



# *DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE*

## AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA DATE: JULY 15, 2015  
TO: Chair McCormack and Members of the Design Review Committee  
THRU: Leslie Aranda Roseberry, Planning Manager  
FROM: Jennifer Le, Acting Principal Planner  
SUBJECT: **DRC No. 4675-13 – Metrolink Parking Structure Project**

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### **SUMMARY**

A proposal to construct a new parking structure at the northwest corner of Chapman Avenue and Lemon Street. The parking structure would contain 611 parking spaces on five levels (two below grade, one at grade and two above grade). 500 spaces would be for transit users and 111 for general use.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION – NO ACTION (PRELIMINARY REVIEW)**

Staff recommends the DRC provide feedback on the proposed design.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Applicant/Owner: City of Orange  
Property Location: 130 North Lemon Street  
General Plan Designation: Old Towne Mixed Use (OTMU)  
Zoning Classification: Public Institution (PI) and OTMU-15  
Existing Development: City-owned surface parking lot  
Property Size: 1.73 acres  
Associated Applications: Zone Change No. 1275-14, Major Site Plan Review No. 0649-10,  
Parcel Map 0005-14 & Environmental Review No. 1832-14

Previous DRC Project Review: March 20, 2013

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public Notice is not required for Preliminary Review.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

An Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and concludes that all potentially significant impacts resulting from the project could be reduced to less than significant levels with the incorporation of mitigation measures. The MND was released for public review on June 10, 2015. The review period ends on July 15, 2015. The MND will be reviewed and considered by the DRC at a later date, at the time DRC takes action on the project.

Because a portion of the project may be federally funded, compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is also required. NEPA and Section 106 compliance are being undertaken concurrently with the CEQA process. A Section 106 Historic Resources Report was prepared and submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office. Following receipt of SHPO's preliminary comments, the Historic Resources Report was refined and incorporated into the MND. The Historic Resources Report's executive summary and recommended mitigation measures are included as attachments to this staff report.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project site is 1.73 acres in size and is comprised of the proposed parking structure site (1.23 acres) and the adjacent construction staging area (0.5 acres) to the south. The project would involve the removal of the existing 172-space public surface parking lot and construction of a five-level parking structure, with two subterranean levels, one at-grade level, and two above-grade levels on the 1.23-acre portion of the project site. The parking structure would provide 611 parking spaces, with 500 dedicated for transit users (Metrolink) and 111 spaces for general use. Access would be provided via two driveways, one on Lemon Street and one on Maple Avenue.

The structure height would be up to 28 feet. The structure would be clad with a brick veneer exterior wall finish to blend in with the historic masonry commercial and industrial buildings in the surrounding area. The structure openings would be squared off with metal mullions and echo the style of window openings found on many commercial buildings in the Old Towne area. Brick pilasters with a precast concrete base would be incorporated on all four structure elevations. A precast concrete band is proposed at the top of the parapet. Historically-referenced public art is proposed along the east elevation of the parking structure and would be down-lit with historically referenced gooseneck lighting. Parking structure access points would be accented with metal canopies. Two elevator towers are proposed at the north and south ends of the structure (maximum height of 41 feet) and would be finished with glass panels to allow for improved visibility and security. Flush-mounted photovoltaic panels are proposed on the top deck of the parking structure to generate power for the structure. The panels would be flush-mounted on top of the two elevator towers and on the parking structure's top deck located on a ramp cover that is positioned below the top of the parapet. Lighting would also be installed on the top deck for security purposes, using a combination of 14-foot light poles and wall-mounted lights.

An equipment/storage area with a metal door is proposed on the northwest side of the parking structure off of Maple Avenue and will house a Southern California Edison transformer. The enclosure will either reuse the existing block wall at the western property line, or the City will demolish the existing block wall and construct a new enclosure wall at the same height as the existing wall.

A bicycle plaza that would accommodate City bike lockers and bike racks would be included in the project along Maple Avenue immediately west of the parking structure. The bike plaza includes decorative paving, landscaping, lighting, a canopy, bike lockers and bike racks. Flush-mounted photovoltaic panels are proposed on top of the bicycle plaza canopy and are designed in a manner that they will not be substantially visible from the street.

The proposed project includes construction of a new sidewalk, curb and gutter, and installation of street trees and Acorn style light standards along Lemon Street and Maple Avenue where the parking structure interfaces with the sidewalk. Onsite landscaping is concentrated on the east and north project site frontages at the base of the parking structure along Maple Avenue and Lemon Street.

## **EXISTING SITE**

The site is 1.73 acres and is currently used as a 172-space public surface parking lot. The site is paved with striped parking spaces, planters, landscaping, lighting and perimeter fencing and walls. Access is via two driveways on Lemon Street. The site is located within the City's National Register-listed and locally designated Old Towne Orange Historic Districts.

## **EXISTING AREA CONTEXT**

The project site is located in a transitional area of the City which contains a mix of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional uses. The site is bordered to the north by Maple Avenue and Chapman University's Dodge Film School; single family residential and commercial uses on Lemon Street to the east; Chapman Avenue and commercial uses to the south; and single family residential and commercial/industrial uses on Cypress Street to the west. The surrounding area contains a mix of contributing and non-contributing structures.

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Orange Municipal Code (OMC) Section 17.10.070 establishes the general criteria the DRC should use when reviewing the project. This section states the following:

The project shall have an internally consistent, integrated design theme, which is reflected in the following elements:

1. **Architectural Features.**
  - a. The architectural features shall reflect a similar design style or period.

- b. Creative building elements and identifying features should be used to create a high quality project with visual interest and an architectural style.
2. **Landscape.**
- a. The type, size and location of landscape materials shall support the project's overall design concept.
  - b. Landscaping shall not obstruct visibility of required addressing, nor shall it obstruct the vision of motorists or pedestrians in proximity to the site.
  - c. Landscape areas shall be provided in and around parking lots to break up the appearance of large expanses of hardscape.
3. **Signage.** All signage shall be compatible with the building(s) design, scale, colors, materials and lighting.
4. **Secondary Functional and Accessory Features.** Trash receptacles, storage and loading areas, transformers and mechanical equipment shall be screened in a manner, which is architecturally compatible with the principal building(s).

## **ANALYSIS/STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES**

### *Project Background*

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is working to expand Metrolink service in Orange County. At full roll out of the Metrolink service expansion, OCTA projects that the Orange station will need 900 parking spaces. The station currently has 375 spaces. In early 2009, the City and OCTA entered into a cooperative agreement and began to plan for a new parking structure to serve the Orange Transportation Center (OTC).

In November 2009, the Orange City Council identified a preferred design option which involved construction of two parking structures: one on the West Chapman Parking Lot (located immediately west of the railroad tracks between Chapman Avenue and Palm Avenue) and the Lemon Street Parking Lot (located at the northwest corner of Chapman Avenue and Lemon Street). After additional investigation, the parking structure on the West Chapman Lot was found to be infeasible and efforts refocused on the Lemon Street location.

In 2010 and 2011, a number of design concepts were presented at community outreach meetings and vetted through the City Council. Outreach meetings were held on December 13, 2010, October 4, 2011, and November 10, 2011 with local residents, business owners, and local preservation groups such as the Old Towne Preservation Association (OTPA), Cypress Barrio group, and the Plaza Design Collaborative. Feedback was generally positive. Design-related comments were made on the structure height, rooftop lightpoles/light spill, the brick exterior treatment, and the proportion of the brick columns and lintels compared to other historic commercial buildings in the area.

In 2012, the project was delayed for 18 months due to funding complications related to the dissolution of the Orange Redevelopment Agency. In 2013, project funding complications were resolved with the State, and work on the project began again.

#### *Previous DRC Review*

The project was reviewed by the DRC on March 20, 2013 for preliminary review. At the time the project consisted of the parking structure and the development of two commercial buildings and a paseo south of the parking structure. In general, the DRC was supportive and provided detailed feedback on the project design. At the meeting, representatives of OTPA commented on the height of the structure, the height and location of the elevator towers, the public art elements, and the height and design of the photovoltaic panels. Meeting minutes from the March 20, 2013 DRC meeting are attached.

#### *Project Status*

Since the 2013 DRC review, schematic design plans were prepared. The two previously-proposed commercial buildings were eliminated from the project. The project now focuses exclusively on the parking structure and its construction staging area. Development of commercial uses and the paseo on the remaining portions of the Lemon Street lot may occur at a later date as a separate and independent project.

In addition, the project design was refined to address DRC and community comments. For example, the photovoltaic panels were redesigned to be flush-mounted on the top deck and located below the parapet wall to minimize its visibility. The height of the light poles on the top deck were reduced to 14 feet tall (the shortest possible pole height that could maintain minimum security light levels on the top deck). The elevations and brick treatment were also further refined.

Schematic design plans were finalized in late 2014 and CEQA and NEPA compliance documents and technical studies were prepared. A Mitigated Negative Declaration was released for public review on June 10, 2015. A Town Hall Meeting was held on July 8, 2015. The CEQA public comment period ends on July 15, 2015.

At this time, staff is seeking DRC feedback on the project design and suggestions for final plan refinements and details. In particular, staff is seeking feedback on ways to further break up the mass of the building (for example, through landscape palette choices or variation in the brick pattern) particularly on elevations where long wall expanses are necessary. Staff is also seeking feedback on the treatment of the northeast corner of the building (where a venting system is required) and treatment for the concrete vehicle barrier walls that will be visible through the parking structure openings. Staff is also seeking feedback on the hardscape and lighting details in the bike plaza area.

Following DRC's preliminary review and the CEQA public review period, project plans and the Section 106 report will be resubmitted to SHPO for review and concurrence. Following SHPO

review, the project will come back to the DRC for a formal recommendation to the Planning Commission and City Council.

### **ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

The City's SMART team (formerly SRC) reviewed the project on February 2, 2011 and December 14, 2011 for preliminary review. SMART recommended approval of the project subject to conditions on May 27, 2015.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Project Site Map
2. Minutes from the March 20, 2013 DRC Meeting
3. Schematic Design Plans
4. Color Elevations
5. Perspective Views
6. Context-Aerial Photos
7. Historic Resources Report - Executive Summary & Recommended Mitigation

cc: Lisa Kim, Economic Development Manager