

FINDINGS

General Plan/Charter Findings

1. **General Plan Land Use Designation.** The subject property is located in the Sylmar Community Plan, last updated by the City Council on June 10, 2015. The property is currently designated for Very Low I Residential land uses, with corresponding zones of RE20 and RA. The property is currently zoned RA-1-K which is consistent with the land use designation. The recommended Plan Amendment would designate the site for Neighborhood Commercial land uses, which has corresponding zones of CR, C1, and C1.5. The proposed C1-1VL-K zoning designation would therefore comply with the Neighborhood Commercial land use designation.

2. **General Plan Text.**
 - a. **Sylmar Community Plan.** The adopted Sylmar Community Plan is intended to promote an arrangement of land uses, streets, and services which will encourage and contribute the economic, social and physical health, safety, welfare and convenience of the people who live and work in the community. In general, the Community Plan includes policies which promote a variety of housing options and calls for proper siting and compatibility when considering higher-density developments. In addition, decision-makers should consider neighborhood character and identity, 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.

Relevant goals, policies, and programs of the Sylmar Community Plan, with which the proposed project is consistent, include:

Goal LU1: Complete, livable and quality neighborhoods throughout Sylmar that provide a variety of housing types, densities, forms and design, and a mix of uses and services that support the needs of residents.

Policy LU1.1 Choice in Type, Quality, and Location of Housing. Provide a variety of housing types that accommodates households of all sizes and for all persons regardless of income, age, ethnic background, and physical needs throughout Sylmar's residential neighborhoods and in targeted mixed-use areas.

Policy LU1.3 Recreational Amenities. Incorporate amenities for residents, such as on-site recreational facilities, passive open spaces, and community gardens which promote physical activity, fitness, and health.

Goal LU2: Well-designed residential neighborhoods that enhance the pedestrian experience and exhibit the architectural characteristics and qualities that distinguish Sylmar.

Policy LU2.1 High-Quality Development. Design projects to achieve a high level of quality in accordance with the Sylmar Community Plan Design Guidelines for Residential Areas, Residential Citywide Design Guidelines, and other applicable design guidelines. Projects are required to incorporate to the maximum extent feasible applicable design guidelines.

Policy LU2.3 Design Standards. Support design standards to achieve transition in scale when neighborhoods planned for multifamily residential uses abut existing single family residential uses and/or neighborhoods planned for single family residential uses.

Goal LU5: Lots within and adjacent to equinekeeping areas that are designed to ensure the feasibility of equinekeeping on equestrian lots and compatibility with adjacent non-equinekeeping lots.

Policy LU5.2 Transitions. Provide additional setbacks and density fading on all higher density development, including all residential and non-residential development, adjacent to equinekeeping lots regardless of location within an Equinekeeping "K" District.

Policy LU5.4 Proper Distances from Stables/Stalls. Maintain proper distances from equine stables/stalls and habitable rooms of any dwelling unit and neighbor's dwelling unit, including accessory living quarters. Refer to the Sylmar Design Guidelines.

Goal LU7: Environmentally sustainable residential development that uses green design and technology and water conservation methods to minimize consumption of non-renewable natural resources and replenish the City's watershed by capturing and storing water in Sylmar's underground basin.

Policy LU7.2 Permeable Surfaces. Increase areas of permeability by minimizing driveway and curb cut widths, limiting driveway paving to the width required to access a garage, and utilizing permeable surfaces on driveways, walkways, trails, and outdoor spaces in order to capture, infiltrate, and store water underground.

Policy LU7.3 Landscaping. Retain existing vegetation and trees and use native and drought-tolerant landscape and drip irrigation when developing the site in order to conserve water.

Goal LU12: Strong and competitive commercial areas that serve the community with a wide range of goods and services, support the local businesses and economy, and provide employment opportunities and revenue to the City.

Policy LU12.2 Commercial Development. Locate new commercial uses within existing established commercial areas. Accommodate larger projects within Community Centers and near the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station to minimize impact on residential neighborhoods and help retain the existing community fabric.

Goal LU13: Commercial and mixed-use development that complement adjacent and surrounding neighborhoods and contribute to Sylmar's semi-rural character and agricultural heritage.

Policy LU13.1 Neighborhood Compatibility. Ensure that new development adjacent to residential neighborhoods is designed in a manner that is sensitive to existing and adjacent buildings so that it blends in with the neighborhood context.

Policy LU13.2 Height Limits. Design new commercial structures to be compatible in height with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Policy LU13.3 Transitions. Provide transitional setbacks and upper floor setbacks for new projects adjacent to residential uses in order to maintain access to light and air and minimize operational impacts.

LU13.5 Rural Character. Reinforce the distinctive semi-rural character of the area by incorporating rural features and equestrian-oriented elements, such as ranch-style architecture, hitching posts, and horse parking areas, in remodels and new development, especially commercial areas within or near an Equinekeeping “K” Supplemental Use District and/or adjacent to a trail. Refer to Chapter 4 for additional trail policies and design guidelines.

Goal LU14: Attractive and pedestrian-oriented commercial areas that are safe, easily accessible, and enhance the unique commercial and cultural character of the community.

Policy LU14.1 High-Quality Development. Design projects to achieve a high level of quality and developed in accordance to the Commercial Citywide Design Guidelines and other applicable design guidelines. Projects are required to incorporate to the maximum extent feasible applicable design guidelines.

Policy LU14.2 Building Orientation. Improve neighborhood character and the pedestrian environment of commercial areas by siting buildings so they interact with the sidewalk and the street, contribute to a sense of human scale, and support ease of accessibility to buildings.

Policy LU14.3 Pedestrian Access and Connections. Provide safe and direct pedestrian entrances from the sidewalk and the street and encourage connections to abutting commercial development. Utilize techniques to increase motorist awareness of pedestrians, such as lighting, raised crosswalks, changes in paving, signage or other devices.

Policy LU14.4 Building Façade. Create and reinforce neighborhood identity and a richer pedestrian environment by incorporating features on the building façade that add visual interest to the environment, architectural elements that add scale and character, and building elements that enhance comfort and security of pedestrians.

Policy LU14.5 On-site Landscaping. Provide landscaped areas with shade trees on-site that complement the character of the built environment, add beauty and visual interest, increase pedestrian comfort, and extend the sense of the public-right-of-way onto the site.

Goal LU17: Quaint, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood commercial districts that serve surrounding neighborhoods and businesses as local gathering places where people can shop and socialize.

Policy LU17.3 Small-Scale Development. Design projects to be compatible in scale and character with surrounding neighborhoods so that they do not

interrupt the community fabric or street grid. Limit buildings to two stories in height in designated neighborhood commercial districts.

Policy LU17.5 Public Amenities. Incorporate outdoor spaces, such as plazas and courtyards that accommodate outdoor dining and other activities. Support sidewalk dining to enhance the pedestrian atmosphere.

The General Plan Amendment and Zone Change to Neighborhood Commercial land uses and the C1-1VL-K zone would be consistent with the aforementioned goals, policies, and programs of the Sylmar Community Plan by developing a neighborhood-serving mixed-use development that incorporates effective transitions, high-quality materials representing the rural character of the Sylmar community, and providing pedestrian-friendly design elements. The proposed general plan designation and zone change would ensure that any future development is compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood and brings the land use designation and zoning of the property into consistency with the land use designation and zoning of the surrounding residential area.

- b. **Framework Element.** The General Plan Framework is a guide for the City to implement growth and development policies by providing a comprehensive, long-range view of the City of Los Angeles as a whole. It allows for amendments to the community plans which further refine land use boundaries and categories to reflect local conditions, parcel characteristics, existing land uses, and public input. The framework plan denotes the approximate area of the subject site as a "Neighborhood Center," which is identified as a focal point for surrounding residential neighborhoods and containing a diversity of land uses such as restaurants, retail outlets, grocery stores, child care facilities, small professional offices, community meeting rooms, pharmacies, religious facilities and other similar services. Generally, Neighborhood Districts are at a floor area ratio of 1.5:1 or less and characterized by 1- or 2-story buildings, which is consistent with the proposed project.

The Framework further explains how the City should accommodate growth and development by tying in the goals, objectives and policies of other Elements of the Framework. Specifically, the Framework calls for amendments to the community plans which further refine the General Plan to reflect local conditions, "provided (a) that the basic differentiation and relationships among land use districts are maintained, (b) there is no reduction in overall housing capacity, and (c) additional environmental review is conducted in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act should the impacts of the changes exceed the levels of significance defined and modify the conclusions of the Framework Element's Environmental Impact Report".

The proposed westward extension of the Neighborhood Commercial land use designation use would maintain a similar differentiation and relationship between commercial and lower-scale single-family land uses with a proper separation and buffering between the uses as currently exists today. In addition, it would increase housing capacity and would be compatible with the long-range vision for the area as an integrated Community Center.

Potential environmental impacts from the increased housing capacity have been adequately analyzed in CEQA documentation and mitigated in the conditions of approval. The attached conditions will also ensure that the proposed General Plan Amendment supports the City's goal of creating a more livable city as well as

adhering to the development standards of the Framework Element and Community Plans.

- c. **Mobility Element.** The Mobility Element of the General Plan (Mobility Plan 2035) is likely to be affected by the recommended action herein through the imposition of street dedications and improvements surrounding the project site. Glenoaks Boulevard is designated as an Avenue II under Mobility Plan 2035, dedicated to a half right-of-way width of 40 feet and improved with asphalt roadway and concrete curb, gutters, and a sidewalk. Dedications and improvements have been imposed under the (T) Tentative Classification conditions contained within this staff report.

The proposed project is in conformance with the Mobility Element policies listed below:

Policy 1.2. Implement a balanced transportation system on all streets, tunnels, and bridges using complete streets principles to ensure the safety and mobility of all users.

Policy 2.3. 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.

Policy 2.6. Provide safe, convenient, and comfortable local and regional bicycling facilities for people of all types and abilities.

Policy 3.3: 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 3.8. Provide bicyclists with convenient, secure and well-maintained bicycle parking facilities.

- d. **Housing Element.** The Project would meet many housing objectives and policies contained in the Housing Element of the Los Angeles General Plan as follows:

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

Objective 2.5: Promote a more equitable distribution of affordable housing opportunities throughout the City.

Policy 2.5.1: Target housing resources, policies and incentives to include affordable housing in residential development, particularly in mixed use development, Transit Oriented Districts and designated Centers.

Policy 2.5.2: Foster the development of new affordable housing units citywide and within each Community Plan area.

In addition to close to the development of community-serving retail space activating Glenoaks Boulevard, the Project would add 8 residential units to an older commercial corridor and provide additional quality rental housing with a mix of traditional apartments and live-work spaces.

- e. **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.
3. **Charter Findings – City Charter Sections 555, 556, and 558 (General Plan Amendment).** The proposed General Plan Amendment complies with Sections 555, 556, and 558 in that the plan amendment is consistent with numerous goals, policies and objectives of the Citywide General Plan Framework and the Sylmar Community Plan to provide adequate housing for all economic, age and ethnic segments of the community, to provide additional neighborhood-serving commercial uses, and to develop mixed-use projects along major boulevards.

The subject site is currently underutilized with a residential duplex in disrepair with no natural vegetation. The proposed mixed use project will allow start-up businesses to exist within the two live work units, provide six residential units for families on the second floor, and will create a shopping and dining destination that will have a positive effect on Glenoaks Boulevard within the community of Sylmar. Furthermore, the architectural style of the proposed project will capture the design aesthetic of the Sylmar community to ensure that it creates a physical identity that is consistent with the community.

As stated above, the proposed project is in conformance with the goals, policies, and programs of the Sylmar Community Plan and has been designed with high quality materials and will establish public gathering places both internally and externally. The proposed project incorporates natural materials such as wood and stone to enhance conformity with the rural architectural style of the community. The proposed project will build out the right of way along Glenoaks Boulevard. This will include adding a sidewalk and street trees. Parking is provided along the side and rear of the property. Outdoor seating for a future restaurant will be located along Glenoaks Boulevard. The proposed project is two stories in height which will integrate the project into the community fabric. An enhanced setback through the parking lot and driveway is proposed to increase the setback to the residential property to the north. The project meets the design guidelines by providing high quality materials throughout the project design. This includes but is not limited to, natural wood, stone, enhanced landscaping, and public gathering places.

The proposed project will comply with all zoning standards relevant to the C1-1VL-K zone. This includes, but is not limited to, land use, setbacks, open space, building line requirements, and height requirements. The proposed project includes the construction of six residential apartment units, two live work units, and 3,479 square feet of café/retail space. Furthermore, the project will also dedicate three feet of City right of way to complete the buildout of Glenoaks Boulevard along the project frontage. This includes a public sidewalk that does not currently exist along the frontage. The proposed project is not located within a City designated Specific Plan.

The zone change is also consistent with the neighboring and abutting properties that are zoned C1. Abutting properties to the north and west are zoned RA-1-K and are developed with one-story single-family dwellings. Abutting properties to the east are zoned C1-1XL-K-CPIO and are developed with two-story commercial buildings. Properties to the south,

across Glenoaks, are zoned R1-1 and developed with one-story single-family dwellings, as well as a site zoned PF-1XL-CPIO and developed with an LADWP Substation. Adjacent properties to the north include two large sites zoned PF-1VL-K and developed with the Olive Vista Middle School and Sylmar Elementary School, both public schools serving the area. A zone change from to C1-1VL and the construction of 8 residential units and commercial uses in a two-story development would be compatible with the use and size of existing adjacent developments. Therefore, the project will be in good zoning practice by providing a harmonious density and land use activity for the vicinity.

The project is also convenient in location to several major streets, such as Glenoaks Boulevard, and as an infill project will have adequate access to existing City services and infrastructure. There is a necessity for housing in all income levels and housing types, and the project will create more opportunity for rental housing in the vicinity. Further, the project's design will enhance the built environment and create pedestrian-oriented, neighborhood-serving commercial uses.

Therefore, for the reasons stated above, the general plan amendment and zone and height district changes are beneficial in terms of the public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice, while further consisting with the general plan.

Entitlement Findings

- 4. Zone Change Findings. Pursuant to Section 12.32-C of the Municipal Code, and based on these findings, the recommended action is deemed consistent with public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.**

The (T)(Q)C1-1VL-K zone is consistent with the proposed Neighborhood Commercial land use designation, which allows for a corresponding zone of C1. The project is also convenient in location to several major streets, such as Glenoaks Boulevard, and as an infill project will have adequate access to existing City services and infrastructure. There is a necessity for housing in all income levels and housing types, and the project will create more opportunity for rental housing in the vicinity. Further, the project's design will enhance the built environment and create pedestrian-oriented, neighborhood-serving commercial uses.

Abutting properties to the north and west are zoned RA-1-K and are developed with one-story single-family dwellings. Abutting properties to the east are zoned C1-1XL-K-CPIO and are developed with two-story commercial buildings. Properties to the south, across Glenoaks, are zoned R1-1 and developed with one-story single-family dwellings, as well as a site zoned PF-1XL-CPIO and developed with an LADWP Substation. Adjacent properties to the north include two large sites zoned PF-1VL-K and developed with the Olive Vista Middle School and Sylmar Elementary School, both public schools serving the area. A zone change from to C1-1VL and the construction of 8 residential units and commercial uses in a two-story development would be compatible with the use and size of existing adjacent developments. Therefore, the zone change is provided as part of public necessity and convenience and in the general welfare of the neighborhood. Furthermore, such zone change will be in good zoning practice by providing a harmonious density and land use activity for the vicinity.

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 protect the best interests of and to assure a development more compatible with 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 effects of the subject recommended action.

CEQA Findings

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (ENV-2019-6855-MND) was prepared for the proposed project. 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 judgment and analysis. The records upon which this decision is based are with the Valley Project Planning Section of the Planning Department in Room 430, 6262 North Van Nuys Boulevard. I hereby adopt that the Mitigated Negative Declaration, imposed the conditions shown in that document on this approval.