

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: April 4, 2005

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION FOR AMENDMENT TO INCREASE FLOOR AREA RATIO IN THE CENTRAL DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN FULLER SEMINARY PRECINCT

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council initiate an amendment to the Central District Specific Plan to increase the Floor Area Ratio in the central part of the Fuller Seminary precinct from 1.50 to 2.00. This amendment shall be processed in tandem with the Fuller Seminary Master Development Plan.

BACKGROUND

The Central District Specific Plan was adopted by the City Council on November 8, 2004. The Specific Plan assigned Floor Area Ratios (FAR) to each property based on several factors, including 1994 General Plan direction, the scale of existing development, and the need to conform development intensity with the 1994 Land Use Element. Attachment 1 shows the FARs that were adopted for the Central District.

On January 24, 2005, at the request of representatives from the University Club, Women's City Club, and First Congregational Church, the City Council directed staff to restudy the FARs in the area bounded by Walnut Street on the north, Union Street on the south, Los Robles Avenue on the west, and Madison Avenue on the east and return within 60 days with a recommendation for adjustments to the FARs, if appropriate.

Staff has met several times with representatives of the University Club, Women's City Club, First Congregational Church and Fuller Seminary to discuss the Central District Specific Plan and the FARs assigned to properties in the Fuller Seminary precinct. The clubs and church feel that a 2.00 FAR is more appropriate for their properties than the 1.50 FAR currently assigned by the Central District Specific Plan.

ANALYSIS

The area bounded by Walnut and Union Streets, and Los Robles and Madison Avenues (Ford Place / Fuller Seminary Precinct – see Attachment 2) includes FARs of 1.50 and 2.00. Fuller Seminary owns the majority of the properties within this precinct, but there are a few institutional and commercial property owners as well.

Fuller Seminary has submitted a Master Development Plan (MDP) application for the future development of its campus. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared to analyze the impacts of the MDP. The EIR preparation and MDP review process is expected to be completed in Fall 2005.

Although the Fuller MDP will be the subject of community meetings and will likely be modified before it is adopted, the MDP currently calls for less development than the maximum permitted under the Central District Specific Plan floor area ratios. Therefore, there would be excess capacity on Fuller Seminary-owned property that could allow the clubs and church property to be developed at up to a 2.00 FAR without exceeding the overall amount of future development within the Fuller Seminary Precinct.

After studying this area, staff feels that the 1.50 FAR envisioned by the Central District Specific Plan is appropriate to maintain the scale and character of the area. However staff has concluded that a 2.00 FAR may also be appropriate for the clubs and church properties because it could allow these institutions to work together to creatively share parking or possibly to vacate Oakland Avenue to create additional open space. If done in tandem with the Fuller Seminary Master Plan, an FAR increase from 1.50 to 2.00 could be accomplished without an increase in the anticipated amount of overall development in the area. The additional square footage that could be built if all non-Fuller owned properties in the district develop at a 2.00 FAR instead of a 1.50 FAR would be approximately 150,000 square feet. Height limits, design guidelines, and standards for protection of historic structures will ensure that any future development continues to be at an appropriate scale.

By processing this FAR increase in tandem with the Fuller Seminary MDP, staff can ensure that there is capacity within the Fuller precinct to accommodate both the amount of development permitted under the MDP and on the clubs and church properties. In addition, the environmental analysis prepared for the Fuller MDP could also determine whether there are any environmental impacts of the FAR increase. This, however would require a revision to the scope of work for the environmental analysis. Because an EIR is being prepared, the timeline for the MDP and the proposed FAR increase is anticipated to result in public hearings before the Planning Commission and the City Council in Fall 2005.

Either the City Council or the Planning Commission may initiate specific plan amendments. The Planning Commission is currently undergoing a process of evaluating and prioritizing several proposed amendments to specific plans, and initiated

amendments to the East Pasadena and Fair Oaks / Orange Grove Specific Plans on March 23.

FISCAL IMPACT

Staff will process this Central District Specific Plan amendment in tandem with the Fuller Seminary MDP. Additional staff time will be required for this work and additional neighborhood meetings may be required. The amount of additional staff work is unknown at this time. There is no provision in the fee schedule for reimbursement of costs associated with Specific Plan amendments; therefore, the additional costs of this amendment will be borne by the City. This task will be added to the fiscal year 2005-2006 work program of the Planning Division and accommodated within the budget of the Planning & Development Department.


Respectfully submitted,


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Attachments:

- 1 – Map of Floor Area Ratios in the Central District
- 2 – Map of Precincts in the Central District

Figure 3-9 – Central District Maximum Floor Area Ratio

