

FINDINGS

(As Amended by the City Planning Commission at its meeting on November 21, 2024)

General Plan/Charter Findings (Charter 556)

1. General Plan.

- a. **General Plan Land Use Designation.** The subject property is located within the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan area, which was updated by the City Council on September 4, 1993 and designates the subject property for General Commercial land uses corresponding to the C1.5, C2, C4, and RAS3 Zones. The site has an underlying zone of MR2-1 and P-1. The zone change from MR2-1 and P-1 to C2 is warranted as the site's zoning does not correspond to the range of zones within the General Commercial land use designation. The zone change to C2 would allow the site to be consistent with the current land use designation. The proposed self-storage is a commercial use that is consistent with development permitted by conditional use in the proposed (T)(Q)C2-1 Zone. Therefore, the project is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan as reflected in the adopted Framework Element and Community Plan.

- b. **Land Use Element.**

The proposed project complies with applicable provisions of the Los Angeles Municipal Code and the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan. There are twelve elements of the General Plan. Each of these elements establishes policies 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 Code requirements of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

The Land Use Element of the City's General Plan is divided into 35 Community Plans. The subject property is located within the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan, which designates the site for General Commercial land uses corresponding to the CR, C1.5, C2, C4, and RAS3 Zones.

Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan. The Community Plan text includes the following relevant land use objective:

Objective 4: To promote economic well-being and public convenience through: a) Allocating and distributing commercial lands for retail, service, and other facilities in quantities and patterns based on Los Angeles City Planning Department accepted planning principles and standards.

The zone changes will promote a strong and competitive commercial sector by allowing for the development of a presently vacant site. The new development and improvements to the public right of way will substantially upgrade the aesthetic and functional qualities of the site. The project will result in the addition of a 108,248 square-foot self-storage facility consisting of four buildings. The project will add a neighborhood serving use through the creation of a public convenience through the provision of a new self-storage option. The project will also widen the sidewalks along the street frontage to create a more pedestrian friendly area. The improvements will substantially upgrade the aesthetic and

functional qualities of the site and will promote economic well-being for the surrounding businesses and support public convenience in the community.

- c. The **Framework Element** for the General Plan 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 Framework Element includes the following goals, objectives and policies relevant to the instant request:

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 livable 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 3.1.1: Identify areas on the Long-Range Land Use Diagram and in the community plan sufficient for the development of a diversity of uses that serve the needs of existing and future residents (housing, employment, retail, entertainment, cultural/institutional, educational, health services, recreation, and similar uses), provide job opportunities, and support visitors and tourism.

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.

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 or potential public transit corridors and stations.

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.

Policy 3.4.1: Conserve existing stable residential neighborhoods and lower-intensity commercial districts and encourage the majority of new commercial and mixed-use (integrated commercial and residential) development to be located (a) in a network of neighborhood districts, community, regional, and downtown centers, (b) in proximity to rail and bus transit stations and corridors, and (c) along the City's major boulevards, referred to as districts, centers, and mixed-use boulevards, in accordance with the Framework Long-Range Land Use Diagram.

The project will contribute toward the City's long-term fiscal and economic viability by redeveloping a presently vacant site with a new self-storage use. Removal of the existing MR2-1 and P-1 Zone will allow the proposed project to be built and will require a street dedication and sidewalk widening and improvements thereby enhancing pedestrian safety and comfort along De Soto Avenue.

Goal 3K: Transit stations to function as a primary focal point of the City's development.

Objective 3.15: Focus mixed commercial/residential uses, neighborhood – oriented retail, employment opportunities, and civic and quasi-public uses around urban transit stations, while protecting and preserving surrounding low-density neighborhoods from the encroachment of incompatible land uses.

Policy 3.15.5: Provide for the development of public streetscape improvements, where appropriate.

The project will maintain the character of the existing commercial district, while improving a presently underutilized portion of De Soto Avenue. Surrounding properties are generally developed with industrial warehouses, mini-shopping centers and another self-storage facility. The project adheres to floor area and height limitations of the requested C2 zone. The proposed project is located within the boundaries of a busy intersection that is heavily used by Metro's buses (Metro 244 and Metro 166). The project is also 0.5 miles away from the Metro G Line Nordhoff station that provides another alternative for patrons to access the proposed project through transit. The new 108,248 square-foot self-storage development will be easily accessible, add updated landscaping, improved sidewalks, and will maintain the general character of the existing commercial district along De Soto Avenue.

Goal 5A: A livable city for existing and future residents and one that is attractive to future investment. A City of interconnected, diverse neighborhoods that builds on the strengths of these neighborhoods and function at both the neighborhood and citywide scale.

Objective 5.5: Enhance the livability of all neighborhoods by upgrading the quality of development and improving the quality of the public realm.

Policy 5.5.1: Plant and/or facilitate the planting of street trees, which provide shade and give scale to residential and commercial streets in all neighborhoods in the City.

The Project is conditioned to provide nine (9) street trees, to the satisfaction of the Urban Forestry of the Bureau of Sanitation, enhancing the quality of the public realm.

- d. **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. De Soto Avenue is a designated Boulevard II under Mobility Plan 2035, dedicated to a right-of-way width of 105 feet and improved with asphalt roadway, concrete curb, gutters, and a sidewalk. The half right-of-way includes 40-foot roadway, and 10-foot sidewalk.

The Bureau of Engineering (BOE) is requiring a 2-foot future easement and 3-foot dedication along the property frontage to complete a 15-foot wide Boulevard II sidewalk

standard in accordance with Boulevard II standards of Mobility Plan 2035. Conditions for improvements have been imposed under the (T) Tentative Classification conditions in accordance with Boulevard II standards of Mobility Plan 2035.

The dedication and improvement requirement would continue to advance Mobility 2035's policies in recognizing walking as a component of every trip to ensure high-quality pedestrian access. New street trees will be planted along the project's street frontage and a new direct pedestrian path of travel has been designated from the sidewalk to the main entrance to the self-storage building and the convenience store. The project as designed and conditioned will meet the following goals and objectives of Mobility Plan 2035:

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 3.1: Recognize all modes of travel, including pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicular modes – including goods movement – as integral components of the City's transportation system.

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.

The proposed project will provide a 15-foot sidewalk along De Soto Avenue to create a quality, safe and comfortable walking environment. The new sidewalk facilities will improve pedestrian walkability along De Soto Avenue. The self-storage facility will orient the front entrance to be in line with a direct pedestrian path of travel from the sidewalk. The project will take vehicular access from two driveways on De Soto Avenue and two additional access driveways from the rear alley. The proposed project is located in a major employment center and will be located proximate to neighborhood destinations including places of employment, restaurants, and transit service. The project is located within 0.5 miles of the Metro G Line Nordhoff station, which offers access to local and regional destinations including Chatsworth, Warner Center, Van Nuys, and North Hollywood. The project is also within 0.5 miles of the Metro G Line bike path, which mostly runs parallel with the busway. To accommodate bicycle travel, the project will provide convenient and secure bicycle parking on-site as it is code required.

Zone Change Findings; "T", "Q" Classification Findings

2. **Pursuant to Section 12.32-F of the Municipal Code, the zone change is in conformance with the public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.**
 - a. **Public Necessity:** Approval of the Zone Change removes the existing zoning and allows the site to be developed consistent with the goals and objectives of the General Plan Framework Element and the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan as outlined above. The project site is in the Los Angeles State Enterprise Zone and are unimproved vacant lots. The project will construct four new buildings for a total 108,833 square-foot self-storage facility. The project will establish a new viable commercial service to the site

and expand the availability and location of self-storage services for the Chatsworth community. Thus, the proposed project optimizes the use of the currently vacant property, introduces new development and new public improvements and will generate increased tax revenues from an existing vacant commercial use, thus providing a public necessity.

- b. Convenience: The project will redevelop a vacant and restricted industrially zoned property that is located within close proximity to a major employment center (Chatsworth-Northridge Industrial Core) and residential neighborhoods. Public convenience will be served by the addition of viable commercial development at the site that will add an additional needed commercial use.
- c. General Welfare: Granting the Zone Change to the (T)(Q)C2-1 Zone allows for the redevelopment of an underutilized and vacant site. The development of a self-storage would create a safer site for the community rather than a lot that currently sits vacant. The project will enhance the urban environment by providing a use that is within the General Commercial land use designation and by improving public facilities surrounding the site to be in line with Mobility Plan 2035 street standards and ADA requirements. Given the project's proximity to existing job centers and transit services, the project will provide a desirable commercial use to serve the Chatsworth community, thereby advancing the general welfare.
- d. Good Zoning Practices: The project site is presently zoned MR2-1 and P-1 and is located within the General Commercial land use designation, which includes the following corresponding zones C1.5, C2, C4, and RAS3. The MR2 and P Zones are not corresponding zones of the General Commercial land use designation. Approval of the Zone Change to C2-1 will make the site's zoning consistent with the land use designation, in keeping with good zoning practice. The Zone Change will also accommodate the proposed self-storage and is consistent with the type of development encouraged by the General Plan Framework Element and the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan.
- e. "T" and "Q" Classification Findings. Pursuant to LAMC Sections 12.32-G.1 and G.2, the current action, as recommended, has been made contingent upon compliance with new "T" and "Q" conditions of approval, and project specific conditions of approval imposed herein. Such limitations are necessary to ensure the identified dedications, 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 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.

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.

Conditional Use Findings

- 3. 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 project will enhance the built environment by redevelopment a presently underutilized and vacant site with a 108,248 square-foot self-storage facility with four new buildings. The

project would provide a neighborhood serving commercial use within a major industrial-commercial jobs center in the West Valley. The newly proposed four self-storage buildings will enhance the built environment with well-designed commercial buildings, public right of way improvements, new landscaping including street trees and on-site trees. The proposed buildings display a clean design of contemporary elements and materials to improve the aesthetic appearance along De Soto Avenue. The self-storage facility will include a ground floor customer service center and enhanced landscaping along the ground floor that will enhance the appearance of De Soto Avenue.

4. 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 neighborhood, or the public health, welfare, and safety.

The 1.8 net acre subject property consists of two vacant lots and has approximately 290 feet of frontage along De Soto Avenue and rear frontage along an alley. The previous use was an LA Fitness gymnasium which was demolished.

With the concurrent Zone Change request, the project will be located on a site zoned C2-1, which permits commercial uses and conditionally allows self-storage use. The C2-1 zone permits a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.5 to 1 and the project proposes an FAR of 1.38:1 and thus is in compliance with the C2-1 Zone. The proposed zone C2-1 does not have a height limit and thus the proposed four story, 51-feet 3-inches in height building complies with the requested zone. The overall project complies with the overall floor area and height limitations of the zone and is thus compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Surrounding uses include a mix of industrial and commercial uses. The northern adjoining property is zoned (Q)C2-1 and is developed with a mix of commercial retail/restaurant uses. The eastern adjoining properties (across De Soto Avenue) are zoned MR2-1 and P-1 and are developed with a self-storage facility, convenient store and gas station (located at 9110 North De Soto Avenue) and other industrial uses. The southern adjoining property is developed with a mini-shopping center with various fast food and neighborhood serving uses. Therefore, the project's location, operations and other significant features will be compatible with and will not adversely affect or further degrade adjacent properties, the surrounding neighborhood, or the public health, welfare and safety.

5. The project substantially conforms with the purpose, intent and provisions of the General Plan, the applicable community plan, and any applicable specific plan

The project site is comprised of two interior lots totaling 78,255 square-feet. The Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan designates the site as General Commercial with corresponding zones of CR, C1.5, C2, C4, RAS3 and Height District No. 1. The Property is currently zoned MR2-1 and P-1 and is inconsistent with the land use designation. The property is not located within a specific plan and is not located within an interim control ordinance area. The applicant has requested a Zone Change of the project site from MR2-1 and P-1 to C2-1 and a conditional use for self-storage in the requested C2-1 Zone. The Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan contains the following text:

Objective 4: To promote economic well-being and public convenience through: a) Allocating and distributing commercial lands for retail, service, and other facilities in quantities and patterns based on Los Angeles City Planning Department accepted planning principles and standards.

The project will develop the site with a viable commercial enterprise in an area designated and zoned for such uses. The project will include features such as electric vehicle charging

stations and solar panels that are intended to help the site reduce its environmental footprint. EV chargers onsite will be provided in conformance with the code and will support the adoption of low and zero emission transportation fuel sources by the project's visitors. Solar panels will be provided in conformance with the code and will support the site's EV chargers and other site electrical uses to help reduce the site's dependence on fossil fuels and carbon generating public utility electrical power. Taken together, these conditions provide for the public welfare and public necessity by reducing the level of pollution or greenhouse gas emissions to the benefit of the neighborhood and City in response to General Plan Health and Wellness Element Policies 5.1 (reduce air pollution), 5.7 (reduce greenhouse gas emissions); Air Quality Element Policy 4.2.3 (ensuring new development is compatible with alternative fuel vehicles), 5.1.2 (shift to non-polluting sources of energy in buildings and operations); Mobility Element Policy 4.1 (expand access to transportation choices) and 5.4 (encourage adoption of low emission fuel sources, new mobility technology and supporting infrastructure). The solar and EV conditions are also good zoning practice because they provide a convenient service amenity to the visitors who use electric vehicles and utilize electricity on site for other functions. As such, the project substantially conforms with the purpose, intent, and provisions of the General Plan.

Site Plan Review Findings

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

The project site is comprised of two interior lots located at 9129, 9143, and 9145 North De Soto Avenue. The Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan designates the site for General Commercial land uses with corresponding zones of C1.5, C2, C4, RAS3, and Height District No. 1. The property is not located within a specific plan and is not located within an interim control ordinance area. The applicant has requested a zone change of the project site from MR2-1 and P-1 to C2-1. The Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan contains the following objectives.

Objective 4: To promote economic well-being and public convenience through: a) Allocating and disturbing commercial lands for retail, service, and other facilities in quantities and patterns based on Los Angeles City Planning Department accepted planning principles and standards;

Objective 10: To improve vehicular circulation patterns within the Community and encourage specific improvements to key streets and intersections to improve the flow of traffic and accommodate future demand;

The project is consistent with the objectives of the Community Plan in that it utilizes land designated for commercial uses for a new commercial use (self-storage). The proposed self-storage use will help to serve the surrounding neighborhood and the Chatsworth community. The commercial development will create a pedestrian friendly environment by widening the public sidewalk, and by separating vehicular and pedestrian access points to the site. The project will improve and provide nine (9) street trees and provide appropriate drought tolerate landscaping, including providing landscaped buffer around the site's street and alley frontages. As proposed, the project will be in substantial conformance with the provisions of the General Plan and the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan. The project is not located within a Specific Plan.

7. 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 neighboring properties.

Compatibility with Existing and Future Development

The proposed structures are consistent with the visual character of the area. Surrounding uses include a mix of industrial and commercial uses. The northern adjoining property is zoned (Q)C2-1 and P-1 and is developed with commercial uses. The eastern properties (across De Soto Avenue) are zoned MR2-1, (T)(Q)C2-1 and P-1 and are developed with industrial and commercial uses. The southern adjoining properties are zoned C2-1 and are developed with a mini-shopping center. To the west of the project site, properties are zoned MR2-1 and P-1 and are developed with industrial uses. The project complies with the floor area and height limitations of the proposed C2-1 zone regulations that regulate developmental form in the area. While the self-storage use is taller than most of the existing buildings, it is sufficiently setback and includes articulation and landscaping to minimize the appearance of bulk and massing. As such, the new structures will be similar in scale to existing buildings in the surrounding area.

Arrangement of Buildings (Height, Bulk, Setbacks)

Height

The current MR2-1 Zone and Height District allows for a maximum building height of 45 feet. The requested C2 zone with Height District 1 allows for unlimited building height. A building height of 51-feet 3-inches is proposed for the four-story building and a height of 19-feet 4-inches is proposed for the three one-story buildings. There is one other four story self-storage site across De Soto Avenue from the subject site.

Bulk

The project site is comprised of two vacant lots with a total lot area of 78,255 square feet. The existing MR2-1 and P-1 Zones as well as the proposed C2-1 Zone limit FAR at the site to 1.5 to 1. The project proposes 108,248 square feet of floor area with an FAR of 1.38:1. Therefore, the proposed project complies with the floor area requirements of the proposed C2 zone and will be compatible with the other commercial and industrial development in the area.

Setbacks

No setbacks are required for non-residential development within the requested C2 Zone. However, the project provides voluntary setbacks along all property lines to allow space for landscaping. The project's one-story buildings are set back five-feet and five inches from De Soto Avenue. The project's proposed four-story building has a variable front yard setback from De Soto Avenue between 12-feet 9-inches and 16-feet. Additionally, the project provides a northern side yard of two-feet and seven-inches, a southern side yard of five-feet and four-inches and a variable rear yard of three feet and two-inches to 21 feet and four-inches, which all comply with the C2 Zone yard requirements.

The location of the buildings has been designed to be compatible with adjacent uses. While the four-story proposed building is taller than existing one-story buildings to the north and south, it is compatible with the adjacent uses as it is setback from De Soto Avenue and includes articulation and landscaping to minimize the appearance of bulk and massing. The proposed project also provides a landscape buffer along the rear alley. Therefore, the proposed height, bulk and setbacks of the development are compliant with the requested C2-1 Zone and are compatible with nearby structures and similar to the existing self-storage use across the street from the site.

Parking, Loading Areas, Trash Collection

The project will include a total of 21 vehicle parking spaces (utilizing AB 2097 for reduced parking), eight bicycle parking spaces, and a dedicated trash enclosure area. Loading and unloading will take place throughout the site, adjacent to the individual drive-up storage units, and on-site trash enclosure area and at the available parking spaces adjacent to the elevator lobby near the center of the parking lot. The project has been conditioned to provide a code-compliant loading zone adjacent to the drive-up storage units abutting the alley. The project will also include on-site trash collection for both refuse and recyclable materials, in conformance with the L.A.M.C. The trash enclosure is located on the southwest side of the property.

Landscaping

Currently the site does not have any trees or landscaping. The proposed project will provide 5,940 square feet of landscaping including 45 trees, including nine (9) street trees along De Soto Avenue (subject to the requirements of the Urban Forestry Division). Landscaping will be provided along the perimeter of the site which include the street frontages, and rear alley.

Lighting

The proposed project's lighting scheme will be compatible with surrounding development. Exterior lighting will illuminate on-site facilities in order to provide sufficient lighting for circulation and security, while minimizing impacts on adjacent properties. Ground level lighting for the commercial center will activate and enhance the pedestrian environment at night.

The project has been conditioned, herein, to ensure that the proposed arrangement of buildings, off-street parking facilities, and other such pertinent improvements will be compatible with existing and future development on neighboring properties.

8. That any residential project provides recreational and service amenities in order to improve habitability for the residents and minimize impacts on neighboring properties.

The proposed project involves the development of a self-storage facility. No residential uses are proposed and thus the proposed project is not subject to the City's open space requirements pursuant to LAMC Section 12.21-G,2. However, the project has been conditioned so that all open areas not used for buildings, driveways, and parking areas be attractively landscaped, include an automatic irrigation system, and maintained in accordance with a landscape plan prepared by a licensed landscape architect or licensed architect.

Environmental Findings

9. On July 25, 2024, a Mitigated Negative Declaration (ENV-2023-6313-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 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. Pursuant to Assembly Bill 52, the City completed the tribal consultation process in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. The records upon which this

decision is based are with the Environmental Review Section of the Department of City Planning in Room 763, 200 North Spring Street.

- 10. Flood Insurance.** The National Flood Insurance Program rate maps, which are a part of the Flood Hazard Management Specific Plan adopted by the City Council by Ordinance No. 172,081, have been reviewed and it has been determined that this project is located in Zone C, areas of minimal flooding.