

Agenda Report

September 19, 2016

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: LA SALLE HIGH SCHOOL MASTER PLAN - 3880 EAST SIERRA MADRE BOULEVARD

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council take the following actions:

1. Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program set forth in Attachment G for the project;
2. Adopt by Resolution the Specific Findings (Attachment A) for the approval of the La Salle High School Master Plan, acknowledging that the Master Plan, as conditioned, is consistent with General Plan and Zoning Ordinance; and
3. Approve the Private Tree Removal Permit for the removal of two protected mature trees on the La Salle High School campus, acknowledging that the replacement tree canopy is sustainable over the long term by adhering to the adopted replacement matrix.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On July 13, 2016, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the Master Plan to the City Council. The Commission discussed a variety of topics, including third-party uses, swimming pool operation hours, and the compatibility of school use with adjacent single-family uses. The Commission added conditions of approval that all pool activities cease by 7:00 p.m. and that parking information for large events be included on tickets for such events.

DESIGN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On November 10, 2015, the Design Commission conducted an Advisory Review of the proposed Master Plan. Based on comments from the Design Commission, conditions of approval have been added to address the height and visibility of the proposed solar

panels, green treatment of the proposed sound wall at the pool area, use of the pool, lighting, and historic preservation (Attachment B). As recommended by Design Commission, La Salle staff met with Department of Transportation (DOT) staff to modify the circulation plan. The revised circulation plan has been reviewed and approved by DOT and implemented by La Salle.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The proposed project is a 15-year, three-phase Master Plan for La Salle High School. The purpose of the Master Plan is to address various athletic and programmatic needs, including a new practice gym, aquatic building, performance arts and sound stage building and a field house. The project also includes a new outdoor swimming pool with an associated sound wall, reconfiguration and extension of an existing surface parking lot (north parking lot) and extension of the southern surface parking lot. No increase in student enrollment is proposed; the existing permitted enrollment capacity will remain at 780 students. The number of faculty would increase from 90 to 95. The proposed project would result in a net increase of 83,874 square feet; when all phases are complete, the proposed gross floor area of the campus would be 179,375 square feet.

BACKGROUND:

In 1955, an all-boys high school was established in the existing location of the La Salle High School campus through Conditional Use Permit (CUP) #75 with a maximum enrollment of 600 students. The high school was later converted to a co-education facility in 1991 and approved for a minor expansion to accommodate female students. In 1995, the school was approved for a more substantial expansion and an increase in student enrollment to 780 students. Several CUPs have been approved since 1995, which have allowed La Salle to install a freestanding reader board along their frontage of Sierra Madre Boulevard, an illuminated football scoreboard, outdoor bleacher seating and fencing adjacent to the sport field, and athletic field lights. The field lights are required be turned off no later than 7:30 pm, except in the instance of nine annual events when the lights may be on until 10:00 pm. Overall, the lights may be used up to a maximum of 52 times annually, but no more than three times during the same calendar week.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed project at 3880 E. Sierra Madre Boulevard is a three-phased, 15-year Master Plan for the construction of athletic and performance arts facilities for La Salle High School. The project includes the demolition of two existing buildings, removal of a baseball field (the baseball field was removed in 2013 and the La Salle baseball program is currently held at the Arcadia County Park), renovation of an existing classroom building, construction of five new buildings, consisting of a classroom building, new practice gym, aquatic building, performance arts and sound stage building and a field house, resulting in a net increase of 83,874 square feet. The project also includes a new outdoor swimming pool with an associated sound wall, reconfiguration

and extension of an existing surface parking lot (north parking lot), a new surface parking lot (south parking lot), landscaping and the removal of two protected trees. No increase in student enrollment is proposed; the existing permitted enrollment capacity will remain at 780 students. The number of faculty will increase from 90 to 95.

At full implementation, La Salle High School would include a net new increase of 83,874 square feet and a total gross floor area of 179,375 square feet. Attachment C identifies the existing and proposed buildings and facilities.

Location and Setting

La Salle High School is located on the south side of Sierra Madre Boulevard at the southwest corner of Michillinda Street, on the border of Pasadena and the City of Sierra Madre. Both Sierra Madre Boulevard and Michillinda Street are heavily trafficked streets that carry commuter traffic. North of the project site, across Sierra Madre Boulevard, are a retail shopping center, a multi-family development, and single family houses. To the south are single-family houses on Canfield Road, west is a church, and east, across Michillinda Street (in the City of Sierra Madre) are a church and multi- and single-family houses.

Phasing

The proposed Master Plan is a 15 year Master Plan, separated into three phases. Construction is dependent on fundraising efforts and construction could begin earlier if fundraising is greater than anticipated. A summary of each phase is provided below:

Phase 1: Projected to occur within 5 years of Master Plan approval

- Interior renovations to the existing administration/classroom building with no modifications to the exterior of the building.
- Demolish a 3,875-square-foot, two-story locker and classroom building and construct 1,800 square feet of classroom space located below an entry deck.
- Construct an 11,600-square-foot practice gymnasium with a maximum height of 40 feet at the lowest point on the south side.
- Construct an open-air swimming pool, including excavation to decrease the finished grade of the pool deck by eight feet from existing grade and construction of an associated sound wall that would extend 12 feet above existing grade. General public use of the pool is not permitted under this Master Plan.
- Construct an 8,750-square foot Aquatic Center located immediately south of the new Practice Gymnasium and west of the new pool. The Aquatic Center would include a weight room, locker rooms, team gathering areas, and equipment storage areas.

Solar collector panels and mechanical screening would be installed on the rooftop of the new Aquatic Center building.

- Restripe the existing surface parking and drop-off area, along East Sierra Madre Boulevard, extending east from the northwest corner of the property and terminating at the easternmost edge of the existing gym.
- Construct a parking lot at the southern-center portion of the site, west of the new Aquatic Building and east of the existing track and field area. This lot would replace the existing surface parking lot on which the new pool and aquatic building would be constructed. At build-out, there would be a net increase of nine parking spaces on the school's campus.

Phase 2: Projected to occur ten to fifteen years after Master Plan approval

- Demolish an existing 1,301-square-foot storage building.
- Construct a 43-foot 5-inches-tall performance arts and indoor sound stage building (measured from its lowest point on the south side). The total square footage of both buildings is 56,250 square feet. The proposed Performance Arts and Indoor Sound Stage Building would include 500 seats for spectators, an auditorium, a sound recording facility, and classroom space.

Phase 3: Projected to occur ten to fifteen years after Master Plan approval

- Construct a field house built into the hillside beneath the existing bleachers north of the track and field area (Building 12).

ANALYSIS:

General Plan Consistency

The project site has a General Plan designation of Institutional. This category is used to characterize facilities owned and operated by the City or by other public and/or private institutions such as corporate yards, schools, libraries, and hospitals. The proposed Master Plan is a Master Conditional Use Permit that outlines La Salle's proposed development and uses for the next 15 years; additionally, the school has been established in its current location since 1955, therefore, the continued use of the project site as a private high school is consistent with the General Plan, as further discussed in detail in attached Findings (Attachment A).

Zoning Code Consistency

The zoning designation for the project site campus is Public/Semi-Public (PS). All existing and proposed uses within the project site are conditionally permitted in the PS

zone. The proposed Master Plan would allow La Salle High School to continue to operate a school and ancillary school uses in the existing location; therefore, the proposed use is consistent with the intent of the PS zoning district.

Development Standards

For properties in the PS zoning district, the development standards are established through a CUP or Master Plan. The development standards proposed under this Master Plan are included as Attachment D.

Traffic

The Department of Transportation has reviewed the proposed project based on the thresholds outlined in the Traffic Impact Review Guidelines in 2012 and determined a Traffic Study was not required because there would be no new trips generated based on no increase in student population. The project includes an increase of five new staff members and therefore, the nominal increase in staff member also did not trip the thresholds of requiring a traffic study. Furthermore, events at the proposed Performance Arts Center would typically be held in the evenings or weekends during non-peak hours, therefore, no additional peak traffic trips are anticipated during peak traffic hours.

Parking/Circulation

The proposed Master Plan would provide all 204 required parking spaces on-site during Phase 1. To alleviate queuing along East Sierra Madre Blvd in active lanes, DOT staff has approved a change to the public street parking in front of the school. The changes to the public street parking zones would designate a larger area for queuing and allow for drop-off and pick-up to occur in the lane closest to the curb (where cars would normally park).

There are currently four curb cuts for ingress and egress for the northern parking lot along East Sierra Madre Blvd. The Master Plan includes reconfiguring the ingress and egress of this parking lot to have a total of three curb cuts. The new configuration of the north parking lot would allow for ADA parking spaces to be located closer to the main entrance of the school and allow for a drop-off/pick-up line within the parking lot. The proposed circulation plan has been reviewed and approved by DOT.

Historic Preservation

The existing gym was built in 1959, designed by Bissell & Duquette, and the administration/classroom building was built in 1956, designed by Barker and Ott. Preliminary research suggests that these buildings may be eligible for historic designation due to their representation of typical institutional development of the period and association with significant architects. The proposed project does not include any

exterior modifications to these buildings nor does it include any changes that would significantly impact their historic setting.

Noise

The City retained a Noise Consultant, Wieland Acoustics, Inc. to determine the noise impact of the proposed project which included measuring existing noise levels in five different locations in the immediate vicinity of the project site and comparing it to the thresholds set in the City's Noise Ordinance. The Noise Study found that water polo activities in the outdoor pool area could exceed the ambient noise level by more than five decibels at portions of the south property line; therefore, a 12-foot tall sound wall, with a portion cantilevered inward toward the swimming pool, along the southern portion of the proposed pool is necessary in order to mitigate these noise impacts to a less than significant level. The findings of the Noise Study are discussed in depth in the "Noise Section" in the attached Initial Study (Attachment G.)

Signage and Lighting

New identification signs on the proposed new buildings and general campus direction signs, scoreboards and code-required signs would be constructed. No exterior lighting is proposed or allowed with the exception of lighting required by applicable codes, such as the Building Code, Fire Code or Public Health Code.

Tree Removal Permit

The project site contains 72 private trees. The project proposes the removal of two protected trees (both are American sweetgum trees) to accommodate the improvements included in the Master Plan. The applicant has submitted a preliminary landscaping plan to show the general location of replacement trees and new landscaping on the Master Plan site. The preliminary landscaping plan complies with the adopted Tree Replacement Matrix and emphasizes a tree canopy that is sustainable over the long term.

Neighborhood Meetings, Correspondence and Public Hearing

Three neighborhood meetings were held to receive public comments on the proposed Master Plan on June 5, 2013, December 3, 2014 and October 27, 2015. Notices were sent to property owners and occupants within 500 feet of La Salle High School. Additionally, a project status update was given at the Lower Hasting Ranch Neighborhood Association (LHRA) board meeting on September 1, 2015, subsequently; the board selected one resident to represent the LHRA to continue discussion with La Salle and City staff. Several smaller meetings were held with neighborhood representatives to further understand and resolve residents' concerns. Some of the key issues are summarized below:

Noise impacts: Community members, particularly those adjacent to the school along Canfield Road have expressed concerns with potential noise that could be generated from the proposed pool. Several design features, such as excavating soil to site the pool at a lower elevation and construction of a proposed 12-foot sound wall are proposed to mitigate noise impacts. The City retained Wieland Acoustics, Inc. to prepare a Noise Study to determine the noise levels that could be generated by the operations of the proposed project and all noise impacts were found to be less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation measures. Several conditions have been included to address neighbors' concerns related to noise, such as Condition #47 requires the school to verify that activities associated with a typical water polo game are consistent with the Noise Ordinance 47 through the preparation of a noise study submitted to the Zoning Administrator. In addition, during deliberations at the Planning Commission public hearing, Condition # 44 was modified to restrict buzzers or whistles in the Aquatic Center and pool from being used before 8:00 a.m. and after 7:00 p.m. or dusk, whichever occurs first.

Lighting impacts: Neighbors have expressed concerns regarding lighting impacts from the school's existing and proposed operation. Lighting of the athletic field was approved in 2006 and no changes to the existing lighting restrictions of the athletic field are permitted under the proposed Master Plan. Additionally, no new lighting, with the exception of applicable code required lighting shall be permitted.

View obstruction impacts: In designing the project, the architect considered the potential visual impacts of the expansion of the school on neighboring residential properties and therefore, designed the project to site proposed buildings that are taller (proposed practice gym and performance arts center) closer to Sierra Madre Blvd. and away from the residential buildings located to the south. The school also installed story poles to illustrate the maximum height of the proposed practice gym, performance arts center and sound wall. The story poles were installed December 18, 2015 through December 27, 2015. Due to the 12-foot elevation change between the La Salle High School and the single-family residences to the south along Canfield Road, the scale and location of the new structures would not substantially obstruct views of the San Gabriel Mountains. Additionally, to minimize obstruction of mountain views by new development, Condition #45 establishes the maximum height of the solar panels on the Aquatic Center shall not exceed the maximum height of the sound wall and Condition #46 requires the school to provide a green treatment to south side of the sound wall (facing Canfield Road).

Third Party Uses: Currently, La Salle High School is operating under several CUPs. Due to third-party uses of schools being a relatively new source of neighborhood concern, the CUPs do not address third party uses with the exception of one condition in CUP#2968 approved in 1995 which states:

Use of amphitheater, gymnasium, and other school buildings shall be limited to school related activities only and shall not be used for events which are not a part of school activities.

In more recent years, it has become increasingly common for schools and institutions to offer their facilities to other schools and organizations that are in need for facilities for practices, events, fundraisers, and functions. However, coupled with the school's own normal day-to-day operations, the frequency and intensity of the events on the school campus may present traffic, parking and noise impacts to nearby uses. Therefore, several conditions have been included to regulate third-party uses:

First, it is reasonable to believe that smaller events occurring entirely indoors, such as SAT preparation classes, practices and games in the gyms, homeowner association meetings, community meetings, or similar third-party uses are unlikely to significantly impact the residential neighborhood. Therefore, no limits are placed on third-party uses with less than 150 attendees that occur entirely indoors; allowing the school to continue to offer their campus to some third-party uses with minimal impacts to the neighborhood. For larger events, limitations on the frequency, location, and type of events are proposed in Conditions #22, 26 and 27 in Attachment B and as listed below:

- Indoor events with more than 150 attendees – 15 days per calendar year
- Outdoor events – 12 days per calendar year
- Performance Arts Center – 24 performance days

Parking impacts: Neighbors also raised the issue of event participants parking on their streets. Several conditions of approval have been included, such as Condition #24 which was added at the request of Planning Commission, requires La Salle to provide event parking information to attendees; Condition #25 requires a parking monitor during large special events, and Condition #42 requires submittal of parking lease agreements.

Circulation impacts: There have been varying opinions and concerns regarding the number of curb cuts fronting Sierra Madre Blvd and the location of the curb cuts. The Master Plan proposes to reconfigure the ingress and egress of the northern parking lot to have a total of three curb cuts. A Circulation Assessment Study was prepared by URS dated June 3, 2013 to document the driveway and pedestrian circulation due to the change in driveway layout. The Circulation Assessment Study found that the location of a new curb cut was located too close to the intersection of East Sierra Madre and Michillinda Avenue; therefore, La Salle High School revised the circulation plan to move the new curb cut from the Michillinda Avenue crosswalk, for a total distance of 300 feet, in excess of the 200 feet recommended by URS. The circulation plan has been reviewed by DOT and will not conflict with such plans and will not interfere with effectiveness of the overall circulation system.

Written correspondence received pertaining to the project is included as Attachment E.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The Pasadena General Plan Land Use Element reaffirms the City's commitment to provide a diverse educational system responsive to the needs of the community,

including *GOAL 17. Educational System - A strong and diverse educational system that is responsive to the life-long needs of the community and related to maintaining a high quality of life and a strong economy.* Furthermore, General Plan Policy #17.4, *Long-Range Planning for Private Schools*, requires private schools to collaborate with the City on site selection, site design, traffic control, circulation and site acquisition to ensure compatibility with the neighborhoods or districts in which they are located.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

In accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, an Initial Study was prepared in order to identify and analyze the project's potential impacts on the environment. The 30-day public review period for the Initial Study began on June 6, 2016 and ended July 5, 2016. The Initial Study found that no significant and unavoidable impacts would result from the project, with the incorporation of mitigation measures.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The cost of the project reviews and permits would be borne by the school. There would be no fiscal impact to the City.

Respectfully submitted,




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Attachments: (7)

- Attachment A – Master Plan Findings
- Attachment B – Conditions of Approval
- Attachment C – Existing and Proposed Facilities
- Attachment D – Development Standards
- Attachment E – Written Correspondence
- Attachment F – Plans
- Attachment G – Initial Study, Mitigated Negative Declaration