

March 6, 2002

**Honorable Chairman and Members of the
Hermosa Beach Planning Commission**

**Regular Meeting of
March 19, 2002**

SUBJECT: STANDARDS FOR MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

INITIATED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Recommendation

To direct staff as deemed appropriate, and set the matter for public hearing.

Background

At the meeting of February 19, the Planning Commission approved a small residential/commercial mixed use project at 44 Hermosa Avenue in the C-1, Neighborhood Commercial Zone. After review of that project the Commission directed staff to return with a text amendment to provide standards for the review of mixed-use projects in the Zoning Ordinance.

Analysis

The Zoning Ordinance currently allows residential/commercial mixed-use projects only in the C-1 zone. The only portion of the code that addresses mixed-use is contained in the C-1 permitted use list, where it states “one or more apartments may be built above a commercial building” subject to approval of a Conditional Use Permit. No specific development standards are included in the C-1 zone for such a project meaning that only the general standards of the C-1 zone and ; Section 17.44 parking standards apply to such projects. This leaves project design concerns which are unique to mixed-use projects to the discretion of the Commission under the general criteria for review of Conditional Use Permits and Precise Development Plans. These concerns include residential density (i.e. the number of units), open space, lot coverage, setbacks, separation of uses. Also, the provision limits residential uses to “apartments,” thus not clearly allowing a condominium form of ownership for the residential units in a project.

To resolve these shortcomings in the Code, staff would recommend consideration of new language as follows in the C-1 permitted use list: “Residential use; residential units including apartments or condominiums above ground floor commercial space as part of a mixed use development” as a conditionally permitted use. This item on the list would then be referenced to a new sub-section in Chapter 17.40 titled Mixed-Use Development which would contain specific standards for such projects.

The Commission may want to consider the following standards for this Mixed-Use Development section.

STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL UNITS

A possible approach would be to apply the standards of the R-3 zone to the residential portion of mixed-use projects. This would mean the development would be subject to the same density requirements of the R-3 zone, and the units would have to provide the same setbacks, open space, lot coverage, etc, as neighboring multi-family projects. This is the approach the City of Manhattan Beach uses in its local commercial and downtown commercial zones, where residential development requires a C.U.P. and otherwise is subject to the provisions of the multi-family residential zone.

This approach, however, does not recognize that with commercial on the ground floor, the available area for residential living space is substantially reduced meaning the requirements may be too restrictive. Further, it does not leave any flexibility to vary from these standards to address the unique design needs of mixed projects or the character of the fronting street which may lend itself to lesser front setbacks, or smaller deck sizes. Further, it may be appropriate to allow a higher density of units with smaller unit size, such as one-bedroom efficiencies or live-work studios to create some incentive to develop these projects and to potentially provide greater affordability of the units.

Also, a reference to the R-3 standards would not provide any standards for how to balance commercial and residential uses, or provide direction for how much residential, if any should be allowed on the ground floor.

Provisions that have been incorporated into other cities mixed use ordinances include the following:

Residential use allowed in the rear one-half of the lot in the underlying commercial zone, and above the first floor in any portion of the lot. (Redondo Beach, MU overlay zone)

Development standards contained in the Zoning Ordinance other than for floor area ratio, building height, lot area per dwelling unit and parking may be varied as desirable or essential to accomplish the objectives of this section (RB)

Performance standards for noise, security, lighting (RB, see attached)

STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL SPACE ON THE GROUND FLOOR

The code already requires that the ground floor be commercial, but does not really specify how much. It may be appropriate to require some *minimum* amount of commercial space, whether as a percentage of lot area or square footage, to avoid the commercial portion to be just a token amount as a way to get residential projects approved in commercial zones. For example the commercial portions of the project at 44 Hermosa Avenue are 25% of the total building area, 100% of the ground floor space, 33% of the site area. Examples noted in the Livable Communities Resource Manual include requiring a minimum 30% commercial floor area; 50% of the ground floor, or 100% of the ground floor, or 80% of the frontage. The other local ordinances reviewed do not have specific minimums for commercial, but prohibit residential use on the ground floor, or limit to just the back portion of the lot.

PARKING

The parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance currently require an aggregate calculation for any mix of uses, with some possible reductions for consolidated shopping centers where parking can be shared. Projects with a residential and commercial mix typically are not appropriate for shared parking because parking needs overlap during morning hours and evening hours, and thus separate assigned spaces are needed. The Livable Cities Resource Manual, which strongly encourages mixed use projects, specifically states that only in rare cases is there justification for shared or reduced parking in residential/commercial mixed use projects. However, given the small lots in Hermosa, mixed use projects may not be feasible unless some kind of parking flexibility is allowed.

LIMITATIONS ON ALLOWED COMMERCIAL USES

Given that residential uses are located in close proximity to commercial uses in a mixed use project, it may be appropriate to limit the type of commercial uses. For example, the City of the Redondo Beach specifically excludes pet stores and pet grooming, drive-through facilities, hotels, liquor stores, service stations and thrift shops. The C-1 zone already has a fairly limited list of permitted commercial uses, since it is intended for neighborhood commercial areas. However, some possible conflicting commercial uses that are allowed include liquor and grocery stores, bakeries, and restaurants/cafes with alcohol.

Further, the Commission may wish to consider expanding opportunities for mixed-use to other commercial zones in the City and the M-1 zone. For example the downtown district (C-2 Zone) may be appropriate for similar smaller scale vertical mixed-use projects as was discussed in the 1994 Land Use Element, downtown alternatives discussion. The mixed-use alternative was not adopted at that time, but the analysis is still relevant to the current discussion (copy attached). Also, the commercial corridors along P.C.H. and Aviation Boulevard may be appropriate for larger scale projects that might incorporate both vertical mixed-use and horizontal mixed-use elements in a project. This possibility was discussed recently as part of the Housing Element to encourage some additional opportunities for low and moderate income housing. The City Council, however, did not agree with the Commission's recommendation to include a mixed-use program in the Housing Element. Also, in the M-1 zone there might be some locations appropriate for live-work studios. If the Commission desires to include these C-2, C-3 and M-1 areas as possible locations for mixed-use projects, it would be necessary to amend the General Plan Land Use Element, and to conduct an environmental analysis pursuant to the requirements of CEQA because of the possible land use and housing impacts.

CONCUR:

Ken Robertson
Associate Planner

Sol Blumenfeld, Director
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Attachments

Excerpts from the South Bay "Livable Communities Handbook"

Excerpt from the "Livable Communities Resource Manual"

Excerpt from Redondo Beach ordinance (other ordinances on file)