

# Agenda Report

**TO:** City Council

**DATE:** July 13, 1998

**FROM:** City Manager

**SUBJECT:** Approval of the West Gateway 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 and the mitigation measures contained therein (Attachment B); and
2. Approve the De Minimis Impact Finding on the State Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Attachment C); and
3. Adopt a resolution approving the West Gateway Specific Plan (Attachment D), modified as recommended in this report and as shown in Attachment A; and
4. Direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination with the Los Angeles County Recorder (Attachment E); and
5. Direct staff to initiate the West Gateway Implementation Program, including processing zoning map and code amendments, establishing a West Gateway parking district, adopting design guidelines, and including projects in the capital improvements program.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The West Gateway Specific Plan preparation process has been underway for over two years. The Draft Specific Plan is the result of an extensive public participation process that included community meetings and workshops, sub-area meetings, and the guidance of the West Gateway Coordinating Committee.

The West Gateway Specific Plan includes land use regulations, development standards, design guidelines, and transportation and streetscape enhancements which are intended to

improve the economic vitality and visual appeal of the area. It is the tool to implement the goals and objectives of the General Plan for this area of Pasadena. The Specific Plan serves as the bridge between the General Plan and individual development projects..

An EIR has been prepared for the West Gateway Specific Plan. It is a program or "tiered" EIR. It is more general than a project-specific EIR because neither the nature of future site-specific development projects, nor the precise nature of public improvements are completely defined at this time. The EIR focuses on the effects that may be expected with the adoption and subsequent implementation of the Specific Plan. It identifies and assesses impacts which were not sufficiently addressed in the 1994 General Plan EIR. The EIR was the subject of public hearings before the Planning Commission on January 28th and May 13th, and all comments have been responded to in the attached Final EIR.

The draft Specific Plan has been reviewed by several commissions, the West Gateway Coordinating Committee and staff. Several changes to the draft Plan are recommended by these groups. These changes are discussed in this report and outlined in Attachment A.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### **Purpose of the West Gateway Specific Plan**

On May 16, 1994, the City Council adopted the revised Land Use and Mobility Elements of the General Plan. The West Gateway Specific Plan is one of seven specific plans identified by the 1994 Land Use Element of the General Plan to implement its goals and objectives in areas where future growth is to be targeted. On March 27, 1995, the City Council directed staff to initiate the preparation of the West Gateway Specific Plan and to expand the boundaries of the West Gateway Specific Plan to include the "urban village" section of the Central District or other adjacent areas as needed to achieve the goals of the General Plan.

The Specific Plan was undertaken based on several issues. The Worldwide Church of God organization had begun the process of selling its holdings in this area, which include the former Ambassador College campus and approximately 16 acres in the South DeLacey Corridor. The Specific Plan process provided an opportunity for the City, the community and the Worldwide Church of God to work together to identify the types of future development allowed on the property. In addition, there was increasing community concern about the privately-owned bungalows adjacent to the United States Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Through the Specific Plan process, appropriate future uses for these structures have been established.

The West Gateway Specific Plan is organized into three sections - the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Past outlines background information about the history of the West Gateway area, and the Specific Plan preparation process. The Present defines the existing conditions, including zoning, land use, and architectural resources. The Future contains

design guidelines, land use and development standards, and traffic and streetscape measures, as well as implementation measures.

### Description of the Area

The West Gateway Specific Plan area has been divided into three Sub-areas:

*Orange Grove / Colorado* - includes the former Ambassador College campus, Elks Club Lodge, Norton Simon Museum and Hughes Market.

*South DeLacey Corridor* - south of Old Pasadena between Fair Oaks and Pasadena Avenues and Green Street and Del Mar Boulevard.

*Vista del Arroyo bungalows* - includes the privately owned bungalows adjacent to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals and the adjacent Army Reserve Training Center.

### Planning and Community Participation Process

In March 1996, a West Gateway Coordinating Committee was formed. Members represented the Planning Commission, Cultural Heritage Commission, West Pasadena Residents Association, Chamber of Commerce, Norton Simon Museum, Worldwide Church of God, and Council District #1. This group met twice a month, throughout the process, to oversee and advise staff on the process of preparing the Specific Plan.

An interdepartmental staff team comprised of representatives from the Planning & Permitting, Housing & Development, and Public Works & Transportation Departments met throughout the process to prepare the Draft Specific Plan. Consultants were hired to assist in the public participation process, conduct economic analysis, develop a historic inventory, prepare a structural analysis of the Vista del Arroyo Bungalows, and prepare the environmental impact report and traffic analysis.

The community participation process for the Specific Plan has been extensive. It is detailed in the appendix of the Draft Specific Plan. The process began with a community workshop in May of 1996. This was followed by a series of three or four working group meetings in each of the sub-areas. A final community-wide open house was held in July of 1997.

### Reviews by Commissions and Committees

The Draft West Gateway Specific Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report have been reviewed by the appropriate commissions and committees. The Arts Commission, Cultural Heritage Commission, Design Commission, Transportation Advisory Commission, and Community Development Committee reviewed and provided comments on the Draft Specific Plan and the Draft EIR. These comments and recommended modifications to the Specific Plan are discussed briefly later in this report and are listed in full in Attachment A.

Planning Commission Public Hearing

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on May 13, 1998. After hearing public testimony, they unanimously accepted the staff recommendation and the changes to the draft Specific Plan recommended by staff in response to the input from the other advisory commissions.

ANALYSIS:

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

The Orange Grove / Colorado and Vista del Arroyo Bungalows sub-areas are within the area that the General Plan designates as the West Gateway Specific Plan.

The General Plan direction for the West Gateway Specific Plan is: focus on arts, culture and education; incorporate existing parks and setback requirements; preserve and enhance landscaping and "South Orange Grove ambiance;" preserve historic structures; encourage mixed use development; and establish a link to Old Pasadena. The General Plan established the following numeric limits for the West Gateway area:

Total New Housing Units	75 housing units
Total Non-Residential Square Footage	800,000 square feet
General Commercial	350,000 square feet
Institutional	250,000 square feet
Not designated	200,000 square feet

In the General Plan, the South De Lacey Corridor sub-area was part of the Central District Specific Plan as area (a1) Urban Village. This area has been included in the West Gateway Specific Plan because approximately fifteen acres (about 60%) of this area are under the ownership of the Worldwide Church of God and the future of this property is tied with the future of the church's campus across the freeway. The General Plan envisions an urban village atmosphere with high density housing in a variety of types and prices, as well as a mix of artist lofts, offices, shops, schools and artisans' workshops. In addition, this area is envisioned as a transit oriented development area due to its proximity to the proposed light rail station at Arroyo Parkway and Del Mar Boulevard. The General Plan's numeric limits for this area are:

Total New Housing Units	1,000 housing units
Total Non-Residential Square Footage	150,000 square feet
General Commercial	125,000 square feet
Institutional	25,000 square feet

## MAJOR PLAN ISSUES

### Flexibility and Encouragement of Housing

Throughout the extensive community participation process for the West Gateway Specific Plan, there was strong support for flexibility in the South DeLacey Corridor to maximize the area's ability to respond to market demand. There was also support for encouraging housing and providing incentives for housing over other uses in order to promote an urban village environment. The draft Specific Plan strives to balance these two objectives and to implement the General Plan's vision for this area.

The draft Specific Plan allows a variety of uses - high-density residential, office, and institutional, yet provides a height bonus for projects that include housing. In addition, the draft plan requires that if a non-residential development is proposed on the large blocks west of DeLacey Avenue, a housing component must be included. Full build-out of the South DeLacey Corridor will result in a minimum of 250 housing units.

Staff supports the West Gateway Coordinating Committee's recommendation of a maximum cap on the amount of development in the sub-area, with flexibility to allow both residential and non-residential development up to the cap. Staff believes this achieves the General Plan goals by: targeting growth by encouraging residential and non-residential development in this downtown and transit-oriented area; promoting economic vitality; and by using an active community participation process in preparing the Specific Plan, thereby determining the future direction for the area.

### Numeric Limits and Conversion of Non-Residential Square Footage to Housing

The General Plan did not foresee that the Worldwide Church of God would propose to sell its property. Therefore, in the Orange Grove / Colorado and Vista del Arroyo Bungalows subareas, the General Plan building intensity standards of 75 new residential units and 800,000 square feet of non-residential development may not be adequate to allow new development on this site and also allow the other properties within this sub-area to develop.

The draft Specific Plan recommends an equal allocation of the non-residential square footage to all parcels within the sub-area. In addition, the flexibility recommended by the West Gateway Coordinating Committee (Attachment A) would allow non-residential square footage to be converted to housing units, if needed for future projects. The draft Specific Plan also recommends that during the five-year review of the General Plan, the building intensity standards for this area be revisited and potentially increased to meet the goals of the West Gateway Specific Plan.

### Use of the Planned Development Process as a Tool to Implement the Specific Plan

Throughout the West Gateway Specific Plan area, the Planned Development (PD) process is recommended as a means of implementing the plan for proposed new developments.

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Throughout the West Gateway Specific Plan area, the Planned Development (PD) process is recommended as a means of implementing the plan for proposed new developments. This is not intended to defer decision-making in the area, nor is it intended to allow new developments to disregard the standards set in the Specific Plan. Rather it is intended for large parcels, such as the Worldwide Church of God's campus, or unusually constrained parcels, such as the Vista del Arroyo bungalows site, to be developed, in conformance with the development and design standards of the West Gateway Specific Plan and with the ability to tailor other requirements to achieve the high-quality development desired by the community.

### Adaptive Re-use and Preservation of Historic Buildings

A historic resources inventory was prepared for the West Gateway area, which identified and evaluated the historic structures in the plan area. The Vista del Arroyo Bungalows are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Vista del Arroyo Hotel complex. The Old Pasadena National Register District includes many of the buildings in the South DeLacey Corridor that are along Green and Dayton Streets and Fair Oaks Avenue. In addition, the Friendship Baptist Church is on the National Register.

The Specific Plan recommends that significant historic buildings and landscaping be preserved and that new buildings adjacent to historic buildings respect the massing and scale of the older buildings. Demolition of the privately-owned Vista del Arroyo Bungalows is not permitted under the Plan. An implementation measure of the Plan is to submit landmark nominations for all significant historic buildings identified in the historic inventory.

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In order to achieve the goals of the West Gateway Specific Plan, an Implementation Plan has been established (see pp. 121-136 of the Draft Plan.) It outlines specific actions to be undertaken by staff in the Planning and Permitting and Public Works and Transportation Departments to achieve the Specific Plan's goals.

The first activities anticipated to take place to implement the Plan include the establishment of a West Gateway Parking District, adoption of zoning code and map amendments, adoption of design guidelines, and inclusion of projects in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP.) In addition, city staff will continue to work with the State Historic Preservation Office to enforce the federal covenants that require preservation and maintenance of the privately-owned Vista del Arroyo bungalows. The Vacant Buildings Ordinance, adopted on April 6, 1998, can also be used to require maintenance of these structures.

## RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE DRAFT SPECIFIC PLAN

Attachment A lists the comments from each of the Commissions, the West Gateway Coordinating Committee, and staff, and outlines recommended changes to the draft Plan in response to these comments.

The Arts Commission recommended that public art be used in the Orange Grove / Colorado intersection, along DeLacey Avenue, and in the transition between the West Gateway and Old Pasadena areas; and that Arts Commissioners be included in the future planning for these areas. They also supported retaining Ambassador Auditorium as a performing arts venue and Arts staff recommended exploring the option of using the public art requirement of any future projects to support the Auditorium.

The Community Development Committee recommended that the South DeLacey Corridor sub-area be renamed "Urban Village," and the goal of 1,000 units of housing with limited amounts of other uses be restored to the draft Specific Plan. They did not think the draft Specific Plan should promote flexibility in the South DeLacey Corridor and recommended returning this subarea to the Central District, if these changes were not made in the draft Specific Plan.

The Cultural Heritage Commission acknowledged that historic resources have been appropriately identified and protected in the draft Specific Plan and in the draft EIR. They also recommended that staff be given the authority to review demolitions and relocations of buildings in the West Gateway area that were not found to be significant on the historic resources inventory.

The Design Commission acknowledged that they currently have design review authority over most of the Specific Plan area. They reviewed and made amendments to the design guidelines in the draft Specific Plan. They supported the inclusion of a gateway element in the Specific Plan and wanted to be involved in the future planning for this gateway.

The Transportation Advisory Commission recommended that any future traffic studies regarding the location of the War Memorial Flagstaff be returned to them for review, that all forms of public transportation be emphasized under the draft Specific Plan's guiding principles, and that parking management strategies be included in the Specific Plan.

The West Gateway Coordinating Committee recommended that a maximum envelope of development be established for the South DeLacey Corridor and within that envelope, the mix of residential and non-residential uses be flexible. They further recommended that in the Orange Grove / Colorado and Vista del Arroyo Bungalows sub-areas, flexibility also be allowed to allow additional residential units beyond the 75 units allowed in the General Plan.

There were four concepts in the draft Specific Plan that were not clear to citizens who reviewed the draft plan. Staff has recommended language to clarify these concepts. (1) Senior housing and continuing care for seniors, is permitted wherever multi-family housing

is permitted. (2) The draft Specific Plan recommends that the numeric limits for the West Gateway area be revisited during the General Plan five-year review process. It recommends that the limits for the West Gateway area be increased to 1,300 units and 1,600,000 square feet. This new limits are proposed for the Vista del Arroyo Bungalows and Orange Grove / Colorado sub-areas only. The South DeLacey Corridor sub-area has its own numeric limits. (3) The minimum number of residential units required in the Area 2 portion of the South DeLacey Corridor at full build-out is 250 units - with 125 units on each of the two large blocks west of DeLacey Avenue. (4) In the South DeLacey Corridor, setbacks are required only for the portions of buildings that are greater than 40 feet in height.

The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the draft West Gateway Specific Plan, with the staff-recommended amendments.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared. Defined by CEQA, the EIR is an informational document which informs the City's decisions makers and the public of the environmental effects of the project, and identifies possible ways to minimize any significant impacts.

The West Gateway Specific Plan EIR is a program or "tiered" EIR. It is less detailed than a project-specific EIR, but is comprehensive because it analyzes the potential impacts that may result from the implementation of the goals and objectives of the Specific Plan. This EIR supplements the findings discussed in the General Plan EIR.

On January 28, 1998, a public hearing on the draft EIR was held before the Planning Commission. Several residents and Planning Commissioners had comments on the draft Plan and draft EIR. Additional comments from government agencies and citizens were received by mail. Responses to these comments are provided in Section VIII of the Final EIR and corrections to the text of the EIR have been made throughout the document. The Final EIR was the subject of a public hearing on May 13, 1998.

The EIR primarily analyzed impacts in the areas of: Land Use and Planning, Cultural Resources, Transportation and Circulation, Public Services (Schools), Air Quality, Recreation, and Population and Housing. These were issues identified by city staff in the Initial Environmental Study as potentially impacted by the draft Specific Plan.

No adverse impacts are anticipated by the EIR in the areas of Land Use, Population and Housing, Cultural Resources and Recreation.

Traffic and Circulation - Implementation of the Draft Specific Plan could significantly impact three of the thirteen intersections studied during the a.m. and p.m. peak commute periods. Impacts at two of these intersections (Fair Oaks/Del Mar and Arroyo Parkway/Del Mar) can be reduced to a level of insignificance by implementing



Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures and increasing corridor capacity by computerized traffic signal synchronization. Impacts at the third intersection, Pasadena Avenue / Del Mar, can be reduced to a level of insignificance by constructing a westbound right-turn-only lane from Del Mar to Pasadena Avenue.

Air Quality - Any impacts can be mitigated by implementing construction mitigation measures.

Public Services (Schools) - Due to existing capacity problems for elementary schools in the Pasadena Unified School District, the West Gateway Specific Plan and resulting population increases will result in an imbalance between elementary school enrollment and capacity. Continuing to collect the development impact fees for residential and commercial development will help to mitigate this potential impact.

The Draft EIR addresses four potential alternatives to the proposed Specific Plan. They are analyzed in Section V of the Final EIR and are summarized on the next page:

*Alternative 1* looks at the general effects of not adopting the Specific Plan. Under this scenario, the development standards proposed in the Specific Plan will not be adopted and existing zoning requirements would govern land uses.

*Alternative 2* assumes that the future growth identified in the General Plan will be developed, but without the performance standards of the Specific Plan.

*Alternative 3* assumes adoption of the Specific Plan's recommendations, but assumes less development than identified in the Land Use Element of the General Plan.

*Alternative 4* focuses on the South DeLacey Corridor and proposes less residential development and greater non-residential development in this sub-area.

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act, the EIR identified an "environmentally superior" alternative. Alternative 3 is environmentally superior to the project, and the other alternatives. However, with respect to city-wide and regional impacts, the West Gateway Specific Plan was found to be superior to other alternatives in that it balances economic vitality with the maintenance of the high quality character of the area and its historically and architecturally significant elements.

## **CONCLUSION**

The West Gateway Specific Plan is the product of numerous meetings of the West Gateway Coordinating Committee, community workshops, and other meetings. It represents the cooperative work of staff from several City departments. In the West Gateway Specific Plan we were able to achieve consensus of the major property owners, West Pasadena Residents' Association, and the Chamber of Commerce on the future direction for this important area of Pasadena.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

By providing a strategy for the properties owned by the Worldwide Church of God, the Specific Plan facilitates the transition of these properties to new uses. Currently, this 50 acre property does not generate property taxes because of its non-profit status. If some or all of the new uses are “for-profit,” this property will generate property tax revenues for the City.

Implementation of the West Gateway Specific Plan will require that improvement projects be included in the next Capital Improvement Plan, and funded as funds become available.

**WORKLOAD IMPACT**

Implementation of the West Gateway Specific Plan will require additional staff work in the Planning and Permitting and the Public Works and Transportation Departments to draft the implementing ordinances, establish parking districts, undertake additional studies, etc. This staff work can be accommodated with existing staff under existing work programs.


**HOUSING IMPACT**

Implementation of the West Gateway Specific Plan will have a positive impact on housing. Under the Plan, housing is allowed in the entire West Gateway area. In the South DeLacey Corridor sub-area, up to 1,000 new housing units can be developed and if a non-residential development is built, up to 250 housing units must be included in the development. In the Orange Grove / Colorado and Vista del Arroyo Bungalows sub-areas, housing is a permitted use under the Plan, where it was not permitted before.

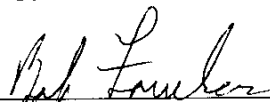
Respectfully submitted,

  
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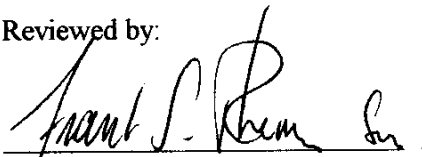
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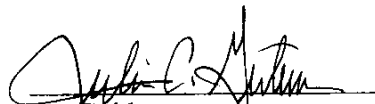
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Attachments:

- Attachment A - Recommended Changes to the Draft West Gateway Specific Plan
- Attachment B - Resolution certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report
- Attachment C - De Minimis Impact Finding on the State Fish and Wildlife Habitat
- Attachment D - Resolution adopting the West Gateway Specific Plan
- Attachment E - Notice of Determination
- Attachment F - Letters commenting on the draft West Gateway Specific Plan

Draft West Gateway Specific Plan - January 1998

West Gateway Specific Plan Final Environmental Impact Report - April 1998