

Agenda Report

May 23, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: SOUTH FAIR OAKS 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 Amendment, Specific Plan Amendment, and Zoning Code Map and Text Amendments;
3. Adopt a resolution approving the General Plan Map Amendment;
4. Adopt a resolution approving the recommended South Fair Oaks Specific Plan; and
5. Direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance for the Zoning Code Map and Text Amendments within 90 days consistent with the provisions set forth herein.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On April 13, 2022, by a vote of 5-2, the Planning Commission recommended that the City Council approve the proposed South Fair Oaks Specific Plan (SFOSP), including the General Plan Map Amendment, Zoning Code Map and Text Amendments, and the Addendum, as presented by staff, with the following recommended changes:

- Include an implementation program in the SFOSP related to public-private partnerships for the creation of paseos and publicly accessible open space.
- Included in the staff recommendation; and
- Incorporate language in the SFOSP that would give the review authority the ability to approve limited deviations from development standards not including allowed height,

setbacks, or tree planting requirements, for commercial properties when it can be clearly demonstrated that compliance with the standards would result in a substantial hardship.

- Staff does not recommend that this recommendation be incorporated into the SFOSP.

In addition, staff refined the proposed SFOSP that was presented to the Planning Commission to reflect feedback received. Refer to Attachment A for the Recommended SFOSP. The 1998 SFOSP is also included as Attachment B.

STAFF RECOMMENDED SOUTH FAIR OAKS SPECIFIC PLAN

The recommended SFOSP encompasses the area between Del Mar Boulevard to the north, the Metro L Line (Gold) right-of-way and Picher Alley to the east, State Street and the SR-110 Arroyo Parkway to the south, and Pasadena Avenue to the west (Shown in Map 1). As proposed, the specific plan boundaries align with the overall vision, goals, and policies for the plan area as approved and depicted in the General Plan Land Use diagram, with the exception of the removal of parcels south of Glenarm Avenue and east of the SR-110 Freeway owned by Pasadena Unified School District which include the Blair Middle and High School campuses.

Map 1. Recommended South Fair Oaks Specific Plan Area



Plan Vision, Goals, and Policies

The SFOSP area is envisioned as a creative, innovative, and health-oriented mixed-use community that provides multi-family housing, neighborhood-serving amenities, medical services, educational, and employment opportunities accessible to transit for residents, employees, students, and faculty. The objective of updating this plan is to establish new regulations, standards, and guidelines that would facilitate and encourage development and improvements that help realize the vision and goals for this area.

Key goals of the recommended plan include:

- A variety of new housing options with convenient access to transit, major institutions, and a lively mix of neighborhood commercial uses and amenities, all supported by an engaging public realm;
- A balanced variety of medical, office, retail, and restaurant uses that take advantage of the proximity to major institutions and support the City's creative and economic vitality;
- Diverse building design that fosters creativity and district identity with supportive, job-generating uses that enable innovation;
- Compatible development with sensitive transitions to existing residential neighborhoods that support community character;
- A walkable community with enhanced sidewalks and connective paseos to make transit and destinations more comfortable and pleasant to access; and
- A livable and sustainable community with rich landscaping and open space.

Economic Development Goals

The Economic Development Strategic Plan was completed in 2012 and it summarized economic conditions within Pasadena and offered a range of goals and objectives to guide future work plans. The plan offered four primary goals specifically related to:

- Job creation;
- Strengthening Pasadena's commercial retail districts;
- Promote Pasadena as a technology cluster; and
- Increasing collaboration to support tourism.

To achieve these goals, the recommended plan supports investment that creates jobs, enhances shopping and dining districts, cultivates innovation ecosystems, and encourages activities that attract businesses. The recommended plan includes policies that support an environment where existing and new businesses are able to leverage the proximity to major institutions. The plan allows for a variety of uses and provides amenities for residents, employees, students, and visitors, all within walking distance to

public transportation. The plan accomplishes this by allowing a wide range of land uses, optimizing densities and intensities, refining parking standards, and establishing new open space requirements and public realm standards, that work together to create a desirable mixed-use community.

Recommended Regulations and Standards

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

Land Uses (Chapter 4 of the Recommended SFOSP)

The recommended SFOSP intends to balance a variety of medical, office, retail, and restaurant uses that support the City's creative and economic vitality while providing new housing opportunities with convenient access to transit and major institutions such as the Art Center and Huntington Health. The most significant land use shift compared to the existing plan is the introduction of residential uses along Raymond Avenue and portions of Fair Oaks Avenue, Arroyo Parkway, and Waverly Drive. Residential uses will continue to be permitted along Del Mar Boulevard, as well as work/live units throughout most of the northwest area of the plan to address feedback received from the Planning Commission. The area south of Hurlbut Street, west of Fair Oaks Avenue, will also remain as a multi-family residential neighborhood.

Portions along Arroyo Parkway and the northwest area of the plan will continue to focus on nonresidential land uses. The intent within these areas is to encourage an eclectic mix of commercial, innovative, research and development uses that support existing businesses, create new employment opportunities, and promote economic vitality for the City, as well as provide neighborhood amenities and services for the surrounding community. The recommended plan recognizes the need for these types of businesses to serve the broader community and generate revenue for the City, while revising standards to improve the urban design of such uses and support pedestrian mobility. The land use regulations recommended support businesses that would offer services and employment opportunities for residents in and around the plan area, as well as attract businesses to surrounding areas that may support medical, research and development, dining, retail, and service industries. In general, the recommended plan expands the types of allowed uses, providing greater flexibility in the types of commercial land uses allowed, which is intended to reduce barriers to new businesses and job opportunities from locating in the plan area. For a complete list of allowable land uses refer to Chapter 4.3 of the recommended SFOSP.

Key change: Introduction of housing along Raymond Avenue and portions of Fair Oaks Avenue, Arroyo Parkway, Del Mar Boulevard, and Waverly Drive.

Density and Building Height (Chapter 6 of the Recommended SFOSP)

The standards in the recommended SFOSP seek to facilitate and encourage development, particularly new housing, near the Fillmore and Del Mar Stations, focusing growth and higher density development away from residential neighborhoods and into areas that are transit-accessible and closer to jobs and amenities. The greatest building heights for both residential and commercial are proposed adjacent to the Fillmore and Del Mar Stations. Along Arroyo Parkway, heights are relatively lower in order to provide appropriate transitions to adjacent multi-family residential properties to the east, with lower heights within the multi-family residential neighborhood in the southwest portion of the plan area.

Sidewalk, Building Setback, and Street Trees (Chapters 5 and 6 of the Recommended SFOSP)

The recommended SFOSP includes public realm standards and guidelines to support pedestrian mobility and amenities within the sidewalk that are appropriate and relative to adjacent land uses. Existing sidewalk widths range between 8 to 12 feet along Fair Oaks Avenue; 10 feet along Raymond Avenue and Arroyo Parkway; 8 to 12 along Del Mar Boulevard; 10 feet along California Boulevard; and 8 feet along Glenarm Street. The recommended plan will introduce a new development standard for minimum sidewalk widths ranging from 12 to 25 feet, with the widest sidewalks required along access routes to the Fillmore Station. In addition to the newly required minimum sidewalk widths, the plan will require a minimum 5-foot building setback throughout the plan area. The majority of the corridors allow a 0-foot building setback today per the 1998 SFOSP.

The combination of minimum sidewalk widths, building setbacks, and other standards, such as minimum parkways, not only serves to reduce the appearance of building mass, but also creates greater opportunities for increasing the street tree canopy and stormwater capture throughout the plan area. Standardizing minimum street tree well dimensions and requiring an uncompacted root zone for all new street trees also contributes to an enhanced shade canopy that helps to reduce the urban heat island effect, decrease sidewalk temperatures, enhances pedestrian comfort, and improve visual appearance of the street. Lastly, the 5-foot minimum setback for underground parking throughout the plan area provides additional space for private and public shade trees to mature. The recommended plan also includes design guidance for tree selection which builds on the City's Master Street Tree Plan, refer to Appendix A.2.

Key change: Introduction of minimum sidewalk widths and minimum 5' setbacks for buildings and underground parking throughout the plan area.

Open Space and Paseos (Chapter 6 of the Recommended SFOSP)

The recommended SFOSP revises open space requirements to improve quality of life and open space access for residents, businesses, students, and visitors. Private and common open space requirements for residential development would be based on the

number of bedrooms in each proposed unit, ensuring adequate open space amenities for the number of residents within each building. Common open space is also required for commercial projects, creating amenities for visitors and employees. In addition to the benefit of providing open space for building users, the requirements also contribute to better building modulation and massing with patios, balconies, terraces, and plazas. The recommended plan also includes a new requirement for Publicly Accessible Open Space ("PAOS"), including paseos, for larger projects near the Fillmore Station to achieve an overarching goal of creating a sense of place and improving access and visibility to the station from Huntington Health, Art Center, and Arroyo Parkway that would promote physical activity and wellness. The recommended plan requires the planting of trees for common open space and PAOS, including paseos. The number of trees required is a function of the size of the space and trees planted in pots can be used ornamentally but on the ground floor will not count towards the tree requirement.

Key change: New open space requirements and tree planting standards.

Parking (Chapter 6 of the Recommended SFOSP)

The recommended SFOSP refines parking requirements for commercial uses by setting a consistent minimum parking requirement of 2 spaces per 1,000 square feet for retail, restaurant, service uses, and offices, including medical offices. Also, no additional parking will be required for these uses occupying less than 5,000 square feet as well as for outdoor dining spaces less than 500 square feet. Projects within designated historic resources and changes of use in structures built prior to 1970 will also not be required to provide additional parking. This allows for greater flexibility for changes in use, particularly when a new restaurant seeks to occupy an existing tenant space that was previously used for retail or office, and encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings. It also reduces development costs, making it easier for new businesses to be established that can provide job opportunities and amenities for nearby residents, employees, and students. The reduced parking requirements also reflect the area's access to high quality transit, including the Fillmore and Del Mar Stations, both of which are walkable within a quarter- and half-mile radius, covering the majority of the plan area.

Implementation (Chapter 7 of the Recommended SFOSP)

The plan will be primarily implemented through the adoption of the plan's new land use, public realm, development regulations, and guidelines. In addition, the recommended plan includes targeted actions for the City that are intended to help guide and prioritize implementation of the plan. These actions reflect feedback received throughout the outreach process and includes programs such as work with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to identify opportunities for safety and mobility improvements consistent with the Complete Streets Program and Planning staff overseeing a citywide historic survey to identify historic resources in the area. As recommended by the Planning Commission, a new action item is included to study the feasibility of implementing the paseo network through City and/or other public funding and public-private partnerships.

CONCLUSION:

As recommended, this plan seeks to facilitate and encourage both commercial and residential development and improvements to realize the vision for the plan area. The recommended plan 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, promoting sustainable neighborhoods that are walkable and support public transit.

On April 13, 2022, the Planning Commission voted 5-2 to recommend approval of the specific plan for South Fair Oaks as proposed by staff, with two additional changes as previously outlined. Staff refined the proposed SFOSP that was presented to the Planning Commission to reflect feedback received for consideration by the City Council.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

An Initial Study and Environmental Impact Report (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 South Fair Oaks Specific Plan 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. Refer to Attachment E for the Addendum to the General Plan EIR. For information on the 2015 General Plan EIR refer to Attachment F.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact to the City by adopting the recommended plan and associated addendum to the 2015 General Plan EIR. Costs related to some implementation actions, 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 recommended plan 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. 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,



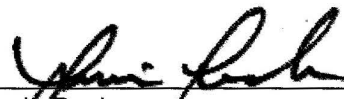
DAVID M. REYES
Director of Planning & Community
Development Department

Prepared by:



Anita Cerna
Principal Planner

Reviewed by:



Luis Rocha
Planning Manager

Approved by:



CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
Interim City Manager

Attachments: (8)

Attachment A – Recommended South Fair Oaks Specific Plan
Attachment B – Existing 1998 South Fair Oaks 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/SFOSP-CC-HR-052322>