

Agenda Report

April 26, 2010

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Development Department
SUBJECT: REQUEST TO CONSIDER INITIATION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE SOUTH FAIR OAKS SPECIFIC PLAN

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the focused amendment study proposed herein is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies); and
2. Pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code Section 17.74.030, initiate an amendment to the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan and related sections of the Zoning Code, Zoning Map and General Plan to permit residential uses west of Fair Oaks Avenue and north of Hurlbut Street.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

At its regular meeting on Wednesday, March 10, 2010, the Planning Commission expressed support for Regency Park Senior Living, Inc's request that the City Council initiate a review of the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan. The requested amendments would allow the development of senior housing at 909-915 S. Fair Oaks Avenue. The Commission acknowledged that senior housing is an increasingly critical need in Pasadena, that Huntington Hospital supports the location of senior housing facilities in close proximity to its campus, and that the applicant has already proven itself capable of developing, constructing, and operating a high quality facility in the immediate area. These factors, as well as the 12-year time span since the Specific Plan's adoption and the underutilized status of the subject site, contributed to the Planning Commission's support for initiation of a limited review of the Specific Plan based on the application for development of senior housing that has been submitted to the City.

The Commission stipulated that this recommendation should not change the order of comprehensive specific plan reviews outlined in the Planning & Development Department's existing work plan or affect the General Plan update schedule.

BACKGROUND:

A Predevelopment Plan Review was presented before the City Council on September 21, 2009 for a proposed 175-unit assisted living facility on three properties—909 and 915 S. Fair Oaks Avenue and 33 Hurlbut Street. The proposed use is not permitted per the City's current Zoning and Specific Plan designations for the site and would require amendments to the Zoning Code and Specific Plan.

In response to the applicant's request that City Council initiate a Zoning Code and Specific Plan amendment, the Council asked staff to review the applicant's proposal and to provide additional information and options to the Council as to the feasibility and appropriateness of the Council initiating a Zoning Code and Specific Plan amendment to allow for the proposed assisted living use on the subject site.

Staff prepared an analysis of the applicant's request in light of evaluation criteria approved by the Planning Commission on May 25, 2005 (Attachment A). Accordingly, staff requested that the Planning Commission provide comment and input on the request to initiate a Specific Plan amendment prior to presenting a response to the City Council.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

Pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code Section 17.74.030, City Council has the authority to initiate Zoning Code text amendments, General Plan text amendments, and General Plan diagram or Zoning map amendments. Consideration of these proposed amendments would further the General Plan Land Use Element policies listed below.

Policy 10.3 – Business Expansion and Growth: Support the continuation or expansion of existing businesses in harmony with their surroundings and provide new spaces for growth and changing business requirements.

Policy 14.2 – Accessible Services: Promote the accessible location of public and private community services facilities, including accessibility to transportation and the location of housing, such as senior housing, near services.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The applicant, Regency Park Senior Living, Inc., proposes construction of a new 183,639-square foot, 175-unit assisted living facility. The South Fair Oaks Specific Plan (SFSP) allows for certain residential uses, including "Residential Care, General," west of Fair Oaks Avenue and south of Hurlbut Street only. The subject parcels are west of S. Fair Oaks Avenue but north of Hurlbut Street. In addition, the project as proposed would reach a height of 56 feet. The height limit for the site is 45 feet. A height variance would therefore be required for project approval.

ANALYSIS:

The language in the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan related to development of residential uses calls for such uses west of Fair Oaks Avenue and south of Hurlbut Street only.

Table 4-2 of the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan states that residential uses within the Specific Plan area, including Residential Care, General, are permitted provided that they are located on the "west side of Fair Oaks Avenue south of Hurlbut Street only."

Consistent language is included in the Pasadena Zoning Code in Section 17.35.030:

A. Permitted uses. In addition to the uses permitted in the base district, the following uses shall be permitted within this overlay district on properties located west of Fair Oaks Avenue and south of Hurlbut Street:

Life/care facilities;

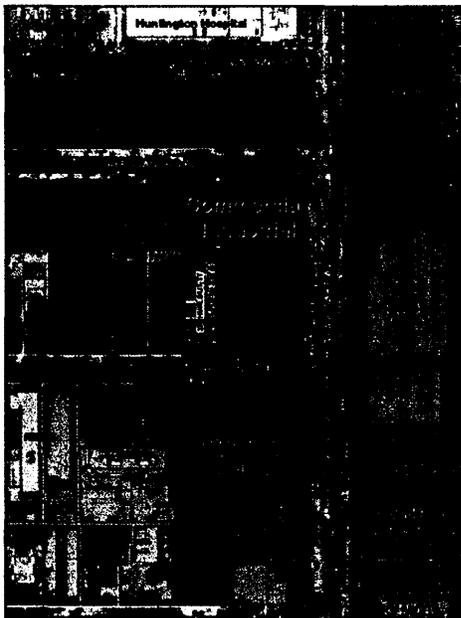
Medical services - extended care;

Multifamily residential, with a maximum density of 32 units per acre;

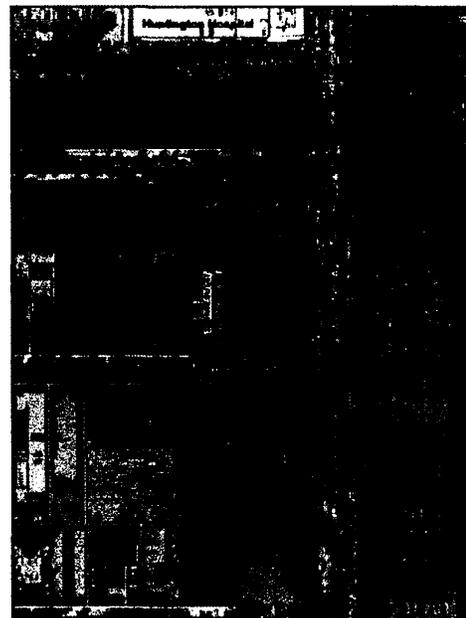
Residential care, general.

The proposed assisted living facility would be classified as Residential care, general according to the Zoning Code. Since the proposed use is currently allowed in other locations within the Specific Plan area, the applicant's request is to amend the aforementioned text within the Zoning Code and South Fair Oaks Specific Plan in order to allow residential uses north of Hurlbut Street.

Existing

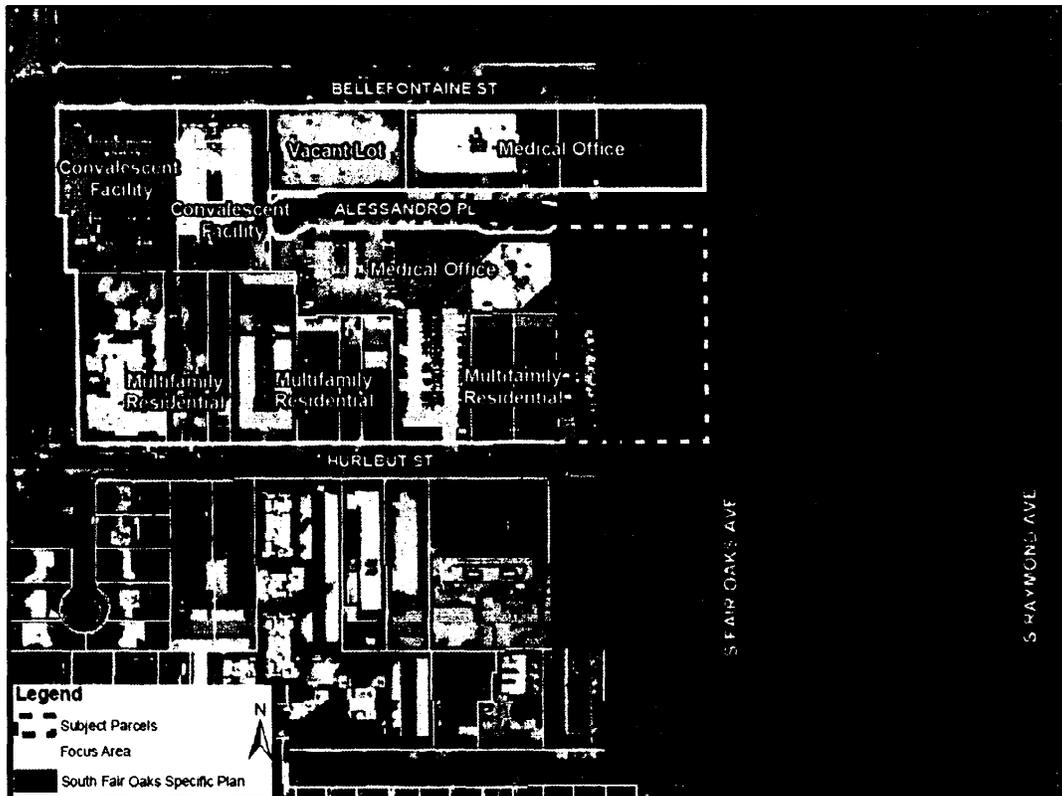


Proposed



Hurlbut Street was established as the dividing line so that the blocks between Hurlbut Street and Bellefontaine Street could serve as a transition from residential to commercial and medical uses.

The March 10, 2010 Planning Commission recommendation called for a “focused review” of the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan. Based upon preliminary staff analysis of the subject proposal, staff agrees that residential uses should remain limited to the west side of S. Fair Oaks Avenue in the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan area. Accordingly, should City Council elect to initiate the requested amendment to the Specific Plan, staff recommends that the land use review focus on the area between Pasadena Avenue to the west, Fair Oaks Avenue to the east, Bellefontaine Street to the north, and Hurlbut Street to the south.



As part of a focused review of land uses within the area outlined above, detailed consideration would be given to the possibility of incorporating the 33 Hurlbut Street parcel, currently zoned RM32 (Multifamily Residential, 32 density units/acre), and other parcels within the review area into the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan. Incorporation of some or all of the focus area parcels into the Specific Plan would require Zoning Map and General Plan Diagram amendments in addition to text amendments to the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan and Zoning Code. Staff review would also include consideration of the location of a new boundary line below which residential uses would be permitted.

Additional presentations to the Planning Commission as well as community outreach meetings would be conducted as part of the process to consider the proposed amendments and prior to the City Council’s final decision.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

CEQA exempts from its application those projects that involve “only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the agency, board or commission has not approved, adopted, or funded...” and which do not have a legally binding effect on later activities. (State CEQA Guidelines § 15262). To fall under this exemption, however, the lead agency is required to “consider environmental factors.”

The study proposed herein could lead to a zone change and specific plan amendment to increase the allowed uses at a number of sites. Those new uses generally will not lead to materially different environmental effects than uses already allowed in the study area. Nonetheless, the environmental factors that may change if the results of this study are adopted could include traffic, air quality and aesthetic matters. All relevant environmental factors will be analyzed in more depth through the CEQA process if this request for consideration is granted. Regardless of whether the results of the study are adopted, any development project that would be proposed for sites covered by the study would have to go through the appropriate environmental review process at the time a project is proposed.

FISCAL IMPACT:

If the necessary amendments to allow the proposed use are approved, fees related to processing of the development application will be paid to the City by the applicant in accordance with the General Fee Schedule.

Respectfully submitted,



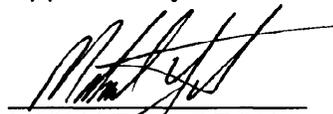
STEVE MERMELL
Assistant City Manager

Prepared by:



Erin Clark
Associate Planner

Approved by:



MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

Attachments:

Attachment A – Specific Plan Amendment Criteria Analysis

Attachment B – South Fair Oaks Specific Plan & Proposed Review Area