

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** September 15, 2008

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW FOR A NEW HUNTINGTON
MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTES (HMRI) BIOMEDICAL
RESEARCH LABORATORY BUILDING AT 660-686 S. FAIR
OAKS AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is being provided for information only.

BACKGROUND:

This project summary is being presented to the City Council per Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) guidelines, which call for staff to present projects of community-wide significance to the City Council for informational purposes.

Huntington Medical Research Institutes (HMRI) has submitted a Pre-Application Conference proposal for construction of a 108,987 sq. ft. biomedical research laboratory building on a 95,220 sq. ft. site at the southeast corner of S. Fair Oaks Avenue and Pico Avenue in the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan area. This use is classified as Research and Development—non-office under the Zoning Code. The project site consists of nine parcels that are currently improved with ten HMRI-owned structures that total 35,927 sq. ft. Nine of the ten buildings would be fully demolished, as well as a portion of the C. Hunter Sheldon Magnetic Resonance Laboratory, for a total of 21,530 sq. ft. of demolition. The final project would consist of the 108,987 sq. ft. of new construction and the remaining 14,397 sq. ft. of the Sheldon Laboratory.

Project Description

The project site is comprised of approximately 2.19 acres (95,220 sq. ft.) and located at the southeast corner of S. Fair Oaks Avenue and Pico Avenue. The site is bounded by Pico Avenue to the north, Raymond Avenue to the east, small businesses to the south, and Fair Oaks Avenue to the west. Edmondson Alley runs from north to south through the center of the site, separating the areas for the proposed research laboratory building and proposed surface parking.

The proposed project includes the demolition of 21,530 sq. ft. of existing commercial space and the construction of a four-story, 108,987 sq. ft. biomedical research laboratory. A surface parking lot with 102 spaces would be provided across Edmondson Alley. As proposed, the height of the four-story building would be 68.5 ft. The maximum height of a proposed central rotunda is 76 ft. The maximum height limit for a Research and Development use in this area is 56 ft.

The site is within the ¼ mile radius of the Fillmore Gold Line station and, therefore, is within the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area. This includes a reduced parking standard and design that encourages pedestrian movement.

Discretionary Reviews

The project would require a Minor Conditional Use Permit (MCUP) for a project greater than 15,000 sq. ft. that is located within a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area, a MCUP for shared parking off-site, a Variance to locate surface parking on a corner lot abutting S. Raymond Avenue, and a Variance to allow habitable space to exceed the height limit by more than 10ft. In addition to approval of the required discretionary entitlements by the Hearing Officer, the Design Commission approval of the proposed design is required.

Predevelopment Plan Review Summary

On June 5, 2008 staff conducted a meeting between the applicant and City Departments. The meeting identified the following additional considerations:

Environmental Review: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review of the project will address a number of issue areas including traffic and circulation and air quality. An Initial Study will determine if the project will require an environmental impact report.

Transportation and Parking: The proposed project includes the construction of 102 surface parking spaces. The parking requirement for this site is 222 spaces, based on the reduced TOD standard of 1.8 parking spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. (i.e. 2 spaces/ 1,000 sq. ft. -10% TOD reduction). A Traffic Impact Analysis will be prepared to assess potential traffic and parking issues related to this project, as well as the potential for shared parking in the area. A parking demand analysis will be conducted to determine the appropriate reduction of the parking

requirement, if any, based on the actual projected use. Any proposed reduction of the parking requirement would require approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit.

Transit Oriented Development: Due to the project's proximity to the metro Gold Line Station, the applicant must obtain a Minor Conditional Use Permit in order to ensure compliance with the City's TOD standards. One of the findings will require the applicant to design the project in such a way as to enhance pedestrian access and other non-motorized modes of transportation to public transit. The project must also encourage pedestrian activity. The applicant will need to provide further information on how the design of the site encourages pedestrian activity and access.

Design & Historic Preservation Review: The nine buildings and the portion of the tenth (Sheldon Laboratory) that would be demolished prior to construction of the new biomedical research building are not designated historic resources and would not require a Certificate of Appropriateness. The Design Commission will review the proposed project as part of the Concept and Final Design Review process prior to approval of an application for a building permit.

Timeline

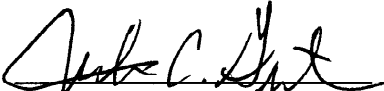
Date	Activity
April 7, 2008	Application submitted for Pre-Application Conference
June 5, 2008	Preliminary Plan Review meeting with applicant
Fall 2008	Preparation of Traffic Study and Initial Environmental Study and determination of environmental decision required
Winter/Spring 2009	Hearing Officer Public Hearing for MCUPs, Variances, and CEQA findings
Following Hearing Officer approval	Design Review by Design Commission

*The above timeline assumes the project will not need an environmental impact report. If one is required, at least an additional six months will be necessary for processing the EIR as well as additional public meetings.

FISCAL IMPACT:

As a Research & Development use, this project is eligible for fee waivers and fee reductions for plan check and permit fees in an amount that cannot be determined at this time.

Respectfully submitted


for Bernard K. Melekian
City Manager

Prepared by:


Erin Clark
Associate Planner

Approved by:


Richard J. Bruckner
Director of Planning and Development

- Attachment 1: Existing Buildings to be Demolished
- Attachment 2: Proposed Site Plan
- Attachment 3: Renderings of Proposed Construction