

FINDINGS

General Plan/Charter Findings

1. General Plan Land Use Designation.

The subject property is located within the Mission Hills – Panorama City – North Hills Community Plan area which was updated by the City Council on June 9, 1999 and designates the subject property for Neighborhood Office Commercial land uses corresponding to the C1, C1.5, C2, C4, RAS3, RAS4, and P Zones. The site is currently zoned [Q]C2-1VL, [T][Q]C2-1VL, [T][Q]C2-1, P-1VL. The southwest corner of the subject property zoned [Q]C2-1VL is the result of Ordinance No. 164,750, and has a permanent “Q” Qualified Condition that prohibits multi-family residential development, including hotels and motels, that exceed the density permitted in the RD1.5 Zone. The [Q]C2-1VL, [T][Q]C2-1, and P-1VL zoned portions of the property, however, will not be rezoned nor will the on-site buildings be altered as a result of the proposed project. The portion of the project site zoned [T][Q]C2-1VL, established by Ordinance Number 176,116 (Case No. APCNV-2003-4385-ZC-CU) contains permanent “Q” Qualified Conditions requiring that proposed development conform to all provisions of the C2 Zone, that the project conform to all provisions of Commercial Corner Development per LAMC Section 12.22. A.23, that the total building area not exceed 10,800 square feet, that the height of all buildings and structures not exceed 24 feet, and that a minimum of 186 parking spaces be provided. Additionally, the permanent “Q” Conditions include specific design-related requirements for proposed development.

The applicant is requesting to rezone the [T][Q]C2-1VL zoned portion of the subject property to (T)(Q)C2-1VL effectively removing the site’s project specific permanent “Q” Qualified Conditions in order to permit the construction, use, and maintenance of a new 15,468 square-foot, two-story commercial retail and office building. The northeast portion of the site zoned [T][Q]C2-1 is currently improved with a surface parking lot that will undergo restriping and will have new landscaping as a result of the proposed project.

The proposed (T)(Q)C2-1VL Zone is a corresponding zone for the Neighborhood Office Commercial land use designation in accordance with the Mission Hills – Panorama City – North Hills Community Plan. The proposed commercial retail and office building is a use that is permitted in the proposed (T)(Q)C2-1VL Zone. The project will expand employment opportunities within the Mission Hills – Panorama City – North Hills Community Plan area and generate new tax revenue for the City. Therefore, the project is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan as reflected in the adopted Community Plan.

2. General Plan Text.

- a. The **Framework Element** of the General Plan (Framework Element) 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 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 liveable 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 3.1.4: Accommodate new development in accordance with land use and density provisions of the General Plan Framework Long-Range Land Use Diagram and Table 3-1.

Policy 3.1.5: Identify areas on the Long-Range Land Use Diagram and in the community plans 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.

The proposed Zone Change from [T][Q]C2-1VL to (T)(Q)C2-1VL will allow for the redevelopment of a surface parking lot with a new two-story commercial retail and office building that is well-designed and compatible with the scale and character of this commercial corridor and surrounding residential development. The project's pedestrian-oriented design and new landscaping will further enhance the built environment and in particular, the streetscape of Terra Bella Street. The project also supports the community by providing new employment opportunities for the local region. Therefore, the Zone Change is consistent with the Distribution of Land Use goals, objectives and policies of the General Plan Framework Element.

- b. **Mission Hills – Panorama City – North Hills Community Plan.** The Community Plan text includes the following relevant land use Goal, Objectives, and Policies:

GOAL: A STRONG AND COMPETITIVE COMMERCIAL SECTOR WHICH BEST SERVES THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY THROUGH MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY AND ACCESSIBILITY WHILE PRESERVING THE UNIQUE COMMERCIAL AND CULTURAL CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY.

Objective 2-1: To conserve, strengthen, and encourage investment in all commercial districts.

Policy 2-1.1: New commercial uses shall be located in existing established commercial areas or existing shopping centers.

Policy 2-1.2: Require that projects be designed and developed to achieve a high level of quality, distinctive character, and compatibility with existing uses and development.

Objective 2-2: To enhance the identity of distinctive commercial districts and to identify pedestrian oriented districts (PODs).

Policy 2-2.1: New development needs to add to and enhance the existing pedestrian street activity.

Policy 2-2.2: Ensure that commercial infill projects achieve harmony in design with the best of existing development.

Objective 2-3: To enhance the appearance of commercial districts.

Policy 2-3.1: Require that any proposed development be designed to enhance and be compatible with adjacent development.

Policy 2-3.2: Preserve community character, scale, and architectural diversity.

Policy 2-3.3: Improve safety and aesthetics of parking areas in commercial areas.

Policy 2-3.4: Landscaped corridors should be created and enhanced through the planting of street trees along segments with no setbacks and through median plantings.

Objective 2-4: To maintain and increase the commercial employment base for community residents whenever possible.

Policy 2-4.1: Protect commercial plan designations so that commercial development is encouraged.

The proposed Zone Change from [T][Q]C2-1VL to (T)(Q)C2-1VL will allow for the development of new commercial building on the project site. The project would replace a portion of an existing surface parking lot with a new commercial retail and office building.

The project's proposed commercial retail and office uses are uses permitted by the C2 Zone, as well as the site's underlying Neighborhood Office Commercial land use designation. Surrounding properties are developed with similar scale buildings and uses, including retail stores, offices, and professional services. The proposed building will be two stories with a maximum height of 34 feet, ensuring a new commercial development that maintains appropriate scale and character with the surrounding neighborhood. In addition, the project will adhere to the standard hours of operation for Commercial Corner Development requirements under the Los Angeles Municipal Code, which will reduce potential impacts to surrounding residential uses relating to noise or loitering.

Furthermore, the project's proposed ground floor design, appropriate landscaping, and public-facing entrances, promote a more lively and pedestrian-oriented commercial environment. The project's design and proposed uses will enhance the built environment, increase commercial activity, and support job growth within the region. Thus, the proposed Zone Change is consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Mission Hills – Panorama City – North Hills Community Plan.

- c. The **Mobility Element** of the General Plan (Mobility Plan 2035) is likely to be affected by the recommended action herein. Van Nuys Boulevard, a designated Boulevard II, is dedicated to a right-of-way width of 100 feet and improved with asphalt roadway, concrete curb, gutter, and sidewalk. As part of the (T) Tentative Classification conditions incorporated herein, a 5-foot dedication along the property frontage is required to complete a 55-foot half right-of-way in accordance with Boulevard II of Mobility Plan 2035 as well as a 20-foot radius property line return at the intersection with Nordhoff Street. Consequently, the project will result in the reconstruction of the existing sidewalk to a full-width concrete sidewalk.

Nordhoff Street, a designated Boulevard II, is dedicated to a right-of-way width of 100 feet and improved with asphalt roadway, concrete curb, gutter, and sidewalk. As part of the (T) Tentative Classification conditions incorporated herein, a 5-foot dedication along the property frontage is required to complete a 55-foot half right-of-way in accordance with Boulevard II of Mobility Plan 2035 as well as a 20-foot radius property line return at the intersection with Terra Bella Street. Consequently, the project will result in the reconstruction of the existing sidewalk to a full-width concrete sidewalk.

Terra Bella Street, a designated Local Street – Standard, is dedicated to a right-of-way width of 60 feet and improved with asphalt roadway, concrete curb, and sidewalk. No dedication is required along Terra Bella Street, however as part of the (T) Tentative Classification conditions incorporated herein, the project will result in the reconstruction of the existing sidewalk to a full-width concrete sidewalk along the property line facing Terra Bella Street.

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

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 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 3.5: Support “first-mile, last-mile solutions” such as multi-modal transportation services, organizations, and activities in the areas around transit stations and major bus stops (transit stops) to maximize multi-modal connectivity and access for transit riders.

The project site is within proximity to Metro Local Lines 233, 744, and 166, enabling future employees and customers to access the new businesses via public transit, thereby reducing vehicle miles traveled for the region. In addition, the new development will provide 16 new bicycle parking stalls further supporting the Mobility Element’s policy of improving and expanding “first-mile, last-mile solutions” in order to maximize multi-modal connectivity and access for transit riders.

Lastly, the project will maintain common access driveways at the southwest corner of the site along Van Nuys Boulevard, and at the northeast corner along Terra Bella Street. The project will reconfigure the third existing common access driveway along the southwest end of the property along Terra Bella Street by closing off the section and shifting the access point northeast via curb cut. The project will not increase the number curb cuts and driveways which will further reduce the development’s impact on circulation in the surrounding area, including the performance and reliability of transit services and to avoid conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists.

- d. 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.

Zone Change and “T”/“Q” Classification Findings

1. **Pursuant to Section 12.32 of the Municipal Code, the zone change and classifications are necessary because:**
 - a. Public Necessity: Approval of the Zone Change to (T)(Q)C2-1VL will allow for the construction, use, and maintenance of a new two-story, 15,468 square-foot commercial retail and office building. The new commercial development will enhance the built environment and provide new employment opportunities for the community while generating sales tax revenue for the City. Furthermore, the proposed development is located at a site that is currently improved with three commercial buildings. The proposed commercial retail and offices uses will compliment and be compatible with the site’s existing commercial uses. Thus, the proposed project will contribute to the public necessity of providing new compatible and viable commercial uses that will generate jobs for the region and tax revenue for the City.
 - b. Convenience: The project site is located in an urbanized area of the Mission Hills/Panorama City/North Hills community that has a wide variety of residential, commercial, and public uses and extensive infrastructure. Approval of the Zone Change in conjunction with proposed project, will allow for the redevelopment of an underutilized and restricted commercially zoned property that has frontage along two major commercial thoroughfares: Van Nuys Boulevard and Nordhoff Street. In addition, the project site is within proximity to Metro Local Lines 233, 744, and 166, enabling future employees and

customers to access the new businesses via public transit, thereby reducing vehicle miles traveled in the region. The project will add new viable commercial services that are compatible with existing commercial and residential uses, and beneficial to the community.

- c. General Welfare: Approval of the Zone Change will allow for the redevelopment of an underutilized site with a modern commercial development that will revitalize a long-established commercial corridor and provide new commercial services for the neighborhood and community as a whole. The project also provides a valuable service of expanding employment opportunities in the Mission Hills/Panorama City/North Hills communities, while generating new tax revenue for the City.
- d. Good Zoning Practice: The proposed Zone Change to (T)(Q)C2-1VL is consistent with the underlying Neighborhood Office Commercial land use designation by the Mission Hills – Panorama City – North Hills Community Plan. The proposed Zone Change would effectively remove permanent “Q” Qualified Conditions as the part of the subject property’s existing [T][Q]C2-1VL zoning that impose site-specific limitations, that will allow for the redevelopment of an underutilized site with a new two-story commercial retail and office building including public improvements to the sidewalks and streets fronting the property. The proposed development is consistent and compatible with the uses, scale, and character of surrounding properties. The project’s design and proposed uses will enhance the built environment, increase commercial activity, and support job growth within the region.
- e. “T” and “Q” Classification Findings: Per Section 12.32-G,1 and 2 of the Municipal Code, the current action, as recommended, has been made contingent upon compliance with new “T” and “Q” conditions of approval. Such limitations are necessary to ensure the identified dedications, improvements, and actions are undertaken to meet the public’s needs, convenience, and general welfare served by the required actions. The conditions that limit the scale, design and scope of future development on the site are also necessary to protect the best interests of and to assure a development more compatible with surrounding properties and the overall pattern of the commercial and residential development in the community, to secure an appropriate development in harmony with the General Plan as discussed in Findings Section 1, and to prevent or alleviate the potential adverse environmental effect of adding additional dwelling units to the established neighborhood.

Environmental Findings

1. On October 8, 2020, a Mitigated Negative Declaration (ENV-2020-3303-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. The records upon which this decision is based are with the Environmental Review Section of the Department of City Planning in Room 750, 200 North Spring Street.

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.