

Agenda Report

January 28, 2013

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW OF DESIGN PROJECT LOCATED AT 1336 and 1347 EAST COLORADO BOULEVARD

RECOMMENDATION:

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

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

J and K Plus Investments, LLC has submitted a Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) application to develop the properties located at 1336 and 1347 East Colorado Boulevard. The site was previously used as Pasadena Ford, an automotive retailer. The subject site is also located within the boundaries of the East Colorado Specific Plan. 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 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.

This report provides a project description, identifies the entitlement and environmental review process and key issues that staff will focus on during the case processing, should a formal application be submitted. These issues include the project's size, height and scale in relation to the surrounding uses, and whether the project is consistent with the College Campus area of the East Colorado Specific Plan.

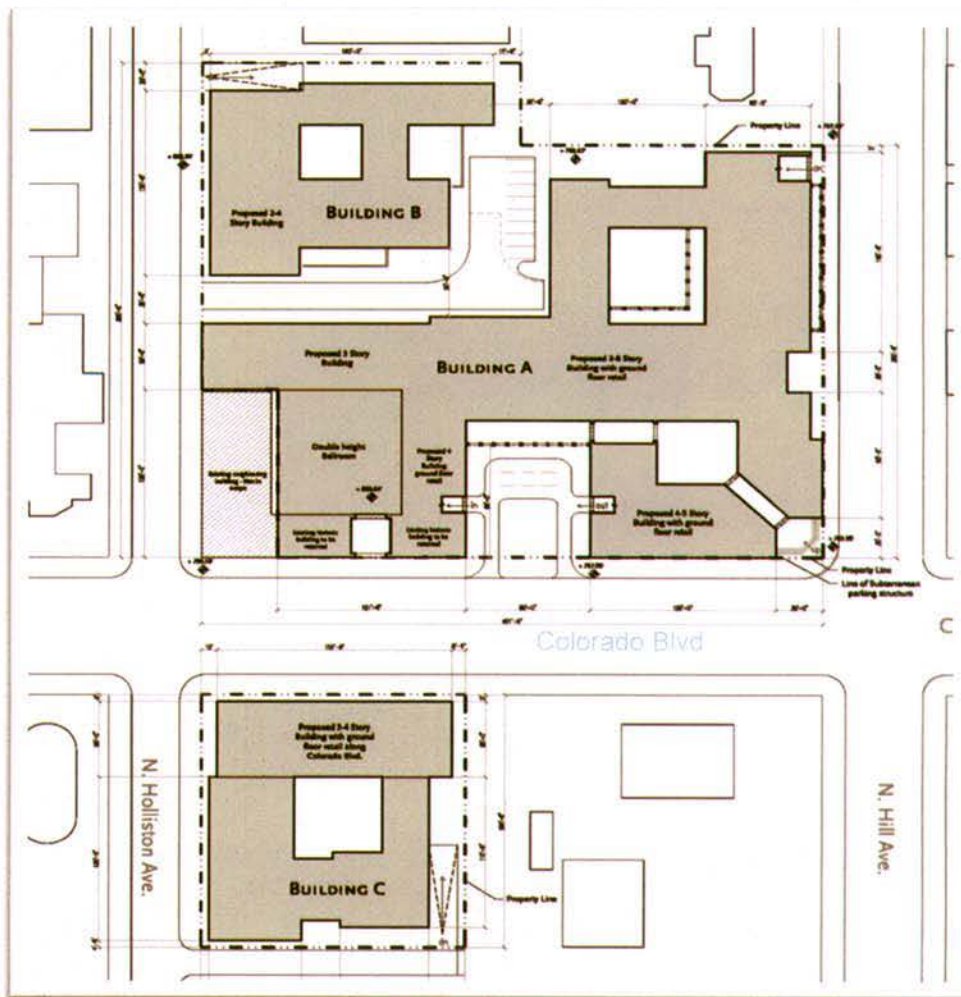
PROJECT SUMMARY:

The subject site is comprised of two parcels. The larger parcel is located at the northwest corner of Colorado Boulevard and Hill Avenue and measures approximately 127,961 square feet (2.94 acres). The site contains multiple buildings that were previously used for the display and service of vehicles. The site also contains a large surface parking area that was used for the outdoor display and storage of vehicles. The second parcel, which measures 30,895 square feet (.71 acres) is located at the

southeast corner of Colorado Boulevard and Holliston Avenue. This parcel contains a small building that was used in conjunction with automotive sales.

The proposal for the north parcel consists of two buildings. A 300 room hotel with 10,000 square feet of ground floor commercial (Building A) would be placed within proximity to the intersection of Colorado Boulevard and Hill Avenue. The building will range in height between three to seven stories (74 foot high) and will measure 371,088 square feet. Portions of the proposed building would be up to 90 feet high in order to accommodate architectural features. A second building (Building B) is proposed along Holliston Avenue and will consist of either a residential project with 40 to 75 residential dwelling units, or a smaller 100 room hotel with a height of up to four stories (47.5 feet high). Two levels of subterranean parking are proposed to accommodate up to 490 parking spaces.

The proposal for the south parcel consists of the construction of a three to four story building (Building C) measuring 89,595 square feet with a maximum height of 47.5 feet and two levels of subterranean parking with up to 150 parking spaces. The building will be setback five feet from Colorado Boulevard and Holliston Avenue. The applicant is exploring multiple options for the use of this proposed building. These options include a residential project ranging between 45 to 100 residential dwelling units or a 120 room hotel. The proposed site plan is shown below:



DISCRETIONARY ENTITLEMENTS

The applicant has informed staff on their intent to proceed with a Planned Development (PD) at this location, which would require City Council approval. Planned Developments are sometimes preferred by applicants as a way to streamline the review process and provide more flexibility from zoning standards when designing projects, provided they are consistent with the General Plan. Specific findings are required to be made prior to the approval of a PD. Some of these findings are listed below:

- 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;
- Encourage the preservation of serviceable existing structures of historic value or artistic merit by providing the opportunity to use them imaginatively for purposes other than that for which they were originally intended; and
- Ensure orderly and thorough planning that will result in quality urban design.

The Planning Commission will first review the project and make a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council will be the final decision making body. The project will also be subject to approval by the Design Commission.

PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY

On December 11, 2012 staff conducted a preliminary informational meeting regarding the proposed project with the applicant and other City departments/divisions, including Community Planning, Design and Historic Preservation, Transportation, Fire, Housing, and Public Works. At the meeting, staff expressed concerns regarding the project's size, height and scale in relation to the surrounding uses, and whether the project is consistent with the College Campus area of the East Colorado Specific Plan. Below is a breakdown of those concerns:

Design and Historic Preservation

Because the project consists of new construction over 25,000 square feet in the East Colorado Specific Plan area, Design Review is required, with the Design Commission being the reviewing authority. The applicable design guidelines for the project are the Citywide Design Principles in the Land Use Element of the General Plan, the Design Guidelines in the East Colorado Specific Plan and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial & Multi-Family Residential Districts.

The on-site building at 1355 E. Colorado Blvd. is documented as being eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in the historic resources survey for the East Colorado Boulevard Specific Plan. The design of the new buildings should be in response to the architectural urban context that exists, particularly the historic resources located on the site which are intended for retention.

Based on the information contained in the preliminary plans, the following issues will be analyzed during the design review process:

- Care should be taken to further develop the building form in response to the applicable guidelines for this site and in response to the architectural urban context that exists, particularly the historic resources located on the site which are intended for retention;
- The scale, massing, materials, solid-to-void relationships, the interplay of horizontal and vertical elements of the new construction and the modulation of the exterior walls facing public streets;
- The introduction of design features that are “human scaled” and inviting to pedestrians. The treatment of private entrances and common entrances facing the streets is part of this review;
- The quality of materials and finishes, the proportions of window/door openings, the modulation of building walls, shade and shadow;
- Landscaping—especially in the setbacks along the sidewalks—and screening of mechanical equipment; and
- Views from the interior of the site (and elevations facing the interior courtyard).

Zoning Code

The subject property is zoned ECSP-CG-2 (East Colorado Specific Plan, Commercial General-Sub area 2), with a portion zoned RM-48PK where Building B is proposed. The East Colorado Specific Plan promotes a vibrant mix of land uses intended to create a series of distinctive "places" along the Boulevard. In addition, the Zoning Code requires compliance with setbacks and height. There are no floor area requirements within the Specific Plan. Below is a breakdown of those requirements as they relate to this project:

Residential Density. One of the project options proposes housing. Through the Planned Development process, some of the residential density will need to be shifted within the site. The subject site is within an area that allows up to 48 residential dwelling units per acre, before any density bonus. Based on a lot size of 127,961 square feet (north parcel), the allowable residential density is 94 units, while 22 dwelling units are allowed for the south parcel. The applicant is proposing a range between 40 to 75 dwelling units for the north parcel while proposing 45 to 100 residential dwelling units on the south parcel. Through the Planned Development Process or the Density Bonus Provisions of the Zoning Code, the applicant may request to exceed the allowable density.

Setbacks. Setbacks within the East Colorado Specific plan require that buildings be placed five feet (fixed) from the property line. The application submitted by the applicant and as discussed earlier, show the minimum setbacks are being provided within the project area.

Height. Some of the proposed buildings will be significantly higher than other structures in the surrounding area. The maximum height within this sub-area of the Specific Plan

is 45 feet, while a project in the RM-48-PK, may go as high as 38 feet. Building A on the north parcel will have a maximum height of 74 feet (up to 90 feet for architectural features), while Building B will have a maximum height of approximately 37 feet. Building C on the south parcel will have a maximum height of approximately 47.5 feet. As proposed, the buildings would not comply with the allowable height for the Specific Plan. Through the Planned Development process, the applicant may request additional height.

Parking. The applicant is proposing to provide two levels of subterranean parking on both parcels. The north parcel will potentially accommodate up to 490 vehicles and will have vehicle access off of Colorado Boulevard near the existing driveway that was previously used by the car dealer. The south parcel will accommodate up to 150 parking spaces. Vehicle access to this site will be from an existing alley located behind the proposed building. Based on the mix of uses, the minimum required parking for the project area will be provided on site.

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. Staff will execute a contract for environmental services once a formal application is submitted.

General Plan and Specific Plan

The property's General Plan Land Use designation is Specific Plan (East Colorado Specific Plan). The Specific Plan is further broken down into sub-areas, with the project site located within the CG-2 sub-area (College District Sub-Area). The Specific Plan calls for the relocation of the Ford Dealer to the Chihuahueta sub-area (east of Sunnyslope Avenue) and creation of a project that creates a strong urban edge and opportunities for a pedestrian oriented streetscape. Uses in the College District should be college/neighborhood serving. Restaurants, cafes, bookstores, office supplies, banks, and motels would all be appropriate uses within this sub-area. Plazas and outdoor spaces should be incorporated into the design of projects.

In addition, the East Colorado Specific Plan includes a list of goals and objectives for new developments. In this case, the project does not comply with one of the primary objectives, which reads, "Encourage two and three-story building along Colorado Boulevard to improve the street scale."

The following Land Use Policy and Objectives of the General Plan that may be applicable to the project:

- Policy 10.9 – Healthy Business Community: Promote a strong, healthy business community to provide jobs for Pasadena residents, and a broad revenue base for the City.

- Policy 15.2 – Increase Supply: Increase the total number of market rate and affordable housing units within the City.
- Policy 21.1 – Transit-Oriented and Pedestrian-Oriented Development: Within targeted development areas, cluster development near light rail stations and along major corridors served by transportation thereby creating transit-oriented development “nodes” and encouraging pedestrian access.

In addition staff identified objectives and policies which warrant further consideration:

- Policy 2.3 – Urban Open Spaces: Encourage and require, where feasible, the incorporation of publicly accessible urban open spaces, including parks, courtyards, water features, gardens, passageways and plazas, into public improvements and private projects.

The project, as proposed does not include any publicly accessible spaces that can be utilized by people within the subarea.

- Policy 5.9 – Contextual and Compatible Design: Urban design programs shall ensure that new development shall respect Pasadena’s heritage by requiring that new development respond to its context and be compatible with the traditions and character of Pasadena, and shall promote orderly development which is compatible with its surrounding scale and which protects the privacy, and access to light and air of surrounding properties.

The surrounding buildings are low in scale – one to two stories. The vision for the area, as demonstrated in the East Colorado Specific Plan and in the General Plan Update outreach, is to continue moderately scaled buildings.

- Policy 5.10 – Spatial Attributes: Promote development that creates and enhances positive spatial attributes of major public streets, open spaces, cityscape and mountain sight lines and important “gateways” into the City.

The project could affect mountain sight lines. The submitted application should include exhibits that demonstrate the project’s impact on mountain sight lines and consider design modifications to reduce the project’s visual impact.

GENERAL PLAN CAPS

In 1994, the General Plan allocated 750 housing units and 550,000 square feet of non-residential development and 100,000 square feet was set aside for institutional uses within the East Colorado Specific Plan. The General Plan allows the allocation of housing units to be converted to non-residential square feet utilizing a conversion factor for new development whereby a residential unit may be converted to commercial floor area at a rate of 1,000 square feet per unit.

As of December 31, 2011, the East Colorado Specific Plan retained a General Plan allocation of 736 housing units, 143,322 square feet of non-residential development potential and 100,000 square feet of institutional. This PPR includes three options – a student housing option, a market housing option, and a hotel option.

The student housing option would construct 175 units and 298,588 square feet of non-residential development. This analysis assumes the student units are true residential units with kitchens and will not be rented at affordable rates. This option would use 143,322 square feet of non-residential development. It would also require the conversion of 156 dwelling units to 156,000 square feet of non-residential square feet. This option would leave 100,000 square feet of non-residential development for institutional uses and 405 housing units within the specific plan. Any future non-residential development in the East Colorado Specific Plan would require the conversion of housing units to non-residential development.

The market housing option would construct 85 units and 298,588 square feet of non-residential development. This option would use 143,322 square feet of non-residential development. It would also require the conversion of 156 dwelling units to 156,000 non-residential square feet. This option would leave 100,000 square feet of non-residential development for institutional uses and 495 housing units within the specific plan. Any future non-residential development in the East Colorado Specific Plan would require the conversion of housing units to non-residential development.

The hotel option would result in no new residential units and 460,683 square feet of non-residential development. This option would use 143,322 square feet of non-residential development. It would also require the conversion of 318 dwelling units to 317,361 non-residential square feet. This option would leave 100,000 square feet of non-residential development for institutional uses and 418 housing units within the specific plan. Any future non-residential development in the East Colorado Specific Plan would require the conversion of housing units to non-residential development.

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.

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 EIR Scoping Meetings;
- Preparation of EIR;
- Planning Commission Meetings to recommend action on the PD and EIR;
- City Council Public Meetings for final action on the PD and EIR; and
- Design Commission reviews.

FISCAL IMPACT:

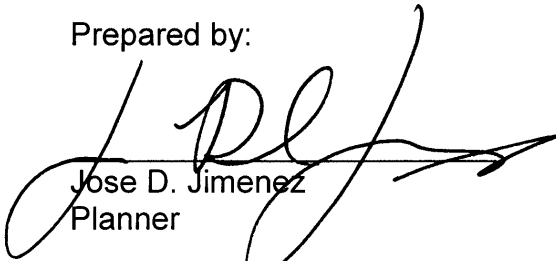
The project has the potential to generate revenue through the collection of Residential Impact fees as well as Transportation Improvement fees. The exact amount of these fees will be determined during the plan check process.

Respectfully submitted,



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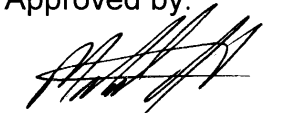
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Attachments: PPR Plans.