



**PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT**

DATE: JANUARY 14, 2020
TO: DESIGN COMMISSION
FROM: DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR, PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION – MAJOR MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING COMMERCIAL BUILDING (THE PASEO)
300 EAST COLORADO BOULEVARD

Project Description:

This proposal is for major modifications to an existing two-story commercial center known as Paseo Colorado at 300 E. Colorado Boulevard. The center is being rebranded as “The Paseo”. The site is bordered by East Colorado Boulevard on the north, East Green Street on the south, South Marengo Avenue on the west, and South Euclid Avenue on the east within the CD-2 Zoning District (Central District Specific Plan, Civic Center/Midtown Sub-district). The building was originally built in 2002 as a substantial remodel of the former Plaza Pasadena enclosed shopping mall that was built ca. 1980. The commercial portion of the center is comprised of two separate buildings flanking the Garfield Promenade, a pedestrian passage that provides visual connection between the Pasadena Civic Auditorium and Pasadena Central Library, as originally envisioned in the 1923 and 1925-6 Civic Center plans prepared by architects and planners Bennett, Parsons & Frost. The development is constructed over a subterranean parking garage accessed from both Colorado Boulevard and Green Street at the terminus of Euclid Avenue. The buildings have flat roofs with flat- and hipped-roofed tower elements and is clad in smooth stucco in various colors with stone accents. Other features of the existing development include strategically located specialty paving, water features, pergolas and art components, some of which were installed in compliance with the City’s public art requirement.

The proposed design involves modifications to the existing buildings and site features intended to foster a more hospitable environment for existing and future retail and restaurant operations on the site. The proposal is separated into zones that correspond to the common, public areas of the existing development and does not involve addition of square footage or changes to commercial storefronts. Below is a general description of proposed modifications to each of these zones. The plans depict possible locations for art elements throughout the project, which may or may not be part of the project’s public art requirement; therefore, they are not described in detail as the designs shown are intended to be placeholders and would require review by the Arts and Culture Commission rather than the Design Commission:

Garfield Promenade

The Garfield Promenade is arguably the most important zone of the project due to its connection to the Civic Center’s historical Beaux Arts plan. Following the public objection from

the construction of the Plaza Pasadena, which blocked the original axial views between the Civic Auditorium and Public Library, when the Paseo was constructed, an agreement between the ownership and the City establishes height limitations within three zones of the Promenade to ensure that the restored axial views are maintained in the future. From the applicant's perspective, this has resulted in an inhospitable environment that they are now seeking to soften and encourage gathering with the following improvements:

- Projecting flat canopies and 90-degree-angle shade structures attached to the building
- Modified glazing
- Applied parapet frieze design
- A cultural digital media screen located at the stairs leading to Rainbow Court
- Enhanced specialty paving
- Multiple new seating elements including stadium and platform seating near Green Street, stadium and banquette seating at the existing water feature, which is proposed to be modified to raise the water level and stain walls and caps black, parterre seating with retractable shading devices and other movable seating.
- New movable water/landscape features and planters with horizontal-slat trellises
- An iconic monument sign
- Lighting improvements including string lighting, canopy lighting, floor pattern projectors, tower projection mapping and top-of-tower lighting

Rainbow Court (formerly "Fountain Court")

The Rainbow Court is at the second floor, west of the Garfield Promenade and is accessed by communicating stairs from both the Garfield Promenade and East Colorado Boulevard. The large, focal water feature element and pergola at this location are proposed to be retained.

- New pergola structure, proposed to incorporate previously approved public art currently used as a decorative railing at the east edge of the court, overlooking the Garfield Promenade below. A more open metal-picket railing is proposed in place of the existing art panels and solid pilasters at that location.
- Raised seating deck and dining/lounge furniture below pergola described above.
- Installation of new movable planters
- Art installations including "Rose Parade Legacy Plaques" and pop-up exhibit space

- Turf rug and movable furniture surrounding the existing fountain
- New lighting including down-lights mounted to the proposed new pergola and floor pattern projectors, as well as removal of existing decorative fixtures

Green Street

The proposed modifications along Green Street are focused at the segment between Marengo Avenue and the terminus of the Garfield Promenade.

- Platform seating and signage at the Garfield Promenade terminus
- Planters and furniture
- Signage at the parking entrance
- Linear accent lighting at the top of the building

Colorado Court (formerly "Theater Court")

This ground-level open plaza is located to the east of the Garfield Promenade along Colorado Boulevard and includes two large communicating stairs at either end providing access to the theater and restaurant spaces at the second floor. The proportions of this space are more intimate than the Garfield Promenade and is terminated at the south end by the existing building volume.

- Fire pit, planters, movable seating and built-up platform seating at existing radial paving feature
- Iconic signage along Colorado Boulevard and a portal sign for the theater at the top of the westerly stair
- Movable seating and tables
- Overhead sails and string lighting

Theater Terrace

This area is at the second floor at the eastern end of the site and is generally used for outdoor restaurant seating and access to the theater.

- Outdoor dining furniture, planters and overhead sails mounted on new elevated posts west of the theater
- Elevator tower cladding
- Decorative parapet frieze
- Two new lounge areas with furniture and outdoor game tables near the theater

- Directory sign
- Tower and mural lighting

Paseo

This area is generally within the interior of the site between the Garfield Promenade and Los Robles Avenue and is the main retail corridor of the development.

- Multiple different types of furniture
- Landscape planters
- Overhead signage at western end
- Gateway signage at eastern end
- Ceiling and mural lighting; removal of existing decorative lighting fixtures

Euclid Court

This area is a relatively narrow pedestrian corridor extending south from Colorado Boulevard at the eastern end of the site between the existing Paseo building and the new mixed-use building that is currently under construction at the eastern end of the block, and includes the internal court and existing water feature at the southern terminus of the corridor.

- Seating and planters

Applicable Design Guidelines:

- Design-Related Goals and Policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan
- Design Guidelines in the Central District Specific Plan (including Civic Center/Midtown Subdistrict Design Guidelines)

Previous/Existing Entitlements:

- On January 24, 2017, the Design Commission approved an application for Concept Design Review for major exterior modifications to The Paseo; the design has since been abandoned in favor of this new proposal.

Approvals Needed/Project Scheduling:

- Concept Art Plan (Arts & Culture Commission)
- Consolidated Design Review (Design Commission)
- Final Art Plan (Arts & Culture Commission)
- Building Permits (Building Staff)

CEQA Clearance:

This is preliminary consultation regarding design review and is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Staff Observations:

Applicable Design Guidelines:

The following design guidelines are applicable to the project and should guide further development and study of the project as it moves forward in the design review process:

Design-Related Policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan:

- 7.1: Design each building as a high-quality, long term addition to the City's urban fabric; exterior design and buildings material shall exhibit permanence and quality, minimize maintenance concerns, and extend the life of the building.
- 7.2: Allow for the development of a diversity of buildings styles. Support innovative and creative design solutions to issues related to context and environmental sustainability.
- 7.3: Require that new and adaptively re-used buildings are designed to respect and complement the defining built form, massing, scale, modulation, and architectural detailing of their contextual setting.

Central District Specific Plan:

- SP 5.1: Utilize a landscape palette that reflects the history, culture, and climate of the Central District; in general, use a rich, yet coordinated palette of landscape materials to provide scale, texture, and color.
- SP 5.2 Encourage the use of on-site planting, furniture, lighting and site details that respect the landscape character of the immediate area and support the design intentions of the building architecture.
- SP 5.3 Provide year-round greenery; automatic watering systems and drought tolerant species are encouraged to promote water conservation and reduce maintenance concerns.
- BD 1.1 Design visually attractive buildings that add richness and variety to the Downtown environment, including creative contemporary architectural solutions.
- BD 1.2: Integrate new development with its surroundings, emphasizing functional and visual continuity while admitting individual expression.
- BD 1.3 Establish a harmonious transition between newer and older buildings; compatible design should respect the scale, massing and materials of adjacent buildings and landscape.
- BD 1.6 Discourage excessive and overly gratuitous ornamentation that detracts from the visual clarity of Downtown's historic architecture.

- BD 3.1: Establish a building's overall appearance on a clear and pleasing set of proportions; a building should exhibit a sense of order.
- BD 3.2: Utilize a hierarchy of vertical and horizontal expression; façade articulation should reflect changes in building form.
- BD 6.1 Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to Downtown; exterior design and building materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to an urban setting.
- BD 6.2 Use materials, colors, and details to unify a building's appearance; buildings and structures should be built of compatible materials on all sides.
- BD 6.3 Design architectural features that are an integral part of the building, and discourage ornamentation and features that appear "tacked-on" or artificially thin; this applies to balconies, canopies and awnings, as well as exposed rafters and beams, moldings, downspouts, scuppers, etc.
- BD 6.4 Employ especially durable and high-quality materials at the street level, encouraging those materials that show permanence and quality, minimize maintenance concerns, and extend the life of the building; examples of appropriate building materials for use at the street level include: stone, terra-cotta or tile, metal, brick and transparent glass.
- BD 6.6 Limit the number of materials and colors used on the exterior of an individual building so that there is visual simplicity and harmony; intense color should be used only as an accent or as part of a carefully executed and balanced color scheme.

Civic Center/Midtown Subdistrict Design Guidelines:

Sub-District Character Recommendation #1: Respect the dominance of the principal civic landmarks; buildings and landscape should define streets and contain public space, creating a consistent and unified context for these landmark buildings.

Sub-District Character Recommendation #2: Protect and enhance views and view corridors focused on monumental civic buildings, especially City Hall, the Central Library, and the Civic Auditorium; City Hall's dome should be the dominant element of the skyline.

Site Planning Recommendation #1: Emphasize an elegant, simple landscape design vocabulary.

Site Planning Recommendation #3: Encourage the presence of shade trees, lush plantings, warm materials, and fountains in outdoor spaces; fountains are an especially identifiable element within the Civic Center / Midtown area.

Building Design Recommendation #1: Match the permanence and quality of civic buildings in the area; buildings should be designed and built as long-term additions to the area.

Building Design Recommendation #3: Use the palette of materials and colors currently found in the area; masonry (non-brick), stucco, colored concrete, and tile decorative

elements are prominent materials, and the use of intense colors should be severely limited.

Potential Design Issues:

- Per the Second Amended and Restated Operation and Reciprocal Easement Agreement for Paseo Colorado, recorded on December 19, 2018 (“agreement,”), between the current property owners (and their successors) and the City, no permanent improvements exceeding 18 inches in height are permitted in the central 45’-wide portion of the Garfield Promenade. Tables with umbrellas less than 9’ in height are exempted from this requirement. Although described as movable and non-permanent, further review is required to determine if the proposed ground-mounted shading devices within this zone may be allowed within the provisions of this agreement. In future submittals, depict in the plans and renderings the locations of the Garfield Promenade Zones, as defined in the agreement, as well as the heights of all new structures, to ensure that the height limitations are not exceeded. Zone 1 is the middle 30’ of the promenade; Zone 2 is two 7 ½’ strips flanking Zone 1 and Zone 3 is the outer 16’ strips on either side of the promenade.
- Further explore unification of the proposed new design elements to ensure that a high quality, timeless appearance is maintained by the new installations and to ensure that the proposed new features are of a quality that is consistent with the existing character of the Civic Center. In general, the new elements using materials of metal and wood satisfy these criteria while the primary-colored elements, including furniture and signage elements, tend to cheapen the appearance of the center and may be quickly dated. The design guidelines also specifically recommend that the use of intense color be severely limited in the Civic Center.
- Digital signs are prohibited by the Zoning Code. Use of the Garfield Promenade for events such as outdoor movie showings may be an appropriate use for the space; however, consider a removable installation that would only be in place for such events.
- Refine the use of patterned lighting in strategic locations as opposed to wholesale lighting of the ground plane.
- Some of the renderings appear to depict new paving; however, this is not clearly called out in all of the sheets indicating proposed improvements. In future submittals, ensure that renderings accurately depict whether changes to paving are proposed and provide clear specifications regarding proposed paving improvements.
- Provide further details regarding irrigation for the proposed new landscape planters, to ensure that new landscape elements are properly maintained.

- Work with Cultural Affairs Staff to further define the proposed art components of the project. Any proposed art components that are not included within a Concept Art Plan approved by the Arts & Culture Commission shall require Design Review. Please note that any proposed relocation, disassembly or reuse of existing artworks that already have established conditions of approval with the City of Pasadena may not be considered towards fulfillment of a new Public Art Requirement and, importantly, requires distinct approval by the Arts & Culture Commission prior to their inclusion in a proposed Concept Art Plan or Design Review Application.
- Work with the staff of the Department of Public Works regarding the proposed installation of a crosswalk mural at the Green Street/Garfield Promenade intersection.

Project Scheduling/Sequencing:

- Concept Art Plan
- Consolidated Design Review by the Design Commission
- Final Art Plan
- Building Permits

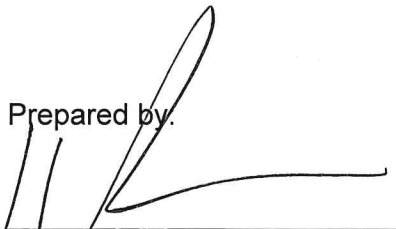
Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Reyes

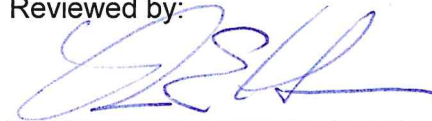
Director of Planning & Community Development Department

Prepared by:



Kevin Johnson
Senior Planner

Reviewed by:



Leon E. White
Principal Planner

Attachments:

- A. Applicant submittal packages including photographs, rendering and product information
- B. Applicant design narrative