

Agenda Report

September 29, 2014

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Planning & Community Development Department

SUBJECT: VILLA ESPERANZA MASTER PLAN - 2116 EAST VILLA STREET

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Adopt the Findings in the draft Initial Environmental Study (Attachment F), that with the incorporation of mitigation measures, the Master Plan will have no significant or unavoidable impacts and adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration;
2. Adopt by Resolution the Specific Findings for a General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation of the site from Neighborhood Commercial and Medium Density Residential (0-16 dwelling units/net acre) to Institutional;
3. Direct the City Attorney to draft an ordinance within 60 days consistent with the provisions set forth herein, amending the zoning of the consolidated building site from Commercial Limited (CL) and Multi-family Residential -16 (RM-16) to Public and Semi-Public (PS) zoning;
4. Adopt by Resolution the Specific Findings for the approval of the Villa Esperanza Master Plan acknowledging that the Master Plan, as conditioned, is consistent with General Plan and Zoning Ordinance; and
5. Approve the Private Tree Removal Permit, acknowledging that the replacement tree canopy is sustainable over the long term by adhering to the adopted replacement matrix.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On August 13, 2014 the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Master Plan to the City Council. The Commission discussed the duration of construction activities, the scale of the two-story administration/parking structure in relation to adjacent buildings, parking, traffic impacts, and the compatibility of school use with adjacent single-family uses. The Commission requested a block wall be constructed along the property line separating school uses from residential uses.

DESIGN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On May 27, 2014 the Design Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Master Plan to the Planning Commission. The Commission determined that the project is generally consistent with the Citywide Design Principles and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts and that further fine tuning of the design will resolve any minor architectural contextual issues that remain. Based on the existing design review thresholds in the Zoning Code, each of the new buildings on the campus will require design review by the Planning Director, subject to be called up by the Design Commission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Villa Esperanza Services is proposing a 15 year, three-phase Master Plan that would allow the demolition of 12 structures and construction of three new structures, for a net increase of 12,212 square feet on the 1.87 acre site. At full implementation, the Villa Esperanza campus would be 46,073 square feet. Student enrollment would increase from 85 students to 120 students. The project also includes a Zoning Map Amendment and a General Plan Amendment to change the zoning and land use designations to accurately reflect the existing institutional use on the property. Although the Master Plan is for 15 years, this includes fundraising time and efforts; the duration of construction activities for each building ranges from 8 months to 17 months.

BACKGROUND:

On July 11, 2011, the proposed project was presented as an information item to City Council as part of the Pre-Development Review process. City Council comments included a request for a clear site plan depicting existing structures in relation to proposed structures and clarification about the intent of the parking structure. In response to City Council's comments, the applicant has provided a new site plan (Page 14 of Attachment A) and clarified that the intent of the parking structure is to provide required parking for staff members because there is currently insufficient parking.

The proposed Master Plan allows for the City and neighbors to evaluate the proposed uses that are anticipated to occur on the Villa Esperanza Services (VES) campus for the next 15 years, resulting in orderly and thorough review of expansion plans to ensure compatible and desirable development for the neighborhood. VES is a non-profit

organization serving children, adults and seniors with developmental disabilities that has been in operation in Pasadena since 1961 in the existing neighborhood. Over the years, VES has acquired properties within the neighborhood to accommodate the growth and development of the school.

Four Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) were previously approved for uses on the Master Plan site.

- In 1974, CUP #836 allowed for an existing residential building to be used as a home for a maximum of 6 people with developmental disabilities on 447 N. Craig Ave.
- In 1986, CUP #1677 allowed for trained house parents to provide 24 hour non-medical care for a maximum of 6 people with developmental disabilities in an existing residential structure located at 427 N. Craig Ave.
- In 1987, CUP #1723 allowed for the school to expand into a 2,560 square foot building formerly used as an insurance agency at 2130 E. Villa St. The enrollment capacity was 68 students at this time.
- In 1990, CUP #2250 was approved to merge three lots (427, 435 and 443 N. Craig Ave) into one lot and allowed for 30 clients to be served in a residential care facility. This CUP included a collective parking agreement between the school uses on 2130 E. Villa St and residential uses on 427, 435 and 443 N. Craig Ave.

Location

The surrounding neighborhood is an eclectic mix of one and two-story buildings with residential buildings to the south and commercial and institutional buildings to the east, west and north. There is no dominant architectural style in the neighborhood and no significant historic structures other than a house constructed in 1886 to the south, which is separated from the campus by two intervening properties. The proposed Master Plan includes a total of nine parcels, six of which are located on East Villa Street and bounded by Oak and North Craig Avenues and three of which are located on North Craig Avenue and bounded by East Villa Street and East Maple Avenue.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

VES operates various programs from different buildings; some of these buildings are located offsite from the proposed Master Plan site. The Master Plan only includes proposed uses within the main campus and consists of nine parcels, totaling approximately 79,721 square feet. When all phases are complete, the school will be 46,073 square feet.

The project proposes to:

- a. Demolish all existing buildings onsite except a single-family residence (427 N. Craig) that will be retained;

- b. Construct three new buildings, totaling 42,300 square feet, consisting of:
 - I. Two-story, 24,000 square foot building utilized for administrative offices, therapy; rooms, storage, outdoor common space and 82 parking spaces;
 - II. One-story, 9,800 square foot building utilized for classrooms, cafeteria and a gym;
 - III. One-story, 8,500 square foot building utilized for therapy rooms, gym and classrooms;
- c. Outdoor play area and landscaping in outdoor open space;
- d. Directional signage, lighting and perimeter fencing;
- e. Removal of eight protected trees as identified on the site plan;
- f. Provision of a job training program for people with developmental disabilities to work on campus;
- g. Contract with 20 school districts to serve students with moderate to severe developmental disabilities. Bus companies and taxi services are used to transport students to and from their schools. The enrollment capacity would be increased from 85 students to 120 students; and no changes to the existing 128 staff level are proposed; and
- h. Continued use of a residential structure that is currently used for a state-licensed residential care facility for six adults. This use will remain but become nonconforming under the Zone Change.

VES has indicated that limited special uses and evening events are anticipated after 6:00 pm because the majority of students leave on buses at 3:00 pm. In addition, VES does not anticipate rental of facilities to other programs or organizations because the infrastructure will be specific to the needs of the students they serve.

ANALYSIS:

General Plan Consistency

Although VES operates as an institutional use, the Master Plan site is designated Neighborhood Commercial and Medium Density Residential (0-16 dwelling units/net acre). The General Plan Amendment would allow VES to continue to operate a school, provide therapy and residential care, and operate employment programs to serve people with developmental disabilities. The proposed General Plan Amendment would restrict the site to institutional uses and accurately reflect existing uses on the Master Plan site. The proposed amendment is consistent with the General Plan. A condition of approval requires the consolidation of nine parcels into one building site through recordation of a covenant.

Zoning Code Consistency

Currently, the Master Plan site is zoned CL and RM-16 and is subject to the commercial development standards in the CL district and the City of Gardens standards in the RM-16. Utilizing these two sets of development standards is difficult for the development of a school site. The project includes rezoning the entire Master Plan site to Public and Semi-Public (PS) because the PS district is intended to provide a specific base zoning district for large public or semi-public land uses that may not be appropriate in other base zoning districts. The PS zone could be applied to sites with a contiguous area of two acres or more, including alleys, streets, or other rights-of-way. The Master Plan site includes nine continuous parcels and is approximately 2.47 acres, including adjacent streets and rights-of-way.

By rezoning the site to PS, the development standards are established as part of the Master Plan. All existing and proposed uses within the Master Plan site are permitted or conditionally permitted in the PS zone with the exception of a Residential Care, Limited use for six adults that live in a single-family residence proposed to remain. This can remain as a grandfathered use. The development standards established through the proposed Master Plan are included in Attachment A (refer to Page 6).

Traffic and Circulation

The primary vehicular access would continue to be on Oak Avenue near the corner of East Villa Street and pick-up and drop-off locations would remain on East Villa Street. Based on a review by the Transportation Department (DOT), a traffic study was not required for this project because the proposed project does not include additional new employees and the increase in enrollment would result in three new vehicles to transport new students, for a total of six new trips per peak hour. As such, DOT determined that there will be minimal change to the traffic and circulation patterns. Nonetheless, the project's impact on traffic was analyzed in the initial study and was found to be less than significant.

Parking and Loading Spaces

The Zoning Code includes different parking requirements for grammar schools, high schools and schools that offer specialized education and training. Based on the school's operations, it is most similar to a grammar school because the curriculum is tailored to fit the needs of their students and each classroom may include various students of different ages. In addition, all students arrive by bus or private transportation; there are no student drivers. Therefore, the grammar school parking standards (1.5 spaces per classroom, plus 1 space for every 2 employees and members of the faculty) shall apply. The proposed Master Plan is consistent with the number of parking spaces required in the Zoning Code. The Master Plan requires:

- A minimum of 82 parking spaces, including two ADA accessible spaces;

- A minimum of two required loading spaces each meeting the size requirements; and
- Loading spaces must be screened from view from a public street and meet backing-out requirements.

VES also operates an adult daycare program that was formerly located at 2031 East Villa Street approved under CUP#5525 in 2011. As part of the condition of approval of CUP#5525, a minimum of eight parking spaces were required to be provided at the proposed Master Plan site. However, in January 2014 the adult daycare program was approved to be relocated to 1990 East Walnut Street. The applicant is anticipating this move to occur by December 2014. Until CUP #5525 is relinquished through a noticed public hearing or operation has ceased for more than 12 months, the Master Plan site must continue to provide eight parking spaces in compliance with the requirements of CUP #5525.

VES currently provides 38 parking spaces, including the eight parking spaces reserved for CUP #5525. Prior to issuance of any building permits for Phase 1 construction, VES is required to provide evidence of a lease for 38 parking spaces, within ¼ mile of the Master Plan site or another temporary parking arrangement approved by the Director of Planning & Community Development.

Indoor Classroom and Outdoor Play Areas

VES proposes to increase the enrollment capacity from 85 students to 120 students, which would require 2,880 square feet of indoor classroom area and 9,000 square feet of outdoor play area. The project proposes 9,505 square feet of indoor classroom area and 13,000 square feet of outdoor play area. The outdoor play area will be located within a central courtyard between the two classroom buildings out of the required front or corner side yard setback and more than 25 feet from a residential use. The minimum indoor classroom area and outdoor play area are consistent with the requirements in the Zoning Code.

Tree Removal Permit

The Tree Protection Ordinance requires protection of public trees and trees on private property of certain species and size. The project site contains 30 private trees, 27 of which would be removed for the construction of the project. Eight of the trees proposed to be removed are designated as protected trees. The project proposes the removal of these trees to accommodate the Master Plan program. The applicant has submitted a preliminary landscaping plan to show the general location of replacement trees and new landscaping on the Master Plan site and have demonstrated compliance with the Replacement Tree Matrix as required by the City's Tree Protection Ordinance. A condition of approval requires the applicant to submit a final landscaping plan, demonstrating adherence to the replacement tree matrix.

Neighborhood Meetings and Correspondence

A neighborhood meeting to receive comments on the proposed Master Plan was held February 20, 2013. Attendees expressed support for the proposed Master Plan and the project did not receive any opposition. Due to the lapse in time between the last neighborhood meeting and the Planning Commission meeting, staff hosted a second neighborhood meeting on June 16, 2014 at the Villa Esperanza campus. Notices were sent to property owners and occupants within 1,000 feet of the Master Plan site. Attendees had questions about the scope of the Zoning Map Amendment, construction duration, construction safety, and the project's adherence to the City's Tree Protection Ordinance.

At the meeting, staff clarified that the Zoning Map Amendment is only applicable to the Master Plan site and the zoning of all adjacent properties would remain the same. Staff also clarified construction activities would not occur for 15 years and that the Master Plan allotted time for the school to raise construction funding. VES Chief Executive Officer assured neighbors that safety during construction is a high priority because the school will remain in operation with students on campus and a construction management team has been retained to address construction related concerns. Lastly, the architect has submitted a Replacement Tree Matrix to demonstrate the project's adherence to the City's Tree Protection Ordinance to address the comments related to protected trees raised at the neighborhood meeting.

Written correspondence received pertaining to the project is included as Attachment D.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

Providing adequate services is a stated Objective in the General Plan: Objective 13 – Adequate Services: Provide adequate support for businesses and institutions that serve the needs of Pasadena's diverse residents and families, including schools, hospitals, parks, child and adult day care centers, libraries, shelters, public auditoriums, clinics, social clubs and recreation centers.

Policy 13.4 – Education: Promote public and private schools, support quality education for all students.

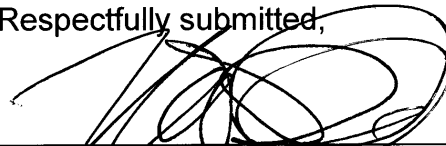
ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

An Initial Environmental Study was prepared for this project. The Initial Study (Attachment F) found that with the incorporation of mitigation measures, the Master Plan will have no significant or unavoidable impacts and that a Mitigated Negative Declaration be adopted. The mitigation measure is related to the project's impact on cultural resources. This mitigation measure is incorporated by reference into the Conditions of Approval as Condition #6.

FISCAL IMPACT:

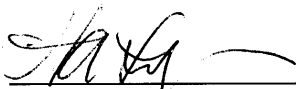
The cost of the project reviews and permits will be paid to the City by the applicant. The project will generate income to the City.

Respectfully submitted,



VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
Director of Planning & Community
Development

Prepared by:



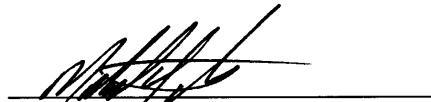
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MICHAEL J. BECK
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Attachments (6)

- Attachment A – Villa Esperanza Master Plan, September 2014
- Attachment B – General Plan Amendment Map
- Attachment C – Conditions of Approval
- Attachment D – Written Correspondence
- Attachment E – Mitigation Monitoring Report Program
- Attachment F – Initial Study, Mitigated Negative Declaration