

**DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING
DEPARTMENT STATEMENT**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING: SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

Appeal Hearing on the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission’s (Commission) approval and recommendation to approve Project No. PRJ2021-002011-(1), and a public hearing to consider Plan Amendment (PA) No. RPPL2021004860 and Zone Change (ZC) No. RPPL2021007152, and affirm the Commission approval of Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 83534 (RPPL2021007149) (TR83534), Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. RPPL2021007151, and Administrative Housing Permit (AHP) No. RPPL2021007161 (collectively known as the “Project”). The TR83534, the PA, the ZC, the CUP, and the AHP are collectively known as the “Project Entitlements.” An Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Findings of Fact, and Statement of Overriding Consideration (SOC) were prepared for the Project in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The applicant proposes to create a 360-unit Residential Planned Development (RPD) that includes 82 affordable units, and 28 acres of publicly-accessible, privately-owned open space and trail areas on 75.65 gross (74.90 net) acres, on a portion of a former golf course. TR83534 depicts 268 lots, including 200 single-family lots, 35 multi-family lots with 160 attached condominiums in multiple buildings, and 13 open space lots.

The Project was deemed complete in December 2021 and is subject to the regulations in effect at that time. The Project includes a PA to amend the then Rowland Heights Community Plan (Community Plan), a component of the General Plan, from U1 (Urban 1 – 1.1. to 3.2 Dwelling Units Per Gross Acre) to U2 (Urban 2 – 3.3. to 6 Dwelling Units Per Gross Acre) and from O (Open Space) to U2, U3 (Urban 3 – 6.1 to 12 Dwelling Units Per Gross Acre), and U4 (Urban 4 – 12.1 to 22 Dwelling Units Per Gross Acre). The Project also includes a ZC to RPD zoning with suffixes representing different residential densities: RPD-5,000-6U - 5,000 Square Feet Minimum Required Lot Area - 6 Dwelling Units Per Net Acre), RPD-5,000-12U - 5,000 Square Feet Minimum Required Lot Area - 12 Dwelling Units Per Net Acre), and RPD-5,000-17U - 5,000 Square Feet Minimum Required Lot Area - 17 Dwelling Units Per Net Acre). The Project includes a CUP for on-site Project grading exceeding 100,000 cubic yards and off-site grading transport exceeding 100,000 cubic yards, as well as an RPD with townhomes exceeding the height maximum, townhomes and triplex condominiums with reduced setbacks, and average lot widths less than 50 feet. An AHP is included for 82 affordable units set aside for moderate- and middle-income families, or 120 percent of the local Area Median Income (AMI) and 150 percent AMI, respectively, and associated development standard modifications and incentives.

On July 21, 2021, the Commission voted to initiate the PA for the Project as required by the Community Plan. The PA initiation was appealed and upheld by the Board of Supervisors (Board) on October 19, 2021.

On June 26, 2024, the Commission continued the duly noticed public hearing for the matter, without opening the public hearing, to July 24, 2024. On July 24, 2024, the Commission held a public hearing on the Project where the Commission heard a staff presentation and testimony from the applicant as well as public testimony in support of and in opposition to the Project. Comments in support of the Project included, but were not limited to, the Project's range of housing products, provision of housing including the number of for-sale workforce units which would also boost the local economy as well as increase the student population set aside approximately 35% of the Project site as publicly accessible open space. Comments in opposition to the Project included, but were not limited to, concerns regarding biological resources and services as well as the Project's environmental impacts and the EIR. Concerns were also raised regarding the design of affordable housing near a freeway, and the unlikelihood that affordable housing will materialize. Finally, other concerns raised included not receiving Project notices, and whether a local hire program will be employed in constructing the Project. After considering all testimony, the Commission voted 4-0 to certify the EIR, Findings of Fact, SOC, and adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; approve TR 83534, CUP, and AHP; and recommend approval of the PA and ZC to the Board.

The Commission's decision was timely appealed to the Board by Wanda Ewing on August 5, 2024. The appeal raises concerns about the sufficiency of EIR and its basis for the Commission's findings for TR83534, the CUP, and the AHP. The EIR that was prepared for the Project evaluates all 21 environmental factors for potential environmental impacts and includes a cumulative impact analysis and alternatives analysis. All comments received during the public comment period, starting on October 30, 2023, and ending on January 5, 2024, for the draft EIR were thoroughly responded to in the final EIR dated May 2024. The appeal attaches the same letter, dated January 5, 2024, to which a response was provided in the final EIR. The appeal does not raise any new issues.

As detailed in the Project entitlement findings and resolution, the Project meets the findings for TR83534, the PA, ZC, CUP, and AHP. The Project is consistent with the goals and policies of the Community Plan as well as the General Plan, including the Guiding Principles of the General Plan: 1) employ smart growth; 2) ensure community services and infrastructure are sufficient to accommodate growth; 3) provide the foundation for a strong and diverse economy; 4) promote excellence in environmental resource management; and 5) provide healthy, livable and equitable communities.


Staff recommends approval of the Project to assist the County in meeting its housing needs by providing 360 new residential units, of which 82 are income-restricted units affordable at the middle-income and moderate-income levels. Additionally, this urban infill Project provides approximately 28 acres of publicly-accessible, privately-owned and maintained open space

which includes an approximately two-mile-long trail system. The Project provides a range of housing products with on-site amenities including guest parking, landscaped walkways, tree plantings, and passive recreational opportunities, that will improve the quality of life for residents, guests, and the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Project's EIR, including the draft EIR and final EIR, was prepared for this Project in compliance with CEQA, the State CEQA Guidelines, and the County's environmental document reporting procedures and guidelines. The EIR evaluated all environmental factors and concluded the Project would have a less than significant effect on air quality, biological resources, cultural and tribal cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology, public services, and wildfire with implementation of mitigation measures. The EIR identified significant unavoidable impacts on Greenhouse Gases, noise, and transportation resources after implementation of the Project design features and feasible mitigation measures. The Commission found, as set forth in the prepared CEQA Findings and SOC, that the benefits and value of the urban infill Project outweigh the remaining significant impacts of the Project after implementation of all feasible mitigation.

Staff recommends that the Board certify the EIR, including Environmental Findings of Fact and SOC adopted and incorporated by reference; and approve the Project by adopting a resolution for PA No. RPPL2021004860, adopt an ordinance for ZC No. RPPL2021007152, and adopt the Commission's Findings and Conditions as the Board's Findings and Conditions to uphold the approval of Project No. PRJ2021-002011-(1), consisting of TR83534 (RPPL202107149), CUP No. RPPL2021007151, and AHP No. RPPL2021007161.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Bodek", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

AMY J. BODEK, AICP
Director of Regional Planning

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