

CENTRAL DISTRICT

SPECIFIC PLAN UPDATE

Planning Commission
June 28, 2023

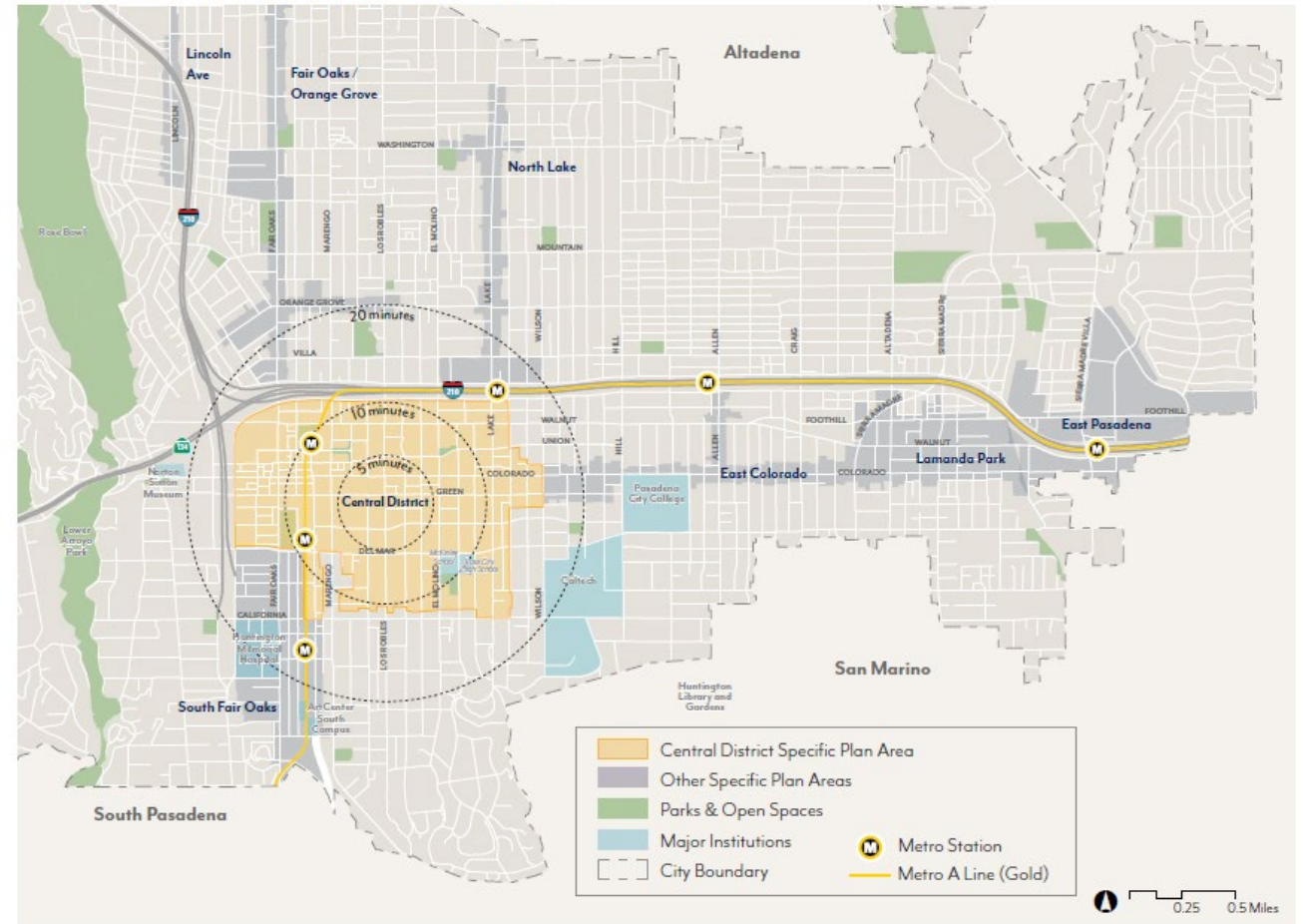


OUR PASADENA
PUTTING THE PLAN IN MOTION

Central District Specific Plan Area

- Bounded by Corson St, Pasadena Ave, Wilson Ave & Del Mar / California Blvd
- Pasadena's downtown area with numerous historic resources
- Walking distance to 4 Metro Stations - Del Mar, North Lake, Memorial Park, & Fillmore stations
- Borders East Colorado, South Fair Oaks, Fair Oaks/Orange Grove, & North Lake specific plan areas

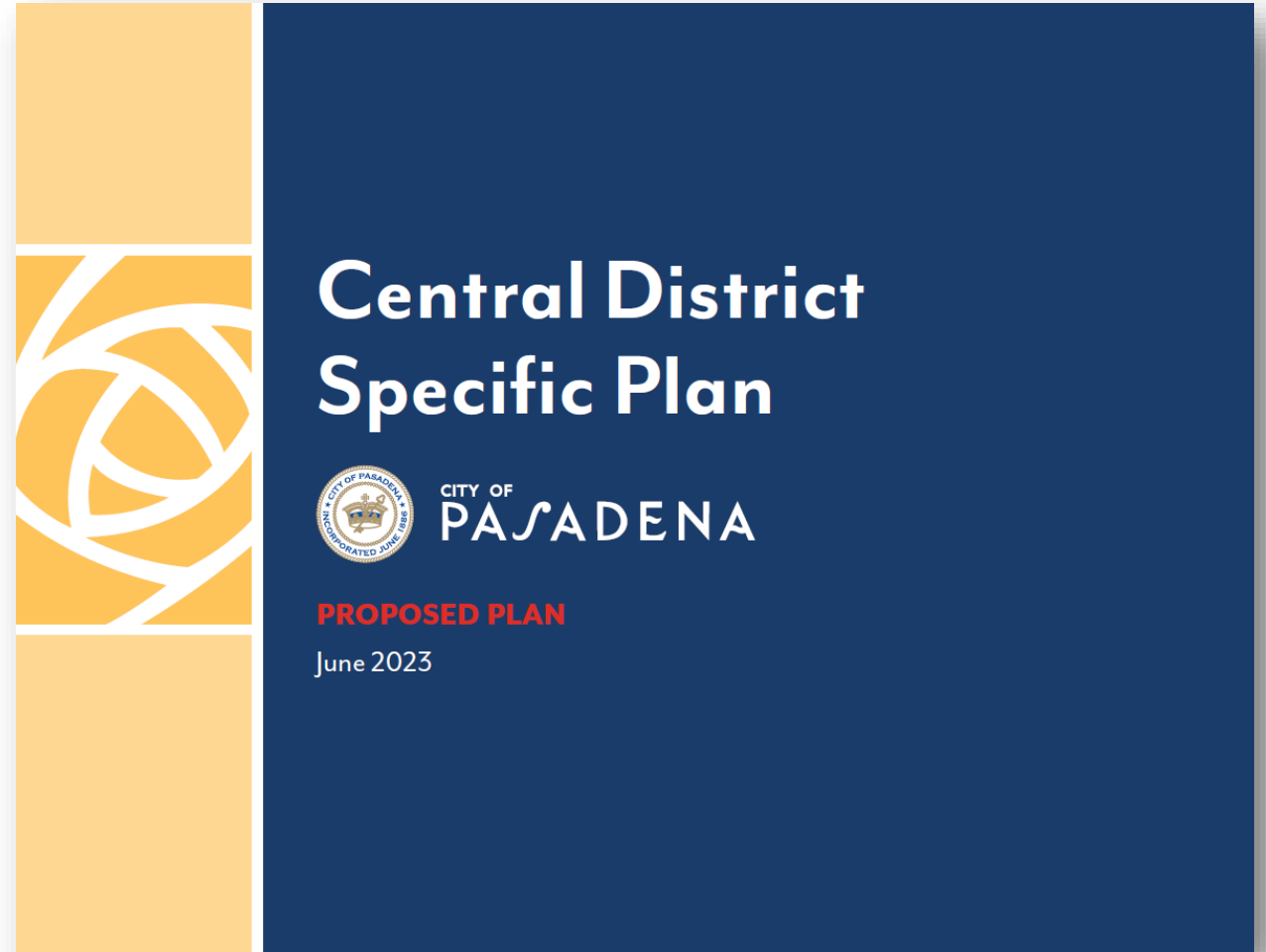
Map 2.1-1: Central District Specific Plan Area and Regional Context



Background

Planning Commission Study Sessions:

- December 8, 2021 – preliminary draft plan
- June 22, 2022 – revised draft plan
- February 22, 2023 – draft proposed plan
 - Comments from the Planning Commission focused on the following:
 - Incorporating the 2004 design guidelines into the plan
 - Plan implementation
 - Vehicular parking
 - Allowable land uses



February 23 Study Session Comments

- Incorporating the 2004 design guidelines
 - Based on the work of the PC Subcommittee, the proposed plan incorporates new goals, policies, text boxes & objective development and design standards
 - Appendix A.3, which previously included the 2004 design guidelines, was removed from the proposed plan
- Plan implementation
 - New action item (A-4) added to table noting an annual update on the status of the action items
 - New column added to the table to identify potential funding sources and relevant Capital Improvement Program (CIP) information for each action item
- Vehicular parking
 - TOD area & access to four Metro stations
 - Less parking for most uses
 - No additional parking within designated historic resources or changes of use
 - Parking reductions for projects within ½ mile of a Metro station apply
 - Shared and unbundled parking is permitted
 - State law prevails
- Allowable land uses
 - Land use table updated to allow, by-right, additional residential uses

PROPOSED PLAN



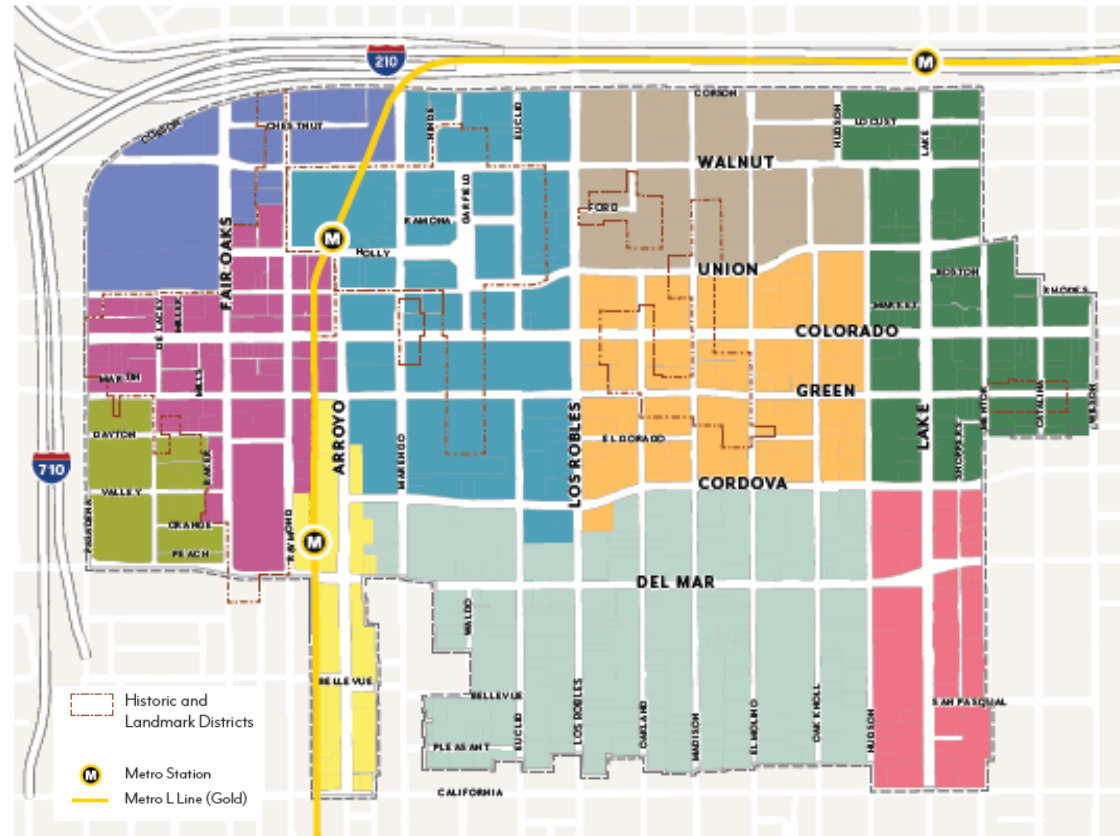
Central District Vision



The Central District will build upon its existing strengths as Pasadena's vibrant downtown, providing a diversity of economic, civic, cultural, entertainment, and residential opportunities. The district will be a place to work, shop, live, play, raise a family, with convenient access by foot, bicycle, and transit, as well as by car. Physical and economic growth will support this role and respect the numerous resources of historical and cultural significance that contribute to the district's unique identity.

Central District Subareas – No changes from Draft Plan

Map 2.2-1: Central District Specific Plan Subareas



Civic Center



Northwest Gateway



Old Pasadena



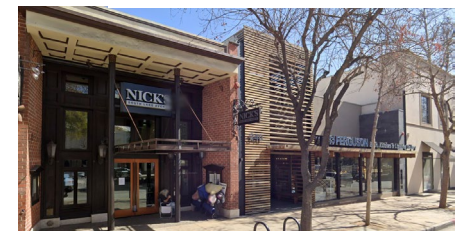
De Lacey



Arroyo/Del Mar



In-Town Residential



South Lake



Walnut Transit



Playhouse



Mid Lake

Goals and Policies – Revisions to Draft Plan

- Goals & policies were reorganized into 5 topics to incorporate the 2004 design guidelines

- Public Realm
- Development & Design
- Historic Identity
- Economic Development
- Subareas


- Added a new goal with policies for Historic Identity

- New policies added for Public Realm, Development & Design, and subareas

3.21 PLAN AREA GOALS & POLICIES

PUBLIC REALM

Goal 1. A public realm, including sidewalks, plazas, parks, and parks, that support a walkable downtown and contribute to the Central District's sense of place.



Planters and benches break down the size of larger blocks and encourage walking.


Policies:

- 1.a. **Walkability.** Provide an unobstructed path of travel for users that can reasonably accommodate pedestrian volumes along the corridor; all streets should be made safe and comfortable for movement on foot.
- 1.b. **Universal Design.** Construct an inclusive public realm that's accessible and functional for people of all ages, sizes, and abilities, eliminating barriers in the built environment.
- 1.c. **Enhanced Streetscapes.** Promote a regular cadence of individual storefronts that engage the sidewalk with street-oriented and well-marked entrances that invite walk-in traffic.
- 1.d. **Street Furnishings.** Consider the provision of benches, planters, bicycle parking, bus shelters, and other pedestrian amenities at frequent intervals, especially along wide sidewalks with the heaviest foot traffic.
- 1.e. **Lighting.** Provide adequate pedestrian-scale lighting along sidewalks and in public spaces to enhance the safety and comfort of visitors, especially at night.
- 1.f. **Outdoor Dining.** Encourage sidewalk cafes, provided clear passage is maintained for pedestrians within the public and private realm.
- 1.g. **Open Space Network.** Preserve and expand the network of plazas and parks to correct key destinations and encourage pedestrian activity, architectural quality, and sense of discovery, building on the historic legacy of the District's network of public open space.
- 1.h. **Streetscape Plans.** Reference existing and proposed streetscape plans for detailed strategies in the treatment of paving and amenities such as furniture and signage to help unify areas around a district identity.
- 1.i. **New Park Space.** Support additional parkland in the area generally between Colorado and California Boulevards and Los Rios and Lake Avenues.


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HISTORIC IDENTITY

Goal 7. A downtown district that builds from the City's rich architecture and history with a healthy balance of old and new buildings that create a strong and varied urban fabric.



Colorado Boulevard serves as the City's main street.



Views of civic landmarks.


Policies:

- 7.a. **Historic Character.** Strengthen the District's historic identity formed by the City's architecturally and culturally significant buildings, landscapes, and community character.
- 7.b. **View Corridors.** Frame important vistas of natural and built landmarks – especially Pasadena City Hall, the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, and the Pasadena Public Library – and look for opportunities to open new views of features and buildings.
- 7.c. **Architectural Legacy.** Require development within and adjacent to the District's historic districts and various designated and eligible properties to be compatible with the scale, materials, colors, and design features of the resource.
- 7.d. **Existing Buildings.** Encourage the retention and reuse of downtown buildings and maintain their character-defining qualities in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
- 7.e. **Urban Infill.** Focus growth on vacant/under-utilized parcels to protect historic resources while creating employment and housing opportunities within new buildings that contribute to a distinctive urban character.
- 7.f. **Complementary Buildings.** Establish a harmonious transition between old and new, emphasizing functional and visual continuity while allowing individual expression.
- 7.g. **Visual Clarity.** Discourage excessive ornamentation that detracts from the overall legibility of the District's historic architecture.
- 7.h. **Landscape Elements.** Retain historic parkway features, including street trees, tree lawns, granite curbs, tree grates, street lights, and benches, where feasible.

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DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN

Goal 6. Ample access to open space for both passive and active enjoyment that expands upon the current open space network.




Courtyards and plazas create space for resting, community gathering, and additional publicly-accessible amenities.

Policies:

- 6.a. **Residential Open Space.** Incorporate private and common open space areas that correlate to a building's size and number of residents.
- 6.b. **Commercial Open Space.** Require large non-residential or mixed-use projects to provide open space for residents, employees, and visitors.
- 6.c. **Quality Design.** Introduce open space design standards that apply universal design to maximize the comfort, utility, visual appeal, and programming potential of each open space for human activity and social interaction.
- 6.d. **Convenient Location.** Locate the massing of buildings to consistently frame and define public and common open spaces; site courtyards and plazas so that they are centrally located.
- 6.e. **Landscape Palette.** Use lush plantings that reflect the history and climate of Pasadena through a rich palette of scale, texture, and color.
- 6.f. **Connections.** Encourage ground level pedestrian passages and common spaces with a strong functional and visual connection to the street for safety; use integrated site planning to solidify links between interior and exterior.
- 6.g. **Comfortable Setting.** Create a pleasant micro-climate, including shade from summer sun and access to winter sunlight; locate seating with consideration to sun and shade.
- 6.h. **Point of Interest.** Consider adding focal elements, for instance, a sculpture, fountain or art piece to outdoor space.
- 6.i. **Urban Greening.** Use all open space areas to further environmental goals – such as carbon sequestration, drought tolerance, and reducing the urban heat island effect – through tree planting, stormwater capture, and native landscaping.

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MID LAKE



Mixed-use office and retail development along Lake Avenue.

Goal 17. A major mixed-use business and entertainment district, acting as a primary gateway to the Lake Avenue commercial corridor and the Central District with safe and comfortable multi-modal access to and from Lake Station.

Policies:

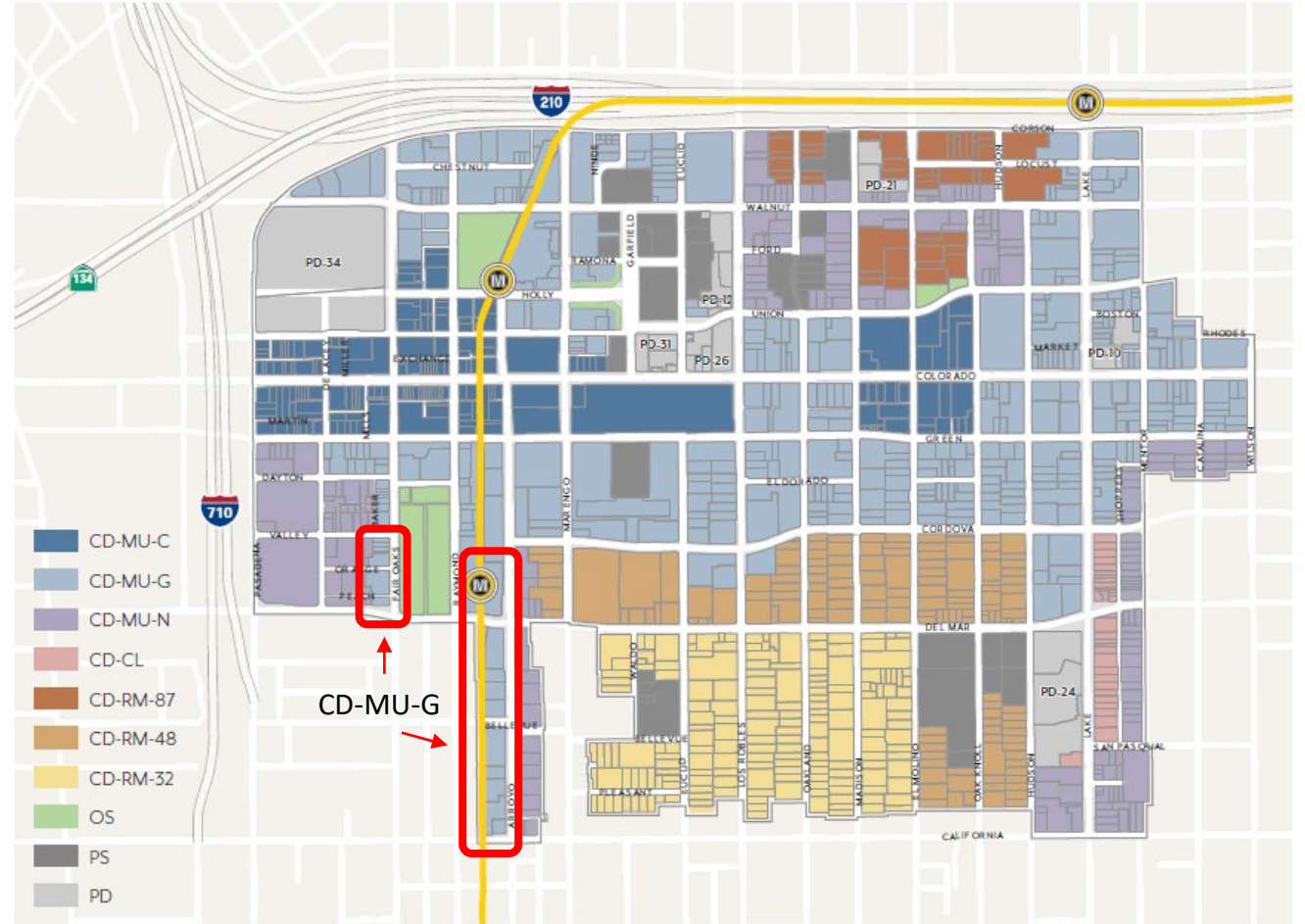
- 17.a. **Station Gateway.** Encourage transit use and draw additional retail activity through improved public realm design surrounding Lake Station.
- 17.b. **Lake Walnut.** Develop parcels near the intersection of Lake Avenue and Walnut Street on a local parcel for the neighborhood, with public open space and other pedestrian-friendly amenities.
- 17.c. **Lake Colorado.** Support high-quality building design and activity-generating uses that identify Lake Colorado as one of the City's prominent intersections, connecting the City's Main Street of Colorado Boulevard with the distinct commercial environments of Lake Avenue.
- 17.d. **Employment Made.** Strengthen the existing mix of commercial office and medical office, as well as supporting retail and restaurants, that provide a broad variety of jobs that create an active and economically vital business core.
- 17.e. **Entertainment Made.** Build upon popular entertainment uses around Colorado Boulevard and Mentor Avenue to attract local and regional visitors and generate activity for other nearby businesses.
- 17.f. **Housing Opportunities.** Introduce a mix of transit-accessible housing options adjacent to jobs, retail, and services along the Lake Avenue corridor.
- 17.g. **Adaptive Reuse.** Encourage the conversion of underutilized commercial buildings, including office towers along North Lake Avenue, to new and practical uses such as housing.

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Land Use and Zoning Districts – Revisions to Draft Plan

- Boundaries between CD-MU-G and CD-MU-N districts around Central Park were modified to expand CD-MU-G (light blue area)
- Land use table was updated to allow additional residential uses:
 - Boarding houses
 - Religious facilities with affordable
- Other changes to allowable commercial uses are proposed

Map 4.2-1: Zoning Districts



Public Realm Standards – Revisions to Draft Plan

- New and revised text boxes were added to incorporate the 2004 design guidelines

SIDEWALK WIDTHS & MOBILITY

Sidewalks are unifying elements that weave the fabric of the Central District; therefore, widths of at least 10' are required throughout the CDSP area to provide space for a clear walk zone and pedestrian amenities such as landscaping, lighting, signage, and bicycle parking. Active Sidewalks, designed for commercial and mixed-use areas with more pedestrian activity, have wider Walk Zones, while Residential Sidewalks typically have a larger Amenity Zone with landscaped parkways. Consideration should be given to coordinated fixtures, including lighting, seating and wayfinding, to further establish individual neighborhood identities.



Sufficient building height and mass will spatially define public streets and civic spaces, and establish a strong relationship between building and streets.



All streets should be designed for safe and comfortable movement on foot; a high level of streetscape amenities should be incorporated.



Landscape and streetscape improvements can communicate the public character and quality of the District's streets.

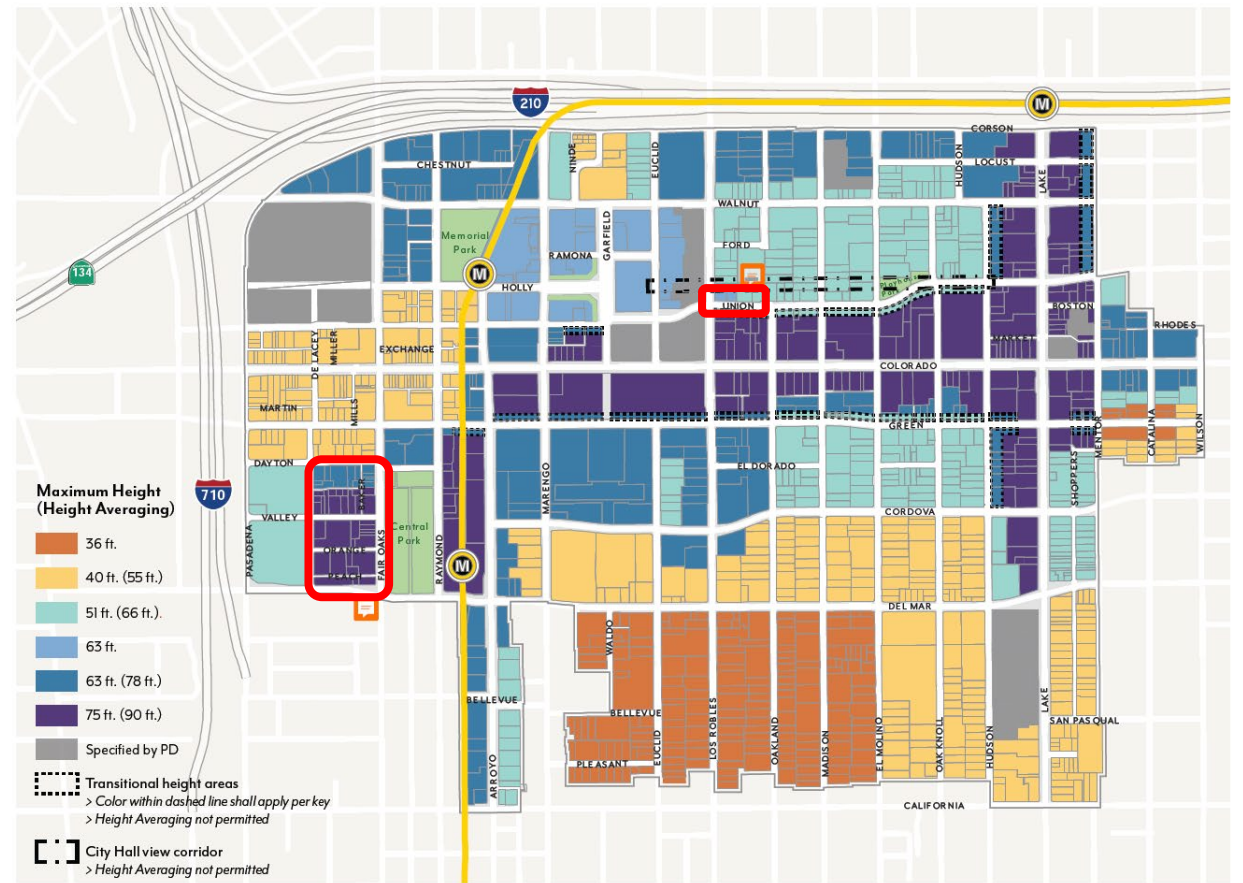


All sidewalks should provide ample width for pedestrians and be designed for universal access.

Development and Design Standards – Revisions to Draft Plan

- Added “Design” to the title of Chapter 4
- Increased heights in the following areas:
 - Two parcels located north of Union St near Los Robles Ave to 63 from 51 feet
 - Parcels between Dayton St & Central Court, west of Central Park to 63 from 40 feet
 - Parcels south of Central Court, west of Central Park to 75 from 51 feet (FAR increased to 3.0 from 2.25)

Map 6.1-3: Building Height



Development and Design Standards – Revisions to Draft Plan

- Revised modulation standards
 - New standard added to clarify planes separated by 20 ft width x 20 ft depth are considered separate facades
 - An exception added to encourage new development include traditional architectural features such as 4” recessed windows, a base, middle, and top, and the use of brick or stone
- Text box added to define building mass and modulation to incorporate the 2004 design guidelines

BUILDING MASS & MODULATION

Modulation refers to variations in depth of a building's façade. A set of responsive, regulating proportions will contribute to a coherent building design and promote architectural unity within the District, while proper articulation of a building's façade will add to the richness and variety of the District's architecture – such as cornices, belt lines, and fenestration patterns. Large, monolithic buildings negate the qualities of the Central District, and detract from the physical environment. The appropriate consideration of scale, massing, detail, and three-dimensional quality of individual buildings will contribute to a varied streetscape and satisfying public environment.



Building volumes should be arranged to maintain a compatible scale with their surroundings; in general, break down the massing of larger buildings.



Strong building forms such as towers may be considered to demarcate important gateways and intersections, functioning as a visual anchor.



A hierarchy of vertical and horizontal expression should be used; façade articulation should reflect changes in building form.



The number of materials and colors should be limited; where multiple materials or colors are used on a façade, they should transition at inside corners.

Development and Design Standards – Revisions to Draft Plan

- Added requirements for exterior fixtures
 - Façade lighting frequency every 30 feet or less & located between 8 to 15 feet above sidewalk elevation
 - Screen vents by decorative caps or painted to match the façade & must be centered or consistently aligned with another architectural element, such as score lines, windows, or vertical planes
- Text boxes added & revised

FIXTURES & DRAINAGE

Downspouts, gutters, scuppers, and similar required fixtures should be designed to employ at least one of the following:

- » Use a high-quality, durable material (e.g. copper);
- » Minimize the appearance through placement at inside building corners and painted to match the building; or
- » Locate interior to the building.



Well-designed downspouts using high-quality materials.

Development and Design Standards – Revisions to Draft Plan

- Added new parking design & layout standards
 - Parking Structures
 - Screen open areas using heavy-gauge metal, precast concrete panels, laminated glass, green walls, photovoltaic panels or other material per review authority
 - Vehicular ramps shall not be located within 10 feet of the sidewalk line, except at parking entrances/exits
 - Gates
 - Locate gates a minimum of 20 feet from the property line to allow for a queueing vehicle without blocking the public right-of-way
 - Conceal mechanical equipment associated with gates
 - Exterior building materials shall wrap into parking entrances/exits for a minimum of 20 feet from the building façade

PARKING STRUCTURES & ENTRANCES



Entrances integrated in the architecture of the building reduce the visual impacts of parking.



Garage entrance without screening or façade integration.

Development and Design Standards – Revisions to Draft Plan

- Added new plaza requirement for the northeast corner of Lake Ave & California Blvd
 - Minimum 400 sf plaza at the corner
 - Standards may be modified if the project provides a larger plaza that is accessible to the public and meets the intent of the publicly accessible open space



Map 6.3-1: Publicly Accessible Open Space



Opportunity areas show a range of siting options and are not representative of the scale of open space required; see Sections 6.3.4 and 6.3.5 for minimum dimensions. Exact siting of paseos and plazas subject to the discretion of the Planning Director. Paseos shall satisfy the intent of through-block connectivity.

Implementation Actions – Revisions to the Draft Plan

- Added a new action item (A-4) to require annual update on the status of the actions to guide discussion on future capital improvements and studies
- New column was added to the table to include potential funding sources & relevant Capital Improvement Program information
- Actions were reorganized and slightly reworded

Action	Description	Timeframe	Responsible Agencies
A-4: Annual Report	The Planning Department will present an annual report to the Planning Commission on the implementation actions in Table 71-1 to inform the Capital Improvement Program and the overall progress of the plan.	Ongoing	P&CDD DOT PW

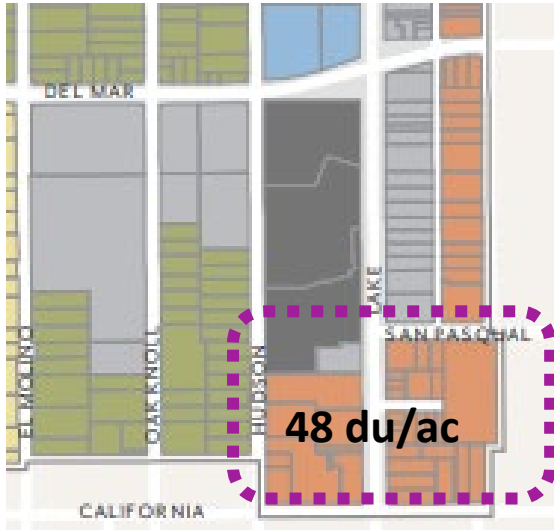
Action	Description	Timeframe	Potential Funding Sources / Relevant CIP Programs	Responsible Agencies
Infrastructure, Mobility, and Sustainability (IMS)				
IMS-1: Master Street Tree Plan	Review street tree palette from the Master Street Tree Plan to consider tree designations that better address Specific Plan and Climate Action Plan objectives for climate resilience, shading, urban cooling, and carbon sequestration and which are complementary to adjacent development and uses.	Near-Term	General Fund Street Tree Replacement Deposit CIP: • Tree Replacement/Planting Citywide FY 2023-2027 (78959) ¹	PWD
IMS-2: Paseo Network	Study the feasibility of implementing the paseo network as described in Map 6.3-1 through City and other public funding, public-private partnerships, or other funding mechanisms, such as grants, that are not reliant solely on redevelopment of adjacent parcels.	Medium-Term	General Fund Community Development Block Grant	P&CDD, PRC&S
IMS-3: Complete Street Program Improvements	Identify opportunities for safety and mobility improvements and enhancements consistent with DOT's Complete Street Program, such as signalized and pedestrian scrambled crosswalks, bulb-outs or curb extensions, bus shelters, bicycle racks, and medians. Projects should incorporate best practices in universal design and sustainable elements like bioswales, and cooling strategies like green infrastructure, cool pavements, shade trees, and other cooling amenities.	Near-Term	Gas Tax Traffic Reduction Fee CIP: • Citywide Complete Streets Program FY 2021-2025 (75114) ² • Pedestrian Crossing Enhancements Program FY 2021-2025 (75112) ³ • Installation of Leading Pedestrian Interval and Audible Signals and Signalized Intersections (75125) ⁴ • Citywide Continental Crosswalk Implementation	PWD, DOT, P&CDD
IMS-4: Freeway Stub Redevelopment	Plan for the redevelopment of the 710 freeway stub and explore ways to connect the area to the CDSP with the creation of walkable streetscapes, new housing and employment opportunities, and expanded open space.	Near-Term	Reconnecting Communities Grant, US Department of Transportation General Fund	P&CDD DOT, PWD, PR&CS, EDD, PWP

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS



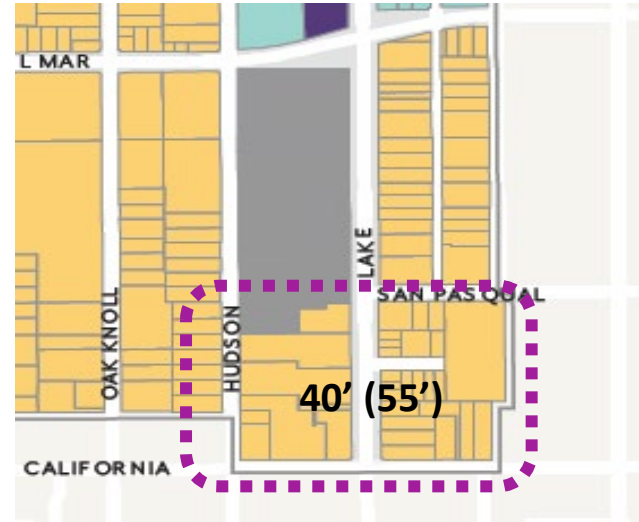
South Lake Ave - Pavilions

Density (Proposed)



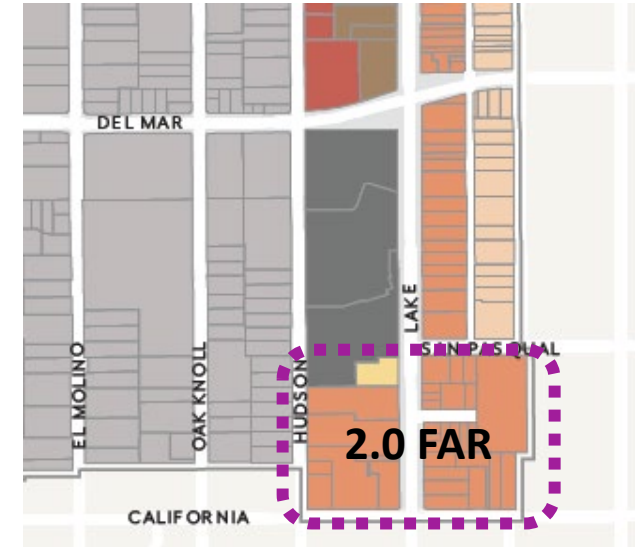
Same, no change

Height (Proposed)

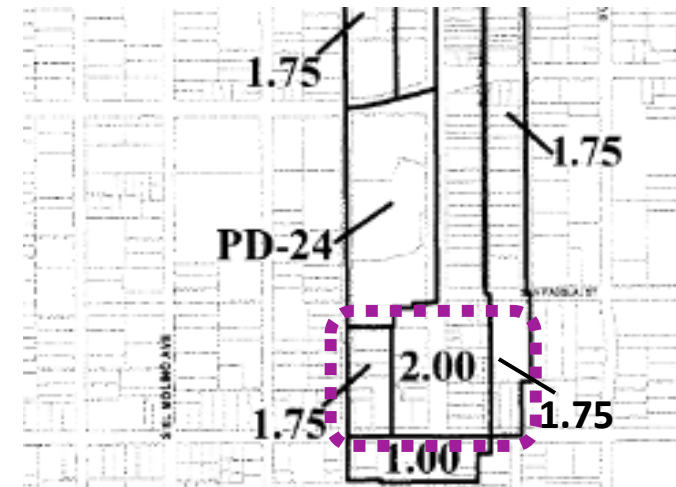


Same, no change
Added height averaging

Floor Area Ratio (Proposed)



Floor Area Ratio (2004)



Green Space Gaps - Needs Analysis (2007)

Green Space, Recreation and Parks Master Plan

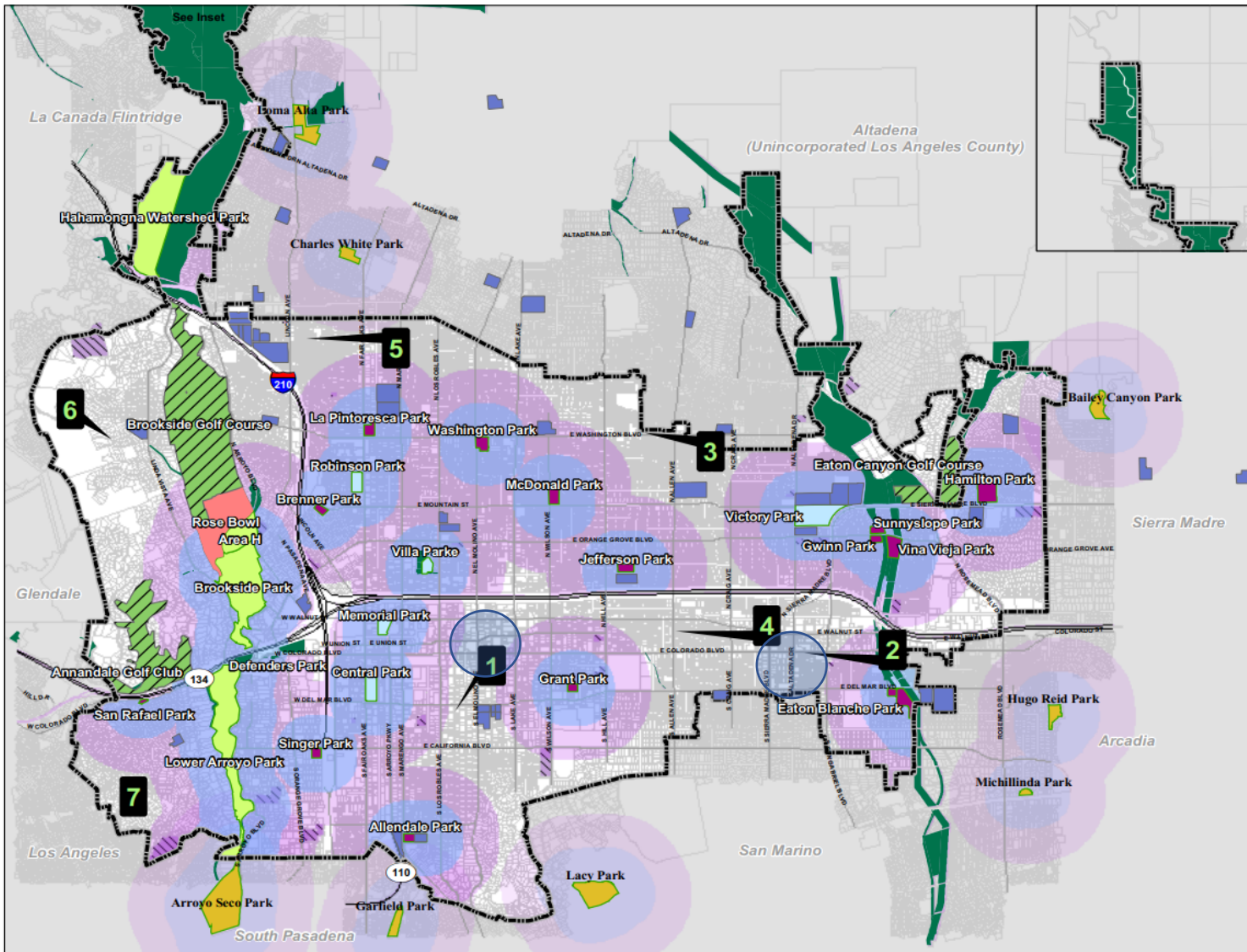


EXHIBIT 4.3-1: GREEN SPACE GAPS

This map depicts both 1/4 mile and 1/2 mile radii or "walkable service areas" around Pasadena's Neighborhood and Community Parks. As described in Section 4.3 (Service Area Analysis), 1/2 mile represents a 10-20 minute walk for many people. 1/4 mile represents an appropriate distance for those residents with limited walking abilities. Barriers to walkability, such as the 210 and 134 freeways, are included in this map as obstacles which most people would not cross in order to access a Neighborhood or Community Park. Other barriers might exist within individual neighborhoods, but they are not included for the purpose of this citywide analysis.

While this map does not attempt to explain all aspects of the City's green space coverage and deficiencies, it does provide a starting point for identifying which portions of the City are in immediate need of access to parkland.

Descriptions of the seven "gap" areas depicted on this map can be found on [page 11](#) in this Section.

Legend

	Golf Course		OS (Open Space)
	Citywide Park		1/2 Mile Buffers
	Community Park		1/4 Mile Buffers
	Neighborhood Park		Public Schools
	Rose Bowl		Private Schools
	Park Outside City		City Boundary

City of Pasadena
INCORPORATED JUNE 18, 1886

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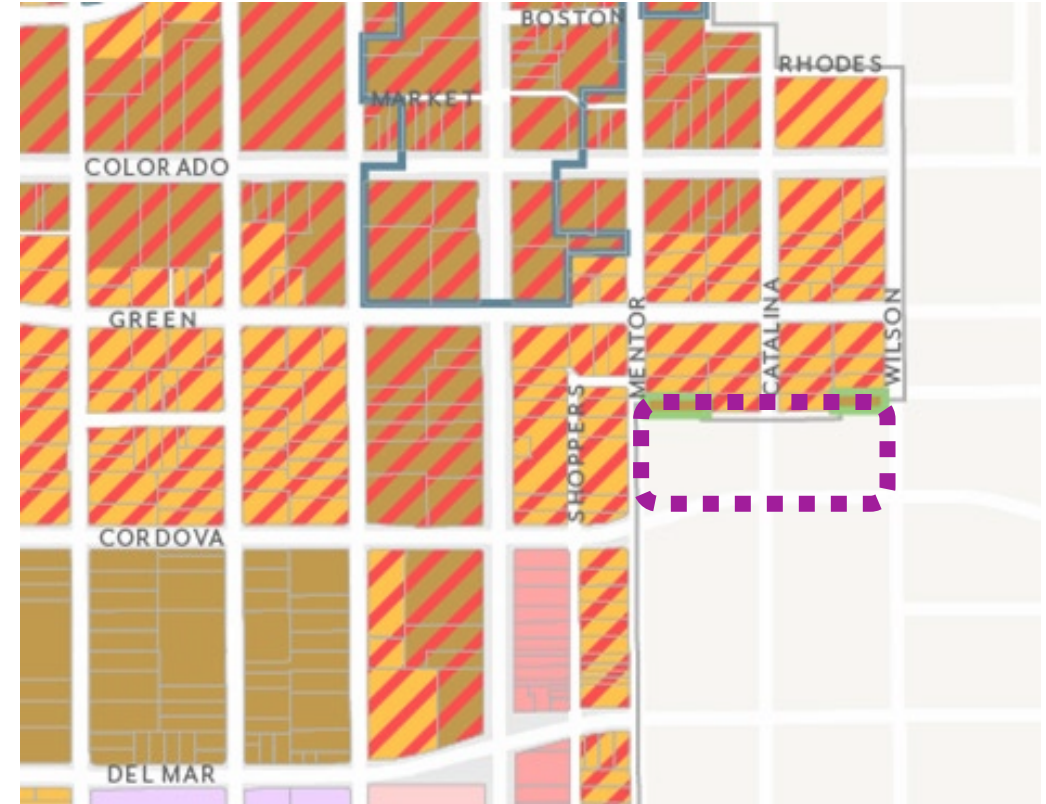
- Gap #1: Los Robles Ave between Green St and California Blvd

Construction Hours

- PMC 9.36.070 limits hours of construction for properties zoned residential or within 500 feet of a residential zoning district
 - Monday through Friday: 7 AM – 7 PM
 - Saturday: 8 AM – 5 PM
- Construction hours do not apply to most of CDSP area as it is not zoned residential, however overall noise restrictions apply
- To amend PMC to apply construction hours to areas that permit residential uses (mixed-use areas) requires an amendment to Title 9 which is outside of the purview of the Planning Commission

North of Cordova – Plan Boundary

- Current density is RM-48 and subject to the City of Gardens standards
- Parcels are not within Central District Specific Plan boundary
- Recommend that this area remain RM-48



STAFF RECOMMENDATION



Staff Recommendation

It is recommended that the Planning Commission:

1. **Recommend** that the City Council consider an Addendum to the 2015 Pasadena General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR), along with the 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; and
2. **Recommend** that the City Council make the Findings for Approval for the General Plan Map Amendment, Specific Plan Amendment, and Zoning Code Map and Text Amendments and approve the proposed Central District Specific Plan. Amendments to the Zoning Code Text also include technical changes in the previously adopted Lincoln Avenue, East Colorado, and South Fair Oaks Specific Plan for internal consistency.

THANK YOU

