

STAFF REPORT
City of Lancaster, California

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MVB

Date: September 9, 2008

To: Mayor Parris and City Council Members

From: Brian S. Ludicke, Planning Director

Subject: **Adoption of Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan, 140 Acres Generally Bounded by Kettering Street, the Union Pacific Railroad, Newgrove Street (east of Date Avenue), Milling Street (west of Date Avenue), and 10th Street West (with westerly extension at the intersection of 10th Street West and Lancaster Boulevard).**

Recommendation:

- A. Adopt Resolution No. 08-80, a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Lancaster, California, certifying Environmental Impact Report No. 07-02, making required environmental findings, including a Statement of Overriding Considerations, in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, and approving General Plan Amendment No. 08-01 to re-designate the 140-acre area to SP (Specific Plan.)

- B. Introduce Ordinance No. 906, an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Lancaster, California, amending the zoning plan for the City of Lancaster by approving the Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan (SP 08-01.)

Background:

The City of Lancaster initiated the preparation of a specific plan for the downtown area in 2005. A key component of the planning effort for downtown was the high level of public outreach that the City conducted to ensure that the final plan embodies the goals and desires of the community. This outreach effort, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of the Specific Plan, included a three-day “downtown immersion” process in May 2006, in which approximately 150 members of the community participated, including property and business owners, community leaders, and members of the general public. The “vision” created from this input was refined through subsequent community meetings and discussions between RBF Consulting and City staff, and was used as the basis for preparation of the specific plan.

The key section of the proposed specific plan is Chapter 5, which contains the regulating code for the downtown area. As described in detail in the attached Planning Commission staff report, the regulating code is a “form-based” code, in which greater emphasis is placed on the location, mass, and form of the buildings rather than specific use of the buildings. Use restrictions do exist in the plan where considered necessary (for example, alcohol sales will require a conditional use permit); however, the intent of the regulating code is to allow and encourage mixed use development in the downtown area.

The Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan is considered a next step in the long-term commitment of the community to the downtown area. The intent of the plan is to establish a regulatory framework that ensures development will, over time, contribute positively to the creation of the community's vision for the downtown. The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed specific plan and associated environmental impact report on August 18, 2008, and voted to recommend to the Council certification of the EIR and approval of the general plan amendment and specific plan, with several modifications related to the administration of the plan and allowable building types.

BSL/jr

Attachments:

Resolution No. 08-80

Findings (Exhibit "A" of Resolution No. 08-80 on file in the City Clerk Department)

Ordinance No. 906

Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan (08-01) (Exhibit "A" of Ordinance No. 906 on file in the City Clerk Department)

Final Environmental Impact Report – on file in the City Clerk Department

Staff Recommended Modifications

PC Staff Report dated August 28, 2008

RESOLUTION NO. 08-80

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA CERTIFYING THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR NO. 07-02), ADOPTING OF ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS, ADOPTING A STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS, AND APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE ADOPTED GENERAL PLAN OF THE CITY, KNOWN AS GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 08-01

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 3.A of City Council Resolution No. 93-07 an amendment to the adopted General Plan of the City has been initiated by the Lancaster City Council in 2005 to redesignate 140± acres as shown in the Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan document to SP (Specific Plan), and

WHEREAS, notice of intention to consider the General Plan amendment was given as required in Sections 65854 and 65905 of the Government Code of the State of California; and

WHEREAS, staff has performed necessary investigations, prepared a written report, and recommended that the General Plan amendment be approved; and

WHEREAS, public notice was provided as required by law and a public hearing was held by the Planning Commission on August 18, 2008, at which meeting the Planning Commission voted to recommend to the City Council approval of General Plan Amendment No. 08-01; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds and certifies, pursuant to Section 15090(a)(1) of the State CEQA Guidelines, that the final environmental impact report prepared for this proposed project has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as described in Section 3 of **Exhibit "A"** of this resolution, which is on file in the City Clerk Department; and

WHEREAS, the City Council hereby finds and certifies, pursuant to Section 15090(a)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines that the final EIR was presented to the Council, and that the Council reviewed and considered the information contained in the final EIR prior to making a decision on the project; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 15090(a)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the City Council certifies that the final environmental impact report reflects the City's independent judgment and analysis; and

WHEREAS, the City Council, based on the evidence in the entire record, hereby adopts the following findings in support of approval of General Plan Amendment No. 08-01:

1. There is a need for the proposed land use designation of SP in order to allow for a specific plan to be approved for the downtown Lancaster area that will allow for long-term development of a mixed use district in an aesthetically pleasing manner.

2. The proposed designation will be compatible with other land use designations in the area, including nearby commercial, industrial, and residential designations, because the SP designation will allow for adoption of a specific plan that provides for proper building and design transitions between these adjoining areas and the downtown area.
3. The proposed amendment is consistent with and implements Goals 16 and 19 of the adopted General Plan, because it will promote the economic viability of the downtown area, and thereby the City as a whole, and will allow for the establishment of a mix and variety of land uses with an aesthetically pleasing physical environment.
4. The proposed amendment is consistent with the following objectives and policies of the General Plan:

Objective 16.5: “Maintain downtown Lancaster as a cultural, financial, and governmental center.”

Policy 16.5.2: “Encourage the development of cultural facilities and related businesses in the downtown area.”

Policy 16.5.3: “Support Redevelopment efforts to encourage appropriate office and commercial development in downtown Lancaster in order to accommodate finance-related businesses.”

Policy 16.5.3: “Promote the development of a transit village development district around the Metrolink Commuter Rail Station order to further strengthen the role of downtown Lancaster as the cultural, financial, and government center of the City.”

Objective 19.1: “Ensure that all development within the City of Lancaster yields a pleasant living, working, or shopping environment, and attracts the interest of residents, shoppers, and visitors as the result of consistent exemplary site, architectural, and landscape design.”

Policy 19.1.1: “Promote high-quality projects and facilitate innovation in building design, land use mixes and site planning, and by encouraging mixed-use developments that contain, when appropriate, pedestrian scale and uses that encourage a sense of place.”

Policy 19.2.5: “Promote the creation of a transit village development district around the Metrolink commuter rail station to provide opportunities for transit-oriented development, including housing, shopping, public services, and employment opportunities with a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment.

5. The proposed amendment would encourage the provision of a range of housing styles and types, because it allows for the adoption of a specific plan that encourages mixed use development and allows housing as a by-right use with the various districts that comprise the downtown area.

6. As noted within the final EIR, there may not be sufficient water available to serve all development contained within the expected 2030 build-out scenario. However, the intent of the proposed general plan amendment is to allow for the adoption of a specific plan that would guide the long-term development of the downtown area with respect to physical design, and the general plan amendment and specific plan itself do not make such development mandatory or constitute a development project but are instead regulatory in nature. All individual development proposals would be required to obtain water service from the appropriate water purveyor, currently Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 40, or any subsequent purveyor, prior to construction. The benefits of the regulatory framework provided by the specific plan outweigh the potential lack of water to allow development, as noted within Section 7 of **Exhibit "A"**, which is on file in the City Clerk Department.
7. The proposed amendment would not adversely affect the economic health of the City, because the proposed specific plan would allow for the generation of additional economic activity within the downtown area.
8. The proposed site could be adequately served by necessary services and utilities, based on information contained in the final environmental impact report prepared for the Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan (EIR 07-02), provided that appropriate upgrades in size and capacity of existing facilities are made over the life of the specific plan as development occurs in the downtown area.
9. The proposed amendment may have an adverse effect on traffic and circulation systems as noted in the final EIR and discussed in **Exhibit "A"**, which is on file in the City Clerk Department. Mitigation measures exist to reduce this impact in certain cases to less than significant; however, significant effects would still occur; these significant effects are considered acceptable due to overriding considerations as noted in Section 7 of **Exhibit "A"**, which is on file in the City Clerk Department.
10. The proposed amendment is in the public interest, because it would allow for the adoption of a specific plan that will provide a framework for the development of the downtown area into a vibrant mixed use district in accordance with community goals as expressed in the public outreach effort conducted for the preparation of the Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The City Council certifies the final environmental impact report as stated in this Resolution and in **Exhibit "A"** which is on file in the City Clerk Department.
2. The City Council hereby adopts of all environmental findings and the Statement of Overriding Considerations as contained in **Exhibit "A"** of this Resolution, which is on file in the City Clerk Department.
3. The City Council hereby approves General Plan Amendment No. 08-01 to redesignate the subject property to SP (Specific Plan), with the Transit Village District boundary remaining as currently designated on the adopted General Plan.

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2008, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

GERI K. BRYAN, CMC
City Clerk
City of Lancaster

R. REX PARRIS
Mayor
City of Lancaster

STATE OF CALIFORNIA }
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES }ss
CITY OF LANCASTER }

CERTIFICATION OF RESOLUTION
CITY COUNCIL

I, _____, _____ City of Lancaster, California, do hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution No. 08-80, for which the original is on file in my office.

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE SEAL OF THE CITY OF LANCASTER, on this _____ day of _____, _____.

(seal)

ORDINANCE NO. 906

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING
THE DOWNTOWN LANCASTER SPECIFIC PLAN (SP
08-01)

WHEREAS, the City of Lancaster is considering the adoption of a specific plan as contained in **Exhibit “A” of this Ordinance**, which is on file in the City Clerk Department, pursuant to Section 65450 et. seq. of the Government Code of the State of California; and

WHEREAS, notice of intention to consider the specific plan for the subject property was given as required in Section 65867 of the Government Code of the State of California; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held before the Lancaster Planning Commission on August 18, 2008, at which time the Planning Commission recommended approval of the specific plan with modifications; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held before the City Council on September 9, 2008, regarding the proposed specific plan; and

WHEREAS, the City Council hereby finds that the proposed specific plan may have effects on the environment, and incorporates by reference all environmental findings as included in **Exhibit “A” of Resolution No. 08-80**; and

WHEREAS the City Council hereby makes the following findings in support of Specific Plan No. 08-01:

1. The proposed Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan (SP 08-01) is consistent with the General Plan land use designation of SP for the subject property, and with identified goals, objectives, and policies of the adopted General Plan as identified within City Council Resolution No. 08-80.
2. Modified conditions, including the opportunity to allow for development of the downtown area as a mixed use district containing retail, dining, office space, residential, and public uses in accordance with community goals as expressed in the public outreach effort for preparation of the Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan, warrant a revision in the zoning plan as it pertains to the area under consideration.
3. A need for the Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan exists to establish the necessary development standards and guidelines for the development of a mixed use area within downtown Lancaster.
4. The particular property under consideration is a proper location for adoption of this specific plan, because it will allow for development that is compatible with and will enhance the City’s historic center.

5. Adoption of the Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan at such a location will be in the interest of public health, safety, and general welfare and in conformity with good zoning practices, because it allows for development in a way that is sensitive to and consistent with the community's long-term goals for the downtown area; now, therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA, DOES HEREBY ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City Council hereby adopts by reference all environmental findings contained in **Exhibit "A" of Resolution No. 08-80**, which is on file in the City Clerk Department.

Section 2. The City Council hereby approves the Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan (SP 08-01) as contained in **Exhibit "A" of this Ordinance**, which is on file in the City Clerk Department, incorporating all modifications as described on the cover sheet of **Exhibit "A" of Resolution No. 08-80**, which is on file in the City Clerk Department.

Section 3. That the City Clerk shall certify to the passage of this Ordinance and will see that it is published and posted in the manner required by law.

I, Geri K. Bryan, CMC, City Clerk of the City of Lancaster, do hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was regularly introduced and placed upon its first reading on the ____ day of _____, 2008, and placed upon its second reading and adoption at a regular meeting of the City Council on the ____ day of _____, 2008, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

GERI K. BRYAN, CMC
City Clerk
City of Lancaster

R. REX PARRIS
Mayor
City of Lancaster

STATE OF CALIFORNIA }
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES } ss
CITY OF LANCASTER }

CERTIFICATION OF ORDINANCE
CITY COUNCIL

I, _____, _____ City of Lancaster, California, do hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of the original Ordinance No. 906, for which the original is on file in my office.

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE SEAL OF THE CITY OF LANCASTER, on this _____ day of _____, _____.

(seal)
