

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING
DRAFT FINDINGS OF THE HEARING OFFICER
AND ORDER
PROJECT NO. PRJ2024-004225-(1)
COMMUNITY STANDARDS DISTRICT MODIFICATION NO. RPPL2024006082

RECITALS

1. **HEARING DATE(S).** The Los Angeles County ("County") Hearing Officer conducted a duly noticed public hearing in the matter of Community Standards District ("CSD") Modification No. **RPPL2024006082** on August 18, 2026.
2. **HEARING PROCEEDINGS.** *Reserved.*
3. **ENTITLEMENT REQUESTED.** The applicant, Robert Mahlebashian ("Applicant"), requests the CSD Modification within the East Pasadena-East San Gabriel CSD to authorize (1) a reduction to the CSD-required rear yard setback, to allow 15 feet in lieu of the required 25 feet, to accommodate the construction of a proposed 325-square-foot addition to the rear of an existing 774-square-foot single-family residence ("SFR") and (2) a reduction to the CSD-required side yard setback, to allow three feet and 11 inches in lieu of the required six feet, to accommodate an existing ground-mounted heating, ventilation, and air conditioning ("HVAC") unit ("Project") on a property located at 5548 North Willard Avenue ("Project Site") in the unincorporated community of East Pasadena – East San Gabriel in the A-1 (Light Agricultural) Zone pursuant to Los Angeles County Code ("County Code") then Section 22.318.090 (Modification of Development Standards).
4. **APPLICABILITY.** The application was deemed complete on December 16, 2024. At that time, the Project Site was located within the H9 (Residential 9 – 0 to 9 Dwelling Units Per Net Acre) land use category of the General Plan Land Use Policy Map. Since the time the application was deemed complete, the West San Gabriel Valley Area Plan ("Area Plan") was adopted. The existing H9 land use category remains unchanged.

At the time the application was deemed complete, the Project Site was also located within the A-1 Zone. The Project Site's current zoning designation is R-1 (Single-Family Residence). The Project Site remains within the East Pasadena – East San Gabriel CSD, and it is now located within the West San Gabriel Valley Planning Area Standards District ("PASD").

Pursuant to Chapter 2 (Applicability) of the General Plan and County Code Section 22.246.020 (Applicability of Zone Changes and Ordinance Amendments), the Applicant chose to have the complete CSD Modification and SPR applications be subject to the land use policies, zoning and regulations in effect at the time it was deemed complete on December 16, 2024. As such, all references to the General Plan and County Code within these Findings are to the version in effect at the time the application was deemed complete.

5. **ENTITLEMENT(S) REQUIRED.** The CSD Modification is required to authorize modifications to the development standards of the East Pasadena – East San Gabriel CSD, set forth in County Code then Section 22.318.070 (Zone Specific Development Standards), pursuant to County Code then Section 22.318.090 (Modification of Development Standards).
6. **RELATED ENTITLEMENT.** Site Plan Review (“SPR”) No. RPPL2024006083 (“related SPR”) is a related request to authorize the proposed 325-square-foot addition to the existing SFR for compliance with applicable development standards pursuant to County Code Section 22.16.030 (Land Use Regulations for Zones A-1, A-2, O-S, R-R, and W). The related SPR can be approved pending approval of the requested CSD Modification.
7. **LOCATION.** The Project is located at 5548 North Willard Avenue within the East San Gabriel Zoned District and West San Gabriel Valley Planning Area.
8. **PREVIOUS ENTITLEMENT(S).** There are no previous zoning entitlements granted for the Project Site. The existing SFR was constructed in 1949 and did not require review by LA County Planning.
9. **LAND USE DESIGNATION.** The Project Site was located within the H9 land use category of the General Plan Land Use Policy Map when the CSD Modification was deemed complete.
10. **ZONING.** The Project Site was located within the East San Gabriel Zoned District and was zoned A-1 when the CSD Modification was deemed complete.

11. SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING.

LOCATION	LEGACY GENERAL PLAN LAND USE POLICY*	LEGACY ZONING*	EXISTING USES
NORTH	H9	A-1	SFRs
EAST	H9, City of San Gabriel	A-1, City of San Gabriel	SFRs
SOUTH	H9, City of San Gabriel	A-1, City of San Gabriel, R-1	SFRs
WEST	H9	A-1, R-1	SFRs

* Refer to Finding No. 4 (Applicability), above.

12. PROJECT AND SITE PLAN DESCRIPTION.

A. Existing Site Conditions

The Project Site is 5,400 square feet (0.12 acre) gross and 4,620 square feet (0.11 acre) net in size and consists of one (1) legal lot. The Project Site is rectangular in

shape with generally flat topography and is developed with an existing SFR with an attached two-car garage and enclosed porch.

B. Site Access

The Project Site is accessible via North Willard Avenue, a private street, to the west. Access to the Project Site will be via an entrance/exit from North Willard Avenue.

C. Site Plan

The site plan depicts the existing 774-square-foot SFR with a 344-square-foot attached two-car garage. Landscaping with seven (7) ornamental trees, hardscape, and an existing ground-mounted HVAC unit are also depicted. The existing 163-square-foot enclosed porch at the rear is depicted for removal, to be replaced with the proposed 325-square-foot addition to the SFR, consisting of a new primary bedroom and bathroom. The proposed SFR will have a total of three (3) bedrooms.

D. Parking

No changes to parking for the Project Site are required or proposed for the Project. A SFR with three (3) bedrooms requires two (2) covered parking spaces, and the existing attached two-car garage will remain on the Project Site.

13. CEQA DETERMINATION. Prior to the Hearing Officer's public hearing on the Project, LA County Planning staff ("Staff") determined that the Project qualified for the Class 1, Existing Facilities, and Class 5, Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations, Categorical Exemptions from the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code section 21000, et seq.) ("CEQA"), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines for the County, because the Project involves a modification of the rear yard setback requirement, and a minor addition to an existing SFR which would not increase the floor area by more than fifty percent (50%). The Project Site is served by existing public utility services and infrastructure, and the minor addition would not require a significant expansion of these services. No exceptions to an exemption apply because the Project is not located within a Significant Ecological Area, on a scenic highway or on a hazardous waste site, is not known to contain historic resources, and there are no unusual circumstances that would indicate a reasonable possibility that the Project could have a significant or cumulative effect on the environment. Therefore, Staff recommends that the Hearing Officer determine that the project is categorically exempt from CEQA.

14. PUBLIC COMMENTS. Staff did not receive any public comments before the Report to the Hearing Officer was issued on August 6, 2026.

15. AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS. Staff has not received any comments as consultation of the Project to other County Departments was not necessary.

16. LEGAL NOTIFICATION. Pursuant to County Code Section 22.222.120 (Public Hearing Procedure), the community was properly notified of the public hearing by mail and newspaper (Pasadena Star News). Additionally, the Project was noticed and case materials were available on LA County Planning's website. On July 1, 2026, a total of

65 Notices of Public Hearing were mailed to all property owners as identified on the County Assessor's record within a 300-foot radius from the Project Site, as well as five (5) notices to those on the courtesy mailing list for the East San Gabriel Zoned District and to any additional interested parties.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY FINDINGS

17. **LAND USE POLICY.** The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan because the H9 designation is intended for SFRs, a category into which this Project falls. The Hearing Officer further finds that the Project promotes the upkeep and improvement of an existing SFR, which results in the continuation of the single-family residential character of the community.

18. **GOALS AND POLICIES.** The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan, including the following:

- **Land Use Policy No. 5.1:** *Encourage a mix of residential land use designations and development regulations that accommodate various densities, building types and styles.*
- **Land Use Goal No. 7:** *Compatible land uses that complement neighborhood character and the natural environment.*

The Project contributes to a mix of residential development styles by allowing an addition to the existing SFR, which will generally occupy the footprint of the existing enclosed porch. While the Project is a CSD Modification request to authorize (1) a reduction to the CSD-required rear yard setback, to allow 15 feet in lieu of the required 25 feet, to accommodate the construction of a proposed 325-square-foot addition to the rear of an existing 774-square-foot SFR; and (2) a reduction to the CSD-required side yard setback, to allow three feet and 11 inches in lieu of the required six feet, to accommodate an existing ground-mounted heating, ventilation, and air conditioning HVAC unit, the associated addition will give the residents of the SFR an expanded living area via a new primary bedroom and bathroom. Because the Project Site is accessible via a private street easement, and the location of the addition is at the rear of the SFR, it will be outside of public view and not anticipated to cause adverse impacts to the surrounding area. The setbacks provided are adequate for maintaining sufficient space for light, air, and privacy, and are compatible with the existing rear yard setback of neighboring properties. In consideration of these factors, the Project is consistent with the General Plan.

ZONING CODE CONSISTENCY FINDINGS

19. **PERMITTED USE IN ZONE.** The Hearing Officer finds that, while the Project is a CSD Modification request to authorize reductions to CSD-required setbacks to accommodate a proposed SFR addition and an existing ground-mounted HVAC unit, it is consistent with the A-1 zoning classification as the existing SFR is permitted in

such zone pursuant to County Code Section 22.16.030 (Land Use Regulations for Zones A-1, A-2, O-S, R-R, and W).

20. **TREE PLANTING.** The Hearing Officer finds that, while the Project is a CSD Modification request to authorize reductions to CSD-required setbacks to accommodate a proposed SFR addition and an existing ground-mounted HVAC unit, it is consistent with the standards identified in County Code Section 22.126.030 (Tree Requirements), which require two (2) trees for residential projects with three or fewer units. The Project would retain seven (7) ornamental trees on the Project Site. The existing SFR was developed in 1949, prior to the effective date of these standards in 2016. Furthermore, the Hearing Officer finds that these standards do not apply to the Project because it adds 325 square feet of floor area to the Project Site, which is less than 50 percent of the total existing building floor area of 774 square feet, pursuant to County Code Section 22.126.020 (Applicability).

21. **RESIDENTIAL DESIGN STANDARDS.** The Hearing Officer finds that, while the Project is a CSD Modification request to authorize reductions to CSD-required setbacks to accommodate a proposed SFR addition and an existing ground-mounted HVAC unit, it is consistent with the standards identified in County Code Section 22.140.520 (Residential Design Standards). Subsection F.8.b.i (Coverage) requires that a minimum of 20 percent of the lot area not used for buildings and structures, such as setbacks and open space, shall be landscaped. The Project Site has a net lot area of 4,620 square feet, with a proposed lot coverage of 1,443 square feet, which requires at least 636 square feet of landscaping. The Project will provide approximately 2,123 square feet of landscaping, exceeding the minimum requirement. Because the proposed addition is located at the rear of the existing SFR, and the existing building façade and attached garage facing the private street easement is not changing, the following standards do not apply:

- a. Direct pedestrian access;
- b. Building orientation;
- c. Canopy trees;
- d. Primary entryway;
- e. Articulations;
- f. Façade details; and
- g. Vehicle parking facilities.

22. **SFRs.** The Hearing Officer finds that, while the Project is a CSD Modification request to authorize reductions to CSD-required setbacks to accommodate a proposed SFR addition and an existing ground-mounted HVAC unit, it is consistent with the standards identified in County Code Section 22.140.580 (SFRs), which require SFRs to have a minimum building width of 20 feet and a minimum floor area of 800 square feet. The existing SFR with the proposed addition will be 32 feet wide and 1,099 square feet in size, in compliance with the minimum required width and floor area, respectively.

23. **WEST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY PASD.** The Hearing Officer finds that, while the Project is a CSD Modification request to authorize reductions to CSD-required

setbacks to accommodate a proposed SFR addition and an existing ground-mounted HVAC unit, it is exempt from the requirements of the West San Gabriel Valley PASD because the application was deemed complete prior to its effective date on April 10, 2025, in accordance with Finding No. 4 (Applicability), above.

24. **EAST PASADENA-EAST SAN GABRIEL CSD.** The Hearing Officer finds that, while the Project is a CSD Modification request to authorize reductions to CSD-required setbacks to accommodate a proposed SFR addition and an existing ground-mounted HVAC unit, it is consistent with the following standards identified in County Code then Section 22.318.070 (Zone Specific Development Standards), applicable to SFRs within the East Pasadena-East San Gabriel CSD and the A-1 Zone:

- a. **REQUIRED YARDS.** The following standards related to minimum required yards and setbacks:
 - i. **MINIMUM FRONT YARD DEPTH.** The front yard shall be at least the average depth of front yards on the same side of the street on the same block. The existing SFR is set back 21 feet and seven inches from the private street easement, and the proposed addition is set back 48 feet and 11 inches from the private street easement.
 - ii. **MINIMUM SIDE YARD WIDTH.** On a lot smaller than 13,000 square feet, the side yard must be at least 10 percent of the average lot width, but no less than five feet. The required side yard setback is six feet on the Project Site because it is rectangular in shape with a uniform width of 60 feet. Although the existing ground-mounted HVAC unit is set back three feet and 11 inches from the side lot line, the existing SFR and proposed addition are not within the required side yard. If approved, the CSD Modification would authorize a side yard depth of three feet and 11 inches in lieu of the required six feet, to accommodate the existing ground-mounted HVAC unit.
 - iii. **MINIMUM REAR YARD DEPTH.** On a lot smaller than 13,000 square feet, the rear yard shall be at least 25 feet. The proposed addition is set back 15 feet from the rear lot line and therefore encroaches into the required rear yard. If approved, the CSD Modification would authorize a rear yard depth of 15 feet in lieu of the required 25 feet, to accommodate the proposed 325-square-foot addition.
 - iv. **STRUCTURE STEPBACK.** For structures that exceed 17 feet in height and are located on a lot adjacent to the R-1 Zone, the maximum height at five feet from the side property line adjacent to the R-1 Zone shall be limited to 10 feet, any portion of the structure that exceeds 10 feet in height shall be set back an additional foot for every additional foot in height. This requirement does not apply because the existing SFR and proposed addition do not exceed a height of 12 feet and seven inches.

- b. **HEIGHT AND STORIES.** SFRs shall be limited to a maximum height of 30 feet and two (2) stories. The proposed addition will match the existing SFR's building height of 12 feet and seven (7) inches, and the proposed SFR will be a single story, within the maximum allowable height limits.
- c. **FRONT YARD LANDSCAPING.** At least fifty percent (50%) of the front yard shall be landscaped. Approximately 860 square feet of the 1,200-square-foot front yard (71.7%) is landscaped, exceeding the minimum requirement.
- d. **MAXIMUM FLOOR AREA.** The maximum floor area of SFRs shall be limited to $(0.25 \times \text{net lot area}) + 1,000$ square feet, or 2,155 square feet on the Project Site. The existing SFR has 774 square feet of habitable floor area. With the proposed 325-square-foot addition, the SFR will have 1,099 square feet of habitable floor area, which is within the allowable floor area.
- e. **MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE.** The maximum lot coverage on a lot shall be limited to $(0.25 \times \text{net lot area}) + 1,000$ square feet, or 2,155 square feet on the subject Project Site. The existing SFR and attached garage with the proposed 325-square-foot addition will result in a total building footprint of 1,443 square feet, which is within the allowable lot coverage.
- f. **PARKING.** A minimum of two (2) covered parking spaces for a SFR with three (3) bedrooms. The Project would retain the existing 344-square-foot two-car garage on the Project Site.

EAST PASADENA – EAST SAN GABRIEL CSD MODIFICATION FINDINGS

25. **The Hearing Officer finds that the use, development of land, and application of development standards comply with all applicable provisions of Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the County Code.** The Project requests to authorize (1) a reduction to the CSD-required rear yard setback, to allow 15 feet in lieu of the required 25 feet, to accommodate the construction of a proposed 325-square-foot addition to the rear of an existing 774-square-foot SFR and (2) a reduction to the CSD-required side yard setback, to allow three feet and 11 inches in lieu of the required six feet, to accommodate an existing ground-mounted heating, ventilation, and air conditioning HVAC unit. Aside from the rear and side yard setbacks, the proposed addition to the existing SFR complies with all other applicable development standards identified in County Code then Section 22.318.070 (Zone Specific Development Standards). Notwithstanding the East Pasadena – East San Gabriel CSD, the proposed addition complies with Countywide standards for SFRs in the A-1 zone, as a 15-foot rear yard setback is provided. The side yard setback modification is limited to accommodating an existing ground-mounted HVAC unit. Furthermore, the proposed addition will expand the existing 774-square-foot SFR to have 1,099 square feet of floor area, in conformance with the minimum 800-square-foot floor area required for SFRs.

26. **The Hearing Officer finds that the use, development of land, and application of development standards, when considered on the basis of the suitability of the site for the particular use or development intended, are arranged to avoid traffic congestion, provide for the safety and convenience of bicyclists and pedestrians, including children, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities, to protect public health, safety and general welfare, prevent adverse effects on neighboring property and conform with good zoning practice.** The proposed addition is located at the rear of the existing SFR and away from public view, along North Willard Avenue. The existing HVAC unit is sufficiently setback (include how many feet) from the public right-of-way and would therefore cause no changes to the existing traffic or safety features in the surrounding area. The side yard setback reduction is limited to accommodating an existing ground-mounted HVAC unit and thus will create no new impacts. Therefore, there would be negligible impact to the public rights-of-way surrounding the Project Site.
27. **The Hearing Officer finds that the use, development of land, and application of development standards are suitable from the standpoint of functional developmental design.** The proposed addition is consistent with the surrounding residential area because the general architectural character will be maintained. The proposed addition will give the residents of the SFR an expanded living area via a new primary bedroom and bathroom. The side yard setback reduction is limited to accommodating an existing ground-mounted HVAC unit and thus will create no new impacts. The setback provided will leave space for air, light, and privacy for the residents of the SFR. The addition is subject to review under the related SPR for compliance with all other applicable development standards. Furthermore, the proposed addition will bring the SFR into compliance with the minimum required floor area for SFRs.
28. The Hearing Officer finds that a grant term limit is not necessary for the CSD Modification so long as the SFR continues to exist. This grant shall be subject to termination at such time that the SFR ceases to exist.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

29. The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines sections 15301 (Class 1, Existing Facilities Categorical Exemption) and 15305 (Class 5, Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations Categorical Exemption). The Project involves a modification of the side and rear yard setback requirements, to accommodate an existing ground-mounted HVAC unit and a proposed 325-square-foot floor area addition, respectively, at an existing SFR. The proposed addition would not increase the existing 774-square-foot floor area by more than 50 percent, and the proposed yard setback reductions would not result in any changes in land use or density. None of the exceptions to an exemption apply because the Project is not located within a Significant Ecological Area, on a scenic highway or on a hazardous waste site, is not known to contain historic resources, and there are no unusual circumstances that would indicate a reasonable possibility that

the Project could have a significant or cumulative effect on the environment. Therefore, the Hearing Officer finds that the Project is categorically exempt from CEQA.

ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS

30. LOCATION OF DOCUMENTS. The location of the documents and other materials constituting the record of proceedings upon which the Hearing Officer's decision is based in this matter is at LA County Planning, 13th Floor, Hall of Records, 320 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, California 90012. The custodian of such documents and materials shall be the Director of LA County Planning.

BASED ON THE FOREGOING, THE HEARING OFFICER CONCLUDES THAT:

- A. The proposed use will be consistent with the adopted General Plan for the area.
- B. The use, development of land, and application of development standards comply with all applicable provisions of Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the County Code.
- C. The use, development of land, and application of development standards, when considered on the basis of the suitability of the site for the particular use or development intended, are arranged to avoid traffic congestion, provide for the safety and convenience of bicyclists and pedestrians, including children, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities, to protect public health, safety and general welfare, prevent adverse effects on neighboring property and conform with good zoning practice.
- D. The use, development of land, and application of development standards are suitable from the standpoint of functional developmental design.

THEREFORE, THE HEARING OFFICER:

- 1. Finds that the Project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines sections 15301 (Class 1, Existing Facilities Categorical Exemption) and 15305 (Class 5, Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations Categorical Exemption); and
- 2. Approves **COMMUNITY STANDARDS DISTRICT MODIFICATION NO. RPPL2024006082**, subject to the attached conditions.

ACTION DATE: August 18, 2026

SMT:MRB:ERS

August 6, 2026