

**City of San Leandro
Community Development Department
Planning Services Division
Staff Report**

DATE: April 19, 2012

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Philip Millenbah, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: **PLN2011-00039**; Zoning Map and Text Amendment for the Establishment of a Planned District and the Approval of a Planned Development Permit for a 27,664 Square Foot Retail Project located at 1550 East 14th Street.

Applicant

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Innisfree Ventures II, LLC (the “Applicant”) is proposing to develop the subject site with a 27,664 square foot retail development. The project will consist of two new single-story structures consisting of a 13, 869 sq.ft space for a new Fresh & Easy neighborhood store and a five space retail shop building totaling 13,795 sq. ft. These retail shops will include Peet’s Coffee, a Chipotle’s restaurant, and other retail uses. The subject property is on E. 14th Street, commonly known as the former Alberston’s site, and is presently used as a temporary city parking lot.

The site is currently zoned DA-1 (S) (Downtown Area 1 with “S” overlay). The DA zone was created during the City’s implementation of the Downtown Transit Oriented Development Strategy (TOD) and focused on encouraging business uses and mixed use development in the downtown area and in association with the development of the city’s evolving AC Transit and BART resources. The underlying General Plan Designation is MUD (Downtown Mixed Use) which supports the mixed use component of the DA zone. The “S” overlay, in this case “SP-1-Downtown South Gateway Policy”, was crafted especially for the subject lot and required upper floor residential with lower floor commercial uses. The rezoning to PD will eliminate the “S” overlay and the requirement for upper floor residential uses. The PD will continue to allow for development of residential units which will keep the new PD consistent with the underlying MUD General Plan designation and allow for the possibility of residential uses at a later date.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take public testimony on the environmental documents and the overall merits of the project. Staff further recommends that the Planning Commission consider staff’s proposed Findings for project approval and adopt the attached Resolution approving the project as follows:

- A. Find that the project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Sections 21083 and 21084 of the Public Resources Code and Section 15332 of CEQA Guidelines;
- B. Approve a Rezone of the subject site from DA-1 (S) (Downtown Area 1 with an “S” overlay zone) to PD (Planned Development District);
- C. Approve a Planned Development permit to develop two retail structures totaling 27, 664 sq. ft. subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

PROPOSAL

Following is a summary outline of the proposed project:

Site Plan

Site had previously been reviewed during the city’s implementation of the TOD Strategy. This site was viewed as an ‘opportunity’ site for future development looking for a range of uses that could include ‘transit’, retail and residential uses.

The proposed project has a total Site Area: 75,442 square feet (1.73 acres) and consists of two single-story retail buildings. Building A is a single tenant specialty grocer, with 13,869 square feet of retail area, and Building B is multi-tenant retail building with a total 13,795 square feet of building area. The total building floor area of both buildings is 27,644 square feet. The subject project site will have a total building coverage of 36.6% of the total site area. On-site parking will consist of 84 spaces for a parking ratio of 3 parking spaces/1000 sq ft. of building area. New diagonal parking on Juana Avenue will provide an additional 24 stalls, for a total of 108 stalls with a total ratio of 3.9 spaces /1000 sq ft of building area. The site is currently zoned DA-1 and has a General Plan designation of Downtown Mixed Use. The site will be rezoned to Planned District and the General Plan designation will remain the same.

The site was formerly used as a grocery store (formerly Lucky’s, and previously Albertsons’s). The structure that previously existed on this site was larger than what is proposed and the use remains the same as the previous use.

The proposed project is also on the AC Transit Rapid Transit line that runs along E. 14th Street. The project will have a bus stop at the corner of Dolores and E. 14th street that is being specially designed to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian access to the site and to reduce automobile traffic.

Elevations

The proposed design takes elements from the local building vernacular and the city’s historical Spanish contexts along West Estudillo Avenue, and elsewhere downtown. The city’s design has also been evolving more in this direction with the recent additions to the Creekside project at Davis and San Leandro Boulevard., and to the Cornerstone at San Leandro Crossings residential project near the Downtown BART Station. There is a diversity of roof lines and the structure’s

individual retail spaces are segmented by using differing building materials, rooflines and glazing. Overall it is a visually interesting building.

Landscaping, Fencing and Signs

The site plan includes a plaza area that is adjacent to the AC Transit bus stop on E. 14th street. The plaza consists of stone (granite) seating areas, a small grove of trees and a water element that creates a spray when activated. The area will create a protected area for people to wait for bus service and will encourage shoppers to take public transportation to downtown San Leandro.

Additionally, the area at the corner of Juana Avenue and E.14th Street, the site of the proposed Peet's Coffee shop, will include a landscaped outdoor seating area. This area will contain screening along the parking lot area along with a buffer to the traffic on Juana Avenue while also allowing access to Juana Avenue.

All signs will be subject to a city building permit and shall be consistent with the Downtown Sign Design Guidelines.

Lot Line Adjustment

line is shown on the site plan indicating a conceptual boundary of the two remaining parcels. However, no lot consolidation or lot line adjustment is proposed with this application.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Rezoning and Planned District

The Zoning Map designates the subject site as DA-1(S) and the Applicant has requested a rezone of the parcel to Planned District (PD). A Planned District is a special zoning designation that allows tailored development standards for parcels that have unique attributes and need special attention. In this case this parcel is the largest available parcel in downtown San Leandro and represents an opportunity to develop something that will encourage more people to shop and eat downtown. The uniqueness of this parcel is also related to the Downtown Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Strategy approved in 2007. The TOD Strategy is focused on making the downtown a pedestrian oriented place serviced by special bus and BART service. The city is presently working on enhancing the downtown BART station area and making bicycle and pedestrian connections between BART and downtown that are safe and pleasant. This proposed development would be a part of this strategy in as much as it would offer destination uses while also acting as a catalyst for new uses in the area and more people coming to the downtown. In this respect the development and use standards of the proposed district would be consistent with the Downtown Mixed Use General Plan while also creating some flexibility to allow "transit" uses as that term evolves over the coming years.

The Planning Commission may recommend approval of a rezoning from DA-1(S) to Planned District (PD), upon finding that the rezoning and plans are consistent with the adopted Land Use

Element of the General Plan and other applicable policies of the General Plan, and is compatible with surrounding development. Staff is submitting General Plan Conformance policies below as examples of how the proposed development would be consistent with existing city policies and plans including the TOD strategy.

Planned Development Permit

As mentioned above, the City of San Leandro Zoning Code (Article 10) provides a mechanism through the Planned Development (PD) zoning process to allow the creation of a new district composed of customized development standards that reflect the local character and neighborhood form while meeting the special attributes of the subject parcel. This ensures that such land uses and new structures are compatible with the surrounding context are developed in an orderly manner and with high quality urban design. In this case the Planned District creates the zoning and development standards and the Planned Development Permit approves the project uses, site plan, and architectural design.

General Plan Conformance

General Plan Policies which encourage this type of development are:

6.01 DOWNTOWN PLAN

In accordance with the adopted Downtown Plan and Urban Design Guidelines and the Downtown San Leandro Transit Oriented Development Strategy, ensure that new Downtown Development is attractive and creates an image conducive to revitalization.

6.02 RETAIL-SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Develop and implement business development strategies that improve the mix of retail and service businesses Downtown, with an emphasis on higher-end retail shops, sit-down restaurants, and entertainment uses.

6.05 PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

Provide public and private improvements that create a safe, friendly, and pleasurable environment for pedestrians in Downtown.

6.06 URBAN DESIGN

Promote quality Downtown architecture that is well articulated, enhances the pedestrian setting, preserves the City's architectural heritage, and fits in with the scale and texture of existing historic structures. Discourage "franchise architecture" that will distract from creating a unique and distinctive Downtown setting.

8.05 NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPPING CENTERS

Promote reinvestment in the City's viable neighborhood shopping centers, with an emphasis on new retail uses that serve the adjacent neighborhoods and contribute to the overall vitality of the centers.

8.09-C: East 14th Street Zoning Changes

Pursue Zoning Code changes along East 14th Street which enable the desired development pattern to be gradually achieved. Zoning for the East 14th Street corridor should provide incentives for mixed use development, such as density bonuses and allowances for shared parking.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA pursuant to the Section 21083 and 21084 of the Public Resources Code and Section 15332 of CEQA Guidelines:

15332. In-Fill Development Projects. Class 32 consists of projects characterized as in-fill development meeting the conditions described in this section: (a) the project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations, (b) the proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses, (c) the project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species, (d) approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality, and (e) the site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The project site was also subject to an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that was approved by the San Leandro City Council in September, 2007 pursuant to Resolution 2007-111. The 2007 EIR looked at an intensity of development on the subject site that is greater than the amount of development proposed with this project and as such the proposed project would have fewer impacts than was studied in the adopted EIR. The 2007 EIR looked at the site as being a high density mixed-use site with both retail and residential uses that would be developed with a lot coverage exceeding 50%.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Notification of the April 19, 2012 Planning Commission hearing was sent to property owners and businesses within a 500-foot radius of the site as well as to various public agencies. A legal ad was also published in the local newspaper, the *Daily Review*, at least ten days prior to the April 19, 2012 Planning Commission meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution Recommending approval of **PLN2011-00039**, a Zoning Map and Text Amendment for the Establishment of a Planned District and the Approval of a Planned Development Permit for a 27,664 Square Foot Retail Project located at 1550 East 14th Street, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

ATTACHMENTS

Resolution of Planning Commission Approval and Recommendation to Council
Exhibit A-Rezoning and Vicinity Map
Exhibit B-Proposed Planned District Zoning Code Standards
Exhibit C-Recommended Conditions of Approval
Project Plans:

Exhibit D – Multi-Tenant Building Floor Plan (A2)
Exhibit E – Specialty Grocery Floor Plan (A3)
Exhibit F – Multi-Tenant Building Exterior Elevations (A4)
Exhibit D – Multi-Tenant Exterior Elevations (A5)
Exhibit G – Specialty Grocery Exterior Elevations (A6)
Exhibit H– Conceptual Landscape Plans (L1)
Exhibit I – Enlarged Landscape Plans (L2)
Exhibit J – Plant Palette (L3)
Exhibit K – Site Photometric (EP1.0)
Exhibit L – Fixture Cut Sheets (EPO.1)
Exhibit M – ALTA Survey (C1)

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