

FINDINGS

A. General Plan Findings

1. **General Plan Land Use Designation.** The subject property is located within the Northridge Community Plan, last updated and adopted by the City Council on February 24, 1988. The Community Plan designates the subject lot for Neighborhood Commercial land uses with corresponding zones of C1, C1.5, C2, C4, and RAS3. The subject lot is comprised of two parcels totaling approximately 25,967 square feet in area and zoned RS-1VL, which is more restrictive than the corresponding zones of the land use designation. The proposed zone change to C2-1VL will make the zone consistent with the land use designation on the plan map. Therefore the applicant's request 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.** The Northridge Community Plan 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 unique character of the community.

Policy 2-1.4: Require that projects be designed and developed to achieve a high level of quality, distinctive character, and compatibility with existing uses and developed in accordance with design standards.

Policy 2-2.1: Improve security and parking standards in commercial area. Where new development occurs, parking should be located at the rear of buildings.

Objective 2-3: To enhance the appearance of commercial districts.

Policy 2-3.1: Improve the landscaping of commercial properties.

Policy 2-3.4: Preserve community character, scale, and architectural diversity.

The project is in conformance with these goals, objectives, and policies. The Community Plan intends to promote well designed commercial development that serves the needs of the community and is compatible with existing development.

The proposed project will enhance the appearance of the underdeveloped and underutilized site. Currently, one parcel of the subject site is developed with a single family dwelling and the second parcel is an undeveloped, vacant lot. The proposed structure is one story and 20 feet and 7 inches in height, which is compatible with both the adjacent multi-story medical office buildings and adjacent one-story single family dwellings. The project proposes a variety of materials for the building exterior, including faux stone finish, corrugated copper panels, and aluminum trim to create an articulated façade and to

enhance visual interest of the site. The various decorative, architectural elements are featured on all four elevations of the building for a cohesive appearance. The project is conditioned to fully screen from view any structures on the roof, such as air conditioning and other mechanical equipment to further improve the appearance of the site. Per the Tree Report dated February 6, 2018 prepared by Arsen Margossian, there are 8 non-protected trees currently located on site, all of which are proposed for removal. The applicant's landscape plan indicates that approximately 12 shade trees will be provided in the surface parking lot and a 5-foot landscaped setback will be located to the south, east, and west of the building along the property lines. The landscaped setback will include drought tolerant/low maintenance flowering accent shrubs and ground cover and will improve the streetscape of Roscoe Boulevard and Etiwanda Avenue.

The site is designed in a manner which will enhance the appearance of the site and will be visually compatible with the surrounding uses. Therefore, the project furthers the goals, objectives, and policies of the Northridge Community Plan.

3. **Framework Element.** The Framework Element for the General Plan (Framework Element) 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 recommended zone change to C2-1VL conforms to the following objectives and policies of the Citywide General Plan Framework as follows:

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

Objective 7.2: Establish a balance of land uses that provides for commercial and industrial development which meets the needs of local residents, sustains economic growth, and assures maximum feasible environmental quality.

The proposed medical office building will provide a facility that serves the medical needs of the City's existing and future residents and visitors. The Framework Element recognizes the varied needs of a city, and the subsequent need for varied land uses to meet those needs. Medical office uses provide specialized services that help meet public necessity and the demand for particular healthcare services. The tenant of the site will be a medical imaging company relocating from their existing building near the intersection of Roscoe Boulevard and Reseda Boulevard. Per the applicant, their existing location is an older, dated building which impedes their ability to provide quality care. The project site will have enhanced technological infrastructure that will allow the tenant to provide high quality medical services. Further, the project supports the policies of the Framework Element by providing a land use that sustains economic growth by providing jobs in an existing medical hub. The project will include EV parking and drought tolerant landscaping, both of which contribute to the project's maximum feasible environmental quality. Additionally,

the landscape plan indicates that there will be approximately 12 shade trees located in the surface parking lot which will help reduce impacts of urban heat island effect on the project site.

The Framework Element also states:

Policy 3.1.7: Allow for development in accordance with the policies, standards, and programs of specific plans in areas which they have been adopted.

The Community Plan map was intended to create a balance of land uses that are appropriately located and to strategically guide future development. The proposed zone change will bring the subject property in conformance with the General Plan land use designation of Neighborhood Commercial. The site's land use designation has corresponding zones of C1, C1.5, C2, C4, and RAS3. The property is currently zoned RS-1VL, and a zone change is required to utilize the property in accordance with its given land use designation. The project is located at an underutilized commercial corner and proposed development will implement the corresponding policies, standards, and programs of the subject land use designation.

Furthermore, the Framework Element states:

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.

Objective 3.5: Ensure that the character and scale of stable single-family residential neighborhoods is maintained, allowing infill development provided that it is compatible with and maintains the scale and character of existing development.

The Framework Element aims to purposefully direct growth and new development where appropriate. The project is located at the corner of Etiwanda Avenue and Roscoe Boulevard. The project is an infill development, and the proposed structure is compatible with and maintains the scale of existing nearby development. Abutting properties to the north and west of the site are developed with single family dwellings. Abutting properties to the south and east of the site are developed with medical office buildings and the Northridge Hospital Medical Center. The medical office buildings are two- to three-stories and the hospital is comprised of several buildings of varied heights up to seven-stories in height. The proposed structure is one-story and 20 feet and 7 inches in height. The project is not expected to create significant traffic impacts, and vehicular access will be from two driveways on Etiwanda Avenue. The site is located in close proximity to several bus lines operating along Roscoe Boulevard and Reseda Boulevard to the west.

4. **Mobility Element.** The Mobility Element of the General Plan (Mobility Plan 2035) will be affected by the recommended action herein though the imposition of street dedications

and improvements surrounding the project site. Per the Mobility Plan, Roscoe Boulevard is a designated Boulevard II, which has a standard dedicated right-of-way of 110 feet. The existing dedicated right-of-way on Roscoe Boulevard is 100 feet. Per the Mobility Plan, Etiwanda Avenue is a designated Collector, which has a standard dedicated right-of-way of 66 feet. The existing dedicated right-of-way on Etiwanda Avenue is 60 feet.

The Bureau of Engineering has recommended a 5-foot dedication on Roscoe Boulevard and a 3-foot dedication on Etiwanda Avenue. The stated dedications will bring these rights-of-way into conformance with the standards identified in the Mobility Plan. No street widenings are required, and therefore the dedications would go towards expanding the sidewalks. The applicant has applied for a waiver of the recommended dedications and improvements.

The Mobility Element includes the following policies:

- Policy 1.1: Roadway User Vulnerability. Design, plan, and operate streets to prioritize the safety of the most vulnerable roadway user.
- Policy 1.2: Complete Streets. Implement a balanced transportation system on all streets, tunnels, and bridges using complete street principles to ensure the safety and mobility of all users.
- Policy 2.3: Pedestrian Infrastructure: 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.

Sidewalk conditions surrounding the site do not meet the current standards of the Mobility Plan. The facilities are in need of repair/replacement and used to advance the Plan's policies to create more accessible streets for users of all transportation modes. Widening the sidewalks will ensure high-quality, safe, and comfortable pedestrian access. The widened sidewalks will also improve transit accessibility to and from bus stops near the project site.

Staff has recommended the disapproval of the waiver of dedication and improvement in order for the project to meet the goals and objectives of the Mobility Plan 2035.

B. Entitlement Findings

1. Vesting Zone Change Findings; "T", "Q" Classification Findings

- a. Pursuant Section 12.32 of the LAMC, and based on these findings, the recommended action is deemed consistent with public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.**

Public Necessity: Approval of the Vesting Zone Change will bring the site in conformance with the land use designation of the General Plan and will allow the site to be developed in compliance with the goals and objectives of the Framework

Element and the Northridge Community Plan. The site will be developed with a medical office building to be used for medical imaging services. Per the applicant, the tenant of the site will relocate from an existing, out-of-date building. The new building will be constructed with advanced technological infrastructure to support the specific type of medical services to be provided on site. The project will allow the tenant to provide higher quality medical care. The proposed development will optimize the use of the site in a manner consistent with the General Plan, and therefore the request is consistent with public necessity.

Convenience: The proposed medical office building is an infill development, and therefore will have adequate access to existing City services and infrastructure. The southerly parcel of the project site is currently undeveloped and underutilized. The project will activate the corner of Etiwanda Avenue and Roscoe Boulevard and enhance the appearance of the unmaintained vacant lot. The proposed zone change allows for the development of a medical office use in close proximity to existing medical offices, the Northridge Medical Center Hospital, residential development, and existing commercial and retail uses. The site is conveniently located near several major surface street thoroughfares, including Roscoe Boulevard, Reseda Boulevard, and Lindley Avenue. Additionally, the site is within a 5-6 minute walk to several bus lines operating along Roscoe Boulevard (152, 353), Reseda Boulevard (240, 744), and Lindley Avenue (239). Therefore the proposed project will be of convenience to the City residents and visitors.

General Welfare: Staff has recommended the disapproval of the requested waiver of dedications and improvements. The project has been conditioned with "T" conditions to require dedications and improvements along the public rights-of-way adjacent to the site. The public improvements include a 5-foot dedication and widening the sidewalk on Roscoe Boulevard and a 3-foot dedication and widening the sidewalk on Etiwanda Avenue. These improvements will implement the policies of the Mobility Plan to prioritize complete streets and increase pedestrian safety. Therefore, as conditioned, the project is in harmony with the general welfare of the City.

Good Zoning Practices: The subject property is located within the Northridge Community Plan Area, which designates the site for Neighborhood Commercial land uses with the corresponding zones of C1, C1.5, C2, C4, and RAS3. The zone change from RS-1VL to C2-1VL will make the site's zoning consistent with the land use designation of the General Plan. Further, the development of a medical office building at the subject site is consistent with the type of development encouraged by the Framework Element and the Northridge Community Plan. The medical imaging center will enhance the urban environment and provide a buffer between the existing residential development to the north and the commercially zoned medical office uses along Roscoe Boulevard. The proposed zone and scale of the project will be compatible with existing development pattern around the site, and as such, will implement good zoning practices.

- b. **"T" and "Q" Classification Findings.** Pursuant to Section 12.32 G.1 and G.2(a), of the LAMC, the current action, as recommended, has been made contingent upon compliance with new "T" and "Q" conditions of approval imposed herein for the proposed project. 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 the 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 impacts 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.

2. Building Line Removal, Section 12.32 R.2 of the LAMC: The recommended building line removal is consistent with the General Plan and in conformance with the public necessity, convenience, general welfare or good zoning practice in that:

City records show that on July 18, 1950, pursuant to Ordinance No 96,753 a building line was established on both sides of Roscoe Boulevard from Tuxford Street to Fallbrook Avenue. The applicant is requesting the removal of the 25-foot building line fronting on Roscoe Boulevard abutting the subject site.

The removal of the 25-foot building line along Roscoe Boulevard will allow the site to be developed in a manner consistent with other properties in the vicinity. For example, pursuant to Ordinance No. 177,562, on May 19, 2006, under case APCNV-2006-2046-BL, the City Council removed the building line established by Ordinance No. 96,753 at 18700 Roscoe Boulevard. By removing the building line, the applicant is able to design the site in a more pedestrian-oriented manner by orienting the building closer to the street frontage and having parking located at the rear of the site. The close proximity of the building to the street frontage promotes pedestrian accessibility to and from the site. The removal of the 25-foot building line will not impact the improvement of Roscoe Boulevard or Etiwanda Avenue. Per the Bureau of Engineering, improvement is required on both Roscoe Boulevard and Etiwanda Avenue. However, the applicant is requesting a waiver of dedication and improvement to Boulevard II and Collector Street standards, as discussed herein.

As such, removal of the building line is consistent with the General Plan and in conformance with the public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice.

3. Waiver of Dedication, Section 12.37 I.3 of the LAMC: For the reasons stated below, the Director is unable to make any of the following findings:

a. The dedication or improvement required does not bear a reasonable relationship to any project impact.

No. The proposed project is the construction of new medical office building, approximately 9,400 square feet in area and an adjacent surface parking lot. The applicant has requested a Vesting Zone Change from RS-1VL to C2-1VL, the removal of a 25-foot building line along Roscoe Boulevard, and a Waiver of Dedication and Improvement on Roscoe Boulevard and Etiwanda Boulevard.

Per the Mobility Plan 2035, Roscoe Boulevard is a designated Boulevard II, which requires a 110-foot right-of-way and 80-foot roadway width. The Planning Case Referral Form completed by Bureau of Engineering staff and dated October 5, 2017 indicates that the standard half right-of-way (from street centerline to property line) is 55 feet and the existing half right-of-way is 50 feet. A 5-foot dedication is recommended to bring the half right-of-way of Roscoe Boulevard in compliance with Mobility Plan standards.

Per the Mobility Plan, Etiwanda is a designated Collector Street, which requires a 66-foot right-of-way and 40-foot roadway width. The Planning Case Referral Form indicates that the standard half right-of-way is 33 feet and the existing half right-of-way is 30 feet. A 3-foot dedication is recommended to bring the half right-of-way of Etiwanda Avenue in compliance with Mobility Plan standards.

BOE is also recommending the construction of a new 10-foot wide sidewalk and landscaped parkway along the property frontage on Roscoe Boulevard and a new 8-foot wide sidewalk and landscaped parkway along the property frontage on Etiwanda Avenue. No street widening is required. Therefore, the dedications would go towards expanding the sidewalks for increased pedestrian safety and accessibility.

The applicant is requesting a zone change from RS-1VL to C2-1VL to expand the permissible uses of the site. Approval of the zone change to C2-1VL will significantly expand the intensity of uses permitted at the site, as the site currently developed with a single family dwelling and is partially undeveloped with a vacant lot. An increase of permitted uses and increased development on the subject site corresponds with the recommended public improvements. The General Plan contains the following policies which promote the improvement of the pedestrian infrastructure during new development:

Mobility Plan 2035 Policy 2.3: Pedestrian Infrastructure: 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.

Framework Element Policy 3.15.4: Design and site new development to promote pedestrian activity.

Framework Element Objective 5.9: Encourage proper design and effective use of the built environment to help increase personal safety at all times of the day.

Air Quality Policy 4.2.3: Ensure that new development is compatible with pedestrian, bicycles, transit, and alternative fuel vehicles.

These policies intend to shape new development and site plans in a manner which prioritizes pedestrian uses. New development must be considered within the context of the surrounding environment to determine a project's suitability at the subject location. BOE has assessed the existing improvements adjacent to the site, and made recommendations of the dedications and improvements needed to implement the goals and policies of the Mobility Plan. Denial of the requested waiver of dedication and improvement prioritizes pedestrian infrastructure for future users of the site and pedestrians accessing nearby medical, commercial, and residential uses. The site is

located adjacent to medical offices, including the Northridge Hospital Medical Center. At the intersection of Etiwanda Avenue and Roscoe Boulevard there are three existing medical office/uses. The project is proposing to add a fourth medical-related use at this intersection. The medical office on the subject property may provide medical services supplemental to those existing in the vicinity, and users of an adjacent site may walk to the subject site. The site is also adjacent to multiple bus stops, and people may access the site from nearby transit stops. Complying with the dedications and improvements per BOE's letter will ensure there is a safe and comfortable walking environment for pedestrians seeking to access various health care services. Providing the requested dedication and improvements promotes the site's compatibility with safe pedestrian use and promotes healthy, sustainable forms of transportation.

Therefore, the dedication and improvement required at this location does bear a reasonable relationship to potential project impacts. As such, this finding cannot be made.

b. The dedication or improvement is not necessary to meet the City's mobility needs for the next 20 years based on guidelines the Street Standards Committee has established.

No. LAMC Section 12.37 A states that "the guidelines developed by Street Standards Committees shall be consistent with the goals and purpose of the Transportation Element of the General Plan as determined by the City Planning Commission." Mobility Plan 2035 serves as the City's updated Transportation Element of the General Plan. It is a guiding policy document which provides a foundation for achieving a transportation system that balances the needs of all road users. It was approved by the City Planning Commission in June 2016 and was adopted by City Council in September 2016. California's Complete Streets Act (AB 1358) was adopted in 2008 and requires cities to incorporate complete street policies and standards into their general plan. The intent of this bill is to make streets safe, comfortable, and convenient for all people regardless of age, ability, or transportation mode. The Mobility Plan complies with the Complete Streets Act by incorporating complete street principles into the goals and policies of the plan. The Plan includes the following policies which promote and implement complete street practices:

Policy 1.1: Roadway User Vulnerability. Design, plan, and operate streets to prioritize the safety of the most vulnerable roadway user.

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

These policies and objectives prioritize the functionality of streets and the safety of street users. The plan further implements these policies through street designations and standard roadway dimensions, which indicate the street's role in the larger transportation network and provide a standardized framework for requiring dedications and improvements. These designations state the appropriate roadway width and right-of-way width to meet the goals and objectives of the plan. BOE's recommended dedications and improvements are informed by the street designations of the Mobility Plan. By dedicating a 3-foot wide strip of land on Etiwanda Avenue and a 5-foot wide strip of land on Roscoe Boulevard, the project will provide widened sidewalks in the

public right-of-way adjacent to the project site. Per the plan, “roadways should operate in a manner that considers the presence of people who walk and bike, children, the elderly, and the mobility-impaired.” Further, the plan continues that “expanding the active transportation network increases opportunities for the transit dependent by better connecting people to work, education, and recreation.” Widening sidewalks is important for increased accessibility for pedestrians going to and around the site. It also creates safer sidewalks by adding a wider buffer between pedestrians and cars. Waiving the dedications and improvements recommended by BOE does not further the Mobility Plan’s goals for implementing a balanced and equitable transportation system. Certain entitlement requests, such as a zone change, provide an opportunity for the City to assess the condition of existing public improvements and to require the enhancement of those public improvements when necessary. In the subject case, requiring dedications and improvements serves to implement the plan by bringing the adjacent street frontages in compliance with their respective street designations.

Additionally, the Mobility Plan 2035 contains the following policy:

Policy 1.3: Safe Routes to Schools. Prioritize the safety of school children on all streets regardless of highway classifications.

There are three schools located in the vicinity of the site, including Magnolia Science Academy (approximately <0.1 miles to the west), Cantara Street Elementary School (0.5 miles to the southeast), and Northridge Middle School (approximately 0.7 miles to the northeast). Students, parents, and faculty may walk to school or walk to nearby public transit stops and pass the subject location. The Mobility Plan 2035 cites data from LADOT which reports that many students are already using active forms of transportation during their commute. Approximately 33% of LA County students walk or bike to school, which is higher than the State average of 26%. The data gathered found that this trend becomes stronger when a student lives within a half-mile from school. Of those students who live between a quarter-mile and a half-mile from school, 50% of students walk or bike to school. Of those students who live less than a quarter-mile from school, 73% of students walk or bike to school. LADOT data also found that of students who live over a mile from school, 19% still walk or bike. Enhancing pedestrian safety by widening the sidewalk may result in an increase students walking to nearby schools and meets this policy of prioritizing the safety of school children.

Therefore, the dedications and improvements required at this location are actually necessary to meet the City’s mobility needs for the next 20 years based on guidelines the Street Standards Committee has established. As such, this finding cannot be made.

c. The dedication or improvement is physically impractical.

No. The project site consists of two lots, generally level, and approximately 25,967 square feet in area, zoned RS-1VL. The subject property is located at the northwest corner of Etiwanda Avenue and Roscoe Boulevard. The site has approximately 190 feet of street frontage on Etiwanda Avenue and 100 feet of street frontage on Roscoe Boulevard. Etiwanda Avenue has an existing right-of-way width of 60 feet, which does not meet the Collector Street standard of 66 feet. Roscoe Boulevard has an existing right-of-way width of 100 feet, which does not meet the Boulevard II standard of 110 feet. The site is located 8.2 kilometers from the Northridge Fault and in an Airport

Hazard Zone (150' Height Limit Above Elevation 790). There are no other known environmental hazards on site that would inhibit the development of the site and recommended dedications and improvements. The site is not located near a bridge, tunnel, or other constraint limiting the roadway or subject property which would make dedication and improvement impractical. Further, there are no significant protected trees, topographic features, or extenuating circumstances at this location which would make the dedications and improvements of the site physically impractical. As such, this finding cannot be made.

C. CEQA Findings

Based on the independent judgement of the decision-maker (Area Planning Commission), after consideration of the whole of the administrative record, the project was assessed in Mitigated Negative Declaration, No. ENV-2017-4685-MND, with the circulation period ending on January 2, 2019; and no major revisions are required to the Mitigated Negative Declaration; and no subsequent EIR or negative declaration is required for approval of the project. Impacts were identified in the areas of aesthetics, biological resources, and transportation/traffic. With the implementation of mitigation measures, all impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level.