

Agenda Report

November 18, 2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Community Development Department
SUBJECT: LAMANDA PARK SPECIFIC PLAN

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Adopt the Addendum to the 2015 Pasadena General Plan Environmental Impact Report (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 Land Use Map Amendment, Specific Plan Adoption, Zoning Map Amendment, and Zoning Text Amendment to adopt the recommended Lamanda Park Specific Plan. The Zoning Text Amendment also includes technical changes in the previously adopted Lincoln Avenue, East Colorado, South Fair Oaks, and Central District Specific Plans for internal consistency;
3. Adopt a resolution approving the General Plan Map Amendment;
4. Adopt a resolution approving the recommended Lamanda Park Specific Plan; and
5. Direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance for the Zoning Map and Text Amendments within 120 days consistent with the provisions set forth herein.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On August 28, 2024, by a vote of 7-0, the Planning Commission recommended that the City Council approve the proposed Lamanda Park Specific Plan (LPSP), as presented by staff, with five recommended changes as outlined below:

1. Insert specific language to protect existing street trees throughout Lamanda Park (included in plan).
2. Require new and improved projects to include pedestrian walkways from arterial streets to main building entrances (included in plan).
3. Incorporate additional pedestrian crosswalks along Colorado Boulevard (included in plan).

4. Incorporate a potential linear park along the former railroad right-of-way (included in plan).
5. Initiate pilot investments to be implemented and funded by the City within the first year of the Specific Plan's adoption with a minimum budget allocation of \$50,000. (not part of the specific plan document, Council can provide separate direction)

The Commission also requested staff review options for pedestrian access from Walnut Street to the Home Depot entrance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Lamanda Park area, in southeast Pasadena, features an eclectic mix of forms and uses, with commercial and industrial properties making up the majority. Its core contains research and development, industrial, warehousing, and office uses. The area is vital in technology-focused industries, contributing to the region's life science industry.

The recommended LPSP is the only new specific plan that is being created as part of the Our Pasadena program. The plan will establish goals, policies, and standards in accordance with the General Plan and is guided by the input of community members, the Planning Commission, the Design Commission, and the City Council. Members of the community have expressed a desire to maintain the unique character of the area while improving the public realm and expanding opportunities for local serving uses such as restaurants, retail shops and possibly a park.

Lamanda Park's vision is to be a research and development hub with light industrial and creative businesses supported by flexible commercial spaces and diverse housing opportunities near jobs, shops, and services connected by a vibrant public realm. The plan encourages the continued development of these uses while introducing more housing opportunities along the peripheries. Implementation actions are part of the plan that are intended to guide and prioritize public realm improvements to achieve the plan vision over time.

BACKGROUND:

The City initiated the Our Pasadena - Putting the Plan in Motion program to update the City's seven existing specific plan areas and create a new plan for the Lamanda Park area. The program's primary goal is to establish objective regulations to shape the built environment within Pasadena's eight planning areas in accordance with the General Plan and its guiding principles. Four of the eight specific plans have been adopted by the City Council (Lincoln Avenue [2021], East Colorado [2021], South Fair Oaks [2022], and Central District [2023]). In addition to the LPSP, three other specific plans are in progress, including the North Lake Specific Plan, which had five study sessions with the Planning Commission in 2024. Study sessions on the Fair Oaks/Orange Grove and East Pasadena Specific Plans are anticipated to commence in 2025.

Recommended Lamanda Park Specific Plan

On August 23, 2023, a study session was held, followed by a public hearing with the Planning Commission on August 28, 2024. The following is an overview of the LPSP, organized by topic. Refer to Attachment A of the Staff Report for the Recommended LPSP.

Plan Context

The LPSP will be a new specific plan comprising areas within the 2000 East Pasadena and 2003 East Colorado Specific Plans. The recommended LPSP generally encompasses the area between the 210 freeway to the north, Roosevelt and Vista Avenues to the west, Colorado Boulevard to the south, and Kinneloa Avenue to the east, as shown on Map 1. The plan area includes portions of four of the City's major thoroughfares: Sierra Madre Boulevard, Foothill Boulevard, Walnut Street, and Colorado Boulevard. The eastern portion of the LPSP is within a half-mile of the Sierra Madre Villa Metro Station.

Map 1: Plan Area and Context



The LPSP area is a unique district in Pasadena. The area features an eclectic mix of forms and uses, with a concentration of research and development, industrial, warehousing, and office uses in its core. Retail and commercial uses are largely concentrated along Colorado and Sierra Madre Boulevards. Auto-related uses can be seen throughout Lamanda Park, especially on Altadena Drive, Walnut Street, and

adjacent cross streets. The area also has two major auto dealerships: Volkswagen at the corner of Walnut Street and Sierra Madre Boulevard, and Audi on Colorado Boulevard between Sunnyslope and Kinneloa Avenues. There are also work-live and multi-family units on Nina Street, Daisy Avenue, and Sunnyslope Avenue.

The area plays a crucial role in the technology-focused industries, contributing to the Los Angeles region's \$61.5 billion life science industry. The area has over 750 businesses and employs close to 5,500 people. More than 100 businesses have called Lamanda Park home for over 20 years. Vacancy rates are relatively low in this area. Existing business types include a variety of neighborhood service uses such as autobody, auto sales, coffee shops, garden centers, hardware stores, machine shops, offices, pet services, pharmacies, restaurants, retail, and light manufacturing. Lamanda Park remains a hub of interest for startups, particularly from Caltech.

Notable projects include Home Depot, Volkswagen, Audi, Rosebud Café, Wild Parrot Brewing Company, Starbucks, Fast 5Xpress Wash, and the Copa Vida Roasting Facility. In addition, a new Porsche auto dealership is approved at the northeast corner of Sunnyslope Avenue and Colorado Boulevard.

Plan Vision

LPSP's vision highlights the City's goal of fostering innovation and creativity, allowing Pasadena to become a cutting-edge business development and job hub. The LPSP would leverage the thriving commercial environment and establish policies to facilitate its growth. New pedestrian-friendly development would be encouraged, improving connections between the private and public realms and visually enhancing the area. To maintain an already well-established employment and commercial hub, housing will mostly be limited to the perimeter of the LPSP.

There is significant focus to provide greater connectivity within the area and opportunities to use alternative modes of transportation for employees and residents. Improvements, such as mid-block crossings and curb extensions with trees, will help create friendlier corridors. Existing landscaped medians should be planted and expanded, where feasible, and other urban greening should be incorporated to promote permeability and sustainability. The Planning Commission recommended that there be additional pedestrian crosswalk opportunities along Colorado Boulevard, which has been added to the plan. Refer to Figure 3.1-1 in Chapter 3 of the Recommended LPSP.

Subareas and Concepts

As shown on Map 2, the LPSP is organized into three subareas distinguished by their existing conditions, General Plan Land Use designations, and the plan's vision: Foothill District, Walnut Innovation District, and Roseway District.

Map 2. Plan Subareas



Foothill District

The Foothill District subarea acts as the northern border of the LPSP and includes areas north of Foothill Boulevard. The area mostly consists of one- to two-story buildings, mainly built between the 1930s and the 1960s with neighborhood-serving commercial, evolving toward vehicle-related uses. Commercial uses can be found in free-standing buildings as well as in former residential buildings. The western portion of the subarea has a mix of small-scale commercial and industrial buildings and a few residential uses. The eastern portion of Foothill Boulevard has a few sit-down and drive-through restaurants.

The goal of the area is to enhance the multi-use district with residential uses, local shops, services, and employment opportunities, featuring a transition from the western corridor's auto-oriented commercial variety toward a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood feel in the eastern portion of the corridor. Figure 1 showcases the development potential with a new mixed-use development, with residential on the upper floors, on the northern portions of Foothill Boulevard, with rooftop open space, enhanced pedestrian crossings, and street trees in mid-block curb extensions.

Figure 1. *Foothill District Concept*



Walnut Innovation District

The Walnut Innovation District subarea encompasses the central portion of the plan. It is bounded by Foothill Boulevard to the north and Nina Street to the south. The area contains commercial and industrial uses with a cluster of residential uses on Eloise Street. Many parcels north of Walnut Street are two- to three-story warehouse-style commercial structures, including the Home Depot. Additionally, technology companies use these larger warehouse-style buildings to house their headquarters. South of Walnut Street typically features smaller-scale, street-oriented mid-20th-century development.

The area's goal is to build from what is currently there and foster creative sectors, innovation, and research and development uses while showcasing art and celebrating unconventional building designs. North of Walnut Street will provide a modernized industrial employment hub while creating opportunities for gathering and programming. South of Walnut will be an entrepreneurial district that supports an eclectic mix of creative businesses connected by an active pedestrian environment. Figure 2 showcases Walnut Street, with commercial and industrial buildings, landscaped surface parking buffers, enhanced sidewalks, and pedestrian crossings. The area may also have creatively programmed space for use, such as food trucks and outdoor dining areas for employees and locals to frequent.

Figure 2. *Walnut Innovation District Concept*



The Roseway District

The Roseway District subarea surrounds Colorado Boulevard throughout the plan area, forming the southern edge of the LPSP. Generally, this corridor has a mix of pedestrian-focused uses west of Sunnyslope Avenue and auto-focused commercial uses east of Sunnyslope Avenue.

The intersection of Colorado Boulevard and Sierra Madre Boulevard is the corridor's main focal point of activity, featuring historic street-facing building fronts reflecting various styles from the mid-to-late 20th Century and contemporary shopping centers. Buildings of one or two stories characterize the western portion. These commercial storefronts contribute to the "Main Street" character of the corridor. The area is home to arts and music uses such as the Pasadena Music Academy, fitness uses, eateries, breweries, auto-related uses, and science and technology companies such as hQPhotonics Inc. The area east of Sunnyslope Avenue includes more regional destinations such as the Audi and Porsche dealerships and Ganahl Lumber. This area is characterized by larger buildings with greater setbacks, creating a transition into East Pasadena.

Overall, the Roseway District's goal is to create a vibrant corridor featuring neighborhood-serving commercial businesses on the ground floor, residential on the upper floors in the western portion, and a mix of regional-serving commercial in the eastern portion. Figure 3 shows the intersection of Colorado and Sierra Madre Boulevards with mixed-use development, public realm enhancements, and landscaped medians.

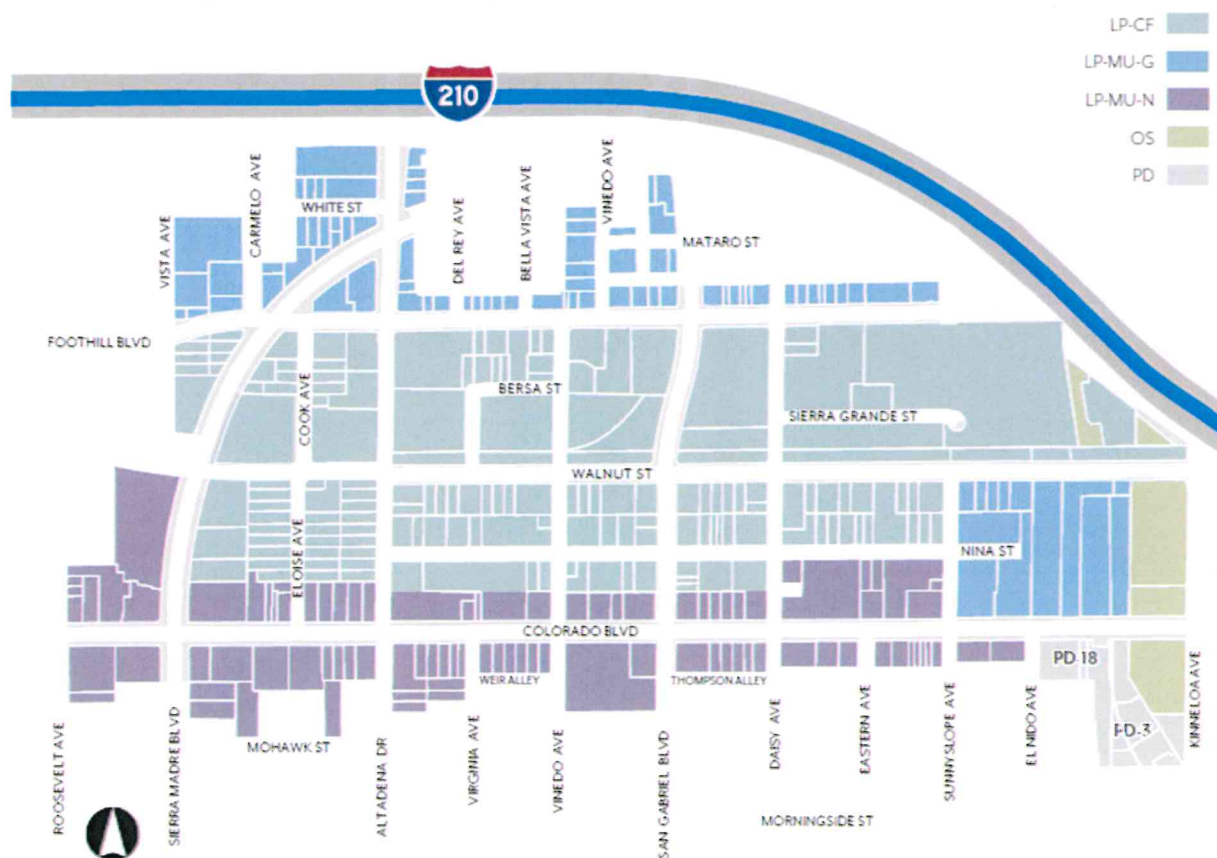
Figure 3. *Roseway District Concept*



Land Use Regulations

The LPSP will continue to allow for commercial and industrial uses throughout the plan area, focusing on more commercial and pedestrian-oriented uses along Colorado and Foothill Boulevards. The Lamanda Park area has four Zoning Districts, as shown on Map 3. LP-MU-G (Mixed-Use General) and LP-MU-N (Mixed-Use Neighborhood) are designated for a mix of commercial and residential uses, while LP-CF (Commercial Flex) is for commercial and industrial uses only. Refer to Table 4.3-1 in Chapter 4 of the Recommended LPSP for specific land use regulations.

Map 3. Recommended Zoning Districts



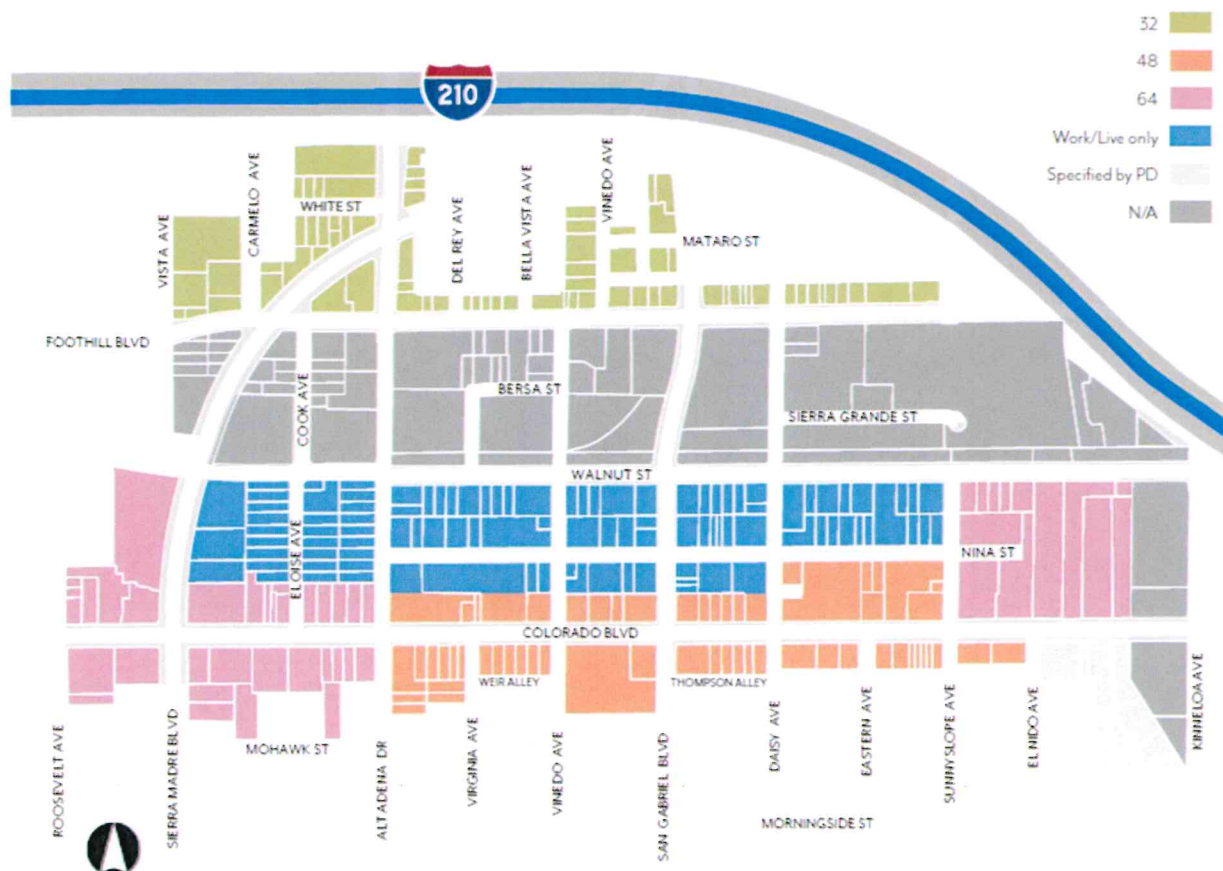
Key Development Standards

Residential Density

Currently, the plan area is mostly zoned for commercial and industrial uses, with limited housing permitted along the perimeter of the plan. The area provides unique incubator space for many smaller start-up businesses. The proposed densities shown on Map 4 balance the need to preserve existing employment centers in the Walnut Innovation District and expand housing opportunities in various locations along the perimeter of the plan.

For example, currently, only the area north of Foothill Boulevard and east of Altadena Drive allows housing at a density of 32 units per acre. The plan will allow housing on all properties north of Foothill Boulevard at the same density of 32 units per acre. For the area between Foothill Boulevard and Walnut Street, housing will remain prohibited. However, work/live will be allowed for the properties on the south side of Walnut Street. For the area along Colorado Boulevard, currently, only mixed-use projects are allowed at densities of 48 or 60 units per acre. The plan will expand this to allow mixed-use and housing-only projects at densities of 48 or 64 units per acre.

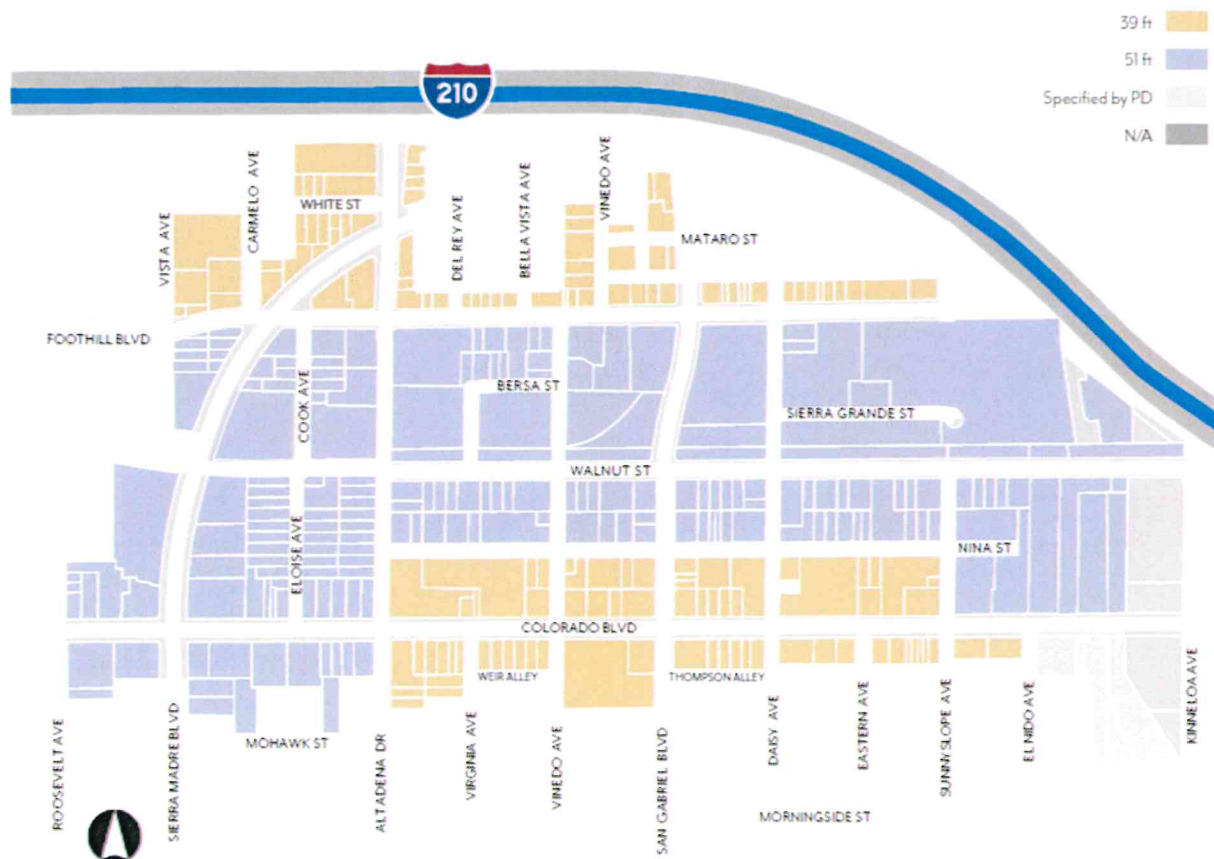
Map 4. Recommended Residential Densities



Building Heights

Overall, the recommended building heights shown on Map 5 are comparable to today's height limits. The current height limits for the area north of Foothill Boulevard are 36 or 45 feet; the recommended height limit is 39 feet. For the area along Colorado Boulevard between Altadena Drive and Sunnyslope Avenue, the current height limit is 36 feet; the recommended height limit is 39 feet (to accommodate taller ground floors). The plan proposes a building height limit of 51 feet for the remaining areas to accommodate new industrial and commercial development opportunities between Foothill Boulevard and Nina Street. This is a slight decrease from the existing height limit of 60 feet.

Map 5. Recommended Building Heights



Setbacks and Stepbacks

Currently, the required building setback is five feet for most of the plan area. However, on the ground, building setbacks vary throughout the LPSP area. Some buildings are built to the property line, while others are set back 10 to 15 feet from the sidewalk. The proposed plan will establish a setback range of three to 10 feet for most of the plan area, with a range of five to 15 feet in the industrial area. Residential dwelling units shall be setback at least five feet. Setback areas will be required to include landscaping to enhance the ground floor of the building. Along Colorado Boulevard, buildings shall not exceed 20 feet in height before stepping back 10 feet in depth to accommodate the existing Ficus trees. Refer to Map 6.1-4 in Chapter 6 of the Recommended LPSP for proposed building setbacks.

Sidewalks and Connections to Building Entrances

Similar to other newly adopted specific plans, minimum sidewalk requirements will be required and play a crucial role in circulation. LPSP's wider streets, including Colorado Boulevard, Walnut Street, Foothill Boulevard, Sierra Madre Boulevard, and San Gabriel Boulevard, are proposed to have a minimum sidewalk width of 12 feet, allowing for more considerable walk and amenity zones. The smaller streets within the plan area are proposed to have a minimum sidewalk width of 10 feet, consistent with existing conditions and sufficient for walking. Refer to Map 5.1-1 in Chapter 5 of the Recommended LPSP for proposed sidewalk widths.

The Planning Commission recommended new projects include pedestrian walkways from arterial streets to main building entrances, which has been added to the plan.

Several members of the public expressed concern over the lack of pedestrian access to the Home Depot site. In response, the Commission requested staff review options for better pedestrian access from Walnut Street to the Home Depot entrance. Staff did review the Home Depot site, and it is built to current code requirements. New requirements cannot be imposed on an existing site, however a regulation has been added to the plan that new development on double-fronted lots, including new land uses that front Foothill Boulevard and Walnut Street, will be required to provide pedestrian access from both streets.

Street Trees

An important provision of the LPSP requires new development to plant street trees under the guidance of the City's Master Street Tree Plan. Trees included in the Master Street Tree Plan are Ficus, Live Oak, Cork and Holly Oaks, Chinese Elm, Southern Magnolia, Cajeput, and Yew Pine.

The Planning Commission recommended specific language to protect existing street trees, which has been addressed in the plan, specifically Chapter 3, Goal 3, Policy 3.f requires the protection and maintenance of mature and healthy trees. All street trees, regardless of species and size, are protected by the Tree Protection Ordinance.

Appendix A2 of the LPSP provides guidance for future tree selection. The alternative trees list found also focuses on the tree canopy and why these alternative trees may fit best in the plan area given biodiversity, water retention and color contrasting characteristics.

Additionally, Colorado Boulevard, Sierra Madre Boulevard, San Gabriel Boulevard, Foothill Boulevard and Altadena Drive currently have medians that can support vegetation and trees, improving the public realm. Though the City's Master Street Tree Plan does not apply to street medians, Appendix A2 provides guidance for future vegetative landscaping on medians. These include Cajeput, Pink Trumpet, Australian Willow and Chinese Pistache trees.

Open Spaces

Open spaces contribute to an active public and private realm and can range from private patios and balconies to useable shared spaces such as plazas and pocket parks with public art.

Residential projects, including mixed-use projects, shall provide a minimum amount of total open space (private and common open space areas). Open space requirements are based on the number of bedrooms per unit, ensuring adequate open space for residents within each building. Due to more modest building envelopes found in the plan area (related to heights, floor area and setbacks) the open space requirements are slightly less compared to other recently adopted specific plan areas but greater than existing code requirements. In addition, residential and mixed-use projects with more than 80,000 square feet of gross area shall provide publicly accessible open space.

There were several comments from the public about opportunities to establish a park within the plan boundaries. The Planning Commission recommended incorporating a potential linear park along the former railroad right-of-way on Walnut Street. This has been addressed in the plan with the incorporation of a new goal and implementation action item to explore potential siting opportunities for new parks, particularly within the former rail right-of-way on the north side of Walnut Street.

Plan Implementation

The LPSP will primarily be implemented by adopting the new development regulations, which align private sector investment with the plan's vision. In addition, the plan includes targeted action items to help guide and prioritize improvements within the public realm.

The Planning Commission expressed concern that there is no funding commitment associated with the adoption of the specific plans. In response, they recommended that the city implement and fund pilot investments within the first year of the Specific Plan's adoption, with a minimum allocated budget of \$50,000.

The specific plan does not explicitly allocate funds nor identify how funds should be spent. However, it does include an implementation chapter that identifies action items to guide and prioritize implementation. These are provided in Chapter 7 of the LPSP; refer to Attachment A. In addition, Attachment G, provides cost estimates, where available, for the implementation action items to guide any future work related to funding for plan implementation.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The LPSP continues to encourage commercial, industrial, and research-type uses in the plan area while introducing targeted housing opportunities. This is consistent with the City's 2015 General Plan, 2021-2029 Housing Element and 2024 Economic Development Strategic Plan, specifically to support and promote quality of life and the local economy.

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 to analyze the new LPSP 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 not already analyzed in the EIR. Refer to Attachment C for the Addendum to the General Plan EIR. Refer to Attachment D for information on the 2015 General Plan EIR.

CONCLUSION:

The LPSP seeks to encourage commercial and residential development, while focusing the continued growth of the creative, industrial and research and development industries. The plan reflects community and commission feedback and the desire to build upon the areas unique character while supporting new development that is contextually appropriate and enhances the area. It also strives to stimulate economic development and balance housing, work/live and employment opportunities in the area.

On August 28, 2024, the Planning Commission moved to recommend approval of the specific plan as proposed by staff, with five additional recommendations as outlined. Staff has included the four recommendations that pertain to the standards of the plan. The recommendation related to funding can be pursued if directed by the Council.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact on the City by adopting the LPSP and associated addendum to the 2015 General Plan EIR. Costs related to some implementation action programs are expected to be partially or fully offset by grant funding as available. The LPSP is designed to encourage the retention of existing businesses and spur additional development and public realm improvements within the plan area, which may result in increased revenue to the City's General Fund, helping to offset costs related to the public realm improvements.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Attachments (7):

- Attachment A – Recommended Lamanda Park Specific Plan
- Attachment B – Community Engagement and Public Feedback
- Attachment C – Addendum to the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- Attachment D – 2015 General Plan EIR and Appendices
- Attachment E – Recommended General Plan and Zoning Code Amendments
- Attachment F – Required Findings for General Plan and Zoning Code Amendments
- Attachment G – Preliminary Cost for Implementation Action Items