

# Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: NOVEMBER 5, 2001

FROM: CITY MANAGER

RE: PROPOSED ZONE CHANGE FROM *PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC* (PS) TO  
*PLANNED DEVELOPMENT* (PD) FOR THE VISTA DEL ARROYO  
BUNGALOWS.

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## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council following a public hearing:

1. Adopt the final Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study (Attachment 4); and
2. Adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (Attachment 5); and
3. Find that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment (Attachment 6); and
4. Approve the De Minimis Impact on State Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Attachment 8); and
5. Find the proposed Zone Change consistent with the policies of the General Plan and the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance, as stated in the body of the report; and
6. Approve the Zone Change from *Public/Semi-Public* (PS) to *Planned Development* (PD) for the property shown in the attached map (Attachment 1); and
7. Direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination (Attachment 7) and a Certificate of Fee Exemption for the California Department of Fish and Game, with the Los Angeles County Recorder; and
8. Waive plan check, permit (including construction tax), and City impact fees associated with rehabilitating the eight existing bungalows.
9. Conduct first reading of the attached ordinance.

### **Planning Commission Recommendation**

The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed project and associated zone change at its meetings of September 26 and October 10, 2001. The Commission continued the September 26 hearing because a number of lengthy comments were received on the environmental document prior to the hearing. On October 10, 2001, the Commission voted unanimously to

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MEETING OF 11/5/01

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.B. 8:00P.M.

recommend approval of the code amendment and adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) (see Attachment 11). The Commission requested decreasing the size of trees subject to mitigation from eight inches to four inches at diameter at breast height.

### **Design Commission Recommendation**

The Design Commission reviewed the proposed project and zone change at its meetings of September 10 and September 24, 2001. The Commission recommended that the Planning Commission and City Council approve the zone change, adopt the MND (with further clarification about potential view impacts), and find that the project is appropriate (see Attachment 9). The Commission's concerns related to views of the Colorado Street Bridge and adjacent historic resources, which are addressed in the final MND.

### **Cultural Heritage Recommendation**

The Cultural Heritage Commission reviewed the proposed project and associated zone change at its meeting of September 17, 2001. The Commission recommended that the Planning Commission and City Council find the project appropriate, approve the zone change, and adopt the MND (with further clarification about potential view impacts – see Attachment 10). The Commission's concerns related to views of the Colorado Street Bridge and adjacent historic resources, which are addressed in the final MND.

The staff recommendation and final MND incorporate all Commission recommendations.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this code amendment is to allow multi-family development at the site of the Vista del Arroyo Bungalows. Currently, the site's Public/Semi-Public (PS) zoning district does not allow residential uses. The *West Gateway Specific Plan* encourages rezoning the site to Planned Development (PD) to accommodate future development. If the zone change is approved, the applicant will rehabilitate, restore, and/or reconstruct the existing dilapidated on-site bungalows and construct new buildings appropriate to the setting, for a total of 45 units.

### **BACKGROUND**

The subject site is an approximately 2.9-acre property generally bounded by Defender's Park, Grand Avenue, The Western Justice Center, The Army-Reserve Training Center, Arroyo Boulevard, and Arroyo Drive (see Attachment 1). Upper and lower portions of the site are relatively flat, while slopes in the center of the site are steeper. The City has recorded easements under the Colorado Street Bridge as well as adjacent to Arroyo Drive.

Eight bungalows on the *National Register of Historic Places* (1981) from the former Vista del Arroyo hotel occupy upper portions of the property adjacent to Grand Avenue. During the 1920s and 1930s, families paid to build the bungalows adjacent to the main hotel complex and then lived in them for a specified period of time, after which they reverted in ownership to the hotel. During World War II, the hotel was utilized as a hospital; in the 1980s, the U.S. Government declared the site excess property, and sold it into private ownership.

The bungalows largely have been abandoned since after World War II and have fallen into substantial disrepair. Most of the bungalows have been vandalized and continue to deteriorate due to exposure, the weather, lack of maintenance, and vagrancy. 21 South Grand Avenue recently suffered disastrous fire and subsequent water damage from fire suppression.

Grand Vista Partners (the applicant) proposes to (1) restore the eight existing bungalows and convert them into 16 units and (2) construct about 45,000 square feet of housing in three new buildings (see Attachment 2). The project will result in the construction of 29 new dwelling units, for a total of 45 dwelling units. Three subterranean parking garages are included. Due to the site's unique characteristics and to ensure compatible development consistent with the *West Gateway Specific Plan* recommendations, the applicant proposes a change in the site's zoning designation from *Public/Semi-Public (PS)* to *Planned Development (PD)*.

## **ANALYSIS**

The project includes a requested zone change from PS to PD, thereby facilitating reuse of existing on-site bungalows and construction of new residential units. Residences are not allowed under PS zoning, except with a conditional use permit, and only under limited circumstances. Therefore, a zone change is necessary to proceed and suggested under the *West Gateway Specific Plan*.

### **General Plan**

The General Plan land use designation for the subject site is *West Gateway Specific Plan*. Surrounding land use designations include *West Gateway Specific Plan* to the east, south, and west, and *Open Space (OS)* to the north. Additional land use designations in the vicinity include *Low-Density Residential (0-6 dwelling units/net acre)* and *Medium-Density Residential (0-16 dwelling units/net acre)*.

The proposed project and zone change are consistent with the objectives, goals, and policies of the *General Plan Land Use Element* – in particular with Objective 1 (Targeted Development), Objective 4 (Limited Development), Objective 5 (Character and Scale of Pasadena), Objective 6 (Historic Preservation), Objective 7 (Residential Neighborhood), and Objective 14 (Accessible and Well-Designed City).

### **The West Gateway Specific Plan**

The *General Plan Land Use Element* directs growth into seven targeted areas to be guided by specific plans, including the *West Gateway Specific Plan*, which incorporates the project site. The Specific Plan's guiding principles include balancing economic development, historic preservation, and culture. In particular, the Plan has as objectives to alleviate blighted on-site conditions, preserve historic buildings, and protect and enhance the neighborhood character. Residential use of the site compatible with the overall residential character of the area is encouraged, including single- and multi-family development. Development standards allow a density of up to 10 new dwelling units per acre; limit lot coverage to 35 percent; limit structures along Grand Avenue to two stories in height; limit building heights on the hillside and lower portions of the site to 35 feet, and; allow new construction of additional dwelling units in accordance with the prescribed density limits. The *West Gateway Specific Plan* recommends the PD process to arrive at other development standards, such as setbacks, parking, and open space. Additional recommendations include allowing flexibility regarding parking requirements, prohibiting vehicular connection between the upper and lower levels of the site, and encouraging preservation of the historic bungalows through density bonuses.

*West Gateway Specific Plan* design guidelines for the site require new construction and additions to existing buildings to be subject to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. The guidelines also work to enhance the overall residential character of the

surrounding neighborhood; provide gardens, landscaped yards, and private outdoor areas; minimize alterations to the existing topography; encourage parking structures appropriate to the site, and; allow vehicular access to the lower portion of the site from Arroyo Boulevard and to the upper portion of the site from Grand Avenue.

The project is a residential development, and the applicant seeks a zone change for the site per the direction of the *West Gateway Specific Plan*. The project incorporates and rehabilitates the eight existing historic bungalows. Vehicular access to the project is split between the lower and the upper portion of the site. The applicant proposes a density of 10 new dwelling units per acre in addition to 16 units in the existing bungalows. Lot coverage, proposed at about 31 percent, is less than the maximum 35 percent delineated by the Plan. Structures along Grand Avenue will be two stories or less in height, and no building will exceed 35 feet. Gardens, landscaped yards, patios, and private outdoor areas will complement the style of the former hotel, as well as nearby development. Any changes to existing topography will be hidden by structures. The project complies with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*; compliance will be ensured by mitigation measures identified in the final Mitigated Negative Declaration (see Attachment 4), as well as with preservation covenants encumbering the property and in the PD itself (see Attachment 3). Overall, the project is well designed and appropriately scaled to complement the bungalows as well as nearby development.

### **Planned Development**

The West Gateway Specific Plan recommends use of the City's Planned Development (PD) zoning designation to facilitate reuse of the bungalows and encourage new development. The recommended PD standards for the site are included in Attachment 3. Issues involved in the PD include parking, setbacks, height, density, landscaping, views, historic preservation, and other relevant topics.

The proposed PD is appropriate because the site is a relatively large parcel subject to unique constraints, including extreme topography as well as adjacent and on-site historic resources. The PD will allow development of the site consistent with the General Plan, but more restrictive than otherwise would be permitted to account for these constraints. Use of the PD for this site will encourage orderly and thorough planning through consolidation of discretionary actions necessary to approve the project. The project will encourage allocation and improvement of common open space in gardens, courtyards, and other landscaped areas. Finally, the PD will encourage preservation of existing structures of historic value and artistic merit through adaptive reuse.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING**

A community meeting was held on August 14 to present the applicant's proposal to interested neighbors, solicit community input, and explain the City's PD process. Approximately 70 people attended the meeting, held at La Casita del Arroyo. Generally, community input was positive. Issues raised include (1) protecting the neighborhood in light of the proposed development at the former Church of God campus, (2) potential traffic impacts, (3) parking, (4) perceptions that the City's affordable housing requirements are not appropriate for this site, (5) protection of views across the site, (6) existing dangerous on-site conditions and fire hazards, and (7) historic resources.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

views across the site, (6) existing dangerous on-site conditions and fire hazards, and (7) historic resources.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

Pursuant to the *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA – Public Resources Code, Section 21000 *et seq.*), a draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and Initial Study was prepared and circulated for a 30-day public review period, between August 24 and September 24, 2001. Comments received on the draft document, including comments from the Design, Cultural Heritage, and Planning commissions regarding views and aesthetics, have been responded to and incorporated into the final MND and Initial Study (see Attachment 4). The final MND and Initial Study conclude that mitigation will ensure less-than-significant impacts on the physical environment.

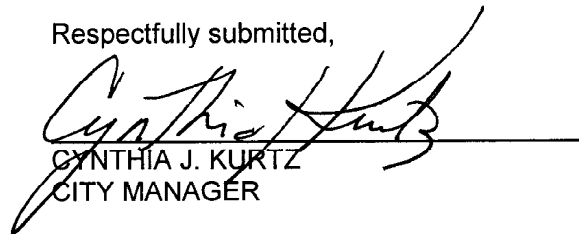
### **FISCAL IMPACT**

No immediate fiscal impact will result due to establishment of the PD-25 zoning district. City resources expended to process the zone change are recovered through the PD application. Permitting and plan check fees will be collected from future development on the site to cover costs incurred to review new development on the site.

The *West Gateway Specific Plan* (page 115) states that projects applying for a PD that include rehabilitation of the bungalows are eligible for special provisions and incentives, including waivers of some City fees associated with rehabilitation. Therefore, staff recommends waiving plan check, permit (including construction tax), and City impact fees as they apply to rehabilitation of the existing on-site bungalows.


By waiving these fees, approximately \$208,000 will not be collected. These fee waivers will not apply to new construction, subterranean parking, or other site improvements. About \$388,000 fees in total are estimated to be collected after the waiver.

Respectfully submitted,

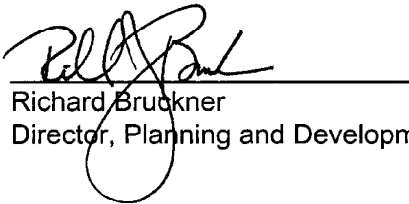


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CITY MANAGER

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Attachments

1. Vicinity Map
2. Site Plan and Elevations of Proposed Development
3. Draft PD
4. Final Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study
5. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
6. CEQA Findings
7. Notice of Determination
8. De Minimis Impact Finding
9. Design Commission Recommendations
10. Cultural Heritage Recommendations
11. Planning Commission Recommendations
12. Additional Correspondence