

September 16, 2021

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Find the project within the scope of the previously-certified Downtown Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) (SCH#2009071006); Approve and adopt the Downtown Plan Program EIR Land Use Equivalency Program and 7th and Locust Development Downtown Plan EIR Addendum (EIRA 06-20) as an Addendum to the Downtown Plan Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR) (SCH #2009071006) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162. (District 1 and District 2);

Approve Site Plan Review SPR20-011 to allow the demolition of on-site structures and construction of a new seven-story mixed-use building containing 108 dwelling units, 1,188 sq. ft. of ground floor commercial uses, and an integrated four-level, 135 stall parking garage located at 636 Locust Avenue in the Downtown Plan (PD-30) Zoning District. (District 1)

APPLICANT: Starpoint Properties, LLC
c/o Sandy Schmid, VP Development
433 North Camden Drive, Suite 100
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
(Application No. 2004-11)

DISCUSSION

Project Site

The subject property is 22,000-square-foot in size located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Locust Avenue and 7th Street in the PD-30 District (Height Incentive Area) (Attachment A - Vicinity Map). The project site is bounded by Locust Avenue to the west and 7th Street to the north. An existing alley (Waite Court) currently borders the eastern property line. and is 18-feet wide. Adjacent uses are typical of the downtown setting and are described in Table 1.



Table 1: Uses Adjacent to the Subject Site

Location	Zoning Designation	Land Use
North	PD-30	Oropeza Elementary School and Renaissance High School for the Arts
East	PD-30	Commercial-retail businesses
West	PD-30	Surface parking lot, Molina Healthcare Facility and El Economico (newspaper publisher)
South	PD-30	Two-story, multifamily residential

As shown on Figure 1, Project Site, the parcel has approximately 147 linear feet of street frontage along Locust Avenue to the west and approximately 145 linear feet of street frontage along 7th Street to the north. The property is currently developed with a former Auto Care facility.

Figure 1: Project Site



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, which travels north-south with an off-ramp at 6th Street, and an on-ramp that can be accessed via 7th Street. As of June 2021, Long Beach Transit offers a modified bus schedule that operates four bus routes along 7th Street. Additional regional access is provided by the Metro A line, which travels to and from downtown Los Angeles and the

greater Los Angeles County area, with the 5th Street Station at Long Beach Boulevard, between 4th and 5th Street, approximately 500 feet southeast of the project site.

The site is located within the Downtown (DT) General Plan Land Use Element (LUE) PlaceType designation, which is subject to the development standards of the PD-30 zoning district. The PD-30 area is divided into a Downtown Plan area and a Downtown Neighborhood Overlay district. The project site is located in the height incentive area of the Downtown Plan area, which intends for high intensity development featuring a combination of land uses including retail, offices, and higher density residential uses.

Site Plan Review

The project includes the demolition of the on-site structure and construction of a seven-story mixed-use building containing 108 dwelling units, 1,188 square feet of ground level commercial uses, and an integrated four-level, 135-stall parking garage at 636 Locust Avenue (Attachment B - Project Plans). Vehicle access to the parking garage will be from Waite Court. The 18-foot wide alley will be widened by two-feet, with an alley dedication, that will result in a 20-foot-wide alley to allow for two-way vehicular traffic. The parking areas will be located in four levels: two subterranean, one at-grade, and one above-grade. The Project provides 135 parking spaces, which includes one parking space per unit (108 spaces) and guest parking at a rate of one space per four dwelling units (27 spaces). The proposed 1,188 square feet of ground level commercial uses is exempt from parking because the size of the tenant space is less than 6,000 square feet. As noted above, the project site is located within a transit-rich environment in proximity to regional and local transit and active transportation infrastructure. The project also includes 32 bicycle parking spaces located on the ground level. Additional amenities include 108 individual unit storage spaces that will measure a minimum of 25 square feet in area and contain at least 175 cubic feet of space, per PD-30 requirements.

The site is in the PD-30 Height Incentive Area, a subarea that allows high-rise development. The PD-30 Height Incentive Area is characterized by mid- and high-rise residential development, high-intensity employment, and various retail, cultural, and entertainment destinations. The maximum base floor area ratio (FAR) in the PD-30 Height Incentive Area is 8.0. While the proposed project's total gross building area is approximately 172,068, the total floor area for commercial and residential enclosed building space is 79,374 square feet, and thus the Project's FAR is 3.6:1, in accordance with Zoning Code provisions and FAR calculations.

The base height limit in the PD-30 Height Incentive Area is 240 feet. The total height of the project will be 98-feet in height, which is less than half of the allowable base height limit for the area. The Project is also designed to conform with all applicable development standards of PD-30 and is consistent with the type and intensity of development intended by the Zoning District.

The PD-30 Zoning District encourages architectural design that promotes high-quality mixed-use development with pedestrian-oriented ground floors. The building's 7th Street frontage contains pedestrian entrances to the main lobby of the building and to the commercial space. Double-height retail and amenity spaces line 7th Street with a 15-foot high ground floor creating high transparency with visual connection and interaction between the building's interior social spaces and exterior public sidewalk. Amenities include a ground floor fitness area, lounge, bike storage and community room. Ground floor units with sidewalk entries and second floor residential units line Locust Avenue, activating the street. Tenants can access the Project's residential lobby from the ground floor entrance along 7th Street and from the parking areas.

PD-30 permits a zero-foot setback along Locust Avenue and 7th Street at the project site. The ground floor building area would be built to the property line with the exception of corner cut-off areas for visibility and the lobby and commercial tenant space entries on 7th Street and residential unit entries on Locust Avenue.

Residential units are located on the seven floors of the building. The project includes 77 one-bedroom units, 11 one-bedroom with den, 17 two-bedroom units, and 3 three-bedroom units. All 108 market rate units would be larger than the PD-30 Zoning District minimum unit size of 600 square feet. The application (App. No. 2004-11) to redevelop the site was filed on April 16, 2020, prior to March 6, 2021, the effective date of the inclusionary housing ordinance (ORD-21-0006). Therefore, this project is not subject to the provisions of the inclusionary housing ordinance. The market rate units contribute to the reduction of the well-documented City and state-wide housing shortage and are consistent with goals and policies of the General Plan.

PD-30 requires common outdoor open space for the Project equal to 15 percent of lot area (3,300 square feet). The Project contains outdoor open space area (2,925 square feet) on the third floor and a roof deck (2,405 square feet) on the 7th floor. The areas of common outdoor open space total 5,330 square feet. These open space areas feature a mix of softscape and hardscape and includes a variety of amenities including seating areas, barbeque, and pool. In addition to common outdoor open space requirements, PD-30 requires new developments containing 21 or more dwelling units to provide at least one community room measuring 500 square feet or greater. A 736-square-foot gym and 687-square-foot lounge area located on the ground floor and a 600-square-foot community room located on the 3rd floor exceeds the PD-30 minimum requirement. At least 50 percent of all residential dwelling units are required to contain private open space in the form of either a balcony, patio, or roof terrace. A total of 54 units feature a private balcony. The project's open space meets or exceeds the PD-30 open space requirements.

The scale of the mid-rise building is well within the height limit for this area of PD-30, and the project would be compatible with both the mix uses and the variable scale found in surrounding area, including the Oropeza Elementary School and Renaissance High School for the Arts located across 7th Street to the north, a surface parking lot, the Molina Healthcare facility, and El Economico, a newspaper publisher to the west across Locust Avenue, commercial-retail businesses to the east,

across the alley (Waite Court) and a two-story residential building immediately to the south of the subject site. The existing auto service building is built to the property line. The project is designed at the same zero-foot setback with the enclosed parking garage on levels one and two; no openings will face the existing two-story building, and the upper floors will be setback 10-feet to provide a buffer. There is open space at the podium level (floor 3) that will include landscaping and privacy screening. Residential balconies and a courtyard amenity deck add depth and textural form along the frontages. The ground floor retail areas would feature a storefront window system with canopies. The above-grade parking areas would be fully screened. The building's material palette uses cool and neutral grey base colors contrasted with accents of blues and off-whites. The upper residential levels are clad in smooth and sanded stucco while the majority of the podium is wrapped with a contemporary brick veneer. Balcony areas will feature welded wire mesh or perforated metal guardrails. The ground floor elevations will include double-height storefront windows on 7th Street and aluminum wood-look slats. Locust Avenue will include window and entry features at the ground level. All windows will have recessed features to provide depth to the elevations as required in the PD-30 Design Guidelines. The level of design quality and architectural expression of the building is consistent with the goals of the Downtown Plan for high-quality building design and architecture (Attachment C - Findings). The project, as conditioned (Attachment D - Conditions of Approval) does comply with all the provisions of the Downtown Plan.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A total of 87 notices of public hearing were distributed within a 300-foot radius from the project site on August 16, 2021 in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Zoning Regulations. In addition, a public hearing notice was published in the Press-Telegram on August 16, 2021. As of the preparation of this report, no public comments have been received (Attachment E - Public Correspondence).

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines, the City of Long Beach adopted a Certified Downtown Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (Certified PEIR) [SCH No. 2009071006] in January 2012. The Certified PEIR analyzed the potential environmental impacts that may result from the implementation of the Downtown Plan (PD-30). The Certified PEIR assumed that full implementation of the Downtown Plan could increase the density and intensity of existing Downtown land uses by allowing up to (1) approximately 5,000 new residential units; (2) 1.5 million square feet of new office, civic, cultural, and similar uses; (3) 384,000 square feet of new retail; (4) 96,000 square feet of restaurants; and (5) 800 new hotel rooms.

A Land Use Equivalency Program (Equivalency Program) was prepared as part of the Addendum to provide development flexibility so that the Downtown Plan could respond to market conditions over the build-out duration of the plan. Land uses to be developed would be allowed to be reallocated among the permitted land uses so long as the limitations of the Equivalency Program are satisfied and do not exceed the analyzed upper levels of environmental impacts that are

identified in the Program Environmental Impact Report (Certified PEIR) or exceed the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Increases in permitted land uses can be reallocated for corresponding decreases of other permitted land uses under the proposed Equivalency Program. (Attachment F - Land Use Equivalency Program)

A new residential project, when considered with projects that have been completed, under construction, or approved, would exceed the approximately 5,000 residential units contemplated in the Certified PEIR. However, the Certified PEIR also evaluated impacts from the construction and operation of 480,000 square feet of retail/commercial space, 1,500,000 square feet of office space, and 800 hotel rooms. To date, approximately 203,710 square feet of retail/commercial space, 490,000 square feet of office space, and 223 hotel rooms have been completed, is under construction, or approved. Given that there is a demand for new housing units in the Downtown Plan Area and decreased demand for new commercial,¹ office, and hotel uses, a Land Use Equivalency Program analysis has been prepared to characterize the extent of additional residential development that could occur within the Downtown Plan Area. To determine the reallocation rates, a Downtown Plan Equivalency Calculator (DPEC),² has been developed to allow the City to easily track the approved projects and to reduce available commercial, office, and/or hotel space, accordingly, to accommodate increased demand for residential housing units while staying within the overall impacts analyzed in the PEIR. The DPEC has developed a conservative exchange rate to allow for the reallocation of commercial, office, and/or hotel space as residential units such that applicable regulations are satisfied, and no additional significant environmental impacts or substantially greater impacts would occur than previously identified in the Certified PEIR. The DPEC provides for the initial reallocation of non-residential land use to account for an additional 3,260 housing units to be developed within the Downtown Plan area (Attachment G - Downtown Plan Equivalency Calculator).

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, this project was analyzed as part of the previously Downtown Plan Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR) (SCH#2009071006). An EIR Addendum (EIRA 06-20) was prepared to analyze the proposed project to determine whether the project would result in any new significant environmental impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of impacts identified in the Certified PEIR (Attachment H - Downtown Plan Program EIR Land Use Equivalency Program and 7th and Locust Project EIR Addendum). The Land Use Equivalency Program analysis prepared as a part of this Addendum 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. In addition, the development is subject to the Downtown Plan PEIR Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) (Attachment I - Downtown Plan MMRP). The MMRP is designed to ensure compliance with adopted mitigation measures during project implementation. For each mitigation measure

¹ Note that commercial land use includes restaurant and retail uses.

² Environmental Science Associates (ESA). *Downtown Plan Equivalency Calculator Memorandum*. April 2021.

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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 responsible for verifying compliance with individual mitigation measures is identified.

Respectfully submitted,



ANITA JUHOLA-GARCIA
PROJECT PLANNER



ALEXIS OROPEZA
CURRENT PLANNING OFFICER



PATRICIA DIEFENDERFER, AICP
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER



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OSCAR W. ORCI
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Attachments:

- Attachment A – Vicinity Map
- Attachment B – Project Plans
- Attachment C – Findings
- Attachment D – Conditions of Approval
- Attachment E – Public Correspondence
- Attachment F – Land Use Equivalency Program
- Attachment G – Downtown Plan Equivalency Calculator
- Attachment H – Downtown Plan Program EIR Land Use Equivalency Program and 7th and Locust Development – Downtown Plan EIR Addendum
- Attachment I – Downtown Plan MMRP