



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 2014

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AN INTERPRETATION OF GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING CONSISTENCY FOR A PLANNED DEVELOPMENT COMMERCIAL SITE AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF HARBOR BLVD. AND HAMILTON STREET

DATE: JANUARY 23, 2014

FROM: PLANNING DIVISION/DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PRESENTATION BY: MINOO ASHABI, PRINCIPAL PLANNER

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: MINOO ASHABI, AIA (714) 754-5610
minoo.ashabi@costamesaca.gov

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is seeking feedback on the General Plan and Zoning consistency for a proposed 28-unit residential project containing seven live/work units at the southwest corner of Hamilton Street and Harbor Boulevard. The following options are recommended:

- The applicant can proceed with the project as a master plan subject to approval by the Planning Commission and preparation of the appropriate CEQA documents.
- The project is subject to site specific General Plan Amendment and rezone to allow high density residential development with a live/work option.

BACKGROUND

The project site is a 1.5-acre irregular parcel located at the southwest corner of Harbor Boulevard and Hamilton Street that takes direct access from Charle Street. The site contains several parcels (2089 and 2099 Harbor Blvd. and 511 Hamilton Street); is zoned Planned Development Commercial (PDC) and has a General Plan land use designation of General Commercial. Two vacant buildings, located on the site, have been abandoned for several years. To improve the appearance of the site the buildings have been painted and to keep transients from occupying the buildings, the site has been fenced off with a chain link fence for the past several years. The site was previously used as an automotive repair shop and is undergoing soil and groundwater remediation.

The site is also bounded by commercial uses to the south and west (auto repair and construction equipment rental).

In 2007, a rezone was approved to change the zoning on this site from C2 General Business District to PDC Planned Development Commercial; to accommodate future retail shops, offices and service establishments intended to serve adjacent residential areas, as

well as the entire community and region. Complementary residential uses could also be included in the planned development.

In 2008, the property owner submitted a proposal to remodel the existing buildings and construct an additional 19,000 square feet of commercial space. The existing buildings were nonconforming with regards to setback along Harbor Boulevard and the request was denied by the Planning Commission.

ANALYSIS

Proposal

Development Services has received a proposal to redevelop the property with 28 detached residential units. Seven of the units on the southerly portion of the site will include a ground floor workspace similar to live/work units allowed in the Urban Plan areas and twenty one units are traditional single family units. The proposed work spaces range in size between 100 and 125 square feet compared to the minimum 250 Square feet required for live work spaces in the Urban Plan areas. Four unique floor plans are proposed and they are identified on the site plan as Plans A, B, C, and D; the seven live/work units are identified on the site plan as CX and DX (Attachment 4).

As part of the project application, a noise analysis, traffic study and Phase I and II Environmental Assessment were submitted. Eight of the homes have private backyards that back up to Harbor Boulevard. The noise analysis concluded that the exterior noise level for the homes along Harbor Boulevard are exceeding the allowable level per the City's Noise Ordinance, which will require further investigation. The Environmental Assessment reports noted that the project site is listed on the Cal/EPA Cortese list of contaminated site and is still subject to further soils remediation and final clearance approval from the Regional Water Board, which would also be further analyzed if the project is approved to move forward for processing.

General Plan Land Use Designation

The General Plan Land use for this site is General Commercial. This designation is intended to permit a wide range of commercial uses, which serve both local and regional needs. These land use areas are typically located along major transportation routes with significant traffic. The General Commercial land use allows residential and other noncommercial uses, as "complementary uses" through the Planned Development process. The General Plan also notes that the residential densities in planned development projects shall not exceed 20 dwelling units per acre with a corresponding population density of up to 50 persons per acre.

Zoning

The project site is zoned PDC (Planned Development Commercial). The PDC zone is defined as follows:

"This District is intended for retail shops, offices and service establishments, including but not limited to, hotels, restaurants, theaters, museums, financial institutions and health

clubs. These uses are intended to serve adjacent residential areas, as well as the entire community and region. **Complementary residential uses could also be included in the planned development.**” The code does not define complementary residential use and this is one of the key interpretations staff is requesting from the Council.

Site Design

The live/work units are located at the rear of the project and any commercial traffic would be required to access the site from Charle Street, which is shared with the high density residential neighborhood to the west. No accommodation has been made to design the live/work units with storefronts for a Main Street look or to provide pedestrian access to the live/work units from the main drive or public streets. The project design shows only two open customer/guest parking spaces located near the center of the site to serve both the residential and commercial needs of the project.

Relevant Projects

For background information, the following two residential projects have been approved on commercial land use designations in the recent years:

- 1500 Mesa Verde Drive East – 224-unit senior housing project was approved on a portion of a block designated PDC zone; a commercial shopping center occupies the balance of the PCD zone. This project is an example of horizontal mixed use, where two or more uses are located adjacent to each other to form a single interconnected project. The senior housing in this case was considered complementary to the adjacent commercial shopping center. The project site is 7.1 acre.
- 421 Bernard Street – 113 unit apartment complex was approved on a parcel that is part of a block of PDC zone. The project site is 2.46- acre an included a five-level mixed use parking garage for joint use of the commercial and residential uses.

EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Staff is requesting that City Council clarify a number of issues to determine if the project should proceed as a Master Plan, as that term is use relative to the implementation of the PDC zone and to establish a basis to proceed with the request as proposed. Alternatively, Council is asked to consider and advise if it appears that the project requires a general plan amendment and rezone of the property to implement the proposed project objectives. The proposed project raises a number of questions and policy interpretation that call for Council direction; these include the following General Plan consistency and site development issues.

General Plan Consistency Issues:

- How should “Complementary Residential Use” be defined?
- With seven live work units as the only commercial component, does the project qualify as commercial with a complementary residential use?

- Is this site appropriated for a General Plan Amendment to allow residential development, given noise impacts from Harbor Boulevard and the adjacent automotive repair and equipment rental yard?
- Consideration of other recently approved projects, determined to be complementary residential uses.

Site Development Issues:

- Does the design of the live work units serve the commercial needs of the adjacent residential area, the Community and/or Region as called for in the PDC zone?
- Does the project design appropriately address pedestrian access, visibility and customer parking, for a commercial project?

Conclusion

In order to proceed with the project processing, staff is seeking City Council direction for consistency of the proposed project with the General Plan, zoning and site development issues discussed above.

MINOO ASHABI, AIA
Principal Planner

GARY ARMSTRONG, AICP
Economic and Development Services
Director

Attachments: [1. Location Map](#)
 [2. Zoning Map](#)
 [3. General Plan Map](#)
 [4. Conceptual Plans](#)

cc: Chief Executive Officer
 Assistant Chief Executive Officer
 Public Services Director
 City Attorney
 Transportation Services Manager
 City Engineer
 City Clerk (9)
 Staff (7)
 File (2)

W. David Hutchins
South Coast Communities LLC.
100 Pacifica, Suite 360
Irvine, CA 92618

Eric Nelson
Red Mountain Retail Group, Inc.
1234 E. 17th Street
Santa Ana, CA 92701