



DATE: September 6, 2017

AGENDA ITEM # 2

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

FROM: Zachary Dahl, Planning Services Manager – Current Planning

SUBJECT: New Office Building and Public Plaza – 101-151 First Street

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend approval of Commercial Design Review Application 17-D-05 to the Planning and Transportation Commission

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a Commercial Design Review application for a new three-story, 77,000 square-foot office building at 101-151 First Street with three levels of underground parking and a 1,200 square-foot café on the first floor at the south end of the building. The project also includes a new 22,000 square-foot public plaza (First Street Green) that occupies the south end of the project site and a portion of Public Parking Plaza 7. The project site is comprised of eight existing parcels that front on First Street between Shasta Street and Plaza 7, and is a total of 1.14 acres (49,731 square feet) in size. The portion of Plaza 7 that would be occupied by the public plaza is approximately 14,200 square feet in size and 67 existing public parking spaces would be relocated into the underground garage. The site includes eight existing commercial buildings, all of which would be demolished as part of the project.

A cover letter from the applicant that provides additional information about the project is included as Attachment A and a condensed version of the project plans that focuses on the project's bicycle and pedestrian amenities is included as Attachment B.

The project site is designated as Downtown Commercial in the General Plan and zoned CD/R3 (Commercial Downtown/Multi-Family). Plaza 7 is designated as Public and Institutional in the General Plan and zoned CRS (Commercial Retail Sales). The General Plan has multiple goals, policies and objectives that support the new commercial development and public amenities Downtown and the proposed uses are permitted in the CD/R3 and CRS districts.

BACKGROUND

As outlined in the Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 14.78), the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission shall consider projects at a public meeting and act in an advisory capacity to the Planning and Transportation Commission on bicycle and pedestrian matters. For Commercial

Design Review applications, the Commission shall provide an advisory recommendation on the elements of the application that pertain to bicycle and pedestrian issues.

The City does not have a bicycle parking ordinance, but does use the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Bicycle Technical Guidelines as a recommended bicycle parking guideline. For office buildings/office uses, VTA recommends one space per 6,000 square feet (75% Class I and 25% Class II). For restaurant uses, one Class I space per 30 employees and one Class II space per 3,000 square feet is recommended. For parks and recreational fields, one Class II space per nine users during peak daylight times of a peak season is recommended.

A Class I space is defined as one that protects the entire bicycle and its components from theft, vandalism or inclement weather and is appropriate for long-term parking (two hours to all day). A Class II space is defined as a rack to which the frame and at least one wheel can be secured with a user provided U-lock or padlock and cable and is appropriate for short-term parking (less than two hours).

DISCUSSION

Bicycle Amenities

As recommended by the VTA guidelines, the project should provide 13 bicycle parking spaces for the office building (10 Class I and three Class II), and five spaces for the café use (one Class I and four Class II). In addition, end of trip changing facilities would be encouraged for an office building of this size. For the public plaza, based on the estimate of 337 users during peak daylight hours¹, a total of 37 Class II spaces would be recommended. Sheet L2.00 in the attached plans provides specific information about the project's bicycle and pedestrian amenities.

A total of 24 Class I spaces are proposed in the first level of the underground parking garage, four class II spaces are proposed at the building's entrance along First Street and an end of trip facility (bathrooms with showers and changing rooms) is proposed on the first floor off of the main lobby. Employees of the café would also have access to these amenities. For the café customers and public plaza users, a total of 48 Class II spaces would be available in and around the plaza space. In addition, a bicycle repair station is proposed near the plaza's main entrance along First Street. Overall, the project is significantly exceeding the VTA Guideline for bicycle parking spaces and is also providing additional amenities that support and encourage bicycle users.

Pedestrian Improvements

The project will be replacing and widening the sidewalk along its First Street frontage, installing an improved crosswalk with a bulb out at Shasta Street and installing new landscaping with low walls along First Street to improve the buffer between pedestrians and vehicles. The existing alley along the rear of the building that provides access to the multi-family residential buildings on Second Street will be rebuilt with enhanced pavement treatments, new trees and landscaping to create an alley that encourages slower vehicle speeds and is more inviting for pedestrian access. A shaded seating area along Shasta Street to support rideshare users is also proposed.

¹ This estimate of peak users in the plaza was provided by the applicant and additional background information to support this number is included in their cover letter.

The proposed public plaza is designed to be very welcoming to pedestrians and create strong linkages with the surrounding sidewalks and greater Downtown area. The mid-block crosswalk on First Street and remaining Plaza 7 driveway crosswalk will both be improved, trellis structures on First Street and at the Plaza 7/alley connection will identify entry points and the entrance to the underground garage with public parking has been designed to be clear and visible from the plaza. However, staff recommends that the connection between the First Street sidewalk and the pedestrian entrance to the underground public parking be strengthened. This recommendation has been conveyed to the applicant and they are currently evaluating design modifications to strengthen the pedestrian access between First Street and the underground public parking. Otherwise, the proposed improvements, trees and landscaping will create a very welcoming environment that enhances pedestrian access, safety and connects well to the surrounding Downtown streets and sidewalk infrastructure.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This project will require an environmental initial study and a Negative Declaration as required by the California Environmental Quality Act. This evaluation is currently underway and will be completed prior to review by the Planning and Transportation Commission.

Attachments:

- A. Applicant Cover Letter
- B. Project Plans