



LOS ANGELES CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

200 N. Spring Street, Room 272, Los Angeles, California, 90012, (213) 978-1300
www.lacity.org/PLN/index.htm

Determination Mailing Date: JUN 16 2014

CASE NO.: CPC-2014-424-HD
CEQA: ENV-2014-425-CE

Council District: 1 – Cedillo, 13 – O'Farrell
Plan Area: Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley
Request(s): Height District Change

Applicant: City of Los Angeles

Location: Parcels fronting Sunset Boulevard between Glendale Boulevard and Mc Duff Street; Parcels South of Sunset Boulevard along Lemoyne Street and Logan Street; Parcels North and South of Sunset Boulevard along Echo Park and Laveta Terrace; and Parcels North of Sunset Boulevard along Fairbanks Place and Mc Duff Street

At its meeting on June 12, 2014, the following action was taken by the City Planning Commission:

1. **Approved** a Height District Change from 1L to 1VL [decrease allowed height from 75 feet to 45 feet].
2. **Adopted** the attached Findings.
3. **Adopted** Categorical Exemption No. ENV-2014-725-CE as the environmental clearance.

Recommendations to the City Council:

1. **Recommend** that the City Council **adopt** a Height District Change from 1L to 1VL [decrease allowed height from 75 feet to 45 feet].
2. **Recommend** that the City Council **adopt** the attached Findings.
3. **Recommend** that the City Council **adopt** Categorical Exemption No. ENV-2014-725-CE as the environmental clearance.

This action was taken by the following vote:

Moved: Dake-Wilson
Seconded: Segura
Ayes: Ambroz, Cabildo, Choe, Mack, Perlman,
Absent: Ahn, Katz

Vote: 7 - 0



James K. Williams, Commission Executive Assistant II
City Planning Commission

Effective Date: The decision of the City Planning Commission is final upon the mailing date of this Determination Letter. If you seek judicial review of any decision of the City pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.5, the petition for writ of mandate pursuant to that section must be filed no later than the 90th day following the date on which the City's decision became final pursuant to the California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.6. There may be other time limits which also affect your ability to seek judicial review.

Attachments: Findings, Ordinance, Map
City Planner: Haydee Urita Lopez

FINDINGS

GENERAL PLAN/CHARTER FINDINGS

1. The project complies with the City's General Plan Framework and land use designation. The project area falls within the area covered by the Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley Community Plan Update adopted by City Council on August 11, 2004. The Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley Community Plan designates the parcels in the project area as Community Commercial with corresponding zones of CR, C2, C4, and RAS3. All the parcels in the proposed project area are zoned C2, with a proposed 1VL Height District.
 - a. The Citywide General Plan Framework text includes policies related to conservation of existing lower-intensity residential and commercial districts. The proposed height district change from 1L to 1VL would be in conformance with the following policy:

Policy 3.4.1: Conserve existing stable residential neighborhoods and lower-intensity commercial districts...in accordance with the Framework Long-Range Land Use Diagram.

The project area is comprised of low intensity community commercial uses. Currently this project area is developed with local "mom and pop" retail shops, restaurants, and neighborhood uses that serve the local community. Most of the buildings are one story, with the exception of the historic Jensen Recreation Center, which is approximately 40-feet in height. In sum, the buildings and uses identified in the project area are low intensity and the built environment is already consistent with the Framework's goal of conserving low-scale neighborhood commercial districts.

The proposed height district change would lower the maximum height allowed. This change would provide certainty in the long-range, to protect the low-scale character of this corridor. A lower height threshold would decrease the intensity of land development. Lower intensities would guarantee long-range protection of the existing residential neighborhood and its local commercial corridor. The proposed height district change is consistent with the Citywide General Plan Framework and land use designation.

The proposed height district change complies with the Community Plan's policies for residential and commercial land use. The Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley Community Plan is part of the General Plan Framework's Land Use element. The community plan text includes the following relevant policies that seek to ensure best practices for residential and commercial land uses:

Policy 2-3.4: Preserve community character, scale and architectural diversity.

Policy 1-1: Encourage new infill residential development that complements existing development and architectural style.

Policy 1-1.5: Protect existing stable single family and low-density multiple family residential neighborhoods from encroachment by higher density residential and other incompatible uses.

The above policies were identified for residential land use uses to address both existing residential neighborhoods, and future infill projects where deemed appropriate. These residential policies cautiously call for new infill development in the

context of neighborhood preservation and compatibility with the existing community scale. The proposed height district change to lower the height district meets the community plan's expectation to preserve community character and protect lower density neighborhoods from incompatible, higher density.

Similarly, the following policies for commercial land use, address compatibility and consistency:

Objective 2-4: Reinforce the identity of distinct commercial districts through the use of design guidelines and development standards.

Policy 2-4.1: Ensure that commercial infill projects achieve harmony with the best of existing development.

The proposed height district change would limit potential development to a height that is more compatible with the project area. The properties immediately adjacent to the south of the project area are in the Angeleno Heights Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ). For the most part, HPOZs are special areas with unique historical and architectural elements. Buildings that fall within an HPOZ are subject to strict development and preservation guidelines, and normally follow a lower density pattern in comparison to other residential neighborhoods. The proposed height district change is a tool to shape the massing of proposed projects that benefit the project area and also results in protection of the surrounding lower density adjacent neighborhoods, including properties that fall within an HPOZ. The proposed height district change is consistent with the Community Plan's policies for residential and commercial land use.

- b. The proposed height district change complies with the Echo Park CDO's design goals and principles. Approximately 80% of the project area falls within the Echo Park CDO, which is an implementation tool of the Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley Community Plan. This CDO provides goals that seek to strengthen and embrace its pedestrian orientation, connectivity to Echo Park Lake, and retention of its unique cultural neighborhood identity. This CDO includes the following design goals and principles:

The CDO seeks to create a walkable community that takes advantage of the unique characteristics of the area: historic homes, scenic hillsides, winding roads, all nestled between a lush park and lake that provides respite from the urban core and opportunities for greater physical health and well-being.

To preserve architecturally significant buildings in the neighborhood and to ensure that further incompatible alterations do not occur, and to encourage new development that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood context.

Encourage a cohesive neighborhood character by building new structures and additions at a scale that is appropriate to the street and the surrounding neighborhood context.

The CDO calls for more context specific guidelines and standards that are unique to Echo Park. The project area for the proposed Height District change falls within the northern part of this CDO and is known for its pedestrian orientation and local commercial activities. The lower height district specifically addresses the concern to

avoid future incompatible alterations in this neighborhood. Currently, the Jensen Recreation Center (located north of Echo Park Lake) measures approximately 40 feet in height; the proposed height district change would establish a threshold on height which guarantees that future projects strive for consistency with the current massing and scale of this neighborhood, in keeping with the goals of the CDO. The proposed height district change is consistent with the Echo Park CDO's design goals and principles to ensure compatible land uses.

HEIGHT DISTRICT FINDINGS

2. Pursuant to Section 12.32-C of the Municipal Code, and based on these findings, the recommended action is deemed consistent with the public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.
 - a. Public Necessity. Granting the requested height district change, as recommended, will be deemed consistent with public necessity. The height district change will reduce the intensity of land development in a residential neighborhood and local commercial corridor that is characterized by buildings that are less than 45 feet in height. To satisfy the preservation of local character and require in-fill development to match the existing character of Echo Park's eclectic neighborhood, the Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley Community Plan encourages the protection of lower density neighborhoods from incompatible higher density.
 - b. Convenience. Granting the requested height district change, as recommended, will be deemed consistent with public convenience. The proposed height district change contributes to the preservation of the neighborhood character and provides neighborhood stabilization. The proposed height district change to 45 feet provides certainty that the character, architecture, and unique local neighborhood culture of Echo Park will be embraced and maintained.
 - c. General Welfare. Granting the requested height district change, as recommended, will be deemed consistent with the general welfare, in that the height district change to a lower height will provide for a design aesthetic that is consistent with the design goals and guidelines of the Echo Park Community Design Overlay District Plan. The project area is currently subject to a 1L Height District, while the adjacent properties to the north, south, east, and west all observe a 1VL Height District. The proposed height district change would result in consistency for a neighborhood that currently falls within a community design overlay (CDO) that requires improved design practices that will ensure compatibility with the pedestrian orientation and architectural character of this neighborhood.
 - d. Good Zoning Practice. Granting the requested height district change, as recommended will be deemed consistent with good zoning practice. The requested height district change from 1L to 1VL is in conformance with the purposes, intent and provision of the General Plan as reflected the adopted Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley Community Plan and the Echo Park Community Design Overlay District. The project area is currently subject to a 1L Height District, while the adjacent properties to the north, south, east, and west all observe a 1VL Height District. In addition, the project area is adjacent to an HPOZ that has a 1VL Height District, and also falls within a Community Design Overlay that has a 1VL Height District.

The proposed height district change would allow development that is consistent with that of surrounding properties; and is deemed consistent with Section 12.32-C of the Municipal Code.

CEQA FINDING

3. On February 5, 2014, the Department of City Planning issued Categorical Exemption No. ENV-2014-425-CE, per Class 5, Category 38, of City California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (see Exhibit C). The justification for the exemption applies for height district changes that reduce the intensity of development of land. The proposed height district change is to decrease the current 75-foot height maximum to a 45-foot height maximum. The attached Categorical Exemption (CE) reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis. The records upon which this decision is based are with the CPC Case file in Room 667, 200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles CA 90012.

DETERMINATION MALING
CPC-2014-424-HD
MAILING DATE: June 16, 2014

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