

Agenda Report

May 15, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: PREDEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW OF A 95-ROOM RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY AT 825-861 EAST WALNUT STREET

RECOMMENDATION:

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

BACKGROUND:

The applicant, Emily Murray, on behalf of Harbert South Bay, LLC, has submitted a Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) application to develop the project site at 825, 831 and 861 East Walnut Street with a new six-story, 95-room, residential care facility with 60 subterranean parking spaces. 67 rooms are designated for assisted living, and an additional 28 rooms will be for memory care. The project site is currently developed with a former restaurant (Conrad's) building, and surface parking lot. The existing restaurant building, and surface parking lot would be demolished to accommodate the project.

The purpose of a PPR is to achieve better projects through early consultation between City staff and applicants. PPRs also 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 involves the construction of 83,280 square feet of gross floor area, and therefore qualifies as a project of community-wide significance.

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

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The applicant proposes the consolidation of three parcels to create one project site measuring 27,762 square feet, demolition of the former restaurant building and surface parking lot, and construction of the following:

- A six-story, 83,280 square-foot Residential Care, General facility with a proposed height of up to 75 feet;
- 95 units consisting of 67 assisted living units and 28 memory care units;
- 60 parking spaces in a one-level subterranean parking garage; and
- On-site amenities including covered patios, swimming pool, courtyards, terraces, several common and private dining rooms, a theater, an arts and crafts room and a private piano lounge/library.

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.

Land Use

The Zoning Code defines “Residential Care, General” as a “State licensed facility, family home, group care facility, or similar facility that is maintained and operated to provide 24-hour nonmedical residential care for seven or more adults, children, or adults and children in need of personal services, supervision, or assistance essential for sustaining the activities of daily living or the protection of the individual. This use includes the administration of limited medical assistance.” This is classified as a public, semi-public use by the Zoning Code and the units are therefore not considered residential dwelling units subject to density requirements.

The facility would receive a license from the State of California, Department of Social Services prior to operation. The facility would provide hospitality, wellness, health and fitness programs led by full-time staff members. The proposed group care facility use aligns with the Zoning Code definition for Residential Care, General use.

The project site is located in the CD-5 (Central District Specific Plan, Lake Avenue subdistrict) zoning district. A Conditional Use Permit is required to establish the proposed land use in this zoning district.

The General Plan Land Use Designation for 861 East Walnut Street is High Commercial. 825 and 831 East Walnut Street have a Land Use Designation of Urban Housing in the General Plan.

The High Commercial (0.0 – 3.0 FAR) land use designation is characterized by a wide range of regional commercial uses fostering regional office and incidental retail uses

primarily located along Lake Avenue south of the 210 freeway. The Urban Housing (0 – 87 du/ac) designation is characterized by a variety of development types, that provide a diversity of living environments, including high-density multifamily complexes in neighborhoods with densities of up to 87 dwelling units per acre and four to seven story buildings. These developments are characterized by landscaped courtyards and minimal separations between buildings. The proposed residential care facility would provide 95 units for memory care and assisted living and would include landscaped courtyards, subterranean parking, and minimal setbacks, all of which are consistent with the Urban Housing and High Commercial land use designations.

Amendments

The applicant has been advised that the Central District Specific Plan is in the process of being updated; a study session was held with the Planning Commission in February 2023. The draft update to the specific plan, presented to the Planning Commission, includes an amendment to the General Plan Land Use Diagram to change the land use designation for 825 and 831 East Walnut Street from Urban Housing to High Commercial, so that the entire project site has one land use designation. The draft update to the specific plan is anticipated to go to the Planning Commission for a public hearing in June 2023, followed by a public hearing with the City Council.

Context and Compatibility

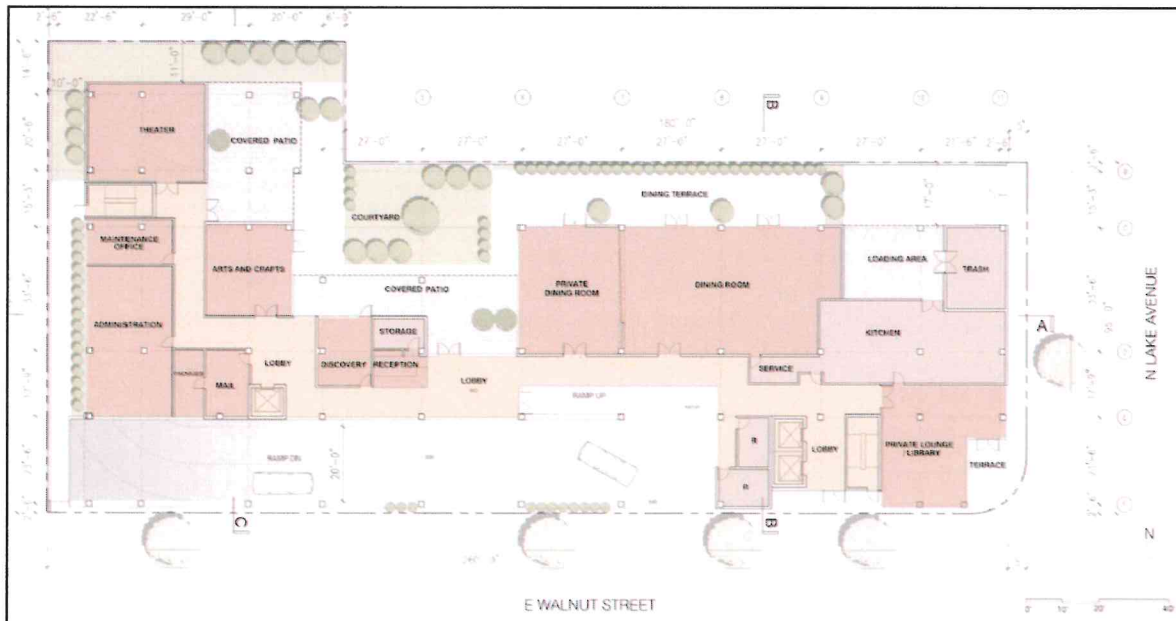
The proposed project would be six-stories tall and have a height of up to 75 feet. The project site is bordered by a two-story (approximately 28 foot tall) commercial office building to the north, a seven-story (approximately 76 feet tall) mixed-use building to the east, across Lake Avenue, and a six-story (approximately 90 feet tall) commercial office building to the south, across Walnut Avenue. A five-story (approximately 70 feet tall) multi-family development abuts the project site to the west. The project fits within the context of adjacent buildings and is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Figures 1 and 2, next page, provide an aerial view of the existing site as well as a site plan of the proposed project.

Figure 1: Aerial View Project Site



Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan



Massing and Scale

The development standards for the Central District Specific Plan are identified in Section 17.30.040 of the Zoning Code. Figure 3-8 establishes a maximum height limit of 75 feet, and up to 90' with height averaging, for the parcel at 861 E. Walnut St. For the parcels at 825 and 831 E. Walnut St., the maximum height limit is 60 feet, and up to 75 feet with height averaging. The Project has an overall height of 75 feet and complies with the current height requirement.

Figure 3-9 establishes a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 3.0 for the parcel at 861 E. Walnut St and a maximum FAR of 2.25 for the parcels at 825 and 831 E. Walnut St. The project proposes a FAR of 2.99 across the project site (all three parcels). The portion of the proposed building on parcels at 825 and 831 E. Walnut St. exceeds the maximum FAR allowed.

The applicant has been advised that the Central District Specific Plan is in the process of being updated. The draft update to the specific plan includes amendments to the applicable development standards, including an FAR of 3.0 and a height of 75', 90' with height averaging, for the entire project site.

The Figures below provide the preliminary street elevations of the proposed building:

Figure 3: South Elevation, Walnut Street



Figure 4: East Elevation, Lake Avenue



Summary of Development Standards

A summary of the key development standards, and compliance with the current Zoning Code requirements, is provided in the table below. For informational purposes, comparison with the draft Central District Specific Plan, presented to the Planning Commission at the February 22, 2023 meeting, is also provided.

Table 1: Summary of Standards

Development Standard	Project Proposal	Current Zoning Code Requirement	Draft CDSP Requirement
Land Use	Residential Care Facility	Permitted use with CUP	Permitted use with CUP
Height			
861 E. Walnut St.	75'	75' (90' with height averaging)	75' (90' with height averaging)
825-831 E. Walnut St.	75'	60' (75' with height averaging)	75' (90' with height averaging)
Floor Area Ratio			
861 E. Walnut St.	2.96	Maximum of 3.0	Maximum of 3.0
825-831 E. Walnut St.	2.96	Maximum of 2.25	Maximum of 3.0
Setbacks			
Front -Lake Ave	5'	0'-5'	0'-3'
Corner Side- Walnut Ave	2'-6"	0'-5'	0'-5'
Interior sides	10'	None required	None required
Parking	60 spaces	As specified by Conditional Use Permit	As specified by Conditional Use Permit

ENTITLEMENTS REQUIRED:

Land Use Permits

Based on the scope of the project, the project requires the following land use entitlements:

- Conditional Use Permit: To establish a Residential Care, General Facility.
- Minor Conditional Use Permit: To allow tandem parking for a nonresidential use.
- Variance: To exceed the maximum allowed FAR of 2.25*.
- Certificate of Exception (lot line adjustment): To consolidate three parcels into one parcel.

*Required if processed prior to the Central District Specific Plan update.

Design Review

New construction greater than 25,000 square feet is subject to Design Review with the Design Commission being the reviewing authority. The applicable design guidelines for the project are the Design goals and policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan and the Central District Specific Plan Design Guidelines. Design review is a three-step process: 1) Preliminary Consultation; 2) Concept design review; and 3) Final design review.

Environmental Review

This project will be subject to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). According to the Department of Transportation, and based on the information submitted with the PPR, a traffic analysis would be required. Technical studies (e.g., noise, air quality) may be necessary to determine the type of CEQA clearance required for the project.

NEXT STEPS:

To proceed with the project, the applicant may wait for the City Council to approve the Central District Specific Plan update to see if amendments are made to the applicable development standards or proceed before. The Hearing Officer would be the review authority for the entitlements listed above.

After the land use entitlements are obtained, Design Review would be required.

FISCAL IMPACT:

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

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments: (2)

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