



Community Development Department

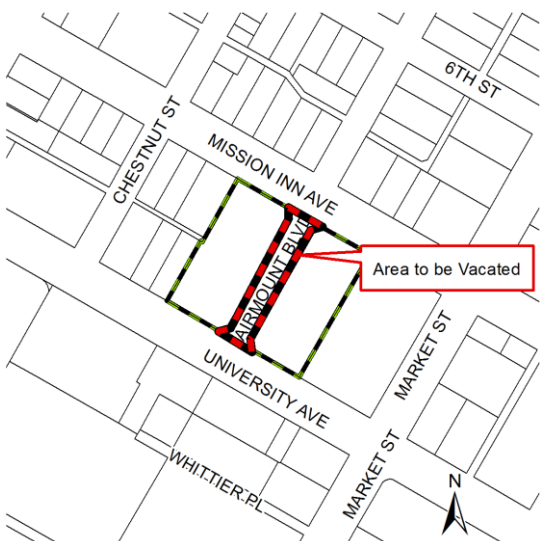
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Planning Division

PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING DATE: MARCH 08, 2018

AGENDA ITEM NO.: 4

PROPOSED PROJECT

Case Numbers	P17-0667 (Street Vacation)	
Request	To consider a Street Vacation to abandon an approximately 0.46-acre segment of Fairmount Boulevard, a public street 328 feet in length and 60 feet in width.	
Applicant	City of Riverside	
Project Location	Fairmount Boulevard between Mission Inn and University Avenues	
APN	N/A; adjacent to 213-261-027 and 214-252-016	
Project area	0.46 acres	
Ward	1	
Neighborhood	Downtown	
Specific Plan	Downtown Specific Plan – Raincross District	
General Plan Designation	N/A; adjacent to DSP – Downtown Specific Plan	
Zoning Designation	N/A; adjacent to DSP-RC – Downtown Specific Plan, Raincross District	
Staff Planner	Matthew Taylor, Assistant Planner; 951-826-5944; mtaylor@riversideca.gov	

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff Recommends that the City Planning Commission:

1. **RECOMMEND that the City Council DETERMINE** that this proposed project is exempt from further California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3) (General Rule) and 15301 (Existing Facilities) of the CEQA Guidelines, as the project will not have a significant effect on the environment; and
2. **RECOMMEND APPROVAL** of Planning Case P17-0667 (Street Vacation) based on the findings outlined in the staff report.

SITE BACKGROUND

The segment of Fairmount Boulevard proposed to be vacated is a fully improved local street, 60 feet in width (36 feet curb-to-curb) with one general travel lane in each direction and limited curb-adjacent on-street parking. It terminates at the intersection with University Avenue. Properties immediately adjacent to the segment to be vacated are owned by the City and are developed with the current Riverside Police Department North Neighborhood Policing Center (RPD North NPC) and former Greyhound bus terminal to the west; and the former Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) downtown bus transfer plaza and a public parking lot to the east.

The subject segment of Fairmount Boulevard was vacated and closed in 1983 to facilitate the construction of the Multi-Modal Transit Center (MMTC), and was subsequently rededicated and reopened when the MMTC was reconfigured in 1999. A 180-foot-long segment of Fairmount Boulevard right-of-way south of University Avenue extending to Whittier Place was vacated in 2011 to facilitate the construction of the Riverside Community College Centennial Plaza project. Recently, Greyhound vacated the adjacent building and RTA relocated bus transfers to various existing bus stops throughout the Downtown area; since then, the former bus transfer plaza has been used as a temporary overflow parking lot for the North NPC.

PROPOSAL

The City proposes to abandon and vacate the right-of-way segment comprising Fairmount Boulevard between Mission Inn and University Avenues, which is approximately 328 feet in length and 60 feet in width, comprising 0.46 acres in area. This proposal will facilitate future consolidation with the adjoining City-owned parcels to create a 2.65-acre site for the future construction of the new Downtown Branch of the Riverside Public Library.

As a matter of information, the Downtown library project is not subject to Title 19 (Zoning Code), pursuant to Section 19.040.110 (Public Projects) and is therefore not within the purview of the Planning Commission. Pursuant to Title 20, a Certificate of Appropriateness will be required to ensure the future construction of the library is compatible with the Seventh Street Historic District.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

<i>Authorization and Compliance Summary</i>			
	N/A	Consistent	Inconsistent
<p>General Plan 2025</p> <p>Fairmount Boulevard is not identified as a collector, arterial, scenic or special boulevard in Figure CCM-4 (Master Plan of Roadways) of the General Plan 2025 Circulation and Community Mobility Element. The proposed closure of this segment of Fairmount will not affect capacity, traffic flow or right-of-way dimensions on Mission Inn Avenue, identified in the Master Plan of Roadways as a Scenic 100-foot Arterial Boulevard, or University Avenue, identified as a Special Scenic 100-foot Arterial Boulevard and Parkway. The proposed project is therefore consistent with the General Plan 2025.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Downtown Specific Plan</p> <p>Fairmount Boulevard is not identified as either a Major or Secondary Street in Figure 19A (Traffic Circulation Network) of the Downtown Specific Plan. Closure of this segment will not affect the capacity or right-of-way dimension of either Mission Inn Avenue, identified in the Specific Plan as a Secondary Street, or University Avenue, identified as a Major Street. Fairmount Boulevard further is not identified as a Pedestrian-Oriented Street or designated as part of the Bicycle Network in the Downtown Specific Plan.</p> <p>Although Chapter 19 (Circulation) of the Downtown Specific Plan encourages preservation and enhancement of the downtown street grid and discourages further street closures, the public benefit of the future use of the site for the library project outweighs the proposed elimination of the existing public right-of-way. As such, the proposed right-of-way vacation is consistent with the goals and policies of the Downtown Specific Plan.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Compliance with Citywide Design & Sign Guidelines</p> <p>No development is considered or proposed as part of this application.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

STREET VACATION

Pursuant to the provisions of the Public Streets, Highways, and Services Easements Vacation Law (commencing with §8300 of the Streets and Highways Code of the State of California) as well as Chapter 19.890 (Street, Alley and Walkway Vacations) of the Zoning Code, the proposed right-of-way vacation cannot be considered a Summary Vacation as Fairmount Boulevard has not been expended or impassable for vehicular travel for at least five years and since public money has been expended on its maintenance during such period. As such, the requested street closure is considered a Standard Vacation. The following facts are provided to support the proposed vacation of the subject portion of Fairmount Boulevard:

- The proposed area to be vacated will no longer be needed for street purposes or for access to adjacent parcels.
- Properties to the east and west of the proposed vacation will retain public access from University and Mission Inn Avenues, and the area to be vacated will not be necessary for access to any parcels.
- The proposed vacation will not impact access to any other parcels as all other streets and alleys will remain in their current configuration, and the proposed vacation will not impact east-west vehicular or pedestrian circulation on either Mission Inn or University Avenue.

Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that the subject right-of-way is not needed for vehicular or pedestrian traffic or for present or prospective public use. The vacated right-of-way will be placed within the DSP-RC– Downtown Specific Plan Raincross District and designated DSP – Downtown Specific Plan based on the City's General Plan.

In compliance with State Law and local ordinance, should the Planning Commission approve the proposed right-of-way vacation, the City Council will consider a Resolution of Intent to set a public hearing to consider the vacation at a date not sooner than 15 days following adoption of the Resolution of Intent. At least 15 days prior to the public hearing date established with the Resolution of Intent, notice will be posted at all intersections and at points occurring each 300 feet along the affected roadway segment.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Planning Division Staff have determined that the proposed right-of-way vacation is categorically exempt from further California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) of the CEQA Guidelines, which applies to the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment or topographic features involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of such determination. A Traffic Assessment prepared for the future library project also analyzed the effects of the proposed closure of Fairmount Boulevard under consideration with this action on the local circulation network and determined that no adverse effects to nearby streets and intersections will occur as a result of the proposed street closure.

The proposed right-of-way vacation is also exempt from further CEQA review pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, which stipulates that a project is exempt from CEQA if covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have a potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. As the project at hand involves the closure of a short

segment of a local street not identified as a major component of the local circulation network and vacation of the associated public right-of-way on which it is constructed, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY

Although the Downtown neighborhood was platted and developed with a street grid system comprised of square blocks approximately 330 feet in length on all sides, there is significant precedent for modification of this grid pattern found throughout the area. White Park, which was laid out in the early development of the Downtown neighborhood's original Mile Square, is similar in size and orientation to the block configuration proposed by this project in that it is equivalent in size to two standard blocks side-by-side. Most notably, the Main Street Pedestrian Mall consolidated blocks on either side of the former Main Street right-of-way between Fifth and Eleventh Streets, creating larger blocks of a similar size to the proposed project along the Main Street corridor. Further, although not a part of this proposal, the future library project proposes to maintain substantial internal pedestrian connectivity and vehicular circulation between Mission Inn and University Avenues. Thus, the proposed right-of-way vacation is consistent with the surrounding development pattern and is compatible with the surrounding development.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

Public hearing notices were mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the site. As of the writing of this report, no responses have been received by Planning Staff.

APPEAL INFORMATION

Actions by the City Planning Commission, including any environmental finding, may be appealed to the City Council within ten calendar days after the decision. Appeal filing and processing information may be obtained from the Community & Economic Development Department, Public Information Section, 3rd Floor, City Hall.

EXHIBITS LIST

1. Aerial Photo
2. General Plan Map
3. Specific Plan Map
4. Legal Description and Plat Map
5. Future Library Site Plan (for reference only)
6. Existing Site Photos

Prepared by: Matthew Taylor, Assistant Planner

Reviewed by: Patricia Brenes, Principal Planner

Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Community & Economic Development Director