CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 7, 2012 **ITEM NUMBER:**

SUBJECT: **GENERAL PLAN SCREENING REQUEST GPS-11-04 FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1726 SUPERIOR AVENUE FOR PROPOSED WALGREENS DEVELOPMENT**

DATE: **JANUARY 26, 2012**

FROM: **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

PRESENTATION BY: **MEL LEE, AICP, SENIOR PLANNER**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: **MEL LEE (714) 754-5611**
mel.lee@costamesaca.gov

RECOMMENDATION

Accept or reject the following proposed General Plan Amendment (GPA) for processing:

- A site specific floor area ratio (FAR) - .30 maximum FAR allowed; .49 FAR proposed – for a proposed Walgreens retail store and pharmacy project on the former Tower Records site.

BACKGROUND

Project Site/Environs

The property is located at the intersection of Superior Avenue and Newport Boulevard, north of 17th Street. The property contains an existing retail building (formerly Tower Records) which will be demolished to accommodate the proposed project. The property is zoned C2 (General Business District), has a General Plan Designation of General Commercial, and is also located within the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area.

Planning Application Summary

Location: 1726 Superior Avenue Application: GPS-11-04

Request: General Plan Screening request GPS-11-04 for site specific floor area ratio (FAR) - .30 maximum FAR allowed; .49 FAR proposed – for a new Walgreens retail store and pharmacy on the former Tower Records site.

SUBJECT PROPERTY:

Zone: C2
General Plan: General Commercial
Lot Dimensions: Irregular
Lot Area: 29,182 SF
Existing Development: Commercial building (to be demolished) and surface parking

SURROUNDING PROPERTY:

North: (Across Superior) C2, Commercial Uses
South: C2, Commercial Uses
East: (Across Newport) C2, Commercial Uses
West: C2, Commercial Uses

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD COMPARISON

Development Standard	Required/Allowed	Proposed/Provided
Lot Size:		
Lot Width (Average)	120 FT	99 FT (1)
Lot Area	12,000 SF	29,182 SF
Floor Area Ratio (FAR):		
Maximum FAR	.30 (8,755 SF)	.49 (14,310 SF) (2)
Building Height:	2 Stories/30 FT	1 Story (w/Basement)/32 FT (3)
Interior Landscaping:	1,100 SF	0 SF (3)
Setbacks (Building):		
Front (Superior Ave.)	20 FT	67 FT
Side (left/right)	0 FT/10 FT	0 FT/ 128 FT
Rear (Newport Blvd.)	20 FT	0-1 FT (3)
Setbacks (Landscaping)		
Newport Blvd.	20 FT	0-18 FT (3)
Superior Ave.	20 FT	0-16 FT (3)
Parking		
Standard	54	42
Handicapped	3	2
Total	57 Spaces (4)	44 Spaces
Bicycle Racks	NA	1 (for 5 Bicycles)

(1) The property is legal nonconforming.
(2) Site-specific General Plan amendment required for 0.49 FAR deviation.
(3) Does not comply with code requirement – variance application required.
(4) Parking deviation requested based on unique operational characteristics as validated by parking study by KOA.

REQUEST

The applicant is proposing to construct a new 14,310 square foot retail building (9,990 square foot ground-level retail store with 4,320 square foot below grade basement) for Walgreens. If the General Plan Screening is accepted for processing, the proposal would require approval of the following:

- Site-specific General Plan Amendment (GPA) to allow a .49 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for the project (.30 maximum FAR allowed).
- Variance and/or minor conditional use permit to allow a reduction in required on-site parking spaces for the project.
- Variance from maximum building height (30 feet allowed; 32 feet proposed).
- Variance from building and landscaped setbacks (20 feet required along Newport Boulevard and Superior Avenue; 0-1 foot building setback along Newport Boulevard and 0-18 foot landscaped setbacks along both streets proposed).
- Variance from interior parking area landscaping requirements (1,100 sq. ft. required; 0 sq. ft. proposed).

ANALYSIS

General Plan Screening Criteria

City of Costa Mesa 2000 General Plan Land Use Element Objective LU-1E.1 (c) allows the City Council to accept General Plan Amendments (GPAs) to approve deviations from the maximum FAR established by the General Plan based on criteria established by City Council policy (Policy No. 500-2).

The above policy, a copy of which is attached to this memo, establishes three criteria for accepting GPA requests:

- A GPA is necessary to resolve an inconsistency between General Plan and zoning designation for a parcel;
- A GPA is necessary to provide a uniform land use designation for a single parcel or development site; or
- A GPA would result in decreased traffic impacts from the property.

The policy also acknowledges these criteria are only guidelines and City Council may accept an application which does not meet the criteria if it finds there are overriding reasons to do so.

Compliance with General Plan

- *Project will result in an increase in traffic to the property.* Transportation staff completed a preliminary trip generation analysis and concluded that the proposed project is expected to result in an increase in trips per the table below.

General Plan Land Use Designation	SQ. FT.	ADT X TSF	AM Peak Hr Trips	PM Peak Hr Trips	Total Avg. Daily Trips
Tower Records - Specialty Retail	10,620	44.32	-	55	470
General Plan Allowance - General Commercial	8,755	67.91	14	55	600
Walgreens - Per Traffic Study (1)	**14,310**	**N/A**	**41**	**108**	**1,160**

(1) Source: Traffic Impact Study prepared by KOA Corporation (Attachment 3)

Although the project will result in an increase in traffic to the property, as noted earlier, City Council Policy allows acceptance of the request if it finds there are overriding reasons to do so.

- *Project complies with General Plan Community Design Element Objective CD-8A.1.: new and remodeled commercial structures and properties in Costa Mesa should be designed to reflect the City's architectural diversity, yet be compatible with nearby existing buildings' scale and character*. The proposed development is a single story building that will be compatible in scale and character to surrounding buildings in the vicinity. The proposed development will replace an obsolete building on the property that has been a frequent target of vandalism and graffiti.

- *Project complies with General Plan Land Use Element Objective LU-1C.1: permit the construction of buildings over two stories or 30 feet only when it can be shown that the construction of such structures will not adversely impact surrounding developments and deprive existing land uses of adequate light, air, privacy, and solar access.* There will be no adverse impacts to surrounding developments or a deprivation of adequate light, air, privacy, and solar access to surrounding properties because the 2 foot excess roof height applies to the roof peak of a single architectural tower element on the northerly portion of the building.

- *Project will revitalize a property located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area.* The "Tower Records" site has been vacant for approximately 5 years with minimal property maintenance. The new Walgreens store would revitalize the property in keeping with redevelopment objectives. Furthermore, the project will be consistent with the redevelopment plan as it pertains to the architectural design guidelines for new construction (i.e., roof materials, building colors and architecture, etc.).

Initial Council Feedback on Proposed Code Deviations

If City Council directs staff to proceed with the processing of the General Plan Amendment as discussed above, initial feedback is requested on the following Code deviations:

- *Parking Determination.* The applicant is seeking a determination as to whether the number of proposed on-site parking spaces will be adequate for the project based on the parking study prepared by KOA Corporation (Attachment 3) which indicates that, based on a survey of three similar Walgreens stores, two in Santa Ana and one in Huntington Beach, the proposed parking supply would adequately serve the new Walgreens store. The study indicated that the City's retail parking rate of 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet is not an appropriate rate for this type and size of a Walgreens store.

- *Building and landscaped setbacks (20 feet required along Newport Boulevard and Superior Avenue; 0-1 foot building setback along Newport Boulevard and 0-18 foot landscaped setbacks along both streets proposed).* Council may wish to provide general feedback regarding the proposed building setbacks and landscaping.

- *Interior parking area landscaping requirements (1,100 sq. ft. required; 0 sq. ft. proposed).* Council may wish to provide general feedback regarding the parking lot landscaping, and whether or not additional landscaping is desired.

ALTERNATIVES

City Council has the following alternatives available for consideration:

1. *Accept General Plan Amendment application for processing and provide any initial feedback related to the proposed Code deviations.* This will allow the applicant to proceed with the application process per City Council policy and based on any initial feedback related to the proposed Code deviations.

2. *Deny application from further processing.* Denial of this request would mean that the project could not proceed to be considered by the Planning Commission or City Council in its current form.

FISCAL REVIEW

Fiscal review is not required for this item.

LEGAL REVIEW

Legal review is not required for this item.

CONCLUSION

Council may accept or reject this project for General Plan Amendment processing. If the project is accepted for processing, it does not provide an assurance that the project will be ultimately approved.

MEL LEE, AICP
Senior Planner

KHANH NGUYEN
Interim Development Services Director

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location Map
2. City Council Policy 500-2
3. Packet Containing Plans, Parking Study, and Traffic Study (Separately Bound Document)

DISTRIBUTION:

Chief Executive Officer
Assistant Chief Executive Officer
Economic Development Director
City Attorney
Interim Development Svs. Director
Public Services Director
Transportation Svs. Mgr.
City Clerk (2)
Staff (4)
Planning Staff (8)
File (2)

Corrie Kates
P.O. Box 4403
Costa Mesa, CA 92628

Walgreen Co.
106 Wilmot Road, MS #1640
Deerfield, IL 60015

File: CC020712WalgreensScreening	Date: 01/25/12	Time: 11:00 am