

CITY OF SAN JOSÉ, CALIFORNIA
Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
801 North First Street, Room 400
San José, California 95110-1795

Hearing Date/Agenda Number
P.C. 02/13/2002 Item 3.a.

STAFF REPORT

File Number
PDC 01-07-068

Application Type
Planned Development Rezoning

Council District
6

Planning Area
Willow Glen

Assessor's Parcel Number(s)
284-02-008

PROJECT DESCRIPTION : To allow the construction of up to a maximum of 250,000 square feet of commercial uses

Completed by: Anastazia Aziz

Location: Southeast corner of Southwest Expressway and Fruitdale Avenue

Gross Acreage: 1.91

Net Acreage: 1.91

Net Density: N/A

Existing Zoning: C-P Commercial Pedestrian Existing Use: Vacant

Proposed Zoning: A(PD) Planned Development Proposed Use: Commercial

GENERAL PLAN

Completed by: AA

Land Use/Transportation Diagram Designation
General Commercial with Transit Oriented Development Corridor Overlay

Project Conformance:
 Yes No
 See Analysis and Recommendations

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

Completed by: AA

North: Multi-family Residential

A(PD) Planned Development

East: Multi-family Residential

R-M Residential; A(PD) Planned Development

South: Multi-family Residential

R-1-8 (PD)

West: Rail line, multi-family residential

R-M Residential

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Completed by: AA

Environmental Impact Report adopted by Resolution No. 70356
 Negative Declaration
 Negative Declaration adopted on

Exempt
 Environmental Review Incomplete

FILE HISTORY

Completed by: AA

Annexation Title: Hamilton No. 32

Date: August 31, 1970

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION

Approval
 Approval with Conditions
 Denial
 Uphold Director's Decision

Date: _____

Approved by: _____
 Action
 Recommendation

APPLICANT/DEVELOPER/OWNER

John Vidovich, De Anza Properties
920 West Fremont Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94087

PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED

Completed by: AA

Department of Public Works

See attached memorandum.

Other Departments and Agencies

See attached memoranda from Environmental Services Department, County of Santa Clara, State of California Department of Transportation, and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

None received.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BACKGROUND

The applicant, DeAnza Properties, is requesting a Planned Development Rezoning from C-P Commercial to A(PD) Planned Development to allow the development of up to 250,000 square feet of commercial uses on the subject property. A planned and funded future light rail transit (LRT) line and station will be constructed at the corner of Southwest Expressway and Fruitdale Avenue and bus route Nos. 25, 503 and State Route 17 serve the site.

Fruitdale Avenue is the site's northern boundary, St. Elizabeth is to the east, the Wilshire Park condominium development is to the south and multi-family apartments are located to the west, separated from the site by Southwest Expressway and the railroad right-of-way. A commercial building is located on the opposite side of Fruitdale Avenue to the north; however, the site has been rezoned for multi-family residential uses (File No. PDC99-03-026).

Prior Approvals

The site is approximately two acres in size and was subject to a General Plan Amendment (File No. GP00-06-05) which approved a change in the General Plan land use designation from Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC) to General Commercial.

The subject site forms part of a larger property which totals twelve acres in size. Planned Development Zoning (File no. PDC00-08-068) was approved for ten acres located to the east and south of the subject site to allow residential and retail uses. Planned Development Permit File No. PD01-01-013 was subsequently approved for the same ten-acre, site permitting 442 dwelling units and 8,000 square feet of retail in a total of five buildings. The previously-approved project is shown on the attached Land Use Plan (see areas A, B, C1, C2, and D). The approved buildings are located along Fruitdale Avenue, St. Elizabeth Drive, and the southern and the southwestern corner of the site with limited frontage on Southwest Expressway. A fitness center, meeting rooms, leasing offices, outdoor pool, clubhouse and other residential amenities are provided for residents. Buildings range in height from 25 feet along the southern perimeter of the site, 35 feet along a portion of St. Elizabeth Drive and up to a maximum of 65 feet adjacent to Fruitdale Avenue. The publicly-accessible open space of approximately 0.8 acres is located in the center of the project. East-west and north-south pedestrian paseos criss-cross the property to allow the public to easily gain access to the light rail

station, project open space, and retail uses. The twelve-acre property is currently being prepared for construction of the approved residential and retail uses.

Redevelopment Project Area

The subject site, known as the Fruitdale Station Project, is located within the Neighborhood Business Cluster Redevelopment Project Area

Project Description

This Planned Development Zoning proposes up to a maximum of 250,000 square feet of office uses or a combination of up to a maximum of 20,000 square feet of retail uses and a maximum of 230,000 square feet of office uses on Block E as indicated on the attached General Development Plan. The proposed zoning allows a maximum height of 120 feet. The applicant's conceptual plans show a maximum height of 99 feet at the corner of Fruitdale Avenue and Southwest Expressway allowing for a grand entry feature and sense of arrival at Fruitdale Station. The building steps down to approximately 71 feet (five stories) for the remainder of the building envelope. Retail uses, up to a maximum of 20,000 square feet are proposed at the ground level along the Southwest Expressway frontage and along the interior of the site adjacent to the 0.8 acre of publicly-accessible private open space. The applicant proposes to allow employees access to the previously-approved shower and recreation facilities located immediately to the south of the proposed building.

The majority of the project's required parking is provided underneath the proposed building. A small amount of parking is dedicated exclusively for the commercial uses in the structured parking previously-approved on Block C1. Additionally, parking in excess of the required amount is available within Block C2. This consists of unassigned parking that is available for both the residential and commercial uses. A 15% reduction in the number of required commercial parking spaces is proposed because of the site's proximity to light rail and bus routes. Retail uses of less than 5,000 square feet are not proposed to provide dedicated parking. Bicycle and motorcycle parking spaces are provided at a ratio of one space per 50 auto spaces.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Several community meetings were held for this proposal and the previously-approved 10-acre project, the most recent on Wednesday, November 1, 2000 at both Chai House and the Sherman Oaks Community Center. Attendees expressed concern regarding school impacts associated with the multi-family residential aspect of the prior project and indicated a desire for more parks in the neighborhood. Chai House residents expressed a strong desire that the proposed retail uses include a grocery store.

The Neighborhood Business Clusters Redevelopment Area Formation Environmental Impact Report (EIR) provided opportunity for public comment. Notices of availability of the Draft EIR were published and mailed to property owners and tenants within 1000 feet of the subject site.

A number of community meetings and public hearings regarding the proposed General Plan Amendment from *Transit Corridor Residential* to *General Commercial* for the subject two-acre site were also held.

A notice of the public hearing before the Planning Commission and City Council was published and distributed to the owners and tenants of all properties located within 1,000 feet of the project site. Staff has been available to discuss the project with members of the public.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The environmental impacts of this project were addressed in the *Fruitdale Office General Plan and Subsequent PD Rezoning* (EIR). This EIR addressed up to 250,000 square feet of office uses and was submitted in support of the General Plan Amendment. A subsequent traffic analysis indicates that the currently proposed option of replacing 20,000 square feet of office uses with retail uses would not result in any additional traffic impacts; consequently an Addendum to the EIR was prepared for this project modification and indicates there are no additional impacts.

GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE

The proposed rezoning is consistent with the San José 2020 General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of *General Commercial* and *Transit Oriented Development Corridor* and with the relevant General Plan policies. The commercial uses are compatible in scale and character with the existing and planned land uses surrounding the site, particularly due to its location near the planned Fruitdale LRT Station. The intent of the Transit-Oriented Development Corridors is to encourage more intensive non-residential uses and mixed-use development. Similarly, the Growth Management and Sustainable City Major Strategies direct more intensive, mixed use development in close proximity to light rail stations. The proposal is consistent with these key principles in that it proposes a large commercial component adjacent to and integrated with the previously-approved 442 residential units. The overall result is a mixed-use development on a twelve-acre site across the street from a light rail station.

ANALYSIS

The primary issues associated with this proposal are conformance with the Commercial Design Guidelines. The overall intent of the greater 12-acre proposal is to create a transit and pedestrian-oriented neighborhood. As such, the subject rezoning on the 2-acre parcel is designed to reinforce the spatial organization and cohesiveness of the overall development. The subject proposal provides a clear edge to the public open space, and to the promenade, paseo, and internal streets which define and traverse the area.

Conformance with the Commercial Design Guidelines (CDG)

The Commercial Design Guidelines for office buildings over three stories in height focus on: 1) site organization; 2) setbacks; 3) building design; and 4) parking opportunities.

Site Organization

The rezoning allows ground floor neighborhood serving retail uses to encourage retail and pedestrian activity and to present an appropriately urban façade to Southwest Expressway and Fruitdale Avenue. The rezoning requires that the frontage include a storefront treatment with glazing that provides 60% transparency, and that awning, canopies and arcades are encouraged. Office uses are permitted throughout the building.

Additionally, the east-west and north-south paseos create pedestrian connections between St. Elizabeth Drive, the proposed commercial building, and the Fruitdale Light Rail Station, and connections between the southern residential buildings, the proposed commercial buildings and the VTA bus stop on Fruitdale Avenue. The publicly-accessible open space is centrally-located on the site and sheltered from the traffic on Southwest Expressway and Fruitdale Avenue, thereby providing a safe and comfortable open space area for use by project employees and the greater residential neighborhood.

Setbacks

The CDG recommends twenty-five foot setbacks from the street for buildings over three stories; however the guidelines also recommend siting buildings at or near the front setback line where appropriate. The proposed building is set back thirteen feet from Southwest Expressway, eleven feet from Fruitdale Avenue and narrows to a five-foot setback at the corner of Southwest Expressway and Fruitdale Avenue.

The reduced setbacks serve to encourage the use of transit by project employees and patrons by providing efficient and direct connections between the building and the light rail station and the bus stop. A wide sidewalk (minimum ten feet in width) is proposed along both street frontages to ensure pedestrian safety. Additionally, the proposed building siting will provide a strong street presence along the adjacent arterials of Southwest Expressway and Fruitdale Avenue. The reduced setbacks also make it possible to provide a larger publicly-accessible open space in the interior of the site.

Building Design

According to the CDG, buildings should be oriented parallel to the street, particularly at intersections. Furthermore, the Guidelines recommend orienting buildings toward light rail stations and bus stops for convenient access by public transit passengers. The proposed rezoning orients the buildings parallel to Fruitdale Avenue and Southwest Expressway. The buildings create a distinctive edge, define the site, and create and facilitate direct pedestrian access to the proximate transit facilities in conformance with the requirements of the Guidelines.

The prominent ninety-nine foot tall entry feature proposed at the corner of Southwest Expressway and Fruitdale Avenue provides an appropriate landmark for not only the project site, but also for the Fruitdale LRT station. The design accommodates roofline variation and places the height and bulk of the building at the corner.

Treatment of the building elevations along the Southwest Expressway should recognize the large scale of this urban transit boulevard, but avoid a monolithic appearance through modulation in both the roof line and in the fenestration and vertical plane of the facade. Special architectural treatments (e.g., towers, radial corner, special fenestration, etc.) are proposed at the intersection of Fruitdale Avenue and Southwest Expressway to create an urban edge and to create a landmark statement opposite the transit station.

Special treatments should be employed at the ground level (e.g., canopies, arcades, passages, etc.) and at the topmost floor (e.g., projecting eaves, towers, distinctive roof forms, etc.) to establish a clear base and top to the building. In addition, special architectural expression should be incorporated within the building at key entries, view termini and corners to provide for further articulation, scale and interest.

Overall the building is well designed and sited to provide a sense of arrival at Fruitdale Station and will integrate well with the approved mixed-use development on the larger site.

Parking Opportunities

Parking for the commercial uses is proposed consistent with Zoning Code standards. Proposed parking requirements are based upon a 15 percent reduction from the City's standard parking ratios. The 15 percent reduction is typically allowed for projects with a high degree of transit orientation. Neighborhood-serving retail uses less than 5,000 square feet in area may be exempt from parking requirements if it is demonstrated

to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning that such uses will predominantly serve nearby residents and employees, and will not create undue parking impacts.

A range from a minimum of 723 parking spaces to a maximum of 750 parking spaces, depending on the mix of office and retail uses is required for the project. Six hundred and forty-six parking spaces are located beneath the building in three levels of underground parking and 135 spaces are dedicated for the exclusive use of the subject proposal in the adjacent Block C1 during business hours for a total of 781 parking spaces which exceeds the parking requirement.

Additionally, reciprocal shared residential guest parking spaces between the office and previously-approved residential uses is permitted to encourage and facilitate the parking spaces to be used more efficiently. The office and guest parking peak parking periods differ and the uses lend themselves to sharing parking spaces. The office spaces will be occupied during business hours on weekdays and generally unoccupied on weekday evenings and weekends, when demand increases for residential guest parking. Likewise, guest parking is not fully utilized during weekday business hours and may be shared for overflow employee parking. Up to 50 guest parking spaces in Block C2 may be shared with the subject property for additional employee parking, and at-grade 13 spaces at grade adjacent to the commercial uses are also proposed to be shared. During off-peak office hours on weekday evenings and weekends, residential guests of the previously-approved project may share the office parking spaces located on either the subject property or in Block C1.

For all of the above reasons, staff concludes that the proposed project is in substantial conformance with the Commercial Design Guidelines.

Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, staff concludes that the proposed project provides a significant opportunity to further important goals and strategies of the General Plan for transit-oriented, office, infill development within the Urban Service Area, that the project conforms to the Commercial Design Guidelines and that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends that the City Council approve the subject rezoning for the following reasons:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the San José 2020 General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of General Commercial.
 2. The proposed project conforms to the Commercial Design Guidelines.
 3. The project will promote transit usage.
 4. The proposed rezoning is compatible with existing and proposed uses on the adjacent and neighboring properties.
- c: Jim Sisk, De Anza Properties, 920 West Fremont Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94087
Alex Seidel, Seidel Holzman, 425 Battery Street, 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94111
Anne Stedler, City of San Jose Redevelopment Agency