

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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STAFF REPORT: CONSENT CALENDAR

Application No.: 5-17-0429

Applicant: City of Santa Monica

Agent: Christopher Dishlip

Location: 1685 Main Street, Santa Monica, Los Angeles County

Project Description: Improvements and addition to Santa Monica City Hall. Proposed project includes the demolition of a rear portion of City Hall, as well as minor interior improvements; the construction of a three-story above basement level, 45 ft. high, approximately 50,200 sq. ft. addition to the rear of the Santa Monica City Hall building to house the City Services Building; and hardscape and landscaping improvements.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with conditions

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The proposed project raises issues regarding impacts to public access. The proposed City Hall addition will generate a demand of 90 parking spaces. However, based on the current inventory, the Civic Center surface parking lot and parking structure provide an adequate supply of parking to support the proposed increase in the intensity of use.

The proposed development has been conditioned to assure that the proposed project is consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. The conditions are: **1)** best management practices and **2)** permit compliance.

Staff is recommending **APPROVAL** of the proposed coastal development permit as conditioned.

Section 30600(c) of the Coastal Act provides for the issuance of coastal development permits directly by the Commission in regions where the local government having jurisdiction does not

5-17-0429 (City of Santa Monica)

have a certified Local Coastal Program. The City of Santa Monica only has a certified Land Use Plan and has not exercised the options provided in 30600(b) or 30600.5 to issue its own permits. Therefore, the Coastal Commission is the permit issuing entity and the standard of review is Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. The certified Land Use Plan may be used for guidance.

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APPENDICES

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EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1 – Project Location
- Exhibit 2 – Project Rendering
- Exhibit 3 – Project Plans and Elevations

I. MOTION AND RESOLUTION

Motion:

*I move that the Commission **approve** the coastal development permit applications included on the consent calendar in accordance with the staff recommendations.*

Staff recommends a **YES** vote. Passage of this motion will result in approval of all of the permits included on the consent calendar. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

Resolution:

The Commission hereby approves a coastal development permit for the proposed development and adopts the findings set forth below on grounds that the development as conditioned will be in conformity with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act and will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction over the area to prepare a Local Coastal Program conforming to the provisions of Chapter 3. Approval of the permit complies with the California Environmental Quality Act because either 1) feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives have been incorporated to substantially lessen any significant adverse effects of the development on the environment, or 2) there are no further feasible mitigation measures or alternatives that would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts of the development on the environment.

II. STANDARD CONDITIONS:

This permit is granted subject to the following standard conditions:

1. **Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgment.** The permit is not valid and development shall not commence until a copy of the permit, signed by the permittee or authorized agent, acknowledging receipt of the permit and acceptance of the terms and conditions, is returned to the Commission office.
2. **Expiration.** If development has not commenced, the permit will expire two years from the date on which the Commission voted on the application. Development shall be pursued in a diligent manner and completed in a reasonable period of time. Application for extension of the permit must be made prior to the expiration date.
3. **Interpretation.** Any questions of intent of interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director or the Commission.
4. **Assignment.** The permit may be assigned to any qualified person, provided assignee files with the Commission an affidavit accepting all terms and conditions of the permit.

5. **Terms and Conditions Run with the Land.** These terms and conditions shall be perpetual, and it is the intention of the Commission and the permittee to bind all future owners and possessors of the subject property to the terms and conditions.

III. SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

This permit is granted subject to the following special conditions:

1. Storage of Construction Materials, Mechanized Equipment and Removal of Construction Debris

The permittee shall comply with the following construction-related requirements:

- (a) No demolition or construction materials, debris, or waste shall be placed or stored where it may enter sensitive habitat, receiving waters or a storm drain, or be subject to wave, wind, rain, or tidal erosion and dispersion.
- (b) No demolition or construction equipment, materials, or activity shall be placed in or occur in any location that would result in impacts to environmentally sensitive habitat areas, streams, wetlands or their buffers.
- (c) Any and all debris resulting from demolition or construction activities shall be removed from the project site within 24 hours of completion of the project.
- (d) Demolition or construction debris and sediment shall be removed from work areas each day that demolition or construction occurs to prevent the accumulation of sediment and other debris that may be discharged into coastal waters.
- (e) All trash and debris shall be disposed in the proper trash and recycling receptacles at the end of every construction day.
- (f) The applicant(s) shall provide adequate disposal facilities for solid waste, including excess concrete, produced during demolition or construction.
- (g) Debris shall be disposed of at a legal disposal site or recycled at a recycling facility. If the disposal site is located in the coastal zone, a coastal development permit or an amendment to this permit shall be required before disposal can take place unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment or new permit is legally required.
- (h) All stock piles and construction materials shall be covered, enclosed on all sides, shall be located as far away as possible from drain inlets and any waterway, and shall not be stored in contact with the soil.
- (i) Machinery and equipment shall be maintained and washed in confined areas specifically designed to control runoff. Thinners or solvents shall not be discharged into sanitary or storm sewer systems.
- (j) The discharge of any hazardous materials into any receiving waters shall be prohibited.

- (k) Spill prevention and control measures shall be implemented to ensure the proper handling and storage of petroleum products and other construction materials. Measures shall include a designated fueling and vehicle maintenance area with appropriate berms and protection to prevent any spillage of gasoline or related petroleum products or contact with runoff. The area shall be located as far away from the receiving waters and storm drain inlets as possible.
- (l) Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Good Housekeeping Practices (GHPs) designed to prevent spillage and/or runoff of demolition or construction-related materials, and to contain sediment or contaminants associated with demolition or construction activity, shall be implemented prior to the on-set of such activity.
- (m) All BMPs shall be maintained in a functional condition throughout the duration of construction activity.

2. Permit Compliance. All development must occur in strict compliance with the proposal as set forth in the application, subject to any special conditions imposed herein. Any deviation from the approved plans must be submitted for review by the Executive Director to determine whether an amendment to this Coastal Development Permit No. 5-17-0429 is necessary pursuant to the requirements of the Coastal Act and the California Code of Regulations.

IV. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS:

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION & LOCATION

The City of Santa Monica (“City”) is proposing to construct three-story above basement level, 45 ft. high, approximately 50,200 sq. ft. addition to the rear of the approximately 60,000 sq. ft., 55-ft. high Santa Monica City Hall building, a designated City Landmark, to accommodate the City Services Building (“CSB”) (**Exhibit 2 & 3**). The addition will extend across the east elevation of City Hall.

In designing the proposed project, the City took into consideration the historic sensitivity of the Landmark City Hall building. The CSB has been designed as a structurally separate building wing to the original City Hall building (**Exhibit 2 & 3**). However, the proposed project includes the demolition of a rear portion of City Hall, as well as minor interior improvements. Scope of demolition is limited to the removal of 37 ft. of the rear portion of the south wing of City Hall (former firetruck bay), removal of exterior stairwell enclosure on the building’s north wing, and removal of seven windows on the south wings and six on the north wing. In addition, the project has received approval from the Landmarks Commission of the City of Santa Monica ensuring that historic preservation of the City Landmark will be implemented.

New landscaping is proposed and will consist of both low and moderate water use, non-invasive plants. Typically, the Commission requires that all new landscaping comprise of only low water use, non-invasive plants (Low WUCOLS Ranking) as identified by the California Department of Water Resources. In this case, however, the City Services Building addition will be a “Living Building Challenge” certified building (i.e. Net Zero Energy, Net Zero Waste, Net Zero Water, etc.), and Net Zero Water is proposed to be met through reduction of water use, water reuse, and water recycling. Reused and recycled water will be utilized to water the proposed landscaping.

The subject site area measures a net 51,380 sq. ft. and is currently developed with original City Hall building, paved areas, and landscaping. The project location is less than ¼ -mile inland of the beach. The project site is located within the Civic Center Core District (“District”) (**Exhibit 1**). The District is bounded by Civic Center Drive on the south, Fourth Street on the east, Main Street on the west, and E. Pacific Coast Highway on the north. The District is within the City of Santa Monica’s (“City”) larger Civic Center Specific Plan (“CCSP”) area, which encompasses a number of areas including a total of five special use districts and is bounded by Pico Boulevard on the south, Fourth Street on the east, Ocean Avenue on the west, and Colorado Avenue on the north. The proposed addition will be bounded by the extant City Hall building and the Public Safety Facility. The District is owned and operated by City. The currently proposed development is consistent with the Parks and Open Space (“OS”) zoning designation and the surrounding land uses.

Public Access and Parking

As previously stated above, the project site is located in one of the districts of the CCSP area. This District is located less than ¼ -mile inland of the beach in the City of Santa Monica. The District consists of the Santa Monica City Hall, Public Safety Facility, Civic Center Garage, County Courthouse, and Tongva Park.

In 2008, the Civic Center Garage was constructed and added 770 parking spaces to the Civic Center area, which only had 1,000 parking spaces in the Civic Auditorium surface parking lot at the time. The Civic Center surface lot and parking garage (“Civic Parking Facility”) currently consist of a total of 1,770 spaces. Historically, the surface parking lot of the Civic Parking Facility served events conducted at the Civic Auditorium, which is a multi-purpose convention center that opened in 1958. The Civic Parking Facility presently serves the Civic Center uses (i.e. City Hall, Civic Auditorium, Santa Monica Courthouse, Public Safety Facility), as well as coastal events (e.g. Twilight concert Series) and general public parking, and Santa Monica High School staff and students through monthly passes during the non-peak summer season. In addition, approximately 100 of the 230 parking spaces extant at the project site were leased to Macerich SMP LP and served a valet parking program; this lease, however, expired on December 31, 2016 and was not renewed.

The proposed City Hall addition will accommodate the City Services Building, which has been designed to provide office space for up to 239 permanent City employees to facilitate public services in one location. Presently, the 239 City employees are located at various off-site locations near and within the CCSP area (i.e. 1901 Main Street; 1717 4th Street; City Hall; and 1437 4th Street). Out of the 239 City employees, 176 possess monthly passes to the Civic Parking Facility and are accounted for in the present parking demand. Approximately 63 City employees have the option to park either at the Santa Monica Library, at the subterranean parking spaces available to them at their off-site locations, or at the Civic Parking Facility. Therefore, these 63 City employees have the potential to generate new parking demand in the CCSP area. Taking a conservative approach, Commission staff has assumed that the proposed City Hall addition and consolidation of City staff within the CCSP area will generate a demand of 63 parking spaces. The City is also proposing to add six new vehicles for to the City’s vehicle pool within the Civic Parking Facility (garage and surface lot), which will displace six parking spaces currently available. Finally, according to the City’s staff report for this project, “it is assumed that 21 regular users of th[e North surface parking] lot [that abuts City Hall] will be transferred permanently to the Civic Parking Facility once the construction of CSB commences”. Therefore, based on the new demand, displaced parking, and transferred users, the project will have a total demand of 90 spaces. To determine

whether or not the proposed project will be adequately supported by the Civic Parking Facility, a supply of 90 parking spaces must be currently available to mitigate for the increase in demand and displacement of parking anticipated as a result of the proposed development to avoid any adverse impacts to public coastal access.

Because of the project site's proximity to the State beach and its location in a public parking lot, development in the parking lot could adversely impact public access to the beach by reducing the total parking inventory near the coast. If the parking demand generated by development within the CCSP area exceeds the supply of parking that is currently available to the public and for CCSPA uses, visitors of to the Civic Center uses will utilize the parking that is needed to support general beachgoers, strollers, bicyclists, and joggers that depend on and use the parking that is available in the general vicinity of the coast. Therefore, in order to determine if the proposed project is consistent with the access policies of the Coastal Act, the Commission must find that the parking demand generated by the proposed development is adequately supported by the supply of parking available for new uses in the District.

It should be noted that there is another application concurrently before the Commission for the removal of 230 parking spaces at the Civic Auditorium surface parking lot to accommodate a Early Childhood Education Center (CDP Application No. 5-16-1033), which will also be served by the Civic Parking Facility. The increase in parking demand anticipated to be generated by this project estimates to 270 parking spaces.

Current parking utilization data of the Civic Parking Facility (surface parking lot and parking garage) has been provided and indicates that there is an adequate supply of parking to support the proposed development. According to utilization data collected for the Civic Center surface parking lot for the month of March 2017, occupancy did not exceed 60% with a minimum of 400 parking spaces available on a weekday, and did not exceed 40% with a minimum of 600 parking spaces available on the weekend. This lower utilization rate may be due, in part, to the Civic Auditorium not being fully operational since 2012 due to earthquake damage; the East Wing of the auditorium is available for limited public events and the Main Hall is available for limited events and film rentals that are not accessible to the general public. Based on July-August 2016 utilization data for the Civic Center Garage, the minimum number of parking spaces available in the parking structure during typical peak weekday period is on average approximately 25%, or 192 parking spaces, and approximately 50%, or 385 parking spaces, on the weekend. In addition, bicycle parking facilities for employees and visitors will be provided. Therefore, it can be reasonably assumed that the Civic Parking Facility (surface parking lot and parking garage) will adequately support the City hall addition, as well as the new ECEC development (CDP Application No. 5-16-1033).

Downtown Santa Monica is unique in that the City is constantly working on ensuring that the downtown area is transit-oriented. An example of such efforts includes the founding of an Emissions Reduction Program. The City's Emission Reduction Plan makes use of the Metro Expo Line stations that recently opened, which are less ¼ -mile from the project site, and of the public bike share system recently established downtown, which are within walking distance to the beach and the City's Municipal Pier. The close proximity and accessibility of the project site to the alternative transportation will help reduce parking demand at the project site.

Regarding future development in the Civic Center area, the City is currently planning the rehabilitation and future expansion of the Civic Auditorium (approx. 20,000 sq. ft. addition), as well as the removal of more surface parking to the east to accommodate a new Civic Auditorium Park within the Auditorium Special Use District. The City intends to consolidate the Civic Auditorium surface parking into a below-grade parking structure. According to the City's CCSP, the construction of the Civic Auditorium addition and the Civic Auditorium Park will be proposed after the construction of the ECEC project. For any future development in the Civic Center Area, the City will need to continue to evaluate parking for effective planning to ensure that the parking supply at the Civic Center area at any given time in the future is adequate to mitigate for any proposed future increase in demand and/or displacement of parking to avoid any adverse impacts to public coastal access. The City acknowledges Commission staff's concern regarding potential parking and public access issues at the project location, which will have to be addressed in the future.

Conclusion

Because the project site is located in close proximity to the coast, the Commission recommends construction-related requirements and best management practices under **Special Condition 1**. The Commission imposes **Special Condition 2** to ensure permit compliance.

The Commission, therefore, finds that the proposed project, as conditioned, will not have adverse impacts to coastal resources and public access, and will be consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act and with all applicable policies of the certified LUP.

B. PUBLIC ACCESS

The proposed development will not affect the public's ability to gain access to, and/or to use the coast and nearby recreational facilities. Therefore, as proposed the development, as conditioned, conforms to Sections 30210 through 30214, Sections 30220 through 30224, and 30252 of the Coastal Act.

C. DEVELOPMENT

The development is located within an existing developed area and is compatible with the character and scale of the surrounding area. However, the proposed project raises concerns that future development of the project site potentially may result in a development which is not consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. To assure that future development is consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act, the Commission finds that a future improvements special condition must be imposed. As conditioned the development conforms with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

D. WATER QUALITY/BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

The proposed development has a potential for a discharge of polluted runoff from the project site into coastal waters. The development, as proposed and as conditioned, incorporates design features to minimize the effect of construction and post-construction activities on the marine environment. These design features include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following: the appropriate management of equipment and construction materials, reducing runoff through installation of roof drains, gutters, downspouts, and a drainage system to rain barrels. Post-construction best management practices should minimize the project's potential adverse impact on coastal waters. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed development, as conditioned, conforms to

Sections 30230 and 30231 of the Coastal Act regarding the protection of water quality to promote the biological productivity of coastal waters and to protect human health.

E. LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM

Coastal Act section 30604(a) states that, prior to certification of a local coastal program (“LCP”), a coastal development permit can only be issued upon a finding that the proposed development is in conformity with Chapter 3 of the Act and that the permitted development will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare an LCP that is in conformity with Chapter 3. In August 1992, the Commission certified, with suggested modifications, the land use plan portion of the City of Santa Monica's Local Coastal Program, excluding the area west of Ocean Avenue and Neilson way (Beach Overlay District). On September 15, 1992, the City of Santa Monica accepted the LUP with suggested modifications. The proposed development is consistent with Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. Approval of the project will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare a Local Coastal Program that is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act.

F. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

As conditioned, there are no feasible alternatives or additional feasible mitigation measures available that would substantially lessen any significant adverse effect that the activity may have on the environment. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed project, as conditioned to mitigate the identified impacts, is the least environmentally damaging feasible alternative and can be found consistent with the requirements of the Coastal Act to conform to CEQA.

Appendix A - Substantive File Documents

- City of Santa Monica certified Land Use Plan
- Coastal Development Permit Application No. 5-16-1033
- City of Santa Monica Civic Center Specific Plan
- Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation, Proposed City of Santa Monica – City Services Building, 1685 Main Street, Santa Monica by Geotechnologies, Inc., October 14, 2016.
- City of Santa Monica Planning Commission Report, Agenda Item 9-B, Smgov.net, City of Santa Monica, November 2, 2016.
Web:<https://www.smgov.net/departments/pcd/agendas/Planning-Commission/2016/20161102/s2016110209-B.pdf>
- Appeal (16ENT-0200) to City Council of the Planning Commission’s Approval of Development Review Permit 16ENT-0140 for the City Services Building, Santamonicacityca.iqm2.com, Santa Monica Office of the City Clerk, January 2017.
Web:https://santamonicacityca.iqm2.com/Citizens/Detail_LegiFile.aspx?Frame=&MeetingID=1086&MediaPosition=&ID=2238&CssClass=