

# Agenda Report

April 23, 2018

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department

**SUBJECT: PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW OF A NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT 1307-1355 LINCOLN AVENUE AND 460-466 W. WASHINGTON BOULEVARD**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

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

**BACKGROUND:**

The applicant, The Lincoln Bedroom Project, LLC, has submitted a Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) application to develop the properties at 1307 and 1355 Lincoln Avenue and 460 and 466 West Washington Boulevard. The project site consists of four (4) legal lots (AINs: 5727-009-008, 5727-009-007, 5727-009-010, and 5727-008-038), with a total site size of approximately 106,000 square feet or 2.4 acres. The site is currently occupied by commercial and residential buildings.

The proposed project consists of demolition of existing on-site commercial and residential buildings and construction of 64, for-sale, detached townhomes (including nine units designated for moderate-income households). The project site is currently dual-zoned Lincoln Avenue Specific Plan – Commercial Limited (LASP-CL) and Single-Family Residential at six dwelling units per acre (RS-6). The applicant is proposing to establish a Planned Development zone for this project site.

The PPR process is established in Section 17.60.040.C of the City's Zoning Code as a process by which better projects can be achieved through early consultation between City staff and applicants. The process coordinates the review of projects among City staff, familiarizes applicants with the regulations and procedures that apply to the projects, and avoids significant investment in the design of a project without preliminary input from City staff. It also helps to identify issues that may arise during application processing, such as community concerns and consistency with City regulations and policies.

Projects that meet the threshold of "community-wide significance" (greater than 50,000 square feet in size with at least one discretionary action, 50 or more housing units, or any project that is deemed by the Director of Planning & Community Development Department to be of major importance to the City) are presented to the City Council as a way to inform Councilmembers and the public of significant upcoming projects.

This report provides a project description, identifies the anticipated entitlement and environmental review processes, summarizes key areas of concern regarding Zoning Code and General Plan compliance, and offers background on the evolution of the project to date.

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The 106,000 square-foot subject site has frontage along Lincoln Avenue to the east, West Washington Boulevard to the north, and Pepper Street to the south. A portion of the site was previously occupied by Pierce Plastics. The site is dual zoned LASP-CL and RS-6, with corresponding General Plan designations of Medium Mixed Use and Low Density Residential, respectively. The project includes:

- Demolition of existing on-site commercial and residential buildings;
- Establishment of a Planned Development zoning district for the project site; and
- Construction of 64, for-sale, detached townhomes (including nine units designated for moderate-income households);

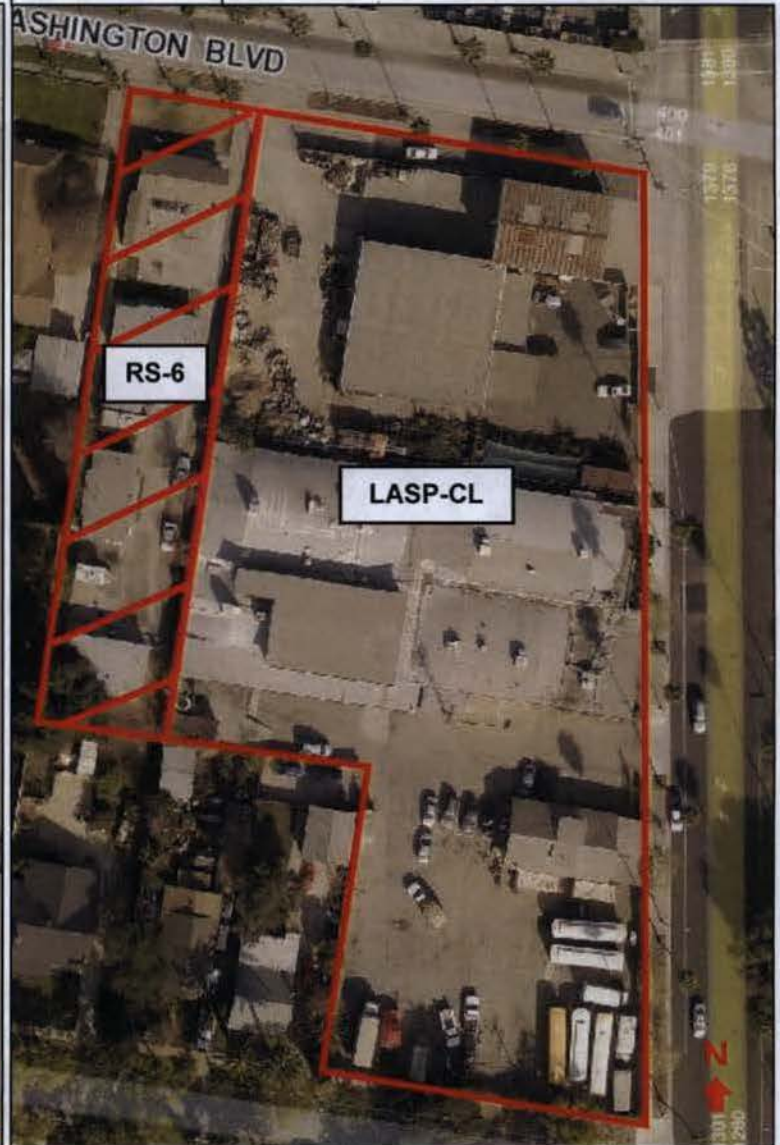
The project features rows of three-story townhomes aligned along a series of internal drive aisles. An aerial map of the existing site and the proposed site plan are provided on the following page.

As discussed later in this report, the applicant completed one preliminary consultation review with the Design Commission. Extensive comments were provided and the applicant team is currently studying different options for layout and design of the project.

Site Plan



Aerial Map



The following table summarizes the project as proposed. Additional modifications will be made to the project prior to submittal of the PD application. All development standards can be amended per the PD, with the exception of the proposed density on the RS-6 portion of the site, which can only be accommodated via an amendment to the General Plan Land Use Diagram.

<b>PROJECT SUMMARY</b>				
<b>Zoning Designation:</b> Lincoln Avenue Specific Plan – Commercial Limited (LASP-CL) and RS-6				
<b>General Plan Designation:</b> High Mixed-Use and Low Density Residential				
<b>Proposed Development Standards:</b>		<b>Code Req.</b>		<b>Meets Code</b>
<b>Gross Lot Size:</b>	106,025	Sq. Ft.	N/A	N/A
<i>LASP-CL Lot Area:</i>	86,596	Sq. Ft.	N/A	N/A
<i>RS-6 Lot Area:</i>	19,429	Sq. Ft.	N/A	N/A
<b>Proposed Building Size:</b>	108,938	Sq. Ft.	N/A	N/A
<b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR):</b> <i>LASP-CL</i>	2.8		0.7 (Max)	No
<b>Maximum Floor Area:</b> <i>RS-6</i>	13,808	Sq. Ft.	5,267 Sq. Ft. (Max)	No
<b>Density:</b> <i>LASP-CL</i>	56	Units	32 units (up to 44 with a 35% density bonus)	No
<b>Density:</b> <i>RS-6</i>	8	Units	1 DU/Lot	No
<b>Setbacks:</b>				
Lincoln Ave.	1.5	Ft.	1.5 Ft. (Min) – 5 Ft. (Max)	Yes
Washington Ave.	1.5 to 25	Ft.	1.5 ft. (Min) – 5 Ft. (Max)	No
Pepper St.	5	Ft.	10 Ft. (Min)	No
LASP-CL Rear	21	Ft.	5 Ft. + Encroachment Plane	Yes
RS-6 Front	25	Ft.	Prevailing Setback (Approximately 28.5 Ft.)	No
RS-6 Side	10.5	Ft.	6.4 Ft. + Encroachment Plane	Yes
RS-6 Rear	22	Ft.	25 Ft.	No
<b>Height:</b> <i>LASP-CL</i>	30	Ft. (3 stories)	2 stories/ 36 Ft. to ridge	No
<b>Height:</b> <i>RS-6</i>	30	Ft. (3 stories)	28 Ft. + Encroachment Plane	No
<b>Garden Requirements*:</b>	No garden proposed		Provide Main Garden	No
<i>*Per Section 17.37.080 of the Zoning Code, multi-family projects located within the Lincoln Avenue Specific Plan area are required to comply with RM District Garden Requirements in 17.22.080.</i>				
<b>Parking Calculations</b>				
Total # of Spaces Provided:	133		133	No
<i>Res. Unit &gt; 650 Sq. Ft.</i>	126 (covered)		128 - Two covered spaces/unit	
<i>Res. Guest Parking</i>	7		5	

**Discretionary Entitlements:**

Following a thorough review of the proposed plans, staff concluded that the project, as proposed, would require submittal of a Planned Development (PD) application, as well as an amendment to the General Plan Land Use Diagram for the portion of the site designated as Low Density Residential. Furthermore, the following design-related reviews are required:

1. Preliminary Consultation-Design Review: This project has been reviewed by the Design Commission through the Preliminary Consultation process for preliminary advisory comments. An additional preliminary consultation review may be required after the Planned Development application is submitted.
2. Concept & Final-Design Review: This project must be reviewed by the Design Commission through the Concept and Final Design Review process.

**Environmental Review:**

This project will be subject to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). It is expected that a traffic study will be required by the Department of Transportation, as well as additional environmental studies to determine what type of CEQA analysis is required for the project.

**PROJECT EVOLUTION:**

Prior to the submittal of the plans reviewed as part of this PPR application, the property owner had presented to City staff and community members a proposal for a mixed-use project inclusive of commercial uses on the ground floor and 150 residential units above. The project ranged in height from 15.5 to 58 feet, proposed a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.25 and a density of 61 units per acre. The maximum density established per the General Plan Land Use Diagram for three of four parcels on the project site is 87 dwelling units per acre; and the maximum FAR is 2.25. While the proposed density and FAR of the precursor project exceeded the requirements established by the Lincoln Avenue Specific Plan, they were well within the limitations established by the General Plan for this site and could be attained via a Planned Development application.

The 150 unit, mixed-use project was not well-received by the community; mainly due to the proposed density, massing, and scale. In response to the community's feedback and concerns, the project was revised to eliminate the commercial component, reduce the residential density by more than fifty percent to 26 units per acre, and reduce the height of proposed buildings. The revised project, which includes 64 detached townhomes, is the subject of this PPR application.

Following receipt of PPR comments and comments from the Design Commission, the applicant expressed a willingness to further revise the project to address both land use and design issues, prior to submittal of a formal entitlement application.

## **PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW COMMENTS:**

PPR comments were provided to the applicant in response to the project that was submitted. The comments are included as Attachment B to this staff report. The applicant elected to meet with Current Planning and Community Planning staff to gain clarity on some of the more significant comments. Shortly after, the project was scheduled for Preliminary Consultation with the Design Commission.

### **Planning Staff's Comments:**

Recognizing that most development standards could be amended per an approved PD plan, the most notable comments from Planning staff involved site/project design matters.

Community Planning staff cited General Plan Policy 7.3:

*Compatibility: Require that new and adaptively re-used buildings are designed to respect and complement the defining built form, massing, scale, modulation, and architectural detailing of their contextual setting.*

Staff requested that further consideration be given to the compatibility of the proposed project (e.g. scale, design quality, height, setbacks, etc.) to the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood; and, to redesign the project to further encourage architectural and design excellence, reflective of the Lincoln Avenue Specific Plan standards and the City's design guidelines.

Zoning staff cited Section 17.37.080 of the Zoning Code, which requires that multi-family residential projects in the LASP area comply with the RM-16 standards (City of Gardens requirements). The project, as proposed, is generally not in compliance with these requirements. These standards specifically address building separation (light and air separation), building design (massing, wall modulation, frontage, street orientation, building entrances), wall/fence design, main garden requirements, total garden space requirements, and front yard garden features.

Similarly, Design & Historic Preservation staff's comments encouraged redesigning the project to capture the spirit of the City of Gardens requirements. Staff specifically requested that the applicant explore ways to consolidate some of the massing into several simpler building volumes centered around communal amenities and open space; as well as consolidating the proposed parking within a single structure toward the rear of the site, with residential units lining the streets, and with the addition of upper-level courtyards, in order to provide for additional communal open space.

**PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION COMMENTS:**

On February 27, 2018, the Design Commission, acting under the provisions of Section 17.61.030 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, reviewed the application for Preliminary Consultation. The Commission's comments focused on the following:

- The proposed design's incompatibility with the surrounding context or the character of Pasadena;
- A desire for the project to be design-driven with a focus on community objectives;
- A desire for the provision of shared amenities, communal open space and pedestrian circulation, as well as a stronger connection to the surrounding context;
- A desire for incorporation of more variety, modulation and a sense of individualism in the design, in lieu of the repetitious pattern of proposed three story volumes;
- A desire for incorporation of more gradual transitions in height and massing between the site and adjacent properties, in consideration of the surrounding single-family neighborhood; and
- Utilization of one of four architectural styles that have traditionally marked the Pasadena design environment: Craftsman, Mediterranean, Monterey, or Main Street Commercial.

The Commission expressed general concern over the current design and layout of the site and provided the applicant with direction on redesigning the project to achieve architectural excellence and compatibility with the surrounding properties.

**NEXT STEPS:**

Public hearings before the Design Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council are required for the Planned Development application, with the Design and Planning Commissions acting as recommendation bodies and the City Council as an approval body. Furthermore, environmental review will occur consistent with the requirements of CEQA. Upon submittal of an official application, the steps included in the review process are as follows:

- Applicant submits Planned Development application with final project proposal;
- Conduct environmental review per CEQA;
- Conduct a noticed public hearing before the Design Commission;

- Conduct a noticed public hearing before the Planning Commission;
- Conduct a noticed public hearing before the City Council for: (1) review and approval of the PD and Amendment to the General Plan Land Use Diagram (if still applicable to the final project); and (2) consideration of adoption of the environmental determination; and
- Return to Design Commission for Concept/Final design approvals.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

This report is for information only and will not result in any fiscal impact.

Respectfully submitted,



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Approved by:



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STEVE MERMELL  
City Manager

Attachments: (2)

Attachment A – Predevelopment Plan Review Plans  
Attachment B – Predevelopment Plan Review Comments to Applicant