

# Agenda Report

June 10, 2013

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department

**SUBJECT: PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW OF PROJECT LOCATED AT 260-400 E. COLORADO BOULEVARD (PASEO COLORADO)**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

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

**BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:**

RTKL Associates, Inc. has submitted a Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) application for the Paseo Colorado property located at 260-400 E. Colorado Boulevard. The project proposes to demolish the existing Macy's and adjacent commercial buildings to the north and construct a new 6-story, 175-room hotel and 2-story commercial building. A new vehicular ramp to the underground parking areas is also proposed off of Green Street for the hotel. In addition, the project proposes smaller modifications to the Paseo Colorado including realigning existing tenant spaces and relocating existing stairways, escalators and bridges. The total net increase in building square footage for the project is less than 2,000 square feet. Other changes are also proposed for the cinema entrance area and the Garfield promenade. No changes are proposed for the residential portion of the Paseo Colorado.

The PPR process is established in the City's Zoning Code as a process by which better projects can be achieved through early consultation between City staff and applicants. The process coordinates the review of projects among City staff, familiarizes applicants with the regulations and procedures that apply to the projects, and avoids significant investment in the design of a project without preliminary input from City staff. It also helps to identify issues that may arise during application processing such as community concerns, achieving consistency with City regulations and policies.

Projects that meet the threshold of "community-wide significance" (greater than 50,000 square feet of construction with at least one discretionary action, 50 or more housing units, or any project that is deemed by the Director of Planning & Community Development Department to be of major importance to the City) are presented to the City Council as way to inform them and the public of significant projects.

This report provides a project description, identifies the entitlement and environmental review processes, and some topic areas that staff will focus on during case processing, should a formal application be submitted.

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The entire project site is developed with the Paseo Colorado, located on a 10.5 acre site bounded by Colorado Boulevard to the north, Los Robles Avenue to the east, Green Street to the south and Marengo Avenue to the west (excluding the building at the southeast corner of Colorado Boulevard and Marengo Avenue). The site was originally developed in the late 1970s with the Plaza Pasadena Mall, an enclosed shopping mall with parking provided in an underground garage and two above-grade parking structures. In 1999, the Paseo Colorado project was approved by the City Council to replace the old Plaza. The project included 589,000 square feet of commercial space and 400 residential units in an open air lifestyle center. The Macy's and parking areas are the only features of the original Plaza that remain.

#### *Original PPR Plans:*

The applicant submitted a Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) application to demolish the existing 160,000 square foot Macy's and street front commercial buildings to the north and construct a new 44,000 square foot, 2-story commercial building along Colorado Boulevard and a new 114,000 square foot, 6-story, 175-room hotel towards the southern portion of the site. The applicant envisions the commercial building will be occupied by retail uses on the ground floor and restaurants with patio dining on the second floor. The hotel would cater to business clientele by providing conference rooms and a corporate center. While the proposed hotel includes a café, lounge area and some ground floor retail; it does not include a separate restaurant or banquet facilities.

The original PPR plans included a motor court accessed from Los Robles Avenue to accommodate hotel guests and visitors. The commercial building had a loading space facing Los Robles Avenue with two curb cuts to accommodate truck movements. Staff had concerns regarding the motor court and proposed loading. Neither was consistent with the Central District Specific Plan as they would negatively impact pedestrian connectivity and safety within the Paseo Colorado and along Los Robles Avenue.

In addition, other modifications to the Paseo Colorado including realigning existing tenant spaces, adding some small tenant spaces totaling less than 4,000 square feet, and relocating existing stairways, escalators and bridges are proposed. The total net increase in building square footage for the project is less than 2,000 square feet. Other changes are proposed for the cinema entrance area and the Garfield promenade area. For the cinema area, one of the stairways and ground floor tenants will be removed to allow for a larger pedestrian area. For the area facing the Garfield promenade, the round staircase will be removed and squared-off to increase the visibility of the ground floor retail spaces. No square footage is proposed within the 77-foot wide promenade.

However, the applicant proposes to replace much of the paving and kiosks with grass and other landscaping to create a more park-like feel. No changes are proposed for the residential portion of the project.

*Revised Plans to Address Staff Concerns:*

The applicant team continued to work with staff in revising the plans to address many of staff's concerns raised in the PPR comments related to vehicular access, loading and pedestrian connectivity. The revised plans have all vehicular access from Green Street. This includes a motor court, new ramp to the underground parking areas and loading space. The commercial building would no longer have its own loading space; instead, it would share existing loading spaces with other tenants at the Paseo Colorado. The space between the commercial building along Colorado Boulevard and the hotel would be a new pedestrian courtyard that would connect with the rest of the Paseo Colorado.

All other aspects of the project remained unchanged when comparing the original PPR plans and revised plans. This included the mix of uses, height and placement of buildings and other modifications to the Paseo Colorado.

PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY

On April 10, 2013 a meeting was held to discuss the PPR comments with the applicant and staff from City departments/divisions, including Community Planning, Current Planning, Design & Historic Preservation, Cultural Affairs, Fire, Public Works and Transportation. At the meeting, staff expressed concerns regarding the project's massing, architectural design, building setbacks, vehicular access points, location of loading spaces and pedestrian connectivity. As previously noted, the applicant team continued to meet with staff in April and May to revise the plans to address staff concerns. Below is a summary of some of staff's comments on the revised plans:

Zoning Code

The Paseo Colorado is in the CD-2 (Central District Specific Plan, Civic Center/Midtown sub-area) zoning district. All the project's proposed uses are permitted in the zoning district (by-right or through the approval of a Conditional Use Permit). Below are the discretionary entitlements required for the project and some of the applicable development standards and how the project has addressed them.

*Discretionary Entitlements:*

- Conditional Use Permit for a major project with over 25,000 square feet of new construction;
- Conditional Use Permit for a new hotel use in the Central District Specific Plan, Civic-Center Midtown (CD-2) zoning district;

- Minor Conditional Use Permit for a project in a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area with over 15,000 square feet of new construction;
- Minor Conditional Use Permit for on-site shared parking;
- Minor Conditional Use Permit for on-site valet parking; and
- Design Review for a project that exceeds 5,000 square feet in the Central District.

In addition, the project may require a Tentative Parcel Map to consolidate parcels and a Tree Removal Permit, if any protected trees are identified and proposed for removal. Furthermore, since the project does not meet all setback requirements, Minor Variances would be needed, unless the project was redesigned to meet all requirements of the Zoning Code. Since the project has over 75,000 square feet of new construction, the Conditional Use Permit for a major project requires Planning Commission approval. All of the zoning entitlements outlined above would be packaged together and reviewed by the Planning Commission. If the project is approved by the Planning Commission, it will be subject to review by the Design Commission.

*Setbacks:* On both Colorado Boulevard and Los Robles Avenue, non-residential buildings are required to be built up to the street setback line. On Green Street, non-residential buildings may be set back up to five feet from the property line. In reviewing the new alternative, the building is built up to the property line along Colorado Boulevard and most of Los Robles Avenue. However, it does not appear to meet the setback requirements along Green Street. Setbacks of up to 65 feet are proposed along Green Street to accommodate the proposed motor court. A Minor Variance would be required to deviate from the setback requirements.

*Height:* The height limit for the Paseo Colorado is 75 feet and up to 90 feet with height averaging (which is approved by the Design Commission). For the Paseo Colorado, up to 30 percent of the building can exceed 75 feet in height, provided that no portion exceeds 90 feet and the average height of all building areas is 75 feet. In reviewing the new alternative, the maximum proposed height for the commercial building is 40 feet and for the hotel is 75 feet. Overall, the project appears to meet the City's height averaging requirements.

*Size:* No square footage is permitted within the 77-foot wide Garfield Promenade, while the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for the rest of the Paseo Colorado is 3.0. This results in a maximum allowable floor area of 1,274,130 square feet. The existing Paseo Colorado has an area of approximately 1,100,000 square feet. Since the total net increase in building square footage for the project is less than 2,000 square feet, it is within the maximum FAR.

*Parking:* The total number of parking spaces currently available for commercial use is 2,825. The original approval states that 3,793 parking spaces were required, creating a parking deficit of 968 spaces. In 1999, a Minor Conditional Use Permit was approved for on-site shared parking. At that time, a parking study showed that the mix of uses

had differing parking demands and there was enough parking available during peak periods.

Since the Paseo Colorado was first approved, the City has adopted new parking standards. In addition, the Paseo Colorado's mix of uses has changed. Current parking requirements include 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail space, up to 10 spaces per 1,000 square feet of restaurant space (indoor or outdoor) and 1 space per hotel room. Staff has completed a preliminary estimate on the change in parking requirements for the project and found a difference of less than five spaces. Regardless, it is anticipated a new Minor Conditional Use permit will be needed to update the shared parking approval to reflect the current proposal. An updated parking study, recently submitted by the applicant, will need to be reviewed by staff to ensure there is still enough parking available during peak periods.

*Access and Loading:* As discussed above, the new alternative has all vehicular access from Green Street. This includes a motor court, new ramp to the underground parking areas and loading space. The commercial building would share existing loading spaces with other tenants at the Paseo Colorado. The space between the commercial building along Colorado Boulevard and the hotel would be a new pedestrian courtyard that would connect with the rest of the Paseo Colorado. Staff will continue to review of the new alternative to ensure it has the necessary turning radius for cars and trucks and does not negatively impact pedestrian movements.

#### Design and Historic Preservation

*Demolition:* The Macy's building is not designated as an historic resource and does not appear to be eligible for such designation. The Macy's site is also not located within an historic district. However, the Garfield Promenade area is located within the Civic Center Historic District (connecting the Civic Auditorium to the rest of the Civic Center). Design review will be required for proposed improvements to this area to ensure new construction complies with the Secretary of Interior Standards.

*Design Review:* Design Review is required as the project exceeds 5,000 square feet in size and is located in the Central District. Because the size of the project is greater than 25,000 square feet, the Design Commission is the review authority. Specific design guidelines applicable to this project include the Citywide Design Guidelines and the Central District Specific Plan Design Guidelines.

Below are some of the design-related topic areas that were highlighted:

- *Massing:* The project should relate contextually to this urban site in an intelligent, innovative and deliberate fashion. The new buildings should better engage the street-edge at the corner of Colorado Boulevard and Los Robles Avenue. The applicant should consider shifting some of the taller massing of the hotel to the corner to create more visual focus, while maintaining retail on the ground level.

This may also allow for a centrally located entrance to the hotel lobby from the public sidewalk on Colorado Boulevard.

- *Siting:* The project is generally well sited. The proposed retail spaces along Colorado Boulevard are designed effectively to create a street-oriented environment that encourages sidewalk activity. The overall massing of the corner should be restudied as previously discussed.
- *Compatibility:* The new buildings are generally well suited to this location and will help develop this block as a key urban component in the downtown. Future architectural studies should be reviewed, in response to the traditional design aesthetic that is being proposed for part of the new buildings. This includes the possibility of including deeply recessed windows and doors behind the exterior wall planes, introducing bulkheads in a contrasting durable material for the storefront systems and adding appropriately scaled transoms and awnings.
- *Windows:* Large amounts of storefront windows along both streets at the northeast corner will provide the necessary transparency for a lively pedestrian experience.
- *Materials:* The Citywide Design Principles call for durable, high-quality materials and thus the specification for materials and finishes and the details of their application will be of critical importance in developing a high caliber structure at this prominent location.

### General Plan and Specific Plan

*General Plan:* The 2004 General Plan Land Use Policies and Objectives that the proposed project should support include:

- Policy 5.5 – Architectural and Design Excellence: The City shall actively promote architectural design and excellence in buildings, open space and urban design and shall discourage poor quality development. If the applicant decides to move forward, the project will be required to go through a multi-step design review process to ensure that the architecture and building materials are of high quality.
- Policy 12.1 – Retail: The project should encourage retail and sales-producing businesses to remain, expand in, or come to, Pasadena and promote healthy retail areas. The project will make changes to improve the retail shops of Paseo Colorado, but will also remove a large retail tenant.
- Policy 14.1 – Human Values: Growth policies should reflect concern for the well-being of citizens, should respect the City's social, cultural and economic diversity. The project's design should continue to emphasize human scale and pedestrian orientation within the Paseo Colorado.

- Policy 20.3 – Bicycles/Pedestrians: The project should promote the use of non-motorized modes of transportation, such as bicycles and walking within the City. The project's design should continue to address pedestrian movement and access within the Paseo Colorado.

*Specific Plan:* The property lies within the Central District Specific Plan. The plan places the property in the "Civic Center/Midtown" sub-district. The plan includes 30 objectives and an extensive list of design guidelines. The project complies with many of them (e.g. objectives related to providing economic opportunities and guidelines related to supporting infill projects), and should continue to focus on the following areas:

- Objective 26 – Make Downtown Walkable. Downtown should be safe, convenient and comfortable place to walk.
- Objective 27 – Strengthen Sub-District Identify. The unique identity and distinct qualities of the downtown's sub-districts should be reinforced. Special consideration should continue to be given to make sure the new commercial buildings are integrated with the rest of the Paseo Colorado and the "Civic Center/Midtown" sub-district.
- Objective 28 – Build Sub-District Connections. Physical, social and economic linkages between Downtown's sub-districts should be strengthened so that these areas support each other. Los Robles Avenue is the boundary between the "Civic Center/Midtown" and "Pasadena Playhouse" sub-districts. Special consideration should continue to be given to make sure the project helps link the two sub-districts.
- Design Guidelines CC3.2, SP1.4 and SP3.1 – Increase Physical Connectivity, Encourage Integrate Site Planning and Location of Site Plazas and Courtyards. Circulation patterns should be extended and connect important centers of activity. Pedestrian connections should be well marked. Outdoor gathering spaces are encouraged for larger projects and should be well defined. Special consideration should continue to be given to pedestrian movements between the new commercial buildings and the rest of the Paseo Colorado.

*General Plan Caps:* In 1994, the General Plan allocated 5,095 housing units and 6.2 million square feet of new non-residential development to the Central District Specific Plan. As of December 31, 2012, the Central District retained an allocation of 502 housing units and 3.78 million square feet of non-residential potential (this also factors in projects that have submitted or entitlements but have not yet received approval or issued building permits). The project does not propose any residential units and proposes a net increase of less than 2,000 square feet of commercial space. Therefore, the Specific Plan has enough remaining allocation to accommodate the project.

### Cultural Affairs

The project is subject to the City's Public Art Program. This requires a percentage of the building's valuation costs to be allocated by the developer to incorporate in their design a public art component. In addition, the proposed project would impact existing artwork on the Macy's site and at other parts of the Paseo Colorado (the Paseo site includes a multitude of art pieces such as sculptures, murals, railings and tile works). The applicant has not yet decided which artwork is proposed for removal; those that need to be relocated would need to go through a multi-step approval process.

### Transportation/Traffic

A traffic analysis will be required to assess project's traffic-related impacts on adjacent streets and intersections. The project is also subject to the City's Traffic Reduction/Transportation Improvement Fee and Trip Reduction Ordinance. The Department of Transportation will also review the revised project circulation plan for vehicular and loading access to ensure it has adequate turning radius for cars and trucks and does not negatively impact non-auto modes including pedestrians. Special consideration should also be given to Green Street, which is a one-way street traveling eastbound.

### Environmental Review

Pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an environmental review of the project will occur in order to analyze the project's potential to result in significant impacts, as identified by State and local environmental guidelines.

### NEXT STEPS

This project will require approvals involving meetings and public hearings before the Planning Commission and Design Commission. In addition, an environmental review will occur consistent with the requirements of the CEQA. The following identifies the steps in the review process:

- Preliminary Consultation with Design Commission (submitted on May 24, 2013);
- Environmental Review
- Planning Commission Public Hearing on the Conditional Use Permits, Minor Conditional Permits and environmental review (submitted on May 24, 2013; and
- Design Commission reviews (Preliminary Consultation, Concept, and Final).



**FISCAL IMPACT:**

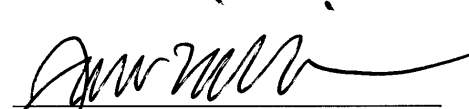
The project has the potential to generate revenue through the collection Transportation Improvement and other fees. The exact amount of these fees will be determined during the plan check process.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Attachment A – Predevelopment Plan Review – Revised Plans