

JUSTIFICATION/FINDINGS

General Plan/Charter Findings

1. General Plan Land Use Designation. The project site, located at 9712 Oak Pass Road, is located within the Bel Air-Beverly Crest Community Planning Area, which was last updated in November, 1996. The site is irregularly-shaped and comprised of eleven parcels and approximately 32.67 acres of lot area. The Community Plan currently designates the site with land use designations of Minimum Residential, Very Low I Residential, and Very Low II Residential, which includes RE15, RE20 and RE40 as corresponding zones.

The proposed amendment would re-designate the Project Site as Specialized Hospitality and Residential, a new land use designation which would list specific plan as the corresponding zone. The proposed zone change to a new specific plan would be consistent with the adoption of the proposed Amendment and would be in substantial conformance with the purpose, intent, and provisions of the General Plan as reflected within the Bel Air-Beverly Crest Community Plan.

2. General Plan Text. The Bel Air-Beverly Crest Community Plan text includes the following relevant issues and policies:

Residential Issues:

- **Need to minimize grading, limit land use intensity, and preserve natural topography in hillside areas.** The proposed project would comply with proposed development standards in the proposed specific plan that would regulate grading, use and density and respect natural topography.
- **Need to preserve open space and the natural character of mountainous areas.** The proposed project would set aside approximately 5 acres for open space protected against future development.
- **Need to improve the visual environment through the development of appropriate design criteria and controls.** The proposed specific plan would include design guidelines to ensure a high quality visual environment compatible with the surrounding environment.

Residential Policies:

- **The open and natural character of single-family development of the Bel Air-Beverly Crest Community is desirable and deserving of public protection.** The specific plan would provide customized development standards and design guidelines to ensure that development is compatible with the open and natural character of development.
- **All areas within Bel Air-Beverly Crest should be subject to improved design standards to ensure compatibility of new development with the scenic character of the Community.** The proposed specific plan includes design guidelines customized for the project site.

Commercial Policies

- **It is proposed that off-street parking be provided at a ratio consistent with the Municipal code, as a minimum.** The proposed specific plan would require parking capacity consistent with off-street parking requirements of the Municipal Code.

Open Space and Conservation Policies

- **The Bel Air-Beverly Crest Community is deemed to be an area of very beautiful and attractive residences and of a high quality environment worthy of public protection.** The proposed land use designation and specific plan are designed to allow for boutique hotel and estate residential uses with quality standards of the highest caliber, creating an exceptionally beautiful development that would serve as a landmark amenity in Los Angeles.

3. Framework Element.

The Framework Element includes the following goals relevant to the proposed amendment and zone change:

Land Use

GOAL 3B: Preservation of the City's stable single-family residential neighborhoods.

Objective 3.5: Ensure that the character and scale of stable single-family residential neighborhoods is maintained, allowing for infill development provided that it is compatible with and maintains the scale and character of existing development.

The proposed amendment would preserve existing single-family neighborhoods in the area. The residential uses would be single-family residential estate uses on one-acre minimum lots generally surrounded by open space protected against future development. The hotel use would be governed by customized development standards to reduce bulk and height and require sufficient landscaping to ensure compatibility with surrounding single family residential neighborhoods.

Economic Development

GOAL 7A: A vibrant economically revitalized City.

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.

The proposed amendment would allow for the establishment of a world-class boutique hotel integrated with the site's topography and native landscaping to create a unique haven in a secluded, organic environment. The proposed hotel's design, hillside setting, vistas, and amenities would offer an unparalleled experience and caliber of service, establishing a landmark amenity in the City of Los Angeles, creating high quality jobs and generating new revenue sources for the City.

4. Housing Element. The proposed amendment and zone change will support objectives of the Housing Element.

Objective 1.1: Produce an adequate supply of rental and ownership housing in order to meet current and projected needs.

Policy 1.1.3: Facilitate new construction and preservation of a range of different housing types that address the particular needs of the city's households.

The project will provide new single family housing in the form of nine residential estates that will be compatible with the surrounding residential uses.

Objective 2.3: Promote sustainable buildings, which minimize adverse effects on the environment and minimize the use of non-renewable resources.

Policy 2.3.3: Promote and facilitate reduction of energy consumption in new and existing housing.

The proposed Project would use organic fertilizers limiting the use of chemicals and pesticides. The boutique hotel and residential estates would be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certified, and the use of alternative renewable energy would be a design feature of the proposed Project.

5. Sewerage Facilities Element. The Sewerage Facilities of the General Plan will not be affected by the proposed project and the existing sewer system should be able to accommodate the total flows for the proposed project.

6. Charter Finding - 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 Project Site is a large, approximately 32.67-acre site within Benedict Canyon. While portions of the site were previously developed and existing roadways and other infrastructure traverse the site, most of the previous structures have been removed and the site exists as a vacant island in the midst of a primarily residential area. The site's topography creates an opportunity for development that integrates with the hillsides, allowing for enjoyment of stunning vistas and foliage while avoiding impacts to major ridgelines and minimizing impacts to existing residential uses. The site's size, location and setting offer a unique opportunity for a specialized, boutique hotel that would provide a landmark amenity in the City of Los Angeles and North America, creating

quality jobs and generating revenue for the City. The site thus has significant social, economic and physical identity.

7. Charter Finding - 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.

The proposed amendment would re-designate the Project Site from Minimum Residential, Very Low I Residential, and Very Low II Residential, to a new land use designation of Specialized Hospitality and Residential. The proposed amendment of the land use designation, in conjunction with the proposed zone change to a new specific plan, would allow the redevelopment of the site with a 99-guestroom hotel, nine residential estates, parking, private streets and infrastructure and open spaces. The Project Site offers a unique opportunity to create a landmark hotel in the City of Los Angeles that would create quality jobs and generate new revenue for the City of Los Angeles. As discussed in Finding 1-5, above, the amendment of the land use designation would be consistent with the purpose, intent and provisions of the General Plan.

8. Charter Finding - City Charter Finding 558. The proposed Amendment to the Bel Air-Beverly Crest Community Plan will be in conformance with public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.

The proposed amendment to the Bel Air-Beverly Crest Community Plan would re-designate the Project Site from Minimum Residential, Very Low I Residential, and Very Low II Residential to a new land use designation of Specialized Hospitality and Residential. In conjunction with the proposed amendment, the proposed Vesting Zone Change to a new Specific Plan would permit the development of the Project Site with a 99-guestroom boutique hotel integrated with the site's topography and offering an unparalleled guest experience, establishing a landmark hotel amenity in the City of Los Angeles. The proposed amendment and zone change would also permit the development of nine residential estates, providing additional single family housing.

Public Necessity, Convenience, and General Welfare

The proposed amendment and zone change would serve the City of Los Angeles by allowing the establishment of a new boutique hotel that would create quality jobs and generate new revenues for the City. The boutique hotel would offer a secluded, organic environment, where guests would enjoy unparalleled natural beauty and scenic vistas. A world-class boutique hotel in this location would establish a landmark amenity that is unique among southern California hotels, and would increase tourism revenue. The residential estates would provide new single family housing, contributing to the diversity of housing types within the City. The proposed project would provide a comprehensive and thoughtful plan for the large 32.67-acre site, avoiding piecemeal development and ensuring appropriate infrastructure. The proposed Specialized Hospitality and Residential land use designation, and corresponding specific plan zoning, would allow for customized development standards that would implement the objectives of existing hillside development regulations, while tailoring standards to the site's unique features and programming. The creation of a comprehensive development scheme for this large site would minimize impacts on surrounding development while achieving the desired use. The project site

currently exists as a vacant island in the midst of residential development. Overgrown brush, invasive species and lack of maintenance in vacant hillside areas can contribute to increased fire risks for surrounding homes. Planned development of this 32.67 site will allow for mitigation of fire risk for both the site itself and surrounding properties. Improved vehicular access through the site, and new emergency access connections that would accompany planned development of the site would improve the emergency access and service for the larger area.

Good Zoning Practice

The proposed amendment and accompanying specific plan constitute good zoning practice by providing a comprehensive and thoughtful plan for the large 32.67-acre hillside site. The specialized land use designation and zoning would allow for the desired uses while providing customized development standards and regulations to achieve the objectives of existing hillside regulations. Customized zoning would allow for comprehensive planning of a unique site, avoiding piecemeal development and ensuring appropriate infrastructure. The proposed Specific Plan would apply the principles of hillside development standards to the new hotel use, achieving compatibility with surrounding uses. Comprehensive site planning would increase opportunities to preserve existing mature trees, maximize open space and minimize import/export of soils.

Entitlement Findings

9. Vesting Zone Change and Height District Change Findings.

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10. Site Plan Review Findings.

a. The project is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan, applicable community plan, and any applicable specific plan.

As discussed above, the proposed vesting zone change to specific plan would be consistent with the proposed land use designation, which proposes customized development standards to allow for boutique hotel and residential estate uses while respecting the site topography and landscaping and minimizing impacts on surrounding residential properties. The proposed Conceptual Site Plan proposes a 99-guestroom boutique hotel on Subarea A, and nine residential estates on Subarea B, as provided in the proposed Specific Plan. The proposed tentative tract map re-subdivides the site into ten lots. Lots 10 on Subarea A is approximately 16.13 acres, in compliance with the minimum lot area of 16 acres provided in the Specific Plan for Subarea A. Lots 1-9 on Subarea B are in compliance with the minimum lot area of one acre provided in the proposed specific plan for Subarea B. Hotel development is below the 1.5 FAR maximum provided in the proposed specific plan. Hotel buildings are generally dispersed throughout Subarea A and have maximum height envelopes of 80 feet above finished grade in order to maximize the number of mature trees retained in place and minimize grading. Hotel buildings also do not exceed a height of 1028 feet MSL, which ensures that structures do not extend significantly above the height of Oak Pass Drive. Hotel buildings are terraced into hillsides to preserve existing view sheds and to integrate development with the topography and foliage.

For the residential estates on Subarea B, maximum residential square footage would be regulated by the Specific Plan, and building heights envelopes would not exceed 45 feet above finished grade. Proposed design guidelines would further ensure compatibility.

As discussed above, the Project would meet the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan and the Central City Community Plan area. As such, the project is in substantial conformance with the General Plan and Community Plan.

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b. The project consists of an arrangement of buildings and structures (including height, bulk and setbacks), off-street parking facilities, loading areas, lighting, landscaping, trash collection, and other such pertinent improvements, that is or will be compatible with existing and future development on adjacent properties and neighboring properties.

As discussed above, customized development standards would ensure that the proposed uses will be compatible with surrounding development, will minimize tree removal and grading and will preserve existing viewsheds and integrate with the site's topography and environment. Proposed design guidelines would further ensure compatibility.

Building Arrangement (height, bulk and setbacks)

As discussed above, the hotel buildings will consist of a series of buildings dispersed throughout the site, minimizing bulk. Hotel buildings will be set back at least 15 feet from the property line and there will be a minimum separation of 20 feet between buildings on Subarea A. Hotel buildings will be limited to a height envelope of 80 feet above finished grade, which minimizes lot coverage, tree removal and grading. However, buildings also will be limited to 1028 feet MSL, ensuring that buildings do not extend significantly above Oak Pass Drive.

The residential estates will be generally surrounded by areas of open space protected against future development, providing a significant separation from most adjacent properties.

Off-Street Parking Facilities and Loading Areas

The Project proposes to exceed LAMC off-street parking standards by providing ample parking capacity in subterranean and above ground parking structures on site. Hotel loading areas will meet LAMC requirements.

Lighting

The proposed project will comply with lighting standards set forth in the Specific Plan to ensure low level lighting and avoid impacts on views in the project vicinity.

Landscaping

Approximately 60% of the 32.67-acre site will consist of open space, landscaping and other green spaces. Approximately 5 acres will be set aside as open space protected against development. Landscaped areas will emphasize native plantings in accordance with the conceptual landscape plan included in the proposed Specific Plan.

Trash Collection

The project proposes to provide trash and recycling areas for the hotel within one or more buildings.

Fences and/or Walls

Fences and walls are regulated by the proposed Specific Plan and will utilize appropriate screening and will include visually permeable components in some locations to integrate with the environment.

Sustainability

The Proposed Project would use organic fertilizers limiting the use of chemicals and pesticides. The boutique hotel and residential estates would be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certified, and the use of alternative renewable energy would be a design feature of the Proposed Project.

c. Any residential project provides recreational and service amenities to improve habitability for its residents and minimize impacts on neighboring properties.

The residential estates will consist of minimum one-acre lots with sufficient space for recreational amenities, such as swimming pools and decks. The hotel site will incorporate walking paths and open areas that will provide an additional resource for recreation.