

Agenda Report

TO: City Council

DATE: December 17, 2001

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: Proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Change for Property Located at the Northwest Corner of Lincoln Avenue and Montana Street

RECOMMENDATION:

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

1. Approve the Initial Environmental Study and Negative Declaration (Attachment 1);
2. Approve the De Minimis Impact Finding on the State Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Attachment 2);
3. Adopt the findings that the zone change from RS-6 (Single-family Residential, 6 dwelling units/net acre) to CG-1 (General Commercial, Lincoln Corridor) and General Plan amendment from Low Density Residential (0-6 dwelling units/net acre) to General Commercial are consistent with the goals and objectives of the General Plan and the purposes of Title 17 as outlined in the body of the report;
4. Approve the General Plan amendment from Low Density Residential (0-6 dwelling units/net acre) to General Commercial;
5. Approve the Zone Change from RS-6 (Single-family Residential, 6 dwelling units/net acre) to CG-1 (General Commercial, Lincoln Corridor) zoning district (Attachment 5);
6. Adopt a resolution (Attachment 7) approving a General Plan amendment from Low Density Residential (0-6 dwelling units/net acre) to General Commercial as shown in the attached map (Exhibit A);
7. Direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination and a Certificate of Fee Exemption for the California Department of Fish And Game, with the Los Angeles County Recorder (Attachment 3); and
8. Direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance amending the official zoning map of the City of Pasadena established by Section 17.08.040 of the Pasadena Municipal Code from RS-6 (Single-family Residential, 6 dwelling units/net acre) to CG-1 (General Commercial, Lincoln Corridor).

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Planning Commission reviewed the proposal at the November 14, 2001 meeting. Following the public hearing, the Commission unanimously recommended approval of the General Plan amendment and zone change.

On November 5, 2001, the Cultural Heritage Commission reviewed the General Plan amendment and zone change, and the two buildings proposed for demolition. The Commission expressed concern about the potential sale of the property in the future and subsequent demolition of the Sunday School building. A representative for the J. L. Moseley Company stated that the developer has no intentions to sell this property. The Commission determined that the two buildings (445 W. Montana Street and 2069 Lincoln Avenue) proposed for demolition do not qualify for designation as a landmark and that the proposed General Plan amendment and zone change will not result in a significant adverse effect on historic resources. The Commission recommended approval of the General Plan amendment and zone change to the Planning Commission and City Council.

On October 25, 2001, the Northwest Commission reviewed the proposed General Plan amendment and zone change. The Commission's concern was the buffering of residences to the west from commercial uses. The Commission also requested the applicant explore the possibility of having the existing church designated as a historic structure and that there should be a landscape buffer between the commercial and residential uses. The applicant responded and stated that a landscape buffer will be provided between the proposed office building and the residential use to the west and the landscape was shown on the plan. The Northwest Commission recommended approval of the General Plan amendment and zone change.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This application for General Plan amendment and zone change is in connection with the development of an entire property that is 44,967 square feet (1.03 acres) in size. The development consists of three parcels. Two parcels (6,400 square feet in area) are located within Los Angeles County (Altadena) and one parcel (38,567 square feet in area) is in the City (Attachment 4). The two parcels in Los Angeles County have a General Plan land use designation of Commercial Business and a zoning designation of C-3 (Commercial). Commercial/retail uses and accessory parking are permitted in the C-3 zone and are consistent with the General Plan land use designation for this area.

The parcel within the City is currently divided by a zoning boundary resulting in two General Plan land use designations and two zoning districts at this site (Attachment 5). The western portion of the parcel (8,687 square feet in size) is zoned RS-6 with a General Plan land use designation of Low Density Residential. This site contains a one-story, wood frame building, with a stucco coating, which was originally a Sunday School building for the Lincoln Avenue Church (the Church demolished in 1979 following a fire) and was subsequently converted into office space. Constructed in 1926 and designed in the Mission Revival style, the L-shaped building, currently vacant, will be outfitted for offices as part of the new development.

BACKGROUND:

An application for a General Plan amendment and zone change was submitted by the J. L. Moseley Company, Inc. for a portion of the property located at the northwest corner of Lincoln

Avenue and Montana Street. This is a request to amend the General Plan designation from Low Density Residential (0-6 dwelling units/net acre) to General Commercial and change the zone from RS-6 (Single-family Residential, 6 dwelling units/net acre) to CG-1 (General Commercial, Lincoln Corridor) for the westerly portion of the site to allow for commercial uses (Attachment 4). The Low Density Residential General Plan designation and the corresponding RS-6 zoning of this site allow primarily residential and residential-related uses only; thus, the request for amending the General Plan and zoning designations.

PROJECT ANALYSIS:

In regulating properties divided by a zoning boundary, the Zoning Code, Chapter 17.64.160, provides for standards of the less restrictive district (the CG-1 zone) to apply to the more restrictive portion (RS-6) if it does not exceed 30-feet measured perpendicular to the district boundary. The subject RS-6 portion is 67 feet; thus, the applicant cannot take advantage of this provision and is seeking a zone change. This zone change application is essentially to extend the existing CG-1 zone to a portion of the property that measures 67 X 129.67'.

The CG-1-Lincoln Corridor is a general commercial zone that allows a range of commercial uses including office (business and professional), retail, food sales, restaurants, personal services, vehicle sales and services, small-scale storage and warehousing, among other uses. This CG-1 district has additional land use regulations resulting from the planning efforts to revitalize the Lincoln Corridor. These regulations aim at minimizing the potential impact of commercial development on adjacent residential districts by limiting: 1) the number of large trucks that can be stored on each lot, 2) the number of truck trips related to commercial and industrial uses within 300 feet of residential districts, and 3) the hours of operation of large trucks on sites within 300 feet of residential districts.

The proposed zone change would provide consistency in the utilization of the entire property and its development options in that the same set of zoning requirements will be applied to the entire site, allowing flexibility for the reuse of the existing building on the site. Given the more restrictive regulations of the CG-1 district, the potential impacts to the residential areas in the vicinity will be minimized. Proposal that exceed these provisions are reviewed through the Conditional Use Permit process.

If the General Plan amendment and zone change are approved, the applicant proposes to rehabilitate and re-use the existing building on the subject site to provide 4,740 square feet of commercial office space. Originally a Sunday School, this building was for some time used as an office, but is currently vacant. The adaptive re-use of this building is part of a larger development for the entire property, which includes the construction of a 14,402-square foot building. The new development will consist of a two-story commercial office building with 11,738-square feet of commercial office and a one-story building with 2,664-square feet of retail space. The project will also provide 62 on-site parking spaces. Development on the new building and parking area is permitted within the existing CG-1 zone. An 8-foot high concrete block wall along the western boundary of the site would be provided to buffer the noise from adjacent residential uses to the west (Attachment 6).

The project also involves the demolition of two existing buildings on the project site; a one-story 460-square foot unreinforced masonry structure at 2069 Lincoln Avenue, a 3,150-square foot, two-story structure with exterior walls of board-formed concrete at 445 W. Montana Street. These two structures were part of three buildings owned by the Lincoln Avenue Church. The

structure at Lincoln Avenue, built as real estate offices, was later owned by the church. Despite its associations with a major local architect, the building no longer retains its architectural significance because of alterations in 1981. The building at 445 W. Montana was used as classrooms for the Sunday School. The loss of the 1916 church on this site disrupted a grouping of historic buildings on this site. Consequently, the two remaining buildings on Montana Street do not convey a cohesive statement about the history of the church and its presence in the neighborhood. Moreover, there are no known associations here with events or persons important to the history of the City. Architecturally, the buildings add interest and a sense of time to the street. This contribution, however, is insufficient to justify historic designations for them. For this reason, staff recommends approval of demolition of the buildings on Lincoln Avenue and Montana Street. The Cultural Heritage Commission also supported staff's recommendation.

Surrounding Land Uses: Directly north of the project site are commercial/retail and single-family residential uses. South of the site are single-family residences and office (Pasadena Neighborhood Housing Services). To the east are commercial offices and institutional uses. Properties to the west are single-family residences.

Area General Plan Designations: The land use designation to the east and southeast of the subject site is General Commercial. To the west and south, the General Plan land use designation is Low Density Residential. North of the project site, the General Plan land use designation is Commercial Business (Los Angeles County General Plan land use designation).

Area Zoning Designations: The current zoning designation for the project is CG-1 and RS-6. Surrounding zoning designations include C-3 (Commercial, Los Angeles County zoning designation) to the north, CG-1 to the east and south, and RS-6 to the west (Attachment 5).

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY: The proposed project will advance the goals of the Land Use Element of the General Plan by targeting new investment in the Northwest Enterprise Zone. The proposed project is consistent with Objective 10 of the Land Use Element of the General Plan which states, "Pasadena shall promote a diverse economic base that serve local residents by providing jobs, by providing city revenues, by enhancing our dynamic social and cultural life, and by meeting the needs of international competition".

The proposed project conforms to the Lincoln Avenue Plan vision for this side of Lincoln Avenue (from Wyoming Street to the northern City Boundary) with commercial/retail uses to restore the neighborhood retain character that this area once enjoyed.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING: A neighborhood meeting was held October 25, 2001 in conjunction with the Northwest Commission meeting at the Jackie Robinson Center. Seven residents and neighborhood association members spoke in favor of the project.

A resident raised concerns that the proposed project would impede views to the mountains. The resident also expressed concern that the ingress and egress on Montana Street would increase traffic to the residential area to the west. Public Works and Transportation Department staff reviewed the proposed project and determined that the impact in traffic would be less than significant. The permitted height at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Montana Street is 45-feet. The proposed height of the development, 36-feet, is below the height limit.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

An Initial Environmental Study was prepared for the General Plan amendment and zoning code and project proposal in conformance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). It was found that the proposal would not have a significant effect on the environment and a Negative Declaration has been prepared. In addition, there will be no impact on fish and wildlife and staff is recommending the adoption of a Negative Declaration.

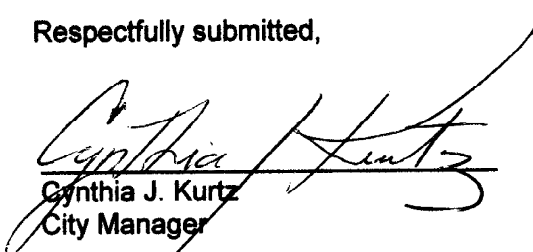
CONCLUSION:

Approval of the General Plan amendment and zone change will a consistent application of the Zoning Code to the entire site. The extension of the CG-1 will allow the developer to re-use an existing building as part of a commercial development proposed for the entire property at the northwest corner of Lincoln Avenue and Montana Street. The General Plan amendment and zone change, if approved, will also have the beneficial and positive result of providing commercial/retail uses to an area that has been targeted for development. The project will provide much needed employment opportunities for the residents of Pasadena and meet the goals of the Land Use Element of the General Plan. It is staff's determination that the proposed General Plan amendment and zone change, and the future development of the site will not disrupt the established character of the neighborhood nor will be a detrimental to the surrounding area. Such development to this area may restore the portion of Lincoln Avenue to the neighborhood commercial character that it appears to have once enjoyed.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There will not be an immediate fiscal impact as a result of this General Plan amendment and zone change. However, permitting fees will be collected for the development of the commercial office building proposed on the site to cover costs incurred from staff time required for project review.

Respectfully submitted,




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City Manager

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