

Council File No. 18-1242
CPC-2017-712-GPA-VZC-HD-VCU-SPR

Statement of Office of Council Member Gil Cedillo, First District:

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, my office strongly supported the development of new hotels, including the expansion of a hotel incentive zone into the Westlake community, west of the Convention Center. The global pandemic has changed the world.

It has induced the worst recession since the Great Depression and adversely impacted Southern California's hospitality sector. To use Downtown Los Angeles as an example, a submarket of approximately 8,500 hotel rooms, a significant percentage of the hotels have suspended operations following the pandemic. The Mayor's emergency order has cancelled conferences normally scheduled at the Los Angeles Convention Center. The pandemic has drastically reduced air travel. The sports and entertainment industry has been decimated.

The City's land-use priorities should be responsive to these unprecedented changes. Indeed, the City Council has the authority to exercise discretion on land-use matters. The Council Member's position is that there is no justification for a hotel use at this site. In contrast, demand for affordable housing continues unabated, exacerbated by the pandemic, and the need to produce housing is compelling.

The Council Member agrees with the key point raised in the appeal filed by UNITE HERE Local 11 – that without a housing component, the proposed Project is inconsistent with the General, Community and Redevelopment Plans. The proposed Project does nothing to advance and conflicts with the affordable housing goals and policies. Hence, a General Plan Amendment should be not granted.

Our office does not question the adequacy of the environmental clearance, which is based on a proposed hotel use. We fundamentally question the justification for the use. Hence, our office would recommend the denial of the appeal filed by "Supporters Alliance for Environmental Responsibility", which is solely a CEQA challenge; while granting in part and denying in part, the appeal filed by UNITE HERE Local 11, which includes the fundamental land-use concern which our office shares – that the proposed Project, without a housing component, conflicts with the General & Redevelopment Plans.

Our office would urge the Committee to:

- Not adopt the General Plan Amendment, Zone Change and Height District Change
- Grant in part, deny in part the appeal filed by Elle Farmer, UNITE HERE Local 11
- Deny the appeal filed by Supporters Alliance for Environmental Responsibility
- Instruct the Department of City Planning to prepare the appropriate findings