

Agenda Report

February 27, 2012

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning Department
SUBJECT: PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW OF THE LINCOLN PROPERTIES PROJECT (PARSONS SITE) LOCATED AT 100 WEST WALNUT STREET

RECOMMENDATION:

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

BACKGROUND:

Lincoln Properties has submitted a Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) application to construct an approximate 980,000 square foot mixed-use development project at 100 West Walnut Street. 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 to 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 project encompasses two parcels associated with the Parsons Engineering headquarters located at 100 Walnut Street as identified in the graphic on the next page. The main Parsons building is located on Parcel One, which is bounded by Walnut Street to the north, Fair Oaks Avenue to the east, Holly Street to the south and Pasadena Avenue to the west. Parcel Two, referred to as the "Annex", is located south of Parcel One, with additional frontage along Union Street.

The proposed project would retain the existing 12-story office building on Parcel One and replace the surrounding surface parking lots with new residential, office, and retail development. The proposed new development would be dispersed among seven new buildings, each five or six-stories in height. Parking is proposed to be provided within a new three-level subterranean parking garage. No new development is proposed on Parcel Two.

The project proposes seven new buildings (A-G as shown on the site plan below):

Proposed Office Building:

- Building A: 228,000 sq.ft.(including 10,000 sq.ft. retail)
- Building B: 152,000 sq.ft.
- Building C: 204,476 sq.ft. (including 20,000 square feet of retail)

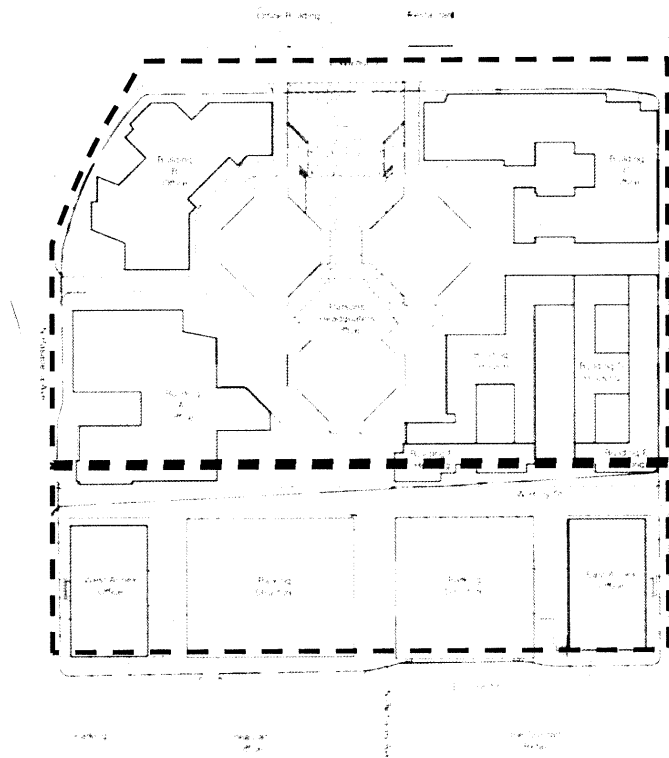
Proposed Residential Building:

- Building D: 113 Units (112,173 sq.ft.)
- Building E: 82 Units (81,506 sq.ft.)
- Building F: 49 Units (48,030 sq.ft.)
- Building G: 155 Units (153,815 sq.ft.)

TOTAL COMMERCIAL SQ. FT.: **584,476**

TOTAL NO. OF UNITS: **up to 400**
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL SQ.FT.: **395,524**

The proposed site plan is shown below.



PARCEL 1 (Parsons Site):
7 new buildings proposed

- 584,476 Commercial Sq.Ft.
- 395,524 Residential Sq. Ft.
- 4,137 parking spaces

PARCEL 2 (Annex Site):
No Changes to Existing Buildings

- Two Commercial Office Buildings (Approx. 280,000 sq.ft. each)
- Two parking structures containing a total of 2,241 parking spaces.

DISCRETIONARY ENTITLEMENTS

The applicant proposes to establish a new Planned Development District. The purpose of a Planned Development District is to:

- Allow for development of sites where there is an opportunity to achieve a particular mix of uses, appearance, land use compatibility, that is in character with its surroundings;
- Establish a procedure for the development of large parcels of land in order to reduce or eliminate the rigidity, delays, and inequities that otherwise would result from application of land use regulations and administrative procedures designed primarily for small parcels; and
- Ensure orderly and thorough planning that will result in quality urban design.

The City Council is the decision making body for all Planned Developments, but the Planning Commission will first review the project and make a recommendation. The project will also be subject to approval by the Design Commission.

PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY

On October 25, 2011 staff conducted a preliminary informational meeting regarding the proposed project with the applicant and other City departments, including Transportation, Fire, and Public Works. Review and comments on the proposal identified the following issues:

Environmental Review: Pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared to analyze the project's potential to result in significant impacts, as identified by State and local environmental guidelines. On February 6, 2012, the City Council authorized the City Manager to execute a contract with EPA Consulting to prepare the required environmental review. The EIR will analyze among other things, impacts related to noise, air and traffic.

General Plan: Per the General Plan, the property is designated as Central District Specific Plan. The vision of the General Plan is to accommodate a diverse mix of land uses designed to create the primary business, financial, retailing and government center for the City. Through the Planned Development process, staff will work with the applicant to ensure the project is consistent with the uses, height and density envisioned for this area as outlined by the City's General Plan. The following Land Use Policy and Objectives of the General Plan may be applicable to the project:

- Objective One: Targeted Development - Direct higher density development away from Pasadena's residential neighborhoods and into targeted areas, creating an exciting urban core;

- Policy 1.5: Urban Villages - Encourage Urban Villages where appropriate and feasible in the Urban Core; and.
- Objective 23 – Mobility Element: Support the development of transit-oriented and pedestrian-oriented developments.

In addition, the Mobility Element of the General Plan is intended to promote a livable community where people can circulate without cars. This vision is achieved by encouraging land-use planning that will support mobility goals, which include, but not limited to programs intended to increase public parking in commercial and retail areas. The following Mobility policies are applicable to the project:

- Policy 1.2: Allow mixed-use zoning that includes housing and commercial uses intended to encourage living and working in the same area in order to reduce the number of vehicle trips;
- Policy 1.7: Focus development densities for residential and non-residential land uses around Gold Line Stations; and
- Policy 4.11: Establish programs that provide for existing and future parking demands in commercial areas in a pleasing manner.

General Plan Development Caps: The Land Use Element establishes caps for the maximum number of residential units and commercial floor area that can be developed under the existing General Plan. The proposed project would not exceed these caps. The property is located within Subarea 1, Old Pasadena. For this sub-area of the Central District, the total number of residential units existing under the cap is 636 units. The proposed 400 units proposed under this project is within the allowed cap number. The maximum allowed commercial square footage available under the cap is 3,905,872 square feet. The proposed project would establish approximately 550,000 square feet of new commercial development on the site, which is well below the maximum threshold for the area.

Zoning Code

The subject property is zoned CD-1 (Central District Specific Plan, Subarea 1, Old Pasadena). The Central District encourages a vibrant mix of land uses, including office, retail and residential. In addition, the Zoning Code requires compliance with Setbacks, Height and Density. Below is a breakdown of those requirements as they relate to this project.

Floor Area Ratio and Residential Density. The project complies with the Code's maximum floor area ratio (FAR) limitation and maximum allowed residential density. Pursuant to PMC Section 17.30.040, the maximum allowed FAR is 2.25:1. Given the existing lot size of 987,958 square feet, the allowable development is 2,222,905 square feet of floor area. The project proposes a total FAR of 1.98:1 which includes 980,000 square feet of new floor area and 871,728 square feet of existing development. The Code allows 87 residential units per acre of land or 1,976 total units for the site

(notwithstanding the General Plan Cap). The proposed 400 units are well within Code requirements.

Setbacks. The project complies with the Code's setback requirements. Setbacks within the Central District are determined by the District Setback Map which requires a minimum setback of 10 feet along Pasadena Avenue. On Walnut Street a non-residential project may be placed between 0-5 feet from the property line, while a residential project may be setback between 5' to 10'. Along Fair Oaks all non-residential projects must be placed at the property line, while a residential project may be setback a maximum of five feet. It is the applicant's intent to comply with the setback requirements as outlined in the Zoning Code.

Height. The project complies with the Code's height requirements. The maximum allowable height in this district is 60 feet. The Code provides for height averaging by allowing additional building height on certain portions of a building site that is counterbalanced by lower height elsewhere on a development site. With Height Averaging portions of the new construction may project up to 75 feet in height. The applicant proposes to utilize Height Averaging to achieve additional height along the buildings closer to Walnut Street as well as Pasadena Avenue. This request will require review and approval by the Design Commission.

Transit-Oriented Uses. In addition to being located in the Central District, the site is also located within the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) area. The purpose of the TOD is to establish reduced off-street parking requirements intended to promote the use of the existing mass transit network among other things. TOD standards also establish a maximum number of parking spaces per project which is established through a reduction of the number of spaces normally required by the Code.

Parking. The site will be developed with three-levels of subterranean parking. The parking for the proposed development includes use of existing spaces, replacement, and new parking spaces, as identified in the table below:

PROPOSED PARKING	
Existing Parking to Remain	
• 75 N. Fair Oaks Avenue (Annex Site)	968 Spaces
• 74 N. Pasadena Avenue (Annex Site)	1,273 Spaces
Existing Parking Spaces to be Replaced	
• 100 W. Walnut Street	1,361 Spaces
Additional New Parking Spaces	
• 100 W. Walnut Street	2,776 Spaces
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES	6,378 Spaces

Based on the mix of potential uses that are proposed, staff has identified a minimum of 1,948 parking spaces for the new construction.

In addition to the parking proposed for existing and future uses, the site currently provides alternative parking options for uses in Old Pasadena as well as the Rose Bowl events. The applicant has expressed an interest in continuing to provide parking for these uses. The applicant, through the Planned Development process, may establish the appropriate number of parking spaces for this project. This number may exceed existing Code requirements, including those identified in by the TOD.

As noted, there are no changes proposed to the number or configuration of the parking spaces located at the Annex Site.

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. Preliminary review by the Transportation Department has included the possibility of opening up Holly Street so that it connects with Pasadena Avenue to the West as well as modifying the project's ingress and egress points to increase the volume of Walnut Street ingress and Pasadena Avenue egress.

Urban Form and Compatibility

At this stage, the project design is preliminary. The final design of the project will be evaluated against the Citywide Design Principles and the Central District Design Guidelines. Additionally, the project would require approval of the Design Commission prior to being built. In conjunction with the Predevelopment Application staff has reviewed the project in the context of its urban setting.

Surrounding Neighborhood. The subject property is generally bound by freeways to the north and west. Old Pasadena is located to the south, and the Civic Center area to the east. The office building and parking structures located on the Annex Parcel shield the Parson's site from Old Pasadena. The development located on both the Annex and Parson's Parcels contrast starkly with the scale and architectural style of the development patterns found within Old Pasadena.

Old Pasadena is developed with buildings demonstrating a unified if not similar architectural theme, with a human scale. The area's pedestrian orientation is highlighted by narrower streets, walkable sidewalks, alleys and mid-block crossings. Additionally, buildings are generally located flush to the sidewalk and have ground floor retail, restaurant or other commercial uses.

Design Opportunities to Improve Pedestrian Orientation. While it is unlikely that the future development of the site will mirror the height, density and architectural styles found in Old Pasadena, it is important that new construction on the subject property regard these surrounding buildings as an asset and seek to restore some of the urban fabric that was removed from the area by the existing development. Specifically, in reviewing the site plan, the applicant has proposed to place the Class A office buildings along the western edge of the site, adjacent to Pasadena Avenue and the freeway. This appears to be an appropriate placement for these office buildings, which require greater floor plates and a greater scale and massing than the other proposed uses.

There are also opportunities to improve the project's pedestrian orientation along Fair Oaks Avenue. These include re-orienting the buildings towards the street to engage the pedestrian. Moreover, the scale and massing of the proposed buildings along Fair Oaks Avenue should reflect an appropriate transition between the project and the built environment of Old Pasadena, which are generally not greater than 3-stories in height. Additionally, long continuous facades that are along this street frontage should be broken up to read as a series of individual buildings.

Other opportunities to improve the pedestrian orientation of the project may result from a preliminary review by the Design Commission and public participation. The analysis of the project's design will continue as refinements are proposed.

NEXT STEPS

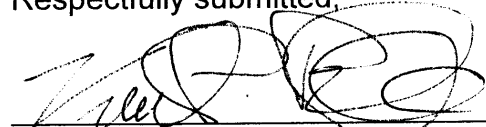
This project will require a legislative approval involving public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council. In addition, an EIR will be prepared consistent with the requirements of the CEQA. The following list identifies next steps in the review process:

- Preliminary Consultation with Design Commission;
- Preparation of Initial Study;
- Public Scoping Meetings;
- Preparation of EIR;
- Planning Commission Meetings;
- City Council Public Meetings; and
- Design Commission reviews.

FISCAL IMPACT:

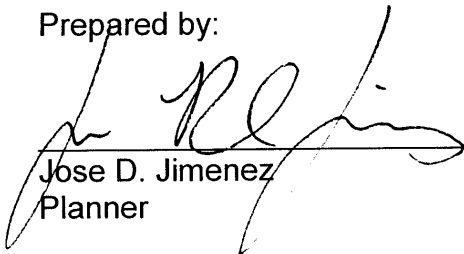
The project will generate plan check and permit fees. The exact amount of these fees will be determined during the plan check process.

Respectfully submitted,




VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
Director of Planning
Planning Department

Prepared by:



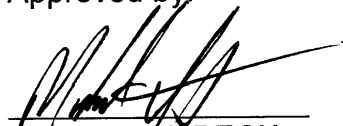
Jose D. Jimenez
Planner

Concurred by:



David Reyes
Principal Planner/Zoning Administrator

Approved by:



MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

Attachment:

Attachment A – Planned Development Plans