



MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 16, 2012
TO: Planning and Transportation Commission
FROM: James Walgren, Assistant City Manager
SUBJECT: PROJECT PHOTO-SIMULATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

Receive the staff report and provide a recommendation to the City Council.

BACKGROUND

The City Council has requested that the City begin requiring photosimulations of larger development proposals, such as new commercial, mixed-use and multiple-family residential projects, represented in the context of their built and natural surroundings. Staff noted that these types of requirements could be implemented administratively immediately. Council requested that this matter be agendaized for discussion, and further desired to have the Planning and Transportation Commission comment as well.

DISCUSSION

The City currently requires perspective drawings for large projects as part of the application submittal package. The Community Development Director has the authority to update and modify the submittal package as may be appropriate. Attached to the July 24 City Council report are several examples of perspective drawings, which include:

- Example 1 – Traditional hand-drawn building perspective
- Example 2 – Computer generated building perspective
- Example 3 – Hand-drawn building perspective photo-simulated into existing conditions
- Example 4 – Computer-generated photo-simulation presentation

Examples 1 and 2 represent current submittal requirements. Example 3 and 4 represent new submittals requirements. Based on staff and Council discussion, these would need to include sufficient elevation perspectives to fully represent the built structure. This would only apply to new, or significantly enlarged, commercial, mixed-use and multiple-family residential projects. In consultations with vendors who provide this service, costs have been determined to range from \$1,500 to \$2,500 typically for a series of renderings, which seems reasonable given the scope of these projects.

Attachments:

1. July 24, 2012 City Council Report
2. Amended Project Submittal requirements



DATE: July 24, 2012

AGENDA ITEM # _____

AGENDA REPORT

TO: City Council
FROM: James Walgren, Assistant City Manager
SUBJECT: Project photosimulations

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept the agenda report and direct staff accordingly

SUMMARY:

Estimated Fiscal Impact:

Amount: Costs to be borne by project applicants

Budgeted: Not applicable

Public Hearing Notice: Not applicable

Previous Council Consideration: June 26, 2012

CEQA Status: Not applicable

Attachments:

1. Hand-drawn building perspective
2. Computer generated building perspective
3. Hand-drawn building perspective photosimulated into existing conditions
4. Computer-generated photosimulation presentation

BACKGROUND

Councilmember Packard has requested that the City begin requiring photosimulations of larger development proposals, such as new commercial, mixed-use and multiple-family residential projects. Staff responded that this could be implemented administratively immediately.

At its June 26, 2012 city Council meeting, Council requested that this matter be agendized for discussion.

DISCUSSION

The City currently requires perspective drawings for large projects as part of the application submittal package. The Community Development Director has the authority to update and modify the submittal package as may be appropriate.

Attached are several examples of perspective drawings, which include:

Example 1 – Traditional hand-drawn building perspective, per current submittal requirements

Example 2 – Computer generated building perspective, also accepted per current submittal requirements

Example 3 – Hand-drawn building perspective photosimulated into existing conditions

Example 4 – Computer-generated photosimulation presentation

Staff requested that the architectural firm Hawley, Peterson, and Snyder of Mountain View comment on the use of photosimulations. As noted below, Example 3 photosimulations can be achieved relatively easily. The Example 4 perspective is a much more expensive endeavor.

The feedback included the following points:

1. “Perspectives at all elevations and from different distances are a bit much. For non-campus situated single structure projects, we are of a mind that at least a minimum of two from opposite corners, but not more than four, one of each elevation, would give you a good idea of what all four elevations would look like. The lesser requirement would probably be appropriate for single building developments. Require multiple views for large commercial, mixed use and multiple building developments. The focal points distance and elevation would be at the developer’s discretion. Having been on the opposite side of the table for presentations of projects, in some jurisdictions there is a pre-submittal of the presentation for review and if reviewers feel they need more information for clarity, they can request same at that time. Not sure if the request for additional information is discretionary as part of the planning review process in Los Altos. Try to reserve the option to ask for more.
2. Many architectural firms have this capability to varying degrees, and if not, outside resources can provide perspectives at a relatively low cost. Outside resources providing these services run around \$1,200 for a fairly simple project and on up from there. The most popular 3D software product and easiest to use currently is SketchUp. Note that once the structure(s) are modeled in SketchUp, or any other un-enhanced (see the following paragraph) 3D

software application, the viewpoints and number of perspectives possible are infinite but drawing the line at two or possibly four as suggested would make some sense especially if the developer uses some other medium to provide this requirement.

At the upper end of project rendering are 3D programs that simulate lighting, reflections, shadows, time of year sun angles, etc. and usually are overlaid or “enhanced” using Photoshop or similar software for a more “photorealistic” product. These presentations are time consuming to create and can be very expensive. Each of these “enhanced” types of renderings is static and can’t be viewed like as a moving panorama like SketchUp can. Usually major developers have the wherewithal to put these together and they can be, and are, used for promotional and marketing purposes as well.”

Considering the professional feedback, it appears that requiring building perspectives photosimulated into existing conditions may be the best approach. It is important to note that photosimulations can also be easily manipulated and are not as reliable as to-scale drawings.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

PUBLIC CONTACT

Posting of the meeting agenda serves as notice to the general public

ALTERNATIVE

Maintain current perspective drawing submittal requirements

Example 1



FEBRUARY 2011

EDI
INTERNATIONAL

EDI International, INC.
1000 AVENUE
EDITH AVENUE, SUITE 100, CA 94704
Phone: 415-302-2580
www.edi-international.com

A. M. ...

Example 2



Example 3



Example 4





**CITY OF LOS ALTOS
INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING FOR
COMMERCIAL or MULTI-FAMILY DESIGN REVIEW**

I. APPLICATION FORM & FILING FEE

- A. One (1) copy of the application form properly filled out.
- B. Filing fee:

Fee	_____
Environmental Assessment	_____
Other	_____
TOTAL	_____

Make checks payable to the City of Los Altos. Fees are not refundable.

II. DRAWINGS

- A. Five (5) full-size (24" x 36") and two (2) half-size (12" x 18") plans of the following:
NOTE: Additional half-size (12" x 18") plans will need to be submitted at a later date, as determined by your project planner.
- B. One (1) digital copy of all plans in .pdf format (Adobe Acrobat compatible) provided on a CD, DVD, or a USB data key.
 - 1. Fully dimensioned site plan (scale: 1/8" = 1') that includes the following:
 - North arrow;
 - Subject property showing all property lines and adjacent streets;
 - Location and dimensions, including setbacks, of all proposed structures;
 - Location and dimensions of parking, driveways and loading areas (indicate surfacing material);
 - Location, size, type, and proposed disposition of all existing trees over 4" in diameter;
 - A summary of land development calculations including site area, lot coverage allowed and proposed, total proposed impervious surface, building area, parking stalls required and proposed, and when appropriate the number of beds, students, or dining seats.

2. Landscaping plan including the following:
 - Proposed walkways;
 - Fences and retaining walls;
 - Utility areas and trash facilities; and
 - Any special landscape features such as children's play areas must be specified.
3. Dimensioned building elevations (Scale $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$) of all sides of all proposed structures indicating the following: (All elevations of a building shall be provided on one plan sheet when possible.)
 - Building materials;
 - Design details;
 - Roof pitch;
 - Roof plan;
 - Height;
 - Color;
 - Utility and trash enclosures; and
 - Fencing.
4. Fully dimensioned floor plans (Scale $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$), plus any other details necessary to show balconies or other features such as, roof gardens, cabanas, etc. Floor plans for single-story buildings may be shown on the site plan.
5. Grading and Drainage Plan (scale: $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$) indicating:

~~a. For remodels and additions less than 750 square feet (or as determined necessary by Planning Division staff), include a Grading and Drainage Plan showing:~~

- Elevation at street and neighboring property lines
- Pad elevation
- Finished floor elevation
- Lot drainage pattern
- Existing and proposed contours
- Stormwater management measures to retain stormwater on site in accord with the Best Management Practices

~~b. For new buildings and additions over 750 square feet (or as determined necessary by Planning Division staff), a Grading and Drainage Plan including the above information shall be prepared and stamped by a Registered Civil Engineer.~~

- C. ~~One (1) colored~~ For new buildings, and additions to existing buildings of fifty (50) percent or greater, a sufficient number of perspective color renderings of the proposed structure, photosimulated in the context of the built and natural surroundings, to represent how all elevations of the building will appear of the exterior of the building. If you wish to have the perspective returned to you following the processing of your application, please supply one 8 1/2 x 11 inch color photograph of the perspective.

- D. One (1) copy if a streetscape elevation showing proposed structures in relation to development on adjoining properties. In the case of a corner lot, a streetscape of each street is required.

III. NOTIFICATION LIST, MAP, & PUBLIC HEARING NOTIFICATION

The Planning Division will provide you with: a) a list of the names and mailing addresses of all property owners within a 500-foot radius of the exterior boundaries of the site; and b) an area map showing the properties within a 500-foot radius.

You must provide three complete sets of blank stamped postcards (post office approved size) to the Planning Division. The Planning Division will provide the wording to go on the two sets of postcards.

PLEASE NOTE: Notification for Commercial land uses, by City Council resolution, requires notification of commercial tenants within 500 feet of the property boundaries. Accordingly, the name list should be expanded to include these businesses. However, this task is the project applicant's responsibility.

On-Site Posting Requirement - In addition to providing the above materials for the City to mail notices, you will also need to physically post a notice on the project site at least 10 days prior to the first A&S meeting. City staff will provide the notice to you along with instructions for properly posting it on the project site.

IV. SUBMITTING MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION

These instructions will be modified in the event your application for architectural and site approval is filed simultaneously with another application, e.g., subdivision, variance, use permit, etc. If you are filing two or more applications simultaneously, please inquire of the Planning Division for any further instructions or modifications to these instructions.