

<b>Location:</b>	<b>Block T-12 in City Center bounded by Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Jefferson Street, and 11<sup>th</sup> Street.</b>
<b>Proposal:</b>	Construction of a residential project containing one of the following options: (Option 1) up to 284 units and an equal number of parking spaces in two adjoining eight-story buildings, with two levels of subsurface parking; or (Option 2) up to 450 units and 430 parking spaces in a <sup>7-</sup> 25 story high-rise tower adjacent to an eight-story podium, with three levels of subsurface parking.
<b>Applicant:</b>	Shorenstein Realty Investors Three, L.P.
<b>Owner:</b>	City of Oakland Redevelopment Agency
<b>Planning Permits Required:</b>	(1) Amendment to Preliminary Development Plan for City Center Project for Block T-12; (2) Major Conditional Use Permit for development over 100,000 square feet and for exceeding 120 feet in height; (3) Variances from the required number and dimensions of parking and on-site loading spaces, a reduction in the rear yard setback, and a reduction in the amount of private open space; and (4) Design Review of the preliminary site plan and building design.
<b>General Plan:</b>	Central Business District
<b>Zoning:</b>	C-51 Central Business Service Commercial Zone/S-17 Downtown Residential Open Space Combining Zone
<b>Environmental Determination:</b>	Environmental review underway. It is anticipated that an Addendum to the Oakland City Center Project EIR (April 2000) will be sufficient to provide the required environmental review for the project.
<b>Historic Status:</b>	N/A
<b>Service Delivery District:</b>	Downtown/West Oakland/Harbor
<b>City Council District:</b>	3
<b>For further information:</b>	Contact case planner <b>Rick Tooker</b> at (510) 238-6281 or by e-mail at <a href="mailto:ricktooker@sbcglobal.net">ricktooker@sbcglobal.net</a>

## SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to receive preliminary design review comments on a proposal to construct a residential development located on the City block bounded by Martin Luther King, Jr. Way to the west, 12<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Jefferson Street to the east, and 11<sup>th</sup> Street to the south. The project site, known as Block T-12, is one of four blocks contained in the Oakland City Center Project site, which received approval of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) and Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) in April 2000 with the following mix of uses:

- Block T-9 has already been developed with a 470,000 square foot office building.
- A PDP for Block T-10 was originally approved in April 2000 for a mix of residential, commercial and office uses, but the project was revised in August 2004 and a Final

Development Plan (FDP) was approved for an eight-story building with 251 residential units and 2,600 square feet of ground-level commercial space. This project is now under construction.

- A PDP for Block T-5/6 was originally approved in April 2000 for 580,000 square feet of office and 7,500 square feet of ground-level commercial space. This project is scheduled for construction no later than in 2013.
- A PDP for Block T-12, the project site, was originally approved in April 2000 for 584,000 square feet of office space, but an amended PDP is now proposed for a residential project with up to 284 units (Option 1) or up to 450 units (Option 2).

Staff is seeking comments from the Design Review Committee and the public regarding the design of the proposed project. These comments will provide guidance to the applicant and staff in processing the planning applications for the project, prior to its review by the full Planning Commission. It is anticipated that the project will be schedule for Planning Commission review in July or August 2005. The primary design issues identified in this report include the proposed architecture, open space, street-level residential entry design, and detail contained in the project plans.

## **PROJECT SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA**

The project site is approximately 60,000 square feet or 1.4 acres in area and presently serves as a privately-operated, publicly accessible, surface parking lot containing 200 spaces. Ingress/egress to the parking lot is taken from Jefferson Street, mid-block between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets. A cyclone fence currently surrounds the site. There are four trees adjacent to the property in the adjacent public right-of-way, including two small Magnolia trees (7"-8" dbh) and two Locust trees (10"-11" dbh), all of which will be removed with the project and replaced as part of a comprehensive landscaping plan, to include new street trees. Land uses in the area include the City Center West Parking Garage (north), Lafayette Square Park (south), a 21-story office building at 555 City Center (east), and the Landmark Place development (west). Preservation Park and the African-American Museum and Library are located within close proximity to the site across Martin Luther King, Jr. Way and 12<sup>th</sup> Street, as is the Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building located across Jefferson and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets. The project site is also located close to public transit, including BART and AC Transit. The 12<sup>th</sup> Street/City Center Bart Station is approximately three blocks west of the project site, while the nearest AC Transit bus stop is located within one-half block directly southeast of Block T-12 on 11<sup>th</sup> Street near the corner of 11<sup>th</sup> and Jefferson Streets. (See vicinity plan on the following page)



## BACKGROUND

The project site is located on one of four city blocks included in the City Center Project area, in the City of Oakland's City Center District Urban Renewal Plan area. The property is currently owned by the City's Redevelopment Agency, which has maintained a Disposition and Development Agreement (DDA) for a twelve-block area of Downtown Oakland, including Block T-12, for nearly thirty-five years. As a result of various factors reflecting changes in the local and regional market conditions, the DDA has been amended on a number of occasions and now sets forth the terms and conditions of the sale to, and development of Block T-12 by the applicant.

Block T-12 is the third block proposed for development of the phased four-block City Center Project approved in April 2000. The applicant has constructed an office building on Block T-9 immediately to the east of the project site (555 City Center) and has relinquished its development rights to another developer to construct a mid-rise residential project with street-level commercial uses on Block T-10. Although the applicant has received a PDP to construct two additional office buildings on Blocks T-5/6 and T-12, the applicant now proposes to modify the project to include up to 284 residential units (Option 1) or up to 450 residential units (Option 2) on Block T-12; therefore, an amendment to the PDP is required. It should be noted that even if a residential project is approved for Block T-12, the applicant will retain its rights to pursue the original office project.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a residential development for Block T-12 as an alternative to the office tower originally proposed in April 2000, to include the following options:

**Option 1** – Construction of two adjoining “L”-shaped buildings eight stories in height ( $\pm$ 85 feet) with up to 284 residential units and an equal number of parking spaces in two levels, one and a half of which would be below grade.

**Option 2** – Construction essentially the same footprint as Option 1, but would include up to 450 residential units in a high-rise tower 25 stories in height ( $\pm$ 240 feet) on the northeastern portion of the site and 430 parking spaces in three levels, two and a half of which would be below grade.

Under either option above, construction could occur in two phases or all at once. If phased, construction would include the following, in no particular order:

1. One “L”-shaped building located in the western half of the site with up to 144 units in an eight-story building; and
2. One “L”-shaped building located in the eastern half of the site with up to 140 units in an eight-story building or an eight-story podium with a 25 story high-rise tower building with up to 306 residential units in the eastern half of the site.

Each option would provide open space in a ground-level courtyard fronting on 11<sup>th</sup> Street. If phased, approximately 284 parking spaces (Option 1) to 430 parking spaces (Option 2) would be provided in a two- to three-level subsurface garage. Up to 200 additional parking spaces may be made available through a lease agreement by the applicant in the City Center West Garage.

## **ZONING ANALYSIS**

The project site is located in the Central Business Service Commercial District (C-51). This zoning district allows for residential use in both the mid- and high-rise development options. The maximum FAR allowed under this zoning classification is 7.0, but may be exceeded according to the Planning Code by 10 percent on any corner lot and 10 percent for a lot facing a public park. Therefore, the maximum FAR allowed for this site is 8.4 (approximately 10.5 percent when associated with a Planned Unit Development (PUD)). As submitted, proposed Option 1 is well within the allowable FAR, at 5.2 percent, and proposed Option 2 is within the allowable floor area a PUD, at 8.8 percent. These options present significantly less FAR compared to the April 2000 office project, which proposed 9.7 percent FAR. The residential proposal would also comply with the Planning Code requirements for one parking space per residential unit for Option 1, although Option 2 may require a variance if the maximum of 450 dwelling units and only 430 parking spaces are provided and additional parking is not provided through a lease agreement in the City Center West Parking Garage.

The project site is also in the Downtown Residential Open Space Combining District (S-17), which provides open space standards for residential development that are appropriate to the unique density, urban character and historic character of the CBD. On each lot containing residential uses with two or more units in the S-17 District, usable open space is required at a rate of 75 square feet per unit. As submitted, and further described below in the Design Issues section of this report, the applicant proposes a variance from these requirements providing approximately 29 to 47 square feet of usable open space per unit, respectively, depending on which option is proposed (284 units or 450 units). This proposed reduction in open space is the result of the urban infill nature of the site and is seemingly offset by the adjacent open space at Lafayette Square Park which is easily accessible located directly across the street from the project site.

## **DESIGN ISSUES**

It is anticipated that the proposed project will require the following planning approvals: (1) an amendment to the existing PDP for the City Center Project, Block T-12; (2) a Major Conditional Use Permit for development over 100,000 square feet and for exceeding 120 feet in height; (3) Variances from the required number and dimensions of parking and on-site loading spaces, a reduction in the rear yard setback, and a reduction in the amount of private open space; and (4) Design Review of the preliminary site plan and building design. The purpose of this review is to provide preliminary design review of the proposed residential project, of which this information will provide guidance to the applicant and staff in processing the planning applications prior to their review by the full Planning Commission.

The City's requirements for Preliminary Development Plans (PDPs) recognize that the project design is preliminary in nature and subject to refinement as the application moves through the review process. As a result, this preliminary Design Review provides an opportunity for early consideration of the project site and building design. However, more detailed plans need to be provided identifying the project design, such as how the garage opening, entry elements at the street-level units, the gated courtyard, pavement materials, building colors, window materials and tinting, if proposed, landscaping, and public improvements will be designed. Additional detail will be required as part of the Final Development Plan, consistent with the City's application submittal requirements and addressing the issues analyzed in this report, where supported by the Design Review Committee.

Staff believes that the conceptual design is generally attractive and innovative. However, staff has identified a number of outstanding design issues that are presented in the following section of this report. It is requested that the Design Review Committee review these issues, as well as any other site and architectural elements and provide preliminary comments. Staff will continue to work with the applicant to refine and further develop the design, as necessary, in anticipation of full Planning Commission review.

### **Outstanding Design Issues**

Architecture – The proposed buildings would be constructed of pre-cast concrete, glass and plaster and the building foundations would be shallow, spread footings. Stone may also be used in the project. The superstructure of the buildings would be steel, concrete or a combination of both (steel frame with a concrete core). The building footprints generally would be L-shaped, and when both phases are complete (if phased) the buildings would be situated in a U-shaped configuration to create a gated interior courtyard fronting 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Lafayette Square Park. Height would vary between approximately 85 feet (8 stories) and 240 feet (25 stories) depending on with option is ultimately developed.

*Staff Comments:* The variety of architectural elements appears well balanced and interesting. Under Option 1 (eight story buildings), the structures provide horizontal and vertical off-sets, various size windows, railings that break up continuous horizontal walls, and grid windows in flat and curved patterns that provide a rhythm to the structure effectively blending the modern building elements in a comfortable urban residential scale. Architectural elements at the top roof parapet, which appear to project outward from the eight-story buildings, create a sort of roof eave effectively grounding the structure providing a more pedestrian scale visible from the street. The 25 story high-rise tower contained in the Option 2 complements the building elements of the mid-rise structures providing a combination of curved and corner glass curtains that will enhance the urban skyline.

It is important to note that these plans are preliminary in nature and are changeable as additional detail is considered in the preparation of a Final Development Plan. However, for the purposes of this preliminary review, staff believes that the proposed site plan and design provides a cohesive and attractive presentation. Further, the “U”-shaped design fronting on Lafayette Square Park to the south provides a feeling of openness between the two sites and effectively

reduces the appearance of mass on the park environment. This will also provide for a more enjoyable use of the private courtyard, as views across 11<sup>th</sup> Street into the park are enhanced.

Open Space – The Zoning Regulations require 75 square feet of common open space per residential unit, except that for “efficiency” units of fewer than 500 square feet 50 square feet of open space is required per unit. Under each option, the project would provide open space in a ground-level courtyard as well as private patios, decks and/or balconies. However, the project would require a variance from the open space square footage requirement, since the proposal would provide between approximately 29 to 47 square feet of open space per unit.

*Staff Comments:* Given the infill nature of this project in the downtown, the maximum number of units proposed (up to 450), and the varying heights and setbacks designed to provide an appropriate sense of mass and scale, the proposed reduction in open space per unit appears to be reasonable. To increase the private open space would require a more compact building footprint and more vertical design, which would not be as complementary to the building designs and heights in the surrounding neighborhood, particularly at Landmark Place and Preservation Park, or as complementary to the natural open space at Lafayette Square Park. However, staff believes that the gated courtyard should include the type of amenities proposed in the application submittal materials, such as a swimming pool, raised tree planters, benches, recreational elements and fountains, to provide a sense of residential “oasis” within the urban downtown setting. The design of the project at this preliminary stage is not completed to a point where such detail is provided. Similarly, landscaping of the fourth story patio areas, as shown on the three-dimensional perspective drawing, to include accent trees, would further enhance the value of open spaces on the property and help to justify the proposed open space variance.

Street-Level Unit Entries – The project proposes approximately 25 residential units that would provide primary access to the street. Residential lobbies will be provided for those ground-level units not otherwise fronting on the street and the units located on the upper stories.

*Staff Comments:* Ground floor design and details are a critical part of how the buildings will read from the pedestrian level. However, the project plans are not sufficiently detailed at this point to illustrate how these units will transition from public, semi-private, and private space between the sidewalk and front entrances. The treatment of street-level private entries is important to providing a visual connection between the units and the street, while still distinguishing between public and private space. Similarly, durable, high-quality materials are important to add visual interest to the ground-floor units. Staff believes that the submittal of detailed elevations of the ground floor level is necessary early in the development review process. It is anticipated that the applicant will present some examples of street-level entry designs that could be applied to the project in the Final Development Plan during the Design Review Committee’s June 2005 meeting.

## CONCLUSION

Staff recommends the Design Review Committee consider and provide comments on the preliminary plans for the proposed project, with emphasis on the issues identified above, as well as any other issues the Committee identifies during its discussion.

Respectfully submitted:

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CLAUDIA CAPPIO  
Development Director

Prepared by:

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Attachments:

- A. Project Plans
- B. Applicable General Plan Reference