



Culver CITY

MIKE BALKMAN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
9770 CULVER BOULEVARD
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA 90232-0507
CITY HALL Tel. (310) 253-5710
FAX (310) 253-5721

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2008

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Planning Commission will listen to the public on any item on the agenda or item of interest that is not on the agenda. The Planning Commission cannot legally take action on any item not scheduled on the agenda. Such items may be referred for administrative action or scheduled on a future agenda.

If you wish to speak to the Commissioners, please complete a Speaker's Card and present it to the Secretary before the agenda item is called. You will be called to the podium by name when it is your turn to speak to the Commissioners.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Persons wishing to speak on agenda items will be called at the time the agenda item is brought forward. Comments will generally be limited to five minutes per speaker; however, a three-minute limit may be declared by the Chairperson for agenda items for which many Speaker Cards have been submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

A total of twenty minutes shall be devoted to audience participation at the beginning of the agenda. Speakers will be called on in the order cards were received by the Secretary. If additional time is needed, the Chairperson will allow for same at the end of the agenda.

When the Secretary calls your name, please advance to the podium and state your name and city of residence. Speakers must limit their comments to five minutes. A three-minute limit may be declared by the Chairperson if there is a large number of individuals desiring to address the Commissioners.

NOTE: AT OR ABOUT 11:00 P.M., COMMISSION MEMBERS WILL DETERMINE WHETHER TO CONTINUE WITH DISCUSSION OF REMAINING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA OR TO CARRY SOME/ALL OF THE ITEMS OVER TO A FUTURE MEETING DATE.

CELL PHONES AND OTHER DISTRACTIONS

Use of cell phones, pagers and other communication devices is prohibited while the Planning Commission Meeting is in session. Please turn all devices off or place on silent alert and leave the Chambers to use. During the meeting, please refrain from applause or other actions that may be disruptive to the speakers or the conduct of City business.

MEETING INFORMATION

Planning Commission meetings are regularly scheduled for the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month. Planning Commission Agenda information is available 72 hours before each Planning Commission meeting via a tape recorded message by calling 310-253-5741.

City Council/Agency/Commission meetings can be viewed live on Channel 35 by Comcast subscribers. Meetings are also broadcast on the City's Radio Station AM 1690. To view the Planning Commission meetings on line please visit <http://www.culvercity.org/citygov/netcast.asp>.

ALD

Assisted Listening Devices are available through the Secretary.



Culver CITY

Agendas are available on the web at:
www.culvercity.org

REVISED AGENDA

Planning Commission

Wednesday, October 22, 2008

7:00 p.m.

Mike Balkman Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

David Rockwell, Chair
John Kuechle, Vice Chair
Linda Smith Frost, Commissioner
Marcus Tiggs, Commissioner
Anthony Pleskow, Commissioner

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENT – Items Not On The Agenda

PUBLIC HEARING

PH-1 Site Plan Review, Administrative Use Permit, Negative Declaration, recommended Height Exception and Tentative Tract Map for the Construction of a Terraced/Split-Level 4-5 Story Condominium Office Building located at 8665 Hayden Place. Staff Report: Joseph Montoya (310) 253-5736. **Approve.**
(Continued from October 8, 2008)

CONSENT CALENDAR. *Note: Consent Calendar items are considered to be routine in nature and may be approved by one motion. Public requests to discuss Consent Calendar items must be filed with the Secretary before the Consent Calendar is called.*

- C-1. Secretary's Report. **Approve Report.**
C-2 Approval of Minutes of September 24, 2008.

ITEMS FROM STAFF

ITEMS FROM PLANNING COMMISSION

ADJOURN

**Next Planning Commission Meeting
November 12, 2008
7:00 PM**

Upcoming Public Meeting Schedule –Tentative – 2008

Date	Day	Time	Location
<i>City Council</i>			
<i>October 27</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>7:00PM</i>	<i>Council Chambers</i>
<i>Redevelopment Agency</i>			
<i>November 3</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>7:00PM</i>	<i>Council Chambers</i>
<i>Civil Service Commission</i>			
<i>November 5</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>7:00PM</i>	<i>Council Chambers</i>
<i>Cultural Affairs Commission</i>			
<i>November 11</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>7:00PM</i>	<i>Council Chambers</i>
<i>Parks & Recreation Commission</i>			
<i>November 4</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>7:00PM</i>	<i>Patacchia Room</i>
<i>Planning Commission</i>			
<i>November 12</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>7:00PM</i>	<i>Council Chambers</i>

- Meetings may be added or changed.
- Times and date may be changed.

Meeting Date: October 22, 2008	Item Number: PH-1
AGENDA ITEM: Approval of Site Plan Review, SPR P-2007183, Administrative Use Permit, AUP P-2008110, and a Negative Declaration, and a recommendation of Height Exception, HTEX P-2008111, and Tentative Tract Map No. 69769, TTM P-2007184, for the Construction of a terraced / split-level 4 – 5 story condominium office building measuring 62,765 Gross Square Feet (GSF) at 8665 Hayden Place. (Continued from October 8, 2008)	
Contact Person/Dept.: Joseph Montoya, Associate Planner	Phone Number: (310) 253-5736
Public Hearing: [X]	Action Item: [] Attachments: [X]
Public Notification: On September 16, 2008, notices were mailed to all property owners and occupants within a 500-foot plus radius of the site extended to the end of the block; to all individuals who previously spoke on this proposed project at prior City meetings and to all other interested individuals. The notice was also emailed to the Master Notification List. On September 16, 2008, two (2) Project Notification signs were posted on the site. On October 2, 2008, a revised public notice announcing the change in meeting date was mailed to all individuals listed above plus an e-mail to the Master Notification List. The project notification signs were modified on October 5, 2008, to announce the new public hearing date.	
Planning Review: Thomas Gorham, Planning Manager, October 13, 2008	

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt a Negative Declaration based on the Initial Study finding the project will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment (Attachment No. 15);
2. Approve Site Plan Review, SPR P-2007183, and Administrative Use Permit, AUP P-2007184, subject to the Conditions of Approval as outlined in Resolution No. 2008-P012 (Attachment No. 1); and
3. Recommend to the City Council conditional approval of Height Exception, HTEX P-2008111, and Tentative Tract Map No. 69769, TTM P-2007184, subject to the Conditions of Approval as outlined in Resolution No. 2008-P012 (Attachment No. 1).

PROCEDURES:

1. Chair calls on staff for a brief staff report and Planning Commission poses questions to staff as desired;
2. Chair opens the public hearing, providing the applicant the first opportunity to speak, followed by the general public;
3. Chair seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented; and
4. Commission discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.

BACKGROUND:

Request

As outlined in the preliminary development plans (Attachment No. 5), the project applicant / property owner, ReThink Tara Green LLC, is requesting approval to demolish the existing 18,000 gross square foot (GSF) industrial building along with all site improvements and then to construct a terraced split-level 4 – 5 story condominium office building measuring 62,765 GSF and between 30'-6" and 61'-9" in height with 181 parking spaces [including 36 spaces in tandem form] with related setbacks and onsite / offsite improvements. To accomplish this

request, a Site Plan Review (SPR) is required to construct the project; a Height Exception (HTEX) is required to exceed the 43 foot building height limit in the IG Zone; an Administrative Use Permit (AUP) is required for the tandem parking and a Tentative Tract Map (TTM) is required to subdivide the site for office condominium airspace units. General Information

Please refer to the Project Summary (Attachment No. 2).

Existing Conditions

The subject site, as outlined in the Vicinity Map (Attachment No. 3) and Aerial Photograph (Attachment No. 4), is a single lot parcel accessed from the westerly terminus of the Hayden Place cul-de-sac via an existing fire lane easement roadway that shall remain in place along the easterly portion of the site. It is currently developed with an 18,000 GSF industrial building formerly used as a warehouse / distribution center for a retail user measuring 25'-0" +/- to the roof and constructed circa 1977 with 30 surface parking spaces and landscaping consisting of ground cover, shrubs and trees.

To the north, the site fronts onto Higuera Street and although it does not offer any private vehicle access, emergency public vehicles to/from the street via a barricaded emergency drive approach shall continue to maintain access. Along Higuera Street is a City-managed landscape maintenance district with ground cover, shrubs and trees to which the applicant is a participant. To the east is an existing industrial building and parking lot. To the south, directly abutting the site is an industrial building and parking lot. And to the west, directly abutting the site is a single family residence.

The site is designated in the General Plan Land Use Element as "Industrial" and on the Zoning Map as "General Industrial (IG)". To the north, across Higuera Street, the area has residential designations and is developed with single and multiple family residences. To the east and south, the area has industrial designations and is developed with office / research / industrial / commercial / filming uses. To the west, both abutting the site and across Lucerne Avenue, the area is designated residential and developed with single and multiple family residential uses.

Project Description

On August 2, 2007, the applicant initiated the filing process to begin this multi-component development review and approval process. As outlined in the attached preliminary development plans, the applicant is requesting approval to accomplish the following actions:

1. Construct a new terraced split-level 4 – 5 story condominium office building measuring 62,765 GSF with a surface parking lot and an attached subterranean parking structure. Each office floor is "split" with Section "A" constructed within the northerly portion of the site and Section "B" a floor higher within the southerly portion of the site [hence a partial 5th floor along the south side]. The building is provided with varied setbacks along all building frontages. These setbacks are to be provided with new trees and other landscaping so as to soften the visual image of the project from the surrounding residential neighborhood. A courtyard located within the central portion of the building is to be provided with passive landscaping and seating. Additional onsite and offsite improvements including, but not limited to, landscaping, water fountain, fencing and public art are proposed.

The site slopes away from Higuera Street towards the Hayden Place cul-de-sac. Since the existing slope condition of the site will generally remain in place, the "new grade" elevation points for the proposed building shall be as follows:

- A. 89.67' at the northeast corner [at the top of the Higuera Street public sidewalk];
- B. 82.26' at the southeast corner [abutting the top of the fire lane easement roadway to/from the Hayden Place cul-de-sac];
- C. 87.10' at the southwest corner [the natural grade of the abutting residence]; and
- D. 90.18' at the northwest corner [at the top of the Higuera Street public sidewalk].

The split-level terraced building consist of two (2) portions with Portion "A" being nearest to the north property line along the Higuera Street frontage and with Portion "B" being furthest from the Higuera Street frontage along the southerly property line. Hence, the "new grade" of the 1st floor of the project along the Higuera Street frontage is between 2'-0" and 4'-10" below the Higuera Street top of public sidewalk elevation. The other portions of the site also result in a varying building height.

The building is proposed to be "green" in design by use of alternative roof materials, skylights, centrally located ventilation shafts, photovoltaic solar panels along the southerly roof area of "Portion B" and other environmental and aesthetically sensitive elements such as a "green screen" facing the westerly edge of the central courtyard so as to provide additional screening to the residential uses to the west of the site. Additional screening is to be provided by the installation of vertical louvers along the south wall so as to obstruct direct line of sight from the upper floors of the project onto the residential uses to the west; and the windows along the west building elevations are to be non-vision glass to further protect the visual privacy of the residential uses to the west. Said terracing steps the building away from the residential uses in the area and towards the adjoining industrial uses. To be constructed, the project requires the approval of a Site Plan Review (SPR) application;

- 2. Construct the subject building with a varying height between 30'-6" and 61'-9" to the top of roof via a Height Exception (HTEX) application since portions of the proposed structure exceeds the 43'-0" maximum height permitted in the IG Zone;
- 3. Provide 181 parking spaces [12 spaces on the surface and 169 parking spaces within a three (3) level subterranean parking structure]. The parking plan proposes 36 parking spaces in tandem format via an Administrative Use Permit (AUP) application. The project also proposes to provide 29 bicycle parking spaces located throughout the surface and subterranean parking areas. The parking area within the subterranean garage is also intended to be provided with an after-hours security gate system; and
- 4. Subdivide the new project into a "for sale" condominium airspace office complex via a Tentative Tract Map (TTM) application.

The applicant has provided a written narrative (Attachment No. 8) summarizing the proposed project and efforts to address neighborhood concerns

Project Notification

The public notification process began when, under the City's direction, the applicant mailed a letter to the surrounding neighborhood informing them of the initial project application filing with the City on December 13, 2007.

As outlined in the Public Notification Radius Map (Attachment No. 10), the standard 300 foot radius for all mailed public notification to owners and occupants was initially extended to 500 feet and then extended again to the end of the block and to include portions of the Hayden Tract along Hayden Avenue and the surrounding streets. Individuals that spoke at prior Planning Commission and City Council meetings on the proposed project were also notified. All other CCMC requirements pertaining to posted notification signage were followed.

Two separate public notice mailings were mailed, and the onsite project notification signs were installed, announcing the original October 8, 2008, Planning Commission meeting date and then subsequently remailed and revised to reflect the rescheduled meeting date of October 22, 2008.

On September 29 and 30, 2008, the Planning Division received a petition (Attachment No. 11) [one (1) cover page and 21 pages with 294 signatures] in opposition to the referenced project. At this time, thirty two (32) of the signatures have been found to be invalid [i.e., due either because the signatures were in opposition to some other project or not a valid signature] thereby validating 262 signatures at this time. Thereafter, the applicant submitted a letter (Attachment No. 16) responding to the petition introductory statements.

In addition to the public notification outlined above, the applicant conducted a minimum of twelve (12) "outreach" events with the surrounding residents informing them of the project and of the various revisions of the project design as it evolved to the version currently under review via this application process. These outreach events are describe in the applicant's Height Exception Criteria Summary dated August 7, 2008 (Attachment No. 9).

ANALYSIS:

Land Use and Zoning

The General Plan Land Use Element designates the site as "Industrial". The General Plan states on Page LU-21 that "... *Residential and industrial uses, or commercial [i.e., offices] and industrial uses, can coexist when specific uses and design characteristics are analyzed for compatibility ...*"; and that "... *Maximum building intensity, specific types of land use, and development standards shall be controlled by zoning based on lot size and location ...*". Additionally, the Zoning Map designates the subject site with an "Industrial (IG)" zoning designation which is consistent with and implements the General Plan designation listed above. Furthermore, as listed in CCMC Section 17.230 – Industrial Zoning Districts / Table 2-8 "Allowed Uses and Permit Restrictions", the proposed "office" use of the subject site is listed as a "permitted" use in the IG Zone. Therefore, based on the above data and the analysis performed on the proposed developed plan, staff is of the opinion the proposed applications are consistent with the General Plan and Zoning designations for the site.

Architectural Design

As outlined in the proposed preliminary development plans (Attachment No. 5) and the materials board (Attachment No. 6) [to be on display at the meeting], the proposed building configuration and materials result in a structure that conforms to all applicable provisions of the IG Zone and all other CCMC development standards. The proposed split-level height, with accompanying terracing / setbacks, provides separation from the abutting properties to the north [Higuera Street] and west [Lucerne Avenue] taking into account the sloped configuration of the site.

The existing building proposed to be demolished is generally a non-descript concrete tilt-up structure approximately 25 feet in height located within the industrial / office business park established in the early 1970's. In contrast to the existing building's architectural design, the proposed project is an architecturally modern theme building making use of a variety of building materials and finishes and a building massing pattern intended to soften the visual image of the building when viewed from the surrounding residential areas. The proposed multi-faced building includes the use of wood cladding, aluminum panels, cast concrete, steel, perforated stainless steel rain screen, operable windows, shading elements, cantilevered walls and walking bridges. These elements, in concert with "green" building screens / walls and roof components, are all intended to further enhance the compatibility of the proposed structure with the neighborhood while providing an overall site design that is environmentally friendly and energy efficient. Other site improvements [i.e., exterior light fixtures, bicycle racks, water fountain, fencing, security gates] shall be of architectural materials, finishes and colors compatible with the project. Lastly, the proposed installation of public art panels in compliance with the City's Art in Public Places program along the building facades will further add to the visual character of the building.

The project is required to meet the photovoltaic requirements of CCMC Ordinance No. 2008-004. To meet this new requirement, the applicant proposes to include a roof mounted photovoltaic system along the southerly roof of Portion "B" to reduce the demand of electricity. Additionally, the applicant proposes a building design that incorporates construction, architecture and operational measures consistent with the United States Green Building Council's (USGBC) design standards. The USGBC uses a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) four (4) level rating system that begins with basic "certified" and then proceeds upward past "silver" and "gold" to "platinum", the highest most efficient rating of all. It is the goal of the applicant to design, construct and operate the proposed project so as to receive a "Gold" rating by including the elements noted above while also insulating the building and reducing the demand for mechanical services and using energy efficient windows and site lighting systems.

On the basis of the proposed design and massing of the building, the project is anticipated to be compatible with the existing area. Regarding the building's compatibility with the residential uses to the north and west, the building is stepped back from the residential uses so as to minimize the proposed building visual impact and the proposed materials are intended to be non-reflective. To the east and south, the building massing and architecture is compatible with the adjoining industrial / office / commercial uses in the area.

Height Exception

Originally, the applicant submitted preliminary development plans that proposed a building with a uniform height measuring 43'-0" with a 5'-0" parapet for an effective building height of 48'-0" consistent with the 43'-0" height limit (plus 5'-0" parapet) in the IG Zone.

However, after receiving comments from some of the neighboring residents pertaining to the height of the building and its proximity to adjacent residential uses during various applicant-sponsored community meetings, the applicant revised the building massing so as to terrace the building away from the neighboring residential uses to the north and west and then added a partial 5th floor at the furthest point away from the residences so as to regain the footage lost as a result of the terracing and maintain a building measuring 62,765 GSF as originally proposed.

Since the proposed project exceeds the maximum building height, the applicant has filed a Height Exception application. As outlined in the preliminary development plans, the applicant has submitted for approval a terraced / split-level office building measuring between 30'-6" and 61'-9" in height that provides a building massing which steps back from the surrounding

residential uses and provides the desired building size – yet the proposed building exceeds the CCMC maximum building height of 43'-0" in the IG Zone by up to 18'-9".

CCMC Section 17.300.025.C.1. – Exceptions to Height Limits outlines the procedure for requesting the City Council to grant an exception to the height limits established in the CCMC. The City Council, after consideration of a recommendation from the Planning Commission, may by resolution establish a maximum building height for new construction in Redevelopment Component Area #1 through #3 subject to consistency with a Design For Development (DFD) as may be adopted by the Culver City Redevelopment Agency for the subject site. Since the subject project site is located within Redevelopment Component Area #3, the applicant has initiated discussions with the Redevelopment Division for Redevelopment Agency adoption of a DFD. The request to exceed the maximum building height, and any other restrictions related to rooftop parapets and mechanical equipment, are to be considered as part of this Height Exception and the DFD. At present, Redevelopment Division staff is in negotiations with the applicant as to the contents of the DFD and the required public review of the DFD by the Redevelopment Agency is not anticipated to be scheduled until after the Planning Commission has completed its review of the proposed project. An excerpt of the draft DFD pertaining to the proposed building height is provided for informational purposes (Attachment No. 7). Therefore, if the Planning Commission were to recommend to the City Council approval of the proposed Height Exception and approve the Site Plan Review, the Site Plan Review would not become effective unless and until the Redevelopment Agency were to approve the DFD and unless and until the City Council were to approve the Height Exception.

As required as part of the submittal requirements for a Height Exception (Attachment No. 17) the applicant has submitted a shade and shadow study, site line analysis, and visual simulations as outlined in the Preliminary Development Plans (Attachment No. 5). In addition, the applicant has conducted community outreach events as describe in the applicant's Height Exception Criteria Summary dated August 7, 2008 (Attachment No. 9). Since the proposed Height Exception does not result in additional floor area, the applicant was not required to submit a pro forma, market analysis or additional traffic study.

In reviewing requests for a Height Exception, design and compatibility are the key criteria used by staff to assess the proposal and make a recommendation. This includes: privacy of adjacent uses; shade and shadow impacts; view blockage; location relative to surrounding uses; and design and physical appearance.

Privacy: The project design has taken into consideration privacy impacts to adjacent residential uses. The building is a minimum of 100 feet from homes on Higuera and the west side of Lucerne minimizing any views into these homes or yards. The western façade of the building is adjacent to three homes on the east side of Lucerne. The windows on the west side of the building are few and set high so that views into the neighboring yards are constrained.

Shade and Shadow: As outlined in the architectural plans, an analysis of the anticipated shade and shadow footprint of the proposed building throughout the year has been prepared. The analysis concludes that there will be no significant impact onto any of the adjoining buildings resulting from the additional height.

View Blockage: The proposed building will not be in the view shed of any residential uses and therefore will not result in any view blockage from adjacent properties.

Location: The majority of the proposed building is at or below the 43 foot height limit of the IG zone. The portion of the building that rises to a proposed 61'-9" is located away from the sensitive residential receptors and more appropriately towards the commercial/industrial uses on Hayden Place. The building measures a maximum height of 32 feet along the residential

perimeter on the Higuera (north) side and 30.5 feet along the residential perimeter on the Lucerne (west) side. This height of the building in this location is consistent with the 30 foot height limit in the surrounding R-2 residential zone. In addition, the building is setback up to 24 feet directly abutting the residential uses on Lucerne.

Design and Physical Appearance: The massing of the proposed building includes a terraced / split-level design with varying building setbacks pulling the height away from the adjoining residential uses and more appropriately towards the commercial / industrial uses. The proposed building materials, colors and finishes are intended to create a building appearance that is sensitive to the nature of the adjoining residential uses, including the extensive use of wood paneling on those portions of the building facing residential uses.

Based on the criteria outlined above, staff believes there are various unique characteristics that apply to the subject site and the proposed design of the project which lend to it being appropriate for a Height Exception. The Height Exception does not seek to add square footage to the building, but rather is intended to address compatibility issues with adjacent residential uses. The lowering of the height adjacent to the residential use provides a building appearance that insures a compatibility with the surrounding residential uses.

Landscaping

Based on the extent of the site disruption during the construction phase of the project so as to construct the new subterranean garage, all existing landscaping within the site [i.e., trees, shrubs and ground cover] is required to be removed. As outlined in the proposed site plan, new landscaped planters above natural dirt areas are proposed as well within the proposed setback areas above the subterranean garage. Other areas deemed appropriate for landscaping shall include portions of the “green” rooftop areas.

In addition to the proposed onsite landscape plan, along the Higuera Street frontage within the existing landscaping maintenance district, additional landscaping [i.e., trees, shrubs and ground cover] as deemed appropriate by the Parks Manager / City Landscape Architect and City Engineer shall be added to further screen the building from the surrounding residential area.

Parking

The proposed parking plan of 181 parking spaces in a combination of surface and subterranean locations meets all applicable CCMC onsite parking requirements for the proposed office use including, but not limited to, the provision of the required number of parking spaces [i.e., 179 spaces are required and 2 spaces are extra] with the use of the AUP for tandem parking referenced herein as well as the type of parking spaces [i.e., standard, handicapped and loading], dimensions [i.e., width, length, aisleway and vertical clearance] and signage. As permitted in the CCMC, the loading parking space is to be shared with one of the standard spaces which can accommodate small trucks since larger trucks are not anticipated to be used for the project. In addition, 29 bicycle racks will be provided in both the surface parking area and the subterranean parking structure.

The applicant is requesting approval of an Administrative Use Permit (AUP) in order to provide 36 parking spaces in tandem form within the subterranean garage. Accordingly, as outlined in CCMC Section 17.320.035.C.1.b., the use of tandem parking serving the proposed office use is an allowable feature provided said tandem parking meets the required AUP findings listed in CCMC Section 17.530.020 – Findings and Decisions. Based on the location

[within the parking structure], format [2-deep] and dimensions [refer to plans] of the tandem parking spaces, staff has determined the request meets all of the minimum requirements of the CCMC.

Traffic and Circulation

Based on the City's adopted traffic study criteria, a traffic study was deemed necessary by the Planning Division and Engineering Division. As outlined in the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) approved by the City of Culver City and the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) and the scope of the analysis listed therein, KOA Corporation, a state licensed traffic engineering firm, prepared the traffic study dated July 23, 2008, and entitled Traffic Impact Analysis For The Proposed 8665 Hayden Place Office, Culver City (Attachment No. 12). Said traffic study analyzed the existing and proposed traffic volumes to be generated by the proposed project as well as traffic patterns at nineteen (19) intersections within the surrounding area [i.e., City of Culver City and City of Los Angeles] regardless of jurisdiction during both the AM and PM peak hours. Based on the information gathered from the field investigations, the consultant proceeded with the required analysis including projected future traffic levels at the referenced intersections based on development projects currently under construction or anticipated to be constructed in the near future.

In addition to the 19 study intersections, the traffic consultant also investigated the potential project related traffic impacts to the residential streets adjacent to or near the project site including, but not limited to, Higuera Street, Lucerne Avenue, Wesley Street, Helms Avenue and Schaefer Street.

The traffic analysis also took into account not only the existing traffic diversion improvements within the area, but it also analyzed various on-going and/or completed public improvement projects in the area including, but not limited to, street repair work at the Higuera Street / Eastham Drive intersection, the Higuera Street – Rodeo Road / Jefferson Boulevard intersection, the Jefferson Boulevard / National Boulevard intersection, the Eastham Drive / Jefferson Boulevard intersection and the Hayden Avenue / National Boulevard intersection.

Other components of the analysis included taking into account the sole vehicle access for the site is provided via the two-way fire lane roadway easement leading to/from the westerly terminus of the Hayden Place cul-de-sac and thereafter from the Hayden Place – Hayden Avenue / Higuera Street intersection. Private vehicle access of any type or duration from along Higuera Street abutting the site was noted to be prohibited and shall continued to be prohibited as part of this proposed project. Lastly, the analysis confirmed the onsite circulation shall be provided via 27'-0" wide aisle ways which allow vehicles to maneuver adequately in and out of parking spaces within the surface parking area and the subterranean garage. Vertical clearance within the subterranean garage shall be no less than 7'-0" as required in the CCMC.

Taking into account the onsite and offsite circulation patterns referenced above, the traffic consultant analyzed the projected future traffic levels in the area and the trips generated by the proposed project. Based on that analysis, the traffic study concludes the increase in traffic at the studied intersections as a result of the project will be below the City's criteria for significant impacts. Traffic impacts at studied intersections [measured as volume to capacity ratios (V/C) or the ratio of the number of actual vehicles to the amount of vehicles the intersection can accommodate] must increase beyond a threshold given the Level of Service (LOS) measured for the intersections in order to be considered a significant impact. At the study intersections, the increase in the V/C ratios resulting from the project – given the LOS for those intersections – is calculated to be below what the City established as a significant impact. In other words, added traffic resulting from the project to the areas studied is expected to be small enough so as to not create a significant impact on traffic.

Therefore, as outlined in the Executive Summary of the traffic study [Page 4], the traffic consultant has determined “... *the traffic analysis shows that the project is expected to have no significant impacts, based on City of Culver City and [the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation] LADOT traffic study guidelines, at any of the study intersections ...*”. The Project Summary and Project Recommendations [Page 54] further states the proposed parking, access and circulation system for the proposed project will function in accordance with the City's standards based on various conclusions including, but not limited to, the following:

1. The project is anticipated to generate 575 net new daily vehicle trips, including 82 net new trips in the AM peak hour [i.e., 7:00 AM – 9:00 AM] and 77 net new trips during the PM peak hour [i.e., 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM]; and said trips do not exceed the thresholds for significant impact at any location;
2. The proposed project will not significantly impact any of the study intersections nor will it produce sufficient net new traffic to create significant impacts to any of the adjacent local streets [neither residential nor non-residential] or to the area's regional arterial roadways and freeways; and therefore no offsite traffic mitigation measures are warranted for the project; and
3. Although not specified or required as a mitigation measure in the traffic analysis, based on the proposed gross square footage of the project, the proposed project is required to meet the CCMC Traffic Demand Management (TDM) Ordinance.

Therefore, no traffic related project mitigation measures are required. The City's Engineering Division and consulting traffic engineers have reviewed the traffic study and have determined the traffic consultant's findings to be acceptable. A condition of approval requiring compliance with the CCMC TDM Ordinance has been recommended.

Noise

Construction of the project shall be subject to the hours of construction as outlined in the CCMC [unless otherwise modified by the Planning Commission]. The project will be conditioned to require the use of construction equipment with state-of-the-art noise shielding and muffling devices. Both the applicant and City contact information shall be posted on the project site to direct individuals wishing to report noise and other construction activity complaints. Following occupancy of the site, the project is expected to generate no more than the noise level consistent with the current use on the site. Therefore, no other special noise related conditions of approval are recommended.

Construction

The proposed project includes the demolition of all existing onsite improvements and the construction of a subterranean garage, the above ground office building and related onsite and offsite improvements. Of special concern is the fact that the required excavation for the relocation of existing utilities and the construction of the subterranean garage will be in close proximity to the existing landscaped buffer to the north, the existing industrial building to the south and the existing single family residence to the west. A condition of approval requiring the applicant to provide adequate shoring at a minimum along the north, south and west property lines as deemed necessary by the Building Official so as to insure the stability of the adjacent improvements listed above has been recommended.

Security

The project shall be secured with a 4'-0" high wrought iron fence along the north property line facing Higuera Street, with a 6'-0" high block wall along the west property line abutting the single family residence with the CCMC required wall step-down and with an after-hours overhead security gate at the entrance to the subterranean garage with said gate setback from the building entrance so as to insure proper vehicle alignment. The surface parking area shall remain unsecured. The previously noted emergency fire lane access driveway along the Higuera Street frontage currently secured by a post and chain barricade shall be upgraded to a swing gate and Fire Department lock system that shall continue to prohibited any private vehicle usage of the emergency driveway. Lastly, the Covenants, Codes and Restrictions [CC&R's] required as part of the subdivision process shall include the creation of an owners association that shall actively manage and provide security for the site. A condition of approval requiring all security elements to be architecturally compatible with the project's design and continuing the prohibition of private usage of the Higuera Street emergency driveway have been recommended.

Area Compatibility

The "Industrial" General Plan and Zoning designations for the subject property permit office use developments as proposed by the applicant. The proposed building height of between 30'-6" and 61'-9", while greater in some instances than the surrounding industrial and residential buildings, is deemed to be compatible as a result of the proposed use of the terraced / split-level configuration and varying building setbacks as noted on the preliminary development plans and as outlined in the Height Exception analysis contained herein.

The proposed building materials and both the onsite and offsite landscaping results in a project that is compatible with land uses permitted on neighboring properties which are zoned either "Industrial (IG)" or "Two Family Residential (R2)". The project will provide adequate parking onsite, the onsite and offsite landscaping is in excess of CCMC requirements and the traffic generated by the project has been deemed to not cause a significant impact to the existing or projected traffic levels in the area. In addition, the noise levels generated by the proposed use are anticipated to be compatible with the surrounding uses in the vicinity. To date, no written comments have been received other than the referenced petition.

Subdivision

Because the project is intended as an office condominium development, an airspace subdivision is required. There will be a maximum of 30 office condominium units. The State Subdivision Map Act and CCMC Chapter 15.10 regulate the subdivision of land. The tentative tract map review process allows the City the opportunity to review the proposed subdivision to insure all necessary onsite and offsite improvements are provided for. Accordingly, the Public Works Department has reviewed the proposed condominium subdivision via Tentative Tract Map No. 69769 (Attachment No. 13) and found it to be in compliance with all applicable State and CCMC regulations subject to the recommend conditions of approval.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Initial Study (Attachment No. 14) was prepared which determined the project to have less than significant impacts on the community since it is consistent with CCMC regulations and the traffic study determined expected traffic from the project will be below any threshold of significance. Taking into account the applications for this project, the preliminary development plans, the materials

board and the recommended conditions of approval, staff determined the project could not have a significant effect on the environment and a Negative Declaration is recommended (Attachment No. 15).

CONCLUSION:

Staff has paid particular attention to the design of this project as it relates to the residential neighborhood to the north across Higuera Street and to the west abutting the site and across Lucerne Avenue and has worked closely with the applicant to meet all applicable CCMC requirements, address community concerns and develop a project that follows good planning practice.

Staff has visited the site numerous times and spoken with various residents of the subject neighborhood to better understand and be able to address all applicable concerns and has proposed numerous conditions to address the issues particularly related to construction impacts and compatibility with both the residential and non-residential uses in the vicinity. Based on the analysis contained herein, staff believes all findings for the subject applications can be made as more specifically outlined in the draft resolution of approval (Attachment No. 1) and recommends approval of the project.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

The following alternative options may be considered by the Planning Commission:

1. Approve the proposed project and applications with the recommended conditions of approval if the applications are deemed to meet the required findings.
2. Approve the proposed project and applications with additional and/or different conditions of approval if deemed necessary to meet the required findings and mitigate any new project impacts identified at the meeting.
3. Disapprove the proposed project if the applications do not meet the required findings.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution No. 2008-P012.
2. Project Summary.
3. Vicinity Map.
4. Aerial Photograph.
5. Preliminary Development Plans dated September 30, 2008.
6. Materials Board [to be on display at the meeting].
7. Excerpt of the draft Design For Development.
8. Applicant's Project Summary.
9. Applicant's Height Exception Criteria Summary.
10. Public Notification Radius Map.
11. Petition in Opposition to the Project.
12. Traffic Study dated July 23, 2008.
13. Tentative Tract Map No. 69769.
14. CEQA Initial Study.
15. CEQA Proposed Negative Declaration.
16. Applicant's Letter Responding to Petition Statements.

17. Height Exception Submittal Requirements.