

MOTION

The Ventura/Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan (Specific Plan), nestled between the Los Angeles River to the north and Santa Monica Mountains to the south, is a land use plan that spans over 17 miles in length, includes 1,200 acres of land, and regulates over 4,300 individual parcels in total. The Specific Plan encompasses the communities of Woodland Hills, Tarzana, Encino, Sherman Oaks, Studio City, and Cahuenga Pass. Originally adopted in 1991, it was amended twice, once in 1996, then again in 2001. Currently, the Specific Plan regulates floor area ratios, height, lot coverage, uses, development standards, landscaping, parking, signs, and the collection of project impact assessment fees to ensure Ventura Boulevard remains viable as the San Fernando Valley's premier commercial corridor.


The pending Ventura/Cahuenga Specific Plan Amendment was initiated in 2019 in response to a 2017 motion by the City Council (CF 17-1071) which directed the Planning Department to amend the Specific Plan in order to achieve a more modern and streamlined regulatory process. The amendment, which is currently being crafted by Los Angeles City Planning and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation, aims to simplify and reduce the timeframe of the sign approval process to help small businesses along the Corridor and update Project Impact Assessment (PIA) fees and allowable expenditures. The amendment will look to make fees more flexible by allowing for expenditures that will apply to public realm improvements that are not currently allowed in the Specific Plan; for example landscaped medians, sidewalks, street trees, streetlights, crosswalks, and alleys among other improvements.

Local businesses are suffering from the burdensome sign process in the current Specific Plan and the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated business difficulties and impeded economic recovery, therefore timely and expeditious amendments that help modernize and streamline regulations should not be delayed. Furthermore, the policy goals and practical intent of this amendment goes hand in hand with the sustainability, livability, and mobility goals of adopted plans and ordinances such as Mobility Plan 2035, Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, and the newly adopted Processes and Procedures Ordinance.

Additionally, the Specific Plan establishes the Ventura/Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Plan Review Board (PRB), as detailed under Section 15 of the plan, whose members are appointed by Council Districts in which the Specific Plan area is located as well as the Mayor, and which makes recommendations to these appointing authorities. These provisions were severely impacted by the 2021 redistricting process. In November 2022, the Planning Department informed PRB members and affected Council Offices no longer within the purview of the Specific Plan following the 2021 redistricting process about their respective removals as a legal necessity based on existing rules as detailed in Section 15 to ensure that PRB reviews and actions are not in a state of legal precariousness. Our understanding is that this change has been effectuated for some PRB members, but not others, and has unfortunately caused confusion and frustration for many community members. As such, City Council should consider and propose a sustainable solution and language amendments that center equitable community representation, feasible tenureship, and a diversity of voices for designated advisory bodies under the jurisdiction of this Specific Plan and other relevant plans that may be similarly affected by the redistricting processes.

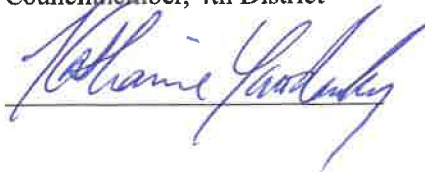
I THEREFORE MOVE that the Los Angeles City Council instruct Los Angeles City Planning, with support from Los Angeles Department of Transportation and all relevant agencies, to expeditiously amend the Ventura/Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan to streamline signage reviews and other simple cases such as changes of use to assist local businesses; to update and modify the language of the Specific Plan to reflect recently adopted ordinances; and to update the language of the Specific Plan to broaden PRB membership to ensure socioeconomic and demographic diversity, to allocate PRB appointments to achieve equitable representation based on communities rather than Council District, to clarify administrative duties to properly run PRB meetings, and to clarify term limits and standardize processes for terms ending, among other things.

PRESENTED BY:


NITHYA RAMAN
Councilmember, 4th District


BOB BLUMENFIELD
Councilmember, 3rd District

SECONDED BY:



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FEB 15 2023

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