

Agenda Report

DATE: March 24, 2003
TO: CITY COUNCIL
FROM: City Manager
SUBJECT: Predevelopment Plan Review for the Proposed Ambassador Campus Master Plan (300 West Green Street), within the West Gateway Specific Plan Area

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is for information only.

BACKGROUND:

The City's Predevelopment Plan Review (PPR) guidelines identify projects of "community-wide significance" that are presented to the City Council for informational purposes. Shea Homes, on behalf of the Worldwide Church of God, has submitted a proposal to govern the future development of the Ambassador College campus within the West Gateway Specific Plan area. The West Gateway Specific Plan was adopted by the City Council in July 1998 to provide the land use regulations, development standards, and design guidelines for all properties within the Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan area is divided into three sub-areas, the Ambassador College West Campus is located in the Orange Grove/Colorado sub-area: the East Campus is located in the South De Lacey Corridor sub-area.

The Worldwide Church of God intends to develop the Ambassador Campus as a master planned urban development with Shea Homes acting as the Master Development Consultant for the entire project. They have indicated their intent to apply for a Planned Development District (PD), a Development Agreement and potentially a Community Financing District. The Worldwide Church of God intends to sell the sites to developers who in turn will develop their sites according to the overall plan as defined by a Development Agreement between the City and The Worldwide Church of God.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposal for the Ambassador Campus envisions the retention of most of the significant historic buildings on the site, the removal of a number of non-historic structures and the construction of new infill buildings that will be developed as a variety of housing types. The campus consists of approximately 45 acres of land and two major parcel areas; the West Campus located west of the 710 Freeway, and the East Campus located south of Old Pasadena. Proposed residential unit count for the total development is 1,525 units and approximately 43,000 square feet of neighborhood serving commercial development. The project will provide a mix of single family and multi-family units, including detached houses and a variety of attached flats, town homes, condominiums and apartments. Additionally the applicant has indicated one or more of the individual housing projects might be restricted as senior housing developments.

West Campus - The Worldwide Church of God proposes to develop the West Campus into two distinct residential neighborhoods. These include the Orange Grove neighborhood with 231 units, which equates to a residential density of approximately 11.8 units per acre and the St. John's neighborhood with 504 units for a density of approximately 38.2 units per acre. Total unit count for the West Campus proposal is 735 units. Except for the Ambassador Auditorium, the Orange Grove Apartments and the Memorial Hall Garden/Reflecting Pool, all of the remaining historic structures and gardens on the West Campus, which are to be preserved under the Specific Plan, will remain. The Worldwide Church of God's proposal includes exclusively residential land uses for the West Campus. The proposal includes the re-establishment of Terrace Drive (a north/south street connecting Green Street and Del Mar Boulevard), which was vacated in 1970, and four additional streets for local circulation

East Campus - On the East Campus, the Worldwide Church of God is proposing an urban mixed-use village. This urban village will consist of 790 new dwelling units and the construction of approximately 43,000 square feet of new support commercial. A total of 215,610 square feet of warehouse-type structures will be demolished to make way for 1.12 million sq. ft. of development. A historic single-family house located at 144 West Valley will remain and be rehabilitated. As proposed, the East Campus includes a new north/south street bisecting the middle of the block (between Green Street and Orange Street) along with a new east/west street at the southern end of the property.

PPR MEETING SUMMARY:

On February 20, 2003, a PPR meeting for the project was conducted between the applicant and city staff. The purpose of the PPR meeting is to identify the requirements of the various city departments, to give applicants direction

regarding their projects, and to outline the development schedule. The meeting identified the following discretionary actions and issues:

Specific Plan Review – The West Gateway Specific Plan directs the development proposal for the Worldwide Church of God's mix of uses, heights and setbacks for the West and East Campuses. The Guiding Principles for the West Gateway Specific Plan call for the preservation of the significant historic buildings, gardens and landscape features on the Worldwide Church of God property, including the Ambassador Auditorium. The redevelopment proposal to demolish the Ambassador Auditorium conflicts with the spirit and intent of the West Gateway Specific Plan. Issues to be considered in the analysis of the development application include: historic preservation, traffic, open space, trees, and urban design. These issues may be addressed through the implementation of a Planned Development.

Environmental Review – Although the West Gateway Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was adopted in July 1998. The complexity of the Ambassador Campus Reuse Plan merits its own project EIR to fully analyze the re-development issues. An Initial Environmental Study will focus the EIR. A Scoping Meeting, early in the process, will permit the community to comment on potential environmental issues.

Planned Development – A Planned Development zoning district is a tool that facilitates the orderly planning of large sites that cannot be developed in a single phase and provides greater certainty for property owners, the City, and the community. The Worldwide Church of God proposes to enter into a planned development district for the project.

Development Agreement - A development agreement is planned as a way to negotiate, for example, infrastructure improvements, preservation of buildings and/or open space, which will have a mutual benefit to the developer and the City. It can be used in concert with a Planned Development.

Subdivision Review – The Ambassador College property currently consists of numerous legal parcels that do not reflect the existing pattern of development or the proposed redevelopment of the property. It will be necessary to adjust existing lot lines to reflect existing and proposed development and to facilitate the financing and sale of specific development parcels.

Historic Preservation – The project involves the demolition of approximately 41 existing buildings. Six of these buildings (five buildings of the Orange Grove Apartments and the Ambassador Auditorium) have been identified as significant.

Design Review – Design review is required for new construction in all zoning districts when the square footage of a project exceeds 25,000 square feet. It is

anticipated that most developments within the project will be subject to Design Review.

Trees – This plan retains 70% of protected species and plans to relocate 15% of protected species elsewhere on the site.

Inclusionary Housing Plan - The project will be required to submit an Inclusionary Housing Plan, which fulfills the requirements of the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance. The current ordinance requires that 15 % of the residential units be available for families or persons of restricted income.

Commission Review - The following commissions will be involved in the entitlement process:

- Planning Commission
- Design Commission
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Urban Forestry Advisory Commission
- Traffic Advisory Commission

TIMELINE:

The following schedule outlines the major stages in the process:

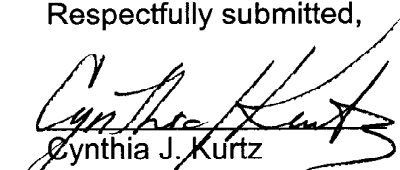
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| 2/20/03 | PPR meeting between applicant and city department representatives |
| 3/24/03 | PPR report to City Council as information item
City Council Recommendation on EIR Consultant |
| 4/01/03 | Applicant submits application for Development Agreement, Community Financing District, Inclusionary Housing Plan, and Planned Development Zone Change Request |
| 4/01/03 | EIR Contract Initiation, preliminary data gathering, traffic counts etc.
Prepare Initial Study |
| 5/01/03 | Deem Application Complete |
| 5/15/03 | Project Initiation Scoping, Complete Initial Study, Notice of Preparation Scoping Meeting(s) |
| 6/01/03 | Scoping Meeting |
| 7/01/03 | Prepare Screen Check draft EIR |
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- 9/01/03 Staff Review of Screen Check draft EIR, Revise Prepare and Print draft EIR
- 10/15/03 Publish draft EIR for 45 day Comment Period
- 11/10/03 Public Meeting(s) to Receive Comments on draft EIR with various City Commissions
- 12/01/03 Comment Period Closed, Prepare Response to Comments
- 2/01/04 Staff review of Response to Comments
- 3/01/04 Prepare Findings of Fact, Prepare and print Final EIR
- 3/15/04 Planning Commission Public Hearing on Project, Development Agreement and Planned Development Zone Change
- 4/01/04 City Council Public Hearing to Certify EIR and take action on Project

FISCAL IMPACT:


Fees are required for the discretionary actions associated with the project. The project will also generate plan check and permit fees, in an amount that cannot be determined at this time. In addition, the project will generate property tax revenues not currently assessed.

Respectfully submitted,



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Approved by:

JR



Richard J. Bruckner
Director of Planning & Development Department