

Agenda Report

November 15, 2021

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: LINCOLN AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN (LASP) UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Adopt the Addendum to the 2015 Pasadena General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) along with the EIR, and find that the Addendum properly discloses only minor technical changes or additions to the EIR, and none of the conditions triggering a subsequent or supplemental EIR are present, as set forth in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15164;
2. Make the Findings for Approval for the General Plan Map and Text Amendments, Specific Plan Amendment, and Zoning Code Map and Text Amendments;
3. Adopt a resolution approving the General Plan Map and Text Amendments;
4. Adopt a resolution approving the recommended LASP; and
5. Direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance for the Zoning Code and Text Amendments within 90 days consistent with the provisions set forth herein.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On June 23, 2021, the Planning Commission recommended that the City Council approve the proposed LASP, including the General Plan Map and Text Amendments, Zoning Code Map and Text Amendments, and the Addendum, as presented by staff, with the following recommended changes:

1. Amend the General Plan Land Use Diagram to allow housing in the LASP-CG zone within the Lincoln North Subarea;
2. Prioritize streetscape enhancements within the Lincoln North Subarea, that improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and connections;

3. Revise existing and/or add a new implementation program to explore the creation of a Business Improvement District to help fund a parking management program that reduces or eliminates parking requirements for individual properties and identifies other parking supply opportunities in the LASP-CG zone within the Lincoln North Subarea;
4. Clarify the public open space requirements and consider renaming and/or including a definition in the LASP;
5. Revise requirements specific to the Kettle's Nursery site located at the intersection of Wyoming Street and Lincoln Avenue and convert them into guidelines to support the redevelopment of the site and encourage preservation of the existing one-story midcentury structure on the northwest portion of the site; and
6. Incorporate a goal and/or policy stating a preference to retain existing architectural style in the LASP-CG zone within the Lincoln North Subarea.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On October 18, 2021, staff provided an informational presentation to the City Council on the relationship between State housing legislation and the City's ongoing efforts to implement the 2015 General Plan. At the meeting, the City Council raised concerns about the effect of State density bonus law (SDBL) and other State housing legislation on the Specific Plan updates. In response to this concern, the City Council directed the Planning and Community Development Department to consider adjusting residential densities to account for potential density bonus within the Specific Plan areas. This report provides an update on the recommended LASP based on direction from the City Council.

BACKGROUND:

On September 20, 2021, staff presented the recommended LASP for the City Council's consideration. At the meeting, several Councilmembers praised the recommended plan but expressed concern over State legislation and questioned whether the densities expressed in the General Plan were reflective of current community ideals. The Mayor and Councilmembers requested an update on recently signed housing legislation, including Senate Bill 9, and shared larger concerns about State law superseding the City's development standards as established in the General Plan. Councilmembers also expressed concern about how SDBL would be implemented with the proposed Specific Plans. The City Council voted to continue the discussion on the LASP update until staff presented further information on the impacts of new state laws.

On October 18, 2021, staff presented the City Council with an overview of the State of California's housing crisis, State legislation that has affected housing and local control, and the impacts of these laws on Pasadena's land use planning framework, including the General Plan and Specific Plans. Staff provided two recommended options for continuing the Specific Plan updates, including one option that proceeds without change to the overall approach, and another that would continue updating the Specific Plans,

and include adjusting densities presented in the Round 3 drafts to account for potential density bonus. The second option also takes into consideration potential new commercial development. Both options would include a concurrent General Plan Amendment to match Specific Plan densities as each Specific Plan is brought forth for approval. The City Council unanimously voted to support the second option, with direction to return as soon as possible with the LASP update.

REVISIONS TO THE RECOMMENDED LINCOLN AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN

Based on the City Council direction, staff recommends adjusting the residential density, floor area ratio (FAR), and building height permitted within a portion of the LASP area to account for SDBL. The adjustment takes into consideration a variety of planning factors, including the plan vision, goals, and policies, existing surrounding residential neighborhoods, recent development projects in the pipeline, physical feasibility of future projects, and applicability of the SDBL. The recommended adjustment would reduce the permitted residential density from 48 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) to 32 du/ac, FAR from 1.5 to 1.0, and building height from 39 to 36 feet for the area between the I-210 Freeway and Pepper Street on the westside of Lincoln Avenue (See Table 1 and Figure 1). This adjustment would continue to encourage and support mixed-use development, including housing, as envisioned by the recommended LASP.

Table 1. Comparison of Density, FAR, and Building Height for LASP-MU Zoning District

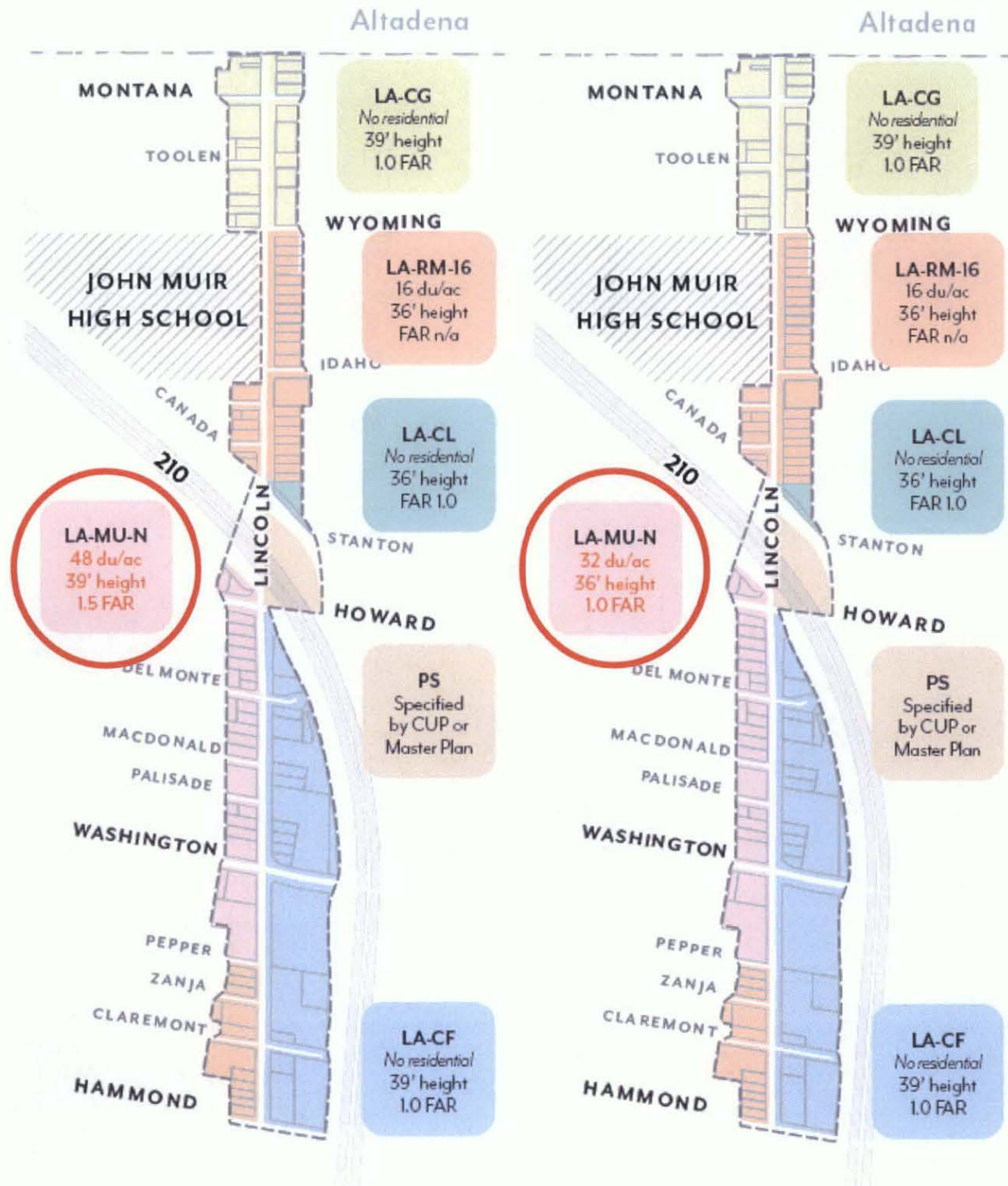
	Current 2013 LASP	Recommended LASP (September)	Revised Recommended LASP (November)	2015 General Plan
Density (du/ac)	16	48	32	0-87
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	0.7	1.5	1.0	0-2.25
Building Height	36'	39'	36'	n/a- height not prescribed

Minor changes to the regulations and development standards are proposed. For the revised update to the LASP refer to Attachment A. The comparison table summarizing changes between the 2013 LASP and the recommended LASP has been revised to reflect the adjustments proposed, and is included as Attachment B. A summary of the recommended regulations and development standards that were presented to the City Council on September 20, 2021 are provided as Attachment C. The recommended amendments to the General Plan and Zoning Code were also updated to reflect these changes, refer to Attachment F. The Addendum to the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR), 2015 General Plan EIR, and the General Plan Consistency Findings are included in this report, no revisions were made to these documents.

Figure 1. Adjusted Density, FAR, and Building Height

Prior Recommendation (September 2021)

Revised Recommendation (November 2021)



ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

An Initial Study and EIR was prepared for the Pasadena General Plan in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and certified by the City Council on August 17, 2015. An addendum to the EIR has been prepared analyzing the update to the LASP in compliance with Section 15164 (Addendum to an EIR or Negative Declaration) of the CEQA guidelines (Title 14, Chapter 3, Article 11). The addendum found that the project revisions will not result in any potentially significant impacts that were not already analyzed in the EIR. For details refer to Attachment D.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:

As recommended, the LASP will establish the vision for a vibrant neighborhood-oriented district that is unique and special, with a mix of uses, services, and amenities, complemented by enhanced streetscapes. The LASP reflects community and commission feedback and the desire to build upon existing conditions, supporting new development that is contextually appropriate and enhances the area. It also stimulates economic development and balances housing and employment opportunities in the area.

The LASP, would replace the current 2013 LASP, refining the plan boundaries, vision, goals, policies, regulations, standards, guidelines, and implementation actions for this specific area. Further, the proposed targeted revisions also address concerns expressed by the City Council related to SDBL and new State laws while supporting the plan vision and allowing for growth.

FISCAL IMPACT:

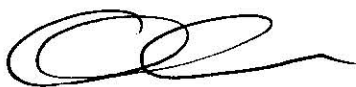
There is no direct fiscal impact to the City by adopting the recommended LASP and associated addendum to the 2015 General Plan Environmental Impact Report. Costs related to some implementation actions within the LASP, such as the Complete Streets Improvement Program, are expected to be partially or fully offset by local, state, and/or federal grant funding as available. Many of the LASP policies and related General Plan and Zoning Code amendments are designed to encourage the retention of existing local businesses and spur additional residential and/or commercial development and public realm improvements within the Plan area, which may serve as a catalyst for increased economic activity and vitality along the Lincoln Avenue corridor. Indirectly, these combined outcomes may result in increased revenue to the City's General Fund through property and sales taxes, business licensing and permitting fees, and development impact fees, helping to offset costs related to public realm improvements.

Respectfully submitted,




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STEVE MERMELL
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Attachments: (7)

Attachment A – Recommended Lincoln Avenue Specific Plan (revised)
Attachment B – Comparison Table of Current and Recommended Standards (revised)
Attachment C – September 13, 2021 Staff Report
Attachment D – Addendum to the General Plan Environmental Impact Report
Attachment E – 2015 General Plan Environmental Impact Report
Attachment F – Recommended General Plan and Zoning Code Amendments (revised)
Attachment G – Required Findings (revised)

Attachments are available at the following link: <https://www.ourpasadena.org/LASP-CC-HR-111521>.