



**PASADENA PLAYHOUSE DISTRICT**  
**Development Strategy Report**

**JUNE 2008**

*Adopted by the*  
Playhouse District Association  
Board of Directors  
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## executive summary

PASADENA'S PLAYHOUSE DISTRICT is at a critical juncture in its evolution. With its myriad cultural institutions, streetscape improvements, and recent wave of mixed-use development, the Playhouse District is emerging as a vibrant hub of *Culture, Commerce, and Community in the Heart of Pasadena*.

Several trends are helping to shape the new face of the Playhouse District as it strives to accommodate new development while maintaining focus on its vision.

- Pasadena's Central District is a national model for downtown revitalization: Old Pasadena, Paseo Colorado, and Lake Avenue offices are easily visible to the outsider. The Playhouse District is equally significant and requires a distinguishable development mixture.
- Recent developments in the Playhouse District have focused on multi-family housing and residential mixed-use projects. The rents, prices per square foot, and occupancy rates in these developments signify the desirability of urban living in the Central District, where residents place great emphasis on the City's walkability.
- In addition to providing direction, goals, and policies for the entire Central District, the *Central District Specific Plan* ("CDSP") articulates the individual roles of specific Districts, including the Playhouse District. The CDSP encourages mixed-use urban developments along corridors and encourages the most intense development around transit stations. Its policies have reinforced resident trends towards driving less and walking more.
- Pasadena's *Green City Action Plan* and its commitment to becoming a city where one can get around without a car. Residents who work in Pasadena already demonstrate a conscious choice to live where they can walk to work, shopping, and recreation. The Central District, with its host of transportation options, walkable street network, and dynamic mix of uses, is where development is encouraged.
- The Central District is blessed by strong access to the region, with its many freeways and the Gold Line. However, increasing congestion and an unsure future for transit construction make creating a sustainable Central District all the more critical.



*Institutions such as the Culinary Academy make the Playhouse District unique.*



The Playhouse District's pleasant environment is one of its greatest assets.

**Figure 1:** Approximately 40,000 residents live within one mile of the Playhouse District which includes student housing for Fuller, Cal Tech and PCC.

## STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

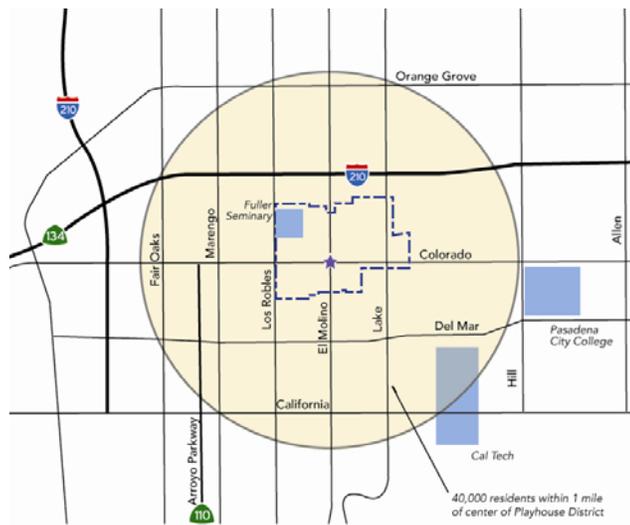
With the understanding of the emerging trends that continue to impact development within the Playhouse District, the Playhouse District has two key strategies for success that will be critical to follow as development and policy pressure continue to save the District and to support a jobs/housing balance in the Central District.

- **Save the District**

The Playhouse District's vision as the home of *Culture, Commerce, and Community in the Heart of Pasadena* should guide development decisions. Saving the District's vision will continue to be challenging as its many underutilized sites become attractive for new development.

- **Jobs/Housing Balance**

The Central District's current imbalance of 40,000 residents within 1 mile of the center of Downtown Pasadena and 80,000 Downtown employees (City of Pasadena Retail Report 2007) continues to exacerbate regional problems with commuting. The opportunity for housing within the Central District is perhaps the only local control the City has to avoid an ever-worsening traffic situation.



## Development Analysis

To illustrate impacts on the jobs/housing balance, this report analyzed five underutilized sites that have development potential yet currently have no development proposals. Maximum floor-area ratios dictate gross square footage amounts for each site. Parking totals reflect reductions for the City's Transit-oriented Development maximum parking requirements for office, retail, and residential. This analysis shows that office development generates at least three times as much traffic as residential development, and requires about twice as many parking spaces for the same project square footage. Because residential uses are prohibited on North Lake Avenue, the Playhouse District can serve as an important home for nearby office workers.

## CONCLUSION

Pursuing, enacting, or not lifting the cap on residential development within the Central District will have significant impacts:

1. Erode the progress made in fulfilling the vision of the Playhouse District;
2. Force residential development to occur outside of the City's walkable, transit-accessible core and into surrounding neighborhoods and cities;
3. Create additional traffic as workers commute to the newly-created jobs in the Central District.

To fulfill the Playhouse District's vision, the goals and policies of the CDSP, the principles of the Green City Action Plan, and the City's General Plan, housing must be allowed as part of the development picture in the Central District.

## introduction

AS THE CULTURAL HEART of Pasadena's Central District, the Playhouse District holds a unique and vital role in the continuing evolution of the City's cultural, retail, and business center. Recent and anticipated development pressure on the Playhouse District has created the need to help guide policy to protect the District's character.

### PURPOSE

This report examines factors that are influencing the Playhouse District today and articulates strategies and conclusions to offer clarity for the District's growth and evolution. As the City of Pasadena decides how to address the issue of residential development in the Central District, the Playhouse District is at a critical juncture. As this report examines, City policies encourage growth to occur within the Central District, including the Playhouse District. And while the City's current housing allocation for units that can be built within the Central District is nearing its maximum, over 4 million square feet of office space remain to be allocated in the Central District. Some of Pasadena's residents, rightly upset by an increase in traffic during the same time period, see a ban on residential construction in the Central District as a way to curb the growth in housing and subsequent traffic impacts. This report examines many of the trends that are influencing growth in Pasadena, and specifically the Central District, and how best the Playhouse District can accomplish many of the goals set forth for not only itself, but for the entire Central District and indeed the City of Pasadena.

The Playhouse District Association, with its charge of maintaining the best interests and long-term viability of its businesses, residents, property owners, and employees, has played an active role in achieving the community vision for the District. Recent development activity, ranging from façade rehabilitations to multi-story mixed-use infill developments, has begun to reshape the Playhouse District into a full-service, thriving urban neighborhood. The continued interest in developing several large vacant or underutilized sites throughout the District

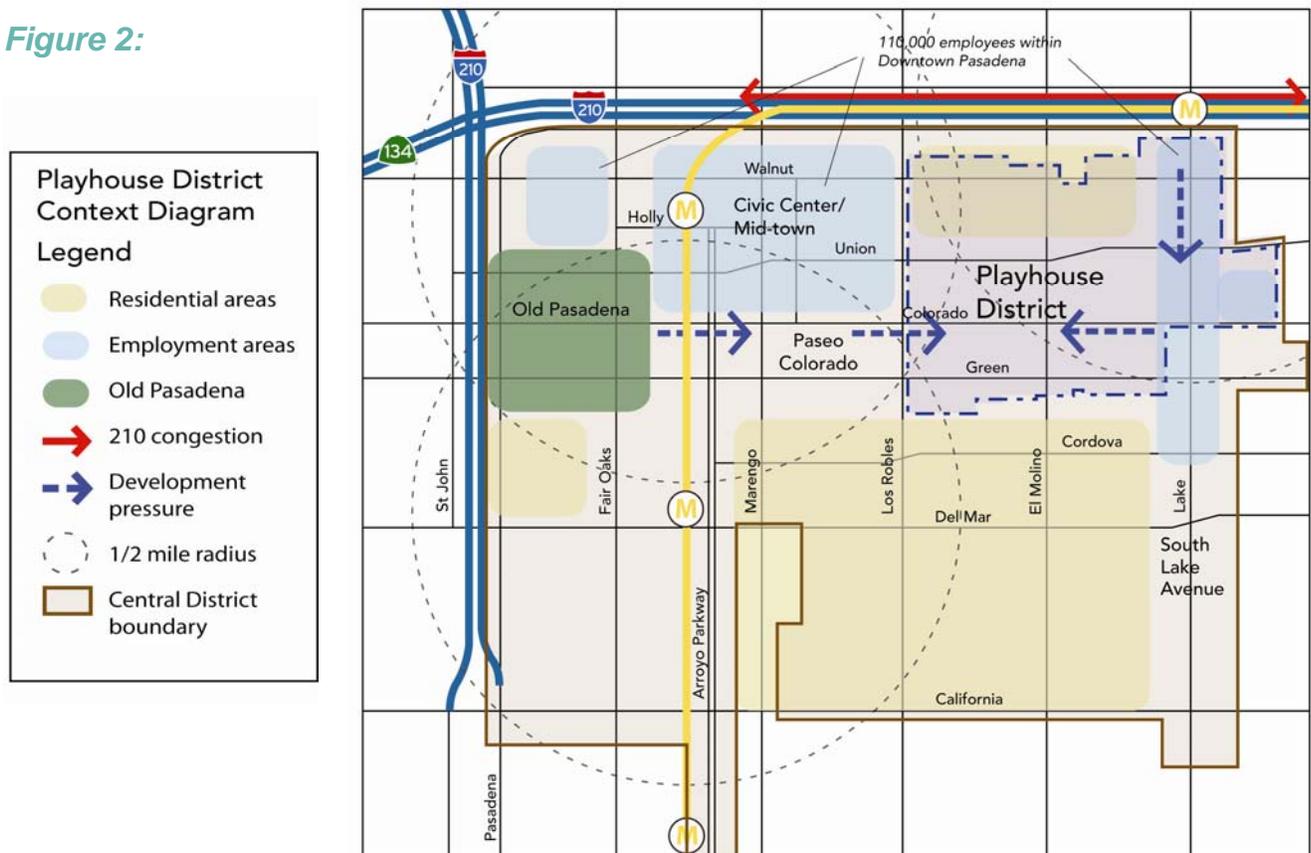
*Many residents see a ban on housing as a way to curb traffic growth.*

presents a unique opportunity to shape the District’s future – carefully guiding new investment will ensure a proper balance of uses, activities, and design characteristics. The Playhouse District is at a critical juncture – how the District responds to increasing development pressure, be it policy- or market-driven, will determine its physical, economic, and social form for decades to come.

## emerging trends

Pasadena's Central District has been transformed over many decades into a collection of environments known for their dynamic uses, historic charm, and attractive environment. As the City's home for *Culture, Commerce, and Community in the Heart of Pasadena*, the Playhouse District has likewise experienced a re-focusing of its core mission and vision. In its own ongoing evolution, several national, regional, and local trends influence the potential for the Playhouse District to transform into an integral yet distinct part of Pasadena's downtown area. Figure 2 below illustrates many of the driving forces in the area:

Figure 2:



*Areas of the Playhouse District are beyond a one-half-mile walk from Gold Line stations.*

Figure 2 illustrates not only the Playhouse District's relative location within the Central District, but also some of the trends and forces that have begun to converge on the District. The Playhouse District, flanked on its edges by strong forces such as the Lake Avenue employment corridor, Walnut and In-Town Housing areas, and the Paseo/Civic Center Mid-Town district, has only recently begun to undergo some of the large-scale development that these districts have been experiencing since the mid-1990's. The "march" eastward along Colorado from the successes in Old Pasadena and Paseo Colorado has reached the Playhouse District, with its many new mixed-use buildings, retailers, and restaurants. Similar pressure is coming from the east, with Lake Avenue seeing many new office buildings over many years. Pressure now exists to continue the large-scale office development into the Playhouse District, where vacant and under-utilized development sites still exist.

Any discussion regarding the appropriate amount of desired development must include the issues of traffic congestion and transit access. As Figure 2 illustrates, areas of the Playhouse District, especially along Colorado Boulevard, are out of reach of a one-half-mile (or roughly 10-minute) walk of the Gold Line stations, making high-intensity employment much less accessible to transit for employees with few realistic alternatives to driving. As the following Emerging Trends articulate, these development and policy pressures are converging on the Playhouse District, a place that is eager to grow in a manner that achieves its vision and character, strengthens its role, and enhances the Downtown experience.

#### A NATIONAL MODEL

Pasadena is known nationally and internationally for its wealth of cultural resources, including the Rose Bowl, architecture, and, more recently, its downtown. Complete with museums, historic districts, housing, employment, civic facilities, and a revitalized retail scene, Pasadena is viewed as a successful



*Recent developments such as the Archstone mixed-use project are re-shaping the Playhouse District.*

example of downtown revitalization. Retail lease rates in Old Pasadena compare favorably with those of other world-renowned destinations such as Beverly Hills and Santa Monica. Central District sales tax revenue now generates a significant portion (over 20%) of the City's tax base, a dramatic change from 20 years ago. Paseo Colorado, the reinvention of the City's attempt at a regional enclosed shopping mall (Plaza Pasadena), incorporates housing, retail, services, and entertainment within the urban core and represents the movement of development eastward from Old Pasadena. Large-scale office buildings along Lake and Colorado command premium rents and high occupancy rates due to their location within one of Southern California's best working environments. All of these factors helped launch Pasadena into 1<sup>st</sup> place when California's "Best Mid-Sized Cities" were analyzed in 2007 for the quality of their downtowns (California Planning and Development Report 2007).

Indeed, the Playhouse District has experienced its own significant investment in recent years, much of which has helped reinforce the District's urban form while adding new vitality in the form of residences, retailers, and restaurants. The continued pressure for change and the next phase of development will shape the future of the Playhouse District.

#### DEMAND FOR AN URBAN LIFESTYLE

As evidenced by the significant amount of mixed-use and residential construction in the Central District over the last several years – nearly 1,000 residential units have been built since 1999 in the Playhouse District alone – the demand for urban living is clearly evident in places such as Pasadena. Recent multi-story developments which have replaced one-story buildings and vacant lots throughout Pasadena's Central District, and specifically the Playhouse District, indicate that land values have risen significantly, translating into higher construction activity, sales prices, rental occupancy, and lease rates. Similarly, high-quality new construction housing values in the Central District routinely are

*New construction housing continues to sell for \$600 per square foot.*

at \$600 per square foot, which rival the high rental rates for retail space in some areas of Old Pasadena (City of Pasadena Retail Report 2007). Proximity to a range of walkable destinations helps boost rental occupancies and lease rates in Paseo Colorado, Trio, and Archstone mixed-use projects. The projects' location within an urban village and their proximity to employment centers provide opportunities to live a more urban lifestyle, where the private vehicle is not necessary for many daily trips. In fact, a recent survey conducted by the City of Pasadena notes that 42% of Central District residents who work in Pasadena, (aka Downtown Pasadena Resident Workers), make their journey to work in a mode other than private car (City of Pasadena Downtown Resident Survey, 2008). This trend helps shed further light on the positive impacts that recent residential and mixed-use developments have had on Pasadena's Central District transportation system.

Adding to the momentum and positive energy within Pasadena itself, the regional economy and population are expected to continue growing at strong, steady paces, placing further demand for housing in cities throughout Southern California. In addition, the Regional Housing Needs Allocation ("RHNA") from Southern California Association of Governments ("SCAG") mandates that cities plan for additional housing. Smartly, Pasadena's compact land use patterns in the Central District can accommodate the demand for housing adjacent to employment in its downtown; however, these evolving patterns could remain unfulfilled by the impending cap on residential development in the Central District.

#### CENTRAL DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN

To guide the expected growth and development resulting from regional and local demand, the Central District Specific Plan (CDSP) forms the basis for land use and urban design policy in Pasadena's downtown. Among its key goals and policies relevant to the Playhouse District and its continuing evolution are the

following:

- Direct development (i.e. multi-family residential) away from single family residential areas and into the downtown core along principal mobility corridors and near transit;
- Provide for new market-rate and affordable housing units;
- Provide opportunity for non-traditional housing types (e.g. work-live housing, workforce housing, transit villages) and a variety of household types;
- Provide a mix of uses including urban housing, vertical mixed-use projects, commercial office, retail, and recreation; and
- Develop vacant and underutilized land compatible utilizing balanced growth principles.

*The Central District  
Specific Plan  
("CDSP")  
encourages unique  
District identities.*

These various goals and policies have helped guide economic development and investment throughout the Central District and have begun to reinforce the emerging jobs/housing balance in the Playhouse District. By steering much of the pressure for housing and employment uses to the Central District, the CDSP continues to create a compact environment where new development is targeted to a limited geographic area.

As a direct correlation between jobs and housing in the Central District, the City of Pasadena's Downtown Resident Survey shows that Downtown Pasadena Resident Workers are far more likely to walk to work, reducing the number of cars on downtown streets. Fully 30% of those who responded reported that they walk to work, a number much higher than Pasadena as a whole, and even higher than such notably walkable and transit-friendly cities as San Francisco (see Figure 3). With several large underdeveloped properties, the Playhouse District is poised to accept its share of the future growth in the Central District. These sites

also have the potential to dramatically alter the area’s walkability and village-like feel, because of the high traffic volumes certain uses would create.

**Figure 3: Commute Trends in California Cities**

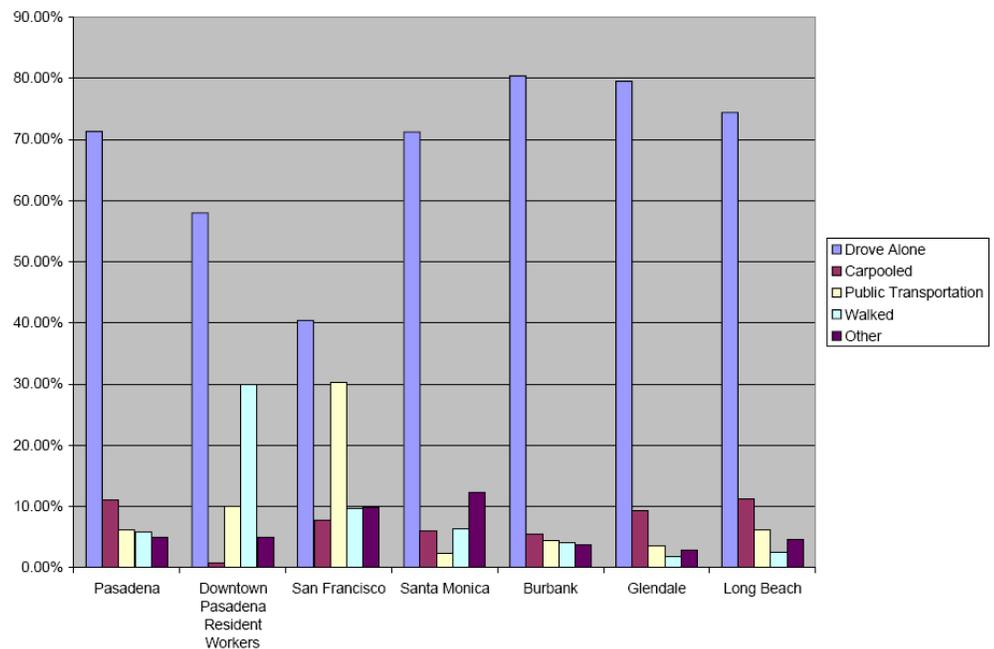


Figure 3 (above) displays comparative figures for commuting trends in various California cities.

**GREEN PASADENA**

As part of Pasadena’s solution to improving livability, accommodating its fair share of regional growth pressures, and reducing environmental impacts, the City has adopted policies aimed at environmental sustainability. Key components of

*The Pasadena City Council adopted the United Nations Urban Environmental Accords.*

Pasadena’s “green” policies include:

- City Council endorsement of the *UN Urban Environmental Accords* and adoption of the *Green City Action Plan* to encourage land use-transportation balance and a walkable community in 2006
- Support for Pasadena to be a city where people can circulate without cars (General Plan Guiding Principle Number 5, 1994)
- Adoption of Transit-Oriented Development policies to encourage intense development nearest transit stations and along transit corridors (General Plan, 1994)

These green policies not only aim to improve Pasadena’s environmental footprint but also to support its multi-modal transportation network which is focused on the Central District. A large part of the City’s efforts to date have been in making areas more walkable, as evidenced by its investments in the streetscapes of Old Pasadena and the Playhouse District. These investments, coupled with strong urban design principles that emphasize the public realm, support walking throughout the Central District. The streetscape investments together with a “main street” development pattern and a variety of commercial leases have helped improve walkability, so much so that according to “Walkscore.com”, the corner of El Molino and Colorado rates a 97 out of a possible 100 score for the most walkable place. In addition, Central District residents report that the City’s walkable character is one of the major reasons that attracted them to Pasadena. (City of Pasadena Downtown Resident Survey 2008). Continuing the policies and investments that have helped make the area walkable will be critical in achieving the goal of creating a “Green Pasadena”.

#### REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Pasadena’s location at the confluence of three freeways and the Metro Gold Line make it very accessible to the greater Los Angeles region. Although the Central

*I-210 Freeway  
congestion  
continues to worsen  
with the recent  
extension to San  
Bernardino.*

District is well-served by the regional freeway network, it also suffers from the congestion it brings. Issues such as increasing congestion along the Foothill (210) Freeway continue to exacerbate traffic problems, forcing residents to compete for local roadway space with commuters traveling long distances to jobs in Pasadena. The recent extension of the 210 Freeway eastward to San Bernardino has increased the propensity for driving into Pasadena, further worsening the congestion. With no guarantee for the extension of the Gold Line eastward to Montclair and Ontario, few viable alternatives will exist to reduce regional job-created traffic from Pasadena's streets. Much of the Playhouse District is beyond a comfortable 10-minute walk of a Gold Line station, making the District more prone to suffer from increased vehicular traffic from commuters.

*The Playhouse District is Downtown's home for intellectual and cultural activities.*

## strategies for success

Pasadena's Playhouse District has evolved over the past several years into a thriving mixed-use urban community whose vision is *Culture, Commerce, and Community in the Heart of Pasadena*. This delicate balance of preservation and evolution has relied on an established community vision, committed leadership, and strategic developments and enhancements aimed at fulfilling its vision. Current and anticipated development pressures threaten this vision so carefully shepherded over the past decade.

### SAVE THE DISTRICT

As Pasadena's hub for arts, design, and culture, the Playhouse District has much at stake when determining the impacts of new development. Unlike other places or districts without a purpose or identity, the Playhouse District is viewed by the City and the region as a unique cultural asset. In addition to its namesake, the Pasadena Playhouse Theatre, the District is home to many businesses, organizations, and landmarks that combine to form a treasured environment. The Central District Specific Plan, in fact, sets forth policies aimed at maintaining and preserving the District's role as Downtown's home for intellectual and cultural activities. The CDSP encourages developments in the District aimed at creating a vibrant, mixed-use environment and supports its role as an arts and culture-oriented district.

Recent developments such as the Archstone, Trio, and Granada Court projects have introduced nearly 450 residential units into the heart of the Playhouse District, further enhancing and providing support to the District's existing cultural venues. Each has reinforced the District's cherished qualities such as its home furnishings and design services, cultural venues, and restaurant scene. Whereas these developments represent the significant trend towards urban infill discussed earlier, they also support the District's walkable environment for residents, visitors, and employees.

On the horizon, however, are proposed potential new developments that could negatively impact not only the quality of the District's built environment, but also its quality-of-life. The Playhouse District is home to many buildings and sites that,

until recently, have not been targeted for new development. The buildings are primarily one-story architecturally insignificant buildings and parking lots. The District must be ready to respond and guide to preserve its unique character.

### JOBS/HOUSING BALANCE

Perhaps the most relevant and pressing method for directing any new development within the Central District, and certainly within the Playhouse District, is improving the jobs/housing balance. Few relationships impact a city's mobility, economic health, and social well-being more than the balance of housing to jobs.

#### Existing Conditions

As a highly desirable and accessible regional job center, Pasadena provides 80,000 jobs in the Central District, attracting workers from throughout the greater Los Angeles region. Although some of the Central District's workers live within Pasadena, the City's housing prices have risen so drastically that many more workers are being pushed farther and farther from Pasadena to afford homes. With an estimated 40,000 residents and over 80,000 jobs within its Central District, Pasadena's jobs-housing balance is at a critical juncture. The General Plan and CDSP both encourage housing to help revitalize the Central District and help prevent the over-development of single-family areas throughout the City. However, the CDSP prohibits housing within the existing job corridor along North Lake Avenue, forcing housing to search for additional sites near the City's largest employment center. Many of the largest available sites are located within the Playhouse District, in the geographic heart of Downtown.

With strong demand for both housing and office space within the Central District, developments of both kinds are financially viable. However, finances alone should not dictate the direction of Pasadena's Downtown and its unique districts. The introduction of additional office and professional jobs with no additional housing will create a greater job/housing imbalance and an even more intolerable traffic situation, where workers continue to commute from distant locales without an improved regional transportation network. These workers, as already

*The Central District's jobs/housing imbalance exacerbates the City's traffic issues.*

*Many Pasadena residents choose the City because of its walkability, resulting in a conscious decision to be able to walk to work.*

evidenced in areas of high employment-density areas (such as West Los Angeles), will continue to find routes such as arterials and surface streets, further exacerbating frustrations and impacting the quality of life of Pasadena residents.

As a contrast to West Los Angeles, Pasadena's similarly high-income job fields of finance, academic/research, and law attract workers who have the ability to choose where to live and how to get to work. Yet, instead of driving alone and crowding the City's streets, these workers have chosen Pasadena for the ability to live within an environment where walking is possible and enjoyable. As noted, 30% of those resident workers have chosen to walk to work, evidence that the City's policies to create a walkable city are paying off. It is therefore clear that additional housing within job centers, specifically the Central District, will provide needed additional opportunities to live closer to work, especially as demographic trends towards smaller households continue.

#### Development Sites Analysis

To illustrate the potential impact of prohibiting the opportunity to build residential units in the Central District, five key sites in Pasadena's Playhouse District were examined. No current development plans or proposals are in place or are filed with the City of Pasadena for these sites. The sites shared several characteristics:

- New development was seen as feasible in the future
- Current uses may no longer be of the "highest and best" order
- Property owners have shown interest in exploring development options

The sites were examined to determine the maximum likely buildout so that the analysis would present a "worst-case" or most intense development scenario. This assumed that:

- Developments maximize the allowable FAR and height restrictions
- All new parking is subterranean
- Office space is calculated on gross non-retail building square footage

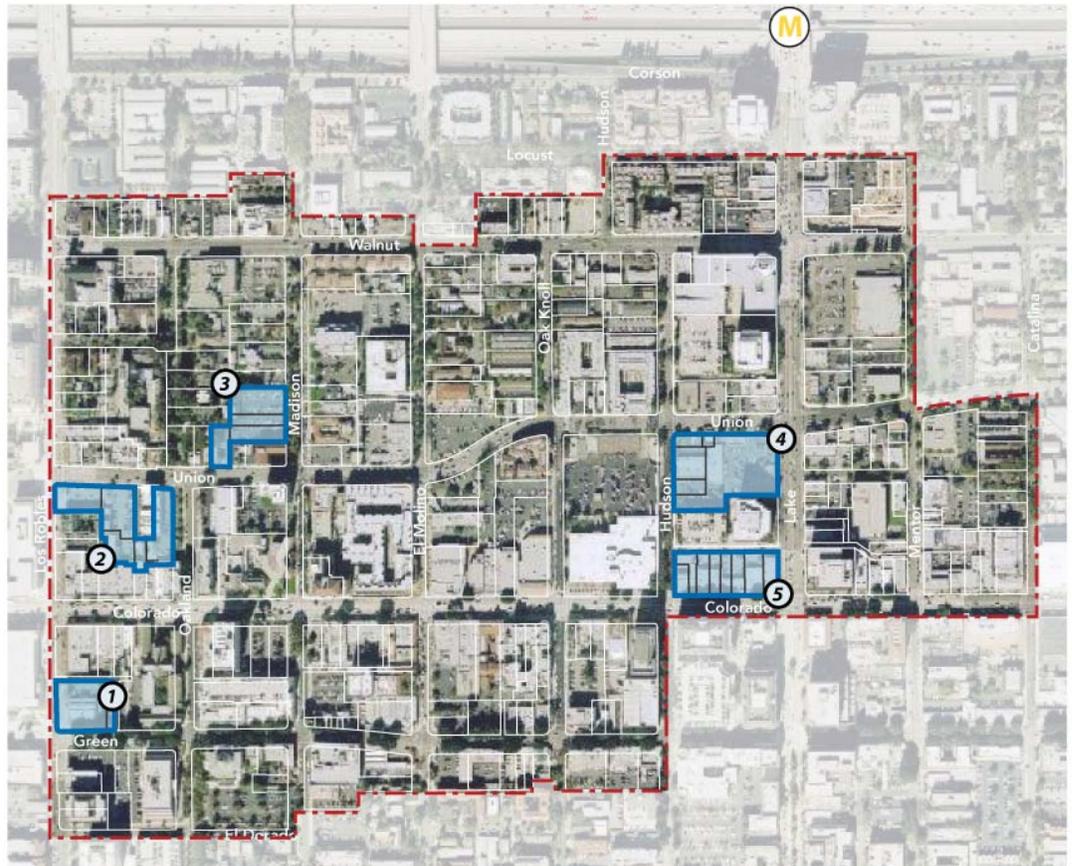
- Residential space is calculated utilizing 80% of the non-retail square footage (allowing for circulation and common space)
- Residential units are 1,150 square feet on average
- Parking ratios for gross office are 3 spaces per 1,000 sf (less a 25% reduction due to location within the City's TOD trip reduction area)
- Parking ratios for retail are 3 per 1,000 sf (less a 10% reduction for TOD area)
- Parking ratios for residential are assumed at the maximum allowable (1.75 spaces for each unit, regardless of size)
- Daily trip rates were calculated as follows: Office - 12.3 trips per 1,000 sf; Residential – 6.1 trips per unit; Retail – 40.7 trips per 1,000 sf (Institute of Transportation Engineers, Trip Generation; 1987)
- PM peak per hour trips are 1.49 for 1,000 sf of office and .62 for each residential unit (Institute of Transportation Engineers, Trip Generation; 1987)

Sites were then analyzed to create two development options which illustrate the difference between office- and residential-based mixed-use developments. Each site analysis breaks down the maximum allowable building area into ground-floor (retail) space and upper-floor (office or residential) space. Parking spaces listed reflect the maximum allowable amount and combine all permitted uses on the development site.

The map below shows the five site locations. As the aerial image illustrates, most sites are relatively underutilized. Many have large surface parking areas and only 1-story buildings, making them more and more isolated as developments push upward around them. Below, each site is analyzed individually.

### Development Sites Analysis

-  Development site
-  Parcels
-  Playhouse District Association boundary





*A new development on the Amalgamated Bank site should create a dynamic entry into the District.*

Site 1 – Amalgamated Bank

This site frames the northeast corner of Union and Los Robles and is one of the key entry points into the Playhouse District.

Current development: Amalgamated Bank (1 story), surface parking lot

Size size: 38,333 sf

Zoning: CD-2 Civic Center/Mid-town

Maximum allowable height: 75'

Allowable FAR: 2.25

Key features and opportunities: Gateway site, Green Street frontage, across from Paseo Colorado Macy's

Site 1's bank building provides minimal activity, employees, or opportunities for functions beyond normal business hours. Redevelopment here should build the image of the District, creating a more definite transition from the Paseo Colorado and Civic Center uses to the west, announcing the arrival into the human-scaled Green Street corridor. Complementary uses along Los Robles can likewise continue the corridor's business focus that begins at Cordova.

**Development alternatives:**

	Office Mixed-use	Residential Mixed-use
Total building area (sf)	86,249	86,249
Ground-floor retail/office (sf)	5,000	5,000
Upper floor office (sf)	81,249	0
Upper floor residential (units)	0	56
Subterranean parking spaces	196	112
Daily Trips	1,202	545
<i>PM peak hour trips (estimated)</i>	122	35



*Development along Union should complement the surrounding museums and provide replacement parking for other uses.*

### Site 2 – Linden/Museum Block

This site straddles the Pacific Asia Museum and Pasadena Museum of California Art, both on the block bounded by Colorado, Los Robles, Union, and Oakland.

Current development: Small offices, surface parking lots

Site size: 73,181 sf

Zoning: CD-4 Pasadena Playhouse

Maximum allowable height: 65'

Allowable FAR: 2 for parcels fronting Union, 3 for parcels fronting Colorado

Key features and opportunities: Between 2 museums, shared parking

Site 2 is an opportunity to complement two significant cultural icons in the Playhouse District. The properties currently provide parking for museums and businesses along Colorado, including the Linden Optometry building.

Development alternatives shown here provide a shared parking facility while creating complementary cultural and cross-educational opportunities. Offices, additional gallery and functional spaces, retail, and housing could complete the picture. PM peak trips estimated here reflect the impact of only the new, additional space and do not include trips for existing uses such as Linden Optometry.

#### Development alternatives:

	Office Mixed-use	Residential Mixed-use
Total building area (sf)	166,362	166,362
Ground-floor retail, gallery (sf)	12,000	12,000
Upper floor office (sf)	154,362	0
Upper floor residential (units)	0	107
Subterranean parking spaces	450	290
Daily Trips	2,387	1,141
<i>PM peak hour trips (estimated)</i>	<i>230</i>	<i>66</i>



*The Presbyterian Church parking lots on Madison are zoned exclusively for residential.*

### Site 3 – Pasadena Presbyterian Properties

This site mostly fronts Oakland north of Union. An adjacent parcel fronts Union.

Current development: Surface parking lots (mostly for Presbyterian Church)

Site size: 50,530 sf

Zoning: CD-3 Walnut Housing

Maximum allowable height: 65'

Allowable FAR: 2 for parcels fronting Union (and 200 feet north), 1.5 for parcels north of such a point

Key features and opportunities: Large, contiguous undeveloped site, adjacent to Fuller Seminary

Under the Walnut Housing zoning subdistrict in the Central District Specific Plan, the site must be developed with residential. Ground floor complementary uses might also include office and limited retail, especially along Union. The Office option here would require a zone change, and could be construed as “takings” by removing the existing residential entitlements.

#### Development alternatives:

	Office Mixed-use <i>(not allowed-requires zone change)</i>	Residential Mixed-use
Total building area (sf)	86,560	86,560
Ground-floor retail/office (sf)	2,000	2,000
Upper floor office (sf)	84,560	0
Upper floor residential (units)	0	59
Subterranean parking spaces	194	109
Daily Trips	1,121	441
<i>PM peak hour trips (estimated)</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>37</i>



*The suburban restaurants contrast with the surrounding intense developments.*

#### Site 4 – Del Taco Site

This site consists of the northern half of the block bounded by Colorado, Hudson, Union, and Lake.

Current development: Del Taco, Coco's, surface parking, small offices and retail

Site size: 97,139 sf

Zoning: CD-5 Lake Avenue

Maximum allowable height: 90'

Allowable FAR: 3

Key features and opportunities: Large, contiguous underutilized site, along Lake employment corridor, 2 blocks/easy walk from Gold Line station

Site 4 is located along an evolving Lake Avenue mixed-use corridor. Recent developments along Lake include high-intensity residential, office, and supporting retail. As part of the Colorado/Lake Node within the CD-5 subdistrict, this site is encouraged to be more intense, with office development along the Lake frontage. Although housing is not permitted to front Lake Avenue, the western portions of the site could accommodate some residential along Union and Hudson.

#### Development alternatives:

	Office Mixed-use	Residential Mixed-use
Total building area (sf)	291,416	291,416
Ground-floor retail/rest (sf)	13,000	13,000
Upper floor office (sf)	278,416	123,937
Upper floor residential (units)	0	106
Subterranean parking spaces	661	500
Daily Trips	3,953	2,700
<i>PM peak hour trips (estimated)</i>	<i>415</i>	<i>251</i>



*The 1-story buildings on the site have become outdated and do not take advantage of this important location.*

### Site 5 – FedEx Block

This site consists of the southern half of the block bounded by Colorado, Hudson, Union, and Lake.

Current development: FedEx/Kinko's, Canterbury Records, other small retail/services

Site size: 60,984 sf

Zoning: CD-5 Lake Avenue

Maximum allowable height: 90'

Allowable FAR: 3

Key features and opportunities: Contiguous site at one of City's most prominent corners, announces entry into Playhouse District

Although currently fully occupied by retail and service uses, the parcels between Hudson and Lake offer greater opportunity for more intense development. Likewise, the corner at Lake identifies the site as a key part of the existing high-intensity employment corridor along Lake. As part of the Colorado/Lake Node within the CD-5 subdistrict, this site is encouraged to be developed with a more intense pattern, focusing on office development along the Lake frontage.

#### **Development alternatives:**

	Office Mixed-use	Residential Mixed-use
Total building area (sf)	182,952	182,952
Ground-floor retail/rest (sf)	20,000	20,000
Upper floor office (sf)	162,952	81,476
Upper floor residential (units)	0	57
Subterranean parking spaces	421	336
Daily Trips	2,818	2,164
<i>PM peak hour trips (estimated)</i>	<i>243</i>	<i>156</i>

*Office uses would generate three times more daily trips during the afternoon peak hours than the equivalent amount of housing square footage.*



*New development should support the Playhouse District's existing unique cultural focus.*

## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The Development Sites Analysis illustrates the differences in parking and daily traffic generation between office-focused development and a residential mixed-use development. Based on this analysis, it is clear that office space generates approximately three times the number of daily trips and higher afternoon peak hour trips as does an equivalent amount of residential space. In addition to the existing employee base of Pasadena's Central District (estimated currently at over 110,000 people), these development sites have the potential to greatly increase the amount of employment space and commuter activity within the Playhouse District. Given the trends towards residents' conscious choice of a walkable environment, as shown by the Downtown Resident Survey, similar types of housing should be encouraged to provide even greater opportunity for job-adjacent living. By contrast, the lack of additional residential development will result in the continued imbalance between employees working in the area and the available opportunities for nearby housing, thus detracting from the area's emerging 24-hour activity base and in some cases could result in a "takings" situation by disallowing a current entitlement.

As a potential solution to Pasadena's growing frustration with vehicular traffic, prohibiting residential development within the Central District will only generate additional commute traffic, further exacerbating the current traffic congestion. Not allowing residential development and/or maintaining the 1994 cap on residential development within the Central District will have significant impacts including the following:

1. Erode the progress made in fulfilling the vision of the Playhouse District as an urban village;
2. Force residential development to occur outside of the City's walkable, transit-accessible core and into surrounding neighborhoods and cities;
3. Create additional traffic as workers commute to the newly-created jobs in the Central District.

*Residential must  
continue to be a part of  
the development  
picture in Pasadena's  
Central District*

Adding parking for employees, even with reductions for transit ridership and fulfilling the City of Pasadena's trip reduction guidelines will place hundreds of new car trips onto area streets during commute times. This will be especially true for office uses during the pm peak hours of 4-7pm when other trips such as retail, service, and school returns also impact traffic. For the Playhouse District, the implications will likely be felt along its primary arteries, such as Colorado, Green, Walnut, and Lake as commuters make their way to regional transportation corridors. In contrast, residents making the Central District home already take advantage of the area's walkable environment, benefiting the entire City of Pasadena by removing vehicles from the City's streets, especially at peak times.

Furthermore, any new developments are likely to be of such a significant investment that any subsequent change in the land use balance will likely not occur for several decades. Permitting development that does not include a residential component will reduce further the opportunity to not only enhance the Playhouse District's emerging urban neighborhood, but will also reverse the course towards a sound development pattern that has helped enhance and sustain one of Southern California's great cities.

To fulfill the Playhouse District's vision and character, the goals and policies within the CDSP, the principles of the Green City Action Plan, and the City's General Plan, housing must continue to be allowed as part of the development pattern in the Central District.