

Agenda Report

TO: City Council

DATE: September 10, 2001

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: Proposed Zone Change to Add a PK (Parking) Overlay to a Portion of the Property Located at 236 North Chester 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 Zone Change from RM-32 (Multi-family Residential, 0-32 units/acre) to RM-32 PK (Multi-family Residential, 0-32 units/acre – Parking Overlay) is consistent with the goals and objectives of the General Plan and the purposes of Title 17;
4. Approve the Zone Change from RM-32 (Multi-family Residential, 0-32 units/acre) to RM-32 PK (Multi-family Residential, 0-32 units/acre – Parking Overlay) (Attachment 3), and direct the City Attorney to prepare an Ordinance; and
5. Direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination (Attachment 4) and the Certificate of Fee Exemption for the California Department of Fish and Game, with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission considered this case at a public hearing on July 25, 2001. No opposition was present at the hearing although at the neighborhood meeting, residents expressed concerns regarding the proposal's proximity to the multi-family residential site to the north. As a result, the Planning Commission recommended a modification to staff's recommendation to include a landscape plan for screening of the site along the north property line to be approved by the City Arborist, and unanimously voted to approve the Zone Change from RM-32 to RM-32 PK. The recommendation include in this report incorporates the Planning Commission's recommendation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this proposal is to change the zoning designation for a portion of the property located at 236 North Chester Avenue. The request is to add a PK (Parking) Overlay to the existing RM-32 (Multi-family Residential, 0-32 units/acre) zoned section of the subject property. The Zone Change will allow for the development of off-street parking on the subject property for a proposed two-story, 13,258-square foot office building on the adjacent lot to the east at 227

North Holliston Avenue. Development of the proposed office building on Holliston Avenue does not require any discretionary approval. However, establishing its required parking in a PK Overlay district requires a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The proposed Zone Change is being requested because two zoning districts, RM-32 and RM-32 PK, divide the Chester Avenue site. This proposal to extend the existing PK Overlay across to the northerly RM-32 portion of the site is to allow the applicant to establish the Code required forty off-street parking spaces for the proposed office building on the adjacent lot.

BACKGROUND:

The subject site is located on the east side of Chester Avenue between Corson Street and Walnut Street. It is an irregularly shaped lot totaling approximately 14,382 square feet in area. The adjacent lot to the east, which is under the same ownership and is a part of this proposed development, is approximately 13,330 square feet and is located on the west side of Holliston Avenue also between Corson Street and Walnut Street. Both properties are remnants of an abandoned railroad right-of-way, and as a result, are split by zoning district boundaries.

ANALYSIS:

The PK district is an overlay that is combined with certain residential districts to allow the development of off-street parking facilities serving a non-residential district. The development standards of the PK district include the requirements of the off-street parking standards of the Zoning Code (i.e. landscaping, lighting, dimensions), and applicable additional regulations to minimize potential impacts to the surrounding residential areas. Utilizing any parcel in a PK district for off-street parking for a non-residential use requires the review and approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Other standards of the PK Overlay district include:

1. Vehicular and pedestrian access shall only be through a PK zoned lot;
2. Planting strips shall be 3.5 feet wide when abutting an R or RPK district boundary;
3. A solid masonry wall 6 feet in height shall adjoin a property line abutting an R district;

The RM-32 portion of the Chester Avenue property is approximately 5,661 square feet. The portion that currently has a PK Overlay is approximately 8,721 square feet. Parking for the proposed office use can be established on the PK portion of the property with a CUP. However, due to the narrowness of the lot and the number of parking spaces required by the Zoning Code, utilization of the remaining RM-32 portion of the lot is necessary to satisfy the parking requirement, provide an appropriate design, and to avoid rendering the RM-32 portion of the site useless.

If the proposed office building were trimmed to reduce its overall square footage to a size where parking could be accommodated on-site and on only the PK portion of the Chester Avenue site, development on the remaining RM-32 portion of the property could not occur. The remaining area of the lot would be 37 feet wide by 153 feet deep. Residential development on this remaining area would require the approval of a subdivision to create a separate legal lot, which would not be permitted because the lot area and width would be substandard. The minimum required lot width in a RM-32 district is 60 feet, and the minimum lot area is 10,000 square feet.

The adjacent property where the office building is proposed is also divided by zoning district boundaries, and is zoned CG (General Commercial) and RM-32. This site, however, can utilize the CG standards for the entire lot pursuant to the Zoning Code provision that allows the property owner the option to apply the standards of the less restrictive district (CG) provided the more restrictive portion does not exceed 30 feet, measured perpendicular to the district boundary. The subject site can not take advantage of this provision because the RM-32 portion,

which is the more restrictive, measured perpendicularly to the district boundary is 37 feet. The PK portion is 57 feet.

Given the more restrictive standards of the PK district, and the added discretionary review of a Conditional Use Permit to establish off-street parking in a PK district, the proposal to extend the PK overlay over the entire property will achieve the following:

1. Maintain the existing permitted use classifications; and
2. Provides the flexibility to allow for the development of off-street parking for adjacent non-residential uses; and
3. Provides consistency in the utilization of the subject site and its development options in that the same set of zoning requirements will be applied to the entire site; and
4. Allows for a comprehensive review of an off-street parking proposal and its relation to the surrounding area through a Conditional Use Permit.

Any potential impacts to the area as a result of the development of off-street parking at this site would be addressed and conditioned accordingly as to mitigate issues related to neighborhood compatibility, permitted use of the site, hours of operation, safety and security, landscaping, lighting, and overall maintenance.

FINDINGS

The proposed Zone Change is consistent with the purposes of Title 17 of the Municipal Code, and the objectives and policies of the General Plan Land Use Element. Specifically, the proposed zone would require that a CUP be obtained prior to the establishment of a commercial off-street parking lot in the PK district. This process would implement the development standards of Title 17, and would help carry out the objective and policies of the general plan in the following manner. Pursuant to Objective 5 (Character and Scale of Pasadena) preservation of Pasadena's character and scale, including its traditional urban design form and historic character, shall be given its highest priority in the consideration of future development. Further, Policy 10.3 (Business Expansion and Growth) identifies the fact that the City needs to support the continuation or expansion of existing businesses in harmony with their surroundings and provide new spaces for growth and changing business requirements.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

A neighborhood meeting was held May 1, 2001, at the Hill Avenue Branch Public Library. Two residents attended. The purpose of their visit was to get more information on the specifics of the proposal. After some questions and brief discussion, the attendees expressed support for the proposal and felt that it would not adversely impact their property or the area.

A second neighborhood meeting was held on June 26, 2001, due to incorrect noticing of the previous meeting. Residents of the condominiums directly adjacent to the project site attended in opposition of the proposed commercial office building. Staff clarified that the office building is a permitted use, and that denial of this zone change does not preclude the applicant from establishing this use at 227 North Holliston Avenue. After discussion, the applicant agreed to install landscaping along the north property line to screen the proposed office building.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

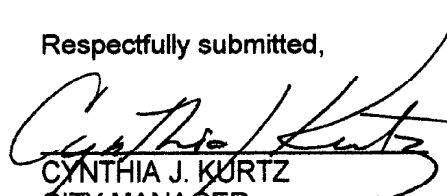
An Initial Environmental Study was prepared for the project proposal in conformance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Attachment 1). It was found that the proposal would not have a significant effect on the environment and that a Negative Declaration would be prepared. The staff report recommends that the City Council approve the

Initial Environmental Study and direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

FISCAL IMPACT

The application fees collected for the entitlement requests, and the plan check fees, are intended to cover the additional workload that results from such proposals.

Respectfully submitted,




CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
CITY MANAGER

Prepared by:



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Approved by:



Richard J. Bruckner
Director of Planning and Development

Attachments:

1. Initial Environmental Study and Negative Declaration
2. De Minimis Impact Finding
3. Zoning Map Designations
4. Notice of Determination