



# Los Angeles City Planning Commission

200 North Spring Street, Room 272, Los Angeles, California, 90012-4801, (213) 978-1300

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## LETTER OF DETERMINATION

**MAILING DATE: JANUARY 9, 2024**

**Case No. CPC-2023-1637-SP**

Council District: 3 – Blumenfield; 4 – Raman

CEQA: ENV-2023-1638-CE

Plan Areas: Canoga Park – Winnetka – Woodland Hills – West Hills

Encino – Tarzana, Sherman Oaks – Studio City

Toluca Lake – Cahuenga Pass

**Project Site:** Ventura – Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan Area

**Applicant:** City of Los Angeles

At its meeting of **October 26, 2023**, the Los Angeles City Planning Commission took the actions below in conjunction with the approval of the following:

An amendment to the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan pursuant to Sections 11.5.7 G and 12.32, of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC), to create an administrative process for signage review, update the Plan to align with the Processes and Procedures Ordinance and the Mobility Element, amend the Specific Plan's Plan Review Board appointments and administration, update references to corrected maps, and clean-up typos and plan language as well as code references.

1. **Determined**, that based on the whole of the administrative record, the Project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Case No. ENV-2023-1638-CE (**Exhibit C**) and CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301 (Class 1 for existing structures, including interior alterations for tenant improvements); Section 15303 (Class 3 as applied to small structures for limited changes of use and interior alterations related to tenant improvements); Section 15311 (Class 11 for on-premises signs); and Section 15320 (Class 20 for changes in reorganization of local governmental agencies relating to the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan Review Board (PRB) appointments and administration, administrative project review process, updated language to reflect new ordinances and language clean up, recognition of a sixth community, and updated maps). There is no substantial evidence demonstrating that an exception to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 applies;
2. **Approved and Recommended** that the City Council **adopt**, pursuant to Sections 11.5.7 G and 12.32 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, the linked proposed zoning ordinance to amend the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan, as shown in **Exhibit B**, with a modification to Section 15.A.5 of the Specific Plan as follows (specific language is detailed in Attachment 1):
  - a. Add the neighborhood councils to those listed to receive written notification of a Plan Review Board member's term expiration prior to the end of the member's term.
3. **Adopted** the Staff Report as the Commission's Report on the subject; and
4. **Adopted** the attached Findings.

The vote proceeded as follows:

Moved: Choe  
Second: Cabildo  
Ayes: Gold, Lawshe, Leung, Zamora  
Nay: Mack  
Absent: Millman, Noonan

**Vote: 6 – 1**

*Cecilia Lamas*

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Cecilia Lamas, Commission Executive Assistant II  
Los Angeles City Planning Commission

Fiscal Impact Statement: There is no General Fund impact as administrative costs are recovered through fees.

**Effective Date/Appeals:** The decision of the Los Angeles City Planning Commission is final and not appealable.

Notice: If you seek judicial review of any decision of the City pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.5, the petition for writ of mandate pursuant to that section must be filed no later than the 90th day following the date on which the City's decision became final pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.6. There may be other time limits which also affect your ability to seek judicial review.

Attachments: Attachment 1 (CPC Modification), Findings

Exhibits: (If you are accessing this letter on-line, please click on each link below to view the exhibits, or visit <https://planning.lacity.org/pdiscaseinfo>, and enter the Case Number (CPC-2023-1637-SP), to access this letter and its attachments electronically).

[Staff Recommendation Report and Exhibits to the City Planning Commission](#)

[Exhibit A – City Charter, LAMC, and General Plan Findings](#)

[Exhibit B – Proposed Amendment to the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan – Proposed Ordinance and Plan Maps](#)

[Exhibit C – Environmental Clearance – Categorical Exemption](#)

cc: Shana M. M. Bonstin, Deputy Director  
Haydee Urita-Lopez, Principal City Planner  
Priya Mehendale, Senior City Planner  
Courtney Schoenwald, City Planner  
Lauren Padick, City Planning Associate

## ATTACHMENT 1

### MODIFICATIONS TO THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE AMENDING THE VENTURA-CAHUENGA BOULEVARD CORRIDOR SPECIFIC PLAN BY THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION ON OCTOBER 26, 2023

On October 26, 2023, the City Planning Commission moved to edit the applicable written notifications regarding the Ventura Specific Plan Review Board membership term expirations to also include the Neighborhood Councils in the notification list.

This would amend Section 15.A.5 of the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Specific Plan (**Exhibit B** of the Staff Recommendation Report) to add “neighborhood council” to the parties listed to receive the notification in writing, as shown in underline:

**5. Expiration of Term.** Upon expiration of the term of any member of the Plan Review Board, the appointment for the next succeeding term shall be made by the appointing authority. No member of the Board shall serve more than two consecutive four-year terms. The Department of City Planning shall notify, *in writing*, the appointing councilmember, board member, and neighborhood council for the board member’s corresponding community of the upcoming expiration of term prior to the end of the member’s term limit. Members of the Board whose terms have expired shall remain members until their replacements have been appointed.

## FINDINGS

### Project Location

The Specific Plan corridor spans over 17 miles in length, includes more than 1,200 acres of land, and regulates over 4,300 individual parcels of land. It comprises parcels that front on Ventura Boulevard as well as adjacent boulevards including Topanga Canyon Boulevard, Reseda Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, and Van Nuys Boulevard. The Specific Plan boundaries include properties and rights-of-way along Ventura Boulevard, spanning from the Dry Canyon-Calabasas Flood Control Channel west of Woodlake Avenue in Woodland Hills, to Cahuenga Boulevard four (4) lots (approximately 209 linear feet) east of Oakcrest Drive in Cahuenga Pass. A detailed map of the area is included as **Exhibit B, Plan Maps 1 to 14** that accompany the Proposed Ordinance for the Specific Plan.

### 1. City Charter Findings

**Charter Sections 556 and 558** - The City Charter was adopted by voters at the General Municipal Election held June 8, 1999, and sets forth various provisions related to City Departments. Charter Sections 556 and 558 require the City Planning Commission and City Council to adopt the following findings when taking any action to (i) create or change a zone or zoning district created for the purpose of regulating the use of land, or (ii) zoning the permissible uses, height, density, bulk, location or use of buildings or structures, size of yards, open space, setbacks, building line requirements, and other similar requirements, including specific plan ordinances:

- (1) The zoning ordinance is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent, and provisions of the General Plan.
- (2) The zoning ordinance is in conformity with public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice.

The Proposed Ordinance (**Exhibit B**) amends the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan (Ordinance Nos. 166,560, 166,837, 168,644, 171,240, 174,052, and 185,650) as per the following overview of the types of revisions and clarifications that are proposed (full text of changes in **Exhibit B**):

- a. Changing the definition of “Project” in Section 4 of the Specific Plan to include a proposed ministerial Administrative Clearance Review process for sign permits, interior tenant improvements, and changes of use that will not increase the floor area, increase the number of vehicle trips, increase parking requirements, or permit a change of use to a use that is not already permitted by the Specific Plan, and to clarify the types of projects that would require Discretionary Review.
- b. Adding the definition of “Tenant Frontage” in Section 4 to clarify the metric for calculating sign area.
- c. Clarifying the wording in Section 8, entitled “Sign Regulations,” specifically:
  - i. Revising language for wall sign area calculation from “lot frontage,” which is undefined in the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) to the newly defined term “tenant frontage.”
  - ii. Clarifying that a secondary wall sign would be calculated from the same tenant frontage calculation.
  - iii. Replacing the term “lot frontage” (undefined) from Monument Sign calculations with the term “street frontage” (defined) to match LAMC Section 14.4.8 for Monument Signs.

- d. Adding language to Section 9 to outline the Administrative Clearance Review process, and distinguish it from other Discretionary Reviews, such as Project Compliance, Project Adjustments, Exception of Entitlements, etc.
- e. Adding references to the new Chapter 1A of the LAMC (Processes and Procedures Ordinance, effective 1/23/23, operative 1/22/24) throughout the Specific Plan.
- f. Updating street designation names in Section 7 to match the Mobility Plan 2035.
- g. Updating references to out-of-date LAMC citations and clarifying cross-references to chapters that reside outside of Chapter 1 in the LAMC.
- h. Updating references in the existing Specific Plan from “five (5) communities” to “six (6) communities” to divide the existing “Studio City/Cahuenga Pass” into two (2) distinct communities, i.e., “Studio City” and “Cahuenga Pass,” and updating Section 1.B of the Specific Plan to identify the boundaries for these two (2) distinct communities.
- i. Correcting typos/grammatical errors, as well as terminology corrections within the document, such as updating the Specific Plan name to “Ventura-Cahuenga” instead of “Ventura/Cahuenga” throughout, in Section 4 correcting PM to AM for the morning peak hour traffic definition, consistently referencing City Planning Commission for urban design guidelines throughout, updating the terms “San Diego Freeway” to “Interstate 405” and “Ventura Highway” to “U.S. Route 101” throughout, hyphenating two (2)-word modifiers before the noun throughout, etc.
- j. Updating the maps and map references to reflect corrections, previous amendments, and integrate maps that were separated on multiple pages.
- k. Amending Section 15 of the Specific Plan regarding the Plan Review Board’s (PRB) appointment process and composition to assign one (1) board member to represent each of the six (6) communities, rather than two (2) board members per council district, and clarifying qualifications and term limits for PRB board members.
- l. Clarifying department roles and responsibilities in Section 15 related to their work with the PRB.

Most changes with the Proposed Ordinance are administrative in nature, and modify the text of the Specific Plan without any land use impacts (e.g. language clean up, Plan Review Board appointments). However, the shift from requiring discretionary review for new signage in the Specific Plan to a more streamlined administrative clearance review process for signage, and by defining this process as the appropriate method for reviewing tenant improvements and changes of use, and the clarifying calculation methodologies based on “tenant frontage” or “street frontage” in lieu of “lot frontage” for wall and monument signs— are improvements and are considered land-use regulations that could have tangible impacts because these are the only scopes of work with impacts on the built environment. This change to add an Administrative Clearance Review process is intended to be business-friendly: to help businesses in erecting signs, or to move into an existing space more readily. As such, the findings below center around commercial land uses. This section provides relevant goals, objectives, policies, and programs that are established in the General Plan that form the basis for Staff’s recommended actions for the Proposed Ordinance.

Based on the City Charter, the above findings are required for the Proposed Ordinance. The Proposed Ordinance is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent, and provisions of the General Plan, as noted below:

## **General Plan Findings**

The City of Los Angeles' General Plan consists of the Framework Element, seven (7) required Elements that are mandated by State law, including Land Use, Mobility, Housing, Conservation, Noise, Safety, and Open Space, and optional Elements including Air Quality, Service Systems, and Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles. Thirty-five individual community plans comprise the Land Use Element for the City of Los Angeles. The Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor is located in three (3) of these individual Community Plans: the Canoga Park - Winnetka - Woodland Hills - West Hills Community Plan, the Encino - Tarzana Community Plan, and the Sherman Oaks - Studio City - Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan.

### **Framework Element**

The City of Los Angeles' General Plan's Framework Element<sup>1</sup> was adopted August 8, 2001, and is a strategy for long-term growth that sets a citywide context to guide the subsequent amendments of the City's community plans, zoning ordinances, and other pertinent programs. The project complies with the following goals and objectives of the Framework Element:

**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.

**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 3.413** Establish incentives for the attraction of growth and development of districts, centers, and mixed-use boulevards targeted for growth that may include: ...

- d.** Streamlined development review processes
- e.** "By-right" entitlements for development projects consistent with the community plans and zoning

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<sup>1</sup> General Plan Framework Element is online at: <https://planning.lacity.org/cwd/framwkw/contents.htm>

Ventura Boulevard is a major transit corridor and is identified as a location to be a Moderate Plus Transit Enhanced Street in the Mobility Plan 2035<sup>2</sup>. By adopting a process of Administrative Clearance Review, the Proposed Ordinance complies with this goal, objectives, and policies by facilitating a business's ability to open along a transit corridor. With an Administrative Clearance Review for certain interior improvements and changes of use, the capacity for a new business to move into a new space is easier, since a case would not need to be filed, which would take time and money above and beyond the improvements. And in streamlining the sign review, a business is able to advertise for themselves immediately. By allowing these commercial spaces to be more readily improved, these changes (including interior alterations related to tenant improvements) support fiscal and economic viability with a diversity of uses that support the needs of residents, visitors, and businesses.

The fee to file a sign case, per LAMC Section 19.01 G and 19.05 A.1, is \$3,757.65, including the environmental case filing fee, which has an associated fee of \$556.00 for categorical exemptions and \$6,640.30 for negative declarations, etc.. If the sign is approved, the applicant must also undergo the condition clearance process which takes additional time and expense, per LAMC Section 19.04, in the amount of \$2,499.36. The total cost to the applicant is \$6,257.01. This amount does not include the permit fees, plan printing cost, expediting services (if utilized), etc. By defining the new process for signage, interior construction, and/or simple changes of use as Administrative Clearance Review, this Proposed Ordinance will streamline review for that work, and enable the Specific Plan to allow for a faster, more cost-effective process for businesses (the cost would be, per LAMC Section 19.04, under \$400 in lieu of the current fees noted above which are over \$6,000), which will help these businesses.

**GOAL 3D** *Pedestrian-oriented districts that provide local identity, commercial activity, and support Los Angeles' neighborhoods.*

**Objective 3.8** Reinforce existing and establish new neighborhood districts which accommodate a broad range of uses that serve the needs of adjacent residents, promote neighborhood activity, are compatible with adjacent neighborhoods, and are developed as desirable places to work and visit.

**Goal 3E** Pedestrian-oriented, high activity, multi- and mixed-use centers that support and provide identity for Los Angeles' communities.

**Policy 3.9.5** Promote pedestrian activity by the design and siting of structures in accordance with Pedestrian-Oriented District Policies 3.16.1 through 3.16.3

**GOAL 3H** *Lower-intensity highway-oriented and local commercial nodes that accommodate commercial needs outside centers and districts.*

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<sup>2</sup> Mobility Plan 2035 is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/523f2a95-9d72-41d7-aba5-1972f84c1d36/Mobility\\_Plan\\_2035.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/523f2a95-9d72-41d7-aba5-1972f84c1d36/Mobility_Plan_2035.pdf)

**Objective 3.12** Generally, maintain the uses, density, and character of existing low-intensity commercial districts whose functions serve surrounding neighborhoods and/or are precluded from intensification due to their physical characteristics.

**GOAL 3L** *Districts that promote pedestrian activity and provide a quality experience for the City's residents.*

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

**Objective 5.8** Reinforce or encourage the establishment of a strong pedestrian orientation in designated neighborhood districts, community centers, and pedestrian-oriented subareas within regional centers, so that these districts and centers can serve as a focus of activity for the surrounding community and a focus for investment in the community.

By streamlining changes of use and interior construction, the Proposed Ordinance is allowing these commercial spaces to be more readily improved, which include interior alterations related to tenant improvements that help a business comply with building and safety codes. These improvements provide additional opportunities for businesses to exist and thrive in neighborhood serving areas within walking distance which in turn is vital for a healthy pedestrian environment. Further, by facilitating a business's ability to install a sign quickly and more readily under the streamlined administrative process, the pedestrian experience is improved by helping orient those walking to the businesses nearby.

**GOAL 7B-** *A City with land appropriately and sufficiently designated to sustain a robust commercial and industrial base.*

**Objective 7.2** Establish a balance of land uses that provides for commercial and industrial development which meets the needs of local residents, sustains economic growth, and assures maximum feasible environmental quality.

**Policy 7.2.2** Concentrate commercial development entitlements in areas best able to support them, including community and regional centers, transit stations, and mixed-use corridors. This concentration prevents commercial development from encroaching on existing residential neighborhoods.

**Policy 7.2.3** Encourage new commercial development in proximity to rail and bus transit corridors and stations.



**Policy 7.2.4** Ensure that the City has enough capacity to accommodate the development of general commercial uses which support community needs in all parts of Los Angeles.

In streamlining signage, changes of use, and interior construction with Administrative Clearance Review, the Proposed Ordinance is encouraging the reuse of existing commercial spaces on a transit corridor, that can help meet the needs of local residents and sustain economic growth, while reducing the impact on the environment as the space is being reused and improved. Further, this reuse retains the commercial uses in the areas that are best meant to accommodate neighborhood serving uses and support the local economy

**GOAL 7D** *A City able to attract and maintain new land uses and businesses.*

**Objective 7.4** Improve the provision of governmental services, expedite the administrative processing of development applications, and minimize public and private development application costs.

**Policy 7.4.1** Develop and maintain a streamlined development review process to assure the City's competitiveness within the Southern California region.

**Policy 7.4.2** Maximize opportunities for "by-right" development.

**Policy 7.4.3** Maintain development fee structures that do not unreasonably burden specific industry groups, are financially competitive with other cities in the region, and reduce uncertainty to the development community.

By streamlining signage, changes of use and interior construction through Administrative Clearance Review, the Proposed Ordinance is facilitating a business's ability to move into an existing space more readily, which is reducing their burden and making the process more akin to a by-right process. Additionally, the Administrative Clearance Review process will reduce the permitting fees a business is required to pay to move into their space. Overall, the Administrative Clearance Review process helps to create a pragmatic process that provides clarity and reduces uncertainty to the development community.

### ***Community Plans***

As noted above, the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor traverses across three (3) community plans, which all set forth planning purposes, objectives, and policies for land uses within their boundaries. All the community plans state that their purposes are to promote an arrangement of land uses, streets, and services which will encourage and contribute to the economic, social and physical health, safety, welfare, and convenience of the people who live and work in the community. The three (3) community plans that the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor is in are: the Canoga Park - Winnetka - Woodland Hills -

West Hills Community Plan, the Encino - Tarzana Community Plan, and the Sherman Oaks - Studio City - Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan.

The **Canoga Park – Winnetka - Woodland Hills Community Plan**<sup>3</sup>, was adopted August 17, 1999. The Proposed Ordinance would be in conformance with the following objectives, and policies of the Canoga Park - Winnetka - Woodland Hills Community Plan Community Plan:

**GOAL 2-** *An economically vital commercial sector offering a diversity of goods and services to meet the needs of the community plan area. This means that commercial land use policies must support maximum efficiency and accessibility of commercial development while preserving the historic commercial and cultural character of the district.*

**Objective 2-1** To conserve and strengthen viable commercial development and encourage recycling of obsolete commercial development.

**Policy 2-1.1** Locate new commercial development in areas currently designated for such development.

**Objective 2-4** Reinforce the identity of distinct commercial districts through the use of design guidelines and development standards.

**Policy 2-4.1** Ensure that commercial infill projects achieve harmony with the best of existing development.

The **Encino - Tarzana Community Plan**<sup>4</sup>, was adopted December 16, 1998. The Proposed Ordinance would be in conformance with the following objectives, and policies of the Encino - Tarzana Community Plan:

**GOAL 2 –** *A strong and competitive commercial sector which best serves the needs of the community through maximum efficiency and accessibility while preserving the historic commercial and cultural character of the district.*

**Objective 2-1** To conserve and strengthen viable commercial development.

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

**Objective 2-3** To enhance the identity of distinctive commercial districts and to identify pedestrian oriented districts (POD's).

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<sup>3</sup> The Canoga Park-Winnetka-Woodland Hills Community Plan is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/c2a26cca-955f-42ee-8eeb-332f05286c78/Canoga\\_Park-Winnetka-Woodland\\_Hills-West\\_Hills\\_Community\\_Plan.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/c2a26cca-955f-42ee-8eeb-332f05286c78/Canoga_Park-Winnetka-Woodland_Hills-West_Hills_Community_Plan.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The Encino - Tarzana Community Plan is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/7d419ea7-e1b9-400d-8f7e-ea7f39822527/Encino-Tarzana\\_Community\\_Plan.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/7d419ea7-e1b9-400d-8f7e-ea7f39822527/Encino-Tarzana_Community_Plan.pdf)

**Policy 2-3.3** Ensure that commercial infill projects achieve harmony with the best of existing development.

The **Sherman Oaks - Studio City - Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan**<sup>5</sup>, was adopted May 13, 1998. The Proposed Ordinance would be in conformance with the following objectives, and policies of the Sherman Oaks - Studio City -Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan:

**GOAL 2** – *A strong and competitive commercial sector which best serves the needs of the community through maximum efficiency and accessibility while preserving the historic commercial and cultural character of the district.*

**Objective 2-1** To conserve and strengthen viable commercial development.

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

**Objective 2-3** To enhance the identity of distinctive commercial districts and to identify pedestrian oriented districts (POD's).

**Policy 2-3.3** Ensure that commercial infill projects achieve harmony with the best of existing development.

The Proposed Ordinance meets the intent of the goals, objectives, and policies of these Community Plans by utilizing land use tools to enhance business opportunities in the Community Plan areas. The Proposed Ordinance would amend existing regulations to enable an easier process for a business to install a sign and through administratively clearly changes of uses, would facilitate a mix of uses and potentially help to successfully improve and re-open vacant spaces, allowing the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor to function as a stronger commercial center for the surrounding community and the broader region of Los Angeles.

### **Air Quality Element**

The Proposed Ordinance complies with the Air Quality Element<sup>6</sup>, which was adopted on November 25, 1992, by complying with the following goal, objective, and policies:

**Policy 4.2.4** Ensure that new development is compatible with pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and alternative fuel vehicles (Page 25 of pdf doc)

<sup>5</sup> The Sherman Oaks - Studio City -Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/8bd3ea98-b6d0-4408-aae7-ddca8f9df8ae/Sherman\\_Oaks-Studio\\_City-Toluca\\_Lake-Cahuenga\\_Pass\\_Community\\_Plan.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/8bd3ea98-b6d0-4408-aae7-ddca8f9df8ae/Sherman_Oaks-Studio_City-Toluca_Lake-Cahuenga_Pass_Community_Plan.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Air Quality Element is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/0ff9a9b0-0adf-49b4-8e07-0c16feea70bc/Air\\_Quality\\_Element.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/0ff9a9b0-0adf-49b4-8e07-0c16feea70bc/Air_Quality_Element.pdf)

The introduction of the administrative clearance review process with the Proposed Ordinance will enable businesses to efficiently install pedestrian-oriented signage. For example, projecting signs are commonly utilized within multi-tenant centers to aid in wayfinding. Should businesses take advantage of this easier sign installation process for pedestrian signage, those traversing the Corridor by foot or bike will also be able to identify businesses more readily by not needing to view the business from the street to see the identification signage that is often oriented toward the main Boulevard. This will in turn contribute to a more pedestrian-friendly environment and disincentive vehicle miles traveled within certain communities along the Boulevard, and will thus result in less gas emissions.

### **Health Element**

The Proposed Ordinance complies with the Plan for a Health Los Angeles<sup>7</sup>, known as the Health and Wellness Element, which was adopted in spring of 2015, by complying with the following policy and implementation program:

**Policy 2.6 Repurpose underutilized spaces for health**

Work proactively with residents to identify and remove barriers to leverage and repurpose vacant and underutilized spaces as a strategy to improve community health

Since the adoption of the Specific Plan, businesses have identified the Project Permit Compliance process, which is the discretionary review process that is currently required by the Specific Plan, as a significant barrier to being able to take over vacant spaces, as told to the Planning Department by the Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA) and the Business Improvement District (BID) representatives from Studio City, Sherman Oaks, and Encino. Any new business identification signs would be required to undergo a process which can take weeks to months. Especially within the critical first few months of operation, it is imperative for a business to be able to identify itself and advertise. For landowners, this can pose a challenge to leasing empty space as prospective tenants may decide to operate in areas without such a requirement. The creation of an administrative process with the Proposed Ordinance will make this process easier and remove a significant barrier to businesses being able to successfully improve, occupy and re-open vacant spaces.

**Implementation Program P1- Healthy Building Design Guidelines:**  
“exterior building design that promotes ‘eyes on the street’ and a ‘pedestrian oriented environment’ “

As stated previously, the introduction of the administrative clearance review process with the Proposed Ordinance will enable businesses to more easily

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<sup>7</sup> Healthy Places LA is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/2442d4df-34b3-4683-8eb9-b5ea1182782b/Plan\\_for\\_a\\_Healthy\\_Los\\_Angeles.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/2442d4df-34b3-4683-8eb9-b5ea1182782b/Plan_for_a_Healthy_Los_Angeles.pdf)

install pedestrian-oriented signage, like projecting signs. This will in turn contribute to a more pedestrian-oriented environment.

### **Mobility Plan 2035**

The Proposed Ordinance also complies with the Mobility Plan 2035<sup>8</sup>, originally adopted on August 11, 2015 and most recently amended September 7, 2016. Specifically, the Proposed Ordinance complies with the following initiatives and policies:

#### **Citywide General Plan Circulation System Maps**

Maps in the Mobility Plan 2035 that show the street designations for roadways in Los Angeles.

By updating the references in the Specific Plan to the nomenclature of street classifications designated in the Mobility Plan 2035, the Proposed Ordinance complies with that element of the General Plan.

#### **Policy 4.3 - Fair and Equal Treatment -**

Ensure the fair and equal treatment of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and education levels with respect to the development and implementation of citywide transportation policies and programs (page 123)

#### **Plan text from Policy 4.3:**

The City should strive to inform and involve environmental justice groups, community-based organizations, and all concerned residents in the planning and monitoring process of new and ongoing transportation policies and programs.

#### **Policy 4.4 - Community Collaboration**

Continue to support the role of community engagement in the design outcomes and implementation of mobility projects.

#### **Policy 4.10 - Public-Private Partnerships**

Encourage partnerships with community groups (residents and business/property owners) to initiate and maintain enhanced public rights-of-way projects.

The Proposed Ordinance includes a new requirement for the Plan Review Board to have members with a diversity of lived experience. The Board would have members who live in, work in, own property in, have experience with transit or cycling within, who is a person with a disability and/or represents a non-profit that advocates for accessibility improvements for people with disabilities, and who will serve the community in the Specific Plan area. This will ensure that community-based organizations will have a designated “voice” on the board. Given the PRB specifically is tasked with oversight of a mitigation fee which is utilized on public-right-of-way projects, it is imperative that the

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<sup>8</sup> Mobility Plan 2035 is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/523f2a95-9d72-41d7-aba5-1972f84c1d36/Mobility\\_Plan\\_2035.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/523f2a95-9d72-41d7-aba5-1972f84c1d36/Mobility_Plan_2035.pdf)

input of community groups is included. Further, ensuring a diversity of lived experiences will ensure a well-rounded discussion on the merits of various proposals before the board.

Further, the Proposed Ordinance is in conformity with public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice, as noted below:

Compliance with the General Plan and Community Plans. As noted above, the Proposed Ordinance complies with the General Plan and Community Plans.

Public Necessity. The Proposed Ordinance is in conformity with public necessity because it will promote economic opportunity by introducing policies that help maintain a viable retail base in the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor. Economic opportunity in all communities is essential to improve social equity and maintain the quality of life. A business-friendly environment is a requirement for protecting current jobs and developing new ones. The Proposed Ordinance addresses changing consumer needs and concerns raised by local business leaders.

Convenience. The Proposed Ordinance is in conformity with public convenience because it will enable smaller businesses to open more quickly and with smaller fees than before in the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor. Commercial services are necessary for the well-being of residents, students, and visitors. Additionally, the business-friendly goals of this Specific Plan Amendment create opportunities for new establishments to serve nearby residents. For those residing within or near the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor, this would reduce the need to drive greater distances to other communities, or cities outside Los Angeles, to dine, shop, or receive commercial services.

General Welfare. The Proposed Ordinance is in conformity with the general welfare because the Specific Plan Amendment will not change the range of neighborhood-serving land uses that are allowed by the Specific Plan. The Office of Zoning Administration will continue to review projects that may impact adjacent residential neighborhoods (generally establishments that sell or serve alcohol, provide live entertainment, etc.) on a case-by-case basis through an existing Conditional Use process pursuant to Section 13B.2.2 in Chapter 1A of the LAMC. Future discretionary development will still be required to undergo an environmental review process to ensure that impacts to health and safety are analyzed before permits are issued.

Good Zoning Practice. The Proposed Ordinance is in conformity with good zoning practice because its policies aim to support Citywide and community goals. The language clean-up and alignment of the Specific Plan with more recently passed regulations will be easier for City Staff and the public to comprehend. The Specific Plan Amendment will remove burdensome land use regulations regarding processes for signage, interior construction, tenant improvements, and changes of use in the Specific Plan, and in streamlining

those processes support businesses in the Corridor. This facilitation for businesses aligns with the Executive Directive No. 4<sup>9</sup> from Mayor Bass.

## 2. **General Plan Findings**

The City of Los Angeles' General Plan consists of the Framework Element, seven (7) required Elements that are mandated by State law, including Land Use, Mobility, Housing, Conservation, Noise, Safety, and Open Space, and optional Elements including Air Quality, Service Systems, and Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles. Thirty-five individual community plans comprise the Land Use Element for the City of Los Angeles. The Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor is located in three (3) of these individual Community Plans: the Canoga Park - Winnetka - Woodland Hills - West Hills Community Plan, the Encino - Tarzana Community Plan, and the Sherman Oaks - Studio City - Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan.

### ***Framework Element***

The City of Los Angeles' General Plan's Framework Element<sup>10</sup> was adopted August 8, 2001, and is a strategy for long-term growth that sets a citywide context to guide the subsequent amendments of the City's community plans, zoning ordinances, and other pertinent programs. The project complies with the following goals and objectives of the Framework Element:

**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.
- 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 3.413** Establish incentives for the attraction of growth and development of districts, centers, and mixed-use boulevards targeted for growth that may include: ...
  - f.** Streamlined development review processes
  - g.** "By-right" entitlements for development projects consistent with the community plans and zoning

<sup>9</sup> Executive Directive No. 4: <https://mayor.lacity.gov/sites/g/files/wph2066/files/2023-06/ED%204%20-%20Identifying%20Barriers%20to%20Small%20Business%20Creation%2C%20Development%20and%20Growth%20%281%29.pdf>

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Ventura Boulevard is a major transit corridor and is identified as a location to be a Moderate Plus Transit Enhanced Street in the Mobility Plan 2035<sup>11</sup>. By adopting a process of Administrative Clearance Review, the Proposed Ordinance complies with this goal, objectives, and policies by facilitating a business's ability to open along a transit corridor. With an Administrative Clearance Review for certain interior improvements and changes of use, the capacity for a new business to move into a new space is easier, since a case would not need to be filed, which would take time and money above and beyond the improvements. And in streamlining the sign review, a business is able to advertise for themselves immediately. By allowing these commercial spaces to be more readily improved, these changes (including interior alterations related to tenant improvements) support fiscal and economic viability with a diversity of uses that support the needs of residents, visitors, and businesses.

The fee to file a sign case, per LAMC Section 19.01 G and 19.05 A.1, is \$3,757.65, including the environmental case filing fee, which has an associated fee of \$556.00 for categorical exemptions and \$6,640.30 for negative declarations, etc.. If the sign is approved, the applicant must also undergo the condition clearance process which takes additional time and expense, per LAMC Section 19.04, in the amount of \$2,499.36. The total cost to the applicant is \$6,257.01. This amount does not include the permit fees, plan printing cost, expediting services (if utilized), etc. By defining the new process for signage, interior construction, and/or simple changes of use as Administrative Clearance Review, this Proposed Ordinance will streamline review for that work, and enable the Specific Plan to allow for a faster, more cost-effective process for businesses (the cost would be, per LAMC Section 19.04, under \$400 in lieu of the current fees noted above which are over \$6,000), which will help these businesses.

**GOAL 3D** *Pedestrian-oriented districts that provide local identity, commercial activity, and support Los Angeles' neighborhoods.*

**Objective 3.8** Reinforce existing and establish new neighborhood districts which accommodate a broad range of uses that serve the needs of adjacent residents, promote neighborhood activity, are compatible with adjacent neighborhoods, and are developed as desirable places to work and visit.

**Goal 3E** *Pedestrian-oriented, high activity, multi- and mixed-use centers that support and provide identity for Los Angeles' communities.*

**Policy 3.9.5** Promote pedestrian activity by the design and siting of structures in accordance with Pedestrian-Oriented District Policies 3.16.1 through 3.16.3

**GOAL 3H** *Lower-intensity highway-oriented and local commercial nodes that accommodate commercial needs outside centers and districts.*

**Objective 3.12** Generally, maintain the uses, density, and character of existing low-intensity commercial districts whose functions serve surrounding neighborhoods and/or are precluded from intensification due to their physical characteristics.

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<sup>11</sup> Mobility Plan 2035 is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/523f2a95-9d72-41d7-aba5-1972f84c1d36/Mobility\\_Plan\\_2035.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/523f2a95-9d72-41d7-aba5-1972f84c1d36/Mobility_Plan_2035.pdf)



**GOAL 3L** *Districts that promote pedestrian activity and provide a quality experience for the City's residents.*

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

**Objective 5.8** Reinforce or encourage the establishment of a strong pedestrian orientation in designated neighborhood districts, community centers, and pedestrian-oriented subareas within regional centers, so that these districts and centers can serve as a focus of activity for the surrounding community and a focus for investment in the community.

By streamlining changes of use and interior construction, the Proposed Ordinance is allowing these commercial spaces to be more readily improved, which include interior alterations related to tenant improvements that help a business comply with building and safety codes. These improvements provide additional opportunities for businesses to exist and thrive in neighborhood serving areas within walking distance which in turn is vital for a healthy pedestrian environment. Further, by facilitating a business's ability to install a sign quickly and more readily under the streamlined administrative process, the pedestrian experience is improved by helping orient those walking to the businesses nearby.

**GOAL 7B-** *A City with land appropriately and sufficiently designated to sustain a robust commercial and industrial base.*

**Objective 7.2** Establish a balance of land uses that provides for commercial and industrial development which meets the needs of local residents, sustains economic growth, and assures maximum feasible environmental quality.

**Policy 7.2.2** Concentrate commercial development entitlements in areas best able to support them, including community and regional centers, transit stations, and mixed-use corridors. This concentration prevents commercial development from encroaching on existing residential neighborhoods.

**Policy 7.2.3** Encourage new commercial development in proximity to rail and bus transit corridors and stations.

**Policy 7.2.4** Ensure that the City has enough capacity to accommodate the development of general commercial uses which support community needs in all parts of Los Angeles.

In streamlining signage, changes of use, and interior construction with Administrative Clearance Review, the Proposed Ordinance is encouraging the reuse of existing commercial spaces on a transit corridor, that can help meet the needs of local residents and sustain economic growth, while reducing the impact on the environment as the space is being reused and improved. Further, this reuse retains the commercial uses in the areas that are best meant to accommodate neighborhood serving uses and support the local economy

**GOAL 7D** *A City able to attract and maintain new land uses and businesses.*

- Objective 7.4** Improve the provision of governmental services, expedite the administrative processing of development applications, and minimize public and private development application costs.
- Policy 7.4.1** Develop and maintain a streamlined development review process to assure the City's competitiveness within the Southern California region.
- Policy 7.4.2** Maximize opportunities for "by-right" development.
- Policy 7.4.3** Maintain development fee structures that do not unreasonably burden specific industry groups, are financially competitive with other cities in the region, and reduce uncertainty to the development community.

By streamlining signage, changes of use and interior construction through Administrative Clearance Review, the Proposed Ordinance is facilitating a business's ability to move into an existing space more readily, which is reducing their burden and making the process more akin to a by-right process. Additionally, the Administrative Clearance Review process will reduce the permitting fees a business is required to pay to move into their space. Overall, the Administrative Clearance Review process helps to create a pragmatic process that provides clarity and reduces uncertainty to the development community.

### ***Community Plans***

As noted above, the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor traverses across three (3) community plans, which all set forth planning purposes, objectives, and policies for land uses within their boundaries. All the community plans state that their purposes are to promote an arrangement of land uses, streets, and services which will encourage and contribute to the economic, social and physical health, safety, welfare, and convenience of the people who live and work in the community. The three (3) community plans that the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor is in are: the Canoga Park - Winnetka - Woodland Hills - West Hills Community Plan, the Encino - Tarzana Community Plan, and the Sherman Oaks - Studio City - Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan.

The **Canoga Park – Winnetka - Woodland Hills Community Plan**<sup>12</sup>, was adopted August 17, 1999. The Proposed Ordinance would be in conformance with the following objectives, and policies of the Canoga Park - Winnetka - Woodland Hills Community Plan Community Plan:

**GOAL 2-** *An economically vital commercial sector offering a diversity of goods and services to meet the needs of the community plan area. This means that commercial land use policies must support maximum efficiency and accessibility of commercial development while preserving the historic commercial and cultural character of the district.*

- Objective 2-1** To conserve and strengthen viable commercial development and encourage recycling of obsolete commercial development.

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<sup>12</sup> The Canoga Park-Winnetka-Woodland Hills Community Plan is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/c2a26cca-955f-42ee-8eeb-332f05286c78/Canoga\\_Park-Winnetka-Woodland\\_Hills-West\\_Hills\\_Community\\_Plan.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/c2a26cca-955f-42ee-8eeb-332f05286c78/Canoga_Park-Winnetka-Woodland_Hills-West_Hills_Community_Plan.pdf)

- Policy 2-1.1** Locate new commercial development in areas currently designated for such development.
- Objective 2-4** Reinforce the identity of distinct commercial districts through the use of design guidelines and development standards.
- Policy 2-4.1** Ensure that commercial infill projects achieve harmony with the best of existing development.

The **Encino - Tarzana Community Plan**<sup>13</sup>, was adopted December 16, 1998. The Proposed Ordinance would be in conformance with the following objectives, and policies of the Encino - Tarzana Community Plan:

**GOAL 2** – *A strong and competitive commercial sector which best serves the needs of the community through maximum efficiency and accessibility while preserving the historic commercial and cultural character of the district.*

- Objective 2-1** To conserve and strengthen viable commercial development.
- Policy 2-1.1** New commercial uses shall be located in existing established commercial areas or existing shopping centers.
- Objective 2-3** To enhance the identity of distinctive commercial districts and to identify pedestrian oriented districts (POD's).
- Policy 2-3.3** Ensure that commercial infill projects achieve harmony with the best of existing development.

The **Sherman Oaks - Studio City - Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan**<sup>14</sup>, was adopted May 13, 1998. The Proposed Ordinance would be in conformance with the following objectives, and policies of the Sherman Oaks - Studio City -Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan:

**GOAL 2** – *A strong and competitive commercial sector which best serves the needs of the community through maximum efficiency and accessibility while preserving the historic commercial and cultural character of the district.*

- Objective 2-1** To conserve and strengthen viable commercial development.
- Policy 2-1.1** New commercial uses shall be located in existing established commercial areas or existing shopping centers.
- Objective 2-3** To enhance the identity of distinctive commercial districts and to identify pedestrian oriented districts (POD's).

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<sup>13</sup> The Encino - Tarzana Community Plan is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/7d419ea7-e1b9-400d-8f7e-ea7f39822527/Encino-Tarzana\\_Community\\_Plan.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/7d419ea7-e1b9-400d-8f7e-ea7f39822527/Encino-Tarzana_Community_Plan.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> The Sherman Oaks - Studio City -Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/8bd3ea98-b6d0-4408-aae7-ddca8f9df8ae/Sherman\\_Oaks-Studio\\_City-Toluca\\_Lake-Cahuenga\\_Pass\\_Community\\_Plan.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/8bd3ea98-b6d0-4408-aae7-ddca8f9df8ae/Sherman_Oaks-Studio_City-Toluca_Lake-Cahuenga_Pass_Community_Plan.pdf)

**Policy 2-3.3** Ensure that commercial infill projects achieve harmony with the best of existing development.

The Proposed Ordinance meets the intent of the goals, objectives, and policies of these Community Plans by utilizing land use tools to enhance business opportunities in the Community Plan areas. The Proposed Ordinance would amend existing regulations to enable an easier process for a business to install a sign and through administratively clearly changes of uses, would facilitate a mix of uses and potentially help to successfully improve and re-open vacant spaces, allowing the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor to function as a stronger commercial center for the surrounding community and the broader region of Los Angeles.

### ***Air Quality Element***

The Proposed Ordinance complies with the Air Quality Element<sup>15</sup>, which was adopted on November 25, 1992, by complying with the following goal, objective, and policies:

**Policy 4.2.4** Ensure that new development is compatible with pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and alternative fuel vehicles (Page 25 of pdf doc)

The introduction of the administrative clearance review process with the Proposed Ordinance will enable businesses to efficiently install pedestrian-oriented signage. For example, projecting signs are commonly utilized within multi-tenant centers to aid in wayfinding. Should businesses take advantage of this easier sign installation process for pedestrian signage, those traversing the Corridor by foot or bike will also be able to identify businesses more readily by not needing to view the business from the street to see the identification signage that is often oriented toward the main Boulevard. This will in turn contribute to a more pedestrian-friendly environment and disincentive vehicle miles traveled within certain communities along the Boulevard, and will thus result in less gas emissions.

### ***Health Element***

The Proposed Ordinance complies with the Plan for a Health Los Angeles<sup>16</sup>, known as the Health and Wellness Element, which was adopted in spring of 2015, by complying with the following policy and implementation program:

**Policy 2.6 Repurpose underutilized spaces for health**  
Work proactively with residents to identify and remove barriers to leverage and repurpose vacant and underutilized spaces as a strategy to improve community health

Since the adoption of the Specific Plan, businesses have identified the Project Permit Compliance process, which is the discretionary review process that is currently required by the Specific Plan, as a significant barrier to being able to take over vacant spaces, as told to the Planning Department by the Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA) and the Business Improvement District (BID) representatives from Studio City, Sherman Oaks, and Encino. Any new business identification signs would be required to undergo a process which

<sup>15</sup> Air Quality Element is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/0ff9a9b0-0adf-49b4-8e07-0c16f6ea70bc/Air\\_Quality\\_Element.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/0ff9a9b0-0adf-49b4-8e07-0c16f6ea70bc/Air_Quality_Element.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Healthy Places LA is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/2442d4df-34b3-4683-8eb9-b5ea1182782b/Plan\\_for\\_a\\_Healthy\\_Los\\_Angeles.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/2442d4df-34b3-4683-8eb9-b5ea1182782b/Plan_for_a_Healthy_Los_Angeles.pdf)

can take weeks to months. Especially within the critical first few months of operation, it is imperative for a business to be able to identify itself and advertise. For landowners, this can pose a challenge to leasing empty space as prospective tenants may decide to operate in areas without such a requirement. The creation of an administrative process with the Proposed Ordinance will make this process easier and remove a significant barrier to businesses being able to successfully improve, occupy and re-open vacant spaces.

**Implementation Program P1- Healthy Building Design Guidelines:**

“exterior building design that promotes ‘eyes on the street’ and a ‘pedestrian oriented environment’ “

As stated previously, the introduction of the administrative clearance review process with the Proposed Ordinance will enable businesses to more easily install pedestrian-oriented signage, like projecting signs. This will in turn contribute to a more pedestrian-oriented environment.

***Mobility Plan 2035***

The Proposed Ordinance also complies with the Mobility Plan 2035<sup>17</sup>, originally adopted on August 11, 2015 and most recently amended September 7, 2016. Specifically, the Proposed Ordinance complies with the following initiatives and policies:

**Citywide General Plan Circulation System Maps**

Maps in the Mobility Plan 2035 that show the street designations for roadways in Los Angeles.

By updating the references in the Specific Plan to the nomenclature of street classifications designated in the Mobility Plan 2035, the Proposed Ordinance complies with that element of the General Plan.

**Policy 4.3 - Fair and Equal Treatment -**

Ensure the fair and equal treatment of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and education levels with respect to the development and implementation of citywide transportation policies and programs (page 123)

**Plan text from Policy 4.3:**

The City should strive to inform and involve environmental justice groups, community-based organizations, and all concerned residents in the planning and monitoring process of new and ongoing transportation policies and programs.

**Policy 4.4 - Community Collaboration**

Continue to support the role of community engagement in the design outcomes and implementation of mobility projects.

**Policy 4.10 - Public-Private Partnerships**

Encourage partnerships with community groups (residents and business/property owners) to initiate and maintain enhanced public rights-of-way projects.

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The Proposed Ordinance includes a new requirement for the Plan Review Board to have members with a diversity of lived experience. The Board would have members who live in, work in, own property in, have experience with transit or cycling within, who is a person with a disability and/or represents a non-profit that advocates for accessibility improvements for people with disabilities, and who will serve the community in the Specific Plan area. This will ensure that community-based organizations will have a designated “voice” on the board. Given the PRB specifically is tasked with oversight of a mitigation fee which is utilized on public-right-of-way projects, it is imperative that the input of community groups is included. Further, ensuring a diversity of lived experiences will ensure a well-rounded discussion on the merits of various proposals before the board.

### **3. Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Findings**

#### **Specific Plan Amendment, LAMC Section 11.5.7 G**

The Specific Plan Amendment Procedures in LAMC Section 11.5.7 G refer the processing of Amendments to LAMC Section 12.32, and Los Angeles City Charter Section 558 and LAMC Section 12.32 (C)(7) require that prior to adopting a land use ordinance, the City Council make findings that the ordinance complies with the General Plan and conforms with public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice. The Proposed Ordinance is in conformity with the aforementioned as follows:

Public Necessity. The Proposed Ordinance is in conformity with public necessity because it will promote economic opportunity by introducing policies that help maintain a viable retail base in the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor. Economic opportunity in all communities is essential to improve social equity and maintain the quality of life. A business-friendly environment is a requirement for protecting current jobs and developing new ones. The Proposed Ordinance addresses changing consumer needs and concerns raised by local business leaders.

Convenience. The Proposed Ordinance is in conformity with public convenience because it will enable smaller businesses to open more quickly and with smaller fees than before in the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor. Commercial services are necessary for the well-being of residents, students, and visitors. Additionally, the business-friendly goals of this Specific Plan Amendment create opportunities for new establishments to serve nearby residents. For those residing within or near the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor, this would reduce the need to drive greater distances to other communities, or cities outside Los Angeles, to dine, shop, or receive commercial services.

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Good Zoning Practice. The Proposed Ordinance is in conformity with good zoning practice because its policies aim to support Citywide and community goals. The language clean-up and alignment of the Specific Plan with more recently passed regulations will be easier for City Staff and the public to comprehend. The Specific Plan Amendment will remove

burdensome land use regulations regarding processes for signage, interior construction, tenant improvements, and changes of use in the Specific Plan, and in streamlining those processes support businesses in the Corridor. This facilitation for businesses aligns with the Executive Directive No. 4<sup>18</sup> from Mayor Bass.

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

**Objective 3.4** 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

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the same time conserving existing neighborhoods and related districts.

- Policy 3.413** Establish incentives for the attraction of growth and development of districts, centers, and mixed-use boulevards targeted for growth that may include: ...
- h. Streamlined development review processes
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**Goal 3E** Pedestrian-oriented, high activity, multi- and mixed-use centers that support and provide identity for Los Angeles' communities.

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By streamlining changes of use and interior construction, the Proposed Ordinance is allowing these commercial spaces to be more readily improved, which include interior alterations related to tenant improvements that help a business comply with building and safety codes. These improvements provide additional opportunities for businesses to exist and thrive in neighborhood serving areas within walking distance which in turn is vital for a healthy pedestrian environment. Further, by facilitating a business's ability to install a sign quickly and more readily under the streamlined administrative process, the pedestrian experience is improved by helping orient those walking to the businesses nearby.

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**Objective 7.2** Establish a balance of land uses that provides for commercial and industrial development which meets the needs of local residents, sustains economic growth, and assures maximum feasible environmental quality.

- Policy 7.2.2** Concentrate commercial development entitlements in areas best able to support them, including community and regional centers, transit stations, and mixed-use corridors. This concentration prevents commercial development from encroaching on existing residential neighborhoods.
- Policy 7.2.3** Encourage new commercial development in proximity to rail and bus transit corridors and stations.
- Policy 7.2.4** Ensure that the City has enough capacity to accommodate the development of general commercial uses which support community needs in all parts of Los Angeles.

In streamlining signage, changes of use, and interior construction with Administrative Clearance Review, the Proposed Ordinance is encouraging the reuse of existing commercial spaces on a transit corridor, that can help meet the needs of local residents and sustain economic growth, while reducing the impact on the environment as the space is being reused and improved. Further, this reuse retains the commercial uses in the areas that are best meant to accommodate neighborhood serving uses and support the local economy

**GOAL 7D** *A City able to attract and maintain new land uses and businesses.*

- Objective 7.4** Improve the provision of governmental services, expedite the administrative processing of development applications, and minimize public and private development application costs.
- Policy 7.4.1** Develop and maintain a streamlined development review process to assure the City's competitiveness within the Southern California region.
- Policy 7.4.2** Maximize opportunities for "by-right" development.
- Policy 7.4.3** Maintain development fee structures that do not unreasonably burden specific industry groups, are financially competitive with other cities in the region, and reduce uncertainty to the development community.

By streamlining signage, changes of use and interior construction through Administrative Clearance Review, the Proposed Ordinance is facilitating a business's ability to move into an existing space more readily, which is reducing their burden and making the process more akin to a by-right process. Additionally, the Administrative Clearance Review process will reduce the permitting fees a business is required to pay to move into their space. Overall, the Administrative Clearance Review process helps to create a pragmatic process that provides clarity and reduces uncertainty to the development community.

### **Community Plans**

As noted above, the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor traverses across three (3) community plans, which all set forth planning purposes, objectives, and policies for land uses within their boundaries. All the community plans state that their purposes are to promote an arrangement of land uses, streets, and services which will encourage and contribute to the economic, social and physical health, safety, welfare, and convenience of the people who live and work in the community. The three (3) community plans that the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor is in are: the Canoga Park - Winnetka - Woodland Hills - West Hills Community Plan, the Encino - Tarzana Community Plan, and the Sherman Oaks - Studio City - Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan.

The **Canoga Park – Winnetka - Woodland Hills Community Plan**<sup>21</sup>, was adopted August 17, 1999. The Proposed Ordinance would be in conformance with the following objectives, and policies of the Canoga Park - Winnetka - Woodland Hills Community Plan Community Plan:

**GOAL 2-** *An economically vital commercial sector offering a diversity of goods and services to meet the needs of the community plan area. This means that commercial land use policies must support maximum efficiency and accessibility of commercial development while preserving the historic commercial and cultural character of the district.*

**Objective 2-1** To conserve and strengthen viable commercial development and encourage recycling of obsolete commercial development.

**Policy 2-1.1** Locate new commercial development in areas currently designated for such development.

**Objective 2-4** Reinforce the identity of distinct commercial districts through the use of design guidelines and development standards.

**Policy 2-4.1** Ensure that commercial infill projects achieve harmony with the best of existing development.

The **Encino - Tarzana Community Plan**<sup>22</sup>, was adopted December 16, 1998. The Proposed Ordinance would be in conformance with the following objectives, and policies of the Encino - Tarzana Community Plan:

**GOAL 2 –** *A strong and competitive commercial sector which best serves the needs of the community through maximum efficiency and accessibility while preserving the historic commercial and cultural character of the district.*

<sup>21</sup> The Canoga Park-Winnetka-Woodland Hills Community Plan is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/c2a26cca-955f-42ee-8eeb-332f05286c78/Canoga\\_Park-Winnetka-Woodland\\_Hills-West\\_Hills\\_Community\\_Plan.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/c2a26cca-955f-42ee-8eeb-332f05286c78/Canoga_Park-Winnetka-Woodland_Hills-West_Hills_Community_Plan.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> The Encino - Tarzana Community Plan is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/7d419ea7-e1b9-400d-8f7e-ea7f39822527/Encino-Tarzana\\_Community\\_Plan.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/7d419ea7-e1b9-400d-8f7e-ea7f39822527/Encino-Tarzana_Community_Plan.pdf)

- Objective 2-1** To conserve and strengthen viable commercial development.
- Policy 2-1.1** New commercial uses shall be located in existing established commercial areas or existing shopping centers.
- Objective 2-3** To enhance the identity of distinctive commercial districts and to identify pedestrian oriented districts (POD's).
- Policy 2-3.3** Ensure that commercial infill projects achieve harmony with the best of existing development.

The **Sherman Oaks - Studio City - Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan**<sup>23</sup>, was adopted May 13, 1998. The Proposed Ordinance would be in conformance with the following objectives, and policies of the Sherman Oaks - Studio City -Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan:

**GOAL 2** – *A strong and competitive commercial sector which best serves the needs of the community through maximum efficiency and accessibility while preserving the historic commercial and cultural character of the district.*

- Objective 2-1** To conserve and strengthen viable commercial development.
- Policy 2-1.1** New commercial uses shall be located in existing established commercial areas or existing shopping centers.
- Objective 2-3** To enhance the identity of distinctive commercial districts and to identify pedestrian oriented districts (POD's).
- Policy 2-3.3** Ensure that commercial infill projects achieve harmony with the best of existing development.

The Proposed Ordinance meets the intent of the goals, objectives, and policies of these Community Plans by utilizing land use tools to enhance business opportunities in the Community Plan areas. The Proposed Ordinance would amend existing regulations to enable an easier process for a business to install a sign and through administratively clearly changes of uses, would facilitate a mix of uses and potentially help to successfully improve and re-open vacant spaces, allowing the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor to function as a stronger commercial center for the surrounding community and the broader region of Los Angeles.

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<sup>23</sup> The Sherman Oaks - Studio City -Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/8bd3ea98-b6d0-4408-aae7-ddca8f9df8ae/Sherman\\_Oaks-Studio\\_City-Toluca\\_Lake-Cahuenga\\_Pass\\_Community\\_Plan.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/8bd3ea98-b6d0-4408-aae7-ddca8f9df8ae/Sherman_Oaks-Studio_City-Toluca_Lake-Cahuenga_Pass_Community_Plan.pdf)

## Air Quality Element

The Proposed Ordinance complies with the Air Quality Element<sup>24</sup>, which was adopted on November 25, 1992, by complying with the following goal, objective, and policies:

**Policy 4.2.4** Ensure that new development is compatible with pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and alternative fuel vehicles (Page 25 of pdf doc)

The introduction of the administrative clearance review process with the Proposed Ordinance will enable businesses to efficiently install pedestrian-oriented signage. For example, projecting signs are commonly utilized within multi-tenant centers to aid in wayfinding. Should businesses take advantage of this easier sign installation process for pedestrian signage, those traversing the Corridor by foot or bike will also be able to identify businesses more readily by not needing to view the business from the street to see the identification signage that is often oriented toward the main Boulevard. This will in turn contribute to a more pedestrian-friendly environment and disincentive vehicle miles traveled within certain communities along the Boulevard, and will thus result in less gas emissions.

## Health Element

The Proposed Ordinance complies with the Plan for a Health Los Angeles<sup>25</sup>, known as the Health and Wellness Element, which was adopted in spring of 2015, by complying with the following policy and implementation program:

**Policy 2.6 Repurpose underutilized spaces for health**  
Work proactively with residents to identify and remove barriers to leverage and repurpose vacant and underutilized spaces as a strategy to improve community health

Since the adoption of the Specific Plan, businesses have identified the Project Permit Compliance process, which is the discretionary review process that is currently required by the Specific Plan, as a significant barrier to being able to take over vacant spaces, as told to the Planning Department by the Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA) and the Business Improvement District (BID) representatives from Studio City, Sherman Oaks, and Encino. Any new business identification signs would be required to undergo a process which can take weeks to months. Especially within the critical first few months of operation, it is imperative for a business to be able to identify itself and advertise. For landowners, this can pose a challenge to leasing empty space as prospective tenants may decide to operate in areas without such a

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<sup>24</sup> Air Quality Element is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/0ff9a9b0-0adf-49b4-8e07-0c16f6ea70bc/Air\\_Quality\\_Element.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/0ff9a9b0-0adf-49b4-8e07-0c16f6ea70bc/Air_Quality_Element.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Healthy Places LA is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/2442d4df-34b3-4683-8eb9-b5ea1182782b/Plan\\_for\\_a\\_Healthy\\_Los\\_Angeles.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/2442d4df-34b3-4683-8eb9-b5ea1182782b/Plan_for_a_Healthy_Los_Angeles.pdf)

requirement. The creation of an administrative process with the Proposed Ordinance will make this process easier and remove a significant barrier to businesses being able to successfully improve, occupy and re-open vacant spaces.

**Implementation Program P1- Healthy Building Design Guidelines:**  
“exterior building design that promotes ‘eyes on the street’ and a ‘pedestrian oriented environment’ “

As stated previously, the introduction of the administrative clearance review process with the Proposed Ordinance will enable businesses to more easily install pedestrian-oriented signage, like projecting signs. This will in turn contribute to a more pedestrian-oriented environment.

### **Mobility Plan 2035**

The Proposed Ordinance also complies with the Mobility Plan 2035<sup>26</sup>, originally adopted on August 11, 2015 and most recently amended September 7, 2016. Specifically, the Proposed Ordinance complies with the following initiatives and policies:

#### **Citywide General Plan Circulation System Maps**

Maps in the Mobility Plan 2035 that show the street designations for roadways in Los Angeles.

By updating the references in the Specific Plan to the nomenclature of street classifications designated in the Mobility Plan 2035, the Proposed Ordinance complies with that element of the General Plan.

#### **Policy 4.3 - Fair and Equal Treatment -**

Ensure the fair and equal treatment of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and education levels with respect to the development and implementation of citywide transportation policies and programs (page 123)

#### **Plan text from Policy 4.3:**

The City should strive to inform and involve environmental justice groups, community-based organizations, and all concerned residents in the planning and monitoring process of new and ongoing transportation policies and programs.

#### **Policy 4.4 - Community Collaboration**

Continue to support the role of community engagement in the design outcomes and implementation of mobility projects.

#### **Policy 4.10 - Public-Private Partnerships**

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<sup>26</sup> Mobility Plan 2035 is online at: [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/523f2a95-9d72-41d7-aba5-1972f84c1d36/Mobility\\_Plan\\_2035.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/523f2a95-9d72-41d7-aba5-1972f84c1d36/Mobility_Plan_2035.pdf)

Encourage partnerships with community groups (residents and business/property owners) to initiate and maintain enhanced public rights-of-way projects.

The Proposed Ordinance includes a new requirement for the Plan Review Board to have members with a diversity of lived experience. The Board would have members who live in, work in, own property in, have experience with transit or cycling within, who is a person with a disability and/or represents a non-profit that advocates for accessibility improvements for people with disabilities, and who will serve the community in the Specific Plan area. This will ensure that community-based organizations will have a designated “voice” on the board. Given the PRB specifically is tasked with oversight of a mitigation fee which is utilized on public-right-of-way projects, it is imperative that the input of community groups is included. Further, ensuring a diversity of lived experiences will ensure a well-rounded discussion on the merits of various proposals before the board.

#### **4. Other Finding**

##### **State Law Restrictions on Zoning Actions under Housing Crisis Act (SB 330/SB8) and California Government Code Section 66300 et. seq.**

On October 9, 2019, Governor Newsom signed into law Senate Bill 330 (SB 330), the Housing Crisis Act of 2019. The act amended existing State laws (e.g. California Government Code Sections 65589.5, 65940, 65943, 65950, Sections 65905.5, 65913.10, and 65941.1) and created new regulations (California Government Code Section 66300<sup>27</sup> et. seq.) around the production, preservation and planning of housing. The bill took effect in January 1, 2020 and sunsets on January 1, 2025. Senate Bill 8 extended key provisions of SB 330 until January 1, 2030. The goal of SB 330 and amended Government Code is to create certainty in the development of housing projects, speeding up the review of these projects. California Government Code now requires that the historic status or designation of any site be determined at the time an application for a discretionary action is deemed complete. Nonobjective design review standards established after January 1, 2020, cannot be imposed or enforced. Based on this law, any zoning amendment that results in a net downzoning or otherwise reduces housing capacity (with limited exceptions involving health and safety, affordable housing, and voter initiatives) are prohibited. Moratoriums on housing development, or limits on approval, permits, or housing units cannot be imposed by local jurisdictions. These restrictions do not apply to zoning amendments that result in no net loss in zoned housing capacity or intensity.

As noted above, the Proposed Ordinance is administrative in nature and does not change any development standards other than signage. As no net loss in zoned housing capacity or intensity is proposed with the amendment, the project complies with the Housing Crisis Act of 2019, SB 330, SB8, and California Government Code Section 66300 et. seq.

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<sup>27</sup> California Government Code Section 66300 (Housing Crisis Act of 2019):  
[https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&division=1.&title=7.&part=&chapter=12.&article=](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&division=1.&title=7.&part=&chapter=12.&article=)

## 5. CEQA Finding

As demonstrated in **Exhibit C**, the City of Los Angeles determined based on the whole of the administrative record, that the Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301 (Class 1 for existing structures, including interior alterations for tenant improvements); Section 15303 (Class 3 as applied to small structures for limited changes of use and interior alterations related to tenant improvements); Section 15311 (Class 11 for on-premises signs); and Section 15320 (Class 20 for changes in reorganization of local governmental agencies relating to the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan Review Board (PRB) appointments and administration, administrative project review process, updated language to reflect new ordinances and language clean up, recognition of a sixth community, and updated maps). There is no substantial evidence demonstrating that an exception to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 applies.