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December 23, 2020

The Honorable City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, California 90012

Attention: PLUM Committee

Dear Honorable Members:

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROJECT EXEMPTION REQUEST FOR PROPOSED
MIRAMAR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

CASE NO.: ENV-2020-4502-SCPE; DIR-2020-4501-SPR-TOC-PHP-VHCA

PROJECT NAME: Menlo Ave

PROJECT APPLICANT: Michael Soroichinsky, Menlo Investor LLC

PROJECT LOCATION/ADDRESS: 1216-1224 South Menlo Avenue

COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA: Wilshire

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 1 – Cedillo

On July 30, 2020, the applicant submitted a request for the City to consider whether the project is exempt under Public Resources Code ("PRC") Section 21155.1 as a Sustainable Communities Project. The Sustainable Communities Project Exemption was adopted into State Law as part of Senate Bill 375 (2008), the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act. The request and supplemental materials are enclosed herein.

The proposed project involves the demolition of the existing classrooms at the rear of 1216 Menlo Avenue, the eight (8) unit multifamily residential building and surface parking lot, and the five (5) nonprotected on-site trees, and for the construction, use and maintenance of a new six-story, 74 foot 3 inch, 100-percent affordable housing multifamily residential structure with 128 dwelling units, 127 of which are restricted affordable units and one (1) market-rate manager's unit. The proposed project will repurpose the existing three-story single family residential structure at 1216 Menlo Avenue for use as administrative and social services offices, as well as for common use areas by the residents. The new six-story multifamily residential structure and the repurposed three-story single family residential structure will contain 114,450 square feet of Floor Area with a Floor Area Ratio of 3.54:1. The sixth floor of the new residential building will be stepped back from Menlo Avenue by 15 feet. The proposed unit mix is comprised of 24 studio units, 39 one-bedroom units, 33 two-bedroom units, and 32 three-bedroom units. The project is eligible for a one (1) increase in Tier from 3 to 4 for consisting of 100-percent on-site restricted affordable units, exclusive of a manager's unit, per Section IV.9 of the TOC Guidelines. As a Tier 4 TOC, 100-

percent affordable priority housing project, no automobile parking is required; however, the project is providing three (3) automobile parking spaces. The project is providing 90 long term bicycle parking stalls located in the new six-story building and nine (9) short term bicycle parking spaces located along the parkway along the front of the property. The project is providing a minimum of 12,026 square feet of usable open space that includes a community room, courtyard, roof decks, and private balconies. The project will retain the existing (8) non-protected street trees and will provide an additional 32 new trees on-site.

It is hereby requested that the City Council consider and determine if the proposed project qualifies for a Sustainable Communities Project Exemption ("SCPE"), pursuant to Public Resources Code ("PRC") Section 21155.1.

PRC Section 21155.1 provides that projects are statutorily exempt from CEQA if a hearing is held by the City Council and the City Council finds, based on the whole of the administrative record, that the project qualifies as a transit priority project as defined by PRC Section 21155(b), and further meets all of the criteria set forth in PRC Section 21155.1 (a) and (b) and one of the criteria of subdivision (c). If the City Council finds, after conducting a public hearing, all of the above, then the project is declared a Sustainable Communities Project and shall be exempt from CEQA.

The Department of City Planning has reviewed the SCPE that was prepared for the proposed project and is recommending that the City Council determine that the project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to PRC Section 21155.1.

Actions for the City Council:

The City of Los Angeles finds, upon a review of the entire administrative record, including the Environmental Case No. ENV-2020-3753-SCPE, and all comments received, that:

1. The Proposed Project qualifies as a transit priority project pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21155(b), which by definition means that the proposed Project is consistent with the general use designations, density, building intensity, and applicable policies specified for the project area in the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) prepared by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21155(a); and contains more than 50 percent residential; provides a minimum net density greater than 20 units an acre; and is within one-half mile of a major transit stop or high-quality transit corridor included in a regional transportation plan per PRC Section 21155(b); and
2. Finds that all criteria in PRC Section 21155.1(a) and (b) are met, including environmental criteria, land use criteria, and at least one criteria (affordable housing) in PRC Section 21155.1(c)

Therefore, the City of Los Angeles finds that the proposed project qualifies as a transit priority project that is declared to be a Sustainable Communities Project and is therefore exempt from CEQA, in accordance with PRC Section 21155.1.

The City recommends that City Council:

DETERMINE that based on the whole of the administrative record, the Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code, Section 21155.1; FIND the Project is a transit priority project pursuant to PRC Section 21155; FIND the Project is a sustainable communities project that meets all of the requirements of subdivisions (a) and (b) and one of the requirements of subdivision (c) of PRC Section 21155.1.

The attached documentation fully discusses the project's eligibility for the exemption.

Sincerely,

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
Director of Planning

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Harris', is written over the printed name and title.

James Harris
City Planning Associate

VPB:JC:DK:GG:JH

Enclosures

Sustainable Communities Project CEQA Exemption and Appendices