



# *DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE*

## AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA DATE:      SEPTEMBER 16, 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 and July 15, 2015 (preliminary review only)

### **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 public review period for the MND was June 10, 2015 through 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.

## **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 may also be included along the east and south elevations 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**

The DRC reviewed the project on July 15, 2015 and provided feedback on the proposed design. Staff and the design team have discussed options for addressing the DRC's comments and would like DRC feedback on our proposed solutions before we move forward.

The following summarizes DRC's July 15<sup>th</sup> comments and the design team's proposed solutions for discussion.

#### **Elevations/Design Elements:**

- Comment: Concern with the accuracy of the shadows on the elevations.
  - Response: The design team has revised the elevations to more accurately represent the shadows resulting from the proposed pilaster elements. Revised elevations have been included in your packet.
- Comment: DRC suggested a redesign of the vent structure on the northeast corner to make it more vertical in nature.
  - Response: The design team revised the vent design to have a more vertical orientation than previously proposed. The revised elevations included in the packet show the revised vent design.

Staff also noted that Jeff Frankel of OTPA commented on the height of the elevator towers and the possibility of setting them back to reduce their mass. Staff has researched this possibility and found that it is infeasible. It is possible to reduce the overall height of the towers by 1'-4" by making some design adjustments. However, rearranging the plan to set the elevator towers back would cause the access points to the stairs and elevators to be in conflict with the driveway entry points. This change would complicate ingress/egress and put pedestrians in a precarious location. As such, staff feels that the towers should be left in their currently proposed location. The design team has revised the elevations included in your packet to reflect the 1'-4" reduction in the height of the towers for DRC consideration.

#### **Color and Materials**

- Comment: There is too much variation in the brick blend. Suggested eliminating the dark or light brick from the blend.

- Response: The design team has eliminated the darker brick from the blend. A revised brick sample will be presented at the DRC meeting.
- Comment: Questioned the smoked glass choice with the brick color and suggested a clear glass instead.
  - Response: The design team has revised the smoked glass material to use a clear glass instead. A sample will presented at the DRC meeting.

### Landscaping

- Comment: DRC expressed concern that there was a disconnect between the architecture and landscaping. Suggested coordinating the landscaping and public art installations.
  - Response: The design team will have its landscape architect and City landscape staff at the DRC meeting to make a brief presentation and discuss the landscape concept and design. The previously-presented landscape plans are included in your packet for reference and discussion purposes.
- Comment: DRC expressed concern regarding the street tree species choices.
  - Response: The Lavender Trumpet Tree is proposed on Maple Avenue and Southern Magnolia is proposed on Lemon Street. Both species are listed in the existing STMP tree palette as options. (It should be noted that the Street Tree Master Plan is currently being updated and both trees are also in the *proposed* street tree palette.)

The adopted Depot Specific Plan Figure 5-4 calls for Sweet Gum (Liquid Amber) on Maple Avenue. Although this species (*rotundiloba*) is included in the Street Tree Master Plan tree palette, in recent years, the City has avoided planting new Liquid Amber trees due to damage to City sidewalks this species' root system has caused. As such, staff intends to revise the Depot Specific Plan to change the tree species identified for Maple Avenue to be consistent with Public Works policy. However, the revision to the Depot Specific Plan has not yet occurred.

Street tree species currently located along Maple Avenue between Olive Avenue and the Santa Fe Depot are primarily Camphor, Liquid Amber and Southern Magnolia, though Lavender Trumpet Tree is common in the Old Towne area in general. Staff is seeking DRC feedback on the street tree choice on Lemon Street.

### Public Art

- Comment: DRC questioned whether the artwork design was the right concept and whether the public would understand it. Suggested public art would add something to the building but it had to be done right and be high quality. (It should also be noted that Jeff Frankel of OTPA also commented at the meeting that he was not in favor of the wall art and thought it unnecessary.)
  - Response: The wall art concepts have not been developed in sufficient detail to respond to DRC's information requests. Initially, the design team envisioned the art as packing crate graphics using a mosaic tile material. Due to budget constraints on the project, staff

is now anticipating the wall art would be designed and installed on the parking structure after construction completion and dependent on the availability of funding. Staff is also considering releasing a public art request for proposals for development of the public art design, similar to the process followed for the art installation at the Depot undercrossing. In any case, detailed plans for the public art installation would be presented to the DRC at a later time.

As another option, the City could eliminate the public art from the parking structure design. This is a viable option if the DRC determines that the art is not needed from the standpoint of breaking up the mass of the building wall (on the east elevation in particular). A landscaped planter is proposed on the east elevation, along with street trees in large tree wells along Lemon Street. Allowing the brick façade to be the focus, with the landscaping and street trees providing a visual break along the east elevation, could stand alone as an acceptable solution.

If the DRC determines that some type of visual element is needed, a vertical landscape element could also be used in place of the public art. However, the planter area at the base of the structure is narrow and may limit our options. Staff is seeking DRC feedback on this issue. Revised elevations showing the parking structure without the public art are included in your packet for discussion purposes.

### **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. Minutes from the July 15, 2015 DRC Meeting
2. Select (revised) elevations and landscape sheets for discussion

cc: Lisa Kim, Economic Development Manager