



STAFF REPORT
11/18/2020

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Luis Lopez, Development Services Director
SUBJECT: Cairo Casitas Project

SPECIFICS:

- a) Ordinance No. 1169 approving Change of Zone (CZ 20-2) to change the zoning from C-G (General Commercial) and R-M (Multiple Family Residential) to CN-PD (Neighborhood Commercial – Planned Development) and RM-PD (Multifamily Residential – Planned Development) on 0.49 acres of partially-developed land.
- b) Resolution No. 2020-69 approving Conditional Use Permit (CUP 328 setting land use regulations and minimum development standards for the CN-PD (Neighborhood Commercial – Planned Development Overlay) and R-M (Multiple-Family Residential – Planned Development Overlay) zones, and approving Architectural Review (AR 20-08) to allow parking lot and façade renovations of an existing commercial / mixed-use building and construction of a new 7,279 square foot, two-story apartments building with eight dwelling units and detached carports on 0.489 acres located at 51-704 Cesar Chavez Street (APN: 778-150-001). Tomer Tzadok (Applicant).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the Cairo Casitas project by taking the following actions:

- 1) Move to introduce for first reading, by title only, Ordinance No. 1169 approving Change of Zone (CZ 20-2) to change the zoning from C-G (General Commercial) and R-M (Multiple Family Residential) to CN-PD (Neighborhood Commercial – Planned Development) and RM-PD (Multifamily Residential – Planned Development) on 0.49 acres of partially-developed land.
- 2) Move to Adopt Resolution No. 2020-69 approving Conditional Use Permit (CUP 328 setting land use regulations and minimum development standards for the CN-PD (Neighborhood Commercial – Planned Development Overlay) and R-M (Multiple-Family Residential –

Planned Development Overlay) zones, and approving Architectural Review (AR 20-08) to allow parking lot and façade renovations of an existing commercial / mixed-use building and construction of a new 7,279 square foot, two-story apartments building with eight dwelling units and detached carports on 0.489 acres located at 51-704 Cesar Chavez Street (APN: 778-150-001). Tomer Tzadok (Applicant).

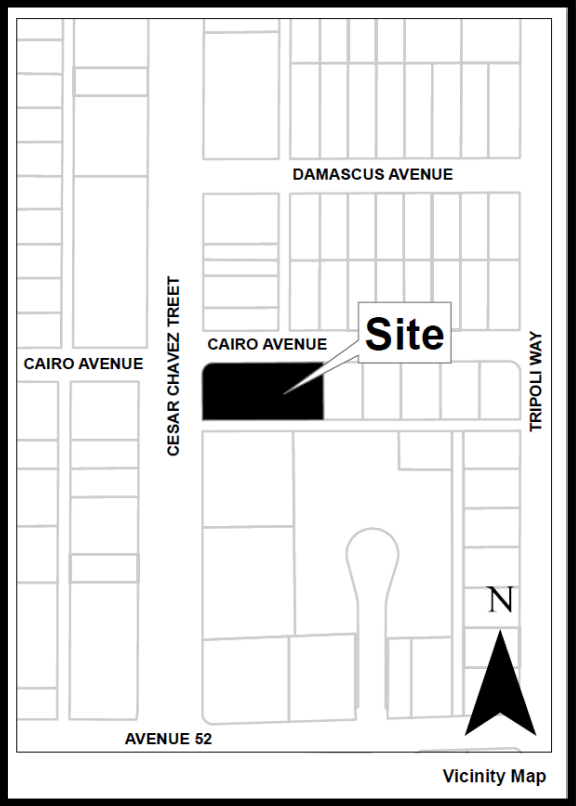
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On October 7, 2020 the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing and recommended to the City Council, approval of the “Cairo Casitas” project inclusive of Change of Zone (CZ 20-02), Conditional Use Permit (CUP 328) and Architectural Review (AR 20-08). The proposed project is an “infill development” that will renovate an aging commercial/mixed use building located at the southeast corner of Cesar Chavez Street and Cairo Avenue. The project further includes the construction of a new eight-unit “garden apartments” two-story building and detached carports accessed from a public alley. The project will use the “PD (Planned Development Overlay)” zoning regulations for flexible “mixed use” zoning regulations to implement the vision of the City’s General Plan for this sector of Cesar Chavez Street. There were no public concerns registered during the public noticing periods, and the Planning Commission approved the project directing the applicant to provide additional landscaping in the central garden, and to complement the renovation of the commercial building with the new construction.

BACKGROUND:

The property known as 51-704 Cesar Chavez Street is a 0.489-acre corner site with an existing two-story commercial building constructed in 1965 that was historically used as a multi-tenant building with a laundromat and pub/bar (The Keg). The building has had two residential apartments on the second floor, and there is access from a public alley on the south side of the property.

In the late 2000’s the laundromat was planned for an expansion on the north side but the project was abandoned, leaving a 1,300 square foot “storage room” addition to the building. Within the past 10 years the commercial space previously occupied by the pub/bar was converted into a beauty salon and a snack shop (La Mangoneada), and the laundromat space was converted into two retail/office suites (Botanica and Office Services). Additionally, in the late 2000’s, the rear of the property accessed from Cairo Avenue and the public alley was paved and fenced, and has been used periodically for outdoor storage.



DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The applicant/owner, Mr. Tomer Tzadok, submitted a conceptual development plans, and a formal application to renovate an older existing commercial building, and to construct a new two-story apartments building on the rear portion of the property. The existing building is a multi-tenant retail building with ground-floor commercial businesses and two dwelling units on the second floor. The easterly 11,392 square feet of the property (east side) contains an open paved area, which is being proposed for a new two-story apartments building will consist of eight (8) dwelling units designed in a “garden apartment” layout with detached carports to be accessed from the public alley on the south side of the property.

The project requires a change of zone from C-G (General Commercial), in the front portion of the property, to CN-PD (Neighborhood Commercial – Planned Development) in order to be consistent with the City’s General Plan land use designation. Additionally, the rear of the site will be re-zoned from R-M (Multiple-Family Residential) to RM-PD (Multiple Family – Planned Development Overlay) in order to allow flexible land use regulations and development standards for the project. Additionally, architectural review is required under the Zoning Code for review of the site plan, exterior building materials and colors, and the landscaping / fencing/ signage improvements.

Environmental Setting:

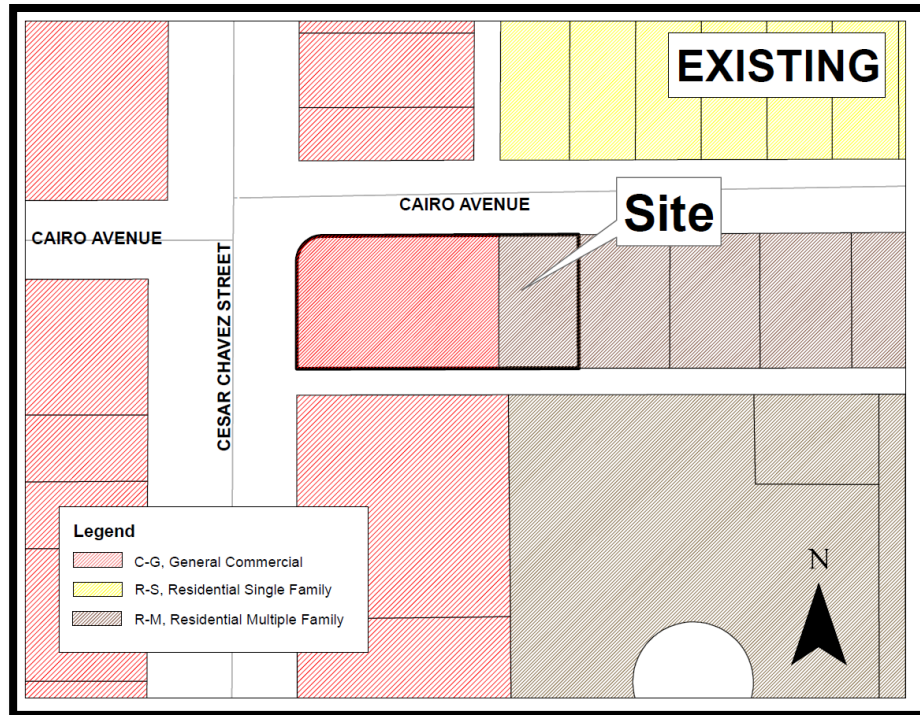
The subject site is a 0.489-acre partially-developed site with a split-zoning of commercial zoning (C-G) in the front, and multiple-family residential (R-M) in the rear. The site abuts a 20-foot wide public alley that runs east-to-west and which connects Cesar Chavez Street to Tripoli Way. There are existing apartment buildings adjacent and east of the subject site that use the alley for parking and carport access. The rear portion of the site is paved and has been previously used for outdoor storage and parking.

The site is designated as “Neighborhood Center” along Cesar Chavez Street on the 2035 Coachella General Plan’s Land Use and Community Character Element, as illustrated in the light purple designator, and “Urban Neighborhood” in the orange designator below:



Surrounding properties are designated “Neighborhood Center” to the north, south and west along Cesar Chavez Street and “Suburban Neighborhood” to the northeast along the north side of Cairo Avenue. There is an “Urban Neighborhood” designation to the east along the south side of Cairo Avenue where the Plaza Miranda Apartments are located. The Urban Neighborhood designation allows very high-density residential ranging from 0-38 dwelling units per acre. The proposed eight apartments will be situated on the rear 0.26-acre portion of the site. This would equal a density of 30.7 units per acre for that portion of the site, which is consistent with the density envisioned by the General Plan.

As previously stated, the site is currently split-zoned with C-G (General Commercial) zoning in the front and R-M (Multiple-Family Residential) zoning in the rear, as illustrated below:

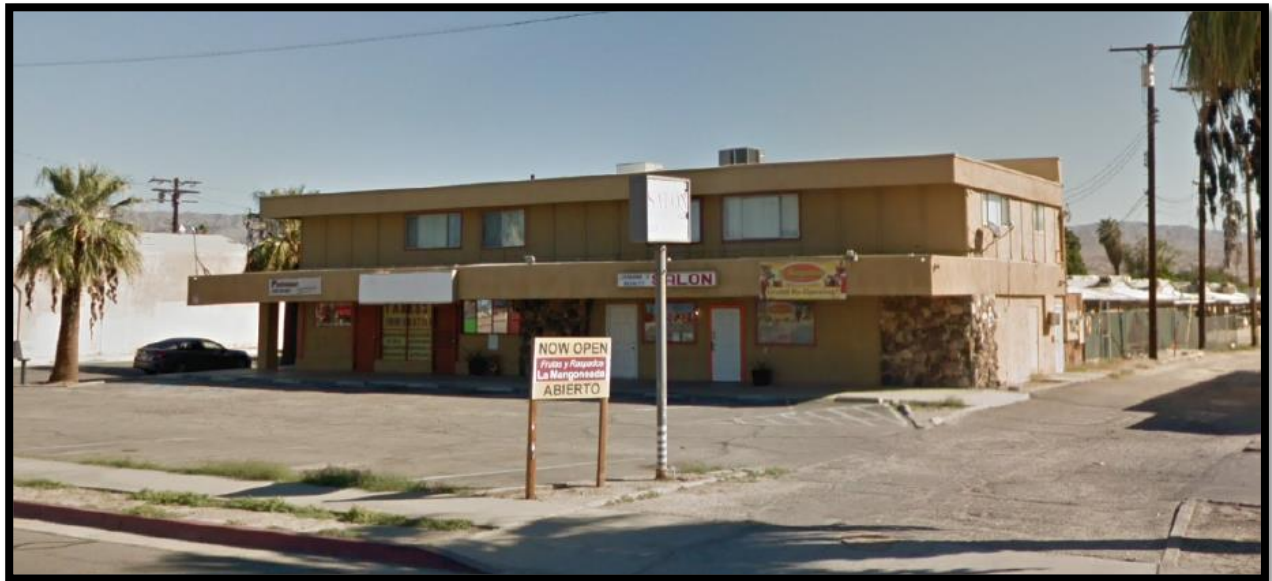


Existing Conditions:

The aerial photograph of the site and vicinity, and some Google image photographs are shown below:



Aerial Photograph:



Cesar Chavez Street Frontage



Cesar Chavez Street Frontage



Cairo Avenue Frontage



Cairo Avenue Frontage

The commercial building has existing businesses on the ground floor (Snack Bar, Beauty Salon, Office uses) and two apartments on the second floor. There is a “storage room” addition on the north side of the ground floor that will be converted into one of the eight apartments as part of the development. A trash enclosure area on the south side of the commercial building will be accessed from the service alley and will serve all tenants. Currently the existing one-way angled parking lot along Cesar Chavez Street is in disrepair and is nonconforming as it does not provide the required landscaping. The proposed project will renovate the parking lot and add landscaping.

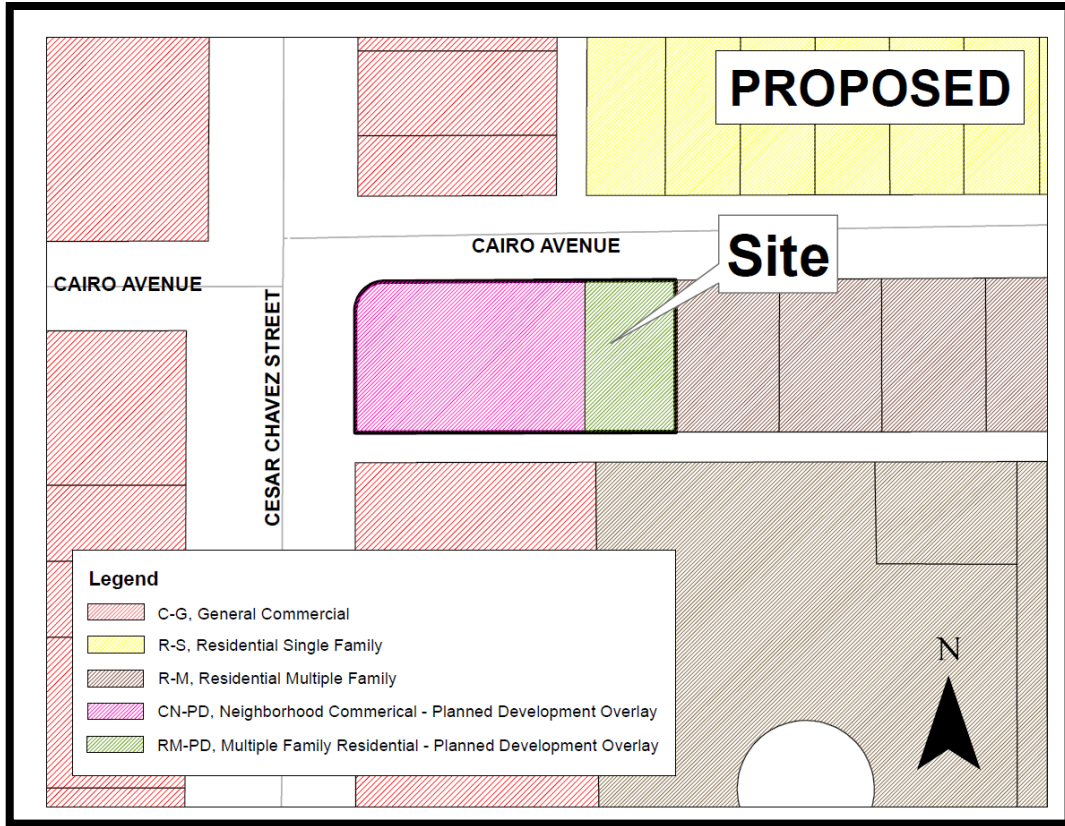
Surrounding properties to the east are zoned R-M and have one-story apartments on the south side of Cairo Avenue. The buildings along the south side of Cairo Avenue have a reduced setback of approximately five feet. There are single family residences on the north side of Cairo Avenue with a standard 15-20 foot deep front yard, and there are commercial uses to the north, west, and south along Cesar Chavez Street. The building at the southwest corner of Cairo Avenue and Cesar Chavez Street is an abandoned warehouse/office building with unimproved parking in the front.

Change of Zone:

The City has not created a “mixed-use zoning” ordinance or similar district regulations in the City’s Municipal Code, for this type of development, as envisioned in the General Plan. This would call for neighborhood commercial uses mixed with high-density multifamily residential, creating a gathering spot in the community and providing commercial services close to residential uses. Staff has previously recommended the use of the “PD” (Planned Development Overlay) zone which allows for flexible land use regulations and development standards. Although the PD Overlay is mostly intended for larger development sites that incorporate multiple parcels of land, staff finds that the flexibility provided in the Code is a feasible way to allow mixed-use development, until the City updates the Zoning Code in the future. This same approach was used to entitle the Pueblo Viejo Villas project, and the Tower Market/Borrego/Ravella project at the northwest corner of Calhoun Street and Avenue 50.

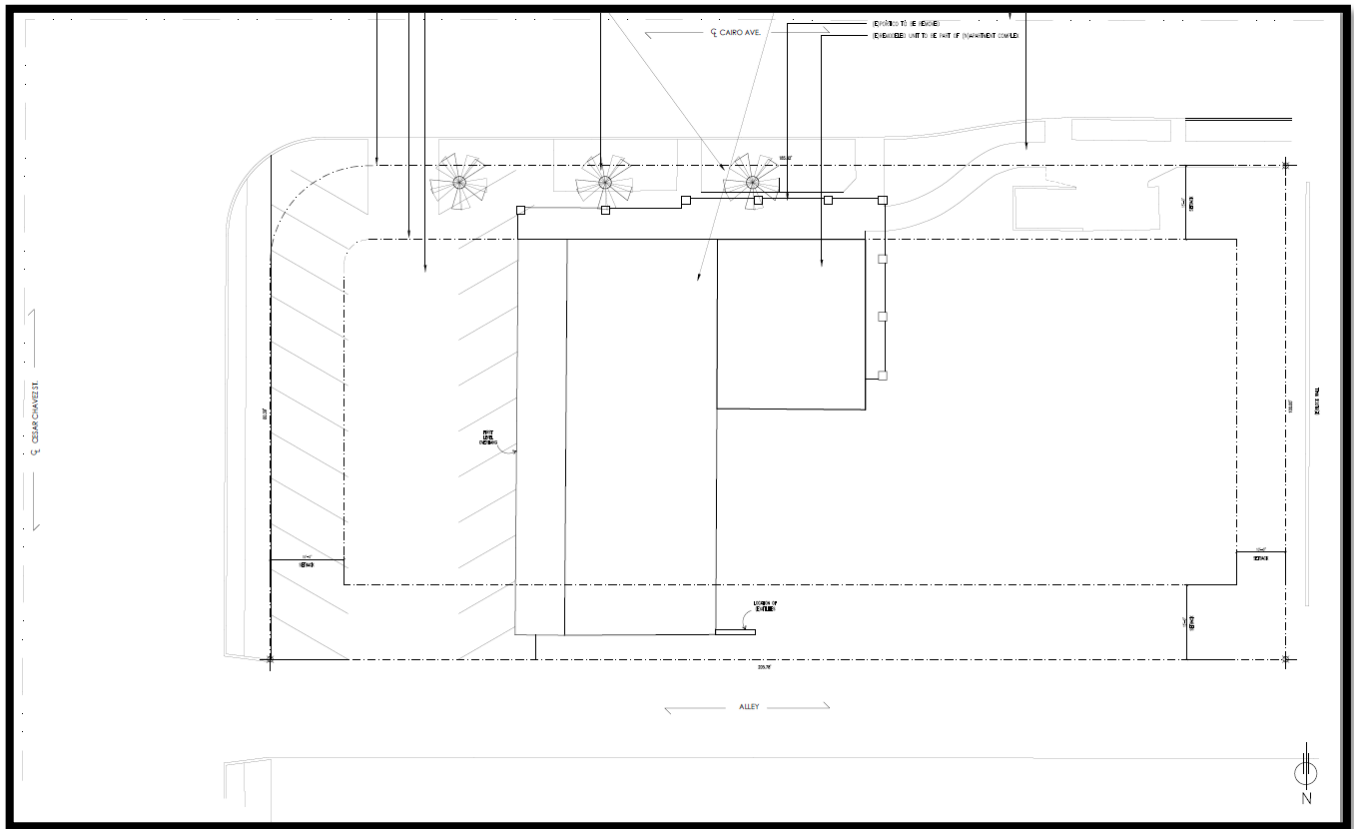
The “PD” Overlay Zone requires the adoption of “design guidelines” to include a master circulation plan, landscape plan, building massing plan, architectural theming and signage plan for all common areas and for the various building types. This project will use a streamlined “Architectural Review” approach because the renovation and new apartments will be built in one phase and the site is a small infill property.

The “change of zone” exhibit below shows how the PD Overlay zone will be incorporated on the City’s Official Zoning Map.



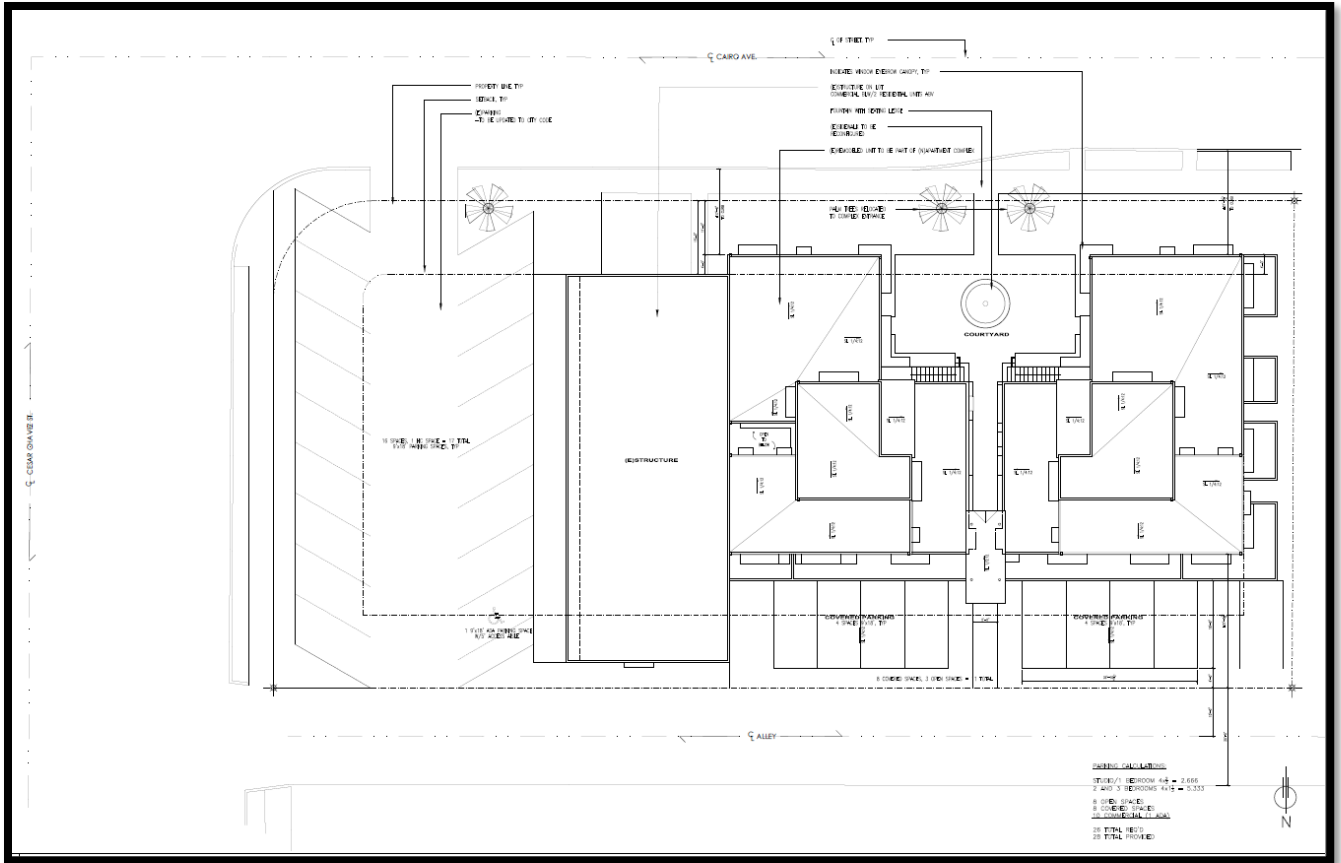
Site Plan Review:

The exhibit below shows the “existing site plan” conditions:



As shown above, there was a “storage room” addition on the northeast side of the commercial building is oriented towards Cairo Avenue, while all the existing storefronts are oriented towards Cesar Chavez Street. The parking lot is accessed from the south side at the public alley entrance from Cesar Chavez Street. The apartments on the second floor of the commercial building are accessed from a door near the alley and along Cairo Avenue. There is minimal landscaping on the site with palm trees located along Cairo Avenue. The rear portion of the site is fully paved, but will require some mitigation for on-site retention/drainage pursuant to current Engineering requirements.

The applicant submitted the overall site plan that shows the project at build out. The existing commercial building would have a converted “storage area” and the new apartments building on the east side of the property, as shown below:



The exhibit above shows a garden courtyard apartment design with a central garden/fountain at the front entrance to the apartments along Cairo Avenue. During the Pre-Application Review for this project, staff encouraged the owner to orient the front doors into the apartments to be towards the central garden, and to use balconies and window elements to further add a human scale to the garden as viewed from the street. The main garden along Cairo Avenue will have a view corridor to the street, and a covered breezeway area that leads to the carports and the alley on the south.

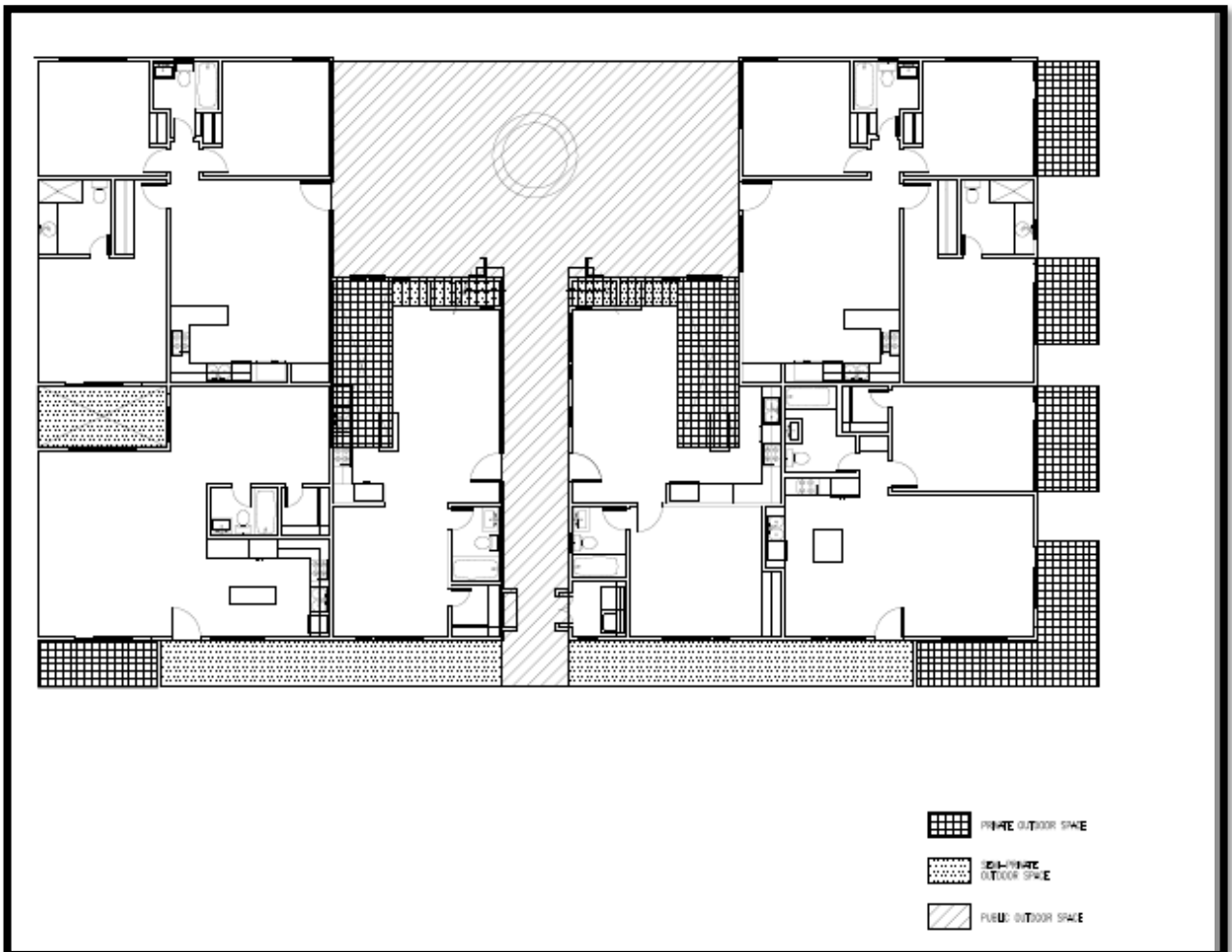
The carports and guest parking will be accessed from the 20-foot public alley and will provide a 24-foot turning radius with a 90-degree parking orientation. By placing all the parking in the rear of the apartments, the front of the apartments will have a traditional design theme with the central garden, and no vehicle parking or driveways visible from Cairo Avenue in front of the apartments.

Floor Plans / Unit Mix:

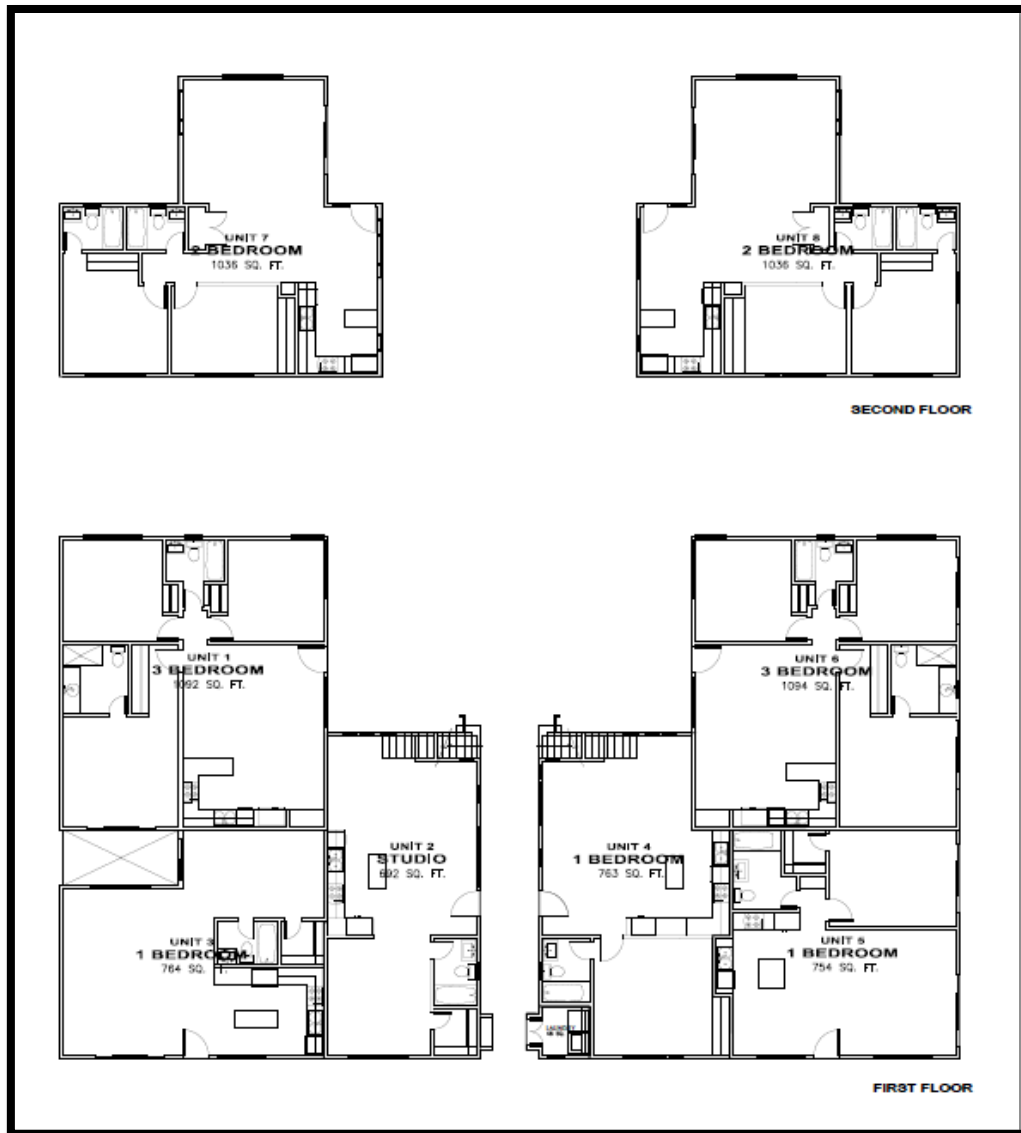
The applicant has submitted floor plans showing the following unit mix and minimum unit sizes:

- Studio Unit692 square feet (1 Unit)
- 1 Bedroom Unit754 square feet (3 units)
- 2 Bedroom Unit1,036 square feet (2 units)
- 3 Bedroom Unit.....1,092 square feet (2 units)

The exhibits below show the orientation of the various apartment dwellings, and the individual floor plans for each unit:



The above exhibit shows private and common open space areas for each dwelling. Each apartment will have a private patio area and access to the central garden area with fountain.



The above exhibit shows the front door entries into each apartment unit. Two ground floor units will have front doors facing the garden, and two will be accessed from the breezeway area, and two accessed from the rear. The upper floor units are two-bedroom units that will be accessed via a staircase that leads to a covered porch/balcony area.

Consistency with General Plan/Zoning / Proposed Flexible PD Overlay Standards:

The existing commercial building is a non-conforming structure in that it does not comply with current land use regulations and development standards. The standards in effect in 1965, or any exceptions granted by the City at that time, indicate that the parking lot was built with minimal landscaping and the public improvements including sidewalks, and drive approaches do not comply with current city standards. By virtue of the expansion of floor area and the addition of new dwelling units, the owner will be required to upgrade the existing non-conforming conditions and bring the commercial project up to City standards. Therefore, new commercial drive approaches will be installed and the existing sidewalks will be removed and replaced as needed to comply with current ADA path-of-travel requirements.

The PD Overlay zone allows the Planning Commission (through approval of a Conditional Use Permit) to set flexible land use regulations and development standards. The original ordinance was intended to encourage “clustered housing” where a large open space amenity is provided. For this project, the PD regulations can provide the ability to use smaller dwelling unit sizes, reduced setbacks and reduced parking ratios that would allow for a more urban character as envisioned in the General Plan for the “Neighborhood Center” and “Urban Neighborhood” designations.

However, this ordinance has also served the City as a zoning tool to allow mixed-use developments by creating mixed-use standards and reduced setbacks for urban infill projects. Accordingly, the CN-PD zone that is proposed for the commercial building will allow “multifamily residential” uses on the upper floors of the commercial building. Additionally, it will vest the parking lot to have reduced landscaping, and allow for loading to occur on parking stalls themselves instead of having a dedicated commercial loading area.

Setbacks and Parking:

The apartments will utilize flexible standards in that the front yard setback requirement which would normally be 15 feet along Cairo Avenue is being proposed at 11 feet. This would be compatible with the adjoining apartments to the east which have a reduced front yard setback of approximately five feet along Cairo Avenue. The interior side yard setback of 10 feet can be provided along the eastern property line.

Similarly, the off-street parking requirements for the project would be flexible as shown below:

Required Parking:

9 “commercial” stalls (2,212 sq. ft. bldg.)
10 Covered “residential” Parking Spaces
9 Uncovered “residential” Parking Spaces
28 Total Required

Parking Provided:

17 spaces
8 Covered Parking Spaces
3 Uncovered residential stalls
28 Total Provided

The summary above shows that the City’s Parking regulations require 28 parking stalls and the project can provide 28 parking stalls. However, there are two existing residences within the commercial building that would share parking in the commercial parking lot. Additionally, six of the required uncovered parking stalls would be shared with the commercial stalls. In addition to the off-street parking there is public parking allowed along Cairo Avenue that would mitigate the need for parking during peak hour use of the commercial uses.

Unit Mix/Dwelling unit sizes:

The new apartments building will have one Studio apartment, three 1-Bedroom apartment units, two 2-Bedroom apartment units, and two 3-Bedroom apartment units. The units will have the following sizes, which comply with minimum standards in the RM zone:

<u>Minimum Dwelling Unit Size:</u>	<u>Proposed Unit Size:</u>
<i>Studio Unit- 600 sq. ft.</i>	<i>692 sq. ft.</i>
<i>1 Bedroom Unit- 750 sq. ft.</i>	<i>754 sq. ft.</i>
<i>2 Bedroom Unit- 900 sq. ft.</i>	<i>1,036 sq. ft.</i>
<i>3 Bedroom Unit- 1,050 sq. ft.</i>	<i>1,092 sq. ft.</i>

Architectural Theming:

The PD Overlay zone requires that design guidelines showing theming for all common areas and architectural themes be provided as part of the change of zone request. Because this project will be developed in one phase and represents a small infill project, the architect submitted all the architectural exhibits for the buildings, showing the parking lot and façade renovations for the old building, signage plan, architectural and landscape exhibits for the new apartments, and a pictorial representation of a “Contemporary Art Deco” architectural theming that is proposed as shown below.





The images above show the inspiration style of architecture, and the bright color schemes, to be used in the proposed for the new apartments building. The style of architecture includes mono-color smooth plaster walls with flat roofs, strong horizontal banding, glass block windows, simple rooflines and cornice trims. These element which is a modernistic, and modern streamlined architectural forms. The architect designed the building in order to complement the existing commercial / mixed-use building which has a similar design motif, but that will be renovated significantly with this project.

The color schemes shown in the colored elevation drawings below depict what is being proposed for the commercial building, and the apartments building as viewed from the street:

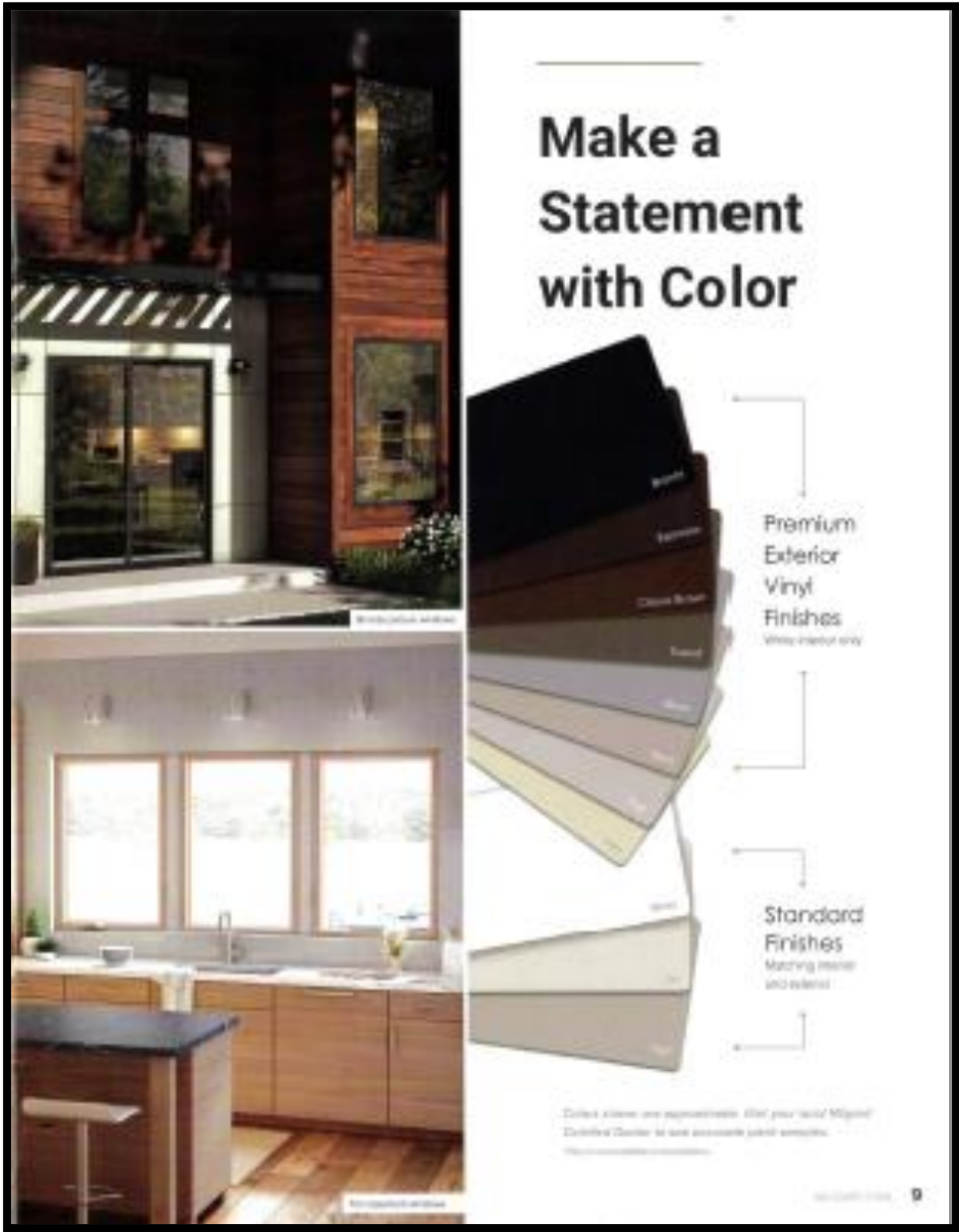


The existing commercial building has a flat-roof design with a bold awning structure along the storefronts where signs are currently placed. The submitted plans show that the awning structure will be removed and replaced with canvas awnings. The Planning Commission imposed a requirement that the exterior finishes of the commercial building be treated to be compatible with the new apartments building. As such, the applicant has agreed to treat the textures and colors of the existing building to match those of the new apartments building.

The colored elevation drawing shows a soft white field color for all exterior walls of the buildings, with bronze window trims and bronze horizontal banding on the apartments. Glass block will be used in combination with vinyl windows on the apartments. The commercial

building will use espresso window trims and espresso-colored vertical wood cladding. Turquoise fascia trims on the commercial building and Turquoise canvas awnings will be used over all the storefront windows and side facades. A new sign program shows wall signs attached flat against the wall of the new building, with goose-neck lighting over each sign area.

The brochure below shows the vinyl window material, and a sample image of the vertical wood cladding.

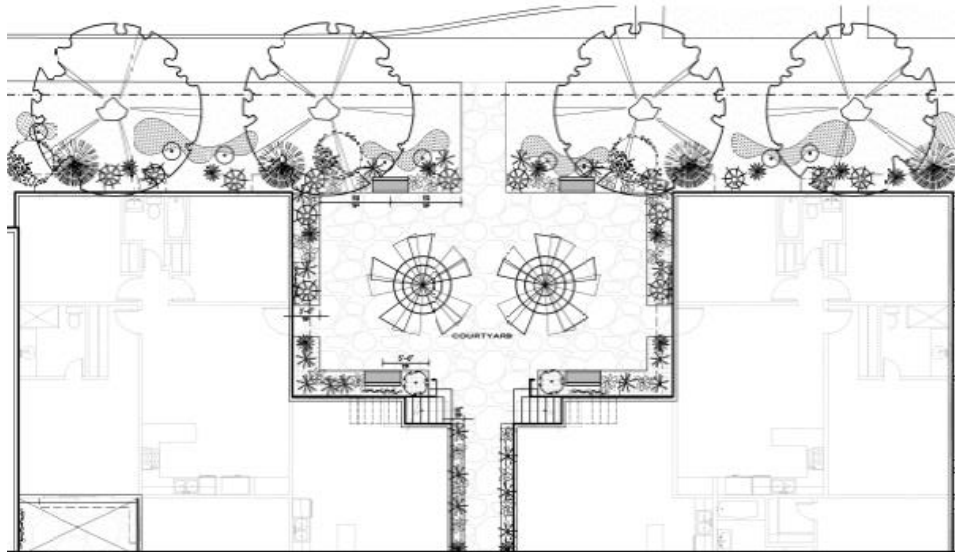


Landscaping:

The applicant submitted conceptual landscaping plans for the project showing new “fruitless olive trees” along the Cairo Avenue street frontage and in the parking lot perimeter planters along Cesar Chavez Street. New linear landscaping planters will be installed around the parking stalls and in front of the retail storefronts with desert-friendly plantings. The central garden will have stamped concrete and a fountain that is visible to the street, in addition to perimeter plantings in all walkway areas with a variety of shrubs, succulents, accent palm trees, and espalier/ vines as shown in the exhibit below.



The Planning Commission imposed a new condition of approval requiring the use of stamped concrete, additional shading with landscaping and seating benches to be added to the main garden. As a result of this, the architect submitted a revised landscaping plan for the main garden and the street trees / landscaping along Cairo Avenue was submitted as shown in the exhibit below:



The above plan shows the addition of two California Fan Palms in lieu of one fountain that was shown previously in the center of the garden. The revised plan shows four seating benches around the perimeter of the garden and enhanced plantings in the perimeter planter areas of the garden and breezeway. The street trees along Cairo Avenue were modified to add additional “Fruitless Olive” trees at the entry to the garden where the two palm trees were shown originally.

Environmental Review:

Staff found that the proposed project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act as “Infill Development” (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15332). The proposed project is consistent with the general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies and current zoning designations and will comply with the PD Overlay zoning regulations. The subject site is less than five acres in size and is substantially surrounded by urban uses. The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species since it is improved with buildings and hardscape. The approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality, and the site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There are no fiscal impacts associated with approval of the Cairo Casitas project.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Introduce Ordinance No. 1169 for first reading, by title only, and adopt Resolution No. 2020-69 to approve the Cairo Casitas Project with the findings and conditions attached to this staff report.
2. Introduce Ordinance No. 1169 for first reading, by title only, and adopt Resolution No. 2020-69 to approve the Cairo Casitas Project with modified conditions of approval.
3. Continue this matter and provide staff direction.
4. Make findings for denial of the Cairo Casitas Project.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):

Staff recommends Alternative #1 or #2 as noted above.

Attachments:

Ordinance No 1169 approving Change of Zone (CZ 20-02)
Resolution No. 2020-69 approving CUP 328 and AR 20-08