

## FINDINGS

### General Plan Findings

#### 1. General Plan Land Use Designation.

The subject property is located within the Central City North Community Plan area which was updated by the City Council on December 15, 2000 and designates the subject property for Heavy Manufacturing land uses corresponding to the M3 Zone. The site is presently zoned M3-1-RIO. The proposed 107-foot 6 inch in height office building with ground floor retail is consistent with development permitted in the proposed M3-2D-RIO Zone. The Community Plan Map, through Footnote No. 6, states that properties designated on zoning maps as Height District Nos. 1, 1L, 1VL, or 1XL (or their equivalent) that are limited to a floor area ratio of 1.5 to 1 can request a Zone Change / Height District Change to allow for a maximum floor area ratio of 3 to 1. The proposed Zone Change and Height District change from M3-1-RIO to M3-2D-RIO would permit an FAR of 3 to 1, which would enable the project site to be built at a height and density consistent with Footnote No. 6 of the Central City North Community Plan and with existing development in the Arts District. Therefore, the project is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan as reflected in the adopted Community Plan.

#### 2. General Plan Text.

- a. **Land Use Chapter, Framework Element.** The Framework Element of the General Plan was adopted by the City of Los Angeles in December 1996 and re-adopted in August 2001. The Framework Element provides guidance regarding policy issues for the entire City of Los Angeles, including the project site. The Framework Element also sets forth a Citywide comprehensive long-range growth strategy and defines Citywide policies regarding such issues as land use, housing, urban form, neighborhood design, open space, economic development, and public services.

The project will support and will be generally consistent with the General Plan Framework Land Use Chapter, as it will introduce a new commercial use to an underutilized site currently used as a warehouse and scrap metal yard. In addition, the project will comply with the following goals, objectives, and policies set forth in the General Plan Framework Land Use Chapter as follows:

Goal 3A. A physically balanced distribution of land uses that contributes towards and facilitates the City's long-term fiscal and economic viability, revitalization of economically depressed areas, conservation of existing residential neighborhoods, equitable distribution of public resources, conservation of natural resources, provision of adequate infrastructure and public services, reduction of traffic congestion and improvement of air quality, enhancement of recreation and open space opportunities, assurance of environmental justice and a healthful living environment, and achievement of the vision for a more liveable city.

Objective 3.1. Accommodate a diversity of uses that support the needs of the City's existing and future residents, businesses, and visitors.

Policy 3.1.1. Identify areas on the Long-Range Land Use Diagram and in the community plans sufficient for the development of a diversity of uses that serve the needs of existing and future residents (housing, employment, retail, entertainment, cultural/institutional, educational, health, services, recreation, and similar uses), provide job opportunities, and support visitors and tourism.

Objective 3.4. Encourage new multi-family residential, retail commercial, and office development in the City's neighborhood districts, community, regional, and downtown centers as well as along primary transit corridors/boulevards, while at the same time conserving existing neighborhoods and related districts.

The project is located within the Arts District, an area of the City that is undergoing rapid change from a predominantly industrial land use area to a having a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. The proposed project will contribute toward and facilitate the City's long-term fiscal and economic viability by redeveloping an underutilized site with a new commercial office building with 6,163 square feet of ground floor commercial uses. The project maximizes retail and commercial services along the Violet Street frontage.

The proposed office and retail space will expand the site's employment capacity and create new opportunities for neighborhood serving businesses. The project's proximity to transit connections and its mix of uses will encourage the reduction of vehicular trips to and from the project, vehicle miles traveled, and help reduce air pollution.

- b. **Central City North Community Plan.** The Community Plan text includes the following relevant land use goals, objectives, and policies:

Goal 2. A strong and competitive commercial sector which best serves the needs of the community through maximum efficiency and accessibility while preserving the historic commercial and cultural character of the district.

Objective 2-2. To attract uses which strengthen the economic base and expand market opportunities for existing and new businesses.

Policy 2-2.2. New development needs to add to and enhance the existing pedestrian street activity.

Policy 2-2.3. Require that the first floor street frontage of structures, including mixed-use projects and parking structures located in pedestrian oriented districts, incorporate commercial uses.

Goal 3. Sufficient land for a variety of industrial uses with maximum employment opportunities which are safe for the environment and the work force and which have minimal adverse impact on adjacent uses.

Objective 3.1. To provide for existing and future industrial uses which contribute job opportunities for residents and which minimize environmental and visual impacts to the community.

Policy 3-1.1. Designate lands for the continuation of existing industry and development of new industrial parks, research and development uses, light manufacturing, and similar uses which provide employment opportunities.

Objective 3.3. To retain industrial plan designations to maintain the industrial employment base for community residents and to increase it whenever possible.

Policy 3-3.1. The numerous large rail yards and other industrially planned parcels located in predominantly industrial areas should be protected from development by other uses which do not support the industrial base of the City and the community.

In addition to the land use goal, policies, and objectives described above, the project is consistent with the following design policies within the Urban Design Chapter of the Community Plan:

Site Planning. Structures shall be oriented toward the main commercial street where a parcel is located and shall avoid pedestrian/vehicular conflicts by:

- Locate surface parking to the rear of structures.
- Maximize retail and commercial service uses along frontages of commercial developments.
- Provide front pedestrian entrances for businesses fronting on main commercial streets.
- Requiring site plans which include ancillary structures, service areas, pedestrian walkways, vehicular paths, loading areas, drop off, and landscaped areas.

Height and Building Design. The project is consistent with the following policies regarding height and building design.

- Require the use of articulations, recesses, surface perforations, porticoes to break up long, flat building facades.
- Provide accenting, complementary building materials to building facades.
- Screen mechanical and electrical equipment from public view.
- Screen all rooftop equipment and building appurtenances from public view.
- Require the enclosure of trash areas for all projects.

Parking Structures. Parking structures shall be integrated with the design of the buildings they serve through:

- Design parking structure exteriors to match the style, materials and color of the main building.

- Along commercial frontages, and where appropriate, maximize retail and commercial service uses on ground floors of parking buildings.

The proposed project is a commercial office building consisting of 90,773 square feet of office space and 6,163 square feet of ground floor retail space. The project will provide new office space to the Arts District submarket of Downtown Los Angeles and provide opportunities for new neighborhood serving commercial uses in the ground floor commercial space. As a result, the development will strengthen the existing commercial and industrial development in the community by adding to the consumer base through the introduction of new employees and visitors, and by adding new amenities for the existing workforce. The project is also an infill development that will replace an underutilized site with desirable commercial development.

The proposed project is designed with commercial and pedestrian uses oriented towards Violet Street and parking located towards the alley, encouraging pedestrian activity and minimizing curb cuts. The project's setbacks mirror existing development in the area and will further provide a 7-foot rear setback along the alley to provide additional separation from southern abutting properties. The building's perceived massing will be reduced by the use of differing materials and balcony projections. A trash enclosure will also be provided and will be out of public view. The building's parking podium will be screened from view by a vinyl graphic wrap. The project has been designed with adequate buffering, landscaping, screening, and treatments to the facade to be compatible with the surrounding area.

- c. **Mobility Element.** The Mobility Element of the General Plan (Mobility Plan 2035) is likely to be affected by the recommended action herein through the imposition of street dedications and improvements surrounding the project site. Violet Street is designated as a Collector Street under Mobility Plan 2035, dedicated to a half right-of-way width of 33 feet and improved with asphalt roadway. The alley to the south is dedicated to a 10-foot wide half right-of-way and improved with asphalt roadway. Dedications and improvements have been imposed under the (T) Tentative Classification conditions contained within this staff report.

The proposed project is in conformance with the Mobility Element policies listed below:

Policy 1.2. Implement a balanced transportation system on all streets, tunnels, and bridges using complete streets principles to ensure the safety and mobility of all users.

Policy 2.3. Recognize walking as a component of every trip, and ensure high quality pedestrian access in all site planning and public right-of-way modifications to provide a safe and comfortable walking environment.

Policy 2.6. Provide safe, convenient, and comfortable local and regional bicycling facilities for people of all types and abilities.

Policy 2.10. Facilitate the provision of adequate on and off-street loading areas.

Policy 3.3: Promote equitable land use decisions that result in fewer vehicle trips by providing greater proximity and access to jobs, destinations, and other neighborhood services.

Policy 3.8. Provide bicyclists with convenient, secure and well-maintained bicycle parking facilities.

The project site is served by public transit and bike share; several Metro Local bus stops and the Metro bike share system are within walking distance of the subject property. The project includes 14 short-term and 23 long-term bicycle parking spaces and related facilities in accordance with the provisions of the LAMC. These facilities are located in direct proximity to the street and alley, with designated access intended to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. The project also includes a designated loading area in accordance with the provisions of the LAMC that is accessible from the alley.

- d. **Health and Wellness Element.** Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, the Health and Wellness Element of the General Plan, calls for the promotion of a healthy built environment in a manner that enhances opportunities for improved health and well-being, and which promotes healthy living and working conditions. The proposed project complies with the following policies:

Policy 3.2.1. Pattern of development that considers proximity to public transit corridors and station.

Policy 3.2.3. Land use patterns that emphasize pedestrian/bicycle access

Policy 3.4.1. Encourage new development to be located near rail and bus transit stations and corridors.

Policies 3.8.4-3.8.6. Promote pedestrian activity (streetscape improvements) in neighborhood districts.

The project locates jobs and commercial space within walking distance to several Metro Local bus stops and a bike share station. Short-term and long-term bicycle parking will be available on-site along with spaces along the Violet Street frontage and the alley to allow for an alternative mode of transportation to and from the project site.

- e. **Sewerage Facilities Element.** The Sewerage Facilities Element of the General Plan will not be affected by the recommended action. While the sewer system is likely able to accommodate the total flows for the proposed project, further detailed gauging and evaluation may be needed as part of the permit process to identify a specific sewer connection point. If the public sewer has insufficient capacity then the developer will be required to build sewer lines to a point in the sewer system with sufficient capacity. A final approval for sewer capacity and connection permit will be made at that time. Ultimately, this sewage flow will be conveyed to the Hyperion Treatment Plant, which has sufficient capacity for the project.

### **Zone and Height District Change Findings; “T” and “Q” Classification Findings**

3. Pursuant to Section 12.32 of the Municipal Code, and based on these Findings, the recommended action is deemed consistent with the General Plan and is in conformity with public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.

The proposed project involves the demolition of an existing 6,614 square-foot industrial warehouse and removal of a scrap metal yard. The project would include the construction of a nine-story, 96,938 square foot office building with ground-floor retail. The project would include 90,773 square feet of office space and 6,163 square feet of ground-floor retail space. Office units would be provided on levels six through nine. A minimum of approximately 200 automobile parking spaces would be provided for the project in levels one through five. A maximum of 274 parking spaces would be provided on-site with the tandem parking configuration. The project would also provide a total of 37 bicycle parking spaces, which includes 14 short-term bicycle parking spaces and 23 long-term bicycle parking spaces. The proposed building would have a maximum height of approximately 107'-6" feet above grade and an FAR of 3 to 1.

The project site consists of four parcels totaling 32,313 square feet of lot area. The Central City North Community Plan designates the site for the Heavy Manufacturing land use designation, which includes a corresponding zone of M3. With approval of the requested Zone Change/Height District Change, the zone will continue to be consistent with the range of zones corresponding to the Heavy Manufacturing land use designation. Based on the existing Height District No. 1, the subject property would be permitted a maximum of FAR of 1.5 to 1. The recommended M3-2D-RIO Zone would allow for a maximum FAR of 3 to 1, consistent with Footnote No. 6 of the Central City North Community Plan.

- a. Public Necessity. Approval of the Zone and Height District Change to (T)(Q)M3-2D-RIO would allow the site to be developed with approximately 96,936 square feet of commercial floor area, a significant increase from the 6,614 square-foot warehouse and scrap metal yard. The additional office and retail space will allow the site to potentially have a significant number of new jobs. The requested Zone and Height District Change will enable the Arts District to continue to attract new businesses and add additional neighborhood serving uses and amenities to the site.
- b. Convenience. Granting the proposed Zone and Height District Change would result in a project that is convenient to the public. The project site is located in a dynamic, burgeoning mixed-use neighborhood within the Central City North Community Plan area. The project site provides convenient vehicular access and public transit opportunities, as it is located just north of Interstate 10 and within walking distance (less than one-half mile) of several Metro Local bus stops, a Metro bike share station, and the Greyhound bus station. The project site is also located just east of Santa Fe Avenue and just south of 7<sup>th</sup> Street, which contains a number of jobs, restaurants, and residences.
- c. General Welfare. Granting the Zone and Height District Change to (T)(Q)M3-2D-RIO will allow for the development of a new office development on an underutilized site currently improved with a warehouse and scrap metal yard. The improvements resulting from the Zone and Height District Change will enhance the visibility and aesthetic character of the site. Further, the project would be designed in conformance with all applicable fire and safety codes which are intended to promote the General Welfare. Lastly, the applicant is proposing a project that would be consistent with all applicable zoning regulations.
- d. Good Zoning Practices. Approval of the Zone and Height District Change to (T)(Q)M3-2D-RIO allows for the more appropriately intense development of the subject property. Furthermore, the site's location provides a prime opportunity to take advantage of the site's location in the Arts District by creating a higher intensity project with pedestrian-oriented elements. Granting of the Height District Change to Height District No. 2D would

allow the project to be built with a greater FAR than otherwise permitted. The project would be consistent with the height and maximum FAR stipulated by Footnote No. 6 of the Central City North Community Plan and to other existing and proposed developments in the Arts District.

With the recently announced move of Warner Music Group to the nearby Ford Factory Building, the construction of the subject creative office building will further add to the mix of uses in the Arts District. The project introduces new construction to the growing number of adaptive reuse rehabilitation projects, thus contributing to the transformation of the Arts District to a true mixed-use community of industrial, commercial, and residential uses.

- e. “T” and “Q” Classification and “D” Development Limitation Findings. Pursuant to LAMC Sections 12.32-G,1, -G,2, -G,4 , The current action, as recommended, has been made contingent upon compliance with new “T” conditions of approval, and project specific conditions of approval imposed herein. Such limitations are necessary to ensure the identified dedications, improvements, and construction notices are executed to meet the public’s needs, convenience and general welfare served by the required actions. The “D” limitation and “Q” conditions that limit the scale and scope of the development along with site operations, are also necessary to: protect the best interests of and to assure a development more compatible with, the surrounding properties and the overall pattern of development in the community; to secure an appropriate development in harmony with the General Plan as discussed in the above sections, and to prevent or mitigate the potential adverse environmental effects of the recommended actions.

For the reasons stated above, the zone and height district change requests are beneficial in terms of the public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice, and are consistent with the General Plan.

### **Site Plan Review Findings**

4. **The project is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan, applicable community plan, and any applicable specific plan.**

#### General Plan – Framework Element

The Framework Element of the City’s General Plan was adopted on December 11, 1996 and re-adopted on August 8, 2001. The Framework Element sets forth a comprehensive long-range growth strategy for the City and defines citywide policies regarding such pertinent issues as land use, housing, urban form, neighborhood design, open space, economic development, transportation, infrastructure, and public services. As such, the Framework Element serves as an essential qualitative analysis tool in providing the general policy context within which to assess the merits of the proposed project relative to the project site and its surroundings, and against the established goals of the City.

The Framework Element defines Heavy Manufacturing as being those designated areas within the City which are intended to “preserve industrial lands for the retention and expansion of existing and attraction of new industrial uses that provide job opportunities for the City’s residents.” The proposed development is consistent with the following Community Commercial goals, objectives and policies identified within the Framework Element (Chapter 3 – Land Use):

Goal 3J: Industrial growth that provides job opportunities for the City's residents and maintains the City's fiscal viability.

Objective 3.14: Provide land and supporting services for the retention of existing and attraction of new industries.

Policy 3.14.1: Accommodate the development of industrial uses in areas designated as "Industrial-Light," "Industrial-Heavy," and "Industrial-Transit" in accordance with Tables 3-1 and 3-9. The range and intensities of uses permitted in any area shall be determined by the community plans. .

Relative to the site's Heavy Manufacturing designation under the Central City North Community Plan, the project site is currently underutilized as it is improved with a 6,163 square-foot warehouse and scrap metal yard. The applicant proposes a 107-foot 6-inch in height, 9-story office building with 90,773 square feet of office space and 6,163 square feet of ground floor commercial space. The project will help create additional job opportunities and help create a pedestrian-oriented, high activity, office development that will help revitalize the South Industrial neighborhood of the Arts District. Office tenants may include creative office/tech/law firms. As such, the proposed project is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan Framework Element.

#### Central City North Community Plan

The subject property is designated for Heavy Manufacturing uses under the Central City North Community Plan, with the corresponding zone of M3. The proposed office development is consistent with the Heavy Manufacturing designation and uses permitted under the (T)(Q)M3-2D-CDO Zone applicable to the project site. Furthermore, the surrounding properties are currently developed with warehouses, recycling centers, offices, artist-in-residence, and as such, the proposed project will be compatible with the existing uses in the surrounding area.

Objectives of the Community Plan include the following:

Objective 3.1. To provide for existing and future industrial uses which contribute job opportunities for residents and which minimize environmental and visual impacts to the community.

The project site is currently underutilized as previously described. The proposed office development is consistent with the above Community Plan objective as it would result additional job opportunities at the site through the addition of 90,773 square feet of office space and 6,163 square feet of retail space. The project would be constructed to a maximum FAR of 3 to 1, fully maximizing the development potential of the site in line with the Central City North Community Plan Footnote No. 6.

5. **The project consists of an arrangement of buildings and structures (including height, bulk and setbacks), off-street parking facilities, loading areas, lighting, landscaping, trash collection, and other such pertinent improvements that is or will be compatible with existing and future development on neighboring properties.**

The project site is located within the Central City North Community Plan, just south of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and just north of Interstate 10, near Santa Fe Avenue and Violet Street. The area is

generally developed with industrial uses including maintenance facilities, warehouses, offices, and live/work. The site abuts one live/work artist in residence unit to the south. Just north of the site along Santa Fe Avenue is the Ford Factory redevelopment, which includes 283,583 square feet of development and a five-story parking structure. Just south of the project site on Bay Street is the SoHo Warehouse redevelopment, which rises to a height of 96 feet 2 inches and six-stories, and includes a roof deck, bars, restaurants, and a private club.

The proposed project is redeveloping an underutilized site. The following project elements were designed in a manner that is compatible with both existing and future development of the surrounding area:

#### Height/Bulk

The proposed commercial office building will be nine-stories and 107 feet 6 inches in height. With the requested Height District No. 2D, the project is permitted to be built with unlimited height and stories, but is limited to an FAR of 3 to 1. While the building is taller than most of the existing buildings in the immediate area, other nearby buildings that fit the same context include the six-story building at 1000 Santa Fe (SoHo Warehouse) and the five to six-story buildings at the Ford Factory complex.

The proposed project has dual frontages along Violet Street and an alleyway. The overall mass and scale of the project is comparable with other development in the Arts District neighborhood of Downtown Los Angeles in that the building will maximize most of its lot coverage. The façade of the proposed office building has been articulated with varied balconies and materials to minimize the mass of the building. Further, the structure will be setback 7 feet from the alley to provide for additional landscaping and to help minimize impacts to the southerly abutting properties.

#### Setbacks

The setbacks applicable to the project are established initially under Section 12.20 of the LAMC, which has no setback requirements for the M3 Zone. The project site plan (Exhibit "A") indicates the following yard provisions:

	<b>Setback</b>
<b>Front/Violet Street (North)</b>	0 feet
<b>Side (East)</b>	0 feet
<b>Side (West)</b>	4 feet 10 inches
<b>Rear/Alley (South)</b>	7 feet

Therefore, the proposed setbacks for the project are consistent with the requirements of the LAMC.

#### Off-street Parking, Bicycle Parking, and Driveways:

The project is required to provide 196 automobile parking spaces along with 37 bicycle parking spaces (14 short-term and 23 long-term spaces). The project will provide a total of 200 off-street automobile parking spaces (or 274 with tandem configuration) and 37 bicycle parking spaces. The applicant is proposing to provide 14 long-term bicycle parking spaces and 23 short term bicycle parking spaces.

Ingress/egress to and from the project's garage will be provided by a two-way driveway accessed off of the alleyway. Per Exhibit "A", short term bicycle parking will be provided on the ground floor in a manner to allow convenient access for bicyclists entering and leaving the site.

#### Loading Areas

The project is required to provide a 817 square-foot loading area per LAMC Section 12.21,C,6(d). The project includes a 920 square-foot loading area with 14-foot in height ceiling. The loading area is located towards the rear of the site and accessed from the alley.

#### Lighting and Building Signage:

Lighting and signage will be provided per LAMC requirements. The project's parking podium will be wrapped in vinyl with the dual purpose of screening the parking podium from view and displaying rotating public art, in keeping with the neighborhood's defining residences. The art murals are required to comply with the requirements of the Department of Cultural Affairs and all illuminated and non-illuminated signs would be designed in accordance with LAMC Section 14.4 and Ordinances Nos. 179,416, 180,841, and 182,706.

#### On-Site Landscaping:

The project is required to provide landscaping in compliance with the Los Angeles River Implementation Overlay. Additionally, all other open areas not used for buildings, driveways, parking areas, recreational facilities or walks are to be landscaped and maintained in accordance with a landscape plan to be approved by the Director of Planning or designee.

#### Building Orientation/Frontage

The proposed project is designed to activate Violet Street, which will serve as the primary pedestrian and vehicular access point. Retail customers are intended to enter the project site from Violet Street while office tenants are intended to enter from the alley.

Façade treatments, landscaping, and a sidewalk distinguish the primary entrance along Violet Street from the rest of the street. The building has also incorporated transparent building elements on the ground floor façade to increase visibility to and from the site.

#### Trash Collection

An enclosed trash area is located on the ground floor of the building and is not visible to the public.

As described above, the project consists of an arrangement of buildings and structures (including height, bulk and setbacks), off-street parking facilities, loading areas, lighting, landscaping, trash collection, and other such pertinent improvements, that will be compatible with existing and future development on adjacent and neighboring properties.

- 6. That any residential project provides recreational and service amenities in order to improve habitability for the residents and minimize impacts on neighboring properties.**

The proposed office and commercial building is an entirely commercial use. The project is not a residential project and will not create a demand for recreation and service amenities on neighboring properties.

### **Environmental Findings**

7. **Environmental Finding.** A Mitigated Negative Declaration (ENV-2016-1707-MND) and corresponding Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP) were prepared for the proposed project. The MMP is a document that is separate from the MND and is prepared and adopted as part of the project's proposal. Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code requires a Lead Agency to adopt a "reporting or monitoring program for the changes made to the project or conditions of approval, adopted in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment." The MND was circulated for public review on October 1, 2016 through October 31, 2016. During the review period, the Department of City Planning received two comment letters.

Parker Environmental Consultants, prepared a formal response to all comments, dated October 28, 2016. The comments are responses are included in the staff report with Exhibit "B". The final MND document was prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to determine if the project would result in a significant impact on the environment. Staff from the Los Angeles Department of City Planning has reviewed the final MND and finds that it was prepared in accordance with the City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide and other applicable City requirements. As such, the MND is adequate for CEQA clearance, as noted in Exhibit "B".

On the basis of the whole of the record before the lead agency including any comments received, the lead agency finds that, with imposition of the mitigation measures described in the MND, there is no substantial evidence that the proposed project will have a significant effect on the environment. The lead agency find that the attached Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis; and all that the mitigation measures have been made enforceable conditions on the property. The records upon which this decision is based are with the Environmental Review Section of the Planning Department in Room 750, 200 North Spring Street.

8. **Flood Insurance.** The National Flood Insurance Program rate maps, which are a part of the Flood Hazard Management Specific Plan adopted by the City Council by Ordinance No. 172,081, have been reviewed and it has been determined that this project is located in Zone C, areas of minimal flooding.