

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: SEPTEMBER 24, 2007

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN AMENDMENT
FOR THE WESTRIDGE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, 324 MADELINE DRIVE

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

1. Adopt the Environmental Initial Study, Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (Attachments 2, 3, and 4);
2. Adopt by Resolution the Specific Findings for the amendment of the General Plan land use designation from Medium Density Residential, 0-16 units per acre to Institutional, for the parcel located at 1066 South Orange Grove Boulevard, and approve the proposed General Plan Amendment, and adopt by Resolution the Specific Findings for the Master Development Plan and approve the proposed Master Development Plan Amendment with Conditions;
3. Find that the proposed zone change from RM-16-1 (Multi-Family Residential, 14 units per acre) to PS (Public, Semi-Public) is consistent with the purposes of Chapter 17.26 (PS, Public, Semi-Public District) of the Zoning Code, and approve the proposed Zone Change;
4. Find that the remaining sites identified in the adopted 2000-2005 Housing Element are adequate to accommodate the City's share of the regional housing need for the planning period pursuant to Government Code Section 65584 (Attachment 1);
5. Find that the proposed removal of four of six protected trees and 38 non-protected trees are consistent with the criteria provided in the City's Tree Protection Ordinance, as discussed in the body of the report (Attachment 1), and approve the tree removal requests;
6. Concurrently conduct first reading of an ordinance amending the official zoning map of the City of Pasadena established by Section 17.20.020 of the Pasadena Municipal

Code for the parcel at 1066 South Orange Grove Boulevard, from RM-16-1 (Multi-Family Residential, 14 units per acre) to PS (public, Semi-Public); and

7. Direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination (Attachment 5) in accordance with Section 15075 of the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW

On July 11, 2007, the Planning Commission reviewed and recommended approval of the proposed amendment to the Westridge School Master Development Plan (MDP), including the proposed zone change and amendment to the General Plan Land Use designation of the parcel at 1066 South Orange Grove Boulevard, and other components of the MDP. The Commission recommended addition of conditions that maintains the current enrollment (502) as the maximum and the number of staff and faculty at 105 employees, requires the review and approval of the number and location of temporary structures, and clarifies protection of remaining trees in accordance with the Tree Protection Ordinance. These new conditions and modification have been incorporated into the recommended Conditions of Approval of the MDP amendment (Exhibit B of Resolution, enclosed).

DESIGN COMMISSION REVIEW

On May 29 and June 11, 2007 the Design Commission reviewed the proposed Master Development Plan and concurred with staff recommendation to include four conditions of approval that pertain to design review of new construction, landscaping plans for each phase of the master plan with attention to specific protected trees that were identified for removal. Building height, setback and encroachment plane requirements on the new Science Center for view protection and privacy of adjacent residential developments were clarified. These conditions have been incorporated in the recommended Conditions of Approval of the Master Development Plan amendment (Exhibit B of Resolution, enclosed).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed amendment to the Westridge School Master Development Plan (MDP) consists of seven components, which are projected to occur in three phases over a ten-year period or longer. The major elements of this amendment are: 1) the proposed expansion of the school campus onto an adjacent parcel to the northwest (1066 South Orange Grove Boulevard), which will require a zone change and an amendment to the General Plan land use designation, and 2) the demolition of existing buildings in the campus and an existing parking lot, and construction of new school buildings and a new underground parking structure. Conditions of approval of this amendment shall supersede those of the previous amendments which are associated with completed projects, while certain conditions that are continuously implemented shall remain in effect. The current enrollment (502 students) and staffing (105 employees) shall remain as the maximum number allowed in the master plan amendment.

BACKGROUND

Westridge School for Girls (founded in 1913) is an independent, college-preparatory day school for 4th through 12th grade. The original Westridge School Master Development Plan was approved in 1993, and amended in 1998 and 2002. All the projects included in the 2002 amendment have been completed to date. This proposed amendment will maintain the student enrollment cap of 502 students (current enrollment is 502) and the number of faculty and staff will remain at 105.

The school campus presently consists of 9.15 acres (398,409 square feet) and 105,608 square feet of building floor area. The proposed amendment will add an adjacent parcel (17,388 square feet lot area) that will bring the total campus area to 9.54 acres (415,797 square feet).

The Westridge School for Girls campus is surrounded by residential uses: multi-family development along South Orange Grove Boulevard within the Multi-family Residential, 14 units per acre (RM-16-1) zone and single-family residences on the northeast, east and south on Arlington Drive, State Street and Brookmere Road within the Single-family Residential, four units per acre (RS-4) zone.

Components of the Proposed Master Development Plan Amendment

The proposed improvements are projected to occur in three phases, as follows:

Phase I:

- Addition of 1066 South Orange Grove property to the campus,
- Demolition of the 4,900-square-foot residence, and
- Construction of a new (19,730 square feet) Upper School Science Center on the site.

Phase II

- Demolition of existing Gertrude Hall Lecture (SMUD) building (1,155 square feet) and Gertrude Hall Classroom building (1,896 square feet),
- Construction of the new Middle School complex (21,040 square feet), and
- Remodel of existing Joan Irvine Smith Library.

Phase III

- Demolition of the existing Ranney House (8,376 square feet) and State Street surface parking lot (91 spaces),
- Construction of the new Lower School complex (17,436 square feet) with underground parking (109 parking spaces), and
- Minor alterations to the east side of Braun Science building.

ANALYSIS

Zone Change and General Plan Amendment

The proposed MDPA adds an adjacent residential property (1066 South Orange Grove Boulevard) to the school campus. This requires a zone change of the subject residential parcel from Multi-Family Residential, 14 units per acre (RM16-1) to Public, Semi-Public (PS), and a General Plan Land Use Diagram Amendment to designate the

residential parcel from Medium Density Residential (0-16 dwelling units per acre) to Institutional. See Exhibit A of the Resolution - map of campus and zone change area.

The current zoning of the subject parcel (RM-16-1) would allow up to six dwelling units in a multi-family residential development at this site. The proposed Science Center will be a less intense land use because it will be occupied during regular school hours and not typically on evenings, weekends and holidays as it would be if it was a six-unit multi-family residential building, and the school enrollment will not increase. The proposed development of this parcel will not provide access from Orange Grove Boulevard, thus, will result in less traffic on this segment of Orange Grove Boulevard. The proposed Science Center will not be required to provide parking spaces in this site because the building will be used by the same students and employees for which parking requirements are provided in the campus (currently 145 spaces, projected to increase to 167 with the completion of the underground parking structure in Phase III). Developing this site for the proposed Science Center will have no effect on the traffic circulation and parking operations because Westridge School will continue to implement a Parking Operations Plan regardless of the building development in this parcel. Lastly, school use is conditionally permitted in the current zoning of the property. This means that a school may be established at this site subject to approval of a Conditional Use Permit. However, Westridge School is requesting to incorporate the property into the school campus through a Master Development Plan Amendment process that provides the benefit of a comprehensive review of the entire master plan site.

Staff recommends approval of the request for zone change and General Plan amendment based on findings of consistency with General Plan objectives and policies: Objective 13.4 - Provides for adequate support for businesses and institutions that serve the needs of the City's diverse residents and families, including schools; promote public and private schools, support quality education for all students; Policy 23.4 – Support specific plans, master plans and other planning activities initiated by cultural, scientific, corporate, entertainment and educational institutions.

Development Standards

As part of the Master Development Plan, development at 1066 South Orange Grove will be subject to the same front and side setbacks as the RM-16-1 and more stringent building height (24 feet versus 36 feet allowed in the RM-16-1 zone) and encroachment plane (45° inward commencing at six feet above existing grade). These development standards will ensure that the proposed new Science Center will be compatible with the character and scale of the surrounding residential developments, and address specific concerns from neighbors pertaining to privacy and view protection. Detailed analysis is in Attachment 1 of this staff report. The proposed conditions of approval include requiring Westridge School to implement a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program and a Parking Plan that ensure that student, employee and guest parking needs are met within the school campus. Refinements have been made to conditions #33, 37, and 42 by staff, after the Planning Commission review, to further clarify and guide their implementation. Changes are indicated by strike outs and underlining.

Proposed Demolitions and New Construction

The proposed MDPA includes demolition of four structures and construction of new buildings in their place, with a total new floor area of approximately 58,206 square feet. The demolition and construction of replacement buildings will result in a net increase of

46,779 square feet of building floor area. Completion of the Master Plan Amendment will bring the total building floor area to approximately 152,387 square feet. Parking is currently provided for 149 cars in three lots on campus, and projected to increase to 167 parking spaces after completion of Phase III of the master plan. The code-required parking is 123 spaces.

Based on survey information and permit records, staff determined that the four buildings proposed for demolition do not meet the threshold or criteria that would qualify any of them for a level of historic or architectural significance. Thus, the demolition does not result in a loss of historic resources. Further discussion is in Attachment 1.

Although the master plan application has not provided architectural design plans for these proposed new buildings, the master plan will provide conditions of approval that will define the building envelopes of these new buildings in terms of building height, setbacks, provision of encroachment planes, which are compatible with the surrounding residential developments. These proposed new buildings are all less than 25,000 square feet; thus, will be subject to design review by the Planning Director prior to issuance of building permits.

Preliminary drawings submitted at this time show that the new Science Center building (Phase I) will be shorter than the three-story Madeline Condominium (to its south) to preserve views. It appears to be slightly taller than the one-story condominium building to its north; however, the type and placement of the Science Center windows will allow light in but not look out into the adjacent condominium units' windows to ensure privacy. The roofs are flat, in keeping with the flat roofs of the adjacent condominium buildings.

The proposed new Middle School buildings (Phase II), located in the interior of the campus will consist of four separate buildings with small footprints, which are consistent with the massing and size of the two buildings proposed to be removed. The proposed new Lower School building (Phase III) will replace the two-story Ranney House, and will consist of three separate smaller structures at grade. This grouping of buildings will relate to the other three buildings on State Street frontage of the campus, which were once residential structures that have been adaptively re-used for school purposes. See Exhibit C of the Resolution – Proposed Site Plan, Phase III of the Master Development Plan.

Housing

Since 2003, state law has required local jurisdictions to assess any reduction in potential density on a parcel to determine whether it will affect the jurisdiction's capacity for its share of the regional housing need (i.e., RHNA). If adequate capacity remains, then the jurisdiction may approve the reduction with two written findings: 1) this is a minor reduction in overall capacity consistent with the general plan, including the housing element; and 2) the remaining sites that were included in the City's Housing Element analysis are adequate for the jurisdiction's share of regional housing need. These two findings can be made for this zone change request. Therefore, the potential reduction by five housing units is within the housing forecast and is consistent with the City's 2000-2005 Housing Element of the General Plan, adopted in 2002. It is also within the range of housing forecast for Pasadena contained in the Southern California 2020 - a preliminary Growth Forecast: Regional Overview prepared by the Southern California Association of Governments.

Trees

An inventory of existing trees prepared by the applicant for the entire campus indicates that there are 33 street (public) trees and 271 private trees, including those that are in the residential parcel (1066 South Orange Grove Boulevard) that is proposed to be added to the school campus. None of the street trees will be affected by construction and they will be protected in accordance with the City's Tree Protection Ordinance. Among the 271 private trees, 30 are protected (7 Native and 23 Specimen), and six of the protected trees are proposed for removal. Staff recommends granting the request to remove four of the six protected trees and thirty-eight non-protected trees based on findings provided for in the Tree Protection Ordinance: that a campus-wide landscaping plan will include new trees that will result in a the tree canopy coverage that is greater than the tree canopy being removed. Further analysis and specific findings for granting requests for removal of certain trees are found in Attachment 1.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING:

The City held a neighborhood meeting on May 1, 2007 at the Allendale Library, attended by 13 residents of the neighborhood. Among the concerns raised at that neighborhood meeting include: privacy, view protection, potential increased traffic on State Street, traffic flow during the morning drop-off period. These concerns are addressed by conditions 6, 7 and 8 (See Exhibit B of Resolution).

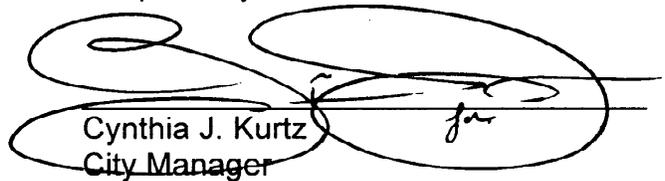
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND DOCUMENTATION

An Initial Study (Attachment 2) prepared for the project found that with incorporation of mitigation measures, potential significant impact will be reduced to an insignificant level. Therefore, a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program are recommended (Attachments 3 and 4).

FISCAL IMPACT

Amendment of the Westridge School Master Development Plan will have no fiscal impact because the school shall be responsible for the cost of processing future review and approval of projects in the form of fees in accordance with the City's Fee Schedule at the time of submittal of plans.

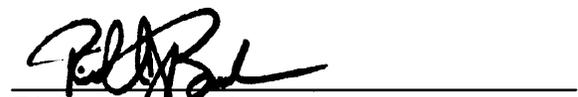
Respectfully submitted,


Cynthia J. Kurtz
City Manager

Prepared by:


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Planner

Approved by:


Richard J. Bruckner
Director of Planning and Development

Enclosure:

Resolution approving the General Plan Amendment and the Master Development Plan

- Exhibit A to the Resolution - Westridge School master plan map
- Exhibit B to the Resolution - Westridge School MDPA No. 3 (MDPA2007) -
Text and conditions of approval
- Exhibit C to the Resolution - Westridge School MDPA Phase III

Attachments:

1. Analysis and Findings for zone change and amendment to General Plan Land Use designation, demolitions and new construction development standards, proposed Master Development Plan, and proposed tree removals
2. Draft Initial Environmental Study (Traffic Study is available at City's web page at: <http://www.cityofpasadena.net/planning/environmental/Westridge>)
3. Mitigated Negative Declaration
4. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
5. Notice of Determination
6. Correspondence