

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL **DATE: OCTOBER 23, 2000**
FROM: CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF THE EAST PASADENA SPECIFIC PLAN AND FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council, following a public hearing:

1. Adopt a resolution certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report, making the findings required by the California Environmental Quality Act, making a statement of overriding considerations, and adopting a mitigation monitoring program (Attachment A);
2. Approve the De Minimis Impact Finding on State Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Attachment B);
3. Adopt a resolution adopting the East Pasadena Specific Plan, as shown in Attachment C;
4. Direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination with the Los Angeles County Recorder; and,
5. Direct staff to initiate the East Pasadena Specific Plan Implementation Program, which includes adopting zoning map and code amendments, adopting design guidelines, and including projects in the capital improvements program.

COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION

On October 18, 2000, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposed Specific Plan, with modifications that included requiring that the City assess mobility in the area and review an interim limit on development during the first five-year implementation review. The modifications are incorporated into the draft Specific Plan.

The Transportation Advisory Commission, Design Commission, Cultural Heritage Commission, and Arts Commission reviewed the draft Specific Plan. Changes recommended by the Commissions, primarily related to preservation of the Stuart Company Building, were incorporated into the draft during the review by the Planning Commission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The East Pasadena Specific Plan recommends public improvements and a regulatory framework for mobility and new development in the east Pasadena area. In addition to implementing the General Plan direction to increase employment opportunities in the area, the Specific Plan responds to five goals that were established during the planning process. It also recommends an interim limit on development.

The Specific Plan implements the General Plan and responds to the following goals:

- Mitigate the impacts of traffic;
- Accommodate the light rail transit site and maximize its use;
- Enable preservation of the Stuart Company building;
- Encourage high technology/research and development uses;
- Establish design and development standards.

The Specific Plan recommends an *interim* limit of 1,357,455 square feet of net new nonresidential development and 235 net new residential units. These interim limits are less than the 2,100,000 square feet and 400 units allocated in the General Plan. Development exceeding the interim limit of 1,357,455 square feet and 235 units will be allowed only if certain roadway extensions are implemented. With completion of the extensions, up to 2,100,000 square feet of net new nonresidential floor area and 500 residential units will be allowed. During the first five-year review of implementation, the City will assess mobility in the Specific Plan area and review the interim limit.

BACKGROUND

Description of the Plan Area

The Specific Plan area includes three subareas. (Specific Plan, Figure 2-4, Page 2-10) Subarea d1, the *Foothill Industrial District*, is characterized by small industrial uses, including many new high technology, R&D-oriented firms, but also includes the large Avon Products facility and other large uses. The General Plan encourages continued use as an industrial district, with some office and commercial development.

Subarea d2, the *Foothill, Rosemead, Sierra Madre Villa* area has several large parcels, which provided sites for postwar defense and other high technology companies, formerly including the Stuart Pharmaceutical Company and the Datatape Division facility. The General Plan encourages additional industrial and office development, with a limited amount of supporting retail/commercial development.

Subarea d3, the *Hastings Ranch/Foothill-Rosemead Shopping Center* area consists primarily of two shopping centers, along with multiplex theaters and restaurants. The General Plan emphasizes enhancing the existing retail development and improving pedestrian access.

Planning and Community Participation Process

Preparation of the Specific Plan began again in April 1998. Work with an earlier draft was halted during 1995, after the City Council approved the draft. A steering committee of approximately fifteen property owners, residents, and business owners met eleven times during 1998-2000, focusing on a wide variety of issues in east Pasadena and the

Specific Plan area. Community meetings were held during the period following April 1998. In addition, key Specific Plan issues were discussed at Council District 4 meetings and meetings of neighborhoods near the Plan area.

ANALYSIS

Major Issues

The major issues that are described below are addressed in the Specific Plan according to the five goals that were established during the planning process, as well as the direction given in the city's General Plan.

Transit-Oriented Development ("TOD"): The light rail station at Sierra Madre Villa will bring a distinct opportunity to the east Pasadena area. Not only will it provide access to the regional rail system, but it will allow the total impacts of new development to be reduced by clustering development around the station, in greater reliance on the rail system than would be possible at other locations.

The General Plan Land Use Element says that transit-oriented development should be encouraged near the station in each of the three subareas. The Specific Plan establishes five criteria for evaluating whether development is transit-oriented. In line with the General Plan's direction, the Specific Plan requires that new development within a one-quarter mile distance from the light rail station boarding area meet the criteria of transit-oriented development, when findings are made for a discretionary approval. Within a distance of one half mile, conditions of approval for a new project will improve the project's relationship to the transit station, but the development need not qualify fully as TOD.

Role of High Technology/Research and Development-Oriented Uses: Both the General Plan and the Specific Plan affirm the importance of high technology-based employment in east Pasadena.

The land use regulations in the Specific Plan are intended to support the various forms of high technology/research and development-based activity. A change of zoning designation from IG (Industrial) to CG (General Commercial) in portions of the plan area, with some modifications to the base CG zoning regulations, will encourage the office and laboratory spaces that characterize high technology-oriented uses

In addition, an alternative set of development standards for the light rail joint development site is designed to support high technology-related uses, in this particular case on a site that has difficult development constraints.

Preservation of the Stuart Company Building: The Stuart Company building and grounds, designed by Edward Durrell Stone and Thomas D. Church and completed in 1958, are the prime example of postwar development in east Pasadena. Their importance is recognized on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Stuart Company site is the location for joint development with the Pasadena Blue Line Construction Authority, in support of the light rail station. The Construction Authority requires that the private developer provide parking spaces for 1,000 automobiles and also loading areas for the buses that will serve the station. Any proposal for the site must meet those requirements for operation of the light rail station,

as well as preserve significant elements of the Stuart Company building and landscaping, a requirement of the Specific Plan, which is consistent with the direction given by the Construction Authority.

The Specific Plan provides two alternatives for the development standards that regulate the site. One alternative allows development with a Floor Area Ratio of 2.0 (*i.e.*, 796,000 square feet), with a height limit of 60 feet. A second alternative reduces the total development potential on the site, down to a FAR of 1.5 (*i.e.*, 597,000 square feet), but permits a height limit of 85 feet. Both alternatives provide the intensity of development that is necessary for this transit-oriented development area. The second alternative, however, provides flexibility for the greater floor-to-floor heights (*i.e.*, fourteen to sixteen feet) that are necessary for many high technology uses, especially those with laboratory space, while working with the constraints imposed by use of the site as a light rail station. In exchange for the flexibility required for some high technology uses, it requires a reduction in the total development potential.

“Big Box Retail”: The General Plan directly prohibited “discount retail/big box” in Subarea d2 until completion of the Specific Plan, to provide an opportunity to assess whether large destination retailing could be appropriate in the area. (Land Use Element, page 52) Traffic impacts on the surrounding neighborhood and the feasibility of technology-oriented alternatives to retail (*i.e.*, industrial and environmental) were listed in the General Plan as issues to be addressed before determining whether “big box” retailing should be permitted. As noted above, the employment that would be available with the technology-oriented uses was considered a priority. New projects in the area indicate now that development of high technology-oriented uses in Subarea d2 is feasible. The Specific Plan confirms, therefore, that “big box” retailing is not appropriate here and prohibits this form of destination retail. The Plan defines “big box retail” as a retail or wholesale store with a floor area of at least 75,000 square feet and with centralized cashiering.

Traffic Impacts: The Specific Plan is designed to reduce the growth of traffic both within the Plan area and also in the surrounding neighborhoods. Because the traffic impacts of development within the area will be combined with the traffic passing through it, the Specific Plan recommends improvements that address more than the impacts of Plan area traffic.

Improvements are recommended for both the physical street system and the traffic signal management system that controls it. Physical improvements are designed to increase capacity in some locations and to protect neighborhoods in others. Full mobility in the east Pasadena area will require one or more street extensions along the freeway, two of which are currently listed in the city’s Mobility Element: Kenneloa Avenue, Walnut Street, and Maple Street.

Light rail provides an opportunity to shift trips to transit in new development that would otherwise depend more completely on new automobile trips. The clustering of development at the light rail station, so workers may use transit conveniently, is a crucial land use strategy for the area’s mobility program.

Interim Limit: Traffic conditions in the east Pasadena area require that total impacts of development be monitored regularly. The Specific Plan recommends an *interim* limit of 1,357,455 square feet of net new nonresidential development and 235 net new

residential units. These interim limits are less than the 2,100,000 square feet and 400 units allocated in the General Plan. Development exceeding the interim limit of 1,357,455 square feet and 235 units will be allowed only if certain roadway extensions are implemented.

Two street extensions must be completed before development that exceeds the interim limits is allowed: Kinneloa Avenue and Walnut Street. A third extension, Maple Street, will be evaluated in the update of the General Plan Mobility Element. If the Maple Street extension is sufficiently beneficial to justify its cost, it also must be completed for development to exceed the interim limit.

With completion of the extensions, up to 2,100,000 square feet of net new nonresidential floor area and 500 residential units may be allowed. During the first five-year review of implementation, the City will assess the effects of the Blue Line and mobility improvements in the Specific Plan area and will review the interim limit.

General Plan Consistency

The General Plan Land Use Element provides directions for the Specific Plan, including standards for the amount of additional development to be allowed in the area (*i.e.*, intensity standards). Before describing the direction for each of the three subareas, the Land Use Element establishes direction for the area as a whole: "This specific plan will focus on providing additional employment opportunities for the City by facilitating expansion of existing businesses and development of new businesses." The emphasis on employment opportunities, not on new retail development, is continued in the directions for each of the subareas. Similarly, General Plan Land Use Policy 10.5 emphasizes promoting industrial development by protecting industrial areas from destination retail development. The Draft Specific Plan reflects the priority of additional employment opportunity through its emphasis on industrial and high technology-based uses and its prohibition of "big box retail."

The General Plan intensity standards set limits for net new development in the area. The Specific Plan is designed in accord with those standards, except in three cases where a reevaluation of the General Plan numbers is recommended. The General Plan Land Use Element set a limit of four hundred total residential units in the Specific Plan area, with no new housing in the d1 *East Foothill Industrial District*. In developing the Plan, staff recognized that live/work space would be appropriate in the subarea. Consequently, the Specific Plan recommends that the residential intensity standards be reevaluated during the General Plan update process and that the update allow one hundred units in Subarea d1 and up to five hundred total units in the Specific Plan area. Also, if demand occurs in d3, a share of the four hundred units that are allocated to d2 may be moved to d3.

The Specific Plan also recommends that the nonresidential intensity standards be adjusted from those given in the 1994 Land Use Element. To achieve revitalization of the shopping areas in Subarea d3, the Specific Plan recommends that slightly more development be allowed than was allocated in the General Plan, an increase of 25,100 square feet in Subarea d3 that will be balanced by a reduction by the same amount in Subarea d2. Finally, the Specific Plan changes the mix of uses within Subarea d2. The change results from reconsidering the appropriate use classifications for new high technology development.

Implementation Plan

Implementation of the Specific Plan deals with improvements both in the public realm and in the private realm, through publicly funded improvements and with changes to the City's project approval requirements. In the public realm, the Specific Plan recommends improvements to area streetscapes, the street and traffic management system, and parking. The City's Zoning Code is the primary instrument for the changes to regulation in the private realm that are recommended in the Specific Plan. In addition, as a result of the Specific Plan process, certain amendments to the General Plan Land Use Element will be required to maintain consistency between the two documents. Those amendments are described above in the discussion of General Plan consistency. The Implementation Plan includes a five-year review to assess progress and to recommend appropriate adjustments.

Environmental Impact Report

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an environmental impact report (EIR) has been prepared. An EIR informs the city's decision-makers and the public of any significant environmental impacts of the project and identifies possible ways to minimize those impacts. The East Pasadena Specific Plan EIR is a "program," or tiered, EIR. While it is less detailed than a project-specific EIR, it is comprehensive because it analyzes the potential impacts that may result from the implementation of the goals and objectives in the Specific Plan.

On May 24, 2000, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to receive comments on the Draft EIR. Comments, both oral and written, have been submitted. Responses to those comments are included in the Final Environmental Impact Report.

The EIR evaluated potential impacts in the following areas: Land Use, Traffic and Circulation, Air Quality, Population and Housing, Public Services (Utilities and Public Schools), and Recreation. An extensive mitigation program is provided for Traffic and Circulation impacts. Significant development in the air basin, however, cannot be adequately mitigated, so Air Quality impacts remain, even with mitigation. As a result, a Statement of Overriding Considerations will be required for adoption of the Specific Plan. The Statement of Overriding Considerations recognizes the remaining impacts but demonstrates the overriding benefits of the Specific Plan.

WORKLOAD IMPACT

Implementation of the East Pasadena Specific Plan will require staff work in the Planning and Permitting Department and the Public Works and Transportation Department to draft the implementing ordinances and undertake additional studies. This work can be accommodated with existing staff under the existing work programs.

HOUSING IMPACT

Implementation of the East Pasadena Specific Plan will have a positive effect on the city's supply of housing. Under the Plan, housing will be allowed in CG districts of Subarea d2 and work/live spaces are permitted in the IG district in Subarea d1. In neither case is housing permitted under the existing zoning. New residential development will provide affordable housing units according to citywide requirements.

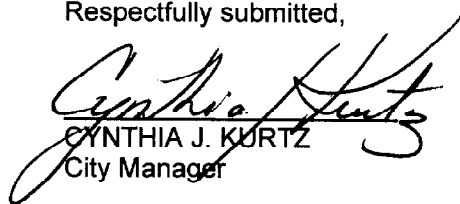
CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY IMPACTS

The Specific Plan provides for housing and employment opportunities in the east Pasadena area. The five hundred residential units, not including new affordable housing units, would provide housing for approximately two hundred school-aged children, according to the Pasadena Unified School District estimates. Net new nonresidential development is adequate for approximately 9,600 jobs. Both totals will be somewhat lower under the interim limits (*i.e.*, 235 units rather than 500 units; 1,357,455 square feet rather than 2,100,000 square feet). Transit opportunities related to the light rail station will increase mobility options for youth and others without automobiles.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of the East Pasadena Specific Plan will rely on a variety of funding sources, both public and private. Estimated costs for streetscape improvements and Mobility Chapter Improvements total \$16,903,850. Private development will fund a significant portion of the total cost. Some public realm improvement projects may be included in the next Capital Improvement Plan and funded as funds become available.

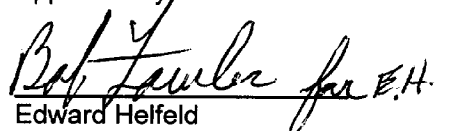
Respectfully submitted,


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Attachments:

- A. Resolution Certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR)
- B. De Minimis Impact Finding on State Fish and Wildlife Habitat
- C. Resolution Adopting the East Pasadena Specific Plan (Specific Plan)