



DATE: January 23, 2014

AGENDA ITEM # 1

TO: Planning and Transportation Commission
FROM: David Kornfield, Planning Services Manager
SUBJECT: Study Session for a Mixed-Use Project at 999 Fremont Avenue

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide study session input to the applicant

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this study session is to provide early design input to the property owner for a mixed-use project for the property at 999 Fremont Avenue. The subject property is within the Loyola Corners Neighborhood Commercial Center Specific Plan (Specific Plan) area which can be found at: <http://www.losaltosca.gov/communitydevelopment/page/adopted-plans>. The subject property is also within the CN and LC/SPZ zoning districts (Chapters 14.40 and 14.42 of the Municipal Code, respectively).

The site is currently developed with a retail building with approximately 1,000 square feet of building area and surface parking and most recently used for a personal service. The applicant proposes a mixed-use development concept with approximately 1,000 square feet of retail area and parking at the ground level, six residential condominiums on the second and third floors, and a roof-top deck.

The proposed retail and housing uses are permitted as conditional uses and the conditional expansion regulations in the CN and LC/SPC Specific Plan zoning regulations. The Specific Plan zoning regulations also permit a uniform parking requirement of 1 space for every 300 square feet of commercial building area as opposed to a separate retail and office parking ratio.

The specific plan is two decades old and may be outdated. The Specific Plan calls out specific policies for the subject property—SP-3 Photo Drive-Up Site (Page 45 of the Specific Plan)—which has been ineffective since over time neither the City nor the property owner have come to terms in developing the property as an open plaza. The traffic circulation changes have remained conceptual and only partially implemented such as a slight relocation of the Foothill Expressway on-ramp and the County's commitment to widening the Loyola Bridge. Closing Miramonte Avenue is somewhat dependent on making the subject property a plaza and remains a traffic circulation challenge. The zoning language that implements the conditional expansion requirements remains in effect (Section 14.42.040 of the Code) the

purpose of which is to allow new ground-level retail building area before allowing additional office area to reinforce the retail viability of the district.

In addition to the Design Controls in the CN District related to providing a mixture of scales in building design and making the proportions of ground-level elements pedestrian in scale (Section 14.40.150 of the Code), the Specific Plan dictates the following architectural design guidelines for buildings in the Loyola Corners (Specific Plan, page 58): a) an informal and unpretentious architecture; b) moderately small building elements and massing reflecting a human scale; and c) compatibility of scale, color and materials with the surrounding structures.

Subsequent to the Specific Plan the City Council approved a streetscape plan for Loyola Corners (attached). The purpose of the streetscape plan is to enhance the entries and edges of the plan area and to clarify the pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns. The streetscape plan envisions making A Street a one-way street leading northeast. It should be noted that the streetscape Concept Plan is approved by the City Council but remains an unfunded and unscheduled capital improvement.

The streetscape Concept Plan shows enhanced paving at the A Street/Fremont and A Street/Miramonte intersections, adding street trees beyond the sidewalk on the southerly side of the subject property, and widening the sidewalk and adding street trees on the westerly side of A Street. Additionally, the streetscape plan includes special intersection paving and crosswalks.

DISCUSSION

The applicant has refined the concept to incorporate a great deal of staff input related to making the design more rustic, addressing parking requirements and incorporating some of the desired streetscape elements. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that some zoning and design concerns remain and we encouraged the applicant to seek study session input before finalizing the application. From a staff perspective the Commission might consider the following issues, some of which are interrelated:

- Massing and scale: the project proposes three-story massing, which should be considered in relationship to the predominantly one- and two-story structures nearby. The zoning allows no front or side yards for the development. The parking garage is screened from the street by a solid wall that has some openings and landscape softening such as vines. The wood shingle siding and composition shingle roof are appropriately rustic materials in the context.
- Building height—the conceptual plans have two alternatives related to the proposed building height. Option 1 (Page A3 of the plans) shows the building at 33 feet tall to the top of the roof deck, three feet above the 30-foot height limit. Option 2 (Page A4 of the plans) shows the building at a conforming 30 feet in height with nine-foot wall plates.

- Landscaping: the project removes the street trees along the A Street frontage but incorporates several along Fremont Avenue. A project of this scale should retain or provide street trees on all of its frontages.
- Off-Street parking—the project provides 15 parking spaces, where 17 are required by code. The two-space deficit is from the lack of visitor parking, which per the Code may be provided by the non-residential parking spaces if approved by the Commission and Council. The parking garage does not have a turn around area, which is required. The parking garage could be opened-up on the Fremont Avenue frontage at the expense of a tree well.
- Retail use—the project replaces the retail building area with a similar size space (1,000 square feet). The property is isolated by streets on all of its frontages with a limited opportunity for a contiguous retail relationship to the core of the Loyola Corners area. According to the applicant the proposed retail area is located at the Fremont Avenue/Miramonte Avenue intersection where there might be more vehicular visibility for a destination retail use. The proposed location of the retail area also helps provide for a more efficient parking lot layout. The height of the wall plate for the retail use should be high to provide for a high-quality space.
- Residential use—the project includes six residential units and a rooftop deck. It is more and more common for higher density residential uses along transportation corridors. This housing site is unique in that it also relates to the Loyola Corners commercial area and could increase the vitality of it with more households. The project includes a large bicycle storage area off the lobby which could facilitate alternative transportation modes. The floor plans for the units result in all corner units with two walls of light and air for each unit. Each unit has a small deck and roof top access to a large deck.

Attachments:

- A. Application
- B. Loyola Corners Concept Plan (excerpts)

Cc: Gregg Bunker, Property Owner
Daryl Fazeks, Architect



ATTACHMENT A

CITY OF LOS ALTOS
GENERAL APPLICATION

Type of Review Requested: (Check all boxes that apply)

Permit # 1105964

Table with 3 columns and 7 rows listing review types: One-Story Design Review, Two-Story Design Review, Variance(s), Lot Line Adjustment, Tentative Map/Division of Land, Subdivision Map Review, Sign Review, Sidewalk Display Permit, Use Permit, Tenant Improvement, Preliminary Project Review, Commercial Design Review, Multiple-Family Review, Rezoning, R1-S Overlay, General Plan/Code Amendment, Appeal, Other.

Project Address/Location: 999 Fremont Ave
Project Proposal/Use: mixed use
Current Use of Property: commercial
Assessor Parcel Number(s): APN 189-15-092 Site Area:
New Sq. Ft.: 14364 Remodeled Sq. Ft.: Existing Sq. Ft. to Remain:
Total Existing Sq. Ft.: 1000 Total Proposed Sq. Ft. (including basement): 14364

Applicant's Name: GREGG BUNKER / LONDOLA CORNERS DEV LLC.
Home Telephone #: 408 781-1725 (cell) Business Telephone #: 408 558-3600
Mailing Address: 1900 Camden Ave
City/State/Zip Code: San Jose, Ca 95124

Property Owner's Name: GREGG BUNKER
Home Telephone #: (408) 781-1725 (cell) Business Telephone #: 408 558-3600
Mailing Address: 1900 Camden Ave
City/State/Zip Code: San Jose, Ca 95124

Architect/Designer's Name: DARYL FAZEKAS Telephone #: 408 395-9400

*** If your project includes complete or partial demolition of an existing residence or commercial building, a demolition permit must be issued and finalized prior to obtaining your building permit. Please contact the Building Division for a demolition package. ***

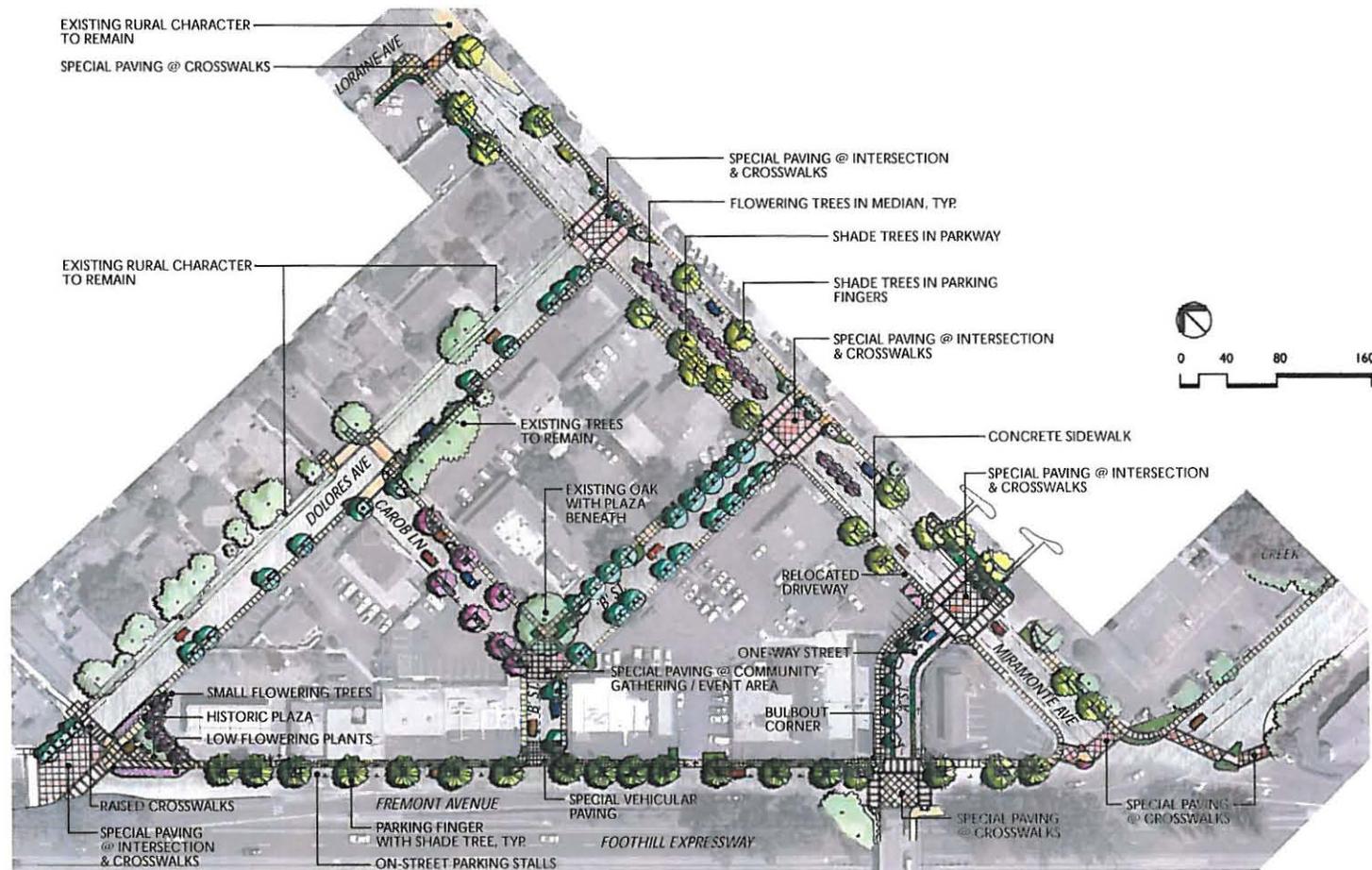
SITE PLAN

The Implementation Plan establishes a sense-of-place by applying layers of improvements to the existing framework of Loyola Corners. The first step in defining the district is to enhance the entries and edges highlighting Loyola Corners as a destination. The three main entries along Fremont Avenue at A Street, B Street, and Dolores Avenue are visible from the Expressway and should be treated with special paving and landscape. Improving the entries and the perimeter, including the Fremont Frontage, creates a first impression which will invite people to explore the district.

A clear organization of pedestrian and vehicular circulations are vital to the success of Loyola Corners. Patterns of paving, landscape, and streetscape furnishings will establish a hierarchy of vehicular traffic, bike traffic, walking paths, and pedestrian nodes. Encouraging people to linger, cross the street, and see what's around the corner creates a synergy vital to Loyola Corners' economic viability.

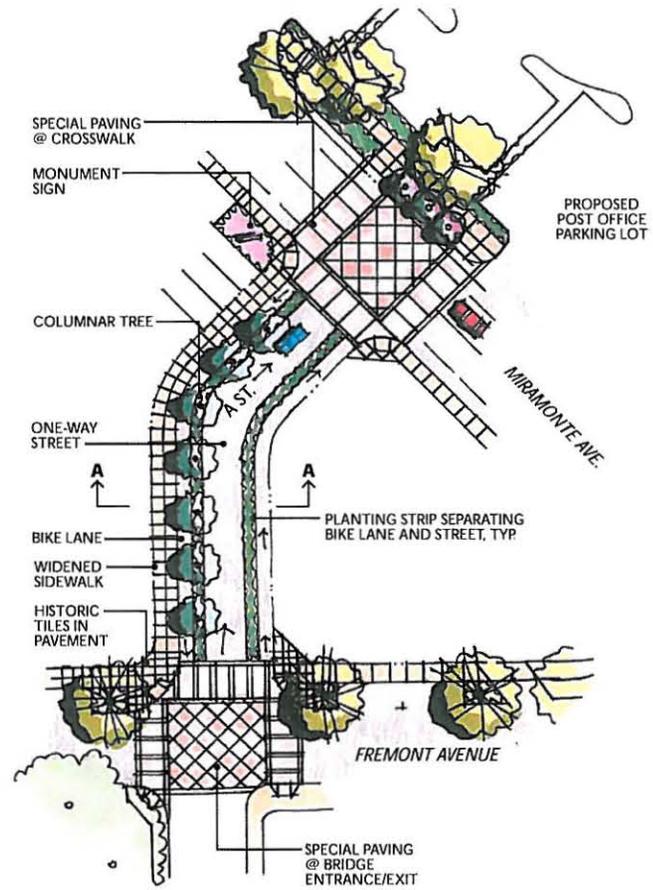
Existing bike routes on Fremont Avenue, Dolores Avenue and B Street will be preserved. New Class 2 Bikeways will be added along Miramonte Avenue.

A Street will become a one-way street heading from Fremont Avenue to Miramonte Avenue. On the south side of Dolores Avenue, 10 street trees will be added while the existing condition will be preserved along the north side.



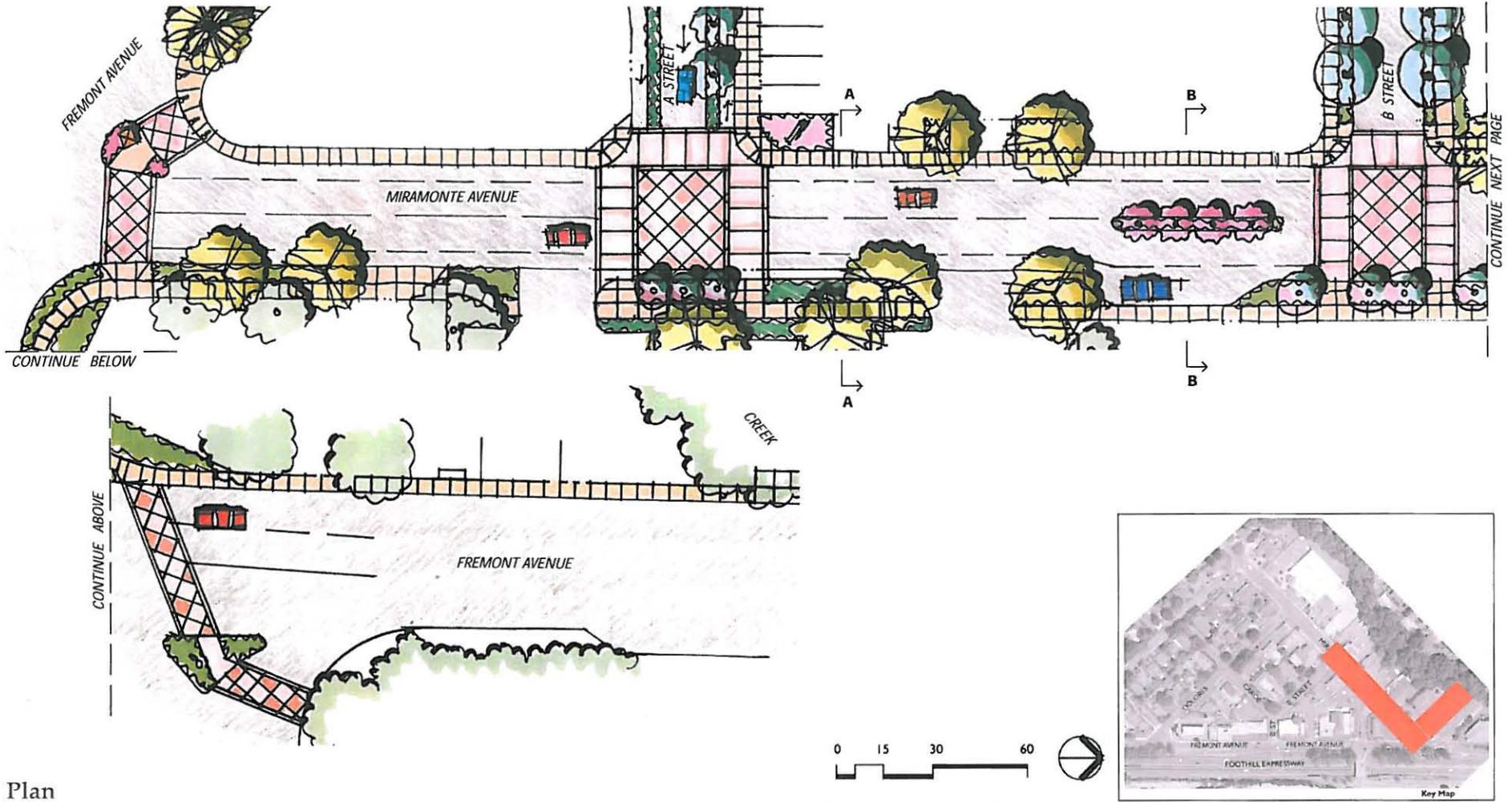
Overall Concept Plan

'A' STREET



Plan

MIRAMONTE AVENUE BETWEEN FREMONT AVENUE AND 'B' STREET, & FREMONT AVENUE TO CREEK



Plan