

FINDINGS

General Plan/Charter Findings

1. General Plan Land Use Designation.

The project site is located within the Chatsworth – Porter Ranch Community Plan, adopted on September 4, 1993 and recently amended on September 7, 2016 as part of the Mobility Plan 2035 update. The site is subject to the Chatsworth – Porter Ranch Community Plan Footnotes Nos. 2, 12, 13, 17, 22, and 23, which clarify that the Height District is '1', mobile home parks are consistent with the RMP Zone, that streets are shown for reference, that the area is located within the Equestrian Areas and Trails Map of the Community Plan text, and that it is the intent of the Plan that entitlements grant one of the zone designations within the corresponding zones shown on the map. The site is currently zoned A2-1 and OS-1XL, and the subject request is a Zone Change entitlement which would preserve the existing OS-1XL zone and would change the rest of the site from A2-1 to RA-1-K. Staff is recommending the inclusion of 'T' Tentative Classification Conditions, and the City Council has motioned requesting that the Department of City Planning apply a K Equine District to the subject site. As such, the recommended zone would be (T)RA-1-K, which is consistent with the Community Plan's land use, as the RA Zone classification is a corresponding zone, and complies with the Community Plan's footnotes.

2. General Plan Text.

The City of Los Angeles **General Plan** is a comprehensive, long-range vision for the development of the City through the declaration of purposes, policies, and programs. The General Plan consists of the Framework Element, and various Elements (Land Use, Air Quality, Health, Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources, Housing, Infrastructure Systems, Mobility, Noise, Open Space and Conservation, Public Facilities and Services, Safety, and Urban Form and Neighborhood Design). Within these Elements are various plans and documents which are incorporated by reference, for example, the Public Facilities and Services Element incorporates the Major equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan, the Public Libraries Plan, the Public Recreation Plan, and the Public Schools Plan.

The **Land Use Element** of the General Plan consists of the 35 Community Plans within the City of Los Angeles. The Community Plans establish goals, objectives, and policies for future developments at a neighborhood level. The subject site is located within the Chatsworth – Porter Ranch Community Plan, adopted on September 4, 1993 and recently amended on September 7, 2016 as part of the Mobility Plan 2035 update.

The Plan is intended to promote an arrangement of land use, circulation, and services which will encourage and contribute to the economic, social and physical health, safety, welfare, and convenience of the Community, within the larger framework of the City; guide the development, betterment, and change of the Community to meet existing and anticipated needs and conditions; contribute to a healthful and pleasant environment; balance growth and stability; reflect economic potentialities and limitations, land development and other trends; and protect investment to the extent reasonable and feasible. Of particular note are the features, objectives, and policies related to equinekeeping areas:

Objective 14. To develop and maintain equestrian trails, linkages, and bicycle facilities within the Community;

Feature Several horsekeeping areas are proposed in the northerly and westerly sections of the Community. The Plan encourages the preservation of these land uses, especially north of Chatsworth Street and west of De Soto Avenue (including the east side of De Soto Avenue) to the City/County line. Provisions shall be made for equestrian access via Brown's Canyon Wash. Horsekeeping facilities with appropriate restrictions could be provided westerly and northerly to the City/County line.

Chatsworth-Porter Ranch includes large areas of open space and natural land forms. It is one of the more rural areas of the City and supports a substantial equestrian-oriented population. It is a policy of the Plan to place a higher priority on the preservation of designated horsekeeping areas than on other uses found in the RA Zone category. Toward this end, the Plan supports the establishment of "K" Horsekeeping Supplemental Use Districts in appropriate areas in order to ensure the preservation of this equestrian lifestyle. Efforts should be made to insure compatibility between the equestrian and other uses found in the RA Zone. In all instances, the RA Zone should be encouraged to emulate the existing rural landscape, whether horsekeeping is present or not.

Service System Features:

The Plan proposes utilization and development of flood control rights-of-way by the County of Los Angeles for open space purposes and/or hiking, bicycle and equestrian trails where appropriate. This type of recreation use is also proposed for power line rights-of-way.

Programs - Public Improvements (Other Public Facilities):

1.d. Incorporate unpaved equestrian and hiking trails and/or paved bicycle trails in the channel rights-of-way.

3. Equestrian Trails and Bicycle Facilities. The Plan incorporates the Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan and Mobility Plan 2035, which are Elements of the General Plan, and it incorporates the Guide to Existing and Potential Equestrian Trails, Twelfth Council District. To update the trails portion of the Plan, the continued aggressive approach to the acquisition and improvement of the trails is encouraged. The accompanying sketches, entitled "Cross Sections - Equestrian Trails and Bicycle Routes", depict several suggested means of incorporating a trail system into a street or subdivision. The trail system proposed by the Plan could be provided and maintained by various methods, including: a. Assessment districts consisting of concerned owners interested in establishing a trail system through horsekeeping areas; and b. Revenue from the equine licensing fee (Section 53.15.1 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code). It is recommended that a task force of

members from involved City departments be appointed to formulate a means of financing the development and maintenance of equestrian trails.

Future Studies: Trails. The proposed trails, trail crossings, trail stops and assembly areas, as identified in the Equestrian Areas and Trails Map, indicate areas and elements that further the desire to have a comprehensive equestrian trail system.

The Community Plan incorporates the Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan and the Guide to Existing and Potential Equestrian Trails (Twelfth Council District). The project's consistency with the Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan is discussed below. According to the Existing and Potential Equestrian Trails (Twelfth Council District) Plan, the subject site is located within a proposed "K" Equine keeping District and the Backbone trail system is located approximately where Bee Canyon Road exists. As conditioned, the project is consistent with the Community Plan, in that the project is designed to accommodate equestrian uses, a portion of the Backbone trail system will be constructed, and the private equestrian trails will ensure the preservation of the equestrian lifestyle by ensuring the equestrian infrastructure is constructed.

In regards to the Community Plan's General Plan Land Use Designation Map, the site has a land use designation of Very Low I Residential, with the corresponding zones of RE20 and RA. The site is currently zoned A2-1, which is more restrictive than the corresponding zones for the land use designation. The subject request is for a zone change from the A2 zone to the RA zone. The Project proposes to subdivide the site into 19 parcels, construction of 18 single-family dwellings and preservation of one (1) existing dwelling, which is consistent with the density permitted by the requested zone. The project has been conditioned to require the approval of the subject Zone Change entitlement prior to the issuance of a building permit or recordation of a final map. Therefore, both the tract map and zone change will be consistent with the land use designation.

The Land Use Element is further implemented through the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC). The zoning regulations contained within the LAMC regulates, but is not limited to, the maximum permitted density, height, parking, and the subdivision of land. The project site has approximately 11.92 acres of lot area, which would permit a maximum of five (5) dwelling units under the existing zone and a maximum of 29 dwelling units under the proposed zone. As shown on the tract map, the Project proposes to subdivide the project site into 19 single-family lots, which does not exceed the density of the zone requested.

South of the site is an existing 'K' Equinekeeping District overlay, and the City Council has approved a motion requesting that a 'K' Equinekeeping District be applied to the subject property. As such, the applicant's tract map has prepared for the requirements of the 'K' Equinekeeping District by providing the required grading pads, equine keeping areas, equine storage areas, and equine corral areas. Additionally a 10 foot wide vehicular access path from the horsekeeping area to the private street, on the same side of the lot as the driveway has been provided for each property. As conditioned, the project will comply with the intent of the Community Plan, in that the Backbone public trail will be constructed, the zoning will be consistent with the land use designation, and the project will continue to support equestrian uses.

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 Framework Element includes the following provisions, objectives and policies relevant to the instant request:

- Goal 3B Preservation of the City's stable single-family residential neighborhoods
- Objective 3.5 Ensure that the character and scale of stable single-family residential neighborhoods is maintained, allowing for infill development provided that it is compatible with and maintains the scale and character of existing development.
- Policy 3.5.5 Require new development in special use neighborhoods such as water-oriented, rural/agricultural and equestrian communities to maintain their predominant and distinguishing characteristics.
- Policy 3.8.6 Encourage outdoor areas within neighborhood districts to be lighted for night use, safety and comfort commensurate with their intended nighttime use.
- Goal 6A An integrated citywide/regional public and private open space system that serves and is accessible by the City's population and is unthreatened by encroachment from other land uses.
- Objective 6.2 Maximize the use of the City's existing open space network and recreation facilities by enhancing those facilities and providing connections, particularly from targeted growth areas, to the existing regional and community open space system.
- Policy 6.2.2 Protect and expand equestrian resources, where feasible, and maintain safe links in major public open space areas such as Hansen Dam, Sepulveda Basin, Griffith Park, and the San Gabriel, Santa Monica, Santa Susanna Mountains and the Simi Hills.
- a. Maintain the equestrian facilities on publicly owned lands, such as Hansen Dam and the Los Angeles Equestrian Center.
 - b. Preserve, where feasible, the "Horsekeeping Supplemental Use District" ("K" District), with links to major open areas.
 - c. Support the policies and objectives of the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor Master Plan, the Urban Greenways Plan, and the Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan (and all amendments) as a

foundation for promoting and maintaining a trail system within the City.

- Goal 9b. Appropriate lighting required to (1) provide for nighttime vision, visibility, and safety needs on streets, sidewalks, parking lots, transportation, recreation, security, ornamental, and other outdoor locations; (2) provide appropriate and desirable regulation of architectural and informational lighting such as building facade lighting or advertising lighting; and (3) protect and preserve the nighttime environment, views, driver visibility, and otherwise minimize or prevent light pollution, light trespass, and glare.
- Objective 9.4 Ensure efficient and effective energy management in providing appropriate levels of lighting for private outdoor lighting for private streets, parking areas, pedestrian areas, security lighting, and other forms of outdoor lighting and minimize or eliminate the adverse impact of lighting due to light pollution, light trespass, and glare.
- Policy 9.40.1 Require lighting on private streets, pedestrian oriented areas, and pedestrian walks to meet minimum City standards for street and sidewalk lighting.
- Policy 9.40.3 Develop regulations to ensure quality lighting to minimize or eliminate the adverse impact of lighting due to light pollution, light trespass, and glare for facade lighting, security lighting, and advertising lighting, including billboards.

The Project consists of the subdivision of an 11.92 acre site into nineteen (19) single-family lots. The project requires the demolition of six (6) dwellings and various unattached garages, sheds, stables, and open sided structures. One existing dwelling, (the 'Wilson House'), will be preserved and a detached garage will be constructed for the resident. Private streets, walls, and a public horse trail will be constructed for the subdivision. The site is currently vacant but previously functioned as a cluster of single-family dwellings with accessory agricultural uses.

In regards to lighting in a rural area, although Policy 9.40.1 does encourage lighting on private streets to be consistent with City standards for streets, the site is located in a rural/agricultural portion of the San Fernando Valley which has notably less lighting than other portions of the City. Policy 3.5.5 indicates that new developments in rural/agricultural and equestrian communities should maintain their predominant and distinguishing characteristics, and requiring the preservation of equestrian uses and low-level lighting is consistent with the predominant and distinguishing characteristics.

Additionally, based on a review of nearby neighborhoods, the project has been conditioned to prohibit sports/athletic courts as an accessory use. The intent of the RA Zone is to allow single-family dwellings, home occupations, truck gardening and nurseries, and limited Agricultural uses (such as the keeping of domestic livestock, equines, poultry, and bees). However, it appears that in some communities where the RA Zone has been utilized, rear portions of the sites have been developed with tennis courts, instead of these above-mentioned low-impact rural uses. Reviewing aerial images of a neighborhood ½ mile to the east (bounded by Canoga Avenue on the west, Rinaldi Street on the North,

and Bermuda Street on the South), which has RA zoning and does not have prohibitions on tennis courts, it was found that of the 88 of homes located on three street frontages, 35 homes have had tennis courts constructed in their rear yards. This is troublesome as the courts reduce the water permeability of the site, increase the amount of area which is paved (thereby increasing ambient air temperatures), result in additional unnecessary lighting, and are inconsistent with the nearby rural/agricultural uses. Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that the construction of sports courts may impact how many properties can be effectively used for horsekeeping purposes in the future. As such, in keeping with Framework Policies 3.5.5. and 9.4, and the Community Plan policies which require that the site emulate rural uses, sports courts are prohibited.

The project, as conditioned, is consistent with the above mentioned objectives and policies, in that the area will be maintained as a single-family neighborhood, the scale is compatible with the character of the existing development to the south, the subdivision has been conditioned to require areas set aside for equestrian uses (consistent with the surrounding equestrian community), the subdivision is designed to provide a public equestrian trail along Bee Canyon Road (to connect to a larger regional trail), inappropriate accessory uses (tennis courts) have been prohibited, and the project will provide lighting which is appropriate with the rural/agricultural character. As such, the proposed zone change is consistent with these provisions in the Framework Element.

4. Housing Element.

The Housing Element 2013-2021 was adopted on December 3, 2013 and identifies the City's housing conditions and needs, and establishes the goals, objectives and policies that are the foundation of the City's housing and growth strategy. The project is consistent with several objectives and policies of the Housing Element. The plan text includes the following relevant housing objectives and policies:

Goal 1: Housing Projection and Preservation.

Objective 1.1: Produce an adequate supply of rental and ownership housing in order to meet current and projected needs.

Policy 1.1.2: Expand affordable rental housing for all income groups that need assistance.

Policy 1.1.3: Facilitate new construction and preservation of a range of different housing types that address the particular needs of the city's households.

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

Objective 1.3: Forecast and plan for changing housing needs over time in relation to production and preservation needs.

Policy 1.3.5: Provide sufficient land use and density to accommodate an adequate supply of housing units by type and cost within the City to meet the projections of housing needs, according to the policies and objectives of the City's Framework Element of the General Plan.

The state allows for ADUs to be constructed in single-family zones in order to create additional housing. In order to ensure these ADUs do not impact the development of adjacent horsekeeping facilities, the ADUs may not be located in the area reserved for equine uses and may not be located within 35 feet of pads reserved for equine uses on adjacent sites.

As conditioned, the proposed zone change for the subject property will facilitate the construction of additional housing in order to meet current and projected needs without negatively impacting equine uses. Therefore, the Zone Change is consistent with the Housing Element goals, objectives and policies of the General Plan.

5. The Mobility Element

The **Mobility Element** (renamed the Mobility Plan 2035) was adopted on September 7, 2016 and provides the policy foundation for achieving a transportation system that balances the needs of all road users and incorporates “complete streets” principles. The Mobility Plan 2035 also defines the Citywide policies regarding five goals – ensuring safe access for all users, a well-maintained and high-quality transportation system, a system which provides infrastructure for all mobility modes, a system wherein transportation data is shared collaboratively, and a system which promotes the health of community members and reduces impacts on the environment. The Mobility Plan 2035 includes the following goals, objectives and policies relevant to the instant request:

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| Goal 1 | Safety is at the foundation of a Complete Streets policy – to design and operate streets in a way that enables safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or transportation mode choice. Safety consistently ranks as a top priority for many in the City of Los Angeles and is an important factor in creating livable neighborhoods. People want streets to be safe, stress-free places for all ages and all modes of travel. In terms of transportation, concerns for physical safety stem from traffic speeds, roadway conflict between different modes of travel, and infrastructure. Safety is a key issue when deciding whether to walk, bike, drive, or take transit. |
| Policy 1.9 | Recreational Trail Safety: Balance user needs on the City’s public recreational trails. |
| Goal 2 | World Class Infrastructure. Infrastructure is the physical underpinning of the City’s transportation system. In the City of Los Angeles, streets are our largest public asset and play a large role in defining the City’s character. A well-maintained and connected network of streets, paths, bikeways, trails, and more provides Angelenos with the optimum variety of mode choices. This Plan establishes a Complete Streets Network of individual roads enhanced for a particular mode (pedestrians bicycles, transit, vehicles, trucks). It also focuses attention on the benefits of flexible design standards, needed future infrastructure improvements, and funding. |

- 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.
- Goal 3 A transportation system is only useful insofar as it is accessible and convenient.
- Policy 3.1 Access for All: Recognize all modes of travel, including pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicular modes - including goods movement – as integral components of the City's transportation system.

As conditioned, the project is consistent with the Mobility Plan 2035's goals which emphasize the importance of a safe and accessible transportation system.

As originally submitted, the project proposed gates at the entrance of the subdivision. At the hearing, the representative indicated that the site was difficult to secure, as they had been experiencing issues regarding homeless encampments and as such, they wanted gates here proposed at the subdivision entrances. Additionally, letters were received from neighbors who reside in the newly constructed subdivision south of the site, voicing their support for a gated community to discourage homeless encampments, illegal dumping, and littering. It is reasonable to assume that after the completion of the project that the land will be better maintained by the residents who will inhabit the properties and the common areas which will be maintained by the Home Owners Association (HOA). As such, gates will not be needed to discourage homeless encampments, illegal dumping, and littering, as the land will be actively inhabited and maintained. Staff conducted a site visit of the property and the surrounding neighborhood and indeed it did appear that homeless encampments, illegal dumping, and littering were occurring on the subject site because it was vacant. Surrounding properties did not exhibit these same issues, as they are occupied and maintained. It is reasonable to assume that development of the site will discourage these activities from occurring in the future and therefore the gates are not needed for these purposes.

Moreover, the Chatsworth area is one of the safest communities in the City. The site is located in Reporting District 1721 of the Devonshire Division, and experienced 54 crimes in the 2018 calendar year, which is significantly less than the City average of 185 crimes per reporting district for the 2018 calendar year. As these gates are not needed to address crime, as this is one of the safer sections of the City, it is reasonable to deduce that the gates have been designed to create a 'closed' community and limit access. This is not in keeping with the Mobility Plan 2035 policies which encourage a connected network of streets to encourage pedestrian accessibility.

Construction of a gate at the entrance of the property would also prevent existing neighbors from accessing their property - there are at least two properties which are accessed from the unimproved Bee Canyon Road which may be affected by the subdivision if access to the community were limited by gates. These two properties appear to be land-locked (APNs 2723005019 and 2723005036) and take access from Bee Canyon Road. According to aerial images provided in the Historic Resource Report (Figure 5, page 20), it appears that a dirt road has existed in that location since at least the late 1940s and it is reasonable to assume that these parcels were subdivided prior to the City's subdivision regulations, which were enacted in the 1960s. It is fairly common in

older parts of the City that subdivisions of land occurred and were not improved with public streets and did not provide formal access through a public or private street. A letter was received from the property owner of APN 2723005019 (10945 Old Santa Susana Pass Road mailing address) and they noted their concern regarding access, among other issues. They indicated that they have easement rights over Calle Milagros and Bee Canyon Lane and indicated that in prior discussions with the applicant, they did not agree to gated access which would control access to their ranch. The City does not have copies of these referenced easements, and as such, it is presumed that these are private easements between private property owners, and not public easements. Regardless, it is not in the City's interest to allow the construction of gates on the subject property if it would deprive another resident unimpeded access to their property.

The project has been conditioned to prohibit gates at the entrance of the subdivision, in order to promote pedestrian and motorist accessibility, and to ensure that access to existing properties are not hampered; by including these conditions, the project is brought into consistency with the Mobility Plan 2035.

In regards to equine accessibility, as conditioned, a public equestrian trail must be constructed in order to provide a portion of the trail as identified in the General Plan and Community Plan. The applicant has designed their project in anticipation of a "K" Equinekeeping District overlay being applied (requiring various equestrian improvements) in conjunction with the zone change request from an A2 zone to an RA zone.

The Mobility Plan 2035 stresses safety as a key issue for users of a mobility system and that a transportation system should be accessible and convenient. As submitted, the project illustrates a public equestrian trail along Bee Canyon Road which connects to a public trail located to the south. An equestrian trail will be constructed and reserved through easement to the north, if the site redevelops and requires discretionary approval. Exhibit A illustrates equine keeping pads on each proposed parcel, except for the historic site, and illustrates vehicular access paths from the equine keeping area to the driveway (for trailer access).

However, the map as originally submitted did not illustrate safe paths of travel from the private properties to the public trail. As such, the only means of travel would be for private property owners to ride their horses in the street or atop the sidewalk. Riding in the street for significant distances would be unsafe, as it would create a roadway conflict between horses and vehicles. Riding atop the sidewalk would also be problematic, as it creates conflicts between horses and pedestrians and the surface materials are not inherently compatible – a sidewalk is normally constructed of concrete and is finished to be relatively smooth, to improve walkability. However, horse trails are normally constructed of decomposed granite or other fine materials, as pavements and hardened materials offer poor traction for horseshoes and increase the risk of a fall. Additionally, sidewalks are usually utilized for the placement of public utilities (water, power, etc.) which is not problematic for pedestrians, as people can walk around these obstructions, but is more difficult for horses.

After the Deputy Advisory Agency (DAA) hearing on March 26, 2019, based on the community input at the hearing, the applicant provided a revised site plan illustrating a plan for equestrian access from each of the proposed properties to the public trail. It is a compromise which creates private trails for a portion of the site and makes modifications

to the proposed public trail to provide reduced distances from private properties to the public trail. The applicant proposes:

Lot 1, along the northern portion of the site, will have a gate installed along the westerly side yard wall (to open inwards or slide open so as not to obstruct the trail), in order to provide access from the equestrian pad to the northern portion of the Bee Canyon Road public trail. The DAA has incorporated this design into the approval of the tract and has further conditioned the project to require that the gate be a minimum of four (4) feet in width.

Lots 6-13, along the southeast portion of the site, will set aside five (5) feet along the rear of each property and will be improved to create a ten (10) foot private trail, to connect private properties to the southern portion of the Bee Canyon Road public trail. Gates will be located along this private trail in order to provide direct access from the equestrian pads to the private trail. The DAA has incorporated this design into the approval of the project and has further conditioned that the trail will be enclosed with six (6) foot high slumpstone or decorative masonry wall. The gates providing access to rear yards shall be a minimum four (4) feet in width.

For all other portions of the site, the applicant has recommended the use of equestrian trail street crossings which would improve equestrian safety, without the construction of additional private trails. The applicant has identified two of these crosswalk locations as being located at the terminus of A Street and Bee Canyon Road and at the T-intersection of Calle Milagros and Bee Canyon Road. The DAA has incorporated this design into the approval of the project and has further conditioned the trail crossings to meet the following specifications – the crosswalks shall be at least 6 feet in width, shall utilize high-visibility crosswalk patterns and those patterns shall be designed with paint instead of slick materials such as plastic or epoxy. Additionally, signage shall be provided at each of the crosswalk locations to notify drivers of the location of equestrian users, and these crosswalks shall be improved with Rapid Flashing Beacons which will be manually activated from push buttons located at pedestrian and equestrian heights. Curb ramps shall be located at each of the crosswalks and shall be aligned with the crosswalk to improve accessibility and street parking shall be prohibited for a distance of 20 feet adjacent to the crosswalk, to provide appropriate lines of sight from drivers to equestrians. The applicant has also proposed a break in the southern portion of the Bee Canyon Road trail, in order to provide an access point for westerly properties along Bee Canyon Road (Lots 16 and 17). The DAA has incorporated this design into the approval of the project and has further required that an additional crosswalk be located at this location.

The inclusion of the two applicant identified crosswalks will ensure equestrian safety for equestrians crossing the private streets while on the public trail. The third DAA identified crosswalk will provide safe access for equestrians on Lots 16 and 17 to be able to access the public trail. These DAA conditions of approval for VTT-74478 have been likewise incorporated into this recommendation report.

In regards to pedestrian safety, the project has been conditioned to provide five (5) foot sidewalks along all private streets within the subdivision. The map as submitted had four (4) foot sidewalks. Typically streets are constructed with sidewalks with a minimum width

of five (5) feet, as any smaller, and it impedes the ability for multiple users to use the sidewalk – such as children walking to school or residents using strollers on the sidewalk. By conditioning these different infrastructure systems (street, sidewalk, and horse trail), the project will be consistent with the intents of the Mobility Plan 2035. Safe access for pedestrian, motorists, and equestrians are provided by limiting roadway conflicts between the various modes of travel, in a way which is accessible and convenient.

6. Conservation Element

The **Conservation Element** of the General Plan was adopted on September 26, 2001 and provides the policy direction on the preservation, conservation, protection and enhancement of the city's natural resources. The Conservation Element addresses goals for a wide variety of topics – Agricultural lands, Animal Keeping areas, Archaeological and Paleontological resources, Cultural and Historical resources, Endangered Species, Equine Areas, Erosion areas, Fisheries, Forest areas, Geological Hazard areas, Habitats, Scenic Vistas, Open Space areas, and Resource Management areas. Of particular note is the chapter addressing Animal Keeping, Equine areas, and Ecological areas, and the following goals, objectives, and policies are relevant to the instant request:

- Objective 2 Retain, to the extent feasible, the last remaining agricultural features of the city as part of the city's heritage and economy.
- Policy 2.1 Continue to encourage the retention of parcels in agricultural and low density land use and zoning categories that will encourage their retention in agricultural and related uses.
- Objective 6 Retain equine oriented uses as a part of the city's heritage and for recreational, educational and economic purposes.
- Policy 6.1 Continue to encourage the establishment of new equine uses and K districts and to protect existing significant areas from encroachment.
- Policy 6.2 Establish standards and procedures for a comprehensive equine trail system, similar to the bikeways system, including provisions for protection of watershed and natural environments.
- Policy 6.3 Continue to expand and maintain trail linkages which will reinforce the viability of equine uses.
- Policy 6.4 Continue to increase funding for equine trails and facilities acquisition, construction, maintenance and equine related city activities.
- Objective 11 Preserve, protect, restore and enhance natural plant and wildlife diversity, habitats, corridors and linkages so as to enable the healthy propagation and survival of native species, especially those species that are endangered, sensitive, threatened or species of special concern.

- Policy 11.1 Continue to identify significant habitat areas, corridors and buffers and to take measures to protect, enhance and/or restore them.
- Policy 11.2 Continue to protect, restore and/or enhance habitat areas, linkages and corridor segments, to the greatest extent practical, within city owned or managed sites.
- Policy 11.3 Continue to work cooperatively with other agencies and entities in protecting local habitats and endangered, threatened, sensitive and rare species.

On May 10, 2017, the City Council adopted the Biodiversity Motion, in which Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation was directed to oversee efforts to evaluate biodiversity in the City, develop an index to measure net loss going forward, and develop policies and projects to enhance biodiversity. Urban biodiversity consists of the flora, fauna, and ecosystems which enrich and sustain the City and nature, and the City's goal is to have a "no net loss" of biodiversity. In keeping with Objective 11 and Policy 11.3, the Department of City Planning staff coordinated with the Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation (LASAN) Biodiversity Project coordinator to review the landscape plan in regards to biodiversity preservation. LASAN staff noted that this site was historically an alluvial floodplain with well drained, sandy loam soils, and that Coastal Sage Scrub or Riversidian-Sage Scrub plant species, Oak woodland or Riparian Woodland species, and native perennial grasses and annual wildflowers would be most appropriate in this location. In particular, the LASAN Biodiversity project coordinator noted that Coast Live Oak and Valley Oak would be appropriate selections, and given the site's location between a County Sensitive Ecological Area (to the west) and the Stoney Point Park (to the east), it was important to support east-west connectivity through the site and to reduce effects at the edge of the site. Lastly, conditions of approval have been included to ensure that all tree species are local tree species and that at least 50% of the landscape materials (ground cover, shrubs, grasses, and perennials) are to be Southern California native plant materials which are appropriate to this biome. This condition will ensure that the proposed landscape materials are supportive of native wildlife species and the local ecosystem.

In keeping with Objective 11 of the Conservation Element, the project has been conditioned to prohibit vehicular gates and pedestrian gates, as these obstructions would potentially impact the east-west connectivity of the site for wildlife. Additionally, as the site is located between a County Sensitive Ecological Area (to the west) and the Stoney Point Park (to the east), it is important that the landscaping on the site support local habitat, and as such, in tandem with the aforementioned landscaping requirement, a condition has also been applied to the site to prohibit sports courts, as these uses would limit the area for plant/landscaping restoration.

Lastly, in keeping with Objective 6, the project has been conditioned to provide a public equestrian trail which links to a regional trail plan and to provide safe equestrian circulation from private properties to the public trail, thereby reinforcing the viability of equine uses and strengthening the use of the district as a 'K' Equinekeeping District. As such, with the abovementioned conditions of approval, the project is consistent with the Objectives and Policies of the Conservation Element.

7. Public Facilities and Services Element – Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan

The **Public Facilities and Services Element** of the General Plan consists of four plans which were adopted between 1968 and 1980 – the Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan (Adopted 1968), Public Libraries Plan (Adopted 1968), Public Recreation Plan (Adopted 1980), and the Public Schools Plan (Adopted 1968). These four plans were consolidated when the Framework Element was adopted in 1996. Of particular note is the **Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan**, and the following goals, objectives, and policies are relevant to the instant request:

- Policy 1 To provide a means for the promotion of horseback riding as a healthful and relaxing activity.
- Policy 2 To provide a guide that can be used to acquire or reserve land for a coordinated system of equestrian trails.
- Policy 3 To guide public and private decision makers in the development of new trails to form a system connecting City trails with County, State and Federal systems and connecting urban trails with wilderness trails.
- Policy 4 To provide a guide for the combination of equestrian and hiking trails where desirable.
- Policy 5 To illustrate the location of horse keeping districts, major concentrations of horses and to indicate how these areas relate to the trail system.
- Policy 8 To describe standards for the improvement of existing and proposed trails.
- Policy 9 To provide a guide for new trails where desirable, as segments, as separate systems, or in combination with equestrian trails.
- Policy 11 Routes shown on the Major Trails Plan should be only backbone trails which connect the various equestrian areas together to form a major trails system. Connections with the other city trails and the major County, State and Federal trails surrounding the City should be included.
- Policy 13 Trails should be used by equestrians and hikers only. Bicycles, motorcycles, and other vehicles except maintenance vehicles should be prohibited.
- Policy 16 Street crossings should be avoided where possible, but may be used if they are appropriately marked and controlled.

As conditioned, the project is consistent with Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan, as the construction of the Bee Canyon Road trail creates a connection to a larger identified equestrian trail and will connect with the existing trail to the south. This trail is part of the backbone trail identified in the Community Plan. Per Policy 11, an additional private trail

has been conditioned in order to provide access from the private equine keeping areas of Lots 6-13 to the public trail. Additionally, in the spirit of Policy 16, three crosswalks have been incorporated into the project in order to reduce vehicular/equestrian conflicts. The crosswalks shall be at least 6 feet in width, shall utilize high-visibility crosswalk patterns, and those patterns shall be designed with paint instead of slick materials such as plastic or epoxy. Additionally, signage shall be provided at each of the crosswalk locations to notify drivers of the location of equestrian users. Since the area is rural with minimal lighting, the crosswalks will be required to provide Rapid Flashing Beacons to provide safe crossing for equestrians during early morning or evening hours. These beacons shall be manually activated from push buttons located at pedestrian and equestrian heights. Additionally, curb ramps shall be located at each of the crosswalks and parking shall be prohibited adjacent to these crosswalks, in order to provide improved lines of sight.

As such, the project as conditioned, is consistent with the Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan, a component of the Public Facilities and Services Element, in that street crossings are selectively placed and appropriated marked and a private trail will further supplement the backbone trail to provide direct access to specific properties, which will strengthen the equestrian orientation of the neighborhood and promote horseback riding through the creation of horse riding infrastructure.

8. Health and Wellness Element and Air Quality Element.

Policy 5.1, 5.6, and 5.7 of the Plan for a Healthy LA, the Health and Wellness Element, and Policy 4.2.3 of the Air Quality Element are policy initiatives related to the reduction of air pollution and greenhouse gases and increasing the city's resilience to climate change risks. As conditioned herein, the Project is required to provide parking spaces which would be equipped for the immediate installation and use of EV Charging Stations, as well as for future use. The Project has also been conditioned to install solar panels and an operating photovoltaic system. The installation and operation of the solar panels would help to reduce the site's dependence on fossil fuels and carbon generating public utility electrical power. Taken together, the conditions would provide for the public welfare and public necessity by reducing the level of pollution or greenhouse gas emissions to the benefit of the neighborhood and the City. Lastly, the project has been conditioned to prohibit sports courts as these uses increase the quantity of hardscape on a site, thereby reducing the permeability of the site and increasing the ambient temperature of the air, thereby contributing to "heat islands" which affect energy demand, air conditioning costs, greenhouse gases, and heat-related illness.

As conditioned, the Project would be consistent with the aforementioned policies, as well as Policy 5.1.2 of the Air Quality Element, by ensuring that future developments are compatible with alternative fuel vehicles and shift to non-polluting sources of energy. Additionally, the conditions will increase the city's resilience to climate change crisis by addressing increasing temperatures and heat related effects. The solar and EV conditions are also good zoning practice because they provide a convenient service amenity to the occupants or visitors who use electric vehicles and utilize electricity on site for other functions. As such, the Project provides service amenities to improve habitability for the residents of the Project and to minimize impacts on neighboring properties.

9. Charter Findings – City Charter Section 556 and 558 (Zone Changes)

The proposed zone change complies with Section 556 and 558 in that the zone change promotes land use regulations which are consistent with the General Plan, as noted in Findings Nos. 1 - 8 above; and with public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice, as noted below in Finding No. 10.

Zone Change Findings

10. Pursuant to LAMC Section 12.32. C and G., the zone change is in conformance with the public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.

The current application is a request to change the zone from an A2 Zone to an RA Zone with a 'K' Equinekeeping Supplemental District overlay, resulting in a site with a RA-1-K zone. The Community Plan designates the site for Very Low I Residential uses with corresponding zones of RE20 and RA. Staff is recommending the inclusion of 'T' Tentative Classification Conditions, and the City Council has motioned that the Department of City Planning apply a K Equine District overlay to the subject site. As such, the recommended zone would be (T)RA-1-K, which is consistent with the Community Plan's land use, as the RA Zone classification is a corresponding zone

i. Public Necessity: The granting of the proposed zone change will result in a project that is in conformance with the public necessity by developing additional housing on the site in a way which is consistent with the General Plan and the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan. According to the Historic Resource Report, portions of the site were utilized as agricultural land for orchards in the 1920s through the 1940s and the land transitioned from being a 'Gentlemen's Farm' to equine uses in the 1960s. The requested zone change allows the property to continue promoting equinekeeping uses (per the K Equinekeeping overlay) while providing much needed housing on the site. Additionally, as the site is identified as a location for the public backbone horse trail (see Finding Nos. 2 and 7 for more information), the conditions which have been applied to the project will promote the public necessity by providing trail infrastructure to the larger community (backbone trail) and to the immediate neighbors (equestrian crosswalks, private trails, etc.).

ii. Convenience: The zone change will allow the development of the project, which will include improved private streets in locations where there are existing dirt and gravel roads. Staff has recommended conditions of approval for the project to prohibit gates at the entrance to ensure that neighbors located on Bee Canyon Road are able to continue accessing their properties on what was an unimproved road. Additionally, as part of the 'T' Tentative Classification Conditions, the project will be required to improve the portion of Old Santa Susana Pass Road which is adjacent to the project site with curbs, gutters, and sidewalks; thereby providing a convenience to neighbors in the vicinity.

iii. General Welfare: As previously mentioned, the zone change will allow for the development of additional housing, which will benefit the general public as the City is facing a housing shortage. Additionally development of the public backbone trail will provide recreational opportunities for the community of Chatsworth, thereby providing a general welfare to the public.

iv. Good Zoning Practices: Conditions of Approval have been recommended to ensure that good zoning practices are utilized on the subject site. The project has been prohibited from becoming a 'closed' community through the use of gates, thereby improving mobility for pedestrians and motorists. Additionally, the Community Plan places a "higher priority on the preservation of designated horsekeeping areas than on other uses found in the RA Zone category. Toward this end, the Plan supports the establishment of "K" Horsekeeping Supplemental Use Districts in appropriate areas in order to ensure the preservation of this equestrian lifestyle. Efforts should be made to insure compatibility between the equestrian and other uses found in the RA Zone. In all instances, the RA Zone should be encouraged to emulate the existing rural landscape, whether horsekeeping is present or not." As the project has been conditioned to provide equine infrastructure to ensure equestrians can safely access the site, the project is in keeping with good zoning practices by continuing to emulate the existing equinekeeping character of the community. In addition, approving the zone change classification from A2 to RA is in keeping with good zoning practices as it increases the allowable density on-site, consistent with the zoning allowed by the land use designation.

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.

11. Pursuant to LAMC Section 12.32 G, Findings for "T" and "Q" Classifications.

Pursuant to LAMC Sections 12.32-G, 1, the current action, as recommended, has been made contingent upon compliance with "T" and "Q" Conditions and the project specific Conditions of Approval imposed herein for the proposed project. Such limitations are necessary to ensure the identified dedications, improvements, and equine infrastructure are executed to meet the public's needs, convenience and general welfare served by the required actions. The conditions ensure that roadways are built out to proper standards, required by the Mobility Element.

Environmental Findings

12. **Environmental Finding.** A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), along with mitigation measures and a Mitigation Monitoring Program (ENV-2016-3175-MND), was prepared for the proposed project in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). On the basis of the whole of the record before the lead agency including any comments received, 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 judgement and analysis. The records upon which this decision is based are with the Valley Project Planning Division of the Planning Department in Room 430, 6262 Van Nuys Boulevard.

13. **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 the majority of the site is located within Zone X, areas determined to be outside the 0.2% annual chance floodplain. Portions of the site are located within the Santa Susana Creek, which is a concrete-lined flood control channel, this area is identified as a 100-year flood hazard area, however the flood discharge would be contained within the channel. As such, no

housing will be placed within a flood zone, and there are no flood zone compliance requirements for the project.