



**CITY OF MONTCLAIR
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

**REGULAR ADJOURNED MEETING
Monday, April 27, 2015**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER
5111 Benito Street, Montclair, California 91763**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Martinez led those present in the salute to the flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Flores, Commissioners Martinez, Sahagun and Vodvarka, Community Development Director Lustro, City Planner Diaz, Associate Planner Gutiérrez, and City Attorney Robbins

MINUTES

The minutes of the April 13, 2015 regular meeting were presented for approval. Vice Chair Flores moved, Commissioner Sahagun seconded, and the minutes were approved 5-0.

ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

AGENDA ITEMS

- a. CASE NUMBER 2015-4
Project Address: 5060 Montclair Plaza Lane
Project Applicant: 5060 Montclair Plaza Lane Owner, LLC
Project Planner: Michael Diaz, City Planner
Request: Precise Plan of Design for expansion and enhancement of Montclair Plaza
CEQA Assessment: Mitigated Negative Declaration

City Planner Diaz reviewed the staff report. *(A PowerPoint presentation was made by Director Lustro, describing the two phases of the project, the massing of the buildings, cinema, parking decks lined with retail, new frontage on the existing mall, Fashion Park District, Town Square District, The Avenue, Lifestyle Park District, and pedestrian paths).* Discussion followed regarding some of the illustrations in the presentation.

City Planner Diaz stated that pursuant to CEQA requirements, an Initial Study was prepared for the project and on the basis of the findings of the Initial Study, a proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and monitoring program are proposed. There are 11 mitigation measures identified for the project and they were incorporated as conditions of approval in the draft resolution. The MND was circulated for the required 30-day public review period plus a few extra days, from March 4 to April 6, 2015. During the public review comment period, a copy of the MND was made available to the public at City Hall, online on the City's website and at the public library. They were also sent to the State Clearinghouse for distribution to state agencies that might be affected by the project or have an interest in reviewing it. During that time, staff received two public comments on the proposed MND: one from the County of San Bernardino regarding asbestos removal and the other from the State Clearinghouse that they had distributed the document and there were no comments from those agencies. Staff also received one inquiry at the counter from a resident who lives on the north side of Moreno Street, wanting to know if the project was going to extend to her side of the street. Staff explained that is not the case so she went away satisfied with the response.

The responses to the public agency notices that we got were included in the final MND document included in the Commissioners' packets along with staff's responses. Overall, staff finds the proposed exterior renovations and the addition of the outdoor districts to the mall to be exceptional and an ambitious project that would transform the Montclair Plaza and its current status as a long-term suburban type enclosed mall into a distinctive urban development that creates a new sense of place for shopping and entertainment in the City as well as the west end of the Inland Empire. Staff believes the proposed project, with its various site and architectural improvements, are key to creating this unique and vital urban space that we have envisioned. At over 61 acres in area, the overall shape and size of the site is sufficient to accommodate the proposed changes and we feel the general arrangement of the buildings, massing and the heights, as indicated in the submitted plans, are attractive and up to date without being overly trendy. Staff is pleased with the

architectural style that was chosen for this particular project because staff feels it is the most appropriate way to best capture the desired urban setting and look for the mall that everyone is envisioning. It is also a very flexible style that allows a lot of things to be done that would be limiting if a different architectural style was chosen.

Commissioner Martinez commented he saw a lot of work was put into the Mitigated Negative Declaration but wanted to clarify that nowhere in the MND was a potential significant impact. He did not see any but wanted to clarify between the draft and final versions there were no potentially significant impacts. City Planner Diaz confirmed there are no significant changes to either document. There were a few errors at the front of the final document as well as responses to the comments that we got from the public, but essentially, nothing has changed. The findings of the Initial Study remain the same.

Commissioner Vodvarka noticed in the illustrations displayed it showed greenscape where lawn or landscaping of some sort would be and wondered what type of landscaping it would be. City Planner Diaz replied that the green you see on the picture indicates landscape planter areas. The green is chosen because that is how you depict landscaping on a plan like this. The plans for landscaping will be developed as the project moves forward and the applicant is aware of our water conservation ordinance as well as the recent mandates by the Governor and they will be designing their landscaping to fit those requirements.

Commissioner Vodvarka asked if they would be continuing to use the type of speed bumps already in the roadway at the present time. City Planner Diaz stated he did not know at the moment, but the final designs of the roadways are still being worked on as well as other aspects of the plans so as we go along we will figure out the appropriate way to implement traffic calming measures. He commented he is looking forward to being around to see this project get finished because he felt it was going to be a wonderful project.

Vice Chair Flores thanked everyone who was involved in getting the report done. He mentioned item 3.7 on page 97, which discusses Senate Bill 375 and Assembly Bill 32 regarding greenhouse gas emissions. They are trying to get the standards back to the 1990s and he wondered if we are succeeding in cutting greenhouse gas emissions. Director Lustro replied that we are required, not only for this project, but for any project of any reasonable size to analyze greenhouse gases. That is part of any Initial Study that is done and in this particular project, an analysis of greenhouse gas emissions was done and it was determined, as with the other issue areas within the Initial Study, that with mitigation incorporated the impacts in the area of greenhouse gases would be less than significant. Vice Chair Flores asked about 3.12 regarding noise on page 133 and he wondered how A, B, C and D would be mitigated so they are not causing any problems. Director Lustro replied the primary impacts from noise, as stated in the MND and staff report, are going to be during construction. When the project is finished, there really won't be a noticeable amount of noise generated from the project above what is going on at the Plaza property right now. The uses are going to remain largely the same, they are going to be enhanced, but you are still looking at a regional shopping center. There will be outdoor uses added to the exclusively indoor uses. If you look at some of the mitigation measures, the standard mitigation measures that are typically incorporated in the area of noise usually involve

hours of construction, making sure construction equipment is fitted with the appropriate noise muffling devices, and making sure that the staging of the construction is away from sensitive receptors. In this particular case, we wouldn't want construction staging to occur on the north side of the property, which is bordered partially by residential uses, or on the west side of the property, where there are residential uses, a church and a private school. So, those are just a few ways in which noise is mitigated and, again, the focus is largely during construction. Once the construction is done, noise levels typically tend to return to what they were before the project was implemented.

Vice Chair Flores asked about the analysis of construction equipment on page 135. Director Lustro stated at this time, the applicant and the construction company don't have an exhaustive list of the various types of equipment that will be used. The table that Vice Chair Flores points out on page 135, Table NO-1, was sourced from the Federal Transportation Administration and provides typical sound levels for these types of equipment. It is true that there is not a detail for each conceivable type of equipment or machine that is used but these are typical sound levels for what would be generated by the types of equipment listed.

Vice Chair Flores commented on the cross sections on page G1.21; he felt they should have had an extra cross section that would go across Nordstrom, and that the horizontal and vertical scales indicated should have been more complete.

Commissioner Sahagun inquired whether the major department stores were on board with the remodel and would be participating or was the applicant the lead. Director Lustro replied that CIM Group is the proponent of the project as the primary property owner on the Montclair Plaza site but as is typical of properties such as the Plaza, they will be required to obtain certain approvals from the major department stores. Commissioner Sahagun asked about Sears and JCPenney because they own their buildings. Director Lustro stated that JCPenney is the only major that does not own its building. Commissioner Sahagun asked if there would be any construction barriers along the freeway to discourage drivers from watching the construction activity. Director Lustro stated that it is not anticipated because any temporary screen wall along the freeway would need to be of a considerable height.

Commissioner Sahagun commented he would like to see the developer incorporate bus shelters around the perimeter of the property where bus stops are located as we have done on other projects.

Chair Johnson asked about conditions 59 and 60 regarding water. On recent projects we have talked about how the groundscape has to be designed in order to percolate surface water runoff, but if she understands this project correctly, there is not a whole lot of groundscape; most of it is paved area. She just wants to understand that the water will have a clean route to go. City Planner Diaz replied that as part of the project, the applicant is required to prepare a Water Quality Management Plan and with a project this size, there will be various ways of getting the water back into the ground. Some of the water will be diverted into landscape areas where it can be utilized for landscaping purposes, but it is also an urban environment so there will likely be other devices incorporated into the

project. Potted plants and landscaped plants in planters are part of the whole landscape package that will be coming forth as one of the conditions of approval required so we will be looking through all those elements to make sure everything is done per the WQMP requirements. Director Lustro added that because there are limited areas for landscape infiltration, there are also devices that can be installed underground in a parking field, where water can be collected in what appear to be typical catch basins. Rather than that water being conveyed directly into the storm drain system, it may go into a subsurface water quality management device where it is treated and percolated into the groundwater. Many times, all is not what it appears, particularly in this new world of water quality management that we continue to navigate.

Chair Johnson invited comments from the audience on the agenda item.

Kathleen Kim, 4700 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, representing CIM Group, and Jim Suhr, president of James Suhr and Associates, 817 Chautauqua Boulevard, Pacific Palisades, land use consultant for CIM Group, introduced themselves and said they were available for questions. Chair Johnson recalled that in a previous presentation there was some discussion about a proposed water feature in one of the outdoor shopping districts. She did not see one in tonight's presentation and wondered if it will still be included or if it is undetermined at this point. She also asked about special events. She believed she saw somewhere that there was a possibility of having concerts or other outdoor activities on top of the north parking structure, but is that the only place where concerts are planned? She also asked about the timeframe for the project. She heard 30 months; does that include both phases? Ms. Kim replied to the last question first. If Phase II begins immediately following the completion of Phase I, then they are anticipating a total construction window of 30 months for both phases. With respect to water features, Ms. Kim stated they are part of the overall landscape program being evaluated and if incorporated, they would be passive systems. Exact locations are yet to be determined because they are still developing the design. Ms. Kim stated they are looking at various opportunities, especially in the Lifestyle Park where there are open venues with a lot of softscapes incorporated. With respect to concerts and outdoor events, they feel there will be ample opportunities and locations, including the Lifestyle Park; the north parking deck, where they will be enhancing the entryway to the mall; and the Fashion Park.

Bobby Hyde, manager of Ben Bridge Jewelers, 5031 Montclair Plaza Lane, Montclair, inquired as to whether outdoor directional signs are contemplated. He felt there should be directional signs to stores other than just the majors, as is done in other regional centers. City Planner Diaz stated that Condition No. 11 requires a master sign program for the entire mall, particularly focusing on the exterior of the building, but directory signs would be a component of that sign program design. They will be exploring opportunities for wayfinding that identify key destinations and districts on the property. Commissioner Sahagun asked if the sign program would come to the Commission for approval. City Planner Diaz confirmed it would.

Bruce Culp, 9016 Sycamore Avenue, Montclair, a resident of The Paseos, commented he saw some earlier plans in the North Montclair Downtown Specific Plan that showed a bigger plaza on the north side of the property than what was being displayed, which is

more of an enhanced parking structure. He was trying to figure out how to tie in the public transit lines at the Transcenter with the Plaza. Are there any plans to try to draw transit riders and bicycle riders on the Pacific Electric Inland Empire Trail south on Fremont to the Plaza? Director Lustro asked the Commission to keep in mind that the project that is before the Commission is basically proposed in two phases; this is CIM Group's initial stab at renovating the Plaza and there have been a number of other discussions that have taken place with respect to even further enhancements of the property once these first two phases are done that staff is not at liberty to speak of right now, but what he could say was that CIM is very interested in taking advantage of the North Montclair Downtown Specific Plan. They are excited about the addition of residential units north of Moreno Street and that we continue to review additional proposals for development. Further, they are excited about the fact that the property is in very close proximity to the Montclair Transcenter, with its existing Metrolink stop and the future Metro Gold Line. The existence of the Downtown Specific Plan in close proximity to Montclair Plaza played an important role in CIM's desire to acquire the property last year. CIM sees the benefit of the City's vision for North Montclair and they have expressed to staff that they want to take advantage of that to the Plaza's full potential.

Commissioner Vodvarka asked what type of police coverage we would have with the expansion of the Plaza. There used to be a Plaza substation there and he wondered if that could happen again. City Planner Diaz replied there are conditions of approval that anticipate a discussion between CIM Group and the Montclair Police Department about the possibility of continuing or re-establishing an on-site police presence. One of the conditions the Police Department asked for was an upgrade in the ability to increase communication within the mall with improved radio service (Condition No. 118). The Police Department will work with the applicant to make sure that system is in place so if there is ever an emergency on this site, they will be able to communicate both within the mall itself and to the outside agencies that might be responding for help.

Hearing no other comments and no one else being present, Chair Johnson brought the item back to the Commission for discussion and action.

Vice Chair Flores moved, Commissioner Sahagun seconded to take the following actions as responsible agency:

1. Certify that the Commission has reviewed and considered the environmental assessment based upon the findings and proposed mitigation measures in the Initial Study prepared for the project, and that there will be no significant impact on the environment as a result of the construction of the proposed expansion and enhancement of Montclair Plaza, including associated on-site improvements; and
2. Adopt the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and finding that there will be a DeMinimis impact on fish and wildlife; and
3. Direct staff to file a Notice of Determination (NOD) and the applicant to pay appropriate fees within five (5) days of this action.

There being no opposition to the motion, the motion passed 5-0.

Commissioner Vodvarka moved to approve a Precise Plan of Design request under Case No. 2015-4 for the Precise Plan of Design (PPD) for the expansion and enhancement of Montclair Plaza, including associated on-site improvements, per approved plans submitted to the City on April 6, 2015, and as described in the staff report, subject to the 120 conditions in Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-1829, seconded by Commissioner Martinez, there being no opposition to the motion, the motion passed 5-0.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Director Lustro commented that staff shares the Commission's excitement about the Plaza project and would like to see it get started as soon as possible.

Commissioner Sahagun asked about the three steamrollers parked on Harvard Street near Monte Vista and wondered what project they are associated with. City Manager Edward Starr replied they are associated with pavement improvements Caltrans is making on I-10.

Vice Chair Flores saw a survey crew at Monte Vista and Moreno and wondered if that work was in conjunction with the mall project. Director Lustro stated he was not aware of that.

Vice Chair Flores stated he observed grading underway on the Montclair Shoppes project across from Costco and the re-grand opening of the 3-Way Thrift Store and felt it was good to see progress going on.

Vice Chair Flores commented on an article he read about e-cigarettes and how younger kids are getting hooked on them. He knows that the City regulates where vape shops can locate but he has serious concerns about the ready availability of the product to young people. While some smokers claim that e-cigarettes have helped them quit, he is worried that young people introduced to e-cigarettes will eventually move on to real cigarettes.

Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Embree
Recording Secretary