

Agenda Report

July 12, 2021

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW OF A NEW DRIVE-THROUGH RESTAURANT PROPOSED AT 3333 EAST FOOTHILL BOULEVARD

RECOMMENDATION:

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

BACKGROUND:

The applicant, The ARBA Group, Inc., has submitted a Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) application to develop a property at 3333 East Foothill Boulevard. The site is currently occupied by an El Torito Restaurant and zoned EPSP-d2-CG-C (East Pasadena Specific Plan, subarea d2, Commercial General). The proposed project consists of a new 2,380 square foot drive-through restaurant to be constructed on an existing surface parking lot. The existing El Torito restaurant would be retained on-site. The proposed project is additionally located within a Transit-Oriented District (TOD) area. Drive-through restaurants are prohibited uses within such districts. The project also seeks to utilize the Transit-Oriented District (TOD) development standards which allow a 10% reduction in parking spaces, resulting in 98 parking spaces being provided. This reduction represents the maximum parking that would be required.

The purpose of a 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 regulations and procedures that apply to the project, 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 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. Given the proposed project's prominent corner location within a Transit-Oriented District (TOD) area, and the fact that drive-through restaurants are presently prohibited within TOD areas, the proposed project was determined by the Director to be of major importance to the City and therefore 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 construct a new 2,380 square foot drive-through restaurant on an existing surface parking lot. The existing El Torito restaurant would be retained on-site. An aerial map of the existing site and the existing and proposed site plans follow:

Figure 1: Aerial View of Existing Site Conditions

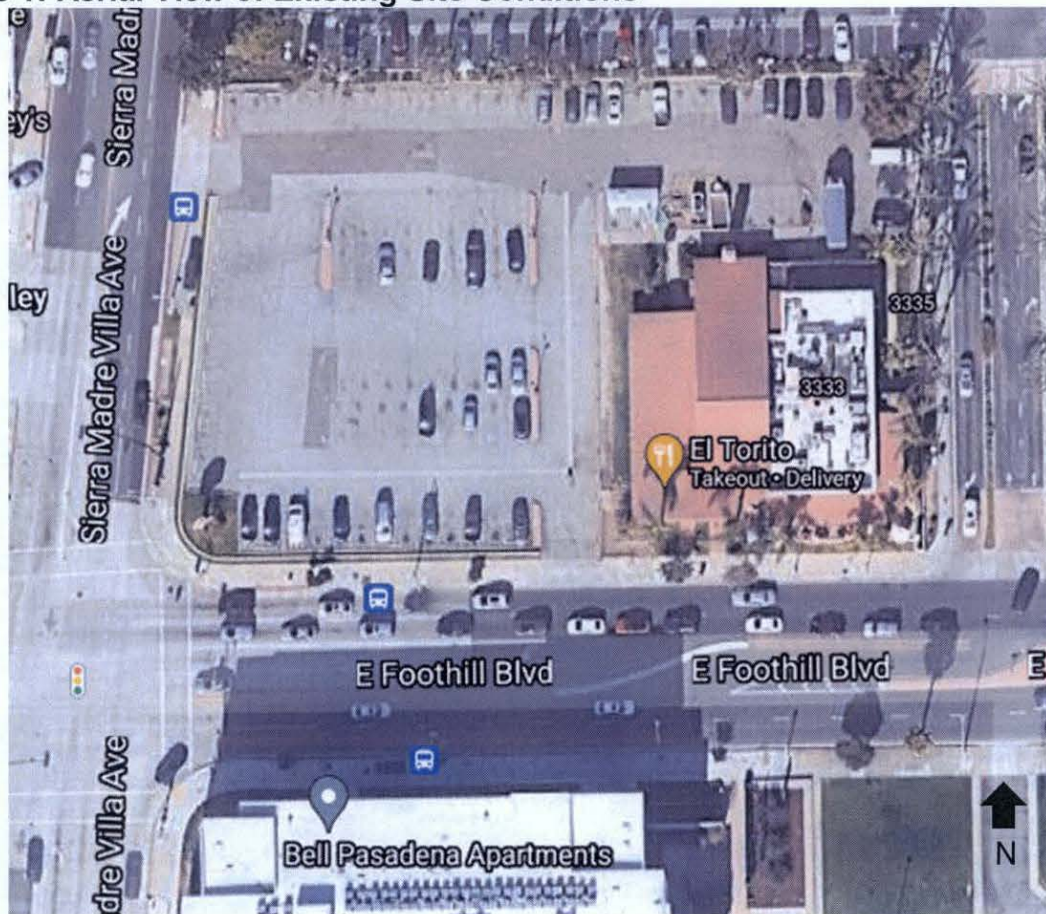


Figure 2: Existing Site Plan

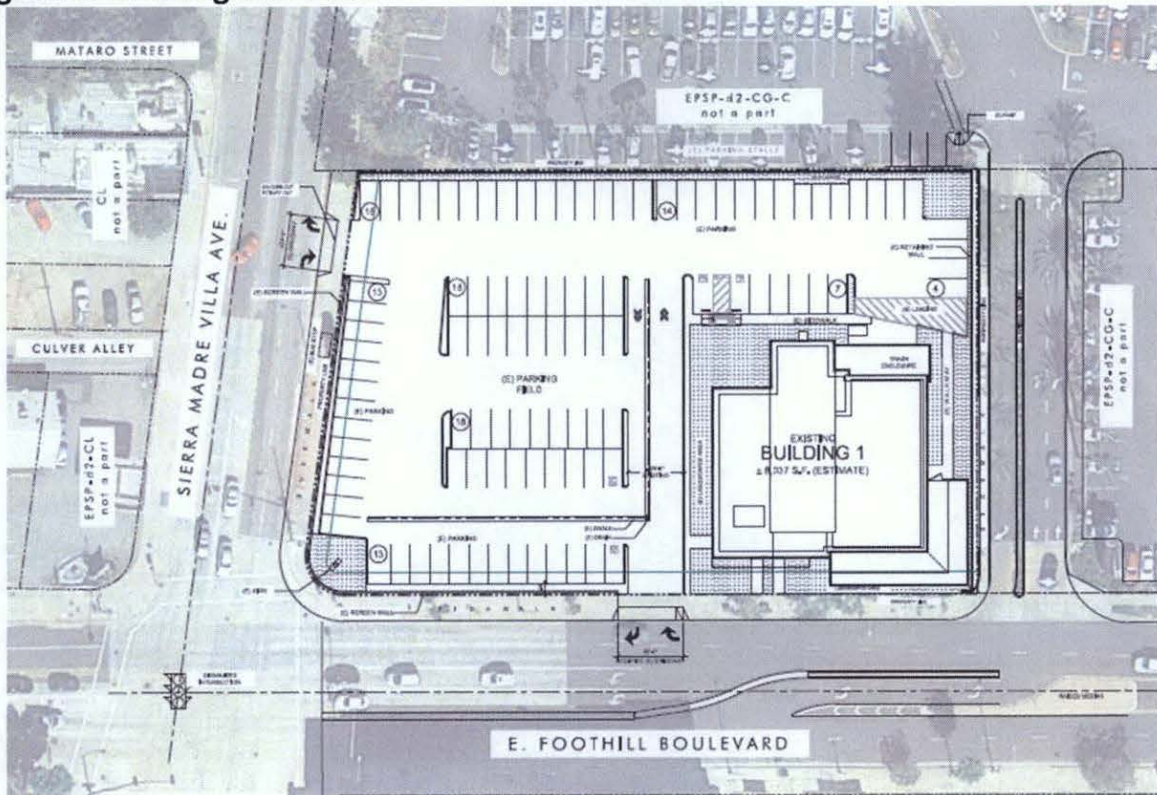
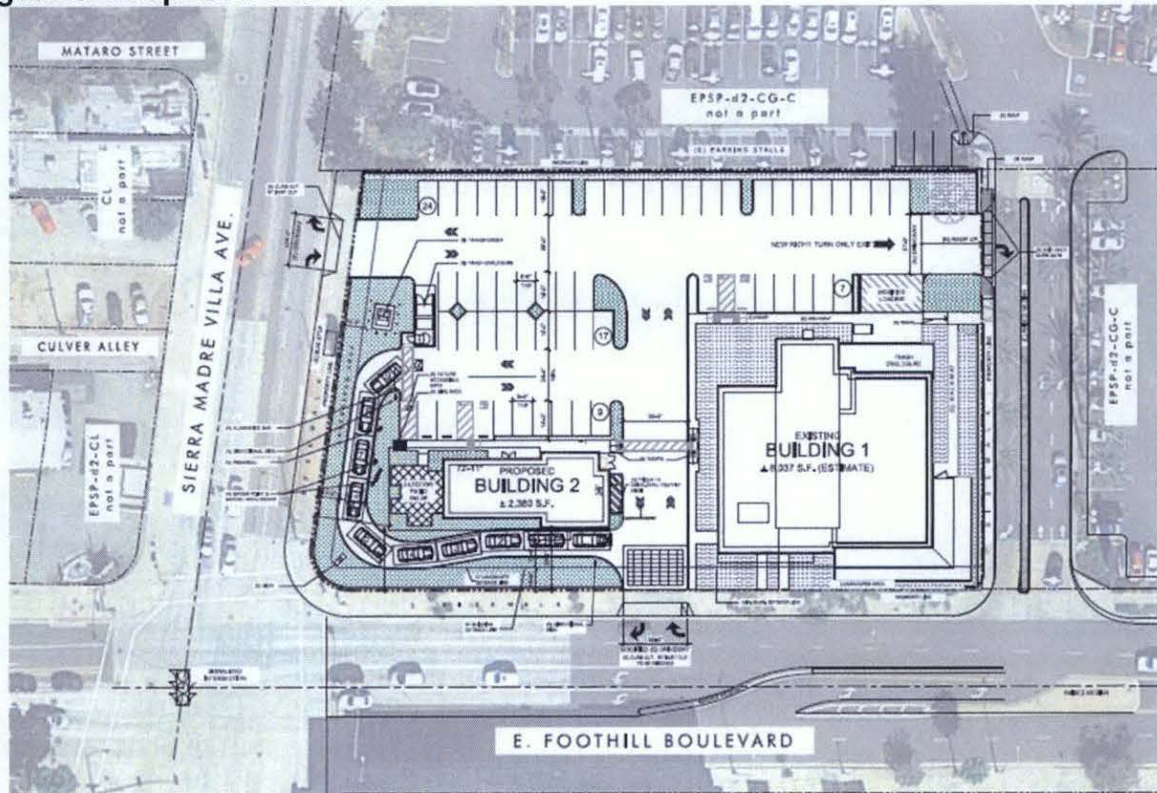


Figure 3: Proposed Site Plan



PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW ANALYSIS:

All applicable City departments reviewed the project as part of the PPR process and provided comments that are included in Attachment A. Notable Planning-related standards and comments are discussed below.

Context and Compatibility

The project site is a 46,887 square foot parcel, located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Foothill Boulevard and Sierra Madre Villa Avenue. Adjacent properties to the north and east consist of surface parking lots and retail establishments developed as part of the Hastings Village shopping center. Directly to the south is the Bell Pasadena apartment complex and The Stuart at Sierra Madre Villa Apartments. To the southwest is a Kaiser Permanente office building. To the west are one- and two-story commercial structures including a gas station, retail, restaurants and services, with single-family residential to the northwest.

Massing and Scale

The proposed project did not include elevations or other diagrams to indicate massing and overall scale, however the project consists of a 2,380 square foot drive-through restaurant which would be expected to be one story and within the height requirements of the East Pasadena Specific Plan. The proposed building would be set back approximately 28'6" from the property line fronting Foothill Boulevard and approximately 60' from the property line fronting Sierra Madre Villa Avenue in order to accommodate landscaping and the drive aisle for the restaurant. A 550 square foot outdoor patio would be located adjacent to the drive aisle and restaurant, but largely inaccessible to pedestrians walking along Foothill Boulevard and Sierra Madre Villa Avenue. Design review is not required for a project of this size in East Pasadena, however the applicant has been encouraged to reconsider the location of the drive aisle in order to locate the building and patio closer to the street intersection, creating a more pedestrian-friendly configuration that aligns with the goals of the Sierra Madre Villa Transit Village.

Zoning Code Compliance

Pursuant to Section 17.50.340.B.1.a – Prohibited Land Uses, Drive-Through Businesses are specifically prohibited within the Transit Oriented Area. As such, the proposed new commercial building with drive-through is not a permitted use on this site. Staff is seeking comment from the City Council on the possibility of a Zoning Code Text Amendment to allow drive-thru uses within a TOD.

ENTITLEMENT PROCESS:

The proposed project would be constructed on a site that is presently zoned EPSP-d2-CG-C and is within a Transit-Oriented District area (1/4 mile of a transit stop – in this case, the Sierra Madre Villa L (Gold) line station. Since the proposed use is currently prohibited within TOD areas, a Zoning Code Text Amendment would be required to

allow such uses. A Zoning Code Text Amendment may only be initiated by City Council action, Commission action, Council action as part of an urgency ordinance, or by the City Manager. Should such an amendment be initiated and passed by the City Council, the project would then be required to submit for the necessary approvals established by the Zoning Code Text Amendment.

NEXT STEPS:

The applicant has received comments from City departments as part of the PPR process. Absent direction to initiate a Zoning Code Text Amendment to allow drive-through businesses in TOD areas, there are no further steps as the project would not be permitted to move forward. If a Zoning Code Text Amendment is initiated, staff would begin the process of amending the Zoning Code to allow drive-thru establishments within a TOD area. Staff would study the proposed change and present a Zoning Code Text Amendment to the Planning Commission for a recommendation and to the City Council for final action (at noticed public hearings).

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:



Martin Potter
Planner

Reviewed by:



David Sanchez
Principal Planner

Approved by:


for STEVE MERMELL
City Manager

Attachments: (2)

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