



# Agenda Report

August 2, 2021

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department  
**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR TIME EXTENSION: CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT #6279 FOR REHABILITATION OF HISTORIC YWCA BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION OF A TWO-TO-SIX-STORY, 91,000-SQUARE-FOOT BUILDING FOR USE AS A HOTEL  
78 NORTH MARENGO AVENUE, 155 EAST UNION STREET & 95 NORTH GARFIELD AVENUE**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Find that the project proposed herein was subject to environmental review in the Environmental Impact Report certified by the City Council on August 16, 2016, and that there are no changed circumstances or new information which would require further environmental review.
2. Find that the findings and conditions of the original approval still apply;
3. Find that the proposed project meets the current height, setbacks, and floor area ratio requirements of the Zoning Code and is consistent with the General Plan, the Central District Specific Plan, and the Zoning Map; and, therefore,
4. Based on these findings, approve the request for Time Extension for one additional year, to August 16, 2022.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On August 16, 2016, the City Council approved a series of Zoning entitlements for a new two-to-six-story, 185-room hotel building, including rehabilitation of the historic YWCA building, at 78 N. Marengo Avenue, 155 E. Union Street and 95 N. Garfield Avenue. The approved entitlements were as follows:

1. Surplus Property declaration and exemption from competitive sale requirement: To determine that real property of the City is not needed for the purpose for which it was acquired or for any other public purpose and to allow the City to enter into a long-term lease with the developer most suited to successfully rehabilitate the YWCA building rather than to the highest bidder;
2. Conditional Use Permit (CUP): for a new non-residential project exceeding 25,000 square feet of gross floor area;
3. CUP: to allow use of property in the CD-2 Zoning District for a “Lodging – hotels” use;
4. CUP: for the sale of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption;
5. Minor CUP: for a new commercial project exceeding 15,000 square feet of gross floor area in a transit oriented district (TOD);
6. Minor CUP: for shared parking;
7. Minor CUP: for reduced parking;
8. Variance: for reduced first floor height;
9. Variance: for loading spaces (number and design); and
10. Public Tree Removals: to remove 23 public trees in fair to good condition to accommodate the proposed development.

Pursuant to Zoning Code §17.64.040.A.2, approvals required by the Zoning Code on properties in zoning districts outside RS districts are valid for an initial period of three years except where a Time Extension is granted pursuant to subsection C of the same section. Subsection C specifies that the original decision maker is the review authority for time extensions and, in this case, the City Council was the original review decision maker for the entitlements. Further, this subsection states that two one-year time extensions may be granted and that a public hearing is required except for decisions granted by the Director. On June 3, 2019, the City Council conducted a public hearing and approved a one-year time extension (to August 16, 2020) for the project. In addition, pursuant to Resolution No. 9774 of the City Council, on April 20, 2020, the City Manager took action to automatically suspend for one year time limits imposed by the Pasadena Municipal Code for land use entitlements approved prior to July 1, 2020, which extended the August 16, 2020 expiration date to August 16, 2021.

It should be noted that the surplus property declaration and waiver from the competitive sale requirement are not approvals required by the Zoning Code and do not expire. In

addition, pursuant to PMC §8.52.076 and the City's public tree removal criteria, public tree removal requests are evaluated based on the merits of each project and would require a new application for a new project. As such, only entitlement numbers 2-9 in the list above are requested to be extended.

Pursuant to Zoning Code §17.64.040.B, a permit for a new development project is deemed exercised when:

1. A building permit for the subject property has been issued, and construction diligently pursued to completion; or
2. A Certificate of Occupancy has been issued by the City.

### **ANALYSIS:**

As a result of City Council action taken on May 22, 2017, lease negotiations with the original developer and project applicant, Kimpton Hotel & Restaurant Group, were terminated and, as such, the project has not completed the design review process and has not been submitted for building plan check. Following that action, the City Council convened a Civic Center Task Force to provide recommendations for potential development in the Civic Center, which met eight times between October 26, 2017 and May 3, 2018. The recommendations of the Task Force were presented to the City Council on June 18, 2018, which directed staff to conduct an urban design study and an economic study to provide additional background to the Council on a future Request for Proposals for development of the site. On April 8, 2019, the City Council reviewed an urban design study from OLIN Partnership and an economic study from Kosmont Companies and directed staff to prepare a new Request for Proposals with more specific development envelope parameters for the site and no specific use for the building. The Request for Proposals was released on June 20, 2019 and on November 4, 2019, the City Council reviewed the 10 development proposals that were received and recommended narrowing down the proposals to five. On September 22, 2020, developers HRI Properties, LLC and Edgewood Realty Partners, LLC conducted a virtual presentation of their proposed developments for the site and on November 23, 2020, the City Council directed staff to enter into exclusive negotiations with HRI Properties, LLC for a new development on the site, which would include substantial renovation of the YWCA building and construction of a separate, adjacent building for use as a 179-room hotel (14 rooms in the YWCA building and 165 in the proposed new building). In light of these actions, it is likely that the proposed project would utilize some or all of the previously approved entitlements, with modifications that may be necessary to reflect the specifics of the new proposal. As such, it is in the City's best interest to extend the entitlements' time limit to accommodate the entitlement process for the project, which may include such applications as Changes to an Approved Project to modify these entitlements in accordance with the new proposal, as well as design review.

Pursuant to Zoning Code §17.64.040.D, the findings required to approve a Time Extension are:

1. The findings and conditions of the original approval still apply; and
2. The proposed project meets the current height, setbacks, and floor area ratio requirements of the Zoning Code and is consistent with the General Plan, any applicable Specific Plan, and the Zoning Map.

Since the project was approved in 2016, there have been no changes in the development of the surrounding area that would affect the findings and conditions of the original approval. In addition, there have been no changes to the height, setbacks or floor area ratio requirements of the Zoning Code, to the General Plan, Central District Specific Plan, or the Zoning Map as they relate to the property.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

On August 16, 2016, the project that is the subject of the requested time extension was subject to environmental review and the Council certified an Environmental Impact Report and made the findings required by the California Environmental Quality Act therefor. There are no changed circumstances at the project site or within the surrounding area, and there is no new information which would require further environmental review at this time. Further environmental review may be necessary should a newly proposed project deviate materially from what was analyzed in the EIR. That analysis will occur if and when a new project is proposed.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

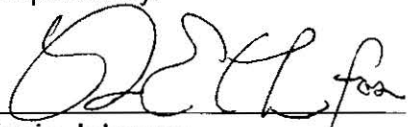
There is no fiscal impact to the City as a result of this action.

Respectfully submitted,



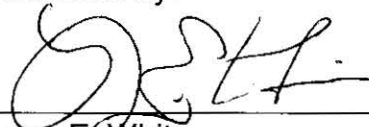
DAVID M. REYES  
Director of Planning & Community Development

Prepared by:



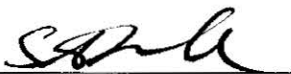
Kevin Johnson  
Senior Planner

Reviewed by:



Leon E. White  
Principal Planner

Approved by:



STEVE MERMELL  
City Manager

Attachment: (1)

Attachment A - CUP #6279 Approval Letter with Attachments