



Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: FEBRUARY 28, 2000

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: AMENDMENT TO TITLE 17 (ZONING) OF THE PASADENA MUNICIPAL CODE – PROHIBITING VEHICLE/EQUIPMENT SALES, LEASING AND RENTALS AND VEHICLE STORAGE WITHIN THE VEHICLE REPAIR RESTRICTED OVERLAY DISTRICT (VR) IN THE FAIR OAKS/ORANGE GROVE CORRIDOR

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

1. Approve the Initial Environmental Study and Negative Declaration (Attachment 1);
2. Approve the De Minimis Impact Finding on the State Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Attachment 2);
3. Find that the proposed Code Amendment to Title 17 (Zoning) of the Pasadena Municipal Code to prohibit vehicle/equipment sales, leasing and rentals and vehicle storage in the Vehicle Repair Restricted Overlay District (VR) is consistent with the General Plan, as stated in the body of the report;
4. Approve the Code Amendment to Title 17 (Zoning) of the Pasadena Municipal Code to prohibit vehicle/equipment sales, leasing and rentals and vehicle storage in the Vehicle Repair Restricted Overlay District (VR) within the Fair Oaks/Orange Grove corridor area;
5. Direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination and a Certificate of Fee Exemption for the California Department of Fish and Game, with the Los Angeles County Recorder (Attachment 3); and
6. Direct the City Attorney to prepare an Ordinance to amend Title 17 (Zoning) of the Pasadena Municipal Code to prohibit vehicle/equipment sales, leasing and rentals and vehicle storage in the Vehicle Repair Restricted Overlay District (VR) within the Fair Oaks/Orange Grove corridor area.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission reviewed this proposal at a public hearing on February 9, 2000, and voted unanimously to recommend approval of staff's recommendation.

NORTHWEST COMMISSION:

On February 2, 2000, the Northwest Commission reviewed the proposed zoning code amendment and recommended its approval to the Planning Commission and City Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The proposed code amendment will prohibit vehicle/equipment sales, leasing and rentals and vehicle storage along the Fair Oaks/Orange Grove corridor. The two land uses are an addition to the existing prohibited uses in the Vehicle Repair Restricted Overlay District (VR). These auto-related land uses have impaired the Fair Oaks/Orange Grove corridor area by detracting from efforts for revitalization and enhancement of the area. Approval of the proposed code amendment would prevent further concentration of auto-related uses along this corridor, and will help revitalization of this area with a balance of mixed-used development, both commercial/retail and residential uses.

BACKGROUND:

On September 18, 1995, the City Council approved an amendment to Title 17 (Zoning) of the Pasadena Municipal Code creating the Vehicle Repair Restricted Overlay District (VR). The VR Overlay District was created to address concerns about the concentration of vehicle/auto repair uses along the Fair Oaks/Orange Grove corridor between Maple and Mountain Streets. The VR ordinance prohibited the following uses in this area: *"Comprehensive vehicle repair services including, but not limited to repairing or installing of mechanical or electrical parts, tires or brakes; repairing or painting of vehicle bodies; fenders or upholstery; vehicle dismantling; and any other related services."*

Aside from those uses listed above, a number of other uses involving the storage of operative or inoperative vehicles remained as permitted in this area. These uses are grouped under the "Vehicle/Equipment sales, Leasing and rentals"; and "Vehicle Storage" classifications. The negative effects of these uses on the efforts to improve the physical environment of this area and on the plans for its revitalization have been raised by residents and community organization; thus, the proposal that the VR Overlay District also restrict these uses.

ANALYSIS:

According to Chapter 17.16.050 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, Vehicle/Equipment Sales, Leasing and Rentals includes the "sale, lease or rental of automobiles, trucks, tractors, construction or agricultural equipment, mobile homes, and similar equipment, including storage and incidental maintenance and repair." In the same chapter, Vehicle Storage is defined, "as storage of operative or inoperative vehicles. This classification

includes storage of parking towaways, impound yards, and storage lots for buses and recreational vehicles, but does not include vehicle dismantling.”

In the VR Overlay District, the use classification vehicle/equipment sales, leasing and rentals are permitted and vehicle storage is a conditionally permitted use. Both of these classifications involve potential aesthetic impacts resulting from the storage of operative and inoperative vehicles and equipment that could involve comprehensive maintenance and repair activities. These repair activities could easily evolve into levels of comprehensive auto/vehicle repair that the VR Overlay District is specifically intending to deter. These auto/vehicle repair activities would be consistent with the community’s overall vision expressed during preparation of the Fair Oaks/Orange Grove Specific plan. The community’s vision of the corridor is to beautify and enhance the area with a balance of mixed-use development, with both commercial/retail and residential uses.

The amount of land devoted to auto repair related uses is considerable, especially between Orange Grove Boulevard and Villa Street (Attachment 4).

On the northeast corner of Maple Street and Fair Oaks Avenue is the new Mobil service station. This service station occupies a 51,760 square-foot parcel. On the west side of Fair Oaks Avenue, between Peoria and Villa Street, the United States Post Office occupies around 95,000 square feet that is devoted to the maintenance of postal vehicles. North of Orange Grove Boulevard on the west side of Fair Oaks Avenue, incorporated into a building housing a restaurant on the corner, is a tire rim/hub cap facility. And, on the west side of Fair Oaks Avenue is a 48,480 square-foot auto body facility, and north of that is another auto-related facility. On this block, only one parcel is not devoted to auto repair land uses.

Many of the issues or complaints regarding auto repair land uses in the area are related to storage, design and general maintenance of auto repair facilities on Fair Oaks Avenue.

FAIR OAKS/ORANGE GROVE MASTER PLAN:

The Fair Oaks/Orange Grove Master Plan stated the following concerns regarding automobile/vehicle repair: *“The growing number of auto body shops have also diminished the area’s attractiveness as a first rate commercial location. The occupied and otherwise prime retail locations, are visually unattractive, and are not perceived as serving the needs of the local community.”* The city has already committed funds as demonstrated by the redevelopment of the Renaissance Shopping Center for the enhancement of the Fair Oaks/Orange Grove corridor area.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

Fair Oaks/Orange Grove Specific Plan:

The proposed code amendment is located within the Fair Oaks/Orange Grove Specific Plan area of the General Plan. The Fair Oaks/Orange Grove Specific Plan is anticipated to be completed in late spring.

In this area, the Specific Plan will encourage “livable communities” such as balanced mixed-use development, with retail, residential and employment within walking distance of one another, stabilize neighborhoods with affordable housing opportunities and provide for adaptive reuse of existing residential and commercial buildings to emphasize the historic uniqueness of Fair Oaks/Orange Grove, and to foster a greater sense of community. By moving forward with this zoning code amendment, will help further the intent of the Specific Plan and community’s vision to improve the appearance of the corridor in attracting a balance of mixed-use development of both commercial/retail and residential that will beautify and enhance the area.

NONCONFORMING USES AND STRUCTURES:

With the approval of this zoning code amendment, existing auto-related land uses that fall under the vehicle/equipment sales, leasing and rentals and vehicle storage classification will become nonconforming. If the owner or tenant of the property desires to make changes or expand their place of business, they must adhere to Chapter 17.76 of the Pasadena Municipal Code – Nonconforming Uses, Structures and signs. A legal nonconforming use may continue to operate; however alteration or enlargement of nonconforming uses shall require a conditional use permit.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

An Initial Environmental Study was prepared for the project proposal in conformance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Attachment 1). It was found that the proposed zoning code amendment would not have a significant effect on the environment and that a Negative Declaration would be prepared. The staff report recommends that the City Council approves the Initial Environmental Study and direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The proposed code amendment will not result in an increased workload for Planning and Permitting Department staff to review projects. The proposed code amendment will prohibit land uses of vehicle/equipment sales, leasing and rental and vehicle storage, but due to the VR Overlay District that is already in placed, the number of proposed auto-related uses submitted to the Planning and Permitting Department over the past few years has been minimal.

Respectfully submitted,



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City Manager

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Approved by:


Darrell L. Lewis
Director of Planning and Permitting

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Initial Environmental Study and Negative Declaration
- Attachment 2 – De Minimis Impact Finding
- Attachment 3 – Notice of Determination
- Attachment 4 – Auto-Related Uses