

CORRESPONDENCE

December 2, 2021

Mayor Victor Gordo and City Council Members
City of Pasadena
100 N. Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91101

Dear Mayor Gordo and City Council Members:

Huntington Hospital requests that you Call Up for review by the City Council the **denial** by the Planning Commission of our Conditional Use Permit applications for a proposed Medical Office Building ("MOB") to be located at 758 & 766 S. Fair Oaks Boulevard, the current location of the Huntington Hospital Collection Site.

Developing an MOB across Fair Oaks from the Hospital will significantly enhance our mission by allowing Huntington doctors to treat their patients in an ambulatory, outpatient setting in close proximity to the Hospital. This is clearly the direction of healthcare nationwide, and the Hospital is striving to perpetuate and enhance its reputation for high quality.

We submitted the following applications for the development of a new 4-story, 100,285 square foot medical office building, with 3 levels of subterranean parking with 251 parking spaces (the "Project"):

1. Conditional Use Permit to allow a major project of greater than 75,000 square feet in gross floor area within the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan; and,
2. Minor Conditional Use Permit to allow 45 parking spaces to be shared in the parking structure located at 802 Fairmount Ave.

We have been working closely with City Staff on this Project for nearly two years. Our formal application was deemed complete in July 2020. The City's Predevelopment Plan Review Comments were presented to us in September 2020. We had our first Preliminary Consultation with the Design Commission in November 2020. The PPR on this Project was presented to the City Council in February 2021. We then had our second Preliminary Consultation with the Design Commission in April 2021. Finally, in November, at a Special Meeting of the Planning Commission, we had our hearing on the requested CUPs. [The Project has not yet been before the Design Commission for Concept approval.]

The Staff Report on our applications concluded that the Project "as designed and conditioned, would comply with all of the applicable development standards." As a result, Staff recommended that the Planning Commission approve the Project with the findings and conditions proposed.

The Planning Commission denied our applications on the grounds that "the proposed site plan and location of entrances will not be compatible with the site."

As you are probably aware, there are many medical use buildings in this area. Significantly, the Shriners Hospital building is across the street and further south, a block north is the recently completed Huntington Medical Research Institute headquarters, and at the corner of Fair Oaks and California, the Planning Commission just recently approved with CUPs and Code changes a similar but taller MOB.

Our Project will consist of medical and professional office uses which are expressly permitted and strongly encouraged within the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan District. As Staff has repeatedly pointed out, the Project is designed to conform with all applicable Zoning Code requirements. We are not requesting any variances.

This use encourages the redevelopment of an underutilized industrial site, helping to establish job-creating medical uses. The design features of the Building will foster the pedestrian corridor on Fillmore leading to the light rail facility by providing a 10 foot setback from the property line along Fillmore, and the planting of 21 large boxed trees along Fair Oaks and Fillmore.

The high end design, aesthetics, character and scale of the Building will enhance the neighborhood consistent with Paragraph 3.3.1 of the Design Guidelines of the current South Fair Oaks Specific Plan, stating: "Bold, creative and imaginative design treatments are appropriate and desirable."

Most of the opposition to this Project has focused attention on the orientation of the Building toward, and Project access from, Fillmore Street. As originally conceived, the Project had its access from Fair Oaks. At the first Preliminary Consultation with the Design Commission in November 2020, the Commission instructed us to eliminate the Fair Oaks access and focus access on either the Edmondson Alley or Fillmore Street. We examined carefully the alleyway option and concluded that it does not work. The narrow 20 foot, quarter mile unbroken alley fails to reflect connectivity with the Hospital, lacks patient focus, presents security issues, is lower than the Project site, is the main industrial access for surrounding properties, is often impassable because of large delivery trucks, contains major utility lines, and is better used to provide back of the house service for trash, linens, and contaminated items. Thus, in conformance with the Design Commission direction, the access is now from Fillmore.

We at the Huntington Hospital are extremely excited about this Project. We believe that it will encourage an increase in similar developments in the South Fair Oaks District. Most importantly, we feel this Project will significantly help us to enhance the health and well-being of residents in our area.

Sincerely,

Lori J. Morgan, MD, MBA

Lori J. Morgan, MD, MBA (Dec 2, 2021 09:01 PST)

Lori J. Morgan, MD, MBA
President and Chief Executive Officer