



II. Project Description

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A. PROJECT LOCATION

The Pasadena Conference Center is located in the central portion of the City of Pasadena, approximately one-quarter mile south of Pasadena City Hall and approximately 0.5 mile south of the Foothill Freeway (I-210). The Project site is located on the northern two thirds of the block bounded to the north by Green Street, to the east by Euclid Avenue, to the south by Cordova Street, and to the west by Marengo Avenue, which is one block east of Arroyo Parkway. Figure 1 on page 27 identifies the location of the Project site in a regional and local context. Regional access to the Project site is provided via the Foothill and Ventura Freeways. In addition, the Pasadena Freeway (SR-110), which becomes Arroyo Parkway near the southwestern most portion of the City of Pasadena, provides access to the Project site from the south.

The Project site is located in an area that is characterized by a mix of land uses, as shown in Figure 2 on page 28. Immediately north of the Project site, across Green Street, is Paseo Colorado, a three-block, open-air urban village which features 387 residential units, professional offices, and approximately 8 dining and 60 retail establishments, including a gourmet market (Gelson's), a department store (Macy's), and a multi-screen movie theater. To the east and west of the Project site are primarily office uses. Immediately to the south on the same block as the Project site are the 317-room Sheraton Hotel, the 14-story Concord-Pasadena senior housing development, and the 135-unit Arpeggio apartment complex.

B. EXISTING PROJECT SITE COMPONENTS

The Pasadena Conference Center complex consists of a variety of existing structures and two exterior plazas. The Pasadena Civic Auditorium and the Pasadena Ice Skating Center are located on the central portion of the Project site, the Exhibition Hall and Ludwigshafen Plaza on the western portion, and the Conference Center and Mishima Plaza on the eastern portion, as shown in Figure 3 on page 29. The site also contains two subterranean parking levels.

The Civic Auditorium, which is located on the north-central portion of the Project site, was constructed in 1931 and is a contributing structure to the Civic Center National Register Historic District. This facility contains approximately 132,397 square feet with 3,029 fixed seats. Adjoining the Civic Auditorium to the south is the Pasadena Ice Skating Center, which

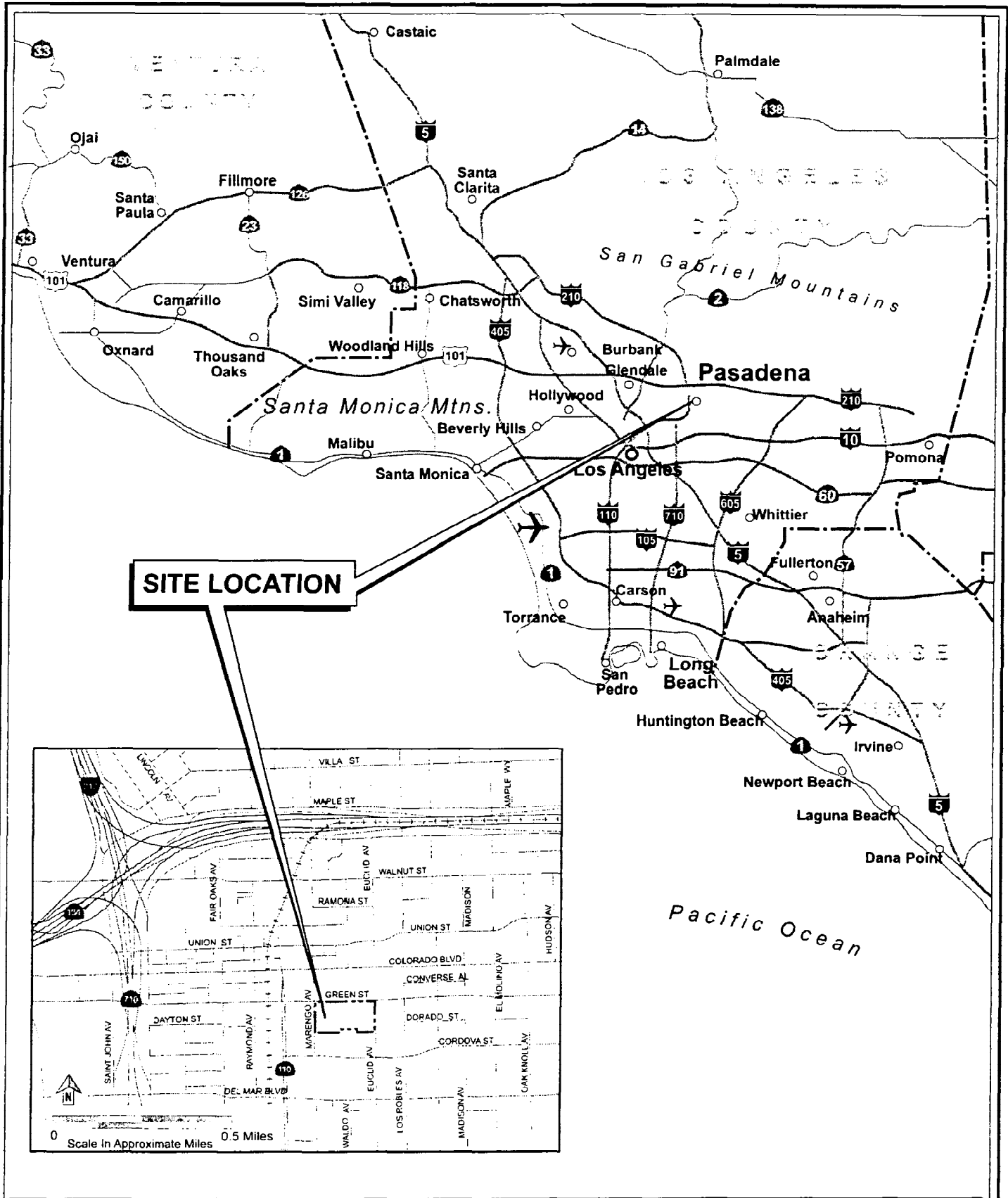


Figure 1
Regional Location
and Vicinity Map

Source: PCR Services Corporation



Figure 2
Aerial Photograph of
On-Site and Surrounding Uses

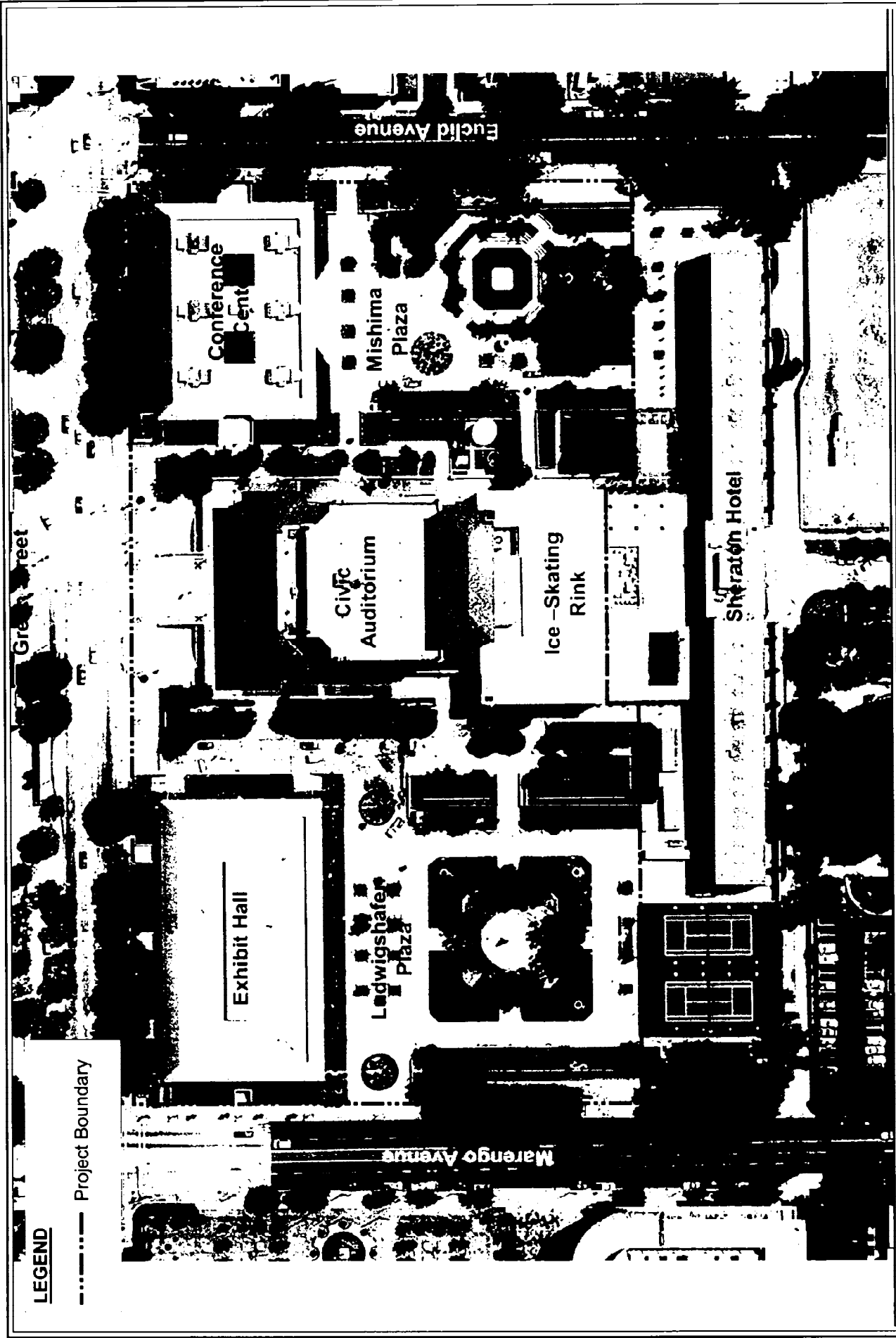


Figure 3
Existing Site Plan

Source: Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership, October 2002

occupies an historic landmark building originally constructed for use as an Exhibition Hall and later used as a ballroom/dance hall during World War II.

The Exhibition Hall, which is located on the northwestern corner of the Project site, presently contains a total 47,000 square feet. Of this total, it includes 32,000 square feet of unobstructed, column-free meeting and convention space and 4,000 square feet of lobby space. The Exhibition Hall can accommodate 430 Booths and a maximum of 4,400 seats for a general session (i.e., theater, meeting, convention) and approximately 2,200 seats for a banquet. The Exhibition Hall includes an annex with 15,000 square feet of additional meeting or exhibit space, which can accommodate an additional 600 general session seats, 300 banquet seats, or 130 booths.

The Conference Center, which is located on the northeastern corner of the Project site, contains approximately 49,344 square feet of meeting and exhibit space on two levels, including a 283-seat theater with permanent tiered seating. This interior space can accommodate 80 exhibit booths and seating for 1,100 guests for a general session and 750 banquet seats.

Immediately south of the Exhibition Hall is the Ludwigshafen Plaza, which is landscaped with a central fountain, decorative planters, and a variety of trees. Immediately south of the Conference Center is the Mishima Plaza, which is also landscaped with decorative planters and a variety of trees. Both plazas are Sister City Plazas. Two levels of parking (Parking Levels A and B) are provided below the existing Ludwigshafen Plaza and Mishima Plaza.

C. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the City of Pasadena and the Pasadena Center Operating Company (PCOC), the manager and operator of the Pasadena Conference Center, for implementing the proposed Project include the following:

- To design an expanded Conference Center that is complimentary to the Civic Auditorium and the National Register Historic District, while providing modern amenities and facilities that would make it more competitive with other centers in the region. This would aid in strengthening the local economy by drawing an increased number of out-of-town patrons to Pasadena.
- To design a site plan that would take advantage of the Conference Center's unique location within the Central District, including its proximity to shopping, dining, and entertainment uses.

- To foster a design that (1) would attract pedestrians from the Pasadena Conference Center site into the Civic Center area by encouraging pedestrian movement along both Green Street and Marengo Avenue, (2) would improve the use of underutilized public plazas, and (3) would enhance the pedestrian experience.
- To increase the number of events, and the quality of those events, that occur on an annual basis in order to take advantage of those times when the facility is currently unutilized.

D. PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The Project involves the addition of approximately 211,320 square feet of new floor area, exclusive of parking and the Ice Skating Center. With the proposed demolition, this represents a net increase of 164,320 square feet on the Project site. New construction includes: (1) a new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building with a lobby and pre-function space, as well as “back of house” (BOH) spaces for storage areas, circulation space, etc.; (2) the addition of 10,000 square feet of administrative office space to the Conference Center building; and (3) a new Parking Structure. Please see Table 1 on page 32 for a summary of Project characteristics. The Project includes activities occurring in and around two existing and two proposed buildings. Complementing these buildings would be two reconfigured public plazas. These components of the Project as well as a description of vehicular access and parking facilities are described below under separate subheadings.

1. Existing and Proposed Buildings

a. Civic Auditorium

As shown in Figure 4 on page 33, construction of the proposed Project would include the restoration of the existing steps to the Civic Auditorium, which front on Green Street. This improvement would provide enhanced pedestrian access to this portion of the Project site and return the design of this area to its original 1932 layout. This Project component would not result in the physical expansion of the Civic Auditorium structure, nor any changes to the Civic Auditorium or the Pasadena Ice Skating Center.

Table 1

PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

Building	Existing Square Footage/Spaces to Remain	Existing Square Footage/Spaces to be Removed	Proposed Square Footage/Spaces
Exhibition Hall		51,000 sq.ft.	
Ice Skating Center	21,000 sq.ft.		
Conference Center building Administrative Offices	49,344 sq.ft.		10,000 sq.ft.
Civic Auditorium	132,397 sq.ft.		
Parking	295 spaces	530 spaces	
Parking Structure (7-level) ^a			897 spaces ^b
Loading Dock			24 spaces
			(921 new spaces) ^{c, d}
Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building			201,320 sq.ft.
Total Proposed Square Footage			211,320 sq.ft.
Net New Square Footage			164,320 sq.ft.

^a In the event that funding cannot be secured for a 7-level structure, a 5-level structure would be developed.

^b A 5-level structure would contain 653 spaces.

^c This would result in a total of 1,216 parking spaces on site.

^d If a 5-level structure were developed, a total of 677 new spaces would be provided on site; with the 295 remaining spaces, a total of 972 spaces would be provided on site.

Source: Fentress Bradburn Architects Ltd., and PCR Services Corporation, 2004.

b. Exhibition Hall

The existing 47,000-square-foot Exhibition Hall would be completely demolished and removed from the Project site to accommodate a new 201,320-square-foot Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building. This new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building would include the following major components, as shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6 on pages 34 and 35:

- Two new exhibit halls (a 29,400-square-foot Exhibit Hall A and a 29,400-square-foot Exhibit Hall B) designed so that they may be combined to serve as a single, 58,800-square-foot hall;

LEGEND

Project Boundary

1- Demolish steps @ forecourt of Civic Auditorium currently providing access to Terrace and reconfigure to original configuration of 1932 construction.

2- Demolish existing Exhibition Hall.

3- Demolish existing Plaza slab and landscaping, paving north of tennis courts.

4- Demolish existing plazas and parking structures.

5- Remove existing cooling tower & ice storage tank east of Civic Auditorium.

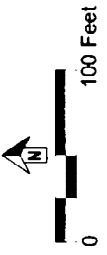
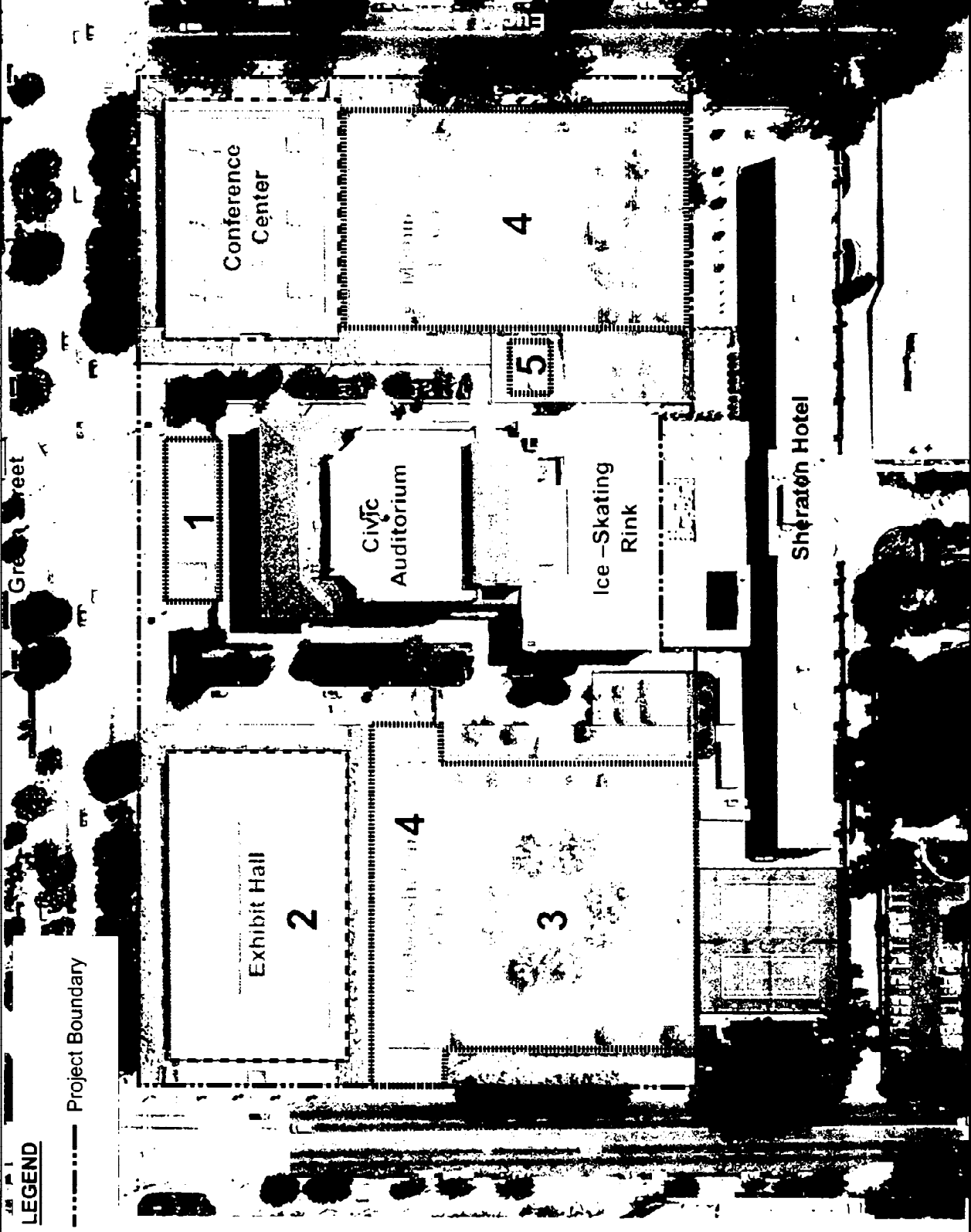


Figure 4
Proposed Demolition Plan

Source: PCR Services Corporation, April 2004

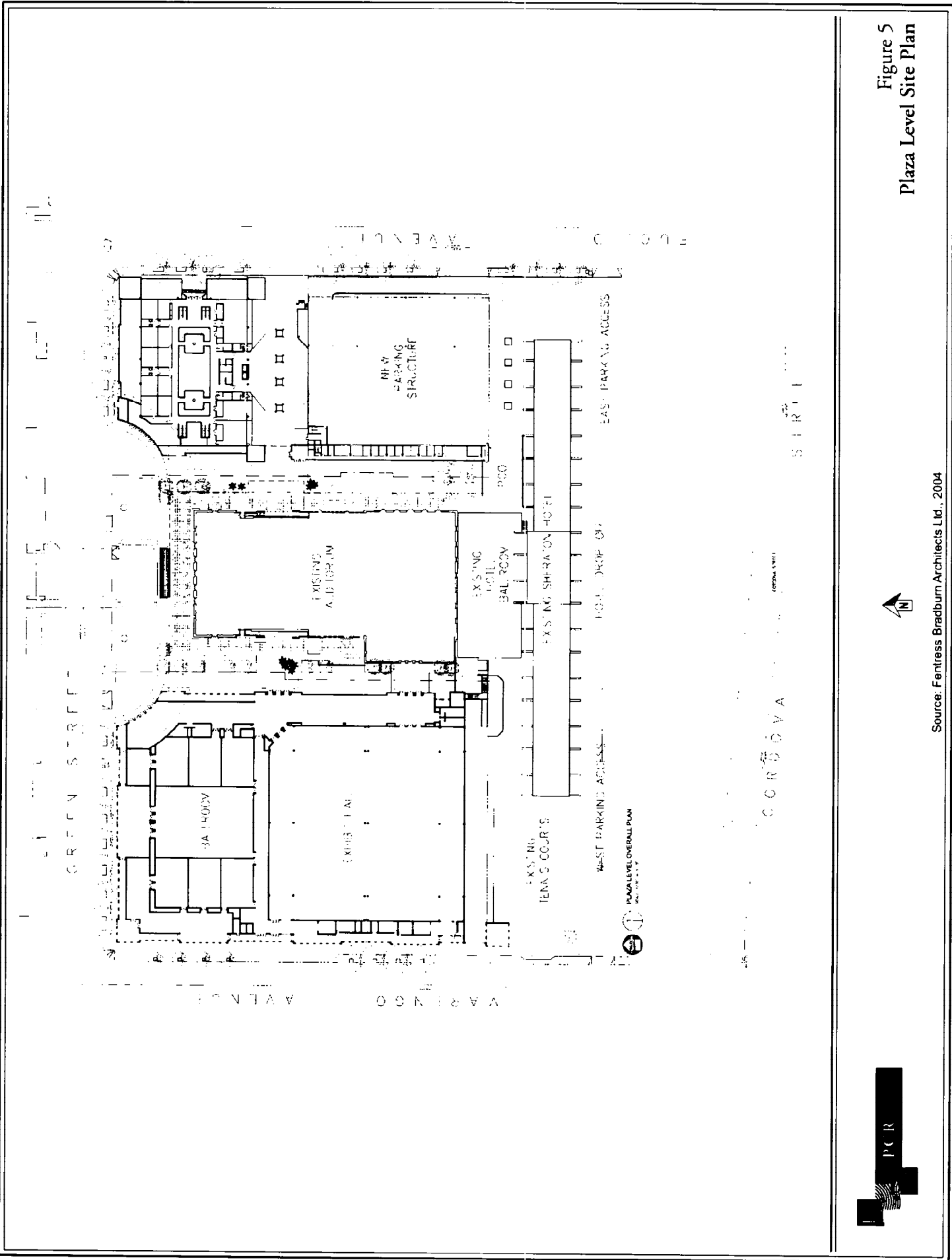
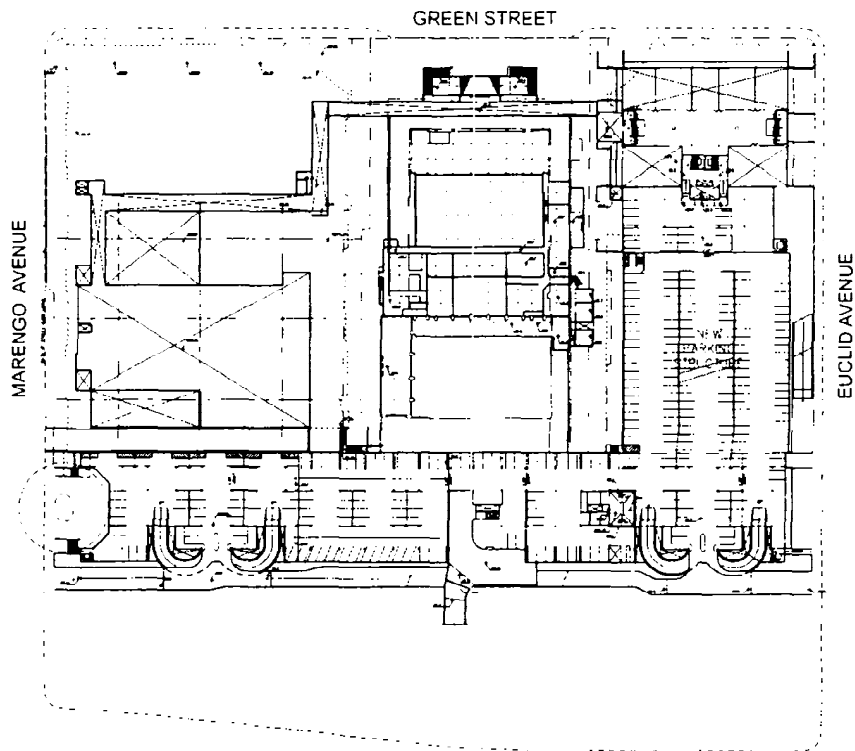
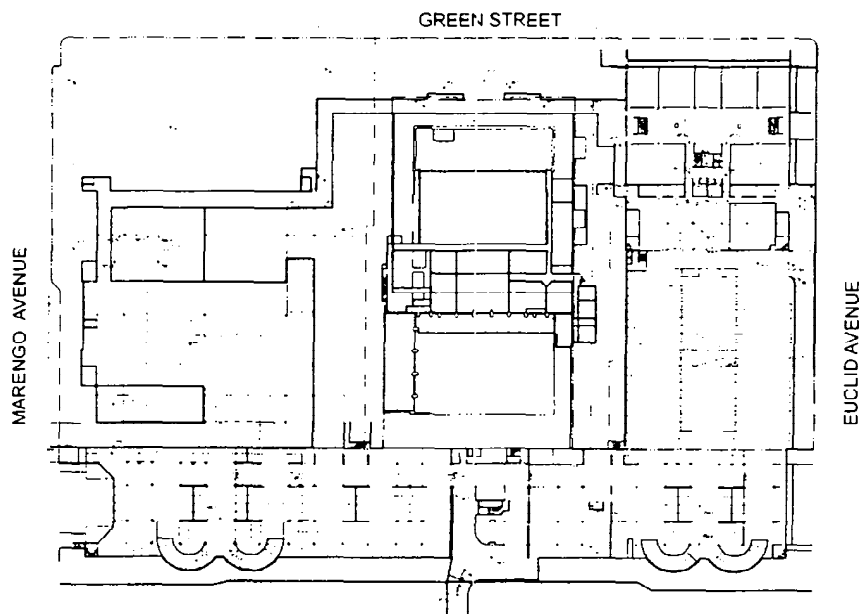


Figure 5
Plaza Level Site Plan

Source: Fentress Bradburn Architects Ltd., 2004



Parking Level A Plan



Parking Level B Plan



Figure 6
Parking Levels A and B Plan

- A new 25,600-square-foot Ballroom located on the north side of Exhibit Hall A, which can be used as a single ballroom or can be subdivided into multiple spaces of varying sizes. On occasion, this space may also be combined to the exhibit halls to serve as additional exhibition space;
- 26,370 square feet of new lobby and pre-function area wrap the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building, fronting along a portion of Marengo Avenue, Green Street, and Ludwigshafen Plaza;
- 9,850 square feet of back-of-house (BOH) space serving the Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building at plaza level;
- A 55,800-square-foot loading dock, 10,000-square-foot kitchen, and 14,900 square feet of storage space are located beneath the Exhibition Halls at Parking Level B (see Figure 6 on page 35.)

The new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building would be constructed at existing grade in order to engage the vibrant Civic Center District and welcome pedestrians onto the Project site while creating a new setback configuration along Green Street that would accentuate the prominence of the Civic Auditorium, as shown in Figure 5. Other setbacks would vary to accommodate existing trees and for incorporating the proposed site design features, including pedestrian arcades and landscaped areas, pre-function areas, and the BOH areas.

c. Conference Center

The existing 49,344-square-foot Conference Center building would remain on site and would be expanded to include administrative office space. Activities involved in the renovation of the Conference Center include:

- Construction of a new façade to make the existing building architecturally compatible with the new Exhibition Hall on the west side of the Civic Auditorium;
- Relocation of the Conference Center entrance to be more prominently located on the northwest corner of the existing building off of the Civic Auditorium Forecourt and opposite the entrance to the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building;
- Renovation of the existing kitchen into new pantry and storage; and
- Addition of 10,000 square feet of administrative office space along Green Street and Euclid Avenue.

d. Parking Structure

A new Parking Structure would be constructed to the south of the existing Conference Center. The Parking Structure would consist of two levels of below-grade parking, one level at-grade parking, and four levels of parking above grade. The 5-level structure would have two levels below grade, one level at grade, and two levels above grade. The proposed 7-level Parking Structure would have access from Euclid Avenue. The structure would be located 70 feet south of the Conference Center, thus creating a landscaped pedestrian plaza between the two buildings. The height of the 7-level Parking Structure would be 48 feet above plaza level, with the elevator shaft and stairway extending an additional seven feet. Should a 5-level Parking Structure be built, it would have a height of 28 to 30 feet above the plaza level, with the elevator shaft and stairway extending an additional 7 feet.

e. Conversion of the Pasadena Ice Skating Center

The project includes the conversion of the approximately 21,000-square-foot Ice Skating Center to ballroom space. The space was previously uses as a ballroom/dance hall. The conversion would not result in any exterior modifications to the structure. Rather, the conversion would alter the interior of the building and reinstate the previous use of the structure. Entry into the converted ballroom space would remain from the west elevation through a centrally located arched opening.

f. Plazas

The proposed buildings would replace some of the existing open plaza areas. The space between the Civic Auditorium and the proposed buildings would be redesigned as a new Ludwigshafen Plaza and a new Mishima Plaza. Along with the Civic Auditorium Forecourt, these plazas would form a comprehensive system of integrated public plazas that would extend from Green Street to the Sheraton Hotel along both sides of the Civic Auditorium. A portion of these plazas would also serve as a dedicated fire lane to provide emergency access to all the buildings on site. A total of 75,390 square feet of plaza space would be provided on site under the proposed Project.

To accommodate the new Mishima plaza, the existing cryogel tank that serves the existing central mechanical plant, and that is located under the existing Civic Auditorium, would be removed. The below-grade switchgear room that is located adjacent to the existing central mechanical plant would be expanded to accommodate additional electrical switchgear to serve the new buildings.

The reconfiguration of Ludwigshafen and the Mishima Plazas would result in the removal of approximately ~~51-77~~ of the approximately 152 trees ~~from identified on and around~~ the Project site. Of these 77 trees, 72 are located on the site and 5 are street trees. The Project would result in the planting-replanting of five-8 of these trees on the site, thus resulting in the net loss of ~~46-69~~ trees. All of these trees are considered public trees and are, thereby, protected under the City's Tree Protection Ordinance, regardless of the size or type of tree. This ordinance requires that the City Manager notify the abutting property owners 10 days prior to the removal of one or two public trees and the City Council, Design Commission, and any neighborhood groups prior to the removal of three or more public trees. Removal of existing trees would be offset by new landscaping in the plaza spaces and along the street edges. The Landmark Moreton Bay Fig tree at the southwest corner of the site, the existing palms along the sides of the Civic Auditorium and the Ficus street trees would be protected.

2. Site Access, Parking, and Loading

Pedestrian access to the Project site would be provided primarily along Green Street. The proposed reconfigured steps on Green Street would provide the main entrance to the Civic Auditorium. The new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom would feature a lobby at its northeast corner. A new entrance lobby would be constructed on the northwest corner of the existing Conference Center opposite the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building entry lobby. Placing the three primary building entries off of the Civic Auditorium Forecourt and along Green Street provides a strong terminus to the pedestrian portion of Garfield Avenue that is within the Paseo Colorado mixed-use development immediately north of Green Street and improves wayfinding for visitors arriving at the Conference Center. The two reconfigured plazas would feature other access points to the buildings and to the parking levels.

Access to the Parking Structure would continue to be provided through the two existing driveways located along Marengo Avenue and along Euclid Avenue, south of the existing Sheraton Pasadena Hotel, as shown in Figure 5. The project would demolish 530 parking spaces currently located below Ludwigshafen and Mishima Plazas. These spaces would be replaced by 897 new spaces located in a new 7-level Parking Structure and 24 new spaces for employee use in the reconfigured loading dock. With the 295 existing spaces that would remain, a total of 1,216 spaces would be provided on site. If a 5-level structure were developed, the structure would contain 653 spaces. With the 24 new employee spaces and the 295 existing spaces to remain, a total of 972 spaces would be provided on site. The required number of parking spaces for the Project will be established per the Major Project Conditional Use Permit review process. A parking assessment has been prepared as part of the Traffic Impact Study conducted for the Project and included as Appendix B of this EIR. The parking assessment concluded that adequate parking will be provided for the Project.

The Project also includes expansion of the two existing loading docks. One loading dock would serve the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building and, occasionally, would be used to assist in serving the Civic Auditorium. A second loading dock would serve the Conference Center Building. The loading dock and staging/service areas that would serve the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building and assist with service to the Civic Auditorium would be located below the Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building at Parking Level B and would be accessed from Marengo Avenue. This area has been designed to allow truck maneuvering to occur on site and also to assist, occasionally, in serving as an additional service area for the Civic Auditorium. The design would assist in reducing the present use of the plaza to the west of the Civic Auditorium as a staging area for events at the Civic Auditorium. The existing Conference Center loading dock that is located on Parking Level B would be reconfigured to provide maneuvering room to permit head-in entry and exit from the dock.

3. Architecture

The design of the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building would incorporate architectural elements so as to be compatible with the character of the Civic Auditorium's setting in terms of size, scale, massing, material, texture, and color. The façades of the Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building would be articulated by protruding pilasters, which serve to create a pattern and rhythm along the exterior of the structure. Horizontally, the structure would be divided into three parts, a base, middle, and top, which serves to create a human scale. The base would consist of a covered colonnade. The building would be capped by a flat roof with a parapet that would provide screening of roof top equipment. The eastern and western corners of the Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building along Green Street would have a pitched tile roof, to match the roof of the Civic Auditorium. The main entryway of the building, which is located at the northeast corner of the building, would be setback to open up the view of the Civic Auditorium.

The existing exterior elevations of the Conference Center would be re-designed to complement the design of the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building. In addition, the Conference Center's entrance would be relocated to a more prominent location situated at the northwest corner of the existing building off of the Civic Auditorium Forecourt area and opposite the entrance to the new Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building. Finally, the Civic Auditorium's current front step arrangement and placement situated between the building's forecourt and Green Street would be removed and the original 1932 design configuration would be reconstructed.

The proposed Project's design as presented in this EIR is schematic in nature. It has been presumed that the Project's program, massing, height, setbacks, and pedestrian and vehicular access are to be as presented in this EIR. Other aspects of the design, specifically building articulation, exterior colors and materials, will be refined as part of the City's ongoing design

review process. The Applicant is committed to a final building envelope that would be in substantial compliance with that presented in this EIR and a final design that would conform to all mitigation measures included in this EIR.

E. PROJECT CONSTRUCTION AND SCHEDULE

The Project would be completed in two major phases. Phase I would include improvements to the eastern portion of the site and Phase II would include improvements to the western portion of the site. Phase I is anticipated to commence in early 2005 with demolition of the parking levels on the eastern side of the site. Phase I would continue, with the construction of the new Parking Structure building, which is anticipated to occur between June 2005 and March 2006, and the renovation and expansion of the Conference Center building, which is anticipated to occur between April 2006 and August 2006.

Phase II is anticipated to commence upon the completion of Phase I and would start with demolition of the existing parking structure and construction of the new Exhibition Hall. This work would be accomplished in 12 months. Upon completion of the new Exhibition Hall, the existing Exhibition Hall would be demolished and replaced by the new Ballroom. In addition, the Ice Skating Center would be converted to Ballroom space during this phase. Phase II would be accomplished in seven months. Completion of the Project is expected by the end of 2007.

F. DISCRETIONARY AND MINISTERIAL ACTIONS

The City of Pasadena is the lead agency for the Project. Approvals required to be granted by the City of Pasadena, or other responsible agencies, for implementation of the proposed expansion of the Pasadena Conference Center include the following, with the decision maker or body shown in parentheses:

- Major Project Conditional Use Permit approval (Zoning Hearing Officer);
- Conditional Use Permit to expand a Commercial Recreation Use (Zoning Hearing Officer);
- Approval of funding (Pasadena City Council);
- Demolition Permit (City of Pasadena Building Division);
- Design Review (City of Pasadena Design Commission);
- Tree Removal (Design Commission);

- Permits to Construct and Operate (South Coast Air Quality Management District [SCAQMD] and California Occupational Safety and Health Administration [Cal/OSHA]);
- Storm Water Permits (State Water Resources Board);
- Transportation Permit for Oversized or Excessive Loads (Department of Motor Vehicles);
- Haul route approval (Pasadena Department of Transportation);
- Variance for Exhibition Hall and Ballroom building setback along Green Street and Marengo Avenue, if the project moves ahead of the draft Central District Specific Plan (Zoning Hearing Officer);
- Specific Plan Amendment for the View Corridor and Pedestrian Access and the number of stories for the Parking Structure, if the project moves ahead of the draft Central District Specific Plan (Planning Commission and City Council); and
- Other approvals, if determined in the review process to be required.