



City of Rialto

Legislation Text

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For the Planning Commission Meeting of November 8, 2017

TO: Honorable Chairman and Planning Commissioners
APPROVAL: Robb Steel, Asst.CA/Development Services Director
REVIEWED BY: Gina M. Gibson-Williams, Planning Manager
FROM:

A request to determine the adequacy of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Environmental Assessment Review 2017-0072) and recommend approval of a Specific Plan (Specific Plan 2017-0001) to establish the boundaries, zoning, infrastructure and design standards for a 101.7-acre site known as the Pepper Avenue Specific Plan (Master Case 2017-0042).

BACKGROUND:

APPLICANT
City of Rialto

LOCATION

The site is located east of Eucalyptus Avenue, south of the 210 Freeway, west of Meridian Avenue and north of Walnut Avenue. Pepper Avenue bisects the Project into two east and west halves.



Developer Initiated Specific Plan

Mr. Everett Hughes filed the original Pepper Avenue Specific Plan on September 20, 2006 for a 112-acre master planned community consisting of residential and commercial development. The City completed the task of securing environmental clearance and Federal permits to initiate construction of the roadway extension. Mr. Everett Hughes withdrew the project in 2007. The Pepper Avenue roadway extension was completed in 2014.

City Initiated Specific Plan

A specific plan is a tool to implement the general plan. It establishes a link between policies of the general plan and individual development proposals in a defined area. A specific plan may encompass an area as large or as small as a single acre.

On February 25, 2014, the City Council approved a Professional Service Agreement with KTGy for preparation of the Pepper Avenue Specific Plan. Preparation of the Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report began in March 2014.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The City held three community meetings to receive public input on the Specific Plan and the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Stakeholder Meeting

On April 7, 2014, a stakeholder meeting took place. Input from the stakeholder meeting served as the basis to create conceptual development scenarios for the area.

Conceptual Plan Development

In July 2014, a Development Opportunity study was prepared for the project to evaluate the market feasibility of developing retail, Business Park, hotel, residential, and rental development for the Specific Plan.

Community Workshop

On September 8, 2014, community members voted on the conceptual development and design of the plan at a workshop. A summary of the workshop and the corresponding votes is included as an attachment to this report.

Community Meeting

On April 3, 2017, the City held a community meeting to discuss the completed specific plan and the DEIR. Community members expressed their overall support for the plan and reiterated their desire to see the site developed as commercial. Participants stipulated two conditions for any proposed residential project in the overlay zone: 1) community input and 2) superior design standards.

Participants also requested an update from the Public Works Department on the status of improvements associated with the Pepper Avenue extension, specifically extending the median to Baseline and installation of a signal at Winchester. The Public Works Department will update the Pepper Avenue neighborhood group on these issues.

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION ACTION

Economic Development Committee

On February 18, 2016 and April 26, 2017, the Economic Development Committee reviewed the Conceptual Land Use Map and the Development Opportunity Study for the Specific Plan.

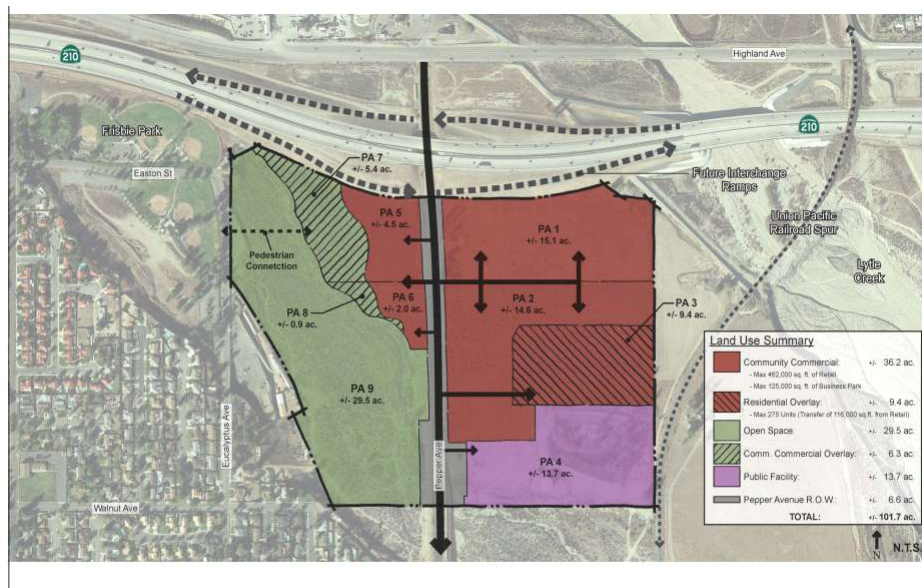
Transportation Commission

The Transportation Commission approved the Traffic Impact Analysis in May of 2016.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

The Pepper Avenue Specific Plan will facilitate the development of a master planned community consisting of commercial development that capitalizes on proximity to a major arterial and the I-210 freeway. The intent is to facilitate development of “main-street” retail to create a destination hub. The Project will create an entry gateway statement to Rialto. Once developed, the Project will also provide a new source of tax revenue to the City, utilize predominantly vacant land, serve the City’s commercial and residential needs and preserve the site’s natural habitat. The Specific Plan and Land Use Plan are attached to this report for reference (**Exhibits A and B**).

The plan consists of a 101.7-acres with zoning for 462,000 square feet of retail shopping center, 125,000 square feet of business park uses, 29.5 acres of natural open space, and 13.7 acres of water facilities, including water wells, a pump station, and a reservoir. The plan also has an overlay zone, which would allow the option to develop up to 275 multi-family dwelling units. The majority of the proposed project site is vacant and undeveloped.



SOURCE: KTG Architecture+Planning, July 2015

Pepper Avenue Specific Plan

Figure 2-4
Land Use Plan

Land Use Plan and Intensity

KTGY prepared a conceptual yield study and land use plan based on analysis from the Development Opportunity study, input from stakeholders, the community, and staff. The land use plan allows for market flexibility. The specific plan allows “big-box” retail. This concept is successful at the Town Center in Aliso Viejo, Riverside Plaza in Riverside, and at the Seacliff Village Shopping Center in Huntington Beach. Fast-casual restaurants generally locate adjacent to or within retail hubs. If the plan area cannot accommodate all of the retail anticipated for the project, a residential designation overlays 13.9 acres to allow for flexibility. Distribution and industrial uses are not permitted within the project. The land use designations in the plan and the corresponding intensities for each are outlined below:

Development and Intensity

- East of Pepper Avenue
 - Community Commercial: 462,000 square feet; or
 - Multi-family Residential Overlay: 236,000 square feet with 275 units dwelling units on 13.9 acres
 - Business Park: 125,000 square feet
- West of Pepper Avenue
 - Community Commercial: 6.3 acres 110,000 square feet (includes 65,000 square feet of development within habitat area)
 - Open Space: 30 acres

Three land use designations are designated within the plan: Community Commercial, Open Space, and Public Facility. Two overlay land use designation are also proposed: Community Commercial and Multi-Family Residential. These uses create a sense of place and the design including a “main street” pedestrian oriented town center, a pedestrian connection to Frisbie Park, a welcoming plaza, and a comprehensive landscape theme. Details regarding the land use plan are below.

- The Community Commercial land use designation will allow for up to 462,000 square feet of retail and 125,000 square feet of business park uses that take advantage of the visibility from the 210 Freeway, as well as a prime location adjacent to the proposed freeway interchange. These uses will serve the nearby residential uses.
- The Open Space land use will preserve nearly 30 acres of habitat for Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub (RAFSS). No development, except for a pedestrian bridge, is permitted within this designation. The pedestrian bridge is proposed to cross through this planning area to connect the existing Frisbie Park to the Community Commercial district. This bridge will be designed to be environmentally sensitive to the open space below and feature interpretive signage so bridge users may learn about the protected habitat.
- The Public Facility designation contains an existing West Valley Water District (WVWD) facility that consists of existing pump stations, water supply wells, and a reservoir. This designation would allow future water district facilities.
- The Multi-Family Residential Overlay allows for the option of up to 275 units, subject to a reduction in the retail square footage. This overlay zone is located at the eastern edge of the Project site.
- A Community Commercial Overlay Zone will allow a limited development on approximately 6.3 acres, to allow future developers the flexibility to attract a wider variety of tenants on the western side of Pepper Avenue. Should a future developer choose to pursue limited development within the habitat area, the developer will be required to obtain necessary approvals from the permitting agencies and provide the necessary mitigation measures. Should the property owner wish to keep this area as natural open space, the permitted development intensity of this Overlay Zone may transfer to another portion of the Specific Plan.

The architectural design of the Project is a Mediterranean style, consistent with the City's namesake, the Rialto Bridge in Venice, Italy. The project will include refined elements (not rustic) and incorporate the use of stone accents.

The Specific Plan encourages an environmentally conscious or "Green" design to provide for a sustainable community. Developers within the Specific Plan area will be encouraged to incorporate energy- and water-saving materials and features to reduce energy and water consumption needs, and to minimize the impacts associated with development. All future applications within the Specific Plan area will comply with all applicable California Green Building code standards

Traffic

Urban Crossroads prepared a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) in January 2016 for the specific plan covering 24 intersections and 10 roadway segments. The Transportation Commission reviewed and approved the TIA in May of 2016. The following roadway improvements are needed to mitigate potential impacts:

1. Riverside Avenue/Easton Street (Intersection #3):
Participate in the signal modification to provide separate right turn overlap signal phasing for the existing westbound right turn lane.
2. Eucalyptus Avenue/Baseline Road (Intersection #8):
 - Northbound Approach: Provides separate left turn lane, in addition to the existing through lane.
 - Southbound Approach: Provide separate left turn lane, in addition to the existing through lane.
3. Pepper Avenue/Highland Avenue (Intersection #9):
 - Northbound Approach: Restripe through lane to shared through-right lane, in addition to the left turn lane and right turn lane.
 - Eastbound Approach: Participate in the signal modification to provide separate right turn overlap signal phasing for the right turn lane.
4. Pepper Avenue/SR-210 Westbound Ramps (Intersection #10):
 - Northbound Approach: Modify traffic signal to provide north/south split phase. Restripe first through lane to provide a left-through lane, in addition to the left turn lane and second through lane.
 - Westbound Approach: Provide additional (second) left turn lane.
5. Pepper Avenue/SR-210 Eastbound Ramps (Intersection #11):
 - Northbound Approach: Provide separate right turn lane.
 - Eastbound Approach: Provide additional (second) right turn lane.
6. Pepper Avenue/Winchester Drive (Intersection #12):
 - Participate in construction of a traffic signal.
 - Northbound Approach: Provide separate left turn lane and second through lane, eliminating defacto right turn lane.

- Southbound Approach: Provide separate left turn lane and second through lane, eliminating defacto right turn lane.
7. Pepper Avenue/Mariposa Drive (Intersection #13):
 - Participate in construction of a traffic signal.
 - Northbound Approach: Provide separate left turn lane and second through lane, eliminating defacto right turn lane.
 - Southbound Approach: Provide separate left turn lane and second through lane, eliminating defacto right turn lane.
 8. Pepper Avenue/Baseline Road (Intersection #14):
SB Approach: Provide separate right turn lane.
 9. Pepper Avenue/Etiwanda Avenue (Intersection #15):
Participate in construction of a traffic signal.
 10. Pepper Avenue/Foothill Boulevard (Intersection #16):
 - Participate in the signal modification to provide separate right turn overlap signal phasing for the existing eastbound right turn lane.
 - Southbound Approach: Provide separate right turn lane.
 - Westbound Approach: Provide additional (third) through lane.

With the implementation of and adherence to the mitigation measure listed in the TIA, potentially significant traffic impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:

The Specific Plan conforms to the goals and policies of the 2010 General Plan. A General Plan consistency analysis is included In Appendix A of the Specific Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

A scoping meeting to prepare the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on February 4, 2016. The DEIR public comment began on March 7, 2017 and ended on April 24, 2017.

The City received four comments on the DEIR and responses were prepared and made a part of the public record. The property owners provided comments to staff, which were incorporated into the DEIR as well as comments from the public. All commenting agencies and individuals will receive a copy of the response to comments 10 days prior to the City Council hearing.

As set forth in the preceding sections, the City's approval of the Pepper Avenue Specific Plan Project will result in environmental impacts that cannot be substantially lessened or avoided. The following adverse impact of the proposed Project is considered significant and unavoidable based. While mitigation measures would reduce these impacts, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable for Operational Cumulative Traffic Noise Impacts. The City Council must consider the Statement of Overriding Considerations with the DEIR. A copy of the DEIR and the Response to Comment Document and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan are included with the report as **Exhibits C and D**.

The Planning Commission role is to determine the adequacy of the DEIR according the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act and the City of Rialto Environmental Guidelines. After receiving oral and written testimony, the Planning Commission must forward a recommendation to the City Council for final consideration.

Electronic copies of the environmental analysis are available for review in the Development Services Department, Planning Division and online at www.rialtoca.gov <<http://www.rialtoca.gov>>.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The City incurred costs to prepare the environmental document to extend Pepper Avenue across the habitat area, to construct the Pepper Avenue road extension, and to prepare the Specific Plan and the DEIR. The City's completion of the Specific Plan and EIR adds considerable value to the contiguous parcels.

A fee study to allocate a dollar amount to each developable parcel to recover costs associated with the preparation for the Specific Plan and the DEIR will be prepared and presented to the City Council. The study will analyze the potential fiscal impacts and benefits to the City should the Specific Plan area be built-out as permitted under the Specific Plan and develop a reimbursement fee to offset some of the costs incurred to entitle the land for development.

Since the land use plan is predominantly retail, staff expects a substantial positive fiscal impact to the City post development.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission:

- 1) Determine the adequacy of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Environmental Assessment Review 2017-0072);and
- 2) Recommend approval of a Specific Plan (Specific Plan 2017-0001) to establish the boundaries, zoning, infrastructure and design standards for a 101.7-acre site known as the Pepper Avenue Specific Plan (Master Case 2017-0042).