

IX. RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

B. RESPONSES TO ORAL COMMENTS

The City of Pasadena held two public meetings to solicit comment on the Draft EIR. Specifically, the following City of Pasadena meetings considered the Draft EIR:

- Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) – August 26, 2010 (pages IX.B-1 to IX.B-17)
- Hearing Officer Hearing (HOH) – September 1, 2010 (pages IX.B-18 to IX.B-20)

Both meetings were advisory in nature with no authority to take action on the project, which is still in the environmental review stage. Each meeting provided the respective advisory body the opportunity to comment on the analysis and conclusions in the Draft EIR, and to facilitate a dialogue outside of the EIR process. Comments directly relevant to the Draft EIR are summarized here. While general design and project related comments are not considered environmental comments under CEQA and will be addressed and considered separately throughout subsequent stages of the project approval process, responses to these comments are provided where appropriate.

The Transportation Advisory Commission meeting of August 26, 2010 facilitated more of a dialogue between the Commission, the applicant and staff. Only one member of the public was present and offered comment.

The Hearing Officer Hearing of September 1, 2010 was solely to collect public comment. No significant discussion concerning the EIR process was conducted by the Hearing Officer. Nine members of the public provided EIR comments. Several of the comments expressed support for the project, its potential community and City benefits, and a desire to see the approval process move quickly. These comments, and other comments not directly related to the Draft EIR are not addressed in any detail here.

Comments are presented in chronological order of each meeting and are numbered and sequenced by the respective meetings (e.g., HOH-#, etc.).

Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) Meeting August 26, 2010

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Commissioner Floraline Stevens

Comment TAC-FS.1

The Constance Hotel building is in a dilapidated condition.

Response TAC-FS.1

Conditions of the existing former Constance Hotel structure are extensively documented in the Historical Resources chapter of the Draft EIR (see pages IV.C-8 through IV.C-10). As acknowledged in the Draft EIR, the historical structure built in 1926, is vacant (and has been vacant for at least 18 months) and was last utilized as a senior residence (Pasadena Manor). Until such a time as Phase 1 project construction is initiated (conversion of the former Constance Hotel structure to a new converted hotel use), no new improvements to the structure would be expected and existing conditions would be expected to be largely unchanged.

Comment TAC-FS.2

What is the height of adjacent office buildings and relationship of the new project office building to other neighboring buildings including Chase?

Response TAC-FS.2

An assessment of the visual relationship between the project and adjacent buildings is provided in the Aesthetics chapter of the Draft EIR. The majority of these uses are located along Lake Avenue adjacent to, south and north of the proposed project, including the 11-story office building located at 2 N. Lake Avenue directly across Colorado Boulevard from the project. The Chase building mentioned by the Commissioner is a nine-story structure across from the project, on Colorado Boulevard immediately west of Lake Avenue. As addressed in the Draft EIR, the proposed project would be considered aesthetically compatible with surrounding uses with respect to massing and scale for purposes of determining significance under CEQA. Specifically, the Draft EIR states the following (page IV.A-23):

“The proposed structure would be six stories in height and would increase massing and scale of the site compared to existing conditions. The proposed structure would be located in an area that contains similar multi-story structures occupied with similar commercial uses. As such, while the proposed project would increase massing and scale compared to existing site conditions, it would maintain a comparable aesthetic appearance with similarly scaled adjacent buildings. Because the site is surrounded by a number of similarly scaled buildings, the existing site does not inherently provide a sense of visual relief along Lake Avenue. As such, the project would create a sense of continuity for pedestrian and driver level views along Lake Avenue, rather than an intrusion or disruption.”

The Draft EIR continues:

“As such, while the proposed project would increase massing and scale compared to existing site conditions, it would maintain a comparable aesthetic appearance with similarly scaled adjacent buildings” (page IV.A-23).”

These conditions would also apply to the Chase building, located further west. The Commissioner is referred to the IV.A, Aesthetics of the Draft and Final EIR for a detailed analysis of these conditions, including several photo-simulations that depict the scale of the project relative to each of the adjoining streets.

The project will also be subject to the design review process as also described in the Draft EIR:

“As the design of the project changes through the design review process set forth in the Zoning Code, it will be subject to approval from the City of Pasadena Design Commission. Any changes to the preliminary design analyzed herein will be further analyzed and it is anticipated that any potential impacts that may arise from such changes will be mitigated through conditions imposed by the Design Commission.”

Consequently, the visual effects of the project as they relate to adjacent buildings have been adequately addressed by the Draft EIR.

Comment TAC-FS.3

All the restaurants will be on the second level. How is this pedestrian friendly?

Response TAC-FS.3

While the Commissioner is correct that most restaurant space will be located on a second terrace level, that level will be integrated into the street level pedestrian experience through a paseo extending into the project site adjacent to the hotel and leading up to the terrace level. The paseo will serve as both an entry into the project site from Colorado Boulevard, as well as a connection of sorts that links the hotel with the adjacent retail and restaurant uses within the project. Pedestrian amenities and landscape continuity including trellises, water features and planters will further enhance the experience and provide a connection between street and terrace levels. The Zoning Code (Section 17.30.030B) requires pedestrian-oriented uses to occupy the ground level of the project along Colorado Boulevard and Lake Avenue, respectively. The project proposes either retail or restaurant uses on the majority of the ground floor, which complies with the Zoning Code.

Comment TAC-FS.4

Does not agree that conversion of Constance Hotel building into 81 units under Alternative 3 could be considered historically sensitive, even if undertaken in accordance with National Park Service (e.g., Interior 106 Standards) guidelines.

Response TAC-FS.4

Alternative 3 meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. It retains the central double loaded corridor and doorways in their existing locations while removing existing hotel room demising partitions to form fewer and larger residential units. Because this approach meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, Alternative 3 is "historically sensitive" to the Constance Hotel building and meets relevant criteria for rehabilitation.

Commissioner Steven Acker

Comment TAC-SA.1

The number, type and route of valet trips should be explained, including the path to the parking structure at 2 N. Lake Avenue.

Response TAC-SA.1

The Draft EIR evaluated the number, type and route of valet trips in Chapter IV.E, Transportation and Circulation, and in Appendix I, Final Transportation Study for the Lake at Colorado Project DEIR, prepared by RAJU Associates. This is described in the Draft EIR as follows:

"All of the Phase 1 valet trips, not including pass-by, were assigned to and from the existing offsite parking facility at 2 N. Lake Avenue. As indicated in **Table IV.E-8**, Phase 1 trips to the off-site parking facility would be a net total of 35 inbound and 49 outbound during the morning peak hour and 49 inbound and 54 outbound during the evening peak hour. These trips occur in addition to the project-generated trips to and from the project site.

The inbound project-generated trips to the project site were assigned as outbound valet trips from the project site to the potential valet parking facility at 2 N. Lake Avenue, and the outbound project-generated trips from the potential valet parking facility were assigned as inbound valet trips to the project site. These inbound valet trips to the projects site were then finally assigned as outbound trips from the project site. The distribution of valet trips to/from the valet facility off-site was based on the most logical route (shortest and easiest, preference to right-turns rather than left-turns) between the project site and off-site parking facility. The valet trips traffic assignment to/from the off-site parking facility are depicted in the project traffic study (Appendix I of this EIR)."

As shown in Figure 10, in Appendix I to the Draft EIR, the shortest and easiest route was determined to be Mentor Avenue south/Lake Avenue north to Boston Court east into the 2 N. Lake Avenue parking structure. Each leg of the valet trip to/from the project site was evaluated in the project traffic analysis and incorporated in the impact findings/conclusions in the Draft EIR.

Commissioner Diane Trout**Comment TAC-DT.1**

Concerned about the relative short-term nature of a shuttle as mitigation (three year minimum) for the Walnut Street/Lake Avenue intersection relative to the life of the project. What happens to effectiveness of mitigation after three years, and any resulting change in impact?

Response TAC-DT.1

The mitigation measure consists of the provision of funding to cover the capital costs of acquisition of a shuttle bus and 100% of the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) costs for a period of three years.

The three-year time frame is considered a sufficient period to establish operations and maintenance costs for the shuttle and adequate lead time for the City to pursue other subsidies that would allow the shuttle to continue to operate in perpetuity. As such, the three-year time frame is intended to provide a bridge to funding that would increase transit ridership in both the near- and long-term, and reduce system/network trips that would otherwise be impacting the Walnut Street/Lake Avenue intersection. After three years, the applicant will have been considered to have contributed their fair share to the cost of establishing this shuttle, and the responsibility to maintain the route will pass to the City. The City does not plan to cancel the route after three years.

Comment TAC-DT.2

Concerned about LOS at Lake Avenue/Maple Street (north of the freeway) moving from LOS D to E.

Response TAC-DT.2

The Commissioner is correct in acknowledging that the intersection of Lake Avenue/Maple Street moves from LOS D for 2009 conditions to LOS E with the addition of project traffic for Phase 3 PM peak hour conditions (see Table IV.E-14). The PM peak hour LOS does not increase solely with the addition of the project traffic for Phase 1 and 2 conditions, but gets pushed to LOS E when future ambient growth is added (see Tables IV.E-9 and IV.E-11). Despite this general degradation of LOS at the Lake Avenue/Maple Street intersection, the project increase in volume/capacity (V/C) does not exceed established City of Pasadena thresholds of significance (an increase of 0.03, or greater). Consequently, even with the change in LOS, for CEQA purposes, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact at this intersection. The Commissioner's concerns are also noted for the record here and will be forwarded on to the decision-maker.

Comment TAC-DT.3

Will the pedestrian experience from the Lake Gold Line station to the project change? Is there mitigation that should be imposed to ensure that pedestrians are not discouraged to walk from the station to/from the project)?

Response TAC-DT.3

The Draft EIR comprehensively analyzed potential impacts to transit as well as pedestrian flow in and around the project site (pages IV.E-37 through IV.E-47). No potential impacts were identified, as pedestrian traffic has adequate sidewalk widths, crosswalks, signalized intersections, and other pedestrian features in place to protect safety. Whereas the Commissioner's concern regarding the aesthetics of the pedestrian experience to/from the Lake Avenue Gold Line Station are acknowledged, the considerations are more appropriately addressed through conditions of approval outside of the CEQA process as might be deemed necessary to provide or contribute additional amenities.

Comment TAC-DT.4

A ticket machine and other improvements should be added to the Metro bus stop at Lake Avenue/Colorado Boulevard to encourage project ridership.

Response TAC-DT.4

Mitigation Measure IV.E-13 provides a number of specific conditions/improvements with respect to the Lake Avenue/Colorado Boulevard bus zone, adjacent to the site. While a requirement for a ticket machine is not explicitly identified as one such condition, Metro as the responsible transit agency would be responsible for its implementation and funds provided by the measure for bus stop improvements could be utilized for a ticket machine, if so determined by Metro. The Commissioner's support for inclusion of a ticket machine and other improvements is also noted for the record here and will be forwarded on to the decision-maker.

Comment TAC-DT.5

Has similar funding that would support continuation of shuttle services past 3 years been successful for other projects?

Response TAC-DT.5

The Playa Vista First Phase Project in the City of Los Angeles provided funding to the Santa Monica Big Blue Bus for implementation of additional bus services along the Lincoln Boulevard corridor between the City and the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). This service has been very successful and has been absorbed into the overall Santa Monica Big Blue Bus day-to-day operations.

Commissioner Robin Salzer

Comment TAC-RS.1

What is the project schedule for completion of each/all phases?

Response TAC-RS.1

As addressed in the Transportation and Circulation analysis (Chapter IV.E and Appendix I of the Draft EIR), the project schedule for traffic analysis purposes assumes that Phase 1 would be

operational in 2012, Phase 2 would be operational in 2014 and that the project would be fully operational and completed with Phase 3 in 2015.

Comment TAC-RS.2

Will new construction impair the historic status of the Constance Hotel building?

Response TAC-RS.2

The Draft EIR provided a comprehensive analysis of the impacts of the proposed project on Historical Resources (see EIR chapter IV.C, Historical Resources). The analysis included the direct effects on on-site resources themselves (including renovation of the former Constance Hotel structure and demolition of the 1926 commercial storefront along Colorado Boulevard) as well as the effect of actions as contributors to the significance of other structures, and impacts to setting and context. The demolition of the storefront would have a significant adverse impact to the eligibility of the Constance Hotel structure as noted on page IV.C-28 of the Draft EIR:

“The exterior of the 1926 multi-storefront building is substantially intact below later additions, though its interiors other than the original dining room have sustained significant alterations and do not retain integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association. As such, the multi-storefront building is a historic resource. The Constance Hotel tower and courtyard would not continue to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and convey their historic associations with the demolition of this related building. Therefore, demolition of the 1926 multi-storefront building would result in a significant adverse effect to historic resources on the site.”

The effect of this impact would remain significant, even after extensive mitigation, as noted on page IV.C-36 of the Draft EIR:

“Implementation of the mitigation measures would not reduce impacts to historic resources to a less-than-significant level and the Constance Hotel would not continue to remain eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources and the National Register of Historic Places. Consequently, the project, as currently proposed, would have a significant and unmitigated impact to historical resources, even with preservation of the former Constance hotel tower and related elements including the hotel courtyard.”

In addition, the Draft EIR also addressed the relationship of new construction to the historic Constance Hotel structure and any direct potential impact to the building. This is addressed in detail on pages IV.C-29 through IV.C-30 of the Draft EIR. Both the design of the new hotel addition, as well as other new construction; and the relative location, scale and massing of new construction, were found to not result in a significant adverse impact to the Constance Hotel structure.

Consequently, the Draft EIR adequately addressed potential impacts of new construction to the historic status of the former Constance Hotel structure.

Comment TAC-RS.3

Have historical resource and other potential impacts to Bistro 45 adjacent to the site been considered by the EIR? Would it be detrimental to business and could it result in similar deteriorating conditions as occur along Rosemead Boulevard?

Response TAC-RS.3

Potential historical resource impacts to adjacent properties, including the Bistro 45 building immediately adjacent on the south, were addressed in the Draft EIR. Specifically, see page IV.C-33 of the Draft EIR. The analysis of potential impacts to the Bistro 45 building found the following:

“Proposed construction is differentiated, but compatible in location, scale, and character with the adjacent resource. This would not be considered a significant impact. Subsequent review by the City of Pasadena Design Commission during the approval process is required. As a subsequent discretionary action in the approval process, the Design Commission will be asked to find that there are no changed circumstances or new information that would require further CEQA review of the project, based on the proposed design. In order to make that finding, the Design Commission has the authority to require changes to the future design of the new construction so that the final design does not have an unmitigable significant impact on historic resources. For that reason, subsequent design review would ensure that the new construction would have no significant impact.”

In addition, the Draft EIR identified specific mitigation to address potential vibration impacts to the Bistro 45 property (Mitigation Measures IV.D-4 through IV.D-6) that could occur during construction to ensure consistency with Secretary of the Interior Standards. Consequently, potential impacts to the Bistro 45 property were analyzed in the Draft EIR.

With respect to potential business impacts to the Bistro 45 property, please see Response to Comment HOH-7 from the adjacent property owner who expressed that the project will be an improvement for the adjacent property owner who has been subject to vacant conditions that created an eyesore, and that the project may actually serve as a linchpin to the success of the East Colorado/Playhouse District/South Lake business districts. However, the Commissioner’s concern over business related impacts are also noted for the record here and will be forwarded on to the decision-maker.

Comment TAC-RS.4

Is there a “Plan B” to parking at 2 N. Lake during special events like the Rose Bowl/Parade? What contingencies have been considered for these special event conditions?

Response TAC-RS.4

The comment appears to assume that special event parking at 2 N. Lake Avenue would preclude project parking at that site. That assumption is incorrect. During special event conditions, the Project would continue to have access to 100 reserved parking spaces at 2 N. Lake Avenue as guaranteed by contractual agreement, in accordance with the Zoning Code,

and as part of the Conditions of Approval for the land use entitlements for the project. Parking contingencies for special events are not within the scope of this project, and it is up to the owners of 2 N. Lake to consent (or not) to allowing special event parking at that location. Organizers for special City events would generally review parking alternatives within the City for public use.

Commissioner Myra Booker

Comment TAC-MB.1

What distance/area would the shuttle serve? There is not a connection to Old Pasadena. Extending shuttle service to include Old Pasadena should be considered.

Response TAC-MB.1

The Pasadena ARTS Bus Route 20 currently provides service along the Lake Avenue and Fair Oaks Avenue corridors including the Old Town Pasadena area. The proposed shuttle would provide service along the Lake Avenue corridor between Del Mar Boulevard/California Avenue to the Gold Line Station at Lake Avenue and the 210 Freeway, and potentially, points north. Currently, several bus routes along Colorado Boulevard connect the study area of the project to the Old Pasadena area. This shuttle route would allow transfers to occur between these transit facilities. There is not an impact of the project that requires mitigation connecting the site to Old Pasadena, rather the comment should be considered by the decisionmaker in the separate context of connectivity provided by the ARTS shuttle bus system.

Comment TAC-MB.2

Pedestrian activity and bike usage should be increased with the project.

Response TAC-MB.2

Pedestrian activity and bicycle usage will be encouraged as all phases of the project will be subject to the City's Transportation Demand Management (TDM)/Trip Reduction Ordinance (TRO) requirements as described on page IV.E-56 of the Draft EIR. The purpose of the trip reduction requirement is to reduce the demand for automobile commute trips by ensuring that the design of major nonresidential developments projects accommodates facilities for alternative modes of transportation. A TOM plan shall be completed to address the project's programs to promote alternative modes of transportation prior to the issuance of the first permit for construction per phase (foundation, demolition, grading, or building) and shall meet requirements for carpooling, bicycle parking and a TDM plan. While no significant adverse impacts to pedestrian circulation were identified in the Draft EIR, and "[n]umerous pedestrian access and circulation possibilities similar to existing conditions will continue to be available with the proposed project conditions" (page IV.E-44), the project will also be subject to approval from the City of Pasadena Design Commission which can address any additional amenities or design considerations that could further encourage pedestrian activity and around the project. However, it should also be noted that the applicant can only address property within its own ownership and control. The Commissioner's recommendation to encourage bicycle use and pedestrian activity is also noted for the record here and will be forwarded on to the decision-maker.

Comment TAC-MB.3

Peak demand periods for the hotel don't match the peak periods analyzed in the EIR for parking and traffic. Explain why this is.

Response TAC-MB.3

In accordance with Institute of Transportation Engineers and City of Pasadena methodologies, the traffic analysis for the proposed analyzed the impacts of the project at study intersections during the peak traffic hours of 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM, and 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. While peak usage of the hotel (and other uses within the project), may not correlate to peak periods on the study area street system, these periods are when the street system would be most congested and the impact of the project, regardless of the trip contribution, would result in the greatest impact. Therefore, the analysis is a "worst case" scenario. Analysis of project intersection impacts during off-peak traffic hours would likely understate project impacts. For example, peak parking demand at project buildout (e.g., Phase 3) was found to occur at 2:00 PM on weekdays at 8:00 PM on weekends (Draft EIR page IV.E-53). Traffic on study area streets would be less congested at these hours, then during AM and PM peak study hours. Project impacts at this time would therefore be less than during peak the peak periods of congestion analyzed in the Draft EIR.

Commissioner Sharon Yonashiro**Comment TAC-SY.1**

Clarify that the shuttle mitigation for the Walnut Street/Lake Avenue intersection impact is not required for Alternatives 3 and 4, because there would not be an intersection impact with those alternatives.

Response TAC-SY.1

Per CEQA Guidelines §15126.4(a)(3), mitigation measures "are not required for effects found to be less than significant". As stated clearly in Chapter VI, Alternatives to the Proposed Project, Alternatives 3 and 4 would eliminate any intersection impact at Walnut Street/Lake Avenue to a less than significant level (see Draft EIR pages VI-41 through VI-55, and VI-71 through VI-76). Consequently, no mitigation measures (e.g., Draft EIR Mitigation Measure IV.E-11 for acquisition and operation and maintenance of shuttle bus) would be required at this intersection for the alternatives.

Comment TAC-SY.2

More information concerning how the Transit Oriented Development designation by the City applies to use of 2 N. Lake Avenue for project parking and associated trips should be provided.

Response TAC-SY.2

The development site for the project and the existing office and parking garage development at 2 N. Lake Avenue, respectively, are located in the Central District Transit-Oriented Area, as shown on Figure 3-5 of the Zoning Code (PMC Chapter 17). Chapter 17.50.340 identifies the applicability and development standards for Transit-Oriented Development. The proposed

project on the development site (hotel re-use, new construction of commercial and residential uses) is subject to the TOD standards which require mandatory reductions in parking spaces, provision of TOD land uses, and the approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit. The project proposes to meet the minimum parking requirements of the TOD and Zoning Code. In addition, the project proposes to utilize an existing parking garage at 2 N. Lake Avenue to supply Zoning Code-required parking spaces for the project in shared arrangement with existing office uses at 2 N. Lake Avenue. Shared parking is allowed among the uses on-site, and is permitted to occur off-site (for example, at 2 N. Lake Avenue), with the approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit. Since the 2 N. Lake Avenue property is an existing development, and not part of a new development, and it does not propose new construction on the property, it is not specifically subject to TOD development standards.

In the Final Transportation Study (Raju Associates, Inc., May 24, 2010), a parking demand study was conducted to analyze the potential for shared parking for the project as well as analyze exiting parking supply and demand at the 2 N. Lake Avenue parking garage. Although the 2 N. Lake Avenue development is not specifically subject to TOD development standards, the model used to calculate parking demand for the new development project does include factors that take into account transit use (buses, light rail, etc.) in the immediate area. For the proposed project, 585 spaces were determined to be the peak parking demand and a parking supply of 650 spaces was recommended. This reduction in the number of parking spaces from 783 code-required parking spaces, requires approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit (to provide a total of 550 parking spaces on the project site, plus an additional 100 spaces at an existing parking garage at 2 N. Lake Avenue, in order to be consistent with the shared parking analysis of the Final Transportation Study, included as Appendix I to the Draft EIR), which is included in the land use entitlement application for the proposed project.

Comment TAC-SY.3

Isn't 783 spaces (e.g., Code total) the amount of required parking for the project? The difference between this amount and that provided by the project to meet demand should be explained.

Response TAC-SY.3

Table 4-6 (Section 17.46.040) of the Zoning Code identifies the off-street parking requirements for different land use classifications, including the required parking reductions for projects located in the Transit Oriented Development district. Based on the project's proposed land uses and gross floor area, a total of 783 code-required off-street parking spaces are required for the project at the completion of Phase 3. Section 17.46.050 of the Zoning Code allows for a reduction in the number of off-street parking spaces required on any site where the hours of operation allow the shared use of parking spaces to occur without conflict.

The City of Pasadena allows for "Shared Parking" between various uses and recognizes the importance of the same in the design of facilities within the City. This phenomenon has been documented in detail in the Urban Land Institute's (ULI's) *Shared Parking* document. Shared Parking concepts have been implemented successfully at numerous mixed-use projects all around the country, in general, and in Southern California, in particular. In actual practice, these mixed uses namely retail, hotel, restaurant, office and bank uses would all peak in their parking demands at different times of the day during weekdays versus weekends and during different times of the year.

In the Final Transportation Study (Raju Associates, Inc., May 24, 2010), a parking demand study was conducted to analyze the potential for shared parking for the project. Table IV.E-23 shows the shared parking demand summary for the project, including peak parking demands by season, weekday/weekend, and time of day. The parking demand profiles of each of the uses by time of day, for weekdays versus weekend days and during different months of the year are overlaid and the peak demand of the mixed-use center is determined. This overall peak is typically the parking demand that the proposed supply should satisfy. The parking supply recommended is typically 10% greater than the peak demand identified for the project so that the last few vehicles arriving during the peak time would not have to circle around to search for those last few available spaces.

For the proposed project, 585 spaces were determined to be the peak parking demand and a parking supply of 650 spaces was recommended. This reduction in the number of parking spaces from 783 code-required parking spaces, requires approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit (to provide a total of 550 parking spaces on the project site, plus an additional 100 spaces at an existing parking garage at 2 N. Lake Avenue, in order to be consistent with the shared parking analysis of the Final Transportation Study, included as Appendix I to the Draft EIR), which is included in the land use entitlement application for the proposed project.

Comment TAC-SY.4

Especially concerned about Walnut Street/Lake Avenue intersection impact. Uncertain about trip reduction benefits from shuttle mitigation, as well as other transit incentives, and whether impacts might not still occur.

Response TAC-SY.4

Pasadena ARTS Bus Route 20 providing service along the Lake Avenue corridor as well as along Fair Oaks Avenue corridor is currently experiencing overcrowding during peak periods within this segment, and has been growing in patronage per the City's General Plan Metrics Report. The intent of the added service is to mainly reduce the number of commuter trips between the Gold Line Station and the South Lake Business District by offering a viable alternative to driving. Encouraging use of the shuttle will be a component of the Project's TDM plan, therefore educating employees at the site of the viability of this option. Increasing shuttle service will decrease transit wait times which, in turn, will make alternative forms of transportation more accessible and inviting. Access to more alternative forms of transportation will, in summary, reduce the number of cars on the street network. Thus, the Walnut Street/Lake Avenue intersection will be less impacted by system traffic.

Comment TAC-SY.5

What is the magnitude of funding that would be required to maintain the shuttle over the long-term?

Response TAC-SY.5

It is estimated that operation and maintenance costs to operate the shuttle service program is approximately \$275,000 per year, which may be subject to change.

Comment TAC-SY.6

What mitigation measures are identified to address segment impacts?

Response TAC-SY.6

Mitigation measure guidelines for each increment of segment volume growth are provided on page IV.E-16 of the Draft EIR, and the table is again included here for reference.

TABLE IV.E-6 Street Segment Impact Thresholds	
Traffic Growth on Street Segments	Required Traffic Mitigation Measures
0.0 - 2.4% Daily Traffic Growth	Staff review and conditions
2.5% - 4.9% Daily Traffic Growth	Initial study required if existing count is greater than 2,000 vpd Soft mitigation required
5.0% - 7.4% Daily Traffic Growth	Initial study required Soft mitigation required Physical mitigation may be required
7.5% + Daily Traffic Growth	Initial study required Soft mitigation required Extensive physical mitigation may be required Project alternatives may be considered

Analysis of project impacts for the 12 studied street segments are provided for each phase, with a correlating column of ADT impact (see Draft EIR Tables IV.E-15 through IV.E-17). The ADT impact column calls out the corresponding mitigation requirements for the respective level of impact along a specific segment. In summary, the following mitigation requirements were identified in accordance with the City's segment impact thresholds:

Phase 1

- Staff review and conditions – 1 segment
- Soft mitigation required – 9 segments
- Soft mitigation + extensive physical mitigation + project alternatives considered – 2 segments

Phase 2

- Staff review and conditions – 8 segments
- Soft mitigation required – 3 segments
- Soft mitigation + extensive physical mitigation + project alternatives considered – 1 segment

Phase 3

- Staff review and conditions – 5 segments
- Soft mitigation required – 4 segments

- Soft mitigation + extensive physical mitigation + project alternatives considered – 3 segments

In accordance with the Department of Transportation's (DOT) guidelines, the specific measures that might be implemented are at DOT's discretion. The Draft EIR identified soft mitigation to address street segment impacts (see Draft EIR Mitigation Measures IV.E-1 and IV.E-2 to contribute funds to Neighborhood Traffic Management Capital Improvement, and for construction maintenance of pedestrian access along Mentor Avenue and Colorado Boulevard). However, as no physical mitigation measures were available to the project to reduce significant street segment impacts that exceeded City thresholds for physical mitigation (short of a project alternative that substantially reduces project scope under Alternative 4), the Draft EIR identified that three street segment impacts would remain with completion of the proposed project (see Draft EIR pages IV.E-62 through IV.E-63). Such significant unmitigated impacts will require a Statement of Overriding Considerations in accordance with §15093 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Comment TAC-SY.7

Is the shared parking methodology an approved City process, or is this new for the proposed project?

Response TAC-SY.7

See Response to Comment TAC.SY-3 concerning the same topic. Shared parking among different land uses has been allowed to occur with a discretionary land use entitlement under the Zoning Code since 1985. The entitlement application for the proposed project includes a parking supply, demand, and use analysis to determine if shared parking can occur without resulting in a shortage of parking spaces at any time. The Raju Associates, Inc. parking study concluded that the proposed mix of land uses and their operating characteristics can accommodate a shared parking arrangement. Examples of projects and/or properties in the vicinity that have shared parking among different land uses include Paseo Colorado (300 E. Colorado Boulevard), Trio mixed-use development (680 E. Colorado Boulevard), and Lake Avenue Church (393 N. Lake Avenue).

Comment TAC-SY.8

The details of project alternatives and their impacts are too deep in the EIR and should be introduced at the beginning of the EIR.

Response TAC-SY.8

The sequence of presentation within the Draft EIR is provided in accordance with Article 9 of the CEQA Guidelines. As such, the Alternatives chapter is always provided towards the end of the document after presentation of all potential environmental impacts. This is to allow the decision-maker to first evaluate the detailed environmental effects of the proposed project itself, before considering possible alternatives that could reduce these effects. However, as also required under §15123 of the CEQA Guidelines, a Summary of the Draft EIR is provided at the beginning of the document, including Alternatives to Reduce or Avoid Significant Effect (see Draft EIR pages 1-2 through 1-4). Consequently, the presentation of EIR alternatives, and detailed discussion of such alternatives, is provided in accordance and consistent with, all relevant CEQA Guidelines. The CEQA Guidelines further encourage brevity in the Summary of an EIR,

so provision of extensive description of EIR alternatives, beyond that which is called for in a Summary is not considered necessary. Nonetheless, the Commissioner's preference for detailed presentation of the Alternatives earlier in the Draft EIR are also noted for the record here and will be forwarded on to the decision-maker.

Commissioner Jennifer Higginbotham

Comment TAC-JH.1

Supports shared parking with 2 N. Lake Avenue structure. Also supports redevelopment of the project corner at Colorado Boulevard/Lake Avenue.

Response TAC-JH.1

The Commissioner's support for provision of shared parking for the proposed mixed-use project, as well as support for redevelopment of the project site is also noted for the record here and will be forwarded on to the decision-maker.

Comment TAC-JH.2

The South Lake Business District could address Commissioner Booker's shuttle service area concerns.

Response TAC-JH.2

The City will continue to look for opportunities to improve and enhance the connectivity issues brought up by Commissioner Booker. The Pasadena ARTS Bus will also examine the potential for coordinated transfers (in its schedule design) to effectively minimize transfer times with the METRO Rapid Line, the Gold Line and other regional transit lines within this study area. The comment is also noted for the record here and will be forwarded to the decision-maker.

Comment TAC-JH.3

Why is the Lake Avenue/Walnut Street intersection impacted/emphasized compared to the Lake Avenue/Colorado Boulevard intersection?

Response TAC-JH.3

The Draft EIR traffic analyzed potential impacts at 15 study area intersections on the local street system that could be most likely impacted by the proposed project. The location of these intersections is shown in Figure IV.E-1 of the Draft EIR. Only one of these intersections (the Walnut Street/Lake Avenue intersection) would be subject to conditions that would result in a significant impact due to the proposed project (with Phase 3 during the PM peak hour) in accordance with the City's significance thresholds (see Draft EIR, Table IV.E-5).

There would be less critical intersection movements at the Lake Avenue/ Colorado Boulevard intersection to trigger a significant intersection impact given the restriction of project site access from Colorado Boulevard, available project parking north of the site at 2 North Lake Avenue, and with project traffic having site access on Mentor Avenue and Lake Avenue.

Comment TAC-JH.4

Why is there an emphasis on Mentor Avenue street segments?

Response TAC-JH.4

See Response to Comment TAC-JH.3. As with the intersection analysis, the Draft EIR also assessed potential impacts to 12 study street segments most likely to be impacted by the proposed project. Four of these street segments are along Mentor Avenue, four are along El Molino Avenue, three are along Hudson Avenue and one is along Catalina Avenue. Street segment impacts are easily triggered on lower volume roadways where even a small number of additional trips can trigger an increase in total street volumes that exceed a threshold (see Response to Comment TAC-SY.6 for street segment thresholds used in the Draft EIR). Given that Mentor Avenue is directly adjacent to the site and provides direct access to project driveways, project trips will occur in higher percentages on Mentor Avenue street segments than on other analyzed street segments further to the east (Catalina Avenue) or west (Hudson Avenue, El Molino Avenue), more impacts would be created along Mentor Avenue street segments.

Comment TAC-JH.5

What is the basis for assumption for shuttle use as effective mitigation, and the associated benefits and trip reductions presumed to occur with mitigation? What type of underlying data/documentation was utilized to demonstrate this effectiveness?

Response TAC-JH.5

The proposed shuttle bus would add additional seats per trip in each direction on an already overloaded route. By improving the headway of the shuttle service, transit capacity will be increased to this well-traveled corridor. See Response to Comment TAC-SY.4 for discussion of potential for utilization of this critical regional transit connector. This shuttle is being offered to the general public for their use and not just for the proposed project users. Given the density of uses and the attractiveness of the corridor connection to the regional transit (Gold Line) that is currently being enhanced, the shuttle service would be effective in reducing the auto trips enough to render the impact reduced to below a level of significance. Shuttle services to train stations adjacent to commercial corridors have been found to be effective around the country.

Comment TAC-JH.6

How was the 3-year time frame determined for the shuttle mitigation?

Response TAC-JH.6

See Response to Comment TAC-DT.1.

Comment TAC-JH.7

Concerned about EIR adequacy and specifically, the effectiveness and stated benefit of shuttle mitigation to reduce the project impact at the Walnut Street/Lake Avenue intersection.

Response TAC-JH.7

See Responses to Comments TAC-JH.5 and TAC-SY.4.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dave Horton, On-Site Business Owner

Comment TAC-PC.1

Was not properly notified during the long-term planning of the project.

Response TAC-PC.1

The Draft EIR properly followed all City and State noticing/posting requirements throughout the EIR process to date, including the Notice of Preparation (per §15375 of the CEQA Guidelines) and the Notice of Completion (per §15372 of the CEQA Guidelines). However, to the extent that more communication between the applicant and the affected business-owner was desired as the project was being conceived and presented to the public, such concerns are also noted for the record here and will be forwarded on to the decision-maker.

Comment TAC-PC.2

May be relocating his business to Mentor Avenue nearby and is concerned about air quality, noise and traffic effects from the project along Mentor Avenue.

Response TAC-PC.2

Mentor Avenue adjacent and proximate to the site is considered part of the environmental setting and baseline conditions for the project under CEQA, and the potential impacts of the project relative to changes that could occur in these conditions is addressed throughout the Draft EIR. Specifically, the potential impacts to Mentor Avenue adjacent and proximate to the site were analyzed with respect to Aesthetics (Chapter IV.A), Air Quality (Chapter IV.B), Historical Resources (Chapter IV.C) Noise (Chapter IV.D), Transportation and Circulation (Chapter IV.E) and Utilities (Chapter IV. F). The commentor is referred to the Draft EIR for a detailed analysis of potential localized impacts at locations along Mentor Avenue in the project vicinity.

Hearing Officer Hearing (HOH) Meeting September 1, 2010

Nine speakers provided comment on the Draft EIR in the sequence below:

1. David Horton (business owner, 908 E. Colorado Boulevard, on-site)
2. Phil Balderama (business owner, on-site)
3. Jenna Kachour (Preservation Director, Pasadena Heritage)
4. Wayne Hunt (25 N. Mentor Avenue)
5. Ann Scheid (500 S. Arroyo Boulevard)
6. Carla Walecka (25 N. Mentor Avenue)
7. John Walsh (848 S. Mentor Ave.)
8. Eddie Imteesud
9. Tim Nguyen (45 S. Mentor Avenue, Bistro 45)

Collective comments are summarized here from topical response, rather than as individuals.

Comment HOH-1

Application of Federal stimulus funding by the City implies that the project has been pre-approved.

Response HOH-1

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), new categories of bonds were created. One new category is the Recovery Zone Facilities Bonds (RZFB) that gives issuers the temporary ability to issue private activity tax-exempt bonds, and in doing so, to induce private lenders to loan money to private entities such as developers, thus stimulating our economy. On May 10, 2010, the City Council recommended awarding the City's RZFB allocation to the proposed project. The recommended action was expressly for the purpose of inducing borrowers to undertake the project, and not to signify that the City or any officer or agent of the City will grant any approvals that may be required in connection with the construction or rehabilitation of the project. Accordingly, the only Federal involvement in RZFBs is the relaxation of Federal income tax rules for a limited time and for certain bonds that finance certain types of projects. RZFBs are not grants of Federal dollars and no Federal dollars are being spent on this project.

Comment HOH-2

There is the appearance of impropriety due to the involvement of a Planning Commissioner representing the applicant.

Response HOH-2

This is not a comment on the substance of the EIR. However, the comment will be forwarded to the decision-maker for consideration

Comment HOH-3

Alternatives 3 and 4 should be pursued because they both address the significant historical resource impacts resulting from the demolition of the 1926 Colorado Boulevard storefront.

Response HOH-3

Ultimately, it will be to the discretion of the decision-maker as to whether the project as currently proposed is approved, including the required Statement of Overriding Considerations in accordance with §15093 of the CEQA Guidelines; or whether one of the EIR alternatives moves forward through the approval process with its associated Statement of Overriding Considerations (still required to address significant unmitigated street segments and construction air quality impacts). The preference for approval of EIR Alternatives 3 or 4, rather than the proposed project, to eliminate the significant impact to historical resources, is also noted for the record here and will be forwarded on to the decision-maker.

Comment HOH- 4

The loading area design for Alternatives 3 and 4 could adversely affect the historic nature of the Hotel Constance courtyard. Specifically, the courtyard dimensions will be altered by encroachment of the parking structure and truck loading spaces into the historic courtyard footprint. Alternatives to this loading configuration should be considered and evaluated including street loading, loading elsewhere on the site such as within or adjacent the hotel addition, such that the courtyard is either not impacted, or is only impacted temporarily.

Response HOH-4

The comment is correct. The loading area design for Alternatives 3 and 4 requires the demolition of the courtyard, which is a character-defining feature. This is a less than significant impact on the historic character of the Constance Hotel site (tower, courtyard, and multi-storefront building) when viewed in the context of the entire project.

Comment HOH-5

Portions of the DEIR that reference historic resources should be carefully reviewed by a historic preservation professional to address inconsistencies in historic resources terminology and contradictory information.

Response HOH-5

See Responses to Comments 6.3 and 6.4 (Pasadena Heritage). The Draft EIR has been reviewed and clarified for references to historic resources.

Comment HOH-6

Traffic segment impacts are acknowledged as not unusual for the area, and in fact, increased traffic may result in more vibrant, business friendly, “park-once” conditions, that would help to offset these impacts.

Response HOH-6

The Draft EIR identifies street segment impacts on Mentor Avenue for the proposed project as well as for EIR alternatives (see Chapter IV.E, Transportation and Circulation, Chapter VI, Alternatives to the Proposed Project, and in Appendix I, Final Transportation Study for the Lake at Colorado Project DEIR, prepared by RAJU Associates), including impacts that exceed the highest threshold of an increase of more than 7.4 percent daily trips. The possible benefits to businesses, and neighborhood vitality are also noted for the record here and will be forwarded on to the decision-maker.

Comment HOH-7

The project will be an improvement for the adjacent property owner who has been subject to vacant conditions that created an eyesore. The project will improve the East Colorado area and may serve as a linchpin to the success of the East Colorado/Playhouse District/South Lake business districts.

Response HOH-7

Aesthetic impacts from the proposed project, including photo-simulations that depict post-project conditions from a variety of perspectives, (see Figure IV.A-8 for the view looking north from Mentor Avenue), as well as a description of how existing visual conditions on and adjacent to the site would change with the project, are provided in Chapter IV.A, Aesthetics, of the Draft EIR. The perceived benefits in overall visual quality, as well as well as a business stimulus for areas to the west and south are also noted for the record here and will be forwarded on to the decision-maker.