

## FINDINGS

### CEQA FINDING

Based on the whole of the administrative record, as supported by the justification prepared and found in the environmental case file, the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15314, Class 14, and there is no substantial evidence demonstrating that any exceptions contained in Section 15300.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines regarding location, cumulative impacts, significant effects or unusual circumstances, scenic highways, or hazardous waste sites, or historical resources applies.

### GENERAL PLAN/CHARTER FINDINGS

#### 1. General Plan Land Use Designation.

The Property is located within the area covered by the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan, updated and adopted by the City Council on September 4, 1993. The Plan designates the subject property as Very Low I Density Residential with corresponding zones of A2-1 and RA-1. The existing zoning is consistent with the land use designation of the General Plan as reflected in the adopted community plan.

#### 2. General Plan Text.

The proposed location is recognized as being consistent with the various applicable elements and objectives of the General Plan, per prior approvals for the athletic field and bleachers, as well as the campus as a whole.

Overall, implementation of the Project would not detract from the valued visual character of the community or area; nor introduce inappropriate contrast between proposed Project elements and adjacent and nearby development; nor remove existing features that substantially contribute to the character of or image of the community; or nor be materially inconsistent with the goals and policies of the Chatsworth – Porter Ranch Community Plan.

The Project is the extension of an existing accessory use to an educational use that is compatible and consistent with the existing School and school-related athletic land uses in the vicinity. Structure heights would be consistent with the height of other existing structures in the Project vicinity. The Project site is separated from residential neighborhoods by distance, terrain, and by open space and other institutional uses in the vicinity. Therefore, the Project would not adversely change the existing relationships between numerous land uses or properties in an established neighborhood or community or have the long-term effect of adversely altering a neighborhood or community through ongoing disruption, diversion or isolation.

A stated goal of the Community Plan is "to encourage the preservation and enhancement of the varied and distinctive residential character of the Community." The proposed project is located adjacent to educational, public facility, and residential uses, with single-family homes located primarily south and east of the site. These adjacent uses have been thoroughly considered by the previous decision makers when designing the campus layout and school operation. School buildings, landscape treatments, and fencing have been sited to ensure the adequate screening and buffering of noise from exterior activity areas.

The Community 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; 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.

The proposed project will accomplish this by allowing Sierra Canyon School to further contribute to the operational, physical, and entertainment needs of their shared student body. The subject site will not only be available to the students and teachers of the two schools, but to the surrounding communities both directly through the applicant allowing the community to use the site for events and indirectly through the students who attend the schools and live in the surrounding communities. Finally, the proposed Project will not be detrimental to the character of development in the immediate neighborhood because the proposed athletic field and supporting facilities will be consistent with other institutional uses within the Community Plan.

### **3. Charter Findings.**

Pursuant to Section 556 of the City Charter, the subject Conditional Use is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan. The Los Angeles Municipal Code permits the filing, review, and determination of conditional use applications as outlined in Section 12.24. Provided findings of fact are made herein.

## **CONDITIONAL USE FINDINGS**

### **4. The project will enhance the built environment in the surrounding neighborhood or will perform a function or provide a service that is essential or beneficial to the community, city, or region.**

The Sierra Canyon School Athletic Fields were previously approved for 300 seats at the football field under CPC-2008-3537-CU. The instant request would represent an expansion of this use by 1,330 seats to a total of 1,630 seats. The school has previously demonstrated substantial compliance with the conditions of approval imposed in prior Conditional Use permits, including evidence that the school is operating near full capacity and providing essential educational services to both immediate residents and general residents of the San Fernando Valley.

Adjacent/proximate uses include Sierra Canyon Campuses to the west and east, single-family residences to the south and California State Route 118 to the north. The areas to the west and south are single-family residential. Properties across De Soto Avenue immediately to the east include a vacant parcel, two single-family homes fronting on Rinaldi Street, and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power land that includes a sunken reservoir. Most notably, Sierra Canyon Secondary School (grades 7-12) is on the north side of Rinaldi Street.

The north Chatsworth area, west of De Soto Avenue and east of Mason Avenue, is primarily designated for Very Low I Residential uses, corresponding to the RE20 (Residential Estate) and RA (Residential Agriculture) zones designated in the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch

Community Plan. The rural quality of the region is enhanced by the proximity of equestrian trails and some unpaved local streets. Within the north De Soto Avenue corridor, newer residential subdivisions are generally located east of De Soto Avenue, between De Soto and Mason Avenues, while horse-keeping properties are generally located west of De Soto Avenue. Since the 1970s, higher density single-family subdivisions have been built in lower density agricultural neighborhoods (formerly operating truck farms and small ranches) and new local streets were developed to serve these subdivisions. Porter Ranch, a planned community adjacent to SR-118, is largely built-out east of Corbin Avenue. More recently, development of more residential uses has extended west of Mason Avenue. The proposed use supports the educational and operational needs of Sierra Canyon.

The proposed Project will enhance the built environment in the surrounding neighborhood and will perform a function and a service that is beneficial to the community. The fields themselves and the events taking place thereon would not be expanded in scope or occurrence; rather, the Project represents an expansion of attendee seating and a more efficient use of parking resources to better serve the expanded seating. The improvement of the athletic fields would provide athletic facilities and general open space that would relieve any potential burden to City operated recreational facilities that would otherwise be used for School competitive athletic events. Further, the enhanced facilities do not represent an expansion in student enrollment; rather, the Project will serve to enhance extracurricular facilities for existing students, parents, and visitors.

Therefore, the continued use and proposed expansion of the existing school will provide a service that is both essential and beneficial to the community.

**5. The project's location, size, height, operations, and other significant features will be compatible with and will not adversely affect or further degrade adjacent properties, the surrounding neighborhoods, or the public health, welfare, and safety.**

The location, size, height, operations and other significant features of the proposed Project will be compatible with and will not adversely affect or further degrade adjacent properties, the surrounding neighborhood, or the public health, welfare, and safety. The proposed expansion of bleacher seating does not represent a new use, but the expansion of an existing one. Events taking place on the enhanced fields would not be changed in type, timing, or number of occurrences. The project would allow the school to maintain and enhance its physical built environment and the services provided to the student body in a way that will not adversely affect or further degrade adjacent properties or surrounding neighborhoods. Improvement of the athletic fields will help to provide greater and enhanced educational experiences for Sierra Canyon's students, thereby enriching and benefiting the students, the City and the region as a whole.

For the reasons identified above, the project would be desirable to the public convenience and welfare. The Project is designed to protect the surrounding communities and neighborhoods while allowing a reasonable use of the subject site. The site, once developed, will be self-sustaining. Any events at this site will have a minimal impact on the surrounding communities.

**6. The project substantially conforms to the purpose, intent, and provisions of the General Plan, the applicable community plan, and any specific plan.**

The General Plan is the City's roadmap for future growth and development. The General Plan Elements establish goals, policies, purposes, and programs that provide for the regulatory environment in managing the City, and for addressing environmental concerns and problems. The majority of the policies derived from these elements are in the form of

LAMC requirements. Except for the entitlement described herein, the Project does not propose to deviate from any other LAMC requirements. The General Plan is comprised of the Framework Element, seven state-mandated elements, and four additional elements. The Framework Element establishes the broad overall policy and direction for the General Plan. The Mobility Plan 2035 provides the policy foundation for achieving a transportation system that balances the needs of all road users. The proposed project meets the following goals, objectives and programs of the Mobility Plan:

*Policy 3.3 Land Use Access and Mix: Promote equitable land use decisions that result in fewer vehicle trips by providing greater proximity and access to jobs, destinations, and other neighborhood services.*

*Policy 3.9 Increased Network Access: Streets, alleys, stairways, and other public right-of-ways play an important role in the City's mobility system by facilitating better connectivity. Increased network access improves the mobility of travelers by breaking up long blocks and providing short-cuts that reduce the distance required to get from one point to another.*

*Policy 4.13 Parking and Land Use Management: Balance on-street and offstreet parking supply with other transportation and land use objectives. Parking in Los Angeles is a crucial but often overlooked element of the larger mobility system in the City and region at large, with significant implications for travel behavior as well as urban form ... When planning for parking-related needs, it is important to consider ways of effectively managing parking demand.*

*Program PK.1 Creative Parking Solutions: "... to identify and implement creative strategies to resolve parking conflicts in areas with high-parking demand".*

*Program PK.12 Shared Off-Street Parking: Facilitate the shared utilization of privately owned off-street parking facilities.*

*Program S.3 Safe Routes to School: Although the Mobility Element discusses partnering with LAUSD, in the subject proposal working with Sierra Canyon School can achieve the same program goal "to calm traffic in communities surrounding all elementary, middle and high schools to maximize pedestrian and bicycle convenience and safety".*

The Health and Wellness Element of the City's General Plan is designed to elevate health as a priority for the City's future growth and development. As a recreational use, this Project meets the following goals, objectives, and programs of the Health and Wellness Element:

*Policy 2.5 Schools as centers of health and well-being: Support strategies that make schools centers of health and well-being by creating economic, environmental, social, and physical conditions in and around local schools that are safe, abundant in healthy goods and services, and offer opportunities for physical activity and recreation.*

The Land Use Element of the City's General Plan divides the City into 35 Community Plan areas. The Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan designates the property for Very Low I Residential land uses with corresponding zones of RE20 and RA. The property is not in a Specific Plan Area.

The proposed project meets the following goals, objectives and programs of the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan:

*Objective 6: To make provisions for a circulation system coordinated with land uses and densities and adequate to accommodate traffic; and to encourage the expansion and improvement of public transportation service.*

*Objective 7: To encourage open space for recreational uses, and to promote the preservation of views, natural character and topography of mountainous parts of the Community for the enjoyment of both local residents and persons throughout the Los Angeles region.*

The community plan is silent regarding shared parking agreements. The school received a conditional use permit in July of 2009 for the athletic field and a conditional use in 1982 establishing the school. The City Council found that the school/athletic field was designed in a manner that was compatible with the adjacent residential uses and it was in conformance with the General Plan. The proposed shared parking agreement does not include construction, expansion, or reduction in required parking and therefore substantially conforms to the purpose, intent and provisions of the General Plan and the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan.

### **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S DETERMINATION FINDINGS**

**7. The project will enhance the built environment in the surrounding neighborhood or will perform a function or provide a service that is essential or beneficial to the community, city, or region.**

Sierra Canyon is requesting a determination to permit the shared parking of the 236 parking spaces in the Upper Campus Parking during events at the Athletic Fields, while the Athletic Fields Parking would provide the remaining 90 parking spaces, for a total of 326 parking spaces available for event attendees.

The proposed Project will enhance the built environment in the surrounding neighborhood and will perform a function and a service that is beneficial to the community. The fields themselves and the events taking place thereon would not be expanded in scope or occurrence; rather, the Project represents an expansion of attendee seating and a more efficient use of parking resources to better serve the expanded seating. The improvement of the athletic fields would provide athletic facilities and general open space that would relieve any potential burden to City operated recreational facilities that would otherwise be used for School competitive athletic events. Further, the enhanced facilities do not represent an expansion in student enrollment; rather, the Project will serve to enhance extracurricular facilities for existing students, parents, and visitors.

The shared use of the Upper Campus Parking during the hours the Upper Campus is closed would provide the benefit of relieving any potential burden to City operated recreational facilities that would otherwise be used for school competitive athletic events. The shared parking would best utilize existing resources and activate the pedestrian streetscape by having students and parents/guardians walking to an event at the Athletic Fields, reinforcing activation of the school's pathways.

Approval of the request would allow drivers to have more options for parking and would reduce the use of local streets for parking. The shared parking between the Athletic Field and the Upper Campus would supplement (not replace or reduce) the parking required for the Upper Campus, which otherwise be under-utilized at the time athletic events take place.

8. **The project's location, size, height, operations, and other significant features will be compatible with and will not adversely affect or further degrade adjacent properties, the surrounding neighborhoods, or the public health, welfare, and safety.**

The Upper Campus Parking has 236 parking spaces that are used primarily during school hours on weekdays and various hours on the weekends, whereas existing Athletic Field parking is 90 spaces. Sierra Canyon proposes to allow the use of the Upper Campus Parking for events at the Athletic Fields after school hours, not overlapping with the use of the school.

A Parking Demand/Shared Parking Study was prepared by Overland Traffic Consultants, Inc. for the proposed shared use of the Athletic Field Parking, Upper Campus Parking, and, if needed, street parking (attached as Exhibit D2). The study was conducted from Wednesday, November 13, 2019 to Tuesday, November 19, 2019 to identify typical parking demands for a week of operation. It found that peak parking demand for that period occurred at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 14, 2019, with a parking surplus of 81 spaces between both parking areas. Observed peak demand from this study, combined with estimated peak demand during games resulted in a shortfall only during the 8:00 p.m. hour, and only of three (3) spaces. This observed and estimated peak demand would be mitigated through Condition 4 of this grant which limits the ability of other events and activities to take place during games.

The distance between the Athletic Field and the Upper Campus is approximately 600 feet. There are no reserved or restricted spaces in the parking areas. The Athletic Field Parking will continue to be used for parking during athletic events and drop-off/pick-up during school hours whereas the Upper School Parking would continue to be utilized as the required parking for that campus. During events at the Athletic Field, parents/guardians would have the option to use either parking lot. This grant would not affect the use of the parking spaces in the either area during school hours. There would also be no increase in student enrollment or operational changes of the Lower School or the athletic fields associated with this entitlement.

Approval of the request would allow drivers to have more options for parking and would reduce the use of local streets for parking. The shared parking between the Athletic Field and the Upper Campus would supplement (not replace or reduce) the parking required for the Upper Campus. The shared parking would not result in any change in the facilities, or permitted use of the property, and would not adversely affect or further degrade adjacent properties, the surrounding neighborhood, or the public health welfare and safety.

9. **The project substantially conforms to the purpose, intent, and provisions of the General Plan, the applicable community plan, and any specific plan.**

The General Plan is the City's roadmap for future growth and development. The General Plan Elements establish goals, policies, purposes, and programs that provide for the regulatory environment in managing the City, and for addressing environmental concerns and problems. The majority of the policies derived from these elements are in the form of LAMC requirements. Except for the entitlement described herein, the Project does not propose to deviate from any other LAMC requirements. The General Plan is comprised of the Framework Element, seven state-mandated elements, and four additional elements. The Framework Element establishes the broad overall policy and direction for the General Plan. The Mobility Plan 2035 provides the policy foundation for achieving a transportation system that balances the needs of all road users. The proposed project meets the following goals, objectives and programs of the Mobility Plan:

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The community plan is silent regarding shared parking agreements. The school received a conditional use permit in July of 2009 for the athletic field and a conditional use in 1982 establishing the school. The City Council found that the school/athletic field was designed in a manner that was compatible with the adjacent residential uses and it was in conformance with the General Plan. The proposed shared parking agreement does not include construction, expansion, or reduction in required parking and therefore substantially conforms to the purpose, intent and provisions of the General Plan and the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan.

**10. A total number of parking spaces will provide adequate parking for the uses on the site.**

As previously stated, the required parking for the Project will remain in the Athletic Field Parking and Upper Campus Parking with 326 parking spaces. The shared use of the 326 parking spaces as requested would only be used during event hours after school. The Athletic Field is located approximately 600 feet from the Upper Campus, which is within the 750 feet required per LAMC Section 12.21.A 4(g). Typical school hours are from 8:30 am to 2:30/3:00 p.m. for all students in Sierra Canyon and the Athletic Field is used mostly after the Upper Campus is released (3:00 p.m.).

As stated above, a consultant conducted an analysis of the parking lot demand that found that the athletic field parking lot exceeded capacity during one hour and by a minor amount, which would be mitigated through appropriate conditions. Therefore, during the event hours, the 326 parking spaces would provide adequate parking for the Athletic Field.

### **SITE PLAN REVIEW FINDINGS**

**11. The project is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan, applicable community plan, and any applicable specific plan.**

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The community plan is silent regarding shared parking agreements. The school received a conditional use permit in July of 2009 for the athletic field and a conditional use in 1982 establishing the school. On June 7, 2006, the City Council denied appeals and approved a conditional use for the Upper School at 20801 Rinaldi Street under case number CPC-2005-6118-CU-SPR. Through these actions, the City Council found that the school/athletic field was designed in a manner that was compatible with the adjacent residential uses and it was in conformance with the General Plan. The proposed shared parking agreement does not include construction, expansion, or reduction in required parking and therefore substantially conforms to the purpose, intent and provisions of the General Plan and the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan.

- 12. The project consists of an arrangement of buildings and structures (including height, bulk and setbacks), off-street parking facilities, loading areas, lighting, landscaping,**

**trash collection, and other such pertinent improvements, that is or will be compatible with existing and future development on adjacent properties and neighboring properties.**

The Project would not provide any new buildings, off-street parking facilities, loading areas, trash collection, and other such pertinent improvements. Instead, the Project only proposes to provide additional bleachers for the school, which would be designed consistently with the overall appearance and character of the school buildings and their uses.

- 13. The residential project provides recreational and service amenities to improve habitability for its residents and minimize impacts on neighboring properties.**

This finding is not applicable as the project contains no residential uses.