

RESOLUTION NO. 2016-P002

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING TO THE CITY COUNCIL (1) APPROVAL OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, P2015-0141-CP, HEIGHT EXCEPTION, P2015-0141-HTEX, AND TENTATIVE TRACT MAP, P2015-0141-TTM FOR PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT NO. 11, CONSISTING OF A MIXED USE TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING A 148 ROOM HOTEL, APPROXIMATELY 57,742 GROSS SQUARE FEET OF RETAIL AND RESTAURANT USES, 196,333 SQUARE FEET OF OFFICE USE AND 200 RESIDENTIAL DWELLING UNITS LOCATED AT 8824 NATIONAL BOULEVARD; AND (2) ADOPTION OF THE RELATED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

(Comprehensive Plan, P2015-0141-CP, Tentative Tract Map, P2015-0141-TTM and Height Exception, P2015-0141-HTEX)

WHEREAS, on November 25, 2015, Culver Station, LLC as the applicant (the "Applicant") of 8824 National Boulevard, filed an application for a Comprehensive Plan, Height Exception and Tentative Tract Map for Planned Development District No. 11 (PD 11), consisting of a mixed use transit oriented development (TOD) including a 148 room hotel, approximately 196,333 gross square feet of office use, 57,742 gross square feet of retail and restaurant use, 200 residential dwelling units, and 1,531 parking spaces, distributed as: a) a stand-alone 5-story office building with ground floor retail and restaurant use; b) two interconnected 5 and 6-story buildings that will include a 200-unit residential building, a 148-room boutique hotel, and a mix of retail and restaurant uses on the ground level of the two buildings; c) landscaped courtyards and open spaces at both the pedestrian and podium levels; d) ground-level podium and subterranean parking; and e) parking for users of the adjacent Metro Station (the "Project"), the Project site is described more fully as lots 1 through 52 of

1 Tract No. 5461; a portion of Exposition Boulevard; and a portion of Rancho Rincon De Los
2 Bueyes; in the City of Culver City, County of Los Angeles, State of California; and,

3 WHEREAS, in order to implement the proposed Project, approval of the following
4 applications are required:

- 5
- 6 1. Comprehensive Plan: To ensure the Project is in compliance with all required
7 standards and City ordinances, including PD 11, and establish all onsite and offsite
8 conditions of approval to reflect the site features and compatibility of the proposed
9 Project with the uses on adjoining properties,
 - 10 2. Tentative Tract Map: To ensure compliance with State and local subdivision law and
11 ordinances because the project requires land and airspace subdivisions, and
 - 12 3. Height Exception: To ensure the Project is in compliance with all required standards
13 and City ordinances, and to ensure consistency with PD 11 and the Design for
14 Development for the Exposition Light Rail Transit and Station Area established by
15 the former Culver City Redevelopment Agency.

16 WHEREAS, on February 17, 2016, after conducting a duly noticed public hearing on
17 the subject applications, including full consideration of the applications, plans, staff report,
18 environmental information and all testimony presented, the Planning Commission (i) by a vote
19 of 5 to 0, recommended to the City Council adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration, in
20 accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), finding the Project, as
21 mitigated, will not result in significant adverse environmental impacts; (ii) by a vote of 5 to 0,
22 recommended to the City Council adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
23 (MMRP), which prescribes mitigation measures that will reduce the Project's potentially
24 significant impacts to a less than significant levels; and (iii) by a vote of 5 to 0, recommended
25 to the City Council approval of Comprehensive Plan, P2015-0141-CP; Height Exception,
26 P2015-0141-HTEX; and Tentative Tract Map, P2015-0141-TTM, as set forth herein below.
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1 NOW, THEREFORE, THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CULVER
2 CITY, CALIFORNIA, RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

3 SECTION 1. Pursuant to the foregoing recitations and the provisions of Culver City
4 Municipal Code (CCMC), the following findings are hereby made:

5 **Comprehensive Plan for Planned Development Zoning District No. 11:**
6

7 As outlined in CCMC Title 17, Section 17.560.020, the following required findings for a
8 Comprehensive Plan are hereby made:

9 **A. The proposed Comprehensive Plan can be substantially completed within four
10 years.**

11 The Project is planned and scheduled to be completed within three years. The Applicant
12 will construct the entire Project in one phase. Construction is expected to begin in late
2016 with full build-out and occupancy in 2019.

13 **B. The proposed development is capable of creating an environment of sustained
14 desirability and stability or adequate assurance will be provided such objective
15 will be attained.**

16 The projects land uses, consisting of a boutique hotel, creative office space, residential,
17 retail, and dining establishments and an extensive community public open space area
18 all contribute to a desirable and stable transit oriented development as envisioned for
19 the Project site. The Project site plan is based upon the concept of creating a sense of
20 place through connectivity, circulation and gathering. As required by PD 11 project
21 goals, the Project site provides a large and meaningful public park connecting to the
22 Expo transit plaza to accommodate Project users. The Project's extensive open space
23 area, including the Great Lawn and Central Plaza, will be accessible from the Expo
24 Station, office, retail areas, hotel and residential units, creating a dynamic place for the
25 public, commuters, hotel guests and residents to enjoy. Retail and café uses will line the
26 park area and the transit plaza providing desirable opportunities for shopping and dining
27 experiences.

28 The Project's landscape and streetscape design are key elements that help promote a
29 more livable, accessible, and vibrant neighborhood. The Project site plan strives to
create an environment that is pedestrian-oriented. Streetscape improvements around
the Project site are intended to promote area revitalization through the implementation
of pedestrian-friendly streetscape enhancements including canopy street trees, street
furniture, graphics, and new crosswalk paving. The pedestrian experience on all three
street fronts (Washington, National and Venice Boulevards) includes retail and
restaurant spaces that spill out to outdoor dining areas. Hotel, Office and Residential
living spaces above the ground level animate the urban experience, while landscape

1 buffers help to enhance the separation from the streets and create a safe and
2 comfortable pedestrian experience.

3 The Project site plan focuses on sustainability within an urban environment. Low
4 Impact Development (LID) features such as bioswales, filtration planters, and structural
5 soil system are all part of the Project. The Project site plan is designed to promote the
6 use of the Expo light rail transit, buses and other modes of travel with the inclusion of
7 the transit plaza, pedestrian connections, enhanced bus stops, bike parking,
8 opportunities for bike and car sharing.

9 **C. The proposed uses will not be substantially detrimental to present and potential**
10 **surrounding uses but will have a beneficial effect.**

11 A mix of office/retail, transportation, light industrial and commercial uses currently
12 surround the Project site, including the Expo station, Access Culver City mixed use
13 development, Platform office/retail development, another future mixed use TOD project,
14 the Helms Bakery Complex, warehousing and distribution facilities, and various other
15 retail and office establishments. The Project site is currently underutilized with an
16 approximate 4.15 acre surface parking lot serving the Expo station and 1.38 acres of
17 single story, low density industrial and commercial uses fronting Venice Boulevard. The
18 proposed Project will have a beneficial effect by providing new housing, a boutique hotel,
19 creative office space, retail, and dining opportunities; pedestrian friendly public open
20 spaces that can accommodate events; an enhanced streetscape along National,
21 Venice, and Washington Boulevards; as well as inviting paseo/transit plaza along Expo
22 station area. The Project is beneficial and complimentary to adjacent TOD projects and
23 will provide economic, cultural and recreational, benefits to the nearby neighborhoods
24 including the Hayden Tract, Helms Bakery Complex, East Washington area, and
25 Downtown Culver.

26 **D. The streets and thoroughfares serving the development are suitable and adequate**
27 **to carry anticipated traffic and the development will not generate traffic that will**
28 **overload the adjacent street network.**

29 A comprehensive traffic study for the Project was prepared and finalized in November
of 2015 and a supplemental study was submitted in January of 2016. The traffic study
identified mitigations and improvements required by the Project in order to limit traffic
impacts to a less than significant level. These mitigations and improvements include
restriping at the National/Venice Boulevard intersections to allow additional left-turn
lanes for improved circulation; addition of bicycle lanes and bike boxes on National
Boulevard between Washington Boulevard and Venice Boulevard; installation of a traffic
signal at the Project's main driveway entrance; various pedestrian and vehicular
operational improvements at and near the adjacent signalized intersections of Venice
and National Boulevards and Washington and National Boulevards, such as new
crosswalks, larger curb radius and wider sidewalks; installation of new and
improvements to existing sidewalks; new decorative crosswalks; and reconstruction of
existing curb returns. These improvements to the roadways and other public rights-of-

way have been included in the Project design and incorporated into the conditions of approval for the Project and will ensure that the surrounding roadways will be suitable and adequate to carry the anticipated traffic created by the Project.

E. The proposed development is compatible with the surrounding area.

The surrounding area is comprised of mixed use residential, commercial, retail and light industrial buildings. Single and multiple family residential neighborhoods are located further south and east of the Project site. The proposed development is a mixed use development containing both residential and commercial uses (hotel, office, retail and restaurant) along with a significant amount of public open space and is designed to complement and interact with the surrounding area. The TOD goals and objectives for the Project site include: bringing shopping, housing, and employment together to advance the goals of enhanced regional air quality and multi-modal mobility for Culver City, the City of Los Angeles and the region; promoting the Expo Line connection to USC, Staples Center and Downtown Los Angeles, Westside cities, and Downtown Culver City; and connecting the project with Culver City's Hayden Tract, Downtown and Arts District, with enhanced streetscape improvements including new bike lanes, new bus stops, wider sidewalks for pedestrians with new street trees, benches, bicycle racks, and wayfinding signs.

F. The types and locations of any proposed commercial development can be economically justified.

The Project incorporates a significant amount of commercial uses with a 148 room boutique hotel, 196,333 gross square feet of office and 57,742 gross square feet of retail and restaurant space. The commercial uses are designed to serve the residents within the Project itself, as well as the surrounding existing office, residential and commercial developments near the Project site. The office space could serve Project residents, nearby Culver City residents, and companies located further away from the Project site. Further the hotel use will potentially serve regional, national, tourist, and international markets. The density of the area along with existing adjacent mixed use, commercial and residential areas will provide an adequate consumer base for the proposed commercial and office uses.

G. The Comprehensive Plan is in conformance with the General Plan, or a concurrent General Plan amendment is in process.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan is in conformance with the goals, policies and strategies of the General Plan. Specifically, the Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the sites General Plan Land Use "General Corridor" commercial designation. The Comprehensive Plan will allow for a mixed use TOD consisting of pedestrian oriented ground floor retail and restaurants with outdoor dining; extensive outdoor spaces, a hotel use, office uses, and residential uses; as well as enhancements to the streetscape along Washington Boulevard, National Boulevard and Venice Boulevard, and will further the goals and objectives as outlined in the General Plan Land Use Element: Objective 2 -

encouraging the creation of housing in the City; Objective 5 – encouraging new business opportunities that expand the City’s economic base and serve the needs of the City’s residential and business communities; Objective 6 - revitalizing the physical character and economic well-being of the City’s commercial corridors; Objective 7 – maintaining commercial centers that serve community as well as regional markets; Objective 8 – foster the growth of businesses that increase City revenues by promoting attractive, quality retail establishments that serve neighborhood, community and regional markets; Objective 10 – extend the City’s park-like qualities into neighborhoods and business districts through streetscape and urban design improvements; and Objective 12 – ensure that new construction has the highest quality of architectural and site design. The Project will provide new housing supply consistent with the City’s Mixed Use Development Standards and encourage reinvestment in the area thereby improving economic vitality, visual quality, and the pedestrian environment.

H. Any exception from the standards and requirements of this Title is warranted by the design and amenities incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan and is desired by the Council.

No exceptions to the standards and requirements of the City’s Zoning Code have been requested for this Project, except for building height which is reviewed in the Height Exception findings below.

I. Existing and proposed utility services are adequate for the proposed uses.

Review of the Project by the City’s Public Works Department has determined that the proposed utility services and existing utilities that will serve the site are adequate for the proposed uses.

J. The Comprehensive Plan has complied with all applicable City requirements.

The Comprehensive Plan has been prepared in conformance with the Culver City Municipal Code, including the Zoning and Building Codes. This includes submission and review of a proposed site plan and uses; preliminary building plans; landscaping, and lighting; and civil engineering plans. Review by City departments of these plans has determined that the Comprehensive Plan is in compliance with all applicable City requirements.

Tentative Tract Map No. 73978:

As outlined in CCMC Title 15, Section 15.10.265, the following required findings for a Tentative Tract Map are hereby made:

A. The proposed map is consistent with the General Plan.

This subdivision is in conformance with the goals, policies and strategies of the General Plan. Specifically, the subdivision and related development allowed for in the accompanying Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the Project site’s General Plan

Land Use "General Corridor" commercial designation.

B. The design of the proposed subdivision is consistent with the General Plan.

The design of the proposed subdivision and accompanying Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the General Plan Land Use and Housing Element objectives and policies and with PD 11 standards for a mixed use TOD. The subdivision and accompanying Comprehensive Plan fulfills the City's goals of creating a sustainable, place-making development that brings housing, shopping and employment together with convenient mass transit.

C. The site is physically suitable for the type of development.

The Project site is physically suitable for the proposed subdivision in that the Project complies with all PD 11 standards and the proposed structures will meet all applicable development standards. The Project site as designed through the accompanying Comprehensive Plan can accommodate the proposed mixed use TOD project consisting of a 148 room boutique hotel, 196,333 square feet of office use, 57,742 square feet of retail and restaurant use, 200 residential dwelling units, approximately 136,400 square feet of outdoor open spaces, and 1,531 parking spaces.

D. The site is physically suitable for the proposed density of development.

The Project site is physically suitable for the density/massing of the proposed Project as outlined in the accompanying Comprehensive Plan. The subdivision can accommodate the proposed high density use of a typical TOD while not creating significant impacts for neighboring properties and residential areas. The subdivision for land and airspace lots will occur on existing contiguous land parcels and will not result in any new land parcels or physical divisions of existing commercial and residential neighborhoods beyond the Project site.

E. The design of the subdivision is not likely to cause substantial environmental damage or substantially and avoidably injure fish or wildlife or their habitat.

The proposed tentative tract map subdivision together with the onsite and offsite improvements will not cause any known environmental damage and will not damage any fish and/or wildlife habitats because such fish and/or wildlife habitats do not exist on or near the site. The majority of the site is currently a surface parking lot and in the past was developed with various light industrial and commercial uses. The portion fronting Venice Boulevard is occupied by light industrial and commercial uses and thus the Project site does not serve any known habitat for fish or other wildlife.

F. The design of the subdivision is not likely to cause serious public health problems.

1 The proposed tentative tract map subdivision will not cause any known serious public
2 health problems, after implementation of the onsite and offsite improvements;
3 compliance with all applicable subdivision, PD 11, and Zoning Code development
4 standards; and compliance with all Project conditions of approval required by the
5 reviewing agencies of the City, such as the Fire Prevention Division, Planning Division,
6 Building and Safety Division and the Engineering Division. The uses proposed for this
7 subdivision are consistent with commercial corridor and mixed use land uses allowed in
8 both PD 11 and the Zoning Code.

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10 **G. The design of the subdivision will not conflict with easements, acquired by the**
11 **public at large, for access through or use of, property within the proposed**
12 **subdivision.**

13 The proposed Tentative Tract Map subdivision and the onsite and offsite improvements
14 will not conflict with any existing and/or proposed easements. There will be easements
15 for subsurface encroachments into portions of the public right-of-way and easements for
16 both subsurface and surface/above surface encroachments into portions of the Metro
17 right-of-way. These encroachments will not affect public or Metro right-of-way access
18 and use requirements or placement of utilities within the public or Metro right-of-way at
19 either above surface, at surface, or below surface areas.

20 **Height Exception:**

21 Pursuant to the requirements of CCMC Section 17.300.025C and PD 11, height exceptions
22 may be authorized by City Council when all of the following findings can be made:

23 **1. The proposed development is consistent with the purposes and intent of the**
24 **General Plan and other plans adopted in the area in which the Project is located**
25 **and will promote public health, safety and general welfare.**

26 The Project, as designed, will complement and be compatible with the surrounding
27 properties and will in all other respects, conform to the applicable zoning regulations and
28 development standards. The City has designated the surrounding area a Transit
29 Oriented Development District (TOD District) to encourage redevelopment that benefits
by proximity to mass transit. The redevelopment planning for the TOD District facilitates
sustainable building and planning goals that encourage connectivity, good urban design,
walkable and bike-friendly streets, good site access and mixed land use. The Project
will promote these goals and is consistent with the General Plan and other adopted
plans for the area.

The Project as designed promotes the public health, safety and welfare through mixed
land uses that encourage active use of mass transit by tenants, workers and customers.
The additional building height of the Project is offset by significant, usable, ground level
open space. The Project site includes a large central public open space that will be
programmed and operated for public use and a public transit plaza that will provide a

convenient commuter friendly location for retail and seating adjacent to the Culver City Expo Station.

The proposed building design and site layout maintains a good relationship to the surrounding commercial and residential neighborhoods. The overall Project site maintains a low site coverage (approximately 55%) providing the opportunities for significant open space and public space amenities. Further, the Project is located on a site which is greater than 5 acres to create a significant buffer to adjacent properties. It is also bounded by a mix of commercial and industrial uses that will not be negatively impacted by the additional height in the development. The Site is accessed on three sides to promote area circulation and facilitate convenient entry to area parking. The project contains significant parking to address Project and area-wide parking needs. Consequently the proposed development will not create injury to neighboring properties by hindering use or reducing or impairing property values.

2. The extra height in the Project fosters sustainable design and improves architectural massing and other design features to improve the overall development of the property.

The extra height in the Project fosters sustainable design and improves architectural massing and other design features to improve the overall development of the property. The Project site design is based upon sun and shadow and light and air studies. These analyses have been used to improve building orientation and massing, resulting in increased open space throughout the development.

The Project, as designed, creates significantly more open space for community and public use, addresses view corridors and creates visually interesting building form while reducing sun/shade impacts. The increased Project open space has permitted the use of sustainability features, including storm water capture and reuse, solar technology and natural lighting and cooling.

Varied building heights and improved massing of the proposed Project site structures also support the goals and objectives of the TOD by creating a sustainable, mixed-use regional destination which brings shopping, housing, hospitality and employment together into a live, work, play environment. Building types include commercial office with ground floor retail and restaurant uses, multi-family residential with ground floor retail and restaurant uses above, and a boutique hotel with lobby, restaurant and banquet facilities. The mixed-use nature of the development adjacent to the Culver City Expo Station, which is designed with increased open space and enhanced pedestrian amenities, creates synergy with the surrounding TOD District to encourage walkability, biking and use of mass transit.

Therefore, the Project site design with mixed use development provides significant public open space that allows for natural lighting, heating, cooling, use of solar

1 technology and storm water capture for on-site irrigation and is consistent with
2 sustainable best practices.

- 3 **3. The proposed additional building height is necessary in order to ensure the**
4 **financial feasibility of the Project as verified by a financial feasibility study**
5 **demonstrating the financial benefits of constructing the Project at the proposed**
6 **building height(s) in comparison to the current building height limit applicable to**
7 **the property.**

8 If the building height was limited to 56 feet, the financial feasibility of the Project would
9 be compromised. Comparing the proposed development with that of a development
10 program that retains the building footprints and coverage as planned, but eliminates the
11 building area above the established height limit excessively reduces development by
12 approximately 19% of the building floor area. The reduction of building area results in a
13 substantial economic impact that impairs the economics of the development to the point
14 of infeasibility.

15 The project is currently projected to generate a 17.7% levered internal rate of return
16 (IRR) over a six year hold period and an 8.0% stabilized return on cost which are the
17 expected financial thresholds given the overall Project size, scale, product type,
18 construction type and development risk (i.e. there is no Project preleasing)

19 However, if designed to 56 feet the Project returns are adversely impacted by the
20 reduction in square footage and the IRR decreases to 11.3% and the stabilized return
21 on cost is 6.6%. These returns are well below an acceptable investor range given the
22 level of risk associated with the development and the Project could not go forward
23 without significant design changes to increase density through reducing the amount of
24 open space. Therefore additional building height is required in order to ensure financial
25 feasibility given the required zoning and development program.

- 26 **4. The project is located in a Redevelopment Project Area Component Area and is**
27 **consistent with an established Design for Development.**

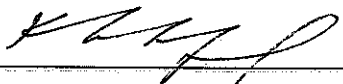
28 The Project site is to be developed as a vertically and horizontally integrated mixed use
29 TOD and is located in Redevelopment Project Area Component Area 3 . The proposed
development is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Redevelopment Plan for
the Culver City Redevelopment Project Area Component Area 3 and the Exposition
Light Rail Transit Station Area Design for Development (Expo DFD) which envisions
area redevelopment supported by mass transit. The Project as designed provides for
a mix of land uses that both support and are benefitted by proximity to transit.

Further, the mixed use TOD conforms to the property zoning, General Plan, PD 11 and
all area plans including planning by Metro and the City of Los Angeles. The Project is
strategically located and designed to be accessible to multi-modal forms of transit
including Expo, local and regional bus transit such as Metro, Culver City Bus, Big Blue
Bus and LA Commuter Express, bike routes along Ballona Creek, Expo, and Venice

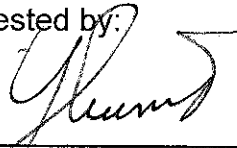
1 Boulevard and major roadways including Venice, Robertson and Washington
2 Boulevards and presents exceptional opportunities to promote transit use given its close
proximity to key activity and employment centers within Culver City and the Westside

3 SECTION 2. Pursuant to the foregoing recitations and findings, the Planning
4 Commission of the City of Culver City, California, hereby recommends to the City Council (1)
5 approval of Comprehensive Plan, P2015-0141-CP, Tentative Tract Map, P2015-0141-TTM,
6 Height Exception, P2015-0141-HTEX, subject to the conditions of approval as set forth in
7 Exhibit "A" (Standard and Special Conditions of Approval) and Exhibit "B" (Mitigation
8 Measures), attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference; and (2) adoption of a
9 related Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
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13 APPROVED and ADOPTED this 17th day of February 2016.
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18 KEVIN LACHOFF, CHAIRPERSON
19 PLANNING COMMISSION
20 CITY OF CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

21 Attested by:

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23 Yvonne Hunt
24 Administrative Secretary
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