

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** OCTOBER 18, 1999

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: AMENDMENTS TO THE CIVIC CENTER SPECIFIC PLAN AND
THE GENERAL PLAN LAND USE ELEMENT RELATED TO THE
PASEO COLORADO DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION

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

- A. Adopt a resolution (1) certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report on the Plaza Pasadena Renovation, also known as Paseo Colorado, with Addendum, and (2) making the findings required by the California Environmental Quality Act, making a statement of overriding considerations, and adopting the mitigation monitoring program (Attachment A);
- B. Adopt a resolution (1) amending the *Civic Center Specific Plan* to modify the boundaries of the Civic Center Specific Plan area and to establish regulations, standards, and guidelines for the amended area, and (2) amending the boundaries of the Civic Center Master Plan strategy area in the *General Plan Land Use Element* (Attachment B);
- C. Make a finding of De Minimis Impact on State Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Attachment C);
- D. 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 Registrar-Recorder.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The amendments to the *Civic Center Specific Plan* and the *General Plan Land Use Element* will facilitate development of the Paseo Colorado development project, following the approach recommended by the Mayor and Council's City

Center Task Force. Regulations, standards, and guidelines are established in the *Civic Center Specific Plan* amendment to supplement those in *Title 17* of the *Pasadena Municipal Code*, the Zoning Code. Where there is a conflict between the provisions of the *Specific Plan* and *Title 17*, the provisions of the *Specific Plan* shall control, according to the resolution approved on March 20, 1990, to adopt the *Specific Plan*. In addition, including the project site within the boundaries of the Civic Center Master Plan strategy area in the *General Plan Land Use Element* makes it subject to the provisions of the strategy area rather than to those for the "Remaining Areas Within the Central Business District."

BACKGROUND

On April 6, 1998, the City Council received the *Civic Center/Mid-Town Programming Effort Report* from the Mayor and Council's City Center Task Force. Concerning the Plaza Pasadena site, the *Programming Report* said:

In order to facilitate the redevelopment of the Plaza Pasadena, an amendment to the boundary of the Civic Center Specific Plan to include the site within the Specific Plan boundary is recommended. As part of this boundary amendment, specific design guidelines and standards would be developed.

Staff is recommending an amendment to the *Civic Center Specific Plan* to permit mixed-use development with the potential to bring twenty-four hour/seven-day activity to the Civic Center area. The corresponding amendment to the *General Plan Land Use Element* is also recommended. The amendments have been prepared in response to the project description provided by TrizecHahn for renovation of the Plaza Pasadena. TrizecHahn made application for amendments both to the *Civic Center Specific Plan* and to the *General Plan Land Use Element*, consistent with the approach recommended by the *Programming Effort Report*.

The proposed amendments respect the direction given for neighboring sites within the Specific Plan area while recognizing that the mix of uses will emphasize retail, restaurants, and entertainment to a much greater extent than is appropriate on the other sites. Standards that are appropriate for the mix of uses, including significant residential development, will accommodate greater intensity than in many other areas of the Civic Center.

The amendment provides certain alternative land use regulations and development standards for the site, which is otherwise subject to the Zoning Code regulations and standards for the CD-2 Colorado Boulevard and CD-3 Civic Center subdistricts. In cases where the regulations and standards diverge from those in the Zoning Code, the *Specific Plan* controls, according to

Resolution No. 6314 (March 20, 1990) adopting the *Civic Center Specific Plan*. There are very few deviations, but they are significant.

The amendment addresses standards for the width of the Garfield Avenue Promenade, building and tower heights, the mix of uses, and the project approval process, within boundaries that include the project site (Attachment B).

The General Plan Land Use Element established an interim height limit of 60 feet for the portions of the Central District that are outside seven Central District strategy areas. These portions of the Central District, known collectively as the "Remaining Areas of the Central Business District," now include most of the Plaza Pasadena site. The interim height limit for the remaining areas is to be in effect until completion of the Zoning Code revision. The proposed amendments to the *Specific Plan* and to the *Land Use Element* provide an opportunity to analyze and establish appropriate height limits and other development standards for the site prior to completion of the *Central District Specific Plan* and the revision of the Zoning Code, by incorporating the site into the Civic Center Specific Plan area.

PROPOSED PROJECT

The Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIR") analyzed a project described by TrizecHahn as of April 30, 1999. There have been subsequent modifications to the proposal. The project described in the EIR, both Draft and Final, includes up to 589,900 gross leasable square feet of retail, restaurant, and entertainment, up to 125,000 square feet of office, and up to 375 residential units (Attachment D). According to the description in the Draft EIR, the width of the Garfield Promenade area, separating two major areas of the project, was 58 feet.

The Specific Plan amendment provides building envelopes for variations on the mix of uses described in the EIR. More significantly, it requires a width of 77 feet from building face to building face across the Garfield Promenade. This change to the Promenade width is a modification proposed by the applicant for the amendment and is reflected in the Final EIR.

Within recent days, the applicant has further revised the description of the project under consideration, thereby reducing impacts identified in the Final Environmental Impact Report. The newly revised project reduces total office development from 125,000 square feet to not more 35,000 square feet of "flex" space, which might be either office or retail. The number of residential units is increased from 375 units to 400 units, though the total area available for housing is not increased. Reconfiguration of the parking will result in a loss of approximately 150 parking spaces. An *Addendum* to the Final EIR has been prepared to analyze these changes, which are not found to be a substantial change in the project (Attachment E).

ANALYSIS

Boundaries: The proposed amendments include the whole of the area bounded by Colorado Boulevard, Green Street, Marengo Avenue and Los Robles Avenue, except for the Pacific Southwest Building (Security Pacific Bank) parcel. The project site area is 10.87 acres. (The EIR analyzes a project site of 14.9 acres, which includes the two parking structures that serve the Plaza Pasadena, one across Marengo Avenue and one across Green Street.) It will expand the Southern Garfield Axis (G4) area of the Specific Plan area, which now includes only the implied extension of Garfield Avenue between Colorado Green, to include the entire Plaza Pasadena site, from Marengo Avenue to Los Robles Avenue.

Standards are provided for the entire site excluding the Macy's portion and the drive entrance parcel abutting the Pacific-Southwest Building, which are recognized in the Specific Plan amendment but not regulated in the height diagrams. The area will be identified as Southern Garfield Promenade/Paseo Colorado (G4). It includes two sites, as shown in the diagrams; west of the Garfield Axis is Site G4a; east of the Garfield Axis is G4b. It also includes the 77-foot wide Garfield Promenade (between the two sites) and the drive entrance parcel.

Amendment to the Land Use Element: The *Central District Specific Plan* area in the General Plan recognizes previous planning efforts, including the *Civic Center Specific Plan*, and maintains the standards established in those plans. Following the recommendation of the City Center Task Force, the proposed amendment places the Plaza Pasadena site fully within the Civic Center Master (Specific) Plan strategy area, to facilitate development on the site that is supportive of the Civic Center and the activities in it. *The Land Use Element* confirms the goals established in the *Civic Center Specific Plan* for the area:

1. Bring the "City Beautiful" vision of the Bennett plan up-to-date;
2. Preserve, maintain and contribute to Pasadena's cultural heritage;
3. Make the Civic Center an important destination in Pasadena;
4. Make a commitment to housing in the Civic Center;
5. Give support to the religious and service institutions;
6. Connect the Civic Center to other areas of development;
7. Undertake public actions that will reinforce the Civic Center Master (Specific) Plan.

The General Plan amendment incorporating the Plaza Pasadena site into the Civic Center Specific Plan area provides an opportunity to further the Plan's goals through the specific standards and regulations of the Specific Plan amendment and the application of the guidelines contained in the Specific Plan.

The intensity standards established in the *Land Use Element* for the Civic Center Master (Specific) Plan area would not be altered as this time. Update of the General Plan, however, will provide an opportunity to consider a commensurate shift of residential units and non-residential floor area the strategy area from the Remaining Areas.

Garfield Promenade: The Mayor and Council's City Center Task Force emphasized the importance of the Garfield Promenade: "The physical axis connection from Garfield Avenue to the Civic Auditorium will be reintroduced. The arch structure and interior pedestrian bridges shall be removed to obtain a visual and physical connection to the Civic Auditorium."

The proposed amendment provides for a separation of at least 77 feet between building faces on the two sides of the Garfield Promenade through the Paseo Colorado project site. This dimension reflects an important change since the project description was established on April 30, 1999, for the Draft Environmental Impact Report.

The restoration of the Garfield axis will be an historic accomplishment, providing views of the three major Civic Center buildings and reestablishing the opportunity to approach the Civic Auditorium from the entire length of Garfield Promenade, as envisioned in the Bennett Plan.

Height: The proposed amendment permits heights up to 100 feet at various locations on the two sites, with two towers up to 130 feet in height. The 100-foot height limit does not apply to significant portions of the sites, however, and buildings are to step back above 50 feet on most public facades. The limit is intended to permit residential and office above the prevailing retail. A limit of 85 feet accommodates second-level cineplex development. Permitted heights generally step back above 50 feet, consistent with the Specific Plan standards for structures along Colorado Boulevard both in the Mutual Savings Block (E6) and on the southern Plaza Las Fuentes site (E5b).

According to the Specific Plan, building height of 130 feet is permitted on the Mutual Savings Block and of 150 feet on the southern Plaza Las Fuentes site (E5b). The City Center/Mid-Town Programming Effort report recommended that buildings along Colorado Boulevard on the Broadway Block (southern Plaza Las Fuentes site) not exceed eight stories and that on the CenFed Block (Mutual Savings Block) buildings not exceed six stories. Both of these blocks are immediately adjacent to the City Hall block. Because the 100-foot limit proposed

in the amendment covers area further south and across Colorado Boulevard, it respects City Hall while permitting heights exceeding those of structures closer to City Hall.

The *Central District (CD) Height District Map* of the Zoning Code permits 130 feet on the Plaza Pasadena site east of the Garfield axis but only 50 feet from the Garfield axis west. The additional height provided by the amendment for the site (G4a) to the west of the axis is important for the inclusion of housing in the mix of uses on the site.

At present, there are intermittent views of the City Hall dome and of the mountains from various locations along Marengo Avenue between Green and Cordova Streets and on the Civic Auditorium block. Development that is permitted now on the Auditorium Block under the existing *Specific Plan*, however, would eliminate some of the views both from Garfield and from the block. The amendment is not creating a significant loss of views either of the San Gabriel Mountains or of Civic Center buildings. It is recreating the opportunity to view the Garfield axis end to end, Central Library to Civic Auditorium.

The existing Pacific Southwest building (1924), on the southeast corner of the Marengo Avenue /Colorado Boulevard intersection, also blocks views of both the dome and the San Gabriel Mountains, especially from the Marengo/Green intersection. The 100-foot limit for Site G4a is lower than the height of the Pacific-Southwest building (110 feet plus rooftop addition), so the building will retain its dominance.

Buildings in most cases are to step back above a height of 50 feet. The existing *Specific Plan* establishes 50 feet as the height for various sites throughout the Civic Center area but varies the extent to which buildings are required to step back. Along Colorado Boulevard on the Plaza Las Fuentes site, for instance, the *Specific Plan* calls for "a strong setback at 50 feet to correspond with the prevailing height along the street edge of Colorado." New construction in the Mutual Savings Block is to step back 35 feet above the height of 50 feet.

Heights are stepped back less aggressively on the south side of Colorado Boulevard under the proposed amendment. For Site 4Ga, the 100-foot limit would step back 22 ½ feet for much of the Colorado frontage, but for a small portion of the length of the wall no stepping back would be necessary (Zone 1). For Site 4Gb, the building is stepped back much less (Zone 5). Depending on the upper story uses, whether office or residential, the height steps back either three or ten feet. If the use is residential, there is flexibility to build in a portion of the 10-foot area in which the building generally steps back, and the structure could extend to the property line above the 50 foot limit for a length of 120 feet.

The diagram provides for two towers up to 130 feet in height. On Site G4a, maximum horizontal area of the tower is 500 square feet. The maximum

horizontal area for the tower on Site G4b is 1,300 square feet. Smaller and lower towers could be constructed as appurtenances, with heights up to 20 feet above the building height limits.

Other Standards and Guidelines: The Southern Garfield Promenade/Paseo Colorado area, according to the amendment, is subject to the General Guidelines of the Specific Plan, except where guidelines are provided specifically for the area.

Mixed Use: The amendment encourages a mix of uses on the site. Because the site is the crossroads of civic and commercial spaces, retail has a more prominent role than in the Civic Center as a whole. As a result, Retail use will be permitted by right on the portion of the site which is zoned CD-3 Civic Center and now allows Retail only with a conditional use permit, as well as on the remainder of site, which is designated CD-2 Colorado Boulevard. In addition, the amendment defines a project on the site as a mixed-use project if it includes at least 200 residential units. The *Programming Effort Report* does not specifically anticipate housing on the site, but it does encourage uses that will promote twenty-four hour activity. The Civic Center/Mid-Town district as a whole is to include housing of all types and for all incomes.

Approval Process: Because the review and approval of the amendment to *Civic Center Specific Plan* provides opportunity to analyze the impacts of a project consistent with it, the amendment eliminates the requirement for a use permit for a project exceeding 25,000 square feet. Use permits for expressive use, for shared parking, and for the sale of alcohol are required, however.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

The amendment to the *Specific Plan* is consistent with the goals for the Civic Center Master (Specific) Plan area listed above (page 3). Most notably, it reestablishes visual and physical connection between the Civic Auditorium and the other buildings of the Civic Center, as envisioned in the Bennett Plan. By providing that linkage, it integrates the Civic Auditorium and Auditorium activities back into the Civic Center, thus supporting both the heritage of the building and the vitality of the City's cultural life. The opportunity presented by the amendment for revitalization of the intersection of civic and commercial activity heightens the importance of the Civic Center and also provides a crucial link between the City's Colorado Boulevard commercial districts. The inclusion of housing, which is made possible by the building heights permitted through the amendment, increases personal commitment the Civic Center area.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIR") was prepared for the Plaza Pasadena Renovation and related approvals, including the amendment to the *Civic Center Specific Plan*. The period for public review of the DEIR concluded on September 20, 1999. Comments received during the review period are included in the Final EIR, along with responses to the comments and revisions (Attachment D).

The Draft EIR considered potential impacts concerning the following: Land Use and Planning; Population and Housing; Air Quality; Transportation/Circulation; Noise; Aesthetics; Cultural Resources; and Construction Impacts. There is an extensive list of mitigation measures for the impacts of traffic associated with the project. Impacts to the Average Daily Traffic on several street segments resulted from redistributing traffic away from de-emphasized streets to the city's Mobility Corridors and other major streets, following the direction provided in the City's *General Plan Mobility Element*.

An *Addendum* to the Final EIR has been prepared to analyze the recent changes to the proposed project, i.e., reduction of office floor area, increase in number of residential units from 375-400, and reconfiguration of parking (Attachment E).

After mitigation and after the proposed reduction in the project, however, several significant impacts remain, especially on street segments that carry redistributed traffic so that impacts on residential and de-emphasized streets are avoided. As a result of the remaining significant impacts, it is recommended the Council adopt a statement of overriding considerations recognizing the benefits of the project that justify its approval while impacts remain.

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

On September 20, 1999, the Cultural Heritage Commission recommended modifications to some of the information reported in the Cultural Resources section of the EIR. Those changes have been incorporated into the FEIR.

DESIGN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

On September 13, 1999, the Design Commission reviewed the proposed amendment to the Specific Plan and commented on the Draft EIR. On a unanimous vote of the quorum, the Commission recommended to the Planning Commission and to the City Council, with the following findings, that the

proposed Southern Garfield Promenade/Paseo Colorado Amendment to the Civic Center Specific Plan be approved:

- a. That the amendment supports and is consistent with the goals of the Civic Center Specific Plan;
- b. That the amendment provides for development on the site appropriate to the context envisioned in the Civic Center Specific Plan for neighboring sites;
- c. That the amendment supports and is consistent with the directions provided in the Civic Center Specific Plan for the Garfield Axis and for the Southern Garfield Axis;
- d. That the amendment supports and is consistent with the goals of the Pasadena Downtown Urban Design Guidelines;
- e. That building masses and heights permitted by the amendment will not result in significant adverse effects on views of the San Gabriel Mountains and Civic Center Buildings.

Changes to the *Aesthetics* section mitigation measures have been incorporated into the FEIR in response to the recommendations of the Design Commission.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

On October 11, 1999, the Transportation Advisory Commission recommended that the proposed Paseo Colorado development project and draft Final EIR:

- a. Are consistent with the Mobility Element of the General Plan;
- b. Adequately present the needed information to approved the Final Environmental Impact Report;
- c. Adequately mitigate the effects and identified impacts of the project upon the City's circulation system;
- d. Provide adequate protection of residential neighborhoods of the City from negative transportation impacts;
- e. Provide suitable and implementable measures to reduce traffic congestion, including ride sharing, van pooling and other trip reduction strategies, in accordance with the City's Trip Reduction Ordinance;

- f. Adequately deal with transportation management in the City's Central District.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission received the recommendations concerning the Environmental Impact Report or the amendments approved by the Cultural Heritage Commission, the Design Commission, and the Transportation Advisory Commission. Following a public hearing, the Planning Commission recommended on October 13, 1999 that the City Council:

- a. Certify the Plaza Pasadena Renovation Final Environmental Impact Report, as required under CEQA;
- b. Approve the De Minimis Impact on Habitat Finding for State Fish and Wildlife;
- c. Find that the amendments to the *General Plan Land Use Element* and to the *Civic Center Specific Plan* are consistent with the General Plan and approve such amendments;
- d. Direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination and Certificate of Fee Exemption for the California Department of Fish and Game, with the Los Angeles County Recorder;
- e. Endorse and incorporate the recommendations of the Cultural Heritage Commission in the Cultural Heritage Commission letter of September 20, 1999;
- f. Endorse and incorporate the recommendations of the Design Commission in the Design Commission letter of September 20, 1999;
- g. Consider the amendments to the *Civic Center Specific Plan* and the *General Plan Land Use Element* concurrent with, or after, the Owner Participation Agreement or other documents to ensure the level of amenities in the current applicant's plans, including but not limited to public spaces including "Garfield Court" and "Fountain Court" areas;
- h. Add an affordable housing component or evaluate an affordable housing component, in view of the fact that the Civic Center/Mid-Town district as a whole is to include housing of all types and for all incomes.

The Commission recommendation concerning the recommendations about the EIR from the Cultural Heritage Commission and the Design Commission are addressed in the Final EIR by revisions made in response to the comments from the other two commissions.

FISCAL IMPACTS

Fiscal impacts of the proposed project are discussed in a separate report.


HOUSING IMPACTS

The proposed amendments encourage the development of residential units by providing additional height for housing. The project will add up to four hundred residential units to the Civic Center Specific Plan area.


Respectfully submitted,


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