



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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PLANNING BUREAU

September 19, 2019

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve an EIR Addendum (EIRA-02-19) to the Downtown Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2009071006); approve a Site Plan Review (SPR 18-038) for a project consisting of 345 residential units in one mixed-use tower (23 stories in height with above grade and subterranean parking) and one mid-rise, mixed-use building (8 stories in height with above grade and subterranean parking), 14,481 sq. ft. of retail space, 563 parking spaces, and 128 bicycle parking spaces; find the proposed vacation of an existing named alley (Roble Way) and vacations of portion of the Pacific Avenue right-of-way in conformance with the General Plan; and approve a Vesting Tentative Tract Map (TTM18-008) to merge six lots into one 1.22-acre ground lot and create six airspace lots on a site currently developed as an at-grade parking lot located at 131 West 3rd Street in the Downtown Plan (PD-30) Height Incentive Area. (District 1)

APPLICANTS: Ensemble Real Estate Investments
c/o Tyson Sayles
444 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 1108
Long Beach, CA 90802
(Application No. 1807-11)

DISCUSSION

The site is located on the east side of Pacific Avenue between West 3rd Street on the south and West 4th Street to the north and Solana Court, a named alley, to the east in the Downtown Plan (PD-30) Zoning District. The site encompasses six parcels and a portion of a named east-west alley (Roble Way) that is proposed to be vacated as a part of the project for a total project area of 1.22-acres (53,358 sq. ft.) (Exhibit A –Vicinity Map). The project site is currently developed as a paved at-grade parking lot with parking spaces utilized by the City of Long Beach. Adjacent uses are typical of the downtown setting and are described in Table 1 below: Uses Adjacent to the Subject Site.

Table 1
Uses Adjacent to the Subject Site

Location	Zoning Designation	Land Use
North	PD-30	Drive thru Restaurant, Multifamily Residential (Walker Building - Historic Landmark)
East	PD-30	Retail
South	PD-30	Retail, Multifamily Residential
West	PD-30	Restaurant, Hotel (Roof Top Sign -Historic Landmark), Multifamily Residential

The site is served by a variety of multi-modal local and regional transportation options. It has access from the Interstate-710 (I-710) freeway off-ramp at East Broadway, with an on-ramp located a few blocks away on West 3rd Street. A local bus stop is located directly in front of the project site on Pacific Avenue and the Long Beach Transit Gallery, which provides access to the full range of local bus routes operated by LB Transit, as well as regional bus routes operated by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), located two blocks to the south. The Metro Blue Line (soon to be renamed A Line) also maintains a light rail stop located northwest of the project site, in the Pacific Avenue median between West 4th Street and West 5th Street, providing regional rail service to downtown Los Angeles and the greater Los Angeles County area. Additionally, existing protected Class IV separated bike lanes are located on Broadway and West 3rd Street, connecting to the City's 65-mile bike route system.

The property is owned by the City of Long Beach and is currently in escrow to transfer the property to the project applicant, Ensemble Real Estate Investments.

Project Description

The proposed project would create a new mixed-use residential development in the core of the Downtown Plan (PD-30) area. The project will replace an existing surface parking lot with two mixed-use buildings, including one tower (23 stories in height) and one mid-rise building (8 stories in height) with parking structures (above-ground levels and subterranean levels) in each building. The project includes a total of 345 dwelling units that would range from studios to three-bedroom, 14,481 sq. ft. of retail space, 563 parking spaces, and 128 bicycle spaces (Exhibit B – Plans and Renderings), interior and exterior amenity areas, and a pedestrian public paseo. The applicant has indicated the project will be constructed in phases. During the first phase of the project, the mid-rise building, the paseo, alley improvements, and adjacent improvements within the right-of-way will be constructed. During phase two, the construction of the south tower will commence. During the second stage, the paseo is anticipated to be used for staging; landscaping will be removed and replaced at the end of that phase.

Table 2, Summary of Proposed Development, provides a summary of each building on-site.

Table 2
Summary of Proposed Development

Location	Height	Number of Residential Units	Retail Area (sq. ft.)	Common Outdoor Open Space ¹	Common Indoor Open Space ²	Private Open Space ³	Public Paseo ⁴
South Tower	23 stories	203 units	7,679	7,325	7,250	7,400 (63 units with private open space)	5,335
North Building	8 stories	142 units	6,802	6,619	4,438	3,940 (50 units with private open space)	-
TOTAL	-	345 units	14,481	13,944⁵	11,688⁶	11,340⁷	5,335

¹ Includes outdoor amenity decks

² Includes activity rooms, bike amenity rooms, fitness rooms areas, and lobbies.

³ Total of 50 percent of units require a minimum of 36 sq. ft. of private open space (total of 6,228 sq. ft.) required per PD-30.

⁴ To be built out during Phase one.

⁵ As proposed, 3,277 sq. ft. in surplus of PD-30 required 20 percent of site required as common outdoor open space.

⁶ As proposed, 10,688 sq. ft. in surplus of PD-30 required 500 sq. ft. room per residential development.

⁷ Balconies and patios for exclusive use by adjacent residents.

Site Plan Review

The site is in the within the Height Incentive Area of the PD-30 Plan area; a subarea that allows high-rise development. The Height Incentive Area is characterized by mid- and high-rise residential development; high intensity employment; and various retail, cultural, and entertainment destinations. The base floor area ratio (FAR) in the PD-30 Height Incentive Area is 8.0, but this may be increased an additional 1.5 FAR through the provision of certain incentives. The proposed project's total gross building area would be approximately 659,515 sq. ft., including all below-grade levels. With the subtraction of exempt garage square footage, the FAR would be 9.48 (505,536 sq. ft.), where a FAR of 11 (586,938 sq. ft.) is the maximum permitted with incentives. To exceed the base FAR of 8.0 in the Height Incentive Area, the applicant is proposing to use a combination of three development incentives for an additional 1.5 of FAR: LEED Silver Certified or Equivalent, Green Roof or Eco-Roof – Option 2: 31-60 percent of footprint, and Public Open Space – Option 1: 10 percent of site.

Development Incentives

The base height limit in the Height Incentive Area is 240 ft., but this may be increased up to 500 ft. through the provision of certain incentives. With the incorporation of the proposed incentives discussed above, an increase in building height is also permitted. Correspondingly, the total height of the south tower is proposed to be 269 ft. above grade. The north mid-rise building will be built at 85 ft. in height which is within the base height limit for the area. The project is designed to conform with all applicable development standards of PD-30 and is consistent with the level and intensity of development intended by the zoning district.

The proposed pedestrian paseo satisfies the development incentive for the provision of public open space (10 percent of the site) to gain an additional 0.5 FAR over the base standards for the Height Incentive Area of PD-30. As conditioned, the entirety of the public paseo (5,335 sq. ft.) would be constructed during the first phase of the project and will be conditioned to require the recordation of an easement allowing public access (Exhibit C – Conditions of Approval).

Architecture

The site configuration and building architecture is well-planned, the mid-rise and tower have architectural styles that are distinct but complimentary, resulting in a cohesive design. The building placement incorporates a public paseo between the two proposed buildings at the location of the east-west named alley (Roble Way) that is to be vacated. Additionally, the building placement relates to the surrounding development pattern in that the lower, mid-rise building is situated on the north end of the site which is consistent with the buildings across 4th Street and was configured in this manner in response to public input. The ground floor retail uses would include a storefront window system with cast-in-place concrete architectural finishes and a steel frame canopy. The overall design of this component of the project would include a contemporary design consisting of a three-part stucco exterior system with a smooth finish at the upper floors. Metal panels with reveal providence would be vertically integrated into the building design. All balcony areas would include an aluminum frame with glass infill.

The PD-30 includes design standards for tower development that encourage a transparent design. The tower effectively uses a combination of opaque and transparent wall systems that, in combination with the building form, creates a well composed building that meets the intent of PD-30, although not fully transparent. As noted in PD-30, the building incorporates a design approach that creates an interplay between the solid and transparent forms. The interaction between the ground floor street and paseo facades, parking structure architectural screening, and tower elements meet and read as a cohesive design to the near and distant viewer.

Building Programming

The south tower ground floor would consist of 7,679 square-ft. of retail, 1,825 square-ft. of leasing/lobby areas, a mailroom, a bike storage room, utility areas, and parking circulation. Lower levels (LL) 1 through 3 would consist of parking and Levels 2 through

5 would consist of above-grade parking. Levels 6 through 22 would consist of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, three-bedroom units and common resident amenity spaces such as a community room, fitness center, and amenity decks. In total, the south tower would develop 203 residential units with 7,679 sq. ft. of retail and would be 23 stories in height.

The north mid-rise building would include 6,802 sq. ft. of retail uses at the ground floor with additional areas for a bike kitchen and storage (1,213 sq. ft.), leasing/lobby areas (1,545 sq. ft.), a mailroom, utility areas, parking, and circulation. LL1 and LL2 would consist of parking and Levels 1 and 2 would consist of at and above-grade parking. Levels 3 through 8 consist of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, three-bedroom units and common resident amenity spaces such as a community room and amenity decks. In total, the north building would develop 142 units and 6,802 sq. ft. of retail and would be 8 stories in height.

PD-30 requires a minimum unit size of 600 sq. ft.. However, a reduction of this minimum unit size standard to 450 sq. ft. may be approved provided no more than 15 percent of all units in a given development are under 600 sq. ft.. The reduction in size requires the Site Plan Review Committee to find the undersized units livable and desirable. Sixteen of the 142 units in the northern mid-rise building, or approximately four percent of the project units, measure less than 600 sq. ft.. The undersized units, all studios, are located in the north mid-rise building and will have open floor plans to enhance their daylight, views, and livability. These units are further enhanced by their inclusion of private outdoor decks. Furthermore, as conditioned, closet organizers shall be installed and maintained in each of the units under 600 sq. ft. in size. Tenants within these units will have full access to all project open space and amenity areas. For these reasons, the Site Plan Review Committee found the provision of undersized units acceptable. In addition to studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units, the project includes a total of 23, three-bedroom units (six units in the northern building and seventeen units in the south tower), which equals approximately six percent of the total project units. The unit mix provides a variety of housing types and sizes promoting a more balanced community in compliance with PD-30 requirements (Pg. 46) and the General Plan Housing Element (2014) Policy 4.2, which encourages rental opportunities that accommodate the housing needs of all socioeconomic segments, including large families.

Open Space

Common (outdoor and indoor) and private open space areas for the residential uses are proposed on the upper floors of the tower and mid-rise building through the presence of amenity decks, common indoor spaces, and private balconies/patios. PD-30 requires projects with over 21 units on a lot size in excess of 30,000 sq. ft. to provide common outdoor open space equal to 20 percent of the lot size (10,667 sq. ft.). The south tower would provide 7,325 sq. ft. of common outdoor open space at the two proposed amenity decks. The north mid-rise building would provide 6,619 sq. ft. of common outdoor open space on the two proposed amenity decks. The total combined common outdoor open

space decks (13,944 sq. ft.) exceeds the required open space requirements required by the PD-30 standards.

In addition to common open space, the development standards for PD-30 require a minimum of 50 percent of units to have private open space area at a minimum increment of 36 sq. ft. As proposed, the mid-rise building would provide 44 percent of the units with this minimum and the tower would provide 33 percent of the units with this minimum. While the minimum private open space area would not meet the PD-30 standards, the project has incorporated a surplus of indoor common open space (4,438 sq. ft. for the mid-rise building and 7,250 sq. ft. for the tower) over the minimum required 500 sq. ft. of common indoor open space required under PD-30 standards. As conditioned, these interior common open space areas intended to exchange for private open space shall be maintained in perpetuity. Therefore, as conditioned, the provision of public, common (interior and exterior), and private (interior and exterior) open space would meet the requirements of the PD-30 development standards.

Vehicle Access

Vehicular access to the project site will be provided from a named alley (Solana Court) along the east of the project site. The existing 16-foot wide alley would be widened to 18-ft. in width with the incorporation of a 2-foot dedication at the entire length of the alley. In addition, a 2-foot-wide easement for vehicular access purposes (limited height of 18-ft.) would be provided along the entire western length of the alley. The resulting Solana Court right-of-way would be 20-ft.-wide and accommodate two-way vehicular travel. Residential parking is provided in both buildings in at-grade, above-grade, and subterranean levels. Parking for commercial visitors is provided in the parking structure at the north building and access would be maintained via the entrance on Solana Court. A sign program that incorporates wayfinding signage which clearly labels retail and guest access areas is required as a condition of approval

Parking

As shown in Table 3, Required Parking, a total of 447 parking spaces are required for this project per the PD-30 Plan requirements. This includes one space per unit (345 spaces), guest parking at a rate of one space per each four dwelling units (87 spaces), and one space per 1,000 sq. ft. of retail (15 spaces). All the retail parking spaces would be located at the ground level of the north mid-rise building.

Table 3
Required Parking

Location	Use	Parking Requirement	Parking Provided
Vehicle Parking			
North Building	142 Residential Units	1 space per unit or 142 spaces	235
		1 guest space per 4 units or 36 spaces ¹	

Table 3
Required Parking

Location	Use	Parking Requirement	Parking Provided
	6,802 sq.ft. of Retail, Restaurants, Bars	1 space per 1,000 sq.ft. or 7 spaces	15
South Tower	203 Residential Units	1 space per unit or 203 spaces	313
		1 guest space per 4 units or 51 spaces ¹	
	7,679 sq.ft. of Retail, Restaurants, Bars	1 space per 1,000 sq.ft. or 8 spaces	0 ²
TOTAL		447	563
Bicycle Parking			
North Building	142 Residential Units	1 space for every 5 units or 29 Spaces	60 spaces (50 hanging and 10 standing)
	6,802 sq.ft. of Retail, Restaurants, Bars	1 space for every 7,500 sq. ft. of retail or 1 space	8 spaces (4 racks)
South Tower	203 Residential Units	1 space for every 5 units or 41 Spaces	50 spaces (hanging)
	7,679 sq.ft. of Retail, Restaurants, Bars	1 space for every 7,500 sq. ft. of retail or 2 spaces	10 spaces (5 racks)
TOTAL		73 spaces	110 spaces (100 hanging and 10 standing)

¹ Half of the required guest parking can be shared with commercial uses.

² All retail parking will be constructed during Phase I and located in the north mid-rise building.

PD-30 requires a total of 70 bicycle parking spaces for the residential component of the project and 3 bicycle parking spaces for the commercial component of the project. As shown in Table 3, Required Parking, the project includes 110 bicycle parking spaces for the residential uses and 18 bicycle parking spaces for the commercial uses on-site, which exceeds the PD-30 requirements. A temporary loading/unloading space would be located on West 4th Street near the entrance to Solana Court to accommodate the pickup and drop-off of rideshare patrons (Taxi, Uber, Lyft, etc.).

The project includes improvements to the pedestrian environment and streetscape, including the provision of street trees and landscaping. Due to the proximity of the project to the Metro Blue Line Station and priority placed on pedestrians within the Downtown plan, a condition of approval requiring the applicant to further assess the feasibility of a pedestrian scramble in a focused traffic analysis at the intersection of Pacific Avenue and West 4th Street is required.

Vesting Tentative Tract Map

The project includes a Vesting Tentative Tract Map (Exhibit D – VTTM No. 82334), which proposes to merge six lots into a single ground lot and create six airspace lots. The airspace lots facilitate separation of the residential, commercial and parking areas for financing purposes (Reference Table 4). The proposed residential units will remain rental units.

Table 4
Lot Breakdown for Vesting Tentative Tract Map

Lot Number	Type of Lot	Use of Lot
1	Ground Lot	Master Ground Lot
1	Airspace Lot	Retail (North Building)
2	Airspace Lot	Residential Units (North Building)
3	Airspace Lot	Midrise Parking
4	Airspace Lot	Residential Units (South Tower)
5	Airspace Lot	High Rise Parking
6	Airspace Lot	Retail (South Tower)

To create the public paseo at the location of the named alley (Roble Way), a vacation of the existing 10-foot-wide alley is provided. In addition, between two and nine ft. of the public right-of-way along Pacific Avenue will be vacated.

General Plan Conformity Findings

The General Plan Conformity finding pertains to the proposed alley vacation and vacation of portions of the right-of-way described above. The vacations must be found consistent with the General Plan. The General Plan consists of 11 elements, each element carries the same authority concerning land use issues. All elements of the General Plan were considered, and staff finds the proposed vacations to be in conformance with all applicable elements. A review of the relevant General Plan elements and specific General Plan consistency findings are presented below.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element divides the City into 21 land use districts, which provide general guidance as to the appropriate type and density of land uses. The alley is located within Land Use District Number 7 - Mixed Use District (LUD 7). LUD 7 is intended to allow for a blending of different land uses as established by the adopted Planned Development District. The subject alley and eastern portion of Pacific Avenue right-of-way are located within the Downtown Plan (PD-30). Alleys within PD-30 are identified for their potential to serve as a means for pedestrian connection and enhancement. However, the subject alley was not identified as an essential piece of the Connectivity Network in the

Downtown Plan. The proposed pedestrian paseo would maintain pedestrian access through the area of the vacated alley.

In addition to the vacation of the existing named alley, between 2 ft. and 11 ft. along the eastern portion of the Pacific Avenue right-of-way would be vacated as part of this project. The vacation of this area would provide for a right-of-way limit consistent with the city blocks to the north and south of the subject site. The vacation of this area would create for a consistent street wall along Pacific Avenue with existing and future development in accordance with the zero-setback provided in PD-30 in this area.

The intent of LUD 7 is to facilitate more cohesive development as opposed to disparate pockets of development. The vacation of the alley and Pacific Avenue right-of way is consistent with this purpose by allowing parcels to potentially be assembled for development while maintaining pedestrian connection along the vacated alley and adjacent Pacific Avenue sidewalk.

The City's Mobility Element is aimed at transforming Long Beach into a community that offers flexible, convenient, affordable, and energy-efficient transportation options for residents and visitors alike. The portion of the alley that is proposed to be vacated was determined to be not necessary for public use or convenience because access to the abutting commercial uses can be maintained by means of two existing streets (West 3rd Street and West 4th Street). Furthermore, the alley is not currently used for access. Alley vacation would therefore not prove detrimental to the movement of people and goods through the area.

The Pacific Avenue right-of-way (2 ft. to 11 ft. along the eastern portion of the Pacific Avenue) proposed to be vacated was determined to be not necessary for public use or convenience. The resulting sidewalk and parkway would be consistent with the Pacific Avenue right-of-way description outlined in the Mobility Element. With regards to the vacation of the alley, it is within the Planning Commission's jurisdiction to make the finding of conformity whereas the City Council is the decision-making body on the alley vacation that is processed separately by the Public Works Department.

Conclusion

The project, with its high-density residential and mixed-use nature, building heights, and orientation towards Pacific Avenue, West 3rd Street, and West 4th Street is representative of the type of developments anticipated within the Downtown Plan. The site is an ideal location for this transit-oriented development, as it is well served by transit and lends itself to multi-modal transportation options. Improving the site with a high-quality, context-sensitive, mixed-use residential project will activate the site, contribute new residential units to the downtown housing stock (Exhibit E – Findings). The overall project package segments the city block to create human-scaled buildings with pedestrian-oriented street frontages and public open spaces that connect the mid-block paseo/alley connections to Pine Avenue. The project will develop a key site along the western portion of downtown and will create an iconic development in this area. Staff recommends the Planning Commission approve the requested Site Plan Review,

Vesting Tentative Tract Map, and the EIR Addendum to the Downtown Plan EIR and find the alley vacation consistent with the General Plan.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A total of 2,336 notices of public hearing were distributed on August 30, 2019, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Zoning Regulations. As of the preparation of this report, staff is in receipt of one letter in response to the project (Exhibit F – Public Comment Received).

In addition, to the formal project notification, planning staff met with the North Pine Neighborhood Alliance (NPNA) leadership several times to review the project and understand their concerns. The project applicant has engaged in community outreach with the NPNA and the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) on multiple occasions between 2016-2019. The most recent presentations included a meeting with the NPNA on November 5, 2018 and a meeting with the DLBA on January 9, 2019. Meeting formats included presentation of the proposed project with display boards and a question and answer session.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines, this project was analyzed as part of the previously-certified Downtown Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). An EIR Addendum (EIRA-02-19) was prepared for this project. The EIR Addendum analyzed the proposed project in accordance with the Downtown Plan PEIR (SCH No. 2009071006) and determined that the project will not result in any new significant impacts that exceed those analyzed in the Downtown Plan PEIR, with mitigation measures included (Exhibit G – EIR Addendum EIRA-02-19). Additionally, the development is subject to the Downtown Plan PEIR Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP). The MMRP is designed to ensure compliance with adopted mitigation measures during project implementation (Exhibit H – Downtown Plan MMRP). For each mitigation measure recommended in the PEIR that applies to the applicant's proposal, specifications are made that identify the action required and the monitoring that must occur. In addition, the party for verifying compliance with individual mitigation measures is identified.

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

September 19, 2019

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Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

- Exhibit A – Vicinity Map
- Exhibit B – Plans and Renderings
- Exhibit C – Conditions of Approval
- Exhibit D – VTTM No. 82334
- Exhibit E – Findings
- Exhibit F – Public Comment Received
- Exhibit G – EIR Addendum EIRA-02-19
- Exhibit H – Downtown Plan MMRP