



Legislation Text

File #: 21-3107, **Version:** 1

FROM:

Planning Department

TITLE:

Master Case No. 22-008: General Plan Amendment (GPA) 22-012, Zoning Code Amendment (ZCA) No. 24-003, and Specific Plan (SP) No. 24-001: amendment to Figure 15.9 (Land Use Category) in Chapter 15 (Land Use, Zoning and Urban Design) of the General Plan to change: approximately 7 acres from Community Commercial (C-C) to Multi-Family Medium to High Density Residential (R-MFMH), approximately 5 acres from Community Commercial (C-C) to Residential Planned Community (R-PC), approximately 38 acres from Residential Planned Community (R-PC) to Multi-Family High Density Residential (R-MFH), approximately 10 acres from Residential Planned Community (R-PC) to Multi Family Residential (R-MF), removal of the Auto Center Overlay designation on approximately 8.5 acres within the Walnut Village Specific Plan boundary; Development Code Amendment to revise Sections 30-635, 30-639, and 30-642 of the Zoning and Development Code to remove the Fontana Auto Center Overlay District from approximately 8.5 acres in the Walnut Village Specific Plan boundary; and a Specific Plan to include rescinding the existing Walnut Village Specific Plan and replacing it with the new Specific Plan to establish a new Walnut Village Specific Plan including new planning areas and development standards, pursuant the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) (SCH No. 2023050271) for the new Walnut Village Specific Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the information contained in this staff report and subject to the attached Findings and Conditions of Approval, staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. PC 2024-____, and forward a recommendation to the City Council to:

1. Certify the Walnut Village Specific Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (FPEIR) (State Clearinghouse No. 2023050271) and adopt a Statement of Overriding Consideration, a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and a Statement of Facts and Findings, and direct staff to file a Notice of Determination; and
2. Adopt a Resolution approving General Plan Amendment (GPA) No. 22-012;
3. Adopt an Ordinance approving Development Code Amendment (ZCA) No. 24-003; and
4. Adopt an Ordinance approving Specific Plan (SP) No. 24-001.

APPLICANT:

City of Fontana
8353 Sierra Avenue
Fontana, CA 92335

LOCATION:

The project site is located south of the 210 freeway, east of Sierra Avenue, west of Palmetto Avenue and north of Baseline Avenue.

REQUEST:

General Plan Amendment (GPA) No. 22-012 - A request to amend Figure 15.9 (Land Use Category) in Chapter 15 (Land Use, Zoning and Urban Design) of the General Plan for an amendment to change: approximately 7 acres from Community Commercial (C-C) to Multi-Family Medium to High Density Residential (R-MFMH), approximately 5 acres from Community Commercial (C-C) to Residential Planned Community (R-PC), approximately 38 acres from Residential Planned Community (R-PC) to Multi-Family High Density Residential (R-MFH), approximately 10 acres from Residential Planned Community (R-PC) to Multi Family Residential (R-MF). The General Plan Amendment also includes the removal of the Auto Center Overlay designation on approximately 8.5 acres within the Walnut Village Specific Plan boundary.

Development Code Amendment (ZCA) No. 24-003 - This request is to remove the Fontana Auto Center Overlay (Planning Area No. 2) from portions of Figure No. 1 (Fontana Auto Center Overlay District Planning Area Boundaries Map) and revise Sections 30-635, 30-639, and 30-642 of the Zoning and Development Code to make modifications to Planning Area No. 2.

Specific Plan (SP) No. 24-001- A request to rescind the existing Walnut Village Specific Plan (SP-3) and to approve the new Walnut Village Specific Plan including new planning areas and development standards to provide for additional housing opportunities. The new proposed specific plan is included as part of Attachment No. 6.

PROJECT PLANNER:

Cecily Session-Goins, Associate Planner

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Existing Land Uses and Designations:

Property	General Plan	Zoning	Existing Land Use
Site:	Residential Planned Community (R-PC) Medium Density Residential (R-M) Community Commercial (C-C) Public Facilities (P-PF) Recreational Facilities (P-R)	Walnut Village Specific Plan and Auto Center Overlay	Single-family residential Multi-family residential Retail and services
North:	N/A	N/A	210 freeway
South:	General Commercial (C-G) Medium Density Residential (R-M) Single-Family Residential (R-SF)	General Commercial (C-2) Medium Density Residential (R-2) Single-Family Residential (R-1)	Fueling station Single-family residential
East:	City of Rialto	City of Rialto	Industrial commerce centers
West:	General Commercial (C-G) Medium Density Residential (R-M)/ Walkable Mixed-Use Corridor & Downtown (WMXU-1)	Promenade Specific Plan and Auto Center Overlay	Single-family residential Vacant Auto dealership

Background Information:

On June 9, 2020, the City of Fontana was awarded the LEAP Grant program funds in the amount of \$500,000 by the Department of Housing and Community Development to complete work on a new Specific Plan for Walnut Village. The LEAP Grant, as part of the Local Governmental Planning Support Grants Programs, provides a one-time grant funding to regions and jurisdiction for technical assistance, preparation and adoption of the planning documents, and process improvements. The goal of this program is to make funding available to all local governments in California for the preparation, adoption and implementation of plans that streamline housing approvals and accelerate housing production. The goals of the program are to (1) accelerate housing production; and (2) facilitate compliance with and to provide funding to jurisdictions for the preparation and adoption of planning documents implementing the sixth cycle of the regional housing needs assessment.

The Walnut Village Specific Plan was first adopted in 1983 and was adopted to accommodate a large population growth in Fontana in a short amount of time. The original specific plan limited land uses to single-family residential. However, the specific plan was amended 11 times between the time of adoption and 2000. Those amendments reflected a shift from exclusively single-family residential with the inclusion of a variety of residential densities, commercial land uses and parks. The Walnut Village Specific Plan was amended most recently in 2021 to revise land uses and development standards for the area of vacant land at the southwest corner of South Highland Avenue and Mango Avenue. Since the Walnut Village Specific Plan that was first adopted in 1983 was limited to single-family development and had many amendments throughout the years, it is outdated and no longer furthers the goals of the General Plan and Housing Element. Thus, the purpose of this project is to

utilize the LEAP Grant programs funds for a new Walnut Village Specific Plan that provides for additional denser housing types along with opportunities for mixed uses in a manner that complements the goals in the General Plan and Housing Element.

On February 28, 2023, the Planning Commission and City Council held a Joint workshop on the new Walnut Village Specific Plan where components of the new Specific Plan were introduced, including initial land use considerations, goals of the Specific Plan (create housing and employment opportunities along with mixed use development), and a vision for the Specific Plan.

ANALYSIS:

This proposal includes multiple actions that will establish the newly envisioned Walnut Village Specific Plan; including a General Plan amendment, Zoning Ordinance amendments, and new Specific Plan.

The Specific Plan area encompasses approximately 342 acres and includes a number of large, vacant parcels adjacent to established single family residential development. The Plan provides for the implementation of the Fontana General Plan land use policies to allow for higher density residential, mixed and commercial uses, enhanced walkability, and the creation of high-quality development, which will forward the Housing Goal No. 1 (Housing Policy 1.1, Fontana 6th Cycle Housing Element) to establish a range of housing opportunities in the city and also forward Action A (Goal 3 in Chapter 13 of the General Plan) to refine zoning to encourage mixed-use development where appropriate. The majority of the developed areas of the specific plan area include single-family and multi-family residential. Two (2) commercial centers and a park are also located within the specific plan area and approximately 53 acres that are undeveloped/underdeveloped are in four (4) areas, varying in size from approximately 5 acres to 38 acres.

The Walnut Village Specific Plan establishes a land use policy framework that will guide future development by establishing land use and development regulations, and expectations for quality design. The Specific plan's intent is to establish a high quality multi-modal, mixed-use environment that will be compatible with existing development.

The new specific plan has been designed to: establish a high quality of life and economic prosperity; encourage a compact, walkable, mixed-use area, establish development standards and design guidelines to promote high level of quality development; establish a mix of uses that complement the existing development pattern; promote more urban densities along key corridors in the Specific Plan, preserve and promote community culture and heritage; enhance connectivity open spaces and recreational facilities; establish a well-balanced community with opportunities for commercial, residential, and open space, and maintain compatibility with existing development.

General Plan Amendment 22-012

The new Walnut Village Specific Plan includes higher residential unit densities than those allowed currently, which necessitates an amendment to the general plan land use map and includes an amendment to Exhibit 15.9 in Chapter 15 (Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design) of the General Plan by changing land use designations of certain properties including: approximately 7 acres for properties located on the southeast corner of Sierra Avenue and South Highland Avenue from Community Commercial (C-C) to Multi-Family Medium to High Density Residential (R-MFMH),

approximately 5 acres for a property located on the southwest corner of Walnut Village Parkway and Mango Avenue from Community Commercial (C-C) to Residential Planned Community (R-PC), approximately 38 acres for properties located on the northeast corner of Baseline Avenue and Sierra Avenue from Residential Planned Community (R-PC) to Multi-Family High Density Residential (R-MFH), approximately 10 acres for properties located on the northwest corner of Baseline Avenue and Palmetto Avenue from Residential Planned Community (R-PC) to Multi Family Residential (R-MF). In addition, the General Plan amendment includes the removal of a portion of the Auto Center Overlay designation for approximately 8.5 acres within the Walnut Village Specific Plan boundary. Attachment No. 2 depicts the properties included in the General Plan Amendment. This General Plan Amendment will allow for higher residential densities and mixed-use development, which will forward the Housing Goal No. 1 (Housing Policy 1.1, Fontana 6th Cycle Housing Element) to establish a range of housing opportunities in the city and also forward Action A (Goal 3 in Chapter 13 of the General Plan) to refine zoning to encourage mixed-use development where appropriate.

Development Code Amendment No. 24-003

A portion of the specific plan is located within the Auto Center Overlay - Planning Area 2, which is a restrictive overlay. Therefore, the City is proposing to remove the Auto Center Overlay (Planning Area 2) from certain properties located on the northwest portion of Walnut Village Specific Plan to keep the goals, visions, and development standards of the specific plan for this planning area. The Development Code Amendment also includes an updated to the text and figure(s) (Attachment No. 4) within the Zoning and Development Code to reflect these changes.

Specific Plan (SP) No. 24-001

The vision and goal of the new Walnut Village specific plan is to establish a high quality of life and economic prosperity; encourage a compact, walkable, mixed-use area, establish development standards and design guidelines to promote high level of quality development; establish a mix of uses that complement the existing development pattern; promote more urban densities along key corridors in the Specific Plan, preserve and promote community culture and heritage; enhance connectivity open spaces and recreational facilities; establish a well-balanced community with opportunities for commercial, residential, and open space, and maintain compatibility with existing development.

As part of the specific plan amendment, the original Walnut Village Specific Plan will be rescinded, and a new Walnut Village Specific Plan will be adopted that includes new land use areas and development standards for the new Walnut Village Specific Plan. The majority of the existing developed single-family land uses, and their associated land use designations and development standards will be retained in the new specific plan.

The new Walnut Village Specific Plan divides the specific plan area into nine sub-districts as depicted on Attachment No. 3. The Gateway Residential 1 (GR1), Gateway Residential 2 (GR2), Gateway Residential 3 (GR3), Highland Village (H1), and Gateway Commercial sub-districts are currently developed. The new Walnut Village Specific Plan contains updated and/or clarified land uses, development and design standards for the previously-developed areas along with four (4) new sub-districts. The existing specific plan document did not contemplate or provide standards for certain residential modifications, such as patio covers. It also has a limited list of allowable commercial land uses. The new specific plan document provides a clarified regulatory document that reflects current-

day development and land use standards.

Four (4) of the land use districts provide land use, development and design standards for the undeveloped and underdeveloped areas of the specific plan. The Gateway North (GN) located at the southeast corner of Sierra Avenue and South Highland Avenue, Gateway South (GS) located at the northeast corner of Sierra Avenue and Baseline Ave., Gateway East (GE) located at the northwest corner of Palmetto Avenue and Baseline Avenue, and Gateway Residential 4 (GR4) located at the southeast corner of Sierra Avenue and Walnut Village Parkway are all considered undeveloped or underdeveloped. The intent for these sub-districts is to promote high-quality site and architectural design that is compatible with existing development in the specific plan area. Land uses include medium- to high-density residential, pedestrian-oriented commercial (and/or mixed uses).

The updated land uses will increase the potential for additional residential development in the city while enhancing aesthetics along the major gateways into the city from the 210 freeway and surrounding areas.

Environmental:

The Draft Walnut Village Specific Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR) Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) (SCH No. 2023050271) was made available for the public review at the City's website: <https://www.fontanaca.gov/2137/Environmental-Documents>

Subsequent to the preparation and distribution of the Notice of Preparation (NOP), the DPEIR was prepared for the project. The environmental analysis contained in the DPEIR is based in part on specific studies and assessments undertaken for the City by qualified environmental scientists, specialists, and consultants. This analysis addresses air quality and greenhouse gases, biological resources, cultural, noise, and transportation.

These technical studies are contained in the Technical Appendices document of the DPEIR and are made available for the public review. The Draft and Final Programmatic EIR and Technical Appendices can be viewed at the following URL:
<https://www.fontanaca.gov/2137/Environmental-Documents>

The Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (FPEIR) describes the environmental impacts of the project and the mitigation measures to help minimize the project impacts on the environment. The scope of this FPEIR includes analysis of minimize the project impacts on the environment. The scope of this FPEIR includes analysis of environmental issues identified and raised in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and during the DPEIR comment period.

The FPEIR determined that fifteen (15) of environmental effects for the project would have impacts found not to be significant. These 15 categories are Aesthetics, Biological Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Tribal Resources, Cultural Resources, Utilities and Services Systems, Energy, and Transportation and Traffic. The potential impacts from the aforementioned topical areas are fully addressed in the DPEIR.

The analysis in the FPEIR and supporting studies found that, even with incorporation of proposed mitigation measures detailed in the MMRP, impacts to Air Quality and Green House Gases would

remain significant and unavoidable. As a result of the proposed project having an impact that is significant and unavoidable, adoption of a Statement of Overriding Consideration (SOC) by the City Council is required.

Alternatives

As required by CEQA, an EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project which meets the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. The proposed alternatives for this project include "No Project" and "Complete Residential Alternative". The "Complete Residential Alternative" is the Environmentally Superior Alternative. Neither the "No Project" nor the "Complete Residential Alternative" meet the project objectives of encouraging a walkable mixed-use area and establishing a mix of uses that complement the existing development pattern.

Circulation

The project DPEIR was circulated for the 45-day public review period beginning on March 18, 2024, to May 1, 2024. The document was submitted to the State Clearinghouse for notification to State agencies for their possible comment. During the end of the 45-day circulation period the City did not receive any comments. The FPEIR has been included with the environmental documentation.

To approve the project, the City Council must certify the FPEIR, adopt CEQA facts and findings, approve the MMRP and adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations indicating that the project benefits override or outweigh the project identified unavoidable environmental impacts.

MOTION:

Approve staff's recommendation

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Vicinity Map
2. General Plan Amendment Exhibit
3. Zoning Code (Map) Amendment Exhibit
4. Zoning Code Text Amendment
5. Planning Commission Resolution, Findings, and Conditions of Approval
6. Proposed Walnut Village Specific Plan
7. Public Hearing Notice