

Planning Commission Staff Report

August 26, 2015

Item 6. b.

SUBJECT:	PUD-109
APPLICANT/ PROPERTY OWNER:	H. James Knuppe
PURPOSE:	Work Session to review and receive comments on applications for Planned Unit Development (PUD) Rezoning and Development Plan approval to rezone an approximately 0.39-acre site from the C-C (Central Commercial), Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District to a PUD, Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District and to construct a new 2,204-square-foot, two-story commercial/office building and five new 2,104-square-foot, three-story attached townhouses.
LOCATION:	273 Spring Street
GENERAL PLAN:	Retail, Highway, and Service Commercial; Business and Professional Offices
ZONING:	Central Commercial (C-C), Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District
SPECIFIC PLAN:	Downtown Specific Plan – Downtown Commercial
EXHIBITS:	A. Planning Commission Work Session Topics B. Project Plans dated "Received July 2, 2015" C. Preliminary Comment Letters dated June 4, 2014 and August 1, 2014 D. Location and Notification Map

BACKGROUND

On May 5, 2014, the applicant submitted a Preliminary Review application to solicit staff comments on a proposal to construct a two-story commercial building and five new detached townhomes on the subject parcel. This initial submittal included a smaller commercial building (approximately 1,200 square feet) and four detached homes along the eastern property line with one detached home along the northern property line, facing south toward Spring Street. After reviewing the application, staff provided the applicant with two letters discussing

concerns related to land use compatibility, aesthetics, architectural styling and consistency with the Downtown Specific Plan. Specifically, staff was concerned that the relatively small size of the commercial/office building would be contrary to the intent of the Downtown Specific Plan. The Downtown Commercial land use designation requires “pedestrian-oriented commercial” uses. Additionally, the proposed townhomes were out of character in terms of height and scale with the surrounding area. Please see staff’s preliminary comment letters in Exhibit C for additional information.

Over the next several months, staff and the applicant met to discuss alternative design concepts for the subject site that addressed staff’s concerns from the preliminary review process. After these meetings, on April 6, 2015, the applicant submitted a Planned Unit Development Rezoning and Development Plan application to construct a new 2,204-square-foot, two-story commercial/office building and five new 2,104-square-foot, three-story attached townhouses. The Planned Unit Development application is required to provide relief from the site development and parking standards prescribed by the underlying C-C Zoning District and the Pleasanton Municipal Code (PMC).

Staff made additional design suggestions to the applicant over the next two months, and the applicant submitted revised plans on July 2, 2015. Prior to presenting the applications to the Planning Commission for a formal recommendation to the City Council, the proposed project is being presented to the Planning Commission at this time as a work session for the Commission’s review and direction.

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The 0.39-acre subject parcel is generally rectangular in shape and gradually up-slopes from Spring Street in a northerly direction. Due to the grade differential with the surrounding parcels, there are retaining walls ranging in height from approximately one to five feet along the entire perimeter of the subject parcel. There is also an approximately six-foot-tall wood fence along the northern half of the eastern property line and the entire northern property line, as well as an approximately six-foot-tall chain link fence along the northern half of the western property line. There is an approximately 910-square-foot single-story vacant building constructed at the far northern end of the subject parcel, as well as approximately 20 paved parking spaces throughout the remainder of the subject parcel. There are nine trees, of which all are Heritage Trees, of various species, sizes and health conditions on the subject parcel. The subject parcel is accessible from a single driveway off Spring Street.

The properties adjacent to and within the immediate vicinity of the subject parcel on Spring Street and Main Street include several small commercial buildings occupied by a pest control business to the east, meat/seafood market to the west, and a mix of small retail/restaurant and office uses, as well as single-family residences along both sides of Spring Street and on Main Street. Residential uses are located to the north. Figure 1a below shows an aerial and street-scene view of the subject parcel, existing building and surrounding uses. Figure 1b below shows a street-level view of the subject parcel looking north from Spring Street.

Figure 1a: Aerial Photograph



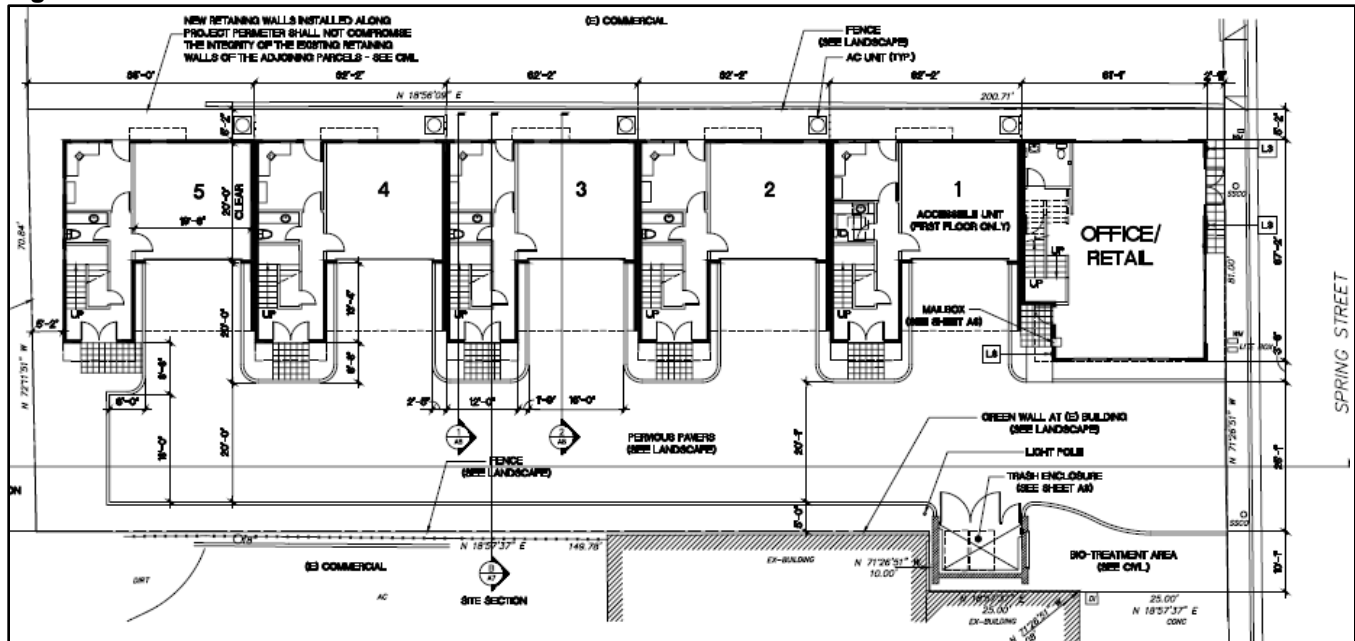
Figure 1b: Street-level Photograph



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to demolish all existing site improvements including removal of the 910-square-foot single-story commercial building, all paved parking spaces, fences along the northern and western property lines, landscaping and trees. The site would be developed with a new 2,204-square-foot, two-story commercial/office building and five new 2,104-square-foot, three-story attached residences (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Site Plan



Commercial/Office Building

The proposed two-story commercial/office building would be designed for a single occupant and the applicant has stated it could accommodate a retail or office tenant. The first floor would be approximately 1,103 square feet in area and the second floor would be approximately 1,101 square feet in area. Entrances to the building would be available from both Spring Street (primary entrance) and at the rear of the first floor. With the exception of a restroom on each floor and stairs, no other interior tenant improvements are proposed at this time. No on-site parking is proposed for the new building; the applicant intends to pay an in-lieu fee for all required on-site parking spaces (seven spaces based on a 1 space/300 sq. ft. ratio) pursuant to PMC Code Section 18.88.120.

The proposed commercial/office building is designed to include some architectural features found in other existing buildings along Spring Street (Figure 3). Most noticeably, along the parapet and roofline, architectural elements prominent in the Mission Revival architectural styling are proposed and include a mix of flat and gabled parapet lines, round tile gable vents, and smooth cement plaster wall finishes. More contemporary architectural elements are also proposed and include striped canvas awnings, a mix of rectangular and curved window shapes and mullion stylings, and modern light fixtures.

Figure 3: Proposed Commercial/Office Building Perspective



Townhouses

Each of the five proposed three-story townhouses would be approximately 2,104 square feet in living area. The first floor of each townhouse would be approximately 408 square feet in area, the second floor would be approximately 961 square feet in area, and the third floor would be approximately 735 square feet in area. The first floor of each townhouse also includes an approximately 400-square-foot two-car garage at grade, as well as a 16-foot-wide by 20-foot-deep driveway. Additionally, each townhouse would have two second-story decks/balconies totaling approximately 156 square feet in area. A small deck/balcony on the front of each townhouse would face west toward Main Street, while the larger deck at the rear of each townhouse would face east. Each townhouse would also have approximately 160 square feet of private outdoor space at the rear that is accessible from the first floor. It should be noted that the applicant is proposing to subdivide the subject parcel into six new parcels (one for the commercial/office building and one for each of the five townhouses); however, the applicant may retain all of the parcels for rental purposes, although they could be sold in the future.






























The proposed townhouses are designed in a contemporary architectural style, which features both flat and curved roof parapet lines, smooth cement plaster walls painted white, a significant amount of glazing, and metal deck/balcony railings (Figure 4). However, the modern design incorporates traditional elements, such as tile roofing and smooth cement plaster walls.

Figure 4: Perspective of Proposed Townhouses



Figure 5 below provides a comprehensive depiction of the overall proposed color and material scheme for the proposed project.

Figure 5: Proposed Color and Material Scheme

MATERIALS		PAINT COLORS		LUMINAIRES	MATERIALS:
 <p>FABRIC AWNING CONFIGURATION</p>				 <p>L1</p>	<p>AW1 Fabric Awning - Firesist - Color: Black</p> <p>AW2 Fabric Awning - Firesist - Color: Sand</p> <p>AW3 Fabric Awning - Firesist - Color: Toasty Beige</p> <p>AW4 Fabric Awning - Firesist - Color: Terracotta</p> <p>AW5 Fabric Awning - Firesist - Color: Burgundy</p> <p>AW6 Fabric Awning - Firesist - Color: Regatta Tweed</p> <p>AW7 Fabric Awning - Firesist - Color: Forrest Green Tweed</p>
 <p>AW1</p>	 <p>AL1</p>	 <p>P1</p>	 <p>P6</p>	 <p>L2</p>	<p>AL1 Clear Anodized Aluminum</p> <p>CP1 Cement Plaster - Medium Float Finish Color: Paint P1</p>
 <p>AW2</p>	 <p>W2</p>	 <p>P2</p>	 <p>P7</p>	 <p>L3</p>	<p>W1 Vinyl Windows - Milgard Color: White</p> <p>W2 Wood Doors - Vertical Grain Fir Color: Natural w/ Clear Finish Garage Doors: To match above.</p>
 <p>AW3</p>	 <p>CPI</p>	 <p>P3</p>	 <p>P8</p>	 <p>L4</p>	<p>R1 Lightweight Concrete Roof Tile - Eagle Roofing - Style: Capistrano Color: El Morado Blend LHC8709</p>
 <p>AW4</p>	 <p>R1</p>	 <p>P4</p>	 <p>P9</p>	 <p>L5</p>	<p>PAINT COLORS:</p> <p>P1 SW7007 Ceiling White</p> <p>P2 SW6114 Bagel</p> <p>P3 SW7018 Dovetail</p> <p>P4 SW6307 Fine Wine</p> <p>P5 SW0006 Toile Red</p> <p>P6 SW0007 Decorous Amber</p> <p>P7 SW7061 Night Owl</p> <p>P8 SW6243 Distance</p> <p>P9 SW6186 Dried Thyme</p> <p>P10 SW6991 Black Magic</p>
 <p>AW5</p>	 <p>W1</p>	 <p>P5</p>	 <p>P10</p>		<p>LUMINAIRES:</p> <p>L1 Trash Pole Light - Gardco Slender Form Silver/LED</p> <p>L2 Wall Sconce - TMS Lighting - Apollo SS-APWSS18 Silver/LED</p> <p>L3 Wall Sconce - TMS Lighting - Kingston GR SS/Fluorescent</p> <p>L4 Up-Light - HK Lighting - ZXLS-01 Silver/LED</p> <p>L5 Sign Light - BK Lighting - Sign Star B - Series Black/Wrinkle/LED</p>
 <p>AW6</p>					
 <p>AW7</p>					

The landscape plan (Figure 6) includes a tree/plant palette of native and non-native species that are primarily drought tolerant, as well as some hardscape features, including a pervious concrete paver driveway and patios.

An ornamental iron fence with stucco columns is proposed along the western property line, while a wood fence is proposed along the northern and eastern property line to provide privacy for the proposed townhouses from the adjacent commercial use. Additionally, a 10-to 15-foot-tall green screen (tubular steel and wire mesh frame that supports/trains growing vine-type plant species over time to create a vegetative screen; see Exhibit B, sheet L2 for details) is proposed along a portion of the western property line to screen the adjacent building along that portion of the subject parcel (Figure 7).

A joint-use trash enclosure is also proposed along the western property line, generally at the southwest corner of the subject site, set back approximately 25 feet from Spring Street. The enclosure would be designed to architecturally complement the proposed commercial/office building.

Figure 6: Landscape Plan

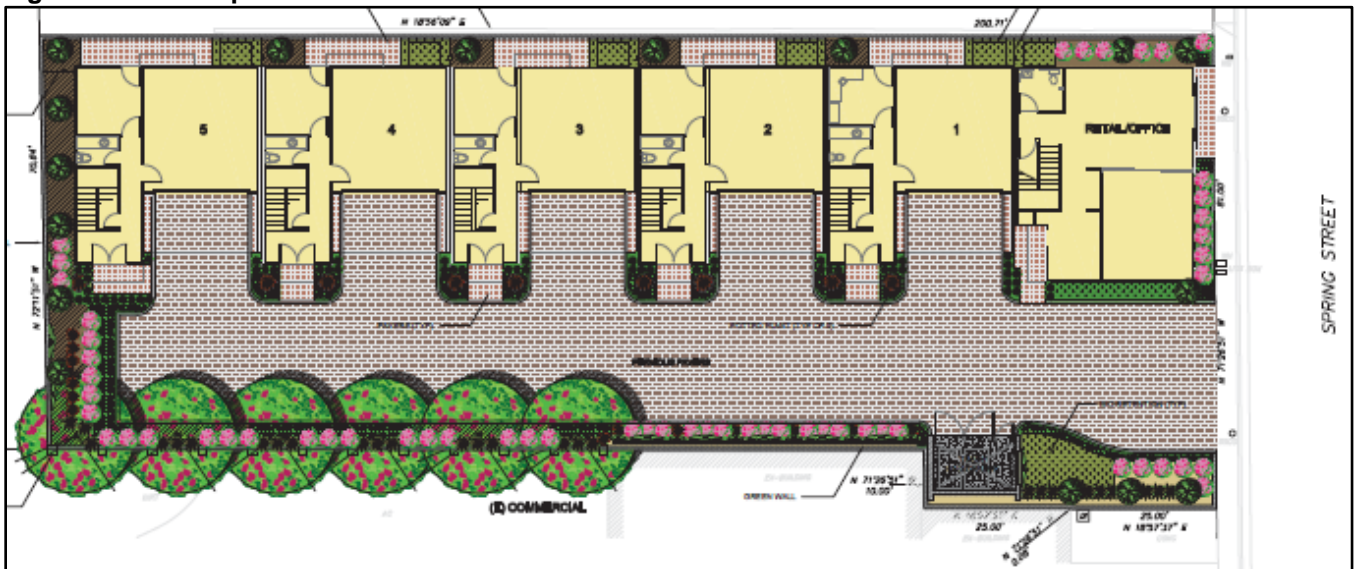
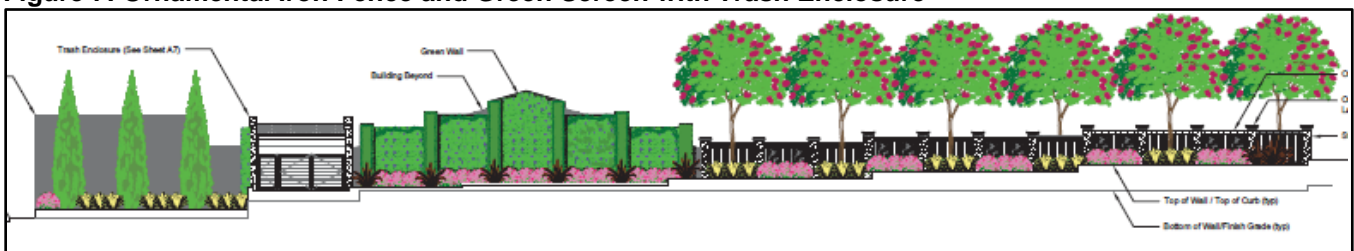


Figure 7: Ornamental Iron Fence and Green Screen with Trash Enclosure



A single 25-foot-wide standard commercial driveway off Spring Street would continue to serve as the sole vehicular access point for the proposed project. This driveway is wider than the existing driveway; however, it is located generally in the same area.

Please see the attached project plans (Exhibit B) for additional information on the subject proposal, including proposed signage criteria for the proposed commercial/office building.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE WORK SESSION

Downtown Specific Plan Consistency and Land Uses

The Downtown Specific Plan land use designation for the subject parcel is “Downtown Commercial,” which allows pedestrian-oriented commercial and upperfloor office and residential uses consistent with the permitted and conditional uses allowed in the Central Commercial Zoning District. Ground floor residential uses are generally not permitted. However, staff generally believes the proposed townhouses are permissible provided the Planning Commission finds that the proposed commercial/office building space is large enough

to accommodate a viable commercial/office use and generates the level of street activity that is desired in the Downtown Commercial designation. The applicant has indicated that only commercial/office space adjacent to and visible from Spring Street would be successful on the subject parcel, especially since this space is not highly visible from Main Street, rendering the remaining portion of the site less than desirable for potential commercial uses and less likely to be able to retain steady commercial tenancy. Staff also notes that due to the relative modest size of the commercial/office building, and its two-story single-occupant configuration, an office use is the most likely tenant as retail tenants typically prefer one-story spaces.

Discussion Points:

- A. *Is the proposed commercial/office building adequately sized and designed for either a retail or office tenant to allow the Planning Commission to make a finding of consistency with the intent of the Downtown Specific Plan land use designation of “Downtown Commercial?”*
- B. *If so, are residential uses appropriate for development on the remainder of the subject parcel?*

Site Design

The proposed commercial/office building would be set back approximately three feet from Spring Street and five feet from the eastern property line. The proposed townhouses would be set back approximately five feet from the northern and eastern property lines. The current underlying C-C zoning allows buildings to be constructed on property line, which is typically encouraged for commercial uses to provide a strong street-level presence.

Due to the grade differential between the subject site and the adjacent parcels, new retaining walls are proposed along the northern, eastern and western property lines. The retaining walls range in height between two feet and six feet, six inches. The lower retaining walls (two to four feet) run along the northern and western property lines. A new six-foot-tall wood fence is proposed on top of the retaining wall along the northern property line and a new six-foot-tall ornamental iron fence and/or green screen (details below) is proposed along the western property line. The tallest retaining wall (up to six feet, six inches) runs along the eastern property line, predominantly behind the proposed townhouses. An approximately four-to-six-foot-tall wood fence is proposed on top of this retaining wall. This retaining wall/fence combination will also provide rear yard privacy for the proposed townhouses. There are existing retaining walls on-site currently that are in various states of disrepair and are in need of replacement. The proposed walls are similar in height to the existing retaining walls.

Discussion Points:

- C. *Does the Planning Commission support the proposed building setbacks and building positioning?*
- D. *Does the Planning Commission support the proposed grading and retaining wall plan?*

Architecture and Design

Staff initially had concerns that the building massing of the proposed townhouses was incompatible with the neighborhood, which primarily comprises one-story commercial and single-family detached homes. The applicant revised the plans multiple times to improve the finish material quality (smooth cement plaster, awnings, etc.) of the overall proposal and to also add architectural interest (storefront windows at the street level, decorative and varying roofline parapets, etc.), wall plane articulation (variable second floor wall planes, dormer elements, etc.) and movement to the front and rear elevations of the proposed commercial/office building, as well as the proposed townhouses, increasing the proposal's consistency with the Downtown Design Guidelines. Additionally, the applicant reduced the height of the proposed townhouses to 30 feet, which is considered acceptable in most residential zones within the City. Staff believes these revisions make the plan more consistent with the Downtown Specific Plan Land Use Policy No. 1 that states: "In order to preserve the historic character of the Downtown, new or remodeled buildings within the Downtown Commercial area should be limited to two stories, except three-story buildings may be allowed on a case-by-case basis provided: (1) the buildings are pedestrian in scale, and include features such as first-story storefront windows, recessed entries, building details, and awnings; (2) buildings are designed to minimize their three-story appearances through use of techniques such as dormer windows, stepping back upper floors, and using design features between building levels to assist in maintaining an overall horizontal design character to the building; and (3) buildings must conform with the City Municipal Code height limits." Downtown Specific Plan Land Use Policy No. 15 refers to Municipal Code Section 18.84, limiting building heights in residential areas and future PUDs in the Downtown to two stories and no more than 30 feet. Staff believes the proposal is consistent with a reasonable interpretation of the Downtown Specific Plan Land Use policies.

Discussion Points

- E. Does the Planning Commission believe the proposal is consistent with the Downtown Specific Plan Land Use policies related to height, design, massing, etc.?*
- F. Are the proposed building designs, area, massing, number of stories, heights, and colors and materials acceptable and compatible with the surrounding area?*

Parking

The existing building totals approximately 910 square feet in area. The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing 910 square-foot building on-site and construct a new 2,204-square-foot two-story commercial/office building, resulting in a net increase of approximately 1,294 square-feet of commercial uses on the subject parcel.

The PMC requires that the applicant provide seven parking spaces for the proposed commercial/office building area (based on a 1 space/300 sq. ft. ratio). However, pursuant to PMC Section 18.88.020 (D2) the subject project would receive a parking credit for the existing, demolished building area if one of the following is met: a) the Planning Commission determines that the replacement structure would have the same architectural style as the original structure in terms of design, materials, massing and detailing, or b) the Planning Commission determines that the replacement structure will be an architectural improvement

compared to the existing structure and will preserve or enhance the overall character of the area. As proposed, it appears that the proposed commercial/office building could satisfy the criteria in “b” above given the proposed building references several of the architectural elements of the surrounding buildings and the existing building to be demolished is designed in a more contemporary and modern architectural style that is not found within the surrounding area (see Figure 8 below). Therefore, if the Planning Commission grants the parking credit, the applicant would be requesting an in-lieu parking agreement to meet the requirement to provide four on-site parking spaces for the proposed commercial/office building.

Figure 8: Existing building to be demolished



In regard to the proposed townhouses, the applicant is providing two covered spaces per unit via two-car garages. Since these units are townhouses and not apartments, there is no requirement to provide guest parking; however, the City normally requires guest parking for townhouse projects. The site plan shows a driveway approach in front of each unit that measures 16 feet wide by 20 feet deep. These driveway approaches could potentially serve as additional/guest parking for the townhouses.

Discussion Points

- G. *Does the Planning Commission support granting a parking credit for the proposal?*
- H. *Does the Planning Commission support the in-lieu proposal for the commercial/office building?*
- I. *Does the Planning Commission support the use of the 20 feet deep driveway approaches as parking for the townhouses?*

Tree Removal and Replacement Plan

As of November 10, 2014, the applicant's consulting arborist indicated that there were 11 trees on-site, 10 of which were Heritage Trees. However, on August 20, 2015, staff observed only nine trees on site, all of which are Heritage Trees. Between November 2014 and August 2015, the applicant received City approval to remove two trees. Also, the applicant worked with staff on various tree preservation scenarios; however, ultimately it was decided that a commercial presence along Spring Street and improved site access and circulation were higher priorities than maintaining the remaining on-site trees. Accordingly, the applicant is proposing to remove all nine remaining on-site trees. Most of the trees are ornamental in nature/species and are either in fair to good health but have a limited chance of survival prior to or after construction, or are located directly within the footprint of the newly planned site construction and improvements. Two of the remaining trees (palm trees) are excellent candidates for on-site transplanting per the consulting arborist. The applicant is proposing to plant 22 new trees (six Crape Myrtle and 16 Italian Cypress) throughout the site, all of which have low water requirements and are drought tolerant. The predominant species are Italian Cypress, which thrive in small spaces, but lack the ability to provide the same canopy/shade cover as the trees to be removed, even at full maturity. The Crape Myrtle are also an excellent species for small spaces, but also fail to fully replace the lost canopy/shade of those trees to be removed. Accordingly, it appears that the three Italian Cypress trees proposed at the southwest corner of the project could be replaced with the two existing palm trees identified as candidates for transplanting by the applicant's consulting arborist. It also appears that the two Italian Cypress trees at the rear of the project site could be replaced by an additional Crape Myrtle tree. Staff believes this will provide a better balance of existing and proposed trees and also improve the aesthetic quality of the project as the palms and Crape Myrtles are more ornamental in nature, and also provide better shading than Italian Cypress. As a result, the Italian Cypress trees would be reduced in number and limited to the smaller spaces along the sides and rears of the proposed townhomes. The applicant could also be required to contribute to the City's Urban Forestry Fund to help off-set the loss of the additional Heritage Trees. This contribution could be determined by the value of the trees to be removed as calculated by the applicant's consulting arborist.

Discussion Points

- J. Does the Planning Commission believe the proposed landscape plan, green screen, and tree removal and replacement plan is adequate or should they be modified?*
- K. Does the Planning Commission believe the applicant should contribute to the City's Urban Forestry Fund to mitigate the removal/loss of the existing Heritage Trees?*

Additional Discussion Point

- L. What other information would the Planning Commission wish to see to assist its decision on the proposals (i.e. color and material board, photo simulations, etc.)?*

PLEASANTON DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION RECOMMENDATION

The Pleasanton Downtown Association (PDA) is not opposed to the inclusion of residential units as part of the proposed project; however, the PDA suggested that the commercial/office building be increased in size and that the first residential unit be eliminated to make room for a larger commercial building. Additionally, the PDA recommended that retail uses be located on the first floor of the commercial/office building.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Notices of this application were sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the site. Staff has provided the location and noticing maps as Exhibit G for reference. At the time this report was published, staff had not received any public comments about the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Since the Planning Commission will take no formal action on the project at the work session, no environmental document accompanies this work session report.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission review the proposal, hear all public testimony, and provide comments to staff and the applicant.

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