Agenda Item No.: **18.**

AGENDA SUMMARY PAGE - PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF: APRIL 22, 2010

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR: M. MARGO WHEELER ☐Consent ☒ Discussion

SUBJECT:
GPA-37467 - GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT - PUBLIC HEARING APPLICANT: ARNOLD STALK - OWNER: MARY PARTSAS 22, LLC - Request to amend a portion of the Southeast Sector Plan of the General Plan FROM: MXU (MIXED USE) TO: C (COMMERCIAL) on 2.68 acres at 2100 Fremont Street (APN 139-35-803-015), Ward 3 (Reese). Staff recommends APPROVAL.

C.C.: 05/19/2010

PROTESTS RECEIVED BEFORE:		**APPROVALS RECEIVED BEFORE:**	
Planning Commission Mtg.	**1**	**Planning Commission Mtg.**	**25**
City Council Meeting	**0**	**City Council Meeting**	**0**

RECOMMENDATION:
Staff recommends APPROVAL.

BACKUP DOCUMENTATION:
1. Location and Aerial Maps
2. Conditions and Staff Report for GPA-37467, ZON-37469 and SDR-37470
3. Supporting Documentation
4. Photos for GPA-37467, ZON-37469 and SDR-37470
5. Justification Letter
6. Concern Letter for GPA-37467, ZON-37469 and SDR-37470
7. Support Postcards
8. Submitted after Final Agenda Protest/Support Postcards
9. Submitted at Meeting Support Letters for GPA-37467, ZON-37469 and SDR-37470

Motion made by KEEN ELLSWORTH to Approve

Passed For: 5; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Did Not Vote: 0; Excused: 2
GLENN TROWBRIDGE, VICKI QUINN, RICHARD TRUESDELL, KEEN ELLSWORTH, GUS FLANGAS; (Against-None); (Abstain-None); (Did Not Vote-None); (Excused-BYRON GOYNES, STEVEN EVANS)

Minutes:
CHAIR TRUESDELL declared the Public Hearing open for Items 18-20.

STEVE GEBEKE, Planning and Development, gave a concise staff report on this matter and added that staff recommends approved of this project, as it is in substantial conformance with the

Downtown Centennial Plan and Title 19, and it supports the goals of the downtown Redevelopment Area Plan. The development cannot proceed as proposed without approval of the General Plan Amendment and/or Rezoning and a new Site Development Plan Review would be required in conformance to the current land use designations and zoning districts. If the General Plan Amendment and Rezoning are approved but the Site Development Plan Review is denied, a new Site Development Plan Review encompassing all or part of the site would be required.

ARNOLD STALK described the site that would house the Las Vegas Gateway Center, which includes various motels and a vacant area. The Las Vegas Gateway Center is a master planned retail commercial center that will serve as the East Fremont Street entryway to downtown Las Vegas. The daily traffic volume of 80,000 vehicles at the four corners where the property is located will provide tremendous opportunity for retail development. More than ample parking will be provided for the proposed uses of a major supermarket, in-line retail shops and some retail pads, a fast-food restaurant and outdoor eatery space totaling approximately 7,100 square feet. The wireless tower located on the lower southeast corner site will be retained and the off-premise existing signage on the northeast corner of Fremont Street and Eastern Avenue will be removed.

He advised the Commissioners that several meetings were held with the neighborhood as well as with retail neighbors, and he submitted several support letters. In response to some of the neighbors' concerns, some changes were made, including the installation of a collector lane, to mitigate potential backing of traffic on Eastern Avenue and having an ingress only driveway on Eastern Avenue, as supported by traffic and planning staff.

MR. STALK mentioned that discussions are ongoing with the Neon Museum to place some of the historic motel signs of this property on the property, similar to the way the Fremont East Entertainment District sign sits in front of the El Cortez Hotel/Casino. The property will accommodate an ACE Green Line stop. The project is anticipated to create 50 full-time and 20 part-time construction jobs and approximately 115 full-time and 40 part-time permanent retail jobs.

Funding is being secured through private construction and permanent takeout financing. Negotiations have been completed with several financial institutions and developers that are interested in the project. Approval will give the green light to start securing tenant leases, and he asserted that the owner has no interest in acquiring the GPA and rezoning in order to subsequently flip the property.

TODD FARLOW, Las Vegas resident, thanked MR. STALK for holding an excellent neighborhood meeting and for saving the signs. He expressed his support of this project, because the originally intended casino would bring more traffic than what is being proposed. However, he is concerned about the large acreage involved and that the project might not be successful, although the proposed project is better than the current state of the site. He suggested the Sunrise Apartments be included and demolished.

BILL MARION, 3455 Cliff Shadows Parkway, Chairman of Neon Museum Board, was thrilled about the restoration of the Blue Angel sign and others because they are historic and iconic signs. As a native Las Vegan, he recalled the vibrant area and appreciated the City trying to extend the vitality of the Fremont Street Experience.

JOHN SCHWARTZ, who owns the building at 2208 Sunrise Avenue and sits on a board overseeing 14 buildings on Sunrise Avenue, indicated that the board has been trying to gather as a collective management association in order to make improvements to the buildings on Sunrise Avenue. The group is making positive progress and is very excited about this development, which will be great for the neighborhood.

COMMISSIONER QUINN stated that she and several constituents are very excited about this project, which she regards as a project that will improve the entire surrounding area.

CHAIR TRUESDELL raised serious questions with regard to the conceptual issues of this project. He asked why C-2, which could accommodate automobile uses, is being requested instead of C-1, which is adequate for a retail center. He appreciates the intent with the historic signs, but did not feel there is a demand for this project, as evidenced by the many surrounding large developments that are struggling. He does not feel the project functions well. The planned big box retail venue on the north side, which he does not believe could be marketed properly, also concerns him. With the owner's lack of investment in this property for the past 20 years, how can anyone be expected to believe that the owner is ready to reinvest in this property?

Regarding the C-2, MR. GEBERT explained that it is being requested because four of the comprising parcels on the northern portion of the site need to be combined with the southern three parcels, which are already C-2. The four parcels are currently zoned as Downtown Commercial under the General Plan, which will accommodate C-1 or C-2 zoning.

MARGO WHEELER, Director of Planning and Development, indicated for CHAIR TRUESDELL that should the Commissioners prefer C-1 zoning where C-2 is being requested, it would be possible because there are no buildings where the zoning line exists. The portion for the market and retail buildings D and E would be zoned C-1 and the southern portion zoned C-2, in which case a parking agreement would be required in order to tie the parcels together. The southern portion, however, could not be rezoned this evening because that is not part of this application. Thus, the Commissioners could only take action on the northern portion encompassing D and E.

CHAIR TRUESDELL questioned the owner's vision for the 40,000 square-foot box space, and MR. STALK replied by reiterating that this development will be an entryway with vitality into East Fremont Street and the redevelopment area. Substantial investment has been made and various consultants were contracted for this project. The site's many multiple hard corners and the traffic lends itself to retail. The Bartsas Family has made a year's commitment to study the site in order to come up with the best possible project. The applicant also wants to be involved in the rehabilitation of the Sunrise Apartments.

CHAIR TRUESDELL expressed fear of the potential grocer eventually moving out, and then leaving a space that only a swap meet could occupy. He felt strongly that the site plan does not amply address what could be a successful gateway project. MR. STALK affirmed that his client has a lot of land, but chose this intersection because of the high volume of traffic. CHAIR TRUESDELL reiterated his concern about the surrounding automobile uses and added that the parking is inadequate for such a large-box retailer.

COMMISSIONER TROWBRIDGE recapped on some of the positives of this project, such as the need for an anchor at the east end of Fremont Street and a supermarket for the area. However, he shared the concerns of CHAIR TRUESDELL regarding the C-2 zoning.

CHAIR TRUESDELL declared the Public Hearing closed for Items 18-20.