



CITY OF SACRAMENTO

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

1231 "I" Street

Sacramento, Ca. 95814

City Planning Commission
Sacramento, California

Members in Session:

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF DRAFT EIR FOR THE DOCKS AREA DEVELOPMENT (M87-061)

SUMMARY

The Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) has distributed a draft Environmental Impact Report on the Docks Area Development Project. The City of Sacramento is a commenting agency pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines. Planning staff has reviewed the subject document and believes the draft EIR adequately assesses the project's potential impacts and recommends that the Commission approve the transmittal of staff comments on the draft EIR to the SHRA.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The proposed Docks Area Development is located between the Sacramento River and Interstate 5 in the the Central City portion of Sacramento (see Attachment 1). The project site is bounded on the east by Interstate 5, on the west by the Sacramento River, Capitol Mall on the north, and I 80 to the south. The project proponent proposes to build the Docks Area Development to complete the revitalization of the historic Sacramento Riverfront that started within the development of Old Sacramento to the north and Miller Park to the south. The project's sponsor wishes to construct a mixed use development including hotel, cultural, retail, arena and public uses, which would be complimentary to other major nearby uses in the project area. Specifically, the objectives of the project sponsor are:

- ° To create for Sacramento a successful public/private partnership project;
- ° To revitalize the riverfront and provide an attractive, safe environment for working, living, playing, and relaxing;
- ° To capitalize on existing riverfront amenities and to create new amenities for workers, visitors, and tourists alike;
- ° To provide necessary and desirable public amenities, linkages, open spaces, shaded areas, promenades, bicycle paths, vistas, river accesses and fishing spots;

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- To emphasize, protect and enhance the western entrance and exit of the downtown riverfront;
- To enhance existing and proposed vehicle linkage between the downtown, Old Sacramento, and the riverfront;
- To organize the area in a manner that all inter-related land use components compliment each other;
- To conceive a design solution that integrates Old Sacramento, the Docks Area, and Miller Park with the Capitol Mall and downtown;
- To offer a cultural environment with full range of day and night time activities.

Environmental impacts and mitigation measures identified in the draft EIR are included in this staff report as Attachment 2. Staff has the following comments on the draft EIR:

- The proposed Docks Area Development is consistent with the City's 1980 Central City Community Plan.
- Many of the parcels in the project area are under public ownership. Rezoning of the few remaining privately held parcels may not be necessary because land uses could be regulated through redevelopment mechanisms.
- In place of the second paragraph on page 5.1, staff recommends the following wording: "Hotel and parking uses are permitted in the M1 and M2 zones. Certain cultural and office uses require a Special Permit."

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Planning Commission approve the transmittal of these comments, with any additional comments deemed appropriate by the Commission, to the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency.

Respectfully submitted,


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Senior Planner

CC/AG/ML/SD:jr
Attachments

DOCKS AREA DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

FIGURE 2



SOURCE: CARISSIMI, ROHRER & ASSOCIATES



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FEET



The proposed project was recently revised (see subsections 1.2 and 3.4). The residential development sketched above has been eliminated, and the California State Railroad Museum has been relocated from its original site (indicated above) to the site originally identified for residential development.

The development would include a variety of types and sizes of buildings in varying locations over the site. At the northernmost portion of the site, along Capitol Mall, would be the hotel portion of the development. The southern portion of the site would include development of the Museum of Railroad Technology, the restaurant, the Towe Ford Museum, and additional commercial/theatre/parking space on the PG&E parcel.

The proposed project would involve a total of \$27,600,000 in construction costs for private improvements. Public improvements would total \$17,200,000 including the parking garage (\$9,360,000 excluding the parking garage). It is anticipated that the project may take up to five years for completion of project construction due to the sequencing of project phases.

This Draft EIR will be reviewed and subject to public comment for a period of 45 days. Toward the end of the comment period, the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Commission will hold a public hearing at which time both the Board and the public will be invited to orally comment on the document. All written and oral comments will be responded to and the comments and responses will be published in a document entitled Summary of Comments and Responses. In combination, the Draft EIR and the Summary of Comments and Responses will constitute the Final EIR on the project.

2.2 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT OR POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

The following environmental effects would be insignificant based on the project design and require no further analysis in the EIR: 1) creation of odors; 2) plant life; 3) animal life; 4) energy/natural resources; and 5) recreation.

2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

LAND USE

Impacts

The project would introduce in the Docks area a significantly different type of development that currently exists on the site or has historically occurred there. The project would result in the demolition of 1,300 square feet of existing structures.

The project would remove 282 existing parking spaces on the site. However, at buildout, there would be an increase of 718 to 818 parking spaces on the project site over the

existing condition. The project would result in the vacation of Front Street between Capitol Mall and "O" Street. The project would not affect the operation of the railroad tracks currently being used for the operation of an historic railroad by the State Department of Parks and Recreation.

The project proposes that the Regional Transit (RT) Meadowview Corridor extension run through the project site along Front Street. RT has proposed a route which would cross Front Street and the northern end of the MORT site. An alternative has been included which analyzes the impacts of the proposed project with the Regional Transit preferred alignment of the LRV line.

Cumulative development projects, including development in West Sacramento, would result in about 2,000,000 square feet of office space, 193,000 square feet of retail and about 3,690 parking spaces. The proposed project would represent about 5% of the total cumulative increase in commercial space.

As proposed, the project's hotel would conform to the current land use designations of the City's General Plan. However, the proposed commercial and cultural uses on the southern end of the the site would not conform to the General Plan designations and would require a General Plan amendment.

Most of the project site is zoned M-1 (light industrial) and M-2 (heavy industrial). Either a variance action or a zoning amendment would be required to allow these uses to be constructed on the site.

Mitigations

The SHRA should require the developer to provide a plan to coordinate the extent and timing of project construction to ensure that there are adequate facilities and resources to accommodate construction of the proposed project and any other cumulative projects in the area.

The project sponsor should request a General Plan amendment for the southern portion of the project site, from "R" Street to Pioneer Bridge.

The project sponsor should request an amendment to the City Zoning Ordinance for the project site west of Interstate-5.

VISUAL QUALITY

Impacts

The proposed development would result in a change in the visual character of the project area. The 11-story hotel building would reinforce the promenade effect created by existing buildings which flank Capitol Mall leading to the State Capitol.

Some views of the Sacramento River would be incrementally blocked by construction of the taller buildings in the project. However, proposed siting of the buildings would effectively protect southwest views of the river from existing buildings.

The project would meet the goals and policies of planning documents relating to visual issues for the area, with the exception of policies relating to the preservation of historic structures.

Mitigations

The following mitigation measures should be considered as a means to diminish potential visual impacts:

Select building materials and finishes which are compatible with other development in the area. The use of non-glare glass should be required.

The museum structures should reflect the historical themes reflected in the existing historic structures on the site.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Impacts

Underwater archaeological features have been identified in the riverbed opposite the project site. The proposed project would not affect any identified archaeological remains of ships currently existing in the riverbed.

It is likely that the project site contains substantial deposits of cultural materials which date between the 1840's and 1920's. During excavation for construction of basement level parking, the project could result in disturbance of these buried artifacts.

The project would result in the demolition of all existing structures on the project site except the three structures of historical significance: (1) the PG&E gas manufacturing plant built in 1873; (2) PG&E electrical generating facility building built in 1890; and (3) the 2000 Front Street PG&E testing building built in 1908.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures would be necessary to protect underwater archaeological resources.

To protect potential landside archaeological resources, an archaeologist should be retained to monitor all project excavation.

To mitigate impacts related to the demolition of historic structures, the sponsor would develop a photographic record of existing historic resources on the site. In the event that project changes resulted in the demolition of the three historic structures on the PG&E site, all usable bricks from the existing structures would be retained and used to construct a visitor center/museum of not less than 2,000 square feet. The visitor center would display the photographic record of the historic buildings and any archaeological artifacts uncovered during excavation.

TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

Impacts

In conjunction with cumulative development in the project area, the proposed project would contribute to increased traffic volumes at all intersections analyzed. During the PM peak hour all signalized intersections would continue to operate satisfactorily with the exception of the intersections of Third Street/"P" Street and Third Street/Capitol Mall. In the case of Third Street/"P" Street, the intersection would operate at Level of Service (LOS) F with cumulative development and this condition would be aggravated with the proposed project. In the case of Third Street/Capitol Mall, the intersection would operate at LOS D with cumulative development and would remain at LOS D with the proposed project. Of the unsignalized intersections analyzed, the only significant impacts would occur at the intersection of "O" Street/Front Street, at the project site, where operations would be at LOS A with only cumulative development and at LOS E with cumulative

development and the proposed project. This is due to the fact that the intersection is secluded from all aspects of the circulation system except that relating directly from the proposed project.

Mitigations

The following include some of the proposed mitigation measures designed to meet the goal of overall intersection operations of LOS C: 1) provide left turn storage pocket on Capitol Mall at entrance to hotel site; 2) encourage daily MORT shuttle operations; 3) add lane for right turn volumes accessing the northbound I-5 ramp at 2nd and "P" Streets; 4) at the intersection of Third Street/"P" Street provide additional signing and improved timing to increase the efficiency of the operation of the intersection; and 5) eliminate parking on the "O" Street overcrossing; 6) add turn lane on "Q" Street at 3rd and "Q" Street intersection; and 7) add lane at Capitol Mall/3rd Street intersection for cumulative impacts.

AIR QUALITY

Impacts

Construction activities would create a temporary increase in dustfall and therefore an increase in TSP concentrations near the construction site. State and federal 24-hour average particulate standards could be violated in the vicinity of the project site.

Emissions of reactive organic compounds and nitrogen oxides would aggravate an already serious problem with ambient ozone in the Sacramento area. The amounts generated by the project would be small with respect to the regional totals and their impacts would be too small to have a measurable effect on regional air quality.

There would be no violations of the one-hour carbon monoxide standard at any intersections analyzed. There would be violations of the eight-hour carbon monoxide standard at the intersections of Third Street/Capitol Mall and Third Street/"P" Street.

Mitigations

All construction contracts should require watering in late morning and at the end of the day; the frequency of watering should increase if wind speeds exceed 15 mph.

To the extent that transportation related mitigations (already discussed) increase the operations of the intersections air quality impacts would be decreased. However, violations of carbon monoxide standards would occur even without the proposed project and, as such, any additional vehicles would contribute to those violations.

NOISE

Impacts

Construction activities would temporarily generate high noise levels on and adjacent to the site, intermittently over the entire period of project construction. The separation of the site and the presence of I-5 should minimize the disruptive effects of construction noise. There are residences about 200 feet from the proposed office site and construction noise effects on those homes could include disturbance of sleep, concentration and communication.

Future noise levels on and around the project site would continue to be dominated by vehicular traffic on Interstate-5 and Interstate-80. At all locations on the site, the land uses proposed for construction would be categorized as conditionally acceptable. In no case would increased noise levels attributable to the project be more than one dBA over the levels associated with cumulative development.

Commercial and recreational boats using the Sacramento River would be occasional sources of intrusive noise on the project site, but would not significantly alter the average noise levels in the area.

Mitigations

All construction equipment and operations with a high noise potential should be muffled or controlled, as feasible.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Impacts

The proposed project would significantly increase the amount of impervious surface on the property and thus, would increase the runoff of stormwater from the site into the already

overloaded drainage networks. This is of particular concern in the Sump 1 system because of the wastewater discharges that result when it reaches capacity.

The proposed project would result in substantial development of the site frontage on the Sacramento river; most of this development would be on or attached to the levee. The principal known water quality issue within the project site is the potential for location of toxic chemicals on the former PG&E property. Preliminary investigations suggest that there are by-products of the gasification process, primarily lampblack and tars. PG&E will be required to implement a mitigation strategy for the gas manufacturing site. PG&E expects the entire program to last nearly two years, during which time development cannot proceed on the site. The project sponsor would be required to locate non-residential uses on the site, even after cleanup of the toxic materials. The proposed uses for the site are compatible with regulations for reuse of contaminated sites.

Mitigations

The project sponsor would examine the feasibility of constructing separate stormwater discharge systems that would not depend on City facilities.

The project sponsor would survey the existing levee and assess its current stability and integrity along the project's river frontage. All construction proposed on or adjacent to the levee would be compatible with its demonstrated structural capacity.

The scheduling and design of the proposed project should not interfere with any site investigation or remedial action undertaken by PG&E at the former gas manufacturing plant site.

The suitability of the equipment proposed for the marine fuel facility at the transient boat docks must be verified by the sponsor and a spill containment plan should be prepared in cooperation with the City's Division of Waterfront Management.

UTILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

1. WATER

Impacts

Total water demand from the project would be approximately 92,000 gallons per day, an increase of about 0.1% over the City's current average daily supply. The City would not anticipate any problems in providing water service to the site.

Mitigations

The project sponsor would be required to pay water service fees along with the costs of all on- and off-site improvements. It is recommended that low-flow fixtures be used to conserve water and that landscaping on the project site feature native drought-resistant plants to the extent possible.

2. Wastewater

Impacts

Total average dry weather flow from the project would be approximately 77,000 gallons per day, about 0.3% of the expanded treatment plant capacity. The City would not anticipate any problems providing service to the proposed project.

Mitigations

The project sponsor would be financially responsible for all on-site improvements and for all off-site improvements that are directly related to the project and not covered within system expansion plans. It is recommended that low-flow fixtures be used in the project design.

3. GAS, ELECTRICITY AND COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Impacts

The project would require the standard extension of a gas main to the project site. PG&E has the supply capacity to serve the project. SMUD has the supply to serve the proposed project for peak electricity demand. Pacific Bell foresees no problem in serving the proposed project.

Mitigations

It is recommended that the project sponsor contact that planning departments of the respective utility companies discussed above as soon as possible and work with them to coordinate the timing of system improvements.

4. FIRE

Impacts

the Fire Department does not anticipate the need for additional resources in providing service to the proposed project, aside from the possibility of a fire boat. Closing the Capital Mall/Front Street intersection to traffic could affect response times.

Mitigations

Structures located on the water would be required to have automatic sprinkler systems with insurance of sufficient water pressure. The cost of a fire boat if the need arises could be covered out of part of the increased property tax revenues generated by the project.

5. POLICE SERVICES

Impacts

The proposed project would increase the risk to public safety through the development of commercial and public space. The Department would require additional resources to serve the proposed project without reducing service levels elsewhere, with an estimate of an additional 1.36 sworn officers.

Mitigations

Increase the authorized strength of the Police Department by the additional 1.36 sworn officers. Part of the increased general fund revenue stemming from increased property and sales tax revenues could be used to partially offset the cost of offices and equipment.

6. SCHOOLS

Impacts

The project as proposed would not generate additional students requiring service by the District.

Mitigations

The project sponsor would be required to pay the District's school impact fees at the time of filing the building permit.

7. PARKS AND RECREATION

Impacts

The proposed project would develop new public space within the City of Sacramento. The City's Park and Recreation Department would be responsible for maintenance of the public spaces developed as part of the proposed project.

Mitigations

The Project sponsor would comply with the City's Quimby Ordinance.

8. SOLID WASTE

Impacts

The project would generate an estimated 601 tons per year of solid waste, an increase of about 0.3% in the current daily tonnage collected by the City.

Mitigations

The project sponsor should use compactor machines at all major commercial, office and hotel buildings.

9. PUBLIC REVENUES AND FISCAL IMPACTS

Impacts

Total public annual revenues anticipated from the proposed project would be \$1.85 million. One time revenues are estimated at \$7.8 million while one time costs for public improvements are expected to be \$17.2 million. The resulting capital cost/revenue shortfall would be approximately \$9.4 million.

Mitigation

The capital shortfall of \$9.4 million would be balanced with \$7.5 million generated from the annual transient occupancy tax of the hotel plus \$1.9 million from the State as its share of the public improvements associated with the MORT.

2.4 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Construction of the proposed project would result in temporary growth-inducing impacts due to the expenditure of \$27.6 million over a five-year period for construction of the project.

The project would intensify public and private uses on the project site. It is possible that commercial and recreational activity on the project site could have spin-off effects by attracting development projects from elsewhere in the region and out of the region. To the extent that future development could be attracted by the proposed project would be in accordance with existing and future regulatory measures, and in locations encouraged by those measures, this growth-inducing impact could be considered to be positive.

2.5 ALTERNATIVES

The EIR describes and evaluates alternatives to the proposed project. The following four alternatives are considered: Alternative One: No Project; Alternative Two: Residential Without MORT; Alternative Three: Only Hotel Portion of the Project; and Alternative Four: Regional Transit Preferred Alignment of Meadowview Extension LRV.