



CITY OF CARSON

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

PUBLIC HEARING: October 24, 2006
SUBJECT: General Plan Amendment No. 79-06
APPLICANT: City of Carson
 701 E. Carson Street
 Carson, CA 90745
OWNER: Carson Dominguez Properties, L.P.
 4901 Birch Street
 Newport Beach, CA 92660
REQUEST: Change the General Plan land use designation
 from High Density Residential to General
 Commercial
PROPERTY INVOLVED: 1281 E. University Drive

COMMISSION ACTION

- Concurred with staff
 Did not concur with staff
 Other

COMMISSIONERS' VOTE

AYE	NO		AYE	NO	
		Cottrell - Chairperson			Hudson
		Pulido – Vice-Chair			Saenz
		Diaz			Verrett
		Graber			Wilson
		Faletogo			

I. Introduction

Applicant

- City of Carson; 701 E. Carson Street, Carson, CA 90745

Property Owner

- Carson Dominguez Properties, L.P.; 4901 Birch Street; Newport Beach, CA 92660

Project Address

- 1281 E. University Drive

Project Description

- On September 5, 2006, the City Council directed staff to prepare a General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation of the subject property from High Density Residential to General Commercial.
- The direction came after the City Council rescinding its decision to approve Amendment No. 2 to Specific Plan No. 2-89, Zone Change Case No. 150-05, and General Plan No. 76-05 for a new 196-unit apartment building.

II. Background

Previous Discretionary Permits

- Specific Plan No. 2-89 – Approved on November 20, 1990, for the development of a business park with limited support commercial designed to be compatible with surrounding land uses. The specific plan area covers 288 acres in northeastern Carson.
- Amendment No. 1 to Specific Plan No. 2-89, General Plan Amendment No. 03-07-074 – Application for an industrial building for a biotech company. Application withdrawn subsequent to Planning Commission hearings held on September 23, 2003, and November 12, 2003.
- Amendment No. 2 to Specific Plan No. 2-89, Zone Change Case No. 150-05, General Plan Amendment No. 76-05 – Application for a 196-unit apartment complex that included a Specific Plan Amendment to modify the Dominguez Technology Center Specific Plan in order to allow for multifamily units in the north-westernmost property (Planning Area 10), a General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation from General Commercial to High Density Residential, and a Zone Change Case to change the zoning from CN (Commercial, Neighborhood) to Dominguez Technology Center Specific Plan (DTCSP). The application was approved by the City Council on May 15 and June 7, 2006. On September 5, 2006, the Specific Plan Amendment and Zone Change Case approvals were rescinded by the City Council after a referendum had been filed by local residents.

Public Safety Issues

- The project site is vacant and the Code Enforcement Division has not reported any incidents with this property.

III. Analysis

Location/Site Characteristics/Existing Development

- The subject site is 5.1 acres located at 1281 E. University Drive on the northwest corner of Central Avenue and University Drive. The subject site is in an urban, developed community located in the northeastern part of the City of Carson.
- California State University Dominguez Hills is located to the north and west of the subject site. The University has horticultural uses to the north of the subject site. The remainder of the University, including the buildings, open space, and recreational areas, is located to the west.
- Buildings to the east across Central Avenue are part of the Dominguez Technology Center Specific Plan (DTCSP) and are used for industrial purposes; to the west across University Drive are single-family homes.

Zoning/General Plan/Redevelopment Area Designation

- The current General Plan land use designation for the project site is High Density Residential (HD); the zoning is CN (Commercial, Neighborhood). The project site is not part of a Redevelopment Project Area.

Required Findings

State law requires compatibility between land use zoning classifications and the General Plan. The proposal to change the General Plan land use designation to General Commercial is consistent with the zone district of CN (Commercial, Neighborhood). Staff can support the project based on the findings included in the draft resolution.

Issues of Concern

- Issue – General Plan Amendment: The City Council's decision to rescind its approval of Amendment No. 2 to Specific Plan No. 2-89 and Zone Change Case No. 150-05 creates an inconsistency with the General Plan, which was amended on May 15, 2006. General Plan Amendment No. 79-06 will change the land use designation of the subject property back to General Commercial, making it consistent once again with the Specific Plan and zoning.
 - *Proposed Condition/Change*: None required.
- Issue – Future Development: The proposed General Plan Amendment will allow for commercial or office uses that are consistent with the underlying Specific Plan No. 2 and CN zoning designation. The property owner has indicated that commercial uses have previously been pursued without success because of the

low traffic volumes on Central Avenue and University Drive. If approved, the General Plan Amendment may limit potential development on the property causing the property to remain vacant for many years.

- *Proposed Condition/Change:* None required; Future development will be properly evaluated once an application is received by the City.
- Issue – Loss of Potential Housing: The General Plan Housing Element indicates that the city is in short supply of housing. However, changing the land use designation of said property from High Density Residential to General Commercial will not significantly impact the City's supply of future housing because other properties in the City have recently been redesignated for residential development.
 - *Proposed Condition/Change:* None required; Future development will be properly evaluated once an application is received by the City.

IV. Environmental Review

Pursuant to Section 15061 of the CEQA Guidelines, the General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation from High Density Residential to General Commercial is not exempt from CEQA. As such, this project is subject to discretionary approval by a governmental agency (Planning Commission or City Council) according to Section 15378 of CEQA. As a project, the proposal is subject to environmental analysis.

An Initial Study for this project has been prepared in accordance with CEQA. Staff has reviewed the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and has prepared a Negative Declaration pursuant to Section 15074 of CEQA. Based on the Initial Study, the proposed General Plan Amendment will not create any significant impacts on the environment.

V. Conclusion

The proposed General Plan Amendment would eliminate the potential for housing on the project site. The General Plan Amendment would provide consistency with the Dominguez Technology Center Specific Plan and the CN zoning designation.

Carson Companies met with several community representatives on October 16, 2006, and agreed to not oppose the General Plan Amendment to revert the land use designation to General Commercial. Since a representative is not available to attend this public hearing, Mr. Vanderhorst has submitted a letter indicating their concurrence with the staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

VI. Recommendation

That the Planning Commission:

- **APPROVE** the Negative Declaration;
- **RECOMMEND APPROVAL** to the City Council of General Plan Amendment No. 79-06; and
- **WAIVE** further reading and **ADOPT** Resolution No._____, entitled "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON RECOMMENDING APPROVAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 79-06 FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1281 E. UNIVERSITY DRIVE."

VII. Exhibits

1. Draft Resolution
2. Letter from Matt Vanderhorst, Carson Companies, dated October 17, 2006
3. Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

Prepared by: _____
John F. Signo, AICP, A/Senior Planner

Approved by: _____
Sheri Repp, Planning Manager