
II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Project Site

The 6.19-acre project site is located in the Los Angeles City community of Woodland Hills. It is located approximately 2 miles south of the Ventura Freeway (I-101), approximately 11 miles from the San Diego Freeway (I-405) and approximately 25 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. The irregularly-shaped project site is bound by San Feliciano Drive to the north, Mulholland Drive to the south, Girard Reservoir to the east and single-family residences to the west. The regional location of the project site is presented in Figure II-1, while its local vicinity is indicated on Figure II-2.

The proposed 6.19-acre project site is surrounded by a chain link fence and consists of a single parcel of land. A vacant two-story single-family residence, sheds and an aged kennel occupy the project site. These structures are located at the east-central portion of the property along Mulholland Drive. The remaining portion of land is undeveloped, open space occupied by various trees (i.e., coast live oak, Southern California black walnut and Mexican fan palm), shrubs, low-lying weeds and grasses. The current structures and vegetation would be removed and replaced with the 37 detached single-family condominium units.

As the project site is located in the hills of the Santa Monica Mountains, the topography of the project site and the surrounding area is variable with elevation changes, although the general trend is of a decreasing slope while moving northward (see Figure II-3). The surface elevation on the irregularly-shaped site fluctuates, with the southwestern edge approximately 1,048 feet above mean sea level (msl), decreasing to approximately 1,000 feet above msl toward the northern edge of the project site. The surface elevations at the central and southeastern edge of the project site are approximately 1,015 and 1,020 msl, respectively. Table II-1 summarizes the slope of existing site topography.

**Table II-1
Existing Slope Analysis**

Slope Category	Square Footage	Percentage of Site Area
10% or Less	177,096 sq. ft.	65.6 %
10% - 15%	18,620 sq. ft.	6.9%
15% and Over	74,140 sq. ft.	27.5%

Figure II-1, Regional Map

Figure II-2, Vicinity Map

Figure II-3 Aerial Photo

The existing topography consists of a north-draining main canyon and a secondary canyon. A north-trending bedrock spur-ridge separates the main and easterly secondary canyon. The existing residential structures were built on the bedrock ridge. Minor cut and fill grading techniques were employed to create level building sites for the structures. Past grading, associated with the construction of Mulholland Drive has consisted of placing fill where the roadway crosses the main and secondary canyons. Fill was also placed along the margins of the main canyon and within a secondary canyon to support residential development and San Feliciano Drive to the west. The abandoned Girard Reservoir was created by placing fill within the main canyon.

There are a total of 186 trees on the project site, of which 30 would be removed for construction of the proposed project. Six (6) of those 30 trees are coast live oaks. Other trees to be removed include: one (1) Apple, nine (9) Mexican Fan Palms, one (1) King Palm, one (1) Fig, five (5) Southern California Black Walnuts, one (1) English Walnut and six (6) Mexican Elderberries. There are no National Register or California State Historic Resource properties, California Historical landmarks, California Points of Historic Interest or City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments on the proposed project site.

Existing Site Zoning/Land Use

The project site is within the Canoga Park-Winnetka-Woodland Hills-West Hills Community Plan Area, which designates the project site as Low Residential, which allows residential densities up to 9 units per net acre. The project site is zoned a residential designation of R1 in the No. 1 Height District, which allows structures up to 45 feet. As described in the Community Plan, the project site also lies within the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan (“Specific Plan”) area, which is comprised of Mulholland Drive and the surrounding area. The project site is located within 500 feet of the Mulholland Scenic Parkway right-of-way, which is referred to as the Inner Corridor. The Specific Plan contains density requirements, building standards and grading restrictions that are applicable to the Inner Corridor.

Surrounding Area

As shown in Figure II-3, the surrounding area is almost entirely developed with suburban uses. Properties to the north, east and west of the project site consist of one- and two-story single-family residences. These properties are all zoned R1-1 (Residential One-Family) with a Height District Designation of “1”. In addition, the Girard Reservoir and the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Pumping Station are located to the northeast of the project site and are also zone R1-1. The properties to the south of the project site consist of a private high school and convent, undeveloped land, a two-story commercial building with a surface parking lot and a small shopping center, anchored by a Gelson’s Supermarket. Approximately 365 feet south of the project site, along Mulholland Highway, the City of Calabasas begins. The Louisville High School and Convent property is zoned RE15-1-H, houses multiple structures and contains a surface parking which parallels Mulholland Drive. The two-story commercial building, called Mulholland Plaza, is located at the southwest corner of the intersection between Mulholland Drive and Mulholland Highway. The shopping center, called Gelson’s Village Calabasas, is located in the

jurisdiction of the City of Calabasas and is adjacent to Mulholland Plaza, consisting of retail and commercial stores including a Gelson's Supermarket, yoga studio, Washington Mutual Bank, and dry cleaners. Adjacent to Gelson's Village Calabasas is a Shell gas station.

No endangered habitat is expected to occur in the area due to the substantial level of existing suburban development. No surface water features or vegetation indicative of wetland areas (i.e., cattails and sedges) are found in the project area.¹ There are no City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments near the project site.² There are scenic vistas identified for the surrounding area.³

Photographs of the project site and surrounding area, including a photograph location map, are presented in Figures II-4 through II-16.

¹ Wildflower Productions, *TOPO! Interactive Maps on CD-ROM, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and Surrounding Rec. Areas*, version 2.3.2 (or upgraded to 2.7.8), 1999.

² Source: City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, *Historic-Cultural Monument Report*, website: <http://www.lacity.org/pln/complan/HCM/hcm.cfm>, July 26, 2004.

³ *California Scenic Highway Mapping System*, State of California Department of Transportation, website <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic/cahisys.htm>, July 26, 2004.

Figure II-4, Photograph Location Map

Figure II-5, Views 1 and 2

Figure II-6, Views 3 and 4

Figure II-7, Views 5 and 6

Figure II-8, Views 7 and 8

Figure II-9, Views 9 and 10

Figure II-10, Views, 11 and 12

Figure II-11, Views, 13 and 14

Figure II-12, Views, 15 and 16

Figure II-13, Views, 17 and 18

Figure II-14, Views, 19 and 20

Figure II-15, Views, 21 and 22

Figure II-16, Views, 23 and 24

PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is the subdivision of a 6.1951-acre, irregularly shaped property into two lots and the subsequent development of 37 detached, single-family condominium homes. The proposed development is shown in Figure II-17, Site Plan.

General Project Features

Three Single-family unit types are envisioned: Units A, B and C. Each unit would have three or four bedrooms and would have a maximum height of three stories or 36 feet, as established by the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan Inner Corridor regulations. Each unit would include a two-car garage. There would be no basements, subterranean floors and no stepped pads. Architectural style has not yet been determined; nor have floor plans, elevations, or renderings yet been developed. Table II-2 provides a summary the 37 proposed condominiums.

**Table II-2
Proposed Building Summary**

Condominium Units	Number of Units	Building Footprint	Total Building Coverage
Unit A	13	30' X 40'	15,600 sq. ft.
Unit B	14	35' X40'	19,600 sq. ft.
Unit C	10	35' X 45'	15,750 sq. ft.
TOTALS	37		50,950 sq. ft.

Of the project site's 6.1951 acres of total area (269,856.8 square feet), building footprint coverage would account for approximately 50,950 square feet (or 18.9% of the total project site). An additional area of 37,646 square feet (or 14.0% of the project site) would be covered by other forms of impervious surfaces, such as roads, driveways, patios and walkways. A total area of 37,500 square feet (or 13.9% of the project site) would be covered with landscaping. Landscaping would consist of approximately 3,500 square feet of common area and 34,000 square feet of private landscaping associated with the proposed homes. In addition, there would be 103,135 square feet (or 38.27% of the project site) of undisturbed open space and 40,626 square feet (or 17.7% of the project site) of private open space. A homeowners' association would be responsible for the maintenance of the open space. Table II-3 summarizes the project area statistics.

Figure II-17, Site Plan

**Table II-3
Project Area Summary**

Component	Square Footage	Percentage of Total Site Area
Building Footprint Coverage	50,950 sq. ft.	18.9%
Other Paved Surfaces	37,646 sq. ft.	14.0%
Landscape Areas	37,500 sq. ft.	13.9%
Open Space	143,761 sq. ft.	53.2%
Total	269,856.8	100%

Parking

The project would a total of 74 covered parking spaces (two per unit in garages) and 19 guest parking spaces. The locations of proposed guest parking are shown on Figure II-17.

Street Lighting

The project proposes not to install standard street lighting on the private drive between Mulholland Highway and San Feliciano Drive. Rather, the project would seek to use low intensity lighting to minimize potential glare and night sky illumination. Such special lighting for would be determined during the construction phase.

Grading

Grading for the proposed project would involve the excavation of approximately 10,700 cubic yards. All excavated material would be used as fill on the project site. Grading would be balanced onsite - there would be no import or export of graded materials.

The Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan Inner Corridor regulations limit grading to one (1) cubic yard per four (4) square feet of lot area. In total, the Specific Plans regulations would permit 67,396 cubic yards of grading ($269,857 \div 4 = 67,396$). The project's grading is in compliance with the Specific Plan's grading requirements.

All manufactured slopes would have a maximum horizontal to vertical ratio of 2 to 1. The project would utilize retaining walls in lieu of slopes to preserve additional oaks. Three retaining walls are proposed. The first is an irregularly-shaped wall that begins on the south side of the main Mulholland Drive entrance to the project site and extends southerly, roughly parallel to Mulholland Drive, and terminates at building pad #35. The second is an irregularly-shaped wall that starts near the northeast corner of the

project site and wraps around the west sides of building pads #1-6. At building pad #7, a small cut slope provides a terminus to the second retaining wall. The third retaining wall picks up on the west side of this small cut slope and extends southerly on the west side of building pads #7-9. The maximum height of the walls is 11'-6", which occurs on the west side of building pad #8.

Access

An internal private roadway, 28 feet in width, would connect two points of offsite vehicular access located on Mulholland Drive and San Feliciano Drive.

Construction Schedule

The first stage of construction is the demolition of all of the existing structures on the project site, which include a two-story residence, shed and kennel. Next the site will be cleared on vegetation (with the exception of the trees to be retained). Then the site will be graded for building pads and access. Overall, construction is expected to take approximately 24 months to complete the project.

The staging for all construction equipment, materials, and construction-worker parking would be provided onsite.

DISCRETIONARY APPROVALS REQUIRED

The City of Los Angeles (the City) is the lead agency for the proposed project. In order to construct the proposed project, the applicant is requesting approval of the following discretionary approvals from the City:

- Approval of Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 61553 to authorize a 37 unit residential condominium development;
- Change of zoning from the existing R1-1 Single Family Residential to (Q) RD6-Restricted Density Multiple Dwelling zone;
- A Specific Plan Exception to allow the encroachment into the protected viewshed of the Mulholland Scenic Parkway;
- A Specific Plan Height Exception for single-family units on upslope pads within 100 feet of Mulholland Drive to exceed 15 feet and to allow single-family units on upslope pads within 500 feet of Mulholland Drive to exceed 30 feet in height;
- Retaining Wall Adjustment to permit deviations from the retaining wall limitations.

The Initial Study serves as the environmental document for all discretionary actions associated with development of the proposed project. This Initial Study is also intended to cover all federal, state, regional and/or local government discretionary approvals that may be required to develop the proposed project, whether or not they are explicitly listed below. Federal, state, and regional agencies that may have jurisdiction over the proposed project include, but are not limited to:

- Regional Water Quality Board; and
- South Coast Air Quality Management District.

RELATED PROJECTS

Section 15063(b)(1) requires an Initial Study to consider whether there is substantial evidence that any aspect of the proposed project, either individually or cumulatively may cause a significant effect on the environment. Cumulative impacts are two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355).

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15130, cumulative impacts are anticipated impacts of the proposed project along with reasonably foreseeable growth. Reasonably foreseeable growth may be based on:

- A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency; or
- A summary of projections contained in the adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or area wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.

For this Initial Study all proposed, recently approved, under construction, and reasonably foreseeable projects within a radius of approximately two and one-half miles that could produce a related or cumulative impact on the local environment when considered in conjunction with the proposed project were obtained from the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), City of Calabasas, City of Hidden Hills, and Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning and are evaluated in this Initial Study. The 24 related projects are listed in Table II-4 and their locations are depicted on Figure II-18. An analysis of the cumulative impacts associated with these related projects and the proposed project is provided in the cumulative impact discussion under each individual impact category in Section IV, Environmental Impact Analysis, of this Initial Study.

Cumulative impacts analyzed in the Initial Study were conservatively assessed. Some of the related projects may not be approved, and some approved projects may not be developed. In addition, many of the related projects have been or will be subject to a variety of mitigation measures that will reduce the

potential environmental impacts associated with those projects. However, with limited exceptions, those mitigation measures have not been taken into account in projecting the environmental impacts of the related projects. Therefore, the cumulative analyses set forth below are conservative and result in projecting greater impacts than is actually anticipated.

**Table II-4
List of Related projects**

<i>Map No.</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Location (Address)</i>
1	108,090	sf	Specialty retail	21347 Ventura Blvd.
2	3,500	sf	Fast-food restaurant w/ drive-through window	20952 Ventura Blvd.
3	141,000	sf	Automobile Dealership w/ repair service	20539 Ventura Blvd.
4	1,322,425	sf	Office	21261 Burbank Blvd.
5	879	du	Apartment	6200 De Soto Ave.
6	136	du	Apartment	6150 De Soto Ave.
7	563	du	Apartment	6250 De Soto Ave.
8	522	du	Apartment	6301 De Soto Ave.
9	421	du	Apartment	6355 De Soto Ave.
	(55,000)	sf	<i>Manufacturing to be removed</i>	
10	7,912	sf	Specialty retail	6750 De Soto Ave.
	3,413	sf	Fast-food restaurant w/ drive-through window	
11	522	du	Apartment	6628 Variel Ave.
12	210	du	Apartment	21050 Vanowen St.
	(39,100)	sf	<i>Office to be removed</i>	
13	300	sf	MTA park-and-ride lot	East side of Canoga Ave. (between Victory Blvd. & Vanowen Ave.)
14	600,000	Sf	Topanga mall expansion	6600 Topanga Canyon Blvd.
15	6,784	Sf	Restaurant	6355 Topanga Canyon Blvd.
	6,216	Sf	Restaurant	
	(10,394)	Sf	<i>Bank to be removed</i>	
16	181,082	Sf	Shopping center	22816 Victory Blvd.
17	200	St	Preschool/day care enrollment expansion	6221 Fallbrook Ave.
18	185	St	Private school enrollment expansion	22555 Oxnard St.
19	156	St	School expansion	5850 Fallbrook Ave.
20	110	Du	Apartment	24141 & 24121 Ventura Blvd.
21	8,700	Sf	Restaurant	23577 Calabasas Rd.
22	11,000	Sf	Office	24106 Calabasas Rd.
23	35,000	Sf	Office expansion	4500 Park Granada
24	65	St	Viewpoint school enrollment expansion	23620 Mulholland Hwy.

Source: Crain & Associates, November 2004

Figure II-18, Location of Related Projects