



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: JUNE 2, 2020**

**FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT      WARD: 1**  
**DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: P19-0179 GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT, P19-0180 ZONING CODE AMENDMENT, P19-0181 DESIGN REVIEW AND P19-0182 VARIANCE – BY KHALID ALI OF EMPIRE PHARMACY HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS, INC., FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A COMMERCIAL RETAIL DEVELOPMENT ON 1.15 ACRES – LOCATED AT 1820 COLUMBIA AVENUE**

## **ISSUE:**

Approve a proposal by Khalid Ali of Empire Pharmacy Health Care Systems, Inc., consisting of a General Plan Amendment, Zoning Code Map Amendment, Design Review and Variance for the construction of a commercial retail development on 1.15 acres located at 1820 Columbia Avenue.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the City Council:

1. Determine that this proposed project will not have a significant impact on the environment based on the findings set forth in the case record and adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Program pursuant to Sections 15074 and 21081.6 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines;
2. Approve Planning Cases P19-0179 General Plan Amendment, P19-0180 Zoning Code Map Amendment, P19-0181 Design Review and P19-0182 Variance based on the findings outlined in the attached Planning Commission staff report and recommended conditions of approval;
3. Adopt the attached Resolution amending the General Plan 2025 land use designation of 1.15 acres from MDR – Medium Density Residential to C – Commercial ; and
4. Introduce, and subsequently adopt, the attached Ordinance amending the Zoning Map to change the zone of 1.15 acres from R-1-7000 – Single-Family Residential Zone to CR – Commercial Retail Zone.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

On April 2, 2020, the City Planning Commission recommended approval of Planning Cases P19-0179, P19-0180, P19-0181 and P19-0182 by a vote of 8 ayes, 0 noes and 0 abstentions, with staff recommended conditions of approval.

## **BACKGROUND**

The project site is currently vacant and consists of nine parcels totaling 1.15 acres and is owned by the City of Riverside. The site was previously developed with single-family dwellings, constructed primarily in the 1940s and 1950s.

In 2007, the City began acquiring the parcels and demolishing the dwellings as part of the Columbia Avenue Grade Separation Project which was completed in 2011.

In March of 2015, the City Council declared the properties surplus and the site was marketed for disposition and development.

In May of 2018, the City Council approved a Purchase and Sale Agreement with the Applicant to acquire the project site for a commercial development.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **Project Description**

The proposed 1.15 acre project site is located at 1820 Columbia Avenue. Surrounding land uses include residential uses to the south and west across East La Cadena Drive, commercial uses and residential uses to the north across Columbia Avenue, and industrial uses to the east across Chicago Avenue.

The Applicant requests approval of the following entitlements to facilitate development of a commercial center: 1) General Plan Amendment to change the General Plan Land Use Designation of the site from MDR – Medium Density Residential to C – Commercial; 2) Zoning Code Map Amendment to rezone the site from the R-1-7000 – Single-Family Residential Zone to the CR – Commercial Retail Zone; 3) Design Review approval of site design and building elevations for four multi-tenant commercial buildings ranging in size from 3,851 to 5,277 square feet, totaling approximately 18,000 square feet; and 4) Variance to allow fewer on-site parking spaces than required by the Zoning Code.

Four buildings comprise the proposed project. Building A, located adjacent to East La Cadena Drive, includes 3,851 square feet intended for a single retail tenant. Building B, located at the northwest corner of East La Cadena Drive, includes 5,277 square feet intended for up to five individual tenant spaces to be occupied with retail, restaurant and service commercial uses. Building C, located adjacent to Columbia Avenue and the central project driveway, includes 4,509 square feet intended for up to three tenant spaces to be occupied with retail and service commercial uses. Building D, located at the northeast corner of Columbia and Chicago Avenue, includes 4,318 square feet, intended as the administrative and dispatch offices for Empire Pharmacy Health Care Systems.

Empire Pharmacy Health Care Systems is a home infusion pharmacy that compounds medications on-site to be delivered to patients throughout the Southern California region. The proposed on-site offices would house Empire Pharmacy's compounding pharmacy operation, product storage, dispatch and administrative offices. Empire Pharmacy's proposed hours of operation are 9:00am to 6:00pm Monday through Friday.

No other tenants for the proposed project have been identified, but the Applicant has indicated

they will lease commercial space to neighborhood-serving retail, personal service and restaurant uses.

Based on the proposed mix of future tenants, the Zoning Code would require up to 76 on-site parking spaces. A total of 56 vehicle parking spaces will serve the proposed project. The Applicant has requested approval of a Variance to allow fewer on-site parking spaces than required by the Zoning Code. Staff is able to make the necessary findings based on the Parking Study that identifies unique operating characteristics and staggered peak operating times of the proposed tenant mix.

For additional background, please refer to the April 2, 2020, City Planning Commission staff report, recommended conditions of approval and minutes (Attachment 3).

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommendations in this report since all project costs are borne by the Applicant.

Prepared by: David Welch, Community & Economic Development Director  
Certified as to  
availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer  
Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager  
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

### **Attachments:**

1. General Plan Amendment Resolution
2. Zoning Code Amendment Ordinance
3. City Planning Commission Report and Exhibits – April 2, 2020
4. City Planning Commission Recommended Conditions of Approval – April 2, 2020
5. City Planning Commission Minutes – April 2, 2020
6. Presentation