CITY OF CARSON

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

WORKSHOP:	May 26, 2009
SUBJECT:	Design Overlay Review No. 1294-08; General Plan Amendment No. 86-08; and Zone Change No. 160-08
APPLICANT:	Gaudenti Partnership 2215 North Gaffey Street San Pedro, CA 90731
REPRESENTATIVE:	Dan Withee and Ricky De La Rosa 2251 West 190th Street Torrance, CA 90504
REQUEST:	To review and comment on a development, general plan amendment and zone change for a potential residential apartment
PROPERTY INVOLVED:	20301 South Main Street

COMMISSION ACTION

____Concurred with staff

____ Did not concur with staff

____ Other

COMMISSIONERS' VOTE

AYE	NO		AYE	NO	
		Chairman Faletogo			**Graber**
		Vice-Chair Saenz			**Park**
		Brimmer			**Schaefer**
		Brown			**Verrett**
		Gordon			

Item No. 12A

I. Introduction

The applicant, Gaudenti Partnership is requesting approval of Design Overlay Review (DOR) No. 1294-08, General Plan Amendment (GPA) No. 26-08, and Zone Change (ZC) No. 160-08 to construct a residential apartment community consisting of three (3) separate buildings of 61, 62, and 64 units for a total of 197 units (approximately 37 du/acre) within an Organic Refuse Landfill (ORL) overlay zone. Parking will be provided at grade level with some affordable housing units located on upper floors. A density bonus is also requested by the applicant to exceed the 25 du/acre limit by providing 15% of the total number of units (30 units) for affordable housing.

The applicant also requests a general plan amendment from Mixed Use – Business Park to High Density Residential and a zone change from ML (Manufacturing, Light) to RM-25 (Residential, Multi-family; 14-25 units per acre) in order to accommodate the proposed development.

Per the Carson Municipal Code (CMC) Section 9121.12, a conditional use permit is required for any development within an ORL overlay zone. If the applicant proceeds forward with the proposal, an application for a conditional use permit will be required.

The purpose of the workshop is for the Planning Commission to conduct an open discussion of the opportunities and constraints of the project and to provide the applicant with a general consensus in regards to the interest for the project.

During the application submittal process, staff informed the applicant that the project would not be supported by staff due to the incompatibility of the use and nature of the site. Even with these early discussions, the applicant has expressed a significant interest in moving forward with the project. Therefore, in efforts to prevent unnecessary procedures and save time/costs for the applicant and the city, staff recommended the applicant participate in a cohesive discussion with the Planning Commission to gain input on the initial reactions to the proposed project.

The workshop discussion with the Planning Commission, staff, and community will allow the applicant to decide on the most appropriate process for the project whether there is merit to support the project or a lack of support. Additional information may be provided by the applicant during the workshop.

II. Background

The site is approximately 5.29 acres (230,388 square feet) and currently utilized as an unpaved landscape/nursery business (GS Nursery). The site is bordered by commercial businesses and storage facilities. To the north, the site is directly adjacent to a power line easement for the city of Los Angeles Water and Power. Further north is a large parking lot currently used as an auto auction lot.

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The site is directly bordered by Main Street to the east and Del Amo Boulevard to the south. Further south is a large storage facility, further east is a portion of the future Boulevards development, and directly west is a commercial building (Exhibit 1).

The general plan designation for the project site and surrounding area was recently amended from Light Industrial to Mixed Use – Business Park during the General Plan update in 2004. The city is currently in the process of preparing development guidelines and a new zoning district for the Mixed Use – Business Park designation. The project site is anticipated to be zoned MU-BP (Mixed Use – Business Park) with the adoption of the new development standards.

Historical records conducted by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) indicated the project site operated as a former landfill, Southwest Conservation Landfill. The landfill operated on a portion of the site from 1964 to 1968 and accepted municipal solid and liquid wastes. In 1973, the property was purchased by Pioneer Theatres, after which TDJ Pioneer Corporation owned the property from 1981 to 2001, when it transferred to the current owner.

III. Analysis

With the current proposal, the project is deficient in usable open space, individual open space, trash enclosures, and parking. The current proposal for 37 du/acre also exceeds the maximum allowable units within the high density, multi-family (14-25 du/acre) zone. The applicant has requested that the density cap, parking requirements, individual open space requirements, and trash enclosure requirements be considered as concessions in exchange for providing affordable housing. Also, the minimum required area for trash enclosures does not meet building and safety requirements. A concession for trash enclosures would not be supported by staff since it could potentially result in adverse impacts to the public's health and safety.

Based on staff's review and research, staff believes the proposed general plan amendment and zone change is inappropriate for the proposed site. The city recently adopted a General Plan update which designated the project area and the surrounding areas to be Mixed Use – Business Park, which identifies the city's long-term goals and vision for this area to be for commercial and industrial development rather than residential uses. In addition, if residential uses are supported, the project site would be surrounded by light industrial and mixed use – business park uses. Land use compatibility would be of great concern since future development within the area has been envisioned to accommodate light industrial and business park uses rather than residential uses. Since the site is designated as a brownfield, landscaping would also be of concern.

Support for this project would set precedence for future projects and the Planning Commission would also need to discuss and re-evaluate the city's long-term goals for the surrounding area and the Mixed Use – Business Park district. Support for this project would divide the designated Mixed Use – Business Park area and separate uses intended to be adjacent to one another. The city's current

supply of residential uses within this area would also be of concern since the city is currently in discussion with the neighboring Boulevards development in whether residential uses would be appropriate. If the city decides residential development within the approved Boulevards project is unnecessary then additional residential uses within the vicinity would also be considered as inappropriate.

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is anticipated to meet California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements. At minimum, a traffic study, noise study, sewer area study, hazardous materials study, soils report, geotechnical study, and health risk assessment will be required to adequately analyze and disclose all potential environmental impacts for the proposed project. Since the site is designated as a brownfield, identified by DTSC as a contaminated site, and residential uses are proposed extensive environmental review is anticipated. Currently, no studies have been conducted for the planning entitlement process. The applicant has been encouraged by staff to delay conducting any environmental studies until after the workshop discussion, in order to prevent unnecessary cost and time.

Currently, the property owner is in coordination with DTSC and the site is involved in a voluntary clean-up agreement with DTSC. There are currently no clean-up activities occurring on the site, however studies have been completed to identify contaminants and the property owner is in discussions with DTSC to begin clean-up activities.

IV. Recommendation

That the Planning Commission:

1. REVIEW and PROVIDE comments on the proposed development.

V. Exhibits

1. Aerial view (pg. 5)
2. Development Plans (Under Separate Cover)

Prepared by: _____
Sharon Song, Associate Planner

Reviewed by: _____
John F. Signo, AICP, Senior Planner

Approved by: _____
Sheri Repp, Planning Manager

Blvd
110
Harbor F-Wy
S Figueroa St
W Del Amo Blvd
Main St
E Del Amo Blvd
Leonardo Dr
Traffic
More...
Map
Satellite
Terrain

Exhibit 1