

**FINDINGS APPROVED BY  
PLANNING AND LAND USE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
MAY 5, 2015**

**General Plan/Charter Findings**

1. **General Plan Land Use Designation.** The subject property is located within the Wilshire Community Plan, which was adopted by the City Council on September 19, 2001 (Case No. CPC 97-0051 CPU). The Plan map designates the subject property as Neighborhood Commercial with corresponding zones of: C1, C1.5, C2, C4, P, CR, RAS3 and RAS4 and High Medium Residential with corresponding zone(s) of R4. The recommended General Plan Amendment would designate all properties as Regional Center Commercial Land Use Designation. The Zone Change request from (Q)C2-1 and R4-2 to R5 would be consistent with the proposed General Plan Land Use Designation of Regional Center Commercial and 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.**

**Framework Element**

The Citywide General Plan Framework Element is a guide for communities to implement growth and development policies by providing a comprehensive long-range view of the City as a whole. The Citywide General Plan Framework text defines policies related to growth and includes policies for land use, housing, urban form/neighborhood design, open space/conservation, economic development, transportation, and infrastructure/public services. The Element establishes categories of land use -- Neighborhood District, Community Center, Regional Center, Downtown Center, and Mixed-Use Boulevard -- that are broadly described by ranges of intensity/density, heights, and lists of typical uses. The definitions reflect a range of land use possibilities found in the City's already diverse urban, suburban, and rural land use patterns.

Although the proposed project is not located along a mixed-use Boulevard as identified by the City's Framework Element, it is located within the boundaries of one of the four Regional Centers located in the Wilshire Community Plan Area (CPA) - the Koreatown Regional Commercial Center. The site is about two blocks south of the Wilshire Regional Center boundary. The Koreatown Regional Commercial Center runs along Olympic Boulevard, in the southwestern portion of the CPA, and is generally bounded by Eighth Street on the north, Twelfth Street on the south, Western Avenue on the west, and continues east towards Vermont Avenue. The proposed project is within two blocks of Wilshire Boulevard, which is a major transit corridor, and approximately 0.4 mile of two Metro stations (Wilshire/Vermont and Wilshire/Normandie Stations). The proposed project is located in a transit-rich area and would be served by existing Metro transit and rail lines and other local and regional transit providers.

The proposed project would be in conformance with the following objectives and policies of the Framework Element as described below.

**Objective 3.4.** Distribution of Land Use: 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.

**Policy 3.4.1.** Conserve existing stable residential neighborhoods and lower-intensity commercial districts and encourage the majority of new commercial and mixed-use (integrated commercial and residential) development to be located (a) in a network of neighborhood districts, community, regional, and downtown centers, (b) in proximity to rail and bus transit stations and corridors, and (c) along the City's major boulevards, referred to as districts, centers, and mixed-use boulevards, in accordance with the Framework Long-Range Land Use Diagram.

*Wilshire Community Plan.*

The project site is located in the southeastern portion of the Wilshire Community Plan Area (CPA), approximately two miles west of downtown Los Angeles. The Wilshire CPA has a pattern of low to medium density residential uses interspersed with areas of higher density residential uses. Long corridors of commercial activity can be found along major boulevards, including Wilshire Boulevard, Pico Boulevard, Western Avenue, and Vermont Avenue. The CPA east of Western Avenue contains large concentrations of higher-density residential neighborhoods surrounding the regional commercial area, known as the Wilshire Regional Center. In the vicinity of the project site, Wilshire Boulevard is developed with a mix of mid-rise and low-rise buildings, as well as mid-rise multi-family residential uses.

Even though the proposed project would entail a higher density and scale than the immediately surrounding uses, the proposed project would be designed to enhance the broader neighborhood character, consistent with the Wilshire Regional Center to the north of the project site. The proposed project consists of a mix of housing and retail uses that would maximize mobility for project residents in the transit-rich community. The proposed project would be consistent with recent state legislations (i.e., Senate Bills 743 and 375) that encourage development of mixed-use projects in transit priority areas. The proposed project is within two blocks of Wilshire Boulevard, which is a major transit corridor served by local and regional transit providers. The site is also located approximately 0.4 mile of two Metro stations (Wilshire/ Vermont and Wilshire/Normandie stations). The proposed project would maximize opportunities to encourage non-automobile modes of travel to regional centers, civic and cultural opportunities in downtown Los Angeles and other areas served by Metro transit options.

The proposed project would include ground-floor and second-floor retail uses to serve project residents and the surrounding neighborhood, and would improve the streetscape and enhance the character of the neighborhood by including landscaping and streetscape improvements to enhance the visual quality of the area.

The proposed project would be in conformance with the following objectives and policies of the Wilshire Community Plan:

**Objective 1-2.** Reduce vehicular trips and congestion by developing new housing in close proximity to regional and community commercial centers, subway stations and existing bus route stops.

**Policy 1-2.1.** Encourage higher density residential uses near major public transportation centers.

**Policy 1-3.1** Promote architectural compatibility and landscaping for new Multiple Family residential development to protect the character and scale of existing residential neighborhoods.

**Policy 1.4-3** Encourage multiple family residential and mixed use development in

commercial zones.

**Objective 2-3** Enhance the visual appearance and appeal of commercial districts.

**Policy 2-2.3** Encourage the incorporation of retail, restaurant, and other neighborhood serving uses in the first floor street frontage of structures, including mixed use projects located in Neighborhood Districts.

**Policy 2-3.1** Improve streetscape identity and character through appropriate controls of signs, landscaping, and streetscape improvements; and require that new development be compatible with the scale of adjacent neighborhoods.

### Housing Element

The proposed project will be implemented in an area developed with various commercial, institutional, and residential land uses. The proposed project is located in a transit-rich area within walking distance of transportation resources to promote and foster a walkable community near the Wilshire Regional Center of Los Angeles. The proposed project is within two blocks of Wilshire Boulevard, which is a major transit corridor, and approximately 0.4 mile of two Metro stations (Wilshire/ Vermont and Wilshire/Normandie stations). The proposed project would be designed to enhance the neighborhood character and promote a mix of housing types and quality design that reduces blighted conditions in the immediate vicinity.

The City's General Plan Housing Element includes the following relevant policies:

**Policy 1.1.4** Expand opportunities for residential development, particularly in designated Centers, Transit Oriented Districts and along Mixed-Use Boulevards.

**Policy 2.2.1** Provide incentives to encourage the integration of housing with other compatible land uses.

**Policy 2.2.2** Provide incentives and flexibility to generate new multi-family housing near transit and centers.

**Policy 2.4.2** Develop and implement design standards that promote quality residential development.

- 3. City Charter Sections 556 and 558.** As described in the Framework Element, Regional Centers are intended to serve as the focal points of regional commerce, identity, and activity. They contain a diversity of uses such as corporate and professional offices, retail commercial malls, government buildings, major health facilities, major entertainment and cultural facilities and supporting services. The development of sites and structures integrating housing with commercial uses is encouraged in concert with supporting services, recreational uses, open spaces, and amenities. They are typically high-density places whose physical form is substantially differentiated from the lower-density neighborhoods of the City. Generally, regional centers will range from FAR 1.5:1 to 6:1 and are characterized by six- to twenty-story (or higher) buildings as determined in the community plan. Their densities and functions support the development of a comprehensive and inter-connected network of public transit and services.

The proposed project is located within one of the four Regional Centers located in the Wilshire Community Plan Area (CPA) - the Koreatown Regional Commercial Center. The site is about two blocks south of the Wilshire Regional Center. The Koreatown Regional Commercial Center runs along Olympic Boulevard, in the southwestern portion of the

CPA, and is generally bounded by Eighth Street on the north, Twelfth Street on the south, Western Avenue on the west, and continues east towards Vermont Avenue. Although the scale and intensity of the proposed project at the R5-2 and Regional Commercial density, is not compatible with the existing pattern of development along 8th Street, the proposed project is located in a transit-rich area. The density of the project supports the existing comprehensive and inter-connected network of public transit and services in the vicinity.

4. The **Transportation Element** of the General Plan will not be affected by the recommended action, in that no specific project requiring dedications or improvements to West 8<sup>th</sup> Street is proposed at this time.
5. The **Sewerage Facilities Element** of the General Plan will not be affected by the recommended action, in that no physical changes are proposed for the project site.
6. **Zone and Height District Change Findings.** *Pursuant to Section 12.32C7 of the Municipal Code, and based on these findings, the recommended action is deemed consistent with public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.*

#### *Public Necessity*

The requested Zone and Height District Change from (Q)C2-1 and R4-2 to R5-2 to accommodate the conditioned project will be consistent with public necessity as it will increase the housing opportunities in the Wilshire Community of Los Angeles by providing apartment units in a high-rise building. The site's current zoning would restrict the site's development to the density allowed by the C2-1 and R4 zones. In order to provide a greater number of units, a zone change to R5 density is needed. As conditioned, the compatible design of the mixed-use project will enhance the neighborhood and will contribute to the revitalization of the Wilshire Boulevard commercial corridor and areas to the south of it. The Wilshire Community Plan encourages multiple family residential and mixed-use developments in close proximity to regional and community commercial centers. The Wilshire Community Plan Objective 2-1 encourages the City to preserve and strengthen viable commercial development and provide additional opportunities for new commercial development and services within existing commercial areas.

#### *Convenience*

The objectives of the Wilshire Community Plan include providing adequate land for new multiple family residential units. The increase in the number of dwelling units and commercial floor area in this area will encourage the viability of the Wilshire Boulevard corridor. The proposed project is located in a transit-rich area within walking distance of transportation resources to promote and foster a walkable community near the Wilshire Regional Center of Los Angeles. The Public Convenience is also served by centrally locating residential opportunities near a variety of employment and services, including the Wilshire Center Regional Center.

#### *General Welfare*

The proposed project will promote general welfare of the community by the following:

- Help meet local housing needs
- Enhance the sense of community in the area by providing a unique development that contributes to the revitalization of the neighborhood
- Reduce dependency on the automobile by locating new development, particularly housing, near public transit and shopping, services and employment

#### *Good Zoning Practice*

Although the requested Zone Change from (Q)C2-1 and R4-2 to R5-2 would allow a level of development that is a higher density and scale than the immediately surrounding uses, the proposed project would be designed to enhance the neighborhood character, consistent with the Wilshire Regional Center to the north of the project site. The proposed project is the construction of a 27 story, 269-unit mixed use structure. Existing development in the immediate neighborhood averages one to six stories in height with 1 to 40 dwelling units per site. However, the proposed project consists of a mix of housing and retail uses that would maximize mobility for project residents in the transit-rich community. The proposed project would be consistent with recent state legislations (i.e., Senate Bills 743 and 375) that encourage development of mixed-use projects in transit priority areas. The proposed project is within two blocks of Wilshire Boulevard, which is a major transit corridor served by local and regional transit providers. The site is also located approximately 0.4 mile of two Metro stations (Wilshire/ Vermont and Wilshire/Normandie stations). By locating housing near job centers and shopping, reliance on the automobile is reduced. The proposed project would maximize opportunities to encourage non-automobile modes of travel to regional centers, civic and cultural opportunities in downtown Los Angeles and other areas served by Metro transit options.

7. **Conditional Use Findings.** Pursuant to Section 12.24 W 15 of the Municipal Code, a Conditional use for a development combining residential and commercial uses in the R5 zone when located in a redevelopment project area.

***a. The location of the project will be desirable to the public convenience and welfare.***

The objectives of the Wilshire Community Plan include providing adequate land for new multiple family residential units. The Wilshire Community Plan also encourages the City to preserve and strengthen viable commercial development and provide additional opportunities for new commercial development and services within existing commercial areas. The increase in the number of dwelling units and commercial floor area in this area will encourage the viability of the Wilshire Boulevard corridor. The proposed project is located in a transit-rich area within walking distance of transportation resources to promote and foster a walkable community near the Wilshire Regional Center of Los Angeles. The public convenience and welfare are served by centrally locating residential opportunities near a variety of employment and services, including the Wilshire Center Regional Center. Additionally, the proposed project will promote general welfare of the community by meeting local housing needs and enhancing the sense of community in the area by providing a unique development that contributes to the revitalization of the neighborhood.

***b. The proposed project will be proper in relation to adjacent uses or the development of the community.***

Although the requested Zone Change from (Q)C2-1 and R4-2 to R5-2 would allow a level of development that is a higher density and scale than the immediately surrounding uses, the proposed project would be designed to enhance the broader neighborhood character, consistent with the Wilshire Regional Center to the north of the project site. The proposed project would include ground-floor and second-floor retail uses to serve project residents and the surrounding neighborhood, and would improve the streetscape and enhance the character of the neighborhood by including landscaping and streetscape improvements.

***c. The proposed project will NOT be materially detrimental to the character of***

***development in the immediate neighborhood.***

As stated above, although the requested Zone Change from (Q)C2-1 and R4-2 to R5-2 would allow a level of development that is a higher density and scale than the immediately surrounding uses, the proposed project would be designed to enhance the broader neighborhood character, consistent with the Wilshire Regional Center to the north of the project site. The proposed project would include ground-floor and second-floor retail uses to serve project residents and the surrounding neighborhood, and would improve the visual quality of the neighborhood by including landscaping and streetscape improvements.

***d. The proposed project will NOT be in harmony with the various elements and objectives of the General Plan.***

The proposed project will be in harmony with the General Plan in that the Wilshire Community Plan encourages multiple family residential and mixed-use developments in close proximity to regional commercial centers. Policy 1-2.1 encourages higher density residential uses near major public transportation centers. The Wilshire Community Plan Objective 2-1 encourages the City to preserve and strengthen viable commercial development and provide additional opportunities for new commercial development and services within existing commercial areas. The objectives of the Wilshire Community Plan include providing adequate land for new multiple family residential units. The increase in the number of dwelling units and commercial floor area in this area will encourage the viability of the Wilshire Boulevard corridor. The proposed project is located in a transit-rich area within walking distance of transportation resources to promote and foster a walkable community near the Wilshire Regional Center of Los Angeles.

8. **Adjustment Findings.** Pursuant to Section 12.28 of the Municipal Code Adjustments to Section 12.12.C are requested as follows: to permit a 15 foot side yard setback along the northerly portion of the property parallel to 8th Street and along the southern portion of the property in lieu of the minimum 16 foot setback otherwise required.

***a. The granting of an adjustment will result in development compatible and consistent with the surrounding area.***

The granting of the requested adjustments will result in development compatible and consistent with the surrounding area. The proposed mixed use project is located immediately adjacent to low level residential uses to the south. The project frontage is proposed along Catalina Street, which contains multiple family residential structures that do not exceed 6 stories in height. Given the frontage of the project along 8<sup>th</sup> Street, which contains commercial use at the ground floor level, the reduced setback is necessary for pedestrian oriented street design and access. The intensity and scale of the proposed mixed use project further support the placement of the required setbacks, which will be consistent with prevailing setbacks in the neighborhood.

***b. The granting of an adjustment will be in conformance with the intent and purpose of the General Plan of the City.***

The proposed project will be harmony with the Wilshire Community Plan in that it consists of a mix of housing and retail uses that would maximize mobility for project residents in the transit-rich community. The proposed project is within

two blocks of Wilshire Boulevard, which is a major transit corridor served by local and regional transit providers. The site is also located approximately 0.4 mile of two Metro stations (Wilshire/Vermont and Wilshire/Normandie stations). The proposed project would maximize opportunities to encourage non-automobile modes of travel to regional centers, civic and cultural opportunities in downtown Los Angeles and other areas served by Metro transit options.

***c. The granting of an adjustment is in conformance with the spirit and intent of the Planning and Zoning Code of the City.***

The granting of the requested Adjustments is in conformance with the spirit and intent of the LAMC in that the requested Zone/Height District Change and General Plan Amendment are not inconsistent with the Wilshire Community Plan.

***d. There are no adverse impacts from the proposed adjustment or any adverse impacts have been mitigated.***

For the reasons set forth in Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration No. ENV 2006-7211-MND, the project will not have a significant effect on the environment. A Traffic Study was prepared for the project in September 2014 and found that the addition of project traffic would not result in significant impacts at any of the study area intersections. The Los Angeles Department of Transportation has established specific thresholds for project-related increases in the Volume/Capacity (V/C) ration of signalized intersections.

***e. The site and/or existing improvement makes strict adherence to zoning regulations impractical or infeasible.***

The proposed mixed use project is located immediately adjacent to low level residential uses to the south. The project frontage is proposed along Catalina Street, which contains multiple family residential structures which do not exceed 6 stories in height. The intent of the required setback of 15 feet is to provide some buffer between the sidewalk and structures, and to soften the street frontage. The intensity and scale of the proposed mixed use project further support the placement of the required setbacks.

**9. Site Plan Review Findings.** Pursuant to Section 16.05 F of the Municipal Code. The project complies with all applicable provisions of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

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

The proposed project will be in harmony with the General Plan in that the Wilshire Community Plan encourages multiple family residential and mixed-use developments in close proximity to regional commercial centers. Policy 1-2.1 encourages higher density residential uses near major public transportation centers. The Wilshire Community Plan Objective 2-1 encourages the City to preserve and strengthen viable commercial development and provide additional opportunities for new commercial development and services within existing commercial areas.

The objectives of the Wilshire Community Plan include providing adequate land for new multiple family residential units. The increase in the number of dwelling units and

commercial floor area in this area will encourage the viability of the Wilshire Boulevard corridor. The proposed project is located in a transit-rich area within walking distance of transportation resources to promote and foster a walkable community near the Wilshire Regional Center of Los Angeles. The intent of mixed use development is to provide housing in close proximity to jobs and services, to reduce vehicular trips, traffic congestion and air pollution, to provide rental housing, and to stimulate vibrancy and activity in pedestrian-oriented areas.

- b. 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 adjacent properties and neighboring properties.***

The project is consistent with many of the Urban Design Policies for individual projects in the Wilshire Community Plan that are intended to ensure that new projects are compatible with existing and future development on neighboring properties.

- c. The residential project provides recreational and service amenities to improve habitability for its residents and minimize impacts on neighboring properties.***

The project is consistent with many of the Urban Design Policies for individual projects in the Wilshire Community Plan that require recreational and service amenities that improve habitability for its residents. A total of 33,046 square feet of common open space, including; a gym/recreation area, library, lounge, theater, a courtyard with a swimming pool, lounging areas, putting green, and rooftop lounge.

## **8. CEQA Findings**

An Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (ENV-2006-7211-MND) was prepared for the proposed project but not adopted. Because the applicant revised the project description, and the previous MND was more than five years old at the time of the revision, ENV-2006-7211-MND was updated and recirculated for a period of 20 days, beginning October 16, 2014 and ending November 4, 2014. No comments were received. On the basis of the whole of the record before the lead agency, 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 attached Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis. The records upon which this decision is based are with the Environmental Review Section of the Planning Department in Room 750, at 200 North Spring Street.

The categories of Cultural Resources, Air Quality and Noise were found to have potentially significant impacts unless mitigated. Although the proposed project was identified in the MND as having a less-than-significant environmental impact with regard to Planning and Land Use, the proposed revised project does not conform to the City's land use goals and policies as defined in the General Plan Framework Element or Land Use Element (the Wilshire Community Plan). The environmental analysis indicates that the proposed project would be consistent with statewide, regional and local policies, citing recent legislation (i.e. SB 743 and SB 375) that encourages development of mixed-use projects in transit priority areas, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions through reduced vehicle trips.

