

# Culver CITY

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## MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** March 29, 2007

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council and Honorable Chair and Members of the Planning Commission

**FROM:** Thomas Gorham, Deputy Community Development Director/Planning Manager; and Susan Yun, Senior Planner

**SUBJECT:** Joint City Council and Planning Commission Presentation Meeting on the Washington/National Draft Specific Plan (Wednesday, April 4, 2007)

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### **INTRODUCTION**

On Wednesday, April 4, 2007, staff will be presenting to the City Council and the Planning Commission an update on the Washington/National Specific Plan as well as an overview of the conceptual plans of the three proposed "Catalytic" development projects located in the Specific Plan area. The format of this meeting is informational in nature and no action or deliberation is being requested at this time. Staff's presentation will include a brief discussion and overview of the following:

- Background
- Specific Plan Provisions
- Draft EIR
- Other Actions required to implement Specific Plan
- Infrastructure
- Vehicle Trip Budget and Traffic Model
- Financing Options
- Catalytic Projects
- Conclusion

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Project Location**

The Specific Plan area is bounded generally by Robertson Boulevard / Higuera Street on the west, Lindblade Street and Landmark Street on the south, and Helms Avenue on the east. Venice Boulevard borders the Specific Plan area on the north, though Culver City's Specific Plan boundary ends at the City of Los Angeles border. The boundary also includes National Boulevard and Metro rights of ways to Ballona Creek (See Attachment 1).

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The Specific Plan area itself comprises approximately 36.27 acres in Culver City. In addition, there are approximately 4.34 acres within the City of Los Angeles that has common ownership with parcels in the Specific Plan area or is anticipated to be developed in conjunction with the Specific Plan development projects.

### **Community Input and Planning Principles**

Work on the Washington/National Specific Plan commenced in early 2006 with review and analysis of the history, the existing conditions, and the current development trends and forces in the area. The main factor in developing a specific plan for the area is to establish a coordinated planning effort that encourages and facilitates transit oriented development opportunities surrounding the Washington/National area to coincide with the planned arrival of Metro's Exposition Light Rail Transit Line and Station Phase I Project (EXPO LRT) to Culver City in or around 2010.

City staff and the consultant team prepared documentation of these conditions, met with prospective developers, and conducted three public workshops in the area that focused on neighborhood character, building massing, residential densities, desirable land uses, and community benefits. Subsequent to the public workshops, City staff and the consultant team summarized the opinions expressed through these workshops and meetings, and interpreted them in the context of good planning principles for incorporation into the Specific Plan using supporting policies and provisions.

Based on this community input, the Specific Plan has established the following Planning Principles:

- **Planning Principle 1**

Ensure orderly and coordinated growth in the Washington/National area in response to development demands by coordinating future projects, known and unknown, and balancing new development with the provision of community benefits and seek to:

- Provide incentives for developments to include wider sidewalks and usable open space.
- Buffer existing residential neighborhoods from negative impacts of new development.
- Select locations for taller, denser development in exchange for public benefits.
- Coordinate future projects, known and unknown, to ensure orderly development in the Specific Plan area.

- **Planning Principle 2**

Maintain the high quality of existing nearby residential neighborhoods and both to avail them of Washington/National's new resources and to protect them from impacts of new development and seek to;

- Re-direct vehicular circulation to discourage traffic and non-local parking in residential neighborhoods.

- Locate parking in ways that minimize neighborhood intrusion.
- Seek calming of through traffic on major boulevards.
- Buffer residential neighborhoods from negative impacts of height, bulk and traffic from new development.

- **Planning Principle 3**

Knit the Washington/National area fully into its context and to establish it as a vital mixed use/commercial neighborhood, connecting and integrating it with Downtown Culver City, the Hayden Tract, the Helms District and the East Washington area and seek to;

- Capture the distinct character of the district.
- Clarify the spatial organization of the district.
- Create a place that is at once a node, a connector, and a gateway.
- Synthesize multiple areas or jurisdictions into one "place."
- Clarify the street pattern

- **Planning Principle 4**

Reinforce the Washington/National area's identity through the character of its unique structures, uses and streets and seek to;

- Determine clear and distinctive roles for the Specific Plan area's "Boulevards" and for its "Back Streets."
- Ensure the connection of the Helms District and Downtown through improvements to the Specific Plan area portion of Washington Boulevard.

- **Planning Principle 5**

Ensure the economic vitality of the area by developing a framework in which businesses can flourish, to provide a community focus for local and area residents and to reinforce the pedestrian-oriented qualities of the district and seek to;

- Encourage locally-owned businesses and creative industries.
- Create a pleasant pedestrian network.
- Re-establish a pedestrian-oriented street wall on the major boulevards.

- **Planning Principle 6**

Provide a forum for public activities, public open space, and landscape relief from the intensity of new development and seek to:

- Introduce an open space network to support the existing neighborhoods and to knit them together with the new development and multi-modal paths.
- Introduce usable public space in concert with new development land use plans.
- Enhance streetscape quality by introducing or increasing the amount of street tree planting for visual enhancement and environmental comfort.

- **Planning Principle 7**

Help achieve a sustainable community which meets the needs of the present while preserving natural ecosystems in the very long term and seek to.

- Incorporate sustainability principles in its planning provisions.
- Encourage the use of the LEED™ sustainability standards in individual projects.

## **SPECIFIC PLAN PROVISIONS**

The Specific Plan establishes land use and development standards that will govern development within the Washington/National Area. It sets forth a framework that will guide development in the area as it expands based upon economic, environmental, and social needs of Culver City residents, businesses and visitors. The Specific Plan is a planning tool that explains and illustrates the development form that may be expected in the future.

### **Tiered Development**

The Washington/National Specific Plan is structured in two tiers of development for purposes of planning and environmental analysis. The first tier (Tier 1) is linked to the development of the three “catalytic” projects proposed within the Specific Plan area. These developments are known as the “Triangle Site (Revelment Agency and Urban Partners)”, “Prior Car-Dealership Site (Brentwood/Fairfield)” and “Spartan Supply Site (Edward Czuker)”. Detailed descriptions of the three catalytic projects are discussed further below. They are referred to as “catalytic projects” because they are anticipated to act as catalysts to spur the improvement of the Washington/National Specific Plan area.

The Specific Plan horizon is 2020. Development of the Catalytic Projects is anticipated to begin by mid 2008 with completion by approximately 2012. The Tier 1 also anticipates the completion and operation of the Exposition Light Rail Transit project near Washington and National Boulevards in 2010.

The second tier (Tier 2) of development consists of the remaining potential development in the Specific Plan area. The Tier 2 development anticipates ultimate build-out of the Specific Plan area by 2020.

### **Land Use Provisions and Development Standards**

The Specific Plan’s land use policies define a mixed-use neighborhood with residential, retail, and office/studio space for creative industries/artisan uses. The Specific Plan is broken in to four (4) zones (See Attachment 2) as follows:

#### **Zone 1**

This zone is nearest to the transit station and represents the core of the mixed-use neighborhood. It can support the strongest mix of uses at higher densities, with an

emphasis on residential but including office, retail, restaurants, hotels, and civic uses as well, including a transit plaza. Residential densities in this zone are permitted up to 65 dwelling units per acre. The height limit for this zone is 56 feet. There is a provision for a height bonus in the zone that would allow structures to be built up to 80 feet provided certain qualifying conditions are met. In addition, one building of up to 130 feet in height is permitted provided certain qualifying conditions are met.

#### Zone 2

This zone lies along the southerly edge of Washington Boulevard and forms its southerly street wall and includes properties on Wesley Street south of Washington Boulevard. This area is planned to contribute significantly to the pedestrian orientation of the boulevard and will include ground floor retail, local and artisan businesses, and upper level residential. Residential densities in this zone are permitted up to 65 dwelling units per acre. The height limit for this zone is 56 feet.

#### Zone 3

This zone comprises the Landmark Industrial Tract excluding the parcels fronting Washington Boulevard and is planned to serve as a transitional buffer between the intensity of Washington and National Boulevards and the existing neighborhoods to the south. Artisan and creative industry uses and live-work residential, permitted at densities up to 35 du/acre, will be allowed. The height limit for this zone is 43 feet.

#### Zone 4

This zone comprises the properties fronting the south side of Lindblade Street and those parcels fronting the north side of Lindblade which do not also front on Washington Boulevard; the properties on the east side of Wesley Street south of National Boulevard; and the properties on the west side of Helms Avenue south of National Boulevard. Zone 4 is planned to support the retention of older industrial buildings and commercial artisan uses; residential uses are not permitted in this zone. The height limit for this zone is 43 feet.

#### Transit Overlay Zone

A Transit overlay ("T") will apply to all parcels within the Light Rail right-of-way. Permitted uses include those within the underlying Specific Plan zone. In addition, the following special conditions apply to development under elevated rail:

- Where vertical clearance allows, retail, vending kiosks, restaurants, and community service uses are encouraged
- Surface parking will be prohibited under elevated rail.
- Where no uses exist under elevated rail, the land will be improved to serve as publicly-accessible landscaped open space where clearance allows, and where clearance does not allow such a use, visible landscape improvements are required.

#### Boulevard Ground Floor Commercial Overlay Zone

A Boulevard Ground Floor Commercial overlay ("B") applies to parcel frontages on Washington, National, and Robertson Boulevards. Ground floor commercial uses are required on the street frontage, with transparent storefronts and public entrances.

Residential uses other than live/work units are prohibited. Residential entrances and lobbies are permitted.

#### Back Street Overlay

A Back Street overlay ("S") applies to parcel frontages on Lindblade, Landmark, Wesley Streets and Helms Avenue. Ground floor non-residential uses are required along the street frontage, with fenestration and visible public entrances.

#### Permitted Uses

A wide variety of land use will be permitted in the Specific Plan area. These include: uses that are consistent with transit oriented development including a mix of housing, office employment and other higher intensity uses; artisan and creative industry uses that are consistent with the current artisan and light industrial characteristics of the area including artisan galleries and studios, small scale product manufacturing, broadcast studios, media production, and creative offices; and retail, service and recreation uses that serve the residents and workers in the area including a grocery store, general retail stores, bookstores, commercial retail, restaurant, day care centers, banks, personal services, hotel, theaters and other neighborhood serving uses.

#### Height Limits

As described above building height will be limited to 56 feet in Zones 1 and 2 and 43 feet in Zones 3 and 4. Further height restrictions apply on properties that adjoin or abut existing residential uses. Structure heights shall not exceed 30 ft. within a distance of 25 ft. from the common property line.

A height bonus of up to 80 feet will be allowed for structures in Zone 1 in return for provisions of additional open space. Buildings qualifying for a height bonus shall be set back from any street frontage a minimum of 50 ft. In addition, one (1) building up to 130 feet in height will be allowed in Zone 1 provided again in return for provisions of additional open space.

#### Street Wall

To maintain a clear and definite street edge, structures fronting Washington and National Boulevards shall be held to the property line (or pedestrian easement as required) consistent with the following formulas.

- The ground floor level shall be built to the property line or sidewalk dedication for a minimum of 90% of its length, measured along the blockfront except for open space.
- The middle floor levels (above 15 ft.) shall be built to at most 2 ft. from the property line or sidewalk dedication for a minimum of 70% of its length up to a height of 46 ft. (43 ft. plus a parapet).
- The upper level (above 43 ft.) shall be stepped back a minimum of 6 ft. from the property line or sidewalk dedication, to a maximum height of 56 ft.

In order to provide pedestrian character to the street the Specific Plan will require the following provisions:

- At least 60% of the ground level frontage on all boulevards, and 30% on back streets shall be transparent.
- For frontages requiring ground floor commercial uses, there shall be usable doors to businesses not less than 50 linear feet apart.
- On Boulevards, street walls shall have a clearly denoted consistent cornice datum line at 46 ft. in height (43 ft. plus parapet).
- No portion of a structure's street frontage above the ground floor on any street within the Specific Plan area shall exceed 75 ft. in length without a break at least 10 ft. in width and a minimum 2 ft. in depth.
- Shading devices (canopies) are encouraged and allowed to encroach beyond the property line or sidewalk dedication by a maximum of 5 ft., and built to a height not less than 8 ft. above the sidewalk.

#### Parking

Parking requirements for specific uses in the Specific Plan will be the same as those required in the City Zoning Code except as follows:

- Reduced parking for individual projects may be permitted with the submittal and approval of a parking demand analysis that illustrates project mode sharing of parking, captive trips associated with mixed-use development, and peaking characteristics.
- Parking in excess of the minimum required may be permitted for public use if that parking is fully accessible to the public and associated with a shared parking plan for a use located within 1,500 feet of the parking facility.
- For buildings undergoing adaptive reuse, no additional parking requirements will be imposed over what the building currently provides on the condition that the building's owner will enter into a shared parking agreement with another property.
- Parking for transit users shall be provided within 1,500 ft. walking distance of the transit station, whether provided by private owners or by a transit agency, and may be used in contractual arrangements for shared parking with other uses.
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#### Open Space

Open space improvements in both public and private sites are intended to establish active, programmed public space throughout the district. Private provision of public open space is a priority for the Specific Plan area, and is one of the qualifying conditions that may be applied to height bonuses. Three categories of open space are defined: Transit Plaza, Public Plaza/Court, and the Neighborhood Open Space as described below:

- A transit plaza shall be located adjacent to the light rail station and be configured in a way that it serves and improves pedestrian circulation between the transit station and other modes of transportation, including parking, bus, shuttle, bicycle, as well as connecting the light rail transit station to the public sidewalk at

- Washington and Venice Boulevards. The space must be connected to through-block pedestrian easements.
- In order to create sufficient public space within the large block configurations of the Specific Plan area, two public plazas or courts shall be provided within Zone 1. The nature of these public spaces is circulation, informal gathering and social interaction in an urban context.
  - The neighborhood open spaces are small outdoor community parks intended to foster social interaction in the Specific Plan area and its surrounding communities, as well as to create opportunities for recreation and play. One neighborhood open space should be provided within Zone 2, 3, and 4.

#### Circulation

Improvements to the circulation and transportation in the Specific Plan area depend on the interworkings of vehicular, pedestrian, and transit circulation and access. The industrial origins of the area have precluded its configuration to rail and vehicular circulation, but neglected pedestrian access. Therefore, a large section of this Specific Plan has been devoted to sidewalk improvements and the creation of pedestrian easements, ultimately creating a web of pedestrian connections that serve to reduce local traffic loads and create a friendly human-scaled place that is accessible to Downtown and the Helms District.

The Specific Plan locates the anticipated Exposition Light Rail Transit Station, a key transit facility, elevated between Washington and Venice Boulevards. Additionally, plans for the future reconfiguration of the Interstate 10 Freeway interchange will alter the nature of vehicular circulation through the Specific Plan area, potentially diverting freeway traffic away from the area and facilitating traffic flow within the Specific Plan area.

#### Development Review Process

The three catalytic projects will be reviewed and approved in concept as part of the Specific Plan and EIR public hearing process before both the Planning Commission and City Council. After adoption of the Specific Plan and certification of the EIR, the catalytic project applicants could submit their projects for final administrative conformance review. During that conformance review staff will ensure that the projects meet all of the applicable provisions of the Specific Plan and provide any of the required mitigation measures contained in the EIR. Staff will impose standard conditions of approval and any special conditions as deemed necessary.

Each new project other than the catalytic projects within the Specific Plan would be subject to an administrative conformance review, including the review of applications, site plan, architecture and design review, landscaping and grading plans. The Deputy Community Development Director/Planning Manager would be the designated review authority on each administrative conformance review application, and would determine its conformance with the provisions of this Specific Plan and impose the necessary conditions of approval. The Deputy Community Development Director/Planning Manager would refer applications to the Planning Commission for final decision under the following circumstances:

- The proposed development project does not conform to the terms of the Specific Plan or seeks modifications to the provisions of the Plan.
- The proposed development requests a height bonus, parking reduction or density bonus based on meeting criteria defined in the Specific Plan.
- The proposed development requires additional environmental analysis beyond that analyzed in the Specific Plan EIR
- The Deputy Community Development Director/Planning Manager determines that the proposed project has unusual circumstances or special conditions related to the provisions of the Specific Plan.

All administrative actions related to the Specific Plan would be subject to public notice and a comment period would be provided. Administrative decisions may be appealed to the Planning Commission.

### **DRAFT EIR**

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Washington/National Specific Plan is being prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and its Guidelines, and will be considered for certification during the Specific Plan adoption process. The EIR evaluates the potential environmental effects that could result from the proposed development and operation of the Washington National Area Specific Plan.

The Washington National Area Specific Plan EIR is both a Program EIR that programmatically addresses the anticipated impacts of implementing the Specific Plan and a Project EIR that addresses the impacts of three catalytic projects currently proposed.

It is anticipated that as additional new projects are proposed within the Specific Plan area they will be reviewed (including review of traffic impacts, potentially through a new traffic study) to determine their consistency with the assumptions and analyses contained in this EIR. If it is determined through this review that no additional potentially significant impacts could arise from future projects then they would not be required to prepare a project-specific EIR.

The area analyzed in the Draft EIR includes property within the City of Los Angeles. A portion of the development in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 would occur in the City of Los Angeles on lots contiguous with the Specific Plan boundaries. In both cases, the properties in question are aggregated within larger parcels under common ownership or anticipated to be developed in conjunction with the Specific Plan development projects. Because it is most likely that these adjoining lots would be improved in a coordinated way, this growth in the City of Los Angeles is included in the Specific Plan and the EIR.

## **OTHER ACTION ITEMS**

There are parallel actions that must be undertaken by the City and the Redevelopment Agency to fully implement the proposed Specific Plan.

### **General Plan Text and Map Amendment**

The amendment to the General Plan land use map will designate and outline the Specific Plan area with its own land use designation. This map amendment will replace those areas in the Specific Plan currently designated as General Corridor (CG), Industrial (IG) and Light Industrial (IL) with the new Specific Plan (SP) General Plan designation.

Within the text of the General Plan Land Use element a new paragraph will be inserted that describes the land use goals and objectives of the Washington National Area Specific Plan land use designation.

### **Zoning Code Text and Map Amendment**

The provisions of the City Zoning Code apply to the properties in the Specific Plan Area and supplement the regulations stated in the Specific Plan.

Currently the zoning and general plan designations are internally inconsistent. Much of the Specific Plan area is zoned for industrial uses (IG). However, most of the properties in the area have a General Corridor (CG) General Plan designation, which allows commercial uses.

Amendments to the Zoning Map will designate and outline the Specific Plan area with its own Specific Plan Zoning to address the current Zoning and General Plan inconsistencies. This map amendment will replace those areas currently zoned as Commercial General (CG) and Industrial (IG) with the new Specific Plan (SP) zone. This new zone is consistent with the new General Plan Land Use Designation described above. The current place holder name of the new Specific Plan land use designation is "Washington National Area Specific Plan".

Under the broader zoning designation of "Washington National Area Specific Plan", the Specific Plan consists of the creation of four new sub-zones as mentioned above (Zone 1, Zone 2, Zone 3, and Zone 4). Each sub-zone has distinct regulating standards of development including permitted land use, height, and density.

The proposed land uses in the Specific Plan area are consistent with current CG zoning designation, yet certain specific uses (i.e. Auto repair, car-dealerships, big box retail) are not permitted in order to encourage development that is appropriate for a pedestrian-oriented area proximate to regional transit stations.

Those areas currently with IG zoning designations are not consistent with the goal of the Washington National Area Specific Plan. Warehousing, manufacturing, distribution, and storage facilities are examples of uses not supported by the goals and policies of the Specific Plan. IG zoning designations does not currently allow residential or

commercial/retail uses, whereas the Specific Plan will allow these types of uses in some areas. The Specific Plan envisions limited industrial uses that are more akin to artisan or creative industry manufacturing than the warehousing and medium to heavy manufacturing currently allowed under IG zones.

The changes to the new Specific Plan (SP) zone designations will result in limited manufacturing uses that currently may be allowed by right or allowed as continuing uses in the IG zones. The more severe cases are with properties along Landmark and Lindblade Streets that will not only lose their industrial zoning designations but also their Industrial Land Use designations. As with the discussion above in the General Plan section, warehousing and medium to heavy industrial uses will no longer be allowed. But a new land use matrix will be in place that encourages artisan and creative industry type manufacturing along these streets.

Rather than a loss of land use potential, this shift from large-scale, heavy industry to artisan and creative industry will act to ease the transition of the neighborhood. Warehouses uses that are no longer in use can be transformed in keeping with the overall goals of the Specific Plan for businesses and manufacturing centers. Further, a diverse array of uses including the aforementioned artisan manufacturing will constitute a new matrix of potential uses, thereby helping to insure land use value for property owners.

One additional amendment will be to change the Zoning Code section that references the boundaries of the East Washington Overlay zone (EWO). Properties east of National Boulevard up to Helms Avenue (not including the historic Helms Bakery complex) will be removed from EWO Zone. The EWO amendment is needed because EWO does not allow mixed use developments, whereas the Specific Plan would.

### **Height Exception**

Although not requiring an amendment to the Zoning Code, the Specific Plan will include implementation of the City's current Height Exception provisions.

A Height Exception is required for the Triangle Site to allow for an 80' foot and a 130' foot height limit for two structures to be located in the interior of the site. With this Height Exception, the site will be able to incorporate a significant amount of "public" open space, including a pedestrian promenade from Washington Boulevard to Venice Boulevard providing access to the EXPO LRT Station and various outside venues for theatre, poetry, live music and passive recreation activities, areas for kiosks supporting small outside retail operations, and an interior public community room that can serve as a meeting space for civic or charitable events. The Height Exception will permit only certain buildings in specific areas of the Triangle site to exceed the general 56-foot height limit applicable in this area. This Height Exception cannot be applied to properties within Component Area No. 4 of the Redevelopment Plan.

### **City Subdivision Ordinance Amendment**

Currently, the City's Subdivision regulations require all Tentative Tract Maps be approved by the City Council, all Tentative Parcel Maps be approved by the Planning

Commission, final Tract maps be approved by the City Council, final Parcel maps be approved by the City Engineer and all dedications be accepted by the Council. A key element of the Specific Plan is establishing developments thresholds to allow for administrative approval of development projects.

In order to facilitate the administrative approval of development projects that include subdivision components, staff is recommending amendments to the City's Subdivision regulations. All subdivisions within the Specific Plan area are being proposed to be approved by an Advisory Agency consisting of City Staff. These decisions would be made through a public hearing process. Further, all final approval of maps and acceptance of dedications within the Specific Plan area would be preformed by a Designated Official (the City Engineer).

Outside of the Specific Plan area, the Planning Commission would approve tentative parcel maps with the City Engineer approving final parcel maps, and the City Council would approve all tentative tract maps, final tract maps and accept all dedications. Any decision by the Advisory Agency and Designated Official could be appealed to directly to the City Council.

### **The Exposition Station Area Design For Development Amendment**

The anticipated amendments to the Exposition Station Area Design for Development adopted by the Redevelopment Agency in June 2006 are:

- Map Amendment to expand boundaries consistent with Specific Plan boundaries.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Pursuant to State law a Specific Plan is required to include an infrastructure analysis which evaluates the potential effects on existing utilities and public services that could result from the construction and operation of the anticipated Washington/National Specific Plan developments. Systems related to the delivery and/or handling of water, wastewater, stormwater, electrical power, natural gas and communication services will be reviewed. In addition, issues related to solid waste/recycling, street use, transportation and school services needs will be analyzed. The infrastructure analysis will identify necessary improvement to address the anticipated impacts of the Tier 1 three "catalytic projects" and the Tier 2 "build-out" scenarios. The estimated cost of the proposed improvements will be identified.

Based on preliminary studies performed to date, it is anticipated that Significant upgrades to the sewer, water, gas and electric utility systems will be required in order to support the catalytic projects and subsequent development.

- Sewer system upgrades will be coordinated with the City's future plans to move toward consolidation of pump stations and potentially connecting to the County Sanitation District while disconnecting the City's sewer system, to the extent possible, from the City of Los Angeles's system.

- Water system upgrades will be coordinated with Golden State Water Company to ensure a reliable supply of water to supply adequate water volume and pressure for both domestic and fire flow purposes. These upgrades may include increased storage and pumping capacity in the Baldwin Hills area.
- Gas system upgrades will be coordinated with Southern California Gas Company to ensure adequate gas supplies to all new development within the project area.
- Many electrical system upgrades will occur on a project by project basis as new development demands new service connections. The City is currently coordinating with Southern California Edison to relocate and underground transmission lines that run through the proposed Triangle site project.
- Other infrastructure improvements include streetscape improvements including trees, parkway treatments, and street furniture. These improvements will be constructed on a project by project basis throughout the project area to improve its appearance and to help stimulate further development.

## **TRAFFIC MODEL, VEHICLE TRIP BUDGET AND VEHICLE TRIP FEE**

### **Traffic Model**

Traffic analysis in the Specific Plan area has been performed through the construction and application of a traffic model, based upon and linked to the SCAG Regional Traffic Model. Coordination with the SCAG model ensures (1) that traffic impacts within the study area incorporate traffic pattern data throughout the regional system, and (2) that the analysis is consistent with that performed in other jurisdictions. Use of the traffic model for the Specific Plan area also establishes a framework of analysis that can be applied, with adjustments, elsewhere in Culver City, or within the Specific Plan area should there be future changes to the development scene.

### **Vehicle Trip Budget**

Development in the Washington National Specific Plan area will be permitted through implementation of a vehicle trips budget or cap that establishes a maximum number vehicle trips resulting from new development, distributed on a first-come first-served basis in two tiers. The Tier 1 anticipates the development intensities represented by the Catalytic Projects; the Tier 2 anticipates a build-out of the Specific Plan area under a reasonable assumption of intensity of use. Once the trip cap has been reached and the trip budget has been expended, future projects will require new environmental review including a new traffic study.

The Tier 1 and Tier 2 trip budgets are based on a traffic analysis documented in the Specific Plan EIR. The project description for each tier level summarizes a reasonable mix and intensity of uses that are permitted under the development standards of the Specific Plan. These scenarios do not assume a total replacement of existing uses with new uses as might occur under a full build-out of the densities and intensities that could occur. They represent the City's best judgment as to likely development, assuming the retention of valued uses and buildings now in existence. These scenarios form the basis

of the traffic study which states the total peak hour vehicle trips generated by the scenarios; these peak volumes then become the vehicle trip budget for the Specific Plan area and its sub areas.

Calculation of an individual project's share of the sub area's trip budget will be made through the conversion of the proposed building area by use, as derived from a Specific Plan Area/Trip Conversion Table.

### **Vehicle Trip Fees**

Vehicle Trip fees will be charged for new development on a *pro rata* basis representing each project's fair share of the costs of mitigation for vehicle trips generated by the subject project. The vehicle trip budget described above establishes the maximum number of vehicle trips generated. The Trip Fee unit cost for projects will be computed by dividing the total cost of traffic-related mitigations for the projects by the total number of trips generated. A Trip Fee for each project will be equal to the number of trips generated by that project multiplied by the trip fee unit cost. Mitigations that are project specific will be paid for directly by the project causing the impacts. However, other mitigations, which are more general in nature and cannot be attributed to a particular project, will be paid for with vehicle trip fees which will be collected from all projects. The projects located in areas 4A, B, and C will be assessed an additional vehicle trip fee to pay for traffic improvements at the Landmark and Washington Boulevard intersection.

### **DESCRIPTION OF FINANCING OPTIONS**

Infrastructure financing is proposed to be funded primarily through Community Facilities Assessment Districts (CFDs). This method of financing will allow for bonds to be issued covering the upfront costs of infrastructure improvements such as sewer, water and gas tax assessments levied on the properties within the district will then be used to pay the debt service for the bonds. Properties that are not initially part of the district can annex into the district as they redevelop therefore allowing for a fair and equitable method of cost sharing for the infrastructure capital improvements and maintenance expenses.

Certain infrastructure improvements will be paid for by developers on a pay-as-you-go basis. Included in this category will be electrical system upgrades needed to provide electrical service to projects, water services for specific projects (not improvements required to the overall system), streetscape and some traffic mitigation requirements.. Other traffic mitigation improvements that are required will be funded through a trip fee collected by the City and used to finance additional traffic system improvements as they become necessary (see discussion above regarding Trip Fees).

The City is using its Rule 20A money (money set aside for utility under grounding projects by the electrical utility company at the direction of the California Public Utilities Commission) to fund the relocation and under grounding of transmission lines that are currently located along National Boulevard and Exposition Boulevard between Venice Boulevard and Washington Boulevard (the Triangle site).

## **Cost Recovery**

Staff is working with a financial consultant to establish the basis of a cost recovery fee program to reimburse the City and Redevelopment Agency (the "Agency") for all costs related to the preparation and adoption of the Specific Plan. A cost allocation model will be prepared to determine the appropriate method of distributing the cost within the Specific Plan area. There may several possible methodologies for allocation such as total site area, new construction site area, per square foot building area or per residential unit.

## **Financial Analysis**

Staff is working with a financial consultant to evaluate the fiscal impact of likely development scenarios resulting from the adoption of the Specific Plan. The impact study includes a cost analysis of City services such as fire and police, and revenue projections for both the City and Agency resulting from new development.

## **OVERVIEW OF THREE CATALYTIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

### **Triangle Site Mixed Use-Transit Oriented Development**

The Triangle Site project (Attachment 3) encompasses numerous parcels, involves coordination with multiple agencies including Metro and the City of Los Angeles. The Triangle site is a critical component of the Specific Plan given its direct relationship with EXPO LRT station. The site is bounded by Washington Boulevard on the south, National Boulevard on the east, Venice Boulevard on the north, and the Metro right-of-way on the west. For project definition purposes, the Metro right-of-way is presumed to be part of the overall development parcel. In all, this site configuration is approximately 6.76 acres in size. Metro has been involved in the design discussions.

A portion of the development would occur in the City of Los Angeles on lots contiguous with the Specific Plan boundaries (5.25 net acres of land making up the project area in Culver City and an additional 1.51 acres of land in the City of Los Angeles, for a total development area of 6.76 acres). These properties are under common ownership. Because it is most likely that these adjoining lots would be improved in a coordinated way, this growth in the City of Los Angeles is included in the Specific Plan and in the Environmental Impact Report.

The Triangle Site project is anticipated to include the development of 230 residential units, a 149 room hotel, 72,000 square feet of retail uses (39,000 square feet in Culver City and 33,000 square feet in Los Angeles), and 120,000 square feet of office use (in Los Angeles).

Parking would be provided for all of these uses consistent with the parking requirements contained in the Specific Plan, in structured levels below the developments. Where parking structures project above grade they would not be exposed to public spaces and streets; in these cases the structures would be lined with other uses along their public

frontages, and the ground floor of those uses would be improved as commercial frontages with a pedestrian-friendly architectural treatment.

Additional public parking would be provided for transit use, with up to 600 parking spaces dedicated to that purpose; the balance of transit parking demand would be accommodated in surface parking within the Metro owned right-of-way, north of Venice Boulevard. In planning for the future light rail station at Washington/National, Metro configured a plan to provide 735 parking spaces for transit riders in a surface parking lot located in its right-of-way northwest of Venice Boulevard; this project proposes to locate as much as 600 of these spaces in structured parking directly connecting to the future station.

Buildings in this project would be built to the property line to support the public "streetwall", and would be built to the height standards of the Specific Plan and the Zoning Code. The quality of the street experience can be greatly enhanced by a public "streetwall." A well-formed public streetwall is created by buildings whose street frontages encourage pedestrians through active uses and transparency at the sidewalk as well as step-backs and fenestration in the upper floors.

Additional height (up to 80 feet and up to 130 feet for two interior structures ) is proposed at the center of the site to be able to incorporate a significant amount of "public" open space (66,100 square feet--29% of overall site area) consisting of the following programmed and landscaped spaces:

- A public "Transit Plaza," is proposed at the southeastern edge of the site, along the Washington Boulevard frontage, adjacent to the light rail over-crossing, and accessible from the corner of Washington and National Boulevards. The proposed hotel and its public spaces, including restaurants and shops, would front on this Transit Plaza. The main program of this space is an event space with a multi-use performance stage that also doubles as informal seating in between events. Up to 900 people could be accommodated in this space. This is envisioned as a space for performances, fairs, markets, speeches and other public events.
- A public "Pedestrian Easement," in the form of a pedestrian promenade would pass through the site, connecting the Transit Plaza and the Public Plaza, and providing direct access to the light rail station platform toward the center of the site. This 31,900 square foot paseo would be similar in character and intent to the "Back Streets" that exist elsewhere in the Specific Plan area, and would be lined with retail and other commercial uses and/or live-work residential units. An event space with permanent step seating (capacity 112 persons) would be a venue for performances, and kiosks, vendors, benches, shade trees, landscape, and a public restroom would provide a friendly pedestrian environment for walking, sitting, and shopping as well as catching a train or a bus.
- A "Public Plaza," on the podium, with access from the Transit Plaza and Pedestrian Easement, would provide 15,400 square feet of passive recreation space. Proposed features include a water wall fountain with seating, chess park, bocce ball court, and a public art space.

- A community room is proposed which would be available for public use. With a capacity of 150 persons, this room would be accessible from the Pedestrian Easement.
- Another "Public Plaza," is proposed at the northwestern edge of the site, along the Venice Boulevard frontage in the City of Los Angeles. This space would serve as a pedestrian gateway into Culver City and would connect the Transit Plaza and Pedestrian Promenade to Venice Boulevard for district walkability and convenient access to regional bus lines. It would serve as an integral part of the overall project's pedestrian circulation system.

### **Edward Czuker Mixed Use Development (Spartan Supply Site)**

The second catalytic project (Attachment 4) will occupy the former Spartan Supply site at the southeast corner of Washington and National Boulevards, and will initiate the connection of the transit center and the Hayden Tract to the south and Helms District uses farther to the east on Washington. The project will establish the streetwall on Washington east of National and help to visually anchor the central intersection. The site is approximately 1.77 acres in size.

The project is anticipated to include up to 115 residential apartments or condominiums, 53,500 square feet of office and up to 42,700 square feet of retail or other commercial space (11,700 sf for a Pharmacy, 29,900 sf for a market and 1,400 sf of café).

The property owner intends to seek a density bonus per State Law for density bonuses. This will be applied for separately and after the Specific Plan is acted upon. The project plans includes a set of alternative plans illustrating what the project would entail should a State Density Bonus is granted. Under this alternative, the project is anticipated to include 156 residential apartments or condominiums, 4,500 sf of office, and 42,700 sf of retail or other commercial space (11,700 sf for a Pharmacy, 29,900 sf for a market and 1,400 sf of café).

Parking would be provided for these uses consistent with the parking requirements contained in the Specific Plan, in structured levels below the development.

Buildings in this project would be built to the property line along the Washington Boulevard frontage, would allow for a public sidewalk on Wesley Street and National Boulevard. Buildings would not exceed 56 feet in height, and would observe the façade articulation requirements outlined in the Specific Plan.

The project also includes improvement of a setback area at the corner of Washington and National as public space addressing the intersection and the transit station across the street. This space may be partly covered within a building arcade, and may include outdoor businesses such as a café or newsstand.

### **Brentwood/Fairfield Mixed Use Development (Prior Car-Dealership Site)**

The third catalytic project (Attachment 5) will occupy parcels formerly occupied by car dealerships on Washington Boulevard, on two lots on either side of the intersection with Landmark Street. This project will be significant in that it will help initiate the connection between the transit center and Downtown Culver City, establishing a street wall presence on the south side of the boulevard. The combined sites on both sides of Landmark comprise approximately 2.05 acres in area.

The project includes development of 134 residential apartments or condominiums, and 17,000 square feet of retail uses fronting Washington Boulevard. Parking would be provided for these uses consistent with the parking requirements contained in the Specific Plan, in structured levels below the development.

Buildings in this project would be built to the property line along the Washington Boulevard frontage, and would allow for a public sidewalk on both sides of Landmark Street. Buildings would not exceed 56 feet in height, and would observe the façade articulation requirements outlined in the Specific Plan.

A "Pedestrian Easement," as defined by the Specific Plan would be provided along the easterly boundary of the property north of Landmark Street, to allow pedestrian connection from Landmark Street to the EXPO right-of-way open space on National Boulevard to the north.

Another Pedestrian Easement on the south-easterly boundary would be provided to initiate a connection between Landmark Street and Lindblade Street, to be completed through the future new development of adjacent parcels.

### **CONCLUSION**

Staff and consultant team are continuing to work to refine and finalize the Specific Plan document. At the same time, staff is working to complete all necessary technical studies such as the Infrastructure Study, Traffic Study, Vehicle Trip Budget and Trip Fee System, and Financing Mechanisms. These studies are critical components to the Draft EIR and Draft Specific Plan.

Some of the major milestones or tasks to anticipate include the following:

- Release of the Draft EIR for a 45-Day Public Review Period (Draft Specific Plan would also be available for review);
- Hold Planning Commission Public Hearing to receive Commission comments and provide recommendation to City Council on the Draft EIR, Draft Specific Plan and Other Actions (General Plan and Zoning Amendments);
- Hold City Council Public Hearing to receive Council comments on the Draft EIR, Draft Specific Plan and Other Actions (General Plan and Zoning Amendments);
- Close 45-Day Public Review Period on the Draft EIR

- Prepare Response to Comments
  - Prepare Final EIR and Associated Technical Studies
  - Prepare Mitigation Monitoring Program
  - Prepare Findings of Fact / Statement of Overriding Considerations
  - Prepare Final Specific Plan
- Release Response to Comments and Final EIR for Public Review
  - Hold Joint City Council /Redevelopment Agency Public Hearing – First Reading of the Specific Plan Ordinance, Certification of the Final EIR, and Decision on Other Actions (General Plan and Zoning Amendments, etc); and
  - Hold Joint City Council /Redevelopment Agency Public Hearing – Second Reading of the Specific Plan Ordinance.

**Attachments:**

1. Project Location Map.
2. Specific Plan Zone Districts
3. Triangle Site Conceptual Development Plans
4. Edward Czuker (Spartan Supply Site) Conceptual Development Plans
5. Brentwood/Fairfield (Prior Car-Dealership Site) Conceptual Development Plans