

## FINDINGS

### General Plan/Charter Findings

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

The Los Angeles General Plan sets forth goals, objectives and programs that guide both Citywide and community specific land use policies. The General Plan is comprised of a range of State-mandated elements, including, Land Use, Transportation, Noise, Safety, Housing and Conservation. The City's Land Use Element is divided into 35 community plans that establish parameters for land use decisions within those sub-areas of the City.

The subject property is located within the Mission Hills – Panorama City – North Hills Community Plan as updated and adopted by the City Council on June 9, 1999. The existing Plan designates the subject site for Medium Residential land uses along the Sepulveda Boulevard frontage with a corresponding zone of R3 and the remainder of the site Low Density with corresponding zones of RE9, RS, R1 and RU. The site is currently zoned RA.

The proposed plan amendment would designate the entire site for Low Medium II Residential land uses. The proposed project, a 75-unit condominium (townhome style) development, is consistent with the proposed zone change to RD1.5-1 for the entire project site and the accompanying Plan amendment to Low Medium II Residential which corresponds to the RD1.5, RD2, RW2, and RZ2.5 for the site. The project will provide needed housing and recreational space in the area. The buildings are all to be 3-stories with a maximum of 41-foot height with roof top decks; below the 45 foot limit established by Height District 1. The project provides 150 parking spaces and 19 guest spaces to comply with a long standing parking policy used by the Deputy Advisory Agency for new condominium development. The project site is not within a specific plan area.

#### Charter Section 555(a)

*That the part or area involved has significant social, economic or physical identity.*

The project site is a very underutilized parcel of land on the south side of Plummer Street, on a section of Plummer Street that is adjacent to an existing 75-unit senior citizen housing development east of the site. The location of this site is unique because it serves as a buffer between the more intensive uses along Sepulveda Boulevard to the east from the single family neighborhood to the west and south. Its substantial size, approximately 136,492 square feet of lot area (3.13 net acres), the development of 75-unit detached residential condominium project and the fact that the site has dual zoning establishes a strong physical identity.

2. General Plan Text. The Mission Hills – Panorama City – North Hills Community Plan text includes the following relevant land use goals, objectives, policies and programs:

**GOAL 1: A SAFE SECURE, AND HIGH QUALITY RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL ECONOMIC, AGE, AND ETHNIC SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY.**

The Mission Hills – Panorama City – North Hills Community Plan was updated and adopted by the Los Angeles City Council on June 9, 1999. The project, a Vesting Tentative Tract Map for condominium purpose, advances a number of specific policies and objectives contained in the Community Plan. These include:

**Objective 1-2:** To locate new housing in a manner which reduces vehicular trips and makes it accessible to services and facilities.

**Policy 1-2.1** Locate higher residential densities near commercial centers, light rail transit stations, and major bus routes where public service facilities and utilities will accommodate this development.

**Program:** The plan concentrates most of the higher residential densities near transit corridors and/or Transit Oriented Districts (TOD).

**Objective 1-5:** To promote and insure the provision of adequate housing for all persons regardless of income, age, or ethnic background. Policies 1-5.1 promote greater individual choice in type, quality, price, and location of housing.

**Policy 1-5.3** Ensure that new housing opportunities minimize displacement of the residents.

**Program:** The decision maker should adopt a finding which addresses any potential displacement of residents as part of any decision relating to the construction of new housing.

**Policy 1-5.4** Provide for development of townhomes and other similar condominium type housing units to increase home ownership options.

**Program:** The Plan cannot require that condominium unit be built instead of rental units; however the Plan encourages such types of development by designating specific areas for Low Medium residential land use categories.

**Policy 1-5.5** Provide for livable family housing at higher densities.

**Program:** The Plan promotes that the Zoning Code be amended to provide that multiple residential densities should not be limited by the number of bedrooms per unit in order to facilitate family housing.

The proposed project will meet the above objectives and policies by providing housing at an appropriate density and location to meet the plan area's needs. The proposed project would revitalize the site and would be compatible with the existing neighborhood land use and character by creating fifteen separate 4 to 6 unit buildings all to be 3-stories with a maximum height of 41 feet with roof top decks. The project would provide a natural transition between the higher intense uses fronting Sepulveda Boulevard to the east from the single family neighborhood to the west and south.

The proposed site plan reduces massing and provides building separation from single-family residences with open spaces and landscaped setbacks. The project will improve Sepulveda Boulevard and Plummer Street with a new full-width concrete sidewalk with tree wells including any necessary removal and reconstruction of existing improvements including sidewalk adjacent to the subject site.

The proposed project will provide additional housing opportunities for residents, while contributing to the revitalization of the area. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the General Plan and the proposed Low Medium II Residential land use designation that helps to implement the goals and objectives of the Mission Hills – Panorama City – North Hills Community Plan.

### **Zone Change / General Plan / Legislative Action Findings**

#### **3. The requested zone change is in conformance with public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.**

There is a critical and well-documented demand for housing throughout the City of Los Angeles. The proposed Zone Change, General Plan Amendment, T Conditions, Q Conditions and Building Line are consistent with Section 558 of the City Charter and Section 12.32 of the LAMC in that it will be in conformance with public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice as described below. With the approval of the requested General Plan Amendment, the requested zoning will be consistent with the General Plan.

The proposed zone change from R3-1 and RA-1 to (T)(Q) RD1.5-1 creates a more uniform type of development that is at a density between the Low Residential and Medium Land Use designation. Immediately east of the subject site is an existing 3-story, 75-unit senior housing development with surface parking that was approved in the early 1980s by Zone Variance (ZA-1981-362-ZV).

Public necessity requires that housing be provided for all segments of the population in diverse locations. Further, said housing must be affordable to the maximum extent possible and provided in such a manner as to protect adjacent projects from adverse impact. The proposed project is beneficial in terms of public necessity in that it offers desirable market-rate, residential units, providing a new, high quality, for-sale dwelling option that is currently unavailable in the local community. The granting of a General Plan Amendment as proposed with a zone change will permit development of this type in a manner that addresses the public necessity for housing in this area. These homeownerships will come with usable open space amenities, and transit accessibility that helps to serve and support local businesses.

The proposed project replaces outdated buildings on a site that has been neglected and under served for a number of years, with a new townhome style housing product currently unavailable at this time. The proposed project follows good planning principles by offering a density transition between the single-family dwellings to the south and west of the project site from the senior citizen housing and more intensive uses fronting Sepulveda Boulevard. The project further follows good planning principles by scaling back the height to under 42 feet where the zoning code permits a maximum height of 45 feet.

In conjunction with its central location, the project site is well-served by public transit. The intersection of Sepulveda Boulevard and Plummer Street is served by Metro Rapid Bus Line 734 going south to Westwood/UCLA and north to the Sylmar Metro Station. It is also served by Metro Local Bus Line 167 going west to the Chatsworth Metro Station and southeast to Coldwater Canyon.

The proposed plan amendment and zone change provide housing opportunities in a way that supports good zoning practice. The densities proposed are in line with the projected housing growth of the area and therefore are compatible with objectives of the Community Plan. The site plan design utilizes the odd shaped lot configuration by dividing the housing units into 15 buildings to be 4 to 6 units each therefore decreasing the potential massing impact. Adequate setbacks provide ample space for light and air circulation for the proposed buildings as well as surrounding structures. The site plan accommodates two small open space parks like amenities connected with interior pedestrian pathways.

A review of the General Plan and its elements including, the Mission Hills – Panorama City – North Hills Community Plan, reveals that there is no conflict or inconsistency with any stated element or objectives if the proposed Zone Change and General Plan Amendment are approved.

### **Q Condition Findings**

- 4. The Q limitations are necessary to protect the best interests of and assure a development more compatible with the surrounding property or neighborhood.**

The proposed Q conditions contain provisions regarding limiting building height, graffiti removal, parking that includes guest spaces, and landscaping to ensure that the project is harmonious with the surrounding neighborhood with regards to its scale and appearance.

- 5. The Q limitations are necessary to secure an appropriate development in harmony with the objectives of the General Plan.**

The proposed Q conditions contain provisions regarding land use and the number of dwelling units permitted and a requirement that a Plan amendment zone change be obtained in order to ensure that the development is in harmony with the objectives of the General Plan.

- 6. The Q limitation is necessary to prevent or mitigate adverse environmental effects of the zone change.**

The proposed Q conditions contain mitigation measures regarding replacement of trees removed, limitations on construction noise and aesthetics to prevent or mitigate adverse environmental impacts from the project.

### **T Condition Finding**

- 7. Public necessity, convenience and general welfare require that provision be made for the orderly arrangement of the property concerned into lots and/or that provision be made for adequate streets, drainage facilities, grading, sewers, utilities, park and recreational facilities; and/or that provision be made for payments of fees in lieu of dedications and/or that provision be made for other dedications; and/or that provision be made for improvements; all in order that the property concerned and the area within which it is located may be properly developed in accordance with the different and additional uses to be permitted within the zone to which the property is proposed for change.**

The current action, as recommended, has been made contingent upon compliance with new "T" conditions of approval imposed herein for the proposed project. Such T Conditions are necessary to ensure the identified dedications, improvements, and actions are undertaken to meet the public's needs, convenience, and general welfare served by the actions required. These actions and improvements will provide the necessary infrastructure to serve the proposed community at this site.

### **Building Line Removal Findings**

- 8. The building line removal is necessary to establish, change or remove a building line in order to give proper effect to the zoning proposed in the proceeding, or to achieve any purpose set forth in Subdivision 1 of this subsection; The building line removal is necessary to provide for the systematic execution of the General Plan; to obtain a**

minimum uniform alignment from the street at which buildings, structures or improvements may be built or maintained; to preserve the commonly accepted characteristics of residential districts; to protect and implement the “Mobility Element of the General Plan”; to provide sufficient open space for public and private transportation; to facilitate adequate street improvements; to prevent the spread of major fires and to facilitate the fighting of fires; and to promote the public peace, health, safety, comfort, convenience, interest and general welfare.

The building line removal is in connection with a proposed Zone Change. The City did not require any new dedication from Plummer Street because it is already a fully dedicated street with four existing travel lanes. The project is also setback twice as far as the existing building line so removal of the line will not hinder the public peace, but instead protect the health, safety, comfort, convenience, interest and general welfare.

### **Site Plan Review Findings**

#### **9. That the Project is consistent with the General Plan**

As described in detail below, the proposed project is consistent with the relevant goals, objectives, policies, and programs of the General Plan. The Community Plan encourages a variety of housing options in order to meet the housing demands of the area. Furthermore, the subject site is designated with Low and Medium Residential land use categories, which is specifically intended for a variety of residential types. The General Plan Amendment from Low Residential and Medium Residential to Low Medium II Residential creates a uniform project, consistent with the General Plan. The proposed development is consistent with the objectives and policies stated below:

#### **Objectives 1-2**

To locate new housing in a manner which reduces vehicular trips and makes it accessible to services and facilities.

**Policy 1-2.1** Locate higher residential densities near commercial centers, light rail transit stations, and major bus routes where public service facilities and utilities will accommodate this development.

**Program:** The plan concentrates most of the higher residential densities near transit corridors and/or Transit Oriented Districts (TOD).

#### **Objectives 1-5**

To promote and insure the provision of adequate housing for all persons regardless of income, age, or ethnic background.

**Policy 1-5.1** Promote greater individual choice in type, quality, price and location of housing.

**Program:** The Plan promotes greater individual choice through its establishment of residential design standards and its allocation of lands for a variety of residential densities.

**Policy 1-5.3** Ensure that new housing opportunities minimize displacement of the residents.

**Program:** The decision maker should adopt a finding which addresses any potential displacement of residents as part of any decision relating to the construction of new housing.

**Policy 1-5.4** Provide for development of townhouses and other similar condominium type housing units to increase home ownership options.

**Program:** The Plan cannot require that condominium units be built instead of rental units; however the Plan encourages such type of development by designating specific areas for Low Medium residential land use categories.

**Policy 1-5.5** Provide livable family housing at higher densities.

**Program:** The Plan promotes that the Zoning Code be amended to provide that multiple residential densities should not be limited by the number of bedrooms per unit in order to facilitate family housing.

A Site Plan Review approval will permit the development of a needed affordable multi-family residential project consistent with the intent of the General Plan. The proposed development is also consistent with the land use designation of the Mission Hills – Panorama City – North Hills Community Plan. Compliance with the LAMC and the goals, policies and programs of the Plan will ensure compatibility with the surrounding community. A 75-unit residential condominium (townhome style) use at the subject site will create an appropriate transition from the senior citizen housing and commercial and higher density land uses along Sepulveda Boulevard from the single family residential neighborhood directly south and immediately east of the subject site while providing the need for (for-sale) housing. As a result the general welfare of the surrounding residential neighborhood would be preserved.

### **Citywide Design Guidelines Consistency**

The City of Los Angeles General Plan Frameworks and the 35 Community Plans that comprise the City's Land Use Element promote architectural and design excellence in buildings, landscape, open space, and public space and emphasize the preservation of the City's character and scale. The Citywide Design Guidelines have been created to implement the 10 Urban Design Principles of the Framework Element, which are a statement of the City's vision for the future of Los Angeles, providing guidance for new development and encouraging projects to complement existing urban form in order to enhance the building environment in Los Angeles. The Citywide Design Guidelines contain design principles and measures that address the different elements of site and building design based on land use. Each section is organized by overarching objectives followed by a list of specific strategies. The proposed multi-family residential project is subject to the Residential Citywide Design Guidelines and conforms to the following objectives and strategies:

#### **Site Planning**

***Site Planning No. 3*** *Where additional setback is necessary or a prevailing setback exists, activate the area with a courtyard or "outdoor room" adjacent to the street by incorporating residential amenities such as seating or water features, for example.*

The proposed project includes enhanced landscape courtyard along the south side of Plummer Street and a small open space park along the west side of Sepulveda Boulevard.

*Site Planning No. 5 Locate a majority of code-required open space at the ground level in a manner that is equally accessible to all residential units to promote safety and the use of outdoor areas. Roof top areas can be used as common open areas.*

The project includes ample open space landscaping at the ground level. The total landscape area is 27,715 square feet. The project is providing roof top decks that can be utilized as common open space.

#### Building Orientation

*Building Orientation No. 2 Entries should be designed according to simple and harmonious proportions in relationship to the overall size and scale of the building. Design entries in proportion to the number of units being accessed. Ensure that pedestrian entries provide shelter year round.*

The projects front entry for the 75-units provides an arched entryway that provides shelter year round. The second story balcony above adds year round shelter for the entry doors below.

#### Building Façade

*Building Façade No. 2 Design multi-family buildings to convey individual residential uses, even when applying a modern aesthetic. Modulated facades can prevent residential buildings from appearing commercial.*

The building facade are designed to be offset to create architectural interest and avoid uninteresting blank walls.

*Building Façade No. 4 Alternate different textures, colors, materials, and distinctive architectural treatments to add visual interest while avoiding dull and repetitive facades.*

The project is providing various earth tone colors to the building façade and includes distinctive architectural treatments such as window cornices for the upper level and balconies for the second level.

*Building Façade No. 7 Integrate varied roof lines through the use of sloping roofs, modulated building heights, or innovative architectural solutions.*

The buildings include varied roof heights to break the massing to the building façade and add visual interest to the structure.

#### Off-Street Parking and Driveways

*Off-Street Parking and Driveways No. 1 Prioritize pedestrian access first and automobile access second. Orient parking and driveways toward the rear or side of buildings and away from the public-right-of-way.*

The guest parking spaces are concentrated towards the center of the site, away from the public-right-of-way.

#### On-Site Landscaping

*On-Site Landscaping No. 3 Design open areas to maintain a balance of landscaping and paved areas.*

The project includes various courtyards that includes pedestrian linkages to the open space areas.

**10. That the Project is consistent with any applicable Redevelopment Plan**

The subject site is part of the CRA Pacoima / Panorama Earthquake Disaster Assistance Project Area. However, the Redevelopment Plan has been terminated in accordance with State Legislation that abolished redevelopment agencies in the State of California.

**11. That the Project consists of an arrangement of buildings and structures (including height, bulk, and setback), off-street parking facilities, loading areas, lighting, landscaping, trash collection and other such pertinent improvements, which is or will be compatible with existing and future development on neighborhood properties.**

The proposed Project is designed with two open space parks, landscaping and articulated building elevations. The proposed 75-unit (townhome style) condominium project is designed so that 15 buildings will only house 4 to 6 units so that the overall massing is minimized as opposed to having one structure with 75-units over a subterranean parking garage. All of the proposed units have been carefully designed with respect to light and ventilation by incorporating pedestrian pathway linkages between the buildings and the two open court yards. The usable open space provided meets open space municipal code requirements. The proposed development will provide usable open space comprised of 18,469 square feet. The building components and open space areas are oriented with the least impact on adjacent and neighboring residential properties that also includes the use of translucent glass for windows that face south of the property to add additional privacy for the neighbors immediately south of the project site.

The Project has been designed to be compatible with existing and future development on neighboring properties and will provide desirable for-sale housing for the population in the Community. It also provides housing in close proximity to the Metro Rapid Line 734 at the intersection of Sepulveda Boulevard and Plummer Street and also served by Metro Local Bus Line 167 going west to the Chatsworth Metro Station and southeast to Coldwater Canyon.

**CEQA Findings**

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (ENV-2015-4183-MND) was prepared for the proposed project. The Department of City Planning published the Mitigated Negative Declaration beginning July 21, 2016 for 20 days, ending August 10, 2016 for the subject case. A revised MND was executed on September 16, 2016 to correct the project description as to number of units, number of protected trees, parking to be removed and to specify the land use "add areas" for the two lots located at 15420 – 15450 West Plummer Street; changing the land use from Low Residential to Low Medium II Residential only. After further consideration by the Department of City Planning, the previously recommended General Plan Amendment for an add area for the properties at 15420-15450 Plummer Street should be removed from this action and considered as part of the future Community Plan Update process for the Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills Plan Area. The revised MND was not re-published because the Project did not intensify in density or height. The add areas will not be intensified because an existing 75-unit senior citizen housing project exists at 15450 Plummer Street and the property located at 15420 is not proposed for any future use at this time. Therefore, the revised MND,



after careful analysis and reflecting independent judgement of the City, finds that the original published MND was adequate in addressing all of the potential environmental impacts with proper mitigation measures. The department found potential negative impacts could occur from the project's implementation due to:

*Aesthetics (landscape, light);*  
*Air Quality;*  
*Biological Resources (tree removal, habitat modification);*  
*Green House Gas Emissions*  
*Noise (demolition, grading, construction, adjacent to freeway)*  
*Public Services (fire, police, recreation)*  
*Transportation (traffic)*

On the basis of the whole of the record before the Advisory Agency including any comments received, the Advisory Agency found that, with imposition of the mitigation measures described in the MND and listed as Environmental Conditions in this report, there would be no substantial evidence that the proposed project will have a significant effect on the environment. The Advisory Agency adopted the MND on August 10, 2016. The attached Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis. A reconsideration of the above Mitigated Negative Declaration was executed on September 16, 2016, but not re-published since the Project did not intensify in density or height from the original published MND and therefore adequate in addressing all of the potential environmental impacts with proper mitigation measures. Other identified potential impacts not specifically mitigated by these conditions are already subject to existing City ordinances, (Sewer Ordinance, Grading Ordinance, Flood Plain Management, Xeriscape Ordinance, Stormwater Ordinance, etc.) which are specifically intended to mitigate such potential impacts on all projects. The records upon which this decision is based are with the Valley Subdivisions Unit of the Planning Department in Room 351, 6262 Van Nuys Boulevard. Since the approval date the City finds on the basis of its independent judgment, after consideration of the whole of the administrative record, the therein proposed project was assessed in the referenced Mitigated Negative Declaration (ENV-2015-3535-MND REC1), and pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15162 and 15164, no subsequent environmental analysis is required for approval of the project.