retained an allocation of 520 housing units and 3.9 million square feet of non-residential development potential. The proposed project

can be accommodated within the allowable remaining units and square feet proposed by the General Plan.

The draft General Plan is proposing to move away from the existing system of development allocation, or caps, and toward a system of development levels. Staff is proposing that the Land Use Element contain a new policy that would set development levels to be evaluated in the General Plan environmental impact report (GP EIR). For the Central District, the GP EIR would study the effects of 3,750 new housing units and 2.5 million square feet of new non-residential development. The Draft Land Use Element is also proposing changes to the Land Use Diagram; however the maximum floor area for this site (a floor area ratio of 2.25) is not proposed to change.

Cultural Affairs

The project is subject to the Pasadena Public Art Program. This Public Art Program requires that at least one percent (1%) of the building valuation costs, based on the project location, for new construction and/or renovation of multi-family residential, commercial, or mixed-used developments and with a building permit valuation of \$500,000 or more shall be allocated by the developer to incorporate in their design a public art component. The developer may also choose to pay the full 1% to the Cultural Trust Fund in lieu of developing a public art project.

Transportation/Traffic

The thresholds identified in the City's Traffic Impact Review Guidelines require that a full Traffic Impact and Parking Analysis be conducted for the project. This analysis will be used to prepare the Traffic and Transportation Chapter of the EIR and will also identify feasible mitigation measures for transportation related impacts.

The Department of Transportation also recommended that the vehicular access location be moved from the proposed location on East Union Street at the eastern edge of the site (adjacent to Skillen Alley) to directly take access from Skillen Alley. This change would avoid the creation of an excessively wide vehicular access corridor along East Union Street, which would result from the adjacency of the alley and the proposed project driveway.

Public Works

Dedications of land for street purposes will be required. These include a two-foot dedication along East Union Street to address a substandard parkway width and five foot dedications along Brainerd & Skillen Alleys and Stratton Place to address substandard alley widths. Construction of the widening of the alleys and corner cut-offs will also be required, as well as installation of street trees and lights.

NEXT STEPS:

This project will require discretionary approvals involving public hearings before the Zoning Hearing Officer and Design Commission. In addition, an EIR may be required if the project is found to have the potential to result in significant environmental impacts. The following list identifies next steps in the review process:

- Preliminary Consultation with Design Commission;
- Preparation of Initial Study;
- If an EIR is required:
 - Public Scoping Meetings;
 - Preparation of EIR;
 - Public Hearing for Certification of EIR
- Zoning Hearing Officer public hearing
- Design Commission public hearings.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The project has the potential to generate revenue through the collection of Residential Impact fees as well as Transportation Improvement fees. The exact amount of these fees will be determined during the plan check process; the Residential Impact fees are estimated at approximately \$864,000 based on the breakdown of unit types provided in the application. The estimated Transportation Improvement fee is approximately \$164,000.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment: PPR Plans