



Agenda Report

September 24, 2018

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: **PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW OF A MIXED-USE
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED AT 150 E. COLORADO BOULEVARD**

RECOMMENDATION:

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

BACKGROUND:

The applicant, James Li of DC Colorado Holdings, LLC, has submitted a Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) application proposing a 196,132 square-foot, two-to-eight-story, mixed-use development consisting of between 88 and 100 dwelling units and 50,850 commercial square feet on a property located at 150 East Colorado Boulevard. The 65,596 square-foot project site (approximately 1.51 acres) is located on the south side of Colorado Boulevard between Marengo Avenue on the east, and Arroyo Parkway on the west. The property spans a city block and is located in the CD-2 (Central District Specific Plan, Civic Center/Midtown subdistrict) zoning district. The site is currently improved with a four-story commercial building that would be demolished and replaced by the proposed project.

Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 17.60.040.C.2.a.(2) (Application Preparation and Filing – Predevelopment Plan Review – Applicability – Mandatory review) a PPR is required for projects consisting of ten or more dwelling units. The purpose of the PPR is to achieve better projects through early consultation between City staff and applicants. The intent is to coordinate the review of projects among City staff and City departments, familiarize applicants with the regulations and procedures that apply to the projects, and avoid significant investment in the design of a project without preliminary input from City staff. In addition, the purpose is to identify issues that may arise during review of the project, provide opportunities for discussion about the project and an exchange of information on potential issues between the City staff and the applicants, and inform the City Council and the public of proposed development projects defined in the administrative guidelines to be of communitywide significance.

A project is categorized as a project of communitywide significance if it consists of: 1) more than 50,000 square feet of gross floor area with one discretionary action; or 2) 50

or more housing units; or 3) any project determined by the Planning Director to be of major importance to the City. Projects of communitywide significance are presented to the City Council for informational purposes. The proposed project consists of more than 50 housing units and qualifies as a project of communitywide significance.

This report provides a project description, identifies the anticipated entitlement and environmental review processes, and summarizes key areas of concern regarding Zoning Code and General Plan compliance.

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The applicant proposes to demolish an existing four-story commercial building and construct a mixed-use project consisting of the following:

- 88 to 100 dwelling units for sale (No inclusionary units; in-lieu fee)
- 2 to 8 stories (approximately 117 feet tall at highest point)
- 196,132 gross square feet
 - 145,282 gross residential square feet
 - 50,850 gross commercial square feet (retail)
- 400 parking spaces (four levels of subterranean parking)

The Zoning Code defines a mixed-use project as the combination of commercial and residential uses in the same structure, where the residential component is located either above (vertical mixed-use) or behind (horizontal mixed-use) the nonresidential component. The applicant's proposal locates the residential component above the commercial component, consistent with the mixed-use definition. An aerial map of the existing site and the proposed site plan are provided.

Figure 1: Aerial View

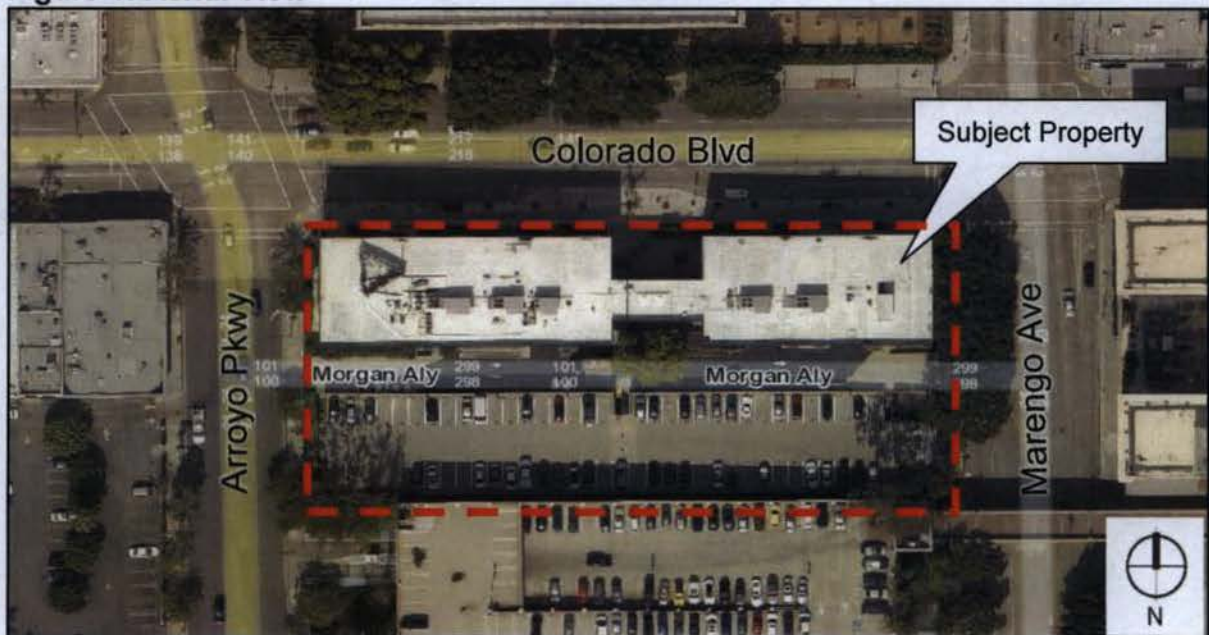


Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan



Figure 3: Proposed Setbacks

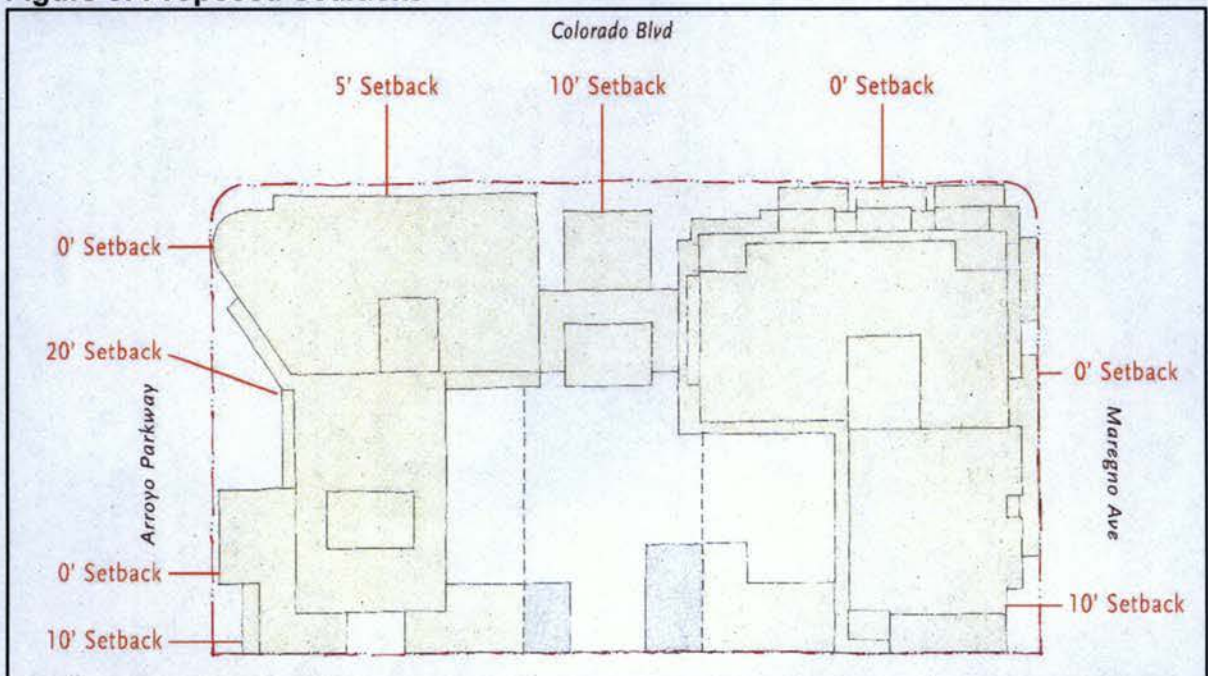


Figure 4: Proposed Building Heights (in stories)

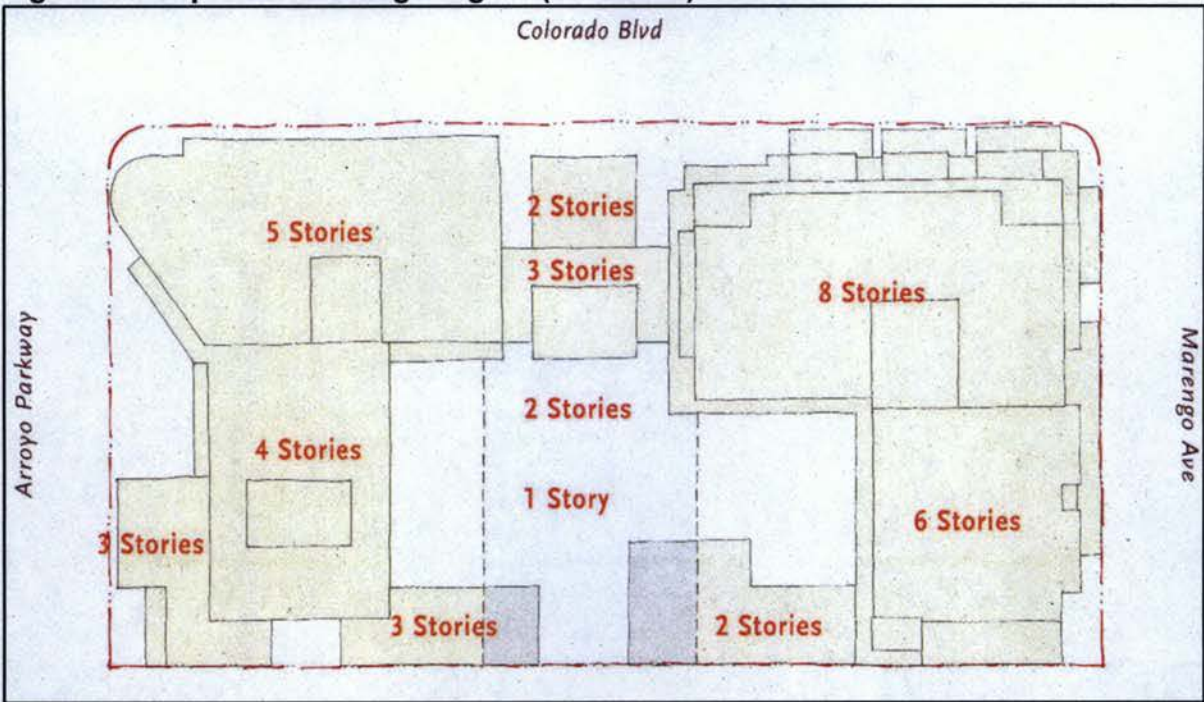


Figure 5: Aerial Perspective

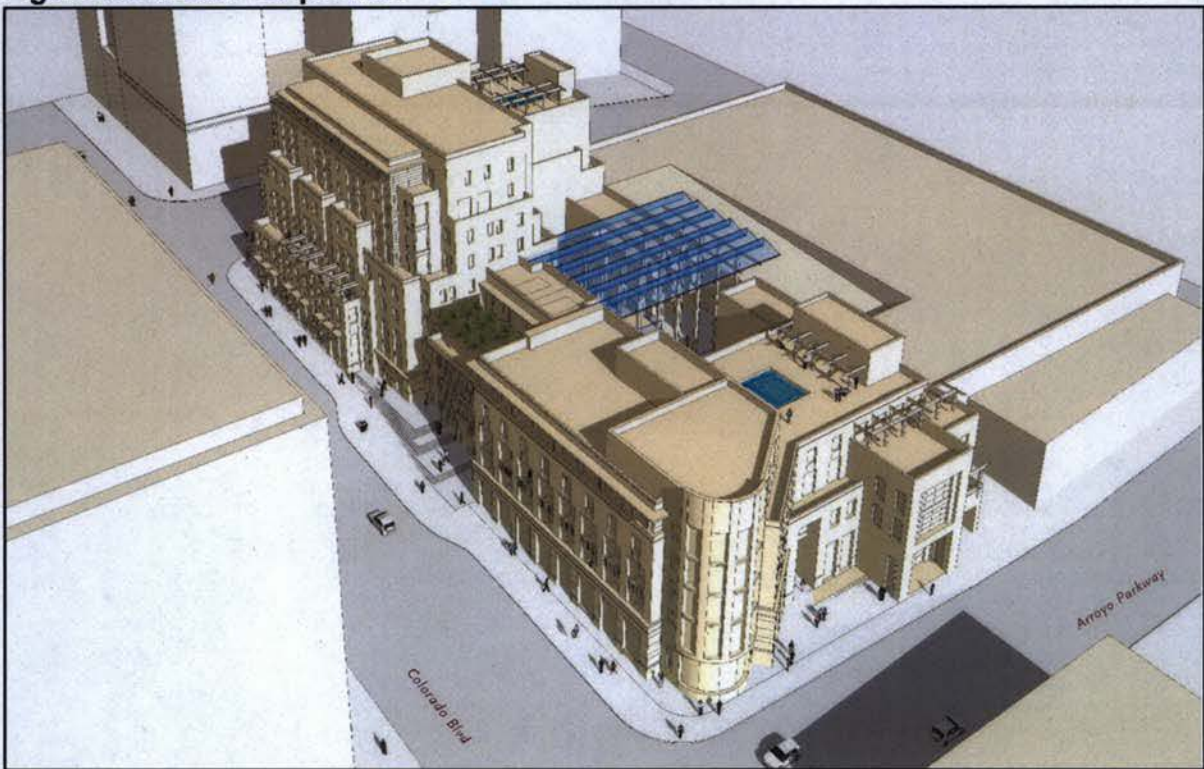


Table 1: Project Characteristics

| | |
|---|--|
| Zoning Designation | |
| CD-2 (Central District Specific Plan, Civic Center/Midtown) | |
| General Plan Land Use Designation | |
| High Mixed Use (0.0-3.0 FAR, 0-87 du/acre) | |
| Lot Size | |
| 65,596 sf | |
| Density | |
| <i>Maximum Permitted</i> | <i>Proposed</i> |
| 87 units per acre or 131 units | 88-100 units or ≈ 58-66 units per acre |
| Floor Area Ratio (FAR) | |
| <i>Maximum Permitted</i> | <i>Proposed</i> |
| 3.0 | 2.9 |
| Building Size (Gross Square Feet) | |
| <i>Maximum Permitted</i> | <i>Proposed</i> |
| 196,788 sf | 196,132 sf |
| Parking Requirements | |
| <i>Required</i> | <i>Proposed</i> |
| Residential: 1.5-1.75 spaces per unit > 650 sf 88 units: 132-154 spaces (min-max) 100 units: 150-175 spaces (min-max) | 400 spaces Not enough information to determine actual requirement and/or compliance |
| Residential Guest: 1 space per 10 units 88 units: 9 spaces 100 units: 10 spaces | |
| Office: 1.95-2.25 spaces per 1,000 sf Retail: 2.4-2.7 spaces per 1,000 sf Restaurants: 8-9 spaces per 1,000 sf Mix of uses and size not provided | |
| Building Height | |
| <i>Maximum Permitted</i> | <i>Proposed</i> |
| 75' (90' with height averaging) | ≈ 117' (without height averaging) |
| Setback Requirements | |
| <i>Required</i> | <i>Proposed*</i> |
| Arroyo Parkway: Build to property line | 0' to 20' |
| Colorado Boulevard: Build to property line | 0' to 10'+ |
| Marengo Avenue: Build to property line | 0' to 10' |
| Interior Side: None required | None |
| Community Space Requirement | |
| <i>Required</i> | <i>Proposed</i> |
| 150 square feet per unit or 13,200-15,000 sf | Not enough information |

*Setback exceptions may be allowed to facilitate superior, pedestrian-oriented project design.

PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW ANALYSIS:

All applicable City departments reviewed the project as part of the PPR and provided comments that are included in Attachment A. The City's Design Commission also conducted a preliminary review via the Preliminary Consultation process and provided comments, which are included below. Notable Planning related standards/comments are discussed below.

Context and Compatibility

A minimum of 50 percent of the ground floor street frontage along Colorado Boulevard is required to consist of pedestrian-oriented uses. The remaining 50 percent may contain uses otherwise permitted and/or accommodate pedestrian and vehicular access. Retail and restaurants are examples of pedestrian-oriented uses. Office does not qualify as pedestrian-oriented. In addition, housing is not permitted at the ground floor in order to maintain retail continuity with adjacent shopping areas. The plan specifies the entire ground floor is devoted to retail uses, which complies. All housing is proposed at the floors above, which complies. Buildings along Colorado Boulevard, Marengo Avenue, and Arroyo Parkway are required to be brought forward and built to the property line. The purpose is to create a place of intense interaction. Portions of the building are set back and not built to the street property lines. This is inconsistent with setback requirements. However, to achieve objectives of the Central District Specific Plan and to facilitate superior, pedestrian-oriented project design, setback exceptions may be allowed through the Zoning Code. Modifications may be granted where the applicant can demonstrate that the additional distance provides a well-designed pedestrian paseo and/or to protect the character of an architecturally significant building or landscape. A setback may also be acceptable where the applicant can demonstrate that it effectively fosters pedestrian-oriented development or promotes pedestrian activity, consistent with the Specific Plan.

Community Planning staff noted that when considering the proposed massing against the surrounding context, it is an appropriate massing scheme that successfully transitions from the low-rise retail to the west to the high-rise commercial to the north and east, and reflects the variation of heights in the vicinity. The orientation of the building towards Colorado Boulevard and Arroyo Parkway and incorporation of a pedestrian paseo linking Old Pasadena to the Paseo Colorado/Civic Center serves to reconnect these two community places. It also reinforces the tradition of publicly accessible pedestrian paseos that have historically been prevalent throughout the Central District. Notwithstanding these benefits, careful consideration should be given to the design and accessibility of the proposed paseo, while maintaining equally pedestrian-oriented and high-quality treatment of the building façade facing Colorado Boulevard. There is a possibility that introducing an alternative entrance and pedestrian walkway through the building could detract from the actual street frontage along Colorado Boulevard, and potentially privatize the public realm rather than complement it. It is recommended that clear and distinctive building entrances and retail frontages be

incorporated into the Colorado Boulevard façade, and appropriate landscaping be incorporated throughout the site.

There also does not appear to be a direct connection from the publicly accessible commercial components of the building to the existing pedestrian bridge across Marengo Avenue. The current design appears to require pedestrians to cross the driveway to the subterranean parking, and take the stairs/elevator up to the bridge to connect to Paseo Colorado. This does not result in an ideal pedestrian experience, and could discourage pedestrian activity through the site and into the adjoining paseos. To help encourage pedestrian connections between the Old Pasadena and Civic Center sub-districts, and enhance the proposed paseo, consideration should be given toward how to best provide a clearly defined, visible, and pleasant pedestrian connection from Arroyo Parkway through the site, across Marengo Avenue, and into the Paseo Colorado.

Density

The maximum allowable density is 87 dwelling units per acre. Based on a lot size of 65,596 square feet, the property is limited to a maximum residential density of 131 units. The applicant proposes between 88 and 100 units. No density bonus is proposed.

Massing and Scale

The maximum building height is 75 feet but may be increased up to 90 feet using height averaging. Height averaging requires Design Commission approval and findings to be made. While the project design varies height across the site (2 to 8 stories along street frontages), the project proposes a maximum building height of approximately 117 feet, exceeding the maximum allowed. The applicant is not proposing height averaging. The steep topography of the site and the City's method for measuring building height contribute to the resulting 117-foot figure for height. The maximum height of a structure is measured from the lowest elevation of the existing grade at an exterior wall of the structure to the highest point of the structure. The applicant's proposal to locate taller portions of the project at higher elevations as opposed to lower elevations also contributes to the resulting figure for height. However, as noted by Community Planning staff, the proposal reflects the existing variation of heights in the vicinity. Adjacent buildings to the north across Colorado Boulevard and east across Marengo Avenue are comparable in scale with seven or more stories. Adjacent properties across Arroyo Parkway generally consist of fewer stories (six or less). A five level parking garage is located to the south.

The floor area spread across the multi-story development results in a proposed floor area ratio (FAR) of 2.9. The maximum FAR allowed is 3.0.

Development Capacities

The 2015 General Plan established caps for residential and nonresidential development in each of the specific plan areas. The original allocated development capacities for the Central District Specific Plan included 4,272 residential units and 2,112,000 square feet of nonresidential development. As of August 7, 2018, the balance in allocated development capacities are 3,927 residential units and 1,887,977 square feet of nonresidential development. The project proposes 88-100 residential units and 50,850 square feet of nonresidential floor area, which is within the remaining development intensities.

Discretionary Entitlements

Projects consisting of residential and nonresidential uses (retail) are permitted by right at the subject site. However, the proposal is subject to a discretionary review.

Conditional Use Permit

Projects where the nonresidential portion exceeds 25,000 gross square feet (> 25,000), qualify as "Major Construction" pursuant to Municipal Code Section 17.61.050.J.2 (Conditional Use Permits and Master Plans – Specialized Conditional Use Permits and Minor Conditional Use Permits – Major Construction) and require approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The proposal includes 50,850 square feet of nonresidential floor area. In addition to findings required to approve a CUP, three additional findings would be required to be made because the project site is located in the Central District Transit-Oriented Area (TOD). The additional findings require that the project: 1) encourages transit use; 2) is designed to enhance pedestrian access and non-motor vehicle modes of transportation to public transit; and 3) encourages pedestrian activity and/or other non-motor vehicle modes of transportation and reduces dependency on motor vehicles. The CUP application is reviewed by a Hearing Officer when the nonresidential floor area is less than 75,000 square feet.

Variance

The proposal exceeds the maximum allowed building height. The maximum allowed building height is 75 feet, where the applicant's proposal is approximately 117 feet tall. The 75-foot limit may be exceeded (up to a maximum of 90 feet) through a process called height averaging. The applicant's proposal does not include height averaging. The applicant is required to modify the project design to comply with the allowed building height, modify the project and receive approval from the Design Commission for height averaging, or pursue a Variance application. This application is reviewed by a Hearing Officer.

Tentative Tract Map

The proposal specifies all dwelling units will be for sale (ownership). The creation of ownership units requires approval of a Tentative Tract Map (TTM) application. This application is reviewed by a Hearing Officer.

Private Tree Removal

The proposal identifies the removal of protected trees on private property. The removal of protected trees requires approval of private tree removal applications. This application is reviewed concurrent with any discretionary entitlement.

Design Review

New construction in the Central District that exceeds 5,000 gross square feet or consists of 10 or more dwelling units requires Design Review before the Design Commission. The project is subject to Design Review (3 steps of review: Preliminary Consultation, Concept Design, Final Design) and completed the Preliminary Consultation process June 26, 2018. The applicant received preliminary advisory comments on the design. The project would be reviewed by the Design Commission through the Concept and Final Design Review process.

Environmental Review

This project would be subject to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A traffic study will be required by the Department of Transportation, as well as additional environmental studies to determine what type of CEQA analysis is required for the project.

PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION:

Through the Preliminary Consultation process the Design Commission provided the comments below on the preliminary design:

1. Further define the intended use of the various courtyards and open spaces provided in the project design. In particular, delineate clearly those spaces intended to be private spaces used by project residents versus publicly accessible areas, with a focus on ensuring that ground-level courtyards and paseos are publicly accessible.
2. Provide a pedestrian circulation diagram outlining how commercial patrons and residents will circulate from the parking structure to their on-site destinations, emphasizing incorporation of ground-level courtyards and paseos into the pedestrian circulation pattern.

3. Further explore and refine the mid-block crossing suggested across Arroyo Parkway to possibly reinforce the historical alleyway network while ensuring pedestrian safety.
4. Further study the relationship of the massing of the easterly portion of the project to the adjacent historic structures of similar scale to the east (Security Pacific Building and Citizens Savings Building). Consider simplifying the massing to better relate to the monumental massing of these historic buildings, as well as responding to the large, deep recess in the upper floors on the west side of the Security Pacific Building.
5. Further refine and resolve the rounded corner at the western end of the Colorado Boulevard elevation. This feature should be iconic and its treatment carefully studied to make a statement of entry to Old Pasadena. In addition, it should be integral to the building and not an articulated tower.
6. Ensure that the south elevation is treated as a primary elevation, including a consistent pattern of openings, given its high level of public visibility.
7. Explore ways to increase the public visibility of the ground-level interior courtyards. Provide studies of the courtyard spaces that illustrate their intended scale and character, with comparison to other similar spaces in the City or surrounding region (i.e., One Colorado or Two Rodeo). Study the possibility of creating a public view corridor through the site between Marengo Ave. & Arroyo Pkwy. and opening them more to the street.
8. Study carefully the design of the stairs within the public courtyards to ensure that they are inviting and that the landscape design is engaged with these features.
9. Be cautious about treatment of signage, particularly at the proposed lantern building.
10. The storefront designs have a monumental scale that may be more appropriately used only at entrances, doorways and passages.
11. The glass canopy feature in the interior courtyard space is a bold statement; explore the possibility of making it more visible from the public realm.

As discussed above, the project would return to the Design Commission at a later date for review through the Concept and Final Design Review process.

NEXT STEPS:

Public hearings before the Hearing Officer and Design Commission are necessary in order to carry out the proposed project. Environmental review of this project will occur

consistent with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
The following identifies the steps in the review process:

- Submittal of discretionary entitlement applications (CUP, Variance, TTM, etc.);
- Environmental Review;
- Public hearing review (Hearing Officer) of any requested zoning entitlements, and to consider adoption of the environmental review; and
- Design Commission review (Concept and Final).

FISCAL IMPACT:

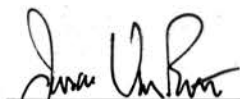
This report is for information only and will not result in any fiscal impact.

Respectfully submitted,



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Development

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Approved by:



STEVE MERMELL
City Manager

Attachments: (2)

Attachment A – Predevelopment Plan Review Comments to Applicant
Attachment B – Predevelopment Plan Review Plans