

# Agenda Report

September 13, 2021

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department  
**SUBJECT:** LINCOLN AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN 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 Lincoln Avenue Specific Plan; 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:**

In 2018, the City initiated the “*Our Pasadena – Putting the Plan in Motion*” program to review and update Pasadena’s specific plans and implement the General Plan Land Use Element. The update to the LASP is the first of eight plans to be presented for consideration to the City Council, and reflects the ideas and feedback generated through a multi-phase community engagement effort conducted between 2018 and 2021. The recommended LASP would replace the current 2013 specific plan, redefining the plan boundaries, vision, goals, policies, regulations, guidelines, and implementation actions for this specific area.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The objective of the Our Pasadena program is to establish neighborhood-specific design and land-use goals resulting in a refined set of permitted uses, residential densities, buildable area, and development standards and guidelines that will shape the built environment of eight specific areas: Central District, East Colorado, East Pasadena, Fair Oaks/Orange Grove, Lamanda Park, Lincoln Avenue, North Lake Avenue, and South Fair Oaks. While the program will establish an overall vision for each specific plan area, the standards and guidelines recommended apply specifically to private development and the adjacent sidewalk. Implementation of the specific plans is supported by a number of complementary tools, including the various plans, programs, and guiding documents listed below:

- Public Art Program
- Bicycle Transportation Action Plan
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Climate Action Plan
- Complete Streets Program
- Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multifamily Residential Districts
- Master Street Tree Plan
- Mobility Element
- Pedestrian Plan
- Sign Design Guidelines
- Street Design Guide
- Zoning Code

The first specific plan as part of the *Our Pasadena* program presented for consideration to the City Council is the LASP. The recommended LASP reflects the ideas and feedback generated through a multi-phase community engagement effort between 2018 and 2021. In addition to the community outreach and visioning process, the recommended LASP represents the outcome of a technical planning and design effort, directly informed by the perspectives and expertise of community members, Planning staff, the Northwest Commission, Design Commission, and Planning Commission. The work is supported by a consultant team of urban planners, urban designers, economists, architects, and landscape architects. The planning process also involved coordination with City staff from Public Works, Transportation, Economic Development, Northwest Programs, and the Accessibility Coordinator. For a summary of the community engagement process and public feedback, refer to Attachment C.

A series of study sessions began in late 2020, starting with the Northwest Commission and concluding with the Planning Commission in early 2021. In each study session, information was presented on the draft plan boundary, vision, goals, policies, standards, and guidelines that would regulate future development within the LASP boundaries. The discussions also included a comparison of the existing 2013 LASP with the draft plan.

On November 2, 2020, the Northwest Commission held a study session on the LASP update. A summary of the comments include:

- Increase amount of greenery and open space;
- Desire for additional shade along the corridor;
- Increase the comfort and safety of sidewalks;
- Make the corridor friendlier to bicyclists;
- Incorporate public art throughout the plan area; and
- Concerns about freeway overpass and discontinuity between northern/southern portions of the plan area.

On December 1, 2020, the Design Commission held a study session on the LASP update. A summary of the comments include::

- Request for similar, cohesive standards on either side of Lincoln Avenue, south of the I-210 freeway;
- Incentivize new businesses rather than limiting opportunities;
- Encourage small-scale, multi-tenant commercial spaces;
- Provide accommodations for outdoor dining and other amenities; and
- Concern about discontinuity between northern/southern portions of the plan area.

On April 28, 2021, the Planning Commission held a study session on the LASP update. A summary of the comments include:

- Public comments focused on façade standards and appropriate building modulation requirements; and
- Commissioner comments included the following, organized by topic:

- Outreach – General support for the outreach conducted for the LASP update and acknowledgement that the draft plan generally responds to community input and concerns received thus far;
- Plan Boundary – Reconsider retaining the Caltrans-owned parcel within the plan area;
- Plan Vision – Recommendation that additional visuals be shown, such as digital models and examples of public art that could be encouraged, such as murals;
- Development Standards (Housing) – Discussion on ensuring that the plan provides appropriate residential density and unit types; varied opinions on the concept of mixed uses on the west side of Lincoln Avenue, south of the I-210 freeway. Some commissioners felt that as proposed, the draft plan would not sufficiently increase density and promote “eyes on the street”. Other commissioners noted that the community responses indicated a preference for a lower density area. Additionally, there was some discussion about changing the Commercial Flex subarea to mixed-use to promote a more cohesive area in terms of uses and building forms;
- Development Standards (Parking) – Support the concept of parking reductions for businesses but also discussed the potential for shared parking garages;
- Development Standards (Plan Cohesion) – Acknowledged that the I-210 freeway creates a barrier within the plan area and expressed interest in further developing the standards and guidelines to encourage a greater sense of cohesion within the plan area; and
- Public Realm Standards – Supported objectives related to streetscape improvements and noted that a robust streetscape plan, combined with development and design standards related to the private realm, would provide the corridor with a greater sense of identity.

On June 9, 2021, the Planning Commission held a publicly noticed hearing to review the LASP update, receive public feedback, and provide recommendations to the City Council. Due to several Commissioners being unavailable, and in the interest of ensuring that all Commissioners would have the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations in a public setting, the LASP update discussion was continued to June 23, 2021. However, members of the public provided general feedback, summarized below:

- Support for not requiring additional parking for specific changes of use;
- Suggested allowing work/live units in the LASP-CG zone within the Lincoln North Subarea;
- Reconsider allowing mixed-use, including housing on the Kettle’s Nursery site; and
- General support for façade modulation requirements.

On June 23, 2021, the Planning Commission held a second publicly noticed hearing to review the LASP update, receive public feedback, and provide recommendations to the

City Council. The Planning Commission moved to recommend approval of the LASP update 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.

Staff has refined the proposed LASP that was presented to the Planning Commission and reflects feedback received as discussed below. Refer to Attachment A for the recommended LASP. The current LASP is also included as Attachment B.

### **RECOMMENDED LINCOLN AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN**

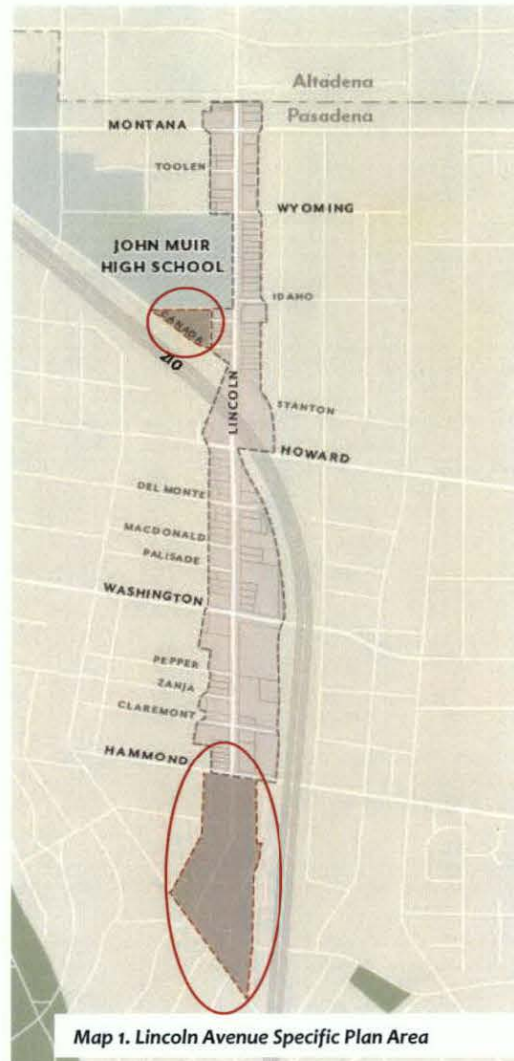
The specific plan area is located a half-mile east of the Arroyo Seco in north Pasadena and generally consists of properties fronting Lincoln Avenue between Forest Avenue on the south and the northern City boundary, just north of Montana Street. It was envisioned that as part of the update, the LASP boundary would be revised, requiring a General Plan amendment. The recommended specific plan area would encompass the 1.1-mile along Lincoln Avenue between Hammond Street and the City boundary, just north of Montana Street.

The following circled areas denoted in red would be removed from the current plan (See Map 1).

- A cluster of developed single-family residential parcels on Anderson Place, south of John Muir High School, currently regulated by the City's Zoning Code RS-6 (single-family) requirements, as specific plans typically do not regulate such uses; and
- A few blocks of developed single-family residential parcels zoned RS-6, a condominium project zoned PD-4 that contains its own development standards,

and a commercially-developed parcel on Lincoln Avenue, south of Hammond Street.

MAP 1:



With the exception of the commercially-developed parcel, all other parcels are currently regulated by the base zoning requirements within the Zoning Code, therefore removing them from the specific plan would not affect how these uses are regulated. The commercially-developed parcel at the corner of Lincoln and Mountain Avenue, near Forrest Avenue, would revert back to CG (General Commercial) zoning if the recommended plan is adopted.

### LASP Area Vision

Lincoln Avenue is an important corridor providing affordable housing, local amenities, industrial and technological services, small business opportunities, and educational and cultural institutions to the residents of Pasadena and nearby communities. The Land Use Element of the General Plan envisions this specific area as a neighborhood-

oriented district with new housing options and a complement of local-serving retail and services, office spaces, and community uses, all tied together with public improvements that create a vibrant and enjoyable pedestrian environment.

The recommended LASP reflects a cohesive vision as described below:

- A horizontal and vertical mix of uses unified by complementary development standards; dotted with modest community gathering spaces, public art, and a continuous tree canopy; leveraging access to the Arroyo Seco and visitors to the Rose Bowl; and encouraging multi-modal connectivity including walking, biking, and transit along an enhanced public realm throughout Lincoln Avenue;
- A main street providing local amenities and small business opportunities within walking distance of residential neighborhoods and the PUSD community; a pedestrian-focused commercial core that builds upon, rather than replaces, the existing character of historic storefronts and local businesses; as well as increased ground floor transparency, shading, through both trees and awnings, and lighting to improve comfort, safety, and the overall experience of north Lincoln Avenue; and
- An eclectic variety of residential, commercial, office, and incubator shared spaces for south Lincoln Avenue; related by common building heights and landscaped setbacks; new vertical mixed-use on the west side with housing, smaller spaces for retail and commercial services; and creation of a hub for research and development/commercial flex uses on the east side, building off of existing uses providing jobs to local residents.

#### Recommended Regulations and Standards

The recommended LASP considers a variety of planning factors, including citywide plans, policies, programs, guiding documents, community and commission feedback, and the following technical analyses:

- Existing conditions such as land use, building age, footprint, block size, stories, frontage, parking, urban form, lot size, property ownership, and circulation;
- Surrounding neighborhoods and development patterns;
- Recent entitled and development projects in the pipeline;
- Best urban planning practices and design standards relating to sidewalks, street trees, building massing and modulation, ground floor design, open space, and minimum parking requirements;
- Market trends, physical feasibility of prototypical sites and development;
- Future land use and mobility concepts; and
- Future capital improvement projects.

The recommended plan will further the vision for a very special, vibrant neighborhood-oriented district with the mix of uses and standards proposed. Modest streetscape

improvements could further develop Lincoln Avenue's unique character and sense of place within Pasadena. The following goals, policies, standards, and implementation actions were revised and/or added to the recommended plan based on Planning Commission feedback:

- **3.1 Vision.** A vision concept map, Figure 3.1-1, was added to help visualize the recommended plan concept for Lincoln Avenue, highlighting key housing, employment, publicly accessible open space and other enhancement opportunities;
- **Goal 7.** Sustainable development that emphasizes green infrastructure, multi-benefit stormwater elements, and climate resiliency to improve water and air quality. A new goal and four policies were added to support citywide climate action objectives, including increasing the amount of pervious surfaces on-site through permeable paving and landscaping to enhance groundwater recharge and filter pollution;
- **Policy 10d.** Architectural Style. A new policy added to encourage new development to complement the existing architecture and reference the century-old storefronts found in the Lincoln North Subarea, north of Wyoming Street;
- **Table 4.2-1** Allowed Uses, Permit Requirements, and Specific Limitations. Add Work/Live Units as an allowed use in the LASP-CG zone to continue to allow this type of residential use within the Lincoln North Subarea, north of Wyoming Street as recommended by Planning Commission. The Planning Commission additionally recommended allowing other types of housing in the LASP-CG zone, however staff's recommendation is to allow work/live units only as a permitted use, which add the potential for housing while retaining the desired commercial nature of this subarea as reflected in Policy 9d;
- **6.1.7.C.** Alternative Compliance. In order to allow flexibility in implementing modulation standards, new text was added that would allow modulation standards to be modified through the Design Review process;
- **6.3.** Publicly Accessible Open Space. For the purposes of this Section, Publicly Accessible Open Space (e.g. plazas, pocket parks, and paseos) are privately owned by publicly accessible spaces and typically include amenities such as seating, landscaping, fountains, and public art;
- **6.3.1.B.** Publicly Accessible Open Space Minimum Area. The proposed publicly accessible open space requirements were refined based on feedback from Planning Commission. The publicly accessible open space requirement would only be applicable to projects in the LASP-CF zone within the Lincoln South Subarea with more than 80,000 square feet of building floor area to provide a percentage of building floor area as publicly accessible open space, as set in Table 6.3-2 of the recommended LASP. The initial publicly accessible open space requirement for projects in the LASP-CG zone within the Lincoln North Subarea, which would have required projects with more than 15,000 square feet of building floor area to provide 5% of building floor area as publicly accessible



open space, have been removed. This requirement was specifically proposed to apply to the Kettle's Nursery site (and other similar sites in this area) to require a publicly accessible open space benefit to the community. The Planning Commission recommended that a guideline would be more appropriate to provide the Design Commission with the greatest flexibility to determine appropriate and prominent publicly accessible open space and encourage the redevelopment of this site. The recommended plan includes guidelines specific to the Kettle's nursery site that will encourage the preservation and incorporation of the existing midcentury structure into future proposed developments along with suggested utilization of the existing driveway as potential open space that is accessible to the public;

- **IMS-2.** Complete Streets Programs Improvement. This action item was refined to identify opportunities for midblock crossings across Lincoln Avenue to improve east-west pedestrian mobility and safety and bulb-outs with sustainable features such as bioswales, as part of the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Complete Streets Program, and to prioritize those improvements in the LASP-CG zone within the Lincoln North Subarea, north of Wyoming Street; and
- **PA-6.** Business Association Formation. This action item was refined to consider formation of a business and/or property-owner association (such as a Business Improvement District) to create opportunities for placemaking, marketing, and parking management along Lincoln Avenue.

A summary of the regulations and standards that implement the plan vision is discussed below. For a comparison of the current and the recommended standards refer to Attachment D.

#### *Land Uses, Density, and Intensity*

Minor changes to the general distribution of land uses are proposed compared to the current plan. The recommended LASP encourages mixed-use development, including housing, on the west side of Lincoln Avenue, between the I-210 Freeway and Pepper Street, in the LASP-MU zone. Commercial uses would be limited to the ground floor of mixed-use projects in this area to ensure that housing options are provided which complement the neighboring residential character west of Lincoln Avenue. In addition, single-family residential uses would be prohibited along the corridor.

The recommended plan does not propose to extend housing opportunities in the LASP-CG zone beyond work/live units. The Planning Commission noted that work/live units had previously been allowed under existing zoning in this area and should remain as a permitted use. Staff clarified that work/live units were intended to remain as a permitted use in the LASP-CG zone and has updated the plan accordingly. The Planning Commission additionally recommended allowing housing on second and third floors in the LASP-CG zone by-right, which would require a General Plan amendment. The recommended plan does not include this provision. The plan recognizes the community's desire to retain the existing neighborhood-serving commercial nature of

this area. When land is zoned mixed-use, housing often becomes the most profitable development scenario. In this zone, the most likely outcome would be the demolition of existing architecture and disruption or loss of existing community-serving businesses at a key commercial location for the area. Opportunities for residential and mixed-use development have been extended to areas along the west side of the Lincoln South subarea.

The recommended LASP additionally does not propose to extend housing opportunities in the LASP-CF zone along the east side of Lincoln Avenue between Howard and Hammond Streets within the Lincoln South Subarea. This area is presently designated as Low Commercial in the General Plan Land Use Diagram, reflecting the character of existing and future desired uses along with these parcels' proximity to the I-210 freeway, and does not specify a residential density. While work/live units would be permitted in the LASP-CF zone, as they are primarily commercial in nature and not subject to residential density, other forms of housing would require a General Plan amendment to establish density.

A key planning consideration is balancing the need for additional housing with the retention of R&D/Flex land for employment and economic development purposes per Land Use Element Goals 2 (Land Use Diversity) and 13 (Innovation). As noted, when land is zoned mixed-use, housing becomes a desirable development scenario, and could eventually take away the few remaining suitable sites for this type of job growth that the City would like to retain. Specifically, Land Use Policy 2.4 calls for the City to provide sufficient land for uses that offer job opportunities for residents in creative office and R&D/Flex formats, and Land Use Policy 13.5 calls for the City to provide for the clustering of creative, research, and incubator industries that leverage proximity to Caltech, JPL, and other regional institutions. The area's freeway adjacency additionally makes it a prime location for R&D/Flex uses. This is validated by the continued success of the Business Park of Pasadena just south of Washington Boulevard, east of Lincoln Avenue. The community also expressed support for these uses throughout the public engagement process to create well-paying employment opportunities and buffer residents from the I-210 Freeway.

The Planning Commission discussed the merits of incorporating housing, both work/live as well as residential units on upper floors in this area as a way to ensure consistency of uses along both sides of Lincoln Avenue and increased safety on the eastern portion of Lincoln Avenue. Specifically, the Commissioners discussed limiting work/live units to the frontage along Lincoln Avenue as a way to create a consistent neighborhood street frontage, as well as establishing a density of 32 dwelling units per acre for residential units, limited to second and third floors within 35 feet from the frontage along Lincoln Avenue. Ultimately, the Planning Commission determined that the balance of residential and non-residential uses in the Lincoln South subarea, as proposed by staff, was appropriate, did not limit work/live units strictly to the Lincoln Avenue frontage and did not recommend a General Plan amendment to allow additional types of housing.

Certain uses such as catering services, charitable institutions, indoor commercial recreation, community gardens, offices on the ground floor, and schools/specialized education and training would be permitted in commercial only areas without a Minor Conditional Use Permit (MCUP) or Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to streamline processing for uses that do not present special challenges and are desired uses expressed by the community. As previously noted above, work/live units would continue to be permitted in the LASP-CF zone and changed from conditionally permitted to permitted by-right in the LASP-CG zone, a recommendation proposed in the LASP that was developed through public and commission feedback and not originally part of the proposed plan.

The sale of beer and wine and full alcohol sales would continue to require a CUP. However, the plan proposes to modify the threshold for alcohol sales that are accessory to retail food sales (such as a grocery store). The plan would also conditionally permit the sale of alcohol as an accessory use at alcohol manufacturing facilities, such as a brewery or distillery, based on community feedback indicating support for such uses in a limited and regulated fashion. This would allow for a tap or tasting room on the premises in the LASP-CF zone; stand-alone bars would continue to be prohibited throughout the plan area.

For a complete list of allowed uses and permit requirements refer to Chapter 4 of the recommended LASP. Definitions of land uses are found in Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) 17.80.020. Additional standards for specific land uses may apply; refer to the PMC Section noted in the table.

The LASP update recommends increasing residential density and nonresidential floor area permitted compared to the current plan. Residential density would increase from 16 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) to 48 du/ac for the area south of the I-210 Freeway and north of Pepper Street, on the west side of Lincoln Avenue, in the LASP-MU zone. An increase from 0.7 floor area ratio (FAR) to 1.5 FAR is also proposed for this area. The recommended changes seek to encourage the redevelopment of existing commercial properties and provide new housing options with some commercial amenities targeting growth along underutilized commercial corridors. The Land Use Element protects nearby residential neighborhoods from overdevelopment and displacement, which were both concerns expressed by the community. The density is lower than the General Plan maximum because the area is not well served by frequent transit and is surrounded by RS (single-family) zoning districts. However, the recommended density of 48 du/ac would not restrict compatible redevelopment of up to three stories. A recent development application for a site within this zoning district indicates that three-story townhome style development at approximately 30 du/ac is likely to be feasible for redevelopment. This change would require a General Plan amendment to update the land use designation from Medium Mixed Use (0-87 du/ac and 0-2.25 FAR) to Low-Medium Mixed Use (48 du/ac and 1.5 FAR) in the Land Use Diagram. This amendment is proposed to align the General Plan and plan vision and to memorialize the refinement of the density and FAR in the plan. For more information on the recommended General Plan amendments refer to Attachment G.

A slight increase in the FAR, from 0.8 to 1.0, is recommended for the area between Wyoming Street and the City boundary, just north of Montana Street, in the LASP-CG zone. It is envisioned that this change combined with the lowered parking requirements proposed in the recommended plan would allow for greater flexibility and increase the likelihood that new commercial projects would be economically feasible.

#### *Development, Design and Public Realm Standards*

The recommended LASP establishes objective development standards to achieve the goals and vision of the Land Use Element, thereby enabling a vibrant neighborhood-oriented district. The recommended LASP includes urban design standards, such as modulation and stepbacks, to help refine building mass and scale, reinforce existing urban character, and improve the aesthetic and design quality of new development. It also addresses the relationship between the private and public realms through ground floor design, publicly accessible open space, and sidewalk standards. Together, the development, design, and public realm standards help to unify the various uses permitted in the plan area, helping to achieve the plan vision.

#### *Building heights*

Recommended building heights would generally remain the same as current restrictions, limited to 36 or 39 feet in height to maintain lower heights expressed by the community. The additional three feet in height, from 36 to 39 feet, in the LASP-MU, LASP-CF and LASP-CG, is required to accommodate the desired three-story scale with a 15 foot ground floor and 12 foot upper floors. In order to create a cohesive streetwall among the different uses, second stories would not be permitted below 15 feet, though residential projects could elevate their first floors up to 5 feet above the sidewalk. Similar building heights on the east side of Lincoln Avenue would help create a sense of balance and symmetry on the corridor, even though the uses will vary. To further incentivize the redevelopment of opportunity sites, the LASP update recommends increasing building heights in the LASP-CG zone, from 36 to 39 feet. For more information on building heights refer to Chapter 6 of the recommended LASP.

#### *Front setbacks and facades*

The recommended LASP maintains a similar setback approach to the current plan with some refinements. In the multi-family neighborhood areas, the recommended setback requirement is greater fronting Lincoln Avenue to better reflect the existing prevailing setback and to support more greening and open space. Recommended setbacks in the LASP-CG zone are reduced slightly, but now measured from a new sidewalk line, effectively maintaining a consistent and comfortable setback distance for parcels in this zone. The setback recommended in the LASP-CF zone is reduced from 12 feet to a range of 5 to 10 feet to encourage a symmetrical streetwall with development across the street and to create a street environment consistent with pedestrian-oriented urban design principles.

In the LASP-CG zone, entrances would be required to be recessed from the façade, in keeping with the historic character of the area, and all entrances would be required to be set back at least 30 inches from the building façade instead of the sidewalk line. Updated transparency requirements increase the amount of glass facing the sidewalk and clarify that it must be located at pedestrian eye level. Shading, such as awnings and canopies, and pedestrian-scale lighting and signage requirements have also been incorporated into the recommended LASP. These changes will enhance the walkability of the area by creating engaging storefronts which invite customers inside and improve neighborhood safety with more “eyes on the street.” For more information refer to Chapter 6 of the recommended LASP.

### *Rear Setbacks and Stepbacks*

The recommended LASP includes slight changes to the current rear setback requirements, specifically changing the angle of the encroachment plane to minimize the massing and scale of the upper floors of new development adjacent to single-family residential neighborhoods. The refinements to the encroachment plane would push development of upper floors towards the middle of the development site and away from single-family zones. The 45-degree encroachment plane angle is stricter than the 30-degree angle that is currently allowed but in-line with citywide standards for nonresidential buildings next to residential districts. The plane starts at 15 feet, higher than the citywide standard, because upper stories in this zone are required to be residential. The recommended LASP also includes additional prohibitions on projected balconies or roof decks within 50 feet of a single-family residential zone.

In the multi-family residential areas, LASP-RM-16, rear stepbacks were refined slightly to make the setback measurement approach consistent with other standards in the plan. The recommended LASP includes a 15 foot stepback at the second story, consistent with citywide standards, and a 50 foot stepback at the third story, more restrictive than the 25 foot citywide standard, but slightly less restrictive than the current plan. For more information refer to Chapter 6 of the recommended LASP.

### *Modulation*

The recommended LASP would include modulation standards that are intended to reduce the scale and “blockiness” of new construction with variation in façade planes and limits on building length. The standards are written to be general enough as to not mandate a particular building architecture and have been analyzed to ensure feasibility with both revival and modern styles. These standards have been designed to work together with height, setback, stepback, and open space standards to encourage high-quality design and appropriately scaled building forms. The maximum façade length standard will prevent monolithic block-sized buildings from interrupting the smaller-scale rhythm of the neighborhood. Similarly, the minimum area modulation standard will ensure multiple façade planes on the larger developments; those over two stories with

over 50 feet in frontage. In the LASP-MU zone, this would most likely be accomplished by recessing private balconies on upper floors.

To address feedback from Design Commission and the public, the recommended LASP includes a new provision that would allow modulation standards to be modified through the Design Review process. For more information refer to Chapter 6 of the recommended LASP.

### *Open Space*

The recommended LASP would increase open space requirements for both residential and nonresidential projects throughout the plan area. For residential uses, the plan would update the combined private and common open space requirement from 150 square feet per unit to a per bedroom requirement ranging from 200 to 275 square feet per bedroom. For example, a 24-unit building with an even mix of studios, one, two, and three bedroom units, this requirement would increase the required open space from a total of 3,600 square feet to 5,700 square feet, or about 238 square feet per unit. The updated requirement better aligns the amount of open space with the number of people living in a building with the objective of improving quality of life and open space access for multi-family residents. Higher open space requirements would also create building modulation opportunities through the need for balconies, upper floor terraces, patios, and courtyards. More recently, since the onset of the COVID pandemic, community members have expressed the desire for more outdoor private and common open spaces within multi-family development for added flexibility and wellness during stay-at-home restrictions. The recommended LASP also includes new common open space design requirements related to indoor/outdoor space, location, hardscape, landscaping, and trees, which would encourage the design of successful, usable open spaces within development.

The recommended LASP introduces public and commercial open space requirements to ensure that new development creates a sense of place for area. Nonresidential projects over 40,000 square feet throughout the plan area would be required to provide 5% of the building floor area as open space for tenants, and projects over 80,000 square feet in the LASP-CF within the Lincoln South Subarea would be required to provide 2 to 3% of building floor area as publicly accessible open space, depending on project size. Publicly accessible open space consists of areas freely accessible to the general public but maintained by private property owners, and could be activated by neighboring businesses, like restaurants with outdoor dining, or temporary uses such as food trucks. These requirements are meant to create a series of community gathering places along the corridor. For more information refer to Chapter 6 of the recommended LASP.

### *Public Realm Standards*

The recommended LASP includes public realm standards and guidelines to implement the General Plan vision for the plan area and achieve objectives of the Pasadena Street

Design Guide and Pasadena Master Street Tree Plan. The recommended LASP introduces the concept of minimum sidewalk widths to the plan area, consistent with the Pasadena Street Design Guide. Existing sidewalk widths along the corridor range from 8 to 15 feet but are commonly about 12 feet. The recommended LASP would establish minimum sidewalk widths of 15 feet in the LASP-CG zone area and 12 feet in other districts to support appropriate pedestrian mobility and amenities within the sidewalk relative to adjacent land uses. The recommended LASP also includes street tree requirements that are consistent with the City's Master Street Tree Plan, however it includes recommendations to refine street tree requirements to better support an enhanced tree canopy, sustainability objectives, and streetscape design. The adoption of new street tree types is not included in the recommended plan, but implementation program IMS-1 includes near-term coordination between Public Works and the community to update the Master Street Tree Plan for the Lincoln corridor. The recommended LASP also introduces a tree well minimum length of six feet and a new requirement to construct an expanded root zone cell when planting new trees to support better tree health and larger tree canopies.

The recommended LASP also maintains the existing parkway requirements from the current plan which requires a portion of the sidewalk to be landscaped as measured by a percentage of the parcel frontage. The recommended LASP introduces a minimum and maximum range for parkways to ensure parkways are constructed, but that adequate room for pedestrian access and other amenities or utilities is also provided within the amenity zone. The recommended LASP would decrease the percentage requirement in the LASP-RM-16 zone from 60 to a range of 20 to 30 percent in order to provide adequate room for pedestrian access and other amenities in this multi-family zone. For more information, including public amenities and landscaping requirements, refer to Chapter 5 of the recommended LASP.

### *Parking*

The recommended LASP intends to reduce the visual impact of parking, regulate appropriate parking supply, encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and lessen the barriers to small businesses through updated parking requirements. Currently, parking minimums severely limit the allowed uses of century-old buildings where parking cannot physically be accommodated on site, and restaurants must use approximately 75% of their land area for parking lots. These policies have the unintended consequence of higher vacancies, particularly in a softening retail market.

Parking requirements for commercial uses were refined in the recommended LASP and are set at 2 per 1,000 square feet in the LASP-CG zone and 3 per 1,000 square feet elsewhere. It also includes exemptions for commercial spaces under 5,000 square feet, uses within designated historic structures and buildings built before 1970, and outdoor dining. Feedback received from the community indicated general support for lowering parking requirements as a way to retain existing businesses and attract new employment-generating opportunities along the corridor. Recalibrating parking requirements to encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings and lessen the barriers

to small businesses were also supported by the Planning Commission. For residential uses, the recommended LASP seeks to reduce the cost of housing by unbundling parking from the unit itself; any unused parking could then be leased to other tenants. Standards relating to driveways, parking lots and parking structures are also included in the plan. For more information refer to Chapter 6 of the recommended LASP.

## **PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

The recommended LASP includes targeted implementation actions intended to help guide and prioritize the implementation of the plan. It also provides an overview of existing services, plans, and programs, all of which can be leveraged to help implement the plan. A summary of funding sources is also included to guide the City in understanding and selecting available funding sources to implement the improvements and programs identified in the recommended LASP. The following implementation actions are intended to guide the City in implementing the recommended LASP over time with generalized timeframes as follows:

- On-going – periodic or on a continuing basis;
- Immediate – upon adoption of the Specific Plan;
- Near-term – 0 to 5 years; and
- Medium-term – 5 to 10 years.

### On-going Implementation

Specific plans are implemented on an on-going basis, and used by various City departments when reviewing projects, seeking funding, and to understand the vision, goals, and policies of specified geographic areas to guide improvements and programming. Implementing a specific plan requires collaboration across City departments and coordination with existing citywide implementation programs, plans, and efforts. For example, the City appropriates capital funds by department and project category through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) on an annual basis. Additionally, the City actively monitors new development within the specific plan areas to ensure that new development does not exceed the number of residential units and non-residential square feet specified in the Land Use Element, referred to as the development capacities, which are uniquely tailored to each specific plan.

Projects are tracked throughout the entitlement and permitting process to monitor both the projected and actual development capacity of each plan area. Residential units and non-residential square footage are formally removed from the development capacity limits upon issuance of a building permit. As of August 2021 for this plan area, 179 out of the available 180 residential unit capacity remains, with 300,000 of non-residential square feet still available. Assuming all projects currently in the pipeline were to receive a building permit, the available residential cap would be 116 units. Development of new affordable residential units do not count toward the development capacity for the LASP area.



### Immediate Implementation

Upon adoption of the new LASP, the Zoning Code text would be amended to replace existing permitted uses and development standards with the uses and development standards provided in adopted specific plan. The Zoning Code map would be amended to replace zoning district designations indicated on the Zoning Map with the new LASP zoning districts.

Other immediate actions include a General Plan map amendment to the Land Use Diagram which establishes the type of land uses that are allowed on a particular site in the City. As recommended, a General Plan map amendment would be required to update the land use designation on the Land Use Diagram from Medium Mixed Use (0-2.25 FAR and 0-87 du/acre) to Low-Medium Mixed Use (0-1.75 FAR and 48 du/ac) in the LASP-MU zone, Institutional to Medium Density Residential (0-16 du/ac), and Medium Density Residential (0 – 16 du/ac) to Low Commercial (0 – 1.0 FAR), as recommended in the LASP. A General Plan map and text amendment would be required to update the specific plan boundary for the LASP to align the plan boundary with the recommended LASP, as described in this report.

For more information on the recommended General Plan and Zoning Code amendments refer to Attachment G.

### Near-term Implementation

The recommended LASP prioritizes several implementation programs that were identified by the public and commissioners as high priority, such as reviewing the Master Street Tree Plan to evaluate the existing tree palette for Lincoln Avenue and revising where appropriate to include tree species that better address Specific Plan and Climate Action Plan objectives related to additional shade, urban cooling, carbon sequestration, and climate resilience. The Complete Streets Program was additionally identified by the public and commissioners as being a high priority implementation item, which involves working with DOT to identify opportunities for signalized pedestrian crossings to improve pedestrian safety, as well as sidewalk bulb-outs with sustainable elements such as bioswales to filter out runoff pollution and increase stormwater capture. The implementation program related to Complete Streets was further refined based on Planning Commission recommendation to prioritize improvements within the Lincoln North Subarea. These near-term implementation actions would be required to commence within five years of adoption of the LASP.

### Medium-term Implementation

The recommended LASP includes targeted implementation programs intended to help guide and prioritize the implementation of the plan, including identifying opportunities for

safety enhancements to improve east/west connections, investigating feasibility of widening the sidewalk underneath the I-210 Freeway, explore opportunities for pedestrian-oriented art on commercial and mixed-use portions of Lincoln Avenue through artist-designed crosswalks, utility boxes, and murals, and supporting formation of a business and/or property-owner association to strengthen opportunities for placemaking and community identity along Lincoln Avenue, which was refined through input from the Planning Commission to include exploration of shared parking management along the corridor. Medium-term implementation actions such as these would be expected to commence between 5-10 years after adoption of the LASP.

For more detailed information on implementation actions, refer to Chapter 7 of the recommended LASP.

### **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.

#### *Addendum to Certified EIR*

The original Project evaluated in the Certified EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2013091009) analyzed potential citywide impacts, broad policy alternatives, and programmatic mitigation measures associated with the General Plan Update. The certified EIR analyzed the update of the General Plan and specific plan amendments, which updated development caps within each of the City's eight specific plan areas.

The City is proposing updates to the LASP previously analyzed in the EIR. Updates to the LASP primarily focus on refining and/or establishing objective development standards to achieve the goals and vision of the General Plan. The project includes updates to the following components of the LASP to bring it into alignment with the General Plan: Specific Plan Area boundary; types of use; policies; design standards, public realm standards; density and intensity of development; height and/or overall scale of buildings and structures; setback and stepbacks; parking requirements; types and amount of open space and landscaping and open space requirements; and implementation programs. The Addendum reflects the recommended LASP, which incorporates revisions made to the proposed plan based on Planning Commission feedback.

The Addendum was prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines § 15164(a) which allows a lead agency to prepare an addendum to a previously certified EIR if only minor technical changes or additions to the previously certified EIR are necessary but none of the

conditions described in CEQA Guidelines § 15162 requiring preparation of a subsequent EIR are present. CEQA Guidelines § 15162 states that no subsequent EIR shall be prepared unless one or more of the following occurs:

- Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
- Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
- New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete, shows any of the following:
  - The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR;
  - Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;
  - Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or
  - Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

Public Resources Code (“PRC”) § 21166 provides that unless one or more of the conditions set forth are met, no subsequent or supplemental environmental impact report is required. The analysis demonstrates that the proposed modifications evaluated in the Addendum would not result in conditions meeting the criteria set forth in CEQA Guidelines § 15162. Therefore, pursuant to PRC § 21166 and CEQA Guidelines § 15162, preparation of a subsequent EIR is not required.

Refer to Attachment E for the Addendum to the General Plan EIR. For information on the 2015 General Environmental Impact Report refer to Attachment F.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:**

The recommended LASP would replace the current 2013 specific plan, refining the plan boundaries, vision, goals, policies, regulations, standards, guidelines, and implementation actions for this specific area. 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 recommended 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.

On June 23, 2021, the Planning Commission moved to recommend approval of the LASP as proposed by staff, with changes as previously outlined. Staff has incorporated many of the Commission's recommendations into a recommended LASP and related documents for consideration by the City Council.

**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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DAVID M. REYES  
Director of Planning & Community  
Development Department

Concurred by:

Prepared by:



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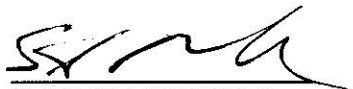
Anita Cerna  
Senior Planner



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David Sanchez  
Principal Planner

Approved by:



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STEVE MERMELL  
City Manager

Attachments: (8)

Attachment A – Recommended Lincoln Avenue Specific Plan  
Attachment B – Existing Lincoln Avenue Specific Plan  
Attachment C – Community Engagement Process and Public Feedback  
Attachment D – Comparison Table of Current and Recommended Standards  
Attachment E – Addendum to the General Plan Environmental Impact Report  
Attachment F – 2015 General Plan Environmental Impact Report  
Attachment G – Recommended General Plan and Zoning Code Amendments  
Attachment H – Required Findings

Attachments are available at the following link: <https://www.ourpasadena.org/LASP-CC-HR-091321>