



Agenda Report

TO: City Council

DATE: August 13, 2001

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT FOR CENTRAL DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN "a5 LAKE AVENUE OFFICE AREA - DEL MAR/CORDOVA TO THE FREEWAY"; AND ADOPT RESOLUTIONS APPROVING A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT FOR "a5 LAKE AVENUE OFFICE AREA - DEL MAR/CORDOVA TO THE FREEWAY" AND A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT FOR OUTPOST LANE FROM OS (OPEN SPACE) TO LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

RECOMMENDATION:

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

1. Approve the Initial Environmental Study (Attachment 1) and Negative Declaration;
2. Approve the De Minimis Impact on the State Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Attachment 2);
3. Find that the proposed General Plan Amendment is consistent with the principles, objectives and policies of the General Plan;
4. Approve the General Plan Amendment to allow residential uses in the "a5 Lake Avenue Office Area - Del Mar/Cordova to the Freeway", and
5. Direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination and a Certificate of Fee Exemption for the California Department of Fish and Game, with the Los Angeles County Recorder,
6. Adopt Resolutions approving the General Plan Amendment for the "a5 Lake Avenue Office Area - Del Mar/Cordova to the Freeway", and for the General Plan Amendment for Outpost Lane from OS (Open Space) to Low Density Residential (Attachment 3)

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed General Plan Amendment at their meetings of April 25 and June 27, 2001. At the public hearing on June 27th, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the staff recommendation with minor changes that staff supports and that are reflected in the above recommendation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed General Plan Amendment is to change the language in the General Plan for Central District Sub-area a5 Lake Avenue Office Area – Del Mar/Cordova to the Freeway, to permit housing in the entire area from the 210 Freeway to Del Mar/Cordova, between Hudson and Mentor Avenues, and that portion of Catalina that is within the sub-area. The General Plan permits 5,095 housing units in the Central District Specific Plan area, distributed among seven targeted areas, and the "Remaining Areas". The General Plan allows for the housing units, or the non-residential square footage, allocation in the "Remaining Areas" to be used either in that area or to be applied within the seven targeted areas if necessary. Two housing projects were approved in sub-area a5 that have resulted in transferring 354 units from the "Remaining Areas" to the sub-area.

The following is the proposed language to be added to the General Plan for sub-area a5:

Proposed New Language (In bold)

This part of the Central District Specific Plan envisions high quality offices, **residential and mixed uses** which may include commercial development at the ground floor to create an active, attractive pedestrian environment for employees using the adjacent light rail station to commute to work. Pedestrian and transit linkages will be provided to make it convenient and attractive for light rail riders to walk or take circulator buses to **their place of employment or residence**. **In order to maintain the strong non-residential component on South Lake Avenue, projects facing South Lake Avenue and Green Street must devote 50% or more of the square footage to non-residential uses. Residential uses are not permitted on the ground floor, except the entrances to residential units above. Housing facing Mentor, Hudson, and Catalina Avenues are not required to have a mixed-use component and may have residential uses on the ground floor.** All new buildings shall be limited to six stories in height.

Total New Housing Units = Will be allocated from the "Remaining Areas" of the Central District, and will replace total non-residential square footage at the rate of 850 square feet for each housing unit.

Total New Non-Residential Square Footage = 1,225,000

BACKGROUND

In April 1999, the City Council approved a similar amendment for Central District sub-area a5, however, it was limited to those parcels located north of Union Street and it did not permit housing facing on Lake Avenue.

When the Land Use Element of the General Plan was adopted in 1994, housing units were not allocated to the a5 sub-area. The rationale for the lack of housing in this sub-area was based in part on the 1983 Urban Design Plan, and the 1992 Urban Design Guidelines, which envisioned this area as a commercial corridor.

General Plan

After the April 1999 General Plan Amendment for sub-area a5, housing became a permitted use north of Union Street, for parcels that do not face South Lake Avenue. In addition, the General Plan restricts the height of new buildings in the sub-area to six stories.

The General Plan permits a total of 6,217,000 square feet of non-residential uses and 5,095 housing units in the Central District Specific Plan area, distributed among seven targeted areas, and the "Remaining Areas". The "Remaining Areas" permits 1,600,000 square feet of non-residential uses and 1,590 housing units. The General Plan states that the allocation in the "Remaining Areas" may be used either in this area or may be applied within the seven targeted areas if necessary.

Two housing projects were approved in sub-area a5 that resulted in transferring 354 units from the "Remaining Areas" to Sub-area a5. In April 2001, the Planning Commission approved "applying" 100 units from the "Remaining Areas" to sub-area a4, the Playhouse District. Both the applying and transferring processes from the "Remaining Areas" accomplished the same goal, which was to provide housing units to areas that either did not have housing units or not enough housing units to accomplish the goals for the area as stated in the General Plan. In addition, five other residential projects totaling 161 units have been approved within the Remaining area. With these actions, there are 975 housing units remaining in this area.

The proposed General Plan Text Amendment supports many objectives and policies contained in the Land Use and Mobility Elements of the General Plan. The proposed amendment in itself will not construct new housing, however, it will provide the opportunity for more urban housing and mixed-use development projects to be developed in the Central District Specific Plan area. One of the developmental goals specified for each of the seven Specific Plans is to "emphasize their linkages to transit by clustering mixed use projects near light rail stations and along Lake Avenue and Colorado Boulevard."

The land use policies in the Mobility Element that support housing in sub-area a5 are: "1) Focus new multi-family residential development into key transit corridors; 2) Focus new employment in key transit corridors, especially along Lake Avenue and Colorado Boulevard; 3) Develop Mixed Use Zoning." "Allow mixed-use zoning which includes housing and commercial to encourage living and working in same area and reduction of trips. Examples include ability for store owners to live above store, works to rent/town in close proximity to jobs and work opportunities." It is the intent of the General Plan Amendment for South Lake Avenue to continue as a strong commercial corridor. Also, "Develop convenient access between affordable housing and affordable transportation."

Policies in the Land Use Element that support this amendment are: Transit-Oriented and Pedestrian-Oriented Development: Within targeted development areas, cluster development near light rail stations and along major transportation corridors (*Lake Avenue*) thereby creating transit oriented development "nodes" and encouraging pedestrian access. Also, Policy 1.4 - Mixed Use: Authorize and encourage Mixed development in targeted areas (*specific plans*), including in-town housing, live-work spaces and in-town commercial uses.

This General Plan Text Amendment proposes that when new housing units are proposed in sub-area a5 that the units be drawn down or transferred from units allocated to the "Remaining Areas" rather than use the "applying" process. In addition, in the sub-area, the amount of non-residential square feet will be reduced based on a conversion formula similar to the one used in the West Gateway Specific Plan and the 1999 General Plan Amendment for housing on South Lake which is one housing unit equals 850 of non-residential square feet. This will ensure that overall intensity for the sub-area will not be increased. For example, the two housing projects totaling 354 units will reduce the amount of non-residential square feet by 300,900 square feet. This means that 924,100 square feet of non-residential development is available for future allocation in sub-area a5.

General Plan Update and Central District Specific Plan

The 1994 General Plan Land Use Element is currently being updated and the Central District Specific Plan is being prepared. Completion of these documents is anticipated for Spring 2002. The proposed amendment to allow housing in sub-area a5 is consistent with the direction of these two documents. The reason for moving this amendment forward now is that, even though staff does not have specific projects before the city, there are several potential developments being discussed. The opportunity to gain housing for this area in the near future, and to add to the continued development South Lake, along with the Shops on South Lake Avenue, is consistent with the General Plan goal of making South Lake a more enlivened experience than what is occurring at the present time. In addition, according to the Mobility Element consultants, future traffic generated from housing and mixed-use projects in the a5 sub-

area will result in fewer automobile trips than the development of equivalent non-residential projects.

Zoning Code

The zoning code permits housing units in all of sub-area a5 (except for PD-10, which does not permit any housing) at a density of up to 87 dwelling units per acre. The height for the sub-area varies based on location. For those areas along Green Street, Hudson Avenue and Mentor Avenue, the height is 50 feet. From Corson Street south to Del Mar, on the west side of Lake Avenue, the permitted height is 130 feet. On the east side of Lake Avenue, the permitted height is 130 feet from Corson Street to Cordova Street; south of Cordova Street it is reduced to 50 feet. Note that the General Plan limits height in sub-area a5 to 6 stories. This would supersede the zoning height of 130 feet, but would not permit the 50 feet to be increased to 6 stories.

The setbacks on Lake Avenue vary depending on location. From Corson Street south to Colorado Boulevard, no setbacks are required; from Colorado Boulevard south to Green Street, no setbacks are permitted; from Green Street to Cordova Street, the setbacks are to be the average of the two adjacent properties; and from Cordova Street south to California Boulevard, no setbacks are permitted. The setbacks on Hudson and Mentor Avenues are a 20-foot minimum.

No changes to the existing height and setback requirements in sub-area a5 are recommended.

New Development Issues - Opportunity for Development

In analyzing the a5 sub-area for potential sites for new housing development, staff determined that there are few potential locations for development. This was based on identifying locations for potential development as primarily surface parking lots; buildings that are underutilized, with sufficient land that could be developed; and ownership patterns. There are not many sites that appear to be candidates for redevelopment. However, two sites, both on the west side of Lake Avenue between Green and Cordova Streets, have the most potential to develop.

Proposed Development Standards - Recommendations for Multifamily Residential and Mixed Use Projects in Sub-area a5

Staff recommends that housing on the Lake Avenue frontage for 185 feet in depth on the west side of Lake Avenue and 180 feet on the east side of Lake Avenue be part of a mixed-use development. Projects facing Green Street for 75 feet in depth will also be required to be a mixed-use development. In these areas, non-residential development (retail, office or service use) would be required on the ground floor. The higher floors could contain a mix of residential and non-residential uses, but residential uses would be limited to 50% of the total square footage of the building.

Because of the residential character of Mentor, Hudson and Catalina Avenues, development facing these streets is not required to be mixed-use and may be 100% residential, including the ground floor.

Traffic

Many of the intersections on Lake Avenue in sub-area a5 are among the most congested in the city. The residential property owners around Lake Avenue consider the traffic impacts of new development to be a significant issue. Because residential development generates fewer automobile trips and due to the ability of residents in the Lake Avenue corridor to walk or use transit for some trips, replacement of some of the non-residential development with residential development should result in fewer additional automobile trips in this corridor.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Land Use and Mobility Elements of the 1994 General Plan concludes that collectively the objectives and policies in the Land Use Element mitigate adverse impacts associated with growth and high-quality development. No mitigation measures were recommended in the EIR. However, new development should be analyzed for significant local impacts when it is proposed, and separate Initial Environmental Studies be prepared for specific projects if required. Staff prepared an Initial Environmental Study (Attachment 1) in compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and found that the proposed General Plan Amendment will not have a significant effect on the environment and that a Negative Declaration will be prepared.

CONCLUSION

Approval of the General Plan Text Amendment for the "a5 Lake Avenue Office - Del Mar/Cordova to the Freeway" study area, and of the Initial Environmental Study, does not in and of itself permit any housing projects to be built in the sub-area. The revised General Plan language will permit, or provide the opportunity for housing development in the entire "a5" sub-area to occur. The housing units for this proposal are to be from the "Remaining Areas" of the Central District. In addition, any proposed housing units will reduce the amount of square footage of non-residential uses permitted in the "a5" sub-area by 850 square feet.

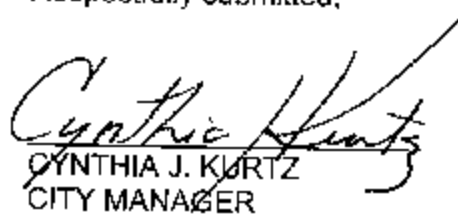
GENERAL PLAN RESOLUTION – State Law limits each General Plan element to four amendments each calendar year. Because of this limitation, resolutions amending the Land Use Element of the General Plan typically include more than one item. The attached resolution (Attachment 3) covers both the "a5 Lake Avenue Office – General Plan text amendment, and the Outpost Lane General Plan map amendment that the City Council approved on April 9, 2001.

HOUSING IMPACT – By including housing as one of the allowable uses in the Central District sub-area a5, more opportunities for housing will be available in downtown Pasadena. Requiring housing on Lake Avenue and Green Street to be part of a mixed-use development will help to maintain the commercial character of these streets, but also allowing residential development. All new housing projects would be subject to the citywide inclusionary housing requirements, which may result in additional affordable housing units.

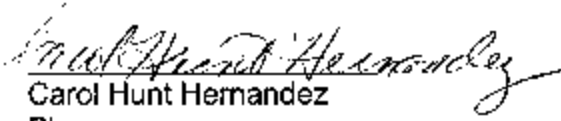
FAMILY IMPACT STATEMENT – This General Plan amendment will provide opportunities for additional downtown housing for families that is convenient to employment centers, public transportation, and shopping.

FISCAL IMPACT – Approval of this General Plan amendment may result in additional development activity in the South Lake Avenue corridor. This may increase the property tax revenue to the City. All development projects will be required to pay fees that will cover the costs of staff workload to process the projects.


Respectfully submitted,


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CITY MANAGER

Prepared by:


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Planner

Approved by:


Richard Bruckner, Director
Planning and Development

Attachments:

1. Initial Environmental Study
2. De Minimis Impact
3. General Plan Resolution
4. Notice of Determination
5. Zoning Map
6. General Plan Map