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June 28, 2018

Los Angeles City Council  
c/o Office of the City Clerk  
City Hall, Room 395  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Attention: PLUM Committee

Dear Honorable Members:

**OPTIONS TO AMEND THE VENTURA-CAHUENGA BOULEVARD CORRIDOR  
SPECIFIC PLAN; CF 17-1071**

On November 21, 2017, the City Council adopted motion 17-1071 (Blumenfield – Koretz – Krekorian – Ryu), requesting that the Department of City Planning (Department) report back with options for either amending, supplementing, creating overlays by neighborhood, and/or revising the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan including providing total costs, staffing needs, outreach strategy, and timeline for each option. As part of the report back, City Council requested the Department coordinate with the Department of Transportation, the Chief Legislative Analyst, and the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment.

**Background**

The Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan was originally adopted on February 16, 1991. The Specific Plan corridor spans over 17 miles in length, contains over 1,200 acres of land, and regulates over 4,300 individual parcels of land. It includes parcels that front on Ventura Boulevard as well as adjacent boulevards including Topanga Canyon Boulevard, Reseda Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, and Van Nuys Boulevard.

Commercial activities in the corridor include a diverse variety of commercial and retail uses including neighborhood-oriented retail stores, low to high-rise commercial office and professional businesses, and regional shopping centers. There is also residential, mixed-

use development, and health care uses on the corridor. The current zoning patterns include a majority of lots with a C2 and C4 commercial zoning classifications. Additional zoning classifications include CR, C1, and C1.5. There are two parking zone classifications applied to the corridor which include the P Zone, permitting public and private surface and subterranean parking areas and the PB Zone, permitting surface, subterranean, and structured parking areas. The pattern of zoning was originally designed to implement those land use designations established for the corridor including Regional Commercial, Community Commercial and Neighborhood-General Commercial.

The Specific Plan includes a series of procedures and development regulations to guide growth along the Ventura Boulevard corridor. However, some of these procedures and regulations have proven over time to be problematic to implement, and are in some instances working against the goals of the community and the plan itself.

#### **Option One – Specific Plan Procedural Enhancements**

Several procedures and processes in the Specific Plan could be enhanced with streamlining. Some of these procedures are difficult or time-consuming to implement, and have the effect of delaying or thwarting investment within the Ventura Boulevard corridor. One such example is the requirement that all new tenant and business identification signs file a Specific Plan Project Permit Compliance application, a process that takes several months and requires a costly application fee. The length of time and cost to process such applications creates a burden for many applicants.

The Department has created an administrative review process that can replace the Project Permit Compliance process for some simple projects, such as new tenant signs or minor changes of use. While the development regulations would remain the same, the reduction in the required level of discretion would dramatically streamline some projects as well as reduce costs for applicants.

These procedural enhancements to the Specific Plan can be accomplished using existing staff and budget resources to complete environmental review, outreach, plan formulation and adoption. The estimated timeline for completion is approximately nine months.

#### **Option Two – Specific Plan Re:Code and Rezone**

The Specific Plan, coupled with the underlying zoning along the corridor, can create unnecessary deterrents for certain types of projects otherwise permitted in the Specific Plan. As an example, the Specific Plan contains parcels with dual zoning classifications which, in certain instances, obstructs potential development projects that might otherwise meet the intent of the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan's zoning system could benefit from simplification, efficiency, modernization, and future adaptability. Option Two would use the re:code process to more effectively implement the goals and

objectives of the Specific Plan. Converting the existing Specific Plan regulations into the new zoning system will ensure the plan is consistent with the rezoning work undertaken as part of the Community Plan Update program. Additionally, the procedural enhancements included in Option One could also be achieved.

Option Two could be accomplished in one to two years, would require two full-time staff positions, and consultant costs of approximately \$100,000 – \$200,000 to include environmental review and community outreach. Both the required staffing and consultant costs are included in the recently adopted fiscal year 2018-19 budget.

### **Option Three – Specific Plan Review and Revision**

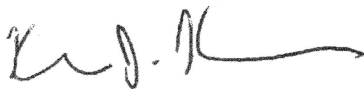
Option Three includes a review and potential revision to all provisions of the Specific Plan including procedures, existing development regulations, permitted densities, heights, zoning classifications, and assessed fees. The Specific Plan would be rezoned. Streamlined procedures could be established. Context appropriate regulatory overlays could be designed to create tailored regulations for the varied communities along Ventura Boulevard.

The revision of the Specific Plan could be accomplished within four to five years and would involve two additional full-time staff positions beyond what is currently budgeted. Estimated consultant costs would exceed \$750,000 and the work program would include an Environmental Impact Report, significant outreach to all affected communities, plan preparation, and adoption.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Blake Lamb at (818) 374-9914 or [Blake.Lamb@lacity.org](mailto:Blake.Lamb@lacity.org).

Sincerely,

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Director of Planning



Kevin J. Keller, AICP  
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