



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: August 28, 2024

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: JENNIFER PAIGE, AICP, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: PROPOSED NEW LAMANDA PARK SPECIFIC PLAN

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Planning Commission:

1. **Recommend** that the City Council consider an Addendum to the 2015 Pasadena General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR), along with the EIR, and find that the Addendum properly discloses only minor technical changes or additions to the EIR, and none of the conditions triggering a subsequent or supplemental EIR are present, as set forth in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15164; and
2. **Recommend** that the City Council make the Findings for Approval for the General Plan Map Amendment, Specific Plan Adoption, and Zoning Code Map and Text Amendments and approve the proposed new Lamanda Park Specific Plan. Amendments to the Zoning Code Text also include technical changes in the previously adopted Specific Plans for internal consistency.

BACKGROUND:

The proposed Lamanda Park Specific Plan (LPSP) is the fifth plan to be presented to the Planning Commission and covers areas in the 2003 East Colorado and the 2000 East Pasadena Specific Plans. The Planning Commission held a study session for the LPSP area on August 23, 2023. Staff presented the draft plan with goals and policies, community engagement process and feedback received, and an overview of the draft plan vision and plan boundaries. Staff also presented information on key development provisions, including residential density, building heights and setbacks, landscaping and design treatments. The staff report is available using the following link: [August 23, 2023 Staff Report](#).

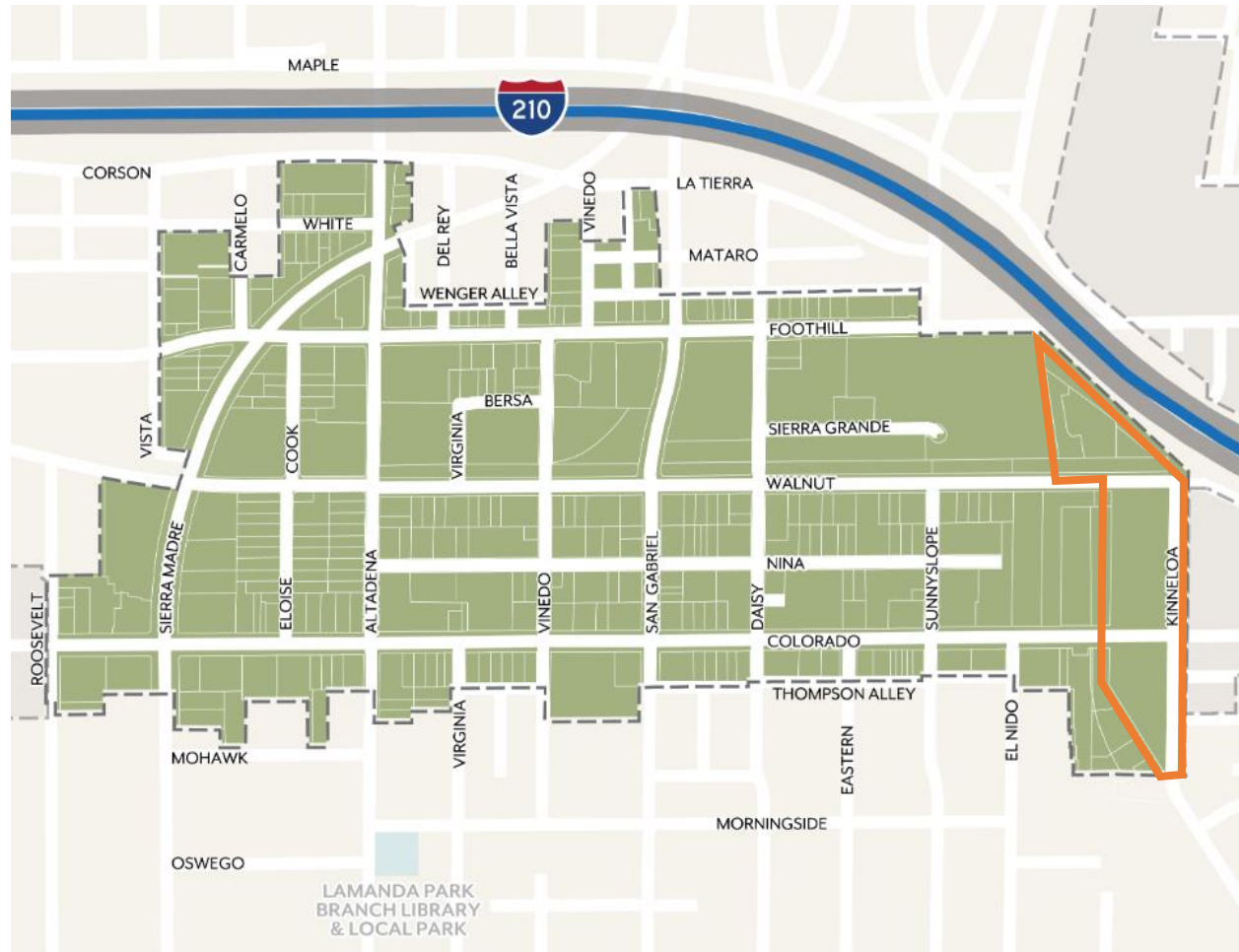
The proposed LPSP will be a new Specific Plan, which is available in Attachment A. For a summary of the community engagement process and public and commission feedback, refer to Attachment B.

PROPOSED LAMANDA PARK SPECIFIC PLAN:

Plan Context

The proposed LPSP generally encompasses the area between the 210 freeway to the north, Roosevelt and Vista Avenues to the west, Colorado Boulevard to the south and Kinneloa Avenue to the east and includes portions of four of the City's major thoroughfares: Sierra Madre Boulevard, Foothill Boulevard, Walnut Street, and Colorado Boulevard. The eastern portion of the LPSP is within a half-mile of the Sierra Madre Villa Metro Station; Refer to Map 1.

Map 1: Plan Area and Context



As previously stated, the LPSP will be a new specific plan in the southeast area of Pasadena, comprising areas within the 2000 East Pasadena and 2003 East Pasadena Specific Plans. The LPSP boundary has changed since last presented to the Commission at the study session. Based on feedback received at the study session, the plan now extends east to Kinneloa Avenue, as indicated in the orange outline in Map 1.

The Lamanda Park area is a unique district in Pasadena. Though the area features an eclectic mix of forms and uses, commercial and industrial properties dominate, owing to the area's historic role as a center for distribution. A concentration of research and development, industrial, warehousing, and office uses can be found in its core. Retail and commercial uses are largely

concentrated along Colorado and Sierra Madre Boulevards. Auto-related uses can be seen throughout the Lamanda Park, especially on Altadena Drive, Walnut Street, and adjacent cross streets. The area also has two major dealerships. The Volkswagen Pasadena dealership is located on the corner of Walnut Street and Sierra Madre Boulevard, and the Audi Dealership on Colorado Boulevard between Sunnyslope and Kinneloa Avenues. There are also some work-live and multi-family units on Nina Street, Daisy Avenue, and Sunnyslope Avenue.

The area plays a crucial role in the technology-focused industries, contributing to the Los Angeles region's \$61.5 billion life science industry. The area is particularly desirable for technology-focused companies due to its proximity to institutions like the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). The area has over 750 businesses and employs close to 5,500 people. Many companies have been in business in Lamanda Park for over five years, with over 100 businesses calling Lamanda Park home for over 20 years. Existing business types include a variety of neighborhood service uses such as advertising agencies, autobody, auto sales, coffee shops, garden centers, hardware stores, machine shops, offices, pet grooming services, pharmacies, restaurants, retail, sheet metal work and manufacturing, and veterinary services. Lamanda Park continues to be a hub of interest for startups, particularly from Caltech.

Major projects in Lamanda Park have been limited to the recently completed Home Depot. Most construction activity in this area has been for tenant improvements, remodeling of existing businesses and construction of new buildings to accommodate existing and new uses. Notable projects include automotive dealers Audi and Volkswagen, Rosebud Café, Wild Parrot Brewing Company, Starbucks, Fast 5Xpress Wash, Encore Cannabis Testing, and Copa Vida Roasting Facility. A recently approved entitlement is for the Rusnak Pasadena Porsche auto dealer at the northeast corner of Sunnyslope Avenue and Colorado Boulevard.

Overall, vacancy rates have been low in this area. The LPSP would leverage off the existing thriving commercial environment and would establish policies and regulations that would facilitate its growth. In order to maintain an already well-established employment and commercial hub, housing will mostly be limited to the perimeter of the LPSP.

Plan Vision

LPSP's vision highlights the City's goal of fostering innovation and creativity allowing for Pasadena to become a cutting-edge business development and job hub.

The LPSP area is envisioned as a center of innovative businesses and creative industries, supported by flexible workspaces, a vibrant public realm, and housing opportunities near employment, retail, and services. The area has been a thriving "industrial" hub and the vision will help enhance this. The LPSP includes goals and policies that provide direction for implementing the plan's vision and achieving desired outcomes. Chapter 3 of the LPSP has further information.

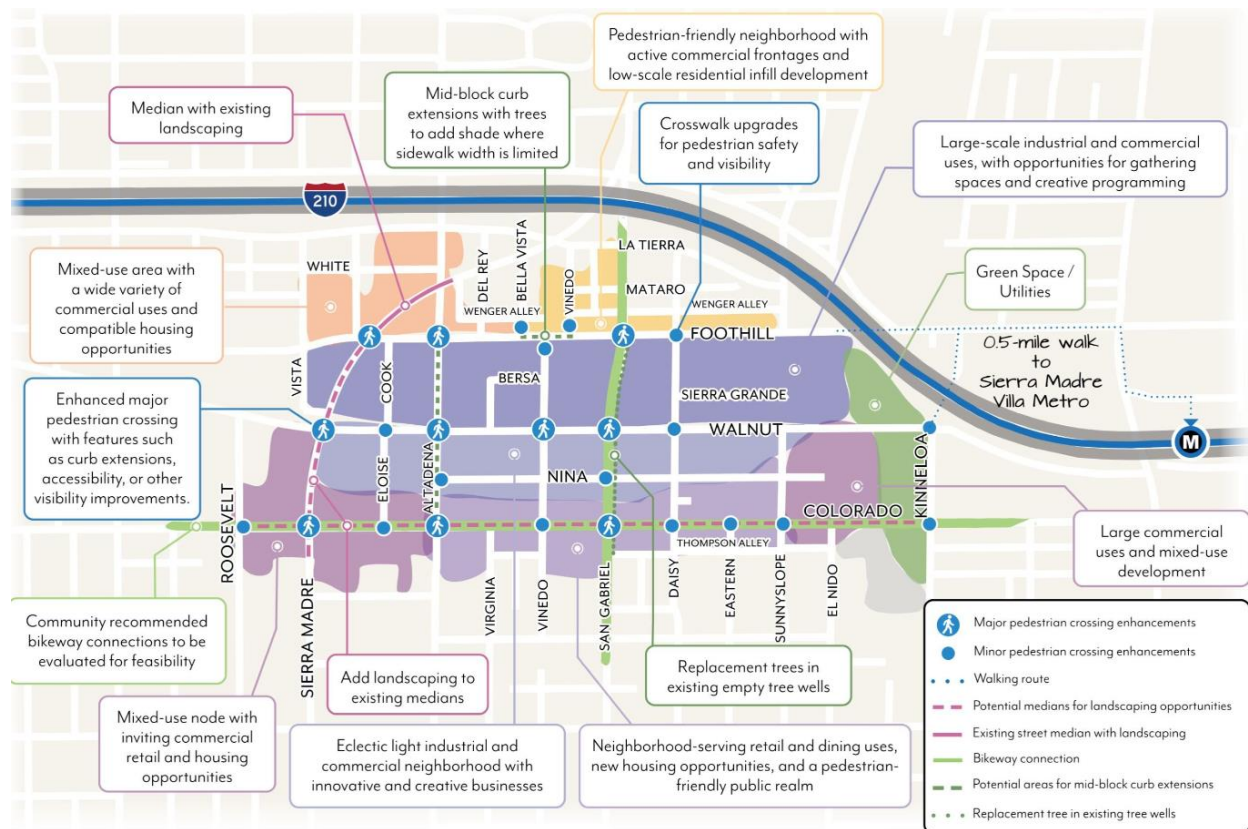
The plan's goals include:

- A supportive environment for new development and businesses which reinforces the surrounding innovative uses.
- A reinvigorated Colorado Boulevard that entices locals with unique retail, restaurants, and other amenities that together foster an active and stimulating environment.
- A variety of new housing options including multi-family, mixed-use, and work/live units.

- Creative building design and complementary building forms that fit the scale of the neighborhood while providing more activity, creative design, and a sense of place.
- Site design that builds and improves connections between the private and public realm through sidewalk-oriented entrances, and visual enhancements where buildings and sidewalks are separated by setbacks, surface parking, walls, or fences.
- Enhancing the pedestrian experience for future residents in new multi-use buildings, existing and new work/live units, as well as employees walking to local shops around the area and connecting to public transportation.
- A green district with sufficient landscaping and shade coverage to encourage pedestrian mobility and support sustainability objectives.

As Map 2 shows, the area is envisioned to grow as an eclectic commercial and industrial tech hub surrounded by housing. Greater connectivity within the area and opportunities to use alternative modes of transportation for employees and residents are also desired. Certain improvements, such as mid-block crossings and curb extensions with trees, will help create friendlier corridors. Existing landscaped medians should be planted and expanded, where feasible, and other urban greening should be incorporated to promote permeability and sustainability.

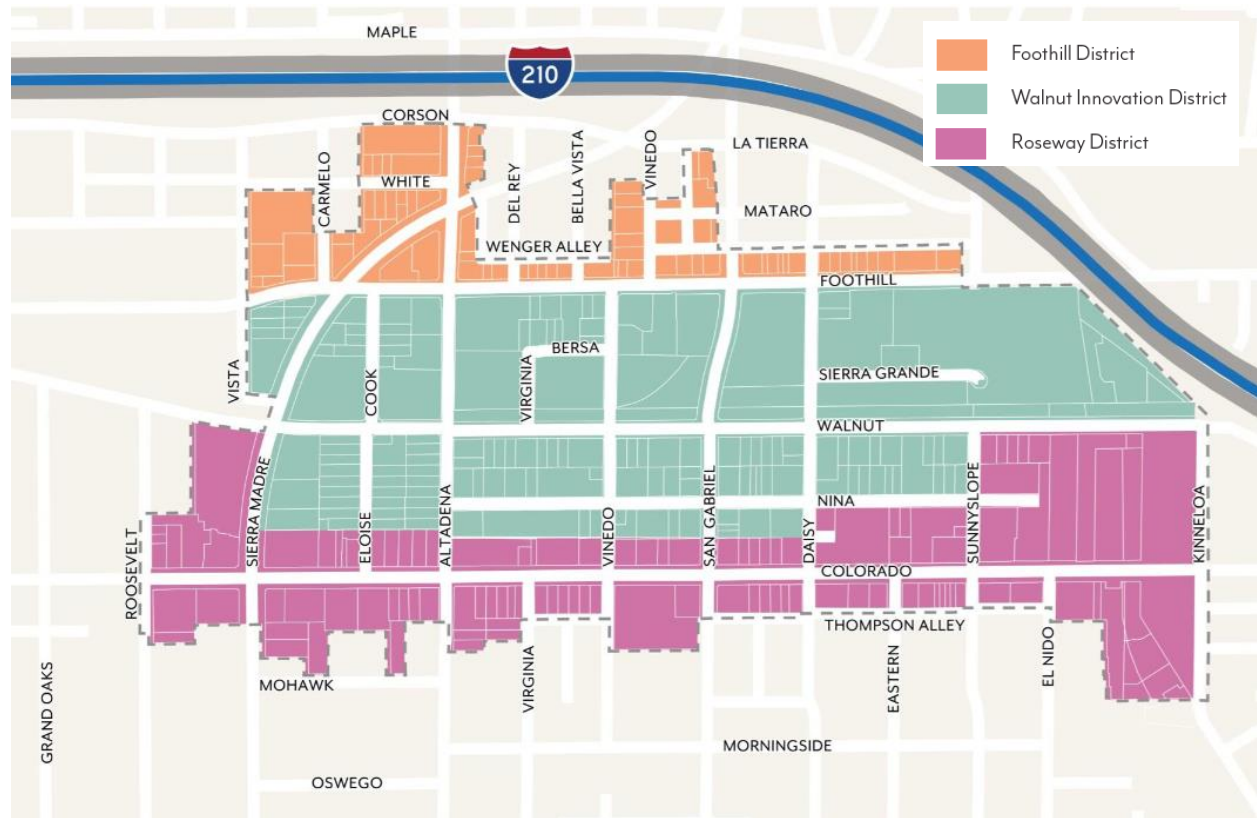
Map 2. Plan Vision Concept



Subareas and Concepts

Lamanda Park is organized into three subareas distinguished by their existing conditions, General Plan Land Use designations, and the plan’s vision for the future: Foothill District, Walnut Innovation District, and Roseway District; Refer to Map 3.

Map 3. Plan Subareas



Key changes from the draft plan presented in August 2023:

- The subarea names were changed from Foothill/Sierra Madre Corridors to Foothill District, R&D Flex to Walnut Innovation District, and Colorado Boulevard Mixed-Use to Roseway District.
- East of Daisy Avenue, generally south of Walnut Avenue, was incorporated into Roseway District which was previously in the R&D Flex.
- The Western area of Walnut Street was incorporated into Walnut Innovation District, which was previously in the Foothill/Sierra Madre Corridors.

The following sections describe each of the subarea’s concepts in greater detail.

Foothill District

The Foothill District subarea acts as the northern border of the LPSP area. The subarea is generally bounded by Vista Avenue to the west, Sunnyslope Avenue to the east, and Foothill Boulevard to the south. The northern boundary varies between White Street, Corson Street, La Tierra Street, and Wenger Alley.

The area mostly consists of one- to two-story buildings, mainly built between the 1930s and the 1960s, and are neighborhood-serving commercial, evolving toward vehicle-related uses. Commercial uses can be found in free-standing buildings as well as in former residential buildings. The western portion of the subarea has a mix of small-scale commercial and industrial buildings and a few residential uses. The eastern portion of Foothill Boulevard has a few sit-down and drive-through restaurants.

The goal of the area is to enhance the multi-use district with residential uses, local shops, services, and employment opportunities, featuring a transition from the western corridor's auto-oriented commercial variety toward a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood feel in the eastern portion of the corridor.

The rendering below showcases the development potential in the Foothill District with a new mixed-use development, with residential on the upper floors, on the northern portions of Foothill Boulevard, with rooftop open space, enhanced pedestrian crossings, and street trees in mid-block curb extensions.

Figure 1. Foothill District Concept



Walnut Innovation District

The Walnut Innovation District subarea encompasses the central portion of the plan area. It is bounded by Foothill Boulevard to the north, Vista Avenue and Sierra Madre Boulevard to the west, Nina Street to the south, and Kinneloa Avenue to the east.

The area is composed of commercial and industrial uses with a cluster of residential uses on Eloise Street. Many parcels north of Walnut Street are two- to three-story warehouse-style commercial structures, including the Home Depot. Additionally, there are technology companies that use these larger warehouse-style buildings to house their headquarters. South of Walnut Street typically features smaller-scale, street-oriented mid-20th-century developments. This

historic character is demonstrated by buildings such as the cross-cable cottage (ca. 1897) at 2754 E. Walnut Street and the Lamanda Park Municipal Light and Power Station (1933) at 160 N. Altadena Drive.

The goal of the area is to build from what is currently there and foster creative sectors, innovation, flexibility, and research and development uses while showcasing art, and celebrating cutting-edge and unconventional building designs. North of Walnut Street will provide a modernized industrial employment hub while creating opportunities for gathering and programming. South of Walnut will be an innovative entrepreneurial district that supports an eclectic mix of creative business endeavors, connected by a comfortable and active pedestrian environment.

The rendering below showcases Walnut Street, with commercial and industrial buildings, landscaped surface parking buffers, enhanced sidewalks, and pedestrian crossings. The area may also have creatively programmed space with uses such as food trucks and outdoor dining areas for employees and locals to frequent.

Figure 2. Walnut Innovation District Concept



The Roseway District

The Roseway District subarea surrounds Colorado Boulevard across the entirety of the plan area, forming the southern edge of the LPSP area. Roosevelt Avenue bounds the subarea to the west and Kinneloa Avenue to the east. Generally, this corridor has a mix of pedestrian-focused uses west of Sunnyslope Avenue and auto-focused commercial uses east of Sunnyslope Avenue.

The intersection of Colorado Boulevard and Sierra Madre Boulevard is the corridor's main focal point of activity, featuring historic street-facing building fronts reflecting various styles from mid-to-late 20th Century development and contemporary multi-tenant shopping centers. Buildings of

one or two stories characterize the western portion. These commercial storefronts contribute to the “Main Street” character of the corridor. The area is home to arts and music uses such as the Pasadena Music Academy, fitness-related uses, eateries, breweries, auto-related uses, and science and technology companies such as hQPhotonics Inc. The area east of Sunnyslope Avenue includes more regional destinations such as the Audi and Porsche dealerships and Ganahl Lumber. This area is characterized by larger buildings with greater setbacks, creating a transition into East Pasadena.

Overall, the Roseway District’s goal is to create a vibrant corridor featuring neighborhood-serving commercial businesses on the ground floor with residential living on the upper floors in the western portion and a mix of regional serving commercial in the eastern portion.

The illustration below shows the intersection of Colorado and Sierra Madre Boulevards as a place with mixed-use development, public realm enhancements, and landscaped medians.

Figure 3. Roseway District Concept



Land Use Regulations

The proposed regulations and standards seek to facilitate and encourage development and improvements to realize the vision for the area, factoring in community, stakeholder, and commission input received throughout the outreach process. The plan will continue to allow for a variety of commercial and industrial uses within the R&D area, and commercial and pedestrian-oriented uses along Colorado and Foothill Boulevards. The proposed regulations are provided in Chapter 4 of the Proposed LPSP; refer to Attachment A.

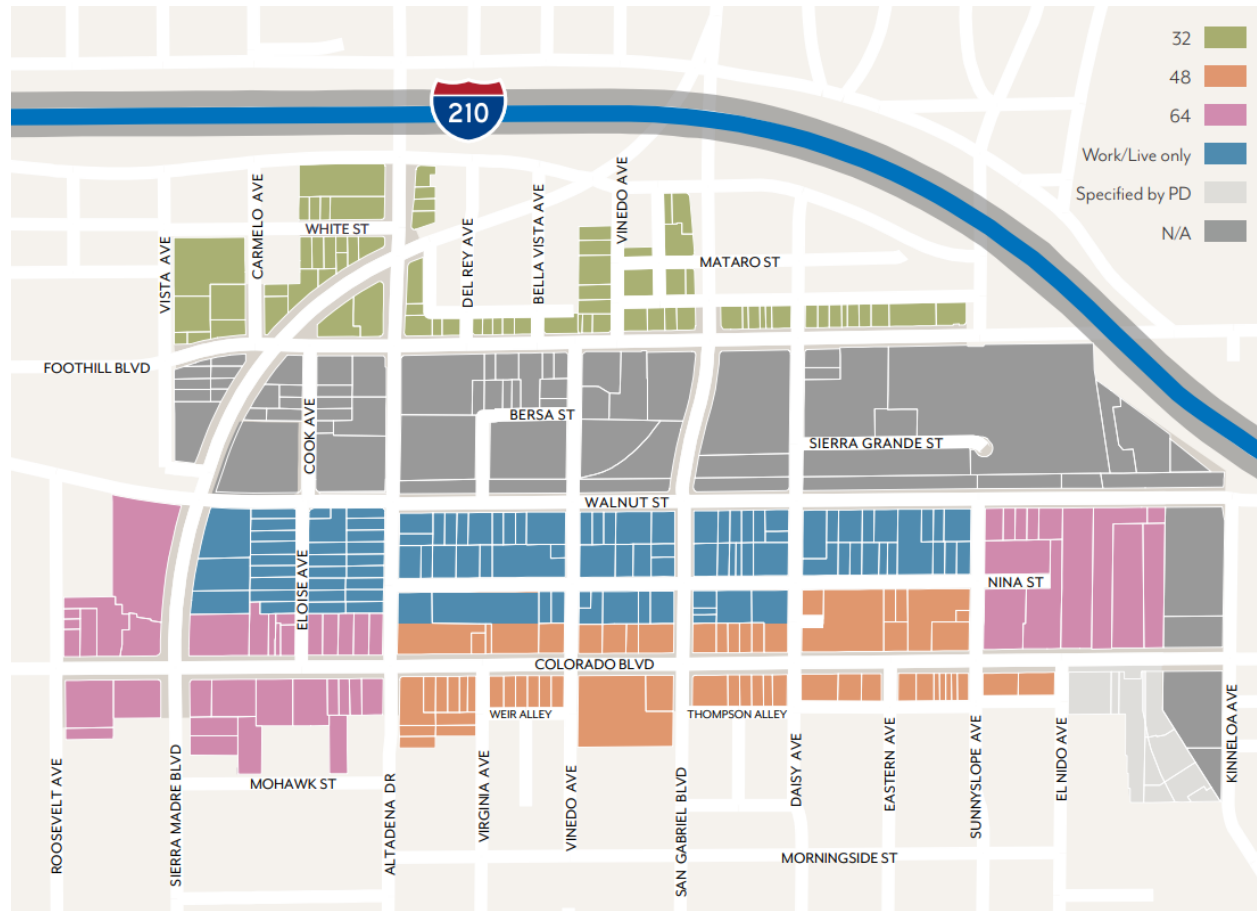
Private and Public Realm Standards

The proposed standards are provided in Chapters 5 and 6 of the LPSP; refer to Attachment A.

Residential Density

Historically, the Lamanda Park area has been a commercially and industrially focused area with some low-density residential uses. The proposed plan's vision includes housing opportunities near employment and therefore will provide the option for more density in various locations on the perimeter of the plan. Densities will be located primarily along Colorado Boulevard and the northern side of Foothill Boulevard, with work/live opportunities between Walnut and Nina Streets. Refer to Map 4 for the proposed residential densities.

Map 4. Density



Key changes from the draft plan presented in August 2023:

There is an increase in housing opportunities in the Lamanda Park area while balancing its already well-established employment and commercial hub.

- On the north side of Foothill Boulevard, the density increases from no housing to 32 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). There is currently some housing located in this area and adding additional housing would complement the area.
- On the south side of Nina Street, between Altadena Drive and Daisy Avenue, the density decreases from 32 du/ac to work/live. This is necessary to preserve the area as a commercial and industrial tech hub. While having housing is important to support

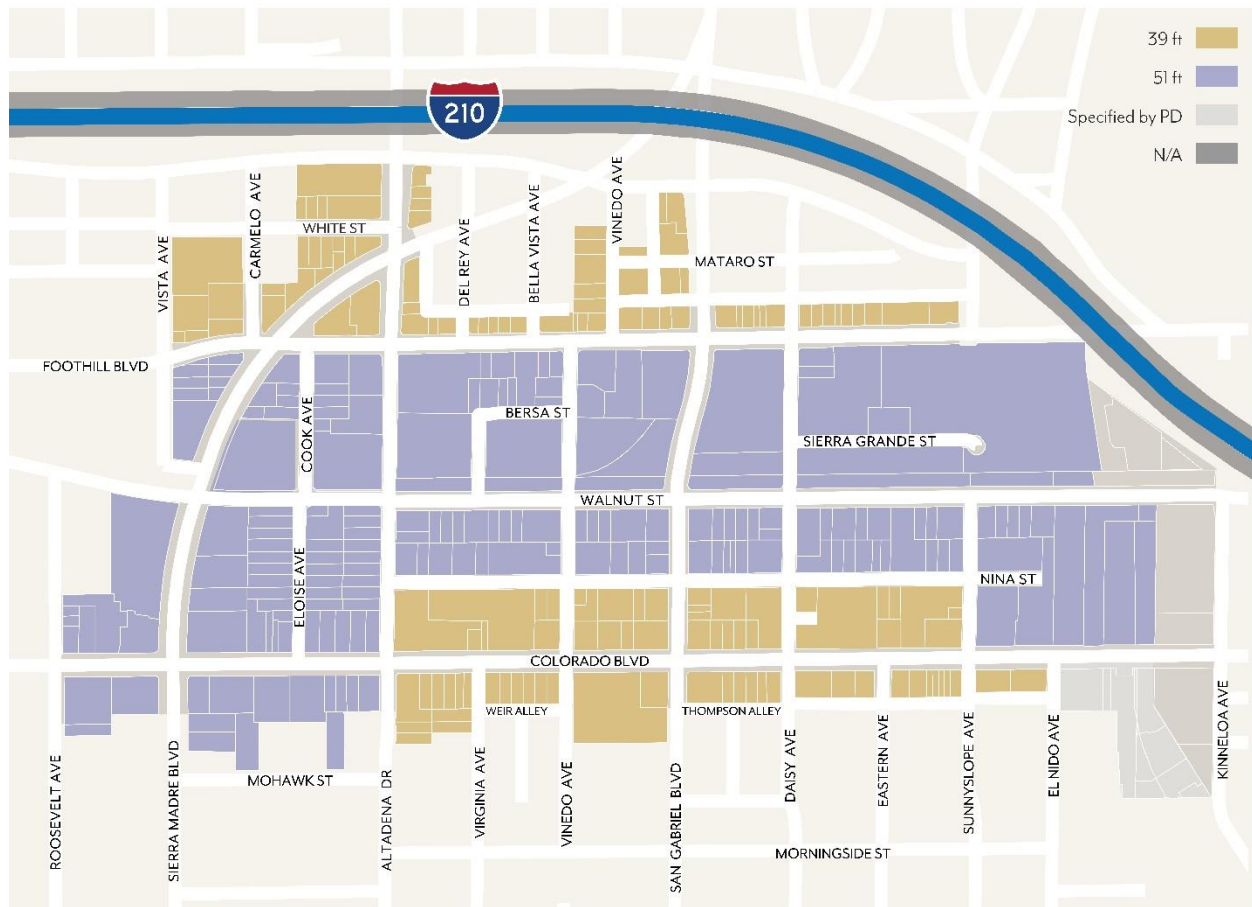
commercial and industrial tech hubs, staff is concerned that allowing multifamily housing in this area could potentially “outprice” tech start-up businesses.

- Between Daisy and Sunnyslope Avenues, the density increases from 32 to 48 du/ac. This aligns with the various housing opportunity sites identified in this area in the 2021-2029 Housing Element.
- The area east of Sunnyslope Avenue, between Walnut Street and Colorado Boulevard, the density increases from no housing to 64 du/ac.
- On Colorado Boulevard, between Altadena Drive and El Nido Avenue, the density increases from 32 to 48 du/ac.

Building Heights

Overall, the proposed building heights are comparable to today’s height limits. North of Foothill Boulevard the proposed height is 39 feet, a slight increase of 3 feet to accommodate taller ground floors. Along Colorado Boulevard the proposed height is 39 feet between Altadena Drive and Sunnyslope Avenue and 51 feet at key intersections. Currently the height limit is 45 feet for the entire corridor. The rest of the plan proposes a building height of 51 feet, allowing for new industrial and commercial development opportunities between Foothill Boulevard and Nina Street. This is a slight decrease from the current height limit of 60 feet. Refer to Map 5 for proposed building heights.

Map 5. Building Heights



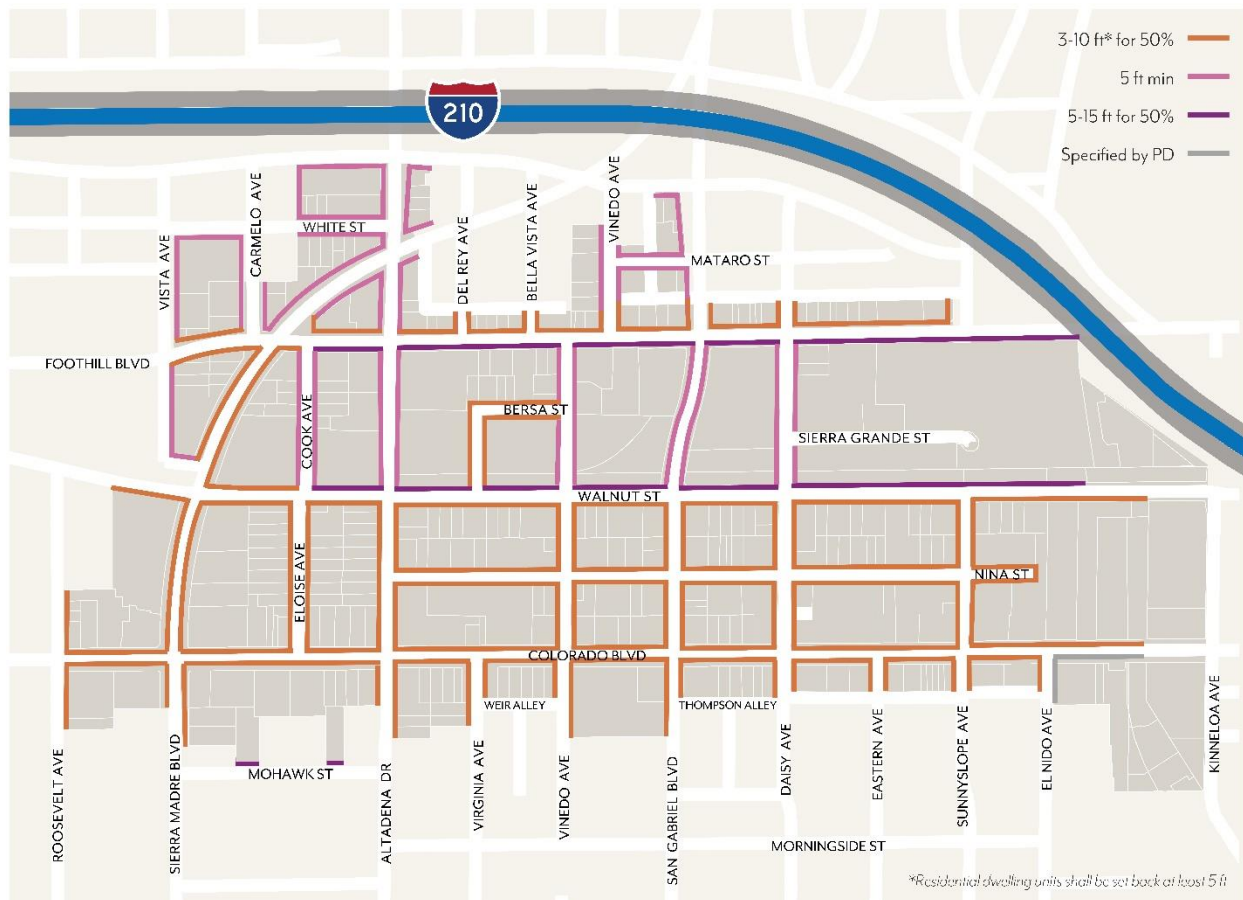
Key changes from the draft plan presented in August 2023:

- On the north side of Foothill Boulevard, the building height is increasing slightly from 36 feet to 39 feet. This would accommodate a minimum 15 feet ground floor and 12 feet for each upper floor, and housing on the upper floors, totaling three stories.
- Between Foothill Boulevard and Walnut Street, the building height is increasing from 45 feet to 51 feet (four stories).
- The area bounded by Walnut Street, Sierra Madre Boulevard, Nina Street, and Sunnyslope Avenue, the building height is increasing from 35 feet to 51 feet (four stories).

Setbacks and Stepbacks

Currently, building setbacks vary throughout the LPSP area. Some buildings are built to the property line, while others are set back between 10 to 15 feet from the sidewalk. The proposed plan will establish a setback range, of three to 10 feet setback for most of the plan area, with five to 10 feet in the industrial and commercial areas. Residential dwelling units shall be setback at least 5 feet. Setback areas will be required to include landscaping to enhance the ground floor of the building. Refer to Map 6 for the proposed setbacks.

Map 6. Setbacks



Key changes from the draft plan presented in August 2023:

- On the north side of Foothill Boulevard, the setback is increased from zero feet to a range of 3-10 feet for 50% of the linear frontage.
- For the northern side of Walnut Street, the setback is increasing from zero feet to 5-10 feet setback range for 50% of the linear frontage. This will help accommodate for landscaped setbacks which enhance the pedestrian experience for the work/live units.
- For the southern side of Walnut Street, the setback is increasing from zero feet to 3-10 feet setback range for 50% of the linear frontage. These parcels are smaller and shallower and will encourage adaptive reuse for new development while providing landscaped buffers.
- For Nina Street, the setback is increasing from 2-5 feet to 3-10 feet for 50% of the linear frontage. This is to accommodate landscaped setbacks and is appropriate for work/live units, as well as some existing multi-family units.
- For Colorado Boulevard, the setback is increasing from 2-7 feet to 3-10 feet for 50% of the linear frontage. In addition, the upper story stepback requirement will increase to 10 feet for buildings taller than 20 feet to accommodate existing mature Ficus trees.

The following provisions on sidewalks, street trees, and open spaces were not available at the last study session.

Sidewalks

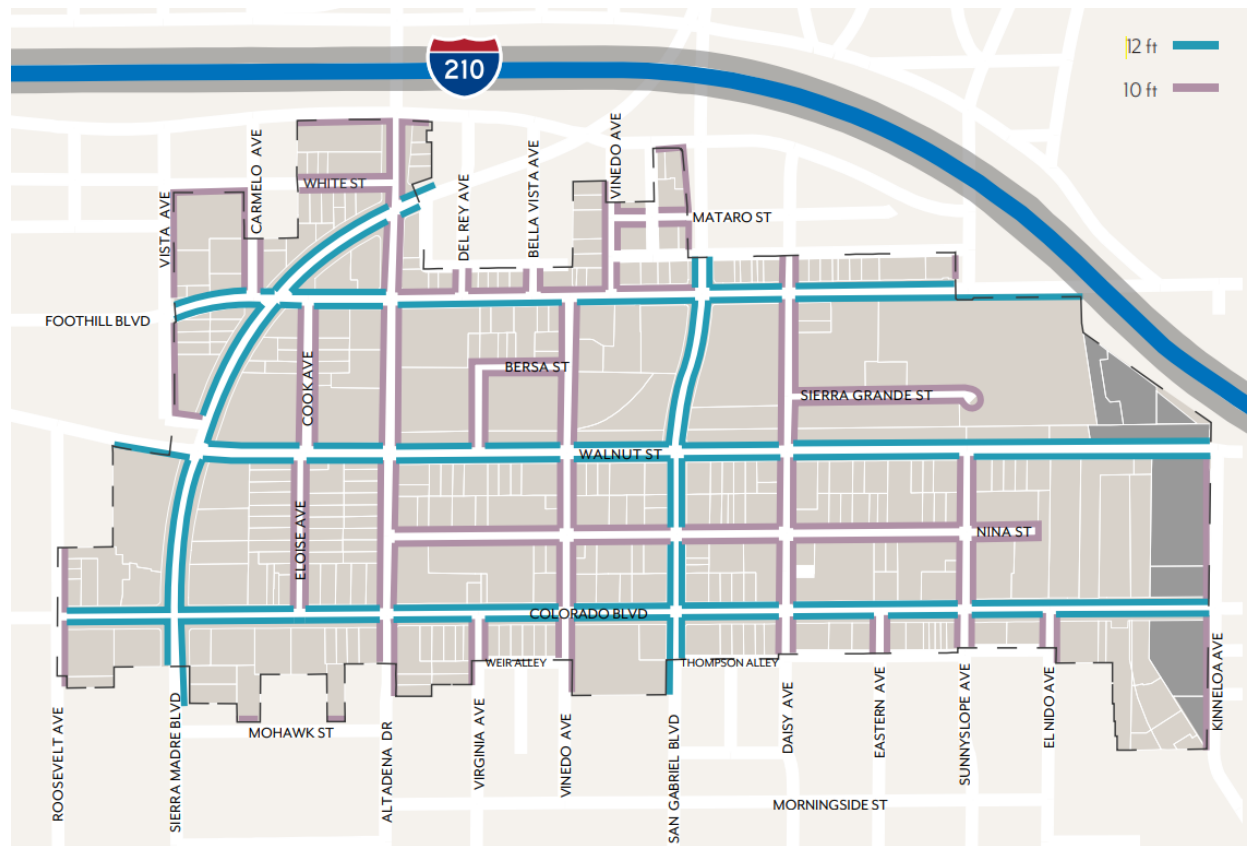
Minimum sidewalk requirements are new and play a crucial role in circulation within the plan. LPSP's larger streets, including Colorado Boulevard, Walnut Street, Foothill Boulevard, Sierra Madre Boulevard and San Gabriel Boulevard, are proposed to have a sidewalk width of 12 feet, allowing for a larger walk and amenity zone. The smaller streets within the plan area are proposed to have a sidewalk width of 10 feet which is consistent with what is there currently and is sufficient for walk and amenity zones for less anticipated pedestrian traffic areas. Refer to Map 7 for the proposed sidewalk widths.

Street Trees

An important new provision of the LPSP is to require new development to plant street trees with the guidance of the City's Master Street Tree Plan. Appendix A2 gives a general description of existing street trees, designated street tree species, and guidance for future tree selection.

Additionally, Colorado Boulevard, Sierra Madre Boulevard, San Gabriel Boulevard, Foothill Boulevard and Altadena Drive currently have medians that can potentially have vegetation and trees, improving the aesthetic of the public realm. Though the City's Master Street Tree Plan does not apply to street medians, Appendix A2 provides guidance for future vegetative landscaping on medians.

Map 7. Sidewalk Widths



Open Spaces

Open spaces contribute to an active public and private realm, serving a variety of purposes including spaces for private use, relaxation, and community and employee gathering. Open spaces can range from private patios and balconies to useable shared spaces such as plazas and pocket parks with public art.

Residential projects, including mixed-use projects, shall provide a minimum amount of total open space (which is a combination of all private and common open space areas). Similar to recently adopted specific plans, open space requirements for residential developments are based on the number of bedrooms per unit, ensuring adequate open space for residents within each building. However, due to more modest building envelopes (related to heights, floor area and setbacks) in the draft plan, the open space requirements are slightly less compared to other recently adopted specific plan areas. Nonetheless, the required open space will also still be greater than what is currently required in the Zoning Code. In addition, residential and mixed-use projects with more than 80,000 square feet of gross area shall provide publicly accessible open space.

Plan Implementation

The proposed LPSP will be primarily implemented through the adoption of the plan's new land use, public realm, and development regulations, which align private sector investment with the plan's vision, goals, and policies. In addition, the LPSP improvements and programs funded through the City and outside sources, can further implement the plan, particularly where new

development is less likely to occur. The proposed LPSP will include targeted actions intended to help guide and prioritize the implementation of the plan. It will also provide an overview of existing services, plans, and programs, all of which can be leveraged to help implement the plan. The proposed implementation actions are provided in Chapter 7 of the Proposed LPSP; refer to Attachment A. Also refer to Map 2 on page 4.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

An Initial Study and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared for the Pasadena General Plan in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and certified by the City Council on August 17, 2015. An addendum to the EIR has been prepared to analyze the new LPSP in compliance with Section 15164 (Addendum to an EIR or Negative Declaration) of the CEQA guidelines (Title 14, Chapter 3, Article 11). The addendum found that the project revisions will not result in any potentially significant impacts not already analyzed in the EIR. Refer to Attachment C for the Addendum to the General Plan EIR. Refer to Attachment D for information on the 2015 General Plan EIR.

CONCLUSION:

The Lamanda Park Specific Plan would replace portions of the East Pasadena Specific Plan (2000) and the East Colorado Specific Plan (2003). The plan will define area boundaries, vision, goals, policies, regulations, objective design and development standards, and action terms. This plan seeks to facilitate and encourage development and improvements to realize the vision and objectives for the area, factoring in community, stakeholders, and commission input throughout the outreach process.

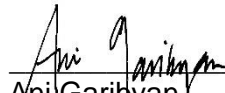
Respectfully Submitted,



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Attachments: (6)

- Attachment A – Proposed Lamanda Park Specific Plan
- Attachment B – Community Engagement and Public Feedback
- Attachment C – Addendum to the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- Attachment D – 2015 General Plan EIR and Appendices
- Attachment E – Recommended General Plan and Zoning Code Amendments
- Attachment F – Required Findings for General Plan and Zoning Code Amendments