

Agenda Report

September 18, 2017

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Planning & Community Development Department

SUBJECT: PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW OF A 72-UNIT MIXED-USE DENSITY BONUS PROJECT LOCATED AT 747 E. GREEN STREET

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is for information only; no City Council action is required.

BACKGROUND:

The applicant, Burke Farrar of Odyssey Development Services, has submitted a Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) application to construct a 72-unit mixed-use density bonus project on the subject property located at the northeast corner of Green Street and Oak Knoll Avenue. The site is currently improved with a four-story, 25,344 square-foot commercial-office building with a 22,776 square-foot surface parking lot. The proposed project includes demolition of the existing commercial parking lot and construction of a seven-story 80,000 square-foot mixed-use structure, consisting of 5,401 square-feet of ground-floor commercial space and 72 residential units (for sale) above. A total of 173 parking spaces are proposed within three levels of subterranean parking and one ground-level parking.

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 the Council and the public of significant projects. The proposed 72 unit project meets the "community-wide significance" threshold. 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:

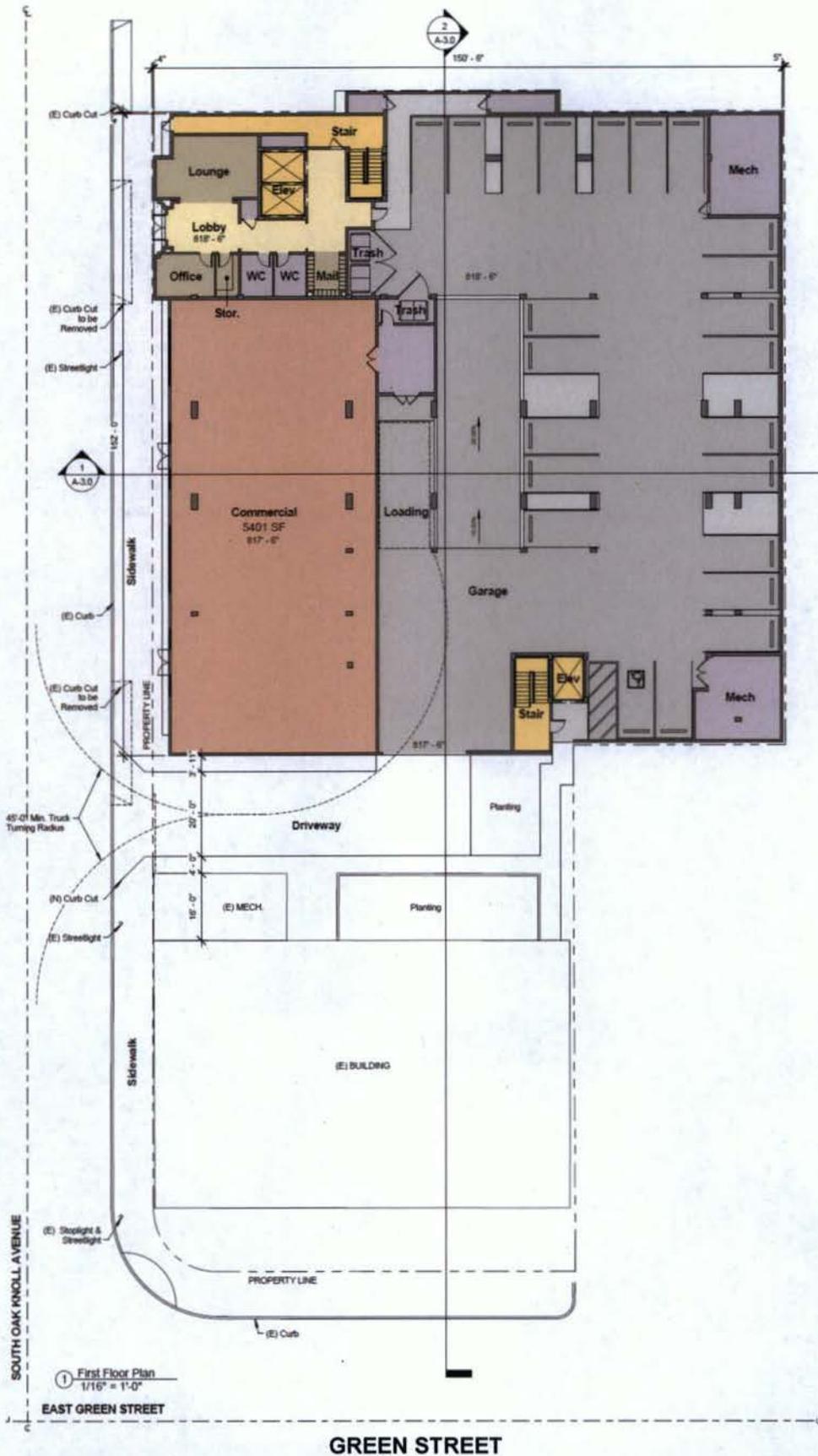
The site is located at the northeast corner of Green Street and Oak Knoll Avenue. It consists of one parcel of land approximately 0.81 acres (35,322 square feet) in size. The site is currently developed with a 25,344 square foot four-story commercial building and a 22,276 square foot surface parking lot area for the building. The site currently sits on a boundary for two precincts, (Playhouse North/Colorado and Playhouse South/Green Street), within the Central District Specific Plan (CD-4). These two precincts are subject to different development standards for maximum residential density, building height, and floor area ratio. When reviewing the project, staff applied the applicable standards as depicted in Figures 3-6 through 3-9 in Section 17.30.040 of the Zoning Code. For the purpose of staff's analysis the areas are identified as Area 1 for the North precinct and Area 2 for the South Precinct. Area 1 measures 6,298 square feet and Area 2 measures 29,023 square feet.

The aerial map of the existing condition of the site, Areas 1 & 2, and the proposed site plan are shown below:

Existing Condition of the Site: Northeast Corner of Green St. and Oak Knoll Ave.



GROUND FLOOR SITE PLAN



The proposed project includes:

- Demolition of the existing surface parking lot; and
- Construction of a seven-story structure consisting of 5,401 square-feet of ground-floor commercial space and 72 for-sale residential units above with ground-level parking and three levels of subterranean parking (173 parking spaces).

The existing four-story, 25,344 square-foot office building is proposed to remain.

Zoning Designation	
CD-4 (Central District, Pasadena Playhouse District)	
General Plan Designation	
Medium Mixed-Use (0.0 – 2.25 FAR)	
Lot Size	
Area 1: 6,298 sq. ft. + Area 2: 29,023 sq. ft. = Total 35,322 sq. ft. (0.81 acres)	
Existing Building Size (To Remain)	
25,344 sq. ft.	
Proposed Building Size:	
83,232 sq. ft.	
Floor Area Ratio	
Maximum Allowed by Zoning Code.	Proposed (including existing building):
3.00 FAR for Area 1 + 2.00 FAR for Area 2 = 2.18 FAR	3.07 FAR (108,576 sq. ft.)*
Total Area Allowed (76,940 sq. ft.) (total combined)	
Residential Density	
Maximum Allowed by Zoning Code	Proposed
Area 1 (87 du/acre) + Area 2: (60 du/acre) = 53 units	72 units @ (88 du/acre)
Total Allowed: 53 units (65 du/acre)	
With 35% Density Bonus: 72 units	
Parking Requirement	
Required.	Proposed
1 space/unit < 650SF @ (43 units) = 43 spaces	173 Total Spaces Proposed.
1 5-1 75spaces/unit > 650SF @ (30 units) = 45-53 spaces	Additional information needed to determine compliance
1 guest parking for every 10 units = 8 spaces	
Residential: Min. 96 spaces, Max. 104 spaces	
Retail: 3 spaces/1,000 SF @ (5401 SF) = 13 spaces	
Existing Office Building: 76 spaces	
TOD Reduction= 10-20% of required parking	
Total: Min 185 spaces, Max. 193 spaces	
Building Height	
Maximum Allowed:	Proposed.
Area 1: 75' (90' with Height Averaging)	Area 1: 87' 9" maximum*
Area 2: 50' (65' with Height Averaging)	Area 2: 77' 8" maximum*
Setbacks	
Oak Knoll and Green St. Frontage:	
Required.	Proposed:
Non-required, may set back up to 5 feet maximum.	5' maximum
Open Space/Community Space	
Required:	Proposed.
14,040 sq. ft.	14,470 sq. ft.

* Applicant has applied for Affordable Housing Concession to exceed requirement

Discretionary Entitlements:

Discretionary Entitlements required for the project are as follows:

1. Affordable Housing Concession Permit:
 - To exceed the maximum permitted floor area ratio requirement of 2.18 (Area 1 and Area 2 combined FAR 3.0 and 2.0 respectively) to 3.07 and
 - To exceed the height limit of 50 feet for Area 1 to allow 87', and 75 feet for Area 2 to allow 77'.
2. Design Review (Concept and Final):
 - For projects that exceed 25,000 square feet in size.

The Conditional Use Permit and Affordable Housing Concession Permit would be presented to a Hearing Officer for his/her consideration, along with the appropriate environmental review documentation. The Design Commission is the review authority for Design Review.

PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY:

Zoning Code:

The site is zoned CD-4 zoning district and governed by Chapter 17.30 of the Zoning Code. According to Figure 3-4 (Central District Housing/Ground Floor Map), the site is located in Area 2, where housing is permitted except on the ground floor; therefore, the proposed mixed-use project is permitted on the site. The information provided to the applicant in the PPR comments is as noted below:

Residential Density and Density Bonus: Per Figure 3-6 (Central District Maximum Residential Density) of the Zoning Code, the maximum allowable residential density on the site is 62 units per acre. Based on the maximum density allowed and size of the site (0.81 acres), 53 units may be constructed by right. Through the affordable housing density bonus provisions under Section 17.43.040 of the Zoning Code, projects may be granted a density bonus of up to 35 percent above the maximum allowable density without discretionary approval.

The applicant is proposing the construction of 72 residential units. Of the 72 units proposed, the applicant has indicated that six units would be designated as very low income. In order to receive a 35 percent density bonus, 11 percent of the units (6 units) must be designated as very low income. As proposed, the project is providing enough affordable units required in order to grant a 35 percent density bonus and construct 72 units on site.

Floor Area: Per Figure 3-9 (Central District Maximum Floor Area Ratio) of the Zoning Code, the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) for this site, with the combined totals for Areas 1 and 2, is 2.18. Based on the 35,322 square foot lot size, the maximum allowable gross floor area is 76,940 square feet. The plans indicate that the proposed gross floor area of the project including the existing 25,344 square foot office building is 108,576 square feet in size, which is an FAR of 3.07.

Height: Per Figure 3-8 (Central District Maximum Height) of the Zoning Code, the maximum allowable building height for this site is 75 feet for Area 1 and 50 feet for Area 2, and if the project utilizes Section 17.30.050.B (Height Averaging) of the Zoning Code, the building may be as tall as 90 feet in Area 1 and 65 feet in Area 2, provided that no more than 30 percent of the building footprint exceeds the height limit and the average height of the entire footprint does not exceed the height limit of 75 feet for Area 1 and 50 feet for Area 2. The building is proposed with a height of 87 feet and 9 inches. Height averaging is a discretionary approval and requires approval of the Design Commission. Based on the information presented, the project as designed would not meet the Height Averaging guidelines.

If the applicant were to revise the building height and Height Averaging were requested, the applicant would be required to provide more detailed information to ensure the height averaging requirements are complied with. As part of the review process for the height averaging, 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. Alternatively, the applicant may apply for a concession to deviate from the height requirements of the Zoning Code as part of an Affordable Housing Concession Permit.

Setbacks: Per Figure 3-7 (Central District Required Setbacks) of the Zoning Code the minimum required building setbacks are as follows:

- Green Street (Setback Type 2): Non-Residential: setback not required; may set back up to five feet maximum.
- Oak Knoll Avenue (Setback Type 2): Non-Residential: setback not required; may set back up to five feet maximum.
- Interior sides: No minimum or maximum setback requirement for a non-residential project.

Based on the plans submitted, the project would meet the setback requirement along Oak Knoll with a four foot setback for the proposed building. All other setbacks on interior sides are not required for this project.

Parking: The proposed project is located in the Central District Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Area and subject to the parking requirements prescribed in Section 17.50.340.D of the Zoning Code (Transit Oriented Development). The parking requirements are summarized below:

Residential: Because the proposed is located within the Central District TOD Area, the project is required to provide 1 space for units 650 square feet or less (43 units) and 1.5-1.75 parking spaces (30 units) for units greater than 650 square feet. (Additionally, one guest space must be provided for every ten units) As a result, the minimum required parking for the residential component of the proposed project is 96 parking spaces and the maximum allowed parking is 104 spaces.

Retail: The proposed 5,401 square feet of retail space would be required to provide 16 parking spaces (3 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet). However, because the proposed project is located within the Central District TOD Area, the parking

requirement for this use must be reduced by no less than ten percent to 14 parking spaces and no more than 20 percent to 13 parking spaces.

Office (existing): The existing 25,344 square foot office building is required to provide 76 parking spaces (3 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet). The proposed project would not result in a change of use for this structure.

Based on the breakdown provided above, a range of 185-193 parking spaces may be required to accommodate the proposed project. However, once the applicable Transit Oriented Development standards are applied, the resulting parking requirement is reduced to a range of 169-177 parking spaces. The project proposes a total of 173 spaces located on three subterranean parking levels and one level ground floor parking which is sufficient to comply with the zoning code parking requirements for the project.

Mixed-use: All mixed-use projects are subject to compliance with Section 17.50.160 (Mixed-Use Projects) of the Zoning Code, which includes but not limited to the following:

Commercial Depth/Height: The ground floor commercial space would be required to measure at least 50 feet in depth, and the height of 15 feet as measured from the floor of the first floor to the floor of the second floor.

The project plans indicate portions of the commercial space would have a depth that is less than 50 feet. The proposed ground floor height is 15 feet, which meets the commercial space height requirement.

Community Space: The minimum requirement for community space is 150 square feet of area per dwelling unit. For this 72 unit project, this results in a minimum total requirement of 14,040 square feet.

Community space includes both indoor/interior space and outdoor open space and can be in the form of private open space (e.g., balconies) or common open space (e.g., pool or side or rear setback areas.). The project plans indicate that there would be a total of 14,470 square feet of community space, including 4,341 square feet of private open space. The locations, dimensions and area of the proposed open space will be verified in future submittals.

Design and Historic Preservation:

Historic Preservation Review: The building at 747 E. Green Street is not designated as a Historic Resource and does not appear to be eligible for such designation, additional review of demolition of the existing parking lot is not required during the design or environmental review processes for the project.

Design Review: The proposed project involves new construction (in excess of 5,000 square feet) in the Central District and would require Design Review. The Design Commission would be the reviewing authority the applicable design guidelines for the project are the design guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan.

Preliminary Design Issues: Based on the information contained in the preliminary plans, the following issues are likely to be analyzed during Design Review:

- 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.
- The inclusion of local references (termed “Pasadena elements” in the code) and an element of “craftsmanship.”
- Views from the interior of the site (and elevations facing the interior courtyard).

On September 27, 2016, the project was reviewed by the Design Commission through the Preliminary Consultation process. The Commission agreed with the comments in the staff report, which are reiterated and modified based on Commission comments below, and provided additional comments on the preliminary design, as listed below:

1. The design appears to incorporate a courtyard space between the existing and new buildings, adjoining the driveway. This space should be carefully designed to ensure adequate integration of the vehicular and pedestrian interface and to develop the intended use of the space in conjunction with the design. The space should have an interesting design and also be safe for pedestrians. The space between the Montana I building (345 E. Colorado Boulevard) and the adjacent parking structure (330 E. Union Street) is an example of a well-designed and inviting pedestrian corridor, which should be considered as inspiration for this space. Accessibility of this space to the public should be considered, as well as potential removal of the existing walled enclosure and mechanical equipment north of the existing building to provide greater connection of the new courtyard to the street.
2. Further consideration should be given to incorporation of fenestration or other treatments to break up the blankness of the north and south elevations, which will be visible from the public right-of way. As currently designed, the podium walls feel disjointed from the rest of the building and should be better integrated into the design.
3. The ground floor commercial spaces should have a stronger design emphasis than the residential lobby entry.

4. Detailing of the building should be carefully considered to ensure that the architectural language of the design is carried through in the architectural details.
5. Consider whether it may be appropriate to carry the central, highly glazed module along the west elevation to the ground plane.
6. Review the newly adopted Transit Oriented District ordinance to determine if the parking requirement for the project can be reduced.

General Plan:

General Plan Consistency: According to the General Plan Land Use Diagram, the subject site is designated as Medium Mixed-use (0.0 to 2.25 FAR, 0 to 87 dwelling units per acre). The project proposes to construct a new mixed-use building with 72 residential units on the 35,322 square foot site. The total square-footage of the new building is approximately 108,576 square feet. The proposed project proposes a FAR of 3.07 and a density of 88 dwelling units per acre, which exceeds the FAR and the density allowed by the Medium Mixed-use land use classification in the General Plan. However, the General Plan allows for the FAR/density to be exceeded if a project is providing affordable units as part of the density bonus provisions codified in the Zoning Code.

Goals and Policies:

The General Plan provides policies and objectives are relevant to the proposed project, including the following:

- Policy 2.1 – Housing Choices: Provide opportunities for a full range of housing types, densities, locations, and affordability levels to address the community’s fair share of regional, senior, and workforce housing needs and provide a strong customer base sustaining the economic vitality of Pasadena’s commercial land uses. The types, densities, and location of housing shall be determined by the Land Use Diagram and reflect the projected needs specified in the Housing Element.

The proposed project is a mixed-use project that consists of 72 dwelling units, inclusive of affordable units that would satisfy the 50-percent density bonus requirement with an approval of a Conditional Use Permit.

- Policy 2.5 – Mixed-use: Create opportunities for development projects that mix housing with commercial uses to enable Pasadena’s residents to live close to businesses and employment, increasing non-auto travel, and interact socially.

The proposed project is to construct a mixed-use building in an area designated for mixed-use development in a centralized location near transit.

- Policy 4.11 – Development that is Compatible: Require that development demonstrates a contextual relationship with neighboring structures and sites addressing such elements as building scale, massing, orientation, setbacks, buffering, the arrangement of shared and private open spaces, visibility, privacy,

automobile and truck access, impacts of noise and lighting, landscaping quality, infrastructure, and aesthetics;

- Policy 7.1 – Architectural Quality: Design each building as a high-quality, long term addition to the City’s urban fabric; exterior design and buildings material shall exhibit permanence and quality, minimize maintenance concerns, and extend the life of the building; and
- Policy 7.3 – Compatibility: Require that new and adaptively re-used buildings are designed to respect and complement the defining built form, massing, scale, modulation, and architectural detailing of their contextual setting.

It is recommended that further consideration be given to the compatibility of the proposed project (e.g. scale, design quality, height, setbacks, etc.) to the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood. Please continue to work with Design and Historic Preservation staff to refine the project’s design so that it further encourages architectural and design excellence and is reflective of the CDSP standards and the City’s design guidelines.

- Policy 10.14 Native Plants. Maintain areas of the city with native plants.

The project proposes the removal of a protected tree under the “City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance.” The applicant is encouraged to work with Zoning Staff regarding replacement options and to ensure that all new landscaping resulting from the project is also comprised of native, and drought-tolerant, plant species.

- Policy 20.1 – Neighborhood Meetings: Encourage broad representation and community participation at all steps of the planning process.

The applicant is highly encouraged to meet with the surrounding residents and the groups listed under the heading “Neighborhoods” below to address potential issues regarding design, traffic, noise, use of the site, and other impacts specifically related to the project.

- 21.1 Adequate and Affordable Housing. Provide a variety of housing types (i.e. small subdivisions, row housing, and condominiums), styles, densities, and affordability levels that are accessible to and meet preferences for different neighborhood types (e.g., mixed-use pedestrian environments and traditional suburban neighborhoods), physical abilities and income levels, pursuant to the Housing Element.

The proposed project is a mixed-use project that consists of 72 dwelling units, inclusive of six very low income units.

- Goal 29 – Transit Villages: Moderate to high density mixed-use clusters of residential and commercial uses developed in an integrated “village-like” environment with buildings clustered on common plazas and open spaces in proximity to Metro Gold Line stations capitalizing on their indeed market demands

and land values, facilitating ridership, and reducing automobile use while increasing walkability.

The proposed project is a mixed-use project that integrates commercial and residential uses within a centralized location of the City. These uses are located within ½ mile of the Metro Gold Line Station at Lake Avenue and walking distance from retail and restaurant uses along Colorado Boulevard. The proposed project is also located within the Central District Transit Oriented Development Area. Further consideration shall be given to ensure that the proposed project consists of design and programmatic elements that encourages pedestrian activities and encourages transit use.

Specific Plan: The project site is located within the Central District Specific Plan (CDSP). The primary purpose of the CDSP is to provide a diverse mix of land uses designed to create the primary business, financial, retailing, and government center of the City. It emphasizes the concept of a higher-density, mixed-use environment that will support transit- and pedestrian-oriented mobility strategies. The CDSP places the subject property in the CD-4 Pasadena Playhouse Sub-District. The objective of this sub-district is to provide for a vibrant, mixed-use environment focused on Colorado Boulevard and the Playhouse that functions as a cultural and arts center for the community.

Specific Plan Objectives: The CDSP provides the following Planning Objectives that are relevant to the proposed project:

- Objective 2 – Identify Growth Areas: Downtown growth and development will be directed toward the most appropriate locations, with the intention of 1) protecting existing residential neighborhoods; 2) supporting transit usage; 3) and revitalizing underutilized areas;

The proposed project provides infill development by demolishing an existing surface parking lot located within the Central District Transit-Oriented Development Area. The proposed project will intensify an underutilized parcel. However, further consideration shall be given to ensure that the proposed project consists of design and programmatic elements that encourages pedestrian activities and encourages transit use.

- Objective 5 – Build Housing Downtown: Downtown will offer a range of housing opportunities, with provisions for the construction of new market-rate and affordable housing units, as well as non-traditional forms of housing, such as work-live accommodations; and
- Objective 19 – Offer Suitable Housing: Downtown housing will meet property standards of maintenance, and accommodate a variety of income levels and lifestyles.

The proposed project is a mixed-use project that consists of 72 dwelling units (both market rate and affordable units).

- Objective 26: Make Downtown Walkable: Downtown will be a safe, convenient and comfortable place to walk, a place where walking is the mode of choice for short trips.

The subject property is located in the southwest corner of Oak Knoll Avenue and Green Street. Oak Knoll Avenue is labeled as a secondary pedestrian connection to Colorado Boulevard while Green Street is envisioned as a multi-modal corridor that prioritizes streetscape improvement. The applicant is encouraged to work with Design and Historic Resources staff to ensure the proposed project consists of design and programmatic elements that are pedestrian oriented.

- Objective 27: Strengthen Sub-District Identity. The unique identity and distinct qualities of Downtown's Sub-districts will be reinforced so that these areas complement one another.

The proposed project is located within the Pasadena Playhouse sub-district which envisions an art-oriented urban environment. The applicant is encouraged to work with Design and Historic Resources Staff to further refine the design and reinforce the sub-district's arts identity as well as Cultural Affairs Staff to identify ways of implementing public art.

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. At this time, it is not known what level of review will be required; it will be determined after the Conditional Use Permit and Affordable Housing Concession Permit applications are submitted.

NEXT STEPS:

Public hearings before the Hearing Officer and Design Commission are necessary in order to carry out 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:

- Environmental Review;
- Hearing Officer Public Hearing to consider adoption of the environmental review and approval of the Conditional Use Permit and Affordable Housing Concession Permit; and
- Design Commission reviews (Concept and Final).

FISCAL IMPACT:

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

Respectfully submitted,



DAVID M. REYES
Director of Planning & Community
Development

Prepared by:



Carlos M. Chacon
Assistant Planner

Concurred by:



Kelvin Parker
Principal Planner/Zoning Administrator

Approved by:



STEVE MERMELL
City Manager

fw

Attachment (1)

Attachment A – Predevelopment Plan Review Plans