

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. **CUP16-010:** Conditional Use Permit for application to construct a new 3,074 square foot drive-through restaurant/commercial retail building in the Commercial Retail (CR) designation of the North Main Street Specific Plan (SP99-01) on Building Pad 6 in the Main Street Metro Project located at 480 N. Main Street.

Applicant: Dan Hinson of HC&D Architects

At the request of Vice Chair Bennett, Lupita Garcia, Assistant Planner, reviewed the staff report and exhibits for Item E1. At the conclusion of her presentation, Ms. Garcia offered to answer any questions of the Commission.

Commissioner Ruscigno asked if there were other alternatives for the elevation views.

Ms. Garcia stated this is what was submitted and is consistent with the overall Metro project.

Commissioner Ruscigno stated that he feels like something is missing from the architecture.

Vice Chair Bennett opened the public hearing.

JOE MORGAN, RESIDENT, stated this project is a waste of good commercial area. He stated that he does not agree with a drive-through business, especially if this area is intended to be a high-end use area.

CAROL BUFFINGTON, RESIDENT, stated she was under the impression that this area was supposed to be an upscale area with a purpose of bringing people to the area. She said that a drive-through makes the area transient and ghetto and detracts from the intended uses in the area.

BEN LOUK, RESIDENT, stated he is opposed to this project because a drive-through is not an appropriate fit for this area. The traffic alone will pose a problem. A sit down restaurant would be more appealing.

DAN HINSON, HC & D ARCHITECTS, stated after much research, a coffee use drive-through business is the highest and best use to serve both the tenants in the area and the traffic coming towards the freeway along Main Street. The goal is to build a sense of community with the tenants and business. The building has been designed to soften the appearance at the site entry.

Vice Chair Bennett asked if there was other interest by other businesses, other than drive through, for this location.

Mr. Hinson responded that a coffee business has offered the greatest amount of interest in this location, and the developer felt a coffee business would be the best for this center.

Commissioner Ruscigno asked what business would be taking residence there.

Mr. Hinson stated it will be a coffee shop and the name will be announced at a later date.

Commissioner Ruscigno stated that when the city first started designing the North Main Street plan, there was intention for communal gathering places where people could linger. He is opposed to a transient type of business.

Mr. Hinson stated the intention is for people to stay and enjoy the business and area. There will be a lounge inside and outside the coffee shop. This will not be a transient type of business such as a Sonic. It will be a typical, upscale coffee shop.

Vice Chair Bennett closed the public hearing, but re-opened the hearing with one additional speaker.

MICHELE WENTWORTH, RESIDENT, stated that she is on the city task force for the Circle City Project related to the SCE transmission line project and wants to preserve the look and economy of the Downtown. She stated a drive-through business is not ideal for the area. This can and will open the door for the business to actually become something else down the line. Some drive-through uses can be open 24-hours a day. This area should be more walkable for people. The lighting should be taken into consideration and a drive-through will ultimately be a nuisance.

Mr. Hinson stated his team has worked with city staff at great lengths to ensure that pedestrian access is maintained. A lot of foot traffic is anticipated from the tenants that will live there. The drive-through is mainly a convenience for commuters that may be traveling on Main Street prior to driving on the freeway. If you look at the overall plan, there are very safe foot traffic paths between the apartments and the proposed building and even over to the Metrolink. Everything is protected by landscape. The traffic circulation provides for an easy path in and easy path out. People living in the area will have the convenience of getting a cup of coffee via the drive-through before heading to work. The size and the square footage of the location is not feasible for a sit down restaurant.

Vice Chair Bennett asked if there is ADA accessibility.

Mr. Hinson stated yes.

Vice Chair Bennett asked if there is a condition for the hours of operation for this project.

Ms. Coletta stated the city does not restrict hours of operation.

Mr. Hinson added that he does not see this business as a 24-hour operation. The synergy within the retail portion of the project and the tenants will create an attractive atmosphere.

Commissioner Norton asked what the number of seating is for the indoor and outdoor areas.

Mr. Hinson stated that he does not have that number because the floor plan and outdoor design have not been configured yet.

Commissioner Norton asked if the vision is designed for indoor and outdoor seating.

Mr. Hinson stated that that is correct.

Commissioner Ruscigno asked if it is possible to decrease the number of parking stalls in order to accommodate more sit down areas outside the business.

Ms. Coletta stated that there is room to increase the seating area.

Mr. Hinson stated that there is substantial excess when it comes to parking considering the parking structure.

Commissioner Ruscigno asked if the coffee business can be changed to a fast food business.

Ms. Coletta stated the Specific Plan does allow for drive-through businesses with a conditional use permit, which is what the applicant is applying for this evening. The city does not restrict the specific types (brands) of uses. The building itself is what is evaluated, not the business.

Mr. Hinson stated that there is one owner of the overall Metro project, and the owner does not want to jeopardize the synergy for this center.

Vice Chair Bennett closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Ruscigno stated he would like the parking areas to be decreased in order to increase the outdoor seating area. The goal is to create an atmosphere for people to gather. A drive-through is convenient; however, coffee shops tend to attract an environment where people like to gather and hang out.

Vice Chair Bennett stated that, in viewing the proposed site plan, there is an immediate crosswalk along the frontage and along the shops in front of the building. He said it was his understanding that this area would be outdoor seating area as well.

Ms. Coletta stated that at the time of the original precise plan approval there was no commercial interest at that time. What the developer is trying to do, now that the housing portion is under construction, is to get more commercial interest. She stated that is just one component of this overall project. There is still approximately 77,000 square feet of commercial on this site. It not just a stand-alone drive-through. In terms of this development being considered high-end, this developer has done a tremendous amount of improvement to this area from what it once looked like. It is a transit-oriented development that the developer is working on; the developer is not the city. The reason it was classified as that was because of the proximity to the Metrolink station. This developer has also built the walkway across the street to provide the access way to the Metrolink, so that people living in this development can cross the street. There is connectivity for pedestrians that this developer has provided for, and that was always in the plan from day one. This drive-through by no means causes a disconnect but rather all works together.

Commissioner Ruscigno stated because of the area and Metrolink, he would like to see a lot more seating area outside. That is why he said he is willing to vote for it, provided the developer would decrease parking in order to increase seating areas.

Ms. Coletta stated the city can work with the developer on those kind of modifications when they come in for plan check.

Commissioner Norton stated he would support that in principle.

Vice Chair Bennett stated that he would just be a little reticent about reducing the number of parking spaces because if you do it for one project, you have to do it for all the projects. But they are over parked.

Commissioner Ruscigno asked how over parked they are and if that is 100 spaces, 200 spaces.

Ms. Garcia stated the building that once existed there now demolished was 7,600 square feet, and now this proposed building is 3,000 square feet so they went from a building that was supported by 75 parking spaces to now only needing 25.

Commissioner Ruscigno stated that means there are almost 50 extra spaces.

Ms. Garcia stated that is correct.

Commissioner Ruscigno concluded that losing two or three is not going to matter much.

Vice Chair Bennett stated he does not see the need to reduce the parking. Outdoor seating is nice. The developer has improved the area dramatically especially down West Harrison. He said that he does not support adding the modification as a mandate.

Commissioner Norton stated he is not asking for any mandates either but since the developer is present, now is a good time to encourage the developer to work with staff to accentuate that gathering function as much as possible.

Commissioner Ruscigno stated he would like to see the parking decreased so that the seating area can increase.

Ms. Coletta stated the Commission would be basically adding a condition of approval to the project. It would have to be by vote tonight if you want to add the condition by a majority vote.

Motion was made by Ruscigno, seconded by Norton, and carried, that the Planning and Housing Commission recommend adoption of Resolution No. 2493 GRANTING CUP16-010, based on the findings contained in the staff report and conditions of approval, adding Condition Number 1PL-009 stating that “The applicant shall work with staff to explore the expansion of the outdoor patio area utilizing up to two parking spaces.”

AYES:	Kirk D. Bennett, Mitchell Norton, and Jeff Ruscigno
NOES:	None
ABSTAINED:	None
ABSENT:	Yolanda Carrillo and Timothy Jones