

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
CONNECT SOUTHWEST LA: A TOD SPECIFIC PLAN FOR WEST ATHENS-
WESTMONT
PROJECT NO. 2016-000317-(2)
ADVANCE PLANNING NO. RPPL 2016002080
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. RPPL 2017009622
STATE CLEARINGHOUS NO. 2017051051**

WHEREAS, the County of Los Angeles (County) Regional Planning Commission (Commission) has conducted a public hearing in the matter of Connect Southwest LA: A TOD Specific Plan for West Athens-Westmont (Specific Plan) and associated Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on September 12, 2018, November 14, 2018, and May 29, 2019; which includes the following:

1. The Specific Plan that includes changes to zoning to encourage transit oriented development and promote active transportation. The Specific Plan would accommodate an additional 1,061 dwelling units and 1.7 million square feet of non-residential land use.
2. Zone Change to “SP” to designate the Specific Plan area.
3. Land Use Amendments to the West Athens-Westmont Community Plan to implement the new Specific Plan zones.
4. A Zoning Ordinance to incorporate the Specific Plan into Title 22.
5. The Programmatic EIR for the Specific Plan in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

WHEREAS, the Commission finds as follows:

1. On October 6, 2015, the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted the update to the Los Angeles County General Plan (General Plan). The General Plan includes five guiding principles: employ smart growth; ensure community services and infrastructure are sufficient to accommodate growth; provide the foundation for a strong and diversified economy; promote excellence in environmental resource management; and provide healthy, livable, and equitable communities;
2. The General Plan includes the establishment of TODs as a main policy area. The General Plan designates 11 TODs that are areas located within a half-mile radius of an existing Metro Station and promotes infill development and active transportation strategies.
3. The General Plan update also repealed earlier TOD regulations and established the TOD Program (Implementation Program LU-2). This program calls for the preparation of a Specific Plan for each of the TOD areas.

4. This Specific Plan is the third TOD plan developed to implement this program and was initiated in January 2016. The Specific Plan area comprises approximately 658 acres adjacent to the Metro Green Line Vermont/Athens Station.
5. The Specific Plan provides land use and development standards for the Specific Plan area.
6. Designation of the Specific Plan requires a zone change within the West Athens-Westmont Zoned District from the zones specified in the West Athens-Westmont Community Plan to “SP (Specific Plan Zone).”
7. Implementation of the Specific Plan requires a General Plan Land Use Amendment to update the land uses specified in the West Athens-Westmont Community Plan to those specified in the Los Angeles County 2035 General Plan.
8. The Vermont/Athens Station was selected for the County’s third TOD Specific Plan due to the proximity of the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station, the 64-acre campus of Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) and the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department Southwest Station and adjacent municipal service center. Significant public investments are planned and underway at LASC as the college implements its updated campus Master Plan. The Specific Plan area is also within two miles of aerospace industries in the City of Hawthorne as well as new Los Angeles Stadium and Entertainment District at Hollywood Park in the City of Inglewood.
9. A project task force of County departments, state agencies and local partners held three quarterly meetings starting in 2016, establishing relationships at the start of the project that carried through the environmental review. Members of the task force included staff from the County and County-family departments, including the Arts Commission, Community Development Commission, Fire Department, Public Works, Public Health, Parks and Recreation, Health Services, Mental Health, the Sheriff’s Department and Metro. Other representatives were from Caltrans and Los Angeles Southwest College.
10. Sixteen outreach events, including four hosted workshops and meetings with public stakeholders, occurred in the community beginning in 2016. Throughout the planning process for the Specific Plan, Regional Planning staff met with and received input from the following local community groups: Southwest Community Association, West Athens-Westmont Task Force, West Athens-Westmont Best Start, and Los Angeles Southwest College. Regional Planning staff also attended and participated in stakeholder meetings for the Concerned Citizens of Willowbrook; the HawthorNEXT Specific Plan [for the nearby Metro Green Line Crenshaw Station]; the Second District Empowerment Congress, Economic Development Committee;

and at meetings with plot-holders at the West Athens Victory Garden, which is managed by the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust.

11. An EIR was prepared for this project in compliance with CEQA. A Draft EIR was circulated for public review and comments from May 16, 2018 to June 29, 2018, (45-days) in compliance with to CEQA reporting requirements. The Draft EIR was made available online as well as at the Woodcrest Library and the A.C. Bilbrew Library. The Notice of Completion and Availability of a Draft EIR was mailed and emailed to 3,931 postal addresses and 54 email addresses and was published in the Long Beach Press Telegram on May 15, 2018.
12. A public meeting to take comments on the Draft EIR was held on May 24, 2018. The County received four (4) comment letters on the DEIR. Two (2) people attended the DEIR public meeting during the statutory 45-day review period. All comments on the Draft EIR are reflected in the Response to Comments in the Final EIR.
13. The Regional Planning Commission discussed the project on September 12, 2018. Staff presented the project and findings of the Final EIR along with the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, the CEQA Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations as well as the Zone Change Map, Zoning Ordinance, West Athens-Westmont Community Plan Land Use Amendments Map. A representative of the Southwest Community Association provided testimony and a letter to the Commission. Staff requested additional time to respond to constituent concerns as well as to incorporate some revisions into the Specific Plan related to housing affordability, mobility and sustainability and to clarify plan objectives. The hearing was continued to November 14, 2018.
14. On November 14, 2018, the Regional Planning Commission granted staff's request for additional time and continued the public hearing off-calendar.
15. A revised notice of public hearing was issued on April 26, 2019, and the project was presented to the Regional Planning Commission on May 29, 2019. Staff provided a revised final draft and an overview of the revisions incorporated. All changes incorporated into the revised draft are within the scope of the completed environmental review. Therefore, no changes needed to be made to the Final EIR, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, the CEQA Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations as well as the Zone Change Map, Zoning Ordinance and West Athens-Westmont Community Plan Land Use Amendments Map discussed previously.
16. Pursuant to the provisions of Sections 22.60.174 and 22.60.175 of the County Code, the public hearing notice was published in the Long Beach Press Telegram on

August 10, 2018. Additionally, 3,931 courtesy notices were mailed (and 54 emailed) to all property owners and other stakeholders.

17. Pursuant to the provisions of Sections 22.60.174 and 22.60.175 of the County Code, the revised public hearing notice was published in the Long Beach Press Telegram on April 26, 2019. Additionally, 3,935 courtesy notices were mailed (54 emailed) to all property owners and other stakeholders.
18. The EIR includes impacts related to air quality, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, transportation and traffic, and utilities and service systems considered and reduced to less than significant with the implementation of the mitigation measures pursuant to CEQA reporting requirements. After the implementation of mitigation measures, the impacts that would remain significant and unavoidable include air quality, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, and transportation and traffic. The Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations provides the written findings in connection with certification of an environmental impact report prior to approval of a project pursuant to Sections 15091 and 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines and Section 21081 of the Public Resources Code.
19. The location of the documents and other materials constituting the record of proceedings upon which the Commission's decision is based in this matter is at the County Department of Regional Planning, 13th Floor, Hall of Records, 320 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. The custodian of such documents and materials shall be the Section Head of the Community Studies East Section.

RESOLVED, that the Commission recommends to the Board:

1. That the Board certify the Final EIR and find that it has been prepared in compliance with CEQA and the state and local agency guidelines related thereto and reflect the independent judgment of the Board.
2. That the Board consider, approve and certify the information contained in the Final EIR prior to approving Advance Planning No. RPPL 2016002080 and related actions.
3. That the Board determine that where significant adverse environmental effects of the project, as described in the Final EIR, could not be reduced to less than significant, the Specific Plan benefits, such as specific social, economic, legal, technological or other considerations outweigh the environmental effects of the project as stated in the attached CEQA Findings and Statement of Overriding

Considerations for the project, which findings and statement are incorporated herein by reference.

4. That the Board consider, approve and certify the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the project, included in the Final EIR and as modified to County format and implementation procedures, and pursuant to Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code, find that the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program as modified by the County is adequately designed to ensure compliance with the mitigation measures during project implementation.
5. That the Board consider, approve and adopt the Specific Plan, Zone Change Map, Zoning Ordinance, and West Athens-Westmont Community Plan Land Use Amendments Map.
6. That the Board determine that the Zone Change and West Athens-Westmont Community Plan Land Use Amendments serve the public health, safety and general welfare and are in conformity with good zoning practice, and are compatible with and supportive of, the goals and polices of the General Plan.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by a majority of the voting members of the County of Los Angeles Regional Planning Commission on May 29, 2019.

Rosie O. Ruiz, Secretary
County of Los Angeles
Regional Planning Commission

VOTE:

Concurring:
Dissenting:
Abstaining:
Absent:

Elaine M. Lemke
Assistant County Counsel

Action Date:
May 29, 2019

AJB:DS:MK:LDF