DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE
AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA DATE:

TO: Chair Woollett and Members of the Design Review Committee

THRU: Leslie Aranda Roseberry, Planning Manager

FROM: Anna Pehoushek, Principal Planner

SUBJECT: DRC No. 4626-12 –SANTA FE DEPOT SPECIFIC PLAN UPDATE

SUMMARY

The proposed Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan Update is the first comprehensive update to the City's 1993 Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan Update. The document addresses a full array of development issues including zoning, streetscape conditions, design guidelines, circulation and parking, and infrastructure improvements. The Specific Plan Update increases the size of the 1993's Specific Plan planning area from approximately 43 acres to approximately 102 acres.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends that the DRC recommend approval of Chapter 5, Urban Design Framework, and Chapter 7, Design Guidelines for Historic Buildings, of the proposed Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan Update to the Planning Commission as presented.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Applicant:	City of Orange
Owner:	Multiple property owners
Property Location:	The portion of Old Towne Orange generally bounded by Walnut Avenue on the north, Palmyra Avenue on the south, Olive Street on the east, and Pixley Street on the west (Attachment 1).
General Plan Designation:	Multiple land use designations including Low Density Residential (LDR), Low Medium Density Residential (LMDR), Medium Density Residential (MDR), Old Towne Mixed Use-15 Spoke Street (OTMIX-15S), Old Towne Mixed Use-15 (OTMIX-15), Old Towne Mixed Use-24 (OTMIX-24), Industrial (I), Public Facilities and Institutions (PI), and Open Space-Park (OS-P).
Zoning Classification:	Multiple zoning classifications including Duplex Residential (R-2-6), Multiple Family Residential (R3), Multiple Family Residential (R-4), Old Towne Mixed Use-15 Spoke Street (OTMU-15S), Old Towne Mixed Use-15 (OTMU-15), Old Towne Mixed Use-24 (OTMU-24),

	General Business (C-2), Light Industrial (M-1), Industrial (M-2); and the 1993 Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan zoning designations of Santa Fe Depot Area Commercial, Medium Density Residential, Mixed Use, Open Space Park, and Public Facilities.
Existing Development:	Assorted development types including single family residential, multi-family residential, auto body and repair shops, retail, restaurant, fraternal organization, Orange Senior Center, church, car wash, film production studio, contractor yards, academic facilities, warehousing, City park, Orange Transportation Center, City water well, Gas Company distribution facility, cable television offices/studio, and surface parking lots.
Property Size:	101.6-acre planning area
Associated Applications:	Ordinance No. 8-12, Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan Update; Zone Change No. 1255-09; and EIR No. 1820-09

Previous DRC Project Review: NA

PUBLIC NOTICE

No Public Notice was required for DRC consideration of the proposed Specific Plan. Public notification will be sent to affected property owners and property owners and tenants within a 300 foot radius of the planning area in conjunction with the public hearing process for Specific Plan adoption.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Environmental Impact Report: The environmental impacts of the revised project and its project alternatives were evaluated by Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) No. 1820-09, which was prepared in accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15070 et seq and in conformance with the Local CEQA Guidelines. The 45-day public review period was initiated on December 12, 2011, and ended on February 1, 2012. Copies of the document were available for public review at all City Libraries, City Hall, and on the City's website.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Orange Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan Update is intended to provide City staff and decision makers, developers, and property owners with strong and clear policies, development and design standards, design guidelines, and a vision that guides land use decisions, infrastructure improvements, design, and economic development activities in the approximate 101-acre Specific Plan Update area.

The Specific Plan Update proposes nine base zoning districts and one overlay district. The Specific Plan Update identifies 11 sites (a single parcel or group of parcels) that are likely to be developed or

adaptively reused by 2020. In general, development within the Specific Plan Update area would occur through adaptive reuse for parcels with historic buildings, infill development on vacant or under-utilized properties and redevelopment of lots without historic buildings. These likely-to-develop sites comprise approximately one-quarter of the total property in the Specific Plan Update area (i.e., 16.5 acres out of a total 64 developable (excluding roads and right-of-way) acres). The balance of the developable property in the Specific Plan Update area, approximately 47 acres, is assumed to remain essentially the same and deemed unlikely to be developed within the planning horizon (2020) of the Specific Plan Update based on existing development or use characteristics. Implementation of the Specific Plan Update would yield an additional 246 residential units and approximately 102,000 square feet of non-residential uses within the Specific Plan Update area beyond existing conditions, within the planning horizon year of 2020. Total anticipated buildout for the Specific Plan Update area including existing development, and development, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse within the likely-to-develop sites would yield up to 461 residential units and approximately 706,000 sq. ft. of non-residential uses.

EXISTING SITE

The proposed Specific Plan Update planning area is developed predominantly with historic residential, commercial, and industrial structures. The area also includes more contemporary multi-family residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development. The planning area also includes the historic Depot Park, public surface parking lots, the Orange Senior Center, a City water well, natural gas distribution facility, and the Orange Transportation Center (Metrolink station and OCTA bus service).

EXISTING AREA CONTEXT

The proposed Specific Plan planning area is in close proximity to the Plaza downtown core, interfaces with historic and contemporary residential development, and Chapman University academic facilities (Partridge Dance Center, Dodge Film School, Crean School of Health and Life Sciences, proposed Filmmakers' Village) and parking lots.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Orange Municipal Code (OMC) Section 17.10.070 establishes the general criteria the DRC should use when reviewing the project. This section states the following:

The project shall have an internally consistent, integrated design theme, which is reflected in the following elements:

1. **Architectural Features**.
    a. The architectural features shall reflect a similar design style or period.
    b. Creative building elements and identifying features should be used to create a high quality project with visual interest and an architectural style.
2. **Landscape**.
    a. The type, size and location of landscape materials shall support the project's overall design concept.

b. Landscaping shall not obstruct visibility of required addressing, nor shall it obstruct the vision of motorists or pedestrians in proximity to the site.

c. Landscape areas shall be provided in and around parking lots to break up the appearance of large expanses of hardscape.

3. **Signage**. All signage shall be compatible with the building(s) design, scale, colors, materials and lighting.

4. **Secondary Functional and Accessory Features**. Trash receptacles, storage and loading areas, transformers and mechanical equipment shall be screened in a manner, which is architecturally compatible with the principal building(s).

ANALYSIS/STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

Project Background

The Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan Update represents an update to the 1993 Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan (http://www.cityoforange.org/depts/commdev/planning/plans_and_documents.asp). The project was initiated in 2006, with a process that included extensive inter-departmental coordination, public outreach in the form of five community workshops, and ongoing adjustments in response to other concurrent City projects with influence on the planning area including the comprehensive General Plan update, Quiet Zone improvements, Depot pedestrian undercrossing, and study of Metrolink parking structure locations and features.

The proposed Specific Plan Update content shares similar core objectives with the original 1993 Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan including:

- Transitioning underutilized property to new, vibrant use
- Reinvigoration of Chapman Avenue
- Improving pedestrian linkage between the Depot and Plaza
- Historic preservation and context-sensitive design
- Enhancement of the pedestrian environment, infrastructure and public safety

However, along with these common objectives, there are aspects of the 1993 Specific Plan that warranted a change in policy and vision for the area given the dynamics in Old Towne since 1993, and specifically the Depot environs including:

- National Register designation of the Old Towne Historic District
- Establishment and success of Metrolink and related opportunities for transit-oriented development
- Adaptive reuse of the historic Depot building
- Adoption of the 2010 General Plan Update
- Growth of Chapman University

- Ongoing rehabilitation of Old Towne properties and revitalization efforts
- Transition of industrial properties out of industrial use
- Desire to better integrate Depot area into rest of Old Towne
- Need for guidance regarding adaptive reuse of industrial property
- Desire for context-sensitive change in a distinctive sub-area of Old Towne
- Interest in encouraging property reinvestment and revitalization on West Chapman

Hence, the update to the Specific Plan stems from the City's recognized need for a proactive strategy for the Depot environs.

Proposed Specific Plan Goals

The proposed Specific Plan Update is intended to facilitate the ongoing refinement (land uses and physical appearance) of the planning area in a manner that is both context-sensitive and authentic. It builds upon existing policy documents with content that is intended to strategically take advantage of existing opportunities, and guide future growth and change in the planning area in a direction that injects new vitality into the area, facilitates its integration with Old Towne areas east of Olive Street, and further contributes to existing pedestrian and transit connectivity. The content of the proposed Specific Plan Update revolves around the following eight goals:

- Diversify the mix of land uses in the Santa Fe Depot area to maximize its function as a vibrant and cohesive transit village, while also maintain its overall historic scale and character
- Maintain and enhance the historic industrial character of the Santa Fe Depot area, as well as the remaining integrity of historic residential areas, through careful and coordinated planning that builds upon its key assets and reinforces its historic development patterns.
- Strengthen the connections between the Santa Fe Depot area and Plaza area.
- Foster a mutually supportive relationship between the Santa Fe Depot area and Chapman University.
- Take advantage of, and support, the Santa Fe Depot's transit services to realize the area's potential to become a multi-modal mixed use district.
- Provide convenient access and circulation for all modes of transportation, enhance walkability, and provide an efficient parking strategy for the Santa Fe Depot area.
- Encourage sustainable design and development practices and facilitate development activity that is beneficial to both the environment and public health.
- Ensure that an adequate and efficient infrastructure system is in place to meet the needs of residents and businesses in the Santa Fe Depot area.

The proposed Specific Plan Update continues to encourage ground-floor retail development along Chapman Avenue, and also carries this concept over to Lemon and Cypress Streets, recognizing their function as pedestrian corridors linking neighborhoods and University activities to Chapman

Avenue, the Plaza, and Depot. The proposed zoning also creates greater consistency between land use policy and the historic residential uses found in the planning area.

The proposed Specific Plan Update addresses a full spectrum of planning, design, and infrastructure issues. Key sections of the proposed Specific Plan related directly to the function of the Design Review Committee include the Urban Design Framework and Design Guidelines for Historic Buildings Chapters (Attachments 2a and 2b, respectively).

Issue 1: Streetscape Aesthetics

Presently, streetscape conditions in the planning area are varied. In some instances sidewalk improvements have been made, Old Towne street lighting has been installed, and there are consistent plantings of well-maintained street trees. However, much of the area has not received the same level of streetscape enhancement associated with the downtown core. More commonly, the blocks of the planning are characterized by:

- Limited street lights that are typically cobra head fixtures mounted on utility poles
- Sporadic and inconsistent street tree planting
- Unmaintained parkways
- Varied sidewalk widths and condition
- Lack of benches, trash receptacles, and bike racks

These circumstances function to visually disassociate the planning area from the downtown core and the larger Old Towne district. Of equal importance is the manner in which these characteristics influence pedestrian activity and hamper the City's desire to create a stronger connection between the Depot, Plaza, and surrounding neighborhoods. They also foster the perception that these areas are not as safe as other portions of Old Towne.

Right-of-way limitations are also a factor in the limited streetscape amenities found in the area. Constraints include utility poles, accommodations for parkways, and other above-ground utility features.

Resolution:

The proposed Specific Plan's Urban Design Framework revolves around the concept of connectivity, and specifically developing stronger, more appealing connections between the Depot, the Plaza, Chapman University, and area neighborhoods.

The proposed Framework recognizes that the distinctive historic building stock, street grid, and alley system serve as the urban design "backdrop" from which to further enhance the "user experience." The Urban Design Framework draws not only from the historic urban fabric, but also relies heavily on the City's existing Street Tree Master Plan, Old Towne Street Light Master Plan, and existing street furniture palette. The framework recognizes that the City desires to maintain the authenticity of its streetscape, but enhance it in ways that make it more attractive and appealing to pedestrians, residents, and businesses.

As a complement to the proposed Urban Design Framework, the proposed Specific Plan incorporates standards for development on private property related to pedestrian circulation and connections, and integration of pedestrian-oriented features into site and project design.

Sidewalks and Parkways

The urban design program establishes a hierarchy of treatments for the public right-of-way to distinguish residential (R-1, R-2, R-3) neighborhoods from non-residential (OTMU, M2, PI, RO) areas. Presently, the inconsistent parkway conditions detract from the appearance of sidewalk areas and also result in varied sidewalk conditions. Therefore, for non-residential areas the Specific Plan Update proposes a phase out of traditional residential parkways on Cypress, Lemon, and Olive Streets between Almond and Maple Avenues. In their place, the Plan proposes the consistent planting of street trees with tree grates. This approach serves to maximize what has historically been limited right-of-way area for pedestrians, recognize the inherent relationship between these areas and the downtown Plaza core, and provide adequate space for accommodating street trees and street furniture, as appropriate, to improve the aesthetic and pedestrian appeal of these areas.

Parkways would be maintained in those portions of the planning area north of Maple Avenue and south of Almond Avenue, which have a predominantly residential character. Establishing street tree uniformity and quality in these locations is proposed to visually enhance these areas, and reinforce a sense of neighborhood quality and cohesiveness.

Depot Courtyard

The proposed Urban Design Framework addresses the lack of clear connectivity between the Depot, Plaza, Chapman University, and surrounding neighborhoods. One of the contributing factors to this is the existing condition of the Atchison Street streetscape. Depot patrons encounter an expanse of "dead" building elevations as they walk to Atchison from the platform, bus turnaround area, and restaurant. To address this issue, one key feature of the proposed Urban Design Framework is the conceptual Depot Courtyard proposed for the Chapman University-owned parcel immediately east of the historic Depot building. Creation of this courtyard, or some similar quasi-public open space on that site is central to providing a welcoming experience to Depot patrons and providing a visual cue to travel east toward the Plaza.

Street Trees and Street Lighting

The proposed Urban Design Framework defers to the City's Street Tree Master Plan and existing Old Towne furniture palette with respect to future streetscape enhancement. Here, a consistent street tree planting is recommended for individual streets within the planning area boundaries. Similarly, uniform street lighting in accordance with the Old Towne Street Light Master Plan is proposed to improve overall lighting conditions on area streets and sidewalks, and replace utility pole mounted lights.

Street Furniture

The proposed Urban Design Framework ultimately identifies the need for the City to develop a streetscape plan that identifies a consistent furniture palette for all of the Specific Plan area. However, the proposed Plan also recognizes that fiscal constraints make the timing of such an effort uncertain. Therefore, the Urban Design Framework defers to the assortment of benches and trash

receptacles found around the Depot and in the Plaza downtown core as the street furniture palette for the Specific Plan area. Priorities are defined for the placement of street furniture, concentrating on areas where high levels of pedestrian activity are expected.

Staff requests that the DRC make a recommendation to the Planning Commission regarding the proposed Urban Design Framework.

Issue 2: Design Guidelines

The Old Towne Design Standards lack specific guidance for projects involving historic industrial buildings or for adaptive reuse projects. Similarly, the Old Towne Design Standards do not address specialized non-industrial building types such as fraternal lodges, churches, or meeting halls. Because of the industrial building stock that characterizes much of the Specific Plan area, and the preservation and adaptive-reuse orientation of the proposed Specific Plan Update, industrial building design considerations warrant attention. Rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse are also possible in the case of properties like the American Legion or church at the northwest corner of Almond Avenue and Lemon Street. Design guidance for these specialized building types is also not readily available in the Old Towne Design Standards.

Resolution:

The proposed Specific Plan includes a Design Guidelines for Historic Buildings Chapter that defers heavily to the *Old Towne Design Standards* and *Secretary of Interior Standards*. Because the *Old Towne Design Standards* do not presently address either historic industrial buildings or adaptive reuse, the proposed Specific Plan text addresses industrial building features and adaptive reuse considerations with respect to character-defining architectural features.

The Design Guidelines chapter recognizes that much of the change in the Specific Plan area will occur through adaptive reuse of historic buildings, as well as additions to those buildings. The Design Guidelines included in the proposed Specific Plan Update are intended to augment the Old Towne Design Standards, and more thoroughly address the issues inherent with the rehabilitation of industrial buildings and specialized building types. In addition to recognizing the Old Towne Design Standards, the proposed guidelines also explain the manner in which the Secretary of Interior's Standards are intended to apply within the Specific Plan area.

The content focuses on a number of aspects of these kinds of historic structures including identification of character-defining features, special roof types and facades, treatment of windows, doors and entries, and building materials. The proposed guidelines also recognize the striking features of historic industrial building interiors that warrant consideration in a rehabilitation or adaptive reuse project. Distinctive interior spaces of specialized non-industrial historic buildings are also noted as features that should be preserved and retained.

Along with property rehabilitation and adaptive reuse, there are limited opportunities in the planning area for building additions and new infill development. The proposed Specific Plan content also addresses this subject using the Old Towne Design Standards and Secretary of Interior's Standards as the basis for supplemental design guidance.

Staff requests that the DRC make a recommendation to the Planning Commission regarding the proposed Design Guidelines.

Issue 3: Building Height

The issue of building height is addressed in the Zoning Districts Chapter of the proposed Specific Plan Update, rather than the Urban Design Framework and Design Guidelines Chapters discussed above; however, staff wanted to make the DRC aware of a change being proposed to building height in the Specific Plan development zoning and development standards given the implications additional building height may have on future design review.

The existing mixed use and commercial building height limit of 25' applied in the Specific Plan Update area is not representative of the building heights of many larger-scale industrial buildings in the Depot area, such as the historic packinghouses. Also curious is the fact that 25' non-residential building height maximum is lower than the height limit for residential development in Old Towne. This height constraint is difficult in the case of new infill development due to modern-day spatial needs for HVAC system ducts and high ceilings.

The Old Towne Design Standards are silent on the issue of industrial building height. The Zoning Ordinance establishes a height limit of 45' in Industrial zones unless the building is within 50' of a residential district, in which case the height is limited to 20 feet.

Resolution:

Adjustment to Non-residential Building Height

The proposed Specific Plan development standards increase the height limit in the mixed use zones to 28'. This height limit adjustment brings the standard into alignment with the maximum height limit applied to residential properties in the Old Towne Residential Quadrants. This slight height modification is adequate to accommodate present-day interior building infrastructure needs. The 28' height limit also remains below the 32' height limit for the Plaza District, and is consistent with the City Council direction regarding acceptable height of the proposed Metrolink parking structure at the Lemon Street parking lot. Given the relatively limited development opportunities in the proposed planning area, instances where a 28' high building or addition would be developed would be distributed throughout the area, and is thus not expected to result in detrimental effects to the character of the Historic District, particularly in light of the fact that any future project would also be subject to adherence with the Old Towne Design Standards and Secretary of Interior's Standards.

Provisions are also included in the height standards where allowable building height may also be limited by the height of an adjacent historic building (Attachment 2c).

Height Overlay

A 3-story zoning overlay is proposed for the block bounded by Chapman Avenue, Pixley Street, Almond Avenue, and the railroad tracks. This overlay accommodates a maximum height of 42'

subject to variation in roof or parapet height for purposes of breaking up building massing. Additionally, building height shall not exceed 28' within 30' of the Almond Avenue property line.

The subject block was determined to be an appropriate location for this overlay zone given its adjacency to the railroad corridor and other large-scale historical industrial buildings including the RWB Party Props (historic packing house) and Icehouse Building on South Cypress Street, and the former Second Harvest Food Bank property (historic packing house) on West Almond Street. Due to the presence of a City water well, Gas Company distribution facility, and historic building on the 100 block of South Pixley, the building footprint where the 42' height could be achieved also has a built-in separation from the residential development across the street to the west on Pixley Street.

Staff requests that the DRC make a recommendation to the Planning Commission regarding the proposed modifications to building height standards.

ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff has worked closely and extensively with representatives from the Staff Review Committee on development and review of the Specific Plan Update and EIR content. Therefore, a formal recommendation by the Staff Review Committee was not needed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND REQUIRED FINDINGS

The courts define a "Finding" as a conclusion which describes the method of analysis decision makers utilize to make the final decision. A decision making body "makes a Finding," or draws a conclusion, through identifying evidence in the record (i.e., testimony, reports, environmental documents, etc.) and should not contain unsupported statements. The statements which support the Findings bridge the gap between the raw data and the ultimate decision, thereby showing the rational decision making process that took place. The "Findings" are, in essence, the ultimate conclusions which must be reached in order to approve (or recommend approval of) a project. The same holds true if denying a project; the decision making body must detail why it cannot make the Findings.

1. *In the Old Towne Historic District, the proposed work conforms to the prescriptive standards and design criteria referenced and/or recommended by the DRC or other reviewing body for the project (OMC 17.10.070.F.1).*

   Because the proposed Specific Plan Update area falls within the boundaries of the Old Towne Historic District, the content of Design Guidelines for Historic Buildings chapter of the proposed Specific Plan Update references the applicability of the Old Towne Design Standards to the planning area and provides augmented design guidance intended to clarify their application to the building stock that typifies much of the Depot district.

2. *In any National Register Historic District, the proposed work complies with the Secretary of the Interior's standards and guidelines (OMC 17.10.07.F.2).*

   Because the proposed Specific Plan Update area falls within the boundaries of the National Register-listed Old Towne Historic District, the content of Design Guidelines for Historic Buildings chapter of the proposed Specific Plan Update references the applicability of the

Secretary of Interior's Standards to the planning area and provides augmented design guidance intended to clarify their application to the building stock that typifies much of the Depot district.

3. *The project design upholds community aesthetics through the use of an internally consistent, integrated design theme and is consistent with all adopted specific plans, applicable design standards, and their required findings (OMC 17.10.07.F.3).*

   The proposed Specific Plan update upholds community design aesthetics by establishing an Urban Design Framework that strives to achieve a more cohesive, consistent streetscape program than is currently in place for the planning area where one presently does not exist. Furthermore, the proposed Specific Plan Design Guidelines repeatedly reference the City's Old Towne Design Standards and Secretary of Interior's Standards are the fundamental design guidance for the area. The proposed Specific Plan supplements these standards by addressing issues not presently covered in the Old Towne Design Standards such as guidance for historic industrial buildings and adaptive reuse.

4. *For infill residential development, as specified in the City of Orange Infill Residential Design Guidelines, the new structure(s) or addition are compatible with the scale, massing, orientation, and articulation of the surrounding development and will preserve or enhance existing neighborhood character (OMC 17.10.07.F.4).*

   Not applicable.

5. *The relationship of the proposed amendment to the General Plan and applicable Specific Plans (OMC 17.10.030).*

   The proposed Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan Update establishes consistency between the General Plan Land Use Policy Map and zoning within the Specific Plan's planning area. The proposed Specific Plan Update also furthers the goals and policies of the Land Use, Circulation and Mobility, Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation, Economic Development, and Housing Elements by providing policies and guidelines that serve to enhance the economic vitality of Old Towne, provide opportunities for adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of historic buildings, reinforce the community's readily available multi-modal transportation network, and provide opportunities for the integration of diversified housing types in the Depot area.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Specific Plan Update Planning Area and Zoning
2. Excerpts from Draft Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan Update
   a. Chapter 5, Urban Design Framework
   b. Chapter 7, Design Guidelines for Historic Buildings
   c. Height standards from Chapter 6, Zoning Districts