A regular meeting of the Pittsburg Planning Commission was called to order by Acting Chairperson Rosemary Tumbaga at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, September 13, 2005 in the City Council Chambers of City Hall at 65 Civic Avenue, Pittsburg, California.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Garcia, Harris, Ohlson, Williams, Tumbaga

Absent: Commissioner Dolojan, Chairperson Ramirez

Staff: Planning Director Melissa Ayres, Associate Planner Ken Strelo, Associate Planner Dana Hoggatt, Planning Consultant Chad Mason, Senior Civil Engineer Alfredo Hurtado, Redevelopment Director Garrett Evans, and Project Manager Ursula Luna

POSTING OF AGENDA:

The agenda was posted at City Hall on Friday, September 9, 2005.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Commissioner Ohlson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

DELETIONS/WITHDRAWALS/CONTINUANCES:

There were no deletions, withdrawals or continuances.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

There were no comments from the audience.
PRESENTATIONS:

There were no presentations.

CONSENT:

a. Minutes – August 23, 2005

Commissioner Ohlson requested an amendment to the first paragraph after the motion on Page 7 of the August 23, 2005 minutes, as follows:

Chairperson Ramirez stepped down from the dais due to a potential conflict of interest with public hearing Item 2, Mariner Walk Residential Subdivision, since he owned property within 300 linear feet of the project site.

And to the first sentence of the eighth paragraph on Page 9:

Commissioner Ohlson referenced the linear park and commented that neither the site map nor the vicinity map had shown a park.

MOTION:

Motion by Commissioner Ohlson to adopt the Consent Calendar, as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harris and carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Garcia, Harris, Ohlson, Williams, Tumbaga
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Commissioner Dolojan, Chairperson Ramirez

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Item 1: Pittsburg ACE Hardware. AP-05-228 (UP)

Application by Pittsburg Ace Hardware to allow a 500 gallon, above ground propane storage tank and dispenser to be installed at 125 East Leland Road. The site is zoned CC-O (Community Commercial with a Limited Overlay) District; APN 088-183-016.

Planning Consultant Chad Mason presented the staff report dated September 13, 2005. He recommended that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 9580, approving Use Permit AP-05-228 (UP), with the conditions as shown.

In response to Commissioner Ohlson regarding the vehicle turnaround, Mr. Mason explained that the City’s Transportation Department had recommended changes to the turnaround area.
Mr. Mason added that most business would be through individual propane tanks brought into the store. In the event a fixed tank was brought in, a customer must bring the vehicle down the drive to access the tank where he/she would have to back into the storage yard and turn out of the drive rather than go into the storage yard and do a turnaround or back out into the adjacent vacant lot.

Commissioner Ohlson did not support the use of concertina wire fencing which was along the existing fencing since the wind would blow in plastic bags that would be caught in the fencing. He questioned whether or not the fencing would be addressed as part of the project.

Mr. Mason stated that he had not raised the issue of concertina wire fencing with the applicant.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

PROPOUNENT:

ANTHONY ROGELSTED, 410 Leon Court, Clayton, identified himself as one of the owners of Ace Hardware. In response to Commissioner Garcia, he expressed his agreement to the conditions of approval as contained in the resolution. As to the issues related to the turnaround, he reported that he had just learned of the issues this date. He expressed a willingness to comply with the staff recommendations, if feasible.

Mr. Rogelsted added that Ace Hardware had similar propane storage facilities at other stores. One of the stores had a provision for drive up business and the other store was not capable of handling such requests. As to the use of the concertina wire, he noted that he and his partner had owned the store for the past year and a half. The fence had been in place at the time of the purchase of the store. Also not supportive of the concertina fencing, he understood that the concertina wire had been placed as security for the area. He was open to suggestions for a more appealing fence that would still serve the site in terms of security.

In response to Commissioner Harris, Mr. Rogelsted explained that the existing air conditioning units were not operable, had been inspected this year, and had been found to be unsalvageable. Bids were being taken for their replacement in the next year.

OPPONENTS: None

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED
MOTION:  **AP-05-228 (UP)**

Motion by Commissioner Garcia to adopt Resolution No. 9580, approving AP-05-228 (UP), a Use Permit application to install an above-ground propane storage tank at 125 East Leland Road for "Pittsburg Ace Hardware Above-Ground Propane Tank, AP-05-228 (UP)," with the conditions as shown. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams and carried by the following vote:

- **Ayes:** Commissioners Garcia, Harris, Ohlson, Williams, Tumbaga
- **Noes:** None
- **Abstain:** None
- **Absent:** Commissioner Dolojan, Chairperson Ramirez

**Item 2: Angelica Commercial Laundry.  AP-05-234 (UP)**

Application by Ron Sneddon of Angelica Textile Services requesting a use permit to operate a commercial laundry facility occupying an approximate 105,000 square foot addition (under construction) to an approximate 318,000 square foot existing building located at 701 Willow Pass Road (Empire Business Park). The site is zoned IP-O (Industrial Park with a Limited Overlay) District; APN 085-280-009.

Associate Planner Ken Strelo presented the staff report dated September 13, 2005. He recommended that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 9581, approving AP-05-234 (UP), with the conditions as shown.

Commissioner Williams inquired of the process for the disposal of the wastewater from the proposed use.

Mr. Strelo explained that the wastewater would be disposed of indoors. The wastewater would be reclaimed with some recycling likely one or more times before it was disposed. The disposal of waste materials would be consistent with the requirements of the Contra Costa Health Services – Hazardous Material (Haz Mat) and the Contra Costa Fire Protection District (CCFPD). The project was conditioned to meet those agency requirements. All water used in the processing once disposed would go through the Delta Diablo Sanitation District (DDSD).

Commissioner Ohlson spoke to pages 4 of 5 of the staff report and requested clarification of the discussion of the CCFPD requirement for plans related to architecture, fire sprinklers, fire alarm, high pile storage and special suppression systems. He understood that high pile storage related to the volume of laundry.

Mr. Strelo advised that section of the staff report had come verbatim from the CCFPD requirements. He recommended that the applicant address the concern with high pile storage.
Commissioner Ohlson also requested clarification on where bicycle parking would be provided on the site. He questioned whether or not additional bicycle parking would be necessary based on the additional use. He suggested that the average laundry worker would be a perfect candidate to bicycle from his/her home in the City to the site. He wanted to encourage that practice through the provision of reasonable bicycle parking.

Mr. Strelo stated that the building had previously been approved with the proposed use involving occupancy within an existing approved building. Without adding a new condition to add bicycle parking, he could ensure that the previously approved business park project had addressed bicycle parking.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

PROPONENT:

LEONARD PULVER, Area Manager, Angelica Textile Services, along with TERRY BEARDSLEY, Stan Davis and Associates welcomed questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Garcia understood that the business had been located in the City of Antioch for many years and had been a good business operator with no record of citations. He verified Mr. Pulver’s agreement to the staff recommended conditions of approval as contained in the resolution.

Mr. Pulver clarified in response to the concerns with respect to high pile storage that high stacking was not allowed to ensure that fire sprinklers were operable. He also commented that the operation had two to four employees who used bicycles at any given time out of the approximate 100 employees in the Antioch plant. Bicycle parking was currently provided in the rear of the Antioch plant within a fenced area.

As to the new plant site, Mr. Pulver stated that there would be approximately 105,000 square feet as opposed to 15,000 square feet in the Antioch plant. He emphasized that they would take care of those employees who were bicyclists.

Mr. Pulver added that the wastewater would be disposed through a closed loop system. The end result would discharge into the sanitary system. He explained that linens would be brought in, put into the wash cycle, chemicals would be added then rinsed and all of the heat would be removed as much as possible out of the work process where it would then be recovered. The Antioch plant was 30 years old using old technology. Newer technology in the new facility would recoup resources as much as possible, while using as little water as possible.

Commissioner Tumbaga inquired of the number of employees anticipated for the Pittsburg plant.
Mr. Pulver stated that in the beginning there would be the same number of employees as currently being utilized for the Antioch facility. He expected that the new facility would expand gradually. He envisioned a substantial increase which would come from the closure of other operations. He explained that the business had plants in the cities of Fresno, Turlock, Stockton, Sacramento, and Antioch and had recently closed a plant in Vallejo through eminent domain.

The new facility would offer an opportunity to consolidate his businesses in a single location with more jobs in the future for local residents. Over a two to three year period, he expected to need 100 to 200 new employees.

JOHN T., Cushman and Wakefield, Real Estate Brokers, representing the developers, spoke to the history of the development of the business park and the size of the proposed operation. He thanked the Commission and staff for working with the applicants and commented on the long process to bring the facility to the City. He expressed his hope that there would be hundreds of employees over time. He added that the closure of the applicant’s Vallejo plant allowed the business to come to Pittsburg. As to bicycle parking, he explained that the tenant was part of the entire business park where there would be plenty of automotive and bicycle parking as part of that development for his employees.

OPPONENTS:  None

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

MOTION:  AP-05-234

Motion by Commissioner Garcia to adopt Resolution No. 9581, approving AP-05-234 (UP), a Use Permit to allow operation of a commercial laundry in approximately 105,000 square feet of an existing 423,000 square foot building located at 701 Willow Pass Road for Angelica Commercial Laundry, with the conditions as shown. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harris and carried by the following vote:

  Ayes:  Commissioners Garcia, Harris, Ohlson, Williams, Tumbaga
  Noes:  None
  Abstain: None
  Absent: Commissioner Dolojan, Chairperson Ramirez

Acting Chairperson Tumbaga declared a recess at 7:36 P.M. The meeting reconvened at 7:42 P.M. with all Commissioners initially shown as present and absent.
COMMISSION CONSIDERATION:


A study session on the proposed Black Diamond Redevelopment Project and a request to receive verbal comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report prepared for the Black Diamond Redevelopment Project. The Black Diamond Redevelopment Project is a proposed mixed use, infill development consisting of 195 condominium flat, loft and townhouse residential units and approximately 40,000 square feet of retail and restaurant commercial space on six acres (three City blocks) located west of Railroad Avenue, between East Fifth and East Eighth Streets.

Associate Planner Dana Hoggatt presented the staff report dated September 13, 2005. She recommended that the Planning Commission provide verbal comments and accept additional comments from the public on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

MUHAMMED NADHIRI, Project Manager, AF Evans Development, 1000 Broadway Suite 300, Oakland, introduced the members of the development team present in the audience. He described the overall vision for the development to create a pedestrian retail and mixed use environment creating an Old Town area as a point of destination. There would be approximately 40,000 square feet of retail along Railroad Avenue, primarily restaurant focus retail, such as sit down/coffee pastry shop opportunities. There would be 195 units of residential flats, townhomes and lofts that would be located above a surface parking lot, creating an urban environment providing space and interaction with the public and private spaces, while also creating a destination downtown area.

Mr. Nadhiri explained that the architecture had been variegated so that it appeared as if the project had been built over time. The design had maintained the rooflines at two stories along Black Diamond Street to respect the single family located across from the project site. The design would gradually step up to five stories as the project reached Railroad Avenue. Efforts were also being made to transition the Railroad Avenue experience into a more residential experience on towards Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Streets as one approached Black Diamond Street.

JOHN THATCH, Principal Design, Dahlin Group Architects, presented a PowerPoint presentation to identify the project design. He described the existing architecture in the immediate area, to be reflected in the proposed architecture. He reiterated the intent of the design to create a destination location for the Old Town area. The project would consist of three City blocks including 38,000 square feet of commercial space along Railroad Avenue to include 14 to 16 foot ceilings in the tenant spaces offering opportunities for restaurants and shops.

The perimeter of the project area would include two story townhomes on grade, with the...
scale of the building broken down to reflect more of the residential area towards Black Diamond Street. The middle of the buildings would include parking with a podium above. The townhomes would have their own garages within the parking garage with direct access into the units and main ground floors. The residential units would range from 1,400 to 1,600 square feet in size.

Mr. Thatch explained that the designers had worked with City staff on the road widths, parking, and aisle widths inside the parking garage. There was concurrence with staff as to the various dimensions. The podium level would be 14 feet out of ground with a combination of loft and townhomes on the Railroad Avenue elevation. The units towards the bottom would consist of flats with townhomes above. There would be no internal corridors in the building. Once reaching the podium level, individuals could walk to his/her units or to the units on the podium level.

Mr. Thatch identified plaza areas with a proposed sculpture envisioned for the Railroad Avenue elevation to create a nice public plaza. A lower plaza would work off the adjacent church and could be used for community events. A bridge would connect to each of the different podium levels creating three cul-de-sacs for the community. He identified the cul-de-sacs as one with a pool and recreation area, another would have a tot lot and play area for children and one could be used as a picnic/garden area.

Mr. Thatch reiterated that the intent of the architecture was that the project appear as if it had been built over time with several different buildings by different owners. The design would add more animation and excitement to the street. The Black Diamond Street elevation would consist of the two story townhomes, with porches and stoops to be raised from the ground 18 inches to two feet around the perimeter to offer a more traditional character.

An illustration of the flats was displayed. The flats would consist of 692 square feet offering a more affordable unit. The flats would be located at the corner along Black Diamond Street. The townhomes would be located on the street and at the podium level offering larger homes, more distinctive living and dining rooms, with upstairs bedrooms. The loft units would be located along Railroad Avenue. A majority of the unit mix would be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible. The unit mix would range from 692 to 1,856 square feet in size.

A three-dimensional rendering was displayed to illustrate the appearance of each of the three buildings, and to illustrate the intent of the architecture, design and landscaping.

Mr. Thatch explained that the loading dock areas and trash collection had been issues that had been previously raised and which would be addressed with further review of the design. He displayed a photograph of another mixed use site to illustrate how those services were typically handled for an urban design.
Commissioner Williams was excited with the project, as presented. She otherwise requested clarification on the location of the loading docks.
Mr. Thatch commented that they had actual loading areas in the plans. As shown on the plans, those loading areas would be away from the main entrances and be separated from the pedestrian environment.

Mr. Nadhiri added that they had also taken the loading areas adjacent to the pedestrian bridges which would allow a semi-truck to pull in and park parallel to the space and off the street to allow for loading and unloading. That would also allow two way vehicular access on Sixth and Seventh Streets. Service corridors would serve the back of the retail uses.

Commissioner Ohlson inquired of the location of bicycle parking, to which Mr. Nadhiri explained that the individual garages for the ground floor townhomes would allow storage inside the garages. The common podium area would accommodate 30 to 50 bicycles per building. It was likely there would be a storage rack vertical along a wall with additional bicycle racks outside on the street for use.

Commissioner Ohlson explained that the 2005 East County Bicycle Plan, which had yet to be adopted by the City of Pittsburg, had suggested that large buildings provide shower facilities and changing rooms for employees of commercial establishments and one locker room for the three buildings.

Mr. Nadhiri advised that they had not reached that level of detail although he was aware of that issue.

Commissioner Ohlson spoke to Page 3-123 of the EIR and the discussions of transit service and Class II Bicycle Lanes being planned for both directions along Herb White Way and along all of Black Diamond Street. He pointed out that per the City’s General Plan, Black Diamond Street would have a Class III Bicycle Facility. As such, that paragraph of the EIR should be corrected.

Commissioner Ohlson also referenced Page 3-90 of the EIR and the discussion where the General Plan called for Class III Bicycle Lanes along the length of Railroad Avenue between certain boundaries, but which would not occur due to the diagonal parking. The Class III Bicycle Facility would then be on Black Diamond Way. He requested that the Black Diamond Way segment be connected via Tenth Street to the Railroad Avenue segment. He also referenced Page 3-91 of the EIR and the discussion of why there would not be a Class III Bicycle Facility along Railroad Avenue fronting the project as a result of the diagonal parking. He requested off-site mitigation for a bicycle facility since there would not be a bicycle facility on Railroad Avenue.

Commissioner Ohlson understood that a Class III bicycle lane was called for from Eighth Street to State Route 4. He questioned whether or not the project would generate in-lieu
park fees, and he inquired of the potential number of people that were expected to occupy the total number of units.

Ms. Hoggatt advised that it had been estimated that there would be three people per unit. The developer would be required to pay in-lieu park fees based on the estimated population, although the developer would receive credit for the plazas based on whatever was not commercial, which was not counted. The plazas at the corners would therefore receive credit. Pursuant to the Subdivision Ordinance, the developer could receive partial credit for the private recreational areas in each courtyard. The developer would have to pay the in-lieu park fees for the remainder.

Commissioner Garcia spoke to the Scampini Building located at the corner of Fifth and Black Diamond Streets which he understood would be demolished by the City as part of the project. He questioned that situation since the building had been designated as an historical structure.

Ursula Luna explained that the project, as proposed, would consider the removal of the referenced building. The City Council would have to adopt overriding considerations to allow the building to remain.

Commissioner Garcia spoke to the discussion on Page ES-12 of the EIR regarding impacts to Eighth Street and Railroad Avenue and whether or not a traffic signal should be installed. He was more concerned with Tenth and Black Diamond Streets since traffic traveling west would likely travel down Tenth Street and not use the freeway, picking up the freeway at Bailey Road. If that corner was not signalized when the new elementary school was open, students on the south side of Tenth Street would more than likely cross at that corner. Even with a crossing guard at that intersection, he suggested that there could be a safety hazard.

Commissioner Garcia also spoke to the fact that Sixth and Seventh Streets at Railroad Avenue would have blind spots as traffic traveled towards the east. He recommended that one of the streets be made one-way east and the other in the opposite direction to solve that problem.

Commissioner Williams requested clarification of the affordable housing component portion of the project.

Mr. Nadhiri explained that based on Redevelopment Law, 15 percent of the units would be set aside for sale to Moderate Income Households. The affordable units would be scattered evenly across the buildings.

Ms. Luna added that as part of the Disposition and Development Agreement (DDA) with...
the Redevelopment Agency, the developer would be required to provide 15 percent of the total number of units as affordable. The DDA would also require that the affordable units include a pro-rata number of units by unit size.

Commissioner Harris inquired of the start date for the project. He also inquired whether or not the developer was aware of the benefits of the City’s Enterprise Zone.

Mr. Nadhiri stated that a late fall start had been targeted and they were working with City staff to reach that timeline. As to the property being located in the Enterprise Zone, he reported that the developer had discussions with City staff and was working to ensure that the project would be feasible while meeting all goals.

Commissioner Tumbaga inquired of the parking that would be provided for the commercial space.

Ms. Hoggatt explained that the parking had been determined based on the project since there was no specific parking standard for the downtown. The EIR Traffic Consultant had surveyed other cities in Central County and had conducted physical counts to determine a ratio based on the number of square feet of commercial space and the number of parking stalls that were needed. Based on that survey, there was a ratio of 3 per 1,000 square feet of commercial space. She noted that some cities had a ratio of 4 per 1,000. For the purpose of the analysis in the EIR, the consultant had assumed a hybrid of the two and had suggested a ratio of 3.5 per 1,000 square feet of commercial space.

Ms. Luna understood that the General Plan encouraged a pedestrian friendly environment and off-site public parking lots, so that there would be no requirement for on-site parking for commercial uses. Additional parking spaces as part of the project would include the new diagonal parking spaces around the blocks.

Ms. Hoggatt clarified that the existing parking supply had been identified on Page 3-146 of the EIR. There would be 53 off-street parking spaces and 107 on-street parking spaces as part of the project.

Commissioner Tumbaga inquired of the size of the main plaza area, to which Mr. Nadhiri understood that would be between 9,800 and 10,000 square feet.

Commissioner Tumbaga identified areas used by the church located across the street not only during Sundays, which was an issue she emphasized needed to be taken into consideration with respect to parking needs.

Ms. Luna explained that the Engineering Department had conducted a parking study in 2004 for the downtown area and planned to prepare a parking strategy for the downtown.

The study had found that the City was only at 60 percent capacity of the existing parking
lots and spaces in the downtown area based on existing conditions, not including the proposed project or other anticipated plans. The study had recommended that some of the redevelopment plans anticipate a parking strategy to address those issues. The City was waiting for a proposal from a consultant who had prepared the parking study and would also address the issues of the parking as well as issues for the entire area while identifying the parking strategy.

Commissioner Tumbaga commented that she had seen portions of the parking study which she found to be flawed given that the time of the study had been inappropriate, and had indicated a peak period in the afternoon when there were no vehicles.

Ms. Luna expressed the willingness to review the parking strategy plan with Commissioner Tumbaga at a later date.

Commissioner Garcia understood that the new elementary school would have parking on the first floor, half underground and half above ground, which would be available to the church on Sundays, or when the Pittsburg Unified School District (PUSD) was not using the site. A stairway had been planned from Railroad Avenue and on Black Diamond Street.

Ms. Ayres understood that was the case, although she noted that the City did not control the school property.

Commissioner Tumbaga emphasized that the parking needed to be addressed. She also clarified with the developer that there would be a total of 195 residential for sale units, with all three buildings abutting one another. The plazas would be for the use of the private residences, with all three buildings via the pedestrian buildings or the street, with key card access to the different courtyard areas. The loading docks would be located behind the commercial uses.

Mr. Thatch again walked the Commission through the proposed loading dock areas and areas for loading and unloading of merchandise for the commercial uses, so that vehicles would be out of traffic when deliveries were made. The location of the trash enclosures were also identified.

Mr. Nadhiri also clarified that the sidewalks would be 12 to 15 feet, would step back from the existing curb, behind the current sidewalk, stepping the property line back to be able to maintain the street width. He identified existing buildings along Railroad Avenue on the west side, which property line the project would not match since the project would step back behind those buildings.

In response to Commissioner Ohlson, Commissioner Garcia identified the location of the proposed new elementary school to be located where the former elementary school had been located and which would be demolished.
Commissioner Ohlson suggested that there was not a parking problem, but a walking problem, particularly with the downtown being designed as pedestrian friendly.

Commissioner Harris inquired whether or not the surrounding neighborhoods had been notified of the discussion before the Commission.

Ms. Hoggatt advised that a 300-foot mailing radius, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) had been prepared. The workshop discussion and EIR had also been posted on the City’s website.

Commissioner Harris sought an expanded public notification process given the size of the development being proposed.

Ms. Ayres clarified that the discussion before the Commission was not a formal public hearing but a study session to solicit comments on the EIR and the project. She explained that there had been several downtown meetings that had been highly advertised. She added that based on a customer survey of residences, the number one source of information from the public was through the City’s website, which was the reason the EIR had been posted on the website. Formal public hearings, when scheduled, would be noticed to the public in the newspaper, mailed to owners within 300 feet of the project size and be posted in the area of the project site. As to the request for an expanded notification, she reported that noticing was very expensive and would have to be discussed further at the staff level.

Ms. Luna clarified as well that two public workshops had been held on the project; one earlier in the year held in the Council Chambers which had been well attended and one late last year at the Chamber of Commerce which had been standing room only. The project would be formally noticed when scheduled before the Planning Commission and the City Council.

Commissioner Ohlson agreed that the project should include an expansion of the 300 foot square radius requirement.

TOM La FLEUR, 51 Lake Street, Pittsburg, was pleased with the commercial architecture which he found to be stunning, although he found the residential architecture to be ordinary. As to the needed parking for the project, he noted that many attending St. Peter Martyr Church parked along the north face of Eighth Street which was a Class II Bicycle Lane, and which would likely be enforced in the near future. As noted by staff there were 160 existing on-street and available off-street parking spaces available to the public.

When the project was completed, there would be 158 parking spaces with a net loss of two spaces, versus a project that would bring in 40,000 square feet of retail and 195 homes.
Mr. LaFleur identified the area of illegal parking which was used by the St. Peter Martyr congregation and the 160 parking spaces which had not included those spaces. He suggested that the net loss of actual parking spaces would greatly affect the church and require more thought. If the project were built with inadequate parking, it would affect the commercial and residential uses being proposed, along with existing businesses along Railroad Avenue. Parking would also likely spill into the street, further impacting businesses on Railroad Avenue. He recommended two levels of podium parking. He did not like the fact that there were recommendations to use parking that might not exist.

Mr. La Fleur reiterated his concerns with the parking which should be addressed in the EIR. He added that the plazas, while beautiful, would be located on the second story and should be enjoyed by the general public. He sought public park space and noted that the small plaza on Black Diamond and Eighth Streets was not in the range of 10,000 square feet in size as suggested by the developer, but rather would be a front yard to some of the units and should be opened up, even if that would result in the loss of some residential units. He added that the Scampini Building was a historic resource and had the potential to be as attractive as Cardinale Bakery had been, although the City lost that building last year. He sought more efforts to preserve historical structures in the community.

Commissioner Harris asked to see the parking identified on the side streets on a larger scale plan.

Mr. Thatch advised that they could provide an 11 x 17 inch set for the Commission at a future date and on their website for interested parties.

Commissioner Garcia commented that the City had expended funds for the parking lot on Marina Boulevard and the City had thrived without parking over the years. He understood that the intent of the project would be to attract those living in the neighborhood with more retail downtown. He assumed that the market that was being generated would be those that would move into the units and into the nearby developments.

Commissioner Garcia pointed out that the downtown had numerous businesses over the years and there had always been adequate parking. He suggested that if everyone went to his/her own parish they would not drive down to the area. He suggested that the new businesses could thrive with those existing in the downtown. With new development planned in the area and with the new bank proposed for the downtown, he suggested that should also improve the downtown area. He also suggested that the new elementary school would complement the area.

Commissioner Tumbaga clarified that St. Peter Martyr Church had a registered congregation of over 2,000 people.
Acting Chairperson Tumbaga declared a recess at 8:55 P.M. The Planning Commission reconvened at 9:02 P.M. with all Commissioners initially shown as present and absent.

**STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:**

1. Notice of Intent (to review/approve projects at staff level).


The Commission acknowledged receipt of the Notice of Intent item, as shown.

Commissioner Tumbaga reported that over the past couple of weeks the area from Woodland Hills to the Shell Gas Station on Railroad Avenue had experienced garbled cell phone calls which she understood had affected all cell phone providers.

Ms. Ayres understood that the County was considering an antenna facility on the Thomas property. She was unaware why the problems had occurred along Railroad Avenue and was unaware of other antennas planned to be installed in that affected area.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Commissioner Garcia reported that he had attended the September 8 TRANSPLAN meeting which had included a discussion on the 2005 East County Bicycle Plan which had been approved by the TRANSPLAN Committee with a recommendation to the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA). He noted that Commissioner Ohlson had been very involved in the preparation of that document. A copy of the plan was provided to staff. He added that he would not be in attendance for the October 13 TRANSPLAN meeting.

**COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Garcia spoke to the staff response he had received regarding his concerns with the closure of Gladstone Drive. He reiterated his request that the road be opened for through traffic particularly off commute periods, or that Ventura Drive be similarly closed since both were public streets.

Ms. Ayres noted that Gladstone Drive was not closed but that speed humps had been installed in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Garcia emphasized that the road was closed to through traffic during commute periods and it should be open during off peak hours.

Commissioner Garcia also spoke to a prior concern with the KB development on Freed and Piedmont Ways which he understood was to have a signal light installed prior to the issuance of any building permits. He had reviewed the meeting minutes when the project
had been discussed and approved, although the recommendation had not been included in the resolution of approval.

Ms. Ayres advised that the meeting minutes had included Commissioner Garcia’s comments and the tapes from the meeting could be reviewed to clarify the comments made at that time. She commented on the possibility that the recommendation did not appear to have been carried over when the motion had been made to approve the project.

Commissioner Garcia expressed concern with traffic during the construction period of the KB project. He again reiterated that the traffic signal should have been installed prior to the issuance of building permits, and at least should be under construction now when the project reached the Piedmont Way side.

Ms. Ayres understood that the traffic signal had been designed, although the Homeowner’s Association (HOA) had not yet responded to the City since the Commission had directed the developer to work with the HOA across E. Leland Road on a possible change to its main entry. As a result, staff would be moving on without the HOA input.

Senior Civil Engineer Alfredo Hurtado explained, when asked, that KB had paid the applicable transportation fees associated with the project. He also affirmed that staff had received the final traffic signal plans and had an equipment order for the signal. While the design was for a three way signal, he understood that they would also design for a four way signal in the event the emergency entrance across the street was opened HOA traffic. The Commission would likely see action in that case within the next week.

Commissioner Garcia commented that for years people had been parking on the street in the area of Harbor Street from the south entrance into Atlantic Plaza and from that point to the Good Shepard Church back entrance. Since that area was close to the entrance, it had been painted red to ensure no sight distance issues. He noted, however, that there was a new sign at the entrance to the shopping center indicating that parking was not permitted and several vehicles that had been parking along Harbor Street had been tagged. A second sign with an arrow had been installed pointing either south or east, but was not clearly defined. If the intent was that no parking be allowed, he asked that the curb be painted red to prevent future tickets to parishioners of the Good Shepard Church.

Commissioner Ohlson clarified that the 2005 East County Bicycle Plan had been approved by the TRANSPLAN Committee and would then move on to the CCTA and Caltrans. It had been scheduled for the December agenda of the TRANSPLAN Committee for final comments. After that time, each city and the County would be asked to adopt the plan.

In response to Commissioner Ohlson about the fence from the south main entrance to the canal adjacent from the Church of the Good Shepherd park, Mr. Hurtado described the easements in that area and the City was responsible to maintain it.
Commissioner Ohlson reported on his attendance at a recent Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, at which time, a CAC Commissioner had asked him why cellular towers in the community were not required to look like trees.

Ms. Ayres explained that the cellular towers in the City had been located primarily on existing PG&E towers, and there were some on Railroad Avenue that had not been screened from view. She noted that staff did have a request to install antennas on a medical office building and staff had recommended that rather than have the antennas be located on the outside mechanical walls on the roof that they be screened from view.

Commissioner Tumbaga reported that the exit from State Route 4 to Railroad Avenue had been routinely gridlocked with traffic sitting through two to three sets of lights. She recommended a no turn on red at the intersection. She also reiterated her concern with the condition of the sinking sidewalks along the east side of Railroad Avenue from Third to Eighth Streets.

Ms. Ayres advised that she would forward the concerns to the traffic division. She commented that by the end of the year the freeway should be fully functional for both Railroad Avenue and Harbor Street. As to the sidewalks, she understood that the Public Works Department could either repair the sidewalks, contract out the work, or contact the adjacent property owner to conduct repairs.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:29 P.M. to a regular meeting of the Planning Commission on September 27, 2005 at 7:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers at 65 Civic Avenue, Pittsburg, CA.

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MELISSA AYRES, Secretary
Pittsburg Planning Commission