

Agenda Report

June 3, 2019

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Planning & Community Development Department

SUBJECT: INITIATION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE LAND USE DIAGRAM, CENTRAL DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN, ZONING MAP, AND ZONING CODE FOR 351 S. HUDSON AVENUE (PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the actions proposed herein are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption);
2. Initiate a Land Use Diagram Amendment at 351 S. Hudson Avenue from Institutional and Medium-High Density Residential to Low-Medium Mixed Use;
3. Initiate a related Zoning Map Amendment from PS (Public, Semi-Public) and RM-48 HL-40(45) (Multi-Family Residential) to PD (Planned Development); and
4. Initiate an associated Zoning Code Amendment (Appendix A – Planned Developments)

BACKGROUND:

Representatives from the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) have approached the City to request the City's assistance with facilitating the sale of PUSD's headquarters at 351 S. Hudson Avenue, partially in order to improve PUSD's financial stability. The specific request is to amend the site's land use designation/zoning district from one that limits the use of the site to primarily institutional uses to a designation/zone that would allow a wider variety of uses. This would thereby make the property more marketable and more financially valuable.

The site is currently occupied by an approximately 87,000 square foot building that contains the district headquarters and Rose City High School, a continuing education high school. There is one surface parking lot location to the north of the building, adjacent to E. Del Mar Boulevard and a second surface parking at the rear (south) of

the site. A preliminary analysis has determined that a portion of the headquarters building may be historically notable.

The site is within the Central District Specific Plan, and is designated as Institutional and Medium-High Density Residential on the Land Use Diagram of the General Plan Land Use Element. The corresponding zoning designation for the site is PS (Public, Semi-Public) and RM-48 HL-40(45) (Multi-Family Residential, 48 units per acre, Height Limit 40 feet or 45 feet with height averaging). Attachments A and B show the project site and vicinity, the existing and surrounding land use designations, and the existing and surrounding zoning districts. The surrounding uses include multi-family residences to the south and north, McKinley School (kindergarten through 8th grade) to the west, and the parking structure for the Shops on South Lake to the east.

REQUIRED AMENDMENTS:

General Plan Land Use Diagram Amendment

Staff recommends the current land use designations of Institutional and Medium-High Density Residential be changed to Low-Medium Mixed Use. As defined in the Land Use Element of the General Plan, the Low-Medium Mixed Use land use category is intended to allow a mix of residential and commercial uses, where development has a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.75 and a maximum residential density of 48 dwelling units per acre. The maximum allowed residential density north of the site is 48 dwelling units per acre, while the maximum density south of the site is 32 units per acre. Therefore, allowing up to 48 units per acre on this site would be consistent with the current residential designation adjacent to the site to the north.

It is important to note however, that the existing zoning designation to the south of the site is RM-48 HL-40(45), which allows residential projects of up to 48 units per acre (with a maximum height of 40 feet, or 45 feet with height averaging). As part of the 2015 adoption of the General Plan Land Use Element this area was changed from High Density Residential (up to 48 units per acre) to Medium-High Density Residential (up to 32 units per acre). Because these areas are within the Central District Specific, it was anticipated that the adopted changes would be implemented as part of the Specific Plan Update effort currently underway.

Zoning Map and Zoning Code Amendments

The majority of the site has a zoning designation of PS (Public, Semi-Public) while the southwestern portion of the site is zoned RM-48 HL-40(45) (Multi-Family Residential, 48 units per acre, Height Limit 40 feet or 45 feet with height averaging). Staff is recommending a Zoning Map Amendment to Planned Development.

As stated in Section 17.26.020.C (PD Planned Development District), the PD zoning district, "...is intended for sites where an applicant proposes and the City desires to achieve a particular mix of uses, appearance, land use compatibility, or special sensitivity to neighborhood character."

The specific purposes are further detailed as follows:

- a. *Establish a procedure for the development of large parcels of land in order to reduce or eliminate the rigidity, delays, and inequities that otherwise would result from application of land use regulations and administrative procedures designed primarily for small parcels;*
- b. *Ensure orderly and thorough planning and review procedures that will result in quality urban design;*
- c. *Encourage variety and avoid monotony in large developments by allowing greater freedom in selecting the means to provide access, light, open space, and amenity;*
- d. *Allow certain types of development consistent with the general plan that can be acceptable at a specific location only under standards significantly more restrictive than those of a base district in which the use is permitted;*
- e. *Provide a mechanism whereby the city may authorize desirable developments in conformity with the general plan without inviting speculative rezoning applications that if granted, often could deprive subsequent owners of development opportunities that do not necessarily result in construction of the proposed facilities;*
- f. *Encourage allocation and improvement of common open space in residential areas, and provide for maintenance of the open space at the expense of those who will directly benefit from it;*
- g. *Encourage the preservation of serviceable existing structures of historic value or artistic merit by providing the opportunity to use them imaginatively for purposes other than that for which they were originally intended; and*
- h. *Encourage the assembly of properties that might otherwise be developed in unrelated increments to the detriment of surrounding neighborhoods.*

In order to qualify for a PD zone, the project site must be a minimum of two acres in size. The project as proposed is comprised of five contiguous parcels, totaling approximately 193,000 square feet, or 4.4 acres.

The creation of a Planned Development for the site would facilitate the crafting of a specific set of regulations to govern future development on the site; regulations that would detail the allowed uses, as well as building height, size, and setbacks. A Planned Development also allows for the implementation of a multitude of site-specific regulations to ensure that future development on the site is tailored to the specific uses that currently surround the site.

INITIATION OF AMENDMENTS:

Per Sections 17.68.080 (Implementation and Amendments) and 17.74.030 (Initiation of Amendments) of the Zoning Code, amendments to the General Plan, Specific Plan(s) and/or the Zoning Code may be initiated by the City Council or Planning Commission. Should the City Council decide to initiate the recommended amendments, staff would conduct public outreach, research, and analysis. This would be followed by a formal staff recommendation to the Planning Commission, at a publicly-noticed public hearing, for the Commission's recommendation to the City Council, to be followed by a public hearing before the City Council to make a decision on the amendments.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The proposed recommendations further the goals and policies of the Land Use Element of the General Plan, including Guiding Principle #8, "Pasadena is committed to public education and a diverse educational system responsive to the broad needs of the community." Assisting the Pasadena Unified School District in partially addressing its financial needs through increasing the resale value of the site. The initiation of the recommended amendments would also be consistent with the following policies in the Land Use Element:

- Policy 2.1 (Housing Choices). *Provide opportunities for a full range of housing types, densities, locations, and affordability levels to address the community's fair share of regional, senior, and workforce housing needs and provide a strong customer base sustaining the economic vitality of Pasadena's commercial land uses. The types, densities, and location of housing shall be determined by the Land Use Diagram and reflect the projected needs specified in the Housing Element.*
- Policy 2.5 (Mixed Use). *Create opportunities for development projects that mix housing with commercial uses to enable Pasadena's residents to live close to businesses and employment, increasing non-auto travel, and interact socially.*
- Policy 6.2 (Established Neighborhoods). *Preserve, protect, and enhance established residential neighborhoods by providing appropriate transitions between these and adjoining areas. Require new development to complement and respond to the existing physical characteristics that contribute to the overall character and livability of the neighborhood.*
- Policy 8.4 (Adaptive Reuse). *Encourage sensitive adaptive re-use including continuing the historic use of historic resources to achieve their preservation, sensitive rehabilitation, and continued economic and environmental value.*

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the initiation of a Land Use Diagram Amendment, Zoning Map Amendment, and Zoning Code Amendment is not a "project" in and of itself, and is therefore not subject to environmental review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption). However, if the amendments are initiated, they will be analyzed in compliance with CEQA as part of the amendment process.

FISCAL IMPACT:

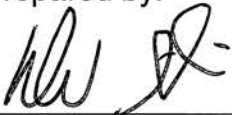
Consistent with any General Plan Element Amendment, Zoning Map Amendment, or Zoning Code Amendment that is initiated by the Planning Commission or the City Council, the cost of the proposed amendments will be borne by the City, specifically the budget of the Planning & Community Development Department.

Respectfully submitted,



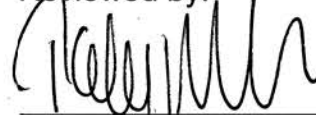
DAVID M. REYES
Director of Planning & Community
Development Department

Prepared by:



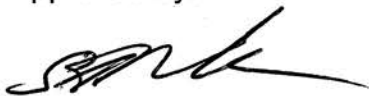
David Sinclair
Senior Planner

Reviewed by:



Talyn Mirzakhani
Zoning Administrator

Approved by:



STEVE MERMELL
City Manager

Attachments: (2)

Attachment A – Project Site and Vicinity
Attachment B – Existing Land Use Diagram and Zoning Map for Site and Surrounding Area