Riverwalk at Studio City

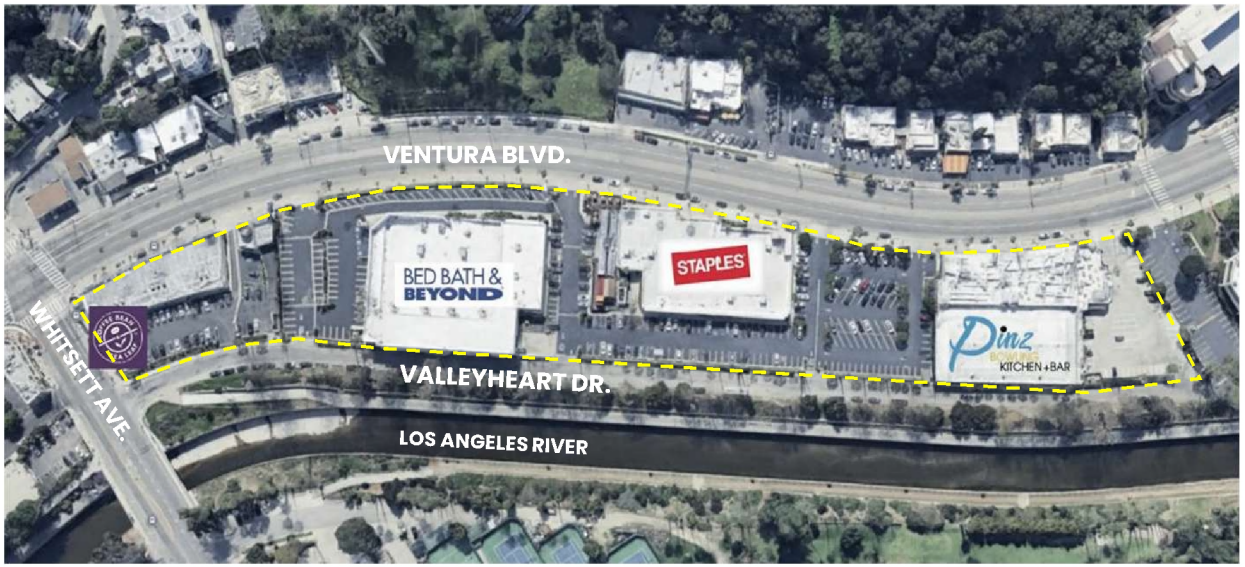
12555 W Ventura Blvd. | Council File No. 26-1081-S1
CPC-2025-5697, VTT-84453, ENV-2025-5697-SE

PLUM Committee Hearing

October 13, 2026

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Site Location



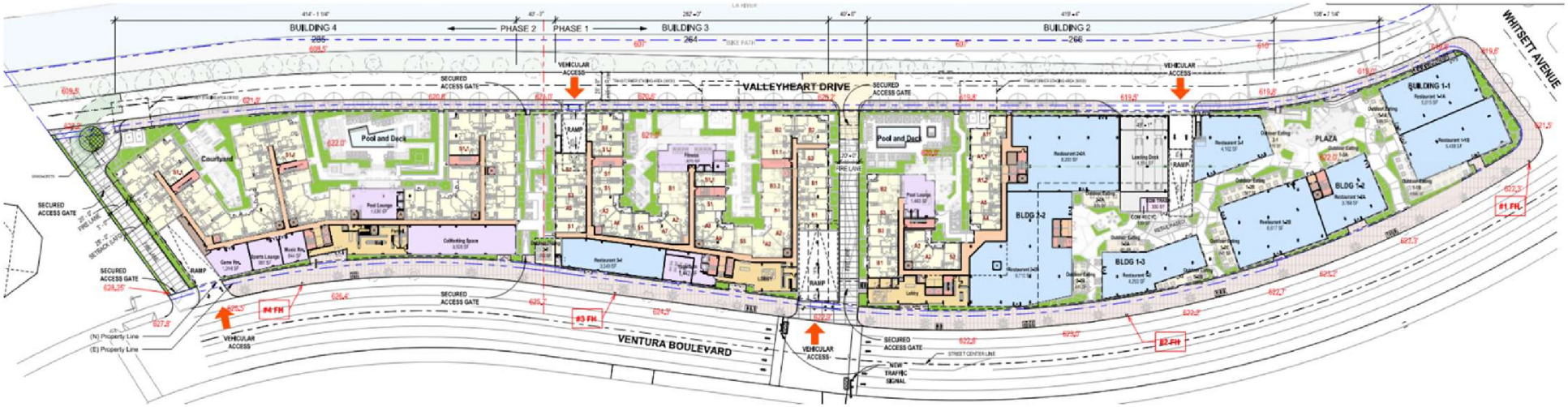
- **Address:** 12555 W. Ventura Blvd. (12501 - 12665 W. Ventura Blvd.)
- **APNs:** 2375-018-008, 013, 018, 019
- **Lot Area:** 261,240 SF (5.99 acres)
- **Existing Use:** One and two-story commercial buildings and associated surface parking lots
- **Proposed Use:** Mixed-Use Residential and Commercial
- **Zoning:** C1.5-1VL-RIO
- **General Plan Land Use:** Neighborhood Office Commercial

Project Overview

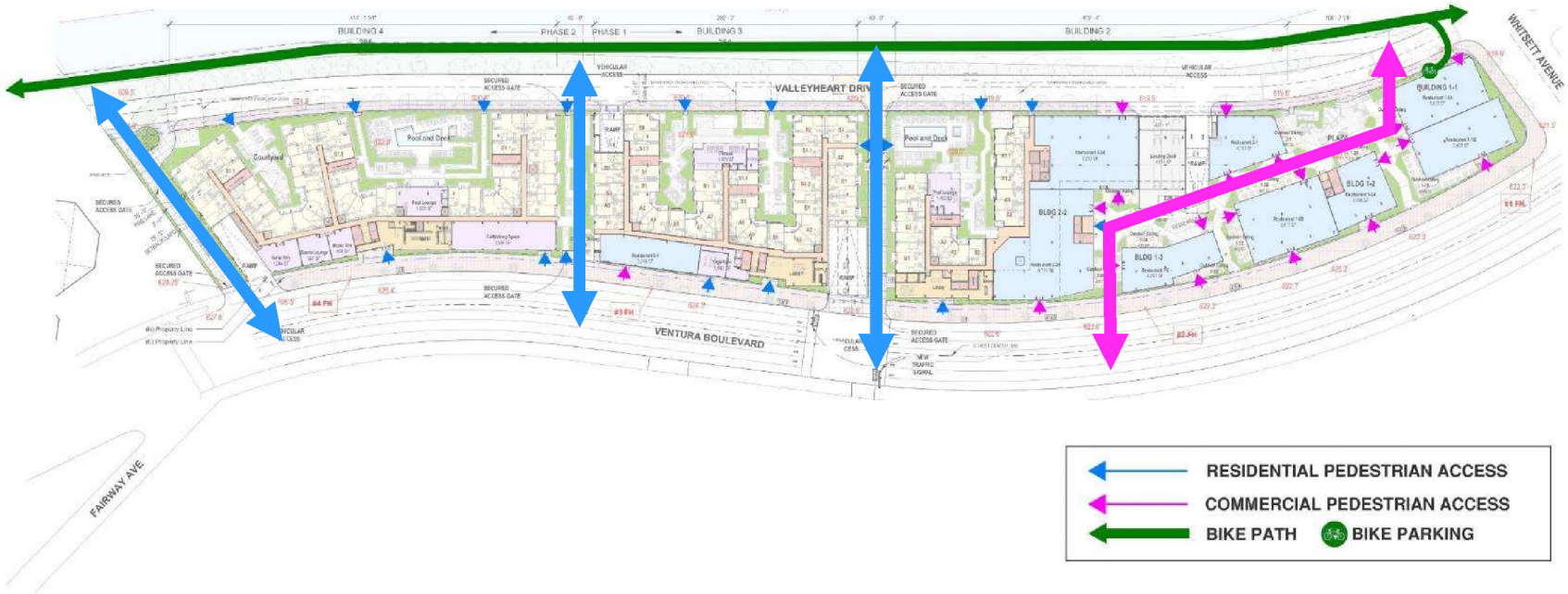


- 814 residential dwelling units
  - 46 Very Low Income (7%) Affordable Units
- 75,968 square feet of restaurant & commercial uses
- 1,806 parking spaces in subterranean lot
  - 1,040 dedicated residential spaces
  - 766 dedicated commercial spaces
- Maximum 7-stories (on Valleyheart Dr.)
  - 5-6 stories on Ventura Blvd.
  - 2-story commercial buildings

Site Plan


BUILDING 4
PHASE 2
PHASE 1
BUILDING 3
BUILDING 2
VALLEYHEART DRIVE
VENTURA BOULEVARD
WHITSETT AVENUE
VEHICULAR ACCESS
SECURED ACCESS GATE
Pool and Deck
Courtyard
RAMP
PLAZA
BLDG 1-1
BLDG 1-2
BLDG 1-3
#4 FH
#3 FH
#2 FH
#1 FH
NEW TRAFFIC SIGNAL

Connection to Los Angeles River





View from Across Ventura Blvd. looking Northeast



View of the Proposed Commercial Landscaped Plaza, from Valleyheart Dr., looking West



View from Valleyheart Dr. looking East

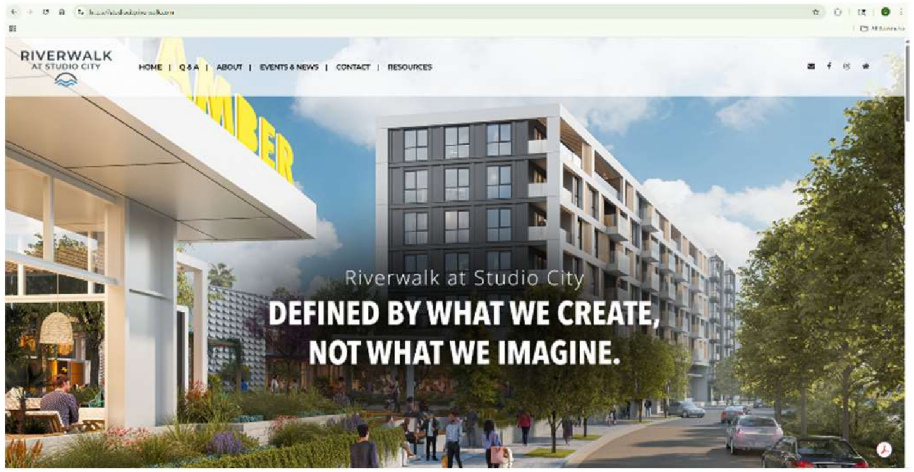
Project Entitlements

- **Density Bonus** with the following requested incentives:
  - Off-Menu Incentive to allow a **floor area ratio of 3.2:1**
  - Waiver of Development Standards to allow **74% lot coverage**
  - Waiver of Development Standards to allow **84 feet maximum building height**
  - Waiver of Development Standards to allow **1.5-foot rear yard setback**
  - Waiver of Development Standards from the **transitional Height**
  - Waiver of Development Standards to allow **volume averaging setbacks** from the roof perimeter with hybrid vertical cutouts
  - Approved by CPC on June 11, 2026, and decision is final and not appealable
- **Project Review** for a development project resulting in a net increase of 50 or more dwelling units and 50,000 gross square feet or more of non-residential floor area.
- **Project Permit Compliance Review**
- **Main Conditional Use Permit** to allow the sale and dispensing of a full-line of alcoholic beverages for on- and off-site consumption
- **VTT-84453**
  - Two-phased **Vesting Tentative Tract Map,** for merger and re-subdivision into 2 main ground lots, 3 residential lots, 5 commercial lots, and 8 parking lots, and a haul route for the removal of approx. 521,100 cy..
  - Approved: 4/15/2026
  - Appeal denied by CPC on 6/11/2026

Community Outreach

Outreach Conducted to:

- Harvard Westlake
- Studio City BID
- Studio City Neighborhood Council
- Council Office
- Friends of the Los Angeles River
- Studio City Chamber of Commerce
- Valley Industry Commerce Association
- Neighboring Commercial and Residential Property Owners and Tenants



Website: https://studiocityriverwalk.com/
Instagram: @riverwalkstudiocity
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61582730655187

Community Outreach – Timeline

- **Summer 2025:** Outreach to community members, including a 4th of July Party for neighbors adjacent to the Project
- **October 2025:** Presented preview at Studio City Neighborhood Council (SCNC)
- **November 2025:** Informational mailer sent to 2,200 addresses in the area, project team attended community holiday event, and open House at the Pinz Bowling Alley. Created and updated website with project and Planning Dept. details.
- **April-September 2026:** Presented project to (SCNC) Land Use Committee, Full Board, and Ad Hoc Committee
- Met and corresponded with over 100 individuals via email, phone, and individual meetings to review the Project and engage the community. Sent second mailer and used text campaign to invite the community to the second event held on site in May. Canvassed area neighbors.



Community Benefits

- **Activated streetscape**, community gathering areas, and thoughtful design
- **Transportation upgrades** in the Specific Plan area funded by $1,000,000 in Project Impact Assessment (PIA) fees
- **Recreation & Park Fees** to fund adjacent LA River bike path, lighting and other upgrades
- Pedestrian and bicycle **connection to Los Angeles River**
- New **affordable housing** units
- Substantial **landscaping** (native plants) for wildlife habitat and shade



Appeal – AB130 Qualification (VHFHSZ)

- **AB130 is a statutory CEQA exemption for urban infill housing development projects.**
  - If a project qualifies based on the objective checklist, there are no exceptions to the exemption.
  - The Project qualifies because it is a housing development project with the required density, in an urban area, on a 6-acre property, that is not in a prohibited area.
- **A Project in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) still qualifies for an AB130 exemption**, if it complies with the fire safety provisions set forth in PRC §4291, PRC §51182, PRC §4290, and California Building Code (CBC) §7A, which has been updated by the wildland-urban interface building standards, currently contained in the California Wildland-Urban Interface Code (CWUIC) 2025, Part 7.
- **The Project fully complies with the Building Code, Fire Code and CWUIC Requirements**, as stated in:
  - Technical Memorandum for Riverwalk at Studio City by Dudek, dated September 26, 2025 (Fire Code Analysis);
  - Technical Review: Wildfire Management Features, dated May 29, 2026, by SGH (Wildfire Management Review); and
  - Inter-Departmental Correspondence, by the Los Angeles Fire Department, dated November 12, 2026 (Fire Department Report).

Appeal – AB130 Qualification (Habitat)

- **The Property is Not** Habitat for Protected Species identified as candidate, sensitive, or species of special status by state or federal agencies, fully protected species, or species protected by the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. Sec. 1531 et seq.), the California Endangered Species Act (Chapter 1.5 (commencing with Section 2050) of Division 3 of the Fish and Game Code), or the Native Plant Protection Act (Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 1900) of Division 2 of the Fish and Game Code).
- **Applicant Declaration**, dated February 12, 2025, confirmed that there were sensitive/special resources in the area, but the Project would not remove or affect the biological resources.
- **Envicom Response to AB 130 Biological Requirements – Riverwalk at Studio City Project**, dated September 19, 2025, confirmed it's biologist conducted a survey on February 10, 2025, and observed only the common Anna's hummingbird and house finch. There were no wetlands, no habitat for protected species, and no land under conservation easement.
- Based on substantial evidence provided related to biological resources, the Project qualified for the AB130 exemption.

Appeal – AB130 Qualification (Bats)

- **In response to the Appeal, the Applicant prepared a bat study and biological resources report:**
  - Focused Bat Surveys for the Proposed Riverwalk at Studio City Development Project in Studio City, California by LSA, dated August 28, 2026 (LSA Bat Study)
  - Biological Resources Report, Riverwalk at Studio City, by Envicom Corporation, dated June 12, 2026, updated September 2026. (Envicom Biological Resources Report)

- The LSA Bat Study determined:
  - There were no bats or evidence of bats, including western yellow bats, on the Property;
  - The Property included only marginally suitable habitat for day-roosting bats;
  - Bats typically roost in palm fronds, which are required to be trimmed in VHFHSZ by the Fire Code; therefore, there will not be suitable habitat in palm trees in a VHFHSZ.

- The Appellant's 2022 Biological Report for the Harvard-Westlake Property by Scott Cashen does not provide substantial evidence of any biological resources for this Project, because it is for a recreational facility located on a former golf course across the river from the Project site, it did not identify any bats on either site, and it determined that the loss of one roosting site would not have a substantial adverse effect on the western yellow bat population.

Appeal – Density Bonus

- The City Planning Commission ("CPC") considered and approved the Density Bonus entitlements for the Project on June 11, 2026 (mailed on July 13, 2026), which included off-menu incentives and waivers, pursuant to LAMC §22.37. (Ord. No. 188,477)
- The CPC approval of the Density Bonus entitlement, including off-menu incentives and waivers, are final and not further appealable to the City Council (LAMC §22.37(d)(3); LAMC Chapter 1A §13B.3.2.G)
- "Notwithstanding the provisions set forth in Section 13B.2.3 of Chapter 1A, the decision of the City Planning Commission shall be final and not further appealable." (LAMC §22.37(d)(3))
- Therefore, the City Council may not consider the Appeal of the Density Bonus entitlements, or the increase in density or waiver of development standards as a basis for any other appeal issue.
- For example, the City Council may not determine that the CPC did not make the VTTM, Project Review, or Project Compliance findings based on the Project density or waived development standards approved as part of the Density Bonus.

Appeal – VTTM

- The VTTM Determination approved the merger and re-subdivision of the Property into two master ground lots, three residential airspace lots, five commercial airspace lots, and eight parking airspace lots as part of a Project for the construction, use, and maintenance of a mixed-use development.
- The VTTM Determination did not approve any density or design standards for the housing development project, and only considered the configuration and layout of the proposed lots and the proposed site plan layout.
- Pursuant to the Subdivision Map Act, the location of the buildings is not considered as part of the approval of the map for housing projects. (Gov'n Code §66427(a))
- The Appeal tries to use the "serious public health problem" finding for denial of a tract map under Gov'n Code §66474.61(f) to trigger full environmental review and studies that would typically be required under CEQA (PRC §21000 *et seq.*). These are two separate evaluations. This Project is statutorily exempt from CEQA under AB130 as an urban infill housing development project (PRC §21080.66). Therefore, any wildfire impact evaluation under CEQA is not required for the Project.

Appeal – Evacuation Study

- The Applicant voluntarily prepared the **Qualitative Wildfire Evacuation Study, Riverwalk at Studio City, by Dudek, dated August 2026 (Evacuation Study),** which provided a detailed fact-specific analysis, and concluded that "the Project would not conflict with any emergency evacuation plan or emergency response plan, would not expose people to a significant risk of loss or death involving wildland fires related to evacuation, would not interfere with evacuation response planning, and would not result in inadequate emergency access."

- The Project Evacuation analysis considers the most conservative situation, where every commercial patron and residential tenant and guest are on the Property.

- The study determines that the Project-generated vehicles could clear a segment of Ventura Boulevard in approximately 21 minutes.

- The Evacuation Study also analyzes various factors, including time of day, the number of vehicles present on-site, the occupancy levels of the residential and commercial uses, the extent to which surrounding neighborhoods and adjacent land uses are also evacuating, traffic management measures implemented by emergency personnel, and the use of multiple available evacuation routes.

- The Evacuation Study concludes that the Project would not impair or otherwise negatively affect any of the City's evacuation routes.

Appeal – No Significant Exacerbating Effects

- In the Lotusland case, the court confirmed that CEQA requires an analysis of a "project's potentially significant exacerbating effects on existing environmental hazards- effects that arise because the project brings 'development and people into the area affected." (*California Building Industry Assoc. v. Bay Area Air Quality Management Dist*. (2015) 62 Cal.4th 369, 288)

- The court agreed that analysis of community evacuation is not required unless the project might exacerbate existing environmental hazards.

- In the Lotusland project, the project would bring 4,070 residents to an area with an existing population of 10,163 residents, where there were limited roads for evacuation. The court determined that by bringing a significant number of people into the area (40% increase), it may significantly exacerbate existing environmental conditions.

- For Riverwalk, it is exempt from CEQA and so had no obligation to prepare the evacuation study. But, an 814-unit project in a large metropolitan area on a major street near freeways would not significantly exacerbate existing environmental conditions. The Project's Evacuation Study showed that the Project did not negatively affect the City's evacuation routes.

Appeal – Safety Element Compliance

- The VTTM is consistent with the Safety Element of the General Plan, and included findings identified in the Fire Department Report. But, as a CEQA exempt project, the code does not require preparation of a project-specific evacuation study.

- The City Council revised the Safety Element in 2025 to incorporate the requirements of Gov'n Code §65302.15. The City has an Emergency Operations Plan for Evacuation, dated October 2020, that analyzes the emergency response as a whole for multiple City departments, including using major streets as evacuation routes identified by DOT. The Fire Department fully complies with the required analysis by identifying the conditions necessary to meet the standards set forth in the CBC, CWUIC, LABC, and City Fire Code.

- The VTTM also does not cause a serious public health problem. The Evacuation Study shows that there is sufficient capacity on Ventura Boulevard, the other major streets, and the freeways used in an evacuation scenario. Also , the haul route would not cause serious health problems. The soil excavation was fully evaluated in the Geology and Soils Report Approval, dated August 11, 2025, by the LADBS Grading Division, and the conditions apply to the VTTM.

Appeal – No Substantial Injury to Wildlife

- The Subdivision Map Act (Gov'n Code §66474.61(e)) provides that the City shall deny a tract map if the design of the subdivision or the proposed improvements are "likely to substantially and avoidably injure fish or wildlife or their habitat."
- The Project proposes to remove approximately 93 palm trees, including 22 onsite Mexican fan palms, 8 king palms, 19 queen palms, and 44 pygmy date palms, and to replace the trees on-site as determined by the Department of Urban Forestry.
- As stated in the LSA Bat Study and Envicom Biological Resources Report, the palms do not provide suitable habitat for bats in a VHFHSZ because the palm fronds must be regularly trimmed due to fire hazards. In addition, bats do not roost in loud urban lighted areas, such as large illuminated commercial parking lots, and were not found on site. Also,, the VTTM only approves the lot division, and does not approve the landscaping for the Project.
- The Appeal did not identify or provide evidence of any fish or wildlife that exist on the Property and would be substantially injured by the Project.

Appeal – Housing Accountability Act

- The State Housing Accountability Act ("HAA", Gov'n Code § 65589.5) requires that cities approve housing development projects unless the city can make findings that the project causes a specific adverse impact to public health and safety.

- When a proposed housing development project complies with applicable, objective general plan, zoning, and subdivision standards and criteria, in effect at the time that the application was deemed complete, a City can only disapprove a project or impose a condition that the project be developed at a lower density, if based on the preponderance of evidence in the record: (i) The housing development project would have a specific, adverse impact upon the public health or safety unless the project is disapproved or approved upon the condition that the project be developed at a lower density; and (ii) There is no feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the adverse impact, other than the disapproval of the housing development project or the approval of the project upon the condition that it be developed at a lower density. (Gov'n Code §65589.5 (j)(1)).

- The Project has no specific adverse impact to public health and safety. The Project is located directly on Ventura Boulevard, a multilane major street, is directly across from a Fire Station, and complies with all fire access and fire safety requirements, including two fire lanes within the Property.

Conclusion

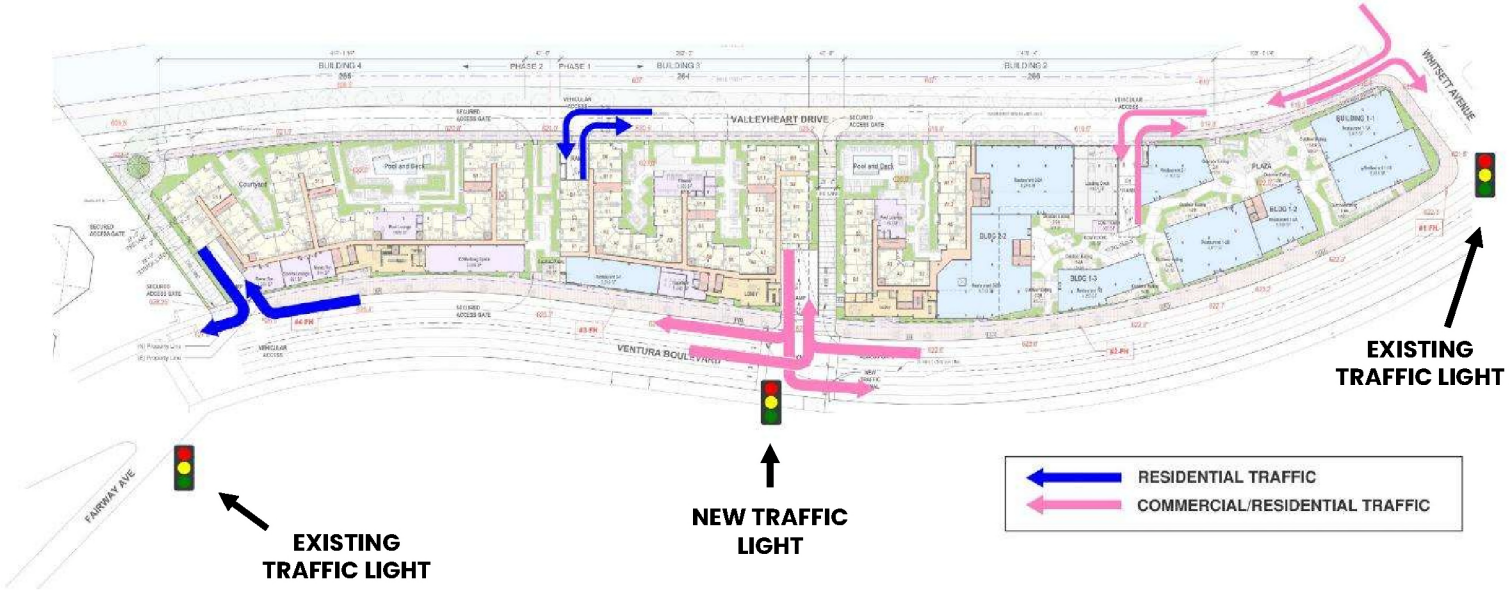
- Riverwalk is exactly the type of housing development project that the legislature intended to qualify for a statutory CEQA exemption under AB130.
- The Project provides 46 units affordable to very low income households.
- The Project creates a community space with direct access to the LA River that encourages pedestrian and bicycle access.
- The Project provides an array of studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units, and amenities.
- The Project includes sufficient parking to ensure all residents and restaurant patrons may park on-site.
- The Project provides funding for park and recreation improvements along the LA River, and for traffic improvements at nearby intersections.
- The Applicants performed extensive outreach and engagement with the Neighborhood Council and local neighbors to address their concerns and requests.

Greenberg Glusker

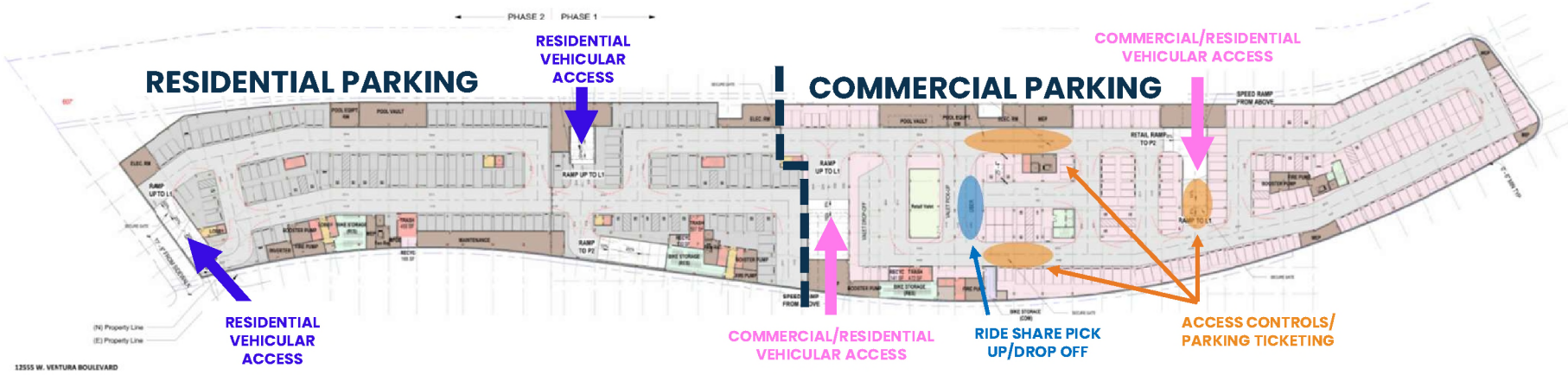
Thank you!

Any questions?

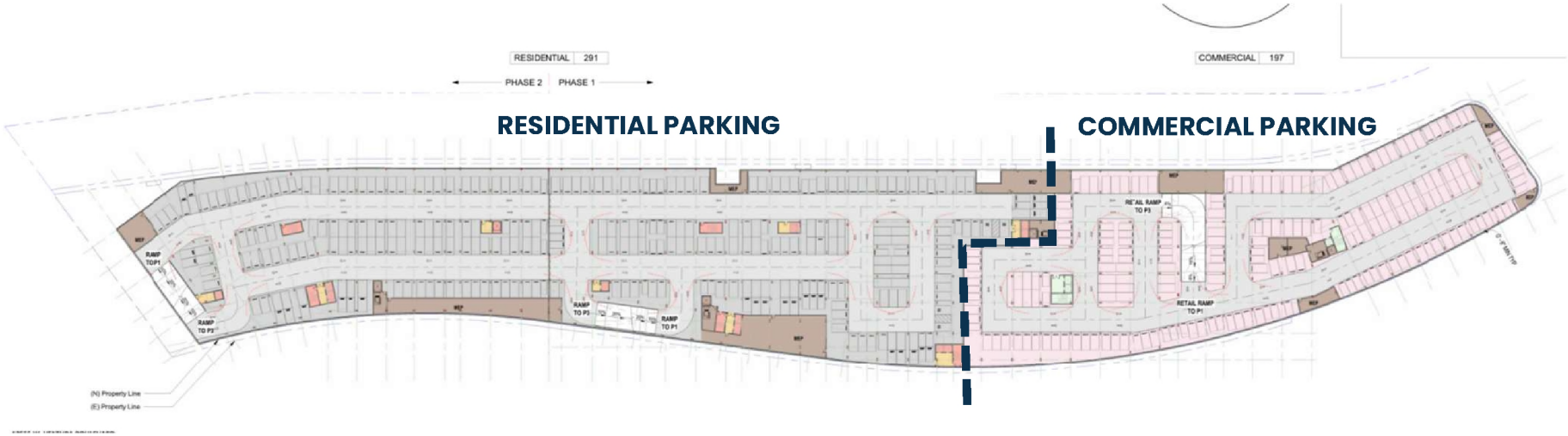
Traffic Circulation – Vehicular Access



Parking – Level P1



Parking – Levels P2-P4



Parking

REQUIRED PARKING SPACES

RESIDENTIAL (LAMC Table 12.22 A.37.(e)(2)(ii)a.)

UNIT TYPE	UNIT COUNT	PARKING RATIO	PARKING SPACES REQ.
STUDIOS	223	1	223
ONE BEDROOM	373	1	373
TWO BEDROOM	218	1.5	327
			923 SPACES

COMMERCIAL (LAMC 12.21.A.4(c) & VCBCSP SECTION 7.F.1.(c))

RESTAURANT SF	PARKING RATIO (1:100)	PARKING SPACES REQ.
75,968	100	760
		760 SPACES

PROPOSED PARKING SPACES		
814 RESIDENTIAL DWELLING UNITS	1,040	SPACES
PROPOSED COMMERCIAL PARKING		
RESTAURANTS - 75,968 SF	766	SPACES
TOTAL AUTOMOBILE PARKING SPACES PROPOSED	**1,806**	**SPACES**

Bicycle Parking

BICYCLE PARKING SPACES

RESIDENTIAL UNITS - BICYCLE PARKING REQUIREMENTS - LAMC SECTION 12.21.A.16(a)(1)(i)

DWELLING UNITS	SHORT-TERM SPACES REQ'D			LONG-TERM SPACES REQ'D		
	RATIO	UNITS	# OF SPACES	RATIO	UNITS	# OF SPACES
One - 25	1 per 10 units	25	3	1 per unit	25	25
26 - 100	1 per 15 units	75	5	1 per 1.5 units	75	50
101 – 200	1 per 20 units	100	5	1 per 2 units	100	50
201 +	1 per 40 units	614	15	1 per 4 units	614	154
	TOTAL	814	28	TOTAL	814	279

LAMC SECTION 12.21.A.16(b) FRACTIONS - ANY FRACTION UP TO AND INCLUDING ONE-HALF MAY BE DISREGARDED AND ANY FRACTION OVER ONE-HALF SHALL BE CONSTRUED AS REQUIRING ONE BICYCLE PARKING SPACE.

COMMERCIAL BICYCLE PARKING REQUIRED - LAMC SECTION 12.21.A.16.(a)(2)

RESTAURANT - 75,968 SF

SHORT TERM BICYCLE PARKING (1 BICYCLE SPACE PER 2,000 SF)	38	
LONG TERM BICYCLE PARKING (1 BICYCLE SPACE PER 2,000 SF)	38	
TOTAL COMMERCIAL BICYCLE SPACES REQUIRED	**76**	
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL BICYCLE PARKING PROPOSED		
SHORT TERM	30	
LONG TERM	324	
TOTAL COMMERICIAL BICYCLE PARKING PROPOSED		
SHORT TERM	38	
LONG TERM	40	
TOTAL BICYCLE PARKING SPACES	**432**	**SPACES**

Design Conceptualization



Design Conceptualization



Architectural Intent

STYLE A

A RHYTHMIC PATTERN OF STAGGERED FRAMES.



STYLE B

A STREAMLINED APPROACH TO THE BASE-MIDDLE-TOP PROPORTIONING ORDER .



Ventura & Whitsett Corner Streetscape



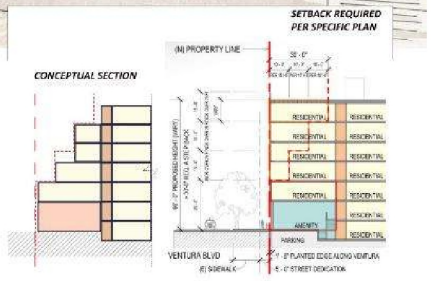
VENTURA BLVD AND WHITSETT AVE CORNER

2-STORY RETAIL MASSING TO RELATE TO ADJACENT RETAIL STREETSCAPE

Building Stepbacks



PROVIDE VARIED 4- TO 5-STORY MASSING ALONG VENTURA BOULEVARD TO CREATE VISUAL INTEREST. THIS WAS PARTLY DRIVEN BY A CITY REQUIREMENT THAT ANY BUILDING EXCEEDING 25 FEET IN HEIGHT SHALL PROVIDE STEPBACKS.



Valleyheart Streetscape



VIEW OF VALLEYHEART DR FROM WHITSETT AVE, LOOKING WEST

Commercial Plaza



VIEW OF RETAIL EXPERIENCE