NOTICE OF PREPARATION
OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE BERGAMOT TRANSIT VILLAGE CENTER PROJECT
(FORMER PAPERMATE SITE)

DATE: November 16, 2010

TO: State Clearinghouse, Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

LEAD AGENCY: City of Santa Monica
1685 Main Street
Santa Monica, CA 90407
Contact: Jing Yeo, AICP, Special Projects Manager
Phone: (310)458-8203

The City of Santa Monica intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Report for the Bergamot Transit Village Center Project (proposed project). The proposed project is for a transit-oriented, mixed-use village comprised of creative arts, residential and retail uses as well as public open space amenities on a site currently developed with 206,000 square feet of vacant industrial uses. The project site is located on the north side of Olympic Boulevard between 26th Street and Stewart Street. In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Santa Monica has prepared this Notice of Preparation to provide Responsible Agencies and other interested parties with information describing the proposal and its potential environmental effects. Environmental factors which would be potentially affected by the project are:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Climate Change
- Construction Effects
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use/Planning
- Neighborhood Effects
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Shadows
- Transportation and Traffic
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

PROJECT APPLICANT: Hines 26th Street, LLC.

PROJECT LOCATION: 1681 26th Street, Santa Monica, CA

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed project is for a transit-oriented, mixed-use village comprised of creative arts, residential and retail uses, as well as public open space amenities. The approximately 7.1-acre project site (310,504 square feet) is a flat, irregularly shaped parcel, consisting of two legal lots bound by Olympic Boulevard to the south, 26th Street to the west, commercial office uses to north, and Stewart Street to the east. The proposed project site is located across Olympic Boulevard from the existing Bergamot Station, a renowned art gallery complex, and the future Expo Light-Rail station.
Implementation of the proposed project (Scenario 1) will require the demolition of the existing approximately 206,000 square feet of vacant industrial uses at the project site, removal of all parking areas, and removal of the limited on-site vegetation. The demolished structures would be replaced by approximately 957,521 square feet of building area within five new buildings. Buildings 1 through 5 would be oriented side-by-side from west to east along Olympic Boulevard, as illustrated in Figure 1 (Proposed Site Plan). Under the proposed project, a maximum of approximately 566,573 square feet of creative arts uses would be located exclusively in Buildings 1, 2, and 3 on the western portion of the project site, and a maximum of 344 residential dwelling units would be located exclusively in Buildings 4 and 5 on the eastern portion of the project site. Retail uses would be located on the ground floor of each of the proposed buildings, not exceeding approximately 83,712 square feet. Buildings range in height from 55 feet to a maximum of up to 86 feet. While the proposed buildings currently programmed for the site are anticipated to be an average of six stories high, the shadows and aesthetics analysis will study a worst-case scenario height of 86 feet with a maximum of seven stories for the creative arts buildings and eight stories for the residential buildings.

Proposed vehicular access to the project site will be primarily from Olympic Boulevard with additional access points on both 26th Street and Stewart Street. As part of the proposed project, a 60-foot-wide north/south vehicular street would be constructed which would bisect the project, connecting Olympic Boulevard to the street at the back of the site. Emergency access, as well as refuse, recycling, and deliveries to the project site will be from this alleyway, accessible from both 26th and Stewart Streets, to be constructed along the northern edge of the project site. Pedestrian access to the project site will be available from four north/south walkable plazas, a 15-foot-wide sidewalk that will circumvent the project site, except along the north side of the project site, as well as one east/west pedestrian pathway.

Parking for the proposed project would be provided within up to three levels of subterranean parking, including approximately 1,961 parking spaces. The subterranean parking would be accessible via multiples ramps from Olympic Boulevard, 26th Street, Stewart Street, the proposed north/south street, and the proposed, northern alley. Of the 1,961 parking spaces proposed, 36 spaces would be handicap and van accessible. Additionally, 104 bike parking spaces would be provided.

The proposed project includes approximately 179,513 square feet of open space. Open space amenities include two parks, four walkable plazas, a playground, and a kid’s room. Open space areas would be landscaped with a variety of trees, shrubs, and grasses. The perimeter of the site along 26th Street, Olympic Boulevard and Stewart Street would be lined with trees and a new sidewalk. The proposed north/south roadway would also be landscaped with trees and shrubs. The proposed open space areas and landscaping is intended to enhance the pedestrian environment in the area, in anticipation of the future Expo Light-Rail station to be located on the south side of Olympic Boulevard.
FIGURE 1
Proposed Site Plan

Source: Gensler 2010.

Bergamot Transit Village
The proposed project will be constructed in up to five phases (each phase consisting of the construction of one or more buildings and all or any portion of the garage) over a period of not longer than twenty years.

An alternate development scenario (Scenario 2) will also be analyzed in the EIR and would include more residential uses and reduce overall building square footage by changing Building 3 from creative arts to residential. In this alternate scenario, Building 3 would include 144 dwelling units, compared to the proposed 145,654 square feet of creative arts uses. The proposed square footage and uses within all other buildings would remain the same as the proposed project. Overall, the alternate scenario would include a total of 946,476 square feet of building area, consisting of 420,919 square feet of creative arts uses, 488 residential dwelling units, and 83,766 square feet of retail uses.

REVIEW PERIOD: As specified by the CEQA Guidelines, the Notice of Preparation will be circulated for a 30-day review period. The City of Santa Monica welcomes agency and public input during this period regarding the scope and content of environmental information related to your agency’s responsibility that must be included in the Draft EIR. Comments may be submitted, in writing, by 5:30 PM on December 15, 2010, and addressed to:

Jing Yeo, AICP
Special Projects Manager
Planning and Community Development
1685 Main Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401
Fax: (310) 458-3380
E-mail: jing.yeo@smgov.net

SCOPING MEETING: If you would like the opportunity provide oral comments on this Notice of Preparation, the City is going to hold a Public Scoping Meeting for the EIR to describe the proposed project, the environmental process, and to receive your verbal input on the information to be included in the EIR. The Public Scoping Meeting is scheduled for 7:00 pm on December 8, 2010, at Thelma Terry Room, Virginia Avenue Park, 2200 Virginia Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90401. The City will consider all comments, written and oral, in determining the final scope of the evaluation to be included in the EIR.

ESPAÑOL: Esto es una noticia de la preparación de un reporte sobre los posibles efectos ambientales referente a la construcción propuesta de edificios de uso mixto, lo cual puede ser de interés a usted. Para más información, llame a Carmen Gutierrez, al número (310) 458-8341.