



Memorandum

TO: Historic Landmarks Commission **FROM:** Courtney Damkroger

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: July 27, 2004

APPROVED:

DATE:

**PROPOSED GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY PLANNED DEVELOPEMNT
REZONING PROJECT LOCATED AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF CURTNER
AVENUE AND MONTEREY ROAD IN CENTRAL SAN JOSE/CITY COUNCIL
POLICY ON THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC LANDMARKS**

INFORMATION

The proposed project is being brought to the Historic Landmarks Commission at this time as an informational item in conformance with the City Council Policy on the Preservation of Historic Landmarks (attached). The Policy states that projects with the potential to alter or demolish a landmark or other significant properties, as defined by the Policy, be brought to the Historic Landmarks Commission and public early in the process.

A Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report was sent to commissioners on June 16, 2004. The proposed project will be the subject of a Draft Environmental Impact Report expected to be circulated in the Fall. A copy of the DEIR will be sent to the Historic Landmarks Commission and will be available on the Planning Division website at: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning/eir/eir.htm>. The Commission will have an opportunity to comment on the DEIR at a subsequent meeting.

The proposal by the General Electric Company includes a rezoning of the site from Heavy Industrial to A (PD) Planned Development Zoning District to allow development of retail commercial uses. The EIR will address two development options: 1) a 646,100 square foot shopping center and 2) a 551,000 square foot shopping center with a 20-screen cineplex. The property currently contains the existing GE facility, which consists of office/manufacturing buildings, pavement, and limited landscaping. The project as described in the Notice of Preparation proposes to remove all structures to construct the proposed development. It should be noted that Planning staff has been meeting with the applicant's design team to investigate options for retaining the Motor Plant or portions of it.

The GE site was the subject of an Environmental Impact Report in late 2003 and early 2004 for the General Plan amendment to change the land use designation on the 55.1-acre site from *Heavy Industrial* (48.5 acres) and *Industrial Park* (6.6 acres) to *General Commercial*. An historic report on the GE Motor Plant facility was prepared and included in that DEIR. The Commission's comments on that DEIR are attached as is a copy of the historic report.

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Ward Hill prepared the historic report for the General Plan Amendment DEIR and found the Motor Plant potentially eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources and the National Register of Historic Places for its architecture, as a distinguished example of a Moderne Style industrial building, and secondarily for its association with the post WWII industrial boom in the County. Using the City of San Jose numerical tally system, the building rated 66, missing the baseline for City Landmark eligibility by one point. At the October 1, 2003 Landmarks Commission meeting the Commission voted 5-0-2 (Commissioners Paim and Janke absent) to pursue designation of the building as a City Landmark. To date, Planning staff has not been able to prepare the nomination for the Commission.

Staff and the EIR consultant are starting to prepare the DEIR. The document will offer alternatives to the proposed project that include reuse of the existing historic Motor Plant and that attempt to accommodate the commercial development objectives of the GE Company. The Planning Department invites suggestions now from the Historic Landmarks Commission regarding the development and composition of alternatives to be considered in the DEIR that avoid or reduce the project's historic resource impacts.

Courtney Damkroger
Historic Preservation Officer

Attachments: 2003 Historic Report
Vicinity Map
General Development Plan
HLC 10-1-03 comment letter

PBCE002/Historic/8-4-04/item 6.b. GE