



# Planning Commission Report

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**Meeting Date:** March 22, 2012

**Subject:** **9900 Santa Monica Boulevard, 9848 Wilshire Boulevard & 9817 Wilshire Boulevard- Gateway Project:** Discussion of a proposed overlay zone and zone text amendment to allow development on the subject T-1 zone properties  
**Continued from March 8, 2012**

PROJECT APPLICANTS: Jeffrey Wilson, Maynard Brittan and Jeffrey Mirken

**Recommendation:** That the Planning Commission direct staff to:

1. Prepare resolutions:
    - a. Certifying the Final Environment Impact Report
    - b. Recommending to the City Council an ordinance to amend the General Plan to establish a Gateway Overlay Zone
    - c. Recommending to the City Council an ordinance to amend the Municipal Code to establish a Gateway Overlay Zone
  2. Renotify a public hearing for May 10, 2012
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## REPORT SUMMARY

This report transmits draft overlay zone objectives and information regarding the next steps to processing the subject zoning code and general plan amendments.

## BACKGROUND

At its meeting of March 8, 2012, the Planning Commission conducted a site visit to the subject properties and discussed proposed overlay zone objectives and development standards. The Planning Commission directed staff to return with updated objectives that reflect the Commission's comments.

The Gateway Subcommittee, consisting of Chair Yukelson and Vice Chair Corman, met to discuss the overlay objectives and possible development standards. The objectives provided in this report reflect their input, as well as staff input.

## DISCUSSION

The subject zoning code and general plan amendments provide a path for the subject property owners to receive approvals for future development of the T-1 parcels. At present, development of the T-1 parcels is limited to specific transportation-related uses.

Action by the Planning Commission and City Council, if the Council supports the Commission's recommendations, would still require each individual property owner to file separate applications for a

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Planned Development Permit and a zoning code amendment to apply the Gateway Overlay to the T-1 parcels. If a T-1 lot is developed in conjunction with a C3 parcel adjacent to the South Santa Monica Boulevard Roadway, the C3 parcel(s) would also be subject to the Gateway Overlay objectives. The underlying C-3 base zoning standards would continue to apply to the C3 parcel(s) (i.e. 45' height and 2.0:1 FAR).

The Planning Commission is moving in a direction that supports broader design flexibility. The Commission has also expressed concerns about the quality, mass and scale of future development. Rather than establishing specific development standards that may constrain creative design solutions for these parcels, the Commission has favored carefully worded objectives to achieve applicant and City goals.

Staff recommends that some development standards be established for the overlay zone. These standards will relate to height, floor area, parking, minimum lot sizes for T-1 lots (to discourage subdivision), and permitted uses. Most of these issues have already been discussed at previous Planning Commission meetings.

The Gateway Subcommittee discussed height for the T-1 parcels and there may be support for building height up to 60 feet for Parcels 1 and 2. However, additional height would in part be predicated on the quality of the development and its use of setbacks, step backs and building modulation. Consistent with the City Council ad hoc meeting, the Commission is evaluating each of the three T-1 parcels independently. Accordingly, there are some concerns about additional height on Parcel 3 as being potentially impactful to residential properties to the north.

It is anticipated that application of the Gateway Overlay Zone to any of these properties would follow a similar process that was established for the Medical Overlay Zone. To achieve this, staff will prepare zoning text amendments that establish a C-PD-G zone, or commercial planned development gateway overlay zone. This overlay zone will have a few development standards and objectives that will guide future development.

### **Zone Objectives**

The following are draft objectives for the Planning Commission's review:

1. Development shall be consistent with the purpose and intent of the Gateway Overlay Zone and the General Plan.
2. Development within the overlay zone shall promote the garden-like quality of the City.
3. Lot consolidation and coordinated development of underlying T-1 zoned properties and adjacent underlying C-3 properties fronting on South Santa Monica Boulevard is encouraged and shall be required for the reviewing authority's approval of maximum height and density allowances.
4. Project design shall be internally and externally consistent and allow for pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access and connectivity within and between Gateway Overlay Zone properties, the adjacent C3 properties, and residential and hotel development built or planned across North

Santa Monica Boulevard. Connectivity at or above grade and within underground parking structures shall be achieved to the extent feasible.

5. Parking shall be located below-grade, shall be located on properties subject to the Gateway Overlay Zone, and vehicle and pedestrian access to parking shall be convenient. Minimal at-grade parking may be considered by the reviewing authority. Parking in excess of the minimum required parking set forth in Section 10-3-2730 of the zoning code shall be incorporated into any development and be made available to the public. The excess public parking incorporated into any development on Parcels 1 and 2 shall on a collective basis significantly offset the parking deficiency in the neighborhood.
6. Development shall take advantage of design flexibility incorporated into the Gateway Overlay Zone to create iconic architecture that promotes the image of the City and that respects the scale, mass and character of surrounding development in the immediate vicinity. Building facades visible from public streets shall exhibit innovative design and/or distinctive architectural merit.
7. Project design and site planning shall incorporate substantial area dedicated to green space, public open space, and pedestrian amenities, and balance building height with appropriate setbacks and landscaping adjacent to public streets to minimize the appearance of a canyon-effect along North Santa Monica Boulevard; buildings shall be well modulated, with appropriate setbacks on higher floors.
8. Development shall be designed with pedestrian-oriented amenities and uses at the ground floor that encourage pedestrian activity during daytime and nighttime hours.
9. Development on Parcels 2 and 3 shall provide significant setbacks from the intersection of Wilshire Boulevard and North and South Santa Monica Boulevard to aesthetically complement Beverly Gardens Park and the fountain plaza, and planned open space at the northwest corner of Wilshire Boulevard and North Santa Monica Boulevard. The setback area at the intersections shall include pedestrian amenities, green space, significant public art, or other elements determined to be appropriate by the reviewing authority. The size and shape of the setbacks on Parcel 2 shall be a primary consideration for any approval by the reviewing authority of maximum height allowances on that Parcel.
10. Development shall incorporate adequate land dedications or easements that may be needed for future transportation and roadway improvements, including possible bike paths, bus shelters, pedestrian bridges or similar improvements.
11. Development shall not result in detrimental impacts to existing or planned development in the vicinity with regard to traffic levels, traffic safety, pedestrian-vehicle conflicts, pedestrian safety hazards, parking demand, parking design, loading or manner of operation, unless the reviewing authority finds the development benefits outweigh the detrimental impacts.
12. Development shall include public benefits that the reviewing authority determines to be appropriate.

**Next Steps**

It is recommended that the Planning Commission provide direction on the following outstanding policy issues:

- Support or modify objectives
- Establish maximum height limits for Parcels 1, 2, and 3
- Confirm that up to a 1.5 FAR can be achieved on a T-1 parcel, for that portion of the T-1 parcel that is immediately adjacent to a C3 parcel that is part of the overall development project
- Verify that the distribution of the allowed 1.5 FAR on T-1 parcels can occur on portions of the T-1 parcel that are adjacent to C3 parcels NOT included as part of the overall development.

Following clarification of the above points, staff will complete the environmental analysis and prepare resolutions for the Planning Commission to review at its May 10, 2012 meeting.

**Report Reviewed By:**

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Jonathan Lait, AICP