

Agenda Report

May 23, 2005

TO: City Council
FROM: Pasadena Center Operating Company (PCOC)
SUBJECT: Actions for Pasadena Conference Center Expansion.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE PCOC BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Approve the Conference Center expansion design approved by the PCOC Board of Directors as presented, including the historically contextual architectural style, the curved entry elements, exterior finishes including the tile roofs and other features as described in the background section below and
2. Direct The PCOC to finalize the design and bid documents, solicit bids on the project and bring the project, including final bid, financing and feasibility back to the council in December of 2005 for final consideration.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION:

1. The main entrances to the convention/conference center buildings should be oriented toward the plaza and frame the edge of the space, rather than be angled toward Green Street. The entrances should be integrated into the Convention/conference buildings and not appear as attachments. The tile roofs should be eliminated.
2. The quality of the landscape, paving, and exterior lighting in the civic space in front of the Civic Auditorium—and the open space to the east and west of it—is important and therefore the collaboration between the design architect and the landscape architect is critical.
3. As specified in the first design principle of the City-wide Design Principles (in the Land-use Element of the General Plan), the new facilities should be more contemporary in design rather than mimic the Civic Auditorium. The materials should be of high quality and complementary to (or similar to) those on the Auditorium.
4. The Green Street and Marengo Avenue elevations are too repetitive. These façades should have a high level of interest and some transparency. They should also reflect the activity of building uses, and at appropriate points there may be a relief from the uniform set back. The elevations facing Green Street should also be simplified with larger masses and more solidity and relate to the activities in the pre-function space. The placement of these buildings should consider the drip line of the existing street trees.
5. In terms of the massing of the new buildings on each side of the Auditorium, the architect's drawings have not taken into consideration the change in grade. The sub-committee discussed

the design of the facades and how they tie in with the horizontal lines carried across from the Auditorium. If the design incorporates the look of a common base for these buildings, the new expansion to the east is at least five feet lower. This change in grade presents a challenge as to how the massing issues are resolved.

6. Review and demonstrate in drawings or other methods, the relationships of the proposed building, setback, sidewalk and the existing mature street trees on Green Street as a way to review the appropriate setbacks. Current Plans indicate a 5' setback, the Design Commission wants to confirm that this is adequate.
7. Recommend that the City Council refer to the adopted City-wide Design Principles (in the Land-use Element of the General Plan) and the Design Guidelines for the Civic Center in the Central District Specific Plan (see below) in their deliberations regarding this project.
8. Request that the applicant present both a 50% design and a final design of the project—with a full landscape design and full elevations of the new construction—to the Design Commission for advisory reviews to the City Council.

BACKGROUND:

The PCOC began the architectural design process for the expansion of the Conference Center in December of 2002. The initial exterior design developed for the project was a contemporary design, intended to be complimentary to the Civic Auditorium by using modern finishes and contemporary colors. The contemporary design was not well received by members of the community or the City Council.

In December of 2003, a subsequent design effort was undertaken with a new architect. The intent was to develop an exterior design scheme that would be compatible with and respectful to the historic Civic Auditorium, and also an integral part of the important Civic Center.

The PCOC structured an inclusive community process. This included the formation of a “Community Advisory Group” as well as presentations to many local civic groups. There were several working sessions held with members of Pasadena Heritage. The project was also presented and discussed at a “Community Town Hall” meeting. At the suggestion of Pasadena Heritage, two independent architects were commissioned to conduct a peer review exercise working with our architects. This was all done with the goal of developing the best possible project for the City of Pasadena.

The City’s design guidelines for the Civic Center / Midtown District (see attached), which includes the conference center, were also reviewed and key design principles were identified.

With the input from this process, and feedback from the previous design, the architect has developed an exterior design concept that takes design inspiration from the classical architecture and finishes of the Civic Auditorium. The design is complimentary to the Civic Auditorium and other buildings in the civic center and will be a long-term addition to the area.

The PCOC board unanimously adopted this design concept. Unanimous support has continued throughout the design process as the design has been refined and improved.

Subsequent to the adoption of the design by The PCOC Board, the architects and PCOC Staff held several meetings with a sub-committee of the Design Commission, to discuss questions and concerns that Design Commission Members had with the design. Although there was extensive dialog, no substantial changes to the design were made. The PCOC Board considered the recommendations of the sub-committee to be a completely different design philosophy than that employed by the PCOC

and the design architect. The PCOC Board also believed that the recommendations were contrary to the entire basis of the design, which was based upon input from the community.

On January 27, 2005, PCOC presented the project to The Design Commission for concept design review. The commission made several recommendations that included the abandonment of the historically contextual design in favor of a more contemporary design style. The PCOC board reviewed the recommendations of the Design Commission and determined that they would require a re-design of the exterior of the facility which would add a minimum of 6 months to the project schedule and \$2.5 - \$3.5 Million in additional cost in design fees and construction cost escalation to the project. The recommendation was also contrary to the public input the PCOC received on the project and represented a design philosophy that the PCOC Board and design architect did not support.

The PCOC's response to the individual comments of the Design Commission is as follows:

- 1 & 3. The curved entry elements are designed to be the prominent entry to a key civic building. They are intended to address Green Street and the new Civic Auditorium plaza and represent "open arms" that will greet visitors to the City of Pasadena. The design is consistent with the Civic Center / Midtown Sub-District Design Guidelines, creating a building that will be seen as a long-term addition to the area by maintaining stylistic unity with the classical architecture of the historic Civic Auditorium, and using a similar palette of colors and materials including masonry, stucco and tile.
2. The landscape, paving and lighting are important components of the design and have been fully integrated into the design. This includes the design recommendations of the City Center Task Force for the Civic Center / Mid-Town District.
4. The exterior elevations are in context with the design of the project, show appropriate transparency and adequately reflect the building uses. The drip line of the current trees is respected by the design and placement of the buildings.
5. The PCOC and the design architect have studied the grade change along Green Street and feel that the model demonstrates that the design adequately addresses the concern.
6. The model adequately demonstrates that the setback and massing of the building does not impact the existing mature street trees. That condition was verified with Parks and Natural Resources Department Staff.
7. The Civic Center / Midtown District Design Guidelines are the most appropriate document to reference when considering this project because of its location in the district. The design is consistent with those guidelines.

At a special meeting on February 9, 2005, The PCOC Board voted unanimously to retain the historically contextual design and recommend that design to the City Council for approval. The architect was also instructed to prepare detailed models that would clearly illustrate the design and the relationship of the design to the historic Civic Auditorium. This resulted in a 1-month delay of the design approval presentation to the city council.

The models were unveiled at a "Community Town Hall" breakfast on Tuesday May 10 as part of a presentation on the design and were well received by community members in attendance. The models will be part of the design presentation to City Council on May 23, 2005.

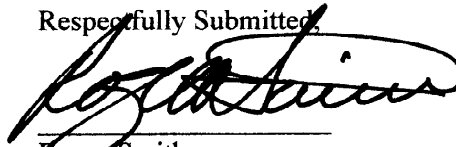
FISCAL IMPACT:

If the design is approved, there will be no additional costs to the project.

If the project requires a redesign of the exterior, additional design fees are estimated to be approximately \$ 600,000, which will exceed the amount previously approved by the Council. The project will also be delayed by a minimum of 6 months. It is estimated that the delay will add from \$2 - \$ 2.5 Million dollars to the project in additional construction project escalation costs. The additional construction costs may impact the feasibility of the project.

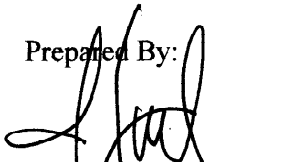
Delay to the project will also impact the realization of an estimated \$24 million in annual economic impact, an estimated 674 new jobs for Pasadena Residents as well as an increase in the city's share of TOT and sales tax revenue.

Respectfully Submitted



Roger Smith
Chief Executive Officer

Prepared By:


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Executive Director

SUB-DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

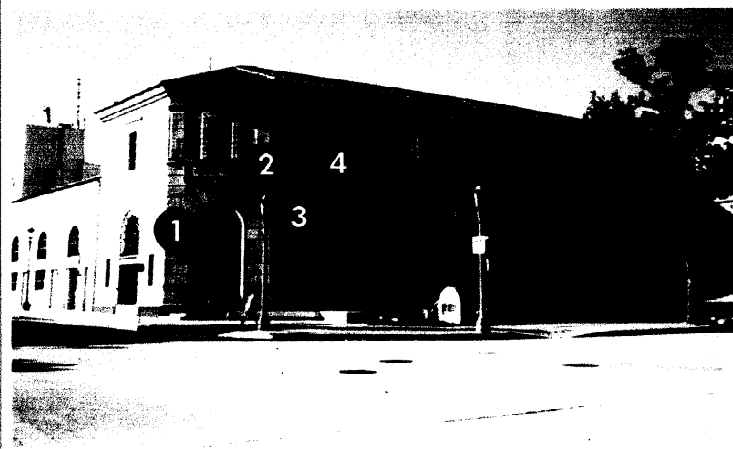
Civic Center / Midtown Design Precedent



- 1. Axial view to civic landmark
- 2. Responsive scale & massing
- 3. Articulated sub-volumes
- 4. Major public outdoor space



- 1. Spatially contained courtyard
- 2. Indoor-outdoor connection
- 3. Shade trees & lush plantings
- 4. Fountain as a focal element



- 1. Civic building w/ prominent entry
- 2. Classical model w/ clear proportions
- 3. High-quality, durable materials (ex.: masonry, terra cotta, ironwork)
- 4. Decorative elements



Civic Center / Midtown Design Guidelines**Sub-District
Character****Guideline: Respect Civic Landmarks**

Maintain a balance between monumental and “background” buildings. In general, new development should provide a context that highlights landmark civic buildings.

Guideline: Protect Views of Monumental Civic Buildings

Monumental civic buildings should be viewed from long approaches as befits their importance. The cross-axis that visually connects the principal civic buildings is of critical importance.

Guideline: Create Dignified Public Spaces

Distinguish this area by the presence of major public plazas and outdoor spaces suitable for public gatherings. These should include dignified spaces associated with public

Recommendations

1. 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.
2. 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 should be the dominant element of the skyline.
3. Establish Centennial Square fronting City Hall as a symbolically special place that accommodates important civic events and gatherings.
4. Preserve and restore historic buildings and landmarks; retain the historic character of the property.

**Street
Environment****Guideline: Promote High Standards of Street Design**

Detail streets to a high standards that reflect the civic importance of the area. Well-designed streets speak of the value of Pasadena’s citizens as they move about its public institutions.

Guideline: Reinforce the Bennett Plan

The Bennett Plan identified grand, public streets in keeping with the monumentality of its building layout. Streetscape improvements should uphold this vision.

Guideline: Maintain and Extend Historic Streetscape Elements

Wide sidewalks with decorative paving and broad tree lawns provide an appropriately dignified setting for City Hall. These and other historic elements such as historic light poles should be maintained and influence further streetscape improvements.

Recommendations

1. Use streetscape elements, including street trees, paving and lighting to identify and accentuate landmark structures.
2. Plant street trees along all of the area’s streets; use scale, form, and planting pattern to establish a clear hierarchy of streets.
3. Create grand promenades that visually strengthen the axes of Holly Street and Garfield Avenue; emphasize a formal planting of trees that does not disrupt views.
4. Maintain historic landscape elements such as ornamental street lights, paving, and tree lawns; streetscape improvements should reflect the quality and character of these historic elements.
5. Reference the Civic Center / Midtown Streetscapes Refined Concept Plan; streetscape improvements should be consistent with this plan.



Civic Center / Midtown Design Guidelines*Site Planning***Guideline: Provide a Gracious Landscape Setting**

The presence of gracious landscape spaces is one of the defining qualities of the Civic Center / Midtown area. Significantly, these spaces exhibit a strong relationship and comfortable flow between interior and exterior space.

Guideline: Embellish Outdoor Spaces

Courtyards, gardens and other landscape areas should be embellished with year-round greenery and floral abundance. These elements a gracious quality and are evocative of the Tournament of Roses Parade.

Guideline: Penetrate Blocks for Visual Connections

The building masses that define the area's streets should not isolate civic buildings and public spaces. Periodic penetrations of the street wall should build physical and visual

Recommendations:

1. Emphasize an elegant, simple landscape design vocabulary.
2. Establish strong physical and visual connections between indoor and outdoor space, and between adjacent outdoor spaces.
3. 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.
4. 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***Guideline: Achieve Design Coherence**

There should be a strong visual relationship between structures in the area, an expression of unity appropriate to a civic center. Clear proportions and materials that relate to adjacent buildings will help achieve this goal.

Guideline: Communicate Building Function

Buildings in the area accommodate commercial, residential or institutional uses, and these should be distinguished through their built form. In particular, public institutions should be readily identifiable.

Guideline: Build to the Highest Standards

The highest level of craftsmanship is expected of all buildings in the Civic Center / Midtown area. High quality design and construction acknowledges both the architectural heritage and civic importance of the area.

Recommendations:

1. Match the permanence and quality of civic buildings in the area; buildings should be designed and built as long-term additions to the area.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

