

Agenda Report

TO: City Council

DATE: April 9, 2001

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: Proposed Zoning Code Amendment to the PD-21 (Planned Development-21, Montgomery Engineering) Zoning District for Properties Located at 270-280 North Madison Avenue

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council following a public hearing:

1. Approve the Initial Environmental Study and Negative Declaration (Attachment 1);
2. Approve the De Minimis Impact Finding on the State Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Attachment 2);
3. Adopt the findings that the proposed zoning code amendment is consistent with the policies of the General Plan and the purposes of Title 17;
4. Approve the zoning code amendment and amended development standards to the PD-21 (Planned Development-21, Montgomery Engineering) zoning district (Attachment 3);
5. Direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance amending the PD-21 (Planned Development-21, Montgomery Engineering) zoning district; and
6. Direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination and a Certificate of Fee Exemption for the California Department of Fish and Game, with the Los Angeles County Recorder (Attachment 4).

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission reviewed the proposal at its meetings on February 21 and February 28, 2001. The Planning Commission continued the meeting to February 28,

2001 and requested staff to analyze the potential impact the project may have on the historic structure at 267 N. El Molino Avenue (Lukens House, a designated landmark). At that time, the Commission supported the staff's analysis in the initial study and determined that project will not create a substantial adverse change to the significance to the historic structure and other environmental impact. The Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the code amendment with an added development standard that existing trees on the public right-of-way not be removed for the project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this code amendment to allow for multi-family residential use in the northern portion of the existing Planned Development-21 zoning district while maintaining the existing office use in the southern portion of the site. Currently, the PD-21 zoning district provides only for office uses at this site. In order to allow for the multi-family development, the Zoning Code for the PD-21 district must be amended. If the code amendment is approved, the developer, the Olson Company will construct a five-story, 55-foot high, 48-unit multi-family residential building with a subterranean garage for 81 parking spaces.

BACKGROUND

An application for a zoning code amendment was submitted by the Olson Company in conjunction with Montgomery Engineering to amend the PD-21 zoning district to allow for multi-family residential use on the northern portion of the site. The parcels involving the new construction are located at 270-280 North Madison Avenue. The existing office building is at 250 North Madison Avenue.

In 1988, Montgomery Engineering purchased an adjacent parcel at 280 North Madison Avenue and combined it with the parcels at 250 and 270 North Madison Avenue to form the 2-acre site for a Planned Development zone. At that time, Montgomery Engineering proposed use of the additional parcels to expand the existing office.

On July 5, 1988, the City Council approved the zone change for the Montgomery Engineering properties from CD-13 (Central District-13, Walnut Street) to PD-21. The PD-21 zoning district provided for the construction of a second office building, 94,146 square feet in size, and 282 parking spaces. Additional development standards in the PD-21 limited the height of the second office building to 72 feet, provided for a pedestrian bridge connecting the new and existing buildings, required a TSM (Transportation System Management) plan, including ridesharing, alternative work hours and other related trip reduction measures, among other requirements.

ANALYSIS

Currently, the PD-21 zoning district is a 2.2-acre site. According to City records, the PD-21 site comprises three lots; a 59,984-square foot lot at 250 North Madison Avenue, and two lots to the north (270 and 280 North Madison Avenue) which are 23,560 square feet and 11,025 square feet in size, respectively. The 38,468-square foot office building (Montgomery Engineering) with 112 parking spaces occupies the lot at 250 North Madison which is located on the southern portion of the PD-21 zoning district. This office building was constructed in 1979 under the R-O (Restricted Office) zoning designation. No expansion of square footage or alteration is proposed for the existing Montgomery Engineering Office.

The lot at 270 North Madison Avenue is vacant and the 280 North Madison contains a parking lot. The proposed 48-unit multi-family residential project would be constructed on these lots. Montgomery Engineering would no longer construct the second commercial office building as provided in the current PD-21 development regulations (Attachment 5). In its place, a residential development is proposed. In order to allow for the 48-unit multi-family residential use, the PD-21 development standards must be amended.

As a comparison, the proposed multi-family development is less intense and would have a lesser impact than the approved office building. The height of the multi-family residential is proposed at 55 feet while the office building was approved at 72 feet. The proposed total square footage for the multi-family residential is 55,193 square feet while the office building had an approved square footage of 94,146. Traffic for the multi-family residential would generate 232 average daily trips with 26 trips in the morning peak hour and 33 trips in the afternoon peak hour. The office building would have generated 1,037 average daily trips with 147 trips during the morning peak hour and 140 trips during the afternoon peak hour.

Most of the development standards that were specific to the previously proposed office building are no longer applicable. New development standards for the residential development will replace the deleted standards. Attachment 3 shows the new development standards pertaining to the multi-family residential project and current standards that will remain. The address assigned to this project is 280 North Madison Avenue. The amended PD-21 development standards applicable to the residential use will include, but will not be limited to, a 55-foot building height limit; a minimum 20-foot front setback with limited encroachment for patios, a 15-foot minimum side and rear yards, a provision of 81 parking spaces minimum, and a maximum density of 60 dwelling units per acre which allows for 48 units.

General Plan Designations: The PD-21 site and surrounding properties are located in subarea a3 Urban Housing area of the Central District Specific Plan as designated in the General Plan.

Zoning Designations: The current zoning designation for this site is PD-21. Surrounding zoning designations include CD-13 (Central District-13, Walnut Street) to the north, east and south; and CD-13 A (Central District-13A, Oakland Street) to the west of the site (Attachment 6). The CD-13 and CD-13A allows for uses such as commercial, retail and multi-family residential. Commercial uses must be on lots fronting on Walnut Street and may only occupy the lot for a depth of 140 feet from the front property line.

Boundaries of the Existing PD-21 Zoning District: The 2.2-acre PD-21 zoning district is contained within a block bounded on the north by Corson Street, on the south by Walnut Street, on the east by El Molino Avenue, and on the west by Madison Avenue. The western portion of PD-21 district occupies parcels fronting on Madison Avenue. The eastern portion of PD-21 occupies two (2) parcels fronting El Molino Avenue (Attachment 7).

Surrounding Land Uses: To the north and west of the PD-21 zoning district are multi-family residential uses. To the east are a church and a single-family residential use. Properties to the south contain commercial uses fronting on Walnut Street.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING: A neighborhood meeting was held on December 21, 2000. A neighbor expressed concerns on the density, height, and parking related to the project. Questions were also raised regarding the status and binding effect of the Development Agreement entered by the City and Montgomery Engineering in 1983. Staff found that the Development Agreement is no longer in effect, it expired in 1988.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY: The proposed code amendment would not change the General Plan Land Use Designation for this site (Central District Specific Plan subarea a3. Urban Housing Area). By amending the PD-21 district to allow for residential uses, the code amendment would be consistent with the General Plan for this area in that, the Central District Specific Plan envisions a downtown high density housing area (49-60 dwelling units per acre) which will provide an opportunity for people to live close to where they shop and work and be within walking distance to the light rail station.

ZONING CODE FINDINGS: The proposed code amendment to the PD-21 district is consistent with: the purpose of the Zoning Code by fostering convenient, harmonious and workable relationships among land uses; and by allowing certain types of development consistent with the general plan that can be acceptable at a specific location under certain standards more restrictive than those of a base district in which the use is permitted.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

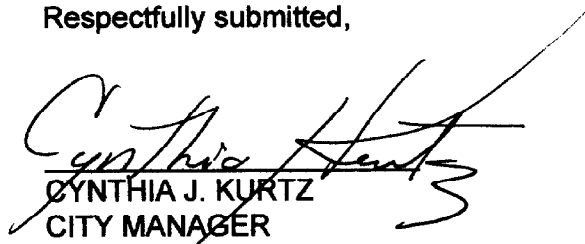
An Initial Environmental Study was prepared for the proposal in conformance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Attachment 1).

Potential impacts by this proposal in the area of historic resources and traffic were carefully assessed and determined to be less than significant. Overall, the proposal would not have a significant effect on the environment and a Negative Declaration was prepared. The new proposal would have less impact on traffic, parking, and building height than the previous PD-21 project. The staff recommends that the City Council approves the Initial Environmental Study and Negative Declaration and direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

FISCAL IMPACT

Should the code amendment receive approval and the ordinance be adopted the project would then proceed to design review. The development fees collected for this residential development are intended to cover the additional workload that results from this project.

Respectfully submitted,



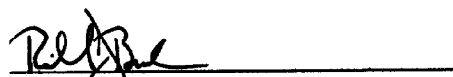
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