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October 21, 2026

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:

APPEAL RESPONSE FOR CASE NO. APCNV-2023-8011-ZC-ZV-CU-WDI-SPP-DRB-1A FOR DENNY'S CAR WASH AT 10125 AND 10113 NORTH BALBOA BOULEVARD AND 17022 WEST ROMAR STREET WITHIN THE NORTHRIDGE COMMUNITY PLAN AND THE GRANADA HILLS SPECIFIC PLAN; CF 26-1288

At its meeting on May 7, 2026, the North Valley Area City Planning Commission (NVAPC) approved the upgrade and continued use of an existing car wash (Denny's Car Wash) which currently consists of five self-service wash bays, one automated car wash tunnel, and six vacuum stations. The approved Project includes: replacing existing fabric shade covers with outdoor shade structures over the vacuum cleaner stations; demolition of a 400 square foot office/storage area and the addition of a 495 square foot equipment housing area; demolition and replacement of a 300 square foot equipment housing area. The project also includes a vehicle queuing lane across the alley to the west from the car wash on the rear portion of the 17022 Romar Street lot. The NVAPC approved the following hours of operation: Self-serve wash bay stations are limited to 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., daily; the automatic car wash tunnel and self-serve vacuum stations are limited to 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., daily.

The North Valley Area Planning Commission issued a Determination Letter on July 29, 2026 with the following actions:

1. **Determined**, based on the whole of the administrative record, that the Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301 (Class 1 for existing structures) and Section 15303 (Class 3 for conversion of small structures), and there is no substantial evidence demonstrating that an exception to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 applies;

2. **Approved and recommended** that the City Council adopt the attached ordinance, pursuant to Chapter 1 Section 12.32 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC), a Zone Change from P-1VL to C2-1-VL;

3. **Approved,** pursuant to LAMC Chapter 1 Section 12.27, a Zone Variance to allow the continued use of a vehicle queuing in the RE11 Zone;

4. **Approved,** pursuant to LAMC Chapter 1 Section 12.24 A.4, a Conditional Use for the remodel of an existing Automotive Use (car wash) that results in more than a 20 percent increase in floor area and does not comply with the requirements enumerated in LAMC Section 12.22 A.28(b)(5);

5. **Approved**, pursuant to LAMC Chapter 1 Section 12.37, a Waiver of Dedication to waive the five foot right of way dedication along Balboa Boulevard;

6. **Approved,** pursuant to LAMC Chapter 1 Section 11.5.7 C and Section 11 of the Granada Hills Specific Plan, a Project Permit Compliance and Design Review for an expansion and renovation of an existing car wash;

7. **Adopted** the attached Modified Conditions of Approval; and

8. **Adopted** the attached Amended Findings.

The NVAPC's decision regarding the Zone Variance, Conditional Use, Waiver of Dedication, and Specific Plan Compliance and Design Review is appealable to City Council. The last day to file an appeal was August 18, 2026. On August 8, 2026, the decision was appealed in part by Kevin K. McDonnell, Jeffer Mangels & Mitchell LLP, who is the representative for the applicant. The Appellant takes issue with multiple Conditions of Approval and one Condition for Effectuating Tentative Classification Removal Condition ("T-Condition"). For reference, the Appellant's requested condition modifications are included in "Enclosure A" to this letter. The submitted appeal points are summarized below. Each appeal point is followed by the Planning Department's response.

Appeal Point #1: Limiting the hours of operation would have "devastating business impacts" (Conditions of Approval Nos. 3.a, 3.b, and 12).
The NVAPC limited the morning hours of operation beyond what was recommended by Planning Staff in its Recommendation Report dated May 7, 2026. The Appellant requests that the City Council approve hours of operation in Planning Staffs' initial recommendation to the NVAPC.

Appeal Point #1 Response: At the NVAPC meeting, community members voiced concerns about the current nuisance issues related to noise from the car wash equipment and patrons and vehicle queuing blocking the alley. In response to community concerns and to reduce morning noise from the car wash use, the NVAPC reduced morning hours of operation by one hour as follows: the Automatic Wash Tunnel and Self-Serve Vacuums were proposed to begin operations at 7:00 a.m. daily and the NVAPC conditioned the project to delay operations until 8:00 a.m. (Condition No. 3.a). The self-serve wash bays were proposed to begin operating at 6:00 a.m. and the NVAPC conditioned the project to delay operations until 7:00 a.m. (Condition No. 3.b). The NVAPC also adjusted the hours of the required vehicle queuing lane attendant (Condition No. 12) to align with the new hours of operation. Staff recommends upholding the hours as approved by the North Valley Area Planning Commission.

Appeal Point #2: A 20-foot driveway reservoir space is not feasible (T-Condition No. 4.a).
Remove the Los Angeles Department of Transportation's (LADOT) condition regarding reservoir space for gated vehicle entrances because there is not enough space to provide this along the alley and "it is impossible to operate the carwash" if a 20-foot reservoir space is required.

Appeal Point #2 Response: T-Condition No. 4.a is a standard LADOT condition for Zone Change entitlements and reads as follows:

> *T-Condition No. 4.A. A minimum of 20-foot reservoir space is required between any security gate or parking space and the property line, or to the satisfaction of LADOT.*

A final decision has not yet been made for the Zone Change and therefore this condition tied to the Zone Change is not yet appealable. Nonetheless, Planning provides the following rebuttal to the removal of this recommended condition. The final clause of the condition states "or to the satisfaction of LADOT." This clause allows LADOT discretion to implement the reservoir space requirement as appropriate for the unique circumstances of each development. Removal of this condition is not necessary because LADOT already has the flexibility to adjust the requirement as necessary.

Appeal Point #3: Gating the site after hours is not possible. The applicant instead proposes to continue their current practice for securing the site after hours.
Gating the site along the alley is not feasible as no type of sliding, swinging, or accordion style gates would work without limiting vehicle access during operating hours. The appellant proposes to secure the site as follows:

- Secure the automatic wash tunnel with metal accordion-style gates which shall be closed and locked at both the entry end and the exit end of the tunnel after hours;

- Each self-serve wash bay shall be chained and locked barring entry by any vehicles from the Balboa Boulevard side of the Property (east side of the Property);

- The alley side of the Property (west side of the Property) shall be secured with a series of chains and locks barring entry of any vehicles from the alley.

Appeal Point #3 Response:
At the Public Hearing on January 13, 2026, members of the public requested the site, and particularly the vacuum stations, be gated after hours to prevent loitering and unauthorized late-night use. In response to this concern, Planning Staff recommended, and the APC adopted, a condition requiring the property to be gated after hours which reads as follows:

Condition No. 6. After Hours Gates. The property shall be gated after hours.

The applicant's proposed alternative condition does not address the community's concerns and Staff recommends upholding the condition the NVAPC adopted.

Conclusion

Based on the information in the record and after consideration of the appeals filed, the Department recommends that the City Council deny the Appeal and uphold the North Valley Area Planning Commission's decision to conditionally approve the project, including in its determination that the project complies with the applicable Categorical Exemptions.

Sincerely,

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
Director of Planning

Renata Ooms

Renata Ooms
City Planner

VPB:PN:CR:RO

Enclosures

Enclosure A: Condition Language Modifications Requested by the Appellant

Enclosure A:
Condition Language Modifications Requested by the Appellant

The Appellant requests the following modifications to the (T)-Conditions recommended for approval by the NVAPC and the Conditions of Approval approved by the NVAPC. (Note: Text in ~~strikeout~~ is requested for deletion by the Appellant, and new text requested by the Appellant is underlined).

(T)-Condition No. 4.a. ~~A minimum of 20-foot reservoir space is required between any security gate or parking space and the property line, or to the satisfaction of LADOT.~~

Condition No. 3.a. The automatic carwash tunnel and self-serve vacuum stations shall operate between the hours of ~~8:00 a.m.~~ 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., daily.

Condition No. 3.b. The self-serve wash bay stations shall operate between the hours of ~~7:00 a.m.~~ 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., daily.

Condition No. 6. After Hours Gates. ~~The property shall be gated after hours.~~ Secure the automatic wash tunnel with metal accordion-style gates which shall be closed and locked at both the entry end and the exit end of the tunnel after hours; each self-serve wash bay shall be chained and locked barring entry by any vehicles from the Balboa Boulevard side of the Property (east side of the property); and the alley side of the property (west side of the property) shall be secured with a series of chains and locks barring entry of any vehicles from the alley.

Condition No. 12 Vehicle Queuing Lane Attendant. At least one queuing attendant shall be on site between ~~7:45 a.m.~~ 6:45 a.m. and 7:15 p.m. to direct vehicles from the vehicle queuing lane to enter the automatic car wash tunnel ~~and to direct vehicles existing the manual wash bays stations and vacuum stations onto the public alley~~. The attendant shall ensure there is no entry to the automatic car wash tunnel by cars traveling in the alley in the northerly direction.