

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: February 23, 2004

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: CENTRAL DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN DEL MAR GOLD LINE STATION AREA
DENSITY CLARIFICATION

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that, following a public hearing, the City Council redirect staff regarding the Floor Area Ratios (FARs) in the Central District Specific Plan.

It is also recommended that the City Council authorize the City Manager to increase the contract with Cotton/Bridges/Associates (CBA) – sub consultant Kaku Associates, for an amount not to exceed \$20,000.00 to provide additional traffic consulting services in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

BACKGROUND: On December 8, 2003, the City Council held a public hearing and conceptually approved the draft Central District Specific Plan. In the motion, the Council directed staff to refine the draft Plan to increase the proposed Floor Area Ratios (FARs) to 3.50 within one-quarter mile of the Del Mar Gold Line station and to balance these increases by reducing the FARs within the Old Pasadena sub-district. Staff has studied this recommendation and has found that it is not possible to balance such a large increase with only a decrease in Old Pasadena.

The 1994 Land Use Element of the General Plan allocated square footage and housing units to each of the seven proposed Specific Plan areas. To the Central District it allocated 5,095 housing units and 6.2 million square feet of non-residential development. The draft Central District Specific Plan allocates this square footage and units to each parcel in the district using a Floor Area Ratio (FAR.) Staff tested these FARs to ensure that if development occurs on all parcels that are likely to develop, the General Plan allocations would not likely be exceeded.

Increasing the FAR within one-quarter mile of the Del Mar station to 3.50 from the FARs ranging from 1.25 to 2.50 proposed in the draft Specific Plan would result in approximately 5.5 million square feet more development potential than originally envisioned in the General Plan. Even by reducing the FAR to zero in the rest of Old Pasadena, including areas outside of the Old Pasadena Management District's boundaries, there is not enough development potential to balance with this increase without increasing the overall amount of new development in the Central District.

In order to preserve the essence of the City Council's direction, staff has undertaken an analysis and developed a set of options that will achieve the FAR balance. These options would result in a plan that is balanced in terms of development potential for the Central District.

Option A

- Reduce the area where FAR is to be increased from a one-quarter mile radius around the Del Mar Station to a smaller parcel specific area (shown on Attachment 1),
- Decrease the FAR in the Old Pasadena Management District from 2.50 to 2.00,
- Increase the FAR around the Del Mar Station to 3.00 rather than 3.50, and
- Clarify that height limits should be increased to 75 feet in the areas where the FAR increases to 3.00.

Attachment 1 shows the one-quarter mile radius around the Del Mar Station. Removing each area shown in various colors on Attachment 1 reduces the area to receive an FAR increase to a much smaller area that is directly related to the Del Mar Station. The areas could be removed for several reasons. Some of the areas were proposed to be zoned for multi-family development only and not governed by an FAR. Other areas were intended to be preserved for lower scale development and others are farther away from the Del Mar Station. By reducing the area to be subject to an FAR increase, the net increase in development potential is no longer 5.5 million square feet, but 429,000 square feet.

Attachment 2 shows the Old Pasadena sub-district of the Central District and within it, the boundaries of the Old Pasadena Management District. By reducing the proposed FAR from 2.50 and 2.25 as proposed within the boundaries of the Management District to 2.00, 150,000 square feet is available to balance the increased FAR around the Del Mar Station. Staff believes that a 2.00 FAR would still encourage additional development on the vacant and underutilized parcels in Old Pasadena, but that further reductions below 2.00 would result in discouraging further development and investment in the District. This option would result in reducing the FAR adjacent to the Memorial Park Gold Line Station in order to increase the FAR adjacent to the Del Mar Station.

Because these changes still did not balance the FAR increases, this option includes increasing the FAR around the Del Mar Station from 2.50 to 3.00, rather than 3.50. This would provide a project that balances the increases in FAR around the Del Mar Station with the decreases in the Old Pasadena Management District without increasing the total amount of new development potential in the Central District.

The draft Specific Plan recommends height limits that are proportional to the FARs. The areas with the highest FARs also have the highest height limits. Colorado Boulevard is proposed to have an FAR of 3.00 and a height limit of 75 feet. The area around the Del Mar Station has various heights, but primarily 60 feet. In order for higher FARs to be achieved around the station without resulting in bulky, blocky buildings, the height should be increased to 75 feet around the Del Mar Station.

Option B

- Reduce the area where FAR is to be increased from a one-quarter mile radius around the Del Mar Station to a smaller parcel specific area (shown in Attachment 1),
- Decrease the FAR in the Old Pasadena Management District from 2.50 to 2.00,

- Decrease the FAR on the Parsons Headquarters block and the block north of Memorial Park from 2.25 to 2.00; or consider reducing FAR in outlying districts such as Playhouse or South Lake,
- Increase the FAR around the Del Mar Station to 3.25 rather than 3.50, and
- Clarify that height limits should be increased to 75 feet in the areas where the FAR increases to 3.25.

Option B also includes reducing the area to receive an increased FAR to a smaller area as shown on Attachment 1 and also includes a decrease in the proposed FARs in the Old Pasadena sub-district. In addition, Option B includes an FAR decrease outside of the boundaries of the Old Pasadena Management District, as shown on Attachment 2. This would include the Parsons site and areas north of Walnut Street. By reducing the proposed FAR in these areas from 2.25 to 2.00 to be consistent with the historic core of Old Pasadena this results in an additional development potential of 115,000 square feet to balance with the area of increased FAR. This reduction could allow the FAR around the Del Mar Station to increase to 3.25, rather than a 3.00 FAR proposed in Option A. This option results in decreasing the FAR around the Memorial Park Station to 2.00 in order to increase the FAR around the Del Mar Station to 3.25. If a decreased FAR is not desirable on the Parsons or other blocks, a balance could be achieved by reducing the FARs outside of Old Pasadena, in the Playhouse District or Lake Avenue areas.

Option C

- Retain the FARs ranging from 1.25 to 2.50 in the one-quarter mile radius around the Del Mar Gold Line station as proposed in the July 2003 Draft Central District Specific Plan.

The original staff and Planning Commission recommendation in the draft Central District Specific Plan allowed a 2.50 FAR around both the Del Mar and Memorial Park Gold Line stations and in the historic core of Old Pasadena.

Contract Amendment - In order to analyze the Central District Specific Plan with increased density around the Del Mar Station, an additional traffic model run will need to be undertaken. To undertake this analysis, an additional \$20,000.00 will need to be added to the contract with Cotton Bridges Associates and sub consultant Kaku Associates, who are preparing the Environmental Impact Report for the Specific Plan and Land Use and Mobility Elements.

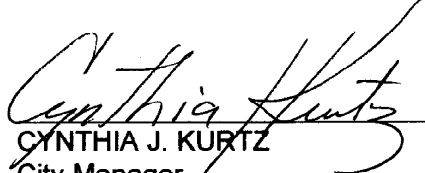
NEXT STEPS

Following clarification of the project by the City Council, the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be released for comment in June 2004. City Commissions will review the EIR and draft Central District Specific Plan in summer 2004, with Council adoption of the Central District Specific Plan anticipated in late Fall 2004.

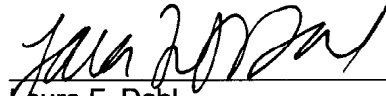
FISCAL IMPACT

Funds are available in Budget Account 8115-101-444100-95601 to complete this work and to perform the supplemental work on the EIR. The additional budget allocation will allow for the EIR to analyze the traffic impacts of the draft Central District Specific Plan with a shifting of density around the light rail station and compare it with other alternatives.

Respectfully submitted,

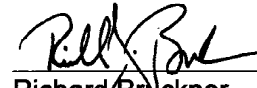

CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
City Manager

Prepared by:



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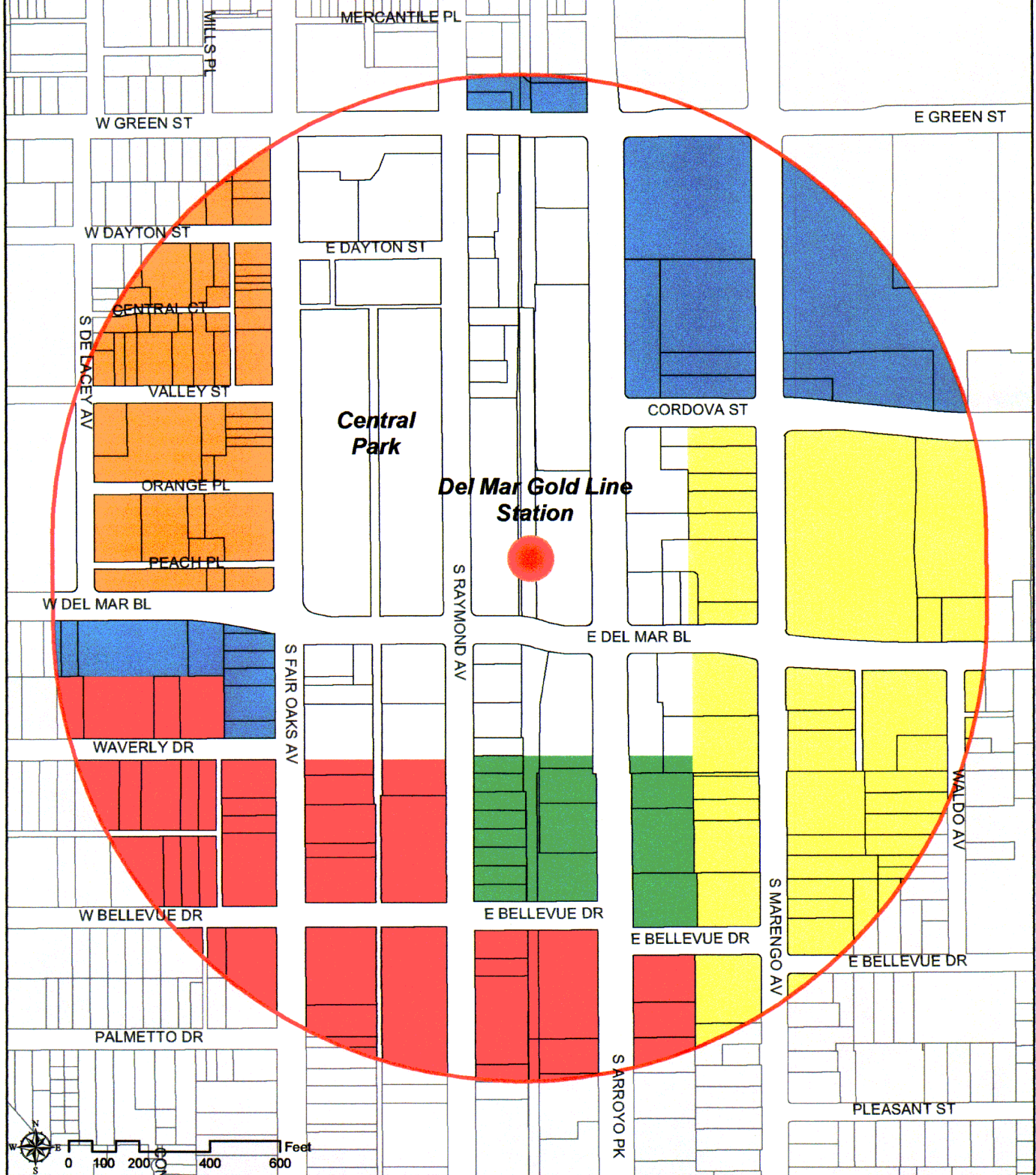
Approved by:



Richard Bruckner
Director
Planning & Development Department

Attachment 1: Del Mar Station – ¼ mile radius
Attachment 2: Old Pasadena District

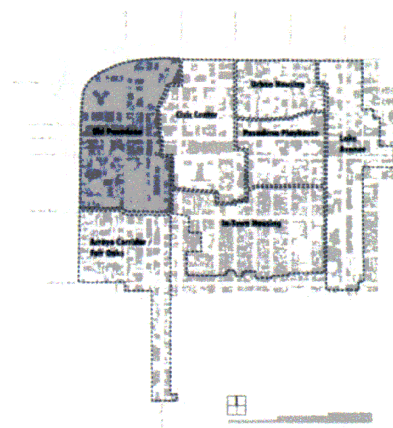
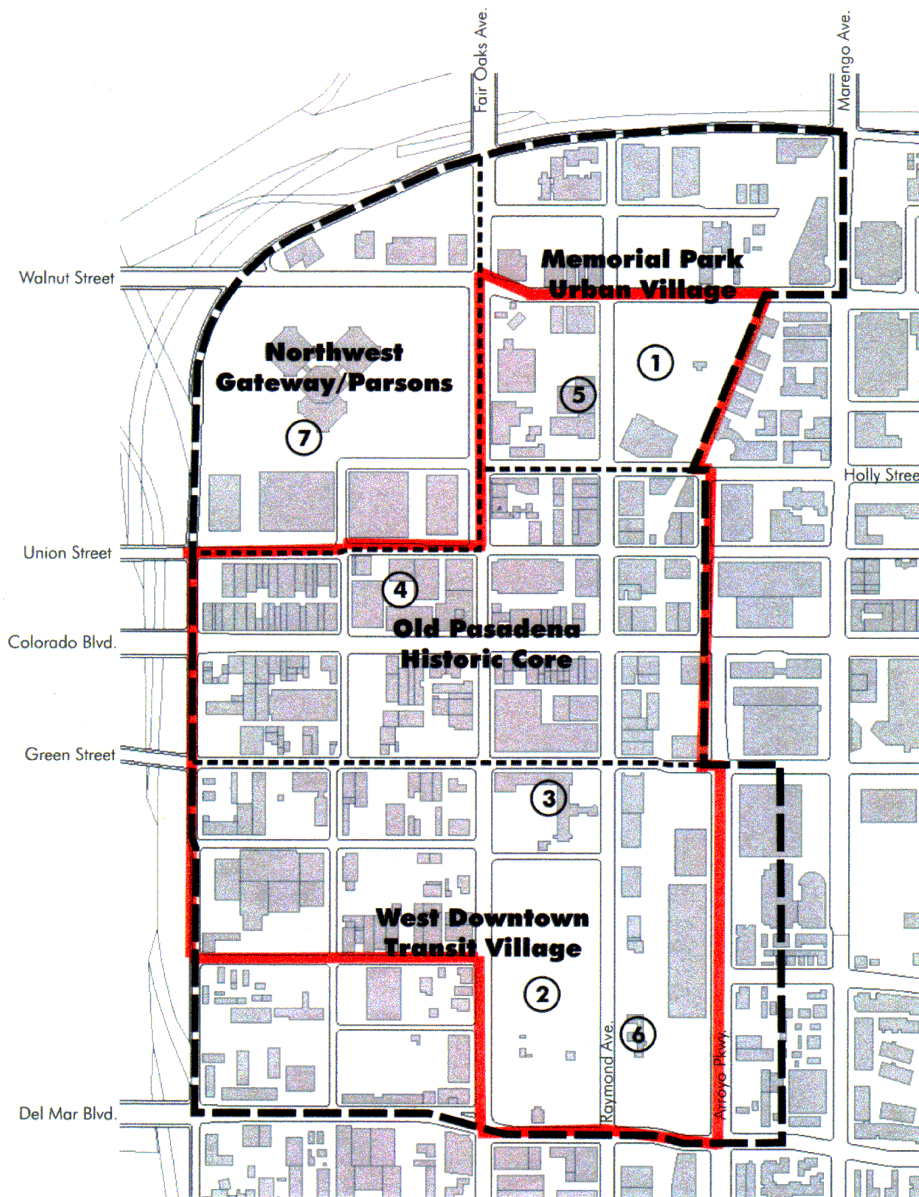
Del Mar Station FAR Analysis



- 1/4 Mile Radius From Del Mar Station
- From RM to 3.50 FAR (2.65 Million Square Feet)
- From 1.25 and 1.50 FAR to 3.50 FAR (1.2 Million Square Feet)
- From 2.00 FAR to 3.50 FAR (200,000 Square Feet)
- From 2.00 FAR to 3.50 FAR (424,000 Square Feet)
- From 2.00 FAR to 3.50 FAR (437,000 Square Feet)

SUB-DISTRICT PLANNING CONCEPTS

Old Pasadena: Precincts & Key Resources



1. Memorial Park
2. Central Park
3. Castle Green
4. One Colorado
5. Armory Center The Arts
6. Santa Fe Depot
7. Parsons Corporate Headquarters

Old Pasadena Management District

