



III. Environmental Impact Analysis

III. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. LAND USE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

New development can affect existing and future land use relationships within a community which in turn can result in physical impacts to the environment. The following analysis of land use impacts addresses the consistency of the proposed Project with the applicable land use regulatory environment (e.g., the Pasadena General Plan and Pasadena Municipal Code), as well as the Project's relationship with existing and future known land uses in the surrounding area.

2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

2.1 Regulatory Framework

The Project site is subject to a number of existing and proposed land use regulations at the local and regional level. At the local level, the Project site is subject to the Pasadena General Plan; the Civic Center Specific Plan; the Central District Specific Plan, which is currently in preparation; the Citywide Design Principles; and the Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC). While the Civic Center Specific Plan is technically still applicable to the Project site, pending adoption of the Central District Specific Plan, the Citywide Design Guidelines are also applicable and are also the most recently adopted guidelines that are applicable to the Project. Regional land use plans applicable to the Project site include the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) Regional Comprehensive Plan & Guide (RCPG); the Los Angeles County Congestion Management Program (CMP); and the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP).

2.1.1 Local Level

2.1.1.1 Pasadena General Plan

The Pasadena General Plan provides the overall framework for developing policy initiatives that achieve the community's vision for the future of the city. In 1990, Pasadena began the Comprehensive General Plan Revision Program with the goal of producing a reorganized, updated General Plan. The Land Use Element of the General Plan was most

recently revised in 1994. The 14 elements of the General Plan describe objectives and policies, not all of which are applicable to the Project. The following objectives and policies from the Land Use Element are of direct applicability to the Project:

- Objective 1—Targeted Development: Direct higher density development away from Pasadena’s residential neighborhoods and into targeted areas, creating an exciting urban core with diverse economic, housing, cultural and entertainment opportunities.
 - Policy 1.1—Targeted Development Areas: Geographical areas have been identified where the bulk of future economic development is to occur.
 - Policy 1.2—Specific Plans: For identified targeted development areas, as a principal implementation tool, utilize Specific Plans containing development standards, distribution of land uses, infrastructure requirements, and implementation measures.
 - Policy 2.3—Urban Open Spaces: Encourage and require, where feasible, the incorporation of publicly accessible urban open spaces, including parks, courtyards, water features, gardens, passageways, and plazas, into public improvements and private projects.
- Guiding Principle 2—Change will be harmonized to preserve Pasadena’s historic character and environment,
- Objective 5—Preservation of Pasadena’s character and scale, including its traditional urban design form and historic character, shall be given highest priority in the consideration of future development.
- Objective 10—Diverse Economy: Pasadena shall promote a diverse economic base that serves 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.
 - Policy 10.1—Targeted Development Areas: Target new development into the urban core, the Northwest Enterprise Zone, along East Colorado, and into other specific growth areas.
 - Policy 10.3—Business Expansion and Growth: Support the continuation or expansion of existing businesses in harmony with their surroundings and provide new spaces for growth and changing business requirements.
 - Policy 10.9—Healthy Business Community: Promote a strong, healthy business community to provide jobs for Pasadena residents, and a broad revenue base for the City.

- Objective 23—Existing Institutions: Provide long-term opportunities for growth of existing cultural, scientific, corporate, entertainment, and educational institutions in balance with their surroundings.
 - Policy 23.1—Expansion: Recognize and support the expansion opportunities of existing regionally significant cultural, scientific, corporate, entertainment, and educational institutions.
 - Policy 23.2—Land Use Opportunities: Provide land use opportunities to retain and to develop regionally significant cultural, scientific, corporate, entertainment, and educational uses.
 - Policy 23.3—Urban Design: Provide clear urban design guidelines to facilitate the growth of existing institutions in balance with their surroundings.
 - Policy 23.4—Support Planning: Support Specific Plans, master plans, and other planning activities initiated by cultural, scientific, corporate, entertainment, and educational institutions.
 - Policy 23.5—Pasadena’s Diversity: Encourage Pasadena’s cultural, scientific, corporate, entertainment and educational institutions to understand, respect, and enhance the City’s social and cultural diversity.

2.1.1.2 Civic Center Specific Plan

The Civic Center Specific Plan was adopted in 1990 and last amended in 2000. While the Civic Center Specific Plan is technically still applicable to the Project site, pending adoption of the Central District Specific Plan, the Citywide Design Guidelines are also applicable and are also the most recently adopted guidelines that are applicable to the Project. The Civic Center Specific Plan was developed to update and carry forward the vision of the 1923 Civic Center Plan (also known as the Bennett Plan). Other goals of the Civic Center Specific Plan were to make the Civic Center an important destination; develop connections with other neighborhoods and activity centers; support the institutions that form the identity of the Civic Center; and to encourage the integration of housing into the Civic Center.

Improving physical and visual access within the Civic Center is a central theme of the Civic Center Specific Plan. The “City Beautiful” concept and the axis of civic landmarks established by the 1923 Civic Center Plan are emphasized as key components of the Civic Center. The 1923 Civic Center Plan created the civic axis formed by Garfield Avenue with the Civic Auditorium as the southern anchor, the Central Library as the northern anchor, and City Hall as the fulcrum. The Civic Center Specific Plan calls for view corridors along this axis to be strengthened and that all sight lines to significant public buildings be maintained.

The Civic Center Specific Plan promotes the creation of a unified design scheme, buildings of architectural character, and usable, inviting public spaces. The Civic Center Specific Plan establishes the following general guidelines:

- View corridors to City Hall's dome structure and other public buildings should be maintained through setbacks and height limits [specific standards not stated];
- Height at the public face of buildings should be approximately 45 feet;
- Uninterrupted façades should be no greater than 130 feet in length;
- New buildings must have massing in scale with the conception of the plan, must feature visual articulation, and may not have the simplistic bulk of the County Courts building;
- Overall appearance must be based on a clearly regulated set of proportions related to classical precedent, with subtle variations to indicate entrances or other areas of interest;
- Entrances should be highlighted by porches, inset arcades or other strong architectural features that present a balanced appearance to viewers;
- Openings should be regularly spaced with variations to reflect important internal arrangements;
- Windows should be rhythmically spaced and recessed with no dark or reflective glass;
- Roof eaves should be marked by shadow and variegated red tile roof or reveal;
- Masonry, stucco or colored concrete should be used with dark wood or metal for openings and entries;
- Tile and fresco decorative elements are encouraged;
- The palette of existing colors—ochre, tans, reds, browns, roses, and pinks—should be used;
- Entrances should be well lit; and
- Neither noise nor appearance of mechanical services shall intrude upon public spaces.

The existing Conference Center building and Exhibition Hall are referred to in the Civic Center Specific Plan as “unfortunately blank and crudely formed” and presenting “a dead wall to the adjoining streets.” The adjoining plazas are called “lifeless and bare.” The Civic Center Specific Plan proposes that the Conference Center complex be reconnected with the rest of the Civic Center with special attention to the Green Street frontage.

The Civic Center Specific Plan states that all new uses on the Project site should support and strengthen cultural resources. Suggested new uses include expansion of the Pasadena Conference Center’s exhibition and educational facilities. The Civic Center Specific Plan indicates that future development on the Project site must maintain pedestrian and visual access through the site. To achieve this, the Civic Center Specific Plan restricts building heights to one story and that open space access from Marengo Avenue and from Euclid Avenue into the center of the site should be maintained. The Civic Center Specific Plan indicated no specific building setbacks for the Project site.

2.1.1.3 Central District Specific Plan

As part of the City’s General Plan Revision Program, a new specific plan for the Central District is being developed. The Central District Specific Plan Framework was produced in draft form in September 2002 and City Council gave concept approval to the Framework in November 2002. The Framework is intended to identify key changes to be set forth in the new Central District Specific Plan. The draft Central District Specific Plan was reviewed by the Planning Commission in September and October 2003 and was conceptually approved by the City Council in December 2003, with some changes approved in February 2004. The Final Specific Plan and EIR will be presented to the City Council in Fall 2004. If adopted, the Central District Specific Plan would replace the Civic Center Specific Plan, described above.

The Central District Specific Plan area is divided into seven Sub-Districts, including the Civic Center/Midtown, which encompasses the Project site. The Central District Specific Plan describes the objectives for the Civic Center/Midtown Sub-District as strengthening the role of the Civic Center as the symbolic and government center of the City; encouraging the presence of civic, cultural and public service institutions; and augmenting the character of the Sub-District through a mix of supporting uses.

The Central District Specific Plan also proposes land use densities based on the desired function and character of each area. The Project site is in an area designated as Moderate-High Intensity. This concept is quantified by setting a height limit of 60 feet and a maximum FAR of 2.25. Height averaging is permitted such that up to 30 percent of the building footprint could be designed to 75 feet in height as long as the average height of the entire building does not exceed

60 feet.¹ At the same time the Central District Specific Plan recognizes that the historic character of the Civic Center Sub-District is an important resource and that landmarks could be harmed by development of excessive height, bulk, and intensity.

Improving mobility within the Central District is also an objective of the Central District Specific Plan. In order to make walking the mode of choice for short trips, ample sidewalks are recommended. The Central District Specific Plan specifies that Green Street, which borders the Project site, feature sidewalks with a minimum width of 10 feet. Street trees, street furniture and other streetscape amenities are recommended.

In addition, the building-street relationship is evaluated in order to establish a regulatory framework for creating a gracious and active public environment throughout the Central District. As such, the Central District Specific Plan proposes that new development be oriented toward the street with an orderly street wall and an emphasis on ground-floor uses that engage and activate the sidewalk. The importance of ample sidewalks that accommodate public activity, especially along main commercial corridors, is emphasized. In addition, setbacks for important streetscapes are specified. A setback is not required along the street edges of the Project site, except the portion immediately in front (north) of the Civic Auditorium. However, buildings may be setback up to five feet maximum.

2.1.1.4 Citywide Design Principles

In October 2002 the City adopted Citywide Design Principles and Guidelines to implement General Plan Policy 5.1, which is to apply city-wide urban design principles. The Citywide Design Principles include general principles, design criteria, existing design guidelines for specific uses or new construction in all districts, public realm design guidelines, private realm design guidelines, and sub-district design guidelines. The three overarching principles are to: (1) Enhance the Surrounding Environment; (2) Incorporate Human Values and Needs; and (3) Show Creativity and Imagination. The Design Criteria are implemented through the specific guidelines that apply citywide. However, of more relevance are the Sub-District Design Guidelines/Recommendations contained in Section 10 for the Civic Center/Midtown area, within which the Project site is located. Section 10 provides the following recommendations for this area:

¹ *Height averaging requires approval of the Design Commission. Draft Central District Specific Plan, as conceptually approved by the City Council on December 8, 2003 and February 23, 2004, page 93.*

Sub-District Character

- Respect the dominance of the principal civic landmarks; buildings and landscape should define streets and contain public space, creating a consistent and unified context for these landmark buildings.
- Protect and enhance views and view corridors focused on monumental civic buildings, especially City Hall, the Central Library, and the Civic Auditorium; City Hall's dome structure should be the dominant element of the skyline.

Site Planning

- Emphasize an elegant, simple landscape design vocabulary.
- Establish strong physical and visual connections between indoor and outdoor space, and between adjacent outdoor spaces.
- Encourage the presence of shade trees, lush plantings, warm materials, and fountains in outdoor spaces; fountains are an especially identifiable element within the Civic Center/Midtown area.
- Use open-air passages and block penetrations to breakdown building mass and establish visual connections; openings should not compromise the containment of streets and outdoor space.

Building Design

- Match the permanence and quality of civic buildings in the area; buildings should be designed and built as long-term additions to the area.
- Respect the architectural design of historic buildings and protect the monumentality of landmark civic buildings; limit the scale and massing of larger buildings by employing articulated sub-volumes.
- Use the palette of materials and colors currently found in the area; masonry (non-brick), stucco, colored concrete, and tile decorative elements are prominent materials, and the use of intense colors should be severely limited.
- Maintain stylistic unity for civic buildings, drawing inspiration from classical Italian and Spanish models; this should not prevent contemporary interpretations responsive to the Southern California environment.

In addition, the Existing Design Guidelines portion of the Citywide Design Principles includes a section regarding the screening of rooftop equipment, which is required in the Pasadena Municipal Code. Rooftop equipment is often an afterthought and the guidelines indicate that the location and screening of rooftop equipment should be considered during the design of a building.

2.1.1.5 Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC)

The Project site is zoned CD-3 [Central District-Civic Center]. As set forth in Chapter 17.33 of the Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC), the primary purpose of the CD zone is to implement the City's downtown urban design plan as appropriate to each of the subdistricts of the Central District. Subdistrict 3 is the Civic Center. The CD-3 zone permits a range of residential, commercial and office uses by right, while requiring a CUP for a number of uses, including the proposed Project. Per PMC Chapter 17.16.050 a Convention Center is classified as a "Commercial Recreation" use, and requires a Conditional Use Permit. A Major Project Conditional Use Permit is also required for any project proposing 25,000 square feet or more of commercial development. Currently, there are no minimum or maximum setback requirements for the Project site. However, the Central District Specific Plan proposes a 5-foot maximum setback for the entire block except that portion immediately in front (north) of the Civic Auditorium. The Central District Specific Plan includes design guidelines such that building modulation, including such features as recessed entrances, forecourts or colonnades, can be utilized to satisfy the setback provision.

Development in the CD-3 zone must comply with the Central District Street Frontage Setback Map and the Central District Height Map. For the Project site, the Central District Street Frontage Setback Map indicates that no setback is required along Green Street, Marengo Avenue or Euclid Avenue and the Central District Height Map indicates a maximum building height of 50 feet for the Project site. According to PMC Section 17.33.080(I)3, this height limit may be exceeded by 20 feet for appurtenances covering not more than 25 percent of the roof area. Appurtenances typically include items such as an elevator tower, mechanical equipment, or architectural design features (cupola, spire). In comparison, the Central District Specific Plan establishes a height limit of 60 feet for the Project site, although height averaging is permitted such that up to 30 percent of the building footprint could be designed to 75 feet in height as long as the average height of the entire building does not exceed 60 feet.

Other applicable sections include PMC Chapter 8.52, which requires protection of trees, and PMC Chapter 17.68, which addresses minimum off-street parking requirements. Section 17.33.080(E) provides for a modification of the setback requirement for the protection of public trees. The PMC also contains provisions relative to landscaping, public tree removal, signs, screening of mechanical equipment, refuse storage, utilities etc. Title 17 of the PMC (the

Zoning Code) is proposed to be revised and updated in the Fall of 2004 as part of the General Plan update that also includes the Central District Specific Plan.

2.1.2 Regional Level

2.1.2.1 Southern California Association of Governments Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide

The Project site is located within the six-County region that comprises the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) planning area. SCAG is a Joint Powers Agency with numerous roles and responsibilities relative to regional issues that extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries. The *Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide (RCPG)* provides for a decision-making with respect to the growth and regional changes that can be anticipated by the year 2015 and beyond. In addition, the RCPG proposes a voluntary strategy for local governments to use to assist them in addressing issues related to future growth and in assessing the potential impacts of proposed development projects within the regional context. The RCPG includes adopted policies related to land use which could ultimately lead to the development of an urban form that will help minimize development costs, protect natural resources, and enhance the quality of life in the region. RCPG policies that relate to the Project include:

- Encourage patterns of urban development and land use which reduce costs on infrastructure construction and make better use of existing facilities;
- Encourage development in and around activity centers, transportation corridors, underutilized infrastructure systems and areas needing recycling and redevelopment;
- Encourage economic strategies to maintain the economic vitality of the sub region;
- Encourage land uses that reduce the need for roadway expansion, reduce the number of auto trips and vehicle miles traveled, and create opportunities for residents to walk and bike; and
- Encourage planned development in locations least likely to cause adverse environmental impact.

2.1.2.2 South Coast Air Quality Management District Air Quality Management Plan

The Project site is located within the South Coast Air Basin (the Basin), making it subject to policies set forth by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The SCAQMD, in conjunction with SCAG, is responsible for establishing and implementing air

pollution control programs throughout the Basin. The SCAQMD's Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) presents strategies for achieving the air quality planning goals set forth in the Federal and California Clean Air Acts (CCAA), including a comprehensive list of pollution control measures aimed at reducing emissions. Specifically, the AQMP proposes a comprehensive list of pollution control measures aimed at reducing emissions and achieving ambient air quality standards.

2.1.2.3 Los Angeles County Congestion Management Program

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) administers the Congestion Management Program (CMP), a state-mandated program designed to address the impact urban congestion has on local communities and the region as a whole. The CMP, revised in 1997, includes a hierarchy of highways and roadways with minimum level of service standards, transit standards, a trip reduction and travel demand management element, a program to analyze the impacts of local land use decisions on the regional transportation system, a seven-year capital improvement program, and a county-wide computer model to evaluate traffic congestion and recommend relief strategies and actions. The primary goal of the CMP is to reduce traffic congestion in order to enhance the economic vitality and quality of life for affected communities.

2.2 Existing Conditions

2.2.1 Project Site

The Project site includes the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, the Conference Center building, Exhibition Hall, Mishima Plaza, Ludwigshafen Plaza, the Pasadena Ice Skating Center and two levels of subterranean parking. In the center of the site is the 132,397-square-foot, 3,029-seat Civic Auditorium. On the south side of the Auditorium is the Pasadena Ice Skating Center. The eastern portion of the site contains the Conference Center building featuring approximately 49,344 square feet of meeting and exhibit space including a 283-seat theater. South of the Conference Center is Mishima Plaza, landscaped with planting beds and a variety of trees. The western portion of the site contains an Exhibition Hall featuring a total of 47,000 square feet of meeting and convention space and a 4,000-square-foot lobby. South of the Exhibition Hall is Ludwigshafen Plaza, landscaped with a central fountain, planting beds, and a variety of trees. Along Marengo Avenue at the southwest corner of the site is a large Moreton Bay Fig tree that is a city-designated Landmark Tree.

Both Ludwigshafen Plaza and Mishima Plaza are elevated above the level of the adjacent sidewalks along Marengo Avenue and Euclid Avenue. Their location and grade differential, as well as the limited points of pedestrian access, restricts the interface between these plazas and the

streetscapes as well as the uses to the east and west, resulting in underutilized, often vacant public plazas. Additionally, access ramps to the parking levels create physical barriers between the Plazas and the sidewalks.

Beneath the Exhibition Hall, Ludwigshafen Plaza and Mishima Plaza are two subterranean parking levels containing a total of 825 stalls. Due to the slope of Euclid Avenue, the parking levels are above grade at the southeastern corner of the site.

The Conference Center building and Exhibition Hall are separated from the adjacent sidewalks by a 25-foot-wide embankment that slopes down from the sidewalk to the base of the buildings which are depressed one level below street grade. The Civic Auditorium is setback approximately 94 feet from Green Street by a forecourt and terrace.

2.2.2 Surrounding Area

The Project site is located on the northern two-thirds of the block bounded on the north by Green Street, on the east by Euclid Avenue, on the west by Marengo Avenue, and on the south by Cordova Street. On the southern third of the block is the 317-room Sheraton Hotel, the 14-story Concord-Pasadena senior housing development, and the 135-unit Arpeggio apartment complex. Further south, across Cordova Street, is a residential neighborhood. Immediately north of the Project site is Paseo Colorado, a three-block, open-air urban village, which features 387 residential units, professional offices, a multi-screen cinema, and approximately eight dining and 60 retail establishments, including a Gelson's market and a Macy's department store. To the east across Euclid Avenue is a parking structure for Paseo Colorado, a Masonic Temple, apartments, and various small office uses. Across Marengo Avenue to the west is a Bank of America building and a Wescom Credit Union office building.

The Project site forms part of the transition from the high-density Colorado Boulevard corridor to the moderate density residential neighborhoods south of Cordova Street. Colorado Boulevard is a major arterial street that traverses the City of Pasadena, connecting Old Pasadena, Civic Center/Midtown, Pasadena Playhouse District, South Lake Avenue (shopping district), and Pasadena City College. These high-density activity nodes are bordered by moderate-density neighborhoods such as that south of Cordova Street between Marengo Avenue and Hudson Street.

The Project site is also part of the design axis formed by Garfield Avenue extending through the plaza of Paseo Colorado. The axis forms a visual connection between Pasadena's architecturally distinguished civic buildings. The Central Library is at the northern end, the Civic Auditorium at the southern end, with City Hall at the fulcrum. This civic design scheme was the central element of the original 1923 Civic Center Plan (also known as the Bennett Plan).

The Project site is also located within the Civic Center Historic District and in close proximity to the Civic Center Financial Historic District (CCFHD).

3.0 IMPACT ANALYSIS

3.1 Methodology

This analysis focuses on the consistency of the Project with adopted plans, policies and ordinances and the compatibility of the Project with surrounding uses. The determination of consistency with applicable land use policies and ordinances is based upon a review of the previously described planning documents that regulate land use or guide land use decisions pertaining to the Project site. The determination of land use compatibility is based upon an assessment of the physical land use relationships between the Project and surrounding uses.

3.2 Significance Thresholds

The CEQA Initial Study prepared for the Project concluded that the Project would not disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community. Accordingly, this analysis will focus on whether the Project would conflict with the site's general plan and zoning designations; conflict with applicable local and regional plans and policies; and whether the Project would be compatible with existing and future known land uses in the vicinity. The Project would be considered to cause a significant impact if:

- The Project would be incompatible with applicable environmental plans, goals and policies of the community; or
- The Project would create conflict with the established uses in the area.

3.3 Project Design Features

The proposed Project would involve the addition of approximately 211,320 square feet of new floor area on site. The main features of the Project are the replacement of the Exhibition Hall and Ludwigshafen Plaza with a new, larger Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building; the renovation of the Conference Center building and the development of a new Parking Structure located to the south of the Conference Center, replacing the majority of Mishima Plaza. Portions of the two subterranean parking levels would be demolished. The parking on site would increase

from 825 to 1,216 spaces,² and new service areas would be added throughout. No changes are proposed to the Civic Auditorium building, however changes are proposed to the forecourt, terrace and the two “Sister City” plazas. In addition, the interior of the Skating Rink would be modified to reinstate the previous ballroom use.

To preserve existing sight lines and street trees some of the existing building setbacks would be maintained. The western half of the Green Street frontage of the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom would be setback six feet from the property line. Furthermore, the entryway for the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building would step back into the site creating a larger setback toward the Civic Auditorium. Along Marengo Avenue the building setback would be approximately 13 feet. The renovated Conference Building would be located at the property line along Green Street and Euclid Avenue. The Green Street frontage of the renovated Conference Center building would feature a covered arcade similar to that of the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building.

The sloped embankments that presently exist between the buildings and the sidewalks would be filled in to create administrative office space. The Green Street façades of both the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom and the Conference Center buildings would be articulated with windows and the Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building would feature an entry lobby facing Green Street, thereby providing a substantial change from the monotonous form of the existing building façades. The massing, scale, materials and color of the new buildings would be designed to complement the Civic Auditorium. In addition, the plaza space along either side of the Civic Auditorium would be redesigned to create more continuous public space on three sides of the Civic Auditorium.

The height of the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building would vary in height from 17 to 45 feet in height. The entryway would be 40 feet above existing grade, along Green Street, rising to 45 feet along the interior plaza and along Marengo Avenue. The new entryway to the Conference Center building would have a roof ridgeline of 40 feet above grade. The arcade/trellis wall along the north and east façades of the Conference Center would be 16 feet above grade. The new Parking Structure located south of the Conference Center building would range in height from 28 to 48 feet above grade.³ The stairs and elevator shaft would rise above the upper level of parking and would be approximately either 35 or 55 feet in height, depending on whether a 5-level or 7-level Parking Structure is built.

² *The 7-level Parking Structure would contain approximately 1,216 spaces, while the 5-level structure would contain approximately 972 spaces.*

³ *The 7-level Parking Structure would be 48 feet in height, and the 5-level structure would be approximately 18 to 20 feet lower in height.*

3.4 Project Impacts

The proposed Project's design as presented in this EIR is schematic in nature. The Project's program, scale, massing, height, and setbacks would remain as presented in this EIR. However, other aspects of the design, specifically building articulation, exterior colors, textures and materials are likely to be refined as part of the City's ongoing design review process. The Applicant is committed to a final design that would be in substantial compliance with the schematic design presented in this EIR and that would conform to all mitigation measures included in this EIR.

3.4.1 Regulatory

3.4.1.1 Pasadena General Plan

Objective 1 of the Pasadena General Plan directs that development be targeted to identified development areas. Policy 1.2 states that Specific Plans would be the principal implementation tool for identified development areas and that these Specific Plans would contain development standards, distribution of land uses, infrastructure requirements, and implementation measures. Because the Project is located in a Specific Plan area, its compatibility with Objective 1 and its related policies, is based on the Project's compatibility with the Specific Plan that applies to the site. As such, the Project's relationship to the Civic Center Specific Plan and the Central District Specific Plan, as discussed below, define the Project's consistency with the City's General Plan.

Policy 2.3 directs that publicly accessible urban open spaces be incorporated into public improvements and private projects. The Project includes the reconfiguration of Ludwigshafen and Mishima Plazas and design changes to the Convention Center and Exhibition Hall buildings such that the urban open spaces provided around the Civic Auditorium will be more accessible. As such, the Project is consistent with this policy.

Per Guiding Principle 2 of the Pasadena General Plan, new development needs to preserve Pasadena's historic character and environment. Objective 5 of the Pasadena General Plan implements this vision by directing that future development be designed to preserve the character and scale of Pasadena. The Project is located adjacent to the Civic Auditorium and, as such, is part of the Civic Center area. Therefore, the compatibility of the Project with Guiding Principle 2 and Objective 5 is based on the Project's relationship, in scale and character, to the Civic Auditorium and other surrounding Civic Center uses. The Project would harmonize with the historic character and environment of Pasadena. As part of the process to finalize the design of the Project, it would be subject to design review by the Pasadena Design Commission to assure that the Project's final design is consistent with these policy directives. In addition, the

proposed mitigation measures would ensure that the Project would respect the character of its location relative to the Civic Auditorium and other prominent nearby buildings.

Objective 10 and Policies 10.1, 10.3 and 10.9 are intended to promote a diverse economic base for the City of Pasadena by targeting new development, by supporting the continuation or expansion of existing businesses in harmony with their surroundings, and by promoting a strong, healthy business community. The Project has been designed to expand the Conference Center in a way that is complimentary to the Civic Auditorium and the National Register Historic District, while providing modern amenities and facilities that would make it competitive with other centers in the region. As this would aid in strengthening the local economy by drawing out-of-town patrons to Pasadena, the Project is consistent with Objective 10 and Policies 10.1, 10.3, and 10.9.

Objective 23 of the Pasadena General Plan relates to existing institutions. Policy 23.1 states that Pasadena should recognize and support expansion opportunities of existing regionally significant institutions. The Project represents an expansion opportunity for the Pasadena Conference Center, an existing regionally significant institution. As such, the Project is consistent with Objective 23 and Policies 23.1 through 23.5. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with the General Plan Policies and Objectives.

3.4.1.2 Civic Center Specific Plan

Currently, the Civic Center Specific Plan is the Specific Plan that applies to the Project site. While the Civic Center Specific Plan is technically still applicable to the Project site, pending adoption of the Central District Specific Plan, the Citywide Design Guidelines are also applicable and are also the most recently adopted guidelines that are applicable to the Project. Notwithstanding, compliance with the Civic Center Specific Plan would also indicate compliance with Objective 1 of the Pasadena General Plan.

The Project would respect the important role of the Civic Auditorium as identified in the Civic Center Specific Plan. The Project maintains the existing visual access to the Civic Auditorium along the civic axis established by the 1923 Civic Center Plan and along Green Street. By expanding the Conference Center, the Project would also help to ensure that the Civic Center continues as an important local and regional destination, would improve connections within the Civic Center, and bolster one of the institutions that forms the Civic Center's identity.

The design of the Project would support the objectives of the Civic Center Specific Plan to create usable, enticing public spaces and building volumes in scale with the landmark buildings of the Civic Center. The Project would not impair sight lines of City Hall's dome structure or any other significant public building. The massing, heights, style, materials and

color of the proposed buildings would respect and compliment the existing Civic Auditorium and the proposed buildings would utilize classical proportions and rhythmic articulations. Please refer to Section III.C, Historic Resources, and Section III.D, Aesthetics, for further discussion of the architectural impacts of the Project.

With a new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building, new façades of the Conference Center building and an enhanced streetscape along Green Street, the Project would embrace the existing connection between the Conference Center complex and the rest of the Civic Center and positively transform the site from what the Civic Center Specific Plan calls “unfortunately blank and crudely formed” buildings and “a dead wall to the adjoining streets.” The existing plazas, referred to as “lifeless and bare” by the Civic Center Specific Plan, would be replaced by the new buildings and by the new plazas connecting the Civic Auditorium with the Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building, the Conference Center building, and adjoining pedestrian pathways along Green Street, Marengo Avenue and Euclid Avenue.

The Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building would satisfy the one-story building height limit specified in the Civic Center Specific Plan. However, the Parking Structure, which would have two or four levels above grade, depending on whether a 5-level or 7-level Parking Structure is built, would exceed the one-story limit specified in the Plan. The project would require an amendment to the Civic Center Specific Plan for the number of stories of the Parking Structure if the project moves ahead of the Central District Specific Plan. The Civic Center Specific Plan does not specify a height limit in feet for the Project site. Therefore, the permitted height in feet of the Project would be controlled by the PMC, unless the Central District Specific Plan is adopted. As discussed below, the Central District Specific Plan does specify height restrictions in feet and, if adopted, it would replace the Civic Center Specific Plan.

The Project would alter the existing pedestrian access and view corridors from Marengo Avenue and Euclid Avenue. The Civic Center Specific Plan states that visual and pedestrian access through and into the block from Euclid Avenue and Marengo Avenue be maintained as part of reconnecting the Civic Auditorium to the rest of the Civic Center. The Civic Center Specific Plan specifically refers to the 130-foot-wide viewshed and pedestrian access from Marengo Avenue to the Auditorium. The purpose of this policy is to maintain visual and pedestrian access to the historic Civic Auditorium such that passers-by are brought into daily visual contact with this landmark. The Project proposes to develop the existing plazas with new buildings, removing portions of the existing pedestrian and visual access to the Civic Auditorium from Marengo Avenue and Euclid Avenue. A walkway and a 30-foot-wide view corridor between the Conference Center and the Parking Structure would be provided from Euclid Avenue. The Project includes two towers, one adjacent to each of the buildings, which would serve to frame the view from Euclid Avenue into the plaza and to the Civic Auditorium. The Civic Auditorium faces north, forming the southern anchor of the civic axis along Garfield Avenue. Only the less distinctive sides of the Civic Auditorium are visible from Marengo

Avenue or Euclid Avenue. In addition, the grade differential between the adjacent sidewalks and the interior of the Project site, coupled with physical separations created by access to the subterranean parking levels, creates an awkward interface between the interior of the Project site and both Marengo and Euclid Avenues. Marengo Avenue and Euclid Avenue slope downward to the south while the Project site retains a level topography, such that the on-site plazas are several feet above the sidewalk and the first level of subterranean parking is exposed at the southern end of the site. Pedestrian access into the existing plazas from Marengo Avenue and from Euclid Avenue is only possible at two points on each side and concrete walls around the perimeter of the plazas impair visual access. For these reasons, pedestrian and visual access to the site along Marengo Avenue and Euclid Avenue is secondary compared to Green Street.

The proposed Project would further reduce the existing pedestrian and visual access along Marengo Avenue by replacing the existing Ludwigshafen Plaza with the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building. However, due to the constrained and secondary nature of the existing view, the change would not be considered substantial. Furthermore, this impact would be substantially reduced by the enhanced pedestrian and visual access along Green Street and enhanced open space around the auditorium, enabling improved pedestrian and visual access to the Civic Auditorium from Green Street and along Garfield Avenue. The Project would reduce the existing pedestrian and visual access along Euclid Street by replacing a portion of the existing Mishima Plaza with the proposed Parking Structure. However, two towers would frame the 30-foot-wide opening, thus providing pedestrian and visual access. Therefore, the Project is compatible with the general intent of the existing Civic Center Specific Plan. Moreover, upon adoption of the Central District Specific Plan, the planning guidelines of the Civic Center Specific Plan would no longer be applicable.

3.4.1.3 Central District Specific Plan

The Central District Specific Plan, once adopted, would replace the existing Civic Center Specific Plan as the Specific Plan that applies to the Project site. The following assesses the Project's compliance with the Central District Specific Plan if it were adopted as currently drafted. As with the Civic Center Specific Plan, compliance with the Central District Specific Plan would also constitute compliance with Objective 1 of the Pasadena General Plan.

The Project would expand and renovate the existing Pasadena Conference Center. This would further the goals of the Central District Specific Plan by enhancing the presence of the Conference Center as a civic institution; by creating a more active pedestrian streetscape; and by strengthening the Civic Center's role as the symbolic center of Pasadena.

Though the Project would create a new building-street relationship, it would not be consistent with the maximum setback of five feet established for the entire block, except for the

portion directly in front of the Civic Auditorium, as specified in the Central District Specific Plan. If the Central District Specific Plan were adopted, as currently drafted, the Project would require a variance from the maximum setback provision for the Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building along Green Street and Marengo Avenue. However, Section 17.33.080(E) provides for a modification to the setback requirements for the protection of public trees. The proposed Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building would maintain a minimum setback of 6 feet and maximum setback of 9.5 feet along Green Street. In addition, the proposed Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building would maintain a 13 to 15 foot setback along Marengo Avenue. The Conference Center renovation would locate the structure at the property line along Green Street and Euclid Avenue. The proposed setback for the Parking Structure would be one to one and a half feet, from the property line along Euclid Avenue. No exterior modifications would be made to the Ice Rink and existing setbacks would remain. A variance for the setbacks for the Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building along Marengo Avenue and Green Street, would be warranted as the Project achieves the objectives underlying the setback provision through other design principles, as described below.

The block containing the Civic Auditorium is an important element in the public realm of the Civic Center Sub-District. The maximum setback provision of the Central District Specific Plan is intended to promote a more active urban streetscape. Exceptions to the setback are allowed for such features as recessed entrances, forecourts and other design features as indicated in the Plan guidelines. The Central District Specific Plan stresses the importance of ample sidewalks, street trees, street furniture and other streetscape amenities along main commercial corridors in order to provide active public space. The Central District Specific Plan also notes the importance of protecting visual access to landmark buildings like the Civic Auditorium and specifies that Green Street feature wide sidewalks with street trees, street furniture and other streetscape amenities.

The proposed setbacks for the Project are based on the setbacks of the existing buildings, which allow for greater protection of existing street trees. Due to the unique nature of the Conference Center uses, the Project cannot be as strongly oriented toward the street as retail uses could be. Nonetheless, compliance with the recommended land use mitigation measures would yield a final Project design that would engage the streetscape through design elements. The proposed lobbies focus public access and ambiance toward the reconfigured plazas around the Civic Auditorium, activating the sidewalk and create intense pedestrian-activity within the plazas and forecourt of the Civic Auditorium, thereby adhering to design guideline SP 2.5 of the Specific Plan. No exterior modifications are proposed to the Ice Rink. The Project would comply with the 60-foot height limit and the 2.25 floor area ratio (FAR) limit specified by the Central District Specific Plan.

The Project would establish a synergy with the pedestrian portion of Garfield Avenue within the Paseo Colorado mixed-use development that is immediately north of Green Street.

The Project design also preserves major sight lines to the Civic Auditorium, an important objective of the Central District Specific Plan. Therefore, the Project is compatible with the general provisions and the intent of the Central District Specific Plan. As such, the Project would not have a significant impact with respect to the Central District Specific Plan.

3.4.1.4 Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC)

The Project use is classified as Commercial Recreation, which is permitted through a Conditional Use Permit in the CD-3 zone. The off-street parking requirement for Commercial Recreation uses is determined through the Conditional Use Permit process. Please refer to Section III.B, for a complete discussion of Project-related parking. A Major Project Conditional Use Permit is also required for the Project.

In order for the Conditional Use Permit to be granted, findings must be made that show that the Project is in accord with the purposes of the Pasadena General Plan, the PMC and the provisions of the district in which the site is located; and that the Project would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare of the public. As described above, the Project would be supportive of the purposes of the Pasadena General Plan and the applicable Specific Plan. Based on the analysis of this EIR, the Project would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare of the public in that there is no proposed change in use.

Proposed building heights are less than the 50-foot maximum permitted in the Central District Height District Map, with the exception of the roof top mechanical screens and the stairs and elevator shaft, which would be designed to 55 feet in height. These areas would be located away from the building edge. The roof top mechanical screens would be permitted to slightly exceed the building height limit in accordance with PMC Section 17.33.080 (I)3. In cases where the design standards of the PMC and the design standards of an applicable Specific Plan are different, the standards of the Specific Plan govern. Therefore, if the Central District Specific Plan were adopted, as drafted, the average height of the entire building could be 60 feet.⁴

Of the approximately ~~108~~152 trees identified on and around the Project site, ~~51~~77 of them, mainly within Ludwigshafen Plaza and Mishima Plaza, would need to be removed in order to implement the Project. Of these 77 trees, 72 are located on the site and 5 are street trees. It is not feasible to protect these trees as part of the Project, as these trees occupy the portion of the site that would be occupied by the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building and the Parking Structure. Due to the fact that the trees are considered public trees, all trees on the project site

⁴ *The Draft Central District Specific Plan allows height averaging such that up to 30 percent of the building footprint could be designed to 75 feet in height, as long as the average height of the entire building does not exceed 60 feet.*

are protected regardless of the size or species. Each tree must be reviewed and approved for removal and the project must comply with the provisions set forth in PMC Section 8.52 (City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance). Notwithstanding, it is feasible to preserve and protect some trees on and around the Project site, specifically the Landmark Moreton Bay Fig tree and the existing Ficus street trees. Specifically, by maintaining the existing setbacks along Green Street, the majority of the existing Ficus street trees can be preserved. The Moreton Bay Fig tree, which is a designated Landmark tree, located adjacent to the site would be protected. In addition, the existing palms located along the east and west sides of the Civic Auditorium would be protected.

During final site plan approval, the Project would be designed to meet the requirements for signs, screening of mechanical equipment, refuse storage, utilities and any other site design requirements as set forth in the PMC. As part of the approval process, all necessary application and review procedures relative to the PMC would be completed. The Project would also be reviewed by the City of Pasadena Design Commission. Based on the preceding, the Project would comply with the PMC. Therefore, the Project would not have a significant impact with respect to the PMC.

3.4.1.5 SCAG Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide (RCPG)

A tabular comparative analysis of RCPG policies and the extent the Project implements these policies is presented in Table 2 on page 62. Based on this analysis, the Project would implement, and be consistent with, the applicable policies of SCAG's Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide. Therefore, the Project would have no impact with respect to the RCPG.

3.4.1.6 SCAQMD Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP)

The air quality impacts associated with the Project, and the Project's consistency with the AQMP, are discussed fully in Section III.D, Air Quality. As discussed therein, the Project would be consistent with the AQMP. In no case are potential inconsistencies identified. Therefore, the Project would not have a significant impact with respect to the AQMP.

3.4.1.7 Los Angeles County Congestion Management Program (CMP)

The traffic impacts associated with the Project and the Project's consistency with the CMP are discussed fully in Section III.B, Transportation. As discussed therein, development of the Project would not result in significant unmitigated impacts to intersections or residential streets in the area, and significant traffic impacts to the CMP road network would not occur. As such, the Project would be consistent with the CMP. Therefore, the Project would not have a significant impact with respect to the CMP.

Table 2

**ANALYSIS OF PROJECT CONSISTENCY WITH POLICIES OF SCAG'S REGIONAL
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND GUIDE (RCPG)**

Relevant Policy	Analysis of Project Consistency
Encourage patterns of urban development and land use which reduce costs on infrastructure construction and make better use of existing facilities	The Project would expand an existing use within that use's existing site, thereby utilizing existing infrastructure and facilities.
Encourage development in and around activity centers, transportation corridors, underutilized infrastructure systems, and areas needing recycling and redevelopment	The Conference Center is located in the Civic Center area, which is a major activity center of the City of Pasadena.
Encourage economic strategies to maintain the economic vitality of the subregion	The Project would expand and renovate the existing Pasadena Conference Center, thereby maintaining, and hopefully improving, the economic benefit provided by the Conference Center to the City and subregion.
Encourage land uses that reduce the need for roadway expansion, reduce the number of auto trips and vehicle miles traveled, and create opportunities for residents to walk and bike.	The Project site is located in the Civic Center area of the City of Pasadena, an urbanized pedestrian-oriented district featuring transit links to other areas of the City and region. Across Green Street from the Project site is Paseo Colorado, a mixed-use urban village. As such, the Project would reduce the need for roadway expansion and vehicle miles traveled and create opportunities for walking and biking.
Encourage planned development in locations least likely to cause adverse environmental impact.	The Project would expand an existing use within that use's existing site which is located within a major urban activity center. This would enable the Project to utilize a previously urbanized location and take advantage of existing infrastructure. As such, the location is less likely to cause adverse environmental impacts compared with an alternative location for the Project.

3.4.2 Relationship to Existing Uses

The Project involves the renovation and expansion of the existing Conference Center complex. As such, the use remains the essentially the same with changes in intensity and form. The Ice Rink would be converted to its previous use as a ballroom. The interface of the Project with surrounding land uses would be affected through new building façades, setbacks and the reconfigured on-site open space. The proposed buildings would interface with the street at grade level and would replace the awkward grade separation formed by the embankments at the street edge. The change in building form, articulation and interface would create a more compatible land use pattern in relationship to Paseo Colorado and other uses along Green Street. As the elevated form of Ludwigshafen Plaza and Mishima Plaza currently creates a break between the streetscape and the plazas, the replacement of both plazas with the proposed buildings, including the Parking Structure, would not significantly alter the land use interface to the east and west. A view and pedestrian corridor would be provided between the Conference Center and the Parking

Structure. Since these are separate structures, it serves to break up the building mass as seen from Euclid Avenue.

To the south of the Project is the Sheraton Hotel. There is access from the Sheraton Hotel into the Project site at the center of the site. The rooms of the Sheraton Hotel also overlook the Project site, with views of the plazas and the rear of the Civic Auditorium. While the Project may change the visual character of the Project site as viewed from the Sheraton Hotel, the land use relationship would be unchanged. The access would remain the same, there would be views of the new plaza space and the existing views of the Civic Auditorium would remain. As the Sheraton Hotel extends the entire length of the block from Marengo Avenue to Euclid Avenue, the Project would not substantially alter the land use relationship between the Project site and uses further south. Based on these anticipated land use and urban form relationships, the Project would not create conflict with surrounding land uses and would not have a significant impact with respect to existing land uses.

Throughout construction of the Project, access to, and use of, the Civic Auditorium would not be interrupted as a result of the construction of the Project. Based on current plans, construction would occur in two non-concurrent phases, with Phase I to include improvements to the eastern portion of the site and Phase II to include improvements to the western portion of the site and the conversion of the Skating Rink. The forecourt and main access to the Civic Auditorium would not be obstructed during either phase. The proposed reconstruction of the Civic Auditorium forecourt would temporarily obstruct the main entrance to the Civic Auditorium, although access to the Civic Auditorium would still be available via the existing side entrances. During reconstruction of the Civic Auditorium forecourt, access to the parking levels and the Pasadena Skating Center would occur from whichever side is not under construction. While there would be a reduction in available on-site parking during each construction phase, there would be a concurrent reduction in the on-site demand for parking, due to the reduction in the size of scheduled events at the Pasadena Conference Center during construction. Additionally, off-site parking facilities would be available to accommodate any excess parking demand.

4.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

As described above, the Project would be consistent with applicable land use plans, policies and regulations excepting the existing pedestrian access and view corridor from Marengo Avenue, the number of stories for the Parking Structure, and the setbacks set forth in the Draft Central District Specific Plan for the Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building along Marengo Avenue and Green Street.

These Project impacts are less than significant. In addition, the Project would be compatible with the surrounding land uses. Although the Project is located in an urbanized