

DATE ISSUED: July 21, 2010

ATTENTION: Honorable Chair and Members of the Redevelopment Agency
Council President and City Council
Docket of July 27, 2010

ORIGINATING DEPT.: Centre City Development Corporation

SUBJECT: Fire Station No. 2 (Bayside) (southeast corner of Pacific Highway
and Cedar Street) – Centre City Development Permit/Coastal
Development Permit/Planned Development Permit and Design
Review – Little Italy Redevelopment District of the Expansion Sub
Area of the Centre City Redevelopment Project – **Joint Public
Hearing**

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 2

REFERENCE: None

STAFF CONTACT: Brad Richter, Assistant Vice President, Planning

REQUESTED ACTION: That the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Diego (“Agency”) grant Design Review approval and the San Diego City Council (“Council”) approve Centre City Development Permit/Coastal Development Permit/Planned Development Permit (CCDP/CDP/PDP) 2010-27 for the Fire Station No. 2 (Bayside) project (“Project”) in the Downtown Community Plan Area.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the Agency:

- Adopt a Resolution making certain findings on the basis of a Secondary Study that certain activities implementing the Centre City Redevelopment Plan relating to the proposed Bayside Fire Station No. 2 Project do not require the preparation of additional environmental documentation.

- Adopt a Resolution approving the basic concept plans and schematic drawings for the Bayside Fire Station No. 2 Project located within the Centre City Redevelopment Project Area.

And, that the Council:

- Adopt a Resolution approving CCDP/CDP/PDP 2010-27 for the Project.

SUMMARY: This application is for approval of CCDP/CDP/PDP 2010-27 for the development of a three-bay fire station on a 10,000 square-foot site located at the southeast corner of Pacific Highway and Cedar Street. The fire station would contain approximately 16,000 square feet to accommodate three fire vehicles, living and working quarters for the fire crew, and one level of underground parking containing 16 spaces. The project requires approval by the Council of a Centre City Development Permit, a Coastal Development Permit for development within the Coastal Zone and a Planned Development Permit for deviations to the development standards of the 1992 Centre City Planned District Ordinance (PDO); and, Design Review approval by the Agency.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS: None with these actions.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION: On June 17, 2010, the Planning Commission voted 6–0 to recommend approval of the Project.

CENTRE CITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION RECOMMENDATION: On May 26, 2010, the Centre City Development Corporation (“Corporation”) Board of Directors voted 6-0 to recommend approval of the Project.

CENTRE CITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CCAC) RECOMMENDATION: On May 19, 2010, the CCAC (Downtown’s officially recognized community planning group) voted 18-1, with 2 recusals, to recommend approval of the Project.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS:

On January 9, 2010, the Corporation hosted a community meeting to kick off the design of the new station at the San Diego Firehouse Museum in Little Italy. Approximately 50 downtown residents, businesses and property owners and members of the public attended the meeting, which included presentations by the design and public artist teams. The design and public artist teams have considered many of the comments/concerns expressed by the public during a question/answer section as they have been developing a set of basic concept/schematic drawings for the Project.

Attached is a resolution adopted by the Little Italy Association (LIA) Board on February 2, 2010 recommending that the Corporation take a “go slow” approach on the construction of the Project until certain conditions have been met. The City’s Fire Chief and Corporation staff addressed the resolution, its conditions and other LIA Board questions and concerns as part of a presentation at the May 4, 2010 LIA meeting. On May 10, 2010, the Little Italy Residents Association (LIRA) sent the attached letter in support of the Project to Councilmember Faulconer. Corporation staff provided a Project update to the LIRA on May 11, 2010.

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

ROLE	FIRM/CONTACT	OWNERSHIP
Property Owner	City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency	N/A
Project Applicant	Centre City Development Corporation on behalf of the Redevelopment Agency John W. Collum, Senior Project Manager	N/A
Architect	Rob Wellington Quigley, FAIA Bob Dickens, Project Architect	Rob Wellington Quigley

BACKGROUND:

The Project advances the Visions and Goals of the Downtown Community Plan and the Objectives of the Centre City Redevelopment Project by:

- Maintaining a safe and livable environment downtown working with the City to ensure appropriate levels of fire and police services proportionate to population and activity level;
- Working with City fire and life safety departments to anticipate construction and expansion of fire and police facilities; and
- Working closely with fire and police department representatives on facility improvement and expansion projects, paying close attention to siting and accessibility requirements.

The Centre City Public Facilities Financing Plan (April 2005) and Downtown Community Plan (March 2006) anticipated the need for new fire-rescue facilities in the downtown area to accommodate a growing population and an increasing demand for emergency services. During the research, development and adoption of the two plans, Corporation staff worked closely with representatives of the City of San Diego (“City”) Fire-Rescue Department (“Fire-Rescue”) on facility improvement and expansion projects, and particularly in selecting sites to accommodate two new fire stations in downtown. Efforts were focused on finding priority sites in two areas

(the northern portion of East Village and the western waterfront) where additional stations and personnel were determined to be necessary to decrease response times and provide adequate coverage in the downtown area.

In early 2006, through the Corporation, the Agency purchased a 10,000 square-foot site at the southeast corner of Pacific Highway and Cedar Street in the Little Italy neighborhood for the purpose of developing a future fire station for the City. The site met the crucial requirements that a new station be located west of the railroad tracks in downtown to address emergency response delays resulting from rail activity, and be proximate to the Harbor Drive/Pacific Highway corridor for easier access to all downtown waterfront properties. Also in 2006, the Agency purchased a site north of Broadway between 13th and 14th streets in the northern portion of the East Village neighborhood for a future fire station. After the purchases, the Corporation and Fire-Rescue staff collaboratively determined that priority should be given to the Little Italy site for development of a new station.

Fire-Rescue has developed a Fire Station Master Plan (FSMP) for city-wide fire station planning and prioritization purposes, in accordance with the City's General Plan, as a means of identifying the communities in which additional fire stations are needed to achieve service-level objectives. The methodology used to prepare the FSMP was to evaluate each community on the basis of four principal risk factors: (1) response-time compliance, (2) annual incident response volume, (3) square miles protected, and (4) firefighter-to-1,000 population. Of the 16 City fire stations that are in various stages of planning and development, and considering the principal risk factors, the FSMP places Fire Station No. 2 (Bayside) as priority number 6. The FSMP has been reviewed by the City Council's Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhood Services, which voted to forward it to the full City Council with a recommendation of approval.

On December 7, 2009, the Agency approved an agreement with the firm of Rob Wellington Quigley, FAIA for architectural and engineering design, permitting and bidding services for the Project. At the same meeting, the Agency approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City, the Agency and the Corporation that describes the responsibilities of each party as the Project moves forward to design and construction. The MOU addresses the Agency's payment of the City's personnel costs of approximately \$275,000 to assist the Corporation in project management during design and construction.

Proposed Schedule – The following is the anticipated Project schedule:

Phase	Anticipated Completion
Schematic Design	July 2010
Design Development	October 2010

Construction Documents/Plan Check	July 2011
Bidding and Award	November 2011
Construction Start	Late-2011
Construction Complete	Early-2013

Proposed Project Budget – The estimated Project budget as of this report is as follows:

Item	Amount
Planning and Design	\$ 2,000,000
Improvements	\$ 17,200,000
<u>FF&E / Fire-Rescue Vehicle</u>	<u>\$ 1,600,000</u>
Total	\$ 20,800,000

Funds in the amount of \$20,800,000 are available in the Fiscal Year 2010 (FY2010) Agency budget for the design, construction, furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF&E) and purchase of one fire vehicle for the Project. Funds in the amount of \$190,000 are available in the FY2010 Agency budget (Public Art – 2% Ordinance set aside) for the design, fabrication and installation of the Project’s public artwork.

DISCUSSION:

The Project is governed by the 1992 Centre City Community Plan as the site is located within the Coastal Zone and the 2006 Downtown Community Plan and amendments to the Centre City PDO have not been certified by the Coastal Commission at this time. The site is located within the Commercial Office land use district, which is intended to accommodate government, business and professional offices, hotels, judicial facilities and a variety of support commercial services and residential development. In addition, the site lies within The Pacific Highway - County Administration Center Design Zone (“CAC Design Zone”), where new developments on the east side of Pacific Highway are subject to a set of design guidelines intended to create a unified architecture district with a strong civic identity focusing on the historic County Administration Center (CAC) and grounds. The County of San Diego administrative staff has reviewed the Project as required by the CAC Design Zone and has provided comments on this Project for consideration (see discussion later in report).

When the 2006 PDO amendments go into effect in this area (estimated in early 2011), the site will be located in the Employment/Residential Mixed-Use District, which is very similar to the existing Commercial Office District. Nearly all development standards for the site remain the

same in the 2006 PDO. The sole exception is that while the permitted Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for this site remains at 4.0, the 2006 Minimum FAR requirement of 2.5 is not yet applicable (the Project is designed at a 1.6 FAR).

Site Description

The 10,000 square-foot project site is located at the southeast corner of Pacific Highway and Cedar Street, an important gateway into the Little Italy neighborhood and across from the CAC building and parking lots (sites for future parks). Surrounding uses include a two-story commercial building and one-story warehouse building to the east, a five-story hotel to the south, and a drive-through restaurant and the one-story Monarch School to the north.

Project Analysis

The proposed Project consists of a three-story building constructed of concrete block and a stucco surface material. The first floor will contain a drive-through apparatus bay that will accommodate engine, truck, medic or other fire-rescue vehicles. This floor also contains a public lobby and administrative offices. The living and sleeping quarters for the fire staff will be on the second and third floors. The third floor also contains an exercise room and an outdoor roof deck adjacent to the kitchen and dining area.

The Project contains two driveways. The Pacific Highway driveway will be the entry for the fire vehicles and the entrance/exit for the driveway to the underground parking area, which contains 16 spaces for the fire crew. The fire vehicles will exit the site through the Cedar Street driveway, enabling them to head west, and then north or south on Pacific Highway, or east on Cedar Street into the Little Italy neighborhood and the remainder of downtown.

The building is set back 15 feet along Cedar Street as required by the PDO to provide a widened view corridor and pedestrian promenade from the Little Italy neighborhood to the CAC and San Diego Bay. A double row of jacaranda trees will be provided on the eastern half of the Cedar Street frontage consistent with the design theme of this promenade, although no trees may be provided in the widened exit driveway area. The area between the jacarandas and the building is designed as stepped concrete benches to create an informal gathering area for station visitors and pedestrians. The northwest corner of the site, where Pacific Highway and Cedar Street converge, is provided with a small plaza complimentary to the CAC building courtyard. Along Pacific Highway, the Project will incorporate the North Embarcadero Visionary Plan streetscape improvements, including Mexican fan palms.

The Project will be designed to achieve LEED Silver rating or above. The building contains a series of green roofs on the third and roof levels, and provides an angled roof canopy over the

elevated atrium element that will contain photovoltaic panels. The building will also incorporate a “green wall” on a portion of the west elevation where a vine will cascade from the third floor planters down an open mesh screen to provide additional landscaping near the corner of the Project and to mitigate the sun exposure into the apparatus bay.

The Project will also contain a public art component and an artist team has been selected. The artist team is collaborating with the architect to incorporate the public art program into the Project design, which proposes to include an art element within the corner plaza.

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

The proposed Project is subject to the development standards of the 1992 Centre City PDO, as amended. The Project does not comply with the following PDO development standards and seeks deviations through the approval of a Planned Development Permit (PDP):

1. Allowance of a driveway on Pacific Highway (typically not permitted).
2. Increase in the Cedar Street driveway width from 30 to 42 feet.
3. Reduction in the required distance of the Cedar Street driveway from the Pacific Highway curb line from 65 to 32 feet.
4. Increase in the total permitted linear feet of driveways on the site from 20 to 62 based on the size of the lot (1 linear foot allowed per 500 sq. ft. of site area).

Pursuant to Section 143.0401 of the San Diego Municipal Code, the purpose of the PDP regulations is:

“to provide flexibility in the application of development regulations for projects where strict application of the base zone regulations would restrict design options and result in a less desirable project. The intent of the Planned Development Permit regulations is to accommodate, to the greatest extent possible, an equitable balance of development types, intensities, styles, site constraints, project amenities, public improvements, and community and City benefits.”

In order to accommodate this much needed public safety facility on the site with its circulation and vehicular access needs, deviations have been proposed to the Centre City PDO’s standards. The PDO development standards were established to minimize the number and size of driveways, and to avoid locating driveways on the busiest streets downtown. The deviations from those standards are necessary to allow the Project to be designed as drive-through facility. This design is highly preferred by the Fire-Rescue Department to avoid vehicles having to back into the building bays. The drive-through design will minimize the potential blocking of Cedar

Street and the associated beeping noise from the back-up movement. The deviation for the width of the Cedar Street driveway is necessary to accommodate fire vehicle maneuvering.

In order to approve a PDP, the following five findings must be made under San Diego Municipal Code Seciton 126.0604. It is staff's conclusion that the findings for approval of the permit can be made, as follows:

(1) *The proposed development will not adversely affect the applicable land use plan.*

The Downtown Community Plan acknowledges the need for additional fire stations in the downtown area to serve its growing population and workforce. Fire Station No. 2 (Bayside) will provide much needed coverage on the west side of the railroad/trolley tracks and avoid delays associated with the track crossings. The modifications will allow for the proper development of the site and maximize the efficiency of fire station operations.

(2) *The proposed development will not be detrimental to the public health, safety and general welfare.*

The construction of a fire station at this location will enhance fire safety in the downtown area, especially for properties west of the railroad/trolley tracks. The proposed deviations to the driveway regulations are not significant and will not create traffic or pedestrian conflicts.

(3) *The proposed development will comply with the regulations of the Land Development Code.*

The development will comply with the Centre City PDO and Land Development Code, and the findings for approval of the deviations can be made as discussed herein. In addition, the findings for approval of a Coastal Development Permit can also be made as discussed later in this report.

(4) *The proposed development, when considered as a whole, will be beneficial to the community.*

The proposed Fire Station No. 2 (Bayside) will greatly improve fire safety services to the western portions of downtown and will fill a need identified in the Downtown Community Plan.

(5) *Any proposed deviations pursuant to Section 126.0602(b)(1) are appropriate for this location and will result in a more desirable project.*

The deviations to the driveway standards result in increased driveway access to the site above what is typically allowed in the downtown area, but the fire station use is unique and has special

design requirements. The additional driveway on Pacific Highway and increased width of the Cedar Street driveway will facilitate appropriate access and turning movements for the fire safety vehicles, allowing for a drive-through facility. The traffic study prepared for the Project has found that the Project will not create significant traffic impacts.

COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

The Project is located within the Coastal Zone, and therefore, requires approval of a Coastal Development Permit. The following findings must be made under San Diego Municipal Code Section 126.0708 in order to approve the Coastal Development Permit:

- (1) *The proposed coastal development will not encroach upon any existing physical accessway that is legally used by the public or any proposed public accessway identified in a Local Coastal Program land use plan; and the proposed coastal development will enhance and protect public views to and along the ocean and other scenic coastal areas as specific in the Local Coastal Program land use plan.*

The Project is located along Cedar Street, a designated Green Street and View Corridor street in the Downtown Community Plan. The Project will provide the required 15-foot wide setback for the building, which provides for enhanced views to San Diego Bay, and provides a widened public esplanade which allows for a double row of Jacaranda trees to enhance the pedestrian experience connecting the Little Italy neighborhood to the bayfront. The design of the Project is in compliance with both public accessway and view corridor requirements of the Downtown Community Plan, Centre City PDO and Centre City Streetscape Manual which make up the Local Coastal Program land use plans for the downtown area.

- (2) *The proposed coastal development will not adversely affect environmentally sensitive lands.*

The site does not contain any environmentally sensitive lands because it is currently entirely improved with a building and paved parking area. The proposed Project will not change this condition.

- (3) *The proposed coastal development is in conformity with the certified Local Coastal Program land use plan and complies with all regulations of the certified Implementation Program.*

The Project will comply with all applicable regulations for the downtown area, subject to approval of the PDP for the deviations previously discussed (and allowed under the City's Land Development Code). The Project fulfills an identified need in the Downtown Community Plan

and complies with the view corridor and public access requirements for the site under the Local Coastal Plan.

DESIGN REVIEW

Under Agency Resolution 2130, all projects requiring Agency financial assistance are subject to design review approval by the Agency. The proposed Project has been designed to complement, but not attempt to imitate, the historical CAC building while providing an attractive entrance element to the Little Italy neighborhood from Pacific Highway. The building incorporates eggshell color stucco that will have a smooth, troweled finish to resemble concrete and large window elements with dark green frames. The building will have a low concrete base to serve as a protective element for the stucco along the street facades. A mixture of clear, spandrel and translucent glass will be utilized within the window systems to provide light and views into the apparatus bays while tempering the heat gain from the west orientation and maintaining privacy for the interior living areas overlooking the apparatus bay. A white corrugated metal material will be used on the elevated atrium in the middle of the building, on the living quarter walls facing the roof gardens, and on the underside of the angled roof canopy.

A key design element is the incorporation of landscaping into the Project through green roofs and a vine wall. The third floor open decks provide an opportunity for landscape planters whose plantings may be visible to the surrounding neighborhood. The cascading trumpet vine element on the west elevation will provide additional greenery and color within this urban station that will compliment the CAC building landscaping across Pacific Highway. The green roofs on the upper level can contain shallow, low-maintenance landscape elements that can provide water retention and building cooling advantages while being visible from the surrounding community.

Overall, Corporation staff recommends that the building exhibits a design appropriate for its location within the CAC Design Zone and is an attractive element at the entry into the Little Italy neighborhood from Pacific Highway.

The Project incorporates public art, as the artist team of Chuck Moffit, Ingram Ober and Marisol Rendón was selected through a Request for Qualifications process managed by the City's Commission for Arts and Culture ("Commission") in compliance with City Council Policy 900-11, "Inclusion of Public Art in Selected Capital Improvements Program and Redevelopment Agency Projects." The schematic artwork proposal consists of a sculpture that would be integrated into the plaza proposed in the northwest corner of the site where the Cedar Street and Pacific Highway sidewalks converge.

The Pacific Highway – County Administration Center Design Zone

The objective of this overlay zone is to create a unified architectural district that creates a visually consistent “frame” around the historic CAC building. New buildings should emphasize compatibility of form, materials and colors without attempting to mimic or replicate the historic building. Projects within the CAC Design Zone are reviewed by the County of San Diego Chief Administrative Officer as part of the design review process. This review is based on the Design Guidelines for CAC Design Zone of the Community Plan (see attached “CAC Design Guidelines”). In April 2010, Corporation staff and the architect met with County staff on the preliminary design. The County has provided staff with comments/recommendations on the Project, which are attached to this report and summarized as follows:

1. Based on the unique and public-serving nature of this facility, the County recognizes the need to allow for some exceptions to the development standards of the PDO. The County also commends the commitment to achieve green building standards with this facility.
2. The County has some concerns regarding fire vehicles turning around on Pacific Highway to facilitate the return of fire vehicles to the station and potential traffic and safety issues that this could produce.

Corporation Response: Corporation staff and the design team will continue to work with Fire-Rescue to identify the safest and most efficient means of facilitating the return of fire vehicles to the station from Pacific Highway, which may include utilizing the surrounding street network to access northbound Pacific Highway.

3. In light of the CAC Design Guidelines, the County urges exploring additional opportunities to enhance the architectural relationship between the fire station and CAC buildings by including design elements to enhance building articulation, window module and cornice, and incorporation of ornamentation details on the building and/or in the small plaza or entry area, potentially utilizing tile or other materials reflective of the CAC.

Corporation Response: Corporation staff and the design team agree that ornamental details reminiscent of the CAC building would enhance the abstract relationship between the two buildings. The fire station drawings have been revised to indicate these materials/details will be concentrated at the public entry, as is the case for the CAC building. The architect envisions the use of natural, weathered brass for the front door eyebrow and signage. Ceramic tile, similar in color, scale and pattern to the CAC building, will be used as an accent in this area. In addition, stucco expansion joints will be carefully combined to reflect the CAC building proportioning system.

4. The County appreciates the proposed design’s sensitivity to the historic CAC as the centerpiece of the CAC Design Zone. The County concurs that the relationship between the two structures should be subtle and that the fire station should be original and not represent a literal effort to replicate the CAC.

Corporation Response: Corporation staff agrees that the design team has accomplished these objectives within the proposed Project design.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The following is a summary of the Project:

Site Area	10,000 sq. ft
Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	4.0
Minimum FAR Required	N/A
Proposed FAR	1.6
FAR Incentives, Exemptions or Bonuses	N/A
Stories / Height	3 stories / 60 feet
Parking	
Required	N/A
Proposed	16

Environmental Impact – This Project is covered under the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Centre City Redevelopment Plan certified by the Redevelopment Agency (“Agency”) on March 14, 2006 (Resolution R-04001) in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The FEIR is a “Program EIR” prepared in compliance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. In accordance with Agency’s procedures, an Environmental Secondary Study (ESS) has been prepared which has made certain findings with respect to the impacts on the environment compared to the analysis performed in the FEIR.

Acting as the “lead agency” for purposes of CEQA review, the Agency will make certain findings, consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 and the Agency’s CEQA procedures, to the effect that (i) the environmental impacts of the proposed Project were adequately addressed in the FEIR, (ii) the proposed Project is within the scope of the development program described in the FEIR, and (iii) no further environmental documentation is required under CEQA. Such findings are set forth in the draft Agency resolution accompanying this item. Acting as the “responsible agency” for purposes of CEQA review in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15096, the Council will state for the record that it has reviewed and considered the FEIR, Addenda, and Secondary Study.

CONCLUSION:

The Project is consistent with the goals and policies of the Downtown Community Plan and fulfills an identified need of the Fire Service Department to provide adequate service levels in the Downtown area, especially west of the railroad/trolled tracks. In addition, the Project is consistent with all adopted design policies and meets the required findings for approval of Centre City planned development permit and coastal development permit. Therefore, staff recommends that the Agency and Council grant approval of the Project.

Respectfully submitted,

Concurred by:



Brad Richter
Assistant Vice President, Planning



Frank J. Alessi
Executive Vice President & Chief Financial
Officer



Jeff Graham
Vice President, Redevelopment

- Attachments: A – Design Guidelines for The Pacific Highway – County Administration Center
Design Zone
B – County of San Diego Letter dated May 3, 2010
C – February 2, 2010 Little Italy Association Board of Directors Resolution
D – Little Italy Residents Association Letter dated May 10, 2010
E – Environmental Secondary Study
Basic Concept/Schematic Drawings
Public Hearing Notice