

City of Sacramento

Legislation Text

File #: 2019-01859, **Version:** 1

Title:

(Pass for Publication) 1690 Bell Avenue Warehouses (P19-015)

File ID: 2019-01859

Location: 1690 Bell Avenue; District 2

Recommendation:

1) Review a resolution adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration and the Mitigation Monitoring Plan; 2) review an ordinance rezoning ± 10.08 acres from the Single-Unit or Duplex Dwelling (R-1A-SPD) and ± 10.84 acres from the Light Industrial (M-1-SPD) zone to the Manufacturing, Research and Development (MRD-SPD) zone within the McClellan Heights and Parker Homes Special Planning District; 3) review a resolution adopting findings of fact and conditions of approval for Site Plan and Design Review for the construction of two (2) warehouse buildings totaling 339,549 square feet on a 20.9-acre site with a deviation to exceed maximum allowed front setback in the MRD-SPD zone; and 4) pass for publication the ordinance title as required by Sacramento City Charter 32c to be adopted February 11, 2019.

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Presenter: None

Attachments:

- 1-Description/Analysis
- 2-Background
- 3-Resolution: Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program
- 4-Exhibit A: Mitigation Monitoring Plan (MMP)
- 5-Ordinance: Rezone
- 6-Exhibit A: Rezone Exhibit
- 7-Resolution: Findings of Fact and Conditions of Approval for Project Entitlements
- 8-Exhibit A: Project Plans
- 9-Community Comments

Description/Analysis

Issue Detail: The project includes the construction of two (2) warehouse buildings totaling 339,549 square feet on a vacant 20.9-acre site. The entire site has a General Plan land use designation of Employment Center Low Rise (ECLR) but consists of two zones: ±10.08 acres are zoned Single-Unit or Duplex Dwelling (R-1A-SPD) and ±10.84 acres are zoned Light Industrial (M-1-SPD). The warehouse use is not allowed in the R-1A zone, so a rezone is required. The applicant is proposing to rezone the entire site to the Manufacturing, Research and Development (MRD-SPD) zone.

Section 17.808.230 of Title 17 requires rezones to be heard at the City Council, and section 17.808.310 requires all entitlements to be heard at the highest level required for the project. Therefore, both the requested rezone and Site Plan and Design Review are required to be reviewed and decided at the City Council level.

Public/Neighborhood Outreach and Comments: As part of the application review process, the proposal was routed to Preservation Sacramento, Region Builders, Walk Sacramento, Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates, Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS), Robla Park Community Association, and North Sacramento Chamber of Commerce.

The applicant team also engaged with neighborhood associations and organizations such as the North Sacramento Chamber of Commerce and held a community outreach meeting on September 12, 2019 to share their project and vision with those living in the vicinity of the project site.

Staff received letters of support from the North Sacramento Chamber of Commerce, Robla Park Community Association, Robla School District, and the Greater Sacramento Urban League. The comment letters are provided in Attachment 9 and excerpts from the letters are summarized below:

North Sacramento Chamber of Commerce: The project will be a “significant investment in [the] Robla community, that will bring jobs, neighborhood investment and infrastructure improvements to Bell Avenue, and will generate property taxes to support local schools and public safety.” This project will benefit the local economy with new investments, have an impact on jobs, and will fill an infrastructure “hole” on Bell Avenue.

Robla Park Community Association: “There are many blighted properties in the Robla Park Community” and “vacant land value brings promise and opportunity for smart growth and infill development.” This project “can be an important step to help [this community] bring the kind of investments that are beautifying other regions of Sacramento.”

Robla School District: The funding provided by this project in the form of development fees, and the projected \$76,000 annual property tax revenue is important for both the Robla School

District and the neighboring Twin Rivers School District. Additionally, the Superintendent welcomes the project for its positive impacts on safety as the property in question is currently, in his words, blighted. “The opportunity to convert abandoned land that is a magnet for disreputable behavior into an attractive job center that will potentially employ parents, neighbors, and young people from [the] school district is welcomed...”

Greater Sacramento Urban League: “This project brings to our community greater economic resilience, more career opportunities for existing neighbors, enhanced public safety, and significant ongoing investments in public services...” Additionally, the letter continues stating that this project will provide jobs in an under-served and diverse neighborhood and that these new employees will provide neighboring small businesses with a new customer base as well as income from impact fees for the local school district.

Staff also mailed hearing notices to all property owners within 300 feet of the project site and posted the site prior to the public hearing. At the time of writing this report, staff has not received any comments on the project in response to the noticing.

Policy Considerations: The General Plan designation for the subject site is Employment Center Low Rise. The General Plan recognizes that Sacramento is a major regional and interstate employment center and policies for Employment Centers within the city promote the continuation of existing industries as well as attracting new industries and employment. These policies provide for the continued growth of the city’s existing employment centers and encourage the reuse of underutilized, vacant, or obsolete industrial buildings.

Employment Center Low Rise (business parks) plays an important role in the city by supporting businesses and providing employment. This designation provides for employment generating uses that generally do not produce loud noise or noxious odors.

Staff finds that the project is consistent with the following General Plan goals and policies:

Goal LU 1.1 Growth and Change. Support sustainable growth and change through orderly and well-planned development that provides for the needs of existing and future residents and businesses, ensures the effective and equitable provision of public services, and makes efficient use of land and infrastructure.

Policy LU 1.1.5 Infill Development. The City shall promote and provide incentives (e.g., focused infill planning, zoning/rezoning, revised regulations, provision of infrastructure) for infill development, reuse, and growth in existing urbanized areas to enhance community character, optimize City investments in infrastructure and community facilities, support increased transit use, promote pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly neighborhoods, increase housing diversity, ensure integrity of historic districts, and enhance retail viability.

The proposed project would be constructed on a long-underutilized parcel in an area in need of economic investment. Approving the proposed rezone would promote this policy by facilitating infill development in a growing urbanized area. Furthermore, a rezone from R-1A to MRD is consistent with the site's Employment Center Low Rise designation which provides for employment generating uses that generally do not produce loud noise or noxious odors. This project would fill an infrastructure and economic gap in this part of the City by providing development on a vacant parcel and in the provision of local employment opportunities. Lastly, the city has existing infrastructure facilities on Bell Avenue which helps maximize prior and future investments in this area.

Goal LU 2.1 City of Neighborhoods. Maintain a city of diverse, distinct, and well-structured neighborhoods that meet the community's needs for complete, sustainable, and high-quality living environments, from the historic downtown core to well-integrated new growth areas.

Policy LU 2.1.2 Protect Established Neighborhoods. The City shall preserve, protect, and enhance established neighborhoods by providing sensitive transitions between these neighborhoods and adjoining areas, and by requiring new development, both private and public, to respect and respond to those existing physical characteristics buildings, streetscapes, open spaces, and urban form that contribute to the overall character and livability of the neighborhood.

Policy LU 2.1.7 Good Neighbors. The City shall encourage businesses located within and adjacent to residential developments to conduct their business in a courteous manner by limiting disturbances and nuisances from operations and patrons, and to act as members of the community by making themselves available to respond to complaints and by participating in neighborhood/community meetings.

Policy LU 2.1.8 Neighborhood Enhancement. The City shall promote infill development, reuse, rehabilitation, and reuse efforts that contribute positively (e.g., architectural design) to existing neighborhoods and surrounding areas.

The proposed project is adjacent to the Parker Homes neighborhood to the southwest and the Village Green Mobile Home Community to the east. Development of this project has evolved with consideration to the impacts on the existing neighborhoods. This is achieved through large side-yard and rear setbacks separating the proposed use from the existing neighborhood; building design and placement; sound walls; and landscaping. The landscaping serves a double purpose, providing not only sound attenuation along the property lines abutting residential areas but also serves as beautification along the currently vacant frontage along Bell Avenue. The placement and design of the building considers pedestrian activity along Bell Avenue. With the proposed development filling a long, vacant stretch of Bell Avenue, this project provides human and vehicular activity where there was none before and has the added benefit of additional eyes on the street, lighting, and other

security features. Finally, although these are intended to be warehouse buildings, the design of the buildings include a large amount of glazing at the north elevations as well large storefront windows at the building entrances.

Goal LU 2.7 City Form and Structure. Require excellence in the design of the city's form and structure through development standards and clear design direction.

Policy LU 2.7.2 Design Review. The City shall require design review that focuses on achieving appropriate form and function for new and reuse and reinvestment projects to promote creativity, innovation, and design quality.

Policy LU 2.7.3 Transitions in Scale. The City shall require that the scale and massing of new development in higher-density centers and corridors provide appropriate transitions in building height and bulk that are sensitive to the physical and visual character of adjoining neighborhoods that have lower development intensities and building heights.

Policy LU 2.7.4 Public Safety and Community Design. The City shall promote design of neighborhoods, centers, streets, and public spaces that enhances public safety and discourages crime by providing street-fronting uses ("eyes on the street"), adequate lighting and sight lines, and features that cultivate a sense of community ownership.

Policy LU 2.7.7 Buildings that Engage the Street. The City shall require buildings to be oriented to and actively engage and complete the public realm through such features as building orientation, build-to and setback lines, façade articulation, ground-floor transparency, and location of parking.

This project was reviewed by staff for appropriateness under the City's Industrial and Business Park (IBP) Design Guidelines and with consideration to the existing neighborhood. The City's IBP guidelines serve to encourage high-quality development and creative design and to protect and enhance property values and community economic viability. The building's public-facing design is respectful of the context in which it is located and attempts to provide a more welcoming and open design than a traditional warehouse building. This is achieved through large amounts of glazing at the north elevations, combined with large storefront windows at the entrances. The placement and design of the building considers pedestrian activity along Bell Avenue. With the proposed development filling a long, vacant stretch of Bell Avenue, this project provides human and vehicular activity where there was none before and has the added benefit of additional eyes on the street, lighting, and other security features. The added landscaping serves a double purpose, providing not only sound attenuation along the property lines abutting residential areas but also serves as beautification along the currently vacant frontage along Bell Avenue creating a welcoming and safe environment for pedestrians.

Goal LU 7.1 Employment Centers. Encourage employee-intensive uses throughout the city in order to strengthen Sacramento's role as a regional and West Coast employment center and to encourage transit ridership and distribute peak hour commute directions.

Policy LU 7.1.1 Employment Intensive Uses. The City shall encourage employee-intensive uses such as medical and professional offices, light industry, research, and skill training.

In the Special Planning District, Bell Avenue acts as a transition from the more industrial development north of Bell Avenue to the more residential development south of Bell Avenue (refer to figure 2 for a map of surrounding land uses). This project proposes industrial development in an area where residential and industrial uses have existed side-by-side for decades. Additionally, this project is expected to provide a significant amount of employment opportunities in the area.

Goal LU 7.2 Industrial Development. Maintain industrial districts that provide for the manufacturing of goods, flex space, and research and development that are attractive, compatible with adjoining nonindustrial uses, and well-maintained.

Policy LU 7.2.1 Industrial Growth. The City shall encourage the protection, continued intensification, and expansion of existing industrial, warehousing, and distribution facilities and provide for new warehousing/distribution activities in select locations when found to be compatible with existing surrounding neighborhoods, to provide a range of employment opportunities for Sacramento's residents.

Policy LU 7.2.2 Internal Movement. The City shall require industrial uses proposed near existing and planned residential areas to be designed to limit the impacts of truck traffic on these residential areas.

This project proposes to rezone the site from R-1A-SPD and M-1-SPD to the Manufacturing, Research and Development (MRD-SPD) zone. The purpose of the MRD zone is to accommodate innovative technology businesses and related support services, while allowing flexibility for transitional uses in areas where existing uses may be incompatible with planned development. The regulations of this zone are intended to achieve a high-quality, nuisance-free environment for manufacturing, assembly, research and development type land uses in accordance with the policies of the general plan, community plans, and any applicable development guidelines adopted for the area, and may be applied primarily to areas designated in the general plan for mixed uses, employment, or industrial uses. This area is a mix of both residential and industrial uses with Bell Avenue serving as a transition area for both types of land uses. This project has been reviewed and analyzed by City departments to ensure that traffic and other impacts on surrounding neighborhoods and local streets are minimized. Internally, in addition to the required masonry wall around the perimeter of the property, areas closer to residential have been required to contain larger landscape strips with dense landscaping to mitigate noise impacts on the surrounding residential

neighborhoods. Additionally, truck maneuvering and parking have been located away from adjacent residential areas.

Goal ED 3.1 Land, Sites, and Opportunity Areas. Retain, attract, expand, and develop businesses by providing readily available and suitable sites with appropriate zoning and access.

Policy ED 3.1.3 Key Infill and Opportunity Areas. The City shall facilitate and promote economic development projects in key infill and opportunity areas.

In the Special Planning District, Bell Avenue acts as a transition from the more industrial development north of Bell Avenue to the more residential development south of Bell Avenue (refer to figure 2 for a map of surrounding land uses). This project proposes industrial development in an area where residential and industrial uses have existed side-by-side for decades. Additionally, this project is expected to provide a significant amount of employment opportunities in the area.

Goal M 1.2 Multimodal System. Increase multimodal accessibility (i.e., the ability to complete desired personal or economic transactions via a range of transportation modes and routes) throughout the city and region with an emphasis on walking, bicycling, and riding transit.

Policy M 1.2.3 Transportation Evaluation. The City shall evaluate discretionary projects for potential impacts to traffic operations, traffic safety, transit service, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian facilities, consistent with the City's Traffic Study Guidelines.

Policy M 1.2.4 Multimodal Access. The City shall facilitate the provision of multimodal access to activity centers such as commercial centers and corridors, employment centers, transit stops/stations, airports, schools, parks, recreation areas, medical centers, and tourist attractions.

Goal M 1.4 Transportation Demand Management. Reduce reliance on the private automobile.

Policy M 1.4.2 Automobile Commute Trip Reduction. The City shall encourage employers to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicle commute trips to their sites by enforcing the existing trip reduction ordinance in the City Code.

Policy M 1.4.3 Transportation Management Associations. The City shall encourage commercial, retail, and residential developments to participate in or create Transportation Management Associations to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips.

This project has been evaluated by City departments, including Public Works, for potential traffic impacts and appropriate measures have been conditioned. This project is expected to employ 100 or more employees based on the employee generation rates in section 17.700.050 and is classified as

a major project under section 17.700.030. As such, this project is required to develop a Transportation Management Plan detailing measures to relieve traffic congestion and reduce vehicle trips to and from work. Possible measures that can be implemented to reduce vehicle trips are listed in sections 17.700.060-070 of the City Code.

Goal M 5.1 Integrated Bicycle System. Create and maintain a safe, comprehensive, and integrated bicycle system and set of support facilities throughout the city that encourage bicycling that is accessible to all. Provide bicycle facilities, programs and services and implement other transportation and land use policies as necessary to achieve the City's bicycle mode share goal as documented in the Bicycle Master Plan.

Policy M 5.1.11 Bike Facilities in New Developments. The City shall require that major new development projects (e.g., employment centers, educational institutions, recreational and retail destinations, and commercial centers) provide bicycle parking (i.e., short-term bicycle parking for visitors and long-term bicycle parking for residents or employees), personal lockers, showers, and other bicycle support facilities.

Goal M 6.1 Managed Parking. Provide and manage parking such that it balances the citywide goals of economic development, livable neighborhoods, sustainability, and public safety with the compact multi-modal urban environment prescribed by the General Plan.

Policy M 6.1.1 Appropriate Parking. The City shall manage public parking and regulate the provision and management of private parking to support parking availability and auto access to neighborhoods across the city, with consideration for access to existing and funded transit service, mixed-use development, and shared parking opportunities.

As part of the discretionary review process, staff has evaluated the vehicle and bicycle parking requirements for the proposed uses. This project, a Wholesale Warehousing and Manufacturing use located in a Traditional Parking District, is required to provide a minimum of 170 vehicle parking spaces up to a maximum of 679 vehicle parking spaces. This project requires a minimum of 28 long-term bicycle spaces and 4 short-term bicycle spaces. As designed, this project meets the required minimum parking spaces for vehicles and bicycles, providing 283 vehicle parking spaces, and 30 long-term and 4 short-term bicycle spaces.

Staff finds that the project is consistent with the following North Sacramento Community Plan goals and policies:

Policy NS.LU 1.1 Development North of Business 80. The City shall encourage development north of Business 80 in a manner which emphasizes neighborhood cohesiveness and variety of housing types.

This project would fill an infrastructure and economic gap in this part of the City by providing development on a vacant parcel and in the provision of local employment opportunities.

This project has been reviewed and analyzed by City departments to ensure that traffic and other impacts on surrounding neighborhoods, local streets, and Interstate 80 are minimized.

The proposed project is adjacent to the Parker Homes neighborhood to the southwest and the Village Green Mobile Home Community to the east. Development of this project has evolved with consideration to the impacts on the existing neighborhoods. This is achieved through large interior and rear-yard setbacks, building design and placement, sound walls, and landscaping. The landscaping serves a double purpose, providing not only sound attenuation along the property lines abutting residential areas but also serves as beautification along the currently vacant frontage along Bell Avenue. With the proposed development filling a long, vacant stretch of Bell Avenue, this project provides human and vehicular activity where there was none before and has the added benefit of additional eyes on the street, lighting, and other security features. Finally, although these are intended to be warehouse buildings, the design of the buildings include a large amount of glazing at the north elevations as well large storefront windows at the building entrances.

Policy NS.LU 1.30 McClellan Heights and Parker Homes Plan Area. The City shall allow low intensity uses such as office, industrial and manufacturing, to occur in mixed use designations, given the proximity to airport safety zones associated with McClellan Airport operations.

This project proposes industrial development in an area where residential and industrial uses have existed side-by-side for decades. In the Special Planning District, Bell Avenue acts as a transition from more industrial development north of Bell Avenue to more residential development south of Bell Avenue.

The project lies with the Overflight Safety Zone for the McClellan Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP), and therefore it is subject to its safety policies. The Overflight Zone allows for many operations that would be found within a warehouse, such as those related to manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, and business and personal services.

McClellan Heights and Parker Homes Land Use and Infrastructure Plan.

The McClellan Heights and Parker Homes Special Planning District (SPD), established in 2007, was developed to implement the goals and policies of the McClellan Heights and Parker Homes Land Use and Infrastructure Plan (Infrastructure Plan). The Infrastructure Plan envisioned the site as suitable for residential uses. The Infrastructure Plan also included objectives to promote economic change in the community while minimizing displacement of residential uses and to build streets that are attractive, safe, and pedestrian-friendly.

Staff has determined that the proposed project would not impede the intent of the McClellan Heights

and Parker Homes SPD or Infrastructure Plan because the proposed MRD zone would allow for future residential development on the site while allowing a long-vacant lot to be developed. This project is expected to bring economic development to the neighborhood and is supported by neighborhood associations for this reason. Proposed improvements at Bell Avenue, including landscaping and lighting, would increase the safety of pedestrians utilizing this section of Bell Avenue. Additionally, the Robla area which surrounds the project site contains undeveloped or underdeveloped residential zoned land that can be developed to meet housing demand. And, finally, the rezone is consistent with, the 2035 General Plan's Housing Element chapter because the Housing Element does not include it the project site in its inventory of vacant land available for residential development.

Economic Impacts: Not applicable.

Environmental Consideration: The City of Sacramento prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Bell Avenue Warehouses (P19-015) project. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the MND was circulated for a 30-day public review period which ended on December 6, 2019. The comment period was also advertised in a newspaper of general circulation. A notice of availability / notice of intent to adopt an MND was posted in the County Clerk's Office and was sent to applicable regulatory agencies, neighborhood associations and stakeholders in the project area.

The City received four letters/emails during the public comment period. The comment letters and responses are included on the City's CDD EIR webpage under the Bell Avenue Warehouses Project (P19-015) heading (webpage listed below). Each of the comments addressed the project site and conditions as they relate to the particular areas of concern of the respective commenting agency, company, or organization.

The comments received did not identify any new significant effect, increase in severity of an impact identified in the Mitigated Negative Declaration, or provided significant new information. In response Staff has made clarifications and minor modifications to the MND and project description regarding the requested change in zoning. The revised MND along with the comments and responses do not create any circumstances pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15073.5 that would require recirculation.

The Environmental Services Manager has determined that adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Plan are appropriate actions under the CEQA. The initial study/MND for the project, and the MND revisions, comments, and responses, are available at the Community Development Department's office at 300 Richards Blvd., 3rd Floor, Sacramento, CA 95811, and webpage located at the following:

<http://www.cityofsacramento.org/Community-Development/Planning/Environmental/Impact-Reports>

200-Year Flood Protection: State Law (SB 5) and Planning and Development Code chapter 17.810 require that the City must make specific findings prior to approving certain entitlements for projects within a flood hazard zone. The purpose is to ensure that new development will have protection from a 200-year flood event or will achieve that protection by 2025. The project site is within a flood hazard zone and is an area covered by SAFCA's Improvements to the State Plan of Flood Control System, and specific findings related to the level of protection have been incorporated as part of this project. Even though the project site is within a flood hazard zone, the local flood management agency, SAFCA, has made adequate progress on the construction of a flood protection system that will ensure protection from a 200-year flood event or will achieve that protection by 2025. This is based on the *SAFCA Urban Level of Flood Protection Plan and Adequate Progress Baseline Report* and the *SAFCA Adequate Progress Toward an Urban Level of Flood Protection Engineer's Report*, each accepted by the City Council on June 21, 2016 (Resolution No. 2016-0226), and the *SAFCA 2019 Adequate Progress Annual Report* accepted by the City Council on October 22, 2019 (Resolution No. 2019-0398).

Sustainability: Not applicable.

Commission/Committee Action: On January 23, 2020, the Planning and Design Commission held a public hearing on the 1690 Bell Avenue Warehouses project (P19-015) and passed a motion to forward a recommendation of approval to City Council for all entitlements.

Rationale for Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the rezone and construction of two (2) warehouse buildings because the project: will provide infill development by developing a long-underutilized parcel; will fill an infrastructure and economic gap in this part of the City by providing development on a vacant parcel and in the provision of local employment opportunities; considers and minimizes impacts to the existing neighborhoods; and, is sited and designed in consideration of the pedestrian experience along Bell Avenue by creating a safe and welcoming environment for pedestrians through lighting, landscaping, security, and an active use.

Financial Considerations: None.

Local Business Enterprise (LBE): No goods or services are being purchased under this report.