TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE: December 1, 2008

CMR:450:08

REPORT TYPE: CONSENT CALENDAR

SUBJECT: Approval of Request to Initiate a Preliminary Review of a Planned Community (PC) Application for Edgewood Plaza, a Mixed Use Development of 24 Single-Family Residences and Two Retail Buildings at 2080 Channing Avenue and 2103-2120 St. Francis Drive.

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the City Council approve the applicant’s request for a preliminary review of a proposed project at 2080 Channing Avenue, also known as Edgewood Plaza. The recommended meeting date for Council’s preliminary review is February 2, 2009.

BACKGROUND
The proposed mixed-use project would allow redevelopment of an existing shopping center on a 3.58 acre site at 2080 Channing Avenue and 2103-2120 St. Francis Drive. The project includes demolition of two of the three existing shopping center buildings on the site and redevelopment with approximately 29,000 square feet of retail uses and up to 24 two-story residences. The small retail buildings would be approximately 14 feet in height. The larger building would be approximately 27 feet in height and would include a grocery store as well as other retail. Residences would border the retail uses on both Channing Avenue and St. Francis Drive. A preliminary site plan was submitted with an application to initiate the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on May 21, 2008. A Scoping Session for the EIR was held in front of the Planning & Transportation Commission (P&TC) on October 15, 2008, in order to collect comments from the public and the P&TC on issues that should be included in the environmental review.

DISCUSSION
The applicant requests that Council conduct a preliminary review of the project for a Planned Community zone change. Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) Section 18.79.030(b) states that
concurrency of the City Council is necessary to conduct a preliminary review. The purposes of a preliminary review, as stated in PAMC Section 18.79.010, are:

a) To maximize opportunities for meaningful public discussion of development projects, at the earliest feasible time, for the guidance of the public, project proponents, and City decision makers.
b) To focus public and environmental review of development projects on the issues of greatest significance to the community, including but not limited to: planning concerns; neighborhood compatibility; Comprehensive Plan consistency; economics; social costs and benefits; fiscal costs and benefits; technological factors; and legal issues. These procedures are not intended to permit or foreclose debate on the merits of approval or disapproval of any given development project.
c) To provide members of the public with the opportunity to obtain early information about development projects in which they may have an interest.
d) To provide project proponents with the opportunity to obtain early, non-binding preliminary comments on development projects to encourage sound and efficient private decisions about how to proceed.
e) To encourage early communication between elected and appointed public officials and staff with respect to the implementation of City policies, standards, and regulations on particular development projects.
f) To facilitate orderly and consistent implementation of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.

NEXT STEPS
Following preliminary review, the applicant may submit a formal development application for the new PC zone and the proposal will be heard by the P&TC with a request to initiate the rezoning.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATION
The Council may choose the following alternatives in accordance with Section 18.79.040(b):

1) The Council may direct the preliminary review to be conducted by the Planning Commission initially and then by the City Council, or
2) The Council may direct that the preliminary review be conducted solely by the Planning Commission, or
3) The Council may direct staff to arrange a joint meeting of the City Council and Planning and Transportation Commission and any other City boards whose participation is deemed desirable.

RESOURCE IMPACT
Applicants for any preliminary review submit a fee deposit, against which staff time to process the application is charged, as a part of the City’s cost recovery program.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS
Policy implications of the project would be discussed during the preliminary review before Council.
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
Appropriate environmental review will be conducted for this project, however it is not required at the time of preliminary review. A scoping session for an EIR was held by the P&TC on October 15, 2008. Environmental issues would be highlighted for the Council during the preliminary review of this project.

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