

Staff Response

The Appellant makes general statements that the City erred in its findings, but offers no explanation or supporting information as to how or with respect to what issue the City supposedly erred. The findings made by the City on pages 36 through 207 of the VTT Letter of Determination (LOD) and pages F-1 through F-157 of the CPC LOD are supported by substantial evidence in the record, and the evaluation of potential environmental impacts is adequately documented in the EIR. The Appellant fails to provide substantial evidence to the contrary.

Appellant's Statements: Traffic

- The project would create additional traffic and air pollution on Laurel Canyon Boulevard and at the intersection of Crescent Heights Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard.

Staff Response

The Appellant states that the Sunset Boulevard / Crescent Heights Boulevard intersection is currently congested, and project impacts are unknown without an "adequate" traffic study. Contrary to the Appellant's statements, the EIR adequately analyzed potential traffic impacts. The Draft EIR addressed the traffic impacts of the project in Section 4.J, Transportation and Circulation, with supporting technical data and analysis provided in Appendix H, while the RP-DEIR addressed the traffic impacts of Alternative 9 in Section 2.B.10, with supporting technical data and analysis provided in Appendix A. The traffic study was conducted in accordance with established thresholds and methodologies, and was reviewed and approved by LADOT. The EIR evaluated intersection impacts using established thresholds from the adopted City of Los Angeles 2006 CEQA Thresholds Guide, as is established practice for projects within the City of Los Angeles. It should be noted that intersections in the City of West Hollywood were evaluated using that jurisdiction's methodology and significance criteria. LADOT traffic methodologies take into account the sensitivity of poor existing intersection levels of service by imposing more stringent thresholds, or rather lower "With Project" incremental increase in transportation compared to baseline, for intersections operating at E or F (see Traffic Study page 102 in Appendix H to the Draft EIR). As indicated on pages 4.J-65 and 4.J-66 of the Draft EIR and page 2-68 of the RP-DEIR, operational traffic impacts at the intersection of Crescent Heights Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard would be less than significant. With respect to Project traffic impacts on Laurel Canyon Boulevard, as indicated in Table 4.J-4a on page 4.J-45 of the Draft EIR and in Table 2-8 on page 2-43 of the RP-DEIR, traffic conditions at the Hollywood Boulevard and Laurel Canyon Boulevard intersection would be level of service B (minimal traffic congestion, a less than significant impact), which suggests that traffic impacts even farther north on Laurel Canyon Drive would also be less than significant.

With respect to operational air quality impacts, the Draft EIR evaluated air quality impacts in Section 4.B, Air Quality, with supporting data and information provided in Appendix B, while Section 2.B.2 of the RP-DEIR addressed such impacts with supporting data provided in Appendix A. As indicated on page 4.B-51 of the Draft EIR and pages 2-22 through 2-25 of the RP-DEIR, the project would result in less than significant operational air quality impacts. This includes the impacts of localized operational air emissions, including mobile-source emissions from vehicles, on the surrounding residential uses (p.4.B-41 through 4.B-43 of the Draft EIR, and page 2-25 of the RP-DEIR). The Appellant has not provided substantial evidence to dispute the findings in the EIR.

Appellant's Statements: Mitigation Measures

- The City failed to consider the following mitigation measures:
 - Improving sidewalks along Laurel Canyon Boulevard
 - Adding a bus stop at Kirkwood and Laurel Canyon Boulevard
 - Traffic Mitigation Plan for Laurel Canyon Road

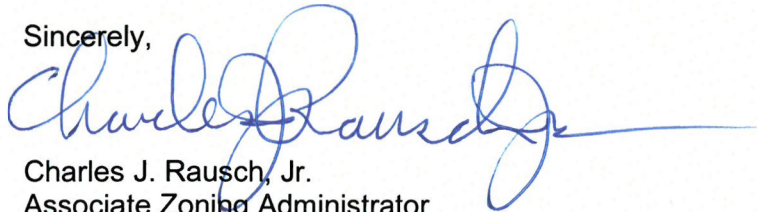
Staff Response

The Appellant asserts that the City failed to consider certain transportation mitigation measures, but the mitigations called for by the Appellant do not have a nexus or relationship to the project or to project-related impacts. As discussed above, impacts to the intersection of Crescent Heights Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard, and to intersections farther north along Laurel Canyon Boulevard, would be less than significant without the need for mitigation. Further, there is no nexus to project-related impacts to pedestrian infrastructure in Laurel Canyon to require upgrades to sidewalks on Laurel Canyon Boulevard. The Appellant further states that the City failed to consider a mitigation measure to add a bus stop at Kirkwood and Laurel Canyon Boulevard. As discussed in the EIR, impacts to public transit would be less than significant. Absent a project-related impact, there is no nexus requiring the project to modify off-site bus stop locations and routes through Laurel Canyon, which are planned and operated by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, not the City of Los Angeles.

Lastly, there is no nexus to require the project to implement a traffic mitigation plan for Laurel Canyon Road due to existing congested traffic conditions. As discussed above, project traffic impacts at Crescent Heights Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard, and on Laurel Canyon Boulevard farther north from the project site, would be less than significant.

As the appellant has failed to adequately disclose how the City erred in its actions relative to the EIR and the associated entitlements, Planning staff respectfully recommends that the appeals, VTT-72370-CN-2A and CPC-2013-2551-MCUP-DB-SPR-1A, be denied.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles J. Rausch, Jr.", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Charles J. Rausch, Jr.
Associate Zoning Administrator
Department of City Planning

