



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2006

ITEM NUMBER:

**SUBJECT: URBAN MASTER PLAN SCREENING REQUEST FOR UMP-06-10 FOR
1640 MONROVIA AVENUE**

DATE: OCTOBER 23, 2006

FROM: PLANNING DIVISION/DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PRESENTATION BY: REBECCA ROBBINS, ASSISTANT PLANNER

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: REBECCA ROBBINS, ASSISTANT PLANNER
(714) 754-5609**

RECOMMENDATION

Provide feedback regarding the Council's expectations of the conceptual condominium project in the Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan area. No deviations from the Urban Plan have been identified at this time.

BACKGROUND

On April 4, 2006, City Council adopted the Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan to allow incentives for residential ownership developments and live/work developments in specified areas. The intent of the urban plan is to provide development/economic incentives for private property owners to reinvest and remodel their properties.

EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

This urban master plan screening process will address the following central question:

- 1) Does the project meet Council's expectations for projects in the Urban Plan areas? The screening process is an opportunity to determine if the conceptual project meets Council's expectations for new projects in the urban plan areas. Council will be providing initial feedback to the applicants.

The screening process allows the applicant to consider Council's initial comments and to refine the development concept based on their feedback.

Development Concept - Summary Sheet

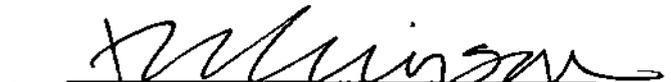
A one-page, project summary sheet is attached for the screening request.

CONCLUSION

This screening process enables Council to address the central question about the proposed development in the urban plan area: Does the project concept meet Council's expectations for new development in the urban plan area?

Council's general comments do not set precedent for approval/denial nor constitute final action on the development project. In addition, the applicant may expect the Planning Commission to have other comments/concerns on a proposed development concept that may not have been necessarily raised by City Council. The screening process allows the applicant to consider Council's initial comments and to refine the development concept based on their feedback.


REBECCA ROBBINS
Assistant Planner


DONALD D. LAMM, AICP
Deputy City Mgr., Dev. Svs. Director

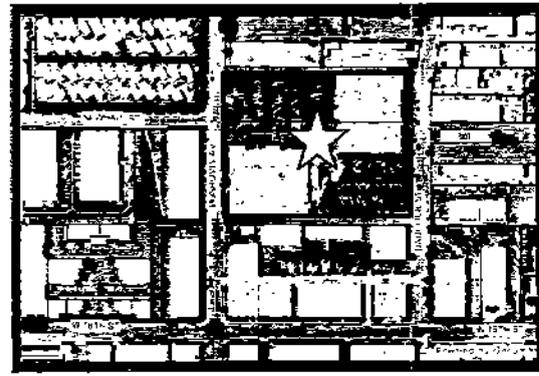
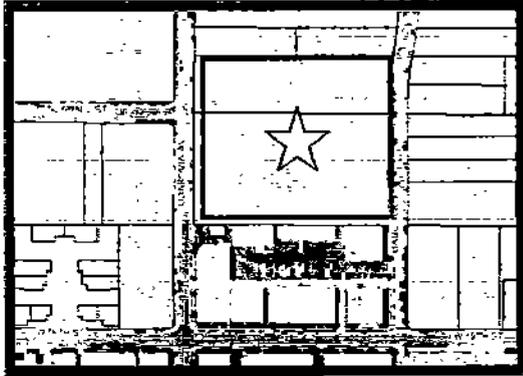
- Attachments: 1. Urban Plan Screening Request Summary Sheet
2. Concept Plan and Sample Architecture
3. Applicant Letter

- cc: City Manager
Asst. City Manager
City Attorney
Public Services Director
Transportation Svs. Mgr.
Associate Engineer
City Clerk
Staff (4)
File (2)

Mr. Kevin Eads
Project Manager
John Laing Homes
3121 Michelson Drive, Suite 200
Irvine, CA 92612-7672

File: 111406UMP0610	Date: 102306	Time: 9:45 a.m.
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UMP-06-10 Urban Loft Development by John Laing Homes – 1640 Monrovia Avenue



BACKGROUND

Nexus Development is the property owner of the 6.8-acre property at 1640 Monrovia, formerly the site of the Eaton Industries. On December 6, 2005, City Council reviewed a General Plan Screening request to change the land use designation of the property from Light Industry to High Density Residential. The General Plan amendment was proposed to accommodate a 4-story townhome development consisting of up to 136 dwelling units (19 dwelling units per acre). This request by Nexus Development was submitted prior to the adoption of the Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan and was to occur independently of the Urban Plan process. At this time, Nexus Development is not pursuing the General Plan amendment to High Density Residential.

URBAN PLAN SCREENING REQUEST

John Laing Homes is considering acquiring the Nexus Development property at 1640 Monrovia and is proposing an urban residential loft project that would be consistent with the Mesa West Urban Plan. This current urban plan screening request is different from the original General Plan screening request considered by City Council last year. Instead of a high-density proposal, this medium-density development project involves 91 three-story townhomes for homeownership at 13 dwelling units per acre (Concept Plan/Architecture, Attachment 2). The proposed density is consistent with the Urban Plan which allows a maximum development of 13 du/ac. The applicant is proposing an urban housing alternative to traditional residential subdivision development (Applicant Letter, Attachment 3). The proposal involves the following:

- Complete demolition of all existing industrial buildings/facilities and remediation of the industrial site for construction
- Construction of 91 three-story townhomes (13 du/ac) at maximum height of 60 feet
- Condominiums to feature roof terraces/decks, outdoor fireplaces, and/or other amenity spaces
- Modern, urban-style architecture for exterior and high-quality fixtures/finishes for interior spaces
- Architectural theme will incorporate elements of adaptive reuse developments in Long Beach and Pasadena
- Private outdoor living spaces through the use of large roof decks or yards
- Centralized park, pedestrian paseos, and front stoops/yards

LAND USE ANALYSIS

The former Eaton Industries site is vacant and contains approximately 133,000 square feet of industrial building area. The required Master Plan process would ensure that the residential project, including proposed building setbacks, structure orientation, placement of windows, outdoor amenity spaces, and noise attenuation, would be compatible with adjacent industrial properties. Since a residential development would only be permitted through an approved Master Plan, staff believes this process provides assurances for a unique residential urban village in the Westside that would be compatible with the surrounding industrial uses. A updated summary sheet of all urban plan screening requests processed to date is provided for informational purposes (Screening Requests Summary, Attachment 4).

PRELIMINARY TRAFFIC REVIEW

The following table is a trip generation summary table comparing the former Eaton Industries development (when fully operational) to a medium-density residential project.

Land Use	AM Peak Hr Trips	PM Peak Hr Trips	Total Avg Daily Trips
<u>Existing Nonconforming Bldg</u> 133,000 sq.ft. of Industrial Uses	123	131	931
<u>Medium-Density Residential Project</u> 91-unit Condominium Project (13 dwelling units/acre)	46	56	611
NET DECREASE			-320

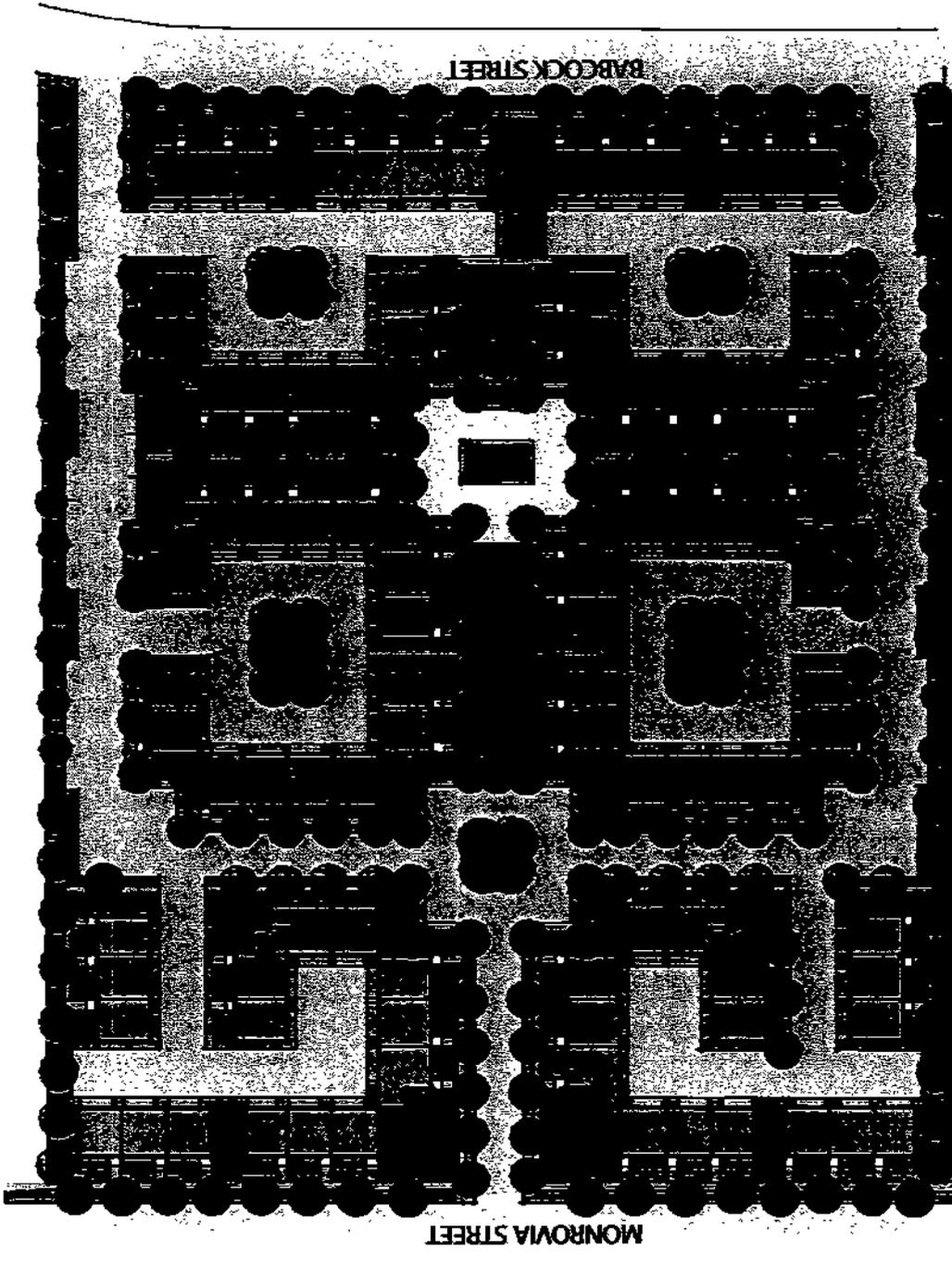
A medium-density project would result in a reduction in vehicle trips, both in the AM and PM peak hour and in average daily trips. Therefore, it can be concluded that the current urban plan screening request for a medium-density development (91 units) would result in comparably reduced traffic compared to the Eaton industrial business.

MERITS OF THE URBAN PLAN SCREENING REQUEST

The proposed 91-unit urban loft development is consistent with the vision of the Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan. No deviations from the Urban Plan have been identified at this time. Following is a summary of the project's conformance with the Urban Plan.

1. The proposed medium-density condominium project is consistent with the Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan. The Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan would allow residential uses at a maximum of 13 du/ac. The proposed project is consistent with the density limitations and the objectives of the Urban Plan as it provides new home-ownership housing opportunities to revitalize the Westside. The proposed project would redevelop a marginal industrial site and help improve the jobs/housing balance in the City.
2. Contemporary architecture reflects the surrounding industrial context. With modern-style architecture featuring clean lines from steel/concrete construction, the new lofts would be architecturally compatible with neighboring industrial uses. The contemporary architecture would resonate with urban professionals in the surfing and other outdoor recreational sports industries.
3. Urban Loft development will accommodate demand for alternative housing choices. The project would create owner-occupied housing opportunities targeted for entrepreneurs in the surfing industry, craftspeople, and other urban professionals seeking an "urban village" setting as opposed to a traditional residential neighborhood. Employees of surrounding companies such as Volcom, Paul Frank, Rucra Clothing, and related industries may elect to live in the proposed urban loft development.

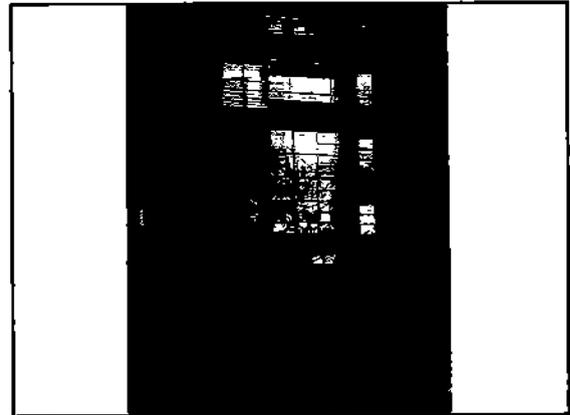
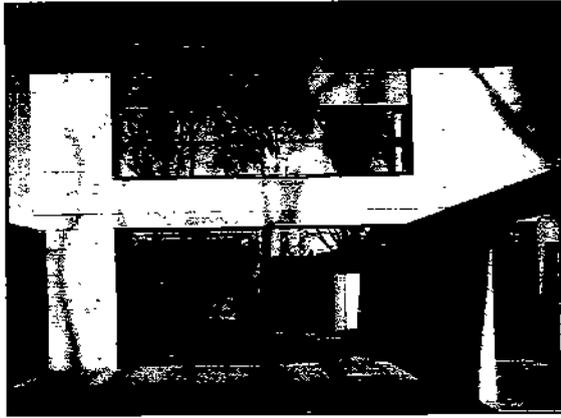
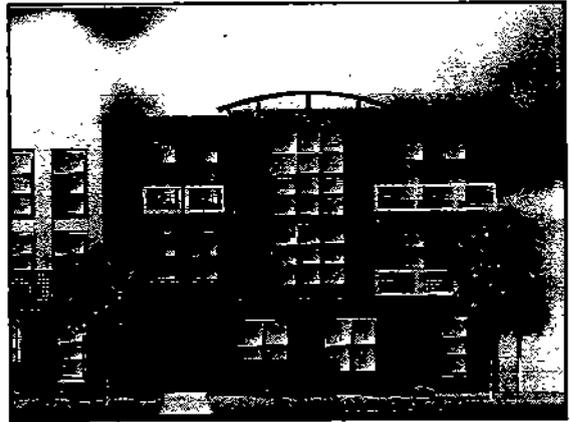
ATTACHMENT 2



WESTSIDE LOFTS

COSTA MESA, CA.

SCHEME 'G' JUNE 1, 2006 2006-031



ATTACHMENT 3



John Laing Homes
Hand crafted since 1848

September 25, 2006

Ms. Kimberly Brandt
City of Costa Mesa
77 Fair Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92628

Re: 1640 Monrovia Avenue, Costa Mesa

Dear Kimberly,

On behalf of John Laing Homes and Nexus Development, we are submitting this proposal for City Council's pre-screening approval. The subject site is located at 1640 Monrovia Avenue (currently zoned MG) in the heart of the Mesa West Urban Plan.

We are excited to be the first development to fulfill the Council's vision for Westside revitalization, a process many years in the making. We believe our new community will spur interest and investment in the area and will serve as the catalyst for the area's rebirth as a thriving neighborhood.

For your consideration, we propose the following:

- 91 for-sale homes on 7 gross acres (13 homes per acre) with a centralized amenity center offering residents the use of such facilities as a common pool and recreation facility.

- Three story attached homes built on grade with a heavy transitional, contemporary style designed to complement with the surrounding uses and offer an urban housing alternative to traditional subdivisions.

- The architecture of the homes will be themed from recent loft designs as well as the look and feel of successful adaptive reuse developments in areas such as Long Beach and Pasadena. This architecture will resonate with potential homebuyers, such as artists, designers, craftspeople, or with other creative leanings drawing from the nature of many of the surrounding companies such as Volcom, Paul Frank, Ruca Clothing, and related industries. We have included photos of building exteriors and interiors that will serve as the inspiration for our design. Great care will be taken so that the architecture is cohesive with both the industrial setting and the Mesa Bluffs Urban Plan.

- Private outdoor living space through the use of large decks or yards. These spaces will be an integral design consideration as we further develop the architecture. Our ultimate goal is to have roof deck living that can take advantage of both ocean and mountain views while offering individual privacy to the homeowner.

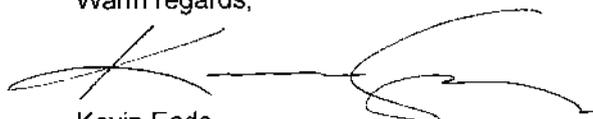
- A site design which is sensitive to the remaining industrial neighbors and their ongoing business activities. As such, the majority of homes have been oriented away from the property lines. The site plan also encourages neighborhood interaction by including a centralized park, pedestrian paseos, and front stoops and yards.

We sincerely appreciate your review of our proposal. Enclosed are the following documents/photos that help better explain our vision for this exciting opportunity:

- Preliminary site plan
- Aerial location map
- Photos of architecture serving to inspire our exterior and interior finishes.

On behalf of our team, we very much look forward to submitting our tentative tract map and moving ahead with this project. Please feel free to contact us directly with any questions.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Eads', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right and a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Kevin Eads
Project Manager