

FINDINGS

General Plan Findings

1. **General Plan Land Use Designation.** The subject property is located within the Reseda-West Van Nuys Community Plan area, which was adopted by City Council on November 17, 1999. The Community Plan designates the subject site for Community Commercial land uses with corresponding zones of CR, C2, C4, RAS3, RAS4, P, and PB. The site is comprised of two parcels totaling 16,009 square feet in area and zoned [Q]R2-1L-CDO-RIO, which is more restrictive than the corresponding zones of the land use designation. The proposed zone change to (T)[Q]RAS4-1L-CDO-RIO will make the zone correspond with the land use designation of the Community 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 Reseda-West Van Nuys Community Plan includes the following relevant land use goals, objectives, and policies:

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.

Policy 1-1.1: Designate specific lands to provide for adequate multi-family residential development.

Policy 1-1.4: Protect the quality of the residential environment through attention to the appearance of communities, including attention to building and site design.

Objective 1-3: To promote and ensure the provision of adequate housing for all persons regardless of income, age, or ethnic background.

Policy 1-2.2: Consider factors such as neighborhood character and identify, compatibility of land uses, impact on livability, impacts on services and public facilities, and impacts on traffic levels when changes in residential densities are proposed.

Policy 1-3.1: Promote greater individual choice in type, quality, price, and location of housing.

The project is in conformance with these goals, objectives, and policies. The Community Plan intends to promote well-designed and appropriately-located multifamily housing that serves the needs of the community and is compatible with surrounding land uses. The

project site is in the vicinity of similar multi-story multifamily residential buildings and is in close proximity to a commercial corridor on Reseda Boulevard. The proposed multifamily project will allow the site to serve as a transitional buffer between the commercial uses to the east and lower density residential uses to the west, which meets the intent of Policy 1-1.1 and Policy 1-2.2. The project will construct 27 dwelling units, or a net increase of 23 dwelling units, and will provide additional housing for the community. The project will set aside two units for Very Low Income Households and two units for Low Income Households. The affordable housing component of the project will provide diverse housing options for all segments of the community which is consistent with Goal 1 and Policy 1-3.1. Additionally, the project includes one- and two-bedroom units, which further promotes choice in housing type. 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 Reseda-West Van Nuys 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 (T)[Q]RAS4-1L-CDO-RIO conforms to the following goals, objectives, and policies of the Citywide General Plan Framework as follows:

Goal 3A: A physically balanced distribution of land uses that contributes towards and facilitates the City's long-term fiscal and economic viability, revitalization of economically depressed areas, conservation of existing residential neighborhoods, equitable distribution of public resources, conservation of natural resources, provision of adequate infrastructure and public services, reduction of traffic congestion and improvement of air quality, enhancement of recreation and open space opportunities, assurance of environmental justice and a healthful living environment, and achievement of the vision for a more liveable city.

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

Policy 3.1.4: Accommodate new development in accordance with land use and density provisions established in the community plans as guided by the Framework Citywide Long-Range Land Use Diagram.

Policy 3.2.1: Provide a pattern of development consisting of distinct districts, centers, boulevards, and neighborhoods that are differentiated by their functional role, scale, and character. This shall be accomplished by considering factors such as the existing concentrations of use, community-oriented activity centers that currently or potentially service

adjacent neighborhoods, and existing potential public transit corridors and stations.

Policy 3.2.2: Established, through the Framework Long-Range Land Use Diagram, community plans, and other implementing tools, patterns, and types of development that improve the integration of housing with commercial uses and the integration of public services and various densities of residential development within neighborhoods at appropriate locations.

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.

The proposed 27-unit apartment building will provide a mixed income housing development that helps to meet the current and projected housing needs of the Community Plan area and the City. The Framework Element recognizes the varied needs of a city, and the subsequent need for varied land uses to meet those needs. The subject site is designated for Community Commercial land uses, and the proposed project is consistent with the designation. The project supports the policies of the Framework Element by providing residential density that is appropriately located and integrated into the community. Adjacent properties to the west of the site are designated for Medium Residential land uses and adjacent properties to the east are designated for Community Commercial land uses. The proposed project serves as a buffer between adjacent residential uses to the west and adjacent commercial uses to the east. The project is located in an urban area and is infill development. The proposed structure is compatible with and maintains the scale of existing development nearby. The project is located in close proximity to Reseda Boulevard and Vanowen Street, both of which are major boulevards. The area surrounding this intersection is identified as Community Center in the Framework Element Land Use Diagram with appropriate floor area ratios ranging from 1.5:1 to 3:1. The construction of a four-story multifamily building with an FAR of 1.8:1 is consistent with this designation and Framework Element policies.

- 4. Housing Element.** The 2013-2021 Housing Element of the General Plan identifies the City's housing conditions and needs, and it establishes the goals, objectives, and policies which are the foundation of the City's housing and growth strategy. The Housing Element will be implemented by the recommended action herein. The plan text includes the following relevant goals, objectives, and policies:

Goal 1: Housing Production 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.

The proposed Zone Change to (T)[Q]RAS4-1L-CDO-RIO for the subject property will facilitate the construction of additional market rate and affordable housing in order to meet current and projected needs. The project will include one- and two-bedroom units and will offer residents a choice in housing type. Therefore, the Vesting Zone Change is consistent with the Housing Element goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan.

5. **Mobility Element.** The Mobility Element of the General Plan (Mobility Plan 2035) is not likely to be affected by the recommended action herein. Baird Avenue, the abutting property to the east, is a designated Local Street – Standard, and has been conditioned to be improved. The Bureau of Engineering recommendation report dated November 14, 2018 required the construction of a 12-foot wide concrete sidewalk along the property frontage. Upon further correspondence with the Valley District Office and the Land Development Division of the Bureau of Engineering, it has been determined that a 5-foot wide sidewalk and 7-foot wide landscaped parkway would also satisfy the required improvements. As such, the (T) Tentative Conditions have been modified to reflect this change. Concrete curbs and gutters will be repaired and the driveway along Baird Avenue will be upgraded to comply with ADA requirements. The project is also conditioned to add one street tree as shown on the landscape plan. Therefore, as conditioned, the Vesting Zone Change to (T)[Q]RAS4-1L-CDO-RIO is consistent with Mobility Plan 2035 goals, objectives, and policies.
6. **Sewerage Facilities Element.** The Sewerage Facilities Element of the General Plan will not be affected by the recommended action. While the sewer system might be able to accommodate the total flows for the proposed project, further detailed gauging and evaluation may be needed as part of the permit process to identify a specific sewer connection point. If the public sewer has insufficient capacity then the developer will be required to build sewer lines to a point in the sewer system with sufficient capacity. A final approval for sewer capacity and connection permit will be made at that time. Ultimately, this sewage flow will be conveyed to the Hyperion Treatment Plant, which has sufficient capacity for the project.
7. **Charter Findings – Section 556 and 558 (Zone Changes).** The proposed zone change complies with Sections 556 and 558 of the City Charter. The project is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent, and provisions of the General Plan as described in Findings Nos. 1-6 above. The project is in substantial conformance with public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice, as noted below in Finding No. 8.

Entitlement Findings – Vesting Zone Change

- 8. 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.**

The subject request is for a Vesting Zone Change from [Q]R2-1L-CDO-RIO to (T)[Q]RAS4-1L-CDO-RIO. The Community Plan designates the site for Community Commercial uses, with corresponding zones of CR, C2, C4, RAS3, RAS4, P, and PB. Staff is recommending the inclusion of (T) Tentative Classification conditions, and as such, the recommended zone would be (T)[Q]RAS4-1L-CDO-RIO, which is consistent with the Community Plan land use designation corresponding zones.

Public Necessity: Approval of the Vesting Zone Change to RAS4 is to a corresponding zone within the Community Commercial land use designation of the General Plan and will allow the site to be developed consistent with the goals and objectives of the Framework Element and the Reseda-West Van Nuys Community Plan. Approval of the project will increase the number of units that can be constructed on the site. The site is in the vicinity of similar multifamily buildings on Baird Avenue and commercial uses to the east on Reseda Boulevard. The site will be developed with 27 residential units, including 4 affordable units, which furthers the goals of the General Plan by providing housing for all segments of the community, and therefore the request is consistent with public necessity.

Convenience: The proposed 27-unit apartment building is an infill development, and therefore will have adequate access to City services and infrastructure. The proposed zone change allows for the development of additional housing in close proximity to an existing commercial corridor on Reseda Boulevard and commercial uses on Vanowen Street. The existing businesses and services include restaurants, coffee shops, a grocery store, and medical office uses. This site is approximately 0.5 miles from the Reseda Park and Recreation Center, which includes sport fields, sport courts, and a pool. Additionally, the site is less than a 5 minute walk to several bus lines operating along Reseda Boulevard (240, 744) and Vanowen Street (165). Therefore, the proposed project will be conveniently located for future residents and visitors.

General Welfare: As previously discussed, the zone change will allow for the development of additional mixed-income housing, which will benefit the general welfare by helping to meet the projected and current housing needs of the community. Four units will be set aside for Low Income and Very Low Income Households. The (T) Tentative Classification conditions the project to require the sidewalk and parkway improvements and repairs in compliance with ADA requirements. 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: As previously discussed, the property is located in the Reseda-West Van Nuys Community Plan area, which designates the site for Community Commercial land uses with corresponding zones of CR, C2, C4, RAS3, RAS4, P, and PB. The zone change from [Q]R2-1L-CDO-RIO to (T)[Q]RAS4-1L-CDO-RIO will bring the site into a zone that is corresponding with the land use designation of the General Plan. The project is infill development, as it is located in an established area with low to medium density residential uses and commercial uses. 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.

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.

9. “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 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.

The existing Q Conditions on the site were applied through Ordinance No. 176,558 as part of the permanent [Q] Conditions of the Reseda Central Business District CDO. The existing Q Conditions remain applicable to the site and are incorporated within the Q Conditions herein.

10. As to be codified in Section 11.5.11 of the Municipal Code, the recommended action is deemed consistent with the requirements of Measure JJJ.

In order for a project with ten or more dwelling units to be eligible for a zone change which results in increased residential floor area, density or height; the project shall meet one of the affordability provisions and job standards, detailed in Section 3 and 5 of the Measure JJJ initiative, as codified in LAMC Section 11.5.11.

If the zone change results in a residential density increase greater than 35%, then the Project shall provide no less than 5% of the total units at rents affordable to Extremely Low Income households and either 6% of the total units at rents affordable to Very Low Income households or 15% of the total units at rents affordable to Lower Income households, inclusive of any Replacement Units. The Project as conditioned will provide 5% of the total units at rents affordable to Extremely Low Income households and 6% of the total units at rents affordable to Very Low Income households.

Additionally, the Project will be conditioned to provide a Project Labor Agreement which ensures at least 30% of all construction hours will be performed by permanent City residents, that construction worker wages will be ‘living wages’ as stipulated in California Labor Code Section 1770, and that all construction workers will be hired with appropriate training requirements.

As such, the Project complies with the affordability provisions and job standards detailed in Section 3 and 5 of the Measure JJJ initiative, as codified in LAMC Section 11.5.11.

Entitlement Findings – Community Design Overlay

11. Pursuant to LAMC Section 13.08 E of the LAMC, the project substantially complies with the adopted CDO Design Guidelines and Standards, as follows:

The proposed project is located within the Reseda Central Business District CDO which is designated for Community Commercial land uses. The project will require the demolition of two existing duplexes, comprised of four units subject to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance, and will construct a 27-unit multifamily building. The project will provide an appropriate transition between the commercial corridor on Reseda Boulevard to the east and the multifamily and single family uses to the west of the site. The project will be four stories and 45 feet in height with at-grade parking and three levels of residential located above. Pedestrian and vehicular access to the site will be from Baird Avenue.

The project, as conditioned herein and stated below, will be in compliance with the guidelines and standards of the Reseda Central Business District CDO.

The project complies with the provisions of *Guidelines 1-4: Parking* of the Design Guidelines, in that the project's ground-level parking garage will be screened from the street as the building's wall will block it from view. Landscaping within the front yard setback will further screen the building wall and parking area. The project will provide a total of 44 vehicular parking spaces. The majority of the parking for the project, 40 spaces, will be provided in an at-grade garage and three levels of residential dwelling units will be located above. Four parking spaces will be provided outside of the structure at the rear of the lot. These parking spaces will not be visible from the public right-of-way and will be screened from view from adjacent properties by a wall to be constructed along the property lines.

The project complies with the provisions of *Guideline 5: Pedestrian Walkways* and *Guidelines 14 and 15: Lighting* of the Design Guidelines, in that direct pedestrian access will be provided to the site from Baird Avenue. The structure can be accessed by an exterior staircase leading to the second floor located at the front of the building, or alternatively pedestrians can access the building by using the covered, exterior walkway along the southern property line to access the elevator. As conditioned, there will be pedestrian lighting at the ground-floor pedestrian access points. Additionally, as conditioned, the lighting shall be shielded and down-facing, directed on the property, away from adjacent structures and lots.

The project complies with *Guideline 7: Equipment Screening* and *Guidelines 21 and 22: Security Devices* of the Design Guidelines, in that the mechanical equipment has been conditioned to be screened from view. The trash enclosure is located in the ground-floor parking garage and will not be visible from the street. The project has been conditioned to prohibit the use of barbed wire, razor wire, and concertina wire, in compliance with Standard 21a of the CDO. Gas meters for the project will be relocated from the front façade

to a side or rear elevation. The project is conditioned that if any transformers or other utility equipment are placed in a location that is visible from the public right-of-way, the plans shall be reviewed by the Department of City Planning. Additionally, the project has been conditioned to ensure that any future security features, such as grilles or gates, are installed respectfully to maintain an active and visible ground-floor frontage.

As conditioned, the landscape plan will comply with the provisions of *Guidelines 8 and 9: Landscaping* of the Design Guidelines and with provisions of the River Improvement Overlay (RIO) by providing a detailed landscape and irrigation plan as conditioned that will show the locations and types of plants which comply with the lists of plants from the RIO. The project provides landscaped areas in the front yard setback and along the walkway adjacent to the southern property line. The project proposes a green wall feature on the western façade that will provide a buffer, soften glare, and enhance the overall aesthetic of the building. The project is conditioned to provide a revised landscape plan which includes the use of plant material that will fully cover the trellis within three years of planting. The ground level parking garage will be screened by the landscaping in the front yard, which thus complies with Guideline 9.

As conditioned, the project will comply with *Guidelines 10-13: Building Materials* of the Design Guidelines. Exterior walls will consist of smooth stucco painted light green and light tan. Decorative lighting, walkways with dark green wrought metal railing, building articulation and a green wall/trellis will also be incorporated into the façade. The use of metal railings and building articulation is consistent throughout the structure. The project has been conditioned to prohibit the use of bare metal elements and unfinished or unsurfaced concrete block walls and to ensure that exterior materials are resistant to graffiti, and thus the project complies with Standard 10b, Guideline 11, and Standard 11.

The project complies with *Guideline 16 and 17: Façade Treatment* and *Guideline 20: Rooflines and Forms* of the Design Guidelines, in that the project will incorporate cohesive design elements through the use of articulation, balconies, a decorative cornice, and building massing. The project has been designed to avoid the use of large blank wall surfaces. Per the plans, the project will have horizontal color bands to distinguish each floor and to help break up blank vertical and horizontal surfaces. Additionally, each dwelling unit has a balcony which will be treated with iron railing and will add to the visual interest of the building and will add façade articulation. The massing of the building has been broken up by having a central courtyard which is visible from the front and rear elevations. This feature of the building design visually reduces the massing of the building by breaking up the front and rear walls. This design also allows more light into the courtyard open space. The project has a flat roof with the exception of the elevator and stair shafts. The western façade, which faces Baird Avenue, has flat, horizontal canopy elements which extend over the second-floor walkway and the third-floor balcony from the primary wall surface. These elements provide shade and add depth to the building façade. Thus, the design of the project complies with the intent of Guidelines 16, 17, and 20.

The proposed project does not currently include any signage, and thus the project has been conditioned to comply with *Guidelines 31-35* of the Design Guidelines which govern

sign regulations. The intent of these guidelines is to ensure uniform, orderly, and attractive sign identification for businesses within the CDO.

12. The structures, site plan, and landscaping are harmonious in scale and design with existing development and any cultural, scenic, or environmental resources adjacent to the site and the vicinity.

The surrounding properties on Baird Avenue and abutting the site are developed with multifamily, single family, and commercial uses which vary in height. There are several two- to four-story multifamily buildings and single-story single-family dwellings in close proximity to the site. Additionally, to the east of the site is a commercial structure which is approximately 74 feet in height. The proposed project, as conditioned, will be harmonious in scale and design with existing development. To the east of the site is a commercial corridor along Reseda Boulevard, and to the west of the site are multifamily dwellings and single family dwellings. The project is well placed to serve as a transitional buffer between the lower density residential uses and the commercial uses. The conditions imposed upon the project regulating building materials, landscaping, and screening of parking, utilities, and other equipment will ensure that the design is compatible with existing development and sensitive to the existing environment.

Environmental Findings

13. Environmental Finding. A Negative Declaration (ND) was prepared for the proposed project in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The basis of the whole of the record before the lead agency including any comments received, the lead agency finds that there is no substantial evidence that the proposed project will have a significant impact on the environment. The attached 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 Blvd.