



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 18-0644, Version: 1

Item #: PH-1.

CC - PUBLIC HEARING (1) Adoption of a Resolution Certifying the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Adopting the Findings Required by CEQA, Adopting the Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP), and Adopting the Statement of Overriding Considerations (P2016-0208-EIR); (2) Introduction of an Ordinance Approving Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 7 (P2016-0208-CP); and (3) Adoption of a Resolution Approving Certificate of Appropriateness (P2016-0208-HPCA); and (4) Introduction of an Ordinance Approving Development Agreement (P2016-0208-DA) and, to update and expand facilities within The Culver Studios, 14-acre campus located at 9336 West Washington Boulevard.

Meeting Date: January 8, 2018

Contact Person/Dept: Michael Allen / Planning Manager
Sol Blumenfeld / Community Development Director

Phone Number: 310-253-5713

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☒

Action Item: ☒

Attachments: Yes ☒ No ☐

Public Notification: (Mailed) Property owners and occupants within a 500-foot radius of the Project site (12/18/2017), (E-mail) Master Notification List (12/18/2017), (Posted) City website (12/18/2017), (Sign) Posted on the site (12/18/2017), (Published) Culver City News on 12/21/2017, (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (1/03/2018)

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (12/21/17)

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council:

1. Adopt a resolution certifying the Project EIR, adopting findings required by CEQA, adopting the Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP), and adopting the Statement of Overriding Considerations, P2016-0208-EIR (Attachment No. 1); and
2. Introduce an Ordinance approving Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 7 (CPA No. 7), P2016-0208-CP subject to the Conditions of Approval (Attachment No. 2); and
3. Adopt a resolution approving the Project Certificate of Appropriateness (P2016-0208-HPCA)

(Attachment No. 3)

4. Introduce an Ordinance approving the Project Development Agreement (P2016-0208-DA) (Attachment No. 4).

PROCEDURES

1. The Mayor seeks a motion to receive and file the affidavit of mailing and posting of public notice.
2. The Mayor calls for a staff report and City Council poses questions to staff as desired.
3. The Mayor opens the public hearing, providing the Applicant the first opportunity to speak, followed by the general public.
4. The Mayor seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented.
5. The City Council discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.

BACKGROUND

Request

The Culver Studios (Applicant) is requesting approval of CPA No. 7 (Project) in order to update and modernize their facilities and operations on the Project site (Attachment No. 5). The Applicant has prepared a master plan for facilities development that has informed CPA No. 7. The Project consists of the following elements as further described in Attachment No. 6, The Culver Studios Comprehensive Plan Amendment No.7:

- New digital media office and stage facilities: 564,500 square feet.
- Demolition of office, support, and stage uses: 219,493 square feet.
- New parking garages and surface parking: 2,370 parking spaces
- New access and gate realignments
- Additional Bicycle Parking
- Utility upgrades
- New landscape within and surrounding the Project site
- Minor Tenant Improvements to Buildings C and D

The Project is described as “Alternative 6” in the Draft EIR (Attachment No. 7) and incorporates the historic preservation alternative retaining sound stages 7/8/9 and removes the proposed Building M included in the original Project proposal described in the Draft EIR. This “Modified Project” now includes a net new buildout of 345,007 square feet, a reduction from the 413,127 net new square feet previously proposed. Other elements of the Project are unchanged.

Planning Commission Hearing and Recommendations

On December 13, 2017, the Culver City Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Project and after discussion, proceeded by a vote of 4-0, 1 absent) adopting Resolution No. 2017-P023, recommending to the City Council certification of the Environmental Impact Report, adoption of findings required by CEQA, adoption of the Mitigation Monitoring Program, and adoption of the Statement of Overriding Considerations; 2) adopting Resolution No. 2017-P021, recommending City Council approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 7 and Certificate of Appropriateness; and 3) adopting Resolution No. 2017-P022, recommending City Council approval of the Development Agreement.

During the public hearing, testimony was provided by over 28 persons, including residents, individuals, and person representing businesses, agencies, and organizations. There was nearly unanimous support for the Project based on public testimony. The Applicant was praised for public outreach efforts to residents, businesses and surrounding organizations, including the Linwood Howe Elementary School. A common sentiment in the public testimony was that that the Project would enhance the economic stability of the City. Some of the testimony included concerns about traffic circulation and some members of the Higuera residential neighborhood expressed concerns about proposed mobility and traffic improvement funding as part of the public benefits proposed in the project Development Agreement. Staff reported that some of the mobility recommendations were inconsistent between the Development Agreement, Development Agreement Resolution and the Staff Report conditions due to drafting errors from earlier document iterations and indicated that the Development Agreement contained the most current recommendations. Attachment No. 7 includes written communications received prior to the Planning Commission hearing. The Planning Commission also inquired about mobility funding and indicated it wanted to see more bicycle parking and EV charging stations operational at project occupancy.

The Applicant expressed concerns with Conditions of Approval Nos. 103 and 104 and the Planning Commission provided direction to revisit these conditions with the Applicant before bring them back for City Council consideration. Staff met with the applicant and the revised conditions are shown in strike-out and underline form in the Conditions of Approval, Exhibit A of the proposed Ordinance.

Existing Conditions

The Project site is located within the “Studio” Zone. The General Plan land use designation is Studio. The Project site is generally bounded by Van Buren Place to the west, the vacated portion of Washington Boulevard to the north, Ince Boulevard to the east and Lucerne Avenue to the south. Surrounding areas include a mix of two-family and multi-family uses, downtown Culver City to north, and commercial uses to the northeast.

The Culver Studios totals roughly 14 acres and is developed with approximately 117,872 square feet of office uses, 74,197 square feet of support uses, and 155,480 square feet of stage uses, for a combined building area total of 347,549 sq. ft. The Project site presently provides 756 vehicle parking spaces throughout the property , including a three-level subterranean parking structure behind the Mansion building (Building C) known as the Rear Lawn Structure, a two and one-half level above ground parking structure adjacent to Van Buren Place, and surface parking areas throughout. The Culver Studios also provides 100 bicycle parking spaces.

Currently designated historic resources include the Mansion, the DeMille Theatre, Building D, and

the bungalow buildings S, T, U, and V, as listed on Table 2.1-1 of the Final EIR. Buildings C and D are designated as “Local Landmark Structures” and bungalows S, T, U, and V are designated as “Locally Significant Structures”.

Project History, CPA No.6 Approval

Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 6 (CPA No. 6) was approved in fall of 2015. Some of the elements from CPA No. 6 have been completed such as the relocation of the bungalows, other elements such as the new Van Buren Parking Structure were not completed and are included in CPA No. 7 while other elements have been eliminated such as façade renovation to existing Building J. CPA No. 6 included adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration, a Conformance Review by the Planning Commission, and an appeal to City Council. Previous Comprehensive Plan Amendments for The Culver Studios, focused primarily on parking needs and neighborhood compatibility.

Surrounding and Adjacent Land Uses

The Project site borders the Town Plaza and downtown Culver City at the northwest and commercial studio uses at the northeast. Residential neighborhoods surround the Studio to the west, east, and south. Linwood E. Howe Elementary School is located to the west of the Project site at 4100 Irving Place. The back side of the school faces Van Buren Place. The commercial project known as the “Culver Steps” is currently under construction directly to the north.

Project Description

CPA No. 7 includes an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared in accordance with the Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A Draft EIR was prepared and circulated for public review and comment. Following public circulation of the Draft EIR and based on input received during the environmental review process with regard to historic resources, the Studio has elected to pursue adoption of Alternative 6 described in the Draft EIR, as the proposed Project. This “Modified” Project retains Stage 7/8/9 and the essential characteristics of the original Comprehensive Plan No. 7 are unchanged.

Under the Modified Project, buildings to be demolished are reduced to approximately 219,493 sq. ft. and new construction at Project buildout totals approximately 564,500 sq. ft. with approximately 345,007 sq. ft. of net new development. This represents an approximate 16 percent reduction in development from the original project. The complete inventory of buildings to remain, to be demolished, and proposed new construction is listed in Table C-1 of the Final EIR (Attachment No. 6) and in CPA No. 7.

The Modified Project results in fewer significant impacts to traffic and historical resources and was selected as the preferred Project alternative and decrease net new development by 68,120 square feet. The Modified Project does not change the amount of parking provided. Despite the reduction of environmental impacts, the Modified Project still results in significant and unavoidable impacts due to demolition of Stage 2/3/4 found to be a historical resource and service impacts to the seven (7) study intersections listed below.

The Modified Project includes demolition of existing buildings including the Commissary, the

Breezeway, Buildings J, L, O, W, X, Y, Z, Stages 2/3/4, 5/6, and Stage 10, and replaced with new buildings as described below:

NEW BUILDINGS J and O:

Buildings J and O are joined with common elevator and stairways forming a long footprint along the eastern end of the Project site boundary at Ince Boulevard. Both buildings will be used for digital media. Building J is 92,840 square feet and Building O is 90,040 square feet for a combined square footage of 182,880. Both buildings replace existing Buildings J, Building L, Building O, and the Commissary will be demolished. The buildings will comply with the 56' height limit as discussed below.

NEW BUILDING K and L:

Buildings K and L are similarly joined with common stairway and elevators and are located opposite Buildings J and O along the western edge of the Project site. Both buildings would be used for digital media. Building K is 170,800 square feet and Building L is 126,120 square feet, for a combined square footage of 296,920. Both buildings would replace Stage 2/3/4, Stage 5/6, the Breezeway, Building N, and Building W to be demolished. The buildings will meet the 56' height limit as discussed below. A portion of building L would be devoted to stage use.

NEW BUILDING Y:

As approved in Comprehensive Plan No. 6, Building Y is located at the southerly end of the Project site and replaces the existing Building Y with a larger footprint and increased height. Total proposed square footage is 84,700. The proposed building has 5' setbacks along the west, east, and south property lines where the building abuts residential properties. Associated with this new construction is demolition of Building Z and Stage 10.

The Project also includes renovation to existing Buildings C and D, designated as historic resources at the local level. The work includes improved accessibility and minor interior tenant improvements and is primarily to the rear of the Mansion and subject to a Certificate of Appropriateness which is a part of the Project. Additionally, site improvements include the following:

FRONT LAWN UPGRADES:

The Front Lawn is proposed to have minor landscape upgrades that reflect the period of historic significance from the early years of the Studio campus.

GATES, ACCESS, PARKING, FENCING, UTILITIES, LANDSCAPE, AND LIGHTING:

The Project proposes 1,959 new vehicle parking spaces, combined with parking to remain, that results in a total of 2,370 total spaces, or a net new 1,614 spaces. The Project provides the Code required 105 bicycle parking spaces where currently 100 bicycle parking spaces exist on-site. Adequate on-site fire access will be provided with fire lanes through a central corridor and across the Project site. Ingress and egress would be provided through a series of gates, which build on the function and location of the current gates. A new Gate 2A will

function along with the current Gate 2 as a part of the Project. A new underground tunnel known as the Culver/Main Tunnel will run beneath the City's proposed Town Plaza project currently under construction and connect underground at the current Gate 1.

- Gate 1: Gate 1 would be reassigned as a pedestrian and bicycle entry gate only and will interface with the Town Plaza Expansion project adjacent to the "Culver Steps" currently under construction. This gate will also serve as an emergency gate and potentially allow access for public parking when available in the Central Parking Structure.
- Gates 2 and 2A: Existing Gate 2 will be realigned and a new Gate 2A will be introduced along Ince Boulevard. These gate realignments provide connection to new buildings J and O. Gate 2 will serve as the primary entrance for visitors and employees and provide safe entry for pedestrians and bicyclists. Gate 2A will serve employees, allowing passenger vehicles but restricting pedestrian and bicycle entry.
- Gate 3: Existing Gate 3 will be realigned to better provide access and avoid conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists, passenger vehicles, and production vehicles.
- Gate 4: Gate 4, located at the southern end of the property near Building Y will be realigned to provide more efficient ingress and egress and improved maneuverability for emergency vehicles. This gate will not be available for visitors, employees, and certain production vehicles and will not be available for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Van Buren Gate. This existing emergency only gate will be upgraded to provide better access and turning movements for larger emergency vehicles. This gate will not be available for visitors, employees, and production vehicles, or bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Van Buren Parking Garage: The Van Buren Garage will provide 1,109 parking spaces within two below grade levels and six above grade levels and conform to the City's 56-foot height limit. Parking will be provided for employees and large production vehicles. The Van Buren Garage will replace an existing 2.5 story parking structure and expand the garage footprint to cover the area where four bungalows were previously located. The Garage will be screened for compatibility with surrounding residential and school uses and include a deep landscaped setback along Van Buren Place which will accommodate a neighborhood open space.
- Central Parking Garage: This below grade parking structure includes two basement levels with 836 spaces and vertical circulation at each end of the structure.
- Landscape: The landscape plan defines various spaces and zones inside and around the Project site to create a campus-like environment. Proposed landscape along the perimeter of the Project is intended to soften the Project commercial edges adjacent to the surrounding neighborhood.
- Perimeter Fence: The Project site will contain various types of fencing including the existing Front Lawn fence at the north end, a 12-foot high textured concrete wall

alternating with a 12-foot high painted metal fence and gate along Ince Boulevard, and a 12-foot high textured concrete wall alternating with a 12-foot high painted metal fence and gate covered in vines along Van Buren Place and the western property boundary.

- Lighting: The Project includes site lighting for facilities and parking structures with measures to reduce lighting impacts on surrounding residential uses.
- Utilities: Water, wastewater, drainage, electrical, natural gas, and telecommunication facilities will be upgraded as a part of the Project.

INCE BOULEVARD, EAST BOUNDARY:

The Project's realignment and reassignment of entry points for ingress and egress has been designed to minimize impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods. All four gates along Ince Boulevard will restrict right turns out to prevent traffic flow existing the Project site from traveling into the more residential neighborhoods surrounding the southern edges of the Project site. Gate 4 located closer to residential areas would serve as a secondary access point for production vehicles. Architectural features have been added as a part of Building J/O design to help reduce views from the Project site into adjoining residential properties.

LUCERNE AVENUE, SOUTH BOUNDARY:

No access to the Project site is provided along the southern end other than for secondary production vehicle access at Gate 4. The Project's Building Y, adjacent to residential properties at the southern end will be used for digital media production, replacing the current building which is used for support services. Proposed Building Y will increase in height from the existing 29 feet to 56 feet plus architectural projections and screening. In order to address impacts to the abutting residential uses to the south a 30-foot section of the back side or southern side of Building Y, is stepped down to 32 feet high. The building height at this side of the new building is lowered to minimize visual impacts to the abutting residential property primarily to the south. The residential properties to the west will benefit partially from the lowered building height. To address this potential impact, the Studios has proposed the use of landscaped green screens particularly along the southerly and westerly building edge facing residential properties at Building Y. Landscaping such as clinging vines will cascade down from irrigated planters at the upper level roof area and will require additional plan submittals to ensure that it can be maintained as a permanent building feature to soften the building facades.

VAN BUREN PLACE, WEST BOUNDARY:

No access for ingress and egress into the Project site is provided along Van Buren Place other than emergency access at the Van Buren Gate.

Subsequent to the CPA No. 6 approval, the Applicant has worked closely with staff to improve the design of the Van Buren Garage. The new Garage will be more enclosed than previous designed to help baffle noise generated from within the new Garage, particularly for properties to the west, north and south of the Studio.

Design elements planned for the parking structure include a 15-foot bermed landscaped setback and architectural screening on the structure façade along the Van Buren Place frontage; an 18-foot setback planted with tall columnar trees on the northern and southern sides of the structure where they abut residential properties with clinging vine planted on the building parking structure walls.

The new Van Buren Garage is required by both Conditions of Approval and noise mitigation measures to minimize potential impacts from the parking structure operation. Operational noise from the parking garage will not significantly impact the adjacent residential properties provided that a concrete wall shielding the full first level from adjoining residential uses is installed along the parking structure's west elevations, facing Van Buren Place. This is consistent with the structure's north and south elevations which is proposed to be enclosed with pre-cast concrete panels with no openings from the ground level to top of the garage. The pre-cast concrete panels at the north and south sides of the structure is required to weigh at least 4lbs per square foot and form a continuous façade with no gaps between the panels to maximize the benefits of an enclosed elevation. Further, all parking structure exhaust or ventilation systems is required to be designed with quiet fans and duct silencers so as to reduce noise emissions to neighboring residential properties.

Because the Van Buren Garage will be open to the general public for live performances or show tapings, the Applicant is also required to post signs at all parking levels that remind people to "respect neighboring residents" and to prohibit honking of horns and loud music from cars or vehicles. Studio parking staff shall enforce this requirement and prevent violations during live audience shows or special events.

PARKING:

The Project provides code complying vehicle and bicycle parking and adequate on-site vehicle and bicycle parking is provided to serve the Project. Most of the new parking will be provided in the new Van Buren Garage which provides 1,109 new parking spaces with the ground and first basement levels accommodating production vehicles. 836 new spaces are included in the Central Garage, and 14 new parking spaces are proposed in a surface parking area near Building Y, resulting in a total of 1,959 new parking spaces at the Project site. Adding the existing 411 spaces that remain located in the Rear Lawn Structure, the Project provides a total of 2,370 spaces, 448 spaces beyond what is required by the Zoning Code as summarized below.

Parking Summary	Number of Spaces
Existing Parking to Remain (Rear Lawn Structure)	411
New Vehicle Parking Proposed	1,959
Total Parking Provided	2,370
Required Parking	1,922
Parking Surplus	448

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Compliance

The City as the Lead Agency has determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required for CPA No. 7. Pursuant to the CEQA, a Notice of Preparation was transmitted on November 17, 2016 and a public scoping meeting held on December 8, 2016. A Draft EIR was prepared and circulated for a 46-day review period commencing on September 22, 2017 and ending on November 6, 2017. A meeting was held on October 12, 2017 to present the Project to the community and to receive written comments on the Draft EIR. A Final EIR has been prepared and includes responses to comments (Attachment No. 7) with links to the online EIR.

Project goals and objectives listed in the Draft EIR under “Statement of Objectives” include eight sub-objectives under the primary objective to sustain the Culver Studios’ prominent role as a dynamic, independent studio in the entertainment, digital media, and creative industries, through transformation and technological updates to the Studio campus supporting a wide range of related activities.

The EIR identified environmental impacts which are summarized in Table ES-1 of the Final EIR, which includes Mitigation Measures required to mitigate Project impacts. In summary, the EIR found the following.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

The EIR found that impacts associated with Project construction involving hauling, deliveries, and pick-ups would be significant and unavoidable since available mitigation measures would not reduce the impact to a less than significant level.

The EIR also found that service impacts to seven (7) intersections during the am and/or pm peak hours would be significant and unavoidable since mitigation measures are not available to lessen the impacts to a less than significant level. The following intersections would be impacted.

1. No 3. Duquesne Ave/Lucerne Ave (Culver City) - am and pm peak hours
2. No 8. Washington Blvd/Culver Blvd (Culver City) - am peak hour
3. No 13. Robertson Blvd/Exposition Blvd/Venice Blvd (City of Los Angeles) - am and pm peak hours
4. No 14. National Blvd/Washington Blvd (Culver City) - am peak hour
5. No 33. Overland Ave/Venice Blvd (City of Los Angeles) - am peak hour
6. No 38. Robertson Blvd/National Blvd (City of Los Angeles) - am and pm peak hours
7. No 42. Duquesne Ave/Braddock Dr (Culver City) - am and pm peak hours

CULTURAL RESOURCES (HISTORICAL RESOURCES):

The EIR found that demolition of Stages 2/3/4 will result in a significant and unavoidable impact since the structures are determined to be a historical resource under CEQA and no mitigation is available to lessen the impact to less than significant levels. Impacts associated with changes to designated historical resources, Buildings C and D, would be less than

significant with mitigation since changes are minor and would not compromise historic significance or eligibility.

OTHER TOPICS:

The EIR provides mitigation for other impacts related to Cultural Resources, Geology, Soils, Noise and Wastewater that will reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

ANALYSIS

Comprehensive Plan and Conditions of Approval

The Culver Studios is located within the “S” Studio Zoning District and is subject to a Comprehensive Plan to regulate Project development. The Comprehensive Plan allows for flexibility to accommodate special uses and development programs considering the unique characteristics of the use, setting, and neighborhood. The Culver Studios has previously amended its Comprehensive Plan six times. Prior amendments focused on on-site parking to prevent parking overflow into the surrounding areas provisions and expanded development.

The Comprehensive Plan establishes development standards. Pursuant to Section 17.250.010.A of the Zoning Code, the Studio zone allows for motion picture and television studio facilities and related media support facilities. The Culver Studios includes uses such as office, stage and support space consistent with the zoning designation. Office uses generally involve spaces to accommodate producers, writers, and production teams; stage uses include all types of active entertainment production; and support uses range from utilities to props/grips/wardrobe to set construction to storage. As identified in the CPA No. 7 document, the Project will be in conformance with the Studio Zoning District and General Plan Land Use designation for the property. The Project also includes Conditions of Approval, included as Exhibit A to the Draft Resolution 2017-P021. See Attachment No. 2.

Architectural Design

The proposed Project design is contemporary; however, the selection of building materials, architectural style and color reflects the design intent of The Culver Studios to embrace a rapidly evolving new media landscape that incorporates contemporary workspace for creative industries while respecting historic aspects of the Studio environment.

BUILDINGS J and O:

Buildings J and O are attached by working space, common stairs, and an elevator and form a linear profile. The building components, volumes, and functions are broken up with various window treatments, varying materials, and building offsets. The combined building is five stories and includes projections creating a distinct rhythm along Ince Boulevard. Building J has two volumes connected by a glass enclosed lobby and passageway. Building O has one volume with upper floors set back. Materials include glass, metal panels, board form concrete, textured plaster, and painted steel. Openings including doors and windows that vary in shape, type, and sizes and help define individual spaces and interior functions.

BUILDINGS K AND L:

Building K and L are adjoined, five-story, buildings with varied interior spaces. Building K steps down in height at three sections following the grade of the Project site and conforms to the 56-foot height limit. The north elevation is designed to take advantage of the building's prominent location with Studio signage oriented toward the more public face of the Project site. The design includes building articulation and a sloping roofline with projecting and recessed elements. Building K includes both stage and digital media use and has been designed for audiences on the ground floor extending to the second floor. Materials include glass, metal panels, corrugated metal, painted steel, painted brick, and powder coated metal, board form concrete and textured plaster

BUILDING Y:

Building Y varies from four to five stories with a front landscaped patio. Materials include glass, railings, steel windows, steel doors, corrugated metal, board form concrete, metal panels, and painted steel. The roofline has a gentle sloping parapet. The ground floor is defined a series of bays and entries and the upper floors are defined by an irregularity in window shapes and openings. The rear of the building faces the immediately joining residential uses and is stepped back along the upper floors. The lower floors adjoining the residential parcels are concrete.

VAN BUREN GARAGE:

The Van Buren Garage is made up of pre-cast concrete panels. The north and south sides of the Garage will be enclosed with pre-cast concrete panels and will have no openings which helps attenuate noise within the garage. The west elevation of the parking structure facing Van Buren Place will be constructed with pre-cast concrete panels with openings above the 3-foot level on each floor. In order to provide visual relief for this elevation, which measures 415 feet long, an architectural screen made up of vertical aluminum louver-like panels will be attached to the façade of the structure. This aluminum panels will be rendered in muted colors, compatible to the coloration of the drought tolerant landscape that will be installed at the base of the Garage along Van Buren Place with a wide setback and space for landscaping and public amenities.

SHADE AND SHADOW:

The Project shade and shadow effects have been evaluated on adjoining properties relative to the time of day and season of the year. In order to determine the extent of the shading from the proposed Project, shade diagrams were prepared and are included in CPA No. 7. An analysis of shade and show was also included in the Project EIR. These diagrams indicate the most extreme shading patterns which occurs in the Winter, Spring, and Fall periods at 3:00 pm across residential uses near Ince Boulevard and Carson Street at the southern end of the Project site.

Project Design Features

A number of Project Design Features have been included in the Project that serve to reduce or avoid potential impacts of the Project. Specific Project Design Features will be included in the Mitigation Monitoring Program and are included in the Project Conditions of Approval.

Building Heights:

The Project must conform to the City's maximum 56-foot height limit pursuant to Section 17.240.015 of the Zoning Code. Section 17.300.025 of the Zoning Code further states that building height shall be measured at a point from existing grade of the site to an imaginary plane located the allowable number of feet above and parallel to the grade as described below.

All structures shall meet the following standards relating to height, except for fences and walls, which shall comply with § 17.300.030 <[http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll?f=jumpink\\$jumpink_x=Advanced\\$jumpink_vpc=first\\$jumpink_xsl=querylink](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll?f=jumpink$jumpink_x=Advanced$jumpink_vpc=first$jumpink_xsl=querylink).

(Fences, Hedges, and Walls), and the allowable exceptions identified in Subsection 17.300.025 <[http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll?f=jumpink\\$jumpink_x=Advanced\\$jumpink_vpc=first\\$jumpink_xsl=querylink](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll?f=jumpink$jumpink_x=Advanced$jumpink_vpc=first$jumpink_xsl=querylink).

.C. (Exceptions to Height Limits) below.

A. Maximum Height. *The height of structures shall not exceed the standard established by the applicable zoning district in Article 2 (Zoning Districts, Allowable Land Uses and Zone-Specific Standards).*

B. Height Measurement. *The maximum allowable height shall be measured as the vertical distance from the existing grade of the site to an imaginary plane located the allowed number of feet above and parallel to the grade. See [Figure 3-3](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll?) <<http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll?>*

(Height Measurement) at top of next page. "Existing Grade" shall be established by the Director, consistent with parcels in the immediate vicinity, and shall not be, nor have been, artificially raised to gain additional building height.

The Applicant has requested that the Director consider an alternative measurement from "existing grade" related to two buildings identified as Buildings J/O (connected by a common stairway and elevator) and K/L (connected by a common stairway and elevator) taking into consideration parcels in the immediate vicinity rather than exclusively from a point measured as the vertical distance from the existing grade. The Applicant's request is related to maintaining a uniform height and uniform floor plates for Building J/O and K/L which are 545 feet and 600 feet in length respectively. The applicant states the request is intended to reconcile use of the site to meet the proposed development program and operational efficiency given the Culver Studios historic property designation which creates unusual development constraints.

The following factors have been considered relative to the request to use an alternative datum for building height measurement:

1. The Culver Studios is rectangular shaped and oriented approximately northwest to southeast. The rectangular shape tapers from approximately 390 feet at its widest

(northwest) to its narrowest at the southeast at approximately 213 feet.

2. The Culver Studios lot slopes along its northwest/southeast axis and there a difference in elevation northwest to southeast of approximately 16.52 feet.
3. Building J/O is comprised of two building sections which are approximately 275 feet and 208 feet in length respectively and total approximately 545 feet in length. There is a difference in elevation of approximately 6' feet from the proposed northerly edge to the proposed southerly edge of building J/O.
4. Building K/L is comprised of two building sections which are approximately 379 feet and 245 feet in length respectively and total approximately 624 feet in length. There is a difference in elevation of approximately 6' feet from the proposed northerly edge to the proposed southerly edge of building K / L.
5. Buildings J/O and K/L cannot be reoriented or relocated given the narrow property width, the configuration of existing buildings and the number of historic buildings surrounding it.
6. Using a point for measurement for the sloping site for Buildings J/O and L/M would require stepped floor plates and stepped ceiling heights that significantly impact the development.
7. The parcels in the immediate vicinity have the following surveyed elevations:

Northeast:	100.2
Southeast:	94.2
Southwest	94.2
Northwest:	100.4
Average:	97.2

The discretion provided in Section 17.300.025 of the Zoning Code is intended to address significant issues created by unique site features such as substantial building length, lot slope and narrow lot width which in combination with the Studio's historic designation restricts development and supports consideration of an alternative datum from which to measure building height for Buildings J/O and K/L. Furthermore, the project Comprehensive Plan allows flexibility relative to the application of development standards particularly as they relate to these unique site features in order to provide a more effective design that responds to site constraints. Therefore, the facts pertaining to the site conditions support consideration of an alternative datum that averages the grade from north to south based upon the existing surveyed grade of adjacent properties which is consistent with Section 17.300.025 of the Zoning Code.

Setbacks:

CPA No. 7 provides setbacks varying in type and width. Along Ince Boulevard, the existing 18-inch setback would not change where existing Stage 7/8/9 would remain. Further north along

Ince Boulevard, at Buildings J/O, setbacks would range from two to five feet with landscape and planter boxes. Where new construction abuts residential parcels, setbacks behind Building K vary from 20 to 30 feet, and five feet behind Building Y. Along Van Buren Place, the Project includes a landscaped, wide 15-foot setback to soften the massing of the Van Buren Garage and to provide a neighborhood public amenity.

Vehicle and Bicycle Parking:

The Culver Studios will provide ample bicycle parking distributed conveniently throughout the Project site. The total bicycle parking will increase from 100 existing spaces to 105 spaces as required by Code. Some of the old bike racks will be removed and any new bicycle racks will adhere to the design requirements of the Culver City Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan design guide. The majority of new bicycle parking spaces will be located within the Van Buren Parking Structure.

The Van Buren Garage will incorporate high clearance parking bays on both the ground level and 1st basement level which are designed and structured to allow production vehicles to use the parking structure as a “base camp” in lieu of current operations (along the west side of Ince Boulevard between Gates 2 and 4). These levels will allow sufficient clear heights and structural capacity to shift those aspects of Studio operations within the property boundaries.

Traffic and Circulation:

The Project EIR included a Traffic Study to identify and analyze traffic and transportation impacts. The Study as contained in the Draft EIR was updated for the Modified Project and made a part of the Final EIR. The Study evaluated existing traffic conditions and forecast future traffic conditions with and without the Project. The Study analyzed twenty-four (24) intersections during both the AM and PM peak hours; 18 intersections are in Culver City and 6 intersections are in Los Angeles. The Study estimated that the Project’s net new trip generation. The Study was updated for the Modified Project and resulted in trip reduction of 66 vehicles in the am peak and 63 vehicles in the pm peak. This reduction under the Modified Project eliminated the significant unavoidable impact at the intersection of Overland Ave/Culver Boulevard. Using the adopted threshold criteria for both the City of Culver City and the City of Los Angeles for determining the Project’s significant traffic impacts at a specific location, the Study reported that there will be traffic impacts at two of the study intersections.

The Study found that during construction there could be substantial delays and disruption of existing traffic flow. Mitigation measures have been provided that lessen these impacts but not to a less than significant level, resulting in significant and unavoidable traffic construction impacts.

The Study found that the Project would result in significant operational level of service impacts at a number of Study intersections during the am and/or pm peak hours. In addition to TDM mitigation measures, additional mitigation measures listed below are included, but would not result in a less than significant impact.

TRAF-8. Intersection 11 (Canfield Ave/Washington Blvd/Culver Blvd). Restripe the northbound approach from one left-turn lane, one shared through/left-turn lane, and one

right-turn lane to two left-turn lanes and one shared through/right-turn lane as shown in Figure 12 o of the Traffic Study.

TRAF-9. Intersection 10 (Ince Blvd/Washington Blvd). Option Mitigation. Prohibit left turns from westbound Ince Blvd to southbound Washington Blvd at this intersection.

TRAF-10. Intersection 11 (Canfield Ave/Washington Blvd/Culver Blvd). Optional Mitigation. Reconfiguration of the westbound approach at the intersection to include an exclusive westbound left-only lane, a shared left/through lane, and a shared through/right turn lane.

Mobility and Sustainability:

CPA No. 7 includes a sustainability strategy that includes green building standards, energy efficiency, resource management and water conservation. CPA No. 7 also includes a mobility strategy that promotes and enhances pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections to and from the Project site, and includes reduced vehicle trips through Transportation Demand Measures. The Applicant will contribute to the City's Mobility Fund as described in the Project Development Agreement with mobility improvements, earmarked toward roadway and mobility improvements that enhance multimodal connectivity to and from the Project site.

Landscaping and Public Art:

The Project landscape design provides a campus-like environment. The plan includes soft and hardscape features and amenities. As a part of the Project, a landscaped setback along Van Buren Place adjacent to the Van Buren Garage with a 15-foot landscaped setback to provide a neighborhood open space for public use.

Pursuant to the City's Public Art Program CCMC 15.06.120, CPA No. 7 will trigger the new Art in Public Places Program requirements. The Applicant will have several options including payment of an in-lieu fee or commissioning original, site-specific permanent art.

Historic Resources:

CURRENTLY DESIGNATED HISTORIC RESOURCES

For historic resources on the Project site, a Certificate of Appropriateness is required for changes to designated Buildings C and D, and the Front Lawn of Building C. Minor tenant improvements and upgrades are included in CPA No. 7. Planned changes to both buildings were found to meet the findings of the Municipal Code needed to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness. Proposed changes will not adversely affect designated resources and would not compromise or diminished their significance or eligibility. The Project's findings for the Certificate of Appropriateness are contained in the attached Draft Resolution (Attachment No. 2).

The Mansion Building C would not be physically altered, or lose its historic significance. While the Manson's immediate surroundings would be changed on the south side, a secondary elevation, the surroundings would not be materially impaired, and Building C

would continue to convey its historical significance. Approval of the Project includes a condition that any proposed plans for changes to the Mansion's Front Lawn landscaping identify the character-defining features of that area and that proposed plans be reviewed by a qualified preservation professional for submittal to the City according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes.

POTENTIAL HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Project EIR included a complete Historical Resources Assessment (HRA) to identify and evaluate historical resources that may be affected by the implementation of The Culver Studios Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 7. The HRA includes descriptions, integrity analysis and significance evaluations for individual buildings and expands on prior historic resource reports. Potential impacts to historical resources and mitigation measures as included in the EIR are based on the HRA findings.

CPA No. 7 includes the demolition of twelve (12) structures, eleven (11) of which were found to be ineligible for historic listing and that do not qualify as historical resources under CEQA. These buildings and structures include the Commissary, the Breezeway, Buildings J, L, O, W, X, Y, Z, and Stages 10 and 5/6. Ineligibility findings focused on compromised integrity or construction outside of period of significance. The HRA found that Stage 2/3/4 is eligible for the National Register, as well as the State and local register.

The HRA also found that Buildings E, H, and I are eligible for local listing. The Project will retain these structures in their current location. The HRA found that Stages 7/8/9, 11/12/14, and 15/16 are eligible for the National Register, as well as State and local registers. The Project, as modified, will retain these stages.

The Project would result in the demolition of Stage 2/3/4 which the HRA found meets the definition of a historical resource under CEQA. Demolition will provide for construction of Building K/L. Stage 2/3/4 is a three story structure with a rectangular footprint that is oriented fronting north toward the Mansion. The structure was built in 1926 and is clad with stucco and topped with a low-pitched roof with a cupola or monitor roof that runs the length of the building.

Construction Schedule and Management Plans

The Applicant has proposed a construction schedule performed in one or two phases and completed within four years or less. Building Y and the Van Buren Garage may be constructed first. Phasing of the construction could help to minimize construction impacts.

The Project is required to submit a Construction Management Plan for review and approval prior to the issuance of building permits. Project generated noise is mitigated with the following measures as described in the MMP:

- MM TRAF-1. **Haul Truck Staging.** Identify Haul Routes.
- MM TRAF-2. **Flagman.** Placed at Ince Boulevard.

MMTRAF-3. **Truck Deliveries/Pick-Ups.** During Non-Peak Periods.
MM TRAF-4. **Access.** No Restricted Access for Adjoining Uses.
MM TRAF-5. **Lane Closures.** To Avoid Peak Periods.

Conditions of Approval, as a part of the Project, require noise and other construction mitigation measures which included quiet air compressors and similar equipment, where available; and a minimum 12-foot tall noise barriers such as noise blankets with specified noise reduction coefficients

The Project is also required to submit a Construction Traffic Control Plan for review and approval which would include Project Design Features as well as the above Mitigation Measures and Conditions of Approval related to minimizing the impact of construction traffic on the surrounding neighborhoods. Project Design Features in the Construction Management Plan include but are not limited to the following:

- Construction site management responsibilities to reduce disturbances on surrounding neighborhoods.
- Alternative transportation modes associated with construction activities.
- Review and approval of the construction schedule with the City departments.
- Bi-weekly construction management meetings with the City.
- Strategies to limit the use of public rights-of-way.
- Community meeting to describe construction activities including schedule, phases, traffic diversion plan, location of construction parking and staging, truck hauling routes, and types and number of trucks.
- Emergency access plan.
- Timing and location of any street closures.

Neighborhood Compatibility

The Culver Studios is seeking to achieve a balance between its historic 20th century uses and emerging operations as a 21st century media center that result from the way entertainment is now produced and experienced. These changes have implications for the evolution of the Studio to a modern facility and for adjacent residential neighborhoods. To address these concerns, CPA No. 7 includes ample on-site parking to meet the needs of the Studio and avoiding off-site parking overflow of production and other vehicles. Mitigation measures have been included to reduce noise impacts on surrounding sensitive uses, particularly during construction. Minimal changes will occur along the northern edge of the Project site. Implementation of the Project will enhance the pedestrian experience within the downtown and integrate the Studio with neighboring business and the expanded Town Plaza. Access to the Project site has been designed to minimize Project related traffic circulation within the surrounding neighborhoods.

Development Agreement

Chapter 17.17.590 of the Zoning Code provides procedures and requirements for review and approval of development agreements consistent with State law. Development agreements are typically processed concurrently with all development related permits. The Planning Commission makes recommendations to the City Council on the development agreement application and the City Council makes the final determination on the application based upon mandatory findings. A

preliminary draft of the Development Agreement was provided for Planning Commission review. The final draft development agreement is adopted by ordinance authorizing its execution.

The Culver Studios has requested that the City consider entering into a development agreement in order to:

1. Support opportunities for economic growth in the City.
2. Assure the Project is developed in accordance with the Project approvals.
3. Implement public benefits above and beyond necessary mitigations for the Project.
4. Assure the Project will not be reduced in density, intensity or use or be subject to new rules, regulations, ordinances, or policies unless allowed in the agreement, while reserving to the City the legislative powers necessary to remain responsible and accountable to its residents in accordance with the goals and objectives of the City.

As part of the public benefits identified in the development agreement, the Developer has agreed to contribute to the City's mobility fund to support local mobility measures that include improvements to first and last mile travel from the Culver City Expo Station in the amount of \$1.00 per square foot of net new development approved under CPA No. 7 and other measures. The public benefit contribution is consistent with the recommendations of the City's Transit Oriented Development Visioning Study.

Comments and Responses on the Draft EIR

During the Draft EIR 46-day review period, written comments were received from residents, interested persons, and agencies. Comments from residents and individuals included concerns and issues focusing primarily on construction impacts, traffic impacts, bicycle facilities, and building height. Comments were received from Hollywood Heritage requesting a more robust mitigation program for historical resources. Comments from Caltrans District 7 addressed concerns over cumulative impacts to freeways I-10 and I-405. The full set of itemized comments and responses are included in the Final EIR (see Attachment 7).

Statement of Overriding Considerations

For those impacts identified in the EIR and found to be significant and unavoidable, the City Council, before Project approval, will be required to adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations. As discussed in the report "Background", the Project EIR identified significant and unavoidable impacts under "Cultural Resources" for impacts to historical resources and under "Transportation and Traffic" for impacts related to construction and operation of certain intersections.

The demolition of Stages 2/3/4, which meets the definition of a "historical resource" under CEQA, is a significant and unavoidable impact. No mitigation is available to reduce the impact to a less than significant level. A robust mitigation program is included in the Mitigation Monitoring Program, but those measures primarily focused on an interpretive program are not sufficient to reduce the impact to a less than significant level. A Statement of Overriding Considerations has been prepared and is included in the Draft Resolution (Attachment No. 1).

Construction traffic impacts associated with truck hauling, deliveries, access, and lane closures

were found to be significance and unavoidable. A Statement of Overriding Considerations has been prepared and is included the Draft Resolution (Attachment No. 1).

Impacts to the seven (7) study intersections listed above under “Background” are significant and unavoidable since mitigation as provided is not sufficient to reduce the impact to a less than significant level.

The Statement of Overriding Considerations includes the CEQA findings of fact and is based on the underlying purpose of the Project which is to sustain The Culver Studios prominent role as a dynamic, independent studio in the entertainment, digital media, and creative industries through expansion and modernization of the Studio campus.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Applicant held three community meetings as part of the outreach to neighbors and community members under the City’s community outreach guidelines as follows:

- Community Meeting No. 1 - December 8, 2016, at the Culver City Senior Center
- Community Meeting No. 2 - October 12, 2017, at the Culver Studios
- Community Meeting No. 3 - November 30, 2017, at City Hall

Meeting No. 1 was associated with the Notice of Preparation for the Project EIR. The meeting was attended by at least 20 people. The Applicant described the development proposal at The Culver Studios and the issues to be addressed in the Project EIR. Community concerns traffic on Van Buren Place and Irving Place, Truck traffic on Ince Boulevard, building height, new access and parking.

Meeting No. 2 was associated with the Notice of Availability for the Draft EIR. The meeting was attended by over 35 persons, primarily individuals from surrounding residential neighborhoods. The Applicant described the Project and the environmental impacts analyzed in the Draft EIR. Person asked questions and expressed concerns regarding construction, traffic, safety, security, and schedule.

Meeting No. 3 was hosted by the City, held at City Hall, and provided an updated on the Project reflecting the newly proposed Modified Project. Approximately four persons attended and asked questions about the Project, particularly construction impacts on surrounding residences.

Notes from all three meetings are included as a part of Attachment 9.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 7 is in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. Potential impacts to various environmental factors such as traffic, historical resources, noise, and air quality, have been analyzed and are included in the Project’s Environmental Impact Report (see Attachment No. 7). Conditions of Approval require that the Applicant implement the

Mitigation Measures as contained in the Mitigation Monitoring Program.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There is no fiscal impact associated with the Project.

CONCLUSION

The Applicant has worked to ensure that the proposed Project will be compatible with surrounding residential neighborhood while preserving and protecting the historic elements of the property and providing The Culver Studios with the economic viability needed to move forward as a modern media center. Based on the analysis contained herein staff believes the findings for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment can be made as outlined in the Resolution (Attachment No. 2) and recommends that the City Council approve the Project.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Resolution certifying the Project EIR, adopting findings required by CEQA, adopting the Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP), and adopting the Statement of Overriding Considerations, P2016-0208-EIR, with Exhibits A and B.
 2. Proposed Ordinance approving Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 7 2016-0208-CP with Exhibit A, Conditions of Approval.
 3. Proposed Resolution approving Certificate of Appropriateness P2016-0208-HPCA with Exhibit A.
 4. Proposed Ordinance approving Development Agreement P2016-208-DA with Exhibit A.
 5. Project Site Map
 6. Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 7, dated November 30, 2017
 7. Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report on CPA No. 7 (Memo)
 8. Public Written Correspondence, Planning Commission Hearing 12-13-17
 9. Community Meetings Notes, Meetings No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3
 10. Planning Commission Resolutions

MOTION

That the City Council:

1. Adopt a Resolution certifying the Project EIR, adopting findings required by CEQA, adopting the Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP), and adopting the Statement of Overriding Considerations (Attachment 1); and
2. Introduce an Ordinance approving Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 7 (CPA No. 7) (Attachment 2); and
3. Adopt a Resolution approving the Certificate of Appropriateness, subject to the Conditions of Approval (Attachment 3); and
4. Introduce an Ordinance approving the Project Development Agreement (Attachment 4).