

FINDINGS

General Plan/Charter Findings

1. The “Q” Qualified Conditions provide development standards to ensure consistency with the City’s General Plan, the West Los Angeles Community Plan, and the Brentwood - Pacific Palisades Community Plan.

- a. General Plan

Land Use

The proposed “Q” Qualified Conditions would be in conformance with the following General Plan Framework land use policy statements:

Policy 3.2.4: Provide for the siting and design of new development that maintains the prevailing scale and character of the City’s stable residential neighborhoods and enhance the character of commercial and industrial districts.

The proposed ordinance aims to address concerns with the scale and character of new multifamily development within the area. The regulations ensure that new multifamily development is compatible with and complements existing building massing and patterns by requiring new buildings to be stepped back above three stories on the front façade, and requiring buildings longer than 150 feet to be broken up through a significant recess in the facade.

Housing

With respect to housing, the Framework Element states the following:

Objective 4.3: Conserve scale and character of residential neighborhoods.

In addition, the Housing Element states the following:

Objective 2.4 Promote livable neighborhoods with a mix of housing types, quality design and a scale and character that respects unique residential neighborhoods in the City.

Policy 2.4.1 Promote preservation of neighborhood character in balance with facilitating new development.

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

The proposed regulations encourage new multifamily development to be developed in a way that will enhance the existing built environment and capitalize on the community character that already exists in the area. The proposed ordinance includes design standards that requires that façades facing a public street include horizontal and vertical articulation, prohibits windowless facades and flush finish window installations facing a public street, and places limitations on the use of stucco unless combined with other materials.

It also includes design standards that discourage building design and site planning from being dominated by cars and vehicular circulation, by limiting the size and placement of driveways and requiring parking garages to be concealed from view. These design standards will act as an additional measure in the development review process to improve the urban design of residential development.

Urban Form and Neighborhood Design

With respect to urban form and neighborhood design, the General Plan Framework includes the following goals, objectives, and policies:

Goal 5A: A livable City for existing and future residents and one that is attractive to future investment. A City of interconnected, diverse neighborhoods that builds on the strengths of those neighborhoods and functions at both the neighborhood and citywide scales.

Objective 5.1: Translate the Framework Element's intent with respect to citywide urban form and neighborhood design to the community and neighborhood levels through locally prepared plans that build on each neighborhood's attributes, emphasize quality of development, and provide or advocate "proactive" implementation programs.

Objective 5.5: Enhance the livability of all neighborhoods by upgrading the quality of development and improving the quality of the public realm.

Objective 5.6: Conserve and reinforce the community character of neighborhoods and commercial districts not designated as growth areas.

The proposed "Q" Qualified Conditions establish design standards for new multifamily development that ensure neighborhood compatibility and pedestrian-orientation by regulating building design and site planning. To achieve this, the standards include requirements for prominent, easily accessible pedestrian entrances; limitations on building length; an upper story stepback requirement; and limitations on driveway design that reduce conflict between vehicles and pedestrians. In addition, the proposed standards include requirements for façade articulation and the use of a variety of high-quality materials and architectural details, which help create visual interest and improve the quality of new development.

b. Community Plans

Both the West Los Angeles and Brentwood – Pacific Palisades Community Plans contain goals and objectives regarding the stabilization of multifamily zoned areas. The proposed ordinance would implement the following relevant goals and objectives of the Community Plans:

West Los Angeles Community Plan

Goal 1: A safe, secure, and high quality residential environment for all economic, age and ethnic segments of the community.

Objective 1-1: To provide for the preservation of existing housing and for the development of new housing to meet the diverse economic and physical needs of the existing residents and projected population of the Plan area to the year

2010.

Objective 1-3: To preserve and enhance the varied and distinct residential character and integrity of existing residential neighborhoods.

Policy 1-3.1: Require architectural compatibility and adequate landscaping for new multifamily residential development to protect the character and scale of existing residential neighborhoods.

Brentwood – Pacific Palisades Community Plan

Goal 1: A safe, secure, and high quality residential environment for all economic, age and ethnic segments of the community.

Objective 1-1: To provide for the preservation of existing housing and for the development of new housing to meet the diverse economic and physical needs of the existing residents and projected population of the Plan area to the year 2010.

Both community plans aim to create a safe and well-designed residential environment for the community. As stated above, the proposed ordinance includes development standards that emphasize the importance of pedestrian safety by requiring new buildings to minimize conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. The “Q” Qualified Conditions also regulate the development of new multifamily buildings so that they have quality design and are architecturally compatible with existing development by breaking up building facades and requiring a mix of quality building materials.

The subject area consists of buildings that were built over a number of decades and includes a variety of building typologies. How buildings are oriented on the site and how driveways and vehicular access is designed also varies greatly. Buildings vary from older small multifamily buildings with generous front yards and 1960s- or 1970s-era dingbats that have prominent street-facing parking areas and wide driveways, to newer multifamily construction with visible above-grade structured parking and small lot subdivisions with zero front yards. The proposed “Q” Qualified Conditions aim to bring greater consistency and compatibility between such existing and new multifamily development while improving building design by encouraging site planning that protects the walking environment of these transit-accessible multifamily areas.

LAMC Determinations

2. Pursuant to Section 12.32-C of the Municipal Code, and based on these findings, the recommended action is deemed consistent with the public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.
 - a. Public Necessity. Granting the requested legislative action, as recommended, will be deemed consistent with public necessity. The proposed “Q” Qualified Conditions will ensure that new development within the area does not negatively impact the aesthetic quality of the neighborhood or infringe on the pedestrian realm creating safety concerns for the community.
 - b. Convenience. Granting the requested legislative action, as recommended, will be deemed consistent with public convenience. The proposed “Q” Qualified Conditions contribute to the preservation of the neighborhood character and

provides neighborhood stabilization. The proposed “Q” Qualified Conditions provide certainty that the character of the local neighborhoods will be enhanced and maintained.

- c. General Welfare. Granting the requested legislative action, as recommended, will be deemed consistent with the general welfare. The proposed “Q” Qualified Conditions would prevent inconsistent multifamily development that harms the visual quality of the area and degrades the pedestrian experience.
- d. Good Zoning Practice. Granting the requested legislative action, as recommended, will be deemed consistent with good zoning practice. The proposed “Q” Qualified Conditions are in conformance with the purposes, intent and provision of the General Plan as reflected in the adopted West Los Angeles Community Plan and Brentwood – Pacific Palisades Community Plans. The parcels to which the proposed “Q” Qualified Conditions would apply are zoned for Multifamily Residential use; therefore these regulations are consistent with the land use that is intended for the area. The proposed ordinance does not change the specified height, density, or parking requirements of the underlying zoning.

Several properties within the project area currently have “Q” Qualified Conditions that limit height of new development. The proposed ordinance would supersede these “Q” Qualified Conditions, but maintain the height limits through a change in height district (from [Q]R4-1 to [Q]R4-1VL).

3. Pursuant to Section 12.32-G.2 of the Municipal Code, the recommended action is deemed consistent with the purpose of the “Q” Qualified Classification, which is deemed necessary to protect the best interest of and assure development more compatible with the surrounding property or neighborhood. Furthermore, the recommended action secures appropriate development that is in harmony with the objectives of the General Plan.

California Environmental Quality Act Findings and Determinations

4. Pursuant to Section 21082.1(c)(3) of the California Public Resource Code, the Department of City Planning prepared a Categorical Exemption (ENV-2017-3648-CE) and an Addendum to the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration for the West Los Angeles Community Plan (ENV-1997-0223-MND-REC) and the Brentwood – Pacific Palisades Community Plan (ENV-1998-0184-MND-REC) as the environmental clearance. On the basis of the whole of the record before the lead agency including any comments received, the lead agency determines that impacts resulting from this policy change will be less than significant, that there will be no impacts, that none of the circumstances requiring subsequent environmental analysis under Public Resource Code, section 21166 have occurred, and that the proposed regulations are categorically exempt from CEQA review. The attached Categorical Exemption and MND Addendum reflect the lead agency’s independent judgment and analysis. The records upon which this decision is based are with the Policy Planning Section of the Planning Department in Room 667, 200 North Spring Street.