

FINDINGS

General Plan/Charter

1. **General Plan Land Use Designation.** The subject property is located within the South Los Angeles Community Plan, which was last updated by the City Council on November 22, 2017. The Community Plan designates the site with a land use designation of Low Residential II, which has a corresponding zoning classification of RD1.5-O.

As recommended, the amendment would re-designate the Project Site to the Community Commercial land use designation and the corresponding zone C2-1D-O. Therefore the project is in substantial conformance with the purpose, intent, and provisions of the General Plan as it is reflected within the South Los Angeles Community Plan, as further discussed in Finding below.

2. **City Charter Finding 555.** The General Plan may be amended in its entirety, by subject elements or parts of subject elements, or by geographic areas, provided that the part or area involved has significant social, economic, or physical identity.

The General Plan Amendment before the City Planning Commission represents an Amendment to the South Los Angeles Community Plan, which is currently designated as Low Medium II Residential for the entire site. The project site is located in the North University Park area, a unique neighborhood originally planned and zoned for multifamily residential uses that has significant social, economic and physical identity as it has evolved to include a mix of residential (including university serving), institutional (university operated), commercial, and mixed-use developments. The project proposes a General Plan Amendment from Low Medium II Residential to Community Commercial in addition to a Zone Change to Commercial. The project site meets the Economic Chapter of the Framework Element's criteria for such lands to be converted to commercial as it meets the two fundamental economic development goals: to provide the physical locations and competitive financial environment necessary to attract various types of economic development to Los Angeles, and to encourage the geographic distribution of job growth in a manner supportive of the City's overall planning objectives. The project will allow for the creation of 400 permanent new jobs for the AAA Headquarters, employment opportunities that will be targeted for the local neighborhood.

Furthermore, the project meets Goals LU6 and LU6.2 of the South Los Angeles Community Plan, by supporting a commercial sector that is strong and competitive, serving the needs of individual neighborhoods and the broader community, and providing local residents with access to high quality jobs providing a pathway out of poverty and create feasible opportunities for new employment.

The project will remove the existing surface parking lot and replace it with a parking structure with a design that is compatible with the historic character of the neighborhood. The building footprint allows for the addition of sustainable landscape features along 27th street that will improve the pedestrian experience on the sidewalk and serve to make the site a more inviting space for the entire community. The project plans to provide drought-tolerant landscaping along with maintaining the existing trees to make the area more visually appealing. Further, the Project's design conceals the vehicular parking and instead highlights the design features and landscaping, which improves upon the surface parking lot that currently occupies the Site. The Project also intends to be compatible and complimentary to the surrounding structures. With the additional on-site long-term and short-term bicycle parking, the Project will also encourage employees to choose non-private

modes of transportation to work, reducing vehicle miles traveled and increasing pedestrian activity in the area. While the proposed General Plan Amendment will change a residential land use designation, the project is oriented around the production of jobs given that the project will allow for the creation of 400 new jobs, targeted towards the local community, which will contribute to the significant economic identity of the area. Furthermore, the surrounding area is zoned C2-1VL-O, both across the street from the subject parcels over the entire block and a few parcels east of the subject site along Figueroa Street. The subject site currently serves and will continue to serve the AAA Headquarters across the street, also designated Community Commercial. Therefore, as the project is located within an area with significant economic and physical identity, as identified by both the General Plan Framework Element and the South Los Angeles Community Plan, the General Plan Amendment complies with Charter Section 555.

3. **City Charter Finding 556.** When approving any matter listed in Section 558, the City Planning Commission and the Council shall make findings showing that the action is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan. If the Council does not adopt the City Planning Commission's findings and recommendations, the Council shall make its own findings.
4. **City Charter Finding 558.** The proposed Amendment to the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan will be in conformance with public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.

Framework Element

The Framework Element of the General Plan ("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 GPA supports the Framework Element of the General Plan by creating jobs by enabling the construction of a creatively designed parking structure, that will support existing uses at AAA and promote employment growth and economic development in the City. Further, the design of the structure creates a more aesthetically engaging pedestrian environment. The GPA to replace the Project Site's land use designation of "Low Medium II Residential" to "Community Commercial" within the Community Plan is more appropriate for the growing demand of employees at AAA's headquarters. The proposed GPA maintains consistency with existing surrounding uses both across the street at the AAA Headquarters and to the East of the Project Site, which include a Community Commercial designation.

The Project is consistent with the land use goals, objectives, and policies identified in the Land Use Chapter of the Framework Element, including the following.

Objective 3.1: Accommodate a diversity of uses that support the needs of the City's existing and future residents, businesses, and visitors.

Objective 3.3: Accommodate projected population and employment growth within the City and each community plan area for the provision of adequate supporting transportation and utility infrastructure and public services.

Objective 3.16: *Accommodate land uses, locate and design buildings, and implement streetscape amenities that enhance pedestrian activity.*

The Site has an existing land use designation of “Low Medium II Residential.” The surface parking lot includes 247 existing parking spaces and cannot support additional jobs or economic growth. AAA currently has 909 employees at its headquarters facility and anticipates hiring approximately 400 new employees. By providing needed parking spaces for the potential new hires, the Project will allow for the creation of 400 new jobs to AAA’s headquarters, and increase business opportunities in the surrounding area for other small businesses that cater to AAA’s employees, such as local restaurant and retail. This will generate sustainable service-based jobs for neighborhood residents and thus improve the economic vitality of the South Los Angeles Community (Objective 3.1, 3.3).

The Project’s design pays tribute to the historic character of the neighborhood. The building footprint allows for the addition of sustainable landscape features along 27th street that will improve the pedestrian experience on the sidewalk and serve to make the Site a more inviting space for the entire community. The Project plans to provide drought-tolerant landscaping along with maintaining the existing trees to make the area more visually appealing. Further, the Project’s design artfully conceals the vehicular parking and instead highlights the design features and landscaping, which improves upon the surface parking lot that currently occupies the Site. The Project also intends to be compatible and complimentary to the surrounding structures. With the additional on-site long-term and short-term bicycle parking, the Project will also encourage employees to choose non-private modes of transportation to work, reducing vehicle miles traveled and increasing pedestrian activity in the area (Objective 3.16).

5. **Land Use Element.** The South Los Angeles community Plan text includes the following relevant goals and policies:

Goal LU6: A commercial sector that is strong and competitive, that serves the needs of individual neighborhoods and the broader community, and that provides local residents with access to high quality jobs providing a pathway out of poverty.

Policy LU6.2: Feasible Development Sites: Encourage consolidation and deepening of shallow commercial corridor lots in a manner that is compatible with the prevailing urban form as a means to stimulate existing businesses and create feasible opportunities for new employment.

The Project will directly meet these goals by developing a new parking structure to support and promote an increase in approximately 400 new jobs at the AAA Headquarters. These jobs are anticipated to include a combination of entry-level and specialty positions that will positively impact growth in the community by way of employment and also stimulate the nearby commercial amenities. Further, replacing the existing surface lot with a parking structure will create a new, well-designed structure in the area, in turn attracting new employees to revitalize the commercial corridor along South Figueroa Street.

Policy LU7.2: Improve Existing Auto-Related Uses: Expansions and modifications of existing auto-related facilities should be designed to improve landscaping, buffering and architectural character in order to minimize environmental impacts.

The Project Site currently includes a surface parking lot of 247 automobile parking spaces. The Site is enclosed by fencing and provides minimal interaction to the pedestrian realm. The Proposed Project will replace the existing surface lot with a sensitively designed parking structure that both enhances the pedestrian experience through the use of architectural arches and screens views of the parked vehicles through the use of perforated metal screens. Additionally, the proposed design will allow for the incorporation of landscaping both along the 27th Street frontage, as well as along the secondary building facades.

Goal LU8: High quality, context-sensitive design that is reflective of the desired community character, and preserves the historic and cultural character of the district.

The Project proposes a parking structure that is sensitive to the surrounding residential uses and consistent with the historic nature of the AAA Headquarters buildings across the street. The Proposed Project seeks to incorporate architectural arches, façade screening, and ample greenery including trees and drought-tolerant landscaping, which will be beneficial to the community at large. The building's footprint has been minimized to accommodate additional pedestrian and landscaped area along 27th Street. The additional area also allows for the incorporation of the unique arches that provide both a visually appealing design at street level, while preserving the cultural character of the surrounding uses.

Further, the Proposed Project also seeks to maintain consistency with the recommended design guidelines, specifically for Parking Structures as included in Appendix B of the Community Plan. The Project is designed to provide a more welcoming pedestrian environment by screening the proposed parking levels and including innovative design features to enhance the pedestrian experience by incorporating architectural arches, façade screening, and ample greenery including trees and drought-tolerant landscaping, which will be beneficial to the community at large. The building's footprint has been minimized to accommodate additional pedestrian and landscaped area along 27th Street. The additional area also allows for the incorporation of the unique arches that provide both a visually appealing design at street level, while preserving the cultural character of the surrounding uses.

Additionally, the pedestrian connection and the addition of bicycle parking provide further connections to the surrounding community.

Policy LU11.6: Native and Drought-Tolerant Landscaping. Encourage the use of native and drought-tolerant plants in all new development to conserve water use.

The Proposed Project design incorporates drought-tolerant landscaping on all sides of the Site. The landscaping will be incorporated into the pedestrian experience and replace existing impermeable surface. Existing street trees will be maintained.

Goal LU12: **Strong and competitive community commercial areas that serve the needs of the surrounding community while preserving historic commercial and cultural character.**

Policy LU12.3: Design Standards and Guidelines. Recommend that new development projects conform to design standards and guidelines that promote high-quality and attractive buildings, as well as an active pedestrian oriented environment.

The Project Site, with approval of the General Plan Amendment will achieve the purposes of the Community Commercial designation to a greater extent than the existing surface parking lot. The Proposed Project will provide up to 731 parking spaces as compared with the current surface parking lot's 247 parking spaces. The more intense use of the Site will bring more economic activity to the region by allowing for the creation of 400 new jobs at the AAA Headquarters. These new employees will provide a stimulus to local businesses, especially local retail and restaurant uses. Further, the Project design will conceal the parked vehicles inside the structure and provide much needed landscaping and green spaces to pedestrians. The proposed design also incorporates the historic character of the buildings in the area

through the use of architectural arches, façade screening, and ample greenery including trees and drought-tolerant landscaping, which will be beneficial to the community at large. The building's footprint has been minimized to accommodate additional pedestrian and landscaped area along 27th Street. The additional area also allows for the incorporation of the unique arches that provide both a visually appealing design at street level, while preserving the cultural character of the surrounding uses.

Appendix B – South LA Community Plan

The Community Plan sets forth specific design guidelines for Parking Garage Design in Appendix B of the Community Plan. Specifically, the Plan sets forth guidelines for Stand-Alone Parking Structures. The proposed Project seeks to maintain consistency with all of these guidelines as follows:

G.9. *Provide an external skin designed to improve the building's appearance over the basic concrete structure of ramps, walls, and columns on all visible facades. Examples of appropriate skin materials include heavy-gage metal screen, pre-cast concrete panels, laminated glass, photovoltaic panels, and other materials consistent with or complementary to the overall project.*

The Project is consistent with this guideline by providing a façade screen in perforated metal across all sides of the structure. The screen is intended to provide an appearance that is aesthetically interesting while adequately screening the vehicles parked within the structure. In addition, all visible facades are further complimented by arches that will include landscaping to enhance the overall appearance of the parking structure.

G.10. *Highlight elevators and stairs architecturally, so visitors can easily find and access these entry points.*

The attached plans indicate the presence of elevators on the front portion of the structure along 27th Street. The elevators will be easily accessible through the proposed pedestrian entry and crosswalk connecting the building to the AAA Headquarters across the way. The stairs are currently located on the East and West corners of the proposed structure. However, both stairwells will be clearly marked and indicated both internally and externally.

G.11. *Integrate sustainable design features such as photovoltaic panels (especially on the top parking deck), renewable materials, and stormwater treatment where possible.*

The Applicant is committed to integrating sustainable design features wherever feasible. The Project currently proposes to largely utilize a combination of concrete, perforated metal, and tile for the design features and intends to incorporate renewable material options wherever feasible. The Applicant will provide adequate stormwater capture mechanisms where possible and drought-tolerant landscaping. Additionally, the Project will include electric vehicle charging stations.

G.12. *Integrate signage and wayfinding with parking structure architecture.*

The Project will provide signage to indicate the entrance/exit and elevator/stair access to the parking structure. The Project will incorporate signage in a way that is compatible with the architectural features of the proposed Project and the surrounding uses.

G.13. *Incorporate public art and lighting into the parking structure design to reinforce its unique identity.*

The Project will provide ample lighting both externally and internally in order to maintain visibility in and around the structure and to prevent any illegal activity near the Site. The Project currently incorporates a unique exterior design with the proposed façade screen made of perforated metal and protruding arches. The renderings contemplate a color scheme that is monochromatic and largely terracotta tones with some light color along the lower periphery of the structure to complement the AAA Headquarters across the street.

The Project is also consistent with additional guidelines related to parking structures as included in Section 1B. of the Community Plan Appendix. These include employing durable materials (G.2.) and making parking entry openings flush with the façade when feasible (G.5.).

Entitlement Findings

6. **Zone Change, Height District Change and “Q” Classification Findings.**

- a. **Pursuant to Section 12.32 C of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, the recommended zone change and height district change is in conformance with the public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.**

Public Necessity and Convenience

The requested Zone Change and Height District Change for the Project is in conformity with public necessity and convenience. The Project addresses the necessity for more parking associated with healthy economic growth and the expansion of the workforce. By concentrating parking spaces for AAA’s employees at the Project Site, the Proposed Project reduces the need for AAA’s employees to park their vehicles on public lots or surface lots. Additionally, the Project will alleviate parking needs at other various AAA parking lots. The Project will create more parking spaces for AAA employees, and in turn preserve public parking for the general public. Additionally, by constructing the Project adjacent to AAA’s Headquarters, the employees could conveniently walk from their offices to their vehicles. The Site will be further integrated into the neighborhood by providing both convenient parking for AAA employees and enhancing the pedestrian experience for the entire community. The Project also places the parking structure proximate to nearby commercial uses hence encouraging convenient access for employees to patronize local businesses.

General Welfare

The general welfare is served by the development of a high quality, aesthetically appealing Project that will promote a positive pedestrian environment. The Project will serve the general welfare by allowing for the creation of 400 new jobs, which will provide an increased tax base that will in turn assist the City in providing necessary community benefits and services. The Project will also provide a pedestrian friendly experience to pedestrians with its creative architecture and sustainable landscaping with seating areas. The Project also includes long-term bicycle parking for AAA employees and short-term bicycle parking that can be utilized by the public. The addition of bicycle parking will further reduce vehicle miles traveled and encourage a more active lifestyle by the community.

Good Zoning Practices

The Proposed Project conforms with good planning practices in that it reduces the negative impact of parked vehicles to the general public. The existing site contains a surface parking lot with 247 vehicle spaces. The use provides no screening of the existing parking and has only minimal landscaping in the form of street trees. The Proposed Project is designed to screen vehicular parking and provide landscaped areas on all sides of the Project. Further, the additional parking spaces will prevent spill-over of parking into

adjacent residential areas by providing sufficient onsite parking to accommodate AAA employees. It will also eliminate the need for street parking which hinders visibility, blocks business storefronts, and has an overall negative impact on neighborhoods. The project will also allow for the AAA Headquarters to expand their jobs base by allowing for parking to accommodate the new workers in a transit priority area. The Project also conforms with the goal of accommodating all vehicle parking on-site. Therefore, the Project's request for a Zone Change and Height District Change conforms with good planning practices.

b. Pursuant to Section 12.32-G of the Municipal Code "Q" Classification and D Development Limitation Findings

Per LAMC Section 12.32-G,2 and 4, the current action, as recommended, has been made contingent upon compliance with D development limitations and "Q" conditions of approval imposed herein for the proposed project. The "Q" conditions that limits the use, scale and scope of future development on the site are 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. The Q condition also limits residential density to the RD1.5 zone to ensure the provisions of LAMC Section 11.5.11.a are complied with. The D development limitations restricts the floor area ratio and height to the project's height and floor area.

7. Environmental Finding Mitigated Negative Declaration.

FIND, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15074(b), after consideration of the whole of the administrative record, including the Mitigated Negative Declaration, No. ENV-2019-6290-MND ("Mitigated Negative Declaration"), and all comments received, with the imposition of mitigation measures, there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment; **FIND** the Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the City; **FIND** the mitigation measures have been made enforceable conditions on the project; and **ADOPT** the Mitigated Negative Declaration and the Mitigation Monitoring Program prepared for the Mitigated Negative Declaration.