

# Agenda Report

January 9, 2012

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Planning Department  
**SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR WEST ENTITLEMENTS – TIME EXTENSION**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the activity described in the application for changes to the approved Ambassador West Project was subject to adequate environmental review in the EIR adopted by the City Council for the Ambassador West Project on April 2, 2007, and that there are no changed circumstances or new information which would trigger further environmental review;
2. Acknowledge that City Ventures and Sunrise Senior Living submitted a joint application for a time extension in a timely manner;
3. Make the specific findings listed in the body of this report; and
4. Approve a six month time extension (expiration April 2, 2012) for the Ambassador West entitlements (Conditional Use Permit #4653, Adjustment Permit #PLN2005-00582, Tree Removal Permits PLN2006-00223 through 00231, and Subdivision Modification PLN2007-00001).

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Development at the Ambassador West campus has not occurred on the anticipated project timeline. The financial challenges of the original parties and changes in ownership stalled the project for several years. The owners are now requesting additional time to complete the project under the new ordinance for Time Limits and Extensions. This project received several prior extensions and is currently eligible for an additional extension of six months under the new ordinance which allows for a total of five years.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Ambassador West Project was approved by the City Council on April 2, 2007. The project is to redevelop a 19.7 acre portion of the former Ambassador College campus in

the block bounded by W. Green St., S. St. John Ave., W. Del Mar Blvd. and S. Orange Grove Blvd. The proposal includes: 1) construction of 200 independent living units for seniors and 48 assisted living units in a six-story 450,000 square foot building; 2) construction of 70 residential condominiums in two- and three-story buildings; 3) intensification of existing apartment buildings and dorms to provide 46 apartment units; 4) conversion of historic buildings to educational, institutional, and office uses; and 5) preservation of historic buildings, significant landscape features and open space.

The Ambassador West Project required the approval of the following entitlements:

- a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to operate the senior life/care facility,
- a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to transfer WGSP development allocation from areas that should be preserved to the northeast portion of the block where the WGSP encourages the highest density,
- an Adjustment Permit to preserve valuable protected trees, landscape features and historic buildings on the site by providing flexibility in design requirements in order to cluster the development on smaller portions of the site for the 70 new condominium units that are allowed by the WGSP,
- an Adjustment Permit for the senior life/care facility to exceed the building height in two locations and to construct a bridge over a side property line,
- Private Tree Removal Requests for removal or relocation of 46 protected trees,
- a Vesting Tentative Tract Map to consolidate the existing land lots into 19 land lots and create 270 air parcel condominiums, and
- a Subdivision Modification to allow for lots without street frontage.

The project's entitlements were granted a one year extension, pursuant to §17.64.040 of the Municipal Code in 2009. Then pursuant to Ordinance No. 7180, the entitlements were granted an additional one year extension in 2010. After exhausting all administrative extensions, the two primary parties chose to apply separately for a major change to an approved project (time limits). On March 28, 2011, in two separate actions, City Council granted City Ventures and Sunrise Senior Living an additional six months with instructions to work together to get the project moving forward. This joint application is the result of that cooperation.

**ANALYSIS:**

The previous extension was scheduled to expire on October 2, 2011 but before the expiration date, the City received a joint application for time extension from City Ventures and Sunrise Senior Living. This action would extend the entitlements until April 2, 2012 – the maximum allowed under the new extension ordinance.

This application complies with the Zoning Code Amendment on Time Limits and Extensions for Planning Entitlements approved by City Council on September 19, 2011 and effective December 24, 2011. Pursuant to §17.64.040 (D and E) of that Amendment under which this request is being processed, the review authority may approve a time extension only after first finding that: 1. The findings and conditions of the original approval still apply; and 2. The proposed project meets the current height, setbacks, and

floor area ratio requirements of the Zoning Code and is consistent with the General Plan, any applicable Specific Plan, and the Zoning Map; however the second finding shall not apply to a project that has been approved with a Vesting Tentative Map. In this case, site conditions have remained essentially the same since the April 2, 2007 approval (with the exception of Mayfair Mansion and Manor Del Mar which were sold as individual single-family properties rather than institutional uses as called for the approved plan); and there have not been any major changes to City policies or Zoning Code development standards for the site. The original approval included findings related to CEQA, Taxpayer Protection Act, Tree Protection and applicable design guidelines, all of which still apply and the corresponding conditions and mitigation measures shall be incorporated into construction drawings prior to the issuance of building permits. This project is exempt from the second required finding because it has an approved Vesting Tentative Tract Map.

City Ventures received Final Design Review approval for the new construction of ten condominium units (Parcel 16) on November 22, 2010, and has completed Concept Design Review for Parcel 9 (21 units) and Preliminary Consultation for Parcels 3 and 5, (39 units). On December 6, 2011, City Ventures pulled a building permit for on-site improvements to prepare the site for Phase 1 of the project, which included the construction of ten condominium units on West Del Mar Boulevard. They anticipate submitting for plan check in a matter of weeks.

Sunrise Senior Living, the property owner of the senior life/care facility site is in the process of selling its property and interests, pending approval of the extension.

If approved, the applicant is subject to all the original conditions of approval dated April 12, 2007 as well as the additional conditions approved by City Council on March 28, 2011.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

A Final Environmental Impact Report was prepared for the Ambassador West Project. A copy (CD) of the EIR is included with this City Council report. It concluded that all potential impacts could be mitigated to a less than significant level, with the exception of impacts to Aesthetics (impacts on the streetscape along Green Street and St. John Avenue), Air Quality (during portions of the construction period emissions would exceed AQMD thresholds), and Historic Resources (effects on the setting of the historic Ambassador Auditorium and Manor Del Mar, effects of attaching a new building to the historic Merritt Mansion, and effects of new construction in a National Register-eligible historic district called the West Del Mar Grouping).

The proposed change to extend the development timeline would not increase any of the impacts identified as significant, would not create new significant impacts, and is within the scope of the Ambassador West Project analyzed by the Environmental Impact Report. Further, circumstances in the area of the Project have not changed such that there would be any substantial increase in potentially significant effects or any new significant effects would be necessary.

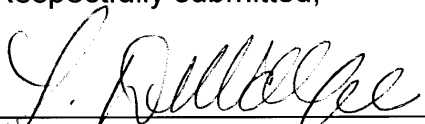
**COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

The General Plan – Objective 6: Promote preservation of historically and architecturally significant buildings and revitalization of traditional neighborhoods and commercial areas. The General Plan – Guiding Principle 2: Change will be harmonized to preserve Pasadena’s historic character and environment. This project includes the preservation of many historic properties and landscapes.


**FISCAL IMPACT:**

If the extension is approved and the project moves forward, the City would receive permit revenue associated with the project.


Respectfully submitted,

  
for VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP  
Director of Planning

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Approved by:

  
MICHAEL J. BECK  
City Manager

Attachments:

Attachment A - Ambassador West Project Site Plan

LEGEND:  PARCEL / LOT NO.

Parcel	Land Use	Lot Area (Acre)	Dwelling Units	Floor Area (SF)
<b>Proposed New Development</b>				
1	New Senior Life/Care	5.74	248	450,000
2	Lower Campus	2.74	193	339,000
	Upper Campus	2.98	55	111,000
<b>New Multi-Family Residential</b>				
3	Italian Garden Units	1.43	20	56,000
5	Italian Garden Units	1.37	19	53,000
9	Grove Units	1.58	21	59,000
16	Del Mar Units	0.76	10	28,000

<b>Proposed Preservation/Reuse</b>				
<b>Existing Buildings (Total)</b>				
2	41-Meritt Mansion - upper campus	-	0	18,000
<b>Senior Life/Care</b>				
6	33-Mayfair Mansion	0.70	0	25,734
15	20-Manor Del Mar	0.41	NA	15,924
		0.29	NA	9,810
<b>Affordable Senior Housing</b>				
7	35-South Orange Grove	0.51	18	14,674
7	36-South Orange Grove	0.51	8	5,855
13	24-Grove Manor	-	4	3,165
<b>Multi-Family Residential</b>				
7	37-South Orange Grove	2.23	21	49,464
7	38-South Orange Grove	0.89	2	2,375
7	39-South Orange Grove	0.83	4	5,950
12	2223-Villa Francosca	0.51	3	7,088
13	24-Grove Manor	0.51	3	21,366
		0.51	3	12,695
<b>Affordable Multi-Family Residential</b>				
7	37-South Orange Grove	0.00	7	4,740
13	24-Grove Manor	-	2	1,600
		-	5	3,140
<b>Single-Family Residence</b>				
6	34-Terrace Villa	0.33	1	9,020
		0.33	1	9,020
<b>Historic Office</b>				
10	18-Rankin House	0.69	0	7,834
10	19-Rankin Carriage House (Guest House/Garage)*	0.69	NA	7,834
<b>Open Space/Private Gardens</b>				
4	Italian Gardens	1.26	0	0
11	Fowler Gardens	0.58	NA	NA
		0.68	NA	NA
<b>Open Space/Public Gardens</b>				
A	Grove Walk/Stream	0.77	NA	NA
B	Terrace Walk (portion)	0.15	NA	NA
C	Great Lawn	1.76	NA	NA
14	Rose Garden	0.41	NA	NA

\*Note: Carriage House to be relocated, location subject to approval



SOURCE: Onyx Architects



Ambassador West Project  
Environmental Impact Report  
CITY OF PASADENA

FIGURE 2.0-5

PROJECT SITE PLAN