

# Agenda Report

March 20, 2017

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department

**SUBJECT: PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW OF THE KAISER PERMANENTE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE PROJECT LOCATED AT 94 SOUTH LOS ROBLES AVENUE**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

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

**BACKGROUND:**

The applicant, Skyler Denniston, on behalf of Kaiser Permanente (Kaiser), has submitted a Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) application to redevelop the property at 94 South Los Robles Avenue; located on the southeast corner of Los Robles Avenue and Green Street. Kaiser, a health care system with hospitals, medical offices and a health plan, is proposing to establish the Kaiser Permanente School of Medicine. The proposed facility will be a fully accredited medical school for future physicians of Kaiser. The school would provide curriculum and teaching methods that focus on the latest in technology and patient medical care.

The site is currently improved with a three-story, 16,700 square-foot commercial office building and a surface parking lot. The project will demolish the existing commercial building and surface parking lot, to allow for the construction of a four-story, 80,000 square-foot school of medicine. 226 parking spaces would be provided within a proposed three-level subterranean parking garage.

The PPR process is established in Section 17.60 040.C of 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 and achieving consistency with City regulations and policies.

Projects that meet the threshold of “community-wide significance” (greater than 50,000 square feet in size 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 a way to inform them and the public of significant projects.

This report provides a project description, identifies the entitlement and environmental review processes, and important topic areas that staff will focus on during case processing.

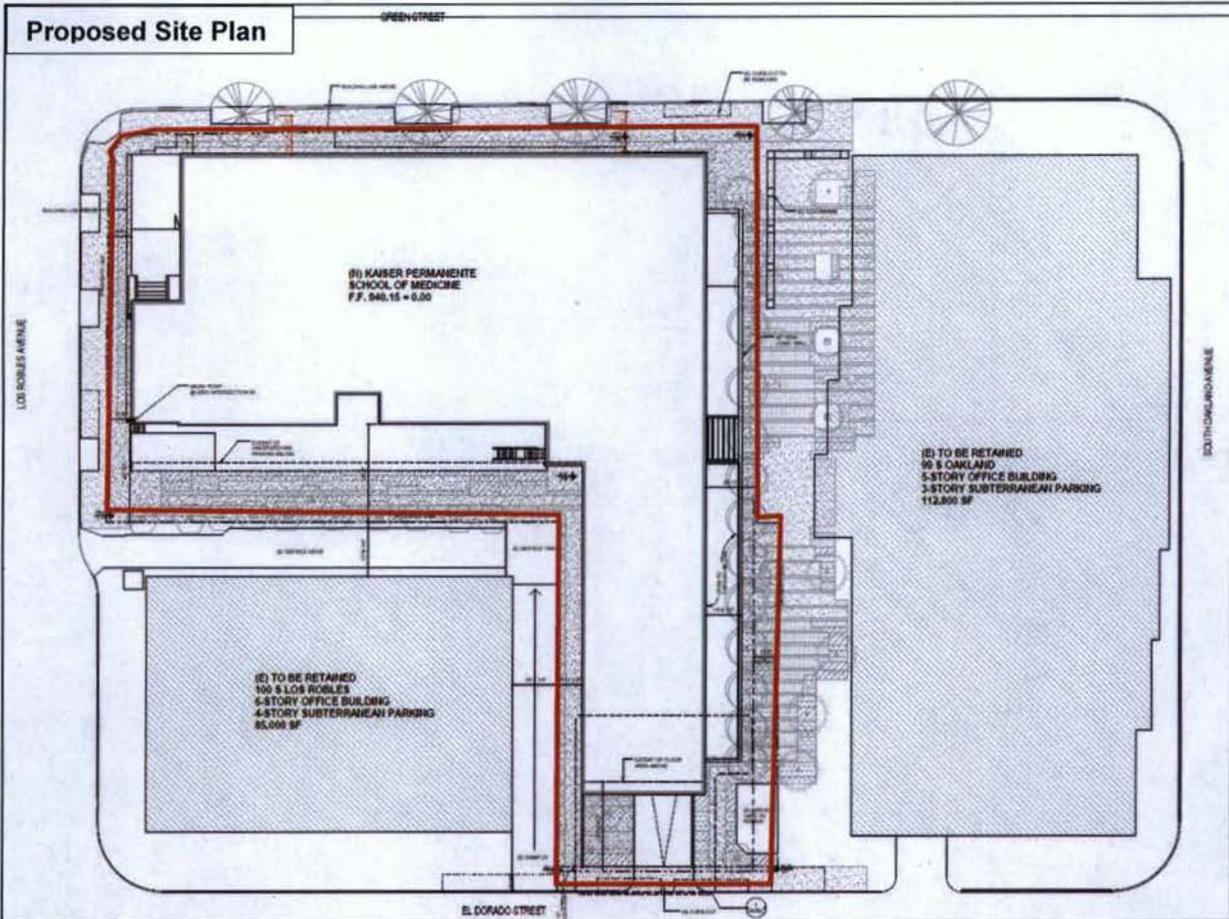
**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The subject site is an irregular-shaped parcel of land, with frontage on Los Robles Avenue to the west, Green Street to the north and El Dorado Street to the south. The 54,014 square-foot site (per application material) consists of four parcels and is located in the CD-2 (Central District, Civic Center/Midtown subdistrict) zoning district. The project includes:

- Demolition of a three-story, 16,700 square-foot commercial office building and a surface parking lot;
- Construction of a four-story, 80,000 square-foot building with 226 parking spaces located within a new three-level subterranean parking garage; and
- The proposed use is *Colleges – Nontraditional Campus Setting* land use. The entire site will be used for the Kaiser School of Medicine.

The aerial map of the existing site and the proposed site plan are shown below:





**Project Statistics:**

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>Zoning Designation:</b>                                |                                 |
| CD-2 (Central District, Civic Center/Midtown subdistrict) |                                 |
| <b>General Plan Designation:</b>                          |                                 |
| Medium Mixed-Use  |                                 |
| <b>Lot Size:</b>  |                                 |
| Minimum Required  | Proposed                        |
| Not Applicable  | 54,014 square feet (1.24 acres) |
| <b>Proposed Building Size:</b>                            |                                 |
| Minimum Required  | Proposed                        |
| Not Applicable  | 80,000 square feet              |
| <b>Floor Area Ratio:</b>                                  |                                 |
| Maximum Permitted   | Proposed                        |
| 2.25 FAR (121,532 sq. ft.)                                | 1.48                            |
| <b>Parking Requirement:</b>                               |                                 |
| Required: 216   | Proposed                        |
| 3 spaces for every 1,000 sf                               | 226                             |
| 20% TOD Reduction   |                                 |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Building Height                                |          |
| Maximum Permitted                              | Proposed |
| 60' (75' with height averaging)                | 75'      |
| Setbacks:                                      |          |
| Required                                       | Proposed |
| Los Robles Ave Max 5' setback                  | 9'-11"   |
| Green St Build to property line (zero setback) | 6'-11"   |
| El Dorado St Max 5' setback                    | 38'      |

**Discretionary Entitlements:**

The Kaiser Permanente School of Medicine is a *College – Nontraditional Campus Setting* use per the Zoning Code. This land use is classified as a Public and Semi-Public Use per P.M.C 17.80 (Definitions: Land Use Classifications). The proposed use would be a fully accredited medical school for future physicians of Kaiser in a nontraditional campus setting. Colleges are an allowed use in the CD-2 zoning district.

Based on the information submitted to-date, the proposed project has been designed to meet applicable development standards of the Zoning Code, General Plan and Specific Plan. The project would require the following discretionary entitlements:

Design Review:

- For a project with new construction that exceeds 5,000 square feet in size
- Height Averaging for a project that exceeds 60-feet in height.

The Design Commission is the review authority for the Design Review.

**PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY:**

**Zoning Code:**

The project site is located within the CD-2 (Central District, Civic Center/Midtown subdistrict) zoning district. The allowable uses and development standards are those of the Central District Specific Plan section of the Zoning Code.

*Height:* Pursuant to Section 17.30.040, Table 3-2, Figure 3-8, the maximum building height limit is 60 feet. The submitted plans indicate that portions of the building would have a height of up to 75 feet. The 60-foot height limit may be exceeded utilizing Section 17.30.050.B (Height Averaging) of the Zoning Code, subject to the specified height averaging standards. For this site, the maximum permitted height utilizing height averaging is 75 feet. The building may be as tall as 75 feet if no more than 30 percent of the building footprint exceeds the height limit and the overall average height of the building does not exceed 60 feet.

The purposes of height averaging are.

- Additional building height is counterbalanced by lower heights across or elsewhere on a development site to achieve an economically viable project that also protects view corridors and/or historically or architecturally significant building, structures, or landscapes; a visual transition in height and massing may be achieved through height averaging.
- Additional building height is counterbalanced by lower heights across or elsewhere on a development site to punctuate important intersections or other prominent locations; this will contribute to a more visually compelling skyline.

Height averaging is a discretionary approval and requires approval of the Design Commission. The Design Commission may impose additional conditions related to site planning, architectural design, as well as requiring public amenities, including public outdoor space and pedestrian paths.

*Floor Area:* Pursuant to Section 17.30.040, Table 3-2, Figure 3-9, the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) allowed for the subject site is 2.25. Based on the submitted information, the project site measures 54,014 square feet and therefore is permitted a maximum FAR of 121,532 square feet.

FAR is calculated utilizing gross floor area. Gross floor area is defined as the total enclosed area of all floors of a building measured to the inside face of the exterior walls including halls, stairways, elevator shafts at each floor level, service and mechanical equipment rooms and basement or attic areas having a height of more than seven feet, but excluding area used exclusively for vehicle parking or loading.

The proposed project would have a floor area of 80,000 square feet, or an FAR of 1.48, and complies with the requirements.

*Vehicle Parking:* The provision of off-street parking is subject to Sections 17.46.040 (Parking and Loading) and 17.50.340 (Transit-Oriented Development) of the Zoning Code. The number of required parking spaces is based on the size of the proposed school. In addition, because the project site is located within the Central District Transit Oriented Development Area (as shown in Figure 3-5 of Section 17.30.030 of the Zoning Code) the parking requirements from 17.46.040 have mandatory reductions as explained below.

Per Section 17.46.040, commercial parking shall be provided in compliance with Table 4-6. A college use is required to provide parking at a ratio of 3 spaces for every 1,000 square feet of floor area. Per Section 17.50.340.D.1, nonresidential uses in a transit-oriented area shall reduce the minimum amount of required off-street parking by 10 percent, with an optional reduction up to 20 percent. The 10 percent reduction shall be the maximum allowed number of parking spaces.

The proposed building would provide 80,000 square feet of gross floor area. The maximum required parking is 216 spaces (240-10% TOD reduction) and the minimum required parking is 192 spaces (240-20% optional TOD reduction). The proposed plans indicate that 226 parking spaces would be provided in a three level subterranean garage. The number of parking spaces provided would have to be reduced by 10 parking spaces to comply with the maximum permitted.

### **General Plan:**

According to the General Plan Land Use Diagram, the subject property is designated as Medium Mixed Use (0.0-2 25 FAR) which is intended to support the development of multi-story buildings with a variety of compatible commercial (retail and office) and residential uses. Projects constructed at Medium Mixed Use densities may be required to develop pedestrian-oriented streetscape amenities along their primary street frontages. Parking shall be located below or to the rear of the street.

The General Plan provides the following policies that are relevant to the proposed project:

*Policy 1.3 - Development Capacities. Regulate building intensity and population density consistently with the designations established by the Land Use Diagram. Within these, cumulative new development within the specific plan areas shall not exceed the number of housing units and commercial square feet specified.*

The project site is located within the Central District Specific Plan, for which the General Plan allows for a maximum CAP of 2,112,000 square feet of commercial square footage. As of January 30, 2017, there remains 1,003,317 square feet of commercial square footage in the Central District Specific Plan. The proposed 80,000 square feet is within the development capacity of the General Plan.

*Policy 2.6 - Transit-Related Land Uses. Promote the development of uses that support and capture the economic value induced by the presence of transit corridors and stations.*

The project site is located within the City's Transit-Oriented Development area. The project site is approximately 0.6 miles walking distance from both the Memorial Park and Del Mar Stations. Prospective students and faculty could benefit from the proximity of the project site to Gold Line stations.

*Policy 2.9 - Institutional Uses. Accommodate the development of educational, religious, cultural, and similar facilities that enrich the lives of Pasadena's residents.*

The proposed project would allow for the construction of a medical school with a prospective student body of up to 192 students. A medical school is an educational facility that could enrich the lives of Pasadena's residents.

*Policy 4.5 - Transit Villages in Context. Differentiate the mix and development intensities of the Transit Villages to reflect their setting, with the highest intensities at Fillmore, Del Mar, Memorial Park and Lake Metro Gold Line stations, moderate intensities at Sierra Madre Villa station and lowest intensities at the Allen Avenue station.*

The project site is located within the City's Transit-Oriented Development area. The project site is approximately 0.6 miles walking distance from both the Memorial Park and Del Mar Stations.

*Policy 5.6 - Property Access. Discourage vehicle driveways on streets with higher pedestrian volumes within the Central District, Transit Villages, and Neighborhood Villages.*

The applicant should work closely with the Department of Transportation to determine whether vehicular access should be provided on S. Los Robles, as proposed.

*Policy 11.2 - Workforce Development. Align workforce development strategies with job skills needed to support Pasadena's key business clusters. Keep the local workforce trained and employed by allowing for a broad range of job training opportunities. Focus on creating jobs and providing training to create individual and family economic self-sufficiency.*

The proposed project is for a medical school that could accommodate up to 192 students. This use would complement similar workforce medical uses in the area that include Huntington Memorial Hospital, Shriners Hospital, Kaiser Permanente Medical Offices and others.

*Policy 17.4 - Long-Range Planning for Private Schools. Require private schools to collaborate with the City on site selection, site design, traffic control, circulation and site acquisition to ensure compatibility with the neighborhoods or districts in which they are located.*

By submitting this PPR, the applicant has commenced their collaboration with the City to determine whether the project is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

### **Design & Historic Preservation:**

*Design Review:* Design Review is required, per Section 17.61.030 of the Zoning Code, as the project exceeds 5,000 square feet in size, with the Design Commission as the review authority.

The project was reviewed by the Design Commission through the Preliminary Consultation process on September 13, 2016. The Commission provided the comments below on the preliminary design:

- 1 Study the connection between the project and the adjacent urban fabric, with close attention paid to the experiences of pedestrians as they walk past and through the project site. The project should have a more strongly emphasized pedestrian presence. This may include reconsidering the ground floor programming and focusing on clearly defining the ground floor entrances on Green Street and Los Robles Avenue so that they are more significantly identified and used.
2. The modern contemporary architectural style is appealing and the concept should be further explored and better executed by refining the design to be more true to its design concept so as to be a truly innovative and unique contribution to the rich architectural history of Pasadena.
3. The service entrance shall not be located off of Green Street.
4. Restudy the exterior stairs as viewed from the south to ensure they are an integral feature of the building.
5. Closely study the proposed landscaping to emphasize the importance and presence of courtyards and alleyways and the experience of pedestrians as they move through these spaces
6. Closely study the location and visibility of pedestrian entrances and revise them to more significantly activate the ground floor and connect the project to the public realm. The primary entrances should be at the ground level and be more prominently visible. Consider developing more significant entrances at the ground floor, taking advantage of the corner location.
- 7 Continue to carefully study the use and function of the open spaces and courtyards. Consider relocating uses such as gathering spaces and cafeterias to the ground floor level adjacent to these landscaped open spaces to further activate the street and better connect users to courtyards and the surrounding context.
8. Closely study the materials and appearance of the ground floor. The storefronts and entrances on the ground floor are opportunities to animate the street. Consider revising the design to provide more generous street level transparency with windows and storefronts that are predominantly transparent glass (or further clarify whether screening devices are proposed at the street-level glazing).

**Environmental Review:**

Pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an environmental review of the project will occur to analyze the project's potential environmental impacts, as identified by State and local environmental guidelines. At this time, it is not known what level of review will be required.

**NEXT STEPS:**

Public hearings before the Design Commission are required for the proposed project. In addition, an environmental review will occur consistent with the requirements of CEQA. The following identifies the steps in the review process:

- Conduct environmental review per CEQA;
- Concept and Final Design Review by the Design Commission.

The Design Commission will be the review authority for the environmental review.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

This report is for information only and will not result in any fiscal impact.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment (1)

Attachment A – Predevelopment Plan Review Plans