

February 20, 2024

Los Angeles City Council
Attention: PLUM Committee c/o Office of the City Clerk
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, California 90012

RE: VENTURA-CAHUENGA SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT (CF 17-1071-S1)

Dear Honorable Members of the Planning And Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee,

Our offices are coming together to share our collective feedback in anticipation of the Ventura-Cahuenga Specific Plan Amendment being before the PLUM Committee on February 20, 2024. The Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan (Specific Plan) is a land use plan that spans over 17 miles, includes 1,200 acres of land, and regulates over 4,300 individual parcels. The Specific Plan encompasses the communities of Woodland Hills, Tarzana, Encino, Sherman Oaks, Studio City, and Cahuenga Pass. Originally adopted in 1991, it was amended twice, once in 1996, then again in 2001, to ensure Ventura Boulevard its success as the San Fernando Valley's premier commercial corridor.

The Ventura-Cahuenga Specific Plan Amendment was initiated in 2019 in response to a 2017 motion by the City Council (CF 17-1071) to achieve a more modern and streamlined regulatory process for the Plan area. This amendment aims to simplify and reduce the timeframe of the sign approval process, update Project Impact Assessment fees, and create flexibility for allowable expenditures so they can apply to public realm improvements not currently allowed in the Specific Plan such as landscaped medians, sidewalks, street trees, streetlights, crosswalks, and alleys.

The Specific Plan establishes the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Plan Review Board (PRB) under Section 15. These advisory board members are appointed by Councilmembers whose districts are within the Specific Plan and the Mayor. Following the 2021 redistricting process, two of the four Council Districts were no longer within the boundaries of the Specific Plan, and therefore their respective appointees were no longer eligible to serve on the PRB. A year later, the Department of City Planning informed affected PRB members and Council Offices no longer within the Specific Plan area about their removals as a legal necessity based on existing rules to ensure that PRB reviews and actions are not in a state of legal precariousness. Unfortunately, this change was effectuated for some PRB members, but not others, and understandably caused confusion and frustration for community members, as there was uneven representation along the Specific Plan area and since some communities lost their representation altogether.

In order to correct representation issues caused by redistricting, we introduced a motion instructing the Department of City Planning to recommend a sustainable solution and language amendments that center equitable representation based on communities rather than Council Districts, present a systematic tenureship structure, and expand socioeconomic and demographic diversity on the PRB as part of the current amendment process. Proposed amendments and recommendations to achieve this and previously referenced outcomes were released by the Department in the spring and summer of 2023, and were adopted by the City Planning Commission (CPC) at its meeting on October 26, 2023 meeting.

Despite CPC's recommendation for a 7 member PRB, some community members have shared concerns that this number is still inadequate to represent the full scope of interests along Ventura Boulevard. Therefore, we respectfully request that the PLUM Committee consider and adopt a modification to amend the appropriate sub-sections under Section 15 of the Specific Plan regarding the PRB's appointment process and composition to reflect the following change regarding assignments:

- One (1) board member to represent each of the six (6) communities within the Specific Plan area to be appointed by the Councilmember who represents the majority of land within the Specific Plan area of each community.
- One (1) member appointed at large by the Mayor.
- One (1) member appointed at large by each of the Councilmembers of the Districts in which the Specific Plan is located.

If adopted, this would create a nine (9) member PRB to be appointed by the Councilmembers of the Districts in which the Specific Plan is located and the Mayor. We want to ensure that this process concludes and new systems are in place before taking any final action around appointments. We look forward to the Department of City Planning, in coordination with the City Attorney, to prepare and present a final ordinance with the proposed amendments to the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan this year so that communities are no longer left in limbo.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Nithya Raman
Councilmember, 4th Council District
City of Los Angeles



Bob Blumenfield
Councilmember, 3rd Council District
City of Los Angeles