

Agenda Report

January 10, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Planning & Community Development Department

**SUBJECT: PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW OF A MIXED-USE PROJECT
CONSISTING OF 193 RESIDENTIAL UNITS AND 15,613 SQUARE
FEET OF NON-RESIDENTIAL SPACE PROPOSED AT 2025 EAST
COLORADO BOULEVARD**

RECOMMENDATION:

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

BACKGROUND:

The applicant, Alexander Catala, on behalf of Rusnak Auto Group, has submitted a Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) application to develop a mixed-use project by consolidating multiple properties along East Colorado Boulevard as well as a partial vacation of North San Marino Avenue. The primary address is 2025 East Colorado Boulevard. The proposed project consists of a four-story mixed-use development including 193 residential units and 15,613 square-feet of non-residential space with 191 parking spaces. The sites are currently developed with a Volvo dealership showroom and service area, as well as surface parking and one residential parcel.

The majority of the parcels are zoned East Colorado Specific Plan, Commercial General (ECSP-CG-4), with one parcel zoned for multi-family residential (RM-32-PK). As part of the proposed project, a portion of North San Marino Avenue would be vacated. The General Plan designation for the majority of the sites is Low Mixed-Use (0.0-1.0 FAR, 0-32 du/ac), with one site designated as Medium-High Residential (0-32 du/ac).

The City is undertaking a comprehensive update of all existing specific plans, including the East Colorado Specific Plan, as well as Zoning Code provisions that relate to the specific plan areas. Updates to the vision, goals, policies, regulations, and standards for East Colorado were reviewed by the Planning Commission and recommended for City Council approval. The applicant has been advised that this effort could potentially result in changes to the existing goals, policies, and development standards that are applicable to the subject property.

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 size and number of residential units submitted by the applicant, the proposed project 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 proposed project consists of the partial street vacation of North San Marino Avenue, as well as consolidation of the following parcels:

Street Address	Parcel Number	Zone
36 N. Berkeley Ave.	5746-014-042	RM-32-PK
1987 E. Colorado Blvd.	5746-014-041	ECSP-CG-4
43 N. San Marino Ave.	5746-014-023	ECSP-CG-4
35 N. San Marino Ave.	5746-014-022	ECSP-CG-4
14 N. San Marino Ave.	5746-014-021	ECSP-CG-4
1999 E. Colorado Blvd.	5746-014-020	ECSP-CG-4
36 N. San Marino Ave.	5746-010-046	ECSP-CG-4
2025 E. Colorado Blvd.	5746-010-045	ECSP-CG-4
35 N. Oak Ave.	5746-010-029	ECSP-CG-4
2045 E. Colorado Blvd.	5746-010-028	ECSP-CG-4
2055 E. Colorado Blvd.	5746-010-027	ECSP-CG-4

The applicant proposes to construct the following:

- 193 multifamily apartment units for rent
- 15,613 square feet of non-residential space
- 191 parking spaces

An aerial map of the existing site and the proposed site plan and elevations follow:

Figure 1: Aerial View of Existing Conditions

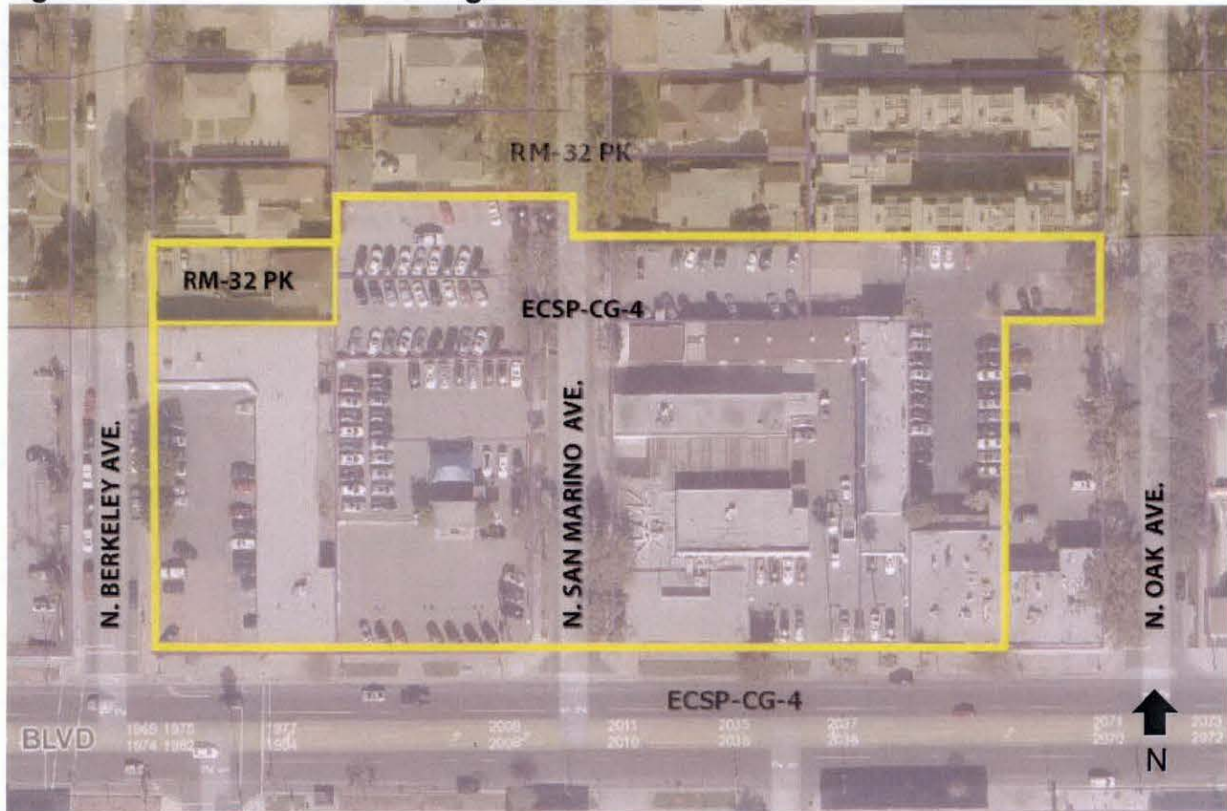


Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan

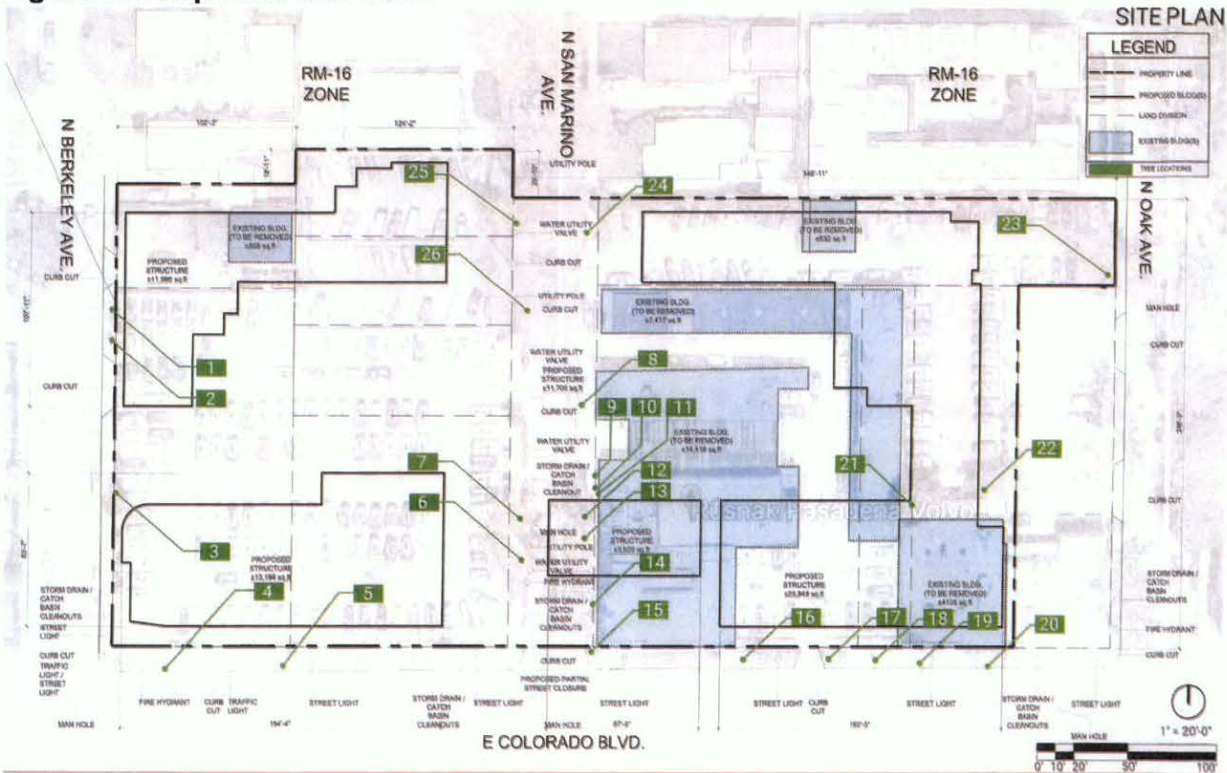
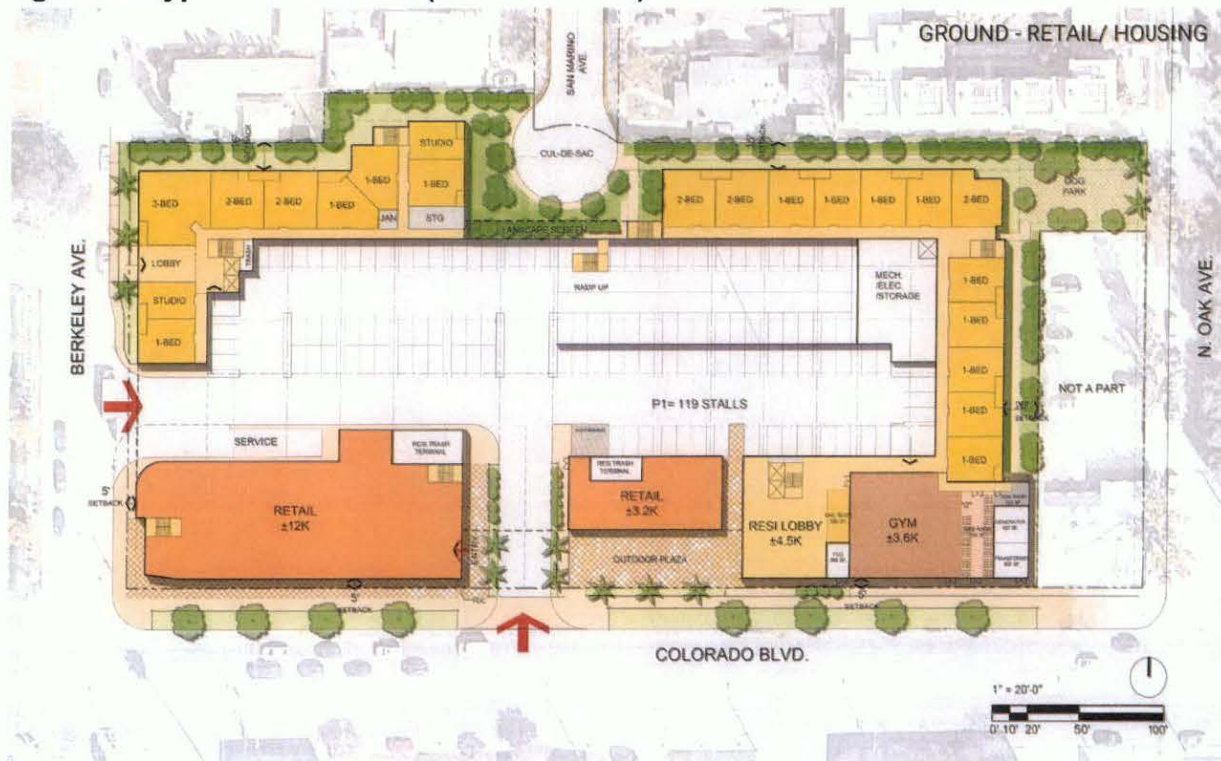


Figure 3: Typical Floor Plan (Ground Floor)



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. An overview of the planning-related standards and comments are discussed below.

General Plan Consistency

The current General Plan Land Use designations are Medium-High Residential (0-32 du/ac) and Low Mixed Use (0.0–1.0 FAR, 0–32 DU/ac). The Low Mixed Use designation is intended to support the development of properties with a mix of compatible uses, including work/live units or ground floor retail and restaurant uses with office and/or residential uses above. Mixed-use buildings may be horizontally or vertically oriented. Sites shall be primarily commercial, but may have residential in areas as indicated by the Specific Plans. For mixed-use projects where both commercial and residential units are developed, the General Plan requires that the cumulative building area (commercial and residential) shall not exceed the maximum FAR specified for the land use category. The proposed project generally complies with the intent of the Low Mixed Use land use designation; however, as this is a proposed mixed-use project it does not comply with the intent of the Medium-High Residential land use designation, which is not characterized by mixed-use or commercial developments.

Based on the approximate size of the proposed parcel and the General Plan maximum density of 32 du/ac and maximum intensity of 1.0 FAR (in the Low Mixed Use portion),

the proposed site would support approximately 99 residential units and/or a maximum floor area of approximately 135,304 square feet.

The proposed project includes 193 units and 15,613 square feet of commercial space, with a total floor area of 250,265 square feet. This results in a total FAR of 1.85, which exceeds the maximum 1.0 FAR permitted by the General Plan. The number of residential units proposed exceeds the maximum permitted by 94 units, and the amount of proposed floor area exceeds the maximum permitted by 114,961 square feet. According to the submitted application, the applicant intends to seek a density bonus for the project, which may allow for concessions such as increased FAR, and to provide 20% affordable units for very-low income households. On-site affordable units are required to be provided in order to be eligible for density bonus.

The General Plan included development capacity limits as part of its adoption in 2015. Each Specific Plan Area is assigned a residential unit cap and non-residential square footage cap. Residential units and non-residential square footage are tracked as projects move through entitlement processes and plan check review, and are formally deducted from the cap upon issuance of a building permit. The East Colorado Specific Plan has a non-residential square footage cap of 300,000 square feet and a residential unit cap of 300; currently there is 297,166 square feet of non-residential square footage and 297 residential units remaining in the cap. The proposed project could be accommodated by the General Plan development capacity specified for East Colorado.

Context and Compatibility

The project site consists of 11 parcels, 10 of which are zoned ECSP-CG-4, and one of which is zoned RM-32-PK. The project additionally includes a portion of North San Marino Avenue which is proposed to be vacated as part of the project, resulting in a site area of approximately 3.1 acres. Along East Colorado Boulevard, surrounding sites are developed predominantly with one- and two-story commercial buildings. To the north and south are one- and two-story single- and multi-family residential dwellings.

Massing and Scale

The proposed project would require a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning from ECSP-CG-4 and RM-32-PK to a zoning designation that would allow for a project of this scale and density. The ECSP-CG-4 zone does not presently allow for multi-family or mixed-use projects. The RM-32-PK zone allows for a maximum of 32 dwelling units per acre, however the existing RM-32-PK zoned lot is 5,650 square feet in size, equating to a density of 4 dwelling units.

Based on the preliminary plans submitted with the PPR application, the massing of the development is much larger than the surrounding residential and commercial contexts. The mass appears to respond to possible future southerly commercial development, while disregarding the existing commercial context and the lower scaled pitched roof residential buildings to the north. The applicant has been encouraged to consider

breaking down the massing with separate buildings of varying type, mass, roof forms, and height, to be more contextually sensitive to existing lower-scale residential development. Additionally, the proposed street vacation of North San Marino Avenue was noted as introducing a physical and visual barrier and separating an established community from a major circulation and commercial corridor (Colorado Boulevard).

Density Bonus

The applicant has indicated that the project would include an on-site affordable housing component. In that case, State Density Bonus Law would apply to the project. As noted, multifamily and mixed-use development is currently prohibited in the ECSP-CG-4 zone. The proposed project would require a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning to a designation that would allow for multifamily and mixed-use development.

ENTITLEMENT PROCESS:

The proposed project would be constructed on sites that are presently zoned ECSP-CG-4 and RM-32-PK and designated as Low Mixed Use and Medium-High Residential in the General Plan. The subject site also includes the proposed vacation of a public street.

Required entitlements for the project would include a General Plan Land Use Map Amendment, a Specific Plan Amendment, a Zoning Map Amendment, and a Tentative Parcel Map application. The vacation of North San Marino Avenue additionally requires review and approval by multiple City and County departments, including but not limited to the Departments of Transportation, Water and Power, Fire, and Police, as well as the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. The Street Vacation, General Plan Map Amendment, Specific Plan Map Amendment and Zoning Map Amendment all require a publicly-noticed hearing with the City Council.

Design Review

Because the project consists of new construction of a mixed-use project greater 25,000 square-feet in size, design review is required, with the Design Commission being the reviewing authority. The applicable design guidelines for the project are the design related goals and policies of the Land Use Element of the General Plan, the private realm design guidelines in the East Colorado Specific Plan and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts. Design review is a three-step process: 1) Preliminary Consultation; 2) Concept (schematic-level) design review; and 3) Final design review. Concept design review is a noticed public hearing before the Design Commission.

Environmental Review

This project would be subject to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which will be conducted in conjunction with applications for a General Plan Amendment, Specific Plan Amendment, Zoning Map Amendment, and Design Review.

The appropriate environmental document for this project will be determined when a formal application is submitted for review.

NEXT STEPS:

The applicant has received comments from City departments as part of the PPR process. The next steps for the project would be to submit applications for a General Plan Map Amendment, Specific Plan Amendment, Zoning Map Amendment, and Tentative Parcel Map. Amendments to the General Plan and Zoning Map must be reviewed by the Planning Commission and recommended to the City Council for a decision.

FISCAL IMPACT:


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

Respectfully submitted,



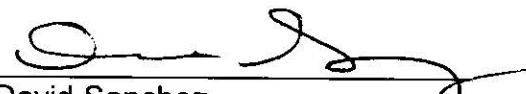
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Attachments: (3)

Attachment A – Predevelopment Plan Review Comments Provided to Applicant
Attachment B – Predevelopment Plan Review Plans
Attachment C – Zoning Code Compliance Table