

Agenda Report

TO: City Council

DATE: OCTOBER 22, 2001

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR PASADENA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

RECOMMENDATION:

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

1. Approve the Environmental Exemption (Attachment 3);
2. Approve the De Minimis Impact Finding on the State Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Attachment 4);
3. Adopt the Master Development Plan Findings, as stated in the report, for the Amendment to the Master Development Plan for Pasadena Christian School;
4. Approve the Pasadena Christian School Master Development Plan Amendment (Attachment 2) subject to the Conditions of Approval;
5. Direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Exemption (Attachment 5) and the Certificate of Fee Exemption for the California Department of Fish and Game, with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

PLANNING COMMISSION:

The Planning Commission reviewed the proposal at their meeting on September 26, 2001. The Commission sought clarification about the re-use of the property where the demolition is proposed after the proposed library is completed. Staff responded that there are no plans for development at this time. At such time when plans are proposed, the school will return to the city for review and approval. The Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Master Development Plan Amendment. The single speaker was the superintendent of the school.

BACKGROUND:

The Master Development Plan for the Pasadena Christian School (1515 N. Los Robles Ave.) was approved by the City Council in December 1998. That approval resulted in the construction of a 6,750 square foot pre-school facility.

The current student enrollment is 638 students, with a capacity of 688 students, ranging from pre-school to grade 8. The campus is approximately 6.9 acres in size and includes eight school buildings.

PROPOSED PROJECT:

The Pasadena Christian School (1515 N. Los Robles Ave.) proposes to amend its Master Development Plan to include the construction of a one-story (20 feet), 6,600 square foot library/media center and the demolition of an existing house, garage, and storage shed at 396 E. Howard St. The demolition will total 1,770 square feet and will result in the net addition of 4,830 square feet to the school campus.

The library/media center will be comprised of a library, a media center, and one science classroom. No increase in the current student enrollment of 638 students is proposed.

The house, garage, and shed will be demolished to provide a staging area for construction equipment for the duration of the library's construction. After completion of the project the site will be converted into an open space area. At such time as the school chooses to develop on this site, including playground equipment, discretionary approval from the City must be attained.

If the amendment is approved the school will apply for a building permit for the library/media center and a demolition permit for the house, garage, and shed.

ANALYSIS:

General Plan Designations: The project site is currently designated Institutional on the General Plan Land Use Diagram (Attachment 1). Surrounding land use designations include: Low Density Residential (0-6 dwelling units / net acre) to the north and east; Medium Density Residential (0-16 dwelling units / net acre) west; and Medium-High Density Residential (0-32 dwelling units / net acre) to the south.

Zoning Designations: The current zoning designation for the project site is PS (Public and Semi-Public District) (Attachment 2). Surrounding zoning designations include: RS-6 (Single-Family Residential District, 6 dwelling units / net acre) to the north and east; RM-16 (Multi-Family Residential District, 16 dwelling units / net acre) to the west; and RM-32 (Multi-Family Residential District, 6 dwelling units / net acre) to the south.

Land Uses: The project site is an existing school campus that has been operated by Pasadena Christian School since 1958. The site is accessible on three sides by N.

Garfield Ave. on the west, E. Howard St. on the north, and N. Los Robles Ave. on the east. To the north and east are single-family residential dwelling units and to the west and south are multi-family apartment buildings.

Traffic and Parking: The campus currently contains a total of 106 parking spaces: 70 spaces in the Garfield Avenue lot; 19 spaces at the main campus entrance on Los Robles Avenue; and 17 spaces at the pre-school on Los Robles Avenue.

Primary access to the school campus is through the Garfield Avenue lot for grades K-8. Access to the pre-school is from Los Robles Avenue.

The proposed project will not increase the staff or student population and therefore no new parking or alterations to the traffic circulation will be required.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING:

A neighborhood meeting was conducted Thursday May 10, 2001, at La Pintoresca Library. Three people who represent surrounding neighborhood associations expressed support for the school proposal. No one appeared in opposition.

Staff received two phone calls from a neighbor near the intersection of N. Garfield Ave. and E. Howard St. who expressed concern about construction traffic at that intersection.

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION:

The proposed amendment was reviewed by the Cultural Heritage Commission at its June 18 and July 2, 2001 meetings. A site visit was conducted as a part of the July 2 meeting. The Cultural Heritage Commission recommended that the house at 396 E. Howard S. is, *"...architecturally insignificant, ineligible for designation as a landmark, and ineligible for rating as a structure of merit."*

DESIGN COMMISSION:

The proposed amendment was reviewed by the Design Commission at its June 25, 2001 meeting. The Design Commission recommended that the demolition of the house at 396 E. Howard St., *"...does not affect any architecturally significant structures that may qualify as historic resources."* Additionally, the Design Commission has recommended that it, *"...shall conduct design review of the proposed library/science building..."*.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:

There are two objectives and two policies within the Land Use Element of the General Plan that support an educational institution like Pasadena Christian School and its need for growth and development.

OBJECTIVE 13 (Adequate Services) is intended to provide adequate support for businesses and institutions that serve the needs of Pasadena's residents and families. Policy 13.4 states: "*Education: Promote public and private schools, support quality education for all students.*"

OBJECTIVE 23 (Existing Institutions) supports long-term growth opportunities for existing institutions to grow in balance with their surroundings. Policy 23.2 states: "*Provide land use opportunities to retain and develop regionally significant cultural, scientific, corporate, entertainment, and educational uses.*"

MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN FINDINGS:

In addition to the General Plan consistency, Section 17.98.040 (f) of the Zoning Code requires findings to be made for Master Development Plans, similar to those for conditional use permits.

1. The location of the Master Development Plan is in accord with the special purposes of this title and the purposes of the district in which it is located. The purpose of a Master Development Plan is to allow an institutional use to plan for future development without the need for conditional use permits for each phase of development. Through city review, this Master Development Plan amendment will result in development that is compatible with the surrounding environment.

2. The location of the Master Development Plan and conditions under which it would be operated or maintained will be consistent with the General Plan. The school is a land use that will support the needs of Pasadena's diverse residents and families. It will provide educational opportunities consistent with Policy 13.4 of the General Plan promoting public and private schools that endorse quality education for all students.

3. The Master Development Plan will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare of persons residing or working in or adjacent to the neighborhood of such use or injurious to properties in the vicinity. This amendment will not increase the intensity of Pasadena Christian School either through an increase in students or staff. In addition, the construction that will occur will be on the interior of the campus. By working with the City of Pasadena, this and future development will be examined to ensure that the school does not adversely affect the surrounding neighborhood. The continued existence and prosperity of the school will allow it to be a positive influence upon the neighborhood.

4. The Master Development Plan will comply with the provisions of this title, including any specific condition required for the proposed Master Development Plan in the district in which it would be located. The Master Development Plan is subject to City code provisions, inspections, and monitoring. It is found that these measures will ensure compliance with the City's various regulations and requirements.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

This Amendment to the Pasadena Christian School's Master Development Plan has been determined to be categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 15314 (*Minor Additions to Schools*) of Article 19 (*Categorical Exemptions*) of CEQA exempts from the provisions of CEQA additions to schools on existing school grounds where the original students capacity is not increased by 25% or ten classroom, whichever is less.

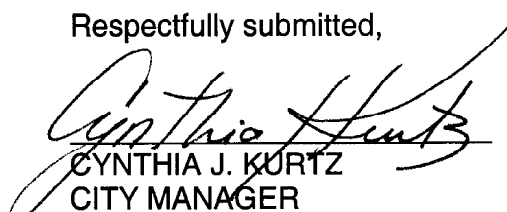
FAMILY IMPACT:

This amendment to Pasadena Christian School's Master Development Plan will allow the school to provide better facilities for its students, and continue to provide educational opportunities for school children in and around Pasadena.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There will not be an immediate fiscal impact as a result of this Master Development Plan Amendment. However, contingent upon approval of the Amendment, it is expected that plans for the library/media center will be submitted immediately following approval. Permitting fees will be collected from this and any future development proposed on the site to cover costs incurred from staff time required for project review.

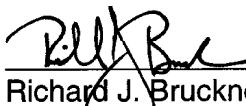
Respectfully submitted,


CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
CITY MANAGER

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Approved by:


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Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Location Map
- Attachment 2 – Proposed Master Development Plan Amendment
- Attachment 3 – Environmental Exemption
- Attachment 4 – De Minimis Impact Finding
- Attachment 5 – Notice of Exemption