



## HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD STAFF REPORT

DATE: October 8, 2013

OTHER BUSINESS

SUBJECT: HSPB 51 – TOWN AND COUNTRY CENTER 174 N. PALM CANYON DRIVE  
DISCUSSION ON INITIATION OF REVISED STUDIES TO CONSIDER  
CLASS 1 HISTORIC DESIGNATION

FROM: Margo Wheeler, AICP, Director of Planning Services

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### SUMMARY

The HSPB requested that the Town & Country Center located at 174 North Palm Canyon Drive be placed on the agenda for discussion.

### BACKGROUND:

<i>Related Relevant City Actions by Planning, Fire, Building, etc...</i>	
December 12, 2006	HSPB initiated process to recommend designation of the Town & Country Center as a Class 1 Historic Site.
June 9, 2009	HSPB voted (4-2) to recommend Class 1 designation by the City Council
June 24, 2009	City Council voted to deny Class 1 designation for the Town & Country Center

### ANALYSIS:

Pursuant to California Governmental Code (CGC) 65450-4, a Specific Plan is a systematic implementation of the General Plan for a part of the area covered by the general plan. Content may include the distribution, location and extent of the uses of land and a program of implementation. All projects proposed to be developed must be in conformance with the specific plan. A specific plan may be amended or repealed in the same manner as it is adopted, which is the same as adopting a General Plan.

The Museum Market Place Specific Plan (MMP-SP) shows a private street that provides east-west permeability and connects the area east of the MMP-SP with the "new plaza and the existing museum". This future street, Museum Way, is proposed as a 48' right of way (ROW) with a 12' sidewalk.

With the adoption of the MMP-SP, the City established the requirement to create this private street on the site of the existing Town & Country building.

Additionally the City Council voted on June 24, 2009, following a public hearing, to deny the recommendation of the HSPB to designate the Town & Country Center a Class 1 historic

resource. These two actions signal to the current or any future property owners that the plan of the City is to move forward with implementation of the Specific Plan.

The staff report prepared for the HSPB meeting of June 9, 2009 pre-dated the adoption of the Museum Market Place Specific Plan. At this point in time, an action to designate the Town & Country Center as a Class 1 historic site would need to also consider an amendment to the Specific Plan. An amendment to the Specific Plan would require further study to look at impacts to traffic flow and modifications to the land uses anticipated for that block.

A new staff report which analyzes amendments to the Specific Plan would need to be prepared in order to set a public hearing for consideration of historic classification.

The 2003 report for and the April 2009 nomination for the Town & Country Center would need to be updated in order to have current information available for the HSPB to make a recommendation on Class 1 designation.

The action to move forward with the reconsideration of such a recommendation would be to initiate review of the 2009 nomination to ensure its information is current and to initiate a study to amend the Museum Market Plaza Specific Plan.

Handwritten signature of Margo Wheeler in cursive, with the word "FOR" written in capital letters below the signature.

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Margo Wheeler, AICP  
Director of Planning Services

Attachments

Excerpt from the Museum Market Plaza Specific Plan



# The Museum Market Plaza Specific Plan

An Amendment to the 2007 Palm Springs General Plan  
Adopted by the City Council, December 2, 2009 (Ordinance 1764; Resolution 22625)

## City of Palm Springs, California

3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way • Palm Springs, California, • 92262

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Authority and Scope

A Specific Plan is a document allowed under California law which provides cities and counties with a planning tool for master planning project sites. A Specific Plan, when approved, becomes the zoning ordinance for the project it covers. Specific Plans must be consistent with the General Plan of the jurisdiction in which they occur.

Specific Plans can be implemented by local jurisdictions in accordance with the provisions of California Government Code Section 65450. The City of Palm Springs is implementing this Specific Plan for the Museum Market Plaza, located at the center of the City's downtown core. The Museum Market Plaza Specific Plan area is irregular in shape, but is generally bounded by Andreas Road on the north, Tahquitz Canyon Way on the south, Museum Drive on the west, and Indian Canyon Drive on the east.

The Palm Springs General Plan supports the development of Specific Plans throughout the community where appropriate:

*"LU1.3 Develop specific plans for areas that need additional design or land use guidance."*

For the Museum Market Plaza area, the General Plan identifies special conditions which will require the preparation of a Specific Plan:

*"The Downtown Central Core (roughly bounded by Amado Road, Tahquitz Canyon Way, Museum Drive, and Indian Canyon Drive)...may be developed with a maximum FAR<sup>1</sup> of 3.5. If projects in these areas provide substantial public spaces or plazas, an FAR of up to 4.0 may be developed upon approval of a Planned Development District or Specific Plan. The Downtown Central Core may also accommodate up to 70 dwelling units per acre for residential or hotel uses if a Planned Development District or Specific Plan is prepared and approved."*

This Specific Plan has been prepared to address both design considerations and land use guidance for the Museum Market Plan, and to establish densities and development standards to

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of floor area ratio in the Palm Springs General Plan states: FAR is the ratio of the total net floor area of a building to the total lot area and describes the intensity of the use on a site. FAR calculations do not include areas within parking structures or outdoor open storage areas. Floor Area Ratio Example (FAR = 0.50): On a one-acre parcel (43,560 sq. ft.), a maximum FAR of 0.50 equates to a total building area of 21,780 sq. ft., in either a 1-, 2-, or 3-story configuration (43,560 sq. ft. multiplied by 0.50 equals 21,780 sq. ft.).

allow for the unified, unique and high quality development which must occur within its boundaries.

This Specific Plan also implements the vision of Downtown Palm Springs described in both the General Plan and the Downtown Design Guidelines. The General Plan specifically identifies the Downtown area as critical to the City's future:

*"It is envisioned that Downtown will become a high-intensity, mixed-use area characterized by residential, office, commercial, and entertainment uses. To stimulate vitality, the Downtown will contain activity areas with differing intensities, which are further defined by the scale and design of buildings in each area. The creation of a central public plaza that will serve as the primary gathering place for visitors and residents of Palm Springs is a key concept planned to reinvigorate the Downtown core."*

This vision is to be implemented through the Downtown Design Guidelines, which provide clear direction for the changes which the City desires in the Downtown. The Guidelines identify the Specific Plan area as "High Intensity Mixed Use (Residential/Commercial Downtown Central Core," and Mixed Use Downtown Outer Core." The core area is described as:

*"...a high intensity mixed use center with taller buildings surrounded by a vibrant mixed use area..."*

This Specific Plan, along with approved projects for the north and south Gateways, form the backbone of the revitalization of the Downtown of Palm Springs. The Museum Market Plaza will also be the connection point to the Resort/Convention Center District to the east, and will re-establish the connection from the Palm Springs Art Museum to Indian Canyon Drive and the hotels and Convention Center to the east, by introducing a new east-west roadway whose focal point will be the Museum.

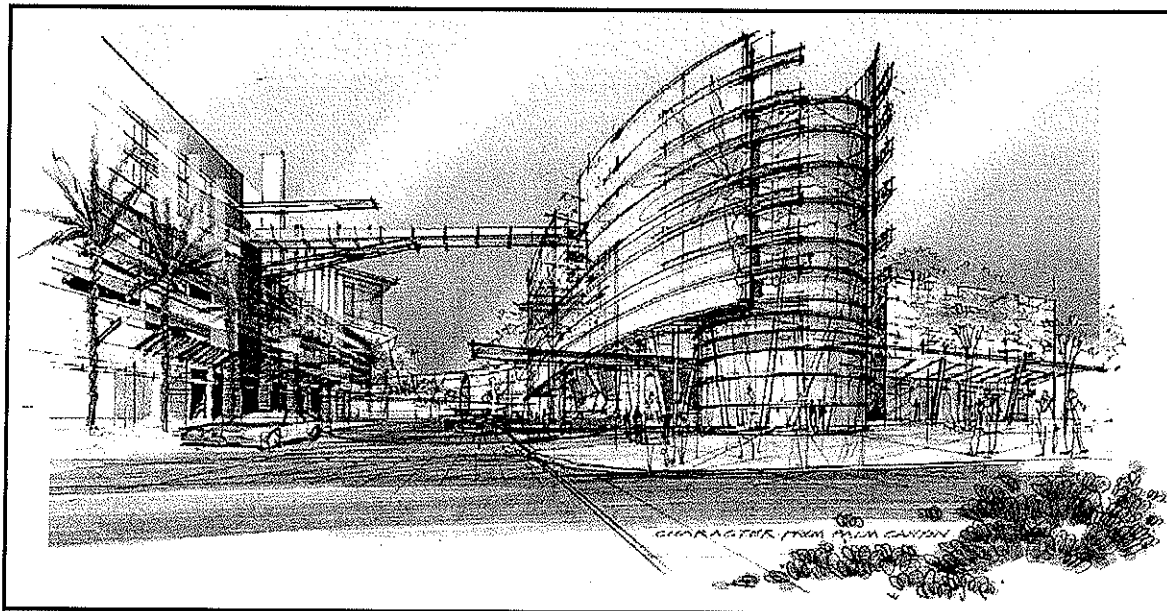
## **B. Project Location**

The Museum Market Plaza is located in the center of the City's Central Business District, at the northwest corner of Tahquitz Canyon Way and Palm Canyon Drive. The area is irregular in shape, and encompasses lands bounded by the Hyatt Suites Hotel and Belardo Road on the north, Tahquitz Canyon Way on the south, Museum Drive on the west, and North Palm Canyon Drive on the east, as well as lands directly east, between North Palm Canyon and Indian Canyon Drives (please see Exhibit I-2, Vicinity Map).

Lands to the north include hotel and retail commercial development along North Palm Canyon, North Indian Canyon and Baristo. Lands to the east include retail commercial development on North Palm Canyon and Indian Canyon, and the Spa Hotel beyond. Lands to the south include hotel and retail commercial development, the Wellwood Murray Library and single-family homes beyond. Lands to the west include the Palm Springs Art Museum and the O'Donnell Golf Course.

developed as a hotel to a height exceeding 60 feet, subject to City Council approval. To the north east of Block E, G and H, built form of approximately 75 feet in height already exists and its well-articulated frontage provides an effective edge to the open space of the golf course. Subject to sensitive architectural treatment, the new built form will continue the adjacent well-defined edge along the northern frontage of Block E, G and H. Massing of the new development towards the north and northwest of the block also results in it having minimal impact on any of the significant streetscenes within the Specific Plan. To avoid the creation of an impenetrable and overtly urban mega-block, effective massing of the new built form will include ample provision for visual and pedestrian permeability.

Another potential exception to the 60-foot height limit may be at Block K, where subject to City Council approval, additional building heights may be developed. Increased building height at



Block K will result in the new built form providing visual continuity between the constrained level of development allowed to the west and the intensive levels of existing and proposed development in Section 14, to the east, including the new proposed Spa Hotel and Hard Rock Hotel, both proposed at 100 feet in height. Block K includes a private street that provides east-west permeability and connects the areas to the east of the Specific Plan with the new Plaza and the existing Museum. The fragmented nature of the block presents challenges in terms of achieving sympathetic massing, as all street frontages should be designed to the human scale and the existing modest levels of development at abutting sites must be respected.

4. Belardo Road

Belardo Road will be extended through the Specific Plan area with a 62 foot right of way, to allow one lane of travel in each direction, and angled parking on each side. A 12 foot sidewalk will also be provided.

5. Museum Drive

Museum Drive will be 48 feet of right of way, with a single lane of traffic in each direction, and parallel parking adjacent to the Specific Plan frontage. A 12 foot sidewalk will be provided adjacent to the Specific Plan.

6. Museum Way

Museum Drive will be 48 feet of right of way, with a single lane of traffic in each direction, and parallel parking adjacent to the Specific Plan frontage. A 12 foot sidewalk will be provided adjacent to the Specific Plan. The alignment of Museum Way will begin in front of the Palm Springs Art Museum and run due east, through Block K, and terminating at Indian Canyon Drive across from the Spa Hotel.

7. Private Drives/Internal Access

Additional drives and access roads may be designed as part of the development of each block. All such roads and drives are proposed to be private, and to be designed within a 36 foot right of way, to include one lane of traffic in each direction, no parking, and 6 foot sidewalks on each side.

- varied economy, increase the City's tax base and act as a catalyst for further redevelopment in downtown, and
- f. Achieve the Specific Plan goal of expanding recreational uses in the downtown which extend the hours of active use in the area, by adding a theater and additional restaurants.

Subsequent phasing of the Museum Market Plaza will be determined by the market. Exhibit V-1 illustrates how phasing may occur at the site, subsequent to any renovation project as allowed above (Conformity Review). Phasing may be modified by market pressures, including changes in both the commercial and residential environments:

- Phase Two: Construction of the Main Plaza, the installation of the new east-west roadway from the Museum to Palm Canyon Drive, the extension of Belardo through the site, and improvements to Palm Canyon Drive.
- Phase Three: Blocks A and C, focusing on the Main Plaza and Palm Canyon frontage. This phase may also include the southern portion of Block E, G & H.
- Phase Four: D & F, and the northern portion of Block E, G & H.
- Phase Five: Block K, including the new east-west street between Palm Canyon and Indian Canyon Drives; however, this block and / or the new east-west street may be developed in an earlier phase, if the market allows.