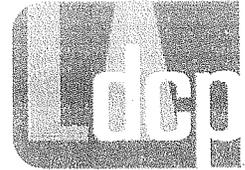




DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING  
RECOMMENDATION REPORT



**ITEM 6**

**City Planning Commission**

**Date:** June 26, 2014  
**Time:** After 8:30 a.m.  
**Place:** Van Nuys City Hall  
Council Chambers, Second Floor  
14410 Sylvan Street,  
Room 201, Council Chamber  
Van Nuys CA 91401

**Public Hearing:** April 25, 2014  
**Appeal Status:** Specific Plan Amendment is not  
appealable,  
**Expiration Date:** N/A  
**Multiple Approval:**

**Case No.:** CPC-2014-67-SPA  
**CEQA No.:** CE-2014-68  
**Incidental Cases:** None  
**Related Cases:** ZA 2013-3370-CU-ZV  
**Council No.:** 2-Krekorian  
**Plan Area:** North Hollywood – Valley  
Village  
**Specific Plan:** Valley Village  
**Certified NC:** Valley Village  
**GPLU:** Neighborhood Office  
Commercial  
**Zone:** [Q]C1-1VL, C1-1VL  
**Applicant:** City Initiated

**PROJECT LOCATION:** 12106,12032,34,36,38,40,42,44,48,50,52,58 West Burbank Blvd. and 5544,47,55 North Laurel Canyon Blvd, legally described as PT 151 Arb 21 and 22 of Lankershim Ranch Land and Water Co., and Tract 5215 M.B. 57-49 Lot FR14,

**PROPOSED PROJECT:** Southwest corner: An amendment to the Valley Village Specific Plan boundaries (to exclude three sites from the specific plan) that would allow an application to be considered by the City to permit a drive through coffee shop, ZA-2013-3370-CU-ZV. The project is being reviewed and processed through the Office of Zoning Administration. If approved the project would be conditioned to ensure a proper integration into the community.

**REQUESTED ACTION:**

1. Pursuant to Section 21082.1(c)(3) of the California Public Resources Code, **Adopt** the ENV-2014-68-CE (Categorical Exemption) for the above referenced project; and
2. Pursuant to Section 11.5.7 G of the Municipal Code a Specific Plan Amendment to the boundaries of the Valley Village Specific Plan, as shown on the attached map.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

1. **Approve** and **recommend** that the City Council approve the **Specific Plan Amendment Boundary** change, as indicated in the report;
2. **Approve** Categorical Exemption No. 2014-68 CE; and
3. **Adopt** the attached Findings.

MICHAEL LOGRANDE  
Director of Planning



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Lisa Webber, Deputy Director



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Daniel Scott, Principal City Planner



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Robert Z. Duenas, Senior City Planner  
Telephone: (818) 374-5072

**ADVICE TO PUBLIC:** \*The exact time this report will be considered during the meeting is uncertain since there may be several other items on the agenda. Written communications may be mailed to the *Commission Secretariat, 200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012* (Phone No. 213-978-1300). While all written communications are given to the Commission for consideration, the initial packets are sent to the week prior to the Commission's meeting date. If you challenge these agenda items in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing agendized herein, or in written correspondence on these matters delivered to this agency at or prior to the public hearing. As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to this programs, services and activities. Sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or other auxiliary aids and/or other services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability of services, please make your request not later than three working days (72 hours) prior to the meeting by calling the Commission Secretariat at (213) 978-1300.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Project Analysis.....A-1**

- Project Summary
- Background
- Related Cases
- Staff analysis
- Conclusion

**Findings..... F-1**

- General Plan/Charter Findings
- CEQA Findings

**Public Hearing..... P-1**

**Exhibits:**

**A – Maps**

- A1 – Valley Village Specific Plan Map
- A2 – Boundary change area, existing Zoning Map
- A3 – Boundary change area, existing General Plan Map
- A4 – Specific Plan area, existing General Plan Map
- A5 – Council Motion
- A6 – Valley Village Specific Plan text
- A7 – Valley Village Neighborhood Council, support.

**B – Environmental Clearance**

## PROJECT ANALYSIS

### Project Summary

The proposal is to modify the northerly boundary of the Valley Village Specific Plan to allow for a more consistent commercial development at the intersection of Burbank and Laurel Canyon Boulevard. Staff was requested by the City Council to review and make a recommendation on the boundary change. Staff reviewed the intent of the Valley Village Specific Plan and the current development conditions of the area to determine if the change was in the best interest of the community. Concurrently, there is a conditional use application being heard by the Office of Zoning Administration to permit a drive-thru coffee shop at the southwesterly corner of the intersection. That action will be dependent on whether the City approves and adopts the boundary change.

### Background

On October 4 2013, Councilman Paul Krekorian (CD 2) introduced a motion to adjust the northerly boundaries of the Valley Village Specific Plan. This was done in conjunction with a conditional use filing to allow a Starbucks drive-thru coffee shop to be considered at the southwesterly corner of Burbank and Laurel Canyon Boulevard. The intersection of Burbank and Laurel Canyon Boulevard lies on the northerly boundary of the specific plan. The northerly corners are outside of the specific plan and are regulated by the city wide commercial standards. The southern corners are within the specific plan and are not only governed by the citywide standards but also the specific plan standards. The concern is that this circumstance may be hindering potential investors from upgrading the surrounding properties due to the additional limitations. A key specific plan standard that is hindering the redevelopment of the southwesterly corner is the prohibition of drive through restaurants. While this action would allow the consideration of a drive-thru at the site, it would still have to be approved by a Zoning Administrator and comply with all the conditions of approval.

### Related Cases

ZA 2013-3370 ZV-CU: This is a conditional use for construction of an 18 foot high 605 square-foot single story drive-thru Starbucks coffee shop with a 739 square foot patio for outdoor seating (44 seats and 19 tables) and 13 surface parking spaces. There will be an outdoor walk up window. A variance to the existing Q conditions is also being requested to permit the coffee shop in lieu of the automobile shop that is permitted in the C4 zone. The public hearing was conducted on April 25, 2014, the final action is still pending.

### Staff Analysis

In 1986, the City Council initiated the development of the Valley Village Specific Plan; after many years the specific plan was adopted in 1993. It was in response to concerns by the community over the intrusion of commercial and multi-family developments that were out of scale and/or out of character with the areas established single-family character. Concern centered around the potential for excessive traffic, spill over parking into the single-family neighborhoods, blocked views and other potential impacts.

The community has three major north/south streets; Whitsitt Ave, Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Colfax Ave and three east/west streets; Chandler Boulevard, Magnolia Boulevard and Riverside Drive. These streets have various commercial and multifamily zones that directly abut the single-family neighborhoods that the specific plan was designed to protect. The outer most boundaries of the specific plan area are; the Hollywood freeway on the east, the Ventura freeway on the south, the Tujunga wash on the west and Burbank Boulevard on the north. Having the freeways and the wash as boundaries create a natural break in development to the communities beyond, however Burbank Boulevard creates a different situation. The properties on the south side of Burbank Boulevard are regulated by the specific plan and the properties on the north side are not. While this does not create a problem for the residential developments along Burbank Boulevard or for the larger commercial sites at Whitsett, the smaller commercial sites at Laurel Canyon Boulevard may be adversely effected. The southerly commercial properties at this intersection have additional restrictions on use that do not apply to the northerly side of Burbank Boulevard.

The specific plan prohibits the following in commercial areas: all ground floor residential, automobile sales-new, bathhouses, burglar alarm businesses, driving schools, escort businesses, fast-food & drive-through restaurants, hotels and motels, massage parlors, mobile home sales-new, monument and tombstone retail sales, off-site advertising signs, RV sales-new, rescue missions, taxicab businesses, trade schools, universities, barber/beauty schools, trailer sales-new. The overall regulations have maintained a consistent character along the main interior commercial streets of the specific plan area. However, the perimeter commercial areas must compete with commercial sites which have less restrictions than themselves. Currently, a drive-thru coffee shop operator wants to locate at the southwesterly corner of Laurel Canyon and Chandler Boulevard, unfortunately the specific plan prohibits drive-thru's. The prohibition of drive-thru's was to prevent the over concentration of fast food drive-thru's within the Valley Village commercial area. A more pedestrian and neighborhood feel was desired for the core commercial areas. The area being recommended for exclusion from the Valley Village specific plan is the smallest of the commercial areas along Burbank Boulevard within the plan and is detached from the southerly commercial areas along Laurel Canyon Boulevard. Removing the three parcels from the plan area would allow them to develop more like their northerly counter parts without impacting the single-family character within the specific plan.

The question has been raised as to why are the boundaries being adjusted for this development as opposed to the applicant requesting a specific plan exception to allow the drive-thru? In response, the specific plan expressly prohibits "drive-thru's" the specific plan exception process can only be used to grant relief of development standards of a specific plan such as height, area, and yards it cannot grant relief from an expressly prohibited use. The alternative in this situation would be to amend the specific plan itself to allow drive-thru's anywhere in the plan area. Considering the unique location of the site on the boundaries of the plan, the consideration of a boundary adjustment was an acceptable option for the council office and the Valley Village Neighborhood Council.

### **Conclusion**

After reviewing the intent of the specific plan, to protect the single-family character of the area, and considering the support of the neighborhood council and council office, staff recommends amending the boundaries of the Valley Village Specific Plan. In addition, the Zoning Administrator acting on the conditional use permit will properly condition the development to ensure compatibility with the area, if the Conditional Use Permit is approved.

## FINDINGS

### A. General Plan/Charter Findings

1. **Framework Element.** The Framework Element recognizes the importance of existing single-family residential neighborhoods and the need to conserve them.

**GOAL 3B**      *Preservation of the City's stable single-family residential neighborhoods.*

***Objective 3.5***

Ensure that the character and scale of stable single-family residential neighborhoods is maintained, allowing for infill development provided that it is compatible with and maintains the scale and character of existing development.

The Framework Element does not identify this area as targeted for intensification or growth. Instead, it defers to the community plans for policy towards plan amendments that would be reflective of the local policies. The Framework Plan supports maintenance of single-family designated areas.

2. **General Plan Land Use Designation.** The subject property is located within the area covered by the North Hollywood-Valley Village Community Plan, updated and adopted by the City Council on May 14, 1996. The existing Plan designates the subject property as Neighborhood Office Commercial with corresponding zones of CR, C1, C1.5, RAS3, RAS4 and P. The recommended approval of the specific plan boundary change will be consistent with the existing community plan designation and policies of the Community plan as noted below.
3. **General Plan Text.** The North Hollywood Community Plan text includes the following relevant policies:

*The Plan encourages the preservation of low density single-family residential areas, the conservation of open space lands and the concentration of commercial and residential development into the North Hollywood Center (business district and environs); these are intended to be connected to other major Centers of the City by a rapid transit network.*

*The Plan proposes that the low-density residential character of North Hollywood-Valley Village should be preserved and that single-family residential neighborhoods be protected from encroachment by other types of uses.*

The proposed Valley Village specific plan boundary changes will not conflict with the relevant residential policies of the community plan. The changes will allow for a consistent commercial development at the intersection of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Burbank Boulevard and still maintain the protections of the Valley Village Specific Plan for the single family residents of the area.

The purposes of the Valley Village Specific Plan include the following:

“To assure orderly, attractive and harmonious multiple residential and commercial developments that are adjacent to the existing single-family developments within the Valley Village area of the North Hollywood Community Plan area;”

“To provide coordinated and comprehensive standards for height, design, building massing, open space, and landscape for new projects so that multiple residential and commercial projects are harmonious with adjacent single-family neighborhoods;”

“To adequately buffer single-family residential uses from adjacent multiple residential and commercial developments;”

The change in boundaries will not conflict with the above purposes and in this instance will allow them to be implemented using the review process established by the L.A.M.C. The proposed project for the site will be reviewed in a public forum for compatibility with the community. Sensitivity to any potential impacts will be addressed and mitigated through that process. These sites are unique in that they are not adjacent to any single-family zones or uses and are bounded by either commercial or multiple family zones or uses. The purpose of these changes is to allow a more consistent and harmonious commercial development throughout the commercial intersection.

## **B. CEQA Findings**

1. **Environmental.** Mitigation measures are not necessary for the subject action there are no potential significant negative environmental effects associated with the action. The Director of Planning has determined that the project is Categorically Exempt from the environmental review pursuant to Article III, Section, 1, and Class 3 and Category 7 of the City of Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines.

## PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMUNICATIONS

### Public Hearing

The public hearing was held on April 25, 2014, right after the Zoning Administrator held the public hearing for ZA-2013-3370-CU-ZV. Notifications for the hearings were sent to the same property owners for both cases. As the Hearing Officer, I heard all the testimony given for the Zoning Administrator's case and then took testimony relating to the specific plan boundary change. The public was able to speak to both issues in a comprehensive manner. Approximately 4 speakers spoke in support of the change and 2 speakers spoke in opposition.

A representative from the Valley Village Neighborhood Council spoke and presented their position in the attached email, exhibit A7 attached.

Seven other letters from residents in support were submitted.

Two representatives of the Valley Village Homeowners Association were opposed to the boundary adjustment. Their concern is that an adjustment to the boundaries would lead to further erosion of the specific plan regulations. The representative was not expressly against development of the site, but rather that an amendment to the boundaries was being considered in order to allow the development.