



Date of meeting: 2/14/12  
Agenda Item: 1

TO: Planning Commission

DATE: February 6, 2012

SUBMITTED BY:

  
Ron Muhekawa, Chief of Planning

  
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SUBJECT: PA 11-087 2090 S. Delaware Apartments  
2090 S. Delaware Street  
(APN 035-320-450)

### RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission review the proposed project on a preliminary basis and provide input regarding the appropriateness of the proposed architectural design, density, unit type, and scale of the proposed buildings.

### PROJECT SITE DESCRIPTION

The project site is an approximately 2.37 acre parcel located at the northwest corner of the intersection of South Delaware Street and Pacific Boulevard (refer to Attachment 1). The project site has an approximately 31,500 square foot vacant commercial building with adjacent surface parking and minimal landscaping.

The subject property is adjacent to a variety of uses including multi-family residential uses directly to the north and the City's corporation yard directly to the northwest. Public storage is located across Pacific Boulevard to the south and multi-family, duplex and single-family uses are located across Delaware Street to the east.

The project site is approximately one-third of a mile (to the south) of the Hayward Park Caltrain Station and just over one-half mile (to the north) of the Hillsdale Caltrain Station. The rail line is adjacent to the project site. The San Mateo Events Center is also located in the project vicinity. The property has a land use designation and zoning of Transit Oriented Development (TOD). The project is located in the San Mateo Rail Corridor Transit-Oriented Development Plan ("Corridor Plan") Civic Area district which allows for multi-family mixed use development with a minimum density of 35 dwelling units per acre and a maximum of 50 dwelling units per acre with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 2.0.

## **PREVIOUS PROJECT & BACKGROUND**

A previous project, by different developer, was reviewed by the Planning Commission at a study session in 2004. At the time, the project included the construction of 143 multi-family units. At the study session, the Planning Commission and adjacent neighbors expressed concern regarding the size and massing of the project, relationship to adjacent residential uses. Based upon these comments, the applicant reduced the number of units to 111 units, modified the design of the project to include courtyards adjacent to the existing residential uses.

Staff recommended approval of the project including the 111 units based upon the above mentioned changes to the project. The project was heard at a Planning Commission Public Hearing in 2006. The Planning Commission reviewed the project and heard testimony from adjacent property owners regarding the proposed 111 unit multi-family project. Concerns regarding the project primarily included the density and massing of the project, as well as potential shade and shadow impacts that could result upon the existing adjacent residential development to the north of the project site. Based upon this testimony, the applicant proposed to reduce the height of the northern portion of the building from four stories down to two and three stories, resulting in a project unit reduction of 111 to 104 units. The Planning Commission approved the reduced project with modifications and revised conditions of approval.

Subsequently, the reduced project was appealed by a member of the adjacent Ironwood townhomes development. The appeal was based upon the size and density of the project and the potential shade and shadow impacts to the existing adjacent residential uses. In addition, a member of the City Council requested to review the project. The City Council approved the project at 111 units in 2007. At this time, no building permits have been filed for that project. The entitlements expire this year.

## **PROPOSED PROJECT**

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing commercial building, which was formally used as a printing and lithographic company, and to construct a three-story residential development consisting of 111 residential apartment units. This design is in keeping with the previously approved unit count project density as described above. It also maintains a site design with units surrounding courtyards; below-grade parking, and a main entry off of Pacific Blvd. This project design differs in that it proposes a solely 3-story elevation (instead of 3 and 4 stories); provides for larger courtyards with greater setbacks from the adjacent Ironwood project; provides for amenity spaces in two ground-level spaces directly adjacent to the Ironwood project. These spaces would be located 5 feet from the property line, as opposed to the 15-foot setback provided by the previous project (refer to Attachments 2 and 4).

As stated above, the proposed 111 residential units are located around courtyards at the center of the site and front the perimeter of the site along Delaware Street and Pacific Boulevard. The

project includes 39 one-bedroom units; 67 two-bedroom units and 5 three-bedroom units. The units will be approximately 750 to 1,400 square feet in size.

The project is consistent with the City's density, height, and floor area requirements (Attachment #2). The building floor area totals approximately 134,006 square feet with a Floor Area Ratio of 1.29, which is below the maximum permitted FAR of 2.0. The building height is approximately 35 feet throughout the project site, which is below the maximum permitted height of 35 to 55 feet. The height limit requirement is 35 feet for the portion of the lot within 45 feet of Delaware Street. This lower height zone is intended to protect the quality of life and sunlight access for residential areas located across Delaware Street. The height limit for the remainder of the lot is 40-55 feet.

Vehicle access to the site will be provided via a driveway on Pacific Boulevard. The project proposes all visitor parking spaces (22 spaces) to be provided at grade, and all vehicle parking for the units is provided in the below garage. This site layout allows for front entrances and stoops to the units to line the streetscape (refer to Attachment 4).

The project proposes 220 parking spaces. 22 of those spaces would be for visitors and 198 would be resident spaces. 15 of these spaces would be tandem spaces. The project also proposes 94 bicycle spaces in accordance with the City's newly adopted Bicycle Master Plan.

The developer submitted a Build It Green Multifamily Greenpoint Checklist that documents a total of 97 points, which exceeds the Green Building Ordinance requirement of 75 points (Attachment #3).

As presently designed, the project requires Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR), Site Development Permit and a tentative map.

This project will require design review by the City's design review consultant which will focus on conformance with the City's Urban Design Element, Corridor Plan and Multi Family Design Guidelines as applicable.

#### **ISSUES:**

Density and Unit Type: The project is proposed at a density of 47 dwelling units per acre. The Rail Corridor Plan specifies a range of density for this project site of 35-50 dwelling units per acre. The proposed project is in the range density requirements of the TOD zone.

#### Architectural Design

The proposed contemporary architectural design is in keeping with the existing Ironwood complex to the north of the project and the newly approved 2000 S. Delaware project further to the north. Across S. Delaware St. are more traditional examples of architecture. Careful review

of the proposed design will be needed to ensure compatibility with both existing land uses and newly approved projects.

#### Building Scale/Roofline

The scale of the buildings is uniform in that they are 3 stories in height. The buildings step down to two stories in height at the location of the amenity rooms, closest to the Ironwood complex. The roofline is essentially flat, with minor variations at the tower elements.

#### Shade and Shadow Study

The applicant is in the process of preparing a final shade and shadow study that will show potential shade and shadow impacts upon the adjacent Ironwood complex during all seasons/times. This has been of importance to the residents of the Ironwood complex, since there has been concern regarding shading of backyards and limitation of solar exposure within the units.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING**

The applicant held a pre-application neighborhood meeting on February 1, 2012. The primary concerns of the adjacent neighbors were the minimum density requirements of the TOD zone. The neighborhood drew a direct correlation between the density minimums for that site and impacts their quality of life through development that blocks their sunlight and views, infringes on their privacy, and increases the demand for on-street parking.

After viewing the shade and shadow study provided by the applicant, the neighborhood requested that the amenity buildings be setback further than the 5 feet proposed and reduced in height and that greater consideration be given to provide additional buffer space between the two projects. There was also concern that the 3-story portion of the along S. Delaware St. was too close to the property line and would have a negative effect on the livability of Ironwood units along S. Delaware St. that directly adjoin the proposed project.

The neighborhood expressed concerns about parking impacts on the neighborhood from guests and residents of the proposed development and noted that on street parking is restricted on Delaware Street and a portion of Pacific Boulevard limiting overflow (refer to Attachment 5).

### **RAIL CORRIDOR TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The project site is located in the Rail Corridor Transit Oriented Development (TOD) plan area. On June 6, 2005 the City adopted the *San Mateo Rail Corridor Transit-Oriented Development Plan (Corridor Plan)*. The intent of the Corridor Plan is to allow, encourage and provide guidance for the creation of world class Transit Oriented Development (TOD) within a half-mile radius of the Hillsdale and Hayward Park Caltrain station areas, while maintaining and improving the quality of life of for those who already live and work in the area. The TOD Policies of the Corridor Plan are designed to encourage and facilitate transit use and reduce vehicle trips.

Since the project is in the Corridor Plan area, the City's standard parking requirements for multi-family housing do not apply. Per Corridor Plan Policy 7.22, the conditions of approval for the project shall establish the parking standards. Staff will work with Hexagon traffic consultants and Nelson/Nygaard to analyze probable trip generation, traffic impacts and the anticipated parking demand for the project. The proposed amount of parking will be analyzed in conjunction with the project site location between two CalTrain stations and the requirement to implement transportation demand management strategies to maximize non-automobile trips.

### **POLICY AND PLAN COMPLIANCE**

The General Plan Land Use Diagram designates the project site as Transit-Oriented Development. Land uses within this area should be transit supportive, including multi-family housing and major employment centers. The project site is within the San Mateo Rail Corridor Transit-Oriented Development Plan ("Corridor Plan") Civic Area district. The Corridor Plan notes that the Civic Area district predominantly allows multi-family residential mixed-use development with a density between 35-50 units per acre. The Floor Area Ratio for this area is 2.0.

General Plan policies and Corridor Plan goals and policies that apply to this project address a variety of topics, including land use, traffic, parking, transportation demand management, housing, design, and noise. The proposed project generally complies with the goals and policies in the General Plan and Corridor Plan. However, the project may need further refinement to conform to specific policies. The formal planning application submittal will be required to provide further clarification and/or documentation to ensure conformance with all applicable policies and guidelines.

### **Environmental Review**

There are a number of environmental issues that need to be addressed during the formal review of the project including traffic, noise, and air quality. Once additional materials are submitted to complete the application packet, staff will assess the level of environmental review required.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION INPUT**

The applicant has submitted conceptual site plans and development information because their intent is to receive feedback from the Planning Commission on the proposed project before proceeding to the next level of detail. At this time, staff is seeking Planning Commission comments and input on the following issues:

- Architectural Design: The proposed contemporary architectural design, including glass tower elements and building materials.

- Site Plan: The use of courtyards to separate the units, as well as the paseos and walkways proposed as part of the project
- Building Scale/Rooflines: The scale of the proposed buildings, in particular the uniform height and flat rooflines.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The applicant will revise the plans as necessary or provide additional information to respond to comments from the Planning Commission's study session and re-submit those materials as part of their application.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Vicinity Map
2. Data Sheet
3. Green Building Checklist
4. Reduced Set of Plans

### **CC (AR and attachments)**

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### **CC (emailed link to AR and attachments)**

Interested Parties