

**Planning and Land Use Committee  
May 18, 2021  
Council File 21-0162  
Case No. CPC-2016-4785-SP-SPP-VZC-HD-CU-CUB-SPR-1A  
20401 Ventura Boulevard**

**FINDINGS:**

The appealed Specific Plan Amendments and Height District Change ensure an appropriate development that is harmonious and in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent, and provisions of the General Plan and are in conformity with public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.

The hotel project will vastly improve the site and the surrounding community. Previously, the site was developed with a restaurant and was demolished a few years ago. Currently, the site is derelict, vacant and underutilized.

The hotel will revitalize the site with an architecturally interesting design, that incorporates a diversity of materials, considerable amount of fenestration and a variety of façade treatments along Ventura Boulevard. The uses in the hotel include restaurant space, conference rooms and a lounge. The restaurant and lounge will not only be available to the hotel guests, but to residents in the surrounding community.

The Canoga Park- Winnetka-Woodland Hills-West Hills Community Plan identifies the oversupply and poor appearance of strip malls as a major land use issue in the West Valley. The site was configured like a strip mall with the previous restaurant and became an obsolete commercial space. The restaurant was tucked into the northwest corner of the lot and surrounded by a surface parking lot to the south and east.

The hotel, on the other hand, is not surrounded by parking. Rather, parking will be provided in a subterranean parking garage, completely out of view. The hotel will have no surface parking, but instead incorporate specially paved driveways and a covered drop-off and pick-up area for guests. The hotel will turn a strip mall-like restaurant development into a lively and activated community amenity with a site plan that is in line with current planning design standards. The hotel is an opportunity that promotes character, improves physical appearance and incorporates desirable design characteristics.

While the current hotel design has a driveway in the front of the pedestrian entrance, the applicant has agreed to provide a distinguished and safe pedestrian walkway that includes, but is not limited to, differentiated paving, landscaping, lighting, and other appropriate design elements to make the walkway pronounced and inviting. The design of the pedestrian walkway must be approved by the Neighborhood Council and Council Office. Furthermore, the proposed porte-cochere is “pedestrian-friendly” in that it provides light, air, and safety from the elements.

The applicant is requesting an extra four feet on the sideyard for a driveway to provide parking opportunities for guests and employees and place back-of-house hotel operations underneath the building, including a loading dock. The extra four feet would allow a driveway that is in conformance with the General Plan while also enabling the hotel to function.

The applicant is also requesting an additional FAR of .059:1 which would allow approximately 3000 more square feet of occupiable building space. Granting .059:1 FAR would result in a building design that is in conformance with the General Plan and allow the current architecturally distinct design to move forward.

The Specific Plan Amendments and Height District Change being appealed are the denial of:

1. Increase the FAR to 1.559:1 in lieu of the permitted 1:1 FAR; by amending the language of Section 6.B;
2. Allow for pedestrians to cross a driveway or parking area to enter the building by amending the language of Section 7.A;
3. Allow for a driveway to be located in front of the building, by amending the language of Section 7.A.3.a.;
4. Increase in the allowable side yard to 43 feet in lieu of the allowable 39 feet at ground floor by amending the language of Section 7.A.3.b;
5. Pursuant to LAMC Section 12.32 Q, a Height District Change from P-1LD, C2-1LD, and C4-1LD to C2-2D Zone.

These Specific Plan Amendments and Height District Change **are approved**, as they will allow for a design that is harmonious with the General Plan. This will allow an FAR of 1.559:1; pedestrians to cross a driveway or parking area to enter the building; a driveway to be located in the front of the building; and an increase in the allowable side yard to 43 feet at the ground floor.

### **General Plan Framework Element**

#### **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.

### Objective 3.2

- Provide for the spatial distribution of development that promotes an improved quality of life by facilitating a reduction of vehicular trips, vehicle miles traveled, and air pollution.
  - Policies **3.2.4** Provide for the siting and design of new development that maintains the prevailing scale and character of the City's stable residential neighborhoods and enhance the character of commercial and industrial districts.

### **GOAL 7B**

A City with land appropriately and sufficiently designated to sustain a robust commercial and industrial base.

### Objective 7.2

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

### **Canoga Park-Winnetka-Woodland Hills Community Plan:**

#### COMMERCIAL

##### Issues

- Oversupply and poor appearance of strip mall development and obsolete commercial space on major thoroughfares.
- Unsightliness of new construction due to the lack of landscaping, architectural character and scale.

##### Opportunities

- Promote the character, economic viability, and quality of existing and new commercial development through design guidelines.
- Improve physical appearance of commercial districts and reduce scale of commercial development adjacent to residential neighborhoods.
- Complement any unique existing development/uses to reinforce desirable design characteristics and uses.

**GOAL 2** An Economically vital commercial sector offering a diversity of goods and services to meet the needs of the Community Plan Area.

- Objective 2-1 Conserve and strengthen viable commercial development and encourage recycling of obsolete commercial development.
  - Policies 2-1.1 Locate new commercial development in areas currently designated for such development.
- Objective 2-2 Enhance the appearance of commercial districts
  - 2-2.1 Require that any proposed development be designed to enhance and be compatible with adjacent development.
  - 2-2.3 Preserve community character, scale and architectural diversity.
    - Program: The Plan establishes height limits, amends Plan designations and recommends corresponding zone changes to implement this policy.

- 2-2.3 Preserve community character, scale and architectural diversity.
- 2-2.4 Improve safety and aesthetics of parking areas in commercial areas.

### **Ventura Cahuenga Specific Plan:**

#### **Section 2. PURPOSES**

D. To assure a balance of commercial land uses in the Specific Plan area that will address the needs of the surrounding communities and greater regional area.

F. To preserve and enhance community aesthetics by establishing coordinated and comprehensive standards for signs, buffering, setbacks, lot coverage, and landscaping.

#### **Section 7.A.3 Neighborhood and General Commercial Plan Designation Areas.**

a. Front Yards and Setbacks. No parking area or driveway shall be placed directly in front of the building except where a driveway is located to provide direct access through the building to a parking area located in the building or to the rear of the building.

#### **Section 15. PLAN REVIEW**

- Ventura Boulevard Plan Review Board. Upon adoption of this Specific Plan, the City Council and Mayor shall appoint members of a Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan 53 Ventura/Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Plan Review Board as set forth in Paragraphs 2 and 4 below.
  1. Authorities and Duties of the Plan Review Board.
    - a. Specific Plan Development and Implementation. Make recommendations to the Councilmembers of the Districts in which the Specific Plan is located and to the Mayor concerning the development and implementation of the Specific Plan.