

FINDINGS

A. General Plan Findings

- a. **General Plan Land Use Designation.** The subject property is located within the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan area which was updated by the City Council on September 4, 1993 and designates the subject property for General Commercial land uses corresponding to the C1.5, C2, C4, and RAS3 Zones. The site is zoned MR2-1 and P-1. The proposed expansion of an existing non-conforming gym is consistent with development permitted in the proposed (T)(Q)C2-1 Zone, which permits the operation of a gym/health club. Therefore, the project is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan as reflected in the adopted Framework Element and Community Plan.
- b. **Land Use Element.**

The proposed project complies with applicable provisions of the Los Angeles Municipal Code and the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan. There are twelve elements of the General Plan. Each of these elements establishes policies that provide for the regulatory environment in managing the City and for addressing environmental concerns and problems. The majority of the policies derived from these Elements are in the form of Code requirements of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

The Land Use Element of the City's General Plan is divided into 35 Community Plans. The subject property is located within the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan, which designates the site for General Commercial land uses corresponding to the CR, C1.5, C2, C4, and RAS3 Zones.

The proposed project is consistent with the following objectives of the Porter Ranch-Chatsworth Community Plan:

LAND USE: Commerce: The plan provides approximately 620 acres of commercial land and related parking uses. The Chatsworth Business District, Northridge Fashion Center, and the Porter Ranch Regional Center will serve as focal points for shopping, civic and social activities for the community. These commercial areas should contain professional offices, department stores, restaurants and entertainment facilities.

Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan. The Community Plan text includes the following relevant land use objectives and policies:

Objective 4a: To promote economic well-being and public convenience through:

- a. Allocating and distributing commercial lands for retail, service, and other facilities in quantities and patterns based on Los Angeles City Planning Department accepted planning principles and standards.

The zone changes will promote a strong and competitive commercial sector by enabling the renovation, rehabilitation and expansion of an existing gym and health club. The project will renovate and expand the existing gym, which has been in operation at the site for over 30 years.

The renovations and improvements to the existing buildings and parking lot will substantially upgrade the aesthetic and functional qualities of the site. The project will result in a 8,227 square-foot addition to the existing 25,732 square-foot gym, resulting in a total of 33,957 square feet of floor area. The newly expanded facility will include a new entry area, new circuit exercise area, weight room, outdoor pool, and locker room facilities. The project will also reconfigure the existing surface lot to current city standards and add additional landscaping, while also making public improvements related to sidewalks and the adjoining alley. The renovations and improvements to the existing buildings, parking lot, and public improvements will substantially upgrade the aesthetic and functional qualities of the site and will promote economic well-being and public convenience in the community.

- c. The **Framework Element** for 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, transportation, infrastructure, and public services. The Framework Element includes the following goals, objectives and policies relevant to the instant request:

Goal 3H: Lower-intensity highway-oriented and local commercial nodes that accommodate commercial needs outside centers and districts.

Objective 3.1: Generally, maintain the uses, density, and character of existing low-intensity commercial districts whose functions serve surrounding neighborhoods and/or are precluded from intensification due to their physical characteristics.

Policy 3.12.1: Accommodate the development of uses in areas designated as "General Commercial" in the community plans in accordance with Tables 3-1 and 3-7. The range and densities/intensities of uses permitted in any area shall be identified in the community plans.

The project will maintain an existing use and will allow that use to continue to serve surrounding neighborhoods with an expanded, modernized facility. The newly expanded health club and gym will include 33,957 square feet of floor area, including a new entrance and circuit exercise area, in addition to a redesigned parking lot, updated façade treatments, and sidewalk improvements along the property's street frontage. The project will maintain the general character of the existing district by expanding the gym into an existing adjoining vacant commercial tenant space, and will provide the community with a modernized and expanded facility.

- d. **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. De Soto Avenue is a designated Boulevard II under Mobility Plan 2035, dedicated to a right-of-way width of 105 feet and improved with asphalt roadway, concrete curb, gutters, and a sidewalk. The half right-of-way includes 40-foot roadway, and 10-foot sidewalk. Nordhoff Street is a designated Boulevard II under Mobility Plan 2035, dedicated to a right-of-way width of 105 feet and improved with asphalt roadway, concrete curb, gutter, and sidewalk. The right-of-way includes a 40-foot roadway and 10-foot sidewalk. The alley is dedicated to a width of 20 feet and is presently improved with asphalt roadway and concrete gutter.

The Bureau of Engineering (BOE) is requiring 5-foot dedication along both De Soto Avenue and Nordhoff Street to complete a 55-foot half right-of-way in accordance with Boulevard II standards of Mobility Plan 2035. The additional dedication would go towards expanding the sidewalk from 10 feet to 15 feet.

Sidewalk conditions surrounding the site do not meet current street standards. The facilities are in need of repair/replacement and will need to be widened to advance the Mobility Plan's stated policy to advanced access for all by "recognizing all modes of travel including pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicular modes as integral components of the City's transportation system."

The applicant has requested to waive the dedication and improvement requirements at the site. Staff has recommended modifying BOE's dedication and improvement requirements to obtain improvements that are in line with existing conditions in the area. Staff recommends modifying BOE conditions to require a 2-foot dedication along De Soto Avenue to join with existing improvements to the north of the site. The northern adjoining property was recently redeveloped as a result of Case No. APCNV-2008-1580-ZC-SPR. At the time, the Transportation Element required a 12-foot sidewalk improvement, which was constructed. Along De Soto Avenue, both the northern adjoining property and the southern adjoining property have improved their sidewalks to 10 to 12 feet in width. The required 5-foot dedication (3 feet more than proposed) and improvement would be physically impractical as it would result in a loss of 12 automobile parking spaces, two pole signs, and a two-foot landscape buffer along De Soto Avenue. The modified dedication and improvement requirement would continue to advance Mobility 2035's policies in recognizing walking as a component of every trip to ensure high-quality pedestrian access. New street trees will be planted along the project's street frontage and a new direct pedestrian path of travel has been designated from the sidewalk to the main entrance to the health club.

Along Nordhoff Street, the eastern and western properties also have sidewalks that have been improved with sidewalks between 10 to 12 feet in width that are in generally good repair. Staff has recommended requiring the 5-foot dedication and sidewalk improvements along Nordhoff Street to comply with Mobility 2035 street standards.

Along the alleyway, BOE has required reconstructing the alley along the property frontage and the intersection with Nordhoff Street to City standards. Staff has recommended requiring reconstruction of the intersection with Nordhoff Street to city standards and repair of the alley satisfactory to BOE. Recommended dedications and improvements have been imposed under the (T) Tentative Classification conditions contained within this staff report.

The project as designed and conditioned will meet the following goals and objectives of Mobility Plan 2035:

- 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 3.1 Recognize all modes of travel, including pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicular modes – including goods movement – as integral components of the City’s transportation system.
- 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 proposed project will provide a 12-foot sidewalk along De Soto Avenue and a 15-foot sidewalk along Nordhoff Street to create a quality, safe and comfortable walking environment. The new sidewalk facilities will improve transit accessibility to and from local bus stops and the reconstruction of the alley and Nordhoff Street will improve that intersection to ADA standards. The newly expanded health club will shift its main entrance into the expansion area and will include a direct pedestrian path of travel from the street.

The project will take vehicular access off of four driveways – three on De Soto Avenue, one on Nordhoff Street, and at various points along the alleyway.

No new curb cuts and driveways were added in order to reduce any impact on circulation in the surrounding area, including the performance and reliability of transit services and to avoid conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists. The proposed project will be located proximate to neighborhood destinations including restaurants, gyms, and a major transit stop. The project is located within 0.5 miles of the Metro Orange Line Nordhoff station, which offers access to local and regional destinations including Chatsworth, Warner Center, Van Nuys, and North Hollywood. The project is also within 0.5 miles of the Metro Orange Line bike path, which mostly runs parallel with the busway. The project will provide short-term bicycle parking on-site.

Zone Change Findings; “T”, “Q” Classification Findings

1. **Pursuant to Section 12.32-C of the Municipal Code, the zone change is in conformance with the public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.**
 - a. **Public Necessity:** Approval of the Zone Change removes the existing antiquated footprint zoning and allows the site to be developed as a unified development that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the General Plan Framework Element and the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan as outlined above. The project site is located in the Los Angeles State Enterprise Zone and is improved with an existing gym and vacant retail tenant space that is in need of modernization that better addresses the market demands of nearby residential areas and commercial/industrial businesses. The project would support the existing gym that has been at the site since 1988 by allowing it to modernize and expand its facilities into an adjoining vacant tenant space, thereby allowing it to better compete with other nearby facilities in the area. Thus, the proposed project optimizes the use of the subject property, introduces new employment opportunities and will generate increased tax revenues from an existing outdated and vacant retail use, thus providing a public necessity.
 - b. **Convenience:** The project will expand an existing use and redevelop an under-utilized and restricted industrially zoned property that is located within close proximity to a major employment center (Chatsworth-Northridge Industrial Core) and residential

neighborhoods. The project will modernize the facility and offer additional capacity to serve more customers from the surrounding community. The project will also thereby increasing public convenience.

- c. General Welfare: Granting the Zone Change to the (T)(Q)C2-1 Zone allows for the expansion of an existing 25,730 square-foot gym/health club into an adjoining tenant space to create a 33,957 square-foot facility. The project will modernize the existing facility while improving choice for gyms in the community. The project will enhance the urban environment by encouraging activity on an under-utilized site within the General Commercial land use designation and by improving public facilities surrounding the site to be in line with existing improvements and ADA requirements. Given the project's proximity to existing residences, job centers and transit services, the project will provide improved modernized gym and fitness facilities for the Chatsworth community.
- d. Good Zoning Practices: The project site is zoned MR2-1 and P-1 and is located within the General Commercial land use designation, which includes the following corresponding zones C1.5, C2, C4, and RAS3. The zone change to C2-1 will make the site's zoning consistent with the land use designation, in keeping with good zoning practice. Further, approval of the Zone Change to the (T)(Q)C2-1 Zone to accommodate the expansion of an existing gym is consistent with the type of development encouraged by the General Plan Framework Element and the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan. The expanded fitness center will enhance the urban environment and encourage daytime and nighttime activity at the site, while improving the nonconforming surface parking lot and include public improvements to the sidewalk and streets fronting the property. The public improvements include allowing a modification to provide 2 feet of dedication and sidewalk improvements in lieu of 5 feet required along De Soto Avenue so that the site can accommodate landscaping, signage, and parking facilities.
- e. "T" and "Q" Classification Findings. Pursuant to LAMC Sections 12.32-G,1 and G,2(a), The current action, as recommended, has been made contingent upon compliance with new "T" and "Q" 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 issued to meet the public's needs, convenience and general welfare served by the required actions. The conditions that limit the operations, scale and scope of development, are also necessary to protect the best interests of and to assure a development more compatible with surrounding properties and the overall pattern of development in the community, to secure an appropriate development in harmony with the General Plan, and to prevent or mitigate the potential adverse environmental effects of the subject recommended action.

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

Waiver of Dedication and Improvement Findings

2. The dedication or improvement requirement is physically impractical.

It would be physically impractical for the project to provide the full dedication and improvement required along De Soto Avenue. The required 5-foot dedication (3 feet more than proposed) and improvement would be physically impractical as it would result in a loss of 12 automobile parking spaces, two pole signs, and a two-foot landscape buffer at

the site. The site's De Soto Avenue street frontage would not have adequate backup space to maintain the parking spaces at the front of the site, or to provide landscaping, or to maintain pole signs. Staff has recommended modifying BOE's dedication and improvement requirements to obtain improvements that are in line with existing conditions in the area. Planning staff modified BOE's requirements in the (T) Conditions to require a 2-foot dedication along De Soto Avenue that would directly align with existing improvements to the north of the site. The northern adjoining property was recently redeveloped as a result of Case No. APCNV-2008-1580-ZC-SPR. At the time, the Transportation Element required a 12-foot sidewalk improvement, which were constructed. Along De Soto Avenue, both the northern adjoining property and the southern adjoining property have improved their sidewalks to 10 to 12 feet in width. The modified dedication and improvement requirement would continue to advance Mobility 2035's policies in recognizing walking as a component of every trip to ensure high-quality pedestrian access. New street trees will be planted along the project's street frontage and a new direct pedestrian path of travel has been designated from the sidewalk to the main entrance to the health club.

Environmental Findings

3. Determine based on the whole of the administrative record, the Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15301, 15305, and City CEQA Guidelines, Class 5, Category 13 and there is no substantial evidence demonstrating that an exception to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 applies; and
4. **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.