



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
REGULAR MEETING

#16-0575

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM, City Manager

DATE: July 12, 2016

TITLE: Quasi - Judicial – Ordinance Approving a Public Purpose Use/Site Plan
Level IV Development Permit – Las Olas Corridor Improvements – 200
Las Olas Circle, 3000 East Las Olas Boulevard and Associated Public
Realm Improvements along East Las Olas Boulevard – City of Fort
Lauderdale – Case R15062

Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Commission adopt an ordinance approving a public purpose use and issuance of a Site Plan Level IV Development Permit for a parking garage and public park/plaza and associated improvements along East Las Olas Boulevard.

The City Commission will determine whether the proposed development or use meets the standards and requirements of the Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR) and criteria for development.

Background

As part of the Fort Lauderdale Beach Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Master Plan, the City of Fort Lauderdale (City) proposes to construct public infrastructure improvements in the Central Beach area to expand public access and amenities, and help create a world-class destination at the core of the area's public realm. The improvements include pedestrian-friendly streetscape design along East Las Olas Boulevard and focus on creating a strong visual and physical connection to the ocean, while prioritizing public pedestrian space over vehicles. By converting the existing Oceanside surface parking lot into park and open space, and constructing a new parking facility north of the Las Olas Boulevard bridge, parking will be consolidated, resulting in iconic and memorable public spaces which can be used for day to day public recreation, as well as special events.

The project includes a 650-space parking structure proposed north of the Las Olas bridge fronting on the Intracoastal Waterway, including four on-street parking spaces on Las Olas Circle, south of the bridge, and 241 spaces in the north Intracoastal lot, for a total of 895 parking spaces. The parking garage is intended to consolidate surface

parking from two existing lots and on-street parking into a single, five-story structure. The site design has been revised to accommodate a potential future expansion of the marina. During the conceptual design phase, the City Commission and Beach Redevelopment Advisory Board (BRAB) came to a consensus and directed EDSA, Inc. and the consultant team to include one parking garage on the north side of Las Olas Boulevard, and to reduce the number of parking spaces due to other parking facilities that were being planned within the vicinity, as well as to reduce the height and mass of the proposed garage to be more compatible with the area. The proposed location for the parking garage allows for the existing Oceanside public parking lot to be utilized in the form of a public park and plaza with active uses. Pedestrian amenities, including a wide pedestrian promenade and facilities such as bicycle lockers, a transit office, and shuttle service, encourage safe and adequate pedestrian movement and support alternative modes of transportation. The transit office comprises approximately 838 square feet on the first floor of the garage. As an amenity to the community, the western portion of the top level of the proposed garage will have a green rooftop deck, which will provide unique views to the Intracoastal Waterway and Downtown.

Features within the proposed Oceanfront plaza and park include public open space for multiple users, an architectural canopy and public restrooms. The architectural canopy functions as a portico arrival canopy with accommodations for a shuttle beach guest drop-off area. The canopy also extends into the plaza serving as a gathering area for pedestrians. A public restroom facility is proposed beneath the architectural shade canopy. The Oceanfront plaza also includes a children's interactive water feature. During special events, the water feature can be turned off so that the hardscape area can be utilized for programming. The Oceanfront plaza also includes flexible open space that can be utilized on a day-to-day basis or programmed for special events. The Site Plan and Application are attached as Exhibit 1 and 2 respectively.

Prior Reviews

The Development Review Committee (DRC) reviewed the proposal on December 8, 2015. All comments have been addressed and are part of the project file with the Department of Sustainable Development. The DRC comments may also be accessed at:

http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/documents/drc/2014comments/022514/022514drc_comments.pdf

The site plan was reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) on February 17, 2016. The PZB recommended approval of the application by a vote of 5-1. The approval was subject to conditions which stipulated that the property north of the parking garage should serve as overflow parking and that the restaurant proposed at the top of the parking garage be removed. The associated development plans and corresponding project narratives are provided as Exhibits 1 and 3, respectively. The PZB staff report and PZB meeting minutes are attached as Exhibits 4 and 5, respectively.

On May 11, 2016, the project which included 60% design plans was presented to the City Commission in their capacity as the CRA Board and the BRAB.

The following changes were requested by the CRA Board and the BRAB and are shown on the revised plans:

Parking Garage

- Number of parking spaces in garage increased from 409 to 650 spaces;
- Green roof with restaurant shell space was removed from level five;
- Shell office space on the ground floor that was to house the City marina offices was eliminated and replaced with additional parking;
- Retail space was eliminated;
- An additional level (level five) of parking was added, with flexible assembly space, including landscaping and shade canopy, on the western section overlooking the Intracoastal Waterway was incorporated;
- Parking, exposed to the sky with no cover, was placed on the east portion of the top level;
- Live planting element of garage architectural treatment was removed;
- Height decreased from 75'-0" feet (top of restaurant shell space) to 52'-5" (floor of Level 5);
- Length increased by 9 feet.

Oceanfront Plaza

- Iconic water feature was eliminated and interactive water feature remains;
- Pedestrian canopy was eliminated;
- Architectural Canopy was reduced in height from 33'-0" to 32'-0" and in area from 7,812 square feet to 4,992 square feet.
- Operations/valet office was eliminated;
- Police substation added per staff recommendation.

Pocket Parks

- Improvements to north and south pocket parks were eliminated.

North Intracoastal Lot

- All improvements in the North Intracoastal Lot, north of the parking garage were eliminated;
- The existing marina security buildings and 241 existing surface parking spaces to remain, with no perimeter improvements.

South Intracoastal Lot

- Four parallel parking spaces added on Las Olas Circle.

Circulation and mobility

- Existing circulation connecting Birch Road and Las Olas Circle to remain; Improvements to traffic islands eliminated from project.

A second DRC technical review was conducted on June 9, 2016 to review changes requested by the Beach CRA and the BRAB. At this time all changes have been reviewed and technical code aspects addressed.

Public Participation

This request is subject to the public participation requirements established in Sec.47-27.4 of the ULDR. A meeting notice was e-mailed to the Central Beach Alliance, the Idlewyld Improvement Association, and the Beach Business Improvement District which represent the civic associations within 300 feet of the subject property. A public participation meeting was held on January 15, 2016 at City Hall. The presentation summary, including list of attendees, is provided as Exhibit 6. The information and affidavits provided meet the public participation requirements for a Site Plan Level IV application. At the April 19, 2016 Conference Meeting, the City Commission requested a second public participation meeting regarding the Las Olas Corridor improvements. The meeting was held on May 4, 2016 at City Hall to provide neighbors with an update on the Beach CRA public improvement projects. The list of questions from the meeting, and subsequent responses, are provided as part of Exhibit 6.

Review Criteria

Pursuant to Section 47-18.26 of the ULDR, publicly-owned structures may be erected and lands used for public purposes, in any zoning district in the City unless prohibited by the City's Comprehensive Plan, and subject to approval by the City Commission. Parking garages are permitted in the Planned Resort District (PRD) and parks are permitted in the A-1-A Beachfront Area District (ABA), subject to City Commission approval, provided criteria outlined for the PRD and ABA Districts, Central Beach Development Design Criteria, Neighborhood Compatibility, and adequacy requirements are met, as defined further below. Responses to the review criteria are included as part of Exhibit 4.

The request for public purpose includes relief from the ULDR requirements regarding the slope of the parking ramp internal to the garage. Per Section 47-20.9 of the ULDR, Parking Garages, the sloping of floor grades shall not exceed five percent for 90 degree parking. However, in an effort to meet all of the criteria for the garage and the surrounding amenities, such as the green space and sidewalk areas, the length of the garage necessitates a slightly steeper grade of six percent for the slope. It is important to note that the increase in the slope of the garage will not create a safety issue and that the request to maintain a slope of six percent is within the established guidelines of the Florida Building Code (FBC) with the ULDR being more restrictive. Per Section 406.4.4 of the FBC, a structured parking garage can have a slope of not more than 6.67 percent.

The proposal includes a request to exceed the maximum limitation of 200 feet of building length, as required by Section 47-12.5 of the ULDR. The proposed design has a maximum building length of 270 feet, where 200 feet is the permitted maximum.

The proposal also includes a request to reduce a portion of the required 20 foot east setback where the Birch Road right-of-way extends into the property for a length of

approximately 50 feet. The setback reduction ranges from 0 inches to 4 feet-10 inches along this segment of right-of-way.

An application for location of a public use or structure may be approved, or approved with conditions, based on the following findings:

1. There is a need for the use or structure to be located where proposed.
2. The use meets a valid municipal purpose.
3. The location of the use or structure is not in conflict with the City Comprehensive Plan.
4. Off-site or on-site conditions exist which reduce any impact of permitting the public use or structure.
5. On-site improvements have been incorporated into the site plan, which minimize any adverse impact as a result of permitting the public use or structure.
6. Alternative locations have been identified and reviewed or it has been determined that no feasible alternative locations are available.
7. The proposed site is found to be the most feasible for location of the public use or structure.
8. The public purposes to be met by the location of the use or structure outweigh the application of the zoning regulation and prohibiting the location of the public use or structure.

The use meets a valid municipal purpose by creating public enhancements and infrastructure improvements along East Las Olas Boulevard on the Fort Lauderdale Beach. By consolidating parking from two existing lots and on-street parking into a single, five-story structure, the project provides flexible outdoor public spaces to be used for day to day recreation as well as special events.

The Oceanfront Plaza is located adjacent to the beach and serves as a gathering space for pedestrian focused activities. The park integrates architectural elements, functional vehicular circulation, pedestrian circulation, open space, and unique site elements into a pedestrian sensitive environment aimed at stimulating revitalization.

The parking structure is set back approximately 83 feet at the narrowest point and approximately 94 feet at the widest point from the Las Olas Bridge to provide an adequate amount of landscape and buffer space for the nearby residents and travelers along Las Olas Boulevard. In addition, per the Central Beach Master Plan, all four sides of the garage are wrapped with an architectural skin. The architectural skin is made of

aluminum fins and creates a visual screen for the parking that results in a visually appealing element.

Multi-functional green space is provided throughout the site to encourage gathering and recreation opportunities. The green spaces also contribute to an aesthetically pleasing environment for surrounding residents and users. The open green space to the south of the Las Olas bridge includes enhanced landscape and flexible space for residents, boaters occupying the marina, and the public. The space is large enough to host recreational activities, maintain support for boat show activities, or host other programmable events.

A pedestrian promenade is proposed to hug the perimeter of the Intracoastal waterway and extends eastward along Las Olas Boulevard. The promenade is to serve as a shared pedestrian walkway and biking path making a strong connection from water-to-water (Ocean to Intracoastal Waterway). The promenade uses a colored, stamped concrete to mimic a traditional boardwalk. Seating and lighting fixtures will be provided along the promenade to encourage safe and comfortable use.

The planned enhancements create a strong visual and physical connection to the beach, while prioritizing public pedestrian space over vehicles. The location of the use or structure is not in conflict with the City Comprehensive Plan.

Pursuant to Section 47-12.6.B of the ULDR, the following criteria shall apply for developments in the Central Beach:

1. It shall first be determined whether the proposed development or use is compatible with the character of the overall plan of development contemplated by the revitalization plan for the Central Beach area;
2. It shall then be determined whether the architectural design of the proposed development is compatible with the design guidelines provided in Sec. 47-25.3 of the ULDR. The design guidelines provided in Sec. 47-25.3 of the ULDR are intended to provide a framework for design review of proposed developments and outline the design elements which have been determined to be compatible with the revitalization plan;
3. The design guidelines provided in this section are not intended to be exclusive. Alternative architectural and design concepts outlined in the development application will be considered during review of the development application. It shall be the applicant's burden to show that the proposed alternative architectural and design concepts are compatible with the character of the overall plan of development contemplated by the revitalization plan for the central beach area and not incompatible with the design guidelines provided in this section;

4. It shall then be determined whether the proposed development incorporates design or architectural elements which mitigate the development's impacts, if any, on existing uses in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development;
5. The goal of the City in the adoption of the revitalization plan is to facilitate development of the Central Beach area as a world-class destination resort. The primary objective of the design review shall be to implement the overall plan of development and to foster redevelopment as contemplated in the revitalization plan.

The draft Central Beach Master Plan (CBMP) was intended to take the place of previous plans for the Central Beach area and the applicant has made efforts to accommodate the intent of the guidelines. The Master Plan objectives include expanding opportunities for pedestrians to experience the Intracoastal waterway, to create a symbolic center and gathering place at Las Olas Boulevard and a variety of public spaces for residents and visitors of all ages, accommodating daily use, special events and performances, as well as making streets more pedestrian oriented. The plans address all these aspects, as well as the architectural design criteria of the City's code. As per Sec. 47-25.3.A.3.e.i.b of the ULDR, consideration shall be given to the recommendations of the adopted neighborhood master plan in which the proposed development is to be located, or which it abuts, although such neighborhood master plan shall not be considered to have the force and effect of law.

The Oceanfront Plaza is located adjacent to the beach and serves as a gathering space for pedestrian focused activities. The park integrates architectural elements, functional vehicular circulation, pedestrian circulation, open space, and unique site elements into a pedestrian-friendly environment aimed at stimulating revitalization. Features within the park include an architectural canopy and restrooms. The canopy mimics the organic patterns of the ocean waves and pays homage to the curvilinear forms of the existing wave wall. The public restroom facility is located beneath the architectural canopy. The restrooms take a utilitarian approach focusing on public safety considerations, durability, and ease of maintenance. A 1,130 square foot children's interactive water feature is provided at the Oceanfront Plaza near the core of the pedestrian activity. The water feature uses a variety of nozzle heads to create dynamic water patterns for play and visual interest. All spaces within the park are accessible and visible to promote safety and security for the users. Adequate site lighting is provided to promote safety and security for park users, while complying with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) turtle lighting standards.

Multi-functional green space is provided throughout the site to encourage gathering and recreation opportunities. The green spaces also contribute to an aesthetically pleasing environment for surrounding residents and users. The open green space to the south of the Las Olas bridge includes enhanced landscape and flexible space for residents, boaters occupying the marina, and the public. The space is large enough to host recreational activities, support boat show activities, or host other programmable events.

Adequacy and Neighborhood Compatibility

The neighborhood compatibility criteria of Sec 47-25.3 of the ULDR include performance standards requiring all developments to be “compatible with, and preserve the character and integrity of adjacent neighborhood, the development shall include improvements or modifications either on-site or within the public rights-of-way to mitigate adverse impacts, such as traffic, noise, odors, shadow, scale, visual nuisances, or other similar adverse effects to adjacent neighborhoods. These improvements or modifications may include, but shall not be limited to, the placement or orientation of buildings and entryways, parking areas, bufferyards, alteration of building mass, and the addition of landscaping, walls, or both, to ameliorate such impacts”.

The properties to the north are zoned Planned Resort Development District (PRD), properties to the south are zoned ABA and South Beach Marina and Hotel Area (SBHMA), properties to the west across from the Intracoastal waterway are zoned Residential Single Family/Low Medium Density and Park. The uses of the surrounding properties consist of restaurants, retail, multi-family residential, and marina facilities. The current use of the subject site is surface parking and a marina office building. The proposed improvements, which include a parking garage, pedestrian amenities, parks, and open space are compatible to the adjacent neighborhood. The proposed parking garage is shorter than any of the surrounding buildings.

The applicant has submitted narratives regarding the project’s compliance with Section 47-25.2 of the ULDR, Adequacy Requirements, and Section 47-25.3 of the ULDR, Neighborhood Compatibility Requirements, attached as Exhibit 3, to assist the City Commission in determining if the proposal meets these criteria. A context plan and perspective renderings depicting the height, mass, scale, materials and details, etc. of the proposed development as it relates to surrounding properties have also been provided with the site plan submittal material as Exhibit 1.

Parking and Circulation

The following tables breakdown the existing parking available in the study area today and the available parking that would be accessible should the request be approved as it is presented.

EXISTING PARKING CONDITIONS		
LOCATION	PARKING TYPE	TOTAL
Oceanside Lot Total spaces (251)	General Spaces	241 metered spaces available to public
	Handicapped Spaces	9 available to public
	Lifeguard Spaces	(1) not available to public
Sub-Total Available to General Public		250
Las Olas Northside Total spaces (494)	General Spaces	413 metered spaces available to public

	Handicapped Spaces	12 available to public
	Dedicated Marina Spaces	(50) permitted spaces
	On-Street Spaces	19 available to public
Sub-Total Available to General Public		444
Las Olas Southside Total spaces (90)	General Spaces	76 available to public
	Handicapped Spaces	4 available to public
	On-Street Spaces	10 available to public
Sub-Total Available to General Public		90
Total Existing Parking		835
Total Parking Available to the Public		784

PARKING REQUIREMENTS AS PROPOSED			
USE	GROSS SQUARE FOOTAGE	PARKING RATIO	PARKING REQUIRED
Transit Office	1,152	1/500 SF GFA	3
Rooftop Assembly Space	10,446	1/400 SF GFA or outdoor space used for activity	26
Sub-Total Parking Requirements			29

PARKING AS PROPOSED		
LOCATION	PARKING TYPE	TOTAL
Las Olas Northside	Parking Garage	650 spaces available to public, except for dedicated marina spaces and transit office spaces
	Surface Parking	241
Southside Lot	On-Street Spaces	4
Sub-Total of Proposed Parking		895
	Handicapped Spaces	14 counted in garage, available to the public
	Dedicated Marina Spaces	(50) counted in garage, but permitted spaces
	Transit Office Spaces	(3) counted in garage but not for public use
	Rooftop Assembly Space	26 counted in garage, available to the public
Sub-Total of Proposed Parking Available to the Public		842

<u>PROPOSED / EXISTING PARKING SUMMARY</u>	
Existing Parking Available to General Public	784
Proposed Parking General Available to General Public	842
Net Difference	+58 parking spaces

The traffic impact analysis completed for the Project, provided as Exhibit 7, contains a detailed analysis of future (year 2025) intersection operating conditions at the two A1A/Las Olas Boulevard intersections. The analysis included a review of expected future traffic conditions for three scenarios:

- 1) No-build, leaving existing roadway geometry;
- 2) Reduce westbound lanes on Las Olas Boulevard to two lanes on the approach to Seabreeze Boulevard, with a single through lane and a single shared through/left turn lane;
- 3) Two westbound lanes with a single through lane and a single exclusive left turn lane.

The results of the analyses indicate that all three alternatives are expected to operate at adopted level of service (LOS "C" or better). In conclusion, the westbound travel lanes of Las Olas Boulevard between northbound A1A and Seabreeze Boulevard can be reduced from the existing three lanes to two and still maintain acceptable operating conditions.

One of the main goals of the project is to improve pedestrian facilities. The sidewalks along Las Olas Boulevard have been widened in order to provide additional area for pedestrians and enhanced connectivity between the beach and the Intracoastal area. There will be a modification of the existing driveway entrance on Seabreeze Boulevard which will interconnect with a new driveway exit on SR A1A northbound. Improvements will be made to Las Olas Boulevard to remove the median, remove the dedicated westbound left turn lane, and create a flush condition in order to prioritize the pedestrian. The intersections of Las Olas Boulevard and both SR A1A northbound and southbound will be raised to a mountable curbed condition as a part of this project, with transitions to the standard curb and gutter condition as required by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Las Olas Circle, adjacent to the proposed parking garage and south of the Las Olas Bridge, will be reconstructed as a part of this project. The timing of the traffic signals may also be modified to help create a priority for pedestrians. This may include an "all-pedestrian" phase at the intersection of SR A1A northbound and Las Olas Boulevard, allowing pedestrians to cross in all directions at once with no vehicular traffic.

As the proposed use of parking facilities and open space does not change, negative impacts to vehicular traffic are not anticipated.

Comprehensive Plan Consistency

The proposed development is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan in that the public use is permitted in the Central Regional Activity Center land use category. The project generates a total of 20 peak hour vehicular trips. If approved there will be 939 vehicular trips remaining (including all pending projects) in the Central Beach Regional Activity Center.

Resource Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

Strategic Connections

This item is a *Press Play Fort Lauderdale Strategic Plan 2018* initiative, included within the Infrastructure Cylinder of Excellence, specifically advancing:

- Goal 1: Be a pedestrian friendly, multi-modal City.
- Objective 2: Integrate transportation land use and planning to create a walkable and bikeable community.

This item advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale Vision Plan 2035: We Are Connected*.

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – Site Plan

Exhibit 2 – Application

Exhibit 3 – Project Narrative

Exhibit 4 – Staff Report from the February 17, 2016 Planning & Zoning Board Meeting

Exhibit 5 – Minutes from the February 17, 2016 Planning & Zoning Board Meeting

Exhibit 6 – Public Participation Report

Exhibit 7 – Traffic Impact Analysis Executive Summary

Exhibit 8 – Ordinance

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