



## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** JUNE 22, 2022

**TO:** PLANNING COMMISSION

**FROM:** DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

**SUBJECT:** SECOND STUDY SESSION ON THE CENTRAL DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN UPDATE

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### RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the staff report and provide feedback on the Central District Specific Plan (CDSP) update. There is no action required at this time. Subsequent to this study session, staff anticipates returning to the Planning Commission with the proposed CDSP for review and recommendation to City Council.

### BACKGROUND:

On December 8, 2021, staff presented an update to the Planning Commission on the CDSP. The presentation provided an overview of the plan boundaries, vision, and subarea concepts, as well as potential changes to land use, development, and public realm standards. The discussion focused on refinements to the plan boundary, potential buildout plan capacity, greater flexibility on ground floor commercial uses, shifting of location for housing opportunities within the plan area, refinements to density and height requirements, support for the proposed sidewalk and setback approach, and incorporating additional standards and/or implementation programs that support and enhance the pedestrian experience and provide outdoor spaces. A summary of feedback received is provided in Attachment A.

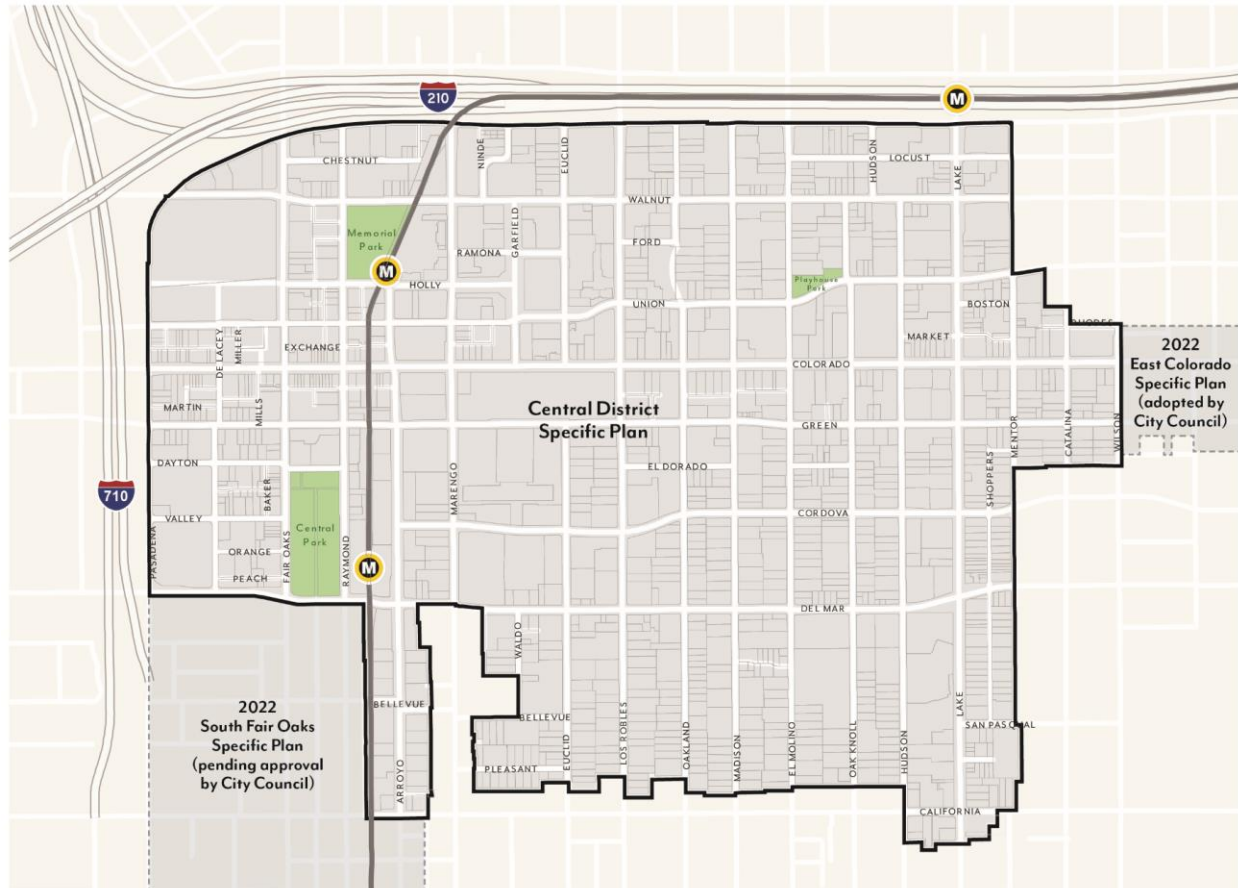
### CENTRAL DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN UPDATE:

#### Draft Plan Boundary

The CDSP generally encompasses the area bound by the I-210 freeway to the north, Pasadena Avenue to the west, California Avenue to the south, and Wilson Avenue to the east (See Figure 1). Bordering the CDSP are the East Colorado Specific Plan

(ECSP) to the east and the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan (SFOSP) to the southwest. The new ECSP was recently adopted in February 2022 and the SFOSP is pending adoption by the City Council.

Figure 1. Draft Plan Boundary



During the December 2021 study session, comments were received regarding changes to the boundary, specifically on whether portions along Arroyo Parkway and Lake Avenue should remain in the plan. It was suggested that the portion of Arroyo Parkway, between Del Mar and California Boulevard, be moved into the SFOSP in order to create a cohesive streetscape along the corridor. For the portion on Lake Avenue, south of California Boulevard, it was suggested that this area be removed from the CDSP in order to maintain the existing low-scale commercial character and the corner plaza at the southwest corner of the intersection.

Staff recommends maintaining the CDSP boundary as presented last year and as originally approved by the City Council. As an alternative to refining the plan boundary, staff recommends that the proposed CDSP incorporate the following changes to address feedback received:

- Include an implementation program that supports the preparation of a cohesive streetscape plan that encompasses the entire stretch of Arroyo Parkway, from Colorado Boulevard to Glenarm Street; and
- Maintain existing residential density, floor area ratio, and height allowances for Lake Avenue, south of California Boulevard, and require future development to incorporate a corner plaza at the southwest corner. If this area is removed from the CDSP, projects would not be subject to the new development and design standards proposed, such as minimum sidewalk widths, maximum unbroken façade standards, ground floor design requirements, and open space requirements, all of which are intended to promote greater pedestrian comfort and walkability.

### New Draft Plan Chapters – Introduction, Background, and Vision, Goals and Policies

Since the December 2021 study session, staff has prepared three new chapters for the CDSP. The new chapters are: (1) Introduction, (2) Background, and (3) Vision, Goals and Policies. The first two chapters provide background information on the CDSP area. The third chapter includes the plan vision, goals, and policies for the area, which build on the vision and subarea concepts presented last year and establish the desired outcomes of the plan and provide general direction for achieving these outcomes. The new draft chapters are provided in Attachment B.

### Housing Crisis Act of 2019 – Reducing the Intensity of Zoning or General Plan Designation (Gov. Code, § 66300)

The HCA limits the ability of a local agency to reduce the intensity of the land use designation of a parcel or parcels without concurrently increasing residential densities elsewhere. (Gov. Code, § 66300, subds. (b)(1)(A) and (i)(1).) This provision is intended to ensure that no overall net loss of development capacity will occur during the housing crisis. Specifically, the law prohibits:

Changing the general plan land use designation, specific plan land use designation, or zoning of a parcel or parcels of property to a less intensive use or reducing the intensity of land use within an existing general plan land use designation, specific plan land use designation, or zoning district in effect at the time of the proposed change, below what was allowed under the land use designation or zoning ordinances of the affected county or affected city, as applicable, as in effect on January 1, 2018, except as otherwise provided in clause (ii) of subparagraph (B) or subdivision (i).

This section does not prohibit an affected county or an affected city, including the local electorate acting through the initiative process, from changing a land use designation or zoning ordinance to a less intensive use, or reducing the intensity of land use, **if the city or county concurrently changes the development**

***standards, policies, and conditions applicable to other parcels within the jurisdiction to ensure that there is no net loss in residential capacity.***

The HCA requirements above are applicable to staff's proposed recommendations as it relates to the Lake Avenue Corridor where there is a proposed reduction in density along South Lake area and a proposed increase in density along Lake north of Green St, as described below.

Revised Draft Plan Chapters – Land Use, Development, and Public Realm Standards

Based on the input received at the December 2021 meeting, staff is proposing the following changes to the regulations and standards that were previously presented and are provided in Attachment C:

- North Lake Avenue – Allow residential uses up to 87 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) on Lake Avenue, north of Green Street, to support new housing opportunities; currently, the 2004 CDSP does not allow residential uses along this portion of Lake Avenue. Allowing residential uses would require an amendment to the General Plan Land Use Element.
- Mid-Lake – Increase residential density from 48 du/ac to 64 du/ac on Green Street between Mentor and Wilson Avenue to align with recently adopted density in the ECSP (previous recommendation was to increase density to 87 du/ac)
- South Lake Avenue –
  - Allow commercial-only uses and consider expanding allowable uses that support pedestrian activity
    - East side of Lake Avenue between Cordova and San Pasqual Street – decrease residential density from 48 du/ac to 0 du/ac
    - West side of Lake Avenue, south of San Pasqual Street – decrease residential density from 48 du/ac to 0 du/ac Street
  - Maintain portions of existing mixed-use corridors with residential densities and limitations on ground floor residential uses as currently permitted by the 2004 CDSP:
    - Lake Avenue between San Pasqual Street and California Boulevard – retain existing density at 48 du/ac with ground floor residential uses prohibited (previous recommendation was to increase density to 64 du/ac)

- West side of Mentor Avenue between Cordova and San Pasqual Street – retain existing density at 48 du/ac with residential uses permitted on all floors (no change from previous recommendation)
- Lake Avenue, south of California Boulevard – retain existing density at 16 du/ac with residential uses permitted on all floors (no change from previous recommendation)

To help guide the discussion on what are appropriate pedestrian-oriented commercial uses for South Lake Avenue, a comparison of permitted and proposed allowable land uses is provided in Attachment D.

**CONCLUSION:**

This report focuses on providing an update on the CDSP for the Planning Commission and members of the public to use as a reference for the study session. Feedback received will inform the preparation of the proposed CDSP that will go to the Planning Commission for its review and recommendation to the City Council this year.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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**Attachments:**

- Attachment A – Updated Public Outreach Process and Feedback Received
- Attachment B – New Draft Chapters 1, 2, and 3
- Attachment C – Revised Draft Chapters 4, 5, and 6
- Attachment D – Land Use Comparison Table for South Lake Avenue

Attachments are available at the following link: <https://www.ourpasadena.org/CDSP-PC-SS-062222>

**ATTACHMENT A**

Updated Public Outreach Process and Feedback Received

**Can be viewed at: <https://www.ourpasadena.org/CDSP-PC-SS-062222>**

**ATTACHMENT B**  
New Draft Chapters 1, 2, and 3

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**ATTACHMENT C**  
Revised Draft Chapters 4, 5, and 6

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**ATTACHMENT D**

Land Use Comparison Table for South Lake Avenue

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